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Tel: 020 7603 8895 Email: l.rebeccajohnson@gmail.com

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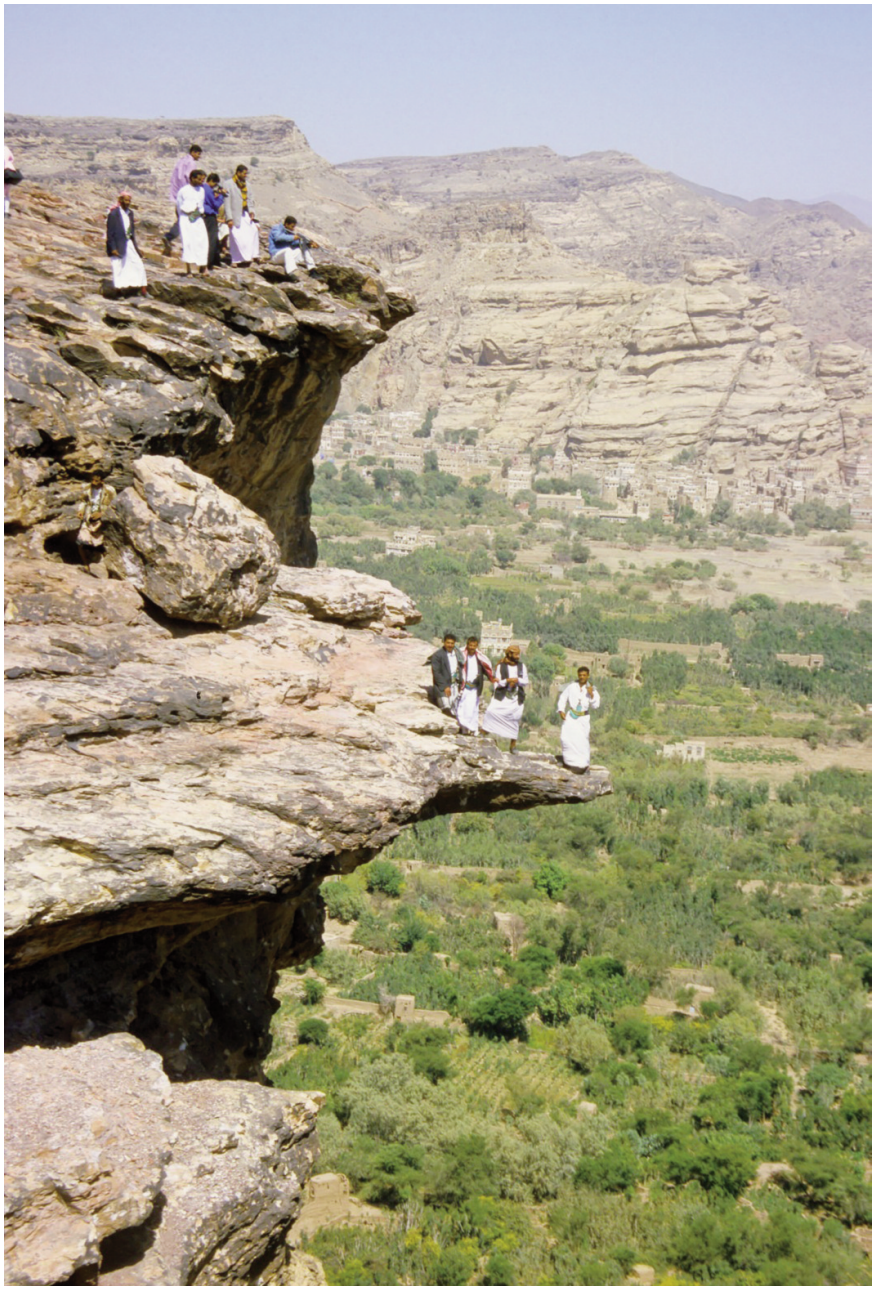

Above Wadi Dhahr near Sana'a *Howard Meadowcroft*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(Nineteenth Annual General Meeting, Wednesday 13 June 2012)

It has been a dramatic year for Yemen which culminated in what is called the GCC deal that paved the way for the resignation of President Saleh and the election of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi as his successor and the appointment of a new coalition government. There is now an agreed process for transition on three main tracks:

- Preparations are under way for a Conference of the National Dialogue, which will include not only the main political parties but also representatives of the southerners, al-Huthis, women, youth and civil society organisations. It should lead to the drawing up of a new constitution in preparation for parliamentary elections in 2014.
- The military and security forces are being restructured to eliminate some of the causes of the 2011 crisis and make it more clearly accountable. These changes have enabled the military to launch a campaign against the Al-Qa'ida insurgency in Abyan.
- The Friends of Yemen have just met in Riyadh to find new ways of supporting the Yemeni government in dealing with its many profound economic and social problems.

There is a very long way to go but these developments offer Yemenis a realistic hope for a better future.

The success of the process so far is the result of action by Yemen's leaders. A key part, however, has been played by the skilled and patient diplomacy of Jamal Bin Omar, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy. He has been backed by the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the EU and the GCC. All are determined to make the transition work. I wish more publicity was given to the remarkable role played by Bin Omar and a group of ambassadors in Yemen. I am delighted that the British government has been fully involved, with both Nicholas Hopton, the current British ambassador and co-President of the BYS, and his predecessor, Jonathan Wilks – playing crucially important roles. However, the success of the transition will depend on Yemen's political leaders, and I am sure we would all wish to support them in the challenging task they face.

In organising our meetings the Society will try to keep members informed of progress.

I said in the 2011 report that the BYS has been planning with the London Middle East Institute at SOAS to organise a conference on Yemen for March 2011. We have now postponed this until early January 2012. We have issued a call for papers and have received well over 50 applications, a great response. It shows the level of current interest in Yemen. We are very keen to involve as many Yemenis as possible and we will shortly start fundraising to enable this to happen. We hope that by next January it will be easier for Yemenis to obtain UK visas in and from Yemen.

Yemen and the UK

Press coverage, unsurprisingly, was largely related to the upheavals surrounding Yemen's own 'Arab Spring'. The world is taking an interest in the country, if not always for the right reasons. The BYS's own Ginny Hill and Tom Finn have contributed regular reports on the developing situation from both inside and outside Yemen.

28th September 2011 – BBC Radio 4 aired a programme about Yemen's water shortage: *Waters of Arabia*

October 2011 – British Yemenis featured in the first episode of a new BBC TV series 'Mixed Britannia'.

25th January 2012 – Stephen Sackur's programme *Yemen in Crisis* aired as part of the HARDtalk series on the BBC News channel in the UK and via satellite to viewers outside the UK on the BBC World News channel.

19th March 2012 – BBC4 *The Reluctant Revolutionary* by award-winning documentary filmmaker Sean McAllister gave an intimate portrait of Yemen, told through the eyes of a local tour guide. There was a further screening of this, followed by Q and A with McAllister, on 5th April at the Prince Charles cinema off Leicester Square.

The October-November issue of *The Middle East in London* magazine, published by The London Middle East Institute at SOAS, was devoted to Yemen and Oman.

Some light relief… *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* transferred to the screen as a romantic comedy, starring Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt and Kristin Scott-Thomas. Not as sharp as the novel, but pleasantly entertaining and as the Daily Mail says, 'one shouldn't carp' at it …

Meanwhile, our congratulations to Dr Salma Samar Damluji on winning

this year's Global Award for Sustainable Architecture for her renovation work in Wadi Daw'an.

Books about Yemen by BYS members include:
Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in Yemen 1962-67 by Jonathan Walker, which has recently been re-issued by the military publishers Pen & Sword. Ginny Hill's book *Yemen and the Coming Chaos: Al-Qaeda, Warlords and Oil in the Arabian Peninsula* should be published before the next AGM, and I hope also that by then a paperback version of my book, *Yemen Divided* will be ready. Recent books by non-members include Stephen W Day (an American scholar who is not to be confused with the BYS's Stephen Day) on *Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen: A Troubled National Union*.

Other non-BYS events:

28 September 2011
Concert at the Barbican *The Ecstatic Journey: Music from around the Sufi World* included a performance by the *Ensemble Syubbanul Akhyar*, descendants of the Hadhrami Arabs of Yemen.

28 October 2011
Transferts de savoir dans les cartographies de l'océan Indien – study day on mediaeval cartography at the Bibliothèque nationale de France

December 2011
Tawakkul Karman spoke at various locations in the UK, including Chatham House.

25 February 2012
The closing event of the *Traders Unpacked* season at The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich was entitled *The East India Company and Me* and included accounts from historians and genealogists who had successfully traced their own ancestors, among whom were British Yemenis.

6 March 2012
U.N.I.T.E.@SOAS An evening of music, poetry and dance performances

from around the world, including a contribution from Yemen organised by BYS member Warda Eissadi

14 March 2012
The *Islamic Art Circle* invited BYS members to their lecture on the *Archaeology of Suakin*, whose architecture is very close to that of Mocha

13–15 March 2012
Photo exhibition at SOAS depicting images of the Yemeni protest movement that started in February 2011

15 March 2012
Screening of the documentary film *Karama Has No Walls* at SOAS

Many Yemeni groups across the UK have been organising charity fundraising events to help with the growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen – wherever we have been aware of them, we have publicised these events by email to our membership and on our Facebook page.

BYS Grant 2012
This year's academic grant has been awarded to Larissa Alles for her thesis on *The Vulnerabilities of Authoritarian Upgrading in Yemen*.

BYS Events
We organised the following:

6 October 2011
Iona Craig – perspective on Yemen as a freelance journalist recently returned from Sana'a

26 October 2011
Thanos Petouris – *Women in Resistance: Female Participation in the Anti–Colonial Movement in South Arabia 1937–67* (joint lecture with LMEI and BFSA)

23 November 2011
Film screening of *The Oath* (event held jointly with the SOAS Khaleej Society)

29 November 2011
HMA Jonathan Wilks – update on situation in Yemen

13 December 2011
Dr Salem Yousr Muftah – lecture on his work with the children of Soqotra

9 February 2012
Dr Qais Ghanem – lecture and launch of his novel *Final Flight from Sanaa*. This was one of the best-attended events of the year and generated good publicity.

(Dr Ghanem is attending the reception after this AGM with copies of his second novel *Two Boys from Aden College* which will be available to buy after the meeting. He is generously donating to the BYS £2 from each copy sold).

28 March 2012
Saleem Haddad on *Public Protest and Visions for Change: Voices from within Yemen's Peaceful Youth Movement* (last minute substitution for Susanne Dahlgren)

26 April 2012
Dr Abdul Galil Shaif al-Shaibi – on his experiences as Chairman of the Aden Free Zone Authority and on challenges facing the new Yemeni leadership

10 May 2012
Benedict Wilkinson on *Recasting the threat from Al-Qa'da in the Arabian Peninsula: Counter-terrorism and Development imperatives*

Forthcoming events
The full autumn programme will be sent out with the 2012 Journal at the end of the summer. Our September speaker will be Taher Ali Qassim to talk about his experience as a Yemeni migrant in Liverpool.

Nicholas Hopton is to give a talk on events in Yemen at our July meeting and we may ask him to come back in October to bring us up to date.

Home**: Contemporary Architectural interpretations of the 'home' in the **Arab world will be presented by the Museum of Architecture, as part of the

British Council's London Festival of Architecture 2012, at The Mosaic Rooms, A.M. Qattan Foundation, 21 June–7 July. The exhibition will include a presentation on Shibam, Hadramawt, by Dr S.S. Damluji

As mentioned above, the BYS Conference will take place on 11 and 12 January 2013. Details will be sent out later and will be placed on the web site. It will be the most important BYS event for some time and one that I hope will raise our profile and enable us to make a contribution to helping Yemen deal with its many problems.

Thanks to all who have already contributed towards Ras Morbat and/or the Soqotri medical students appeal (details of which were sent out with the Spring newsletter).

Membership

We are delighted to welcome 19 new members to the Society since last year.

Members deceased since last AGM: Dr Russell Rhys, Ms Anne Morris and Najla Abu Taleb, whose obituary appeared in last year's Journal.

We also regret to announce the death in late March of Dr Neil Orr who was a member of the 1956 Oxford University expedition to Soqotra and whose account of his return visit to the island some 48 years later was published in the Journal in 2004.

New Committee Members

Three members of the committee are standing down, two of them after many years of service to the BYS. Julian Paxton was secretary for several years and for long a pillar of the society. John Grundon has been an assiduous attendee and generous contributor to the BYS Committee and given us much of his time. Ginny Hill has helped with the discussions on the future of the Society but feels she is simply too busy with Chatham House to stay on the committee but she will continue to support out work.

I want to thank Ginny, John and Julian for all their work on your behalf. I will come to two new members a little later. We co-opted Helen Balkwill-Clark as membership secretary after the last AGM and I would like to thank her for what she has done.

I would also like again to acknowledge our gratitude to Rebecca Johnson, the BYS Secretary, and John Mason our treasurer for their continued work on behalf of the BYS. A special thanks should be given to John Shipman who has edited our journal with such distinction over many years.

Future of the BYS Survey

I mentioned last year the BYS needed to take a look at itself and build for the future. The committee asked three of its members – Adel Aulaqi, Thanos Petouris and Ginny Hill – assisted from Tunis by James Spencer – to produce a report on this. I have now received it and it makes a number of very useful suggestions. There was not enough time between its receipt and the AGM to organise a meeting of the committee to consider it. We plan, however, to arrange a meeting of the new committee to consider it before putting it to members. At the same time, we want to organise a survey of members' opinion about the BYS and its future. These matters will be the priority for the new committee and we will put the proposals to members probably at EGM.

Conclusion

Finally I would to thank His Excellency Abdulla Ali al-Radhi, our joint honorary president, for his generous support for the BYS and for hosting the reception that will follow.

NOEL BREHONY

The British-Yemeni Society

YEMEN:
CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

A spring on Jabal Razih, Yemen © Shelagh Weir

Two-Day Conference: 11-12 January 2013

Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre
SOAS University of London WC1H 0XG

Organised by: The British-Yemeni Society (BYS)
and London Middle East Institute SOAS (LMEI)

YEMEN:
CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE
Friday 11 and Saturday 12 January 2013

Academic Panels:

- *Yemen: Regional and Global Context*
- *Perspectives on the Sa'dah Region*
- *The Southern Question*
- *Aspects of Inward and Outward Migration*
- *Social Policy: Health, Education and Welfare*
- *Cultural Expressions*
- *Rural Development: Land and Water*
- *Aspirations of Yemeni Youth*
- *The Role of Business in Developing the Yemeni Economy*

Admission (including lunch and refreshments):
£30
Concessions, BYS and LMEI Members: £15
Students Free

Enquiries and Registration: 020 7898 4330 / lh2@soas.ac.uk
www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events

YEMEN: THE MYTH OF ISOLATION

JAMES SPENCER

It has been popular – indeed is now almost conventional – to describe pre-revolutionary Yemen as having been isolated and backward; it has been characterised as 'mediæval' or as 'the Tibet of the Middle East' in many Western academic articles and journalistic reports. Yet the actual isolation was less than is commonly presented.

While it would be absurd to suggest that Mutawakkilite Yemen was a highly developed country, judgements by Western writers of its backwardness seem to take as their reference point the sophisticated urban environment where such writers mostly resided. Yet to this day, basic living conditions in certain parts of rural Europe could be described as 'backward' or 'primitive'.

Often initial references to Yemen's isolation are soon contradicted by the facts and figures (and bibliographies) presented by an author. A typical example is Dr K P Schmidt's article on 'Amphibians and Reptiles of Yemen' in the December 1953 issue of *Fieldiana*,[1] published by the Chicago Museum of Natural History. He wrote: 'Yemen, the Kingdom of the Queen of Sheba in ancient times, has been almost completely closed to foreigners through much of its history'. However, in the next three sentences, Schmidt went on to mention the 'Egyptian, Abyssinian, Arab and Turkish rule' which north Yemen had experienced, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the US in 1946, and Yemen's 'invitation to foreign medical missions' to assist the country. Among these were the US medical mission in 1951 and two Italian missions in 1928 and 1929. These are mentioned because they had herpetological by-products in which Schmidt was interested. Schmidt similarly mentions Niebuhr's expedition of 1761–67, and the British Museum Expedition of 1937–38.

It is understandable that a herpetologist should mention only those expeditions which interest him, and/or that he should be unaware of the history of western – let alone foreign – contact with Yemen. Yet Schmidt's categorical omission of other external contacts compounds his misleading initial declaration of Yemen's seclusion. He does not mention the British and Dutch East India coffee factories at Mocha, Zheng Ho's visits, Portuguese and British rule in Aden, conclusion of Treaties with the Imam by the Italians (1926), the Soviet Union (1928), and the United Kingdom

(1934), and above all the steady flow of travellers who had published accounts of their visits to South West Arabia by the time Schmidt wrote. To cite just some of these visitors:

> Cruttenden (1838); Arnaud (1845); Osgood (1854); Halevy (1872); von Wrede (1873); Millingen (1874); Langer (1882); Glaser (1884); Manzoni (1884); Glaser (1886), Haig (1887); Deflers (1889); Harris (1893); Hirsch (1897); Wavell (1911); Beneyton (1913); Jacob (1915); von Mẓcke (1917); Herbert (1924); Montagne (1930); Lamare (1930); al-Rihani (1930); Petrie (1932); Philby (1934); Nazih Mu'ayyad al-Azm (1938); Rossi (1939); Volta (1940); Robertson (1942); Clark (1947); Thesiger (1947); Faroughy (1949); Eilts (1952); Yavneeli (1952); Barer (1952); Heyworth-Dunne (1952); Hoogstraal (1952).

In addition to these published writers, there were some who visited the region but did not record their experiences (such as the Tunisian intellectual Abdal-Aziz al-Tha'alabi who visited Aden in 1924). Robert Wilson, in his 'Survey of Modern Sources for the Mapping of Yemen',[2] identifies several cartographers who produced maps (usually anonymously) but little or no literature.

To be fair to Schmidt, knowledge of many of these authors is made feasible only through the internet, something to which Schmidt (et al) did not have access. Yet the articles by Clark, Eilts and Hoogstraal were all in the US National Geographic Magazine, and Hoogstraal's was even entitled 'Yemen Opens the Door to Progress'![3] The point remains that the routine description of Yemen by Schmidt – and by many others – as 'almost completely closed to foreigners' repeats the myth.

Apart from foreign visitors, there were not a few foreign residents, both western and oriental. In 1886, Major-Genera F.T. Haig identified, in addition to the British 'vice-consul, a Mahommedan gentleman on the Bombay Medical Establishment, half-a-dozen English and Americans resident [in Hodeidah], and a good many Greeks and other Levantines'.[4] Fifty years later, Professor Faroughy noted the presence there of 'about 100 Greeks, and 20 to 30 Europeans and Americans'.

On reaching Sana'a, Haig was put up by 'Messrs. Caprotti, two Italian gentlemen'. Giuseppe and Luigi Caprotti were traders who had arrived in Yemen in 1883. Giuseppe, who outlived his brother, extended hospitality to Aubrey Herbert (the model for John Buchan's Greenmantle) during Herbert's visit to Sana'a in 1905, and gave vital help to Arthur Wavell during his incarceration there in 1911. Volta notes the presence of Italian

doctors in Yemen in the 1930s. His compatriot, Amedeo Guillet, making his first visit to Sana'a in 1941 as a fugitive from British justice, was treated by the renowned Dr Luigi Merucci who had arrived in Yemen in 1936 and remained there for the next twenty years. Professor Faroughy notes that in 1940 '[a] number of Italian propagandists entered Yemen as members of the staff of the [Italian] medical missions at Sana'a, Hodeida, and Taiz…[i]n Sana'a alone there were about a dozen Italian doctors compared with one British.'[5]

In Ta'iz in the 1950s, Skobeleff is even more detailed in her descriptions of personalities and their roles.[6] Her White Russian companion, Dr Moshenetz, remained in Ta'iz with a coterie of foreign medics, until Imam Ahmad's death in 1962.

Greek merchants almost certainly trod the Incense Route, while a Greek mariner wrote the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. In addition to such transients, there had been Greeks resident in highland Yemen in the Fourth Century AD, who cast the heroic bronze statues of King Dhamar Ali Yahbir and his son Tha'ran Yahna'am. Greek merchants also appear in several accounts of the modern era: Haig's journey south to Aden is somewhat longer than normal, since he avoided the stretch of road north of the Ma'abar Pass where a Greek had been recently murdered. A few years later, W.B. Harris describes himself as being 'the only European in the interior, with the exception of a few Greek shopkeepers'.[7] Harris does not mention whether these are Hellenic or Anatolian Greeks – whether they came with the invading Turks (perhaps as sutlers), or independently.

With regard to Yemen's mineral resources, Haig was told by 'two Europeans that they themselves had seen coal, and that there is much sulphur as well as iron ore.' Professor Faroughy noted that 'an American Engineering […] expedition arrived at Hodeida on [sic] Oct. 1927. During their short stay in Yemen, they studied mineral resources, surveyed roads, started experimental gardens and even located a dam site for the irrigation of the Tahama region.' In 1936, an Egyptian scientific expedition (led by Suleiman Ahmed Huzzayin) visited Yemen and Hadhramaut, but were unable to find any significant mineral deposits. As Time recorded in 1955, a large oil and mineral concession, covering half of the country, was agreed earlier that year.[8]

Perhaps because most did not write, and certainly because the few who did rarely wrote in English, the many Asian residents of, and visitors to, highland Yemen are usually ignored: in addition to the aforementioned

Arab writers Nazih al-Azm and Amin al-Rihani who published accounts of their visits to Yemen in the 1920s and 1930s, Professor Faroughy, reckoned that in the late 1940s Sana'a had a resident population of '60,000, of whom some 48,000 are Arabs; 7,000 to 8,000 Jews and 2,000 Levantines.' He estimated that Hodeida had 'a population of some 35,000 to 40,000, mostly Arabs of mixed blood. There are, in addition, some 2,000 to 3,000 Banians (Indian merchants), and 4,000 to 5,000 Hindus'.

Imam Yahya attached importance to education, opening the first modern school in Sana'a in 1925, and by 1941 there were 500 schools across the country. Education was (nominally) compulsory from 7 to 17 years old, and followed the Iraqi curriculum.

In the mid-1930s the Imam sent a group of cadets to Baghdad for military training with a view to improving the efficiency of his armed forces. Faroughy mentions the Iraqi Military Mission which the Imam invited to Yemen in 1940. This mission – which remained in the country until 1942 – has been mostly ignored, despite the account of it by one of its members, Staff Colonel Muhammad Hasan, in his book *Qalb al-Yaman*, published in Baghdad in 1947.

The extensive Nasserite mission by the Egyptian Army is equally glossed over, despite its seminal role in the 1962 Revolution, for without the ideological (and technocratic) inspiration provided, it is unlikely that the republican mentality would have taken root, nor (without the prop of the nearly instantaneous Egyptian military intervention) would it have withstood the Imam's counter-revolutionary operations.

For a plethora of reasons – not least their long residence in Yemen dating back to the era of Jewish proselytising – it would be difficult to describe the Yemenite Jews as foreign residents. However, as a self-identifying global community, they had long had communication with Jews outside highland Yemen, the most famous example of which is Maimonides's '*Epistle to Yemen*'. This was written in Cordoba in AD1172 in answer to a communication from Jacob ben Netan'el al-Fayyumi, the head of the Jewish community in Yemen. al-Fayyumi's request for information argues at least an existing knowledge of (if not prior communication with) Maimonides in al-Andalus – at the far end of the Old World, and confidence that there was a reliable means of communication with him.

Centuries later, several of the foreign visitors to Yemen were either westerners interested in Judaica, or Zionists, both of whom visited the Jewish communities in the towns scattered throughout highland Yemen: Sapir

(1859); Karasso (1875); Yom Tov Tsemach (1910); Shemuel Yavneli (1910/11); Rathjens and Hermann von Wissmann (1928); Tabib (1930); Meged (1948). As a result of these recorded visits – and particularly the continuous Jewish emigration to Palestine (even after it ceased to be an Ottoman possession) – there was two-way correspondence between Yemen and Palestine. Both Goitein[9] and Philby[10] mention the correspondence of Habshush with sections of the Jewish intelligentsia in Jerusalem, while Sara Eden mentions her family's receipt of letters from relations in Palestine, adding that '… people who came to Sana'a would bring news, so a year later we heard that there was a State of Israel.'[11]

The caravans which brought coffee down to the Red Sea port of Hodeidah are likely to have returned to highland Yemen carrying the same European goods which in 1892 Harris noted being sold in Sana'a (as well as tobacco from the Persian Gulf.) In stark contrast to Haig's opinion that Sana'a's 'bazaars are poor', Harris writes that the shops:

> 'are well supplied with European goods, and a large manufacture of silk, jewellery, and arms is carried on there. The quarter in which the Government buildings are situated presents almost a European appearance, with its large Turkish shops, its *cafes,* and its open places, on one of which, in front of the Governor-General's official residence, a military band discourses anything but sweet music of an afternoon.'

Harris also notes that modern 'rifles are being smuggled in by private traders from the French port at Obock.'

Faroughy mentions that following the Soviet Union's treaty of commerce and friendship with Yemen in 1928, the Soviet mission organized permanent commercial exhibits of agriculture utensils at Sana'a and Hodeida'.

By 1952, when the British and American Chargés d'Affaires attended the Ramadhan celebrations in Ta'iz, the viewing stand was clad in corrugated galvanised iron which is unlikely to have been brought in by camel. The 'huge safe, open, with piles of banknotes filling the space' must also have been imported by other means.

Emigration has been an aspect of South Arabian society for thousands of years, singly or as a tribe; permanently or temporarily; far or near. Quite apart from the famous Hadhrami diaspora in the East Indies, Professor Halliday notes 'the first [flow], beginning in the 1890s, led thousands of Yemenis, mainly from the North, to work on ships stopping at Aden'[12] and

that in '1955 35 per cent of the population of Aden – 48,000 people – were North Yemenis'. Whether either of these groups was from highland Yemen, or from the Shafa'i areas termed *al-muntaqa al-wusta* is unclear. Similarly, Faroughy writes:

> 'The excess population was formerly absorbed by the neighbouring countries and by the Italian colonies, where many Yemenis emigrated to work or to join the '*askaris*' of the Italian colonial army. In 1938, however, the Imam introduced a decree forbidding further emigration of his subjects or their enrolment in foreign armies.'

Faroughy's account is corroborated by Guillet, who employed many such Yemenis in his *gruppo banda*, in which they formed the infantry element.

Yemen is often presented as being bereft of modern transport until the Egyptian Enlightenment following the 1962 Revolution. However, this is not borne out by the observed facts.

The Ottomans seem to have intended to bring their Hijaz Railway – later blown up by Lawrence – further south to Yemen. A preliminary survey of the terrain between Hodeidah and Sana'a involving one French and two Turkish engineers was made in 1906. Two further surveys led by a French engineer were made in 1909 and 1911. But only five miles of metre-gauge track between Ras al-Khatib and Hodeidah were ever laid before the project was abandoned when the Italians bombarded Hodeida during the Italo-Turkish War of 1912. (Later a military railway was laid between Aden (Shaikh Othman) and Lahij but scrapped in 1936.)

While the pictures of caterpillar-tracked bulldozers on the Tihama may represent the most accessible area at the very end of the Imamate, motor transport was relatively well known (if not entirely common) at least from Sana'a to the south for decades previously. Loder Park, then the US Consul in Aden, reports the landing of two Fiat cars at Hodeida in 1925,[13] and 15 years later, one of the questions which Rossi records in his 1939 work is 'Where can I buy petrol?', while Faroughy notes that petrol is sold by the large *ratl*. The presence of both a simple term and an agreed measure for petrol suggests that it was in common enough demand. Indeed, Faroughy later comments that from 1928, 'most of the 6,000 tons of [petroleum] oil used by Yemen annually was of Russian origin.' Volta has a photograph showing Yemenis (both Arab chauffeur and Jewish servant) re-fuelling his vehicle with packed fuel.[14] (In the same book, Volta also pictures a steam-launch alongside in Hodeidah flying the Mutawakkilite flag.)

Skobeleff was met at Ta'iz airfield by a jeep and a truck, and she and Dr Moshenetz were provided by the Imam with a Ford car and chauffeur. She mentions the trucks of the Wendell Philips expedition to Ma'rib (which crossed the Ramlat al-Saba'tayn from Shabwa), which the Imam had impounded and kept in one of his palaces.

Not only was there physical communication and travel within Yemen, but electro-magnetic as well: Haig mentions 'that there is a telegraph line from Hodeida, via Menakha, to Sana'a, which appears to be kept in pretty good order, though merchants at Hodeida say it is sometimes quicker to send by post, though that is only once a week.' Harris also mentions that 'telegrams were pouring into Constantinople from Hodaidah beseeching assistance.' Sinclair's compendium of US Consular dispatches describes the Italians as completing a telegraph line on the same route (presumably this is refurbishing the Ottoman one, and extending it to Ta'iz) as well as establishing a large wireless station at Hodeidah.

By 1952, there also seems to have been a telephone system, at least within Ta'iz, for Skobeleff mentions: 'One morning we were called urgently by telephone from Sala' [one of the Imam's palaces.] Whether this system stretched to other cities (possibly strung on the same poles as the telegraph) she does not relate.

Far cheaper and easier to set up – and more widespread given the freedom from cable lines – was radio. Faroughy quotes Freya Stark's 1940 remarks on Imam Yahya's decision to rescind his ban on radios in Sana'a: 'the day after the Imam granted these privileges one could see and especially hear many radios in the streets of Sana'a.'

The stamp on this Yemeni letter is worth noting. Not only is it printed in Rome, but it also depicts an aeroplane in 1952 (AH1373) symbolising the Imamate's links with the outside world. (Yemen was already a member of the International Postal Union and had post offices in its major towns). According to Skobeleff's contemporaneous account of flying in just such an aeroplane, a DC-9 (by the picture she provides) flew from 'Ta'iz for Aden every day of the week except Fridays. It comes to Aden in the morning and leaves in the afternoon; if there are passengers for Ta'iz, they are welcome.' Later during her stay in Ta'iz, she took a photograph of 'the Imam's airplane perform[ing] maneuvers at the Ramadan parade' – the aeroplane concerned is a high-winged light aircraft, thus a second one in addition to the DC9.

While Halliday states that 'no press was allowed in North Yemen', Faroughy mentions that Imam Yahya 'exercises his literary bent mostly in the publication of the governmental organ, the monthly *al-Iman* (The Faith).' This official gazette was produced on the country's one and only printing press set up in the 1930s. It was joined 1938–41 by *Majallat al-Hikma,* the country's first 'political' magazine albeit constrained by being published under official auspices.

In discussing Yemen, it is easy to slip into stereotypes of isolation and backwardness. Yet parts of contemporaneous Europe were not much more advanced than the Mutawakkilite Kingdom: the Blitzkrieg which captured France may have had petrol driven tanks, but its logistic tail was still horse-drawn. Even today, while a mud hut with a straw roof in Yemen might be described as 'primitive', estate agents prefer to use 'picturesque' or 'traditional' when marketing thatched, cob houses in rural Devon. Perhaps therefore instead of saying 'Yemen was isolated', it is safer to say that few visitors went to Yemen in the early to mid-twentieth Century who wrote and published accounts of their experiences in English.

Notes

1 Schmidt, KP Amphibians and Reptiles of Yemen Fieldiana: Zoology Vol. 34, No. 24; p.253. Chicago (Dec 1953)
2 Wilson, RTO Gazeteer of Historical North West Yemen Hidlesheim: OLMS (1989), Chapter 5
3 Hoogstraal, H Yemen opens the door to progress Washington DC: National Geographic Society Vol 101, No 2, (1952) pp.213–244
4 Haig, FT A Journey Through Yemen JRGS Vol. 9 No. VIII, (Aug 1887)
5 Faroughy, A Introducing Yemen New York: Orientalia (1947)
6 Skobeleff, A Light and Shadows: Memories of Yemen Portland: Mandaville Associates (1992)
7 Harris, WB The Rebellion in Yemen Blackwood's Magazine (Feb 1893) p.301

8 Anon 'Forbidden Yemen yields to a Yankee's offer: Yemen signs oil deal with Gabler' Life Magazine (05 Dec 55), p.52

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THE BLIND NAKHUDHA

HENRY DE MONFREID

In 2006 we published a note about the museum which had been established in France in 1990 to celebrate de Monfreid's remarkable life (1879-1974), not least his exploits in the Red Sea and Ethiopia during the early decades of the last century. We also published an article about his turbulent relations with British officialdom in Aden during the First World War. De Monfreid's many talents included his skill as a narrator. His books, first published in the 1930s, attracted international acclaim for their epic appeal and anthropological interest. His 'Sea Adventures' , published in English translation in 1937, chronicling his career as smuggler and entrepreneur between Djibouti and Yemen, contains this poignant story of 'The Blind Nakhudha' (or dhow captain) which, slightly adapted and abridged, we reproduce below.

The North winds had brought me down into the latitude of Kamaran. Then, after a night of calm, a heavy swell rolling up from the south heralded the return of the south-west winds. We had already spent three sleepless nights, and the crew was worn out, so at all costs we had to find an anchorage before nightfall.

The great chain of the Jebel Zukur and Hanish islands had been confronting us since the day before. Tacking continuously, we came slowly nearer. At last, barely a mile from the reef that forms the coast of Jebel Zukur, we slipped through calm water towards a small anchorage wedged between the big island and an islet shaped like a half-moon, formed from an extinct crater.

Finally, we emerged into the little natural harbour, where a ravine formed by an upheaval of rocks ended in a tiny white beach. A fair-sized *boutre* was anchored right inshore amid a tangle of reefs. I dropped anchor offshore, not daring to venture into this dangerous labyrinth.

The men belonging to the *boutre* already there were mother-of-pearl fishers. They had made their usual small encampment on the beach, and I could see them in the distance coming ashore in *houris*. They were Somalis, and at the sight of fellow-countrymen, half a dozen of the canoes instantly surrounded us, and they swarmed on board.

They had been there for three months already and wanted tobacco. In exchange, they gave us the fish that each one had caught with the *harba*, the pointed iron lance with which they harpoon the rock-dwelling fish.

We recounted to each other the thousand petty incidents of our wandering sailors' lives as if they had been the most thrilling news, so

delighted were we to hear new voices. In the wild solitudes of these volcanic archipelagos, in this lonely sea unceasingly swept by the fury of the monsoon, it is a comfort to meet another ship. We feel for each other a touching brotherhood, born of the consciousness of our common helplessness in face of the eternal and pitiless elements.

It appeared that there was a water-hole near the beach still full from the last rains, and we went to fetch water from it. The beach was littered with fish drying in the sun, heaps of oyster shells, and the dorsal shells of turtles. Two naked boys, sturdy as young fauns, crouched over the embers of a fire, cooking enormous sea-snails which slavered and hissed as they stewed in their own muddy juice.

The *nakhudha* was sitting a little higher up against the hill-side, in the shade of a rock. I went up to greet him. He was reclining on a piece of matting, smoking his water pipe with an air of blissful contentment. He looked as if he had been there in the hollow of his rock since time began.

He returned my greeting without turning his head. I was surprised by this discourteous attitude, and was on the point of withdrawing when the Somali who accompanied me smiled and said very simply, 'He is blind'.

A blind *nakhudha*...I was thunderstruck. He invited me to sit down beside him, and passed me the mouthpiece of his narghile. Then he called to one of the cabin-boys bending over the fire, and bade him make tea. All this he did with his head tilted at the angle peculiar to blind men, which gives them the air of gazing into some distant sphere over the heads of ordinary mortals. This *nakhudha* was on the threshold of old age. His prominently boned face was as still as that of a bronze statue, but his eyelids fluttered slowly over the sightless pupils. They seemed to be trying with dogged persistence to brush aside the veil which covered his eyes, from which the light had gone for ever. This nervous twitching dated from the beginning of the malady, ten years before. First there had been just a tenuous mist, then everything seemed to get darker, and by the twilight hour black night had already come.

He was loath to admit his infirmity for fear of losing command of his *boutre*, so he took his son, who was still a child, to sea with him. This boy kept by his father's side and told him what he saw, and that was enough. He knew every rock on the coast so well that no one could steer a ship to her anchorage more surely than he, and for a long time nobody had guessed that he was gradually going blind.

But one morning the sun did not rise for him; he had been abruptly

plunged into impenetrable darkness. He landed with his seaman's chest and shut himself up in his house. Then in the black abyss into which he had just sunk, where he might have been overtaken by despair, a new light had dawned, that of memory. The slightest sound, the faintest perfume, called up from the depths of his recollection images palpitating with colour and life. His *boutre* put to sea again without him, and part of his heart was torn from his breast that day. He wandered along the shore, blown upon by the wind coming in from the open sea, the same wind which was swelling the boat's sails, and a vision of what he could not see would form in his mind.

He passed his days on the beach, inhaling the odour of the seaweed, and listening to the voices of the sea which spoke to him as never before. One day a *boutre* came in from the high seas. Motionless, he listened to the casting of the anchor, judging the distance out. The rattling of the chain in the hawse-hole told him the depth, then the sail was lowered, and the blocks uttered a long harmonious cry. It was the voice of his ship, and the blind old man burst into sobs. The boat on which for twenty years he had steered his men to the distant fishing-banks on the great green reefs was back after three months' absence.

On the day the *boutre* departed on her next voyage, he was found crouching in the hold, hiding under a heap of sails. Instinctively these simple fishermen understood. They went ashore and fetched his seaman's chest, and he resumed his place as *nakhudha* on the quarter-deck beside the helm.

For the last ten years he has steered his ship with astounding sureness towards those distant banks known to him alone. The mention of a single detail is enough to enable him to recognize an island or a rock. He is revered as if God had put a supernatural light into him. It is the light of memory. Like the undying flame of a sanctuary light, it lights up in him changeless images of things that have disappeared for ever. There, under the rock, this sightless old man hears the waves break on the sand. Over his bronzed body passes the warmth of the wind like a caress out of space. The smell of drying fish, the smoke from the wood fires, and the voices of all these seamen as they pull their *pirogues* up on the beach – all these things enter into him, and he sees.

I left him in his trance and went away, deeply moved by the tender solicitude shown by all these rough and primitive men towards their aged and disabled chief. I felt absolutely certain they would keep him with them in the midst of these coral islands, until the day should come when, on one of them, they would bury his remains.

PUBLIC PROTEST AND VISIONS FOR CHANGE: YEMEN'S PEACEFUL YOUTH MOVEMENT

SALEEM HADDAD and JOSHUA ROGERS

This article is based on Saleem Haddad's talk to the Society on 28 March 2012. Saleem Haddad and Joshua Rogers work for ***Saferworld's*** *Yemen programme. The programme focuses on promoting political inclusion and enhancing understandings of security and justice mechanisms in Yemen. The research formed part of an EU-funded project that took place in Yemen and 17 other countries. Saleem Haddad holds an MSc in Development Studies from SOAS. He previously worked in Yemen for Medecins sans Frontieres, researching the humanitarian impact of the 'global war on terror'. Joshua Rogers holds an MA in International Relations from the Free University of Berlin and a BA in History and Politics from Oxford University.*

Introduction

Yemen's civil protest movement has been the largest in Yemeni history and the longest-running of the Arab Spring uprisings. In a country where 75% of the population is under the age of 25, Yemeni youth have been instrumental in peacefully challenging the country's exclusionary politics. Although regime forces have shot hundreds of protestors, the protest movement has created unprecedented opportunities for young people, including women, to debate the future shape of Yemeni society and politics. Yemeni youth are not just voicing a set of grievances; many have begun to articulate visions for a more inclusive political system which they feel could lead to long-term peace and security.

Our research was conducted in July and August 2011 and examines the views which youth have expressed on the grievances and expectations mobilising the protest movement. It offers a snapshot of young people's perceptions of political legitimacy and pathways of change. Our findings were generated from consultations with youth from diverse backgrounds in four major cities: Sana'a, Taiz, Aden and Mukalla, and supplemented by interviews with politicians, religious and tribal authorities, businessmen, women and other leading personalities. Within each location, the research team tried to ensure a balance of opinion between politically independent youth, those associated with a range of political parties, tribal youth, rural youth, and those who did not engage in any form of protest. In some cases, political tensions meant it was not possible to bring such diverse groups together in one room, and the views that emerged most strongly from the

research tended to reflect those most commonly referred to as 'independent youth' associated with the country's peaceful youth movement.

Exploring youth grievances

The most striking feature to emerge was the broad similarity of opinion in all four cities on the key drivers of protest. When asked to identify the top five grievances the problem of corruption consistently topped the list of youth concerns except in Mukalla where the Southern issue predominated.

Corruption

Corruption was seen as a deep-rooted system affecting all aspects of society. At the macro level, youth participants discussed how international aid reinforced corruption by making national leaders accountable to international actors rather than local people. The specific roles of the US and Saudi Arabia were highlighted as contributing to the entrenchment of a corrupt system through formal and informal payments made to individuals within the state, military commanders, and tribes. Lack of accountability helped create a system where the regime's inner circle had access to key sectors of the economy, and was rewarded through government contracts and the allocation of budgetary resources. On a day-to-day level, corruption affected youth most strongly in education and employment opportunities, as well as everyday transactions in the public sector, the justice system and the police. Youth spoke of jobs being bought and sold, exam questions being provided to those with connections, and the routine need to pay bribes to public officials.

Economic Challenges

Unemployment and poverty came second on the list of youth grievances. Over 2011 unemployment, according to unofficial estimates, increased from ca. 40% to between 60–70% of the population. Chronic poverty is severe, with an annual per capita income of under US $900. Nearly half the population earns less than $2 per day. In this context, most Yemeni youth have little hope of finding work abroad, where external markets have been closed to them for political and security reasons. Low standards of education have meant that they lack necessary skills to prepare them for the domestic labour market, but also for more lucrative opportunities in neighbouring Gulf countries.

Exclusion

Exclusion, articulated in different ways by different participants, emerged as another major grievance driving the protests. Young people had an expansive understanding of marginalised groups, identifying youth, women, rural communities, religious minorities, Southerners, non-tribal citizens and even all those not associated with the GPC as excluded. Exclusion was linked to the political system, in which a large-scale appropriation of public funds was used to maintain, through patronage, a narrow ruling coalition and incentives for developing the productive capacity of society were minimal. Political exclusion, young people argued, promoted nepotism at the expense of equality of opportunity and individual merit. Participants also discussed the interaction of multiple mechanisms or layers of exclusion. Young women discussed their multiple exclusion as women and young people from political processes as a factor driving their participation in the protests; and many said that their exclusion cut across all aspects of socio-economic and political life. When asking for greater inclusion, many prioritised their identity as young people, rather than as women.

Security and Justice

The reform of the military and security apparatus was cited by many youth as being an essential precondition of achieving long-term peace and stability, as much of the current violence was traced to divisions within the military itself. Security forces are segmented, with extensive overlap and duplication of functions between the Police, Army and Central Security Forces. Their rivalry and that of their commanders results in ineffective policing that follows logics of power-maintenance, not security provision for people. Government violations of political and human rights has been another key grievance in the eyes of protestors. Stuck between a corrupt judiciary, deteriorating traditional conflict management systems, and a state security apparatus that has exerted a disproportionate level of force in the name of 'stability' and 'counter-terrorism', many Yemenis find themselves in a vacuum when it comes to law enforcement and the provision of security', and this was a grievance cited by youth in all regions.

The Southern Issue

For many Southerners, the process of unification was not smooth, and is seen as the beginning of an unequal relationship between North and South,

and the increasing marginalisation of Southern governorates. Protestors from Aden and Hadramaut largely expressed themselves in language emphasising the separateness and uniqueness of their own region. Participants from both regions stressed that the deteriorating economic and security situation combined with perceived inaction on the part of the central government to address these issues had catalysed secessionist sentiment. Overall, grievances of young people in the South took three main forms. The first related to the desire for greater political representation; the second to the control of the South's natural resources (including the contentious issue of land rights) which were seen to have been misappropriated by Northern elites; and the third related to the South's distinct historical and cultural identity. In particular, Hadrami youth expressed particular pride in their 'civic' identity as distinct from the 'tribal' attitudes prevalent in the North.

Visions

In addition to discussing grievances, youth expressed views on the reforms needed to ensure long-term peace and security. The common demand heard throughout the streets of Yemen in 2011 was for the fall of the regime and its replacement by a modern civic state. Yet the notion of a civic state has remained fluid and contested, representing many things for different people. In characterising what the civic state should embody, many cited rule of law as the key to ensuring equality and justice for all citizens and to resolving issues of weak governance and corruption. Wealth and power must be freed from the clutches of narrow interest groups; the state and its institutions should work for the people rather than for a specific group in society. Investment in education was seen as essential to improving civic awareness, the competitiveness of the Yemeni workforce and promoting economic development.

Decentralisation and local autonomy

When asked who was best able to address challenges facing the country, youth consistently cited the important role played by local level administration, from neighbourhoods and communities to local councils and informal local authority figures, in contributing to positive change. The general feeling was that governorate-level action had a more legitimate popular base than national-level decision-making. While national-level leaders and state actors were seen to be driving the current crisis, it was felt

that if left to their own devices, local communities and leaders were better equipped to effectively deal with their constituents. Views varied on the degree of local autonomy that was desirable, but the concept of greater decentralisation as a means to promote and protect local interests received considerable support. Federalism (subject to varying interpretations) was cited by many in the South not demanding outright secession, as an option which would promote equality among regions. Demands for greater decentralisation were seen by participants in Mukalla as a non-negotiable way to reduce conflict, ensure greater control over their resources and to fill the administrative vacuum left by the central state. Youth in all four cities felt that one strong leader at the centre was not the best model for Yemen's heterogeneous and historically decentralised socio-political structures.

Views of the 'old regime', Military, Political parties and Tribes

All the youth consulted felt that the need to address the split within the military was a top priority and that this split had driven the country to the brink of economic and humanitarian collapse. Indeed for many youth, reform overall was about redefining and de-politicising the role of both the military and tribes within formal political processes. However, the role of the tribes remains deeply contested as tribes remain the most pervasive social force in Yemen, and Yemenis, even those critical of tribal influence in the political system, often pride themselves on their tribal heritage. While only 20–35% of Yemenis consider their tribe to be their primary unit of identity, tribes remain key power brokers in Yemeni politics. On the whole, youth were highly suspicious of current political elites and their ability to reduce conflict and deliver change. Beyond tribal and military elites, young people referred to those leaders affiliated with the GPC and the opposition coalition of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). Parties were seen as self-serving interest groups, out of step with the demands of ordinary Yemenis, which had been used to legitimise and maintain the regime's rule. Youth felt that the regime had actively weakened political parties' positive potential either through co-option or through policies designed to divide the opposition e.g. the fragmented Southern al-Hiraak movement.

Positive Legacies: 'Change' Squares

At the time our research was conducted in July 2011, Yemen's protestors had been camped out in the squares for six months. In a culture where public space is rare, this provided an opportunity for Yemenis of diverse

geographical, social and political backgrounds to meet face-to-face. According to participants in group discussions, this was significant in bringing Yemen's heterogeneous society together to share and discuss ideas. As one young man in Taiz explained: 'we met each other for the first time: leftists, Houthis, Islamists, tribes, all in one place and exchanged ideas…and we saw that our demands [were] united '. For some youth, the protests represented a social revolution as much about empowering citizens and changing mentalities as about political change, toppling leaders and re-drafting the constitution.

Positive Legacies: A new role for women

One of the most immediate changes since protests erupted in Yemen has been the increased visibility of women and their participation in the protests. Young men in Aden discussed how women were 'the backbone of the revolution', and talked about how the courage of women to break social taboos by protesting in the streets gave youth an incentive to emulate their example on an unprecedented scale. In addition to empowering women, the protest movement provided an opportunity to educate men on gender issues. Women remarked that even before the Yemeni female activist, Tawakul Karman, won the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2011 they had begun to notice the political process opening up to them, although they also expressed caution that gains could easily be reversed. The need to build on and promote a greater role for women emerged in all focus groups, including those conducted with young men. The positive role played by women in Taiz and Aden, where women served as judges and in police forces were highlighted by some men in Sana'a as exemplary cases. Young women in all four major cities emerged as more articulate and conciliatory than their male counterparts, demonstrating a willingness to discuss different points of view in contrast to the more argumentative and combative debates in discussion groups with men. This affirms the necessary and important role which women can play in contributing to social and political change in Yemen.

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip being greeted on arrival at Aden in S.S. *Gothic*

THE QUEEN IN ADEN: A Jubilee Retrospective

In the year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee, the following article recalls highlights of her visit to Aden in 1954. We are indebted to Dr Carol Downer for all but one of the b/w illustrations which accompany the text. These have been reproduced from the commemorative album belonging to her father, the late Air Marshal S.O. Bufton, who was closely involved with the Queen's visit.

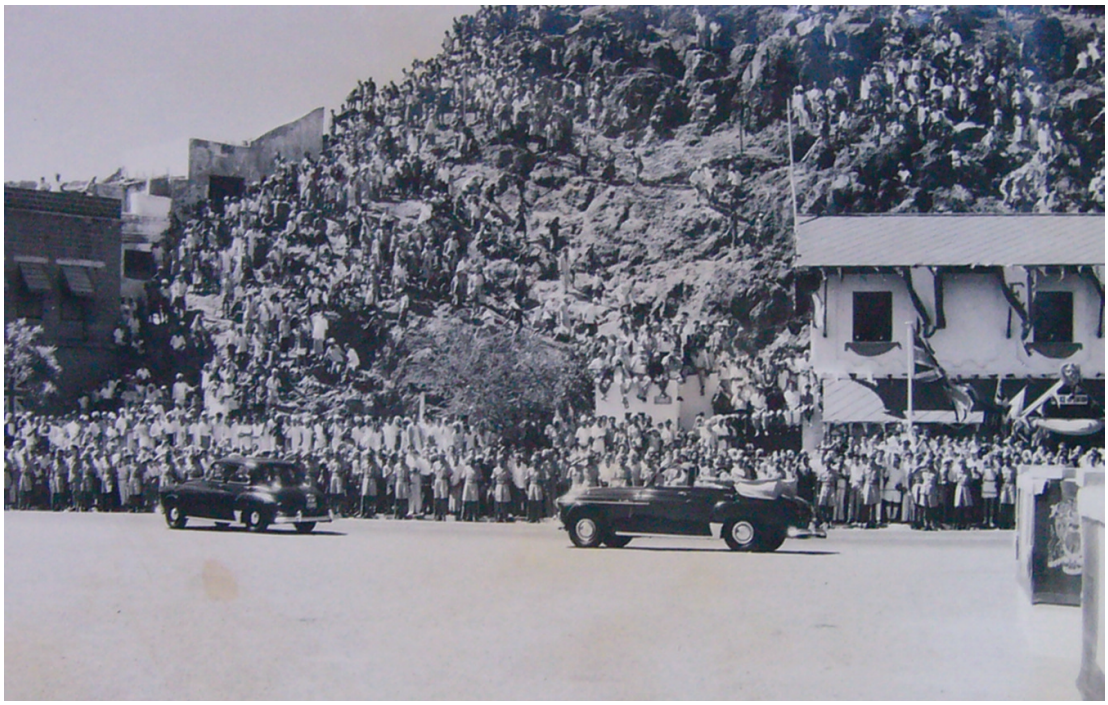
Queen Elizabeth's first pictorial association with Aden dates from June 1953 – the month and year of her coronation – when a new set of Aden colony stamps was issued bearing her profile surmounted by the Royal Crown. This issue was printed in East African currency (cents and shillings) which in 1951 had been adopted in place of the previously used Indian currency (annas and rupees). The stamps depicted a variety of local scenes, including the Colony's emblematic dhow; and for the first time the toponym of Aden and the value of each stamp were printed in Arabic as well as in English.

The Coronation on 2 June 1953 was commemorated by the issue of a special 15 cent stamp with a medallion portrait of the Queen engraved in black, a design shared by colonial territories throughout the empire. Similar commemorative stamps were issued for the only two Aden Protectorate states which ran their own postal services: the Qu'aiti and Kathiri sultanates. This was an exceptional philatelic initiative because all previous and future Qu'aiti and Kathiri stamps bore portraits of their respective rulers, not that of the British sovereign.

The Royal visit to Aden in 1954 was modestly marked by the re-issue of the 1953 one shilling stamp (featuring dhow-building) with an added inscription recording the event.

The Queen's hitherto pictorial and symbolic link with Aden became a spectacular reality on 27 April 1954 when she and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived by sea in S.S. *Gothic* on their way back from Australia and Ceylon. They stepped ashore at the Prince of Wales Pier where they were greeted by the Governor of Aden, Sir Tom Hickenbotham, his Chief Secretary, E.D. Hone, and Air Vice Marshal S.O. Bufton, the Air Officer Commanding, Aden (1953–55); since 1928 responsibility for Aden's security had been vested in the Royal Air Force.

Large crowds had gathered near the Pier and on the hillside opposite, and the whole area between the Pier and the Crescent was festooned with flags, bunting and decorative arches. From the royal dais in the Crescent,



The Royal Couple driving past spectators on Clock Tower Hill

flanked by stands and enclosures packed with spectators, the Queen watched a military parade including units of the RAF, Aden Protectorate Levies (APL), Armed Police, Government Guards, Hadhrami Bedouin Legion (HBL), and Somaliland Scouts. The royal couple then inspected the parade from an open Land Rover. The Queen must have been struck by the ethnic diversity of the crowds which had gathered to see her.

Having returned to the Royal enclosure, the Queen listened patiently to loyal addresses read by members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and to a speech of welcome in Arabic made on behalf of the Protectorate chiefs by the venerable ruler of the Qu'aiti State, Sultan Saleh bin Ghalib (d. 1956). An English translation of his speech was then read by the young, charismatic ruler of Lahej, Sultan Ali Abdul Karim Al-Abdali.

In what will have been the first and last occasion of a royal investiture in Aden, the Queen knighted Air Marshal Sir Claude Pelly, KCB, Commander-in-Chief of the RAF in the Middle East, and next, Sayyid Abu Bakr bin Shaikh al-Kaff, KBE, for his public services as peacemaker and philanthropist in Hadhramaut (Eastern Aden Protectorate). Sayyid Abu Bakr (d. 1965) had earlier declined to kneel to receive his accolade from the Queen on the grounds that as a Muslim he could only kneel before the Almighty; however, as a compromise, he agreed to stoop. On being

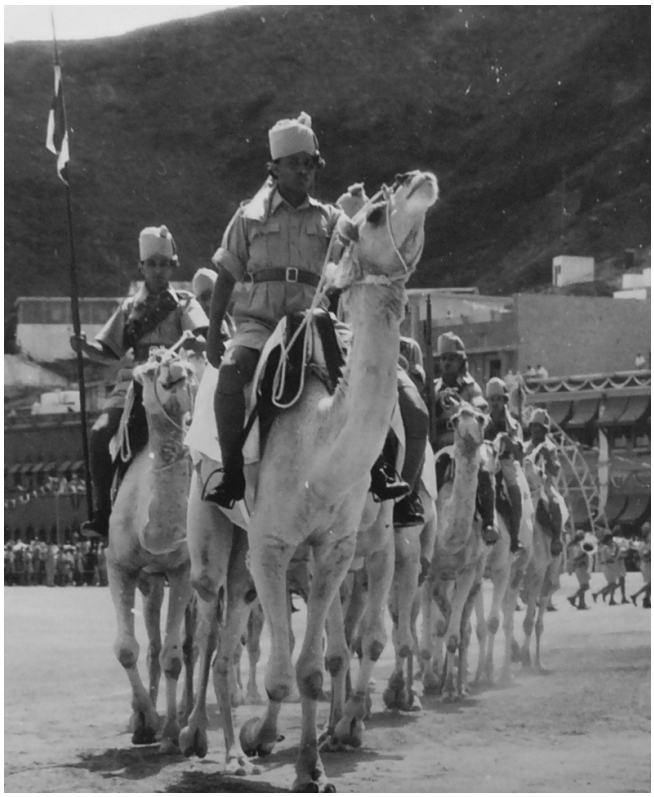
The Queen alighting in the Crescent to review the military parade celebrating her visit

honoured with a KBE in 1953, he had also declined to surrender the CBE awarded him in 1937 (as protocol required him to do on attaining a higher rank within the same Order), commenting that what the British gave with one hand they sought to take away with the other!

The Queen later visited the 180-bed RAF hospital, perched on Barrack Hill above Steamer Point. Ventilated by sea breezes, with its high ceilings and deep, shaded verandahs, the hospital provided welcome relief for patients and staff, from Aden's heat and humidity.

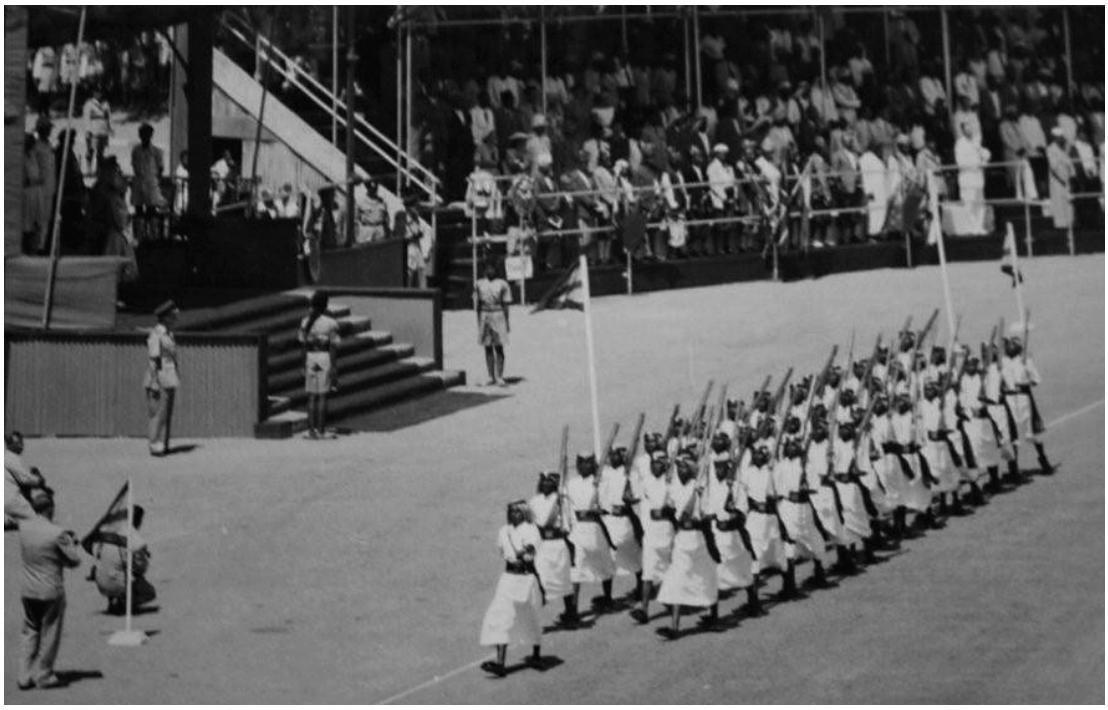
Next, a small lunch at Government House attended by expatriate and Adeni dignitaries, with the Qu'aiti and Lahej Sultans representing the Protectorate.

After retiring to the *Gothic* to rest, the Queen, later that afternoon, embarked on a tour of Ma'alla and Crater through densely packed, cheering crowds. At the football ground 4000 schoolboys were waiting to greet her, and at the Intermediate School playground 2000 schoolgirls were vying with the boys in lung power. People ran beside her car, and the local police had some anxious moments. The enthusiasm with which she was

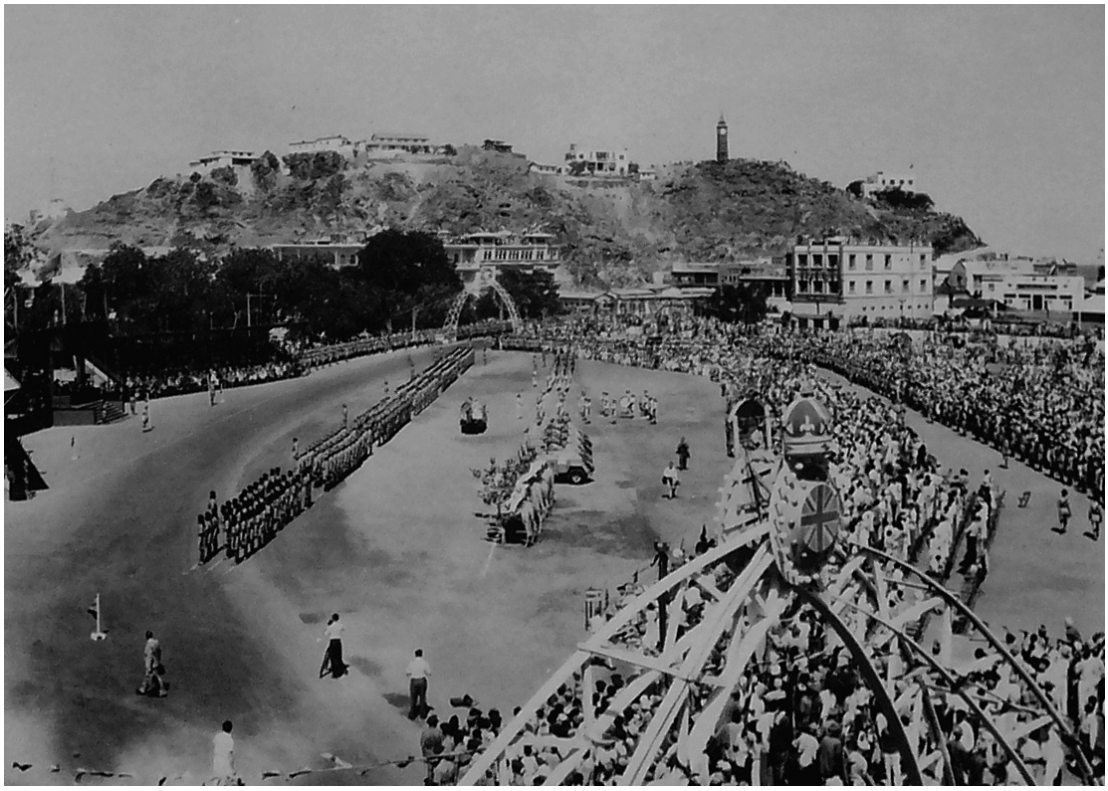


Marchpast by the Camel wing of the Aden Protectorate Levies (APL)

APL Armoured Cars



Marchpast by members of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion



Bird's eye view of the Crescent during the Queen's inspection of the parade from an open Landrover

The Queen knighting Sayyid Abubakr bin Shaikh al-Kaff

received in Crater delayed her programme by some twenty minutes. Her next engagement was to lay the foundation stone for the new 490-bed civil hospital in Khormaksar, which was to bear her name until independence (Princess Alexandra was to visit the hospital, by then fully operational, in 1961). The Queen then proceeded to Sheikh Othman to attend a garden party given in her honour by the Governor.

During the afternoon the Duke of Edinburgh had travelled by launch to Little Aden to view the new BP Oil Refinery whose construction, begun in November 1952, was now almost complete and would transform Aden into one of the largest bunkering ports in the world. The refinery and its tank farm covered 270 acres of largely reclaimed land and was initially designed to process five million tons of oil a year; it would be commissioned in July 1954.

Sheikh Othman, the venue for the Governor's reception, was a township and oasis at the crossroads of the Colony and its desert hinterland. Its main attraction was its extensive municipal gardens with their shade trees and

The Queen on her way from Crater to Khormaksar and Sheikh Othman

beds of flowering shrubs. Here some 400 guests had assembled to greet the Queen. Seated on carpets, Protectorate chiefs, in their variegated robes and turbans, presented a kaleidoscope of colour matched only by the brilliant saris of the Indian ladies present. At a special enclosure the Queen was introduced to purdah wives. More than half a century later a spectator recalled: '[the Queen] was looking particularly beautiful, obviously very happy after the great reception she had had in Crater, not only from the schoolchildren whom she had gone to see but also from the crowds along the route. As in the morning, she looked completely in control – assured'.

After the garden party the Queen and the Duke returned to Steamer Point, made their farewells and retired to the *Gothic* until the early hours of the following morning when they flew from Khormaksar to Uganda. The *Gothic* had been hired for the Royal tour because the Royal Yacht *Britannia* was not yet ready for use.

Britannia (without the Queen) did however pay an unscheduled visit to Aden in early 1986, following the outbreak of a brief but bloody civil war

in South Yemen, to provide a safe haven for expatriates fleeing the violence. The latter included Soviet Bloc advisers, and the irony of the Royal Yacht , during the Cold War, rescuing them from a conflict perpetrated by their own clients was not lost on observers.

During the 1990s an imaginative but implausible myth was to gain currency that the Queen had spent the night of her 1954 visit in the then prestigious Crescent Hotel. After years of neglect under state ownership, the hotel had been refurbished by a local entrepreneur, and a 'Royal Suite', complete with a colour photograph of Her Majesty, had been added to the hotel's advertised but still limited amenities. If the *Gothic* had been unavailable to the Royal couple they would surely have spent the night at Government House.

The Queen's message of thanks to the Governor and to 'all those who helped to make our visit so memorable and so successful' reflects the relatively buoyant, if transient, mood of the day. Her visit was happily timed. Aden was in the heyday of its prosperity. Local politics had yet to ruffle the outward calm of the Colony with its vibrant, polyglot population. The Suez crisis of 1956, which was to irreparably sour Britain's relations with the Arab world, still lay in the future.

EDITOR

THE FLAWED LOGIC OF US DRONE STRIKES IN YEMEN

BENEDICT WILKINSON

Benedict Wilkinson is in the final stages of his PhD at King's College London, where he is writing about the strategies of violent Islamist groups in Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. He was previously Head of Security and Counter-Terrorism at the Royal United Services Institute, where he now holds an Associate Fellowship. The following article draws on the author's presentation to the Society on 10 May.

For US military planners and Government officials, it seems, drone strikes are becoming an increasingly attractive tool for addressing the threat presented by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its insurgent partner, Ansar al-Sharia. This year has witnessed such a dramatic intensification in airstrikes that, by early July, there was an average of nearly one every week – up from fewer than one a month in 2011 and one every six months in 2009.[1] In 2012 alone, airstrikes have been responsible for the death of 161 people, nine of whom were civilians and the remainder alleged members of AQAP or its subsidiaries.

As drone strikes have become an increasingly prominent feature in the 'Global War on Terror', their strategic logic has become correspondingly questionable. Strategically speaking, drone strikes operate on three levels. Primarily, they aim to reduce the capability of an enemy by removing personnel. The fewer militants available to a terrorist group, so the argument runs, the more difficult it is for that organisation to carry out attacks. Identifying appropriate targets is not, however, always straightforward and it is for this reason that drone strikes are predominantly directed towards high-profile leaders who have authority within a terrorist organisation. Here, on the second level, the idea is to remove those individuals with the vision to mastermind plots and the charisma to inspire others to carry them out. Decapitating an organisation – that is, removing these senior management levels – will leave those in the lower ranks and on the margins of a terrorist organisation without the guiding force needed in order for them to project a significant threat. Of course, drone strikes are not only coercive, they are also deterrent. They send a high-profile message to potential supporters and those on the fringes that deeper involvement in terrorist organisations entails a risk which outweighs the benefits.

However, the efficacy of such a policy is dependent not only on the strategic logic of drone strikes, but on the nature of the opposition which

they target. This presents perhaps the greatest problem for US counter-terrorism strategy in Yemen. It is all too easy to assume that AQAP and its insurgent subsidiary, Ansar al-Sharia, represent an essentially hierarchical organisation with a static membership against whom drones strikes will be effective. Closer analysis of the group suggests that this is far from accurate.

The Nature of AQAP

Although the organisation's roots can be traced back to a 2006 prison break in which 23 militants escaped, it was not until 2009 that AQAP formally announced its existence. Since then, the group has expanded not only in terms of personnel, swelling its ranks from a handful of escaped prisoners by recruiting both locally and abroad, but also in *modus operandi*. In the early days of the group's existence, attacks were generally directed at local political and security figures on the one hand, or western diplomatic and touristic presence in Yemen on the other. Not long after AQAP's formal merger with the broader al-Qa'ida movement in 2009, however, the group began to attempt missions abroad, firstly in Saudi Arabia and then in the United States.

Hand in hand with this escalation in targeting ambitions went the development and growth of a dedicated media wing, whose remit was to disseminate propaganda in the form of online magazines in Arabic and English. The Anglophone publication, called *Inspire*, has acquired a level of notoriety in western media, in part, no doubt, because of its slick format and ability to appeal to would-be militants in the West. But in part, it is also because of the alleged involvement of Anwar al-Awlaqi, an American-born Yemeni who acquired something of a cult status for his fluent English and ability to convert complex (pseudo)-religious concepts into simpler sound bites in his sermons and written material. For many in the media, al-Awlaqi presented AQAP's greatest threat. This view, it seems, was mirrored in US official circles: a number of attempts were made on al-Awlaqi's life and in September of last year, he was killed in a drone strike alongside Samir Khan, the editor of the same magazine. Although their deaths produced a hiatus in the publishing of *Inspire*, it was only temporary: in May of this year, two further issues of *Inspire* were released by its new editor, Yahya Ibrahim.

Unfortunately for US officials, drone strikes have not only failed to put an end to the group, but have actually goaded the organisation into further

expansion. In the last year, Ansar al-Sharia, a semi-autonomous insurgent subsidiary of AQAP, has emerged, capable of taking control of sizeable pockets of Yemeni territory. In this period, the group has taken control of Ja'ar and Zinjibar in the South. Ansar al-Sharia has been careful, however, to cloak violence in a softer, humanitarian visage by pandering to the needs of ordinary Yemenis. There are numerous examples of the group's involvement in the provision of basic services (water, electricity and so on), as well as the abolition of taxes and establishing courts in order to maintain and distribute justice.

AQAP's recruitment strategy has also matured in the last eighteen months or so. Originally, the group sought to attract foreigners to Yemen for training and further ideological development, before returning them to their home countries in the knowledge that their passports provided a certain level of operational security. More recently, AQAP has come to realise that this gambit is unlikely to work in the face of increased security at airports. Demonstrating their organisational flexibility, they have now adapted this strategy and seek not to attract supporters to Yemen, but to mobilise them into undertaking their own *jihadi* enterprises at home. It is in their written material that AQAP provide interested parties with various strategies for undertaking terrorist activity abroad. Undoubtedly, it is this final point that continues to cause most concern to security officials in the US and the west more broadly. Indeed, it is likely to have been this development which brought individuals like Anwar al-Awlaqi and Samir Khan to the top of the target list.

Flaws in the Logic of Drones Strikes

If we take this analysis a little further, it reveals ramifications both for the type of group that AQAP has become and the nature of the threat it poses as well as for the US strategy of countering AQAP through drone strikes. The first and perhaps most important point is that AQAP is, by no stretch of the imagination, a rigid hierarchy with a static membership. Rather, as commentators have long pointed out for the broader al-Qa'ida movement, it is a relatively nebulous phenomenon, that comprises not just the *shura* council and regional commanders, but a whole host of fellow travellers, sympathisers and self-initiates both in Yemen and beyond. In short, AQAP is a relatively decentralised organisation. Whilst the *shura* council, comprising the leader, Nasser al-Wuhayshi, and his senior commanders form the backbone of the organisation, the other branches – wings

occupied with the insurgency, social affairs, propaganda and so on – appear not only to be flexible, adaptive and opportunistic, but also to retain some degree of autonomy. It is precisely these characteristics which make drone strikes ineffectual at best and counter-productive at worst.

Decentralised organisations of this type pose two unique problems for drone strikes. First, it is extremely difficult to identify where, precisely, an individual sits in the hierarchy and, by extension, to assess whether they are an appropriate target. Anwar al-Awlaqi is a case in point. For some, he was the 'Head of Foreign Operations', a title he is reputed to have used in an article in *Inspire* magazine.[2] Under this analysis, al-Awlaki was responsible for guiding terrorist plots abroad and ensuring that these caused maximum damage. For other analysts, myself amongst them, he was little more than a useful ideologue, drafted in by the leadership for his ability to disseminate propaganda effectively in English. Whatever the position he really occupied, it is reasonably clear that he drew little respect from the long-term al-Qa'ida leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. bin Laden went so far as to step in and deny requests from AQAP that al-Awlaqi should be promoted, noting rather drily that, 'we would like to be reassured more [about al-Awlaqi]. For example, we here become reassured of people when they go to the line [e.g. go into battle] and get examined there'. In cases such as this, the killing of an individual on the periphery of an organisation (or connected by ideology rather than activity) not only fails to limit their influence and usefulness for the group, but actually lionises them in the memory of their followers. Needless to say, the two most recent editions of *Inspire* are heavily devoted to Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan.

The second problem is that even if a leading figure is identified, it rarely deals a death blow to the organisation. The most poignant example is in the killing of Osama bin Laden which has, to all intents and purposes, failed to make any significant impact on al-Qa'ida. This is part of the nature of semi-hierarchical organisations like al-Qa'ida: because plans are developed at every level, it is unlikely that decapitating the organisation will render it inoperable. Indeed, more often than not, the opposite is the case: drone strikes can cause considerable anger in local populations, not simply from the loss of civilian life, but over the involvement of foreign forces on home soil. In such cases, drone strikes do not limit terrorist organisations by reducing the personnel available to them, rather they can actually increase the capacity of an organisation by driving local

populations towards the very groups they are designed to counter.

To sum up: AQAP is a largely decentralised organisation which displays all the traits of resilience, flexibility and resourcefulness displayed by the broader al-Qa'ida movement. Attempts to remove the senior leadership of such an organisation – and in so doing, expedite the group's demise – are not only unlikely to work, but likely to increase local support for precisely those individuals one is trying to defeat. Bearing this in mind, US officials need to find alternative methods for limiting the progress of AQAP – methods founded on closer partnership with both the Yemeni government and the Yemeni people.

Notes

1 These figures are taken from *The Long War Journal* 'The Covert US Air Campaign in Yemen', available at http://www.longwarjournal.org/multimedia/Yemen/code/Yemen-strike.php

2 See e.g. T. Hegghammer, 'The Case for Chasing al-Awlaki,' in *Foreign Policy* (2010)

Exhibition wall display framing scenes within and outside the built environment

A CELEBRATION OF AL-BILAD

SALMA SAMAR DAMLUJI

The Museum of Architecture, a new London-based organisation, and the British Council sponsored an exhibition this summer intended to highlight architectural interpretations of the 'home' in the Arab world. Dr Damluji was invited to contribute an audio-visual presentation of 'home' in Yemen, drawing on her long experience of the region and her work on the conservation of its mudbrick heritage. Her commentary for the exhibition, reproduced below with photographs which were on display, poignantly attests the mixed fortunes of contemporary mudbrick architecture in the Hadramut province of the country. Dr Damluji is Chief Architect of the Daw'an Mud Brick Architecture Foundation (http://www.dawanarchitecturefoundation.org) based in Mukalla. In April 2012 she received the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture, at a ceremony in Paris.

Introduction

The exhibition touched on the theme of 'Al-Bilad', the name given by Hadramis to their home-town and country. The installation was arranged in three sections: a wall designed to mirror the exterior and interior of Hadrami urban architecture; a wall to act as a screen for the projection of a film, *Sundust*, comprising a series of images shot in Shibam to reflect a sense of the living landscape; and a wall bearing the text of my commentary – a wall of words! The installation aimed to underline the importance of the urban landscape and the fact that architecture is not only about buildings. The exhibition was put together at very short notice and within a very tight budget. The design concept was developed in Beirut with the assistance of Samer Al-Ameen (Image consultant and designer) and produced in London. Samer had earlier been involved in the preparation and production of materials and events for the Say'un Earth Conference which was scheduled for February 2011 but which had to be postponed at the last minute due to the political unrest prevailing in Yemen at the time. To mark the event a book was published entitled *Earth Architecture: Mud, Stone & Shale: Wadi Hadramut & Daw'an*, sumptuously illustrated with superb photographs by Roger Moukarzel who shot the wall images celebrating 'Al-Bilad'. The film *Sundust* was an idea which Roger developed in response to the time and budgetary constraints under which we had to work. Another source of enthusiastic assistance was the London-based Lebanese sculptor, Souheil Suleiman, who built our exhibition structure.

We dedicated the work to the memory of Master Builder Karamah 'Ubayd, of Tarim, who passed away suddenly during Ramadan 2011. He

and his team worked with us on all projects completed to date: in Wadi Hadramut (Aynat and Sah) and in Daw'an where work continues on renovating Masna'at Ba Surrah. His advice and expertise will be greatly missed.

Commentary

'Al-Bilad'…is Hadramut as it is known to Hadramis. Home is where the heart is, and the heart dwells in 'Al-Bilad'…This the fundamental quality of 'home': it is the locus of memory, care, love and commitment. This is understood by Yemenis in general and Hadramis in particular, whose hearts remain within 'Al-Bilad' even though they may live outside it.

Every home in 'Al-Bilad' has a story. Towering buildings and quiet enclaves, landscapes crafted with beauty and dignity, embody a vision of the future which embraces the past, where home life is contained within cool polished walls, simple spaces and furnishings, which exude the scent of incense and myrrh. Inhabitants do not allow roads to be built inside their towns, so children can play outside freely, unthreatened by motor cars, and goats roam at will. But these ethereal sites are being targeted by contractors and developers intent on demolishing centuries-old earth mosques, and replacing their graceful arcades, lofty arches and domes with ugly edifices made of cheap cement bricks and ceramic tiles.

In this time of revolution…afternoon football is the most popular pastime for youths who refuse to chew *qat* or succumb to the politics of conflict and cultural poverty. Undaunted they gather in high spirits...and, defying the sand and dust enveloping their agile bodies, play for hours until after dusk…

While architects on another planet claim to be inspired by its sustainable architecture, Shibam is neglected and decaying. Paraded as a cultural relic, it is a museum of architecture falling into a desperate state of dilapidation, while the community discreetly moves out of this world heritage site. Carved window screens, doors, capitals and columns are removed and exhibited as antiques for sale in the streets. Does anybody care?

Here we live in homes of several storeys, not flats and apartments. We have no housing shortage and continue to build in mud brick, stone and shale. We use *nurah*, a white marbleised plaster polish, to dress our internal walls with different motifs. Here we have open space, courts, terraces and fields. In Daw'an, each living room or bedroom has its own bathroom, and houses are equipped with water cisterns and pools.The architectural loss suffered in the towns and cities of 'Al-Bilad' is materially

and visually painful, even within the context of urban confusion and disorder. It must be understood as a battle for the future, not for conserving the past, on behalf of communities who have a right to celebrate their cultural landscape and urban heritage, and to draw from it. A sense of dignity in an economically balanced and sustainable environment – this is 'Al-Bilad'.

RAUFA HASSAN: AN APPRECIATION

ELHAM MANEA[1]

Raufa Hassan

Raufa Hassan – a pioneer Yemeni women's rights activist and brilliant intellectual and journalist – was more than just a public figure. Born ahead of her time, she was bigger than life itself. She touched the lives of many men and women, including this writer. Her life tells the story of a unique woman who believed in the possibility of social change, only to die expressing despair.

Born in 1958 to a well-to-do Qadi family in north Yemen, Hassan was raised by her grandfather, a judge with a wealth of knowledge. A gifted child, she was allowed to follow him in every mosque's Zawiya (religious teaching circle) he attended. She was his favourite grandchild, as she recounted to this author in an interview in 2006, and social rules did not seem to apply to her. Thanks to her grandfather's care and instruction she was able to skip three years of her elementary education.

Her childhood was a time of rapid political and social change. The imamate regime was overthrown in a military coup in 1962; north Yemen was waking up from centuries of isolation; nationalist and socialist

ideologies were setting the tone in the Arab region; a civil war erupted and the power struggle that followed ended with conservative tribal military elites taking over.

Social change at the time was chaotic, still unshaped and without a clear direction. She explained:

> 'I used to wear *sharshaf* with the *lithma* (two pieces of black cloth that cover the woman from head to toe complemented by a black garment that hides the face), play football and ride with my best friend on her bike. Identity was not yet female and not male either. Neither was it a traditional female. We did not know at the time which traditions we should keep and which we should rebel against.' (Interview by Author, 13 October 2006)

Her future battles with political Islam were to be discerned from her childhood memories. Her religious teacher in sixth grade was none other than the famous Salafi preacher and future Bin Laden's mentor, Abdul Majeed al-Zindani. She and other girls at her class used to mock him every time he entered the class by exposing their faces to him. He would mumble an angry Astaghfur Allah (God's Forgiveness) and they would smile back.

One day she was riding a bike with her female friend and saw him walking down the street. She stopped her friend, jumped off the bike, ran to him with her *sharshaf* and asked: 'Professor, is riding a bike halal or haram (permissible or prohibited from a religious point of view)'. His answer was curt: ' it is morally offensive!' She ran back to her bike, looked at her friend and said: 'let's offend!'

Mocked as he was at the time by female pupils, al-Zindani would succeed in the early seventies in introducing 8 religious subjects (instead of one subject) to the curriculum in all public schools. Raufa Hassan joined other students in demonstrations against this decision but to no avail. The seeds of indoctrination of children in Orthodox Sunni Islam had been planted.

Critical as she was, her awareness of gender roles went through stages. During her early years as a female radio presenter she often reproduced elegant images of nothing but traditional roles of women:

> 'I used to have a woman program in TV and Radio. I am criticising myself now. The radio program was daily and I used to write many of its components. I used to talk about the role a woman should play when she meets her husband. How she opens the door to him and smile to him, how she should cook and work. In

other words, a sanctification of the very traditional social roles we are condemning – instead of a partnership with man, the responsibility should only be shouldered by the woman…'

In line with this, the first generation of women activism at the time was still restricted to charity, led by women of the upper class. Raufa Hassan was a member and later in 1974 a director of the Society of Yemeni Woman in Sana'a. Only later in the seventies did women of middle class background enter the scene.

She did not question the patriarchal structures of Yemeni society until later, she recounted. She would resist any attempt by men in her life to control her – she died single. Although conscious that what they were asking her to 'give up' was 'unfair', she did not at the time situate this 'unfairness' in a broader context. Her travels for higher education to Egypt, the USA and France, her field research in Yemen to get her PhD in sociology from Paris University, and her participation in Arab and international women's conferences have played a decisive role in her intellectual development.

Notwithstanding these early stages, her perception and position on gender went beyond western feminism. She fought her way when she opened in 1993 the Woman and Social Studies Centre at Sana'a University. While the resistance of some university's officials and professors at the sociology department were expected (the latter was insisting on using Marxist theories on gender which neither she nor her team subscribed to (nor indeed to liberal theories on the topic). It was also very telling that she had to resist an attempt by the Netherlands' government, as a donor, to prescribe how gender should be studied in Yemen. She said:

'We did not agree with the Western concept of feminism. Feminism used to mean a ghetto, in general for women – a ghetto of women, who had in fact very radical positions even by Western standards. But this was not our perception. We wanted men and women to study our society and to question the existing theories so we would be able to create a new theory. We cannot do that as women alone; nor can men do that alone; we should do that together. It is not a story about the female gender. We are talking about the story of female and male genders and our problems together because we are facing problems with each other…'

In the end the Centre would turn into a real agent for social change. It emphasized critical thinking. It offered courses on women and education;

women and socialization; women and the media; and women and Sharia and law. Part of the requirements was for students to conduct field work. Many taboo issues were opened, investigated, and published in papers. The backlash from conservative and Islamist groups was therefore expected.

What Raufa Hassan did not expect was the way the centre got entangled in a surrogate political struggle. 1999 was a decisive year. The alliance between President Saleh and the Islamist Islah party, which was crucial for Saleh's victory in the 1994 civil war, was coming to an end. A new presidential election was due. Despite the political row with Saleh, Islah's leaders were unable to agree on a presidential candidate. The party is composed of Salafis, Muslim Brothers and tribal factions. To keep the party united, a compromise was reached and the party leadership decided to support Saleh's candidacy. The decision did not satisfy Islah's party bases and supporters. A distraction was needed. A conference organized by the Centre on the future of Gender Studies on 12–14 September (a week before the presidential elections) provided a perfect opportunity.

Some remarks made in French by an invited participant were taken out of context and distorted in a translation published by the Islah party a day later. In a matter of couple of days more than 150 thousand signatures were gathered in Yemen against the centre; An Islahi Preacher, who was an MP at the time, produced three cassettes attacking Hassan, the Centre and Gender! Similar attacks were repeated in more than 130 Mosques. Thousands went to the streets of Sana'a calling for the defence of Islam and attacking Hassan in the process. An investigation was opened against the centre. No one was talking about Islah's decision to support Saleh's candidacy anymore. She was left alone:

> 'I realized that what they (Islah party) are doing was far bigger than my size. I am small, I do not have a party, I am independent, and I do not have anybody to support me, no tribe, and no women's movement to stand by me. I only have myself …. I told myself this is a new and strong wave of Bedouin turbulence ; if you stand in it, you will get swept away by it. You can only do what plants do in a storm: turn your head down until the storm is over. Once it is over, you can come back, try to regain your strength, gather what have been scattered and see what you can do. You do not have other alternatives.'

She left Yemen and for four years Raufa Hassan worked and taught in Holland, Denmark and Tunisia. She turned down a professorship at

Leiden University. Like a fish, she could not live in sweet water. She needed her salty water.

In 2003 she came back to Yemen and opened the Cultural and Development Programs Foundation. Her foundation did more than gathering what had been scattered. It worked relentlessly for empowering women to be politically active, and coordinating with political groups to promote governmental transparency and accountability.

Working for social change requires an optimist. Raufa Hassan believed strongly in the possibility of change in her country and was willing to work within the Yemeni political system, if this concession would enable her to achieve her vision. This very system stood lame during her darkest moment in 1999.

When the youth revolt erupted in February 2011 she was conspicuously silent. Her younger sister's death in a car accident in Cairo and her own struggle with a terminal illness may have contributed to this. Yet her last article, entitled "Misery and Sorrow" published in al-Watan on 28 April 2011, 12 days before her death, revealed that her silence may have been a loud message. Her words did not leave room for misunderstanding:

> 'I noticed the inexplicable absence of voices… of many persons, whom I respect. And I thought they may have been going through a similar condition to mine; and decided that inflating a torn waterskin is useless; their voices turned husky from explanation and clarification; holding a candle in darkness, (yet) every time they light it, it would blow out; until they despaired, lost their patience and became silent…. If that was their way, then it is not for me to deviate from it.'

For those who knew and loved her, her last words, far sighted as usual, were a startling wake-up call. Outsmarting the cunning Yemeni state would prove as difficult as she predicted.

1 Dr Elham Manea is of dual nationality, Yemeni and Swiss. She is an Associate Professor specialized on the Middle East, with a focus on Yemen, a writer, and a human rights activist. She works at the Political Science Institute at the University of Zurich and a consultant for Swiss government agencies and international human rights organizations. Her latest publication was a book entitled *The Arab State and Women's Rights: The Trap of Authoritarian Governance (Yemen, Syria, Kuwait), London: Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics, June 2011*. A paper entitled 'Yemen's Arab Spring: Outsmarting the Cunning State' is due to be published in 2012 in Larbi Sadiki (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring*, London.

BOOK REVIEWS

Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen: a troubled national union by Stephen W. Day, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Middle East Series), 2012. Pp.xxx + 336. Maps. Tables. Chronology. Notes. Index. Pb. $29.99. ISBN: 978-1-107-60659-3.

This long awaited book by Dr Stephen Day, an American scholar and namesake of a former chairman of the BYS, is the fruit of his research for a PhD thesis in the second half of the 1990s combined with his subsequent interest in Yemeni politics, with a particular focus on the south since unity in 1990. The book looks at two 1960s revolutions that created the Yemen Arab Republic and the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), the emergence of ex President Ali Abdullah Salih and how be built his rule, the failed unification of the two Yemenis in 1990 and how events in the 1990s and early 2000 have shaped the politics of today.

Dr Day argues that the past, present and future of Yemeni politics cannot be properly analyzed without taking into account its regional divisions, whose influence previous scholars have tended to neglect. He points to the strong regionally-based states of the distant past and the difficulty that Yemeni leaders, whether Imams or Presidents, have experienced in persuading Yemen's diverse peoples to accept central authority by force, co-option, persuasion or the ballot box. He defines seven distinct regions that are generally aligned with geographical divisions. The most coherent, perhaps is what he calls the 'north-west highlands' that are strongly associated with Zaydism and the major tribal confederations of the Hashid and Bakil. He argues that elites from this region have dominated and continue to dominate Yemeni regimes. To the west is the coastal plain of the Tihama. The 'midlands' is the Sunni Shafi'i heartland of Taiz, Ibb and parts of neighbouring provinces. The 'southwest lowlands' is Aden and southern Lahij and Abyan and the 'mid southern' the mountainous areas of Eastern and Central Abyan and Shabwa and adjacent lands. To the north is the 'central of desert interior' of Marib and Al-Jawf and parts of Al Bayda and Hadhramaut. Hadhramaut (and Mahra) has historically and culturally long been a distinctive region. Dr Day makes his case well and avoids an overly deterministic approach but some scholars and this reviewer see regionalism as being a crucial but not overriding influence.

What Dr Day successfully shows is that authoritarian regimes or

centralised systems in north, south and united Yemen have provided only short term or illusory stability. Ali Abdullah Salih's regime in its early days and the PDRY in the 1970s tried to build governments that included politicians from all regions and ran into difficulties when they later reverted to centralisation or tried to exclude powerful local groups. Salih stripped power from what had been effective local government in his efforts to strengthen the centre. The 1986 quasi civil war in the south was essentially a fight between two regional groups, each trying to exclude the other from power.

A core part of the book discusses the flawed unification of the northern and southern elites in 1990 and the way that Salih carried out a ruthless and unrelenting policy of marginalising the southern leadership and undermining the PDRY's relatively efficient government systems in the period up to the civil war of 1994 and the subsequent 'occupation' of the south. He shows how the Salih regime at first co-opted the supporters of Ali Nasser Muhammad, the southern leader forced out in the violent events of 1986, and then discarded them as he and his allies from other parts of the northern elite exploited the south for their benefit. This is by far the strongest part of the book, based on surveys and interviews Dr Day conducted for his PhD. He provides the best and most authoritative account that has so far been published in English and should be required reading for scholars, diplomats and others trying to help create a better future for Yemen's 24 million people . It shows why so many in the south demand secession, federation or insist that there must be a more inclusive and democratic system if they are to remain in a united Yemen.

Dr Day draws more on secondary sources to trace how southern discontent evolved from protests in 2007 by military officers dismissed in the 1990s into what has become the southern mobility movement – al-Hiraak. The regime's attempts to put it down merely helped the movement to spread. Al Hiraak may lack cohesion and a united leadership and have inherited the regional divisions of the PDRY but it is a grassroots movement that is too powerful and widespread to ignore – a fact that is now recognised by many in Sana'a and the international community.

The final part of the book appears to be a late addition but is useful in bringing the work beyond the fall of the Salih, which Dr Day attributes to the impact of the great 2011 popular uprising of the Arab Spring on a regime that had been weakening since the mid 2000s. Salih's policies, including a plan to ensure that his son Ahmad would succeed him,

alienated erstwhile allies within the northern upland elite. This intensified after the death of Shaikh Abdullah al-Ahmar, who despite heading the Islah opposition party, was also a strong ally of Salih. Cracks in the regime became major fractures as former allies sided with (or exploited) the mass demonstrations to force Salih out with the help of GCC and UN mediators and heavy pressure from international and regional governments.

His concluding chapter lends force to those who argue that a federal system is likely to provide the most stable system for Yemen whether it is one based on the old north and south Yemen or on some, possibly all, of the regions which Dr Day describes. However, there are quite district differences – which Dr Day acknowledges but does not analyse – between the outlook of the northern and southern elite. Whatever divisions exist in the south there is also a strong sense of a distinctive south Yemeni identity. This is visible in the argument used by many in the south that negotiations over the future of Yemen should be discussed not in the Conference of the National Dialogue (starting in November 2012) but in direct negotiations between southern and northern leaders. To them the southern state still exists. A majority of the northern elite see unity as non-negotiable.

He sets his arguments out against the background of Yemen's profound economic and social problems (as well as discussing the problems in Sa'ada with al-Huthi). This is a very good and well written book that manages to find a path between being academically rigorous in its core sections and accessible to a wider public.

NOEL BREHONY

Salafism in Yemen: Transnationalism and Religious Identity by Laurent Bonnefoy, C. Hurst & Co.(Publishers) Ltd., 2011. Pp.xxi + 307. Glossary. Bibliog. Index. Pb. ISBN: 978-1-84904-131-7.

Despite frequent sensationalist headlines, Islamist movements in Yemen – of all varieties, militant and non-militant – is a topic treated surprisingly little in academic texts, and even in more popular literature (while disclaiming that this review limits itself to material available in the English language). Laurent Bonnefoy's *Salafism in Yemen* is the most recent contribution on the topic, and a substantial addition to an un-crowded field.

The Yemeni Salafi movement originates in the 1970s, and its principal

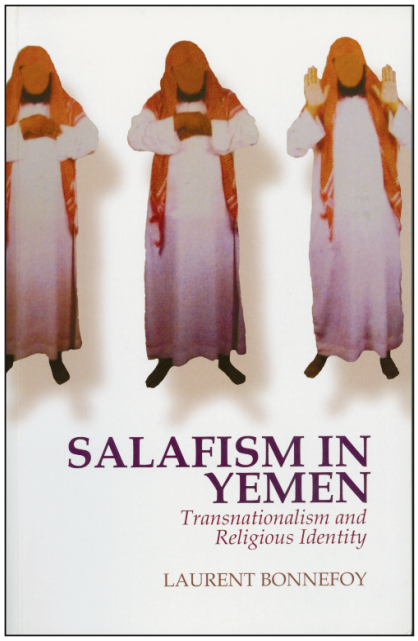


figure Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i (d. 2001) founded the Dar al-Hadith centre in Dammaj, in the northern governorate of Sa'dah, after returning from Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s. Dar al-Hadith continues to be a major centre of Salafi learning in Yemen, with many hundreds of students a year passing through its doors.[1] *Salafism in Yemen* provides the reader with a detailed biography of al-Wadi'i, chronicling his life and ideas through a close reading of his books and speeches.

Salafism is a creed focused on purifying Islam from local particularities and innovations, returning to the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and the Companions, and Yemen's 'Muqbilian Salafism' is particularly characterised by political quietism. Most Yemeni Salafis theoretically reject almost all forms of political engagement or even organised charitable activity, although more recently some splinter groups have taken a more active role, even founding a political party – the Yemeni Rashad Union.

The Salafi movement emerged into a turbulent age, and social and political changes have led to religious identity becoming an increasingly contested arena in Yemen. The growth of the Salafi movement has been both a cause and consequence of social upheavals. After the 1962 revolution in which the Zaydi Imam Badr Hamid al-Din was deposed and replaced by a republican government, many Zaydis – the Shi'a sect who are dominant in the Northern highlands – felt Zaydism to have been deliberately weakened; the subsequent rapid and sometimes aggressive spread of the new creed of Salafism has caused many Yemenis to consider it alien,

and a product of deliberate state-sponsored Saudi proselytising. Non-Salafi Yemenis frequently consider Saudi 'Wahhabism' and 'Salafism' as interchangeable.

Salafism is an international phenomenon – Salafi groups and political parties have recently, for example, become especially prominent in Tunisia and Egypt – but through *Salafism in Yemen* Bonnefoy sets out to make the nuanced argument that while Yemeni Salafism is a product of 'transnational processes' , these are largely 'bottom-up' processes occurring at the grassroots. As well as noting that there is little evidence to support claims that Saudi Arabia bankrolls the movement, Bonnefoy uses the example of a small Salafi centre in the village of Lab'ous, in the remote southern region of Yafi', where he conducted several years of fieldwork delving into the lives and religious practice of the centre's students. Migration to the Gulf countries and especially to Saudi Arabia is one of the few routes to prosperity for the young men of Lab'ous, but one which is nevertheless out of the reach of most. Bonnefoy argues that it is not direct migratory experience which encourages the uptake of Salafism – none of the faculty of Lab'ous had themselves lived in Saudi Arabia – but aspiration to the 'Saudi way of life'. He also finds that in the context of economic stagnation, the sense of group belonging in the Salafi community becomes 'a powerful means of integration' for those marginalised by unemployment.

Muqbil al-Wadi'i's Salafism was not the only religious revival movement to take root in Yemen in the 1980s and 1990s. The anthropologist Gabriele vom Bruck has written extensively on Zaydi communities and her recent article *Regimes of Piety Revisited: Zaydi Political Moralities in Republican Yemen* (2010) offers a useful description of the changes Zaydism has undergone since 1962. She focuses on the consequences of the state's attempt to transcend doctrinal differences – in particular between the biggest sects in Yemen, Zaydi Shi'a and Shafi'i Sunnis – in order to create a 'unified' Islam, and the consequent Zaydi revival movement which appeared in the 1990s.

In *The 'Tariqa' on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen* (2001) Alexander Knysh describes the Sufi revival movements in south Yemen. Knysh discusses what he refers to as the 'neo-traditionalist' movement of Habib 'Umar and the Dar al-Mustafa centre in Tarim, Hadramawt, which has drawn upon local Hadrami beliefs and practices which fell out of favour (or were banned) in the socialist era. These include the veneration of saints' tombs and observing respect for the *sada*,

descendants of the Prophet. However Knysh points out that Habib 'Umar's movement caters to modern tastes – and reacts to Salafi critiques – by '[minimizing] the importance of miracle narratives, ecstatic behaviour, and mystical experiences that figure prominently in the medieval Yemeni hagiographic collections.'

Bonnefoy dedicates a chapter to the question of authenticity, arguing that Salafism, rather than representing the 'Saudisation' of Yemeni society, has itself undergone a 'Yemenisation' process: while belonging to a wider, pan-Islamic reform movement, Yemeni Salafism is adapted to the Yemeni environment. The particular emphasis by al-Wadi'i and his followers on rejecting *hizbiyya* (roughly translated as 'factionalism') and the consequent commitment to political quietism is depicted as a direct reaction to the Zaydi principle of *khuruj*, the obligation of 'rising' against an unjust ruler.

Other scholars argue that Salafism has deep roots in Yemen: Bernard Haykel, in *Revival and Reform in Islam* (2003), his biography of the influential reformist scholar and judge Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1834), draws a direct link between al-Shawkani's legacy and the development of the Salafi movement in Yemen. Al-Shawkani was a Zaydi who became what Haykel describes as a 'Traditionist', rejecting established Zaydi interpretations of Islamic doctrine in favour of the individual scholar's ability to understand Islam through direct reading of the prophetic *hadith*. Al-Shawkani rejected several key tenets of Zaydism – including that of *khuruj* – but was patronised by the Qasimi dynasty of Zaydi imams who ruled in Yemen from the 17th to the 19th century.

Al-Shawkani's approach was not dissimilar to other Islamic reform movements in the 18th and 19th centuries including Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, and his important legacy acts as a counter-point to arguments that Salafism is a purely 'imported' creed. While the emergence of Salafism in Yemen no doubt belongs to a regional, even global trend for religious revival movements – prompted by such forces of modernisation as increased literacy rates, the influence of mass media and the individualisation of religious practice – it is also clearly rooted in the Yemeni political and religious context. As much as other contemporary revival movements such as that of Habib 'Umar in Tarim and recent Zaydi activism, Yemeni Salafism is a product of Yemen's rich intellectual history. *Salafism in Yemen* is an excellent contribution to the literature on Islamist movements in Yemen, and while this review is not comprehensive – in particular it

does not consider studies of Yemen's mainstream Islamist party Islah, such as Jillian Schwedler's book on *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* – the topic is far from being exhausted.

LEONIE NORTHEDGE

[1] Theo Padnos includes mention of Dar al-Hadith and the experiences there of foreign students like himself in his journalistic account of his time in Yemen (*Undercover Muslim*, 2011).

The Workers' Movement and Its role in the Development of the Nationalist Movement in Aden 1945–1963 (al-harakah al-ummaliyah fi adan wa dawroha fi tatawar al-harakah al-wataniyah) by Saleh Ahmed Eisa, published in Aden in Arabic for the Yemen Workers' Trade Union Federation and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, ca.2010. Pp. 265. References and Appendices. Pb.

Aden was significant in Britain's economy, global trade and military strategy. Its port, then the third busiest in the world, was the birth place of its labour movement. Typically it was seen either as an outgrowth of British colonial rule and state-building and/or as a tool of proletarian opposition to British politics in the region. The author subscribes to the latter view and sees the growing tide of labour unrest in the 1950s and early 1960s, characterised by mass mobilisation, recurrent demonstrations and crippling strikes, as part of the wider Arab nationalist movement of the period.

Eisa's book is based on a dissertation which won him an MA from Aden University in 2001. As a former member (1969–74) of PDRY's Labour Organisation and a former General Secretary (1970–4) of the Transport and Communications Union, he is well qualified to chronicle the emergence, development and growth of trade unionism in Aden. He does this in three chapters, preceded by a prologue, in flowing jargon-free Arabic. The narrative ends with very helpful point summaries in Arabic and English marred only by the mal-positioning of scanned documents and the loss of words at the edges. A more serious loss of text arises from the fact that pages 46–64 and 69–72 are missing!

Why the brief period of study (1945–1963) and why the abrupt ending four years before independence are not explained.

Eisa utilised Arabic primary sources, Colonial Annual Reports and interviews which he conducted with five men who contributed to the early years

of workers' union formation. On British policy he used secondary sources, predominantly translated from English into Arabic.

Apart from its officially-sponsored links to the UK's own labour movement, two major factors catalysed the development and growth of the workers' movement in Aden: the Colony's port and British Petroleum's refinery which brought new technology, economic prosperity and a commensurate rise in the territory's skilled and unskilled (mostly imported) work force. Higher education produced Arab intellectual and political leadership and engendered heightened aspirations and an awareness of an independent destiny.

A young educated elite created and led the workers' trade unions and labour movement in Aden. The few named leaders (Abdallah Fadhil Fare', Ali Abdul-Rahman al-Aswadi, Muhsin al-'Aini, Ali Abdul-Razaq and Mohammad Saeed Muswat) drafted its 1960 constitution and created an active cohesive front. In 1960 eight conglomerate unions joined and formed the Worker's Congress. Muswat headed the Executive Board whilst Abdulla al-Asnag was General Secretary. All of the executives were Aden-based; the majority had strong links with North (Imamate) Yemen. One of the strengths of this book lies in its identification by name of leading members of the labour movement.

Despite the absence of a sister movement or political parties in Imamate Yemen, the notion of an indivisible Yemen is reflected in the composition of the movement's leadership. Many originally hailed or had recently taken refuge in Aden from Imamate rule. The constitution of the People's Socialist Party (PSP), the political arm of the labour movement, also considered Yemen as one. A few Aden labour executives such as al-Asnag and Muhsin al-'Aini, went on to hold senior government posts in post-Imamate Yemen.

In solidarity with other Arab and international labour movements Aden's unions supported demands for freedom by other Arab nations, particularly by Algeria and the Arab Maghreb. Strikes and boycotts of shipping directed against the economic interests of US and European powers were also seen as victories on the road to freedom. Yet, Eisa does not analyse the short or long-term effects they may have had on Aden and the area's economic prosperity.

Eisa outlines the growing array of other contenders for political power in the post-colonial era. Almost all were associated with the wider Arab nationalist movement but were divided in ideology and their strategies for

winning power. A few, however, preferred to retain a direct connection with Britain with no declared aspiration to form a united Yemen.

The author does not explore the role, if any, of the movement or its individual members in the armed anti-colonial struggle or the bitter internecine conflicts of the period up to 1967. Neither does he discuss the movement's equally interesting metamorphosis into an instrument of the post-colonial socialist establishment of which he was a senior member.

Since the workers' movement described by Eisa reflected Adeni society of the day, not surprisingly its leadership, membership and narrative were male-dominated. The story is bereft of detail of women's role in the independence movement, despite their active involvement in strikes, demonstrations, and in membership of the Peoples Socialist Party (PSP) and the ATUC. For enlightenment, the reader will need to turn to Asmahan Aqlan al-Alas' *The state of Yemeni Women in Aden under British administration 1937–67*, Aden University Press, 2005 (pp.184–190).

ADEL AL-AULAQI

Contesting Realities: The Public Sphere and Morality in Southern Yemen by Susanne Dahlgren, Syracuse University Press, New York, 2010. Pp. xvi + 371. Gloss. Bibliog. References. Appendices. Index. Illus. Map. Hb. £40.50. ISBN 978-0-8156-3246-7.

'Throughout its history, Aden has seldom left a visitor indifferent', contends Dr Susanne Dahlgren, as she introduces the reader to the city that has also stimulated her own academic interest. And what makes Aden the focus of her study, is the fact that over the period of fifty years which her work negotiates (1950–2001) few other places in the Arab and the wider world have experienced such an array of socio-political changes in such quick succession. British colonial rule and the prolonged and painful decolonisation process gave way to the only Marxist state in Arabia, a rather short-lived political experiment, during the last years of which the author started her field research in South Yemen. And this independent state was consequently subsumed under the more populous and traditionalist North Yemen to form what today is known as the Republic of Yemen.

Dahlgren's work falls under the broad category of ethnography, in that she uses her interviews of no less than 311 Adeni families and her everyday

observations in order to reconstruct the social dynamics, customs, behavioural norms pertaining to gender and family relations over the period of her study. She observes Adenis going about their daily affairs at university, the workplace, the courts of law (where gender and family relations are regulated by the state), social clubs, government offices, and ultimately within the household. Her study is by no means one-sided towards women, as she acknowledges the equally significant role played by men in engendering certain social norms. In this sense, *Contesting Realities* breaks new ground in South Yemeni scholarship; although historical developments and political upheavals of the second half of the 20th century in southern Arabia have been very well recorded, little emphasis has hitherto been placed on the ways in which local society responded to these changes, and the strategies of adaptation it employed.

The aim, therefore, of this book is to explore the evolving nature of social interaction in the public sphere in Aden. Thus, it attempts to conceptualise how different moral frameworks have influenced people's behaviour, and attitudes over time. Under 'moral frameworks' the author groups the different sets of ideologies that dominated the political and social discourse in Aden at different periods of time; these are the local traditional customs, the revolutionary ideology of the socialist period, and Islamic morality of the post-unification era. After the initial section, which positions the book within its epistemological framework, and which might appeal less to the non-academic reader, follows a succession of very interesting and intelligible chapters on different aspects of public life in Aden during the colonial, socialist, and unification periods. The author then shares with the readers some of her characteristic case studies before pulling together her conclusions into her theoretical argument on morality and social praxis in Aden. The connecting thread of the book remains throughout the concept of *adab*, propriety, as the reserve of 'properties one person embodies in their social interaction'. *Adab* is not only relative to one's social position; it is rather in constant flux depending on the social context within which people find themselves during their everyday encounters, and which prescribe the appropriate moral framework from which Adenis freely borrow corresponding patterns of behaviour. In this sense, *adab* becomes an integral feature of Adeni identity; it embodies everything that distinguishes an Adeni from people from other parts of the country.

Contesting Realities not only fills in a void in our knowledge of Adeni society and historiography, refocusing our attention on the very people

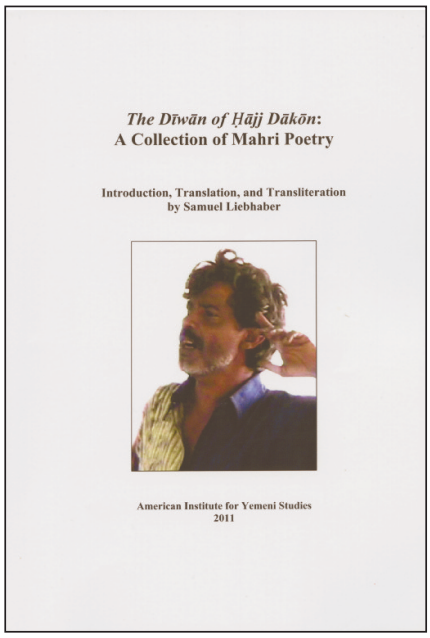
who inhabit the city. It is also an important contribution to ethnography in the Middle East, offering a blueprint for the study of social change in Arab, and Muslim societies on the basis of *adab*. Furthermore, it provides the reader with stimulating insights into the social complexities and hybrid heritage characterising former colonial city-states such as Aden, Hong Kong, and Singapore

THANOS PETOURIS

The Dīwān of* Ḥājj Dākōn: *A Collection of Mahri Poetry: Introduction, Translation and Transliteration by Samuel Liebhaber, The American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 2011. Mahri and Arabic texts. Pp. ix + 187. Bibliog. ISBN-10: 1-882-557-16-6; ISBN 13: 978-1-8825-57166-5)

The appearance of this book marks an important new development for the pre-literate Modern South Arabian languages (MSA) of southern Arabia. Its importance lies in the fact that it presents poems in the Mahri language in *written* form. As Liebhaber writes: 'the Mahri language has never been written down for the benefit and enjoyment of a non-scholarly audience',[1] and 'There is no precedent for complete written texts in the Mahri language. There is no locally agreed-upon means to represent the unique sounds of the Mahri language nor is there a single dialect of Mahri that all Mahri speakers agree ought to form the basis for a standard written idiom. In choosing to commit his poetry to writing Ḥājj has ventured into uncharted territory and has made decisions that may influence the future direction of written Mahri'.[2]

The book is divided into five parts. In Part I [*The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn: Literary and Cultural Analysis*], some biographical details of the poet and the origin of his *Dīwān* are given; the author then discusses traditional and modern poetical forms (especially various types of *Qaṣīda*), orality and literacy, and the socio-cultural context of the Mahri language. In sections 6–9 various poems in Mahri are analysed in depth. Part II [*Key to the Arabic and Mahri Texts*] sets out a table for Arabic and Mahri transliteration and discusses some of the difficulties encountered in transcribing poetry in Mahri. In Parts III to V the eighteen poems are presented: transliterated by Liebhaber and translated by him into English, with detailed linguistic footnotes in Part III [*The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn: Translation and Transliteration*]; transcribed and translated into Arabic by



Ḥājj Dākōn in Part IV [*The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn: Mahri and Arabic Texts*]; in Mahri and Arabic in Ḥājj Dākōn's own handwriting in Part V [*The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn: The Autograph*]. The transcribed poems and their translation are presented on facing pages.[3] The book ends with a useful bibliography.

Ḥājj Dākōn, most of whose poetry is in Arabic, was born in 1968 in Qishn, though he now lives near al-Ghaydha, where he is a well-known semi-professional poet. He is passionate about bringing the Mahri language to a wider audience. Keen to demonstrate that 'Mahri-language poetry is a Yemeni cultural practice and that al-Mahra is participating in the poetic renewal that has been moving over Yemen since the middle of the 20th century',[4] and to show that Mahri is a living and dynamic language, he decided that 'a Mahri script would be necessary for the Mahri language to be recognized in Yemen as a living language'.[5] So in 2003 he began to *write* Mahri poetry, making use of a slightly modified Arabic script to do so. In this collection, he is experimenting with 'contemporary styles of Arabic strophic sung poetry, especially that popular in the Hadramawt',[6] poetry which he too had composed in Arabic, but now instead he decided to try writing such poetry in Mahri. Although he composes in his own dialect, that of Qishn, the simplicity of his transcription system means that his written poetry is readily accessible to a broad Mahri readership. For non-Mahra this is more difficult, since, as Liebhaber points out: 'Unlike Arabic which can employ a full repertoire of diacritics to enable an

accurate phonetic reading, Ḥājj's Mahri script requires prior knowledge of the Mahri language in order to be accurately enunciated'.[7]

The poems, which he calls *Kṣīdet* (Arabic *Qaṣīda*), are lyric poems of some 10–12 lines (though there is one of 25 lines), on largely sentimental themes (Arabic *ghazal*, love poems). They are monorhymed, and are intended to be sung or chanted ('this is the most prestigious form that a poetic performance in al-Mahra can take');[8] their metre ('defined by the number of stressed syllables per line … can be matched to any number of melodies that are associated with specific regions in al-Mahra',[9] a factor which also helps to appeal to a wider Mahra audience. The vocabulary, especially the nominal vocabulary, is heavily influenced by Arabic, which makes it easier to write using an Arabic script. Liebhaber also feels that Ḥājj 'strived towards consistency and was subtly influenced by his education in Arabic which led him to over-correct the Mahri texts by applying rules … in imitation of Arabic grammatical rules'.[10] It is possible, of course, that this is intentional, a reflection of his desire to see his poetry reaching out to a wider, and Arab, readership. 'First and foremost Ḥājj Dākōn has written the *Dīwān* for the enjoyment of the Mahra by offering a collection of lyric poetry that he hopes will form the kernel of a future Mahri literature. Second, Ḥājj has broadened the appeal of his *Dīwān* to Arabic monolingual Yemenis by providing an Arabic translation for each poem that approximates the meter and vocabulary of the Mahri original'.[11]

For this reader, the poems themselves are perhaps the least interesting part of the book: slightly banal generic love poems with little specifically 'Mahri' about them ('as opposed to the highly contextualised subject matter of the tribal odes', as the author notes).[12] But this is not the point: what is important here is that the Mahri poems are presented in a written form. The important introductory section places the poems in context and shows just why they are so innovative. Here too the vexed question of whether Mahri is to be described as a *lahja*, 'dialect' or a *lugha*, 'language' is discussed, and Liebhaber suggests that the translation of *lahja* and *lugha* as 'dialect' and 'language' is unsatisfactory in that it 'does not adequately communicate the contrast between the two terms in Arabic. Instead '*lugha*' and '*lahja*' signify two opposing semantic nodes: writing / oratory / grammar / educated (*lugha*) *vs*. common speech / disorder / illiteracy (*lahja*)'.[13] Pages 19–25, which discuss orality and literacy and the effect that writing has had on Ḥājj's poetry itself, are of great interest, and the points made are well illustrated by comparing a poem composed orally with one

written by Ḥājj. Liebhaber also discusses the supposed relationship between Mahri and 'Himyar', 'by far the most common perception amongst scholarly and non-scholarly Yemenis who often describe the Mahri language as a 'Himyari' language. This association affiliates the Mahra to the prestigious pre-Islamic kingdoms of Saba', Qitban, Ma'in and Himyar, a common reference point for national pride in Yemen.' However, as he points out: 'At the same time, this emphasis on 'Himyari' civilization consigns the Mahri language to an obsolete past,' which leads to the 'the common perception, held by Mahra and non-Mahra alike, that the Mahri language is incapable of expressing the exigencies of modern life and that its oral culture is incapable of change or innovation'.[14] It is to combat this view that Ḥājj has worked to present his poems in this form, in the hopes that they might be 'the nucleus of a future literary tradition for the Mahri language'.[15]

How likely is this hope to be realised? Liebhaber himself has his doubts: the influence of Arabic is powerful: '… certainly the success of written and oratorical Arabic (*al-'arabiyy*a) in establishing itself as the prestige language of the Middle East has been the critical factor behind the overall neglect of the Mahri language',[16] and he concludes his introduction rather pessimistically: 'Given the rapid and profound spread of Arabic throughout the Middle East, there is virtually no intellectual framework to recognize indigenous, oral languages as both separate from Arabic and vital. Due to their vulnerability as 'dialects' (*lahjat*) at the margins of literacy, improbable theories and general neglect easily overtake the unwritten, indigenous languages of the Middle East. In contrast, the indigenous languages of the Middle East that have inherited written traditions (such as the Aramaic language, Coptic, or Hebrew) possess a prestige that guarantees local interest and reputable scholarship. As long as it remains unwritten, the Mahri language will languish in the popular and scholarly imaginations as a 'dialect' and minimal political and social capital will be expended to ensure its survival'.[17] This is also true to differing degrees for the other MSA languages, and, since among these Mahri holds a relatively prestigious position, a failure of this language to revitalise can but bode ill for the others.

There are a few misprints (some examples are *kūss/yEkūsa* for *kūsa/yEkūsa*;[18] 'subtlely influenced' for 'subtly';[19] 'justifies for the dissolution…' for 'justifies the dissolution…';[20] teġṭīr for teġtīr),[21] but none that cause confusion (except possibly 'the fricative lateral consonant /sḡ/' on p. 4).

I am not enthusiastic about the two long vowels of Liebhaber's 'Soqōṭrā': the Soqoṭrans' own term for their island, and for their language, is 'sɔ̄ḵʌ́ṭəri', or, in simplified form, Saḳaṭari; I prefer the spelling 'the 'Afrāri Sultanate of Qishn and Soqotra' on p. 50, or the 'Suqutra' of footnote 166, p.15. Similarly for 'Jibbāli/Śhērī'[22] and 'a Śḥērī speaker'[23]: this language is called by its users Śḥerēt, with the adjective Śḥērī , plural Śḥerō. I also have a query about the translation of poem 1, line 8: *wēt menk ġmisk /w – rɛ̄ḥek syerk* as 'Whenever you leave me / to travel far away'; surely this is 'Whenever I leave you (*menk*, from you, rather than *mēni*, from me) / to travel far away'.

But these are minor points in a remarkable, ground-breaking and valuable work, the result of a fruitful collaboration between a poet fluent in Mahri and Arabic and a linguist quite at home in Arabic and with Arabic sources. Dr Liebhaber is to be congratulated on undertaking this demanding task, and on managing to present the complex results in such a transparent and easy to read format. We must hope that the hard work and Ḥājj Dākōn's dedication is rewarded by seeing his dreams of a resuscitated Mahri being realised. I would strongly recommend anyone who would like to know more about Mahri poetry to read Liebhaber's doctoral dissertation: '*Bedouin Without Arabic: Language, Poetry and the Mahra of Southeast Yemen*' (University of California, Berkeley, 2007).

MIRANDA MORRIS

Notes

1 p.5
2 p.10
3 Note: Audio recordings of Ḥājj singing and reciting these poems will be available online by August 2012 (Mahri Poetic Archive: Special Collections, the Davis Family Library of Middlebury College, USA)
4 p.14
5 p.11
6 p.13
7 Footnote 12, p.11
8 p.16
9 p.16
10 p.59
11 p.5
12 p.11
13 Footnote 9, p.5
14 p.51
15 p.9
16 p.49
17 p.61
18 Footnote 48, p.27
19 p.59
20 p.50
21 line 40 of the poem on p.37
22 Footnotes 11 p.10, and 103 p.49
23 Footnote 112 p.52

The Hadramawt Documents 1904–51: Family Life and Social Customs under the Last Sultans by Mikhail Rodionov and Hanne Schönig, Orient-Institut, Beirut, 2011. Pp. x + 349. Map. Appendices. Indices. Bibliog. Illus. Hb. ISBN 978-3-89913-881-8.

Mikhail Rodionov of St Petersburg needs little introduction, particularly within the context of the long years which he has devoted to the study of various aspects of Hadramawt's history, traditions, customs and culture and their distinct characteristics. In assembling this particular book, he has been joined by Hanne Schönig of Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenburg, another well-known expert in Arabic and Islamic studies.

Their field research was conducted independently (by Rodionov between 1983 and 2008 and by Schönig 1996–2000) before they joined forces to produce this tome. They have been generously assisted in many ways by indigenous Arab and other European scholars in making possible the publication of this important contribution to knowledge of the region.

They define the cultural domain of family life in Hadramawt as being at the intersection of the world of women with the world of men in a gender separated society. Social customs are defined as patterns of accepted behaviour by individuals and social groups, encompassing birth, marriage, burial, religious feasts and pilgrimages, the ritual ibex hunt and traditional ways of conflict resolution: topics on which the late Professor Serjeant painstakingly collected and published a wealth of material.

This study is based on documents drawn largely from the Kathiri Archives in Say'un, supplemented by a few from private collections within the relatively small and land-locked Kathiri domain in Wadi Hadramawt. Only two documents (including the oldest dating from 1904), relevant to Ghayl Ba Wazir and its environs, emanate from what was previously Qu'ayti controlled territory. Thus the material only relates to Hadramawt in very general terms. But it involves a diversity of local actors, and broadly reflects a desire to maintain the existing social order against the external and internal challenges of modernity.

The first part of the book depicts the structure of traditional society in the area to which the documents relate, and its practices (including local rites of passage from the cradle to the grave), and analyses each document's style and substance. The second part presents the documents themselves in facsimile, Arabic transcript and English translation.

The Ghayl Ba Wazir material is of particular interest in that it records

attempts to address concerns shared by all classes of the local community; for example, the high cost of dowries, and a trend towards unsustainable expenditure in the name of social tradition.

The authors pay warm tribute to the late Abd al-Qadir Muhammad al-Sabban, Hadrami scholar and poet, for saving the Kathiri Archives from neglect and dereliction in the 1980s, for cataloguing the many thousands of documents which they comprised, and for inspiring the authors to produce this book.

Rodionov and Schönig deserve our thanks for bringing to general attention the distinctive nature of the Hadrami vernacular, which accounts for its closer affinity with dialects spoken to the east of the region than to its west. A case in point is the rendering of the Arabic 'j' (jeem) as 'y' (ya). This is exemplified in a Kathiri document of 1360H (1941) about the wearing of anklets (Arabic: 'hujūl') which spells this as orally pronounced i.e. 'huyūl' . They deserve further plaudits for adding to our knowledge the indigenous names of numerous items of Hadrami jewellery (some of which are illustrated in the book's photographic appendix), as well as of a wide range of other artifacts. But I find it puzzling that despite their expertise and access to local scholars they should refer to the village of Tariba as 'al-Tariba' (pp.43,47) and to Qa'uḍa as al-Qa'uḍa (p.47). In both toponyms use of the definite article 'al' is redundant. And in footnote 26 at the bottom of p.211 there is another anomaly where the title of 'manṣab' is erroneously rendered in Arabic with a 'sīn' instead of a 'ṣād' .

I also beg to question the authors' definition on p.38 of *hawta* as 'a place circumambulated (by a holy man)'. In brief it means a place which has been enclosed and the enclosure declared sacred for men to come and barter or buy and sell and have social exchanges in peace and security. The term *hawta* in this context has nothing to do with circumambulation around some sacred object. In Islam one circumambulates only 'the House of God' – The Ka'aba in Makka. On p.39 the authors attribute to the influence of Saudi Wahhabism the condemnation of tomb visitations by anti-*sada* Hadramis. A more likely attribution would be the influence of the Egyptian scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Abduh and his reformist movement which had a significant following in diaspora circles. This section of the book raises other points which invite comment. *zaghlata* on p.38 should surely read *zaghrada/zaghrata*. The word appears on p.2 of Document IV 39 but the erroneous substitution of 'l' for 'r' in the original Arabic is passed over without comment.

One wonders what the basis is for the assertion on p.41 that the Mashhad *sada* were waiting to hear news of the Imam of Yemen from the Kathiri Sultan because the latter was deemed a more reliable source than Sultan Umar bin Awadh al-Qu'ayti. There is no mention of this in Document III 276. Following the Imam's defeat by the Saudis in February 1934, his enforced cession to them of Asir and Najran and his treaty with the British on the back of his defeat, news of the situation in Yemen must have been widespread. Sultan Umar would have had no conceivable interest in misrepresenting it.

There are two schools of thought about Sultan Umar's performance as ruler. The received, if superficial, wisdom of western historiography in this regard is that by spending most of his reign in Hyderabad, he neglected the interests of the Qu'ayti homeland. Rodionov and Schönig unfortunately write off as 'a failure' Sultan Umar's historic journey into the hinterland in 1934, which he undertook while suffering from lung cancer. However, the traditional, indigenous school represented by Abdul Khaliq bin Abdullah al-Batati, paints a very different picture in his book *ithbat ma laysa mathbut*…(1989). Batati accompanied Sultan Umar on his 1934 tour which, as an eye-witness, he considered a great success. Batati cites the rains which accompanied it as an auspicious omen and mentions the inter-tribal truces which were arranged in the Sultan's honour; it was upon the lapse of the duration of these truces that they were to be revived in honour of Ingrams' visit later on.

During his absences in India, Sultan Umar left care of the Qu'ayti state in the competent hands of his heir, Sultan Salih bin Ghalib (died 1956 not 1955 as on p.298) while he managed the ruling family's assets in Hyderabad. As revenues from these assets contributed up to 40% of the Qu'ayti state's annual budget, Sultan Umar can hardly be accused of neglecting the welfare of his homeland. Moreover, this alternation of presence between the family's head and his heir was in keeping with dynastic tradition.

On p.42 the Qu'ayti State Secretary is wrongly identified as Sa'id Muhammad al-Qaddal. At the time (1941) the post was held by the Omani/Zanzibari Shaykh Saif al-Bu Ali, and Qaddal was an inspector of girls' schools. Qaddal was only elevated to the post of State Secretary in 1950, upon British insistence.

GHALIB BIN AWADH AL-QU'AITI

The Armed Forces of Aden and the Protectorate 1839–1967: revised and expanded edition by Cliff Lord and David Birtles, Helion & Company Ltd, 2011. Pp. xiv + 124. Numerous b/w and colour illustrations. Appendices. Maps .Glossary. Index. Bibliog. Pb. £30. ISBN 978-1-906033-96-5.

The A5 hardback edition was first published in 2000 and reviewed by Peter Hinchcliffe in the Society's Journal of the same year. The authors had always planned to publish a supplementary volume and had appealed for further information. Additional material and photographs have now been incorporated in the reprinted A4 paperback edition.

The enlarged layout of the book has a clearer text and the quality of reproduction of the many illustrations is much improved. These have all been listed and credited at the beginning of the book for ease of reference. They come from a variety of sources but special mention must be made of the extensive collection of images provided by Sultan Ghalib who has written the Preface to this revised edition. Tony Ford has also contributed many other fine colour as well as black and white photographs taken during his service with the FRA. Seven pages of colour plates showing the detail of the many different uniforms of the Armed Forces, such as 653 Squadron Army Air Corps whose helicopters and light aircraft will be remembered by all who served in the final days of the emergency. There is even a short reference to the formation of the Aden Air Raid Precautions (ARP) during the Second World War.

This new edition also provides additional enlarged maps as well as three new appendices. These include new lists of awards and details of the military vocabulary used in South Arabia (the transliteration of many of the terms leaves much to be desired). However, there is more to this book than military memorabilia; the various descriptions of military operations form a valuable historical record.

There is a newly added appendix on the period from 1945–63 when the rise of Arab nationalism caused civil disturbances and border incursions. Another new appendix on Air Control explains the short-term success in keeping order in the Protectorates with air power while employing a minimum of forces on the ground. It was a policy that was applied in other countries in the region. Comparison may be made with a similar tactic being used in Yemen today where instead of piloted aircraft dropping bombs on recalcitrant tribesmen, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or 'drones' are used ostensibly to target al-Qa'ida.

In his review of the original edition of this book Peter Hinchcliffe paid tribute to 'so many officers and men who served a distant King and Queen with loyalty and fortitude'. It is right and fitting that in this new edition which adds substantively to their story, the role and service of the Armed Forces of Aden and the Protectorate has been given further recognition.

JULIAN PAXTON

Final Flight From Sanaa by Qais Ghanem, Baico Publishing Inc., Ottawa (email:baico@bellnet.ca), 2011. Pp.ii + 253. Pb. $15. ISBN 978-1-926945-12-5.

This is Dr Ghanem's first novel, but perhaps should be read chronologically after his second book *Two Boys from Aden College*, which is also reviewed below. Both books have an over-arching sub-textual theme.

Final Flight from Sanaa was presented by the author at a well-attended British-Yemeni Society meeting on 9 February 2012. He started by highlighting the good fortune which he and others had had in their secondary education in Aden Colony. A government scholarship to study medicine in Edinburgh foreshadowed a successful career and a fulfilled life in Canada where he settled some forty years ago. He returned to Yemen's capital in the early 1980s to serve amongst Yemenis but became disenchanted with a system which rewarded connection rather than merit, and returned to Ottawa. Much of the backdrop to the novel is based on events he witnessed or experienced during his four year sojourn in Sanaa. He admitted that parts of the book were likely to be considered controversial by some, but he was willing to take that risk if it helped to promote a debate over issues of Muslim women, their place in society and human rights.

The author seems to be speaking for many aspiring young men in the Middle East who had long ago left home for higher studies abroad. Many who wished to fulfill their promise to return to serve their homeland, found themselves met with indifference if not actual rejection by post-independence governments. In this context Dr Ghanem, who is an accomplished poet, paints a sharp and almost prophetic picture predating the then unexpected Arab Spring, and more so the recent upheavals in Yemen by quite a few months. His intricate narrative about a Yemeni doctor called Tariq Hakim, traverses continents and cultures, criss-crossing

between Britain, Canada and Poland, Denmark, Germany as well as Kuwait and Yemen. It offers a variety of insights into the human condition from a purely sexual encounter in Denmark to the cultural reflex behaviour of a foreign student in Edinburgh, to Hakim's narrow escape from death at the hands of a jailor, and an extremely tragic rape story.

The book reminded me of other Yemenis like Hakim who had left a happy childhood in a different Yemen, returned to serve but only to find a clash in their souls between what they wholeheartedly adopted of western culture and the realities of Yemeni culture and tradition in governance, tribal habits, male and female sexuality and societal attitudes of the time. Indeed this book should be read in the context of a Yemen of the early nineteen eighties when Hakim served in Sanaa. It would be very interesting if the author were to write a similar story from today's perspective especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring where it was and is being led in Yemen by the new Yemeni woman as much as by the young Yemeni man. Ghanem seems to say that by leaving home one undergoes change forever and one may wish to repatriate that 'enlightened' change. But by now home is an imagined country of origin that no longer exists. So perhaps he is seeking to change Yemen through the medium of a challenging and outspoken book. He tells his story in easy flowing prose and dialogue. In its existing English version, however, it may not reach the wider Arab readership it deserves.

ADEL AL-AULAQI

Two Boys From Aden College by Qais Ghanem, iUniverse, Bloomington (www.iuniverse.com), 2012. Pp. 306. Pb. $14.78. ISBN: 978-1-4697-9626-0.

This book is fiction inspired by real life characters and locations. Aden College, a real place that hardly features in the story, is worth knowing about.[1] The measured dialogue tells a story of two characters, Ahmad and Hasan, who represent contrasts in educated Yemeni youth between the late 1960s and late 1980s. In migration for higher education these students encounter cultural challenges and acquire knowledge and experience well beyond university degrees.

Ahmad and Hasan started as close childhood friends but ended as enemies. As undergraduates in the United Kingdom both took their studies seriously; Hasan read law and Ahmad studied medicine. Hasan adhered to

his religious beliefs, praying five times a day and remaining teetotal. However, hypocritically, he had extra-marital affairs, and extorted money from his hapless father-in-law. In contrast, Ahmad adapted well to his life in Scotland and was the more likeable and honest character. Unconstrained by religiosity he enjoyed alcohol, relished sex with women, and experienced love and rejection.

Both returned to Yemen but escaped to the West from the harsh Marxist regime which then ruled the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). After obtaining further qualifications, Hasan and Ahmad, like many technocrats from PDRY, ended up in Sanaa. Hasan adapted well, held high office in government and accumulated wealth through unabashed corruption. His wife, Ahmad's sister, gave him blind loyalty. The friendship ended on the altar of Hasan's corruption and Ahmad's uncompromising ethics. Ahmad refused to falsify his forensic findings on the murder by a high-ranking government official of a thief and a no-body (and the father of a prostitute named Haleemah).

Through a multitude of characters, the author explores, perhaps uncompromisingly, topics of Yemeni politics and cultural norms of the day, and saves his sharpest criticism for corruption in high office. He criticises the deliberate misuse of Islam, and comments on the disadvantaged status of women in Yemeni society of the period. In an erudite dialogue between Ahmad and young Haleemah we hear the voice of a prostitute in a land where she is a useful pariah. She has the final word on those who killed her father, denied her justice and used her services, yet still despised her. She warns Ahmad about a plot to kill him, and he flees to neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Whilst Hasan lived in the West and returned to marry and hold high office, Ahmad seemed to be trapped by his wish to 'give' of his talent to his imagined Yemen. The author's portrait of an angry Ahmad with an unwavering adherence to medical ethics, and uncompromising views on aspects of Yemeni culture would inevitably lead the reader to believe that he will not fit into the society which he had returned to. Given his declared attachment to and longing for Ann, who rejected him for another woman, and his preference for the West and its values, Ahmad seemed relieved to leave for a place where almost certainly he would face similar dilemmas, but where he could still serve in Arabia and meet the new Yemeni woman. A typically arranged encounter between Ahmad and a modern young Yemeni divorcee, Meethaq, convinced him that he could possibly have a wife with whom he might hope to share a more enlightened relationship.

Life in Yemen has changed since, yet much of the story remains relevant today. Through well-crafted dialogue the author is urging his country of birth and its people to move on further towards a different and more enlightened way of life where justice, equality of both genders and political freedom should be fundamental human rights for all citizens.

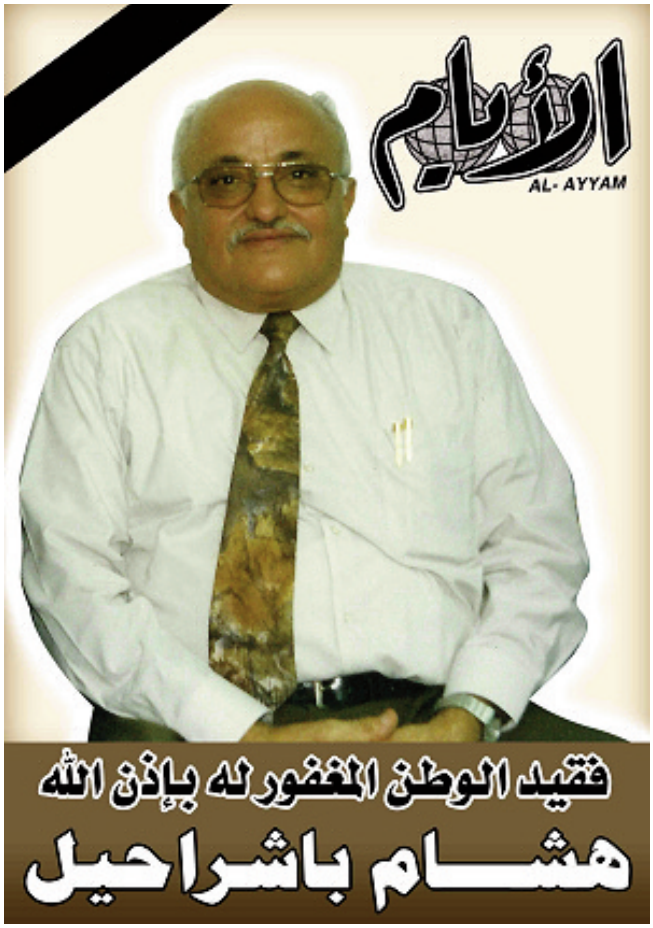
Two Boys from Aden College deserves a much wider readership than its title would suggest that it will attract. It will resonate with many who migrated to find work or who received life-changing higher education abroad and could not return or returned but could not adapt to their home of origin. It is a good read. Words flow easily in a narrative which urges the reader to question existing attitudes on a range of political, social and gender issues.

ADEL AL-AULAQI

[1] Aden College was a secondary school at the edge of the south Arabian coastal desert. It produced the South Arabian English-educated male elite, many of whom were sent abroad for higher education. 1967 brought the end of British colonial control of the area. Many Aden College alumni served and shaped Southern Arabia's post-colonial history. Of those who studied abroad a few did not return to Aden, but a fair number returned to try and fulfil the dream or duty of contributing to the advancement of their home and people. A substantial number did not succeed in adapting to the new post-independence socio-political and economic realities let alone the incessant uncertainties of recurrent conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s, and therefore escaped and re-migrated. They, in the main, settled, adapted and prospered in Europe and North America or in the oil-rich Arab countries.

OBITUARY

Hisham Ba-Shraheel and al-Ayyam: an unfinished journey.[1]



Hisham Ba-Shraheel

Hisham's death on 16 June 2012 grieved many within and well beyond Yemen's borders; numerous obituaries referred to his generosity of spirit as an abiding characteristic. He was highly respected by the ordinary person in the street, men and women in Yemen's corridors of power and, not least, by the journalists who knew him well through his newspaper *al-Ayyam*. He was its Editor-in-Chief and even those who opposed his approaches to Yemeni political commentary held him and his work in high regard; indeed Hisham's life story is inseparable from that of *al-Ayyam*'s and journalism in Yemen.

Hisham was born on the 19 June 1944 in Tawahi town to the veteran

journalist Mohammad Ali Omer Ba-Shraheel, who then worked for the long-established (British) Cable and Wireless Company and also headed *Nadi al-Islah al-Arabi* (The Arab Reform Club).[2] Mohammad Ba-Shraheel also owned and edited the Arabic newspaper *al-Raqeeb* (The Observer or Guardian) and the English weekly *The Recorder*. Hisham's uncle, Mohammad Ali Luqman, was editor of the *al-Qalam al-Adani* (Aden Pen). His uncle Abdul Rahman Girgirah was chief editor of the daily *al-Yaqdhah* (The Awakening) and later of the weekly *al-Nahdha* (Renaissance). In 1960, his aunt Mahiah Nageeb, (nee Mahiah Mohammad Omar Girgirah) published and was chief editor of the monthly *Fatat Shamsan* arguably the first woman's magazine in the Arabian Peninsula. In 1958 Hisham's father founded, edited and published *al-Ayyam* which in due course became an institution in its own right. All these and a wide spectrum of other journals, newspapers, societies and clubs contributed to a vibrant new economic, cultural and political age from the late 1940s until 1967.

Hisham received his primary education in Tawahi, then joined the Crater Middle School in Seira and in 1958 entered the prestigious Aden College; not surprisingly soon after finishing secondary education he joined *al-Ayyam*. Shortly after independence[3] in 1967 all free or opposition press were closed by government decree and the Ba-Shraheel family moved to Sana'a to trade in paper and in sales and repairs of printing equipment such as the stencil.[4] Hisham went to the USA on a training course in the maintenance of printing equipment.

On the 7 November 1990, in the new Republic of Yemen, Hisham and his younger brother Tammam, republished *al-Ayyam* and, by the beginning of 1994, had taken it rapidly from a weekly to three times weekly to a political daily edition, with a sports issue three days per week. It became the largest mass circulation independent national newspaper. It was highly critical of President Ali Abdulla Saleh and his closest associates. It published well-documented reports on issues of corruption in high office, injustice, and partisanship in managing southern region issues. This irked the ruling elite unaccustomed to serious intellectual opposition, and at best risked closure. *Al-Ayyam's* electronic version kept Yemenis abroad informed. Hisham and Tammam could not have run the paper so effectively without the additional talent and dedication of their family and the exceptional pool of staff and journalists.

The regime responded by escalating pressure through warnings and illegal challenges by gangs of thugs demanding land rights to the personal

homes of the Ba-Shraheels as well as to the paper's offices in Sana'a. However, most damaging was the forcible interception of *al-Ayyam's* distribution buses and the confiscation of entire consignments of some fifty thousand copies of the paper allocated to various governorates. Trials in the specially convened Seira Court of First Instance followed. Hisham was charged on 10 May 2010 with offences that included 'publishing false information', 'instigating the use of force and terrorism', 'insulting public institutions' and 'threatening Yemeni unity'. He was also accused of inflaming feelings against the ruling elite by publishing front page photographic evidence of atrocities inflicted upon peaceful anti-government demonstrators. When all failed military force and imprisonment were used.

When I visited *al-Ayyam's* headquarters in Aden in May 2009, it was manifestly under siege. The ever-courteous Hisham introduced me to those present. Famous columnists now sat meditating an unknown future. The mood in al-Ayyam's compound was that of a vigil, aware that a mere telephone call from the president would change everything. Indeed the compound was soon assaulted, Hisham's family home was bombed by rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), *al-Ayyam* was forced to cease publication and on 6 January 2010 Hisham and his two sons were imprisoned.

During my return visit to Aden in 2010, the absence of *al-Ayyam* was acutely noticeable; a loss that felt as if a large part of the guiding spirit of Aden was missing. Newspaper vendors bemoaned the paper's absence and the lost income from its sales which had kept the heads of many a family above water.

Nearly a year after imprisonment Hisham was offered release from detention on the grounds of his deteriorating health. He declined until his sons Hani and Mohammad were also offered release. He left prison a week later to receive treatment in Saudi Arabia. But his health continued to deteriorate and on 24 April 2012 he left Yemen for Germany on what was to be his last journey for treatment. He died there on 16 June 2012.

Hisham played a major role in his newspaper's focus on exposing unbridled corruption, called for decency and democracy in governing Yemen and justice for a South that was plundered for personal use by an uncaring ruling elite in Sana'a. Other newspapers were forcibly closed at the same time as *al-Ayyam* but the especially harsh and vindictive treatment meted out to Hisham and his paper starkly revealed the regime's limits of tolerance.

In addition to his distinguished career in the world of journalism, he is also remembered for his significant but less public role in preserving Aden's archival material.[5] His son, Basha, kindly listed for this obituary *al-Ayyam's* collection of digitized electronic archives, stored in Canada and the USA. These comprise some 4.5 million images covering the period 1954–2008: thousands of colonial government documents relating to Aden's demography prior to 1967; treaties with the Federation of South Arabia and the Aden Protectorates; a complete archive of Public land and land leases before 1990, and a complete set of Laws in Aden and other parts of the South from ca.1920 until 1989. Moreover, the electronic archive contains all the songs produced by Southern artists, including rare recordings that have disappeared from the public domain.

ADEL AL-AULAQI

Notes

1 The author here is indebted to the many who helped; Nageeb Yabli and Awad bin Awad Mubgar, despite their grief, took time to send their personal memories of Hisham as a friend and/or colleague. The Editor of *al-Yaqdha* journal and journalist Nageeb Yabli very kindly permitted me to translate and freely use the anguished eulogy given by Nageeb soon after Hisham's death.

2 Tawahi town was the major port district of Aden Colony.

3 Following the departure of Britain from South Arabia the People's Republic of South Yemen came into being.

4 The stencil duplicator or mimeograph machine (often abbreviated to mimeo) is a low-cost *printing press* that works by forcing ink through a *stencil* onto paper. Whilst in Sana'a Hisham became an expert in their repair.

5 Hisham's son, Basha, kindly permitted publication of his father's photograph in this Journal.