

Sadaka-Reut's Newsletter

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The 'Markaz' opening event – by Sama Shakra, commune member

Noise. People asking for silence. People coming in, looking and checking. The lights working full intensity. Somewhere over there the voice of one of Sadaka Reut's activists – 'Welcome to the opening year event of the Jaffa Markaz for youth!'"

The 'Markaz', entering its second year of implementation, is the result of Sadaka Reut's activities in Jaffa and it focuses on creation for political and social change in the following fields: visual arts, theatre, music, break dance, creative writing and support for school.



On Thursday the 15th of November, the staff of the 'Markaz' held the opening year event, an excellent opportunity by which to start the year.

Friends, youth members, staff and volunteers from Sadaka Reut all over the country, and in particular from Jaffa, attended the event, which took place in a studio in the heart of Jaffa. At 7:30, the place started filling up; the refreshments were ready, the information stand for the 'Markaz' activities was in place and ready to recruit new youth members, reporters from different newspapers and magazines appeared with their note pads and cameras and the staff took their place and role for the event.

The place soon began to fill up with people and a lively atmosphere settled in.

As part of the event, an exhibition of pictures taken during the 'Markaz' summer English camp was established next to a graffiti workshop for young visitors.

The evening began with a small performance of the 'Markaz' home band – System Ali – together with the rapper pair Said and Siad – for the benefit of the reporters. After the warm-up performance, the evening's masters of ceremonies began to explain the event – but they were not to be seen. They were speaking from somewhere outside the studio. This of course attracted a lot of attention and set the perfect stage to explain what the 'Markaz' is about and how it intends to create political and social change in Jaffa. There followed a few performances from different local bands, but it seemed that everyone was waiting for was System Ali. When they performed, the band played energetically, with catchy tunes like "Yafowiye" and the break dance group did their very impressive moves during the songs. The whole crowd was on its feet and everyone seemed to be ready to dance the night away. The cameras were flashing, reporters were interviewing the members of Sadaka Reut and of System Ali, youth enrolled in the activities and went from one picture to the next in the exhibition. After a few hours, the show ended and the event closed. People went home with a feeling of pride for their city, Sadaka Reut members cleaned up the studio with a feeling of satisfaction and the band System Ali store away their instruments under a cloud of admiration.

This was for sure one of the greatest events of the 'Markaz' and one of the most fruitful events Sadaka Reut has ever produced. May other events be just as good as this one!!!



Facilitators' seminar – Palestinians, Jews and Germans

Sadaka Reut and AGFJ, Hamburg, Germany – October 2007, by Adi Maoz, Jewish educational coordinator

I came back a month ago from a seminar in which there participated three groups – Jews, Palestinians and Germans – for a joint discussion on history, identity and responsibility. We took part in the seminar in order to analyze what was the partnership we wished to build together here in Israel. This meeting was for us complex, charged and even sometimes painful. It asked that we open ourselves to the 'other' standing in front of us. It asked that we face the fact of our being simultaneously victims and oppressors. It asked that we face our charged past and the no less complex present we are part of. It demanded that we ask ourselves what would be the reality in which we would want to live and what



future we seek to set for this place in which we were born.

I went to Germany to seek answers, to understand better. I went to Germany to understand where my grandparents were born, and to understand from Germany's younger generation what was the significance of being German today. I went to feel their hurt, to demand recognition, to confront the past and finally to take responsibility on the repair. I went in order to say that what happened to the Jews in Europe then defines who we are today, defines what has become the Israeli-Jewish experience I am part of. A big part of me is composed from this dialogue with what our grandparents' generation has created here in Israel, a dialogue that sees both the injustices and the vision of a new future. I am a product of this complexity, of the contradiction set in the simultaneous destruction and construction of national collectives, in being at once the victim and the oppressor.

The way the different systems in Israel manage the politics of memory feeds the collective victimization of the Jewish people, while it permits oppression, injustice, racism and trampling of the Palestinian people. Moreover, it brings for the suppression of voices within Jewish society, voices that could develop into alternative Jewish identities that are not based on victimization.

I went to Germany and what I realized is that I needed to go all this way, in this complex and complicated group, in order to free myself. Freedom, the riddance of burden, comes from freeing oneself from the insupportable indoctrination of the systems in which one is brought up. I understood that my journey, this educational act that I wish to create at Sadaka Reut and this social change I wish to bring, demands that I confront the victimization feelings that subsist in society and that I contribute to the creation of an alternative Jewish identity, one that does not sanctify the victims; an identity, a society that courageously challenges its oppressive aspects and takes responsibility on its actions, a society that chooses to build itself from a different basis and that aims to create a bi-national alternative reality.

Germany, by Wasim Biroumi, Palestinian educational coordinator



The conclusion of the meeting in Germany I am writing in Hebrew and I do not feel that I have to apologize or to explain myself and that's the essence of the experience I feel I had in the seminar.

The trip was meant, in my opinion, to break the cycle of victimization behind which the Palestinian people often hide. No, I am not trying to annul no pain, injustice or oppression. I say that I am oppressed and that I work towards freeing myself from the strains of this oppression, that I work towards freeing myself from the strains of myself. It is not simple to challenge oneself, to analyze the basis upon which one's identity is built, to question the unquestionable. But in spite of that, and out of full conscience, I went to Germany and deep inside I wanted to unmask the face of the Jewish perpetrator. And no I do not wish to hug trees. And my first purpose was not to connect and to see

the human in the Jew, but rather to connect and to see the human in me.

I grew up on red flag, green and white and green and red yet again. It is impressive how one can 'recruit oneself' to a specific goal, to internalize it and to make it one's own. "To free Palestine" had become my motto, the basis of my discourse, my actions, my thoughts, my feelings – myself. The fear I felt when one came to challenge this identity of mine was insupportable and was always interpreted as 'normalization' and 'westernization'.

I am being taken advantage of, I am a victim and victims are immune to moral considerations. I am allowed to do anything, to use power, to oppress myself and my spouse, to be racist towards Christians, Muslims and others...

I am not less Palestinian. On the contrary, I have found the Palestinian in me – a Palestine that is not a broken olive tree, but rather a big, strong, green and beautiful olive tree.

First impressions on Jaffa, by Omri Gershon, commune member

All my life I have grown up in a Kibbutz. It was for me an environment that was safe and known, in which I felt protected.

When I arrived to Jaffa, my first impression was of a strange and different place. In a sense, there was something scary about it. But at the same time, in spite of the strangeness and the difference, there was something that picked my curiosity in the place, in the space; the colors, the smells, the people...

There was something in the atmosphere that pulled me inside. The people around me gave me a lot of hope and comfort, a fact that helped me get accustomed to my new home for a year or more.

The passage from the Kibbutz to the city was also severe and significant. But I am happy I have done it – because I think it was a big step towards my being independent, my being part of 'real life'.

I can say that my first impression of Jaffa was not so good, but as much as the time passes by, as much as I find myself liking the place to which I have moved. Until now, everyday I find something good, interesting or beautiful about the city.



I am not the type for cities – I prefer the country – but there is something different in Jaffa, something alternative!

Youth seminar in England, summer 2007, by Yael Rozanes, youth member Tel Aviv group

It hit me in the face. For a few seconds I even felt a bit insecure about myself. A Bosnian boy shook my hand and I introduced myself to the Bosnian group. The field, the place where we slept, was crowded with dozens of tents, and in that second when I understood what it meant to be in an international camp in England, with a lot of people I don't know, from places I've never been to, I wanted to go back home. But from here, I said to myself, it could only get better. And it did. After the slight awkwardness that everyone felt, we started talking, and very quickly were recruited for the jobs around the camp. Painting the showers was the most fun, and between complaining ("who cares if the showers have paint anyway?") and learning the numbers in Bosnian (yeden, dva, tree, chetry....) we started to get to know each other, and bond. After some time with the Bosnia and Slovenia groups, other groups started to come as well. British people, Polish people, Romanian people, Spanish people,



Maltese people, and more. As the days went by we got used to our mates, in workshops and during free time, and there was also the tent mates. In my tent we were 5 girls - 6 people to each tent - Anna from Spain, Kelly from Malta, Tajda from Slovenia, Beth from Britain, Ania from Poland that also became a good friend. Communication in the tent, and in the camp overall, was not easy. Some people had great English, some had to scrap the words from MTV they knew, and some just knew Hi and Bye. Sign languages became very popular all of a sudden, and it was all a big mess, but big fun as well. Sometimes you understand people better than you think

As a group, the Israelis and Palestinians were quite united. We had the same mentality; we had the knowledge and the language. This unity that we had was new in a way. We were not used to being so much together, to having so much things in common. We were used to being two different nationalities, different sides of the same coin. Sometimes I could get crazy when someone didn't understand me, and one of the guys from my Israel\Palestine group was the only one who knew what I was talking about. However, our presentation in front of the all camp about the conflict was hard. The Israeli Palestinian conflict was hard to explain, and I had a different opinion from my Palestinian friends about the way we should display the conflict, and the issues involving it.

After all, this is a gentle subject. But I think I took a lot from it, and people understand a bit better what the conflict is about. After all, one of the purposes we had coming there was showing people our cultures, our country, and of course, make people fall madly in love with us , that they tell their friends to come to Israel. The final days were magical. All the camp people had a march for peace in Thornberry, a small town close to the camp, protesting against racism and in favor of cease fire. For a little while I had pure fun with new and exciting people, with new cultures, enjoying this new place. There was a smell of love in the air. I could have written a whole article about each and every one of them - about Kyle's curses, about Nedim's jokes, about all of them. People I learned. This is an experience I will never forget, and the biggest thing I have earned from it was friendship. I still talk to some people from the camp, and I hope to see them all soon, next time in a place with less tents, and remind them to bring an English dictionary.



The Enemy, by Sama Shakra



I stood face to face with
the enemy

He hadn't killed me
So I killed him.

He came to me
In a dream.
Don't die on me again.
I will not stand your immortality
Because I saw black ravens

I thought you were falling again

I saw you
A black stain on the snow
A drawing on a white blanket

And on battle hill
Where the smiles end
Where moments are frozen
In timeless cold fear
Light
Will rise
Against those who weep in murkiness.