

**"Israel and the World
at the Dawn of 2009"
Report of a Listening Post
held on 8th January**



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In this part the participants were asked to collectively identify the major themes arising from the material of Part One. In collecting the points that arose from the discussion in Part One, 5 major themes were identified:

1. *War as a black hole*

Most of the associations raised in part one were about the war in Gaza – the Cast Lead Operation. Some participants reported reluctance to attend the ILP presuming it might turn to be a 'war talk.' It was felt that the preoccupation with the war was a hindrance to fantasy and reflection. Some very prominent issues, local and international were not at all or barely mentioned.

Several fears were connected to the dominant theme of war: the fear of dead soldiers – our sons and of dead citizens of the southern villages in the missiles zone around Gaza; the fear of booby-trapped tunnelled Gaza; the horror of so many casualties among innocent Palestinian citizens, most of them being used as human shields by the Hamas terrorists; the fear of being condemned by other countries, including friendly countries, as responsible for the mess in Gaza due to the manipulative use of the visual media by Arab reporters and due to ignorance and recoiling from sincere understanding of the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the pain and frustration of the impossibility to fight justly and remain humane.

War was farther associated with the opportunity to regain trust in the leadership after long period of disappointments; war as a reset – when all is collapsing and becomes chaotic the war contains a fantasy of gaining new (or old) order.

2. *The underworld of tunnels*

The tunnels dug by the Hamas in the Gaza Strip as an hostile underground world full with smuggled weapons and dangerous surprises, as other vipers' nests, like the caves in

Afghanistan (Why do they prefer investing money in weapons and tunnels to building their city and society?) At the same time, the tunnels are pipelines for survival in an impossible situation. In a presumptuous and virtual world we lose the ground under our feet, even reality programs on TV are not enough to ground us; so many unfulfilled and devastated people are lying in the tunnels, unnoticed, in a fast developing world of global economy. The underworld of tunnels is the shadow of the upper, almost virtual world.

3. *Could Israelis/Jews belong to the family of nations?*

Trying to beat the Hamas terror we might find ourselves rejected from the family of the humane nations; people are shaping their opinions after bloody video films on 'U-tube' rather than by seriously investigating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; there is higher prevalence of anti-Semitic acts against Jews in Europe – 'kill the juice.' We can easily be accused as looking for children's blood (the horrible pictures of casualties in Gaza) and for money (Bernard Madoff as a representative Jew) – classical anti-Semitic themes; when we are hated as Israelis, is it anti-Semitism? Are we serving the world as 'Or Lagoyim' ('in lucem Gentium;' 'a light for the Gentiles') or as a dumping ground?

4. *Gog & Magog*

With millions of un-assimilating Muslim immigrants and other problems of nationality and socioeconomic gaps, the quarrels and crisis in the Middle-East may recur soon in 'peaceful' Europe. The world's economic crisis reminds us that globalization is cracking and might explode. (Ma)Google as a symbol of high-tech sophistication. It is one among other causes for unbridgeable disparity among people and peoples, which might bring to a disaster as Arab workers in Israeli public clinic said in a frank conversation with their Jewish boss: 'At the end there will be a war and we will kill you all.'

5. *Collapsing grand paradigms*

The free economic global market, the cyberspace and internet, the European Union, the UN, a New Middle-East – all optimistic paradigms revealing big shadows in their systems and needing elaborate regulation to keep it from crisis and collapse.

Barack Hussein Obama is an object of intensive projections: on the side of the affluent western world he is the potential integrative leader who might better globalize the world, but on the side of the miserable of both the first and the third world, he is the leader who might recognize the needs of the weaker ones for better earning and prouder identity. Does he have a chance?

Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In this part participants were asked to analyze the material from Parts one & two, and to work at providing psychological explanations that can be developed into hypotheses about what is going on in society.

Analysis: War was the prominent theme that occupied our minds. The Cast Lead Operation in Gaza is also the lead story in international broadcasting services, yet it is not the only war in the world now. It was felt that we are carrying the fear of war of the western democratic world. Our war indicates a failure to talk, negotiate and compromise. We developed high expectations to come to some agreement with the Palestinians but they voted for Hamas, an Islamic terror organisation, which declares that its aim is to eliminate us all and acts in order to fulfil it. After eight years of self-restraint under Kassam missiles from Gaza, we lose hope and have to regain deterrence – all we can do now is to castigate and frighten them. This is the end of dialogue. If we,

Israelis, cannot have a dialogue with the Palestinians, our Semitic cousins, what is going to be with millions of Muslim immigrants in Europe who refuse to assimilate in the local communities? We find that shared humanistic, scientific, technological and economic interests are not enough; the Muslim extremists are successfully taking the dispute to the most archaic level – the religious one. All three monotheistic religions believe in Gog & Magog war at Dooms day. Every one of them believes itself to be the chosen one after Doomsday. It is a reversed and dangerous course of development.

America and Israel are doing to the Islamic terror what every one in the western world would like to do. Alas, beating the terror involves confrontation with the inner shadow – using violence and cruelty which bring also to casualties among the innocents. Most people of the affluent western society prefer to abstain from such a brutal confrontation in order to preserve the convenient (split) fantasy of 'the good ones'. In order to preserve this fantasy the shadow must be projected. At first, the shadow is projected on the terrorist and the 'evil axis' states, but then, when attacking them one meets his own shadow, so the dirty work is left to the strongest ones (US) and to those who must fight for their survival (Israel). Then, there is a second projection: the US and Israel become the villains among 'the good ones'. It seems that the western Judeo-Christian world still needs his Jesus-Jew to take upon himself all the sins, victimized, crucified and resurrected as a purified 'all-good' God, but the comfort in using splitting defences is limited because it is impossible to delineate the evil axis and agree about who are the good ones and who are the bad ones, who is a liar and who is telling the truth.

Grand paradigms, like the free global market in economy and a new Middle-East in politics are collapsing, adding confusion and devastation. The economic crisis which began in the US and became global might be just a minor consequence of the fallacy of regulation. Madoff (a Jew) is not the one responsible for the collapse – he is only one among other symbols of sins and vices of 'the good ones' – the Ponzi Pyramid fraud of the western financial world and its disguised abuse of the weak ones.

Globalization might explode and bring to collapse – people need to be grounded, and war is a disastrous way to come back to touch with the basics of life – blood, man and earth (in Hebrew: dam, adam, adama).

The increasing fear of the war is the fear of confronting the shadow within us all: finding that the Devil and God are both living inside Man. War is a cruel way of transformation from the schizoid-paranoid (split) position to the depressive position.

Taking full responsibility is not by finding a victim to blame, but by painfully acknowledging the effects of globalization on the weaker parts of the world and by building systems and procedures of regulation to guard and manage the world resources and well balance their distribution among the world's nations and citizens.

Hypothesis: Following crisis and collapse in grand paradigms, which had been considered unshakeable until recently, people losing their trust and feelings of safety and regressing to a combative paranoid position. There is fear of local wars and of more war, as a reset – last resource to be grounded in actual reality, regain the depressive position and with it the power to freely fantasize and reflect.

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