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YEMEN TIMES

• SANAA • January 25th thru 31st 1999

Vol. IX, Issue No. 4 • Price 30 Riyals

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An Inefficient Regime Accuses the Media:

Fighting Kidnapping & Terrorism

There have been two negative developments in Yemen's recent experience with kidnapping and terrorism. These have, unfortunately, complicated the regime's local and international relations.

I. NEW WATERSHEDS:

During January 1999, four distinct watersheds have been crossed in Yemen's bad experience with kidnapping and terrorism. These are:

1. For the first time ever, the nation witnessed a break-in by kidnapers to snatch a hostage. This was how John Brooke was taken.

In all previous cases, hostages were grabbed from the streets - while driving, walking, or jogging. We now have a case of someone being taken away from an enclosed compound. The next logical step is for kidnapers to break into homes/offices in order to snatch hostages. This is a bad omen.

2. For the first time ever, kidnapers have placed political demands - some local and others international.

That was the case with the Abyan kidnapers who demanded changes in the political structure of Yemen, as well as in the world's attitude towards Iraq, Sudan, and Libya.

3. For the first time ever, the Yemeni authorities used force to liberate hostages. Although there have been some skirmishes between government forces and tribal groupings in previous kidnapping

cases, the Abyan case was the first situation in which military/security forces stormed the hideout of kidnapers in order to liberate hostages.

4. For the first time ever, foreign experts came to Yemen to investigate cases of violence and terrorism. This is the case with the ten FBI and four Scotland Yard investigators who came here following the Abyan case.

II: ACCUSING THE MEDIA:

The other complication has to do with the rising level of tension between the authorities and the independent and opposition media. Senior politicians of Yemen, including some highly educated ones, repeatedly tell media personalities to team up with them against the terrorists because "This is a national crisis". They insist that the media should show more patriotism by supporting the politicians against the terrorists.

There are three problems with this logic.

1. Wrong Assumption:

The politicians, by their very suggestion, imply that the media support the terrorists and kidnapers. They reach this conclusion because the independent and opposition newspapers report the demands and positions of the terrorists/kidnapers as they square off with the authorities. I can say that neither the Yemen Times nor any other local newspaper that I know of supports the kidnapers/terrorists. We simply report their demands and positions

because it is part of our job. We try to present readers with the two or more sides to any conflict.

2. Misuse of Patriotism:

There is no reason for officials to paint independent and opposition journalists as less patriotic or less concerned about Yemen. They are as patriotic as anybody else, and they serve the country in their own way. Therefore, it does not become the authorities when they label individuals who do not take orders from them as spies or agents of international espionage or intelligence circles. Such accusations only show how intolerant our officials are.

3. National Interest:

Some officials present themselves as an embodiment of the nation and national interests. They remind me of Louis XVI who said, "L'etat, c'est moi." So, if you disagree with the politicians, they say you oppose the national interests of Yemen. How ridiculous.

If anything at all, these same politicians are actually harming Yemen and the national interest because of their selfish behavior, greed, nepotism, and corruption.

III: CONCLUSION:

All sides - local and international - must join hands in the fight against terrorism and kidnapping. But there are rules to this. In order for the people of Yemen and the world community to join hands with the Yemeni state in this fight, it must first shape up. Shaping up calls for changes, especially the need to clean up the prevalent corruption, replacement of inefficient officials, more just distribution of the nation's resources to all regions and citizens, etc. Of course, a firm hand is needed to fight terrorism. But force alone won't do the job. The authorities have to regain their legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the people of Yemen.

Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
Chief Editor - Yemen Times.

German Ambassador Honored by President Saleh

President Ali Abdullah Saleh will bestow the Unity Medal on Dr. Helga von Strachwitz, Ambassador of Germany in Yemen. The official awards ceremony will take place before a farewell audience, scheduled early in February, a few days prior to her departure on February 8, 1999.

The first female ambassador to serve in Yemen, Ms. Strachwitz has done a lot to elevate Yemeni-German relations to an all time high during her more than 4 years of tenure in Sanaa. She was able to persuade her government to stay the course of friendship with Yemen in spite of 8 cases of kidnapping or German nationals, 2 court cases between German and Yemeni firms, and other ordeals. She goes back to serve as director of the African Department in the Foreign Office.



A Yemen Times Initiative: COMMITTEE TO SAVE TOURISM

The economic effects of the recent violence in Yemen has been disastrous to the tourism industry. Many economic activities have suffered, and are now exposed to the risk of bankruptcy. The following are examples:

1. Hotels Suffer:

The large hotels have seen a dramatic drop in their occupancy rates. In some hotels, guests occupy less than 20% of the rooms.

2. Airlines Suffer:

Most of the airlines serving Yemen now fly nearly empty. A European airline flew into Sanaa last week carrying only 28 passengers. Yemenia flew in from Paris last week with only four passengers on board. If this situation persists, services to Sanaa may be canceled.

3. Tour Operators Suffer:

There have been many cancellations of tour groups. Adding insult to injury, some groups simply decided to go to neighboring Saudi Arabia and Oman, whose adjacent regions have terrain and culture similar to those of Yemen.

President Hosni Mubarak, faced with a similar situation after the Luxor tragedy hit Egypt, personally visited the site of the events on the next day and sacked the governor, the minister of the interior, and the director general of security. He invited senior officials, industry entrepreneurs and travel/tourism journalists to discuss the issues. He ordered an immediate international campaign. In less than 6 months, Egypt's efforts to shore up the tourism industry were successful.

The Yemeni leadership must consider similar steps in order to salvage our tourism industry. In the meanwhile, the Yemen Times decided on an initiative of its own. We propose setting up the Yemen Committee to Save Tourism. Its task would be to prepare an immediate action plan. We hereby invite industry entrepreneurs, decision-makers representing first-class hotels, airline agencies, tourism officers, and tour operators, as well as government officials to a meeting.

The meeting will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 2nd at the Yemen Times. Please call (268-661, ext. 301) to attend.

Yemen Times

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OUR VIEWPOINT

The Cronies Create Enemies for the President

I have been thinking a lot before writing this viewpoint, which is based partly on personal experience and partly on observation. The conclusion I have reached, and which I would like to share with the Yemen Times' readers, is that the cronies around President Ali Abdullah Saleh constantly push potential friends away from him. They make more enemies for him. Let me share my thoughts as to why and how this happens.

WHY?

1. Many of the presidential entourage are people who do not actually help the president with his job. If anything, they make the job more difficult. Therefore, these people feel that there are a lot of other people out there who could replace them. As such, it is in their interest not to let any other individuals/groups get the man's trust and confidence. They paint any potential friends as enemies. They constantly present the President with half-truths and mis-information that would make him wary of the new potential friends.

2. Most of the people around the president are parasites. They miss no opportunity for self-enrichment. As a result, they have already become very rich. To keep amassing more money, they are willing to suffer his wrath and his kicks on their butts from time to time. That is the price for occupying an undeserved place and for collecting unearned wealth. That is also why they push out others.

HOW?

1. Often, the president's men bad-mouth potential and actual friends. They do that in the name of the president, or so they present their offensive. Then, when the potential/actual friends fight back, they present the backlash to the president to prove that the said individuals are actually enemies. This strategy has worked very well with journalists, opposition politicians, and other public figures.

2. Many times, the entourage around the president blocks access to the president. They control what goes to the president, as they have in place an elaborate screening process. They do allow the negative stuff to get there, but not all the positive stories.

CONCLUSION:

The potential/actual friends represent various categories. If these are people who need the good offices of the president to continue with their work - like businessmen, then they tend to put up with the hassles of the cronies around the big man. If, on the other hand, the potential/actual friends of the president are people who can manage their affairs without much difficulty irrespective of presidential attitude, then they either ignore the president and his cronies, or even fight back.

Presidential reaction towards this second group depends on the overall political atmosphere. In ordinary times, such individuals and groups who are not willing to appear as kissing up in order to build a correct and fruitful relationship with the president, are simply left alone. But during difficult times, when the president expects everybody to line up behind him, that margin is not available. If you are not enticed to toe the line by the carrot, then you will face the stick. Even that, however, may not make all people fall in line!

The Publisher


YEMEN TIMES

An Independent Economic & Political Weekly



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Zayidi Appeals to President

Mr. Hassan Saeed Al-Zayidi, who has been imprisoned by Political Security Office since December 18th, has appealed to President Ali Abdullah Saleh asking for his release. In a letter to the president, Zayidi pointed out that as a final year student at the College of Journalism at Sanaa University, he has exams starting on 23rd January.

The letter also discloses that Hassan's brother who came to look for him was also taken into custody. "In addition, there are five other members of the Zayidi clan who have been in prison for a long time and have not been charged with any crimes."

The Zayidi clan has been notorious for kidnapping and blowing up of the YHOC oil pipeline which passes through their region. Hassan himself helped the German Berliner Zeitung journalist, Mr. Hamaiel, visit the four Germans who had been held in their region during the first half of December, 1998.

Al-Hadhiri Victimized by State Security Organ

Mohammed Saleh Al-Hadhiri, a well-known columnist and writer with Al-Wahdawi and other opposition papers, stated that state security organs have been tailing him for some time.

On Thursday, January 14th, the security people kidnapped Al-Hadhiri's brother and, thinking they had the writer, beat him badly. "They kept repeating 'Stop writing!' my badly bruised brother told us," he said.

The opposition parties issued a statement condemning the action.

YR 3,397,000,000 To Improve Ports

During 1999, the Ministry of Transportation will execute different projects with total expenses of YR 3,397,000,000. These projects will include improving Aden and Soqatra airports, some seaports, and air transportation in the country.

During 1998, YR 988,000,000 were spent in implementing similar projects.

YR 13,142,218,000 for 36 Projects

With total expenses YR 13,142,128,000 36 projects were licensed in Hodeida. Twenty six of these projects are being implemented in industry, 6 in agriculture & fisheries, and 4 in services and tourism. More than 200 employees will benefit from 50% of these projects.

Since 1992, YR5.5 billion was spent for implementing 219 projects in the governorate.

Custom Revenue = 120% More

The total customs revenue of Hodeida Airport reached YR 57,765,682 in 1998, 120% more than it was in 1997 (YR 30,768,271).

The Hodeida Airport customs office began a new plan in February, 1998.

2 Films at French Center

There will be a show of 2 French films at the French Cultural Center in Sanaa. The first show will be on January 25, and the second on February 1st.

The two films will treat different social problems, most importantly improving children's abilities and talents

YT Weekly Poll

Yemen Times Weekly Poll question is placed at:
<http://yementimes.com/#poll>

How do assess the current Yemeni Government so far?

Result

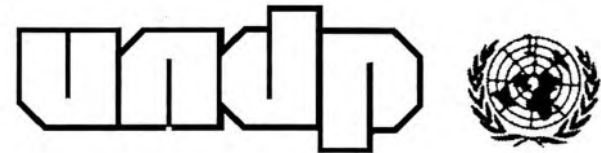
TERRIBLE, needs to be replaced 63%

NOT GOOD ENOUGH, but I can't think of an alternative 25%

DOING GOOD 8%

SUPERB! 4%

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UNDP



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is inviting applications for the following post in its project RAB/98/W01 in Sanaa

This position is open to Yemeni National ONLY

SECRETARY (BILINGUAL):

Duties and Responsibilities:

Assist the Project Coordinator in preparing Project's activities, perform general Administrative/finance support functions, prepare final technical and financial reports, assist in assembling briefing materials and documents for use in official meetings of missions, maintain and update project's working files, liaise with UNDP/Others, assist in monitoring country activities to ensure that the executing agencies submit expenditure reports and other necessary reports, perform secretarial duties, type and prepare correspondence documents and reports in Arabic and English, take notes in meeting as required, coordinate the on-going logistics related to different project activities, and perform other tasks as required.

Qualifications/Experience/Skill Requirements:

1. Completion of secondary education supplemented by courses related to general administration;
2. Ability to operate computer;
3. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic;
4. Five years' experience including progressively responsible work in general administration with emphasis in personnel.

Interested candidates are requested to send their applications with detailed curriculum vitae to:

Operations Manager, UNDP, P. O. Box 551, Sanaa.

- Applicants who have already applied for this post need not apply again.
- Applications should be received **no later than 31st January, 1999.**
- Applications received after this date will not be considered.
- Only those candidates who strictly meet the requirements could apply and acknowledgement will only be sent to shortlisted applicants meeting the requirements of the post.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UNDP



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is inviting applications for the following post in its project YEM/97/300 e in Sanaa

This position is open to Yemeni National ONLY

SECRETARY (BILINGUAL):

Duties and Responsibilities:

Act as full time secretary, type and prepare correspondence, documents and reports in Arabic and English, file correspondence, reports and documents, arrange appointments both internal and external, draft correspondence of routine nature, receive visitors, place and screen telephone calls, and attend to routine requests for information. Typing speed at least 40 Arabic words per minute, and 55 English words per minute, and perform other tasks as required.

Qualifications/Experience/Skill Requirements:

1. Completion of secondary education;
2. Accepting work in the afternoon and evening time;
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Interested candidates are requested to send their applications with detailed curriculum vitae to:

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Ali Mohammed Al-Olofy: "Yemen's margin of press freedom has been steadily shrinking."

The independent weekly "AL RAI AL AAM" was recently suspended by the government on charges of undermining relations with sisterly/friendly countries. The newspaper is highly controversial, to say the least.

It presents itself as a beacon of the public interest, and thus has been openly critical of many influential individuals. However, many have accused it of tactics that are close to blackmail, or at least inappropriate.

The chief editor of the newspaper does not refute those charges. He in fact openly states that most businessmen and government officials only understand such language.

More importantly, however, the newspaper has defended what it sees as Yemen's interests against the encroachment of neighboring Saudi Arabia. It accuses the authorities of appeasement leading to more and more concessions.

Mohammed Bin Sallam of Yemen Times met with the paper's proprietor and chief editor, Ali Mohammed Al Olofy, 59. Ali has been practising journalism for ages. He started before the 26th September Revolution as he used to write for a paper called 'SABA'. After the revolution, he worked with the government before resigning to start his newspaper AL RAI AL AAM on February 25, 1973.

Q: Your paper was recently suspended by the concerned authority. What is the problem in your opinion, and what is the charge?

A: On 24/12/98 I was summoned to the capital's attorney of appeals for investigation, with no reason given. On that same day telephone instructions were directed to 'AL THAWRA' daily printing press not to print our paper. Then it was suspended from circulation after it was printed at 'Al Mufadal' printing house. Also the Saudi newspaper 'Okaz' published a report attacking Yemen and its President on that day.

I was referred to court later that day as well, so I went to the public attorney to ask about the charges which he said he did not know anything about.

In court, I was surprised that no charges were levelled against me in writing but a higher party telephoned the court asking it to charge me with undermining relations with Saudi Arabia. In fact, our relations with Riyadh have been tense since 1934 and that tension escalated following the September Revolution and culminated after the reunification of Yemen in 1990. The differences deepened in 1994 when Saudi Arabia financed the separatists and acts of sabotage in Yemen in addition to the kidnapping of foreigners. Riyadh is the perpetrator of all problems in Yemen. When were those relations normal anyway?

The fact is that the Premier, some of the President's aids, some Ministers, and a number of Governors, the corrupt elements, are not satisfied with AL RAI AL AAM because it fights corruption. They found that charge as an opportunity to suspend the newspaper and only one day after those events, which surprisingly took place in only 24 hours, there was a "serious and eye-catching" official circulation to all Ministries and Government Institutions not to publish advertisements in AL RAI AL AAM nor to subscribe to it. Another official circular demanded all printing

houses not to print the newspaper and ordered all libraries not to sell it. All those steps prove the absence of democracy and freedom of the press in the country. Imagine that they had formed a special court for us in Ramadhan, which is an official holiday for courts in Yemen, and their 16 lawyers came to defend us.

Q: How many times did your newspaper face cases in courts?

A: I remember about eight cases, but in the end we won because the charges were trivial and could not stand in a court of justice. In the last such problem, we faced four charges in one case.

Q: How many times was your paper found guilty?

A: The paper was indicted twice after the 1993 general elections in view of our criticism towards their results and performance of a certain party and once in the late seventies and early eighties when we criticized negative phenomena in Al Thawra hospital.

Q: What do you think about freedom of the press in Yemen at present, particularly in view of political observers' opinion that democracy in the country is diminishing?

A: There is no freedom of the press in Yemen and whoever says so is a liar. There is a chaotic situation here. The ruling People's General Conference had issued papers along with other parties only to spread confusion in the press arena. A strong proof here is that any official can ban the publication of any paper through a telephone contact and not a court order as stipulated in the constitution.

Furthermore, there is not even a marginal democracy that we can describe as diminishing. For example, the parliamentary elections were not clean and the

parties in our country, ruling or opposing, do not have a sound status, and are all financed by certain elements which steer their policies. Frankly, democracy in our country is a facade only meant to beautify the regime while people outside Yemen are deceived into believing that there is democracy in the country.

Q: What is your paper's political trend, and did it change following the reunification of the country?

A: AL RAI AL AAM did not change its trend ever since its establishment in 1973. It pursues a nationalistic path and daringly opposes and criticizes corruption and negative practices regardless of penalties or harassment. It is not true that the paper had changed its policies after the reunification, for it was a unionist paper even before 1990.

Q: What is the role of the press attorney? Does it pursue a sound path, and what are its shortcomings?

A: The press attorney is similar to a police station where anybody can complain about any journalist. That attorney then summons the concerned journalist or chief editor without scrutinizing the complaint.

Q: What is the legal aspect in your case?

A: There is no legal aspect in the case. Usually if such a problem occurs, the President telephones to ask about it and either we convince him or he convinces us and the problem is over. However, this good habit no longer exists and I do not know if this is because of him or those



surrounding him. In my opinion, it is because of those close aides for they are enemies to freedom of the press.

Q: What did the journalists syndicate do in your case?

A: The syndicate issued a statement backing our case but we wished for a stronger position. We hoped that the syndicate would ask the President about such violations.

Q: What are the problems of that syndicate and what are the solutions to them in your opinion?

A: The syndicate should adopt the cases filed against journalists and journalism. However, the syndicate, following 1992, was a theatre for partisan struggle between the then two ruling parties. The managing board's legitimacy is no

longer valid since the general conference should have convened two years ago to elect a new, legitimate board but that did not happen. The problem is that those who currently tackle the syndicate issues are not members of it and the members are merely spectators.

The regime does not wish to have a syndicate in the first place, so it is satisfied with the current situation. We want the general conference to be held with the financial support of the member journalists themselves and not the government which paid 10 million rials for that conference scheduled for coming February 21st. How on earth would you expect that syndicate to perform freely in the future when it was financed by the government?

Q: Is there anything else you wish to add?

A: I hope that a marginal democracy would exist in Yemen in the first place before we agree whether to expand it.

I also hope for the presence of a real journalists' syndicate. For example, in Egypt the journalists' syndicate there foiled a law passed by the government which harmed freedom of the press. But regretfully, here we do not have a legitimate syndicate.

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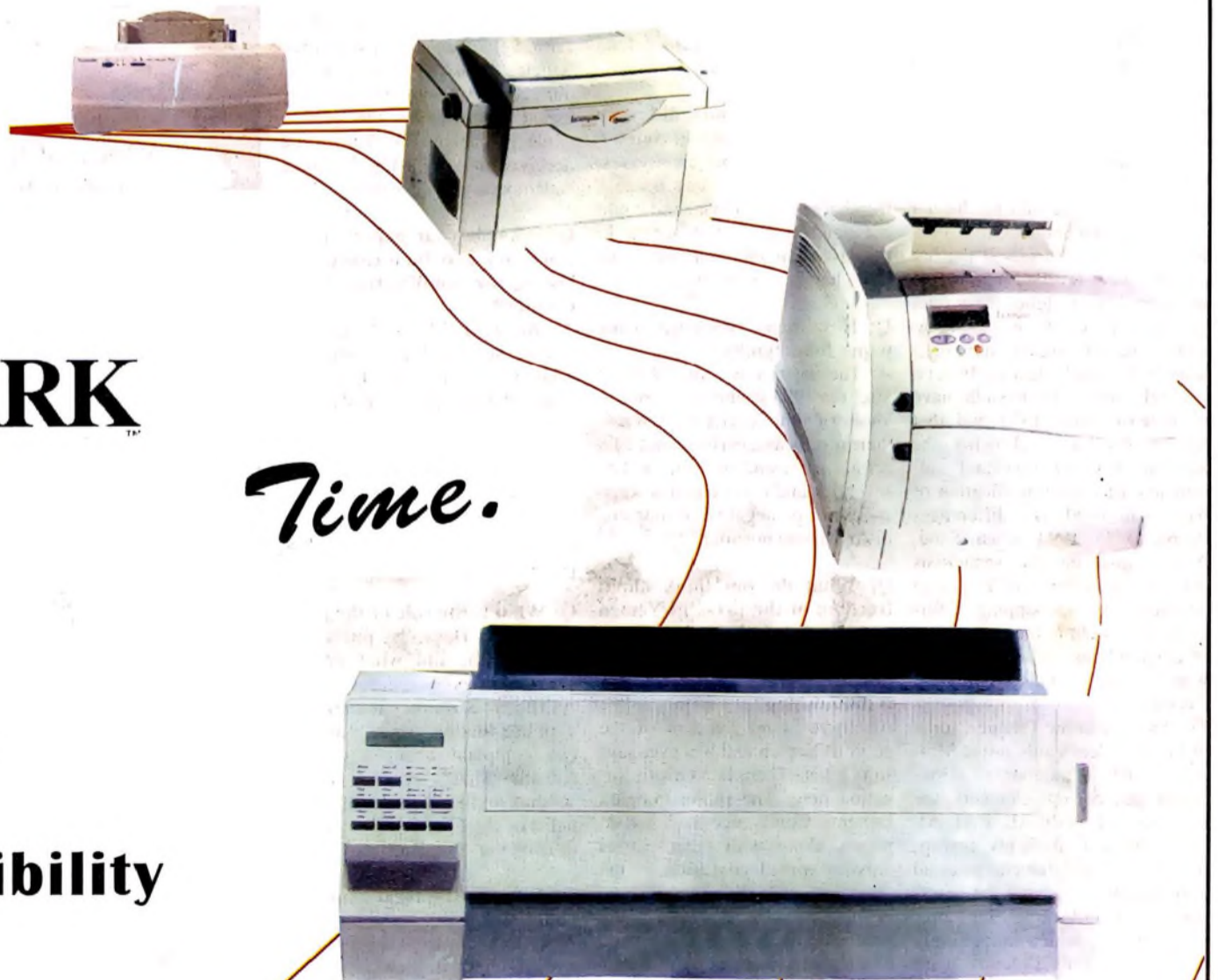


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Commercial Courts from Success to Downfall

A. In Search of a Model Court

For all reasons mentioned above, along with the prime cause envisaged by no response if not resistance to reform and no accountability, the Reformers seized their chance in 1976 and convinced the Authorities to promulgate a number of laws regulating commercial matters. Due to incompetence of the supreme court and Ministry of justice in administering justice the state legal office reluctantly accepted to administer Commercial courts for a period of time. They were intended to be the milestone of all judicial reforms and a model to be copied by regular courts.

In addition other related laws were issued on court fees (law no. 116) for the first time and on civil and commercial procedure. The main law of Commercial courts (no. 40) of 1976 provided that the courts would be constituted in the center of provinces as determined by economic and judicial necessity. The law stipulated cases to be decided by the courts and since this stipulation is related to public order no party can choose otherwise. On matters of appeal there is a commercial circuit of appeal established in the capitol Sanaa acting as an immediate court.

There were reasons other than judicial for setting up commercial courts such as; the pace of economic change as determined by the transformation from subsistence agriculture to progression towards a cash economy and hence partial integration in the international economy. Yemen started reaching out for foreign participation in investment in the economy and one of those investors' main incentive requirements was efficient and speedy litigation. This is why in certain countries commercial courts are called "Investment Judiciary".

B. Courts: A Success and a Model

We emphasize here that the main aim behind establishing commercial courts as a separate judiciary was to set an example for regular courts to follow suit, to deter any delay tactics in due



process of law and as a result enhance the performance of the judiciary as a whole. The idea of commercial courts was not against anything of good quality in the old system, whether it is the Sharia law or those judges of Sharia. The commercial law as a bill was discussed and consented to by some of the best judges equipped in Sharia and the first judge of all commercial courts was chosen from amongst those old judges versed in Sharia. Nevertheless the resistance to reform and intrigues against any kind of judicial reform continued, but the very success of those commercial courts kept opposition dormant for a while. The apparent success was due to many factors. To mention some; firstly the judges were well-paid along with other incentives like lodging, communications, and expenses. Secondly, court buildings were well-chosen for judicial functions. Thirdly, judges were well protected from the outside and without interference, though they were accountable through inspection and reports. Judges were immune from corruption to the extent that in a few instances they reported to me cases of attempted bribery. All expenses of the courts were covered by litigation rates and dutiable charges which were collected for the first time in the country according to law. Judges of those laws were proudly rewarded when foreign courts started quoting their rules. Dr. N Omar of Alexandria University called for the establishment of courts on their model after praising their success.

continued, but the very success of those commercial courts kept opposition dormant for a while. The apparent success was due to many factors. To mention some; firstly the judges were well-paid along with other incentives like lodging, communications, and expenses. Secondly, court buildings were well-chosen for judicial functions. Thirdly, judges were well protected from the outside and without interference, though they were accountable through inspection and reports. Judges were immune from corruption to the extent that in a few instances they reported to me cases of attempted bribery. All expenses of the courts were covered by litigation rates and dutiable charges which were collected for the first time in the country according to law. Judges of those laws were proudly rewarded when foreign courts started quoting their rules. Dr. N Omar of Alexandria University called for the establishment of courts on their model after praising their success.

C. Change of the Guards

In many developing countries, and Yemen is one of them, the main issues depend on personalities rather than institutions. Therefore when a new person takes the responsibility of a government body he has a free hand to apply his beliefs, since there are very few binding regulations and institutions to check and balance his deeds and actions. Hence when a new government was formed at the end of the seventies, the New Guards of the judiciary saw to it that the commercial courts ended

their semi-independence from the decaying judiciary. The steps taken included creating a first degree of appeal, thus killing the notion of speedy litigation in commerce matters. Secondly they decreed that the supreme court should have the last say. That court then, with due respect, was the last one equipped to deal with the worldly concept of commerce and investment. Thirdly it was the State office for legal affairs administering temporarily those Commercial courts which suggested in good faith the transfer of Administration. The Ministry of justice provided that all structural work and facilities were maintained. Nothing of those provisions were fulfilled and all the goodness done was swallowed by the rotting system. Thus commercial courts were amalgamated with regular courts.

D. Segregated or Affiliated Courts?

By segregation here we mean detaching the good and much needed from the bad and can-wait courts because the latter ones need a longer time to reform. This separation of few specialized courts is meant to be temporary until a long-term plan for the reform succeeds and thus all courts to a degree are united under one judicial administration. On the other hand we mean by affiliated courts, that all of the regular ones and the newly created courts for commercial, administrative, and constitutional purposes are united under the umbrella of one administration and one high court, be it qualified, or not qualified to deal with new concepts of law and its institutions. The idea of a united judiciary is simple and preferable in countries where the judiciary is functioning equally well and according to law, but in Yemen when you amalgamate efficient courts with non-efficient ones the latter courts are treated as "more equal" and the modern efficient courts become infected with all the ailing of the traditional ones. On the other hand separate courts may not be a lofty idea, but as a means of gradual reform it is worth trying and after all there is no other way in sight because the overall reform is a theoretical blue-print which will take ages to achieve.

E. Slow Death of Commercial Courts

The beginning of the fall of commercial courts

was manifested by deliberate, ignorant, and indifferent acts performed and not performed to undermine the functions of those courts. The last stroke was the appointment by the supreme council of judges most of whom have no knowledge whatsoever of commercial or financial or investment matters. In addition to the declaration by the court of appeal in Sanaa that all suits of commerce will be dealt with by the civil cases circuit in the fore-mentioned courts. Observers deduced from those moves that there is a fight behind the scenes to inherit commercial courts and enlarge certain circle pay-offs.

It was pointed out to those opposing men of law and Sharia that the Egyptian government which is embarking on a full drive to encourage investment, started setting up special units of commercial litigation. But in the absence of government interest which though claiming Economic reforms, those in the judiciary with vested interests will have the first say and the upper hand.

It is unfortunate that the commercial courts that once expelled their performances had been in decline since the eighties. But mostly "after darkness there is light" thus all of a sudden before the end of last year the world bank pressed the government to see that regular or special courts deal equitably and in a speedy manner with legal suits concerning investment and credits.

The government's response through its central bank was to create courts for settling financial disputes, but at the last moment it was convinced to receive what remained of commercial courts since the issue concerns investment and commerce as a whole, thus new decrees were passed to give commercial courts a degree of administrative and financial independence. However, the old guards saw to it that those nominated to the restored courts were judges from their ranks, or competent judges who would not fall into the trap and thus refuse the appointment. Hence the last try to save the courts was doomed to failure, and those reformers started thinking of the second escape, but this time to arbitration.

By: Husain Al-Hubaishi,
Former Minister of Legal Affairs
for the President and Prime Minister of Yemen

Political Parties Series:
1

The League of Sons of Yemen

Starting with this issue, the Yemen Times will run profiles of the political parties of Yemen. We will print the information as received from the parties. The aim is to inform the public - local and international.

Historical Origin

The League of the Sons of Yemen (LSY) was established in April, 1951 under the name of the League of the Sons of the South. Nationalist figures from north and south of the country participated. The League's main aim was to secure independence of the southern part of the country, then to establish the unity of Yemen. It assumed its new name following reunification of the country in 1990 and is seen as one of the main opposition political parties.

Political & Economic Doctrine

In printed material made available to the 'Yemen Times', the League said that the most important distinctions of the League's doctrines and programs are its objective view toward the importance of unity, in addition to its moderation and anti-violence trends. "We are an Islamic party which believes in dialogue with the others and in justice, moderation, and tolerance."

The League also believes in economic freedom and market policy and rejects monopoly. It calls for protecting the poor through the availability of social and health care in addition to providing work opportunities

and elevating professional competency and rehabilitation.

"We advocate balancing political, economic, and social interests and the establishment of local rule with vast jurisdictions, and we believe in the election according to relative voting lists." Such an option ensures that the parliament would represent all sectors of the society. The League further calls for forming a Shoura (Consultative) Council on the basis of free elections to complement the Council of Deputies (parliament).

"We support the presence of an independent judiciary system that secures justice, security and stability and the independence of the official media away from government control."

The League also calls for a vivid and active role for women in the society and backs national dialogue in which all political, social, economic, and religious elements should participate.

The League is a Modern Party
The League is a modern party which views the government as a board of directors of a company, the people being its shareholders who can replace that board. The party is independent in its ideology and moves and is under

no guardianship from anybody outside Yemen. The party is proud for being the first to underline the importance of neutralizing the presidency of the country in November 1990 away from partisan struggle. It was the first to ask the supreme court to supervise its 8th general conference elections in 1992.

The party also endorsed transparency in partisan work when it recorded all details of its 8th general conference on video tapes, providing them to whoever wishes. The League gave women the opportunity to rise to higher posts.

It was the first party to establish centers for illiteracy eradication and rehabilitating women in Aden and Sanaa, but which were looted in the 1994 war. The party further tabled practical solutions to problems of nationalization and confiscation in the southern and eastern provinces, but which were not heeded by the authority.

The League, finally, tables alternatives to what it opposes, most prominent of which being the local rule's draft law.

The Party's Hierarchy
The party's hierarchal structure

is as follows:
-Party Leader.
-Secretary General.
-Executive Committee (22 members).
-Central Authority (71 members).
-The General Conference (held once every five years under normal circumstances).

The Executive Committee, which also groups the President and the Secretary General) is the daily dynamic tool of the party and is divided into several bureaus including the General Secretariat. The Committee convenes weekly.

The Central Authority, which normally meets every three months, is the party's expanded leadership. It elects members of the Executive Committee, drafts the party's strategy, and amends its bylaws whenever needed.

The party has suffered a lot from the displacement of its leaderships and members ever since its establishment and until 1989 by the British colonialists and later by the dictatorial rule that took over control of the southern part of the country since 1967. Hundreds of its cadres further left the country following the 1994 war which had its impact

on the party but which at the same time elevated its cadres' competency in dealing with various circumstances.

The League General Conferences
The League held its first general conference in Aden in 1951 and was followed by five others in the same place with the sixth being held in 1957. The party could not hold its seventh general conference until November 1986 due to the deportation of its leaders at the hands of the British occupation authority then because of the totalitarian regime's practices following independence of the southern part of the country in 1967.

Even that seventh conference was held secretly within and outside the country and the results brought Abdul Rahman Al Jaffry as party Leader and Mohsin Mohammed bin Farid as Secretary General.

The 8th conference was held in Sanaa, in February 1992 under the supervision of the Supreme Court, and five women were elected to high posts; two as assistants to the party Leader and another two as assistants to the Secretary General.

The Party's Participation in the 1993 General Elections
The League believed that elections were part of the democratic process and realized that they would lack integrity but it hoped that the process would start correctly. The party tabled a dis-

tinguished election program but with nothing else to support it while the parties in power were backed by the army, police, media, the Central Bank and government jobs.

Thus, the party's 90 candidates failed. However, books could be written about the forgery, threats and use of money and arms to ensure the success of the others.

The League and the 1997 General Elections

The League refrained from entering the 1997 Parliamentary elections since they came shortly following the 1994 war which greatly affected the country's political and social balance.

The party expressed the opinion that the country's ruling powers and the opposition should meet to evaluate the reasons and results of that war and to heal the wounds it inflicted through a real and comprehensive national reconciliation.

The League, along with other opposition parties, considered that indulging in the elections without such a conciliation and without amending the legal and procedural violations that preceded the polling, would cause the elections to lose their meaning and the results would be known beforehand. Thus the party decided to boycott the elections.

By: Dr. Salah Haddash,
Yemen Times Managing Editor

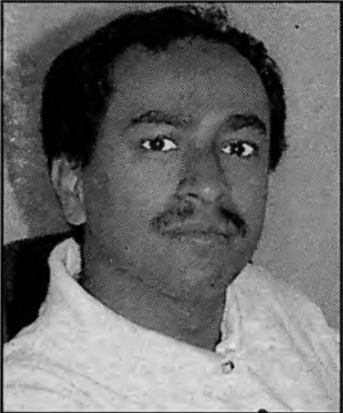


This is an *OPINION* page.

Every week, a different intellectual writes a *FOCUS* on a pertinent issue!

One Benefit of Being a Backward Country:

NO Y2K DISASTER EXPECTED IN YEMEN!



By: Walid Al-Saqqaf
Computer Engineer, Yemen Times Webmaster.

ating when saying that millions of lines of code had been written based on this wrong date storage method. Now all these lines are subject to malfunctioning. We need to find a way out of an expected disaster before it is too late, i.e., before we move on to the new millennium.

Now that it is clear how a year would be stored with two digits, how will the computer store the year 2000? Computers update the year by adding 1 to the number consisting of the two digits, and place 19 next to them. For example, in the last case of update from 1998 to 1999, it has added 1 to 98 to become 99, and 19 was attached to it to become 1999.

Applying the same to 1999, the computer will add 1 to 99 and will result in 100. But because it can only store two digits, it will store the two rightmost digits 00, and will attach 19 to them to become 1900. In other words, computers will think that we are 100 years in the past!

The problem, therefore, is how to make computers understand that we are in fact in 2000, and not in 1900? This is exactly why the year 2000 or Y2K is a problem. Some people think that this problem only exists in computers - with monitors and keyboards - alone. However, the unfortunate truth is that this mechanism - using two digits to store years - is used in hardware and software alike. Millions of chips worldwide use this mechanism to store dates. Videos, TVs, digital clocks, and similar electrical and electronic equipment, which display dates, if not fixed, will miscalculate the date starting on the first of January 2000. Factories, companies, airports, banks, and virtually every establishment using electronic equipment which store dates would probably have this problem in its hardware or

software, or both. From nuclear plants to small electronic watches, they all have the Y2K problem hiding itself until what they call "Doomsday" - January the first, 2000 - comes.

You might have heard the term "Y2K compliant". Well, what a Y2K compliant system means is that it is immune to breakdowns or malfunctioning when moving to the year 2000. Companies producing electronic goods and software worldwide are taking this seriously, and are now producing 100% Y2K compliant products.

Among all sectors, the banking sector is expected to be - directly and indirectly - the most severely exposed to the millennium bug. To explain why, imagine a bank having more than 500 computers. The clock has just struck 00:00 on new year's eve. It is January 1st, 2000. The first thing computers would do is think that it is Monday Jan. 1st 1900 instead of Saturday Jan. 1st 2000. For a bank, date is very important, and almost all its transactions are date-dependent. If computers start using 1900 instead of 2000, many things could go wrong. Imagine what happens to interest on deposits or loans. Some accounts may be deleted, taxes may be miscalculated, and in the worst case, the system may go down and refuse to work. This would in fact be a disaster for people wishing to withdraw money from their accounts.

Some analysts predict that the actual disaster that will occur to the banking system may not be the Y2K itself, but it might be the fear it will generate among bank customers. In spite of banks' continuous guarantees and words of assurances that their customers' accounts will be secure, still people may panic and continue to worry about their money as a result of the Y2K problem. This would probably drive them to

withdraw lots of their money (if not all of it). As a matter of fact, many organizations and experts have already warned depositors of the possible breakdown of banking systems and urged them to keep money in hand as a precaution. Well, if large quantities of money are drawn out of a bank, it will definitely face shortages and even go bankrupt. Consequently, other account owners will probably not be able to withdraw money from their accounts. In other words, even if 100% of the machines in the bank are 100% Y2K compliant, the possibility of a run on the banking system is quite high. Thus, banks may be the first victims of the Y2K.

Besides, because more money will be on hand - at homes, offices, etc. - the number of thefts and robberies that would take place in this period are expected to be comparatively high.

Other than banks' bankruptcy, there are many scenarios presented by analysts and scientists regarding what could happen on January 1st, 2000. They include a complete shutdown of airports, decrease of oil and gas production, failure in stock markets, breakdown in operations of thousands of companies leading to hundreds of thousands of employees being out of work, city blackouts because of electrical generator failures, breakdown of satellite systems leading to the malfunctioning of communication networks, etc. However, serious experts believe that extreme stories like aircraft falling out of the sky or elevators dropping to the ground floors can be dismissed.

The Situation in Yemen

"What a Pity" is what comes to my mind when investigating what is being done in Yemen to prevent a Y2K disaster. I talked to many banks, the national airline, insurance companies, and many commercial firms. Few people are concerned.

A typical answer from a banker when asked about what is being done to prepare for the year 2000, is: "We are certain that our bank will continue to develop as the world counts down for a new prosperous millennium". You get a feeling the question did not sink in. So I ask the question again, using a different phrase. "How will your system be operating on the 1st of January, 2000?" You

get, "It will be operating as good as ever! Like always!". Now, I am not joking, these bankers don't get it. Some bank managers do not know a thing about the Y2K. Some of them have openly said they did not even hear about, let alone try to fix it. One thought I was talking about a transaction!

Maybe they are right. This is the way it should be in Yemen.

Maybe I am out of place!

Maybe this is reasonable in some ways for a country where some bank branches actually do not even have a single computer installed!

Besides, all banks in Yemen - except the Arab Bank - do not have their branches linked to each other (through a permanent electronic networks). In this case, one might think "If everything is done manually, why panic?" Indeed, why panic!

That also explains why computer engineers in Yemen have no jobs! Trying to brush aside the problem by saying, "We do not use computers, so why worry about the Y2K?" might be okay for some sectors. However, did we ever think of the airport? Or the Central Bank of Yemen? Or the Telecommunication Corporation running all local phone networks in the country (PTC)?

To be fair, there are some organizations which are struggling to address this problem. These include some banks and companies which depend heavily on computers and which will therefore be facing dire consequences if their programs are not Y2K compliant by the year 2000.

As an example, I want to use the Arab Bank, which is one of the most efficient banks in Yemen in dealing with this issue. It has dealt with this problem quite smoothly and prepared its system on time. It even held a seminar on the problem, and invited governmental bodies and other banks to attend. But, as usual, attendance from the Yemeni side was disappointing. Then the bank sent questionnaires to be filled-in, but didn't receive most of them back. Besides the Arab Bank, Telyemen is also doing a good job regarding the Y2K.

However, even such hard-working organizations are still in their intermediate phase towards becoming %100 Y2K compliant.

None of them have totally tested their system. But at least, they are aware of it, and working on it. Coming to the Government of Yemen, it doesn't look like it is determined to do something about the Y2K, at least for now. It asked for and received some suggestions on how to fix the Y2K problem. These were submitted to some sectors, which in turn most probably put them aside. After all, in our government's view, this problem is a year away, and it would be a waste of money and effort trying to fix it this early because doing so seems to be too much long-term planning for our officials.

Therefore, in practice, nothing serious is being done. But then again, why worry? Our Government is barely able to manage things manually. Thus, Yemen will probably not be affected much by the Y2K. Being an underdeveloped country with a record low computer per person ratio, Yemen is expected to go out of this millennium healthy and clean with respect to Y2K problems. Yemen should not and will not worry about the Y2K because it does not depend on computerized systems. Indeed, how can you worry about something that could happen to a system, while you do not have that very system?

Let me push this a bit further. Yemenis on the street have no idea of the Y2K. It is hard enough making them understand what computers are because the majority have never SEEN one. Therefore, the answer to a stupid question about Y2K is: "So what?". "What does this have to do with me?". "I don't care!"

At last, I want to finish with this story. As one urban slick told me, "It is God's blessing that we are background. That means we do not have to worry about complicated things like this." Yemen will land on a safe shore whether it is the year 2000 or 3000.

Wouldn't it be fun watching advanced countries drowning in the Y2K, while we Yemenis safely and merrily go about our qat chews? Given our economic burdens and daily hardships, we have all the right in the world not to worry about anything, let alone something as complicated as the Y2K. After all, here in Yemen, we all are busy trying to meet the bigger and most important challenge: *STAYING ALIVE!*

NOTICE TO ALL BRITISH RESIDENTS IN YEMEN

The British Embassy requests that all British nationals resident in Yemen confirm their registration with the Embassy or if they have not registered please do so immediately.

The British Embassy, in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, regularly updates Travel Advice for British nationals intending to travel to Yemen and for British nationals resident in Yemen. This advice is available at the Embassy or can be faxed to you and it is on the FCO Web Site:
<http://www.fco.gov.uk>



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أفراح آل السقاف

نتقدم بأعطر التهاني والتبريكات
للشباب مروان علوي السقاف

بمناسبة عقد قرانه الميمون
وبانتظار الزفاف قريباً باذن الله

وأدام الله السرور

المهنؤون :

د.عبدالعزیز السقاف

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عماد وبسام احمد السقاف

وليد عبدالله السقاف ورشيد علي السقاف

وجميع الأهل والأقارب

Medical & Pharmaceutical Products: CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

1. Brief History of Medical & Pharmaceutical Trade:

Since the British colonial system started in Aden, on January 19th, 1839, trade between most of the Yemeni hinterland and the United Kingdom started and grew. First, under the East India Company and later through a multiple of channels, exports from London and Cardiff to Yemeni coastal territories increased in all fields of business, especially medical and pharmaceutical products. The British encouraged their medical and pharmaceutical companies, as sole agents and/or distributors, to spread medical and pharmaceutical technologies into Arabia through their base of Aden. Quickly, a profitable business flourished. By the mid-20th century, relations between the Britain and the Crown Colony of Aden blossomed. The marketing of pharmaceutical products was organized according to British Medical standards and Boards, thus giving Aden a reputable place. Many local traders and companies started to handle the businesses since the 1940's within the colonial system as general distributors and agents. These include the Orient Pharmacy, A. Besse International Group, and Al-Shifa'a Store, etc.

The Reign of the Black Market:

With the departure of the British system, and given that it was not replaced with any system - let alone a better one, pharmaceutical services began to face a serious problem. The lack of controls and adequate supervision quickly brought in black markets in which quality was no longer subject to any check. The phenomenon of black markets continued to grow during Republican Yemen, and even more so since the reunification of Yemen. All values and standards were eroded as illegal business deals were concluded. Corruption quickly made its mark on the business, and continues to strangle-hold this sector. One of the most common features of black markets is smuggling in of expired or sub-standard goods, over-pricing, and bad storage facilities. Often, these lawbreakers avoid the payment of any taxes and other dues.

Smugglers usually bring products across borders, without the knowledge of relevant authorities. In other words, their products might threaten the health of users. Often, senior power centers, or fat cats - such as senior bureaucrats, tribal sheikhs, and high-ranking security and military officers - are implicated in the business. They accept bribes in return for which they provide cover and facilitate the crime.

In the import of pharmaceuticals, observers estimate that more than half of the business volume is carried out through smuggling. This puts the nation at risk because the drugs are sub-standard. It also deprives the state from revenue from customs and taxes.

Legal Markets:

The laws of the Republic of Yemen provide equal

chances to all citizens dealing in medical, pharmaceutical, and general trade. Under the policy of full and open competition, people engage in the business of their choice.

After May 22nd, 1990, a new system was introduced by republican decrees, which are based on decisions made by the Ministry of Public Health and the Supreme Board for Drugs & Medical Appliances. Four years later, in 1994, the government issued a guideline called the Yemen Drugs Index. This is a medical and pharmaceutical registration for almost all foreign, Arab and local medical goods legalized for importation and sale in Yemen. The guideline offers the following ATC classifications under which all medical goods are imported.

1. Alimentary Tract and Metabolism.
2. Blood and Blood-forming Organs.
3. Cardiovascular System.
4. Dermatologicals.
5. Genito-urinary System and Sex Hormones.
6. Systematic Hormonal Preparations, excluding Sex Hormones.
7. General Anti-infectives, Systematic.
8. Anti-Neo-Plastic & Immunosuppressive Drugs.
9. Musculo-Skeletal System.
10. Central Nervous System.
11. Anti Parasitic Products.
12. Respiratory System
13. Sensory Organs.
14. Various other organs
15. Medical Appliances

Many pharmacists think that, the registered drugs are not sufficient in number, although the number had reached over 12,900 items licensed to be imported until January 1st, 1999, in the Republic of Yemen. Half of the items registered are circulated and available in stock markets.

The Yemen National Drug Company (YEDCO) produces 55 kinds of medicines to meet the needs of the local society with proper-quality treatment and less cost. The number of foreign and Arab manufacturing firms exporting medicine to the Yemeni market is around 320 companies. Yemeni agents and sole distributors are more or less 100 local merchandising firms specialized in importing pharmaceuticals, perfumes, cosmetics and sanitary products. Generic names used in Yemen markets might reach 750, while trade names reached roughly 3200. The United States and Europe provide Yemen with most of its high-quality products and services, while other products come from India, Egypt, and other countries.

Producing Drugs:

Usually, pharmaceutical products gain ground in countries which become famous for chemical laboratory testing facilities and capabilities. The two activities feed on each other and complement each other. It is nearly impossible for backward societies to make a real presence in this field because of the scientific knowledge and skills required. Of course, it is possible to import - a turn-key basis - plants to produce drugs and other medical needs. But that is limited to packaging, mixing and filling of ready-made or nearly ready-made products.

In some cases, some products can be produced under license. This requires continued surveillance and control by the company which holds the trade mark.

In the Republic of Yemen, it is possible to meet up to 20% of local consumption through local manufacture, while the bulk of the requirement will have to be imported.

Distribution of drugs, like any other goods, depend on effective advertisements

Mass Media is a direct and efficient way to make consumers aware of any product. Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines play a great role in consumers' tastes and orientation. Most people spend their time watching or reading special programs, which change public opinion. Other forms of advertisement use



flyers, posters, placards, and even prizes.

Advertisement use exciting and stimulating methods to attract people to a certain behavior. Hence, some medicines are sold more than others, not because they are superior, though they could be, but because of a larger advertising budget.

Intangible Assets:

Usually, intangible assets affect the performance and movement of imported medical and pharmaceutical goods. The most important is the reputation of a company and its products, and the perception of users. As people usually spend a lot of their income on medical needs, many marketing agencies pay enormous attention to the image of the products they sell. Factors affecting the image of a product include:

1. Trade Marks & Patents:

Manufacturers are quite keen on the trade marks and patents of their products. Sometimes, goods are more known by such symbols than by the chemical components. Manufacturers rarely give exclusive rights to produce and sell goods of their products. Such rights are granted on the basis of lengthy legal arrangements.

2. Copyrights:

The exclusive right to publish and sell a literary, artistic, or musical composition is granted by a copyright. Copyrights are issued by the U.S. government and extended for 50 years beyond the concerned person's death.

3. Goodwill:

In business, goodwill refers to an intangible asset of a business that is created from such favorable factors as location, product quality, reputation, and managerial skill. Goodwill allows a business to earn a rate of return on its investment that is often in excess of the normal rate for other firms in the same business.

Policy Measures:

Today, the Republic of Yemen needs to take some visible steps in streamlining this sector. The following steps seem appropriate:

1. Ministerial Quality Control:

The government in general, and the Ministry of Health in particular, should approve certain standards for medical products. Though pricing should be left to the market, quality and standards must be guided by certain controls.

2. Prescription Supervision:

Many harmful drugs are sold over the counter. The authorities have to control the dispensing of drugs to the public. All kinds of medical/pharmaceutical products should be obtained from pharmacies by medical prescriptions only.

Of course, this does not apply to ordinary medical products such as Febs, Tussils, Strepsils, Lomitol, etc.

3. Encouraging Competition:

Given that some companies achieve breakthroughs and advanced research results earlier than others, the industry is subject to bottlenecks in competition leading to monopolies or at least oligopolies. It is

up to the authorities to smooth this out by encouraging more fair and even competition.

The Supreme Board for Drugs & Medical Appliances in Yemen has the role of ensuring adequate supplies of medical needs.

4. New Projects in Medical & Pharmaceutical Industries:

The medical industry in Yemen is basically limited to YEDCO. Although there are giant importers, they have not ventured into production. I spoke with one key businessman and I barely put the question when he gushed out complaints about corruption and government mismanagement. "Most officials want to rob you by proposing to join as partners simply because they would allow you to proceed with it."

This explains why many would-be investors have refrained from investing.

5. Low Taxation, Tariffs & Customs on Medical and Pharmaceutical Products:

Medical and pharmaceutical products are essential goods. Hence, the Yemeni government has decided to levy no/low taxes, tariffs, and customs duty on them. This policy takes into account the low income of the Yemeni society and the draconian health needs in the country.

6. Government Health Facilities:

Government health facilities are in poor shape. It was a wise decision to empower the private sector to come in and provide the service. Allocations by the government are less than 4% of the budget. This means health is not a high priority, which is puzzling given the needs of society.

Conclusion:

The medical and pharmaceutical sector badly needs better management based on clear policy objectives and priorities. Most of the world gives health-related issues top priority because the growth of any nation depends directly on a healthy and knowledgeable population.

Yemen has a lot of social problems, which cannot be solved easily. Scarcity of resources does not make the job easy. But better management of existing resources will go a long way in helping alleviate the current difficulties.

The Republic can mobilize support from regional and international organizations as well as bilateral donors. In addition, Yemen needs to mobilize the private sector, which can be a source for large investments.

I am optimistic regarding the possibilities for the future. They say, "Necessity is the mother of invention." As we approach the next millennium, we can improve our medical service delivery system. It is not just a matter of resources, it is a matter of efficiency of the system.

By: Ghassan Al-Ahdal,
Yemen Times



German Embassy
Language Courses

DEUTSCH? KEIN PROBLEM!

Welcome to our new term!

The term begins on the 7th of February
and lasts until the 17th of March 1999.

The course will be held at the British Council,
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The duration of the course is six weeks:
8 hours per week (= 48h).

Courses are for beginners and intermediates.
Certificates will be issued upon successful completion

Courses will be taught by teachers
who are experienced, qualified and native speakers.

Fees are US\$100 per term.

Registration will commence on the 30th of January
until the 3rd of February at the British Council
during 16:00 - 18:00.

For information, please call:
244 121 or 413 177; or fax: 244 120

HIV/AIDS Patients: Facing Slow Death Alone

Introduction:

An AIDS patient's medical needs cost about US\$ 100,000 to 150,000 a year. That does not include requirements of food, clothes, accommodation or specialized health services. This has made the disease one of the costliest in human history.

This is a sad story, but the predicament of aids patients in Yemen is a story that makes you cry. Most officials would rather not know about the horrible conditions of Yemen's AIDS patients. That is one of the reasons most cases are not reported.

Even those cases that are reported do not receive proper care. The responsible authorities do not offer AIDS patients any facilities, accommodation, medical care, or any help at all. What makes matters worse is people's ignorance. People are scared of AIDS patients because they think the disease is contagious. That is why patients are abandoned by their families and friends. Your heart becomes sick when you see their condition. "They deserve it. It is a worthy punishment." That is what many relatives and friends say in order to cover up for their guilt. Some even tell you it is God's punishment for loose sexual behavior. Their logic is based on the dictum: "The patients brought slow death and social disgrace upon themselves by their deeds."

But, we are talking about human beings. Even if they got AIDS through extra-marital sex, these people continue to have some rights. We can't abandon them as they face slow death.

Mr. A. Th, 34, is an AIDS patient. He is from Shameer, Taiz. His father died when he was 12 years old yet. He left the country when he was still 13 years old to Saudi Arabia where he worked in different jobs (waiter, worker, cashier, etc.) for 22 years. He did not receive any formal schooling. He is married and has 4 children. His family lives in Shameer while he lives in Sanaa.

During my investigation of the condition of AIDS victims, I met him. He agreed to talk to me on the record. Excerpts:

Q: When and How did you discover that you are infected with AIDS?

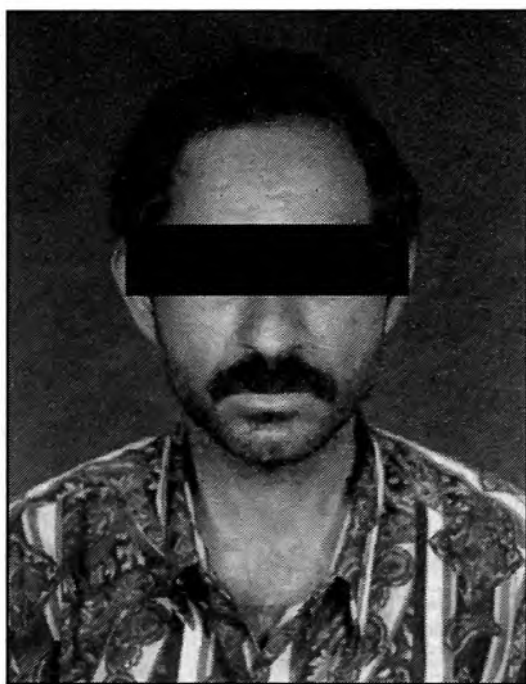
A: Before one year, when I was working in Saudi Arabia, I applied for a job in a factory. I had to take a thorough medical check up. Blood tests indicated that I am infected with AIDS. I did not know, then, what this disease was. The doctors told me it can't be cured. I was expelled to Yemen.

Q: Coming back home, what did you find?

A: All my family members and friends refused to meet me or to let me live with them. I saw loathing in their eyes. I left my family and decided to live in Sanaa alone.

Q: Where and with whom do you live?

A: I live in a motel with some people. They don't know I am infected. I don't have a particular work, but I sell some shirts on the streets. I don't earn enough money even to cover the bare necessities of life, but there are some people who give me money



from time to time. I have my own clothing and things. I use my own shaving machine. I don't want to mix with people because I don't want others to be infected.

Q: How did you get the disease?

A: When I was in Saudi Arabia, I had sex with women, boys and men from different nationalities (Ethiopians, Somalis, and Saudis).

Q: How do you spend your time on a daily basis?

A: I don't smoke or chew qat. I spend my time with my mates in the motel. I eat with them, but most of the time, I stay alone.

Q: Are you on any treatment at the moment?

A: No.

Q: Is there something you long for?

A: I wish I could visit with my children.

Q: Anything you want to add?

A: People like me need help. There is none in Yemen at this time.

This was the interview I made with him. In every word he said, I felt sorrow and pain. This man still believes that authorities can help him. He has no other alternative but to wait for help until he dies. He is withering away.

I appeal to national and international organizations if they can do something for HIV/AIDS patients in Yemen.

By: Nadwa Al-Dawsari, Yemen Times

Technical Innovations for Yemen Solar Energy Cars

Solar Cars have been a goal to make for a long time. The idea behind the solar energy cars is converting the solar radiation into electrical energy. The solar radiation is changed into electrical energy through photovoltaic cells. The electrical batteries provide a constant current while the extra energy is sorted in the batteries, to be used after dark, or when the sunshine is not strong enough to be converted into electrical energy. The electrical current obtained is used to drive an appropriate engine, which keeps the car moving. Currently, the batteries are being made better so that they can go for a longer distance and faster. Actually, a

batteries will enable the same amount of energy to move the same car a longer distance and with a higher speed. Lighter cars reduce the overall car weight. The design of these solar energy cars stresses highly efficient engines, photovoltaic cells and batteries, low resistance body and structure to aerodynamics, thin tires to minimize the friction with the road, simple control instruments and lightweight.

Sooner or later the solar energy cars will be on our roads. The Arab world is the richest region in the whole world in solar energy. The Middle East will be full of solar energy cars be the beginning of the twenty first

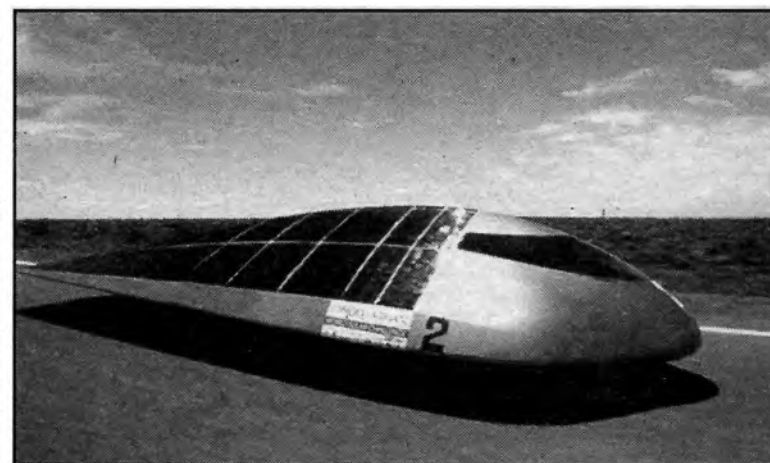
Unfortunately, nothing has been made to promote, develop and exploit this free type of renewable clean energy. We are stupidly waiting for the solar energy cars and other equipment to be imported from the United States, Europe, Australia, Korea or Japan.

Sunrayce is a car race of solar energy cars. All American solar car designers and producers are supported and allowed to participate to prove the efficiency of their cars on the road. Sunrayce'95 put Indiana State University's solar car through the ultimate test - is it safe in the event of an accident? This summer's 1,150-mile (2,070 km)

race from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Golden, Colorado, turned away for race route just 30 miles (54 km) from the finish line. While traveling at a speed of 45 mph (72 km), the car fishtailed into a guardrail when its rear tire failed. Nevertheless, the Indiana State University finished the nine-day race in 19th place out of a field of 38. Massachusetts Institute of Technology won with an average speed of 37.23 mph (60 km). The University of Minnesota finished second, and California Polytechnic Institute, Pomona, placed third. Indiana State University was in 15th



series of batteries are usually used, these are recharged to store the electrical energy gained during the day to be used at night. These solar energy cars are operated free of charge. No gasoline or other fuel is needed and consequently, no pollution of hydrocarbons, lead compounds, carbon dioxide, sulfur oxides or nitrogen oxides are emitted in the air. Actually, a solar energy car is an electric car with an onboard electric power source. Its drawbacks are those of electric cars; low maximum speed of 110 kilometers per hour and a limited range of 240 kilometers. Progress in rechargeable battery technology will produce lighter and more efficient batteries that will increase the currently limited range of kilometers. The lighter



century. A few experimental solar cars are actually running on the roads these days. Yemen is one of those countries in which the solar energy can be tapped smoothly and needed badly.

place at the time of the accident. Yemen is advised to support solar energy research.

Future Industries Consultants, Sana'a

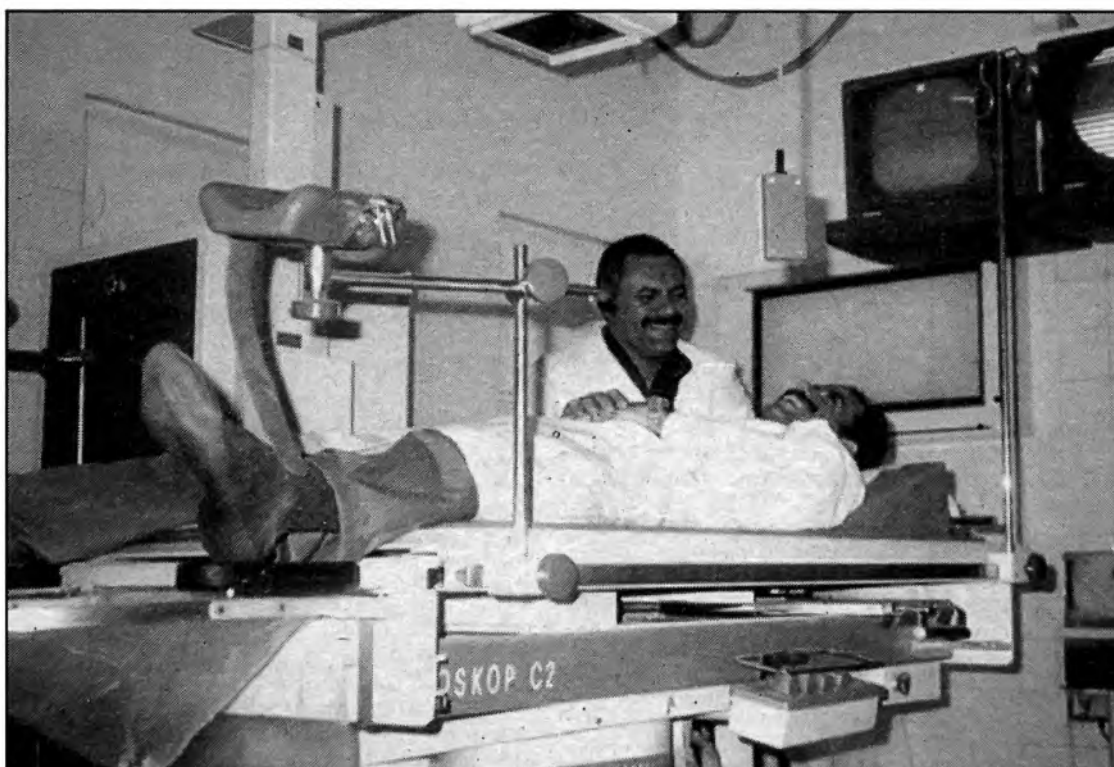
Kidney Problems in Yemen

Hospital admission records show that patients with kidney-related diseases constitute about 4% of the total. I have to hasten to caution against taking such statistics as hard and fixed, though the number does give an indication.

We do know however that there are many cases of renal failures, resulting in deaths. There is also hypertension due to renal diseases, and many cases of kidney stones. Renal failure, necessitating either kidney transplant or dialysis in a special center is needed for about 6000 patients per year.

Kidney stones is a real problem. This disease is well-known to every Yemeni because all of them have seen the very painful symptoms of this illness from close relatives or friends. It is agonizing. It is one of the oldest diseases known to man. Kidney stones have been found in Egyptian mummies of about 7000 years ago.

In Western countries and in the more affluent part of the world, stones are becoming rare. One finds them in fact only in older persons, mainly males, with an obstructed outflow of urine such as in prostate enlargement. The Arabian Peninsula is one of the areas where urinary stones are still a common problem. In Dhamar hospital I carried out a small research for two years. We found that the disease mainly attacks boys (6 times more boys than girls). It was amazing to find that 55% of the stones occurred under the age of 10 years. While in the West most of the stones are found in



he kidneys, in Dhamar we found 60% of the stones in the bladder.

The media in Yemen always stress the fact that health care in Yemen is bad and deteriorating. I have been working in Yemen for the last 14 years and I am happy to say that this is not true. Of course, I have to admit that with a per capita budget for health of 3 dollars per year, miracles should not be expected. But for example in the field of urology there are now two crushing machines (ESWL) and there is a specialist who can perform percutaneous removal of stones.

Yemeni urologists have performed kidney transplantation. Dialysis is available in most parts of the country, but of course the specialists face many problems with regard to maintenance and supplies. Many doctors and directors of hospitals including the minister of Public Health are intent to improve the health care in this country.

In February 1999, to be exact during February 16-18, the Disease Charitable Society together with the National Kidney Foundation, are organizing the first Yemeni Nephrology Meeting, which aims at improving the situation for patients with kidney problems. It will promote a better understanding of the kidney problem in Yemen, provide doctors with better knowledge about diagnosis, treatment and prevention of kidney diseases, and create awareness amongst the population on this issue.

I would like to urge all Yemen Times readers, businessmen, the pharmaceutical industry, politicians and the expatriate community to contribute financially to make this gathering a success.

Dr. J. Veerman

Happy Eid

When the new moon is expected to appear, people go out to mosques and parks in order to have a glimpse of it. When a definite sighting is made, Eid Al-Fitr is declared, and children happily go out singing in the streets. It is easy to see happiness in children's eyes when the are taken by their parents to buy clothes and toys for the Eid. Every one of us has special fond memories about Eid, not only about buying new clothes, but also about waiting for the first day of Eid to wear these clothes. It is as if an intimate meeting will take place between the children and their new clothes. Some of us

his voice coming from deep within his soul and that he has an unlimited energy of light and ability to communicate with God. God's wisdom manifests itself not only in presenting the power of Muslims in their congregation, but also in creating the feeling that a person acquires more strength of conscience by being beside another Muslim praying to god. A Muslim person may not even know the name of the other Muslim beside him or her, but knows that he or she is also honestly and spontaneously praying to God and calling Allahu Akbar. This great meeting of Muslims



remember how he or she used to open his cupboard to look at these beautiful new things. They are eager to wear these clothes and appear in front of their friends and relatives. Memory also holds the most beautiful moments of waiting for the happiness of wearing the new clothes which fades a few hours after taking them off. So the Eid starts before its date by a short time. The Eid traditions are almost the same on the public and personal levels. In all nights of the Eid, people stay up late until the early hours of the following day. In all Islamic areas, everything starts at the dawn of the first Eid day. Children and adults go to the mosque to the Eid prayers. Everybody comes out of the mosque before sunrise to exchange the traditional greetings and felicitations - "kul aam wa antum bikhair" or many happy returns. At the mosque, calls of Allahu Akbar or God is great rise to heaven. The faithful would feel

during the first few hours of the Eid is a major celebration of this sacred occasion. These rituals have been known since the time of the Prophet Mohammed (P) when they were characterized by simplicity and solemnity, and were done in a quiet manner. With the passage of time, however, these rituals acquired a lot of variety and color. Religious occasions during the time of the

Abbasyd dynasty saw many social features. Men in the Caliph's entourage stayed with him throughout the night of the Eid until dawn broke. They then went to the mosque headed by the Caliph riding on a white horse and surrounded by his soldiers. People chanted in the street praising God and the Caliph who prayed in the mosque in front of other men and later delivered the Eid sermon. Upon the return of the Caliph's procession to the palace, banquets are held and poets recited their poems eulogizing the Caliph.

The first hours of the first morning of eid are similar in all Muslim towns and cities. After the dawn prayers and the exchange of felicitations, people start doing their own special traditions which differ from one country to another. Many people visit their relatives and friends to exchange greetings. Some people nowadays use the telephone for this purpose. Eid is truly a happy

occasion for all Muslims. For this reason new habits have appeared in many Muslim societies. Children in particular engage in many festive activities. The first thing a child looks forwards to is the "Eidia" or the gift money given by the child's senior relatives. The amount of money given varies according to the seniority and closeness of that relative. This Eidia is seen as a huge fortune by the little children who use it to buy sweets or go to parks and fun fares.

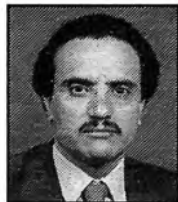
Thus, Eid is an opportunity of children to become grownups for a short period of time. They start to behave as if they are an economic establishment. They save their money and divide the expenditure over the Eid days. It is very joyful to see children in their bright colored clothes playing in parks and enjoying themselves.

There is no doubt that Eid belongs to children immediately after its early hours. Some children accompany their parents, while, others prefer to be independent and go together with their friends to the place they themselves choose. So Eid is a good opportunity for a little child to feel his or her independence for the first time. Some of us may remember those moments when we felt that we didn't want to ask the older people for Eidia because we felt that we had become adults and were far removed from the world of childhood.

During the last few years, new habits have entered our lives that became gradually connected with Eid. Radio, TV, and now satellite TV are competing with each other to bring happiness to the people during Eid. Various programs, happy songs, comedy plays, films and other activities are presented during Eid.

As long as people stay at home then Eid is connected with food. Each Eid has its own special types of food. Eid is celebrated by the artists and ordinary people alike who find a lot of opportunity to express themselves. The main Eid celebrations, though, are performing its religious rituals when people are united by the words "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet". These awe-inspiring words arouse feelings of reverence among the faithful. The hearts of all Muslim people look forward to the next Ramadhan.

By **Ismail Al-Ghairy**



HWA: Back on Track

There is an old Arabic saying which goes like this: "If you stand your ground firmly and long enough, you can withstand any pressure."

The Hadharem Welfare Association (HWA), one of the country's most active NGOs during the mid-1990s and earlier, was finally back on track last week. On January 20th, 1999, the general assembly of the NGO - all the Saqqafs of Hugarriah and their neighbors - held an important meeting to review its past record, take stock of its activities, elect a new board of directors and a financial supervisory committee, and agree on a 3-year plan of action.

The HWA, which was the target of open action by the state during 1995/96, was subjected to all kinds of harassment, including an attempt to dismantle its legally elected board of directors. The NGO which simply refused to be politicized or be used to advance the political agenda of the ruling party, the People's General Congress, was supposed to serve as an example of any NGO that refuses "to see light" according to the PGC politicians.

The prime minister at the time ordered the replacement of the elected board by hand-picked friends. He also ordered the transfer of control and management of the Women's Development Center to another NGO.

When neither order was implemented because the general assembly - read the people of the region - refused to obey illegal orders, an army of 400 soldiers and officers occupied the Hadharem region. After one week, and continued refusal by the people to budge, the army was removed. Then recently, there was more trouble. Five months ago, the

guild of NGO which does not toe the line of the rulers. The HWA is not anti-PGC. It is, in fact, politically neutral. However, it refuses to be used by any particular political party. On January 20th, in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the leading political parties of Yemen (PGC, Islah, YSP, and Nas-serites), as well as regional com-



Ministry of Social Affairs - using a dozen locals from the region - oversaw the establishment of a rival NGO in the same region to undermine and/or replace the HWA. Again, the people refused to work with this new NGO. The authorities have perfected the art of breeding splinter political parties, unions, guilds, NGOs, and other organizations, to weaken a political party, union,

community elders. the HWA held an important convention in which the NGO's future course was charted.

The HWA decided to pursue the construction of two new schools - both for girls, a new technical/vocational center for boys, and three feeder roads.

It also decided to consolidate the work of the Women's Development Center, the Hadharem Drinking Water Project, the Shoura Health Clinic, and the large boys' school.

The NGO also decided to look into two sectors that will generate income in the region. These are the 'fruit-tree planting project, which is going to be implemented hand in hand with the small dam project, and the animal husbandry project. The objective of both projects is to increase the local output of fruits and domesticated animals.

By: **Bassam A. Al-Saqqaf, Yemen Times.**



HWA Elected Bodies:

A. Board of Directors:

- 1- Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf: Chairman and CEO;
- 2- Talal Abdul-Hadi Al-Saqqaf: Secretary-General;
- 3- Adnan Fadhle Al-Saqqaf: Financial Director;
- 4- Abdul-Wahid Ali Al-Saqqaf: Director of Projects;
- 5- Abdul-Jabar A/Moen Al-Saqqaf: Director - Village Branch;
- 6- Tawfeek A/Warith Al-Saqqaf: Director - Aden branch;
- 7- Abdul-Rahim Saeed Al-Saqqaf: Director - Taiz Branch;
- 8- Fayez Noureldeen Al-Saqqaf: Director - Sanaa Branch;
- 9- Walid Abdullah Al-Saqqaf: Director, PR & Follow-up.

B. Financial Supervisory Committee:

1. Ali Abdul-Hadi Al-Saqqaf: Chairman;
2. Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf: Rapporteur;
3. Nayef Noureldeen: Member.

Bringing The Children of the World Together

Would you please introduce yourself?

My name is Alan Patterson, I am the principal of a large Co-Educational independent, private school in Melbourne Australia, I have 1100 students age 5-18 years.

What is the idea of your coming to Yemen?

The idea of me, coming to Yemen to see if I could have an arrangement between my school in Australia called Mowbray College and a school somewhere in Yemen and we found a school in Jibla. We visited the school and talked to the headmaster, staff, and the local education supervisor and we promised to come back in one year to have a look on the idea of forming a relationship between the two schools. This is our second trip and it's about finalizing the project and we are planning to come back in October next year.

Why are you coming back?

We will come back in October next year with a party of fifteen students, we will live in Jibla, in the houses of the local people and they have agreed to that. We will also do some work in the school like some painting, repairs, build a garden and improve toilet facilities. We will be going to Australia to raise some money for these works.

What else does your project offer?

We also offer a travel scholarship to a student from Jibla, to come to my school in Australia for three months to learn English, we will try to find a family in Jibla to have one of my students stay with them too, and we help in International cultural programs.

Are there any other schools taking part in this program?

We are committed to nationalism, we belong to about 35 schools around the world called Round Square Conference(RSC), they are in five continents and each one of those schools must have a project each year in a foreign country. We have a very large International program and we have exchange students program with 40 countries around the world, and we send exchange students out to those 40 countries also.

Why Jibla?

When Penny was here last time, she liked Jibla and she met someone whose family she was helping, so we went to Jibla because she wanted to meet that man and his family again. While she was there I went into a school, I just walked into a school and introduced myself and said that I wanted to form a relationship between my school and a school in Yemen. You see we had to start somewhere so it was Jibla.

What are you trying to achieve through this project?

We help students from different countries to meet and make friends. Youths are the future and when they become the decision-makers this kind of project will help them to understand each other better and make a difference. This is what we believe in RSC.

Ms. Penny Smithis a tour guide who fell in love with Yemen in general and Jibla in particular. Because of the lovely people she met there she wanted to give this heavenly village something in return.

Are you part of the project?

No, Alan and I are friends for the last 45 years. Alan came with me on a tour and it was a perfect one. He could see that there was a good opportunity to develop and enhance the relations between the children of the two countries, people in Australia know nothing about Yemen and this kind of project helps in bridging the gap. I have a special relationship with Jibla and I could see that there were opportunities to help in a small way to put something back for all the pleasure that I have had.

Two of Mr. Alan's students accompanied him on this trip.



Alona is 17 years old, a 12th standard student who says, "I like Yemen and I would like to come back again, I would like to have Yemeni friends come over to visit my country".

Gery, a 16 year-old says, "Yemeni people are a lot different from the people in Australia, they are a lot more friendly and they will go out of their way to welcome you."

It was no surprise to us when we saw the enthusiasm of these two young Australian students, who had come all the way looking for friends and a genuine friendship. When we asked them how they felt about this project, they said, "We are quite sure it is going to work out in bringing us together"

By: **Dr. Salah Haddash**
Managing editor
Yemen Times.

Women & Politics in Yemen

There is much talk about empowerment of women among Yemeni politicians. The concept features visibly in the programs of all political parties. The reality, however, is something different.

At best, women have become a token which is displayed to make a good impression on local and international circles as the situation calls for. That is why almost all parties have brought on board to their top organs a few women.

Though politicians and political parties do not take women seriously as decision-makers, they do take them seriously as voters. The record shows that nearly 30% of total voters in the last parliamentary elections were women. That is why all parties have a section for mobilizing female votes. That is also why most party programs refer to women's rights and other similar issues.

But, while the men do not really take women seriously as partners in political decision-making, how do women view their role. It is sometimes said that women stand in the way of female empowerment than men because they have accepted the existing power-sharing formula. I have decided to talk to a select group of women about this matter. Here is what they said.

Social status: **married.**

Age: **29**

Job: **housewife**

Number of children: **5**

Area of origin: **Haraz**

Qualifications: **secondary school certificate**

We females are not much concerned with politics or anything related to it. It is normal, women are attracted to other objects which are well-known to all. I think that men are more concerned with politics, economy, and even sports. As far as I am concerned, I leave all these things for my husband, for he is infatuated with politics. My husband does not belong to any party, but, more often than not, he shares in the general elections.

I do not care for reading newspapers, local or foreign, since a married woman has a lot of chores

to follow up and if I have a spare time, I spend it in teaching my offspring. However, this did not prevent me from voting in one of the general elections. I voted for a person belonging to a certain party in return for a financial bonus.

Social status: **single**

Age: **27**

Job: **teacher**

Area of origin: **Ibb**

Qualifications: **Educational degree in Islamic Studies**

Really, we do not have enough information on political parties except that they only benefit themselves, with all due respect to the minority who really serve the society. I and my sisters have electoral cards but we do not cast our votes in each general elections because the ballot boxes are usually far away from our home. Reading newspapers is not my favorite hobby, however, I read non-partisan papers and magazines. I cast my vote once for a person from the People's General Conference because we knew him very well.

Social status: **married**

Age: **33**

Job: **housewife**

Number of children: **7**

Area of origin: **Sanaa**

Qualifications: **illiterate**

We truly love our country and are ready to die for it. If I were educated, I would have entered any political party to serve my country. I do not really know what a political party does, but I think that it works for the sake of the country. My husband is not a member of any party and we like to share in anything to benefit our country but we do not know how to do so.

I cannot read or write so I do not read the newspapers but my husband does out of curiosity, as a hobby or something else, I don't know. I have shared in the general elections many times but circumstances prevented me from casting my vote in all past general elections. I cast my vote for an independent nominee once and another time for a partisan nominee, out of my keenness to choose the

best man to serve our country.

Social status: **married**

Age: **36**

Job: **government employee**

Number of children: **6**

Area: **Aden**

Qualifications: **BA degree in English Language**



There are too many parties in our country which groups the good and the bad and we prefer maintaining a distance from them in certain things and keeping close in others. Frankly, we are always keen to keep away from politics and for that reason my husband is not a member of any party. I read many papers such as Al Thawra, Al Jumhoriya, Al Shoura, and others out of curiosity and to get acquainted with what is happening in the country. We shared in the elections and voted for a partisan candidate because he was a man who lived up to his word, a thing which he really proved afterwards.

Marital status: **Married**

Educational Qualifications: **University degree**

Occupation: **A government employee**

Children: **Two**

Our country enjoys good Democracy, which has given a good opportunity to many people specially women such as me to participate in the political life by joining Political Parties. Currently I am working in one of the government departments and I am a member of a political party (Congress). In the beginning I faced a lot of opposition from my family, but at the end they realized that it was a national duty. My husband encourages me and frankly speaking I have gained many things from the Party.

I am still with the Party and I will always be. Women are a very important factor in politics too and after seeing Yemeni women participating in the elections which is a very good sign, it shows that Democracy is for everyone man and woman, it was then when I decided to join politics. I read all kinds of newspapers it is not important if it belongs to a political party or independent institution.

By: **Ahlam Khwlany.**
Yemen Times.

Nations' Proverbs Unfair to Eve

Women are not lunar creatures or satanic beings as many in our country consider them. On the contrary, they are men's partners and mates on this

ample earth. It is disturbing to find people attribute human misery and suffering to Eve's daughters. They put all the blame for our problems on women all the time, forgetting that men could equally be blamed. In fact, human history is full of examples of major calamities which have been the result of men's mistakes. We cannot overlook the havoc and destruction because of men's unwise decisions. Millions and millions of people were trodden over by wars and holocausts, because of male decision-makers. However, this is not my point.

The experience of nations is often caught and summarized in their proverbs and sayings. We rely on proverbs to drive a point home, or to re-cap a position, or to support a viewpoint. In other words, we take proverbs as truths which we use to convince others, regardless of their possible inaccuracies or injustice. In short, proverbs have come to stand for proper conduct, and they regulate our attitudes and behavior.

Unfortunately for women, they are at the center of many proverbs. They portray them sometimes as angels, but more often as evil. Even more unfortunately, such proverbial injustice prevails in most languages, confirming that the proverbs and sayings were coined by men and male dominated societies and experiences. Needless to say there are proverbs which praise and elevate women in all societies, but the

majority are negative to women.

The following English proverbs tell the bias:

"Women are the devil's net."

"Women are necessary evils."

"Many women and evil are thru degrees."

"Devil is dead when there is a wife"

"No woman, no cry."

"An ass would climb a ladder,

if you find wisdom in women."

"A woman and a cherry are painted for their own harm."

"Groaning horse and groaning wife."

"Trust not a woman when she weeps."

"Women and music should never be dated."

"Women are as wavering as the wind."

"Women naturally deceive, weep and spin."

"A woman is a weather cock."

"Women are the root of all evil."

There are many German contributions, like:

"A widow is an easily-ridden low wall."

"A woman is man's evil."

The French ones include the following:

"Woman is like roasted meat;

the more you beat, the softer it will be."

"A woman is a must mischief"

But the real bad ones come from the East. Many proverbs from China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and other societies almost outright demean women. They are given a low esteem and status. Of course, there are many positive proverbs, but I am talking here about the bad ones.

In the Arabic language, women-related proverbs abound, and there are quite a few bad ones. Let me select some really negative ones, as follows:

"A woman is like a scorpion.

She is not smiling when she shows her teeth."

"A woman is like a snake."

"Never abandon your secret with a woman."

"A woman is an evil you can't live without."
"Women are deficient in mind and faith."

Really, now! Those are unfair accusations of women.

When Islam came to the bedouin Arabs, a millennium and a half ago, society was visibly anti-women. The religion, through many teachings and re-structuring of the rights and relations between men and women, pushed to soften the negative attitude, if not to fully reverse it. This is clear from many verses in the Quran. It also can be seen from sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Here are examples:

"Remember. I leave with you in this fareswell sermon a heavy duty and responsibility towards women. I enjoin you to treat them fairly."

"Be kind to women, for they are fragile."

"The best among you are those who are the best to their women."

"Heaven is under the feet of mothers."

"Contentment of parents leads to God's."

Eventually, human life is, of course, impossible, without women. Even the most zealot of men realize that the tender sweethearts are our partners. The reason we have a disproportionate share of bad sayings on women is that the human civilization has really been a man's civilization, for the major part. In other words, men coined most of these proverbs. The question that remains is: "Can we make a conscious effort to correct the imbalance?"

By: **Habeeb Ibrahim,**
Member of International
Translators Federation.



An Obituary for Folk Poet Shaif al-Khaledi

News of great men travels. It was therefore no surprise to me that, while reading my email this week, I should learn of the death on December 31 of Yemeni folk poet Shayf al-Khaledi. But email is an unsympathetic medium, and hardly able to translate for me the loss and grief that hundreds of thousands of Yemenis -- from shepherds in the most remote valleys of Lahej and Abyan to multi-millionaires in Jeddah, Paris, and New York -- are feeling this month. Many English-speakers will not be familiar with the life and work of this extraordinary man. A brief

experiences for al-Khaledi that shaped and sharpened his ideas about Yemen and its people. As the national projects got underway in the PDRY and YAR respectively, al-Khaledi would become a national poet par excellence. By drawing from a rich tradition of symbolic expression that was profoundly moral and spiritual in outlook, he used his poems consistently to articulate national objectives from the perspective of the working majority: farmers, mechanics, small store-owners, taxi-cab drivers, as well as the makers and breakers of local politics. His language was

teners. While he had begun to use cassettes as early as the mid fifties, by the mid 1990s his poems were being distributed in huge quantities throughout Yemen as well as the Gulf and abroad. His poems have been sung especially by Yafi'i musicians and are set to the 'oud (the well-known Middle Eastern lute) and sometimes a variety of drums, flutes and tambourines. But emphasis is given less to the music as much as his words. These words became especially relevant to listeners throughout Yemen when, thanks to the cassette, he was able to use poetic exchanges in order to establish

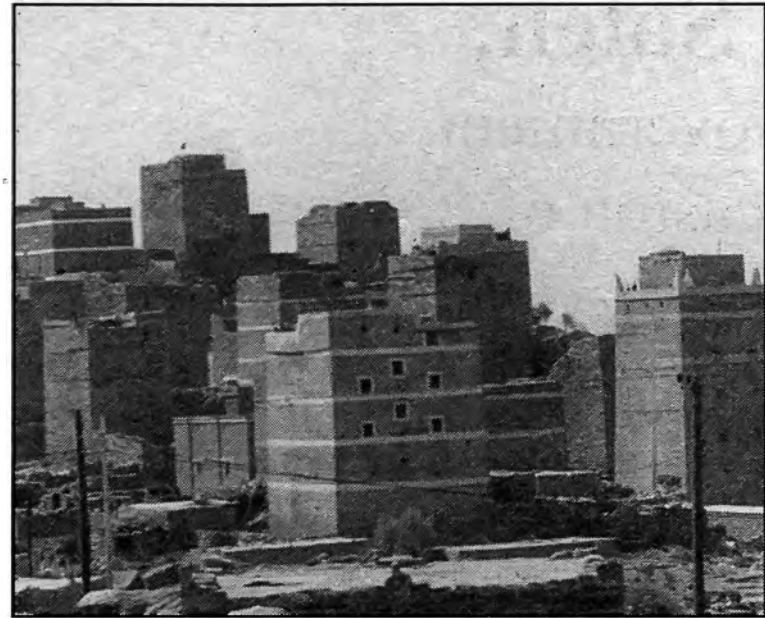
a national dialogue with poets from many different regions throughout Yemen.

While exchanges over the course of more than twenty years were sometimes hot and often political, he adhered to the tradition of mutual respect for other poets that has long marked the practice of poetry in Yemen and, might I add, the spirit of democracy that is so fundamental to the outlook of many Yemeni in both rural and urban areas. Cassettes enabled the extension of a lively genre of poetry that has long existed but which, through al-Khaledi's leadership, developed a particularly popular orientation in recent years.

The remarkable thing about al-Khaledi was how extremely personable he was. Modest

about his accomplishments, he was always quick to give credit to others, to sit with diverse groups of people and to encourage younger poets at every opportunity. His sociability and open-mindedness made my task all the easier. Working as an anthropologist for several years in Yemen, I was able to collect and translate many of his poems and complete a detailed history of his life just six months before he died. I remember my first impression of him at the local market in Lab'us, near his village in Yafi'a, where he paced around with a plastic sack in hand, bought the day's groceries and supplies, chatted with others and swapped news as if the boundaries of the world were just over the hill. As I quickly discovered, the parochial image was deceiving. Everywhere he went in Yafi'a and Aden people greeted him; delegations visiting from as far as Hadramawt, Sana'a and Ma'rib regularly sought him out, gave him the podium and devoured his poems; migrant communities in the Gulf, Britain and the United States were passionate about his poetry and the latest cassettes. Ironically, and most revealingly, he was relatively anonymous in official Yemeni media, academic institutions, and circles of the intellectual elite. His poetry, rather than couched in the elevated diction and conventional imagery of classical Arabic poetry, was sung in a familiar, colloquial tongue; his language, rather than replicating the discourses of those in circles of power, spoke to the concerns of popular Yemeni audiences. Ultimately, his poetry filled gaps and interpreted ruptures in political discourses, and for precisely that reason was remarkably mobile.

The last time I was with al-Khaledi, we attended a rural wedding celebration together. We'd spent the previous evening with our eyes glued to the television set, watching France beat Brazil in the World Cup; he had been an avid observer through the final moments, late into the night, so I assumed that on the fol-



lowing night he would retire early. As dinner at the wedding was concluded and people gathered to dance, a poetic competition was set up. Poets slowly gathered to compete extemporaneously, and soon al-Khaledi was in the center of a ring of challengers, each vying for an opportunity to produce a few perfectly measured and rhymed verses that could dislodge the "poet of

introduction to al-Khaledi now, after his death, seems not too late given that his voice always had an uncanny ability to transcend its place and time. Shayf al-Khaledi was born in a remote village of Yafi'a (a region spanning Lahej and Abyan) in 1932. While settlement in his area was sparse, his district of al-Qu'iti was known for its fierce and influential role in the history of the region and Yemen as a whole. One of his fellow Qu'iti had in fact migrated to India over two-hundred years earlier, established a powerful sultanate in Hyderabad and then returned to Hadramawt to set up what became known as "the Qu'iti State." al-Khaledi grew up knowing that he had a mighty legacy to continue.

He began contributing to local social and political affairs through poetry. In a region where, like many in Yemen, the settlement of controversy and disputes had long been managed through persuasive poems, al-Khaledi quickly distinguished himself as an eloquent and sagacious orator: an extremely valued member of a tribal society. He spent much of his youth traveling around Yafi'a to negotiate, learning much of his neighbors, his region, and its histories. His experience as a folk poet and mediator vastly expanded when he traveled to Aden for the first time in 1947. In working as a day-laborer in the port for three years, he saw first-hand the practices and consequences of colonialism for his fellow workers, most of whom were from the former Protectorate areas as well as Northern regions. It was during these years that he began formulating his ideas about nationalism, pan-Arabism and Yemen's place in larger international contexts.

When the Revolution of 1962 broke out in the North, al-Khaledi abandoned his work in Aden and as a shepherd in Abyan in order to join forces against the Royalists. He spent four years fighting in the North, later returning to help drive the British out of Aden by 1967. These were powerful

colloquial, not the product of an elite education; yet for that reason his words were at once extremely rich and accessible to popular audiences. By drawing upon wonderful gestures of rural humor, folk wisdom, and local histories, he spoke powerfully about national issues: unity (for which he was a long-time supporter), the need to crack down on corruption and bribery (both by leadership cadres during the years of the PDRY and after unity), the hardships of economic reforms on the people (since southern regions had experienced enormous swings in economic orientation), the centrality of religious life to good citizenship (including criticism of radical Islamist movements), and many other issues.

One of the reasons that al-Khaledi became such an influential voice for so many is traceable in no small way to his extremely prolific production. By the dawn of the revolution of 1967 it is said he had composed over one thousand qasidah (a qasidah is a traditional, formal genre of Arabic poetry), and such production continued unabated until his death. While he excelled in many poetic genres (including extemporaneous genres delivered in competitive bouts variously known as rajzah, Sufuuf, balah, daan, etc.), he was a master of the bid' wa jawaab genre (also known as the da'wah wa ijaabah genre) in which one poet sends a qasidah to another poet and the second poet responds with a qasidah that uses the same meter and rhyme structure. This is one of the most exciting and politically charged genres of poetry for many Yemeni audiences, and by the end of his life al-Khaledi had established a reputation widely as "the poet of ripostes" (shaa'ir al-jawaab), a man whose quick wit and well-tuned responses left the corresponding poet either defeated or gasping for another chance to defend himself.

It was the audio-cassette that extended al-Khaledi's prolific production and reputation to hundreds of thousands of lis-



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India, Sana'a

India's Nuclear Policy

In conducting a short series of give nuclear tests in May, India has aimed at building a limited but credible nuclear force that will restore the balance of power in Asia. New Delhi believes that its now explicit nuclear posture will help India stabilize the deterrent relationship with China and Pakistan, join the nuclear arrangements such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and become part of the mainstream on arms control.

India's recent tests are the culmination of a prolonged domestic nuclear debate that goes back to October 1964 when its neighbor to the North, China, conducted its first nuclear weapon test. The rise of a nuclear China, coming less than two years after Beijing's aggression on its long border with India, ended New Delhi's earlier commitment to maintain its nuclear program exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In the wake of China going nuclear, India first tried to get security guarantees from the United States, Soviet Union and Britain. The great powers refused. India then went to the United Nations proposing negotiations on a treaty that would commit the nuclear weapon states to get rid of their atomic arsenals and the non-nuclear states not to acquire them. What India got, instead, was the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that legitimized the possession of nuclear weapons by five big powers and proscribed them for all the others.

Since the mid 1960's, India has had no option but to steadily develop a capability to build nuclear weapons to ensure its security. As a consequence it refused to join any international nuclear arrangement that would limit or take away its nuclear weapon option. Before China's nuclear test in 1964, India was the first country to join the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty after its three sponsors--the US, UK and Soviet Union. After 1964, India has rejected all global nuclear arms control agreements.

India demonstrated its nuclear weapon capability in 1974 by conducting an underground atomic test, but exercised great caution by foregoing further nuclear tests. China responded to India's nuclear restraint by providing massive assistance to Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapon program, that has included transfer of material, technology, human resources, a warhead design, and eventually missiles and the wherewithal to produce them.

In the 1980's, the United States--preoccupied with its Cold War objective turned a blind eye to the Sino-Pak nuclear nexus. Washington woke up to the threat in the 1990s, but failed to dissuade China from ending its nuclear and

missile cooperation with Pakistan. On top of it, the United States had stepped up pressure on India to roll-back its nuclear and missile programs.

The final straw was the emerging US strategic partnership with China that has left countries like India, without alliance relationships with great powers, at the mercy of Beijing. If "self-help" was now the only security option available to India, an explicit demonstration of its nuclear weapon capability had become inevitable.

A nuclear India does not threaten the interests of the United States or the West. It could in fact help promote a balance of power in Asia. The American engagement with China alone will not ensure stability in Asia. The US needs a strong, democratic and nuclear India to embed a rising authoritarian China in a stable Asian balance. Indian's tests have not undermined the global non-proliferation regime. The NPT was expanded indefinitely in 1995 with the full knowledge that India had conducted a test before and was outside its ambit. By shedding its nuclear ambiguity, New Delhi has now ended its long-standing opposition to the NPT system, and has offered to become a partner in the management of global nuclear order.

By becoming an overt nuclear power, India is now in a better position to join global nuclear arms control arrangements. It has expressed a readiness to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiate another treaty that will end the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes.

In agreeing to join these two treaties, India is declaring that it has no intention to pursue an open-ended nuclear weapon program but to accept substantive limits on the sophistication and the size of its nuclear arsenal. India may also be ready to limit its missile capabilities, once it acquires a credible medium range nuclear delivery system against China. The fear of a nuclear arms race in Southern Asia, then, is far-fetched.

What about the danger of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan? New Delhi and Islamabad have long based their security calculus on the premise that the other side had nuclear weapons. Having declared themselves nuclear and military stability. India is ready to negotiate far-reaching nuclear and conventional military confidence-building measures with Pakistan that will reduce the danger of any war and its escalation to the nuclear level.

By: C. Raja Mohan
Strategic Affairs Editor,
The Hindu, New Delhi.

lowing night he would retire early. As dinner at the wedding was concluded and people gathered to dance, a poetic competition was set up. Poets slowly gathered to compete extemporaneously, and soon al-Khaledi was in the center of a ring of challengers, each vying for an opportunity to produce a few perfectly measured and rhymed verses that could dislodge the "poet of

ripostes" from his throne. The drums beat furiously, the dancers romped, and neither the tournament nor al-Khaledi showed any signs of abating by the time I crept exhausted into bed at two in the morning. I remember being amazed and relieved that al-Khaledi had the constitution to endure longer than a fit 30-year old. It is therefore with deep sorrow that, in writing an

obituary, I reflect on how audiences young and old alike have been deprived of a man who had such a love for his country, a commitment to his neighbors, and a passion for poetry.

W. Flagg Miller
Department of Anthropology
University of Michigan



TOTAL - Yemen



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Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Iryani and his Government,

and the Yemeni people on the occasion of

Eid Al-Fitr Al-Mubarak

Many Happy Returns

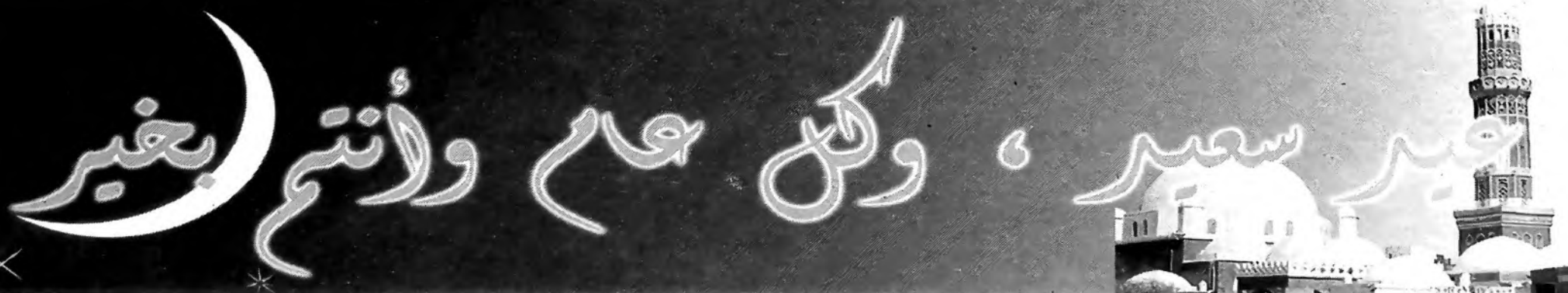
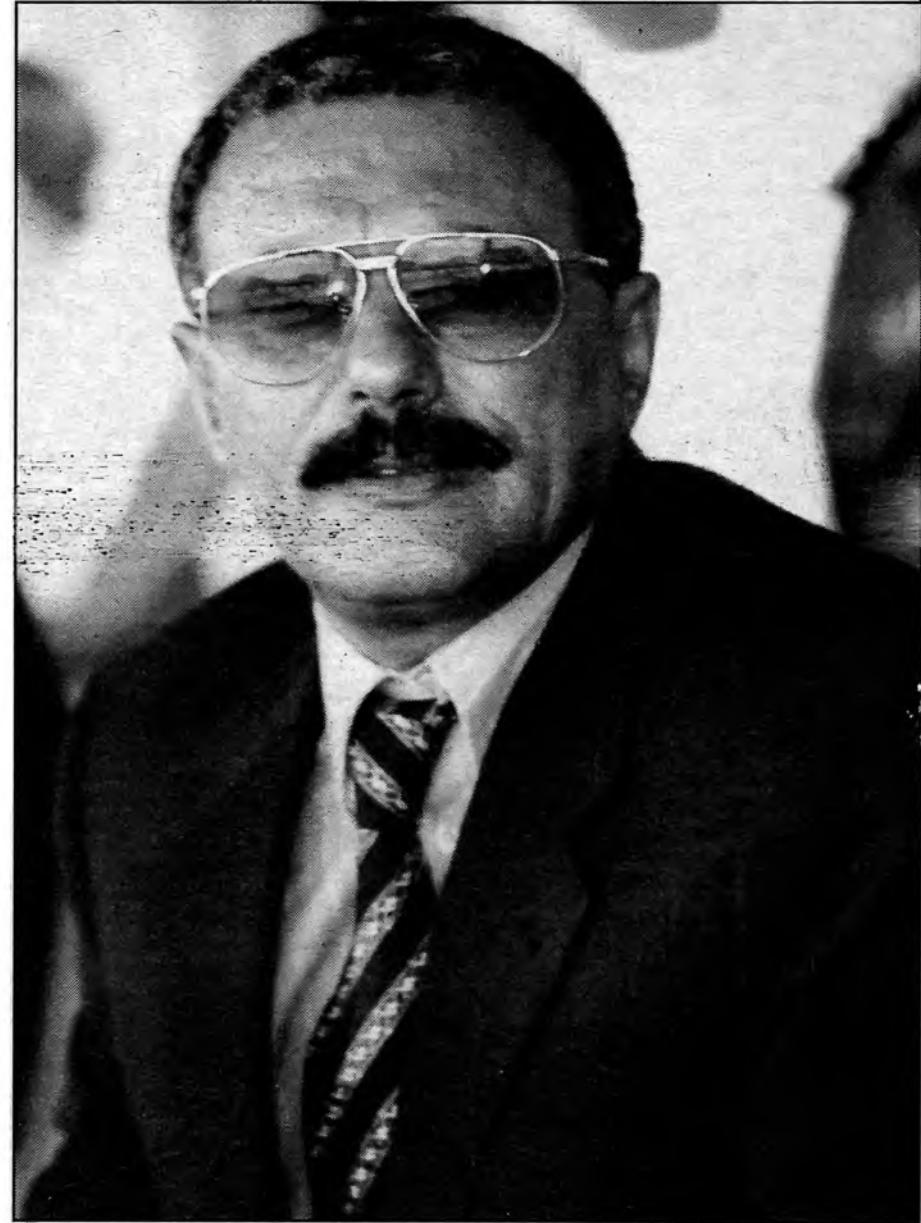
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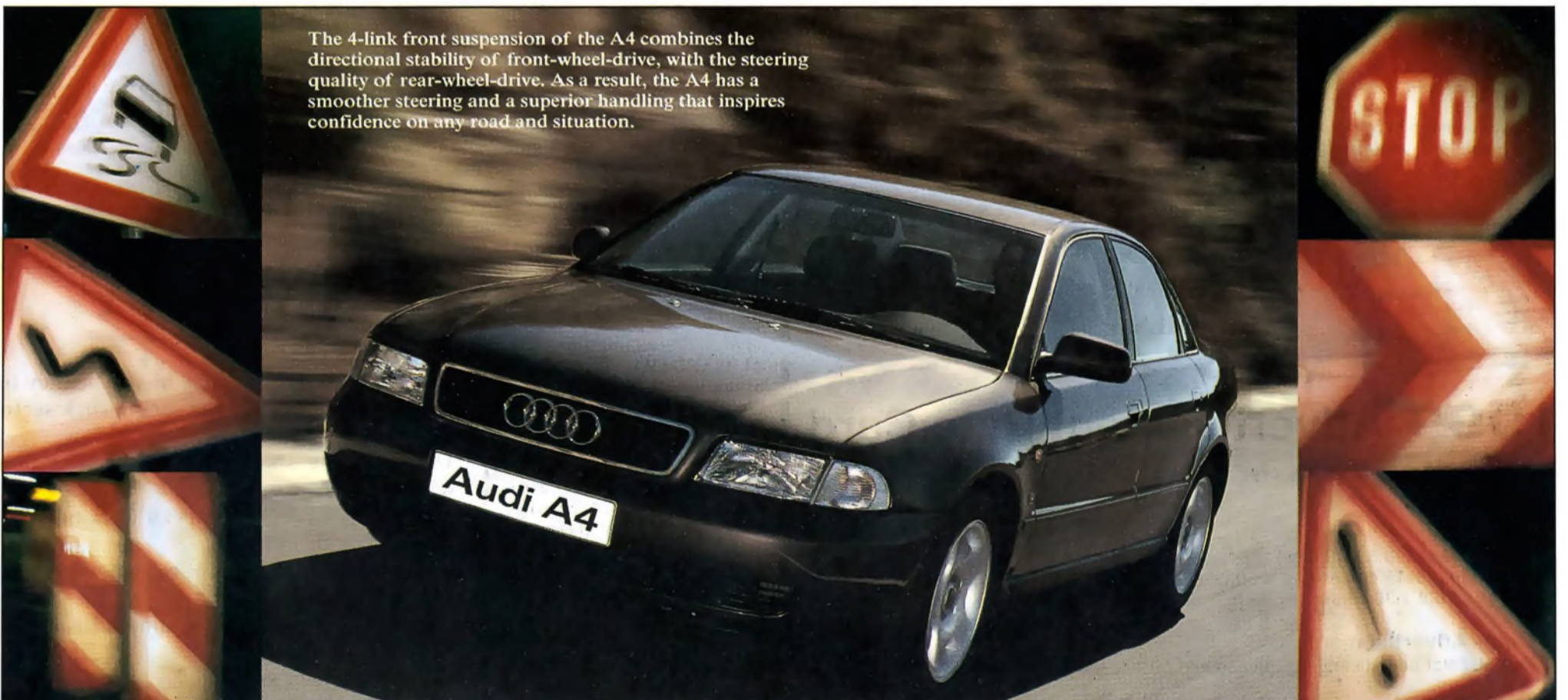
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Yemeni Press in a Week

by: Sameer Farawna



AL AYYAM Sanaa, bi-weekly 23/1/99 (Independent) Main Headlines

-A court in the self-proclaimed republic of the land of Somalia in northern Somalia has condemned 40 Yemeni fishermen for illegal fishing in its waters and fined them \$21,000.

-Yemen's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Abdul Qader Ba Gammal has denied the existence of a diplomatic crisis with Britain. He said in a telephone interview with an Arabic Daily based in London that Sanaa maintains strong relations with London.

-Two explosions on 17 and 20 of this month have targeted the oil pipeline extending from Mareb governorate to Ras Issa. Nothing has so far been declared on damages inflicted or the party behind the blasts.

-A number of Yemeni lawyers and lawmakers have asked the government to ask for the handing over of the so-called Abu Hamza Al Masri, currently residing in Britain, over his statements in Al Jazira space channel, in which he advocated the launching of terrorist attacks that destabilizes security and stability in the country.

-The Saba' private airline company has complained against Yemenia's attempts to block its operation on the pretext that the latter monopolizes air traffic in the country. Saba's complaint, which reached the Council of Ministers, was referred to the Ministry of Legal Affairs which decreed that the Yemeni constitution prohibits monopoly.

An Article Summary: Arrest of British Nationals Increases Tensions

A senior British official has

charged that Yemen's arrest of a number of Britons in Aden recently on charges of planning sabotage acts in that country had increased tension between the two countries.

He added, in radio statements, that Yemeni-British ties had witnessed further complications following those arrests.

Meanwhile, Bader Salmeen Ba Sunaid, lawyer of the five Britons said that he was not able to meet with his clients.

The lawyer said that he could not read all the papers of the case and hoped that he would be able to do so soon. He also hoped that the concerned authority would allow the defendants to make phone calls to their families and to allow a doctor from Britain to check them.

Ba Sunaid said that he did not know of any fixed date for the start of the trial.



AL THAWRA Sanaa, daily 23/1/99 (Official) Main Headlines

-Revenues of Hodeida Airport Customs Department have increased 120% in 1998 compared to the year before.

-An 18 year-old young man mistakenly fired his automatic gun only to kill his 16 year-old wife in Nadra, Ibb governorate last week.

-The 16th session of the Arab Interior Ministers is to be held in Amman next Saturday.

-The French Cultural Center in Sanaa is to screen two films on Monday, 25th January and on February 1st, tackling a number of social issues and the society's role in dealing with them.

An Article Summary: Car Driver Turns Thief

In a strange traffic incident in

Sanaa a few days ago, a speeding car hit a 35-year old pedestrian in one of the streets, the driver stopped and took the man, who was hit in the head, to Al Thawra hospital.

The strange thing is that the driver dropped the man near the eastern gate of the hospital after stealing 20,000 rials and a Janbbiya that is estimated at 80,000 rials from the unconscious man



AL GUMHURYAH Taiz, daily 23/1/99 Main Headlines

-A number of senior army officers visited Abu Mousa Al Asha'eri military camp last Friday and inaugurated the operational and training programs for 1999.

-The Language Center at Taiz University is to organize a number of intensified courses in English and French languages over the coming few days. It will also revise and certify translations, according to Dr. Sadeq Abdul Wahed, the Dean of the Center.

-Many chewers have complained that qat prices soared during the Eid Al Fitr holiday.

An Article Summary: Education Ministry Projects Boosted

Minister of Education Dr. Yehya Al Shuaiby has announced that numerous educational projects will be implemented during 1999. He told AL GUMHURYAH in a special interview that this year will witness the application of a plan to promote technical and vocational education in Yemen. The Minister attributed the decline in the education of girls to the fact that 80% of the students are in the country where schools are far apart and families do not allow their girls to walk a long distance alone.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

UNDP



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is inviting applications for the following two posts in its Poverty Program in Yemen:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Regional Team Leader - As-Sawadiyah (Al-Baydah) | Sub-line 17.60 |
| 2. Regional Team Leader - Al-Mukha (Taiz) | Sub-line 17.61 |

This position is open to Yemeni Nationals Only

Brief Description

Regional Development is one of the four major components of the Poverty Alleviation and Employment Generation Program. The aim of the Regional Development is to assist local communities in five selected regions in Yemen to participate in setting-up participatory development institutional framework as a mean of poverty alleviation within the communities. Moreover, communities will be capacitated to undertake planning, implementation and set-up of development funds within their regions.

Interested candidates are requested to contact Poverty Task Force at UNDP Office Sana'a for details and Job Descriptions of the posts. Applications should indicate post title and sub-line with detailed Curriculum Vitae, and to be forwarded to:

Operations manager, UNDP, P. O. Box No. 551, Sana'a

Applications should be received **not later than 7 February 1999.**

Applications received after this date will not be considered. Only those candidates who strictly meet the requirements could apply and acknowledgment will only be sent to shortlisted applicants meeting the requirements of the post.

He did not rule out the economic hardships, saying that a man with five children, males and females, prefers to send his male offspring to school. Other factors include social habits, early marriage, and, most of all, an absence of female teachers.

The January issue of the weekly (temporarily being issued on a monthly basis) advertising paper 'Bazar' is currently on the newsstands with lots of useful advertisements on the local market.

responsibility in protecting the citizens and enable them to practise their constitutional freedoms away from threats from corruptive elements.

An Amnesty International Delegation Visits Yemen

A Delegation from the London-based Amnesty International is to visit Yemen in the period January 26 to February 6 to meet with its representatives in the country in preparation for opening a branch in Sanaa.

The delegation, members of which are to tour a number of Yemeni governorates, is to discuss the Yemeni representatives' participation in Amnesty International's forthcoming conference in Rabat, Morocco next August.

The delegates are further expected to table the organization's comprehensive strategic plan for the years 2000-2004 and benefit from the Yemeni representatives' opinions of it.



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AL WAHDAMI Sanaa, weekly 16/1/99 (People's Nasserite Unionist Organization)

An Article Summary

An Attack Against Journalism

A group of men kidnapped the brother of renowned journalist Mohammed Saleh Al Hadery ten days ago in front of the latter's house.

The unknown group, mistakenly thinking he was Mohammed Al Hadery, beat up the kidnapped man in a deserted area. When they realized their mistake they threw him in a sewer, handcuffed and bleeding.

They told him to tell his brother that the attack was a final message before a more serious attack befalls him in the event he insisted on continuing with his writing.

Al Hadery has received threats on various occasions in the past year from parties who consider his writings as damaging to their interests.

AL WAHDAMI, in which Al Hadery writes, asks the security authorities to shoulder their

VACANCY

A United Nations agency has a vacancy for a National Officer in the social work sector.

The candidate should be a Yemeni national with:

- An advanced degree is social work or a related field;
- A minimum of 5 years of related work experience;
- A good knowledge and writing skills in English and Arabic;
- Good computer skills.

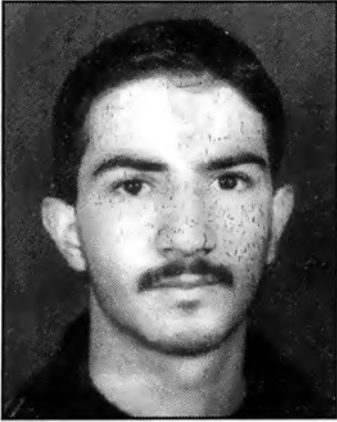
Qualified women candidates are encouraged to apply.

Applications with curriculum vitae should be sent by 9th February, 1999, under confidential cover, to:

Operations Officer,
P. O. Box 725,
Sanaa, Yemen.

The First Amateur Boxer in Sana'a: "We did not find enough support, so we left training."

There are a lot of games which are abandoned by practitioners for many reasons. The most important factor is the overwhelming attention paid to football which consumes 80% of the budget of the Ministry of Youth & Sport. In spite of the previous reason, we clearly see weak standards of football performance during International contests. There are other reasons for the low standard of performance, among which were the insufficient compensation to finance single game-activities and insufficient care for different heroic sports of men or women. This might lead the athlete to think of leaving training and searching for a job to provide for himself a sufficient living. Sport as everybody says does not feed anybody in his life! Mr. Ayman Abdul-Elah Al-Jurmuzi is the first amateur boxer in Sana'a Governorate. In spite of the dif-



ficulties he faced during his training because of his young age, insufficient training potential, and closed auditoriums, he won several local boxing championship contests. He continued training for years until afflicted with despair along with other athletes because of not being given any care or support. All athletes stopped training to impress the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and Yemen Boxing Federation with their demands, and to provide sufficient support for continued training. Boxing disappeared from clubs in Sana'a although there is a special federation for it. Yemen Times met and talked to Ayman and filed the following:

Q. When did you start training and in which club?
A. I started training in 1987 when I was six years



In The Excellent Tournament Ramadhan Recess: Is It Enough To Light Up The Competition Again?

In a few days the football contests will continue after a recess which lasted for the month of Ramadhan. The previous month gave a lot of clubs a chance to get themselves in suitable condition for the fifth week tournament with significance, after failing to show high standards at the beginning of Ramadhan. This might change the unexpected results for many people. Returning to the results of the excellent tournament in its fourth week before Ramadhan, Yemen Times will spotlight on the condition and location of the participants and teams through their early harvest in the excellent tournament contests.

The ambassador of Abyan, in spite of the problems the team had to go through during the preparation period, the team performed exceptionally well in the previous matches, especially when it defeated Ibb-Sha'ab to give the first place to Ahli Sanaa. Hassan is 3rd

Wahda Sanaa Yesterday's Champion
The title holder and the 1997- 1998 champion started the season with very disappointing matches to fall to 4th with seven points. Will this Eid holiday be enough to recharge Al-Wahda?. We expect a surprise when the 5th week kick-off.

Shabb Al-Mukalah The Remarkable Team !
Coming from Al-Mukalah with rocket speed to fight for a top place on the chart. If this team keeps up the same rhythm it started the season with, it will really astonish a lot of people. It is currently holding 5th place

Al-Shu'lah The Mysterious Team.
This team still enjoys its favorite hobby - 'dancing along the chart'. Its performance is quite a puzzle it won against Hilal Al-Hodiedah 2/1, lost to Talea Taiz 1/0, won against Itihad Ibb 6/0 (this is the highest score in the tournament so far) and finally lost to Shabb Al-Mukalah 1/0.

Al-Telal The Gone Celebrity
Once upon a time not long before, this team was one of the strongest in Aden and today it lives on its memories of a glorious past. The beginning of this season was a disaster to Al-Telal and their position on the chart is proof that they are at the tail of the table in 12th position.

Teams Which Joined the Giants
Four teams from the First Division League joined the Excellence League, namely; Wahda Aden, Hilal Hodiedah, Talea Taiz, and Al-Majed. Some of these teams had a good start where others crumpled right from the start.

• **Wahda Aden** .. After the unexpected fall of this team last season to the First Division, it is gaining back its strength and position as one of the excellence league's best teams.

• **Hilal Hodiedah** .. The new ambassador of Hodiedah to the Excellence League. So far this team has had a good start.

• **Talea Taiz** .. Trying very hard to prove that it belongs to this league, through its marvelous performance and the strong fights they put up in their matches.

• **Al-Majed** .. The early fall of this team have caused it a real nightmare and the ghost of falling back to the First Division League will continue to haunt them if they remain at the bottom of the chart.

Sana'a- Ahli in the precedence: Can the club continue?

After four weeks passed by the football tournament, it is obviously clear that Sana'a Ahli Club is the best in progress amid the status quo. The question remains addressed to the Ahli if these four rounds are tantamount to realize victories in the tournament trip and to return to its past. It seems that the good preparation and the excellent management of the Ahli club surpassed the previous problems. All eyes are directed towards the club's team, which vigorously looks forward to winning the excellent football tournament this season.

Ibb-Sha'ab: The stubborn club's team.

The Green county team, as many people call it, engaged in the excellent tournament's competitions and presented strong and distinct parades. Showing stubborn and clear alertness, Ibb-Sha'ab successfully passed the first three stations of the tournament before the Aden's Wahdah, Zuhrah and Tilal. The Sha'ab club ascended from the first moment the leading stage in the football excellent tournament. At the end of the third week, Sha'ab was defeated by Abyan's Hassan to be transferred from its leading position to the second rank. Ibb-Sha'ab enraged a wave of protests around the standard of arbitration of the referees after its defeat. In a letter of protest to the Yemen Football Union, Sha'ab revealed accompanying misfortunes and mistakes. Can Ibb-Sha'ab continue on a stubborn trip and its insistence to snatch the leading position again to the end?

Hassan Abyan's Knight



old. My older brother boxed with me at home. I joined the Ahli Club when I was seven years old. The game was new (in Yemen) at that time, where the club provided us with commercial boxing gloves. The gloves were illegal for training and crammed with cotton as we were without head or teeth protection. We were missing a boxing ring, which is an essential part of training. In spite of the previous reasons our wishes were strong to promote boxing in Yemen and to encourage the Ministry of Youth & Sport to form a boxing federation to take care of boxing activities. Later, athletes increased day by day and Sana'a-Wahdah Club practiced the game, and brought in a Syrian referee while ours was a Yemeni.

Q. When was the Yemen Boxing Federation formed to develop the game?

A. The Yemen Boxing Federation was formed in 1990, directly after the Yemen Unity. There was a federation formed in Aden and recognized internationally, which helped in establishing the General Federation. The recent General Federation had to take care of the game and spread it among the levels of the governorates. The game, at that time, was only practiced in Sana'a, the capital city, and Aden Governorate. The Federation members were very ambitious to ameliorate the art of boxing in Yemen, but they collided with the carelessness of the Ministry of Youth and Sport for such games. The ministry was careless about single games similar to boxing such as swimming, wrestling, Karate, Kung-Fu, Judo, Taikwondo...etc. because, the ministry did not provide enough compensation to finance the lowest limit of training demands. Hence, the recent federation members submitted their group resignations to protest against the improvisation of their demands. We, the athletes, remained hanging in mid-air without a federation. Although, the ministry does not know about us, we exercised great patience while looking for a better hope and a good future for the game. We virtually insisted on training, and another new federation abbreviated by the YBF was formed in 1993. In spite of the previous progressive step, the conditions remained as they were, unchanged, except for some compensation to finance some championships and professional training supervised by new federation members.

Q. How were the conditions of training with the carelessness of Ministry of Youth and Sport?

A. We were training with strong wishes and participated in several championships organized by the YBF as a hope to participate in Arab Federation levels. It seems to me that any care for a game would need an intermediary to provide sufficient support for the contests. This is what happened to football, which exhausts the great part of the budget of Ministry of Youth and Sports. The athletes usually leave one by one because of the high living costs, conditions, and to search for better jobs, although many of them are of excellent standard, experienced, and might possibly be champions if the Ministry of Youth and Sport took care of them.

Q. Why don't the Ministry of Youth and Sport recognize such sport activities?

A. I visited all specialized administrations in the Ministry of Youth and Sport and met the minister himself, Dr. Mohammed Al-Kabab and later the new minister Dr. Mohammed Raweh. I heard a lot of vivid promises, which have not been applied until now in all fields of sports. The special-

ized administrations should take care about all sports and games, but unfortunately I have found them sipping tea instead of discussing inferior matters to sports and far away from athletics. They know nothing about Sport federations, which still miss such sports as parachuting, chivalry, and volleyball enlisted with the Yemen Boxing Federation. I think that the employees in the Ministry of Youth and Sport are more than the athletes in Sana'a clubs. Instead, sport directors ought to follow the sport activities to realize the standards they have reached. You always see them sitting in their offices waiting for reports from various sport federations implementing continuous sport activities in better situations. After reading reports the officers sign the compensation to finance various sport activities. If any officer makes periodical visits to all clubs his thought about the matter will be obviously changed, and the situation will be ameliorated in all sport activities.

Q: Does the youth fund support sports activities?

A: Well, we have heard about this youth fund but we have not experienced any funding by them. Sports projects are a good material for the media, but in reality it's an illusion. For example, millions of riyals are spent on planting stadiums with grass



but no maintenance funding was allocated. As a result stadiums are as dry as ever, and the money is gone with the wind.

Q: Do you still work out? And how do you see the future of sports in Yemen?

A: I stopped working out last year after facing a lot of disappointments and after I was convinced that there is no credibility in developing sports in Yemen. You see a Sportsman reaches an age where he needs a job and an income which he will not find in sports, at least here in Yemen, that's why many people leave sports at a young age after facing life's endless demands.

As far as the future of sports in Yemen is concerned, I see no hope if it is under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. I advise sports clubs to try and attract businessmen and private companies to finance them. Some clubs had already taken the initiative such as Ahli Sanaa, Al-Wahdah and Shabb Sanaa.

Q: What do you think of Prince Naseem? And did you meet him when he visited Yemen?

A: Naseem is an International boxer with a unique style. Unfortunately he has not contributed to boxing in Yemen. He promised to support the game and build a training center in his name in Sanaa, but the promise was not kept. Yes, I met him on his first visit to Yemen in 1993 at Al-Ahli club in Sanaa, where we exercised together. On his last visit he did not call on the club which had received him first in Yemen, before he was known.

Al-Shanini Marketplace in Taiz

HUSTLE & BUSTLE OF A LIVE MUSEUM

Taiz is one of these few cities in the world gifted with beauty, charm and deeply-rooted culture. It has been recently announced as the cultural capital of Yemen. It is actually dense with many charming landmarks that make one sit up and take note. Let us now go together and see one of its splendid features.

Do you know what it is? As soon as you go through the gate of Bab Al-Kabir you have three directions. The direction on your left will guide you to the Al Mudhafar Mosque, one of the most celebrated and ancient

and ancient market in Taiz. Visiting this market is much better than reading books about the history of the city. There one gets close, face to face contact with history and the deeply-rooted cultural heritage of the city. The first thing to be done by tourists when they come to Taiz is to visit this market. Tourists are arrested by the splendor of the market.

Here in this market, there are numerous products and goods. Most, if not all, of the products of all handicrafts being practiced in Taiz are sold at al-Shannini. The scent produced by different kinds of spices can be smelt from a distance.

Home-made cheese is a valuable commodity there and is considered to be the first in Yemen in quality. If you are interested in making a hot delicious traditional Yemeni meal, just visit Al-Shannini. Pans and plates made of pottery, clay or reed are very common there. Vendors there are also traditional and even in the way they dress themselves. I feel really unable to completely reveal the splendor of



this market. And it is not even enough to read about the market. A lot of products don't have equivalents in other countries. Only a visit to the market will set the visitor in a really traditional and ancient museum with a deep and great history.

By: Mohammed Hatem Al-Qadhi
Taiz Office Editor
Yemen Times



mosques in the Islamic world. The direction in the middle is a street of clothing which will take to the second gate of the old city of Taiz, Bab Musa. And the third direction on your right is the focus of my point here. It takes you to the Al-Shannini market. Al-Shannini is the most traditional



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