



FALLEN IDOLS

At a meeting which grouped a number of university women interested in modern social problems, a question was raised regarding the nature and evolution of family relations. One of the group mentioned a study recently made by Dr. Munir Chamoun, a well-known Lebanese sociologist, who concluded that the women of this country «are asexual individuals whose lives revolve around motherhood, a function which absorbs their whole being. They are prepared for it from childhood, they concentrate their whole activity on it. If deprived of it, their personality is distorted, their whole life is shattered».

To this statement one of those present responded by saying that such behavior on the part of women was only natural. Though it may be at times exaggerated, it is, on the whole, instinctive and plausible.

The theory presented by the respondent is one of many stereotyped opinions that are popularly approved, but scientifically refuted.

According to most recent studies, family relations are not inherited nor derived from instinct. Like most traits which constitute our personality, they are acquired patterns of conduct dictated by society. A lecture given on this topic by Dr. Zuhair Hatab, professor of sociology at the Lebanese University, made this point clear in the Women's Studies course at BUC when he referred to eminent anthropologists like James Frazer, Margaret Mead and others. We are not «born» with a certain personality but we are shaped by our environment unless, at an early or late period of our life, we have been trained or induced to think and act independently, to choose our own path and to fix our own reason for existence. That is indeed the ultimate aim of the Women's Liberation movement, to create the woman who believes in her capacity for freedom and personal completeness, who has freed herself from the common belief in fate and predetermined behavior. Even if certain traits, good or bad, were «born» or natural, it should be possible for one with a strong will to modify those traits and use them for one's benefit or to the contrary.

The same idea applies to disabled individuals, whether their disability was inborn or acquired. It is faith in the possibility of improving that lies behind the proclamation of the International Year for Disabled Persons.

All men and women handicapped by negative beliefs, tortured by tyrannical public opinion, are called to shake off their burdens and relieve themselves of traditional sources of worry and depression.

Despotic stereotypes are at the root of human misery. Only in the feeling that man is master of his destiny, is the source of true and permanent happiness.

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MUNEERA EL-SOLH TWENTY YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Private initiative has always played a leading role in the development of Lebanon, especially in the social and economic fields. To this initiative, the 18 centers created in this country for the rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disabled owe their existence. While a few of them receive financial help from the government, all of them depend primarily on private effort for maintenance and development.

Mrs. Muneera El-Solh, herself the mother of a mentally retarded son, decided 20 years ago to create a home for the mentally handicapped, where her boy, together with other children suffering from the same difficulty, would receive proper care. For this purpose she made several trips to Europe where she visited a number of centers for the mentally disabled. In 1960 she founded in Brummana, by her own means, the socio-medical Amal Institute, located in a building she had inherited from her father. «Before the Lebanese war», she said, «the Institute accommodated about 300 Lebanese and foreign children. Now the number is reduced to 70, including 50 children sent to us by the Office of Social Development (OSD). The other twenty are entrusted to us by their parents who live in Lebanon. No more children are sent to us from neighboring countries, the security conditions being unfavorable. As a result, our financial resources are greatly reduced.

Q. — How do you handle the situation?

A. — The OSD is responsible for the expenses of its fifty children. We freely accept the rest because they come from needy families but we do not know how long

we can continue it.

Q. — At what age do you accept the child?

A. — At the age of 7, with the possibility of keeping him until he is twenty. When his condition permits, I try to place him in some kind of employment.

Q. — What procedures are used for admission?

A. — For every child we prepare a card containing information about his case. For a whole week, he is submitted to certain tests which disclose the kind and stage of his handicap. It happens sometimes that the child is sound of mind but because of unhealthy home conditions he has developed neurotic symptoms which his family takes for mental disorder. Away from his family, he recovers his balance.

Q. — What program of instruction do you use?

A. — The government program is used for the less retarded who can go through it at a slower pace than normal children. The others are oriented toward manual work such as carpentry, gardening etc.

Q. — What do you expect from the government authorities?

A. — We first expect financial aid. Second there is a law that requires industrial organizations to send us freely whatever material they want to get rid of, which may help us to carry out our manual skills projects. Research teams must be created to study the kinds and causes of mental handicaps, as a necessary basis for their treatment.

*Information reported by Nayla Kassis,
in «Le Réveil» 21 Jan. 1981.*

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN: THEIR PREPONDERANCE IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

Women represent a growing proportion of employees in the distributive trades—banking, insurance, real estate and offices in general, according to a report prepared for the ILO Eighth Session of the Advisory Committee on Salaried Employees and Professional Workers convoked by the ILO in Geneva from 13 to 22 January 1981.

The preponderance of women in commerce and offices is most pronounced in the industrialised countries. Thus in Finland, women account for 84.0 percent of administrative staff and assimilated workers... In France they number 66.6 percent... and in the United States 79.8 percent.

What is so distinctive about women's employment in commerce and offices, compared to the employment of men, is their concentration into a narrow range of occupations, particularly in the clerical occupational

group. In many countries women account for the near-totality of all secretaries, stenographers, typists and related workers and for the majority of cashiers.

These occupations are at the lower end of the hierarchical structure and are usually characterized by low skill qualifications, routine and repetitive tasks and low pay.

This situation poses the complex question of measures which can be taken to secure full equality of opportunity between men and women at work. They include training, vocational guidance, recruitment practices and re-training. It puts in question, to a certain extent, the present distribution of responsibilities in the family. It also points up the problem of employment and conditions of work arising as a result of the more widespread use of electronics and telecommunications in commerce and offices.

*(ILO Press, 9 January
1981)*

*International Labor Office
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland*

SEMINAR ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE LEBANESE WORKING WOMAN: A SERIOUS EFFORT FOR HER PROMOTION.

Closely following the Seminar on Arab Journalists, 3-8 February 1981⁽¹⁾, a seminar on the «Social Problems of the Lebanese Working Woman» was held in Beirut on February 16-26. The participants were Mr. Hamid Khoury, director of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the representatives of the General Confederation of Labor and of the Permanent Syndical Training and Workers Committees, besides delegates of the Arab Labor Office and other participants.

The recommendations favoring the promotion of the Lebanese Working Woman, which ended the sessions of the Seminar, are hereby reported:

A. LEGISLATION

Require the legislative authorities to approve and apply the labor laws promulgated by both International and Arab Labor Organizations concerning the working woman, including:

- 1) The Arab agreement No. 5 regarding the working woman, and requiring that the maternity leave be raised to three paid months; also the application of Article 14 allowing the working woman an unpaid leave if she claims such a leave for the care of her children.
- 2) Approval of the agreement concerning a paid study leave.
- 3) Issue a law allowing government employees and officials to form their own syndicates.
- 4) Amend the laws of Social Security concerning family and health indemnities to allow a secured woman to receive her children's indemnity when her husband is not secured, without limiting this right to cases of divorce, widowhood and husband's disability.
- 5) Give the working married woman the right to obtain her full indemnities when she claims them without consideration of time limit.
- 6) Amend the Lebanese Labor Law so that it may include rural laborers.

B. GENERAL EDUCATION

- 1) Compulsory free education until the end of the intermediate stage.
- 2) Improve the quality of elementary and intermediate textbooks by eliminating from them all forms of discrimination against woman and all traditional ideas which impose on her a marginal role in society.

- 3) Develop the «National Council for the Elimination of Illiteracy» so that it will include within its activities all Lebanese districts and, for this purpose, public school buildings could be used for adult education during hours when these buildings are free.

C. VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

- 1) Create in the various districts of the country centers for vocational training which will comply with local market demands and concentrate on vocations that agree with woman's capacities.
- 2) Include in the buildings special quarters for vocational training for women students coming from far districts, with the possibility of providing them with transportation facilities.
- 3) Provide training sessions for men and women workers with the aim of developing and updating their technical knowledge.

D. THE SOCIAL FIELD

- 1) Create for working women, in all districts of the country, day nurseries for their children, financed through the joint cooperation of the State, the employers and the National Fund of Social Security.
- 2) Increase the credits allotted for syndical training and worker's education.

E. INFORMATION

- 1) Information programs should be created on radio and television broadcasting stations, emphasizing woman's role in all development activities. The programs should be supervised by the General Worker's Federation and the Syndical Training Commission.
- 2) A special program for workers and syndicates should be presented by radio and television, prepared by the General Confederation of Labor and the Syndical Training Commission.
- 3) Avoid the exploitation and degradation of woman's image in publicity and advertisement programs.

(An-Nahar 27-2-1981)

(1) See Al-Raida, May 1981, vol. IV, No. 16.

WORLD FERTILITY SURVEY CONFERENCE⁽¹⁾

Family Planning Associations, demographic conferences, abundant literature on birth control and family planning, many local and international activities taking place in both developed and developing countries, are presently focused on population problems which people everywhere must confront.

UNESCO, which created in the seventies a special fund for population activities and sponsored studies and publications dealing with this topic, has recently published a book in English, translated into Arabic, on «Population Education: A Contemporary Concern», based on an international study of the conceptualization and methodology of population education.

In Egypt, a «Supreme Council for Population and Family Planning» was established in 1973, with a research office and quarterly review entitled, «Population Studies».

The World Fertility Survey: International Statistical Institute, has been effecting general fertility surveys, including those of over 40 developing countries, which will be completely published by the end of 1981. The already published papers of World Fertility Survey (WFS) are widely used as a source of information about many aspects of child-bearing, marital status and contraception. Recently, 7-11 July 1980, a World Fertility Survey Conference was held at the Wembley Conference Center in London, where «more than 700 population scientists and policy-makers from 93 countries gathered to discuss the findings and policy implications of the WFS, an international survey programme involving some 35,000 women in 41 developing and 19 developed countries.»

Since the WFS Conference directly involves developing countries, including the Arab world, and in accordance with Al-Raida's interest in publishing up-to-date information on family planning and population studies⁽²⁾, this article attempts to condense the major findings and conclusions of that Conference.

The population problem affects mainly third world countries where fertility rates rank highest and population problems are more difficult to handle. According to Dr. Milos Macura, WFS Project Director, the survey has found solid evidence of changes in fertility. In 16 out of 20 countries for which results are now available, it has given evidence of fertility declines and signs of change in both attitude and practice.

1. There is a large unsatisfied demand for family planning in nearly all countries surveyed by WFS, but though women may be willing to use contraceptives, many have no access to them because of the shortage of clinics or difficult communication.

2. In 12 out of 15 surveyed countries, over 30% of women surveyed said that their last birth was unwanted. Between one-fifth and one-quarter of currently

married women stated a desired family size lower than actual size.

3. The rising age of marriage (23-25 years) has played a major part in the reducing of fertility in a number of Asian countries, particularly Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Marriage postponement, however, cannot by itself bring about moderate or low fertility rate without heavy use of birth control.

4. Breast-feeding, prolonged by 5 months, adds an average of five to ten months to the interval between births. In countries where there is little use of contraceptives, the duration of breastfeeding is an important factor in determining variability in the level of fertility within marriage. Surveys show that prolonged breast-feeding is common in Asia. The duration tends to be reduced with increasing education and movement toward urban areas, but the reduction is often compensated by increased use of contraception.

5. Among the factors affecting fertility, it was found that labor force participation of women had the strongest influence on the level of child bearing. Women who work outside the home have smaller families. The importance of this factor is lessened by prospects of future unemployment and underemployment resulting from rapid increase of population in third world countries.

6. Education is the primary key to reduced fertility. In most countries, particularly in Latin America, fertility declines with increasing length of the education of couples. However, schooling is not a pre-requisite for adoption of contraception and reduced fertility. In many Asian countries, women with a few years of schooling have the same fertility rate as women who have never been to school.

7. Surveys have shown that decline in fertility is correlated with the level of contraceptive use. In those countries in the WFS programme where fertility declines are non-existent or negligible (Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan), the level of contraceptive use is less than 10 per cent. However, the survey shows that the relationship between the level of contraceptive use and the sharpness of fertility decline is not constant for all countries, because in some of them this practice may be counterbalanced by other factors.

8. A dramatically increased use of voluntary sterilization as a means of ceasing child-bearing is shown by 19 surveys carried out by WFS. Among the countries reporting more than 15% sterilised for contraceptive purposes are Panama, Fiji, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. In three of them, one out of five currently married women 30 to 34 years old, has been sterilised for contraceptive purposes.

9. Data available from WFS show that over 40% of married women aged 35 to 39 in rural areas, have used contraception in 13 out of 20 countries surveyed. Even in Jordan, where the fertility rate is very high, nearly half of all uneducated married women aged 35 to 39 have used contraception.

10. While it is often suggested that high fertility levels

(1) International Statistical Institute, 35-37 Grosvenor Gardens, London, U.K.

(2) See Al-Raida Sept. 1977, No. 2, p. 10, Feb. 1978, No. 3, p. 7, Feb. 1980, vol. III, No 11 pp. 3-10, Nov. 1980, No. 14, p. 7-9, Feb. 1981, vol. IV, No. 15, pp. 9 and 14, May 1981, No. 16, p. 5.

are a natural response to high levels of child mortality, recent research has suggested that fertility declines can begin without evidence of declining infant mortality. Further research is needed for the explanation of unexpected results along this line.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

WFS surveys have augmented the evidence concerning fertility declines in developing countries. Most of those that have been surveyed have experienced declines ranging from 15-50% during the last decade. They include Costa Rica, Columbia, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Jamaica, Peru, Republic of Korea, and the Philippines.

In Thailand, 2 in 5 couples use contraceptives.

Sri Lanka, in spite of low per capita income, has achieved the lowest fertility and mortality levels in Asia.

Tunisia has made remarkable family planning progress by ensuring available contraceptive service in urban and rural health clinics.⁽¹⁾

Kenya (Africa) has the highest birth rate in the world: 8 children per couple as an average. Though contraceptive knowledge is widespread, only 7% of currently married women are using any method at the time of the survey.

Jordan, the first Arab country to join the WFS, continues to have large families: one in 3 women aged 45-49 have had 11 or more births. Education has contributed to reduce the number of children per family; contraceptive use by 26% has led to a fertility decline of 17%.

Egypt's rapidly growing population is expected to double in 26 years. «Reasons for the apparent increase are now under study», says Gamal Askar, president of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. «Currently 23% of married women are using contraceptives. That figure must be raised to 35% if Egypt is to meet its goal of reducing the birth rate from 40 to 30 per thousand.»

CONCLUSION

Even with fertility declines documented in 16 out of the 20 countries which have completed WFS surveys, the fact that women want an average of four children indicates that relatively high rates of population growth may continue in many developing countries.

Between 1978 and the year 2000, the world's population is projected to grow by 50%, resulting in a total of 6000 million people. Most governments favour slowing population growth. Some 81 per cent of third world people live in countries that want growth slowed, while 16 percent live in countries satisfied with their current growth rates, and only 3 percent live in countries that want faster growth. Most third world governments have initiated policies facilitating use of modern birth control methods, and this has had a major effect on birth rates.

THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UN MID-DECADE FOR WOMEN: IMPRESSIONS OF AN OBSERVER,¹⁾

In issue 15 of *Al-Raida*⁽²⁾, a very brief report was made on the «Mid-Decade World Conference of the United Nations for Women» held at Copenhagen, Denmark, 14-30 July 1980. The article was based on various reports about the Conference, especially the one stating women's specific needs in the list of «Resolutions and Decisions» adopted by the Conference.

As the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World was not represented at the Conference, it seems helpful and appropriate to publish in this issue some interesting impressions given by a delegate from the University of Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania, to this Conference. These impressions express to a large extent the point of view of Third World women and should be a matter of concern to First World and Second World women as well as to those of Third World countries.

In the first place the author criticizes the «low profile that the Non-Governmental Organizations were forced to assume. They were hardly given an opportunity to air their views even in areas where their role was recognized to be essential... A way should be devised to involve them at the decision-making stages instead of calling on them to carry out decisions made by other bodies.»

A second criticism concerns the slow pace at which the implementation of decisions and resolutions has been going so far. The mid-Decade Conference served to remind the Conference members of all countries of the necessity of achieving more progress in the near future.

In the third place, Conference resolutions emphasized improved health services for women as a factor in their further engagement in gainful employment which will require as well technical training for women as a prerequisite for their effective participation in the economic life of their societies.

A fourth point is the need for involving women in the designing of projects which aim at helping them, especially small scale projects which women could handle on their own, individually or collectively. Awareness-raising on the part of women as to their own problems and needs should form an essential part of any program.

The final point presented by the writer is most important. She says that she was very much aware of

(1) Ruth M. Beshu, lecturer, University of Dar-Es-salaam, Tanzania, and member of the Lutheran World Federation Delegation to the Copenhagen Conference; article published in *ICVA NEWS*, Oct, 1980, No. 87, pp. 12-14.

(2) *Al-Raida*, Feb. 1981, Vol. IV, No. 15, p. 9.

(1) See *Al-Raida*, Nov. 1980, Vol III, No. 14, p. 7 on abortion in Tunisia.

the commercialization of poverty and oppression affecting the great majority of people in underdeveloped countries... It seemed to her that there was a deliberate effort on the part of the developed world to close their eyes to the causes of poverty, oppression, racism and misery, and instead, overlay their roles as aid givers to the victims of those evils. They are quite willing to help the victims of crimes but very reluctant to deal with the criminals. This is a vicious circle, and is poor logic.

The writer concludes by saying: «I wish to question this whole philosophy of perpetual beggars and eternal masters of wealth... Aid in whatever form must remain a very temporary measure, while the search for long-lasting solutions must be intensified. In the long run, it is not the masters who will decide to relinquish their supremacy. It will have to be the affected who will rise and take charge of their fates.»

(ICVA: International Council Voluntary Agencies, the international association of non-governmental, non-profit organizations, Geneva, Switzerland.)

NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE LEBANESE WOMAN'S RIGHTS

Held in Beirut, 5-8 March 1981, the Ninth Conference of the Committee for the Lebanese Woman's Rights opened its session with reports from the delegates about the members' social, political, economic and national activities since the meeting of the 8th Conference of 1978.

The session of March 8th, was attended by the prime minister, Mr. Chafic Wazzan who gave a speech in which he affirmed his complete support of woman's cause and of her rightful claim for liberation. While he approved the Lebanese woman's achievement in educational, artistic and social fields, he showed his disapproval of her apathy regarding political activity and called for her effective participation in responsible government positions.

The list of recommendations presented in the closing session pointed out 1) the necessity of woman's struggle in favor of the political liberation of Lebanon. 2) The importance of creating syndicates for women employees and workers and of encouraging women's joining and supporting them. 3) Social and educational problems should receive their proper share of attention from the members. 4) Every sort of discrimination against women in any field must be eliminated. 5) The Committee reemphasized its determination to cooperate with other social, cultural and educational organizations for the purpose of carrying out its objectives.

WOMAN AND INDUSTRIAL WORK IN EGYPT⁽¹⁾

In studying the phases of women's involvement in the industrial sector in Egypt, it is noteworthy that this country experienced the process of transition from a subsistence cultural economy to a semi-industrial economy earlier than any other Arab or African country.

The first phase occurred under Muhammad Ali who tried to forge the economic basis of Egypt's independence from Turkey and succeeded in establishing a number of national factories where veiled women worked side by side with men and shared with them the same oppressive treatment, which in some cases was worse for women.

When Mohammad Ali founded the school of midwifery, his project met with resistance from the upper class of society but those of the lower stratum were ready to enroll their daughters at the school in large numbers and the State encouraged them by arranging marriages between midwives and medical students.

The second phase took place with the expansion of cotton cultivation in Egypt which encouraged women's work in cotton mills as well as in other growing industries such as sugar, textile and cigarette manufacturing. Just as in the Muhammad Ali era, they were also involved in construction. As a result, the veil in factory and construction work was removed while among peasant women engaged in rural work, it had already disappeared.

World War I, by reducing the volume of imports, spurred the development of local industry. In 1914 women comprised about 5 percent of the workers engaged in industry and construction. In the period which followed, 1915-1942, women and children worked under an oppressive legislation: 9-15 hours per day, on all shifts. Women worked in mining and other underground work, wages were irregularly paid, married women were forbidden to work, workers had no right to strike or to form trade-unions. Yet on several occasions, they succeeded in organizing demonstrations and strikes.

With the liberation of Egypt from colonialism in 1952, the policy of centralized planning focused on the development of heavy industry. The Labor Code of 1954 contained a large number of laws which brought about an improvement in the conditions of female workers. Between 1961 and 1971 the percentage of women engaged in the manufacturing industries rose from 3.3 percent to 11.7 percent and that of illiteracy among females in the labor force declined from 82.4 percent in 1961 to 54.1 percent in 1971.

A field research in 1975 was conducted in a textile factory located in Chubra el-Kheima, in the outskirts of Cairo, where a relatively large concentration of women were employed: 1150 females out of 20,000 workers. Workers interviewed numbered 148 (about 37 percent of female workers employed in the silk factory): 65 percent of them were single, 25 percent married, 10 percent divorced; about 10 percent had

(1) Abstract of a study prepared by Mona Hammam, member of the Department of Sociology, American University, Washington, D.C., published in Arab Studies Quarterly, Winter 1980. (See Al-Raida, Nov. 1979, Vol. III, No. 10, p. 10)

attended preparatory school. The illiteracy rate among the totality of women workers was 33 percent.

RESULTS AND COMMENTS

The researcher points out the sharp class separation existing between the workers and the administrative staff. As an example, the factory compound had two gates, one exclusively used by the administrative staff, the other by the workers. They were transported to and from work on separate company buses.

Transportation of women created for them certain problems. Their working hours dictated that they leave home between 4.00 and 5.00 a.m. in order to walk to the bus station and ride the hour long commute to the factory. They had to be accompanied to the bus station by a male escort; otherwise, they would be subjected to a whole range of male abuses.

Another problem was that of women who had children below school age. If they had no relative or neighbor where the child could be deposited, they had to take him or her to a costly day care center which was not always reliable and rarely provided instruction.

When asked why they chose to work, they all gave economic need as the unique reason for working. Another reason for seeking employment was that a job offered women a socially acceptable opportunity to get away from the home environment and make new acquaintances. Single women considered their occupation as a means of accumulating enough savings to provide household furniture when they get married. An interesting method they practiced for stretching the family budget was the «Gam'eyya», a sort of credit cooperative, by which each member contributed to a common fund, allowing all the members to make loans granted on a temporary basis.

SOCIAL VALUE OF EDUCATION

They all considered education as the only avenue for upward social mobility and exhibited enormous concern that their children, including daughters, «not be deprived of it like their parents». The most frequently mentioned occupation aspired to by the mother for her son was that of engineer and for her daughter, that of doctor. They considered all jobs preferable to their factory work. None of them said that if she were educated she would aspire to an administrative position related to factory work.

Owing to the poor cultural background offered by their home environment, it is difficult for children of laboring classes to achieve the educational level required for college or university entrance. As a result, many parents resort to the questionable practice, very common in Egypt now, of private tutoring lessons, which results from classroom overcrowding and the desire of parents to push their children into academic success.

Another sign of backward mentality among those women is the persistence of the traditional scorn of manual work. Textbooks used for adult teaching contain a bias toward intellectual rather than vocational training. While those books occasionally emphasize the importance of the workers' contribution to social welfare, they fail to recognize the role of the working woman in this field and thus fail to encourage women's participation in industrial activity.

THE DOWRY IN ALGERIA⁽¹⁾

In her introduction, the author of this study raises the following questions: In what measures does the dowry factor influence woman's condition in Algeria? How do we explain the persistence of the dowry as a factor of social development while, all through its practice, it confirms social hierarchy and sex discrimination?

In treating the topic she begins by saying that a distinction must be made between «Mahr Musamma» or Sadaq, whose amount is fixed in the marriage contract and «Mahr el Mithl», an undetermined amount of money which should be given to the bride in case no precise amount has been fixed by contract.

The Mahr, or dowry, is defined by Muslim law as: 1) price of the right to possess the woman's body; 2) a condition of validity of marriage and a result of the marriage contract.

Since the Mahr is the price of defloration, the bride who is not a virgin has no right to a dowry. Consequently a widow upon remarriage is entitled to a lower price than that of a maiden.

As to the time of payment, it is a matter of agreement validated by contract. The amount may be paid at a precise date, or only in case of death or divorce. According to a tradition surviving in Tlemcen until fifty years ago, it was payable only ten years after marriage. In case of divorce motivated by the exclusive fault of the wife, the dowry is never paid.

Is the dowry a condition of the validity of marriage? It is so in theory but in practice it is a result of it, since only the consummation of marriage gives the right to a dowry if marriage has been concluded without stipulation or exclusion of such a condition.

Regarding this question, there is no unified opinion among judges. Some think that marriage occurring without previous agreement on the dowry is considered nil. They require that the nature and amount of the dowry be mentioned in the marriage contract by agreement of both parties.

Historical documents reveal that real estate was sometimes given to a bride in the form of Mahr. Investments in jewelry, gold or silverware have also

(1) Abstract of a study made by Chafika Marouf, in «Actes des Journées d'Etude et de Réflexion sur les Femmes Algériennes», Centre de Documentation des Sciences Humaines, Université d'Oran, 3, 4, 5, et 6 Mai 1980, Oran, pp. 295-329. See *Al-Raida*, May 1, 1981, Vol. IV No. 16 p. 9.

been used. Among nomadic tribes, cattle and other commodities enter into the constitution of a dowry.

According to a recent study (1977), the dowry, while keeping its traditional form, has evolved in content. The bride's trousseau, forming an integral part of the dowry, is partly offered by the bridegroom and partly by the bride's father. The husband's offerings may represent exorbitant sums and reflect the latest progress in European textile industry. The same is true of the father's contribution, with the difference that it follows a more rational course and seems to counteract the commonly accepted idea that the bride is «bought» by the husband.

Are there cases that nullify the payment of a dowry? Some researchers place in this category marriage with the parallel cousin, considered for this reason as preferential. Other authors deny the existence of such a rule in Islam and use Koranic authority to support their view.

A representative case of exemption from dowry is the matrimonial exchange called «Badal», in which one bride is given in return for another. This kind of marriage is strongly condemned by public opinion, but tolerated on the ground that it is economically practical.

A final subject of controversy over the dowry is the differentiation between what is named and what is actually designated as Mahr; in other words, between gifts and dowry. Before the consummation of marriage, what the woman affirms by oath to possess is considered authentic. After consummation, it is the husband's assertions that are valid.

In practice, it seems that easy access to divorce has minimized more and more the function of the dowry as the absolute basis of marriage. As soon as marriage is consummated, the wife loses practically all right to her claims regarding the quality and nature of the dowry.

Having defined the object and nature of the dowry, we may be asked if its amount has been subjected to any limitation.

Neither the Koran nor the Hadeeth give any limits. No Maghribian code exists fixing the maximum amount of the dowry. If the sum has not been fixed by contract, (Mahr Musamma) the husband is obliged to give, after the consummation of marriage, a dowry of parity (Mithl), evaluated by Muslim jurisprudence through the following criteria: age, beauty, wealth, country, period, wisdom, religion, piety and virginity, taken in comparison with those of a woman of an equivalent milieu. The dowry of parity seems to cancel the possibility of misalliance, since the equality of rank of the spouses is required as the basis of marriage.

At present the above considerations are gradually losing ground. Marriage tends to become a political and social investment. The courts seem to consider as essential the original social milieu of the bride and her professional status, because these criteria open the way for informal intervention, of a sociological and humanitarian nature, on the part of the judges.

Another aspect of this study concerns the consolidation and the annihilation of the dowry, resulting from the modality of its application.

How is the dowry delivered? Who guarantees its payment?

As a general rule, the whole dowry is exigible after the consummation of marriage. If the husband dies, the woman has the right to receive it. In case of her death, it is due to her heirs. The payment is guaranteed by the husband or by a member of this family. Presently, the husband's father or guardian remains traditionally the guarantor of payment in urban bourgeois society and in well-to-do rural milieus. In less fortunate societies, the question becomes an object of solidarity and cooperation between members of the extended family.

Recent social upheavals in Algeria, however, have destabilized family solidarity and the problem of long term debts has been a threat to the well-being of many couples. For this reason, a new movement has appeared in urban environments, inducing young people to assume by themselves the charge of the dowry, which makes them independent of any financial or moral obligation imposed on them by the family.

The dowry was instituted, and continues to be in Muslim countries, a symbolic value and a regulator of social reproduction, but it is especially a test of applicability and protection for women.

If this institution had its full significance in pre-capitalist societies and concerned particularly the sectors of traditional activities such as commerce and handicrafts, what significance would it have in modern Algeria, where the economic system leads to a progressive general increase in salaries resulting from a stabilization of employment?

Active living, the promotion of women into public functions and the progressive availability of women's education, are evidences of a new and irreversible experience. How would a dowry, under the present conditions, remain a form of insurance and security for a woman in case of divorce or death of the husband?

Why should a dowry be required for a young girl who has permanent employment, like that of a man? Why should not a man be entitled to a dowry if he has only a temporary job or a low salary? Why should he not be protected against the contingencies of life, such as divorce or the death of his wife?

According to the preliminary project of the new family code (art. 42), a salaried wife will have to contribute to the family budget, while in law and tradition, she has no right to share in any direction and decision-making within the family. In case of controversy between couples, they are still referred to the traditional family counsel emanating from the extended family.

Our inquiry permits us to state that, in Tlemcen, a new movement is emerging among young couples, aiming at joint ownership of property and acquisitions, and the investment of the dowry in the purchase of commodities. According to traditional law, the couple is subject to the system of separation of

property, which is a source of loss to salaried couples, especially to the wife whose dowry has been invested into land, belongings or funds registered in the husband's name. Also in case of divorce, her salary is subject to the law of retaliation: upon her death, it passes by inheritance to the members of the husband's family, since the woman's share in it is insignificant.

In conclusion, the dowry as a means of protection and security for the woman raises a number of questions and problems created by changing social conditions and which will have to be studied and discussed in a subsequent work.

ATTITUDES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOWARD WORKING WOMEN IN JORDAN⁽¹⁾

Dr. Barhoum's study opens with a review of the development of women's education and employment in Jordan. More women are educated and an increasing percentage continue into higher education, hence into higher ranking jobs. Inflation is a consideration here as everywhere. Despite the historic traditional role of women, their added income is welcomed and is frequently the means of further education for the next generation.

The female labor force is still low: 16% of the whole; but it is slowly increasing. Traditional female roles are still pursued because they are more acceptable to traditional families. On the other hand, the role of women in development is recognized by both government officials and social and economic planners. For the first time in the country's history, women were given the right to vote in the 1974 Parliamentary Act. In 1980, a woman was appointed as minister of social affairs. Since 1965, the amount of research on women in Jordan exceeds that in any other field.

Information for the study, namely to discover the attitude of university students toward working women, was gleaned by the author through a questionnaire administered in a classroom situation. The sample consisted of 200 male and female students, fully enrolled at the University of Jordan. Both sexes were more or less evenly represented and the majority of them were between 19 and 24.

Briefly stated, the results came as follows: young men whose parents are professional people show a positive attitude toward women's education so that they may participate in the world of work. Male students who come from laboring classes indicate the more traditional attitude of the ascendancy of the male. Attitudes of university women are predictable. They would not be in university if both they and their families were not in accord with the trend favoring the highest possible development of women.

A survey of the educational background of the students' parents shows that the highest percentage, 37%, falls in the elementary education category. Though percentages are about equal for both fathers and mothers at the elementary and high school stages, fathers' education is higher than mothers' at university level: 17.9% for fathers, 3.7% for mothers. This is expected in a society where female enrollment in schools drops from 46% at the elementary stage to 1.2% at the higher education stage.

In the non-education category, the percentage of mothers is double that of fathers, but the case is different when fathers of males are compared, as to educational level, with fathers of females. Ninety-two percent of those who have no education are fathers of males while 7.7% of them are fathers of females. This means that the females come from higher income groups than males and consequently enjoy a better standing.

Many studies of this nature have been undertaken throughout the Middle East in recent years during which women have begun to take their place as contributing persons to their families, their society and their countries. Almost without fail the same conclusions are drawn: 1) results depend on the background of those from whom information has been received; 2) progress is slow but steady; 3) women continue primarily in traditionally accepted professional areas.

The picture has changed little during the past five years, but at least there have been no backward steps.

Reviewed by Jane Leasor

(1) Abstract of a study prepared by Dr. M.I. Barhoum, Sociology Department, University of Jordan, Amman, for the Institute for Women's studies in the Arab World.

ACCESS OF ARAB WOMEN TO HIGHER EDUCATION⁽¹⁾

Higher education for Arab women started at the university level in 1925 when the American University of Beirut (AUB) accepted women students in its departments. Those who planned to study medicine, pharmacy or dentistry were directly enrolled in it, while those who chose other majors had to spend the freshman and sophomore years at the American Junior College for Girls (now Beirut University College) before their promotion to the junior year at AUB.

At about the same time, the French University of St. Joseph in Beirut started admitting women students. In 1928, the first woman student at that institution graduated with a pharmacy degree. In 1931, two women received the medical degree and two others were granted degrees in law.

The Syrian University in Damascus accepted women students in 1926. The Egyptian University decided to accept them in 1929 - 1930. Between 1930 and 1970 many universities established in other Arab countries, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait, became co-educational, and women in North African states and the Arabian peninsula had access to higher education.

Statistics given by the author of the study indicate a sizable increase in the number of universities in the Arab World during the last thirty years. From 12 in 1950, their number reached 50 in 1980. They also indicate a wide geographic distribution, a steady growth in enrollment, along with diversification of fields and a relative rise in standards. The proportion of women in third level or higher education in the Arab world was, in 1977, 28% compared to that of men, while the world average is 41%.

For Arab women, the traditional fields of higher study were education and the humanities and, among the professions, the medical sciences. Statistical data of the UNESCO Yearbooks for the last 25-30 years regarding women's third level enrollment indicate a slight shift of emphasis towards science and science-related professions, specifically engineering and agriculture. One example is Egypt where the proportion of women students in science and science-related professions rose from 18% in 1955 to 29% in 1974.

Another example is Tunisia with a proportion of 40% in 1976 instead of 29% in 1965.

In Jordan the present priority need is in the field of education which attracts half of the women students. The situation is similar in Kuwait, while in Iraq there has been recently a dramatic increase in the field of foreign languages. In Egypt, a progressive step was made when the Institute of Religious Studies (Dar-ul-Ulum) and Al-Azhar University, traditionally reserved for men, were opened to women in 1953.

The participation of Arab women in outside employment has made remarkable progress, though not in all sectors and not at the same rate. In Egypt, women in professional and technical jobs increased from less than 50,000 in 1960 to nearly 1.5 million in 1976. In Iraq, 22,000 women were in employment in 1957, the figure rising to nearly 150,000 in 1978, (excluding the agricultural sector), representing a rise from 2 to 12%. However, the report for 1975-76 indicated that women constituted only 4% of the faculty at full professor level, 5% at each of the associate and assistant professor levels, 15% at instructor level and 31% at lower ranks.

In Algeria, where women actively participated in the struggle for independence, traditional customs forced them to «go back to the kitchen». In Tunisia, laws were enacted to protect the legal status of women based on the principle of sexual equality. In Kuwait, although more than half the students enrolled at the University of Kuwait are women, the impact of traditional factors forces women university graduates into very limited career aspirations.

On the whole, formal education has been an important factor in social change. This is particularly evident in the patterns of Arab family life, where a shift has occurred towards later marriage age for women, marriage by mutual consent and a nuclear family unit with fewer children and higher aspirations for the entire family.

The author concludes by saying that «higher education may be said to have taken root in the Arab world. However, its full impact on society and on the status of women cannot be assessed except in perspective. The experience is encouraging, but a longer span of time is needed for a definitive evaluation.»

(1) Monographs of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, No. 2, Arab Women and Education, Part I: «Access of Arab Women to Higher Education» by Edith A.S. Hanania, Beirut 1980.

DEVELOPMENT OF 3 TO 6 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT⁽¹⁾

In 1975, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, in collaboration with UNICEF, undertook a study whose purpose was to develop a strategy for a national survey of the preschool child in Lebanon. Interrupted by the political events which ravaged the country, work was resumed in 1978 and finished in 1980. Besides providing a strategy for a national survey, the ultimate objective of the study was to supply indicators of childhood needs which would increase understanding and serve as a guide to planners and policy-makers.

In 150 pages, this pilot study analyzes the issue of the child's growth on three different but interrelated levels: the level of the child, the level of the family and the level of the human settlement: city, town, village. Information was classified in relation to the basic dimensions of childhood growth: the physical, the social, the emotional and the cognitive dimensions.

The sampling technique aimed first: to rank and classify all the settlements in Lebanon according to size; second, to classify the urban and the rural settlements according to specific features previously established.

The total number of urban settlements identified was 37, including Beirut, its suburbs and the main towns of the country. The number of rural settlements was 1628, divided into 5 zones on the basis of altitude, climate, type of land irrigation, type of produce and habitability. No attempt was made at drawing a random sample. Urban and rural settlements were selected purposely in order to include settlements from the different geographical locations and proportionately to their distribution in the different strata.

1) Survey of Rural Settlements

The 45 rural settlements selected for the survey revealed that differences existed between the different ecological zones with respect to community characteristics and factors affecting the development of young children. Community health and social services were unevenly distributed. Social centers were of the welfare type and medical services curative. Primary education was accessible to all villages but secondary education was limited to a few and vocational schools non-existent. Communication with the outside world was limited to radio and television. The two zones which appear to have fewer basic facilities were the Beqa'a and the Akkar areas.

2) Urban Settlements

Data on Beirut and other cities and towns were

lost during the events. Information was available only for the 14 suburbs studied which, as the conclusion says, have little to offer the children's total development: huge buildings of concrete blocks; dirty, busy streets; absence of trees and gardens, no curative health facilities, and absence of playgrounds. Political dissensions were reflected in the existence of 27 party centers with different political affiliations, disseminated in the studied suburbs.

The young child of Beirut's suburbs has to rely almost entirely on his family for his physical and mental development, since his environment does not provide him with any factors of growth except schools with varied levels and, on the whole, these are below the levels of schools in Beirut and other cities. Some children are more favored because of their middle or upper class status, where parents can choose better living conditions and place their children in schools with acceptable standards.

3) The Family

Data on the Lebanese family, unlike those on human settlements, include Beirut, the suburbs and nine cities and towns.

The main data obtained are:

- The nuclear family forms a majority in the studied sample: between 73% and 85%.
- The average number in the family is: 5.9 in Beirut and 6-6.9 in suburbs, towns and villages.
- The average number of living children per family is: 2.98 in Beirut and 4-4.97 in suburbs, towns and villages.
- The age distribution of parents indicates the higher age groups for fathers, with an average age of 45 for fathers and 37 for mothers.

The educational data show that illiterate mothers constitute the largest group among all levels. In small villages 24 % of fathers and 63 % of mothers are illiterate. In towns, illiterate fathers comprise 16% of the sample and mothers 56%.

The largest number of employed fathers, 76% in all settlements, work in the private sector. Judged by the father's education and employment, the largest proportion of lower class families exist in small villages and towns, 53% and 35% respectively; while the highest proportion of middle class families are in Beirut and suburbs, 61.3% respectively.

General findings reveal that small villages in rural districts were the least privileged in matters of housing conditions, children's schooling and access to mass media.

The majority of respondents reported preference for private schools, private medical care and national banks in their financial transactions.

Findings revealed that 25% of preschool children in Beirut were out of school, as compared to 38% in suburbs and towns and 43% in villages.

4) The Child

Concerning the role played by mothers in the cognitive and social development of their children,

(Continued on page 12)

(1) Monographs of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, No. 3, 1980, Principal Investigators: Julinda Abu Nasr, Mary Makhoul, Irini Lorfing.

WOMEN IN MAURITANIA

This study is part of a series of publications on «Women in Development», prepared for: Office of Women in Development and USAID/MAURITANIA, by Melinda Smale, Office of International Cooperation and Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, October 1980.

The reason which gave rise to this study was the 1970-1980 drought in Mauritania, which caused male migration, hence unprecedented disruption in Mauritanian society. Women were either abandoned or became *de facto* heads-of-households.

Mauritania is an African country, recently freed from French colonization. Its official name is the «Islamic Republic of Mauritania». Area: 419,229 square miles; population around 1,500,000. Social conditions in this country present a complex background of ethnic groups, tribes, classes and castes which are continuously confused and are not easy to define. The class-system prevailing in the country creates barriers and stereotypes which tend to hinder normal progress.

The Maures are divided into Bidan (white Maures) and Haratin (black Maures). The Bidan comprise the Mauritanian nobility, made up of the Zawaya or Marabout groups (those with religious training and functions), and the Hassaniya, a warrior group. To them are attached the Zenaga (free tributary or vassal

groups), Muallimin (craftsmen), the Ighyuwm (entertainers), all of whom are of inferior rank.

The population consists of four categories of men and women:

- 1) free people, including nobles and commoners;
- 2) casted people including craftsmen, artisans and entertainers;
- 3) freed people: former slaves;
- 4) slaves or captives

The Black Maures (Haratin) are freed slaves who are held in low esteem but still higher than the Zenaga. They live as an integrated part of larger Bidan (white) encampments, or work as herders or in settled agricultural communities.

There are other divisions of the population, identified by their traditional occupation, which means that the occupation of the individual indicates the group or the sub-group to which he belongs. Examples:

- 1) The Tourcouleur: agricultural groups, divided into freemen, artisans and captives.
- 2) The Peulh: semi-itinerant cattle-owning class, equivalent to Tourcouleur religious nobles.
- 3) The Soninke: traders and laborers.

The above social divisions and subdivisions indicate that the Mauritians still adhere to an archaic culture of which certain aspects persist in conservative societies, more particularly in developing countries. It is the class-system in which religious leaders and warriors occupy the highest rank, the first, because they are the keepers of the faith which they are supposed to pass unto posterity. As such, they are the privileged recipients of tributes in money and goods from all those who follow Islam. They do not do any other activity because they consider work below their dignity. The same principle applies to warriors, the Hassani noblemen, who live from tribute and pillage and perform no work apart from fighting.

The noble class: religious leaders and warriors, look down on craftsmanship and manual work, which is performed by slaves, freed slaves or people unwilling to accept or defend Islam during the religious wars and who, through respect to the conquering or returning warriors (nobles), consented to serve the warriors' family needs.

How did slavery originate?

When a fight took place, the stronger men captured the weaker ones, turned them into slaves or sold them. These captives had to work very hard and recover their freedom at a heavy price. Freed slaves, however, do not enjoy the same social status as free men and nobles.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Women are equally divided into Bidan and Haratin, noblewomen and servile women, free women and slaves. The first belong to the Zawaya or Hassani groups. They are preeminently managers and supervisors of tent and camp labor performed by Haratin (black), Zenaga and other artisan groups.

The status of the Bidan woman is expressed by the degree of her inactivity, since inactivity demon-

Development of 3-6 year old children

(Continued from page 11)

responses showed that their role was insignificant. The physical needs of the child absorbed most of their time while the moral and intellectual needs were neglected.

On the other hand, investigation regarding mothers' knowledge on nutrition and health practices revealed their awareness of such matters, but there was no evidence of practicing this knowledge.

Data regarding the child's cognitive development were reported on 205 children whose ages ranged between 3 and 6 years. The results revealed differences in scores of children with respect to type of settlement. The five-year-olds of the large villages achieved higher scores than those of the small villages, while Beirut's five-year-olds scored higher than those of suburbs and towns.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The study which has been hereby briefly presented gave indications of existing differences and similarities among the various areas of Lebanon. Discrepancies exist with respect to institutional structures, community services, basic living facilities and standards of living in the different settlements. Some areas, such as Akkar and the Beqa'a, suffered most from the absence of community services.

Another result of the study was to confirm the feasibility of the proposed strategy for the assessment of Lebanese preschoolers' priority needs.

A FRIEND OF THE DISABLED

ESTHER JOHNSON LANGWORTHY
WRITES ABOUT THEM

trates the wealth of her family. The sedentarization of those Bidan women limits their awareness and knowledge of productive activities. Force feeding or «gavage» condemns them to immobility and obesity. This condition makes them physically inferior and less prolific than Haratin women. As a result, noblemen often marry Haratin women or take them as concubines because they are physically more resistant.

The major part of the study is devoted to a detailed report about women's activities, their economic status and the laws regulating this status, the problems which women had to face as a result of the 1970-1980 drought and the male migration which followed. During the last ten years, the population has changed from being 2/3 nomad, 1/3 sedentary to the opposite status: 2/3 sedentary, 1/3 nomad.

Women's role as income earners is determined through both ethnic ascription and a relevant production system. In household production, their role is considered secondary or complementary, yet important and necessary. They participate in all kinds of occupations: uncasted ones such as cropping, gathering, livestock and herding activities, in which Tourcouleur and Peulh women take part; and casted occupations, such as fishing, artisan occupations and servile tasks.

The drought and the resulting effects obliged many rural women to seek employment in the capital, Nouakchott, where they performed paid domestic labor and practiced some business. Protracted drought accelerated migration and sedentarization created new cultivation activities and increased productive activity of women. On the other hand, it decreased the economic exchange value of women's products relative to the value of men's urban wage-earning. It also created the problem of declining yield and increased women's dependence on migrant remittances, merchant credit and aid.

The recommendations derived from general observations on the orientation of government and donor assistance are summarized in the following initial paragraphs of page 95:

«The major drought-period focus of government and donor assistance efforts has been the provision of food and medical services and goods to urban and rural populations. Women have been addressed, through the extension of health care and nutritional services, as part of a services recipient population. These relatively well-financed programs have as their principal objective the amelioration of living conditions and, as a long-term goal, the instruction of women in adaptive nutrition and childcare...»

«In contrast, projects addressing women as income earners and producers have received meager support. Subsequent to the change in national development policies, the opportunity for wage-earning activities, through state-financed industrial investment programs have diminished for the population as a whole, and for women in particular.»

Faculty and students of Beirut University College in the forties and fifties, when it was successively called «American Junior College» and «Beirut College for Women», will surely remember a lively teacher who, besides her multiple talents and varied intellectual interests, had an unusual ability to befriend everyone. A gifted pianist, a teacher of humanities, Esther Johnson was also a dynamic social worker, a believer in a humane socialism which she tried to put into practice and did not restrict to mere talk.

One of the projects she undertook after leaving Beirut College and settling in Schenectady, N.Y. with her husband, Professor Harry Langworthy Jr., was to teach handicapped students who suffered from emotional and perceptual problems. After eleven years of sustained effort in this field, she has been working on a «Diary of a Teacher of Exceptional Students», describing the «educational experiences of twelve talented teenage students as they progress from frustration and failure to creative lives of usefulness to themselves and others.»

In her letter, which relates some of her own experiences, she points out unjustified attitudes adopted toward the disabled, by teachers, administrators and community leaders. Here are some examples:

1. Fear that the disabled are a threat to the safety and success of others.
2. Feeling that the disabled are not worthy of tax dollars being used for them, under the brutal pessimism of cost-effectiveness.
3. Prejudice against the abilities of the disabled based on the use of gross categorical labels: paranoid, schizophrenic, retardate, etc.
4. Fear that the disabled would not be able to perform a responsible job, based on the use of outdated Stanford-Binet IQ Tests as an unchanging measure of ability and a sure prediction of future achievement, yet proved so wrong by the gifted individuals of history and thousands of very successful everyday people.

About help given the handicapped in the United States, she says that disabled Vietnam veterans have pressured Congress for equal access to universities, employment, travel on public vehicles and in public places. Many buildings now have wide doors and ramps for the use of the handicapped; education and employment are subsidized by government funds.

Of methods used for their rehabilitation, she mentions the writing of plays, movies, television shows, produced by and with the handicapped, demonstrating who they are and what they can do. The Emmy Award winning movie, «Elephant Man», is an example.

(Continued on page 14)

Mrs. Langworthy gives credit to Mr. Nadeem Shweiri for his achievement in the Kafa'at Institute and to Dr. Munir Khoury for his research and analysis of the rehabilitation of the disabled in the Arab countries.⁽¹⁾ She adds that «Lebanon has not only practical concern but human and spiritual as well; a beautiful approach to the whole person, not isolating the disability as the important thing.»

Tribute should equally be paid to Mrs. Langworthy for her sincere interest in the handicapped. We hope that her happy initiative of writing a book which will allow other people to share her inspiring experience with them, will help to promote the cause she takes so much to heart.

(1) Al-Raida, Feb. 1981, Vol. IV, No. 15

IYDP — Informational Data

According to reliable evaluations provided by UNO, 10 percent of the world's population are physically or mentally disabled.

Their total number is evaluated at 450 million.

Three-quarters of them receive no specialized help from experts. 146 million of the disabled are children below 15 years of age, distributed as follows:

- 6 million in North America
- 11 million in Europe
- 13 million in Latin America
- 18 million in Africa
- 88 million in Asia

Eighty percent of the total number are in developing countries where less than 1 percent of them receive specialized aid.

By the end of the 20th century, the number of disabled persons will reach 600 million, including 200 million children.

The portion of disability in the Developing World will rise with the increase of malnutrition and disease in pregnancy and early childhood. It will fall with the rise of the mortality rate among disabled children.

Modern medicine has contributed to the increase in the number of disabled persons, first, by lengthening the life of disabled children until adulthood; second, by allowing a large number of adults to reach old age, or the stage of utter disability.

CHIEF CAUSES OF DISABILITY

1. Malnutrition, especially among children.
2. Contagious and non-contagious diseases, which attack 3 percent of the world's population.
3. Mental retardation, affecting 1 to 4 percent of the adult world population.
4. Psychic disorders, affecting 40 million of the world's population.
5. Moral decadence, with about 100 million victims
6. Drugs and alcohol: 40 million addicts
7. Accidents due to varied causes
8. Deafness: 70 million victims
9. Blindness: 42 million victims
10. Brain paralysis: 15 million victims
11. Leprosy: 15 million victims
12. Epilepsy: 15 million victims.

PHILOSOPHY AND WOMEN⁽¹⁾

EDITED BY SHARON BISHOP
AND MARJORIE WEIN ZWEIG,

Though the title of the book indicates that its approach is philosophical, some of the writers could not be called philosophers in the classic sense. At this stage of their development many are modern feminists and must be accepted as such.

However, the editors have done an unusual type and amount of research, going back to Plato and Aristotle.

These two ancient Greeks agree, after their usual lengthy introductory remarks in the vein of logic and reason, that men and women, having been created equal, are equally able to carry on similar activities. Men were engaged in music and war. Could not women do the same? Women by nature do not have the physical strength of men, but in war, certainly could carry out duties equal to their physical abilities. And in the public baths? Why not? Old men are no more attractive than old women!

Of particular interest is John Stuart Mill, who in 1869 expressed views startlingly similar to those concerning women in the present decade. He was concerned with what was known as «The nature of women... an eminently artificial thing». Mill did not feel that men understood women psychologically, including their own wives, even though their views were held in affection and respect.

At some length he points out in historic perspective the equal abilities of men and women, using Queen Elizabeth I, Joan of Arc, and Queen Victoria as primary examples. Men had to accept these as fact, but still would not acknowledge the equal ability of women as basic to their point of view.

Mill respects women's intuition, which he sees as «an ability to see more of what is before her than what a man is able to do». She discerns, discriminates, and finds general principles, while men can see only facts as they understand them...

The article by Sigmund Freud finds Freud at his usual self-seeing women as consistently and constantly troubled because they are not men! Women's envy of men's stronger sex drive and their own lack of the more elaborate sexual equipment of men is seen by Freud as a source of consternation, envy, and discomfiture. But one must remember that Freud's association with women, other than his own family, consisted primarily of those who were neurotic or psychotically disturbed and cannot be attributed to all women, merely because they are women.

«On Sexual Equality» by Alison Jagger⁽²⁾ spells out

(1) Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc. Belmont, California, 1979

(2) From *Ethics*, University of Chicago Press, July 1974

again the current feminist views of the role of women and a further plea for their equality.

Jagger first raises the question, «Integration or Separation?» and concludes that since the attempt at integration has not been universally successful and therefore challenged, a look at equality through separation is called for.

Her argument, however, leads to such questions as whether or not sexual identity is essential to the definition of a person or the maintenance of his identity. And to claim nonsexuality is not a strong position since it is remote, to say the least, that it is impossible to deny that the people we meet are either men or women.

Concerning the differences between the sexes, the only valid one has to do with the reproductive roles of each sex, which does not have application as to the place of either one in job roles or as persons in society.

The most complete and overriding statement Jagger makes is that «the rights of women can be protected quite adequately in a society which recognizes basic human rights», since the difference between the sexes can be defined only as biological.

The approach of the book is unusual and more academic than the average volume of this nature. It is worth reading.

Reviewed by Jane Leasor

CUSTOMS OF THE ARABIAN GULF

DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS
BY SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN BAHRAIN AND DUBAI
BY BAHIA FAKHRO AND ANN WALKO

A group of teachers, headmistresses and school principals contributed to the production of this book of colorful pictures made by school children living in the Arabian Gulf and carefully commented on in English by two authors: Bahía Fakhro and Ann Walko.

Though the Arab people living in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf countries have begun to change their style of living since the 1930's, old customs and traditions persist especially in the celebrations of festivals connected with religion. The book contains a display of Arabian customs and traditions seen through Arab children's eyes.

Bahía Jum'a Fakhro, co-author of the book, is a graduate of Beirut University College in 1964 with a B.A. in child development. For five years she taught at the Manama Secondary School for girls in Bahrain where she also served as deputy headmistress of the school. Originally from Bahrain, she now lives in Dubai

with her husband and three daughters, and occasionally takes part in cultural activities.

The other co-author is Ann Walko, a former newspaper reporter, editor, teacher, in the U.S. and Turkey. She presently lives in Dubai where her husband's company has been assigned since 1975. Together with Mrs. Fakhro she conceived the idea of using Arab children's views of their society to educate Western children about life in the Arabian Gulf.

(1) For information, write to Arab Customs, Box 6023 Hamden, Connecticut, 06517, U.S.A. or to Bahía Fakhro, Box 1699, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

«WOMAN IN CHURCH THEOLOGY»⁽¹⁾

This book is the second collection of lectures and studies published by the Council of Churches of the Middle East about the topic, «Woman's Status in Church and Society»⁽²⁾.

The title is «Woman in Church Theology»; the authors are a group of religious leaders representing the various Eastern Christian Churches, including a Muslim university professor who spoke on woman in Muslim theology.

The writers discuss the possibility of finding, within the religious texts and teachings of the early Church Fathers, a ground for raising women's role in church service to equal that of men. Among the topics discussed were: the position of woman as archdeaconess in the early Church period, its abolition and whether it should be revived; the evolution of the concept of bodily purification in church rituals and regulations, comprehensively analyzed by Dr. George Bibawi, who insisted on the necessity of wiping out the influence of Manichaean doctrines from Christian theology.

As a group, the writers seem to agree that the biological and social differences existing between the sexes do not signify woman's inferiority nor do they destroy the unity of the human being. According to them, the Church Fathers should remain a chief source of inspiration. The principal aim for men and women of today should be the revival of Christian virtues which are threatened to the point of disappearance. Only creative living, not new positions, can make this revival possible. Through creative living, new spiritual signs may visit us and lead us into new paths.

(1) Arabic text: published by the Council of Churches in The Middle East. Beirut, 1980.

(2) See *Al-Raida* (Arabic publication), Aug. 1979, vol. II, no. 9, p. 16.

A GLANCE INTO THE STATUS OF THE MOROCCAN WOMAN⁽¹⁾

Since Morocco achieved its independence in 1956, the Moroccan woman has played, within her limited means, an active role in national development.

According to the census of 1980, Morocco has a population of about 20 million, 50% of whom are women. Since 1956, free compulsory education on the elementary level is required for both sexes. Female education has been progressing slowly. In 1969-70, the proportion of females on the elementary school level was 43% of the whole. It rose to 56% in 1979-80. In secondary schools, the proportion rose from 25% in 1968 to 35% in 1980. In higher education, the proportion of women progressed from 3% in 1954 to 10% in 1969 and to 18% in 1980. Women have been showing more interest than before in the study of applied sciences. A good many of them are preparing to be physicians, pharmacists, architects, lawyers and judges.

Before 1960, illiteracy among women reached 87% as against 66% among men but, since then, it

has been reduced to 73% against 56%. This proportion applies more to urban than rural districts which contain 50% of the population. For this reason they deserve particular help, especially on the levels of education, health care, orientation and development of family income.

According to the Moroccan Constitution, women should enjoy equal rights with men in politics, education and work conditions. Working women have a paid maternity leave of two months. Nursing mothers benefit from a law allowing them two daily half-hour rest periods during the first eight months following childbirth.

Constitutional laws, however, are not justly applied. Sexual equality is not practiced, especially in the area of family laws. An adult girl is not free to choose her future husband. She is not allowed to travel without the permission of her father, husband or guardian. Social Security laws deprive her of the right to legate her pension to her children, while men are given this right.

Since our men recognize the value of woman's participation in development, they are expected to make it more effective through further legal reforms and strict implementation of constitutional laws.

(1) By Rabi'a Harakat, Arabic article published by *Al-Khidma al-lamiya lil-Mar'a l'Arabiya* (Information, Demography, Development and Reconstruction Studies, Damascus).

OUT OF 11,094 BANK EMPLOYEES IN LEBANON, 3,933 ARE WOMEN

In a report published by the Banks Association in Lebanon on the status of bank employees in 1980, an important increase in their number is noticed, in comparison to preceding years. The number of women has increased by 14.3% over that of last year, while the number of men has had only a 5.3% increase. More than a third of the total number of employees are women.

(*Le Reveil*, 4 June 1981)

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN KUWAIT

«The General Union of Trade Unions, in concluding its first annual conference in Kuwait, called for the implementation of laws respecting freedom in the Arab World and for granting full political and social rights to women. The conference also called for an increase in annual leave in the government sector from 30 to 45 days and for maternity leave for women from 2 to 3 months regardless of the length of service.»

«*Women at Work*» an ILO News Bulletin 2/1980, quoted from *Arab Times*, Kuwait, 29 May 1980

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