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KUWAITI WOMEN 25 Years of Independence 1961 – 1986

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Education and Employment in Kuwait

In Kuwait, education and work are the most essential and determinant factors in society. *Dr. al-Rumeihi*, in the introduction of a book on «Kuwait» (*), quoted this statement from *al-Rihani* who observed these two characteristics in the Kuwaiti society fifty years ago.

Education, as many economists have observed, has a positive influence on economic participation. With the rise of oil prices in 1973; the oil revenues transferred Kuwait to one of the greatest Per Capita income countries in the world, \$22,840 in 1980. The oil revenues have multiplied educational opportunities and created new jobs. Article 40 of the constitution states that «Education is a right for Kuwaitis, guaranteed by the State... (and) in its preliminary stages shall be compulsory and free in accordance with law». The history of female education in Kuwait dates back to 1937, when the first girls' elementary school was opened.

In 1960, the first six Kuwaiti women received their college degrees from Cairo University. In 1963, *Loulua al-Qutami*, a pioneer of women's rights, founded the Kuwaiti Women's cultural and Social Association. In 1970, the number of college graduates rose to 215, and 5 held graduate degrees.

In the same year, 99 per cent of women college graduates were employed and 50 per cent worked as teachers. Kuwaiti women hold important posts in the Ministries, although they are still not sent abroad as diplomats. Among the most prominent women in gov-

ernment is *Fadda al-Khaled* who was Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education in 1981. Education among Kuwaiti females was very significant. Over the last decade, the number of Kuwaiti female graduates at Kuwait University was nearly twice the number of Kuwaiti male graduates.⁽¹⁾ Here one should also consider the propensity of males to study abroad.

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of Kuwaiti women in the labour force, from 1 per cent in 1957 to 3.2 per cent in 1975 and 5 per cent in 1980. The majority of women work in the government sector. They work as teachers in girls' schools, in the Ministry of Education, in health and social services. Women have also entered the private sector; many are running their own business and some are involved in making investment. In the Souq al-Manakh stock market crash, the assets of 89 people were frozen, among whom 26 were women.⁽²⁾

What is expected from Kuwaiti women? What more needs to be achieved? According to *Nora al-Falah* «women in Kuwait have to learn from the experiences of women in various other societies, women who have been struggling to ensure equality between the sexes. Then, Kuwaiti women will be able to create in this country the first movement to liberate women and in the process, at the same time, develop their entire society».⁽³⁾

(*) *Kuwait*. Published by the Government of Kuwait to commemorate the 25th anniversary of independence. 1986. p. 7.

(1) Annual Statistical Abstract, 1984, Kuwait, p. 313.

(2) The Middle East, October 1985, p. 8.

(3) Al-Falah, Nora. «KUWAIT: God's Will — and the process of Socialization», in *Sisterhood is Global*, Robin Morgan ed., p. 413.

The Right to Vote^(*)

Kuwait, the only Gulf Arab country with an elected National Assembly, still denies women their right to vote and be elected. The Kuwaiti constitution was promulgated in 1962, and legislative elections started in 1963. Over the past years, the question of political rights for women has been a controversial and central issue, an issue that has social, political and religious dimensions.

Article I of the election law states that voting rights are restricted to literate male Kuwaiti nationals over the age of twenty-one. A poll of these men showed that 58 per cent opposed electoral rights for women, 27 per cent were in favor. The issue still remains an important challenge to Kuwaiti women who remain determined to win their political rights. Several Kuwaiti women's organizations have been challenged by these limitations and tried to register as voters in February's elections, 1985. Article 29 of the constitution states that «all people are equal in human dignity and in public rights and duties before the law without distinction as to race, origin, language or religion».

Based on this article, a group of deputies who won the elections presented a bill to grant women their electoral rights. The ministry of Islamic affairs issued a fatwa (ruling) as to the validity of the bill stating «the nature of the electoral process befits men, who are endowed with ability and expertise: it is not permissible that women recommend or nominate other women or men».

The fatwa was opposed by many people and caused sharp debate. Critics of the fatwa have argued that this statement is not based on the Holy Quran, women in Islam were able to give their opinion in public affairs and had their rights since the early days of Islam. Instead, the fatwa is based on the Maliki school of jurisprudence in the 8th century. Advocates of women's right to vote, refer to article 6 of the constitution which

states that the system of government «shall be democratic, under which sovereignty resides in the people, the source of all powers». People in the article represents all men and women of the country.

Serious attempts have been made to grant women their electoral rights. The first attempt was in 1971, when Deputy *Salem al-Marzook* proposed that the vote be granted to literate women who have finished their primary education. The assembly did not approve this proposal. Another attempt was made by the society for the Advancement of the Family during the same year, calling for changes in the personal status laws regarding polygamy.

The National Assembly was suspended in 1976, and no elections were held until Sheikh Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah revived the assembly in 1981. A bill was presented after the 1981 elections by deputy member, *Ahmad al-Tukheim*, proposing to amend article I to give women the right to vote. The bill did not gain enough support and was blocked by the fundamentalist religious groups who oppose the enfranchisement of women based on their argument that these practices are un-Islamic and do not conform with the Kuwaiti traditions. In 1985, the Reform Society, one of the religious Islamic groups, called for giving women the right to vote. The editor of their magazine, *al-Mujtamaa* was quoted saying «Islam says a women should cover her hair and her arms, not her mind».⁽¹⁾

The government of Kuwait has always advocated women's education and employment. The perspectives of all government plans are aimed at people's welfare and improving women's status. In 1980, and when asked about the political rights of women, Prime Minister Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah said, «In my opinion, the time has come to take note of the position of Kuwaiti woman and her effective role in society, and put forward the matter of the vote for study and discussion».⁽²⁾

Aida Arasoghli

(*) This article is based on the following sources:

- *Assayad*, 18 September 1985, pp. 68-70.
- *The Daily Star*, 18 February 1986.
- *The Middle East*, October 1985, pp. 7-9.

(1) *The Middle East*, October 1985, p. 8.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Advocates of Women's Political Rights

Badria al-Awadhi, former Dean at Kuwait University, faculty of law, believes that all Kuwaitis have equal rights under the constitution and women are ready to assume a political role. She adds that those who deny Kuwaiti women their rights are not just.

Dalal al-Ghanim, public relations manager, states that Kuwaiti women will not give up the fight until they win their rights.

Loulua al-Qutami, founder and president of Women's Cultural and Social Association, believes that article 29 of the Constitution assures equal rights for women. She attempted to register as a voter on the basis of this article.

Noreya al-Saddani, a strong campaigner for women's political rights, believes that women are a decisive factor in society, but at the same time they still feel inferior because of the way they are brought up.

Fatima al-Issa, President of Nadi al-Fatat, believes that the Fatwa (ruling) is contradictory and women should continue their struggle in order to gain the right to vote in the next session of the Kuwaiti parliament.

Fadila Doaij al-Sabah, a prominent lawyer, believes that Kuwaiti women have the potential, and hold high posts (office) in the Ministries, they are capable of voting and being elected.

Dalal al-Zein, President of Women's Committee at the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society, states that women have played a vital role, though indirectly, in the choice of deputies for the next four-year term of the fifty member assembly.

Fawziya al-Bahr, a successful engineer, believes that it is time to acknowledge the need for the participation of all members of the society in the process of economic and social development.



Fadila al-Sabah
(From Assayad)



Dalal al-Zein
(From Assayad)



Fawziya al-Bahr
(From Assayad)

Dr. Maasoumah al-Mubarak, states that the results of the elections have been a success for women if one considers the recommendations that were suggested by some deputy members who won the elections. She feels disappointed that women do not have the right to vote, but she also has high hopes in the next session.

Dr. Rasha al-Sabah, Dean at the University of Kuwait, advocates that Kuwaiti women can take part in the formulation of the country's future only if they are given their political electoral rights.

At the Crossroads of Development

The following article is an excerpt from a paper presented by *Dr. Lubna Ahmed Alkazi* at the regional conference on Planning for the Integration of Arab Women in Economic Development, which was organized by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.

With declining revenues and national minorities, the Gulf oil rich States are reassessing their development plans. Many ambitious projects have been eliminated, but yet economic self-reliance is a distant goal. They have achieved educational progress and expanded welfare services. Yet, the productivity of nationals is still low. National men are concentrated in administrative white collar occupations by their own choice. While women are being channelled into sex segregated occupations through indirect social consensus. This wastage of Human Capital is irrational and detrimental in the long term future of society. Every individual in the labour active age must contribute to the country's future. How long can Kuwait and its neighbours buy technology and the workers to manage the process? The oil glut has shown these countries that its nationals must now create an income to substitute the oil revenue invested in them. Women are an important half of the society and they must be allowed to participate in their country's future.

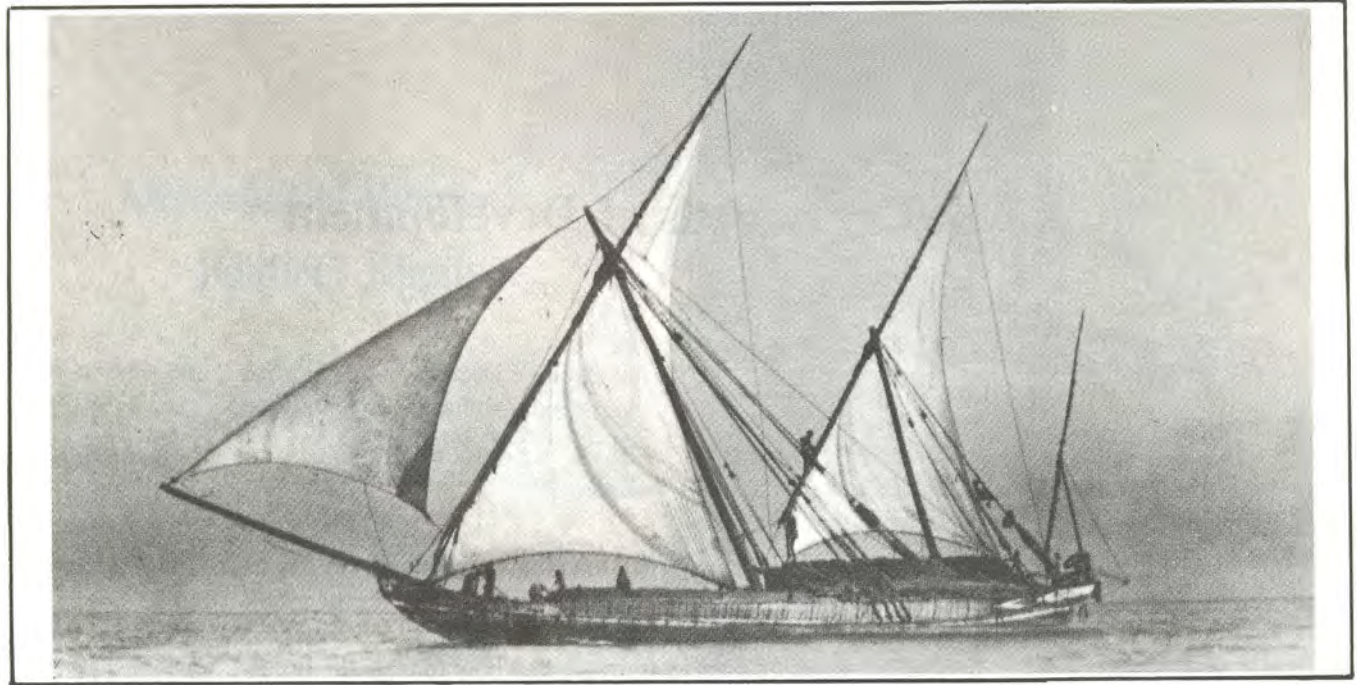
(a) Guided Employment: Both national men and women should be employed according to their qualifications. Women with Science degrees should work in fields that require this education. Law graduates should practise law and accountants and statisticians must not be channelled to areas not requiring those specializations. Women should be given vacation with the schools, so that children are not neglected in the summer. And one major reason for employment overstaf-

ing in schools would, thus, not be necessary for women.

(b) Vocational training: Vocational training for uneducated and less educated women should be opened in various centres of the country. These centres could train women how to operate a telephone board system, typing, weaving textiles, etc. Traditional crafts like dyeing and weaving wool could be revived: along with other crafts such as cane weaving and pottery. These handicrafts could later be exported and create a source of income to the country. There has been a revival of past crafts in Kuwait by private organizations. But on a national level, it would employ larger numbers of workers and contribute to the Gross National Product.

(c) Daycare centres: There has been rising discontent with strangers rearing the children isolated in their homes. Daycare centres in the larger bureaucratic organizations or Ministries could be opened for the children of the employees. Mothers could take turns in caring for these children which would not entail an additional staff at the company or in their homes. Furthermore, working mothers would feel a sharing of responsibility with their female colleagues.

(d) Counselling centres: Social obstacles are increasing for working women everywhere. In countries with rising unemployment, women workers have been blamed; in countries with rise in drug abuse, mothers have been blamed; rising divorce rates is due to ever demanding wives. Thus, women have to confront various obstacles and accusations if they try to leave the prescribed role for them. The task of balancing domestic roles and careers can be psychologically overwhelm-



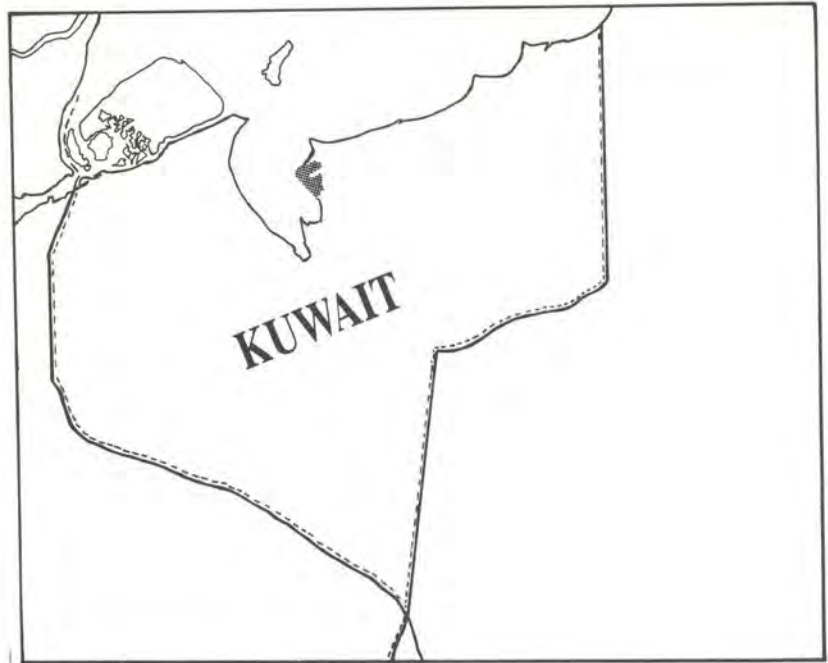
ing for many women. Some give up the struggle and return home. In western countries, counselling centres are open for working women to seek advice and solve problems. However, in Gulf societies, there is no qualified centres that women could seek legal and psychological advice. The growing demands on women have increased and counselling centres would help those who need them.

(e) Dispelling Myths: Without studies and facts to support them, claims have been made on the instability of female labour. Yet women workers remain in the same occupation longer than men, as they are not willing to risk their jobs. Men are more likely to change occupations in order to find better prospects. Studies should be conducted on job turnover between national men and women to dispel the myth that women are short term workers. Also on-the-job-training is often suited to the male employees by being scheduled in the evenings. Female employees who would wish to benefit

from these training programs cannot do so as double work shifts would create domestic problems. However, if job training was offered during work hours, it would have greater female registration. Women are led to believe that their cohorts are all being employed in segregated areas. But, Kuwaiti women have entered various fields and new occupational possibilities are always created with the expansion of the market. Thus, the contribution of women in various spheres should be publicly known so as to encourage others to venture in these fields.

At present, government officials are complaining that women are only working in sex segregated areas, while they are needed in other areas. However, if a survey was conducted of women in those sex segregated employments, the officials could analyze the cause — is it by the choice of the women workers alone? or, is it imposed on them by the men in their society? What are the benefits in these areas which could be transferred to those areas needing recruitment?

KUWAIT



Location:	Kuwait is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south, Iraq to the west and north, and the Arabian Gulf to the east.	Constitutional hereditary monarchy. The Amir (head of state), the prime minister and a cabinet hold the executive power. Legislative power is held by the elected National Assembly. Legislation and court jurisprudence are based on the Islamic Sharia.
Area:	20.150 sq. Km.	
Population:	1.7 Million.	
Capital:	Kuwait.	
Languages:	Arabic.	
Religions:	Islam (predominantly sunni) 91.5 %, Christian 6.4 %, other 2.1 %.	
Education:	It is free through post-graduate level and compulsory through intermediate level. The first girls elementary school was opened in 1937. The first 6 Kuwaiti women college graduates received their degrees in 1960.	
Birth Rate:	Per 1000 pop. (1980) 39.7.	
Death Rate:	Per 1000 pop. (1980) 4.1.	
Life Expectancy:	(1975-1980): Female 72 years, male 67 years.	
Government:	The al-Sabah Dynasty was founded in 1756. Kuwait was proclaimed a British Protectorate by a treaty concluded between the Sheikh and Britain in 1899. It was recognized as an independent government in 1914 under British protection. It gained its full independence in 1961, and was recognized as a sovereign Arab State in 1962.	
	Women's Suffrage:	None.
	Currency:	Kuwaiti Dinar.
	Per Capita Income:	\$ 14,000 (in 1984).
	Equal Pay Policy:	Equal pay for equal work.
	Production:	Livestock, oil, fish, petrochemicals.
	Family:	Maternity benefits are sponsored by the government. 2-month maternity leave. A modern maternity hospital opened in 1961, and there were around 73 free government-run kindergartens (in 1981) as well as several (motherhood centres).
	Welfare:	Health services and education are free to everyone. The government funds orphanages, senior care facilities, libraries, and gives rent subsidies to Kuwaiti families living in leased housing.

Fatima Hussein

«دخلت الحياة وسوف أخرج منها دون احتراف
لأنني عاشقة كبرى لحريتي».
(فاطمة حسين)

Fatima Hussein Issa al-Qiney is a pioneer Kuwaiti writer and a prominent figure in the media. She was born in Kuwait in 1937 where she received her high-school education, and later continued her education at Cairo University (1956-1960). Her career life started in New York where she presented a programme on the daily events of a Kuwaiti woman in New York. She came back to Kuwait in 1962 and worked for the Kuwaiti radio presenting the women's programme. Then she decided to work in the field of politics, but she faced many obstacles so she resigned and joined the television, preparing the programme on the family from 1963 till 1977. Now *Fatima* is a member of the Consultancy Council for the Media. She is married to *Suleiman al-Mutawaa*, a consultant with the Kuwaiti Oil Company and has two sons and one daughter.

A firm believer in women's potential and the need to integrate women in all development programmes. She is a strong advocate of women's social, economic, political and electoral rights. When asked about her opinion on the Fatwa (ruling) concerning women's right to vote and be elected, she responded by saying that the Fatwa will relegate women back to the Ottoman subordination.

She believes that the government should adopt national legislation and in particular laws governing personal status, to conform to the principles of equality. For her, legislation has a strong effect on women's participation in the field of public work. The status of women is undermined due to legal codes, tradition and norms.



(From *Sayidaty*)

In her book published recently «A Point»^(*), she wrote about the media, education, the press, the changing roles of women, and love. The book is a rich comprehensive collection of essays, stories, perceptions and opinions of all aspects of life from within the culture of the Middle East. Her literary work voices *Fatima's* strive for freedom and reflects an outspoken character who aims to improve her society and country.

(*) Hussein, Fatima: *A Circle*. Kuwait: Al-Rabiaan, 1985. First edition, 247 pages.

The General Federation of Iraqi Women



Manal Younis, President of the General Federation of Iraqi Women

The General Federation of Iraqi Women GFIW was convened in Baghdad from March 29 — April 5 1986. Around 250 delegates from all over the world attended the conference which was opened by Vice President Mr. *Taha Muheiddin Ma'rouf*, who gave a speech on the important role of women and the need to integrate women in the process of social and economic development. The Vice President's speech was followed by a number of other speeches given by participants in the conference.

The agenda of the conference, which was attended by the participants, included meetings that were held every day to discuss the Federation's three-year plan which aims at enhancing the integration of women in the country's economic development. The female labour force participation rate in 1984 was 24.3 per cent as compared to 17 per cent in 1975. Eleven committees of the 12th conference of GFIW were formed to discuss the federation's plans in the following sectors: finance, administrative, information, and public relations, social development, culture, economic development, research and studies, and women in North Iraq.

The GFIW headed by Chairwoman, Mrs. *Manal Younis*, has played a vital role in women's emancipation during the last few years. Many training courses, symposiums and conferences were held by the GFIW, focusing on eradication of illiteracy, providing women with formal and non-formal education and ensuring equal pay for equal work.

The Federation's objectives aims at preparing and mobilizing Iraqi women to undertake their effective role, raising her status and ensuring her equal rights. The Federation also aims at promoting sisterhood among Arab women, to speed up the process of utilizing the human reserves of women in the Arab world and to design measures at all levels to enhance female labour force participation. It is very important to be aware of the economic contribution of women and their potential in promoting the development and growth of their respective societies.

President *Saddam Hussein's* view on Iraqi women's role can be summarized in his saying that «we do not believe in a correct role for man in society if detached from that of women».

Aida Arasoghli

An Interview with Hoda al-Namani

Amin Al-Rihani

This interview was published in *Women and the Family in the Middle East* by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea. *Hoda al-Namani* was born in Damascus, lived in Egypt for many years, and now resides in Beirut. She has published four books of poetry.

The fourth and most recent collection of poetry by Hoda al-Namani is her work *I Remember I Was a Point, I Was a Circle*. This book can be considered as a single long poem, divided into separate sections or scenes, each independent of one another yet at the same time complementary.

The poem is a work that springs up from within the earth and from the ruins, determined to search for a new hope, for resurrection amid the specters of destruction and loss. The sections of the poem turn, in a rhythmic succession of episodes, from the lover whispering to her loved one, to the rebellious revolutionary youth, to those in despair turning toward God, to the restive wanderer across the stars..

The lover's words, moreover, are a movement through perplexing questions on paths that lead to the doors of question that cause pain, to return and end in surrender to divine will, or to the will of fate, whose remorselessness is conveyed by the verses. Thus the whispered conversation of the lover is transformed into a whispered conversation of life.

The following discussion of the poem between its author and the critic Amin al-Rihani took place on Lebanese radio on the program «Book of the Week».

Question by Amin al-Rihani: What is the symbolic dimension of the ideas of the point and the circle in your latest poem?

Hoda al-Namani: If we must make explicit the symbolic dimension of these two ideas, the first thing is to get away from the identification of the two words that come from textbooks of grammar and style, and even

from books of mathematics and astronomy...

Amin al-Rihani: The abstract in the poetic imagery, while totally separated from actuality, changes from metaphor into constructive fantasy. How do you explain this kind of abstraction in your poetry, especially in this particular poem?

Hoda al-Namani: Abstraction should never be separated from reality. However much the metaphor exceeds the limits of literary style, rises high, and hovers, there are always invisible lines connecting the image to the object. The connection is embedded in the roots and in the subconscious.

Constructive fantasy is inevitably based upon experience and reality. How do we distinguish between our dreams and reality? There's no difference! They're distinguished only among other people. All experience, any experience, is tangible. How and why do we distinguish between the material world and the spiritual? How can you imprison a poet? You can't. Thought is a bird. Prevent me now from ascending to heaven — can you? Poetry is a part of us. The poet remains above the poetry, around the poetry, within the poetry, grasping with it whatever appears to be escaping from him.

In the same way, misunderstanding can arise from the ambiguity of the symbols. I sometimes use mystic symbols, and these should be comprehended with the heart. I saw them with the heart, because they often penetrate, and they must be apprehended with compassion.

The wing, the bird, the ship, the woman, are all indicators of the soul. The bird might be love, for example, and likewise death, which in its turn is life. The poet is a child playing with words, as a child would play with seashells and with stars. This, in my opinion, is the one great delight of life.

Al-Makassed: The Impact of Education

«Education of women is the most potent factor in enhancing their integration in the process of social and economic development».

Tammam Salam

President of al-Makassed

The *Makassed* Philanthropic Islamic Association in Beirut was founded on Sha'ban 1, 1295 A.H. (July 16, 1878 A.D.) by a group of prominent men aiming at the development and progress of the indigenous community.

The fundamental guidelines that were delineated in the educational programme of *al-Makassed* focused on female education. The rationale behind starting the educational endeavors of *al-Makassed* with a girls school was their strong belief in the education of women as a vehicle for the advancement of the society and the family, and thus the nation. The opening of a girl's school in 1879 in Beirut was due in part to a strong faith in education as means of transforming the socioeconomic conditions of the family. Members of *al-Makassed* Association acknowledged the reality that the most pressing need of the community at that time was female education. Since educational opportunities were limited and class specific, the *Makassed* school was made free of charge so as to increase the access of education to all members of society. The first girls's school was founded by *Sheikh Abd al-Kader Kabbani*. The educational systems that existed at the time the *Makassed* was set up were the Ottoman public and the foreign missionary. The role of *al-Makassed* in setting private national schools was paramount in spreading female education. The first girls schools was located near Bab Idriss and started with 23 students and six teachers. With time *al-Makassed* achieved a remark-



able expansion in educational facilities and enrollments. This school is what became known in 1925 as «*Al-Makassed Highschool for Girls*»; its director was *Miss Julia Tohmeh*.

The *Makassed* focused on the emergence of national educational systems and the integration of long-term educational plans into comprehensive plans. The Association also tried to establish a certain balance between the different levels of education, as well as education for productive employment and rural development. The approach of educational development at *al-Makassed* was centered around human power development, trying to provide qualified humanpower to attain national development plans.

The future plans of *al-Makassed* involve carrying a feasibility study to assess the supply and demand of the labour market to limit the discrepancies that exist between female education and the socioeconomic needs of the country. *Mr. Salam* has also emphasized the need to spread education to all the rural areas of Lebanon, focusing on increasing female enrollments in vocational training and formal education, hence women will have more occupational options.

According to the President of *al-Makassed*, *Mr. Tammam Salam*, education is a catalyst for progress and growth. *Al-Makassed* aims at bringing up a generation that is aware, enlightened and productive, stimulating in all their students the pursuit of knowledge and inquiry.

«Adventure of Memories Between Lebanon and Palestine»

Anbara Salam al-Khalidy

The biography of *Anbara Salam al-Khalidy* is not an ordinary personal account, it rather reflects the experience of a pioneer woman who worked to improve the status of Arab women in the social and cultural spheres. Her father, *Selim Salam*, encouraged her yearning for freedom and education. As soon as she was old enough to understand the conditions of women in the Arab world, she wondered why they should be subjected to bondage. Her memoirs reflect the political, social and cultural climate in the early twentieth century, when most people had a traditional conception of the role of women.

Before the age of ten, she only learned reading and arithmetic. It was thought that a woman needed to learn no more. She also had to wear the veil. The first political event that she witnessed was when the Ottoman Sultanate was overthrown in 1908 by the Young Turks. Her family fled to Egypt after Italy launched war against Turkey and Lebanon. In Egypt, she was exposed to various intellectual streams. She continued her education in Beirut al al-Makassed, whose director was Miss *Julia Tohmeh*. Miss *Tohmeh* encouraged *Anbara* to attend cultural activities at the Sunday club, but the newspapers' headlines read in the following day «Muslim girls in night clubs». Ironically enough, it was at the same club in 1928 that *Anbara* gave a speech, without wearing the veil, on her impressions of her stay in England.

Anbara was strongly influenced by the work of *Malak «Bahethat al Badia», May Ziadeh* and *Zeinab Fawwaz*. It was inevitable that she be influenced by *Qassem Amin's* books: «Tahrir al Maraa» and «Al

Maraa Al Jadida». *Anbara* was subjected to the rise of political arabism at the turn of the century. It was mainly fostered by Syrian emigrants to Egypt such as *al-Kawakibi* (1849-1902) and *Mohammad Rida* (1865-1935). Arabism was directed against the Turks and the Sultanate. The Arab subjects were well aware of their separate linguistic and cultural identity and in 1913, a conference was held in Paris to voice Arab demands for justice. *Anbara* wrote a letter asking for the decentralization of the Ottoman rule, which was signed by *Shafika Ghroyyib, Wadad Mahmassani* and herself.

In 1914, she founded with other pioneer women, an association called «Arab Girls Awakening». It was aimed at helping girls to educate themselves and to go on with their education. This society could indeed be considered the first women's society in the Arab world. First World War broke out, and most Lebanese families were suffering hunger and poverty. *Anbara* addressed a letter to *Jamal Pasha* describing the condition and suffering of her people. Soon committees were formed to carry out different services to needy people. Early in the century, political activities in Syria and Lebanon aimed at defining national aspirations. *Anbara* met *King Faisal* and conveyed the message of her people for an independent Arab state. He discussed and compared with her the status of Arab women vis-à-vis the status of Western women. *Faisal's* regime in Syria almost ushered in a period of realization of such aspirations as have been cherished by authors and poets. The dream of Arab unity was shattered at the Peace Conference of 1920, where Syria and Lebanon were entrusted to France.

In 1924, she was a member of the «Lebanese Women's Union» and worked closely with *Salma Sayegh, Labiba Thabet, Ibtihaj Kaddoura* and many

(*) *Jawlatun Fi al-Thikrayat Bayna Lubnan wa Falastine*. Beirut: An-Nahar 1978, 222 pages.

others. The society aimed at promoting local made products produced by the indigenous people of Syria and Lebanon. *Anbara* left for England in 1925 to study English and to join her father, *Selim Salam*.

Women's conferences began their activities in 1928 when the first conference was held in Beirut. The second was held in 1930. In 1935, *Huda Shaarawi*, the first president of the «Union of Arab Women» called for a conference in Egypt to assess the status of women in the Arab World. *Anbara* was greatly impressed by *Shaarawi* who was the first woman to call for social reforms and to participate in many political activities, e.g. the political uprising of 1919. She also mentions *Adila Al Jarairi*, *Fatima Al-Yashurti*, *Julia Tohmeh*, *Ibtihaj Kaddoura*, *Salma Sayegh* and many others who collaborated with her in all women's activities and conferences.

After her marriage to *Ahmad al-Khalidy*, she continued her cultural activities and translated *Homer's Iliad* and *Virgil's Iniad* to Arabic. *Anbara* was able to hold her own beliefs, in spite of many obstacles in her path and this attributed to her success as well as that of women's movements in the Arab East. Women in the early twentieth century had to go through continuous struggle to gain total acceptance of their rights by society. They advocated ideas of freedom, education and work and were strongly fought by those who regarded the independence of women as a threat to their own. She was a woman of principle, an originator of a



renaissance, and a capable woman who was able to organize and command both the respect and admiration of all who worked with her. She worked all her life believing that there can be no progress without the struggle and freedom of Arab women.

A.A.

The next issue of Al-Raida is going to be on
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Articles and contributions on Bahrain will be appreciated from all our readers. Articles chosen to be published will have a special acknowledgment to the writer.

Draft Labour Law in Jordan

This report which appeared in the Jordan Times, March 9, 1986, discusses the provisions regarding women in the new draft law.

For the first time in Jordan, the issue of women has been included in a national development plan, thus giving women the opportunity to discuss for themselves the status of women on a national level... The women's section committee, represented by specialists in the various fields of study, looked into the role of women in the labour force, (rural and urban), education and health to see what steps could be taken to help women in the future to be on an equal footing to men, not only in theory, but in practice... The Ministry of labour in cooperation with the ILO set about drafting the new Labour Law after the social security law was introduced in 1978.

The recommendations were submitted to a committee comprising the Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trade unions and representatives from the Social Security Corporation, the Jordan Bar Association, the engineers association and the University of Jordan.

The committee held a total of 37 weekly sessions during which they debated these recommendations in depth.

This new draft labour law is still going through the constitutional process because of the «tripartite structure in national decision-making which makes it difficult to bring them altogether and to reach a conclusive decision on which all agree,» explained Dr. Mohammad Abdul Hadi, from the Ministry of Labour. However, it is hoped that before May 1, 1986 (Labour Day) a final decision will be reached to implement this long overdue law.

The new law set out to give equality to women in employment opportunities, wages, promotion and training. This principle is in effect but the minimum

training age has been raised from 13 to 16, thus guaranteeing compulsory education.

— Women are prohibited from doing dangerous or hazardous work and work that is detrimental to her health;

— Women are restricted from doing nightwork between 8 p.m. and 6. a.m. except in cases of emergency, for women in leadership positions and workers in social health and tourist services;

— Nurseries: The law has been changed to oblige establishments that employ 20 married women or more to provide suitable location for their children under 4 years of age.

— Maternity leave: The law has been changed to give not less than 10 weeks with at least 6 weeks after delivery on full pay. There is still no provision for an extension of maternity leave due to sickness resulting from pregnancy or delivery.

— Employers are prohibited from sacking women for marriage or maternity reasons.

— A working nursing mother is allowed one hourly breast feeding break per day. This principle is already in force.

— A woman is guaranteed her job back should she choose to take unpaid leave to accompany her husband on missions abroad, for a period not exceeding two years.

— A woman is guaranteed her job back should she choose to take unpaid leave to raise her children, for a period not exceeding one year.

The current labour law does not apply to establishments classified as «irregular» (i.e. employing less than 5 persons), nor to a large sector of the agricultural field.

The new draft labour law has set out to rectify this and any establishment operating in the national economy be they «regular» or «irregular» must comply with the terms of the law once it has been approved.

Many people expressed the view that sufficient supporting services for women are of vital importance if women are to be encouraged to take part in the socio-economic development of their country. Jordan has often acknowledged that its citizens are its most valuable natural resources and the role of women is seen as vital to the continuity of socio-economic development. Yet, the single and most repeated grievance of many women is the lack of adequate supporting services which would ease the burdens they face simply because they chose to exercise their rights to take part in this development process.

Rasha al-Sabah

Rasha al-Hamoud al-Sabah, is the dean of the languages department at Kuwait University. Her book, «Qadaya Fikriya», has recently won the prize of creative literature by ALECSO, Arab League for Education, Culture and Science Organization.



Sheikh Nasser and Sheikhha Hussa al-Sabah.

This prize has been a remarkable acknowledgment of the literary contributions of Arab women in general and women of the Gulf in particular. *Rasha* began pursuing a career as a diplomat in 1972, but the the Kuwait foreign ministry did not approve. She decided to continue her university education, and received her Ph.D. from Yale University in 1977.

Rasha, a pioneer and remarkable figure of contemporary Arab Womanhood, is also a member of the Institute of Mulsim Languages, and has many well researched publications on the European concept of Islam in the Middle Ages, orientalism, the role of the state in *Mciavelli's* thought, the philosophy of *Ibn Rushd* and its impact on the Middle Ages.

Islamic Art in Kuwait

The Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya at the National Musuem of Kuwait houses one of the finest collections of Islamic art which is the private collection of Sheikh *Nasser* and Sheikhha *Hussa al-Sabah*.

Jassem al-Homeidhi has also an important private collection consisting of some rare Islamic metal objects. A book of this collection is going to be published soon.

The Sabah's collection has taken eight years to assemble, and the first piece was acquired in 1975. *Sheikha Hussa*, besides being the director of Dar al-Athar, gives lectures on Islamic art. Dar al-Athar has published a catalogue on the exhibition which was held under the theme of «Science in Islam». It has also published a children's guide on Islamic art, which marks an unprecedented event in the Arab world. Dar al-Athar held an exhibition of children's work to encourage cultural and educational endeavors.

Dr. Shafica Karagulla

Dr. *Shafica Karagulla*, a neuro-psychiatrist with an outstanding medical and psychiatric background of research and practice, has passed away on March 13, 1986 in the United States. She was the President and Director of Research of the Higher Sense Perception Research Foundation in Beverly Hills, California.

Born in Turkey, she received her early education at the American School for Girls in Beirut, Lebanon and later continued her education at the American Junior College for Women and the American University of Beirut, receiving her degree of Doctor of Medicine and surgery in 1940. Dr. *Karagulla* travelled to Edinburgh, Scotland, to obtain her training in psychiatry at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders. In Britain, Dr. *Karagulla's* research in electrical shock therapy made medical history. Dr. *Karagulla* obtained in 1948 her diploma in Psychological Medicine from the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Surgeons of England. In 1950 she became a member of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, the highest medical qualification in Britain. She crossed the Atlantic in 1952 to study the effect of electrical stimulation on the brain of conscious patients during neuro-surgery. At this time she received a research fellowship in the department of neurology and neuro-surgery at McGill University and the Montreal Neurological Institute, Canada.

By special invitation in 1956, Dr. *Karagulla* came to the United States and became an American citizen and practicing physician. One of her major contribution is her book *Breakthrough to Creativity*, which presents some of the fascinating findings of eight years of research in the field of Higher Sense Perception. She has discovered that HSP abilities are far more widespread than any one has supposed. She defines HSP as «the ability to observe and experience hitherto unperceived dimensions of environment».

Publications

- *Breakthrough to Creativity Your Higher Sense Perception*, 1967.
- *Through the Curtain*, 1983.

Mother inferior

«In rich countries more men than women die in middle age. In poor countries, the reverse is true. This is because childbearing in the developing countries is hazardous. About one woman in ten in the third world dies during pregnancy, more than 100 times as many as in the United States or Sweden. Yet relatively simple improvements in antenatal care and family planning could prevent at least a quarter of those deaths.

The incidence of the main causes of death during pregnancy varies regionally. In South Asia, haemorrhage during labour is a big problem. In Africa, women inherit relatively small pelvises and die because the equipment and skilled people to perform caesarean sections are in short supply. Botched abortions cause half of all deaths during pregnancy in Latin America, where laws permit abortions only when the mother's life is in danger. Infection is a problem everywhere.

If mothers are sick, their babies are usually sick too. Childbearing is a fulltime occupation for many women. About 80% of fertile women in poorer countries will have a child within one year of the last one and more than one-third of mothers are younger than 20 or older than 34. Pregnancies among unmarried teenagers are common. In Senegal, one urban study involving 764 mothers who were 16 to 21 years old found that 31 % of them were unmarried.

Many mothers are sick because they do not get enough to eat. In some male-dominated societies women go hungrier than men and visit the doctor less often. In many instances, however, medical services are simply not available...

In April 1985, the World Health Organization (WHO) got together with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to recommend ways of reducing the number of maternal deaths. They have run into criticism since for concentrating on medical techniques and giving too little prominence to simple measures that can reduce mortality in childbirth, such as cleanliness and a better diet. One Indonesian study found that one antenatal visit by a trained health worker lowered death rates among mothers-to-be to one-fifth of what they were...».

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AL-RAIDA, IWSAW QUARTERLY

LEBANON

P.O.Box 13-5053
Beirut University College
Beirut, Lebanon
Cable Address: BECOGE
Tx: BUC 23389 LE

U.S.A.

Beirut University College
475 Riverside Drive,
Room 1846
New York, NY 10115

Director: **Julinda Abu Nasr**
Advisor: **Rose Ghurayyib**
Editor: **Aida Arasoghli**

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