

"Once Upon a Time in Lebanon"

by Roseanne Khalaf
Caravan Books, N.Y. 1982

The three short stories which this book contains were inspired by nineteenth century Lebanese figures who achieved distinction and fame during that eventful period of the country's history: Emir Bashir, the shrewd and iron-handed ruler; Akhwat Shanai, a famous eccentric fellow, whose creative imagination inspired the ingenuous way of bringing water to the magnificent Beit Eddin palace which the Emir intended to build. Tanyus Shahin, the popular leader who organized a successful revolt against tyrannical feudal lords; Sitt Nazira Jumblatt, the prominent Druze lady who distinguished herself as politician. The stories form a "mixture of history, fact, fancy and folklore", as the author says. Roseanne Saad Khalaf is a Lebanese who has been teaching English and Cultural Studies at the American University of Beirut. To make her stories more attractive, she takes a certain freedom in portraying the manners and way of life of the inhabitants. The lively, imaginative style should appeal not only to young readers for whom the stories are meant, but also to adults interested in historical narratives which throw some light on the eventful past of this spot of the East called Lebanon.

10th Annual Report of World Health Organization

Published in Geneva, November 1981, by the WHO (World Health Organization), the book reports, in 167 pages, on the "Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction".

The introduction points out the general need for information and family services planning care. It shows the differences of opinion regarding the ways to meet the demands. There is, however, a general agreement on the need to increase research on how to make the "best use of current knowledge and technology and the importance of developing new methods."

In 1972, the Member States of WHO established the "Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction". Eighty countries were involved in the Programme, including 54 developing countries. International meetings in 1981 emphasized the necessity of coordination of research in family planning and suggested that world efforts be redirected to concentrate practically exclusively on the development of new contraceptive technology. In response, contraceptive research has been actively carried out. Material on the needs, approaches and mechanisms has been extensively reviewed.

The Report contains a collection of all sorts of reviews dealing with the topic of research on methods of fertility regulation, infertility, institution strengthening and dissemination of information.

The introducer concludes by saying that "it is possible that these various reviews will lead to a better understanding at least of one aspect of the field and to better funding it."

A Radio Program on Health

IWSAW is glad to announce that it has prepared for illiterate and semi-literate women, in simplified Arabic and in the form of dialogues, a set of 36 radio sessions on general health, 10-15 min. each.

The recording of the whole set was made possible through a grant by the voluntary Fund of U.N. Decade for Women. The Economic Commission for West Asia and a committee of medical experts, evaluated and approved the content of the program. It is offered for sale by IWSAW on cassettes at L.L.3000, and on reels at L.L. 5000. For more information, please contact IWSAW.

Due to the war conditions in Lebanon during June, July and August 1982, the suspension of the mail service obliged us to postpone the distribution of the August issue of Al-Raida until November 1982.

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