

## Egyptian Parliament Approves Divorce Law

After a protracted and noisy debate, the Egyptian parliament has unanimously approved a law giving women the right to sue for divorce if their husbands take a second wife.

The law which passed on July 1, 1985 is almost identical to the «Personal Status» one which was decreed in 1979 by the late President Anwar Sadat, and was known as «Jihan's Law» after President Sadat's wife, who lobbied hard for it.

The 1979 law gave a woman whose husband took a second wife an automatic divorce if she requested it. The key difference in the new law is that a woman who suffers «moral or material injury» from her husband's remarriage can file

for divorce, the decision to grant it or deny it left to a judge.

The new law has retained another controversial article from the 1979 one, which is to give the family dwelling to a divorced woman and her children. It has also added a provision that the woman can take either the marital dwelling or enough money to obtain another home.

The reason the first law was scrapped is because President Sadat implemented it by decree, bypassing parliament. Moreover, the 1979 law had elicited criticism from Moslem fundamentalists who said it gave women non-Islamic rights.

The new law, however, according to government legislators, conforms to Islamic Law or Sharia - which allows a man up to four wives - because it did not regulate his right to remarry, only his wife's right to ask for a divorce.

(AP, July 2, 1985)

## Jordanian Women to be Drafted In Army

Jordan's Parliament has approved a bill, after heated debate, to raise a «people's army» into which both men and women would be drafted. Under this law, all males between 16 and 55 and female students in secondary schools and higher institutions would have to join the «people's army». Other women between 16 and 45 could volunteer.

This new force would be a paramilitary one to help Jordan's 73,000- strong armed forces and would be under its supervision. Until now women were allowed to serve in the Jordanian armed forces, but only as volunteers.

This law raised controversy because some deputies cited tradition and religion as reasons for opposing female conscription. One deputy

declared, «Many would refuse to see their daughters being trained in school compounds by men, under the gaze of crowds of boys».

But Prime Minister Zeid Rifai, who pushed the bill through an extraordinary session, said, «It is not logical to ignore women, who make up half our society». He cited occasions when women had fought alongside men from the early days of Islam down to modern times and said, «Today in Afghanistan we find Moslem, Afghani women taking part in resistance operations».

The Prime Minister also said training would not be mixed. The women would be trained in the use of light weapons, first aid, traffic control, and civil defense.

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