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Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
 The Democracy and Freedom of Expression conference came out with a communique that triggered criticism. Do you think that the so-called Sana'a communique reflects the views of the people and NGOs?

I don't know (14%)
 Yes (19%) No (69%)

This edition's question:
 Joint-meeting parties (JMP) have recently declared its candidate to the upcoming presidential election. Do you think the authorities would allow the JMP to use the state media instruments to propagate for its electoral platform?

- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know

Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll and have your voice heard

End collective punishment of the Palestinian people

By: Yemen Times Staff

Yemen Times sides by human rights international organizations around the world and strongly condemns Israel's illegal attacks and siege of the Gaza Strip. These ongoing military operations are nothing less than the collective punishment of an entire civilian population. As such they blatantly contravene Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits 'collective penalties' and all likewise measures of intimidation. During the period 20th May and 21st June this year Israel's occupation forces killed

30 Palestinians, including 7 children, in the Gaza Strip. Among them were 7 members of the Ghalia family who were decimated in an Israeli gun-boat attack on a Gaza beach. All the others were killed by helicopter missile and artillery fire.

We view the frantic international efforts to secure the release of a single Israeli soldier captured in combat in the occupied territories as utter hypocrisy and disgraceful double-standards. There are at least 9,800 Palestinians currently being held by the occupation forces in Israeli prisons. Of that number, Israel is holding 126

Palestinian women and 450 minors. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem has confirmed that 85% of Palestinian detainees have been tortured during interrogation.

We call for an immediate end to the degrading and inhuman treatment of Palestinian prisoners. We demand their immediate release and an end to the extrajudicial killings of civilians. We urge the Yemeni government and all international governments to honor their treaty obligation to 'ensure respect' for the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.



Opposition nominates Bin Shamlan for president

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, July 2 — Under the slogan "President for the sake of Yemen, not Yemen for the sake of President," the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) named former MP Faisal Bin Othman Bin Shamlan their candidate for the upcoming presidential elections. Bin Shamlan is an independent politician and has no political affiliation.

"I expected the opposition presidential candidate to be one of the JMP leaders who are competent and more eligible than

me, Bin Shamlan said, addressing hundreds of people at the Sheraton Hotel.

"As the JMP insisted on my nomination, hard work and total commitment have become a must."

The JMP candidate hoped that opposition and all Yemeni people have good thoughts about him, pointing out that he appreciates the JMP, which gives a constructive lesson to other parties.

"The JMP is a paved road leading to the best of changes and forming a civil democratic governance to help the Yemeni people live in peace and security," the candidate stated. He praised the JMP and its comprehensive political reform project, affirming that only peaceful struggle will be accepted.

The JMP released a statement



The JMP announcing their presidential candidate

announcing their presidential candidate and political program that stated, "Based on the nomination by the JMP's Shoura Council and central committees, as well as confidence of Yemenis to exercise their electoral right for tackling their issues, the JMP declares Faisal Bin Shamlan its can-

didate for the upcoming presidential race."

Opposition parties emphasized they will back their candidate and prepare a strong electoral campaign to win the support of a majority of voters. They trust Bin Shamlan because he is politically and

Yemen refutes supporting the Islamic Courts

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 2 — Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, denied last Saturday a statement by a U.S. official that Yemen is one of three regional countries supporting the Islamic Courts movement in Somalia.

"What the US official said is untrue," Al-Qirbi commented.

"Yemen only supported the Somali police with light arms at an early time following the formation of the Somali

legal government under the Nairobi Accord. Since then, Yemen has not extended any financial assistance or arms to the [interim] government or the courts."

In a statement to Al-Jazeera, the Al-Qirbi noted: "I hoped that the U.S. official, who said she would discuss the matter with Yemen and Saudi Arabia and other governments in the region, did so before releasing the statement to help us examine the matter."

Continued on page 2

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Cinema in the Arab World

Islam and the West: Beyond Entertainment

The recurring culture clash themes on Islam vs. West conflicts are being outrightly abandoned by Middle Eastern film producers. They favour a return to an art cinema free to choose its own topics.

By: Antonia Naim

The burden of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the continued occupation of Palestine are obviously involved.

As for Lebanon, the feverish reconstruction of the country and the reminiscences on the civil war, the weight on sectarianism and the deep rift between classes, almost totally pervade the new Lebanese film industry which, though often supported by Europe – there is no public assistance for the cinema in Lebanon – remains a national cinema portraying a national reality.

Starting from this trend, can we obtain a new cinema? It would be of an unusual nature, probing into a period of confrontation. And is this cinema unrelated to the social reality, to the Palestinian citizens that massively elected the Islamic party Hamas or the Israeli extremists that refused to leave the colonies in Gaza?

Revisiting political and artistic dimensions

Cinema, the 7th art, has always been, year after year, a shield against narrow-minded religions and values, trying to impose their vision of the world and to colonise the political sphere of societies. Even Censorship, both Eastern and Western, has a scant long term effectiveness on this matter.

Today, some would like to prove to the world that Middle-Eastern societies have become almost totally Islamic and are populated by kamikazes manipulated by religious groups that advocate the destruction of the West. Cinema in this geographical area reacts to these clichés by revisiting two essential dimensions

of the whole history of cinema, that is, the political and artistic dimensions.

The Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman is one of the most notorious examples. Through his last films, "Chronicle of a Disappearance" and "Divine Intervention", he inquires on circumstances that pretend to foster civilisation, but prefers going back to the introspection of his main character, placing him at the centre of the story.

This is also the case of recent films such as "Atash" by Tawfik Abu Wael (2004), a biting, radical piece; or "Paradise Now" (2005), by the Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu Assad, which has had a big success and received an Oscar nomination.

Abu Assad chose to tackle the particularly controversial topic of suicide attacks through the history of two childhood friends living in Nablus, Khaled and Said, selected for an attack in Tel Aviv.

The story of Khaled and Said in "Paradise Now"

Although they start off as volunteers in an Islamic group, the two friends start having doubts on the need to commit this action. Throughout the film, we get acquainted with their lives: they work off and on in a garage, but spend most of their time on the top of a hill, watching over an occupied Nablus, day-dreaming and brooding over their daily humiliations and lack of freedom and work.

Deep wounds have marked their lives: Khaled's father was tortured by Israeli soldiers. As for Said, he has to live with the disgrace of a collaborator father, executed by Palestinian militia when he was 10.

The filmmaker at this point fails to



Cinema in the Middle East responds to Western clichés by revisiting the political and artistic dimensions. The Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman is one of the most notorious examples.

agree with the myth of martyrdom and returns to the debate on politics; if the violence of the Palestinian colonisation fosters further violence, that of attacks, it prompts an even more terrifying violence, that of the destruction of the Palestinian society, human morality. The film was shown in Ramallah, in one of the two cinemas left in Palestine, the Al Kasaba theatre on September 2005.

The comeback to politics in Israeli cinema

As for Israeli cinema, the comeback to politics is especially strong in documentaries: a few filmmakers chose to question society and to battle against the fake representations imposed by the present power, to denounce the lack of respect of human rights, the pursuit of colonisation in Palestine, the erection of a totally illegal wall condemned by international conventions.

Simone Bitton and her film "The Wall" – Juliano Mer Khameis and the striking film "Arna's Children", an homage to his own mother who was

recruited as a young girl in the clandestine Jewish army of Palmach, married an Arab communist intellectual after 1948 and then became a leftist Israeli militant.

After the first Intifada, Arna created a theatre in the refugee camp of Jenine with the camp's children who, she will discover as her son returns to Jenine in 2002, will have come to a tragic end: either killed by the Israeli army or became kamikaze...

Avi Mograbi is one of the enfants terribles of Israel's cinema, a troublemaker who is set, film after film, to build awareness for his people and to deconstruct Israel's myths. In his last film, in 2005, "Pour un seul de mes yeux", Mograbi abandons his former grating and burlesque comedy to investigate (together with his public and his people) on two Israeli myths:

Samson (who is classified as the first kamikaze in history) and the myth of the Massada hill, extolling the collective suicide of the Zealotes. The young Israeli generations have had their fair share of these two myths, both in school and during group visits to histor-

ical sites, which seem more like the reunions of a sect...

As for fiction, the filmmaker Amos Gitai has of late cast off his interest for Jewish orthodox communities represented in his film "Kadosh", and is going back to research in his disturbing film Promised Land, which thrusts us in the slave trade and the Eastern prostitute market and unveils the lack of values of Israel's society.

A "clash of civilisations" in a very personal light

A distressing, highly subversive film that has been much criticised in Israel. "Alila" and "Free Zone", are also disturbing films. They are tales of free women, stories of friendship between women of opposing cultures, one American, the other from Israel, the third Palestinian, the famous clash of civilisations again, but in a very personal light...

As for the Lebanon, some young filmmakers like Ghassan Salhab ("Terra incognita", 1998, "Beyrouth fantôme", 2002), Danielle Arbid ("Raddem", "Dans les champs de bataille", 2004) abandon the aesthetic codes imposed by the large Egyptian film industry as well as the American model, by creating new codes and crossbreed narrations that thrive on European art cinema and other more remote cinema.

In "A perfect day" (2006), Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige have

progressed even further by producing a *cinema d'auteur*, which although abstract, it deals with shapes, space, time and the loss of memory, such a central theme in Lebanon.

It is a minimalist film, which reflects Antonioni with his adventures, where silences make sense. Beirut is there, an inconspicuous star, and for the first time our senses are spared of the wounds of the civil war or of its feverish reconstruction: they remain in the background, in that non visible space, the viewer's imagination.

Considering this brief summary of the cinema in the Middle East, we can ask ourselves: is cinema the last barricade under siege or on the contrary, the building ground for a future transnational civil and secular society with strong international ties?

In any case, the cinema witnesses the conflicts that cross each one of these societies, that animates them and makes them live or tests their own existence.

It represents a place of contact, of dialogue even between societies at war. The fact that cinema, being present in festivals world wide, instantly becomes an international show should lead us to think on how European societies take part in the financial aid, the co-production of these national cinemas, of this "regional" Middle Eastern cinema, of which I have tried to pull out some common characteristics, beyond the clichés of the clash of civilisations.

Source: www.qantara.de

The tree that killed its caretaker

The following is a true story of a farmer who died in his qat field while hanging onto one of its tall trees.

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

Hatem Ali grew up in the qat fields of his grandfathers. As a child, Ali used to spend some time in the qat fields watching his father and grandfather pick qat leaves from the trees. When he became a grown-up, Ali befriended the qat trees after spending much time caring for them throughout the four seasons of the year.

Ali was famous for having the best quality qat in his district. When asked about the best qat, locals would say, "Ali's son Hatem is the best at caring

for qat." They also used to say about him, "Even if you asked him to leave his house to sell you qat, he would leave his comfortable seat and qat session to fulfill your demand."

Ali paid much more attention to his qat fields than other farmers. He was matchless in caring for qat trees. Also, he used to describe qat leaves with superb detail and was the best describer of qat in his village, even highlighting qat's advantages.

Ali was known for being a generous farmer with a sense of humor that never left his countenance. Those without money to buy qat went to Ali's fields to request some qat leaves, as he

never disappointed anyone requesting qat without money. He also used to sell qat on a post-payment basis.

Those farmers who worked with him bear witness to his being a generous and good man and he treated them kindly. They never got bored or tired of working in his fields, especially because he used to create an atmosphere of humor for them. When he saw a sad worker of his, he said to him, "Hey man, why are you sad? OK, chew some qat and forget the world. There's no need to get upset."

As usual, Ali went to his fields after Al-Fajr prayer to care for the qat trees and water them, even if it was too cold for him to touch the water. His wife brought his breakfast to him because he preferred having it under the shade of the qat trees. Afterward, he went to sell his qat in the market until midday (i.e., until 5 or 6 p.m.).

Tragically, Ali's life ended this past January. Having prayed Al-Fajr prayer, he headed for his qat fields as usual, having his breakfast under the very tree on which he soon after died. It was 10 a.m. when he set a stepladder against the tree because it was too tall for him to reach its leaves. The ground below was full of water. His death hour quickly approached, as he didn't notice the electrical wire touching the tree and the steel stepladder.

Ali ascended the stepladder and picked a few leaves. Unknowingly, he took his last look at the other qat trees he inherited from his father. Suddenly, the electric shock ran over the steel stepladder and Ali died holding onto the qat tree.

It was a black day for all the villagers because they lost one of their area's best local residents. Ali lived in a Sana'a suburb and died at age 35.

Yemen: Rights groups express concern over street vendor deaths

SANAA, 25 June (IRIN) — Human rights activists are calling for greater protection of street vendors following reports that several had been killed by local officials in cities throughout Yemen.

In some cases, unlicensed vendors – who are forbidden from hawking their wares in the streets – have been shot at or beaten by municipal officials, say human rights workers.

Khalid al-Anesi, executive director of the National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedoms in Sana'a, known as HOOD, said that such attacks have become commonplace.

"Attacks against street vendors have become a daily scene," he said. "Municipality prisons are full of street vendors." Al-Anesi pointed out that, over the past year, six cases – including beatings and killings – had been registered with HOOD, but that "there are other cases which haven't been disclosed".

Yemen is a poor country, with some 42 percent of the population currently living under the poverty line. Street vendors, therefore, are a common site in almost every neighbourhood.

According to a recent law issued, however, street vendors are only

allowed to sell in specified parts of the city. They are banned from working on major streets so as not to get in the way of pedestrians or cause traffic jams.

Street vendor Ahmed al-Raimi, 35, said that municipality workers regularly chased him and other vendors off the streets, and accused them of forcing him to work in "an environment of fear".

Human rights activist and lawyer for HOOD Ahmed Arman also pointed out that street vendors were often shot at by municipality workers. He went on to say that HOOD had received reports of the deaths of three street vendors this year. The latest case was on 13 June, when Ali al-Bahri, a mechanic, was allegedly killed over a disagreement with municipality workers in a neighbourhood of the capital. "This reflects the violence of authorities," opined Arman.

Yahya al-Shu'aibi, the Governor of Sana'a, however, said that such fatal attacks were isolated cases and did not represent a trend. "If it happens, then it's the result of resistance," al-Shu'aibi said. "The municipality is tasked only to remove those who violate the rules, not to take aggressive measures against them."

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Yemen Press Review

By: Mohammed Khidhr

AL-Wahdawi
weekly, organ of
the Nasserite
Unionist
Organization
(NUO), 27 Jun
2006.

Main headlines
- NUO central committee approves participation in the upcoming

elections
- Two people killed and four other wounded in armed confrontations in Bani Hushaish
- Imprisonment to two officers condemned of kidnapping, torturing and raping of a child, Citizens storm Yafie security administration
- Despite apology of the foreign

minister, the American ambassador to Yemen criticizes the president's speech
- Al-Hamdi: Presidential elections, an opportunity to effect change in the Yemeni reality
- Massive festivals by the JMP demanding for reform and free elections
- Criticized violation of the principles agreement by the ruling party, The NUO assistant secretary general Asim: retraction of the president an expected drama
- Al-Mouayad demands ending his 3000-hour suffering
- Symposium on Yemen accession to the WTO
- General Assembly of Yemen International Bank approves raising the Bank's capital

mistreated them and violated their rights it could be their right because they are their masters. On the other hand, the rulers remained considering themselves as the shadow of God on the Earth.

The rulers might accept democracy as a slogan and form to improve their image before the world. But the democracy that they accept is the one that does not approach their positions and limit their authorities or affect their privileges as well as it should not lead to cross the red lines by criticizing them. The rulers think constitutions and laws as a formal complementary aspect of the state, similar to the flag and the national anthem. The decision taken by the ruler stays above the constitution and the law.

As a result of this despotic and totalitarian culture there is the non-existence of separation between powers, the sovereignty of the law, peaceful transfer of power, and respect of human rights. Balloting boxes competition remains governed by the will of rulers. That situation has made the opposition compete in elections with the state that possesses all capabilities and powers rather than with another political party.

On the president's retraction from his decision of not running for presidential elections for a second term, writer Muamar Mohammed al-Batoul says the Arab rulers are among rulers who stay the longest period in power. It has become a habit practiced by majority of Arab presidents, except in very rare instances. The Arab citizen is not accustomed to see on the ground a democratic practice, peaceful transfer of power without any problems except in the example of Lebanon. Many of Arab presidents managed to score records in the length of their stay in power.

The president's decision of not nominating himself for another term was a surprise to many Arab leaders and the Arab peoples too. It was considered a good initiative and conclusion had he clung to that historic and national decision and he would have been the first Arab president to do something like that. I think the president had had a full conviction in not nominating himself for another term but it seems there are some centers of power that do not prefer this matter. These powers are beneficiary from of his stay in governance and keeping the situation as it is. These forces consider the president's departure from his post a departure and loss of their interests and power.

Al-Wasat weekly,
28 Jun 2006.

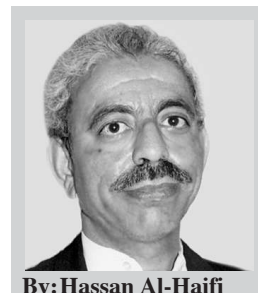
Main headlines
- Bin Shamlan most prominent opposition presidential candidate
- Considering the president's acknowledgement of liquidating Nasserite leaders as self-criticism, Al-Afiif demands the regime to unveil bodies of those executed and deem them as martyrs
- Asking for civil disobedience, Sana'a conference excludes civil organizations and reflects governments vision
- America intensifies its military presence in the Horn of Africa waters, warns Yemen against supporting the Islamic courts
- The president thanks tribes sheikhs and criticizes his party's leaderships in the capital
- Under request from education minister presidency security prevent women school inspectors from protest

Dr Abdulmalik al-Mutawakil writes saying while we are seeking to build a democratic society we have to admit that the major problem from which our least developed societies suffer is that we, as rulers and the governed have remained hostage of authoritative despotic culture that has dominated over our societies for long period of time. The majority of the citizens consider themselves as subjects not as citizens. They consider their rulers as heavenly ordained. If the rulers treated them well it is a favor done to them and if they

COMMON SENSE

The arrogance of power

The horrific latest violence that has erupted last week in Gaza and in Iraq only goes to show that unilateral possession of power at the international and regional levels only underscores the danger



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

majority of innocent civilians, we have the US Ambassador to the United Nations calling Damascus the cause of all this mayhem unleashed by the Israelis for not surrendering Khalid Mash'al, the leader of Hamas. That is not exactly what calling a spade a

spade is all about. But then John Bolton is one of the engineers of the biggest flop in American history with the invasion of Iraq. One wonders what John Bolton has to say about the rape and murder of an Iraqi woman along with the three other members of her family, including a child, carried out by the very forces that Bolton and his havoc engineering friends in the Right Wing Establishment that is holding the helms in the United States?

Israel has an unlimited scope to unleash death and destruction to defend itself, says the White House even if it means the annihilation of the Palestinian people. But anyone who dares raise a finger of resistance to the most horrific occupation of all times is a terrorist and murderer in the White House glossary of words, which now even the United States Supreme Court can no longer stomach. The increasing horrors that this region is being witness to are the engineering fine works of the right wing establishment on behalf of their Israeli friends, who seem to have driven this region into an abyss of violence, for which no clear exit is in sight.

Thank you, Mr. Bolton for your contemptuous appraisal of events in the region. We wish to tell Mr. Bolton that it is American weaponry that is being unleashed against the people of Gaza and not the toys of weapons that Damascus may own. We also wish to tell him that it is the Israeli Mossad that is actively at work fomenting all sorts of violence in Iraq and elsewhere in the region, including Lebanon. Perhaps Mr. Bolton is not aware that a big ring of Mossad agents was captured in Lebanon planning for another major explosion there, after all the previous explosions, the latter of which are becoming less of a mystery now that this ring was captured.

Yet amidst the world outrage at what is obviously a bad exploitation of a mismatch, let alone exaggerated mass punishment against the helpless

democracy pillars is the basic thing, looking towards the future and fighting corruption is the hope and the demand.

The writer concludes his article by hoping to hear from the opposition what would help build the democratic process and to play the ball in its court in the correct way.

The agreement through dialogue is an important gain but the most important is the commitment to it in word and action. Observer of the Yemeni case can see the extent of the Yemenis response to the signing. In fact the accord to go to balloting boxes in the presidential and local elections is an important matter and what is more important is the achievement of an amount of decency, freedom and transparency. The question is whether the document would provide those aspects.

Probably the most dangerous thing in the agreement is the connivance against the role of the woman and the resorting to floating formulas instead of defining proportions of her participation whether through the quotas or certain percentage obligatory to the two parties.

Regarding neutrality of the official media and public service and public property as well as the armed forces, it is a good matter but more important is the extent of those institutions commitment in practice.

Al-Balagh
weekly, 27 Jun
2006.

Main headlines
- Opposition parliamentarians: No Hope for the JMP in the upcoming elections
- Chairman of the Higher Council of the alliance of the tribes of Marib, Jawf, Shabwa, and Saada: The tribe above partisanship, our alliance aims to make the state listen to the tribe voice
- Armed clashes renew in Al-Hadda
- Whooping cough disease spread in four villages in Bait al-Faqieh
- Government forces launch intensive attack on Jumaa Bin Fadhil area in Saada
- Prisoners of the military prison in Hudeidah demand the parliament the formation of a committee to investigate into violations and crimes perpetrated against them

The newspaper editor in chief discusses in an article acceptance of President Ali Abdullah Saleh to nominate himself for the Yemeni presidential elections. He says maybe the opposition would say that the action has been a kind of a drama or other such descriptions but the fact is that millions of the people have gone to the streets to tell the president to be their candidate to the presidency. The writer says the masses of the people have done that voluntarily and that their action portrays the Yemenis nature that is ready to bear difficulties and hunger and poverty for participating in what they think is correct.

The truth of what happened is a spectacular image of democracy that means diversity and difference at a time the opposition says it is not with nomination of Ali Abdullah Saleh. It is also at a time other some declares in writings that they do not want president Saleh. There are on the other hand the masses who took to the streets to support Saleh's nomination. This is indeed the democratic school the president talked about in his speech and this is the freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom of choice, the writer says.

Now the ball is in the court of the opposition that is in need to take its decision to declare its candidate to the presidential elections. The opposition has signed the agreement of principles with the General People's Congress and competition is required in the democratic process and the existence of more than one candidate is a required matter. Above all the tendency towards stabilization of

agreement that maybe the first of its kind in our Arab homeland or maybe in our third world. The decency of elections is a right guaranteed by the constitution and the laws regulating elections. It is known that the Yemeni constitution and the election law stipulate that. There might be in one of them or in both some shortcomings in this regard and in such a case conducting dialogue and through the parliament such shortcomings could be reviewed and rectified.

Al-Nidaa weekly,
28 Jun 2006.

Main headlines
- Main opposition presidential candidates, Bin Shamlan, al-Hamdi and Damaj
- Sana'a declaration calls on governments to respect independence of trade unions and to unleash the media freedom
- Attempted assassination against taxes authority deputy during his son's wedding ceremony
- Financial corruption in Yemeni islands
- Government institutions and influential personalities seize endowments lands in Saada

The writer Abdulbari Tahir discusses in an article the impartiality of elections saying after two months of dialogue the ruling GPC party and parties of the JMP (the political opposition) have signed a document on elections honesty. It is an

SILVER LINING

Democratic reform must proceed

It is fine to have state and non-state actors meet and debate common concerns in the Arab countries like what happened last week at the Sana'a conference on democracy, political reforms, and the freedom of expression. Although the conference was dominated by the governments and its recommendations were not up to expectations, still such activities are good. It is good to encourage the networking of civil society reformers in the region by brining them together to discuss the possibilities of boosting democratic reforms in their respective countries and the challenges ahead, provided that such activities are not turned into propaganda for authoritarian regimes.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

tomorrow, while we fear the future. What a pity! President Ali Abdullah Saleh addressed the democracy conference noting that democracy and reform cannot be thought of being enacted while terrorism strikes the region. He said that the West is now making theories on democracy and civil society organizations while the people of the region are poor. Sardonicly, he said, "teach us [democracy] and feed us."

I should ask why the West has to teach us and feed us as if we were their babies. It is not their responsibility to do all this while we remain idle, waiting for their sympathetic support.

Why terrorism and poverty?
The region is plagued with terrorism because it lacks democratic traditions. Instead, it has an authoritarian culture that fails to recognize the right of others to exist or express their difference of opinion. Talking about the Palestinian issue, making it the sole reason of our plight, is unjustifiable. I understand the ordeals of the Palestinians and the outrageous atrocities the Israelis carry out against them. Yet, it is unreasonable to halt developmental and reform processes that target hundreds of millions citizens living in the other Arab countries. I know that we do not fully agree with the foreign policies of the West, but this does not mean that we should look at their support for our democratization with suspicion.

Again, our poverty and backwardness are not completely due to our lack of resources. We are poor because we lack good governance and powerful legislatures that are able to nip the corruption of the executives in the bud and hold them accountable. We are poor because nobody knows where our public money goes. We are poor because most of our budget goes to armaments instead of health and education. If our resources were channeled properly, none of the Arab countries would need the support of the West or other rich countries, or let us say our need then will be limited.

What we need from conferences such as the one held in Sana'a is not mere recommendations and polite talks. Rather, we need developed countries to exercise effective pressure on Arab regimes so that they stop harassing democracy activists and journalists. The West needs to lay down its support for greater progress in political reforms and the freedom of the media.

I agree with Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim that Arab regimes should show us timelines for democratic transitions, even though it is impossible to set a timeframe for such an open-ended and sophisticated process. Yet, such timelines would provide some evidence of their determination to implement serious action. Non-state actors should think strategically and figure out what can be exactly concretized, and not just keep their heads in the clouds. For example, in the field of media, we need to see the end of the state monopoly over the broadcast media and more room for journalists to operate without restraint. Don't you agree?

Mohammed Al-Qadhi is a Yemeni journalist and columnist. (mhalqadhi@hotmail.com)

Other people look forward to a better

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
Ministry of Oil & Minerals
**Petroleum Exploration &
Production Authority**

Tender Announcement



Announcing the general tender No. 2 for the year 2006, the Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority (PEPA) invites well-qualified consultants to prepare studies and design of PEPA's Building.

PEPA invites experienced companies and consultation offices in and outside Yemen, having the desire to compete for the tender, to apply to the PEPA's General Administration for Financial and Administrative Affairs, the Political Zone, opposite to the National Tobacco and Matches Company, during the official working hours to receive the tender documents for a non-refundable sum of 50,000 Yemeni Riyals.

The following requirements have to be met:

- 1- Submitting bids in envelopes stamped with red wax.
- 2- The technical offer must be submitted in one envelope and the financial offer in another envelope, and each envelope must contain an original and three authorized copies of each offer.
- 3- Enclosing a photocopy of the tax card valid for 2006.
- 4- Enclosing a photocopy of the insurance card valid for 2006.
- 5- Enclosing a photocopy of the zakat card valid for 2006.
- 6- Submitting a preliminary deposit, with the financial offer, equivalent to 2,5% of the bid value. This can be via a payable check or a bank guarantee from an accredited bank in Yemen valid for 120 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 7- The sum must be paid in local currency (Yemeni Riyal).

The closing date for receiving technical and financial offers is Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Technical envelopes will be opened at 11:00 of the same day in the presence of bid owners or their representatives. No bid will be accepted after the above-stated deadline.

For inquiries, contact us at the following address:

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P. Box: 7196- Sana'a,
Tele: 967 1 441230
Fax: 967 1 448726

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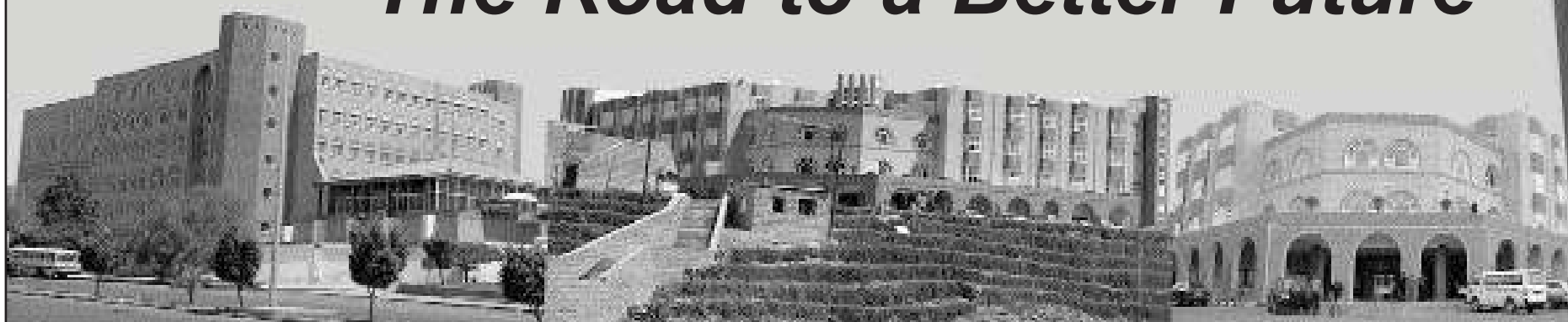
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Ahmed Al-Absi: a Yemeni photography master

By: Atif Awad

Ahmed Omar Al-Absi was born in a village in central Yemen in 1911, according to his son Mohammed Ahmed Omar, a doctor in Dhamar province. His grandmother used to retell the story of her son to her grandson. Mohammed still remembers his grandmother describing the story of Al-Absi and his fascination with the camera.



Ahmed Omar Al-Absi.

"As a child, he used to hear grownups mention a machine that could marvelously depict people's faces and bodies when they stood in front of it," she recounted. "He became obsessed with it. When he became a teenager, he went to British-colonized Aden, hell-bent on seeing the machine that could exactly reproduce faces in pictures and on paper."

Al-Absi began searching for the

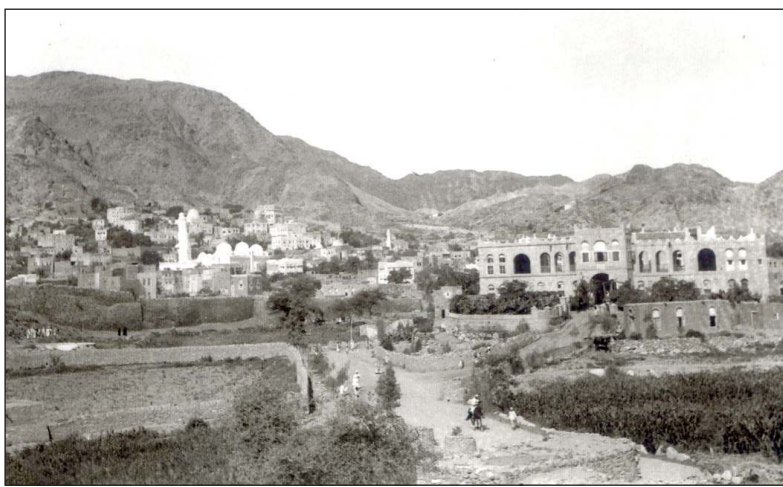
machine in Aden where he met an Indian of Persian origin who was a photographer and owned a studio. He became his disciple and picked up skills from the photographer, as he kept observing what he was doing in terms of taking and developing photos. He was keen not to neglect any part of the man's practice.

Spending considerable time with the Indian photographer, Al-Absi became a professional in the art of photography. He then thought of returning to his native province of Taiz and introducing that first marvelous machine – the camera – to former North Yemen.

People had heard about it, but few believed it. Aden was an isolated British colony that no one could enter easily, aside from the fact that traveling at that time was difficult and tiresome. Not many Yemenis could afford to pay the travel expenses to Aden; therefore, the majority used donkeys and mules as means of transportation and less frequently by automobiles, which were very few.

Despite difficult circumstances, Al-Absi continued to practice his beloved profession in the city of Taiz. He encountered many hurdles such as the alleged illegality of photography which some muftis say is against Islam. However, Al-Absi wasn't practicing the profession to earn his living but rather spontaneously and instinctively.

With his camera, he wanted to record Yemeni events which thereafter continued to conjure up sad but important memories. Had it not been for Al-Absi, Yemenis couldn't have acquainted themselves with atrocities perpetrated against Yemeni revolutionists by the imam and his henchmen. With his lens, he captured



Pre-Revolution Taiz city, a photograph taken by Ahmed Omar Al-Absi.

the horrible executions of revolutionists in a square in the city of Taiz, both those of the 1948 and 1955 revolutions.

Of those revolutionists whose executions were memorialized on film by Al-Absi's still camera were judge Al-Sayyaghi and Al-Luqayyah. Through his lens, he depicted the horrible sword of Al-Woshah, the imam's executioner, beheading revolutionists. Even the moment of executing Al-Woshah himself, the imam's faithful henchman, was attended by Al-Absi's camera.

It was not only executions that were recorded by the lens of this creative and spontaneous artist. Al-Absi also shot numerous scenes from the miserable life of Yemenis at that time and their villages, as well as public places and the remarkable landmarks in Taiz and Aden.

Abdul-Rahman Bajjash, deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Thawra daily, said practically every real photographer in Yemen and every studio in any Yemeni

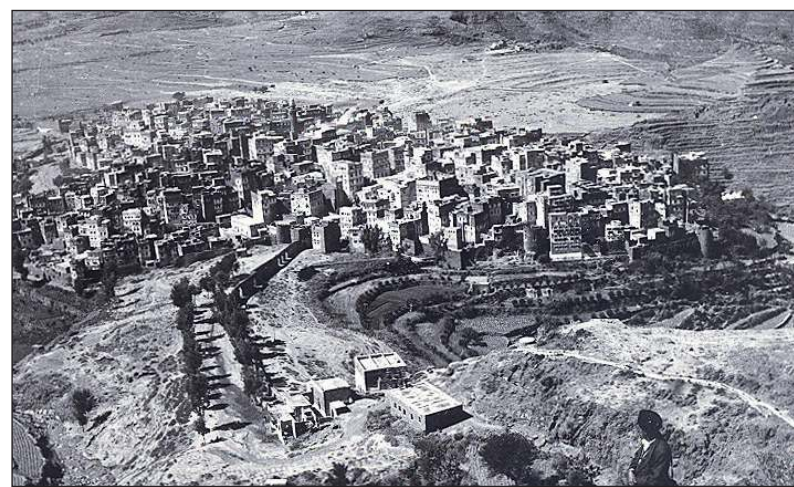
city have something to do with this great photographer, who was a pioneer and a master in the art of photography. Al-Absi sensed his responsibility toward his nation and his people and carried it regularly and constantly without reluctance. He taught all those wanting to learn photography and master its nuances. Not only that, he also helped those who wanted to learn but had little sustenance.

Al-Absi's son Mohammed displayed a great quantity of pictures his father shot. Each photo retells a thousand tales and stories, reviving memories and enlivening scenes from Yemeni villages and people in the past. The collection is a registry that surpasses organized corporate efforts.

While showing the collection, Al-Absi's son voiced his wish to see his father's works cared for by the state or any organization by publishing a book displaying and preserving such an invaluable heritage.



Al-Tawahi Aden as in 1952.



Ibb city as in 1950.

Koran Studies:

A Reappraisal of the position of women

The supremacy of men over women in Islam is often substantiated by citing Verse 4.34 in the Koran. An academic institute in Germany has just published a new study on the Verse. Susan Javad of "Qantara" interviews the editor.

Luise Becker, how did you and the Center for Islamic Women's Studies (ZIF) in Cologne arrive at the idea of compiling a work on Verse 4.34?

Luise Becker: For one thing, the Verse in Sura 4, which goes under the heading "Women," is regarded as a bone of contention per se in terms of relations between the sexes in Islam. No other text offers at first glance such a misogynous definition of prescribed relations between men and women. But, as I say, at first glance, and in its translated version.

The impulse for our work came from the fact that this topic has been vehemently discussed in the German and Western European context and also because this text poses a great difficulty for Muslim women, especially those who lack the foundation to interpret and critically approach the Verse. In addition, this text is still used by men to underpin their supposed God-given privileged status.

Our work, however, also aims to provide a signal to German society by demonstrating how texts can be

approached in Islam. The Islamic religious tradition of dialectics (*kalam*) has long offered tools to "crack open" texts. Exegetic and hermeneutic work within Islam is nothing new, yet this has been largely forgotten.

Our work, therefore, should not be understood as any sort of final answer. As subjective beings, there is no way we can provide definitive answers.

Do you then see yourselves in the tradition of Islamic scholarship or rather in an anti-traditional role? And how do you assess dogmatism in Islamic teachings?

Becker: I think that this is one of the greatest problems in Islam. An absolute standpoint is very often taken according to the motto "this has already been stated by such-and-such a scholar centuries ago." With all respect, this easily leads to opinions gaining acceptance as "God-given" laws. In contrast, we regard our position as being in accordance with the approach of early Islamic scholars, who tended to hold the view that "my opinion dies with me."

Such a path, followed by Abu Hanifa, for example, is actually quite an enlightened one. Yet, all this is apparently forgotten or ignored as a result of special interests. This is why our work includes the commentaries of past scholars as well as contemporary academics, and also points out the contradictions to the original text with respect to relations between the sexes as prescribed by the Koran.

We would like to see an end to traditional, conservative ways of thinking and a return to the open-mindedness that prevailed in the early days of Islam. At that time, *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) and *ra'y* (personal judgment) were practiced and there was room for alternative opinions and pragmatic solutions, without those expressing varying viewpoints

having to fear charges of apostasy or heresy.

How do you then deal with Verse 4.34?

Becker: The first exegesis of this Verse was actually provided by the Prophet himself. He said, "Do not beat women. Those who hit women are amongst the worst of creatures." Supported by the prophetic example, the word "hit" could be interpreted within the given context to mean "hit out upon or adopt another path." In this case, it doesn't refer to the emotional domestic conflict, but rather distances itself from this context. Curiously, this prophetic course of conduct is not considered.

The actual problem, however, is whether one takes the context into account when interpreting the Koran and whether one is prepared to say that even the word of God has, quite naturally, been conveyed within a specific context and that herein lies the binding and timeless essence of the Koran with respect to justice between the sexes. Should one cite texts that state the equality of the sexes alongside those, such as the above quoted Verse, with no context, thereby generalizing the historical example for all times?

This would probably leave readers extremely perplexed and unable to see the equality advocated by the Koran. Fortunately, the apparent contradictions have been extensively explored and also debated among Muslims. This is a fundamental debate that has to take place in the Islamic world.

What reaction have you so far received from Muslims to the publication?

Becker: Most of the response has come from non-Muslim circles. I tend to regard the meager response from Muslims as being rather typical. The topic evidently involves still too many risks for

Muslims. A Muslim man came to me and said, "What you have written is certainly interesting, but it is unfortunately once again directed against us men." When I then told him that a well-known contemporary male scholar had come to very similar conclusions, he changed his position and was at once prepared to engage in a detailed discussion on the topic.

This is a great problem, as such work done by women is not taken seriously enough. And it is women who are affected. This also indicates how men fundamentally think about women. Of course, this phenomenon is not just specific to Islam. Whenever a man expresses the same opinion as a woman on a topic, people are prepared to listen to the man.

Yet, we have also experienced positive to euphoric responses from Muslim women. Even some men have responded positively, rarely in writing, however, but more often in telephone calls or personal conversations. This once again shows how men fear making a public admission of such views.

Does the ZIF enjoy contacts with other Muslim groups following similar approaches?

Becker: Unfortunately, there is still no sufficiently established network for cooperation in Europe or even worldwide. But it is emerging. Previously, it has been mainly individuals, such as Fatima Mernissi, Amina Wadud, and Rifaat Hassan, who were noted for such work. We would like to establish contacts with women and groups that use the Koran as the basis for their work and do not only regard Islam as a significant cornerstone of culture. To date, we are the only group in Germany using this approach to interpret the Koran.

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The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 36

Translated by Edward FitzGerald

The ball no question makes of
ayes and noes,
But right or left, as strikes the
player goes;
And He that toss'd thee down
into the field,
He Knows about it all - He
knows-HE knows!

Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

Yemen: The People and Culture (VII)

Author: Qadhi Abdullah Abdul-Wahhab Al-Shamahi
Language: Arabic
Publisher: Dar Al-Hana Printing
Year Published: 1973
No. of Pages: 370

With the entry of the Zeidi faith, began a long history of on-and-off Zeidi rule that sometimes encompassed all of Yemen proper; i.e., the geographical bounds of natural Yemen extending from way inside the Central and Southern highlands of Yemen, Hadramaut and even Oman. However, by its nature and its calls for rebellions against any tyrannical or despotic ruler, a sustainable institutionalized Zeidi regime could not be well established in Yemen. Thus, much intermittent warfare occurred throughout the 1000 years or so of Zeidi rule and it would not be unusual to see brothers warring against each other, with each brother claiming that he is more competent in upholding God's law on Earth. Along this period, however other dynasties flourished in the more subdued regions of Yemen. This was mainly in the South, the Tehama region and the other lowland plains area of Yemen. As these regimes rose, the Zeidi regime tended to lie in dormant state in the far northern highlands surrounding the City of Sa'ada where Imam Al-Hadi Yahya Bin Al-Hussein had set up the Zeidi caliphate, with almost all the Imams being descendants of Ali, cousin of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH) and Fatima, the latter's daughter through their son Hassan, whereas the Shiites of Persia and the Fertile Crescent usually followed the Imams that descended from Hassan's brother Hussein.

Notwithstanding the above, it is worth mentioning that there were several states that rose in the intervals between Zeidi rule, which were replete with culture and learning and great artistic achievements. We will briefly look at the most prominent of these regimes and note their significant contributions to Yemeni modern culture.

The Sulaihi Dynasty

The Sulaihi dynasty began with Ali Mohammed Al-Sulaihi, who rose in 436 AH from the "castle of Masar", as the author states, in what is today Haraz. He was followed by the followers of the Ismaeli Shiite Sect. He was able to defeat the prominent Yemeni leaders that thought the Ismaeli sect to be heretical, including the Rassi leader Ja'afar Ibn Al-Qassim Al-Iyani, and their tribal allies from Hamdan led by the Sultan Abi Hashid Ibn Al-Dhahhak, and after fierce fighting in several fronts the Sulaihi forces got the upper hand and finally took Sana'a after the latter was defeated and killed in the Bani Matar area. Within a short while after that, Mohammed had control of most of Yemen and a significant part of the Arabian Peninsula. He brought

together many of the independent sultans and princes that had domains in Yemen and formed a council out of them to manage the affairs of state in Yemen. During the reign of Ali Bin Mohammed Al-Sulaihi relative peace prevailed and Sana'a and many cities saw a flourishing building boom, which included enlargement of the Grand Mosque. However this peace and tranquility was not to last. The first Sulaihi ruler was killed on his way to a pilgrimage to Mecca in the Year 456 AH in the plains of Tehama. His son, Al-Mukarram Ahmed Bin Ali Al-Sulaihi took over the throne. The latter was able to sustain the Sulaihi dynasty and overcome the rebellions that began to rise after his father's death. After some intermittent fighting among the various Sulaihis themselves and the beginning of the dissolution of their vast domain, a few Sulaihi rulers came and went until the throne became in the hands of Queen Arwa around 492 AH, where she ruled indirectly or directly up to 532 AH. During her reign several achievements were realized and many architectural symbols are testimony to the grandeur and aesthetic inclinations of the Sulaihi regime. These included the Al-Janad Mosque in Ta'ez, the West wing of the Grand Mosque in Sana'a and the several fortifications, dams and reservoirs that stretch through Ibb, Ta'ez and the other territories they were able to hold on to. However, death of the Queen ended the zenith of power and prosperity reached by the Sulaihis.

The Sulaihi dynasty was followed by another period of divisions and competing dynasties and the Shiites of the North were able to take an active role again in the state of affairs, in the areas of "Sa'ada, Hashid and Al-Ahnoon", which the author notes was neglected by the Sulaihis. In addition other sultans and local chiefs or sheikhs were able to establish themselves in their local regions and Yemen became divided again with many states reigning here and there until the Year 554 when the Imam-King, as the author titles him, Ali Bin Mahdi Al-Himyari took control of Zabid. His sectarian inclination was neither Zeidi nor Shafei and he did not believe that the "rule of the State should be under the Qurishis as the latter. He was known for his scholarly attributes and also believed that tyrannical despots should be overthrown, if necessary. He followed the Hanafi sect to a certain extent, but did not mind taking from some of the other sects any beliefs that agreed with his scholarly persuasion. He was a devoted pious man, according to the author, and really felt that he was fighting in the right path, since he never refused to cease his determination to establish his view of a proper Islamic state. The noted significance of the rule of Ali Bin Mahdi was the complete dissolution of the Ethiopian influence in Yemen and "Yemen was never to see the latter come into prominence to this day", says the author.

Taiz anti-TB center: Citizens must pay for treatment

By: Yemen Times Staff
Taiz bureau

The current prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) in Yemen is 1.5 cases per 1,000 people. Medical reports estimate that between 2,000 and 2,500 Yemenis die from TB every year, making it the fourth cause of death in Yemen. This estimation seems in sync with several hospital statistics. In reality, most deaths in Yemen occur outside of hospitals, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population lives.

Therefore, in cooperation with international organizations, the Yemeni government is conducting a National Tuberculosis Program aimed at eliminating TB in Yemen. Anti-TB centers have been established in many governorates to receive patients and examine, treat and provide them drugs.

Additionally, the centers are responsible for preparing medical files including dates of patients' cases as well as determining methods to help patients become involved in the treatment program by providing them with free medical services. Such measures are supposed to remove obstacles for mostly poor patients.

The Taiz anti-TB center manager was attacked by unidentified individuals and the deputy manager excused himself from being interviewed.

However, many Taiz governorate patients claim that such measures aren't applied at the Taiz anti-TB center, as patients must pay for everything and in every section of the center, beginning from diagnosis and ending with the cost of medication.

The national anti-TB program



The Taiz anti-TB center lab diagnoses 600 to 800 TB cases annually.

manager addressed an April 10 memorandum numbered 111 to the Ministry of Health, wherein he highlighted the situation at the Taiz center. According to the memo, the center has established a lab to increase its income by conducting routine medical tests like blood tests, typhoid, rheumatism, pregnancy tests and liver and kidney function tests.

Additionally, the center opened a pharmacy selling medication at costs similar to those in the private market. According to the memo, such additions are against the program's policy and its main aim, which is building and equipping a Taiz governorate center specialized in treating TB patients freely, like centers in Sana'a and Aden.

The Taiz center manager couldn't be interviewed because he suffered a stroke due to an attack by unidentified individuals who struck him on the head. The deputy manager said he couldn't do an interview, saying he was very busy, particularly with the manager's absence.

Dr. Ameen Al-Swidi, head of the center's lab section, said the center receives very few TB samples. "The national anti-TB program has opened anti-TB units in many Taiz governorate directorates to reduce difficulties patients face in traveling to the center. We also trained technical personnel in these units to test, diagnose and distribute medications," he said.

"The few samples that reach the center are for microscopy examinations. Such samples are sent to the center if routine tests fail to diagnose the infection," he added.

Samples reach the center in closed, sterilized plastic containers prepared for that purpose. "The containers are used only once. Used containers are burned directly after we finish the tests to insure that they won't be the cause of infection," he explained.

Al-Swidi confirmed that the Taiz anti-TB center is ready to diagnose TB infection by direct testing or microscopy examinations, adding that the center is discovering 600 to 800 TB cases annually.

"If there are any defects or trouble, we contact the national institute in Sana'a, which provides us with everything we need, whether equipment or solutions," he noted.

However, Al-Swidi confessed that the Taiz center still lacks some equipment. "We have asked for a computer for many years. A computer is



The anti-TB center in Taiz governorate.

important to our work because we can prepare and save reports and databases of our patients, our center and other sectors and units," he explained.

Handling 600-800 TB cases annually, center staff are exposed to infection transmission due to lack of public knowledge.

Regarding the safety of the center's staff, Al-Swidi said medical staff are exposed to infection, particularly those working in the lab because they deal directly with TB-infected patients or samples that are considered very dangerous.

"There's a lack of knowledge in this regard. That is, many patients don't know that sneezing, coughing or spitting are sources of contagion. So protective materials employees use in the lab aren't enough because they're exposed to infection in the corridor or anyplace where patients have spit or coughed, especially given that sanitation inside the center isn't good enough," he said.

Dr. Abdulwarth Al-Sulwi, also from the Taiz center, discussed the disease and its treatment, explaining that TB is a chronic and acute bacterial infection caused by a rod-shaped bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It primarily attacks the lungs, but also may affect the brain, kidneys, bones and lymph nodes.

TB symptoms include coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, weight loss, fever, chills and fatigue. Children and those with weakened immune systems are the most susceptible to TB and half of all untreated TB cases are fatal.

"Every year, eight million people contract this disease and tuberculosis causes two million deaths a year," Al-

Sulwi stated, "WHO predicts that between 2000 and 2020, nearly one billion will become infected with the TB bacteria and 35 million will die from the disease. Ninety-five percent of these patients are found in developing countries."

According to Al-Sulwi, the reason for the disease's prevalence in such countries is their low treatment rates because patients don't complete the full six to nine months of antibiotic therapy required to cure TB. Many stop taking antibiotics when they begin feeling healthier, but successful TB treatment requires therapy beyond the period of obvious symptoms.

When patients fail to follow the prescribed treatment, they may become actively infectious, spreading the disease to others. An infected individual may infect as many as 10 to 15 others in a single year.

Failure to complete the full round of treatment also can cause the emergence of TB bacterial strains with acquired drug resistance, further complicating treatment by increasing the length and cost of therapy. The emergence of multiple drug therapy-resistant bacteria strains is a serious problem, particularly because no ready drug treatment is available to combat newly emerging strains.

TB is transmitted from person to person usually by inhaling bacteria-carrying air particles. When a TB patient coughs, sneezes or speaks, small particles carrying two to three bacteria surrounded by a layer of moisture are released into the air. When another individual inhales these particles, the bacteria may lodge in that person's lungs and multiply.

The Taiz center opened a lab to conduct routine medical tests in addition to TB testing.

Al-Sulwi pointed to many general preventive measures that can be taken to reduce TB's spread in public places, including:

- Those infected with TB should cover their mouth with a handkerchief or tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Those infected with TB shouldn't spit on the floor inside homes but rather in a tissue that must be burned afterward.
- Children must be vaccinated against TB immediately after birth and

until they reach age 4.

- Avoid smoking tobacco or water pipe with others.
- Good and balanced nutrition.
- Early diagnosis and early treatment.
- Allow light, heat and air to enter the house by opening windows because fresh air with light and heat kills TB-causing bacteria.

While Al-Sulwi confirmed that TB isn't a hereditary disease, it is chronic. However, it's considered preventable, even in those who have been exposed to an infected individual. Fatality occurs only when the patient is late in diagnosis and treatment.

Diagnosing TB requires two separate methods. Tuberculin skin testing is a method of screening for exposure to TB infection. An individual infected with TB will have developed a hypersensitivity to the TB bacteria, even if he or she didn't develop the disease.

A purified protein derived from the bacteria is injected into the skin and the area is inspected for a bump 48 to 72 hours later. A positive test implies that TB infection has occurred. Skin tests aren't 100 percent accurate and they don't always indicate the presence of active disease.

TB diagnosis also is done by identifying bacteria in sputum (matter coughed up from the lungs) or other bodily fluids and tissues in conjunction with an abnormal chest X-ray and the presence of TB symptoms. Once TB has been diagnosed, further testing is required to determine the most appropriate drugs to treat the particular strain of TB bacteria.

WHO updates aviation guidelines for TB prevention

WHO today issued updated guidelines for the airline industry that will further minimize the risk of tuberculosis (TB) and other infectious diseases being passed from passenger to passenger on board aircraft. The "Tuberculosis and Air Travel" guidelines stipulate that people with infectious TB must postpone long-distance travel, while those with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) must postpone any air travel.

To date, no case of active TB has been identified as a result of exposure on a commercial aircraft. The quality of the air on board commercial aircraft is high and under normal conditions cabin air is cleaner than the air in most buildings.

Prolonged journeys of more than eight hours in a confined aircraft cabin may involve an increased risk of transmission, but the risk should be similar to that in other circumstances where people are together in other confined spaces. The guidelines also advise that aircraft ventilation systems should continue to operate when the aircraft is delayed on the ground and the doors are closed. If not in operation, ground delays should be kept to less than 30 minutes.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and its partners, including WHO, are actively looking at ways to improve the accuracy and availability of passenger information. As an interim measure, a

locator card has been developed. If there is suspected case of a communicable disease of international importance on board, designated passengers would be asked fill it out. The card records the name, seat number and emergency contact information.

"Increasing global TB incidence and the emergence of drug resistant strains of the disease has raised concerns about the international spread of particularly dangerous strains. We need clear and effective procedures in place to reduce the risk of transmission of infection on board flights, and to ensure the appropriate follow up when necessary," said WHO's Director of Stop TB, Dr Mario Raviglione.

Serious harm by research

The media, legislators, and other organizations often raise concerns about human-rights violations and ethical breaches in clinical research. Such cases are legion. Human subjects are allowed to be bitten by 100 mosquitoes that could carry malaria in a study in Brazil. A French doctor performs a face transplant without the benefit of the usual research that would accompany such a high-risk procedure. An 18-year-old subject in a gene therapy trial dies, with numerous lapses in the clinical trial noted after his death.

Just months ago, a clinical trial in London that saw the first use of a drug in humans resulted in six healthy subjects becoming violently ill. Two of the volunteers nearly died. The volunteers were paid several thousands of dollars to participate in the trial.

The general public is aware of



By: Adil E. Shamoo

clinical research trials, but there is little awareness that the number of subjects enrolled in research is much larger than the numbers enrolled in clinical trials alone. While some research-related deaths reach the popular media, the actual number of deaths in research is higher. Even regulators and industry experts are not aware of the true numbers of deaths and adverse events, due to the lack of proper reporting.

The large numbers of human subjects in research are an outgrowth of the legitimate need for more and better health care throughout our ever-lengthening lifespans. No single entity keeps track of the real extent of the abuse of all human subjects engaged in research either in the United States or worldwide. I estimate that in the US

alone, there are more than twenty million subjects, half of whom represent drug trials. Worldwide, this number could exceed fifty million, with about half that number in drug studies. These staggering numbers present an awesome responsibility for our citizens and our governments alike.

The immediate ethical issue facing us is the real harm inflicted on unsuspecting subjects through a vast array of indignities, adverse events, injuries, and death. Many of those who are harmed are poor, uneducated, and politically powerless. Some are impaired in their ability to give informed consent due to mental or cognitive disabilities, or are exposed to coercion, improper monitoring, and pervasive conflicts of interest. Moreover, the justice of the distribution of risks and benefits is questionable when research subjects are concentrated on a vulnerable segment of our society.

Bloomberg Market magazine

recently published an extensive article on the unethical practices of the largest contract research organization conducting some clinical trials in Florida. Trial subjects drawn from illegal Latin American immigrants were threatened with reporting of their illegal status to the US Department of Homeland Security if they complained about the risks of the drug that they received.

That is only one example. The system of protections for human subjects worldwide is either nonexistent or broken. In Europe since May 2004, all clinical trials in the 25 nations of the EU must conform to the European Directive (ED) issued in 2001 at the behest of pharmaceutical industry. Each country's regulatory body will have to issue their own regulations that are within the bound of the Directive.

The Directive brings the protections for human subjects in European clinical trials in line with those in the US. But in both the US and Europe, the

system has serious shortcomings and gaps. For example, there are highly decentralized ethics committees with varied qualities to protect human subjects. The EU directive does not regulate social and behavioral research while the US does not regulate research that is privately funded and not related to drug licensing.

Further down the chain of supervision, research institutions are designated to "manage" their own conflicts of interests as well as those of their investigators. Yet many institutions and investigators have a financial stake in the clinical trials they conduct. Most investigators have little or no training in ethics and regulatory compliance, for which there is no mandatory education.

Advocates in the US, such as the ten-year-old human rights organization, Citizens for Responsible Care and Research (www.circare.org), which I co-founded, have proposed a universal National Human Subjects Protection Act. However, there is no

likelihood of passage anytime soon.

Opposition to serious reforms to protect human subjects in research comes from two groups: the pharmaceutical industry and universities. The objections of industry rest on the narrow issue of added financial cost. The objections coming from universities are more puzzling, as it is in their long-term interest to conduct research ethically.

In both cases, the effective protection of human subjects should receive much higher priority, thereby justifying the modest added expense, which probably would amount to no more than 1-2% of the overall cost of clinical studies. If such research is truly to serve the public good, the safety, health, and dignity of human subjects should not be compromised.

Dr Adil E. Shamoo is Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Accountability in Research*. Source: Project Syndicate, 2006.

Republic of Yemen
Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank
Sana'a, Head-office

International Tender Notice TENDER NO.:01/2006/CACBANK

- The Republic of Yemen has received a Grant from the Government of the United State of America (USA) towards the cost of the "FY 2003 Food for Progress" and intends to apply part of the Grant proceeds towards eligible payments under the contract for consulting services for the upgrading and modernization of the Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank (CACBANK)
- The Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank (CACBANK) invites qualified international consultants with a minimum experience of not less than ten years in restructuring of Banks and financial institutions, and shall submit their sealed bids for the following services:
 - To enhance CACB's management by possible identifying of three strategic hires for senior management positions and evaluating current staff, responsibilities and staffing levels;
 - To propose improvements to CACB's organizational structure;
 - To assess the strength of CACB's capital accounts in terms of present capital adequacy and future growth, evaluate new sources of capital, and formulate a plan to develop the existing public/private relationship;
 - To prepare a detailed plan to strengthen CACB earnings;
 - To review the CACB risk management system and make recommendations to bring it in line with industry norms and best practices;
 - To evaluate CACB's new accounting system for functionality and efficiency and propose an effective disaster recovery plan;
 - To review CACB's lending strategy and design work plans that will improve training, procedures, quality and oversight;
 - To design a multi-year strategy for CACB's banking activities; including rural sector and agricultural lending aiming to improve lending and minimize existing and future risks; and
 - To propose a methodology for assessing new product offerings and suggesting additional product offerings with a high likelihood of success.
 - The consultant shall carry-out a financial market survey to collect the required information and data in order to assess the level of liquidity available, new products demand, target groups. etc, to enable CACB to exercise different future banking activities.
 - The consultant shall look into the possibility of opening an Islamic window at branch level as part of CACB future products.
- Consultants shall submit proposals for all of the tasks generally described above. Proposals will be evaluated based on both Quality and Cost, and compensation will be on a lump sum basis.
- Interested Consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services for all of the project tasks.
- Documents shall be purchased at below address on submission of a written application for non-refundable fee of US\$ 2000 (two thousand dollars), plus US\$ 100 for the courier charges for overseas delivery (if required) from the following address:

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Al-Saqr needs 3 points to clinch title

By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

In round 22 of Premier League play, the Al-Saqr team from Taiz drew Al-Yarmouk last Friday at Al-Meraysi Stadium in Sana'a. The draw postponed announcement of the first placed team as the titleholder. Al-Saqr, however, increased its points to 50, needing only three points to win the title. Al-Yarmouk raised its points to 28 and is in eighth place.

At Al-Kibsi Stadium in Ibb, Sha'ab Ibb reclaimed second place with 39 points thanks to early goals from Fikri Al-Hubaishi in minutes 16 and 31 with a 2-1 win over Al-Telal. Machawba, from Congo, scored the visiting team's goal in minute 43 of the second half.

Al-Hubaishi has become the top scorer with 20 goals netted and has a three goal lead over Ahli Sana'a forward Adel Al-Salimi who has been sus-



Al-Saqr team

ended for five games under a Yemeni Football Federation's decision. Al-Telal remains in the fifth place with 35

Premier League standings

Team	Games played	Wins	Draws	Losses	Goals for	Goals against	Total points
Al-Saqr	22	15	5	2	39	13	50
Sha'ab Ibb	22	11	6	5	39	28	39
Ahli Sana'a	22	11	5	6	37	28	38
Helal Hodeida	22	10	6	6	42	33	36
Al-Telal	22	11	2	9	33	30	35
Hassan	22	9	7	6	24	20	34
Sha'ab Hadramout	22	9	4	9	28	36	31
Al-Yarmouk	22	7	7	8	25	28	28
Al-Shu'la	22	8	9	7	27	26	27
Tadhamun Shabwa	22	8	2	12	27	36	26
Al-Rashid	22	7	4	11	21	30	25
Shabab Al-Jeel	22	8	5	11	23	28	23
22 May	22	5	3	14	28	44	18
Ta'awen Ba'adan	22	4	5	13	31	44	17

Brazil 0 – 1 France

Thierry Henry's superb volley sent holders Brazil out of the World Cup as France moved into the semi-finals.

Inspired by man-of-the-match Zinedine Zidane, France were the better side in the first half, but failed to create clear chances to trouble Dida.

That changed just before the hour when Zidane swept a free-kick to the far post where it was sumptuously volleyed past the Brazilian goalkeeper by Henry.

Fabien Barthez denied Ronaldo late on to set up a semi-final with Portugal.

Prior to that save Barthez had flapped on a couple of occasions, but it was a mark of Brazil's lacklustre play that Ronaldo's shot came in stoppage time.

Brazil had strolled their way to the quarter-finals, but Carlos Alberto Parriera's side had no answer to a France team that combined defensive discipline with some wonderful attacking play.

France's route to the last eight has involved plenty of huffing and puffing, but the knockout stages have brought out the best in Raymond Domenech's side.

Zidane was magnificent throughout, while after the interval the speed of Henry and Franck Ribery unsettled the Brazilian defence.

As early as the first minute Brazil were given a glimpse of what they were to experience for the remaining 89 minutes as Zidane glided away from a succession of Brazilian tackles as he executed a quick turn and that trademark stepover.

A Zidane flick that deceived Cafu was equally breathtaking, while he held off and teased Kaka by juggling the ball.

Not to be outdone, Brazil's number 10 Ronaldinho deftly touched the ball into Ronaldo's path before the Brazilian striker was closed down by the French defence.

A Zidane free-kick set up France's best chance in the first half but Florent Malouda headed over.

A minute before the interval another piece of Zidane wizardry released Patrick Vieira, who was scythed down by Juan, who was booked.

Within a minute of the second half



Thierry Henry's superb volley sent holders Brazil out of the World Cup as France moved into the semi-finals.

starting Vieira went close with a glancing header from a Zidane free-kick.

As the second half developed Henry began to come to the fore, first sprinting past Cafu, then troubling Lucio, before the Frenchman's backheel nearly released Vieira.

So often in their careers with France, Henry and Zidane have failed to quite click, but on 57 minutes they combined to devastating effect.

Zidane whipped in a free-kick to the far past that Henry spectacularly volleyed past Dida into the roof of the net.

Soon after the waspish Ribery nearly created a second goal for France when his penetrative cross was almost inadvertently turned into the Brazilian goal by defender Juan.

Ribery then almost latched on to a Henry pass, but Dida just got to the ball before the Marseille winger.

The win means France have beaten Brazil in three of their four World Cup

points.

Sha'ab Hadramawt beat its host Helal Al-Hodeida 5-4 in a dramatic play to jump to the seventh place with 31 points, while Al-Helal retreated to fourth place with 36 points.

In Abyan, Hassan thrashed its guest Ahli Sana'a 3-0 climbing to sixth place in the league with 34 points, while the visiting team retreated to the third place with 38 points.

In a Shabwa game, Al-Tadhamun defeated its guest Shabab Al-Jeel from Hodeida to take tenth place with 26 points, while the loser fell back to the twelfth place with 23 points.

At 22 May International Stadium in Aden, Al-Shu'ala downed Al-Rashid from Taiz 4-0 taking ninth place with 27 points, while the visiting team slid to eleventh place with 25 points.

Round 23 kicked off on Thursday with the 22 May team from Sana'a defeating its guest Ta'awen Ba'adan 3-1 to occupy the penultimate place with 18 points, while the visiting team remained in last place with 17 points.

More than a game

By: Neil Stormer

Washington, D.C. – "Some people believe that football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed with that attitude, it is much, much more important than that!"

With those words, former Liverpool football coach Bill Shankly inadvertently alluded to a new reality: football is not just a game, but is also an economic force, a model of globalisation and, more importantly, a vehicle for conflict resolution.

Two days ago, in the pages of this paper, Pascal Boniface discussed the relationship between football and geopolitics. In the context of his article, Boniface jokingly stated that football fans believe that FIFA should be given a Nobel Peace Prize. While concerted, pro-active efforts need to be made before the noblest of Nobel Prizes is conferred upon football's governing body, it is true that football and sports in general can play and have played a role in limiting the reaches of war and de-escalating violent situations.

There are numerous examples from the 20th and 21st centuries showing just how large a role football and sports have played in mitigating conflict. Consider the Christmas Truce during World War I; caked in mud and nearly frozen, Germans and Brits climbed out of their respective trenches along the front, set aside their guns and mutual animosities and celebrated Christmas by playing football. The truce didn't last, the war continued, but soldiers on both sides found themselves unable to fire out of their trenches – to fire across their erstwhile football pitch – at their enemies. A large amount of wasted ammunition was recorded on the following days as guns were trained at the stars above and not at the enemy.

In 1967, Pele travelled to Lagos, Nigeria, then in the midst of a brutal civil war, to play an exhibition match.

In order to allow both sides of the conflict to see the greatest ever play the game, a 48-hour ceasefire was called and honoured. A single footballer stopped a war.

World Cup qualification can do it too. Cote d'Ivoire is in the middle of a civil war. After the country's qualification for the World Cup, President Laurent Gbagbo acquiesced to the pleas of the Ivorian football federation and restarted peace talks. The country now enjoys a tense ceasefire, thanks solely to the team's trip to Germany. The peace may not survive much longer than the World Cup, but any cessation in fighting is a reason to celebrate.

Football can be a force for violence however. There is a tendency towards nationalism and racism, and the 1980s witnessed the rise of football-related gangs notorious for criminal behaviour and drunken brawling. The game has also "started" a war: a riot erupted at a series of games between Honduras and El Salvador, and the ensuing diplomatic collapse resulted in the 100-day Soccer War.

But the violence is the exception, not the norm. Sports have long served as a means of bridging gaps through peaceful exchanges and act as a diplomatic tool. While rivalries are occasionally inflamed through athletic contests, sports exchanges are seen as a safe ice-breaker.

The real sports-related conflict resolution success to be had though is not through the temporary unity achieved during international tournaments or the diplomatic thaw following a friendly football match. While a successful national team's efforts can bring warring sides together for the duration of the World Cup, the way to leverage football and all sports in the name of conflict resolution is through consistent, grassroots efforts to enlist the masses in peaceful interaction.

An increasing number of organisations take advantage of this form of peace building. Football 4 Peace is one such organisation. Since 2001, F4P has

been bringing Muslim and Jewish youth together to foster understanding and to overcome differences through sport. The Peres Centre for Peace has used football in a variety of ways to foster peace between Israel and Palestine, from a mixed Israeli-Palestinian exhibition team to camps and tournaments for children from both side of the divide.

Acknowledging the role sports can play in building peace, among other things, the UN General Assembly, passed Resolution 58/5, proclaiming 2005 to be the International Year for Sport and Physical Education. The goal was to use sports "as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

Organisations that promote understanding through sports see in them an unrivalled ability to overcome cultural, political and religious differences while promoting unity and understanding.

While the temporary ceasefire in Nigeria during Pele's visit and Ivory Coast's World Cup-inspired peace are not to be overlooked, these examples are only part of the bigger picture. The path to peace should be paved not just with the one-off event and top-down, tournament-inspired ceasefires, but also with long-term efforts of those who try to build from the ground up.

The premise behind the practice is simple: just as the World War I-era British and Germans who entered into a wartime Christmas football match would not readily fire upon each other, those who play together find it difficult to remain foes.

No one seriously contends that football is more important than life or death, but if applied to more serious pursuits, it can mean the difference between war and peace.

Neil Stormer works in conflict resolution and foreign policy in Washington, D.C.

This article was distributed by the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) and can be accessed at www.commongroundnews.org.

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The Ministry of Oil and Minerals (MOM) and Safer Exploration & Production Operations Company (SAFER) are pleased to announce a new initiative to recruit and train graduates to work as Legal Counsels for SAFER Co. The successful candidates will go through rigorous language and academic training to be qualified to work in the Legal Department at SAFER Co.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must have university degree preferably degree in Law from a recognized & reputed university with a minimum of 80% or GPA 3.00. Other disciplines may be considered as Petroleum Engineering if they have excellent English language skills.
- Age 22-28.
- Commitment to travel abroad to complete a Masters degree program in International Law.
- Commitment to undergo intensive English language training in Yemen if needed.
- Students with strong language skills are encouraged to apply. And those who are in a position to sit for the TOEFL or IELTS are encouraged to do so.
- Experience in this field is a plus but not essential.
- Must have strong work and learning ethics.

Application Criteria:

- Applications must be submitted NO Later Than **September 23, 2006**.
- Application Form could be obtained from our Website by choosing the following path: <http://www.saferyemen.com/download.html>, then click on download application under "Legal Counsel Qualification Program for Work at SAFER Co."
- A member of our recruitment team will call you if you are selected for a test and interview.
- Selection will be **based on the most qualified applicants**.
- Please make sure that your application contains all the needed personal, contact and qualification information.
- Any application that doesn't meet the minimum requirements will **Not be considered**.
- Handed-In CV's will **NOT be considered**.
- The scholarship committee on behalf of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals and SAFER Co., is committed to give all applicants equal, fair and competitive opportunities.

If you meet the above requirements, please forward your **resume, Application Form and a copy of your university transcript** and a copy of your TOEFL/ITP/IELTS score if available to the following address:

Safer Exploration and Production Operation Company
Attn: Human Resources Department
Recruiting Section
P.O. Box 481,
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

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Abayas and skirts

By: Beth Boal, Larin Brink and Fahad Mohammad

Richmond, Virginia; Kuwait City, Kuwait; Iowa City, Iowa - Black shadows walking side by side with women wearing Escada Jeans and tops while flaunting the latest Prada bag are a typical scene in many of the oil-rich Gulf State shopping malls. The *abaya*, a long, loose cloak covering the entire body from head to toe is often worn by Arab women. However, it has had to make way for the latest European and American haute couture. Just a few decades ago most Gulf women were seen only in black abayas, but today denim and abaya-clad women are as frequently found side by side. In politics and the workplace, women are also making strides in bringing together the modern and the traditional, in unique and quiet ways.

There have been numerous misconceptions concerning Arab women by the Western world, but negative stereotypes by the media are slowly being transformed by Arab women themselves. For instance, Arab women are often seen by their Western counterparts as being veiled by an oppressive patriarchal society. The reality is quite different. This reality varies, however, depending on which Arab country you are referring to, and which Arab woman you are talking about. For years, Westerners have misconstrued the hijab, the Islamic practice of women wearing a veil, as a control mechanism used by Arab men to oppress women. What most Westerners do not know is that wearing the veil is not mandated in most Arab countries, and Arab women choose to wear it in effort to avoid the male gaze.

The veil is based on Islamic religious doctrine, but is not much different from Christian-Judeo tradition which also calls for women to cover their heads in certain circumstances. Women who choose to wear the veil do so to protect themselves from unsolicited stares and to avoid being



seen as mere sexual objects. In contrast, although women in the U.S. are not required to wear tight jeans and low-cut tops, many choose to do so knowing that this will increase their sex appeal. The end result, ironically, is that Arab women are seen as oppressed and American women are seen as liberated, despite the fact that the latter's wardrobe seems designed to be physically pleasing to men while the other attempts to downplay the physical.

However, Arab women are subtly incorporating western fashion into their own styles, as if to send a message to the Western world that they can create a balance between these opposing viewpoints, and incorporate both of them. It is not uncommon to see women wearing brightly collared hijabs, some decorated with glitter and using striking, bright patterns, with tight, hip-hugging denim jeans.

In a similarly paradoxical way, Arab women are gaining access to other parts of society that were formerly closed to them without having created an overt feminist movement or even denouncing

traditional roles, as feminist movements in the West did. Rather, change just seems to be happening, as many Arab regimes are slowly embracing women's suffrage. Almost a year ago, Kuwaiti women got the right to vote and run for parliament, a breakthrough political decision that was debated for years and one already enacted in Bahrain and Qatar. Today, conservative Islamist MP's have acknowledged the positive impact of this decision and have already taken steps to win women votes by putting on the table anti-discrimination laws. After decades of being a half-democracy, Kuwaiti women can now become involved in the political process. The involvement of women in politics is a must to show the West that Arab women are not merely oppressed, and will increase respect for Muslim countries everywhere.

In the economic arena, however, women have made only minimal progress. For women in the Middle East, barriers to employment perpetuate the gender inequality of the region. The World Bank report "Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere" addressed the issue, stating that "[a] key entry point to bring about change is to focus on women's economic rights." While blue collar jobs will no doubt remain off-limits to women, there is also a thriving corporate job market, which women are often unqualified for because of a lack of education. The impact is great. If a country does not employ half of its citizens, it stifles innovation and possibly stagnates development. Because of high unemployment, a lack of a female work force, and a large population of people too old or too young to work, the Middle East and North Africa have the largest economic ratio dependency rate in the world, which is to say, relatively few wage-earners provide for a large segment of the population. Some reports show that a household's income could increase by 25% if women were a more active part of the labour market.

Nevertheless, there are some prominent exceptions to the rule. In several Arab countries, like Lebanon and Kuwait, women make up one-third of the workforce, and they are even entering male-dominated occupations as ambassadors, doctors and engineers. In addition, many women have started businesses and entered the stock markets, forcing their way into the patriarchal business sector and paving the road for the next generation of Arab women. Opening up the possibility of greater economic freedom for women could be the catalyst needed for gender equality in the region.

Flip through Arabic TV channels these days and you will see significant changes and paradoxes in Arab societies. There are elegantly dressed news presenters on Lebanese channels, raunchy, hip-shaking video clips of Haifa Wahbi, Elissa and other female singers, and women speakers at financial presentations in Doha and Dubai. Change is both subtle and dramatic, and will no doubt always seem "odd" to Western eyes. It is inconceivable that the women in this region abandon the abaya and the hijab in favour of low-tops and skirts, but it is quite possible that women will rise to the top of the political structure. The world should not expect outcomes that parallel the development of women's rights in the West, and foreign values and ideologies mustn't be imposed on the region. Rather, we should celebrate that a balance has been struck between abayas and skirts.

Beth Boal, Larin Brink and Fahad Mohammad wrote this article as part of the Soliya Connect program, an online dialogue program that allows students from American and Arab universities to engage in inter-cultural dialogue. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) and can be accessed at www.commongroundnews.org.

Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), May 30, 2006

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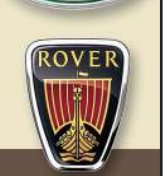
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