

**"Spain and the World
at the Dawn of 2007"
Report of a Listening Post
held on 11th January**



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

Part 1. SHARING 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. This part was concerned with what might be called 'the stuff of people's everyday lives' that related to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

The group begin talking about the ETA terrorist attack the last 30th December, in the terminal 4 in Barajas airport. One of the participants listened to the explosion in his house, and it gave him the feeling of a deep sadness, although he was very pessimistic with ETA's announcement last year of its end of violence. There was a hope of peace but with this terrorist attack all that hope has disappeared. We have this problem since 40 years ago. But what we can see is that terrorism is a global problem which affects to a lot of people.

In England the terrorism attack's notice wasn't shocking, because they were giving more attention to Indonesia's attack. This is Spanish' local problem, and don't have the same importance at other levels of the world. But the Islamic terrorism is very important. This is a Spanish problem but it has died foreign people, so it is extended to other countries. But there is a difference because dead people were South American. If the dead persons were British or American, the terrorist attack has had more significance.

They think about the origin of the dead persons. There are different "types of dead people" and different "types of citizens".

People don't used to call things by their name because it bother; what people used to do is to change the name of the things or situations, or maybe we delude ourselves or people deceive us. It seems that things are good or bad depending on the moment we are. There are a lot of truths of the same situation, and at the end it generates paranoia or lack of criticism. Some times people don't have "critical spirit" but accept everything. There is a manipulation from the mass media. Depending on the newspaper, or TV, or friends group you are listening, you could see the reality on one way or another.

What ETA said last months was a lie, but lies are in politics and in all the society. There is political corruption, but then they say they haven't done anything.

There are a lot of things that happen in our society, but at the end we have very small capacity of being shocked about all those things: Air Madrid problems, social fractures The "Estatut" (Catalan statute) was celebrated like a very good success because it was approved by 25% of the Catalan people. Irak problems, Iran's threats our citizen mobilization capacity has been reduced a lot.

There is a part of the society which is not involved, and the example is that some of the people who were going to come here today haven't come. There is no commitment or involvement, the indifference is what predominates.

Another subject is the immigration, and how this affects to the country, because new groups and political parties arise which are formed only by immigrant people who can govern in some towns in the future. The problem is that there is no immigration politics, and the risk is that racism arises like in France.

The last New Year's Eve appeared 480 burnt cars in France. Nobody talked about it because this is normal or local, and the newspapers didn't tell anything about it. There is another notice in France about "Mr. Quixote's sons", who remembers us the housing problem we have in Spain; that is a group of people who demonstrate camping with tents in the streets. But at the end that people is also manipulated by politicians, because they are going to have elections.

In Madrid there was a demonstration against high prices of housing, but people wasn't involved because the reality is they want the system continues like this. It was really infuriating because there was a small group shouting out of context and out of a negotiable reality. About the "peace process" with ETA, people feels very sceptical because it's impossible to negotiate with people who threat you with guns. And also there is 11-M shade.

There is a positive part in these reflections, and this is basketball. Spain won and people were supporting the basketball team. But the media wasn't talking about basketball until Spanish team was in the final. The media also haven't talked too much about the expansion of European Union. Now we are poorer than before. Almunia (the only Spanish European commissioner) admitted in a small meeting that European Constitution has been a failure. We are 25 countries without any union, we only have in common the euro, but this doesn't worry. But on the other hand, the European integration is positive. There is another problem with Turkey, which is between Occident and Orient. Iran cut the gas to Turkey as a form of pressure because doesn't want it to get closer to occidental world. Rumania and Yugoslavia have been integrated in the European Union, and this is positive, but on the other hand, it's difficult for them to adapt to the new situation, because they have money problems. There are many people who emigrate to other countries and now they send money to their families, and this produces growth.

There are 8 biggest Galician companies which have gone to Portugal or East Countries because costs are lower. It costs less to pay workers. Politicians doesn't take care of our country's needs, and for that reason we are going to stop being competitive. The system isn't sustainable, so we have to look for a change. Students leave Spain because they don't see future here. We consume energy which is going to finish, and nobody look for alternative sources of energy. Our resources aren't sustainable but limited. And also is the climatic change problem. There are lack of solidarity and egoism.

There are two types of people: who tries to look for security and who tries to find freedom. People who try to find freedom are based on common sense. People who try to look for security, at the end, they don't have common sense, and want politicians to manage our fears. That is the reason to emerge the limitations that government impose us: we can't eat fresh fish in restaurants, or smoking, or eat hamburgers, or we have a lot of controls in airports and planes we are totally controlled in our life, we don't have privacy. And also they frighten people to adapt to the society rules, so you don't have election. An example is when someone wants to have a baby with other different

method, and all the environment, beginning by doctors, say that is a crazy idea, and began to frighten you.

The Church was which controlled all those kinds of things before, but now is the State. It seems to be fighting between them to have the power: there are a lot of problems with them in the schools Politicians talk like priests, indoctrinating ("don't smoke, don't eat hamburgers"). The Governments put rules to benefit people, and make new rules if it emerges new things. It has emerged anisakis problem and that's the reason for the rule to not to eat fresh fish in restaurants. It is striking that anisakis appears when there are more and more Japanese restaurants, and the doubt is if anisakis has existed always. Politicians devote their selves to manage our fears.

Citizens sometimes move but don't achieve anything, like it happened with demonstrations against Irak's war. The 11-M changed the politics in Spain. However recently people are saying the following: "ZP (Zapatero, Spain's president) you came in through Atocha (Madrid train's station where was the Islamic terrorist attack) but you will go out through Barajas (Madrid's airport, where ETA terrorist attack)". When there is a new phenomenon which affects our security, we change the government.

We are consumers with different classes. The consumption society has positive and negative aspects: the competitiveness fall down prices and this allows people to take more products which are good for everybody. It has to be a balance between positive and negative aspects. The education is the way to achieve the balance between consumption and responsibility.

The new driving licence in Spain by points has obtained 300 young dead people less than the year before. But this has another contrast because now there are less organ donations of traffic accidents, so there are more dead people because they were waiting transplants. On one way new radar in roads are control, and they are good, but the problem is that there are a lot of radars which aren't where the accidents take place, but they used them to earn money.

Society tries to find the perfect citizen (don't eat, don't smoke, and don't drive too fast) but at the end we all are going to be older and there won't be retirement pensions. Another shocking notice of this year was the massive arrival of boats from Africa to Canary Islands. In Spain we take in immigration later than in other European countries because we needed later People try to look for private education for Spanish children because they don't want to mix with immigrants children. But there is also another reason, and it is because public schools and nursery schools don't admit people who exceed annual income. There are public benefits but people can't access to them, but the immigrants can. At the end what is happening is that there are ghettos. In Leicester it is said that maybe in 5 years there will be more Indian than English people.

Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1.

1. Education
2. Manipulation of institutions which hold effective control
3. Emigration/ Racism

4. Global and Local Terrorism
5. Corruption

Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In this part of the Listening Post the members were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and, developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here the members were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world. Their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

Analysis and Hypothesis 1

education

Analysis:

It generates feelings of falseness, impotence, anger, fury, frustration because it has more importance than normally people gives, and nobody do anything. We have a consumer society which doesn't works with the human part, or education of values and communication, and this generates a lot of sadness. Some years ago the Education was based on the transmission of values, and now it's different. It has decreased one kind of values and has increased other kinds like consumerism. We can also associate to the Education other concepts: hounding, mistreatment, nobody is going to take care of my son, frightened of don't know what kind of place we are sending our child, frightened of everything instead of hope for learning. The responsibility of the Education is placed on the System instead of placed on us. It is important to know how to influence in the Education and don't delegate it to the System. People delegate Education because we have a very competitive society which doesn't let time for family, and educate a child mean a commitment with your son. The global control system of the society is repeated by parents with their children; parents want to know where are and what are their children doing every moment for security.

Hypothesis:

Because of the lack of values in Education, the members of society feel sad, anger, impotent and frustrated; as a result people don't work the human part or family values and they use the control to manage their children and the education is delegated to the System. The System, at the same time, feels frustrated and impotent for working values and the human part, and the result is that education is transformed in exerting a lot of control on children.

Analysis and Hypothesis 2

manipulation of institutions which hold effective control

Analysis:

It generates feelings of anger and fury, and the consequence is that some people get only little information or being asocial citizen. It also generates feelings of sadness because we need to find something that makes a deep analysis about something. And at

the end there is ambivalence between anger and want to know or know how to differentiate to avoid manipulation. There is a manipulation to increase consume constantly. It has two parts but it is only used the negative part to catch you. There is a feeling that you don't know how those institutions manipulate you because you can also watch on TV, as last week, how they manipulate you using your emotions to buy more things. But if you are aware of that you leave. If you are conscious you can rehabilitate. We lose discernment, personal values and human relations.

Hypothesis:

Because of manipulation of institutions which hold effective control, the members of the society have feelings of anger, fury and sadness; the result is that ambivalence is generated. The ambivalence is between don't want to know what is happening outside and therefore you have to transform yourself into asocial citizen, and the desire of wanting to know and you have to take the risk of those institutions manipulates you or maybe you can differentiate to have discernment and personal values.

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