

Yemeni Arabic transcript:

ل: كانت شمال و جنوب و اتحررنا و كل شي الشماليين عايشيين حياتهم و الجنوبيين عايشيين حياتهم . وبعدين كنا كانت أيام الحزب كنا نسميه الحزب لأنه كان الحزب الحاكم... من كلمة حزب.. حزب يعني الحزب الحاكم، مش عارفة أيش كان إسم الحزب الحاكم، بس كان لنحنا علمنا و كان لهم علمهم.. كان لنحنا نشيدنا الوطني و كان لهم نشيدهم. يعني كان نحنا بلادين منفصلتين. كانوا يسمونه اليمن الشمالي، و الجمهورية الديمقراطية الجنوبية.

وكانت مختلفة تماما. يعني في الشمال مرة متعلقين، مرة يعني تحسبهم مع نفوسهم. بتلاقيهم ملتزمين مرة بالدين و البنات مفروض مايدرسوش.. حتى العيال مايدرسوش.. يعني الدراسة التعليم آخر شي. أهم شي العادات و التقاليد و الدين و كانوا يعني مرة ملتزمين. في الجنوب العكس تماما. لأنه بالذات الإتحاد السوفييتي، أول ما أنفصلنا بدأنا نعيش حياتنا وكل شي بعدين الإتحاد السوفييتي بدأ يتعاون مع الحزب وكان يعطي منح .. يعني أغلب الطلبة اليمنيين، العدنيين بالذات، تحصيلهم في روسيا يدرسوا. اللي يدرسوا طب واللي يدرسوا هندسة، ومش أنهم يدرسوا بس أغلبهم يروحوا يدرسوا ويرجعوا بعد عشر سنين، يعني حدود عشر سنين. ويرجعوا وعقليتهم كلها عقلية أوروبيا. و بعدين عشان كدة لأنه تأثير الإتحاد السوفييتي.. يعني أتأثرنا أول شي بالإستعمار لبريطاني و بعدين بالإتحاد السوفييتي، يعني كانوا كل الناس اللي يمشوا في الشارع مثلا الحريم يمشوا و مافيش حجاب.. ماکانش في في حجاب بالخالص. ماکانش في قران، .. ماکانش يدخلوا القرآن للجنوب، محد كان عارف أيش الدين مسلمين بس بالإسم. يعني الوحدة إذا تلبس حجاب بيضحكوا عليها. وكل شي وكان النظام كله مختلط وكل شي. يعني دحين لو باقول مثلا لو مصر ولا سوريا، صح أنهم مايلبسوش الحجاب بس في عندهم قرآن بس عارفين الدين.. نحنا كنا مرة مغششين علينا كانوا مش عارفين حاجة. يعني زي ما تقولي اشتراكيين. كانوا يسمونه النظام الاشتراكي. الاشتراكيين أحيانا توصل بهم الدرجة.. إنهم يكونوا مش اشتراكيين حتى.. لدرجة أكثر من الاشتراكية درجة يعني مرة على الجنب الثاني.

بعدين بدأوا الناس يتحظروا، بالذات بعدما افتك الإتحاد السوفييتي. أول شي بدأ الشمال والجنوب قالوا لازم نتحد.. بدؤا يعملوا اجتماعات بين رئيس الشمال علي عبدالله صالح ده دحين رئيسنا ورئيس الجنوب علي سالم البيض. و بدؤا يعملوا بدؤا يعني مؤتمرات وبتكلموا مع بعض واتفاقيات وكل شي و بعدين اتوحدنا 22 مايو عام 1990 و علم واحد ونشيد واحد ورئيس واحد.

English translation:

L: Yemen had two separate parts: the North and the South; both of them got their independence and were living a decent life. In the South it was the time of the *hizb*, which means the ruling party. I don't know what the name of that party was, but it's usually called *al-hizb*. The South had its own flag and anthem that were different from the ones of the North. They were called Northern Yemen and the Democratic Republic of South Yemen¹.

The two parts were completely different. People in the north were very conservative and very religious. They didn't let many of their sons or daughters go to school; education didn't have much importance. The customs and traditions occupied a large part of their lives. In the southern part it was the contrary. Once the South got its independence, the Soviet Union started to help the *hizb*. The Soviet Union used to give scholarships to study in Russia for the Yemeni students, especially the ones from the South. Some students took medicine and others took engineering; many of them kept studying for about 10 years. Thus, they came back with a different, westernized mentality. I mean people of the South were influenced by the British occupation and then by the Soviet Union. Women would walk in the streets without a *hijab*²; there was not such a thing called *hijab*. People didn't have any *Qur'ans*, because they weren't brought [in]to the

¹ They are officially called: The Yemeni Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

² Hijab: the Islamic headscarf that Muslim women wear.

country. If a woman wore a *hijab* she would be teased. The educational and public systems were all mixed-gender. I mean now in Egypt and Syria not many people wear *hijab*, but they have the Qura'an and they know their religion. However, people of the South didn't know anything; they were in delusion. I mean it was a socialist system that sometimes could go way too far with its ideas.

Once the Soviet Union was destroyed, people started to understand. First the North and South thought of unifying. Many conferences were held between the president of the North – who is the current president Ali Abdullah Saleh – and the president of the South, Salim al-Beidh. Some agreements were made and the two parts were unified on the 22nd of May, 1990. They made one flag, one anthem and had one president for the whole nation.

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