

People's Republic of Yemen (PRY)

Rice

British influence in what is retrospectively called South Yemen lasted far beyond the independence of the North Yemen area that would become the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). In 1965, nationalist groups began the expulsion of British occupiers, and independence was declared in 1967. Qahtan Muhammad al-Shaabi served as the first president of the Republic, with the National Liberation Front (NLF, former guerilla nationalist force that had expelled the British) as his political party and SOLS.

In 1969, far-left elements of the NLF removed al-Shaabi from power and installed Salim Rubayyi Ali as the new president. Because Geddes codes the PRY as a single-party system for its entire existence, this was not coded as a SOLS change even though it was competing factions of the party (Note: we have contacted to our regional expert to ask whether the factional divisions between the leftists and rightists in this single-party system were considerably extreme and should be considered as composing separate SOLSs. Our regional expert told us that while it is true that the factional divisions were deep and based along tribal line, it is difficult to define how much this should be seen as a real change in SOLS. Therefore, we keep our coding (i.e., single-party with no SOLS changes).

Rubayyi served as the leader of the PRY until his execution in 1978 by the more leftist wing of his party, which had gained control and reorganized into the United Political Organization of the National Front (UPONF) in 1975, and was transitioning into a full-fledged communist party.¹ This is not coded as a SOLS change, because the party was clearly in charge of picking the leader rather than vice versa.

After his death by firing squad in July 1978, Rubayyi was succeeded by Ali Nasir Muhammad Husani. When Nasir backed off from conflict with North Yemen, the party split and violent clashes occurred. The UPONF became the Hizb al Ishtiraki al Yaman (HIY) (also Yemeni Socialist Party - YSP) under the leadership of Husani in October (Ishiyama 2005). Nasir was ousted in December of 1978, and Abdul Fattah Ismail was placed in the chairmanship with the approval of the organization now calling itself the Socialist Party of Yemen (HIY).

Ismail served the chairmanship until 1980, when he resigned and went into exile. This prompted the return of Nasir, who served the HIY until 1986. A month of intense battle between the two men's respective forces occurred in January of that year that ultimately saw Ismail killed and Nasir exiled from the country. The party chose to install Haidar Abu Bakr al-Attas as their new leader, and he would be in charge of the country until its unification with the YAR in 1990.

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¹ The NLF merged with the local PDU and Ba'thists groupings and formed the UPONF (United Political Organisation of the National Front) (Al-Hamdani, 1985, p.14).

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Coded by Graham West June 27, 2010

Revised by Eelco van der Maat 26/10/2011

Revised by Michaela Mattes 12/17/2011

Updated by Naoko Matsumura 06/10/2012

Revised by Bryan Rooney 10/17/2012

Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) 05/24/2014