

“Life is in understanding. When people understand each other, life has meaning. If people don't understand each other, life has no meaning.”

Petar Dunov

Lately, I have been thinking more and more that mutual understanding is the feeling which has merged the ideas of Rotary's fathers into an indestructible alloy. This understanding cannot happen simply because we have expressed and declared some of our views. It is a deep internal process as a result of upbringing, of the search for and acceptance of philosophy, of suffered life principles and personal improvement.

Latterly, it is understandable that we are nervous for many reasons: objective, subjective, internal and brought in from outside. For more than two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked negative thinking, limited life horizons and even led to illogical actions. We often reproach and regret ourselves that the Chinese curse to live in interesting times has overtaken us. In fact, we forget that the heartbeat describing the fact that we are alive is not a level and smooth straight line, but a string of highs and lows.

The world around us seems to have gone crazy, with no strong foundations. It is logical to look for an analogy with the events around 1917 or around 1939. We can see the misfortunes, failures and mistakes and strive to protect ourselves from them, we can see how Rotarians acted in those times and rely on their experience.

The Rotary Foundation dates back to 1917, and around 1939 the young Bulgarian district was active in international work to build bridges of friendship with the democratic and civilized world. A little later, prominent Rotarians, as true leaders and professionals, boldly and resolutely stood up for Bulgarian Jews to prevent their deportation from the Kingdom of Bulgaria. All three Rotarian MPs signed the declaration in their defense.

We, today's Bulgarian Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors, with our international activities and building informal contacts with friends from other districts, prove the Rotary philosophy with our overall behavior to work for Peace and Conflict Resolution worldwide, such as the Rotary theme for the month of February.

But in order to send a message of peace and overcoming conflicts outside of ourselves, we must first be at peace with ourselves, with our family, with our close circle of friends and professionals. This does not mean keeping silent and sweeping conflicts under the carpet, but resolving them by upholding the positions and rules we have agreed to follow. Peace in our clubs should not be based on the egocentric principle 'Let it be good for me, and then let others get it'. Many of the inherited problems in our clubs are the result of professing the understanding 'Peace be upon me', which is immediately becoming a prerequisite for future conflict.

Although few, there are still clubs in our country with unresolved, inherited conflicts.

However difficult it may be for us, I am convinced that we can clear the old guild traps set by people who are no longer even Rotarians, in order to enable young friends with Rotarian blood in their veins, future new Rotarians, to think, share, and translate the bright Rotary idea into action without this legacy weighing on them.

I sincerely believe that adhering to the age-old Rotary rules and principles, and observing them firmly, is the only path that leads to peace and understanding in our community.

*Borislav Kadrekov
District Governor 2021-22
District 2482 Bulgaria*