

A MESSAGE TO CONSIDER

«Leading psychologists and thinkers of today suggest as a remedy for common social evils a radical change in people's conduct so that their dealings with each other will be based on cooperation and fair play instead of jealousy and competition».

This statement was made by Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, an eminent professor of philosophy at the University of Texas, during a visit she recently made to Lebanon where she met a number of friends and colleagues.

To that statement, one of the listeners responded by saying: «Your suggestion implies a change in human nature, of which jealousy and thirst for domination are intrinsic traits».

Not exactly, answered Dr. Hibri. Many scientists think that what we now call instincts or inherited characters were, several centuries ago, acquired traits which, in the long run, became inherited. What we can do now is to reverse the process and build our educational system on a new basis: a humanitarian pattern instead of a selfish, anti-humanitarian one.

While I pondered over Dr. Hibri's words, I realized how true it is that jealousy and greed are chiefly responsible for human misery. War, the main source of injustice and suffering, has no other cause but jealousy and greed. Since the dawn of human civilization, jealousy pushed Cain to kill his brother Abel. It made Saul attempt to kill David, Sparta to fight Athens, the Greeks to invade and ruin Troy. Jealousy in pre-Islamic Arabia kindled the 40 year war of Dahis and Al-Ghabra and, in Islam, the war between Ali and Muawiah, between Omayyads and Abbasids and between Berbers and Arabs of Al-Maghreb. The Lebanese war of today has no other cause but jealousy and lust for power and positions, whether the fight is induced by rival great powers or by the local parties and communities.

Jealousy is a fatal disease because it is never quenched. A person who craves a certain position will not be satisfied with it; once he has obtained it he will keep craving a higher one until his disease destroys him.

The cure of this disease lies in the hands of educators, parents, teachers and society as a whole. It is up to them and through them to effect the change in children's orientation and moral training. Even as adults we can work to bring about the change in ourselves. For a person with a strong will, self-improvement is possible, no matter how old he may be. Getting rid of evil habits that poison our lives should be for every one a primary concern, which is never too late to start.

Contents

A Message to Consider Pioneers:

- Reliving the Past
with Daisy Al Ameer.....2
- Mona Saudi, a woman
without complexes.....3

Conference

- Integration of women
in Development
Plans in the United
Arab Emirates.....4

Book Report

- Technology and
Human Affairs.....6

Reports:

- The Armenian
Women in Lebanon8
- Female Circumcision,
Excision &
Infibulation.....9
- The Overpopulation
Problem in Egypt11

Articles

- The Changing Role
of Arab Women.....12
- Problems and
Prospects of Rural
Women in Jordan14
- IYDP in Lebanon15
- The woman
Bread-Winner.....15

Recently Received by IWSAW

- L'Œil, an issue on
the Arts
in Jordan16
- At-Tarbiyah-al-Usriyyah —
Family Education.....16
- Ideas Forum16
- Population Education:
A contemporary
Concern16
- Manushi — The first
feminist Journal
of India16

RE-LIVING THE PAST

with Daisy al-Ameer



The first impression is one of a ladylike, elegantly dressed woman. Her speech has poetic tones accompanied by a firm and forceful expression. Her gray eyes and fair complexion reveal a mixed origin. Her father, an Iraqi doctor; her mother a Lebanese who studied at the American College of Beirut. In spite of his strict conservatism, her father encouraged her to seek knowledge by reading the books out of their home library. Her readings developed her taste for literature and helped her try to develop her own philosophy of life.

In her early years, she adopted the habit of recording her past in a diary which she cherished greatly. She soon realized that it was only a collection of sad memories, and gave it up in order to indulge in the bright dreams of the future. Her dreams, however, were bound to remain unfulfilled. She gradually rid herself of them and decided to live in the present, where reality was something she could touch and see. She adopted a realistic attitude which became the source that inspired her writings.

How did she start writing?

Upon completing her secondary schooling she took up carving as a hobby. Her interest in modern Arab writers like Toufiq al-Hakim, Gibran, and al-Mazini, made her decide to pursue higher studies in literature at the Teachers' Training College of Baghdad where she graduated with a B.A. degree. Her travels in England and the United States widened her horizons and strengthened her sense of independence and self-reliance. In 1962, she came to Beirut where she occupied a post at the Iraqi Embassy. Her contact with literary men awakened her literary talent. She wrote «The Little Rug», a short story which was somewhat biographical. The success with which it met induced her to take up writing as a permanent hobby. To date, she has published four collections of short stories and

a fifth collection is for publication. It seems that the short story is the literary form that is most suited to her disposition: a cross-section of the character's life, focusing on one single idea or experience.

Her stories are characterized by conciseness, irony, emphasis on one point, and concrete, suggestive details. They are faithful records of actual experience but, whether the idea behind the story is clear or not, the author is careful not to tell it outright. It is for the reader to guess.

Most of these stories deal with the condition and problems of Arab women in whom she criticizes the cowardice and submissiveness to the other sex. So completely absorbed are they in the world of men that they have no chance to develop an entity of their own. Their lives are built on illusions. Their happiness is a make-believe. Her story, «The Happy Arab Home» is an ironic description of a family whose members live in apparent harmony because the younger generation has completely surrendered its will to the older one. Confirmed in traditionalism, they still call themselves «progressive».

What personal message would she like to communicate to the young women of today?

There is a common belief that marriage is the *raison d'être* of a woman. Daisy al-Ameer is not of this opinion, because if a girl considers marriage as her only goal she will be very disappointed if she «misses the train».

In her case, she has found satisfaction in her writing, her work and her independence. She adds that the Iraqi Government, by supporting women's work and patronizing writers and intellectuals, has been to her a source of help and encouragement.

(This article was based on an interview with Daisy al-Ameer, made by Alidz Nakhoudian, from the Women's Studies Class, B.U.C June 1981).

MONA SAUDI: A WOMAN WITHOUT COMPLEXES

Born in Amman in 1945, Mona Saudi completed her high school and left her native country Jordan to discover the world. Her first stop was Paris. There, she attended the «Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts». Her ambition and curiosity pushed her to another country for training. In Carrara, Italy, her major occupation was Art. Finally, she settled in Lebanon in 1969. Since that time, she has been working as sculptress and writer.

Her career

As a sculptress, she draws her own designs in black and white. She is the author of art publications for children as well as for adults. She is the founder of, and responsible for «Qism al Funun-at-Tashkiliyah — Al l'an-ul Muahad — M.T.F.» (Plastic Arts Section)

Her publications include the following Arabic books:

- In Time of War Children Testify, 1970.
- First Vision, 1972.

Mona Saudi has illustrated books for Ghassan Kanafani, Mu'in Bsisso and Adonis.

Her work

Consistency and unity are some of the outstanding qualities of her work. Her style is distinguished by precision, organic vitality and sensuality. Her art reflects her personality which is linked to the natural environment and human relationships.

Being a woman, she conceives herself as recipient and donor. Her art reflects the woman in her, her occupations, her qualities and her character. Woman's work, according to her, cannot be conceived by man. It is a reflection of her feminism. As recipient and donor, Mona Saudi is the woman, the wife, the mother, the mistress and the land. All these elements are innate truths and associated with her inner person.

In response to certain questions regarding women's problems and status, Mona Saudi believes that nothing is impossible for a woman but that some people dispute her position and status in society. Up until 20 years ago, Arab Society — being a closed society — misconceived the position of women. Being in touch with economic, political and social fields, women have recently found ways to prove their capacities and impose their personality in a manner similar to that of Zenobia and Cleopatra in the past.

Concerning the emancipation of women, Mona Saudi believes that women should be considered as human beings, with the right to be free, and the right to choose their way of self-expression. Their emancipation should be a positive one, fulfilled and expressed not only in words, but also in concrete deeds.



Concerning the veil, she believes that it is a custom which humiliates women. The purpose of the veil is to hide women's beauty and body; however, the body is the reflection of the «self». Men should not use the veil to damage the dignity and integrity of women. Instead, they should learn to control their emotions. Whenever the veil is present, the relationship between man and woman cannot be a correct one. Women are not to be conceived as possessions or objects.

Does she have an ideal in life?

Mona Saudi has no special ideal. The individual, the environment, the artist in her, and her own experience form her own personal ideal. She has never had a complex about being a woman. She has never wished to be a man since a man is not considered by her as superior. She is perfectly satisfied and content to be a female.

In patriarchal societies, she says, women are considered as important contributors. This is a world of both men and women, so why should it be a patriarchy? It is a humanistic world, based on equality, so differentiation should not exist. The roles of oppressed and oppressor in daily life, in sexual behavior, or in society must not be present. As a matter of fact, this continual oppression is alive in our society. This will affect the productivity of women vis-a-vis society. Woman is the master only within the framework of her own marital house.

Marriage should be an association of both partners for a betterment of life. Men and women should stand side by side, sharing responsibility, happiness and sadness. With civil marriage and divorce, marriage is no longer considered as a closed institution. Woman with this new exit is able to prove herself and develop her personality.

Living in an old house, full of character, Mona Saudi has her own atelier. Her sculptures and drawings are dotted around the place. Married, and mother of a daughter, Mona Saudi is not trying to impress or influence her young child — on the contrary, she encourages her to make her own decisions. She is against any form of sexual discrimination. If she had a son, she would refuse to treat him differently from his sister.

(Interview given by Mona Saudi to Fatima Shaar and Walid Zahr-el-Din, from the Women's Studies course at BUC, June 1981.)

INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITHIN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES⁽¹⁾☆

«Development education is increasingly specified as action oriented and aimed at raising critical awareness. Its content focuses on the issues of human rights, equity and social justice, self-reliance, dignity and the quality of life.»

(From an article on the topic by Nicu Van Oudenhoven, Unicef Information Bulletin, 14 April 1981, p. 11).

In a detailed introduction of 30 pages, Dr. Haidar Ibrahim Ali presents the concepts and the problems of development within the United Arab Emirates.

«Development» in the modern sense is linked to westernization and industrialization; it requires a change in the conditions of traditional societies, leading to their adoption of a Western style of development. This is based on a capitalistic system of production, rapid industrialization, parliamentary government and constitution and so on.

This form of development does not necessarily result in general welfare. It may lead to one-sided growth, favoring an increase in income for some classes at the expense of others. As an example, we may mention Brazil, where industrialization failed to solve the problems of underdevelopment.

For a clearer understanding of development, the author tries to define «underdevelopment», the first sign of which is the uneven distribution of national income resulting from its abuse in worthless or futile expenditure. Another sign is the preponderance of the rural sector with its traditional use of archaic implements and the persistence of feudal ties between landowners and workers. This leads to dwindling rural production and an increased migration to urban centers. A third sign is the dependence of the country on a single source of raw material such as oil or one type of agricultural product. The product is sold at a low cost. The end product is bought from the world markets at a high cost.

The above analysis leads to the following definition of economic development: Adequacy of production, a fair distribution of income and elimination of economic dependency. In the case of the Gulf Region, other implications should be considered herewith. These include the complete utilization of human resources with an end to transforming them into productive forces, the elimination of illiteracy and the application of education to cater for the needs of the development process.

Problems of Development in the Gulf Region⁽²⁾

In the Gulf States, as in other Arab countries, there is the problem of limitation of employment due to the difference between potential and actual workers. This condition applies particularly to those Gulf states which are obliged to employ large numbers of workers from other Arab countries or from foreign ones. In 1975, the percentage of resident Arab workers in Bahrain, Kuwait and UAE was 41.7%, that of Pakistani and Indian workers, 45.7% and that of Iranians and Europeans, 12.6%. Local Arabs account for only 26.5% of the foreigners.

A second problem is the disparity that exists between the various sectors of production brought about by the predominance of the oil sector. Opportunities for employment are not proportional to the huge capital since capital-labor ratio is subject to the decisions of the oil companies.

A third problem is the cultural lag resulting from the disparity in the rates of material and cultural growth. In the educational field in particular, methods and programs have not evolved according to a plan which aimed to prepare good citizens. Illiteracy is high, especially amongst women; the mass media do not have the impetus that would allow them to contribute effectively to the education of the public.

To the above problems we may add other harmful aspects of the «oil culture» such as: 1) the increased interest in consumption as a way of life. 2) Disdain of work, especially manual work. 3) Money fetishism, i.e. considering money as the key to social status, and 4) Ethnocentrism, which means giving a superior rank to a racial or cultural group instead of encouraging true democratic relations in society.

(1) Abstract of a study prepared in Arabic by Dr. Haidar Ibrahim Ali, Professor in the Sociology Department, School of Arts, University of the United Arab Emirates, presented at the **Second Regional Conference** for Arab Gulf Women, March 28-31, 1981.

☆ The United Arab Emirates are Abu-Dhabi, Ajman, Chariqa, Dubai, Al-Fujaira, Umm-ul-Qi'wayn, and Ras-el-Khayma.

(2) It includes Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and possibly the two Yemens.

Women and Development

The author of the study agrees with those who believe that the liberation of women is closely linked to that of men and of society as a whole. However, he disagrees with those who believe that general progress depends on the adoption of a particular political system, as do those who affirm that socialism can solve all problems, including those of women. To him, those societies which have been indicated as models, are still in the experimental stages and so far have not been able to achieve the results which their initiators predicted.

To Dr. Ali, the problem of the Third World is not so much that of slow growth or lack of industrialization and westernization. It is the problem of choosing the right system — a system insuring social justice and general welfare, resulting from the right sort of development.

While women's integration in development is everywhere deficient, it is particularly so in the Third World. Men are, in most cases, the sole source of income, and hence they enjoy complete authority within the family while women are restricted to house-keeping and child care.

Since education is the first pre-requisite for women to participate in the development process it is essential to look into the status of women's education in the Gulf states.

In 1967, the proportions of girls to boys were as follows:

Elementary level	29.5%
Secondary level	24 %
University level	18.5%

In 1976, the proportions rose to the following:

Elementary	36%
Secondary	29.5%
University	34%

In Kuwait, the first elementary school for girls was opened in 1937-38; in UAE (Abu-Dhabi), in 1963; In 1973-74 the number of schools in UAE attained 155, with a total enrollment of 51476 of whom 40% were girls.

In Bahrain, where education began earlier than in other Gulf states, the first elementary school for boys was opened in 1919; the first school for girls in 1928. In

1973-74, the total number of students was 55726, about half of whom were girls. In Qatar, the first elementary school for boys was founded in 1952, for girls in 1956. In 1972-73, the total number of students in Qatar reached 23392, including 10435 girls.

Discrimination between boys and girls exists not only in numbers but also in programs of courses. Professional and technical training for women is greatly restricted. University education is limited to a small number. The proportion of illiteracy reaches about 70% for both sexes, 85% for women alone.

The limited opportunity for education and training imposes limits on job opportunities. Before the oil era, women of these countries participated in money-earning activities such as sewing, trading, cattle raising and the pearl-diving industry. Recent wealth has discouraged women's employment outside the home. The number of women engaged in productive work does not exceed 2% in the UAE. The rest are housekeepers. In Kuwait, a relatively more developed state than the rest, although the number of women students attained 42% of the total in 1974, the percentage of working women did not exceed 5% of the number of Kuwaiti workers. These formed only 25.5% of the whole while non-Kuwaitis reached 74.5%.

To remedy the situation, the Family Revival Association (Jam'iyyat-un-Nahda-l-Usriyya) published, in 1974, the following recommendations in an attempt to encourage women to work:

1. Creation of a committee attached to the Ministry, called «Women's Affairs Committee», whose function would be to guide and encourage the participation of women in development.
2. Inclusion of women in committees responsible for establishing or amending family laws.
3. Creation of professional training centers where women of various educational levels would be admitted.
4. Encouraging women's membership in workers' and employees' syndicates.

General Handicaps to Woman's Integration in Development

Some handicaps are an integral part of local traditions, such as despising manual work and the inherent aversion to work in general. The idea that work, in whatever form, is sacred and ennobling does not exist in their code of conduct. They readily accept government subsidies and grants without any return. Employees lack seriousness, conscientiousness and work ethics. They fail to see the connection between work and civic duties.

To these general handicaps are added those arising from the traditional upbringing of women, such as the belief that a woman's education and involvement in work would blemish her honor. Here the author asks whether it is better to keep women in a state of ignorance and imposed seclusion, or to let them enjoy the benefits of social contact once they have been armed with knowledge and unselfish guidance. Another objection raised against woman's work is the fear that it would destroy her femininity. «What do they mean by femininity?» asks Dr. Ali. If it means indolence, soft living, infatuation, and idleness, then it is a source of corruption. True femininity means that a woman lives according to her nature which requires her to cultivate her talents and achieve self-realization through education and work.

Another source of demoralization, according to the author, is the negative image which the media create of women in Arab history. If carefully studied, history reveals that the Arabs produced many women leaders such as queen Arwa Bint Ahmad (Tenth Century A.D.), who shared her husband's interests and activities and yielded a beneficial influence on her environment.

Recommendations

The author recommends, in the first place, the creation of research centers, provided with statistical equipment, allowing the production of accurate and objective studies around the present status and needs of women.

Second, investigation into Arab heritage with an aim to emphasize the positive aspects of women's lives and contributions.

Third, increasing the number of technical training schools and centers, to the effect of making such training accessible to all students, girls and boys.

Fourth, rehabilitation of manual work by raising the salaries of technicians and craftsmen of both sexes.

Fifth, promulgation of labor laws giving working women equal rights with men, and in so doing help to alleviate their household duties.

Sixth, persuading leaders and members of women's unions and associations, whose activities are concentrated on charity work, to organize campaigns and seminars with the aim of spreading awareness among the public and inducing volunteers to participate in projects of adult education, rural development, literacy campaigns and so on.

Conclusion

The author of this study seems to be a believer in the importance of woman's integration in development. His analysis of woman's situation in the Gulf countries is objective and factual. It expresses his deep interest in the right sort of woman's liberation which would eliminate the harmful aspects of both the traditional and the modern way of life and keep only the best of Arab and Western cultures.

TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN AFFAIRS⁽¹⁾

The overwhelming role played by technology in our lives is reflected in this extensive work of 617 large size pages dealing with the subject and compiled from the works of 86 contemporary writers as well as forewords and introductions written by the editors. The preface presents the book as follows: "The point at which technology and the humanities intersect is the concern of this book of readings. It grew out of courses in the philosophy of technology offered at both the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A & M University over some seven years."

The book is an attempt to assess technology, and to show its assets and liabilities taking into account the differing opinions on the subject.

A pessimistic view is adopted by Paul Goodman, noted author, lecturer and therapist, who says that "since technology is a branch of moral philosophy, not of science, it is time to slow its pace down in order to allow time for assessment. He adds that "science and technology have fallen under the domination of money and power. As in the case of Christianity and Communism, we have gotten the horrors of abusing a good idea" (p. 156).

Many artists share the same attitude expressed by Goodman.

Jacob Landau, Chairman of the Department of Graphic Arts at Brooklyn Pratt Institute, fears that "the need of a patron to support him will make the artist a yes-man. Many artists will succumb to the crude commercialism that attends technology" (p. 111).

However, Landau himself thinks that it is the function of art to humanize technology. Joseph Meeker, professor at Athabasca University, says that technology represents a new alliance between science and art, which will serve to render the world more intelligible and will enable us to confront our problems as well-balanced beings. It will serve as a link between the so-called "spiritual" or "mystic" forces and the realm of scientific research.

(1) Edited by Larry Hickman and Azizah al-Hibri, the C.V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981.

Akin to the artists' point of view is that of religious thinkers, in East and West, concerning the evaluation of technology. Tagore of India (d. 1941) advocates simplicity in the material aspects of life in order "to give the imagination and spiritual faculties of man the ability to blossom".

Gabriel Marcel, a contemporary French philosopher, thinks that technique is something good, or the expression of something good, since it amounts to "a specific instance of our general application of our gift of reason to reality." But Marcel is concerned about the relation between technological progress and sin, when an invention is utilized for wrong ends by people who did not contribute toward its development or perfection. The vice of "envy" which he considers as another outgrowth of technological progress, stands at the root of hostility and conflicts between individuals or between nations. To him "only a recourse to an act of faith can save the world from the mortal malady from which it appears to be suffering."

Speaking on behalf of the Third World, Denis Goulet, a noted author, (born in 1931), thinks that in order to oppose the threat of Western technology, the underdeveloped nations should be allowed to use their own wisdom in developing fresh outlooks on the relation of technology to society and to help bring forth a new non-elitist world order. He hopes for a world technology with a human, non-imperialist, face.

Concerning the relation between technology and sex, Rollo May, a leading psychologist, analyzes the impact of technology on sex in our present age. Love has given way to sex, worry about sexual repression is replaced by anxiety regarding the modern "techniques" of sexuality, and the necessity of "conforming" to them. Instead of passion and sentiment, we are urged to emphasize the "technology of sex". Eros "as a source of the creative power and the bridge between men and gods has deteriorated because it has lost passion and become insipid, childish, banal." While Rollo May advocates the rehabilitation of Eros but in a disciplined form, Robert and Anna Francœur, (the first, a professor, the second, an essayist), condemn the sexual attitude which has characterized American and European cultures during the past century. They call it "hot sex", which means obsession with mechanical relations, possessiveness, conquest and jealousy. They propose the dissemination of a "cool-sex culture", which affirms for woman self-identity and self-actualization, eliminates possessiveness, but considers the value of long-term commitment and stable marriage.

Shulamith Firestone, writer and editor of a feminist magazine, considers the problem from a different angle. She says in her book, "The Dialectic of Sex", that in the history of culture "there is an underlying

dialectic of sex. Culture is seen to have evolved historically along two modes: 1) the Aesthetic Mode which rests on imagination and the active search for an alternate, ideal reality. 2) The Technological Mode which rests on experimentation and the scientific method... The first mode is regarded as subjective and intuitive, it corresponds with "female" behavior. The second is regarded as objective and logical, hence corresponding to male behavior.

"We are now living in the age of the Technological Mode... This situation will culminate soon in a sexual revolution that obliterates the divisions between the two modes and integrates them into one richer mode which will give rise to an "androgynous culture"... Then the repressive aspect of civilization described by both Freud and Marcuse is seen by Firestone as disappearing in this new culture (pp. 338-347).

While political economists and technocrats uphold the dramatic transformation wrought by modern technology and extol the development of the "technotronic" society and the benefits of outer space research, they all insist on the necessity of humanizing technology.

Kenneth Boulding, Professor of Economics, University of Colorado, asserts the dependence of technology on traditional, cultural manifestations and recommends that "both technology and culture" acquiesce to an interdependence that will assure the longevity of both." Brzezinsky, author and former assistant to the President for national security affairs, thinks that "the underlying problem will be to find a way of avoiding the widening of the cultural and psychological gap inherent in the growing differentiation of the world. He calls for **international** cooperation in every facet of life: educational, economic and technological, leading to the stimulation of a dialogue on a global scale, which would effect a search for new directions, transcending the tangibles of economic development.

Conclusion

This book clearly shows the preoccupation of a large number of thinkers with the problems created by technology and the necessity of handling them. It points out their wish to create an alliance between art and science, to apply human values to technique and to find means of understanding between developed and developing countries. The contributors constitute a select group of authors, including men and women, representing all aspects of modern thought in various parts of the world.

* It is up to the future to show whether their admonition will have any echo and lead to the implementation of radical solutions.

THE ARMENIAN WOMEN IN LEBANON

The history of the Armenian community in Lebanon begins in 1921 when the French transferred the remnants of the Armenians of Cilicia, Syria and Anatolia to Beirut after the massacres perpetrated by the Turks in 1915. Later, in 1937, when Alexandretta (modern Iskenderun) was ceded to Turkey by the French, more Armenians came. Those who settled in Beirut were given the area near the port and started their life in ragged tents and wretched tin shacks. Soon these poor dwellings became concrete-built houses, shops began to open and the men made use of their handcraft skills. They opened schools and built churches. As they began to learn Arabic they exercised their traditional skills in business and commerce, established workshops that developed into factories. In 1975 the Armenian community in Lebanon numbered around 150,000 most of whom lived in Bourj Hammoud and the rest in the suburbs, in Anjar, Chtaura and Zahle. The community supported a number of churches, a network of schools, daily newspapers and magazines.

What was the contribution of the Armenian woman in building the community to its prosperous state of business, culture and education? Some of the women coming from Turkey, who had received their education in missionary schools, worked as teachers in the schools, others who had no education worked as cooks, baby nurses, or did handwork and embroidery to earn a living. Many of them were widowed with children for whom livelihood had to be earned by the mothers. Those Armenian women coming from Turkey, in spite of the hardships, persecution and starvation, still kept an indomitable spirit to struggle for their survival. They had the strength and health inherited from their mountainous and vigorous climate. They had an unwavering faith in God coupled with deep religious ideals. Armenians as a race are particularly talented for the arts and crafts. Their children are imbued with a love for music, since every Armenian home has at least one musical instrument through which they are taught to play and sing their folksongs and melodies. Besides their musical heritage, they have their own traditional folk dances, costumes, embroideries, style of building and world famous architecture. Their history, rich in events and contributions, helped to create in them a strong national feeling which served to link them together and made them practice self-help and cooperation in their lands of emigration. Their love for education was so great that they sacrificed a lot to educate their children. The family traditions to which they anchored so strongly assured for them a sort of stability in the unstable life of a refugee.

Women in the home as wives and mothers are usually very traditional. The husband is the real head

and leader of the family, he works outside and thus does not share in the family work. The wife is responsible for all the housework, and most of all, raising of the children. Relatively few husbands help in bringing up the children, although among the younger couples this is changing as husbands extend more help to their wives in child rearing. There is good discipline at home and children learn to behave from early childhood. Parents emphasize the need for academic excellence and achievement. Many of the parents take charge of giving their children music and art education.

The Armenian women gradually developed into community conscious individuals organizing activities to sustain the churches and schools that needed a good deal of moral and financial support. They organized bazaars where they sold their embroidery and homemade Armenian delicacies to raise money. Each church had its women's auxiliaries that up to the present carry their roles as supporters of their faith and education. To mention a few of those groups there are the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Women's auxiliaries and the Armenian Red Cross that sponsor summer camps, maintain medical centers and give first aid to war casualties. A ladies' guild helps the orphanage in Ghazir, which is under the auspices of the church, and the Home of the Aged that gets its main support from the Women's Auxiliary. Other women's groups work for the hospital in Azounieh, Shouf; the Sisters of Hripsime have an orphanage in Bzommar. Karageuzian Foundation runs a vocational school for girls of school age who for one reason or another are out of school. Various women's organizations support schools and education. Without their devoted services, schools cannot meet their financial obligations. Also they promote culture and encourage young artists. They organize painting exhibitions, concerts, children's choirs, dance groups, invite prominent musicians and artists from abroad.

The education of women has gained ground recently and more young women are pursuing a secondary education and the percentage of those getting a university education is increasing. Two women's secondary schools have been operating for decades, the A.G.B.U. Tarouhi Hagopian Girls' Secondary School and Hripsimantz Girls' Nuns School. Due to the educational advancement many women have professional careers mostly in the field of education, nursing, pharmacy and secretarial work. More and more we see the women entering the business world either through private enterprise or through management and executive positions. The career women's percentage is small however, compared to the large

number of those women who stay at home and raise a family. Among this latter group of women those who have a secondary education show discontent for their role as mere housewives and mothers. They are in search of self-fulfillment which can truly give meaning to their lives. Even though they attend lectures, and pursue hobby type activities like flower arrangement, physical fitness exercises, first aid courses, these activities don't seem to satisfy their desire for self realization. There is a great need for well organized continuing education programs in language instruction, hygiene, child care, adolescent problems and others. There is also a need for publications in the Armenian language on women, child psychology and family relations. The lack of a good women's magazine is greatly felt. «Yeridassart Hayouhi», (The Young Armenian Woman), was published by a well-known woman writer and journalist, Siran Seza, for fifteen years but upon her death, in 1967, the magazine was discontinued.

The Armenian woman has a long and rich heritage of learning and culture; specially the aristocratic classes in ancient Armenia were highly cultured. In the 5th C.A.D., Zvig was a woman of great learning who established her own school in the palace headquarters and educated the intellectual elite of her time. Among those she taught some became historians and writers and mentioned Zvig's name with great admiration in their writings that have reached down to us. There were queens like Khosrovanoush who spent her whole dowry to build the great centers of learning called Sanahin and Haghpas, which were universities of those times. Princesses and great ladies of the aristocracy became patrons of learning by charging the monks to copy, illustrate and illuminate important manuscripts. They built cathedrals and churches in memory of their families.

As an example of even illiterate Armenian Women's appreciation of culture is the miraculous journey of the most voluminous manuscript written in the 10th Century. The women of Moush who fled from Turkish persecution carried different parts of the great Manuscript, hiding it in the most secret dwellings and caves until they reached the boundaries of present Armenia.

With such a heritage as an inspiration, the Armenian women in Lebanon have done well and deserve recognition. They can do more if they are given more responsibility in community leadership especially in the areas of education, culture, social and medical work. The percentage of women serving on responsible positions and on important religious, political and cultural committees is low indeed.

As the new Lebanese Armenian women with a university education emerge, it becomes essential to incorporate their efforts and contribution on a deeper level for securing a better future for the community in Lebanon.

Azadouhi Kalaidjia

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION, EXCISION AND INFIBULATION⁽¹⁾

The subject of female genital mutilation has received special attention in the issues of *Al-Raida*⁽²⁾. A report was published in it about the work of Fran Hosken, an experienced researcher on the topic and author of the voluminous «Hosken Report». Another report in *Al-Raida* dealt with the Khartoum Seminar organized in 1978 by the World Health Organization for the study of the problem. It is noteworthy that other international organizations have equally handled the subject: the UNESCO, the UNICEF and lastly, the Minority Rights Group which recently published a report on the subject containing detailed facts, programs and practical proposals for change.

The size of the problem is clear when one considers that female genital mutilation in one form or another is practiced in almost all the countries of North and Central Africa, in parts of South Africa, in the southern states of the Arabian peninsula and in the United Arab Emirates.

Types of Mutilation

1) Circumcision or cutting of the hood of the clitoris. This is the mildest type of mutilation and it affects only a small proportion of the millions of women concerned. It is known in Muslim countries as «Sunna» (tradition).

2) Excision, meaning the cutting of the clitoris and of all, or part of, the labia minora.

3) Infibulation, the cutting of the clitoris, labia minora and at least the anterior two-thirds, and often the whole, of the medical part of the labia majora. The two sides of the vulva are then pinned together by silk

(1) This article is based on Report No. 47, published by Minority Rights Group, 36 Craven Street, London WC2N5NG, December 1980.

(2) See *Al-Raida* No.5, August 1978, p. 10; No.9, Vol. II, August 1979, p. 13; No. 10, Vol. II, November 1979, p. 15 and No. 15, Vol. IV, February 1981, p. 16.

or catgut sutures, or with thorns, thus obliterating the vaginal introitus except for a very small opening kept patent by the insertion of a tiny piece of wood or a reed for the passage of urine or menstrual blood. These operations are done with special knives, with razor blades or with pieces of glass. The girl's legs are then bound together from hip to ankle and she is kept immobile for up to forty days to permit the formation of scar tissue.

The operator is most frequently an old woman of the village or a traditional birth attendant (Daya). In some countries the operations are performed in hospitals.

The age at which the mutilations are carried out varies from a few days old to about seven years old.

Physical Consequences:

The operation may produce the following immediate complications: hemorrhage, post-operative shock, and injury to other organs. The longterm ones are chronic infection of the uterus and vagina, fistula formation due to rupture of the vagina or uterus, extremely painful menstruation, vulval abscesses, etc.

Psychological Consequences:

Apart from the deprivation of sexual enjoyment due to the excision of the clitoris, the psychological trauma encountered during the operation, the secrecy and fear surrounding the ritual and the tales told about the importance of conforming to this practice are likely to mark the girl's personality with a lifelong feeling of inertness and resignation.

Motives for the Custom

The reason most frequently mentioned for female mutilation is the attenuation of sexual desire supposedly concentrated in the clitoris. The operation is considered a safeguard of pre-marital chastity, though the contrary is true, because refibulation is easily done to restore the original form.

Many people pretend that the custom is demanded by the Islamic faith, though it is not limited to Moslems. The fact that it is no longer observed by leading Moslem countries like Saudi Arabia eliminates the religious basis for it.

Cleanliness is also mentioned as a motive because the external female genitals are considered dirty. But the effect is usually opposite to that of promoting hygiene; urine and menstrual blood which cannot escape naturally result in discomfort, odor and infection.

The persistence of a custom that is not supported

by significant reasons is hard to explain. However the strong impact of tradition in Third World countries, the desire to keep women in a state of subjugation, and the fact that the custom is an irreplaceable source of revenue for operators, may help to explain it.

Programs and Practical Proposals for Change

Women writers from Africa and Arab countries have been speaking out against female genital mutilation. One is Nawal Saadawi from Egypt; another is Awa Thiam from Senegal, who discusses in her book, *«La Parole aux Nègresses»* (Negro women should speak), two major themes: polygamy and genital mutilation. She attributed the persistence of the custom to men's fanaticism and women's blind adherence to ancestral values. She wishes for a vast reciprocal solidarity among oppressed women and calls upon them to wage a long and continuous struggle.

In Somalia, the Women's Democratic Organization is the main agent for the government commission concerned with the abolition of the custom. The same organization actively participated in the 1978 World Health Organization Seminar in Khartoum in which ten countries were represented and several recommendations were made.⁽³⁾

Campaigns against mutilation are most advanced in the Sudan, where an educational booklet in Arabic has been developed and programs have been started in rural areas with financial assistance from an organization in Sweden. Similar projects have been initiated in Kenya. In Geneva a working group is coordinated by Isabelle Tevoedjre from Benin (Nigeria). In Somalia, Edna Adan Ismail obtained the support of the government for research and education programs.

In Egypt, Marie Bassili Assa'ad, a senior research assistant at the Social Research Centre of the American University in Cairo, has conducted a pilot study on the custom, the extent of its practice in Egypt and the arguments given for its persistence. One of these arguments is the following: «Female circumcision is a deeply entrenched custom that is passed on from grandmother to mother and daughter. It is done for beauty and cleanliness».

Ms. Assa'ad concludes her study by expounding the following needs:

a. Research to ascertain the distribution of the different forms of mutilation and the physical and psychological damages caused by the milder (Sunna) more common form practiced in Egypt.

b. Research regarding men's views on the custom. Is it true that they refuse to marry uncircumcised girls, as is often claimed by women?

(3) See Al-Raida No. 9, Vol. II, Aug. 1979, p. 13.

c. No immediate action should be taken against the mistaken views linking female circumcision with Islamic beliefs and practices. If we encourage some religious leaders to take a stand against the practice, this will encourage others to stand in support of it, developing a religious opposition to any change and inducing the use of religion as a camouflage for other objectives.

d. Immediate action should be initiated by policy-makers, leaders of public opinion, educators and health practitioners before facing the resistance of the masses. Groups recruited from the above categories should receive adequate information about the practice, its extent, the reasons for its perpetuation and the effect of traditional and unscientific beliefs pertaining to women's health and sexuality. They would then be in charge of transmitting this information and discussing it with their audiences. The information could be included in curricula of medical and nursing schools, and distributed to planning associations and social workers. It could be presented in the form of information manuals based on case studies and research findings.

Other signs of awareness in Egypt regarding this problem are: first, a seminar held by the Cairo Family Planning Association, in October 1979, which brought together representatives from the Arab League, UNICEF, WHO and other organizations, and published a set of 14 recommendations which aimed at handling the situation.

Second, a detailed education project has been recently worked out (July-August 1980) by the Middle East Council of Churches with the specific aim of combating female circumcision, which is practiced in Egypt by the Christian Copts as well as by the Muslims. The project proposes:

1) production of educational material; 2) training sessions for leaders; 3) sessions for married couples, engaged couples, youth programs and women's groups.

Conclusion

Mutilation of female genitals remains a widely practiced custom. Though a number of men and women in some of the countries concerned are actively involved in eliminating it, the task is a difficult one.

Two conclusions may be drawn, first, that the issue must be treated as a health issue and not be linked with sexual liberation of women. The temptation to reduce pain and death by offering to perform the operations in hospitals (in the meantime) must be refused.

Secondly, steps towards eradication must be taken locally, by women in the countries concerned. Other women can contribute, however, in a practical way. For this purpose, research must be carried out, funds are needed from UNESCO, UNICEF, Health Ministries of the countries concerned and also from every other possible source.

THE OVER-POPULATION PROBLEM IN EGYPT

Population Studies⁽¹⁾ no. 55, Oct.-Dec. 1980, contains, besides population statistics, three articles dealing with the population problem in Egypt. The first, (pp. 11-38) by Dr. Hussein Abdel Aziz Helmi Sayed and Dr. Mohamed Ezzat El-Khorazati, discusses levels and differentials of fertility in Egypt, taking as a basis the National Fertility Survey of 1974-1975. Here are some excerpts of this article:

The reported level of fertility measured by the average number of children ever-born for selected ever-married women aged 45-49 was about 6 children for the whole country. For urban and rural areas these averages were about 6.3 and 5.9 respectively (p. 15).

Examining the mean ideal number of children clearly shows the effect of socio-economic factors on fertility. The lowest values were those of highly educated women (married to highly educated husbands) who worked after marriage. These women are living in Cairo and Alexandria and they are of urban origin (p. 28).

Results show that with the increased effort in the socio-economic field, in particular in the area of education, marital fertility levels in Egypt will tend to decrease below recent levels (p. 30).

The most significant variables influencing women's attitudes toward ideal family size are their education and residence. Husband's education and origin/residence factors rank second in importance... Women's labor force participation affects fertility behavior but not attitudes toward fertility.

The second article, pp. 41-54, by Dr. Mary Taylor Hassouna and contributors, carries the title, "Barrier

(1) A quarterly review published by the Population and Family Planning Board, Research Office, under the Supreme Council for Population and Family Planning in Egypt.

Methods Projects". It reports on a project carried out over six months, with the purpose of studying the acceptability of "Barrier Methods" of contraception among Egyptian married couples.

The barrier methods selected for the study were: Neosamptan foam tablets, Orthodiaphragm with jelly, Delfen cream, Delfen spray and condoms. Both governmental and non-governmental units involved in family-planning services participated in the investigation program. They presented the barrier methods and discussed them with the women who sought contraceptive services, then asked them to select a method.

In its first six months of service delivery, the Barrier Method Study attracted 3325 women to the practice of family planning. A large majority chose the "foam tablet". During the same period, 49% of the women who selected a method dropped out, either permanently or temporarily. They switched to either another barrier method or to the use of common oral contraceptives or to IUD's (intra uterine devices).

Since the availability of Barrier methods in Egypt is severely limited, their success will depend on their availability and on the ability of the personnel to give adequate explanations and effect convincing discussions among the clientele.

The third article, pp. 57-59, deals with the subject of the preparation of a teacher's guidebook in population education for geography teachers of secondary schools.

The article summarizes a study prepared by Mr. Mohammad El-Sayed Gameel, which aims to show the need for a teacher's guidebook in population education as a help to cope with the over-population problem in Egypt. Reaching 40 million in 1960, the population is expected to exceed 66 million by the year 2000. With development efforts unable to match this rapid population increase, several consequences arise such as difficulties in securing food, employment, housing, schooling and other services.

The proposed guidebook will present the population problem as a disproportion between the population growth, distribution and characteristics on the one hand and the available resources of the community on the other. The basic elements of population education will be stated as follows: development of awareness and understanding of the problem and its consequences, formulation of a mental attitude toward the problem, attainment of skills required for decision-making in personal situations related to population problems and improvement of the quality of life. Besides recommendations and suggestions for further studies, the guidebook will also contain directions for teachers, and proposed educational goals and aspects of students' activities.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF ARAB WOMEN

BY HUDA ZURAYK⁽¹⁾

In introducing her paper, Dr. Huda Zurayk differentiates between traditional societies, in which woman's role is restricted to the function of child rearing and housekeeping, and developed societies where women participate strongly in many areas that were previously closed to them. In Arab countries which have different stages of development, it is not possible to speak either of a uniform role or of a uniform change in the role of Arab women today. The ultimate objective sought by Dr. Zurayk is "to present statistical evidence within a theoretical framework that describes the direction and rate of change in the role of Arab Women and to indicate some implications for policy innovations."

Though statistical information in this paper dates from 1975, it is still valid in 1981 and the conclusions are still up-to-date.

According to the author, traditional culture restricting women to household duties is still dominant in most Arab countries. Therefore we may consider the labor force participation of Arab women to be the major proof of their changing role in society. Contributions to voluntary services and cultural activities, though they increase a woman's sense of self-fulfillment, do not give her the independence provided by a wage-earning activity.

To be effective and progressive, woman's participation in the labour force needs the help of education which increases her work potential, changes her aspirations and her values regarding proper modes of behavior in society. In other words, education coupled with work, should serve to build in woman a balanced and integrated personality.

Urbanization is another factor associated with the development process. By allowing the family to break away from certain traditions connected with rural life, it gives women some independence in their decisions. The more expensive life-style in the city produces economic pressure on the family which induces the woman to seek employment outside the home.

Education as an indicator of change

Besides the change it effects in woman's personality, education affects her mode of behavior by raising the marriage age and negatively influencing the fertility of married women. Women are thus left with a larger amount of leisure time before marriage and during their

¹ Condensed from a paper published by the Population Bulletin of UN Economic Commission for Western Asia, No. 17, Dec. 1979.

married life which can be devoted to productive work outside the home.

Female education as an indicator of change in the Arab world is still far behind the desired level. Statistics taken between 1970 and 1976 indicate that the majority of adult females were illiterate in almost all Arab countries. They also give evidence of disparities among them in the status of women, ranging from 45 percent female illiteracy in Jordan and Lebanon to around 98 percent in Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

It is important to observe, however, that an increase in female enrolment rates in all age groups occurred between 1970 and 1975, particularly for countries with very low enrolment rates. This is indicative of a trend which should continue and accelerate, to produce an adult Arab woman better able to participate in development.

Fertility

The high value of children in Arab culture has contributed to a historically high level of fertility in the Arab countries. Two indicators of the level of fertility, the crude birth rate and the total fertility rate, indicate a continuing pattern of high fertility in the ECWA region today. Other findings: 1) little variation exists in the fertility rates among the Arab countries in spite of the disparity among them in terms of the illiteracy rates of the adult female population. 2) A clear rising trend in the mean age of marriage of those with decreasing levels of illiteracy. 3) A negative trend in fertility as the level of education of the woman rises.

However, even though some Arab women are showing lower levels of fertility, the family size in Arab society is still generally large, leaving the Arab woman with a relatively short portion of her life span that can be devoted to productive labour outside the home.

Urbanization

Statistics made in 1975 show that, with the exception of Oman, Saudi Arabia and the two Yemens, a substantial percentage of the population in each of the Arab countries in the ECWA region are residing in urban areas. Urban living, as already stated, contributes to beneficial changes in social organization. However, when it means a massive emigration from rural areas to urban ones, it is apt to disturb the demographic equilibrium by diminishing the number of active population in rural districts and creating problems of overpopulation in urban ones. For this reason, migration into towns should be subjected to state control.

Economic Structure

Agriculture is still a large sector in the populous Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Yemen.

Jordan and Lebanon, on the other hand, are shown to have developed large service sectors, as have the oil-rich countries of the Arab Gulf.

The work of women in traditional agriculture is undertaken mostly as part of family labour and does not usually provide them with the independence gained in a wage-earning job.

Labour Force Participation

Figures reveal very low female activity rates in comparison to male activity rates in Arab countries. It is interesting to note that activity rates of women are highest in Lebanon, the country with one of the highest literacy rates, the lowest level of fertility and an economic structure favouring the service and industry sectors.

In countries that have moved away from a purely agricultural economy, the labour force participation of women seems to concentrate on the service sector, i.e. on teaching, nursing and domestic service.

Dr. Zurayk thinks that the low degree of female labour participation is due to two important factors: 1) social organization patterns and social values which have not responded adequately to changes occurring in Arab countries, since they strongly favour maintaining the traditional role of the woman as wife and mother. 2) The fact that most Arab women today, including educated women, are not psychologically prepared to actively assume the responsibilities of the new place that could be open for them in society. They seem to be unaware of the demands which a developing country imposes on its population, requiring the contribution of every adult member of society, including women, to speed up the development process.

In conclusion, the author mentions the main factors that would help the Arab woman fulfill her double role in home and society. They are:

1. The elimination of illiteracy prevailing to a high degree among women.
2. Increasing female school enrolment at every level and promoting quality education.
3. Social thinkers among both men and women should present to the community the need to develop the social values that allow women to fulfill themselves and achieve self-realization for their own good and for the good of the community.
4. The communication media should be encouraged to project positive supportive images relevant to the working woman's life.
5. Governments should repeal all legislation that discriminates against women, be it in the laws of personal status, civic life and employment or in laws affecting other aspects of individual and social living.
6. Legislation should take into consideration the needs of the working mother and allow her certain concessions that help her fulfill her double role as housewife and participator in general development.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF RURAL WOMEN IN JORDAN

Several articles were published by Al-Raida⁽¹⁾ on the status of women in Jordan but they generally dealt with women's education and work in urban areas. The study made by Mr. Hassan Hammad⁽²⁾, briefly presented in this article, deals mainly with "the problems and prospects of women in rural development" which is the title of his dissertation submitted at Reading University's Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Centre.

In his opening paragraph the author points out that women's status in Jordan varies according to the district in which they live and the class of society to which they belong. In less educated urban society, woman's status and role remain traditional while, in the educated class of large towns, women are beginning to take their place alongside men in society. Many are doing public or professional work; some are involved in political careers but the majority take up traditionally feminine occupations. In 1979, while there were 11,811 female teachers and 2080 nurses and midwives, there were only 40 female architects and engineers, 11 lawyers, 203 doctors and three journalists.

The village women offer a different picture. The majority of them work in the field on family land with their husbands; their economic contribution, generally uncompensated, is important because they carry on a double burden of field work and household duties until the end of their lives. Those who belong to rich rural families usually refuse to take part in field work outside the house, but they make their contribution by looking after the animals within the house and "hosh", the household yard or compound.

The author goes on to say that Arab countries, though they have different stages of development, offer a similar image of women in rural districts. They follow a double standard which includes discrimination between girls and boys, an imposed guardianship on women in adult life, a lower status for women who are single, widowed or divorced. The birth of a boy is accompanied by ceremonies of rejoicing which are denied to girls. The period of breastfeeding is longer for males than for females. A strict code of honor exposes a woman to lose her life if she is suspected of wayward conduct.

As to education, the Jordanian law requires

compulsory education for boys and girls at the elementary stage in separate schools, but the percentage of girls attending school in rural districts is still very low and that of dropouts (children who leave school before they have learned to read and write) is higher for girls than for boys. In the Jordan Valley, (Al-Ghor), it reaches 90 percent among girls. An official report published in 1979 stated that the illiteracy rate for males in rural districts was 49.5 percent; for females, between 76 and 85 percent. No vocational education was available for girls. In the Jordan Valley, where the number of girls attending school was half that of boys, the only secondary school in the district was reserved for boys.

According to a survey published by the University of Jordan in 1979, the educational level in the "Badia", (the bedouin areas in the country), is the lowest of all. Fifty percent of males of all ages have never entered school while the figure for female illiteracy is 88 percent.

The government literacy program which takes care of adult education, suffers from the lack of trained teachers and readable material. It does not provide women with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve and increase their productivity. Rural women are equally neglected by agricultural radio programs which cater only for male farmers. Extension workers generally belong to the male sex and are prevented by social norms from reaching women.

Health services in rural areas do not receive more attention than education does. They are limited to health clinics which are not always available nor easily accessible because of bad roads and long distances. Infant mortality in these areas reaches 130-160/1000 while the general figure is 90-100/1000. The average number of children is 10 per woman of age group 36-50 years. 81.3 percent of the children's deaths occur before they are two years of age.

On the whole, the rural and bedouin population are suffering from a serious lack of health education as compared with urban dwellers. Their health needs may be briefly stated as follows:

1. Health and nutrition programs to be directed to all members of the family.
2. Installation of a sewer system.
3. Provision of the rural population with clean water and regular checking of water sources.
4. Increase in the number of clinics and improvement of their quality.
5. Provision of preventive health advice.
6. Provision of out-patient treatment, including mobile health and dental units.
7. More health surveys and research.

(1) See Al-Raida, May 1979, Vol. II, no. 8, p. 8, Voluntary Social Organizations; Aug. 1, 1980, Vol. III, no. 13, p. 5, The Role of Women in Jordanian Society; May 1, 1981, Vol. IV, no. 16, p. 15, Women's Work in Jordan; Aug. 1, 1981, Vol. IV, no. 17, p. 9, Attitude Toward Women's Work in Jordan.

(2) Published in *Jordan Times*, Thurs. Fr., July 9-10, 1981, p.3.

IYDP IN LEBANON

The number of the handicapped persons in Lebanon attains 1% of the population, creating a problem rendered more acute by the persistent war.

In No. 16 of *Al-Raida*, May 1, 1981, p. 5, we announced that, on the occasion of IYDP, a general census of the handicapped in Lebanon had been projected by the Government. According to an article published by *«Le Réveil»*, August 6, 1981, no accurate statistics about their number has so far been obtained, but it is estimated at 30,000 to 40,000 in a population not exceeding 3.2 million, which means that this country counts one handicapped person for every hundred inhabitants, equalling five to six times the world ratio. A quarter of the total number comprises the war victims that fell between 1976 and 1981.

This same article relates a conversation regarding this problem, held with Dr. Ramez Hajjar, himself a paralytic fastened to a wheelchair since six years, as a result of a car accident which occurred to him while he was a medical student. In spite of his infirmity, he was able to overcome his psychological breakdown, take his exams, obtain his medical degree and occupy a position at the American University Hospital of Beirut.

Moved by the sad condition of the handicapped in a still feudalized society which refuses to accept them as adults with equal rights, Dr. Hajjar has established friendly relations with other handicapped individuals. One of them, a congenital paralytic, has succeeded like him in obtaining a doctorate in law, in history and Arabic literature, plus a "licence" in sociology. Together they plan to create an association of the "motor handicapped", those in wheelchairs, and whose problem of readaptation differs from that of the blind, the deaf and dumb and the mentally retarded. Their objective is to emancipate the mentality of other

people concerning the handicapped, give the latter a reason for existence, spread in the Lebanese society an awareness of their problem and elaborate a project of law recognizing their rights in society, particularly their right to work.

With the present situation of insecurity in Lebanon, where the danger of snipers is lurking everywhere, any person may receive a bullet in his back and become incapacitated for life. Hence the importance of making the problem a responsibility of all the Lebanese.

How are the "motor-handicapped" taken care of in Lebanon?

The old fighters who have become handicapped by war receive a certain indemnity from their military organizations. The civilian handicapped depend on their families. Many of them are sent to private specialized institutions which are very costly and though they try to rehabilitate the patient, yet they isolate him from society. Such centers exist at the American University Hospital, at the French Hotel-Dieu, at Beit-Chabab, Ouzai, Kafa'at, but they can accommodate only a few of the large number of handicapped people in the country. On the other hand, there is a pressing need for the creation of a unit which would take care of the patient at the critical stage of his ailment. Such a unit is still inexistent in any of the above institutions.

The association which Dr. Hajjar and his group are planning to create, will vindicate the rights of the handicapped as regular citizens. They do not claim the pity of others nor their charity. What they claim is a change in their mentality, so that they may recognize for the handicapped equal rights to health, schooling, reeducation and work. Their claim to have larger elevators, steps and sidewalks accommodated for their wheel-chairs, should not be considered a privilege but a right. The group created by Dr. Hajjar and his friends already includes more than 200 members who hope to obtain soon the statute of an association of public utility, recognized by the State.

THE WOMAN BREAD-WINNER

«In the United States, the myth of the ideal nuclear family structure was debunked when it became apparent that women were the sole heads of 34% of all minority households and 11% of all white families. In 1972, 52% of the former and 25% of the latter category of families were below the poverty level as compared with only 5% of the families with an adult male head.

Additional data have revealed that this is by no means a phenomenon restricted to the United States. Women-headed households account for 35% of all households in many parts of the Caribbean. Between 1960 and 1970, the proportion of such households doubled in Brazil and increased by 33% in Morocco. Using census data for 74 developing countries we calculated the total range of adult women who, because of their current marital/family status, carry the

potential of being, or eventually becoming, family heads.

The percentage of potential household heads varies from 10% to 48%; the average of 74 countries is 18%. Their proportion could be 18% in India, 23% in Indonesia, and about 46% of the household heads in Botswana (Africa), 18% in Kenya and 15% in Iran.

In parts of the Middle East, real conflicts are surfacing between increasing economic pressures and the continued existence of traditional obligations; conflicts that inhibit kinship units from providing economic support to female members as it is 'ideally' and even legally prescribed. In many countries male unemployment and male marginality have prevented men from keeping their economic obligations towards their kinswomen. This has contributed to the breakdown of the extended family."

(Quoted from an article on "The Plight of the Woman-Breadwinner" by Mayra Buvinic, Nadia H. Youssef and Ilsa Schumacher, in "The Unesco Courier", July 1980, p. 11-12).

«L'Œil», an issue on the Arts in Jordan

The cultural movement in Jordan, engineered by King Abdullah in the early part of this century, took the form of a real revolution under his grandson, King Hussain. This is shown by such important achievements as the creation of Art institutes and associations, the founding of the National Gallery, folkloric museums and archaeological exhibits and the revival of the local crafts of ceramics, jewelry, calligraphy and folk music. The government's belief in the benefits of cultural rapprochement culminated in the cultural agreements it concluded with several countries including France. As a result, a number devoted to the arts in the Royal Hashemite Kingdom was produced in January-February 1981 by the monthly art review, «L'Œil». It contains beautifully reproduced and richly colored pictures of Petra and Jerash, Omayyad palaces and mosaics, with features of the cultural heritage: costumes, arms, jewels, oriental residences, besides a survey of contemporary architecture, art books and art life in Jordan.

The project was patronized by King Hussain and Queen Noor, and enthusiastically supported by Princess Wijdan Ali, herself a painter, who mobilized all the necessary means for the success of the project.

Princess Wijdan is an art graduate from Beirut University College.

**At-Tarbiah-al-Usriyyah
(Family Education)
Beirut, 1981**

A recent publication of the Lebanon Family Planning Association's, containing summaries of lectures, discussions and recommendations presented at the seminar which the LFPA organized on the occasion of the Family Planning Week, December 3-5, 1979. The work was compiled by Mr. Toufiq Osseiran, general secretary of the Association, who introduced it as "an effort stressing the importance of family education and particularly sex education which should be entrusted to qualified and scientifically minded educators but has been unfortunately left to the care of commercial and vulgar mass media." With the collaboration of the Education Center for Research and Development, the Association has made direct contact with UNESCO and hopes to achieve a few important steps on the long way leading to the realization of a happier and more enlightened family life in Lebanon.

Ideas Forum

A magazine published by UNICEF's Information Division, dealing with the international problems of childhood, particularly in developing countries. The issue no.4, June 2, 1981, contains articles on "the International Code of marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes", "The Disabled Child, facts and figures", "Destitute women in Bangladesh", and "Refugee children in Somalia". Three supplements, nos. 10, 11 and 12, deal respectively with "the Father's role in education", "Children and blindness" and "Separated children".

**At-Tarbiah-as-Sukkaniyah: Ihtimam Muasir
(Population Education: A
Contemporary Concern)**

An international study of the conceptualization and methodology of population education, forming part of a series of studies and documents published by UNESCO. This study has been translated into Arabic under the auspices of the «Regional UNESCO Office for Education in the Arab Countries», Beirut, Lebanon. The work consists of nine chapters dealing with the objectives of population education, the planning of its programs, its methodology, the execution of curricular and extra-curricular programs, present needs and future trends. Each chapter is followed by a bibliography. The concluding chapter stresses the arguments and discussions pointing out the importance of population education, which primarily aims at change and improvement of the mode of living for all people.

**Manushi — a journal about women
and society, the first feminist
journal in India**

Published in English and Hindi since 1979, it is the mouth-piece of women, voicing opinions on their living conditions, problems, burdens, struggles, and aspirations. Issues such as violence against women, economic discrimination, religious, social and familial enslavement and health related issues are regularly highlighted.

Manushi is an attempt to look anew at the world through women's eyes.

**C 1/202 Lajpat Magar 1
India, New Delhi 110024.**

**AL-RAIDA, A QUARTERLY
PUBLISHED BY IWSAW**

P.O.B. 13-5053
Beirut University College
Beirut — Lebanon
Cable address: BECOGE

STAFF

Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr — Director
Rose Ghurayyib — Editor
Mrs. Irene Lorfing — Research Associate
Nuha Azar — Secretary
Unsigned articles were written by the Editor

Yearly Contribution :

L.L. 15 in Lebanon or U.S. \$ 10 or
equivalent abroad, paid directly or
by postal order to B.U.C.