KATE CLERIDES

Kate Clerides was inspired to write this book based on her experience in reconciliation work in Cyprus, and she continues to be an active member in citizen peacebuilding groups. She was active in Cypriot politics during the years 1986 to 2014 as a Member of Parliament, Vice-President of the Democratic Rally Party and Presidential Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs.

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HETEROTOPIA

Kate Clerides

BUILDING BRIDGES
IN A POLARIZED WORLD
AND DIVIDED CYPRUS

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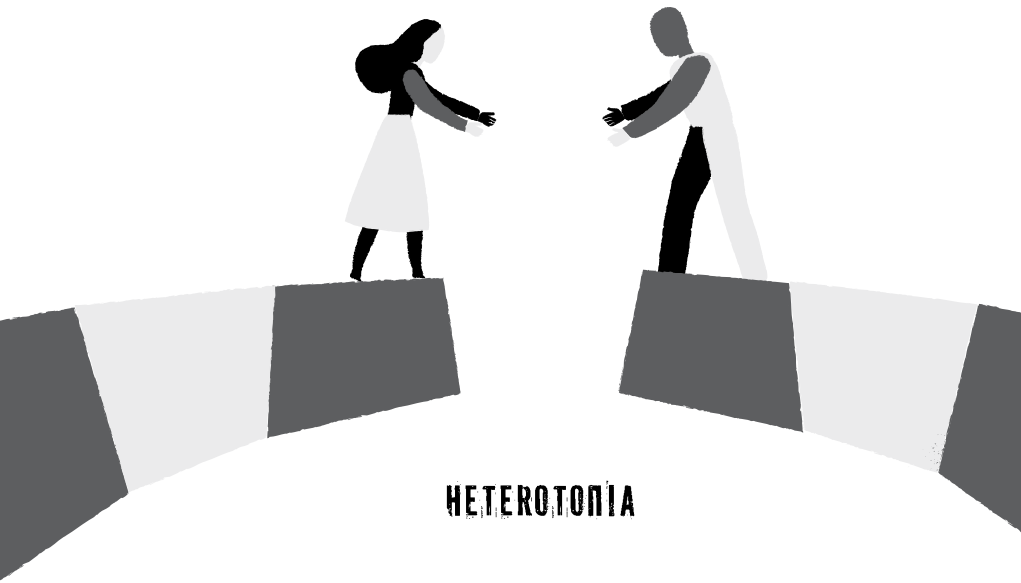

HETEROTOPIA

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INTRODUCTION

"I invite you not to build walls but bridges, to conquer evil with good, offence with forgiveness, to live in peace with everyone."

POPE FRANCIS

"A man who uses force is afraid of reasoning."

KENYAN PROVERB

"A human being is a deciding being. Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

VIKTOR FRANKL, "MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING"

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of the coronavirus. The year when all around the world we went through the same experience of being forced to stay at home in lockdown. When we were forced to come to terms with ourselves and think about the world and our place in it.

Despite living through this shared experience and common threat, no one can doubt that we are living in a time of increasing ideological polarization within countries, and increased conflict between countries.

I started writing this book in June 2020. It was, I believe, an appropriate time to think about the journey we need to make together from polarization to consensus, from separateness to com-

munity, from duality to oneness; because if there is one thing that COVID-19 brought home (or should have brought home) to us all, it is our common humanity and our common vulnerability to forces that we do not control.

The pandemic and global warming are the two most recent examples of how difficult we find it as a species to cooperate for the long-term common good. We witnessed this during the pandemic with the slow roll out of vaccines in the most disadvantaged countries of Africa and Asia, which led to new strains of the virus emerging and encircling the globe. And we witnessed this again at the UN Glasgow Climate Summit in 2022, particularly in relation to finding agreement on the reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

At international conferences each nation tries to achieve the best deal it can for itself, something which seems self-evident, and which appears to make sense in the short term. However, if we want to survive over the long term as individuals, societies, and the world community, we need to learn to act less selfishly, and to work cooperatively for the common good.

As someone who has devoted the last thirty years of her life trying to build bridges, resolve conflict, and foster reconciliation in the divided island of Cyprus, this seemed to me to be the right time to share what I have learnt in the context of my work as a politician, citizen activist, and individual working for re-unification.

Like Oprah Winfrey, I believe that *"we are here to fulfil the highest, truest expression of ourselves as human beings and until you have used all your value as a human being you are not yet done!"* Hence this book. I want to share the knowledge I have acquired over the years and which I have assimilated in my own way, in the hope that it may resonate with others and be of use to

those who read this. My learnings, I hope, are not just relevant to Cyprus even though my experiences relate primarily to the island.

This book is a personal account of what I have learnt and not a textbook on conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution, mediation, or negotiation. It pays homage to the work of many scholars in the field with whom I have had the privilege of working, and who have devoted their time, energy, and love to Cyprus. I am grateful to the late Louise Diamond and Leonard Doob, as well as John MacDonald, Diana Chigas, Robert Rotberg, Marco Turk, Benjamin Broome, Ron Fisher, and Christopher Thorsen (Aikido Master) for what they have taught me, and many other citizen activists, here in Cyprus; for getting us started on the journey to greater understanding of "the other."

Perhaps the greatest gift I received from my participation in conflict resolution workshops is the deep friendships created with people from both sides of the divide which continue to this day. And as an additional bonus, through the workshops I met Costas Shammas, one of the initiators of the project, and our friendship eventually led to our marriage!

I am also deeply indebted both to the Eisenhower Foundation (USA) for the fellowship they granted me in 1994 to explore in depth the working of the federal system of governance in the United States, and to the Weinstein Foundation (USA) for a fellowship in 2016 to both my husband Costas and I to follow up our conflict resolution training and explore further mediation techniques.

I love to read well known authors from various countries and find that many of them provide marvellous insights into better understanding our world. Consequently, I make several references to literature as illustrations of points I want to make, as

well as references to films that I believe have a significant message to deliver.

The Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and many other writers on Buddhism introduced me to the concepts of compassion, detachment, and the middle way, which I personally find very relevant for those working to create a more harmonious world.

Through my work I have come to realize that spirituality, in the sense of the belief that we are all connected, is an essential element in creating a more harmonious world. Although I myself do not belong to any specific religious tradition, I respect them all. Thus, throughout this book you will find many quotations from different religious traditions. The quotations are those which have a special meaning for me. I hope the reader will feel the same.

As a child I remember my parents telling me not to make judgements until I had heard both sides of the story. "*There are two sides to every story*," they would say.

The central message of this book is that everyone has their own story, everyone has their own "take" on a situation, everyone has their own "truth." I honestly believe that unless you can put yourself in the other person's shoes and understand their "truth" you can never solve a conflict by peaceful means. Many partial truths make up the "whole truth." Only once we have accepted this idea can we move on to consensus building and creating more harmonious societies.

At present we live essentially in a culture based on separateness, antagonism, and power. We think that we are separate individuals, nations, and communities, and that some of us are more deserving than others. We assume that those of us who are stronger have the right to impose our will on others.

A culture of harmony starts from the premise that we are all connected; we are all human beings in the same family of life. We

all basically want the same things, so when we cooperate and work together for the benefit of the whole, we all come out better off. It is a different world view; one we need to take on board now.

We all ask the question at some time or another, "Who am I and why am I here?"

My answer is first and foremost, we are human. Our primary function is to take care of each other and our planet. Our various identities make us unique, but do not need to separate us.

In order to take care of each other and our planet, we need to rediscover our common humanity. We need to learn the techniques required to achieve this, both as individuals and as political actors. If we do not, we will not be able to overcome the tremendous challenges that face us already.

Just how precarious the world order that we currently take for granted can be, and how interconnected we all are, has been demonstrated again starkly by the repercussions reverberating around the world from the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022. I will discuss the resort to war further in Chapter 9.

Finding our common humanity means dealing with fundamental inequalities within and between counties, in addition to learning to cooperate and resolve conflicts. I have always been acutely aware of the fundamental structural inequalities within and between countries. The work of the World Inequality Lab at the Paris School of Economics provides substantive data on this issue as well as proposals for rectifying it. These inequities are drivers of conflict, which need to be addressed at the political level. In Chapters 7 and 8, I examine this issue as well as the issues of oppression, corruption, injustice, and abuses of power.

A Few Words on Cyprus and Terminology

Prior to my in-depth contacts with Turkish Cypriots through the conflict resolution workshops and prior to the 1974 military operation by Turkey, I was not anti-Turkish. Nevertheless, following the events of 1974, I shared the general view of Greek Cypriots that we were the victims of the debacle and not, as I later came to realise, that both sides were both victims and perpetrators.

Working with Turkish Cypriots during the many conflict resolution workshops we attended together, I learnt how they perceived the conflict just as they learnt how we Greek Cypriots understood the conflict. I will record many of these insights at different points in the book.

What started out for me as an attempt to solve the Cyprus problem through reconciliation from the ground up with conflict resolution workshops, as opposed to from the top down with negotiations, became a personal journey of discovery.

Learning the techniques and skills needed to bridge differences and putting them into practice has become a way of life. Getting rid of the "enemy image" has enabled me to accept the situation on the ground and consequently to feel that, despite the existing political division, I have reunited Cyprus in my own mind. I am able to have friendships and undertake activities on both sides of the divide.

In this book we will look at the reasons why the conflict in Cyprus, like so many other conflicts and divisions around the world, has remained unsolved.

In addition to examples from Cyprus, which provided my firsthand experience with alternative dispute resolution, readers will find that I make many references to the polarized political situation in the United States. This is not only because it is ex-

tremely topical, but also because it shows how fragile democracy can be even in what are generally considered well established democracies. The United States probably provides the best current example of just how destructive polarization, left unchecked, can be.

The terminology used to name various events in the Cyprus conflict varies depending on which side is recounting the events. In order to be fair and consistent with the philosophy behind this book, I have tried to use neutral terminology and avoid what are known in conflict resolution parlance as "trigger words" which offend the "other."

For instance, what Greek Cypriots see as the "Turkish invasion," Turkish Cypriots consider having been an "intervention" or "peace operation" carried out by Turkey to save them from extermination, following the coup carried out by the Greek military junta against President Makarios.

I have therefore preferred to use the terminology "Turkish military intervention" which is in fact the terminology used in the Security Council resolution of 20th July 1974 and all subsequent resolutions. The resolution calls for "an immediate end to foreign military intervention in the Republic of Cyprus.... and the withdrawal without delay from the Republic of Cyprus of foreign military personnel present otherwise than under the authority of international agreements...."

The self-declared Turkish Cypriot administrative entity in the north is often referred to as the "so-called" or "pseudo state" in Greek discourse because it is not internationally recognized. This is considered offensive by many Turkish Cypriots, so I have preferred to use the terminology "Turkish Cypriot Administration" or the designations "north" and "south" when referring to the two sides.

Finally, I have used the term "bi-communal activists" in referring to those working for a solution and reconciliation in Cyprus, since this is how they are generally referred to on the island and in the international academic literature discussing their role and assessing their effectiveness.

Thanks

I would be amiss if I did not thank my friends Bekir Azgın, Sharon Feissel, Marina Christofides and Emily Markides for reading earlier drafts of this book and giving me invaluable feedback.

I am also deeply grateful to Prof. Niyazi Kızılyürek who guided me through the whole writing process and whose publishing house is publishing this book.

It goes without saying that the ideas expressed in this book are entirely my own.

CHAPTER 1

Historical Outline of the Cyprus Conflict

"Ah Nicosia!
1000 swallows
fly overhead
and not one knows
about the Green Line."

CHRISTOPHER THORSEN, AIKIDO MASTER

Unfortunately, when we focus on the Cyprus conflict we are focusing on a long-standing and still unresolved conflict. Just how long-standing depends on when you think the conflict started. For some Greek Cypriots it might be as far back as the fall of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire in 1453. For most Turkish Cypriots it begins with the Greek Cypriot struggle for union with Greece in the 1950s. So just how different the perception of a conflict can be, is immediately brought home by this one example.

Looked at from an academic point of view the Cyprus conflict, even though it concerns a small island in the Eastern Mediterranean, makes an interesting case study as we can analyse the conflict from at least three levels:

- The international level and the interests of the major players in the region at any given time.

- The long-standing enmity between Greece and Turkey, the two "motherlands" which are the guarantors of the island's independence, along with Britain, as stipulated in the 1960 constitution which established the Republic of Cyprus.
- The relationship between the two communities on the island.

All three levels interact and impact on each other and are in a continuous interplay and dynamic. If one tries to make an analysis of the conflict, one finds that each side has its own interpretation and perspective of how the events unfolded.

Having spent a great deal of time in conflict resolution workshops trying to understand the other side's view of the situation, I believe that my brief outline of the conflict here will not reflect the view of the average Greek Cypriot but rather, I hope, a more balanced version of the story which tries to incorporate an understanding of how both sides view the events that took place, each from their own perspective.

So, I would like to take you on a short walk through history and explain the position of the two sides at the present time.

A Brief History

Cyprus became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1571 when the island was captured from its Venetian rulers by the Ottoman Turks. It remained under Ottoman rule until 1878 when the island was rented to Britain. Cyprus formally became a colony of the British Empire when Britain annexed the island in the early 20th century.

Greek Cypriots, who make up about 80% of the island's population, believe themselves to be descendants of settlers from Hellenic times who came to the island around 2000-1000 BC. While Turkish Cypriots, who make up about 20% of the island's population, believe themselves to be descended from the Ottoman Turks who took over the island in 1571. This is important only because each community considers itself to be part of the wider Greek or Turkish nation, rather than Cypriot.

Thus, for Greek Cypriots the struggle that was launched to free Cyprus from colonial rule in the 1950s and to unite Cyprus with Greece (*enosis*) seemed a natural objective, since they considered Cyprus to be a Greek island. As the majority population, they attempted to exercise their right to self-determination and unite with Greece.

However, for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, the idea of *enosis* was an anathema and an existential threat. From their point of view the island was historically part of the Ottoman Empire. They considered Cyprus' geographical location – nestled as it is under Turkey's southern flank – to be of strategic importance to Turkey.

Each side perceives the other as being the instigator and cause of the problem, while third parties tend to lament the fact that the struggle against colonial rule was not aimed at achieving independence so that it could have been undertaken by both communities together. However, to take this view is to ignore the historical legacy of the island and the psychological and political mindset of the time when ethnic fervor and nationalism were the order of the day.

As the struggle for *enosis* developed it was countered by Turkish demands for partition (*taksim)* of the island, which were encouraged by Britain in the hope that it would be able to main-

tain control of the island by using its well-known policy of "divide and rule."

In the end the compromise solution of the Zurich and London agreements was reached, which granted Cyprus independence in 1960, under which Britain, Greece, and Turkey became guarantors of the island's independence.

The constitutional outcome of the agreements had elements of functional federalism. The President was to be Greek Cypriot, the Vice-President Turkish Cypriot, the President of Parliament Greek Cypriot, the Vice-President Turkish Cypriot, and so on throughout the government and civil service. The constitution effectively ensured that neither community was able to take important decisions without the consent of the other. For example, the Vice-President had the power to veto decisions of the Council of Ministers (which was made up of seven Greek Cypriot and three Turkish Cypriot Ministers).

Not surprisingly these measures, which were meant to protect the smaller community from being steamrollered by the larger one, caused resentment in the Greek Cypriot community. The island had been granted an independence which no one had fought for, and nobody wanted. As the late, former President Glafcos Clerides once commented, no one was ready to die for the Cypriot flag.

In view of this reality, it is not surprising that the mindset and the political discourse in the two communities was not conducive to making the agreement work. Both sides fundamentally remained committed to their national projects. Consequently, not long after independence, friction arose between the two communities.

By 1963, Archbishop Makarios, the first President of the Republic of Cyprus, put forward proposals to amend the constitu-

tion which were viewed with hostility by the Turkish side, since the aim was to limit the participation of the Turkish Cypriots and abrogate their right of veto.

No one was surprised when the intercommunal fighting broke out in December 1963. Which side stared it depends on who is telling the story, but the truth of the matter is both sides were secretly arming with the aim of pursuing their nationalistic objectives. It is interesting to note that what was termed "intercommunal fighting" in British accounts, in Greek accounts was referred to as the "Turkish Cypriot insurrection" while in the Turkish accounts the events were considered to be the result of "Greek Cypriot aggression."

During the fighting, the Turkish Cypriot members of the government and parliament withdrew from the government and left their posts in the civil service. The majority of the Turkish Cypriot population moved, out of fear and on the instructions of their leadership, into ghettos in the Turkish quarters of the main towns as well as ghettos created around Turkish Cypriot villages.

Ceasefire lines were drawn up and the first United Nations troops arrived on the island in 1964 to maintain the peace, following these events in 1963. By 1968, the negotiations, which had started under the auspices of the United Nations to resolve the constitutional crisis, had almost reached a compromise solution, which gave limited autonomy to Turkish Cypriot Areas.

However, when the compromise was put before President Makarios, he refused to agree, partly fearing criticism from the nationalist elements in the Greek Cypriot community and also because he considered the status quo in which Greek Cypriots were exclusively running the state, the second best option to *enosis*.

It is important to know that from the start of independence in 1960, there was a deep schism within the Greek Cypriot com-

munity. The conflict was between the supporters of General Grivas (who had been the military leader of the *enosis* struggle against the British) and the supporters of President Makarios (who as the Ethnarch was the political leader of the struggle for *enosis.)*

Grivas' supporters considered that, by signing the London and Zurich agreements for independence, Makarios had compromised the national desire for *enosis*. At the same time Makarios himself in his public addresses spoke of independence as if it was a step on the path to *enosis*. This, of course, did not inspire confidence in the Turkish Cypriot community that the independence agreement was intended to last.

The situation worsened after 1967, when in Greece the military junta took over the government after a coup and began to undermine Archbishop Makarios, using the Greek military contingent which was stationed on the island in accordance with the treaties founding the Republic. From then on there were continuous disagreements between the Athens Junta and Nicosia. On July 3rd 1974, Makarios, in a letter to the Military Junta leader Gizikis, demanded the withdrawal of the Greek military contingent.

The Greek Junta responded by carrying out a coup in cooperation with the illegal organisation of EOKA B founded by General Grivas. They overthrew Makarios who had to flee from the island. Turkey, claiming she had the right to re-establish constitutional order under the Treaty of Guarantee used this as a pretext to intervene militarily and occupy one-third of the territory of the island. The Greek Cypriot population fled in the face of the advancing forces or were forcibly expelled and became internally displaced persons and remain so today.

Since 1974, a ceasefire line has divided the island with Greek Cypriots living in the southern part of the island under the con-

trol of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots living in the northern area with an army of 40,000 Turkish mainland troops stationed in the north, and a UN force patrolling the buffer zone.

The government of the Republic is internationally recognised (except by Turkey). In 1975, the Turkish Cypriot leadership, with the support of Turkey, declared the northern part of Cyprus to be a "federated state", subsequently re-named in 1983 as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is only recognised by Turkey.

Although the international community only recognises the Republic of Cyprus officially, it considers that the Republic is composed of two ethnic communities and all the UN Security Council Resolutions call on the leaders of the two communities to engage in a negotiation process to find a lasting and workable solution to reunite the island.

The Basis for a Solution

As we have seen, the Cyprus problem has occupied the United Nations at all stages since the intercommunal clashes in 1963 and continues to do so until today. The parameters for a settlement were established by the High-Level Agreements between the leaders of the two communities, Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktaş in 1977 and reiterated in 1979, and are embodied in successive UN Resolutions which provide that a Cyprus settlement must be based on the following principles:

- a state of Cyprus
- with single sovereignty and international personality and single citizenship

- with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded
- comprising two politically equal communities as described in the relevant Security Council Resolutions; (political equality has been defined as effective participation, not necessarily numerical equality)
- in a bi-zonal bi-communal federation
- that such a settlement must exclude union in whole or in part with any other country or any form of partition or secession.

(SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1251/1999)

More Recent Developments

Turkey's official position and that of the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş had always been that the Cyprus problem was solved on the ground in 1974. This changed when newly elected Prime Minister Recep Tayıp Erdoğan in 2002 accepted that there should be a negotiated settlement to the Cyprus question.

As a result of a strategy put in place by the Greek and Cypriot governments of the time coupling Cyprus' accession process with EU candidate status for Turkey, Cyprus started accession talks in 1995. This strategy meant that for the first time Turkey had an incentive to negotiate a settlement in Cyprus in return for potential membership of the European Union.

Prime Minister Erdoğan also saw Turkey's candidate status as an opportunity to use European law in his project to liberalise the Kemalist secularist restrictions on the use of Islamic symbols in public life in Turkey which, for example, prevented female civil servants from wearing headscarves at work and female students who wanted to cover their head from attending university.

This new stance on the part of Turkey encouraged the international community to invest time and energy in Cyprus, since in Greece and Cyprus there were governments in place that were genuinely prepared to make the necessary compromises to achieve a solution. The stumbling block proved to be the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş who refused to change his position. Eventually, due to Denktaş' ill health and elections in the Turkish Cypriot community Erdoğan's policy prevailed.

In the interim however, the situation changed on the Greek Cypriot side. The new President Tassos Papadopoulos, who was elected and took office at the beginning of 2003, was a hardliner, which is to say that he was not prepared to make the concessions the Greek Cypriot side needed to make in order to achieve a negotiated settlement. In his view the status quo was preferable to a negotiated settlement and therefore he deliberately failed to negotiate.

Prior to the referendum on the Annan Plan, as the agreement came to be known, his party, the Democratic Party along with other anti-solution groups including the church, launched a massive disinformation campaign against the agreement e.g. school children poured out onto the streets with "no" stickers on their foreheads. Finally, on the eve of the referendum in his televised talk to the nation, President Papadopoulos called on Greek Cypriots, with tears in his eyes, to vote against the plan.

The Annan Plan was put to a referendum in both communities on April 24th 2004. The international community, and particularly the EU member states, hoped that Cyprus would join the European Union on the 1st of May 2004, as a reunited island with its problem solved.

However, the results of the referendum, with 65% of Turkish Cypriots voting "yes" and 76% of Greek Cypriots voting "no", failed to bring about the desired result, and a divided Cyprus en-

tered the European Union. Although technically the whole of Cyprus became part of the European Union, the acquis communautaire applies only to the areas under the control of the Republic.

Following a hiatus of years of stalemate and following the election of what appeared to be pro-solution leaderships in both communities, a new initiative was launched by the international community under the auspices of the UN, which finally led to a High-Level Meeting held at Crans-Montana in Switzerland in 2017.

These talks were held under the auspices of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and for the first time all the parties involved, including the guarantor powers, were present, hence the depiction "high level." In addition, the EU was present as an observer represented by its High Representative for Foreign Affairs at the time, Frederica Mogherini. These talks again failed to reach an agreement with each side blaming the other for the failure, and the situation has been in stalemate since then.

In November 2020, elections were held in the Turkish controlled area of the island. There is convincing evidence that Turkey interfered in the elections in order to oust pro-solution politician Mustafa Akıncı in favour of the anti-solution candidate Ersin Tatar, in order to change course in its Cyprus policy and demand a "two-state" solution; essentially, a return to the demand for partition of the island *(taksim)*.

After Mr. Tatar's election, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres made another attempt and called an informal High-Level Meeting. At the meeting, which took place in Geneve in 2021, the Turkish side declared that the option of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation was no longer on the table for discussion and reiterated their demand for a two-state solution. Whether this is a final red line for the Turkish side, or a bargaining position remains to be seen.

Why has solving the Cyprus question proved to be so intractable?

There are many reasons for this intractability which have not necessarily remained constant over time.

A significant factor, particularly in the earlier stages, was the fact that the political leaderships that emerged at the end of colonialism came on both sides, from those who had fought for the nationalist projects of *enosis* or *taksim*.

As in other post-colonial societies, they were chosen because of their contribution to the struggle against colonialism, which of course meant that in general, on both sides they were nationalists and supporters of their own community's rights. There was no common vision for Cyprus as an independent state. They were not able to make the compromise solution work and over time they became the new political elites with their own vested interests based on nationalistic narratives.

As we saw earlier, after the intercommunal fighting of 1963 and the breakdown of constitutional order an agreement was eventually reached between the negotiators Glafcos Clerides and Rauf Denktaş in 1968 which would have given Turkish Cypriots local autonomy in return for reduced representation at all levels of government. However, Makarios refused to accept this proposed agreement preferring the status quo which meant that Greek Cypriots were running the island by themselves.

After the Turkish military intervention of 1974, it was the Turkish side which became intransigent. Despite the High-Level Agreements between Makarios and Denktaş and the Security Council Resolutions stipulating the federal solution mentioned previously, the Turkish Cypriot interlocutor Rauf Denktaş and Ankara both considered that the problem had been solved by the

division of the island and the de-facto exchange of populations which had taken place on the ground. Their aim was to achieve recognition for the newly created entity in the north and they had no genuine interest in negotiating.

It was only after the EU Helsinki summit in 1999 which opened the door to accession negotiations for Turkey, that the Turkish side agreed that negotiations were needed to solve the Cyprus conflict. A potential agreement was reached with the Annan Plan, which was put to a referendum in 2004 which, as we saw earlier, was not approved by the Greek Cypriot side. There are a number of reasons which account for Greek Cypriot's reluctance to accept a compromise settlement.

Firstly, the High-Level Agreement between Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktaş for a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation first agreed in 1977 and reconfirmed in 1979, has never been popular among the majority of Greek Cypriots who continued to hanker, unrealistically, after what they considered to be a unitary state and a return to the pre-1974 status.

Secondly, a deliberate disinformation campaign against the plan was carried out by those sections of the Greek Cypriot political leadership, including the President at the time, Tassos Papadopoulos, who favoured the status quo; the majority of the public was happy to follow, either out of self-interest or genuine fear of the unknown. Included in the misinformation, for example, was that civil servants' jobs and pensions were not secured under the agreement.

On the Turkish Cypriot side, the incentive to vote for the plan was the fact that Cyprus would be joining the EU, and therefore Turkish Cypriots would become part of the world community after having been isolated and totally dependent on Turkey for so long.

One of the fundamental problems on the Greek Cypriot side is that the political leadership has not had the courage to educate public opinion about what is feasible in terms of a negotiated settlement and continues to draw "red lines" which Turkey will never meet.

One example of such an unfeasible demand emerged very recently in 2016 when the Greek Foreign Minister at the time, Nikos Kotzias, stated that Greece would not attend the on-going talks unless Turkey gave up her right to be a guarantor. Prior to this the Greek Cypriot position had always been that the original Treaty of Guarantee should be amended to include additional guarantors so as to be less threatening to Greek Cypriots. It had never sought complete abrogation, knowing that this was something that no Turkish government would be able to accept.

Similarly, with another contentious issue, that of effective Turkish Cypriot participation in decision-making at the federal level, the Greek Cypriot position has hardened over time; proposing that Turkish Cypriots should only have a say in issues that affect them directly. In other words, the concept of power-sharing is not acceptable to the Greek Cypriots who continue to consider themselves the true owners of the island.

One could argue that the fundamental issue in Cyprus, is two differing views of who controls the island. In Greek Cypriot eyes, Cyprus is a Greek island because of its history and majority Greek speaking population, and Greek Cypriots should have control, except on issues that directly affect Turkish Cypriots.

This is the position adopted by the current President, Nicos Anastasiades, as well as the majority Greek Cypriot view on the issue of power sharing.

The Turkish Cypriot view is that under the 1960 constitution which established the Republic of Cyprus they are partners

and co-founders of the Republic. In addition, the UN resolutions talk of "effective participation" of the Turkish Cypriots which the Turkish side interprets as joint decision making at the level of federal government.

President Anastasiades has convinced public opinion that the Turkish Cypriot interpretation of power sharing means that Turkey will control Cyprus through the Turkish Cypriots and that such a constitution will be unworkable and break down like the 1960 Constitution. It also seems unfair to the majority of Greek Cypriots because they are still thinking in terms of majority/minority.

Unfortunately, there is no positive dynamic behind the idea of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation on the Greek Cypriot side. Politicians and the public pay lip service to it because it is what the UN resolutions specify, but from the Greek Cypriot point of view it is seen as an undue compromise which will probably lead to more complications later on and not as a vision for the future. The present status quo seems preferable to most people because it is known. The unknown which calls for change, is frightening.

So, the current narrative that "we want a solution within the parameters set by the U.N., but we cannot achieve this because of Turkish intransigence" is a feel-good narrative, which few are willing to question or give up.

Additionally, the fact that the conflict is a "cold conflict" with no intercommunal fighting and almost no loss of life for the last forty years, makes the status quo seem like a favourable, or at least acceptable, option.

The Situation on the Ground

Currently, there are several check points which allow people to cross either on foot or by car and so contact between the two sides is possible for those who wish it. This accessibility, which became possible after 2003, has made the work of bi-communal activists easier. Nevertheless, there are many people who still refuse to cross as a matter of principle, and many young people simply are not interested in venturing into what they see as enemy territory.

There are European Union regulations for trade of certain locally produced items across the "Green Line" as the ceasefire line is known in Cyprus. The EU also has offices in the north to help the Turkish Cypriot side to prepare for implementation of the acquis when and if an agreement is finally reached.

The status quo has become the new "normal" in Cyprus. Even though when asked, people say they want a solution, in fact the weight of inertia and the cultivation of fear of the other, works in favour of the status quo and against change.

The words of eighty-eight-year-old South Korean poet *Ko Un* are so true and something we have failed to realise: *"Unification is not about going back; it is about moving forward."*

There is much more one could write both about the history and the current political situation on the island, but the aim of this book is not to discuss the political conflict in detail, but to give the reader a brief background in order to understand references made to and examples from Cyprus in the chapters that follow.

A lot has been written on the Cyprus problem and much of it is available in English. In general, however, even purportedly academic accounts tend to be biased in favour of one or the oth-

er side. For anyone who wants to know more and for objective accounts, I highly recommend the books of my late father, Glafcos Clerides and those of Prof. Niyazi Kızılyürek which are available in English (as well as in Greek and Turkish), and which objectively consider the views of both sides.

The Greek-Turkish Dimension

As discussed previously, the relations between Greece and Turkey and the historical baggage of the events which took place in the late 19th and early 20th century have had a significant impact on Cyprus.

In a *Webinar* organized by the *International Institute for Peace* in Vienna and the *Centre for International and European Studies of Kadir Has University* in Istanbul (November 16th, 2020), *Professors Mustafa Aydın* and *Dimitrios Triantafillou* provide insights to the background of the current tensions over the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. According to *Professor Aydın*, for most of the 20th century Turkey did not have a Mediterranean policy. After the Cold War, and especially since the early 2000s following the Arab Spring, the Mediterranean has become more important for Turkey.

Russia, the US, and France have military in the region and the British have the Sovereign Bases in Cyprus. The perception from Turkey's point of view is that the Eastern Mediterranean, which is of vital importance to her, is coming under the control of others.

The discovery of natural gas reserves and oil in the region has further complicated the picture, with intense arguments over Exclusive Economic Zones. This has led to the use of gunboat

diplomacy by Turkey to counter bi-lateral agreements made by Greece and Cyprus for the future use of the oil and gas. While Greece and Cyprus consider such alliances necessary because of the threat from Turkey.

The East-Med Gas Forum initiated by Egypt, which now includes Cyprus, Israel, France, Jordan, Italy, a representative from the Palestinian Authority and observers from the US, EU and the World Bank but excludes Turkey, re-enforces this sense of isolation.

Speaking during the same webinar, Greek academic *Dimitrios Triantafillou* points out that for many years there was a "cold peace" between Greece and Turkey without, however, there being a resolution of differences over contested airspace and maritime zones. Added to this we now have the hydrocarbon issue, all of which are leading to high tension and increased militarisation of politics between Greece and Turkey.

Unfortunately, each side is locked into its own narrative and positions. The Greek side stressing international law and the Turkish side using its gunboat diplomacy to counter what it believes to be policies to isolate Turkey. There is no dialogue and no real understanding of the concerns of the other side.

The participants in the webinar point out that there needs to be a genuine in-depth dialogue between the two countries behind closed doors. The dialogue should be under the aegis of the political leadership in both countries, but without the participation of politicians, who are too susceptible to public opinion. There must be complete confidentiality surrounding the dialogue, which will be a long process if the parties are to get beyond stated positions and look deeper at the real fears and interests which are driving their actions.

However, as *Prof. Ioannis Grigoriades* points out in his chapter on *Greek-Turkish Relations* in the *Oxford Handbook of*

Modern Greek Politics (2020 ed.): *"The costs of postponing a bitter compromise appear low and this provides a strong incentive to political leaders to refrain from taking the necessary political risks. This poses substantial risks for the future..."*

Asymmetrical Conflicts

Most Greek Cypriots view the Cyprus conflict from the perspective that Turkey has always had the long-term objective to annex the northern part of Cyprus and that she can do so due to her size, geographical importance, and military strength vis-à-vis Cyprus and Greece, even though the latter are members of the European Union. Hence, they consider that there is very little they can do to change the situation.

There is some truth to this analysis, nevertheless, there have been points in time when the balance of power was more favourable to the Greek Cypriot side, as we have seen in the previous analysis.

Namely, after the Helsinki summit in 1999 which opened the door to Turkey's accession to the EU and gave her an incentive to negotiate. Therefore, in the view of many, despite the shortcomings of the Annan Plan, Greek Cypriots missed a golden opportunity to resolve the problem in 2004 within the agreed parameters of the UN resolutions and High-Level Agreements.

Researcher *Nathalie Tocci* makes a similar assessment looking at the process in her study *"The EU and Conflict Resolution. Promoting Peace in the Backyard"*: "*In Cyprus, the EU had all the cards in place to play an effective if not decisive role in conflict resolution. Cyprus' accession process imbued the Greek Cypriot community with a greater sense of security, which could have*

raised the willingness of the authorities to compromise with the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey. This seemed to be the case of the former Greek Cypriot leadership (Clerides Government) towards the end of its rule. The prospects of Cyprus' membership coupled with Turkey's accession process and the increasingly pressing conditionality on Ankara could also have induced greater moderation in Turkish Cypriots... Finally, Cyprus' accession process offered the UN Secretary General an alternative framework within which to formulate a loose federal proposal, as indeed happened through the Annan Plan. Yet all these positive changes either materialized sequentially and belatedly, or were hindered by mistrust, miscommunication, and domestic manipulation. (...) A new leadership in the Republic of Cyprus (Papadopoulos Government) used the gains of EU entry to legitimize rejectionism and manipulate the mechanisms of acquis enforcement to justify its stance. The EU which had kept out of negotiations, kept silent when its name was invoked to smear the UN plan."

Similarly, during the process leading up to the High Level Talks held in Crans-Montana in 2017, Turkey once more perceived an advantage in solving the Cyprus issue in order to secure her position as an energy hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, once again, the Greek Cypriot side shied away from making the necessary compromises to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

The EU card and consequently EU leverage vis-à-vis Turkey have been weakened, since it has been made clear to Turkey that she has no chance to become a full member of the EU. Even though Europe remains Turkey's biggest trading partner, Turkey has an important bargaining chip with almost 4 million refugees, mostly Syrian, who want desperately to move to Europe, and whom Europe is currently paying Turkey to keep in Turkey.

At the same time the EU, after the rejection of the Annan Plan and the failure of the High Level Talks in Crans-Montana, no longer believes that the Greek Cypriot side is serious about signing a solution. It is therefore neither willing nor able to do anything more than castigate Turkey verbally and impose limited sanctions on individuals.

The only way out of this deadlock would be to deal with the pending issues of conflict between Greece and Turkey over Exclusive Economic Zones, the energy issues, and the reunification of the island as a package, so that each party achieves some, though obviously not all, of its objectives. This would take courageous political leadership on all sides, coupled with an information campaign to educate public opinion in advance as to what is feasible and why it is more advantageous than the present stalemate.

CHAPTER 2

The Consequences of Long-term Conflict on Society

"Human beings are the most important thing in life, the rest is shadow."

LOOSELY TRANSLATED FROM THE KORAN.

"You ask me - what are the important things of the world? It is people, it is people, it is people."

MĀORİ SAYING.

Protracted conflicts have long-term effects on the societies that experience them, and on the individuals who live in these societies. The narrative which develops around the conflict puts all the blame for the conflict on the other side; these narratives are handed down from generation to generation through family stories, the educational system, the media, and to young males during their military service.

In Cyprus, the intercommunal tensions which started in the late 1950s, and that finally led to the total division of the island with the Turkish military intervention of 1974, means that there has been almost no contact between the two communities for the past fifty years.

This protracted lack of contact:

- has consolidated the enemy image and the de-humanization of the other,
- has enhanced the victim stance of both communities – all the blame for the conflict is placed on the other side,
- nationalistic political discourse is the order of the day; anyone who questions the political actions of his/her own side is branded as a traitor,
- independent political thought is frowned on and anyone who tries to explain the view of the other side is considered to have gone over to the other side,
- the media reproduces and encourages this nationalistic discourse, not only in relation to events of the past but also in relation to current developments.
- All the above are re-enforced by the historical baggage of the Greek-Turkish conflict as well as subsequent disputes, including the current on-going disputes over the Aegean and energy exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In other words, we have become locked into the narratives which we have developed over time and about which *Yuval Noah Harari* speaks so eloquently in his book *"21 Lessons for the 21st Century."* He points out that the only species that can cooperate beyond the family unit is the human species but to do this, human beings need a narrative to bind them together, to work for a common cause: *"Homo sapiens is a storytelling animal, that thinks in stories rather than in numbers or graphs and believes that the universe itself works like a story, replete with heroes and villains, conflicts and resolutions, climaxes, and happy endings. When we look for the meaning of life, we want a story that will explain what reality is all about and what is my particular role in*

the cosmic drama. This role defines who I am and gives meaning to all my experiences and choices."

So, it is not hard to see why it is so difficult to give up or change the narrative we have lived by and in, for so long. In addition, protracted ethnic conflicts feel like, and often are, existential conflicts for the parties involved.

Add to the above, the fact that many political careers have been built on the conflict and therefore have an interest in maintaining the status quo, and it is not hard to see why it is so difficult to show people that there really is more than one side to the story. It is so much more comfortable to believe that you are in the right than to take some of the blame for a situation.

As Louise Diamond so rightly points out *"Leaders tend to be older men still 'fighting the last war.' Really, I think they are unable to help their societies move forward because they are totally wrapped up in getting their needs met, their positions met and being justified in the torch they have been carrying, unable to see what their societies could look like if they truly led for peace." (Louise Diamond, President of Peace Tech interviewed by Julian Portilla in 2003 in "Beyond Intractability on-line learning.")*

Additionally, there are various groups in society who may have profited from the conflict, who fear that they will lose out if there is a solution and therefore have a stake in maintaining the conflict. Particularly, if it is a bloodless, frozen conflict as the situation in Cyprus has become. In such cases the status quo seems much more comforting than the fear of the unknown change to be brought about by a compromise solution.

Intercommunal reconciliation is particularly demanding because it often means:

- surrendering hatreds passed on for generations,

- releasing chosen narratives,
- relinquishing fantasies of vengeance,
- re-establishing relations which have been shattered by betrayal and brutality, and
- transcending feelings of humiliation and loss.

Just how difficult this process can be was brought home to me in one of our bi-communal workshops where we did an exercise called "A Walk Through History".

Greek and Turkish Cypriots were asked to make a timeline showing the major events related to the conflict in Cyprus:

The Greek Cypriot group decided to put the starting point in 1453 with the fall of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire. Not surprisingly in one sense, as the fall of the Byzantine Empire to Muslim invaders is still a point of reference for many Greeks, and a wound on the Greek psyche.

In contrast the Turkish Cypriot side chose the commencement of the struggle for *enosis*, union with Greece, in the 1950s as the starting point.

This example demonstrates the weight of the historical baggage that is often being carried in conflict situations. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the conflict in Northern Ireland are two other pertinent examples.

We also need to keep in mind that conflicts often start out with one set of goals (for instance in Cyprus the anti-colonial struggle against the British for union with Greece), but then new actors and new or revised agendas complicate things over time. Thus, conflicts that start as a clear confrontation between two parties metamorphose into more complicated situations with more parties and issues involved.

To use the example of Cyprus again, Turkish Cypriots and Turkey reacted to *enosis* with *taksim*, a call for partition of the island between Turkey and Greece.

Subsequently, under the 1960 constitution of the Republic of Cyprus which granted independence to the island, Britain, Greece, and Turkey became guarantor powers, a factor which Turkey used to justify her military operation in 1974.

The constitutional arrangements agreed on in 1960 created what was essentially a functional federation without territorial federal units.

However, the Greek Cypriots always ignored this fact and considered Cyprus to be a unitary state with guarantees for the Turkish minority; while Turkish Cypriots considered themselves to be co-founders of, and partners in, the new Republic, despite the large numerical difference in the two communities.

Even today the discourse of the Greek Cypriot leadership refers to one people made up of two main communities, whereas in the Turkish discourse reference is made to the two peoples who make up the population of the island.

Subsequently, another layer of complexity was added with the unilateral declaration of the "Turkish Cypriot Federated State" in 1975 later renamed the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" in 1983, for which the Turkish side demands recognition.

The history of the conflict continues with new layers of problems and disputes, the latest one being the dispute over natural gas and oil deposits discovered in the region.

In the case of Cyprus, outside players were involved from the very beginning as we have already seen in the historical outline. However, in addition, each conflict invites the intervention of other outside players who have interests in the outcome, thus complicating even further the already difficult initial conflict.

In his book "*Protracted Social Conflicts*" *Edward E. Azar* points out: "*To separate domestic and international is artificial – there is really only one social environment, and its domestic face is the more compelling: thus, there are international and national interests which actors manipulate and exchange in return for the opportunity of satisfying domestic needs, but not the other way around.*"

We have been able to observe the truth of this statement in the context of Cyprus. Despite the United Nations' long-standing involvement, including the personal involvement of successive Secretary Generals, when the moment arrives and decisions must be made, political leaderships make their decisions based on what they believe is in their political party's interest at the time, considering domestic public opinion rather than how the decision will play out in the international community or what is in the best interests of the country in the long-term.

One example of this was the referendum for the Annan Plan in 2004. Although the Communist Party of Cyprus (AKEL) favoured a solution and initially decided to support the plan, it changed its decision overnight because it was in a coalition government with President Tassos Papadopoulos' Democratic Party (DIKO,) a party that was against the plan.

AKEL did not want to lose the benefits of being in the coalition in power. It is also probable that Russia, which still influences AKEL even after the fall of the Soviet Union, encouraged this stance.

Despite its verbal support for a solution, Russia does not have an interest in the resolution of the Cyprus problem, since the tension between Greece and Turkey weakens NATO and works to Russia's advantage in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Power of Narratives

Political actors and the media, and now social media as well, shape the narratives within which we live and breathe. But as award winning writer *Salman Rushdie* points out: "*We need all of us, whatever our background, to constantly examine the stories inside which and with which we live. We all live in stories, so called grand narratives. Nation is a story. Religion is a story. Family is a story. Community is a story. We all live within and with these narratives. And it seems to me the definition of any living, vibrant society is that you constantly question those stories, that you constantly argue about the stories. The argument itself is freedom... When you can't retell for yourself the stories of your life then you live in a prison...Somebody else controls the story....*" *(Interview in "Point of Enquiry," 2006.)*

All societies need to re-examine their narratives. Greek and Turkish Cypriots need to examine their narratives of the conflict and realize that they are only being told one side of the story.

This is what *Mine Balman* has done in her groundbreaking documentary "*Beyond History Education*" *(2021)* showing how the educational systems of the two sides perpetuate the telling of partial truths about the events leading up to, during, and after 1974. Watching people interviewed from both sides in the film who grew up during this period recount how they were taught about the events, makes one feel that if only these two narrative could be joined together, they would give us a much more honest account of what happened.

Even societies which we do not think of as being societies in conflict, but in fact are, such as the USA, need to go through this process as *Paul Auster*, the well-known American author points out in an *interview with Lidja Haas in the Financial Times*

(27.1.2017). The gist of his argument is that at its best America is a noble idea; an open society, everyone can become an American, etc., etc. However, what is left out of the narrative is the reality that the US was born out of two crimes against humanity:

- The genocide of the indigenous Red Indian tribes which started when the first British colonials arrived in the New World and
- Slavery, which went on for hundreds of years.

He points out that "*the Germans, after the Second World War examined themselves and have atoned, really repented for what they turned into in the thirties and the horrors they committed. But I don't think America has ever examined itself closely enough. I mean these fights about the Confederate flag, in the 21st century are shocking to me. There's been no repentance.*"

And he goes on to say "*This is a poison inside the whole system. Unless we come to terms with the issue of slavery the conflict between races will persist. We are going to continue to be a flawed and tragic country.*" His words seem to be prophetic, particularly in view of the events on Capitol Hill on January 6th 2021.

The challenge is to convince political leaderships that this truth telling needs to happen. Just how difficult this can be is evidenced by the reaction to Critical Race Theory teaching in the US. In some states such as Florida it has been banned in public schools. Unless we educate public opinion about the multiple truths of any problematic situation, bringing about change or negotiating one's way out of a conflict is almost impossible.

How do we unpick these stories/narratives with which we have grown up, which recount the story from our side's point of

view and which, as we have seen, to some extent are necessary for us to be able to function as societies?

In fact, we do not have to give up our narrative, but learn to take on board other narratives, including those of the enemy, because like our own, all narratives contain partial truths.

The following chapters will outline the concepts and tools we need in order to broaden the narratives and take on board other people's narratives and truths.

Humanizing the "other"

From our experience in Cyprus, we can say that contact and listening to the "other's" story under the right conditions, can be important and helpful.

In Cyprus in 2003, the Turkish side unexpectedly opened a checkpoint and contact between the two communities suddenly became possible again after fifty years of virtually total separation.

People from both sides, gathered in long lines at the checkpoints and took the opportunity to revisit their old homes and in some cases to meet with neighbours of old. There were many touching stories of Turkish Cypriots, who had been settled into Greek Cypriot homes after 1974, who handed over personal items like photos and jewellery that they had kept for the original owners.

The initial enthusiasm waned when people realised that the places they were visiting had completely changed and were no longer the places they remembered. The amazing thing to note is that there were no violent incidents during this period.

However, as more checkpoints opened as part of confidence building measures, some people gradually started crossing for shopping and sight-seeing and even in some cases for work.

So, for many people like me who seek contact, moving back and forth between the two sides became a new and more fulfilling way of life. I made new Turkish Cypriot friends when I started to help a group of young teachers learning Greek, I was able to meet old friends for lunch or dinner, go to the bookshop that I used to go to with my mother when I was a little girl, and visit areas of Cyprus that I knew as a child.

At the same time many refused and still refuse to cross. In the case of Greek Cypriots, because the procedure involves showing one's ID, which some people feel implies recognition of what they consider to be an illegal state. In the case of some Greek and Turkish Cypriots, because they are fearful of what might happen to them if they cross, even though there have been no significant violent incidents since the checkpoints opened.

Nevertheless, although the opening of check points (there are now a total of seven crossing points) is considered a confidence building measure and despite the lack of any serious incidents taking place since the openings, because the contacts between people are mostly superficial, opening check points have had no significant effect in increasing levels of trust between the parties to the conflict or in influencing the narratives around the conflict. Superficial contact by itself is not sufficient to achieve this.

The Trauma of Violence

The legacy of conflict is both traumatised societies and individuals. The cost of violent conflict on traumatised survivors is generally overlooked. We count the dead after a conflict, but we forget about the "living dead" that survive the conflict but are often scarred for life. We now have a name for this, post traumatic

stress syndrome (PTS) but not all suffers are able to get access to treatment.

We also forget that this trauma is passed on from generation to generation in many long standing ethnic conflicts. The role of official narratives and school curricula in this process comes across clearly in Mine Balman's documentary mentioned earlier. Her interviewees, who grew up after 1974, describes their anxiety on meeting someone from the other community when studying abroad. As well as how surprised they were when they finally got to know each other and, in some cases, even became friends.

A classic film on the traumatic effect of violence on an individual is "Born on the Fourth of July" (1989) which recounts the story of Ron Kovic, a suburban New York teenager who, in the 1960s, enlists in the Marines and goes to Vietnam, believing it to be his patriotic duty. During a retreat he accidentally kills a fellow soldier and later becomes permanently paralysed in battle. Returning home to an uncaring Veterans Administration bureaucracy and to politicians on both sides of the political divide who do not understand what he has been through, Kovic turns into an impassioned critic of the war. He continues till today to work for veterans. He stated recently in a note on WhatsApp that in the greater Los Angeles area alone there are more than 4,000 homeless veterans.

A more recent film entitled the "Last Full Measure" (2019) also shows the devastating effects of PTS on veterans, who never really come to terms with what they have experienced and are unable to live fulfilling lives, simply surviving by drifting from day to day.

Nobel Prize winning author *Toni Morrison* gives us an understanding of what it is like carry within you the horrors of war

in her book entitled *"Home" (2012)*. African American Korean War veteran Frank Money, in addition to coping with PTS, is discharged from an integrated army to return to a segregated southern US. He is saved from a life of drifting by the fact that he has to search for his sister who has disappeared. He eventually finds her living in the house of a white doctor who is carrying out medical experiments on her (something which actually occurred in 1950's America.) They are finally able to move back home together both deeply scarred by what they have been through.

In many of his novels *Salmon Rushdie* provides deep insights into the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India and the subsequent Partition of the sub-continent. With his sardonic eye and inimitable style, in the following excerpt from his novel *"Shalimar the Clown"* he provides a graphic description of the dead-end created by war, both for the combatants and the land fought over, in this case in the context of the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir:

"When he returned from the war of 1965 Colonel H. K. was once more a changed man... War whose highest purpose was the creation of clarity where none existed, the noble clarity of victory and defeat, had solved nothing. There had been little glory and much wasteful dying. Neither side had made good its claim to this land or gained more than the tiniest patches of territory. The coming of peace left things in worse shape than they had been before the twenty five days of battle. This was peace with more embitterment, peace with mutual contempt. For Colonel K., however, there was no peace because the war raged on interminably in his memory, every moment of it replaying itself at every moment of every day, the livid green dampness of the trenches, the choking golf ball of fear in the throat, the shell bursts like lethal palm fronds in the sky, the sour grimaces of passing bullets, the iridescence of wounds and mutilations, the incandescence of death."

This description will also apply aptly I believe to the Russian - Ukrainian conflict when it finally ends: *"There had been little glory and much wasteful dying. Neither side had made good its claim to this land or gained more than the tiniest patches of territory. The coming of peace left things in worse shape than they had been before the.... days of battle."*

Similarly, listening to the accounts of the survivors of the latest round of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, which ended in a cease fire in November 2020 one is again reminded of the previously quoted words of *Salmon Rushdie's* character Colonel K. Following the ceasefire agreement borders have been redrawn, people have had to move and relocate from their villages, and there is one village which has been divided down the middle. Is this really peace or just a temporary hiccup before more violence?

In the case of Syria, the expulsion of the Rohingya, and the suppression of the Uighur, to name just a few current examples of conflict, we have to ask what sort of psychological legacy has been left to the survivors, particularly the child survivors, of these brutal violent conflicts, and what sort of legacy has been left to the world by the creation of so many traumatised refugee communities.

Even in the case of Northern Ireland, normally considered a success story, twenty years after the signing of the peace agreement although most of the agreement has been implemented, sectarian tensions endure. Less than 10% of students attend religiously integrated schools, social interaction remains limited, and dozens of "peace walls" divide Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods in the city. And this despite the countless NGOs' reconciliation projects to overcome the divide.

One reason for this may well be because in Northern Ireland a comprehensive approach to dealing with the legacy of past vio-

lence and with perpetrators has never been developed, nor has there ever been an investigation of the role of the British Security Services during what are euphemistically described as "the troubles". It is possible that truth telling along the lines of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission might have been helpful here in overcoming the trauma and legacy of violence between the two communities.

In Cyprus too, many peace activists believe that creating a format to allow truth telling is a necessary element needed to fill in the one-sided narratives on both sides and to bring about reconciliation to enable people to accept a negotiated settlement. The role of truth telling and aplogy will be discussed further, in later chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Starting the conversation: techniques for Conflict Resolution and Consensus Building

"You must be the change that you want to see in the world."

MAHATMA GANDHİ

"Don't wait for a Gandhi, don't wait for a King, don't wait for a Mandela. You are your own Gandhi; you are your own King."

LEYMAH GBOWEE, LIBERİAN ACTIVIST, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2011

The need to develop a more consensual culture and to build bridges of communication between communities, religions, interest groups, and nations becomes more and more pressing by the day as we witness the outbreak of ever more armed conflicts all around the world, as well as the rise in extremist movements, which aim to impose their ideology or value system on others using violence and force.

So far, our response to these conflicts has been restricted to countering force with force, or in the best-case scenario with international diplomacy and formal negotiations.

Almost nothing has been done to address the fundamental economic imbalances in the current world order, both between

and within countries, which are a root cause of conflict. These social inequalities have both been driving the Covid-19 pandemic and have been further starkened and highlighted by the pandemic.

The bigger the political problems are, the more you need people working together to solve them. Multilateral solutions are something we need to strive for despite the difficulties, but will we realize this before it is too late?

The indications are not promising. In many countries, even in Europe, we see a trend moving back towards protectionism and nationalism. In others, like Latin America for example, the Covid-19 crisis has shown up the fundamental weaknesses of many Latin American states. This is the opportunity to make improvements and reforms which have been discussed for years, but surveys show that trust for politicians is at an all-time low. Will new leaders emerge with the needed macro-vision to face these challenges? One can only hope that this will be the case.

As many distinguished thinkers and writers have pointed out, this is the time for the world to re-think itself; to tackle the huge problems ahead which we were facing before the pandemic, but which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and further by the war in Ukraine. In addition to enlightened leadership at home, we need cooperation at a global level.

This is the situation at the macro-level, but one can also approach the problem from the bottom-up, by looking at how we can encourage citizen action towards cooperation, cohesion, and reconciliation through training in the appropriate techniques. And that is the focus of this chapter.

To move from the general to the specific, I would like to illustrate what I mean by looking at the case of Cyprus and the work of citizen peacebuilders and bi-communal activists in their efforts to build bridges of communication in a divided island.

In the early 1990s, the Cyprus Peace Centre, headed by Costas Shammas, brought Conflict Resolution expert Louise Diamond to Cyprus. Louise had worked in other conflict areas. The idea was to see if she could bring her expertise to Cyprus and train Cypriots from both communities to conduct conflict resolution workshops on their own and provide training to the wider society. With the help of Fatma Azgın, Costas Shammas' counterpart from the Turkish Cypriot community, participants from both communities and funding for the project were found. The first workshops were held mono-communally, and these were subsequently followed by bi-communal trainings.

In the previous chapter, we looked at the consequences of long, drawn-out conflicts on society. How does one start to break down stereotypes and build bridges of communication in such situations?

"The question, 'what is it like to be you?' is a powerful starting point for building bridges between people.

Would I have done things differently if I were in your shoes? If I were in the totality of your circumstances?

When we look into the eyes of the other- without looking away- the labels start to come off."

FROM "ON COMPASSION, UPLIFT TV."

Thus, the starting point is to really listen to the other and for this most of us need training.

Communication skills training/Active listening.

"We need to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard."

HARRIET LERNER, PSYCHOLOGIST

Very often when we talk to others, particularly when it is something political that we feel strongly about, we do not really listen to what the other is saying, because we are too busy preparing our response to counter their argument. What we are having is not really a dialogue, but a debate.

Active listening is one of the most important life skills one can acquire for conflict resolution or mediation however, it is one of the hardest things to do in real life situations. It means turning off your internal voice, suspending your own thought process for a while and really focusing on what the other is saying; checking that you have really understood by paraphrasing, and not jumping to conclusions. Then when your turn comes to speak you need to respond honestly and allow the other person to check out your meaning, thus engaging in a dialogue and not a debate; (which is what those of us who were in debating societies at school or university, like myself, were so proud of learning to do).

Real understanding of how the other side perceives the situation leads to a breaking down of stereotypes, leads you to see the other as a real person and not just "the other," and opens the possibility of exploring new options together.

To sum up we need active listening:

- to gain information about the other, (so that we do not assume we know where the other is coming from)
- to make the other feel heard, and therefore fully respected as an individual
- to break the cycle of argument
- to help the other listen to you
- to promote a change in attitudes
- to improve the relationship

How do we achieve this? In our trainings we did an exercise in small groups discussing a given topic. One person was the speaker, the other the listener and the third the observer/note-taker who gave feedback on whether the techniques described below were being applied by the speaker and listener. Then we all changed roles.

These were the things we learned to look out for:

Listening: Understanding how the other makes sense to him/herself

The first step in the process is to centre yourself and truly focus on the other person in order to fully understand what they are telling you. This means you have to:

1) Give the speaker your full and undivided attention.

- Listen for meanings, feelings, and values – how does the issue make sense to them, what are their emotions, what is important to them.
- Use clarifying statements or questions to make sure that you have understood e.g.: "Are you saying that...?;" "What do you mean by...?"; "Let us see if I understand what you are saying..."; "It sounds like you are saying... is that what you mean?

2) Check out assumptions – about interpretations of body language, about what you imagine is the thought or belief behind the statement. In order to do this you need to:

- Ask open-ended questions to expand the communication e.g.: "Could you say more about that?;" "How might

that look/ What would help that happen?"; "How do you make sense of that/ feel about that?"

- Suspend or release your own reactions and judgements to be fully present to the other – comments about "should" or "should not," "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad" impede the flow of further genuine communication.
- Similarly, remember that moving the conversation to what it reminds you of in your own life can stop the sharing before it is complete.

Levelling: Letting the other know how you make sense to yourself

Speak the truth from your own experience:

- Say what you know from your own life, not what you hear others say, or what you believe others want you to say.
- Share, at whatever level of risk you feel comfortable with, your thoughts, feelings, hopes, needs, and concerns – without expectation that the other should respond in a specific way.
- Speak for yourself – If you speak collectively allow room for the possibility that others in the room may have other opinions.
- Acknowledge the assumptions that underlie your opinions, distinguish between opinions and truth.
- Distinguish loaded questions from questions that truly seek information.

In short:
Focus on the other person.
Turn down your internal voice. Do not be judgmental.
Check that you have understood.
Watch your body language/ facial expressions.

Communication Blocks

One of the most frequently used phrases in a discussion and one of the biggest blocks to communication is the phrase "Yes, but....." It is a block because without realizing it when we use it we are immediately negating what the other person has been telling us. Difficult as this may be in practice, we need to learn to use the phrase "Yes, and....." which acknowledges the other perspective and then adds our own, thus completing the picture.

Lessons from a Hostage Negotiator

Once again the importance of listening was brought home to me by *Jack Cambria*, a former NYPD hostage negotiator, in his presentation entitled "*Verbal De-escalation and Crisis Communication*" in an online seminar for the *Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre*.

Surely, there can be no more harrowing or critical a conversation than that between a hostage negotiator and a hostage taker because in this situation lives are at stake. So it is not surprising that *"Talk to Me"* is the slogan of the NYPD hostage negotiators team.

As Cambria points out, a basic human need is to understand and be understood. So, the main characteristic of a good hostage

negotiator who is working in situations of high tension and often anger, is listening skills. Their rule of thumb is: "Listen 80% of the time, talk only 20% of the time."

He also stresses the importance of ethics, namely, telling the truth and empathetic attentive listening.

When you are facing verbal abuse or anger it is not helpful to follow your natural impulse and respond with anger. You need to find out why the other person is feeling this intense anger in order to be able to defuse the situation.

He stresses: "Control your emotion or your emotion will control you." High rationality and emotion cannot easily co-exist, so you should not let an impulsive reaction betray your intelligence. One needs to ask oneself is this the right response to this situation.

And finally, as he points out, since a basic human need is to understand and to be understood, most people will respond positively to **respect.** Something we often forget, because usually we do not respect the people with whom we are in conflict.

In summary a good (hostage) negotiator needs to know how to handle verbal abuse, not allow an impulsive reaction to betray their intelligence, ask themselves is this the right response to the situation, and know themselves, their strengths, and weaknesses.

The points made by this experienced hostage negotiator are equally valid for anyone entering a conversation with "the other."

Acknowledging Partial Validity

Practising active listening leads one to acknowledge that we do not know everything there is to know about the issue we are discussing.

As *Bruce Patton* points out in his book *"On Negotiation"*: *"Most people who feel strongly about their views on some issue tend to react to those who disagree, either by concluding that the dissenters have thought less deeply about the issue or that they are looking out for narrow self-interest of some kind, thinking that these people tend to collect evidence to support their position and to ignore or explain away conflicting information.*

It is usually more accurate and more educational to assume that people with strongly held but opposing views are seeing things about the situation that you do not, things that you would probably consider significant if you saw them too. You still might not, and quite likely would not, agree with the other side's view, but in part that will be because you see some things that they do not. Understanding both sides may lead you both to adopt a third improved view."

In their book *"Compassionate Conversations: How to Speak and Listen from the Heart"* the authors *Diane Musho Hamilton, Kimberly Myosai Loh, and Gabriel Menegale Wilson* take the integral view that all perspectives are **true but partial**. None of us has absolute claim to the whole truth. We need one another to enrich our understanding of reality through receiving other points of view first, instead of advocating for our own.

We become habituated to the familiar, we tend to become rigid in our beliefs. What is the broader possible approach? Through compassionate listening we can soften and become more porous to accept other views. We can include more perspectives and points of view and **learn to hold more truths than one at the same time.**

All the techniques which have been mentioned earlier are necessary pre-requisites for compassionate listening. However,

technique is not enough, the added component here is that we need to listen with an **open mind and a compassionate heart.**

Jack Cambria, the hostage negotiator to whom I referenced earlier, also reminds us that **"your truth is not the only truth,"** and that arrogance is often a camouflage for insecurity. What applies in the tensest and most demanding of all negotiations, namely hostage negotiation, applies to negotiation in general. Empathy, compassion, and respect for the other are essential.

Listening to the Other Person's Story/ Humanizing the other

One of the most powerful experiences in the conflict resolution workshops we attended was the exercise of listening to the personal story of how the conflict had impacted the life of a person from the other side.

In my case my Turkish Cypriot counterpart, who happened to be working in a semi-government organisation at the time, described the fear he experienced on July 15th 1974, the day of the military coup in Cyprus.

He was terrified that, as a Turkish Cypriot, he could have been detained either by the military or Greek Cypriot irregulars if they came upon him, and he had to get back to his home in the Turkish quarter in another town, any way he could. He described his ordeal on that day to me in detail, how he moved from one area to another, keeping out of the way of military patrols and dangerous areas until he eventually managed to get home. By listening to him describe his experience I could understand and experience the terror he had lived through on that day.

When my turn came I was able to describe to him the fear I experienced the day of the coup, as my family were put under house arrest because my father was an associate of President Makarios, and the fear I experienced when the Turkish military operation began.

We both became aware that the fear, pain, and suffering experienced by people on both sides was, and still is, equally traumatic to the individuals involved. We realised we do not want future generations to experience what we had lived through and decided to try and find a better way forward.

Humanizing the other means that the "other" is no longer the enemy or the "other" but a human being with feelings like your own.

The Iceberg Theory: Positions, Interests, Needs

In order to be able to solve a conflict we need to know how to analyse it. In our conflict resolution training we used the Iceberg Theory to make the crucial distinction between positions, interests, and needs.

When we look at an iceberg, we know that only one-third is visible above the surface and that the remaining two-thirds are below. This is a useful analogy which can be applied to conflicts:

- At the tip of the iceberg are the stated **POSITIONS** of the two sides which are competing and mutually exclusive.
- Under the surface are the **INTERESTS** of the two sides, influenced by history, perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, feelings, fears, wounds, hopes, and aspirations which underlie the stated positions.

- And even deeper below are the **NEEDS** of the two sides. Basic human needs are common to everyone, they are non- negotiable, but satisfiable and mutually interdependent; such as respect for identity, physical security, the ability to meet our economic requirements.

All of these elements need to be unpacked and examined for a successful resolution of conflict and negotiation to take place. So, the basic questions we need to ask are:

1. What are the needs and/or interests that the other party's positions are trying to secure?
2. And in parallel, what are our needs/interests that our positions are trying to secure?
3. Can we find alternative ways of satisfying these needs which will be acceptable to the other side?

In order to move forward in solving conflicts we need to focus on interests and needs, not positions, and to create new options as to how we could satisfy those interests and needs without forsaking our own.

To do this successfully it is important to discover the other side's perception of our behaviour, do they understand it in the same way as we do? Getting to the heart of perceptions is crucial because very often the perception or understanding of the other side as to what is being said or intended is different to what the speaker intends to say or believes they are saying. We tend to jump to conclusions about what the other side is asking for and what the other side needs.

To give a simplistic, basic example from our workshops: two sisters were fighting over an orange. Their mother suggested

that they halve it, but that did not satisfy them, and they went on fighting. Eventually she thought to ask them what they wanted to do with it. It turned out that one wanted to make juice and the other wanted to bake a cake and use the zest from the skin!

The moral of the story: if you find out the real needs and interests of the other side then you can produce creative solutions which can satisfy both sides.

As one of my fellow trainer colleagues Bekir Azgın said in one of our sessions: the ideal situation is working together for long enough so that you look at the problem as something to be tackled jointly and not as though you are two opposing sides. This can happen when both sides become so sensitive to the needs of the other that they try to propose solutions that will meet the other's needs as well as their own.

A Walk Through History

In every conflict each side has a narrative about who started the conflict, what the conflict is about, what a fair solution would entail. Hence the usefulness of having each side set down in parallel what they see as being the major incidents in the conflict from the starting point to the present time.

This exercise shows which events in the conflict are considered of major importance to each side and how they interpret these events. In this way, as already mentioned in Chapter 2, you can learn a lot about how each side perceives the causes and the development of the conflict. In the case of the Cyprus conflict in one workshop, when we did the exercise, the Greek Cypriot group dated the start of the Cyprus conflict from the fall of Constantinople!

This is not as strange as it at first seems and reveals a lot about the scars which the fall of the Byzantine Empire have left on the collective Greek psyche, and that are passed on from one generation to another through the teaching of history in schools.

This in turn creates a threat in the mind of Turkish Cypriots that the "Megali Idea" the idea of an expanded Greece, which would include the Anatolian coast, is not yet dead and buried. An idea which from the Turkish point of view is re-enforced by the fact that in Greek, Istanbul is still called Constantinople. In the discussion, a Turkish Cypriot colleague stated that in her mind this indicated that Greeks still feel they have a claim on the city. She has a point, because there are some Greeks who are still waiting for "the white race" (meaning the Russians) to come along at some time in the future and help them "liberate Constantinople."

The value of doing this exercise is that it allows you both to clarify your own ideas and to see how the other side perceives the role of your side in generating the conflict. Looking at the layers of narratives that have been built up around long-standing conflicts is the first step to un-picking these narratives and separating fact from fiction. Who believes what? Is it still realistic to believe these narratives? Does my side really believe them? Does the other side still believe that my side believes them?

The Spiritual Element

Realising that we are all connected, that the other has the same fundamental needs as you, and that if you were in their shoes you would probably act in the same way, is a vital realisation if we are going to solve conflicts.

Also important, is believing that each person can make a difference and that major changes start from small beginnings. Conflict resolution training can give you this realisation because you can see and experience for yourself the changes taking place in yourself and in other members of the group; or in some cases the resistance to change.

In one of our Cypriot workshops a hardliner, who must have been having difficulties accepting the new learnings, was indisposed for three days when his throat swelled up and he could not speak. Surely a classic psychosomatic reaction to the new information, but more importantly, the new experiences and feelings he was trying so hard to resist.

As *Judge Daniel Weinstein*, one of the fathers of mediation in the USA, points out," *mediation is a process whereby we understand what is not at a conscious level; it is meditation, mindfulness and it takes us into areas of thought unknown to us, a place where consciousness expands, and magic can happen."*

Ubuntu, the African philosophy of oneness, an understanding of the interrelatedness of life, is another potential point of entry into this mindset. A person can only be a person through others: *"I am because you are."* We are each able to become more because of our interaction with others.

Or to quote Jack Cambria, hostage negotiator again *"embrace the difficult people of this world because ultimately they become our greatest teachers."*

The Importance of Levelling and Vulnerability

Research Professor *Brené Brown* has spent twenty years studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. Her acclaimed *TED*

talk on Vulnerability is one of the five most watched talks with thirty-five million views. She defines vulnerability as the emotion we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.

All of these are present during conflict resolution dialogues. Vulnerability is not about winning or losing, it is about having the courage to show up when you cannot control the outcome. As Brené Brown points out, it is an essential component of courage, authenticity, and connection, all of which are vital ingredients for solving conflicts and building consensus.

Vulnerability means that we have the courage to do something first without being sure what the response will be; it means taking risks. It means having the courage of telling the story of who you are with your whole heart, being compassionate to yourself and others, and building connections as a result of authenticity. You are who you are, and you are enough.

We need to trust to be vulnerable, and we need to be vulnerable in order to build trust. This is a slow process; we need to test the waters to determine whom we can trust.

The conflict resolution workshop environment is conducive to building trust because it is made clear at the outset that Chatham House rules apply, that what is said in the room stays in the room and no attributions are made without prior permission.

At the same time, because both vulnerability and trust are expressed in the workshop environment, the level of trust between group members is high and carries on being so, in many cases, beyond the workshop environment.

Reframing

Everyone has a different way of looking at things which for them is valid. This was brought home vividly to us in one of the exercises we did during the conflict resolution workshops.

We were asked to look at a black and white drawing and then asked what we had seen. About half the group said it was a drawing of an old woman, while the rest said it was a drawing of a young woman. We were then asked to refocus and try and see the opposite of what we had first seen. All of us eventually were able to distinguish the opposite figure in the same drawing, it was just a question of focus.

In the case of verbal statements, we need to look beyond the original wording to determine the speaker's actual wants and needs. Then we can recast the statement in neutral language or in an interests-based way, in the same way as we looked at the picture in the exercise, with a new set of eyes.

So, the first step is to get each party to understand their frame, and to become aware that it is just that: **a frame**. Then each of us can appreciate that people have different frames that are for them, valid. That way one can accept that no one has the sole "right" frame and one can then move on to equitably explore similarities and differences in the way we look at events. Reframing is an essential step which allows us to produce new options.

Noticing

The human tendency to wear blinders and focus on what we know or think we know means that we tend to focus on a limit-

ed set of information. However, the additional information that we miss is essential to making successful decisions.

Harvard Professor *Max Bazerman* author of *"The Power of Noticing: What the Best Leaders See"* demonstrates this dramatically by showing his students a clip of basketball players playing ball. He asks the audience to say how many players there are in the picture and because everyone focuses on the players, myself included when I did the exercise, almost everyone fails to see the woman with the umbrella who walks across the screen behind the players.

To deal successfully with conflict we need to expand our vision and take on board all the relevant information from both sides as well as how they interpret it.

Bazerman recommends that:

- We widen the frame by asking for more information.
- That like Sherlock Holmes in the "Hound of the Baskervilles" we remember the dogs that do not bark; that is noticing something that is not apparent. What you see is not all there is, we often need to look deeper and further.
- Look out for "failures of imagination," that is having enough information, but ignoring or overlooking the most relevant (as in the clip with the basketball players.)

If we keep these points in mind, this will help us to look at other options, to widen and reframe the issues, and to think out of the box.

Brain Storming, Producing New Options, Thinking Out of the Box

The whole aim of getting a deeper understanding of the other side's needs is to enable fresh thinking about possible options that could satisfy their needs without damaging your own. Essentially this is the same tool used by mediators, a technique which we will be looking at in a subsequent chapter.

As an illustration of what I mean I would like to look at the conflict between Greece and Turkey which arose when Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan decided to reconvert Agia Sophia into a mosque.

The decision taken by President Erdoğan, changed a decision taken by Kemal Atatürk in 1935 by which Agia Sophia, which had been functioning as a mosque till that date, was converted into a museum.

From the Greek point of view, given the sensitivity around the fall of Constantinople mentioned earlier and given the present tensions between the two countries over the Aegean, this seemed like a slap in the face and Erdoğan's decision was perceived as a provocative action.

The fact of the matter is that it is within the power and competence of the Turkish state to decide this issue. No amount of protest by Orthodox and other Christians around the world was going to change the decision.

It is also important to note that Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror so admired Agia Sophia that he converted it into a mosque after the fall of Constantinople. The architectural style was emulated by Ottoman mosques for the next 1000 years, and it remained the most important mosque in the city until the Sultan Ahmed Mosque was built in 1616. This indicates its significance to Islam.

Of course the behaviour of the two sides was predictable given the current state of the relationship between the two countries. The protests from Greece supported by other Christian countries were an expected reaction.

However I would like to suggest an alternative possible approach: what would have been the outcome I wonder if, instead of lambasting this development, the Greek government and the Orthodox Church had welcomed the fact that Agia Sophia was to be restored as a religious site, since throughout the centuries it has served both as a place of Christian and Muslim worship?

In this context they could have suggested that in addition to Agia Sophia being used for Muslim Friday prayers, that it be used to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas and Easter services. Thus, setting an example of how different faiths can harmoniously co-exist worshiping Allah/God each in their own way.

Had the Greek government and Greek Orthodox Church taken this approach there would, I believe, have been wide support from the international community and it might have been difficult for President Erdoğan to refuse such a request.

Even if he had not accepted such a suggestion, it would have been a more diplomatic approach than to imply that reconverting a site used as a mosque from 1541 to 1935 was a sacrilegious act.

Having been in politics for a number of years myself I am conscious of how difficult it is to break out of the cycle of responding forcefully to what is considered as provocation, but this in my view, is what distinguishes true leaders from politicians.

Cultivating Creative Thinking

> "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but seeing with new eyes."
>
> *MARCEL PROUST*

In an online seminar given by *Inbal Arieli*, Israeli entrepreneur and author of the book *"Chutzpah: Why Israel is the Hub of Innovation and Entrepreneurship"*, explains her theory of the Israeli success story with start-ups. She attributes this success, in a large part, to the Israeli educational model which, starting from kindergarten teaches children to deal with "balagan", that is "mess" or "chaos" in Hebrew, and consequently encourages creative thinking out of the box.

To demonstrate what she meant she showed pictures of a typical Israeli nursery school yard, which looked like a junk yard, with various discarded objects lying around. The point was to encourage children to exercise their creativity. She contrasted this with a European playground for children where everything is orderly and controlled.

In accordance with the Israeli model, children are part of the real world, and they need to react to real things. One should not limit their creativity by telling them what to do with the things. They need to learn to manage risk, and this environment forces children to work together to create something. *"There is an 'I' in the 'we', mistakes are an inseparable part of success, as is falling and getting up again,"* Arieli explains.

Controlled chaos breeds mental agility and improvisation and serves as a backdrop for the uniquely Israeli response of optimism, resilience, and breakthrough innovation, according to Arieli.

Even during military service, a similar approach is taken. Recruits are encouraged to tinker with their weapons and make improvements for themselves, known as "shiftzur". In Israel, the phrase "rosh gadol" which means "big head" or "think big" is a positive attribute as in "do not just do as you are told, think big!".

My point of course is not about entrepreneurship, important as that is, but about problem solving, learning to work as a team and thinking out of the box, all of which are necessary for successful conflict resolution.

It is unfortunate that, in the area of conflict resolution, Israeli governments have not been so successful, because like most other nations in conflict they are locked into their "righteous narrative" and cannot accept the other side's truth and take on board their side of the story.

Cultural Identity and Differences

> "You have your way; I have my way. As for the correct way and the only way, it does not exist."
>
> *FRIEDRİCH NIETZSCHE*

Culture can be defined as a patterned way of thinking shared by a group. There are of course many different types of culture: national culture, religious cultures, sub-cultures, organisational cultures, family cultures, and so on. Of course, no culture is monolithic, since there are multiple stories in each culture, cultures are multi-dimensional, and everyone brings their own take to their culture.

Even though we all say that we know we need to be respectful of the other's culture, this often proves extremely difficult in

practice, because we are so convinced that our own world view is the correct one and should be taken on board by all others.

An example of lack of sensitivity to cultural nuances are the cartoons of Mohammed published first in a Danish newspaper and later reprinted in the French journal Charlie Hebdo. The issue both in Denmark and in France was considered purely as an issue of freedom of speech, but this in my view is too simplistic an approach. Irrespective of the right to freedom of speech and the fact that there are no blasphemy laws in France, publishing these cartoons indicates a lack of awareness of the sensitivities of Muslims, who do not depict religious figures in any form, let alone as cartoons.

It is important to keep in mind the words of the philosopher *Edmund Burke*: *"The restraints on men as well as their rights are to be reckoned among their rights."*

The right to freedom of speech has to be balanced against the damage caused by hate speech which denigrates individuals on the basis of membership of a social group identified by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical or mental disability. Even if the cartoons do not classify as hate speech, it is difficult to understand what useful purpose they could serve as a starting point for a discussion about Islam, which was the reason given for the cartoons by the Danish newspaper that first published them.

This does not in any way justify the terrorist attacks carried out by Muslim fundamentalists as reprisals. Nor is it an argument in favour of complete cultural relativism. Cultural practices such as female circumcision (genital mutilation) which are harmful to those who are subjected to them, need to be changed. Cultural sensitivity ends where physical or mental damage is caused to individuals, groups, or the environment by the practice in question.

In this context I believe it is worth mentioning that the **Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security** has developed a practical tool the "*Islam and Negotiation Action Guide*" for negotiators to ensure women's rights are understood in settings where Islam informs the perspectives of the parties. The toolkit offers non-Muslim negotiators and mediators a better understanding of the central Islamic values that play a role in the negotiation and mediation process. The guide covers issues of education, employment, and women's mobility.

Just how difficult cultural co-existence can be, even in the context of loving relationships, was brought home to me when I read the novel "Ali and Nino." It tells the story of a Muslim boy Ali, and Nino, a Christian Georgian girl with a sophisticated European background, who grow up together in Baku, the oil-rich capital of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century. They fall in love during their childhood and manage to marry. Changes of circumstance mean they have to live with Ali's relatives in Persia for a while, where Nino finds it extremely difficult to adjust to the traditional role of a Muslim woman in purdah. Later, when they finally return to Azerbaijan, the liberation struggle breaks out, and Ali feels he must stay and fight for Azerbaijani independence. He sends Nino and their child to safety in Georgia, while he remains in Baku, eventually losing his life in the independence struggle.

It is not so much the story itself, as the understanding of how deeply our cultural background influences us and how difficult it is to totally accept another culture, which is so distinctive about this book. For many years, the true identity of the author of the book, who used the pseudonym Kurban Said, was unknown. Recent research indicates that the writer was probably Lev Nussimbaum, a Jew born in Baku in 1905, who had a passion for the Orient and in his youth converted to Islam. This diverse background

presumably accounts for his wonderful insights into the many cultures he describes, and which co-existed in Baku at that time.

Humiliation as a Cause of Violence

One of the most powerful human needs is the need for dignity. Attacks on our identity are perceived as attacks on our dignity, leading to feelings of humiliation. When people feel repeatedly humiliated some react in the most brutal way.

Europeans today fail to realise the humiliation they imposed on the people they occupied under colonialism because they are taught a sanitized version of colonial history in their schools. Then they also fail to realise the sensitivities of immigrant groups who migrated to European countries for a better life after colonialism ended.

No European country has ever apologised for colonial rule, even though the prosperity of European countries was built to a large extent on colonial exploitation, and reparations have never been paid.

Shashi Tharoor in his book *"Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India"* examines in detail the effects of British colonialism in India. The book followed on from an Oxford Union debate in 2015 entitled "Does Britain owe reparations to its colonies?" that went viral on the web. It estimates the amount of money the British Empire made from India during its almost 400 years of colonial rule as $45 trillion, an amount almost 17 times the current GDP of Britain and India combined.

More importantly however, he describes the arrogance of British colonialists towards the Indian population, which was probably even more damaging to the collective psyche than the economic exploitation.

Younger generations of Europeans, who have no experience of colonialism, should not forget this negative legacy which they have inherited; they need to be taught the truth about colonialism and not romanticised versions of history. As Booker Prize winning author *Bernardine Evaristo*, who is of mixed Nigerian and British heritage said in a *BBC Hard Talk interview*, British school children need to be taught British history "warts and all".

European countries colonized in order to exploit and not to civilize, as is so powerfully depicted in *Joseph Conrad's* classic novel "*Out of Darkness*" based on his own experiences in the Belgian Congo; and in a much more recent book *"Afterlives"* by the 2021 Tanzanian Nobel Prize Winner *Abdulrazak Gurnah* which describes the harshness of German colonialism in East Africa.

Equally, Europeans need to realise that it is this history of colonialism which has led to large scale migration to former colonial powers like Britain and France. The fact that these new citizens are still predominantly the underdogs or disadvantaged groups in their new countries should also not be forgotten.

I emphasise that to try to understand is not to justify or condone violence; it means just that, to understand and explain the reasons for what takes place so that one can make the appropriate interventions, which may begin with an acknowledgement of past wrongs and an in depth dialogue as to how they could be corrected, as outlined in Chapter 6 on Humiliation, Apology and Forgiveness.

Interfaith Dialogue

Religion is a factor which needs to be considered in all conflict situations, since the statistics show that 84% of the world's population describe themselves as believers.

According to *Prof. Peter Mandaville of George Mason University,* religion entered international relations as a topic of consideration at the end of the Cold War, initially as a problem to be delt with e.g., freedom of religion, religious terrorism etc.

More recently however there has been a reframing of the issue with the realisation that engagement with religious actors by diplomats has great potential in helping to solve problems. So, as he points out, there is a need for increased religious literacy among diplomats.

It is also important to right-size religion – where does religion play a part and where does it not play a part, even though it may seem to? Cyprus is an interesting case in point.

Historically, the Greek Orthodox Church in Ottoman times was the representative of the Greek community on the island and as such the Ethnarchy have always played a role in politics. They were closely identified with the struggle against the British for union with Greece, and the first President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios was both head of the Church and head of the State.

As Turkish Cypriot participants rightly pointed out in the conflict resolution workshops, the Orthodox Church continued to play a role in Cypriot politics after independence and continues to do so to this day, encouraging the use of nationalistic symbols and discourse. Thus, in Turkish Cypriot eyes the Church plays a negative role vis-à-vis the Cyprus problem. In contrast the Turkish Cypriot community is a predominantly secular community along the lines advocated by Atatürk, and consequently faith is confined to the personal sphere.

Despite the influx of settlers from mainland Turkey and a deliberate policy of the Erdoğan government to build large, new mosques and even to try to set up religious schools in the north, which have led to protests to the part of Turkish Cypriots, the secularism of the Turkish Cypriots themselves has remained largely unchanged.

Despite the laudable efforts to foster an interfaith dialogue in Cyprus undertaken by the Swedish Embassy, and despite the encouraging photos which appear after such meetings showing the Archbishop, the Mufti, the Maronite Archbishop, and the Catholic Bishop smiling together on the steps of some religious site or other, the discourse of the Orthodox Archbishop very often remains unhelpful at crucial moments in the conflict. Thus, although the Cyprus problem is not a religious conflict, religious actors nevertheless impact the situation and need to be considered.

To conclude this chapter: a generation ago we believed that the forces of democracy, freedom, and progress were unstoppable. Instead, we are entering the 2020s with many of the most established democracies feeling weakened and under threat. We are also seeing the first major war in Europe since the Second World War.

Thus, what *Viktor E. Frankl*, holocaust survivor wrote after the Second World War applies as much today as it did then: *"For the world is in a bad state but everything will become still worse unless each of us does his best."*

It is everybody's responsibility to improve society and the aim of this book is to provide some of the tools which can help us do this. I want to believe that the American Anthropologist *Margaret Mead* was right when she said: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

CHAPTER 4

From Polarization to Convergence

"He tried to create a better society and move people to a different, better humanity."

IN MEMORIAM OF U.S. SENATOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST JOHN LEWIS.

The term "polarization" has come into frequent use in our political vocabulary over the last few years. It indicates that conflict is not only a feature of ethnically divided societies, but there is also increasing polarization within many societies that we thought of as being stable democracies with an orderly change over between governments of differing hues.

Perhaps the most striking recent examples of the deep divisions which can emerge even in well-established democracies come from the 2016 election of Donald Trump in the US, (a scenario that was repeated in the 2020 election), and the United Kingdom with the bitter struggle between the "Remainers" and "Leavers" over Brexit.

In these two countries, as well as in many other European countries, the liberal/conservative divide has deepened and essentially transformed into a struggle between globalists and nationalists, between traditional liberals and the extreme or alt right. In the American context as causes for these deep divisions the US organisation **Peacebuilding** identified the following causes:

- the long overdue need for democratic reforms to overcome the growing sense of alienation of the electorate from political actors,
- issues of social justice; the ever widening gap between the richest and the poorest, the diminishing middle class, and the consequent reduction in social mobility in the US and other western democracies that are major triggers of extremism,
- the deterioration of trust in political institutions and across party lines since the 1960s,

all of which have led to a toxic political polarization and an attempt to mainstream violent extremism in the US.

In their book *"Reclaiming Populism: How Economic Fairness Can Win Back Disenchanted Voters"* (2021) *Eric Protzer and Paul Summerville* examine in depth the issue of social justice and differentiate between equality and fairness. Citizens turn to populism when they are fed up with an unfair economy with low social mobility, which makes them feel the system is rigged and must be forcefully reset.

Protzer and Summerville contrast countries like Australia, Canada, and the Nordics, which pair state sponsored equal opportunity with competitive markets and are socially mobile and populism resistant, with countries that fail on either input with negative consequences: the US has competitive markets but does not have sufficient structural support for equal opportunity; France has a world class social safety net but taxes away the fruits of success. Both countries suffer from low social mobility and fierce populist movements.

During the 2020 Presidential Election Campaign in the USA, *Richard Haas in an article for the Council of Foreign Re-*

lations pointed out that the 2020 elections revealed that the United States may be officially one country but is in effect two nations. They will have to co-exist, but whether they can work together remains to be seen. In his view Trumpism – a modern day form of American populism – will continue to remain a powerful force regardless of Biden's Presidency, and despite Trump's defeat. He predicts populism, nativism, and illiberalism will continue to remain threats in the US, a prediction which is borne out by the deep divisions we are witnessing following the overturning of the abortion rights case of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme court in June 2022.

Just how percipient this statement proved to be, was evidenced by the storming of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Despite the upheaval, Congress was eventually able to confirm Biden's election. Nevertheless, one year after these events in reviewing the situation analysts have made the point that, despite arrests and trials of a number of the participants, these various extreme right wing groups are in the process of reorganizing. Even more disconcerting is the fact that there is now clear evidence that Trump himself encouraged the rioters and that members of the White House staff went along with Trump's claim that the election had been stolen, yet no one in a position of authority has been called to account.

Cynthia Miller-Idriss, a specialist in extreme right terror, in a recent online seminar organized by *"Search for Common Ground" (January 27 2021)* notes that there was an astronomical growth of the far right after President Obama's election. The cause is essentially the fear felt by some, who are already struggling and feel disadvantaged under the present system, that social reform means something will be taken away from them and given to someone else, who in their eyes, does not deserve it.

This feels like an existential threat and such groups of people can be easily manipulated by populist politicians, who offer easy answers to what are essentially complex issues, and indulge in scapegoating, coupled with disinformation campaigns, and misuse of media platforms.

At the present time the FBI and Homeland Security consider white supremacy groups to be the most persistent threat to the United States. In the attack on the Capitol, more than twenty groups were involved. These groups are amorphous and nebulous and are networks, not organisations, according to *Cynthia Miller-Idriss*. They frequently attempt to unify under one banner only to fragment again, as they did around the disinformation campaign that the 2020 election was rigged, which subsequently led to the events at the Capitol building.

In the wake of the Capitol events, many interesting theories have been put forward regarding the "Trump Phenomenon". Many parallels have been drawn between the rise of the philosophy of Nazi Germany and the white supremacist movement in the U.S.

American Historian *Fritz Stern's* book entitled the "*Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology*" puts forward the thesis that the conservative revolution is a defense of an ideal past that never existed, and it aims to re-establish this imaginary past as a concrete reality in the future. Supporters of such ideologies are alienated from the world they inhabit, where the old values are withering away. Proponents are prone to look for saviours who promise a rescue and point a way home. Reading this, one has to say that it seems very relevant to what is happening today in 21st century America.

In a similar vein, *Anne Applebaum* in her latest book "*Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*"

suggests that those who are attracted to such ideologies cannot cope with the complexity and uncertainty of liberalism. She examines the cases of the US, Hungary, and Poland today, and points out that authoritarian regimes can only come to power if a section of the political elites and intellectuals is complicit in the process.

A similar point was made much earlier in a book by *Julien Benda i*n 1927, published in English under the title *"The Treason of the Intellectuals"* which examined the role of some European intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whom he argues, had lost the ability to reason dispassionately about political and military matters, instead becoming apologists for crass nationalism, war mongering, and racism.

Finding our Common Humanity

Jonathan Haidt's "The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion" looks at a milder form of polarization. I was struck by the appropriateness of the title when I came across his book. We do feel "righteous" about our strongly held political, religious, or ideological beliefs because they feel like an intrinsic part of ourselves, so that when they come under attack we respond in kind.

This is so, despite the fact that based on the research of both anthropologists and evolutionists, we come into this world not as a blank slate but with a basic value system already wired in and that basic value system is common to us all.

As *Gary Marcus*, psychologist and brain scientist, head of *New York University's Infant Language Learning Center* explains: "*The initial organization of the brain does not rely that*

much on experience... Nature provides a ***first draft*** *which experience then revises... 'Built in' does not mean unmalleable, it means organized in advance of experience."*

So, what does this first draft contain? According to the scientists we all come into this world wired with a preference for:

- Care and Nurturance, as opposed to Harm
- Fairness as opposed to Cheating
- Liberty as opposed to Oppression
- Loyalty as opposed to Betrayal
- Authority as opposed to Subversion
- Sanctity as opposed to Degradation

To paraphrase *Johnathan Haidt* although we all share these basic values, research shows that the emphasis we put on them differs, depending on where we are in the left/right, liberal/conservative, spectrum. Liberals give more emphasis to care, fairness, and liberty while conservatives give more weight to loyalty, authority, and sanctity.

This means that if we can look beyond the different nuances there is a core of common values, a field of common humanity where we can all meet. So why do we create these divisions?

Basically, the answer is the narratives we create. While we know that in nature large scale cooperation can only take place between family members, human beings can cooperate beyond the family group.

However, in order to do so they need a narrative around which to come together; religion, tribal affiliation, the nation state, political ideology, or even a football team, can play this role. Nations' flags perform the same function, similarly, concepts such as "our side, their side," or "who is loyal, who is a traitor?".

However, narratives tend to be oversimplified; they unite us into teams but divide us against other teams. As *Haidt* points out *"morality binds and blinds*," leading to the separation of good v. evil. The other side is seen as an anathema.

In Cyprus, in addition to the ethnic division, which was discussed earlier, we also have the polarization between left and right within the two communities, which has a long history. In the Greek Cypriot community, it became very evident after the Greek civil war following the Second World War and heightened during the anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s.

This attitude was still very evident in the 1980s. When I first came back from living abroad and started to get involved in politics, I was shocked when people would describe someone as "one of us" or as "not one of us". At that time, the level of fanaticism was so high that people would try and shop and use services provided by people who belonged to the same party as themselves.

Though this fanaticism has watered down over time, it is always revived at the time of elections as each party uses it to rally its supporters to come out and vote. It has proved impossible for the major parties of the right and left to cooperate over the one thing on which they basically agree: the need to solve the Cyprus problem within the UN parameters.

How do we bring about change in these polarized situations? It is definitely not easy, requires work at various levels in the society, and is a slow process. Leaderships that are moderate can help point the way, as was the case with my late father's Presidency in Cyprus, 1993-2003. Despite being branded as a nationalist by the left-wing he was able to demonstrate through his own behaviour the benefits of moderation and dialogue.

As a starting point *Haidt* suggests that we need to cultivate moral humility, listen deeply to the other to understand their way

of thinking, and appeal to people's higher instincts if we are going to move beyond the current polarization to convergence. *Miller-Idriss* also believes that we need to show kindness, empathy, and support, while at the same time offering the other view in order to provide a non-judgmental path back to the mainstream for people with extreme ideas.

The challenges facing President Biden and his team are immense. However, as in all countries facing challenges, leaderships need to work with other sectors of society to bring about change.

The response of corporate organisations in the US in the wake of the attack on the Capitol has been encouraging. For example, Coca Cola, AT+T and Morgan Stanley suspended or ended their political action committee contributions to members of Congress who voted against the Electoral College's certification of the newly elected President. In addition, and very unusually, many high-profile CEOs of large companies spoke out against Trump's attempts to claim that the results of the election were fraudulent.

It is good to know that, in these fraught times, many grassroots organisations in the US have sprung up all around the country and are working in this field. To mention just a few:

ComeTogetherAmerica.net is a website giving details of many such projects encouraging citizens to support bridge building in their communities and across the country, and projects like **Braver Angels** work to bring liberals and conservatives together to build a working alliance to depolarize America.

While another initiative, the **Divided Community Project** has a mission to expand mediation and conflict resolution initiatives across the US by providing communities facing increasing unrest with experts who can assist local government, law enforcement, and community leaders as they work to mediate conflict.

Similarly, **Living Room Conversations.org** is a conversational model developed by dialogue experts in order to facilitate connection between people despite their differences and identify areas of common concern and shared understanding.

The **Alliance for Peacebuilding** is a non-partisan network of 130-plus organisations working in 181 countries to end conflict and sustain peace. Members include development organisations, academic institutions, and innovative humanitarian and faith-based organisations.

However, as previously noted, polarization is not just an American phenomenon. In Britain, the mission of **More in Common.Org** is to understand the forces that are driving people apart, to find common ground and to help bring people together to tackle shared challenges.

The ability of such grassroots organisations to influence the wider society depends upon the extent to which the discourse of the political leadership and mainstream media is helpful. In most cases however, it is unfortunately, not.

Ultimately, like *Desmond Tutu* I want to believe that the positive efforts we make to improve our societies **do** have a long-term positive effect, even though at the time it often feels like a drop in the ocean. In the following quote from his book "*No Future Without Forgiveness*" he refers to his meetings with peace activists in Northern Ireland: "*And so, I was able to say to those remarkable people in Belfast that nothing is lost. What they were doing advanced the course of reconciliation. What each one of us does can retard or promote, can hinder or advance, the process at the heart of the universe. Christians would say that the outcome is not in question. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ puts the issue beyond doubt: ultimately peace and compassion and gentleness and forgiveness and reconciliation will have the last*

word and prevail over their ghastly counterparts. The victory over apartheid was proof of this seemingly utopian dream."

It is this belief that keeps me going in my work for reconciliation in Cyprus despite the fact that no political settlement is in sight. As *Desmond Tutu* says, *"nothing is lost";* whatever we do that is positive ultimately has a positive impact in the long term even if we are not able to see the result ourselves.

The Danger of Implicit Bias

> "Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed."
>
> *FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE*

We all are subject to implicit biases, and we need to recognise these in ourselves if we are to enter useful dialogues to bring about consensus and change for the better.

More importantly however, implicit bias and racial profiling can lead to dangerous and unjust results as is the case in the United States where law enforcement agents have killed and wounded a disproportionate number of African Americans, giving rise to the movement **Black Lives Matter.**

Implicit bias can be defined as unconsciously attributing to an individual the qualities (whether favourable or unfavourable) that society attributes to that group of people. While **Confirmation bias** leads you to overweigh the evidence which supports what you believe.

This is a theme that has been highlighted in many films, often based on real life events, and often related to miscarriages of justice. A very forceful illustration of the implicit bias against

Jews in late 19th century France, was the well-known Dreyfus affair, brought once again to the screen by *Roman Polanski* in his 2019 award-winning film, *"J' accuse."* The film is based on the book by *Emile Zola* of the same name, which the famous novelist wrote in defense of Dreyfus and against the French government at the time of the trial in 1894.

In this case implicit bias and confirmation bias led to the condemnation of an innocent man for treason who was then sentenced to lifetime exile to Devil's Island. Dreyfus was eventually pardoned and released due to a public protest following the publication of Emile Zola's book in which he defended Dreyfus and accused the French War Office and some military officers of concealing evidence. However, Zola himself was then tried and convicted of libel and had to escape France and move to England to avoid going to prison.

How implicit bias and perceptions of the other can change through personal contact is very well depicted in *Clint Eastwood's film "Gran Torino"* (2008). Eastwood portrays a disgruntled, elderly, veteran of the Korean war, estranged from his family. He avoids contact with his Hmong neighbours who have recently moved into the house next door. When the young son of the family tries to steal his beloved Gran Torino car this sets off a series of events which bring him into greater contact with the family. Gradually his perception of his Hmong neighbours changes due to this personal contact, and he finally loses his life trying to protect the young neighbour in a gang shooting.

Clint Eastwood deals again with the issue of implicit bias in his film entitled *"Richard Jewell"* (2019) which is based on real life events and in this case, a near miscarriage of justice. Richard Jewell was the security guard who noticed an abandoned bag,

which turned out to be a bomb, that killed several people and injured many others in Centennial Park at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

At first, he was treated as a hero by the media, but shortly afterwards when no other suspect could be found, he himself came under suspicion. The police claimed that he fit the profile of a lone bomber (a loner, with a hero complex who lived with his mother), although the police never clarified whose profile of a lone bomber Richard Jewell fit. The media then changed its tune and hounded him as a suspect. Had it not been for the support of a dedicated lawyer, he would almost certainly have been convicted of a crime he did not commit.

The film "*Just Mercy*" (2019) recounts the true story of the mistaken conviction of African American Walter McMillian, who spent nine years on death row convicted of the rape and murder of a young white girl which he did not commit. His conviction was based on the coerced evidence of another convict, which had been fabricated by law enforcement agents, because McMillian fit their "profile" of a black rapist who violated and killed a white woman.

His story is told by attorney *Bryan Stevenson* who set up the **Equal Justice Initiative** in Montgomery, Alabama to challenge bias in the legal system against the poor and people of colour. Stevenson was finally able to overturn the conviction due to his tenacity and determination. The organisation which he set up has helped many other wrongfully convicted persons. The film is based on the book by *Bryan Stevenson* "*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*". It ends with the gruesome statistic that one out of every nine persons on death row in the US is innocent.

It is encouraging that film makers are calling attention to these issues and once again we see that film, as an art form, has

an important role to play in educating the public, and films that have something to say, can convey a powerful message.

Owning up to Implicit Biase

Given that according to science we all come into this world with a common moral code, where do these implicit biases come from? Family background and traditions play the biggest role in my view. If I look at my own family going back to my grandparents and even great grandparents despite being worlds apart- Cyprus and India – there was a tradition of liberalism and acceptance of the other on both sides of the family.

So, it is not surprising that my own personal bias is towards liberalism and my red lines are ethnocentrism, racism, totalitarianism, and homophobia. So, for me it is difficult to engage in an open-minded dialogue with people who I see as being "beyond the pale" because they hold such views.

However, as someone who believes in reconciliation and consensus building, I must continually remind myself to practice what I preach. We must pay attention to our own implicit biases and do our self-examination first. I often have to remind myself of a piece of advice given to us by our conflict resolution trainer Louise Diamond: *"separate the people from the problem."* As well as something she once said which struck me as extremely powerful: *"you are as close to God as you are to the person you feel furthest away from."*

We need to ask: "What triggers my frustration, when did I stop listening to the person opposite me?" As a result of this: "Am I missing evidence, facts, and opportunities which could be used to bring about resolution of the conflict?"

It is vital to remember that all points of view have something to contribute to the total understanding of a problem or situation. Only if you really listen with an open mind can you build up the bigger, more complete picture.

A Holistic World View

In the Western world we are culturally accustomed to think in dualistic terms. In contrast, the world view long held by eastern and indigenous peoples posits the underlying unity within and beyond the appearance of separation.

Examples of this are the yin and yang in Chinese philosophy, which while expressing two distinct qualities are always in a dynamic dance within a single whole.

Similarly, the Hindu gods Vishnu the preserver, representing stability, and Shiva the destroyer, representing change are often depicted together in one statue.

One of the most profound expressions of this view is that of *Seng Ts'an,* a Zen Buddhist patriarch of the 7th century: "*The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences. When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised. Make the smallest distinction however then heaven and earth are set instantly apart. To set up what you like against what you dislike is a disease of the mind.*"

In the same vein is a quote from the Sufi mystic Rumi: "*Beyond the area of right and wrong there is a field, and I will meet you there.*"

Though most of us may not be capable of this level of enlightenment we can nevertheless strive to meet in the field of our common humanity.

Pastor Silvester Beaman's words from *President Biden's Inauguration* ceremony indicates one way to achieve this: *"In discovering our humanity, we will seek the good in and for all our neighbours. We will love the unlovable, remove the stigma of the so-called untouchables. We will care for our most vulnerable – our children, the elderly, the emotionally challenged and the poor."*

Humanity Triumphs - an Example from Cyprus

At the end of the 1990s prior to the opening of the checkpoints, two small boys Kemal and Andreas needed bone marrow transplants at about the same time. A call went out for compatible donors to be found to save the lives of these two children.

At that moment in time a miracle took place. Cypriots from both sides of the dividing line flocked to the Ledra Palace in the buffer zone to give blood samples in the hope that appropriate donors could be found for these two children.

Andreas was lucky, eventually a donor, in the end from outside Cyprus, was found. Today he is studying to be a lawyer. Unfortunately, Kemal was not so lucky, and he lost the fight against leukaemia.

These two boys brought all Cypriots together for a moment in time. They were the reason that two organisations which help children with cancer – the Kemal Saraçoğlu Foundation in the north and the Karaiskakion Foundation in the south, started to cooperate across the Green Line.

They also provided the opportunity for these two families to become friends. At a recent event of the Saraçoğlu Foundation to honour bone marrow donors, which I attended, the Andreas

Vassiliou family and representatives from the Karaiskakion, were present, as they are every year.

The plight of these two children was able to unite the hearts of all Cypriots for a moment in time; humanity triumphed over division.

Subsequently, this memorable moment in time inspired me to write a children's story about our family's dogs to raise funds for these two charities. The book has been illustrated by a Turkish Cypriot artist, has been printed bilingually in Greek and Turkish and is being sold on both sides of the island.

Building Consensus and Finding Convergence

> "Fight for the things that you believe in but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."
>
> *JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG.*

> "Inclusiveness is the ability to synthesize many viewpoints and extract the essence or juice in them. Inclusiveness does not reject any light that presents itself in solving a problem. Inclusiveness takes in those elements of advice, scientific investigation and knowledge which contribute to an answer to a problem. All wisdom is accepted regardless of the source."
>
> *TORKOM SARAYDARIAN "TALKS ON AGNI".*

> "Tolerance is historically the product of the realization of the irreconcilability of equally dogmatic faiths and the practical improbability of complete victory of one over the other. Those who wished to survive realized that they had to tolerate error. They gradu-

> ally came to see the merits of diversity and so became skeptical about definitive solutions in human affairs."
>
> *ISAIAH BERLIN*

As the above quotes indicate there are practical as well as philosophical reasons for taking all views on board and trying to build consensus. Consensus building takes time, effort, and organization and does not just happen through casual dialogue. However, it can be an empowering replacement for majority decision-making, and can help us to overcome the "righteous mind" syndrome.

The process itself attempts to understand different perspectives and solicits ideas from all the stakeholders concerned with a specific issue, neither excluding nor being condescending to any of the participants.

Consensus happens when divergent views are brought into the conversation with the aim of achieving an outcome of shared goals. Building consensus among varied stakeholders creates a sense of cohesiveness and a collective spirit, which are both important for acting on the decisions that have been made.

The aim is to reach the best agreement for the vast majority, since unanimity is unlikely. In South Africa, the concept of **sufficient consensus** has been developed, provided however that **all** the parties are around the table.

The characteristics of the process are that it is:

- Collaborative – a shared proposal that meets the concerns of as many as possible, to the greatest extent possible
- Cooperative

- Egalitarian
- Inclusive – includes as many stakeholders as possible
- Participatory – actively solicits input from all participants

Not everyone will get what they first wanted but the **shared goals at the outcome of the process** should meet the needs of all the relevant stakeholders so that they are prepared to implement them.

Building consensus and trust in societies torn by ethnic, religious, or ideological divides are necessary prerequisites for democracy and economic prosperity.

In order to promote consensus, we need to be able to accept that we do not know **all** the truth of a situation, we only know our truth and experience of the situation.

We need to be listening deeply to the other to understand where they are coming from. What are their needs and concerns? How can we meet these, while at the same time meeting our own vital needs? We also need a structure and a forum that enable us to do this in relation to specific issues and that encourage us to solve these issues through constructive dialogue with all the stakeholders involved.

The **Convergence Centre for Policy Resolution** set up by Robert Fersh in Washington is one such organization working in the field of consensus building. Fersh had worked in the US Congress, and this led him to realise that no one political party or faction had all the answers, that there was a need for a space where all stakeholders in an issue could be heard, and relationships of trust between parties with different or opposing views could be built.

He identifies the following points as essential to creating convergence:

- Identifying the issue of contention. Framing the issue in a way that appeals to everyone, everyone needs to see a common goal.
- Bringing in people with different points of view to advise the team in setting up the discussion.
- Research phase: Where is the energy around the issue? Which are the contentious issues? Where are there possible areas of agreement?
- The facilitator must be neutral and cultivate a culture of respect, honesty, and trust in order to openly discuss underlying interests, fears, and concerns.

The aim of the process is to establish a dialogue which leads to a commitment to work together to solve the problem over time. We are hard wired to see issues in a polarized fashion of us v. them. Collaborative problem solving asks, what are the issues on the table and whose voices do I need to hear?

Diversity of views is essential but realistically, for the outcomes to be implemented, you need to have people around the table who can get things done. This means advantaging groups who can push things, such as government agencies, trade unions, etc., in a sense advantaging the status quo. You need sufficiently diverse voices in the room, but realistically, to get things done, the stakeholders need to have influence in the real world.

Fortunately, we are increasingly seeing the development of powerful informal groups, such as **Black Lives Matter**, environmental activists, and women's groups which are not only influential locally but across national boundaries, who are also stakeholders in the outcome and who can counterbalance the status quo in the discussions.

As Fersh points out, a major issue to be faced at the end of the process is how to ensure that the ideas that come out of the dialogue in the room can be successfully taken back to the constituencies of the participants.

Consequently, at the planning stage we need to think about who could be the spoiler at a later stage and whether we should include them in the process.

There are no easy answers to these questions, but one way for the ideas to be taken forward is to make the people involved feel that they are part of the answer to the problem and have a stake in the outcome.

Enhancing Impact through Collaboration

The importance of collaboration has been demonstrated by projects like the **Collective Impact Movement** where several stakeholders agree to work together for the same outcome. Collective impact efforts are most successful when they build on what already exists, honouring current efforts and engaging established organisations, rather than creating new structures.

One such striking example is the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN,) a collaborative effort created by a decision of the UN General Assembly in 2002 with the goal of improving the health and nutrition of one billion people in the developing world.

In less than a decade GAIN has created and coordinated the activity of thirty-six large scale collaborations that include governments, NGOs, multilateral organisations, universities, and more than six hundred companies in more than thirty countries.

The two main principles behind GAIN were that there were proven interventions that could be employed at scale and that the private sector needed to have a greater role to play.

For Collective Impact projects to be successful the parties involved must have: a common agenda; a shared vision for change and a common understanding of the problem; a common system of collecting data and measuring success; their activities should be mutually reinforcing; they must be in continuous communication, and they need a separate "backbone" organisation(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to do the work of coordination and management.

This approach can be used at the local, national, and even global level (as we have seen with the example of GAIN). In fact, there is probably no other way society will achieve large scale progress on urgent and complex problems of our time unless the collective impact approach becomes the accepted way of doing business.

The implications of this methodology at this moment in time when we are facing the twin crises of global warming and the Covid-19 pandemic are clear. Let us hope they will not be missed.

Marshall McLuhan definitely had a point when he said, *"The danger for all of us going into the future, is that we will drive along into the future looking into the rear-view mirror."*

CHAPTER 5

On Mediation, Negotiation and Facilitated Dialogue

"Understand the differences, act on the commonalities."

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

"No one is exempt from the call to find common ground."

BARACK OBAMA

We tend to think of mediation in relation to disputes in the area of commercial or family matters and small claims disputes. Of course, mediation has an important role to play in these areas and in some countries, legislation has been passed to make mediation mandatory before parties can go to court.

However, what we are going to look at here, is the added value that a mediator can bring in areas of societal conflict, given that the mediator's skills and training have a lot in common with the conflict resolution skills described in Chapter 3 on "Starting the Conversation," and given that the state of mind needed for mediation can be helpful for reconciliation.

Veteran mediator *Kenneth Cloke*, founder of **Mediators Beyond Boarders**, makes a powerful case for using conflict resolution and mediation skills in the arena of political conflicts in his

book "*The Politics of Conflict and the Conflict of Politics: How to Think About and Engage in Political Conflicts*".

Cloke points out that although politics should be a large group decision making process and a social problem-solving process, when it is not inclusive it leaves a substantial group of citizens feeling left out.

This occurs either because it is power-based, as in the case of authoritarian regimes, or a rights-based democracy where it is based on the will of the absolute majority which, in some cases may only be marginally more than that of the minority; as for example in the referendum over Brexit which left half the population feeling dissatisfied with the result.

True democracy, which takes account of diversity and the inequalities inherent in all societies, requires a set of skills and the ability to engage in dialogue with people you do not agree with. Through dialogue truth emerges, something substantive that people need to talk about emerges, thus the process itself is valuable, according to Cloke.

A truly democratic process would involve all the stakeholders concerned with an issue around a table to reach a consensus through dialogue as discussed in the previous chapter, "From Polarization to Convergence."

In 2016 my husband Costas Shammas and I were awarded a Weinstein Fellowship on the basis of our conflict resolution work in Cyprus. Our project proposal was based on the idea, somewhat similar to the thinking outlined above, that the principles behind conflict resolution and mediation would be valuable in moving our conflict habituated society (conflict habituated both within and across community lines) in a more productive direction.

Additionally, we believed that in the event of a solution there would be a need for a dispute resolution mechanism to be

in place at the federal level of government where the two communities would be interacting, to smooth out the lumps and bumps in the road ahead.

The fellowships had been established by *Judge Daniel Weinstein,* one of the pioneers of mediation in the United States. After serving ten years on the bench Judge Danny, as he is affectionately known to Weinstein Fellows, left the bench to set up the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services (JAMS), one of the first mediation providers in the US, and later the Weinstein Fellowships, to help promote mediation worldwide.

As Judge Danny said in a recent Weinstein Fellows webinar "*mediators are peacemakers*". After all the word comes from the Latin "mediatus" which means "in the middle".

In some cultures, mediation in various forms has been around a long time. Judge Danny relates how a Weinstein Fellow from Bhutan went around the villages in his country to review the traditional mediation practices to bring back and incorporate them in the new, more formal structures, to be set up by legislation.

In the US though, when Judge Danny left the bench in the 1960s there were no mediation courses, the only way to resolve a dispute was through litigation. JAMS was a pioneer in the field and persisted in its endeavours despite being resisted initially by the various American Bar Associations.

Judge Danny turned eighty in 2021 and was appointed Distinguished Mediator in Residence at Pepperdine University in California in recognition of his contribution to the development and advancement of mediation services in the US.

As he recounts, the conditions for promoting mediation in the US in the 1960s were ripe because the court system was backed up and parties were willing to try new and faster ways of resolving disputes, especially as this did not preclude them from going to

court if the mediation failed. The Bar Associations softened their stance when lawyers realised it also meant that lawyers could add another string to their bow and become mediators themselves.

A mediator is a third-party facilitator who mediates between two parties who are usually already negotiating. So, a mediator brings fresh eyes to the situation and may well be able to reframe the issue in a way that makes it more amenable to resolution.

We have all fallen into the trap of obsessing over our version of the narrative in personal disputes, even though we are often aware that we are doing something dysfunctional and should stop. The same applies in the public domain. So, what is the added value that a mediator can bring to a dispute?

Judge Rebecca Westerfield, another *JAMS mediator* and *Weinstein trustee*, outlines the added value that mediators can bring to help resolve on-going conflicts, either in the private or public sphere:

- The parties are generally locked into their versions of the truth and their respective narratives. The mediator can bring a new take on the situation by redefining the issue, taking some of the poison out of the conflict by getting each party to understand, though not necessarily agree, with the other side's point of view.
- It is also important to note that the "other side" may not be monolithic, and the mediator can help to clarify the nuances between different positions and work through these differences.
- In many cases too, there may be technical issues which need clarification, and the mediator can bring in independent neutrals that both parties can trust to explain specific issues.

- In addition, the mediator can design the process creatively to fit the specific needs of the parties, something which cannot be done in a court case.

All these techniques, along with those we have already looked at in the Chapter 3 on "Starting the Conversation" can be extremely useful in problem solving at the community level.

However, a pre-requisite for a mediator to be able to bring about change is a willingness of the parties to engage fruitfully. One might think that this is a given, but if we look at the example of UN mediation efforts in Cyprus, we will see that this has not always been so.

In the context of Cyprus, the role of mediator has been played by successive Special Representatives of the UN Secretary General. In all since 1964, when the first was appointed, till today there have been twenty-five Special Representatives. For most it has been a thankless task since, despite their efforts to remain neutral, they are always perceived as favouring the "other" or else doing the bidding of outside powers.

I have known most of them personally and some who stayed a number of years like Bibiano Osorio-Tafall (1967-1974), and Gustave Feissel (1993-1998) gave their all to Cyprus. In the case of Cyprus, it was not the mediators who failed but the lack of willingness to compromise exhibited by one party or the other at different points in time during the conflict.

To give two examples of what I mean: after 1974 until 1999 when Mr. Rauf Denktaş was leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and in full agreement with Ankara's position that the Cyprus problem had been solved on the ground, there was no possibility of reaching a negotiated settlement.

Things changed between 1999 and 2004 when Cyprus achieved EU accession status and Turkey became a candidate country. However, before the process could be completed, hard-liners took over the government on the Greek Cypriot side leading to a rejection of the Annan Peace Plan in the 2004 referendum.

And so, it continues with each side upping the ante depending on what their real motives are and depending too on what they think public opinion will accept. As the British say, "You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink!"

In addition to actually mediating community disputes, *Bruce Edwards*, another *JAMS associate, Weinstein trustee*, and founder of the *Edwards Mediation Academy* in San Francisco, believes that mediators can help people see the value of choosing leaders who know how to collaborate across differences, rather than firebrands advocating for one specific solution to a problem.

Thus, mediators can be ambassadors for the spread of collaborative approaches by encouraging elected leaders to use them in problem solving where they can apply their skills, usually exercised in the private sector for commercial matters, to social problems and community issues.

Early Issue Resolution or "Upstream" Mediation

As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons we applied for the Weinstein Fellowship was our belief that if we had a solution based on a federal model of government, there would be a need for a permanent bi-communal mediation body able to intervene and smooth the path before problems got out of hand.

Prof. Thomas J. Stipanovich (Pepperdine University) makes a strong case for "upstream mediation." Instead of focusing on

the repair of relationships we should use the skills and insights of mediators to facilitate understanding and collaboration in long-term relationships before the conflicts become fully fledged. Something analogous to preventative medicine.

At the point where a relationship is about to turn into a full-fledged dispute, but before the positions have hardened, is the best opportunity for problem-solving interventions to conflict. This kind of relational facilitation could be of special value in the context of intercultural relationships, he points out.

If we ever achieve a resolution of the Cyprus problem, I am convinced that we will need such a mechanism at the federal level of government where the two communities will have to work together, in order to avoid the kinds of conflict which occurred over the 1960 Constitution.

In the same vein the *2009 UN Report on Enhancing Mediation,* under the heading "Strengthening National/Local Capacity for Conflict Prevention/Resolution" noted "*One promising approach is the development of national architectures for dispute resolution through national, regional and district peace councils to provide mediation and prevent local conflicts from escalating and spreading.*"

Education for Dialogue

> "The greatest threat to communication is the belief that we have already had it."
>
> *GEORGE BERNARD SHAW*

If we want to live in more harmonious societies then conflict resolution and mediation skills training should be part of the educational system at all levels.

Imagine what it would be like if we were all taught the basic skills of mediators at school:

- listening with your whole being so that attention moves from the brain to your heart, which allows you to open to the other;
- learning to separate the people from the problem so that feelings of anger, which in its useful form can drive us forward, can be directed at the problem and not at the individual with whom you disagree;
- learning to achieve greater self-knowledge and self-introspection so that you can centre yourself and work from a place of calm.

In this context it is interesting to note that the book *"Young Negotiators"* by *Jared Curhan* of *Harvard's Program on Negotiation* was chosen by the US Departments of Education and Justice as a model programme for school-based violence prevention and has been used to train thousands of children across the US to achieve their goals without the use of violence. It has been translated into a number of foreign languages including Spanish, Hebrew, and Arabic.

What makes the programme unique is that it focuses on teaching all children to use a systematic approach to solving problems themselves, rather than through third-party mediation.

It encourages children to prevent potential conflicts by teaching them **communication skills** and specific language to enhance this communication. It teaches techniques as a **life skill** that can be used in a variety of environments and situations.

A similar programme of peer mediation training in schools is carried out by the Southern California Mediation Association's

Educational Foundation. **Kids Managing Conflict** commits to the development of effective communication skills with an emphasis on conflict resolution. They believe that training of communication skills should begin at an early age, ideally no later than during middle and high school. Their vision is to build a more harmonious society by fostering the development of tomorrows' leaders who will choose non-confrontational conflict resolution.

Even where there are no such programmes in schools it is never too late for each one of us to start discussions with children and family, modelling good listening skills as you teach them to focus on the problem as an "it" and not as a "you" i.e., doing our best not to personalise the problem and to try and solve it as a joint enterprise.

The Importance of Civility

In May 2019, *Marco Turk, Prof. Emeritus of California State University, Dominguez Hills*, was invited by the NGO **Unite Cyprus Now** to spend a month in Cyprus and give four workshops to train participants in facilitating dialogue.

Interestingly enough the first section of the training focused on the importance of civility, a concept to which, I must admit, I had until then given little thought.

Prof. Turk's remarks, adapted from *P.M. Forni's* book "*Choosing Civility*" noted that, essentially, civility entails respecting others on their own terms, as we would expect them to do for us.

Humanizing each other is crucial to living together peacefully. We can best achieve this when we acknowledge each other's core values while exhibiting respect and empathy for the other.

That is the true meaning of civility, and it differs from politeness, which is often merely an exterior veneer.

We tend to forget that: *"No one has ever been insulted into agreement. Even worse... If you insult someone with whom you disagree, the odds are greater than 3 to 1 that the person will harden his/her views against your position. Hate is self-defeating... So... Love your enemies." Arthur C. Brooks, economist, and author of "Love Your Enemies."*

While civility requires restraint, it does not insist on our giving up self-expression. If we are kind and considerate, others will generally respond similarly. Civility in relationships is key if people are valued and requires paying attention and showing respect for the other. It is an essential element for a true dialogue.

While I was in the US for the Weinstein Fellowship, I was able to watch the final debates between the candidates on T.V. during the 2016 presidential campaign. Quite frankly, I was shocked by Trump's poor argumentation as well as by his incivility. Then subsequently, when I read reports of some of the extremely uncivil comments made by him during his tenure in office, I could not believe my ears! It never occurred to me that a political leader in any democratic country could use such language and get away with it.

Those who argued in his favour claimed that political correctness had gone too far in the US. However, there is a reason for political correctness, and that is to combat prejudices and show people that using demeaning language or racial slurs is not acceptable. Like civility, political correctness should not just be a veneer, it should be meant. Hate speech is not a part of free speech. Surely it is the role of political leadership to demonstrate this rather than to fall to the level of the worst behaviours in our societies!

Dealing with Anger

In order to be an effective mediator, negotiator, or facilitator of dialogue you need to have done a fair amount of introspection and to know yourself well.

One of the most common traps we fall into is anger. Exactly as *William L. Ury*, author of one of the best-known books on negotiation *"Getting to Yes"* says *"When you are angry you will make the best speech you will always regret"*. We are often our own worst enemies because we act or react instinctively out of emotional anger.

I was not sufficiently conscious of this fact in my 30s and 40s as an active politician. On several occasions when I felt strongly about something, I would have "righteous" outbursts expressing my viewpoint. Of course, I convinced no one, and friends would ask me afterwards why I had shot myself in the foot!

Common responses in situations of stress are either to attack, accommodate, or avoid the confrontation. Obviously, none of these are useful responses, because they do not address the essence of the problem.

Instead, we need to think about things before we act or react. In such situations Ury suggests, we need to stand back and look at the situation as a third party would. We need to **"go to the balcony,"** which is a metaphor for centering, calming down, and achieving perspective.

In their book *"Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate" Daniel Shapiro* and *Roger Fisher* stress the need for negotiators to address **core concerns**, which they define as **human wants that are important to almost everyone** in virtually every negotiation. Rather than focusing on the emotions being ex-

pressed, we need to keep in mind what the other party is really looking for in the interaction. They list these core concerns as:

- Appreciation – the desire to feel understood and honestly valued is universal. Cooperation increases when there is a mutual feeling of appreciation. The best way to demonstrate this appreciation is by truly listening to the other.
- Building affiliation, connectedness, humanizing the other.
- Respecting the autonomy of each participating party and making procedural decisions together.
- Acknowledging the status of the other, where this is appropriate, while being aware that opinions of persons of higher status are not automatically correct.
- Choosing a fulfilling role for oneself, one that fulfills your needs and standards of appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, and status.
- In situations of conflict and high tension, when things are getting out of hand, someone must **break the cycle of disrespect and incivility**. The role of the mediator, the role of the third side, is to help the parties in the conflict "go to the balcony".
- More specifically, when things are heating up, we need to find ways to calm down the situation (appreciate the other's concerns, take a break etc.) And we need to diagnose the triggers of strong emotions both in ourselves and in others; what purpose do they serve and what are the concerns behind these strong emotions that need to be addressed?

The Tribal Mindset and Identity Politics

How do we guard against the fundamental mindset that leads to emotionally charged conflicts? The forces that draw us into adversarial relationships, according to *Daniel Shapiro* in his book *"Negotiating the Non-negotiable"* are the **tribal/divisive/ adversarial** mind set; the conviction that one's view is correct and the compulsion to defend one's view to the end.

In a very helpful online seminar on how to have political discussions during polarized times, *Robert Bordone* and *Rachel Viscomi* of *Harvard University's Program on Negotiation* make the valid point that we tend to mix in "bubbles" of like-minded people which limits our tolerance for difference, minimizes nuances, and makes us forget to ask, what are the pieces of information relating to this issue which are missing? If we are able to see others' views as more nuanced, and not in terms of black and white then we may find some areas of connection, some points on which we agree.

In fact, we are all pretty complex, so what you see at first is not necessarily who I am, or all that I am. We all have multiple identities and nuances within those broad identities. When we engage in a discussion with someone, we need to try to embrace the whole person and not just a snapshot stereotype. Of course, we all tend to make snap judgements about people because this serves as a kind of shorthand which help us to move quickly in a complex world, but we need to remain aware of what we are doing.

Prof. Emerita Penelope Corfield of *Royal Holloway, London University* makes a powerful argument for "*Being Assessed as a Whole Person: A Critique of Identity Politics*" in an article published online in *Academia Letters* when she writes *"...it is to be hoped that in the long-run a celebration of truly shared, egal-*

itarian, human personhood will prevail. It is possible to experience and indeed to play with a variety of overlapping identities. Yet the multiple stands fuse together to make complex individuals in the round."

One of the things I have learnt over time is that all human beings share certain basic characteristics which create our common humanity, but we all have very different personalities and ways of expressing ourselves. This is what we need to respect and show curiosity about, rather than being fearful of one another.

Differences are useful. Polarization equals harshness and isolation; it is a dysfunctional, reductionist way of defining differences. We need to look at differences with curiosity, as an educational experience, giving us the chance to get to know new ideas and thoughts; one excellent way in which to learn about how others perceive the world is through facilitated dialogue.

Facilitated Dialogues

> "The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction both are transformed."
>
> *CARL JUNG*

The aim of the NGO **Unite Cyprus Now** in inviting Prof. Marco Turk to give workshops to train participants in facilitating dialogue was to enable the participants to carry out facilitated dialogues between the two communities in Cyprus.

Many of the attendees, like myself, were former trainees of Prof. Turk, who as a Fulbright scholar in the 1990s had provided the first mediation trainings for Cypriots from both communi-

ties; but there were also many young people who attended the training for the first time. The Unite Cyprus Now project is on-going and transferred on-line during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The aim of a facilitated dialogue is not for participants to come to an agreement, as in the case of mediation or a negotiation, but **to understand why their views differ,** to respect and learn from each other. Effective dialogue has been defined as *"a focused and intentional conversation, a space of civility and equality in which those who differ may listen and learn."*

The key here is that it is an intentional conversation in a structured environment with a trained facilitator. Thus, there is a big difference between a facilitated dialogue and casual discussions that we may have about social issues or politics at a social event, because the participants are there specifically for this purpose.

The essential foundation for a real or profound dialogue, as opposed to a superficial conversation or an argument, is **focused and respectful listening,** making a conscious effort to hear and fully understand what the other is saying. All the rules that have been discussed in the section on attentive/active listening in Chapter 3 apply to facilitated dialogue as well.

Through a facilitated dialogue we learn more about ourselves and our values by interacting civilly with others with whom we differ. Explaining our views to others often has the effect of clarifying them for ourselves and making us think about why we hold these specific views on a subject.

The key, in the case of disagreement, is **not to prove that you are right** but to **try and understand** why you disagree. As *Carl Jung* so insightfully pointed out: *"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."*

It is the **dialogue process itself,** which is important, not the attempt to determine who is right or wrong, and it is important to

avoid confusing your views with your identity, they are not the same. We therefore should not feel that because someone does not agree with our views, they have devalued our identity or personhood.

Larry Dressler in his book "*Standing in the Fire: Leading High-Heat meetings with Calm, Clarity and Courage*" explains how a facilitator can successfully handle dialogues which have the potential to become explosive.

He suggests that there are two kinds of energy that come into play when our emotional hot buttons are pushed; the first is the energy of reactivity and defensiveness; the second is the energy of calm and deliberate choice.

If you remain open and calm as a facilitator you can create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable enough to share how they really feel. A skilled facilitator is a **"fire-tender"** who channels the dynamic energy of conflict and passion into a productive, innovative force.

To paraphrase Dressler want to live in a more harmonious and civil society then dialogue is essential. Dialogue, the aim of which is to be a learning experience, where no point of view is labelled as right or wrong and where the people involved can explore why they feel as they do about the issue in question, is essential

By consistently coming from a place of **curiosity and learning,** by probing to discover the deeper meaning of the issue to each person, by asking questions which do not have a single correct answer, and by inviting people to offer their own unique perspective and answers, we can greatly enrich our own viewpoint and understanding of the world.

Dialogue, without agendas and from the heart, encourages openness and promotes the best of our humanity. After all only humans have the gift of speech, hence the ability to have open and clear dialogues is at the heart of our humanity.

The first step of course is to be able to convince or encourage people to want to enter into the facilitated dialogue process. In Cyprus it has proved much more difficult than originally expected to find participants for facilitated dialogues.

Perhaps people are just not interested in learning about "the other" or maybe there is a fundamental but unexpressed fear that by listening to "the other" and taking on board some of their arguments it may appear to make past sacrifices of your own side meaningless. It should not be perceived this way, because what seemed valid at one historical point in time may not seem valid at another; nevertheless, I believe that this is one reason why people are reluctant to get involved in a dialogue or reconciliation activities.

A second and similar reason is that to understand the other, means that you have to accept the partial truth of your own view. Many people, in my experience, are not willing to take this step, because they are not comfortable in living in more nuanced grey zones and are happier living in the dichotomy of black/white, good/bad.

Grassroots Efforts

> *"Even though we think that a particular action at an individual level may be very small, just imagine if it is repeated several million times. It will make a difference."*
>
> *WANGARI MAATHAI, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER 2004, FOUNDER OF THE GREEN BELT MOVEMENT.*

Maathai's tree planting movement started with the planting of seven sapling trees in Kenya. Eventually it spread throughout Africa.

As *Bruce Edwards (Edwards Mediation Academy, San Francisco)* points out, if we want things to change, we cannot wait for the "people at the top." We need to rely on ourselves and not on others. He gives some interesting examples of **grassroots efforts** to help encourage conversations and convergence around difficult issues in the United States and elsewhere, many of which started as individual initiatives, for example:

A woman in Berkley, California has started "living room conversations" creating a safe space for a personal exchange of ideas between individuals with differing perspectives.

In Scotland, **John Sturrock** organises tours for small groups involving sightseeing during the day and group conversations in the evening to a similar end.

Peace Direct, an organisation founded by *Scilla Elsworthy*, a former CEO and author of "*The Business Plan for Peace*," sponsors locally led peace initiatives around the world. In their last count, they were sponsoring 1,650 grassroots initiatives, giving the message that violence is less effective than using methods that connect people.

Similarly, a project entitled **Weave** *(Aspen Institute)* focuses on highlighting and bringing greater attention to grassroots initiatives around the US, which are building bridges of communication in their communities.

In the context of Cyprus too there have been many grassroots initiatives to get dialogue started. One of the most successful has been a group started by educationalists from both communities, the **Association for Historical Dialogue and Research** (AHDR) which studies the way history is being taught on both sides of the Green Line and undertakes numerous activities for parents and children to counterbalance these biases.

Apart from their work as an organisation, they were instrumental in establishing a space in the buffer zone known as the **Home for Cooperation** which provides a venue for all those who want to undertake bi-communal activities. There is a pleasant café which serves as a convenient meeting point and among the regular activities are language lessons at various levels for those who want to learn the other's language. Many other presentations and lectures are held there. In cooperation with the Karaiskakion and Saraçoğlu Foundations, we organized the launch of my bi-lingual children's book "The President's Dogs" there in the form of a children's party.

The **Association for Bilingualism Cyprus** encourages the use of both languages and provides lessons, conversation groups, and excursions to help bring people from the two communities together.

The bi-communal women's group **Hands Across the Divide** established twenty years ago, has as its main aim *to promote cooperation among Cypriot women to achieve their vision of a humane Cyprus, providing equal opportunities to all its people in all social, economic, and political realms*. Within this context it has carried out various projects including a peace bus which visited village coffee shops to foster reconciliation on both sides of the Green Line.

A global organisation which has brought together the youth of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, is **PeacePlayers Cyprus** "*using basketball as a reconciliation tool to empower youth across physical divides in Cyprus and create the next generation of advocates for peace*".

By joining **PeacePlayers,** young people north and south of the divide train with selected coaches at their local schools and consequently have the opportunity to play mixed-team friendly matches, as well as to take part in tournaments overseas.

They also have the opportunity to attend a Leadership Development Programme, where they spend time together over a couple of days at a location like Agros (south) or Kyrenia (north) to learn about one another. This programme has proven to be popular with team members and has been the instigator of new friendships across the divide.

An extremely interesting project, which unfortunately was never realised as it was considered too politically sensitive, was proposed by **Education for Peace, Canada.** The idea was to take a group of Greek and Turkish Cypriots by bus to the sites of two mass graves of innocent victims of massacres, to raise awareness of the fact that atrocities had been committed by both sides. The group would stay overnight together in a hotel and after dinner participants would be asked to spend the evening by themselves in their rooms to make some notes on their thoughts about the visits, which they would share the following morning after breakfast.

These initiatives of course have value, but a significant limitation on the effectiveness of such undertakings is that what the participants learn cannot easily be transferred to the wider society, because they are experiential learnings. You need to have had the experience in order to undergo the change; just hearing about it is not usually sufficient, as we learnt to our dismay when we organized round table discussions and appeared in TV discussions talking about our experiences in the conflict resolution workshops.

There is also the problem of self-selection, in the sense that those who want to participate in such activities are generally favourably predisposed to the idea of reconciliation anyway.

In Cyprus we have also faced another difficulty, namely the language barrier. Dialogue groups and other training sessions are usually conducted in English as the common language for the

two communities, hence these activities are perceived as being for the educated elite. Those who do not feel confident in English generally do not participate.

The activities mainly take place in the buffer zone in Nicosia. This is a convenient meeting place for people from both sides but is again perceived as a "special" space, one which would not be visited by the average Cypriot who is not interested in actively participating in reconciliation efforts. Consequently, there is very little participation beyond Nicosia.

One significant exception to this rule was a bicommunal initiative of people from Famagusta who were working together for the return of the fenced off area from which Greek Cypriots were expelled during the military intervention. However, since the Turkish military started opening up the fenced off area and declared that there is no possibility of Greek Cypriot return to the area not surprisingly there has been no public activity of the group.

Despite these limitations, every now and then there is **a light in the dark.** Recently, using both languages the **Antilogos Theatre** group staged a production of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" on the rooftop of the Home for Cooperation in the buffer zone. Apart from being an excellent production, the experiment of having one character speaking Greek and the other Turkish (with subtitles) worked amazingly well. The open air backdrop of the Kyrenia mountain range with the illuminated TRNC flag, also added to the significance of the production which was adapted to reflect the current situation in Cyprus.

CHAPTER 6

Humiliation, Apology, and Forgiveness

'Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done, of putting a false label on it. It means rather that the evil act no longer remains a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is the catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

The weak can never forgive.
Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.

MAHATMA GANDHİ

Why is it so difficult to achieve reconciliation in situations of political conflict? Perhaps the simple answer is because the first step in the process of reconciliation, an apology, is generally missing. As *Yehudith Auerbach, psychologist and international relations professor at Bar-Ilan University* who has written extensively on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict points out: "*The concept of reconciliation has a much broader meaning than conflict resolution. It involves psychological processes, both cognitive and emotional, and this adds an important element to conflict termination... Whereas reconciliation emphasizes the psychological aspect of conflict termination, forgiveness adds the spiritual-moral dimension to the discussion.*"

Especially where a party has been humiliated, apology is vital in assuaging feelings of humiliation, promoting feelings of forgiveness, and restoring balance to a relationship. The apology must, of course, be genuine and not mere lip service.

An apology meets the needs of the victim by providing a restoration of their dignity, an assurance of shared values (both parties agree that what happened was wrong), it validates that the victim was not responsible for the offense and is safe from a repeated offense.

It may include reparative justice in the form of punishment of the offender(s) as well as reparations (compensation). It may also include dialogue which allows the victims to express their feelings and to grieve over their losses, as in the case of the **South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission**; it is a way of addressing the humiliation victims have been made to feel at the hands of the perpetrator.

At the same time apology has beneficial effects for the person who apologises. *Carl Jung* pointed out that "*Apologies represent a splitting of the self into a blameworthy part and a part that stands back and sympathizes with the blame giving, and by implication is worthy of being brought back into the fold*".

When the injurer fails to take responsibility, guilt may soon translate into a sense of internal shame – the feeling not that one has committed a wrongful act but that one is oneself defective – and ultimately this leads to a loss of self-esteem.

Jonathan Cohen in an article on the "*Immorality of Denial*" points out that failing to take responsibility for misdeeds can cause problems to fester and grow. How much easier it would have been if early on, the Catholic Church had squarely faced the problem of priests sexually abusing children, for instance. Admitting one's errors can be pivotal to avoiding future repetition. He

suggests, in the case of the Catholic Church, not only might facing the problems of sexual abuse early on have helped to prevent further abuse, but it might also have prompted it to rethink other subjects such as the celibacy of priests and the ordination of women. As Cohen points out, taking responsibility can be essential for turning injury into a learning experience.

Apology and forgiveness are two sides of the same coin. They reflect the constructive ways the oppressors and oppressed in a conflict can come to terms with the pain and suffering the conflict produced.

In most intractable, on-going conflicts both sides have caused pain and suffering, both sides have probably committed atrocities, so there is a need for all parties to make apologies and grant forgiveness, if they are to get to reconciliation and closure.

In the case of Cyprus, both sides have experienced humiliation. The Turkish Cypriots feel humiliated by the behaviour of Greek Cypriots towards them in the early stages of the life of the Republic, while Greek Cypriots feel humiliated by the loss of territory in the military operation of 1974. If we are to move forward to a new relationship, we need to address and confront these issues.

We also know that the feeling of **humiliation** experienced by a group is one of the fastest drivers of conflict and that a powerful antidote is to show **respect for the other**. As an illustration of the dramatic impact that showing respect for the other can have, I recount the following report of an incident which took place during the war in Iraq in April 2003:

Lt. Col. Chris Hughes, U.S. Army (101st Airborne,) was leading his soldiers towards one of the holy cities in Iraq, Najaf. The objective was to secure the town and protect the important Imam Ali shrine, as well as to protect the Grand Ayatollah Sis-

tani, a Shia cleric who had been put under house arrest by Saddam Hussein.

As Hughes and two hundred of his men approached the Ayatollah's home the ground had been prepared. The Ayatollah knew he was coming, and the town was reported to be friendly.

However, unbeknown to Hughes, Baathist agitators had circulated a rumour that the Americans were not there to protect their religious leader but to take the mosque. In a matter of seconds, the mood of the crowd changed, they became angry, started shouting and throwing stones at the soldiers, who were heavily armed, tense, and tired due to lack of sleep. A bloodbath seemed imminent.

Amid all the agitation Hughes raised his rifle **upside down** to show that he had no intention of firing it. Then he told his men to take a knee (i.e., to kneel), to lower their weapons, and smile. The crowd quieted and some even smiled back. Then he told his soldiers to back up and walk away.

As a last gesture he placed his flat hand on his heart meaning "Peace be with you," said, "Have a nice day" and walked away. Later, when the confusion was cleared up, Hughes and his troops were able to enter the city. (Account based on the book by *Edwin Black "Banking on Baghdad".)*

The role of humiliation in collective political violence was mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, in the section on respect for cultural identity. I return to it here because I believe that the remedy for humiliation suffered by one group at the hands of another can only be by apology and forgiveness. All human beings want to be treated with dignity, yet the role of humiliation in collective violence has been understudied. The profound effect of violence on human psychology must be considered and delt with in any conflict situation, but particularly in long drawn out conflicts such as

that of Northern Ireland, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Cyprus, as well as in situations of the oppression by one group over another, such as the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Hence a recognition of the humiliation the other has suffered at the hands of your group, a deeply felt genuine apology and a request for forgiveness could, I believe, help move many confrontations from stalemate to dialogue.

The Politics of Apology and Forgiveness

Without apology and forgiveness people remain locked in the narratives and value systems that produced the conflict. Little progress beyond a ceasefire or at best a negotiated settlement can be made.

As *Desmond Tutu* has pointed out in "*No Future Without Forgiveness*" in relation to South Africa: "*It is crucial when a relationship has been damaged... that the perpetrator should acknowledge the truth and be ready and willing to apologize. It helps the process of forgiveness and reconciliation immensely. It is never easy. We all know how difficult it is for most of us to admit that we have been wrong.*"

"*Our leaders were ready in South Africa to say they were willing to walk the path of confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation with all the hazards that lay along the way. And it seems that the gamble might be paying off, since our land has not been overwhelmed by the catastrophe that seemed so inevitable.*"

In order to apologise and forgive you need to come to terms with the acceptance of partial truth, acknowledge that your own side has also committed wrongs, accept the responsibility for them even though you may not have been directly involved, and admit this truth publicly.

The problem is of course that apology is seen as, and is in fact, an admission of guilt, so political leaderships are at best divided about whether such a step should be taken and are often totally opposed to the idea. The case of South Africa is of course an interesting exception.

Take for example the case of Japan in relation to human rights abuses committed against Koreans, such as the issue of the forcible use of Korean women as "comfort women" for the Japanese troops. Successive Japanese Governments have been unable to bring themselves to acknowledge and apologise for this abuse.

Negotiated agreements such as the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement, no matter how encouraging they may be, will not really be real agreements unless they are underpinned by the acknowledgement of past wrongs committed by all sides, the building of trust, and true reconciliation between the parties.

One can see that this has not yet been achieved in Northern Ireland, where the physical walls between the two communities erected during the conflict are still standing and where even the name for the agreement differs depending on which community you belong to.

Unfortunately, in situations of protracted conflict the parties involved have a clear sense of the wrong that has been done to them, but little sense of the victimhood that the other community feels.

This is not really surprising when you consider the warped and schizophrenic reality that becomes "normality" in situations of protracted conflict like that of Northern Ireland, which *Anna Burns* describes in her award-winning novel "*Milkman*".

Even though Northern Ireland is nowhere mentioned as such, those of us who are old enough to remember the "troubles"

in Northern Ireland will have no difficulty in recognising the location. And those of us who have grown up in conflict situations, as I myself did, will have no difficulty in identifying with the kind of atmosphere she describes, where the abnormal becomes normal.

In the case of Cyprus both sides have committed violations, so mutual apology for wrongdoing would be an immense step forward in building trust.

Although Greek Cypriots know that there are mass graves of Turkish Cypriots who were executed by Greek Cypriot irregulars and admit this privately, they believe that to accept this openly and apologise, weakens their side's negotiating position.

Similarly, Turkey and Turkish Cypriots need to acknowledge the pain and devastation caused to the Greek Cypriot population by the military operation in 1974, which also resulted in mass graves of slaughtered innocents, and not justify it by referring to the earlier mistreatment of Turkish Cypriots. Both sides need to accept responsibility for their misdeeds. It is irrelevant who committed misdeeds first, and who committed more.

To give another example from Cyprus: due to the protracted conflict, there are missing persons from both communities, some from as far back as 1963. Cyprus is lucky in that the European Union and several individual countries have provided funding to enable a Committee for Missing Persons under the auspices of the UN and with the participation of a Greek and Turkish Cypriot representative to trace the missing in order to return the remains to families for proper burial.

Even though the whole process is bi-communal, with Cypriots from both communities working together at all stages, from exhumation to identification of the remains in the laboratory established specifically for this purpose in the buffer zone, each side only reports burials of their own missing and the television re-

ports of the burials of these heroes/martyrs emphasise the violence committed by the other side which led to their death.

The only exception to this approach is the work of journalist and peace activist Sevgül Uludağ who has researched and published articles and books about the missing from both sides in both Turkish and Greek Cypriot newspapers, and who covers the burials which take place in both communities on her Facebook page. Her work has been instrumental in helping to locate burial sites of missing persons from both communities. She has been supported in her efforts by Greek Cypriot journalist and publisher, Andreas Paraschos.

She continued and continues to write fearlessly, even after her brother-in-law, Kutlu Adali also a journalist, was murdered in a political execution in 1996. She was awarded the Courage in Journalism Award in 2008 by the International Women's Media Foundation and has received many other well deserved awards for her work.

Unfortunately, documentaries which show the pain and suffering of both communities and that cultivate the idea of reconciliation and forgiveness, like the following examples, have never been given a wide viewing.

In 2011 Jimmy Carter, Desmond Tutu, and Lakhdar Brahimi visited Cyprus representing the **Elders Organization**, an international NGO of public figures, peace and human rights activists brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007. One of their goals is "*to use their political independence to help resolve some of the world's most intractable conflicts*".

The Elders worked with the Committee of Missing Persons and the Cyprus Friendship Foundation (Cypriot Youth from both communities) to make a documentary entitled "*Digging the Past in Search of the Future*".

The documentary, which is extremely moving, follows the three Elders as they accompany four young Cypriots from the two communities to learn firsthand about the search for the missing at exhumation sites and subsequently in the laboratory.

The film is powerful visually and brings home the grotesque nature of conflict. It has a message of apology and forgiveness but unfortunately has only had limited private viewing in Cyprus. It has never been shown on any television channel or in schools in either community, though it is available on YouTube.

The same applies to another documentary entitled "*Our Wall*" made by *Panicos Chrysanthou* and *Niyazi Kizilyurek* in 1993, which interviews people from both communities who were victims of intercommunal violence and who lost loved ones.

During my term of office as a Member of Parliament, as someone who wanted to foster the idea of reconciliation, I visited the government broadcasting corporation with Panicos Chrysanthou, the director of the film, to encourage them to show it on public television. Our plea fell on deaf ears. All these years later it has still never been shown.

Unfortunately, the politically correct or expedient thing to do on each side is to reinforce the victim image of itself rather than recognise that both sides have been both victims and perpetrators and encourage reconciliation. Political leaders find it more expedient and easier to sell the idea that they will work on reconciliation after there is a negotiated settlement.

Hence another of my attempts to foster forgiveness was also largely ignored. When my father Glafcos Clerides, who had been President of Cyprus from 1993-2003, passed away, I decided that donations in his memory, which amounted to a considerable sum, would be donated to the Committee for Missing Persons to

benefit both communities. Not surprisingly almost no publicity was given to this gesture.

Political apologies can be a powerful tool in the re-examination of a nation's history, and the significance this history has on democratic processes and events taking place in a country today.

In the US there is a growing recognition that dealing with the past is a necessary step for the survival of democracy and that it is time for the United States to acknowledge the genocide of the American Indians and the brutality of slavery and its aftermath and the role these continue to play in the socio-political life of the country today.

It is interesting to note in this context that Abraham Lincoln established Thanksgiving in 1863 to enjoin the nation to repent for "our national perverseness and disobedience" to God during the Civil War and to ask for forgiveness for the sins that led to so many deaths.

However, it is also important to note that this did not include asking for repentance for the ills of slavery, something which has never been done.

To be fair to Lincoln, he wanted to give reparations and land to former slaves, but before he could do so he was assassinated by a fanatic anti-abolitionist. His successor Andrew Jackson was against this policy, and it was never carried out.

Today Representative Barbara Lee is pushing for a bill in the US Congress to establish a Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Commission to enable truth-telling about slavery and its aftermath. There seems to be a growing realization that truth telling is a necessary part of the process of dismantling systemic racism in the US. The history and legacy of violence has repercussions today, thus a public recounting is healing as well an experiment in public pedagogy; societies can learn from this process.

If injustice is not rectified, it gets reinforced from generation to generation. There has to be a common understanding of what happened in the past. We have to know where we are coming from to know where we want to go.

In general, the attitude to issues like slavery and colonialism is that they belong to a different era in history and therefore cannot be judged by today's standards, end of story. However, even though they have been abolished, many countries which were former colonies and groups of people like African Americans remain disadvantaged, so forgiveness needs to be sought and reparations made.

The teaching of critical race theory, which examines how historical patterns of racism are ingrained in the judicial system, laws and other institutions is an important step in the right direction; it is incredible to me that some states in the US have decided to ban teaching it in schools.

So far, colonial powers have generally only made half-hearted apologies for crimes carried out during the colonialist period, like Germany's apology in 2021 to Namibia for the genocide of 80% the Nama and Herero people in 1904-1908. The apology, however, was incomplete as it was coupled with an offer of development aid instead of providing for compensation.

Similarly, the King of Belgium has expressed his "deepest regret" for the atrocities Belgium committed in the Congo but stopped short of a full apology, even on a visit to the Congo to return an important artifact stolen by the Belgians from the Congo in June 2022.

Germany, is one of the few countries which at least in stages, has been able to come to terms with and acknowledge its abusive past, in relation to the Holocaust.

The first step came in 1951, when Chancellor Konrad Adenauer announced the payment of reparations to Israel, without however making a formal apology for the Holocaust.

Then in 1970, Chancellor Willy Brandt fell to his knees at the site of the Warsaw ghetto, thus expressing guilt, sorrow and accepting the responsibility of Germany for the Holocaust. (In commemoration in 2020 Germany issued a stamp showing Willy Brandt's knee fall in Warsaw fifty years after the event.)

However, it was not until 1985 that President Richard von Weizsäcker expressed a full formal apology on behalf of the German people to Germany's victims of war.

The process of how Germans' themselves have come to terms with their past (known in German, Vergangenheitsbewaltigung) and how they have dealt with haunting monuments and landscapes which evoke remembrances of two lost wars and a horrendous dictatorship, provide useful examples for other countries which need to go through a similar process of working through the past.

Making an effective apology is not easy either at a personal level or in the political field. It requires acknowledging the offence, expressing remorse, and providing an explanation (not an excuse). It also means that you take responsibility for the offence and ideally offer reparation. You also need to show that you have learnt the lesson and ask for forgiveness. So, it is not surprising that politicians are wary of doing this.

In her book "*Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics" Jennifer Lind* makes the interesting point that countries can mend their relationships without going through the process of contrition, as for example France and Germany after the Second World War with the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner to the European Union.

In her view the problem with apology is that a backlash is a predictable response from nationalistic circles within the society, leading to intense debate between those in favour and those against apology. This is of course a valid point in the real-life political context, and this is the reason why apology has never been on the political agenda in Cyprus.

Public opinion must be prepared for the apology and truth telling. There must be a general acceptance of wrongdoing by the majority in society which needs to precede the apology. This appears to have been the case in Germany, where apology for Nazi atrocities were made over a long period of time and not immediately after the war.

The most profound and pioneering example in this field was of course the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee. *Desmond Tutu* in his book "*No Future Without Forgiveness*" explains why the truth and reconciliation committee was preferred to legal action against perpetrators. He describes the process of setting up the committee, the difficulties faced during its work, and makes an evaluation of the outcome: "*South Africans managed an extraordinary, reasonably peaceful transition from the awfulness of repression to the relative stability of democracy. They confounded everyone by their novel manner of dealing with their horrendous past. They had perhaps surprised even themselves at first by how much equanimity they had shown as some of the gory details of the past were rehearsed. It was a phenomenon that the world could not dismiss as insignificant.*"

Some apologies have been made so long after the events that took place that one wonders if they have more than symbolic meaning for the victims, especially if reparations are not involved, as in the case of the 1996 apology by the Australian Government acknowledging the wrongs done to the Aboriginal population.

Nevertheless, even though some of these apologies are long overdue, they do have a significant symbolic value. After the first step has been taken, it opens the way for other steps to follow. In the Australian context, the Government of the State of Victoria has decided to formally establish a truth telling process to recognise and address historic wrongs and on-going injustices against indigenous Australians.

More recently, the co-leader of the Māori party in New Zealand, Rawiri Waititi won a battle in Parliament against wearing a tie, which he considered the equivalent of "a colonial noose" and was allowed to wear a traditional pendant, a Hei-tiki, instead. A small victory perhaps, but a victory of symbolic value.

To Forgive is not to Forget

To quote *Desmond Tutu* again: *"In forgiving, people are not being asked to forget. On the contrary it is important to remember so that we should not let the same atrocities happen again. Forgiving does not mean condoning what has been done. It means taking what happened seriously and not minimizing it; drawing out the sting in the memory that threatens to poison our entire existence. It involves trying to understand the perpetrators and so have empathy, to try to stand in their shoes and appreciate the sort of pressures and influences that might have conditioned them."*

The important point here is that understanding does not mean condoning, it means through understanding finding ways to stop similar atrocities and violence happening again.

This is the point I made earlier Chapter 3 in relation to the Muslim fundamentalist violence we are witnessing today. We

need to understand the root causes, which I believe have more to do with the feeling of centuries of humiliation by Europeans who happen to be Christian, rather than with religious intolerance.

Thus, to treat the Charlie Hebdo cartoons of the prophet Muhammad solely as an issue of freedom of speech is to miss the point. In a deeper sense it is not a question of freedom of speech, it is a matter of respecting the other's identity and beliefs and not humiliating them.

Similarly, in the case of white supremacists or the alt right, we need to understand the forces at work which are behind their actions as well as trying to prevent and contain the violence. In the words of Carl Jung: *"Understanding does not cure evil, but it is a definite help inasmuch as one can cope with comprehensible darkness."*

Unless we address the fundamental causes of the forces driving so much violent action in our societies, such as feelings of humiliation which lead to stigmatization and hatred of the "other," as well as dealing with the growing inequalities within all our societies, there will be no real prospects for social peace.

CHAPTER 7

Oppression, Injustice, and Inequality

"When you see something that isn't right or fair you need to say something, you need to do something."

U.S. SENATOR JOHN LEWIS, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

At different periods in history people have worked in different ways to overcome inequality and injustice. In most situations, violent struggle has been the method chosen and much less frequently non-violent resistance.

We need to differentiate between situations of conflict – where each of the parties involved may have some right and some wrong – and situations of oppression, injustice, and inequality. Some situations are inherently evil such as slavery, human trafficking, authoritarian regimes, and apartheid, and conflict resolution cannot solve these problems since the imbalance of power is such that negotiation or mediation would be meaningless.

Although the whole tenor of this book is about how to avoid violent conflict, I would be the first to admit that there are some situations in which violent confrontation probably cannot be avoided. In my view the Second World War was one such instance.

In international relations appeasement is often the first method of choice until the threat hits so close to home that it can-

not be avoided, and then the reaction is usually a full-scale war. This was the case prior to the Second World War.

The continuing debate about British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, the policy by which oppressive moves of the fascist powers of Europe went largely unopposed in the years prior to World War Two, are a clear example.

Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and Germany's annexation of Austria were ignored, and Chamberlain, together with the French Prime Minister Eduard Daladier, endorsed Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland with the Munich Agreement of September 1938; Neville Chamberlain then returned to Britain claiming, "peace for our time".

Many reasons have been posited for this approach, most prominently that Chamberlain believed he could avoid, or perhaps postpone a European war, for which Britain was not ready.

At the same time the horrendous philosophy on which Nazism was based – the fact that in Nazi Germany the aim was to annihilate Jews, and all others whom the state considered "undesirables," to deny the humanity of those it defined as "others" and "undesirables" – was initially ignored. Whether such an approach was morally justified is questionable.

Prof. Robert Mnookin of Harvard University looks in depth at this issue in his book *"Bargaining with the Devil: When to Negotiate and When to Fight."* His two heroes are Winston Churchill and Nelson Mandela.

Churchill because, after long deliberation with his Cabinet, he decided not to accept Mussolini's offer to negotiate with Hitler and instead to declare war on Nazi Germany; and Mandela because, after his release from prison he initiated negotiations with the apartheid regime without consulting anyone.

How do we make the wise decision on when to negotiate and when to fight? First of all, we need to look coldly at the issues at stake with emotional detachment, Mnookin stresses, and then, as guidelines, we need to weigh up the following issues:

- The underlying interests of both parties.
- The alternatives for both parties.
- The potential negotiated outcomes that can benefit both sides.
- Whether the agreement will be enforceable.
- Potential costs of negotiation e.g., to one's reputation, etc.

In addition, there are considerations of legitimacy, morality, identity, and self-respect. Some values may be non-negotiable.

Advocacy and Sanctions

In the case of South Africa, the Anti-Apartheid Movement which started in Britain in the 1960s by boycotting South African goods, subsequently broadened its approach and used cooperation within the United Nations to help achieve its aims.

The strategy used was to press for a range of measures to isolate the regime, support the liberation movement, and inform public opinion about the continued need for effective sanctions.

Within the U.N. those against apartheid built the broadest coalition of support for each measure possible, welcoming cooperation rather than alienating governments or organisations which were not prepared to support sanctions or the armed struggle.

At the same time in South Africa itself, the struggle on the ground used violence, as was the case in so many anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s and 60s, including that of Cyprus in the period of 1955-1959, so that, as in all such cases, one man's freedom fight became another man's terrorist attack.

Change through Non-Violent Resistance
Aikido

I was introduced to the philosophy of Aikido at one of our bi-communal conflict resolution workshops where we used the Japanese martial art Aikido as an analogy for what we are doing in conflict resolution.

Aikido, which means the Art of Peace was developed by martial arts expert Morihei Ueshiba. During the devastation of the Second World War, he had a vision of the Great Spirit of Peace, a path that could lead to the elimination of all strife and the reconciliation of humankind.

Aikido is based on ethical considerations contained in Eastern religious and philosophical thought but differs from other self-defense methods as it aims merely to neutralise and harmlessly redirect the aggression of the attacker.

Ueshiba's goal was to create an art that practitioners could use to defend themselves while also protecting their attackers from injury.

The word Aikido, composed of three characters in Japanese, breaks down as follows: Ai = harmony
ki = a way of life
do= action

"*The way of the warrior has been misunderstood as a means to kill and destroy others. To smash, injure or destroy is the worst sin a human being can commit. The real Way of the Warrior is to prevent slaughter- it is the Art of Peace, the power of love.*"

Ueshiba taught the Art of Peace as a mind-body discipline, as a practical means of handling aggression and as a way of life that fosters fearlessness, wisdom, love, and friendship.

Just what this means in practice was demonstrated to us by Aikido master Chris Thorsen at several of the conflict resolution workshops Cypriots attended. He showed us how, by using the skills of Aikido, you can bring a much larger opponent than yourself to the floor without harming them.

The first step involves centering oneself, the second, meeting the energy of the other, and the third, using that energy to flow together in another direction.

Naturally, despite the convincing demonstration we witnessed from Chris Thorsen, there were some in the group who doubted the effectiveness of this technique.

In one of the workshops Chris was challenged by a huge, overweight, burly Greek Cypriot Member of Parliament who was determined to demonstrate that Aikido does not work. I must confess I was delighted when he ended up on the floor...unharmed of course!

Hence the Aikido master functions as a teacher. When the challenger approaches, the master uses special techniques to show the challenger that it is futile and unkind to challenge aggressively and sends the challenger away as quickly and harmlessly as possible.

Essentially, in the context of conflict resolution, the metaphor of Aikido functions as follows:

Step 1: know where you are coming from and what you are bringing to the table in terms of your past, hopes, fears, feelings, missing information;
Step 2: meet the other – know where the other is coming from and understand it; ask yourself what are the images/prejudices you are carrying of the other side;
Step 3: what can we do together in a creative, cooperative way?

Interdependence

The awareness that we are all connected not only to one another but to all that is around us, that *"no man is an island"* as the poet *John Donne* so famously said, is a prerequisite to striving for greater equality in the world and for seeking peaceful solutions.

"If we shift our focus from ourselves to others and the wider world, and if we turn our attention to all the crises in the world, we will see that many of these problems arise from this powerful combination of self-centeredness and the belief in our independent existence.

Now in contrast if you shift your focus from yourself to others and cultivate the thought of caring for the well-being of others this will have the immediate effect of opening your life. The same applies when you cultivate the understanding that the self is not really an independently existing entity and begin to view it in terms of its dependent relation to others.

We can ask ourselves 'what benefit do I as an individual derive from my self-centeredness and from my belief in my existence as an independent self?' When you really think deeply you

will realize the answer is 'Not very much.'" Dalai Lama, "Transcendent Wisdom".

We can also use this as a useful perspective on global politics in the 21st century. Climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have shown just how interconnected and interdependent our world and the world economy is.

No nation has been able to isolate itself from the pandemic, just as no nation has been able to avoid the fallout of climate change and the war in Ukraine. *Martin Luther King Jr.* puts it very well: *"All men are interdependent. Every nation is an heir of a vast treasury of ideas and labor to which both the living and the dead of all nations have contributed...When we arise in the morning we go to the bathroom where we reach for a sponge which is provided for us by a Pacific Islander. We reach for soap that is created for us by a European. Then at the table we drink coffee which is provided for us by a South American or tea by a Chinese, or cocoa by a West African. Before we leave for our jobs, we are already beholden to more than half of the world."*

We will be much more effective as a world community if we internalise this realisation and act upon it collectively.

Gandhian and Kingian Non-Violent Resistance

The belief that the only way to overcome hatred is with love, led Mahatma Gandhi to develop the idea of non-violent resistance in his struggle to liberate India from British colonial rule.

Gandhi believed that to attack another person is like attacking ourselves, since we are all simply representations of the Creator. Thus, in Gandhi's world view there is no enemy, only another, like oneself, who needs to be shown the truth. His philos-

ophy was based on the ancient Hindu principle of *ahimsa* which means we must do all we can to prevent the recurrence of suffering and aggression.

From this he developed the concept of *satyagraha,* non-co-operation, or non-violent struggle. Literally, *satyagraha* means "truth force" and the aim was for all to see the truth and agree to change an unjust law or situation without violence; fighting injustice by voluntarily submitting oneself to suffering. The doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by inflicting violence on one's opponent, but on oneself. Easy to say, but extremely difficult to practice.

One of the most famous examples of the use of *satyagraha* were the Salt Marches which Gandhi and his followers led to protest the Salt Tax imposed by the British on salt; a tax which affected the poorest people in India the most.

The Salt Marches have gone down in history and there are many pictures and descriptions on You Tube. An eyewitness account by a British journalist makes difficult reading, but it illustrates the power of non-violent protest.

In one march for instance, two thousand five hundred marchers came face to face with four hundred policemen and six British officers. As they approached in columns of twenty-five, they were beaten down with clubs on their heads and shoulders and as they fell, many of them bleeding, the next twenty-five came forward, were beaten with clubs, fell, and on and on, until the final column fell.

This use of "truth force" was not immediately successful. Eventually British public opinion was outraged by these scenes, but it took seven years and many marches before the salt tax was repealed. Nevertheless, in India Gandhi showed that military might had to eventually give way to unstoppable moral force.

We know that Gandhi's non-violent resistance was the inspiration for Martin Luther King Jr. and many other civil rights leaders, like the recently deceased Senator John Lewis, in their struggle for equality in the U.S.

In his book *"Stride Toward Freedom" Martin Luther King Jr.* wrote: *"Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale... It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months."*

His analysis of why non-violence is effective is profound. *"The non-violent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage they did not know they had. Finally, it reaches the opponent and so stirs his conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality."*

In this context the interview of *Bryan Stevenson with Sen. John Lewis* conducted in 2019, approximately a year before the Senator died, as part of the *TED Legacy Project*, makes inspirational viewing. I highly recommend it for the insights it provides to the challenges faced by the non-violent civil rights struggle in the US.

Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Dalai Lama are supreme spiritual teachers in their efforts to achieve their aims through non-violent means and their search for common ground and reminding ourselves of them can be a powerful way of sustaining our hope for a more just world.

Inadequacy of Democratic Political Systems

Unfortunately, the way we conduct politics today, even in those societies we consider democratic, has little to do with promoting equality and even less with promoting the idea of interconnectedness.

Voting is a rights-based, win-lose, adversarial process, whereas true democracy requires collaborative problem solving. Politics as conducted today is an impediment to reaching convergence, because it poses the issues to the electorate as if there were only one correct answer to a problem.

As pioneer mediator *Kenneth Cloke*, founder of **Mediators Beyond Boarders** points out in his book "*Politics, Dialogue and the Evolution of Democracy*" politics today could benefit greatly from a mediation perspective. Mediation is a radically democratic form of problem solving because it is dialogue based and it includes all the stakeholders as we have seen in Chapters 5 and 6.

It does not assume that the problem is one of evil intentions on anybody's side, as is so often the discourse in modern day politics even in democratic societies. Instead, it looks deeper into what people believe and want in their lives. It is a conversation of engagement, inclusion and problem solving with deep, healing value.

Unfortunately, politics today is more about domination, who gets to dominate whom, both at the national and international level, rather than what it could or should be, namely a large group decision making process. In essence politics is the art of conflict resolution. We need to look at political conflicts as an area in which mediators can bring their skills to foster dialogue to resolve conflicts.

We need to rethink the language of politics. What is needed is not demagogic skills but honesty, emotional skills, and heart, all of which are included in mediation skills.

When we try to solve conflicts based on power or rights, these are zero sum games. When we focus on interests nobody loses, though not everyone wins everything they want.

We often forget that true democracy requires a set of skills, namely the ability to engage in dialogue with people you do not agree with. However, as *Cloke* points out, the way we conduct politics today with negative advertising and trashing of one's opponent, means that whoever wins an election is "damaged goods" by the time they take office. So, what politics could be and should be about according to *Cloke* is:

- A form of social problem solving.
- A large group facilitation process.
- The art of conflict resolution, the building of consensus through an interests-based, dialogic approach.

Unfortunately, in the few instances where major political parties have been forced to cooperate because of the outcome of an election result, as in Germany with the grand coalition between the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats from March 2018 to December 2021, the parties themselves were unhappy with this situation because they feared losing the support of their base. Instead of seeing this as an opportunity for growth, the parties could not wait to get back to the traditional adversarial politics which is based on the idea that one ideology has the right answer to every question.

Essentially, the way we are conducting politics in democracies as a competition between parties is increasing polarization. We need to educate ourselves and the wider public about what politics should be about and start learning the tools of problem solving, conflict resolution and mediation at school in order to be

able to apply them in later life. What we should be asking is "How can we help each other to do something together to change things for the better?"

The greatest power we have is the power to change the game and our mind set. *Einstein* said that the most important question that human beings can ask themselves is, *"Is the universe a friendly place?"*

This is a philosophical question which each of us needs to answer for ourselves. Thus, we need to ask if some of our beliefs are hindering us. We open new pathways for ourselves and others when we reframe our picture of the universe from one of scarcity to sufficiency, from unfriendly to friendly

This is true; however, it is clear that in political terms the question has already been answered negatively. Most countries see each other as competitors and the world as a place of scarcity where one man's loss is another man's gain.

Ultimately, we need to change our outlook not only at the individual level but also at the political level if we are not to be overtaken by pandemics, climate change, and unending migration flows. The moderate success of the UN Glasgow Climate Summit in 2021 indicates that some governments appear to be becoming aware of this, at least in relation to the pandemic and climate change.

Inequality

The over-riding issues of inequalities within countries and between countries and continents have to be addressed. There is enough to go round but we have to distribute it more equitably.

The *World Inequality Report* is produced annually by the *World Inequality Lab of the Paris School of Economics*. The Data Base was started in the 2010s and provides data that helps to show whether policies to reduce inequality are working. The *Report for 2022* states: *"that addressing the challenges of the 21st century is not feasible without significant redistribution of income and wealth inequalities.....Recent developments in international taxation show that progress towards fairer economic policies is indeed possible at the global level as well as between countries."*

The discussions around the Global Minimum Corporate Tax and President Biden's support for this measure are encouraging. Under the new International Global Tax Rules which 137 countries have signed up to, simulations have shown that countries can raise 50-80 billion euros more per year to use to invest in education, health care, and infrastructure to create a more level playing field for their citizens.

It cannot be acceptable that the world's richest 1%, the billionaires at the very top of the economic pyramid, now have more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60% of the planet's population. It cannot be acceptable that almost half of humanity is living on less than $5.50 per day. It cannot be acceptable that 735 million people are living in extreme poverty and that many others are just one hospital bill or failed harvest away from slipping into it. (*Data from Oxfam.)*

Unless we address these fundamental issues there is no possibility of living in a world without massive population migrations and no possibility of dealing with the challenges of climate change.

The Vision

> "I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the alters of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and non-violent and redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land. 'And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit under his own vine or fig tree, and none shall be afraid.' I still believe that we shall overcome."
>
> *MARTİN LUTHER KİNG JR.*

I believe we all need a powerful vision like this if we are to move forward as individuals, societies, nations, and as an international community of nations.

We also need to remind ourselves of the wisdom of *Sufi* mystic and poet *Yunus Emre* that we take nothing with us when we leave this world: "*Come let us get to know each other, let us make our work a little easier. Let us love and be loved, no one inherits this world.*"

Consequently, it is important that we leave something of value behind because ultimately: "*We will be known by the tracks that we leave.*" *(American Indian.)*

CHAPTER 8

Confronting Structural and Systemic Inequality and Injustice

"If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time.... But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

ABORIGINAL ACTIVIST SAYING.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

In the process of doing research for this book I became much more aware of the role of structural and systemic inequalities both within and between countries as drivers of violent conflict.

In fact if we think about it more carefully, we will realize that the western democracies of which we are so proud have been built on the exploitation of others. In the case of the US, on the genocide of the native American Indian tribes and on the enslavement of Africans. In the case of European countries, on the colonization of Africa and large parts of Asia.

These truths need to be acknowledged through truth telling, apology, and reparations to begin the healing process, and as a starting point to action for a fairer distribution of the world's wealth both within and between countries.

It is an issue which is occupying the minds of more and more intellectuals around the world, particularly at the **World Inequality Lab** at the **Paris School of Economics** which gathers social scientists committed to helping everyone understand the drivers of inequality worldwide through evidence-based research and publishes annually the **World Inequality Report**.

A leading intellectual in this field, *Thomas Piketty* in an article in *Le Monde* (13.4.21) explains the need for a fairer distribution of the world's wealth: *"The Covid-19 crisis, the most serious global health crisis in a century, forces us to fundamentally rethink the notion of international solidarity. Beyond the right to produce vaccines and medical equipment, it is the whole question of the right of poor countries to develop and receive part of the benefits of the tax revenues of the world's multinationals and billionaires that must be asked. We need to move beyond the neo-colonial notion of international aid, paid at the whim of rich countries and under their control and finally move towards a logic of rights."*

And he goes on to ask the rhetorical question: *"Why should every country be entitled to a share of the revenues collected from the world's multinationals and billionaires? Firstly, because every human being should have equal minimum rights to health, education, and development. Secondly,..... Western enrichment has always been based on the international division of labour and the unbridled exploitation of the world's natural and human resources."*

In a similar vein *Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation*, argues that it is time to move beyond charitable giving to creating societies with dignity and justice for all. Feel good, band

aid, philanthropic giving is not enough, our economic systems need to be examined and restructured. In an interview on *"The Inflection Point"* entitled *"Darren Walker's Mission to End Inequality"* (February 2022) he makes the important distinction between generosity and justice. He quotes *Martin Luther King Jr* to make this important point: *"Philanthropy is commendable, but it should not allow the philanthropist to overlook the social inequality that makes philanthropy necessary."*

We need to look at the underlying root causes of inequality and the social systems that sustain it, systems that privilege some of us and disadvantage others, and we also need to look at distortions in the capitalist system where hate and division have become monetized/profitable, and disinformation threatens the very heart of democracy.

He believes that moving forward in the post Corona virus world, we will be forced to leave behind some structures and systems we have been living in. Capitalism, he argues, is skating on thin ice. It has been distorted to compound inequalities. The global system will have to provide a fairer distribution of benefits.

Similarly, in his ground-breaking book *"Utopia for realists and how we can get there", Rutger Bregman* argues that we can construct a society with visionary ideas that are in fact wholly implementable. Every milestone of civilization – from the end of slavery to the beginning of democracy – was once considered a utopian fantasy. As he forcefully argues with detailed evidence, basic guaranteed income and a fifteen-hour workweek can become reality in our lifetime.

Consequently, I believe that it is incumbent on those of us who are privileged to think about what we have to give up in order to achieve greater equality in this world, where there is in fact enough to go round for everybody if it is better distributed.

Those of us who are privileged also need to think about how we can **access our privilege to empower others.**

Privilege as Power

> "When you are used to superiority then equality seems like oppression."
>
> *(ANON.)*

Fundamental to this conversation is the concept of privilege. Those of us who are privileged take this privilege for granted as though it was a right which we have earned.

However, in fact privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they have done or failed to do

For example in Cyprus, because of their numerical advantage Greek Cypriots were the privileged group; in the US white American heterosexuals have the advantage; in Afghanistan men are privileged over women, something which despite women's struggle for equality remains true in all parts of the world, though of course the degree of disadvantage varies.

Dominant groups feel that privileges are their due and that the subordinate groups' struggles stem from inferiority. This privilege is then supported by processes and behaviours in the socio-economic and legal system that privilege the dominant group and obstruct the subordinate group, since it is the privileged who make the laws and run the political systems.

Whereas in actual fact privilege stems from an accident of birth. *Allan G. Johnson*, author of *"Privilege, Power and Differ-*

ence" gives this example as an illustration*: "When people come up to me after I give a speech, for example, it doesn't occur to me that they'd probably be more critical and less positive if I were a Latino or a woman or gay. I don't feel privileged in that moment, I just feel I did a good job..... The existence of privilege doesn't mean that I didn't do a good job..... What it does mean is that I am also getting something that other people are denied, people who are like me in every way except for the gender, race, and sexual orientation."*

I am sure women readers will easily be able to identify with this example. Whatever we are doing, we always know we have to be twice as good as the average man in order to be accepted and taken seriously. Of course there are many nuances to privilege. Even though I am a woman, in my society I have a certain level of privilege, because I had a good education, I am the daughter of a well-loved political figure, and I am economically comfortable.

As a young woman coming of age in the 1970's I am deeply indebted to those feminist theorists who helped me realise that in the societies in which I lived and moved men were privileged**.** They motivated me to action in my early political career to promote legislation to empower women and to encourage women to participate in the decision-making process of the political party I represented.

Later, through my participation in bicommunal activities I became aware of Greek Cypriot hubris in relation to Turkish Cypriots and how this was expressed in many subtle and unsubtle ways, as well as realizing how demeaning this must feel to Turkish Cypriots.

As the product of a mixed marriage living in a nationalistic environment, I quickly became aware of what it feels like not to fit in in the dominant group in society.

There was a phrase my mother used to use when I was a child when she saw someone who was disadvantaged: "There but for the grace of God go I." I do not know where she got it from because she was not religious, perhaps from the Catholic school she attended as a child. However, to me what it means is that it is just a question of luck where you are born, the colour of your skin, your socio-economic status, so it is beholden on those of us who have any sort of advantage to use it for the benefit of those who are disadvantaged for any reason.

Implementing the concept of inclusion and dismantling privilege requires moving away from ideas and practices that are based solely in the dominant culture and towards embracing diversity and the ideas and practices reflective of all groups. Diversity is seen as enriching rather than as a problem and disadvantage is seen not as individual failure but as an outcome of an unequal and unjust system which must be changed.

This quote from *Malcolm X* makes the point eloquently: *"If you stick a knife in my back and pull it out six inches, there's no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. Progress is healing the wound that the blow made. And they haven't even pulled the knife out much less heal the wound. They won't even admit the knife is there."*

Hence the importance of efforts like that of Representative Barbara Lee and Senator Cory Booker to establish a Commission on Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation in the US Congress. Senator Booker explains the reasoning behind the proposal: *"To realize our nation's promise of being a place of liberty and justice for all we must acknowledge and address the systemic racism and white supremacy that have been with us since our nation's founding. The first ever congressional commission on truth, racial healing and transformation will be a critical compli-*

ment to other urgent legislative efforts like S.40 which would establish a commission on reparations. Together these proposals are a necessary step in beginning to root out systemic racism in our institutions, creating proposals for addressing and repairing past harm, and building a more just nation for every American."

Congresswoman Lee adds the following in her reasoning for supporting the Bill: "*We've made substantial progress, but the legacy of systemic racism clearly shows that the chains of slavery have yet to be broken. This commission will educate and inform the public about the historical context for the current inequalities we witness each and every day."*

From the Casual Killing Act 1669, which ensured that a slave owner was not considered guilty of murder if a slave died during punishment, to the "stop and frisk" Terry ruling of the Supreme Court in 1968, which allows the police to stop and search on suspicion of danger, to the industrial prison complex which continues to allow forced labour, structural inequality has always been embedded in the US social, legal, political, and economic system.

De-humanizing the other allows these inequalities to persist and means there is a lack of empathy for the suffering or disadvantage of the other. The attitude cultivated is that this group is not human. They are violent and therefore a threat to my security and purity. This kind of de-humanization has been the enabler of genocide and other horrible crimes against humanity. And it is discernible in many of the conflicts we are witnessing today, including the relationship between the two main religious groups in Nigeria and in the language used in Hungary vis-à-vis the Roma, to mention just two current examples.

The best way to re-humanize the other is to create interaction across the divided groups in a controlled environment where shared personal narratives can lead to a shift in perceptions.

We need to be aware that dismantling inequalities is often perceived as threatening to those who see themselves as part of the privileged group, particularly if they are on the lower rungs of the privileged group and feel they have something to lose, which is the motivation behind many white supremacist groups today.

So it is extremely important that sensitivity is shown to these groups of people who feel threatened and to make it clear that dismantling privilege and reparations will not disadvantage them, but that in fact a more equitable society will benefit them as well. It is important that they not be made to feel like pariahs' and are included in the civilized dialogue as well.

An example of this is the **Uniting for Action America Program** in the US which brings small groups of people with differing viewpoints together over an extended period of time to discuss a specific issue; it could be as broad as the issue of race or more specific like food waste, for example. A trained facilitator ensures that the discussion is held in a spirit of generosity and openness.

The aim of the programme is to build relationships, help people to communicate effectively across different views, strengthen collaborative skills and, even though they may not reach full agreement, to agree to a specific action that they can carry out together on the issue they have been discussing.

Truth Telling

In this process of dismantling systemic inequality truth telling and education are also essential elements, as American Indian *Kitcki Corrall, Executive Director of the United South and Eastern Tribes,* addressing Americans on *Indianz.com (22.1.2019)*

points out: "*You have become the wealthiest and most powerful nation the world has ever known as a consequence of the resources you took against our will, but you fail to live up to the promise you made that resulted from your asserting your will. You saw us only as an implement to your aspirations that were rooted in greed, not as equals as intended by the Creator. You have perpetuated a belief that we are of historical relevance only. You have allowed us to be invisible in our own land.*"

He notes that school children are taught false narratives about the founding of the US. They are not taught about the Discovery Doctrine for example, which was used by European monarchs beginning in the mid-15th century as a means of colonizing the lands outside Europe, based on the presiding theory of the time that indigenous people, because they were not Christian, were not human and therefore the land was empty or terra nullius and up for grabs.

In May 2012, the U.N. recognized the on-going impact of the Discovery Doctrine on indigenous peoples as the "shameful" root of all the discrimination and marginalization which indigenous peoples face today.

The "woke" Generation

The word "woke" means to be alert to injustice in society, especially racism. We are lucky because nowadays through the works of brilliant, young, and what I would term "woke" writers, it is possible for us to understand more deeply what it feels like to grow up in a marginalized or underprivileged community.

Of course, famous American authors like Maya Angelou and Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison paved the way in the 20th century

describing what it was like growing up in the southern United States as the descendants of slaves. While Octavia E. Butler of the same generation uses the science fiction, time-travel genre to tell a similar story. Their books are now considered classics.

The new generation includes countless new authors such as *Rosanna Amaka* of African and Caribbean heritage who wrote *"The Book of Echoes"* to give voice to the Brixton immigrant community, inspired by a wish to understand the impact of history on present day lives; while *Gabriel Krause*, the child of Polish immigrants, who was drawn into a life of crime and gangs from an early age, describes this lifestyle using the vernacular in his autobiographical novel *"Who They Was"* and provides us with a vivid picture of what it is like to grow up in a housing estate in Britain at the beginning of the millennium.

In 2019 *Bernardine Evaristo* (of Nigerian/British heritage) became the first black woman to win the Booker prize since its inception fifty years earlier with her book *"Girl, Woman, Other."* *Her* autobiography *"Manifesto, on never giving up,"* is her intimate and fearless account of how she did it. From a childhood steeped in racism from neighbours, priests and even some white members of her own family, she charts her rebellion against mainstream, and her lifelong commitment to community and creativity, and through the prism of her extraordinary experiences she offers us insights into the nature of race, class, feminism, sexuality, and aging in modern Britain.

I am old enough to remember the fall of Saigon and the images of Vietnamese scrambling to get on the last fights out with the American transport planes. I always thought that those who got out and reached the US were the lucky ones and "lived happily ever after." However, reading *Viet Thanh Nguyen*'s Pulitzer Prize winning book *"The Sympathizer"* made me realize that

those who made it out faced racism and discrimination in their new homeland. Nguyen's book explores identity, politics, and America through the eyes of a half-French, half-Vietnamese immigrant. In his sequel "*The Committed*" with his sardonic eye and sharp tongue he describes French colonial rule in Vietnam and the demeaning attitudes of the French in general to Vietnamese and other immigrants from their former colonies, during his time spent in Paris.

Ocean Vuong, another Vietnamese immigrant in his novel "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" tells of Vietnam, the lasting impact of war, and of his family's struggle to forge a new future in America in the face of poverty and racism.

The 2021 Nobel prize for writing was awarded to *Abdulrazak Gurnah* a Tanzanian born British writer, who left Zanzibar as a teenager after the 1964 revolution, and who said in his Nobel prize acceptance speech that "*it was after I arrived in England following a long period of poverty and alienation that it became clear to me that there was something I wanted to say.*" He began writing "*in refusal of the self-assured summaries of people who despised and belittled us.*" He books explore the experience of colonialism, the lingering ties that bind continents and how competing versions of history collide.

All these writers and many more, too many to list here, can help us to understand the different kinds of prejudices that exist in all our societies, even those we consider enlightened and democratic, and help us to work to create fairer societies and a more equal playing field for all.

These talented writers have broadened my vision and helped me to experience through their eyes and feelings what the world is like for so many beyond my comfortable existence. They have also made me aware of the traumas that so many have been

scarred with, which most of us know nothing about, or which are just a period of history we have read about.

Our Individual Responsibility

At the same time those of us who are members of the privileged group in our societies have a moral imperative to act as allies for those who are working to dismantle oppression. An ally is a person whose commitment to dismantling oppression is reflected in a willingness to do the following:

- Educate oneself about oppression.
- Listen to and learn from people who are targets of oppression.
- Examine and challenge one's own prejudices, stereotypes, and assumptions.
- Work through feelings of guilt shame and defensiveness to understand what is beneath them and what needs to be healed.
- Learn and practice the skills of challenging oppressive remarks, behaviours, policies, and institutional structures.
- Act collectively with members of the target group to dismantle oppression.

(THESE ARE VERY VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS FROM VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY)

Taking this a step further this means one has to be an **upstander** not a bystander and take a stand in the face of social injustice. When someone says something harmful, we need to be prepared to say something. **Don't be silent**, step up into the si-

lence when someone says something offensive about a marginalized group.

We have a duty to promote inclusion by building bridges to purposely redefine and shape a culture in which all people are being included, since ideas and practices are often based on what the dominant culture considers "normal." By excluding individuals or groups we limit the richness and creativity in our communities.

That valuing diversity can also have advantages for business is evidenced in the example from Israel below.

An Example from Israel

"The best insurance against violence is coexistence."
BILLBOARD OF THE HAREL INSURANCE COMPANY IN ISRAEL.

While writing this section I came across a report from Israel describing how after the latest round of violence (May 2021) between Israel and in Gaza, which led to intercommunal conflict between Arabs and Jews within Israel itself, many of the largest Israeli corporations are promoting inclusion, and showcasing the fact that they employ people from both communities.

The images of Arab and Jewish co-workers published recently in the Israeli press and on companies' websites underline the little-known fact that Israel's 21% Arab population is already making inroads in corporate employment.

Much of the credit for this shift goes to an organization called **Co-Impact: The Partnership for a Breakthrough in Arab Employment**. "*Our goal is to change the company's DNA to*

make sure it values diversity not just ideologically but also from a business case perspective for the good of the company," explains Stephanie Daon, director of external relations of Co-Impact. *"If you have no Arab employees, you cannot understand how to reach Arab customers. And diversity brings more ideas and strategies into the workplace."*

The combination of what is morally right and what is politically and economically expedient makes this approach useful and worthy of note. Nevertheless, for as long as the underlying problems of the Israel-Palestine conflict continue to fester, such projects, I venture to say, can only be partial solutions.

Negative Peace

Negative peace is the absence of tension at the expense of justice, the repressing of real issues for the sake of external calm, according to *Kazu Haga* in his book *"Healing Resistance: Legacies of Violence and Trauma,"* a re-examination of Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent resistance. In his view anger is legitimate in the context of injustice and inequality. It is different from violence, which is a tragic expression of the failure to meet people's needs. We therefore need to create a space where anger can be expressed and honoured, he argues.

We can do this by creating spaces for unconditional belonging because we all need to belong. Once you hear someone's story you begin to understand why they think and behave as they do. We learn to hold paradox; truth is not a zero-sum game. We need to take disagreement as an invitation to engagement, not as a trigger for detachment. We need to look at nuance, and not see things in black and white.

"*Peace is disruptive, peace is messy, peace is loud, and it requires having difficult conversations in a spirit of non-violence to promote healing. At the same time, accountability and repairing the harm need to be part of the process.*" These are Haga's conclusions after having worked with many groups, including for example, some of the most despised groups in prison society, such as child sexual offenders.

We are all part of one community, Martin Luther King's *"beloved community,"* and that means everyone, not just those who are like us and whom we like. However, that does not mean that we have to **like** everyone in the beloved community, we just need to respect their humanity, Kazu Haga points out.

Founder of the **East Point Peace Academy** (in juxtaposition to the West Point Military Academy) Kazu Haga and his associates define their goal as follows: "*The Beloved Community is where a sustainable distribution of resources ensures that all needs are met, where each culture is valued and honoured, and where the principles and skills of nonviolence and reconciliation are institutionalized across all levels of society as a core value of our culture.*

The Beloved Community is more of a journey of awakening rather than a destination. Waking up to the fact that each conflict that is reconciled creates a strengthened relationship, each conflict that is a lesson learned moves us forward towards the Beloved Community, whereas conflict that results in violence moves us away from it."

I cannot think of a better vision for my own country, Cyprus, or for any other country, than this description of the "Beloved Community."

CHAPTER 9

Conflict Resolution v. Political Reality

> "International problems are solved on the basis of the interests of the parties involved. If there are politicians who believe that problems are solved on the basis of what is just, then in my mind they still haven't passed the first class of primary school in politics."
>
> *GLAFCOS CLERIDES, PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS, 1993-2003*

The crisis over Ukraine and the Russian military intervention forced me to ask myself why, when we have so many alternative dispute resolution tools available to us, do we end up going back to the primitive method of imposing our will on another by the use of force?

Talking to a friend recently about this, he reminded me that this is the way of the world. At the time of the ancient Greek city states, when Athens made unreasonable demands on one of its neighbouring city states, they protested that the demands were unfair and not justified. The Athenians replied, true, but we have the force needed to impose them.

Why should we imagine that things would be any different today? Perhaps the mistake that enlightened liberals made following the Second World War was to assume that the law of the strong had evaporated simply because it had been shown to be unjust and in the long term not cost-effective and untenable.

Many, and I include myself, believed that after the devastation of the Second World War the mechanisms put in place by the international community would be sufficient to prevent another catastrophe. Those of us who were born and grew up after the Second World War had the misconception that we were living in a new era, where things were improving in terms of the establishment of democracy and organized international relations overall, even if there was backsliding periodically. However, as we have seen over the first two decades of the 21st century this newly established world order has failed to meet the challenges of politics as it is played out in the real world and neither democracy nor smooth international relations can be taken for granted.

It was the German writer and politician, *Ludwig von Rochau*, who originally coined the word "*realpolitik*" in the 19th century. By this he meant that "*the law of power governs the world of states just as the law of gravity governs the physical world.*"

However, today we know that the physical world is much more complex than Newton's theory of gravity. Should we not also realize that we need more nuanced policies in the relationships between states and in international relations? Can we really afford to play power politics, which prioritizes national self-interest, over the interests of other nations or the international community?

Once again, as with climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ukrainian crisis has already, and will continue to disrupt the world economy and the economies of every single country on the globe. Thankfully, the danger that it could lead to famine in some African and Asian countries seems to have been avoided, but the possibility of a nuclear accident cannot be ruled out. In addition, because of the ensuing energy crisis which it is

creating, it will probably de-rail the targets set to help slow climate change. Just one example: three months into the war in June 2022, Germany decided it would have to re-activate coal production in order to ensure sufficient fuel supplies for the forthcoming winter.

From the outset watching the crisis unfold, as an interested observer, I was struck by the fact that despite the repeated meetings between the foreign ministers of the US and Russia, Blinken and Lavrov, there seemed to be no real desire to negotiate the crisis; in fact a deliberate failure of diplomacy and negotiation. Was this due to the fact that there were hidden agendas on the part of some or all the parties or principal actors involved which favoured the outbreak of war? If so, this will become clearer in due course, when we are able to sift through both the information and disinformation currently circulating.

This is the view of Noam Chomsky, who has described the war as "an insane experiment" on the part of the US, which in his view is sacrificing the Ukraine in its effort to weaken Russia. The experiment is insane because it is a gamble: will Putin loose and slink away or will he use the weapons we know he has, to devastate the Ukraine? In Chomsky's view the most important question to ask about the war is how to end it, but no-one is talking about that, what they are talking about is how to increase the supply of arms to the Ukraine.

He also points out that there is a case of "double think" in the discourse in the west. On the one hand analysts are claiming, gloatingly, that the Russian military apparatus is not performing well, on the other hand, in the face of the perceived Russian threat Germany is tripling its defence budget and Finland and Sweden are abandoning their traditional neutrality and joining NATO. *(Chomsky: War in Ukraine is an "insane experiment" by*

the USA. Interviewed by Wlad Jachtchenko on Argumentarik, May 2022.)

It is also, of course, possible that Putin wanted this war in order to bolster his popularity, in which case he also has a hidden agenda and is also taking a gamble.

Leaving hidden agendas aside and looked at in pure political terms the conflict is about the delineation of the spheres of influence of the two superpowers, the US and Russia. And this is something that could have been the subject of a negotiation and should have been the subject of negotiation much earlier on when Russia took over other areas of the former Soviet Union and the west only reacted weakly with sanctions.

We also know that whatever the outcome of the war, which is unlikely to be clear cut, there will have to be a negotiation in the end. I am reminded again of the Salman Rushdie quote referenced earlier: "*There had been little glory and much wasted dying. Neither side had made good its claim to this land or gained more than the tiniest patches of territory. The coming of peace left things in worse shape than they had been before the X. days of battle. This was peace with mutual embitterment, peace with mutual contempt.* Rushdie here is talking here about the war over Kashmir, but the outcome will be no different at the end of the war over Ukraine.

Obviously if there are hidden agendas then there will be no room for negotiation or conflict resolution because this will not serve the aim of the party/parties with the agenda and if they consider they have the power to impose their will they will try to do so.

Nevertheless, the challenge for those of us involved in conflict resolution, mediation or negotiation work is to make the value of these processes visible to the wider public as well as politi-

cal actors, who are generally trapped in their nationalistic narratives. Putting yourself in the other person's shoes is definitely not a skill that most politicians possess or even want to possess, because they are still thinking in terms of winning over the other.

In the best-case scenario politicians are thinking in terms of what they believe, correctly or incorrectly, serves the interests of their country in the short term. Even more often we see that politicians are first and foremost interested in staying in power or getting themselves re-elected, so they tend to tell people what they want to hear and follow public opinion rather than lead it.

In conflict situations the narrative is always that the other side is to blame, and our side are the victims. This narrative is not conducive to leading political leaders to make compromises which are necessary for negotiated solutions, but which are difficult to sell to the electorate.

As someone who has been both a citizen activist and a political actor, in the context of Cyprus I have seen this dynamic at play time and time again, as I have outlined in this book.

In many countries mediators have been successful in convincing the wider public that conflict resolution and mediation are useful in the context of interpersonal, family, organizational and even community disputes.

A major challenge for those of us involved in this field now is to push for greater recognition and acceptance of the idea that these conflict resolution/mediation skills need to be brought into play in political negotiations between states and in the international arena.

A recent document of the **Alliance for Peacebuilding** organization cogently makes the case for the need to **reframe peace and peacebuilding.** The general public need to understand that peace and security are not primarily based on military might.

In today's world people and communities around the globe are interconnected. To promote peace and avoid violent conflict we must create the conditions for peace through the on-going work of building bridges across social divides in areas of conflict, both within and between countries.

When we support peacebuilding in one part of the world it benefits all of us. Alternatively, when nations go to war in one area of the world, as we have seen in the current war in Ukraine, and even earlier in Syria, nations beyond the immediate warring parties are impacted. We need to think of peacebuilding as a cost-effective alternative to militarism and war.

The report stresses that in the political context the narrative of connection can help build a meaningful understanding of peace building as a counter to militarism. However, in order for this narrative to shift public thinking it has to get into public discourse, it has to become part of how we talk about peace and conflict.

This is of course a major challenge and will not happen overnight, but the work needs to start now through the educational system with the teaching of conflict resolution as a fundamental life skill from primary school upwards, and subsequently as an essential element in the education of all those professionals who have to deal with conflict situations in their work, including diplomats and politicians.

In the context of international diplomacy it is interesting to note that the US State Department has taken on board the idea that early preventative, well-informed diplomacy, using the conflict resolution mindset can be used to de-escalate crises and avoid them in the future.

In March 2022 the US State Department had the public launch of its **Negotiation Support Unit** which has the stated aim

"of changing the way we do diplomacy and linking it to how we build sustainable peace" according to head of the unit, the Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Anne Witkowsky.

It comprises a team of conflict resolution experts who will advise diplomats, who have the on the ground country expertise, and help them think through complex political negotiations. In the past this had been done on an ad hoc basis, this unit puts the work on a more organized, permanent basis.

The Unit aims to tap into the full universe of conflict resolution expertise acting as a conduit for civil society and academics as well as engaging with the peace building community in order to tap into the collective knowledge in the field through the **Negotiation Support Network**, a network of international peacebuilding practitioners and academics. Why was this resource not used in the Ukrainian context? Is it intended for use only where the US has no direct interest in the conflict, one wonders?

In addition to bringing the conflict resolution mental framework into politics both national and international, we need to focus on de-escalation and avoidance by early **intervention/prevention**, sometimes known as **upstream intervention**, which has been outlined in the mediation chapter of this book.

This concept seems particularly relevant in the Ukrainian context where there has long been a divide between the west and east of the country, in addition to the on-going tensions between the Ukraine and Russia.

The UN, with the agreement of the Security Council, could set up an Upstream Intervention/Prevention Unit to assist the parties before things get out of hand. Obviously, who would particate in such efforts in each particular case might prove a stumbling block, but if the teams are largely made up of academics

their nationality should not be such an issue, and if they were headed by respected figures such as a member of the Elders group this would give them added weight. Much of the work could be outsourced since there are reputed conflict resolution institutions around the world which could be mandated and coordinated by the UN unit in each specific case.

Recognizing the need for preventative action at the end of 2019 the US Congress passed the bi-partisan **Global Fragility Act** focusing on preventing the growth of extremism in fragile states. The Act directs the Department of State to establish an interagency Global Fragility Initiative to stabilize conflict afflicted areas and to establish funds to support such efforts. On April 1st, 2022, the first four priority countries and a region were announced: Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and Coastal West Africa.

The accompanying press release notes that the announcement is timely because global violent conflict is at a 30-year high and goes on to say that Congress believes that the Act, if successfully implemented, will fundamentally modify the way the US government operates in addressing the drivers of conflict through its whole of government approach. Admirable as this initiative is it is once again other-directed. The nature of US foreign policy and its contribution to world stability/instability appears to be outside the focus of the State Department's Negotiation Support Unit and the Global Fragility Act.

The philosophy underlying conflict resolution, mediation, reconciliation, and peacebuilding is imbued by a spirt of hope that problems can be solved through genuine dialogue and deeper understanding, differences can be overcome, and bridges built so that we can build a fairer and more positive future for all.

While power politics, the game being played today, is a theory in international relations which contends that distributions of power or changes to these distributions of power and national interests are legitimate causes of war. Power politics prioritizes national self-interest over the interests of other nations or the international community.

Perhaps an intermediate approach would be to try and solve some regional problems, such as for instance the issues over energy and the exclusive economic zones between Greece, Turkey, and divided Cyprus through an over-all exchange of gains and losses leading to an acceptable compromise for each party involved. However, for such an approach to work there needs to be an awareness and acceptance of the need for compromise in the public discourse of all the parties involved.

In a *Norwegian Peace Institute (PRIO) report* on the possibilities for this region in this context researcher *Zenonas Tziarras* makes the following point relevant to our discussion on the prospects for better crafted peacebuilding: "*Perhaps national interests narrowly defined, traditional geo-political problems and historical patterns of enmity set the stage and pace of international relations in the troubled region of the Eastern Mediterranean. However, states are not merely mindless passive victims of their geopolitical circumstances, though they may sometimes be powerless in the face of certain challenges. More often than not, states have a choice to either indulge in conflict and competition or engage in dialogue and negotiation. As such, the future of the Eastern Mediterranean largely depends on what regional states will make of it. If either of the two antagonistic poles of the Eastern Mediterranean chooses polarization and confrontation over dialogue and collaboration, the future of the region will not look much different from its turbulent past. Peace and more regional*

integration are by no means a given outcome of the new geopolitics of the East Mediterranean."

The same can legitimately be said about many other on-going and potential conflicts, including the Ukrainian today, and the possible conflict over Taiwan in the very near future.

So where does this leave us? Is conflict resolution a pie in the sky in relation to real life politics? It certainly seems so at this point in time; however, if we carry on being trapped in *realpolitik* it is doubtful if we will be able to cope with the major challenges that lie ahead if we want to survive as a species on this planet.

AFTERWORD:
MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

"Our vision is a world where each person feels secure, dignified and included; a world where people build peace and manage conflict without violence."

ALLIANCEFORPEACEBUILDING.ORG

Last night I had a dream: I was a little girl walking with my mother down the main shopping street in Nicosia, Ledra Street. The shop keepers wave hello because they know us. We regularly take this route to my grandfather's law office *John Clerides and Sons* opposite the law courts in the Turkish Quarter, in the area known as the Saray, to see my father.

We reach Atatürk Square and make a stop at Rüstem's bookshop, because it has the best selection of English books, and my mother loves to read. We are friends with Mr. Rüstem and whenever we go to my father's office, we make a stop there. Close by is Bedevi's Confectionery which has the best *baklava* and *galaktoboureko* in Nicosia, so we usually make a stop there as well, for morning coffee and cake. Often a well-known Turkish Cypriot Judge comes by, greets us, and gives me sweets which he always has stashed away in his coat pocket.

At my father's office we are greeted by uncle Chrysanthos, grey haired, wearing a waistcoat with a pocket watch. Suddenly

a loud voice can be heard from the law courts opposite. "Mr. Clerides is next." It is the court clerk informing the lawyers whose offices are opposite that they should prepare to appear.

At that point I wake up. The dream, which is also a childhood memory, ends here. The time I am referring to is pre-1955, when I was four or five years old, Cyprus was still under British rule and the armed struggle for union with Greece had not yet begun.

Very often these days I find myself taking the same route down Ledra Street. Now I must go through the checkpoint on the Greek Cypriot side, cross no-man's land, go through the checkpoint on the Turkish Cypriot side in order to find myself at Rüstem's Bookshop. It is still one of my favourite places. In addition to the bookshop, which is now run by Mr. Rüstem's son, there is a pleasant coffee bar and courtyard, and upstairs there is an excellent restaurant where I often meet friends for lunch.

A little further on, right opposite the law courts is the Kemal Saraçoglü Foundation for Children with Leukaemia. Sometimes I stop and have a coffee with a friend who works there.

I feel a sense of comfort as I take these steps, because I feel that I have reunited Nicosia in my heart. I do it for myself, walking the old routes and reconnecting with familiar places from my childhood.

When we started the conflict resolution groups with my husband Costas in the early 1990s, I gradually began to realise that after 1963, when we had the first intercommunal troubles and the first division of Nicosia, I had been missing the contact with Turkish Cypriots. I came to understand through my renewed contact with them, that I was recovering a part of me that I did not realise had been lost. For me, the loss of the other half of my country is not just the absence of place, but also the loss of the people who are part of Cyprus for me.

I had thought that this was only something people from the older generation who had known Turkish Cypriots would feel. However, I recently heard a young Turkish Cypriot saying something similar about Greek Cypriots. Getting to know them she said, makes her feel like she is discovering her other half.

Not so strange if you think about it, because we have been fed by the same soil; we have grown up in the same physical space under the same sky and lived for four centuries side by side. Historically the time we were together is much longer than the time we have been apart. And whether we realize it or not we all carry our history within us.

So, it is not surprising that I feel the need to spend more time on the Turkish Cypriot side and get more involved in everyday life there, as in this way I have reunited Cyprus for myself. And it is not surprising that during the period of the Covid-19 lockdowns the only thing that I really missed was the access to the "other side".

My efforts at the political level may have failed to bring the results I had hoped for; I myself however in my own way live in a reunited homeland, something I wish for all Cypriots, in order for them to be able to discover their missing half.

When I came across the book written by *Michalis Denaxas* entitled *"Neither a Greek nor a Turk"* (in Greek) it resonated with me because it describes a somewhat similar experience. The author was born in Istanbul, but his family were expelled from Turkey as a reprisal for the troubles in Cyprus in 1964 when the author was seven years old. They moved to Greece, where they were perceived as "outsiders." He was bilingual and sometimes mixed the two languages, was made fun of, and found it difficult to settle down at school, where the teachers were not particularly helpful.

Many years later he decides to return to Istanbul. Of course there are feelings of bitterness about the expulsion, but in the end the ties that bind him to the past and the city prove to be stronger. He writes "*Every time I find myself in Istanbul I talk to my mother. I take her hand like she used to take mine when I was a child, and we walk together. We see the city as we did when we left it all those years ago.*" (My translation.) Over time he has able to re-establish his connection with the city from which he was expelled, and which will always remain a part of him.

The Bi-communalists' Vision for Cyprus

Bi-communal activists believe that a solution in the context of Cyprus' EU membership would guarantee physical security for both communities, security for their ethnic identity, and exercise of their political rights. It would lead to economic development in both communities, which have highly educated populations that would be able to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the EU.

It would mean a reversal of the brain drain with young people returning to the island, instead of staying or emigrating abroad. Many Cypriots who have settled overseas would want to return and invest in Cyprus. Greek and Turkish Cypriot businesspeople could invest and provide expertise to the Balkans and the Turkish speaking Caucasus, thus providing easier access to those markets for the EU.

Both communities already have highly developed educational institutions with many foreign students. Cyprus could easily become a centre providing educational, banking, insurance, and health services to the region.

With a solution we could turn our multiculturalism into an asset – in marketing our tourism product and in developing Cyprus as a meeting point for cultures, a centre for conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue.

Why were those of us working for reconciliation never able to sell this vision to the wider public?

A German academic, Oliver Wolleh, who did research in Cyprus on the bi-communal activists in the early 2000's explains it as follows: *"There is a large gap between the number of people currently involved in reconciliation efforts and the number necessary to represent a significant portion of each community's population...The strong emphasis on bi-communal contacts has overshadowed the importance of influencing public opinion, the media, and attitudes within each community."*

Unfortunately, he is correct in his assessment that bi-communal activists remain on the fringes of society and have never become a critical mass in a position to affect changes in perceptions.

This point is also made very clearly in the *European Aid Assessment Report of their "Cypriot Civil Society in Action Programme of Reconciliation and Peace Economics Project" carried out in 2012.*

Their view is that the two communities do not even agree on what the Cyprus problem is, and additionally, there is little agreement about arrangements for the post-solution state. There is a marked reluctance to recognise the other side and to cross the Green Line. Most Cypriots do not cross, and the contacts are limited to a small percentage of the population.

In this context the *CIVICUS State of Civil Society Survey in 2011* found that 50% of Greek Cypriots and 45% of Turkish Cypriots had **never** crossed to the other side. While only 10% of

Greek Cypriots and 15% of Turkish Cypriots had participated in bi-communal activities, mostly limited to people in the capital Nicosia.

Another important finding of the EU survey is that there is notable societal mistrust both within and between the two communities as well as suspicion about the leaderships and the direction of the talks.

While the Turkish Cypriot community tends to think of the problem as one between the communities, the Greek Cypriots tend to view the cause as external, outside invasion and external interests.

"Both these narratives contain a large element of truth and bolstered by decades' worth of education and public discourse are hard to dislodge, as we discovered in our focus groups...Furthermore reconciliation initiatives will be of limited utility if there is no need for either side to acknowledge the point of view of the other."

The report concludes that, given this fundamental disagreement and the low level of interaction between the communities, it is highly problematic from the outset to effectively implement reconciliation initiatives.

Since Greek Cypriots tend to perceive the problem as caused by outside invasion and the interests of foreign powers, it follows that reconciliation efforts cannot fundamentally apply to them. As someone who has been involved in reconciliation efforts for many years, I can personally confirm this finding. The usual response to my activities is "But the problem is not the Turkish Cypriots but Turkey!" or "But we got along fine in the past, the problem was due to the British who came along and divided us." Of course there is truth in both these assertions, but they are not the whole story as previously discussed in Chapter 1.

The early bi-communal workshops came under attack both from the political elite and the media. Since they were backed by Fulbright and USAID, participants were often accused by politicians and the media of being in the pay of the Americans to undertake secret negotiations to weaken the positions of their own sides.

It is also fair to say that many people resist the idea of reconciling with the other because, as *Anthony Giddens* points out in *"The Consequences of Modernity*," we define our self-identity in terms of what we are not. The self, as reflexively understood by a person in terms of their biography and identity, presumes continuity across space and time. Giddens notes that learning "what is not me" is the way many people define what is me.

Recent work by psychologists and sociologists makes another crucial point, namely that reconciliation attempts must first come to terms with the perception of victimization prevalent among those involved in intractable conflicts. Each side is unaware of and denies the other side's suffering, as we have seen earlier with the issues of missing persons and displacements of population in Cyprus.

It is clear that citizen diplomacy cannot be a substitute for formal negotiations and is limited by the constraints of *realpolitik*, especially if the leadership elites are not supportive or openly opposed and are using a quite different discourse, as has been the case in Cyprus. Bridging the divide between the official level and civil society efforts was thus not possible in the case of Cyprus.

Nevertheless, the efforts made and continuing to be made still do have value, I believe. It gives those people who decide to embark on the journey the opportunity to examine old wounds and stereotypes, to get past the enemy image and see the human

face of the other side. Had we achieved a solution, this group of bicommunalists who have built up trust could have played a useful role in helping to make the solution work.

Peace agreements at the official level without reconciliation throughout the society, come with their own problems, because they reconfigure the enemy as a new compatriot without having done the necessary groundwork, as seems to be the case in Northern Ireland.

Some Limited Successes

To be fair in our assessment, there have been some limited successes as well as periods when the number of bi-communal activities proliferated and seemed to be making a difference, as we were reminded in a letter by *Benjamin Broome*, one of the Fulbright Professors who worked with bi-communal activists between 1994-96.

He wrote to bi-communal activists in 2020: "*This week marks the 25th anniversary of the 'Agora-Bazaar' we held at the Ledra Palace on 24.6.1995. This ground-breaking gathering was probably the first time such a large number of peacebuilders had been brought together in Cyprus and it marked the beginning of a sustained expression of bicommunal activities over the next few years.*

Leading up to this event the Trainers Group had been intensely working for 9 months to conduct and exchange community-based analyses of obstacles to peacebuilding in Cyprus, create a collective vision statement for peacebuilding activities and produce an options field of over 240 possible bicommunal activities that could help implement this vision."

From this extensive list fifteen projects were selected and peacebuilders from both communities were invited to a marketplace at the Ledra Palace (in the buffer zone) to learn about the projects, which included study groups, dialogue groups, research projects, media initiatives and artistic events. Each of the projects involved additional participation from both communities, and the spin-offs from these groups over the next three years increased the number of people involved in bi-communal groups to nearly 2000.

And he goes on to say: "*It is important to recognize the work of those who set the stage for our coming together. The Cyprus Peace Centre, in which many of you were involved led the way in the early stages of bi-communal work...the Fulbright Center made possible our Trainers Workshops... The trainers' group itself came from workshops led by Louise Diamond, Diana Chigas, Ron Fisher and other friends and colleagues who offered their expertise during the early 1990s. I especially want to acknowledge the contribution of Louise Diamond, whose vision of peace and personal dedication to the cause of peacebuilding was an inspiration to all of us... She may have left us, but her impact continues.*"

And there have also been some other qualified successes. In 1999 I was able to convince the political party to which I belong, the Democratic Rally (DISY), to establish a Bi-communal Relations Bureau and to employ a Turkish Cypriot graduate of the University of Cyprus to help me in establishing contact with Turkish Cypriot political parties and organisations.

Over several years these led to frequent bi-lateral contacts between DISY and all the Turkish Cypriot political parties, including right wing parties which were not in favour of a solution. This was quite an achievement given that the Communist party AKEL, traditionally in favour of contacts between the left-wing

parties on the two sides, had had a monopoly on such activities for many years.

One can also justly claim, I think, that all the political parties now at least pay lip service to the need for reconciliation, even though this is always deferred in time till after the solution is found.

Despite my disappointment at the limited impact the bi-communal activities have been able to have at the political level, my personal journey of discovery and reconnection has continued.

Several years ago I started learning Turkish. One of the methods recommended to me to help the learning process was to watch Turkish films and TV series. An unintended benefit has been that in the process I have also learnt something about Turkey and the Turkish way of life in different contexts, and through my contacts with Turkish Cypriots I have been able to see the differences and similarities of their culture with that of mainland Turkey.

Looking back now I realise that learning Turkish was my way of saying to my Turkish Cypriot friends "I respect you, in my eyes you are as Cypriot as I am. I am sorry for the wrongs that my side has done to you in the past. I accept you as being co-founders of the Cypriot state and that we should decide on the future of our island together".

In order to practise my Turkish and to get more involved with the Turkish Cypriot community, I decided to do some voluntary work in the north. The Secondary School Teachers Union offers Greek language lessons, so I offered to help with Greek conversation for their students. This has brought me into contact with many new people and a new group of friends which I greatly enjoy. Through these contacts I have also been able to get involved in more cultural activities in the north.

Currently, I am focusing my energy on encouraging NGOs across the divide who have similar interests to work together, as part of a new bi-communal project aimed at keeping pro-solution activists engaged, the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre initiated by Meltem Onurkan Samani, a founder member of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, one of the bi-communal institutions that has remained active since its inception, mentioned earlier.

The Gender Dimension

It may seem surprising that I have not focused much on the gender dimension in peace building. Especially surprising since I came of age at a time when women's rights were being hotly debated.

In my student days in in London the late 1960s and early 1970s I was strongly influenced by the feminist movement which was at its height: Germaine Greer and Gloria Steinem were my heroines, as were civil rights activist Angela Davis, and the colourful New York Representative Bella Abzug, who campaigned against the Vietnam war and was one of the founders of the National Women's Political Caucus in the US Congress in 1971.

So I was very much aware of the disadvantages faced by women when I became active in politics in Cyprus in the 1980s. And I had the opportunity to experience them first-hand as I was almost always the only woman round the table. Consequently, most of the time my views were ignored, sometimes later to be expressed by a man and subsequently taken up!

In fact my initial involvement with party politics started with a campaign to encourage women to become more active in

the party, both in the urban and rural areas. And it was here that I discovered how many talented women had, till then, only been able to exercise their skills organising party dances and teas. The men had begun to realise that if they wanted to increase their voter base they had to get more women interested in, and actively involved, in politics!

The objective became to get women into the decision-making bodies of the party. The debate on the issue of quotas was at its height, but despite resistance from the men, and even some women who considered it demeaning, we were eventually able to establish quotas to ensure that there would be women at all levels of the party's decision-making process.

In my early years in parliament in the 1990s I concentrated on promoting women's issues which various women's organisations were trying to tackle, such as giving housewives a share of marital property on divorce, the issue of equal pay, violence in the family, and sexual harassment at work. I have to say that despite the fact that most male colleagues were indifferent or sometimes actually hostile, there were always a few who could appreciate the fairness of the arguments and supported these efforts.

In the context of reconciliation efforts however, I cannot say that I have found women to be more responsive or more open to meeting with women from the other side. In fact, most of the women's mobilization at the level of civil society immediately after the military operation by Turkey was the kind of mobilization that would be seen as confrontational by the other side; such as the **Women Walk Home** movement with mass participation of women in marches to the buffer zone, carrying Greek flags and demanding the right to return home. This is not really surprising, because women are indoctrinated by the same societal narratives as men.

In terms of bi-communal activism exclusively women's initiatives are **Hands across the Divide** and an informal group initiated by a former Ambassador of Holland and the UN Secretary General's Representative (both women), entitled **Women Walk and Talk.** I have already mentioned the outstanding work of journalist and peace activist Sevgül Uludağ. Finally, I would be amiss if I did not mention the **Centre for Visual Arts and Culture (CVAR),** a museum very close to the green line which showcases Cyprus' multicultural heritage through visual arts and culture, the product of a lifetime of dedicated collecting by Rita and Costas Severis, with members of the board from different communities. Among the aims of the museum is to teach today's children about the wealth of our past. As Rita Severis says, "*CVAR is a bridge from the past to the future; from our past we can build bridges to a common peaceful future and work towards a unified Cyprus.*"

Definitely there is a need for more women around the table, because women make up half the world and therefore they should be equally represented in all political decision making: *"The world of humanity has two wings. One is women and the other is men. Not until both are equally developed can the bird fly." Bahais' of Southeast Asia* for the programme ***Women Weave the World.***

As women traditionally in all societies have had a different role in society to that of men, they bring different insights and perspectives to the table, and they play a crucial role in re-establishing the social fabric after conflict.

However, both men and women need first and foremost to learn how to deal constructively with difference and conflict from an early age, as I explain in Chapter 3 on "Starting the Conversation". In my view it is simplistic to say that women are by

nature more peaceful than men or to imply that they are more ethical beings.

We need to de-couple gender and women and include both men and women in the concept of gender, so that we look at issues such as the fact that men are saddled with specific societal expectations, just as are women. Taking gender seriously in this context, therefore, would mean analysing the gender coding of ideas about conflict and peace.

Furthermore, if one takes the view, as I do, that not all violence and conflict can be solved by negotiation and conflict resolution for all the reasons discussed earlier, one has to take on board the idea that female militancy is as legitimate as that of men in some circumstances.

One such example is provided in book by *Gayle Tzemach Lemmon* entitled *"The Daughters of Kobani" (2021)* which tells the story of the women who decided to confront the Islamic State. It describes the formation of Kurdish women's militia groups, initially to protect their town Kobani, from being taken over by ISIS.

From that unlikely beginning emerged a fighting force that waged war against ISIS alongside the United States, at the same time spreading their own political vision, determined to make women's equality a reality by fighting – house by house, street by street, city by city – the men of ISIS who bought and sold women.

The foundation of their philosophy was that if they took part in the war, they would be entitled to take part in the peace. And though they initially fought in mixed groups, sometimes leading the men into battle, they later decided to form women's militias so that men would not later be able to take credit for the fighting.

Based on years of on the ground research and hundreds of hours of interviews, the book introduces us to the women who were not only determined to defeat the Islamic State but also to change women's lives in their corner of the Middle East and beyond.

The Courage to Move Forward

"Am I not destroying my enemies when
I make friends of them?"
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

In 1951, six years after the end of the Second World War, a defeated Germany had been divided into East and West Germany, with its capital Berlin divided into four sectors under the administration of the Allies.

Under these circumstances it seems impossible to imagine that the then Chancellor of West Germany, Konrad Adenauer, would have the courage to sign the agreement on Coal and Steel with France, when the then Foreign Minister of France, Robert Schuman, made this proposal to him.

France was one of the victors in the war and throughout history had been an enemy of Germany. The aim of the agreement was for the joint management of the French and German produce of coal and steel by a common Higher Authority.

In this way Schuman, who had the idea for the plan, believed that the cooperation which would develop over the production would demonstrate that war between the two countries was not only unthinkable but impossible, (bearing in mind that in those days wars were fuelled by coal and steel). It needed both courage

and foresight to put forward such a proposal which was of course unpalatable to many French people so shortly after the war.

Konrad Adenauer also needed to have great courage and daring, as well as exceptional wisdom, to be able to lead a defeated Germany in this first step towards cooperation and reconciliation with France. By taking this step he encountered great criticism from his compatriots, who accused him of selling his country's wealth to the enemy.

Despite this criticism he believed that the normalisation of relations with Germany's former enemies was beneficial to Germany. So he went ahead and took this significant step.

As we all know this agreement was the foundation stone for what later became the European Community and then the European Union and was the start of a long period of peace on the continent of Europe.

Some Final Thoughts on Cyprus: Reframing our Approach to Turkey

In an analogous manner I have the audacity to suggest that we Greek Cypriots need to rethink our approach to Turkey. Instead of seeing her as an enemy, we need to think of her as a potential partner and ally.

Today we are not talking about coal and steel but about natural gas and oil deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean, which have become a bone of contention for countries in the region. They have once again become a point of discussion after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine as an alternative source of energy enabling Europe to become less dependent on Russian oil and gas.

According to the experts the oil and gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean will only have real value if they can be exported through a pipeline to Turkey. Realistically this can only happen with a solution of the Cyprus conflict. Thus in order to move forward, these issues need to be dealt with together.

In my view we need to change tactics and go beyond trying to safeguard ourselves against Turkey by making treaties of questionable value with other players in the region and take a bold step like that taken by Konrad Adenauer and include Turkey as a partner in the exploitation and development of the natural gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean.

I am under no illusion as to how difficult such a step would be for the Greek Cypriot and Greek political leaderships, because it requires a completely opposite approach to the one we have taken to date. And it would be particularly difficult at this point in time when the relationship between Greece and Turkey is at an all-time low, with Turkey continually threatening Greece over the Aegean islands. But I believe it could be a gamechanger. And we must admit that, over the last fifty years, our efforts to limit Turkey's expansionist aims have proved unsuccessful, which would suggest that we need to re-examine our strategy.

It is not surprising that with the Ukrainian crisis pushing up the prices for gas and oil in Europe, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland visited Cyprus and Turkey to sound out the possibilities for such a deal. The headline in the English language Cyprus Mail of April 10th 2022 was: "US pressure on Cyprus to offer the biggest confidence building measure of them all – energy cooperation with Turkey."

During her visit to Turkey she encouraged Turkey to work with Israel on energy issues and stated after her talks "the idea would be for everybody to benefit because there is a need for al-

ternative supplies of energy everywhere." Whether this pragmatic approach will be able to work in a region of such intense hostility depends largely on the amount of time and energy US foreign policy actors will put into the effort.

Unlike Germany, we have not come to terms with our past. We continue to consider ourselves the exclusive victims in Cyprus and fail to accept that we are also perpetrators of misdeeds and that we have made fatal political mistakes for which we are paying today. We continue to be guided by our feelings and what we consider just, rather than acknowledge the realities and think in terms of what an objective outsider would consider fair.

However, it is encouraging to note that Averof Neofytou, the candidate of the Democratic Rally for the presidential elections which will be held in February 2023, has taken the first step in the right direction by saying that with the solution of the Cyprus problem Turkey must be included in the energy equation in the region and that Cyprus should join NATO.

We need to envision the tremendous advantages Cyprus could accrue by cooperating with the largest country in the region, which, in turn, would also benefit from cooperating with a reunited Cyprus, a member of the European Union, with a significant Turkish speaking population.

At this moment in time the EU needs Turkey more than Turkey needs the EU, since Turkey is hosting and holding back the flow of about 4 million, mainly Syrian refugees, who want to move to the EU; thus the EU has very little leverage over Turkey. This is the reason why, despite the repeated pressure of Greece and Cyprus regarding Turkey's threats in the East Mediterranean, the EU has only issued strongly worded condemnations and limited sanctions against some members of the Erdoğan government.

In relation to Cyprus, despite the current deadlock, there could still be one final chance to reunite Cyprus if the two sides in Cyprus, and Greece and Turkey were to engage in an attempt to deal with all the outstanding issues between them all together with the oil and gas issue used as a catalyst rather than a bone of contention.

In fact what I am suggesting is the use of linkage politics, often employed to break impasses or help sides improve their bargaining position; linking certain issues to other seemingly unrelated ones can help sides to reach a compromise. Linkages are often used by creative mediators to break deadlocks and have the advantage that they help to create interdependencies between sides which means that the agreement reached is likely to hold together better over the long-term.

One can only hope that the international community will show sufficient interest in the oil and gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean to try this option in the not too distant future.

A Final Thought

> "Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise so I will change myself."
>
> *RÛMÎ*

Doing the research for this book I have been encouraged by the number of projects, big and small, that are being undertaken all round the world to try and tackle the challenges facing us in the 21st century. I hope this book provides a useful guide for all those who want to work for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. We have the tools necessary to reach the higher ground; we need to take the decision to use them.

In the case of Cyprus, as in other cases of violent or protracted conflict, moving forward successfully means working through the traumas of the past, apologising, and asking for forgiveness, striving actively for reconciliation, and working out a negotiated settlement, as described in this book. We need to show magnanimity of spirit in order to break through the tit for tat discourse and behaviour between the two sides.

This is the journey that the two communities must make, this is the journey Greece and Turkey need to make as well, and this is the journey that all those who have grown up in conflict need to make individually.

To end, I give the final word to my husband Costas Shammas who wrote this poem in Greek, which I have translated, to whom this book is dedicated and who got me started on the path to peacebuilding:

Little-Big Human

I am all the good and bad that exists
I am all the strengths and weaknesses that have ever been expressed
I am the ignorant one who knows it all
I am the critic who judges everyone and justifies myself.

I am the good and the bad
I am the dark and the glow of the firefly
A firefly that wants to explode
To disappear lighting up the darkness.
Oh, I can! If only I knew how.
Help me, please!

FOLLOW UP VIEWING AND READING

Inspirational Viewing
(All available on YouTube)

"The Fight for Civil Rights and Freedom" An interview of Sen. John Lewis with Bryan Stevenson, TED Legacy Project, mentioned in the text.

"As we Forgive" A film by Laura Waters Hinson on reconciliation in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994.

"Forgiving Dr. Mengele" A film by Bob Hercules and Cheri Pugh about Holocaust survivor, Eva Moses Kor.

"Digging the Past in Search of the Future" A film made by The Elders on the missing persons in Cyprus, mentioned in the text. (2011)

"Our Wall" A film made by Panicos Chrysanthou and Niyazi Kizilyurek (1993) about the division of the island, mentioned in the text.

"Capturing History" a video explaining the Cyprus Critical History Archive.

"Beyond History Education" a documentary by Mine Balman (2021) on the teaching of history in the public schools of the two communities, mentioned in the text.

"Digi Wisdom from Cypriot Mediators and Trainers" 2014 (short interviews with some of the founding members of the Bi-communal Activist groups.)

Reading
(First-hand accounts of the conflict by Cypriots.)

"We are Cypriots. 28 Cypriots Tell their Stories: Reports and Photographs from a Divided Island" By Lisa Fuhr. Icon Verlag. Bilingual English/German, 2019

"The Line. Women, Partition and the Gender Order in Cyprus" By Cynthia Cockburn. Zed Books, 2004

"Laconic Tales Cyprus 1974" By Elias Pantelides, Epiphaniou Publications, 2017. (Also available in Greek and Turkish editions.)

Books by academics who worked with Bi-communal Activists and are mentioned in the text (All available from Amazon)

Louise Diamond:
"The Peace Book: 108 Simple Ways to Create a More Peaceful World" (2001)
"The Courage for Peace: Creating Harmony in Ourselves and the World" (2000)
"Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace" (1999) with John McDonald
Benjamin J. Broome:
"Building Bridges across the Green Line: A Guide to Intercultural Relations in Cyprus" (2005)
A. Marco Turk:
"Visions in Conflict: Peacebuilding in Cyprus. A View from the Ground" (2013)

For and insightful look at Greek-Turkish Relations

Umut Özkırımlı and Spyros A. Sofos: "Tormented by History. Nationalism in Greece and Turkey." (2008)