

Lebanese Women Denied Bench Training

The High Magistrate Court of Lebanon has denied all of 195 women applicants the right to sit for the written entrance examination to the Training Magistrate Institute. Among the men applicants, 79 out of 159 were given the entrance exam.

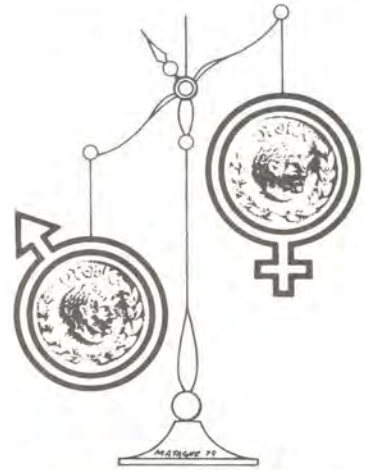
Why None of the WOMEN?

This decision was made at the highest level of the High Magistrate Court. Many lawyers and judges claim that women themselves have refused and continue to refuse magistrate appointments in distant rural courts, an essential part of the training process of judges.

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and Beirut University College, issued the following press release in response to the High Magistrate's decision regarding women on Tuesday, December 15, 1993

Discrimination is practiced all over the world in various forms and degrees. But, humanitarian trends of thought seek to reduce it to the lowest possible level in the hope of eliminating it. In Lebanon, the highest office of law violated human rights when it denied 195 women the right to sit for the entrance exam to the Institute of Judicial Training. The news was absolutely shocking and insulting to the integrity not only of women but of the Lebanese people as a whole.

Lebanon is one of the countries that have not yet ratified the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and therefore, in the legal sense, is not really violating any laws. It appears that, in this time of restoring law and order, it is the people who must preach to the authorities about issues pertaining to human rights, equality and lack of



discrimination. In our minds and perceptions it is evident but in practice it is not, obviously. Not all of us practice them in reality either, but we, at the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and at Beirut University College, are certainly trying to, by creating public awareness and educating our students along these principles. We find significant social opposition as is, but we never imagined the real opposition would come from the Supreme Court.

These women were denied magistrate training because of their gender or for gender-related reasons. Whatever the reasons may be, they are not acceptable. All we ask is that women be treated like men, without any concessions. If women are denied magistrate training so should men. And if men are granted access to these examinations, so should women. And let the best man/woman win.