

# Al-Ghadeer

A STUDENT PUBLICATION  
ISSUED AT BIRZEIT COLLEGE

AL GHADEER EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief : Manuel Hassassian

Secretaries : Laila Ahed, Ara Voskian, Issa Noursi

No. 1

Vol. 12

December 1972

## The Four-Year Program

By Manuel Hassassian

Birzeit College has introduced the four-year program. The huge obstacle that faces most of the students when they graduate as Sophomores is that of the foreign universities which are already overcrowded and therefore tend to turn them down. In fact enrollement in these universities, especially the A.U.B. would be a bit difficult for most of the students.

Financially speaking, I think it would be far better for one to stay in his country than go abroad and incur large expenses which one's parents can hardly afford. I think this program has many advantages. Firstly, continuing one's university education would be something possible for all qualified students to achieve. Next this plan would give the best chances for comparatively weaker students to get the Bachelor's

degree either in Arts or Sciences. They may also earn a teaching diploma, which is useful in the field of teaching while studying for their degree. As it is planned the third year or the junior class will be added in 1974 and the senior class in 1975. This means that the Freshman students would thus be able to obtain their first degree at this college. At last, one of the most difficult problems facing our students nowadays is partially solved. However students would stand less chances of getting in touch with foreign culture and civilization, for one of the most important things for a student is that he should find some change in his cultural and social environment to challenge his mind. Yet the Four-Year program has much to recommend.

## Who Is To Be Blamed ??

By Ara Voskian

Just a few days after the opening of the College I entered the cafeteria to enjoy a few peaceful moments sipping a cup of coffee. As I sat down, I heard somebody talking loudly and in an angry tone, expressing his desire to drop the English 141 course given by Miss Alidz Kishishian. I know Miss Kishishian quite well, for last year I took my English 141 and 142 courses with her and I enjoyed every moment in her lectures.

"Why was this guy dropping the course ; " I asked Freshman students, and the answers I got reinstated their impression that Miss K. was very tough, that she was giving lots of assignments, that she was very exacting and was very rapid in giving lectures.

I realized something was wrong with that particular class. "But who is to be blamed ; " I asked a friend of mine, a freshman who is taking English 141 with Miss K., about the instructor, and he answered saying " man

she's great, she's just great."

Was I delighted to hear this answer ; Yes I was, for at last I could find somebody who shared with me the same point of view.

Who is wrong in judging this particular instructor ? We, my friend and I, or those who are complaining about her ? To know the answer I attended two of Miss Kishishian's lectures, and formulated my own conclusion.

Miss K. is not tough, she gives assignments similar to last year's ( which are below freshman level according to her ). Her lectures are very quick and very clear as well. On the other hand perhaps some of the students come to her classes without preparing their assignments or perhaps most of them are not ready for discussion. Finally I am sure if all Freshmen in her class try to cooperate in preparing their assignments they will be satisfied with her.

## Q and A With Mr. Otaqui

( ENGLISH & ECONOMICS INSTRUCTOR )

By Manuel Hassassian

Q. Could you tell us something about your educational background

A. I started my primary education at B.Z. School and then transferred to Friends School for the elementary classes. I then did the Freshman and Sophomore at B.Z.C. After this I went to Minnesota Manchester College where I took my B.A. in Economics. Then I went to Canada where I did Three semesters for my Master degree in Social Planning at Toronto University.

Q. What is your opinion about making B.Z.C. a Four-year institution ?

A. I think it is an essential step and will save the students lots of trouble in travel and expense.

Q. Do you have a gap in your social life since coming from the States ?

A. I miss going to concerts, good T.V. programs, plays and good newspapers.

I miss the opportunities of the big city. Concerning dating, it is not a serious problem since there are compensations.

Q. Do you think there is a difference in the mental ability between an Arab student and a foreigner ?

A. In terms of I.Q. no single race is more intelligent than the other. If all possibilities and privileges of an American are given to an Arab-he can do just as well or better. Academically speaking it depends on natural - born intelligence and environment.

Q. What are your dislikes at B.Z.C. ?

A. I find difficulty in transportation, donkeys waking me up in the middle of the night, and the noise of trucks and buses while lecturing.

Another difficulty, is that the level of comprehension among the students differs. This is mainly in the Freshman Class.

Q. What are your likes of B.Z.C. ?

A. Small College life. Knowing all the students on campus. nice social atmosphere.

Q. What improvements do you suggest for B.Z.C. ?

A. I think that the college should increase the number of instructors. Books should be ordered before the year starts. Providing adequate transportation.

All these are natural for a small college and should be solved by the 4-year program.

Q. What is your opinion of pop music ?

A. I enjoy Pop music especially if there is a progression to it.

Q. Are you taking the music course ?

A. Yes. I like classical music and have never studied it formally.

By taking the course, I would learn how to listen properly.

Q. What's your opinion on intermarriage ?

A. I encourage it if it is met with responsibility and certain safeguards.

Q. Do you like sports ?

A. I love watching sports, especially ice- hockey. I also enjoy basket-ball and cricket and soccer at a world level.

Q. From a political point of view, as an Arab student, did you find any difficulty while studying abroad ?

A. Academically speaking being an Arab was not an obstacle to me. But Arab students should be careful in presenting their problems in case the people are biased.

Thank you.

## Freedom of Choice

by Issa Noursi

It is an almost common belief in our society that a worthwhile student is that one who is willing to pursue his higher education majoring in scientific field, especially

MEDICINE and ENGINEERING.

Any student whose interest lies elsewhere is liable to get all the discouragement in the world from his parents who claim to know their child's interest and thus try to impose on him the field of study they think is most apt. Unfortunately for the student the choice usually turns out to be either medicine or engineering. By so doing Parents cause more harm than good. Furthermore, they belittle the concept of learning and education by utilizing their children to serve economic ends since medicine and engineering are among the most highly paid professions.

Parents should give their children the freedom of choice to follow whatever subject they

feel is best for them.

Furthermore, parents should take into account their childrens, potentialities and their background education at high school.

Try to imagine what would happen if all high school graduates go on to study these two subjects: we would surely end up with no one left to till the land, to run the factories or render the other services vital for every society.

It is certain that we will have a surplus of doctors and engineers and if we give just one glance at the local newspapers of the last few months we see the fact. This surplus would surely burden the economy and unemployed doctors and engineers would have to look for other jobs not up to their expectations. As I have read about Ph.D. graduates in the U.S.A. who have gone to work as cab drivers or in restaurants washing dishes.

## No More Manners

By Ali Kleibo

I lifted up my hand and pushed a thick lock of my hair away from my eyes. The road cleared up. Vague figures took a steady form and, for a moment, everything seemed arrested in time. How beautiful Ramallah looked early in the morning. I walked on and the forms became hazy. The pictures became shaky. Everything moved as I quickly paced down the Manarah Street. Even my hair moved up and down my neck. An interwoven succession of moving colours and forms flashed past my eyes; grey and darkly dressed middle-aged persons, brown donkeys, white and black cats, green bushes and trees, red roofs of white stoned buildings and blue, black, yellow and red cars.

Sounds of squeaking tyres, honking horns, braying donkeys, human voices all mixed together rushed vaguely to my ears. I stopped, looked around to cross the street. The human voices became audible.

— "Look, a hippie."

— "He is an Arab."

— "They forgot all the Arab

customs and traditions."

— "Look at his hair, it is like a girl's."

— "No more manners."

— "Poor lost generation, they don't know what they want."

— "They imitate the west ignorantly."

— "Just look at his hair, he is not a man."

A breeze then blew and my hair once more fell over my eyes. I pushed the lock backward.

Why do they interfere with me? Do I ever criticise their conservative appearance? They claim that I do not know what I want, as if they knew. They undulate between Eastern and Western influences not knowing what to choose. But as soon as someone makes his choice they are the first to criticise. They are extremely ignorant and intolerant. I moved forward leaving their comments behind. My hair bounced on my neck and forehead rhythmically. I am satisfied with myself. I will just go on.

## Self-Portrait

By Laila Ahed

I am considered short and tending to be on the plump side. I possess a clean complexion that is neither too dark nor too fair. I have a small forehead, under which lie dark eyebrows and brown eyes. My nose is not prominent and I cannot say that it gets much attention but it serves its purpose. The shape of my face is round and tends to get chubbier as the years go by. Recently I have had the misfortune of noticing a protrusion under my chin, which I will not acknowledge as a double-chin. My hair is light brown and tends to be straight so that no amount of coaxing with a curling iron will allow it to come out in sausage-like rolls.

My normal expression varies in accordance with my moods. Sometimes I feel on top of the world and am given to great outbursts of chattering so that no one (there is no exception) can get a word in. At other times, I fit myself in a corner and no coaxing or chiding will get me to come out of my self-made shell. People often think me a snob because I have this "keep away air" about me, but I consider myself an extrovert. For I am the first to talk to a new student or neighbour who has just moved in. Yet I seldom like to talk to them again. I attribute this to the lack of interest on my part and am aware that this is a fault which I would be better off without.

I am also given to extreme fits of modesty and when someone praises me, I often wish that the earth would open up and swallow me. At other times when I think that I really deserve & it comes from a person of some standing, I bask in the sunshine of praise.

One of the things I detest is to sit and listen to people trying to carry an ordinary, everyday conversation, lacking intelligence and wit. From this I have come to the conclusion that people say the same thing everyday with little change.

I derive great pleasure from reading anything that comes within my hands. I read textbooks, fashion magazines, even recipes; anything that will quench my thirst for knowledge. I

am possessed with the idea of knowing and acquiring knowledge. Yet my ability to read and comprehend is influenced by trivial matters. I cannot, for instance, open a book if a problem lurks in my mind, for this disturbs my concentration.

A demanding person, I must always have everything in order. Chaos disturbs my peace of mind. This is contrary to my nature, for I am not always a neat person. The drawers in my dresser bear witness to the fact.

I can take criticism only from people whom I think capable of criticising me and then have fair grounds for their criticism. It bothers me when someone who does not really know my nature attempts to criticise me. I think: why does not he look at his own faults! I have strong passions, yet possess the will to control them. I love strongly and can hate just as strongly. I am given to outbursts of temper. If someone insults me, I keep quiet and harbor it as a grudge and when chance presents itself, I am not slow in venting my revenge.

I am troubled by ambitions and have the greatest urge to succeed. But when I fail, I consider it a step that will contribute to my next success. I do not fear death, on the contrary I look forward to it, for I think that it will be the liberation of all my inhibitions. I do not like to see other people suffer and often am heard to say that I wished the misfortunes of these people would fall on me. But this is only talk, for I personally think I have too much of a load already without any further additions.

In choosing my friends I am very selective; yet once chosen, I greatly cherish them and refrain from saying anything that will harm their reputation. In turn they treat me in like manner and both sides are satisfied with such relations.

I am very curious and have an inquisitive mind. Hence I must know the reason for everything of a questionable nature. I am not a very confidential person, for many a secret have slipped through my mouth unintentionally.