

# 'The Mental Preparation for the Disengagement'

## And its Aftermath in the IDF

Preliminary Report

Abstract

Sivan 5768

June 2008

Translated: August 2008

**Mental Preparation Investigation Team**

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הפעלת כוח - מהו כוח סביר

מותר להפעיל כוח רק לאחר שמוצו פעולות כריזה, הידברות ושכנוע וברור שההתנגדות נמשכת או מחמירה.

הפעלת סמכות וכוח תהיה אך ורק לצורך השלמת המשימה ובמידה הנדרשת בלבד, בהתאם לרמת ההתנגדות, ולא מעבר לכך (פרופורציונלית).

הפעלת כוח פיזי תהיה כתגובה לפעולה או סירוב מצד המתפנים, אך לא ביוזמת המפנים.

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מפת שיעור

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חזור

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## Abstract

"Our point of departure is that in principle removing a person from his dwelling place and forcibly moving him someplace else causes serious harm to his self-respect, his freedom, and his possessions. A person's home is not only a roof over his head, it is the means for establishing the physical and social position of a person, his private life and his social relationships. A number of a person's basic human rights are harmed when he is forcibly removed from his home and moved to another place, even if such a move does not involve crossing an international border."

Judge Aharon Barak, ruling in the Ajuri case 7015/02, rejecting the forced move of terrorists from Nablus to Gaza.

The main mystery that concerned us in writing this report was: how were tens of thousands of IDF soldiers brought to a state where they would march in tandem, look at the surroundings with the frozen stare of a robot, and throw family after family from their homes and their secure lives? And, as it were, they did this with "sensitivity and determination."

The expulsion of Jews from twenty-one settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern Shomron, and the transformation of these settlements into piles of destruction, was a calamity for those who were expelled, a blow for those faithful to the return to Zion, and a national trauma for Israel and the entire Jewish nation. This was true in the past, it is true now, and it will be true in the future. Suddenly, without any apparent reason, a leader who was elected under a banner stating that "the status of Netzarim is the same as that of Tel Aviv" decided to change course and begin a race towards self-destruction. This was destruction of Zionism, Israeli security, personal rights, and the rebuilding of the nation and the land, and not only Netzarim. It was a track leading to uncompromising treachery towards the best people, those who had rebuilt the land and who were the most magnificent people in Israel. It would be reminiscent of Nero and the burning of Rome. And the entire system fell in line. The entire IDF was drafted into the project and fulfilled its role, with "sensitivity and determination."

Anybody who saw the march of the soldiers into Gush Katif in their black uniforms, with the symbols of the country on their shirts and their hats, in teams together with the police and the soldiers at roadblocks, who together pursued the best of the youth of the country – as "infiltrators" and "illegal persons"; anybody who heard IDF generals declare that "**the people in 'orange' are more dangerous than the Hizbullah**" – must wonder how this amazing feat was accomplished. How was the IDF transformed into an army of expulsion? How did the officers and the soldiers become so insensitive?

The perplexity increased after the Second Lebanon War: a scant ten months after the "Disengagement" – a clockwork operation, the most precise mission ever carried out by the IDF – the army failed miserably in the Second Lebanon War. Is this a matter of bad luck? Is it only by chance that before the ink dried on the albums glorifying the expulsion a failure came about in a real case – a war against an external enemy? The "Disengagement" was a precision operation carried out in seven concentric circles (security levels) by an army which had been transformed into a "guardian of peace" during eighteen

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months of glorious mental preparation. How could it be that this army wasn't able to vanquish 3000 well-entrenched terrorists who spewed out their Katusha rockets, as it had previously been able to overcome the "salt of the earth" in Gush Katif? Was this a chance occurrence?

The answer is that there was no chance involved, the performance in the war was an inevitable consequence of the earlier operation. For the mental preparation that allowed the expulsion to run like clockwork is the same mechanism that destroyed the IDF's capability to fight. This is especially true among the commanders of the IDF. But since this truth and this causal link are so clear, and the results are so definite, and this linkage was so obvious – especially among the IDF officers who warned about it in advance – the question is stronger still: why were these military commanders quiet? How and when did they change their spots?

This is the question which spawned the current research – a study of the *Mental Preparation for the Disengagement Mission* which the soldiers and officers of the IDF went through, and of the results of the process. The main goal of this study is to reveal the facts.

The "Disengagement" appeared on the national scene as a complete surprise on December 18, 2003, at the Herzliya Conference. There Ariel Sharon first revealed his plan to evacuate the Jews of Gush Katif and the settlements in northern Shomron from their homes. Why? Just because! This was a mere seven months after Sharon had forced his government to accept the American "Road Map," in spite of the fact that one-sided expulsion went against the principles of that plan. At the same time, a leftist smokescreen was cast into the atmosphere: this action will increase Israel's security and lower the friction with the Arabs of the Gaza area, because Israel will be completely disassociated from them. Two months later the message was crystallized further in an interview with Yoel Marcus in *Haaretz*. Sharon took the opportunity to clarify his vision: **"My assumption is that in the future no Jews will be living in Gaza."**

Immediately after the speech in the Herzliya Conference, the southern military commander Dan Harel, in secret, appointed a team to deal with this matter: a group of psychologists. Why was this kept a secret? Because the plan had not been presented to the government for approval, it had not been brought to any vote whatsoever – not even for a first reading as a proposed law in the Knesset. But as is well known, in Israeli democracy the IDF follows the political dictates of the Prime Minister even without approval of the government or the Knesset.

This secret team immediately began to prepare a plan for spiritual and ideological conversion of the IDF as a whole and of each individual soldier. Such a transformation was needed because of the irresolvable conflict between the objectives of the IDF, which include defense of Israel and its citizens against an enemy, and the "Disengagement mission," which consisted solely of expelling Jews from their land in order to hand it over to the enemy, transforming the Jews into penniless refugees. The psychological plan was printed in July 2004 as IDF kits titled *Mental Preparations for the Disengagement Mission*, published by the Behavioral Sciences Department of the Manpower Directorate, the Psychology

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Department in the Ground Arm of the IDF, the Behavioral Sciences Division of the Israeli Police, and the Education and Youth Corps of the IDF. The Disengagement Law was approved in the Knesset only on February 16, 2005, seven full months after the kits were published.

The expulsion plan contained an innate internal contradiction, and it was therefore clear to the leadership – both civilian and military – that this must be overcome. It was done by releasing the soldiers from their conscience, by carrying out exercises in "emotional disconnect," so that they would be transformed into obedient robots. They could then perform commands that under normal circumstances would be considered patently illegal.

During our research, we of the Mental Preparation Investigation Team discovered thousands of pages of "mental preparations" and political briefings. We interviewed former soldiers who took part in the preparations and the operation itself, we analyzed testimony that appeared in various media, and we studied documentary and propaganda films prepared by the IDF. The "smoking gun" that best helped us understand the techniques involved was a report of the plans for brainwashing, which was prepared by the psychologists themselves. This appeared in the journal *Military Psychology*, Number 5, December 2006: "The Disengagement Mission, A Look from Within", pages 1-273, unclassified, published by the Center for Applied Military Psychology. This document contains a professional-technical explanation of the mental and political brainwashing, a description of the IDF agenda before the operation, techniques that were applied, and various commands and exercises that overwhelmed the minds of the IDF.

The *Mental Preparation for the Disengagement Mission* was prepared in a comprehensive way that has no parallel in the prior history of the IDF. Kits were produced for all command levels and for all the military disciplines: battalion commander, company commander, platoon chief, police, etc. The kits established a new ideology. The main points: there is no single truth; "democracy" is the most important value, Israel is a democracy first and only afterwards a Jewish state. The "Disengagement" is democratic and legal. "Legal" is defined by what the High Court of Justice has ruled. The court also decides what is democratic. The IDF protects the regime, and it is therefore legal for it to operate against the citizens, even within the sovereign area of Israel. This is in spite of the fact that the basic tenet of the IDF – the "spirit of the IDF" – demands that only legal orders be carried out, shows respect for the love of the land and the values of Judaism, and makes no mention at all of a mission protecting the regime and "democracy." The objective of the brainwashing was to emphasize the need for obedience. It was incorporated within the framework of the confusion created by post-modernism which was infiltrated into the IDF. This was assimilated in stages using dishonest techniques, including threats, fraud, lies, and temptation. It was assimilated by planting "a mechanism of emotional disconnect," hatred of the settlers, and a transformation of the political identity.

In this way, the psychologists instituted a silent revolution within the army, without the knowledge of the soldiers and the citizens of Israel. The IDF was transformed from a protective fighting force into a post-modern army labeled with a new formal title: *PATZLAM* – a Hebrew acronym for "Military Operation

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**Other Than War" (MOOTW).** Without legal authorization or permission, the IDF became an army which instead of concentrating on protecting the citizens of the country and fighting the enemy centered its attention on expulsion of citizens and destroying their homes.

The soldiers were told that if the army did not succeed in the mission of expulsion, the result would be tantamount to the destruction of the "Third Temple." Those who were not taken in by this threat were given other overt and covert threats: they would be expelled from prestigious courses, army career men would be fired, they would be jailed, and they would suffer in their civilian jobs. The pressure to perform the expulsion and to participate in the preparations came from all sides. At the same time, the "preparation" included such techniques as: neutralizing emotions, cancellation of personal responsibility, "alternate thought" and fraud ("**the expellees have nothing against me personally, it's not me**"), "newspeak," and shock manipulations. All of these completed the operation as it were held in the grip of a vise. The shock operations were visible in the tremendous strength shown by repeated phalanx formations moving back and forth, broadcasting a shock wave of threat and great force: shock to the settlers ("**resistance is hopeless**") and shock of the soldiers ("**to refuse the orders is futile**").

The techniques used to root out the emotions and thoughts of the soldiers and to remove the personal responsibility for their actions transformed them into robots. They were robots who performed their tasks in the expulsion but then failed in the war that took place soon afterwards. They were robots, and some of them woke up after the fact with trauma. This trauma was predicted by the psychologists but they did nothing to prevent it.

This "mental preparation" and the act of expulsion itself are analyzed in this report from several angles: the legal point of view, the professional psychological aspect, and the military aspect – that is, the significance of these actions in terms of IDF combat capabilities and the effects on the relationship between the IDF and Israeli society.

From the legal point of view, the "mental preparation" depended on the validity of an order given by the civil authorities. However, from the point of view of current Israeli law (since there is no constitution in Israel) and the rulings of the High Court of Justice, this authorization was illegal. Not only is the authorization immoral and a crime against the Jewish nation and against humanity, it is illegal based on the mission of the IDF: the role of the army in a democratic society, as was established by the Chief of Staff of the IDF in a formal statement of *The Mission of the IDF* and according to law, is as follows: "**To protect the existence of the State of Israel, its entirety, its sovereignty, and the wellbeing of its inhabitants, and to thwart the efforts of an enemy to interfere with proper life in the country.**" This is the justification for the army to bear arms in offensive operations, to maintain well-trained forces and to forcefully recruit soldiers by law. The strength of the army is many times greater than that of the police force in the country. It is neither the role nor within the authority of the IDF to enforce the law or to perform any other tasks aside from defending the country against external enemies. Using the army to

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carry out government decisions that are not directly related to the security of the country is a patently illegal move.

The "approval" by High Court of Justice to use the IDF for the expulsion in Gush Katif, based on the modified version of the order of government and law, which allows using the IDF "to achieve the national security goals" of the State of Israel, was directly opposite to the intention of the lawmakers. The amendment to the law was meant to allow voluntary actions by the IDF in the realms of health, education, and immigrant absorption, not to allow soldiers to be used for political purposes, as was done in the expulsion.

The giving of a patently illegal order requires the IDF as a whole and every individual soldier and officer to refuse to obey it. Otherwise, the legal order and the democratic regime of the State of Israel will be in clear and existential jeopardy.

From the professional-psychological point of view a large and destructive action was undertaken that was both fraudulent and deceptive. Under normal circumstances, people are not able to expel a civilian population except in times of war; this is especially true when brothers are being expelled. Such an action is in conflict with natural ethical instincts. It was therefore necessary to implement a system of psychological manipulation in order to bring the soldiers and the policemen to a state where they were able to do this. The psychological techniques used were based on a combination of enticement, threats, and force, making full use of data from American experiments which studied how to destroy normal ethical instincts in people and how to overcome their natural resistance to blind obedience. The public, including the population which was about to be expelled, was treated to a series of messages describing the action as a game, which was to be played out according to rules set up by those in charge. For example, certain protest activities were permitted, but every act of defiance that had any real effect, even passive resistance – such as blocking roads – was defined as violence and was severely criticized.

Psychological fraud was also performed against the leaders of the opposition to the expulsion and their followers. These people were told directly and in indirect messages how to struggle "in a constructive way" – the meaning of this laundered code is: fight, but without any hope of winning. This action, which in practice allowed the expulsion to take place, was performed with the backing of the mental health institutions in the country. While these institutions knew of the spiritual and health damage to be expected in the population that was about to be expelled, they did not sound any warnings, they did not demand that the expulsion be stopped, they did not publish any warnings about irreversible trauma, and they did nothing to help prepare the intended candidates for a struggle to prevent the operation. There can be no doubt that this is what would have happened if similar plans had been developed to uproot the inhabitants of Um-El-Fahem. All of the actions and the entire mission of these institutions were aimed at having the expulsion take place without serious opposition. It seems clear that the people who performed these actions were acting for political reasons, and they therefore ignored their professional obligation, which was to care for their clients and their communities.

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The "mental preparations" also had military consequences. The IDF, which was transformed in the "Disengagement" into an organization dedicated to MOOTW (Military Operation Other Than War), paid for the process by decreased military capability. The analysis below of the MOOTW training process is an objective analysis of the damage done by the "mental preparation" to the fighting capabilities of the IDF. It is not an attempt to analyze the logic of the action, its morality, or its legality. The point of departure for this analysis is the result: the failure of the Second Lebanon War. There can be no doubt that this was not a coincidence but a definite result of the transformation that the IDF had gone through ten months earlier – especially the high command. This is particularly true since the operating theme within the IDF during the ten months following the expulsion was that it was now necessary to prepare for the "real thing," the future step of "Convergence" – abandoning more territory to the enemy.

It is clear that the deterioration in the fighting capability of the IDF did not begin all of a sudden, with the *Mental Preparation for the Disengagement Mission*. Perhaps the root cause can be found in the earlier action of giving the Sinai area to Egypt. This was followed by the first *Intifada*, with a clear downward step – institutionalized fleeing from stones, based on a claim that "the only viable solution is a political one." The next stage was the "peace process," which mercilessly beat down on the IDF for the next 14 years. The "peace process" reeducated the IDF as part of the "Oslo mentality" about an imaginary "partner," adding further confusion to the military capability of the IDF. Some of the clear downward steps during the time of the Oslo process were: restraint against the Arab reaction when the Western Wall tunnel was opened, the technique of non-victory over terror – euphemistically called "a low intensity war" – knowingly abandoning Madhat Yussef to die in Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, and the hasty retreat from Lebanon. But the "Oslo mentality" did not come out of the clear blue either. It was the result of a cultural and ideological foundation that was fostered by those who set the tone in Israeli society with an essential ingredient of post-Zionism. This is a culture and an ideology which is the opposite of Jewish existence in general and of Zionism in particular. Post-Zionism developed as an Israeli mutation of the worldwide cultural movement of post-modernism. To understand the link between the two, it is only necessary to look at the central theme of post-modernism: "There is no single truth, there are only alternative narratives. Everybody has his own narrative." This negativistic approach was incorporated into an ideal of rejecting Zionism and the right of the Jewish nation to live. This corrupted viewpoint trickled through into the IDF and led the way for the politically motivated denial of its true mission.

All of the above elements can be compared to an artillery bombardment before a final blow: the "Disengagement." The *Mental Preparation for the Disengagement Mission* and the expulsion itself served as the last nail in the coffin. Why? Because they not only interfered with the fighting capability but actually transformed the IDF: they converted the fighting army of the IDF into a MOOTW, a police force whose mission was the exact opposite of its original objective. MOOTW – *PATZLAM* – might appear to be nothing more than another military acronym, but in effect it is a description – with a sly wink – of the transformation of the IDF into a force which will perform political missions – in the service of the far left, of course.

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The transformation in the "mental preparation" and in the expulsion itself was not only a change in mission but also a change of identity. The modified objectives transformed the IDF from an army whose mission was to defend the homeland and vanquish an enemy into a quasi-police force aimed at performing a political mission – although the mission was not really one suitable for the police either. The modification of the identity squashed the "spirit of the IDF," which is the basic formulation of the foundations of this institution. This is the nucleus of its fighting capability in all its components: a professional approach, battle readiness, comradeship, pride, military heritage, leadership, a fighting spirit, and self-sacrifice during battle. This is a spirit which crystallized the IDF from the moment it was formed, served as its motivating force, and attracted the recruits into its ranks. These concepts were clear as a bell before it was necessary to codify them into a document named the "ethical code" or summarize it into a "pocket handbook." But once these basic beliefs are trampled, nothing else really matters.

The MOOTW approach modified the view that the enemy is an enemy and that the goal is to defeat him. Post-modernism – in its post-Zionist mutation which trickled through to the IDF from the general society in Israel – institutionalized a destructive spirit in the IDF: to strive for non-victory, to find a different angle on fulfilling (or rather not achieving) a mission, to flee from military contact and from conquering any physical territory, and an approach that everything can be solved by the appropriate media "spin." All of these elements, together with "specialization" and readiness for police activities against Jews, of necessity harm the capability to fight against an enemy.

This link – between fighting capability against an enemy and specialization in police activity against Jews – can be seen in a conceptual way in the following equation:

$$F_E + P_J = \text{Constant}$$

Where:  $F_E$  – Fighting capability against an enemy

$P_J$  – Police activity against Jews

The equation states that the stronger the element of police activity ( $P_J$ ), the weaker the fighting capability ( $F_E$ ) will be. It is clear that this is true about the IDF, which operates according to the *Spirit of the IDF*, and in accordance with restraints pertaining to the close proximity between times of fighting and police work. It is most relevant for the high level career officers (Brigadier General and above)!

The failure of the Second Lebanon War was related to the above factors. From the military standpoint, this was a failure of fighting spirit. It was a failure to strive for victory; a failure to define the objectives – at all command levels; a failure to capture land and to define actions appropriate for every unit in the army. In all of these factors, the MOOTW approach which led up to the "Disengagement" played an important role. Senior commanders, from rank of battalion commander and up, spent all of their time and energy transforming themselves and the IDF in order to perform the "Disengagement." In order to make the conversion the top level command squashed the *Spirit of the IDF* and the objective of its existence – defense of the Jewish nation and its country. They trampled these elements in deference to the sanctity

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of obeying orders, even if they were contrary to the very essence and mission of the IDF. They trampled the elements because they were influenced by "spin." They trampled these elements because this was a necessary condition in preparing for the "Disengagement."

The "mental preparation" and the IDF participation in the expulsion also had a devastating effect on the motivation of the rightist-religious-Zionist community to serve in the IDF. This sector of the population came to recognize, although quite late, that the "Disengagement" was invented as a tool for the sole purpose of being used against them, as a purposeful attack with anti-Semitic overtones, in order to shake the foundations of their own beliefs. The IDF played a central role in causing this damage. This is because until these events the relationship between this community and the IDF was one of great love, expressed as a feeling of sanctity and willingness for unlimited dedication to the IDF – as conscripts, as career men, and in reserve duty.

As opposed to their reaction to the courts, the police, and the press, from which they had no high initial expectations, the community's reaction to the IDF treachery was severe, and it included both insult and anger. This feeling increased many times over in view of the clockwork precision by which the expulsion was carried out as compared to the ineffective way the army had defended the area of Gush Katif against massive bombardment during the previous four years. In addition, this sector of the population lost its respect for the IDF, which showed a complete lack of understanding of what the people saw as a clear security disaster that would be the inevitable result of the destruction and the expulsion from the area. And the frustration of the community increased when the few people in the IDF who understood the danger caved in when faced with the priority given to following orders. The result of all these factors was a drastic reduction in the motivation to serve, a refusal to report for reserve duty, and a reduction in the number of soldiers who wanted to sign up for officer's training or for army careers.

The Second Lebanon War helped patch up this unsatisfactory relationship. The return of an existential threat does not allow the IDF the luxury of losing the "orange" community. And the victims of the expulsion are not able to play with the idea of maintaining a hatred for the IDF. Today the motivation to serve is based on recognizing the IDF as a vital defense, while the feeling of "sanctity" has been replaced by a "sobering effect," in an effort to steer clear of future leftist adventures. At the same time, the IDF has begun to appreciate the significance and the critical importance of the "orange" community: it is fully motivated, disciplined, honest, faithful, and normative, and it joins the service in large numbers. This recognition will serve as a deterrent force to help limit additional MOOTW operations in the future.

Understanding how the "mental preparation" transformed the IDF so that it could perform the expulsion and understanding the disaster – the damage to the fighting spirit of the IDF – are prerequisites today for repairing the damage to the IDF. Knowledge of this process will also take the sting out of any further plans for MOOTW, and it is therefore a vital precondition for any attempt to deter future ideas of such a suicidal plan for expulsion of Jews.