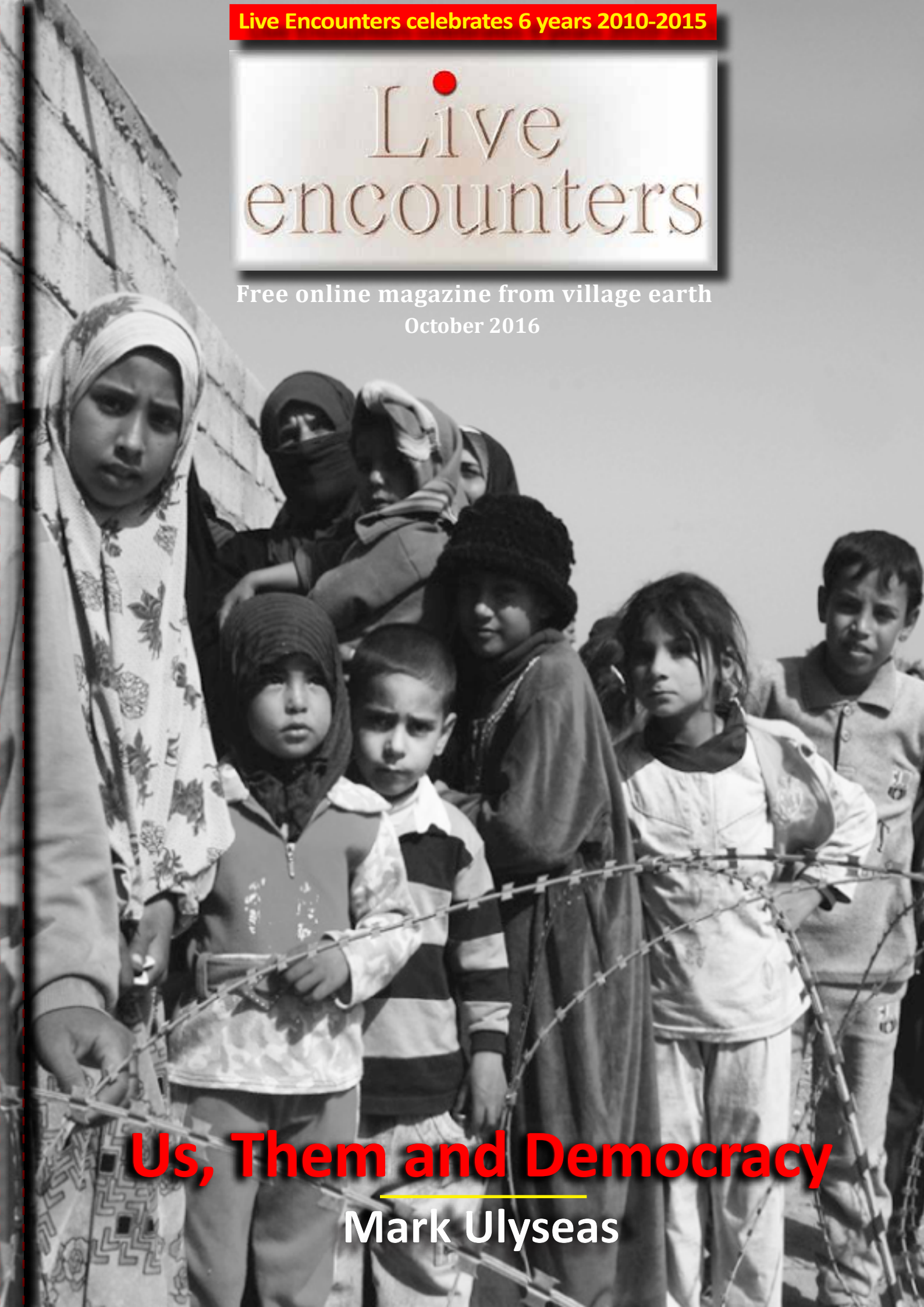


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October 2016



Us, Them and Democracy

Mark Ulyseas

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Cover photograph by Mark Ulyseas

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South African Elections 2016

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Balanced Societies

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Kilcourse spent his career in management development and was widely published in management and academic journals. He appeared in several educational videos produced for the BBC, and has spoken on management in the USA, Europe and the UK. Tom began working life as a manual worker in his native Manchester, before winning a scholarship to study at Ruskin College, Oxford. He later won a State Scholarship to read economics at Hull University. He is now retired. www.amazon.com



A Family Destruction Lens on Warfare

Professor John Braithwaite

Professor John Braithwaite is an Australian Research Council Federation Fellow and Founder of RegNet (the Regulatory Institutions Network), now School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) at the Australian National University. John is now undertaking a 20-year comparative project called 'Peacebuilding Compared', with Hilary Charlesworth and Valerie Braithwaite. His best known work is on the ideas of responsive regulation and restorative justice. His most recent book is the co-authored volume, Pharmaceuticals, Corporate Crime and Public Health (2014), with Graham Dukes and J.P. Moloney.



Refractions of Islam in India - Situating Sufism and Yoga

Professor Carl W. Ernst

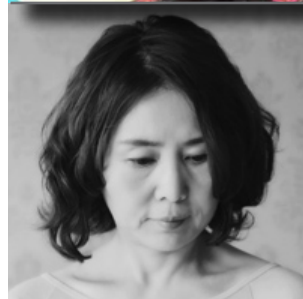
Carl W. Ernst is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Islamic studies at the Department of Religious Studies (2005-) and Co-director of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA. He is a specialist in Islamic studies, with a focus on West and South Asia. His published research, based on the study of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, has been mainly devoted to the study of three areas: general and critical issues of Islamic studies, pre-modern and contemporary Sufism, and Indo-Muslim culture. Published by [SAGE](http://www.sagepub.com)



Failure of institutionalised cooperation in South Asia

Nivedita Jayaram

Nivedita Jayaram is a recent postgraduate in International Relations from the Department of War Studies at King's College London. She has a B.A. Political Science, Economics and Sociology from Christ University, Bangalore. During her undergraduate studies, she received the French Embassy's scholarship to study World Politics and War at Sciences Po, Paris. Nivedita's research interests include Afghanistan and South Asian security, International Politics of the Middle East, and South Asian regional integration. In Mantraya, Nivedita is associated with the "Regional Economic and Cooperation and Connectivity in South Asia" project. (With Mantraya since 1 August 2016).



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Celebrating 6 years 2010-2015



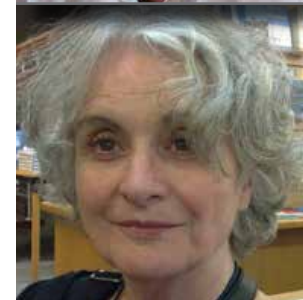
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Us, Them and Democracy

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas is founder and editor of Live Encounters Magazine and Live Encounters Poetry. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. <http://www.amazon.com/author/markulyseas>



The Battle of Cable Street

Deborah Lavin

Deborah Lavin is an active member of London Voices and the Socialist History Society, which has published her *Bradlaugh Contra Marx, the Radicalism vs. Socialism in the First International*. She was an actress and has written plays, including *The Body Trade* (Stukke Theatre, Berlin and Grenzlandtheatre, Aachen) and *Happy Families* (Studio-Life Theatre and Atelier Theatre, Tokyo). She is presently writing the first full length biography of the miscreant Dr Edward Aveling, but she is available for chairing, talking and reading out her poetry.



Farming Life in Ghana and the Rural Experience

Patrick Sakyi

Patrick Sakyi is a bright young man with lots of vision and commitment to smallholder farmers in Ghana. He works as a monitoring & evaluation associate with *Farmerline*, a social enterprise which builds innovative data collection platforms & mobile applications to improve information access for smallholder farmers in Ghana and other African countries. He has written this fascinating article about his boyhood farming and rural experience in Ghana and looking to the future for smallholder farmers there.



7 steps to Intuitive Healing

Dr Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the author of the #1 Best-selling book on Amazon, *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine and Live Intuitively: Journal the Wisdom of your Soul*. She is an internationally known Author, Speaker, Intuitive Coach and Mentor and Psychic Medium. She specializes in assisting others to regain their own personal power, develop their intuition and live a life of abundance, happiness, and joy. <http://energymedicinedna.com/>



Simit Kebabi - Gaziantep Style

Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the "Turkish Chefs of the World", "Dünyanın Türk Seftleri" TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries. www.ozlemsturkishtable.com



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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Richards_\(academic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Richards_(academic))



SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS 2016

DR HOWARD RICHARDS

“Our greatest political problem is lack of imagination.” - Michel Foucault



<http://www.africaliberalnetwork.org>

The markets loved election results that left the party of Nelson Mandela quaking in its boots. The African National Congress (ANC) allied with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have been continually in office since the beginning of democracy in 1994. In nationwide municipal elections held August 3, 2016, for the first time ever the ANC alliance won less than 60% of the vote. In nationwide totals the ANC scored 54%, the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) 27%, and the self-styled “Leninist” Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) 8%, while numerous smaller parties shared the remaining 11%. The DA took the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality including Port Elizabeth from the ANC. The Democratic Alliance added to the dominant position it has long held in Cape Town and in over a dozen smaller cities near Cape Town. In 26 cities, including the big ones Johannesburg and Pretoria, coalition government will be the name of the game. In those cities nobody won a majority of the council seats which means under South African rules that the smaller parties will tip the balance between an ANC mayor and a DA mayor. Although the Economic Freedom Fighters did not win any municipalities, in some cities (like Joburg where they got 11%) they are on track to be kingmakers and sharers in the spoils of victory. For the first time EFF militants will hold executive offices in cities. All signs point to the EFF forming pragmatic alliances with the free market liberals of the DA who are in theory their ideological enemies.

The markets loved the elections. The South African rand strengthened against the US dollar rising to 13.8 rands per dollar, reversing a downward slide that had seen it fall from 7.5 per dollar in 2012 to nearly 15 per dollar in July of 2016. Shares rose on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The website of the United States Council on Foreign Relations echoed the markets with the headline “It’s Morning in South Africa.” Bloomberg News explained why: The election results are a sign that South Africa will enact the long overdue economic reforms needed to address the deep poverty of the majority and a staggering 27% rate of unemployment. The elections are a sign that President Jacob Zuma (who put a cheerful spin on his party’s setbacks declaring them to be proof that “South Africa is a thriving democracy”) may be forced to resign before his term is up in 2019. If he resigns, he will probably be replaced by someone less corrupt and more investor-friendly like Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa or former president Thabo Mbeki. Zuma himself might see the light and change course.

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At this point in history, the major media, owned by investors and run by investors for investors, have been transmitting the pro-investor philosophies of political and economic liberalism for a little longer than two centuries. In many minds, it is at this point in history not a conscious assumption – it is more like a subconscious presupposition shared by the media sending the messages and the public receiving them-- that the one thing the elected officials of any government must do, whatever else they do, and the one thing everyone else must do, is to please us, the investors.



The ANC itself might unseat Zuma at its party convention in 2017. (Under South African rules the president of the party with the most seats in Parliament becomes the president of the country, which means that President Zuma could be voted out of office by his own party even before the next parliamentary elections.) In a few years the Democratic Alliance with or without coalition partners may be the party electing the majority of the MPs and forming the government. In short, all winds are blowing Bloomberg's way, blowing to the right.

Blowing Bloomberg's way, the winds of change will bring what Bloomberg calls the long overdue economic reforms needed to make doing business more secure, easier, and more profitable. Sensing the direction of the wind, the markets registered growing investor confidence after the election.

One can agree that Bloomberg interpreted correctly the reaction of the markets to the election, and even agree that some of the DA's proposed neoliberal economic reforms would be on balance desirable, without agreeing with the overall philosophy that shapes its reporting. Bloomberg frames the expected reforms as the efficient causes that will generate prosperity and employment. That investors are already expecting higher profits is framed as good news for the poor. The proposition that more investor-friendly reforms (on top of the many South Africa has already had) will serve the common good is treated as a given needing no proof; as if it were a joke that had already been told; as if those who did not understand the joke and did not know when to laugh, or did not know whether to laugh or cry, were not so much mistaken as left out of the conversation, deprived of voice.

At this point in history, the major media, owned by investors and run by investors for investors, have been transmitting the pro-investor philosophies of political and economic liberalism for a little longer than two centuries. In many minds, it is at this point in history not a conscious assumption –it is more like a subconscious presupposition shared by the media sending the messages and the public receiving them-- that the one thing the elected officials of any government must do, whatever else they do, and the one thing everyone else must do, is to please us, the investors. The voice of the investors has said so often that what it says passes for common sense, "please investors." Attract us. Woo us. If we investors invest, then all is well. Then there is employment, then people rise out of poverty, then more tax money flows into public coffers. If we investors do not invest, then all is lost: then there is unemployment, in the extreme case of SA there is 27% unemployment; then there is poverty, in the extreme case of SA there is the world's highest Gini coefficient; then there is desperation, crime, insanity, social chaos and violence.

Some see the whole *problematique* differently. They see as a duck the same sketch the mass media see as a rabbit. The rabbit: the question, the first question, the question whose answer is the key to solving so many problems, is how to attract investment? The duck: the question, the first question, the question whose answer is the key to solving so many problems, is how to make democracy real? In other words, how to make modern societies governable. In other words, how to liberate humanity (and the biosphere) from an overriding imperative that when push comes to shove trumps all other imperatives, that imperiously commands that money must continually and forever morph into more money. *The necessity of doing whatever it takes to attract investment is the problem, not the solution.*

Those who see the duck, those who feel deprived of voice in a culture saturated everywhere with messages endlessly repeating "rabbit-rabbit-rabbit-rabbit"; those who are looking for guidance to help them to articulate what they would say if they had a voice; those who seek an alternative to hyper-liberal public discourses like those in South Africa today that feature the ANC and the DA vying in a beauty contest to see who looks most business-friendly –with the DA currently looking better and the ANC poised to improve its image by changing leaders— have for nearly two centuries been going to libraries –and more recently to Websites-- to read the works of Karl Marx. It should not be overlooked, however, that in essence a mainstream liberal analysis of how capitalism works and Karl Marx's analysis of how capitalism works are almost exactly the same.

Consider the analyses of Dani Rodrik and Ricardo Hausmann, two mainstream liberal economists who have been advisors to the government of South Africa, and whose views have influenced its National Development Plan. Although they acknowledge that development has other dimensions, their focus is on economic growth. What economic growth requires, they say, is getting entrepreneurs excited about investing. Exciting entrepreneurs in turn requires favourable (low) wages paid to a high quality work force, the availability of credit and infrastructure, favourable (low) taxes, no obstacles to taking profits out of the country after they have accrued, and in general doing whatever it takes to attract investors. Nothing separates their analyses from Marx's view that where there is accumulation of capital there is capitalism, and where there is capitalism there is accumulation of capital; or Marx's view that the production process begins with investing money to buy means of production, continues with producing for the purpose of sale, and concludes a cycle by selling for the purpose of profit. Something does separate contemporary mainstream economists from Marx's (mistaken) thesis that capitalists can only make profits by exploiting labour, but nothing separates them from his thesis that the dynamic that drives capitalism is profit.

If it is indeed “morning in South Africa” let us hope morning will bring light with its heat. If the DA and the EFF form pragmatic alliances to govern cities, let us hope they also talk to each other about their deepest beliefs. If they share ideas as well as power, they will learn from each other.



There is a reason why liberals and Marxists have superficially different but essentially similar views. The reason is that it is true that capital accumulation drives capitalism. Both are correct. The liberals liberals are more grateful to entrepreneurs who organize the factors of production and generate a (“surplus value”) and rightly so, for a modern society cannot function without organizers who organize the accumulation of a social surplus. The Marxists are more worried that the path we are on (“growth”) is socially and ecologically unsustainable, again rightly so. Both are correct.

Michel Foucault is also correct. There is proof that Foucault is correct in the responses of the leaders of the nations of the world to the global financial crisis of 2008 and its ongoing aftermaths. Their lack of imagination has been cosmic, breath-taking. When the capital accumulation machine broke down –as sooner or later it always does-- business and political leaders remained and still today remain in the grip of economic thinking confined to a production model that begins with investing money to buy means of production, continues with producing for the purpose of sale, and concludes a cycle by selling for the purpose of profit. Thousands of otherwise intelligent leaders have been unable to think of anything better to do when financial bubbles burst, debts become unpayable, workers are thrown out of work, and production slows down than to impose austerity on an innocent public that never did anything to cause the crisis, to bail out banks, and to try to shore up sagging investments and sales by inundating markets with more and more money at zero percent or even negative interest rates. Political leaders and the citizens they represent fail to see realities in plain sight. For example, the reality that buying and selling is only of the ways that human beings get the work of the world done and meet their needs. For example, the reality that within the general category of buying and selling, only a subset of all the haggling and trading people do in market-places around the world is motivated by or leads to private capital accumulation.

Thinking more broadly: If “African Renaissance” means anything it must mean remembering that in the territory now occupied by the Republic of South Africa people lived and raised children and carried out all the normal human functions for thousands of years without unemployment or inflation. As Julius Nyerere often pointed out, the historical conditions of the possibility of unemployment did not exist until Africa was conquered by Europeans. Nyerere liked to quote a Swahili proverb: Feed your guest for two days, on the third day give him a hoe. The Argentine economist José Luis Coraggio has demonstrated that in most Latin American and African countries today far more people make their livings in what Coraggio calls the “people’s economy,” i.e. in economic activities where little or no capital is accumulated, than in the capitalist firms that get so much more than their fair share of academic and political attention.

As Karl Polanyi and many others have documented the principle of reciprocity and the principle of sharing the surplus typical of many indigenous knowledge systems have organized labour to meet human needs for many centuries. They have stood the test of time. And these are only three samples suggesting the infinite number of non-capitalist and mixed (i.e. part capitalist) solutions to the challenges of life that are practiced today and have been practiced in the past. They do not even begin to imagine the unbounded organizing humans will do in the future.

If it is indeed “morning in South Africa” let us hope morning will bring light with its heat. If the DA and the EFF form pragmatic alliances to govern cities, let us hope they also talk to each other about their deepest beliefs. If they share ideas as well as power, they will learn from each other. Let us also hope that the inevitable repositioning of the ANC will be an occasion for necessary conversations about how to build a fully nurturant society. Let us hope that the people of good will who are willing to live and die for the cause of justice will also like be willing to read and think for the cause of justice.

Recommended Readings

Gavin Andersson and Howard Richards (2015), *Unbounded Organizing in Community*. Lake Oswego: Dignity Press.

Roy Bhaskar (1986), *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*. London: Verso.

Hein Marais (2013), *South Africa Pushed to the Limit*. London: Zed Books.

Karl Polanyi (1944), *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Howard Richards (2016), [**The Impossibility of Politics and How to Make Politics Possible**](#) (search under this title on Google)

Dani Rodrik (with Ricardo Hausmann and Andres Velasco) (2007), *One Economics, Many Recipes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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TOM KILCOURSE BALANCED SOCIETIES



<https://pixabay.com/en/>

Emmanuel Macron, a French politician who is believed to be planning to stand in the next presidential election, is alleged to favour the reform of the welfare state in France. If that is true, he would be well advised to think again. During my lifetime I have witnessed the effects that ideologically driven governments can have on societies. The most startling examples perhaps were provided by the Soviet Union and communist China, in which private enterprise was virtually eliminated. The eventual outcome is now a matter of historical record, but what lessons have been drawn? In some western countries it appears that people have concluded that the state has little part to play in a country's development. The pendulum has swung to an equally extreme position, and an equally fallacious one.

Today's prevailing ideology suggests that the state has no significant role in the economy, other than the facilitation and promotion of private enterprise. Social and philosophical matters are ignored or *subordinated* to economics, by which they mean market forces. These forces have been virtually deified, with consideration of other factors in life being thought largely irrational. The world is suddenly one, a global entity whose direction can be safely left to *free* market forces. Pride in, or love of, one's nation or culture is identified as racism or xenophobia. The market alone merits the bended knee.

This distorted view of 'economics' is an Anglo-American construct, though it is no longer confined to the UK and USA. Adam Smith spoke only of 'political-economy' with good reason, a fact ignored or forgotten by many who use his name in justification of their policies. The political upheaval experienced in America and the UK has its roots in the economic philosophy prevailing in those two countries. Abandonment to market forces deprives people of a reasonable standard of living, but it does not deprive them of the vote. Belief that their vote will achieve nothing prevents many from using it, especially when it is clear that the two main parties differ only marginally, but that perception can change. We saw this in Britain when the referendum on EU membership was held. This presented people with an opportunity to influence events without having to choose between the two traditional parties of government. In America, the emergence of Donald Trump kick started a similar phenomenon.

Whitehall was suddenly the playground of consultants seeking 'efficiency'. Given the mindset that private enterprise is invariably more efficient than public sector operation, the outcome was inevitable. We now have large areas of public service outsourced to privately owned companies, some of which have been created to take advantage of Blair's policy. There have been many failures, yet companies behind those failures continue to tender for the operation of services. Despite some well publicised cock-ups, they continue to be considered for ever greater areas of service. Why?

In America and Britain alike the two main political parties have been committed to the same economic philosophy: free-market globalisation, the exclusive province of private enterprise. In my country we saw the privatisation of public services begin under the Conservative Prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, while a Labour government under Tony Blair began outsourcing those services for which it remained responsible. Those policies continue today, despite all the evidence that the change has not delivered the promised benefits. Pressure for these policies came not from the people, but from those businesses that were set to benefit financially, even when failing to deliver a better service.

A classic example has been the privatisation of British Rail under John Major's government. That BR left room for improvement is evident, but the break-up of the system and the flogging off of the fragments was an example of political vandalism. It is no surprise that not a single country has followed Britain's approach. The cost to successive governments has been enormous, while significant improvement has not been forthcoming. Indeed, we have clear evidence that the continuation of this policy is driven by dogma rather than effectiveness. When the East-coast main line was abandoned by two private businesses, the government handed the task of running it to publicly owned Directly Operated Railways. DOR operated the line efficiently, customer satisfaction was high, and at a significant profit with funds going to the Treasury. Nevertheless, when the time came to re-franchise the line, DOR was not allowed to bid, despite that performance. More than 60% of the people in Britain now support the re-nationalisation of the rail system, but it is almost certain that the wish will be ignored.

The privatisation of other services in Britain has also been largely disappointing. Although the most efficient bus service in the country is run by a municipality, we shall not see the road passenger transport industry returned to public ownership anytime soon. As for energy, British households and companies face the highest energy bills in western Europe, while many householders feel that the opportunity to switch providers offers little reward. In both transport and energy, a significant proportion of the service is owned by foreign organisations.

When Tony Blair came to power he changed the moderately socialist Labour Party to what became known as 'Tory Light' in pursuit of votes from 'middle England'. His government began to outsource services that his predecessors had failed to privatise. Whitehall was suddenly the playground of consultants seeking 'efficiency'. Given the mindset that private enterprise is invariably more efficient than public sector operation, the outcome was inevitable. We now have large areas of public service outsourced to privately owned companies, some of which have been created to take advantage of Blair's policy. There have been many failures, yet companies behind those failures continue to tender for the operation of services. Despite some well publicised cock-ups, they continue to be considered for ever greater areas of service. Why?

We need leaders capable of taking a balanced view across the whole spectrum. This is why I would caution Monsieur Macron. Having lived in France for fifteen years, I can say that it is a much better balanced society than is Britain. Critics always point to the high unemployment level, but the economy is more diverse there and better balanced. In my view, there is also a better balance between economic and social considerations.

In September, 'Private Eye', Britain's satirical magazine, published a very revealing piece on the close relationship between some of those companies, the politicians that we elect and the civil servants we employ. The companies tendering for chunks of the public sector are in the habit of hiring both politicians and civil servants when they quit their day job. It seems to me to be a system inviting a conflict of interest, if not downright corruption.

This narrow pursuit of 'economic' efficiency, even when failing in its own terms, inevitably carries with it social and political consequences, in that order. The social consequences have been apparent for some time, most notably the commodification of labour, and people. The notion of public service with which the public sector was imbued, however imperfectly, has been largely destroyed. Publicly owned monopolies have given way to privately owned oligopolies motivated more by profit than by sense of service. Outsourced 'services' are run for profit gained by squeezing the labour 'commodity'.

It is no coincidence that the notion of job security has largely disappeared as increasing numbers of people are employed on zero-hours contracts, or are listed as 'self-employed'. We have chosen to pursue a myth of economic efficiency at the cost of social disintegration. We no longer have a sense of one society, or any sense of community. Rather, it is everyone for themselves, and damned the hindmost. These are the social consequences of our political stupidity.

The political consequences are just emerging. Conflict in the Labour Party between residual 'new labourites' and those who wish to return to a more socialist conviction. The Lib-Dems destroyed as a political force, and dangers of conflict in the Conservative Party.

France would be foolish to follow Britain's example.

What we require is a political leadership that understands economics, and appreciates the importance of externalities. Having high cost energy supplies, roads choked with traffic because of low investment in improvements, etc. are negative externalities to companies operating in Britain. Economics, politics and society are separate entities only on campus. Elsewhere, isolated consideration makes sense to accountants, perhaps, but not to economists. We need leaders capable of taking a balanced view across the whole spectrum. This is why I would caution Monsieur Macron. Having lived in France for fifteen years, I can say that it is a much better balanced society than is Britain. Critics always point to the high unemployment level, but the economy is more diverse there and better balanced. In my view, there is also a better balance between economic and social considerations.

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Official opening of Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital, Brisbane, Australia. Photo: State Library of Queensland

A Family Destruction Lens on Warfare

Professor John Braithwaite

RegNet, ANU

Conducting [fieldwork in conflict and post-conflict zones](#), I keep meeting people who say their lives have no meaning. That which gives life meaning, the warmth and trust and stability provided by healthy and loving human relationships, is a target of war. Victims are forced to watch their loved ones brutalised, and it is also a tactic of war to force people to commit acts of horrendous violence on those they love.

The stories of war that are told in the West are often from the perspective of the victors, and celebrate the fallen male heroes. A feminist lens has helped shift this perspective, bringing into view the less visible suffering of the women and children who have violence inflicted on them during war. Another lens that is needed to complement it is that of family destruction, sometimes through violence, including sexual violence that fathers and sons have been forced by their captors to inflict on each other. This occurred in both Serbian and Croatian concentration camps in Bosnia, and it was a conscious strategy of war to destroy families of the enemy community, turning them against one another through maximal humiliation.

The childhood memory of war suffering that is most vivid for me is of my father's periodic stays in the "nerve ward" of the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital in Brisbane. I remember the frightened families visiting their suffering patriarchs. Often the men stared blankly as they sat after their electroconvulsive shock therapy, their hand shaking with a cigarette in it.

My own family's suffering was much less. But it was significant, especially for my mother, as for my grandmothers with World War I. Our story, the story of the Moxhams, and the story of the new friends my brother Dick has made who are families of Japanese officers executed for the crimes of Sandakan, is beautifully documented in Dick's book released this month, *Fighting Monsters: An Intimate History of the Sandakan Tragedy* (Richard Wallace Braithwaite: Australian Scholarly Publishing).

For western troops in twenty-first century wars, post-war suicides and homicides caused by the war take many more lives than bombs and bullets. In the twentieth century as well, homicide and suicide rates increased dramatically after countries participated in wars. My father was one of the six survivors of the Sandakan death march in World War II that took 1787 Australian and 641 British lives. It was the greatest war crime ever suffered by Australian soldiers. Bill Moxham was another survivor. Our family knew that Bill lived a tortured life, and in turn tortured his family with violence and threats of murder. In the end he turned his gun on himself, though that hardly ended the suffering of his family.

Using the three lenses simultaneously – feminist, family destruction, and western domination, helps us understand something terrible that happened at Sandakan. Before they perished, the Australian POWs were required by their captors to march under the verandah of the building where a group of Asian women were housed. Called "comfort women", they were raped repeatedly by Japanese soldiers. As the bedraggled starving men marched as best they could, the women poured the contents of their chamber pots down upon their suffering bodies. This signified the humiliation of white colonialism, I conjecture. At least it might have in the eyes of someone who urged them to inflict this upon our beloved fathers.

My own family's suffering was much less. But it was significant, especially for my mother, as for my grandmothers with World War I. Our story, the story of the Moxhams, and the story of the new friends my brother Dick has made who are families of Japanese officers executed for the crimes of Sandakan, is beautifully documented in Dick's book released this month, **[Fighting Monsters: An Intimate History of the Sandakan Tragedy](#)** (Richard Wallace Braithwaite: Australian Scholarly Publishing).

The childhood memory of war suffering that is most vivid for me is of my father's periodic stays in the "nerve ward" of the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital in Brisbane. I remember the frightened families visiting their suffering patriarchs. Often the men stared blankly as they sat after their electroconvulsive shock therapy, their hand shaking with a cigarette in it.

A family destruction lens helps us see more clearly the magnitude of the suffering of male survivors such as those in the nerve ward, and the wide ripples of suffering in their families, whether in Japan or Australia. So while we need a feminist lens to complement a lens that mourns the fallen, we also need a family destruction lens to complement the feminist lens. We need this complementarity to see the full horror of war and the cycles of violence it produces.

After that, we need a western domination lens to see that most of the suffering of war is not in the west at all. War's assault on life and what gives it meaning is experienced mostly by the peoples of countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Congo in this century, and in the last century in our region by the peoples of China, PNG, Guadalcanal and the town of Sandakan and its surrounding villages.

John now undertaking a 20-year comparative project called 'Peacebuilding Compared', with Hilary Charlesworth and Valerie Braithwaite.

Publications from this project include the co-authored

[Networked Governance of Freedom and Tyranny: Peace in East Timor](#) (ANU Press: 2012);

[Pillars and Shadows: Statebuilding as peacebuilding in Solomon Islands](#) (ANU E Press: 2010);

[Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment: Sequencing peace in Bougainville](#) (ANU E Press: 2010);

and

[Anomie and Violence: Non-truth and reconciliation in Indonesian peacebuilding](#) (ANU E Press: 2010).

Read more on John's research and publications on his personal website on **[War|Crime|Regulation](#) available at **[johnbraithwaite.com](#)**

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REFRACTIONS OF ISLAM IN INDIA SITUATING SUFISM AND YOGA

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Refractions of Islam in India gathers three decades of studies focusing on South Asian Sufism, and on Muslim reflections on the culture and religions of India. To my mind, and in my experience, this more than millennial tradition cannot be explained as the encounter of two separate cultures, notwithstanding the exclusivist claims underlying the partition of India from Pakistan, and the consequent acceleration of the politics of communalism. A thorough consideration of the historical and cultural dossier prior to the ascendancy of European colonialism tells a different tale; in this narration, religion was not a separate identity, but a presence suffusing the rest of life, like light refracted in amber or glass. So striking is the lack of a sense of foreignness that it takes an effort to avoid reading contemporary conflicts into these texts from centuries ago. This is not to say that there were no articulations of difference in pre-modern India; indeed, there were and are countless locations of identity defined along the lines of faith and devotion, caste and ethnicity, class and status. But the modern obsession with a binary opposition between Islam and Hinduism (or Buddhism) is remarkably inadequate to explain the rich and complex interactions that characterized much of what we now call South Asian Islam.

REFRACTIONS OF ISLAM IN INDIA

Situating Sufism and Yoga

Carl W. Ernst

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An important early Persian text, *The Fifty Verses of Kamarupa*, was explored as one of the main sources known to Muslim scholars for practices of divination by breath and summoning yogini goddesses (“Being Careful with the Goddess: Yoginis in Persian and Arabic Texts”). The earliest summary of those yoga-related practices was translated from a Persian encyclopedia (“A 14th-Century Persian Account of Breath Control and Meditation”). And a nineteenth-century Arabic treatment of yogis as a subset of the Shattari Sufi order also was presented (“Traces of Šattari Sufism and Yoga in North Africa”).

My discovery of the complex structure of this work, including extensive quotations from the illuminationist philosopher Suhrawardi, and a narration from the *Hymn of the Soul* from the Gnostic Acts of Thomas, only indicated the tip of the iceberg. While this particular example of Muslim engagement with yoga turned out to be surprisingly widespread, it was far from being a significant source of the Sufi tradition.

The bulk of the essays in this volume are focused on a different subject, the varying strategies and interpretive approaches taken by Muslims in their discussions of Indian religious practices, particularly those associated with yoga. This is a deep and intractable problem, inextricably entwined with the origins of Orientalism. For it was at the very moment when Sufism was discovered by Sir William Jones in the 1790s, that he simultaneously announced its dependence upon Indian mysticism – for were not all oriental religions ultimately one, in the great mysterious East? The hostility towards Islam exhibited by most early European scholars, when combined with their enthusiastic admiration of Sufism, led irresistibly to the conclusion that Sufism must be based on foreign influence. This mechanistic argument has proved to be surprisingly enduring, despite a lack of historical evidence to test it. No doubt this Orientalist legacy aroused my curiosity, leading me to undertake my first examination of the most important Arabic text on yoga, the Arabic version of the now lost *Amrtakunda* or *The Pool of Nectar*. My discovery of the complex structure of this work, including extensive quotations from the illuminationist philosopher Suhrawardi, and a narration from the *Hymn of the Soul* from the Gnostic Acts of Thomas, only indicated the tip of the iceberg. While this particular example of Muslim engagement with yoga turned out to be surprisingly widespread, it was far from being a significant source of the Sufi tradition. If it was no longer possible to maintain the ridiculous assertion that all of Islamic mysticism derived from Hinduism, the question remained – how was one to understand the reflections on yogic practice that are to be found in Sufi texts?

Other recent articles offered a Hindu secretary’s use of Islamicate philosophy to defend Vedantic metaphysics (“A Persian Philosophical Defense of Vedanta”) and a broader essay on Muslim thinkers’ engagement with Indian religions in terms of universalist perspectives (“The Limits of Universalism in Islamic Thought: The Case of Indian Religions”). All these articles used specific examples of documented interactions of Muslim intellectuals with Hindu themes and practices, setting up an archive that complicates any abstract generalizations about Islam and Hinduism.

The articles included here are in general reproduced as they were written, with minor editing and correction. Yet they are far from being the last word on the subject of Islam in South Asia. Attentive readers will notice that I have been promising to release my edition and translation of the Arabic translation of *The Pool of Nectar* for well over twenty years, but it has not yet been delivered. There are plenty of excuses for that delay, mainly based on the need to unravel the immensely complex threads of the literary transmission of yogic teachings in Sufi circles. Recent discoveries, including some generously communicated to me by Kazuyo Sakaki, have altered the picture I initially sketched of this intricate literary problem. In recent years, the formation of the international scholarly project known as Perso-Indica (<http://www.perso-indica.net/>), aimed at tracking and analyzing the vast translation movement from Sanskrit into Persian, has also made possible a much more sophisticated approach to this inter-cultural activity. The new tools and perspectives provided by this project have enabled me to move beyond the Orientalist obsession with “origins,” focusing instead on cultural translation as a form of reception history. I hope to provide readers with some new analyses of Muslim interaction with the religions of India in the near future.

Yet many unresolved questions remained, and clues had to be followed in a whole series of separate textual explorations. These include a widely circulated work on yoga, credited to the founding figure of the Chishti order (“Two Versions of a Persian Text on Yoga and Cosmology, Attributed to Shaykh Mu`in al-Din Chishti”). The Gnostic “Hymn of the Pearl,” previously unknown in Islamicate languages, was presented in a multilingual edition from the Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu translations of the *Amrtakunda* (“Fragmentary Versions of the Apocryphal ‘Hymn of the Pearl’”). Encounters of Muslims with yogis were discussed (“Accounts of Yogis in Arabic and Persian Historical and Travel Texts”). A Mughal era Persian treatise on Indian philosophy, often ascribed to the poet Fayzi, was introduced and analyzed in relation to Illuminationist (*ishraqi*) thought (“Fayzi’s Illuminationist Interpretation of Vedanta”). An important early Persian text, *The Fifty Verses of Kamarupa*, was explored as one of the main sources known to Muslim scholars for practices of divination by breath and summoning yogini goddesses (“Being Careful with the Goddess: Yoginis in Persian and Arabic Texts”). The earliest summary of those yoga-related practices was translated from a Persian encyclopedia (“A 14th-Century Persian Account of Breath Control and Meditation”). And a nineteenth-century Arabic treatment of yogis as a subset of the Shattari Sufi order also was presented (“Traces of Šattari Sufism and Yoga in North Africa”).

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FAILURE OF INSTITUTIONALISED COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Abstract

Regional integration in South Asia lags behind other regions in the world despite efforts at institutionalized cooperation through the SAARC. Economic cooperation and connectivity in South Asia can pave the way for shared problem solving and greater economic development for all states in the region. The SAARC efforts remain ineffective due to its narrow focus on the removal of tariffs on intraregional trade. Led by a motivated political leadership, SAARC could greatly benefit from identifying and resolving the unaddressed barriers to regional integration, rather than relying on progressive tariff reduction on intraregional trade in goods as the single means for facilitating regional integration.

South Asian regional integration facilitated by economic cooperation and connectivity has emerged to the forefront of multilateral relations in the region due to the increasing awareness that only concerted effort can help South Asia jointly address the problems of developing nations with large populations. However, institutionalized cooperation, in the form of the South Asian Association for Regional Integration (SAARC), formed in 1985, has failed to achieve expected results. The region remains one of the least integrated in the world. This can be attributed to the SAARC's failure to fully implement its main instrument for improving intraregional trade, namely, the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) due to a variety of reasons.

First, the SAARC-envisioned progressive trade liberalization programme has not been sufficient to ensure the full implementation of the SAFTA, due to the existence of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), while the SAARCs main focus has remained tariff reduction alone. Second, low levels of regional connectivity, as well as the lack of border infrastructure to facilitate the smooth flow of goods and people, have hampered the creation of a regional supply chain. Third, the failure of the SAFTA can also be explained by its narrow scope, in that it covers only intraregional trade in goods while excluding other important aspects of regional economic cooperation such as trade in services, and investment and financial cooperation between South Asian states.

Former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh stated at the 16th SAARC summit in 2010 that, "We have created institutions for regional economic cooperation but we have not empowered them adequately to enable them to be more proactive". This statement is relevant in a scenario where South Asian nations acknowledge that regional integration is a geographic necessity, but the institutional arrangements fail to make integration possible, as they are retarded by a number of challenges which remain unaddressed. Presently, negotiations for establishing a South Asian Economic Union by 2030 are underway. However, the progressive trade liberalization programme under the auspices of the SAARC has performed poorly as South Asia remains one of the least integrated regions in the world.

Trade among SAARC Countries (as percentage of total trade)

Year	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Intraregional trade	4.8	4.6	5.6	5.1	5.3	4.8	4.2	4.7	4.4	4.3
AAGR*	14%		14%							

*AAGR = Annual Average Growth Rate
Data from Export Import Bank of India



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Non-Tariff Barriers

The greatest impediment to intraregional trade, it has been pointed out, is in the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs). These provide necessary protection to the importing countries and hence, are difficult to address. However, NTMs become barriers to trade in the form of NTBs, only when they are combined with unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, corruption and lack of information. As in the case of South Asia, NTBs have increased the cost of intraregional trade and also reduced quantities traded. Regional trade has remained below five percent of the total trade of South Asian countries, as it is more expensive than trade with countries outside the region.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), which are essential for protecting the health of consumers, environment, product quality and standards, comprise the largest share of NTMs in the region. SPS deals with regulations for food safety and plant and animal health. TBTs are measures taken to protect domestic markets, consumers and industries, which can indirectly discriminate against imports from other countries. Each country follows different standards and procedures with relation to SPS/TBT regulations, and also applies different standards to exporting countries based on the level of hostility or ideological differences between them. While these NTMs cannot be eliminated, it is important to ensure that they are accompanied by relevant policy measures so that they do not hamper trade and become NTBs. Further, NTMs unfairly discriminate against exports of smaller nations with lesser capacities as they lead to high costs. Another major NTB comes in the form of customs duties, rules, and regulations. These are sometimes unreasonable and reflect the inability of South Asian countries to overcome protectionist economics.

Connectivity and Cross Border Infrastructure

Lack of connectivity in the region also adversely affects intraregional trade. The creation of a smooth flowing regional supply chain will require investment in physical infrastructure for transport across borders. There is a lack of synchronized and coordinated border infrastructure in road freight, rail, shared waterways, and connectivity by sea. For instance, goods transported between Delhi and Dhaka would take only five days with improved road connectivity. Border infrastructure such as land customs stations and warehouse facilities are weak. The low yield for investment in such projects have discouraged governments from taking a more active role in trade facilitation through cross border infrastructural development. Additionally, border authorities in South Asian countries have been noted as highly dysfunctional, further affecting trade.



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South Asia can be understood as comprising three sub-regions: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) in the east; India, Maldives and Sri Lanka in the south and India; Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west. The BBIN countries have recorded higher amounts of integration by undertaking measures for trade facilitation and improved connectivity. The Bangladesh-India Memorandum (2010) enables improved bilateral trade between the two countries, while also allowing Bangladesh access land-locked states of Bhutan and Nepal through Indian territory. It also envisions heightened energy cooperation, thereby building upon the region's strengths in the form of meeting the rising demand for energy.

In 2015, BBIN member countries signed a Motor Vehicles Agreement, which simplifies transport of goods and people across borders, as cargo and passengers are no longer required to transfer into the other country's transport vehicle at the border. India has been given access to Bangladeshi port in Ashuganj, since June 2016, in order to access its remote northeastern region. Bus connectivity was established along the Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala route in June 2015. The Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati bus service, which was to start operating in May 2015, has been stalled due to technical issues. Improving bilateral relations within a sub-region can lead the way for the rest of South Asia by demonstrating its successes. It can encourage and help implement similar projects in the rest of the region.

Narrow Focus of the SAFTA

Loopholes in regional integration can also be attributed to the SAFTA's narrow focus on trade in products. Services constitute one third of South Asia's exports and 50 percent of the region's GDP, mainly in information technology, energy, business process outsourcing, and tourism and travel. The service sector is especially important due to South Asia's underperforming industrial sector and declining productivity in agriculture. Comparative advantage on trade in goods is difficult to exploit in the region, as all countries are characterized by labour surpluses and lack of capital. However, in the case of services, national comparative advantages can be exploited. For instance, neighbouring countries could benefit from India's well-developed health sector, tourism potential in Sri Lanka and Maldives, and gas transmission services in Bangladesh. An agreement on services is necessary to complement the SAFTA. The South Asian Trade in Services Agreement (SATIS) has not yet materialized owing to inability of the South Asian nations to take the steps necessary to make SATIS a reality.



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<https://pixabay.com/en/devotion-bhutan-buddhism-pilgrimage-1563713/>

Important Trade Agreements in South Asia

Regional Agreements	South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (1995) SAARC Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters (2005) South Asia Free Trade Agreement (2006) Agreement on the Establishment of South Asian Regional Standards Organization (2008)
Bilateral Agreements	India Maldives Trade Agreement (1981) India Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (1998) Pakistan Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (2005) India Bhutan Trade Agreement (2006) India Bangladesh Trade Agreement (2006) India Nepal Trade Treaty (2009) Pakistan Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (negotiations ongoing) Pakistan Nepal Free Trade Agreement (negotiations ongoing)

It has been demonstrated that enhanced investment has positive effects on intra-regional trade. Indian investment in Bhutan’s hydroelectric resources, majority of which is sold to India, comprises a major share of Bhutan’s income. India also holds more than 60 percent of Bhutan’s debt stock and is one of its largest aid providers. Other smaller nations with untapped resources due to capital unavailability in the region could benefit from intraregional FDI flows to achieve rapid economic development. If developed, these resources could be used to meet the food and industrial input requirements of India. India should be encouraged to invest in these resources, and integrate LDCs into India’s rising economy on mutually beneficial terms. However, this has been hindered by the fears of Indian interference in the domestic politics of these countries, and lack of initiative on the part of India. Intraregional investment therefore remains less than one percent as no agreement has been negotiated for the same. Financial cooperation in the form of multilateral financing agencies, such as the vision for a South Asian Development Bank, has also seen slow progress.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The SAARC’s trade liberalization programme has been partially successful, in that intraregional trade has shown a steady, if slow, improvement. It increased fourfold between 1990 and 2000, and is expected to increase by 1.6 times when all tariffs are removed. The SAARC must, therefore, prioritize the removal of all bottlenecks, which impede the full implementation of these measures. South Asia is characterized by the historical baggage of conflict and mistrust, as well as being socially, economically and politically heterogeneous. Added to this is India’s presence as the largest country in the region, and its economic and military might, which make smaller nations wary of India’s dominant role in setting the agenda for the region.

The SAARC’s focus must then be on ensuring that policies enabling integration are informed by the unique characteristics of South Asia’s political economy. Policy undertaken to facilitate integration should clearly spell out what each country is to gain from integration, as well as how security concerns of hostile nations are to be addressed, in order to create a win-win situation.

All regional integration arrangements must clearly spell out the preferential treatment to Least Developed Countries, so that they are not unfairly discriminated in the process of economic integration. Allowing the SAARC’s agenda to be hijacked by political tensions will lead to lack of political will in addressing the challenges to economic cooperation.



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Conclusion and Recommendations *contd...*

One way to address this is to allow the increasingly important private sector in South Asian countries to lead the discussions on improving bi/multilateral cooperation. Strong linkages between enterprises in these countries, acting as a pressure group, will push the political leadership into negotiating policies that are favourable for businesses. Trade facilitation measures for achieving the full implementation of the SAFTA and paving the way for progressive integration must be the primary focus.

The negative effects of NTBs can be avoided by creating a transparent system with uniform standards in the region. Standard certificates issued by the exporting country should be accepted by the importing country. Special testing laboratories must be made available at border regions to avoid delays. Border warehouses will improve trade in perishable items, which constitute 1/3rd of intraregional trade. All countries should follow a single set of mutually agreed customs procedures, rather than an arbitrary model. Efforts must be undertaken to build the capacity of small and medium enterprises in smaller nations to meet export standards in order to allow them to benefit from trade.

Regional transport and communication links must be improved through investment in cross border infrastructure and trade-transit agreements between countries. The disincentive to invest in infrastructure can be addressed by creating a transport network across countries that have a free trade agreement in place. This will increase the traffic along these routes. Private sector investment can be sought on such projects as they will yield high profits, and can be engaged in a Build-Operate-Transfer model. Trade is affected when one country's infrastructure is less developed than its trading partner. It is necessary to harness funding by setting up regional multilateral financing institutions in order to synchronize infrastructure standards across countries. Trade facilitation through the creation of trade-transit agreements should be undertaken on an urgent basis. Efficiency at the level of border authorities will simplify cross border transit and will complement improved connectivity.

Trade, financial cooperation, and investment reinforce one another and must be undertaken simultaneously. The SAFTA must be complemented with agreements in investment and financial cooperation in order to make it more feasible. It has been repeatedly proven in international relations that the benefits derived from economic cooperation outweigh the domestic nationalist in hostile states. Integration is possible when participant states view it as an opportunity, rather than a threat.

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HỘI AN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKYOUNG CHA

Hội An, formerly known as Fai-Fo or Faifoo, is a city with a population of approximately 120,000 in Vietnam's Quảng Nam Province and noted since 1999 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Old Town Hội An, the city's historic district, is recognized as an exceptionally well-preserved example of a South-East Asian trading port dating from the 15th to the 19th century, its buildings and street plan reflecting a unique blend of influences, indigenous and foreign.



The ubiquitous Cyclo – cycle rickshaw – a Franco-Vietnamese term. The cyclo is a three-wheel bicycle taxi that appeared in Vietnam during the French colonial period.



Twilight sets in on Hội An.



Bán hàng rong, street vendors, wearing the leaf hat called nón lá.



Bánh bột lọc is a small, clear-looking, chewy tapioca dumpling in Vietnamese cuisine that can be eaten as an appetizer or small snack. It is usually filled with shrimp and pork belly, often being topped with fried shallots and served with sweet chili fish sauce.



Bánh xèo, literally “sizzling cake”, named for the loud sizzling sound it makes when the rice batter is poured into the hot skillet. It is a Vietnamese savory fried pancake made of rice flour, water, turmeric powder, stuffed with slivers of fatty pork, shrimp, diced green onion, and bean sprouts.



Bán hàng rong, street vendors, wearing the leaf hat called nón lá.



Bán hàng rong, street vendors, wearing the leaf hat called nón lá.



A standard of the street in Hội An is 'thit nuong'. This consists of grilled skewers of meat, some herbs and greens, and a few rice paper wrappers to roll it all up in.



Cao lầu is a regional Vietnamese dish made with noodles, pork, and local greens, that is found only in the town of Hội An.



Japanese Bridge (Chua Cau) - Legend has it that the bridge was built in Hội An as a weapon of ancient people to deter the monster Mamazu, which has its head in India, its tail in Japan and its back in Vietnam, from causing earthquakes and other calamities. In fact, it was constructed by the Japanese trading community in 1593 to connect them with the Chinese area on the other side of a small stream.



The tradition to decorate the ancient town in Hội An with multi-colored lanterns, started three centuries ago, and is still continued today on Tets (new year) and the fourteenth night of each lunar month.



"I believe Gandhi is the only person who knew about real democracy – not democracy as the right to go and buy what you want, but democracy as the responsibility to be accountable to everyone around you. Democracy begins with freedom from hunger, freedom from unemployment, freedom from fear, and freedom from hatred. To me, those are the real freedoms on the basis of which good human societies are based." — [Vandana Shiva](#)

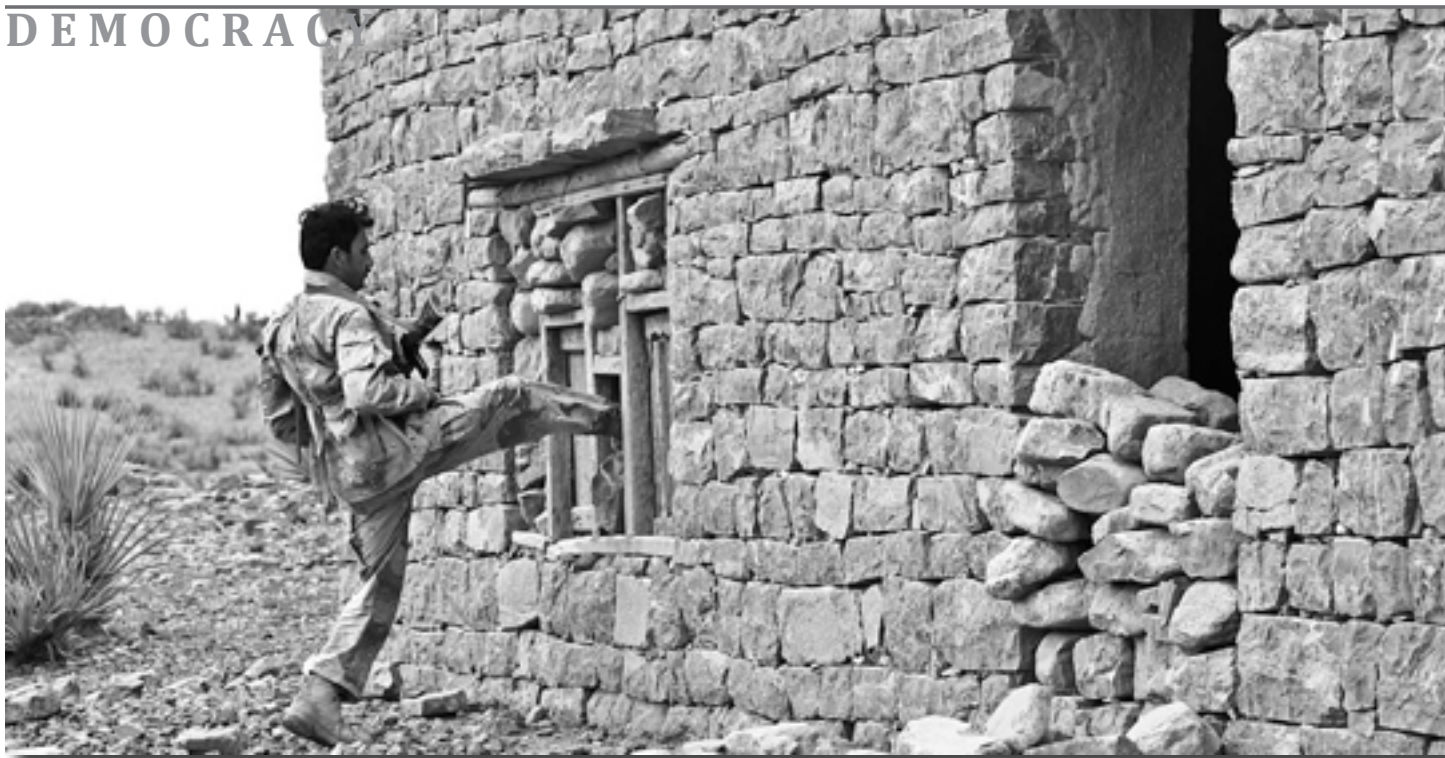
Us, Them and Democracy

The blood of innocent civilians continues to flow down gutters of countries afflicted by the insidious by-product of capitalism - *democracy pre-packed for the masses* - while the media takes sides. Governments that claim to possess democratic ideals are leading the pack of perpetrating and perpetuating war, thus ensuring that violence continues as there is much money to be made in the slaughter. They are backed by transnational corporations that act as grim reapers harvesting the rewards from peddling arms, drugs for medicinal and other purposes, genetically modified agricultural products etc. under the garb of 'promoting a better way of life' by forcefully introducing alien cultures to 'our values' (whatever this means) in order to achieve economic colonisation. Countries that resist such overtures often face an onslaught of abuse like disinformation by a paid media. This is usually followed by various forms of political and economic actions, overt and covert with disastrous effect.

What is more dangerous – a benign dictator or a transnational corporation aka stateless entity that works with democratic governments to undermine the basic structures of societies, to remould them into subservient objects for profit?

Today we witness politicians expressing an urgent need to take democracy to the peoples of other countries while at the same time building more prisons to incarcerate their citizens, enacting laws for invasive surveillance that infringe basic rights and curtail civil liberties with the excuse that *The State* is susceptible to imminent security threats?





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Sometime ago I watched a TV programme that discussed the issue of taking democracy to countries that were deemed to be 'undemocratic', whatever this means. Of course the list of the usual suspects was called out much to the delight of muslim baiters in the audience. When the uncouth display by these zealots was firmly put down by the moderator, sanity returned. The discussion veered from the unnatural borders of countries (an ugly inheritance from the colonial days) to imposition of alien cultural values on a country in the form of democratic processes couched in the insistence that individual rights is paramount to being free... free being the operative word here. This word has been used threadbare and has now lost its meaning.

What is democracy? What does it represent? Does it represent a culture? Or, is it a utopian concept that is still being tried and tested in the bloody cycle of wars? And can *one size fits all* work in a multi-cultural world where thousands of communities survive in hierarchical social setups that have stood the test of time; until of course when confronted by alien notions of right and wrong, which is usually promoted by extremists of one religion or another.

Did the aborigines need democracy before their land was occupied and their vibrant ethos dismantled by those seeking to civilise the 'natives', to set them free from the bondage of their culture?

Did the Native American Indians need democracy before settlers took over their lands and put them into reservations like animals?

One suspects that those who shout from the rooftops about democratic ideals are the ones who perpetrate a fraud on humanity. For they use this banner to infiltrate and destroy ancient societies. Democracy, as one sees it, cannot be 'imposed' because it threatens the core social values within close knit communities where each member of the group has a function or job to serve the community as a whole, like bees that work in tandem to collect honey and build a hive.

World leaders that peddle democracy can themselves be accused of using it as a sword to dismember nations, to bring down legally elected representatives of the people and to create confusion for narrow plutocratic objectives. Their brothers in arms are a burgeoning new brand of self-appointed gendarmes for human rights, many of whom have agendas to spread disinformation about a people or country so as to internationally discredit either or both for the purpose of self-profit. Following them closely are the rabid dogs of the *merchants* of democracy whose sole aim is to bring the targeted country under their control for economic benefit and in some cases, for political or religious reasons.



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How often do we hear such utterances – 'they are a threat to the civilised world' (civilised being the operative word here).

Major human rights violations are on the rise in the world's democracies. Such news is generally non-news for the *presstitutes*. For instance, the Occupy Movement was criminally shutdown by democratic states because it represented democratic ideals - to protest against an elected government's criminal actions and/or inactions. This defeats the very purpose of democracy.

Democracy is the consent by the majority of the populace on matters related to the social contract and it has to be *in sync* with the aspirations of all those concerned. Every member/citizen is a shareholder in a democracy.

Such a situation does not exist. However, democracy is a *profitable* idea for *us*, not them.

Here is a quote on democracy from Mahatma Gandhi that sums it up: "*What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or in the holy name of liberty or democracy?*"

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



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The Battle of Cable Street

The Bourgeoisie is a Hydra not a cockroach.



Leaflet produced by the London Communist Party urging people to participate in an anti-fascist demonstration on October 4, 1936, in London's Trafalgar Square. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

It is now eighty years since The Battle of Cable Street on October 4th 1936 when a Communist and ILP mass of about twenty thousand forced Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) off the streets of the East End. It was a great, but organised fight with strategic placements, barricades and worked-out rushes at the police, standing between the BUF blackshirts and the angry, but politically motivated East End working class. The organisation of the anti-fascists was hardly surprising, as not because they outnumbered the some 5000 fascist and some 6000 police, but because nearly every man over the age of 36 had fought in the trenches during the First World War and understood the military basics of attack and defence.

Energy and commitment are great, but energy, commitment, experience and expertise work much better.

Anyone who wants to read of the sheer verve and vigour of the day, should get hold of a copy of the communist Phil Piratin's "Our Flag Stays Red", and there are other tremendous communist eyewitness and participant accounts.

All of these accounts bring to mind, William Wordsworth's famous lines on the French Revolution

*Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heavenⁱ*

But though the Battle of Cable St was a very visible demonstration of Communist power and influence in the East End and the euphoria around it at the time and the continuing interest today is understandable; and while the Battle of Cable Street should obviously be celebrated, it also has to be understood that it was a victorious battle, not a victorious war and not all its repercussions were favourable to the Communist movement.

After the blackshirts were forced off the East End streets, they continued to hold meetings which attracted large audiences in Stepney, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green and Stoke Newington. And Special Branch reported that the membership of the British Union of Fascists now actually increased some 2000,ⁱⁱ and there is no doubt, that if the Red Army had not defeated the Nazis and the now unimaginable had happened, the BUF could easily have reappeared in strength, rather than as it actually did in 1948, as Mosley's new *Union Movement*, demanding a United Europe with no immigration. A political potage which attracted no attention from a post-war population interested in housing, the new NHS and nationalisation.

In 1936 it was not necessary to get police or local authority permission before staging a march or demonstration, but on October 2nd, two days before the B.U.F. march, a delegation from the "Jewish People's Council (Against fascism and Anti-Semitism)" went to the Home Secretary, Sir John Simonⁱⁱⁱ with a petition containing 100,000 signatures asking for the march to be banned as it would inevitably cause a "breach of the peace."

The Jewish People's Council was an ephemeral working class organisation, not be confused with the elite British Board of Deputies (BBD) but while the BBD position of avoiding direct confrontation with the fascists has been criticised, it was not inactive.^{iv}

The cost of policing fascist marches had actually become an issue in several towns that summer, yet Sir John had left instructions for any delegation demanding a ban on the march to be ignored and for the BUF march in the East End to go ahead. Arguably, Sir John did not care if fascists and communists battered each other to pieces, but he also had an agenda, Letting the march go ahead and a battle to take place between fascist and anti-fascists would allow the government to introduce a public order bill, which would restrict the free speech and right to demonstrate of communists as much as fascists, even more so if the police were biased.

Nor was it isolated from the Communist opponents of fascism. If nothing else the current president of the British Board of Deputies, Neville Laski was a brother-in-law of Jack Gaster, one of the two post war communist members of the London County Council (LCC).

*

On October 2nd, a senior civil servant^{vi}, spoke to the Jewish People’s Council delegation as Sir John was away in Scotland where he had delivered a speech, equating communism with fascism,

“..... Communism and Fascism..... are both foreign products. However much they denounce each other, the Communists and Fascists have one aim in common—to get rid of democratic self-government in favour of a dictatorship”.^v

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The moment the Battle of Cable Street was over, Sir John had the General Secretary of the Trades Union Council and arch anti-communist Sir Walter Citrine^{vii} on side; Citrine had been general secretary at the time of the General Strike and in 1927 had written the opus, *Democracy or Disruption – An Examination of Communist Influences in the Trade Unions*. Citrine would successfully sue the *Daily Worker* for libel in April 1940. The judge^{viii} would take time to praise him for strengthening non-Communist unions around the world, especially in the West Indies. Sir John Simon also gained the important support of Herbert Morrison^{ix} current head of the London County Council. Later as Home Secretary during the wartime coalition government, Morrison would ban the *Daily Worker*^x

Morrison’s anti-communism was as visceral as Citrine’s; and with no effective opposition from within the “Labour movement” the Public Order Act 1936 had no problem passing both houses. It received Royal Assent on 18th December 1936.

In 1936, the government of Stanley Baldwin had really looking for an excuse to introduce and impose a draconian Public Order Act. They seized on the opportunity presented by the Battle of Cable Street, but if the anti-fascists had taken the advice of the British Board of Deputies (and the Quakers) and just stayed indoors while the fascists marched past, the government would surely have found some other pretext to introduce a Public Order Act. This is not a call to inaction, but a call to recognise that while some glorious battles have been fought and won, victory is not yet ours.

Most historical attention has been given to the banning of political uniforms, but just as important was the prohibition of organised training in military techniques and the imposition for the first time in British history of the need to get prior permission to march and demonstrate. Previously demonstrations could only be stopped if and when they had become tumultuous and violent; and only when the *Riot Act* had been read and people given time to disperse (that was the theory, though clearly, as at Peterloo in 1819, Coldbath Fields 1833 theory was not always carried out in practice.

Even so the new legal requirement for prior permission to assemble and demonstrate was an enormous abrogation of traditional civil liberties, so were the new restrictions on free speech, which might lead to a breach of the peace

And as might be expected and no doubt intended, The Public Order Act 1936 has been used far more extensively against the left than the right, including against flying pickets during the 1984/5.

In 1936, the government of Stanley Baldwin had really looking for an excuse to introduce and impose a draconian Public Order Act. They seized on the opportunity presented by the Battle of Cable Street, but if the anti-fascists had taken the advice of the British Board of Deputies (and the Quakers) and just stayed indoors while the fascists marched past, the government would surely have found some other pretext to introduce a Public Order Act. This is not a call to inaction, but a call to recognise that while some glorious battles have been fought and won, victory is not yet ours.

The bourgeoisie is a Hydra not a cockroach.

i French Revolution by William Wordsworth 1805, he later turned against revolution.
ii Hurrah for the Blackshirts, Fascists and Fascism between the Wars by Martin Pugh, Jonathan Cape 2005
iii Sir John Simon 1873-1954
iv See British Fascism and anti-Semitism and Jewish responses by Daniel Tilles, Bloomsbury 2014
v Neville Laski (1890-1869) married Phina Emily Gaster .sister of Jack Gaster (1907-2007)Laski was president of the British Board of Deputies from 1933-1939
vi Sir Alexander Maxwell (1880-1963)
vii Sir Walter Citrine 1887-1983, gen sec of TUC 1926-1945
viii Mr Justice Stable
ix Herbert Morrison (1888-1965)
x Banned on January 21 1941. The ban lasted for eighteen months

Patrick Sakyi is a bright young man with lots of vision and commitment to smallholder farmers in Ghana. He works as a monitoring & evaluation associate with Farmerline, a social enterprise which builds innovative data collection platforms & mobile applications to improve information access for smallholder farmers in Ghana and other African countries. He has written this fascinating article about his boyhood farming and rural experience in Ghana and looking to the future for smallholder farmers there.



PATRICK SAKYI

FARMING LIFE IN GHANA AND THE RURAL EXPERIENCE



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Story highlights

Growing up on the farm, in the rural area, provides a unique life experience. You learn many life skills and lessons. It can be exciting but there are times that it can be challenging as well. "I didn't think much of these rural experiences at the time, but I have begun to appreciate them lately in my work and life. Anytime I step on the farm, I become like a child again"

Introduction

I live in Kumasi, Ghana and I work with a social enterprise that serves the needs of smallholder farmers to turn them into successful entrepreneurs. I like the city for its greenery and moderate cost of living. Kumasi is a big city with about 1.17m inhabitants and I have lived here for almost 9yrs. But this is not where I grew up. When I meet people and tell them that I grew up on a farm, in a rural area, they hardly believed me. This happened so much that I stopped talking about it. But recently, my conversations with some colleagues about my childhood made me realize that I had a lot to share about my experiences growing up on the farm. Hence I went down memory lane and put together this piece as a way of sharing my experiences.

Family business and the need for education

My dad was a cocoa farmer. My mom was a trader and cocoa farmer as well. She bought maize, oranges, plantain and avocados from several farmers in neighbouring villages and sent the produce to a big market at Mankesim in the Central region to be sold. I have five siblings and I am the sixth (2 brothers and 3 sisters). Right from birth until I was seven years old, I lived with my parents in the village. Afterwards, my parents had to send me to the city to stay with an aunt. My immediate elder sister, who was 2yrs older than me, had already been staying with the same aunt for about a year. Sending me away at this age was one of the hardest decisions my parents made. My mom kept doubting about her decision until the very last night before she took me away to the city but this was necessary for me to start schooling and to get proper education. Whenever she visited us in the city and we had to say goodbye, there were many tears.



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School holidays and farming: where does the food come from?

While schooling in the city, I returned to the village during every vacation, either short or long, to spend time with my parents. This was a happy moment because my other siblings, living and schooling in different towns with other family, also returned to the village for the vacation. During the school holidays we assisted on the farm. Cocoa farming was my dad's main business but we grew almost all the other food crops that we consumed at home. So at a young age, I knew very well where our food came from. We planted crops such as maize, yam, cocoyam, plantain and vegetables. These provided us with the food we needed all year round. Occasionally, we cultivated rice. We also raised goats, sheep, turkey and chicken. Fruit trees such as mangoes, oranges and avocados were spread all over the cocoa farm. When the fruits were in season, then you never become hungry when you go work on the cocoa farm because there would be plenty of fruits to eat. Since we grew almost all that we consumed, the main items I remember my mom purchased from the market, on her usual trading trips, was salt, bread, dried fish and meat pie.

Learning to earn and save: a step-by-step guide

I learned how to earn money and save in order to buy what I wanted. I did this by growing plantain in our backyard garden. For the plantain to grow well and yield good bunches, it required a good soil rich in nutrients. So I was taught to add animal droppings and decayed plant leaves into the soil as organic manure to improve its nutrients. When the plantain matured, I harvested and my mom would sell on one of her several trading trips to the market at Mankesim. My siblings and I also went to the bush in search of black pepper (*Piper guineense*) for sale. It is a vine that grows by climbing on tree branches and smaller stems. It could only be found growing in the wild and it was difficult to find but then we knew it was a pricy spice and so worth the search. The spice itself is derived from the dried fruit. So after harvesting the fruits, we dried it in the hot sun for about two weeks. Afterwards we measured the quantity with a standard tin or bowl and then it was sold at the market by my mom. With my savings I bought additional clothes or shoes for Christmas.

The homestead, canoeing and fishing: I smell water from here

Our village was a small one and I think it will be best described as a homestead. There were five separate families residing in there. So I can only count five separate buildings. It is located in the Central region of Ghana. The near towns were Assin Kushea and Assin Ahyiresu Donkorkrom which were 5.3km and 3.2km from the village, respectively. These towns were only reachable through walking. The village was situated near a river called the *Prah* River. The distance from the village to the river was just about 70meters. At age eight, I could already ride a canoe on the river.



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The canoe was a small dug out boat with no motor on it. My dad carved it out of the trunk of hardwood. The carving was an art. It required a lot of skill and precision. I accompanied my dad and my elder brothers to fish in the river. Of course, I was always excited to be the one riding the canoe. I so liked canoeing that, my dad and other adults would try to sneak away most of the time when they were going to the riverside because they feared I would follow them in case I noticed them going there. Fishing required experience, good equipment, planning and patience. The equipment we used were fishing nets, specially woven basket and occasionally a long line with several hooks on it. Fishing required patience in the sense that we set the traps in the water in the evening and then went back to next day to check on the traps if we were successful with a catch. The common catch we made were tilapia, prawns and catfish. I liked going to the river and enjoyed being at the waterfront. After everyday's work on the farm, we had plenty of time to do what we wanted. We either went hunting or we went swimming.

Board games and storytelling: what has it got to do with the wisdom pot?

In the evenings, after dinner, we played board games. The common games we played included ludo, cards and *oware*. On other nights, we sat in a circle around a warm fire and told stories, the popular *Ananse* stories (stories that portray the spider, *Ananse*, as a witty or cunning character as it could get). These story telling moments expanded our imagination and it was also a way for adults, including our parents, to pass on important life lessons to the children in the form of storytelling. The stories were colourful and varied from drama to tragedy to comedy. I'm sure most Ghanaians will be able to remember at least, one *Ananse* story or tell you their favourite one. Ananse story that explains a phenomenon and teaches kids to share and not to be selfish goes like this:

Once upon a time, Ananse became concerned about all the wisdom there was in the world. So he gathered all of it into a pot and covered it. Already he was clever in order to do this. He didn't find it safe to keep the pot of wisdom in his room so he decided to go hide it on the tallest tree in the forest so that he will become the wisest person on earth. On his way to the forest, his son, Ntikuma, noticed him so, followed his dad secretly to see what he was up to. Ananse found the tallest tree in the forest and he begun to climb it. The pot was big and heavy so he tied it in front of him while climbing but this became difficult and more difficult as he climbed because the pot was in his way. Ntikuma, watching from a distance and seeing his dad struggle, started to laugh at the sight of Ananse. He shouted "dad, why don't you tie the pot behind you? It will be easier to climb". Upon hearing this, Ananse paused. He quickly realized that he had failed in his attempt to gather all the wisdom in the world so he became annoyed with himself. He untied the pot and let it slip. As it smashed on the ground, the wisdom spread as it was carried with the wind and that is why there is a bit of it everywhere in the world.



Photograph by Patrick Sakyi

Christmas trees and treats

My favourite occasion was Christmas. Christmas was such a special occasion in the village. On every 24th December, Christmas Eve, we made our Christmas tree. The tree was made from palm fronds. The leaves were woven together and the top parts were connected to form an arch. It was then decorated with fresh and colourful flowers. The tree was placed at the main entrance to the village. So anybody who came to the village walked through the arch before entering the village. On the Christmas day we wore our beautiful clothes and ate nice food prepared by my mom. At the time rice was a delicacy and was prepared during special occasions including Christmas. Kids move in groups from one village to another visiting several villages in to collect Christmas presents. Presents varied from money to food and drinks. Oh, and the Piccadilly biscuits. This was awesome because there were enough cookies for every kid who visited the village. At least, everybody gets a handful of Picadillies!

Rural novelty: distillation and saponification

Life in the village can be industrious. We didn't have to buy soap in the village since we made our own. I learned how to make soap, from cocoa husks and palm oil, at an early age. I would later come to learn about this in school, in science class, as a process called saponification. Through my dad, I also learned how to brew our local alcoholic gin made from palm wine, which I later learned in school was through a process called distillation. The brewing of alcohol was just another source of income for my dad. Surprisingly, he did not drink. He had a way of testing the quality of the gin without even having to taste it.

Information and communication technology in agriculture (ICT4Ag)

I didn't think much of these rural experiences at the time, but I have begun to appreciate them lately in my work and life. As a frontline staff of a social enterprise working in Ghana, my work brings me to the rural areas almost every week to interact with farmers. The proliferation of mobile phones and their use in agriculture is vastly changing the way farmers communicate and access information and other beneficial services. With innovative services running on mobile phones, my dad could have received weather forecast everyday for him to plan his daily farm activities or seasonal forecast to know when and what staple crops to plant. Similarly, he could also have sought for best farm management practices advice whenever he had challenges on the farm without necessarily traveling long distances to seek the same information. Mobile Money is another great innovation.



<https://pixabay.com/en/>

It is an electronic wallet service that allows users to send and receive money using their mobile phones. Easy and fast transaction, huh!! With its access extending to many places in rural areas, people won't have to travel far distances in order to conduct financial transactions. But how do we ensure that such important mobile services reach the people, especially the farmers in the rural areas, who need it most? I believe that tested and proven innovations will need support to scale in order to make it accessible and affordable to most farmers in rural settings whose incomes tend to be small and seasonal. This should be combined with more awareness creation and training of the users to improve their capacity to utilize these services. Such innovations and other locally adapted information and communication technologies (ICTs) would be important to attracting the youth into agriculture, improving agriculture productivity, decision-making and reducing youth unemployment.

Challenges

Farm life, in rural Ghana, was exciting but there were times that it was challenging as well. Access to a health facility, a school and transportation were difficult. One of the moments I disliked most was when I felt sick. Actually, this was the moment I received the most attention or care but I still didn't like it because I knew very well that the nearest hospital was at Assin Kushea, 5.3km walking distance away from the village. When I felt sick, my mom would walk with me there to get medical treatment. After seeing the doctor, we had to walk back to the village. This was exhausting. Similarly, when I started schooling in the village at 6yrs, I had to walk 3.2km to reach the school and walk back the same distance after school. Transportation was a challenge. There were no motorable roads to the village so no cars could access the community. Hence, walking long distances was the only option to reach a hospital or a school. This was the reason why my parents had to send me to city at an early age in order to get the best of education.

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Your dreams are the place of Intuition. You receive symbolic images, messages and gain ideas and receive answers to your questions. You have access to the whole collective unconscious. Whether you remember them or not, you have between seven to nine dreams per night.



7 STEPS TO INTUITIVE HEALING

When you hear the words intuitive healing, what comes to mind? Many people are searching today for information, healing, and guidance. Although, I am an intuitive healer and reader, my focus is empowering others to use their own intuitive abilities.

Intuitive healing can happen on many levels. You can receive a healing on a spiritual, mental, emotional or physical level. These levels are all related, but illness begins in the etheric field (the energetic field around the body) before it happens on the physical level. Therefore it is important to take steps to heal on all levels.

Intuitive healing has a deep connection to the heart. You have a gentle, loving voice inside that guides you. This voice is a quiet voice and does not fight with or try to overcome the voice of the ego or the other voices within. Often we carry within a voice of a parent or authority figure. In psychology this is called an interject. It is important to discern between the voice that is coming from your intuition and the others.

Some refer to this inner voice as their Higher Self, their Guardian Angel, their Internal Coach or many other names. Whatever you call it is fine. Just know you are a reflection of the Divine and this voice is your connection to your own Divine Light. This Intuitive Voice is quiet and it guides you in many ways. It can also work with your intellectual or analytic mind when you are able to calm the constant mind chatter. The Intuitive Voice has access to Oneness and when you learn to hear and understand, you will begin to feel peace.

These seven steps can help you to be guided by your Intuitive Voice and create healing on all levels of your being. You cannot increase your intuition with your mind, but can access it through your heart. You must allow it to happen through ongoing gentle practice. Use the tools daily and validate your experience of Intuitive Healing.



There are several ways to begin to hear your Intuitive Voice and to heal yourself on many levels.

Step 1. Be Still

Take time several times a day to stop and close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Scan your body from the top of your head down to your toes and just notice. Pay attention to any sensations and just notice. Be present in your body. Your body feels safe and you heal when you are consciously present in your body.

2. Allow Yourself to Fall into Trance

You have a natural ability to heal and come into balance when you allow yourself to fall into trance. Just as when you dream, you have “ultradian rhythms” while you are awake. You may notice yourself falling into trance when you are at a stop sign or when you are washing dishes. This daydreaming or spacing out regulates your mind and body and allows you to access your Intuitive Voice without effort. Honor the natural rhythm of your body. This is a vital part of self-healing.

Step 3. Notice Your Beliefs and Self-talk

Your beliefs are attitudes, viewpoints, ideas, thoughts, values, perceptions and more. They are not the truth, but how you organize your view to make sense of the world and give it meaning. Notice your beliefs and what beliefs hold you back from having your desired life. Notice your self-talk. When your self-talk and beliefs are negative your whole mind/body/spirit responds with a loss of energy and you attract to yourself negative life experiences. You can increase positive beliefs and self-talk and allow yourself to be more open to hearing your Intuitive Voice and receiving healing on all levels.

Step 4. Listen with Your Body

Your body is an incredible intuitive receiver. In order to heal fully and receive intuitive messages, you need to be awareness of and listen to your. Your intuition can come through images, dreams, sounds, gut feelings, a sense of knowing, hearing or sensing. In the beginning, it is common to receive messages through your gut feeling. Once this happens ask yourself “what does this mean?” You may or may not get an answer, but it is important to use your gut as a tool. If you begin to do something and your gut alerts you, know it has to do with what you were doing or thinking. Last week I was going to go downtown Spokane and have dinner, a movie and listen to a friend play music. As I began to get ready I felt a sense of alertness and I heard a voice inside my head saying the word “alarm!” I had no idea what was happening, but the sense of alarm would not stop. Having had many experiences with my intuition, I knew to listen. I made the decision to stay home that night and the alarm ceased. Now, I could try to guess at what might have happened, but instead, I just affirmed myself for listening and went on. The more you listen to your Intuitive Voice, the more it shows up for you and the easier it is to hear.

Step 5: Access Your Self-Healing Energy

We all have subtle energy around us and we can use this energy to heal. Have you ever stubbed your toe and noticed when you put your hand on your toe it felt better. When you have been in pain has the healing touch of a loved one made a difference. You have this natural healing energy within you and you are a powerful healer. Tap into your body’s subtle energy and feel the energy in your hands when you put them on a loved one. You are surrounded by a colorful energy field that comes from the chakras in the center of your body. Take a moment to rub your hands together and then put them together palm to palm. Pull them away from each other gently and feel the powerful energy you have in your hands. This is your healing energy. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes.

Step 6: Practice Accessing Your Intuition

The best ways to access your intuition are through Meditation and through Viewing. With meditation you are able to quiet your mind and allow your Intuitive Voice to come through. This can happen either during the meditation or you can journal for a few minutes afterward and just let your intuition come through. Another way is to View. Viewing can be by being in your heart or the center of your head and imaging a white screen. On the screen allow yourself to see images and when they appear you can ask what they mean and just receive. You can also use Remote Viewing where you close your eyes and you can move through time and space. You can go into the past, the present or into the future. With remote viewing you can see someone at a great distance. This is often used by medical intuitives to help diagnose illness.

Step 7: Listen to Your Dreams

Your dreams are the place of Intuition. You receive symbolic images, messages and gain ideas and receive answers to your questions. You have access to the whole collective unconscious. Whether you remember them or not, you have between seven to nine dreams per night. This is during the REM state, where you have access to information and healing you cannot access in the daytime. Your dreams are a way that your Intuitive Self communicates with you! When you begin to honor your dreams and listen, they will show up for you more fully and guide you. There are many guides to dream work, and what I recommend is Realities of the Dreaming Mind by Sivananda Swami Radha (2004). It is helpful to have paper and pen by your bed to collect your dreams as soon as you awake. They tend to fly away until you train yourself to catch them.

These seven steps can help you to be guided by your Intuitive Voice and create healing on all levels of your being. You cannot increase your intuition with your mind, but can access it through your heart. You must allow it to happen through ongoing gentle practice. Use the tools daily and validate your experience of Intuitive Healing.

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SIMIT KEBABI; GROUND MEAT AND BULGUR KEBABS, GAZIANTEP STYLE

This delicious ground (minced) meat and bulgur kebab called Simit Kebabi, hails from Gaziantep, considered as one of the gastronomic capitals of Turkey. Fine bulgur is referred as Simit in Gaziantep and that's where the kebab's name come from (Simit is also the name of the popular Turkish street food, the sesame coated bread rings). Bulgur is an important ingredient in southern Turkish cooking; it appears in pilafs, mezzes like Icli Kofte, soups and in kebabs. Fine bulgur brings a wonderful texture and taste to this kebab, fragrantly spiced with cumin, red pepper flakes and dried mint. If you can't find fine bulgur, you can ground the coarse bulgur in food processor in a couple of pulses; take care not to ground too much and turn the bulgur into fine powder.

It is important to have some fat content in the meat mixture for this kebab; traditionally, tail fat is included in this kebab in Gaziantep. The ustas, masters in Gaziantep prepare the ground (minced) meat for the Simit Kebabi, chopping by hand, using a special curved-bladed knife called Zirh. This method gives the meat a lot of flavor and much better texture; so if you can get your meat hand chopped by the butcher that would be great. If not, use ground lamb or beef with some good fat content in it.

I serve my Simit Kebabi with roasted vegetables and garlic yoghurt by the side. You can wrap the kebab and roasted vegetables with a dollop of garlicky yoghurt, in Turkish flat breads or pita pockets.





Simit Kebabi; Ground (minced meat) and bulgur kebab, Gaziantep Style © Ozlem Warren

Serves: 4

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground (minced) lamb
- 75 gr / 2.6 oz. / ⅓ cup fine bulgur (or coarse bulgur, grounded to fine bulgur in food processor)
- 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 80 ml/ 2.7 fl. oz./ ⅓ cup hot water
- 15 ml/ 3 tsp. red pepper flakes (or a bit less if you prefer less spicy)
- 5 ml/ 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 5 ml / 1 tsp. dried mint
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Bowl of water to shape the simit kebab on skewers
- For the roasted vegetables:
- 2 medium eggplants (aubergines) quartered and sliced
- 1 medium onion, quartered and coarsely chopped
- 1 red bell (or pointy) pepper and 1 green bell (or pointy) pepper, deseeded and cut in chunks
- 60 ml/ 4 tbsp. olive oil
- For the garlicky yoghurt sauce:
- 13 oz. / 1 ½ cup plain whole milk yoghurt
- 1 small clove of garlic, crushed with a pinch of salt and finely chopped

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 200 C/ 400 F
2. Place the fine bulgur in a bowl and pour in the hot water. Combine well and set aside for 10 – 15 minutes for the bulgur to absorb all the water and soften.



Ozlem in the kitchen © Ozlem Warren

3. Place the soften bulgur in a large mixing bowl and stir in the garlic, ground (minced) meat, red pepper flakes, ground cumin and dried mint. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Have a bowl of water by your side. Wet your hands and knead the mixture well for 5 – 8 minutes, until all combined.
4. Wet your hands and take a large lump of the meat mixture – just a bit less than ½ cup and form into a ball. Mold it around and along the skewer, until it is evenly thick. Squeeze and shape the meat gently so that the meat sticks to the skewer. Work meat around and down the skewer while rotating skewer with bottom hand until kebab is ¾” in diameter. Cover the skewered meat in cling film and refrigerate until firm, for about 30 minutes.
5. Now prepare your vegetables. Using a vegetable peeler, peel the eggplants (aubergines) lengthways in zebra stripes. Cut the eggplants lengthways, and then slice about ½ inch thick. Sprinkle some salt over them and leave for about 15 minutes. Squeeze out their moisture with paper towel. On a baking tray, spread the eggplant slices, chopped onions and the colorful peppers. Drizzle 4 tbsp. the olive oil over them and season with salt and black pepper. Coat all the pieces with olive oil and seasoning. Bake in the preheated oven for about for about 35 minutes, until they are chargrilled around the edges.
6. To bake the Simit Kebabi, grease a baking tray and arrange the prepared kebab skewers side by side. Sprinkle 3 tbsp. water over them and place a (heat resistant) bowl of water at the bottom of the oven (this will keep the kebabs moist). Bake the kebabs for 35 – 40 minutes, turning them half way around.
7. You can also grill the kebabs over a medium charcoal fire, turning frequently in the same direction. Or you can grill kebabs on hottest part of grill, turning as needed, until slightly charred and cooked through, for 12-15 minutes.
8. To make garlicky yoghurt; crush a small garlic clove with salt and chop finely. Stir in to the yoghurt and combine well.
9. Serve the Simit Kebab hot, along with the roasted vegetables, garlicky yoghurt and flat breads. You can wrap the kebab and roasted vegetables with a dollop of garlicky yoghurt, in Turkish flat breads or pita pockets too.

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