

BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Summer 1991, Vol. IX. No. 54

Basic Education and Female Drop-out in the Arab World

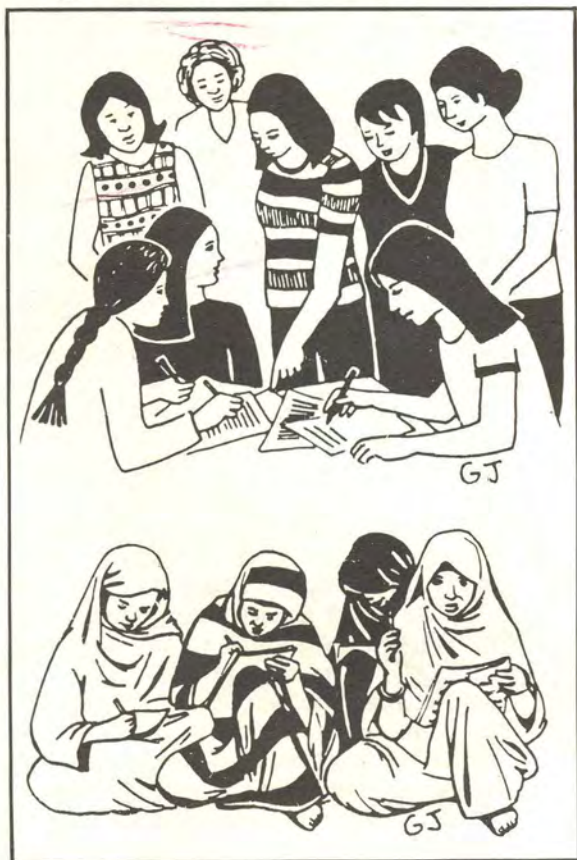


Illustration: International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC)

Contents

Letter to the Editor

When is Old Age a Problem ?
By Rose Ghurayyib

Study

Basic Education and Female Drop-out in the Arab World

Article

Iraq's Progressive Policies Towards Women

Book Review

Sexuality and War by Evelyne Accad.
Reviewed by Rose Ghurayyib

Actualities

IWSAW Activities, 1991

Profile

Dorothy Salhab Kazemi:
Ceramics

Announcement

A Thank you Note

When Is Old Age A Problem?

By Rose Ghurayyib

I once met a middle-aged bachelor at a summer resort whose customers were from various classes and creeds. When asked why he was still un-married, he replied with a frown: "marriage is a very difficult problem!". He kept repeating "marriage is a very difficult problem!" until he finally decided not to marry at all. This man is one of a minority group of men and women who refrain from marriage because they are afraid of the responsibilities and problems.

Recalling the reasons that induced him to get married, an old neighbor of mine told me that he decided to take a wife in order to conform with tradition and comply with public opinion. In other words, he was moved by the "herd instinct", which dominates most people and makes them afraid of deviating from the norms.

I clearly remember the verdict of Mr. Stoltzfus, President of BUC (1940-1958), himself a happily married man: "Every way of life has its advantages and disadvantages, its pros and cons. Both married and never-married people have problems which may be similar or different in nature. Handling these problems successfully directly related to their happiness and welfare."

The examples mentioned above give us an idea about the difference in attitudes that people have about marriage. This difference should warn us against the use of generalizations and sweeping statements. Hence, drawing a parallel between married life and singlehood, Miss Randa Abul-Husn, Editor of *Al-Raida*, considers old age a major problem for never-married women. She says that "these women end up alone in their lives, when they find themselves with limited material reward from retirement and with no private nucleus to rely upon." (1)

This statement seems to be based on traditional thinking instead of actual experience or positive inquiry. It is a well-known fact, nowadays, that the extended family, the backbone of the tribal system, is gradually disappearing in developed and underdeveloped countries like Lebanon and the rest of the Arab world. Today's couples refuse to live with their in-laws under the same roof, and insist on buying or renting a house of their own before marriage. There is a Lebanese proverb which says: "People of the same generation should share life together." This proverb is equivalent to the English saying: "Birds of a feather

flock together." You cannot expect the young to enjoy the company of the old and vice versa. The gap between the two is much too wide to bridge. Even if the children accept to live with their parents, they are so busy with full-time jobs or activities for planning and preparing their future, which keep them away from home most of the time and, in any case, unable to take care of aging or disabled parents.

Old people, whether men or women, married or never-married, sharing life with a family or living in a single apartment, are bound to lead an isolated life and to secure their own means of recreation. From experience, I know that people who have led a busy life and acquired rich experiences, do not feel lonely in old age. On the contrary, they may enjoy a peaceful, restful life in a well-accommodated rest-house here or elsewhere. Resorts for the aged are being set up in all countries, including Lebanon, because they have become a necessity. Some of them fulfill the conditions required to insure the comfort and well-being of old people. They are considered first class homes and they charge high prices. Other resorts, particularly the free ones, are poorly accommodated and require government supervision or assistance from benevolent organizations. In most cases, these resorts provide the aged with the care, which their families are unable to provide. In our Arab tradition, people generally follow the habit of saving face by pretending that "all is well within their homes." Since nobody has thoroughly investigated the real status of senior citizens in this region, proper care remains a matter of doubt, regardless of whether they stay with their families or take refuge in a retirement home.

Women who voluntarily accept celibacy are usually characterized by an independent spirit. They engage in a lifelong profession or in a vocation that provides them with financial independence and security in old age. They can afford a comfortable rest-house or a nursing-home in case of disability, unless some unexpected catastrophe, like war, shatters their lives and destroys their plans. Women who are retired professionals or widows and have a permanent income, enjoy more economic security than housewives. Housewives are unable to have savings because their housework has no monetary value. As a result, they have to depend, on a small share of inherited property or on the dubious help of their children who are usually burdened with the sustenance of their own families.

Basic Education and Female Drop-outs in the Arab World (*)

Therefore, if they feel lonely or bored in their retreat, single women may occupy themselves with knitting, the favorite pastime of Lebanese women. They may play cards, listen to music or to the radio, watch television or drama. If their sight is still good, they may read books, write memoirs and so on. For people seeking rest, well-accommodated old people's homes seem like ideal places. Like social life, solitude has its lovers.

The old Latin adage attributed to Horace : "O blessed solitude, O sole blessedness !" still applies to our hectic days, which require a quiet abode for tired souls, away from the noise and hubbub of modern life.(2) •



Excerpts from a study entitled "Basic Education and Female Drop-outs in the Arab World", conducted by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, 1990. The data which appears in this translation are taken exclusively from this study, unless indicated otherwise..

This study examines aspects of Basic Education in the Arab World and concentrates mainly on female drop-outs. The research surveys forms and rates, as well as the determinants of female drop-outs stated by a sample of female drop-outs themselves.

Basic Education

According to this study, Basic Education is defined as a comprehensive educational system forming the first stage of public education. It offers basic knowledge as well as vocational skills and guidance needed to create a responsible citizen who would be able to cope with change and participate in development. "Under this program the goal is to orient students, at an early stage, to various occupations and relevant skills."(1) The basic education program is six years in countries like Sudan and Somalia and nine to ten years in the Gulf countries and Jordan.

However, despite development, Basic Education schools in the Arab world are too few and too small leaving approximately 26% of Arab children (est: 9 million), ages 6 to 15, out of school or unaccommodated, technically speaking. Educational facilities are inconsistent and vary from one country to another. For instance, by 1989, countries like Jordan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Qatar and Libya had the facilities to provide schooling for all its students. Whereas, other countries such as Yemen (35%), Somalia (50%) and Mauritania (53%) could only accommodate around 50% of their population.

These shortages result from national budget deficits on one hand and socio-economic obstacles in the

(1) Editorial, Never-married Women, *Al-Raida*, Vol IX, # 53, Spring 1991.

(2) "About Women and Old Age" *Al-Raida*, # 20- 22, 1982.

family on the other hand. Thus, many of the respective countries suffer from lack of funding and resources needed to create enough schools. On the other hand, high costs of education and gender socialization, giving priority of education to sons rather than daughters, persist.

Female enrollment in basic education has increased significantly in the last few decades. The increase was mobilized by a number of factors such as a general concensus that compulsory education is the prerogative of the state; education is the natural right of every female citizen; and basic education should represent bare knowledge of every citizen. Consequently, the number of students at the elementary level of basic education has risen from 8.1 m. in 1960 to 24.8 m. in 1985, i.e. a 349% increase. However, these rates are still lower than their counterparts in developed and developing countries. Furthermore, shortage of accom-

modation for all the children means failure to eliminate illiteracy and to develop the potentials of women.

Female Drop-outs from Basic Education

The general definition of female school drop-out is when the student leaves school before the completion of the level in which she is enrolled, i.e preparatory, elementary, intermediate or secondary level, etc. . . .

Education specialists in the Arab world seem to feel that this definition is incomplete. They suggest that it should include the females who cut their education short at a specific level rather than complete all the requirements. Furthermore, they feel that the qualification of the one who graduate should also be a determinant of what they call quality drop-out. Quality drop-out occurs when a female student graduates with poor qualifications and remains unskilled and unequipped to

Table
ILLITERACY IN THE ARAB STATES
(LAST AVAILABLE DATA OR ESTIMATIONS-AGE GROUP 15+)
(BY THOUSANDS)

		MF		M		F	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
*Bahrain	(1986)	53,3	32	17,6	21.1	35,7	43
*Egypt	(1986)	15298,8	55.1	5971,2	42.4	93276	68.2
*Iraq	(1986)	3754,4	42.4	973,4	21.4	2781	64.6
*Jordan	(1986)	363,9	26.4	122,3	16.9	241,7	36.9
*Kuwait	(1986)	115,2	30.4	32,9	17.8	82,3	42.4
*Lebanon	(1986)	255,8	14.7	85,6	10.5	170,2	18.5
*Qatar	(1986)	16,7	31.6	5,4	20.9	11,2	41.6
*Saudi Arabia	(1986)	2166,9	46.4	635,5	26.8	1532,4	66.6
*Syrian A.R.	(1986)	2165,2	38.9	658,3	23.5	1497,9	54.5
*U.A.Emirates	(1986)	97,1	45.6	36,6	33	60,5	59.2
*Yemen	(1986)	3295,6	81.1	1116,4	61.5	2179,1	69.9
**Algeria	(1982)	5880,3	55.3	2297,3	42.7	3583	68.3
**Libyan A.J.	(1973)	608	61.0	200,8	38.7	407,2	85.2
**Morocco	(1971)	6407	78.6	2654	66.4	3753	90.2
**Sudan	(1973) ²	5221,3	68.6	2090,5	55.2	3130,7	82.1
***Tunisia	(1984)	2077	49.3	840	39.5	1237	59.4
**D.Yemen	(1973) ²	736	72.9	254	52.3	482	92.1

cope with change and participate effectively in public development and public employment.

The Rate of Female Drop-out in the Arab World and an Overview of Enrollment by Sex

Surveys confirm that in 1990, the number of females, in the Arab world, who are out of school and are not enrolled in any program (12.3%) remains higher than male non-enrollment (10.1%).

Unequal sex ratios in education are also evident inside the schools and in the programs. Hence, this research reports that, in 1985, females in elementary schools formed only 41% of the student population. At the intermediate and secondary levels, females were only 39% (see Table 2). The gap was significantly wider in higher education, where females amounted to only a third of the student population.

Table 2
Gender Distribution of Students in the Arab World (1985) (2)

(%)	Elementary	Intermediate & Secondary	Higher Education
Female	41	39	33
Male	59	61	68
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Illiteracy rates show similar discrepancies (see Table 1). For example, female illiteracy is as high as 92.1% in Democratic Yemen (before unification), and 90.2% in Morocco. It is lowest in Lebanon at 18.5% (see Table 3). Alphabetic illiteracy in the Arab world is also among the highest in the world, reaching 50% in general, and a high of 65% among females.

Hence, the phenomenon of drop-out accentuates the problem. According to the data of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the percentage of student drop-out from basic education in 1989, for both sexes, was highest in Yemen (85%) and Somalia (67%). It was lower in UAE (12%), Algeria (17%) and Libya (18%).

The ratio of male to female drop-out was rather low

except in Bahrain and Kuwait (see Table 3). In Bahrain, male drop-out from basic education (6.34%) was double the female drop-out (3%) in 1989. The same case existed in Kuwait in 1980, with male drop-out averaging 6.9% compared to 3.1% for females. However, by 1989, the gap was significantly decreased in Kuwait, putting females on the higher end of the scale at 1.3% compared to 1.1% male drop-out.

Table 3

Percentage of Male and Female Drop-out from the Preparatory level of Basic Education in the Arab World, 1980, 1989

Country	Year	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total
Jordan	1980	2.6	2.1	2.1
	1989	3.1	3.2	2.6
U.A.E.	1980	3.7	3.9	3.8
	1989	3.0	2.8	2.4
Bahrain	1980	1.2	1.8	1.5
	1989	3.4	6.3	4.8
Tunisia	1980	6.7	5.9	6.2
	1989	6.9	6.7	6.8
Kuwait	1980	3.1	6.9	5.0
	1989	1.3	1.1	1.2
Iraq	1980	6.7	1.7	6.2
	1989	6.9	2.0	6.8

Source: *The State of the Child in the Arab World 1990*, Arab Council for Childhood and Development.

In another survey which examined drop-out from formal school in 1982/83 in Bahrain, female drop-out (39%) was higher than male drop-out (36%) at the elementary level. The survey also revealed that the rate of drop-outs varied with age, country, geographical location and sex.

In a study conducted in Syria, the rate of female drop-out is higher than its male counterpart in secondary school and at pre-university levels. At the elementary level, on the other hand, female drop-out was higher in

rural areas (30.02%) compared to urban areas (18.38%).

Determinants of Female Drop-outs

"School enrollment is not, however, the only condition which mitigates against the distribution of educational opportunity between the two sexes in the Arab world. General cultural mores as well as in-school factors prevent women from reaching their full potential." (3)

In the survey reported by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, a sample of female drop-outs were asked to give the reasons and factors which led them to drop-out of basic education.

1. One third of the respondents said that the main reason for leaving school was financial: they could not afford tuition fees. Another main reason was the inconvenience and difficulty of commuting between home and school in the absence of adequate means of transportation.

2. Half of the respondents said that (cultural) priority given to family care and early marriage was a major reason that led them to drop-out of school.

3. One third of the sample in rural areas and one

third of the sample in urban areas said that they left school in order to help at home and to save the relevant expenses for the needs of the family.

4. Approximately half of the sample related drop-out to teaching methodologies and curricula such as the difficulty of the material and its lack of relevance to their needs.

5. Many respondents related drop-out to in-school factors such as lack of guidance from administrators and instructors, lack of coordination between the school and the parents, and discrepancies in treatment.

6. Approximately one third of the respondents said they dropped out for personal reasons such as loss of interest, failure in class, etc . . .

7. Another third of the respondents related drop-out to poor educational policies and facilities, such as the absence of financial assistance.

According to this survey, the determinants of female drop-out are related to the educational system, such as curricula, lack of guidance, lack of communication between the school and parents, and lack of assistance. Other main determinants are inherent in the social and economic systems of society, whereby the family cannot afford the costs of education. Furthermore, the ignorance of parents hinder the development of their children. Last but not least, the value system, which gives priority of education to sons is largely responsible for the drop-out of females, their illiteracy and their lack of qualification to participate in development in their society. •

(*) Al-Ta'lim al-Assasi wa Tasarub al-Inath fi al-Watan al-Aarabi, Basic Education and female Drop-out in the Arab World, *The State of the Child in the Arab World 1990* Arab Council for Childhood and Development. Translated by Randa Abul-Husn.

(1) Massialas, B.C. and Samir A. Jarrar, *Arab Education in Transition: a Source Book*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1991. p. 68.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid, Massialas and Jarrar 1991, p.56.

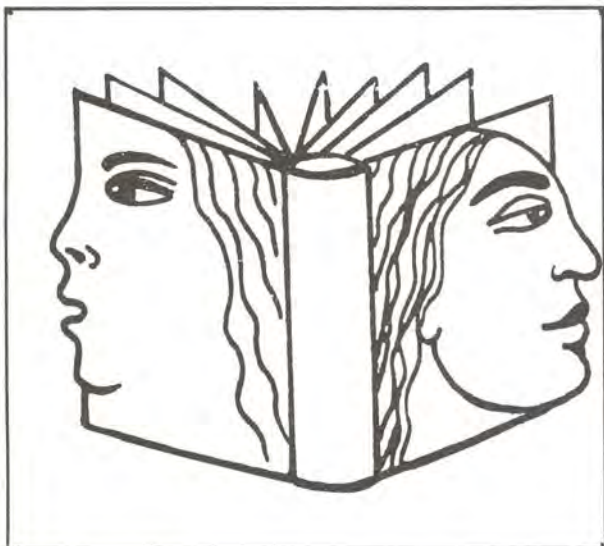


Illustration: Newsletter of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (Egypt)

Iraq's Progressive Policies Towards Women

What has become of the Iraqi woman after the war? What has become of powerful women's groups like the General Federation of Iraqi Women? How did the war affect the rights and conditions of Iraqi women?

These are but a few of the questions that are being asked. Researchers are earnestly corresponding with each other and with concerned centers to get current data. The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World has received numerous requests for up-to-date news. Unfortunately, very little information is coming out of Iraq. What is known about the aftermath of the war is that thousands of refugees, the majority of which are women and children, are fleeing through the southern part of the country. Undoubtedly and customary during wars, Iraqi women must be desperately trying to rebuild their families and homes and anxiously searching for stability. We tried to approach some Lebanese or other women who fled Iraq recently for eye-witness reports about what Iraqi women experienced and how they are coping with the war. We were hoping to draw parallels between the war traumas and survival patterns of Lebanese women and Iraqi women (although the two wars are very different). Unfortunately again, the refu-

gees seem reluctant to speak-out or know very little having fled in a state of total chaos and terror.

Therefore, the only reliable and available data concentrates on the regime's support to women's rights before the war. Once again we are abridging and giving excerpts of an outstanding article written by Andrea W. Lorenz (1) which is published in the May/June 1991 issue of Ms. magazine.(2)

According to Lorenz, the Iraqi regime has backed policies towards women that are the most progressive in the Arab world. These progressive policies and the economic growth of the 70's, encouraged women to participate in the country's development. Iraqi women were traveling overseas for higher education. Local programs to eradicate illiteracy were established all over the country. Regional and interregional migration for rural to urban areas and the cities for education increased. "In 1979, 51 percent of Baghdad University medical school's first year were women, as were 75 percent of students in the English translation department at Mustansiriyeh University."(3)

According to Lorenz it was a time of relative politi-



Illustration taken from the Newsletter of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, March 1991 issue, p.20.

cal freedom and there was an influx of technology. Iraq became one of the countries of the Gulf likely to experience an influx of foreign labor from labor surplus countries in the Middle East and Asia. But the general policy of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party was to train women in specialized fields and managerial positions rather than import labor. Consequently, female labor force participation of Iraqi women increased; unlike other booming Gulf countries where traditional restrictions were tightened in order to control interaction between the increasing number of men and women (migrating from rural to urban regions for employment) in the work place. "A survey conducted in Kuwait by Al Thakib (1975) to assess societal attitudes towards the education and employment of women, found that 96 percent of the respondents were in favor of women's education up to the secondary level. With respect to employment, the majority (90 percent) indicated their approval of women working in governmental agencies, preferably in teaching, because it provides minimal chances of interaction between the sexes."⁴

Hence, "by 1980, Iraqi women formed 37 percent of oil project designers working for the Ministry of Oil, and 30 percent of construction supervisors. By 1982, they comprised 46 percent of teachers, 29 percent of doctors, 46 percent of dentists, 70 percent of pharmacists, 15 percent of accountants, 14 percent of factory workers, and four percent of senior management positions"⁵ In addition to equal opportunity for education and high positions, Iraqi women enjoyed equal pay. Iraqi women were enlisted in the army during the Iran-Iraq war. It is said that at one point, Iraqi women were selling their jewelry to support the army.

However, the Iran-Iraq war still made things difficult for women. Lorenz reports that as men went off to the front, marriage plans were deferred. In April 1982, the government passed laws prohibiting married women to travel without their husbands, and single women were required to have written permission from their guardians. According to Lorenz, this stemmed the growing number of Iraqi women who were leaving to complete their education abroad.

"Women's participation in the formal labor force

more than doubled, filling up jobs that had been vacated by the men who went to the front. . . . Women were told that it was their patriotic duty to bear five children each, in order to narrow the population gap between Iraq's then 15 million people and Iran's 47 million. In 1986, birth control devices disappeared from the market; even condoms were declared illegal."⁽⁶⁾ In the spring of 1989, newspapers in the region reported that a new decree acquitting the man who commits a crime of honor (killing his wife, daughter, sister or mother for adultery) was passed. According to some analysts, the purpose of this law was to, coercively, prevent the women, whose men were on the front, from violating traditional codes of honor and committing adultery.

It seems like war always succeeds in destroying what little progress is being made. The Iraqi women have made gains during the Iran-Iraq war, despite the problems. Now, they are facing the aftermath of a more destructive war. A war which destabilized the country's infrastructure, educational and employment facilities, not to mention the once progressive political regime, which supported women's rights. Aisha, An Iraqi woman told Andrea Lorenz : "My country is being destroyed. It's tearing me apart. . . . still, I feel confident that even after the war, women's rights will remain strong."^{*}

(1) Andrea W. Lorenz is publication manager at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations; she has an M.A. in Arabic Studies and has visited Iraq several times.

(2) Andrea Lorenz, "Ishtar Was A Woman", Ms. magazine, Editor: Robin Morgan, New York: May/June 1991. p. 14-15.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Abu-Nasr, Lorring and Azzam, "An Overview of Arab Women in Population, Employment and Economic Development" Abu Nasr, Khoury and Azzam (Eds.) *Women, Employment and Development in the Arab World*, New York Mouton Publishers, 1985.

(5) Statistics from Iraq: *The Contemporary State*, edited by Tim Niblock, Taken from Andrea W. Lorenz, "Iraqi Women Preserve Gains Despite Wartime Problems," *Al-Raida*, Vol IX, No. 51, p.9.

(6) Ibid. Lorenz, "Ishtar was a Woman" Ms Magazine.

Sexuality and War Author: Evelyne Accad

Review by Rose Ghurayyib

In her latest book, "Sexuality and War : Literary Masks of the Middle East," Evelyne Accad deals with two aspects of human activity emphasizing male superiority under the patriarchal system. What relationship exists between the two aspects? Evelyne Accad defines sexuality as "attitudes towards one's mate, family and society," i.e. the total complex of relations between men and women in society. She postulates that the topic has been neglected in the handling of social problems, particularly in women's studies, which led to the development of perverted sexual relations. The violence practiced in war is itself an inhuman act. It must be a result or one of the results of inhuman sexual behavior on the personal and social level. "War carries the load of sexual violence . . . The warrior settles his accounts with the archaic femininity which threatens him." (1) Evelyne Accad is concerned with the Lebanese war, which, for 16 years, has been raging in her country. The corruption she refers to is the oppressive attitude towards women, Attitudes which impose on them a double standard, and demand total submission to the male.

Accad also postulates that women who have been excluded from war practices and historically restricted from the performance of peaceful tasks, are more fit than men to assume political leadership. Hence, she quotes a very familiar feminist theme "that the personal is political." (2) Accad suggests a sexual revolution which begins on the personal level but aspires to a transformation of the traditional relations of domination and subordination that permeate interpersonal relationships. She believes that novels are a source of knowledge which illustrates such relationships and reflect collective imagination and the culture of people (3). Consequently, she undertakes a detailed psychological analysis of six novels: three written by women and three others written by men. In her analysis, she tries to show the difference between men and women novelists' attitude, future visions and suggested solutions for the war problem.

The three novels written about the war by three outstanding women are stories of revolt against the war and the perverse conditions which created it. Each

writer reacts in her own way. "The Story of Zahra" by Hanan al-Shaykh gives, in a natural, fluent and imaginative style, poignant descriptions of corruption and destruction in her environment. The main character, Zahra, a Shi'ite young girl from South Lebanon, is brought up in a stifling atmosphere of family cruelty and sexual licentiousness. Her experiences arouse disgust. Hence, after a period of resignation, she decides to revolt and, taking advantage of the sexual liberation encouraged by the war, has a love affair with a sniper. She is finally



killed by the sniper who decided to get rid of her when she told him she was pregnant. In this story, Zahra is a rebel who tries to free herself in the best way she can. She was daring but ignorant, so she fell victim of her ignorance and brought a fatal end to her problem.

Sitt Marie Rose is the main character in a true story written by Etel Adnan. The protagonist is a Syrian-Lebanese woman who, moved by a nationalist or philanthropic feeling, decides to help the Palestinian fighters. Her daring action costs her her life. Her fate was similar to Zahra's, only it was more constructive. Evelyne Accad admires this women's heroic action which expresses criticism of the perversion permeating the other local militias. However, Accad comments that

the author, Etel Adnan, was wrong in having Sitt Marie Rose make emotional statements glorifying the Palestinian fighters; because their war was as ruthless, as hungry for power, and they had a macho attitude towards their women which is similar to other militias.

Andree Chedid's novel, "A House Without Roots" adopts a more positive attitude than the other two novels. The female characters are more balanced, thoughtful, economically independent, religiously tolerant and socially conscious. Each one practiced a new profession: law and pharmacy. In politics, their attitudes were visionary and revolutionary. They visualize a future which is secular where civil marriage is practiced and the hybridization of culture is utilized. This novel represents Andree Chedid's idealistic view of Lebanon and the Lebanese woman of tomorrow, of the future.

I shall not dwell long on the three novels written by the male authors. Barakat in "Days of Dust" uses allegorical language to show his disappointment with the Palestinians and the Arabs in general. He emphasizes that they failed to use sacrifice and heroism in their struggle against Israel, therefore, losing the war. Tawfiq Awad is fond of portraying violence in eloquent terms and is more interested in tragic events than un-humanitarian messages. In "Death in Beirut" he gives vivid pictures of corrupt sexuality, male arrogance, women's enslavement and nasty exploitation of the students' revolt in 1970. Both Barakat and Awad end their novels with the protagonists joining the Palestinian fighters, at a time when the Palestinian cause was sacred for the Arabs.

Elias Khoury's novel, "The Little Mountain", presents symbols of surrealistic destruction: street battles, looting, a mob marching to the sea symbolizing, according to Accad, woman or dreams or aimless romantic notions. Fascination by death is one of its recurring themes. Finally, we may conclude from the interesting accounts made by Evelyne Accad, and her detailed analysis of characters and symbols, that a bent toward violence and war is shown in the descriptions and endings of the stories written by men.

The causes of the Lebanese and other wars in the Middle East are complex and intricate, direct and indirect. Evelyne Accad emphasizes perverted sexuality as factors of war in order to show the necessity of a sexual revolution or a general reform in that domain.(4) As an example of her interest in reform and change, she redefines "nationalism" from a feminist point of view. She insists that it should transcend its narrow, patriarchal limits and reflect a sense of unity and love of the

whole nation (5). She also clarifies the meaning of the peace movement by adopting Laure Moghaizel's (6) definition of the term "non-violence", which does not imply a passive, inert attitude but a sustained, energetic and non-violent struggle. Accad's analysis of the Lebanese Problem (p. 27-39) and her explanation of such stereotyped words as "chabab", "zaim", "Shatara", reflect a deep understanding of the Lebanese warlike spirit and of the Middle Eastern mentality.

In our age, militarism has evolved into frightful terrorism. Sophisticated arms, nuclear and chemical weapons threaten the world with imminent extermination. Internationalism as represented by the U.N.O. has created a movement for peace in the form of non-violence, dialogue, negotiation and exchange of views. The worldwide women's liberation movement, supported by a large number of men thinkers and leaders who have been influenced by Ghandi's systems of non-violence, can serve as a great agent for international understanding. It seems true that the novels written by men show a certain approval of war, are less sincere and optimistic than those written by women. However, can we infer from this analysis that violence is an intrinsic trait in men? According to certain researchers, violence may have developed in men during their hunt for food in the primitive periods, while women stayed home to cultivate the soil and take care of babies. The hunting activity may have evolved into organized fighting. Regardless of whether violence is acquired or inherited, it should be our task to help men get rid of it. How? One way is by reading and promoting the works of a new generation of writers whose social research is committed to peace, non-violence and social justice. The author of "Sexuality and War" belongs to that group. *

(1) Evelyne Accad, *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East*, New York: New York University Press, 1990. p. quote by Jean Libis "Le Mythe de l'Angroline."

(2) Ibid. Foreword by Kathleen Barry.

(3) On p. 4-5 of her book, Accad says that creative work "not only include all the various fields - social, political, anthropological, religious and cultural - but also allow us to enter into the imaginary and unconscious world of the author."

(4) Ibid p. 12-26.

(5) Ibid. Foreword by Kathleen Barry, p.x.

(6) Maitre Laure Moghaizel is a prominent Female lawyer and a leading feminist. She is active tapping various channels to secure women's legislative and political rights. Maitre Moghaizel was nominated for this year's parliamentary elections. She is one of the founders of the Lebanese Association for Human Rights, who is active in demanding for human rights in Lebanon. Maitre Moghaizel is also a good friend of Al-Raida. We have published many of her articles and recommendation for women's empowerment in the region.

Illustration from Churches in Solidarity with Women.

IWSAW Activities, 1991

Women's institutes all over the world are familiar with the rush involved in administrating workshops for women in development not to mention the sense of achievement afterwards.

This past year has been just that for us here at IWSAW. The Director, Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr and Project Manager, Mrs. Anita Nassar had us running all over the place preparing and following up eight Income Generating workshops for displaced Lebanese women, and preparing a book fair for children on behalf of the Lebanese chapter of the International Board on Books for Young People (LEBBY), among other projects in addition to the daily routine of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.

The Income Generating Project.

The Income Generating project has been in the

making for years. It started in 1989 when IWSAW felt a responsibility and obligation to answer the painful cry of needy families, especially, displaced women who had no formal education or skill to earn a living or support their families.

The Income Generating Project started with a market study to examine products and commodities that were in demand and could be produced by these women, in their homes. Knitting, embroidery, arabesque wall frames, and other folkloric handicrafts were found to be marketable. Consequently, IWSAW conducted preliminary training sessions for approximately sixty women, supplied them with the raw material, and upon completion of the work marketed and sold the products. The products turned out to be so impressive, they were purchased by some of the leading retailers in the city. Consequently, in less than a year, the Income Generating Project hosted more than one-hundred and twenty



IWSAW's Income Generating Workshop

displaced women.

In 1990-91, The Income Generating Project was expanded and given a new perspective. This time, the goal was to include young displaced girls who were only three years old when the war broke out and, consequently, had been denied proper schooling. Hence, now at eighteen they are illiterate and do not have any skills, or hope of earning a living. Therefore, IWSAW studied the possibility of conducting workshops to teach them alphabetization, basic living skills and knowledge and to provide specialized training and job placement.

The team of the Income Generating Project conducted a number of surveys to get a current update on the needs of the displaced women and girls, to identify job demands in local markets and secure ready job opportunities. Training personnel and training centers were located. Then the candidates were screened carefully to place the right person in the right workshop.

Another unique characteristics of the workshops is the incorporation of IWSAW's Basic Living Skills Program (BLSP)(1) for semi-literate women in the form of a half-hour lesson at the end of each day. The lessons covered elements in nutrition, child care home management, family planning, civic education, environment and legal rights for women.

Starting December 1990, IWSAW launched eight workshops simultaneously. Two Sequin embroidery workshops were given at the Institute, hosted sixteen participants. A Flower arrangement workshop was also conducted right here in IWSAW's offices for eight participants. Furthermore, IWSAW assisted and cooperated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and provided fundings for material and trainers for workshops in additional sequin embroidery and Facial and Make-up technician workshops. One participant is getting on-location, live training in hair-dressing in a Beauty Salon. IWSAW's training in knitting which recruited sixty women in the past is now offered to an additional forty women. The new participants are trained in knitting skills as well as in the marketing of the finished goods and in bookkeeping. The women meet with our social workers in small groups in the homes of some of the participants. A workshop to teach women skills in operating factory sewing machines is still in progress for a period of six months, under the auspices of the "Mouvement Sociale". There are five participants in this workshop.

Children's Book Fair

IWSAW's concern for women includes support





Photo : The Participants of the IWTC Workshop

and assistance in child care, proper education and gender socialization. Hence, IWSAW administers, supports and participates in a number of projects for promoting proper care for children. Books, the importance of reading and play are the primary goals of IWSAW's activities for children. Therefore, support and assistance is sought and received from international, regional and global groups, in addition to volunteer work and contributions of women from the Lebanese community.

In cooperation with the Lebanese Board on Books for Young People (LEBBY), IWSAW organized a children's Book Fair on the campus of Beirut University College (BUC) on Saturday May 18 and Sunday May 19, 1991. The Fair included a book exhibition of selected books, a puppet theater, story-telling and story-reading and seven educational games. LEBBY members, IWSAW and BUC student volunteers all worked to set-up the fair on campus. IWSAW's Puppet Theater Project was responsible for preparing the script, the music and the training of the actors. The children loved the play which was shown twice a day. The book fair was a successful event which brought together a number of children, who had been denied safe outdoor activities for the past sixteen years, on a sunny spring weekend on the beautiful campus of BUC.

The earnings of the fair are to be channelled into the expansion and promotion of IWSAW's Portable Library Project. So far, twelve portable libraries have already been distributed to various concerned groups and organizations throughout the country and more are being produced and prepared.

As a summer activity, LEBBY is opening the children's library of IWSAW to the community two afternoons a week. Women from the community volunteer to read and tell stories to children. The children are taught to respect and love books, learn to use the library, do individual readings and group story telling and story reading.

IWTC Women's Computer Desktop Publishing Workshop

IWSAW is particularly grateful to The International Women's Tribune Center in New York for the opportunity it gave us to expand our knowledge and skills in using our computer for desktop publishing. This issue of Al-Raida is a fine example of IWTC Women's Computer Desktop Publishing Workshop's contribution

For two weeks, the Editor of Al-Raida was gener-

Dorothy Salhab Kazemi: Ceramics

ously received by the staff of IWTC, who kindly hosted nine women from women's institutes in the Caribbean, Pacific, Africa, The Middle East and Asia. We were introduced to various desktop publishing programs, word processing, data base, and spreadsheets for Macintosh.

The entire staff of IWSAW has benefited from this workshop. We have acquired additional knowledge and skills using our Macintosh and will soon be adding an additional terminal and starting a computer network in the office. Al-Raida and IWSAW thank IWTC and its staff for their generous contribution to the improvement and development of desktop publishing techniques for women in the world. *

Dorothy Kazemi passed away in the summer of 1990. Her work remains evidence of her sensuous talent for turning clay into language. Her students from BUC speak of her with a passion. She has taught them not to be afraid to work with the soil, and to feel what they do.

"The Islamic print is evident; the circle and the square; the Arabic calligraphy; the cross marking the symmetry; and the blue color which is an important element of Islamic art.

The art of Dorothy Salhab Kazemi is a harmony between Eastern and Islamic culture." (1) in her memory, one cannot but acknowledge the sensibility and sensitivity of her character and her soul illustrated in her art.

"Along with functional pottery, Dorothy created sculptural pieces that express a sensuous duality between nature and the human body. . . . In the undulating curves and indentations, in their soft and time-worn texture, the forms strongly evoke echoes of a primordial age when nature and man were one."(2)

I feel my way through, she said, Clay is a sensual material, and there is an interaction between me and the material which almost directs itself. I simply follow that interaction, from piece to piece, as I feel the forms. Some people say my work is erotic; they give it a limited definition that views eroticism with a narrow vision. For me, all life is an erotic manifestation. (3)

Dorothy Kazemi was the first Lebanese woman ceramist (4) . She said that, since childhood, she has loved "the feel of pottery, the round, full, voluptuous perfection of form born of clay and fired to the durability and texture of stone." (5)

Dorothy started out with an Associates of Arts from Beirut University College (BUC), when it was still Beirut College for Women (BCW). During her junior college years she traveled to Denmark for a student's summer course (6) . The trip was important in determining the path of her life later on. A great deal of that summer was spent seeing exhibitions of Danish pottery, ceramics, glass ware and making friends, which

(1) In the early 1980s IWSAW designed a Basic Living Skills Program (BLSP). The BLSP consists of a comprehensive information kit addressing the needs of illiterate and semi-literate women in health, nutrition, child care home management, family planning, civic education, environment and legal rights. Social workers are trained to give the lessons in the simple forms designated by the manual of instructions.



Photograph of Dorothy Kazemi taken from the book of Helen Khal.

came easily with a sincere person like Dorothy. Reluctantly, she returned to Lebanon and made a transfer to the English literature department of the American University of Beirut to become a teacher on her parents wishes.

But pottery remained her greatest love and could no longer remain a private hobby. Dorothy went back to Denmark, in an attempt to make her dream come true. She was introduced to Gutte Eriksen, the well-known potter who worked with Bernard Leich. She managed to persuade Eriksen to teach her pottery. For a year, Dorothy worked, watching and learning to knead clay, to throw, pull, pinch, shape and to glaze and fire and glaze again.(7) Afterwards she attended an art school for two years in Copenhagen.

When she returned to Lebanon, she returned to teaching. But this time she was a professor of ceramics at Beirut University College (1971-1982). In her native village of Roumieh, she established her atelier and her wheel, where she prepared more of the sensuous pieces that were exhibited in various countries.

Hence, since 1964, Dorothy Kazemi held various exhibits in Copenhagen, Glaslow, Beirut and Damascus. Her most important solo exhibit was in 1975 at the museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen, where some of the pieces purchased by the museum are still on display.

Dorothy was not afraid to work with the earth. She wanted to know everything about it. Not only did she work with it to create erotic glazed pots, but she strove to know as much as she could about its rich archaeological mysteries. Hence, she participated in five archaeological researches in Syria and discovered the intimate link between history and the quality and techniques of pottery in the Middle East.

Most of all, Dorothy is remembered as hardworking and an especially kind, sincere, calm and genuine person. Her professors, students and friends acclaim and praise her soft character. They admire her peaceful serenity and speak of her with earnest nostalgia. To many of her students, she is a role-model. Her work is a clear reflection of her ability to elevate inner feelings and turn them into concrete, hard and beautiful shapes for the eyes to see and the soul to feel. •

(1) Translated from: Francoise Espagnet, "Dorothy Salhab Kazimi : Artiste Du Monde," *La Ceramique Moderne, Journal Technique -Artistic Periodique*, Janvier 1991, No. 343.

(2) Helen Khal, "Dorothy Kazemi" *The woman Artisit in Lebanon*, Beirut: Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1987. p. 141.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 135.

(4) Myra Mirshak, "Mrs. Dorothy Kazemi, First Lebanese Woman Ceramist," *The Daily Star*, Beirut, 1972.

(5) Helen Khal, *Ibid*, p.136.

(6)(7) *Ibid*

A Thank You Note

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, its documentation center at Beirut University College and Al-Raida thank Mrs Marjorie Gallard of San Pedro, CA. for her generous donation of four cassettes of great American women's speeches.

The cassettes include speeches of Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Ernestine Rose, Lucy Stone and "Pioneer Daughter: Journal of Elenore Plaisted", "The Homesteader: Letters of Elinor Pruitt Steward" and others.

We consider these cassettes valuable collectors' items to be added to our Documentation Center.

Thank You.

AL - RAIDA, IWSAW QUARTERLY

YEARLY CONTRIBUTION 1991

LEBANON

P.O.Box 13 - 5053
Beirut University College
Beirut, Lebanon
Cable Address: 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**

Lebanon: L.L. 6000 per year
Other Countries: \$22 per year
plus \$3 to cover postage