

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA

The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia

Identity Maintenance
or Assimilation?



Edited by

Abdullah Ibrahim Abushouk & Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim

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Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk
Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim



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On the cover (top to bottom):

- 1) The city of Hadhramaut, Yemen. Used by permission of the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Yemen.
- 2) and F Genealogical tree of the Alawi Sayyids of Hadhramaut. Courtesy of Dr. Anne Katrine Bang, University of Bergen, Norway.
- 3) Hadhrami seamen. Courtesy of Prof. Daniel M. Varisco, Hofstra University, USA.

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CHAPTER TEN

SAYYID SHAYKH AHMAD AL-HĀDĪ'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN MALAYA

Hafiz Zakariya

Then came to our eastern countries the Europeans from the north winds [...]. And what happened to all of us here? We were all silent. Then, we surrendered to them our dignity, our laws, and our properties and our national pride!

Sayyid Shaykh and Ahmad al-Hādī, *Demand for the Improvement of the Native Sons*

The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the *salafī*-inspired reform movements in various parts of Southeast Asia. Kiyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan and the Muhammadiyah movement led such reform in Java, whereas a group of reformists, spearheaded by Haji Rasul, Haji 'Abdullah Ahmad, and Shaykh Jamil Jambik, carried out similar reform in West Sumatra.¹ In colonial Malaya, the *salafī*² ideas found a following among a group of concerned Muslim scholars. These ideas were brought to Malaya primarily through reform-minded students/scholars who had studied in the Middle East, and the circulation of *salafī* writings such as *al-Manār* that reached audiences in Malaya.³ Like the *salafī* figures in the Middle East, the primary concern of the local reformists was the backwardness of Malay-Muslim

¹ For further details on Dahlan and Muhammadiyah, see Noor, *Modernist Muslim*, 73–82. A standard account on Islamic reform in West Sumatra is provided by Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra 1927–1933*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971.

² Technically, the word *salafīyya* is derived from its Arabic root, *salafa*, to precede. In Arabic lexicons, the noun *salaf* refers to the virtuous forefathers, and the *salafī* is a person who relies on the Qur'an and Sunna as the sole sources of religious rulings. While most Muslim scholars agree that the first three generations of the Muslims are the *salafis*, the issue of who is considered a member of the *salaf* after those earlier generations remains contested. In this study 'Abduh's stream of thinking is designated as the *salafīyya* because it has become known so. Furthermore, it called for a return to the practises of the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-sālih*).

³ For further details, see Abushouk, Chapter viii.