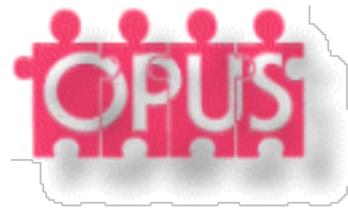


## AN ORGANISATION FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY (OPUS)

### Turkey and the World at the Dawn of 2015 Report of a New Year's Listening Post



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 Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. From several presented these have been drawn together under the following interrelated themes:

##### **Themes:**

##### **1-Multiple appearances of Death and the 'So What' attitude; The test of Muslims with Death;**

The Terrorist attacks done by immigrants to Europe's most symbolic city is perceived as very bold, brave action. There are many participants, both man and woman, from different European countries who participate to terrorist group called ISIS. It seems that it is a reflection of people's anger who doesn't feel integrated to Europe's values. Every day on media we watch, hear news about different kind of deaths.

'Death does not surprise me at all anymore. Death, began to be expressed in the numbers, death began to turn, to transform into numbers. Children, who are watching movies from televisions or internet, began to think death as a real. I'm watching the evening news and it says that 12 people were killed. I say 'so what'. Social events appear all over the world. Death does not sound too different to me now.'

It is thought-provoking that why deaths, most of the wars are happening in Muslim world and how Muslims are associated with death.

During the European medieval Christianity has a very bad period and Christianity did the revolution during 14.th and 15.th century. Our religion is now 1400 years old. After this dark period, like Christianity, Islam also will experience his own enlightenment and revolution. Every bad is for good.

Paris, Sivas, Istanbul, Kobani is heartrending. Why deaths happening? We have no respect for human's life. No one can blame me because I'm black or I'm white. We do not tolerate each other. What happen if we accept each other as alphabet?

## **2-Rapid change and difficulty in finding meaning; dreaming and feeling of letting go...;**

A lot of things happen. Everything is changing. We started to react to everything. 11 years in the management and administration of the government, common discourses are changing and it is not possible to follow which ones are changing which ones are stable. We do not care anymore. I live in Turkey. Many times I found myself while I am dreaming that I am living in another country. I am with the feeling of letting go. That's my first time while I found myself questioning whether I want to live in this country or not. There are different lives elsewhere in the world. Everyone is very reactive. Most people are in trouble by thinking, how do I save the day. No one is interested with the other one. Everyone is for his own.

## **3- Prejudices, toxicity, insecurity, shell replacement, polarization; Why do not we come together as citizens? How we can get close to all differences using the power of love and being loved?**

Prejudices, stereotypes are very common; everywhere you can feel toxicity, toxicity of negativity. Global movements, situation of the world is very anxious. There are feelings of insecurity among people. The place that we are inside now is the centre of the social movements. In Kadikoy, social events happens every day in this area. But it is not the same in other cities, in provinces participation to social events is not as common as here. When you look at another countries, in Spain for example, in every city you can see sensitive citizens who are participating to social events.

Polarization is everywhere; everyone had its own side. When I witness all this, I want to say ' It is enough, itttt issss eeeenouggggghhh'. When I go out, when I am searching on the streets and watch and listen what people are talking about, I did not hear anyone, who says that he/she loves the government. I am amazed how they can get so many votes. We're changing the shell.

This period will also end. The last representative of this period will be the

government. Moreover, using religious discourse, representatives of government constitute the greatest distrust of religion.

Why do not we come together as citizens? Some of us as rightist or leftists, some of us who are secularist or atheist or religious ones. Is not it possible to get close with love and affection. Human love must be at the forefront. But how is it possible to love while you are full with hate?

Ignorance, prejudices which are at the forefront in this environment, I want to say 'It is enough' and I want to fight against them. I want to fight against injustice, against illiteracy. As if ignorance is all around in the air we breathe, as if ignorance is a part of us.

#### **4- Everything's starting to look like each other and homogenization;**

Everything is starting to resemble each other. There is homogenisation. The city does not sound appealing to countryside. As if, there is a single dominant language, such as English. He rules over all things. Globalization has a homogenisation impact on locality. There are bad urbanization, filled with construction everywhere. Something similar is happening in countries like ours. We have environmental problems, distorted urbanization gives much damage to the environment. Rivers are drying up, natural life is in danger.

#### **5- What does the meaning of ' I am a Turk? Why do we explain everything with 'cunning/stratagem'?; identity confusion, feelings of inferiority, self-shame, dislike, loss of self-confidence, 'foreign' adoration;**

Being in Turkey, living in Turkey, what does it mean being a Turk. Like everything which begin to lose its meaning, to be a Turk, to be proud of your national identity and love your national identity, begins to be understood as fascism and nationalism. And this positive feeling leaves its place to the feeling which is explained with 'cunning'. As if we want to do everything under the cover of a stratagem. Why we try to explained everything with cunning/stratagem.

We are a country who turns his face to West. Our weakness is to be very cunning.

To be crafty means, to be like a fox who is waiting for its prey. Beastly feeling.

To be crafty also is associated with inability of institutionalisation. This is not only our country, there are also other countries. French companies also appears in the media with issues related with how crafty they are.

However, there are differences between us in the perception of ourselves.

As if, we have confidence that is relating with ignorance. We say yes to

everything, we say 'we can did everything' without questioning. As a Turkish nation, we have feelings of inferiority, we do not like ourselves. But if it is related with 'foreigners', it is not the same. While our interest towards foreigners, our visible respect towards them was infinite, the subject is reversed when it is just ourselves. But, this begin to change in recent decades.

When we start to develop business and social relationships with different countries, our perceptions begin to change rapidly. We witness that the 'foreigners' are not different from us, they also have weaknesses and strengths, we begin to exchange different experiences. During this processes, we began to meet under the same roof. We began to know each other, with positive and negative parts. This process helps us to see ourselves from different perspective, which is more human centred. Our inferiority complex started to decrease.

### **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. The resulting analysis has been distilled into the following two interrelated hypotheses:

#### **1; Feeling of losing the 'skin' at individual,organisational and national level**

As Turkish person, it begins to be much impossible being a world citizen at the same time. Common views are like that; ' When I go abroad, I feel unaccepted with my passport, with my name. Just because it is from Eastern(?)country and my name sounds different. East is associated with barbarians, with terrorism, West with humanitarians. East is conservative West is open minded. To be Eastern means to begin 1-0 behind. Being from East is something that you are ashamed, being from West is a value that you are proud of being a part. Why are these splitting? I am ashamed of being in this situation. I don't want to be part of this splitting. It is very meaningless. I was born in a city which is in eastern Anatolia. Now I am living in west of Turkey, in the city which symbolizes western values and modernity. So what? I feel very comfortable with my both parts, eastern and western, and I feel myself cosmopolite. Identity has no jury. ''

'We have lost respect for the Sacred. There are attacks on religion, on Atatürk. I'm struggling with finding meaning in this environment. My

belief is decreased. The truths that we are grown for many years and centuries, one day, you learn that all this constructed truths are not truths. You are shocked. You begin to ask, common what is happening here, all these years, the truths are not truths yet, you feel naked, I feel like I raped. I feel deceived. '

As a country, we are in a state, where we shifted from West more to Middle East. Geopolitical situation, in-between-ness, rapidly changes that are happening in a daily basis, makes us to questioning our 'skin'. Many citizens are witnessing that they are losing their skin; individual skin, organisational skin and national skin. This feeling of losing the 'skin' makes citizens to feel themselves loosing boundaries, helpless, without protection, without sense of boundary. Being without a 'skin' opens door to toxicity where it is not possible to care and protect your health( individual, organisational, national)and cells.

## **2: Searching for a meaning, for love and for life; deepest need for digesting, longing for lovingly breastfeeding**

'I was not born in Turkey, I was born in Serbia, in a religious family and my mother nursed me with disgust. They said, 'their religion is different from ours, they are infidel, that is Serbian, they are different from us, he/she is the enemy. For me this is breastfeeding with hate.' When I was 45, I understand very deeply that this internalized hate, has given me a lot of harm. I was 25 years old when I went to the West. I lived there for 45 years. There is a tolerance and humanism in Western culture. I was born in Serbia, I lived there until I was 14 years. We immigrated in Turkey and I lived there until I was 25 years old. Then I immigrated to Western country. I learned to hate in our geography, I also immigrated from one geographical hate to another one, from Serbia to Turkey. Anatolia's name in the mythology is 'Small Asia'. The historical importance of Small Asia is, internalized tolerance, internalized love. But, look what is the situation nowadays. Opposite of its meaning. I am ashamed.'

'I'm not happy. I'm struggling to find meaning in what I do, I'm doing with 'as if..' feeling. I feel constantly tense. When I do wrong-don't matter what- I feel rejected from my family, colleagues or friends. As a result of this, I'm angry, I'm afraid to do wrong. I need to be as others want me to be. This makes me very tired.

On the streets, in the media, in home or work environment usually we are dealing something about the death. Death in traffic, deaths as a result of violence, deaths in Russia, in Middle east, terror deaths. Now, death turns into the figures, numbers and pictures. Every death hurts, and different kind of deaths have different reactions, but now, it seems as if every death is the same, without colour, and happens very quick. No time to understand, because you have to stop if you want to understand. But it is not possible when you are running.

We live by chance, while some communities are dying by chance. East live incidentally, West dye incidentally. Here people died in traffic by chance, while in some places people in traffic are living without accident.'

'I say, How can I improve it, what should I do? I'm trying to write something of my own and I am crying. Inside of me is crying also. We live with death by chance. '

**Convener: Muzaffer Mustafa**