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Inequalities of Aid & Neo-colonialism

Elizabeth Harrop



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The Politics and inequalities of foreign aid

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Elizabeth is a freelance writer, poet and artist specialising in human rights advocacy, with a particular interest in the rights of women and children who has worked for many international organisations including Amnesty International and UNICEF, and has worked in a number of countries, where she has spoken with the victims of human trafficking. The subjects Elizabeth has worked and written on include inter-country adoption; legal reform; maternal and infant health; the sexualisation of children; and war propaganda. www.libertyandhumanity.com



An Incongruous UN Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul

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David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter; occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications.



CPI-Maoist's continuing potency

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr. Routray served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Govt of India, Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Research Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia.



The Anger of the White Man in the Age of Terrorism

Joana Stella Kompa

Born in Germany, Joana Stella Kompa has lived for the past 25 years in various cultures of Asia. She studied Journalism, New English Literature and Normative Ethics at Tübingen University as well as Philosophy of Mind and Theory of Knowledge at Oxford University. Joana worked as a consultant for Problem-Based Learning, Senior Lecturer and Program Director for Media Design at Temasek Polytechnic (Singapore) and Raffles International College (Bangkok). She is a graduate student M(Sc) of Applied Psychology at Liverpool University. www.joanastellakompa.com



Academics and practitioners: bringing together our strengths

Dr Philippa Smales

Dr Smales is the Network and Partnerships Manager for the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network, which is currently hosted within the office of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). She has previously worked in several regional NGOs based in both Thailand and Australia, focusing mainly on Asia and the Pacific. She also previously lectured Business Ethics at RMIT while completing her PhD at the Centre of Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE) at the University of Melbourne.



Inside Bali

Mark I Chaves

Mark is a freelance writer and photographer based in Bali, Indonesia. He is an active contributor for [diaforlife](http://diaforlife.com), inbali.org, and [balipedia](http://balipedia.com). Follow Mark's photography portfolio on [tumblr](http://tumblr.com/marklchaves) and [eyeem](http://eyeem.com/marklchaves). <http://marklchaves.com>

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Expanding Chinese Infrastructure on the Indian border

Jhinuk Chowdhury

Chowdhury is an India based independent journalist. She has written extensively on South Asia and India-China relations. Jhinuk has been a regular op-ed contributor to Russia Today, The Diplomat (Sri Lanka, India's Ocean diplomacy, Modi's Kashmir strategy, India's ICBM strategy, SAARC) etc. With an overall experience of about 12 years, Jhinuk is a keen observer of South Asia, China and the BRICS nations. She is a project intern with Mantraya. This Special Report is a part of Mantraya's Borderlands; and China and South Asia projects.)



The way to a cohesive society

Dr Ibolya (Ibi) Losoncz

Ibi is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Australian National University, Regulatory Institutions Network (RegNet). The focus of her research is the interplay between individual and institutional elements of integration and their impact on the resettlement trajectories of humanitarian migrants and their families. Prior to joining RegNet Ibi has been a research analyst with various institutes and government departments.



In or Brexit - two points of view

Dr Greta Sykes and David Morgan

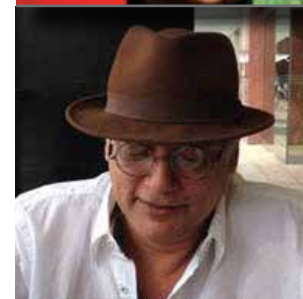
Two opposing points of view on the burning issue of whether Britain should stay in the EU or not. Dr Greta Sykes passionately presents her argument that Britain should remain in the EU; whilst David Morgan dispassionately lays out the facts as to why Britain must exit the arrangement.



Graeme Hamilton - Profile of an Artist

Musician, Vocalist, Composer and Producer

Graeme has had a long and varied career in the music industry. Playing trumpet and keyboards, touring and recording with bands such as Lee Perry, Au pairs, Carmel, FYC, UB40, Al Green, Special Beat and Andy Hamilton. Writing for short films and producing albums as well as composing. He is currently setting up an online record label and recording new material for independent release. naturalmystix@hotmail.com



Lord Mountbatten's tryst in Simla with Ava Aunt

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a free lance journalist and photographer. All this took up nearly three decades. End 2009 he created Live Encounters for the free sharing of knowledge hoping that the 'humane' in humanity still remained albeit scattered around the globe. He hasn't been disappointed. Poets, writers, journalists, students, painters, activists, doctors etc. from across continents have continued to contribute to Live Encounters. This has become a celebration of Life by people of village earth.





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THE POLITICS AND INEQUALITIES OF FOREIGN AID: NEO-COLONIALISM AND NATIONAL INTEREST

Elizabeth Harrop

April 2016 saw the biggest leak of private data in history: 11.5 million documents dubbed the Panama Papers, pointing the way to potential tax evasion by numerous political figures including 12 national leaders, one of whom has since resigned (Iceland's prime minister Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson).

The global tax justice cause received a PR coup, at a time when pressure is mounting to make what is immoral, illegal: the avoidance of tax, to the detriment of States and their populations, and to the benefit of wealthy individuals.

The use of the UK's crown dependencies and overseas territories (CDOTs) as tax havens have led economists to chart "an unrelenting, escalating transfer of wealth, enabled by the offshore system, often from the very poorest to the very richest nations" (Juliette Garside, Guardian).

However this is just one example of how global financial flows are based on inequality and outdated paradigms in which the rich are seen to deserve ever more wealth – a wealth which automatically imbues them with prima facie moral superiority – while the poor are side-lined, marginalised and blamed for their own poverty.



As Duffield explains: “For many, the dangers facing aid workers stem from the politicisation of aid. A root solution would be the disentanglement and distancing of aid agencies from the ideology, practice and aims of liberal interventionism, the public rejection of state funding and the promotion of independent action. It would also involve talking back to Western foreign policy. For an embedded aid industry, this is an impossible political choice”.

Challenging the narrative of foreign aid

Analisa Furia in her book *The Foreign Aid Regime: Gift-Giving, States and Global Dis/Order* outlines two significant and convenient hypocrisies. Firstly, in developed countries domestic poverty is not framed as a matter of development, thus creating an arbitrary separation between types of poverty and the country which owns it. Secondly, there is a failure to frame the poverty of countries receiving aid in the context of international power relations, structural conditions and the detrimental role played by rich countries, thus obscuring the roots of and influences on poverty in developing nations.

This segregation between donor and donee, is exemplified by the now ubiquitous fortified humanitarian aid compound, which “merges into and reproduces the global trend toward social segregation and defensive urban living” (Mark Duffield). Duffield urges that in considering these militarised structures “it is legitimate to ask what sort of impression they make on the public and, not least, those aid beneficiaries that agencies claim to empower and better. In their appearance and intent, these buildings are the very opposite of empowering; they are intimidating structures designed to keep the public out”.

Furthermore, through the use of such highly defended and impenetrable structures, the physical location where international aid meets underdevelopment is “marked as dangerous” reinforcing the notion of *them and us*.

This narrative, of the generous but at-risk benefactor West, and a developing South which is lucky to have the West’s money and (expensive) expertise, through humanitarian and development assistance, needs continually challenging.

However the industry itself is unlikely to take on that role. As Duffield explains: “For many, the dangers facing aid workers stem from the politicisation of aid. A root solution would be the disentanglement and distancing of aid agencies from the ideology, practice and aims of liberal interventionism, the public rejection of state funding and the promotion of independent action. It would also involve talking back to Western foreign policy. For an embedded aid industry, this is an impossible political choice”.

Tax evasion preventing development

In terms of the West as philanthropist, is it really so generous? Perhaps not when you consider that the figures associated with tax evasion are similar to donations made in the Foreign Aid sector.

In 1997, the Economist profiled neo-colonialism in Mozambique, noting that “One, largely unmentioned, reason why Mozambique is getting plenty of foreign aid is that much of the country is not run by Mozambicans... aid now constitutes around 60% of Mozambique's budget... and some 160 foreign aid agencies operate in the country”. The situation for Mozambique got worse before it got better. In 2000 aid was 74% of total government expenditure, falling to 25% in 2016

Net official development assistance (ODA) from the 29 members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) stood at \$131.6 billion in 2015. However according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), there are “an estimated \$100 billion of annual tax revenue losses for developing countries” due to foreign investment channelled through offshore hubs. Indeed ActionAid claims that 98 of 100 of the UK’s biggest companies use tax havens.

The link between tax avoidance and development is obvious according to UNCTAD: “Profit shifting out of developing countries can have a significant negative impact on their prospects for sustainable development”.

Agendas in aid

Meanwhile, back to the question of aid. Overseas interventions have long be dogged by accusations of self-interested political meddling under the guise of do-gooding, typified in 2003 when journalist Robert Fisk famously said of the unfolding Iraq war “Don't tell me America would have invaded Iraq if its chief export was beetroot”.

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Echoing Duffield, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) reported in 2001 on how humanitarian action was becoming increasingly tied to political objectives.

This changing role of humanitarian aid became characterised by “the forced repatriation of refugees, attempts at conflict resolution in conjunction with humanitarian aid, and the withholding of aid to meet political objectives”. Just such a scenario was played out in South Sudan last year, with threats by the USA of UN sanctions unless the August 2015 peace deal was signed.

The main point is there are different kinds of aid which have markedly different results. “Real Aid” in a nutshell, is teaching someone to fish versus giving them fish handouts.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) claims that "UK aid is spent where it is most needed", the presumption being this is where people are the poorest, most marginalised, their human rights most violated. However, a recent project by students from Bath Spa University found that "overall all evidence suggests that the UK government participates in biased aid more than fair practice". The students noted that in 2013, the least developed country in the world, Niger (last out of 186 countries in the Human Development Index 2013), received nothing in bilateral aid.

Agendas in aid *contd...*

ActionAid defines Real Aid as "The kind of aid that helps support dramatic decreases in aid dependence... aid which empowers poor women and men to realise their rights, and reduces inequality. It might do this directly, by supporting smallholder farmers, empowering women or building schools. Or it might do it indirectly, by supporting tax systems, better governance or economic development." And it is worth noting here that supporting tax systems also means reforming the global tax system which keeps poor countries poor.

Real Aid is accountable, transparent, maximises impact and supports developing countries to make their own decisions. ActionAid chimes a warning: "Substandard aid does not do this – and there's still a lot of it out there."

Lack of transparency

Illustrating once more with Mozambique, it is hard to make an assessment of whether aid is effective when a vast proportion of aid does not use government budgetary execution, reporting, procurement, or audit procedures. A report on aid and budget transparency in Mozambique by The Informal Governance Group and Alliance concluded "this makes it all but impossible for the government, parliament or civil society to monitor clearly how this money is being spent. The United States was the largest donor to Mozambique in 2009 but not one dollar of this money was channelled through Mozambican systems".

The report also found that the African Development Bank, the World Bank and Portugal also bypass national systems in Mozambique.

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Meanwhile corrupt governments continue to be the happy recipients of British aid. A 2014 report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) concluded that "DFID recognises corruption as a critical development challenge... (but) has not, however, developed an approach equal to the challenge, nor has it focussed its efforts on the poor. DFID's willingness to engage in programming that explicitly tackles corruption generally is often constrained by political sensitivity in-country". So even if DFID's aid is going "where it is most needed", it is not necessarily impacting those it is intended to assist.

Meanwhile the Republic of Korea (South Korea), had a higher ranking in the 2013 HDI than the UK (the Republic of Korea was ranked 12th, the UK ranked 26th) and is itself a DAC donor, yet it received £1.3 million from DFID. The student's report noted: "With the Republic of Korea making the single largest contribution to the UK goods export growth in 2012, it can lead to the questioning of the morals surrounding UK's aid contribution".

Robert Carter, one of the Bath Spa students, comments: "I agree that we should send money to ex-colonial countries, as we should be responsible for what we have done and the state we have left these countries in. On the other hand, I do question the true reason for giving aid. For example, is the money being sent to a country such as India, one of the biggest recipients of UK Aid, done to assist human development? I feel our government is more interested in the trade deals they get, from things such as defence and arm deals. This is not just seen with the UK but with countries such as the US, France and Germany. It seems to me that what the donor gets in return is more important than aiding human development and reducing poverty."

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A new narrative

Surprisingly perhaps, DFID is not (or rather is no longer) claiming to be unbiased in its aid spending. In its new aid strategy published in November 2015, DFID pledges to tackle "the great global challenges of our age, in order to eliminate poverty and – crucially – also advance the UK's national interest".

Thereby DFID embraces the criticisms of New Humanitarianism, namely the convergence of humanitarian values with the politicised liberal security agenda, and the convergence of humanitarian and development programming, and makes it into a marketing message.

However this new narrative also involves significant private as well as political interests. According to the World Bank, Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are now used in more than 134 developing countries, contributing 15–20 percent of total infrastructure investment.

On 12 May 2016, the UK will convene a global anti-corruption summit, to help transform how the international community tackles corruption. The government has also stated its commitment to invest more in tackling tax evasion and avoidance. However transparency in all global financial transactions, including PPPs and development aid, has to be part of that call to action.

A new narrative *contd...*

Nonetheless, the World Bank Group says expanded use of PPPs are needed to help overcome inadequate infrastructure which constrains economic growth. To give an example from just one donor country, USAID has engaged in 1,600 PPPs worth \$16.5 billion in the period 2000–2014.

However with the rising trend in PPPs, comes rising concern. In February 2016, more than 50 civil society organisations (CSOs) wrote to the World Bank Group to push for more financial transparency around PPPs, citing threats to social and environmental impacts, respect for human rights, and democratic accountability, and macroeconomic problems, including hidden public indebtedness.

A call to action

On 12 May 2016, the UK will convene a global anti-corruption summit, to help transform how the international community tackles corruption. The government has also stated its commitment to invest more in tackling tax evasion and avoidance. However transparency in all global financial transactions, including PPPs and development aid, has to be part of that call to action.

Such timely initiatives are desperately needed to create a new narrative around aid and development in which governments in the developing and developed world, are all culpable partners. And in which transparency is the watchword.

With thanks to Bath Spa University students for inspiring this article:
Elinor Burgess; [Robert Carter](#); [Stephen Dunning](#); Lawrence Evry; Laura Talbot.
Bath Spa [Global Development & Sustainability](#) BSc (Hons).



David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles for the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter, occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications. He is active in the Peace in Kurdistan campaign.



David Morgan

An Incongruous UN Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is planning to open the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit on 23 and 24 May 2016. On the face of it, this seems like an extremely laudable initiative. But it is with a certain amount of disbelief that one learns that, of all the places where it might have been held, this World Humanitarian Summit will be hosted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul. How incongruous is this choice of venue and host.

Of all locations where a prestigious international event like this could be held, Turkey at the present time is among the least suitable of all. There is a civil war raging there which has been launched as a deliberate action by the government of the country. Turkey is at war with its own people. It is systematically destroying all the infrastructure of towns and cities in the southeast region which has a Kurdish majority population. The Kurds are currently being collectively punished for expressing their free political choice at the ballot box in voting for the HDP. The pretext for this military operation is supposedly to eliminate the PKK and weaken its popular support base, which is quite considerable. The way that Erdogan believes he can defeat the PKK once and for all is to take on the entire Kurdish population and, as a result, towns are bombarded, and homes are reduced to rubble, leading to the cruel displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

There is much justice in the repeated claim from Kurds that they are under attack simply for being Kurdish. Whatever the truth of the claim, it is appalling that an international institution like the UN, to which the world looks for impartiality, not only averts its eyes and remains silent while Turkey's latest atrocities continue, but actually lends support to bolster a government that is committing major human rights violations, as Turkey is currently doing.

The world currently faces a humanitarian crisis on a massive scale. That is the prime motive for the UN in holding its forthcoming humanitarian summit. All decent people will of course wholeheartedly concur. Indeed, urgent action needs to be taken at an international level to foster peace, to reduce conflict and to ameliorate the social divisions that are literally tearing countries apart.

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One of the main themes of the planned summit is to be, “Serving the needs of people in conflict”, which alone surely renders it utterly inappropriate for Turkey to be hosting the event given the current humanitarian disaster taking place in cities across the country’s southeast which have been subjected to curfew, bombardment and systematic destruction by Turkish state forces.

As publicity for the coming UN summit states, “In our rapidly changing world, we must continually seek better ways to meet the needs of millions of people affected by conflicts and disasters.”

The conflict that has been unfolding in Turkey’s southeast over the past few months is one such conflict that needs to be brought to a halt urgently and resolved. It is precisely because the Turkish government has chosen an unwinnable military solution to the Kurdish conflict that a humanitarian disaster is now looming in many parts of the country. This protracted conflict makes the location of the forthcoming UN Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul a wholly inappropriate one.

The government headed by President Erdogan has consciously exacerbated a conflict with its Kurdish minority population in reaction to the surprise result of last year’s first national election which saw the pro-Kurdish HDP achieve a historic breakthrough that denied the AKP its political majority. The AKP was left unable to do as it pleases and quickly took action to foment conflict with the Kurds to win back support and marginalise the HDP by smearing it as a mouthpiece for the PKK and as such a front for terrorism.

As a result in Turkey today people are slaughtered as part of a malign state policy that is fanning sectarian conflicts and deepening social tensions. Peace-making has been taken right off the agenda and the whole country is suffering the consequences. It is therefore very hard to understand how the government in Ankara deserves to be rewarded by the great honour of hosting such an important international initiative of the UN.

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This important and timely initiative by the UN Secretary-General will bring together governments, humanitarian organisations, representatives of peoples affected by humanitarian crises and others to develop solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges and set an agenda for future humanitarian action. It seems bizarre to hold such a summit in Turkey while an increasingly bloody confrontation is taking its toll on the country’s population.

The Kurdish people desperately want international action to help resolve their plight but the government headed by President Erdogan is making their lives increasingly intolerable and destroying their communities.

So, at this time when the Turkish state is waging this relentless war against its own people, under the pretext of fighting the PKK, a UN summit on humanitarian action definitely should not take place in Istanbul. It is shocking to discover that the UN seems to need reminding what is taking place in Turkey today. It is a time also when independent Turkish journalists, academics, lawyers and creative artists are harried, intimidated and prosecuted for exercising their legitimate rights to free expression.

His brutal military crackdown on the Kurds means that he is getting away with murder because there has been a deafening silence from the international community as the military operations have been pursued over the past few months. So, at this time when the Turkish state is waging this relentless war against its own people, under the pretext of fighting the PKK, a UN summit on humanitarian action definitely should not take place in Istanbul.

It is shocking to discover that the UN seems to need reminding what is taking place in Turkey today. It is a time also when independent Turkish journalists, academics, lawyers and creative artists are harried, intimidated and prosecuted for exercising their legitimate rights to free expression.

It is a time when basic democratic, political and human rights are under serious assault from an increasingly authoritarian AKP government.

It is a time when the Kurdish people as a whole are collectively targeted and punished mercilessly for alleged support for the PKK.

It is a time when Kurdish men, women, children and old people, are not spared the indiscriminate bombardment by Turkish military operations against their towns and villages; a time, when hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent people have been forced to flee their homes in fear, and are not ever likely to be allowed to return because the government now intends to confiscate their land.

All this suffering is rooted in a sectarian domestic policy, unprecedented in modern times, which is taking Turkey right back to the dark days of the 1990s when martial law, death squads and targeted assassinations were a regular feature of daily life; when political prisoners were detained without a fair trial, when the country was notorious across the world for its torture of political dissidents, when activists simply disappeared and when the bodies of Kurds were ritually mutilated by security forces whose activities were protected by a secretive state that flagrantly snubbed all international human rights standards and norms of legality. In view of the worsening situation inside Turkey, let me strongly urge the UN to reconsider its decision to select Istanbul as the venue for this important event. Please think again even at this late hour.

The UN’s valuable initiative will be seriously undermined and tainted by association with a regime that routinely abuses its powers; a divisive government that poses a threat to democracy, free speech and civil rights; an authoritarian government that has been accused of pursuing a sectarian foreign policy, and one that has even been alleged is an active supporter of Islamic State terrorism in Syria.

Indeed, it is widely alleged in particular that Ankara has been assisting ISIS and its affiliates with the supply of weapons; that it has facilitated illegal trading by ISIS and other Islamist groups that it openly supports like Jabhat al-Nusra; that it is turning a blind eye to ISIS fund raising, permitting the transport and delivery of lethal military equipment across Turkish territory and likewise permitting volunteers to travel through Turkey to join the ranks of ISIS.

Indeed, it is widely alleged in particular that Ankara has been assisting ISIS and its affiliates with the supply of weapons; that it has facilitated illegal trading by ISIS and other Islamist groups that it openly supports like Jabhat al-Nusra; that it is turning a blind eye to ISIS fund raising, permitting the transport and delivery of lethal military equipment across Turkish territory and likewise permitting volunteers to travel through Turkey to join the ranks of ISIS.

There is much more than circumstantial evidence to indicate that Turkey is heavily involved in the ISIS support network and as such these allegations need to be subject to a thoroughgoing, independent investigation. While such question marks hang over Turkey and its record, the policies of the AKP government should give grave cause for concern for the UN and all who uphold freedom and democracy. We therefore genuinely believe that the country at present constitutes a totally unsuitable host for the forthcoming humanitarian summit.

Erdogan has been given credit for providing shelter to millions of refugees but he has manipulated the refugee crisis like a ruthless chess player calculating every move for personal advantage. It is hardly surprising to see how eagerly Chancellor Merkel has jumped into bed with him, it is equally unsurprising to witness the EU dutifully following suit, but it is profoundly worrying to find the UN snuggling up to President Erdogan.

If the summit is held in Istanbul as planned it will only be exploited by Erdogan as fuel for his own well-oiled propaganda machine. It will be interpreted by Turkey's tethered media as a ringing endorsement of Erdogan, the AKP and the increasingly divisive policies it pursues at home and abroad.

In particular, it will help to prolong the conflict with the Kurds when this historic conflict demands impartial mediation to achieve a lasting peace and which seemed to be a real possibility less than two years ago when the peace process was starting to get under way.

Furthermore, to proceed with holding a humanitarian summit in Turkey will be an affront to the Kurds and all those who are now suffering under the oppressive measures pursued by the government of Erdogan, who is dismantling his country's fragile democracy by seeking to acquire more and more presidential powers to his office.

Not so long ago Turkey was held up as a model of moderation to be emulated all over the Middle East and Asia; it has now become a real threat to its neighbours, to the democratic process inside the country and to its own people.

Not so long ago Turkey was held up as a model of moderation to be emulated all over the Middle East and Asia; it has now become a real threat to its neighbours, to the democratic process inside the country and to its own people. The Kurds right now are facing the full force of the Turkish state's brutal onslaught. Other democratic forces are in the firing line too. This creeping authoritarianism must be stopped by raising our voices loud and clear against it; rather than being passed over in silence.

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In order to maximise the potential success of this humanitarian summit and to command universal support, the UN needs to think again and relocate the summit to a more suitable country; preferably a place where civilians are not being shot dead by their country's own armed forces.

Surely it is not beyond the collective wit of UN diplomats and event organisers to find a better location for such an important gathering.

For more information on the UN summit see: <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/>





Dr. Routray served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Govt of India, Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Research Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia.

CPI-Maoist's Continuing Potency

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray

Director of www.mantraya.org

Abstract

Killing of 16 civilians in the worst massacre since 2013 and another three security force personnel in Chhattisgarh by the CPI-Maoist brings back attention on the potency of a declining extremism. The state's continued achievements in neutralising its cadres does not appear to have dented its capacities to carry out selective and well-planned strikes.

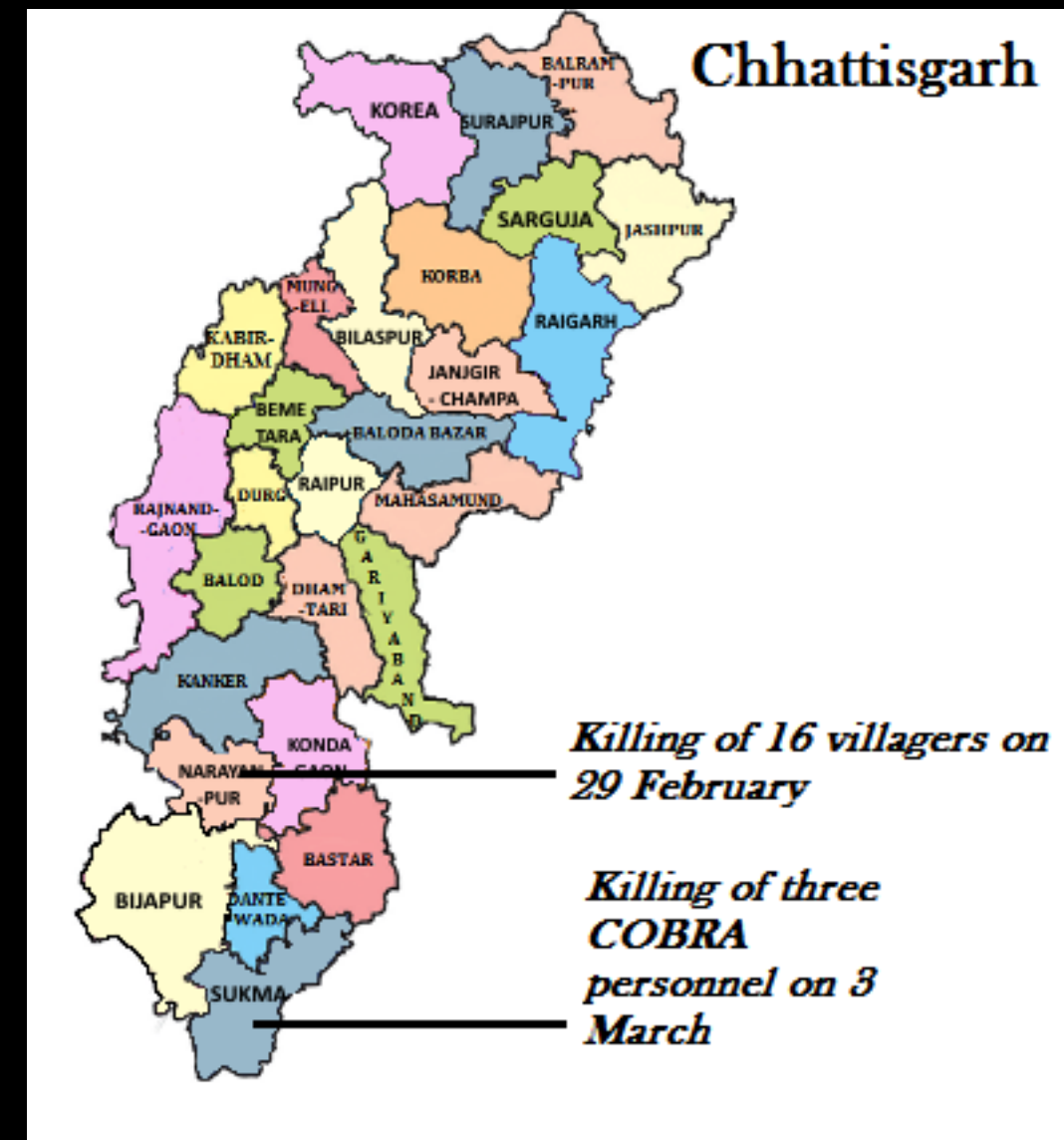
Killing of 16 villagers and three security force personnel by the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) in a matter of four days in Chhattisgarh raises the important question: **Does the extremist outfit, despite its current state of weakness, continue to remain a potent adversary?**

In the first incident, 16 villagers were accused as police informers and killed after being tried in a people's court in the Narayanpur district on 29 February. This is the worst massacre to have been carried out by the CPI-Maoist since 2013, when it had targeted workers and leaders of the Congress Party and killed 27 persons. The police came to know of the incident two days later. This speaks of an abysmal lack of administrative and security presence in a large area surrounding the location of the incident.

In the second incident, on 3 March, three personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s COBRA commando unit were killed and 13 injured including the commander of the battalion in an encounter with Maoists in the southernmost Sukma district. While two personnel were killed on the spot, the third succumbed to his injury later.

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The security force establishment over time has attempted to label these as acts of desperation. However, close examination of most Maoist violence points otherwise. Lets analyse the last two attacks.

Sukma remains one of the six districts worst affected by left-wing extremism. In spite of the sizeable security force presence and pro-active operations, Chhattisgarh's tryst with Maoist violence remains far from over.

These two strikes came somewhat against the run of play – a series of achievements by the state against the extremists. On 1 March, eight suspected Maoists, including five women, were killed in an encounter with security forces in a forest near Telangana-Chhattisgarh border in a joint operation by the CRPF personnel, Chhattisgarh police and Greyhounds personnel of Telangana police.

Those killed in the encounter are suspected members of the Venkatapuram area committee of the outfit that operates in Bhadachalam in Khammam district in Telangana and had assembled in the area for a meeting.

On 2 March, 23 CPI-Maoist cadres including three who carried a reward of INR 100,000 each on their head had surrendered before the Bastar police. Notwithstanding the fact many of the surrender episodes in Chhattisgarh have remained acutely controversial, loss of cadres through killings, arrests and surrender have indeed affected the CPI-Maoist's operations.

According to available official data, between 2010 and 2015, 19,531 CPI-Maoist cadres have been neutralised (killed, arrested and surrendered). The severe depletion of its cadre strength has been acknowledged by the outfit in a number of its publications.

And yet, extremist strikes continue to occur. In the first two months of the year (not including the 29 February) killing, the CPI-Maoist has managed to kill 30 security forces and civilians in various states.

On 8 January, a Border Security Force (BSF) officer and a soldier were killed in Koraput district of Odisha.

On 27 January, seven police personnel were killed and eight others were injured in a landmine blast by the CPI-Maoist in Palamu district.

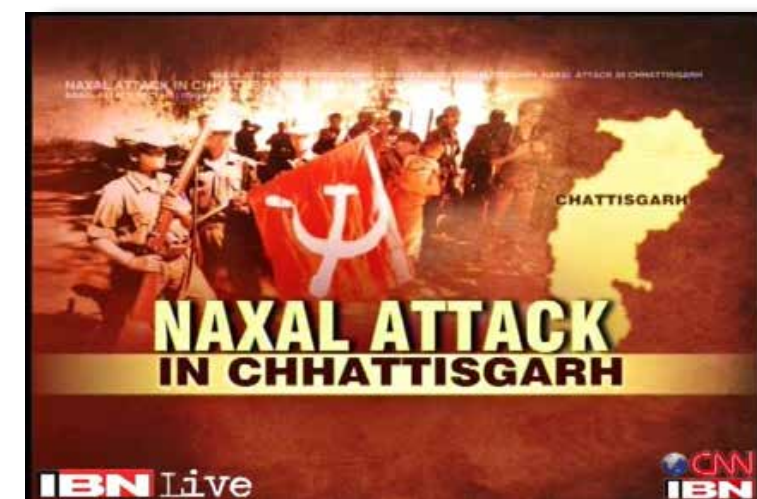
The security force establishment over time has attempted to label these as acts of desperation. However, close examination of most Maoist violence points otherwise. Lets analyse the last two attacks.

Firstly, killing of police informers with an objective of cleansing support for the state among the tribals has remained frequently-resorted-to strategy of the extremists. As many as 1352 people branded as police informers have been killed by the extremists between 2008 and 2015.

Secondly, on 3 March, Maoists took on the well trained COBRA personnel and inflicted three deaths on them. The COBRA personnel were operating along with the District Reserve Group (DRG) of the Chhattisgarh police were on a search mission when they came under attack. The encounter lasted for over 12 hours and teams attempting to evacuate the injured security force personnel came under repeated attacks by the extremists. Clearly, the attack points at some serious level of strategic planning, which the outfit is still capable of. Sukma remains one of the six districts worst affected by left-wing extremism.

In spite of the sizeable security force presence and pro-active operations, Chhattisgarh's tryst with Maoist violence remains far from over.

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THE ANGER OF THE WHITE MAN IN THE AGE OF TERRORISM

JOANA STELLA KOMPA

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The Crisis of Western Culture

In order to realize what is at stake in the discussion about the current state of Western culture, a brief review can provide useful insights. Historically, European and American cultures share the same ideological heritage of being deeply rooted in Christianity and the Age of Enlightenment, entailing a secular-scientific worldview. The latter movement was philosophically spearheaded by pioneers like Darwin, Marx and Freud and much intellectual progress has been made since.

Christian as well as rationalist-secular cultural traditions have both been accelerated by the uber-ideology of a capitalist economy. Max Weber identified the birth of capitalism in Protestant Ethics, empowering the rule of law and supporting a reliable, institutionalized bureaucracy that could guarantee transgenerational economic development to foster the continued accumulation of capital. Arguably, prior to Protestantism, the rise of cities in the high and late Middle Ages could be regarded as a prerequisite for capitalist expansion, such as e.g., the German 'Hansestädte' of Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen. Wealth generation in Western cultures has been intrinsically linked to democratic progress and growing secular independence from its very beginnings.

The existential promise to citizens in the economic wonder-years after WWII was the prospect of enjoying extended human- and citizen rights (inclusive of workers-, women's and children's rights), to be able to accumulate sufficient capital to care for a family, build a house, raise children, send them to public universities, afford regular holidays and finding comfort in retirement, based on government-secured pension funds. This crucial social contract has been broken in recent decades, marked by the decline of European and American middle classes. By privatizing central institutions such as healthcare, education, housing, childcare and provision funds for old age, capitalism has eroded the operational conditions for the pragmatic planning of life projects for the majority of citizens.

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In an economically bifurcated society, life seems to have forfeited fairness and compassion towards citizen's individual narrative: Stable jobs and careers have become scarce while poverty at old age has turned into a real prospect for many. Growing inequality has been well-researched by authors such as [Ichiro Kawachi](#), [Kate Pickett](#) and [Richard Wilkinson](#). The authors argue that social inequality is highly correlated to increasing violence, crime, common ill-health, both physically and mentally, and social estrangement tearing social fabric apart.

The Crisis of Western Culture *contd...*

Instead, Western market economies have turned into market societies, according to Harvard professor Michael Sandel, where everything is up for sale. Political debate such as the United States has deteriorated to a mere PR exercise, story-boarded by media spin doctors optimizing the personality contest. Presidential elections are staged as *panem et circenses*. We could argue (as a working hypothesis) with game-theory that in a privatized market-democracy, where players have stopped gaining an advantage by contributing to the greater good, the superordinate goal of social inclusion has lost its mandate.

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In times of zero-interest European money policies, middle-class members are forced to fight for themselves (reminiscent of Hobbes' *bellum omnium contra omnes*) as they witness their life-savings dwindling. Exempted in this process are the wealthy who have escaped global turmoil by migrating their capital to more secure financial markets, remaining largely unaffected by the uncertainties of folk economics. The decoupling of financial and economic markets is Thomas Piketty's [central argument](#). The economies of the rich and of the poor have been functionally severed. The leaked [Panama Papers](#) are in this light the icing on the cake, illustrating to the public that the super-rich, celebrities and international criminals belong to a privileged class of their own. The investor-courts that are suggested in TTIP, effectively overruling democratically legitimized national laws, are another example of corporations allowed dominance over workers rights, ecological concerns, consumer protection and community rights. The rich and powerful create a parallel justice system where different sets of laws apply.

Even worse in the long term, growing income inequality in Western societies seems to foster neo-feudal tendencies. Social mobility has nearly come to a stand-still and salient class-structures develop. In Germany, for example, the richest 10 percent of the population currently own 60 percent of the gross national wealth, while the poorest 50 percent merely own 2,6 percent according to the

The rise of parallel societies, in particular Muslim communities in the UK, Belgium and France, has sparked much controversy and heated debate. From the socio-psychological perspective of Social Identity Theory, the problem could be defined from a slightly different perspective. The first step of creating social identities by the process of social categorization is to label and divide groups. We label people into easily-recognizable groups, such as Muslims and non-Muslims, moderate Muslims and Islamists and so on and so forth. t

German Bundesbank as per 2015. Regarding the stock market, research by the Bundesbank has linked rising share prices to [growing inequality](#). Western culture has turned into a game of few winners and many losers.

In summary, Western cultures have started to disintegrate on a social, economical and political level by abandoning the very essence they were once built upon, which are the institutional frameworks for the realization of democratic, rational life-projects as well as ethics of empathetic solidarity with vulnerable and less well-off members of society. The political crisis in Europe and America today evolves in this light as a deep cultural crisis, accompanied by the fears and paranoia of social decline and isolation.

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A Global Competition of Cultures: 'Us' versus 'Them'

The rise of parallel societies, in particular Muslim communities in the UK, Belgium and France, has sparked much controversy and heated debate. From the socio-psychological perspective of Social Identity Theory, the problem could be defined from a slightly different perspective. The first step of creating social identities by the process of social categorization is to label and divide groups. We label people into easily-recognizable groups, such as Muslims and non-Muslims, moderate Muslims and Islamists and so on and so forth. However, and this is the often overlooked assumption in labeling and sub-labeling groups, people simultaneously accept the autonomy and salience of labeled groups. Perhaps it is this neglected aspect of social categorization where notions of unfairness start to develop.

Religious borders, to set the context, are largely non-negotiable. There is little difference into marrying, for example, into a traditional Catholic or Muslim family since, either way, marrying into another religious group is linked to the expectation of conversion. Apostasy, on the other side, may be punishable by death or at least by severe sanctions by families and patriarch clans.

The fact that radicalization is facilitated via Muslim communities, such as Salafist groups, reinforces stereotype perceptions of minority groups lacking the democratic ethos and commitment in supporting majority values. Prejudice is created by leaving the question of causation in the dark. Besides terrorism, it is also groups such as criminal Arab family clans, committing crimes ranging from drug- and human trafficking to ordered honor killings, [most prominent in German cities](#), causing suspicion of the majority, even if functionally the criminal underworld and terrorism follow different goals.

A Global Competition of Cultures: 'Us' versus 'Them' *contd...*

Minority groups self-isolate to this extent and they argue their case with cultural identity protection, but expect social inclusion (or at least the benefits of citizenship) from the majority. Inclusion is demanded unilaterally: *'Since we are a minority you should include us, but we see no obligation to include you in return'*. To illustrate that integration is indeed a predominantly Islamic problem we may compare the integration of Muslim minorities to Asian populations. Non-theist and polytheist belief systems such as Taoism, Buddhism or Shinto have proven compatible with Western belief systems, theist and atheist, by signaling social openness and allowing for a typically unproblematic integration into mainstream culture.

Above and beyond religious group borders, the democratic argument states that cultural-religious autonomy is not an issue as long as minorities share the democratic ethos of the majority and defend the freedoms as they are guaranteed by Western constitutions. The current anger and suspicion of many Europeans and Americans towards Muslim minorities is to this extent structured at least fourfold:

(1) Firstly, as the original promise of freedom and wealth for all within Western cultures continues to fade, Western populations are confronted by strong collectivist minority cultures allowing for little mutual compromise when it comes to social permeability. Strong minority ingroup coherence and tight social norms confront a weak majority outgroup consensus, effectively evoking a strong intergroup polarization by posing an identity threat.

(2) Secondly, the fact that radicalization is facilitated via Muslim communities, such as Salafist groups, reinforces stereotype perceptions of minority groups lacking the democratic ethos and commitment in supporting majority values. Prejudice is created by leaving the question of causation in the dark. Besides terrorism, it is also groups such as criminal Arab family clans, committing crimes ranging from drug- and human trafficking to ordered honor killings, [most prominent in German cities](#), causing suspicion of the majority, even if functionally the criminal underworld and terrorism follow different goals.

(3) Thirdly, the experience of cultural radicalization does not only apply to vulnerable minorities living in the banlieues of Paris or Bruxelles' Molenbeek, but encompasses entire nations, such as the rise of radical Hinduism in India or the spread of fundamentalist Islam in Malaysia show. Cultural

The American Psychological Association's [interpretation of terrorist psychology](#) is congruent with the current liberal media narrative of a disenfranchised and dis-empowered youth being tempted by radical ideology, providing simple answers to the complexities of life. The narrative is amplified by a minority group's perceived role as a victim against a seemingly overwhelming oppressor. However, one would ask, why do some minorities resist violent confrontation with the majority? Jewish minorities, as an example, have persevered for millennia by advocating ingroup literacy and education.

Cultural identities that are strongly motivated by religion alone appear inherently susceptible to fundamentalism, be it on individual-, group- or national level.

(4) Lastly, peaceful coexistence and tolerance alone cannot compensate for a lack of superordinate goals, shared social beliefs and cultural exchange. Successful integration requires such beneficial factors in order to transcend cultural borders.

The Terrorist Threat and Cultural Parenting Styles: Many Open Questions

The American Psychological Association's [interpretation of terrorist psychology](#) is congruent with the current liberal media narrative of a disenfranchised and dis-empowered youth being tempted by radical ideology, providing simple answers to the complexities of life. The narrative is amplified by a minority group's perceived role as a victim against a seemingly overwhelming oppressor. However, one would ask, why do some minorities resist violent confrontation with the majority? Jewish minorities, as an example, have persevered for millennia by advocating ingroup literacy and education. Members of Jewish minorities tend to become bankers, teachers, lawyers, merchants, traders, novelists, doctors or scientists. It would appear absurd, counter-intuitive and downright nonsensical to put on a suicide belt. Similarly, many Asian cultures belong to the group of *'learning cultures'*. The pragmatic focus in life is to persevere and to advance by education, which is highly valued in nations such as Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong or Singapore. Culture is primarily advanced by knowledge, not by belief.

The question why and how ingroup radicalization is possible needs to be answered by Muslim communities themselves. Much soul-searching (and research) lies ahead. As long as the problem of radicalization is not addressed, skepticism towards Muslim communities is likely to intensify. Documentaries featuring Muslim mothers mourning their son's death in Syria after joining ISIS still beg the question how a moderate Muslim upbringing could not deter their children from radicalizing.

In the meantime, disenfranchised Westerners have turned to right-wing populist movements, from PEGIDA to Donald Trump, to abandon their very own traditions of socially inclusive Christianity, humanist philosophy and secular democratic ethos. Cultural uncertainty avoidance is realized by conservative idealizations of nationalism, patriotism, excluding minorities and advocating traditional gender roles. Recent examples would be [discriminating laws and bills](#) passed against LGBT communities in the United States, such as in North Carolina, Mississippi and Indiana.

The larger the minority group size and its subsequent identity-strength, the less pressing appears the need to adapt, to demonstrate transparency and social openness to the facilitating majority. Prospects for cooperation remain pessimistic should group-polarization persist, but tensions may deescalate once opportunities for social exchange within communities, at work and the public sphere can be created. The future, if there is any, lies in the hands of moderate, courageous and liberal cultural advocates on both sides.

The Terrorist Threat and Cultural Parenting Styles: Many Open Questions *contd...*

When the social norms of a majority group appear under threat, social group-membership is formulated increasingly exclusive. As a result, generalized hatred is extended to cultural minority ingroups. Culture on a grand scale, previously accommodating a diversity of people, suddenly starts bubble-wrapping ingroup identities.

Inevitably, such ideologies polarize societies even more and in their trail encourage minority terrorism, rather than discourage it, since the Western 'oppressor' becomes finally visible and reveals his hostile reactionary agenda. It is in the nature of hatred that it renders opposing people similar.

Cooperative coexistence requires mutual openness and transparency

Minority relations in Western cultures are severely strained. Tensions are amplified by the inherent cultural crisis of a crumbling social contract. Peaceful, but merely passive coexistence between Muslim minorities and Western majorities, is bound to fail, given that intergroup trust entails social exchange as well as the sharing of social norms and superordinate goals. The larger the minority group size and its subsequent identity-strength, the less pressing appears the need to adapt, to demonstrate transparency and social openness to the facilitating majority. Prospects for cooperation remain pessimistic should group-polarization persist, but tensions may deescalate once opportunities for social exchange within communities, at work and the public sphere can be created. The future, if there is any, lies in the hands of moderate, courageous and liberal cultural advocates on both sides.



Dr Philippa Smales is RDI Network and Partnerships Manager for the '[Research for Development Impact Network](#)', a collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development and Australian universities. The views expressed in this post are her own. The RDI Network is free and open to all practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development and global social justice. If you are interested in joining, you can sign up through the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) [website](#). Growing out of an existing partnership between ACFID (the peak body for the not-for-profit aid and development sector in Australia), twelve leading Australian universities, and the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), over the past six years, the Network is the only body of its sort in the Australian development community.



DR PHILIPPA SMALES

RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT NETWORK

ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS: BRINGING TOGETHER OUR STRENGTHS



Bringing together academics and practitioners can strengthen research in many different areas, including in human rights and in international aid and development. Due to the nature of their work, academics and practitioners tend to conceive of and measure their research impact or outputs differently. While this can lead to a failure to connect, harnessing the strengths of both approaches can produce better outcomes, overall.

In academia, research on specialised areas can take place over long periods of time – often years. Outputs are usually conference papers, journal articles, maybe a book; these have impact if they are widely read, cited, and purchased. Research for practitioners is often done over a very short time period – days or weeks, and is usually on a particular thematic issue or centred around case studies. Outputs are often a research report which is distributed internally and to a limited degree, externally, or development of policy, frameworks, tools, media or advocacy materials. The output has impact if it changes policy or practice, is used by practitioners, or is useful in the field.

National implementation of the International Labour Organisation's [Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers](#) provides an example of how bringing together the different approaches of academics and practitioners can yield stronger outcomes than either sector working alone. The Convention entered into force in 2013 and is an important piece of international human rights law; its implementation can make a difference in the lives of thousands of domestic workers who under national laws previously had few, if any, rights as workers.

After its adoption in 2011, academics researched and wrote on how the Convention could be implemented by extending or adapting existing laws, regulations and policies, as well as on the intricacies of other laws that could be affected by bringing domestic work into the formal economy. This research often failed to connect with how the framing of these laws would affect domestic workers in their everyday lives.

...practitioners are increasingly moving from field work into doing a postgraduate degree at a university, often in order to research a specific issue encountered in the field. They bring with them a practitioner's viewpoint and contacts in not-for-profit, non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They want their research to be relevant to the field and eventually to be used by practitioners, or to change policies that affect the work of practitioners in the field.

On the other hand, practitioners researched the lives of domestic workers and considered the likely impact of legal and regulatory initiatives. Practitioners used this research to better advocate or assist civil society organisations to advocate for changes in laws and policies. Their work often lacked an understanding of how exactly protections for domestic workers could be incorporated into legal and regulatory regimes.

Had academics and practitioners worked together, they would have been better able to ensure that proposals for law and policy reform were relevant and effective for protecting the rights of domestic workers not just in theory, but in practice.

Working together enables academics to benefit from practitioners' local relationships, knowledge and access to communities, while practitioners can benefit from the additional research capacity, expertise and methodological rigor of academics.

In the field of international development, academics and practitioners are already working together in several ways.

Firstly, practitioners are increasingly moving from field work into doing a postgraduate degree at a university, often in order to research a specific issue encountered in the field. They bring with them a practitioner's viewpoint and contacts in not-for-profit, non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They want their research to be relevant to the field and eventually to be used by practitioners, or to change policies that affect the work of practitioners in the field.

Secondly, there are consultants with an academic background who are commissioned by NGOs to do evaluations, policy or research where capacity is lacking within NGO staff.

Thirdly, there are also increasing examples of formal partnerships, such as the [Oxfam-Monash Partnership](#), built on the idea that working in partnership can achieve more in international development than working alone. The Oxfam-Monash Partnership conducts action research projects that combine the disciplinary knowledge of Monash academics and ground-level expertise of Oxfam staff to achieve research outcomes that would not otherwise be possible.

The RDI Network is also working to strengthen research by supporting cross-sector research and publications, holding regular and collaborative symposia, workshops and conferences focused on key areas relevant to development practice and theory, and providing leadership in developing much needed guidance in the area of ethical research. It is also at the core of communications for Australian academics and practitioners on international development research.

In November 2014, the Oxfam-Monash Partnership and the [Research for Development Impact \(RDI\) Network](#) (named the ACFID University Network at the time) jointly hosted a Partnerships Brokering Workshop. The Workshop was highly regarded by all participants, particularly as it was based on current partnerships between NGOs and universities on specific development priorities and focused on the realities involved in collaboration across different organisational cultures. The workshop had a practice-oriented nature with training by specialist partnership brokers and the development of case studies of existing NGO and academic research partnerships.

As well as partnership brokering, the RDI Network is also working to strengthen research by supporting cross-sector research and publications, holding regular and collaborative symposia, workshops and conferences focused on key areas relevant to development practice and theory, and providing leadership in developing much needed guidance in the area of ethical research. It is also at the core of communications for Australian academics and practitioners on international development research. Those who join the Network have access to information on key sector events and conferences, latest research and reports, sector jobs and consultancy positions, as well as news from within the Network.



INSIDE BALI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK I CHAVES

Important cultural subtleties are often masked or overlooked at 'exotic' tourist destinations. Bali is no exception.

The island has another side that falls below the radar of typical visitors and travel magazines. Too often, a superficial layer of the wild night club scene, high-end resort sprawl, gentrified shopping malls, and ultra-spiritual yoga studios paint but a mere fraction of Bali's offerings.

The allure of Bali starts with the Balinese people. They are that common thread which entices travellers from all over the world to visit. Without them, there would be no 'magic'. Life in Bali is a balance of keeping one foot in tradition and the other in modernization.

The people that live here are an integral part of Bali's lucrative tourist industry. They are the focus of this photo essay. The selection of photographs attempts to show what is hiding in plain sight' – opening our eyes and minds to the beauty of the obvious.

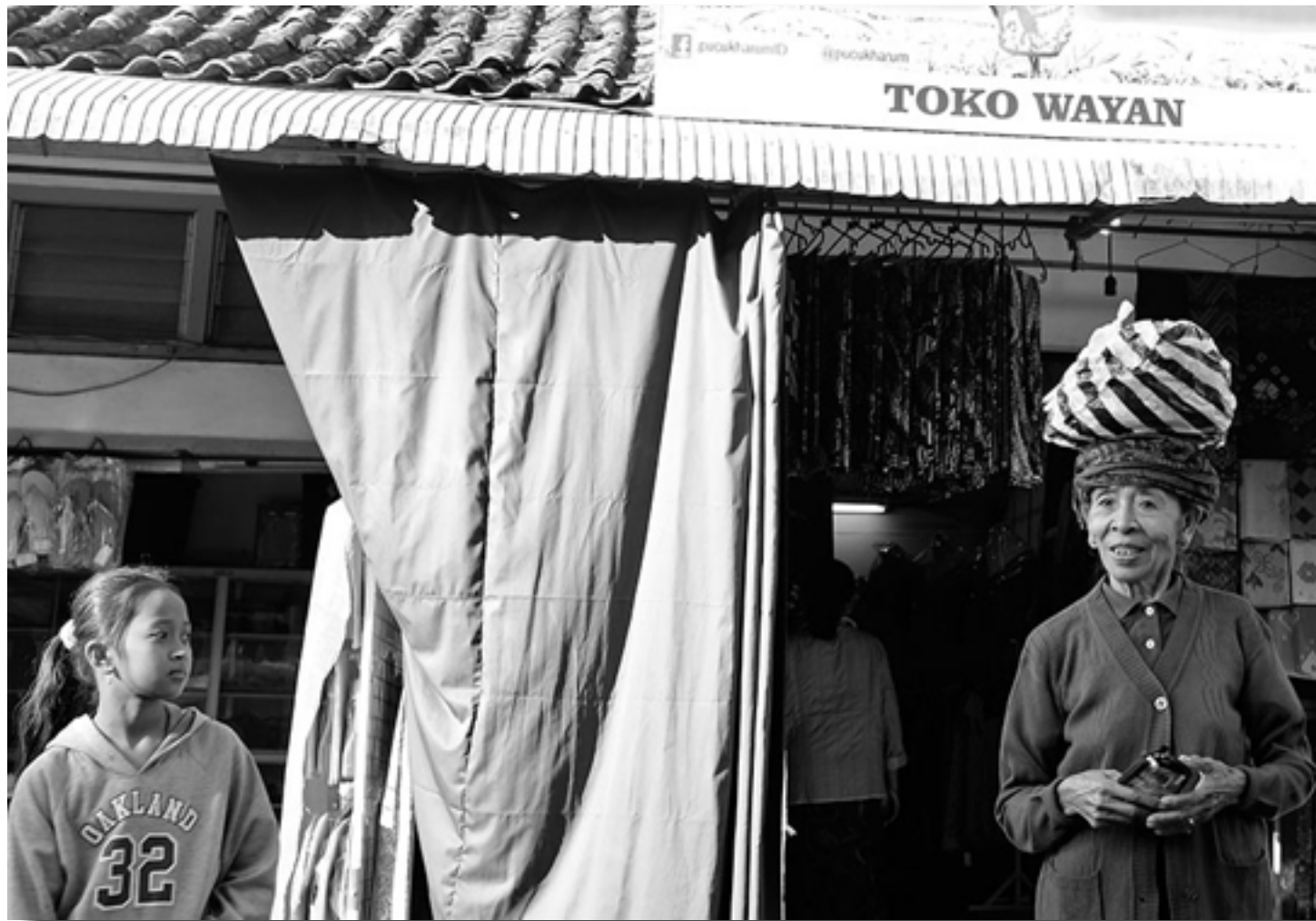




Woman eating typical Indonesian fare in Klungkung Bali.



Elderly woman sitting outside a traditional house in the Island's poorest region, East Bali.



A young girl sporting her 'Oakland' hoodie with an elderly woman carrying goods on her head, Bali style.



Just after sunrise, a woman walks to the market 2km away with holy Mount Agung in the background.



Jhinuk Chowdhury is an India based independent journalist. She has written extensively on South Asia and India-China relations. Jhinuk has been a regular op-ed contributor to Russia Today, The Diplomat (Sri Lanka, India's Ocean diplomacy, Modi's Kashmir strategy, India's ICBM strategy, SAARC), Huffington Post and Swarajya. Previously she worked with the leading Indian daily, The Times of India, as a business correspondent covering human resources, IT, jobs and careers. After about a stint of five years in journalism, Jhinuk moved to corporate sector working with brands like NetApp, HP and Samsung as a communication and content expert. With an overall experience of about 12 years, Jhinuk is a keen observer of South Asia, China and the BRICS nations.

Expanding Chinese Infrastructure on the Indian border

Jhinuk Chowdhury, Project intern with www.mantraya.org

Abstract

Three key focus areas of China's massive infrastructure build up along the Sino-Indian border are: integrating the border region to Chinese mainland, accessibility to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and strengthening counter offensive capabilities. This calls for an urgent attention from New Delhi as a reactionary policy would not suffice.

Introduction

Some positive developments in past years notwithstanding, Sino-Indian bilateral relations continue to be marred by the war both countries fought 54 years ago. The Line of Actual Control (LAC) that divides both is not recognized by China. Many Indian thinkers acknowledge the LAC is drawn with an ink of perception. India's perception of what constitutes part of its territory is vastly different from that of the Chinese. An extension of its unambiguous claim over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, Beijing in the past years has stepped up its border infrastructure projects. This enables the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to retain a clear advantage in military mobilization and capabilities vis-a-vis their Indian counterparts. Indian response, on the contrary, has been reactionary.

Beijing's steadily growing infrastructure build up along LAC include roads, railway line, and fibre optics following a three pronged strategy. Firstly, it aims at integrating its front lying region with Chinese mainland – a strategy most visible in China's infrastructure projects in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which it occupied in 1949. A defense buildup for quick mobilization supported by a strong air defense system and an uncomplicated administrative framework, is the second objective of this strategy. And thirdly, the strategy is all about extending China's accessibility to the LAC through rail networks, and in many cases using some of the bordering countries like Nepal and Pakistan to strengthen its strategic hold in the border areas.

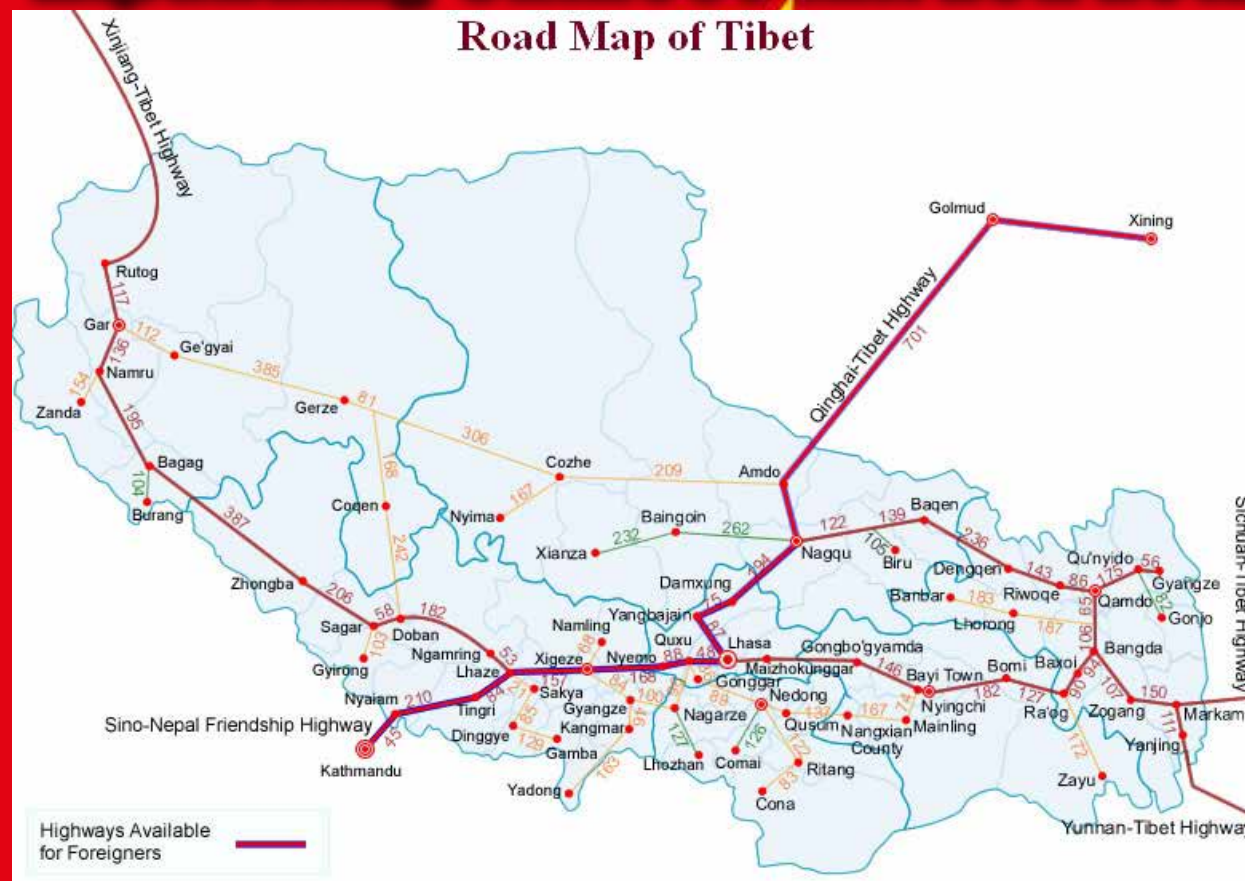


Figure 1: Road Map of Tibet, Source: Tibet Travel Planner

In November 2013, China opened an all weather road linking Medog County in the TAR, which is also close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh (referred as 'South Tibet' by China), to the rest of China. With this, every TAR county is connected to a highway network in China. In July 2013, the Chinese government announced that it will spend about 200 billion Yuan or \$32.3 billion to build a road network centred around Lhasa and extend the combined length of the TAR's highways to over 110,000 kilometres.

Highways to 'Sinocize' Tibet

Entire TAR is connected to China's mainland and interiors by 'all weather' road networks. Key TAR highway networks of China are:

The Eastern Highway that connects Chengdu in Sichuan Province and Linzhi (Ngiti) in the TAR up to Lhasa. The highway, originally called the Kangding-Tibet Highway, is a high-elevation road starting from Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, on the east and ending at Lhasa, capital of TAR, on the west. With a South Line length of 2,115 kilometres and North Line length of 2,414 kilometres, building of Eastern Highway started in April 1950, and was opened for traffic on 25 December 1954.

The Central Highway connects Xining in Qinghai Province to Lhasa. Also called the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, this road network was opened along with the Eastern Highway in 1954. It was asphalted in 1985 and is said to be the world's longest asphalt road. More than 80 percent of freight transport go via this highway. Three major overhauls of the highway has cost nearly three billion yuan (\$362 million).

The Western Highway connects Xinjiang Province to the TAR, by linking Kashgar and Lhasa. After a diversion to Khunjerab Pass it subsequently becomes the Karakoram Highway and touches Gilgit in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). It is 3,105 kilometres long.

The 716 kilometres-long Yunnan-Tibet Highway connects the provinces of Yunnan and the TAR. It branches off from the Eastern Highway and then connects to Yunnan and the TAR.

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The Karakoram Highway (KKH) that connects Abbottabad in Punjab (Pakistan) to Kashgar in Xinjiang region of China has generated much concerns in New Delhi. The Karakoram ranges also form the de facto border along the LAC. It consists of the Ladakh region in India, Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and touches the Aksai Chin region occupied by China. The construction of Karakoram Highway, China's only overland link to Pakistan, began in 1967. Initially built jointly by Pakistan and China, it is maintained by China. There are proposals to transform KKH into an economic corridor, also referred to as the Karakoram Corridor (KC), by making it into an all-weather expressway.

Support system for border forces

As per a 2015 estimate, China has positioned about 300,000 People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops and six Rapid Reaction Forces or RPF at Chengdu in the TAR. The focus seems to be on creating a reliable and robust support system for this front line force. For instance all Military Supply Depots are connected to Lhasa by radio and OFC establishing real-time connectivity. China has a single unified Commander responsible for the armed forces in the TAR and along Indian border.

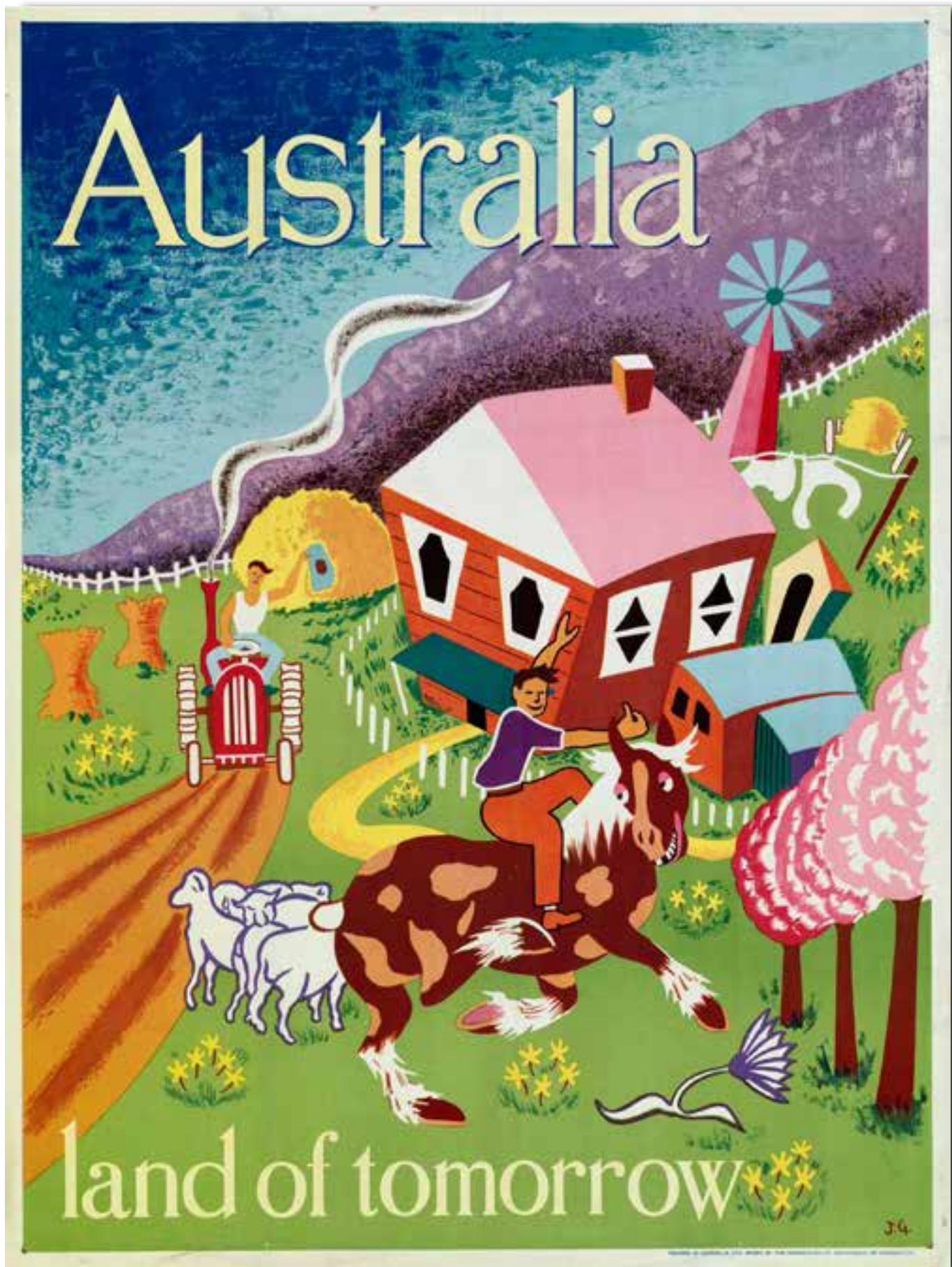
The most important line of support for the border forces, however, is the air mobility and helicopter-borne military operations. China already has five operational airfields in the TAR region- at Gongar, Pangta, Linchi, Hoping, and Gar Gunsu. Plans are underway to construct newer airfields and upgrading advanced landing grounds (ALGs) and helipads which will strengthen People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) fighter aircrafts' striking range. The PLAAF operations has apparently intensified since 2012 when it carried out weapon firing trials at high altitude ranges in the TAR for the first time. Currently, two regiments of 24 aircraft, J-10s and J-11s, operate virtually on a permanent basis from the TAR airfields. Their operational philosophy in TAR is said to be focusing on strong air defence to create local air dominance, and support to ground forces primarily for integrated airborne assault operations.

Karakoram Highway

The Karakoram Highway (KKH) that connects Abbottabad in Punjab (Pakistan) to Kashgar in Xinjiang region of China has generated much concerns in New Delhi. The Karakoram ranges also form the de facto border along the LAC. It consists of the Ladakh region in India, Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and touches the Aksai Chin region occupied by China. The construction of Karakoram Highway, China's only overland link to Pakistan, began in 1967. Initially built jointly by Pakistan and China, it is maintained by China. There are proposals to transform KKH into an economic corridor, also referred to as the Karakoram Corridor (KC), by making it into an all-weather expressway. Five 7 seven kilometre-long tunnels have been constructed to ensure year-round land connectivity. In September 2015, the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the tunnels, also called Also called the Pakistan-China Friendship Tunnels. Fears have been expressed in New Delhi that these tunnels could be used not only for rapid movement of troops and material from China and Pakistan or for stationing missiles in PoK.



Contrary to this, [report](#) of the Indian Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence, released in 2013-2014 terms the Indian infrastructure along the Sino-Indian border to be in a dismal state. Of the 73 all-weather roads, along the Sino-Indian border that India had identified for construction in 2006, just 18 have been completed. Of the 27 roads that were to be constructed by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) forces deployed along India's border with Tibet – just one is complete with “as many as eleven roads behind schedule” and even their detailed project reports not yet finalized. The plans to construct 14 strategic railway lines near the border have registered “nil achievement.” Even though border infrastructure has received precedence under the Modi government, even the task of catching up with China appears to be mired in glorious uncertainties.



Australian Government poster displayed between 1949 and 1951 in various migrant reception centres. (Image courtesy of the NAA/Wikipedia).

Dr Ibolya (Ibi) Losoncz is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Australian National University, Regulatory Institutions Network (RegNet). The focus of her research is the interplay between individual and institutional elements of integration and their impact on the resettlement trajectories of humanitarian migrants and their families. Prior to joining RegNet Ibi has been a research analyst with various institutes and government departments.



THE WAY TO A COHESIVE SOCIETY: CULTURAL ASSIMILATION OR STRUCTURAL INCLUSION?

DR Ibolya (Ibi) Losoncz*

REGNET, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Increased international migration, including refugee admissions and resettlement, has changed the ethnic make-up of many developed countries. Instead of capitalising on diversity, government policies rely heavily on the assimilation of migrants as a way to create cohesion and unity within mainstream society. In public discourse, assimilation also tends to be portrayed as a precondition for social cohesion. But wouldn't supporting the economic, social and political participation of newly arrived immigrants while acknowledging their diverse cultures be a more effective way of building a cohesive society? A critical look at Australia's [humanitarian resettlement program](#) provides valuable insights to this important question.

Despite Australia being a safe society of stable institutions and high living standards, far from zones of conflict, there has been 'much anxiety expressed about social cohesion – now and in the past'.^[1] This concern about social cohesion is reflected in Australia's immigration policy, dominated by a strong emphasis on migrants assimilating and adopting Australian values. At the same time, there is much less thought given to ensuring that there are effective means for humanitarian migrants to participate and be included in society. The government assumes that existing mechanisms developed to ensure that institutions provide equal access to all members of Australian society will also ensure equal access to humanitarian migrants and other minority groups.

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Despite a strong desire among humanitarian migrants for economic participation, my analysis of a [recently released longitudinal survey](#) found that after one year of resettlement, only six percent of humanitarian migrants were in paid work. While length of residence in Australia and English proficiency improved the odds of employment, education levels and employment experience prior to coming to Australia did not.

[My recent research](#) shows that this assumption is at odds with the reality for many humanitarian migrants.[2] Drawing on extensive fieldwork, I have argued that mechanisms developed to ensure equal access among citizens fail to secure such rights to humanitarian and other migrant groups. Instead, they favour those already socialised to the functioning and operation of these institutions, who know how to work the system. By failing to account for the marginalisation and cultural values of many migrant groups, these processes actually block pathways to social and economic security, prompting some humanitarian migrant groups to disengage from government, community and social institutions.

The narrative that Australia's resettlement services make it a 'world leader in the field' is very common. [3] Yet, despite the resources invested in resettlement programs, many humanitarian migrants experience severe social and economic problems. In fact, one of the strongest indicators of disadvantage in our society is humanitarian entry status, often combined with other indicators of disadvantage such as low English proficiency and education levels. While Australia gives legal permission to humanitarian migrants to resettle here, it does not afford them the same living standards and opportunities enjoyed by those born here. Economic marginalisation of humanitarian migrants prevents them from fully participating in or belonging to the broader community.

Despite a strong desire among humanitarian migrants for economic participation, my analysis of a [recently released longitudinal survey](#) found that after one year of resettlement, only six percent of humanitarian migrants were in paid work. While length of residence in Australia and English proficiency improved the odds of employment, education levels and employment experience prior to coming to Australia did not. A considerable proportion of humanitarian migrants hold post-school qualifications and have work experience prior to coming to Australia, yet these personal resources do not improve the likelihood that they will obtain employment. This indicates that current hiring practices under-value the capabilities of humanitarian migrants. Similarly, while humanitarian migrants report high self-sufficiency and self-reliance, these personal resources do not translate into improved employment prospects.

An employment rate of six percent among a population with high aspirational and personal resources, as well as capacities in the form of post school qualifications and overseas work experience, is unjustifiably low. It suggests that many of these humanitarian migrants face unequal opportunity within the Australian employment system and discrimination from prospective employers.

Despite increasing evidence, this systemic exclusion of migrant minorities is not acknowledged by policy makers, and public discourse is dominated by claims that particular migrant groups fall short in sharing Australia's cultural values and are prone to adopt non-functional behaviours in their new country. Blaming individuals or minority communities for failing to participate and assimilate into mainstream society obscures systemic problems.

Discrimination against ethnic minorities in Australian workplace recruitment practices has been found in other empirical studies, including a comprehensive evaluation by Graham Hugo of the labour market experience of humanitarian migrants.[4] While Hugo's study showed that there was improvement over time and generations, some groups continue to experience high levels of unemployment even controlling for a range of factors such as language barriers. Despite the evidence, most employers deny that their practices are discriminatory. They see lack of 'cultural knowledge' and 'Australian-ness' as legitimate reasons for excluding migrant minorities from the job market.[5] In other words, cultural difference, or a failure to assimilate, have become a basis for denying economic participation and inclusion.

Despite increasing evidence, this systemic exclusion of migrant minorities is not acknowledged by policy makers, and public discourse is dominated by claims that particular migrant groups fall short in sharing Australia's cultural values and are prone to adopt non-functional behaviours in their new country. Blaming individuals or minority communities for failing to participate and assimilate into mainstream society obscures systemic problems. By obscuring these problems instead of engaging with them, policy makers risk creating exclusionary spaces among humanitarian migrants and producing a fragmented and divided society.

***This post is based on a longer article:**

Losoncz, I. (2015) 'Goals without means: A Mertonian critique of Australia's resettlement policy for South Sudanese refugees'. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, [Available here](#).

[1] Jupp, J., Nieuwenhuysen, J., & Dawson, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Social cohesion in Australia*. (pg. 9) Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

[2] Losoncz, I. (2015) 'Goals without means: A Mertonian critique of Australia's resettlement policy for South Sudanese refugees'. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2015/12/04/jrs.fev017.full.pdf+html>;

Losoncz, I. (2015). 'Aspirations, capabilities and blocked pathways: Refugee resettlement in Australia'. Paper presented at the Human Development and Capability Association Conference, Washington D.C.

[3] The Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Opening of the Settlement Council Of Australia's First National Conference, 28-29 May 2009, Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, Canberra.

[4] Hugo, G. (2011). *Economic, social and civic contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants*. Canberra: Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

[5] Tilbury, F., & Colic-Peisker, V. (2007). *Skilled refugees, employment and social inclusion: A Perth case study of three communities*. In V. Colic-Peisker & F. Tilbury (Eds.), *Settling in Australia: The social inclusion of refugees* (pp. 108-127). Perth: Centre for Social and Community Research, Murdoch University.



A debate has been raging in Britain over the past few months ever since Prime Minister David Cameron announced a national referendum to be held on 23 June on whether the country should remain a member state of the European Union or go it alone. Leaving the EU has led to the coining of a new word in the political vocabulary – “Brexit”, namely, a “British Exit” from the EU. All the main political parties from the ruling Conservatives to the opposition Labour Party, now led by the left-wing Jeremy Corbyn, have decided to back a “Yes” vote to stay in the EU; they are joined by the Greens, the Welsh nationalists, Plaid Cymru and the SNP in Scotland. Only UKIP (UK Independence Party) and some small leftist parties such as Counterfire and the SWP are backing a “No” vote. The main parties, however, are deeply divided on the issue with many leading members of each party, including Cabinet ministers, campaigning actively for a “Brexit”. The ramifications of the vote will be long term: whatever the outcome, profound fissures have been exposed in UK politics and society.

- David Morgan

In, in, in – why a backward-looking critique of the EU won't get us what we want

Dr Greta Sykes

There exists in many romantic and Trotskyist minds the intuitive view that the state is something we have to fight against at all costs, and if only the corporate state of Europe were to disappear ordinary people can begin to forge our fate with small-scale markets, foraging, exchanging goods without money and building up our idealistic vision of humankind's future. I have also heard it said that we need to start again from scratch, because the EU is just not up to 'it'. The same kind of thing was said about the GDR and the USSR. They were not 'real socialist countries'. The results of abandoning and berating those early attempts at socialism are there for all to experience: We are living in a world bordering precariously several abysses - financial, climate, global wars and refugee issues, with global monopoly capitalism at its heart.

All complex societies ended up having a state from Mesopotamian days onwards. The EU is now seen by some as a capitalist form of state that combines all the evils in it. Yet, it is only doing what national governments have decided for it to do. The fact that the EU has become a cumbersome body, too large, without appropriate governing legislation, therefore too undemocratic and too divided in its politics, is not due to its original conception but due to the machinations of Britain – as it used to be called 'the Trojan horse of the US' in Europe and the gambles of global capital.

The EU was set up with the expressed aim of preserving peace in Europe. The Enlightenment, the French Revolution and all the aspects of culture that Europeans cherish and see as being theirs, including all their trade union achievements, form its backdrop. The EU could never fulfil all the aims and aspirations contained in its historic background. It was set up as a market for goods and people, and it has fulfilled many of these aims, for example, in legislation for Erasmus/young people's programmes, environmental protection, animal protection, human rights legislation, ecological programmes, alternative energy, to name but a few.

The EU is also part of the ever forward drive of global monopoly capitalism. This is our common enemy. Do we fight this gigantic enemy better on our own in a small island, or do we join forces with more points of views and a wider perspective by voting to stay in the EU? There have always been many more socialists, communists, Greens from the rest of Europe than in percentage terms there were in the UK. Should we not work together with these people, or do we choose the eternal 'little Englander' mentality? That is the key question. Let no one make the mistake of thinking that war in Europe is not on the cards any more. Romantic perspectives focus on the past and nostalgically mourn the bygone struggles of the working people. No one is denying them. However, as an internationalist I need to look to the future as well as the past. And the future is going to be an almighty falling apart into petty nationalist and racist countries squabbling over the remainder of the EU corpse, if we go it alone – the scenarios of Hungary and Poland are waiting in the wings - rather we should combine our common wisdom with our fellow Europeans and try to minimise the mess we have made of the world and our continent and stay in Europe. And yes, indeed, war can happen again, especially as most people on our continent have never experienced it.

Popular Struggle is the Guarantee of Our Cherished Rights, Not the Brussels Bureaucracy

David Morgan

Washington is eagerly awaiting the result of the British referendum on the European Union and is openly seeking to influence the vote. When US President Obama flew into London on 22 April he surprised everyone with his unambiguous support for Britain remaining in the EU, suggesting that the country would be left at the “back of the queue” in any future trade negotiations with America if the vote went in favour of ‘Brexit’.

Europe cannot be limited to or defined by the entity known as the European Union or conceptually confined within its borders. The history of Europe encompasses the Enlightenment which has shaped what it is to be modern and it remains one of the great world civilisations. These Enlightenment values of popular rights, women’s liberation and basic human equality represent a fundamental legacy of humanity.

The European Union is not even a shadow of the real Europe; it is simply a political project created out of intensely ignoble motives of gaining advantage and realpolitik. The EU is actually a deeply flawed and anti-European phenomenon.

The EU is a historically specific institution, not a permanent feature of civilisation or a democratic model of government. A strong case can be made for arguing that no such EU identity exists; there is clearly little evidence of any groundswell of pro-EU feelings or sense of attachment or affection among the peoples of Europe for the EU.

The EU is nevertheless lauded by its assiduous proponents as the ultimate guarantor of peace, freedom and democratic rights. It is erroneously asserted that only the existence of the EU has kept the peace in central Europe since 1945 and that it has ensured that the rival powers won’t ever repeat the cataclysmic mistakes of the 20th century.

What those who make these specious arguments deliberately fail to acknowledge is the role of the USSR in defeating Hitler’s fascist regime. This is one of the great dishonesties in the case made for the EU.

By an ideological sleight of hand they try to give credit to the EU when it should rightly lie with all the peoples of Europe who gave their lives in the last world war including the 20 million-plus Russians.

The EU, it should be recalled, emerged in the Cold War era when it was established in order to institutionalise the East-West division of Europe. Its recent eastwards expansion right up to the borders of Russia, in tandem with NATO’s aggressive designs, demonstrates that it remains decisive to the continued division of Europe and the exclusion of Russia, one of the greatest of European cultures. The military aspect of the EU has been repeatedly admitted by NATO which has been warning that a vote to leave will only give comfort to Moscow by weakening the western alliance against Russia.

The Head of the US Army in Europe, Lieutenant-General Frederick “Ben” Hodges, indicated that the EU is perceived to be a central plank of the NATO military alliance. A “Brexit” would weaken the West’s capacity to resist alleged Russian expansionism in Ukraine and Syria, Hodges told the BBC.

Thus, the EU should not be confused with the cultural richness of Europe as a historic entity or the geographical limits of the European continent.

European greatness has far more substance than any temporary institution like the EU, which is really just an opportunistic alliance.

Furthermore, to credit the EU with securing people’s rights and liberties is to belittle the history of popular struggles that have taken place in varying degrees within each European country.

Our civil rights and liberties certainly do not depend on the fate of the EU at all but are the outcome of the strength of organised labour and the struggles of many diverse social movements.

It is an affront to the memory of all those who faced state violence, blacklisting, imprisonment, transportation and discrimination in the protracted fight for social change in Britain over many decades and centuries.

True internationalists have been driven by a burning determination to right injustice and a desire to correct the ills of society rather than seeking to create a Common Agricultural Policy, common currency or common defence policy. The EU is not the embodiment of people’s democracy but part of the preservation of the free market and defence of corporate class power.

The honourable traditions of international solidarity cannot be conflated with the unelected European Commission or identified with its largely powerless and so misnamed Parliament, elected but lacking in democratic powers and legitimacy.

The history of popular struggles is erased from public memory and utterly dismissed by the invidious attempts to portray the EU as the apex of democracy and as the ultimate defender of people’s liberties and rights – when in truth such rights, which we now take for granted, have been won by Chartists, Suffragettes and trade unionists.

Opposition to the EU need not be seen as a xenophobic option because true freedom and democracy do not reside in the remote Brussels bureaucracy with its opaque decision making. A vote against the EU is emphatically not to oppose Europe’s revolutionary traditions; quite the contrary, it is to begin the process of recovering them from the overweening corporate power that oppresses us all.



Graeme Hamilton

song writer - musician - vocalist - producer
in a live encounter with Mark Ulyseas

The following interview gives the reader a ringside view of the world of well known artist, Graeme Hamilton who is the son of the legendary [Andy Hamilton](#).

I met Graeme in a small restaurant at a popular Asian tourist destination. We talked the talk about everything from human rights to pasta to his life and times in the music world – writing, composing, producing and performing with some of the world's leading bands - **UB40, Au Pairs, FYC (Fine Young Cannibals), Al Green, The English Beat, Lee Perry, Special Beat, Carmel** among others - on international tours.

Read on and enjoy the music...

Roy Benson Bb school trumpet, gold colored. © Picture created by PJ, October 16 2006 [LINK](#)

PROFILE OF AN ARTIST

In this period UB40 a band with a global name asked if I would be interested in joining forces. They used to come and see us rehearse and play around town and liked our alternative approach. We grew up in the same city and many times I would meet different members at local shows, parties around town and on the road at different shows and festivals. It was quite a natural process that we might work together as it was a pretty tight circle of musicians in the city. Brian Travers, the sax player a good friend, was eager that I record with the band. We recorded the album Geffery Morgan; we had a great time, the band still play shows and are recording, that's pretty amazing after thirty, plus years.



Folio Magazine, Nepal. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton

How would you define your work as an 'artist' – song writer, musician, producer or vocalist? Today, it is rare to find a musical artist who would only involve themselves with a single aspect of the creative process, for instance, when making a recording. Performers may be considered a musician or vocalist but more than likely, they will, to varying degrees, co-write, co-produce and so on.

Performing on stage or in the studio are worlds apart when it comes to the role you may play. Live performance can be spontaneous, where raw energy plays a large part in the spectacle, that raw energy allows you to throw caution to the wind and maybe do something you have never done before. While the studio, being the laboratory, is where you meddle with a range of ideas, technical equipment, (*compressors, phasers, flangers*) and a multitude of other devices: Example microphones, which are designed to work best with the particular voice or instrument. Here you can take the time to layer the tracks and build up the sound and feel, as close to how you can imagine it.

Things are changing quickly with the advent of the digital age and within the "music industry" more, than meets the eye. Today most musical artists play multiple roles in their attempts to get the music heard. Making music, can sadly become the least central aspect of that process, certainly, for a while. Social media plays an increasing role in the marketing.

JAZZ REGGAE CALYPSO ROCK POP EUROPEAN CLASSICAL



Ash, Arambol, Goa. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton

This is because the record companies have themselves changed how they do business. Much, much more is expected from the artist, it's no longer enough to just play your songs, you have to involve yourself in many aspects which before were considered too technical for the artist to do. Saying that, the mega stars have teams of people dedicated to promotion and exposure, it's pretty much based on how much revenue you have at your disposal. Most aspiring artists have very limited budgets and therefore take on various roles to forward the cause.

Technology has always played an important role in making music and today that has never been more evident today. Hit albums can now be recorded in modest studios, with computers at the heart. Those computers are packed with software that can emulate expensive hardware, making it possible to achieve a high quality sound at a fraction of the price it was ten years ago. There are unexpected happenings that may blur exactly what your role as an artist is, they may not be so obvious but they are many and very real.

I'm content with being called a musician or calling myself a musician but that title today may be misleading.

Does your work fit into any specific genre? I'm sure there are artists who would not dream of playing other styles of music, they might be purists or just uncomfortable engaging themes they are not familiar with or they cannot relate to other styles and I respect them for that. I suppose for me, because I did study European classical music, working my way through the grading system. Performing exercises and concertos to a high enough standard to get the grade. Playing Jazz, Reggae and Calypso with my father from a young age. Moving on to play with Punk and Rock bands and blending my sound into Pop music.

I can work within various genres as I hear the music as language and after all when you see pretty much all music, when written down in musical script, then you see the connection most music has. Reading music scores makes you realise there is a melody and a chord progression a rhythm and emotions.

It's not realistic to place all what I do into a specific genre, though it's wonderful to play and sing. Reggae for example, for an audience who want to hear only reggae, that's fine. Playing Jazz and improvising with other musicians, pushing the boundaries and creating alternative melodies spontaneously.



Ash, Arambol, Goa. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton

Does your work fit into any specific genre? *(contd.)* I'm more than willing to work within a specific genre, sticking to its rules and following a certain pattern. For me the most meaningful aspect whilst performing within any genre, singing or playing, is to sound like me, not to try to emulate anybody but to have a unique sound that could only be me.

I would have to say no..... My work won't fit into a specific genre but I try to create a feel, a sound, a pulse that can be recognised as individual.

Which musicians have you played with and were there 'special' experiences'?

I suppose I have been lucky to spend all of my life playing music and not much else, a good portion of that time, playing music alone. That might sound strange to some but it's probably the most crucial time you have to be introspective and study, improve and be your own critic, get angry with yourself and push that little bit harder. That time alone gives you the patience and discipline you might need someday and can be extremely enjoyable or painful, as you have only your own boundaries. It doesn't beat playing with other musicians though, at least most of the time.

When I hear music that allows me to dream whilst awake, that can bring to the surface emotions, then my heart smiles and smiles for ages and that feeling is never lost.

After leaving college I began to branch out into different styles, playing with local rock, punk, alternative and experimenting as well as having my own band playing some of my own compositions. I was approached by band members of a punk band the **Au Pairs**, they were fairly well known across Europe and it was the first time I was able to tour, travel around to festivals in the UK and the rest of Europe, it was a pretty crazy setup as we were anti-establishment, which reflected the feelings of the youth discontent with the political and social landscape under a conservative government.

The music was full of rage at times and it felt pretty rebellious. It was a lot of fun! Times were changing and we wanted to make new sounds so the guitarist the drummer and I began to play instrumentals, composing and jamming. We lived together and collaborated with any musician that was interested, a good time in my life to take on new influences. African, Asian and South American music was enlightening for us and we tried to incorporate those influences into our sound.

JAZZ REGGAE CALYPSO ROCK POP EUROPEAN CLASSICAL

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We had a great local following and so the shows were always atmospheric, we played around the UK and some alternative festivals in Europe, a great learning period.

Carmel were a Manchester based band that fused some "Jazziness" into their catchy pop songs, I'm unsure how they got my phone number but they asked me to play with them and do solo's and riffs to embellish the music. The band had a couple of hit songs in the British charts and so we would play on television and even performed on Top of the Pops, this show was the number one TV show in the country. It's amazing by going on popular TV programs how quickly you make a name and a reputation. Also it gave me income so I could continue to experiment with less commercial outfits.

In this period **UB40** a band with a global name asked if I would be interested in joining forces. They used to come and see us rehearse and play around town and liked our alternative approach. We grew up in the same city and many times I would meet different members at local shows, parties around town and on the road at different shows and festivals. It was quite a natural process that we might work together as it was a pretty tight circle of musicians in the city. **Brian Travers**, the sax player a good friend, was eager that I record with the band. We recorded the album **Geffery Morgan**; we had a great time, the band still play shows and are recording, that's pretty amazing after thirty, plus years.



Pic by Mira Arad. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton



Graeme with his father, Andy Hamilton. Pic given and owned by Graeme Hamilton

Which musicians have you played with and were there any 'special' experiences'?

(contd.) **The English Beat** were a well known Ska band who were around at that time, they had reached the end of their time as one band and split into several outfits. **Andy Cox** and **David Steele** joined forces with Roland Gift and asked if I would play with them. We soon went to the studio to make a demo tape for the record companies to hear and not much later were signed to London Records. The first single **Johnny Come Home** was an immediate hit; it featured me quite heavily with a trumpet solo on the intro and another solo, later in the song. Roland had a great voice which was soulful and grating, the audience felt they were hearing something very different to the bands that were around at the time. I pretty much played with the **FYC (Fine young Cannibals)** for the life time of the band which was quite short, about six years or so. We had global success, Gold and Platinum albums as well as a Grammy Nomination. We shared a tour US tour with UB40 once, which was great fun. During a period of uncertainty, when the band was taking a break for various reasons, we recorded **"Tired of Getting Pushed Around"** on the same Label London. Roland didn't sing on that track and it was released under the name, **Two Men a Drum Machine and a Trumpet**. It was a drastically different sound to FYC as it was house music and more electronic, we actually had some chart success in the UK and Europe but it was more of a temporary project.

We did attempt to record a third album with FYC but it was obvious things were over and so a compilation was pieced together featuring some previously unreleased materials, remixes and previous hits. Later I got to record with a very special singer **Al Green**, it was a great honour to play on his album and still to this day I wonder how special it was. The album titled **Your Heart is in Good Hands** was sweet, his vocal style is so unique and recognisable. I consider him to be one of the true great legends of our times, he is amazing.

My father, **Andy Hamilton**, landed his first record contract at the age of 72, a sax player, playing a rare form of Jamaica Calypso, Mento. Though he had quite a name in jazz he had been neglected by the British Jazz scene, partially because he was black and because people were over protective of the British take on jazz. **Nick Gold**, who ran an independent label saw the potential in Andy's music. He realised that it was dance music which had all but died out in British Jazz. His first album **Silvershine**, we recorded partially in Birmingham at UB40's studio and the rest at the old Decca studios in London. I did a lot of arranging for that album and many musicians were invited to perform, including Mick **Hucknall** of **Simply Red**, **David Murray**, considered by some to be one of the world's best Tenor players, **Jean Toussaint**, **Jason Robello** and many others.

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What is the message in your music? I wouldn't say my music always has a message except to try and be uplifting. It may be a sad song or have no strong theme but you would still want to project a complete balanced picture, the clarity is very important, Instruments add the mood and texture, so to interpret the emotion through instrumentation alone is something I do concentrate on. For me, it all comes from the melody and to build sympathetic responses, supporting the vision you are trying to create. The rhythms, the dynamics, tempo all crafted together to build a complete image. The idea of placing a message within each piece is not really for me as music is more like storytelling, painting sound it may be abstract, free of timing or key.

What were the influences and events that led to you becoming a musician? Throughout my life there have been many occasions where I was fortunate, by chance, by design or by the laws of chaos to share some time together, either performing, collaborating or just being in the same room as artists who somehow at that time

PROFILE OF AN ARTIST

Though my father was always there to coach me I also had private tuition, John Saunders would arrive on a Saturday, midday at our house, and the place was pretty quiet until we started to play. He was really into the technical aspects of mastering the instrument. Posture, tone, range and reading. They were lengthy sessions, sometimes five hours. We would enjoy the lesson as he always kept a sense of humour even through the difficult patches.

What were the influences and events that led to you becoming a musician? *(contd.)* were on the same path as myself and sometimes I was inspired, that inspiration doesn't stop happening later. My parents, initially encouraged me to play music, though my mother was not musical but she was married to a man who lived his music. Together they made it possible for me to study and encouraged me in my early years to get involved with many musical events and projects.

I was hearing and playing music from a very young age. Music is therapy, language, philosophy, culture, healing, education and love. That's what my father clearly guided me towards understanding. Maybe even that collection of words fails to go far enough to really portray how wonderful music can be. He was passionate in his devotion to the power of music and I could feel his emotion when he played. Once you get to a point when you can put your own mark upon a piece through your own phrasing and interpretation then it becomes more personalised and you become more recognisable.

He taught me the songs he composed and we would play together, sometimes I would harmonise or play counter riffs to his melodies. It was very special for me as I knew what he was about to play even if he didn't tell me, he would sometimes count the band in without informing us which song he intended, most of the time we got it right but not always, to my father's surprise. We would laugh and try again.

He was tireless and had a wonderful energy and realised through his experiences, that music could break down barriers that divided people. For young people, it could keep them focused on more diverse aspects in life, help them stay out of trouble and form close friendships and teams that you trusted and relied upon. Most of the pupils he would teach never intended to become full time musicians and that wasn't the objective. The point was to enrich your life!

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Pic © 2011 Sworup Ranjit. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton

I was aware that it was very useful study, to absorb that knowledge but I also recognised that I had no real future in classical music. When playing jazz you may have to un-learn that clinical delivery and adjust to the subtle difference each style demands.

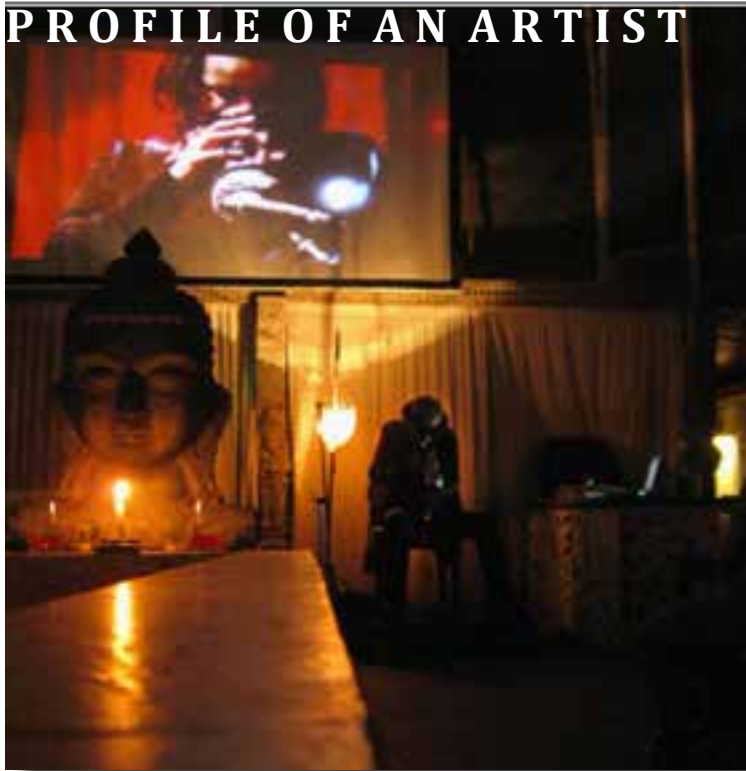
I never met him, the great Miles Davis; he had a massive influence on me. When I was being lazy and not doing anything in particular, I would listen to Miles. He played, it was as if he was speaking a pure language, his phrasing and use of space was captivating to me. He was very progressive and constantly moved on into new and challenging ideas, that eventually became a cause of concern for more traditional jazz performers and critics they accused him of selling out, to me it was fascinating. Many of the great jazz musicians came up through his bands, when they were young. I feel he has been one of the most influential artists we have had the joy to hear and opened many people's minds and hearts to new experiences.

Looking back today what do you think you have achieved through your creative pursuit? It's not something I have thought about before as I can't really say that I consider achievement in terms of success. It is a wonderful feeling when you can reach so many people with simple things and that they feel it's something they want to be a part of, to see others being delighted and kind to each other because they have come together to join a big celebration. The effort people are prepared to make and no doubt sacrifices.

I play regular weekly shows at some venues now and it still surprises me that every week the regulars arrive, even though they have seen the show many times before, they come. That makes me feel comfortable onstage, knowing that they are here and I'm a catalyst for that togetherness. Also, it's fine to work with young performers who need a confidence boost and help guide them through the self doubt and encourage them by sharing the stage or taking time in the studio, to give them as many chances as they want to get the take right. To see their faces, sometimes relief, sometimes a sense of pride is worth a million bucks.

Looking back I would never have believed how diverse the whole platform is, how it is inter-linked, that I would be involved in so many layers of creativity. All of the arts are essential for humanity to express, it is a chance to escape rational. I realise that you don't have to be an artist to be an artist, those who can appreciate are very much, part of the process, if they can relate to the idea then they are part of that idea.

JAZZ REGGAE CALYPSO ROCK POP EUROPEAN CLASSICAL



Pic by Mira Arad. Pic given by Graeme Hamilton

What are you working on now? I'm working on an album, it's mostly complete but i think i might need another song to get there. I'm singing and it's mostly reggae, with a little Ska. I love the simplicity of Reggae and how the groove should sit in a certain way. Reggae grew in Jamaica so it's never been far from me and it seems natural to continue to try new things through Reggae music. I have another album already finished; it's an instrumental and is based upon my time in Asia. It's very much influenced by Asian melody and rhythm, more of a chill out session and dreamy.

I am always writing and have much I would like to release but I am taking time as I want to start a modest online record company. Having worked with both major and independent record companies I see that it is now time to move with the times as having the internet allows people to set up without too much problem and expense. Marketing is always challenging and so coming up with new ideas is important. It's important to maintain some kind of contact to the people who support and like the music. With the internet this is much easier now but i think it can also be too easy just to bombard people with post after post and overload them with information.

I am always performing when I can and have places I can do regular shows. It's important to me as I feel performing is the most integral aspect. Just recording and writing would drive me crazy. Onstage is a great place to learn new things, as many times a new musician will turn up, can learn from them. I incorporate modern sequences as it works well within a dance oriented setting and allows me to be flexible when it comes to the availability of musicians. It's great when you have a complete band who have a similar vision as it is organic but things are moving quickly, as we see in music today DJ's are very popular and you won't see an instrument in sight so sometimes I like to try and meet that half way.

As long as things are progressing then it's fun to do and as long as the audience are coming to check things out and enjoying then so am I.

What makes a musician and can one anyone with a guitar become one? I heard a statistic years ago and it informed me that there were eighteen million guitarists in America alone. If that figure was accurate then it shows that pretty much anybody with the will can play music. I've heard people play really well and they just play music for a hobby. Playing music full time is not something most people would want to do; it's more recreation than career for most. It is important to keep learning and discovering that I believe what makes a musician.

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Being in the right place at the right time is probably the most significant factor as I'm sure there are more giants of music, who never received recognition simply because it was not their time and place.

It's a myriad of chances and possibilities, a lottery. Your chances are improved if you network as much as possible, then others who have projects underway could possibly invite you along for the ride.

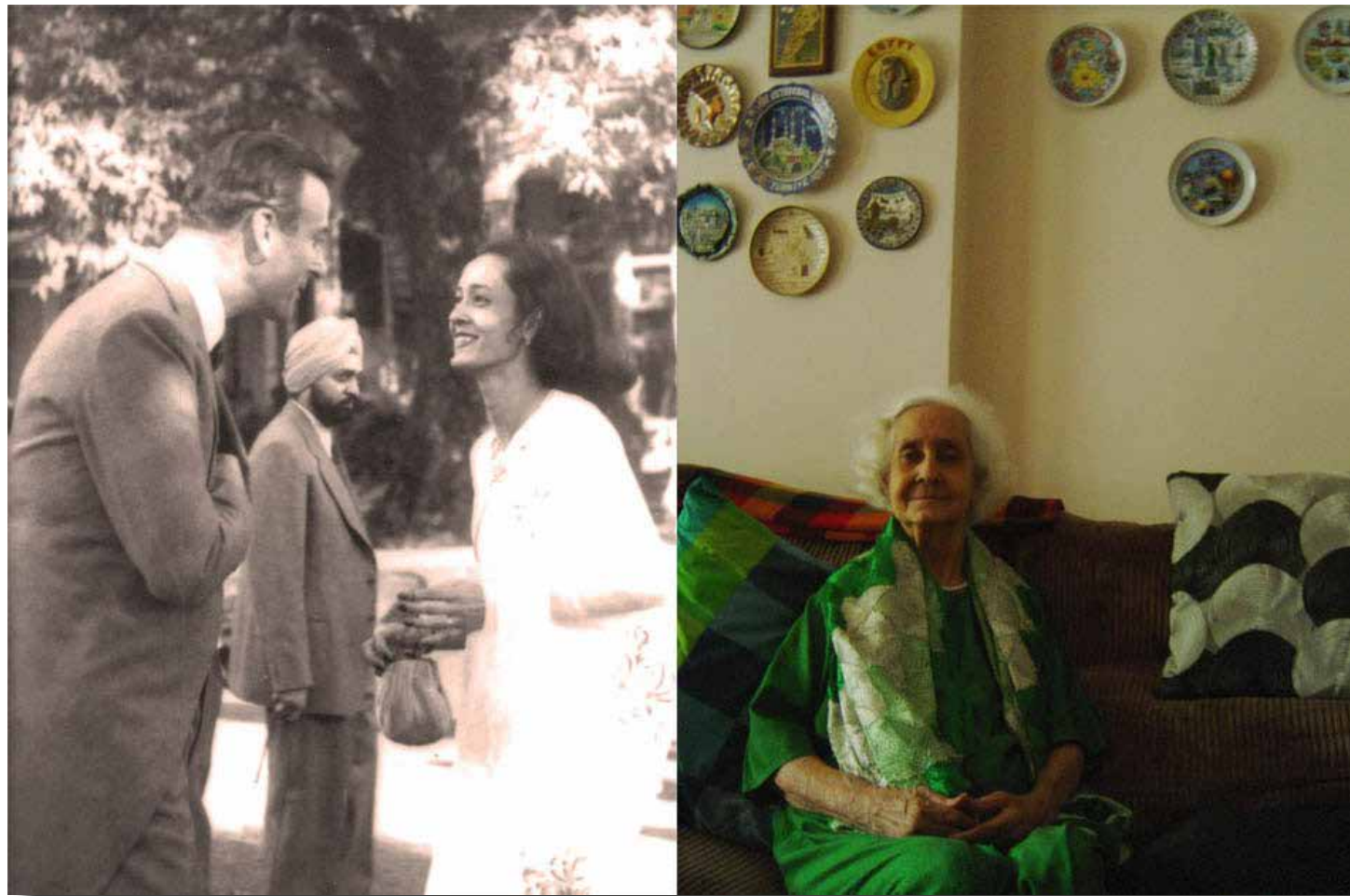
It's not always necessary but having a unique identity is helpful, it doesn't matter if you sing or play any instrument, being recognised for the sound you produce is important. If you think of any greats in music they couldn't be confused with other artists as they stand out. There are many bands out there who have a following though they are not that distinctive in their sound, they might have really great songs that people can connect with or their appearance may really be the selling point

JAZZ REGGAE CALYPSO ROCK POP EUROPEAN CLASSICAL



Roy Benson Bb school trumpet, gold colored.
© Picture created by PJ, October 16 2006 [LINK](#)

"If only I wasn't Governor-General but just a grass-bachelor sailor I would have had the most wonderful time here. An exceptionally lovely Anglo-Indian girl, leading lady of the second play, attracted me more than any girl for years. And as luck would have it I absolutely clicked with her. I just saw enough of her on stage. After the show and sitting opposite her after the Club dinner to know we could have had a wonderful time...Isn't it maddening I just can't do anything about it. She was just my cup of tea. Pammy (his other daughter Pamela) was amused but luckily I don't think mummy noticed anything..." – An extract from *Mountbatten* by Paul Ziegler. Lord Mountbatten had written this in a letter to his daughter Patricia after having met Ava Bhasin who played the leading role in a play presented by the Simla Amateur Dramatic Club (ADC), in the summer of 1948. [Reference](#)



Lord Mountbatten with Ava in Simla 1948. Ava Bhasin 2011 pic by Mark Ulyseas

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S TRYST IN SIMLA WITH AVA AUNTY IN 1947

July 29, 2011. There is a fragment of Indian History that nestles somewhere on the outskirts of Bengaluru in the form of an 85 year old lady, Ava Bhasin, who is an aspiring poet and a delightful remnant from the heady early post colonial days of the Indian sub continent when ball room dancing, politics, Gandhi, gymkhanas, tea parties, theatre and cricket came together to form a delightful spicy mix for a charming existence; The merry go round of the manor born.

Some weeks ago while I traversed the narrow by lanes of an ancient port city, Kochi, researching the life of the Jews in Jew Town, I was invited to meet Ava by my sister Sarita Kaul of Bali who was in Bengaluru to savor the delights of a family reunion. I was instructed to call her Ava Aunty and not to use any words that could be construed as four letters too many, if you get the drift. So here I am, after a fifteen hour road trip, sitting in front of Ava Aunty sipping a nice cup of fine Darjeeling and munching on a jaw breaking muruku (South Indian Snack).

Ava Bhasin is frail; her eyesight is diminishing but the will to live surges to the surface when she speaks about the day when she met her husband for the first time, the enchanting encounter with Mountbatten, birth of her three sons and the poems that she writes for posterity.

So how did you meet the Governor General?

Mark, it was by accident that I took part in the Play, Half an Hour. Apparently the leading lady had been transferred i.e. her government job took her elsewhere so I was asked to take her place. I did. And it seems that the Earl and Countess Mountbatten of Burma were in the audience and I was singled out after the show to meet Mountbatten, who was Governor General of India at that time. Yes, we hit it off very well. Later we met once more at the Governor's Lodge for a Garden Party for the cast of the ADC. I would have loved to have had an intellectual relationship with him. If the untoward had happened it would have had to be by accident. Nothing did, thankfully. However, on both occasions we had a conversation and it felt like we had known each other from another time. He was suave, handsome and a very bright fellow who was well known as a ladies' man. But I was married and my boys were still babies, I couldn't think, I was young, I was too overwhelmed. In hind sight I wonder if I had pursued him to continue our conversation where it would have led. Humm...

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Where were you born?

In Calcutta, 1924. My parents met in London. Daddy, Bibhuti Bhushan Chatterjee, was studying for the Bar (he became a Barrister, Middle Temple) and my mummy, Vera, was a Nelsonhood. Her father worked in Buckingham Palace. She had a brother called Leslie who was in the Navy. I remember mummy narrating an incident concerning Uncle Leslie. It seems that when their ship was sailing through the Suez Canal to India they passed another ship in the night. On the other ship Uncle Leslie lay dying of TB. The ship hooted. It was a moving experience for mummy as she held my elder sister Sita, who was a few months old, in her arms. It was as if life and death were passing in the night.

How did you meet your husband?

I was at a party in Firpos on Chowringhee, a blossoming 16 year old! I always wore a saree because my mother wanted us to embrace our Indian roots. Across the table a gentleman kept staring at me. His name was Devraj Bhasin and he was about 15 years my senior. Devraj was smitten by me and promptly introduced himself. On hearing that mummy was well known for her hand embroidery he made an appointment and visited our home to 'see' her embroidery. It was an excuse to meet me.

We fell in love. My friends in the building helped me meet him. And then we decided to get married a year later. My mother accompanied me to the Gurdwara for the marriage ceremony. Daddy didn't know I was getting married. When we told him after the wedding he refused to see me and Devraj; and further called my husband a gambler because he was a Stock Broker. After our marriage and before partition we went to Lahore where my eldest son was born. It was a beautiful city of colleges with a vibrant social life.

I think the name of the restaurant was 'Faletis' (I am not sure if this is the correct spelling) where we used to go dancing, Ball room dancing. My husband was an excellent dancer. Lahore was a modern city. No one spoke of religion or even discussed it; everything was intellectual, very civilized. Do you know that the Prime Minister of India, Shri Manmohan Singh, was born in Lahore? Hahahaha...the irony, the politics, why can't we all just live in peace.

Before partition we left Lahore and went to Calcutta for a short while before finally settling in Delhi. I loved Delhi with its old world charm, the monuments, Gymkhana, social life, the evening walks in Lodhi Gardens.

Touch the leaf.
Touch the scar.
Touch the white waters.
Touch the music that comes from the flute.
It is me.
Touched with your love –
Weeping and mute.
Touched by the shadow of sorrows,
The loss of your hand on my heart

- Ava Bhasin, *The Touch of Things*



After all these years I still recall the story of mummy when she arrived in India for the first time and went straight to Thakurma's house (her mother-in law). On entering the house mummy touched her feet as per Indian tradition. They became friends for the rest of their lives. Often Thakurma would visit us but would bring her own food. As she was a widow it was forbidden to eat in her daughter in law's home. Mummy wanted to understand India, its customs and traditions. She wanted to become an Indian, though she was English. And for this and much more, I love her dearly.

Did you witness the full horror of the partition?

Not really. We would read about riots in the papers and if some area that we proposed to visit was dangerous we wouldn't go there or in some cases never left the house for a few days. During the immediate years of post partition I worked for Sarla Birla teaching refugees hand embroidery. The products they made were sold and the proceeds given to these unfortunate people. I worked with Sarla for around six years. We still keep in touch!

What inspires you to write poetry?

Kashmir and the stories of Habba Khatun. Habba was married to Prince Yusuf Chak of Kashmir. He was banished by the British to Bihar and she died alone in Kashmir. I remember my visit to this heaven on earth, many years ago with my husband. We stayed in a House Boat. There is a beauty there that consoles the soul and soothes the senses. I don't know what they are doing with it now, the futility of violence, the ingenuity with which people use hatred and bigotry in their daily life. This is sad. This is tragic.

Her self-published anthology of love poems is titled – *The Touch of Things*. It reflects a clean unwashed innocence with a touch of melancholia. Maybe it is a piece from the enchanted life she has led; a life that in her words 'was worth reliving'.

At the end of the meeting Ava Bhasin rose ethereal like from the sofa and with her hand in my arm we walked quietly to the waiting car. And as it pulled away I watched a fragment of a beautiful life weave its way through the traffic and then fade into the haze of the twilight rush hour.

Ava Bhasin aka Ava Aunty peacefully passed away on September 12, 2012. RIP Ava Aunty.

Live Encounters celebrates 6 years 2010-2015

Live encounters

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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas