Context: Encountering Conflict

Bertolt Brecht’s *Life of Galileo*

**What are the consequences and outcomes of conflict?**

The consequences of conflict can be **short-term** or **long-term**, both **positive** and **negative** or have a **public** and/or **personal** impact. There may also be considerable overlap between these categories. The table below presents some examples of conflict, their causes and their consequences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of conflict</th>
<th>Causes of conflict</th>
<th>Consequences of conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political conflict</td>
<td>Different beliefs and/or values</td>
<td>Challenges to social norms (which may become changes long-term and lead to greater equality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship conflict (Workplace)</td>
<td>Failure to communicate</td>
<td>Lack of trust; failure to achieve results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural conflict</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Low self-esteem; outbursts of anger or violence on the streets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider the following quote by past US President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865):

“We see conflict as a positive dimension in our everyday lives and a life without encountering conflict would deprive us of creative energy, impetus for progress and the opportunity to deepen our experience in life. However, the important thing is to be able to deal with the emotions which arise in ourselves and in others when faced with conflict.”

**Answer the following questions:**

- Is conflict something we should always try to avoid or can conflict be positive?
- In what ways is it vital to human progress? How can it be a catalyst for change?
- In what ways might the conflict between Galileo and the Catholic Church be considered positive? What might were/have been its long-term consequences for society?
- How is conflict resolved?
- What types of conflict are the most difficult to resolve?
- Do you think that there are there some conflicts that can never be resolved?
- Does victory over an opponent always resolve conflict?
- In the play, how is the conflict between Galileo and the Catholic Church resolved?