



CEDEJ Tuesday Seminar

Egyptian Progressive Education and Teacher Activism: 1922-1953

Presented by **Farida Makar**

On May 20, 2025 at 2pm at CEDEJ

23 Gamal Eldin Abou El Mahassen St., Garden City – Cairo

In 1936, a group of Egyptian teachers established *Rābiṭat al-tarbiya al-ḥadītha*, an association dedicated to the promotion of progressive education, child-centered methods and modern pedagogy. The group included psychoanalysts, prominent surrealists, a former student of Jean Piaget, and a renowned British educationalist among others. But *Rābiṭat al-tarbiya al-ḥadītha* was not the only teachers' association of its kind: Between 1922 and 1952 Egyptian teachers founded at least 3 other associations to advance progressive education and defend their rights.

This presentation is an attempt to understand the teaching profession on its own terms by taking a deeper look at the different teachers' associations which were active during the first half of the twentieth century. Drawing on a number of sources including teachers' magazines and the archives of the *Rābiṭat al-tarbiya al-ḥadītha*, the presentation explores why and how teachers became active in such groups.

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عبد عبد الواسد شلال	مهاج الدين	د	أحمد عبد السلام الكرداني
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It suggests, as expected, that teachers viewed them as important spaces for the defence of their socio-economic rights, but it also proposes that they used such networks to promote progressive pedagogy which they believed to be directly linked to their socio-economic struggles.

From the most conservative of these groups to the more progressive, they all shared an interest in progressive education, making a glue which gave the profession as a whole a kind of shared identity, despite the vast differences in economic status, geographical location and institutional background.

Farida Makar holds a DPhil in History from St. Antony's College, Oxford. Her work focuses on the history of progressive education and the teachers' movement in early 20th century Egypt. She is the author of "*Educational Institutions and John Dewey in Early 20th Century Egypt*" and co-author of "*Egyptian Textbooks in Times of Change: 1952-1980*" with Ehaab Abdou.