



IWSAW: Fourteen Years of Sustained Effort

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IWSAW: Fourteen Years of Sustained Effort

«In your school, do you organize cleaning campaigns for the purpose of arousing social consciousness among both students and community?»

This question was asked by the coordinator of a panel discussion which brought together a number of school teachers coming from various parts of Lebanon. While the questioner waited for an answer, one of the participants raised her hand to say: «That is not our business. It is the duty of the municipal council.»

The person who raised the objection was the headmistress of a coeducational village school. While she spoke, a little frown darkened her placid face.

«But who is the municipal council?» Asked the coordinator without waiting for an answer. «Its members are people like us. They were elected by the community and were entrusted with the task of providing the village or town with water, lighting, cleanliness and other necessities. If they fail in their task, we have the right to question them. It is our duty to supervise and promote every project that serves the public welfare.»

The headmistress shook her head and did not answer. I could see that she was a person who recoiled from innovation as from a mortal sin. The idea of a cleaning campaign seemed to her ridiculous. She and her students followed a program which had been dictated to them and which they were not allowed to change or criticize. They needed someone who had the power to shake off their apathy and break down the barriers that surrounded them. This task had to be undertaken by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, founded at B.U.C. in 1973, with the aim of awakening dormant minds, particularly among women who form half of the population and who should be able to play an active role, not

*only as mothers, housekeepers or teachers, but also as participants in all fields of development. In order to have an accurate idea about women's needs and potentialities, a research program was undertaken, a documentation center was established at B.U.C. Library, a bibliography of English and French works on women was published while a compilation of Arabic works on the same topic was started. Besides the quarterly newsletter, **Al-Raida**, issued in both Arabic and English and containing up-to-date information about the Institute's activities and women's problems and achievements in the Arab world, a series of publications in Arabic and English were put forth, dealing with the legal status of women, their artistic and literary output, their role in industry, in education, etc. A valuable publication called, «The Basic Living Skills Program», with audiovisual material, was prepared for the benefit of semi-illiterate women. If we add to the above sketch, the organization and the attendance of international conferences on women and of workshops on children's literature, we may conclude that IWSAW has been fighting on several fronts. In spite of obstacles created by the Lebanese war and by the slaves of tradition, the Institute has carried on the task of spreading awareness regarding woman's liberation in the Arab World. Its latest step has been the organization of exhibits and public lectures in cooperation with the Goethe Institute and other Cultural centers in Lebanon. After fourteen years of sustained effort, the seeds that have been planted will not fail to grow and produce fruit.*

Rose Ghurayyib

More Women Join The WorkForce And The Ranks Of The Unemployed

The following is an ILO report on the participation of women in economic activity.

A piece of good news for women: their proportion in the workforce has grown in many parts of the world. In fact, 21 developed countries and 13 developing countries registered an increase in the number of working women during 1982-85, according to the 1986 edition of the ILO's **Year Book of Labour Statistics**.

But there is another side to the coin: in most countries the unemployment rate continued to be significantly higher for women than for men. Furthermore, the gap actually widened during that period, particularly in developed countries. Thus, 8 out of 23 industrialised nations and 12 out of 16 developing countries showed higher rates of unemployment for women than for men. The female unemployment rate was about double the male rate in certain developed countries like Belgium (1.9 times higher) and Italy (2.5 times higher).

In the Third World the difference in unemployment rates for men and women was not as strongly marked. While in the Netherlands Antilles the women's unemployment rate was twice that of men, it was just the opposite in the Republic of Korea.

The number of developed countries where women's unemployment was higher than men's increased from 15 to 18 between 1982 and 1985. Moreover, where total unemployment rose, female unemployment increased more than male unemployment. Thus results reported indicated a positive relationship between high total unemployment rate in the country and that of women's unemployment.

Examples of the rate of change in unemployment in both developed and developing countries: the Federal Republic of Germany 0.1 for men, 0.2 for women; Australia 0.9 for men, 0.3 for women; Costa Rica 1.5 for men, 2.9 for women; and Hong Kong 0.3 for men, 0.2 for women.

This situation is not new. Such trends were already noticeable during the 1983-84 period. Yet, the phenomenon by which female unemployment grows higher and decreases less than male unemployment now affects 14 out of 25 advanced countries and 9 out of 16 developing countries. This was particularly evident in Austria, Canada, Denmark, Spain, the United States, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Netherlands Antilles, Barbados, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

On the bright side, female employment did show a moderate increase in many parts of the world. In most developed countries women made up 35 to 45 per cent of the employed population. Finland registered 48 per cent of female participation and Sweden 47 per cent. In contrast, women's participation was substantially lower

Spain (29 per cent during 1982-85) and Greece (31 per cent in 1982 and 33 per cent in 1984).

In Latin America and the Caribbean the number of women in the employed population ranged from 26 per cent in Costa Rica to 44 per cent in Barbados. Asian countries showed less fluctuations, from 36 per cent in Singapore to 39 per cent in the Republic of Korea.

Higher rates of increase in the number of women employed were found in Uruguay, from 38 to 41 per cent, New Zealand, from 34 to 36 per cent, Luxembourg, from 32 to 34 per cent, and the Netherlands from 33 to 35 per cent. However, a decrease in the employed female population was registered in Australia, from 37 to 34 per cent.

The growth in the employed female population may be principally attributed, both in developed and developing countries, to the expanding service sector, which in 1985 provided jobs for around 55 per cent of the total employed population of most countries covered.

International Labour Office
Geneva, May 1987

Flight Against Time

By Emily Nasrallah

Flight Against Time^{*} is Emily Nasrallah's first book to be translated into English. It is her sixth novel in a series of thirteen books, and is a moving story about the imigrant experience.

More about this book will appear in the November issue of *Al Raida*: «Women and War».

Emily Nasrallah is a prominent Lebanese writer. She was born in Kfeir, a small village in South Lebanon. A graduate of Beirut University College and the American University of Beirut, she was a teacher and

journalist before becoming a full-time novelist and short-story writer.

Having lived the Lebanese experience, Emily Nasrallah says that women all over the Arab World can develop their capacities despite difficulties and hindrances. She is presently working on a new novel. «Writing», she says, «is my breath of life».

Women in Development

By Winifred Weekes-Vagliani

In collaboration with Bernard Grossat

Paris: Development Center Studies, 1980.

«Women in Development» was published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The book aims at fulfilling one of the major concerns of OECD which is integrating women in development. It brings together the knowledge and experience available in member countries of the Organization in both economic development and the formulation and execution of general policies of economic aid.

The purpose of this study is to adapt such knowledge and experience to the actual needs of countries or regions in the process of development thus putting the results at the disposal of countries by appropriate means.

Dr. Weekes-Vagliani's study is divided into three parts: an overview of the problem, methodology and case studies.

The overview emphasizes the need to integrate women in development «It is now generally recognized that women are essential components of the development process, which can take place only if both men and women are included». (W. Weekes-Vagliani, p. 7)



^{*} Nasrallah, Emily. **Flight Against Time**. Charlottetown: Ragwood Press, 1987. 208 pages.

Using existing data which have recently been made available, Dr. Weekes-Vagliani developed a methodology in her study focusing on young women. It combines survey data and anthropological materials to bring a new perspective to bear on the problem of breaking into the vicious circle of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and early child-bearing.

With scarce national resources, the study reveals that policy makers need to know which measures will reach the intended target group. Knowledge of certain factors such as ethnicity and family systems associated with ethnic groups, domestic life cycle patterns, the meaning of delayed marriage and economic autonomy in each setting are essential to design effective policies and development programs.

By focusing on young women and including material which to-date has often been ignored, this study provides some helpful insight for future research and action in this field.

Mortemaison

By: Vénus Khoury - Ghata

Mortemaison^{*}, meaning **Deadhouse**, is the novel of a journey through the night, the liberation from love. In her usual sharp satiric style, Vénus Khoury-Ghata, a Lebanese novelist, poetess and journalist, living in Paris - expresses the grief of a wife over the death of a loved one. It is a catharsic way of dealing with sorrow.

The story unfolds in a sequence of strange events. At Luc's death, his wife starts to dig into his past trying to find out the facet of his life which was hidden from her. In her quest, she meets Christine Tsarkovskoy, a Russian woman who was Luc's ex-mistress. He had abandoned her when he got married, leaving her his dog as a

consolation! He had already stopped desiring her when she became a good friend of his mother. In his mind the two women had become interchangeable, thus contradicting Freud's oedipal theory.

The wife then decides to travel to Turkey --to the Asian side of the Bosphorus-- to meet her mother-in-law and introduce her daughter Mie to her. Through the strange stories recounted by her mother-in-law, she tries to reconstruct the puzzle of Luc's life «descendant of the bey's of Turkey, of the revolutionaries of Albania, believer and infidel, man and seagull» (p.99).

Unable to forget her grief through her quest, the wife goes to Paris and throws herself into a relationship with a Brazilian. She realizes «en termes vulgaires, elle souhaitait un nettoyage de son coeur, le sexe de l'amant agissant à la manière d'une curette d'obstétricien». (Literally that she was using sexual intercourse as a means of cleansing her heart as an obstetrician would clean her womb) (p. 136). Feeling guilty at her action, she sees it as a betrayal of her husband's memory.

Although one appreciates Khoury-Ghata's unusual poetic images, her humour and satire --rare qualities among women writers-- the novel is a disappointment. The story is superficial and does not move beyond the perpetuation of old clichés. Women are portrayed as jealous, vengeful and greedy. Youth and beauty are the components of seduction and children are the only consolation against death.

The novel ends on a reflection over the importance of her daughter. Only Mie had really counted in her husband's life -- therefore his death. She was the prolongation of Luc, and thanks to her, he could live a second life, a sweeter childhood. It is this thought which, ultimately consoles her.

One wishes that Vénus would find a way to channel her talents into worthwhile and transcending human topics.

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* Khoury-Gata, Vénus.

(*) **Mortemaison**. Paris: Flammarion, 1987. 169 pages. 70.00 F.F.

International Conference on Homebirth

A two-day International Conference on Homebirth will be held in London in October 1987 and will be followed by a week of workshops.

It aims to unite people from many countries who are concerned about childbirth and the tendency throughout the developed world to deliver babies in hospitals. The view that hospital is the best place for birth has gone largely unchallenged and the conference has invited an international guest list of speakers to address this issue.

For more information contact:

Home Birth Conference
65 Mount Nod Road
London SW₁₆ 2LP
England

Women At Work Weekend Conference

April 8-10-1988

Call for Papers in occupational/ managerial/ organisational psychology which contributes new information to feminist literature, research or hypotheses, incl. decisionmaking; leadership; conflict; job satisfaction; design or stress; ergonomics; unemployment; promotion; intimacy needs of career women; group theory; the male ego; creativity, sexuality and power; motivation; personality cults; mobility; access; bureaucracy; systems analysis etc.

Outlines to Sandra Oliver, Faculty Office, Thames Polytechnic, Oakfield Lane, Dartford, Kent, DAI 2SZ. Conference details to follow.

REGISTRATION DETAILS
from Administrator (same address).

The Gulf and Arab Peninsula Women's Conference

The Gulf and Arab Peninsula Women's Fourth Conference was the first to be held in Muscat Oman on 13-17 December, 1986. Sayyid Thuwainy bin Shihab, Personal Representative of His Highness Sultan Qaboos, opened the conference. The representative of Oman's 27-member delegation to the conference was Huda bint Abdallah Al-Ghazali, Director-General of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

Among the topics discussed at the conference, two were of a contraversal nature and attracted much attention.

One topic dealt with the influence of foreign «nannies» on Arab society. The controversy surrounding foreign «nannies» was sparked by Bahrain's Dr. Munira Fakhro, who holds a doctorate in social policy and planning from Columbia University. Dr. Fakhro suggested that the «nanny» issue was being blown out of proportion to distract attention from real social problems Arabs are facing. However, there was a mixed reaction and Mona Khamees, a UAE journalist working with Sharjah's Al Khaleej, warned of the influence in culture and religion that foreign «nannies» may have on their children.

The other topic touched on polygamy and its negative effects. The paper was given by Iraqi team leader Farqat Ahmed, which evoked sharp reaction from the participants.

Decisions based on recommendations of the four-day deliberations by delegates from the UAE, Iraq, Bahrain, the Yemen Arab Republic, Kuwait and Oman, were drafted and conveyed to the respective Ministries of the member countries for implementation.

Khaleej Times 18 December 1986

World Health Day

April 7, 1987 UNICEF AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION Offices throughout the world became smoke-free.

The anti-smoke campaign has been gathering momentum since last year when the Pan American Health Organization instituted a similar policy.

It was revealed that in the past year, lung cancer overtook breast cancer as a leading cancer killer among women and tobacco companies have been targeting women in their advertising campaigns in an attempt to maintain and increase sales.

The American Women's Medical Association launched a campaign to combat and discourage women from smoking while the World Bank pledged one million dollars to a «Safe Motherhood Fund» to be managed by WHO.

According to WHO one quarter of all deaths of women of child bearing age in developing countries occur during pregnancy or childbirth. Last year 99 percent of the half million women who died in pregnancy or childbirth were from developing countries.

Carbon monoxide in cigarettes reduces the capacity of blood to carry oxygen. Because of this, smoking is dangerous to unborn infants, and likely to be far more serious in the Third World, where anemia among women is widespread according to WHO.

Smoking also increases the health risks to non-smokers who inhale the smoke produced by others. «Smoking destroys people and wastes money on a gargantuan scale», Dr. C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service said in a recent publication of the WHO. He has called for a society free of smoking by the year 2000 and has encouraged all countries to adopt the same goal.

The Office of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at Beirut University College has been smoke-free since its inception in 1973.

Action for children
Volume II, No. 1, 1987

Education of Women and Health ☆

My Name is Today is a remarkable contribution to children all over the world. It was prepared by the Institute of Child Health, University of London, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of UNICEF. On the first page of the book, there is a warm and touching poem by Gabriela Mistral, the Nobel Prize-winning poet from Chile:

'We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The Child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer «Tomorrow». His name is «Today».'

Gabriela Mistral
Nobel Prize-winning poet from Chile

The original draft of this book was prepared for a presentation to the Institute of Child Health given on the occasion when Professor Morley was presented with the King Faisal International Health Award for his work in primary health care.

* Morley, David and Lovel, Hermione, «Education of Woman and Health» in **My Name is Today**. Macmillan Publishers, 1986. 359 pages.

One of the chapters of the book deals with the impact of women's education on health. The education of girls is closely associated with a falling infant mortality and birth rate and improved nutrition. In our world four out of ten women are illiterate and in some African and Arab countries eight out of ten. The health and well being of the family is highly dependent on the literacy of the mother. Girl's school education is often not considered to be so necessary, and parents are sometimes unwilling to spend money on girls rather than on boys. So the investment which could improve life tomorrow is withdrawn to help cope with life today. Despite low levels in the past, education for girls is a change which is well under way. The proportion of 6 to 11-year-old girls who are enrolled in schools in the poorest half of the world has jumped from 34 per cent to 80 per cent in 1960. Recent studies have clearly established that the more educated the mother, the greater are the chances that her child will survive till five. A decrease in child mortality is more strongly and consistently related to the level of maternal education than any other easily measurable factor. Schooling seems to enhance a woman's ability to care for her children. Studies show that it is not because she is better off, less fatalistic, more knowledgeable about health, hygiene and especially nutrition, but because she is better equipped to make use of new ideas and institutions. Her status and power within the family are improved and she may be willing to abandon customs such as providing food for male adults at the expense of children.

For almost all children, the most important primary health worker is the mother. It is the mother's level of education and access to information which will decide whether or not she will give herself for a tetanus shot in pregnancy; whether she knows about the advantages of breast feeding, whether bouts of diarrhea will be treated by administering fluids and foods; and whether there will be an adequate interval between births. Too often resources are not available but female literacy increases both the demand for them and the chance of their being used when they become available.

Highly aware of the rate of social and functional illi-



teracy in the Arab region, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World has recently completed an action oriented program especially designed to meet the needs of social illiteracy of Arab women in the areas of health, child care, home management, civic education, family planning, nutrition, environment as well as legal rights. The Basic Living Skills Program is a unique innovative and comprehensive approach to family education and community development. It is a non-formal integrated program designed for illiterate and semi-literate women to be used by health and social workers and educators involved in community development.

The contents of the Basic Living Skills are simple self-explanatory learning materials in Arabic to maximize learning among women. The Basic Living Skills Kit contains 140 lessons each stating objectives of lesson, facts about the topic, and method of teaching. These are compiled in 8 volumes and cased in heavy cardboard jackets. Four hundred colored illustrations support the text which may be used as posters to supplement text, motivate discussion, or may be cut and used with a flannel board. Eighty-five slides in color and framed for easy use as well as 150 handouts to participants to reinforce learning in the areas of communicable diseases, childhood diseases and immunization schedules from the age of 2 to 12 years are included.

The Charm
(a short story)
ILFAT IDILBI

Translated from the Arabic by Basima Bezirgan
and Elizabeth Fernea

The following story was published in **Women and the
Family in the Middle East**, edited by Elizabeth Fernea.
Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.



Her neighbor said, trying to be comforting, «What's the matter with you, Um Safi? Why make such a thing of it? You think this is the first time a man has taken a second wife?»

«How can he do this to me?» cried Um Safi, wiping her tears. «If I'd heard this from anyone but you, Khadooj, I wouldn't have believed it. I would have said no, it's gossip... vicious...» She stopped. «Oh», she cried again, «how can he do this to me, Abu Safi, after twenty-five years of marriage!»

Khadooj sniffed sarcastically. «How indeed? Sometimes I wonder about you, Um Safi. You should know by this time that trusting a man is as stupid as trying to carry water in a sieve». Then her manner changed. «But look, my dear, there's no time to waste. I'll take you to Um Zeki. She'll give you a charm to stop everything before it is too late!»

«But how?» Um Safi frowned. «You just said his wedding was set for tonight».

«Yes, yes, but Um Zeki can do wonders».

«In such a short time? In a few hours?»

«That woman can do anything, believe me. She's known for stopping weddings at the last minute, for bringing husbands and wives back together after they've fought for years. She's even managed to separate the closest and most loving of couples».

«But how?»

«Does it matter how? She just does it. But there's no point in even going to see her unless you have a gold lira. No work unless she's paid in advance. And it's a fixed price: one gold lira per job».

Um Safi hesitated. «I have a gold lira», she said.

«All right, let's go».

Um Safi rushed to dress, then she opened her own private chest and took out the gold lira. For a moment she held it tightly in her hand. Years ago she had promised herself never to part with it, this gold lira that was heavy with memories and had become a symbol of her own blessings and good fortune.

She had had many difficult times in her life, bad days, hard days, but she had never considered spending the golden lira. No, it was not a simple matter to use it.

Whenever she rearranged her chest, she would take the gold lira from its box, deep in the folds of garments. Just looking at the piece filled her with happiness, and often she would let her imagination bear her away, into the past.

Twenty-five years ago. The day she had come to this house as a bride. Many times during those years she had sat, the gold lira in her hand, looking first at the winking gold and then at the courtyard where she had worked and lived and raised her children. And she would see the courtyard as it had been on her wedding day, filled with festively dressed guests, the lemon and bitter orange trees decorated with lighted lanterns. When she crossed the threshold for the first time, she had been lucky: the traditional bit of dough on a green fig leaf, handed to her by a cousin, had stuck successfully to the wall of the courtyard. Her family had smiled and congratulated each other on this good omen, an omen that their daughter would settle peacefully in her new home and that her life would be filled with joy.

«The sacred words of Yaseen will protect you», the girls had sung. «O flower of the grove, you are the bloom of rose, of iris, that crowns the head of the sultan». The women of the bridegroom's family had welcomed her into the courtyard with joyous cries of ululation. «No, you're not too tall to be ugly», they sang, «nor short enough to be squat. You're as good as the best halawa, fresh and sweet, sweet». The groom's mother had taken her hand and led her to the place of honor, a platform decked with flowers, made comfortable with carpets and satin cushions. And all the time she had remembered to keep her eyes lowered modestly, so as not to be, as they said, «one of those impertinent brides who gazes into the faces of the guests».

But still she had managed to steal a glance at the courtyard, realized she would live there for the rest of her life, and had loved it then as she loved it now: a spacious courtyard with luxuriant shade trees and high arched doors with a fountain whose jet of sparkling water rose into the air and fell back, splashing, into a small silvery pool. The lilac tree had bloomed for the wedding day, its branches heavy with clusters of pale mauve flowers. When one of the girls' pretty heads touched the branches, blossoms floated gently down to

decorate the courtyard floor with lavender petals. The windows and doors were festooned with jasmine, its scent stronger and sweeter than all of the perfumes worn by the wedding guests.

The twenty young girls had carried decorated candles and had circled the fountain, the flames of the candles leaping as they sang the traditional bridal song:

Blessings on the bride!

God's blessings on the bride!

O beauty,

O beauty,

O rose blossoming in the garden.

Um Safi sighed. She remembered herself then, how proud she had been of her beauty, circling with the girls, proud of her fine blonde hair that fell over her shoulders, almost reaching her knees. The mashita had twined glinting golden threads through her hair and a long transparent veil of white net had been fastened on her head with a wreath of lemon blossoms, the symbol of purity and virginity, of innocence.

Shouts and chants of many people outside had signaled the arrival of the groom.

An old lady had said to her, «They're singing that marriage is a harness for men, a chain, but that real men can handle it. They're singing to your husband because he's leaving the company of bachelors. But they say that if he cares well for his future wife and his home, they will shout congratulations!»

The women's joyous cries of ululation rose higher.

From under her eyelashes Um Safi had looked toward the door and seen her future husband for the first time, coming toward her, surrounded by members of his family. She cast her eyes down. A young relative of hers had whispered, «Don't forget. Don't talk to him till he gives you something for your hair».

He was before her. The mashita put her hands in his. She felt her chest rising and falling alarmingly, her heart pounding. Until this day, twenty-five years later, she could not explain that strange disturbance in her body. Had it been fear, awe, joy? Or all of these?

They had entered the bridal chamber. The door closed behind them. They were alone. She sat beside

her husband. She felt again that strange disturbance in her chest. He was nervous, too, she thought, for he was fingering his worry beads. A moment of thick, embarrassed silence passed. Then he came close, took one of her hands and uttered, in a soft, gentle voice, the traditional first sentence of a husband to his new wife.

«You and I— against the world!» He paused. «Or is it you and the world against me?»

She almost looked up at him, but remembered the words of her young relative and turned her face away coquettishly.

He had smiled. «Oh yes,» he said. «Now I remember». He had lifted a lock of her light hair and kissed it. «Your fair hair is like silk, my love. I shall cherish it with my life. It has no price but gold». He reached into his pocket, took out a gold lira, and put it into her hand.

At that moment she had vowed to herself that she would save the gold piece as a token of blessing, of good fortune, in memory of this wedding day. She had raised her head, meeting his eyes for the first time, and had answered him, speaking clearly and directly from the depths of her heart.

«You and I— against the world!»

She had honored that vow. For twenty-five years she had stood with him against the world, a good wife, faithful, loving, caring. She had borne him nine children, four young men now as straight and tall as palm trees, five young girls, each as beautiful as the moon, she thought. And how could he do this terrible thing to her now? Take another wife? How could he? How could he forget those years?

Maybe KhadooJ was right. Men were faithless, deceitful. She had never believed that, but she realized now that her husband had changed over the years. After his uncle Bakri had died and left him the mill and the orchard, he had never been the same. He became more cross, more irritable, so short-tempered that the smallest matter seemed to annoy him. He had withdrawn more and more from family life, and was always creating excuses to be away from her. How stupid she had been! How foolish not to have noticed that something was going on! She had always had complete faith

in him and had never suspected he might be thinking of someone else.

The gold lira. Yes, she would spend it. She had no doubts now. She went to Khadooĵ and said she was ready to see Um Zeki.

Um Zeki took the gold piece.

«After the evening prayer», she said, «go alone to the roof of your house. Circle the roof seven times, repeating this charm each time».

Um Safi nodded. But she felt oddly numb. She had done something she had sworn never to do. She had given up her gold piece, the piece heavy with memory, all for a charm to stop the marriage of her husband.

Her children said, «Mother, what's wrong? Mother, your face is so pale and sad». She did not answer. She was waiting for the call to evening prayer to end. As the muezzin's cry died away, she stole away from the children, up on to the roof, as Um Zeki had instructed her.

Rain poured down. The night was full of darkness and foreboding. Fear filled her suddenly; she had not expected to be afraid. She was trembling, but she straightened up in the rain and began the first round, chanting as she had been told to chant:

«I send you Hani and Mani and the fiercest jinn of all, Khohramani the ruthless,

In his rose tarboosh and his leather slippers
To bring you back, now, now!
In any way, in any way,
From wherever you are,
Quickly, quickly, quickly!»

As she finished the verse, a bolt of thunder roared above her head. Lightning cracked the black sky, the rain fell in torrents. Um Safi froze with terror, she could not move, she felt she was nailed in place on the dark, wet roof. It seemed as though she saw before her ghosts of those evil jinns, Hani, Mani, Khohramani, in horrid glimmers of horns and tails. She thought she could hear in the distance the howling of rabid dogs and the crying of the owl.

Her heart was pounding so hard she felt it might drop down in her body or stop beating forever. «Oh, what

have I done?» She moaned to herself. «These jinns are dreadful creatures». She cried out, «O Abu Safi, beloved husband, what have I done to you?» He was the father of her nine children after all, and still the most handsome man on the street, despite his age of forty-five. How could she have taken it into her head to condemn him to this horror; he would come to some terrible harm and she would lose him forever.

«No, no,» she cried. «May God forgive me for the evil I have committed. Please, God, let Abu Safi live safe and sound, even if he does marry another. May God forgive me!» And she added, «And please compensate me for the loss of my gold lira».

Um Safi tried to move from the place where she stood, crying in the rain. She pushed along slowly, feeling her way with hesitant steps through the darkness along the edge of the wet roof. Then she stumbled, her foot slipped, and she catapulted down, down into the courtyard below.

But she did not die. Her fall was broken by the full branches of the old lilac tree, the tree she had watered and cared for during the twenty-five years of her marriage.

She had cried out as she fell, and her children rushed to help. Safi, the oldest son, lifted her gently down and carried her to her own bed.

«What in God's name is the matter with you, Mother?» he asked. «What were you wandering around on the roof for on a night like this?»

Um Safi turned away from him and from the other children who had gathered round her bed. She was ashamed to tell them about the charm, but she could not help saying abruptly, «It's because of your father. He's taking another wife. His wedding is tonight».

A shocked silence. Silence like the dead moment before a storm. Then the storm broke. The children all began to talk at the same time, and the babble of agitated voices grew loud, louder. Safi stood up, screaming and cursing and shouting so his words were incomprehensible. He was running out of the bedroom when

his sister called, «Safi! Where are you going? How can you run off with Mother in such a state?»

«I'm going to him», he shouted, «to bring him here».

Um Safi gathered herself together. «Bring your father here? Why? What for? Where is he?»

«I don't know, Mother, but I'll find him, wherever he is, and I'll bring him back here. Wherever he is», he added, shouting wildly.

Um Safi opened her mouth and shut it again. «So that's the way it is», she said to herself. «That's the spirit, this Khohramani, the fiercest of the jinns». He had always been there, her oldest son, her strongest son. He would have helped her, but she had never asked him. She had not even thought about him. And she had wasted her gold lira and destroyed her memories.

«No, my son», she said finally. «God bless you for thinking of it, but don't confront your father now. You know how stubborn he is. I've asked for God's help. Please, don't make a scene, Safi. Don't give the neighbors something to chew on...»

Safi interrupted. «Don't be silly, Mother. People are already gossiping about us. So what difference does that make? Do you want me to let my father get married again so you can commit suicide and all of us can stand by and watch?»

He slammed the door behind him.

The room grew quiet. Safi had voiced everyone's worst fears, including those of his mother. Um Safi closed her eyes. A strange peace was creeping over her as she realized that her son had grown strong and independent; he was now a man perfectly capable of defending her if she needed him.

In a short time Safi returned with his father.

Um Safi closed her eyes and pretended to be unconscious. Abu Safi stood at his wife's bed. He could not meet the nine pairs of accusing eyes, and so he bowed his head in humiliation and murmured:

«There is no strength but the strength of God.
There is no power, but from God.

Fate, destiny; what is written on the forehead the eye must see.

We pray to God, we turn always to God, in his mercy».

But even the holy words spoken eloquently could not make those accusing eyes disappear. Abu Safi's sense of humiliation and shame was almost too much to bear.

«I must get the doctor for Um Safi», he said, and ran out of the house. When he came back, the children would have calmed down, he told himself. The doctor's presence would help smooth over the embarrassment of this day.

By morning, news of the events in Um Safi and Abu Safi's house had spread through the neighborhood. The women came to inquire after Um Safi. She felt poorly from the effects of her fall, but cheered up a bit when Khadooq came and whispered in her ear: «You see, Abu Safi's marriage has been stopped. The stream returns to its bed». She smiled triumphantly. «Didn't I tell you? Um Zeki is a wonder. Her charm never fails».

NOTE: This story was translated under the auspices of PROTA, the project for translation of Arab literature into English, directed by Dr. Salma Khadra al-Jayyusi.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A Training Workshop for Writers and Illustrators of Children's Books in Arabic was held at Ayia Napa Cyprus from July 21 to August 7, 1987 in cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches. Similar Workshops were held in the Summers of 1985 and 1986.

It is our belief that children's literature is an important agent of social and moral change. Through books children are exposed to models of behavior that are set for them by adults. They incorporate values of peace, and non-violence as these values are revealed through the characters and events of the stories they encounter through reading or hearing or seeing. This kind of literature is especially needed in Lebanon for our children who are living in an environment where war and violence are a way of life.



Kabkoub El Souf

Written and Illustrated by Hala Khoury

Children's Literature Publications

The following sample illustrations are from the books resulting from the 1985-86 Workshops. These were part of the Institute's project on Children's Literature in Arabic funded by the Kuwait Society for the Advancement of Arab Children.

The books are presently in the press and will be ready in December 1987.



Abu HadabahFi El Ghabah

Written and Illustrated by Rima Khalifeh



Arnab Arnoub
Written and Illustrated by Amal Alameddine



Antara El Saghir
Written and Illustrated by Nada Khoury



Rim Wel Himar
Written by Salam Koussa, Illustrated by Rima Khalifeh

Al-Raida

Miss Aida Arasoghli who was editor of Al-Raida for the past two years has left for the United States to continue her studies at Georgetown University. We are sorry to lose Miss Arasoghli and wish her success in her endeavors. Miss Maha Samara, a well known Lebanese journalist, will be the guest editor for our next issue entitled «Women in Economic Development».

Publications

- «Fi Tarik Al-Hayat» (Arabic) by Dr. Jamal Karam Harfouche is just out. A review of the book appeared in the February issue of Al-Raida. US \$ 2.50

- «Haya Nugani» (Arabic) by Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr is now on the market. It is a music book for the young

accompanied by a cassette - 66 songs with scores for piano, guitar and Orff instruments. A unique feature of this book is introducing the Orff method in teaching music to Arab children. It also includes instructions to teachers on methods of teaching music. US \$ 14



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