Discovering the Virus of Dehumanization beyond the Multiple-Causation Approach

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1. The approach is the message

The main purpose of this paper is to call scholars and students of inter-group conflict to look beyond the Multiple-Causation Approach in order to gain perspective of the Direct Cause of wars and prejudices. By the Direct Cause is meant what the perpetrators and the supporters of even the most horrendous acts of socially organized violence and inter-group hatred believe and say to justify their behavior and their faith in it. My point to be made is, that while the Multiple-Causation approach has been very helpful in identifying, describing and explaining all existing, possible, and not yet discovered, sources of psychodynamic and socio-cultural factors that influence people who hate, discriminate, kill and murder; it could contain a fatal methodological error, that of ignoring or blurring the difference between direct-physical and indirect influencing causes.

The Direct Causation Approach is Person-Centered. It leads one directly to ask and then investigate in research the following question:

> *"How exactly does it happen that normal human beings, all endowed with a conscience, an awareness of their individual responsibility for their judgment and choice of truth over untruth, reason over irrationality, justice over injustice and morality over sin, – manage to justify in their own eyes even the most inhuman atrocities and acts of self and others mass-destruction, without running into intolerable Cognitive Dissonance with their own supreme values?"*

There is nothing more I wish than that scholars, better qualified and positioned that me, take up research of that question. I also present here my personal road to the Direct Approach and my research findings. They include a discovery that I believe could be that "breakthrough" the field is wishing for without much confidence it will be made in the near future. I see it as a natural outgrowth of the approach; anyone with a psychological frame of mind could discover it, if only he or she focused on what *directly* makes people feel and act inhumanly, consciously and in good faith. That would require listening carefully and noticing the patterns of what fanatics of conflict say and what they neglect to say about themselves and their enemies, the "Others".

2. One man's road to the Direct Causation Person-Centered approach

In the hope of narrowing the gap of estrangement I have been feeling with colleagues in the field ever since I took the Direct Causation approach, I shall briefly relate the incident that put me on that path; it would also help illustrate the approach and explain my feeling of urgency in advocating it. One afternoon in 1970, on the Syrian frontline, after it was already all quiet, I found myself in one brief moment the only one alive, one of six, whose body parts were all over me. I felt I would not be able to go on living without understanding, *really* understanding, "why wars?" and why what happened to me and my buddies took place as it did. I got over the trauma when the Real cause of wars presented itself in my mind and I never doubted it since. The direct cause of what happened to us was that the Syrian gunner on the other side wanted to hit his target, and aimed well. Had he not wanted to do that, he would not have done so. The direct cause of the violence that is war is warriors, people, those who fight as well all those who give orders and those who support them. And why we should consider this the REAL cause with a capital R? – Because living individuals are the only links in the chain of causation beginning in distant past, more recent past, historical, geopolitical, economic, and other contexts whereby those contexts influence people to believe they should take part in killing, massacres, genocide; or support wars for what they see as good reasons. How exactly could they, on both sides of any front? -- My research work since has been guided by that insight into the Direct Cause of wars.

3. Field survey: from Gordon Allport to James Waller

Beginning my course of learning I studied Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) and became rather attached to it. Recently, after my work was done for some years, I established personal contact with James Waller, the author of a book I had picked up only by its title, so closely it sounded like my own focus of inquiry: *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (2002). Both scholars embraced the Multi-Causation approach, as practically all other political psychologists and theorists in between. I see the authors of those two excellent and comprehensive studies as representing the approach of my present readers, and therefore I shall use their works in order to explicate the relationship of the Direct Causation approach to the mainstream community of scholars in the field.

Allport himself was very emphatic on the subject:

> Are discrimination and prejudice facts of the social structure or of the personality structure? The answer we have given is both. .. And we emphasize once again, as forcefully as possible, that a multiple approach is required. ...help comes from Historical, Sociocultural, and Situational analysis, as well as from analysis in terms of Socialization, Personality Dynamics, Phenomenology, and finally, but not least important, in terms of actual Group Differences. To understand

> prejudice and its conditions the results of investigations at all these levels must be kept in mind... there is no other way. (p.476.)

A closer examination of that seminal volume reveals, that Gordon Allport was defending his psychological perspective against scholars of other disciplines and the prevailing political culture that did not reach to psychology for understanding politically motivated social behavior (they still mostly don't). War and politics were considered the realm of abstract "forces" conditioned by historical geo-political socio-cultural or economic interests. Even ideologies, in the minds of the most eminent scholars at the time, were supposed to *"have an existence independent of any single individual, those existing in particular time result both of historical processes and of contemporary social events"* (Frenkel-Brunswik et. al., 1947). Allport wanted psychology to be included on equal terms in the scope of research and thinking about prejudice and other social diseases. He was very careful not be regarded as biased toward his field. He did not express criticism of any Political Science or Political Philosophy theory, including those that categorically explained this critical aspect of human behavior without any scientific inquiry into it, like Marxism or the popular "human nature" theories. In his rather apologetic argumentation I find enough support for the Direct Causation approach, but as he forwarded it in a defensive context he did not go as far as capitalize on the difference between direct and indirect causation. He claimed "immediate causation", though he definitely realized that without it other factors would remain just abstract constructs, not actual agents of hate, prejudice or organized aggression:

> I believe it is only within the nexus of personality that we find the effective operation of historical, cultural, and economic factors. Unless mores somehow enter the fibre of individual lives they are not effective agents, for it is only *individuals* who can feel antagonism and practice discrimination. Yet "causation is a broad term, and we can (and should) acknowledge long-range sociocultural etiology as well as the immediate causation that lies in attitudes held by the individual. (p.xii)

That could be forwarded as the basic argument for the Direct Causation Person-Centered approach, which of course *does* acknowledge other, indirect sociocultural and geopolitical influences on human behavior. Discussing the historical theory of intergroup conflict, Allport quoted "one historian" who objected the "*recent efforts to establish a purely psychological view of the subject*". That historian, in an article titled '*Prejudice and Capitalist Exlpoitation*', claimed that psychological studies *"are enlightening only within narrow limits. For personality is itself conditioned by social forces; in the last analysis, the search for understanding must reach into the broad social context within which personality is shaped"*. Allport commented:

> While admitting the force of this criticism, we may point out that while history provides "the broad social context" in cannot tell why within this context one personality develops prejudice and another does not. And this is precisely the question that the psychologist most wants to answer. (p. 204)

Allport admitted the force of this criticism, even though he had seen that, as he said above, "only individuals" can actually feel and practice prejudice. He understood society and history as being in reality living individuals, but he could not object at that time to animation of abstract forces that were supposed to condition society, by theorists who explained wars and conflicts as if politics, including war, was not human behavior and nothing but human behavior; or as if real individual persons were not influenced *directly* but what they themselves thought and believed.

Jim Waller, in the 21th century, took the Multiple-Causation approach against the worst cases of inter-group social epidemics, genocide and mass killing. Waller asked the same question that I did, *"How do we explain the extraordinary evil that we perpetrate on each other in the name of our country, race, ethnicity, political party, or god?"* (p. xii). He went straight to the perpetrators and did not evidence any need, like Allport 50 years back, to make allowances for "social forces" or "historical contexts" beyond taking their effects for granted and making his full inventory of them. In that sense, "*the infant science of human conflict*", as Allport called it while he thought it was "*thriving*", seems indeed to be in a better position today.

I would suggest that Waller's work (he agreed that I read him right) can be seen as typifying the limitations of the multiple causation approach. On the one hand he is very Person-Centered, very close to the realization that the cause of wars is warriors, normal human individuals:

> *To offer a psychological explanation for the atrocities committed by perpetrators in not to forgive, justify, or condone their behaviors. There are no "perpetratorless" mass killings or genocides. Perpetrators are not just the hapless victims of human nature of their social context. ...the perpetrators, in willfully failing to exercise their moral judgment, retain full moral and legal accountability for the atrocities they committed. No explanatory model will ever take that away.* (p. 275)

Any research effort is conditioned by the approach one takes, and Waller, as if conditioned by the multiple-causation approach, came out with a comprehensive Explanatory Model of all the "*forces that shape our responses to authority*". His work is kind of super-multiple-causation map of the entire field that includes all influencing factors along all possible parameters, discovered or defined by the best research in the past (even "*we have to determine the specific applicability of the model to female perpetrators of mass killings and genocide*"). He ended up with a very predictable result in application: recommendation that his model be used for future research. Predictable and characteristic of the best and the most conscientious minds in the field is also his recommendation to exercise humility:

> *"Much more research, from wide range of academic disciplines and in both laboratory and real-life setting, is needed to educate us about how to make*

the world of our children a safer place." ..."It is arrogant to believe that any study of extraordinary human evil can offer closure."... While the model offered here gives us a framework within which to continue our investigations, it certainly raises as many questions as it gives definitive answers". ..."We are left with humbling and painful recognition that the persistence of inhumanity in human affairs in incontrovertible"(p. 278).

Thus, 50 years after Allport, the multiple-causation approach is fully exonerated, and we are confirmed in continuing to do more of the same, safely, with just enough hope to sustain us. The reference in Jim's book which touched me most closely was "*I am committed to remain open to a different take on the problem*" -- I can only hope he is not the only one.

4. The Direct Causation approach

1.   The Direct Causation approach suggested here does keep in mind, as Allport postulated, "investigations on all levels", and acknowledges the influence of all multiple factors on inter-group destructive, irrational and prejudiced behavior. Many causes known and assumed, general and personal, surely had influenced the perpetrators of the 9/11 massacre. The Direct Cause, however, of that fully conscious act of terror, was the then present justification of it in the minds of the perpetrators who were ready to die and kill for it. If they had not believed in it they would not have done it.

2. The Direct Causation approach is taken as a matter of course, of common sense, in all scientific and daily practical interventions, when the cause is known to be physical. When a house catches fire or a bridge collapses, weather conditions and history of construction are not ignored, but the naturally assumed cause is whatever occurred, there and then, in its concrete body. If the contagions of prejudice and hatred were visible under a microscope, Direct Causation approach would be applied naturally. The fact that they are not, does not in any way justify a change in approach. Scientific approach, as well as common sense, still demands that if we ever hope to intervene in order to help the condition we must not forget to focus on the closest-to-physical causes that cause the condition directly. The analogy I find most proper is how we should approach computer software programming. Like attitudes and beliefs it is not physical, it cannot be seen (only hardware can), but it is real and it is there and it determines directly how the program works.

2. The Direct Approach taken here follows as closely as possible the methodological example of medical science in general and research of contagious diseases in particular. Researchers of AIDS or cancer, on whose efforts rests our hope that humanity will one day be able to cure those diseases, neither rule out nor disregard environmental, cultural, psychological, economic, sexual and other causes that participate in generating the condition. But where would medical science be if they could not focus their microscopes and attention on the physical

agents, the virus and the cancerous cells, that do the actual damage directly to the human body? – It would be exactly where humanity was in the times the Plague was decimating entire populations, germs and viruses were not yet discovered of and life-expectancy in developed countries reached 35. Indirect causes, when known, can be met with measures of isolation, sanitation, good nutrition or hygiene – that is how far the Multiple-Causation approach can go in helping the condition, not farther. This, I submit, is the effect of most well designed counter-prejudice and Peace Education projects. However, once the disease strikes a living person, healing must involve interest in the direct-physical causes that affect the person within.

4.   In taking the Direct Causation approach I see the parameters of hope and humility in that context.

5. The line of research

The population of subjects was persons speaking their minds about the conflict. They were leaders, journalists, writers, common people – voices raised in national discourse about the conflict between WE, the in-group, and THEM, our enemies, in my country that has been in a state of no-peace for about 100 years now. As evidence of conflict-oriented behavior were chosen expressions in line with the general pattern "WE GOOD/RIGHT THEM WRONG/GUILTY", any unqualified expression that generally affirmed the truth of what one of the first anthropologists (Sumner, 1906) had described as "*each tribe nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders*"; the national media here are often referred to as "The tribal bonfire". Evidence abounded in all open media sources. Findings were later compared to such sources in other arenas of war and conflict, past and present.

Within the organism, direct causation of fanatical thinking and behavior was naturally assumed to take place in the cognitive orientation system applied to reality of inter-group conflict, the organ Allport referred to in more general term as "personality", the site of beliefs and attitudes. More specifically, it is the conscious part of the mind, the terrain of cognitive psychology. I conceptualized it in terms of General Semantics (Korzybski, 1933; Hayakawa, 1972; Johnson, 1972), as the conceptual Map by which humans are guided in their orientation in the real world, the Territory. The much neglected today theory of General Semantics is the science of human orientation, the psychology of conscious thinking processes that participate in orientation and in navigating our ways in life. It postulates that the inherent difference between Map and Territory, symbols and things, defines human condition and explains, in source, normal orientation errors. The most fundamental errors are over-abstraction by identification of Word and Thing. Things in reality are concrete and individually different; words can only symbolize some aspects of the real Thing, but we often *identify* words with the things they symbolize, including those words that stand for limitless categories. The second fundamental error is inability to grasp change by

identification of Things or events that occurred in different times with the same symbolic labels. I could readily conceptualize prejudice as erroneous identification of individuals with words that symbolize a whole category of different people. The fanatical orientation Map, "WE (ALWAYS) GOOD THEM (ALWAYS) BAD", is also such fundamental error, since "WE" and "THEM" are abstract categories, and the relationship "WE RIGHT THEM WRONG" is not subject to change with time. In "The Nature of Prejudice" I could detect sure signs that Gordon Allport was familiar with General Semantics in a positive way, for example, in his writing about categorization, "*the most common trick of the human mind*", or when he mentioned that even young children "*can learn that Foreigner 1 is not Foreigner 2* (p. 474).

Allport wrote, that "*without knowledge of the roots of hostility we cannot hope to employ our intelligence effectively in controlling its destructiveness*" (p.xi). In General Semantics I had found the needed confirmation that in focusing on the orientation system of the mind I was approaching the very roots of the human condition that war is such an integral part of it. Symbolization, using symbolic-conceptual cognitive "maps" for orientation and navigation in the world, defines humanness, enables thinking, identity and identification, self awareness, and awareness of time. It stands between us and our direct experience and makes us, alone among all creatures, live in two worlds not just one: the real world of "Things" including living individuals and ourselves – and the virtual world we create by using symbols of language we acquire from our group. We are therefore in constant danger of misrepresenting the real world by our conceptual constructs of it and "misrelating" (Waller's term) to other humans by identifying them with some label we symbolically pin on them. Human aggression is nothing like animal aggression, because it is also symbolically perceived and justified. A white dog can never be "inhuman" to a black dog because its behavior, regulated by instinct, is triggered by its senses and focused on the real thing, the other dog in the real world. If the sight, sound, smell, or behavior of the other dog triggers it, it might become unfriendly or violent with that individual dog, but never prejudiced. The animal cannot think by abstract labels like "enemy", qualities such as "black" or categories such as "black dogs". "*But under the influence of badly chosen words, applied without any understanding of their merely symbolic character, we are apt to behave with a fiendishness and an organized stupidity, of which dumb animals (precisely because they are dumb and cannot speak) are blessedly incapable*" (Huxley, 1958).

6. Findings

In evidence of thinking about the conflict I found, first, fixed and recurring patterns of thought and judgment. Not many of them, as could be expected from a thinking system guided by such two-valued, primitive, conceptual map of orientation, as 'WE ALWAYS GOOD/RIGHT THEM ALWAYS WRONG/GUILTY'. Secondly, I found that the language of political conflict includes responses to stimuli coming from different areas of the political

Territory. Accordingly, for the purpose of organizing the symptoms, this theory organizes the expressions about conflict under ten headings: 1. WE, 2. THEM, 3. BLEEDING HEARTS, 4. CAPTIVES, 5. LEADER, 6. DEVIANTS, 7. STRATEGY, 8. OTHER NATIONS, 9. TIME, 10. MORALITY.

The Patterned Beliefs could be symptoms of prejudiced or fanatical orientation. They are the cognitive schemata that "*function as molds that are fit over incoming information*" (Weinberger and McClelland, 1990). If people were computers the Direct Cause of prejudice and fanaticism would be the programming that makes them mold all incoming information into patterns that fit the fantastic, irrational, "WE GOOD THEM BAD" orientation. People however are not computers, and that finding does not solve the problem "How can they?" How do they manage to avoid Cognitive Dissonance with their own supreme values of sanity, truth and justice?

Then, in evidence of how both leaders and common people reason about war and conflict, I came to discovery that for me was shocking and did radically change my understanding. I found that the same people who consistently supported war and conflict and justified our conduct in it, never-ever (*sic!*) evidenced awareness of the most basic, self-evident, human facts. In the 20 years covered in my study not a single person of the political mainstream in my country, and none of their spokespersons and supporters, uttered even a single expression of concern over the moral standing of the Israelis in *decades* of war, in which we were the rulers by force over a vanquished civilian population, with thousands of reported violations of their human rights. I stand firmly by the accuracy of my finding. Our late Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, once said something for which she was criticized as hypocritical. Addressing the Arabs she said, "*Perhaps we could forgive you one day the killing of our sons. But we could never forgive you that you made us kill your sons.*" That expression would be classified as a spontaneous expression of concern over our moral stature; she understood that killing them is not good for our souls. But it was made over 6 years before the 20 years period covered in my study.

Then, there was not a single *spontaneous* expression of sympathy found among the consensual voices in the media for the thousands of innocent Palestinian victims in thousands of war operations. There were of course many instances that the same people who never uttered a spontaneous expression of sympathy or concern claimed that they were very sensitive to the suffering of the Palestinians and very sorry for the collateral damage they suffered because of their terrorists, and although we suffer from their violence far more, their suffering touches our heart. But such expression was evident only in a mood of defensiveness when challenged by others, never spontaneous, whereas we know that "*An important distinction exists between primary or spontaneous moral judgment and the more deliberate activity of moral theorizing*" (Davidson & Youniss, 1991).

In relation to Strategy, not a single expression of awareness of the possibility that less drastic measures of policing the territories may have been, in any one case, more effective than more violent and severe measures; nor that we might benefit from initiating some reconciliation and concession efforts all along maintaining, in principle, "We want peace"; nor that there may be *something* patriotic or at least normal in those of us who are referred to as "Bleeding Hearts", beyond faintheartedness, hypocrisy or treason. That was how I discovered that so many people, by far the majority in any country, have enormous Blind Areas regarding basic human facts of life attached to that WE ALWAYS RIGHT THEM ALWAYS GUILTY principal coordinates of their political orientation.

These are solid facts: in the collective arena of discourse about our war situation during all those years there was no evidence of any spontaneous expression of awareness of basic self-evident human facts of life, regarding all aspects of the conflict reality, including the fact that the people who make up "THEM" are all unique individuals, with their differences, their humanness, their rights; including the possibility of change or the possibility that there is or could be some justice in their stand in the conflict, or that we should be fair to them, which would require measuring our own war behavior and their behavior with the *same* moral yardstick (Patterned Beliefs: "How can you compare?!", "…And what did they do to us?"). The term Dehumanization is exactly descriptive of that mental condition characterized as prejudice and usually referred to as fanaticism. And, in contrast to the common understanding of "dehumanization", it necessarily works both ways: all that could possibly happen to our side because we are human, and that means vulnerable to mistake and sin and becoming evil in our war against them, is swept forever under a Blind Area.

You can readily test my discovery against any conflict-oriented or prejudiced text anywhere. Allport provides a sample of demagogy on page 385 of The Nature of Prejudice, that contains sentences like, *"We have assembled under the banner of Jesus Christ and the banner of our American Republic, the cross and the Flag, to demonstrate to the international financiers of Wall Street, the international Communists of Moscow and the international Jewish terrorists throughout the world, that they have failed."* - You will not find any evidence that the person is aware that he and his followers might be wrong, might hate too much, or might commit sins against their fellow Americans by being too extreme; or that their enemies are individuals, each different and human, and many possessing good qualities like themselves – basic self-evident facts of human reality. The omnipresence of the same Blind Areas in what Allport called "prejudiced personality" has immediate practical value in approaching the prejudiced and the fanatics: It is not what they think and say that is so important in understanding them. **It is what they don't say, don't think, are not even aware of, that matters most**. If they were not mentally blind to significant parts of human reality, they could not be able to maintain their sense of orientation in the political world.

The full informed answer to the question "How people manage to commit politically motivated evil while feeling moral and without running into an intolerable Cognitive Dissonance", is the following: their mental mechanism filters out all evidence that would not fit their cognitive orientation map that spells WE ARE GOOD/RIGHT THEY ARE GUILTY in all circumstances and for all time; evidence that does reach their awareness is molded automatically into fixed Patterned Beliefs, forever confirming their belief that YES, in that instance too we were doing right and it was their fault. Please note that the moral right-wrong distinction is present in the dehumanized/fanatical orientation as much as in mine or yours – and this is so important for estimating chances of a helping intervention. Dehumanization does not obliterate the affected individuals' need for moral self-justification. It only manages, through its deadly effective Blind Areas, to harness it to its needs. Fanatics of conflict are able to take atrocious actions against others and feel good and righteous, only because they have lost sight of their enemies' humanness – and in the process of their own fallible humanness as well.

7. Symptoms and operational definition

Symptoms of dehumanized orientation are the Blind Areas and the corresponding Patterned Beliefs.

A dehumanized personality is someone who over a prolonged period of time spoke of the conflict only in Patterned Beliefs, that is ideas that fit the "WE RIGHT THEM GUILTY" formula, and did not give evidence of awareness of any of the Blind Areas.

8. Analytical and diagnostic tool: The Dehumanization Syndrome

The Theory of Dehumanization organizes the identified Blind Areas and the corresponding Patterned Beliefs into a Dehumanization Syndrome under ten headings, each an aspect of a conflict reality: We, Them, Bleeding Hearts, Deviants, Captives, Leader, Other Nations, Strategy, Morality, Time.

The Dehumanization Syndrome is the tool for analysis of war and conflict-related expression of persons and in written texts.

Technique of analysis: It follows methods of content-analysis (Tetlock, 1993). One unit of analysis is an expression of single meaning, one opinion about any one aspect of the conflict. Applied to individuals over a length of time it serves as the assessment tool of dehumanized personality. Opinions are classified in three categories.

1. Ruling out Dehumanization (those that evidence awareness of reality covered by any Blind Area)

2. Symptomatic of Dehumanization: racist, prejudiced, stereotyped, fascist (see "Morality" for definition of fascist opinions)

3. Could be symptomatic of Dehumanization but could be not ("We have to be strong!")

THE DEHUMANIZATION SYNDROME

WE -- Blind Areas

1. The fact that "WE"(the Nation, the People, the Country, the State) is an abstract term and that in reality only individual human beings exist

2. The dangers of herd-mentality, of **too much** collective identification and too little individual self-identity

3. The possibility of having **too much national pride** and of feeling, unjustifiably, superior to others

4. The possibility WE **might not be right**, or not entirely right, in our conflict with "THEM"

5. **Fear of sinning** with regard to THEM; the possibility that we were in some instances as guilty as THEM or as some OTHER NATIONS, or that we could sin against THEM now or in the future

6. The possibility that WE **lose the war**

WE -- Patterned Beliefs

1. We are better\ superior to others

2. We are brave fighters, patriots

3. The common good is the supreme value, individual good is less valued; war, blood, death, victims, are not just means to secure human life values but values in themselves

4. We are right (always), in victory or in defeat; we are never the aggressors but act in self-defense, take preventive measures, obey God's command, retaliate, etc.

5. We shall be victorious if we stay faithful to our collective values.

THEM -- Blind Areas

1. **Their humanity**; the fact that each one of them is as human a being as each one of us

2. **Their individuality**, the differences between each one of THEM and others

3. The possibility that **THEM could change** and become less belligerent.

4. **Their good qualities** and achievements as a group

5. The possibility that there is, or could be, some justice on **their** side of the conflict with us.

THEM -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **THEY are bad by nature:** savages, animals, idolaters, sub-human, inferior race, inferior culture (snake-eaters, frog-eaters, dog-eaters, pig-eaters, etc.).

2. **Negative stereotypes:** THEM are stupid, dirty, lazy, thieves, cheaters, kidnappers of children, seducers of women, blood-suckers, etc.

3. **THEY are extreme in hating us:** fanatics, nationalistic, fundamentalist, etc.

4. **THEY are the villains:** threaten us, do acts of cruelty and horror, want to conquer us, subjugate us, destroy\annihilate us; take our lands, jobs, women; contaminate us with disease and crime, etc.

5. **THEY understand nothing but force**.   THEY take advantage of our conciliatory moves that THEY interpret as weakness.

BLEEDING HEARTS – Blind Areas

1. The possibility, that the views of "Bleeding Hearts" are legitimate in terms of national interests and that they are sane and decent people **motivated by good intentions**.

2. The possibility, that a more **conciliatory policy towards THEM could be better and a more belligerent policy could be worse** for us.

3. The possibility, that Bleeding Hearts could be **motivated by a genuine patriotic motivation**

4. The possibility that the person him\herself could **sin by neglecting his\her moral duty to prevent injustice/war crimes** against THEM

5. The fact that WE (the nation, the People) and our leaders, (leadership, government, Party), are not the same; and that, therefore, **opposition to the regime is not necessarily a treason against the nation while a support of the regime could be.**

BLEEDING HEARTS -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **Bleeding Hearts support THEM** (traitors, fifth-column, back-stabbers, 'Niggerlovers', etc.).

2. **Bleeding Hearts are villains** (double-standard, hypocrite, wolves in lambskin, deserters, elitists, etc.).

3. **Bleeding Hearts are mentally unhealthy** ("bleeding hearts", naive, stupid, defeatist, cowardly, self-hating, contemptible, with no dignity, leading to national suicide, etc.).

DEVIANTS: WE who commit war-crimes or break the rules fighting against THEM (like in the U.S. Lt.Kelly, Private England, Oliver North) – Blind Areas

1. The crimes as such. Whatever WE do against THEM is not considered a sin, or a crime, or a transgression

2. The danger of our moral corruption by Deviants' actions.

3. One's own moral obligation in defending ourselves against war crimes and in eliminating them should they occur.

DEVIANTS – Patterned Beliefs

1. **They are "deviant":** atypical, abnormal, not a regular part of WE, WE are not guilty of and not responsible for their behavior.

2. **They are essentially good people**, worthy of understanding, compassion, and forgiveness.

3. **Bleeding Hearts are worse than Deviants.**

4. **In prosecuting Deviants we prove how good we are, too good.**

CAPTIVES (slaves, POW's, minorities, civilian population under occupation, etc.) – **Blind Areas**

1. The fact, that Captives are **powerless and oppressed** by us.

2. The dependence of Captives on us and **our particular responsibility as "captors"**.

3. The **suffering** of Captives (information about their suffering is pushed into a Blind Area and immediately forgotten).

4. The **existential or situational suffering** of Captives as a vanquished nation under (for them) foreign rulers.

5. The danger that **WE become morally corrupted** lording by force over the Captives.

CAPTIVES -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **Captives are not oppressed**; they are happy as they are; their life is better than elsewhere or than it had been before they became our captives.

2. **The suffering of the Captives is their own fault** or the fault of someone else, not ours.

3. **WE are the ones who suffer;** their situation is better than ours

LEADER – Blind Areas

1. The **Leader's human limitations**

2. The danger of **personality-cult** (*"On to battlefield for the Motherland, on to battlefield for Stalin"* - Soviet military song).

3. The danger of personal **corruption**, in particular egomania and paranoia, of the Leader.

4. The danger of physical and **psychological exploitation** of the followers by their Leader.

LEADER -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **Great, giant, one and only, father, mother, omniscient, genius, etc**. (expressions of being under the influence of charisma).

2. **Admired, beloved, WE are indebted to him\her**.

3. The Leader is identified with our highest values

4. Opposing the Leader is the worst crime, blasphemy, sacrilege.

5. **The Leader is never wrong** (others are always guilty of our misfortunes, not the LEADER).

6. **Whoever opposes, criticizes, or weakens the Leader weakens us**.

STRATEGY -- Blind Areas

1. The possibility that the **best tactics in certain situations is not using force** or using some other tactics such as giving in or making a reconciliatory gesture (*"THEY understand nothing but force"*).

2. The expected **results of using force:** violence breeds violence and motivation to retaliate; the victims, dangers, suffering, and terrible price of making war.

STRATEGY -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **Only force:** (popular clichés: *"Until they've learned their lesson"*; *"...For they should see and fear"* (Biblical expression about the fear of God), etc.

2. **Not using force is weakness** (THEM interpret it as weakness), stupidity, cowardice.

3. **If force does not help *more* force should be used**.

4. **If force had not helped somebody else is to be blamed, not WE**

OTHER NATIONS -- Blind Areas

1. **The importance of forces and events outside of the arena of conflict**. Significant OTHERS are only those who are perceived as affecting the conflict.

2. The fact that we regard the conflicts and wars of OTHER NATIONS with **the same** blend of neutrality, interest, apathy, and ignorance as OTHER NATIONS regard our conflict (*"The whole world is against us"*).

3. **The possibility of a neutral attitude** or a neutral intervention by OTHER NATIONS in WE-THEM conflict *("good or bad for us?"*).

4. The political and personal **value in keeping normal ties** with OTHER NATIONS that do not support us in our conflict with THEM.

5. **The price** paid in values of freedom of expression, the right of the public to be informed, and democracy in general, **of hiding information about the crimes of our DEVIANTS lest OTHER NATIONS know**.

OTHER NATIONS -- Patterned Beliefs

1. **OTHER NATIONS** ("The World"**) are essentially immoral and unfair**.

2. (When Other Nations criticize some of our positions or sympathize with some positions of THEM:) **OTHER NATIONS are against us, unfair.**

3. (When Other Nations sympathize with our position:) **OTHER NATIONS are "a real friend", moral, fair.**

4. (When Other Nations who were "a real friend" turn to be sympathetic with some positions of THEM rather than with us): Stage A: **Our system of "information" (propaganda) has failed**. Stage B: If the non-sympathetic attitude persists – going back to Patterned Belief No. 2.

MORALITY -- Blind Areas

1. **The moral obligation itself** that is measuring whatever WE do to THEM and whatever THEY do to us with *the same* yardstick.

2. The **danger of sinning** against THEM; the possibility that what WE do unto THEM would be as bad as what THEY do unto us *("...But what did they do to us!")*

3. **The personal duty of moral conduct** in relation to THEM, and the fact that there is no moral judgment other than that of individuals like oneself (*"I only followed orders..."*).

4. **The fact that "Means" and "Goals" exist only as abstract** concepts in our mind and that in reality only individuals like ourselves can justify or not justify anything (**"*The aim justifies the means*"**-- perhaps the deadliest Blind-Area of the 20th century).

5. The possibility that **morality is power**; that behaving morally WE are strengthened and behaving immorally WE are weakened

MORALITY – Patterned Beliefs

1. **All that WE do to THEM in the conflict is moral** (*"Everything is moral which is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat"* - Lenin.)

2. "**An eye for eye**": the same immoral deed of THEM against us becomes moral as retaliation or revenge.

3. **Morality in matters of state is the business of the state, not of the individual**.

4. **There is no morality--should be no morality--in the war with THEM,** only interests of power and survival of the fittest.

5. **Might is Right**.

6. The Aim justifies the Means.

   Note: Patterned Beliefs no. 4 and 5 could serve as objectively defined symptoms of Fascist outlook and personality.

TIME – Blind Areas

1. The fact that **there is change:** WE, THEM, everything else in the war or conflict situation

2. The fact, that **past and future have no meaning other than in the perception and thinking of living people in the present**.

3. The fact, that **history can never "repeat itself"** and that only we are capable of discovering some similarities—more relevant or less relevant—in past and present reality.

TIME – Patterned Beliefs

1. **Time is historical.** Its significance is perceived in terms of the national (or tribal-ancestral) history rather than in terms of human life ("We seek to secure peace for the generations to come...")

2. Events in the present are less significant in their affect on living people**, more significant as moments in history.**

3. **The "WE good\right -- THEM bad\wrong" situation is constant: distant past, past, present, future** ("we have to expect another 100 years of Palestinian terrorism").

4. **No change under the sun; what was good/proper in the past is good/proper in the present.**

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Summary: The Dehumanization Syndrome makes the general psychological condition of war-orientation, fanaticism, prejudice, etc., an operationally definable inventory of symptoms. I wish I shall live to see the day it is included in the DSM.

Blind Areas are not my invention anymore than the human Orientation System is anyone's invention. They are phenomena discovered in human expression and theorized to exist in the inner space of the fanatical and prejudiced personality. The Theory of Dehumanization, by means of the Dehumanization Syndrome, makes the phenomena explicit and operationally definable. I feel that once the existence of Blind Areas and the corresponding Patterned Beliefs becomes known, there could be not reason why persons who seriously inquire into war and conflict, ethnocentrism and prejudice, fanaticism, racism, etc. should ignore them. As an independent researcher I think most specifically of the scientific-academic community – those thousands of people all over the world busy with Political Psychology, Peace Research, or Peace Studies.

9. Personality structure

a. The central role of each Blind Area in avoiding Cognitive Dissonance:

The universal presence of the specified Blind Areas in prejudice orientation attests to their central function in the dehumanized moral orientation system. "*Conceptions of right and justice form an inescapable part of the context of political reasoning*"(Simpson, 1987). That system in its primitive dualistic structure must have components so tightly integrated, that admittance of reality covered by any of the Blind Areas could make the entire structure disintegrate. The reader can follow the logic of the role each Blind Area has in maintaining other components of the Syndrome in place. In my book in Hebrew (Netzer, 2001) I used the following example:

Try to identify\empathize with a person who navigates her or his way by that orientation system\conceptual "map". In all that happens in reality of the conflict he\she must become convinced that WE were right and THEM were wrong, guilty. Try to enter into the frame of mind of such real person you know from personal contact or the media. Now imagine that one day that person is spontaneously stating something like that:

> "It is a pity we cannot lift the security fence we keep for separating the Gaza Strip from Egypt. Having to enclose them like in a ghetto makes them stressed and brings them to blame us for their misery as if we are the cause of it, and makes them hate us more. If we could let them have some breathing space and have economic relations and cooperation with Egypt, they would be better off, less hateful, busier with working for a living and less busy with terror..."

Note that the person does not say the separation fence line should be open, but only regrets that it has to be closed and sees the advantages for us in opening it. It isn't even a political statement, just an expression of sentiment.

But the saying clearly gives evidence of awareness of the Blind Area that covers the possibility that less strict control of THEM could be better for us. The person also gives evidence of awareness that they suffer in the conflict with us. That awareness reveals that the person sees THEM as human beings same as ourselves: if you close them in and make their lives miserable they suffer and hate. If you let them have more freedom and enterprise they'd hate less. However that banal self-evident truth stands in opposition to the fixated "WE GOOD THEM BAD" premise of the orientation system that requires that THEM must be always and only bad. The dehumanized conceptual map demands that the badness and the guilt of THEM would be inherent in THEM; be imbedded in their nature and therefore not amendable by what we do.

That example is no more than words, wishful thinking, but it touches on matters that have a central role in maintaining the dehumanized orientation system operational. If "their" malicious violence against us could be affected by what we do to them, if they could change for the better because of what we could do for them – the dehumanized person would not be able to integrate those ideas with the basis of his or her orientation, mainly that they are always the bad guys and we are the good guys. The very awareness and contemplation of possibilities, conditions, and effects our behavior has on THEM for better or worse, could lead to undermining of the whole orientation system that depends on us being always the good guys and them being the guilty ones. – Such connectedness of each one of the Blind Areas in keeping the entire Orientation System functioning can be easily traced, including of course those areas that cover our own fallible humanness.

b. Motivation: The Dehumanization Theory, I submit, deciphers the political motivation code: our strongest "interest" is not in any physical resource, rational wish, or sub-conscious drive of our nature - but the compelling need to maintain

our orientation system in working order, know that our core beliefs are reasonable and moral. Therefore you feel the vehemence and the aggressiveness of fanatics and bigots, leaders and followers alike, whenever their dehumanized beliefs are challenged.

10. Application in Political analysis and prediction

Using the Dehumanization Syndrome you can identify and point out dehumanized expression in any person's behavior or in any political text past and present. Through identifying in what is being said or written the Patterned Beliefs and Blind Areas of dehumanized orientation, people in our culture could assess war and hate orientation directly in contemporary individuals, whether students, associates, political leaders, anyone including yourselves.

Behavior of leaders diagnosed as dehumanized can be predicted with great accuracy to be in conformity with Patterned Beliefs, including Strategy ("Only force"; "THEY interpret peaceful moves as weakness" etc.). Illusions about "peace process" could be thus avoided, as long as the leaders of both parties in conflict do not evidence awareness of Blind Areas and express opinions that conform to Patterned Beliefs. Until that day, there will be no peace process between Israel and the Palestinians (the only psychologically and humanly possible peace could be enforced peace; dehumanized fanatics are no stupid, they indeed "understand" superior force). On the other hand, I found that even a single spontaneous expression of AWARENESS of reality covered in a Blind Area, by a person, including political leaders, who had previously been diagnosed as politically dehumanized, predicts (with very high probability) a complete turnaround in her or his attitudes about the conflict. If any of the Israeli mainstream politicians uttered such expression of sentiment as in the example above (expressing regret that we cannot employ less drastic measures of control over the Palestinians without even changing his position on the issue), I would be willing to bet 10:1 that something profoundly radical has happened to him (her) and is about to be observed in his politics in the near future. My self-assurance is to be understood by the centrality of each one of the Blind Areas in maintaining the entire Orientation System.

In the 20 years of monitoring the Israeli media such event happened only once. The then Defense Minister Eizer Weizmann made a small headline (not on a front page), saying "*Israelis and Egyptians need to meet person-to-person and get to know each other*". None of the political commentators as much as noticed it, but I could predict that the man would soon come to grief with his political party and its leader Menachem Begin. It happened even sooner than I expected, so if predictability should be the test of theory, the Theory of Dehumanization passed.

11. Application in Education

When children are old enough to learn that there are WE and THEM, wars and heroes and villains, they'd be old enough to learn that there has been Dehumanization. They should become able to identify its symptoms in themselves and in others and be informed well that that is one of the Deadly Sins, the deadliest one by far they must learn to recognize in order to avoid.

The Dehumanization Syndrome can make the danger of it owned rather than projected on the Out-group, identifiable in own language, applicable to any historical, literary or contemporary text analyzed in a classroom. Please go back for a while to Allport's sample of the "Christian Nationalist" (p.385) and imagine the effect on schoolchildren if such texts were regularly analyzed in a History classroom, for awareness of Blind Areas. The teacher would simply have to ask open question, like "*Where do we find here that the speaker warns his listeners against being too extreme in their criticism of their enemies*"; "*Where do you find expression of awareness the THEM are each human individual like himself*", etc. - If Blind Areas are the Direct Cause of any individual prejudice and fanaticism, bringing them to awareness should have the effect of healing. In my limited experience, it changes the perspective of learners about the reality of war and conflict; it humanizes it without entering into political argument. War fanaticism and prejudice cannot exist without the fantastic distortion of human reality only mental blindness can make possible.

The educational impact of this technique is predicted to be very high, in light of the fact that helping persons to become aware of what was hidden by their mental blinders is the cardinal technique in psychological help.

In responding to students who talk of others in Dehumanized, Racist, Ethnocentric or any other prejudiced ways, the teacher can simply point out that the expression conforms to a certain Patterned Belief that the student had learned to recognize in texts, and ask him or her to comment on that fact, thus brining it to the student's awareness. Patterned Beliefs are so far not recognizable in our culture but persons, including young students, who had learned to recognize those specific Patterned Beliefs and Blind Areas would transcend our culture. The effect of that responding technique is likely to be as of specific personal feedback here-and-now, considered to be the most effective tool of personal growth and change.

12. Application in political attitudes change

Empathy: To taste the emotional flavor of dehumanization, the enchantment, enthusiasm, and beauty of living in super-human and sub-human world instead of just in human reality, one may recall one's lost paradise of childhood and adolescence. Then most of us loved and hated our groups and gangs, sports teams, cultural idols, authority figures, heroes, villains, nations, religions, ethnicity, as adult people of dehumanized orientation love their in-group and hate "them". All this must be kept in mind when attempting to deal with them.

To argue with a dehumanized person will be like arguing with a computer programmed to reject the most relevant information. The Dehumanization Theory makes it clear why: Admittance of a fact that does not conform to it could make the entire orientation system disintegrate. The end result of arguing would be fully predictable to come in any of the fixated Patterned Beliefs. But the technique of asking open questions about realities covered in Blind Areas circumvents resistance, touches the missing true substance in one's beliefs, and helps people to admit human reality into their cognitive representations. I found it to be the most effective technique for helping undermine the dehumanized self-justification system.

Prognosis

How many people in the world will benefit if, beginning at the age of identity-forming, Dehumanization were integrated into the education system and children be educated to become aware of Blind Areas and able to identify Patterned Beliefs in their own thinking and the expression of others? What will be the effect of national cultures in which a critical mass of people is practically humanized, informed of Blind Areas and able to recognize Pattern Beliefs? To what extent would war be regarded as an option for resolving conflicts in a society well informed and used to detect the characteristic Blind Areas and Patterned Beliefs of dehumanized irrationality? - For now I can only claim, that if this mapping of the organic inner structure and function of Dehumanized orientation is correct - bringing it to the cultural awareness will make a significant difference.

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