The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia
Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?

Edited by
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 women. Courtesy of Prof. Daniel M. Varisco, Hofstra University, USA.

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CHAPTER TEN

SAYYID SHAYKH AHMAD AL-HĀDI’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!

Savvid Shaykh and Ahmad al-Hādi, 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. Kiawai Haji Ahmad Dālān 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 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.2 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 Dālān and Muhammadiyah, see Noer. Modernist Muslim, 73–82. A standard account on Islamic reform in West Sumatra is provided by Taufik Abdullah, Schools and Politics: The Kanun Muda Movement in West Sumatra 1927–1933, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971.
2 For further details, see Abushouk, Chapter viii.

3 In Arabic lexicons, the noun salafī refers to the virtuous forefathers, and the salafī is a person who relies on the Qurā’n and Sunna as the sole sources of religious rulings. While most Muslim scholars agree that the first three generations of the Muslims are the salafīs, the issue of who is considered a member of the salaf after those earlier generations remains contested. In this study, ‘Abū ‘Abdullāh’s stream of thinking is designated as the salafī because it has become known so. Furthermore, it called for a return to the practices of the pious ancestors al-salaf al-sālih. 