

A New Feminist Party in Cairo ⁽¹⁾: Open to men also

The creation of the first political women's party since the July Revolution has been announced in Cairo. Its provisional name will be: "Jam'iyyat-Tadhamun-el-Mar'a (Association of Women's Solidarity). The founding committee includes a number of women writers, journalists, artists and university professors. Among them are Nawal Saadawi who will probably take on the presidency; Malak Abdul Aziz, a well-known poet, wife of the late author Muhammad Mandour; Ni'mat Ahmad Fouad, writer and political leader; Suad Zuhair, Journalist and activist; Atiyat Abnudi, artist and film producer; Amira Matar, chairperson of the philosophy department at Ain-Shams University and Muna Abu Sunna, instructor of English literature at Ain-Shams.

The aim of the Association, according to Dr. Saadawi, is to point out woman's achievements, to encourage her further activity, break the chains that impede her action, rid social and behavioral values of vulgar patterns which threaten the family, and build a new, authentic feminine personality, free from complexes and unhampered by sexual discrimination.

The creation of this Association seems necessary at a time when reactionary movements are inducing women to "go back home". "Our movement," says Dr. Saadawi, "aims to revive and expand the efforts of women pioneers who struggled to ensure our emancipation. We want to participate in economic, social and cultural development at this crucial moment when rising economic problems demand the participation of both men and women".

Membership in the Association is not restricted to women. Men who believe that the country's development depends on women as well as on men, may join. Rural women and female industrial workers are invited to join urban women professionals and employees, in handling problems which are common to all and those which are peculiar to a single group.

1. From an article published in *Al-Wattan*, (a daily paper appearing in Kuwait) Feb. 14, 1983.

Women in North Yemen : Progress and Problems

"A new era has dawned for women in Democratic Yemen but the obstacles to progress are many."

So declared Mrs. Atiqa Esh-Shami, President of the Yemeni Women's Association, in an interview with a correspondent from *Al-Jawhara* (Jewel), the women's magazine published in Qatar, one of the Gulf States.

"The doors of education," she continued, "are open wide for them, from the elementary to the university level. Our women show great interest in education and in work. A fair number of university graduates occupy advanced positions in the government and elsewhere. Another factor in their emancipation is the creation of women's associations, the oldest of which is the one I preside over, founded in Sana'a in 1959."

"Our association has made its way in spite of difficulties; now it is engaged in an illiteracy eradication campaign and in the establishment of sewing, weaving and typing courses for women. The golden year for our women was 1982, when

they obtained the right to take part in elections, and when one of them was elected member of the permanent Committee of the People's Congress."

Asked what main problems the Association was attempting to handle, Mrs. Esh-Shami replied: "There is first the veil, which is still used in an archaic Turkish form: the **charchaf** which covers the body and head completely, leaving only an opening for the eyes. We are trying to substitute the Chador, the Authentic Muslim veil which permits the face and hands to be seen. Another problem is the brideprice, which is so high that it deters young men from marriage. There is also the tradition of encouraging early marriage for women between 10 and 12, when the girl is unripe for her task and unequipped with the necessary amount of education and experience. The traditional wedding ceremonies are also oppressive and out of date; they last for a whole month and are a source of burdensome and meaningless expenditure."

A Lebanese Woman member of the International Council for Rural Development

May Rihani was recently appointed as a member of the International Council for Rural Development, whose central office is in Washington. The Council includes international figures such as Robert McNamara and Cyrus Vance.

May Rihani has been Vice-President of the Transnational Development Organization, which carries out economic projects in the Arab World, North Africa and the Far East. Last month she lectured, at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, on "Development Potentialities in Third World Countries".

(Al-Nahar, 24 - 4 - 1983)

Senegal will have Women in the Police Corps

For the first time in their history Senegalese women have joined the police corps in their country. Nine women, appointed as police officers and inspectors, have been included in the last promotion of the National Police School in Senegal. On the other hand, young women volunteers may from now on start a military career and take part in the entrance contest at the Polytechnic School, which has a military status and trains civil engineers, or at the military School of Health.

(International Women's News, 1983/1, p. 12)

Miss Sameera Al-Daher, the first Lebanese Woman to occupy the post of Ambassador

She is a graduate of the Law School at St. Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon. In 1968, she joined the Diplomatic Corps. After serving at the Lebanese Consulate in Sydney, Australia and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she was appointed charge d'affaires in Peking, China, counselor in London and consul general in New York, a post from which she was promoted to that of Lebanese ambassador to Japan.

(Al-Nahar, 10 - 4 - 1983)

New Moroccan Association of Women

In Rabat, a Moroccan association of women with judicial careers has been created. It aims to establish relations and exchange among women lawyers, to make common their professional and social experience, to collect information regarding their status and career, to study and defend every question and every legal problem relating to the status of women, children and family, to favor the establishment of friendly ties between the members and, finally to contribute to the propagation of peace plans and activities.

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