

Aden in the Time of the Red Star

UK Et voici le sous titre de cet article

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The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was the only regime in the Arab world that genuinely identifying itself as Marxist¹. During its short existence, from 1970 to 1997, it became a base for Soviet influence in the region and the capital for Arab liberation movements, most notably those of Palestine and the Arab peninsula, and for Middle-Eastern communist organisations. Aden, its capital, which Westerners associate most readily with the myth of Rimbaud or the figure of [Paul] Nizan, author of *Aden-Arabie*, thus gave up its status as a free zone so as to become a laboratory for socialist experience in the poorest country on the peninsula. The time when goods and people disembarked onto the cluttered quays at Tawahi, where quay-side stores were stuffed with untaxed goods, was truly over. The time of nationalisations, of peoples militias, of female emancipation, of apparent equality had come. In short, it was when the red star flew over the old domain of Queen Elizabeth. The slogan of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) - "there is no voice louder than that of the Party" - had subdued the calls to prayer of the muezzins, even if Islam had been made the official religion of the State.

((#10)) The lights of colonial cosmopolitanism were brusquely extinguished and the curtain fell on a society marked by an ethnic hierarchy in which the "natives" skirted around the bottom of the barrel, above the Somalians, whilst Europeans survived the nightmare climate of the city by closing themselves off in their clubs. Some of these continued to exist as pubs after the departure of the British. Open from 6pm, they served a local beer, Sira, produced in a brewery run by the East Germans, which was itself one of the first targets for the Islamist battalions who fought against the army of the Sanaa regime, the separatists in the South and "impious" socialists in the war of 1994².

In the 1970s, the global climate of emancipation had touched Aden via a Marxism that, consecrated by the State, set itself up as a counter-model in the face of the social and religious conservatism of the previous generation. Demonstrating an anti-religious attitude could be expressed, ostentatiously, by the fact of lining up one's empty beer bottles on a table in a bar. This didn't just mark the fact that one drank, but that one drank a lot³.

Polygamy was made illegal by the law on the family in 1974, which accorded some significant rights to women and was one of the most progressive in the Arab world. In January 1981, Ali Salem Al-Bid, Deputy Prime Minister and member of the Central Committee of the YSP was obliged to resign his position as a result of bigamy. The

mixing of the sexes was the rule – as much in public spaces as in the professional and partisan circles. The popular militias accommodated female training as did the army and the police. In 1976, under the Presidency of Salim Rubay' Ali, major demonstrations were organised in all regions in favour of the abolition of veiling of the face – on the date of International Women's Day⁴.

What perhaps surprised the traveller from Sanaa the most, when he or she landed at Aden airport in the 1980s, was discovering that women, dressed in a shirt and trousers, were in charge of searching luggage. The mini-skirt and trousers had both appeared in Aden, hair wasn't covered up by headscarves any longer and young women would swim in two-piece bikinis, alongside men on the beach at Gold Mohur, where, Soviet songs crackling over loudspeakers, party members and expatriates from fraternal countries were to be found.

Debates inside the cells of the YSP provided an opening to a new world and a Marxist enculturation that formed the other half of the Westernisation that began in the British era. The young militants' bible was - like elsewhere, but in Arabic here - the work by Georges Politzer, *The Elementary Principles of Philosophy*. The militant publishers of Beirut provided the Arabic translation of this European culture, which was synonymous with modernisation and emancipation. Fawwaz Traboulsi, the Director of the Organisation for Communist Action in Lebanon, recounts in his memoirs [[hyperlink here](#)] that the Marxist-leaning branch of the National Liberation Front in Hadramaout, devoted a part of the funds it gained from the armed robbery of a British bank to the purchase of Marxist-Leninist books that he was asked to buy in Beirut⁵.

Internationalism was lived intellectually in Party meetings, where the problems of Africa, Asia and the Americas were discussed. But also thanks to study grants that sent young students, who were supposed to train the new elite of the country, to the four corners of the socialist world, from Cuba to the USSR. Literacy was the great national cause in a country that inherited an educational system that was elitist in Aden and remained rudimentary and embryonic in the old protectorates. [The cause] relied on young volunteers who enrolled with enthusiasm in campaigns that could take them into the most far-flung areas of the country. In the early years of the regime, popular participation and permanent mobilisation was as much a consequence of the socialist ideology and legitimacy of the new regime as it was a means for each of the rival currents of the YSP to constitute a force for support.

In August 1972, these seven glorious years (in the words of the regime) saw countryfolk demonstrate in Aden in their thousands, demanding that President Salem Rubay' Ali nationalise housing and reduce salaries for civil servants again. These demonstrations had been organised by the Political Organisation of the National Front, which had replaced the National Liberation Front [NLF] during the fifth congress in March 1972, and increasingly asserted a Marxist direction⁶. These demonstrations had been instrumentalised by the President so as to put pressure on both city dwellers and his political opponents. The Adenese writer Habib Abdulrab gives this gently ironic description: "a din of tumultuous, lively, dancing cries turned a calm, docile city on its

head, surprisingly submerging it. Overcome with *revolutionary joy*, the demonstrators descended on Aden from the mountains and the plains of Southern Yemen in the Party's lorries, the ecstasy of the first, long voyage to the capital cheerfully flaunted. Drunk with excitement, those from the first wave had already been there for a week. Throats rasping, they yelled neatly rhyming formulae. In their slogans, they decreed that burning the chador was a national duty (as if it wasn't hot enough), that to reduce salaries was equally so; and they demanded that the three 'historical directors' reinforce their 'anti-reactionary' line, because the people 'in its entirety', they cried with force, is Marxist! [...] Then they followed melodically with this: *we want neither 'hippy' nor bell-bottoms. We don't know if it's a boy or a girl. We want neither traitor nor reactionary line. Our whole people is Marxist*"[\[7\]](#).

These remnants of the British Empire – pubs, villas, military barracks, parks -clung to the city to give it this very particular cachet, which would have been picturesque had it not been doubled by a form of voluntary seclusion. In effect, Aden was an isolated and withdrawn capital, surrounded by mountains and the sea, but now cut off from the rest of the world by a securitarian politics which tightly restricted the issuing of visas and prevented contact with foreigners by the law of 1975. It was really bad luck for an old Yemeni man who searched in vain for a vehicle to transport his sheep on the day of the Festival of Abraham's Sacrifice. He decided to hitchhike and got in the car of a Sudanese man. Arrested at a police roadblock, he spent two days in prison, for speaking to a foreigner.

Returned to its Yemini hinterland, Aden turned its back on the sea, only welcoming the flags of its brother countries. The city hitched itself to the rest of the Arab world so as to become the figurehead of Arabism and socialism in the hostile environment of the oil monarchies. The Westerners – the British military and administrators - had left, but so too had the great European and Indian merchants, who were victims of the law on nationalisation in 1969. The departure of foreigners and political opponents created residential voids. These were filled by deserving militants and combatants of the National Liberation Front, many of whom came from tribal regions. For their part, the leaders shared out the coastal villas of the European elite, whilst the countryfolk populated the apartment blocks of Ma'alla, where, little by little, they would throw off their ragged rural trappings.

The Capital of Arab Communists

The relations that were constructed between Yemeni and Palestinian militants at the heart of the Arab Nationalist Movement in the 1960s, during the struggles for the defence of the republic in the North and for the independence of the South, continued well after these objectives were achieved and the dissolution of the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1970. Georges Habache and Nayef Hawatmeh, who led the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), were also leaders of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM). They were allies of the principal leaders of the National Liberation Front, which combated the British and the sultans between 1963 and 1967 and whose backbone was formed by ANM

militants. In 1966, the Palestinians Georges Habaches and Hani al-Hindi went to Taz with the Lebanese Mohsen Ibrahim to try to mediate between two tendencies of the NLF, the one partisans of a fusion with FLOSY (Front for the Liberation of Southern Yemen), the rival organisation supported by Nasser, and the other, who opposed them⁸. Lebanese and Palestinian representatives, such as Georges Habache, Nayef Hawatmeh, Karim Mroué, Nadim Abd al-Samad, Muhsin Ibrahim, Fawwaz Traboulsi, played a significant role in the foundation, in 1975, of the Yemen Socialist Party, resulting from the fusion of the NLF, the People's Democratic Union, and the (ex-Baathist) Popular Vanguard Party⁹. Of all the movements that emanated from the ANM, from The National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf to the PFLP, only the National Liberation Front succeeded in taking power¹⁰.

For twenty years, from 1970 to 1990, Aden became at once both the capital of Arab communism and a base for the Palestinians. Situated on the borders of the Arab world, South Yemen was transformed into a "progressive" sanctuary by the very fact that it benefited from Soviet protection, this alliance being an element of stability for a regime that was prey to struggles between clans and which dealt itself a fatal blow during the violent conflict in 1986 between movements in the Yemeni Socialist Party. It was on the margins of the world but at the centre of the world of Arab communism, for which it played the role of a refuge as much as a logistical base.

It welcomed Iraqi communists fleeing the repression of Saddam Hussein's regime, Lebanese communist combatants of the Lebanese Communist Party and the Communist Action Organisation in Lebanon, who went there to train during the war in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. The links between the leaders of the LCP and the CAOL and the Southern Yemeni leaders were very close. Secretary-General of the LCP Georges Hawi's personal revolver was a gift from Ali Nasser Mohammed, the President of South Yemen, a Makarov which served in resistance fighter Souha Bechara's assassination attempt against Antoine Lahd, head of Israel's allied militia in Southern Lebanon¹¹.

Along with others, Georges Hawi tried to intervene between Abd al-Fattah Ismaïl and Ali Nasser Mohammed, the two rivals for the leadership of the YSP and the State in South Yemen. Thus he made the journey from Damascus to Aden in 1985 to convince Ali Nasser Mohammed not to have Abd al-Fattah Ismaïl executed and to send him to Moscow, despite the initial opposition of the Soviet ambassador, who defended his claims to power¹². The leaders of the LCP, of the PFLP (Georges Habache) and of the DFLP (Nayeh Hawatmeh) were solicited by the two movements within the YSP to establish as mediation allowing the recourse to violence to be avoided. Georges Hawi even flew to Moscow in order (unsuccessfully) to dissuade Abd al-Fattah Ismaïl from returning to Aden and becoming an actor in the conflict that was brewing¹³. With Nadim Abd al-Samad, he led a last-ditch attempt in Aden to try to convince the leaders of the YSP to push back the date of the meeting of the political office, scheduled for January 13th 1986. These efforts were in vain and didn't manage to prevent the irruption of ten days of bloody violence in the city on the dark day that marked the beginning of the end of the RDPY and accelerated the process of unification with North Yemen.

Progressive Arabic Solidarities

The South Yemen regime put Lebanese militant communist architects in charge of, for example, the plan for the urbanization of Mukalla, the construction of the Rock Hotel in Tawahi (Aden) and the construction of Aden university. It was at the Rock Hotel, henceforth the 26th September Hotel, that the *pistoleros* and theoreticians of the world revolution met. Some had come to give lessons in scientific socialism to their Yemeni comrades and others to prepare for their next “revolutionary” operations. The university programmes had been conceived with the help of the Lebanese leader and communist intellectual Hussayn Mroué, and the school programmes with the help of Lebanese pedagogues.

((#20)) It was the Iraqi communist poets, including Saadi Youssef, who participated in the foundation of the publishing house Dar al-Hamdani in 1982. One year previously, Saadi Youssef had expressed the desire to see a statue of Rimbaud erected in Aden, where the poets had accomplished an “annual pilgrimage, bringing their gifts of wine and roses to the feet of Rimbaud”¹⁴. The same year, accompanied by his compatriot Chawqi Abdelamir, and the French poet Guillevic, Saadi Youssef tried to convince the South Yemen President Ali Nasser Mohammed, to give the name Rimbaud to a street in Tawahi, after a fruitless search for his house in Aden. Instead, he agreed to rename the beach of Gold Mohur, Arthur Rimbaud, a theoretical decision that today is long forgotten¹⁵. The restaurant Nashwan belonged to the PFLP and its cooks and waiters were Lebanese, left-wing militants from South Yemen, whilst there was a night club that was run by the Iraqi Communist Party¹⁶. However, in June 1979 a Kurdish Iraqi communist, who was a professor at Aden University, was assassinated in broad daylight by killers from the Baathist regime, disguised as diplomats. The police arrested them in their embassy, and in reprisal South Yemeni students in Iraq were arrested and then expelled from the country¹⁷.

South Yemen had become a “centre for revolution” which, in the first years of its existence was threatened by its brother and enemy the Arab Republic of Yemen and its allies on the Arab peninsula, which represented the “reactionary camp” allied to the United States. The regime in Aden defended itself by arming opposition movements in place in its most immediate neighbours – the Arab Republic of Yemen in the North and the Sultanate of Oman to the East. The Democratic National Front that led the struggle in North Yemen was based in Aden and its militants were organically linked to the YSP, initially in a secret manner, because for a long time the Front kept up the fiction of two different organisations.

South Yemen welcomed militants who had come to join in the guerilla war in Dhofar, from across the Arab peninsula. At the outset, with the Dhofar Liberation Front, the war had an essentially nationalist aim, then its ideological footprint and its geographical ambitions expanded to embrace both Marxism and the whole of the peninsula. As a consequence, its name changed, and after its revolutionary turn in 1968, it called itself the People’s Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf¹⁸. Although the guerilla war came to an end in 1975, posters of the female combatants of Dhofar, in khaki shorts

and curly hair, covered the walls of the many militant bedrooms in the 1980s. It is this image that can be found on the cover of the French translation of the novel by the Egyptian Sonallah Ibrahim. Through the figure of Warda, the name that he gave to his novel, Sonallah Ibrahim paid homage to these women in struggle and to the guerilla war in Dhofar.

Crossroads of the International Revolution

Starting in the 1970s, the growing power of the Palestinian resistance movements and the drift into violence of an extreme left party in Europe that made the anti-Zionist cause its own, turned Aden into a relay and crossroads for certain of these organisations. The links of Wadhi Haddad's "external operations" group, which gained autonomy from the Palestinian Liberation Front, with the German militants of the RAF, the Movement 2 June, and Revolutionary Cells (RZ), but also the Japanese Red Army, ETA, Danish and Italian groups, could [be anchored] in the sanctuary of South Yemen, where Wadih Haddad acted almost as he pleased. His privileged relations with the regime in Aden would have even caused annoyance in the leadership of PFLP, which considered it an inconsistency in its prerogatives and in the influence that it could exercise over the department of "external operations" and over the comrades in the SYP. Wadih Haddad was officially excluded from the PFLP in February 1976.

Wadih Haddad had begun his activities in Aden at the start of the 1970s. He had a villa in the Khormaskar quarter at his disposal. This villa was central in the set-up of his group and the training centre that was established- the camp at Ja'ar (although it is known under the name of the camp in Aden) - was most important. Ja'ar is situated in the region of Abyan, sixty kilometres to the East of Aden. Since the 1990s, this small locale has been one of the fiefs of jihadists in Yemen, most notably the Aden-Abyan army, which carried out several attacks and tourist kidnappings. It is difficult to imagine that between 1971 and 1990 it housed the military and ideological training camp of Wadih Haddad's group, which had made itself internationally famous for its plane hijackings and by the kidnapping of ministers for foreign affairs at OPEC in Vienna 1975¹⁹. It was in this camp that the Venezuelan Illich Ramirez Sanchez alias Carlos the Jackal, Fusako Shigenobu, the leader of the Japanese Red Army, Hagop Hagopian (his real name was Bedros Ohanessian), founder of the ASALA (the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), Germans from the Red Army Faction, the Movement 2 June and Revolutionary Cells trained alongside combatants from Palestine, Lebanon, Eritrea, some Italians (excluding the Red Brigades), Iranians, Turks, Basques, Dutch, Nicaraguans and Salvadoreans...

The camp could only accommodate forty or so people at once for military and political training. The regime was harsh and Wadih Haddid was a tough boss, concerned to maintain strict discipline. He gave responsibility for this to Carlos whilst he was on a journey to Beirut and Nairobi²⁰. The senior member of Movement 2 June, Hans-Joachim Klein, who participated in the hostage taking in Vienna, offers an acid testimony which dents the image of Wadih Haddid, according to Abou Hani (father of Hani). Without being certain (because when writing his memoirs, and in fear of reprisals, he would not say

which Arab countries had welcomed him), one might think that he is describing the camp at Ja'ar when he says "...the leaders at [camp name removed]...Abou Hani was always coming and going - profited from all the pleasures that the area could offer. That went from going to the cinema to visiting the nightclubs, passing via banquets at the hotel. And they had in their pockets what no soldier had in theirs: cash. In any case, these privileges were only accorded to Johnny and I, and in a more limited way to the other leaders of the RAF, of 2 June and the CZ. The other members of the West German guerrilla groups had as little entitlement to them as our Palestinian comrades"²¹.

Aden had thus become the logistical base for German activists because of the links that united them with the PFLP. "Revolutionary solidarity" was established on the basis of an unequal exchange, most notably with the militants of the Revolutionary Cells. The latter carried out terrorist operations for Wadih Haddid in return for arms, money and training. Several German activists lost their lives in this way through the hijacking of planes. Beirut and Baghdad constituted other relays in relation of client to boss or mercenary to commander, but Aden presented major advantages. Its friendly regime was less concerned about diplomatic considerations than was Iraq, for example, it provided passports (often diplomatic ones, most notably for Carlos), its isolation, its distance from the front line with Israel, and Soviet protection made it a sanctuary that was all the more precious, given that its support for the Palestinian cause had an affective colouring (interpersonal links) as well as a radical orientation (the PFLP and the DFPLP, rather than Fatah). Thus in the 1972 the South Yemen government facilitated an operation carried out by PFLP commandoes who "stole" a speedboat from the port at Aden so as to attack the tanker Coral Sea, which was heading towards Israel, near the Isle of Perim.

It would seem that the city gained its function as a relay not from international commerce but from a new type of traffic, that of hijacked planes, which the PFLP became specialists in during the 1970s. Its airport welcomed the first hijacked plane in February 1972, when combatants involved in "external operations" hijacked a Lufthansa plane at New Delhi and redirected it to Aden. The German government paid a ransom of 5 million dollars, and the unit gave itself up to the Yemeni authorities, who released them shortly afterwards. Two years later, a mixed unit of Japanese Red Army and PFLP guerillas captured the Japanese Embassy in Kuwait in an assault and seized several hostages, including the ambassador, and joined up with another Japanese-Palestinian group that had come from Singapore where it had taken the passengers of a ferry-boat hostage. A Japan Airlines plane took them from Kuwait to South Yemen, where they disappeared. However, hijackers from Wadih Haddad's group were turned away from Aden on two occasions. In 1974, after taking hostages from the French Embassy in the Hague, three Japanese guerillas who left the Netherlands on a plane for to Aden were refused permission to disembark by the South Yemen authorities. The Syrians agreed to take the plane. During the hijacking of a Lufthansa Boeing on the Palma-Frankfurt route in October 1977 by a Palestinian commando outfit calling for the liberation of RAF prisoners and two Palestinians imprisoned in Turkey, Aden was to be the final destination of the plane. It landed but was not given permission to stay and took off for Mogadishu, where a German military unit launched an attack on it, killing all the hostage takers, with the exception of the Lebanese guerilla Souhayla Al-Sayih. This action was to

have been the last action by Wadih Haddad of any size. It gave the tendency of the SYP led by Abd al-Fattah Ismaïl the opportunity to overthrow Salem Ali Rubayy, who gave Wadih Haddad the permission to get the plane to land in Aden²². He was executed in 1978.

The city was a refuge for militants being pursued across Europe or elsewhere, and they found in South Yemen a chance for recovery in anonymity or a brief reprieve before going back to clandestinity in their own countries. Several member of the Japanese Red Army, who had escaped from the bloody purges of February 1972 and the waves of arrests carried out by the police, passed through Aden.

Two Germans took part with Carlos the Jackal in the taking hostages of ministers at OPEC in Vienna in December 1975, an operation that Black September claimed responsibility for, and which the Lebanese guerilla Kamal Khayr Beyk led. Kamal Khayr Beyk met Carlos one month before in Aden and the latter only agreed to take part after having got the agreement of Wadih Haddad²³. After the operation, Hans-Joachim Klein and Carlos made stopovers in Algeria and Libya, then took refuge in Aden. It was a bank in Aden that took the significant ransoms demanded from Iran and Saudi Arabia for the freeing of their two oil ministers, Jamshid Amouzegar and Ahmed Zaki Yamani. Wadi Haddad was the recipient. He called Carlos to his villa in Khormskar so that the latter could explain to him why he had disobeyed his order to execute the Iranian and Saudi ministers. He then enjoined him to return to the training camp at Ja'ar.

Of the six prisoners released in exchange for the freedom of the hostage Peter Lorenz, CDU politician from Berlin captured by the Movement 2 June in February 1975, five returned to South Yemen²⁴. There they rejoined Verena Becker, the "black fiancée" of the Movement 2 June, who had joined up with the RAF in Aden, where she took refuge that same year, before going back to Germany in 1977²⁵. In Aden during those years, one finds militants in flight such as Peter Jürgen Boock of the RAF, who took part in the kidnapping of Hans-Martin Schleyer, the president of the confederation of West-German employers in September 1977. Arrested in Yugoslavia in May 1978, he was expelled and went to South Yemen, where he stayed until the end of 1979²⁶. It was Aden that Carlos the Jackal took refuge in after the failure of hostage-taking episode at Entebbe airport in June 1976, where an Israeli commando unit carried out an assault on the Air France Airbus that had been hijacked by a group of Movement 2 June and PFLP guerrillas.

After the unification of Yemen in May 1990, but above all after the defeat of the SYP separatists in July 1994, Aden stopped being the refuge of internationalist desperadoes, who were no longer anything but simple mercenaries in retirement. In 1991, Syria expelled members of Carlos the Jackal's group, who went to South Yemen. They quickly returned to Damascus, from which they were sent first to Libya and then to Jordan. From there, Carlos was sent to Khartoum in 1993, where he was arrested the following year by French policemen²⁷. Johannes Weinrich, a member of Revolutionary Cells portrayed as the right hand man of Carlos, managed to stay hidden for a number of years in Aden, where he was finally arrested in June 1995. His extradition to West Germany undoubtedly marks the end of an era!

The 'Era of the Party'

Since 1994, the domination of the Sanaa regime over the provinces of South Yemen has been translated most notably by the nomination of senior civil servants from North Yemen into the majority of local administration and security posts. But it has also been translated by the despoilment of previously nationalized lands that have been handed out to the regime's devotees. The resentment of the populations of the South faced with the tight hold of Sanaa onto power and a Northern presence that is felt more and more as a new form of internal colonization is amplified by the gravity of the economic crisis, galloping inflation and high levels of unemployment. This situation of social desperation is a fertile soil in which separatist or federalist demands can grow.

In Aden, the ex-capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, a feeling of belonging to the city involves a confused and ambivalent nostalgia for the British period and that of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The first is synonymous with both occupation and repression but also with economic prosperity, social and political modernity, and the mixing of religions. The second, called the "era of the party" (*ayyâm al-hizb*)²⁸ refers as much to security and the uncontested supremacy of the State as to the absence of political and economic freedoms, and to a bloody struggle for power at the heart of the Yemeni Socialist Party. The date of 13th January 1986 is in this regard crucial, as it marks the inexorable decline of the PDRPY. Starting in this period, many women took to wearing the veil again and the men returned to the mosque, as if in expiation of the impiety and immorality – supposed or proven – of the ruling class.

Twenty-two years later, on January 13th 2008, a large demonstration brought together tens of thousands of people in Aden so as to erase the traces of discord, display the union of people in the South and to demand the end of the discriminatory measures of the Sanaa regime against the people. It was called the "Rally for Reconciliation" (*musâlaha*) and ended with violent incidents in which several soldiers and demonstrators died. This great "national" reconciliation constituted a pause from a whole series of inter-tribal and regional meetings which had been held in the previous months to bring an end to the vendettas. The latter were heavily repressed by the State during the socialist period (1967-1990) and have returned since unity.

((#30)) One of the most negative inheritances of the Socialist period, these fratricidal massacres of 13th January 1986 have, paradoxically become a symbol for the rallying and mobilization of a part of the population of the regions of the South, who are reappropriating the memory of the "era of the Party" again today, as a major component of its historical, social and cultural singularity. As all memory is selective, but also plural, it is at risk of varying as rapidly as the course of events and relations of force. The twenty-three years of socialism in South Yemen forms a memory caught tightly between the distant past of a Southern Arabia under British protectorate, and two decades of a unified Yemen whose unstable present seems to give back a bit of nostalgic luster to twinkling past of the red star.

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- [1] From 1967 to 1970, South Yemen called itself the People's Republic of South Yemen, becoming the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in November 1970, with the adoption of its first Constitution.
- [2] The war of May-July 1994 saw the separatists of the YSP struggling against the Unionist troops of the Sanaa regime. Entrenched in Aden, on May 21st 1994, the separatists proclaimed the (ephemeral) existence of the Democratic Republic of Yemen, with at its head Ali Salem Al-Bid, the signatory of the accords with Ali Abdallah Saleh, President of the Arab Republic of Yemen from 1978 to 1990 and President of Yemen since.
- [3] The testimony of Habib Abdurab, who shared his memories of Aden in the 1970s with me.
- [4] Fawwaz Traboulsi *Wu'ûd 'Aden* [The Promises of Aden] (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 2000) p.87
- [5] See Fawwaz Traboulis *Sourat al fatâ bi-l-ahmar. Ayyâm fî-s-silm wa-l-harb* [Portrait of a Young Man as a Red. Days of Peace and War] (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1997) p.76.
- [6] This organization became the Yemen Socialist Party in 1975, during its sixth congress.
- [7] Habib Abdurab *La reine étripée* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998) pp.13-14.
- [8] Helen Lackner *PDR Yemen. Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985) p.43.
- [9] See Karim Mroué *Karim Mourouwwé yatadhakkar. Fî mâ yachbahu as-sîra* (Memoirs and Autobiography). Interviews with Saqr Abou Fakhr (Damascus, Dar al-Madâ, 2002) p. 311 - 312.
- [10] Helen Lackner op. cit. p.36.
- [11] Georges Hawi *Al-Harb, wa-l-muqawama wa-l-hizb* [War, Resistance, the Party] (Beirut, Dar an-Nahar, 2005) p.35
- [12] Georges Hawi op. cit. p.128 - 129.
- [13] Georges Hawi op. cit. p.130 - 131.
- [14] Lucine Taminian 'Rimbaud's House in Aden, Yemen: Giving Voice(s) to the Silent Poet' *Cultural Anthropology* vol.13 no.4 1988 p.464.
- [15] Lucine Taminian op. cit. p.474.
- [16] Fawwaz Traboulsi *Wu'ûd 'Aden* op. cit. p.46 and 89.
- [17] Helen Lackner op. cit. p.84
- [18] See Fawwaz Traboulsi *Sourat al-fatâ bi-l-ahmar* .op. cit. p. 74
- [19] Wadi' Haddad died of leukemia on the 28th March 1978 in a hospital in East Berlin.
- [20] Information on the camp is taken from Ghassan Charbel *Asrâr al-sundûq al-aswad* (The Secrets of the Black Box) (Beirut, Riyad El-Rayyes Books, 2008).
- [21] Hans-Joachim Klein *La mort mercenaire. Témoignage d'un ancien terroriste ouest-allemand* J. and B. Balard (trans.) (Paris: Seuil: 1980) pp.268 - 70.
- [22] Ghassan Charbel op.cit.p.126
- [23] Ghassan Charbel op. cit. p.226
- [24] Anne Steiner and Loïc Debray *RAF. Guérilla urbaine en Europe occidentale* (Paris: Editions de l'échappée, 2006) p.60.

[25] Given a reprieve in 1989 after twelve years in prison, Verena Becker was charged in March 2010 with the murder of the Director of Public Prosecutions, General Bulback on 17th April 1977

[26] Anne Steiner and Loïc Debray op. cit. p.131

[27] Christophe Chiclet 'L'adieu aux armes' *Confluences Méditerranée* no.18, Summer 1996, pp.147 - 149

[28] *Ayyâm al-hizb* literally signifies the days (*ayyâm*) of the Party (*al-hizb*).

Notes
