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***Aden,  
The Protectorates  
and the Yemen***

***By REGINALD SORENSEN***

***THREE SHILLINGS***

**FABIAN INTERNATIONAL AND COMMONWEALTH BUREAUX**

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July, 1961



# **ADEN, THE PROTECTORATES AND THE YEMEN**

by **Reginald Sorensen**

## FOREWORD

In the process of 'liquidating' the British Empire peaceably and constitutionally it is essential to appreciate the unique circumstances of each territory in order adequately to prepare for the transition from colonial dependence. The following pages may be a small contribution to that end in respect of an area in South-west Arabia still in British possession or within British influence.

There are many whose experience and responsibilities entitle them to be accepted as authorities on the subject. I have no such equipment, for apart from some acquaintance with available relevant literature my first-hand experience is confined to a brief visit to Aden and the Yemen. It was my good fortune to be invited by the Yemen Chargé d'Affaires and the Iman of the Yemen to visit their ancient country, which I did in 1958, taking with me the Rt. Hon. John Dugdale, M.P. I am grateful to His Majesty for the opportunity he afforded us to have a glimpse of a fascinating, even if mediæval, land; and I likewise deeply appreciate the helpfulness of Mr. Kenneth Oldfield, British Acting Chargé d'Affaires at Taiz and the kind hospitality extended by the then Governor of Aden, Sir William Luce, including the facility by which we were able to visit the British side of a troubled frontier. The exciting incidents of our experience form no part of this present survey, but because it is impossible to understand the significance of Aden Colony and the Protectorates without considering the Yemen I have drawn on my limited knowledge of the Yemen.

Grateful acknowledgment is here made for quotations from certain publications, including those of the Yemen Legation in London and the British Colonial Office, and for informative conversations I was privileged to have with several specialists in the field with which I deal.

R. W. SORENSEN.

## I. The History

SINCE 1946 most constituent parts of the British Empire have been or are being replaced by independent nation-states within the Commonwealth. Among the remaining small colonial territories are important strategic centres or 'fortresses' whose special features present difficulties to the avowed British policy of promoting self-government. Within this category are Aden and the Aden Protectorates lying to the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula, with the Kingdom of the Yemen beyond the northern boundary.

Aden became a British possession in 1839, the occasion being provided by British reprisal action because Indian sailors under British protection had been maltreated when wrecked on the rocky coast. Before this several efforts to secure a suitable coaling station had failed and the request for a lease for one in Socotra had been refused.

Aden, Hong Kong and Singapore came within the context of British imperial expansion about the same time. The specific value of Aden was further enhanced when the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 removed a land barrier to the passage of ships from the East to Europe. We may remember, in this connection, the astute operation of Disraeli by which the British Government secured a substantial holding in the Suez Canal Company.

Subsequent to the acquisition of Aden a number of hinterland rulers sought or were induced to accept treaties of friendship and also from 1880 a series of Protectorate treaties. Along the frontier of the Protectorates raids and forays have been endemic and efforts to secure Yemeni agreement on territorial demarcation have been fruitless owing to their persistent claim that Britain is unentitled to what they describe as 'Southern' or 'Occupied' Yemen.

In order to appreciate the bearing of the Yemen on Aden and the Protectorates it is necessary to glance at the historical background, although this can only be a quite inadequate sketch.

### EARLIER HISTORY

There are references to Aden as 'Eden' (possibly the 'Garden of Eden'?) in the Old Testament. Archæological remains indicate the existence of a flourishing civilisation during the pre-Christian millenium, and while much awaits excavation nevertheless a vast derelict dam, 2,000 ft. long, at Marib, the capital of ancient Saba, a partially-unearthed temple



to 'Sin' a moon god (both attributed, without sound evidence, to the enterprise of the Biblical Queen of Sheba) and remarkable alabaster figures and carvings testify to an impressive Sabean culture. Caravans trading in incense greatly contributed to Sabean prosperity and the dam, which lasted from the 6th century B.C. until its collapse in the 6th century A.D., ensured that '... the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose'—although, alas, the wilderness returned. The Romans, whose attempted conquest of the country failed, termed it Arabia Felix (i.e. Happy Arabia).

According to Mr. W. H. Ingrams, C.M.G., O.B.E., 'The people of South Arabia had a practical monopoly of incense, and on that and on their overland trade everybody through whose country the incense was carried ... lived and built up a civilisation.

'The Romans ... discovered the changes of the monsoon in the Indian Ocean and that led quite soon to the transport of incense by sea.

'(This) ... resulted in the destruction of the overland trade, and thus the ancient South Arabian civilisation.'

In the 6th century the Yemen passed under Ethiopian domination for a short period until Persian intervention brought this to an end. Islam embraced the country in the 7th century under the militant leadership of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, and since then it has been supreme. Christian churches disappeared, but Jewish communities continued until after World War II. Saladin in the 12th century and Ottoman Selim I in the 16th century conquered the country and thenceforth, despite insurrections, the Turks maintained wavering control for some 200 years. The Portuguese had not omitted South Arabia among their astonishing array of explorations and expeditions, but their assault on Aden was abortive.

Religious fissures in Islam had produced the Sunnis and the Shias, and from these developed respectively the Yemeni Shaifais and Zeidis, between whom since the 17th century considerable tension has existed. Within each were also subsidiary conflicting sects. Numerically today not less than 55 per cent., and possibly two-thirds, of Yemenis are Shaifai. The Imams, who claim descent from both the Himyarite dynasties of the 6th to 2nd centuries B.C. and the Rassid dynasty of the 9th century A.D., descending from the prophet Muhammad, are Zeidis.

As in our own British history at one time so in the Yemen there have been frequent periods of internal rivalry and strife between local rulers who intrigued for power, influence and predominance and on occasion asserted their independence when their personal ambitions or resentments could receive reliable support. Qassim the Great expelled the Turks in 1640, and in 1728 during a period of Zeidi decline, the Sultan of Lahej was powerful enough firmly to establish his separate authority and defy the Imam. Such intermittent insurgence can be described as rebellion or liberation according to one's presuppositions, Imams, of course, pronouncing the former and Sultans the latter. Yemen instability was engendered not only by intrigues and the internal stresses of rival rulers and religious divergences, but also by resentment against Turkish domination or its ever-threatening imperialism. In the early part of the 17th century the Imams



were able to drive out the Turks, although their restored authority was not absolute over all the territory in south-west Arabia and the Turkish menace was constant. The Wahhabi religious-reform movement, originating in Saudi Arabia, spread into the Yemen in the beginning of the 19th century and brought considerable disturbance. This provided the opportunity for the intervention of Egyptian forces under Muhammad Ali in 1818, when the Wahhabis were expelled and the Zeidi Imam restored. From about 1836 the Turks were engaged in re-asserting their sway over the Yemen, with encouragement from Palmerston and the British Government.

### 1839 AND AFTER

Until the 19th century Britain's interest in the Yemen had been slight. The East India Company made exploratory contact in 1609 and a commercial centre was opened at Mocha in 1618. This was much appreciated for economic and political reasons by the Imam. After an attack at Mocha a Captain Bruce negotiated a mutually advantageous treaty, including the right to appoint a British Agent. It was not until 1839 that Britain acquired Aden, and it is here appropriate to record the Yemeni interpretation of that episode in a statement issued from 'The Legation of the Moutawakilite, Kingdom of the Yemen,' London, in May, 1958:—

'The British, realising that Yemen was occupied in her war of independence with the Turks, seized this golden opportunity and forced the Sultan of Lahej to sign a document in 1802 by which the East India Company was permitted to stop at the port for supplies.

'In 1837 Britain contemplated occupation and when her attempts to force the Sultan into accepting their presence in Aden failed, she bombarded Aden and finally occupied it. After occupying the town and its surroundings, the aggression continued with the result of occupying other parts of Yemen (the so-called Aden Protectorate).

'To give their aggression a legal backing, the British forced and bribed the Chiefs of those areas to sign a strange document which sets a unique precedent in Law and International Relations. One of those documents provided for the purchase of Aden with the stipend of 6,500 dollars per annum while other documents oblige heirs and their successors as well to abide by the documents forever with no mention of a date for their termination.'

It is not disputed that Aden was bombarded, occupied (under the command of Captain Haines of the Indian Navy) and annexed by the British Crown; that the Sultan of Lahej signed an agreement, with the provision that he should receive an annual subsidy; and that areas beyond Aden were later formed into Protectorates. Nevertheless the statement does not give the whole truth, for apart from ignoring the subordinate incident of the shipwrecked sailors, it ignores the fact that in 1799 the then Sultan actually offered Aden to the British. It also fails to recognise that any aggression was committed not against the Imam or the Yemen, but against



the Sultan of Lahej, a sovereign ruler of independent territory with whom, as with other rulers who repudiated the Imam's authority, the British Government made valid treaties. Indeed in 1844 the Imam *requested* British permission to capture Lahej. Whether British assurance of a regular income for the Sultan was bribery, compensation or shrewd magnanimity may be a matter of terminology. The Imams themselves have not disdained the practice.

### USE OF MILITARY FORCE

This contention that British action involved not the Imam but the Sultan is crucial, but carries no denial that Arabian territory was acquired by British military action. Undoubtedly maltreatment of the shipwrecked sailors presented the opportunity to seize by force what had not been obtained by persuasion, a method in those days considered less reprehensible than normally is so today. Yet it is not only British and other European Powers who employed force to serve their interests. In common with most rulers and governments, Yemeni Imams also did so when seeking to preserve or extend their domain and Lahej Sultans when achieving or defending their independence.

Appeals to legality in this context beg the basic question, for legal decrees or instruments are fashioned to ensure social order and regulation according to whatever is held to be necessary by the prevailing social authority, and this varies from one society, age or place to another. Thus the 'Divine Right of Kings' has now little weight in this country, but Imams appear to believe otherwise in their claim to autocratic prerogatives. Likewise, Islamic ethical and social concepts differ in many respects from those now prevalent in Western Christendom. To the extent, therefore, that there is no common criterion even honest judgments will differ on what is legal or right. Moreover, if it be argued that the title to possession is determined by custom or usage this human postulate is subject to diversity of definition on what constitutes custom or usage, on whether this must be continuous, on the relationship of assumed individual 'rights' to social needs and on the legitimacy of means by which originally a possession was acquired. Actually it would seem that entitlement to any territory depended initially on sheer physical ability to occupy, extend and defend a desired area. It is not merely that 'possession is nine points of the law', but that primarily it was ten points.

This is relevant to the claims and counter-claims in south-west Arabia—and elsewhere. Presumably among early nomadic or settled Arabic tribes came rivalry for ascendancy, until by force, guile or consent one sheikh and his people became predominant, at least in a particular area, and with this authority, then proceeded to elaborate, integrate and legalise their power until overthrown. By such procedure the Zeidi Imams became ascendant, and also by the same historical, traditional and 'natural' means other Arabians and also Ethiopians, Persians, Egyptians, Turks, Portuguese,



Italians and British have pursued their interests. Certainly with treaty-making enters the moral element of contractual obligations, as with the treaties between Britain and the Sultan of Lahej in 1839, and with other rulers whose sovereign claims were as valid as that of an Imam to whatever area wherein he could enforce his will.

British ownership of Aden Colony and control over the hinterland, now the Protectorates, did not prevent the Imam from seeking British aid in 1841 and 1843 for the recovery of the Tihama coastal plain from seizure by Hussain ibn Ali. While events in the Yemen were recurrently turbulent, the Turks were violently wrestling with Yemenis, and during the internal confusion Britain acquired in 1857 the extra seven square miles of the island of Perim, almost 100 miles west of Aden.

### DISPUTED BOUNDARY

In 1872 Turkish forces occupied the Yemen capital of Sana and the Yemen became again a province of the Ottoman Empire. British-Turkish relations deteriorated, and conflict arose in the following year because of Turkish penetration of the British sphere as far as Lahej. After withdrawal the Turkish-British relationship continued with little trouble save over boundary disputation. Both parties set up a Boundary Commission and agreement was reached on a portion of the line, but it was not until shortly before World War I that the Commission completed its task, and even then without full ground delimitation. The present Imam disowns this 1914 agreement as not binding since the Yemen ceased to be a Turkish vassal. Nevertheless with the outbreak of World War I the Imam sided with Turkey. To quote again from the 1958 Yemen Legation memorandum:—

‘(In) . . . first World War . . . both the Turks and the British, considered by Yemen as Imperialists, were engaged in the fighting.’ Paradoxically it was British Imperialists who at the end of the war liberated the Yemen from its Turkish Imperialists allies.

Rebellious Shaifai Idrisi north of the Yemen fought the Imam and the Turks, but until driven back by British forces Turkish troops invested Lahej and pressed as far as Sheikh Othman, 17 miles from Aden. With the end of the war and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, British forces occupied Hodeida, the Yemen port, and soon transferred it not to the Imam, who had backed the wrong horse, but to the Idrisi, although the Imam recaptured it later. The Idrisi themselves became rent with civil strife over succession to the Sheikdom. Ali, son of the late sheikh, was deposed by his uncle Husain but supported by the Imam while Husain sought assistance from Ibn Saud. Husain died in 1925, leaving Saudi-Yemeni relations severely strained.

The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne divested Turkey of all its Arabian possessions; and in 1925 negotiations began between the Imam and the United Kingdom Government over outstanding disputes, including Zeidi



frontier raids and R.A.F. counter-action. The Imam had not only repudiated any treaty obligation inherited from the Turks, but had also made a treaty with Italy. After accepting a British ultimatum for the return of prisoners, restitution of loot and withdrawal of forces, he retaliated by blocking commerce between his kingdom and Aden. Meanwhile came war between Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. Ibn Saud defeated the Imam, but subsequently initiated generous treaties with the Imam, demarcating the frontier and affirming 'Islamic Friendship and Arab Fraternity'. M. B. Seton-Williams observes in *Britain and the Arab States*, that 'the increasing necessity for unity in the Arab world was crystallising as a result of a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.

### TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, 1934

After protracted negotiations, at last in 1934 emerged at Sana the Anglo-Yemen 'Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Co-operation'. Article I formally recognised the Imam as King of the independent Yemen. Article 3 stated:—

'The settlement of the question of the southern frontier of the Yemen is deferred pending the conclusion of . . . the negotiations which shall take place between them before the expiry of the period of the present Treaty.

' . . . the high contracting parties agree that they will prevent, by all means at their disposal . . . any interference by their subjects, or from their side of the frontier, with the affairs of the people inhabiting the other side of the frontier.'

The Treaty, signed by Sir Bernard Reilly, then Chief Commissioner of Aden, and the Imam included an appendix requiring assistance from the Imam for the suppression of slave trading.

The Treaty eased the situation, but disputation arose over the precise meaning of 'frontier', for the Arab word *hudud* can mean not merely a line, but the whole contiguous area. Translation of 'subjects' was also imprecise. Beneath this lay Yemeni apprehension lest its claim to Protectorate territory appeared to be abrogated by over-definitive terminology.

The Imam also suspected that Britain intended to integrate its control over and even further than the Hadhramaut area, which is 'Protected' territory distinct from the original West Aden Protectorate and stretches eastward to the frontier of Muscat and Oman. Although Zeidis in the past had frequently invaded the area, the Hadhramaut was never part of the Yemen. The Hadhramaut Sultans had for long had friendly relations with Britain, and in 1863 and 1873 accepted treaties by which they were encouraged to abolish slavery. In 1882 Britain made a Protectorate Treaty with the Quaitis, the strongest of the more important Hadhramaut tribes. Invaluable service, for which they are rightly honoured, was rendered by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Ingrams who settled in the Hadhramaut before World



War II. After succeeding in pacifying the 1,400 tribes the Sultans demonstrated their confidence by requesting the official appointment of Mr. Ingrams as Resident Adviser.

### POST-WAR HISTORY

During World War II the Iman was nominally neutral although he permitted broadcasting stations to spread Axis propaganda until, under British pressure, this ceased and he interned several Germans and Italians. Professor George Linczowski, of Berkeley University, comments in *The Middle East in World Affairs* that 'the British victory at El Alamein inevitably had a cooling effect on Yahya's (i.e. the Imam's) pro-Axis proclivities.' The Italians, some of whom remain in the Yemen, were the remnant of those sent to the Yemen during Mussolini's regime.

The Yemen joined the Arab League in 1945 and the United Nations in 1947. The rigid prohibition of Yemeni Jewish emigration was lifted in post-war years, with the result that virtually the whole Jewish colony of over 40,000 departed on 'Operation Flying Carpet' to Israel.

In 1948 the aged Imam, Yahya Bin Mohd Bin Hamid-Ud-Din, was assassinated, to the horror of the Zeidis, even though some had grown restive. His son Ahmed inherited the throne, but his relative, Abdullah al Wazir, rebelled and for a short time became the Imam. He was overthrown and executed together with several accomplices, others fleeing into the Protectorate and Aden where they were speedily sent overseas. Ahmad al Nasir Li Din Allah Bin Yahya Hamid al Din then became the Imam, but Yemeni-British relations worsened. This was due partly, it is said, to the preposterous belief that the Aden Governor had been implicated in the assassination plot, and partly to angry reaction to the mooted idea of Protectorate Federation.

Frontier conflict continued, particularly at Beihan, with R.A.F. activity evoking charges and counter-charges on whether Yemeni or Protectorate tribes first started shooting. Since a rifle and a scabbard 'jambiyah' on the waist seem essential to masculine attire in the neighbourhood probably the bellicose initiative alternated. Following an unsuccessful attack on Beihan the Imam became more amenable to discussion. Finally, at a London Conference in 1950 agreement was reached concerning the opening of Legations at Taiz and London, some measure of educational, economic and other co-operation in the Yemen and appointment of a Joint Commission to deal with demarcation. The Yemen Government failed to implement the proposed Commission.

Protectorate trouble occurred in 1952 when the unstable Sultan of Lahej, having been charged with responsibility for the murder of two cousins, fled to the Yemen. Fearing disorder the Governor sent troops to Lahej as a precaution, whereat the Imam declared this a violation of the



1934 Treaty guaranteeing frontier immunity on the basis of the before-mentioned interpretation of 'frontier'. Ali Abdul Karim became the new Sultan.

Another internal Yemen revolt broke out in July, 1954, led by H.R.H. Saif el Islam Abdullah. He was half-brother to Mohammed al Badr, who had insisted he was the recognised rightful Crown Prince. Abdullah at first appeared to be succeeding and actually imprisoned Imam Ahmad, who was persuaded to abdicate. Ahmad, however, escaped and his son, Mohammed al Badr, marched an army of loyal tribesmen on Taiz. Abdullah's rebellion collapsed, he and another brother were executed, and Mohammed al Badr became Crown Prince without further question after the restoration of Ahmad as Imam.

Probably stimulated by 'Suez' reactions the Imam laid claim in 1956 to the British Kamaran island, 22 square miles off the Yemen coast and taken from the Turks. Though separate from Aden Colony the Governor of Aden had been declared also Governor of Kamaran. Yemeni claim has some weight and the only reasons why it should not be transferred seem to be consideration for the well-being of the 2,000 inhabitants and discouragement of the Imam's major claim. At the United Nations Assembly Yemen representatives repeatedly alleged that the R.A.F. retaliatory assaults constituted aggression and reasserted that the Protectorates were British 'occupied' Yemen territory.

### CROWN PRINCE ON TOUR

In 1958 the Imam intimated that the British Chargé d'Affaires was *persona non grata*. No official explanation of this has ever been given, but rumour attributed it to the Imam's absurd belief that the British diplomat had consorted with politically undesirable Yemenis. This did not involve a complete rupture and another Chargé d'Affaires was appointed. In the same year the Crown Prince undertook an extensive tour, first to London where he met the Queen, the Prime Minister and others; and then to Italy, Roumania, Poland, Yugoslavia, U.S.S.R., Chinese Peoples' Republic, Syria and Egypt, in which lands elaborate ceremonial impressed him far more than his British reception. His Royal Highness must have had intriguing reflections during his passage through revolutionary totalitarian States. Contact with Peking China was especially fruitful: mutual treaties were followed by a large Chinese delegation of technicians and others to the Yemen, Russians having preceded them. The Yemen also received machinery, tools, rolled steel, consumer goods and a substantial loan, and the Yemen agreed to provide free hospitality for Chinese visitors and to send China Yemeni students.

In a press conference at Damascus toward the end of his journey the Crown Prince explained that after finding French and Italian sympathy for Britain's policy on the Yemen, 'we were then forced to visit the eastern States, in which we found full support for the Arab case in general, and the Yemeni case in particular.' No doubt he also conveyed to his father



the reassuring words of Chou-en-lai, 'the Chinese Government and people support the position of the Yemen in the case of Aden and the southern part of the Yemen known as "Protectorates," and fully sympathise with and resolutely support the people of the Yemen in their just struggle'. Information on any reciprocal message from the Imam is not available.

The Yemen decided to join the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria, although it was emphasised this was not complete union, but federation. The foreign supply of arms and 30 or more aircraft gratified the Imam and the Crown Prince, but the Imam was not without apprehension over the impact of Russia, China and Egypt.

Frontier disturbance continued and a British aircraft was shot down in Yemen territory. There were also signs of further internal Yemen unrest. One report, incidentally, mentioned that the stalwart sword-executioner who had performed a long series of competent deeds before large multitudes in Taiz had changed his role and, not merely figuratively, lost his head.

Inauguration of a Protectorate Federation exasperated the Imam, who took this as conclusive evidence that Britain would never concede the justice of his claim to 'Southern Yemen'. The British Government on its part, contended that Protectorate rulers were completely free to join or refuse; that the Sultan of Lahej had earlier praised 'the fine spirit' of the proposal; and that as Britain firmly rejected the Imam's claim his opinion on the Federation was irrelevant. Protectorate views were not unanimous. Some rulers wanted simply to preserve their traditional way of life; some were averse to widening the gulf between them and the Yemen and preferred to await a Yemen revolution; and some accepted the proposal as an encouraging development. Such a small-scale federation can only be an experimental attempt to secure some co-ordination among 800,000 peoples in a host of small and larger tribal communities.

This, in the words of the London Yemen Legation memorandum, is how the Kingdom of Yemen sees the venture:—'Britain is pursuing her aims by promises, pressures and money to force the rulers into a form of federation in order to sever finally the southern parts from Yemen, and establish the British domination there. . . .'

### LAHEJ DISTURBANCES

The reigning Sultan of Lahej, Ali Abdul Karim, had been closely associated with Muhammed Ali Jifri, President of the South Arabian League, and was vehemently critical of both the British and the Imam. He became hostile to the Federation proposal possibly not only because of al Jifri's influence but also because his status as Senior Ruler would be affected. Subversive propaganda again becoming rife in Lahej, the Aden Governor, Sir William Luce, despatched troops and had the Director of Education, Abdullah, brother of Muhammad Ali al Jifri, arrested. Two other brothers who also were to be arrested managed to escape.

The Sultan protested vigorously that the Governor had no legal right to act thus in his autonomous State and flew to London to publicise his



grievance and argue with the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lennox-Boyd. He left London hurriedly, this being not unconnected with the fact that a third of his armed guards sped to the Yemen by his decision or with his connivance with some £10,000. As the Lower Yafa emulated Lahej, its tribal guard also defecting with £10,000, perhaps that is a standard amount for such purposes. In 1958 the U.K. Government withdrew recognition of the Sultan of Lahej, and five months later the Lahej college of electors deposed him and made his cousin, Fadhl bin Ali, his successor.

The deposed Sultan broadcast attacks on the British Government from Egypt, which had assured him of full support. Optimistically, he visited the Imam, and Sir Bernard Reilly, K.C.M.G., C.I.E., O.B.E., Governor of Aden from 1937, has this to say in his *Aden and the Yemen*, published by the Colonial Office in 1960: 'It is not known for certain what passed between them, but there were reports that serious differences of opinion arose. . . . Ali Abdul Karim, while asserting his desire to achieve independence from the British, is said to have refused to admit the Yemen's right to the Aden Protectorate or to accept the Imam's view that, following the removal of British control, it should be integrated with the Yemen.' The history of Lahej fortifies this account. While some Protectorate rulers may not want British supervision it is evident that neither do they want the Imam's despotism. Frequent risings, plottings and decapitations within the Yemen may signify similar disposition among His Majesty's own subjects.

Shariff Hussein of Beihan and his brother came to London some months after the Sultan's visit, and it is reported that one matter discussed with the Colonial Secretary was the means of preventing Yemeni raids on Beihan. Their proposals must have found favour, for the raids did subside after their return, but probably for reasons other than R.A.F. activity. Serious occurrences of bomb-throwing, however, took place in Aden.

### EFFECTS OF PROPAGANDA

Whatever the future of the Federation, no doubt the ex-Sultan Ali Abdul Karim will continue his radio attacks and maintain secret contact with supporters in Lahej and Aden. It must be quite a task for Cairo to sort out the somewhat dissonant propaganda material supplied respectively by the ex-Sultan and the Imam, but it can be compounded under heat into such as this:—

'The insurgent people of Arab Eden want to preserve their Arabism and to free themselves from the tentacles of imperialism. . . . The process of concentrating foreigners in Aden is very similar to the process of concentrating Jews in Palestine. . . . But free Arabs will never give them an opportunity to interfere with the future of the Arab nation or to impede the march it has begun in the path of freedom.' (Cairo Radio in Arabic: 'Voice of the Arabs,' 21.4.58.)



Such sentiments vibrate with particular responsiveness in Aden Colony, with its preponderant Arab community, of whom some are pro-Yemen, more are both anti-British and anti-Imam, most are seemingly inert and very few are ardently pro-British. 'Nasserism' swirling around them all becomes absorbed to a considerable degree, but anti-Israel attacks on Jews have lapsed, for not many Jews remain compared with former years.

This short historical survey, inevitably suffering by compression, may serve to illustrate how and why the affairs of Aden Colony, the Aden Protectorates and the Yemen interact. Within this context consideration can now be given to the contemporary social and political scene.

## 2. Aden Colony

THIS territory, for which the Secretary of State for the Colonies has ministerial responsibility in the United Kingdom Government, covers about 80 square miles, with an additional 35 square miles in the islands of Perim and Kuria Muria. From a population of about 500 it grew to nearly 140,000 in the 1955 census year and may be 200,000 today. The census gave this analysis:—

Aden Arabs ... ..	36,910	British (including military) ...	3,763
Protectorate Arabs ... ..	18,881	Jews (1931: 6,000) ... ..	831
Yemeni Arabs ... ..	48,088	Other Europeans ... ..	721
Somalis ... ..	10,611	Miscellaneous ... ..	2,608
Indians ... ..	15,817		

Until 1937 Aden was administered by the Indian Government through a Chief Commissioner, previously a Resident, but then transferred to the Colonial Office, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief being locally responsible. Until 1955 a Legislative Council consisted of the Governor (acting as President), four ex-officio, four official and eight unofficial members. From 1955 to 1959 four of the unofficial seats became reserved for elected members. The 1959 Constitution provides for a Legislative Council of 23, of which 12 are elected, six are nominated by the Governor and five are ex-officio members. The Governor has ceased to be President, but appoints a Speaker who cannot vote.

The Executive Council comprises the five ex-officio Legco members and five elected or nominated members from Legco, '... not less than three of whom being elected members, selected and appointed by the Governor, acting in his discretion, to be styled Members in Charge.' This has now been changed to five 'Ministers' responsible respectively for Education and Immigration, Public Works and Aviation, Labour and Local Government, Health and Post and Information. Other departments are in the hands of the ex-officio Chief Secretary, Attorney General and the Financial Secretary. Ministers reply to questions in the Legislative Council, formulate policy for Executive consideration and fulfil policy determined



by the Legislative Council. Certain executive and legislative powers are reserved for the Governor.

Enfranchisement is open to males over 21 years who are either British Colony-born subjects or have been resident for two years immediately before applying for registration and who own immovable property worth 1,500s.<sup>1</sup> or occupy premises of not less than 250 s. annual value for a year before registration or have an average minimum monthly income of 200 s. for that period.

On this basis 21,554 men qualified and registered. At the General Election in 1959 26 per cent. of these voted, though in the oil refinery district, only 15 per cent. The low voting percentage was partly due to an organised boycott, supported by the T.U.C. The elected representatives included nine Arabs, two Somalis and one Indian and of these 11 were members of the Aden Association, although not standing as such.

### POLITICAL PARTIES

At that time the political groupings were the Aden Association, working for self-government within the Commonwealth, the South Arabian League, standing for a united South Arabia, and the United National Front, an extreme anti-British 'Left' movement. It should be noted that the largest single Aden community of 48,088 were classified as 'Yemeni', including women and children. One current political issue is over whether Yemeni Arabs should be enfranchised. Trade unionism seems almost as much, if not more, concerned with politics as with wages and labour conditions, largely because of "Free Yemeni" agitation.

In 1955 twelve trade unions existed, but in 1960 there were 33, of which 30 were affiliated to the Aden T.U.C. The T.U.C. owns an influential newspaper and is affiliated both with the I.C.F.T.U. and with the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions. On behalf of the British T.U.C. Mr. James Young, Mr. Albert Lewis and Mr. Andrew Dalglish, C.B.E., and also Special Adviser, Mr. T. E. Fallowes, have given considerable service in helping to organise and advise trade unions among over 60,000 workers. Serious disturbance and disputes occurred in 1956, 1959 and 1960, the first involving 209,790 lost 'man days'. The 1960 Ordinance legally enforcing conciliation and restricting strikes and lock-outs has evoked much criticism, although no strikes have taken place since its introduction.

Public expenditure in 1959-60 amounted to £3,833,284 (1939 £132,013) and Revenue £3,888,459. From 1947 to March, 1960, £10,450,000 was spent on Development Plans, plus £4m. at Little Aden. The 1960-64 Development Plan will cost £5,845,000 (£1m. from C.D. & W. grants).

Shipping, supremely important, is controlled by the Port Trust whose 1957-58 Report shows that apart from 1,611 sailing vessels and dhows of

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<sup>1</sup> The East African shilling is equivalent to the British shilling.

130,964 tonnage and 184 Government and Admiralty vessels of 722,158 tonnage there were 5,435 merchant steamers of 23,728,661 tonnage (10,599,884 of this under the British flag) that used the port. Compare this with 2,122 vessels of 8,769,538 tonnage in 1938. Recovery from the alarming drop of about 7 million tonnage in 1956-57 due to the Suez crisis was swift.

Labour finds employment with shipping, in refuelling and oil refining, the export of cotton piece goods, tobacco, hides, skins, coffee and small industries dealing with soap, gums, salt, oil seeds, cigarettes and aluminium articles. Imports in 1959 were £71,771,000 in value and exports £63,497,937.

Two Government hospitals providing 611 beds (495 of these in the modern 'Queen Elizabeth') and 107 cots had 6,501 in-patients in 1958, and with five clinics or dispensaries dealt with 461,797 out-patients compared with 215,264 in 1954. There were 26,067 attendances at the maternity hospital. At least 30 per cent. of the patients came from the Yemen. The British Petroleum Company's own medical service has a further 70 beds and had 1,203 in-patients and 63,789 out-patient attendances in the same year. The Church of Scotland's 73-bed hospital at Sheikh Othman, just over the Protectorate border, had 977 in-patients and 19,972 out-patient attendances. The available medical department staff was 74, but little progress has been made in recruiting girls for training as nurses owing to meagre education and to local prejudice.

Tuberculosis is the most serious problem, which is not surprising since about one-third of the inhabitants are badly housed or without any kind of accommodation. Sanitary conditions in many houses are very poor. The chewing of qat, the narcotic leaves of a Yemeni shrub, has been said to be deleterious, and its indirect economic loss estimated at £2½m. It was once prohibited but expediency has withdrawn the ban. Vital statistics for 1958 compared with our own were:—

				<i>England and Wales</i>	
Birth rate	...	...	39.15	per 1,000	... 16.4
Death rate (corrected)	...	...	11.2	per 1,000	... 11.7
Infant mortality (live births)	...	...	135.9	per 1,000	... 22.5
Maternal Mortality	...	...	3.69	per 1,000	... 0.44

The 1958 figures for education are as follows:—

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Free Primary Education in Government Schools (6 to 13)	2,614	1,545
Do. aided or unaided	2,198	1,189
Government Intermediate Schools	1,221	370
Other Intermediate Schools	1,827	345
Government Secondary Schools	680	131
Other Secondary Schools	403	100
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Technical and Vocational Schools	300	—
Teacher Training Institutions	26	15
Total number of schools	61	



The total number of 12,623 children, of whom only 3,680 were girls, represents from one-third to one-half of the children who should be receiving education of some sort. It also emphasises the assumption prevailing that the female sex has less need of education and that women are unentitled or unfitted for social and political equality.

### LABOUR CONDITIONS

Social conditions are certainly improving compared with the period described by a former Governor of Aden, Sir Tom Hickenbotham, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.I.E., O.B.E., in his *Aden*, published in 1958:— 'The general condition of Arab labour in the Colony when I first came to know Aden in the 1930s can only be described as disgraceful . . . wages left no margin between income and expenditure, nothing could be saved against old age and sickness. . . . There was no form of consultation between master and man and the authority of the master was absolute. Coal and cargo coolies . . . (had) grossly overcrowded conditions without washing or sanitary arrangements. . . . The owners never had the slightest idea who lived in these dormitories and what went on there. . . .'

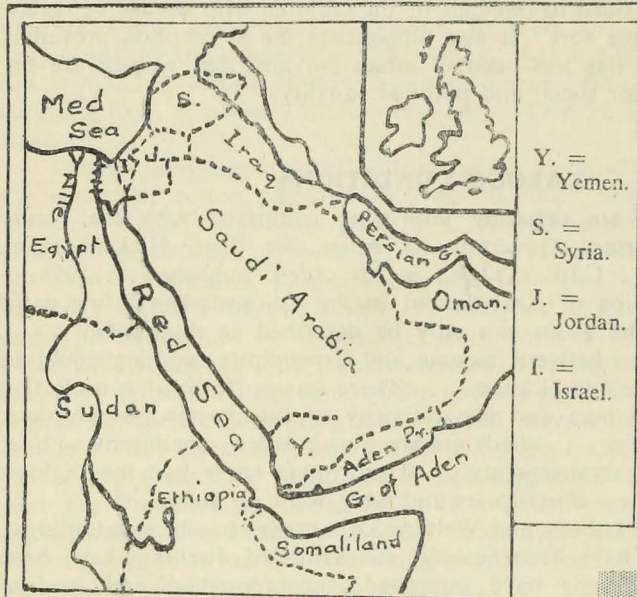
Since the war a Labour and Welfare Department has been established, Labour Ordinances have been enacted, thousands of dwellings have been built, working conditions have improved, superannuation and medical schemes have been introduced, water sanitation has been provided in government working-class houses and similar private property in the municipal area, over twice as many children go to school and trade unionism has helped to raise wages. The present minimum daily wage for adult labourers is 7 shillings, skilled workers receive up to 15s., and clerks over 350s. per month.

Although remembrance of past bad conditions supplements contemporary grievances, including that of 2,000-3,000 unemployed, it is untrue either that the cause of agitation is entirely economic or that British 'colonialism' has only had ill effects. Politically there is now some measure of representative government, and even if economic development by British enterprise has served commercial and strategic ends, nevertheless it has also bestowed some material benefit on thousands of workers who otherwise would have had a more impoverished life. The harbour services, the £45,000,000 oil refinery, the several small industries, modernised fishing and public or private service have proved a magnet to large numbers in the Protectorates and the Yemen.

Social benefits have accrued and will accrue from expenditure on Colony Development Plans by the Aden Government from its own resources, from public loans and from a British Government Colonial Development and Welfare grant for improvements in social services, communications and transport, public utilities and housing. The Nuffield Foundation and U.N.I.C.E.F. have also given valuable aid.

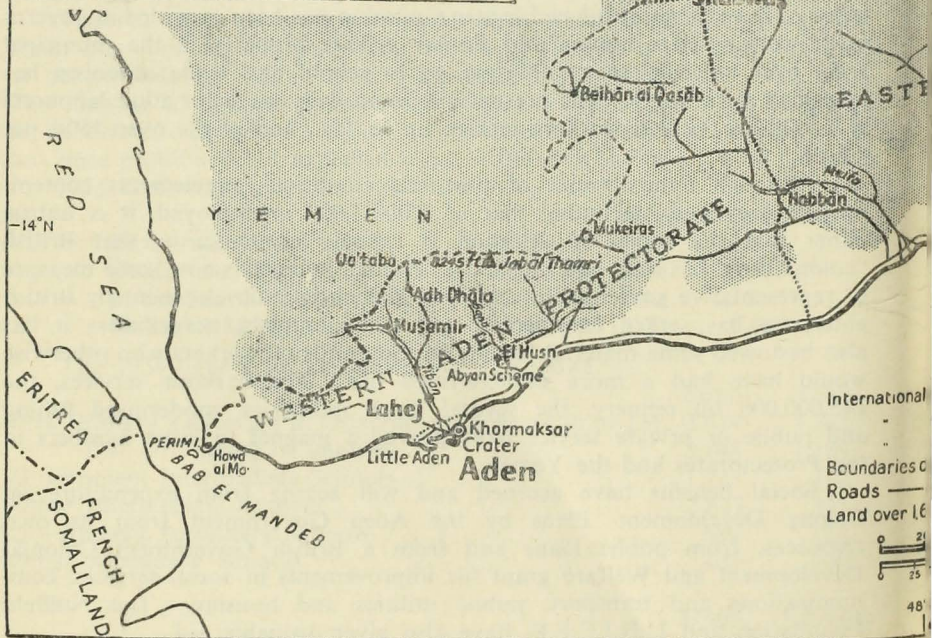
Political life, as previously indicated, is subject to many passionate cross-currents, and even the powerful aspiration for south Arabian union





- Y. = Yemen.
- S. = Syria.
- J. = Jordan.
- I. = Israel.

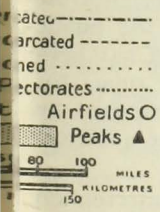
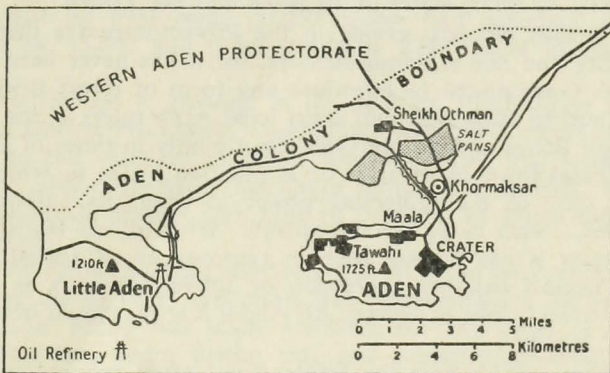
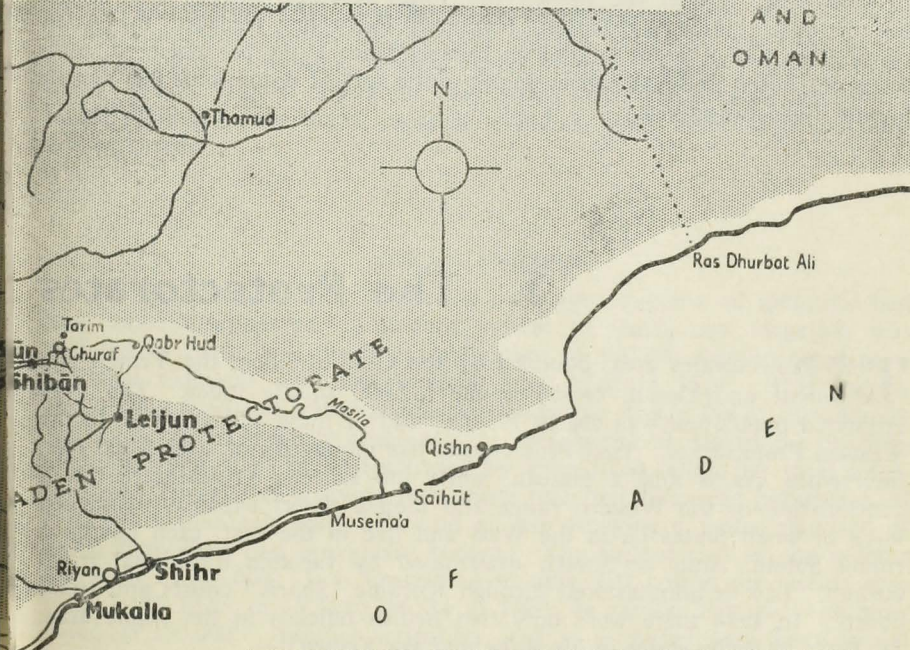
# ADEN CO





# ADEN AND PROTECTORATE

MUSCAT  
AND  
OMAN



is affected by contrary opinions on whether the Yemen can or should be 'liberated' by 'Free Yemen' agencies from Aden; whether the British Government is or is not appeasing the Imam; whether concern with the Yemen should politically be put aside temporarily and concentration given to the Colony; whether effort should be made to seek integration with the Protectorate Federation or whether support should be sought from Cairo or elsewhere. Under the impact the South Arabian League has wilted, the National Union (or United National) Party has replaced the Aden Association and a small Istiqlal or Independence Party has emerged, each being registered political parties having some sort of union with the Yemen among their objectives.

### 3. The Protectorates

THE Protectorates area, bounded by the Gulf of Eden, the Yemen and Muscat and Oman, covers about 112,000 square miles. The 1959 estimated population was nearly 795,000, and of these 430,000 were in the Western Protectorate. That Protectorate has mountains of over 8,000 feet, intervening plains and a plateau, while the Eastern Protectorate has a continuation of the Western range and then a desert expanse. Nineteen large or small States lie in the West and five in the east, each having a ruling Sultan, Amir or Sheikh determined by variable traditional tribal custom. Law is administered through Koranic 'Sharia' courts and tribal courts. In 1934 there were only two British officials in the whole area. Sir Bernard Reilly states in his *Aden and the Yemen*:—

'British officials serving in the Protectorate are there in an advisory capacity and not as administrators, for it has never been the policy of the British Government to introduce any form of direct British administration . . . (but) to encourage and assist local Arab rulers in the good government of their States and to intervene directly only in times of emergency if there is a breakdown in security or a situation arises in which it becomes the clear duty of the protecting power to assert its authority in the public interest. Such cases are infrequent. When direct British action has been necessary it has usually been in response to an appeal of the rulers for help against external aggression or subversion such as that practised by the Yemen.' The ex-Sultan, Ali Abdul Karim, should observe the qualification 'usually'.

Some rulers near the border have often suffered violent intervention from Yemeni tribes. Otherwise than the accession to the Federation of nine States with an aggregate population of about 380,000, traditional Arab life remains as formerly in its social pattern and poverty. If there has been only slight social and political improvement this may be due to



the negative side of the freedom guaranteed to the Protectorates. Had Britain insisted on substantial reforms it would have been accused of gross interference in autonomous Protectorate affairs, but if it has not interfered, then it can be accused of neglect!

Despite the desire of Protectorate Arabs to live like their forefathers some improvements have been made without unduly affecting internal government by the rulers. On the one or two per cent. of the area cultivable in the wadis and plains, 90 per cent. of the tribesmen are engaged in growing millet, sorghum, wheat, barley, cotton, sesame, date, banana, melon, fruits, grapes, vegetables and coffee and raising cattle, sheep and goats. The last four items, together with fish, ghee, skins, hides and lime are exported.

### ABYAN SCHEME

In the Abyan district, where the extensive irrigation of antiquity had long since disappeared, a modern system of dams and irrigation was initiated in 1940, with the first small grant of £10,000 supplemented by a £270,000 Colonial and Development and Welfare loan. This greatly encouraged food and cotton production under the Abyan Board, now wholly Arab. Sir Bernard Reilly observes: '... the district of Abyan, the development of which used to be frustrated by inter-tribal feuds, has been transformed. There is now living in it more than ten times the population of little more than ten years ago, and all are enjoying a better standard of living than they had previously known.' The capital cost of the scheme has been £1,216,000. It is heartening to note that cotton production rose from 1,587 bales in 1950 to 34,524 in 1960, its annual average value now being £1,300,000. Another irrigation area is at Lahej and the Colonial Secretary stated that by 1961 some 40,000 people had benefited, cotton acreage increased by 35,000 and other crops by 8,000 acres in the two schemes.

Co-operative enterprise is growing in the Western Protectorate which in 1960 had seven Cotton Producers' Associations with 6,600 members and marketed cotton to the value of £250,000, and five Fruit and Vegetable Co-operatives with about the same marketing value, five farmers' Credit Societies and a Wholesale Market with sales of £400,000, of which £300,000 went to the farmers.

These gratifying results contrast sombrely with Sir Tom Hickenbotham's comment: 'During the 89 years that India was responsible for the Protectorate not one single penny was made available for any form of social service.' India was then under British rule and evidently imperial glory is not always synonymous with social responsibility.

Oil prospecting has been unsuccessful. The Protectorates rely mostly on agriculture and fishing in their economy. H.M.G. annually provided funds for administration and social services. In 1959-60 these amounted to £2,399,616 (including £22,063 for Intelligence), as well as an agreed



annual Grant-in-Aid of over £1½m. for the Federation. The Nuffield Foundation and U.N.I.C.E.F. also assist. Aggregate 'States' expenditure in 1959-60 was £1,418,854 and revenue £1,431,052.

There are no trade unions in the Protectorates, but there are trade union members in Lahej who belong to a Colony trade union. Generally, traditional tribal life prevails in which ancient customs remain powerful, women are subjugated (though not without considerable domestic power) a residual stratum of tribal slavery still lingers and 'democracy' is a very strange word. Polemical Cairo radio, however, penetrates influentially and stimulates a sense of racial affinity between those on both sides of the frontier.

### HEALTH CONDITIONS

The Protectorates have Health Departments of varying scope and competence in most States, and altogether had in their services in 1959 18 doctors, one dental officer, one matron and two nurses on the senior staff and nearly 259 sub-professional, clerical or unskilled assistants. Eight small hospitals provide 170 beds in the Western Protectorate and in addition to their 123,118 out-patient treatments there were 277,670 treatments by health clinics. Aden also receives many from the Protectorate for treatment. Tuberculosis is less rife than in the Colony, the main complaints being ulcer, lung, skin, ear and eye afflictions, fevers, intestinal flux and malaria. There are no registrations of births and deaths or relevant vital statistics. Until a few years ago R.A.F. Medical Officers attended to the needs of many of the people. To Health Expenditure of £231,029 in 1959 the British Government contributed £129,041, the States £72,903, and U.N.I.F.E.F. and other sources £29,085.

Education is very meagre. Before the war only a few private schools and Koranic teachers existed, but in the West there are now 45 primary, 6 intermediate and no secondary schools, with 2,824 boys and 222 girls attending in the first and 1,000 boys only in the second. In the East are 32 Government and 46 other primary schools for 7,612 boys and 769 girls, a Government secondary school for 240 boys and one other for 22 boys. Teachers are scarce, only 87 'trained' men and seven women, 79 'untrained' men and two women being available. Twelve men were receiving one-year training courses in Aden in 1958.

The Protectorates have a few small townships, although many tribes-peoples are nomadic. Transport is mostly over dried river beds or desert tracks, although some motor roads have been or are being constructed. Frontier excitement has subsided, but subversion continues in places. Apart from the Federation, the work of the Abyan Board, the presence of education, technical and health advisers and occasional visits from the Governo of Aden or his officials, only an occasional droning aeroplane ripples ancient Arab life in the Protectorates.



## 4. The Yemen

THE Yemen is no part of British responsibility, but because of its contiguity and historical interaction with the Protectorates and Aden Colony it is appropriate also to look at the internal condition of the Yemen.

Cartography leaves part of the Yemen-Protectorate frontier ambiguous, and mutual agreement to remedy this is unlikely for reasons already stated. Ethnically, peoples on both sides are of the same stock and the Imam asserts that all are Yemenis. Frequently tribesmen from both sides infiltrate, and intermittently there have been violent collisions.

The Imam is the religious head of the minority Zeidis and absolute secular monarch of 4m. to 5m. subjects. Only approximate figures of population or anything else can be given because, apart from tax records jealously guarded by the Imam, there are hardly any statistics available or, possibly, existent. Such information or figures as will be mentioned are largely derived from estimates based on information from personal contacts.

The Yemen extends over 75,000 square miles, consisting of hills, mountains rising over 8,000 feet, plateau, steppe and desert. It is bounded by South Arabia to the north and north-east, the Red Sea to the west and the Aden Protectorates to the south and east. Its principle towns are Sana, the old capital (population about 60,000), Hodeida, the chief port (about 40,000) and Taiz, present seat of government (about 10,000). Now that the ancient Jewish colony has gone to Israel only a few Ethiopians, Somalis, Indians and Iranians constitute the fragmentary non-Yemeni population.

Imamate succession is not by strict primogeniture, but generally depends on election or selection from the dynastic family by Ulemas, or learned preachers, according to a 14-point test. The King and Imam governs automatically through a Diwan or Council of Ministers, with Administration through two 'Liwas' or Principalities and a number of 'Qadas' or districts in the charge of 'Amils' or Residents. Numerous sheiks with minor responsibilities may have to send a son nominally to the Royal Court for training, but also actually as a hostage. In this feudalistic structure there is no semblance of democracy, no political party and no trade union. Slavery existed until recent years. Women are in purdah and only leave their homes shrouded in a black 'sharshaf'. There are severe restrictions on personal liberty and none may enter or leave the country without the Imam's personal permission.

The Imam has absolute power, but there are courts of law observing either 'sharia' canon law or 'urf' customary law. Punishment may be by fine, forced labour, pillory, leg manacles for adults or children, foot or hand amputation or sword execution. Yemeni officials assert that there is very little crime!



### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

As in the Protectorate, the people are mostly engaged in agriculture and produce similar crops, excepting that while the production of 'mocha' coffee has drastically declined, the growing of qat has greatly increased. Extensive terrace cultivation along hill and mountain slopes furnishes enough food for a population apparently increasing slowly owing to the high death rate. Roads are mostly primitive, the only modern ones totalling 500 miles, being between Taiz, Sana and Hodeida. There are no railways, very few motor cars and three or four civil aircraft owned by the Imam, transport being normally by camel, mule and ass.

Hides, skins, coffee, rock salt, sulphur, raisins, potatoes and honey are exported. There are textile, stone and leather handicrafts, but the silver-smithing for which the Jews were famous went with their migration. A small number of dhows are built at Hodeida. German and American prospectors have failed to strike the oil it was hoped would put the Imam and his country in the same affluent category as Kuwait, and nothing more has been heard of an announcement that Russian prospectors had succeeded. There may be valuable mineral resources, but little has been discovered. Trade agreements with East and West Germans, Egyptians and Russians for the construction of cement, glass, plastics and other small works have made a little progress, and Hodeida harbour is being enlarged. About 1955 electric lighting became available in Taiz, Hodeida and Sana, where there is also a limited telephone system and a piped water supply. (These and printing presses had been prohibited by a previous Imam.)

Government income is secured from tithe, a tax on capital, a head tax and customs duties. Sir Reader Bullard in his *Middle East* states, 'The richest provinces are Hodeida, Ibb and Taiz, yielding a revenue of some 5m. ryals per annum. . . . Maritime customs, collected chiefly at Hodeida, yield about 50,000 ryals.' (A ryal equals about 5s. 9d.) The Imam himself is reputed to be very wealthy, but graciously declared that the alleged immense fortune disclosed after his father's assassination would be devoted to the well-being of his subjects.

A few urban schools exist for boys, none for girls, and higher education is given by private tutors in wealthy families, at Sana 'University' or at Cairo. Five hospitals, with possibly 1,000 to 1,500 beds, 30 or so Italian, Egyptian or Indian doctors and a handful of Ethiopian nurses (no Yemeni) have to meet the medical needs of the Yemen. In Taiz the Royal Hospital, provided through the beneficence of His Majesty, has 600 beds, mostly for males, although there are no special hospitals for women. Out-patient attendances are over 25,000 annually. It is alleged that half the children die before they reach 5 years. The main diseases are tuberculosis, rheumatoid arthritis, malaria, bilharzia, trachoma, diabetes, debility, decalcification and female genital complaints.

### POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Three small newspapers, one official, circulate and in the 'souks' or



markets a few books can be bought. There are no alcoholic drinks; but here and there in the towns masculine groups gather to discuss over coffee, soft drinks, hubble-bubble tobacco pipes or qat, either the weather or, cautiously, other subjects. The ulemas have some influence, not exclusively on theology, and the many portraits of Nasser, often of the Crown Prince and sometimes of the Imam, Nehru, Gandhi or another African or Asian leading personalities betoken, along with attention to Cairo radio cascades, ominous rumbling beneath a crust of tranquil poverty.

Many features of Yemeni life, including poverty and anti-Europeanism are common to other Arab countries. The Yemen is a mediæval, despotic society, but this is as much the Yemen's domestic concern as it is for the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. or the Peoples Republic of China to be totalitarian, plutocratic, democratic or oligarchic.

## 5. The Future

AS previously emphasised, the U.K. Government rejects the Yemeni claim to all South-west Arabia, because:—

- (a) Protectorate rulers have no desire to be integrated with the Yemen under present Yemeni conditions, and repudiate any assertion by the Imam to have authority over them.
- (b) Alteration of British treaty obligations with those rulers must rest solely with the parties concerned.
- (c) Aden Colony was ceded by Treaty to Britain by the then Sultan of Lahej after military success and conformed to the historical 'natural' practice of tribes and nations, including the Yemen.
- (d) While ready to extend modern principles of freedom and self-government, as already implemented in many ex-colonial territories, the U.K. Government will only do so by orderly process and cannot agree to transfer any community within its authority or protection without the community's consent and with safeguards for British interests.

The Yemen, on the contrary, insists that 'Southern Yemen' should be restored irrespective of the extraneous desires of Protectorate rulers. Thus whatever attention the Yemen appears to have given to boundary rectification has simply been a tactical expedient that has not affected its fundamental claim shielded by Article 3 of the 1934 Sana Treaty:—'Settlement of the southern frontier of the Yemen is deferred pending the conclusion . . . of the negotiations which shall take place . . . before the expiry of the present Treaty.'

At one time the Imam might have been prepared to negotiate a settlement on the basis of either (a) British recognition of the Yemeni claim, transference of the Protectorate territory to the Yemen in  $x$  years and the

leasing of Aden Colony to Britain or indefinite suspension of that particular issue, or (b) A Condominium allowing Britain to be associated temporarily with the Yemen in Protectorate administration, with special arrangements in respect of Aden Colony. The latter evidently would involve British co-operation with the Yemen in preserving law and order should Protectorate rulers become restive and strengthening the Imam's resistance to Egypt or Russia should they become embarrassing. Neither conjecture in any case would be acceptable to the British Government.

### UNITED NATIONS' INVESTIGATION

Although British reasons for rejecting the Yemen claim are substantial, nevertheless they would be strengthened by international judgment. As the Yemen has pressed its claim to the 'co-called Protectorates' on the United Nations, it would be expedient for the British Government to urge the United Nations impartially to examine the claim or to seek joint agreement with the Yemen Government for appointment of an international juridical tribunal for that purpose.

Confidence in the soundness of the British case does not release Britain from immediate obligations pending any impartial decision, or in the most probable event of the Yemen rejecting an investigation and its judgment or if the Yemen procrastinates indefinitely. The strong demand for political independence in the Colony and among some Protectorate rulers will continue, and even those content with the present position, including those in the Federation, may find themselves hard pressed to alleged unwarrantable interference with Protectorate State rights, however guilty of duplicity the Sultan had been. Cairo radio will not cease distorting facts, nor will propaganda become less mendacious. Arab cultural consciousness will receive incessant encouragement from the plea that Protectorate Arabs must share the all-Arab obligation to cast off the Western imperialist yoke.

Britain must deflate emotions grossly inflated by fierce propaganda by re-emphasising that the inhabitants of Aden Colony and the Protectorates can freely decide their political destiny, for good or ill. It must be made abundantly clear that the Federation is not an imposed institution, and that though it has potential political, economic and social value the rulers and peoples are free to decide whether to enter it or not and whether to be independent of both Britain and the Yemen or associated with either, provided the decision is genuinely representative.

It would be no easy task to ensure that provision because of the prevailing pattern of Arab life, but the difficulties should be no more insurmountable than have been somewhat similar difficulties in, for instance, Nigeria. A possible course may be to hold an all-Protectorate Convention of Sultans, Amirs and Sheikhs, since a democratic referendum or plebiscite would be inappropriate or unworkable under the circumstances.



Conclusions must include safeguards and would have to be virtually unanimous as it would be impracticable for some widely separated areas to opt diversely. As a preliminary measure it may be advantageous to appoint a U.N. Boundary Commission, without prejudice to the main issue, if necessary also to determine an agreed supervised neutralised zone along the frontier.

### IMAM'S REACTION

This procedure is not likely to be received by the Imam with enthusiasm, although he should appreciate that even if Britain conceded his claim he would be confronted with a formidable problem if he had to face the enmity of ex-Protectorate rulers and peoples when he sought to enforce his will and authority. Exhaustion of his military and economic resources in that event itself would be as disastrous as the likelihood that the constant feud between Zeidis and Shaifais would flare into violent strife. Perhaps it would dawn on him that it would be better to let Protectorate peoples make a free choice than for him to face such grave perils—or an alternative peril if he sought intervention on his behalf either by some nominally friendly foreign power or by the United Arab Republic.

It is conceivable that Arab cultural affinity would induce Protectorate rulers and peoples to choose integration with the Yemen, but it is hardly conceivable that they would indefinitely tolerate the inferior constitutional and social condition of the Zeidi-dominated Yemen. Politically the Protectorates now enjoy far more self-government than they would have in the Yemen, and this is also true of the prospects of social improvements. This is no conclusive reason why those in the Protectorates should not merge with the Yemen, but in a free choice this should be borne in mind beyond propagandist prejudice and distortions from any quarter.

The Federation of nine or ten out of 25 different States may seem ludicrously small, but it can serve to encourage greater homogeneity, to co-ordinate plans for social and economic progress and to provide useful preparation for whatever future course the Protectorates choose.

As elsewhere, a primitive economy cannot grant much more than subsistence for the multitude. To secure increased per capita production initial external aid is required and also the co-operation of the peoples themselves, without which the finest of intentions will encounter resistance and frustration. It is therefore imperative that rulers and potential leaders shall direct part of their energy imaginatively and constructively to social advancement and not be completely absorbed in political conflict. 'Freedom' should not mean simply freedom to remain poverty stricken.

### CLOSER ASSOCIATION

Politics in the Colony is greatly concerned with Colony-Protectorates relationship and the desirability of integrating the two areas. Many



Protectorate rulers seem unsympathetic to this and their peoples may be apathetic. Probably the rulers are apprehensive of the disturbing effect on the authority of Adenese 'agitators', and many of their peoples may fear disruption of their rigid tribal way of life. Nonetheless the anomalous distinction between the Colony and the Protectorates requires examination of what could be an appropriate form of closer association, economically discrepant though they are.

The present limited elective representation and administrative responsibility in the Colony cannot remain as it is, both because of an inherent impetus toward full indigenous responsibility and because consistency involves this local application of avowed British policy. Nevertheless warnings should be heeded that this has hazards because the historical foundations of British democracy differ from those in Arabian sociology and an alien constitutional framework could collapse or become shattered by demagogic despotism. There is evidence to support this possibility not only in Asia and Africa, but also in Europe, as we well know.

Moreover, Aden has not as yet a sufficiently cogent political life within its community of some 107,000 'Aden', 'Protectorate' and 'Yemeni' Arabs, 26,000 Somalis and Indians and 7,000 others. Turbulent passions stream through Adenese tributaries of pro- and anti-Imam Yemenism, 'Free Yemenis', anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and 'proletarianism'. All these are augmented by personal rivalries and external propagandist intrusion, and are charged with a delusion, not peculiar to Aden, that when British imperialism has vanished so will every grievance and burden disappear. To these several elements must be added the official, commercial, paternalistic, altruistic or apprehensive British.

Optimism would be naively excessive if it assumes that good will and sweet reason will inevitably prevail in this complex situation. Nevertheless, as expediency and principle alike do not countenance reliance on military means to repress disaffection the immediate alternative policy must be a further advance to self-government, in the resolute hope that this will not only serve the well-being of Adenese but also become an influential example to the Yemen and beyond.

Despite the hazards the existing Aden Constitution does mark an advance to full self-government. The 12 elected representatives have a majority of one in the Legislative Council of 23, and these, together with the elected members who are Ministers, have gained valuable experience. Ultimately the Legislative Council is bound to become wholly elective and, correspondingly, the Executive Council will then have to be appointed from among the elected membership of Legco. The remaining issues are those of the Governor and his reserved powers and the franchise.

#### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The basis of the existing franchise, as stated earlier, excludes women, and so strong is convention and tradition that it would be prudent not immediately to enfranchise women without general consent, which means



in effect among male politicians. The fact that women are unenfranchised in both Switzerland and Northern Nigeria does not lessen this affront to ardent feminists, who will point out that whatever argument may be adduced on the ground that Adenese women are politically ignorant and domestically absorbed, could have been said of Indian and Nigerian Western and Eastern Region women who are nevertheless enfranchised. The comparison is not necessarily sound, for Indian and Nigerian indigenous political parties or current opinion decided this, whereas that disposition does not at present exist in Aden Colony or in the politically backward Protectorates.

It would be possible to impose feminine enfranchisement irrespective of Arab masculine reactions. As this treatment of prevailing Arabic mores would evoke angry denunciations and turmoil it would be prudent to emulate Northern Nigeria and not at present introduce the European principle of 'Votes for Women'. In due course current evaluations and prejudices will become modified, and expanded education for girls will contribute greatly toward feminine emancipation. It is encouraging to note that a woman, Mrs. Mahiya Najib, edits a woman's magazine, 'Fatat Shansan'.

Even extension of male enfranchisement contains the difficulty of determining what should constitute entitlement. Should 'Yemeni' Arabs, for instance, be entitled and if so on what terms? Should property, residence or income qualifications be entirely abolished? Such considerations are very familiar in democratic advance in other territories. It is here suggested that existing Aden Colony franchise qualifications should be replaced by those of birth in the Colony or five years continuous residence, attainment of 21 years of age and registered acceptance of the obligations of Adenese citizenship.

### ULTIMATE INDEPENDENCE

Until the advent of complete independence the Governor's reserved powers would remain, although needing revision. Pressure for complete independence will depend for its achievement on whether the demand for it is sustained and compulsive, whether a cohesive and coherent political movement emerges, what will be future Colony-Protectorates relationship, what changes take place in the Yemen<sup>1</sup> and whether the British Government can be satisfied that its strategic and military interests are adequately protected. Mutual goodwill and confidence could ensure the acceptable form and stages of peaceable and democratic political developments, but this could be frustrated by suspicion, bitter racialism and resentments or the machinations of deliberate wreckers.

There are other determinative factors: the small population of upwards of 200,000 itself may make exclusive Colony independence impracticable, even if it were economically viable; integration with the Protectorates may prove impossible for some time; drastic change in the Yemen could remove existing impediments to union between Protectorate and Yemeni peoples. Prediction can only be speculative and tentative and therefore



attention must be focused on the next desirable step. The continuation of British 'fortress' facilities should present no insuperable difficulty, assuming in these days of nuclear armaments such a 'fortress' is still required, if for no other reason than its economic value to the inhabitants. Settlement of the Cyprus conflict included agreement for a British military base, and some similar arrangement could apply to Aden.

A Colony Development Plan is already operating, but needs to be expanded and also related to economic development in the Protectorates. Of the estimated 62,000 labour force in the Colony, according to an Aden Government Report, 21,000 were employed in hotels, catering and domestic service, 11,640 by the Government or H.M. Forces, 7,000 in retail and distributive trades, 5,000 in light industries, 1,700 in the oil refinery, 10,000 in constructive works and 5,600 in Port activities. From this it will be seen how much has depended on the British. What is also significant is that of the 62,000 only about 24,000 are Aden-born, the rest coming from the Protectorates or the Yemen. As the Protectorates are almost entirely devoted to agriculture and Colony oil refining and light industries absorb less than 7,000 it is obvious that in the absence of any discovered mineral resources only increased crop yield and industrial expansion can ensure the possibility of a higher standard of living for the near million people in the two areas.

### POPULATION PROBLEM

Through greater natural increase resulting from improved medical and health services and through immigration the population will increase sharply in the years ahead. This is an added reason why, difficult as this may be, the economy must expand, particularly in the Protectorates where, it is declared, 98 per cent. of the land is uncultivable. It appears imperative that a vaster comprehensive plan covering both the Colony and the Protectorates should be prepared in co-operation with Protectorate rulers, trade union and other representatives and the Government. For this, greatly increased public and, if possible, private capital investment and enterprise will be required, although the directive responsibility will rest with the Government. Further aid will also be necessary from British and other quarters to assist extended education and social services. Even granted progress in productive capacity the attainment of a better life for the masses will be slow, and difficulties will be exacerbated if either industrial strikes in the Colony recur, or if Protectorate peoples are unresponsive to innovations.

Sanely and ideally economic development should embrace also the Yemen and further afield in over-all planning. Some approach to this has been taken by the formation at Baghdad of the Arab League Economic

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*The Herald* of 24th June, 1961, reported that the Iman had 'turned over supreme power to his son,' the Crown Prince. Though he has not officially abdicated, this move could have significant consequences in due course.



Council and its projected Arab States Airline service and a tanker fleet with nominal capital of £25,000,000. The Yemen is participating in the Council, and is also receiving technical, financial and other assistance from Egyptian, Russian and Chinese sources. In 1953 it did not disdain United Nations help. West and East Germany have trade agreements for technical and industrial aid to the Yemen. All this must make for some economic improvement, although the encouragement it should receive from constitutional progress seems remote; and more heads may roll in the dust because their owners became despondent over the efficacy of relying on loyal appeals to the Imam.

Whatever the prospect of drastic change in the Yemen it is to be hoped that British-Yemen relationship will at least remain as quiet as the frontier had become in 1960. Before then British troops were flown to Aden in 1958 because of frontier incidents and a R.A.F. aircraft shot down in 1959. The report that the Imam had been killed by falling from his horse proved incorrect, and other reports of unrest involving the Crown Prince faded like smoke. In April, 1960, the then Governor of Aden, Sir William Luce, and his wife journeyed to Taiz to see the British Chargé d'Affaires and while there had private conversation with the Crown Prince, which may be a good omen. The attempted assassination of the Imam in March, 1961, severely wounded him, and gave evidence of yet another conspiracy.

Meanwhile, British political and economic obligations received this prim endorsement in a *Times* paragraph of April 21st, 1958:—

'There are various measures the British Government can take to build up a genuinely happier situation in southern Arabia, such as increasing the material benefit within Aden, helping the inhabitants to work towards a sensible political future of their own. . . . Britain has, however, a clear legal right to be where she is.'

This was written before the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, had acknowledged the impetus of 'winds of change'. Aden has felt those winds, and more than a zephyr has touched the Yemen.

### CONSEQUENCES OF INDEPENDENCE

Apart from Egypt, the emergence of the Sudan and Somaliland to full political freedom and independence a few miles across the Red Sea is embarrassing to those who argue that Adenese and Protectorate peoples are too politically immature for self-government. Consistency and expediency alike determine that British policy must extend to those peoples similar political responsibility—even if there is no certainty that this will bring social stability, that they will conform to British conceptions of what they should do or that vast economic and social improvement will speedily result. Internal disappointments, frustrations and severe tensions could bring confusion or disintegration. But there are also happier contingencies

and potencies. Yet the immediate British necessity of assisting progress to responsible freedom cannot be evaded and the preceding pages have attempted to put this in its historical, political and social context, together with an elaboration of these main propositions:—

1. The Yemen claim to Aden Colony and the Protectorates is invalid.
2. Those territories should become more closely associated or integrated either by extending the Federation or by an alternative means.
3. Colony and Protectorate peoples must be assured of freedom to choose not simply that association, but also independence within the Commonwealth or outside.
4. Aden Colony should proceed to full representative, internal self-government.
5. The Yemen claim should be considered by an international tribunal whose judgment should be accepted by both sides.
6. Both the legal rights and the sociological conditions of the Protectorates must be respected in efforts to secure worthy reforms.
7. Diversified economic planning should be further expanded, and this, with extended education and social services, requires substantial subventions from the U.K. Government and other sources.
8. British strategic and military interests can be effectually safeguarded by agreement during any transitional period.

Aden and the Aden Protectorates originally were brought into the British orbit because this served British imperial requirements. More enlightened modern principles of freedom, self-determination and international justice demand that with the same motive and wisdom that Britain had in liberating India and other imperial possessions so must it seek to implement those principles in Aden Colony and the Protectorates.

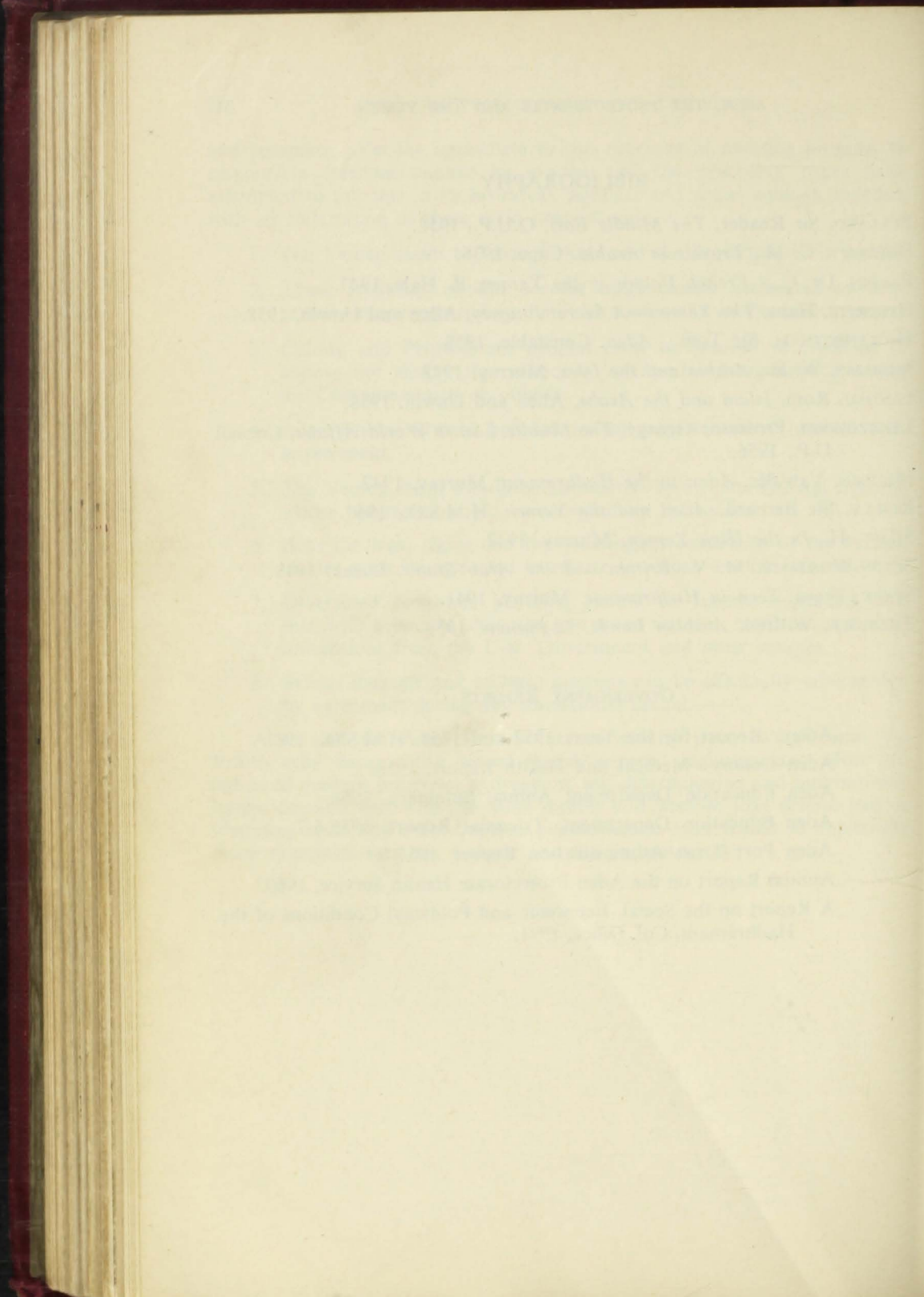


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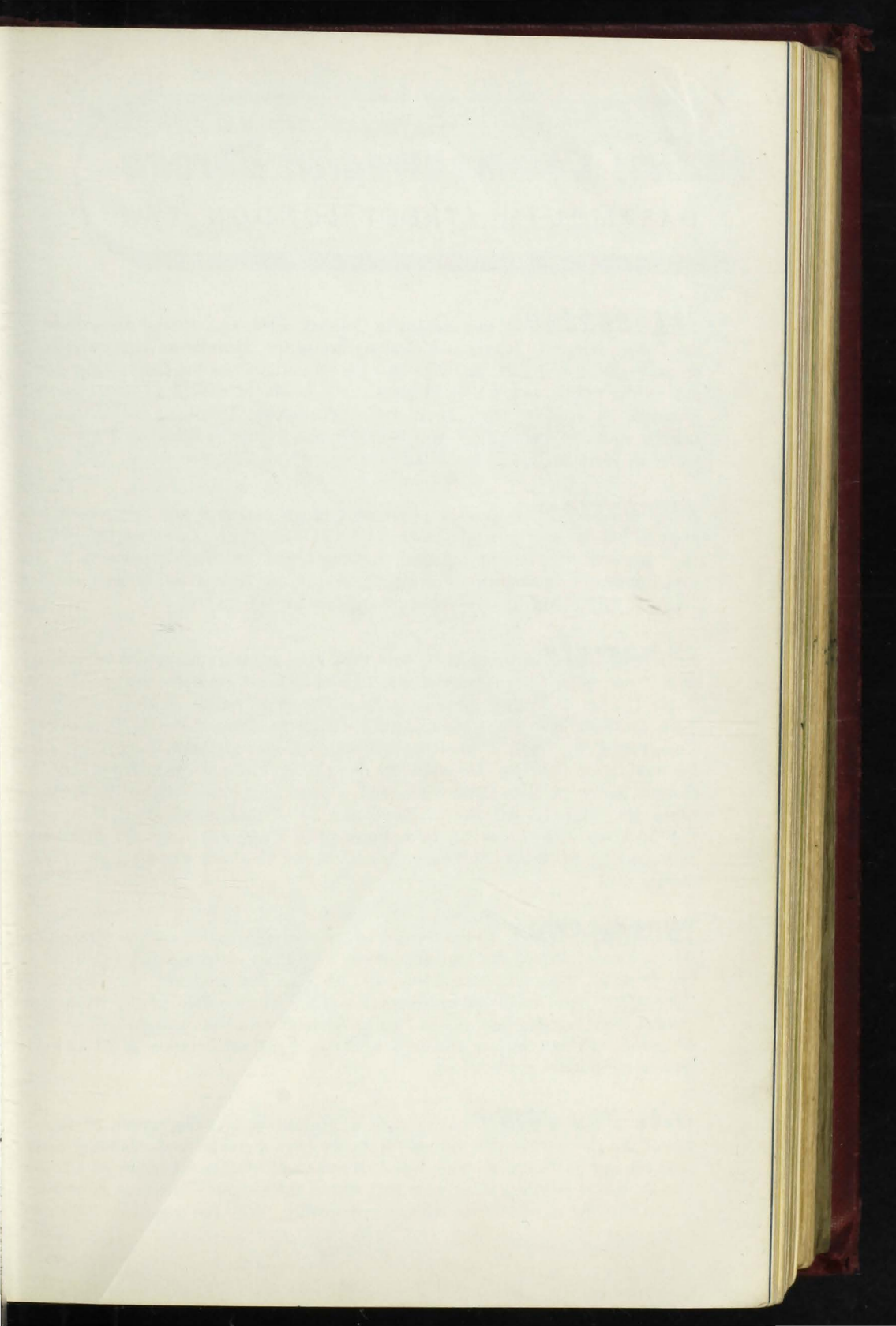
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# **Fabian Commonwealth Bureau**

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