

IYC Activities at BUC

Besides the yearly dramatic performance offered for children by Beirut University College (see accompanying picture of the "Wizard of OZ", presented this year), two important projects connected with the International Year of the Child were initiated at BUC during the summer of 1979. The first was a workshop on good books for children held in cooperation with Goethe Institute, during the week of July 2-6. It was presided by Dr. Hans Helby, director of Gutenberg Museums in Mainz and author of books for young people. Dr. Helby emphasized the importance of picture story-books for children, discussed the criteria of a good story and read some examples as an illustration. He demonstrated certain ideas by experimenting with a group of children to whom he had distributed books for reading. He also showed an exhibit of picture story-books brought from Germany for the occasion.

One of the recommendations approved by the responsible committee was the creation of a national section of the IBBY (International Board for Books for Youngsters) which would engage members from Lebanon and other Arab countries.

The second project initiated by BUC on the same occasion was a training course for nursery and kindergarten teachers, lasting two months (July 3-Sept. 8) and executed by Dr. J. Abu Nasr, Mrs. Randa Khoury & Miss Leila Jarrar. It included lectures, participative activity by the attendants of the course, introduction of modern equipment and methods of handling it, explanation of recent theories on child development, planning preschool activities and kindergarten programs.

This training session aroused a good deal of response. About 80 teachers from Lebanon and other Arab countries asked to subscribe but only 60 could be accommodated by the College.



"CHILDREN REQUISITION ADULTS"

A play called "Lebanon, my love", was presented in June 1979, at al-Bustan Hotel in Beit-Mery, a Lebanese mountain village. Eighty school children formed the majority of the actors. They addressed questions to the older group of 6 actors, one of whom symbolized history and faithfully answered their questions regarding the history of their country. The other members of the older group answered questions regarding the present crisis. The children proceeded to a requisition, or a court plea, in which they accused their seniors of neglect and betrayal, urged them to reflect over the situation and try to redress their errors.

With songs, dances and a poetic dialogue, the play took the form of an operetta in 2 acts.

1 - "The IYC National Committee" in Lebanon organized in May 1979 a competition among song-writers for the best three songs dealing with the theme, "War and Children". Four thousand pounds were to be distributed to the winners. As none of the eight songs presented met the conditions set by the committee, it was decided that one thousand pounds would be awarded to each of the two authors whose works were considered of some relative value. The remaining sum, 2000 pounds, would be reserved for another contest of the same type but with different conditions.

2 - "The Institute of Research and Development" connected with the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts has organized a competition for the best six stories written for children ranging from K.G. to the 5th elementary. Important prizes have been set aside for the winning stories. The results will be known in the fall of 1979.

3 - In May 1979 The Arab Cultural Club in Beirut devoted a whole week for lectures and discussions on children's literature. A competition for the best three stories for children aged 10-12 was organized. A puppet show was presented by the group of children who regularly attend the daily children's programs presented by the Club. The puppet show was created by the children under the guidance of the supervisors in charge and it proved to be a successful one.



A Child's Prayer:

Our Father

*Our Father, who art every where:
See how the world has despoiled itself.
Look down on the sea polluted by petroleum*

*There's water in the wine,
Who knows what's in the oil?
Our daily bread-how often does it taste peculiar?
But you know how many people
Have no bread, have nothing at all.*

*Give us this day a better world
where there is more love in our hearts and minds
Where money takes second place to
loving care and thoughtfulness of others*

*The highway takes us to far distant places
But no one understands his neighbour*

*Every one talks about Peace on Earth
But on every side there's always
some war or other.
Always war.*

*We, your children, pray
Show us how to be better:
To sit quietly, to learn our lessons
and not be enticed away by television.*

*And deliver us from greed, whims
and all untruths,
And deliver us from smog. Amen.*

UNICEF Information Bulletin. Issue no. 19, p. 20. This children's prayer was originally sung by Italian school children at a gala concert to celebrate UNICEF's 30th anniversary