## Malta: A Survivor Nation?

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# Questions in search of answers

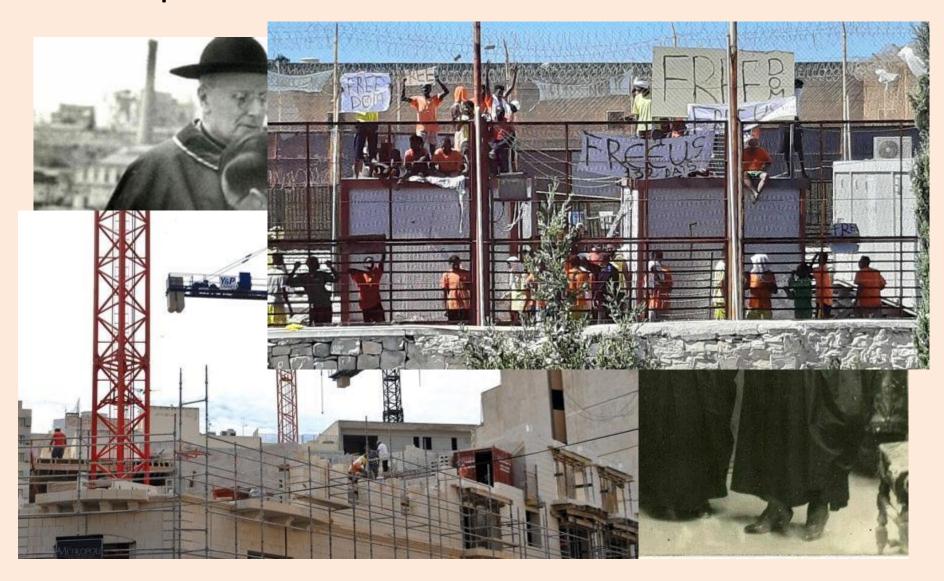


- To what extent, if at all, have the people of Malta experienced collective trauma, past or present?
- What are the policy and political implications of such experiences?
- health professionals in addressing national policy and the political implications of trauma?

The past: the drama of war, famine and pestilence ...



# The recent past and present: political conflict and cultural trauma



# Political, policy implications

- Political appropriation of collective memory to shape – or corrode – national identity: vulnerability ... heroism ... resilience
- Corrosive effects on collective psyche of Maltese subservience to 'the Other' – the chronic experience of powerlessness: pika ... gemgem ... blasphemy ... amoral familism
- Group narratives of victimhood: transfers vendikattivi ... diskriminazzjoni ... korruzzjoni
- Partisan politics, weak institutional legitimacy, clientelistic policy-making and administration

## A role for mental health professionals?

- Political implications of a professional mission: memory-making, interpretation, representation, campaigning
- Positive implications: the potential for healing, reconciliation, empowerment and a healthy diversity
- Negative implications: nurturing the cult of victimhood, promoting dissonance and grievance
- Acknowledge corrosive patterns and conditions as well as self-evident trauma.

#### **Photo credits**

Siege of Malta - <a href="https://listverse.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Seige-of-MAlta-e1373581541444.jpg">https://listverse.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Seige-of-MAlta-e1373581541444.jpg</a>
Gonzi/Mintoff - Maltese Community Council of Victoria - <a href="https://mccv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Mintoff-with-Archbishop-Michael-Gonzi.jpg">https://mccv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Mintoff-with-Archbishop-Michael-Gonzi.jpg</a>

Tower cranes – *Times of Malta* Immigrant protests – *Times of Malta*