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WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST



The

Continuing

Struggle

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

DHOFAH. Background article and interview, Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf. Support Statement for Omani Women.

SUDANESE WOMEN'S STRUGGLE. Carolyn Fleuhr Lobban.

ALGERIA UNVEILED. Selections from Franz Fanon's Studies in a Dying Colonialism.

A "WOMAN'S" VOICE. Poems by Syrian Poet Nizār Qabbānī.

NO LONGER A REFUGEE. Interview with Palestinian Commando Leila Khaled.

PALESTINE: STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION. Interview with Palestinian woman.

MARRUECOS. Poem of Morocco, by Carmen Carrillo.

WOMEN IN IRAN. From the Newsletter, Iranian Students Association.

IRAN AND IMPERIALISM. Interview with Iranian woman student.

ISRAEL TODAY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS. Interview with Israeli woman.

THE NEW STRATEGY OF CONTROL. The U.S. and Population "Problems" in the Third World. Bonnie Maas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cover design, adapted from a poster of the General Union of Arab students in the U.K. and Ireland, contributed by a Palestinian woman artist.

We thank our sisters who were interviewed for their time, cooperation and support.

Women's Middle East Collective
Revised Edition, August, 1973, Cambridge, Massachusetts,

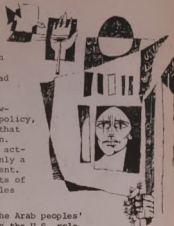
INTRODUCTION

This anthology of articles about women and revolution in the Middle East was put together by a section of the Women's Center School in Cambridge Massachusetts, that had been meeting together over several months specifically to study the Middle East. Most, but not all of us, had been involved in feminist and/or socialist movements. Our knowledge of the role of the Middle East in U.S. imperialist policy, and of the particular role played by Iran and Zionism in that policy, came out only after extensive study and discussion. Similarly, while some of us had been to Israel, or had an active interest in its history and culture, most of us had only a rudimentary knowledge of the Palestinian Resistance Movement. We had virtually no awareness at all of the broader aspects of Arab society and culture, and of the revolutionary struggles that have developed in that area.

The expanding role of the U.S. in the oppression of the Arab peoples' liberation struggles, and of the Iranian people, as well as the U.S. role in supporting capitalism and Zionism in Israel needs to be brought to the attention of those working to fight against imperialism.

As women, we felt an important way to do this was to share with others what we had learned about the social conditions of the masses and, especially, of women in the Middle East, as seen by women.

The advanced stage of the development of the liberation struggles in the Middle East, and the progress made by women in them, gives us a new sense of the urgent need to develop our own movement in solidarity with the Third World. Knowing about our sisters' struggles helps us in our efforts to liberate ourselves and unite with all oppressed peoples, to defeat U.S. imperialism at home and abroad.



THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTHEAST AFRICA

The following edited item, written by a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLAOG), and printed in the Palestine Resistance Bulletin (May 71), offers a general description of the women's role in the revolutionary struggle in Dhofar, a province of Oman bordering in South Yemen, where the feudal and tribal structures that still predominate are the base for the liberation movement throughout the Gulf. It is the author's opinion that vestiges of primitive communism—typical of a herding society where tribes still exist, greatly facilitate the women's struggle for full equality because neither "conventional" forms of property ownership nor oppression of women are firmly established. While some may question the author's thesis that a less advanced property system facilitates the development of revolutionary consciousness, we feel that this item is of great value in portraying the conditions experienced by the majority of Dhofari women.

It is hard to name a more persecuted and exploited human being (within class society) than the woman, regardless of her social and economic status within that society. The peasant, for example, is oppressed by feudalism; the worker by capitalism, but both the peasant and working woman in addition suffer from the subservient marital and filial relations within society. This added oppression which is embedded in the traditions and values of society paralyzes any activities of woman and finally ends up robbing her of her own humanity.

We cannot deal in this article with the problems of women in general, nor can we tackle the problems of her liberation. Rather, we will concern ourselves with the importance of the role that the woman in the Gulf can and should play in the armed liberation movement, that has been going on in Dhofar for the last five years. The historical development of the revolution has enabled it in the last five years to build an ideological base and enforce political changes throughout the rural areas. This process has succeeded in weakening and even abolishing some of the feudal traditions that existed in these areas, and has replaced them with a new ideology free of the weaknesses of the past.

The rural population is almost completely dependent on pasturing; in other words, rural society is a peasant society that uses animals as the principal means of production. Almost every family is completely dependent on a collection of animals as a source of income regardless of the area of land which they might own. Furthermore, the differences in the amount of land owned are usually not enough to enable the peasants to compete in the market of primitive production.* In many instances the woman owns the private means of production, and sometimes within the same family the woman might own more animals than her husband. In some cases, she might own all the animals so that the man and subsequently the whole family becomes dependent on the mother.

We have classified the rural areas as being mainly pastoral. The agricultural season does not exceed three months during the rainy season in the summer. Two main products are produced during this week. Agriculture can play a very revolutionary role in such societies.** What we should stress here is the nonexistence of private ownership of land in its traditional meaning and its unsettling effects on tribal societies.

Four main points, to a large extent explain the prominent role played by women in the revolution that is going on in the mountainous areas. This phenomena has occurred not in spite of the primitiveness of these rural societies but because of that "primitiveness".

- (1) The decrease in the productivity of agriculture and pasturing and the reflection of this on the position of both men and women;
- (2) The combined sharing of all work between man and woman on both a filial and a social level (division of labour);
- (3) The remnants of a faint imprint of primitive classless society in the rural areas we are talking about;
- (4) The strong and occasionally dominant economic status of women within the family.

* "Market of primitive production"—a market based upon bartering of goods, rather than on currency.
** Agriculture can play a very revolutionary role—a reference to PFLAOG's efforts to create a rational system of agricultural communes to replace individual herding and cultivation.

This conclusion is in agreement with the Marxist analysis which attributes the oppression and the subservient role of the woman to the growth in the productivity of work and the appearance and evolution of ownership. If the oppression of women historically has moved parallel to class oppression then the similarities between classless societies and the rural areas we have just described provide us with an indication of the proof of our conclusion. Nobody can be so ignorant and blind as to conclude that the rural areas are free from oppression and exploitation. What we want to show is that the oppression and exploitation which definitely exists is rooted in the relationship between rural society and society in the Gulf as a whole.

There is no question that the unique position of the rural woman which we have discussed is the result of a very particular social structure which has kept her free from the chains that have enslaved her sister in the cities, not only in Dhofar but throughout the whole Gulf. We can summarize the position of the rural woman as follows:

- (1) A relatively high social and cultural position (compared to city woman and a much more progressive relationship between her and her husband (again as compared to city woman).)
- (2) Complete liberation from the grip of old traditions and norms which have historically paralyzed her a prisoner in the house, veiled and segregated from male company, completely dependent on the man. Women in the rural areas are unveiled and can socialize and talk to anyone they wish to from either sex. They can travel freely without the approval of either husband or father and can stay away from the house for long hours.
- (3) The rural woman is a full participant in the economy of society and in the different kinds of work available.
- (4) The rural woman, as opposed to the city woman, can divorce her husband.

The interaction of women with the revolution in the Gulf has been most successful in the rural areas. This is attributed to the political and economic structure which is characteristic of the rural areas and its reflection in the family structure and the role traditionally played by the woman. It can also be attributed to the simmering revolutionary atmosphere that pervades the rural areas in contrast to the urban areas.

Tufala, 15, and Amina, 12, are members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLAOG). They formed part of the first platoon of women's militants to receive full training for membership in the People's Liberation Army. They were interviewed in South Yemen by Fred Halliday, whose article first appeared in The Black Dwarf, a socialist magazine published in England. Included here are excerpts of this article.

WHY ARE YOU FIGHTING AND SUPPORTING THE REVOLUTION?
Tufala: Because British imperialism is killing our men and our women. We are fighting to get them out.

WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY DO?

Tufala: My family are shepherd in the western province, and I used to work with them. For three months of the year we grew crops, and for the rest of the time we were nomads, herding our flocks. I never went to school or learned to read. I joined the Front two years ago, and my parents tried to stop me. But I felt I should join my comrades.

AMINA, CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU CAME TO JOIN THE FRONT?

Amina: Well, I was in Salala, the capital, and you can't escape by land as it is surrounded by a big fence. So I escaped by sea with my brother. That was last September.

WHY DID YOU RUN AWAY?

Amina: Imperialism. My father was a poor farmer, he got 4-5 rupias a day. We were very poor. So my brother and I got an old cart-tire for 8 rials and we swam in the sea for eight hours till we reached the coastline controlled by the Front.



WEREN'T YOU COLD AND FRIGHTENED? COULD YOU SWIM?
Amina: I couldn't swim well, and we got very cold and hungry and thirsty. But it is better to die in the sea than be captured by the British.

WHO THOUGHT OF ESCAPING, YOU OR YOUR BROTHER?
Amina: Everyone thinks of escaping.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE IN SALALA? HAVE YOU SEEN BRITISH OFFICERS OR THE SULTAN?
Amina: Sometimes I'd see British officers out shopping, but they generally stay in their base. I've never seen the Sultan, he's dead, though his spies say he is alive.

HOW DID YOU GET TO HEAR ABOUT THE FRONT IN SALALA?
Amina: People found leaflets against the Sultan, they said "This is good and so is the revolution."

TUFULA, SINCE JOINING THE FRONT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
Tufula: Well, at first I was in the militia, the Popular Guard, and then took part in defending Shabbout when the enemy attacked it in the summer of 1969. There was a battle for 24 hours and I carried water to the fighters up front. I think I was the first woman to join the army in the western area.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO SPEAK ARABIC?
Tufula: The Front taught me, and I learned from working with comrades in the Front. But it is still difficult.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE FRONT SINCE YOU FLED, AMINA?
Amina: I've learned literacy, politics and revolution.

DO YOU EVER MISS YOUR PARENTS?
Amina: I don't think about my parents, I think about the revolution.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN GENERALLY, AND OF THE SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE CONTRACTS HERE?

Tufula: It is a pity to ask something from a person if you're going to marry him. If I want a man I'll marry him because I want to and he won't have to buy me. Anyway, there is no difference between men and women. I am a woman, and I've seen I can do the same as they do. Before the revolution women used to be bought and sold and dispensed with like animals. Now they just know their rights and take part in the struggle along with everyone else.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ISLAM? ARE YOU RELIGIOUS?
Tufula: I am in a society of people who pray, and I am one of them.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION?
Amina: They are like us. They are fighting for liberation, and they have socialist aims.

WHAT ROLE WILL WOMEN PLAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION?
Tufula: There is a big role awaiting women. They will have to farm and learn to read, write and type.

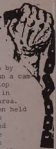


AFTER THE REVOLUTION, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO ABROAD AND VISIT ANY OTHER COUNTRY?

Tufula: I'd like to visit the countries that are helping us, People's China and the People's Republic of South Yemen.

SUPPORT OMANI WOMEN

The Sultan of Oman and Muscat, urged on by his British military advisors, has begun a campaign of mass arrests and torture to stop the advance of the liberation struggle in Dhofar, Oman, and throughout the Gulf area. On June 20, 1973, 74 Omanis who had been held for six months or more and subjected to severe torture were tried and sentenced to death and shot by firing squads. The following day, the remainder were given long prison terms, many for life. Among them are 8 women: Zainah al-Kundi, Fatimah Al-Hashar, Aisha Al-Farsi, Bahlan Ali Khalifa, Zaboob Bint Hasser, Thabat Bint Fayallil, Saeda Al-Ka'sh, Harlan Al-Hashar. Some of the women are pregnant, and have been tortured. A worldwide campaign of protests and letters to the Sultan and to the UN Human Rights Commission is underway, and your help is needed. Letters should be sent to: Fahd Mahmood Al-Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultanate of Oman. Letters should also be sent to the International Commission on Human Rights, 10 W. York, New York, asking that they condemn the conditions of political prisoners in Oman, and that Oman be expelled from the U.N.



Sudanese Women Struggle

CAROLYN FLEUHR LOBBAN

Carolyn has spent 1 year in the Sudan. She is presently a teacher of women's studies at Rhode Island College. Her special area of interest is anthropology.



The position of the Arab women, maintained by Islamic societal values of absolute male dominance, is usually considered to be one of the worst in the world in terms of female suppression. But little information concerning contemporary struggles of Arab women is available, and the reality of the modern woman living in Islamic countries is often obscured by the popular myths of polygamy and the harem. In fact, such Western stereotypes are based on romanticized literary accounts of the lives of bourgeois women during the period of the decline of the Ottoman Empire and these are hardly a characteristic group of women.

First of all, Islam is not the monolith of values and social structure that it is often considered to be -- Islam was overlaid on a variety of cultures. There is much variation between countries like Morocco or Tunisia or Egypt or Sudan, and a place like Pakistan. Enormous political differences separate reactionary countries like Saudi Arabia from places where revolutionary struggles have been fought in the past and continue to be waged, such as Algeria, Dhofar in the Arab Gulf, Palestine, and Eritrea. While Saudi Arabian women are shielded behind veils and in houses from outside influences, Dhofari women to the south fight alongside their male comrades for liberation from reactionary oil-rich sultans who are supported by British imperialist oil interests. While Gaddafi of Libya was calling for a return to the days of the Islamic sacred state, Laila Mahled became world famous for her courageous hijack attempt in the Palestinian effort to obtain an independent secular state. And in Sudan the well-to-do Muslim woman living in Khartoum leads a very different life from the peasant Muslim woman who cultivates the field and carries water long distances for use in the compound.

CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN NORTHERN SUDAN

The Democratic Republic of the Sudan is an Afro-Arab state, described in this way because of its mixed population. The northern Arab Sudan became Islamicized about 400 years ago through successive waves of immigrants from Arabia across the Red Sea. These people settled and mixed with indigenous peoples, and the process of spreading Islam (a process that still continues) began. Relative to other parts of the Arab world, this area is quite traditional in religious matters.

Women, generally speaking, are under the absolute authority of men and are not usually involved in decision-making. The degree of complete domination varies by class and from rural to the urban areas. Rural peasant women and lower-class women, because of necessity, are contributors to the economy and are working to help support the family or group. Their range of experience is greater and they are more respected by men because of their contributions; they are relatively more liberated than the middle class, city-dwelling women. Theoretically, however, a man considers it a disgrace for his woman or a female relative to have to work. Ironically, as people move from the rural areas to settle and prosper in the cities, women seem to lose the few liberties they have. In Algeria, it has been shown that women put on the veil as they move into the cities rather than the reverse. The concept of women as property increases as men themselves prosper; poorer men need the help and labor of their women.

It is not socially acceptable for Arab women in the city of Khartoum to be employed, and typical female jobs like domestic housework are positions normally filled by "out" groups of southern Sudanese men and women or Ethiopian women. A woman who is forced to work by economic necessity will find that the community is gossiping about her moral behavior.

The practice of "pharonic" circumcision is widespread and is performed as a kind of insurance that the young girl will not be involved in sexual encounters before marriage. This horribly painful practice is slowly being replaced with clitoridectomy (the removal of only the clitoris).

According to Islam, divorce is the unilateral privilege of the man. He may without good cause verbally divorce a woman in the presence of witnesses while a woman seeking a divorce must go to court and prove extreme negligence, desertion, or adultery (which requires two witnesses¹). But women are not reluctant to go to court, and, with recent reforms since the mildly progressive regime has been in power, women are becoming stronger and less shy about bringing their problems into court. In matters of inheritance, women receive half what a man gets, but the women know the laws of inheritance almost as well as their own children's names, and they make sure they get all that they are entitled to. In court the testimony of one man must be matched by that from two women, and the customary blood-wealth payments for the death of an individual allows twice as much to be paid for a man as for a woman.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SUDAN

The first organized group of women emerged from the Communist Party. The party was formed in 1956, and in the same year to was the Sudanese Women's League; it was the first party to open its membership to both sexes and to establish the emancipation of women as one of its goals. The Woman's League, like the party at large, began with a group of educated people, but spread throughout northern Sudan to encompass working people and peasants.

In 1951 three Communist women were among the seven founding members of the Sudanese Women's Union -- the successor to the Woman's League with broader membership. Four years later the Union began to publish the progressive magazine *The Woman's Voice*. The magazine took militant political stands (i.e. in opposition to colonialism and later against the neo-colonialist designs of the British and Americans) as well as publishing articles which attempted to educate the female membership away from certain harmful traditions like female circumcision and the practice of facial scarification done according to ethnic background.

The Union at the same time took up the fight of equal pay for equal work for the small one percent of working women and fought to extend a seven-day maternity leave to forty days with pay. They also attacked the Islamic divorce laws which so heavily favor men, and they began to campaign against polygamy, which some refer to as "legalized prostitution."

This progressive group of women stirred the public so that a rival group of reactionary women hastily organized a society which functioned as the Sudanese equivalent of the Ladies Tea Association. Fatma Ahmed Ibrahim, one of the founders of the Women's Union and certainly its symbolic head, reacted to the reactionary women's group by saying that "independence is not women's festivals or teas or promises from a reactionary government; independence is a really free Sudanese society, both economically and politically, a socialist society, the society of a truly emancipated Sudanese woman."

The Women's Union and *The Woman's Voice* rose and fell in accordance with political events in the country as a whole. During the reactionary military regime of the American-backed General Abboud (1959-1964), the Union was officially banned and the government's own lackey women's organization was pushed up front. In October, 1964 a popular revolution throughout the country overthrew the reactionary Abboud regime. For the first time Sudanese women came out into the streets and demonstrated, fought, and died alongside their brothers during the days of the revolution. Fatma Ibrahim herself led the first demonstration of several hundred; when the soldiers raised their guns to fire on the demonstrators, Fatma stepped forward, dropped her traditional woman's white outer garment, the *tabi*, and shouted "I will be the first." No shots were fired that day. One woman was killed in the October events, and she was a Woman's Union member, five other women were injured, three of whom were Union or CP members.

Women were shown not to be weak or timid, and with men and women working together to bring down the regime, absolute ideas about sexual segregation were brought into question. Officially the revolution brought women the vote. The success of the revolution was unfortunately short-lived, and its aftermath brought moderation and not more progressive gains.

In the years 1965-69, the Women's Union continued to be active in the usual ways of education, and acting as a political pressure group. Fatma Ibrahim became the first woman elected to the then-functioning Sudanese Parliament.

In May 1969, a seemingly progressive military regime came to power with the support of large numbers of progressives including the Sudanese Communist Party, the Women's Union, and other democratic organizations. The story is too complicated to tell here, but within two years the regime was turned right around through coup and counter-coup and became militantly anti-Communist with dizzying speed. In the fierce anti-Communist campaign which ensued, Fatma's husband, the most prominent Trade Union leader in the country and winner of the Lenin Prize, was hanged. Thirteen other Communist and progressive leaders were executed and thousands imprisoned, including some women leaders. Saad Ibrahim, a prominent Women's Union leader, is still detained without trial in Khartoum jails and has staged several hunger strikes to obtain basic privileges like having visitors. Women from the families of jailed progressives demonstrated at the Khartoum Palace for consent, Fatma's husband, from the government while their husbands and brothers were confined. The government has since provided this.

In the early progressive days of the present regime, some reforms to assist the conditions of women were enacted, and to a degree they have been helpful. Bat etaha, the right of a husband to bring back by force of the police a wife who has fled his house, has been abolished. Likewise a divorced woman has the right to obtain up to one-half of her ex-husband's salary for her support and that of her children. These reforms, enlightened though they are, have not yet had their full impact on women because they are not things which women have had to fight for and gain themselves. They were handed down and not obtained through democratic struggle of women and are therefore less meaningful. But they are nonetheless welcome, and with time and education Sudanese women will derive full benefit from these reforms.

Meanwhile women will continue to complain to each other about their condition and to hope for better days for their daughters. Those days will come only when women stand up and demand them. Women's liberation can come only from the just struggles of women everywhere. The aims of the Sudanese women's movement remain the same as at the time of its founding: 1) the emancipation of women through the attainment of equal rights and equal duties and the full liberation of every woman from the enslavement under which she lives; 2) the struggle for international female emancipation and peace through socialism. Women of the world want freedom, and they know their destinies lie only in their own hands.



Jumana Hasselini Bayazit

"ALGERIA UNVEILED"

During the Algerian Revolution, many Algerian women chose to use the veil as a revolutionary tool; removing the veil when it would serve to disarm the colonialists and putting it back on to disguise their role as political activists, while allowing themselves to assume new dimensions in the revolution, such as running guns. Fanon emphasized the inner-contradictions these Algerian women faced in disrobing themselves of an age-old tradition, while at the same time confronting the "essentially hostile world of the occupier." The level of commitment to the Revolution that each woman had was her inspiration.

The contemporary Syrian poet, Nizār Qabbānī, spoke of the plight of the Arab woman, in her name and with her voice, using the first person feminine in many of his poems in this genre. His poetry reflects not only her problems but also the mood, experience and agony which Arab youth has undergone in the last three or four decades in respect to their relations with the opposite sex. In 1968 Qabbānī explained the reasons for his assuming a female identity speaking with a female voice. In the introduction of his book *Yammiyyat Imna'a la-Mubāliya (Diary of a Woman Who Does Not Care)*, he wrote at the request of the women students at the American University of Beirut:

"Is it not the irony of fate that I should cry out with a woman's voice while women are unable to speak with their own natural voice!!"

The following are excerpts from his poetry.*

A

"WOMAN'S" VOICE

"A Voice from the Harem"

"You love me!"
No, do not say it again,
For you make me laugh...
You love me
As you love any, any woman.
"You love me!"
I am a face
Among the many faces in your color book,
A yellow paper that you put aside after you read,
A card in a deck of cards
That you take out and put back
When you find a new toy
You will destroy me...

You want me to be
A new favorite that you will bury
Behind the walls of a chronic Harem:
As for me,
I am seeking—O, you exploiter!—
A man that would love me,
For you do not know how to love.
You are a collector of objects.
Your field is the eyes (of women)
Not what is behind those eyes.
You are a child playing
With colored beads...



"Love and Petroleum"

When will you understand!
O unbridled camel of the desert
Whose face is nibbled by smallpox
That I will not be here
Ashes in your cigarette,
A head
Among the thousand heads that lie on your pillows...
A breast of marble
On which your fingerprints are recorded.
When will you understand!
That you cannot numb me
With your rank and power,
That you can never take over the world
With your oil, your concessions,
Your petroleum with which your cloak reeks,
Your cars which you lay, numerous,
At the feet of your princesses
You slave of your emotions,
To whom wives are one
Of the many hobbies that you heap



* Excerpts from Qabbānī's diary and translations by Arich Loya, "Poetry as a Social Document: The Social Position of the Arab Woman as Reflected in the Poetry of Nizār al-Qabbānī," *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXIII, No. 1 (Jan., 1973).

The conditions that Qabbānī talks about have largely disappeared in Syria as a result of the social reforms introduced by the Ba'ath Socialist Party. Prostitution is illegal, the landowning and rich merchant class is in exile and new educational, agricultural and medical schools have been introduced, in which women as well as men have the opportunity to improve their social conditions through communal initiative. The admiration for the West, and its bourgeois pleasures and play things, is absent.

The opposite is true in Lebanon, where the Arab man faces problems similar to those faced by Qabbānī in his growth from chauvinist, to a sexist worshipper of women as unearthly perfection, to a supporter of women's emancipation. Personal relations in Lebanon are regulated by the church or religious constitution. There is no civil law regarding marriage, divorce, or inheritance. In addition to the traditional oppression suffered by women at the hands of the orthodox religious establishment, women in Lebanon also find themselves segregated into their own religious community. Even now, inter-marriages between people of six major religious sects, in the Islamic and Christian religions, is rare. The expansion of international capitalism in Lebanon adds yet another dimension to sexual oppression, that of political and economic exploitation. The paternalism of the feudal lord has given way to employment of women at slave wages in 19th century factory conditions, while the availability of ever more luxurious goods, imported from the West, creates a new bourgeoisie in which the woman's traditional role of leadership in the home gives way to conspicuous consumption - French mini-skirts, expensive coiffures, and imported crystal - while denying her own culture in an even more oppressive manner. Underneath the exterior of "modernity," even the university-educated woman in Lebanon finds her protests silenced.

NO Longer a Refugee

On September 6, 1970, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked four planes over Western Europe and diverted them to Jordan. An attempt to hijack a fifth plane in Amsterdam was unsuccessful. (Leila Khaled, Sunday Telegraph, May 20, 1973, London).

Leila's family had fled from Haifa to Lebanon during the war of 1948. We chose to include a condensation of this article in respect of a woman whose human compassion and political commitment have moved her to be, as she says, "No longer a refugee, but a revolutionary," "Fighting for the liberation of the Palestinian people."

PALESTINIAN COMRADES IN SYRIA

Fortunately the Israeli officer had his back to them. Since we were already holding hands for his benefit, I quickly threw my arms around Patrick. He seemed a little surprised, but what man will rebuff a woman under such conditions? The embrace lasted until my Arab friend passed by unnoticed by the El-Al officer.

As we re-entered the hall, I saw some 30 or 40 youngsters waiting to board El-Al Flight 219. I was shocked and once again I had to face the agonizing problem of what to do to avoid hurting children. I love children and I know they are free from guilt. I vowed to do my utmost not to jeopardize the lives of the passengers needlessly. I sat paralyzed for a few seconds, wrestling with the moral issues of our action.

I realized that the enemy's fortress was not impregnable as I ascended the plane with twelve guards of honour bearing sub-machine guns guaranteeing my "security."

*Leila Khaled related in an article about the 1969 hijacking: "While these guards pricked my conscience, the whole history of Palestine and her children came before my eyes. I saw everything from the first day of my exile. I saw my people homeless, hungry, barefoot. The twice 'refugee' children of Bagan camp near Amman seemed to stand a humiliated multitude in front of me saying, 'We too are children and we are a part of the human race.' The scene strengthened me enormously. 'What crime did I and my people perpetrate against anyone to deserve the fate we have suffered?' The answer was 'None.' 'The operation must be carried out.'

Abd Abidi

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□ نام الجيد □
Abd Abidi

Patrick and I were finally seated together. About half an hour after take off Patrick prepared his hand grenade and pistol, and I pulled the safety pins off of my two hand grenades and rushed forward through the first-class section and towards the cockpit. We shouted "Don't move," as some of the passengers tried to take cover. Three stewards were in front of us wielding hand guns. In a couple of seconds I could count six guns. Shots were fired. The plane went into a spin. The firing continued and suddenly I found myself beset by a pack of wolves. El-Al staff as well as passengers. Someone succeeded in prying one of the grenades from me without exploding himself and the plane. I held tightly to the other until I was knocked unconscious for a second and was overpowered. I fought until I was exhausted.

Patrick was lying bleeding profusely and breathing heavily, too weak to resist. An Israeli guard started tying Patrick up with wires and a necktie. The man stepped on Patrick's hips and Patrick looked at me in agony, his hands tied behind his back. Then the Zionist guard fired four shots into Patrick's back.

Then came my turn. I was tied up in the same fashion. As they finished tying me up the pilot announced, "We are going to Tel Aviv." Yet within minutes I felt the plane descend and then touch down.

The passengers disembarked. I could hear the sound of an ambulance outside. British officers stepped into the fray, identifying themselves as members of Scotland Yard. The captain told them, "To hell with you and your government. She is my prisoner. Get out of this plane." The British officers tried to seize me. These Israelis pulled me in one direction by my trussed up legs; the British pulled my hands in the other in a tug of war which the British won. A great husky English officer carried me over his shoulders and

threw me down to the waiting arms of two British officers below. I was in British hands. I knew it would be safer here for me than in Tel Aviv.

The British placed Patrick and me in some kind of police ambulance. I was hoping against hope that Patrick would live. Within minutes, however, I knew he was dead. I held his hands. I kissed his lips in a spirit of camaraderie and love, I wept unashamedly.

I was taken to a hospital and given a general check up. A journalist there recognized me. An officer asked if Leila was my name. I absolutely refused to utter a single word beyond "I am a comrade from the Popular Front," unless they agreed to recognize me as a comrade and treat me as a war prisoner.

The first night was a nightmare. I felt terrible because I had failed to seize and retain El-Al Flight 219 and I felt shattered over the death of comrade Arquello. I couldn't sleep for an hour without waking up.

I was moved to Ealing Police Station on September 7. Here I was placed in a cell by myself. Two women officers guarded me. We exchanged few words. I asked to see newspapers. They said I could read a women's magazine. I said, "No thanks."

On September 8, some inspectors wanted to interrogate me. Among other questions they asked me, "Why would an Arab Palestinian woman try to blow up a plane on which there were Palestinian Arabs?" "Look," I replied, "I had orders to seize the plane, not to blow it up. I am no kamikaze pilot. I care about people. If I'd wanted to blow up the plane no one could have prevented me."

In this relaxed atmosphere, I told the officers that I had committed no crime against the British and I could see no reason why I was being kept in a British gaol. I asked if any Israelis were also held in gaol. "None," they said. I exploded, "Why not? Don't you know they executed my comrade in cold blood." Your colleague was killed in battle. The coroner's verdict says his death was 'lawful homicide.' "Shame on the British courts," I cried.

On September 9, a BOMC W-10 was hijacked. I knew my release was imminent. Mr. Frew, a British inspector, told me I must have known what was going on. I said, "The Front knows what it is doing. I had no say. I am for a recommendation of clemency from a British jury."

On September 10, the ghost of Patrick haunted me. I couldn't stay my tears. The matron tried to calm me, she was a kindly woman and gave me helpful advice, but feelings of sadness and anguish aren't something that can be erased by a few motherly words. I was cheered up a little, however, when I learned that the P.F. was demanding my return in exchange for BOMC passengers.

September 11 was a day for banter. It started with a visit from the envoy of Honduras, a corpulent, moustached feudal lord. He was introduced as His Excellency, the Excellency of Honduras. He asked, "How did you obtain this Honduras passport?" I answered contemptuously: "Did the PF disguise you and send you here as a fictitious banana republic ambassador?" His Excellency was



The uprooted

infuriated. He departed like a vanquished Napoleon.

Mr. Frew visited me once again. He asked me if the Front would explode the plane with the passengers as was reported by the "objective" British press that day. "Yes," I said unhesitatingly. "What," he asked, "have you no humanity? 'Humanity my foot!' I shouted. 'You should be ashamed to utter such a word in the West. If you have any integrity you'd remove that word from your dictionaries and declare it a non-English word.'

The next two weeks I settled into an established routine. I tried to maintain my composure and act naturally, but it was a difficult job. The turmoil in Jordan disturbed me deeply. Mr. Frew was a daily visitor. He wondered why Moslems fought each other instead of the enemy camp. Frew listened intently, but like most of his Western compatriots, he was unable to grasp the idea of social class and its historical implications. He only accused me of being bitter.

On September 28, it was reported that President Nasser had died. I was stunned, emotionally paralyzed. The feelings I had when Che Guevara and Ho Chi-Minh died returned. This time perhaps more poignantly, for I was, as every Arab was at one time or other, an admirer of Nasser. As a giant among dwarfs, he symbolized everything noble, great and weak among the Arabs.

On September 29, Frew intimated that I might soon be released. I checked the newspapers closely for clues as to when the last six hostages were going to be surrendered to the International Red Cross Committee. They finally were on September 30. The moment the hostages reached Cyprus, I was instructed to prepare for departure.

The matrons told me that people were lining up in the streets to see me, but they were going to be sadly disappointed as I would be taken out covered up, in a van. I was supposed to be accompanied by a whole convoy of police cars and motorcyclists. I was allowed one quick look at the crowd and I flashed a victory sign to the photographers.

We travelled by helicopter for about an hour and then landed at another nameless airport. I noted to the captain that helicopters are more difficult to hijack than regular planes. He didn't appreciate my sense of humor.

Suddenly we descended in Munich. The airport was a garrison. I boarded a plane. Three brothers from the Action Organization were brought aboard. Next stop was Zurich where my inspiration, Anina Dabbour, and comrades Ibrahim Twefiq and Mohamed Abu Al-Haija came aboard. I wanted to hug Anina, but it was not permitted.

We arrived in Cairo on October at 8 a.m. The city was in mourning for the death of President Nasser. We were taken to an Egyptian "guesthouse" and held there for 11 days -- we were told for "security reasons."

On October 12 we were flown to Damascus. For the next few weeks I spent most of my time giving press interviews and preparing to marry a fellow fighter, Bassim, an Iraqi Arab revolutionary. We got married on November 26, spent a week together and then returned to our separate tasks.

MICHAEL LEVINE ARTS



Palestinian House dynamited in Gaza All means of intimidation...

Leila Morel

In November, 1970, the PFLP announced it would abandon hijacking attempts against civilian airlines and step up instead its activities against foreign interests, particularly oil, in the Middle East. The Secretary-General of the Front, George Habbash, explained that the hijackings had been successful in bringing the cause of the Palestinians to the attention of the West, but that new tactics were now needed. Israeli airlines were not included in the ban, since they are considered part of the Israeli military arsenal.

"In Jordan's capital, Amman, Hussein's Army had attacked the Palestinian movement. Some 20,000 Palestinians, mostly refugees, were killed or wounded.

WHERE DO THE ARAB REGIMES NOW STAND IN RELATION TO THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS?

Most of the Arab leaders and governments are interested only in maintaining their own power and control. Statements made by these regimes supporting the struggle of the Palestinians and attacking Israel or claiming they will go to war with Israel, are made more to appease internal unrest and dissatisfaction with the status quo, than as an indication that these regimes truly support the revolutionary struggle of the Palestinians. It is from the Arab masses that the Palestinians draw their support.

PALESTINE

struggle

for

liberation



(credit: LNS/Kamal Boullata)

The following interview with a Palestinian woman activist studying in the U.S. presents a picture of the conditions the Palestinian resistance faces today. We have chosen a large portion of this interview on the recent events in Lebanon, not only because this information was not available in the major Western papers, but also for what these events say of the development of the Palestinian struggle, both internally and in its relations with progressive Arab movements. In addition to help the reader will gain some understanding of those Arab regimes which not only suppress progressive forces within their own countries but which are cooperating in attempts to suppress the Palestinian resistance.

In Egypt, at the same time Sadat is making "demands" of the Israelis in the UN, and making forecasts of war against Israel at home, he is actually granting almost every concession to Israel in his attempt to establish secure borders and be free from threat of Israeli "reprisal." This apparent contradiction is explained by understanding that there is a strong student movement in Egypt which is demanding that Egypt reclaim its borders and that they be given training and arms to carry this out. This movement is also in support of Palestinian demands. Sadat's statements are attempts to convince the students that he is responding to their demands, to pacify their mili-

tance and prevent their posing a threat to the internal status quo. In other arenas, however, it is made clear that Egypt does not want war with Israel.

Again, in Syria there is a natural feeling among the people that the fate of the Palestinians is part and parcel of the whole Arab question. Therefore, the Syrian regime cannot say "I am not interested in the Palestinians." Without opening the door to serious questioning among Syrians regarding the nature of the Syrian regime, thereby risking internal upheaval. Prior to the Jordan massacre of Palestinians in 1970, there were progressive factions within the Ba'ath party which supported the Palestinians. What actually happened following the events in Jordan was that there was a major change in the power structure of the Syrian government. The progressive factions of the Ba'ath were taken over by rightist elements who have taken steps to seriously curtail the military activity of the Palestinians. There is, however, a good deal of political education in the camps.

In Lebanon, the Palestinians have been able to carry out the Cairo Agreement (which guarantees Palestinian supremacy and control over the refugee camps and the right of the Palestinians to arm and train themselves within the camps). The Israeli regime has made it clear that if the Arab governments did not control the activities of the Palestinian movements, that it would take what steps it considered necessary to provide for the "security" of Israel. From the many reports of the failure of the Lebanese army to take action against the Israeli commandos during the raid on Beirut, the cooperation of the Lebanese government is clear. It also seems clear that one of the reasons for the Israeli raid was to press those factions of the Lebanon regime that are opposed to the Palestinian resistance movements to take action against the Palestinians. Witness the battles between the Lebanese army and the Palestinian forces soon after the raid. There are also reports that 36 of those taken prisoners by the Palestinian forces were Israeli citizens who had served as provocateurs to sabotage the truces which had been agreed to between the Lebanese government and the Palestinian forces.

WHAT WAS THE REACTION OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE TO THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE LEBANESE ARMY AND THE PALESTINIAN FORCES?

To answer this, let me first give some history of the development of the resistance forces since the Jordanian conflict. After the massacre in Jordan, the Palestinian groups realized that if they remained isolated from other progressive forces within the countries where their camps were, it would be easy for them to be wiped out. The Palestinian movements had therefore established good relations with the progressive elements in Lebanon. One of the strongest links was between the Lebanese women's movements and the Union of Palestinian Women.

Another important factor was that, regardless of the political position taken by Lebanese movements, i.e. whether progressive or reactionary, all groups in Lebanon are armed and trained. It was unlike the situation in Jordan where the Palestinians had to train the militia. In the fighting that broke out, the progressive Lebanese movements were the link to provide Palestinians with ammunition, food, medical equipment, etc. Even those groups that did not support the Palestinians officially, encouraged their members to do so.

The fact that the Palestinian camps are surrounded by Lebanese communities, with whom the Palestinians had developed relationships, also served to defray the army's attacks. Local people stayed in their homes in the midst of the fighting, providing a buffer zone between the Palestinian camps and the army's tanks.

It is clear that the Palestinians were able to play the contradictions that existed in Lebanon very well.

WHAT EFFECT HAVE THESE RECENT ACTIONS HAD ON THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT?

First, I do not think the raid was as successful as the Zionists claim. There was enough resistance to prevent them from getting to the Popular Front headquarters. It is unclear how many names the raid netted them, but it was in no way the bulk of contacts. This of course still has a large effect in terms of intimidation, especially for Arabs living on the West Bank.

Secondly, it pointed up the success of the relationships which had been established between the Palestinians and the progressive Lebanese movements. The Lebanese regime was also unable to take control of the Palestinian camps, as guaranteed in the Cairo Agreement, from the Palestinians.

Thirdly, and perhaps most important, as a result of these events each Palestinian camp is beginning to develop its own administrative units to provide for the management of the everyday life of the camp, from militia activities down to education. This means cooperation among the factions. Since 1970, unification among the factions has been one of the main themes of the resistance movements. While there has been difficulty about what this means and how to go about it, the current development in the camps in Lebanon is a significant step in this process.



Palestine: The Occupied Territories

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE ECONOMIES OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES?

The Palestinian refugees in other Arab countries are not really part of the production systems of those countries. Few Palestinians have taken passports in these other countries. Without doing so it is impossible in some places, such as Lebanon, to get a work permit. What happens is that many Palestinians, unable to work legally, will provide illegal cheap labor for the feudal agriculture system in Southern Lebanon, earning 1/3 of the wages of Lebanese laborers. This, of course, creates strife between the Palestinian workers and the Lebanese workers.

Most Palestinians are forced to live as refugees in the U.N. camps, subsisting on UNRWA rations.

WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THE ROLE AND POSITION OF WOMEN WITHIN THE PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS?

The women's question and women's issues have not been handled properly. There is a tendency within the Palestinian movements to either avoid dealing with the question by saying, "Now is not the time"; that now women should be involved without disrupting the social structure. At the other extreme are those who would superimpose a whole program of radical reforms on every woman. This does not take into account the isolated conditions under which most Arab women have lived. You cannot move directly from such conditions to the point of carrying a gun and engaging in armed struggle.

Little is done by any of the Palestinian factions to analyze the position of women. There have been pragmatic attempts at involving women, but there has not been the necessary development of a program in which the woman's situation is analyzed in terms of her economic and social oppression; a timely program whereby you can move from one stage to another.

The Union for Palestinian Women is active within all of the camps. The primary focus is on the education of women although the program of the group varies with respect to the conditions of the area in which it is working. For example, the National Union for Jordanian and Palestinian women has developed a program which is much more conscious of the economic oppression of women.

While women can receive commando training, and we hear of the actions of individual women, these are still the exception rather than the rule.

WHAT OF THE REPORTS OF THE THRIVING ECONOMIC STATUS OF ARABS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES?

The choice open to Arabs in the West Bank is to stay with Israel or go with Jordan, where the situation is also extremely oppressive. So, in reality, there is no choice: It is also clear that Israel has the more stable economy and that the cheap labor of the Arabs has a role to play in that economy.

WHAT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE PROSPECTS FOR ARAB-JEWISH UNITY AMONG WORKERS?

The prospects of Arab and Jewish workers joining together have improved, especially since Oriental Jews have become more aware of the exploitation of the capitalist system and what the Zionist regime means. Also after '67, they realized that they were "not going to be thrown into the sea." They have begun to understand how this propaganda has been used to distract them from gaining insight into the contradictions within Israeli society and to keep them down.

WOULD YOU COMMENT ON REPORTS OF A GROWING AMBIVALENCE AMONG ARABS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TOWARD THE ZIONIST REGIME?

You must understand that there are very few political movements on the West Bank in which Arabs can work. Rakah, the faction of the Israeli Communist Party which rejected the concepts of Zionism, is allowed to work on the West Bank. However they are not allowed to distribute their newspaper there. Rakah is the only forum open to Arabs on the West Bank through which they can express their grievances and as such it is supported by the Arabs. This does not mean however, that there is widespread agreement among the Arabs with the position of Rakah which follows the Moscow line and even accepts UN Resolution 242 (calling for the evacuation of territories occupied by Israel since '67 in exchange for recognition of her existence with 'secure and recognized' frontiers; ensuring de facto recognition of Israeli frontiers as they existed before 1967).

Morocco

"Morocco," by Carmen Carrillo, was included in *Third World Women*, an anthology of poems, prose and graphics, published by Third World Communications, San Francisco.

The kaftan that covers me
From head to ankles
Keeps me hot.

The veil over my mouth
Keeps me quiet.

Only my eyes are free
To drink
deavour
careless
coveit

My eyes are pupils
In the school of everyday life.

Hey! Do you speak English?
Vous voulez quelque chose?
For qui senores. . .
Their license plate is Dutch.
These Europeans are all rich.
Why don't they hire me
to watch their cars
or shine their shoes
or guide them to the shops.

Hey! Pick up that coke bottle they left.
It's large - worth at least 15¢!



A Woman Nomad

Morocco - land of imperial cities,
Of sultans, and pashas and kings.
Of palaces (yes, Barbara Sutton has one in
Tangier too)
Of camels and goats
And of sheep and skinny dogs.
Morocco - formerly free from the French
All of seventeen years
And today their holiday haunt
(The road signs reading
"French Morocco lead them on).

Morocco - land of
an
sub employment.
under
Where men are forced
To beg and steal
And women are reduced
to slavery.

Morocco - where the streets
Are open clinics
With walking, sitting
Standing victims of
Unheard disease.

Morocco - harrating bustle
Where the taken
And the took play
Bazaar games.

Land of Arabs
Labelled subhuman by
French and Spanish colonialists:
Labelled white by Malcolm X.

Land of obvious contradictions
(Blurred and nullified by
Kief and hashish).
Morocco must rise up.
Morocco will rise up.

ISRAEL TODAY :

a critical analysis

The following interview was conducted with an Israeli woman in the U.S., who was a member of a kibbutz for 5 years. She has been affiliated with an Israeli socialist organization, and has actively participated in Women's studies in the U.S.

Here she tells of her experiences as a child in a kibbutz and of her views on Israeli society today.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE KIBBUTZ IN ISRAELI SOCIETY?

The kibbutz is the cornerstone of Israeli society. While the kibbutz only accounts for 3% of the population, it is politically and militarily very important in Israel. To see the significance of the Kibbutz as a military outpost and colonizing force, one could draw a map of the new kibbutzin and see that it is the same as the new map of Israel. The Kibbutz is important for the progressive image of Israel.

DO YOU SEE THE KIBBUTZ AS A MODEL OF SOCIALIST PRODUCTION?

I don't see the Kibbutz as a socialist system of production. It is a capitalist unit with a special equality between the members of the unit, but in relationship to the outside world, the Kibbutz functions as any other capitalist unit. There is industry in the Kibbutz along with agriculture. Many of the workers are hired laborers, both Arabs and Jews, who can't share equally in the benefits of their labors. The profits from industry go into new investments and into raising, to some extent, the standard of living of the Kibbutz members. All the Kibbutzin are Zionist, which means they believe in and are part of the Zionist establishment. Being a Zionist, you can sit on the Arab land, but how does this fit with being a socialist? Many Kibbutzin are sitting on the land of expelled Arabs, and since the Kibbutzin are Zionist political units, no Arabs can become members. The Kibbutzin movement was carried out by European settlers. The culture remained heavily European; therefore, the percentage of Oriental Jews living on Kibbutzin is very low. Since the war of 1967, a sector of Israeli society is becoming a class of masters. Some people have maids and servants, many of them Arab women from the occupied territory.

WHY IS THE KIBBUTZ REPRESENTED TO AMERICANS AS A MODEL OF SOCIALIST PRODUCTION?

It is only to the American youth, the idealists, that the idea of a socialist system is presented in order to attract them. But the Israeli government is very careful not to scare off capitalists who want to invest by assuring them that Israel is not socialist, that the kibbutz movement is only 3%, and they are socialist only in their internal relationships.



Women's strike in Upper Nazareth:
"After 10 years, 59¢ an hour."



Women of Arab, 15 miles from Bevan, in a protest at the site of their village in Upper Galilee. Israeli forces razed the village in 1953 for military reasons.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE KIBBUTZ?

When the Kibbutz started 70 to 80 years ago, there was a heavy stress on equality between men and women. But today, women are the only ones who take care of the children in the day-care centers, who work in the community kitchens. There are very few women whose daily jobs are spent in the agricultural fields. In addition to women's daily Kibbutz work, they do the tasks of baking, ironing, etc. just like urban women. The fact that women are assuming more domestic work is one aspect of the changes that have taken place in the status of the family within the Kibbutz. Today the family is the most sacred unit in the Kibbutz. More and more mothers want their children to sleep in the house; thus more attention and activity is centered around the family than around the social activity of the community.

TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THE BREAKDOWN IN THE DIVISION OF LABOR?

To the deterioration of socialist ideology in the Kibbutz and to the influences of the city on the Kibbutz.

WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISRAELI SOCIETY? IS THERE A WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL?

Women are generally oppressed in Israel just as in every Western capitalist country. There is a slight difference between Israeli and American women in that Israeli women work much more out of the house. Women in Israel are seen as sex objects just as in the United States.

Israel has no laws against sex discrimination. Job advertisements specify whether they want a man or a woman. Also there is no law for equal pay in Israel. Women get paid less even when doing the same job as a man, and an Arab woman would get even less. Most women of European background do administrative and secretarial work while women of Afro-Asian background work in factories. Women cannot qualify for head-of-the-family status (and therefore lower tax rates) unless their husband is unable to work.

THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS REPORTS, FROM INSIDE ISRAEL AND ABROAD, CONCERNING THE DENIAL OF BASIC CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO ARABS. COULD YOU ELABORATE?

There are two juridical systems in Israel—military and civil. Arabs come under the military law which was inherited from the British mandate period. Under this law Israeli authorities can do whatever they want, to whoever they want, whenever they want. They can appropriate, confine, censor, place under administrative arrest. Constantly there are Arabs under administrative arrest, confined to their village and having to report daily to the police. The usual excuse is "security." Everything in Israel is done in the name of security. Arabs cannot live on Kibbutzim because of "security." Arab writers cannot join the association of Israeli writers because of "security" and poems are censored. Arabs are not members of the dominant labor party in Israel because of "security." The Communist Rakah is the only party in which most of the members are Arab. In the realm of education, school programs are decided by the state. Arabs have to learn the Bible more thoroughly than the Koran!

WHAT EFFECTS DO RELIGIOUS LAWS HAVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

Both sexes are oppressed equally by these laws. You can see how religious laws affect the whole of society, including non-Jews, on Friday nights and Saturdays in Israel—transportation stops, entertainment stops and businesses are closed. There are no civil marriages in Israel. All laws concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage are religious. They date back to Biblical writings and laws. For example, if a man's name is Levy or Cohen, and he wants to marry a divorced woman, religious laws forbid this marriage. On the other hand, a woman cannot get a divorce if her husband does not agree to it. Children of a non-Jewish mother are considered illegitimate and cannot legally marry other Jews. In reality, the majority of Israeli society is non-religious, but the state enforces religious laws.



Arab women peer out from the cell of an Israeli jail in the compound of a prison near Tel Aviv.

IN GENERAL, HOW ARE THE DAILY LIVES OF ORIENTAL JEWS AFFECTED BY RACISM? COULD YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE BLACK PANTHER MOVEMENT?

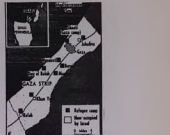
Oriental Jews, those coming from Asian and African countries, are considered to be on a lower social scale than are European Jews. It is natural when one is in worse condition economically, that is, if he receives less; then everything else he receives is less—education, health care, etc. This creates a sociological problem. European chauvinism and circumstances in Israel have created poor conditions for the Oriental Jew. They are even denied their own culture. Maybe it is because of their similarities with Arab culture. Basically, Israel is a western society with western values although 60% of the population is Oriental. In Israel, you hear talk about the Oriental Jew very much like Americans talk about the Negro. Racism is used as a tool for exploitation just as it is here in the United States. In terms of representation, in the government, there are not more than 5% Oriental Jews out of 124 parliament members. Much of the unskilled labor is made up of Oriental Jews and Arabs. They work in seasonal agriculture, in factory work, and construction jobs. In the army, the bulk of the soldiers are of Afro-Asian background although very few of the high officers are. It is a myth that the army is a melting pot of the society!

The Black Panther movement began as a protest against social and economic discrimination of Oriental Jews. It became very clear to the Sephardim (Jews whose origins are in Africa and Asia, also called Oriental Jews) that immigrating Russian Jews were given many benefits such as housing and jobs which were denied them. After living in the country 15 years, many Oriental Jews still live in one-room apartments for six or seven family members. When the Russian Jews came, they immediately received apartments and jobs. As long as Israel is a capitalist Zionist state there is no way for them to escape their economic situation. The Panther movement itself cannot succeed completely until they understand who is exploiting them and why, and until they work with other oppressed groups such as the Arabs.

WE HAVE HEARD THAT AT LEAST 44 SETTLEMENTS HAVE BEEN PLANNED, AND MANY ALREADY SETTLED, INSIDE THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY. COULD YOU COMMENT ON THESE AND ON THE PURCHASE OF LAND IN THESE TERRITORIES?

Yes, these 44 new settlements are already in operation and more are planned. The role of these settlements show a new stage in colonization process today. It is obvious that the occupied territories stay in the hands of Israel, the harder to give them back and the stronger the economic dependency.

As for the purchase of land in the occupied territories: yes, it is happening and yes, the Arabs are selling the land. People in the occupied territories have learned from 60 years' history that if they don't sell their land it will be expropriated by the Zionist government (and that includes Zionist agencies such as the Jewish National Fund).



WHAT WAS THE REACTION OF ISRAELIS TO THE RAID ON LEBANON WHERE 3 PALESTINIAN SPOKESPEAKERS WERE MASSACRED? WHY DO YOU THINK ISRAEL CARRIED OUT THIS RAID?

I really can't say what the reaction was. I don't trust the public opinion polls coming out of Israel. They are created and controlled for the use of propaganda.

Israel carried out this raid because it thought that by destroying the leadership of the Palestinian resistance, it could destroy the organization. If it resistance organizations were destroyed, it would be easier for Israel to show the problem as a refugee problem rather than a Palestinian problem.

DO YOU SEE ANY COOPERATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REGIMES IN ATTEMPTING TO WIPE OUT THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE?

I saw this type of cooperation in the recent past. Israel worked in cooperation with the US and Jordan in 1970 when Hussein massacred the Palestinians. Whenever these governments have an interest in working together they will. The Palestinians are the only threat to the status quo in the Middle East. One can say that the Palestinians are a fermenting element which can bring the whole thing to an explosion.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS PREVENTING UNITY AMONG ARABS AND JEWS INSIDE OF ISRAEL?

On the Jewish workers' side, the main obstacle to Arab-Jewish unity is Zionist ideology. On the Arab side, among the obstacles are Zionist oppression and Arab nationalism. The existence of racism makes it harder for Arabs and Jews to realize that the same forces are oppressing both of them.

WHAT PROSPECTS DO YOU SEE FOR UNITY AMONG THE ARABS AND JEWS FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Right now, the prospects of unity among Middle Easterners look dim. Israel is built on a war economy and the average Israeli worker does not feel that oppressed. After the 1967 war, new markets were opened to Israel and new opportunities arose. In the long run, the only hope for socialist revolution in the Middle East is cooperation between Arab and Jewish workers to organize themselves and struggle together. Political movements which exist everywhere in the Middle East are suppressed. There is no real mass political movement at the present time in the Middle East.

Women In Iran

THE ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED FROM RESISTANCE, ORGAN OF THE IRANIAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION IN THE U.S.

"(Iran's) oil can be compared to a beautiful girl who has many suitors. Naturally, the one suitor who is more appreciative of her, who offers more (money) as mahr¹ and who proposes better terms will win (her Hand)."² This remarkably degrading comment by Iranian Prime Minister Hoveyda reflects something about the conditions of women in Iran today. Despite the Iranian regime's well publicized claims to the contrary, Iranian women remain in the most oppressed section of Iranian society. Their economic, legal and social lot is much worse than the harsh conditions suffered by most of the men.

From birth, an Iranian girl faces a world that considers her inferior to a male child. Iranian parents often pray to have boys, not only because of traditional prejudices against women, but also because they see sons as better providers for their poor parents.

LEGAL SITUATION

"Family law" reform has been a much celebrated aspect of the Shah's "White Revolution". A series of new "family courts" were set up in 1968, supposedly to provide the much needed legal protection of women. Like most other reforms of the Shah these measures seem to be designed more for propaganda purposes than actual improvement of the women's conditions.

Polygamy for example is still allowed under the "family laws" now, however, the man must obtain permission from his first wife. Due to their complete economic dependence of their husbands most wives are forced to give permission. In effect, the law helps only women from well to do backgrounds who can survive without monetary support from their husbands.

Another change which was made in the "White Revolution" concerns divorce laws. Previously a man could divorce his wife without her consent or even knowledge of it by simply repeating three times that he wished to divorce her. The reforms make it compulsory for both people to take the case to court and ask for a divorce permit. Again only wealthy women can take advantage of this law because in poor families the wife is economically dependent on her husband to such an extent that even if her situation is miserable she won't ask for a divorce. If, because of poverty, her parent's cannot take her back into their house, she either has to get a low paying job, remarry or become a prostitute. There is also a great deal of social prejudice against divorced women. Since they will be looked down upon, most women prefer to continue an unhappy marriage rather than divorce their husbands. Due to the high illiteracy rates in Iran, it is very likely that most women in the villages do not even know that divorce is legally permissible.

One of the harshest laws against women is code 179 which states, "If a man finds his wife in bed with another man and injures or murders one or both of them, he is acquitted according to the law. If he sees his daughter, sister or mother with another man (who has no interest in marriage) in bed and commits murder, he is sentenced from one to six months in prison. If he injures them his sentence is from eight days to two months."

There are many other laws which are degrading to women. For example, in cases of inheritance and bearing witness a woman is counted as half of a man. In some cases such as divorce, a woman is not accepted as a witness. A daughter inherits only half as much as her brother. And if her husband should die, a woman cannot be regarded as a guardian for her children. The automatic guardian is her husband's father.

The Shah's most celebrated step towards the "emancipation" of Iranian women was his reform, in 1963, allowing women's suffrage. Previously women, along with criminals and the insane were not allowed to vote.

Women's suffrage has been a major demand of Iranian women since the early 1900's. Under the Shah's dictatorship, however, suffrage in general has no significance. The Women's Suffrage Act did little more than provide a good publicity issue for the Shah, and some positions in the parliament and the cabinet for a few women of Iran's ruling circles.

The Shah then proceeded to outlaw all women's organizations except the official "Women's Organization of Iran" which is headed by his sister Ashraf.

PEASANT WOMEN

The majority of Iranian women are peasants and their life is much different than the women in the cities. In the villages the women work in the fields or on the farm just as the men do. They participate in the production and selling of farm goods and are also responsible for housework such as cooking, sewing and taking care of the children. But despite the greater participation of women peasants in the everyday business of the family, the idea of male supremacy is much stronger in villages and among tribes.

The peasant woman is not to appear in public eyes or to be consulted...At home she must fear the man and consider herself below him. She must see it rightful for the man to beat her and throw her out of the house. But she doesn't have the right to go to her father and complain. She must suffer and prove she is a decent and good wife. The husband's cursing and beating of the wife is necessary and deserved to keep the wife at home and not to spoil her.

In several areas of agriculture, such as tobacco, tea and rice, the majority of workers are peasant women. Many of these women work for their parents or husbands and are not paid. Others work an average of 12 hours a day for near starvation wages. Despite the constant censorship of news in Iran, accounts of the working conditions of these women sometimes appear in the Iranian press. A Tehran newspaper writes "picking tea leaves is exclusively done by women. In Fuman and Someh Sara region, the daily wage is 30cents. Work time is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. During this time span (12 hours) there is a one hour break.

These women have an average of 5 children each. They are forced either to leave their children home or to take them to the fields. Babies are placed in cribs that the mother fashions with her veil and hangs between two trees... The women's food is the cheapest local food which makes the night before or early in the morning and takes to work. Of each 100 women who work on tea plantations, about fifty percent are girls between 8 and 15 and 10 percent older women who normally would be expected to be retired. The younger girls are taken along by their mothers, since even one person could hardly eat an average meal with 30cents."



WOMEN WORKERS

The situation of women workers is not significantly better than that of the peasant women. In 1972 Iran Almanac stated, "A majority of them (women) are ignorant of their legal rights, they have no training and the lowest jobs are allotted to them;..."

The age of women laborers ranges between 19 and 34. Usually after the age of 19 the number of women workers starts decreasing. Although it was supposedly outlawed, many very young girls also work. An Iranian journal has written that "since 1963 in Iran there has been an annual increase of 14.8 per cent in child labor between the ages of 10-14."⁴

More than half of Iranian women and children workers are employed in rug weaving factories where the world renowned Persian carpets are made. They are particularly well suited for this work because their small fingers can best make the millions of tiny knots necessary for the carpets. Conditions in these factories are the clearest examples of the regime's unwillingness to provide legal protection for women workers. A newspaper story that slipped under the censor's eyes states: "These factories do not have enough light and are damp with stale air. Child workers not only lack necessary food, rest and pay, but also lack sun light and fresh air and, therefore, often suffer from general weakness, anemia, and other illnesses. In Mashed tuberculosis and rheumatism are common among child rug weavers."⁵ Many young women are permanently disfigured from long hours of setting cross levers. They are unable to bear children safely as their bone and muscle structure is not developed.



The wages received by women workers aren't enough to provide basic necessities of life. According to government statistics, 50% of women workers get 60-100 rials (75 cents-\$1.25) as their daily wages, 38% get 100-150 rials (\$1.35-\$2.00) and about 12% get 250 rials (\$3.50) daily.* In reality, wages are frequently lower.

Much propaganda has been done by the Shah's regime about the protection of women workers. The Iranian Work Code (in theory) protects pregnant women by permitting them to take a leave of absence from 6 weeks before childbirth to four weeks after. They are not paid but should receive worker's insurance benefits. In reality, these laws are rarely enforced according to the few impartial observers that have been able to visit Iran. (At a factory visited in Yazd), fifty percent of the pregnant working women in their 8th month of pregnancy were suffering from serious anemia...

It was observed that infants kept by their mothers in the factory during work hours, were suffering from severe malnutrition. The food infants were eating was dried bread soaked in tea and sugar. The mothers indicated that they did not have milk to nurse their babies and could not afford to buy milk.

STRUGGLE

The working conditions are so bad that in spite of the threat of the Shah's police force, women have protested their condition. Police repression has been as harsh towards women as it is towards the rest of the Iranian society. In 1971, spool factory workers, most of whom were women between the ages of 10 and 17, went on strike for better working conditions and higher pay—they were earning less than \$1.00 a day. As they demonstrated, the Shah's police force attacked. Many workers were seriously injured and others were arrested.

Women also took an active part in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911), a political movement that demanded an end to autocratic rule and the institution of a representative government. At this time the question of the social position of women first began to appear as a key question. The issue was widely discussed in the progressive press. The newspaper *Soresrafi* printed discussions that the women were raising. It criticized forced and early marriages, the veil, polygamy, the role of the clergy in perpetuating women's oppression. During this time a special women's battalion was formed in Tabriz which fought side by side with the men in defense of their city against anti-constitutional forces.

The period of Allied occupation of Iran (1914-1946) during WWI, women's organizations sprung up in various parts of Iran. This was thanks to the relative freedom that ruled due to a weak central government. Women held conferences, demonstrations for women's rights as well as general democratic rights of the Iranian people.

Recently, the participation of women in the struggles of the Iranian people is increasing. Women workers have taken part in strikes demanding better working conditions. In the mass protest against bus fares hikes in 1971, participation of women (mainly students) in boycotting buses was quite evident.

In February of this year, women in universities throughout Iran joined in demonstrations protesting the Shah's recent \$3 billion arms purchase. They were also protesting the large propaganda campaign of the regime aimed at glorifying the 10th anniversary of Shah's "White Revolution". Shah's police forces shot 28 students to death, 5 of whom were women.

Women are also participating in the organized resistance of the Shah's dictatorship. According to reports received from inside the prisons in Iran, many of such women have been arrested. Accounts of women's resistance under torture are proudly circulated by the opposition.

Throughout Iran's history women have participated in the struggle to build a society based on justice, a society that aims to meet the basic needs of its people. Women are continuing that struggle today, the number who are joining resistance movements is rapidly increasing. The Shah's reforms have failed to improve either the conditions of women or the conditions of workers and peasants in general. It is clear that the solution to the problems of women in Iran must be part of the solution of the problems of poverty and repression within the country as a whole. This goal can only be accomplished by a basic change in the corrupt government system that is now in power.

* *Asahi* "price" offered by the groom for the bride's hand in Iranian marriages. This "price" is as due in case of divorce.

1. *Ettelaat*, Air Edition, Oct. 1971 (22 mdr, 1356).
Prime Minister's interview with German Correspondents.
2. *Asahi*, Tokyo, May 1970 (15 Khordad 1349)
3. *Aspandegar*, May 1970
4. *Kayhan*, Nov. 1968 (10 Bahar, 1347)
5. *Iran Atsanaad Book of Facts*,
The Echo of Iran, 1971 edition

IRAN and IMPERIALISM

The following interview is with an Iranian woman teacher and student. She has written extensively on Iranian women and Iranian society.

IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN IRAN IS A RESULT OF THE MUSLIM RELIGION, YET IN OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS SYRIA, WOMEN SEEM TO HAVE MADE GREATER PROGRESS, AS IN EDUCATION AND PERSONAL RIGHTS. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

First it is important to remember that when Islam first came to Iran, it was a liberating rather than an oppressive force. Before Islam, women had no status in society. Islam praised women and gave them status. It also condemned the practice of live burial of a female child. The present Iranian constitution states that no law can be passed which does not have the approval of religious leaders. However the Shah uses this provision when it aids his plans, and he ignores it when it is more beneficial to the stability of his regime. For example, one of the inhibiting things about Islam initially, was that women couldn't become educated. And now the Shah has taken given women some prospects for education. However, when women push for greater equality the Shah will say, but we can't allow that because it is not in accordance with Islam. It is more than Islam that is at work in the oppression of women. It is the economic system. For example, in the countryside, parents have accepted sending their girls to school, but the economic situation forces them to pull children back out of school so they can work for the landowners. It is important to note that infant mortality is estimated at 50%, other estimates are 60%, and rural life expectancy is about 27 years.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE THE ARMS BUILD UP IN IRAN PLAYING IN THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF THE COUNTRY AND WITH REGARD TO IRAN'S POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Iran has become, after Israel, the second strongest military power in the entire Middle East. One proof is the recent purchase of two billion dollars worth of arms from the U.S. Iran will play the role previously played by the British in the Gulf, role the U.S. would like to play if it were in that area, just as the U.S. is playing in Southeast Asia. The



RUG-WEAVING- 12 HOURS A DAY

Shah has assured the U.S. that he will be capable of policing the Gulf area. Some examples in 1971, following the British evacuation from the Gulf, Iran occupied three of the islands formerly under British control. These islands are economically and strategically important in terms of controlling the waterways, shipment of oil and even oil production, as one of the islands contains oil. Another example was just two months ago. With the rise of insurgency in Oman, Iran sent three helicopters to aid the Omani government. Here is an example outside of the Middle East—A few months before the cease fire in South Vietnam, Iran was also providing planes when needed in the South by Thieu. Internally, the arms will be used to put down insurgency within the country, especially among insurgent ethnic groups such as the Kurds, Baluchis and Azarbaijanis. These last minority groups are severely repressed and are not even permitted to speak or study in their own language.

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH PUBLICITY REGARDING LAND REFORM AND THE PROMOTION OF LITERACY. HAVE THESE REFORMS BEEN EFFECTIVE?

One of the biggest contradictions concerning land reforms is that every day we hear of growing unemployment in the cities, and of peasants leaving one village. If the land reform were bettering the conditions of peasants, why would they be storing the cities? Some statistics will also show the "success" of the land reform. Before the reform, 65% of the land was privately owned by privileged classes, who had "gained the right" to this land.

Through reforms made by the Shah's father, who was himself, the largest landowner in Iran, 15 % of the property was owned by religious institutions, 15% was small peasant plots, 5% was land owned by the state. After the reforms, the figures were 50% privately owned, 15% religious, 25% peasant, and 4% state. Even with land that was evenly divided and where the price was brought down, poorer peasants without money had no access to the land. The Shah is fully aware that a true land reform which guaranteed the freedom of the peasant, can only mean his own destruction.

As for the literacy program, literacy corps were established where young people would go to a village and try to educate masses of illiterate people. There is nothing wrong with literacy programs, I'm questioning the Shah's purpose. What is important is that the system remained the same. Literacy programs were artificial. They did not speak to the real needs of the Iranian people. Since there are still no jobs, the rural population, even though some may be literate, still have to go back to the fields to exist. Within this kind of social and economic framework, 10,000 reforms are really no good.

In the 1950's, during the reign of Mossadeq, there was much freedom, and nationalization of oil was attempted. Women were politically active along with men. They were involved mainly in the Tudeh party and the National Front. As far as I know, the women did not hold leadership positions. With the C.I.A. master of Mossadeq, after the following political repression, political activity slowed down. In the recent 1960's and 70's, with Iran at the height of political repression, women are among the guerrillas who have been captured. I've learned that some of these women have been tortured and others imprisoned in women's prisons.

WOULD YOU COMMENT BRIEFLY ON THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT ON THE IRANIAN ECONOMY AND THE IRANIAN CLASS STRUCTURE?

Ever since the establishment of the oil consortium (7 major oil companies which control 90% of production), Iran's economy has been totally manipulated according to the interests of foreign oil companies. There is no question that Iranian oil resources are being exploited. In addition, the increasing economic dependency has brought Iran face to face with a foreign debt of over \$1.5 billion dollars*. While on the one hand oil revenues are increasing, these monies are drained into the defense budget which is now estimated at 1/3 of the total government revenues. The other major areas of investment has been the industrialization of agriculture. In the South, European companies have started agricultural developments for export trade. One example is the production and export of asparagus - a vegetable unheard of in Iran. Another example is the agro-business initiated by Nixon which is modernizing agriculture through technology, but who can afford tractors? And who owns the land? Industrialization has not affected the rug weaving industry as there is still great demand for hand woven rugs.



Two-thirds of the rug weavers are children between the ages of 6 and 10. In sum, you can say that industrialization has had 3 major effects on the class structure of the rural areas: 1) The proletarianization of many of the peasants who are forced to work on the farms or are forced to emigrate to the cities and work in the factories 2) The creation of a village bourgeoisie (these are peasants who bought the land from the poorer peasants) 3) The integration of the land owning into the comprador bourgeoisie (those with ties to imperialism).

IS THE EMPRESS FARAH A SYMBOL FOR WOMEN IN IRAN?

The Empress does not represent women in Iran. If she doesn't represent the people, how can she be a symbol for them? The government tries to show that Farah was from a "commoner" background. It is even said that she borrowed a dress in order to meet the Shah for the first time. The people know that when she sheds tears, her grief is only a show. At least 60% of the people live in poverty in the countryside. At most, Empress Farah could represent the top 2% of women in the cities. The average Iranian woman is a slave. She is either a housewife or a peasant or working woman, laboring 8 to 12 hours daily. Even when laws are passed which are in favor of women, only a small percentage are able to take advantage of them. For example, in 1971, the law was passed where a man could have no more than one wife unless the first wife consented, but the law is meaningless when wives are forced to consent by threat of divorce, which would mean complete loss of financial support. Women still cannot travel without consent of their husbands.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN OPPOSING IRANIAN REPRESSION? HOW ARE WOMEN ORGANIZED?

There are no formal organizations that I know of. It's a funny question to ask because there are no opposition organizations whatsoever in the sense of women's liberation in America. Tight political repression prevents it. This does not mean, however, that women are inactive. Historically speaking, women were the first to publish newspapers which addressed themselves to political issues. The women received a permit to print a newspaper of arts and literature. They used the newspaper, however, to print plays of a political nature. In 1906, a group of Iranian women revealed themselves as serious political activists. Masses of Iranian people were then opposing the granting of oil concessions and other investment benefits to foreigners. During a large protest in Teheran, the women drew arrows from under their veils. I'm not aware of any specific organization to which these women belonged but this type of collective action proves that an organization of some kind existed. During the reign of Reza Shah between the 1920's and 30's, there was not much writing of a political nature. During the 1940's and 50's there were more political publications due to the fact that the British had exiled the Shah to South Africa and his son, who came to power, was young and politically inexperienced. At this time, much poetry was being written by women.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN IRAN?

Between 1961 and the present there have been constant protests and demonstrations in the universities. Sometimes these will focus on a direct political issue; at other times students will protest against tuition hikes and then use it for larger, more important issues. The most recent events were in February, 1973 in response to three events: 1) The purchase of two billion dollars worth of arms from the U.S.; 2) The fallacy of the recent oil policy, i.e., that Iran controlled the oil; 3) Political repression in Iran (torture, mass murders, imprisonment). This event caused universities throughout the entire country to shut down for two months, yet this event was not reported in one major American paper. In Iran, everybody knows how hard it is to get into the universities. Tuition is very high so that only the privileged can get in. There are few scholarships. There is an in-

crease in the number of students joining the Iranian Students Association. Of course, some students who speak out against the regime while abroad are co-opted by the government when they go back. However, for most, they do not go back. This means that, in order to stay, an Iranian who opposes the Shah must stay in a school or face deportation. The harassment is incredible.

WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THE RESISTANCE OF WORKERS TO THE SHAH'S REGIME?

It must be remembered that industrial workers in Iran are very few in number and unorganized. However, there have been major protests from this sector. There were two major bus strikes which were supported by the students. In the summer of 1971, textile workers carrying the picture of the Shah marched toward the city asking that some promised reforms be acted upon. They were fired upon by the police, and I have personally learned that electrical wires were thrown at them. Workers are not allowed to participate in any social or political activity. In addition, they are encouraged to spy on their friends and report them.



Tehran University Demonstration - July 1961

The New Strategy of control

by BONNIE MASS

While significant numbers of women from the colonized world search for ways to break their traditional chains of social and economic oppression, the imperialist powers are seeking new ways to control their growing revolutionary spirit. Efforts to control "unwanted" populations by displacing large groups of refugees or engaging in counter-insurgency, forced "unbanishment" and genocidal wars have always existed. The new tactics perpetuated by a large sector of the American culture have center on passive programs to control "unwanted" populations, under the guise of "birth control". And in this way, the forces of counter-revolution and of women's oppression seek to control the most personal aspects of women's lives. (See *Birth Control Handbook*, February 1972, Montreal). Their aim is to convince our Third World sisters that fewer in their families will ensure financial stability and personal achievement, and will lead to women's liberation upon acceptance of the IUD, Lippe Loop, sterilization (literary not required), and the pill, whereas, in fact, their real aim is to decrease the number of those who oppose colonialism and imperialism. So it is these propagandists who are blaming women for "causing one of the world's most critical problems"...the over-abundance of "unwanted babies". The International Planned Parenthood's popular slogan urges "Every Child a Wanted Child". But why are these babies wanted or unwanted? And who determines who is wanted? How is it possible for large numbers of our oppressed sisters to make significant choices about their own futures and those of their children, when they are unable to choose how much or what type of sustenance to provide for their families?

In reality, imperialism is the culprit which continues to deny Third World women the fundamental right to make decisions concerning their own bodies by reinforcing traditional shackles and using women as wage slaves.

As a result of present day deterioration in the capitalist economies, and the increased exploitation of the "have none", the ruling class has no choice but to plot grandiose and multi-leveled control programs designed to thwart rebellion and revolution. When the issue of birth control arises from other socio-economic benefits such as complete health care, child care, or preventive medicine, the negative concept of reducing the "undesirable" population becomes dominant. Family planning programs, which have always received most of their support from the international agencies of the ruling class, have avoided the central concerns for the health of women and children. This includes agencies such as the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Agency for International Development (AID), International Planned Parenthood, The Population Council, The World Bank, and "neutral" organizations such as the World Council of Churches and United Nations organs, primarily the World Health Organization, UN Relief and Works Association and UNICEF.

As an example, the population budget of AID was increased twelve-fold in the last 5 years, growing from \$10 million in 1963 to \$125 million in 1973. At the same time, AID's health and welfare budget was slashed by \$49 million. Similarly, the "neutral" UN has created a Population Trust Fund, chaired by John D. Rockefeller III whose funding has risen from \$1.5 million to \$40 million in the last 6 years. While its other welfare organizations, such as UNRWA have trouble raising the minimal funds needed to provide assistance rations to the Palestinian refugees.

1. IPPF, The International Planned Parenthood Federation, known for its clinics around the world, was originally created by the World Bank's Population Family Fund established by Hugh Hooton (Duke Cup, Inc.). Hooton's Chairman have included Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Johnson. In addition to its founder, the IPPF has continued to draw its financial backing from such individuals and military big-wigs as Eugene McCarthy, former President, Walter Reuther, Bill Clinton, a former member, Bob Felt, a CIA Under Secretary of the Army, Rockefeller Practitioner of the Rockefeller Family Limited Partners of Suncoast, Inc. (see *Birth Control Handbook*), and only Frank, and former chairman of the Commission of International Migration. Hundreds of thousands of dollars has been given to IPPF to "lead money" for its new World Population Fund. Lawrence Linder, Secretary Director of the Rockefeller Family Inc., 1970.

2. The Population Council was established in the city of New York, Rockefeller. It finances study grants and experimental research to protect birth control devices in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.
3. World Bank: In 1970, President Robert Rothenberg (former U.S. Secretary of Defense) passed a special Population Physics Assistance Fund. The Bank to extend special loans and credits for population control projects. Much of the Bank's funds come from the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, under the Ford or Peace Act, which has special savings attached using population control as a condition for aid.



"So you are the case of starvation" FROM AL THEATRE, PARISIAN

Within the Middle East, population programs are expanding rapidly with support from these agencies. In Iran, for example, the Shah's contemporary "Fifth Economic Development Plan" has allocated \$100 million for family planning compared to \$6.7 million in 1966. Funds are provided by CDDO, the Ford Foundation, The Population Council, (IPPF), The National Iranian Oil Company. The Shah's "White revolution" has created literacy and health corps as well as women's army corps. One of their purposes is to approach the illiterate peasants and nomadic herdsmen to teach "responsible parenthood". What responsible parenthood means is spelled out in the newsletter of the international division of IPPF, May 73, London. "Their aim is to prevent 1 million births by 1978." What is not said is that the peasants are by and large opposed to family planning, and that as a result, the government has attempted to combine these programs under the cover of providing minimal public health services. But the government's primary basis continues to be the former-population control-while health services seldom extend beyond simple immunizations, teaching of nutrition, and diagnosis of health hazards.

"PRECISELESS POPULATION GROWTH WITHOUT PARALLEL ECONOMIC GROWTH...MAKES FOR A CONSTANT LOWERING OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING. SUCH A DECLINE WITH ITS CONCOMITANT POVERTY AND HUNGER INEVITABLY DELIVERS A POPULATION TO SOME KING OF -ISM, WHETHER IT BE COMMUNISM, FASCISM OR PAN-ARABISM AND WEANS THEM AWAY FROM DEMOCRACY." IPPF President

Situated on the border of Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan has an illiteracy rate of 92%. Before the recent coup d'etat, AID gave an incredible grant of \$1.7 million to the State University of New York, solely for the study of existing family planning programs. Ford, IPPF and Peace Corps Volunteers are already active in the area, working through the Afghan Family Planning Assoc. (AFPGA) (AID War on Hunger, July 1973). The Pulkhan (religious leaders) cooperate closely and provide passages from the country out of context to make the point, "it would be better for you to leave behind rich heirs rather than to leave them as a burden on the community and beggars." Or, "Save me from the hardship of a large family with low property." Little is said about the most pressing need to simply re-distribute the wealth.

In Turkey, another CEMTO country, the IPPF and the Population Council alone provided over \$1 1/2 million of aid in 1969. At the same time, money to maintain life was obviously unavailable. Infant mortality was 161 per thousand and life expectancy at birth was 53.7 years. (HSBMA Health Reports, Nov 71). In order to encourage "acceptors", Turkey rewards its doctors with monetary incentives of \$10 for every inscription. In Egypt, doctors receive an unbelievable fee of \$2.30 for each IUD inscription that remains in place for 6 months or longer according to Dr. Crowley of the Population Council, and the Ford Foundation, (United Arab Republic-Country Profile, August 1969). How low population growth is perhaps more important to the economic future of Egypt than the construction of the High Dam.

Because of poverty and disease, the number of pregnancies among women in rural areas is tragically high compared to the number of living children (Egypt-133 pregnancies to 4.5 live births). In many societies, children hold out the promise of additional support and the extended family structure offers social and economic protection. However, as living standards rise for everyone, and economic security is ensured, the birth rate automatically drops, as shown by the experiences of Cuba and China. Even before modern contraceptive methods were discovered, the birth rate was very often determined by one's economic status.

In contrast to other Middle Eastern countries, Israel has long held a pro-maternal policy towards the Jewish population. Large families are encouraged through government and army stipends. The same benefits are not available however to Arab families since Israel wishes to reduce the birth rate of its Arab minority. Zionist women's organizations "neutral" UN organs and western church groups promote family planning. Their targets are the occupied territories whose population is Arab. Likewise in the Arab countries, such as in the poverty stricken areas of Jordan and southern Lebanon, the UN, church groups and their allied associations carry out similar tactics.

This new tactic, described in this article, is less identifiable as a tactic of oppression, but no less dangerous, because of its deceptive identity to all oppressed peoples, particularly, our Third World sisters, as they become the direct targets. In the other hand, the chances for success of these programs, despite its \$100 million programs are not optimistic. The world's oppressed have long been aware of such deception. Many realize that their social context excludes them from real possibilities to decide for themselves when to have children, and when not to have them, just as they realize that legal provisions for social educational and political equality are but a mockery. It is becoming apparent daily that our sisters and comrades in struggle against all forms of exploitation, will determine their own future on their own terms.

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