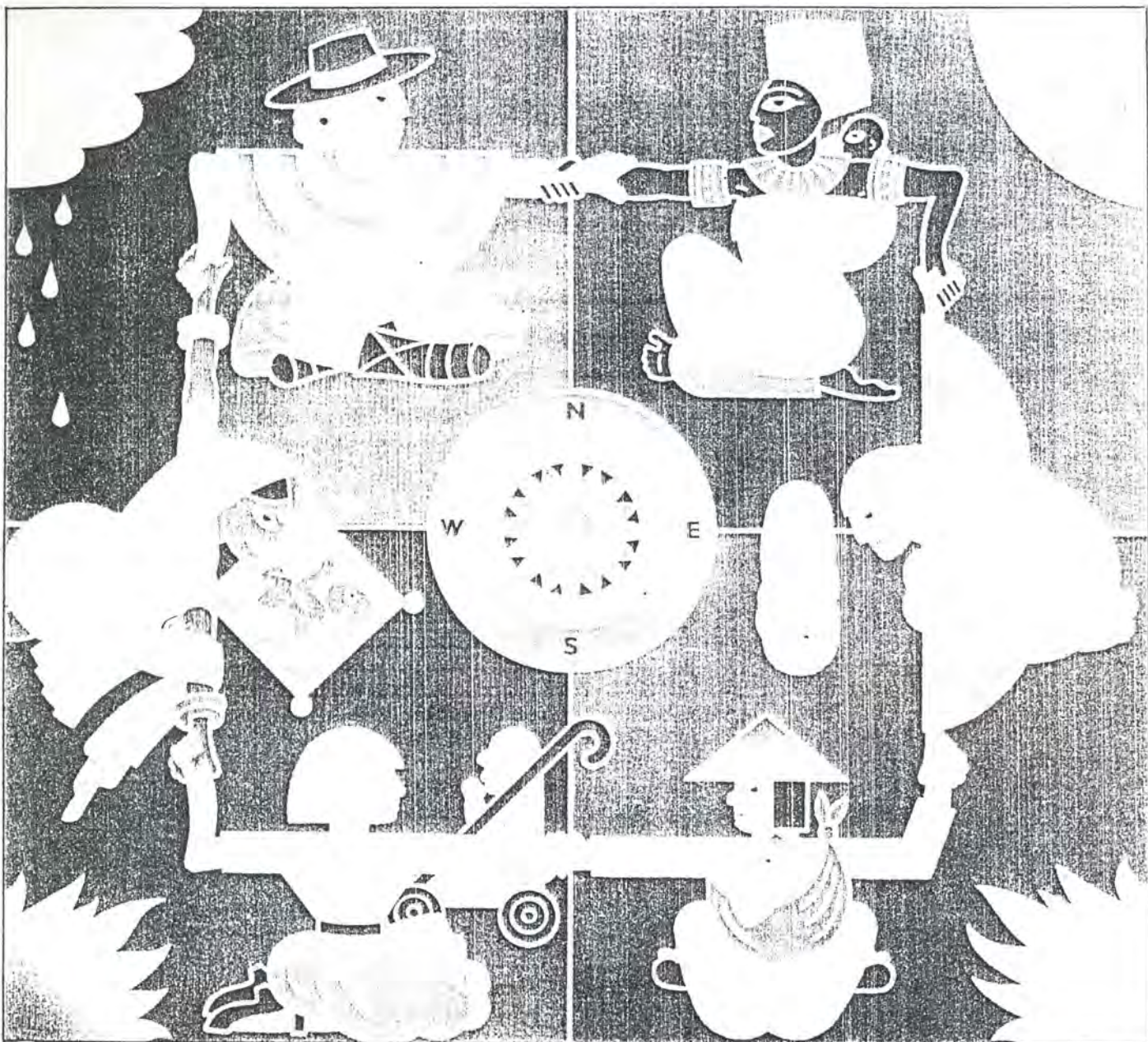




Al-Raida

Women and The Environment



The Seed and the Earth by Dr. Vandana Shiva

Environmental Terrorism in The Gulf

<p>Dr. Nawal Saadawy at BUC on Equality, Rights and Creativity</p>
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Cover picture taken from *Women of The Whole World*, Issue #3 1990, the Journal of The Women's Democratic Federation

Women and The Environment in The Arab World

A decade ago, nobody really worried about the environment, except for a few concerned environmentalists. Their repeated warnings against global warming, the various forms of pollution, the slow extinctions of rare species, health hazards and other environmental problems went without much notice. Global awareness rose only when the danger became real and the consequences were tangibly felt.

The Arab world is no exception. Concern for the environment grew as a result of the ecological disaster and the smoke pollution culminated by the Gulf war. In the Gulf, air and water pollution are, understandably, the most urgent concerns at this time. Consequently, preserving the environment is over and above all other considerations, mostly in the area worse hit (Kuwait). Other regions which did not feel the direct impact of the pollution pay less attention to environmental problems and their effects on people.

Likewise, in Lebanon, environmental awareness rose after the fighting stopped. Thus, people woke from the war to find themselves surrounded by a variety of pollutants. Hence, compounded efforts, publicity, and cleanups are being undertaken by environmentalists and concerned associations. (1)

However, acknowledging the role of women in this matter remains relatively limited in the region, keeping in mind variations between the various countries and the respective degrees of women's participation in national development. Nevertheless, generally speaking, it

would seem that the Arab World has not come around to realizing that **women are the real managers of local environmental resources.** (2). Hopefully, the efforts which are being made to preserve the environment will grow to include a more active and effective role for women at decision-making levels.

The part women play in population-environment issues has been little studied, and more generally, empirical studies of the community use of resources and the impact of environmental degradation on dependent populations are few and far between (3). Hence, most of the research remained largely technical and only recently did researchers and humanitarian organizations begin to concentrate on the social implications of environmental problems.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (4) conducted a number of studies in the area of "Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Change." The research included case studies investigating traditional resource management system (in Africa and Latin America) and environmental activism.

For instance, based on preliminary observations, UNRISD reports that (a) collective action to resist the implementation of environmentally destructive development projects is rarely triggered primarily by an overriding concern to preserve the environment in its existing state, but rather hinges on the lack of sufficient benefits from such projects accruing to local communities. This fact does

not imply that the traditional communities are insensitive to the aesthetic niceties of the surroundings, but rather that they have a desire to survive, and to improve their living levels and consumption levels if possible. (b) The current researches also suggest that the success of environmental movements is often due to their ability to form coalitions with regional, national or international groups which have similar interests, and to publicize their grievances and their cause.

It would seem that the natural trend of things is in reverse. First comes the cause of damage, i.e. an action [war in the case of the Arab World, and technology in the case of the western world (5)] which is independent in itself. It is followed by the aftermath and, thus, hysterical efforts to curtail the destruction and deterioration. Then everybody goes back to business, as usual, and leaves the residue to the consumers of which women form the bulk

Fortunately, there is a growing realization, worldwide, that women are the first to suffer from environmental deterioration and lack of development. For this reason, women appear to be more concerned than men about the state of the Earth and the fate of future generations (6). Women can play special and important roles not only in Environmental protection, but also in conservation and the effective management of different resources

This issue of *Al-Raida* aims at reporting conditions as well as corrective measures for preserving the environment, not only in the Arab World and the Middle East, but on a

Women and the Environment

wider scope. Thus, this issue includes excerpts from papers presented at the Asian Women Institute Triennial Conference entitled "Women in an Age of Technology" which took place in Kobe, Japan in September 1991. These papers discuss controversial perceptions of the role of women in the issue of environment and related technology. On another level, locally active students and scholars also contributed to Al-Raida by sharing information and knowledge they have acquired from their research. In order to contribute to preservation measures, we also present tips and methods for women/men to use in housekeeping chores.

As the saying goes "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness". Hopefully the information, data, ideas and tips presented will serve that purpose •

Randa Abul-Husn

Women tend to be more dependent than men on trees and forests as a source of income, and the money they earn may be critical to the family (Trees for Life)

Worldwide, women produce more than 50 percent of food; in Africa they are responsible for 80 percent. An important proportion comes from trees (Trees for Life).

230 million women in the developing world have malnutrition anaemia (from "Women and the Socio-economic Cultural Environment in Today's World," panel discussion at AWI conference on Women and the Environment in an age of technology).

graphic taken from *Women of the Whole World Issue #1, 1991*, Journal of the Women's International Democratic Federation



The Middle East

October 14, 1992 is the declared date of the Arab Day for The Environment.

October 16, 1992 is the declared international day for the FAO.(Trees for Life, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

An estimated 628 tons/km² of sewage and solid waste material are dumped into the Lebanese shore each year (al-Safir daily newspaper, January 1991)

An electricity generator of one horse power and burning one Kilogram of fuel/hour, commonly used in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern regions and third world countries, leads to: absorbing and burning 18kg of pure air; discharging 3kg of CO₂ and CO; Discharging 2.5 kg of Nitrogen; Discharging varying amounts of Carbon and oils; Generating 60% of the heat to the surrounding air; And increasing noise pollution up to 100 decibel(db) (The Environment in the Media, Lebanese Media Syndicate, 1991) •

(1) See "Industrial Pollution, Agriculture, Farming, Water Pollution, Food, Air" by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr and Rima Zankoul.

(2) Progress Report on UNRISD Activities 1990/1991

(3) Progress Report on UNRISD Activities 1990/1991, Ibid.

(4) The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous institution within the United Nations system established to promote research on the social dimensions of development throughout the world.

(5) See "The seed and the Earth" by Dr. Vandana Shiva, p.

(6) Women News, Published to promote the goals of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

Pollution and Women in an Age of Technology

Abridged from a paper by Dr. Indrani Michael (*)

At the outset it may seem irrelevant to talk about pollution in relation to women and children, especially when environmental issues and relevant crises are global and affect all life forms on earth. However, in reality, these issues and problems do not affect men, women, children and other life forms in the same way. The reasons vary because of the multiplicity of accepted social equality, religious beliefs, role definitions and role expectations of the sexes.

Women, especially those living in the rural areas of Third World countries, play a major role in managing natural resources, such as soil, water, forests and energy. Their (women's) task is largely concentrated in agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to household duties, which makes them the daily managers of the living environment around them. They have profound knowledge of plants, animals and the ecological processes. Consequently, if exploitation of nature is directly related to increase in pollution, then women become the victims of that pollution.

Furthermore, women are the primary victims of any irregularity — socio-economic, political, cultural and others — which affects underprivileged and marginal groups of any society, of which women form a majority. Women's problems and those of the environment are very much interrelated, for both women and the environment are marginalized by existing development policies.

Because of the complex cycles of inappropriate development resulting in environmental degradation, poverty and increase in pollution, the poorest of the poor women and children are

worse hit. They are forced into ways of living which induce further deterioration. It is a double tragedy. The so-called "Third World Women" often have no choice but to exploit natural resources for sustenance and survival. Thereby, they increase pollution, and become, one more time, victims in this vicious cycle.

For instance, Dr. Michael reports a few self-explanatory cases across the world:

1. **Deforestation:** Deforestation is highest in Africa and Asia. Hence, in Togo, West Africa, women gather Dama Dama Mustard seeds from a tree in order to prepare a scarce and expensive sauce. This produce is a major source of income for a significant number of families. However, willful deforestation and environmental pollution affecting the forests in Togo, have reduced the supply of seeds. The consequences are a decrease in family income in addition to high levels of malnutrition among Togolese women and children (1).

2. **Human migration:** Rural-urban migration is a very common phenomenon in Third World countries. Poor, rural families generally move to the city for work and income. Being originally poor they settle in slum areas, which are smelly, infested, short of drinking water, and have unsanitary sewage systems. The women, who migrate with their husbands, are the ones who have to work in these deplorable conditions and become subject to infections, diseases and other health problems.

Such cases are endless. In reality they illustrate how women shape and are being shaped by the environment in the Third World. A healthy environment is, therefore,

fundamental for their survival and for pollution control. Basically, the relationship between women and the environment is cyclical. They are the managers of the environment, from which they expect to replenish their food, water, shelter, fuel, building material, medicines, ingredients and income generating activities. Men enjoy the products of nature prepared by women. This tends to push women towards a more marginal position and to contribute to pollution and destructive factors resulting from intentional and profit oriented technological abuse of the environment.

For Third World women poverty remains at the very core of the problem. Unless poverty of women and families, especially in Third World countries, is dealt with, environmental degradation, increase in pollution and consequent health problems will not be curtailed. "Transfer of equal power to women, to enable them to take control over their own development, both at the top and at grassroot levels, is crucial. Unless an attempt is made to restore their dignity and confidence, allowing them to work as partners, the situation will never change. All other attempts to improve the environment will be futile." (2) •

(*) Abridged from "Pollutions and Women in the Age of Technology" by Dr. I. Michael at the Asian Women Institute (AWI) Triennial conference "Women and the Environment in an Age of Technology", at Kobe College, Japan, September 1991.

Dr. Indrani Michael is the President of the Asian Women's Institute (AWI) and the Principal of Women's Christian College,

(1) Dr. Indrani, source: OXFAM, UK.

(2) Ibid.

The Seed and the Earth

Abridged from a paper by Dr. Vandana Shiva (*)

Dr. Vandana shiva⁽¹⁾ explores the sexuality of creation and procreation in a patriarchal age of technology. Her argument is written using unusual depth of social philosophy that seems hard to follow at first. But in essence, her ideas concentrate on the effects of biotechnology and technological development on the roles of men and women vis-a-vis creation of life. She explains that technological and patriarchal colonization of childbirth for women is similar to the colonization of plant regeneration. In other words, medicine and biotechnology are pretending, although implicitly, to replace woman, thus, reducing her to a passive carrier of life. Similarly in agricultural technology, the Green Revolution paradigm substituted the nutrient cycle of the soil with chemical fertilizers and controlled outputs for the market. In both cases natural cycles of reproduction and production are being invaded. Female roles are being modified and reduced to passivity by making them carriers and experimental grounds.

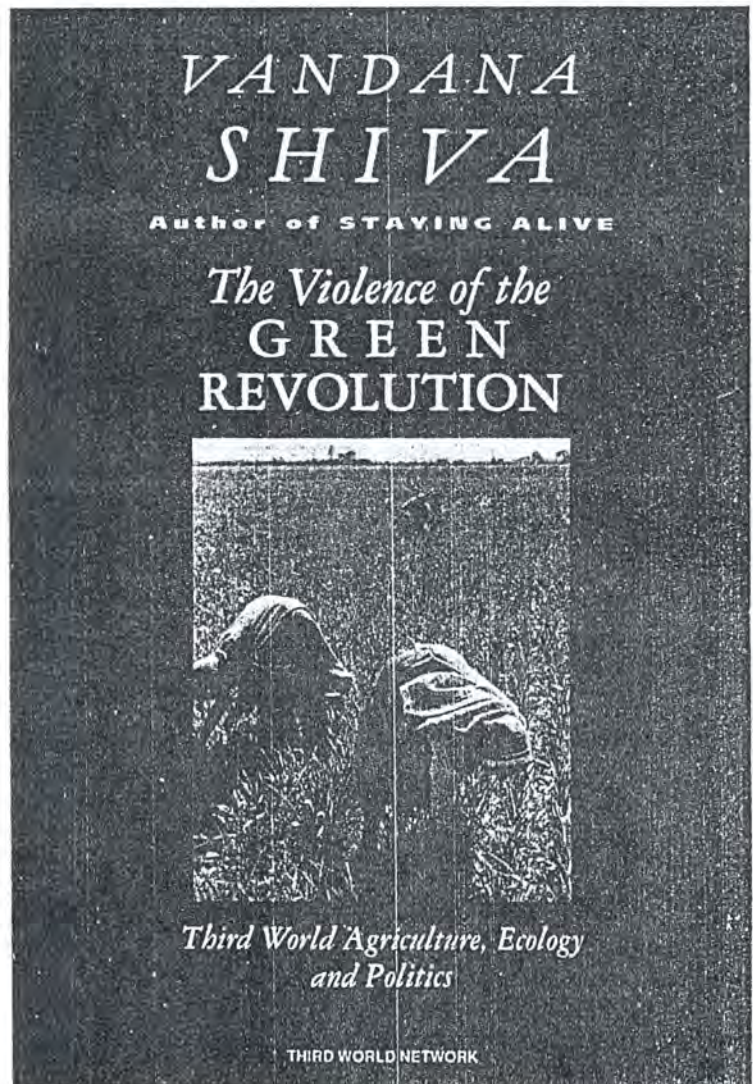
Patriarchal worldviews in all their variations, from the ancient to the modern, from east to west, share one common assumption: they are based on the removal of life from the earth, on the separation of the earth from the seed, and on the association of an inert and empty earth with the passivity of female. The seed and the earth symbolism, therefore, undergoes a metamorphosis when put into a patriarchal mould, and with it are reconstructed gender relations. This non-ecological view has formed the basis of patriarchal perceptions of gender ⁽²⁾.

Hence, Dr. Shiva's paper proves that patriarchy has constructed the

male (the possessor of the seed) as the active principle and the female (the field, earth, i.e. carrier of the seed) as passive, and has used the seed/earth symbolism for creating the division between activity and passivity. She explains that the patriarchal creation boundary allows ecological destruction to be perceived as creation, and ecological regeneration to be perceived as non-creation. Whereas, to sustain life involves, above all, to regenerate life. But in the patriarchal view, to regenerate is not to create, it is merely

o "repeat". The patriarchal paradigm is continuously disassociating women from their bodies and its active role of generating and regenerating life by reserving creativity only to "God like" men.

While the earlier stages of patriarchal division of labor and the creation boundary has created a gender dualism between production and reproduction, creation and procreation, with reproduction and procreation being exclusively female activities; the new biotechnologies,



reproduction too, is moving out of women's control. Recent work on surrogacy and new reproductive technologies substitute women's regenerative capacities with doctors as "producers" and rich infertile couples as "consumers". The consumer's rights then take precedence over those of the woman whose body is being used as a machine. According to Dr. Shiva, the rise of the western medical profession was in essence the rise of male control over women's knowledge and women's bodies.

These new reproductive technologies allow for new levels of invasion into the processes of childbirth. Furthermore, it is the old metaphor of women as the passive field that is renewed with the new technologies. Dr. Shiva illustrates her point by citing a case from Janet Gallagher's report in "Fetus as Patient". Hence in 1981, a (U.S) court order, acting at the request of hospital doctors, ordered that a cesarian be performed on a non-consenting pregnant woman. They said there was a 99 percent chance that the baby could not be born alive vaginally. The court granted temporary custody of the child to a local social service agency. The mother, despite medical predictions and court order, gave vaginal birth to a healthy baby. Hence, according to Dr. Shiva, medical doctors, in this case and many similar ones all over the world, treat their knowledge as infallible and women's knowledge as wild hysteria.

Thus, when women are having children, they are viewed less as a source of human regeneration than as the "raw material" from which the product, the baby, is extracted. What seems significant is that the cesarian section, which requires the most "management" by the doctor and the least "labour" by the uterus and the women, is seen as providing the best product, not to mention that

profit-oriented medical practices perform cesarian section even when it may not be necessary. In the case of *In-vitro-fertilization* (IVF), i.e. test tube babies, an expert committee saw doctors not only as "enablers", but as "taking part in the formation of the embryo itself".

In short, creativity is reserved for God in a male-image. Procreativity is the lot of women.

Profit and power get ultimately linked to the invasion into all biological organisms (3). The Green Revolution, like the biotechnology of reproduction, presupposes that earth (female) is inert or passive. The Green Revolution is essentially based on the "miracle seed" (the active ingredient) which needs chemical fertilizers and which do not produce plants to be returned to the soil for the natural process of recycling nutrients. Hence, the "activity" lay in the "miracle seed" which transcends nature's fertility cycle. Again Dr. Shiva illustrates her point with a quotation from Claude Alvares stating that "For the first time the human race has produced seed that cannot cope on its own, but needs to be placed within an artificial environment for growth and output." (4).

In summary, Dr. Shiva insists that the corporate demand to change a common heritage into a commodity and to treat profits generated through such transformations will lead to erosions of ethics and at the cultural level as well as the political and economic levels for the third world, be it in agriculture or in human reproductive roles.

We wonder whether technological development in reproduction science should be rejected because of its side effects on women who bear the scars,

and stigmas of being used in experimental labs and societies, or should these implications be revisited? Hence, should women be robbed of their innate gift to give and nurture life all in one? Aren't women and men partners in the creation of life with men for neither of them can operate on his/her own? Women's gift of biology and maternity goes beyond fertilization and beyond childbirth into the making of society. Therefore, how far can substituting technology for maternity and motherhood go? *



(*) Abridged from "The Seed and the Earth: Women, Ecology and Biotechnology" by Dr. Vandana Shiva at the Asian Women Institute (AWI) Triennial conference, "Women and the Environment in an Age of Technology", at Kobe College, Japan, September 1991

(1) Dr. Vandana Shiva is the author of the much-acclaimed *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (ISBN 0 86232 822 5, Zed Books) as well as *Ecology and the Politics of Violence* (ISBN 0-8039-9672-1, Sage Publications), and *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics* (ISBN 0 86232 964 7, Zed Books).

Physicist, philosopher and feminist, Dr. Shiva is Director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, Dehradun. She is also the Science and Environment Advisor of the Third World Network.

(2)(3)(4) Ibid.

Industrial Pollution, Agriculture, Farming, Water Pollution, Food, Air in Lebanon

Abridged from a paper by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr and Rima Zankoul (*)

Lebanon is a small country of 10,452 Km², located on the eastern Mediterranean coast. It lies at the intersection of three continents namely Asia, Africa and Europe. It has the four seasons and is rich in a wide variety of geographical features such as mountains, valleys, plains, rivers and lakes, not to mention the beaches surrounding its western boundaries. The Lebanese population estimated at 2,965,000⁽¹⁾ clustered mainly in the large cities especially in Beirut the capital

The last 16 years of war caused the deterioration of the country's infrastructure, the devastation of people's properties and the alteration of their life styles. During the war the Lebanese people were mainly concerned with coping, survival,

safety, securing water, electricity, food supplies and other necessities. Now that peace is settling in, their concerns have shifted to other problems namely environmental ones. Notably, an environment that has been widely neglected and abused for years.

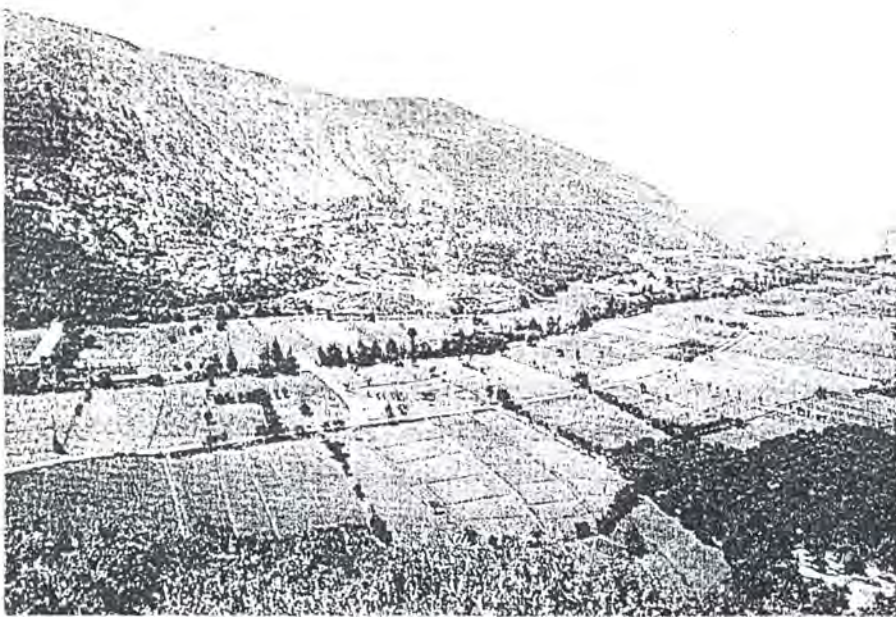
Due to the lack of governmental control, laws have been violated; trees cut; water, air and food polluted.

Noise pollution has increased tremendously. Birds and animals are being shot, the sea violated and garbage dumped everywhere. Furthermore, land degradation is spreading quickly to engulf all of Lebanon. The last swamp (Amiq) in Lebanon is being dried out and no longer serves as a shelter for birds putting them in danger of extinction,

for it is considered one of the major stop-over stations for migrating birds in the Middle East. These sad realities shook the Lebanese out of their indifference. They have come to realize that Lebanon is caught in a very serious state of pollution. Some of the Lebanese are finding it hard to accept the ugly fact that their beautiful green country is turning into a desert.

For the sake of clarity, we shall discuss each specific aspect of pollution separately, such as water, sea, land, air and noise pollution.

Water pollution: The Lebanese war has contributed immensely to water pollution problems, since 1975. "Water transmission mains, reservoirs and distribution systems were subjected to extensive damages in many parts of greater Beirut"⁽²⁾. One of the major problems resulting from the war situation is poor maintenance and repair of distribution systems. Poor maintenance persisted because of the dangers and difficulty of repair-personnel's access to the area where the damage occurs. On the other hand, the usual domestic water shortage was increased because of an extra demand created by the influx of displaced families to large cities such as Beirut and Tripoli. Consequently, the people were forced to drill private wells which tend to be located mostly near the sea shores. Almost all the wells are drilled and used in an unscientific way. "This has led to progressive sea water infiltration into the coastal aquifer with potential risks to users in terms of health and economy"⁽³⁾. Some cases of Cholera, Hepatitis and jaundice were



Taken from Ricardous Michel al-Habr, Tabi'at Lubnan- Bi'at alinsan, mawarid fi tariq alzawal, (Lebanon's Environment- The Human Environment, Resources becoming Extinct),

reported, recently, in North Lebanon. Tests relate causes of such diseases to the pollution of domestic water.

Another factor that contributes to the underground water pollution is the digging of holes for dumping human waste materials. In Lebanon these dumping areas are not constructed according to hygienic and calculated criteria. Liquid wastes penetrate deep into the soil added to the pollution of the wells dug for domestic use. Some farmers even use untreated sewage water to irrigate their land. Needless to say that bacteria and pollutants enter directly into the underground water supply causing a host of health problems.

The second issue related to water is that of the Amiq swamp. This swamp is located in the Beqaa valley. It is a private property with an area of approximately 1700 Hectares which has been reduced to only one Hectare (10,000 m²). "The swamp is unique in all middle eastern countries for its natural ecological system. Hence, it is a natural area which includes hundreds of water plants and animals, most of which are becoming almost extinct due to the draining of water" (4) in order to turn it into an agricultural spot. After the act, it was discovered that the land itself is not fit for agricultural use. Nevertheless, if the swamp is eliminated, the damage will not only affect Lebanon, but the Middle East as well as Africa and Europe. "It has been estimated that more than 2,000,000,000 birds, each year, travel from their breeding grounds in Eurasia to their wintering areas in Africa and back. More than half of these birds traverse the Middle East" (5). The swamp of Amiq also plays an important role in the irrigation of adjacent cultivated land. Hence, by drying it out Lebanon loses an important source of water. Amiq also helps moisturize the Lebanese climate, now, unfortunately, most of the land is changing into a desert. "If

we take the rain-fall average of the last century, we realize that it has dropped from 900 ml to 600 ml affecting mostly coastal areas" (6).

Sea Pollution Lebanon is located on the eastern Mediterranean coast. The Lebanese sea shore is 225 km long. Pollution on the shore is brutally destroying life forms. "An estimated 628,000 Tons/km² of sewage water and solid waste materials are dumped into the sea each year" (7). Pollutants remain in the Mediterranean for decades before being washed away or dissolved, especially because it is a small and closed sea. "Specialists predict that the Mediterranean may become a totally dead sea in the next century, if pollution is not controlled" (8). The Lebanese shore is a good example of a polluted sea because nine major sewage pipes dispose their content in an area 12 km long. "organic wastes in that specific area are estimated at 6 million tons a year which is 7 or 8 times greater than

any other area" (9). As a result, the Lebanese people are suffering from diseases such as meningitis and intestinal problems, in addition to epidermic irritations.

The Mediterranean sea that may look normal on the surface is, in reality, loosing many of its life form because of pollution. "Our shores used to host dolphins, eels, seals, shrimps and many different kinds of fish. Most of these either migrated, are extinct or on their way to extinction" (10). An example of extinct species are sea turtles which lay their eggs on the Lebanese shores. Today they are no longer in sight. As a matter of fact, there is a direct relationship between the decrease in sea turtles and the increase in Jelly fish because Jelly fish are generally eaten by the turtles. In other words, the emigration of turtles, or their extinction from the Lebanese shore caused Jelly fish to survive and propagate safely and easily, leading to harmful effects on swimmers.

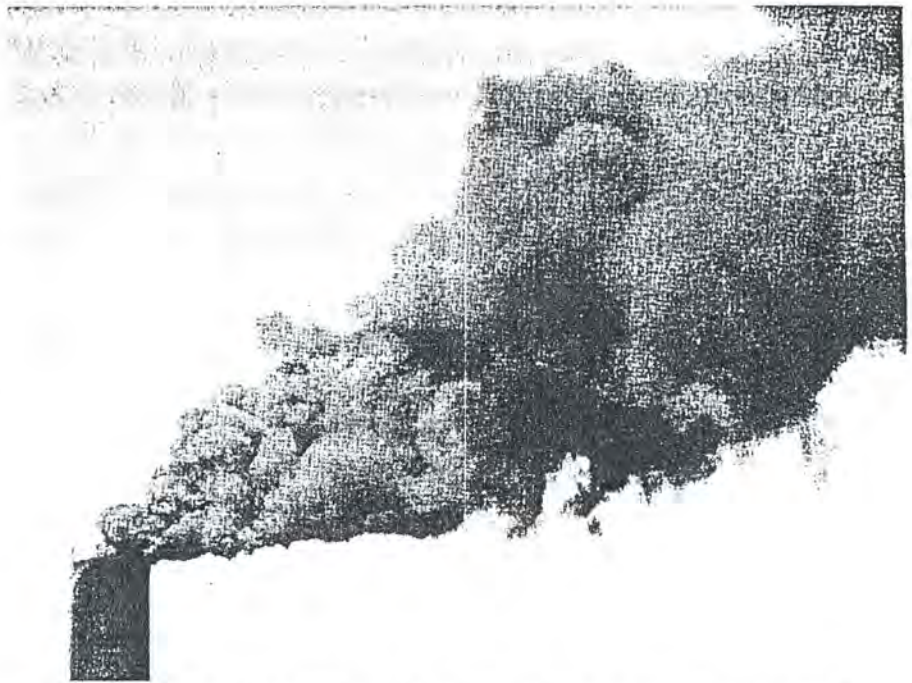


Taken from Ricardous Michel al-Habr, Tabi'at Lubnan- Bi'at alinsan, mawarid fi tariq alzawal, (Lebanon's Environment- The Human Environment, Resources becoming Extinct), Jounieh: Lebanon, P.O.Box 205, 1991

Land Pollution: In Lebanon, rain schedules are usually inconsistent leading to repeated disasters such as flooding or scarcity of water supply. "The slow and continuous decline of natural resources caused by generations who cut forests, misuse agricultural land and cause an increase in herds will sooner or later lead to desertification" (11) Countries characterized by the above features are known for their sensitivity to any ecological change. Like Lebanon the threat is greater in countries surrounded by desert or near one. The soil plays an important role in desertification. Agricultural areas irrigated by underground wells are in danger of saltification as well as decreased fertility. The problem of desertification is growing because of an increase in the degree of land sloping. This increases soil erosion in the mountains leaving it with no green cover.

Another aspect of land pollution is the use of chemical fertilizers and hormones to increase the size, weight and growth of many vegetables, fruits and farm animals. The non-supervised quantities of chemicals being used enter and remain in the human body. With time, these chemicals are transformed into toxic compounds such as Nitrate, causing gastrointestinal disorders and in some cases cancer. Nitrate also interacts with the Hemoglobin in the blood leading to lower Oxygen supply and then causing a series of related diseases. Some of the fertilizers penetrate in the soil and are carried into underground water used by the citizens.

Air and Noise pollution "Air pollution is an ancient problem which goes back to the time when man discovered fuel and began to develop industrial technology" (12). In Lebanon there are more than 1,000,000 vehicles and 2,000,000



Taken from Ricardous Michel al-Habr, *Tab'at Lubnan- Bi'at alinsan, mawarid fi tariq alzawal*, (Lebanon's Environment- The Human Environment, Resources becoming Extinct), Jounieh: Lebanon, P.O.Box 205, 1991

generators which release thousands of Tons of lead, carbon dioxide and harmful gases into the air. Due to the present situation of continuous electricity rationing almost every house has a generator. "The smoke badly affects the kidneys and lead in some cases to cancer" (13).

The causes of air pollution in Lebanon are many. Industries, means of transportation, burning of solid waste materials as well as the domestic use of fuel and coal are some of these causes. Furthermore, "Burning of garbage causes a high degree of pollution leaving the atmosphere full of hydrocarbons and organic flouide resulting from burning plastics" (14)

Generators are the biggest pollution crime of the century in Lebanon. They pollute our air with deadly poisons and increase noise pollution and temperature due to

combustion. Generally speaking, there are 50 generators in each street, each having an average of 50 horsepower. Consequently, 2500 times more pollution is released by each street (15). Noise pollution is also one of the major environmental problems common to most countries.

Studies have shown that noise pollution can negatively affect human mental abilities, their energy and productivity. "Environmental specialists divide noise pollution into 5 different categories: cars, airplanes, industries, building and entertainment. The degree of noise a person can handle without any permanent damage is 90 decibel (db) for 8 hours. The degree of noise pollution in Lebanon is much higher.

Fortunately, while some people remain oblivious and abusers of the environment, others are becoming more aware of these environmental problems through combined efforts

between various academic, educational, and governmental institutions (16). One of the government's proposals is to turn the Amiq swamp into a natural preservation, where animals, birds and humans can survive safely and make use of its richness. Series of proposals are being studied in order to take the proper action towards preserving the beautiful Lebanese nature and its important natural resources.

The basic methods used to create public awareness are: lectures, seminars, T.V. spots and programs, fairs, cleaning campaigns and press releases. Academic institutions such as Beirut University College, the School of Public Health of the American University of Beirut, the Kaslik University and others, sponsor and organize lectures, seminars and environmental fairs to combat pollution. On another hand, numerous seminars, conferences and round tables, were sponsored by international relief organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP and Frederick Ebert Association.

The visual media plays an important role in exposing environmental problems. Scientific documents are broadcasted to introduce different pollution problems in a real and objective way. People tend to understand, react and become aware of the things they see.

T.V. programs and spots, films, animated songs and advertisements, slides and documentation are presented to educate the people irrespective of their social, economic or educational status. This approach allows the message to reach the majority of people. One of the important points of the visual aid show is to show the extent of pollution, by referring to the before and after the war environmental condition. When the present peaceful

atmosphere started to prevail, the Lebanese noticed that their city had become loaded with garbage and waste materials scattered on every corner of every street. Seeing the unbelievable ugliness, pollution, and diseases being caused, municipality officials began a national campaign to educate the people and clean the streets. Hence, they designated a time schedule for garbage collection. This systematic schedule has already contributed to reducing pollution, creating health consciousness and improving the esthetics of the once beautiful city of Beirut.

Women are highly active in this area but few publicize their involvement. Mrs. Zeina Serhal, a fine Art teacher at Beirut University College is the person in charge of directing and organizing ecological programs on national T.V. She made a number of documentaries to show how people pollute their own environment. The Humanities Division at the College also gave a series of lectures to promote environment awareness. The Institute for Women's Studies in The Arab World at Beirut University College in cooperation with the Natural Science Division and the Geology Department of the American University of Beirut are planning a conference entitled Arab Women and the Environment as well as a series of environmental activities for the coming year*

(*) Abridged from "Industrial Pollution, Agriculture, Farming, Water Pollution, Food, Air" by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, the Director of the Institute for Women's studies in the Arab World and Rima Zankoul, research assistant at the Institute. the paper was presented at the Asian Women Institute's (AWI) Triennial conference, "Women and the Environment in an Age of Technology", at Kobe College, Japan, September 1991

(1) UNITED NATIONS, The situation of women 1990 chart, USA 1990.

(2) Zurayk, H., Armenian, H. and Bryce, J. Beirut: 1984. A Population and Health profile. American University of Beirut press, 1984.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ricardous Michel al-Habr, Tabl'aat Lubnan- Bi'at allinsan, mawarid fi tarq alzawal, (Lebanon's Environment- The Human Environment, Resources becoming Extinct), Jounieh: Lebanon, P.O.Box 205, 1991

(5) Society For Protection Of Nature and Natural Resources in Lebanon. Birds Migrating Visitors Protect Them!, Poster, Beirut Lebanon.

(6) Al Afkar 27 may 1991, # 461.

(7) Al Saffir. 11 Jan 1991 page 4.

(8) Ibid

(9) Ibid

(10) Ibid

(11) Ricardous Haber, Ibid, p. 102.

(12) The Federich Ebert Foundation and the The Media Syndicate, 'Alm alBi'a fi Wasa'il al'Ilam, (Environmental Education in the Media), Lebanon: P.O.Box 73.

(13) Al Hasnaa, 8-22 Feb. 1991 # 1456-1457 page 12.

(14) Federich Ebert Foundation, Ibid

(15) Ibid pages 82-83.

(16) See section entitled Worldwide Efforts in this issue of Al-Raida



Environmental Terrorism in the Arab Gulf (*)

In the list of active agencies and networks, women are absent. In fact, there is no literature or report to suggest the involvement of women in the ecological disaster of the Gulf, ironically, not in the making of the disaster nor in the repairs. For how long will women remain uninvolved? Aren't they as much a victim of the pollution?

The matter is strictly in the hands of international and local firms which are headed by men. Furthermore, the experts on the field are strictly men since women and men are segregated in the work place. Although the information which was gathered on the environmental conditions of the Gulf area exclude women, we feel they (women) are, nevertheless, interested in knowing what happened.

Saudi Arabia

It is the biggest oil slick in history and experts say the devastation it will cause to industry and wildlife will go unprecedented (1). The slick was estimated to be 11million barrels stretching in areas up to 60 miles (96km) long and 10 miles (16km) wide in the northern Arabian Sea. With a depth of six inches it moved like pack ice because of the debris it collected. Two additional smaller spills, one near the Saudi Arabian border town of Khafji and another near the Mina Al Bakr oil terminal off Iraq, brought the polluted area to approximately 85 miles long.

Birds are not the only unfortunate victims consumed by the huge swathe of oil. Fish, turtles, dolphins and an estimated population of 7,000 dugongs are in danger as well. About one million migratory birds flock to the western Arabian Gulf area yearly. Saudi Arabia is spreadheading the international efforts to handle the

disastrous spill. Agencies such as the Meteorological and Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) have coordinated with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretaries and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the US Coast Guard, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) among other environmentally concerned countries.

Kuwait

The gravest incident, yet, is the oil smoke from 500 well fires which hang in thick black pall over Kuwait City. By early March, the smoke formed a cloud around 600km long, blocking out the sunlight over an area of between 10,000 and 15,000 square meters (2). The temperature of the Earth's surface beneath the thick cloud was already 10 degrees Centigrade lower than normal. Experts predicted that after thirty days or so of burning, the area covered would be approximately four million square kilometers.

The side effects on humans and other life forms are toxic. Kuwaiti oil is rich in sulphur. Four million barrels a day burning for one year are

estimated to produce several million tons of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere, which combined with the nitrogen oxides in the smoke, will produce millions of tons of acid rain. Fire fighters put out the fire in less than one year, thus, reducing the additional pollution and damage expected in the preliminary estimates.

The facts remain. The Kuwaitis complained of the thick smoke which put the City into darkness at noon. In addition to severe pollution, agriculture lands suffer from acid rain. The effects in lush fruit and grain producing regions, such as Asir in Saudi Arabia is disastrous. A research told *The Middle East* and we quote: "Every effort is being made to minimize the short term damage but that is the easy part, we can see what the short term damage is. For the long term-who knows, I don't believe anyone can be certain just what we are going to be up against in 10, 20, or 30 years."

The ecological disaster caused by the gulf war underlines the urgent need for international action to prevent attacks against the environment. Furthermore, the damage is bound to reach people across the continents directly, by affecting the climate and natural resources, and indirectly, from the imports of polluted goods and food products. Either way, women being the managers and consumers of these goods will be among the first to be touched •



(*) Excerpts from *The Middle East*, a regional magazine, March, April and August 1991 issues.

(1) Miriam Amic, "Environmental Terrorism", *The Middle East*, March 1991, p.13.

(2) Pat Lancaster, "Mosaic: Kuwait's Ecological Timebomb", *The Middle East*, April, 1991, p.44.

Environmental Degradation in Developing Countries: The Plight and Potential Role of Women

By Maya Abdel Rahim

The past two decades have witnessed a growing awareness of and concern with the ever-increasing magnitude of environmental problems, laying bare the societies and government's incomplete understanding of these problems and their inability to deal with them effectively. Amongst the more familiar manifestations of serious environmental degradation are high concentrations of pollutants, large scale build-up of Co₂, desertification, and the depletion of non-renewable as well as renewable resources⁽¹⁾.

The presence of such symptoms in a developing Third World country would directly imply a tenfold dimension to the problem of environmental degradation. One aspect of this multifaceted problem is the fact that women play critical economic roles that have lasting environmental degradation, especially if they are living in rural areas: It is there that women are the main procurers, users and managers of natural resources, and as such they are especially affected by the deterioration of the physical environment. This particularly applies to the women of the more awkward of the developing countries where

it is they who have to walk further and further each year to fetch firewood from the dwindling woodlands; they who must search for hours for a stretch of unpolluted water; they who must cope with the effects of environmental degradation and pollution on their own and their family's health⁽²⁾.

However it is in both rural and urban

areas that women use water and other resources more than men. In Third World societies, women are actively trained to acquire basic resource management skills and hence are in more direct contact with changes in the environment⁽³⁾.

The two biggest environmental problems that face women living in rural areas are (1) resource depletion and (2) pollution. Women rarely have any say in major decisions or development projects that directly affect their environment and their resource needs: some projects, whether commercial or developmental, have depleted important resource bases on which many essential productive activities depend. For example, women are affected by deforestation since they are the primary gatherers of fuelwood⁽⁴⁾. Moreover, women are exposed to different health threats than men because of their separate daily responsibilities: smoke emitted from burning fuelwood, charcoal or dung for cooking can cause serious eye and respiratory diseases. In the later case, the smoke inhaled has, in some case studies, been estimated to have the same effects as smoking several packs of cigarettes a day. Apart from these specific health threats, women are generally more physiologically sensitive to pollutants than men because of their child bearing role⁽⁵⁾.

The interaction between women living in rural areas of developing countries and the environmental problems facing them can neatly be summed up in the following formula: The worsening plight of these women is directly proportional to the rate of environmental

degradation. Hence, improving the lot of such women would necessarily involve the alleviation and eventual solution of environmental problems.

What is needed, then, is "environmental management": scientifically speaking, the term refers to conscious, strategic decisions as opposed to habitual, unconscious actions, which guide the exploitation, development, conservation or protection of environmental resources⁽⁶⁾. However, if environmental management is to be a workable solution in the present context, then it would have to go beyond the realm of this definition to include the human aspect of the problem i.e the female aspect in our case. Tackling such a task would, therefore, require not merely careful planning and concerted action by both government bodies and the rural people, but also the involvement (and recognition) of women as key agents for the "primary environmental care"⁽⁷⁾ that is needed for sustained development •

(1) Sally Macgill, "Environmental Questions and Human Geography", *Environmental Awareness*, 38 (#3, 1986), pg. 357-368.

(2) Nafis Sadck (ed.), "New Sources of Insecurity: Environmental Instability," *Investing In Women: The Focus of the 90's*, New York: UNFPA Publications, 1991, P.11.

(3) *World Economic Survey, 1991*, New York: UN Publications, 1991, p.195.

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics, 1979-1990*, New York: UN Publications, 1991, p.75.

(6) Macgill, *Ibid.*, p.370.

(7) *World Economic Survey, Ibid.*

Worldwide Efforts

Global Assembly on Women and the Environment

The Global Assembly on Women and the Environment: Partners in Life was held in Miami, Florida, from 4 to 8 November, 1991. The four subject areas were water, waste, energy (as it relates to climate changes) and environmentally friendly systems, technology and products. Over 325 success stories from the five geographical regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America) were presented at the Assembly. The Division for Advancement of Women (UN) participated and contributed in the area of women and leadership.

The Assembly was followed by the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, held on 8-12 November 1991 in Miami, Florida, which had been organized by the International Policy Action Committee on Environment and Development. The Congress featured tribunals, with a panel of distinguished women jurists. The judges heard dramatic testimonies from women in every region of the world presenting evidence of their battles against ecological and economic devastation.

Women and Children First

A symposium on the impact of environmental degradation and poverty on women and children entitled "Women and Children First", was held in Geneva from 27 to 31 May 1991. It had been organized by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The participants adopted a statement in which they requested that gender issues be addressed at the conference as a distinct topic, in addition to being integrated horizontally into all discussions, and that the recommendations of the symposium, as well as those emanating from the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment: Partners in Life and the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet.

Greenpeace International



Greenpeace is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the natural world. The organization actively campaigns on a wide range of issues under the four main campaign areas of Nuclear, Toxics, Atmospheric and Ocean Ecology. Greenpeace co-ordinates its campaigns on national, regional and international levels. For more information and contribution contact: Stichting Greenpeace Council, Greenpeace International, Kiezersgracht 176, 1016 DW Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Conference of La Communauté Des Universités Méditerranéennes (C.U.M) (*) The Community of Mediterranean Universities

Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean: A Violation of Marine Laws

The faculty of Law of the St. Joseph University, Kaslik in Byblos, Lebanon organized a three day conference to discuss Marine Pollution and the violation of Marine Laws in the Mediterranean on July 4-5 and 6, 1991. The papers presented discussed Marine Laws; The various forms of marine pollution; The ecological condition of the Near East Mediterranean region; Solid waste disposal on the Lebanese shores; Lebanese and International laws regarding pollution; Unification of regulations in Mediterranean waters and legal protective measures; and Education for a better environment.

The conference emphasized the implementation of International and United Nations articles, rules and regulations passed in three global conventions for protecting the Mediterranean and which have been signed by 17 Mediterranean countries. The relevant articles and laws were declared at the Convention for Protecting the Mediterranean Against Pollution held in Barcelona in 1976; Measure for Cleaning up Pollution produced by sea vessels discussed in Athens on May 17, 1980 and Protection of the Air of the Mediterranean emphasized in Geneva on April 3, 1982.

(*) C.U.M is a non-governmental, cultural and scientific organization whose aim is to reinforce and develop the role of culture, research and technology in promoting peace and collaboration between people and to establish permanent links between universities in the Mediterranean area. The member countries are Lebanon (St. Joseph University, Kaslik [USEK]), Egypt, France and Italy, from which papers from at least three universities are presented in each research project.



Picture taken from CUM Brochure

Newly Available from the International Center for Research on Women

Women, Poverty and Environment in Latin America. by Michael Paolisso and Sally W. Yudelman, 1991, \$6.00. The report explores the ways by which women in the region contribute to protecting natural resources and the environment. This report identifies how local organizations are supporting women's environmental efforts and offers specific recommendations for donor support in solving the dual problems of persistent poverty and environmental degradation in Latin America by enhancing women's environmental roles. This report is available by contacting: Program Assistant, ICRW, Suite 302, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington DC 20036, tel.(202) 797-0007 or Fax (202) 797-0020.

Environmental Fair at AUB

An environmental Fair was held on the campus of the American University of Beirut in the summer of 1991. The fair was organized by the students of the Environmental Health and Nutrition branch of the School of Public Health and the Department of Geology, and coordinated. The fair, which was coordinated by Dr. May Jurdi, consisted of booths each concentrating on a particular aspect of environmental awareness. Women had a significant share of the action. Hence, a number of booths catered to women giving them tips and instructions in proper housekeeping habits. For example, they concentrated on methods of water filtration, cooking temperatures, safe ways to store and protect food, means of maintaining a healthy kitchen and kitchenware. In the geology booth, the students presented information and displayed a number of photographs depicting the conditions of the shores and the land.

For three days the fair was publicized in the media and made open to the general public. The overall purpose of the fair and the way it was organized was to reach the public with information, instructions and awareness. The methods of presentation using audio-visual material and very simple language emphasized the practical goal and scope of the event •



Environmentally Active Groups in Lebanon

Dr. Mohamad Khawli, Chairperson of the Department of Geology at the American University of Beirut is active in the efforts to save the environment. Dr. Khawli's activities, which range from attending conferences to taking an active part in action groups, continuous research and others, can be summarized as creating awareness and motivating people to protect their environment. Presently, Dr. Khawli is responsible for the Lebanese chapter of the International campaign for collecting "100 milion" signatures from around the world for the "Mandate for Life on Earth". Hence a copy of the mandate's signature page is enclosed in this issue for you to sign and to distribute to friends and acquaintances for signature. Once your page and other photocopied ones are filled, please mail directly to the Geology Department of The American University of Beirut, Box 11-0236, Beirut, Lebanon.

Dr. Ricardos Michel Haber is another prominent figure in the area of protecting the environment. He is the founder and Director of the "Friends of the Environment Association" since 1971, which is active in field activities and promoting environmental awareness. Dr. Haber is also professor of science at the American University of Beirut. The contributions of the Association and Dr. Haber include lectures to students at the various universities, schools and associations throughout the country. The lectures discuss the natural resources of Lebanon, civic and environmental education, public health, protection and preservation of the environment. Environmental issues are also channeled through talk shows, media coverage and photographic exhibitions depicting important environmental conditions and issues. Dr. Haber has also published a number of articles and lately, in 1991, a book entitled *Tabi'aat Lubnan ...Bi'at al-Insan: mawarid fi tariq al Zawal (The Nature of Lebanon ...an Environment for Humans: Resources on the Way to Extinction)*. Dr. Ricardos Haber ca be contacted at P.O.Box 123, Jounieh, Lebanon or through the Department of Biology at the American University of Beirut •

Technology

Acid Rain will cost Europe 155 million cubic yards of wood, worth \$30 billion, every year for the next century. (New Scientific, and World Watch.)

Forty-two of Sub-Saharan Africa's 46 countries required food aid in 1990; 14 of them still did not receive enough to meet their minimum requirements (FAO).

One fourth of the world's extinctions of mammals recorded since 1600 have taken place in Australia. Almost half of the continent's surviving mammals are threatened with extinction (Australian Conservative Foundation).

Levels of Hydrogen in the air have more than doubled since pre-industrial times, from around two hundred parts per billion to more than 500. The additional hydrogen -- most likely resulting from burning vegetables and the release of methane through farming and livestock rearing -- could be contributing to stratospheric ozone loss through its role in cloud formation at the poles (Nature).

Global carbon dioxide emissions declined slightly in 1990, for the first time since 1983. The two main reasons for the fall were the recession in North America and the collapse of energy-intensive industries in East Europe and the Soviet Union. Another decline is possible this year (British Petroleum (BP) Review of World Energy).

1990 was the first year in the 35-year history of commercial nuclear power that no new construction began on a nuclear power plant. Only three were expected in 1991. (International Atomic Energy Agency).

The Environment

Nature has provided enough for everybody but not enough for one man's greed (Ghandi)

Poverty is one of the main causes of many environmental in developing countries (Tress for Life).

Over the last 5,000 years we've cleared 60 percent of the world's forest. In the last 40 years alone, Africa lost 23 percent of its forests and Central America, 38 percent (The Almanac of Science and Technology).

The global average temperature for 1990 was the highest ever recorded. The seven warmest years since 1880 have occurred in the past 11 years (Goddard Institute for Space Studies).

An average global temperature rise of 2-5 degrees centigrade during the next century is predicted. (Trees for Life).

Warming will be greatest in the polar regions, possibly by as much as 5-10 degrees centigrade in high latitudes (trees for Life).



Taken from Trees for life, theme of the World Food Day, Food and The Agriculture organization of the UN.

Tips

The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle will light a 100-watt bulb for four hours (50 Simple Things you can do to Save Your Earth, The Earthworks Group, Earthworks Press, 1989).

Recycling one ton of paper saves three cubic yards of landfill space and 7,000 gallons of water needed to make paper from scratch (Save our Planet by Diane MacEachern, Dell Press 1991).

It costs about 40 percent less to refill a "disposable" laser printer cartridge than to buy a new one. You can reuse most cartridges three to six times before adding them to the 14 million we're now sending off to landfills each year (The Recycler's handbook by the Earthworks Group, Earthworks Press, 1990).

Glazing office windows with transparent low emulsive film reduces the amount of ultraviolet rays from sunlight so the space stays 20 to 50 percent cooler (Save Our Planet, Ibid)

Indoor plants clean air naturally--they can remove up to 87 percent of toxic indoor air, including such dangerous pollutants as formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene, within 24 hours (The Green Consumer Letter).

A single 18-watt compact fluorescent bulb produces the same amount of light as a 75-watt incandescent bulb and last 13 times as long, saving generating capacity at the power station as well as the cost of replacing the bulb (Design for Livable Planet by Jon Naar, HarperCollins 1990). •

Everyone's Guide to Toxic in the Home

Many of these substitutes are as effective as and usually cheaper to use than the chemical products available today.

ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER

Mild mixture:

- 1 gallon (4L) hot water
- 1/4 C (50ml) sudsy ammonia
- 1/4 C (50ml) vinegar
- 1 T (15ml) baking soda

This solution is safe for all surfaces, can be rinsed with water, and is very effective for most jobs. For a stronger cleaner or wax stripper, double the amounts of all ingredients except water. Use gloves, and do not mix with other compounds, especially chlorine bleach. *(Never mix ammonia and bleach: an extremely toxic gas is produced)*

CARPETS

To fully clean and deodorize carpets, mix 2 parts cornmeal with 1 part borax. Sprinkle liberally, leave one hour, then vacuum. For tougher stains, repeatedly blot with vinegar in soapy water. For red wine spills, blot with white wine and warm soapy water. Quickly deodorizing is easy if you sprinkle the carpet with baking soda, then vacuum.

MIRRORS, GLASS AND WINDOWS

Wash with simple soap and water; rinse with a solution of 1 part vinegar and 4 parts water. Or rub newspaper on the glass. Or use a spray bottle and a mixture of 1/2 C (120ml) ammonia, 1/8 C (25ml) vinegar, and a quart (1 L) of warm water (the warmer the water, the faster the evaporation).

AIR FRESHENER

Put cloves and cinnamon in boiling water, simmer. Leave opened box of baking soda in room, in refrigerator or garbage. Grow house plants which are an excellent source for air purification.

POLISHES

Furniture polish: Mix 1 tsp. lemon oil in 1 pint mineral oil, for an oily polish

Polishing Cloth: Melt 1/4 C (50ml) paraffin (wax) and 1/4 C (50ml) vinegar together in a double boiler. Soak a dusting rag in the mixture for 1/2 hour, then squeeze and hang to dry.

Floor polish: Melt 1/8 C (25ml) paraffin in a double boiler. Add 1 quart (1 L) mineral oil and a few drops of lemon essence. Apply with a rag, allow to dry, and polish.

Polishing metals

Silver: Soak silver in 1 quart warm water containing 1 tsp. baking soda, 1 tsp. salt, and a piece of aluminum foil. Or polish with a paste of wood ash and water.

Copper: Lemon juice and salt, or hot vinegar and salt.

Chrome: Rubbing alcohol, or a small amount of ammonia with hot water. Also try white flour in a dry rag.

Brass: Equal parts salt and flour, with a little white vinegar

DISHES

Set aside your dish detergent, and dissolve soap flakes in hot water. Add some vinegar to the water for tough grease.

OVEN CLEANER

Use baking soda for scouring. Leave 1/4 cup of ammonia in a dish in the oven overnight to soften spills, scrub the oven the next day with baking soda and save the ammonia to use again.

LINOLEUM FLOOR CLEANER

Mop with 1 cup white vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water to remove dull, greasy film.

BATHROOM CLEANING

Use a firm-bristled brush with

either baking soda and hot water or the mild all-purpose cleaner.

LAUNDRY

The best alternative for cleaning your clothes is, soap.

Another recipe in place of detergent is: Add 1/3 C (80ml) washing soda to water as machine is filling. Add clothes. Add 1 1/2 C (375 ml) of soap. If the water is hard, add 1/4 C (50ml) soda or 1/4 (50ml) vinegar during the first rinse. *Test each of the following on your fabric first. If it starts to discolor, neutralize the cleaning agent immediately. Acids (lemon juice and vinegar) neutralizes alkalies (baking soda and ammonia), and alkalies neutralizes acids. Wash after application*

For Heavy Oils: Rub with solution of 2 T (30ml) washing soda in 1 C (250 ml) warm water.

Soiled Diapers: Presoak in 3 T (45ml) baking soda dissolved in warm water in either tub or washing machine.

Fruit and Wine: Immediately pour salt or hot water on the stain and soak in before washing.

Grease: Pour boiling water on stains and follow with dry baking soda. Or try ammonia and water.

Ink: Soak in milk or remove with hydrogen peroxide.

blood: Soak in cold water or remove with hydrogen peroxide. For a more stubborn stain, mix cornstarch, talcum powder, or cornmeal with water and apply to the mixture. Allow to dry and brush away.

Coffee: Mix egg yolk with lukewarm water and rub on stain.

Chewing-gum: Rub with ice. Gum will flake off.

Lipstick: Rub with cold cream or shortening and wash with washing soda.

Rust: Saturate with sour milk (or lemon juice) and rub with salt. Place in direct sunlight dry, then wash. *

Source: Greenpeace International

Women in Education and Work in Beirut

*By Dr. Gladys Saade Azar
Review and translation of summary
by Nayla Khodr Hamadeh*

Recently, Dr. Gladys Saadeh Azar completed her Ph.D in Sociology at the Sorbonne University in Paris. The following article is a brief summary of her Doctoral Dissertation. Her work was based on a field study conducted in Beirut concerning the relationship between education and work among women in Beirut.

This summary presents the situation of female education in Lebanon, identifies the research problem of the study and reports the findings which were reached.

Female education in Lebanon has made significant progress since independence. Generally speaking, there has been a general favorable trend for women education, despite the regional differences. Nevertheless, Beirut played the leading role. In 1982-1983, female participation on the national level reached a point where it exceeded its male counterpart.

Education and work, however, are still not directly linked. Married females and mothers tend to leave their work after a certain age or when they reach a certain financial situation. At the same time, the fields of educational specializations of women are more inclined towards literary and cultural areas which generate jobs that are easy to quit.

At the beginning, the education of girls was a privilege of the upper social classes. It was considered a symbolic achievement, furthermore,

elevating their girls' economic and social status. Following the democratization of education and its propagation among females, it acquired a new value, which added to its social value: Education acquired an economic (materialistic) function and it became a source of security for young females.

The study conducted aimed at closely examining the attitudes, behaviors and reflections of a group of young females between the age of 23 and 27, who got their "brevet"(1) between the years 1970-1973. The research sample was taken from different schools in Beirut. Beirut was chosen as the sample location because of its important economic and cultural character, which perpetuates a functional role of work. The research followed-up on the respondents' activities and tried to examine what they have done out of the studies they completed, i.e. whether they were working, and if so, what kinds of jobs they held. It even looked into the accommodations they made for their professional careers.

The results of the study can be summarized as follows: In a sample of 182 females, 64 percent continued their secondary school education, whereas 36 percent dropped out after middle school. The reasons they gave for dropping out were either linked to the financial situation of the family (51%), marriage (33%) or to failure at school (16%). Those who continued their studies explained their perseverance either as a "love for culture" (71%) or as a more materialistic aim, notably better jobs

(15%). Among them 67 percent pursued university education while 26 percent dropped out at the secondary level.

While 89.5 percent worked at a one time or another, only 63 percent of the sample were working at the time of the study. Thus, we notice that a large majority did work and those who dropped out explained that they did so because of the difficulty of coping with the multiplicity of roles for a woman, such as having to be a worker, a mother and a housewife.

Among those who were still working, 92 percent were satisfied with their work, although 52 percent of these were ready to quit. This contradiction might be more circumstantial than real because women feel that their jobs are secondary to their role of wife and mother.

Concerning the fields of work of the respondents, 47 percent were secretaries, 35 percent were teachers and 14 percent held jobs in business administration. Hence, the 82 percent representing the first two categories held jobs in traditionally accepted occupations for females. Thus, work for women has become part of the accepted social norms of Beirut. Work is more intense among non-married women with a strong tendency to quit once married. Yet, the professions they engage in remain mostly "feminine" professions.

Because women's status is still

Tradition versus Modernity: Urban Southern Sudanese Women

By John-Gay N. Yoh (*)



(*) Mr. Yoh is a Sudanese student working on his Master's degree in Political Science at the American University of Beirut.

largely linked and dependent on that of their husbands, they (women) tend to consider their own professional activity as being marginal. Work is not considered a fundamental condition for participation in society or for self-realization. Work is easily dropped in favor of the traditional roles of mother and wife, anytime it creates conflicts.

Thus, the general tendency among the respondents is **Yes for education, Maybe for work**, depending on its compatibility with more traditional values. However, the present economic crisis has made work and employment an obligation for women in order to help the family's financial needs. The consequences are bound to produce a new social reality •

(1) The brevet degree is part of the Baccalaureat system of education. It is the degree the student gets at the end of the middle school in order to qualify and be able to pursue his secondary education.

Iraqi Men Free to Kill Adulteress Kins

Iraqi men can now kill their mothers, wives, or daughters who have committed adultery without fear of legal prosecution, according to a decree endorsed at the end of Iran-Iraq war, by Iraqi authorities (1). "Any Iraqi who kills niece or his cousin on his father's side, for adultery, will not be brought to justice," The weekly Al-Ithad quoted the decree. It said Iraqi men would also not be prosecuted for killing the lovers of their women relatives. "If the act of adultery takes place in the family home".

If such killings are carried out outside the family home, an Iraqi man will be sentenced to prison and will no longer face the death penalty according to the decree. The Revolutionary Command Council said the new decree would "protect society against vice while promoting virtue and morality."

Based on informal sources we were told that the so-called common justifications for this law claims to supervise a large majority of Iraqi women whose husbands have been at war for so long, leaving them with Asian and Egyptian male caretakers and servants to tend to their domestic needs.

Such a law is a cruel violation of human rights and explicit discrimination against women •

(1) Produced from: The Nations, 14/3/90, Pakistan

Thirty years ago, it was impossible for a researcher to discuss views pertaining to women's rights in this part of the world. In fact, it was irrational to speak of any rights for women, for there was no such thing as women's rights.

Southern Sudanese society, like many African societies, is typically traditional/tribal, governed by restricting norm and customs. Women were/are confined to family and domestic duties such as raising children, cooking, cleaning and farming. It was not possible for a woman to think of herself as equal to a man. Concepts of social equality, social justice and liberation were unheard of in Southern Sudan.

Hence, it seems that women's rights saw the light in the 1960s

when formal schooling for women became official. Primary schools for girls were opened in the early 1950s and 1960s; and intermediate and secondary schools followed a while later. However, legislative action on the expansion of the educational system did not, necessarily, entail enrollment of all the girls who wished to go to school. In fact, enrollment was largely and directly related to demographic factors, especially urban population. For instance, the female students were limited to the children and relatives of city residents and government officials. Thus, enrollment was bound to increase or decrease depending on the degree of rural to urban migration. Furthermore, the female students, who received a formal education, were later recruited by the government as clerks, secretaries, teachers or they joined nursing training centers to become professional nurses.

Southern Sudan, on another hand, experienced a dramatic change at all levels, due to an intellectual awakening, which included women in the public sector, in the 70s. Following the peace settlement in 1972, Southern Sudan was granted local autonomy and a loose decentralized government. The new government proceeded to inaugurate new schools for girls, especially secondary schools. Consequently, females got a regular and formal education, and began participating more directly and actively in all aspects of life. Hence, female secondary school teachers increased in number and others Sudanese women participated in politics. Some of them were elected to Parliament in the mid 70s and became the available medium through which other women were recruited to professions in the public and private sectors

Nevertheless, traditional sex roles and customs for women persist to our very day. For instance, traditional roles of wife, mother, housekeeper, act as prerequisites for the success or acceptance of a Sudanese woman in any public occupation or profession. Being a descent, loyal and respected housewife are essential elements in her career, regardless of how irrelevant they may be for her and for her family. Consequently, the career oriented South Sudanese woman experiences significant difficulties trying to cope with traditional expectations and the demands of a career. In the last decade, urban Sudanese men, especially in the Upper Nile area, tend to prefer to marry traditional girls with a rural rather than urban background. This is manifested by a tendency for traditional radicalism opposing educated classes who seem to think that society is adapting alien cultural mores other than its own. It follows that the demands of urban and educated women have become an economic and an intellectual "burden", which do not apply to simple rural women.

Like many Third world countries, western concepts of liberation, sexual equality, social justice, and the call for women's involvement in society reached Southern Sudan. Seeing an opportunity for freedom, Sudanese women hastened to seek a college education, where such concepts are propagated.

Some of the changes that can be noticed are:

1. A girl's husband was chosen for her by her parents without consultation, some thirty years ago. Nowadays, the marriage does not happen without the bride's consent and choice of husband.



2. Employment of women is not longer related to social class and (privileged) acquaintances, but to merit and qualifications.

Southern Sudan has undergone significant change from traditionalism to modernity. Hence, exposure to western, "modern" values of liberation help diffuse radical traditionalism. The first phase has been more education for females in a society where women were marginal throughout modern history. Recruitment of Sudanese women in work is another significant development towards removing sex discrimination at work and in society. Hopefully, it won't be too long before other restricting customs and attitudes towards women are abolished in Sudan.

Dr. Nawal el-Saadawy at Beirut University College

Wednesday January 22, 1992

Translated by Randa Abul-Husn

She is famous for her radical ideas and statements, and her name is directly associated with the Feminist movement in the Arab world. Dr. Nawal el-Saadawy needs no introduction. When she came to Beirut University College on Wednesday January 22, 1992, the auditorium was a full house and students were standing in the aisles. Needless to say, her speech aroused controversy infuriating some while asserting the points of others.

Dr. Saadawy spoke of women's rights, the women's movement in the Arab World and the place of women and their cause in the so-called new world order.

What is the relationship between the liberation of women and the new world order? What is the connection between women's liberation with medicine, arts, literature, politics, economics, religion, health, psychology, sex and medicine? Dr. Saadawy began her lecture by raising these questions to explain the relevance and importance of the women's liberation movement in the Arab World, who seems to perceive it (the movement) as irrelevant to the main structure of society. The Women's cause forms the core of society. She said: It is the cause of those who have been oppressed for centuries by the class-patriarchal system. We live in a society where authority is vertical, always coming from above. Hence Dr. Saadawy spoke of three forms of absolute authority: Religious, Political and Patriarchal. An authority which calls itself religious, regardless of whether it speaks in the name of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism or any other. It uses religion, faith, and God to create an absolute authority over the

poor, the oppressed, women and children. Then there is political authority in the government which uses political control, power and autonomy over women and men. The patriarchal authority of the father over the women, young children, and minors in the family is another powerful hindrance for women. These three forms of authority are linked, historical and responsible for slavery, later transformed into the lordship system, then into the socialist system and they (authorities) continue to prevail in various forms of modern authority systems. These authorities thrive on division and colonialism discriminating on the basis of sex, color, creed, class, language, and others. These three fundamental forms of authority are indivisible, inseparable and vertical coming from above.

Dr. Saadawy went on to illustrate her point. The purpose of my trip to Lebanon was to participate in a panel discussion entitled "Civil Society in the Arab world and its Role in Achieving Democracy". Sadly, none of the women in the panel were asked to present a paper. Furthermore, this morning I was discussing the conference with one of my male colleagues and I asked why he did not discuss the issue of women in his paper which dealt with power systems and laws of obedience in the Arab world? Why didn't he include the condition of women in the issue of obedience? His reply was that he did not perceive any problem for women, and felt that the problems of women are the same as those of men. It is rather ironic that the educated ones who have profound knowledge and understanding of the structures of

the Arab society, its political forces, political struggles, regimes, foreign and other forms of interferences, development and planning, do not acknowledge the rights of women. This kind of awareness is suppressed in the name of obedience and traditional sex-roles. In the name of obedience of the female sex, the minds of children are socialized and women's potentials and rights are denied. Consequently, women in the Arab world have not reached nor acquired political power which would allow them to assert their rights and have effective participation in society. Women are still weak and divided even when they form public associations. I was imprisoned by President Sadat at one point and when I came out of prison, I felt that women must have political power. I admire their strong involvement in humanitarian organizations, but what women really need to get their rights is political authority. The women's cause is a political cause par excellence. There is a need for a political movement with a multi-disciplinary approach i.e. involvement in national and international politics, economics, medicine, psychology, sex, and other social arenas, and the connection between them. Dr. Saadawy points out the importance of in depth knowledge of one's history and society in order to act constructively. She said: We cannot understand the women's movement and its many achievements in the Arab World unless we thoroughly reread our history. And we cannot understand the cause unless we reread the religions, understand national and international politics, women's psychology,



discrimination and other social forces.

Eversince, the women's struggle in the Arab world began, it has been oppressed. For if women are to revolt the regimes will fall, because women are the core of society and the oppressed and enslaved population. It is said that the Arab women's movement is a western creation. That is not true. The movement in the Arab world is historical. Arab women are historical in that sense. My mother went to jail because she protested against British occupation. My grandmother, a peasant and illiterate woman, protested in the streets too. That is Feminism! The movement today is a continuation of its historical existence. We are not a creation of the West as the Leftist Arab ideology claims. Hence, the Leftists discredit us by claiming that women's rights will be **AUTOMATICALLY** secured once society is reformed. They criticize us when we raise the issue of sex and advise us to concentrate

on class struggles and economic problems. On the other hand, The Arab Right Wing accuse us of being communists because we link between economic injustice and sexual discrimination. Why? This linkage is a historical fact and the two forms of injustice cannot be separated. In short, all the Arab regimes are against the women's movement because our claims threaten them, for we speak against the class system, patriarchy, internal and external colonialism and other injustices. Therefore, we are historical in that we have always revolted against the systems. We do not revolt against class and patriarchy separately. We know that class struggles do exist and are healthy and that it is a natural trend for the poor to revolt against the rich when there is socio-economic injustice. Likewise, it is normal for women to revolt when they are secluded and oppressed by religious authority, patriarchy, political and other social forms of authority. It is our right to be angry.

What the women's movement needs is proper balanced education of the younger generation. Women need to be creative in society, because creativity mobilizes change. Our Arab society holds the ancient as sacred, hence, a father secludes his daughter and other female kin by virtue of protection, care and honor; and the minds of children are controlled and conditioned according to these values. Therefore, we need a revolt which begins at the children's level. We are in need of democracy. Democracy is not created by the political regime, it is created by the people. President Sadat of Egypt had me imprisoned for this statement, he told me that there was democracy and I believed him, so I went to jail. Furthermore, the Arab Women Solidarity Association in Egypt was shut down last July and my books and publications have been banned because we spoke out against the Gulf war. Why did they shut you down? You were not involved in any political

party? I am asked. We were discriminated against because we opposed the Gulf war. We were against war.

Women in the Arab world must unite. Unless we can reach Arab unity we cannot achieve anything. The Arab world has become the most dangerous area. It used to be the Soviet Union and now that its threat is removed, the Arab world became the new arena. Those who hold nuclear weapons are the ruling and colonial forces in the world. So how can we confront this American war machine and colonial power. Justice does not come from conscience and humanitarian intentions, it comes through power.

Dr. Saadawy concluded her lecture by touching on the political changes taking place in Algeria. She expressed her surprise that the first item on the agenda of the new regime was to force women to wear the veil and a covering robe in public, rather than address the acute problems of unemployment and other grievances in the country. She then criticized the fundamentalists' insistence on veiling women. If the veil's purpose is to protect women from the glances of men, then how are women guilty of indescency? Therefore, the men are the ones who should cover their eyes and wear the veil. She noted that these are human interpretations and laws in the name of religion. One of the spectators protested against the last statement saying that the Koran and Islam are

not against women's rights but support and call upon women to work, get an education and participate in societal development. Dr. Saadawy agreed stating that the interpretation not the Islamic religion are questionable. She clarified that these practices do not represent faith and honor. Faith to Nawal Saadawy is in the soul not in the appearance.

Dr. Saadawy's lecture stimulated loud applause of support and significant discontent from those who opposed her hard-line feminism. Extremist or not, Dr. Saadawy is a mobilizer. Her writings, her actions, her protest and her ideas stimulate women and men to think about women's rights more intently and for more than just a fleeting moment •

Woman and her Rights in Lebanese Law Lecture by Dr. Lamia Shehadeh

AUB Alumni, January 31, 1992

It is with ancient Greek myths describing women as devilish and needing to be tamed to obey men that Dr. Lamia Shehadeh, Chairperson of the Civilization Sequence Studies department of the American University of Beirut began her lecture about Woman's legislative rights in Lebanon. Before addressing the issue of legislation, Dr. Shehadeh defined woman as a human being and used this definition as basis for determining whether the legislations abide to women's human rights, or discriminate against them.

What is a human being? The criteria to be a human being are to have integrity, freedom and independence. . . . If a woman does not have her freedom (of thought, deciding one's own destiny), then she cannot become independent. If she does not have both freedom and independence, then she is without

integrity. Consequently, she is not a human being. Does the Lebanese Law protect these criteria for the Lebanese woman.

Dr. Shehadeh summarized six legislations which violate freedom, independence and integrity for women. 1) Contractual law (Real Estate) whereby the testimony of a woman is inadmissible, it has to be a man. 2) A woman is chosen as beneficiary of a policy, her permission is not admissible, that of her husband is. Furthermore, her husband has the right to cancel HER policy without her consulting her. 3) If a married want to conduct or have a business she must have written permission from her husband, and he is granted the right to stop her from practicing after she has began with a written denial of permission. 4) Men may get a full excuse for a crime of honor, and partial excuse if the crime was instigated by a questionable attitude. 5) A man is considered to have committed

adultery only if it happens in the marital home. Punishment, which range from one month to one year, requires the burden of proof, i.e letters he sent her. Whereas, the woman-alduress who is with him is immediately abducted and her punishment ranges between three months and three years. If her husband forgives her, then charges by the state are dropped; if he does not forgive her the state takes her to trial.

In conclusion, Dr. Shehadeh pointed out that all of the above legislations curtail freedom, independence and integrity of a woman. The existence of such legislation and image of a woman deny her basic quality as a human being.

It is unanimous that such discriminating legislations do exist in the texts of the law and should be amended as soon as the legislative reconstruction of Lebanon begins. •

International Day of Human Rights, And the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women December 10, 1991

The Lebanese Association For Human Rights undertook a series of public lectures and press conferences, on the occasion of the International Day of Human Rights. The main issue raised was to reiterate the demand for Lebanon to sign the women's rights treaty for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The treaty was passed twelve years ago and so far 109 countries signed and some ratified it. Many have just begun to live up to their obligations by examining laws and policies and reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). But, Lebanon is not one of these countries.

Lawyer Laure Moghaizel, one of the founders of the Association and an active feminist gave a lecture on the issue at Beirut University



College in addition to a number cultural centers, educational establishments and the media. Lawyer Moghaizel's insistence on this symbolic signature is often questioned by those who feel that this legislative discrimination is not predominant in practice. Lawyer

Moghaizel usually answers by asking, in return, **why should the legislation be irrelevant to reality, if that is the case?** Hence, the refusal to officially administer the rights of women and eliminate discrimination hinders progress and development for women in society •

IWRAP LOES BRUNOTT MEMORIAL SEMINAR

Looking Beyond Equality: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

**January 20, 1992
Doral Tuscany Hotel, New York**

With a world human rights conference scheduled for 1993 and a world women's conference in 1995, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination -Against Women takes on a new importance. This Women's human rights treaty is the major international instrument that defines their right to equality and the path to social justice.

The International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) hosted a seminar on January 20, 1992 in New York. This seminar was designed for concerned citizens -- including faculty and students-- interested in international law, development, governance and human rights who want to learn more about the Convention's history, principles, and how it is being used.

For more information contact:

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Dr. Waldraut Merhej

By Nada Awar

I was led to the "Diagnostic Center for Special children" by pure coincidence. Being there, I was touched by the sincerity, humanity, devotion and awareness of the women collaborating to form a successful working team. Dr. Vallie (short for Waldraut) Merhej, the owner of the Center, is an Austrian physician and child psychiatrist. She is also a professor at the Department of Education of the American University of Beirut. This active and motivated lady arrived to Beirut in 1967 and volunteered to work in the German Hospital of Beirut for six months. Afterwards, her destiny was to marry a Lebanese man and settle in Lebanon. Unfortunately, her first husband passed away leaving her with three children to support: Yasmine, Omar and Reem. Dr. Vallie faced her problems by creating a job which would combine her professional and personal life. Hence, in 1974, the Diagnostic Center which includes a special nursery was founded. Lebanon was in grave shortage and need for such specialized institutions. The services of the Diagnostic Center include speech therapy, physio-therapy, IQ testing, and parent counseling. The aim of the Center is to help children overcome their problems as early as possible and offers early childhood education.

Dr. Vallie Merhej is also a member of "The Friends of the Handicapped Association." Members of this association have performed a pioneering effort and outstanding services for the handicapped in Lebanon. They were also among the first in the country to arouse public awareness towards handicapped and special children. Dr. Merhej feels that "this institution would be able to operate in full



capacity and accommodate more children if peace is established in Lebanon." She continues that "an official law for mandatory education for special children is a must in the country. Every child has the right to go to school regardless of his/her condition. Children with an IQ below 100 should be given the right to participate and to be accepted in society. Special children should be protected and put on the right track."

About her experience as a professor at the American University of Beirut, Dr. Merhej says: "When I faced my students for the first time, I was afraid." Consequently, I decided to sit in for one of her classes. There were thirteen fully attentive female students in the class, who were each given a chance to participate in the discussion. "Every semester is a new experience for me." Dr. Merhej says "At the beginning of the semester, each student is alienated and unaware of the importance and issue of special children. However, at the end of the semester, they become very involved and enthusiastically participate in helping

the handicapped. My job as a teacher is to make them understand what a physically handicapped is. I tell them not to treat them as if they were perfectly healthy nor as if their condition was a horrible drama. People should help a handicapped whenever the latter asks for help. A mentally retarded person is not crazy. Special people need special education in order to become independent and productive. The goal of the course is to show the needs for special education and how to integrate a handicapped in society."

After the interview, Dr. Merhej invited me to attend the Christmas party of the nursery in the Diagnostic Center. The show performed by the special children was very touching. They were all dressed in white and wore white crowns on their heads. They played the role of snow flakes to one of Fairouz's Christmas carols "Talj Talj (Snow Snow), after which Santa Claus came in and distributed his gifts to the young human "snow flakes". But Santa forgot to give a real gift of admiration to Vallie •

Searching

by Nawal El Saadawy (*)

Reviewed by Dr. Evelyne Accad

The well-known Egyptian novelist, physician, psychiatrist, Nawal El Saadawy, whose achievements were made in spite of the discrimination she encountered within her society, has always amazed us with her courage and her relentless struggle against the harmful stereotypes of women in the Arab world. Once more, with this poignant "search," she raises important questions and problems plaguing Arab society and most other societies around the globe. It is no wonder that this first publication in English of her novel *Searching*, originally written in Arabic, has already won critical acclaim from the judges for 1991's Feminist Book Fortnight.

On a first level, *Searching* tells the story of Fouada (meaning heart in Arabic) who is searching for her missing lover, Farid, when he fails to come to their weekly appointment in a restaurant overlooking the Nile. Fouada keeps trying to call his home, but as the telephone rings unanswered, she tries to come to grips with his disappearance and with her loss.

On another level, the search is a pretext for a much deeper yearning into the significance of life. Fouada realizes that she is stuck in a dead-end ministry job and feels that there must be more meaningful avenues which would improve the world. But where and how? Like *A Woman at Point Zero*, another one of El Saadawy's novels available

in English, *Searching* tells the painful journey of a woman into her inner self and into the limitations which society places upon women who want to rise above the pettiness and the walls surrounding their lives. In both novels, El Saadawy indicts society and shows the need for change and reform. Despite their similarities, the female characters in each novel have different class backgrounds, and the restrictions placed on their lives are different. Firdaws, in *A Woman at Point Zero* reaches a dead end in all aspects of her life, while Fouada, relatively free compared to Firdaws, goes on dreaming even when her dreams appear unreachable.

It is not by coincidence that El-Saadawy gives Fouada a job in a ministry, like herself before being dismissed for publishing a controversial book about women and sex, translated as *The Hidden Face of Eve*, Beacon Press, 1981). Furthermore, Fouada, like El-Saadawy, lives in Cairo where she is confronted with pollution and an overpopulated city plagued by hunger and other major catastrophies of today's world. Fouada wants to be a scientist and opens a chemistry lab, hoping to make "a chemical discovery to eliminate hunger, a new gas for millions to breathe instead of food." (p.93) Fouada refuses a banal existence, "She would not simply live and die, and the world remains the same." (p.103) So she goes on searching for that "unique idea" which does not seem to emerge because of the "thick walls" which

surround it. The similarities between Fouada and the author reveal El Saadawy's plight with the problems that haunt her and that she confronts every day.

Fouada's search becomes more desperate when her lover Farid appears to have vanished and as her dreams seem unattainable. Finally, she discovers that Farid has been imprisoned leaving her these words of hope which end the novel: "Do not grieve, Fouada, do not weep. The words are in the wind beyond the walls, alive and entering hearts with the very air. A day will surely come when the walls will fall and voices once again be freed to speak." (p.114)

El Saadawy knows how to bring out the real issues, the ones that need to be addressed and dealt with if our world is to survive. In this novel, she does it with renewed imagination, creative ideas, descriptions and images that are very effective and show a maturity in style and thought *

(*) Nawal El Saadawy, *Searching*. Translated by Shirley Eber. London and New Jersey, Zed Books. 1991. 114 pages.



Women, Liberation, Creativity (*)
By Khalida Sa'id

Reviewed by Rose Ghurayyib

Khalida Sa'id is a writer of Syrian origin who settled in Lebanon with her husband, the poet Ali Sa'id, better known as "Adonis", for over twenty years. Like many of their contemporaries, they were forced to seek safer regions when the Lebanese war erupted.

"Women, Liberation, Creativity" (an Arabic publication) is a link of series sponsored by Fatima Mermissi, a Moroccan feminist leader and writer, whose book, "Beyond the Veil" was reviewed in *Al-Raida* No. 12, 1980, p. 14. The introduction of "Women, Liberation, Creativity" is written by Ms. Mermissi, in which she considers the book as part of a series called: "Moroccan Women on the Threshold of the Year 2000." The aim of this series is to enlighten the public about the possibility of creating a democratic Arab Maghreb (Morocco) whose inhabitants enjoy complete equality of rights, including sexual equality. "Democracy" Mermissi says "does not exist in the Moroccan world, where sexual segregation is the rule. The Harem atmosphere still dominates. Why can't men and women join efforts for realizing a cultural project of interaction and mixing between the sexes? As it stands, only a miracle could bring about the change, which will allow women and men to sit together, side by side, and converse."

On another hand, the content of "Women, Liberation, Creativity" includes a presentation of a group of contemporary Arab women who

achieved success in various creative fields such as art, poetry and fiction. The overwhelming feminine presence is, furthermore, counterbalanced by fifty pages devoted to a detailed study of Qasim Amin's contribution to women's rights at the beginning of the century. Qasim Amin, an Egyptian lawyer of Kurdish origin, is hailed by the author, Khalida Sa'id, as "the thoughtful light of the Women's liberation movement in the Arab world and the first writer to adopt a scientific approach in handling this delicate issue." Amin is also presented as the reformer, who, in spite of a short life of forty five years (1963-1908), was able to write five books on general reform, including two major works on women's liberation (1). Hence, the core of Amin's ideology is known in one of his famous quotes: **A woman's character should be based on knowledge, free choice and responsibility, instead of coercion and obedience. Her mind must be cultivated and trained to achieve independent thinking and judgement. An ignorant woman, like a child's mind, must be tutored at every step she takes and is, thus, a burden on her family and on society.**

The distinguishing trait of the articles which follow, instead of indulging in a display of claims and complaints, is the presentation of facts about eminent Arab women of our time, followed by a message or plan of action relevant to liberation. First comes the lecture given by Khalida Sa'id at the Lebanese Club

(Dar-el-Fan wal-Adab) in Beirut in 1970, bearing the title "Woman, a Creature who Cannot Exist by Herself." in which she discusses, from a Socialist point of view, the forms of slavery imposed on Arab woman reducing her into an object of pleasure or a body without a soul. Then, Khalida lists a number of reforms she expects the so-called leftist Arab states to adopt as a necessary basis for the realization of real democracy, including sexual equality. These reforms represent the demands of **the enlightened progressive class**, not only in leftist countries but all over the world. This ideology is based on compulsory, free education for both men and women, a co-educational system, strict application of the scientific method in school curricula and in the teaching methods, **secularization of the Personal Status Code**, extending the plan of social security to include all working people and all old age men and women, encouraging and financing women's studies, politicizing women's problems.

The central idea presented in Sa'id's next article "Women and Defiance of Time," is the necessity for every woman to realize herself through a creative activity, which transcends the biological function and insures her continuous development by introducing her into the realm of the intellectual society.

Is woman capable of attaining this stage? Why not? History showed us

that many women attained this creative realization. Even now, in this period of relative inertia prevailing in the Arab world, there are women who have achieved distinction in scientific and literary fields. As an example, the author presents, in abridged forms, the achievements of seven outstanding women from various Arab countries:

Thus, Sahar Khalifa is a novelist who relates, in a set of realistic episodes the story of the Arab woman's shocking condition as a daughter and a wife. In the novel the Arab woman is manipulated by her parents, her brothers, her husband and by society to the extent of losing her identity and being led into a blind alley.

To a certain degree, and unlike Sahar Khalifa, the other women whose work is reviewed by Khalida Sa'id presented solutions for the problems they posed.

Fedwa Tuqan, the Palestinian poet, while she relates the sufferings imposed on her by her conservative environment, tells how she used poetry as a means of self-expression and self-development. Consequently, it became her board of salvation. In her collection, entitled "Wajadtuha (I Have Found It)," she realizes that getting her freedom is in her own hands if she firmly believed in it. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression and of action were all her own if she only dared to declare them through her poetry. Her self-liberation is directly related to the renovation of her poetic style and mood.

Another heroine is Sammiyya Saleh, the rebel poet whose life was a struggle against obsolete stereotypes. Nadia Tueni defied fate through her poetry impending death for eighteen years. Fatima Mernissi, a veteran dared to write a study in which she revealed the errors of religious scholars or "Ulemas", who disagreed on the interpretation of religious texts concerning women. "The guardians of the holy texts have often manipulated them in favor of the ruling power. It is our task to protest and revolt against the errors of the past which are still imposed on us today." Mernissi states.

Suad el-Hakim, a woman of dauntless energy, dedicated herself to the study of Sufism. Her major work is a 1311 page dictionary of Sufism and Sufi terminology and a result of individual research, which lasted years. Muna Saudi is a Jordanian sculptor, whose work, "Improvisations in Stone," stands at the entrance of the Arab Institute in Paris. Muna Saudi's sculptures illustrate her humanist ideology, which evolved from a procreative process into an upward move transcending the dual condition of male-female and seeking infinite horizons. Finally, Laila Badr, a talented fiction-writer, excels in the use of symbolism and moving contrast between dream and reality.

Khalida Sa'id's book, in spite of the variety of ideas it contains, forms a unified whole. The author tries to convince the reader by using rational thoughts and realistic arguments. Her expression is forceful, concise, free from verbosity. The reader, even if he or she does not agree with her, is compelled to think and reexamine

his or her attitude toward woman.

The book, besides its effective style and daring tone, tries to acquaint the public with a group of militant women who have acted in their environments as leaders of thought. For the rest, it brings together, in brief form, some important theories and arguments regarding women's issues, which were already expounded by feminist reformers as Qasem Amin, Simone De Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and other modern reformers *

(*) Sa'id Khalida, *Al-Mara'a, al-Tahrir, al-Ibda'a*, (Women, Liberation, Creativity) An Arabic publication. Casablanca: El-Fanak Press, published by the United Nations University, 1991, 152 pgs.

(1) See "Qasim Amin" in *Al-Raida*, No. 3, 1978.

Bibliography of the book reviewed by Miss Rose Ghurrayib in the previous issue of *Al-Raida*:

Hala Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I*, Jordan: The Economic Press Co., 1990, second edition. (first edition was published in 1987) *

To be A.U.B.

By Hala Habib (*)

To be or not to be
A question facing A.U.B.

Proudly the clock stood tall
Next to the aged College Hall

But a bomb of illiteracy in the nation
Tried to wipe out our education

Reducing to rubble
A sign of trouble

Or was that a warning
Not to go on with signing

Signing the treaty to be
That will change history

Making lords of oil
Toil their soil

While the white flag flow
Our fingers crossed we lie low

(*) Hala Habib is a student of Mass Communication at Beirut University College. She has a talent in poetry writing and we wish to encourage her to develop and share her poems with us.

The Difference Between Intentional Homicide and Murder in the First Degree: A Woman

By Randa Abul-Husn

It is a classical scenario of money and power, still it is an ordinary crime. He did not use the simulation of illusions, nor did he play tricks to suggest psychological disturbances. He did not manufacture a scheme or a conspiracy. But according to the investigation, he simply shot her in the head while she lay next to him in bed and then claimed that she had committed suicide.

The couple was young and wealthy. A significant portion of their extravagant lifestyle was financed by her filthy rich father, who spoiled her lavishly. Before and after marriage, her father provided for her wardrobe, repeated plastic surgery for her nose and teeth, her annual travels and so on. When the husband commented

on her expenditure, she was known to snap back by saying that since it was not his money, he had nothing to complain about; and at other times, according to the two maids in the estate, she would threaten that she made him what he was and she could easily destroy him.

Mind you, he was not exactly a nobody himself. He was educated, upwardly mobile and hard working. He studied law in Paris, where he worked in a reputable law firm and published a book. When he returned home and married her, he was appointed senior manager in her father's company. He was known to mix with some of the most reputed, powerful personalities in society. He was also known to have a temper. In

fact he admitted to having a bad temper and added that hers was even worse.

They lived in a luxurious home in one of the wealthiest neighborhood of the suburbs. The house was a gift from her father.

On the night of the crime, the couple hosted friends for dinner. She was her usual elegant self. Some friends said that she was generally a cheerful person, while the husband claimed that she was moody. Anyway, on that night, the guests left at around 1.A.M. He watched a video, while she supervised the two maids clearing and cleaning the expensive china. The maids retreated at 3.30 A.M. and the couple prepared

**Women in Mass
Communication
Challenging Gender
Value**
**Edited by Pamela J.
Greedon (*)**

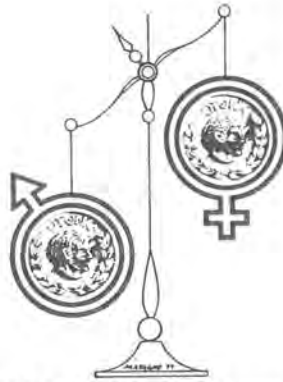
Reviewed By Rima Zankoul

Women in Mass Communication Challenging Gender Values is a humanistic and philosophical discourse about values in mass communication with a stress on current transformation and changes.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first deals mostly with the gender switch in mass communication and its potential to challenge traditional values in that field. It also introduces the pioneering efforts to incorporate feminist theory in media law. This part provides an international perspective on studying women of color in mass communication as well.

The second part describes the status of women faculty and their impact on students. It calls for revision in the way mass communication is taught and practised these days. Some chapters touch on the concept of sexism and economic equity in current mass communication practises and reveals status reports on employment, salaries and other matters facing women *

(*) Pamela J. Greedon(ed.), Women in Mass Communication Challenging Gender Values, London: Sage publications, 1989.



IWTC Intern. Women's Tribune Center

That's a Hurray! right? He was actually taken to court and sentenced for killing her. Given the status of married women vis-a-vis their husbands rights in marriage in this part of the world, a sentence sounds like a breakthrough.

What if the victim had been a man? In fact, in another incident which happened around the same time in town was a quarrel between two men as a result of "courting" the same woman. Hence, in one of the local restaurants, the killer walked in to find his girl friend having lunch with the victim. Without further due, he attacked the man with punches and a torrent of curses. The crowd rushed to separate them and it seemed like the dispute was over. Incidentally, the victimized man was her cousin who was in town to visit his family, of which she is part, naturally. Expect, the offender followed his victim home and shot him in the head at the entrance of his parents' apartment building.

When the police finally proved that the suspect is guilty, the court ruled it as murder in the first degree and the perpetrator was sentenced to 50 years, which, incidentally, is more than double the total sentence the young husband got. Is this the difference between intentional homicide and murder in the first degree? Or is it the difference between a man and a woman? Which is worse, a cold blooded crime or a cold blooded law? *

to go to bed. However, it seems that they had an argument about who should take care of some domestic chores the next day.

A while later, he came to the maid's room, and all shaken, he told her that the Mrs. had shot herself. Then, he ordered the maid to call his close friend, a doctor, who incidentally was one of the guests earlier. The doctor came over immediately, felt for the victim's pulse and rushed her to the hospital. Meanwhile the maids, upon the instruction of the doctor and the suspect himself, cleaned the sheets and the scene of the crime. At the hospital, when she was declared dead, the body was washed and prepared for burial. The police had not been called yet.

However, when the police finally investigated the crime, they discovered that the position of the wound suggested that suicide was unlikely. The most revealing fact was the location of the gun after it had been fired. Hence, according to the maids, the doctor and the suspect himself, her hand holding the gun and the gun itself lay on her shoulder. Furthermore, the gun point was full of blood which streaked inside it. According to the investigators, it was a high caliber pistol, and had she shot herself, her hand and the gun should have jerked back; consequently, making it unlikely to rest on her shoulder and get soiled with blood all the way into its firing chamber.

The husband was declared guilty, he had no alibi and a suggested motive was her wealth. The court gave him an original sentence of thirty years, which was then reduced to fifteen years and later to nine years by virtue of a parliamentary law of pardon.

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