

The General Federation of Jordanian Women

(May 14-16, 1985)

The General Federation of Jordanian Women held a national conference in Amman under the sponsorship of H.R.H. Queen *Nour al-Hussein*. Among the studies presented at the conference was the study of *Butheina Jurdana*(*) on the image of the Jordanian women in the media. She spoke of the important role that the media play in the development of women. In the press, Jordanian women began to play an active role after the fifties, e.g. «Majallat al-Bait al-Arabi» was established in 1978. From 1948-1959, programmes in the radio were restricted to news broadcasts and songs, but later, the programmes were more oriented towards development of the Jordanian society with special programmes for women. Some of these programmes encouraged women to work and tried to offer solutions for the problems that face working women. Other programmes discussed personal status laws such as marriage, inheritance and divorce.

She also spoke about the Jordanian television which has always encouraged women to play an active role in society. Some of the programmes focussed on the problems that face working women who have to carry a «double burden». Other programmes were educational and instructive in their approach, with more emphasis on the cooperation between men and women in work, than on the separate roles where labor is divided. She said that the local programmes did not represent the problems of the Jordanian women, except for some which focussed on rural women and their problems, such as their unremunerative work in the fields. The educational programmes dealt mainly with childcare and health education. Women were misrepresented in the Bedouin programmes and they were usually portrayed as possessions who have no identity of their own. In advertisement, women's value centered around her looks, most advertisements were imported from the west and were alien to the Jordanian women.

(*) Member of the committee of working and career women.



Queen Nour and Butheina Jurdana

(From Sayidaty)

The Image of Women in Egyptian Films

Miss *Jurdana* also spoke of the image of women in Egyptian films. A research study was carried on around 410 Egyptian films, the results indicated that 23.4 per cent women were portrayed as females only, 22 per cent as housewives, 20.5 per cent as working women, 10.5 per cent as students, 79.5 per cent as artists and 5.4 per cent as rural women (the percentage of rural women in Egypt is around 29 per cent). These rates do not represent the Egyptian population, women were misrepresented in the films and portrayed as creatures whose main concern is to get married.

Recommendations

At the end of her study, she suggested the following recommendations:

- To recognize women's right for education and work.
- To prepare programmes that will eradicate illiteracy of women.
- To promote campaigns to inform women of their legal rights.
- To inform women of health education, childcare and nutrition.
- To abolish the image of women as sex symbols.

These recommendations could be implemented by:

1. Encouraging all women's organizations to be integrated in the advisory committee responsible for the preparation and planning of programmes.
2. Increasing the number of programmes dealing with the family, the child and the rural women.
3. Coordinating between all the sectors of the media to promote a positive image of women.
4. Establishing a magazine especially designed to deal with issues relating to the new role of women and the need for women's integration in economic development.