

DEMOCRATIC YEMEN

Dates of Elections: 16 to 18 December 1978

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for the first popularly-chosen members of Parliament since Democratic (South) Yemen gained independence in 1967. National legislators had previously been appointed.

Characteristics of Parliament

In accordance with 1978 amendments to the 1970 Constitution*, the unicameral Parliament of Democratic Yemen, the Supreme People's Council, henceforth consists of 111 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

Every citizen of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, of either sex, who has, by election day, reached the age of 18 has the right to vote. Deprived of this same privilege are persons who have lost their political and civil rights because they have been adjudged guilty of "deeds against the struggle of the working people". The right to vote is moreover suspended with regard to persons that a court has declared incapable of taking decisions, the mentally sick and those detained in prisons or investigation centres.

Electoral registers are compiled on the governorate and district levels and frequently revised. Voting is not compulsory.

All qualified electors who have reached the age of 24 on polling day are eligible for Parliament. Furthermore, the Electoral Law stipulates that candidates must be chosen from among persons (a) with progressive stands in political and professional life prior to the revolution and since the establishment of the national democratic regime, (b) who lead exemplary personal lives and (c) who can read and write. Since members of Parliament are not considered professional legislators, the question of incompatibility of office does not arise.

Candidates are nominated by the mass organizations which exist in the Republic. For election purposes, the country is divided into 80 constituencies, the number of representatives allotted to each depending on its population. Each elector has as many votes as there are seats to be filled in his constituency. In each constituency, those candidates who have obtained the greatest number of votes are declared elected.

By-elections are held to fill Council seats which fall vacant between general elections.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 10-11.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 30 July 1978, Prime Minister Ali Nasser Mohammed announced that the first general elections to be held since Democratic Yemen gained independence in 1967 would take place to a Parliament which would replace the 101-member provisional Supreme People's Council designated by the Supreme Command of the National Liberation Front in 1971*.

Some 175 candidates competed for the parliamentary seats. All were approved at meetings of mass organizations held in residential areas, factories, co-operatives, corporations, Government departments and units of military forces. Each candidate at that time explained the role he intended to play in carrying out and implementing his party's and the Government's economic and social plans; his campaign expenses were borne by the sponsoring mass organization.

At its first session on 27 December, the newly-elected Council appointed an 11-member Presidium to replace the five-man Presidential Council (Executive) and elected Mr. Abdel Fattah Ismail, Secretary-General of the newly-formed Yemen Socialist Party (which superseded the National Front) as its Chairman (and thus Head of State). Mr. Mohammed remained Prime Minister, forming a new Government on 27 December.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Supreme People's Council*

Number of registered electors.	654,685
Voters.	597,550(91.27%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	763
Valid votes.	596,787

PC^{al} Group K ^

Yemen Socialist Party. **III**

*2. Distribution of Members of the Supreme People's Council
according to Professional Category*

Intellectuals and civil servants.72
Workers and farmers.29
Members of the armed forces.10

• See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections V(1970-1971)*, p. 16.

3. *Distribution of Members of the Supreme People's Council
according to Sex*

Men.104
Women.7
	111

4. *Distribution of Members of the Supreme People's Council
according to Age Group*

24-30 years.18
30-40.64
40-50.25
Over 50.4
	111