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COEXISTENCES / DECEMBER 2018



Fig. 27

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Due to a packed agenda, our General Assembly had to be split over two evenings: on 8 November and 11 December 2018, which means that our newsletter reaches you later than usual.

Rest assured, we didn't lose ourselves in meaningless details or idle gossip, but the life of the Association is important to its members and its projects motivate them. As a reminder for the participants and information for others, we give a brief summary below. We also present the projects for 2019 and lastly, we remind the traditional "Bal jaune" (Yellow Ball) which will take place very soon!

We wish you an enjoyable read and a good passage to 2019.

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IN FEW WORDS

Mariela Muri-Guirales, President of the Union of Lausanne Societies honoured us by her presence at our General Assembly. The Union of Lausanne Societies, of which we are part, is the umbrella of associations in Lausanne. It covers 370 member associations and boasts 120 years of voluntary engagement. Ms Muri-Guirales congratulated us for the abundance of our activities. She appreciated the comprehensible and transparent annual report. She reminded how voluntary work was so precious and concluded by saying that our commitment is worthy of applause.

The report of Daniela Hersch, Fiuna Seylan-Ongen and François Feihl on the summer visits (Roots, Tali and Breaking The Ice) was very encouraging. Three groups comprising committed individuals with a strong desire to continue the dialogue and its implementation through specific projects on the ground.

In 2018 we mourned the death of Elsa Skoreczki, our secretary. We render a tribute to Elsa, to her loyalty and friendship. The nomination of a new secretary will take place at the General Assembly in autumn 2019.

There have been new collaborations: for one, Coexistences is now part of KOFF, the Swiss platform for the promotion of peace, and then we have eagerly worked with B8ofHope, in particular for the visit of Roots. Cofounded by Mehra Beit, this is an organisation based in Geneva, which raises funds for organisations working in favour of bi-national work in Israel/Palestine.

The fund raising group works flat out to replenish our funds. A number of possibilities were suggested besides the requests for donations from institutions: a sale of clothes, fund raising dinners, the organisation of a concert, the promotion des legacies in our favour and, why not, an exhibition/sale of art works. All these items will be back on the agenda over the next few weeks. However, Coexistences' financial health is very sound.

To conclude, a General Assembly rich in ideas and projects.

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In addition to our pleasure in welcoming them in Switzerland coupled with the tangible results achieved in the past by our dialogue efforts, we plan on receiving three of these groups in 2019.

26.03-04.04.2019 WOMEN OF THE CRACKS

The first is a group of women from Haifa who have been meeting together since 2014. Co-facilitated by Ulfat Haider from Beit HaGefen (Arab-Jewish Cultural Centre, www.beit-hagefen.com) and Rina Berberoglu from NATAL (Israeli Trauma and Resiliency Centre, in favour victims of terrorism and war, www.natal.org.il), a group born in the wake of the war in Gaza in 2014 in the aim of supporting and reinforcing the voice in favour of the multiculturalism in Haifa. The group meets 2-3 times a month and is comprises women between 35 and 60 from both communities having/had, an active professional life and with quite broad political horizons.

Co-financed by NATAL, the facilitation combines Beit HaGefen's pluralist approach and NATAL's work on trauma.

During 2014-15, the group dynamics was established by work on identities and gender, individual narratives, conferences, excursions and numerous visits in the participants' families.

In 2016-17, the participants themselves initiated activities around the theme of trauma concerning the Nakba, the Holocaust, the war of independence, Jerusalem, Jerusalem Day, racism, memory, Remembrance Day, etc.

Even though the facilitators considered that the group's work was completed, the participants wanted to continue meeting in 2018-19. So their dialogue work continues and the group plans to engage in video-activism by making a film to show to a wider public their experience of meeting and getting to know each other and hence contributing to the reduction of stereotypes and fears. They have also initiated contacts with local orthodox Jewish communities in order to make their work known and encourage them to initiate a binational dialogue work.

The name of the group chosen by the participants, «Women of the Cracks», refers to the personal cracks originating from war trauma but also to the cracks which appeared in their respective narratives in contact with those of the other side. This reference also echoes the words of a song by Leonard Cohen « There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in ».

During the recent tensions in Haifa, the members of the group spoke out publicly in favour of the plural coexistence in their town.

The visit to Switzerland will last a little over a week with several days in the mountains, to experience this unique group catalysis that the visit to Switzerland enables.

Dates of the visit: 26 March - 4 April 2019

15 participants, 2 facilitators

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23.06-04.07.2019 JERUSALEM YOUTH CHOIR



We will have the pleasure to welcome back the choir after their memorable visit in 2017.

The choir underwent in 2017-18 vicissitudes due to the malfunctions in the Jerusalem based YMCA. The youngest recruits were appalled and left the choir, but those who had participated for three years and more personally found, in the dialogue work accomplished through the years and the energy drawn of their stay in Switzerland (yes, you read it right!) the resources to continue and rebuild the choir. Micah Hendler, its founder, strived with all his might and a first rehearsal with new members has just taken place. At the same time, the model of the choir evolves towards a management much more participative by the singers themselves; thus, several work groups assume different aspects of the choir's needs: repertoire, scenography, costumes, coaching for choral conducting, facilitation training, finance and fund raising, communication.

For 2019 of the choir's visit to Switzerland, we are working on a musical collaboration with the St Michel Choir in Fribourg, which should lead to a concert – public seminar music exchanges in Fribourg. Besides that, a new concert at the United Nations is highly probable, and the choir will also appear at a public concert in Lausanne.

The visit to Switzerland will last 10 days of which 4 days in the Valais then one week in Lausanne.

Dates of visit: 23 June - 4 July 2019

28 youngsters, 4 facilitators and 3 supervisors

LATE AUGUST EARLY SEPTEMBER BREAKING THE ICE

Once again a group of 12 Jewish and Arab students from Haifa University will hike (and dialogue) in our Alps this summer. The dates are not yet quite final, but it will probably be the the last week of August and the first week of September.

Like the previous years, the supervision will be ensured by our Beit HaGefen partners, Ulfat and Asaf, and of course by our guide Nadja Schmid, with François Feihl accompanying the hike as the representative of Coexistences.

This event of Breaking The Ice will be the tenth one! We are planning a celebration of this anniversary. The prospective idea we are exploring is a festive event reuniting former participants for a few days in Switzerland, in order to exchange their experience and to have an overview. The dates should be around January or the beginning of February 2020.

Dates of the visit: end of August-beginning of September 2019

12 participants + 2 supervisors

Duration: about 10 days

A FILM ON ROOTS shown in Bern on 5.12.2018

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05.12.2018
BERNE

« The Field », a moving film accompanying the approach initiated by ROOTS, a group of Palestinians and Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

To bring Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank to dialogue, that exists. In a climate of extreme tension, this approach, almost unreal, is described in the film « The Field », made by Rabbi Mordechai Vardi. The Swiss platform for promotion of peace KOFF, which groups 50 NGOs, working for the promotion de peace and civil society, supported by the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, organised its screening a few days ago in cinema in Bern. A story describing in an intense and moving way meetings between two communities, initiated by the Palestinian activist Ali Abu Awad, for long time in a violent conflict with the Israeli authorities and imprisoned for several years, before undertaking a long reconciliation process based on dialogue with the Jewish settlers. Despite the dangers and brutality of the occupation cycle – attacks persistently surrounding this non-violent battle, « The Field » takes a realistic look on a tentative of humanisation, perilous but solid, that the ordeals suffered even strengthen.

«To be in prison was my university», says Ali Abu Awad, «but we are here to change the reality», he observes a little further on. A tortuous and difficult path, almost oppressing, he says in his farm a stone's throw from Jerusalem. In this depressing environment, the strength of the approach is impelling: the dialogue pursues, advances and continues. This on the ground initiative begun in 2014, is called ROOTS. For example, The Lausanne association Coexistences received this summer Palestinian adolescents and children of settlers between Lausanne and in the mountains, at Arolla in the Valais.

The President of Coexistences, Fiuna Seylan Ongen, reminded that « it is so important that these populations meet each other, something which humanises. The Palestinians express a reality and the settlers find the strength to listen to them », she went on after the screening during a discussion, with Valentina Maggiulli, responsible for the Middle-East programme of the feminist NGO CFD (WEESC). Ms Maggiulli said she was « impressed that Ali Abu Awad had been able put forward the subjects and that the settlers listened to them.»

Edgar Bloch, La méduse, 18.12.2018

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11.01.2019
THE «PETIT NOUVEL AN» GRAND BALL IS COMING SOON

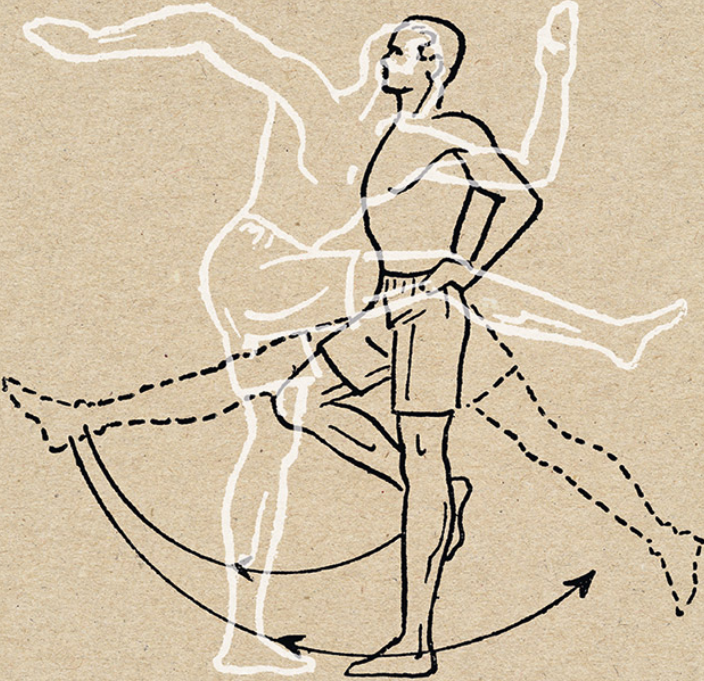


Fig. 27

**ORCHESTRE JAUNE
GRAND BAL DU PETIT NOUVEL AN
VENDREDI 11 JANVIER 2019**

LAUSANNE, CASINO DE MONTBENON, SALLE DES FÊTES
BAL DE 21H - 2H
PORTES, BAR ET PETITE RESTAURATION DÈS 20 H
ADULTES 30.- / ETUDIANT·E·S 15.- / SOUTIEN 50.-
EN FAVEUR DE COEXISTENCES
COEXISTENCES.CH / ORCHESTREJAUNE.CH

On Friday 11 January 2019 will take place the twelfth "Petit Nouvel An" Grand Ball in favour of Coexistences.

The organisers of the Ball met last November, the musicians are polishing their instruments, the dancers are rehearsing their dance. Come along with your friends, this will be an unparalleled evening!

In anticipation of this first event, we wish you a happy, warm and bracing holiday

The communication group