

Experience with Nicola Teresi - Conflict solving

During our experience in Sicily, we had some lessons with Nicola Teresi, whose father is a judge involved in anti-mafia trials.

Nicola has a degree in peace studies and with us he talked about conflict-solving solutions and the relationship between mafia and islamic terrorism.

Conflicts in a group are born because a certain resource lacks in that territory; because of that, the group divides into smaller factions and each faction sees the other groups as enemies because they want those few resources all for them. When we see someone as an enemy, everything they do makes us think even more that they are against us.

Conflicts are escalations of violence, like a spiral that doesn't end until someone stops the violent acts.

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist, founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, has described conflicts as pyramids, where only the top vertex (the behavior between the parts) is visible, while the other two (attitude towards the "foe" and contradiction between the points of view) remain hidden, although it's these two that form the visible aspect; in simple words the hidden vertexes are the "passive parts" and the behavior is the outburst of these passive parts (graph 1).

The solution is simple: instead of answering with violence, we have to show empathy towards our "enemies", using non-violence as a way of contacting them and creativity to overcome the contradictions.

An example of this solution is a brother and a sister fighting for an orange (graph 2):

-If one of them uses violence and takes the orange, only one of them is happy (coordinates 1;0 or 0;1);

-If they cut the orange in half they get to a compromise, but neither gets what they wanted (0.5;0.5);

-If each tries to understand the other (empathy), talking, instead of using plain force, and adopting creative solutions, they can both get what they want (1;1). For example, they can buy another orange, or plant that orange and wait for a tree to grow up and make more oranges.

So, when we are in front of someone violent towards us, we just have to stay cold-blooded and apply the triangle of non-violence in order to resolve the conflict.

With Nicola, we also discussed about ISIS and islamic-terrorism, realizing that it has very little religious purpose and a great interest in drugs, weapon and oil traffic in the mediterranean; specifically, we can compare ISIS to some sort of mafia organization.

Like mafia, this terrorist group acts in two territories: international and regional.

In the international field, ISIS has an important role, as said, in illegal traffics and organizes attacks to scare people and "show their strength".

In the regional field, especially in Syria and Iraq, the self-proclaimed Islamic State gains money with extortion and kidnapping innocent people, dominating those lands with fear.

These activities are typical methods adopted by mafia organizations and guarantee ISIS a huge income per year (roughly 8 million dollars in 2015).

The reason of the terrorist attacks is that ISIS wants to be recognized as a powerful state by the powerful nations of the world. The religion radicalism is just an excuse to earn more supporters in their fight. The natural reaction to these attacks is to hurt the responsible and make him pay for what they did, although that's just what ISIS wants; but there's a way of fighting ISIS using non-violence.

There are three main steps to take:

-Stop sending funds and weapons to the involved parts: directly or indirectly, some people support the factions in the war. If we want to end this war, we have to stop giving those belligerent groups the tools for war.

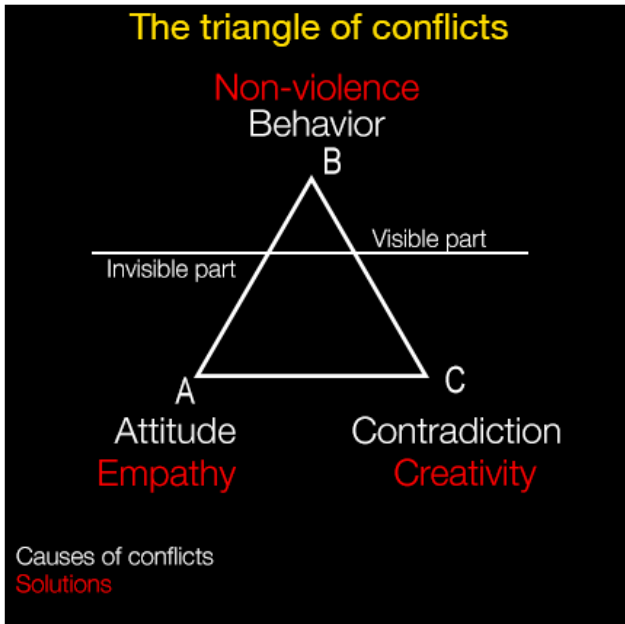
-Invest in social and economic development in all the regions where the terrorists are involved: ISIS gained some of its strength by economically helping the families of those regions and promising education for their children in exchange for fighters. If local communities were self-sustainable, there wouldn't be the need for them to embrace arms in order to live decently.

-Support any non-violent civil resistance movements: the best way of fighting with non-violence is to encourage the non-violent movements and not bow to the brutality of terrorism. Like the great Gandhi, with peaceful and civil movements, we can achieve great things.

The best way of fighting both mafia and ISIS is to stay together: as we said with Nicola talking about bullying, whenever we don't react to the bully he'll get stronger. Only if we react to his actions in peaceful ways we can take the bully down and so we can take down mafia and terrorism.

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Graph 1:



Graph 2

