

Thaláth Maárik Fikriyyah (Three Battles for Liberalism)⁽¹⁾

Written and published in 1976 by Dr. Mukhtar at-Tehámi, this book presents in 185 pages three champions of liberal thought who appeared in Egypt during the nineteenth century. The first is Qassem Ameen (d. 1908) who published in 1899 a remarkable study of the status of the Egyptian woman in his time: "Tahrir el-Maraa" (The Emancipation of Woman), in which he drew his arguments for woman's liberation from Koranic as well as from judicial, economic and psychological sources. The second, Ali Abdul Rázeq, stated in his book "Al-Islám wa Usúl-ul-Hukm" (Islam and the Principles of Government) (1925), that Muslim law is a purely religious law and should not be applied to the form of government adopted by muslims. The Caliphate or theocratic rule was not instituted by the Prophet and its abolition has been a logical

outcome of historical evolution. Taha Hussein, the third of the three, declared in his book on Pre-Islamic Poetry: "Ash-Shir al-Jahili", published in 1926, that he had used the Descartes method of research to prove that "most of so-called Pre-Islamic poetry is a subject of doubt because political dissensions, religious conflicts and anti-Arab movements in early Islam contributed to the forging of the larger part of it." According to him, though Abraham and Ismail have been mentioned in both the Bible and the Koran, that does not make a sufficient proof that they historically existed.

These three books produced great commotion and aroused a good deal of antagonism at the time of their publication. Their impact contributed to the awakening of the Arab mind and, until now, they stand as

monuments of free thought and starting-points for the forward march of rationalism in the Arab world.

(1) by Dr. Mukhtar at-Tehami, Baghdad, 1976

NEW BOOKS FOR ARAB CHILDREN

"The Center for Arab Unity Studies"⁽¹⁾ in Beirut has recently published a series of Arabic books for young people. The first set, "Rubu Biladi", consists of eight booklets containing illustrated information about eight Arab cities, describing the outstanding features of each, the main occupations of its inhabitants and the chief products of the country it represents. It also points out the factors of progress and modernism recently introduced. The other set, "Fata-1-Arab", contains a series of historical and modern stories dealing with Arab unity and nationalism. Women's role in both sets is emphasized.

(1) "Marqaz Dirasat-el-Wehda-1-Arabiyya"

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY IWSAW

CONTEMPORARY ARAB WOMEN POETS

by Rose Ghurayyib⁽¹⁾

The title of this Arabic work is "Nasamat wa A'aseer fish-Shi'ir in-Nisa'i l-Mu'asir", which may be translated into: "Breezes and Whirlwinds in contemporary Arab Women's Poetry". It tries to suggest a panoramic view of varied, or contrasting ideas and emotions in the feminine poetic production which the book presents.

The number of contemporary women poets in the Arab World, who appeared between 1950 and 1978, is about fifty. The book deals with the most outstanding among them, mainly those whose works were accessible to the author, about thirty in number. Three of them: Fadwa Tuqan, Nazik al-Malaika, Andree Chedid, were studied with particular detail as

representatives of more personal trends of thought and style and relatively more prolific and mature outputs. The book also contains prefaces introducing the back-grounds of the feminine poetry of to-day in ancient Arabic literature, in the literature of the 19th century and of the early twentieth. The relatively large number of contemporary Arab women poets evidently shows a mounting interest in the writing of poetry, not only in Arabic but also in French and English. The book bears witness to the freedom with which these women express their intimate thoughts, their longings and their frustrations, their happy or sad memories, their convictions and their revolts, an attitude equally reflected in their breaking up with traditional poetic forms and their indulgence in using free verse and prose-poetry.

The objective treatment of this intricate topic by the author gives this work a particular value.

**THE STATUS OF THE ARAB WOMAN
A Select Bibliography
(Mansell House, London)**

An excellent tool for researchers in the field, but helpful as well to women's organizations, universities, conference preparation, governments — in short, anyone who has need for information on the position of woman in the Arab world.

The material was compiled by Samira Rafidi Meghdessian, who has been head librarian at Beirut University College. She was consultant for a survey of National information systems in twelve Arab countries, conducted by United Nations in 1976.

Entries are in English and French. They are arranged under six general subjects, and nineteen Arab countries.

(1) 430 pp. published by Al-Muassasa-l-Arabiyya lid-Dirasat wan-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

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