



# THOUGHTS ON PEACE



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BELGRADE, 2022.

The brochure is a result of the project “Composting for Peace”, that is implemented by Divan Hub (Belgrade) and hubs from Mersin and Nicosia. Brochure does not necessarily reflect the attitudes of the VAHA consortium, and only members of Divan Hub are responsible for its’ content.

Divan Hub consists of the organizations: ArtAparat, Philopolitics and Belgrade Center for Human Rights and its part of international net of hubs, gathered through VAHA program. VAHA program is initiative of Anadolu Kültür and MitOst organizations.

VAHA is an initiative of Anadolu Kültür and MitOst e.V., funded by Stiftung Mercator and the European Cultural Foundation. VAHA partner consortium is in a collaboration with the iac Berlin to implement a series of ‘thematic workshops and network meetings’. We thank the Chrest Foundation for its support of travel related expenses.



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# INTRODUCTION

**D**ear readers, in front of you is a brochure made up of four texts that analyse the topic of peace from different perspectives.

We have tried to approach this topic comprehensively, analysing artistic and educational tools, different models of community development, as well as concrete environmental actions, encompassing the entire complexity and symbolism of peace.

In an attempt to understand the connection between nature, art and peace, we launched a project together with organisations from Turkey and Cyprus. We call this initiative, launched by several anti-war, environmental, artistic organisations and citizen associations, “Roots of Peace”, and through it we have aimed to exchange local tools and methods, as well as knowledge and experience in the field of peace building.

During the process of discovery and reflection on the topic

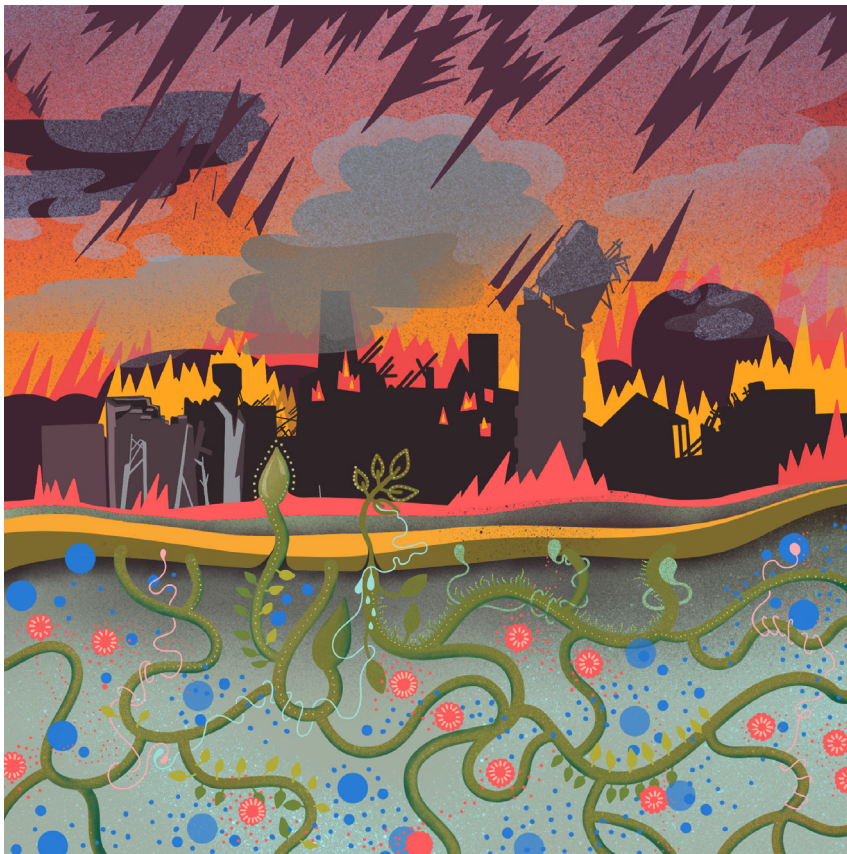
of peace, we have appreciated and used the experiences of our communities, but also looked for new sustainable solutions outside our region, in the desire to contribute with new knowledge and insights.

From the unstable Balkans, through the tension in Turkey to the divided Cyprus, all these experiences can serve as examples of how things can go wrong, but also what can be done to overcome conflicts in order to live in coexistence and peace with the environment.

New, different models of community organisation around nature and with nature are an inspiration that can serve us all for the common liberation of nature from exploitation, from unrest and conflicts that occur because of nature, and for emphasising nature as an important subject in building peace.

The brochure in front of you is one of the outcomes of the aforementioned project, which is being implemented by Divan Hub. Divan Hub consists of organisations: **Art Aparat, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights and Philo-politics.**

Divan Hub is part of the international network of hubs of the VAHA programme and was founded with the desire to bring together all those who work for social change through art, education and community work. The Hub provides a space for individuals and organisations to express themselves, learn and connect with others, in order to create new working methods, new approaches and thus change the communities in which they live. The VAHA programme is an initiative of Anadolu Kültür and MitOst.



# TO PLANT PEACE ON THE TROUBLED SOIL

BY ALEKSANDAR OBRADOVIĆ I DEMIR MEKIĆ

**W**e seem to be living in one of the most challenging times in the last thirty years. Humanity has been facing dangers that are difficult to fully predict. From wars that are getting closer to every doorstep, through climate change and the struggle for natural resources, all the way to the consequences of isolation due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the epidemic of mental illness, despair and self-isolation.

However, we cannot say that the problems of world unrest are something that the world has not faced before. The Mediterranean area is a part of the world that is very familiar with conflicts between people. It is the space where



many empires and religions arose and disappeared, while worldviews changed. We do not even have to go that far to come to the conclusion that periods of conflict marked us and conditioned our perception of the world.

Conflicts, riots and wars were often closely connected with nature, natural resources. Natural resources condition social inequalities, which can be a major driver of conflict, as well as a generator of discontent and rebellion. UNEP - the United Nations Environment Programme, estimated that from 1990 to 2009 (when the estimate was given), at least 18 armed violent conflicts in the world were fought, among other things, over natural resources such as diamonds, forests (wood), minerals, oil and the like. At particular risk are countries that depend on the export of raw materials, which they do not process or they process to a small extent within their borders.

Conflicts are closely related to nature and in such a way that often natural resources that have a high price can be used to finance war forces, or become strategic spoils in the conquest of a territory. In these and similar circumstances, peace is often not “payable”, because it can make

it difficult for individuals and groups to access certain resources that they exploit.

The question that arises is: *Whose nature is it? And what about peace, whose peace is it? And where did it disappear? Do we understand what peace is, to the extent that we understand what conflict, war and clash are?*

Peace is most often defined as the opposite of conflict and war. Almost like the absence of these two. However, we can define peace differently and observe it through several dimensions.

It signifies social and personal well-being. There are various classifications, among others the classification into **negative** and **positive peace**. This division was proposed by Martin Luther King, and set and defined in more detail by the sociologist Johan Galtung. Negative peace would be the absence of direct violence, while positive peace refers to the conditions that ensure human development as well as sustainable peaceful human relations.

There is also sustainable peace, an even broader term that is a goal but also a process that includes all the activities

we do to ensure reconciliation, recovery and development of communities.

There is also **inner peace**, a psychological and spiritual concept, which can be the result of positive peace, healthy connections in the community. Taking into account the world “map” of conflicts, the fire in which the world is, it seems that inner peace as such belongs to a “higher” level of development that is not yet in sight.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NATURE IN BUILDING PEACE?

Speaking about nature, it is clear that we are not only talking about the struggle for resources, and about the conflicts that arise around it. People have always been focused on the sea and the nature that fed them and was the basis of their development. Civilizations were built around water and land, were inspired by them, used them to develop communities.

*In what way can nature become a messenger of change and peace building?*

By ignoring the potential of nature to be a tool in maintaining

and/or building peace, we are ignoring the enormous potential, and opening up space for new conflicts.

The United Nations Environment Programme considers the integration of the management of natural resources into peacebuilding an imperative.

We cannot talk about peace if there are still wars over water in certain countries, if in our region land and water are taken away from the “little man”, thus creating an even bigger gap and social inequality.

In the end, nature is a place of coexistence, territories (although politicised and bounded by political subjects, states) are part of the natural environment to which we all belong.

## **SO, WHAT NOW?**

It is necessary to approach peace holistically, as a complex topic and process. It is built through advocacy for social justice, human rights, ecology, equality and fairness. It must become part of the personal and social activism of each of us. Only if we approach peace in this way, can

We believe that inner peace, as the most personal aspect of peace, will also depend on everything we do in the field of achieving sustainable peace in the political and social sense. We can start this challenging and certainly long-term process of “planting” and building peace on still restless soil with a simple step - recognising nature as a powerful legal and political entity, which can play a very important role in building sustainable peace on the international level.



# LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

BY ALEKSANDAR OBRADOVIĆ

**C**old winter morning. A group of people with hoes moves across the mountain passes. These are Andean peasants who, during the month of yapakis (in Quechua language), which coincides with our August, begin the period of preparation for sowing. In the southern hemisphere it is winter, which is strongly felt on the mountain by the dry and sharp wind that chills to the bone. Wrapping up his poncho of bright red alpaca wool, with patterns of chakana<sup>1</sup>, walks another man leading a group of

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<sup>1</sup> Chakana (in Quechua language) is the oldest symbol of the Andean civilisation. In the form of a stepped cross with a hole in the middle, according to numerous interpretations, it signifies the cosmological and ontological essence of Andean philosophy (author's comment).

farmers. Instead of a hoe, he carries a small bundle in his hands, woven from the finest wool with snake patterns – a symbol of the underworld.

They have come to the fields covered with hoarfrost and there they stand in a circle. The witch doctor spreads his bundle on the ground and begins to take out one gift after another from it. Having lit a fire, the gathered people begin with prayers addressed to Pachamama – the goddess of the earth. They have brought her coca leaves, as well as potatoes and corn. They have begged her to forgive them for disturbing her kingdom and to allow them to plant their crops in it, and to grant them fertility for them. With the songs of the assembled, the sun rises with the smoke of the offerings burning on the ritual fire.

In the Andean world, it was unthinkable that any work involving the exploitation or changing the shape of the land, such as planting, construction, mining, etc., would be started without prior permission obtained from the goddess of the land – Pachamama, Mother Nature. Nature was viewed as an entity unto itself whose good will and fertility enabled life on its surface – earthly life. The rela-



tionship to nature was one of coexistence and respect. This understanding of the environment is deeply rooted in Andean spirituality. According to her teachings, the earthly world is a kind of synthesis in the dialectical play of the heavens, which provide energy, and the earth, which provides fertility. Contrary to the all-Slavic proverb, the Earth is hard and the sky is high, for the Andean man, both the sky and the earth are all around him – they are accessible to him, they give him energy and fertility, there is no intermediary between them. But that is why there is respect and deep appreciation for this complex and subtle interdependence. Although both mining and agriculture have always been known in the Andean world, they have always been used responsibly, sustainably and always with the sought-after approval of divine nature. That is, with the awareness that they are borrowing resources, not owning them.

## A NEW BRAVE WORLD

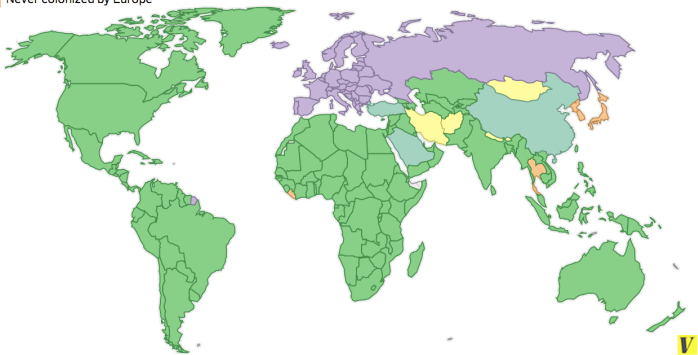
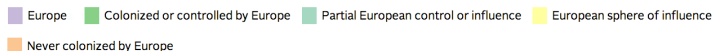
With the arrival of the Spanish in America, this whole world roughly disappears. With the invaders comes the

greedy European exploitation of all resources. The objectification of nature and people created the basis for the brutal robbery that continues today, which some call the accumulation of capital. The land was forcibly taken from the indigenous population, which the colonizers began to exploit cruelly. The natives were driven into the mines to dig in the bowels of the Earth for the occupiers and die quickly and in large numbers from disease, slave labour and unbearable living conditions. The cultures of the indigenous peoples were suppressed, and their spiritualities and worldviews were forcibly erased and buried with layers of imposed Christianity.

The cruelty of this attitude towards nature and people did not stop only at the enslaved parts of the world. Excessive exploitation of everything has become the modus operandi of the entire globalised civilisation. The colonial superpowers imposed this worldview even on peoples that they did not directly subjugate, but that had to adapt to it in order to survive in the dominant model of development. This picture of the world and its order seems dark indeed. Proof that there is no exaggeration here are the already visible climate changes that are creating huge social, eco-

conomic and political crises around the world. Resources are irretrievably disappearing, the quality of land, water and air is degrading, the oceans are growing and threatening the disappearance of entire nations (Mettler 2022), and the columns of “economic migrants” are getting longer all over the world.

## Countries that have been under European control



## SUMAK KAWSAY - A GLIMMER OF HOPE

However, there is one glimmer of light. Hope appeared exactly where it was most suppressed - in South America. With the process of decolonisation, and the waves of democratisation carried by the 20th century, indigenous movements are becoming louder. They are increasingly demanding their rights - to the land, to the use of their language, to their cultural autonomy, and the right to live in accordance with their traditional worldviews.

Indigenous movements, in cooperation with leftist forces, began over time to modify progressive ideas, adapting them to their experience and enriching political theory and practice with new concepts. Among them, one of the most significant is the term *sumak kawsay*. In the Quechua language, *sumac* refers to the *ideal and beautiful fulfilment of the planet*, and *kawsay* means *life*. A concept that represents life with dignity, fulfillment, balance and harmony. In Spanish, it is often translated as *buen vivir* - that is, good living.

Since the 1990s, *sumak kawsay* has grown into a politi-

cal project aimed at achieving collective well-being, social responsibility in the relationship of people to nature, and stopping the endless accumulation of capital. Thus defined, this approach offers ***an alternative to traditional development***. Buen vivir proposes the collective realisation of a harmonious and balanced life based on ethical values, instead of a development model that views human beings as an economic resource.

In Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous activists along with intellectuals initially used this concept to define an alternative paradigm to capitalist development with cosmological, holistic and political dimensions. The 2008 Constitution of Ecuador included the concept of the right to nature, as did the 2009 Constitution of Bolivia, and these are the first national legal acts to protect the rights of nature in the world.

#### PACHAMAMA PROTECTED BY LAW

Bolivian law defines Mother Nature as “a dynamic life system formed by an indivisible community of all life systems and living beings that are interconnected, interdependent and complementary, and that share a common

destiny”, adding that Mother Nature is considered sacred in the worldview of the indigenous people (Vidal 2011).

In this view, human beings and their communities are considered part of the Mother Earth, integrating into life systems defined as *complex and dynamic communities of plants, animals, microorganisms and other beings from their environment, in which human communities and the rest of nature act as a functional whole, under the influence of climatic, physiographic and geological factors, as well as the production practices and cultural diversity of the Bolivian of both sexes, and the worldview of the indigenous people, the intercultural community and the Afro-Bolivian*. This definition can be seen as a more inclusive definition of ecosystem because it explicitly includes the social, cultural and economic dimensions of human communities.

The law also establishes the legal character of Mother Nature as “a collective object of public interest” in order to ensure the realisation and protection of her rights. By giving legal personality to Mother Nature, she can initiate proceedings for the defense of her rights through her rep-

representatives (people). Therefore, to say that Mother Nature is in the public interest represents a major shift from an anthropocentric perspective to a perspective based on the larger Earth community.

### THE CHAIN OF RESPECT IS NOT BROKEN

The struggle for decolonization is not only a struggle for the liberation of the land, but also for the liberation of consciousness. The abolition of export policies and practices must be accompanied by the abolition of exploitative and consumerist ways of thinking that objectify the living environment, nature, resources, and even the people themselves. Through this process, the need for (re)legalising the traditional practices and worldviews of the indigenous population, which has been living in harmony with nature for millennia, crystallised. These acts represent a novelty in modern legislation, and it remains to be seen what effects they will produce in practice. They are, for now, limited only to the Andean cultural circle. However, there is no doubt that with the intensification of the crises caused by climate change, there will be many more such “people’s initiatives” around the

world. Our hopes are that precisely climate change can call into question the anthropocentric approach and bring to the world stage knowledge and experiences that have been developed for thousands of years, and which neither centuries of colonialism nor globalism have destroyed.

An example of such tenacity and determination are precisely the descendants of the American indigenous peoples. In addition to infectious diseases, exploitation and the systematic erasure of their culture, about 50 million people belonging to indigenous peoples live in Latin America today (de Dios 2020). Andean peoples survived thanks to Pachamama. Pachamama will survive thanks to the Andean peoples.

The chain of respect is not broken.



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# MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR RECONCILIATION

## How an Orchestra Erases Borders in Cyprus

BY MAJA ČURČIĆ

Cyprus, an island country located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea in the immediate vicinity of the Turkish coast, has long represented a crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, and many traces of the ancient civilisations that ruled here are still present. Cyprus was part of the Greek, Ottoman and Byzantine empires, and the state was also ruled by the Venetians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Hittites, Persians and Assyrians.

The end of the 19th century brought changes to Cyprus

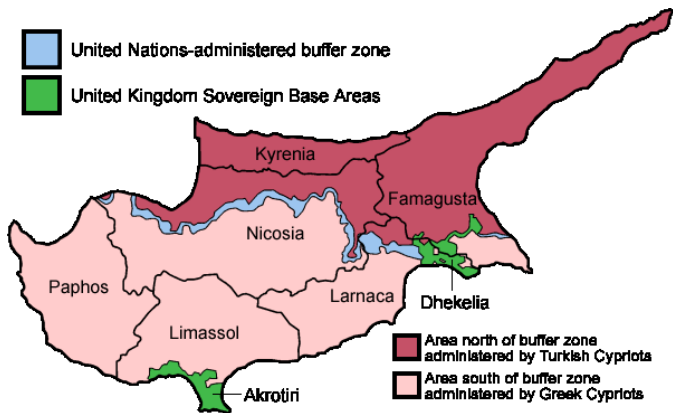
that will significantly affect its current cultural climate. The Ottoman Empire, which at that time ruled Cyprus, ceded this island state to Britain in exchange for British support in the Turkish-Russian War, so that, just before the First World War, Britain would officially annex Cyprus. It remained a British colony until 1960, when it was liberated and finally became an independent country inhabited mainly by Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Unfortunately, the hard-won peace will not last long because already in 1964, conflicts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots began, resulting in war and the division of the country in 1974.

With the division of the country, there was also a large ethnic displacement of the island, with Turkish Cypriots settling in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south. The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was recognised only by Turkey, while the Republic of Cyprus in the southern part is internationally recognised and became a member of the EU in 2004. Between them are a steel fence, observation posts and a buffer zone defended by the United Nations Blue Helmets. The capital,

Nicosia, is the last divided city in Europe.

The mixing of different cultural influences and the multi-ethnic structure of the population, as well as the division of the country that has lasted for almost fifty years, have built a specific identity, cultural climate, and the conditions in which artists create. Between the two sides of the island that share a common history, there was no cultural cooperation for a long time after the war, and even today, despite all efforts, the successful examples of



cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots require effort and endeavour to re-establish the ties that have been destroyed between people.

### **AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE • CYPRUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

**To learn more about how music can work for reconciliation, I spoke with Nihat Agdaç, a violinist originally from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, founder of the Cyprus Chamber Orchestra, the first multi-ethnic orchestra in which Greek and Turkish Cypriots play together.**

Nihat received his classical artistic education in Cyprus, Turkey, and then at the prestigious Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. As a permanent member or guest, he participated in concerts and tours of many important symphony orchestras in Europe - he performed with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Birmingham

ham Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and many other important orchestras in Europe. Nihat is also a concertmaster and one of the founders of the Presidential Symphony Orchestra.

**Nihat, how did you come up with the idea to start a multi-ethnic orchestra in Cyprus?**

It happened spontaneously and gradually. During my studies in Cyprus, I once participated in a music camp in the southern part of the island where I met Natalie Neophytou, an oboist with whom I played two concerts in seven days. Natalie and I somehow immediately clicked and became friends, somehow the communication between us was natural and spontaneous from the beginning.

The following year, we both went to London to study where we continued to socialise and collaborate and there we came up with the idea that upon our return we would try to create an orchestra in which people from both sides of Cyprus would play together. For us, playing music was something very important and quite natural, and this would be a way for people to meet and connect, to erase borders at least for a while, and for art to be a bond between people.





However, due to the extremely large division and bad political situation, there had been no such attempts in Cyprus before us and we were not really sure how many people would actually want to embark on such an endeavor. That's why we collected the names of all our musician friends from both sides of the border and sent them an email asking if they were interested in participating in something like that.

They all said they would like to join!

**It sounds very spontaneous and convenient, but how difficult was it for this idea to come to life in reality?**

From the initial steps of coming up with the idea and contacting the musicians until the idea really came to life, it took us a couple of years. Nevertheless, we thought that this kind of orchestra was something that was important and necessary, that the idea was good and did not leave us despite the personal careers that were developing at the same time.

Then came 2015 and Natalie and I both returned to Cyprus. After several years of deadlock in political negotiations

between the north and south sides and the bad atmosphere that had lasted for a long time on the island, this time upon arrival we found positive developments in the negotiations. After many years, there was an optimism in Cyprus that things were moving and a little more space for cooperation between the two divided parties had opened up.

In that period, a foundation appeared that provided funds specifically for joint multi-ethnic projects. We immediately applied and received funds for the first concert, and that's how our adventure began.

**How would you describe the Cyprus Chamber Orchestra? Why did you choose this particular name?**

The Cyprus Chamber Orchestra is a chamber orchestra that gathers more than 20 Cypriot and Greek musicians and performs classical music at the highest artistic level. The orchestra performs across the island and abroad, promoting peace in Cyprus through the power of music.

We chose the name Cyprus Chamber Orchestra because we wanted the emphasis of our work to be on music and professionalism. Our orchestra is such that it is



multi-ethnic and that is something really unusual in Cyprus, but the artists who play with us are primarily top musicians and we wanted to present ourselves to the audience primarily through music, and put our ethnic affiliations in the background. That's why we needed a name that would suggest a classical artistic chamber ensemble from Cyprus.

From the very beginning, the idea was for the orchestra to have no conductor, but for people to sit next to each other

and listen to each other. In this setting, they have to trust each other more than when there is a conductor and we thought it was very good for broadening horizons and practicing togetherness among our participants.

### **What was the work of the orchestra like at the very beginning?**

We started meeting at the end of 2016, and we practised at the Home for Cooperation<sup>1</sup>, a community centre located in the buffer zone between the north and south of Nicosia, a part that does not belong to either the Greek or Turkish side but is controlled by the United Nations. We were preparing a concert for the end of December and I have to say that luckily for us this concert was completely sold out! There had been no similar attempts in Cyprus before this one, and after this concert we realised that there was a willingness in society to put art above any divisions.

In the following months, we already managed to find

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<sup>1</sup> Home for Cooperation is a community centre located in the middle of the dividing line in Cyprus, in the area of Ledra Palace, UN Buffer Zone, Nicosia. The Centre contributes to the collective efforts of civil society in their engagement in peace building and intercultural dialogue. Using its resources, it encourages people to cooperate with each other beyond limitations and dividing lines.

sponsors and donors, and people were constantly interested in new concerts. Even the Berlin Philharmonic, which was visiting Cyprus through the embassy, expressed its desire to play with us. Of course, we did not refuse such an offer. This performance put us in the spotlight of the entire public in Cyprus and since then the Cyprus Chamber Orchestra has played many concerts in all the most important halls on the island.

### **Did you have problems motivating people from both communities to create together?**

When we thought about starting an orchestra, it was the most natural thing for us to have people from both sides of the island play together. However, the reality is that there were a lot of people in the orchestra who had never crossed the border before. In Cyprus, this is a common problem, especially among young people. The situation is further complicated by the fact that among young people there is a language barrier that was not so present before, so if there are no active initiatives for people to meet, people will not meet on their own.

Although at the beginning there were those who were not

very comfortable that they had to cross the border, all the artists were very motivated to play together. Yet, music has that universal language, so language barriers didn't bother us either. What was also important was that we managed to gather the best musicians from both sides of the island and the fact that the composition is of such high quality motivated both the musicians and the audience.

**Have you encountered prejudices within the orchestra or from the audience?**

Cypriot society has long been divided and prejudices are an integral part of our lives. Nevertheless, it is interesting that even when people have prejudices, when they come to a concert they do not know who is Greek and who is Turkish Cypriot in the audience listening to them, and the same applies to the audience - the musicians sit together and you cannot tell who is who. and thus prejudices are reduced very quickly.

What makes us very happy is when we see that today for our audience it is absolutely fine to come from the extreme south to the north to listen to a concert, or vice versa, and we think that we have awakened some energy

among people. This, in my opinion, is very important because it puts people in a shared space and involves them in a co-creation or listening experience, which creates closeness on some physical level but also on some level beyond the physical. I deeply believe that art is something that breaks down differences, and for people who love art, it is much more important if it is good and what kind of emotions it evokes than who creates or performs it.

**In your opinion, are there enough opportunities for people to meet and cooperate in Cyprus?**

I think that the big problem is that the situation in Cyprus has not changed for a very long time. In addition, young people have lost interest in anything live, be it reconciliation or separation and sometimes seem lethargic to me. Also, it is more difficult to motivate young people because they have no memory of the common past - for them, the inhabitants of the other side are often complete strangers, sometimes they see them as enemies and have no desire to meet them, despite the fact that the island is very small. The stable economy in the south of the Republic of Cyprus further reduces the interest of young people from the

south in the position of northern Cypriots and they often focus more on going to the EU countries than on building connections within the country.

Our elderly fellow citizens have memories of the common past, but the ties are often broken and it is necessary to actively create opportunities for people to cross the border.

**Is there anything you would advise colleagues who want to work on reconciliation of communities through music in a similar way?**

When implementing such projects, it is very important to be very cautious and try not to hurt the feelings of the people involved. We devote a lot of attention to this part, so that everyone who participates and who comes feels comfortable. We cannot contribute to the unification of Cyprus, but we can send a message of peace and love and a clear message that unity is possible.

In accordance with the whole situation, we are also very careful about who financially supports our activities, because we would not want to put artists in an unpleasant situation - e.g. we avoid our activities being financed by



the government of northern or southern Cyprus because it could be perceived as some political position of ours within the orchestra. We never display the flags of any of the parties at our concerts, and we try not to display them in the field of view of the concertgoers, as this could lead to an unpleasant situation for both the musicians and the visitors from the audience, who do not want their presence at the event to be interpreted wrong.

Our project is in a way political because it promotes the values of togetherness and cooperation between communities, but we very consciously stay away from participating in politics beyond that. With our music, we want to give an idea of what a united Cyprus can look like, and this is the value we promote through music.

Also, within the orchestra, we all keep in mind that the political views and feelings of our participants may be different, and we never question that. It has happened that, for example, some member likes to play, but they are not interested in moving to another part because they don't feel comfortable showing their passport. We respect each of the views we hear and try to promote art, love and empathy

towards each other, perhaps with some different views.

I have to admit that, after many years of experience of joint creation and getting to know each other, there are more and more people in the orchestra, as well as our audience, who believe in unification. We don't know if it will happen, but we will try to continue working hard and promote peace and create bonds between people through music.

# TOGETHERNESS AS THE FOUNDATION OF CIVILISATION

BY ALEKSANDAR OBRADOVIĆ

**A**ndean civilisation is unique in many ways. It is the only great civilisation that developed on a mountain range - the Andes, after which it got its name. Also, it is the only one in which empires as big as continents were created, which had neither a writing system, nor wheel, nor riding animals, nor even money. When all the circumstances are taken into account, a common sense question arises - how is any civilisation, let alone an empire, even possible under such conditions? One of the possible answers lies in the ancient and still present principles of Andean societies - *Yanantin* and *Masintin*.

In the Andean world, everything exists in duality – the city, parts of the world, the cosmos, society, man. Everyone and everything is connected to someone or something else and together they form a complementary whole. It is precisely this view of life that instilled in Andean societies an unbreakable faith in togetherness, solidarity, and cooperation.

### MASINTIN - COMPLEMENTARY FRIENDSHIP

**Masintin** is a term made up of the word “masi” which means “friend” and the suffix -tnin which denotes belonging, creating a community, supplementing, that which accompanies someone or something. Roughly speaking, the term could be understood as complementary friendship and it is something that accompanies every member of the Andean community from birth to death. And even after it! Everyone is connected to someone, and even a person who is single is in relation to their community. Also, all children are “masintin” in relation to their parents. However, it is not an eternal state and in order to reach full maturity and develop personality, it is necessary to live with a partner:

“... You need other eyes, another perspective to see (life). When you are a child, you have parents, but when you grow old, you no longer have parents to see and recognize you. As an adult, your *yanantin*, your partner, is the person who is there to see what you do not see in yourself, just as you are there to see in that person what they do not see in themselves. This is why it is easier to take care of another person than to take care of yourself – because you should not take care of yourself! That is why there is another person.” (Webb, 2012)[1]

## YANANTIN - COMPLEMENTARY PARTNERSHIP

So, what makes us complete is **yanantin**. When children become sexually mature, they start looking for their “yana” (lovers, partners), in order to become “yanantin” – harmoniously paired, complemented. This is also done with the help of “masintin”, that is, through friendship and acquaintance, through building relationships on what unites and completes us. This is the only way to grow up and mature

- in the eyes and through the care and tenderness of someone else. From the word “yana” came another Quechua word “yanapay” which means help, which again can be obtained through a loving relationship with another person.

“Quechua[2] love relationships are always based on mutual help. The more you help someone, the more you love them”, says Arawi Ruiz, Quechua historian and chairman of The Quechua Academy of Humanities[3]. “Duality always exists, so that we are aware of the other’s needs. Duality also exists within the individual himself - in the relationships and needs of both male and female sides of the personality”, emphasizes Ruiz.

### ASYMMETRY AS A CONDITION FOR ACTIVATION

Although one of the translations of the term yanantin is *mutual complementation*, one of its main features is also asymmetry, unevenness. Although at first glance it may resemble Taoism or dialectics, these are not opposites:

“For us, Yanantin does not focus on the differences between two beings. That is what separates them. Instead, we focus

on the traits that brought them together. It is Yanantin. That is why we see them as not necessarily opposed, but as *complementary*. One man alone cannot hold everything, cannot take care of everything. Not only is it good to be together, but you have to be together. There is no other way. When there is another, it represents additional strength for both”[4].

In this relationship, one side is always stronger, more dominant. And it is precisely in this difference between the sides that the strength that carries dynamism, mobility and change lies. Disproportion is the basis of reality and is the force that makes things happen. According to asymmetric dualism, reality is made up of different and even opposing forces, but which need each other in order to be complete, i.e. *yanantin*.

That it is not about extreme opposites is also shown by the fact that homosexual couples could also be yanantin. “In the Andean civilisation, homosexuality was considered sacred. Also, femininity was considered divine and the more feminine someone was, the closer they were to Pachamama – the mother goddess of this world. Even men speak “softer”

here, as an expression of decency and good manners,” says historian Ruiz. What a stark contrast to the Christian patriarchy! Today, same-sex couples must no longer be called yanantin, but are classified as masintin, due to the pressure and dominance of the Catholic Church and its traditions.

### YANANTIN AS A BASIC VALUE AND PRINCIPLE OF THE ANDEAN CIVILISATION

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Almost no primordial civilisation insisted so deeply and ubiquitously on the needs of the other, on solidarity out of love and on care for reciprocity as its basic and foundational values. Such a set of society also explains that many Andean cultures, such as the Caral/Norte Chico civilisation, managed to build amazing temples and cities at the same time when the Egyptians were building the pyramids. However, in contrast to Mesopotamia, China or Egypt, here the buildings were created without any signs of coercion, wars, violence or the need for defense - all cities were open and without walls[5]. All of this leads to the assumption that people were not led there by force or escape, but by togetherness and faith in the common good.



Reciprocity was also a basic principle for the economy of the Inca civilisation. Without money, this empire managed to achieve a distributive economy. Similar to the principles of communism (“to each according to their need”), the system developed joint labour (*mita*) and cooperative warehouses that provided all citizens with everything they needed for life and work – food, clothing, weapons and tools. But in addition to the very sophisticated social policy of the state, among the Andean peoples there had always been a custom of *mitk'a* – that is, mutual help in work. This help was not charged (the money certainly did not exist), but was reciprocated when the other side needed help.

The Andean civilisations achieved what in the so-called Ancient World was not considered possible – they built civilisations on the principles of solidarity. Certainly, it was not a world without wars and bloodshed. Let us just give an example of the Inca Empire, which conquered the entire northwest of South America either through diplomacy or by armed force. However, the cultural code of the Andean world had woven solidarity into everyday life and was unable to exist without it. Even after the colonial rise

and the destruction of local states and elites, today, among the people of the Andes, Yanantin and Masintin still form the basis of society and economy and make it an example of overcoming impossible obstacles through a deep faith that, through caring for one's neighbour, we ensure well-being for everyone, including ourselves.

## REFERENCES

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