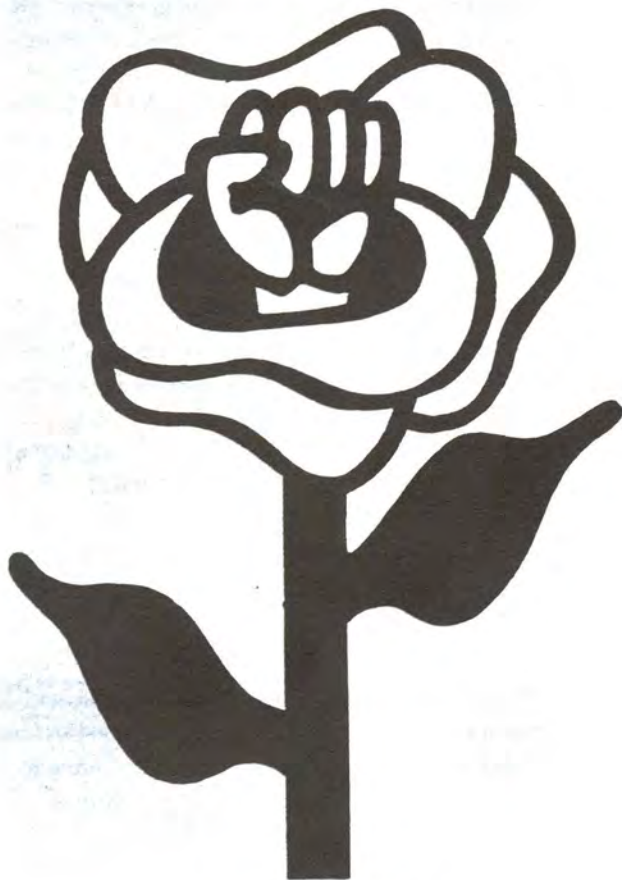


BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

August 1990, Vol. IX No 50

Women In Charge



International Women's
Tribune Center (IWIC)

Contents

Editorial

Women In Charge Of State
Power in Third World Countries

Studies

Participation Of Women In
Politics During The War
Peace Is A Woman.

Various

Mrs. Khadijah Bint-Ahmed:
Minister Of Women's Affairs
In Mauritania

Easy Credit For Women
The Price Of Independence:
The Case Of Algerian Women
The Fate Of Women In Ye-
men After Unification?

Moroccan Women And The
Political Debate

Personal Status Code In
Morocco

Fatherhood
Is as Important as Motherhood
Women Groups Become
More Active In Pakistan

Feminism On the Rise In
Poland

Actualities

Where Women Work Is
Needed by Rose Ghurayyib
And Life goes On
by Intisar Abu-Khadra

Announcements

Tunisian Association Of
Democratic Women

New Jersey Chair In
Women's Studies

Center For Global Issues
And Women's Leadership

Publication

The Development Of
Women's Studies: A Report
From The Netherlands.

Women In Charge of State Power In Third World Countries

Ms. Corazon Aquino, President of the Philippines (1986);

Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan (1989 - August 1990);

Ms. Violeta Chamorro, President of Nicaragua (1990);

Ms. Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, President of Haiti (1990).

All four women came to power through opposition movements against the ruling leaders and the prevailing politics in their countries.

All four women head States which are plagued with ethnic, economic and ideological struggles for power.

All four women, not only struggled to reach their positions, but continue to struggle to keep it and prove their abilities to rule as women.

The journey through power for women like these seems to involve three important phases: First, participating in politics on the national level; Second, being elected to office, neck-to-neck with male competitors; Third, maintaining their status and most importantly refuting the popular beliefs that they are «women». Thus, not only do they have to concentrate on political issues of the moment, but they must constantly deal with the image of women as «weaker» and «emotional» beings as opposed to the «fierce», «diplomatic» and «tough guy» image of their male counterparts.

First: At least two of the four women discussed above-- Ms. Aquino and Ms. Bhutto to be exact-- have come into the world of politics as representatives of the political legacy of a male relative (husband of Aquino and father of Bhutto). They inherited their support from their male relatives. And they were appointed, by the public, to continue the struggles started by these men.

But the essence of the argument here lies in the ideologies these women represent, not the men they inherited it from, i.e. the causes and needs of the masses.

Second: All four women succeeded, not only by promoting certain political ideologies, but through struggles to overthrow the previous unacceptable regimes. Some would argue that they were elected because they represent a convenient test of democracy and equality. That elections were not based on their individual merits as politicians. But that election of a member of a minority group, «women», would be proof enough of democracy in countries that have been under the grips of dictatorship for too long (the Marcos in the Philippines,

General Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua and the Duvaliers in Haiti).

Third: Only an extremist and anti-feminist would say that these women are only symbols of power but the real action is carried out by men behind the scenes. It is true that these females-Heads of States have male advisors. After all, we are talking about equality, not subordination nor superordination.

It would be wrong to claim that these women have not proved to the world that women can handle political crises and govern nations.

Ms. Aquino has been President for a number of years. She has survived over a dozen coup d'etat attempts, economic crises, ethnic uprisings in addition to the wheeling and dealing in international politics.

Ms. Bhutto has had to negotiate peace with neighboring India, to answer to the increasing threats of fundamentalists in her country, and to control the ethnic and economic grievances of her people; in addition to being a mother in labor at the time of her election. Ms. Bhutto was forcefully expelled from office on August 6, 1990. She is contesting this decision in the supreme court.

Ms. Chamorro and Ms. Trouillot have been in power for only a few months, and their achievements are yet to be documented.

In short, Ms. Aquino represents the first breakthrough for Third World women in politics during the 80s. Ms. Bhutto is the first female leader in the Muslim World. Ms. Chamorro is among the pioneers in turbulent Latin America, and Ms. Trouillot is a Justice of the Supreme Court and law-maker in a Caribbean island.

How these women succeeded in politics is besides the point now. What is important is that they are a landmark in the participation of women in world politics in general, and the Third World in particular.

Consequently, they proved to the world that women can take charge of political situations, beyond the home. They have shown that women do not have to stand in the shadows of men forever. Ms. Aquino is President Aquino and no longer the wife of opposition leader. Ms. Bhutto is Prime Minister Bhutto and not simply the daughter of opposition leader, and so on and so forth.

The last half of the 80s may have been the pioneering era for women in politics. Hopefully, the 90s will witness the emancipation of women in political participation and political power.

Randa Abul-Husn

Participation Of Women In Politics During The War (Lebanon)[☆]

What role and function did Lebanese women serve during the war? Where are they amidst the politics and the violence? What advantage did they take of the political equality that is granted to them in the State power?

Lebanese women do not participate in the making of politics. they are virtually absent from the sphere of political action! But abundantly active in the realm of reaction to violence mainly in the form of humanitarian services. Quoting Ghandi, Lawyer laure Moghaizel describes them as «non-violent servants».

Hence, these were the main points of the talk of lawyer Moghaizel at the Colloquium on **Lebanese Women As Witnesses To The War** held in Paris in October 1987^{??}. Passing through the Nairobi conference on the Decade Of Women (1975-1985), Moghaizel suggested the addition of **Participation** to the given goals of Equality, Development and Progress for women. By participation she meant the participation of women in all sectors and at all levels of society with specific emphasis on participation in politics. Moghaizel then discussed the involvement of Lebanese women in four socio-political bodies: (1) the State Power; (2) Political Parties; (3) Syndicates; (4) Non-Governmental Organizations.

The State Power

Women are virtually absent from effective positions and the decision-making power of the State structure. Thus far, only two women have been elected to parliament by proxy for a dead father or husband. There are no women in the executive branch of the state. On the other hand, the presence of women is plentiful in the area of public functions, such as teaching, and in the Diplomatic Corps. However, they do not have the power to make effective decisions about the war or state matters in general; they only represent the State.

Participation Of Women In Political Parties

Two aspects of the role of women in political parties are examined here: the adherence or subscription of women, and the effective participation in decision-making positions in the parties. The information is collected from a survey of ten political parties; in which two questionnaires were distributed to responsible personalities and to the women who are members of the relevant parties. Caution, replies were evasive and the concluding analysis is only tentative.

1. Adherence of Women to Political Parties

- a- The proportion of women has increased at a small rate during the war.
- b- The average age of female members is below 30.
- c- Involvement is provisional and is usually terminated in the event of marriage.
- d- The majority of females is students.
- e- Educational level usually centers around secondary schools or university.
- f- The women perceive their involvement with the party as being secondary to their daily professional or familial duties.

2. Effective Participation of Women in the Activities of the Parties

- a- Only one of the parties has a service of a feminine nature.
- b- Few, if any, women hold posts at the decision-making level.
- c- The presence of women is mostly symbolic.
- d- The internal regulations and policies of the parties do not discriminate against women.
- e- Yet, none of the parties have nominated a woman as candidate to represent it in the executive or legislative power.
- f- The activities performed by women have a subordinate, secondary or partial character. They act merely at executive posts, secretarial jobs, medical care, social assistants and attendants.

Participation of Women in Syndicates

participation in syndicates takes two forms and the adherence of women does not really reveal effective involvement in syndical activities. A fieldwork study was conducted to examine these two forms of participation: to know the adherence of women to syndicates and then their access to decision-making posts in comparison to that of men. The relevant data are as follows:

1. Adherence of Women to Syndicates

- a- the proportion does not vary between the sexes.
- b- Subscription increases with age and decreases after 40.
- c- Subscription is higher among married women than single women.
- d- The rate of subscription of people with lower education levels (lower than secondary school) decreases

as the educational achievements increase. Whereas, the rate of subscription of people with higher educational levels increases along with higher achievements.

2. Access of Women to the Executive Council and Syndicate Commissions

- a- Few or no women are present at this level even when they out-number the male members.
- b- The access of women increases with age until 40.
- c- The access to posts is greater among single women than married women.
- d- The access increases with educational level.

Non-Governmental Organizations

The greatest impact that Lebanese women have had on the war has been in the context of their contributions in non-governmental organizations. They have played a gigantic role in alleviating the sufferings of the people. They have offered medical help, social assistance, housing, food, clothing and funds for the maimed, handicapped and displaced.

But is this enough?! Why should they always pick up the pieces. Is it not time they took part in the making of society,...., and of peace?

A Force For Peace

One young woman took a large scale public initiative to emphasize the need for peace. In her outcry, Miss

Iman Khalifeh, a 29 year old kindergarden teacher then, united not only women but also men, children and the elderlies in Lebanon.

She said «No to the War...», and called for a mass demonstration throughout the city of Beirut cutting through its political boundaries. The call was for May 6, 1984. It was called **The Peace March*****.

The response was tremendous and thousands of people prepared themselves to take the streets. But the guns were louder. The fact remains that Iman Khalifeh tried and the people who supported her tried too.

The women, the people are united as witnesses of the war, they can be united as a force for peace.

☆ **Source:** Excerpts from the address of Lawyer Laure Moghaizel in a colloquium entitled «La Femme Libanaise Temoin De la Guerre» («The Lebanese Woman: Witness To The War»). The colloquium was held in Paris in October 1987 and was sponsored by the League of Arab States in collaboration with the Franco-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the Institute of the Arab World.

☆☆ See al-Raida, vol. III, No. 42, 1987.

☆☆☆ See Al-Raida, vol. VII, No. 30, November 1, 1984, pp. 4-5.

Peace Is A Woman

«Only women can influence men to stop the war and stop the destruction and miseries it brings to the present and the future.»

These are the words of the winner of the UNESCO Prize for Peace, Lorence Dioana. Dioana, a Swiss, has, during the last 20 years, conducted a research study on women in the peace process in the Middle East. Her research is based on field observations throughout the Arab World. Some of her pioneering field-trips are: liv-

ing the experience of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982, and visiting women who were sentenced to death in Iranian prisons.

Upon the release of her book, **The Role of Women in Bringing Peace to the Middle East**, Dioana was asked if she hoped to see peace being established in the region. «We in the book are the dreamers» she said, «We only light a candle of conscience for the conscious ones who do not really need this candle.»

Source: *Al-Shahed Arab Monthly*. Cyprus: Al-Shahed Publishing Co. Ltd. 5th year, No. 57, May 1990, p. 74 (Arabic Reference).

Mrs. Khadijah Bint Ahmed:

Minister of Women's Affairs,
Industry And Tourism In Mauritania

Mrs. Khadijah Bint Ahmed is Minister of Women's Affairs, Industry and Tourism in Mauritania. With a degree in Economics from the University of Mohamad V in Morocco, Mrs. Bint Ahmed worked her way up in the Mauritanian government. At first, she held various posts in the Central Bank: Head of Research, then Director of Loans Budget, and later Director of Loans. Her first official appointment in the government was as Minister of Mines and Industry in 1987.

Mrs. Khadijah Bint Ahmed has developed goals and programs for each of the three branches of her ministry. For Tourism, she calls and encourages local and foreign investors to undertake touristic projects in her country. In Industry, she says that a Corporation for Industrial Development has been created for the purpose of improving and expanding the sector. And as far as Women's Affairs are concerned, Minister Bint Ahmed insists that bank facilities for women in need of loans must be made in order to support women in taking part in the economic development of the country.

In an interview with an Arab Business Magazine*, the Minister spoke in details about the plans and concerns of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

She said; «The Ministry is new and was founded only one year ago. Women have a big share in it. The truth is that this step is the coronation of a policy devised in 1984. The purpose of the policy and the ministry is to give Mauritanian women the opportunity to participate in society so that half of the population would not remain inactive in the national efforts for development».

«Since 1984», she continued, «many Mauritanian women have been assigned to very important positions in the government, and women have begun to share various fields with men».

In line with this policy, the ministry's primary goals is to improve social and financial awareness of Mauritanian women.

«What remains is the problem of facilitating the procedure for getting bank loans for women who cannot present collateral fundings. We are doing our best to assist women in this problem and help them in undertaking local investments.»

* Source: *Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal*, Arab Business Magazine. Fortnightly published in association with The Financial Times Mid East Markets. March 1990 issue, pp. 44-45. (Arabic Reference).

Easy Credit For Women

«Our goal is to reach women who have been bypassed by the traditional banking system and to bring them into the economic mainstream», Ela Bhatt of Ahmedabad, India, the current Women's World Banking (W.W.B.) chairman.

Women's World Banking (W.W.B.), which celebrated its tenth anniversary in April, is unlike any other financial institution. At a time when governments are raising billions to revive the economies of Eastern Europe, **The group**, which has its headquarters in New York and 47 affiliate chapters on six continents, **arranges for women who have no collateral to receive commercial loans**. Many of the loans are so small that most banks would not consider them worth the paperwork. Hence, one of its smallest loans, of \$50, went to a woman in India who used the money to build an oven so she would sell chapati, or flat bread. One of the largest loans helped raise \$1 million to start a dairy cooperative in Thailand.

Under the loan-guarantee program, the international organization of W.W.B promises to be responsible for 50% of a loan, while the local chapter takes on an additional 25%. The rate of repayment has been 99% so far, and W.W.B has suffered only \$35,000 of losses in nearly \$12 million in loans outstanding.

By helping women achieve greater economic independence, the organization has prompted social change. For instance, the Kenya branch of London-based Barclays Bank, which works closely with the local W.W.B group, no longer requires a husband's signature when a woman gets at a loan.

W.W.B plans to offer more financial services worldwide. «In the past ten years we have focused on access to credit. In the next ten years we will be helping women find investors for their businesses, helping them get more training and developing larger markets,» says Nancy Barry, who will become the next president of the group in September.

As Christine Gorman of Time International puts it: Not bad for a bunch of women used to find themselves laughed out of the bank.

Incidentally, W.W.B was founded by Michaela Walsh (former partner in a wall Street financial firm), with six other businesswomen from around the world.

* Taken from «Women Start Taking Credit» article by Christine Gorman in *Time International*, No. 23, June 4, 1990, p. 44.

The Price of Independence: The Case of Algerian Women

Algerian women are praised for their brave participation in the struggle for national independence against French colonialism. According to female scholars like Dr. Faiqa Mjahed, Marie-Aimé Helie-Lucas and Djamilia Amrane a freedom fighter herself (1957-1962), the participation of Algerian women played a determining role in the success of the struggle. Djamilia Amrane, an eyewitness and pioneer in the struggle, documents the activities that women performed during the struggle⁽¹⁾: in charge of hiding places and food collection; liaisons and guides; collection of funds, medicine and ammunition; cooks and clothwashers; clothmakers and repairs; secretaries; political commissioners and armed fighters. Amrane attempted to quantify the participation of Algerian women by surveying the archives of the Ministry of Veterans. She found out, however, that officially, women represent only 3.25% of the male population of registered veterans. Amrane points out that because they were illiterate, from peasant background, veiled and partly secluded, few Algerian women bothered to register.

"Although we know for sure that many women have been involved in the struggle, the biased figures of their participation give a fair idea of the fact that even in the hardest times of the struggle, women were kept in their place and confined to the kinds of tasks which will not disturb social order in the future⁽²⁾."

With this, Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas argues that the role of women in the struggle and its consequent pay-offs are but symbolic. For, even with an independent Algerian Constitution which stipulates equality between men and women, Algerian women were subjected to an increasing lack of political liberties, of morality and of emphasis on religion. Helie-Lucas stresses that after independence, **Algerian women were loosing what in fact they never gained**. She illustrates her view by comparing the laws with the reality of Algerian women immediately following independence in 1962.

By law, women were equal to men in the constitution, but as long as it was in conformity with religion.

By law, the age of marriage for girls was fixed at 18. But it was not enforced.

By law, girls should go to school, but there were not enough schools so boys were going first.

By law, women could and should work, but there were no jobs, so men should have them being heads of families.

By law, women could walk freely in the streets, but men were harassing them and the police was reinforcing this abuse: "What is an honest woman doing outside her home?"

Consequently, more women wore the veil. Forced marriage took place and numerous suicide of young girls occurred. Women were beaten and abused by male relatives, but no one dared to report it to the authorities.

The present status of Algerian women has not improved. Rather it has deteriorated causing them to live in a yet unprecedented atmosphere of fear, terror and frustration.

The final seal — a legal seal at that too — to women's rights in Algeria came in May 1984 with the reactivation of the Personal Status Code. According to Dr. Faiqa Mjahed the code curtails the rights of women to equality by regulating them to hearth and home (domestic duties)⁽³⁾. It forces them to wear the veil and restricts, if not eliminates, their political participation. All under the pretext that women are emotional rather than rational beings.

This reactivation of traditional sex-roles has swept the country in the last few years and has escalated to a point where violence and force is used against Algerian women.

On one hand, Dr. Mjahed reports, Algerian women are harshly attacked by the media. They are accused and held responsible for the ills of society: inflation, theft, shortage of American cigarettes, the rush in public transportation and the country's unemployment rate among others. On the other hand, violence has gone as far as burning the houses of non-conformist women and in one case killing a three year old boy in the process.

The discrimination goes even further. Traditionalists are pressuring members of parliament to vote for



Demonstrating In the Streets of the Capital.

the prohibition of girls from participating in physical education (sports) in schools. They also demand the abolishment of co-education in secondary schools and putting a stop to interaction between male and female students at university restaurants.

To fight back for their rights and combat this situation, Algerian Women - Doctors and activists held extraneous meetings organizing a large demonstration on March 8, 1989 and marched towards Parliament. In response, seven thousand demonstrators, including men, women and children answered the call despite heavy rains. Demonstrators sang national anthems and shouted slogans demanding the abolishment of the Personal Status Code and rooting for equality between men and women under the law.

However, this did not deter the discriminators nor intimidated them. They continued to interfere in the personal lives of the people in general and the women in particular. They held women responsible for the decadence in society as a result of women's neglect of their marital duties.

In light of this, another successful demonstration was organized on September 2, 1989. Other demonstrations continue to be organized in Algeria, and the

women's movement is being mobilized more efficiently. Thus, feminists are defining their demands and plans of action more explicitly with the help of Arab women associations like "Solidarity of Arab Women" and other pioneers in women's movements in the Arab World.

(1) Djamilia Amrane, "La Femme Algerienne et la Guerre de Libération Nationale". From *Actes Des Journées d'Etude et de Reflexion sur les Femmes Algeriennes, 3-4-5 et 6 Mai 1980*. Université d'Oran. Centre de Documentation des Sciences Humaines (CDSH), 1980. pp. 201-224.

(2) Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, *Women in the Algerian Libération Struggle*. Ifda Dossier 72, July/August 1989, pp. 37-48.

(3) Dr. Faiqa Mjahed, *Ghadab Al-Nisa' Al-Jaza'iriat* taken from NOUN (No. 2, August 1989). An Egyptian Quarterly by the Association of Solidarity of Arab Women — (Arabic reference).

Photo: From Newsletter of Arab Women's Solidarity Association - May 1990.

The Fate of Women In Yemen After National Unification?

Yemen - political unification (North and South)!

What is in store for women?

Which formula will the unified government adopt with respect to women: that of the traditional North Yemen community; or that of the progressive South Yemen community?

In South Yemen, women are fearful that the growing influence of fundamentalists will curtail the rights and liberties they have come to enjoy. Thus, there are growing indications that restrictions will be placed on women in schools and at work.

In North Yemen, women hope that the progressive and liberal status of their Southern sisters will be nationalized; and consequently, improve their own situation.

Mrs. Najwa Yehya Zabarrah, Director of Public Health Education in North Yemen, said that the women of the North are looking forward to the unification of the country that was announced in May, 1990*. She stated that at least one woman might be appointed to the office of vice-minister in the unified government.

Mrs. Zabarrah said that the women are hopeful that the unified government will introduce a Family Law based on the progressive laws that were being implemented in South Yemen before unification. Hence, according to these laws, women have more rights in marriage, divorce and maternity matters.

For instance, in North Yemen, based on the Shari'a**, a man is allowed to have four wives. Whereas, in South Yemen, a man is allowed to marry more than one woman only under one condition: the approval of the first wife.

In North Yemen, women are not permitted to interact with men in schools. Furthermore, almost all the women wear gowns which hide every part of their bodies except their eyes.

Whereas, in South Yemen, women may interact with men in schools, and they are allowed to dress as they please.

The rate of working women in South Yemen is also higher than in North Yemen.



(Al-Shahed Magazine - May 1990)

In light of all these differences, Mrs. Zabarrah hopes that the rights of women of the North will improve and that the unified government will support women and encourage their emancipation.

In July 1990, the unified government of Yemen decreed that the Southern laws concerning women and the family are nationalized - Consequently, Yemeni women, both Northern and Southern can breathe more easily and can get to work immediately.

Yemen Arab Republic, North Yemen: capital San'a; area 75,000 sq. miles; pop. 6,700,000; official language Arabic; religion, Moslem, SW Arabian Peninsula.

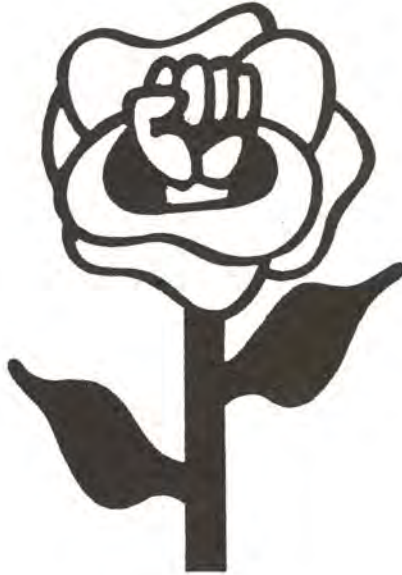
People's Democratic Republic Of Yemen, formerly Southern Yemen Republic: capital Aden; area 180,000 sq. miles; pop. 1,600,000; official language, Arabic; religion, Moslem; location, SE Arabian Peninsula.

☆ *Al-Anwar* daily newspaper, 7/6/90. (Arabic Reference).

☆☆ Islamic Law.

Source: *The New College Encyclopedia*. New York: Galahad Books, 1978.

Moroccan Women And The Political Debate



When they discovered that the judge was a woman, the plaintiff and the defendant preferred to settle their case outside the court.

The legal condition for issuing a passport to a married Moroccan woman remains the same: a written authorization from her husband.

Moroccan women's participation in public affairs in general, and politics in particular, are the topics of a national debate.

This debate was stimulated by the declaration of the Minister of Islamic Affairs that **women should not be in power**. He said that women should not be given positions such as president, governor or mayor.

These words infuriated opposition movements and a number of syndicates. Since then, they have been insisting on the resignation of the minister in question. Hence, the Women's Democratic League in Morocco replied that «these declarations date back to the middle ages, they are unacceptable in a modern state and do not conform with human rights pacts.»

The Moroccan Organization For Human Rights condemned the politics of legalizing the absence of women from power in the name of religion. They added that this constitutes an assault against the rights granted to women in the Constitution.

In fact, the Moroccan Constitution of 1972 stipulates «equality between all Moroccan» and that «men and women have equal political rights.» Legally, Moroccan women have the right to vote and to be elected. They play an influential role in political parties and syndicates.

However, in reality, they do not hold positions at decision-making levels. There are no female officials in the Moroccan Government, Parliament, or the Council for Human Rights that was recently created. How can that be, keeping in mind that women account for half of the population of Morocco (25 million)?

The Moroccan Organization For Human Rights called upon Moroccan women to resist the «primitive mentality that persists in the society, the home, the field, the factory, the office and the street.»

Source: «Jadal Fi Al-Maghreb Howl Ishtirak Al-Mara' Fi Al Hayat Al-'Ammah» *Al-Anwar* daily newspaper, 6/6/1990. (Arabic Reference).

Personal Status Code in Morocco

Fatima Mernissi, a contemporary Moroccan feminist spoke to various Moroccan women from various backgrounds on the issue of marriage and couples. She reports that these women insist on a conjugal couple based on economic and affective equality as the sole viable model and that they are completely dedicated to creating it. Mernissi concludes that "when polygamy-polygyny and repudations are instituted as laws in a given society, it is clear that society has opted against the existence of the marital couple as an entity in which economic and effective relations will be based on equality."

— **Financial Support:** The Personal Status Code stipulates that "every person provides for his needs through his own resources with the exception of the wife whose upkeep (*nafaqa*) is incumbent on her husband". This does not reflect the reality of Moroccan women. Thus, studies show that women are the main providers in 30% of Moroccan families. In her interviews with working Moroccan women, Mernissi concluded that husbands tend to be physically and economically absent in low-income families, leaving the women to care for the family.

Consequently, the reform plan legally grants women their right to participate in supporting the family. Amina Aby Ayyash claims that this reform does not constitute a giant leap towards the emancipation of working Moroccan women. It merely admits their true participation in the Financial support of the family.

— **Divorce:** The Personal Status Code does not permit women to file for divorce except under specific conditions: (1) a dangerous illness of the husband; (2) absence of husband for a long duration; (3) the absence of financial provision from the husband. Thus, the right to divorce lies in the hands of the husband in general. (a) **In a regular divorce**, he may return his wife to his

home after a period of three months and 10 days of the initial divorce. (b) **In a non-retroactive divorce** a husband has to officially remarry his ex-wife if he wants her to return. (c) **The final divorce** is one where a woman may buy her freedom from her husband with a sum of money. Again this divorce is not admissible without the approval of the husband.

The Personal Status Code also known as the Family Code is meant to be a guiding tool in family planning, regulating the relationship between the man and the woman inside the family and in society. However, Moroccan women seem to feel that the Code fails to promote liberation for the family and for women: It tends to reinforce the traditional role of men as financial providers and of women as dependent on men. Consequently, a reform plan of the Code was presented in Morocco in 1981 and in spite of its numerous flaws remains frozen to our present day. The reform plan is criticized for not improving the situation of women but for only alleviating the financial burdens of men.

We shall review some of the basic laws of the Personal Status Code and the suggested reforms, highlighting the relevant remarks of two Moroccan female scholars: Fatima Mernissi and Amina Abu Ayyash.

— **The Right of the Man and the Guardian in Marriage:** It is the man who declares his wish to marry the woman, and does so only after the approval of her guardian. Further, the guardian has the right to arrange for a woman to marry an "appropriate suitor" against her will if he fears "decadence". The reform plan amends this situation only by raising the minimum age for marriage, namely in consideration of the financial capabilities of the young groom. Abu Ayyash sees that the rights and freedom of women remain untouched by all these laws and reforms⁽¹⁾

Fatherhood is as Important as Motherhood



— **Polygamy:** The marriage model, operative by law and in the values is an unbalanced and totally asymmetrical relationship in both economic and affective terms⁽²⁾. Faithfulness is demanded only of the wife. The man can officially have four wives and repudiation allows him to replace them by others if he wishes. According to Amina Abu Ayyash, the reform plan does not propose to ban polygamy. The suggested reform is that the husband must inform his first wife that he is taking another wife through a court of law; and to prove that he is financially capable of supporting the expenses of the additional household. Again Abu Ayyash insists that there is no mention of the rights of women in polygamous marriage practices.

Abu Ayyash states that her criticism of the Personal Status Code and the reform plan is not an attack against men. She claims that there is a need for more democracy and equality between the interactive bodies of society including men, women and the family. Mernissi also criticizes the laws by saying that these laws were designed for the future Moroccan family without consulting the central element of the family: woman.

Egypt is involved in a dialogue on the concepts of childhood and motherhood while fatherhood remains neglected. The dialogue proposes that a working mother should be given a maternity leave with full salary for one year or a full leave with half salary for a number of years in order to raise the family.

However, Egyptian activists feel that these are only partial solutions for they fail to include the father in the task of child-rearing. They claim that these solutions are based on the traditional relationship between the mother and her child. They feel that these solutions reinforce the common belief that the father is there as a bread earner rather than an active partner in raising the children side by side with the mother.

Keeping in mind that early years are crucial in the development of a child's personality, the absence of the father is just as problematic as the absence of the mother. Consequently, Egyptian activists feel that it is the duty of the government to encourage the father and the mother to share, jointly, the responsibilities of raising the family.

In developed countries, maternity leaves are divided between the mother and the father. This is done in order to make sure that the father gets a true feeling for his child, and to care for him/her as a total human being and not simply as an offspring. Sometimes the father chooses to spend more time with the child than the mother especially if her work is more demanding than his and if her salary is more lucrative than his.

(1) *Al-Mara' Al-Maghribiyah Wa Qanoon Al-Ahwal Al-Shakhsiyah* by Amina Abu Ayyash, taken from NOUN (No. 2, Aug. 1989) an Egyptian Quarterly by the Association of the Solidarity of Arab Women. (Arabic reference).

(2) Fatima Mernissi. *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakiland. London: The Women's Press, 1988.

Excerpts from an article: *On Maternity Leave And Work of Women in Egypt*. Taken from NOUN (No. 3, November, 1989), an Egyptian Quarterly by the Association of the Solidarity of Arab Women.

Women Groups Become More Active In Pakistan

Ever since Ms. Benazir Bhutto took over the reigns of Pakistan, women's groups have become more active in an atmosphere they find more congenial.

There are about ten main women's organizations in Pakistan working for women's upliftment and creating general awareness among them for their rights in Pakistan. The oldest among them is the All-Pakistan's Women Association (APWA), established in 1950. Some others are: Women's Action Forum (WAF), «Aurat», International Women's Club, Business and Profession Forum and Women's Voluntary Forum.

Ms. Zahida Ahsanuddin, Chairperson, APWA, member of International Women's Club and interior decorator, said they had been organizing seminars and demonstrations against the «Shariat» and other political issues adversely affecting women. Many victimized women are given free legal aid.

Ms. Jamila Bandial, president OAKS, Islamabad, and member WAF, said her group was actively involved in providing employment to destitute women. Their voluntary vans went around the villages near Lahore with a doctor and a nurse who dispensed free medicine to sick malnourished women as well as health guidance.

Ms. Yasmin Tahir, broadcaster, said that in addition to making women aware about their rights, they were trying to educate women to be economically independent. First woman pilot, Ms. Hijab Imtiazali, feels all these years women's role has been limited to a few areas. «It was high time they were encouraged to be themselves», she added.

Ms. Safia Saeed, social worker, said all women's groups were trying to help uneducated women set up small businesses. With Benazir Bhutto in power, women were feeling a sense of dignity and pride, she said.

Source: Report of the Alumni meeting of Kinnaird College, Lahore, February 8, 1990. The visit was an extension of the diamond jubilee celebrations of the college in Lahore. The reunion included 40 Pakistani women, all former Alumni members, who were given a warm welcome by their Indian counterparts. All the relevant information is taken from the newsletter of *The Asian Women's Institute*.

Feminism On The Rise In Poland

At last, two women are members of the Solidarity Government in Poland. One carries the title of speaker and the other is the Minister of Culture.

This is a first symbol of change in Poland. Only a few months ago, such a situation would have been inconceivable in a country, where only men have the right to speak.

Malgorzata Niezabitowska, 40, brings her beauty, charm and feminine touch to the job of speaker. She adds her radiating style to the profession, something her predecessor, Jersy Urban, lacked. In fact, contrary to Urban who quoted Lenin and the Communist doctrine in length, Malgorzata speaks of her government in simpler and more personal terms using expressions such as «We» and «Us». This young woman, a former journalist, speaks eagerly in the name of the people: «We have neither police nor army. The administration does not belong to us, nor does the economy. Our only force is in the people and the bonds which link the Polish people with their new government.»

Married to a photographer and mother of an eleven year old daughter, Malgorzata is among the first Polish women to break away from the old and rigid Poland, and to pioneer for more feminism in her country.

The second woman in the new Polish government is Isabella Cywinska. She is the new Minister of Culture. Isabella, 54, is well known in her country as a director at the Theatre of Poznan. She is also well known for her involvement in politics. She was arrested in 1981 for her support to solidarity. She was later released after the intervention of The Society of Actors and Cinematographers in Poland.

Isabella Cywinska was appointed to the post of Minister while in the middle of a theatre production. Therefore, she had to take a leave from the government in order to complete her work. Not only is she the Minister of Culture but an active member of cultural activities in her country.

Source: «La Pologne S'Ouvre Au Feminisme», *La Revue Du Liban*, No. 1571, 13-20 Janvier, 1990. p. 23. (French Reference).

Where Woman Work Is Needed

By Rose Ghurayyib

There are groups of women whose members lead a secluded life, away from noise and publicity. They spend part of their time in prayers, devotion and missionary work; and the rest of the time in profitable occupations, which allow them to earn a living. They are the nuns and sisters who belong to the various religious orders in Lebanon.

The nuns are bound by vows of chastity, austerity and obedience, to which they add celibacy and consecration to the service of God and the Church. These nuns represent an important section of the population in Lebanon, which contains a relatively large community of Christians including Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Catholics, Greek and Latins. The nuns belong to the local orders founded in Lebanon during the last two hundred years and are mostly affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church. Their convents exist in almost every district in the country.

Besides missionary work, the nuns practice traditional professions like teaching, nursing, caring for orphans, the old and handicapped, arts and crafts like lacework, embroidery, sewing, design and flower-making.

There is a growing interest in higher education among these nuns in order to keep up with the growing demands of our times. This demand for higher education has been rising since the Vatican II Council was held and The University of the Holy Ghost was founded by a Maronite monk.

Sister Georgette Nasr, from the Order of the Cross (founded some sixty years ago in Lebanon by a Lebanese Capuchin monk, Father Jacob Haddad) is a student of Business Administration at the University of the Holy Ghost. The University also known as Kaslik University is a co-educational institution where women form half of the students and include seventy five nuns. At Kaslik University, most of the teachers are laymen and the language of instruction is French because reference books in Arabic are too few. In Business Administration, Sr. Georgette prepares herself to take

charge of accounts at one of the orphanages, hospitals, nursing homes or schools belonging to the Order of the Cross. During the four years of study, she takes courses in general culture, economics, statistics, mathematics, accounting, computer, science, administration, commercial relations in Lebanon and a course in the French language. She graduates with a degree called "Licence" equivalent to the B.A. granted by American or Anglo-Saxon colleges and universities.

The recently created Order of the Cross contains 250 nuns. The older orders such as those of The Holy Hearts, The Lazarist or Charity Sisters, have over a thousand each. Why so many? **They fill a need, answered Sr. Georgette. Lebanon is short of women directors, nurses, social workers, artisans, accountants, teachers and so on. In spite of people's belief, nowadays, that every woman should have a profession and although we find women in almost every field of work, we find that few of them are adequately trained and many stop working after marriage.**

Furthermore, convents and monasteries are used as school buildings and teaching centers, where convenient buildings are lacking. The Sisters of the Cross own a number of old people's homes and rest-houses. Neither the government nor business people show any interest in creating modern hospices and nursing homes for elderly people. Those that already exist belong to four chief religious sects and communities and because they generally receive the poor who are unable to pay, they lack a trained staff and give little heed to hygienic services.

Sister Georgette ended by saying: **Lebanon is in need of conscientious leaders, planners, directors in every field. This war has obliged women to venture into new areas where they are replacing men. They have to look for neglected areas and occupy positions where they are most needed. Once they make their choice, they must be equipped with the necessary training. The spirit of change and evolution has invaded all institutions and work centers. There is no more place for improvised work and unskilled workers.**

And Life Goes On

By Intisar Abu-Khadra



When my husband was hit by cancer, five years before he passed away, I started to prepare myself for the devastating event. It was not easy for me to accept the fact then. We had shared a lifetime together at home and at work.

Before his death he insisted that I should continue to work and strive for a successful life after him, rather than give up.

Today, exactly six years after the death of my husband (he died on June 12, 1984 and I am writing this essay on June 12, 1990), I am proud to say that I have lived up to his expectations. But adjusting to the new life was not easy.

I had to run the business, a dubbing studio and a translation office along with eight employees. The first thing I did was to contact our clients and reassure them that business would go on as usual. They promised to continue their business with our firm. However, for technical reasons, I had to shut down the studio and concentrate on the translation services of the business.

Immediately following the death of my husband, Ka-

naan Abu-Khadra, I went on to take care of an unfinished book he had started writing. One year before his death he was writing his memories as chief editor of a daily newspaper in Palestine during the period of the Arab-Israeli war, and never finished it. I wrote the remaining part of the book, edited it and published it. Today, «Sahafi Min Falastin Yatakalam» («A Journalist From Palestine Speaks»), is available on the shelves of libraries and bookstores all over the Arab World.

As far as social life is concerned, I became heavily involved in social work. I am now an active member of the Association For the Resurgence Of Palestinian Camps (Inaash), which specializes in promoting Palestinian traditional embroidery. This was one of the many centers that my husband founded in Gaza when he was working as an area officer with the United Nations in 1950. I also try to raise funds to help needy students and families. Furthermore, I donated a scholarship to a medical student in the name of my late husband.

Yes, life goes on. And I plan to go on working and helping as long as I can and as long as my work and activities keep me close to my husband in heart and soul.

The Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie New Jersey Chair In Women's Studies At Douglass College

Position Available: Global Focus

For this cycle, (beginning September 1991 through 1993), a person of significant achievement whose research and/or work focus primarily on women outside the United States is sought. The applicant's background and training can be in any field, but she/he must have made an important contribution to the understanding of women's studies in the world.

Nominations and applications will be accepted until October 1, 1990. Send letters of interest; along with C.V. and other supporting documents to: The Blanche, Edith & Irving Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies Search Committee, c/o Ferris Olin, Voorhees Chapel, Lower Level, Room 4, Douglass College at Rutgers, Box 270, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903-0270. Telephone: (201) 932-6948.

Center For Global Issues And Women's Leadership At Douglass College

The Center for Global Issues and Women's Leadership announced its opening at Douglass College in September 1989. The Center seeks to deepen an understanding of the ways in which gender affects the exercise of power and conduct of public policy internationally.

For further information contact: Charlotte Bunch, Director, Box 270, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0270.

Tunisian Association of Democratic Women

The Tunisian Association Of Democratic Women; Association Tunisienne Des Femmes Democratres (A.T.F.D.) announces that it has been officially recognized by the Tunisian authorities and has been granted a license to operate legally since August 6, 1989.

The Association is autonomous and independent. It proposes to work towards the improvement of the status of Tunisian women. Its goals are:

- The elimination of all forms of discrimination against Tunisian women.
- The protection of the legal rights of Tunisian women and their vested interests towards the establishment of equality between the sexes.

The slogan of the Association **Reflection, Struggle, Solidarity.**

In line with these goals, the Association is eager to establish constant exchange and communications with all institutions and organization interested in women's issues.

Address:

Association Tunisienne Des Femmes Democratres,
ATFD
BP 107
Cité Mahrajéne, 1082
Tunis, Tunisie.

The Development of Women's Studies: A Report From the Netherlands

Margo Brouns

In the past fifteen years, women's studies have flourished in many countries. And the Netherlands is no exception.

The Development of Women's Studies: A Report From The Netherlands is a book which contains a description of the concrete results of fifteen years of Dutch feminist research. In addition, it sketches the historic and theoretical developments within the area of scholarship.

The book is published by the Promotion Committee for Emancipation Research (STEO).

Copies of the book can be ordered by writing to:

- Foris Publications Holland, P.O.Box 509, 3300 AM Dordrecht, The Netherlands, or call (0) 78-510454. DFL 46+9 for postage A/C # 4169323.
- Foris Publication USA Inc., P.O.Box 5904, Providence, R.I. 02903, USA or call (401) 333-0044. \$23+5 postage.
- Write author, title and ISBN of the book on your order (ISBN 90 6765 439 6).

AL - RAIDA, IWSAW QUARTERLY

LEBANON

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

U.S.A.

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

Director: **Julinda Abu Nasr**
Consultant: **Rose Ghurayyib**
Editor: **Randa Abul - Husn**

YEARLY CONTRIBUTION

Lebanon: L.L. 2000 per year
Other Countries: \$ 15 per year
plus \$ 3 to cover postage