



# al-raida

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## 1981, Year of the Handicapped

There was a time when, in every part of the world, disabled individuals, when not exposed or abandoned by their parents or guardians, were treated by society as an object of entertainment. Like animals trained to dance and perform certain tricks before the public, men and women who suffered from physical or mental deformities were exhibited and exploited as sources of amusement for those who could pay them a few coins. The blind, the deaf and dumb, the feeble-minded, the deformed and other disabled groups, rarely had the chance to receive an education or to learn a profession by which they could earn a living.

It was the Declaration of the Rights of man and the United Nations Charter (1959) that induced the change in people's attitude toward the disabled. Moved by pragmatic as well as by humanitarian reasons, social leaders and educators agreed on the necessity of rehabilitating the disabled and helping them to become useful members of society. The most outstanding success achieved by promoters of this new trend was the world-known American, Helen Keller, who, in spite of her three-fold infirmity, (blind, deaf and dumb from birth), was able to obtain higher education, to write books, give lectures and lead a happy life until the advanced age of ninety. Her Egyptian contemporary, the blind scholar Taha Hussein, though less disabled than she was, exemplifies another important success in the field of rehabilitation. Arab history gives the names of two blind men who, in the Abbasid period, succeeded in achieving immortal greatness in poetry and erudition : Bashshār ibn Burd and Abu'Ala'a al-Ma'arri.

If history gives the names of only a few handicapped individuals who were able to defy public opinion and attain self-realization, world leadership in our days is trying to make self-realization possible for every disabled individual. The large number of handicapped produced by frequent wars has made this step imperative, mass media have been mobilized, the creation of rehabilitation centers has been everywhere encouraged and financed by national and international organizations. The Year of the Handicapped, which occurs in 1981, will be another incentive for spreading awareness regarding the general problem of the disabled and, particularly, for effecting a change in people's attitude toward them. Respect for human dignity, recognition of the other person's rights, regardless of his appearance, color, age, sex, race or rank, is the primary requirement of civic education and the first mark of development.

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# Lyna Elias

**A dedicated social leader who insists that social work should train the young in responsible citizenship and civic service.**

The Lebanese war with its tragic sequels has induced a large number of Lebanese groups and, more particularly, women's organizations, to take part in a general movement to help the war victims, including the injured, the sick, the displaced, the disabled and the helpless widows and orphans. The Lebanese Red Cross Society, presided over by Mrs. Alexandra Issa El-Khoury, has doubled its activity. With its clinics, blood banks, anti-drug campaign and first aid courses, it has greatly contributed to general relief work. Many other welfare organizations shared in the campaign. The "Child Welfare Association", the YWCA, "The Union of Women of the South", are only some of the feminine organizations which participated in the general mobilization movement.

One of the successful projects stimulated by war conditions is the welfare project called "Help Lebanon", founded by Mrs. Lyna Elias, a dedicated volunteer social worker who, since the age of 14, was haunted by the desire to start a project of guidance and counselling for youth. Her university education in law and philosophy, which she continued after her marriage, served to develop her general knowledge and to prepare her for successful contact with the younger generation. For some time, she served as a member of various social organizations. In 1972 she founded "The Mission", a movement aiming at spiritual revival among the Lebanese youth for whom she published two works dealing with spiritual life and national consciousness.

"Help Lebanon", which she founded in 1979, aimed to recreate the human personality by using new guidelines in social activity. Training the individual in true citizenship, awakening in the new generation a sense of national responsibility, these are the ultimate goals she sought in her work. As an initial step, she started in 1979-1980, summer camps for displaced and refugee children, recruited, the first year, from one district of Lebanon and, the second year, from the various districts that suffered from war injuries. According to a report given in September 1980, seven groups of children, numbering 740, benefited from 21 days of healthy camp life in seven Lebanese mountain villages. The ages of these children ranged from 7 to 12. The camps were financed by private contributors and conducted by qualified leaders, who had received their training at the "Training Center in Active Educational Methods in Lebanon". The children had a chance to enjoy not only recreation and entertainment but also to make



new contacts and acquire better knowledge of their country. They were trained in useful manual skills and were able to produce many household articles and decorative objects which served to organize an exhibit, open to the public toward the end of September. Group life taught them to work together, to share in responsibility and to develop friendly relations with each other.

Civic education occupies a primary place in Mrs. Elias' program. In the summer camps, cleanliness is greatly emphasized and children are taught to behave like responsible citizens. With this objective in mind, she organized, during September 1980, two seminars for civic education which were open to teachers and university professors. The sessions were conducted by French specialists, who tried to initiate a program of civic training which would form a basis for generalized education in this field.

Within her civic welfare activities she includes her participation in the international anti-drug campaign, JAD (Junior Anti-Drug), and in some re-education programs. To widen her social horizon and learn new experiences, she took a trip to France and Switzerland where she gave lectures about her work and tried to acquaint her audience with the Lebanese problems.

In presenting her opinion regarding social work, she says: "It is not enough to have energy and good will. There is a certain technique which applies to every type of work and which should be applied by social workers. On the other hand, the public must be informed about the deep motives that lie behind civic behavior and how it relates to the political system adopted by the country. We should understand that civic responsibility, in its broader sense, like obeying the laws and paying taxes, and in its simpler aspects like keeping the streets clean and taking care of public property, is not a luxury nor a gratuitous act, but a duty and an indispensable element in the building of a nation."

(Information obtained from interviews and reports published by "Le Réveil", end of September 1980.)



# Nadeem H. Shweiri

Founder of "Al-Kafa-at" Rehabilitation Institute, Beirut, Lebanon.

His slogan : "Potentials not Handicaps" ; "Arms that give, not hands begging alms".

Mr. Nadeem H. Shweiri is indeed a living witness to the truth of the old saying : "Faith can make wonders."

Starting his work 18 years ago with three handicapped people : one blind, one deaf and one amputee, he was able, after 13 years, to enroll 140 handicapped workers who produced, with the help of a machine and the instruction of a qualified leather technician from town, 1.5 million leather bags. Their work yielded the profits that allowed him to build the present medico-social, educational and vocational complex on land he had inherited from his father.

Let us hear his story as he told it, but, for lack of space, it is here retold in an abridged form.

In 1957, while he was an M.A. student at A.U.B., he started a project for destitute young girls living in shady environments. His project developed into a catering school with 137 graduates, distributed in first class hotels and restaurants.

In 1959, two social cases were referred to him who, because of physical handicaps, could not climb the steps of the school building. This instance inspired a handicapped young girl, Nabeela George, who had become an artist in spite of her ten polio-stricken fingers, to send him some of her paintings, asking him to sell them and use the income to start a rehabilitation institute for the physically disabled.

That is how the Kafa-at (abilities) Institute was born.

Several congregations participated in its creation and development. One is "Our Lady of the Apostles", whose nuns have been sharing in its activities since 1959 and are still going on. Another is the Bible Lands Society, represented by its secretary, Mr. C.R. Clothier.



*Mr. Nadeem H. Shweiri with two handicapped workers (1963).*

The project kept growing. The initial prosthetic shop, started in 1963, has expanded into 1) sheltered workshops; 2) a brace shop; 3) a free school for poor, physically impaired students, now 350 in number, who go through the elementary and intermediate grades into the vocational sections where they learn appropriate trades which help their placement in remunerative jobs; 4) a regional training center of technicians in orthotics and prosthetics, which, in 1972, trained 11 students from the Arab countries and is currently training 9 from Lebanon.

Other projects have been added : 1) a school for the deaf accommodating 80 students, who receive a special program of general instruction followed by vocational training; 2) a school for the mentally retarded, 60 at present, who go through a special program till the age of 15, then into handicraft, farming and horticultural training till the age of 20, to end up in a village set-up which the Institute is building for them; 3) a section was opened last year for cerebral palsied children, now 50 in number, who go into the school sections that suit their aptitudes and receive medical treatment at the Physico-Therapy Department created by the Institute.

An intensive, industrial training program will be started within weeks, including 6 trades for 72 physically impaired adults. The course will last 4 months and will be given in two annual sessions.

In 1978, Al-Kafa-at was officially recognized as a non-profit, public benefit organization, receiving financial aid from the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs through the "Social Development Office". It is directed by a group of socially-minded individuals, constituting its Board of Trustees. The founder is a council member of "Rehabilitation International". The universal character of the Institute is shown in its interdenominational chapel, open to all creeds.

Speaking of his 20 year experience, Mr. Shweiri says : "Social welfare is to be considered as investments in dignity and not disbursements on handicaps. The yield would be to generate brotherhood, love and financial means to help others. In this way the gracious circle of love would grow."



## IYDP (International Year of Disabled Persons)

### Disabled or Handicapped ?

The International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) 1981, following the International Year of the Child 1979 and the International Year of Women, 1975, aims to create and spread general awareness regarding the problems of the disabled just as the former two international years tried to spread general awareness regarding the problems of women and children all over the world.

There is, however, a central idea which the organizers of IYDP are trying to emphasize. In the introduction given by Mrs. S.N. K'nanzo (a sociologist from Zaire), executive secretary of IYDP, to "News from the IYDP Secretariat", August 1980, no. 2, pp. 3-6, the main objective of this year consists in the recognition of the difference between "disabled" and "handicapped". Those who suffer from physical or mental disabilities are not so much handicapped by their actual disabilities as by the handicaps of all kinds that society creates for them. These handicaps which take the form of stereotyped, hostile attitudes, tend to create in the disabled an inferiority complex and prevent their integration in society. Studies are being encouraged regarding occupations, jobs and sports that fit each category of disabled people. Methods of rehabilitating them are diligently developed, but more significant is their integration in their communities and more pressing is the need to arouse their talents and hidden resources.

In a study on the disabled in the ECWA Region (Economic Commission for Western Asia), prepared by Dr. Munir Khoury, professor of sociology at Beirut University College, he mentions as one of the handicaps which society creates for the disabled, the concept of fatalism, which means accepting trouble as a pre-destined fate and refusing to struggle against it. The fatalistic attitude represents a static, negativist philosophy which paralyzes action, not only in the field of disabled people but also in all other fields. Unless we replace it by an activist, dynamic philosophy, we shall not be able to achieve progress in any field.

Another handicap raised against the disabled comes from the cherished, traditional values of "charity" and "mercy" towards the unprivileged in general. Charity and mercy are two important driving forces in social activity but once applied with a feeling of a superior helping an inferior, or a privileged person assisting an unprivileged one, they will end in inflating the donor's ego and crushing the receiver's personality. Giving on a charity basis, which does not allow the receiver to give something in return, cannot go on endlessly. The receiver must feel that he is sharing in some activity and is not only a passive "absorbent", if we want him to preserve his human dignity. The donor must realize that what he is giving is but a part of his duty as a citizen; the gift should help to rehabilitate the receiver; otherwise his action is pseudo-humanitarian, leading to no positive result.

This second handicap is closely related to a third one resulting from our people's negative attitude toward work. While in developed countries work is respected and appreciated for its own sake, without regard to its nature or

its financial value, here in the Arab countries we claim top positions for unqualified candidates. We covet responsible intellectual work for people with inadequate intellectual training, because we consider manual work below their dignity. According to Dr. Munir Khoury, many disabled persons shy away from learning simple skills because they, or their families, feel above "simple, unimportant work". Many of the so-called "high-class" families with feeble-minded children usually prefer locking them in rather than giving them a chance to learn simple vocations and help them to lead a healthy, productive life.

The above are some of the points which we should bear in mind when discussing the objectives of IYDP in the Arab countries. They represent long term considerations while the curative and rehabilitative measures and services represent the short term ones. Both types, however, are interrelated and have to go hand in hand. Radical changes in people's lives are impossible without a radical change in their mentality and a careful reconsideration of their values.

## When I Killed My Love

by Nazik al-Malaika

And I hated you, only hatred  
Became my passion,  
It engulfed my to-morrow,  
Absorbed my to-day,  
Was fed by the fire of my curses,  
And the embers of my revolt.  
It was lulled by my cry of grudge  
In a gloomy song,  
Nourished by a profound sleep  
With ghosts of darkness dancing around.

I hated your cursed name, its echos, its shadow,  
I hated its color, its tune, rhythm and form,  
Those ugly, harsh memories  
Fell like a heap, joined eternity in one sudden stroke,  
Mirthfully I was transformed into a morning poem,  
Yesterday, I said, is no more than a hollow dream.

My triumph was complete, your statue  
  crumbled down, thrust into the abyss,  
Joyful I hurried to bury its remains  
Under the sad cypress tree,  
The shovel in my hand savagely digging the earth,  
It fell upon a corpse, awesome and cold,  
Proudly I dragged it to the light.  
What did I see? The dead parts of regret!  
Night offered a mirror through which I saw my hate  
And my dead past, but failed to see myself,  
I had already killed you in my night and in my cup,  
I was slowly escorting the dead to its grave,  
Then I could plainly see, with horror in my eyes,  
That I had killed none but myself!

Collection, "Qararat-ul-Mawja"  
(Depths of the Wave). 1952,  
Trans. from Arabic.



# Services Rendered to the Disabled in the ECWA Region

## Who are the Disabled ?

Literature published on the problem of disablement classifies the disabled as follows :

- a. The physically disabled who are categorized into :
  - 1) the crippled and the amputated,
  - 2) the blind,
  - 3) the deaf,
- b. The mentally disabled comprising
  - 1) the feeble-minded or mentally retarded,
  - 2) the mentally disordered, sometimes called insane.

In the study made by Dr. Mounir Khoury, mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the total number of disabled and mentally retarded persons in the world is estimated at around 450 million and their approximate number in the Arab World is close to 20 million.

In developing countries, including those of the ECWA (Economic Commission for Western Asia) Region, services rendered to the disabled in general are still in the elementary stage. Reports about these services are very inadequate ; yet we shall try in this article to present a bird's eye view of the efforts that have been made and plans visualized in response to the U.N. Declaration that 1981 will be the Year of the Disabled.

To facilitate the task, we shall treat the topic under two sections : mental disabilities and physical handicaps.

### A. Mental Disabilities

In Iraq, considered as a relatively progressive country

in the field of social welfare, there is only one specialized institution for the mentally retarded, called "Al-Raja Institute", founded in 1955. In it, boys and girls aged 7-15 receive treatment and care from specialized personnel. These children are collected daily throughout Baghdad in the morning and driven back home after 1 o'clock. In 1978-79, the number of male and female students reached 330, divided into 26 groups, according to age, and distributed over eight vocational training projects. Al-Raja Institute, like other social welfare centers in Iraq, is a government subsidized project.

Another institution is the "Waziriyeh Vocational Rehabilitation Center" opened in 1971 and considered the largest rehabilitation center in Iraq. It is a multi-service center, including the rehabilitation of the feeble-minded who count around 25% of the total trainees, mostly from the city of Baghdad.

Five other institutions serve the so-called "insane", whose number in these institutions reached 152 in 1977.

It is clear that the above classification into "mentally-retarded" and "insane" is deficient, because it does not consider the various types of mental retardation and mental disorder.

In Jordan, there were, in 1977, seven centers that served mentally retarded persons, created through the joint efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations. According to a booklet recently published<sup>(1)</sup>, about 400 mentally retarded children are

(1) Project Proposals of the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund, Jordan, 1980.



being taken care of by these organizations. The booklet referred to contains descriptions of a number of welfare projects proposed for the near future. They include the establishment of a training center and three service centers for the treatment of only moderately mentally retarded children. Three age groups will be beneficiaries of the centers: group A: 2-6 year-old children; group B: 6-14 years; group C: 14-18 years. The center will consider offering adequate services to the more severe cases in due course.

In **Lebanon**, the war conditions persisting since 1975 paralyzed many activities that existed before the war. The pressing need, however, imposed the reactivation of already existing institutions and the creation of new ones when possible. "The Lebanese Association for Mentally Handicapped Children" was founded in 1965 as a voluntary agency. Between 1965 and 1975 it was able to perform a number of activities including: regular use of information media, holding regular meetings with parents, publication of a quarterly magazine, "Awladuna" (Our children); direct services given by a training center which was opened in 1970; organization of camps and recreational activities, translating into Arabic the book: "When a Child is Different", written by Dr. Maria Egg.

Around 1970, there existed in Lebanon nine institutions for the training of mentally retarded children. By 1972, approximately 350 children and youth attended those institutions. Most of them have resumed their activities but the need is far greater than the effort displayed. According to Dr. M. Khoury, it is estimated that the number of mentally disabled persons of all sorts is around 30,000. Only a small number of them is receiving any treatment.

In **Syria**, adequate information about the topic of mental retardation is not obtainable. We know of the existence of two government hospitals for the mentally retarded: one near Damascus, with a 600 bed capacity, the other in Aleppo, with a 200 bed capacity. Voluntary organizations receive financial support from the government. There are five in all and, according to the Annual Statistical Bulletin of 1977, were providing services to around 152 persons.

In **Saudi Arabia**, an institution created in Riyadh in 1974 provides rehabilitation for both the mentally and the physically handicapped. A recent development plan aims to build another such institution, expanding the capacity of the Riyadh institution to accommodate 240 instead of 80 patients.

In **Bahrain**, the various ministries and private associations concerned with the disabled, have been preparing for the International Year of the Disabled, 1981, in a joint effort to effect a change in the public attitude toward them, and to translate words into action.

In a decree proclaimed by the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, a national committee for the disabled will be formed, presided over by the director of social affairs, and including delegates of the various ministries and private organizations concerned.

The Committee has already prepared a plan of action for 1981, approved by the Director of Social Affairs in 1978 (See An-Nashra ad-Dawriyah, no. 16, 1978). The plan divides the disabled into 4 categories: 1) the mentally

retarded, 2) the physically disabled, 3) the emotionally disturbed, 4) the psychophysically disabled.

#### Aims of the Project:

1. Taking care of 61 disabled children whose names have been on the waiting list since 1972.
2. Determining the number of the disabled and studying their cases in all the Bahraini districts.
3. Providing them with sanitary, social, recreational, educational and material services.

The districts included in the project were: the cities of Issa, Sitra and Muharriq. Other districts are under study.

The project would be subsidized by both local and foreign help.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### B. Physical Disabilities

In the ECWA region, mental disabilities are considered shameful, hence they are surrounded by a secretive and tense atmosphere which impedes their treatment. Physical disabilities, on the contrary, are considered more or less natural; projects created for them move in a more relaxed atmosphere; they are more numerous and better equipped.

1. In Iraq which, among Arab countries, gives social service particular attention, there are five rehabilitative institutions for the physically disabled, all government subsidized.

a. The Vocational Rehabilitation Center in Waziriyeh, already referred to, serves different kinds of handicapped people, with the exception of the blind. It provides an initial assessment period which gives the handicapped person an opportunity to choose the occupation that fits him or her. According to Dr. Khoury's study, the center rehabilitated, between April 1971 and May 1975, 1,020 males and 84 females.

b. The Pilot Institution for the Blind, serves 110 blind males and females whose ages range between 5 and 30 years.

c. The "Industrial Institute for the Deaf" and the "Amal School for the Deaf", both provide their students with primary education and special training preparing them to achieve complete vocational training at the Waziriyeh Center.

d. The "Physiotherapy of Baghdad" provides physiotherapeutic as well as prosthetic-orthopedic services for out-patients.

2. In Jordan, the "Project Proposals of the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund", published in the booklet already referred to, while they give a detailed plan of projected centers for the mentally retarded, do not mention any projects for the physically disabled. However, it is well-known that voluntary organizations, which are particularly active in the social welfare field, play a significant role in caring for the disabled of all categories and receive financial assistance from the Jordanian government, which helps them carry out their activities.<sup>(3)</sup>

(2) An-Nashra ad-Dawriyah, no. 21, April, May, June 1980, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Bahrain.

(3) Al-Raida, vol. II, no. 8, May, 1979, p. 8.



3. In Kuwait, serious efforts have been made for the purpose of improving the conditions of the disabled. The government provides: 1) two "Institutes for the Blind", 2) two for the "Deaf and Dumb", 3) one "Educational Institute for the Paralyzed", and 4) two "Pre-Vocational and Vocational Rehabilitation Institutes". The government takes charge of all expenses needed by the trainees. Services are rendered to them while they live with their families, unless the family proves to be unfit for the proper care of the disabled person. Suitable employment opportunities are made available to those who are able to take a job in sheltered workshops.

4. In Lebanon, the war has created at least 5000 permanently disabled people. The services they receive are mainly financed by private organizations, partly helped by the government. Some of them, such as the "Cortbawi Institutes" in Mt. Lebanon, the "Medical Rehabilitation Center" at Ouzai, the "Kafa'at (Potentials) Institute" at Hadath, existed before the war and are still functioning. The same is true of the "School for the Blind" at Baabda, "Father Roberts' School for the Deaf and Dumb" at Suheileh (Mt. Lebanon). Since 1978, in response to new needs created by the war, several new institutions have sprung up: The "Daouha Institute" at Aramoun for developing human potentials, the "Bait-Shabab Institution" for training the physically disabled, the "National Institute for Employment", founded through the cooperation of the "Industrialists' Association" and the "Kafa'at Institute" for the vocational training of the physically disabled.

Due to the large number of the disabled and the limited aid available, we may conclude that many of them have no access to proper care.

5. In Saudi Arabia, mention has been made of the institutions created in 1974 for both mentally retarded and physically disabled persons. Moreover, a social insurance law, established in 1973, protects several types of workers, including those who have been disabled because of an accident. Plans have been laid out for the establishment of a center for the deaf and dumb by 1978-1979 and of a

rehabilitation center for the seriously disabled.

6. In Syria, statistics given by the Social Services Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs report the existence of eleven institutes for the blind, serving 200 beneficiaries. The accuracy of this report has to be verified. Voluntary associations involved in the rehabilitation of the disabled receive technical and financial help from the government.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has laid down plans for the establishment of several new institutes in and outside Damascus for the rehabilitation of the blind, the deaf-mutes and other physically disabled persons.

### Conclusion

It is clear that the above report is neither comprehensive nor sufficiently documented. Sources and statistics about this wide topic are scarce and not easily obtainable. The brief information we have recorded serves to show that much remains to be done by the ECWA countries in the field of services rendered to the disabled. It also shows the existence of general awareness regarding this problem, as we may infer from the plans made by many Arab states for the treatment and rehabilitation of the various types of disabled children and adults.

### References

1. Al-Raida, vol II, no. 8, May, 1979, p. 8.
2. An-Nashra ad-Dawriya (Periodical Newsletter) no. 16, 1978 & no. 21, 1980, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Bahrain.
3. Project Proposals of the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund, Jordan, 1980.
4. Dalil-ul-Musassasat il-Ijtima'iya fi Lubnan (A guide of the social institutions in Lebanon), 2 vols, edited by the Social Training Center, Hadath, Lebanon, 1980.
5. Information provided by Dr. Mounir Khoury, Professor of Sociology at Beirut University College, Beirut.

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# Women in Development

The Report on Women in Development, compiled by the Office of Women in Development of the United States Agency for International Development, has submitted a comprehensive report on its global proposed activities beginning in 1978. This is the result of the Act of the United States Congress which called for assistance to those programs and activities which integrate women into the national economies of Foreign countries (The Percy Amendment).<sup>1</sup>

Stated goals include literacy, technical and vocational training, compulsory primary school training, increased employment for women, equal opportunities for employment, health education and services, economic value of women's work in domestic food production and marketing, development of rural technology (e.g. cottage

industry, preschool centers, etc.)

Each separate project is described for countries of Africa and Southeast Asia (the latter including only the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand), Latin America, and the Near East.

The largest undertaking is an interregional population program for which a total of \$135,054,000 has been granted.

Latin America and the Caribbean received the largest amount of aid (\$84,138,200), Africa and Southeast Asia the least (\$46,172,582), while the Near East came in for \$58,535,000. The figures would apparently indicate the countries which A.I.D. finds most in need of assistance for development in the areas which particularly concern women.

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(1) Department of State, Washington, D.C., August 1978.



# 17th IBBY Congress, Prague 1980

"The International Board on Books for Young People", (IBBY), was founded in 1951, thanks to the efforts made by Jella Lepman, a British social worker who worked in Germany in the aftermath of World War II and there developed the idea that children's books could serve as a foundation for international understanding. With this purpose in mind she founded the International Youth Library (an associated project of UNESCO) in Munich in 1949. In 1951 she organized a meeting which she called "International Understanding through Children's Books" and, two years later, the first General Assembly of the "International Board on Books for Young People" was held in Zurich.

As stated by Jella Lepman, the Board aims primarily to promote world understanding by using children's books to encourage international friendship and to do away with racial prejudice and misunderstanding. It encourages the establishment of national and international libraries, the continuing education of those involved with children and children's literature and the publication of imaginative and challenging books for young people.

The Board consists of 45 national sections from over 40 states of the world, representing both East and West. An Executive Committee is elected from the National Sections during IBBY's biennial congress (taking place every two years). This Executive Committee serves as a coordinator, collects information, prepares the congresses and acts as an advisor to publishers and institutions in the field of children's literature.

## Main Activities of IBBY

1. International Children's Book Day is observed each year throughout the world on April 2, Hans Christian Andersen's birth date.

2. The Hans Andersen Medal is awarded by IBBY every two years to a living author, and to an illustrator as well, whose complete works have made an important contribution to children's literature.

3. A Hans Christian Andersen Honor List of one excellent children's book from each represented country is presented. The medals, the honor list, together with lectures and discussions focussing on a particular aspect of children's literature, are also presented at the biennial congress of IBBY.

## The Prague Congress, 1980.

The 17th IBBY Congress was held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, between 28-9-1980 and 4-10-1980, on the occasion of the granting of the Hans Christian Andersen Gold Medal to the Czechoslovakian writer for children, Bohumil Riha. A gold medal was also awarded at the Congress to the Japanese illustrator, Suekichi Akaba.

Lecturers from the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, U.S.A. and German Federal Republic presented papers on the principal topic treated by the Congress, namely, "Contemporary Trends in Children's Literature". Lectures were followed by discussions from the 280 participants who represented 41 countries from all parts of the world and included delegates of IBBY sections.

The lectures and discussions revolved around the emphasis that should be given to the reading book for the child versus audio-visual aids like films, television, video and other recorded material. The book has the advantage of stirring the child's mental faculties. It is his principal means of learning his mother tongue and forming his literary taste.

While in the first half of this century, educators recommended factual literature and science stories for children instead of fairy-tales, the new trend has recently taken an opposite course. Myths, fairy-tales, poems for children, are recovering their former importance, and are being presented in new forms which adapt them to modern needs. The overwhelming domination of technology is at the root of this change. Myths give readers a refreshing escape from sombre reality. Yet their function is not limited to entertainment. They are used to present facts in an entertaining and original way.

Other topics of interest in contemporary children's literature are: children of the Third World, their conditions, their needs and the necessity of knowing and understanding them; disabled children, their need of our friendship and help; our environment and the necessity of preserving its resources and beauties, and protecting its scenery, its fauna and flora, its monuments and art treasures, from injury and pollution.

Original illustration of children's books is receiving special attention. Illustration should not be only a means of ornamentation or explanation of the text, but they should add something to it, and present creatively expressed ideas which arouse the child's interest and imagination.

The Congress leaders and lecturers also recommended an increased search for the folklore of Third World countries with the aim of adapting them to modern needs, besides using them as a stepping stone to a better understanding of the natives' mentality and character.

Mr. Knud-Eigill Hauberg-Tychsen, (Denmark), president of IBBY, paid tribute in his opening speech to the efforts displayed by Czechoslovakian authors and illustrators in the field of promoting children's literature in their country and elsewhere. Children's libraries are encouraged; moppet shows, circuses and theatrical performances are receiving a new impetus. Prizes are granted by various organizations to prominent writers and illustrators. The success of the 17th IBBY Congress was due to the successful cooperation and coordination between the Executive Committee and the Czech national section of IBBY.

One of the items presented at the Congress was the creation of three new national sections of IBBY in Lebanon, Mexico and Turkey, during the year 1979.

The Lebanese section was represented for the first time, at this biennial congress, by three of its members, Rose Ghurayyib, Julinda Abu Nasr and Lina Matta. The experience gained from attending the meetings, the reports and other printed material brought by the delegates, will hopefully serve as a guide and incentive to the members of the newly formed section.



# World Conference of the U.N. for Women:

EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE,  
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK.

The "Mid-Decade World Conference of the United Nations for Women", held at Copenhagen, Denmark, 14-30 July 1980, marked the end of five years, or half of the decade, fixed by the Mexico Conference of 1975 for the implementation of the World Plan of Action, which aimed at the realization of complete equality between the sexes(1)

The new Plan of Action adopted by the Conference for the second period (1980-1985), stressed the importance of women's action for peace. Equality, development and peace, which constituted the theme of the Conference, were redefined. Equality does not mean only legal equality but also equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women in total development and in all dimensions of human life.

The plan also recommended mutual cooperation between governments and non-governmental organizations, (NGO's), in implementing the program of action for the second half of the Decade.

Another recommendation was "to promote research aimed at developing effective methodologies of planning for women's development and at evaluating their participation in the informal sectors of the economy, the health of women, the double burden of working women and so on."

As to the "Resolution and Decisions" adopted by the Conference covering 156 stencilled pages and published in six languages, they reemphasize former resolutions such as the implementation of family planning and the control of illegal traffic in drugs.

Women's specific needs are dealt with in paragraphs claiming help to the following categories of women :

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(1) Al-Raida, Vol. 1, no. 5, Aug. 1978, p.11

## 1. Disabled Women

The Conference appeals to all women and men of the world to support and contribute to the success of the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981.

## 2. Migrant Women

The government of host countries should devote particular attention to the problems of migrant women by eliminating all discrimination against them as regards their access to labor markets.

## 3. Eldery Women

The Conference requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the relevant international agencies, to prepare a comparative study on the availability of social and economic security for elderly women.

## 4. Women and Peace

Women should be provided with new opportunities to become more closely involved both on a national and international level, in the process of preparing for peace.

## 5. Lebanese Women

The Conference urges the United Nations and its specialized agencies to give the necessary attention to the needs of the Lebanese women in general and women in South Lebanon in particular, to study means of meeting those needs and to provide financial, material and technical assistance from various international sources.

**6. Palestinian women living inside and outside the occupied territories are entitled to assistance measures as well.**

**7. Women refugees and displaced women the world over :**

The Conference urges the Office of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with other concerned U.N. agencies and international and non-governmental organizations, to establish the programs necessary for dealing with the special needs of displaced and refugee women, especially in the areas of health, education and employment.

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## World Peace and Freedom at WILPF's 21st Triennial

Nearly 500 delegates, participants and guests from the United States and 27 other countries met at Quinnipiac College, Connecticut, U.S.A. for the 21st Triennial Congress of the World International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)(1) held on Aug. 17-23, 1980.

International President Kay reported on the state of the world and the menace of world war, concluding with two proposals : first that WILPF convene in Washington, D.C. a World Women's Peace and Disarmament in March 1982; second, a three-year million dollar improvement program that would be used for, among other things, international office staff, field representatives, annual student institutes and promotion of women's centers in developing countries.

One of the delegates, Lucille Mair, secretary-general of

the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women, said that the conclusions of the Mid-Decade Conference reflected a fuller understanding of the status of women around the world.

A panel on WILPF priorities, workshop sessions in which representatives from the various WILPF sections reported on their work, were followed by a round table meeting at Yale University, where four women who had been personally involved in national liberation movements described the changing role of women in their countries. They came respectively from Grenada (West Indies), Vietnam, Cuba and the Philippines.

On the final day of the Congress, 22 resolutions were discussed and adopted, and new international officers were elected : Carol Pendell (U.S.), president ; Ruth Osborne (U.K.), Anissa Najjar (Lebanon) and Rigmor Thomsen (Denmark), Vice-presidents, and Evelyn Rothfield (Australia), treasurer.

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(1) WILPF, 1213 Race, Philadelphia, Pa., 19107, U.S.A.



# UNESCO Conference in Beirut

Sponsored by the Regional Office for Education in the Arab states, a Seminar for women leaders responsible for the training of rural Arab women, was held at the UNESCO Center, Sports City Avenue, Beirut, 28 October – 7 November 1980. Besides the U.N. delegates and representatives of the Regional Office for Education in the Arab states, the participants included delegates of women's educational institutions and social centers in Lebanon, Sudan, Tunis, Somalia, Jordan, Syria, Palestine. The coordinator of the Seminar was Dr. Nabil Dajani, who shared with Dr. Suad Ismail, director of the U.N. Regional Office, and Miss Yasmine Zahran, representative of the Unesco General Headquarters, the presentation of the Seminar and its objectives.

The speakers, representing various Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian research groups, developed the general aim of the seminar which is "the creation of awareness among rural women regarding their responsibilities and the development of their aptitude for further participation in rural development." The lectures revolved around the following points :

1. Importance of the rural sector, which covers about 70% of the Arab countries.
2. Necessity of training and encouraging local leadership for the handling of rural problems.
3. Complete eradication of illiteracy, an urgent task,
4. Equal rights for both men and women in both rural and urban districts.
5. Renovation and development of methods of rural education,

Regarding methods used in rural education, Dr. Munir Khoury, professor of sociology at Beirut University College, recommended the "Community Development Method" which stresses a purely local basis of developmental activity, is free from pre-conceived ideas, gives priority to the most pressing needs, encourages self-help and independent initiative, requires the mobilization of all existing human potentials and, finally, allows resorting to foreign help only after all local possibilities have been exhausted.

A scientific definition of rural cooperatives and of the role they should play in rural development was presented by Mr. Habib Zumut, regional advisor for the development of cooperatives in the International Labor Organization. Woman's role in cooperative activity has been highly

limited. To promote it, the speaker proposed besides an active campaign against illiteracy, a revision of training programs in cooperative work.

Mrs. Anissa Najjar, president of the "Village Welfare Association" in Lebanon, described the ways by which this association has been trying to answer the needs of the village women: sharing in the revival of local crafts, encouraging women to practice money-earning activities, informing them about their legal rights, and emphasizing their potentials. The schools created by the association train students to do the work of "rural pioneers" who contribute to spread awareness, education and health care techniques in their own districts. Each graduate has to "remove" the illiteracy of at least one person in her village.

The family as a social unit was the topic treated by Mr. Toufic Osseiran, secretary of the Family-Planning Association in Lebanon, who asserted that the family has been and should remain the chief pillar of society. Those who support free sexual union, help to undermine it. Against this wave, he recommended a modernized preparation of women for their role, based on progressive Western ideas, provided it is free from blind imitation and distorted information.

What educational measures should be used to enhance woman's integration in development? In answering this question, Dr. Munir Bashour from the Department of Education, American University of Beirut, proposed what he called a macro-approach followed by a micro-approach to the subject. The first comes from above. It requires the high authorities in the Arab World to elaborate a new code of personal status laws **giving women complete equality with men**. Special efforts must be made to implement the laws and to ensure the development of skills which the implementation necessitates. The micro-approach comes from below. It means the development of local awareness of the actual needs and a genuine desire to meet them. It also means the rise of spontaneous social leadership replacing the routine official employment.

The final lecture, given by Dr. Ilham Kallab Bsat from the Lebanese University, on "Rural Development in Arab Countries and Woman's Contribution to It", condensed the various discussions and recommendations into five points : 1) Democratic training in which both sexes have an equal share, 2) Modernization of training methods, 3) Adaptation of methods to local needs, 4) Integration of the training, and 5) Its continuity.



# Family-Planning Week, Organized by the Lebanon Family Planning Association

THE SIXTH FAMILY-PLANNING WEEK, 1-7 DEC. 1980,  
DISCUSSES FAMILY PLANNING PROSPECTS FOR THE EIGHTIES

Founded in 1969, readily affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which provided it with financial aid, the Lebanon Family-Planning Association (LFPA) was able to gain full recognition within a few years.

In 1970-71, it produced an important field study covering the social, cultural, demographic and economic status of the Lebanese family, including the average percentage of fertility and birth rate, the information about contraceptives, their uses and the reactions they aroused among the respondents(1). A large number of publications were issued by the Association, reporting on its activities in the regular family-planning clinics and others outside, and on the conferences and workshops it organized for the training of leaders and volunteer social workers.

Its latest activity has been the organization of the 6th Family-Planning Week, including a Seminar, 1-3 December, and the direction of the Third Conference of the Non-Governmental Societies in Lebanon, on the Fifth of December, 1980.

The Seminar brought together delegates of about 20 government and private institutions involved in social welfare. Seven lecturers, representing various fields of sociological study, treated the demographic, economic, educational and legal aspects of family-planning. They showed its relationship to government policy and local administration, and expounded the role that women should play in its implementation.

Dr. Abdul-Rahman Labban, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, inaugurated the Seminar with an address in which he said: "Overpopulation is now a world problem. During the last 25 years, the world population has increased at the appalling rate of 60%. Birth control has become a necessity; contraceptive methods should be used, but we prefer the indirect methods of raising the standard of living and promoting women's education and involvement in social activities."

The same topic was treated by Dr. Adnan Mroweh, President of the Lebanon Family-Planning Association, who gave statistics on the future world problems resulting from overpopulation and shortage of food and energy during the coming 20 years. He pointed out the dangers threatening particularly the developing countries where the birth rate is highest and production lowest.

Mr. Toufic Osseiran, general secretary of LFPA, gave a brief report on the nature and objectives of the IPPF which consists of 106 associations disseminated as follows: 18 in Africa, 16 in the Indian Ocean region, 21 in Europe, 12 in

the Middle East and North Africa and 33 in the two Americas. The Federation is mainly financed by Europe, (excluding France) the United States and Japan.

Some details were presented by Mr. Osseiran regarding the latest activities of the Association. First, it has tried to extend its relations to include more of the intellectual elite interested in social change. Second, it has expanded its family-planning services outside the regular clinics. Third, it has followed up its information programs through the various information media. Fourth, it has established contacts with the Coordination Committee of Private Lebanese Organizations with the aim of creating a higher social planning unit, capable of including family-planning in its proposed plans. Fifth, it has developed closer relations with "The Educational Center for Research and Development" as well as a number of ministries, public services and municipal councils, in view of securing effective cooperative action.

Its last field study, made in 1980, covered the village of Ankoun in South Lebanon. It presented in 8 tables, the educational and economic status of the villagers, their birth rate, the information they received on family-planning and how they responded to it. The results showed that 70 - 80% of the inhabitants were favorable to birth control, that 70% had received some information on family-planning through the Association and other media, and that the families with the lowest income (14 in number) and the highest proportion of illiteracy, had the largest number of children: 10 or more per family. The proportion of illiteracy is 39% for women, 21% for men. The ideal number of children per family as reported by the study was the following:

- 18% considered 3 children the ideal number.
- 34% considered 4 children the ideal number.
- 8% considered 5 children the ideal number.
- 6% considered 6 children the ideal number.

The study showed, among other things, a growing positive attitude toward family planning, induced by the LFPA's activities and those of social workers and information media.

The lectures which followed dealt with family planning prospects during the eighties, and were adequately commented on by qualified delegates. It is hoped that some of the lectures and resolutions of the Seminar will be condensed in future issues of Al-Raida.

(1) Al-Raida. Vol. III, no 11, Feb. 1980, p.5



FROM IRAQ

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE GENERAL  
FEDERATION OF IRAQI WOMEN**

The General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) has been producing a number of publications (in Arabic), including a series of studies on child care and child education in the Gulf States(1); also an English magazine, *The Woman*, edited by Mrs. Manal Yunis Abdel-Razzak, president of the Federation.

The Iraqi Department of Children's Culture has been publishing two weekly Arabic magazines for children: "Al-Mizmar" (The Flute) and "Majallati" (My Magazine), containing illustrated stories, poems, comics, nature study, historical narratives from Arab and non-Arab lands.

The General Federation of Iraqi Women Secretariat of Legal Affairs has recently published a study of the laws concerning minors, promulgated in 1969, with the aim of showing its defects, the progressive amendments that it has received since that year, and a projection of further reforms proposed for the future.

Another publication regarding the legal status of foundlings has also been produced by the Secretariat of Legal Affairs of the above Federation. In the reformed laws of 1977 regarding the status of foundlings, the State recognizes its responsibility for them in providing nurseries and homes to accommodate them, and schools where they would have the same opportunity for education as other Iraqi children.

The study states that the foundling has the right to obtain an identity, like other children with legitimate birth. If it happens that someone claims him as his child, he becomes entitled to all the rights and duties that such a condition implies. The same status applies to him or her if he or she is adopted by a family, in which case the adoptive family may keep the child for good unless the authentic father reclaims him or her. As a result the adoption contract may be abolished.

Source : Publications of the GFIW,  
Secretariat of Legal Affairs.  
Iraqi Department of Children's Culture.

(1) Al-Raida. Vol. III, no. 12, May 1980, p.6

FROM BAHRAIN

**WOMEN'S CONDITION IN BAHRAIN**

A national permanent commission for women's condition has been recently founded in Bahrain. The news was officially announced on Sept. 21, 1980. The commission is made up of representatives of the various women's organizations and of those of women employed in the Bahraini ministries. Presided over by Faiza al-Zayani,

FROM LEBANON

**A CHARTER FOR  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

"The League for the Lebanese Woman's Rights" held a press conference at the AUB Alumni Club on the 8th of October, 1980, during which the chairman read and distributed a list of demands entitled, "The Charter of Woman's Rights", based on the United Nations "Charter of Man's Rights".

The so-called "Charter of Woman's Rights" claimed the complete elimination of sexual discrimination in Lebanon on the ground that this step would serve the cause of true democracy and would represent the will of the majority of the Lebanese population.

The following are the main contents of this charter :

1. Elimination of illiteracy which prevails particularly among women.
2. Ratification and implementation of the law requiring equal pay for equal work among both men and women.
3. Forbidding dismissal of working women on account of marriage, pregnancy or maternity.
4. A paid maternity leave should be extended to three months while the right to reinstatement is maintained.
5. Giving women equal rights with men to social security, promotion and occupation of leading positions for which they may be qualified.
6. Abolition of all forms of sexual discrimination existing in the penal code, specifically article 562 which gives alleviating circumstances to crimes committed by men on the pretense of defending their "honor".
7. Fixing the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both sexes.
8. Giving women equal right with men to make or dissolve marriage contracts, equal rights and duties regarding the responsibility for children, with the understanding that the interest of the latter should receive priority in case of dissolution between spouses.
9. The same rights to inheritance and property should be given to both sexes.
10. Effective measures should be used to fight and eliminate prostitution.

director of social affairs in the ministry of labor, the commission will take charge of defending women's rights in that country, in socio-professional and cultural fields. It will also be in charge of following up the evolution of women's political status on the international level, by keeping in touch with the principal world organizations dealing with woman's condition.

The Bahrain archipelago, about 300,000 inhabitants, was in 1928 the first state in the Arab Gulf to school its feminine population.

(Le Reveil, Sept. 22, 1980)



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## FROM SYRIA

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### AN OFFICE FOR INFORMATION SERVICE

In its last meeting, held in Bahrain, summer 1980, the "Board of the Arab Center of Information Studies", which is established in Damascus, decided to create within the center an "Office of Information Service on Arab Women".

The idea was launched during the International Mexico Conference for Women, 1975, when UNESCO, joined by the International Fund for Demographic Activities, called for the creation of information service centers about women in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Arab countries. While the proposal was carried out in the first three regions between 1976 and 1979, it had to wait till about the end of 1980 for its implementation in the Arab countries, through the cooperation of the said Arab Center of Information Studies and UNESCO.

#### Objectives of the Office.

1. The primary aim of this office will be the coordination of information regarding Arab women with the purpose of promoting their integration in national development.
2. The office will have its seat in the Arab Center of Information Studies, Damascus.
3. It will work on the compilation of all material published about the Arab woman, including written works, films and pictures which reflect her position and her activities in the political, social and demographic fields.
4. It will take charge of classifying the compiled material and distributing it among Arab countries.
5. It will publish a monthly report on the activities of its information service.
6. It will cooperate with the Information Services of

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## FROM EGYPT

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### PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PEACE

The peace promoting policy adopted by the Egyptian Government, since 1978, has been a factor in the forward march of this country on the way to progress and well-being. Education is considered as one of the basic pillars used to achieve national progress and promote world understanding. Education in Egypt is free at all levels. Women educators constitute about 40% of the total teaching staff. The structure and aims of the current themes of the United Nations are being taught in the schools as early as the 6th grade. Plans are being made for integrating ideas of international understanding and friendship in educational curricula.

#### Promoting Women's Integration in Development.

In May 1979, President Sadat issued a decree according to which a minimum of 30 women

UNESCO, the International Fund for Demographic Activities in N.Y. and any other institutions capable of providing valuable information on women

Conference for Arab Women Journalists.

This conference was held in Algeria, July 1980, with the aim of informing Arab women journalists about the objectives of the Office and how they could contribute to its successful functioning.

In preparation for the Algeria Conference, a preliminary meeting took place in Damascus, grouping 35 Syrian women journalists out of 98 employed in the Syrian Information Service. During this meeting, a survey was made of the general activities of the Arab Center of Information Studies, particularly in the field of woman's integration in national development. An advisory committee was elected, consisting of 8 women representing the various information media in Syria.

The conference in Algeria, which lasted a week, (in July 1980), was attended by 40 women journalists representing 11 Arab countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Eritrea, Tunisia, Lybia, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Algeria and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

The project of the "Office of Information Service" and its objectives were presented to the conference members. Fourteen of them read papers reporting on women's conditions in their countries, after which the participants discussed the objectives of the Office of Information and came out with a long list of resolutions.

(Condensed from: *Ad-Dirasat ul-Ilamiya*" (Information Studies), an Arabic quarterly published by the "Arab Center for Information Studies", Damascus, no. 22, Oct. 1980, pp.5-15).

representatives of various governorates would be members of Parliament.<sup>(1)</sup> Dr. Sohair el-Kalalmawi chairs the cultural committee within this assembly, while several other women representatives are vice-presidents and members of different committees. For the third time, the minister for Social Affairs and Insurance is a woman. For the first time in Egypt a woman was appointed this summer Ambassador to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Besides the big change which occurred this year concerning family-laws for the benefit of woman<sup>(2)</sup>, a project is being discussed requesting women's voting to be compulsory. Now 10% of all seats in the local councils and governorates are given to women. A supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has been established, to which three women have been appointed. A Supreme Council for Culture has been created with the appointment of one woman member.

Women are now taking decision-making posts. The post of under-Secretary in the field of Mass Media is occupied by a woman. The vice-minister of Television and Broadcasting is a woman; the vice-minister of Social Insurance and the under-secretary of Higher Education are likewise women. Many other women occupy similar positions.

(Condensed from *International Women's News*. Vol. 75, No. 3, Sept. 1980, p. 49)

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(1) *Al-Raida*. Vol. III, no. 14, Nov. 1980, p.9

(2) *Al-Raida*. *Ibid*.



## Law and Planned Parenthood

In this item we try to present the above topic by means of excerpts taken from the handbook on law and Planned Parenthood, compiled and edited in 116 large size pages for the International Planned Parenthood and Federation Panel on Law and Planned Parenthood by John M. Paxman<sup>(1)</sup>.

Considering the problem of law and planned parenthood as it appears in the Third World and particularly in the Arab countries, we may say that very few of the laws and recommendations proposed by the IPPF Panel have been discussed or presented for consideration by government authorities or by non-governmental associations.

On the other hand, it seems encouraging to notice that the Panel on Law and Planned Parenthood organized in 1973, which had its first meeting in Tunis 1974, was attended by professor George Dib of Lebanon. The Middle East and North Africa Region (Mena), whose chairman is Dr. M. Bouzidi of Morocco, is a member in this panel which regards law as a necessary component of all family planning programs and urges that a legal component be included in the plans and programs of all its member associations.

We hope that the following pages will be, for both Arab and non-Arab countries, a source of information and awareness regarding the importance of law in supporting planned parenthood practices and promoting woman's claims to justice and equality.

During the last forty years, people have increasingly become aware of their right to control their fertility and the role that law could play in impeding or encouraging family planning. Demographers as well as international family planning associations have been warning about the dangers of overpopulation for developing and developed countries alike.

The IPPF Law Panel was organized to help family planning associations understand how laws affect their activities and to encourage them to take the law into account when formulating their works programs.

As a result of assessments made by the Family Planning Associations, the Regional Offices and the Law Panel, the IPPF Law and Planned Parenthood Program has focused its activities on laws and policies affecting :

- Regulation of Contraceptive Drugs and Devices
- Sterilization
- Pregnancy Termination
- Utilization of Health and Auxiliary Personnel
- Status of Women
- Information and Services for Adolescents.

### (1) Legal and Policy Aspects of Contraceptive Information and Services

There are two major laws regulating the distribution of contraceptives. First, the doctor's prescription ; second, the pharmacy sale requirement. There is, however, a growing feeling that contraceptives should be made

available in simpler ways, especially for countries where the doctor per capita ratio is low. As a remedy to the situation, the doctor could be replaced by trained and auxiliary personnel who use questionnaires which they distribute to patients with the aim of testing their receptiveness to the Pill. Other techniques are preprinted forms with standing orders or instructions indicating which kind of women can receive oral contraceptives and under what conditions.

### Insertion of IUDs (intra-uterine device)

Use of the IUD requires different regulations from those regarding the Pill, because it cannot be self administered. There is, however, a growing trend to authorize non-medical personnel to perform IUD insertions if they have been adequately trained to perform the operation.

### (2) Voluntary Sterilization and the law

Most countries do not have laws which specifically regulate voluntary sterilization. As a result, it may be considered legal in those countries whose laws do not expressly, or by interpretation, forbid its practice.

IPPF Policy on Voluntary Sterilization :

1. Sterilization as a method of limiting family size is a matter for individual choice which should be made in full knowledge of alternative methods of contraception and the risks and benefits to health and welfare associated with sterilization.
2. The relative simplicity of present sterilization technology, and the known minimal side effects following sterilization, make it an appropriate procedure for those who have attained their desired family size and wish to choose this method.
3. In the light of current medical technology, it is recommended that male and female sterilization procedures should be regarded as irreversible at the time of choice of the procedure. However, in order to provide for unseen events, such techniques should be used as to give the greatest chance of reversibility.

### (3) Pregnancy Termination and the Law

At present, nearly two-thirds of the world's population live in countries where laws permit abortion on a wide variety of grounds.

The requirement that abortions be performed only by registred practitioners is virtually universal. Abortion procedures are legally restricted to qualified doctors. In both developed and developing countries such a law may jeopardize service and disregard an urgent need. In the future, thought will have to be given to utilizing trained midwives, health and auxiliary personnel to conduct abortion procedures early in pregnancy under adequate supervision.

Conclusion Regarding Abortion

As a method of family planning, contraception is generally preferable to abortion. Nevertheless, we are still faced with the fact that no modern method of contraception is 100% fail-proof and no single contraception is appropriate for all. Hence it is unlikely that the need for abortion will ever entirely disappear. Given the present state of contraceptive technology and practice, it is appropriate to have legal abortion

(1) Printed in England by Stephen Austin and Sons Ltd., Hertford, 1980.



available as a back-up alternative where and when it is needed.

#### (4) Expanding the Roles of Health and Auxiliary Personnel in Family Planning.

As has already been pointed out in preceding paragraphs, there exists a general trend towards enlarging the role of non-doctors in fertility regulation by utilizing them to provide contraceptive services. In a few countries, non-doctors are being trained and used in pilot projects to perform sterilizations and even early abortions.

#### (5) Fertility Regulation Information and Services for Adolescents

Theoretical support for information programs for adolescents are based on four justifications :

First, the statements in three international documents : the Teheran Proclamation on Human Rights (1968), the United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969), and the Plan of Action of the World Population at Bucharest (1974).

Second, the population reduction approach.

Third, the adolescent health approach which considers that sexual activity among adolescents, with its potential risks to health, especially the high risk of unwanted pregnancy, creates unique and sometimes severe health problems.

Fourth, status of women approach, presuming that unwanted pregnancies among young girls forces them to give up important educational and employment opportunities.

In recent years, a number of countries have revamped their policies on this subject. A few of them, principally in Scandinavia, have made sex education in the school setting compulsory. In Sweden, information on contraception is provided to pupils between the ages of 14 and 16.

#### (6) Changing the Status of Women Through Law

Possible approaches for establishing equal rights of both men and women within the family are summarized as follows :

1. Legislation requiring free and full consent of both spouses at marriage.
2. Legislation specifying a minimum age for marriage and obligatory registration of births and marriages.
3. Establishment of the same minimum age of marriage for both males and females.
4. Abolition of the concept of the male as unique head of the family by re-defining marriage as an equal partnership.
5. Alteration of divorce procedures in order to establish equal rights and responsibilities for both spouses on the dissolution of marriage, including the right of both to initiate divorce proceedings, the use of special family councils or courts to administer divorces, and the abolition of the concept of divorce based on fault.
6. Establishment of equal rights for men and women in determining the number and spacing of their children, including, if applicable, equal regulations regarding spousal consent.
7. Protection of the wife's right to choose a family name and to work and travel without consent of the husband.
8. Establishment of equal rights of both spouses to own, manage, dispose of and inherit property.

## Women of the Maghreb

by Dr. Alya Baffoun  
Tunis University 1980

This study tries to contrast the present status of the working woman in the Maghreb with that of her predecessor whose function was limited to housekeeping and child care. In treating her topic, the author uses the concepts of dialectical materialism, as when she says : "All social relationships of dependence and oppression, of which the subordination of women is one case, are definitely founded in economic dependence" and "Economic dependence is supported by ideological discourse rooted deep in the unconscious of a culture".

Speaking of the radical change recently effected in woman's position, she says : "The woman is no longer the cousin of equal rank, formerly the preferred bride in the tribal community but neither is she an independent legal person able to fend for herself." "Work has not liberated woman, though it has helped to disrupt traditional life." "The most educated women are often also the most alienated and oppressed by the patriarchal structures of a dependent society".

The number of women in waged employment remains low : 20% of the working population in Tunisia, 15% in Morocco, and 5% in Algeria. Forty-nine per cent of all wage earning women are manual workers ; 34% are office workers ; a large number of them hold poorly paid jobs, especially the daughters of rural parents who have emigrated to the city where they are exposed to bad sanitary and living conditions.

Further on, the author gives a few details about the changes of status for working women as follows :

Waged employment has helped them to make new contacts and confront problems outside the family. From the matrimonial point of view, it has encouraged them to choose their husbands, favor marrying out of the kin-group, and use family-planning and contraception. A working woman has a voice in important decisions, greater independence in her relationship with her husband, which sometimes leads her to deviant behavior.

The indications of change are thus summarized :

The creative ways in which women, in spite of difficulties, try to realize themselves.

Abandonment of the veil.

Access to education and public life.

Learning to become more socialized and to organize themselves.

Holding more open and direct sexual relations, gradual undermining of the former ideology of honor in which women were such an important element.

Cult of money is replacing former idealism.

As a conclusion the author says : "Though industrialization and its effect on the availability of employment for women have led to a destructuring of the patriarchal family based on bonds of consanguinity and marriage between parallel cousins, yet they have not led to the establishment of complete commodity relations capable of absorbing the contradictions inherent in the new structure and leading to a non-sexist system of organization". Women are still oppressed by community and tribal life traditions.



## Books

- **May Ziadeh : At-Tawahhuj Wal-Uful**, by Rose Ghurayyib, a study of the life and literature of the Lebanese writer, in Arabic, 1978. (Price LL. 10)
- **Nassamat wa A'assir fish sh'ir an 'Nissai'l 'Arabi l Mu'assii**, by Rose Ghurayyib, a study of Contemporary Arab Women Poets, in Arabic, 1980 (Price LL. 30)
- **The Status of the Arab Woman: A Selected Bibliography**, in English, by Samira Meghdessian, 1980, Mansell Publishing House, London.

## Monographs\*

- **Women in Islam**, in Arabic, by Sheikh Dr. Subhi Saleh, 1980.
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## In the Press

- **Arab Women in Population Employment and Economic Development**, in English, by IWSAW and the ILO (comparative study of 6 Arab countries), 1980.

\*Price for each monograph: LL. 10 in Beirut and \$ 5 outside including mail.

\*Above publications can be secured from the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College P.O.Box 11-4080, Beirut, Lebanon

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In the editorial we read the following:

"Militarization itself is becoming an issue as women are increasingly being encouraged or conscripted into military service. Military service for women is often being couched in pseudo-feminist arguments of "equality for women" or "equal responsibility for equal rights". In this bulletin several women argue strongly against this manipulation of women and expose the myth of equal rights, equal duties".

The following statistics are reprinted from p. 38: Global **military** spending currently runs at about **\$ 400 thousand million** a year, nearly \$ 1 million a minute. Yet:

1. about 1,500 million people (nearly 40% of the world's population) have no effective services;
2. nearly 3,000 million live in countries which have more than 1,000 inhabitants per physician;
3. nearly 3,000 million people lack access to safe water;
4. about 750,000 die each month from water borne diseases;
5. nearly 570 million people are seriously undernourished;
6. nearly 2,000 million have a life expectancy of less than 60 years, usually less than 50 years;
7. about 800 million are illiterate, including about 70% of the population of Africa; and
8. nearly 250 million children under 14 years of age do not attend school.

(Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.)

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## STAFF

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