

# HISTORY OF MIDDLE EAST FEMINISM TIMELINE

1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 -

## EMERGENCE OF WOMEN'S JOURNALS AND WRITING

Women were writing (poems, essays, letters, etc.) to each other transcending highly segregated and secluded world

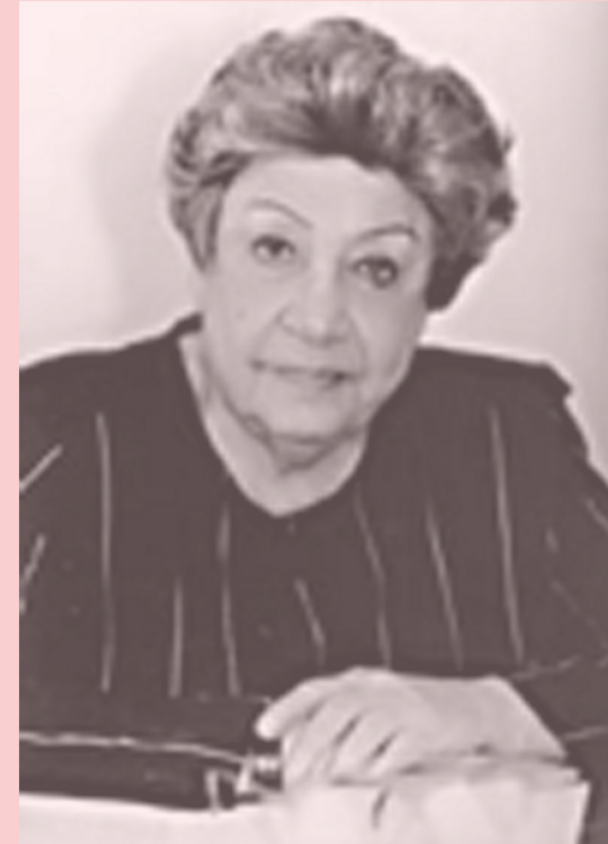
Women were already contributing to male-founded journals

First written evidence occurs in the poetry of Arab women

Poem written together by two women in Syria: Warda al-Yaziji and Warda al-Turk

1867 Warda al-Yaziji's poetry anthology *The Rose Garden* (Had-iqat al-Ward) was the first book by an Arab woman to appear in print

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, while modernization brought Egyptian women some change in everyday life, basic attitudes remained the same



1892 Hind Nawfal, a Syrian woman living in Cairo, founded the first women's journal, *Al-Fatah*  
1899 Qassin Amin published the controversial *The Liberation of Women*

Bahithat al-Badiya published feminist essays in *Al-Jarida*; women pioneered, finding space in men-run publications

Arab journalism began in Egypt: Free press began because of Egypt's independence from Ottoman control

1906 Women's paper *Fatat al-Sharq* was published by May Ziyada and Labiba Hashim

1913 May Ziyada began a weekly literary salon in Cairo frequented by many distinguished intellectuals from Arab world and the West (including Henry James)

1924 Group of Lebanese women wrote Warda al-Yaziji's obituary, the first time women publicly acknowledged another woman before

1925 The first militantly feminist journal in the Arab world appeared in Egypt when the Egyptian Feminist Union founded *l'Egyptienne*

1925 Fatma Yusif, a Lebanese immigrant to Egypt, was the first woman to found a major mainstream journal: *Ruz al-Yusif*

1937 *Al-Misriya*, a sister journal to *l'Egyptienne* in Arabic, was initiated

1945 The Arab Feminist Union published the first pan-Arab women's journal called *Al-Arabiya*

1954 Amina Said, editor of *Al-Arabiya*, started *Hawa*

1958 Laila Baalbaki's *I Live (Ana Ahya)* was published, as an autobiographical narration of a middle class woman's revolt against social conventions, which unleashed a wave of feminist literature



1970s & 1980s saw the founding of other journals such as *Thamanya Mayu* and *Ahfad*

1973 Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) established in Lebanon

1976 IWSAW began publishing the feminist journal *Al-Raida*

1970s Resurgence of Islamic dress for both men and women, including the hijab, particularly at universities and in major urban centers in Cairo

Women found and run their own publishing houses; example: press run by Arab Women Solidarity Association in Cairo

1981 Huda Sharaawi first feminist memoir published (written in mid-1940s)

1989 The Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) began to publish a magazine called *Nun*

## EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Christian missionaries built schools in Egypt w/ French, English, and American languages

The face veil had disappeared from Egyptian culture (upper and middle class women mainly)

1925 Egypt opened the first state institution of secondary education for girls

1930s Other Mashriq countries had a disappearance of the face veil

1936 Zeinab al-Ghazali established the Muslim Women's Association

1938 and 1944 At pan-Arab conferences in Cairo, women joined forces in cementing Arab feminist consciousness

1930s Arab Revolt in Palestine, women from the Mashriq, who had earlier channeled their energy mainly into philanthropic and literary societies, became active as nationalist and feminist militants

1944 The Arab Feminist Union was formed

1945 Inji Efflatoun represented the League of Women Students and Graduates of Egypt at the World congress of Women conference in Paris

1950s & 1960s Sudan and the Maghrib saw the disappearance of the veil and ending of the harem system

mid-1950s Saudi Arabia opened secondary education institutions for girls

1950s & 1960s Sudan and the Maghrib saw the disappearance of the veil and ending of the harem system

1951 Bint al-Nil Union, led by Shafik, demonstrated at the Egyptian parliament for women's rights

1965-1972 Zeinab al-Ghazali imprisoned by Nasser regime for her association with Muslim Brotherhood

In the Arabian Peninsula, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, changes began in the 1970s and especially the 1980s

1985 Arab Women's Solidarity Association met in Nairobi, marking the end of the United Nations Decade of Women

## RISE OF WOMEN'S PUBLIC ORGANIZED MOVEMENTS

1914 Huda Sha'rawi founded the Intellectual Association of Egyptian Women

1923 Huda Sha'rawi established the Egyptian Feminist Union

1948 Doria Shafik founded the Egyptian feminist organization known as Bint al-Nil Union, affiliated with the International Council of Women

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

1919-1922 Egyptian national revolution: Feminist nationalist advocated a society on feminist principles

1949 Syria granted women the right to vote with restrictions

1952 Lebanon granted women the right to vote

1961 Mauritania granted women the right to vote

1972 Syrian government revokes women's suffrage

1953 Syrian women granted suffrage

1962 Algeria granted women the right to vote

1953 Syria lifted restrictions to women's right to vote

1963 Morocco granted women the right to vote

mid-1950 Sudanese women participated in the national independence struggle and continued as an organized feminist movement

1964 Libya and Sudan granted women the right to vote

1956 Egyptian constitution granted women the rights to vote (but only for those who requested it)

1967 Yemen partly granted women the right to vote

1959 Tunisia granted women the right to vote

1954-62 During the Algerian Revolution most of the women who were participated were young and only much later did some become feminists

1975-1982 The Lebanese civil war opened opportunities for women to express themselves and to publish narratives challenging the dominant discourse

1970-1980 Palestinian women asserted themselves as feminists and nationalists.

1979 The Iranian Revolution (aka Islamic Revolution) overthrows the Shah, women participated in the revolution at first but once the Islamic Republic was in power were subjected to stricter laws and regulations

1970 Yemen granted women full rights to vote

1980 Iraq granted women the right to vote

1973 Bahrain granted women the right to vote

1974 Jordan granted women the right to vote

1994 Oman partly granted women the right to vote

2003 Oman fully granted women the right to vote

2005 Kuwait granted women the right to vote



Information for this timeline was obtained from *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing* by Margot Badran and miriam cook and from *Women and Gender in Islam* by Leila Ahmed Graphics Designed by Salwa Geadah (SallyK)