



Al-Raida

Women . . . A Step Ahead



National Conference:
Women and The Environment
Including: Physical, Development,
Social, Political and Media Aspects
Related to Women and Environment

Interview with
Bahia Hariri
Deputy in the Lebanese
Parliament, 1992

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A Noticeable Rise of Women to the Scene

Fall 1992 witnessed a great deal of activities and developments with respect to women in Lebanon and some other Arab countries.

The first event was the Conference on Arab Women and Creativity which was attended by a number of Arab women and men, and which ended with a call for more seminars and encounters promoting women's creativity production in the Arab world. The second event was the Conference on women and the Environment sponsored by the Institute for women's Studies, the Frederich-Ebert Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Institute is planning another Conference on Arab Women and the Environment which will include participants from Arab countries as well.

Post-war Lebanese politics is experiencing a significant participation by women. Furthermore, in the Arab world, Kuwaiti women demonstrated against their continued exclusion from politics, notably elections and voting rights.

The General trend seems a rush of activities for the empowerment of Arab women in the various sectors of society. The situation is slowly shifting from arguments of hidden potentials and lack of opportunity to actual achievements and abilities of women. Meanwhile, politics, in the world and in the Middle East in particular, remains largely masculine and patriarchal. . . . Does that mean these women will have to think like a man, work like a dog and act like a lady? Hence, the struggle is still within the scope of traditional role definitions, social divisions of labor, and patriarchal influence.

Noticeably, the general trend in the social debates and socio-political circles reflects a concern about women being given traditional feminine roles in politics thus reinforcing traditional-

role definitions. Women are concerned that they are not transferred from domestic duties in the private world to domestic duties in the public world. As one scholar said, "we do not want to be moved from cleaning in the house into Ministries where we would be expected to clean the streets, because it is within the scope of our traditional role", i.e. domesticating women's involvement in politics. "Women must participate and be allowed to participate in political life at all its levels."

Therefore, the critical test lies in the hands of the women who are coming to power. It is up to them to defend women's rights by projecting an objective approach and avoid falling into criticism of discrimination themselves. The fact remains that in traditional societies like the Middle East, the Women's Movement is perceived as being sexually biased for women's rights rather than nationalistic, and therefore rated as secondary in priority vis-a-vis the other problems, such as economic crises, geo-political organization of the region, the Israeli-Arab conflict, displaced populations, equality on all its levels, etc. Hence, critical post-war issues tend to take priority over women's suffrage.

Why this inferiority status and esteem in the perception and the self-perception of women in politics? Why is politics, a sector only recently witnessing women's participation, so discriminating? Is it because of the history of patriarchy in politics? Is it lack of women's experience in politics? Or is it that the Women Movement's activities have not been aggressive enough and has so far performed social work more than lobbyism and activism?

This is NOT to discredit or to put down the achievements of the Women's Movement and women's philanthropic, educational and social work associations in Lebanon. One

cannot deny that they dealt well and effectively with many issues to increase women's participation in education, work, trade, and even politics, although shily. However, in a patriarchal society like this, women-related issues are labeled with the very discrimination they so strongly fight. Hence, the Movement is always hindered with semantic arguments about traditional role definitions and the patriarchal system. Yet the women of the region have been progressing and developing along various channels, consequently, producing the very women who are entering parliament and the government today. We note that, historically, women have had a major and mainly informal influence and participation in politics by virtue of the men they supported, whereas, official and formal accession to political power and authority is based on election by pedigree or proxy for a male relative.

Lebanon is for the first time witnessing an official rise of women to the scene. These women will become pioneers for their sisters in the future. It is not how feminist they are that counts at this point but to what extent they can demonstrate women's abilities and potentials to be in effective leadership positions. If, unfortunately, feminism has a negative connotation and works against women in politics in the region, it is the achievements of our new women-politicians that will stand out as proof. The women entering the rings have the golden opportunity to make a difference for the women of their country. The absence of women from parliament and cabinet was an obvious imbalance and therefore, their presence is the first step toward establishing some kind of balance between the men and the women in society, legislation and politics •

Randa Abul-Husn

Ms. Bahia Hariri Deputy in the Lebanese Parliament, 1992



Bahia Hariri is the President of the Hariri Foundation who is responsible for the education of at least 30,000 Lebanese students on educational grants in Lebanon and overseas. She is also President of the branches of the Hariri High School in Saida and Beirut, and attends to the educational and other needs of the people of the surrounding villages in southern Lebanon. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Hariri foundation in Lebanon and in the United States of America and a member of the Board of Trustees of Beirut University College, and the remaining list of leadership tasks she performs goes on and on.

In our interview, she told us about her plans in Parliament. She insisted that the implementation of laws and reforms will have to be performed by parliamentary committees in which she intends to take an active part. She pointed out that up until now the war had reduced the state to an administrative unit but will now have to take matters into its own hands and attend to the many needs of the country. Therefore, the Parliament she has been elected to, will attend to the problems produced by the war and to structuring for a healthy post-war society. Hence, she noted the economic crisis which is the most urgent and imminent concern of the new state. She also noted her

dedication to working on resolving the problem of the displaced population in Lebanon which requires an immediate solution.

On the women's issues we asked her if she intended to push for reform and the emancipation of women. She explained that there are many laws that need to be reformed, whether we are talking about women or about the Lebanese people in general. She explained that Parliamentary committees will be responsible for protecting equal rights, human rights and the needs of the Lebanese people without discrimination of any kind •

R.A.H

Updating Information

In the last issue of *Al-Raida*, No 58, entitled *Women at the Earth Summit*, we reported that Ms. Nayla Moawad, appointed Deputy received the highest number of votes in the country totalling to 90,000. However, after the release of *Al-Raida*, the final and official count of votes revealed that Ms. Bahia Hariri received a higher number of votes totaling to 117,760. Therefore, we wish to bring note to the fact that it was Ms. Hariri that received the highest number of votes for the Parliamentary elections.

Women in Politics

by Rose Ghurayyib

In a Gallup poll organized in 1975, in the United States of America, 73 percent of the respondents said they were ready to vote for a woman candidate for the presidency. In another poll arranged by the same group, 70 percent preferred to see a larger number of women in government positions because "experience has shown that they are more patient than men, more versed in economy and less corruptible."⁽¹⁾

Since 1975, women, almost everywhere, have made noticeable steps in the political fields. Already in 1975, they obtained their political rights not only in developed countries but in most of the African and Asian countries.

Political rights however, did not mean that they were prepared to hold leading political offices. In a few countries, their accession was slow but sure. In other countries, it was sudden yet with doubtful results, while in other countries development was still nil.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

In this category, we may mention, first, Indira Ghandi, who received from her father, Nehru, an adequate training qualifying her for the difficult task of Prime Minister. She handled the post successfully from 1968 to 1984, the year of her assassination. Indira is considered to be the most formidable Prime Minister India has ever had.

Second, Margaret Thatcher, who for several years was the leader of the Conservative party in England and then rose to the position of Prime Minister. For eleven years she proved a remarkable ability to deal with the

political and economic problems. Two years after her resignation in 1990, another strong-minded leader, Betty Boothroyd, was elected as the first female speaker of the House of Commons in seven hundred years.

Less known among female political leaders of Europe today is the Portuguese Maria de Lourdes Pentasilgo, who equipped with several degrees, served as: Researcher in the National Nuclear Energy Commission; State Secretary for Social Security and as Minister of Social Affairs. In 1979, she became the first woman Prime Minister in Portugal and is currently a Special Advisor to the President of the Republic.

In Norway, where women enjoy equal rights since 1978, 25.8 percent of Parliament and four out of seventeen ministers are women. Furthermore, 23 percent of the municipal Council were women in 1980⁽²⁾. In 1981, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland became the first Prime Minister of Norway.

In France, women's suffrage was proclaimed in 1945, and equal rights in 1958. The Women's Liberation Movement was founded in 1970, ten years after the Movement emerged in the United States of America. Political differences split the movement into Radicals and Socialists. Opposed by reactionary tendencies like the Psych and Po (Psychoanalysis and Politics), it enjoyed the support of militant feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and her followers. In spite of material difficulties, the Movement had a strong impact on French society. The sustained efforts of its members succeeded in increasing the number of women in responsible government positions. Hence, it culminated in the appointment of Edith Cresson by Mitterand as the first Prime Minister of

the France in 1992.

In the United States of America the Equal Rights Amendment was promulgated in 1923 followed, in 1972, by the "Prohibition of All Forms of discrimination" in hiring, in educational programs and activities at schools and colleges which receive federal fundings. In government, women hold 4 percent of all elected posts, and form 2 percent of senators, 5 percent of members of Congress, 3 lieutenant governors and 3 cabinet members. Women's association complain of sex discrimination in jobs and salaries, hence attributing it to misapplication of the Equal Rights Amendment. Feminism in the States has to deal with problems related to racial discrimination and controversial ideologies. Nevertheless, the Movement there, which has been in full swing since the early sixties, is the most active and most influential nationally and internationally. Compared to similar movements in other parts of the world, it has the larger output of women's studies, women's publications and women's international networks of information and publicity.

In the new Democracies of Eastern Europe, four extraordinary women seized the opportunity offered them to occupy top government posts. In Estonia, Maju Lauristin, a champion of environmental issues, holds, since 1987, the position of Prime Minister and is one of the founders of the rebellious Popular Front of Estonia. Kazimiera Prunskiene of Lithuania, an expert economist and assistant of Gorbachev, is Prime Minister since 1988 and helped found the Independence Movement in the country.

Sabine Bergman Pohl, a practiced physician from East Germany was elected speaker of the House and then Minister without a portfolio in the

United Bundestag.

In Poland, a freelance writer, Malgorzana Niezabitowska became the spokeswoman of the Polish government.⁽³⁾

Most of these women are novices in political affairs and they intend to persist as activists and party leaders. Furthermore, they have insured themselves a membership in Parliament in case of quitting their executive posts.

WOMEN IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES⁽⁴⁾

We notice that women who ascended to leadership and government positions in countries of the third world owe more to male dynasties than to militant feminism. Such is the case of Chamorro of Nicaragua, who rose to the position of President of the Republic after the assassination of her husband in 1978. The same applies to the promotion of Aquino to the presidency of the Philippines in 1986 after her husband fell victim of the Marcos' regime. In spite of her good intentions, Corazon Aquino was not qualified for the task entrusted to her. As to Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, she succeeded as an avenger of her father who was executed in 1979 by Zia-ul-Hakk and as a restorer of democracy in her country. She, however, discredited herself by resorting to feudal politics during the short period in office.

Similar family politics brought two women to Parliament in another Third World country, namely Lebanon. Thus, the first Woman Deputy, Myrna Bustani, was appointed successor of her father, Emile bustani who died in a plane crash in 1956. The second Deputy is Nayla Mouawad, wife of the President-elect, Rene Mouawad, (assassinated in 1990)

The policy of political succession by pedigree is inherited from the period when rulers were heads of extended tribes or powerful feudal families, who

could legate authority to wives and daughters in the absence or minority of male heirs.

This policy proved insufficient, except in the case of Indira Ghandi who was adequately prepared for her lifelong career by her father. On the other hand, Aquino's weak administration in the Philippines taught most Filipinos, if not all of them, to refute a candidacy based on family right or hereditary succession. Publicity posters carrying the slogan: "No to political dynasty" were used by partisans of Miriam Defensor Santiago, a candidate for the presidential elections (May 25, 1992) who, unlike her rival Ramos, son of Aquino, won her popularity by merit. Highly educated, holder of two law degrees from the University of Michigan, she is a strong disciplinarian who firmly attacks corruption and, therefore, has a 50 percent chance of success.⁽⁵⁾

CONCLUDING REMARKS

"Women around the world are sharing the lessons of social change in the faith that knowledge is power after all."⁽⁶⁾ Stereotypes are among the first obstacles in women's struggle for change. At the risk of remaining single, they are engaged in the search for higher education and higher positions in social and political fields, instead of the traditional search for a husband.

In the Arab world, the recent wave of fundamentalism impeded in many ways the spreading women's movement. In their struggle to achieve equality with men in the fields of education, work and personal status laws, women seem to forget the importance of equal participation in politics, particularly in leadership positions which hold the key to radical and immediate change. Studies about the role of Arab women in the politics of their countries are few ⁽⁷⁾. Two topics of permanent interest to those who deal with women's problems are: Women's education and women's

work. Meanwhile two other important topics receive less attention: First, the study of women's personal status laws, which thru the growing influence of fundamentalists, has recently reached a standstill. The second issue is women's political rights and the efforts spent for the purpose of integrating them into the politics of their countries. These topics attract few authors and researchers not only in the Arab world but also in developed countries where the number of women occupying leading political roles remains low.

A recent study about the participation of Lebanese women in politics during the war shows that they did not make real efforts to organize themselves into electoral groups preparing them to assume leading political roles. In political parties, women prefer to act as followers to men. Their presence in syndicates is scarcely noticeable because of their small number and their self-effacement.⁽⁸⁾ To promote women's interest and participation in politics, the following steps are recommended:

1. Increasing women's enrollment in parties and syndicates, where they may act as activists and inspirers of change instead of mere followers.
2. Feminists organizations may cooperate and organize into electoral groups, working together for the promotion of qualified women candidates.
3. As electoral bodies, women should stand against the traditional policy which allows succession by pedigree. This tradition practiced on a larger scale in Arab countries under the name of feudal privilege, tends to allow unqualified men and women to occupy important positions. Even if these privileged individuals are honest and well-meaning, they rarely resist the temptation of allowing the use of favoritism, nepotism, bribery and other harmful practices.
4. Another important

recommendation consists in giving school boys and girls an adequate preliminary training in citizenship, including civics and community problems.

Rulers, governors and leaders of thought are required to satisfy the people's economic, social and cultural needs in return for the money they receive from the national treasury. They are equally required to enlighten the people regarding their rights and duties as well as those of the leaders, governors and other people in power.

A favorable sign of change, especially in Lebanon, is the presence of three women among the candidates for the parliamentary elections of 1992. After seventeen years of imposed militia rule and civil war, women are trying to assert themselves.

I cannot help admiring the leaders of the Women's Movement in Argentina, who insist on a 50/50 share of representation in Parliament and reject all compromise.

Winning a parliamentary seat is a privilege which every ambitious citizen wishes to have. It means a huge main, on both the financial and the social side, in return for a minimum effort on the part of the winner, since it simply requires attending a minimum number of sessions during the year. It is, as they say, the easiest and shortest way to wealth.

Why should women who form half of the population, everywhere, be deprived of sharing this privilege on an equal basis with men, as long as the constitution gives the right to do so?

Footnotes

- (1) Newland, Kathleen, *Women in Politics: a Global Review*, Washington, D.C. 1975.
- (2) Information about women in leadership positions is mostly taken from *Sisterhood is Global*, compiled, edited and introduced by Robin Morgan, Anchor books, 1984.
- (3) "Challenge in the East", *Time*, December 3, 1990, No. 49, p.48
- (4) "All in the Family", *Op.cit*, p. 51
- (5) "A Thriller in Manila", *Newsweek*, May 25, 1992, pp. 28-30.
- (6) *Time*, *Op.cit*, p.47.
- (7) Abdel-Kader, Soha. article published on "Tendencies of Social Science Research on Women in the Arab World", in *Al-Dirasat-ul-Ijtima'iyya 'an-il-Mara'a fil-'Alam-il-Arabi*, original english edition "Social Science Research on Women in the Arab World", UNESCO, 1984. (Al-Muassasat-ul-Arabiyya lid-Dirasat wa-n-nashr).
- (8) "Participation of Women in Politics during the War". *Al-Raida*, No.50, August 1990, pp.3-4.

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Dr. Fadia Kiwan

How to Enter the Cabinet



In her lecture at the Conference on Women and the Environment organized by the Insitute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (see page 12), Dr. Fadia Kiwandiscussed major political concepts concerning women. She noted that women in Lebanon did attain parliamentary posts, but are not members of the cabinet, pointing out that Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East where women have never participated in cabinet. She insisted that women should become ministers and must have an active and direct involvement in national politics.

In a private interview we asked her:

Q How do you propose that women enter the cabinet?

A. Women's participation in government should be part of a global political network and through participation in a political movement. It is not a question of women being in office in ways that would allow the political world to perceive their participation as a part or an extension of women's traditional (patriarchal)

role or as having a purely women's background and orientation.

Q. Do you think that women being appointed in the cabinet is more imminent and probable, now that three Lebanese women have been elected to Parliament?

A. I believe that it is more probable. Political circles are speculating that ministerial offices will be given to women, either to the deputies themselves or to other women. This is a very important and positive development. However, experience is of crucial importance here, for if these women fail, the general attitude will be that women failed in politics. Therefore, I feel that the ascension to parliamentary and governmental offices through political channels based on experience is safer and stronger than other methods. For instance, if I am elected by proxy or because I am related to a prominent male relative or family member, I am taking a big risk. Thus, I stand the risk of discrediting the entire women's movement and women's

credibility in politics, if I should fail. Therefore, it is sounder and safer to practice politics and to move through the regular channels than to remain within the patriarchal history of the women who have participated in the politics of my country.

I also refuse to be treated in politics in the same way a woman is treated in society. Yes, women may have domestic and maternal skills, but these should not be used as judging grounds when it comes to where they would perform better in public life. I refuse to be given only service duties in the government, I want women to have a direct involvement, participation and decision-making in all the sectors of the government.

In her speech, before the interview, Kiwan emphasized this very point by identifying the pit-fall women could face with respect to the women-environment-politics argument. She wondered if taking a leading political interest in environmental issues would only serve to keep women away from other major and leading political responsibilities and decision-making posts?

In reality Kiwan was calling for an entire change of texture for women in politics and for the environment issue in politics. Experience remains the test of how the situation will develop •

R.A.H

Dr. Fadia Kiwan is a Professor of Politics at the University Saint Joseph in Lebanon. she is also a prominent researcher. She presented a paper entitled "The Political Aspects of the Issue of Women and The Environment" at the conference on Women and the Environment, October 8-10, 1992

Women and The Environment

National Conference

by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

Beirut, October 8-10, 1992

The first time the issue of Women and the Environment was discussed, publicly and on a national level (Lebanon), was at the Conference entitled "Women and the Environment." This Conference was organized by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College and sponsored by The Friederich-Ebert-Stiftung and The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under the patronage of the Minister of Health and Social affairs in the absence of a Ministry of Environment. The Conference brought scholars, environmentalists, economists, politicians and educators among other specialists, women's groups, and concerned citizens together to discuss crucial topics. The three main panel discussions and workshops dealt with "Physical and Economic Aspects as related to Women and Environment", "Social and Political Aspects as related to Women and Environment", and "Media as related to Women and Environment".

The objective of the Conference "is first and foremost to raise awareness among Arab women and offer them knowledge and sound advice to be incorporated into the so-called daily or frequent habitual actions which reflect on the environment" stated Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, in her opening address. She insisted "It is not in vain that we hold this conference on Women and the Environment. The environmental

crisis, in its natural and biological aspects, is quite obvious and evident. The examples, conditions, unhealthy habits, modern technology and waste disposal politics are clear evidence of an acute crisis. . . . It is an entire network of interaction between population issues, as well as economic, political, scientific, social and educational issues. There is a need to focus on "environmental management", i.e. conscious, strategic decisions as opposed to habitual, unconscious actions." Abu Nasr referred to the active participation of Women in the Rio Global Forum, notably Tent Fermea, indicating that improvement on our national level would be a contribution to the world and for Mother Earth. She also noted that "What women do not know about the environment or about the various issues being raised in the world, is simply because they were not told about it. We could begin with Information and Education."

Mr. Samir Farah, Director of the Friederich-Ebert Foundation, on another hand, approached the issue from a macro-societal point of view with emphasis on women's absence from basic policy-making, politics, and the diplomatic corps. He explained that discrimination between men and women in society is largely a result of discrepancies in their respective levels of awareness, education and participation. He emphasized that this conference aims to motivate women's potentials and to promote their participation in public matters particularly those related to the

environment. Farah is optimistic that economic, humanitarian and environmental development can occur simultaneously and be consistent with political development. Such development is possible through programmes related to population issues, women and the general public's awareness and participation in developmental issues. Thus, "it is imperative at this point to elaborate on the developmental link between women and environment keeping in mind that environmental issues cannot be resolved without women who are dynamic and effective members of society".

Ms. Nayla Moawad, the newly-elected Deputy to Parliament is an earnest supporter of this Conference. . . . Moawad was a member, notably one of the most active members, of the Lebanese delegation at the Rio Summit. In her absence from the country, Dr. Fadia Kiwan presented the paper of Ms Moawad, which raised important points and demands. Hence, based on the discussions she participated in at the Summit, the primary roles of women in environmental issues were identified as: 1) women's direct relationship with the upbringing of future generations and therefore the production of environmentally conscious societies; 2) women's equal responsibility with men towards securing public policies and politics that insure environmental rights and protection for the people. The emphasis of the talks at the Rio Summit was on networking between people and governments and between



Left to Right: Dr. Mounir Khoury; Mr. Samir Farah; Mr. Marwan Hamadeh, Minister of Health and Social Affairs; Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr.; and Mr Hagop Jokhadarian

the various countries of the world. Based on these observations and findings, Moawad, questioned how long so-called other political priorities will keep us from securing the actual needs of the people of Lebanon of which healthy environmental parameters, civic education, economic assistance and health care are urgent. She commended the organizers of the Conference and urged them to produce sound resolutions which would be advanced and put forth for implementation.

The Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Mr. Marwan Hamadeh, congratulated the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the sponsors of the Conference for this bold and important initiative towards raising the issue of environment and women. He acknowledged the primary role of women in any environmental matter as half of the population and the primary managers of that environment. Hamadeh, indicated that women have

begun to participate in public and political mainstreams in Lebanon. In addition to the recent election of three women deputies, Hamadeh stated, there are a number of female consultants in the government, one ambassador, three chargee d'Affaire, and three consulates in the diplomatic corps. Hamadeh hoped that women would enter the Cabinet, which is due to be formed shortly after the Conference. He then spoke of the government's neglect of the environment and called upon the conferees to demand for the re-enactment of the ministry in question. He furthermore held the conferees responsible for pressuring the people in charge of health, nutrition, and social affairs to reserve attention to environmental concerns in their curricula's and in their agendas.

The Minister of Environment, while the Ministry was operational, Mr. Hagop Jokhadarian reminded the audience that "we do not inherit the environment but borrow it from our

children". Therefore, he called on the government and women to expand beyond the conventional, classical and traditional roles that have prevailed thus far. Women must be effective on a larger administrative level, not simply through their role as environmentally conscious mothers. He addressed the entire political network to pay precise and special attention to environment and women.

Evidently, the opening ceremony raised questions related to women-environment-politics simultaneously. Women's involvement in environment was advanced as both biological and social with a distinct emphasis on political activism. The general atmosphere presented the shortcoming of the government, women and society towards a healthy environment, identified the need to change and correct the situation and encouraged the participants, panelists and contributors to the Conference to promote awareness and public concern.

Following the opening ceremony an active environmentalist, organizer of the conference and the Chairperson of the Geology Department at the American University of Beirut, Dr. Mohamad Khawli gave the keynote address.

Khawli indicated that women, worldwide have not achieved equality as such although they form half of the population, i.e. 2.7 billion. Consequently, there are 600 million illiterate women as opposed to 350 illiterate men in the world, keeping in mind that women play a basic role in the lives of societies by virtue of their daily traditional duties and their child-bearing role. The environment is a part of this cycle. Hence, "If we review where environment has made the most progress and received the greatest degree of attention and awareness in the world, we notice that it is in those countries where women have achieved more in terms of equality, rights and participation".

Women's participation in development in general and environmental issues in particular, constitute substantial and essential support to the lives of people and societies. For instance, 14 million children die and 3 million are disabled because of precarious and polluted water, and food supplies.

Khawli listed the essential needs and requirements for an environmentally healthy society: 1) Reducing poverty; 2) Controlling population growth; 3) Organizing an egalitarian distribution of production; 4) Creating healthier and more educated people; 5) Decentralizing government projects in order to promote wider participation in development; 6) Resolving administrative problems related to distribution of local production; 7) Improving the relationship between the environment and life forms; 8) Producing sound solutions for environmental problems.



Dr. Mohamad Khawli

PANEL I: Physical and Economic Aspects as related to Women and Environment

Thursday October 8, 1992

The first panels included three prominent women in the field of economics. Mrs. Mona Khalaf concentrated on "Poverty and Development"; Dr. Fadwa MardamBeik Mansour spoke about "Women as an Economic Pressure Group"; and Dr. Wafa' Charafeddine discussed "Planning".

Khalaf - Poverty and Development - examined the effects of poverty on women and on environment. She presented worldwide statistics emphasizing that 85 percent of women in the world in the 80s earn less than ten dollars a year and work 60 to 80 hours a week to sustain family needs. Meanwhile the level of production have decreased by approximately 20 percent in continents like Africa while the population doubled. According to World Bank statistics, poverty is one of the leading cause of environmental deterioration. Hence, the struggle to survive is directly related to environmental deterioration which in turn is directly related to the deterioration of a healthy quality of life and living standard. To resolve the situation, Khalaf noted two requirements: 1) Improving political and public policies of under-developed and developing countries with respect to women. In this respect, women should not only be classified as victims of a bad environment, but as members of the development task. 2) Participation of international networks and governments to support and aid poor countries. Khalaf reminded the audience that each and everyone is a citizen of the world and therefore bear the responsibility of solving imminent problems. she concluded with a Rio Summit slogan "The question is not whether we can afford to do it; the question is, can we afford not to do it."



From left to Right: Dr. Mohamad Khawli; Ms. Mona Khalaf; Mr. Hagop Jokhadarian; Dr. Fadwa Mansour and Ms. Leila Saleeby Dagher, Director of Public Relations, BUC.

Mansour - Women as an Economic Pressure Group - dealt with pollution brought forth from the import of environmentally-unfriendly products and consumption habits from developed wealthy countries. She illustrated her point with the growing supply of convenient disposable products, what she called "one-way" products like Pepsi-Cola and Coca Cola bottles. There are no recycling facilities or environmental solutions for them. "In other words, we are consuming and using material which are produced by wealthy developed industrial countries for the convenience of their relatively wealthy consumer, as opposed to Third World standards. In turn, that technology and that wealth cause a significant portion of the pollution the world community is complaining about" she told us in a brief interview afterwards.

Consequently She felt there is a need for awareness, especially among women, with respect to these products and these habits. Only then can women, significant consumers,

become an environmentally-friendly economic pressure group affecting consumption patterns, production and related economic, social and environmental qualities of the society at large.

Charafeddine - Planning - discussed the absence of women in the planning force. She indicated that, generally speaking, men have been the planners and that planning is inherently linked with politics, political systems and people. Therefore, women do not play a leading role, by virtue of their limited participation and/or exclusion from these sectors. Consequently, the issue of the environment is rarely perceived as related to women as such but to the population at large. Women are largely concentrated in the administrative sectors of the planning machine and their influence does not extend beyond their technical and administrative expertise. Charafeddine warned against a passive role by women in the current phase of planning for the reconstruction of Lebanon.

PANEL II: Social and Political Aspects as related to Women and Environment

Friday October 9, 1992.

The second panel, "Social and Political Aspects as related to Women and Environment" included Dr. Huda Rizk on "Environmental Education and Women"; Dr. Lamia Mansour on "The Importance of Research in Environmental Development and the Role of Women in it"; and Dr. Fadia Kiwan on "Political Aspects related to Women and Environment"; Lawyer, Mr. Hyam Mallat on "Legislation for the Environment and the Role of Women in implementing and developing it".

Rizk - Environmental Education and Women - presented basic educational methods needed for a healthier environment: 1) The incorporation of environmental education in school curricula; 2) The preparation of educational programs using the media, radio and television; 3) Medical Care through public dispensaries to proper child care and healthy pregnancies for women; 4) Educating young females in population control issues such as family planning, spacing of pregnancies and birth control methods in order to counter population explosions and the consequent problems of poverty, etc . . . ; 5) Specifying minimum age of marriage in order to permit the young female to acquire knowledge in health, environment, and other health related matters.

Mansour - The Importance of Research in Environmental Development and the Role of Women in it - emphasized the importance and validity of research and data for the planning and implementation of environmental development. Research should attempt: 1) To



From Left to Right: Dr. Wafa Khoury; Dr. Huda Rizk, Dr. Lamia Mansour; Dr. Leila Azouri; Mrs. Hyam Mallat, Dr. Fadia Kiwan

identify the sources and causes of pollution; 2) To understand environmental processes and channels; 3) To design the scientific and proper channels for protecting and saving the environment, including natural means and human resources of which women are basic.

Kiwan - Political Aspects related to Women and Environment - began by questioning the relationship between the issues of "Women and politics"; "Women and the environment"; and "The environment and politics"?. At first instance they seemed very distant, she pointed, but the link can be seen in three important developments: 1) the Ascension of women to the political world; 2) The abundant presence of women in associations for the preservation of the environment and human rights; 3) The politization of environmental issues. Dr. Kiwan discussed each variable in details and raised interesting questions along the way. She noted that women in Lebanon did attain parliamentary posts, but are not members of the Cabinet, pointing out that Lebanon is the only country in the

Middle East where women have never participated in Cabinet. She warned against a pit-fall women could face with respect to the women-environment-politics argument. Hence, she wondered if taking a leading political interest in environmental issues would only serve to keep women away from other major and leading political responsibilities and decision-making posts?

Mallat - Legislation for the Environment and the Role of Women in implementing and developing it - pointed out that specific environmental laws as such have not been drafted, but there are certain regulations which are related to the environment and its protection. On women, Mallat said the well-being of our society is largely dependent on women and that these regulations are first steps towards saving the environment. Mallat, urged Conferees to pressure for the enactment of the Ministry of Environment saying it constitutes the first step and the legal prerequisite for planning, proposal and implementation of development, awareness and action programs and laws.

PANEL III: Media Aspects as related to Women and Environment



From Left to Right: Ms. Mirella Abdel Sater; Mr. Rafik Shlala; Ms. Sonia Beiruti; Ms. Mirna Semaan Habre; Mr. Ismael Al-Saghir

Saturday October 10, 1992

The third panel discussion included: Ms. Mirna Semaan Habre who presented a paper entitled "Promotion of the Environmental Development through Media and Education"; Mr. Ismael Al-Saghir who spoke about "The Role of Journalism in Environmental Education"; and Mr. Rafik Shlala who insisted on "The Importance of Environmental Education for Media People".

Habre - Promotion of the Environmental Development through Media and Education - warned against a random and unplanned approach to development and environmental projects. Hence, development projects should be specific and relevant to specific situation of the country in question. Development should entail cooperation between the government and the people and development organizations. The government should delegate responsibilities to the people to promote organized and reliable participation in development. In addition to its role as a disseminator and reporter of information, the media

in turn should act a guide and a critical observer of the relevance of the development.

Al-Saghir - The Role of Journalism in Environmental Education - noted that the problems have not reached the point of no return. However, environmental issues continue to have last priority on the media's agenda. Therefore, it is up to all those concerned to stimulate the media to transfer the issue from the news desk to that of primary national issues. In a pilot study, Al-Saghir noticed that the bulk of coverage prepared by female journalists as if to reinforce women's knowledge and relationship with the environment.

Shlala - The Importance of Environmental Education for Media People - strongly addressed the need to train and educate journalists, the members of the media and notably the students of the media in environmental education. He emphasized that the media's coverage of issues like the environment and women are rather brief and lack controversy. He attributed it to two factors: 1) the lack

of education and training of students of the media therefore, a weak background for relevant, efficient and effective coverage and reporting; 2) The issue of the environment does not produce the controversies and dialogues we notice in political, economic and social scandals reported by the media. Consequently, Shlala presented the conferees with a list of demands and resolutions they should bring forth to educational institutions and the government: 1) To incorporate environmental education in the school of journalism and media; 2) To hold public seminars for members of the various forms of media in the country; 3) To send delegations and groups of media people, to attend seminars in other countries with more experience in the relevant issues; 4) To produce a specialized press or release on environmental issues prepared in cooperation between the media, environmentalists and other specialists; 5) To administer and create an information network in the country; 6) To prepare programs on environment for radio and television; 7) To launch a public campaign on environmental issues. **R.A.H.**

Resolutions of the Conference

1. To call for the re-enactment of the Ministry of The Environment.

2. To pressure for the implementation of laws protecting the environment and the enforcement of penalties and fines on violators.

3. To form a committee in charge of coordinating between the various institutions and groups working for the environment.

4. To reactivate the center for industrial research and the organization for the supervision of environmental parameters and products.

5. To support the government and international associations which concentrate on environmental issues, consequently reinforcing and activating the efforts of the people working with them.

6. To call upon social, humanitarian and philanthropic organization to include the environment on their agendas.

7. To encourage women to participate in municipalities and coordinate between women's groups and community affairs.

8. To call upon political parties and groups to include the environment on their social and political agendas.

9. To perform a census of population and environmental conditions in the country.

10. To promote skills of women and increase their income in order to curtail further deterioration in their living standards.

11. To create public awareness about important environmental parameters and train women to play an active role in this respect.

12. To control production and consumption patterns in order to reduce waste.

13. To encourage local productions.

14. To include environmental education in public and private schools and at all the levels of education.

15. To call the Ministry of the Public affairs and the media itself to reserve space, time and attention to environmental issues in their schedules and programs•

On November 1, 1992 A new Cabinet was formed in Lebanon. The cabinet included a Ministry for Environmental Affairs

A Ministry for the affairs of people with special needs was also established in the cabinet.

List of Participants

Dr. Mohamad Khawli: Chairperson of the Department of Geology, American University of Beirut

Ms. Mona Khalaf: Economist and previously an instructor at Beirut University College

Dr. Fadwa Mansour: Economist and instructor at St. Joseph University, Beirut.

Dr. Wafa' Charafeddine: Town Planner and member of the Planning Committee of the Council for Reconstruction and Development in Lebanon.

Dr. Huda Rizk: Professor of sociology and politics at the Lebanese University.

Dr. Lamia Mansour: Environment researcher.

Dr. Fadia Kiwan: Professor of Politics at St. Joseph University, Beirut.

Mr. Hyam Mallat: Lawyer

Ms. Mirna Semaan Habre: Lecturer at Hagazian College, Beirut

Mr. Ismael Al-Saghir: Journalist

Mr. Rafik Shalal: Director of the National News Agency

chair of Panels

H.E Mr. Hagop Jokhadarian: Previous Minister of the Environment (Panel I)

Dr. Leila Azouri: Professor of Law, Lebanese University (Panel II)

Ms. Sonia Beiruti: Journalist (Panel III).

Dr. Hendrick Van der Kloet: Representative of UNDP

Dr. Mounir Khoury: Professor of Sociology

Rapporteurs

Dr. Wafa Khoury: Professor of Agriculture.

Ms. Mirella AbdelSater: Journalist

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College extends its appreciation to Mr. Samir Farah and The Friederich-Ebert-Stiftung, and Dr. Hendrick Van der Kloet and UNDP.

Arab Women and Literary Creativity



Yuman El-Eid of Lebanon giving a welcoming note at the opening ceremony.

Beirut, September 22-26, 1992

The streets of Beirut filled with banners announcing the opening of the long awaited Conference on Arab Women and Creativity. For four days the Conference hall filled with Arab scholars and writers some of whom had not visited Beirut in years. They came together with their Lebanese colleagues to share ideas, knowledge, praise and encouragement to the quality and quantity of women's participation in Arab literature.

The Conference, organized by the National League of Lebanese Writers and Authors and the General League of Arab Writers and Authors, was the first regional activity concentrating on women in Literature to be hosted by Beirut after the war. The participants, with women forming the majority, came from various Arab countries such as Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria,

Libya, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Lebanon of course.

Among the Key women expected to attend the Conference was Dr. Najah al-'Aattar, the Minister of Cultural Affairs in Syria, who herself is a writer. However, unable to attend, Dr. 'Aattar sent a word of support to the participants and to women in creative work. In her message, she noted that differentiation between feminine art and masculine art is narrowing hence bringing creativity to its essence, i.e. quality. This differentiation is being bridged even more by the liberal men who have come to acknowledge, rate and encourage the quality, not the sexuality, of women's creative work, she emphasized.

Speakers at the panels discussed various aspects of the issue such as: the historical development of women

in art and literature, notably short stories and novels. They also discussed gender images in literature and literary works of women. Hence, the titles of some of the papers were: Forms of Literature and sexual perception in Literature; The Novel and Woman; History and Development. Furthermore, some papers touched on specific arts in respective countries such as: The Courses of Creative Development of Lebanese Women; The Role of Women's Creativity in Jordanian Modern Art. Other prominent panelists from the Arab World told their personal experiences in literature and creativity.

The General atmosphere praised women's inherent and instinctive talents in the arts, reinforced them and encouraged its growth. The men at the conference urged women to speak up louder. After four days of deliberations and panels the Conferees made certain demands. Here are some of the resolutions:

1. The General League of Arab Writers and authors was called to organize more conferences and panels on the issue of Women and Creativity.
2. Future conferences and panels should be held in various Arab countries.
3. These panels should include issues of women's creativity in other forms of art such as Theater, Cinema and Modern art and Dansing.
4. Seminars and panels should be organized to conduct research and studies on the various aspect of the issues raised •

R.A.H

The Effects of War on Women in Lebanon

Paper presented by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr
at a Conference: "Pour Le Liban"

Montreal, Canada, October 18-23, 1992

Le Centre d'Etudes Arab pour le Developmnet (CEAD)/The Arab Center for Studies on Development organized a one week Conference entitled Pour Le Liban/For The Lebanon. The Conference covered a variety of topics and the works of a prominent Lebanese film producer, composer, economist, politician and researcher. Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of the Institute for women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University college presented the paper on the Effect of the War on Women and Children. Below is the chapter concerning the effect of war on women .

Everytime the issue of war comes up I remember Red Butler (Clark Gable) in the Classic *Gone with the Wind* warning the men at Tara against going to war. He tells them "when the war is over you will all ask yourselves why you fought it?" He also explained to them that the main accomplishment of wars is destruction and loss of lives.

Later as the movie unfolds, we witness Scarlet O'Hara cutting the drapes to sew her dress, spending her days painfully washing and cooking, cunningly maintaining whatever is left of the estate, giving destitute soldiers something to eat and a place to stay for the night, killing to save her family's life and property, caring for the sick, and teaching the children to read. And the punch that few might have noticed

is when her sister laments: "Why did this war happen, Why?"

The Lebanese woman, like Scarlet O'Hara radiated with life and beauty before the war. During the war and in a similar manner, she struggled to remain afloat, living under harsh circumstances and in the most destructive and discouraging conditions, without as much as a notice to her opinion about the political, military or economic mainstreams of war-society. But like Scarlet O'Hara, the Lebanese woman saved the most precious things in life: the family and her integrity and consequently her country, her Tara.

The comparison of *Gone With The Wind* with the History of the war in Lebanon, and Tara with the condition of the country or Scarlet with the Lebanese woman is not meant to be comic. It is far from being a visual description of the war of Lebanon or of its people notably the women, but it provides an idea of what the women went through and how they coped.

When we speak of war and society and when we decide to concentrate on women being half of the population and an integral segment of society we are incumbered with conceptual and practical variables. It is complex and we therefore must divide our issue into parts and the parts into chapters. The first part can comprise the Effects of the War on Women with chapters analyzing psychological effects, stress syndromes as well as economic, political, employment, education, health, infrastructure, environment,

child care, social customs, humanitarian activities, legal and human rights, not to mention gender relations. The second part involves the Coping Strategies, both intentional and unintentional. The chapters of this part would represent the actual developments and unfoldings of Part I.

Hence, the situation is paradoxical because, along with the laws of destruction, new pro-life laws of survival emerge, affirming the never-ending human ability to start from scratch time after time all over again (1). The involvement of the women of Lebanon in the laws of destruction was practically inexistent. They did not initiate the war nor encouraged it. In fact it disregarded their existence altogether. Women had no say when the war started, neither in the decision-making processes nor in the efforts to achieve reconciliation. Their roles were that of a recipient of the consequences and the outcomes of the war on one hand, and maker and manufacturer of the laws of survival on the other hand.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON WOMEN:

In very simple terms, the war made life extremely difficult not to mention dangerous. It caused at least partial destruction of the country's infrastructure. In addition to loss of safety and security, basic domestic facilities were most hardly hit. Hence, food supplies had to be secured in

very hazardous conditions, water supply, electricity and their safety measures were barely available. Sending the children to school became a daily ordeal for the parents as well as the children. And the list goes on. Women being the basic managers of domestic and family affairs were under tremendous pressure and had to rely on primitive and other resourceful means to secure their needs. "It was difficult to satisfy even life's elementary needs but the extremity of the situation channelled women's inventiveness and initiative. They adapted traditional methods meant for a different era and environment, the war-torn environment(2)"

Another major effect on the women was the absence of men and husbands. Hence, a majority of the men went off to battle, and many died leaving widows with families to sustain. Others migrated to work overseas in the Gulf, Africa, Europe and the Americas in order to financially sustain their families. Women were suddenly heads of families, with little if any previous experience or preparation. With inflation rising to 300 percent in the mid-80s (reaching 1,000 percent in 1992) in the midst of the war, financial resources became scarce. Many women had to leave their home and secure jobs. Consequently, Lebanese urban cities witnessed an increase in female Labor force participation. In a sample survey conducted in 1990 in Beirut and including women from the various parts and religious groups of the city the main reason for working was financial and economic need. Eventually, women were establishing private business enterprises and climbing up the ladder of corporate hierarchy.

In the traditional rural villages, young girls becoming ripe for marriage according to social customs also suffered from the absence of



appropriate male suitors. The consequence proved to be a positive development for them for they resorted to seeking higher education. Consequently, gender division of student approached a 1 to 1 ratio in the universities and increased furthermore in secondary schools which were usually characterized by a significant drop-out of female students approaching the traditional age of marriage.(3)

COPING STRATEGIES

The most tragic effect of the war on rural Lebanese women was displacement. Over 700,000 Lebanese were forced to move away from their towns and villages of origin and settled haphazardly in the capital, its suburbs and Mount Lebanon.(4) These women were fortunately approached by grass root organizations and NGOs like our Institute, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World to



the collapsing structures of the Lebanese society. They patched up the lack of adequate social and medical services by volunteering to work in social welfare organizations both national and international, such as the Red Cross, the YWCA, The Child Welfare Association, The Child Care Association, Family Planning Association, Catholic Relief Services, Near East School of Theology, Terre des Hommes, The United Nations Development Program, and various women's groups in the South, Mountain, the North and the Bekaa(5)

They coordinated relief actions for refugees and displaced families by providing food rations, blankets, clothes, medical treatment and shelter. The able women even travelled overseas to collect help, funding and to stay up-to-date with educational developments and other sustainable development programmes.

Lebanese women also protested war activities by sending communiques which were all left unanswered. Peace marches organized by individual and women's groups were shrewdly dismantled by angry war-profiteering politicians.

Women resumed schools at the beginning of the war in 1975, after a long period of closure. Hence, in November 1975, one school opened after few women teachers decided to perform their duties as well as possible. The school soon swarmed with children and other schools followed suit.

Women also form the majority of school teacher. As a Professor in a University, a trainer of pre-school teachers and a consultant for schools in the country and the region I am proud to confirm the gigantic, super-human diligence of the women to

help them sustain their families and integrate them in the labor force. Based on intensive market research to insure the relevance and need for these skills, displaced semi-literate women were subjected to training workshops. They were taught embroidery, knitting, operating factory machines and other similar skills. The workshops were complimented with instructions in basic living skills in home management, child care, family planning, health, nutrition,

environment, law and legal rights from a kit produced by the Institute. Finally, the Institute helped them secure jobs and market their products. Thus far at least 500 to 1,000 women have benefited from this project in a short time of 3 years.

As far as military conflicts were concerned, Lebanese women reserved the largest portion of humanitarian and medical, first aid assistance. What women achieved was to hold together

keep schools and classes going against all security odds, to maintain a respectable and advanced level of education and to deal with all traumatic situations and reactions of children and students caused by war conditions.

Probably the greatest achievement of Lebanese women is inside their homes. Their determination to provide all the necessary physical needs, they insured that children, especially those at vulnerable ages had a home to return to. Many women would tell tales of how they saved their husbands, children and relatives from swaying under the influence of fraudulent and destructive circumstances and people around them. Despite the absence of law and order, civil codes of behavior were maintained to the best possible level. It is true that chaos did produce some anomie or alienation from accepted norms and values by releasing latent aggression in adults as well as children, but generally speaking, the situation could be much worse.

Women's sacrifices and strict attention to family needs saved the family structure in Lebanon. The family is the most powerful and important social unit in Middle Eastern society. Therefore, by saving it the Lebanese women saved the country and its future.

My mind becomes crowded with all the relevant details, actions, achievements, resourcefulness of Lebanese women and how they survived the war. The list of achievements they performed is long. They sustained an entire country on the constant brinks of collapse in a never-ending and ever-increasing state of chaos and anarchy. And in the process they lost loved ones, homes and personal opportunities. They did all of this in a predominantly patriarchal society that values men more than women. Yet the Scarlet O'Haras of Lebanon proved themselves well in

their countries and in the International community.

In post war Lebanon, the women are reaching political posts only recently three women became members of the newly elected Parliament. They are raising their voices to have the Lebanese government ratify the convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, are getting directly involved in the worldwide and natural campaign for a cleaner, and safer environment, and they promise to ratify discriminating legislation curtailing women's civil rights notably to conduct business transactions without the required endorsement of a man. In an interview conducted with at least one of the female deputies, they were determined to have major involvement in decisions concerning national and international affairs such as the return of the displaced to their homes, the retreat of foreign forces from Lebanon, the preservation and improvement of the educational system, the battle against a soaring inflation and an acute economic crisis, and other national issues.

Some may contribute the

development and mobility of Lebanese women in the government, the labor force, the economy, education and health to the war, thus having created a gap for women to fill by virtue of men's absence. But the women themselves have historically been demanding a share in the country's development and have therefore been preparing, achieving higher education in all fields, traditional, and non-traditional and struggling to reach high positions in society by whatever means possible and grabbing every opportunity •

(1) Gaston Bouthoul, *Mentalities*, Collection Que Sais-Je Paris, 1980, Wafa Stephan, *Al-Raida*, Editorial, November 1, 1984, No. 30.

(2) Juliette Haddad, sociologist, *Al-Raida*, November 1, 1984, No. 34.

(3) Hanania, *Women and Education in Lebanon*, monograph by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1980.

(4) Iskandar and Baroudi, 1984.

(5) *Al-Raida*, August 1980 "Women as Peace Makers".



Kuwaiti Women Want To Vote and Join The Parliament

Kuwait, Monday October 5, 1992

During the elections in Kuwait, hundreds of women demonstrated for the right to vote and to be elected to parliament. They marched the streets towards the various voting booths holding bright and colorful banners which said: *We will be joining you in 1996* and *Men and women together in Parliament in 1996*.

The editor of a national Kuwaiti newspaper, -- Al-Watan, i.e. The Nation -- Ms. Fatima Hussein, one of the organizers of the demonstration said that this public protest is simply a call for the present candidates and voters to ratify voting laws to allow women to exercise their political rights.

The right to vote of Kuwaiti women was on the agenda of the meeting between the Prince of Kuwait, H.R.H Abdallah Salem Al-Sabbah and Secretary of States, James Baker on the visit of the first American delegation to Kuwait after its liberation. At the time, Baker announced that women's rights to vote and to participate in politics was among the priorities of post-war Kuwait.

However, in the midst of reconstruction, the women's issue did not bloom. The old government delegated it to the new government-elect. However, the opposition expects that ratifications will provide women with the right to vote but not the right to be elected and participate directly in politics •

R.A.H

Symposium on Women, Employment and Development in the Arab Countries

Amman, Jordan December 16-18, 1991

Under the patronage of her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal, and the joint efforts of the Arab Association for Women and Development (AWAD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), a symposium entitled "Women, Employment and Development in the Arab countries" was held in Amman.

The symposium is a result of research studies revealing that women have not played a complete role pertaining to their level of education, in the economic and social fields and that national development plans in many Arab countries have not permitted them to do so.⁽¹⁾ Thus, Women's contribution to the Labour force has remained 10-15 percent despite the growth and development.⁽²⁾

The objective was to identify the extend of women's contribution to development planning and their role in future plans at the national level. Contribution in economic activities, international labour standards related to women, effects of childbirth and women's productivity on socio-economic levels, status of women in labour legislation and vocational training for women in the Arab countries, were major topics of discussion and deliberation.

Hence, discussions reviewed employment opportunities and conditions. Furthermore, it became evident that Arab women's participation in the industrial sector is

generally low; that unofficial work is not reported in official statistics and that participation in the agricultural sector is low even in countries where women traditionally engage in agriculture. The service sector, on the other hand, is characterized by heavy concentration of female labour, especially in the social and voluntary services subsectors.

Reproductive and productive behavior of women differ between rural and urban areas. Thus, the interrelationship between fertility and labour is not manifested among rural women, but appeared evident among urban women in the Arab countries. Fertility of urban women is low compared to rural women engaged in agricultural activities. On vocational training, it was found that educational systems in Arab Countries lack programmes that combine theoretical education with vocational training to produce qualified workers who will contribute to the development process.⁽³⁾

The symposium ended by stressing the importance of Arab cooperation in matters related to the labour market and to integrate the market and full utilization of potential capabilities of the Arab society. It also called for enabling women to benefit from the achievements of development by occupying advanced positions at the decision-making levels in the various Arab countries •

(1) Final Report, Symposium on "Women, employment and Development in the Arab Countries, Amman, Arab Association for women and Development, International Labour Organization ILO, p.3.
(2) Ibid, p.5. (3) Ibid. p.9

Workshop to Train Women towards effective Participation in Syndicates

organized by Suzanne Abu Fadel



Ms. Suzanne Abu Fadel

Lebanon, The Frederick-Ebert-Stiftung
October 23-25, 1992

Suzanne Abu fadel is an employee at the Coral Oil Company and a member of the Executive Council of its employees' and workers' syndicate. On another level and under the support and sponsorship of the Friederich-Ebert Foundation, she trains women in syndicate organization, activities and laws in order to prepare them and promote efficient and effective participation in their respective syndicates. We met Ms. Abu Fadel at our recent conference on Women and the Environment and spoke to her to get a better idea about her work.

She told us that her skills stem from a six months course in syndicate work followed by workshops in Italy, Switzerland and Belgium. "In those workshops I saw and learned how women's demands and rights are organized and incorporated into syndicate and union agendas. I realized that women are not effectively participating in our syndicates and unions in Lebanon because they do not have sufficient knowledge about their rights and duties; about employee and employers rights and duties, nor about the purpose, role and procedures of syndicates demands and activities. When I came back from Europe I proposed to conduct seminars which

would teach women and train them to take an active role in their respective syndicates."

She provided us with the proposal she prepared for the workshops where she depicts the background of women's involvement in Lebanese syndicates and the obstacles, solution and methods to promote women's effectiveness in syndicate activities.

In the section examing the history of women's participation in sydicates she reports that the first appearance of women occured in a strike by the Tobacco Syndicate in 1947. The women confronted police fire which caused one women, Ms. Warda Butros Ibrahim, to be killed and many others to be wounded. By 1967 the number of women in the Lebanese Worker's Union reached 250. This number has increased significantly on a national level but women remain absent from decision-making positions. The most prominent woman in a Lebanese syndicate, today, is Ms. Mary Leila Khoury, who was elected President of the Syndicate of Lebanese Pharmacists in August 1991.

Nevertheless, membership alone does not mean an active involvement and women are still relatively inactivite, Ms. Abu Fadel points out. Women must participate and be active to secure their demands and their employment and economic rights. "Even in the European countries that I visited where women have secured equality under the law, syndicate activities and participation serve the purpose of supervising, lobbying and activating for the implementation of these laws." she reports.

The obstacles preventing women from Syndicate work are:

1. Lack of time allocated to the

relevant training.

2. Abundance of responsibilities and duties in the family,

3. Lack of family participation in public issues

4. Inside the Syndicates:

a) Inconvenience of time and place of meetings

b) Men's monopolization of administrative and leadership positions

c) Absence of women's representation

d) Interest in general issues and neglect of specific issues related to women such as: discimination on the job, unequal pay for equal work, absence of day care centers.

The suggested solutions involve:

1. Conducting workshops, meetings and training programs for women in syndicates.

2. Training in the organization and division of labour in the family

3. Convincing husband and other family members to participate in public panels and social activities,

4. Inside the syndicate:

a) Choosing convenient places and time for meetings

b) Conducting seminars and workshops training men to include women and cooperate with them at work and in syndicate duties.

c) Giving women an equal share in leadership positions

d) Creating awareness with

respect to women's rights and needs.

The workshops discuss all of these problems and solutions. They offer the candidates knowledge in syndicate rights, duties, work, purpose and activities; review the work and activities of syndicates; prepare agendas of demands and needs as well as strategies to meet them; train in syndicate activities, educational requirements, environmental issues, etc. ...

Thus far, there have been two workshops for women , the last being in October 23-25 and a third is scheduled in November 13-15, 1992. If succesfull, the trainees themselves are bound to mobilize more women to join and take active part in the syndicates. Ms. Abu Fadel's work and emphasis are relatively new in the country. The need for such programmes is trumendous and Ms. Abu Fadel may be a pioneer and a catalyst for promoting, even further, women's participation and development in society •

R.A.H



Women's Rights and Status, The Environment, Physical Disabilities, Drug Abuse, and Leadership:

Seminars in the Retreat of the National YWCA Youth Leadership:

Reported by Laura Abdallah and Mona Katul

Lebanon, September 19-21, 1992

The Youth Leadership Committee of the National YWCA of Lebanon organized a weekend retreat for thirty youth members representing six out of eight centers in Lebanon: Ain Mraisseh, Ashrafieh, Hadath, Byblos, Tripoli, and Tyre while Ablah of the North and Marjayoun of the South were absent from this occasion. The meeting took place in September 19-21, 1992 at the Rockland Hotel in Meshmesh, Byblos area

The main objective of the retreat was to get acquainted with youth members from other Y centers, and to learn about their various activities in a relaxing and clean environmental context. Guest speakers were invited to give presentations and workshops pertaining to topics of vital interest to the groups and the benefit of the community. Maitre Jacqueline Masabki opened the seminar with an interesting lecture on the rights of women in the Lebanese law. The participants were eager to know about the rights of women with respect to marriage, divorce, child adoption, equal opportunities for work, wages



and professional advancement.

The second speaker was Dr. Ilham Kallab who traced the status of women from a historical and religious perspective outlining the differences between males and females from the Jahiliyah to modern times.

The third session of the seminar was devoted to the environment in general with emphasis on what was being done in Lebanon at the present time. Dr. Mohamad Khawli, Chairman of the Geology Department at the American University of Beirut and Maitre Abdallah Zakhya chaired the discussion. A documentary film, that was released on television the following week, was shown to the participants and a lively discussion followed. As a result of the important

issues that emerged and the need for urgent action, youth members pledged to undertake an awareness campaign in schools and in the various YWCA centers, the material for which is being prepared by the Lebanese environmentalists.

The fourth session was devoted to the problems of drug abuse in Lebanon. Father Benoit Succar was invited to give an up-date on measures that are being undertaken and on rehabilitation programs available in the country. In turn, the participants reported on the implementation of the WYCA Drug Awareness and Prevention Campaign. This campaign has been active during the past year and involved preparing educational materials for use by school groups and the media, towards stopping the

spread of this serious social problem. The seminar ended with a session on how to deal with physically handicapped persons. Ms. Jamileh Tannous, who lost her sight at the age of twelve, shared with Y members her experience and her guidelines for enhanced communication with compassion towards the physically impaired.

In addition to the guest speakers, the youth leaders themselves were indirectly acquiring leadership skills by way of chairing the sessions, keeping order during the lectures, enabling the discussions and steering the various tasks of the seminar. Moreover, the beauty of our Lebanese mountains and the relaxing natural setting were an added asset and inspiration •



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Out of the Margins by Jane Aaron and Sylvia Walby, eds.

Reviewed by Rose Ghurayyib

There is an Arabic proverb which says "one candle can shine over two or even ten (people)." The candle in this proverb represents the male sex, whose presence can illuminate two or even ten females and whose absence means complete darkness.

The patriarchal system, which supposedly started eight thousand years ago, gave men complete priority over women. Only men could enjoy freedom, even when they were not worthy of it; while women, even those who enjoyed a high social status, wealth, education and other worldly favors, had and still have to submit to a male guardian, i.e. a father, a brother, a husband or a son. Manhood has always been a blessing, though the male might be a worthless fellow, while womanhood is viewed as a curse, though the woman might possess the most rare qualities of body and mind.

The book "Out of the Margins: Women's Studies in the Nineties⁽¹⁾", tells the emergence of the women's liberation Movement, followed by that of Women's Studies as a major growth area for higher education in the 70s and the 80s. Its aim has been to revolutionize modern education by introducing and emphasizing a woman's view of the world.

This book deals mainly with the state of women's studies in general and in Britain in particular, where it was produced with the cooperation of a group of feminists and women's studies teachers and researchers.

What is Women's Studies? (2) It is a recent discipline which developed during the last two decades as a corollary to the Women's Liberation Movement, of which it also forms the backbone or essential part. It started at a university level in the United States, spread into Europe and has invaded two associated but distinct areas of education: adult education and access. Access courses are the most recent development in attempts to attract adult students into higher education without the standard entrance requirements.

The contents of Access courses include humanities, social science and computing in addition to areas such as women's history and women's health. They reach out to the working class and black women.

Aims of the Women's Studies defined: Virginia Woolf, in a "Room of One's Own," suddenly realizes the importance of social power involved in a sudden moment of consciousness, when from being the natural inheritor of civilization, she becomes, on the

contrary, outside of it, alien and critical (Woolf, 1929). Hence, Women's Studies try to examine the factor behind woman's alienation and the critical attitude toward civilization, while seeking the ways to eliminate those factors.

The most important objectives of Women's Studies:

1. To review sharing experiences; Examine the experience of women, particularly their experience of oppression; try to explain differences and similarities, utilize alternative perspectives based on women's experience and feminist theory. Knowledge gained from experience is the distinguishing feature of an integrated approach to the study of women by women.
2. To analyze government social politics, the law and the media concerning sexual harassment, equal opportunities, regulation of women's sexuality, mental health, physical and sexual value or pornography.
3. To be adventurous in our search for appropriate methodologies to use with students; accepting the student as co-researcher, whose findings can become original contributions.

4. To draw upon other disciplines and extending the boundaries of our knowledge as teachers. We need to work with women from other disciplines not only in the design of our courses but through joint teaching; to familiarize ourselves with them and engage in time-based workshops and symposia.

5. Our methods of assessment should reflect the learning situations which our students encounter. Learn appropriate methods for evaluating cooperative projects, student research, the value of each student's skills, and to regard ourselves as participants in the learning process alongside our students.(p.41-48)

Why women's studies should be maintained?

1. Because women are still paid three quarters of the wages of men and are still largely excluded from political power.

2. Because W.S⁽³⁾ allows women a space in the academy, a space in schools and paid work uninterrupted by domestic duties.

3. Men learn patterns of behavior designed to maximize chances of promotion while women are deprived of this training.

4. W.S. challenges the dominant culture. It is against categorization, against sexual discrimination, against class and race differentiation. It arouses consciousness of the structured inequalities of advanced capitalist society. It considers racism as "a process of systematic oppression directed toward people who are defined as inferior, usually in pseudo-biological terms such as skin color." The term refers to much more than skin color. It refers to a shared experience

of racism through which oppressed people join together and interpret politically.

5. The slogan of the Women's Liberation Movement is "The personal is the political". It points out the necessity of women's involvement in politics. Women's Studies demands that this slogan be extended into a bigger phrase "The personal is the intellectual", which means changing the lives of real women by improving the political, socio-economic and psychological status of women worldwide.

Women's Claims

1. Promotion of a feminist perspective in all teaching and research.

2. Promotion of Women's Studies in higher education.

3. Equal representation of women in education at every level of hierarchy.

4. Establishment of a feminist lexicon from the basis of a databank of terminology from feminist teachings.

5. Full use of existent European Community structures and projects from Women's Studies.

6. Democratic pedagogy in a non-libertarian institution.

The social advantages of mixed schooling are far outweighed by the academic disadvantages for girls. Mixed schools actually reduced the chances of women teachers holding senior and powerful positions. Women are very under-represented within the domain of governance and authority. Often the total absence of

women is, for example, in engineering, land surveying and technology.

"An education that is to respond to the needs of women must make available the values of academic work but also must, quite deliberately, put these values at risk in the context of feminism." (p.52)

International dimensions of w.s.

In the United States of America, there are more than 30,000 "Women's Studies" courses and close to 600 programmes including an increasing number of MA and Ph.D. programmes and over 150 research centers.

This large national movement insists on becoming international, on continuities and communalities. Hence, they use such slogans as "Sisterhood is Global," "Sisterhood is Powerful," and follow guidelines such as: enlarging our framework, listening to women from other countries like India, Egypt, etc . . . , recognizing the numbing effect of technology and looking for communalities instead of differences.

The movement takes special interest in studying women's exploitation, particularly in Third World countries: sex determination, pornography, dowry, suttee (the custom of Hindu widow willingly cremating herself), sexual abuse, rape, prostitution, with the aim of enlightening people regarding the harmfulness of these practices and the ways to eliminate them.

In Britain, Women's Studies is a challenge to the status quo, a road to change. Why? Because British conservatism has stood against W.S.

OUT OF THE MARGINS

Women's Studies in the Nineties



EDITED BY
**JANE AARON &
SYLVIA WALBY**

 The Falmer Press

expansion and used discrimination against women in all areas of life. Only sixteen percent of university lecturers are women and a mere three percent of professors. Polytechnics are more responsive to new developments. The representation of women drops as you go up the hierarchy. Only fifteen percent of the population have any higher education, one of the lowest in Europe.

"Women's Movement" is a fighting force against all forms of discrimination. It brings together women of every class, race and sexuality.

Academic institutions in England are concerned with reproducing a patriarchal elite to take over positions of power. Women's Studies courses do however challenge this elite from the margins of the academic world, and courses are expanding both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Women's Studies challenge the unrepresentative nature of higher educational institutions. It challenges the academic criteria by which power is maintained as well as the separation between private and public. If women have to obtain equal opportunities, men will have to step out of their ivory towers and take on equal responsibilities for housework and child care. The separation between housework and outside work will have to be broken down.

Immense forces in the British universities are against women's or feminist renaissance. The Equal Opportunity Unit, that was set up to implement the policy drawn up by feminists, has been disbanded. The Women's Studies Unit can only concentrate on courses. It has been transferred to within a faculty. Yet, important steps have been taken towards the provision of a different

kind of education. It is now possible to specialize in Women's Studies, for feminist theory is no longer dismissed as nonsense, the degree of programme has attracted a large number of applicants. In Britain, there are now eighteen institutions of higher education where W.S. is offered; they include universities, colleges and polytechnics. There are informal groups not necessarily connected to the academy, but whose work results in publications on activities related to Women's Studies. Feminist publishers are flourishing and feminist writers are promoted nationally.

W.S. in continental Europe

In France, lively feminist research is being carried out in four major cities.

In Holland, W.S. is taking root with 200 feminist researchers and 13 professors of Women's Studies.

In Belgium, "Les Cahiers du Griff" a French language feminist journal, is based in Brussels, where women's lobby is far stronger than at Westminster, England.

In Denmark, women's research centers exist in all of Denmark's five universities.

In Italy, most of the W.S. centers are outside the university.

In Spain, major funding has been allocated to women's Studies.

In Germany, feminist research is well established.

Greek feminists are struggling to create a base.

There is no Women's Liberation

Movement in Portugal.

Concluding Remarks

1. The provision of Women's Studies courses is an opportunity to make women visible, to challenge the way disciplines have excluded a feminist perspective and deprived women from the management of institutions and curricula.

2. Women's Studies and Feminist Research have similar areas of strength: sociology and the humanities; the same areas of weakness: research in science and technology.

3. Women's Studies reflect women's desire to share information and developing collaborative work. How far have they succeeded in realizing their wish?

4. All we have in common are the differences between theory and practice, North versus South, academic versus political, divided by national concerns and by language.

5. The political climate in the 80s carries an enormous problem: lack of adequate resources and of government support.

The best remains relative. Feminists are not satisfied. An important criterion is to fit in with the present dominant elite •

(1) *Out of the Margins Women's Studies in the Nineties*. Jane Aaron and Sylvia Walby, eds. 1991, New York: The Palmer Press.

(2) The term women's studies is used as a singular word throughout the book.

(3) W.S. stands for Women's Studies

The Pendulum

By Suha Naimy Haddad (*)

Shelling is at its peak outside. The candle light in the shelter flutters once to the left, another to the right, afraid of being strangled, trying to escape the invisible hand. I can see it playing shadows on the iced-staring faces around. It digs its way transparently through thick walls of darkness. How can such fragility penetrate such thickness? It tilts its body so graciously as it spells whispers and temptations. I can hear its murmurs: "Wake up Suha, feel life, feel warmth."

I was too nervous to answer and neglected its encouragement. I simply waved a gesture, "Go away," . . . and it curved its way far, far away from me. SILENCE . . .

I listened carefully to the sounds of sighs, of darkness. Everything was moving along with the slow rhythm of my heart.

- "It's your turn, Suha," uttered one of the neighbors.

It was my turn to shuffle the cards. As I shuffled, reshuffled and distributed the cards, I could feel its cold breath ticking tick, tick, tick, . . . My heart responded do-dj, do-dj, do-dj, do-dj. . . What an enchanting symphony these two compose!

Every now and then, amidst the shelling outside and the giggles of the fearers inside, I used to steal a look at the clock on the wall, to watch its pendulum move steadily left and right, in perfect symmetry and rhythm, with incredible precision. If only I . . .

- Hey Suha, it's your turn, where are you?
- Yes. I'm sorry. I was thinking of something else.

. . . And I would continue my game of cards with the aces and the hearts in the grab of my hand, assured that the clock is still ticking. Bombs are still falling heavily outside and it still . . . Shh, listen to it: tick, tick, tick, tick, . . . Children crying, playing; Parents praying, shouting, pleading . . . tick, tick, tick, tick, What harmony, what persistence.

"SUHAA" calling me. I woke up from my trance

- What is wrong with you?
- What are we playing cards? I asked.
- What do you mean? we are trying to kill time.
- Kill time? Can we do that?
SILENCE. . . We're too arrogant in claiming we can kill time.
- What do you want us to do? Sit and stare at the wall?
- But we can never kill time; Time kills us. We can never count minutes; Minutes count us.
- Who cares. They count us, we count them; Just play, will you?

I kept my silence. My heart was pumping faster. Cold sweat slipped on my body. Bombardment was extremely intense. I need reassurance; I need stability; I need the clock on the wall.

Its pendulum was still moving. How heavy is its movement and how swift. Funny, how unity is obtained through contrasts: day and night, black

and white, man and woman, positive and negative, or are these continuations? Do not name things, Suha. Things are what they are, broader than any definition.

I imagined the pendulum as Dr. Eckelberg's eyes (from Fitzgerald's book *The Great Gatsby*). I felt them watching me; they pierced my flesh and bones and saw what was beyond; They saw facts I never dared to face, or even bothered and wanted to know they existed. His eyes scared me. I looked away; I avoided eye-contact, but I could still feel his eyes watching me from far, still steady, heavy and swift. I whispered to myself: get busy Suha. do not look in time's eyes. You'll be blinded; You'll be swept away. At that time, I felt a cold breath breathing down my neck, and a strange sort of music coming from Dr. Eckelberg's eyes. I looked at them. My eyes stared, my body shook, my heart, my heart; Where is my heart? I can't catch my breath. What happened? Why did the pendulum stop? I need to feel its stability, its persistence; It gives me courage. My heart is beating alone now; Where is the ticking? What happened to my symphony? Will I survive? I am petrified. somebody, somewhere help me. I am suffocating. Now the pendulum stands still; No ticking, no moving, no tranquility, no coldness, no warmth, no nothing. I looked at the people around. I saw lips moving, gestures waving, but I could not hear any words, nor understand any signs. I felt myself alone, yet surrounded by tens. I focussed on those around, but they were distant, a blurred vision.



Where am I? I asked myself.

(No answer)

- Did I step out of time? Why isn't the pendulum moving? Am I dead or alive? What is death? Could the pendulum be moving, but I am unable to see it, in the way that I cannot hear the moving, seemingly soundless lips.
- Stop asking. Look within.
- Who is this?
- I am Dr. Ickelberg.
- But you're supposed to be on the wall.
- I'm everywhere and nowhere. You are my wall. I exist with you, I don't exist with you.
- I'm afraid I don't understand. How can you be in me? There is no one in me but me; And how can you exist and not exist. You're not making any sense.
- There are two yous in you. A major and a minor. An eternal timeless free one, and another timed to starve if not fed.
- Excuse me?
- Who are you?
- What do you mean? My name is Suha and . . .
- Is this who you are? SILENCE . . .
- Why are you here?

- Because there are bombs outside.
- No, I mean here in this so-called existence.
- Well, I'm here to . . . to fulfill myself.
- And then?
- Then, I die.
- If you die in the end, why are you born in the first place?
- W . . . Well; That's the law of nature.
- People are batteries. You are a battery.

I felt absolutely humiliated.

- Dr. Ickelberg; Certainly I'm not a battery! I'm a human being.
- You are my battery; A vital element for my motion, for my existence. Whenever the battery is out of function, I wisely and selfishly refill you to refunction; You make me, and I make you, but not you.
- Did I trespass life to be talking to you?
- No. I'm in there, in your center. You can abolish me whenever you like.

The echo grew further.

I looked around, indeed, people are

machines that are functioning. I felt myself a shadow in the world of non-existence, seen yet not seen, alive yet not alive, as if belonging to another world. Am I dead? I can hear bombs falling in a distance and I can feel panic and fear; or are these echoes of my past life? Beside me my mother sits with the radio in her lap, holding it with strange attachment and passion as if a newborn. I look at the faces around. Panic is the headline, people are moving like muppets, but what story or what director? How can we move without knowing why, what?

I still feel myself alone. I am still watched, still lost in my existence, still wondering where I am. Am I dead, or am I alive? Why did the clock on the wall stop? I am lost. I am scared. Where am I? •

(*) Suha Naimy Haddad is a writer, a painter and play writer. she holds a Bachelors of Arts in Mass Communication and is working on her Master's degree in Philosophy. She is the granddaughter of the famous philosopher, poet and writer, Mikhail Naimy.

Al-Raida Evaluation Questionnaire

With this issue Al-Raida completes its first year in the new enlarged format and its seventeenth year of publication. In order to examine your opinions, requests and comments and in order to assess to what extent Al-Raida serves its purpose as an Arab women's newsletter, we kindly ask you to answer following questionnaire. Kindly complete and return the form to the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University college, P.O.Box 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon. Thank you for your cooperation.

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