



# al-raida

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## 1984, the Beginning of a New World Communication Order?

Last year was declared by the UN General Assembly and by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as World Communication Year.

Talking about World Communication leads us to mention the First Conference of Non-Aligned Information Ministers (COMINAC) which was held on the 26th of January 1984 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Addressing the delegates, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed the hope that the Non-Aligned Information Ministers Conference would help "decolonize" news. What Mrs. Gandhi meant was that Third World Nations should reduce their dependence on the international news agencies and call for a "new world information and communication order based on justice and equality".

According to the Indian Prime Minister, non-aligned countries should be conscious of the "special contribution that the media can make to development and social change, they should also try and learn from one another's experience more than from that of affluent societies".

We at the Raida have been aware of the importance and necessity of improving communications not only with local women's organizations and individuals, here and in the Arab World, but also with all our readers wherever they may be.

Moreover, and throughout the past, we have become aware of the increasing trend towards media saturation and of the way public life is starting to invade the hours, days and weeks of the individual's private world.

We have also noticed how the media tend to encourage a consumer mentality by advocating the "good life" but also failing to provide the means and methods to achieve it, let alone the capacity to be able to criticise it. This we believe is particularly true for women who are often lured by the media to live lives that do not correspond to their social or economic reality. In addition is the fact that images of women in the written press, television and popular fiction are usually that of passive, dependent creatures with few concerns except within the domestic or romantic spheres. It is not surprising then to find more and more women in the Arab and Western World who are trying to counterbalance this image by producing their own magazines, journals, radio, TV programmes and establishing their own publishing houses.

We do hope that the articles we have included will help start a dialogue between us and our readers, not only about the role of women in the media but in all spheres of their lives. In this present issue of Al-Raida we focus on some of the problems Arab women encounter with the media in their countries.

In order to start this dialogue, which we believe is essential to a New World Communication order, we have added a new section to our journal entitled "Open Forum". This is a section open to all our readers who wish to voice their ideas, write their commentaries, suggestions or articles on any issue pertaining to women, preferably Arab ones.

Write to us and you'll be heard.

Wafa' Stephan

## Contents

### PIONEER

H.R.H. Princess Wijdan of Jordan ..... 2

### OPEN FORUM

Lettre a une Jeune Consoeur  
( Claire Gebeyli) ..... 4  
Information and Propaganda  
( Rose Ghurayyib) ..... 5

### TRAVEL REPORTS

Report on a Research Trip ..... 6  
Impressions on a Trip to Egypt ..... 9

### MEDIA REPORTS

Arab Women and the Media ..... 10-11  
Algerian Women in Press and TV ..... 12  
First Woman Information  
Minister in Jordan ..... 13  
First Woman TV Announcer in  
Saudi Arabia ..... 14  
European Women Criticize  
the Media ..... 15  
A Strategy for Change ..... 15

### CONFERENCES

Second Family Planning Conference  
(Beirut, 3-5 November 1983) ..... 16  
Euro-Arab Research Group Conference  
(Amman, 18-20 November 1983)... 17  
Measurement of Women's Economic  
Activity  
(Cairo, 25-27 November, 1983) ...18-22

### POETRY

We Have a City to Patch up  
(Evelyne Accad) ..... 23

### THEATRE

Andree Chedid Talks About Love  
Power and Violence ..... 24

### PROGRESS REPORTS

Rural Women in Sudan ..... 25-26  
Primary Health Care in South  
Yemen ..... 26-27

### BOOK REVIEWS

Woman Through 17 Stories ..... 28  
Femmes de la Mediterranee ..... 28-29

### REPORTS FROM AROUND

#### THE WORLD

Kuwaiti Working Women ..... 30  
Mediterranean Women's Studies  
Institute ..... 30  
Call for a Joint Arab Broadcasting  
Service ..... 30  
Policewomen in Bahrain ..... 31