

**"Germany and the World  
at the Dawn of 2006"**  
Report of a Listening Post  
held on 11th January



**Encouraging The Reflective Citizen**

**Analysis**

The members of the group spoke of their experience that we as citizens are all confronted with increasing trends of modularisation, fragmentation, and loss of meaning. (These encroach into everyday life and shred away its meaning.) Content is pushed back in favour of (digital) "efficiency" and control. This becomes apparent not only in the sphere of the economy, but also in schools, care of the aged (where combing of hair is no longer part of care routine, but a dispensable separate cost factor) and the health sector. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the loss of personal relationships with and in business concerns and the loss of decisive constructive action in the realm of politics.

Initially the group tended to view the problem as the consequence of global economic factors and inadequate political action. Feelings of dependency dominated in the group ("It is 'their' job to create jobs.") coupled with disillusionment, resignation and a certain sympathy for the strategy of muddling through. However, it became apparent that we are continually in danger of accepting so-called objective necessities as inevitable natural forces. We see this as an expression of unconscious dependency needs.

**Hypothesis**

We attempted to grasp the deeper causes of the dissatisfaction in spite of our relative prosperity. The frustration of the need for authorship, of being in charge of one's own course of action, evolved as a main source of the resignation mentioned above.

To take on authorship entails assuming responsibility in both personal and societal contexts coupled with a new comprehension of political action as a citizen. This involves actively defining and organising societal constellations. Authorship is not an easy job, can, however, provide meaningfulness. The implications of the fact, that one's life span is not infinite and yet bountiful as well as bounded, seemed a pre-requisite for responsible action.

Convener: Judy Ritter.