

WOMEN AND HEALTH

There is scarcely any need to prove that woman's concern with health, on an individual or a general level, has always been one of her chief occupations. As a wife and mother, as a nurse, midwife or social worker, she has always had the responsibility of caring for the husband's and the child's physical well-being, for the sick in her home and in hospitals, and for the wounded on battlefields.

According to medical history, women, since the earliest times, have practiced medicine as herb doctors or trained physicians. In spite of men's competition, they continued this practice through medieval and modern times. Nowadays medicine is one of the most popular professions for women. In Russia their number exceeds that of male doctors, and in the Arab countries, according to an article published by *Al-Majal*¹, they form, together with women engineers, 23 per cent of the entire total of physicians and engineers in Egypt, Syria and Morocco.

"Most health care workers are women, from head cooks to bottle providers, they are the largest group users of health services."

These lines were quoted by *WIN NEWS*², from an article reviewing "Women and Medicine" by Joyce Leeson and Judith Gray, published in the *British Medical Journal*, Feb. 17, 1979.

In many parts of the world, especially in Third World countries, children suffer from malnutrition and are threatened by death before 5 years of age. (See the article by Zafrullah Chowdhury on "The Mother and Child in Bangladesh", in *Asian Women*)³. Protecting children from malnutrition and starvation requires the protection of the family and, first of all, the mother, from poverty, ignorance and fear. It means providing women with education, employment and social security. It also means training them in family planning and securing their cooperation in preventing the population explosion which mainly threatens the Third World.

If the United Nations have lately been emphasizing the need for an evolution in women's role and for their wider participation in national development, it is in the all-important field of family planning that the need is most felt. Only a proper knowledge and practice of family planning can allow women enough time and energy for work and achievement outside their homes and for an adequate participation in national development.

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1. *Al-Majal*, No. 8, Nov. 1978.

2. *WIN NEWS*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 51.

3. May 1979, p. 1ff.

EDMA BAYOUTH

Edma Bayouth's name is not only linked to that of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Lebanon. It also recalls Lebanese social work at the stage when it tried to evolve into an organized or systematic activity based on study, inquiry, cooperation and dedication, four characteristics adopted by this militant woman who gave to extensive social work more than fifty years of her life and has become so identified with it that now, after two years of retirement, she maintains contact with her work, moved by the same enthusiasm that characterized her when she started it at the age of twenty.

Q: How did your interest in social work develop?

A: When I was a student in Sidon Girls' School, I was interested in helping the Armenian refugees and orphans who came to Lebanon after World War I. Later, when I joined the YWCA in Beirut to study secretarial work, I dedicated my free time to voluntary social work, when one day, Ruth Woodsmall, the director of the YWCA in the Middle East, at the time, asked me to conduct a study on the social institutions in Lebanon. During my investigations I became acquainted with the different social organizations that were active at the time, and realized how miserable the conditions of working girls and children were.

Q: When was the YWCA founded? Why?

A: In 1920, James Nicol, the director of the American Red Cross in Beirut, suggested the foundation of a YWCA center, similar to the one he visited in Istanbul. Later, two secretaries from the YWCA in Istanbul, Miss Morris and Miss Lack, came to Beirut to establish the center. James Nicol, then turned Jessy Taylor Memorial School into a center of activities for the YWCA. Miss Morris and Miss Lack coordinated with a local committee to organize a YWCA program which would meet the educational, recreational and spiritual needs of women.

The objectives of the YWCA were to help women grow in the knowledge and love of God, to involve a larger number of Lebanese women in active participation in the improvement of the status of women, and in arousing their interest in the social problems in Lebanon.

Q: What are some of the activities and accomplishments of the YWCA that you helped bring to light?

A: In 1930, after the study on the conditions of working girls and children was completed, the government assigned us as inspectors. A national committee, consisting of various groups and organizations, was set up after the initiation of "Child Labor Week," during which legislative, educational and nutritional needs and problems were discussed. The outcome was the initiation of a program



that aimed at:

- o Preventing child labor and sending young working children to school, but unfortunately, mothers got their children out of the school and sent them back to work.
- o Starting nutrition camps, where the working children were gathered, given a good medical examination and treatment for parasites, malnutrition and anemia.
- o Initiating night school courses for working girls and children in the industrial centers, where volunteers from the American University of Beirut used to teach them.

The YWCA was also involved in:

- o Providing special training for girls and women that enables them to find decent jobs.
- o Establishing an employment office.
- o Providing shelter, food and medication for war refugees.
- o Establishing a general committee that investigates the problems of young maids in Lebanon.

Q: What activities are dearest to you?

A: Working with teenage girl-reserves who grew into adult leaders through the years.

- o Watching the factory girls, who came to the night schools, develop new healthy attitudes towards work, employers, and better health habits, and their complete and positive response to the program and the dedicated staff of the YWCA.
- o Summer camps, especially at Dhour Shweir, where the girls were given the opportunity to be creative in all aspects.
- o Nutrition camps where we could see and feel the improved health condition of the poor children. Even their parents could not recognize them after they returned from the camps.

Q: What kind of training does the YWCA provide for its students?

A: Secretarial studies, interior design, home

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ALARMING FACTS ON POPULATION GROWTH IN ARAB COUNTRIES⁽¹⁾

"The Population of the Arab World is growing at an alarming three percent a year and, at the present rate, will double in about 20 years."

There are at present more than 150 million Arabs spread out over 21 independent Arab countries. This number is expected to reach about 300 million in the year 2000.

This rapid growth is not primarily provoked by a surge in the number of births. The chief cause is the dramatic fall in the death rate from 37 per 1000 in 1850 to 15 per 1000 in 1970. The dramatic fall is due to various reasons: fewer famine crises, less tribal warfare, improved agriculture systems and storage techniques. Other reasons are better sanitation and water supplies and the gradual introduction of modern medicine.

Most important among the causes of rapid population growth is the fall in infant mortality which shows a potential for further decline in most countries.

The population growth is one of the most acute problems to be handled by Arab states. It is in fact the chief problem of the developing regions of the world where the population is expected to rise from three billion in 1975 to five billions in the year 2000, while in developed regions only a slight increase will occur: from 1.1 billion in 1975 to 1.3 billion in 2000²

"With the present population growth rates, all resources have to be doubled every 20 to 30 years just to maintain the present standard of living."³ In the 1990s the world may have to face a shortage of food similar to the oil shortage in the 1970s.

In handling the situation, Arab states have adopted diverse policies. Three of them, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, which comprise about 40 percent of the total population of the Arab world, have decided that their population growth rates must be curbed. Population policy has been more successful in Egypt and Tunisia than in Morocco.

In other countries like Jordan, Algeria and Syria, active support of contraceptive services has been provided by governments, while in Sudan, North Yemen, South Yemen, Lebanon and Bahrain, governments have been less active along this line.

On the other hand, a few Arab countries feel the necessity of adopting a policy of accelerating population growth, either because they are thinly populated, as is the case of Iraq and Libya, or because the large proportion of non-nationals and oil wealth induce them to encourage higher birth rates. Such is the case of the Gulf countries, excluding Bahrain.

"The United Nations recognizes access to knowledge about family planning as a basic human right. National family planning associations, members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, were generally the first to provide organized family planning services, but till the early 1970s, the only governments to provide such services were Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The situation has improved over the last five years. Ten of the 21 Arab countries have IPPF member associations and 12 governments now provide some family-planning services" (The Middle East, p. 60). Family planning all over the Arab world is gaining ground and importance.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Chiefly condensed from "Running to Stand Still", (Population Revolution), published in the *The Middle East*, July 1979, no. 57, pp. 57-60.

(2) *WIN NEWS*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1979, p. 19.

(3) *The Middle East*, Ibid. p. 59.

(4) See *Al-Raida* no. 2, p. 10 and no. 3, p. 7.

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economics, hair dressing, knitting, dress making), adult classes of flower arrangement, languages, bridge. The YWCA also provides board and lodging for working women as well as day care centers.

Q: What urged the women to go to the YWCA to learn 40 years ago?

A: Those women found new alternatives to raising a family. Most of them graduated from high school and wanted to pursue a career. The YWCA provided them with new vocational training other than teaching and nursing. Moreover, women were already leaving their homes and seeking jobs in factories.

Q: How would you compare the Lebanese women of today with women 40 years ago?

A: In general, women nowadays, are more extravagant and like to attract attention and show off more than before. They spend a lot of money on their appearance, when there are more pressing needs, especially under the present conditions. Nonetheless, the Lebanese women have contributed to the financial stability of the family during the crisis. Cottage industry,

trading and opening fashion shops (which are mostly owned by women) are some of the means which the Lebanese women have used to help generate income and participate in stabilizing the Lebanese economy.

Q: What are your wishes and hopes for the YWCA?

A: I hope that the YWCA would re-establish its work with the teenagers and youth along with its present vocational training. I know that it would be coming soon due to its effective and dedicated leadership.

Now, after two years of retirement, Edma Bayouth still feels the urge to go out and help people. Different groups are getting in touch with her to re-organize an adult literacy program.

The depth of her experience with people and the richness of her social activities even before she became the director of the YWCA in Lebanon, assert the importance and fruitfulness of organized social work if it is carried out with faith and dedication.

Interview by Najla Husni (IWSAW)

WHAT FAMILY PLANNING MEANS

Family-planning means the possibility for couples to plan the number of their children and to space out their births. It also means the ability to obtain the necessary information and proper knowledge about this subject.

In 1968 the International Human Rights Conference, held in Tehran and grouping more than 110 states, unanimously proclaimed the right of every couple to practice family planning.

Since then, the term has acquired wider connotations because it became involved with the process of ensuring the happiness of the family by effecting a balance between the number of its members and the means which ensure for them a respectable standard of living. In this sense, family planning is a basic factor in creating a healthy, educated and adequately cultured generation.

Family-planning is also an important factor in protecting the mother's and the child's health from the harm caused by frequent pregnancies.

Besides the guidance that family planning can provide concerning the number and spacing of children, it can also be a source of help to childless couples by giving them proper information concerning the causes and treatment of sterility.

Because of its close relationship with demographic conditions within the general scheme of social, cultural and economic resources in each country, family-planning has lately been acquiring a growing importance in both developed and developing countries. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), who has offices in London and New York, comprises 81 states with a family-planning association in each.

ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTH ⁽¹⁾

A seminar on "Another Development in Health," organized in June 1977 at the Dag Hammarskjöld Center at Uppsala, Sweden, declared that the crisis in health care "is not limited to the Third World but is becoming increasingly evident in the industrialized countries as well." It was made clear that development based on economic growth is not a guarantee of general health and welfare unless it is man-centered and works to improve the quality of life that man is leading.

A new definition of health was proposed: "It is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely absence of disease and illness."⁽²⁾

New needs for development in health were expounded by the seminar participants, representing mainly those of the Third World but also including those of industrialized countries.

The following are some of the important remarks and problems discussed by the seminar group:

1. Health-planners, who have been propounding the post-war model of the Western health-service delivery systems in the Third World countries, have disregarded the fundamentally different cultural, social, political, geographical and economic settings, as well as the different patterns of health and disease.
2. The maldistribution of health services which are concentrated in urban areas and wanting in rural ones.
3. The insufficient number of health-care workers, their recruitment, education and training which tend to alienate them from the people and prevent them from

gaining a proper understanding of their needs.

4. The health-cost explosion caused by high-technology care and the demand for accordingly specialized personnel.

It was agreed that modern medicine has failed to fulfil all that people expected from it. For example, the role of immunization and anti-biotics has not been as crucial as often thought. In short, **medicine can no longer be seen as one of the most fundamental causes of good health.** A change of emphasis and perspectives in health policies is needed, but this change needs careful consideration and planning which takes the socio-cultural factors into account.

Recommendations & Conclusions

The idea of involving the community in health questions was emphasized. The people in general should be given the opportunity to express their needs and decide their health-care priorities.

"The people" means the entire population of a community, specifically the underprivileged and the underserved, whose rights have often been usurped by the class which controls political and economic power.

Improvement of health status is a part of the overall improvement in people's political, economic and social status. It is questionable whether vaccination on a malnourished population can have a significant effect.

Better knowledge of the community's health culture, health behavior, appropriate technologies, delivery systems and agencies will help in finding better alternative methods of health care.

Technology should be subservient to people's needs. The same may be said of training and professional attitudes which must undergo a change serving the same goal.

Better health in a country's population is an expression of social justice. It should be a permanently ongoing event in any society which has set the objective of realizing itself in progress.

(1) This article is based on material published in *Development Dialogue*, a journal of international development cooperation published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, 1, 1978.

(2) Goran Starky, "Towards another Development in Health," *Development Dialogue* *ibid.* p.9. Cf the following definition: "Good health needs to be defined in terms of the harmonious development of the individual's personality," quoted by Etienne Berthet, in *World Health* magazine, May 1979, p. 23.

FAMILY PLANNING IN LEBANON



*Dr. Adnan Mroweh
LFPA President*

The Lebanese Family Planning Association (LFPA) was founded in 1969. It is one of nine associations established in countries of the Middle East and North Africa between 1965 and 1971, and affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The nine countries are: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Sudan, Morocco, Afghanistan, Iraq and Cyprus. The Family Planning Associations of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Democratic Republic joined in 1976.

The activities of the LFPA have consisted of the following:

1. Counselling the ministries concerned with family-planning and the social organization of Lebanon regarding the amendment of old laws and the creation of new ones leading to the evolution and welfare of the Lebanese family.
2. Providing the Lebanese family with necessary services in the following fields:
 - a. Preparation of field studies about family status, causes of sterility and high birth rates, treatment of problems derived from these conditions.
 - b. Creating guidance centers or clinics for parents and couples, in cooperation with the local administrations.
 - c. Creating family-planning centers outside the regular clinics.
 - d. Training social workers in family planning.
3. Participation in international family-planning activities through a) affiliation with IPPF, b) close cooperation with the various organizations concerned with the problem.

Field Study in 1970-71(2)

A comprehensive study made in 1970 and published in 2 volumes, covered the following fields:

1. The demographic, social, cultural and economic status of the Lebanese family, and how it influences the parents' attitude toward family-planning.
2. The amount of information within the family about contraceptives, their uses and the response they receive.
3. The status of pregnancy, abortion and child birth in Lebanon.

(2) A sampling demographic study in 2 vols. (Arabic), entitled: *Al-Ustra fi-Lubnan*, (The Family in Lebanon), prepared and published in Beirut, June 1970.

(3) Average fertility: proportion of live births to the total number of females between 15 and 49.
Average birth: proportion of births to the average number of inhabitants in a certain year.

The average percentage of fertility in Lebanon in 1970 reached 131 per thousand while the present average percentage of births was about 27,3 per thousand, i.e. about the same proportion given in the U.N. Demographic Year of 1970.⁽³⁾

The birth rate in Lebanon is a bit lower than in some other Arab countries where it fluctuates between 40 and 50 per thousand, while in industrialized countries it varies from 15 to 18 per thousand.⁽⁴⁾

The study concludes that a lowering of the average of births and fertility in any country depends on the degree of modernization and economic development achieved by that country. This condition presupposes a high degree of industrialization and technological progress; ensuring a higher standard of living for citizens, a higher individual income, better health conditions, a more effective participation of women in development, raising the standard of education and intensifying the means of information and mass media.⁽⁵⁾

Family Planning Services in and Outside the Clinics

The LFPA has established sixteen regular family-planning centers or clinics distributed in the five administrative districts of Lebanon: 6 in Beirut, 4 in Mt. Lebanon, 1 in the Bekaa, 3 in the South, 2 in the North.

It has also worked to establish other centers for family planning service outside the regular clinics.

In June 1978, the Association obtained from the Municipal Council of Beirut an agreement by which the family-planning services of the LFPA would form a part of the services offered to the citizens by the General Health Department of the Council, without any additional expenses incurred by the beneficiaries.

The Association also agreed to offer free family-planning training to employees in Beirut municipal clinics and health centers, to provide them with contraceptives and help in administering them.

LFPA Information Media

Between 1970 and 1979 the Association organized several conferences on varied topics related to family-planning.

Information sessions brought together leaders of different organizations who were informed about LFPA's aims and activities.

Contacts with the general public included television sessions, radio broadcasts, newspaper publicity, posters and publication of reports and monthly newsletters.

Round table conferences were constituted by groups of Lebanese youth discussing a number of social problems. One of them was a conference held at Beit Meri in November 1972, which discussed family planning and its relation to personal status. The following recommendations were submitted by the members:

1. Fixing a minimum age for marriage.

According to the ECWA Demographic & Related Socio-Economic Data Sheets, no. 2, Beirut, Jan. 1978, the crude birth rate per thousand in Lebanon was 34.4 in 1970, 33.0 in 1975.

(4) *Al-Ustra fi Lubnan*, vol. 1, pp. 139-141.

(5) Information in this and subsequent articles is obtained from LFPA recent publications and monthly newsletter *al-Ustra* issued in July and August 1979.

2. Requiring a health certificate from candidates for marriage.
3. Defining the degree of blood ties which does not hinder intermarriage between relatives.
4. Encouraging tendencies and opinions that discourage polygamy on the ground that it infringes the principle of justice.
5. Working for a legal recognition of the right to adopt children and the right of every child to have a family name.
6. Working to the effect of entrusting divorce cases to legal authorities which would permit it only in dire necessity.
7. Supporting all efforts that contribute to arouse woman's awareness and ensure her participation in family planning activities and other forms of social development.

Conference on Demographic Policies

An important conference on demographic policies in Lebanon took place May 12-14, 1977 in Beirut. It was attended by a large audience including representatives from both the public and the private sector. Several papers were read and discussions conducted on demography and development, population distribution in Lebanon, industrial concentration and its influence on demographic agglomeration. The suggestions and recommendations of this conference were reported in *Al-Raida*, Sept. 1977, no. 2, p. 11.

The Societies' Day

Another important conference was "The Societies Day" which grouped men and women representatives of private organizations on December 2, 1978, to discuss family planning issues which resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Coordination of activities of the societies represented at the Conference.
2. Supporting the claim of LFPA regarding the encouragement of family-planning activities in Lebanon and the abolition of laws that obstruct the use of contraceptive methods.
3. The creation of a new board of social welfare directors, capable of drawing a modern social plan for the future and of putting the plan into practice.

Training Sessions

Following the idea that "people's health lies in people's hands," training sessions were held by LFPA for the workers' syndicate leaders in 1971 and for women field workers at Zahrani (South Lebanon) in four successive years, 1974-1979. (See *Al-Raida* no. 2, Sept. 1977, p. 11).

At Mishrif (Mt. Lebanon), a training session for youth leaders was held May 25-27, 1979. Lectures were presented by five social leaders on family-planning in the national context, family laws and family-planning, social leadership and management, and woman's role in promoting social evolution.

The following important recommendations were finally submitted by the participants:

1. The topic of population studies and family-planning is the problem of our time especially in developing countries and should be the principal concern of today's youth because of its direct impact on their status, their future and their ambitions.

2. The Session members emphasize the necessity of adopting a systematic population policy by the State. A regular demographic survey should be made every year to serve as a basis for development and construction projects in Lebanon. The Lebanese Family Planning Association could take the initiative of collecting any available statistics and current periodicals which may be adequately and properly utilized for the purpose of effecting the survey.
3. The State should be required to issue laws asserting the right of parents to know about family-planning technique and receive the services they need in this respect.
4. Sex education as a part of sociological studies and family relations should be included in school and college curricula.

Training Sessions for Women Fieldworkers

This session took charge of giving a three-week training program to 30 women volunteer fieldworkers who offered their family-planning services in the Zahrani and Nabatiyyeh districts of South Lebanon.

The session lasted for three weeks of July 1979. It included lectures and workshop training in management, health care, family-planning information, first-aid, cooperative activities, rural development unit, budgeting and role of economy in family-planning.

About the relation between economy and family planning, Mr. M. Bizri, one of the speakers, gave a lecture which is condensed in the following paragraphs.

After showing the relationship between economics and sociology, the lecturer defined the role played by the population growth in effecting general welfare. If the rate of the former exceeds the rate of national income, the result will be a continuous decrease of individual income and, consequently, a lowering of the standard of living. To meet the requirements of population pressure, imports will have to increase while exports will proportionately decrease. National income will consequently suffer if the population increase is not balanced by a corresponding increase in production.

What connection is there between the economic status of the family and the number of children planned-aid by the parents?

Parents with a low income and rudimentary education are highly dependent on their children as a means of compensation for material and cultural wants. Children become to them a source of moral satisfaction, income production and old age security. They think that the benefits they expect from increasing the number of their children exceed by far the corresponding expenses and privations which this increase would impose on them.

Parents with a relatively high income and high standard of living show less interest in a large number of children because this would interfere with their personal comfort and lead to a lowering of their standard of living. Instead of depending on their children they depend on accumulated savings and sizable securities for their old age.

From the above statement we may conclude that in order to prevent a menacing over-population, it is necessary to wipe out poverty and make people less dependent on their children as a source of income and old age security.

Workshop on Breast-feeding

A joint meeting brought together the Lebanese Family Planning Association and the Association of Pediatricians in Lebanon, in collaboration with UNICEF and the National IYC Committee in Lebanon, for the purpose of organizing a workshop on breastfeeding and the methods of encouraging it.

The workshop was held at the American University of Beirut Alumni Club, May 19, 1979. It was presided over by the Minister of Health and attended by a large number of pediatricians, gynaecologists and representatives of various national and international organizations.

Lectures and discussions emphasized the importance of breastfeeding for the health of mother and child. They pointed out the necessity of recommending it to pregnant women, particularly in the first months following childbirth. They said that the superstition that disparages this natural function should be fought and nullified. Mass media, public and private health centers should be mobilized for a breast-feeding campaign.

Finally a "Breast-feeding Committee" was created, whose function would be to follow up the execution of the above recommendations.

We publish below a few statistics received from LFPA about the services of the Association outside the clinics.

These statistics are limited to the LFPA's activities in South Lebanon, mainly in the districts of Nabatiyyeh and Zahrani.

1) In Nabatiyyeh district, 1978-1979.

37 villages were included in the study. Average number of women at the fertility age in these villages: 2300 in 1978.

Average number of women benefiting from those clinics: varies between 28 and 36 percent, ranging between 600 in January and over 800 in the last three months of the year, thus showing a steady increase.

In 1979, during the first six months, 36 villages were included in the study.

No. of women at the fertility age: 2316

No. of married women at the fertility age: 1687

No. of beneficiaries: between 680 and 780, making 31 to 41 percent of the total.

2) In Al-Zahrani district

40 villages were included in the study.

Average number of women at the fertility age in 1978: 3733

No. of women benefiting from the above clinics: between 1100 and 1200, making 30 to 34 percent.

Average number of married women at the fertility age in the first four months of 1979: 3654, in May-June: 3566

No. of beneficiaries: between 1131 and 1255, making 32 to 34 percent of the total.

SOCIAL WORKERS AND FAMILY PLANNING⁽¹⁾

Family planning in developing countries is likely to become a major occupation for social workers. Since it is considered one of the major means to raise per capital income, to meet a national goal and to indigenize itself by coping more effectively with requirements of the country in which it operates, family planning allows social work to become a developmental, non-marginal profession. Moreover it fulfills a humanitarian drive which is an essential element in social work and which will become more apparent when we think that the developing countries "have about 70 per cent of the world's children, and their population is growing twice as fast as that of industrialized countries. Their total labor force is increasing at a much faster rate than the opportunities for wage employment... Without significant population reduction, unemployment will be the greatest problem due to the population drift from the countryside where the highest birth rate prevails."⁽²⁾

Family Planning and Family Welfare

As visualized by social work, family planning embraces almost the majority of the items which conduce to family welfare. It is not reduced to the limitation of the number of children and the spacing of pregnancies. It actually leads to family welfare "because it aims at bettering the economic standards of families, reducing parental and maternal burdens, minimizing family conflict and ameliorating children's educational, health and

recreational levels... Thus it is logical to assume that family planning is synonymous with family welfare."

Interest of Social Work in family planning

At an international seminar held in Hawaii in 1970 and consisting mainly of social work educators, the members clearly recognized "the grave threat to the well-being of mankind of world-wide population trends."

Another example of this interest is the effort exerted by the international association of Schools of Social Work which launched a program among member schools to stimulate the development of family planning curricula. Pilot schools were involved upon their own choice as, for example, the Faculty of Social Work, University of Helwan, Egypt. At a workshop held June 25-July 1, 1977, it was recommended that new courses in family planning should be developed and a demonstration center for family planning projects should be created.

The author proposes social work intervention in the field of family planning according to a number of standards which include: policy-making, planning, supervision, administration, research, and indirect practice whereby the practitioner works with the agencies involved in family planning activities to promote the coordination and cooperation between these agencies. Direct practice involves family life education process: working to change the attitude of the indigeneous leaders towards family planning, developing social education programs and following up the cases which cease to use contraceptives.

In conclusion the author says that family planning represents a challenge for social work in developing countries, such as Egypt, which suffer from over-population. Social work as an applied science has to develop a relevant scientific base and a set of techniques by which social values can be incorporated and attitudes can be changed to enhance the adoption of family planning among the vast masses of impoverished societies.

(1) Condensed from an article by Dr. Abdel Halim Reda Abdel Aal in *Population Studies* (An Arabic English publication), Cairo, Egypt no. 49, April-June, 1979, pp. 1-13.

(2) Quoted by the author from Herman D. Stein's "Social Welfare and Development: Education Training for the Seventies", *Social Work Education in the Seventies*, (N.Y. FASSW 1970) p. 3

Values About Children And Fertility⁽¹⁾

In the traditional context, male children are predominantly preferred to female children. In the VOC (Value of Children) survey presented by C. Kagitcibasi at the Second Turkish Demography Conference of the Institute of Population Studies, Izmir, 1975, boy preference reaches 71 percent as contrasted with a mere 23 percent for girls. Reasons for this preference: a son is a source of social prestige and recognition, together with old age security and material well-being. A son also enhances his mother's status in the family and community; he is the carrier of the family name through whom it continues.

Female children are mainly valued for their personal qualities such as submissiveness, politeness, being close to the mother, being well-mannered, etc. As a rule, boys are socialized by their fathers, and girls by their mothers, and they learn sex-specific behavior mainly through imitation and identification with the parent of the same sex (Kagitcibasi, pp. 62-63).

Respect and deference to parents and, as a result, identification with them, are the rule for both girls and boys. "From a psycho-dynamic perspective, this respect and deference has been interpreted as the inhibition of initiative and thus being detrimental to autonomous ego development." (Kagitcibasi, p.64). Application of rules without logical explanation serves to further subdue the child and produce a partly unconscious and arbitrarily punitive superego.

The Value of Children (VOC) Study

In the Turkish VOC study conducted in 1975, "A sample of 2317 respondents were used, comprising 1767 women and 550 men. Multi-stage stratified random sampling was used, where stratification was done in terms of the levels of development." (Kagitcibasi, p. 75). The values were presented in terms of advantages and disadvantages of children.

In the category of advantages, "the primary group ties, affection and love," form a most salient value of children for parents. According to a previously conducted pilot study, the child brings the spouses closer together. Other advantages: security in old age, stimulation and activity, the pleasure from watching them grow, help in household chores, general economic help, family continuity, meaning to life, having someone to leave your property to, satisfying the parental instinct, fulfilling a religious duty, moral improvement, creativity.

The disadvantages of children, though less numerous than advantages, are nevertheless many and highly varied. "Concern about the child mainly in the form of fear of doing a bad job seems to be a prevalent worry, followed

by economic burden of children." (Kagitcibasi, p. 87). Economic disadvantages, mentioned very frequently by both sexes in all educated groups, decrease in salience as education increases. On the other hand, both concern about the child and the restriction on parents freedom increase at higher levels of education. Responses concerning the financial and emotional cost of children indicate the greater financial and emotional cost of sons, yet "the before mentioned son preference in spite of this awareness, reflects strong traditional norms and sons instrumental values." (Kagitcibasi, p. 96).

Desirable qualities in both sons and daughters are mainly "being educated and being moral." It should be possible to comment here that the truthfulness of such a response is debatable because, in fact, the prevalence of dishonest dealing in Eastern society offers evidence of the bad example presented by parents to their children.

Number of Children

According to the survey already mentioned, almost half of the respondents (42.4 percent) said that two is the ideal number of children. However, the mean for the ideal number of children is 3.4. This is considerably larger than the mean parity of 2.7 and may be due partly to the young age level of the respondents. Having a single child is mostly disapproved (70.8 percent). Among reasons for not wanting a single child, specific worry about child death is highly salient (43 percent). Most respondents affirm that a child brings positive changes into the life of man and woman. It gives them adult status in society, reflected in greater maturity, responsibility and role changes.

Decision Making in the Family

Predominant male decision making in the family is a sign of traditional sex-role relations. The VOC study found male decision making to be the rule in the majority of the families in Turkey. Predominantly male decision making seems to correlate to other traditional forms of behavior such as lack of communication between the spouses, role differentiation in the family, boy preference and high parity. On the other hand, media exposure correlates quite strongly with modernity variables such as communication between spouses, decision mindedness and concern with overpopulation. Those who experience more media exposure have fewer children and tend not to emphasize traditional reasons for wanting another child. Early use of birth control may be considered a modernity variable since it implies a systematic planning of the number of children from the very beginning instead of waiting till a desired number is reached.

(1) Second part of the report prepared by Cigdem Kagitcibasi for UNESCO, October 1977, on "Cultural Values & Population Action Programs in Turkey, condensed in *Al-Raida* 10, p. 3.

Implications for Population Action Programs

Knowledge of cultural values including the value of children is a preliminary step toward the adoption of a population action program based on the special conditions and needs of every country. Where family-planning is considered a necessity for stemming the menace of overpopulation, as is the case with developing countries, an explicit population policy could be used in such a way as to reduce fertility.

Values connected with children could be reconsidered in the light of modern needs and of social changes brought about by modern culture and technology.

1) While emphasizing, for example the psychological values of children, it could be argued that psychological satisfaction could be obtained from one or two children just as effectively, or even better, than many children. Furthermore, it could even be argued that utilitarian values could be better realized by few rather than many children. For example, to provide old-age security, a well educated child is more valuable than many uneducated children who are all needy.

2) The utilitarian values of children could further be deemphasized by pointing out that, with compulsory education, child labor laws and industrialization, child labor is decreasing and its economic contribution is becoming negligible.

3) Emotional and social benefits such as self-enrichment, self-fulfillment, being accepted as an adult, etc., could possibly be achieved by the creation of job opportunities for both men and women or through creative, occupational achievement.

4) The love and companionship that the children provide could be provided to some extent by the close family, kinship and community ties.

5) The concern about child mortality which is found to be so important in the VOC study can be met by providing better public health services.

6) The costs of children should be clearly associated with large numbers. Health problems obviously increase, as does noise, disorder, and stress, while discipline problems become more acute.

7) Of great practical importance is the awareness of the above disadvantages at earlier stages.

Educational programs and communications in general should reach young couples, or even better, young people before marriage, in order to be effective. Schools, adult education, advice and orientation centers are all effective tools for such information.

Persuasive Communication

In order to penetrate to the audience and break down its various defense mechanisms, the communication should be highly persuasive, hence based on social psychological research. It should take into consideration four basic components:

1) Credible, trustworthy sources.

2) A content joining emotional appeal to specific instruction and concrete information regarding the use of contraceptives.

3) A knowledge of the audience, their own views, and their level of education, is important as a preliminary guide to the ways of affecting them.

4) The context in which persuasive communication takes place is a factor in determining its effectiveness. It has been found that "face-to-face" communication can be more effective than impersonal mass media.

Socio-Economic Development

Improvement of communication techniques, in order to be of widespread and long lasting effectiveness, should be accompanied with socio-economic structural change and development. One of the most important developmental changes is industrialization which opens up job opportunities for both women and men and, by increasing over-all-material costs of children, favors the decrease of fertility. Another factor is education, whose fertility depressing effect seems to be most pronounced at lower levels.

The liberation of women from rigid roles and the opening and equalization of job opportunities for them is of utmost significance in depressing fertility. Improving women's life conditions and raising their status are bound to decrease son preference and fertility.

However, socio-economic development, if left to occur at its own pace, is a slow process and needs to be supplemented with specific population policy focusing on fertility decline and utilizing effective population action programs, such as those that have been adopted in Egypt and other developing countries.

PEOPLE'S HEALTH IN PEOPLE'S HANDS

As a result of the Uppsala Seminar of 1977, the political leaders of India decided that the community should become conscious of what it can do itself and when to call for assistance. Moved by the slogan, "People's Health in People's Hands," they recognized that health improvement can not be brought about merely by increasing the number of doctors or the output of medicine. A new program was adopted by which a community health worker, chosen by and coming from the community, is given training, then sent back to the community with the equipment needed for his work. It is proposed to eventually cover the entire rural population of the country's over 480 million, living in some 560,000 villages, at the rate of one community health worker for each 1000 persons.

A campaign has been launched, mobilizing the political will to overcome the obstacles represented by the prevailing social power structure and administrative machinery.

The Indian rural health scheme is still in its initial stages and it will be some time before one can say how far it will fulfill the requirements of "Another Development in Health."⁽¹⁾

(1) Health and Another Development: Editorial, *Development Dialogue* Op. Cit. pp. 2-3.

FAMILY STATUS IN SYRIA(1)

Modernism and social evolution have had a definite impact on the status and functions of the family everywhere. As an example, woman's education and her integration in work outside the home has affected the structure of the family as well as the woman's attitude toward marriage and her choice of a mate.

In studying the Syrian family, differentiation should be made between the urban family and the rural and bedouin ones, besides the clear differences between religious communities.

The present field-study tries to answer the following questions: What are the dimensions of the recent changes in the Syrian family? How far have they affected its structure and what kind of responses have the changes produced among its members?

Study Procedure

A preliminary survey was made by using a sample of 50 people chosen at random from a series of responses to newspaper and television advertisements concerning the form of inquiry. The results of this preliminary study encouraged the researcher to enlarge his sample to include 400 families from Damascus, representing all the various sectors and containing children who went to school and whose ages ranged from six to twelve. The schools frequented by the children represented the different quarters of the city. A random sample was chosen from both the male and female students of those schools. Their parents were immediately contacted and asked to fill out the forms prepared for them which contained 75 questions on the following topics: basis and factors of marriage, immediate and delayed bride-price, family income and social class structure, family planning and birth control, education and increased woman's influence in family and society, use of the veil, woman's social and political activity, socialization of children, their recreational activity, public and private role in facilitating woman's work.

Part of the study was allocated to the blood-feud stereotype which is still practiced in tribal and family circles.

Principal Results

1. Concerning the pre-marriage period, it was found that the brideprice and trousseau did not play a significant role in postponing marriage. The study revealed a general claim for the limitation of the bride-price, asserting that the excessive sums demanded by the bride's parents represent a primitive social stage and contrast with the spirit of Islam.
2. The study showed a general tendency to reduce the age difference between the spouses, especially among the younger generation.

3. Exogamous marriages, i.e. marriage outside the family and quarter of the spouses, is more and more frequent, not only within the city but also extending to the outside and favoring intermarriage between village and city people.
4. It was found that a young man may marry a girl who is less educated than he, while an educated girl requires of her future husband at least the same level of education as hers.
5. Polygamy, in the sample studied, represented a small proportion: two percent, hence it was impossible for the researcher to explain this fact through the change occurring in the wife's status or in the family income. This result shows the fallacy of the theory which ascribes polygamy to a condition of wealth and luxury and seems to give support to other factors which have a social, psychological or hygienic origin.
6. Remarriage of the husband was chiefly due to divorce or death of the wife, especially among spouses whose educational level did not exceed the elementary stage. The family income did not prove to be a factor in remarriage.
7. The use of the veil is most wide-spread among illiterate women and those with semi-literate or illiterate husbands. It is less common among the educated classes.
8. The family income, though it may be an indicator of social standard, did not prove to be an important factor in veiling or unveiling the woman. This is explained by the fact that in traditional society, wealth depends less on the educational level than on a free profession. The correlation coefficient did not register a strong connection between the annual family income and the use or disuse of the veil (34.67 percent).
9. The number of children in the family seemed to have a definite correlation with the level of education of the parents. The less educated had a larger number of children and vice versa. The researcher did not find a high correlation between family income and the number of family members, nor between the number of rooms and that of the dwellers.

The final conclusion drawn by the researcher regarding this item, is the existence of a strong correlation between the size of the family, the level of the wife's education and her willingness to work. The increasing number of educated women engaged in professional or employed activity is likely to impose birth control and family planning. To ensure a balance between the woman's new status and the size of her family, concerted efforts should be made by social and health institutions for the purpose of creating guidance centers and clinics for parents interested in proper family planning in addition to nursery schools for children of working mothers and employment offices for trained women workers.

10. Questions addressed to the parents concerning the socialization method of children showed that the

(1) This topic was treated in a field study of 281 pp. prepared by Dr. M.S. Akhras and published by the Arab Institute for Planning in Kuwait, 1976. The study was condensed and introduced by Dr. Louis K. Mulaika in *Qira'at fi Ilm-in-Nafs al-Ijtima'i fi-l-Watan el-Arabi*, vol. III, 1979, p. 125. This article is a summary of the condensation.

- less educated group adhered to traditional methods based on coercion and harsh treatment, while the more educated group preferred the modern method of patient, understanding encouragement.
11. Living quarters investigated by the researcher did not provide children with adequate spaces for recreation and play. This condition has led the children to use the street as a playground. To remedy the situation, the researcher suggests that schools be asked to offer their playgrounds for the use of children in their free time. Municipal councils with the cooperation of local groups and associations are urged to create public gardens and playgrounds for children. To encourage woman's participation in national development which has now become a general necessity, the same local institutions should encourage the creation of a sufficient number of day care centers for the children of working mothers.
 12. An inquiry carried out by the researcher showed that the number of blood-feud crimes reached 152 in 1960, or 3.9 percent of the total number of crimes, against 12.27 percent for the crimes of murder and suicide.

Further investigation led to the following conclusions:

- a. Blood-feud or vendetta is a primitive form of self-defense and group protection used in tribal and bedouin societies. Its practice tends to decrease in industrialized areas while in bedouin and agricultural groups it has a wide practice.
- b. The persistence of the extended family structure favors the practice of blood-feud in view of the feeling of group responsibility which binds the members of the family together.
- c. The educational level plays an important role in determining the spread of this tradition. In modernized communities it tends to lose its halo.

The disappearance of this primitive form of conduct is linked with a number of reforms, mainly the following: strict enactment of positive law; encouraging the settlement of bedouins; revision of penal laws regarding murder crimes in tribal communities; providing areas where this practice is common, with social workers and trained counselors.

Finally the researcher asserts that the emancipation of the family through the education and liberation of women is a most important condition for achieving social progress and ensuring general welfare.

TUNISIAN LULLABY(1)

*She is my good fortune, she is my good fortune,
Sing for her and keep the Evil Eye from her,
Suitors already are coming to court her,
But we won't let her go,
All Tunis should be hers,
All the oil of the coast should gloss her braided hair,
And the wheat of Africa fill all the corners of her house.
My daughter, your suitors stand in line,
Their heads humbly bowed,
Your father asks for thousands,
But your mother says it's not enough,
We won't give you up, my daughter,
Not till the son of the bey comes,
Who wears a robe of silk,
He'll bring you anklets
That will jingle and move when you move,
He will offer 130 camels
But in the eyes of a mother
That's not enough for a beloved daughter.*

(1) One of a collection of lullabies picked out between July 1968 and March 1969, from Tunisian muslim women aged forty to sixty; published in *Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak*, Ed. by E.W. Fernea and B.O. Bezirgan, p.92. See section "Recently Received by IWSAW" of this issue.

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

During 1975 and 1976, the Danish Women's Society, DK, held seven seminars in various parts of the country to study the role of women in developing countries. Their activities led to the establishment of a group to aid those countries.

In March 1976, a conference entitled "Solidarity with the Women of Developing Countries" was held with the object of discussing how Danish Women's organization may cooperate in lending support to women in the Third World. A group was appointed to draw up a constitution of a Women's Committee on Developing Countries which was established in May 1976, including 19 organizations and groups.

The purpose of the Committee's work is first to inform Danish women's organizations concerning the conditions and problems of women in developing countries. Second, to contact women's organizations in those countries and back them in their efforts to influence national feminist policy. Third, to induce policy makers to align official development assistance with the cause of women. Fourth, to launch projects aimed primarily at the women of developing countries.

CAREER COUNSELLING CONFERENCE

SINGAPORE, JUNE 1979

Under the auspices of the Asian Women's Institute, thirty international participants and resource people met in Singapore from June 27 to July 3 for a Career Counselling Conference. "Career Education for Asian Women — a Framework", was presented in keynote addresses by two Asian scholars, Dr. Josefina O. Santamaria, associate professor in the department of Guidance and Counselling, De La Salle University, Manila, and Dr. Amnuay Tapingkae, president of Payap College, Thailand.

Beirut University College was represented by two members of the Guidance Office Staff, Mrs. Maha Khuri, Coordinator of Academic Advising, and Mrs. Evelyn Richards, Counselor. In preparation for the conference Mrs. Khuri conducted a study of re-entry students to BUC.

This pilot study was an attempt at bringing out the characteristics and problems of re-entry women as well as serving as an encouragement to pursue further research in other colleges and universities throughout the area. For the purpose of this study a questionnaire was administered in a personal interview to 23 married and 5 single women. It covered four areas: The re-entry woman's background and family life, her motivation for returning, her status at BUC, and the recommendations that she wished to make.

As the findings are made known to various administrators, it is hoped that they will become more aware and concerned for the needs of re-entry women among the student body.

The "Special Problems of the Employment of Women in Lebanon" was presented in a paper by Mrs. Richards. The paper was based on a pilot project sponsored by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World which surveyed employment practices and projections for the future in the Beirut area. This occupational information included employer preferences concerning starting salary, age, educational preparation, special abilities, experience and benefits for different job categories.

With reference to the status of women, the findings confirm that women are currently employed in traditional careers such as teaching and secretarial positions. In addition, employers indicate their preference for women in these positions in the future. The presentation concluded with the exploration of some of the legal, religious and social aspects of the employment of women in Lebanon. Copies of these studies are available from the IWSAW.

Other panels dealt with "Special Problems of Employment of Urban Poor and Rural Women", and "Career Counselling Services available in Asia and the USA". However, the main focus of the conference was the skills oriented workshops. Led by a team of resource persons from the Career Services Office at Wellesley College, the participants learned counselling, career decision making and job hunting techniques; how to develop information resources, run workshops and reach out to client populations; and job development and placement skills. Each College brought career posters, pamphlets, books and photographs for display in the



resource center. BUC's contribution included a pilot project in developing career materials using slides and tape produced by the Communication Arts Department.

During the concluding workshop activity, representatives from participating colleges formulated action plans for developing and expanding their own career counselling services. BUC's plan includes conducting workshops on attitudes toward work for students receiving work/study grants; strengthening the orientation program by including career guidance; planning workshops for secondary school teachers to introduce them to concepts of career education and how to use career information; exploring the development of courses related to career education; and planning a Career Conference to obtain occupational information and help BUC students become more career conscious.

In addition to the educational opportunities such a conference affords, meeting with local hostesses representing various professional women's organizations was a highlight of the week.

The recurring themes of the Conference are well expressed in the summary of the proceedings:

1. Career Planning is a developmental, life-long process.
2. Vocation or occupation is only part of career planning.
3. There is need to define the socio-economic level of the clientele for whom services are being developed.
4. Women continue to have dual roles that are often conflicting. Most women in Asia quit their jobs upon marriage. The major handicaps for working women are marriage and children.
5. While civil and religious laws do not discriminate against women, the attitudes of women themselves and of society in particular were obstacles to a woman's self-fulfilment, utilization of potential and to achieving equal employment opportunities, such as equal pay for equal work.
6. The magnitude of the above problems make re-entry difficult for women.

Even though we come from a variety of cultures, women in general share similar problems. This conference has succeeded in identifying such problems and enabling participants to gain skills to help toward solutions.

Maria Khuri and
Evelyn Richards, B.U.C.

A STUDY ON "HONOR CRIMES" IN LEBANON⁽¹⁾

"A young woman's status in oriental society is pitiful indeed. If she falls in love, her brother gets angry. If she marries the man of her choice, her father will reject her. If she is seduced by a dishonest man, the members of her family hold a counsel by which they decide to wash their honor with her blood." (Said Mirza, Prosecuting Attorney of Beirut, 1973).

"In oriental society, a young girl has no right to lead a normal life. A look from her may be an equivalent to sin. A smile may be an invitation to immorality. Even the joy she displays, the laughter she utters, are suspected as a sign of loose conduct and a source of shame. As soon as she raises her head, a blood thirsty beast is ready to confront her with angry, blood-red eyes."⁽²⁾

Why should a woman symbolize the "honor" of her family or tribe? What is the relation between "blood" and "honor"? Why should the woman and not the man, be sacrificed like a scapegoat to atone for guilt committed by both of them?

These and other similar questions occupied for a long time the author of a recent study on "honor crimes" in Lebanon and led her to prepare a Ph. D. thesis on this topic which she presented, after six years of work, to the University of Strasbourg.

The researcher, Mrs. Laila Shikhani Nakouz, is a specialist in social psychology and occupies the position of chairman of the psychology department at the Lebanese University.

When asked about the reasons why she chose this topic for her thesis she said that she was first moved by the large number of "honor crimes" reported by daily papers and carrying such titles as: "He washed his shame with her blood," and "He slew her from vein to vein." She was also affected by an act of injustice committed against one of her girl friends who was forced by her parents to marry a man twenty years her senior, after enduring imprisonment at home for more than two months.

In preparing her study, she used the documentary method, by reading the files of 130 honor crimes committed in Lebanon within six years, which showed that, in this country, 13 women were slain every year because of erroneous social concepts.

These concepts are derived from certain archaic, tribal principles which, originated by violent, primitive jealousy and possessiveness, consider adultery as a major guilt, hence a source of shame not only to the individuals in question but to the whole family as well. Only blood, the symbol of sacrifice for atonement, can wash away the family shame. But, instead of sacrificing both the man and the woman who were partners in the act, only the

woman is killed because she is the weaker and the less important individual. Killing the man might raise a series of protests and conflicts leading to intertribal or interfamilial warfare. There is surely here the impact of the double standard which requires that a woman be treated differently from a man, i.e. receive a more severe and harsh penalty if she has sinned.

Those who are charged by the family council of "washing the family honor by blood" are usually illiterate or semi-literate people, unemployed or engaged in illegal trade, who have been inculcated since their early years with the idea that killing an adulterous or wayward woman is an act of heroism. The woman's guilt does not have to be proved. It may sometimes be mere suspicion or even a marriage that she planned without the family's consent.

As a treatment for this primitive custom, Mrs. Nakouz proposes first an amendment of the laws of the penal code which grant alleviating circumstances to men committing this crime.⁽³⁾

The mentality of our society must be changed through education and socialization, especially in backward areas which still consider retaliation and avenging blood with blood as a sacred law. Their women refuse to mourn their men who were killed until they have been avenged. Even when the codes of law have been modernized, tribal laws and social stereotypes remain the stronger and more effective patterns of conduct, particularly in underdeveloped communities. In this case, education has to play a major role.

The persistence of tribal law in the larger part of Lebanon (in the North, the Beqaa and the South) shows how little certain sections have been affected by modern civilization. The general state of backwardness which characterizes these areas is further aggravated by the persistency of the feudal system which imposes blind adherence to a hereditary leader whose claim to leadership rests on his descent from a dictatorial ancestor or a privileged family.

These backward areas in Lebanon or elsewhere form dangerous spots which favor the sudden rise of terrorism, setting the whole country ablaze.

MOVEMENT TO BAN WAR TOYS GAINS STRENGTH

West Berlin's "Kindertage" (Children's Days), a permanent body for the defence of children's interests, is campaigning against "war toys" from September to November. During the school holidays a "summer camp" will be held in Turkey, for German and Turkish children. A special programme of 10 films for children will be shown during the International Film Festival in Berlin. And the Highlight of the year's activities will be an international conference on the Rights of the Child, in West Berlin, in December.

(IYC Report, June/July, Vol. II no. 6)

(1) This article is based on an interview with the author of the study, Mrs. Laila Shikhani Nakouz, reported by Wafa el-Oud, and published in *Al-Hasna Magazine*, no. 870, July 6, 1979, p. 6.

(2) Ibid.

(3) See *Al-Raida* no. 4, June 1978. p.10 and no. 9, vol. II, Feb. 1979, p. 6.



Mental Health For Children And Families

An international congress on mental health for children and families was held in Salzburg, Austria, July 8-13, 1979, and was organized by the Austrian association for Mental Health in collaboration with the World Federation for Mental Health.

Mrs. Lorfing of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, who attended the Congress in the company of Dr. Abu Nasr, director of the Institute, gave *Al-Raida* the following report.

The theme of the conference was "Mental Health for Children and Families." Topics related to determinants of a child's total growth were discussed in the light of the prevailing situations in different regions of the world. The effects of structural changes in society and the changing environment of families in relation to developmental needs of children and family were lengthily debated, during the plenary sessions and the workshops. Participants from all over the world contributed papers which were discussed in the various workshops, covering the following subject areas :

- 1 - Bonding attachment and early infant development.
- 2 - Alternative to the nuclear family; role of the extended family and community in child rearing.
- 3 - Divorce, separation and custody.
- 4 - Mental Health of children of migrants and cultural minorities.
- 5 - The impact on children in an overmedicated society.
- 6 - Child abuse and neglect.
- 7 - Suicide in the young.
- 8 - Food habits and mental health of children.

- 9 - External stresses on family life.
- 10 - Problems of exceptional children: the gifted and the limited.
- 11 - Psychosis, psychosomatic illness and chronic illness in children.
- 12 - Epidemiological studies of children and adolescents.
- 13 - Death in a family, terminal illness in children and consequences for family.
- 14 - Making unwanted children wanted, preparation for parenthood.
- 15 - Healthy attitudes towards developing masculine and feminine roles.
- 16 - Psychotherapy of the whole family.
- 17 - Influence of mass media.
- 18 - Creative leisure for children and families.
- 19 - Mental Health and the school.
- 20 - Alcohol and drug abuse.
- 21 - Physical surroundings and environmental influences.
- 22 - Children's rights, parents' rights, child advocacy.
- 23 - Children, religion and mental health.
- 24 - Self help and mental aid.

Dr. Abu Nasr presented the study of Dr. I. Kallab on the image of women in Lebanese elementary reading books. (see *Al-Raida*, June 1978, no. 4. p. 4).

Many issues were debated and in consequence many questions were raised on how to cope with the immediate challenge facing the families and, concomitantly, the children of the world today in their hope for achieving a better life.

LE FEMINISME

By Andrée Michel

Que Sais-je? Series (French)
Presses Universitaires de France, 1979

The author Andrée Michel who has to her credit more than ten published works on various sociological topics, occupies the position of director of research at the National Center of Scientific Research, Paris.

In introducing her book, *Le Féminisme* (feminism), she says that she tried to take her sources of documentation from unbiased authors whenever this was possible. "Unbiased authors" meant especially women historians and anthropologists; also anglosaxon authors rather than those of Latin countries, who are generally more prone than the former to legitimize male domination. She then proceeds to relate the history of women's evolution through the ages until the present time. In the Paleolithic period, men and women led a peaceful existence in which they depended on hunting, gathering and horticulture. Women took an active and creative role, especially in the last two activities, and it is supposed that the use of the hoe in farming was a product of women's initiative. Matriarchal civilization continued until the middle Neolithic period (6000-3000 B.C.) when the invention of the plough asserted man's domination because he could handle the new implement better than woman did.

Agriculture encouraged conquest through war, the patriarchal system replaced the matriarchal, deterioration of international relations brought about the degradation of woman's condition and her seclusion within the family and the city, which later gave birth to the harem or women's apartments where they were deprived of all communication with the outside.

The enslavement of women continued through the later Neolithic period and, with little change, during the three periods of history. Although Judaism, Christianity and Islam have the reputation of displaying sincere efforts for the establishment of social justice, they are patriarchal religions which have confirmed male domination.

In spite of general restrictions,

individual women, in both the East and West, resisted oppression and succeeded in achieving leadership and skill in various fields, more particularly the intellectual. In medieval times, many women distinguished themselves as priestesses, prophetesses, founders of monasteries, abbesses, directresses, teachers, authors, poets, queens, rulers, counselors, saints, theologians, artists, singers and dancers. It is generally known that women in nomadic tribes, like the desert Arabs and the Germanic tribes, enjoyed more freedom than women in urban communities. The "purdah" or veil is considered by Muslim historians as a Byzantine institution adopted by the Muslim Arabs in the Arab peninsula and elsewhere.

Women's struggle for liberation began in Europe in the 16th Century when Marie de Gournay (1566-1645), a French woman, wrote a treatise on the "Equality of Men and Women" and another on "Ladies Grievances." The struggle continued all through the 17th and 18th centuries, when a large number of women from the bourgeoisie and other social classes vehemently claimed their rights and worked for emancipation. Feminist movements started organizing themselves in England, France, Holland and the United States in the early twentieth century. So far, feminism has succeeded in obtaining for women a large number of their claims in politics, education, working conditions and civil status but a good deal more has still to be accomplished for the complete elimination of sexism, i.e. traditional discrimination between the sexes. Feminists of today plead for the respect of woman's dignity, including the right of women to develop all their potentials (sexual, affective, moral, political, intellectual) without accepting the traditional limitations imposed on them by men.

In her conclusion, the author says that women today, in spite of progress achieved, are still subjugated to the repression which was imposed on them in the middle Neolithic period, when social relations were established on the basis of endless accumulation of power, profit and prestige; when dire competition, economic war and conquest replaced peaceful and cooperative activity. Women are still the victims of patriarchal norms and

traditions which should be the targets of the on-going feminist struggle all over the world. The forms of injustice traditionally inflicted on women are only a part of the general world wide injustice which reformers and humanitarians have been denouncing ever since the dawn of the present civilization, 8000 years ago.

The history of women is not only that of their repression but also that of their resistance to repression and occultation. This resistance culminates nowadays in the large number of liberation movements in the Northern Hemisphere with the hope that the feminist struggle would reach the Southern Hemisphere. In the latter, the feminist movement has touched only a few educated and isolated women, separated by a large abyss from their illiterate and ignorant sisters in village and city.

The claims of middle class women of the Northern Hemisphere do not form priorities for those of the Southern, who are overburdened by frequent maternities and deprived of the opportunity of securing for their children a minimum share of welfare and education. Western women are increasingly conscious of the needs of Eastern women, which may be summarized in proper education and technical training leading to social and economic independence.

The patriarchal system which stands as the antipode of feminism, is strongly tied to the system of accumulation of money and power, adopted by both capitalist and socialist states. A careful analysis would show how these states support oppressive military and political groups of the Third World for the sake of achieving expansion and market monopoly.

It is the duty of women socialists and economists in the Third World, aided by those of rich countries, to proceed to an analysis which would reveal the exploitation of women by trusts and world companies. Women form at least one half of the world population. If they join hands to fight war and armament, excessive accumulation of wealth, political repression, social and international inequality, they would be serving their own cause and preventing women from being the victims of publicity and the tools of big profit systems and practices.

Images of Arab Women

by Mona N. Mikhail

Three Continents Press, Inc.

Washington, D.C. 1979

The author, Mona Mikhail, is a young Egyptian graduate of Cairo University and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in Arabic and Comparative Literature. In introducing her book she says that it attempts to identify those significant patterns of change in the status of women through the examination of their role as reflected in Quranic teachings as well as in the writings of the foremost feminist reformists, who, from the turn of this century, have been clamouring for the betterment of the condition of women within these societies. Through these writings we can clearly identify discernible trends that have already been put in motion and are in the process of creating a new woman and a new man in a new society.

After expounding the status of the Arab woman in pre-Islamic times and how Islam contributed to its improvement, the author evaluates the work of four champion pioneers of the Emancipation of women: Qasim Amin⁽¹⁾, Nabawiyya Musa, Al-Tahir Al-Haddad and Nawal Saadawi⁽²⁾. The fact that all these pioneers except one (Al-Tahir Al-Haddad, a Tunisian) were Egyptian, did not prevent her from mentioning writers and poets from other Arab countries, who defended the cause of the Arab woman and denounced the

elements within their societies which deterred her advancement: The poets Al-Zahawi and Maruf Rusafi from Iraq, Fahd al-Askar from Kuwait, and other poets from the Gulf: Abdallah al-Sinnan and Hamid Iryani; The Syrian Nizar Qabbani who "has perhaps become identified with the condition of women through his poetry more than any contemporary Arab writer."

A survey of North African Literature dealing with women's problems is given in chapter eight, particularly the novels of Assia Djebar which form "manifestos for the emancipation of women as well as great psychological masterpieces in their own right." Psychological analysis of a few short stories written by Yusuf Idriss and Naguib Mahfuz reflects the author's special interest in literary criticism and its modern interpretive aspect.

The translations from Maghribine popular poetry and folktales explore a neglected field and bring out men's attitude toward women in its romantic or appreciative aspects. The selections, together with the author's comments and analyses, seem to confirm her faith in the future, suggested by the dedication "to the women who believe that change will come about."

Middle Eastern Muslim Women SpeakEd. by Elizabeth Warmock Fernea and Basima Qattan Bezirgan
409 pp., illustratedThe Dans Danciger Publication Series
University of Texas Press
Austin & London, 1977
Published in U.S.A.

"This volume is a collection of autobiographical and biographical

writings by and about Middle Eastern women. Many of the selections have been translated by the editors from Arabic, Persian or French. They not only represent real women from a wide range of occupations, points of view and socioeconomic status, but also touch on major themes in the contemporary Muslim world."

The book as a whole bears witness to the large number of women, who since the early days of Islam, succeeded in asserting themselves and achieving social prominence in spite of restrictions and taboos. Beginning with Khansa, the famous poet of early Islam, and Aisha Bint Abi Bakr, the Prophet's favorite wife, considered an important authority on Muslim Traditions (Al-Hadith), it includes biographies of, and excerpts from the works and sayings of such famous women as the Andalusian free-minded poet, Wallada Bint al-Mustakfi, Rabi'a the Mystic, Rabi'a Balkhi, the Persian poet of love. From modern times, it gives a short biography of Umm Kulthum, the brilliant Egyptian singer; it presents Nazik al-Malaika, the Iraqi poet who led the free verse movement in the Arab world; Jamila Buhayrid, the militant nationalist of Algeria; Amina al-Said, the distinguished Egyptian journalist; Ghada al-Samman, the writer who claims a sweeping radical change in the status of Arab women; and many others.

According to the editors, "the book offers a fresh and lively approach to the study of Middle Eastern Women and will be of value not only to those interested in the Middle East and in women's issues, but also to anthropologists and social historians."

(1) See *Al-Raida* 3, Feb. 1978, p. 2.(2) See *Al-Raida* 7, Feb. 1979, p. 5

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May we remind you to pay your subscriptions for the year 1980.

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