



BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter Issued by Birzeit University, Birzeit, Occupied West Bank, July 1982

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY ~~REOPENS~~ CLOSED



Birzeit University reopened on April 19, after the second two-month closure since the beginning of the 1981 - 82 academic year.

The University was closed from Nov. 4 - Jan. 4 when it joined the rest of the West Bank in protesting against the "civilian administration."

It was closed again from Feb. 16 - April 16, when the newly appointed Israeli "education officer in charge of universities" visited Birzeit, despite the objections of University officials. The visit was unwelcome because the official was seeking to implement Military Order 854, which gives the Israeli "civil administration" illegal authority to interfere with the operation of institutions of higher education. That Order has been rejected by all universities in the West Bank and Gaza and was condemned by UNESCO.

Because of these disruptions, the first semester was extended until June 4, the second till September 23.

As this newsletter was going into print on July 8, the Israeli military authorities, on instructions of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, closed Birzeit University for three months. The closure brings the total time lost in the 1981-1982 academic year to seven months, and causes severe disruption to the educational process at Birzeit.

The Israeli action came after a two-day strike in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip held to protest the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The strike was marked by widespread demonstrations, including one in Birzeit on July 6.

As is true elsewhere, the political concerns and aspirations of a population are most vividly expressed and argued by members of the academic community, and Birzeit is no exception. To prevent such an involvement, the Israeli authorities have exerted tremendous pressures on the Institution by closing it seven times since 1973.

The past few years have seen a serious intensification and escalation of disruptive acts against Birzeit. Since its reopening on April 19, harassment has taken a number of forms:

1. night raids on women's and men's dormitories, and on student and faculty apartments;
2. the disruption of classes by checkpoints that prevented access to campus; and
3. the confiscation of identity cards of students, without which it is illegal to move.

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BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY CALLS PRESS CONFERENCE

Following the reopening of the University on April 19, the Israeli military authorities stepped up their harassment of the Institution.

Pressures on Birzeit mounted to the point where the University found it necessary to call a press conference on May 13, '82 to explain its case to journalists, and through them, to the public at large.

Dr. Gabi Baramki, Vice-President, stated that the University understands the definition of education in its proper context and that Birzeit students are eager to study. However, the Israeli authorities were making it difficult for the University to compensate for time lost during the closure by breaking into student hostels at night, intimidating and detaining students, and confiscating their I.D. cards.

Dr. Baramki also complained about incorrect reporting in the Israeli press which implicated Birzeit in incidents the Institution was not involved in and said: "This is an S.O.S. Please keep us out of the news. We have only two more weeks to finish the semester and we want to be allowed to do so."

Responding to questions on whether it was possible to have education under occupation, the Vice-President replied that despite the difficulty of functioning under such conditions, Birzeit has managed to keep its educational standards intact and will continue to do so if allowed to function normally."

Mr. Albert Aghazarian, Assistant to the Vice-President for Public Relations, gave details about specific incidents of harassment and mentioned the case of an armed settler who appeared on campus on April 27 demanding to be registered at Birzeit, and the five carloads of settlers who treated themselves to tours of both campuses on April 28.

Mufid Abed Rabbo, President of the Student Council said: "Since the

reopening of the University, the harassments we have been subjected to, the night raids on hostels, the placement of three student council members under town arrest 10 hours after their orders had been lifted, and the lack of respect for the sanctity of the campus confirm the intention of the Israelis to close down the University at any cost.

The reason we are at Birzeit is to try to get an education in normal or near-normal conditions, but the Israeli authorities are making that impossible."

Publications

Three articles by Birzeit University staff appeared in the Journal of Palestine Studies, No. 41, Fall '81 (10th anniversary issue):

- * "Migration and change in a West Bank village: The Case of Deir Dibwan," Ms. Marisa Escribano, (Sociology and Anthropology Department) and Mr. Nazmi El-Joubeh, (Research Assistant).
- * "Building Other People's Homes: The Palestinian Peasant's Household and Work in Israel," Mr. Salim Tamari (Sociology and Anthropology Department).
- * "Arab Lands and Israeli Policy," Dr. Baker Abu Kishk, (Director of the Research and Documentation Center).

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If you would like to add anyone to our mailing list, please contact us at:

Birzeit University,
Public Relations Office,
Birzeit, West Bank

GUEST LECTURERS FROM ABROAD

The following lectures were given at the University by visitors from abroad since January.

- * "Teaching Reading Skills in TEFL," Dr. John Higgins, Language Specialist from the British Council, January 30.
- * "Ethno-Archaeology," Professor Patty-Jo Watson, from Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., February 23.
- * "A Radical Approach to Algebra," and "Computers in an Academic Setting," Professor Mary Gray, from the American University, Washington, January 5, June 10.
- * "The Case of Ziad Abu Ein," Ramsey Clark, Former US Attorney-General, and Chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union, April 24.
- * "The Public Sector in Post-Revolutionary Algeria," and "Background of the Iranian Revolution," Professor N.O. Kielstra, Deputy Chairman, Sociology and Anthropology Department of the University of Amsterdam, May 18 and 19.

* "Social Structure and Land Tenure in Iraq," and "The Formation of the Saudi State 1925 - 32," Dr. Peter Slugglett from the University of Durham, England, May 25 and 26.

* "Iraq the Socialist State 1963-80: Towards a New Evaluation," Dr. Marion Farouk-Slugglett, from the University of Durham, May 27.

"Israeli Practices in the Islamic Holy Sites," was the subject of a panel discussion held at Birzeit on May 22 to commemorate the feast of Al-Isra' Wa'l-Mi'raj (Prophet Mohammad's ascent to heaven). Speakers were: His Excellency Sheikh Sa'ad Eddin El-Alami, head of the Supreme Islamic Council, Mr. Isam Awwad, Al-Aqsa engineer, and Dr. Kamal Abdel-Fattah, Assistant Professor at the Middle East Studies Department of Birzeit.

Two lectures, "Recent Excavations in Palestine" and "Excavations in Jenin," were delivered by Dr. Albert Glock, Head of the Archaeology Department of Birzeit, on March 2 and 4, at the American University of Beirut.

Dyson Makes Plea For Palestinian Education

Professor Freeman Dyson of The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, who was scheduled to lecture at Birzeit in March was unable to do so due to the forced closure of the University during this period by the military authorities.

Alternative plans made for him to speak in Ramallah were cancelled because of the unrest that followed the ousting of El-Bireh's elected mayor.

Professor Dyson was given a tour of the closed new campus. He also met with a number of Birzeit's faculty in a private reception where he talked about his work on the origin of life and evolution.

Professor Dyson was in the area to receive the 1981 Wolf Prize in Physics. According to The Jerusalem Post, March 28, '82, "A hush fell on the Knesset when Professor Dyson, in his acceptance speech, "made a passionate public appeal on behalf of the Palestinians," and told his audience that the Israelis have a "responsibility for fostering education in Birzeit and Bethlehem, as well as Rehovot and Jerusalem."

Professor Dyson, in cooperation with Amnesty International USA, Princeton Group, was instrumental in bringing about the release of a Birzeit physics instructor who was placed under administrative detention (i.e. imprisoned without being charged or tried) from April 74 to January 78.

VISITORS

* On February 17 and 18, a group of 29 students and three tutors from St. Mary's College of Higher Education in England arrived in the West Bank, where they were to have been the guests of Birzeit, only to find that the University had been closed.

St. Mary's and Birzeit students were still able to share in seminars, informal discussions and traditional songs, music and dancing from both Palestine and the British Isles.

As a result of this ten-day visit, St. Mary's College Students' Union voted to establish a linking arrangement between the two institutions.

* Mr. Ramsey Clark, Former US Attorney-General, and Chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and advocates Abdeen Jabara and Henry Schwarzchild visited Birzeit on April 24 and met with University officials, faculty and students.

The guests were here to observe the trial of Ziad Abu Ein, who was extradited from the US under a special US-Israel extradition treaty.

* A ten-member press delegation consisting of journalists from different regions of the United States, and accompanied by two members of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, visited Birzeit on May 11. During its stay in the West Bank, the group met with University officials, faculty, staff and students, and joined them in a number of activities on and off campus.

The delegation visited Birzeit and other educational institutions as part of an eight-day fact-finding tour of the West Bank and Gaza.

* Professor N.O. Kielstra, Deputy Chairman, Sociology and Anthropology Department of the University of Amsterdam visited the University from May 17-23 under an exchange program between the University of Amsterdam and Birzeit.

Tawjihi Students Tutored

The Student Affairs Office in cooperation with the Student Council, the English and Mathematics Departments, organized supplementary courses for high school students to help them with their Tawjihi exam, the results of which are used to determine admission to universities.

One hundred and eighty students from five high schools in Birzeit and Ramallah attended the classes which were held at the University from May 15 to 31.

The five sections of English and two of Mathematics were taught by Birzeit faculty and students.

Psychological Counseling Gets a Boost

Birzeit University, in cooperation with the Lutheran Church, conducted a seminar on psychological counseling for 22 High School teachers from private schools.

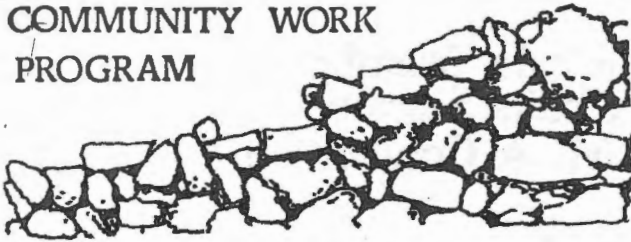
The course, which was held from September 17, '81 till March 4, '82, was prepared by Mr. Elia Awwad of the Department of Education and Psychology, and counselor at the office of Student Affairs of Birzeit.

* Dr. Marion-Farouq Slugglett and Dr. Peter Slugglett from the University of Durham were sponsored by the Friends of Birzeit University in England to visit the Middle East Studies Department of Birzeit, May 23 - June 2.

* Professor Mary Gray from the American University in Washington visited the West Bank from June 5 - 27 as a consultant on computer facilities. The visit was sponsored by AMIDEAST.

Professor Gray was invited to advise the Mathematics Department of Birzeit regarding a computer science program, and to recommend computer hardware and software purchases and personnel training that are expected to enhance the efficiency of the computer system for research and administration.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM



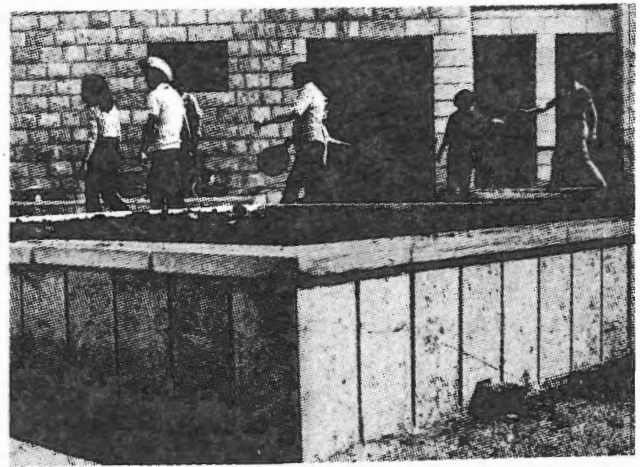
The Community Work Program was adopted by the University in 1973. It requires every student to complete at least 120 work-hours in projects that benefit the community. In each case students cooperate with local councils or charitable societies or other organizations, and work with local residents.

Recent work projects include:

May 9 and May 16

Sixty students took part in a one-day work project in Beit Sahur to help the Qumsiyya family rebuild their home. The house was blown up by Israeli authorities on Nov. 16, '81, because Walid Qumsiyya, 16, had allegedly thrown a stone at an Israeli vehicle.

Since December 3, '81, Birzeit students, like volunteer groups from other universities and youth organizations, have been helping rebuild the Qumsiyya home and three other homes demolished that same night in Bethlehem and Beit Sahur.



May 14, June 7 - 12

A total of 180 students filled the flower beds in the parking lot of the new campus with soil, and prepared them for planting.

International Work Camp

The first international work camp at Birzeit was held in 1980. This year the Student Affairs Office has invited a number of European student unions to nominate 30 volunteers to join Birzeit students in the University's annual work camp, September 16 - 26.

Exhibitions

* First year student Ali Bardawil exhibited thirty-eight pencil drawings, six charcoal drawings and six oil paintings from April 26 - May 10. The show dealt with the Palestinian experience during the last 100 years.

* Mr. Emile Ashrawi, Photo Lab Assistant at UNTSO, United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, exhibited a collection of his photographs from May 25 - June 8.

Mr. Ashrawi also gave an illustrated lecture on "Composition and Subject Choice," on May 26.

At present, a non-credit course on photography is being offered by the Student Affairs Office.



Faculty Development Program

In keeping with the need of the University to support the professional development of its members, Birzeit is engaged in a program of sending several of its faculty and staff abroad on degree and short-term training programs.

The faculty development program started in '77. Since then, 25 members of Birzeit University's faculty have returned from universities abroad and have resumed working for Birzeit.

Thirty-nine people are currently attending universities in the United States, United Kingdom, West Germany, France, and Canada, fifteen of whom are expected to be back at Birzeit during the '82 - 83 academic year.

Faculty Members Visit Arab Universities

Birzeit faculty members Professor Leighton Pratt, Ms. Nahla Asali and Mr. Edmond Durst visited the Language Centers and the English Department of the University of Jordan, and Yarmouk University, April 24 - 26. Professor Pratt and Ms. Asali also visited the Language Center and English Department of Kuwait University, May 23 - 26.

The visits were undertaken to discuss language testing and cooperative ventures between Birzeit and the three universities.

Acting Head Librarian Attends Oran Conference

Ms. Aida Nasser Haddad, Acting Head Librarian, read a paper entitled: "A General Survey of University Libraries in the West Bank: Birzeit University Library," at a conference on "Cooperation and Exchange of Experience in the Fields of Academic Publication, Research and Documentation."

The conference was held by the Association of Arab Universities at the University of Oran, Algeria, May 24 - 26.

Faculty Member Chairs Session at MLA Convention

Dr. Denis Jonnes, assistant professor of English at Birzeit, chaired a special session on "Teaching in the Developing World," at the convention of the Modern Language Association, MLA (of America), on Dec. 29. The purpose of the session was to give university teachers of English, who were teaching or had recently taught at Third World institutions, an opportunity to discuss and to assess their experience. Presentations and discussion covered the special concerns - pedagogical, cultural, political - of teachers of English language and literature outside the Anglophone World.

Math Lectures Start June 16

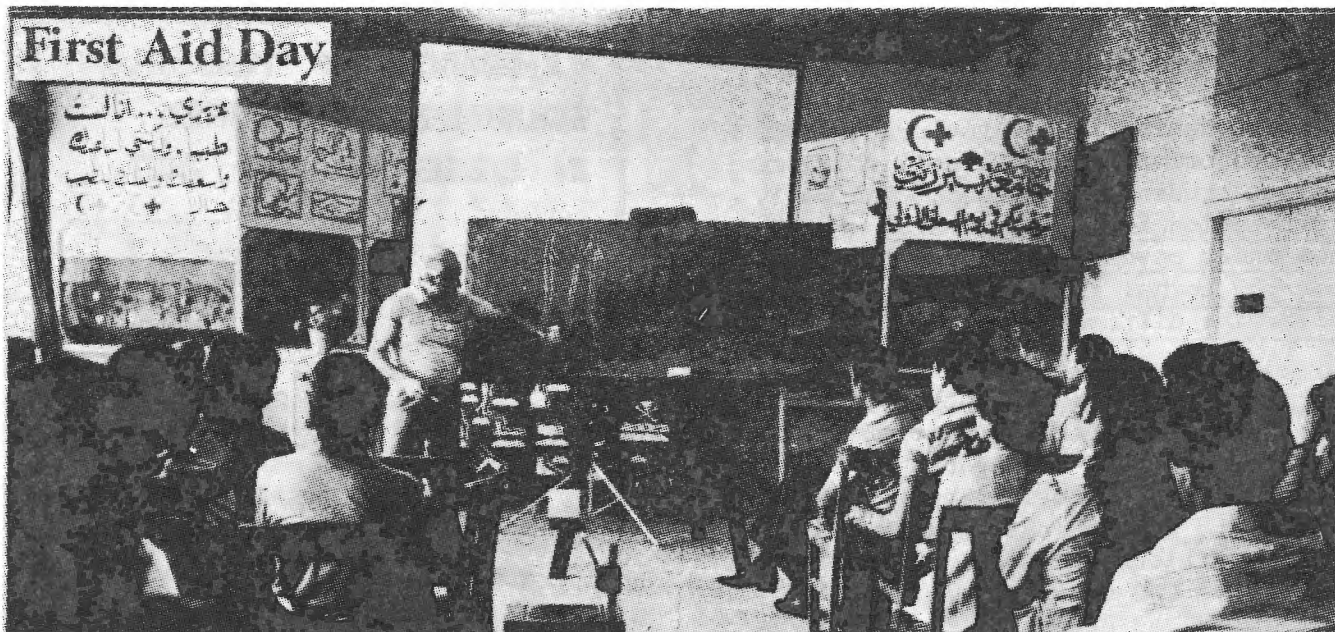
The Mathematics Department has announced a series of weekly lectures and films on a number of mathematical topics from June 16 till the end of the second semester.

The lectures will be delivered by Birzeit faculty and students, as well as by guest lecturers from the West Bank and abroad. The series was organized by Dr. Marwan Awartani of the Mathematics Department.

Mr. Burhan Nassar, Instructor of Arabic died of lung cancer on June 4. He was 32 years old.

A graduate of the University of Ein Shams, Egypt, Mr. Nassar joined Birzeit faculty in '79 and had been granted a scholarship, for the '82-83 school-year, by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Program) for doctoral study in Arabic Linguistics in West Germany.

Birzeit students, staff and administration extend their condolences to his family.



Birzeit Women's Charitable Society, in cooperation with the Employees' Union, held a First Aid Day, at Birzeit on May 22, '82.

The Program, which ran from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., featured three M.D. guest speakers who lectured on the importance of first aid, and on burns, abdominal wounds and the treatment of

general and specific injuries.

Practical training in basic first aid, (bandages, fracture-splinting, wounds, artificial respiration) was given to those who registered for it.

The lectures were illustrated by three films. An exhibition of pictures and diagrams showing first aid techniques was held on both campuses.

New Appointments

* Dr. Said Athamneh, Ph.D. in Statistics, University of Missouri, '77, was appointed as Associate Professor of Business Administration on March 1, '82.

* Dr. Ahmad Kara'in, a graduate of the University of Alexandria, Egypt, '82, was appointed as Assistant Professor of Linguistics in the Arabic Department on June 15.

* Dr. Ramzi Sansur was appointed as Assistant Professor of Public Health on July 1, '82. Dr. Sansur, a graduate of New York University and a specialist in Environmental Health Sciences, plans to research some of the environmental problems of the people in the region.

Contract Signed For Completion of New Campus Buildings

"The Consulting Group for Development and Construction" was awarded the contract for the completion of the Library, the Administration and Assembly Compound.

According to the agreement signed on June 12, '82, the cafeteria should be completed around the end of October '82, and the rest of the work by the end of 1983.

The new campus is being built to meet the increasing demand for university space in the West Bank and Gaza, and is expected to accommodate a total enrollment of 5000 students by 1990.

