

## *IWSAW Publishes Unique Historical Study on Lebanese Women*

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World has recently published *The Sisters of Men*, a new historical study of prominent Lebanese women, which was presented for public discussion on 23 October 1996. The book, authored by Dr. Shereen Khairallah, Professor of History at the American University of Beirut, consists of 42 biographies of women who have made an impact on Lebanese society, history, culture and politics. The title is a translation of an Arabic saying, "*ukhti ar-rijaal*", which is used to describe a strong, intelligent and independent woman of marked substance and capability. A large audience of academicians, students and representatives of various non-governmental organizations attended the book presentation. Discussing the book were Father John Donahue, S.J., Professor of Arabic at the Université Saint Joseph; Ms. Samira Al-Khoury, Instructor in the Humanities Department at AUB, and Mr. Pierre Sarkis, Instructor in History and Cultural Studies at LAU-Byblos. In his presentation, Fr. Donahue noted that Dr. Khairallah had written a "delightful book which is a mixture of history and biography written in a clear, simple style." Donahue also stated that the book will be a valuable reference work for all scholars interested in women in Lebanon. Those wishing to obtain a copy of *Sisters of Men* should visit the Institute for Women's Studies during working hours, or send a letter and a payment of US\$20 to the New York address of the Lebanese American University.

## *Canadian Psychiatrist Aids Families Searching for Solutions*

For the third time in as many years, Canadian-Lebanese psychiatrist Dr. George Awad came to Lebanon to present a series of training sessions for social workers, educators and parents in Lebanon. Dr. Awad conducted seminars in Sidon and Beirut focusing on the following topics: attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity, behavioral disorders, manifestations of violence in children's behaviors, and retardation. The training sessions, which took



*Novelist Hanan Al-Shaykh discusses her recent work while moderator Elias Khoury listens*

place between 11 and 21 November, were organized by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and benefited a total of 104 social workers and educators from the central and southern regions of Lebanon. On 14 November, Dr. Awad delivered a special lecture on the topic of "Children and Trauma," giving particular attention to the psychological needs of children who experienced the war in Lebanon, and the special skills required by helping professionals working with such children. Participants in the training sessions completed questionnaires evaluating the usefulness of the program. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive, and they suggested a number of topics for future training sessions, among them emotional repercussions of physical handicaps, child abuse, deprivation and sex education.

## *World Renowned Lebanese Author Lectures at LAU*

Lebanese novelist Hanan Al-Shaykh, author of such groundbreaking works as *Hikayat Zahra* ("The Story of Zahra"), and *Bareed Beirut* ("Beirut Blues"), gave an informal presentation to a standing-room-only audience at LAU on 9 December. Al-Shaykh's novels have presented a woman's view of war, chaos and social change in Lebanon for an appreciative audience throughout the world. In her speech, sponsored by IWSAW, she discussed the futility of censorship of artistic and scholarly works, noting that poets and authors in the former USSR were able to defy even the strictest methods of censorship. Al-Shaykh also commented on her experience of exile during the war, and how it shaped and influenced her writing, and even became the subject of her most recent novel, *Beirut Blues*. Although she now lives and works in Britain, Al-Shaykh is still very much connected, emotionally and spiritually, to Lebanon. She commented that, whether she is in Beirut or London, "writing is always about exploring the self. I now realize that the more I discover about myself, the more I understand the human condition."

## *IWSAW Documentation Center to go On-Line*

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World is a leader in research, education and documentation on the status and role of women in the Arab world. Through its Documentation Center, IWSAW has developed a one-of-a-kind collection of published as well as unpublished materials on Arab women. Conforming to the history of the Lebanese American University, a leader in women's education in the Arab world, IWSAW is planning to create a database of its entire collection, which will be available through the Internet. The international accessibility of this valuable collection will widen the scope and increase the impact of IWSAW's efforts. On the regional level, it will raise public awareness of the condition of Arab women and inspire research projects. At present, Ms. Fatme Charafeddine is undertaking this project to index and automate the entire documentation collection, which consists of more than 3,500 books and 1,000 documents in Arabic, English and French. For more information, contact Dr. Abu Nasr or Ms. Charafeddine at IWSAW.