



# BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter Issued by Birzeit University, Occupied Palestine, Sept. 1991, No. 21

## BIRZEIT STILL CLOSED!

**As five of the six Palestinian universities in the Occupied Territories open for the 1991-1992 academic year, Birzeit University remains closed under a new three-month order issued on 31 August, only days after Al Najah National University in Nablus and the Islamic University of Gaza were told by the Israeli Ministry of Defense that they would be allowed to re-open.**

With the new order, Birzeit University will have been under closure order for forty-six successive months. Since May 1990, when the Israeli Prime Minister's office announced that all Palestinian universities would be allowed to re-open "gradually," Israeli officials have sought to give the impression that Palestinian higher education is back to normal (see "Of Fallacy and Fact," p. 9). But until this September, about 70% of currently-enrolled university students were still barred from their campuses. This shutdown of higher education, and the continued closure of Birzeit University, leaves no doubt that the Israeli government has yet to abandon the use of university closure as a form of collective punishment.

The new closure order came as the University community pursued all avenues to re-open its facilities. - University attorneys argued in a 12 August letter to the military authorities, that the continuous closure of Birzeit University is illegal under existing military legislation and prior rulings of the High Court, as well as under the Hague Regulations of 1907, which Israel recognizes as applicable to the Occupied Territories and the Fourth Geneva Convention. The letter notes that the security justification has been proven groundless by the military's own policies and practices. As of 1 October, the authorities have not replied to these arguments.

In August, the University Union of Faculty and Employees, the Student Council and the Administration released a joint statement noting that Birzeit students and staff have been "struggling hard... holding substitute classes in rented apartments and faculty residences, without the essential resources of a University library, laboratories, classrooms and faculty offices." The statement urged "serious and massive international pressure on the Israeli authorities."

At a 23 August news conference in Jerusalem sponsored by the Council for Higher Education, representatives of the COIMBRA group, an association of twenty-four of the oldest universities in Europe, condemned the closure of Palestinian universities. On behalf of COIMBRA, Professor Valerio Gremontieri of the University of Siena in Italy announced the establishment of PEACE, a program of exchange, solidarity and practical support for Palestinian universities, which will seek the participation of universities in the COIMBRA group, as well as other European universities and the European Community.

Also representing COIMBRA was Professor Vincent Hanssens, Vice-President of the University of Louvain-la-neuve in Belgium. Professor Hanssens expressed his "deep concern for Palestinian universities" and defense of their academic freedom, saying "If you cut one element of the system, it is the entire system which is under attack."

Such solidarity will be crucial in the coming months, as Birzeit University works to ensure that it not remain "closed-by-military-order" indefinitely.

## *Letter from the vice-president*

Dear friends and colleagues,

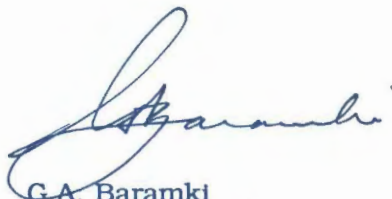
In the wake of the Gulf War and its devastating effect on the Palestinian economy in the Occupied Territories, the debate over development priorities has acquired a new urgency. The most effective use of emergency and more long-term aid from the European Community, international development agencies and other sources is a pressing question for Palestinians here.

I would like to argue for the clear priority of higher education in a development strategy for the Occupied Territories. A position paper issued by the World University Service in a 1990 meeting in Bangkok states it well: "Education is an essential pre-condition of all aspects of development.... the disharmony between education and development could lead to economic and environmental disasters, social calamities and poor or distorted development itself."

Without the human resources of higher education, the values it fosters, and the skills it teaches, development assistance is likely to end up being just another form of social welfare. The Palestinian university system, in particular, has as a major achievement the offering of higher education to all sectors of the population, and thus its effects are widespread and systemic.

Education, like health, is the bedrock of development. It is therefore absolutely essential to consider health and educational services as integral parts of a whole social and developmental strategy. Any funding that does not take this whole picture into consideration would necessarily be lopsided, wasteful and contrary to the interests of Palestinians under occupation.

Sincerely,



G.A. Baramki  
Vice-President

## Unit for Economic Development

"We want to offer practical assistance to investors and consumers in the Occupied Territories," said Dr. Samir Hazboun, Dean of Commerce and Economics, discussing the aims of the University's new **Technical Unit for Consultation**. Established on 1 May 1991 under the supervision of the Faculty of Commerce, the Unit will prepare feasibility and opportunity studies for new or expanding industries and businesses, as well as hold training courses in management, marketing, auditing and other business skills.

The Unit's first seminar, held in July in Ramallah, brought together credit organizations, unions and other organizations with loan programs in the Occupied Territories, and professionals to discuss "**Loans and Development in the Occupied Territories**." Audeh Shehadeh, coordinator of the Technical Unit, announced that the Unit aimed to establish a committee to network with credit organizations in order to develop a united policy.

The Unit has also participated in training seminars organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP): Commerce lecturer Mazen Badra led a three-day session in June on marketing for managers of firms and Audeh Shehadeh led a July session on the preparation of feasibility studies. The Unit is currently assisting an UNRWA project for the blind in Gaza in solving its marketing problems and has been consulted by a number of businessmen interested in starting new enterprises in the Occupied Territories. The Unit is also interested in assisting local trade unions, and plans for a course and several booklets on employment law and collective bargaining agreements are underway.

"The mission of Birzeit University", Dr. Hazboun affirmed, "involves community service and development, as well as teaching our students." Dr. Hazboun offered one final comment: "We founded this Unit when the University was closed; however, to function at our best and to provide the best services, we need to be on campus. For example, we are trying to offer services and consultation without even having our own telephone number, let alone a proper office."



# HUMAN RIGHTS AFTER THE GULF WAR

Towards midnight on 26 May, soldiers brought the lifeless body of Birzeit University student Ibrahim Qasem to his family home. Ibrahim was killed by a single bullet to the head. Largely unreported since the Gulf war, the shooting deaths of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers continue at a steady pace, bringing the number of Palestinians killed by IDF and settler gunfire since December 1987 to over 1000.

While other issues have taken the international center stage after the Gulf War, Palestinian human rights continue to be eroded: a continued pattern of such practices as illegal army violence in the streets and abuse and torture of prisoners under interrogation has been joined by a new apartheid-like system of passes and permits that restrict the movement of Palestinians and by a rapid escalation in the seizure of Palestinian land, which has been proceeding at roughly twelve times its "normal" pace since the Gulf War.

Birzeit University and its students and staff have been adversely affected by these developments. In particular, restrictions on movement, coming on the heels of the extended curfew during the Gulf War severely disrupted the University. Students and staff from Gaza and from the southern part of the West Bank now require passes to enter Jerusalem in order to reach the temporary headquarters of the University, which is located in Ramallah, north of Jerusalem.

The killing of Ibrahim came amid renewed revelations about the practices of the Israeli security services. In May, Israeli officials revealed that special units of the security services operate undercover, dressed in Palestinian clothing, to target Palestinians. Assassinations of political activists by undercover units has long been singled out by human rights organisations as a regular practice. These units do not confine themselves to violent situations: an undercover unit raided a student basketball tournament in the town of Birzeit attended by several hundred students on 12 June. Students were forced to crowd

onto the court and sit with their hands on their heads as their IDs were checked.

Education still remains a target, whether through continued closure or other disruptions. When University students were dispatched to monitor high school finishing exams, the IDF responded by arresting groups of Birzeit students from several different exam sites in the Ramallah area. A massive army raid of a University alternative teaching center in Ramallah on 31 July interrupted exams and classes affecting 200 University students.

The behavior of the General Security Services (Shin Bet) has come under intensified scrutiny since the release in March of a report by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem on illtreatment and torture under interrogation. The report details the torture of Palestinian prisoners, among them Birzeit student Sabri Tmeizi who described a 1989 interrogation session during which he was beaten until he fainted: "When I came to, they were still beating me and kicking me I tried to get up and got more beatings on the head. I fell down... they continued to beat me all over my body and in all directions. I thought I was going to die then and there."

Such illtreatment continues: student Jihad Shweikh from Gaza was detained for several days in September 1991 and emerged with twenty-one cigarette and lighter burns on his face, neck and arm.

With an average of thirteen students detained each month since the end of the Gulf War, the University has a deep concern with both the abuse of prisoners and the abuses of the military justice system. The University's Human Rights Action Project continues to record each case of student and faculty detention or harassment by the military authorities and to coordinate with international and local human rights organizations and activists.

**The Birzeit University Human Rights Action-Project publishes a bimonthly report, the Birzeit Human Rights Record. If you are interested in receiving the Record, please write to Record, Public Relations Office, Birzeit University.**

# PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AT RISK

*What is happening to children and youth in the Occupied Territories? Three academics from Birzeit University have been trying to answer this question through systematic research into the problems of children and teenagers during the Uprising. Below, the Newsletter interviews Dr. Ahmed Baker (Education and Psychology), Dr. Elia Awad (Education and Psychology) and Dr. Shafiq Masalha (Student Affairs) about their current research.*

In three studies undertaken since 1988, **Dr. Ahmed Baker** used standard psychological tests, in addition to clinical interviews, to assess the mental health of Palestinian children (age 5-14) as well as, in his latest study, their mothers and fathers. A study in 1988 of 200 children, a 1989 study of 796 children, and a recent study of 60 families showed that while the mental health of Palestinian children was at risk, there were some important deviations from results obtained elsewhere in the world in studies of children in traumatic conditions.

Dr. Baker observed that, like all children subject to trauma and stress, Palestinian children suffer from anxiety, sleeping disorders, and conduct problems. He was concerned about the increase in depression and anxiety over time: his 1989 study showed a 15% increase in anxiety over 1988 results. He also found, however, that psychopathological symptoms were not high and that self-esteem among children was high, contrary to children in crisis studied elsewhere in the world. He posited that the empowerment of the populace that is a major feature of the intifada may lie behind the high self-esteem, and that the Palestinian family, particularly the mother, seems to serve as a shield to protect children from some of the worst effects of trauma and stress.

The latter hypothesis led Dr. Baker to examine the mental health of mothers and fathers in a study of 60 families divided between families that were "severely traumatized," "moderately traumatized," and "not traumatized." He discovered that the mental health of mothers was severely threatened: anxiety levels were twice as

high as fathers and depression was also prevalent. Mothers in general did not suffer from feelings of despair, guilt or failure, however. While mothers in severely traumatized families suffered twice as much hypertension as mothers in non-traumatized families, one result was consistent: 100% of all respondents registered "sadness" at the prevailing situation.

Dr. Baker is concerned that the psychosocial support of the family to children may be at risk. He also notes that trauma does not manifest itself right away and that problems may be worse in years to come. He recommends extensive efforts to monitor mental health, to strengthen the social support system, and to provide better educational and recreational systems for children.

Dr. Baker's findings have been presented in papers to the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and the American Orthopsychiatric Association, as well as in an upcoming book (see Publications in this Newsletter).

"Adolescents, both before and during the Uprising, have been overlooked as a target group for research and intervention," noted psychologist **Dr. Elia Awad**, explaining the impetus behind his study of 957 Palestinian teenagers in the West Bank. Given the already stressful situation of adolescence, Awad was interested in the level of psychological problems experienced by Palestinian youth from 13-18 years old in the current conditions of widespread trauma and stress. Awad undertook his study during the first eighteen months of the Uprising: using 8 fieldworkers, he interviewed teenagers throughout the West Bank: 62% from villages, 30% from cities and 8% from refugee camps.

The pervasive, direct experience of violence is one clear result of Awad's study: 59% of the respondents have had family members shot at by army or settlers, while 44% had been shot at themselves. 64% of the teenagers incurred psychological injury from humiliation or other harassment by soldiers, while 38% had been beaten. "To my surprise," Awad remarked, "females were more affected by stress and reported more psychological problems," despite a somewhat

lower incident of such experiences as beatings and detentions. However, all symptoms of distress were high and "significant," Awad says. The overall results, however are "predictable," Awad notes, given the deteriorating conditions of Palestinians under occupation.

Awad strongly recommends the increased training of professional counsellors, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. "University curriculum," he affirms, "should incorporate applied courses to a greater degree. At this point, we have the cognitive knowledge but not the skills." Awad also urges efforts to increase public awareness of the needs and problems of youth, as well as other groups like the disabled or the mentally retarded. "We must also be able to reach the caregivers, the family and friends, of the person at risk. It's not enough to establish institutions, which are usually in cities and not accessible to all those who need help."

Awad presented his findings at the 1990 World Congress of the World Federation of Mental Health held in Mexico City on 18-23 August 1991.

In 1988 and 1989, **Dr. Shafiq Masalha** studied the dreams of 150 children, age nine and ten, living in refugee camps in the Occupied Territories, finding that a staggering 78% of the 450 dreams he analyzed closely contained themes of violence, usually related to the Uprising and involving soldiers or settlers. A similar study by another researcher in 1984, which Masalha used for comparison, found only 28% of dreams with violent themes and Masalha's own comparative study of children in the Arab village of Um El Fahm, inside Israel proper, registered only 2 out of 450 dreams that concerned the intifada.

Children's dreams exhibited a clear sense of identity and, contrary to dreams studied before the intifada where children were only victims, had children initiating confrontations with soldiers about 50% of the time. Masalha found no difference between girls and boys. The dreams expressed a lack of hope about the future, Masalha noted. Positive change only occurred by magical or "divine intervention": an earthquake engulfed Israeli settlements in one dream, and another child recounted a dream where "I was walking with my friend Manal and we saw an Is-

raeli soldier who was regretting he was not a Palestinian." An interesting finding, given the stressful and insecure situation, was the absence of nightmares among the children studied.

During the Gulf War, Dr. Masalha answered calls from troubled parents on a Jerusalem Hotline and observed that parents were worried about their inability to protect their children, a real worry given the lack of gas masks for the Palestinian population. Problems of controlling children in the confinement of the home during the continuous wartime curfew also worried parents: "The issue of authority surfaced for many families. There was a confusion of roles where the parents felt unable to protect their children or to make them obey."

Dr. Masalha presented a paper on his research at a May 1991 conference on children and war, held in Rockville, Maryland and sponsored by the American Psychological Association and the National Institute of Health.

## AMSTERDAM-BIRZEIT CONFERENCE

The Program of Discourse Studies at the University of Amsterdam and the Department of English at Birzeit University are pleased to announce a jointly sponsored conference:

### DISCOURSE AND PALESTINE

University of Amsterdam

April 9-11, 1991

Palestine, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have traditionally been the subject of competing interpretations. The focus of this conference will be the study of some of these interpretations as communicated in the content, production, and reception of texts and pictorial images directing the formation of social representation of Palestine and the Palestinians. A multidisciplinary approach is encouraged.

Conference correspondence should be directed to: Toine van Teeffelen, Conference Secretariat, University of Amsterdam, Program of Discourse Studies, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



## MORE DEANS' DILEMMAS

*In the last Newsletter, Dean of Sciences Dr. Simon Kuttab and Dean of Commerce Dr. Samir Hazboun discussed the problems they face due to the closure and the problems they anticipate when the University-re-opens. Below Dr. Najj Abdul Jabbar, Dean of Arts, and Dr. Abdulrahman Hamad, Dean of Engineering address the same topics.*

### **Dr. Najj Abdul Jabbar, Dean of Arts**

As the **Newsletter** interviewed Dr. Najj Abdul Jabbar, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, his voice echoed throughout the basement office which now houses the entire Faculty of Arts in one large room. He shrugged his shoulders: "No one has any privacy. If I want to discuss a confidential matter with a teacher or student, it's impossible."

A drafty and echoing basement is just the beginning of the problems faced by Dr. Abdul Jabbar as a Dean during closure. He remarks: "Although many of our problems are the same as other faculties, I think the loss of the library is a greater blow for us. Most of our departments don't teach from textbooks; we want our students to use many references and depend greatly on the library. Of course, the library is also the lifeline for most faculty research."

The scattering of the University community into a number of inadequate rented buildings in both Ramallah and Birzeit towns have made practical difficulties for students in reaching class, as well as making it impossible to create any "university atmosphere," Dr. Abdul Jabbar notes. He is frustrated by the many plans of the Faculty of Arts that are "on hold," including a third annual meeting for teachers of Arabic, which was scheduled to be held at Birzeit University in 1988.

A first priority once the University is re-opened is to reactivate the plans for symposiums, conferences and workshops, especially those of service to the community. Another urgent priority, Dr. Abdul Jabbar stresses, is "re-learn to work normally as a university under our full regulations." He notes that in the present circumstances, both students and teachers have become ac-

customed to "exceptions," from normal University procedure; "The exceptional has become normal and the normal exceptional. We will need a period on campus to normalize our academic life."

Other plans of the Faculty of Arts include the possible re-introduction of a Master's Degree in Education, a graduate program that was frozen in the mid-1980s, the publication of a research periodical and above all, Dr. Abdul Jabbar emphasizes, "we are ready and willing to immediately begin programs of service to the community, whether workshops for teachers, language training for our own employees or the employees of other institutions, and a host of other activities." A workshop in teaching techniques for University faculty, to be taught by members of Birzeit's Department of Education, is currently in the works, says Dr. Abdul Jabbar, and the Department of Languages Translation recently conducted a successful English-language course for University secretaries. "But we want to do more. All we need is an open campus."

### **Dr. Abdulrahman Hamad, Dean of Engineering**

The current Dean of Engineering, Dr. Abdulrahman Hamad could not reach the University for over a month after the end of the Gulf War, simply because he was a resident of Gaza and could not obtain the necessary permit to travel to and stay in the West Bank. He currently hold a one-month permit, and notes that Gaza students in the Faculty of Engineering are not usually so "fortunate."

Dr. Hamad is deeply concerned about the effect on students of the prolonged closure: "It's simply not like being a real university student. Our students are wanderers from place to place; their psychological, social and educational problems are immense." Engineering faculty members are also not exempt: "our faculty has neither the time nor the resources available to develop. They are constantly losing academically because we can't keep up - either through the library or through the laboratory - with the new international technology."

During the closure, the Faculty of Engineering has set up small-scale laboratories, but the fully-equipped laboratories, with their heavy equipment, remain on campus and off limits by military order. "We of course have problems of maintenance," Dr. Hamad noted, "and once back on campus, one of our priorities must be the replacement of worn-out equipment and the purchase of new equipment necessitated by new developments in the field over the past four years. The financial constraints of the University will, however, be a continuing problem."

Dr. Hamad is concerned about the admission of the many new students seeking university education once the campuses re-open: "they will come to the University with inadequate preparation due to the crisis in the schools. We must work on our first-year curriculum to be able to quickly upgrade their abilities." Another focus for the Faculty of Engineering when the University re-opens will be offering consulting and technical services to the community. "This must be part of the student curriculum as well," Dr. Hamad stresses, "engineers and engineering students from Birzeit University can make an important contribution in developing an industrial infrastructure. In turn, this will be a source of employment for our graduates."

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Department of Euromed Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Birzeit University are jointly sponsoring a conference on:

**"The Uprising as a Stage in the Palestinian National Liberation Movement: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives"**  
**December 20-22, 1991**  
**BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY**

The four themes to be addressed are: Gender and Class Differentiation, Socio-political Consciousness and Popular Mobilization, Socio-Economic Transformation and Strategies of Self-Reliance, and Revolution and Popular Culture. **Scholars interested in presenting papers should submit a one-page abstract to Conference Committee, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Birzeit University, by 15 October.**

### GUEST LECTURES

\* Professor **Jean-Paul Chagnollaud** of Paris X University delivered a 4 May 1991 lecture on "France and the Middle East After the Gulf War."

\* A seminar on "Geostrategic Problems of Tracing Political Boundaries" was given by Professor **Michel Lyon** of the University of Lyon on 6 May .

\* Dr. **Phillipa Strum** of Brooklyn College of the City University of New York addressed "The American and Palestinian Women's Movements: Commonalities and Differences" in a 22 May seminar.

The above three lectures were organized by the University's General Lecture Committee as an **Academic Freedom Lecture Series** .

\* A presentation and slideshow on "New Trends in European Architecture" was given by Professor **Fictner** of Marburg University in a 22 May lecture sponsored by the Department of Architecture and the Goethe Institute in Amman.

\* Dr. **Anthony Coone** , a town planner from Strathclyde University in Scotland, discussed "Land Use Planning in the Occupied Territories: To What End?" in a 15 July lecture reviewing a major study he recently completed for the human rights organization, Al Haq.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

**"The Frankish Crusades": The Crusader Movement and its Influence on Palestine**  
**March 13-15, 1992**  
**BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY**

On the occasion of the passage of 700 years since the final evacuation of Palestine by the Crusaders, the History Department of Birzeit University is sponsoring a conference on the above topic. Those interested in presenting papers are invited to submit a 1000 word abstract before 15 November 1991 to Chair, History Department, Birzeit University, POB 14, Birzeit. Foreign scholars will be given accomodation; limited funds for travel are available.

## THE QUESTION OF WATER

For over a year, the staff of the University's **Center for Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences** have been monitoring water in the Ramallah under an official contract with the Ramallah water authority which provides water for the towns of Ramallah and Bireh, for Jerusalem suburbs outside the municipal boundaries and for numerous villages. The extensive testing, **Dr. Ramzi Sansur**, head of the Center, explained to the **Newsletter**, is paper of a five year plan of water analysis undertaken by the Center, and a pilot project for wider water testing in the Occupied Territories as a whole.

The "state of water" in the West Bank and Gaza is an open scandal. In its 1 August edition, the Israeli-weekly **The Jerusalem Report** noted that sewage from two Israeli settlements near the Green Line has already polluted wells in the West Bank town of Qalqilya and quoted Israeli water officials as warning that new settlements under construction along the Green Line threaten to pollute one of Israel's - and the West Bank's- major water supply, the underground water in aquifers in the West Bank.

Asked about this report, Dr. Sansur carefully noted that "full scientific information about aquifers" was classified information and not available to the researcher. However, he pointed out "urbanization without planning, as is currently the case with Israeli settlements and Palestinian towns and villages, clearly threatens ground water, especially when it is close to the surface," as is the case in the northern region of the West Bank. "Aquifers in the northern region are contaminated," Dr. Sansur states. The reservoirs of the central region, where Ramallah is located, are still clean, Sansur added, while the Jordan Valley is suffering from excessive salinity due to agricultural overuse of water, and densely-populated Gaza faces salinity from intrusions from the sea, as well biological contamination from sewage and contamination from agricultural chemicals.

"Our fear is that urbanization is increasing and there is no central plan," Sansur commented. "we in the Occupied Territories need careful re-

search and planning before we take critical decisions on how to handle our sewage and waste problems in the next period. I believe we must clearly define sewage as toxic waste, and the treatment of sewage as a matter of environmental protection, not just the reuse of water."

Calling Israel's water usage and treatment "ecologically primitive," Sansur warned Palestinians not to make the same errors. "How did they allow themselves to contaminate underground water?" asked Sansour. He gave a partial answer when he noted the pattern of rapid growth without environmental planning and the fact that "with 70% of water going for water-intensive agriculture, they are clearly not using their - and our - resources properly."

Citing Israel's "critical dependence" on West Bank water reservoirs, Sansur could only predict that planning for water usage and treatment in the Occupied Territories will be extraordinarily difficult under the current conditions of occupation. The Center for Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences however, is determined to play a role both in providing the detailed scientific information needed for proper decision-making and in contributing to overall planning to preserve the environmental resources of the Occupied Territories.

## LIBRARY COMPUTERIZATION

The computerized cataloguing of all Arabic books is now completed, reports Library Head **Dr. Maher Hasweh**, and the computerization of English books listings will be finished in one year. The database management system in use, **MINISIS**, is currently being taught in the library skills course required of Birzeit first-year students, and training sessions for faculty will be held "once the university - and the library - reopen." **MINISIS** is a UNESCO-subsidized system that is now in use in many libraries throughout the developing world.

Dr. Hasweh also reports that the Library has begun receiving **ERIC**, a index of education periodicals and unpublished papers, on compact discs (CD-ROM). If librarians and users find it useful, the Library will consider expanding in this direction.



## OF FALLACY AND FACT: Israel and Palestinian Universities

**"The last of the universities opened a few days ago..."**

--- Israeli Ambassador Yoav Biran at the Foreign Affairs Committee, British House of Commons, answering a query about the closure of Palestinian universities, 1 May 1991.

Disinformation, as exemplified in the statement of Israeli Ambassador Biran above, seems to have been the aim of Israeli officials and pro-Israeli groups recently in regard to Palestinian universities. Several documents have come to the Newsletter's attention that were issued in May 1991 in Britain, apparently in an effort to undermine a day of parliamentary lobbying to re-open Palestinian universities, sponsored by the World University Service, the National Union of Students, the Association of University Teachers among others. Below we look at a few of the fallacies in "Education in the Administered Territories: Return to Normality" issued on 8 May by the Israeli Embassy (below IE), a May 1991 briefing by the British Public Affairs Committee (below BIPAC) and a 10 May 1991 letter by Labor Friends of Israel (below LFI).

**FALLACY:** The Israeli army was forced to close universities because they "became centres for much of the anti-Israeli and internecine violence during the intifada." (IE)

**FACT:** Bethlehem University was closed before the intifada and the other five universities within a few weeks after the eruption of the intifada. Unless the universities left detailed operating instructions for conducting the Intifada for the next three-and-one-half years, this claim can be dismissed out of hand.

**FALLACY:** "Even during the worst periods of Intifada violence, kindergartens, primary schools, many secondary schools, vocational schools and all UNRWA institutions remained opened." (IE)

**FACT:** Not a grain of truth in this remarkable statement. All primary schools in the West Bank were closed from 2 February 1988 to mid-May 1988, and have been closed repeatedly since that date. Ditto UNRWA schools. Most vocational colleges in the West Bank were closed for over two years, Kindergartens were explicitly included in a 20 January 1989 order closing all West Bank schools "until further notice."

**FALLACY:** In a section entitled "Why Closures Are Ordered," it is affirmed that "various sites became virtual battlegrounds between elements of Hamas, the fundamentalist organization and between the Palestine Liberation Organization. Many students were killed...." (BIPAC)

**FACT:** No university student has ever been killed in a clash between students, but a number of students have been killed by army gunfire, even before the Intifada. At Birzeit University, soldiers shot and killed four university students in three separate incidents between 1984-1987.

**FALLACY:** "The closing of universities... has not meant that academic studies stopped entirely. The universities rented buildings... and were free to conduct classes. Israel has not prevented or interfered with the activity..." (BIPAC)

**FACT:** On 29 March 1989, a Jerusalem police order banned private schools in East Jerusalem from allowing their facilities to be used by West Bank universities; on 18 April 1989 the *Jerusalem Post* announced the police had uncovered "a network of illegal classes," a very clear indication the authorities considered university teaching equivalent to a crime. In the same period, the army conducted raids on temporary facilities used by universities. That the army failed to stop academic activity was due to the determination of the universities and a wave of unfavorable publicity. For Israel to claim "credit" for off-campus teaching - without libraries, laboratories or adequate facilities- is disingenuous at best.

**FALLACY:** "Their sporadic closure over the past three years is due to the central role they have played in fuelling Palestinian violence and is in no way related to limiting Palestinian educational opportunity." (LFI)

**FACT:** Since when is continuous closure for almost four years "sporadic"? Truth lies in reversing the terms. The shutdown of the entire system of Palestinian higher education - an act unprecedented in modern history - has everything to do with limiting educational opportunity, both in practice and in policy. It is noteworthy that none of the documents examined contains even one specific example of universities "fuelling violence." In fact, during the forty-three months of closure and despite the highly insecure situation of off-campus teaching, not one incident of University-related violence can be cited.

## Birzeit Abroad

\* The head of the University's Physical Education program, **Dr. Kamal Shamsoum** gave lectures for participants from forty countries at the International Scientific Society for Physical Education at Graz University in Austria.

\* **Dr. Maher Hashweh**, head of the University's Library, presented a paper on "Palestinian Science Teachers' Conception of Learning and the Nature of Scientific Knowledge: A Search for the Constructivist Teacher" at the Sixth International Symposium on World Trends in Science and Technology Education, held in Palm Springs, California from 12-21 August 1991.

\* **Dr. Gabi Baramki** (Vice-President and Chairman, Council for Higher Education) and **Dr. Naim Abu Hummos** (Council for Higher Education) paid a working visit to Belgium, Austria and Holland in May 1991 to strengthen support for Palestinian institutions of higher education in the European Community and among European NGOs.

\* In an April 1991 visit to the universities of Messina, Rome and Sienna, **Dr. Roger Heacock** delivered lectures on "Changes in European Policy Towards the Middle East."

\* **Dr. Ali Jarbawi** (Research Center) participated in a June 1991 seminar in Quebec on "The New World Order" which brought together twenty-three international participants. The seminar was sponsored by the Center for International Understanding in St. Louis, Missouri.

\* **Dr. Lisa Taraki** (Sociology) and **Dr. Hannan Mikhail-Ashrawi** (English) participated in at the Eight Annual NGO Conference on Palestine, held 28-30 June 1991 in Quebec.

\* The head of the Personnel Department, **Omar Al Jabi**, attended a July 1991 course in Personnel Management at the University of Pittsburgh.

\* **Dr. Hani Nijim** (Mechanical Engineering) gave lectures at Tokyo Denki University and Hosi University during a May-July 1991 research visit to Japan, where he was engaged in a joint research project with Professor H. Koyama at Tokyo Denki University. He also visited other universities and research laboratories during his two-month stay.

\* **Dr. Khaled Nijim** (Electrical Engineering) presented a paper on "Static Exciter for Wound Rotor Induction Machine" at the Sixteenth Annual Conference of IEEE Industrial Electronic Society in November 1990 in the U.S.

\* In a July 1991 conference on "Population Dispersal and Resettlement in the Middle East", held at Yarmouk University in Jordan, **Dr. Salim Tamari** (Sociology) gave a paper on "Relocation of the Palestinian Coastal Bourgeoisie and its Integration in the Arab World."

\* Six University employees, **Aff Abdallah** (Personnel), **Soud Al Assad** (Personnel), **Fuad Ghawi** (Finance), **Siham Afaneh** (Finance), **Azzam Abu Soud** (Supplies) and **Tawfiq Tamimi** (Supplies) participated in a one-week training working organized by TEAM International and held in Amman in July.

\* At a conference on "Information Technology in Support of Economic Development," held in Khartoum, Sudan in December 1990, **Dr. Adnan Yahya** (Electrical Engineering) addressed "Computers in Economic Development: The West Bank Case."

\* The head of the Computer Center, **Victor Serna**, and the University's Registrar, **Haifa Baramki**, attended a June 1991 conference workshop at Brigham Young University on computer use in registration and acceptance procedures.

\* During a year as a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, **Dr. Itham Abu Ghazaleh** (English) participated in a number of conferences, including Text and Context at Cornell University, the Modern Languages Association in Chicago, The Self and Culture in Literature in Puerto Rico, Women in the Middle East at UCLA, and The Teaching of Literature in San Antonio, among others.

## Development Discussions

\* "Development in the Occupied Territories: Policy and Constraints" was the theme of a 25 May seminar sponsored by the University's Center for Research and Documentation of Palestinian Society. **Dr. Samir Hazboun** (Economics), **Audeh Shehadeh** (Technical Unit) and **Samir Hlelleh** (Welfare Association) spoke at the seminar, which was chaired by **Dr. Ali Jarbawi**.

\* **Dr. Gabi Baramki** (Vice-President), **Dr. Roger Heacock** (History), **Dr. Mohammed Ishtayeh** (Economics) and **Dr. Abdulrahman Hamad** (Engineering) participated in the "European-Palestinian NGO Conference on Development and Cooperation," held 5-7 July 1991 in Jerusalem. The conference aimed to foster dialogue on development strategy between Palestinian and European NGOs: the proceedings, edited by **Roger Heacock**, are now available.

## publications

All publications are in English, unless otherwise indicated.

**Salah Abdul Jawad** (History), "The Impact of External Factors on the Formation of the Palestinian Leadership in the Occupied Territories, *Cahier Marxist*, Summer 1991, in French.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Palestinian Political Groups and the Arm of the Slogan," *Palestinian Studies*, Nicosia, September 1991, in Arabic.

**Ahmed Baker** (Education and Psychology), **Palestinian Children Under Occupation: Their Health and Psychological, Educational and Economic Conditions**, Welfare Association, Geneva and the Arab Society for the Child, Kuwait, September 1991, in Arabic.

**George Giacaman**, (Cultural Studies), "'What Next for the Palestinians?," **Palestinian Assessments of the Gulf War and its Aftermath**, Passia, Jerusalem, April 1991.

**Aziz Haider** (Sociology), **Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population**, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1991.

**N.M. Jisrawi** (Physics), W.L. McLean, N.G. Stoffel, N.S. Hegde, C.C. Chang, D.L. Hart, D.M. Hwang, T.S. Ravi, and B.J. Wilkens, and T. H. Geballe, "Superconductivity in ion beam-mixed layered Au-Si films," *Physical Review B*, 43, 7749(1991).

-----, S. J. Koestler, Q. Lu, M.J. Honkanen, W. Porod, G. Bernstein and S. T. Ruggiero, "Micro wave studies of single electron charging effects," *Bulletin of the American Physical Society* 36, 872(1991).

**Sharif Kanaana** (Sociology), "Humor of the Palestinian Intifada," *Journal of Folklore Research*, University of Indiana, Bloomington, July 1991.

**Mahmoud Miari**, "The Islamic Movement in Israel," *Shu'un Filistiniyya*, Nicosia, Spring 1991'.

**Khaled Nijm** (Electrical Engineering), "Speed Control of Large DC Motors," *Elector Electronics*, England, May 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_, "One-shot Solid State Relay Timer," *Elector Electronics*, July-August 1991.

**Mouna Odeh and Halla Salem** (Community Health), "The Shadow of War," *Women's Review of Books*, Well-seley, Summer 1991.

**Najwa Rizkallah** (Community Health), **Nutritional Status of Primary School Children in a Refugee Camp in the West Bank**, Community Health Unit of Birzeit University, Birzeit, 1991.

**Yusef Salamin** (Physics), "QED Based on Self-energy: The relativistic  $2S_{1/2} - 1S_{1/2} + 1$  decay rates of hydrogen-like atoms," *Physical Review A* 43, 2524.

**Samir Shehadeh** (Arabic), **Studies in the Criticism of the Palestinian Short Story**, Palestinian Writers Union, Jerusalem, 1991, in Arabic.

\_\_\_\_\_, **Sheikh Salim Abu Al Ibal Al Ya'qoubi Hasan Filastin : His Life and Poetry**, Palestinian Writers Union, Jerusalem 1991, in Arabic.

**Salim Tamari**, "The Next Phase: Problems of Transition," **Palestinian Assessments of the Gulf War and its Aftermath**, Passia, Jerusalem, April 1991.

**Adnan Yahya and Abdullah Abdullah** (Electrical Engineering), "Equity Problems in Information Technology: A Third World Perspective," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Technology*, The Information Processing Society of Japan, October 1990'.

**Mohsin Yusuf** (History), "The Zionists and the Fixing of the Borders of Palestine, 1915-1923," *Journal of Southasian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.15, Villanova.

## Afaq Filistiniyya

A new issue of **Afaq Filistiniyya**, the Birzeit University Research Review, is now available. Issue Number 6, 1991 includes **Bishara Doumani** on Ottoman and Mandate Historiography on Palestine, **Samir Hleileh** on Strategies of Development, **Alex Pollock** on Peasants, Merchants and Markets, **Azmi Bishara** on The Crisis of Marxism and **Ataf Alewneh** on Oil and the Gulf Crisis, as well as contributions by **George Giacaman**, **Ilham Abu Ghazaleh**, **Jad Ishaq**, **Munir Fasheh**, **Rima Hammami**, **Joost Hilterman** and others. Most of the articles are in Arabic.

To subscribe for one year (two issues), please send \$20 to **Afaq Filistiniyya**, POB 14, Birzeit, West Bank.

## WORKING PAPERS

Working Papers is a series of occasional papers published by **Afaq Filistiniyya**. **New papers include:**

Working Paper No 4: "The Transformation of an Urban Community, Studies in the Social Morphology, Ruralization, and the Informal Sector in the City of Ramallah," **Nael Younis**, **Nadim Hammoudeh**, **Nadia al Ansari**, **Salim Tamari** (Sociology Department), in Arabic.

Working Paper No. 5: "Street Peddlars: Sidewalk Women Vendors in the Palestinian Informal Economy," **Suha Hindiyyeh**, **Afaf Ghazawneh**, and **Subhiyyeh Idris** (Women's Study Center), in Arabic.



## INTERNATIONAL SUMMER PROGRAM

"I am so full of information and hospitality, that I want to go home and relax and absorb it all." That was the reaction of one of a group of students from the University of Amsterdam after completing Birzeit University's International Summer Program 1991. Some 30 students from all over Europe and North America attended this year's Summer Program, which consisted of several course options, including Beginners or Intermediate Arabic, and courses in sociology and political science. "It was very good," said student Astrid van Genderen Stort. "Never have I had such an intensive course as I've had here."

Students had high praise for the quality of the instruction and the course materials, some noting that daily life under occupation provided constant reminders of the relevance of what they were studying. The most serious problem seemed to be a lack of time for the students to do everything that was available to them. On the schedule were guest lectures on topics varying from "Human Rights Under Occupation" to "Rethinking Issues of Women's Health"; visits to towns, camps and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and an informational tour of Israeli settlements.

Academic excellence, strong personal ties, and the experience of different cultures led most to echo the sentiments of Swiss student Helen Fugger, "I want to come back".

### Dr. Izzat Ghurani To Retire

**Dr. Izzat Ghurani, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, has announced his retirement, commencing 1 April 1991. Dr. Ghurani will take a sabbatical year at the University of Texas in Austin, where he will be Professor Emeritus in Economics.**

**The next Newsletter will interview Dr. Ghurani on his views about the development of the University since 1976, when he joined the faculty. Dr. Ghurani was the first Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics and held a number of other administrative and teaching posts.**

## Report From the Registrar

Second term enrollment in the University's off-campus teaching program totalled **1551 students**, reports Registrar Mrs. **Haifa Baramki**. Many new students have been through a special academic orientation program designed by the University to assist students in acquiring University-level skills and to partially compensate for the disruptions experienced by students in secondary school. Due to the Gulf War curfew the second term was extended until the end of August.

**Female enrollment, at 320 or 21% of current enrollment, is at an alltime low.** In the 1980s, prior to the extended closure of the University, women were roughly 40% of the student body. Mrs. Baramki notes that the "lack of security" and the dismal economic picture, including lack of employment for young women, seems to negatively affect parents' and girls' decisions to attend University. Birzeit University, in particular, has always drawn its student body from the entire Occupied Territories; today families fear sending their daughters away from home. "It's an alarming trend," Mrs. Baramki warned, "the dramatic increase in University education for Palestinian young women has been one of our great achievements over the past two decades. We don't want to lose it." Mrs. Baramki feels the situation will improve if the University re-opens, and highly recommends "active recruitment" of women and an "increase in scholarships and financial assistance."

## AMSTERDAM VISIT

The University welcomed Dr. **Peter Blok**, Director of International Relations at Amsterdam University for a working visit on 18 May to discuss the cooperation agreement between the two institutions. Dr. Blok met with the University's Amsterdam Committee, chaired by Dean of Science Simon Kuttub, to discuss a number of issues, including research visits by faculty members in physics and chemistry, the participation of Amsterdam students in the International Summer Program and two upcoming conferences co-sponsored by the two universities. In August, Birzeit physicists hosted **Dr. Donzelman** of Amsterdam University for a research visit for an ongoing joint project on laser technology.