

### **Documents from the front line**

This section, an ongoing feature of the journal, is intended to include material of a non-academic, practical and immediate nature, representing ongoing psychopolitical process – including manifestos, course handouts, leaflets, petitions, round-robins and ephemera of all kinds. All contributions will be gratefully received.

## **A Letter**

ASAF ROLEF BEN-SHAHAR, Jerusalem

I am an Israeli. I've been living in the UK for the last ten years, and I have just moved back to Israel this summer. Crap timing, I know.

And I am an angry Israeli!

I am angry with Palestine and Palestinians, for perpetuating their victimhood and trauma and allowing for extreme violent sects to terrorise themselves and others, with their acceptance and embracing of violent means of protest, that include suicide explosions, non-selective missile shooting into civilian areas and instilling fear and hatred in the name of Islam in their children.

I am angry with Israel and Israelis for not seeing that we are no longer victims, but have become abusers and perpetrators; for not seeing how we are still blinded by our traumatised past and react – like any PTSD victim, from an underlying distorted perception of urgency; that the fact we understand war to be the only way out of this horrible situation results from generations of dissociation, of being hunted and shamed and de-humanised. I am angry that we fail to see that we are now doing the same, creating a nation that is dissociated, hunted, shamed and dehumanised, that we fail to see that we are the Palestinians, that they are us.

I am angry with America and Americans for supporting Israel, for perpetuating the reign of fear, since terror and fear are comfortable means for exercising non-democratic power in a democratic nation; for creating a dichotomic and simplistic split of 'evil' and 'justice' and deciding that the Hamas are the bad guys and us, Israelis are the good guys. I am angry that the US policies have contributed to the creation of power struggles and traumas by liaising with one side, or with the other, as ways of gaining control and financial upper hand, and without the understanding that any such long-term humiliation, investment in hatred, conflict and war that aims to destroy and shame another nation, is bound to hit back – not only by the others, but also in the corrosion of our own soul; I am angry that the American collective psyche has been corroded for so long.

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And I am angry with you, Europeans, British. Faced with a choice of recognising this conflict as human, as a result of shared – transgenerational trauma, as recognising yourself in it (we are Israel, we are the Hamas); you act no different to America. Yes, you do ‘choose’ a different party, and support the weaker ones, but are still choosing sides instead of realising the recursive relationship here. This is a troubled family. The two brothers are hitting each other, not because one is inherently evil and the other is a victim, but because both have been exposed to – and exposing the other to – ongoing trauma. Punishing the other (as the media here does) is missing the point. When a family expresses severely disorganised patterns of attachment, what is called for is a slow, non-violent, external intervention aimed to rebuild secure attachment to all its members.

I am asking you to practice a more humanistic, mature response and love us both. Love the disturbed nation of the Palestinians, with its violent sides; love us Israelis and help us be more mindful of how our traumas result in our traumatising others. Love us love that does not precludes hate, but when you hate us, keep connected to us. Love us despite of our violence, despite of our behaviours – love us because you too, historically, have been both victims and abusers, and you should know better than choosing sides. You should know by now that healing comes through relationships, through cultivating attachment; not through shaming and disconnected hate. Only when you can recognise both Israel and Palestine inside of you (not just the convenient weaker side) would we stand a chance for an intervention that might lead to cease-fire, to licking of the wounds and then, maybe, within a few generations of non-violent communication, to peace.