



# ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

# Reflections

Allow me to share a couple of episodes from my childhood as we struggle with the scars that we are inflicting on our country/side.

I recall with a lot of nostalgia the time our extended family, would meet up in front of my parents' house and a cortege of some four or five cars would head out on an early Sunday morning to either Kennedy Grove, Ta' Qali or some other exquisite location to spend time playing in the countryside as my parents and relatives chew over what life was throwing at them.

I also recall, when I played in a semi-abandoned field close to home with my friend Mark. We used to play ball till our toes turned blue. When tired of the 'beautiful game' it was time for the bike and the usually squirming away as we blandly rang the doorbell of some old lady.

The lushness of fresh air, the smell of the carob trees, I would dare say, even the waste, found in the countryside, smelt pleasant. I still have a memory of each and every scent. I loved the environment and we learnt to respect it whether it was restraining of our over-zealousness to catch frogs from Chadwick lakes or to dispose responsibly of our leftovers. The respect was there - the ecosystem gave us and we gave it back. In fact, at the time there was no talk about balancing acts and sustainability because it would just happen.

**Reflection 2:  
Some are privileged**

As I sit at my desk to write this piece, children and young people, possibly living just

around the corner, are unhappy and life for them is an uphill struggle. Not out of their own choice they were dealt a bad hand.

Most of us are privileged to have been brought up in a family that thought us not the fear of God but the beauty of godliness.

Most of us have benefitted from an educational system that understood what is good for us and helped us flourish.

Most of us have profited from the tender, loving care of the community that embraced us.

Most of us might not have had to struggle, and if at some point our life took a bit of a twist we had in us enough reserves in the form of resilience to take us forward.

**Reflection 3:  
Too much violence**

I am not one to be nostalgic. It's true the 50's for me is now a conspicuous marker, but much as I value the beauty of the opportunities that sit around us, as I look into the crystal ball I see things that are starting to trouble me and quoting Dante Alighieri from his epic work, *The Divine Comedy*;

*In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to myself, in a dark wood, where the direct way was lost.*

As a matter of fact, instead of a community of peace we have 187,000 people in Malta who struggle with loneliness and who have no one to turn to in times of grief nor in happiness.

We hand over a society that has in the recent past

butchered a journalist, people had their homes pulled down by the excavator and remain homeless and a person was slaughtered because of his skin colour.

Quoting Saint Pope John Paul 2, "Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings."

**Reflection 4:  
Bastions of defense**

However, the silver lining is here for all of you to see.

The Bastions of defense that stood up to our persecutors in the past are symbols giving life to social champions that sit around us. People like Peppi Azzopardi, Dr Marie Briguglio, Mons Philip Grech, Dr Maria Pisani, Jeremy Camilleri, Jes Saliba, Cami Appellgren, Dr Michael Briguglio, Oliver Scicluna, Hon. Evarist Bartolo MP, Hon. Claudio Grech MP, Dr Andrea Dibben, Prof. Arnold Cassola, to mention just a few, are important voices and the designers of our social fabric - people dedicated to social justice. I might not agree with all they say, but they bring comfort and provide me with serenity with their zeal and passion to make the World tick.

They might have chosen 'the road less travelled', as Robert Frost's 1920 poem goes - and they have given of themselves to people who were abandoned by the wayside.

Let's be inspired by these good spirits for their social af-

fluence.

*Over two millennia ago, the Ancient Greeks were already debating different conceptions of the good life, and how it may be fostered, albeit a debate for the privileged in ancient Greek society. In his Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle speaks of three bases for happiness: sensual pleasure, honour, or true happiness, which results from a philosophical approach to life. For Aristotle, true happiness is a lifelong endeavour and not a fleeting feeling; it is the objective result of rational thought and virtuous action. His eudaimonic vision of happiness is often contrasted with a hedonistic approach... (Vella, Falzon & Azzopardi, 2019).*

I salute these architects of a national agenda to support equality, people who have dedicated their lives to bettering the existence of others. Their success is noted in the building of coalitions and consensus. They remain grounded in real-world concerns. Their visionary melding of the human makes them lovers of social justice.

Their reputation is founded on integrity, they are selfless and steadfastly dedicated to their communities.

Herbert Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian philosopher, when interviewed by *The Playboy* in 1969 is quoted as saying;

*...I want to map new terrain rather than chart old landmarks.*

These people inspire us to do precisely that because for us, as George Orwell states;

*If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.*

"Ghandi xi Nghid"

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## Allied forces take control of Suez

British and French troops have seized control of two major ports in Egypt's Canal Zone and declared a ceasefire.

This evening, an official statement said Port Said was in allied hands and the town had suffered little damage.

There was a sense of relief at the United Nations headquarters in New York as the Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld announced the allies had accepted the terms of the UN ceasefire and had ordered troops to stop fighting.

The Israelis have also announced a ceasefire in the Sinai.

### 'Tough fighting'

At dawn today, French commandos sent over from Cyprus landed at Port Fuad and advanced south along the banks of the Suez Canal.

Yesterday, the British Royal Marines 3 Commando Brigade, were brought into Port Said by naval helicopter.

They captured Camil airfield after what Sir Charles Keightley, the allied commander-in-chief described as "some very tough fighting" with Egyptian troops armed with guns, mortars and tanks.

Allied casualties are reported to be light with 30 members of the 16th Parachute Brigade injured. Some 70 Egyptian soldiers have been killed.

### Sunken ships block canal

Last week, the Soviet leader Nikolai Bulganin proposed sending his troops to the Middle East to restore peace to the region.

The suggestion was rejected in a statement issued by the White House as "unthinkable" and "an obvious attempt to

divert world attention from the Hungarian tragedy".

The next major task for the allies is to restore order to the two ports and to clear the entrance to the Suez Canal currently blocked by ships sunk by the Egyptians.

The canal was nationalised on 26 July by Egypt's President Abdel Nasser after the US turned down a previous offer to fund a new dam at Aswan.

The move outraged the canal's Anglo-French owners as well as the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, who has compared President Nasser to Adolf Hitler.

The present military action began on 29 October, when Israel invaded the Sinai. British and French planes entered the fray two days later after President Nasser refused their offer of creating a buffer zone between Israel and Egypt.

They began by destroying most of the Egyptian air force on the ground.

President Abdel Nasser not only angered British and French companies by nationalising the Suez Canal, he also

blockaded the Straits of Tiran Israel's main outlet into the Red Sea.

So Britain and France joined forces with Israel to take control of Suez, although this alliance was denied for years afterwards.

US President Eisenhower and delegates at the United Nations feared the USSR would use the crisis as a way of gaining power in the Middle East and deflecting attention from its invasion of Hungary.

They put pressure on Britain, France and Israel to withdraw from Egypt and a UN emergency force took over.

Britain failed to get control of Suez and this, along with condemnation by Commonwealth leaders of military action not sanctioned by the UN, led to the resignation of Anthony Eden in January 1957.

His successor, Harold Macmillan, was quick to restore damaged relations with the United States.

Israel finally withdrew from Sinai in March 1957 after receiving assurances from the US that it would have access through the Straits of Tiran.