

Conference

An International Women's Convention, "Salon Femmes de la Mediterranee", organized by The Women Journalist of the Mediterranean Network (NGO), will take place, for the first time, from September 24-30, 1997 in the Foire Internationale de Casablanca in Morocco. The convention aims principally at bringing together women from the North and South regions of the Mediterranean countries in the hope of improving women's social status through their participation in economic and political decision-making. The convention's promoter encourages and welcomes women from other parts of the world who express their desire for participation.

Competition

The Coordinating Council For Women in History and the Berkshire Conference on Women Historians announced the eighth annual competition for two \$500 Graduate Student Awards to assist in dissertation work. Applicants must be women graduate students in history from any US institution.

For applications, write to: Professor Janice M. Leone, Award Committee, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Box 23, Murfreesboro TN 37132. Deadline for submission of applications is September 15, 1997.

Recent Publications

Abdullah, Ahmad. *Al-Wa'i al-Qanuni lil-Mar'ah al-Misriyyah*, "The Egyptian Woman's Legal Awareness". Cairo: Ittihad al-Muhamin al-'Arab. 1995. (Arabic)

Allen, Roger. Hilary Kilpatrick and Ed. de Moor (Ed.). *Love and Sexuality in Modern Literature*. London: Al-Saqi Bookshop. 1995.

Arebi, S. *Women and Words in Saudi Arabia*. London: Al-Saqi Bookshop. 1994.

Bilarby, Aisha (Ed.). *Nisa' Qurawiyyat*, "Rural Women". Morocco: Dar Nashr al-Fanak. 1996. (Arabic).

Haider, Raana. *Gender and Development*. Cairo: American University of Cairo (AUC). 1996.

Markaz al-Mar'ah lil-Istisharat wa al-Musa'adah al-Qanuniyyah. *An Examination of the Status of Palestinian Women*. Jerusalem: The Markaz 1995.

Singerman, Diane and Homa Hoodfar (Ed.). *Development, Change and Gender in Cairo*, USA: Indiana U. Press. 1996.

New Releases from "Women Make Movies"*

The Women Next Door, directed by Michal Aviad, is an intimate documentary journey through Israel and the Occupied

Territories to find out how the intifada and Occupation has affected women on both sides of the conflict.

Beirut: The Last Home Movie, directed by Jennifer Fox, is a chronicle of three months in the life of a Lebanese family choosing to remain in its bombed-out Beirut neighborhood despite constant threats of fire, snipers and factional strife.

A Tajik Woman, directed by Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa, focuses upon issues of exile and cultural conflict for Muslim women from Afghanistan and Iran living in the United States.

Voices of the Morning, directed by Meena Nanji, is inspired by *The Hidden Face of Eve* by world-renowned Egyptian feminist writer Nawal El Saadawi. It follows the socialization process and personal struggles of a young woman living under Orthodox Islamic law.

* Women Make Movies is the leading non-profit distributor of films and video tapes by and about women, with a multicultural collection of more than 350 titles. To purchase or rent any of these titles, or to obtain a copy of the complete Women Make Movies catalogue, contact: Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway, Suite 500 ST, New York, NY 10013, Tel: 212/925.0606, Fax 212/925, e-mail:cinema@wmm.com

Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) Planned

The UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in conjunction with other UN agencies and selected NGOs, has announced the following EGMs in preparation for the 50th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2-13 March 1998:

- 1) October 13-17, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - The Girl Child
- 2) November 9-12, Toronto, Canada - Gender Based Persecution
- 3) December 1-4, Finland - Promoting Women's Enjoyment of Economic and Social Rights.

In addition, an EGM on Aging Women is planned from November 29 to December 2, 1997 in Malta, in preparation for the International Year of old people in 1999.

For more detail on these meetings, contact: UN Division for the Advancement of Women, Fax: (1-212)963-3463 or check out UN WOMENWATCH site on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/un.htm>>. Information on the entire UN system on work related to women can be found at this site.

A Call for Information on Violence Against Women

At the Commission on Human Rights, March 10 - April 18, 1997, the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women was extended for 3 more years. Information for the 1998 Report of the Special Rapporteur is needed with particular emphasis on:

- 1) Custodial violence against women
- 2) Documentation of sexual violence against women during

times of conflict.

3) Violence against refugee and internally displaced women.

Materials for the report should be received prior to September 1997. However, all submissions regarding violence against women can be sent at anytime of the year.

Contact: Radhika Coomaraswamy. UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 8 Kynsey Terrace. Colombo 8, Sri Lanka, or c/o UN Centre for Human Rights, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland: Tel: (41-22)917-9123. E-mail: mkohonen.hchr@onog.ch>. The Geneva Working Group on Women's Human Rights also reported that out of the 75 resolutions adopted at the 1997 Commission meeting, 35 resolutions dealt with the rights of women and young girls.

Preparatory Committee Meetings on the Establishment of an Internal Criminal Court (ICC)

The dates for upcoming PreCom meetings are:

- 1) August 4-15, 1997
- 2) December 1-12, 1997
- 3) March 16 - April 3, 1998

For information on how you can become involved in the Women's Caucus, contact: Aida Facio, ICC Women's Caucus: Fax (1-212) 682-5354. E-mail: <iccwomen@maclaw.law.cuny.edu>.

Research Abstract

Rahal, Samira Muhammed. "The Status of the Aged in the Family." *Lebanese University, M.A Thesis, Department of Social Sciences* 1992-1993.

In her study, Samira Rahal aims to portray the life of the aged in Lebanon, their status, the problems and illnesses afflicting them, as well as the amount of care and attention given to them by family members, society, and public institutions. Rahal holds that old age is a stage in life that cannot be disregarded or neglected. Hence, in her study she attempts to portray ways in which one can improve the situation and living conditions of the elderly by making them feel needed and important. Rahal argues that old people suffer from psychological, economic, and social problems that are ignored by society at large.

One Hundred individuals of both sexes (50 men and women) were involved in Rahal's study. The participants, aged sixty-four and above, had different educational backgrounds. Some were illiterate while others had elementary, secondary or university degrees.

Rahal made use of questionnaires through which she found that the elderly in her sample favored living alone or with their spouses rather than residing with their children, relatives, or in institutions. She also discovered that the aged prefer to resume working, but are unable to due to retirement laws, bad health, frailty etc.. Moreover, she detected anxiety on the part of old people who are concerned about the future, what it holds, and

their ability to remain economically self sufficient. She affirms that the aged suffer from loneliness; they seldom go out and are rarely visited by friends who are too ill and frail to get around. This isolation increases with time rendering them introverts. Moreover, in order to overcome their boredom, they start interfering in other people's lives and giving their opinions on how things should be done.

Rahal concludes that the Lebanese war had a positive effect on the status of the aged forcing people to come together and unite. Yet, the change that has taken place in the family structure, where most families nowadays are nuclear rather than extended, along with the deteriorating socio-economic situation has had adverse effects on the elderly. Rahal maintains that young people today are independent: married and sometimes unmarried offspring live alone, and in this way discharge themselves of their duties towards their parents. The pressing need to work in order to survive, forces children to neglect their obligations towards their parents.

Khazaal, Fatmeh. "The Effect of the Father's Absence in the Family on the Social Life of the Children." *Lebanese University, M.A Thesis, Department of Social Sciences* 1994-1995.

The father's absence is a social phenomenon present in all societies according to Fatmeh Khazaal. Her study highlights this situation which is a major problem afflicting the life of young people particularly those aged 6-14 years who require the presence of a father in their lives.

Khazaal's study is restricted to library research (no field work was conducted). She maintains that the absence of the father affects a child profoundly in the course of life for it brings about major problems that hinder his/her physical, mental, emotional, and social development.

Khazaal reports that fatherless children are often reckless, very blunt, and impolite. They suffer from feelings of instability; they isolate themselves from the outside world by refusing to interact with people. Besides, they worry a lot and are distraught most of the time. Kazaal also shows that the absence of the primary bread-winner causes economic instability in the family which, in turn, brings about insecurity and repression that sometimes leads to delinquency and theft. Khazaal maintains that the father is needed in times of crisis to solve his children's problems, give them guidance and advice, help them to discover their areas of interest, and cultivate their talents.

Kazaal concludes that the importance of the father in the life of his children is evident for he is the one who attends to the psycho-social and physical needs of his dependents. She affirms that his presence offers the security, love, and affection which makes children feel wanted and gives them more self confidence. She also asserts that mothers are unable to compensate for the loss of a father or his absence. Kazaal also notes that cultural interests (theater, academic lectures, debates, exhibitions, etc.) and the media help to diminish the emptiness brought about by the loss of a father.