

August 2012

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"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind." - Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Readers,

• The special feature, **Slaughter House Balochistan**, gives us a glimpse of an occupied country which is run like a slaughter house. A candid interview with an *anonymous* Pakistani reveals a view of Balochistan that defies all sensibilities and opens the doors to a *bloody reality* that has continued for decades. Ironically *Western governments* have *overlooked* this carnage in their rush to seek Pakistan's assistance in the fight against *terrorism*.

Will the **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT** investigate the decades long slaughter of the Baloch and bring the perpetrators to justice?

• **Terry McDonagh's** poem **Boxes**, is the title poem of his children's poetry collection, Boxes. He says, "I do a lot of work with young people in schools and libraries and I always feel challenged and deeply satisfied when working with younger age groups. They will only reward you when you deserve it".

• **Joo Peter's photo exhibit** of the Fushimi Inari Taisha Shinto temple complex in Kyoto is breath taking.

• **Barnita Bagchi**, researcher, translator, editor, faculty in Literary Studies at Utrecht University, the Netherlands and Executive Committee Member of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education speaks about her life, work and her latest book **The Politics Of The (IM)POSSIBLE Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered**, Published by **Sage Publications**.

• **Your are in safe hands** is a poem **by Arjun Bagga** that reflects a reality contorted by human machinations.

• **Anat Hoffman, Civil & Human Rights Activist, irac.org**, in her article, **A Place for All** - Struggle for Equality at the Western Wall - *"I believe that all gender segregation in Israel begins at the Kotel. When the Israeli government gave ultra-Orthodox the right to decide on what women were allowed to do at the Kotel, we gave them keys to the whole public sphere"*.

• **Music from the Edge by Randhir Khare**. Folk musicians from Kutch (Gujarat, India) have the odds stacked against them. They belong to marginal communities and play instruments that aren't respected any more.

• **A Simple Cell by Robin Marchesi** is enchanted lyricism.

• **Candess M Campbell's, Creating Healthy Boundaries Part II**, takes a look at the effect Rigid Boundaries have on your relationships and your health.

• **They are just Papuans**, by **Budi Hernawan OFM**, a Franciscan friar, former director of the Office for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Church in Jayapura and a PhD scholar at the Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian National University. *Reprinted by Special Permission of Jemma Purdey, Inside Indonesia*.

We request you to kindly pass this free magazine on to everyone you know.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas

Publisher/Editor

[Write a Letter to the Editor](#)



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Slaughter House Balochistan

a special feature - **Mark Ulyseas**

This is a candid interview with an *anonymous* Pakistani on the role of his country's security forces in Balochistan. The daily litany of kidnapping, torture, mutilated bodies being dumped on roadsides and gunny sacks containing severed body parts thrown from moving vehicles in broad daylight continues unabated while the world looks elsewhere. And will the **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT** investigate the decades long slaughter of innocent Baloch and bring the perpetrators to justice?

www.marculyseas.wordpress.com

www.coroflot.com/markulyseas



Boxes

A poem from his book of the same title - **Terry McDonagh**

Poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh has published four collections of poetry; a play; a book of letters, novel and poetry for children. His work has been translated into Indonesian and German, funded by Ireland Literature Exchange. *In the Light of Bridges – Hamburg Fragments* is his latest book that was launched in Hamburg on 26th April, 2012. www.terry-mcdonagh.com www.podcasts.ie
www.killedan-and-nowhere-else.com



Photo Gallery - Shinto Shrine, Kyoto

Joo Peter

Aka Joachim Peter is a Visual artist and writer based in Southwest Germany, presently working on documentary & travel photography in Asia right. He loves to explore and combine all arts in his work. Joo has studied Arts; painting and graphics, worked for theatre (designing stage, costume and light), did some work for television and film, went into teaching. He writes essays and a blog in his native tongue, German, for he feels his language combines philosophy and humour. <http://joo-peter.photoshelter.com>



The Politics Of The (IM)POSSIBLE

Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered - **Barnita Bagchi**

She is faculty in Literary Studies at Utrecht University, the Netherlands; Executive Committee Member of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education; Published books - *Pliable Pupils and Sufficient Self-Directors: Narratives of Female Education by Five British Women Writers, 1778–1814* (2004); *Webs of History: Information, Communication, and Technology from Early to Post-Colonial India* (co-edited with A.K. Bagchi and D. Sinha, 2005). [Website: Barnita Bagchi](http://www.barnita.com)



You are in safe hands

A poem - **Arjun Bagga**

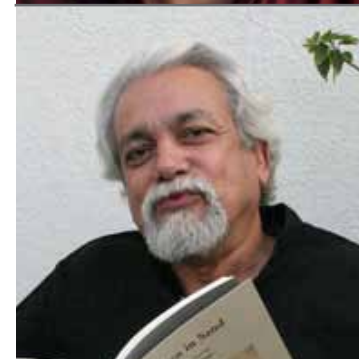
Oscillating between low and high life, Arjun ran his bakery business for nine years but landed in Mumbai and joined movies. Known more for the fights that he's had with his colleagues on set and the times he's been chased by the cops from dance bars, he's been a damn good movies guy. He's made a bunch of friends who swear by him and a number of enemies who might want to shove a beer bottle up his
Email: bagga.arjun@gmail.com



A Place for All - Struggle for Equality at the Western Wall

Civil & Human Rights Activist **Anat Hoffman**

Anat Hoffman is a major leader for social justice in Israel. She is perhaps best known for never giving-up, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Anat was born and raised in Jerusalem and she served in the Jerusalem City Council for 14 years, leading the opposition to the right wing and ultra-Orthodox administration. She was a founding member of Women of the Wall and continues to be a tireless advocate for freedom of religion and women's rights. In 2002, Anat Hoffman became the Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), the legal and advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel. www.irac.org



Music from the Edge

Folk Musicians from Kutch - **Randhir Khare**

Khare is an award winning author of twenty one volumes of non-fiction, fiction, translation and poetry. Executive Editor of Heritage India, the International Culture Journal, a Director of The Rewachand Bhojwani Academy and Visiting Professor to the Dept Of English, Pune University. Recently he was given The Residency Award by The Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) for his contribution to Indian Literature and the Human Rights Award for his efforts to preserve and celebrate marginal and minority cultures. [Available books](http://www.randhirkhare.com)



A Simple Cell

Robin Marchesi

Robin Marchesi was born in Hampshire England. He was educated at Oxford and London Universities. He has lived 'on his wits' throughout the world and has several published works including *Kyoto Garden A B C Quest* and *A Small Journal of Heroin Addiction*. He has worked on and off for the Sculptor Barry Flanagan OBE, a Rilke to a Rodin. At the moment he is living in London completing his latest work entitled: "Prospero's Cell."
<http://www.robinmarchesi.com>



Creating Healthy Boundaries Part II

Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is an internationally known Intuitive Life Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Seminar leader, Hypnotherapist and Author. She specializes in assisting others to gain their own personal power and to live a life of abundance, happiness and joy. Early 2012 she will be releasing her book *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*.
<http://www.12weekstoselfhealing.com>



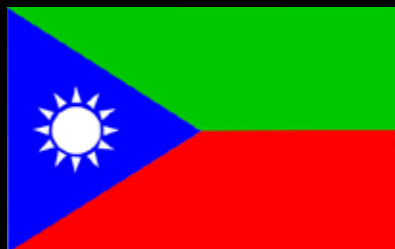
They are just Papuans

Budi Hernawan OFM

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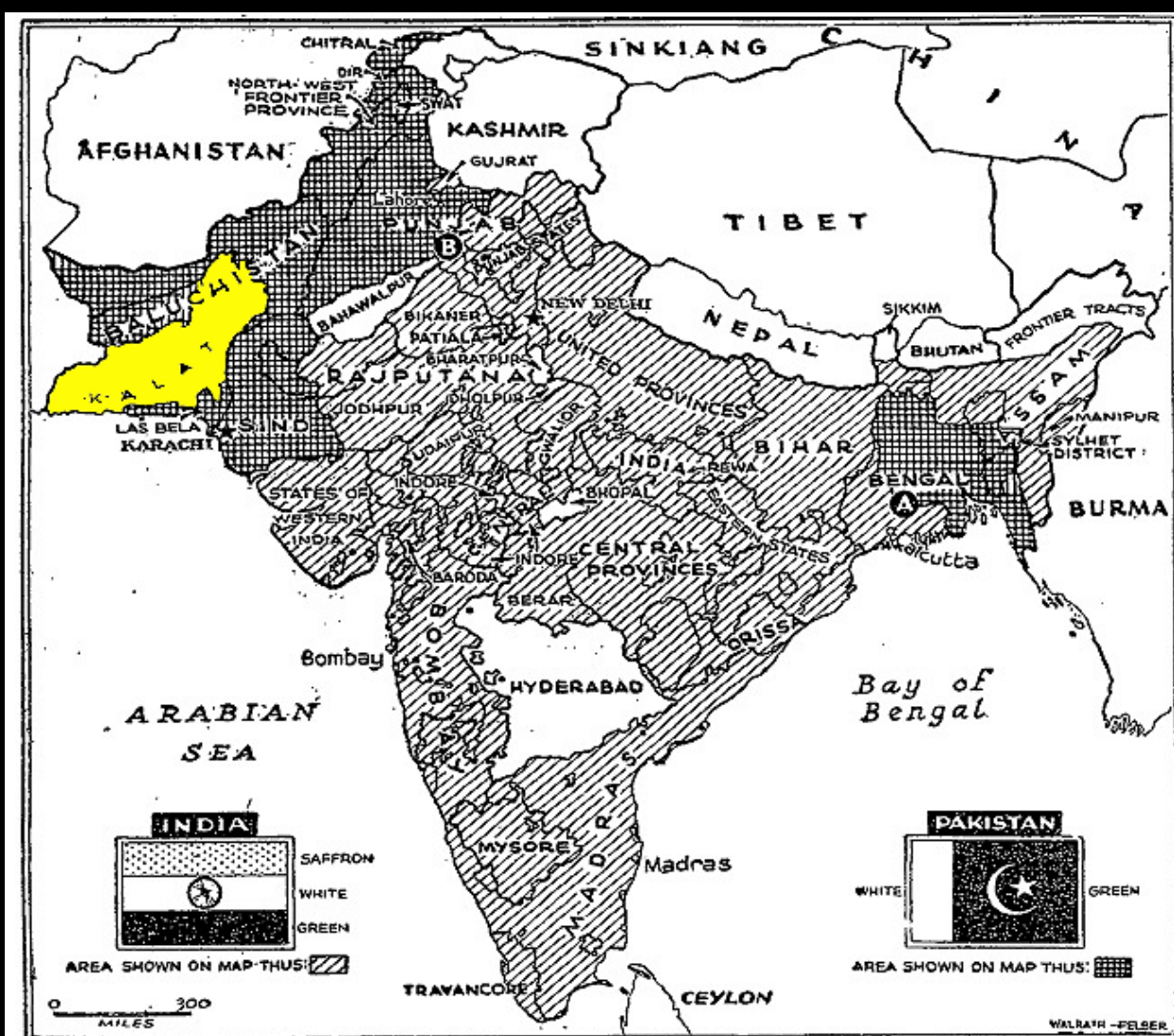
Budi Hernawan OFM is a Franciscan friar, a former director of the Office for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Church in Jayapura and a PhD scholar at the Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian National University.

<http://regnet.anu.edu.au/people/mr-yohanes-budi-hernawan>



Balochistan - Independent 1947 - Occupied since 1948 by Pakistan

The New York Times, front page, August 15, 1947
clearly showing Balochistan (in yellow) as an independent State.
It also reports that Pakistan had recognised Balochistan
as an independent State!



The New York Times
Princely states that have not yet adhered to either India or Pakistan are shown without shading. Pakistan has recognized the independence of Kalat, on the Arabian Sea. The boundaries running through Bengal (A) and the Punjab (B) are to be announced by a commission.



Slaughter House Balochistan

A glimpse of Balochistan that the world ignores and
an interview with an *anonymous Pakistani* - by Mark Ulyseas

The daily litany of kidnapping, torture, mutilated bodies being dumped on roadsides and gunny sacks containing severed body parts thrown from moving vehicles in broad daylight continues unabated while the world looks elsewhere.

This candid interview reveals a view of Balochistan that defies all sensibilities and opens the doors to a *bloody reality* that has continued for decades. Ironically *Western governments* have overlooked this carnage in their rush to seek Pakistan's assistance in the fight against *terrorism*.

"The first time it was reported that our friends were being butchered there was a cry of horror.

Then a hundred were butchered.

But when a thousand were butchered

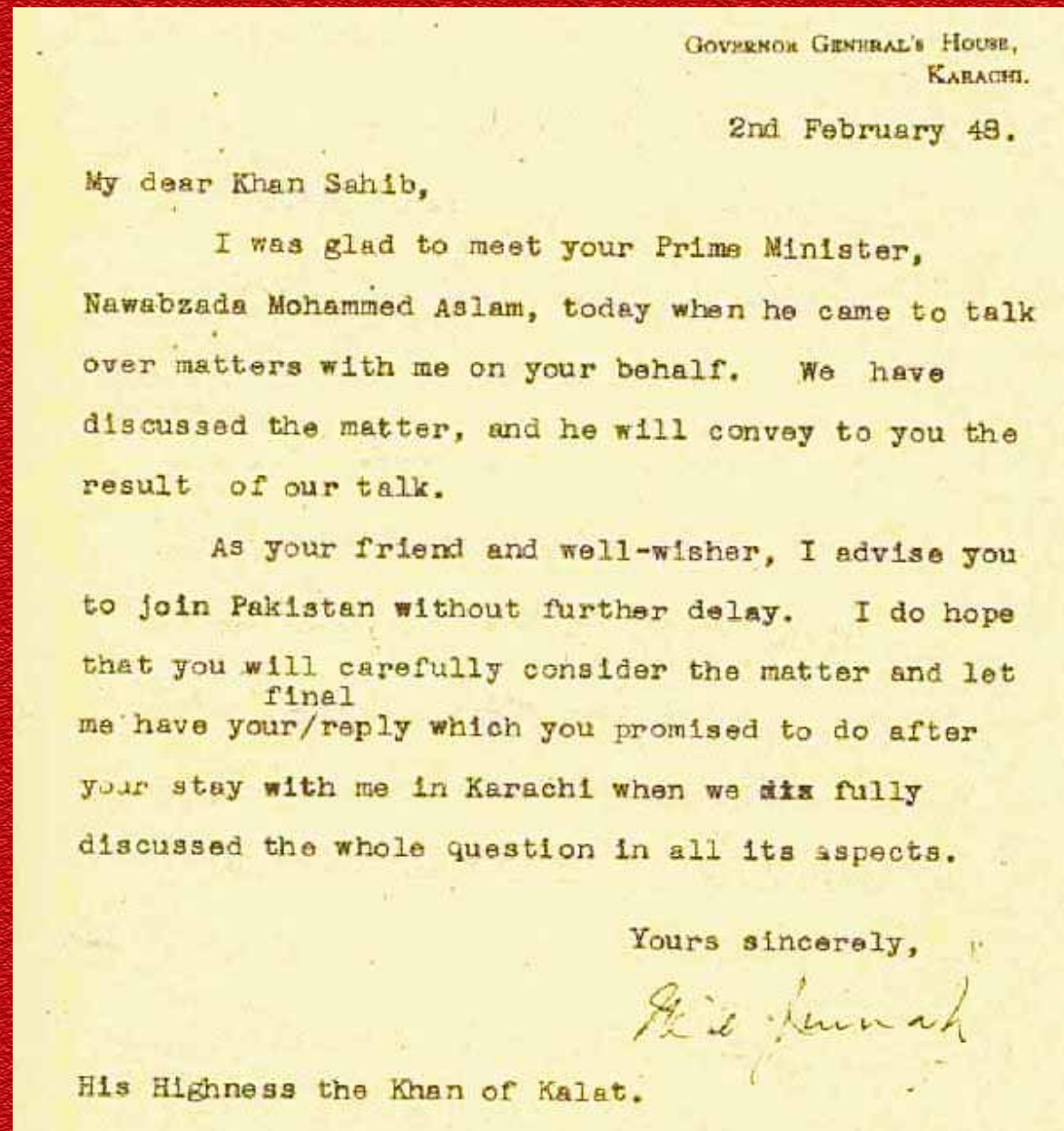
and there was no end to the butchery, a blanket of silence spread.

When evil-doing comes like falling rain, nobody calls out "stop!"

— Bertolt Brecht



Letter from Ali Jinnah to the Khan of Kalat 'advising' him to join Pakistan without further delay.



Jinnah tried to persuade the Khan to join Pakistan, but the Khan and both Houses of the Kalat Assembly refused. The Pakistani army then invaded Balochistan on April 15th, 1948, and imprisoned all members of the Kalat Assembly. India stood by silently. Lord Mountbatten, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, who was President of India's Congress Party said nothing about the rape of Balochistan or later of N.W.F.P.

This was the beginning of the slaughter of Baloch by Pakistan.

"Baloch claim that the **Frontier Corps** etc. are to blame. But the **FC** are only doing their duty, they are following orders. It's like blaming the **SS (Schutzstaffel of the Nazis)** for carrying out the torture and murder of Jews. They too were only following orders. How can we blame them? You must understand this fact."

Why did Pakistan invade Balochistan?

Britain did not favour an independent Balochistan because they feared the Russians would have access to a warm water port as the regime of Mir Dost Mohammad Baranzai in Western Balochistan was alleged to be in contact with the Soviets. Ali Jinnah never wanted to invade Balochistan, he should have stood firm against foreign influence. In fact Jinnah wrote to the Khan of Kalat, who did not have any arrangement with Mir Dost, in February 2nd, 1948, about their discussion on the secession of Balochistan.

Britain viewed Nehru's India as leaning towards socialism and the Soviets, who at that time were 'friendly' with the Afghan government. Pakistan was sandwiched between the two and therefore it made sense to annex Balochistan. Of course, one of the reasons for this invasion was to get access to the **rich natural resources** that the country possessed for at that time Pakistan really didn't have much to go by.

Balochistan is 44% of Pakistan's land mass but has only 4% of the total population of Pakistan. This was an ideal situation... We abide by foreign 'suggestions' to invade Balochistan... get access to the resources and at the same time raise the **standard of living of the Baloch**. Further we could organise transmigration of people from other parts of the country to Balochistan and in time absorb the country into ours in a bloodless manner. It was a win win situation.

Balochistan remains one of the most deprived areas of Pakistan. The Baloch want political autonomy and a greater share of profits from the oil, gas and mineral resources. But instead murderous mayhem is unleashed on them. Why?

It wasn't all that bad in the early years. Yes many Baloch leaders were killed but they had to be silenced because they didn't want to be ruled. The Baloch are a feudal society. So when we annexed their lands we faced armed rebellion. Fortunately we killed and imprisoned as many as we encountered. It was around this time that our army decided to impose a de facto martial law to deal with 'insurgents' and those seeking to break away from our country. This has remained till today even though *these* politicians are *in power*.

As for development in the region the Baloch were never interested in schools, colleges or anything like that. **They want only access to the revenue from the oil, gas etc. So we sidelined them and brought in people from other regions to work. They have themselves to blame for this. If they want jobs etc. we will provide them only if they give up their resistance movement.**

Bugti was not simply the leader of a 300,000-strong tribe of alienated Baluch. He was also a former provincial governor, a former chief minister and the moderate leader of a well-recognized political party. Not since the Supreme Court-ordered hanging of former Prime Minister and President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto following a military coup in 1977 has such a mainstream political leader been killed at the behest of the Pakistani government. As the spontaneous riots spreading across the country can attest, Bugti was not just a local, or even a Baluch hero, but a nationally respected politician whose cause resonated throughout the country. - [TIME Magazine, August 29, 2006. LINK](#)

You appear to condone the killings to justify your method of imposing peace. But this has only fuelled more violence. Why?

Besides foreign powers interfering in our country there is the constant fighting between Shia and Sunni. Our army can decimate the [Baloch](#) in a single day. But we have been very understanding and helpful to the Baloch who want to join the mainstream of society, peacefully. The ongoing killings are the result of the fight between the army and insurgents. It is just collateral damage. Our Supreme Court has directed the government to produce the missing Baloch and to give a detailed account of the ongoing violence and the reasons thereof. Some Baloch claim that the [Frontier Corps, ISI](#), (Inter-Services Intelligence), [IB](#) (Intelligence Bureau) and [MI](#) (Military Intelligence) are to blame.

How can we blame them? They are only doing their duty, they are following instructions. It's like blaming the [SS \(Schutzstaffel of the Nazis\)](#) for carrying out the torture and murder of Jews. They too were only following orders. How can we blame them? You must understand this fact.

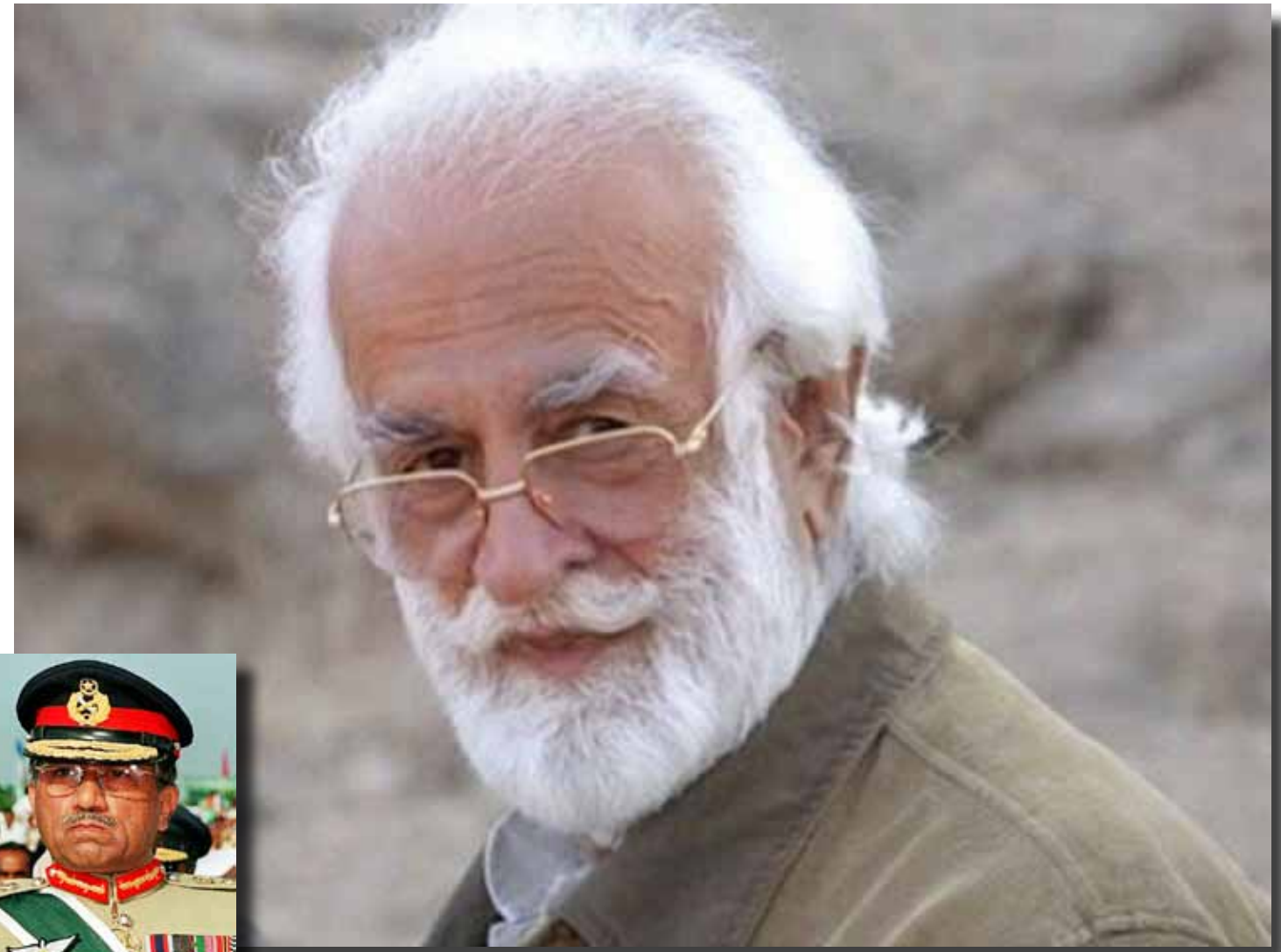
Was Akbar Khan Bugti (July 12, 1927–August 26, 2006) murdered?

Yes, [he was murdered](#). Many Pakistanis were very disturbed by the news because he was the one who could have brought about peace, at least a semblance of peace to the country. But as I had mentioned earlier it was the de facto martial law in Balochistan that he became a victim of. [General Musharraf](#) claims he (Bugti) committed suicide. He would say that because he (Musharraf) was instrumental in unleashing a disastrous clampdown in Balochistan that resulted in the deaths of many FC men and Baloch, including thousands of innocent people who were killed or simply disappeared. All this only added fuel to fire. We should have talked, negotiated with [Akbar Khan Bugti](#). But Musharraf wanted to prove to the Americans that he had complete control of Pakistan. He never really had control.

Do you think Balochistan will go the way of East Bengal? For instance, there is a pogrom to 'do away with' the intelligentsia – teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists etc.

Hah...[the Punjabi elite in the army and politics](#) will never let this happen. Are you aware that the Taliban are here in Quetta? The Americans who wanted to extend the drone flights to cover this city have been dissuaded by some interested parties, for now, though there are a few flights. We need the Taliban in Balochistan because they will help us put down the Baloch with an iron hand and force the [Balochistan Liberation Army \(BLA\)](#), [Balochistan Liberation Front](#) and others to negotiate.

There are many who claim that we are systematically murdering the intelligentsia. I can't refute this claim because it is happening but who is doing this is not traceable. I am not sure if the army or its various other units are involved or not. It is sad that [Baloch scholar, writer and poet, Professor Saba Dashtyari](#) was gunned down but I have no sympathy for these people. The Supreme Court has been directing the authorities to submit details but little or nothing has happened so far. I doubt anything will come of this. You probably know that Balochistan shares a border with Afghanistan and Iran. The border with Iran is porous so many Baloch who are Iranians (part of Balochistan is in Iranian and Afghan territory) escape



General Pervez Musharraf ordered the murder of Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti and the rape of Dera Bugti.

persecution in their country and seek refuge here...hahaha...see, we give them shelter. If they raise their heads here, we will cut them off. Balochistan is now part of Pakistan and can never go the way of [Bangladesh](#). Never. The reason is that we have successfully occupied the country and through transmigration have resettled thousands of citizens from other parts of the country. **We are systematically destroying their cultural roots. I think this is the only way to completely integrate them with the rest of society. This is our method of ethnic cleansing.**

The one mistake the Baloch have made is that they are not united into one group. The many fragments of their movement can easily be influenced/weakened and one by one destroyed in time. They believe they are secular. How can they say this? They are Muslim. In my personal view, the hosting of the [Taliban here](#) by our government will help bring about the conversion of these "secular" Baloch to true Islam and Sharia. And once this is done we will achieve absolute domination. Never forget, the western nations need us to fight terrorism. But we will not do this at the cost of our Islamic principles. We are The Islamic Republic of Pakistan and for this we are grateful to the late [General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq](#).

“We are systematically destroying their (Baloch) cultural roots. I think this is the only way to completely integrate them with the rest of society. This is our method of ethnic cleansing.”

You mention the Taliban in Quetta when they are killing your policemen in Lahore and attacking Pakistani soldiers in Pukhtunkhwa. So on one side you appear to be giving the Taliban office space in Quetta and in Pukhtunkhwa you are killing each other. Could you expand on this?

Khyber Pukhtunkhwa is the tribal belt (**Federally Administered Tribal Areas**). They feel aggrieved that our army is singling them out for special treatment because they give shelter to terrorists from across the border in Afghanistan. It is also the action of terrorists within Pakistan that are trying to destabilise my country. **We communicate with only those elements in the Taliban that understand international politics and have a desire to negotiate.** This is important for as soon as the Americans and their friends depart Afghanistan it will be dangerous for us. **The Taliban we speak to do not support Al Qaeda. I think a time will come when these two will clash.** Also, we expect the Taliban to discipline/re-educate and make them (Baloch) true Muslims.

International and local media report incidents of headless bodies being found, kidnappings and disappearances of women and even children. It is alleged that women have been picked up by your security forces and made to work as sex slaves for the soldiers. Who is carrying out these murderous attacks?

The Balochistan Liberation Army recently executed nine coal miners. They had even attacked **Chinese workers in the Gwadar Port**, police personnel and soldiers of the **Frontier Corps**, killing and kidnapping many of them. The BLA is being funded by foreign governments that want to dismember Pakistan and take control of this strategic State that has a seaport and which borders Iran. **Our military and its departments are here only to maintain law and order.** Regarding the **women and children** I agree there is some truth in this, as a few cases have come to light where missing women have been traced to select interrogation centres here and other places, though we haven't released this information to the public. Unfortunately the women concerned couldn't be sent back to their communities. Whether they were used as sex slaves or not I do not know but you must understand this is a war we are fighting and we have to use all methods at our disposal to crush the insurgents.

Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, has blamed paramilitary forces for a third of all disappearances in Balochistan, where the military is accused of rights violations. Please comment.

Totally false! CJ can only comment on the data given to him. And who gives him this data? People with agendas! I wouldn't put much faith in these reports. Presently there is distrust between Zardari's family and the Supreme Court, in particular, the CJ. **This will be corrected by us because we view Zardari's government as a temporary necessary evil. We hold the real power and control all aspects within the country. So what we say the court will have to abide by. Soon the army will take charge. It will be good for Pakistan for we can work effectively without the Court interfering in such matters as human rights etc.**

“Whether the kidnapped Baloch women were used as sex slaves or not I do not know but you must understand this is a war we are fighting and we have to use all methods at our disposal to stop the violence”.



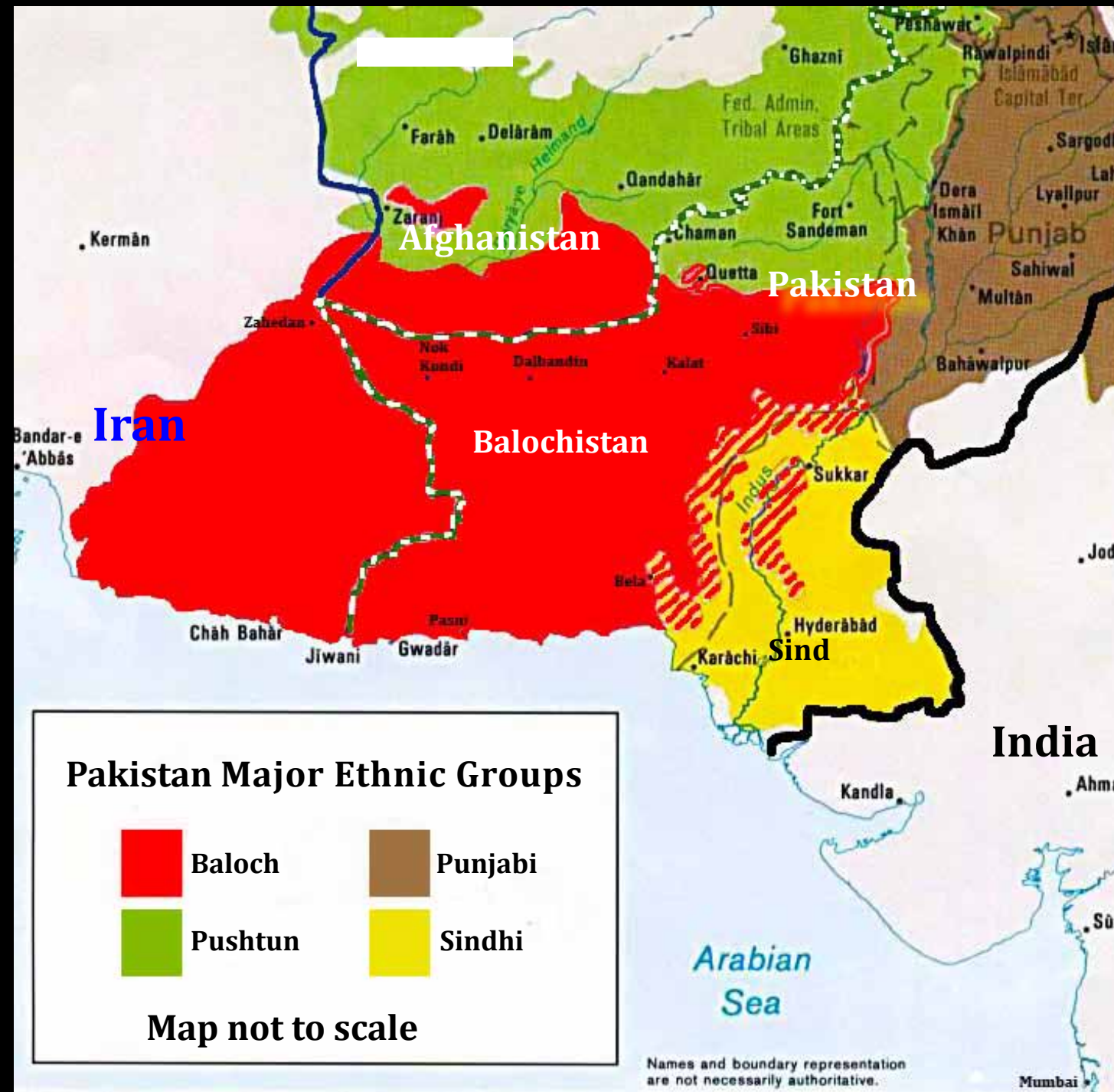
Tortured, murdered Baloch and women with photographs of their missing family members.

It is claimed that the Balochistan Liberation Army is fighting a war of independence just like the Bengal Liberation Army, Mukti Bahini, in the former East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Do you agree?

That was different. **Yahya Khan** was to blame for **Bangladesh** where a few million were killed by our army. I know we were **killing our own people** but we had to enforce our authority or lose part of our country. Many Pakistanis still believe that it was the right way. Alas, we lost it because India intervened. But there is no comparison between Bangladesh and Balochistan.

Here in Balochistan we have locals that want to control the area so we are trying to put them down with an iron hand. The **Balochistan Liberation Army** is not like the **Mukti Bahini**. **They are a small band of criminals that's all and we will eliminate them very shortly. We are drawing up a plan like Searchlight to hunt down their supporters. This will be put into action soon. Right now we are concentrating on containing the violence. But if the need arises we will gas them, it's easy, silent and there are usually no survivors. We are considering this option in FATA too. We have many friends across the border in Iran and Afghanistan that will support us in this operation.**

From this map you will observe that Balochistan (red) straddles Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The dissection of Balochistan, persecution of the Baloch and State sponsored ethnic cleansing over decades is slowly destroying the vibrant ethos of an ancient people.



The Iranian Baloch, from the era of the Shah of Iran till date, have been viewed with suspicious and therefore senselessly killed. They live in abject poverty on the fringes of Iranian society. In Pakistan, they are treated like conquered people, ruled by the Pakistani Punjabis. The 'ethnic cleansing' in Balochistan, besides murderous mayhem, includes deliberate resettling of people from other parts of Pakistan in Balochistan.

"Afghanistan and Balochistan should form a legal team to challenge the illegal occupation of Afghan territories and Balochistan by Pakistan in the International Court of Justice. Once the Durand Line Agreement is declared illegal, it will result in the return of Pakistan-occupied territories back to Afghanistan...and independence for Balochistan."

A brief look at the history of Balochistan

The strategic importance of Balochistan is its location in the Perso-Oman Gulf, with 700 miles long seacoast, the area has been important for international trade.

1928, Britain refused to recognize the regime of Mir Dost Mohammad Baranzai in Western Balochistan because he was alleged to be in contact with the Soviets. He was executed in Teheran, on 16th January 1930, for resisting the intrusions and occupation of his country by the Persians.

1944, General Money, after studying the constitutional position of Balochistan, favoured its independence.

1947, Britain opposed the independence of Balochistan and urged Pakistan to occupy Balochistan in order to crush the nationalists and anti-imperialist or pro-Soviet forces

Durand Line: The line of Evil

Balochistan, along with the North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P) are the victims of an imaginary line, called Durand Line, which was **described by Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President as the "line of Evil"**. In deed that line signifies both the British and Pakistani imperialism that have subjugated the Balochs and the Pushtuns.

In 1893, the Afghan and British governments agreed to demark a 2,450-kilometer (1,519 miles) long border dividing British India and Afghanistan. The signatory of the document, known as The Durand Line Agreement, were Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, ruler of Afghanistan, and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, the foreign secretary of the British Indian government.

After a series of battles and false treaties signed by the British, '**The Durand Line Agreement**' of 1893 divides boundaries between three sovereign countries, namely Afghanistan, Balochistan and British India. **According to that agreement Britain had taken a lease of the area in N.W.F.P and Balochistan, without the knowledge of Balochistan. Sir Durand gave verbal assurance to Afghanistan that the lease end in 1993, but in the written agreement there is no mention of it. Otherwise just like Hong Kong, N.W.F.P would have gone back to Afghanistan in 1993. The Durand Line Agreement should have been a trilateral agreement for it legally required the participation and signatures of all three countries involved. However, the British had drawn the agreement bilaterally between Afghanistan and British India only, and it intentionally excluded Balochistan. Thus, Balochistan has never accepted the validity of the Durand Line.**

The British, under false pretences, assured the Afghan rulers that Balochistan was part of British India, and therefore, they were not required to have the consent of anyone from Balochistan to agree on demarking borders. Meanwhile, the British kept the Baloch rulers in the dark about the Durand Line Agreement to avoid any complications.



Pics. 1 & 2 - Hanging of Baloch in Iran. Pic 3 - Violence in Karachi after Yaqoob Baloch, 40, the president of National Party's Karachi chapter, was shot dead. Pic. 4 - Baloch child shot dead.

According to International Law, all affected parties are required to agree to any changes in demarking their common borders. Hence, under the rules of demarking boundaries of the International Law, the Agreement of Durand Line was in error, and thus, it was null and void as soon as it was signed. International Law states that boundary changes must be made among all concerned parties; and a unilateral declaration by one party has no effect. However, the British government disregarding the objection of Afghanistan gave away the N.W.F.P to Pakistan after a fraud plebiscite. However, it never gave Balochistan to Pakistan in the same way the British never gave away Jammu & Kashmir to India.

When in 1949, Afghanistan's "Loya Jirga" (Grand Council) declared the Durand Line Agreement invalid and also raised objections in the United Nations against the creation of Pakistan and its boundary declared by the British alone, the so-called world body had ignored the plea of a small nation. Throughout the period of British rule of India, the British never occupied Balochistan. There were treaties and lease agreements between the two sovereign states, but neither state invaded the other. Although the treaties signed between British India and Balochistan provided many concessions to the British, but none of the treaties permitted the British to demark the boundaries of Balochistan without the consent of the Baloch rulers.

Once Balochistan was secured through invasion, the Pakistanis deceptively used the law of *uti possidetis juris* to their advantage and continued occupation of territories belonging to Afghanistan, the N.W.F.P with the full approval of the British Army in India and Lord Mountbatten.

Liberation Movement in Balochistan

Mir Azaad Khan Balochi, the General Secretary, The Government of Balochistan in Exile in Jerusalem declared recently, **"Afghanistan and Balochistan should form a legal team to challenge the illegal occupation of Afghan territories and Balochistan by Pakistan in the International Court of Justice. Once the Durand Line Agreement is declared illegal, it will result in the return of Pakistan-occupied territories back to Afghanistan. Also, Balochistan will be declared a country that was forcibly invaded through use of force by the Pakistanis; and with international assistance, Balochistan can regain its independence."** From September 1961 to June 1963, a crisis arose when diplomatic, trade, transit, and consular relations between Balochistan and Pakistan were suspended. Another insurgency erupted in Balochistan in 1973 into an insurgency that lasted four years and became increasingly bitter. **The insurgency was put down by the Pakistan Army, which employed brutal methods including the help of helicopter gunships provided by Iran and flown by Iranian pilots. The Shah of Iran, who feared a spread of the insurrection among the Iranian Baloch, generously gave external assistance to Bhutto.**

By early 1974, an armed revolt was underway in Balochistan. By 2004 Balochistan was up in arms against the federal government, with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front, and People's Liberation Army conducting operations.

Rocket attacks and bomb blasts have been a regular feature in the provincial capital, particularly its cantonment areas, Kohlu and Sui town, since 2000.

Violence peaked in March of 2005 when the Pakistani government attempting to target **Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a seventy-year-old Sardar (tribal leader)** who had fought against the government for decades, shelled the town of Dera Bugti. **The fighting that erupted between the tribal militia and government soldiers resulted in the deaths of 67 people. Ultimately Nawab Bugti also became a martyr in the cause of the liberation of Balochistan.**

Since then thousands more have died. Some shot others kidnapped, tortured (their bodies mutilated) and thrown on public roads in Balochistan.

The Durand Line and N.W.F.P

To this date, relations between Afghanistan, Balochistan and Pakistan are characterized by rivalry, suspicion and resentment. The primary cause of this hostility rests in the debate about the validity of the Durand Line Agreement. Dubbing the Durand line as a line of hatred Afghan President Hamid Karzai has said he does not accept this line as it has raised a wall between the two brothers, and slices a part of Afghanistan from the motherland.

Afghanistan always vigorously protested the inclusion of Pashtun and Baloch areas within Pakistan without providing the inhabitants with an opportunity for self-determination.

A grand Pakhtoon-Balochi tribal convention was held in Peshawar on 11 February 2006 where prominent Pakhtoon and Balochi leaders endorsed a call for the elimination of the infamous and imaginary British-made Durand Line with the objective of creating a Greater Balochistan.

Awami National Party (ANP) leader Asfandiyar Wali Khan said that the Pakhtoon nation was passing through a critical phase of its history, and therefore, the ANP had convened the tribal convention to devise a strategy to counter the ongoing Pakistan military operations in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). **The Pakhtoon Milli Wahdat revolves around the elimination of the Durand Line, dividing Pakistan and Afghanistan, so that Pakhtoons living in NWFP, Balochistan and tribal areas in Pakistan and Afghanistan could form a state of their own.**

Note: These are excerpts from articles written by Dr. Dipak Basu, Professor in International Economics in Nagasaki University, Japan. Published October 12, 2006: And The Problem of Greater Balochistan, written by Innayatullah Baloch.)

Is Balochistan waiting for a Gandhi to lead it to self-determination?
Will all right thinking Pakistanis take control of their country
and guide it onto the path of reconciliation with Balochistan?



Human Rights Watch
Pakistan Director Ali Dayan Hasan says –

“HRW has documented disappearances, which have continued despite the return to constitutional rule in 2008. The federal government, which in 2008 was willing to acknowledge large-scale disappearances, has been unable to prevent abuses by FC and intelligence agencies and has resorted to bare-faced denial.

In 2008, Interior minister Rehman Malik admitted 1100 people were missing. Today he claims that less than 50 are missing, which is nonsense. The on-ground research performed by HRW suggests that considerably more than 50 people have disappeared since 2008 alone. Further, HRW has documented some 300 killings of Baloch nationalists in the last 18 months in “**kill-and-dump**” operations.

While the judiciary has repeatedly tried to address the issue of disappearances in Balochistan, its attempts have been less than successful in the face of intransigence by those perpetrating these abuses. **This is a disaster and it requires politicians to confront the military, which is basically running security policy in Balochistan and tell it to end abuses. Period.**

Political disputes can only be resolved through political measures and not through brutality and military might....

I find the **ISPR** (the PR dept for the ISI - Pakistan’s intelligence) statement bewildering at multiple levels. First, HRW is an international human rights organisation headquartered in New York (as is the UN) but with offices across the world. We take no money from the US or any other government.

We are perturbed by the Stalinist turn of phrase employed by **ISPR** in its public responses to HRW. Consider the last **ISPR** statement; in a Kafka-esque twist, it refers to **Pakistani journalist Saleem Shahzad’s murder** as an “alleged murder.”

The murder is a fact not an allegation.

I hope ISPR will consider avoiding issuing statements that are easily read as threats. There is nothing as abhorrent as feeling threatened by those who are meant to actually keep you secure. Let us discuss and debate facts dispassionately without prejudice and in a manner which is not menacing.

Will the **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT** investigate the decades long slaughter of the Baloch and bring the perpetrators to justice?



Asma Jahangir

LINK
www.dw.de
‘Pakistani intelligence
plotted my assassination’

President of the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association Asma Jahangir has expressed alarm at the rising number of people being gunned down in Balochistan. Incidentally she herself has allegedly received death threats from government agencies.

“It is the obligation of the state to investigate these crimes effectively and bring the perpetrators to justice. There are also widespread allegations against State agents themselves who are accused of illegal use of violence resulting in severe torture and killings of suspected nationalists and militants.

These reports appear to be credible. The Parliament must debate this issue and find solutions to bring some stability in Balochistan”.



Is Balochistan waiting for a Gandhi to be born to lead it away from the killing fields? Will all right thinking Pakistanis take control of their country and guide it onto a path towards reconciliation with Balochistan? And will the Baloch find a way to unite and bring about a peaceful solution to the ongoing murderous mayhem?

And while we wait for Providence to intervene to save this wretched land more innocent men, women and children will be kidnapped, tortured, murdered and dumped on the roads of Balochistan to become mere digits in the death tally.

God save these poor souls.

Terry McDonagh

B

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E S

BLAUPAUSE
BOOKS

I do a lot of work with young people in schools and libraries and I always feel challenged and deeply satisfied when working with younger age groups. They will only reward you when you deserve it. - Terry McDonagh

Boxes

One day, our teacher
put boxes of different colours
in a row and asked us
to choose one and tell the class
what we thought
was in it.
We were to use our imagination.
It was fun

I said there was a sleepy horse
in the smallest yellow box.
She asked me if the horse
was a big horse and I said,
'Yes, he's a giant horse.'
My friends laughed.
I said it again for effect.
'He's a big, giant lazy horse,
big as a house in the sky!'

They laughed even louder.
I wanted to say more
but the teacher screamed,
'That's enough!'

One of the girls had a red box
full of soldiers and hungry children
in the desert. She said she would put
food and roses in her box each day.

The new quiet boy said
his blue box was empty.
No one believed him.
Someone asked what he'd like
to have in his box
and he replied, he'd like
to have his dad at home in it.

My friend said there was
a dancing pencil in her
black box and
when the lid came off
the pencil would write on the wind

P O E T R Y



One of the most famous spots in Japan: a huge temple complex south of Kyoto with thousands of red Torii gates.

Fushimi Inari Taisha is the name of the Shinto temple complex. The shrine sits at the base of a mountain also named Inari, and includes trails up the mountain to many smaller shrines.

Individuals, groups or companies set up orange gates of all sizes for blessing, purification, good luck, to be in harmony with spirits and gods.



www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com









© Barnita Bagchi

Barnita Bagchi

teacher, researcher, translator and editor of

THE POLITICS OF THE (IM)POSSIBLE

Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered

[\(Published by Sage Publications\)](#)

in an exclusive interview with Mark Ulyseas

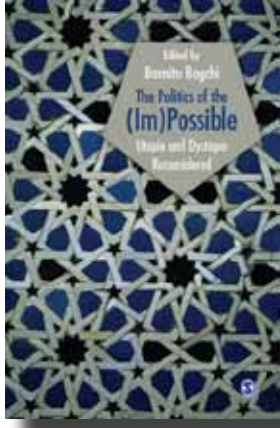
“What a wonderful title your ejournal has! Encounters across cultures, places, nations, countries are precious, and part of the challenge is, I find, to communicate richly, giving enough space to listening as well as speaking.

Readers encountering another’s imaginative world through books or the Internet, a musical performance experienced live or recorded, or people encountering each other and agreeing then to build up something (solidarity, a creative event, a fledgling association or institution)... it is worth one’s while to not remain locked in a closed world, and open up to potentially risky, potentially hugely enriching encounters.

And yes, sadly, as the work of Edward Said and so many other radical critics showed through their reading of history and texts, in overtly unequal exchanges such as those between slave and master in the USA or UK, or colonizing masters and the most marginal of the colonized (think of the story of indigenous peoples in Australia or Canada), or societies divided hierarchically in near-absolute terms by caste or race or class, it IS possible to encounter another, yet not to give her/ him respect, not to listen to her/ him.

Are we listening to those we encounter? Are we creating genuine dialogues?”

- Barnita Bagchi



Please give us a glimpse of your life and work.

I am a teacher, researcher, translator, and writer. I hail from south Kolkata, am Indian, currently live and work in Utrecht in the Netherlands, spent six years of my life as a student at Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, lived and worked in Mumbai and Kolkata as an academic for seven years, have spent much time in France and Germany, have roamed in rural districts such as Murshidabad and Nandurbar on field-work, and am fluent in Bangla, English, French, Dutch, and Hindi, with some knowledge of Sanskrit and German. Clearly, then, I am both cosmopolitan and nomadic, with a strong root and base in Bengal and India.

I grew up in a wonderful milieu in Kolkata, with inspirational parents and a sister who are all academics, and who are all socially committed. Predictably, I was a bookworm, and ranged voraciously all over the world in my reading from when I was nine or so—Latin America, Britain, France, and different parts of India were particularly important sources of favourite authors. I did all my formal training, from BA to Ph.D., in English Literature, yet at various points have been seen and introduced as a historian, a feminist academic, a sociologist, and a literary critic.

From when I was an undergraduate at Jadavpur University, I began translating literature (Bengali and French, notably) and presenting academic work on international literature. I had tremendously inspiring teachers in India, who fuelled me when I went to Oxford and got a 2nd B.A. as a Senior Student in 2 years. Of the three places where I studied, Kolkata remains a home always, and I have cherished memories of Cambridge, from where I still have some of my closest friends.

My Ph.D., undertaken when I was based at Trinity College, Cambridge, brought forth what has remained a powerful and central interest of mine: how women shape and write stories or narratives about the education and development of selves, both their own, and those of others: the relationship between narrative, identity-formation, and education (both formal and informal, including lifelong learning) is an element that I try to highlight in my work.

I have written, edited, part-translated, and co-edited four books: their titles may say something about my range of interests, and I like to believe that there is rigour as well as range there :

Pliable Pupils and Sufficient Self-Directors: Narratives of Female Education by Five British Women Writers, 1778-1814 (2004), Webs of History: Information, Communication, and Technology from Early to Post-Colonial India (Co-ed., with Amiya Kumar Bagchi and Dipankar Sinha, 2005), Sultana's Dream and Padmarag: Two Feminist Utopias, by Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, part-translated and introduced by Barnita Bagchi ISBN 0-14-400003-2(2005), and The Politics of the (Im)possible: Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered. (2012).

I have published numerous articles (in English, French, and, alas, far too seldom, in Bangla), and a

central theme there is how much some South Asian/ Indian women (and men, though my focus has been more on women) were able to actually do to further the welfare of their own lives, and the lives of the marginalised, while crafting powerful creative narratives, essays, and fables in that process.

The remarkable figures of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain from Bengal (creative writer, educator, social activist, feminist) and Ramabai Saraswati/ Medhavi/ Dongre from Maharashtra (educator, polemicist, feminist, reformer) in the period of British colonialism have been important in my understanding of such human and such female agency. I have argued that such women manifested the capacity to build up gendered social capital: pooling the skills of many in associations and institutions they founded and built up through their leadership, they contested deprivations, and made the world a less inequitable and imaginatively richer place.

I have particular interest in my research and teaching in the fiction of Jane Austen, the mind-blowingly all-encompassing creativity of [Rabindranath Tagore](#), in the agile, colourful imaginative power of children's literature (Sukumar Ray and Lila Majumdar in Bengal, the worlds of Winnie-the-Pooh, Judy in *Daddy-Long-Legs*, and Harry Potter, and many others), in fiction, frequently by women, which is termed 'popular', in writing that delineates possible worlds (utopia and dystopia).

What drives me and keeps me moving is the 'worlding' capacity of human beings through story-telling: the myriad ways in which they use their curiosity and imagination to construct worlds for themselves and others which are much more than their bare, matter-of-fact immediate surrounding and environment.

I notice that there are very particular places which charge my batteries even in recollection: our v-shaped porch in our little family retreat in [Shantiniketan](#), from where one can watch monsoon rains pouring through the tall, graceful, spreading trees in the roomy garden, or the Rijn river near my home in Utrecht with its grassy banks and equally graceful, delightful trees, or my favourite spot in a favourite meadow in Cambridge to sit, spread one's books, and read. I notice that the older I grow, greenery and water seem to grow more affectively precious.

Being a cosmopolite is not easy, and I believe that each of us who believes in non-parochial, border-crossing, internationally open, inclusive ways of inhabiting the world has the responsibility to stand up articulately for our precious worlds and shared internationalism.

Everywhere in the world, narrowness, fundamentalisms, economic policies pushing for the profit of big corporations to the detriment of ordinary people are just some of the forces threatening such cosmopolitanism. Although by nature increasingly drawn to tranquillity, I would consider myself a fierce champion of inclusive, cosmopolitan values and ways of living.

THE POLITICS OF THE (IM)POSSIBLE Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered edited by you delves, among other issues, into the relationship between utopia/dystopia and time/memory. Can you please extensively elaborate on this book?

This volume, (published by SAGE, New Delhi, London, Thousand Oaks, in 2012, ISBN 978-8132107347) brings together articles on utopia and dystopia, in a breadth of disciplines: history, literature, gender studies, political science, sociology, anthropology, and Native American Studies, with contributors from India, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Switzerland, and the United States. Utopia is a resonance, a mode, a perspective.

When Sir Thomas More published Utopia in 1516, he coined a word that has become one of the most resonant and connotative concepts in the history of ideas. Utopia, with its Greek pun on a 'good place' (eu-topos) and 'no place' (ou-topos), offers simultaneously a locus of possibilities for human development, as well as a sense that this conceptualization, being speculative, idealized, or fictive, might be impossible to actualize in reality.

The utopian and dystopian mode is a site of paradoxes. Such paradoxes are never to be divorced from material conditions of life, whether historical, economic, political, or the literary context. Such awareness of paradoxes, contradictions, and heterogeneities pervades and lights up this volume. Utopia and dystopia, it cannot be over-emphasized, are modes and resonances present in all parts of the world, not just Europe and white North America.

Equally, utopian and dystopian thought and practice is and has always been gendered. Utopia and memory and temporality intersect in often strange and surprising ways. These three dimensions--the relationship between utopia/ dystopia and time and memory, the focus on Europe and areas outside Europe at the same time, and the gendered analysis of utopia/ dystopia-- are also central to the enterprise undertaken in this volume. These dimensions are not discrete or sutured, they mutually interweave and inflect each other.

The book begins with a conceptualizing introduction by the Editor.

We then sub-divide the volume into three sections. While the first section has articles on the history, political theory, and cultural politics of utopia-dystopia, the second section is on gender politics and utopia-dystopia. The third section consists of one long article (by Caloz-Tschopp) acting as a finale to the volume.

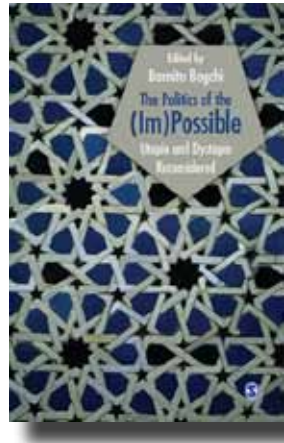
Thus, there are 12 chapters, including the Introduction.

Miguel Abensour critically discusses whether the transition from spatial projections to temporal projections, from imaginary journeys into space to imaginary journeys into time, is one of the distinctive signs of utopian modernity.

contd...

Edited by
Barnita Bagchi
**The Politics of the
(Im)Possible**
Utopia and Dystopia
Reconsidered





Peter Kulchyski analyses Fredric Jameson's important reflections on utopian thought, particularly his recent *Archaeologies of the Future*, in the light of the grounded utopian politics of indigenous hunting-gathering communities in Canada.

Rachel Foxley considers the nature of early modern, seventeenth-century English radicalism, using the concept of utopianism to interrogate the ways in which it was possible to frame demands for fundamental change within early modern English society.

Subhoranjan Dasgupta explores the partition-torn mid-twentieth-century history of South Asia, through an analysis of the Bangladeshi writer Akhtaruzzaman Elias's classic novel *Khowabnama* (Dream-Elegy) and its sharp anatomy of the contradiction and conflict between dystopic illusion propagated by the Muslim League and utopian praxis spearheaded by the peasant movement of Tebhaga.

Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun considers the simultaneously utopic and dystopic nature of the tragic Israel-Palestine impasse, and considers the utopic and revolutionary nature of the possibility of a one-state solution to the crisis.

Theresa Moriarty analyses the feminist utopian thought, the European connections, and the influences within the British political movement, of Anna Wheeler, early nineteenth-century Irish feminist and Owenite activist, who had networks and correspondence with prominent utopian movements, including the Saint-Simonians of France.

Samita Sen discusses the vision of a dystopia described in a 19th century Bengali (vernacular) popular tract named *Meye Parliament ba Dwitya Bhag Bharat Uddhar* (Women parliament or Second Part of Rescue of India).

Martine Spensky analyses early twentieth-century British plans, disseminated through periodical literature, for emigration of white women to colonies such as Australia and Canada.

Barnita Bagchi analyses narratives of gendered utopia and dystopia in the essays, polemical writing, and fiction of the South Asian Bengali Muslim feminist Rokeya Hossain.

Modhumita Roy, contextualizing Bessie Head's work in South African apartheid literature, analyses her novel *When Rain Clouds Gather*, in which a village in Botswana, Golema Mmidi (based on such a village to which Head herself had fled) is configured as a sceptically utopic "new world".

Marie Claire Caloz-Tschopp considers, in the light of her work on global citizenship, migration, and the crisis in public services, whether there is a new utopic political theory (drawing strength from philosophers such as Hannah Arendt) that allows us to find a position from which to resist the dystopic nature of our late capitalist, unequally globalizing world.

What are you working on now?

Too many things! Colonial modernity in India and its relationship to narratives about education (Tagore, Rokeya, Sarojini Naidu...), transnational exchanges in history of education, South Asian utopian and dystopian narratives, humour and children's literature, the relationship between the cosmopolitan and the colonial and post-colonial: these are the principal themes. I also enjoy reviewing books, spend much time preparing for teaching, referee colleagues' articles, and do some academic administration, so one's plate is full.

From September to April, I teach and supervise intensively and extensively across BA and MA programmes in multiple subjects (English, Comparative Literature, History...), so summer is also the time to prepare for that. Over the next two months, I shall be presenting my work in Lisbon (Portugal), Kolkata (India), and in Melbourne (Australia): so the summer will be rich and global, itself coloured by transnational exchanges and cosmopolitan encounters. Kolkata remains one of the most cosmopolitan intellectual cities in the world, incidentally. And students all over the world (certainly in India, the Netherlands, and the UK, where I have taught) remain wonderfully curious and open.

All my work, and those of academic colleagues, however, is undertaken in our current financially strained times for universities globally (leading to overload of teaching, fund crunches in research budgets, too little time for independent, rigorous research...), and especially, and unfortunately for the Humanities, that rich and powerful site for production and transmission of knowledge about culture, education, selfhood, and so much more that is indispensable to human civilization.

What is your message for the readers of Live Encounters?

What a wonderful title your ejournal has! Encounters across cultures, places, nations, countries are precious, and part of the challenge is, I find, to communicate richly, giving enough space to listening as well as speaking. Readers encountering another's imaginative world through books or the Internet, a musical performance experienced live or recorded, or people encountering each other and agreeing then to build up something (solidarity, a creative event, a fledgling association or institution)... it is worth one's while to not remain locked in a closed world, and open up to potentially risky, potentially hugely enriching encounters.

And yes, sadly, as the work of Edward Said and so many other radical critics showed through their reading of history and texts, in overtly unequal exchanges such as those between slave and master in the USA or UK, or colonizing masters and the most marginal of the colonized (think of the story of indigenous peoples in Australia or Canada), or societies divided hierarchically in near-absolute terms by caste or race or class, it IS possible to encounter another, yet not to give her/ him respect, not to listen to her/ him. Are we listening to those we encounter? Are we creating genuine dialogues?



You are in safe hands

Einstein's lesser known work
But a masterpiece
A handbook
'How to become a legend'
In this book he researched
Thinkers, scientists and philosophers,
Listed a pattern to their behaviors

Highlights are as follows :
You have to be an idler,
A COMPULSIVE ONE.
You have successfully reached the high points
Of excessive indulgence and self pity
"No one loves me, no one understands me"
Perfect.

One day you wake up in a gutter
Hung over
Shaken up by a pig
Pushing hard to hump
And you ask why?
TICK TICK TICK....
Damn, it's a digital world now
Loading.....
A strange curiosity takes over
And you decide to resolve it
Though by now it's obvious
You've got nothing to lose
- A keynote to sure success.

You run on the streets, naked
"Eureka...Eureka"

What do you expect now?
You'll be beaten to pulp
Of course
Thrown back in the same gutter
Where it all began
Pigs don't fuck the dead ones
They not that desperate
Don't be disheartened
You are only dead, better off

There sure is hope.
A few decades later
You begin from the beginning
born again
Unaware that a son of another mother
Has reclaimed your finding
Twisted a few squares and triangles
Here and there
And along with a bunch of jerks
Created a mass following
Yes, a strong contender
To become the noble man

And you
Ignorant of the greatest revelation
Will indulge in cheap Chinese toxic toys
Sleep off, careless...

But pray, you never encounter
A paedophile pig
Rocking your cradle



A Place for All --- Struggle for Equality at the Western Wall

Anat Hoffman

Executive Director of Irac

"The problem is that the people running the Kotel itself represent only one kind of Jewish vision: Ultra-Orthodox...the Council is all men. They are all Orthodox, without exception. They make the rules and the rest of us are shut out of the process."

It is their ban on women reading from a Torah Scroll in the women's section, even though Orthodox Jewish law permits it. It is their decision that women cannot wear a Tallit (prayer shawl) while praying unless it is done in a way that does not upset the men. They are the ones that say women singing too loudly is forbidden, and it is their choice to keep the wall segregated like an Orthodox synagogue 24 hours a day."



Why can we coexist in one place but not another? We, non-Orthodox Jews, don't throw sand at the Orthodox when they are swimming, so why do they hurl stones and insults at us when we are praying? For too many years we have simply accepted this as the status quo, but the time has come to stand up and claim our stake at Judaism's holiest site.

The modern state of Israel is a land of deep contrasts and none are more obvious than the difference between her two largest cities: Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. As a native-born Israeli, or Sabra, I assure you that our country is much more than these two cities, but these two distinct places are an apt metaphor for some of Israel's biggest challenges, as well as some unique solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

I have been fighting for pluralism in Israel for my entire career. When I was a member of the Jerusalem City Council and leader of the opposition, I worked to give a voice to residents in the city that were being marginalized. I continue this work today as the Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center in Jerusalem. We work for solutions that will allow all Israelis to live in Israel as equals. We also combat the Orthodox hegemony on religious life for Israel's Jewish citizens. Ground zero in this battle is the Western Wall. This is Judaism's holiest site and an example of how the will of the majority is sometimes subservient to the wishes of a vocal minority. So why am I talking about Tel Aviv?

While Jerusalem is known for its unique place in world history and its sacred status to three religions, Tel Aviv is known for its beaches. Tourists come from all over the world to enjoy miles of coastline. In many ways the first modern Hebrew speaking city looks like any other Mediterranean beach destination, but there is something unique taking place on our coast line. One of our beaches is segregated. Men can swim on certain days, and women on others.

Usually when I write about segregation it is to rail against it, but this is different. I think it is wonderful that Tel Aviv has one beach that is segregated by gender. While 95% of Tel Aviv's beaches are mixed areas where men and women enjoy the sun and surf together, there is one walled off section where religious Jews can come and swim in a setting that is comfortable for them. Israel's beaches are a resource for all Israelis, so having a place for religious Jews alongside secular Jews shows that the potential for compromise actually exists (at least at the beach.)

Travel one hour to Jerusalem and that spirit of compromise disappears. The Kotel (Western Wall) is run by one group. They are Orthodox. Efforts to set up areas for mixed services have representation on the Western Wall Heritage Council? The Kotel is holy to all Jews, but decisions about it are made by a very few.

Why can we coexist in one place but not another? We, non-Orthodox Jews, don't throw sand at the Orthodox when they are swimming, so why do they hurl stones and insults at us when we are praying? For too many years we have simply accepted this as the status quo, but the time has come to stand up and claim our stake at Judaism's holiest site.

Women Of the Wall נשות הכותל

Police warn Raya that she could be arrested for praying aloud.



Orthodox extremists are drifting towards excessive demands of modesty. No longer is it enough that men and women are separated by a partition at the Kotel so men are not disturbed by women, but women are asked not to sing loudly or not to sing at all. The Minister of Religious Affairs stated that the Wall itself listens and is offended by immodest behavior such as women singing.

What exactly is the Western Wall? Why do we call it Judaism's holiest site? Basically, it is a two thousand year old retaining wall built by King Herod when the Temple stood in Jerusalem. This was the place that Jews were required to come three times a year in order to make a sacrifice to God. The Jews revolted against Roman rule in the year 67CE and the Temple was destroyed in the year 70CE. All that remains from our Temple is this retaining wall. Its original function was to keep the mountain from sliding, but it has turned into a symbol of so much more.

Jews are supposed to turn toward Jerusalem when they pray no matter where they are in the world. If a Jew happens to be in Jerusalem then they turn towards the Western Wall. We put our messages to God in its cracks with the hope that our prayers will be heard. The Israeli Army swears in its elite paratrooper units there, and we celebrate both religious and national moments of pride and sorrow in front of the Western Wall. There is no place in the world that represents Jewish and Israeli hopes, dreams, and fears as vividly as this place.

The problem is that the people running the Kotel itself represent only one kind of Jewish vision: Ultra-Orthodox. The Western Wall acts like an embassy. It is technically not under the jurisdiction of the City, but rather Western Wall Heritage Council. This is the group who decides who can do what at a place that is supposed to be for all Jews. With one exception, the Council is all men. They are all Orthodox, without exception. They make the rules and the rest of us are shut out of the process.

It is their ban on women reading from a Torah Scroll in the women's section, even though Orthodox Jewish law permits it. It is their decision that women cannot wear a Tallit (prayer shawl) while praying unless it is done in a way that does not upset the men. They are the ones that say women singing too loudly is forbidden, and it is their choice to keep the wall segregated like an Orthodox synagogue 24 hours a day.

The Kotel has always been a microcosm of major dilemmas in the area of religion and state. First, who decides how we run the holiest site for the Jewish people? Are services conducted in the way many Jews practice Judaism, which is with the liberal denominations? Or do we cater to the people on the ground, the ultra-Orthodox, who are present at the Wall at every hour of every day and literally take shifts to make sure the wall is never alone?

If we ignore the people who are there constantly, then we are offending the persons and groups worshipping at every given moment. But if we ignore the vast numbers of Jews in Israel and around the world who practice differently from the Wall's guardians, we are guaranteeing that the majority control at the Wall will always be ultra-Orthodox. We need to find a balance.

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Above: Police film women praying at the wall

Top: Segregation at the Wall

Middle: Praying at the Wall

Bottom: Waiting outside Police Station for WOW supporter detained for questioning.

Women are not supposed to do anything that hurts the feelings of anyone else. This really means Ultra-Orthodox men, who find the very sight of a woman trying to have a spiritual moment so offensive that they create a disturbance of the peace. In order to placate this one minority view, the Israeli police force women to drape their prayer shawls over their shoulders so that it looks like they are simply wearing a scarf.

I believe that all gender segregation in Israel begins at the Kotel. The ultra-Orthodox's fear of yielding to their *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination, has become a force that dictates life choices to all members of society, regardless of their religious views. When Israeli government gave the ultra-Orthodox the right to decide on what women were allowed to do at the Kotel, we gave them keys to the whole public sphere.

Finding a compromise between liberal and ultra-Orthodox Judaism is becoming harder and harder. Orthodox extremists are drifting towards excessive demands of modesty. No longer is it enough that men and women are separated by a partition at the Kotel so men are not disturbed by women, but women are asked not to sing loudly or not to sing at all. The Minister of Religious Affairs stated that the Wall itself listens and is offended by immodest behavior such as women singing. Not only is singing a problem, but so is blowing shofar, reading the Megilla, reading Torah, or waving the lulav.

I have been actively trying to change the way the Kotel is managed for over twenty years, and I have even been arrested while trying to pray at the Kotel. What was my crime? I committed the terrible act of holding a Torah Scroll with the intent to read. Currently under the Kotel regulations it is a crime to offend the feelings of another person at least when it comes to women performing the most basic Jewish rituals at Judaism's holiest site. Why is this allowed to persist?

There is no shortage of stories from committed Jews from all over the world who talk about the trauma they have suffered trying to worship in their own way at the Kotel. As recently as last month, a visitor from Boston, Deb Houben, was detained for three hours for wearing her tallit (prayer shawl) at the Kotel. I was there and I know better than most how terrible that Thursday morning felt for Deb.

What was her crime? She wore her tallit at Judaism's holiest site. Women are not supposed to do anything that hurts the feelings of anyone else. This really means Ultra-Orthodox men, who find the very sight of a woman trying to have a spiritual moment so offensive that they create a disturbance of the peace.

In order to placate this one minority view, the Israeli police force women to drape their prayer shawls over their shoulders so that it looks like they are simply wearing a scarf. This farce only serves to insult our intelligence (a tallit is always a tallit) and to give the Ultra-Orthodox and the police pretext to harass women who just want to pray in peace.

We need diversity on the Western Wall Heritage Council.

The stones of the Western Wall have been listening to the prayers of all Jews and non-Jews alike for thousands of years. When I go to the Kotel, I think the Wall is actually asking something of us. It wants to be a symbol of peace and coexistence and not a point of division. But it needs people of good will from all faiths and practices to make that dream a reality.

It is difficult to believe that a problem so complex could have such a simple fix, but this would go farther than most can imagine in changing the public face of the Western Wall. Is it really so crazy to think that Jews from inside and outside of Israel could come together and figure out a way to create a space that is inclusive for all visitors? Why has it not happened?

Nobody wants to give up a monopoly, especially when he feels he is fulfilling God's will. The Orthodox rabbis imposing harsh restrictions on the site are well aware that they are in the minority but, in their worldview, compromise is not necessary.

Judaism, in their view, is not something that needs to change to reflect the complexities of a modern democracy. They know that as soon as they begin to compromise with other streams in Judaism it will lead to the inevitable end to their monopoly on religious life in Israel. This is precisely the reason we in the Progressive Movement in Israel cannot give up this fight.

In Israel there is no separation of religion and state, even though Israel's founding document ensures freedom of religion. The Orthodox Rabbinate controls all aspects of religious life in Israel and has since the founding of the modern state in 1948. Marriage and divorce is controlled by this one group, their synagogues are built by the state, and many of their rabbis (around 4000) receive a salary from the state. It was not until this year, after a 7 year battle, that we won the case granting the title of rabbi and a state salary to the first non-Orthodox rabbi in the history of Israel, Rabbi Miri Gold.

So it is clear we still have a long way to go before there is a level playing field. The Western Wall is the holiest site for Reform Jews, Conservative Jews, Orthodox Jews, unaffiliated Jews, and any other title or definition that Jews use around the world to identify themselves. The fact that it is so central to everyone can make it feel like it is the only thing left that actually proves that we are still one people. We cannot let it continue to be a symbol of division and alienation.

We at IRAC have started a campaign in Israel to bring this issue to the top of the agenda. We have begun circulating a petition for people from all over the world to sign so we can let the Israeli government know that the status quo is unacceptable. We are preparing to take this fight to the Israeli Supreme Court. Please sign our petition and pass it on to as many people as you can. [LINK](#)

Women Of the Wall נשות הכותל

We managed to find a way to share the beaches in Tel Aviv, so I know there is hope for Jerusalem as well. The first step in solving a problem is having everyone affected given a voice in the debate. That is why I am not giving ultimatums here about what the future of the Western Wall should look like. I am only calling for the group that manages it to be expanded to include voices that represent all sectors of society.



© Women of the Wall

Please sign our petition and pass it on to as many people as you can.

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The Pluralist

Newsletter of the Israel Religious Action Center
Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism





MUSIC FROM THE EDGE

Folk musicians from Kutch (in Gujarat) have the odds stacked against them. Not only do most of them belong to marginal communities but they also play instruments that aren't respected any more.

- Randhir Khare

One of the few surviving music masters is **Musa Gulam Jath**, a Maldhari or cattle herder who lives on the lip of the Great Rann of Kutch. He plays the Jodia Pawa, a double flute. I remember the first time I heard him play at someone's residence in Bhuj, the district headquarters of Kutch (in Gujarat).

I was given the rare opportunity to experience the triumph of the creative spirit over the vicissitudes of injustice and misfortune.

A musician, powered by his talent and tradition, rising out of the difficulties in his personal life to play music that was inspirational.

It was both stimulating and humbling.

MUSIC FROM THE EDGE



Family of Musa Gulam Jath © Randhir Khare

Most traditional Kutchi folk musicians are victims of humiliation, exploitation and neglect... creative fulfilment being their sole reward. Even under the Raos and other royalty, support and encouragement was extended only to those who were in favour. The others were forced to eke out a living by performing at community gatherings, festivals, and religious celebrations and on occasions in the homes of those who had specially hired their services. They had to, even in those times, supplement their earnings by working on their own land, grazing their herds and flocks, working as hired hands or developing other popular-craft skills. But integration with the Indian Union after Independence began to throw up a whole new set of demands and challenges – rapid urbanisation, the incursion of non-Kutchis into the region and increasing commercialism which affected not merely the social and economic life but also culture and entertainment were among the new pressures. Power and control that was once only enjoyed by landed families and royalty was wholly given over to a plethora of new holders, including businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, armed forces and security personnel and a number of old and new landed families. Add to the list the long arms of international and national cultural bodies and agencies, the music, film and television industries and innumerable individuals who, in the name of culture carry away valuable recordings, after paying musicians a pittance.

The Festivals of India, which showcased the ‘culture of India abroad’, picked up a few musicians from Kutch, displayed them like performing fleas and then dropped them back into their homes so that they could continue to grovel for survival. It must have been a disorientating experience for many of them. After being feted in the world outside, returning to a life bereft of hope became even more difficult. Follow-up support by Government agencies for the chosen ones and others has been grossly insubstantial. Many of the new masters have been known to use their influence and public positions to make musicians perform at marriages, birthdays, official and semi-official gatherings, give them a meal and send them home without paying them even a rupee. The musicians do not complain because they innocently hold on to the hope that some day they will be able to get a favour or two in exchange for the performance. Expectedly, the favours are never forthcoming. Many of the new masters have been known to use their influence and public positions to make

RANDHIR KHARE



Children of Musa Gulam Jath © Randhir Khare

musicians perform at marriages, birthdays, official and semi-official gatherings, give them a meal and send them home without paying them even a rupee. The musicians do not complain because they innocently hold on to the hope that some day they will be able to get a favour or two in exchange for the performance. Expectedly, the favours are never forthcoming.

The tendency to under-value traditional folk music in Kutch is growing at an appalling rate and the new masters often imagine that they are doing the musicians a favour by inviting them to perform. Like the master murli player Surath Nath who died of cold and over exposure to the inclement winter of Banni because he was forced to perform at the government sponsored arts festival to attract tourists – even though he was already very ill. No one seemed to care for the master musician’s health. All they wanted was that he perform. Ironically, officialdom doesn’t care a damn for the pitiful state of the Vaghdis (Surat Nath’s community) a nomadic people but they wouldn’t think twice to crucify one of their accomplished elders.

Of course he’s just one of the many other musicians from traditional community who has got a raw deal. There’s also Siddique Mitha Jath, master of the Surando, a stringed folk instrument in the shape of a peacock which originated in Sind and Baluchistan. He ended up doing a menial job in Ahmedabad. Then there’s also the Borrindo maker and player who is the young potter Osmangani Kumbhar, grandson of the famed potter Buddhachacha Umar Kumbhar.

One of the few surviving music masters is Musa Gulam Jath, a Maldhari or cattle herder who lives on the lip of the Great Rann of Kutch. He plays the Jodia Pawa, a double flute. I remember the first time I heard him play at a someone’s residence in Bhuj, the district headquarters of Kutch (in Gujarat). I was given the rare opportunity to experience the triumph of the creative spirit over the vicissitudes of injustice and misfortune. A musician, powered by his talent and tradition, rising out of the difficulties in his personal life to play music that was inspirational. It was both stimulating and humbling.



Family of Musa Gulam Jath © Randhir Khare

His son was in hospital, his wife seriously ill, his cattle had perished and prospects of farm labour had dwindled due to incessant drought, the roof of his house had collapsed in a storm and he had just about got himself out of a scrape with the security forces who had picked him up while he was grazing someone else's cattle on the border, suspecting him to be an 'enemy' infiltrator. I'd imagined that he'd be so weighed down that he'd hardly be in any position to even hold a conversation with us. He didn't do just that but also shared the music he made on his Jodiya Pawa.

As the notes poured out from the double flute and filled the room, I shut my eyes and wandered out into the Bhuj air and away northwards till I reached the rolling grasslands of Banni, then on to the Rann and across...below me the land was cracked, blistered, dusty and pitiless, around me the air was cool and flocks of migratory birds glided passed towards a blue horizon...I don't know how many lands I passed, how many borders, how many lives...all I know is that I was filled with the strength and wonder of those notes...when I returned, I found myself crying.

When the notes settled around us, we waited in silence for a few moments and then I stood up and left the room. The intensity in the air was more than I could handle. Musa Gulam Jat joined me sometime later. 'Have you heard anyone playing a Jodiya Pawa before this?' He asked, breaking the stillness between us.

'No.'

He began speaking as if he was setting a message out in a bottle to sea, hoping it would be picked up by someone, somewhere...

'This is my life,' he said, tapping the double flute. 'It's more precious to me than anything else in the world. It keeps me alive. Without this I'd be nothing, no one. So let me tell you about this that is so precious to me... see, one is the male and is called the Nar and the other is the female and is called Madi.



© Randhir Khare

The nar keeps the sur and the Madi plays the melody. Together they make the music of the spirit...the music of the desert, shepherds who brought this instrument from Sind when they crossed the border to India from Pakistan. That was a long time ago. In those days there were no borders and shepherds could travel with their flocks. Today, borders have divided people... sometimes I wonder, where do I belong? Whether I am that side of the border or this side, my lot will be the same. So it isn't the question of whether I'm rich or poor. I belong where my family is, my music is. There is no dignity in being a Jath. No one cares for our community and the pitiful way in which we live. You have to come and see for yourself. When there's a storm or it rains heavily, the roof over our heads is knocked down.'

And the message unravelled, about how he learnt the Jodiya Pawa from his father when he was fourteen, the years spent playing whilst he herded cattle, at fairs, on feast days, in melas... then out to perform in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Pune, Nagpur, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi.

It was curiosity and not appreciation that greeted him wherever he went because his instrument was an oddity, his music quaint. Neither fitted into the changing needs of his audiences. It was his performances in England, France and Germany that opened new possibilities for him. 'They may not have known all about the raags I played, but they liked the music, listened with respect. I felt I was being appreciated as a folk musician there. I was somebody.'

Those were real moments of sharing we spent together before the everydayness of survival took over again and he went away, leaving me with the message in the bottle and a night sky that was crowded with stars. In the years that followed, Musa and I became good friends and

I visited him in his makeshift home in Dayapar, near the Great Rann. The moments we shared were precious, the tea black, strong and sweet and the smell of dung hung in the air. In the home of the Master, the silences were filled with fellowship. Outside and far away, the winds came and went from the Great Rann, circling hysterically in the dusty spaces above.

At Dayapar For Musa Gulam Jath

The moon dissolves over the Rann,
Reborn as jackal yaps –
Hard-toothed, bone-breaking,
Moving in the wind –
Smelling of centuries,
Heavy with wandering caravans
Of history, sea skeletons,
Dead memory of dolphins,
Seahorses and pearls now dust
Clenched in fists of salt.

The moon dissolves over the Rann
And I turn to you and ask,
'Which is the path homewards
To remembrance
Where we will find ourselves again
As brother Maldharis?
Where is the vortex of belonging
Where the departed sit in silence
Listening to the moon speak
In the movements of time?'

You stare out into the dark
Until jackal yaps dissolve
Into the effulgence of time
And light shreds dreams.





A Simple Cell

There are five people in a solar system.

It is Xmas day.

Each of them sees themselves as the sun, with the other four a planet spinning round, to their magnetism.

It is a fact.

We behave this way.

On one level, according to Einstein's theory of relativity, we are a collection of a few billion molecules.

All, tiny, individual points, and we, as we perceive ourselves to be, actually do not exist.

We are not solid in this universe. Of course it would be absurd for a molecule, in my big toe, to understand the whole of me, for it to have a concept of my wonderful brain, my great thoughts, feelings, understandings, knowledge, appears ridiculous.

The whole of me subjugated to the comprehension of a molecule?

How preposterous!

Proportionately, therefore, there is no argument, surely, with the fact that each human being is a molecule of humanity?

But we all know, living as we do in a society where everyone knows everything, how the whole world should be.

Each molecule of humanity imagines it has the answer to the world's problems.

Families all over the 'Christian' part of this planet Earth gather today to participate in this Xmas celebration; as they pontificate their opinion on how the world should be run or on how it is another's fault their own failings.

It could be any city, town, village in either hemisphere.

Let us say our five are in Paris celebrating the Nativity in the Rue Notre Dames de Champs at the back of Montparnasse.

Our party consists of an estranged photographer, Dennis, and his increasingly eccentric ex wife, Caroline, who dabbles in the world of prophecy.

They meet for the traditional repast at their son, Nick's house. Their daughter, Natasha who at 22 is sixteen months younger than her brother, coordinates the event.



Nick's girlfriend, Louise, also joins them.

It begins disastrously owing to the 'astrological conjunction between Mars and Saturn' delaying Caroline's departure from her house.

Nick and Louise when joined by Natasha and Dennis are unprepared and undecided as to the preparation of food. Underneath the varying opinions as to how to make the day as 'jolly' as it is supposed to be, lie vast chasms of experience.

Unwritten, unsaid, divisions and unions, infest the spaces between them.

Each knows how the other should be and forgets them in the rush to tell the other how to be.

Yet the past is dead, gone, irretrievable and from its ashes, the meat of sacrifice is consumed, between wine and paper crowns. In millions of households throughout our world, this Xmas, eyes are met across tables and that which has passed over, in time; yet has left its trace in the

posture of the living, is held tensely, in the chest.

It breaks out in an inevitable clash.

It is the nature of these occasions and the set up.

The solar system in which there is competition to be the sun.

Emotion quietens, in the wintry snows of Paris and in the silent Park opposite the house in Montparnasse, which could be anywhere in the world.

We are all a solar system. Within each of us lies a Pluto, Saturn, Venus, Mars, Earth, Mercury and Neptune. But we are drawn out to always seek, in the external for answers to questions that have an internal source.

There is no unity and so things fall apart.

The source seeks us but we refuse it preferring to cast out the mote in another's eye before even noticing that we have an eye ourselves, let alone a mote in it.

It is the same for us all.

Little molecules of humanity resonating till the waves that wash this simple cell, desert me.



Creating Healthy Boundaries Part II

- Rigid Boundaries can affect your Health

by Candess M Campbell, PhD.

Last month I focused on Crossing Boundaries and Collapsed Boundaries. Now, let's look at the effect Rigid Boundaries have on your relationships and your health.

Robert was a well-educated man and was the manager of a local company. He had a beautiful wife and a playful son. The beginning of the marriage was good and he and his wife had a lot of fun together. Robert had always used his work to keep himself from getting too close to anyone. Shortly after they married, their son was born and his wife was busy with the child. After a few years though, his wife wanted a deeper connection. In an unconscious attempt to keep his wife from getting too close, Robert would either stay late at work or start fights over nothing of importance. He was confused about what his wife wanted, felt resistant and closed his heart. As a result at an early age, he had a heart attack (hardened arteries/hardened heart). This is an example of how rigid boundaries can create problems in relationships and health.

Learning to balance yourself in your life and to allow people to love and care for you is critical to being healthy. Boundaries are flexible and can change depending upon the situation, but being aware of when and how you set your boundaries is important. Here is a general guideline you can use. This writing has not accounted for the differences between cultures, so take what is helpful for you and leave the rest.

Rigid Boundaries

Do you find that you **don't involve yourself in activities where you will need to have close interaction with others?** This can be attributed to being shy or being extremely introverted or a pattern of not wanting to develop close relationships.

There is a woman I know who stays in her house most of the time. She doesn't venture out with friends or spend much time with her children. She appears to be afraid of others. The energy around her home is stagnant and she appears to be aging much quicker than her years.

Interaction with others and developing close relationships contributes to your emotional and physical health. As you saw in the previous example, shutting down your heart can literally shut down your heart.

Do you **fill your time with work or activities** leaving your friends and family feeling neglected?



Pics © Candess M Campbell

The best example of this rigid boundary would be myself. I tend to work more than is reasonable for the amount of hours in the day. My goal is to clone myself x12, but until then, it is a continual balancing act to make room for friends and family on a consistent basis. One way I have solved some of this is to create projects with my friends. I even began writing a book with my granddaughter to have fun and increase our connective time. The problem with isolating through work and over-working is it can affect your health. In 2006 I struggled with adrenal fatigue from pushing myself too hard. The treatment was rest and nutritional supplements. I had to take most of the year off to recover my energy and it was a slow road back. I found out that when I had time to spend with friends, they were not very responsive. They said they had never seen me needing anything and they didn't know what to do.

You may find yourself in this situation. If your creativity abounds or you just don't like being around others much, it is imperative to find time to rest and to be connected to your loved ones. I have made a shift in this and my relationships are much more fruitful and I feel alive!

Creating fights because of fear of engulfment or abandonment is another example of rigid boundaries.

I recently had a couple as clients. They both had dysfunctional childhoods and they had a difficult time finding a way to connect with each other in a healthy manner. They would vacillate between being "madly in love," and fighting about everything. They came to my office and for the whole session just yelled at each other. I could see the hurt under the anger and how fearful they were, not only of connecting, but also of being alone. It took two sessions of their yelling before they would even let me intervene. Underneath this anger was a mixed fear of engulfment (collapsed boundaries) and being abandoned (losing oneself in the other and then having the other leave.)

When in relationship it is important to have a good sense of oneself. A relationship is all about merging and separating and we learn this first as children. If you have not had a healthy childhood where you learned to be close and have separate time, it is important that you think about this and watch yourself.

Although it may seem unnatural, setting a plan for when to connect and separate in relationship can be helpful. Practice time together and time apart. If your pattern is not healthy, you will not be able to figure it out by your feelings. You do need a specific plan.

Another sign of rigid boundaries is that you **have many acquaintances and not very many friends**. This again is keeping people away. Or you **may draw others out, but not disclose much about yourself**.



Have you ever spent time with someone, having lunch or dinner together and when you leave realize you spent the whole time talking and didn't know anything about them? You may leave feeling like you over-disclosed or feeling unsettled. This is what happens when you are around someone who does not disclose much personal information. You leave feeling unsatisfied.

If you are the one who doesn't share, you leave feeling unsatisfied as well. This can come from not trusting others or low self-esteem.

I have seen this mostly in social situations. There are some people who will "run a room." They seem to know everyone. At a social gathering they go from group to group getting others to share about themselves (which most people love to do) and they don't share anything themselves. At the time they may feel powerful, but when they leave they can feel isolated and lonely.

Not connecting in an intimate way with anyone not only can affect the heart, but it can affect the immune system as well. Everyone needs connection, touch, and the sense of being seen and known.

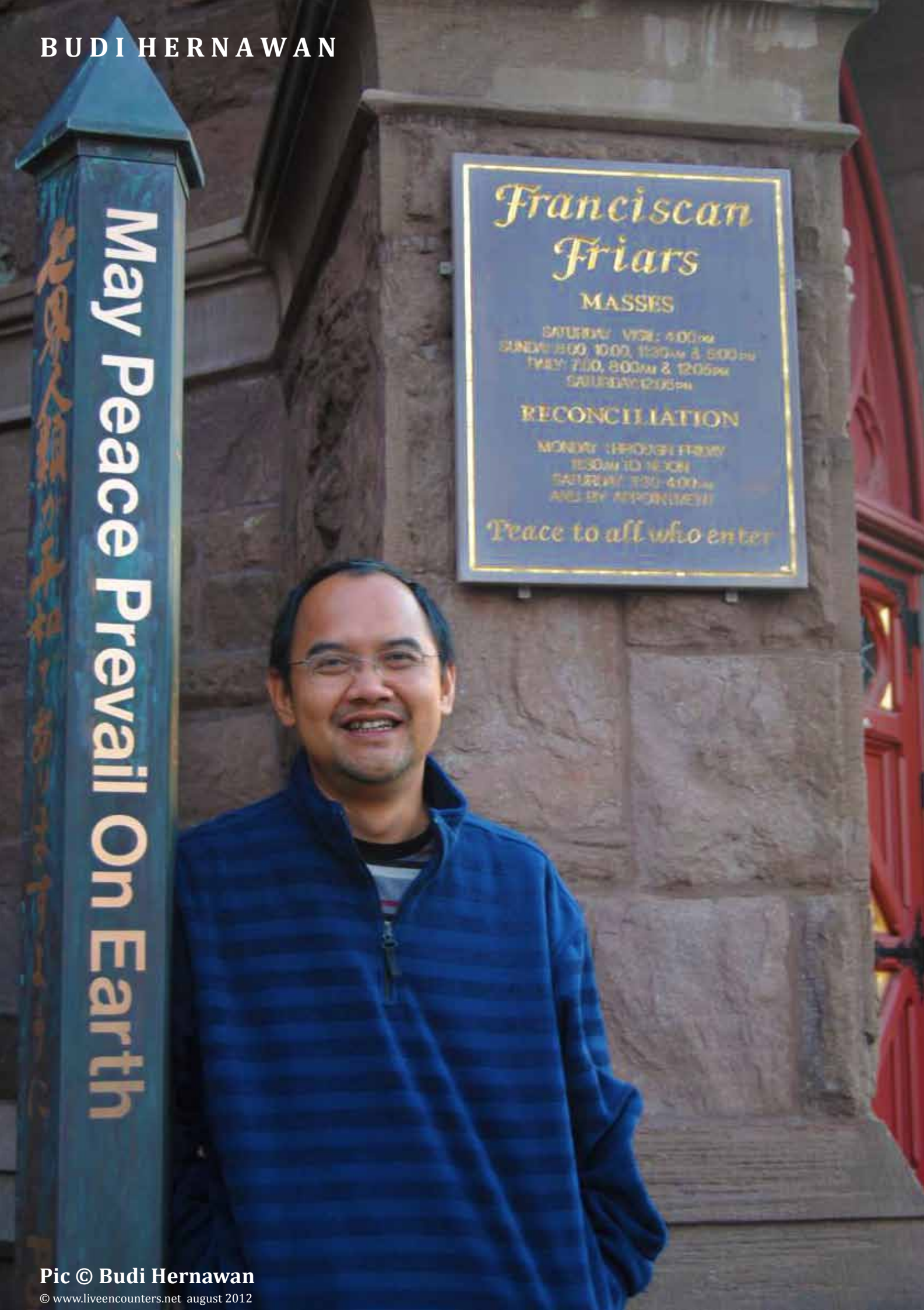
Rigid Boundaries can come from **not being able to identify your own feelings, needs and desires**.

Often clients come to me to try to figure out what they feel and what they want to do. This is good because it means they understand there is a problem and they need some guidance in solving it, therefore finding a solution! It is a problem when someone is in a relationship or even a job situation and they are not able to identify their own feelings, needs and desires. This rigid boundary blocks healthy communication and they may feel angry or frustrated and it can create a lot of stress. Stress is the undercurrent to all illness.

One of the values of taking time to assess your own boundaries is that healthy and unhealthy boundaries are learned. Whether you are teaching your children through example or modeling poor or healthy boundaries to your employees, coworkers or friends, it is helpful to know what you are doing. What is so great is information gives us the choice to increase our health and live a happy and abundant life!

Next month I will share information in Creating Healthy Boundaries Part III

I would love to hear your feedback. Contact me through my website. Like me on [Facebook \(1st Profile\)](#) and/or friend me at [Facebook \(2nd Profile\)](#).



Pic © Budi Hernawan

They are just Papuans

Recent violence shows the authorities share a disturbing mindset about the residents of Papua

by **Budi Hernawan OFM** Franciscan friar,
former director of the Office for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Church in Jayapura,
West Papua, and a PhD scholar at the Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian
National University *Reprinted by Special Permission of Jemma Purdey, Inside Indonesia.*

The statement by President Yudhoyono that recent violent incidents in Papua are 'small-scale incidents compared to those in the Middle East' ([Jakarta Post, 12 June 2012](#)) is worrying. The worry is not only that, by comparing Papuans and people in the Middle East in this way, he appeared to confuse his constitutional duty to protect Indonesian nationals with his role as observer of world politics. It is also because his comment suggests the president views Papuans as living 'bare lives.'

First coined by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, a 'bare life' denotes a life that is limited to its biological and physiological dimensions. The term emphasises the emptiness of such life, a life that is devoid of meaning and value. **Lived bare, the life of an individual is equivalent to a piece of meat. If someone destroys this life, it makes no difference because a bare life that is ended cannot be transformed into sacrifice. It has no higher meaning or significance.**

Whenever a Papuan is killed in violent conflict in Papua, this attitude is on public display. Government officials proclaim their concern about 'national integrity' or 'security', in abstract and formal terms. We never, or rarely, hear them expressing sympathy for the victims, or acknowledging that their lives were valuable and dignified. Human dignity is overshadowed by abstract calculations that serve only the interests of the state. The lives of Papuan victims are thus made bare, made devoid of meaning and stripped of all recognition and rights.



Pic © Budi Hernawan
© www.liveencounters.net august 2012



Bishop John Saklil of Timika conducting funeral ceremony for Kelly Kwalik, leader of free papuan movement who was shot dead by the Indonesian police in 2009. Pic © Budi Hernawan

Violence on the march

The resurgence of violence in recent weeks in Papua is suggestive of this mindset. Since May 2012, unidentified killers have claimed three lives and left six others wounded in Jayapura alone. Most victims were civilians, including a German national, but a few of them were members of TNI (Indonesia's National Armed Forces) and Police. The victims were attacked when they were on the way home from work, such as [Private Doengki Kune](#), or busy at work, such as Tri Saroni, or simply enjoying leisure time on the beach, such as the [German biologist Pieter Helmut](#).

The killers continue to operate freely. Law enforcers seem unable to stop the killings, or to prevent the killers from publically displaying the bodies they leave behind. Randomness has become the language of terror that the killers want to communicate to the whole Papuan population. Their message is crystal clear: they can target anybody regardless of nationality, occupation, gender, ethnicity, time and location. Their impact was great. For a time, the busy road connecting Jayapura and Sentani (where the Jayapura airport is located) was deserted by 6 pm.

The recent violence in the highland town of Wamena in June 2012 evinces a similar pattern. On 6 June two members of the armed forces, [Private Ahmad Ruslan](#) and [Private Ahmad Sarifuddin](#), were riding a motorcycle when they ran over a three-year old boy, Debet Wanimbo and left him injured. Instead of being attentive and responsible to the victim, these soldiers tried to escape, triggering an angry reaction by locals. The locals took the law into their own hands. They stabbed Private Ahmad Ruslan to death and left another soldier in a critical condition. This situation immediately triggered retaliation by the soldiers' comrades in battalion 756.

The soldiers rioted. They stabbed [Mr Elinus Yoman](#) (30 y.o) to death and injured 15 others, and destroyed a lot of private and public property. The commander in chief of the TNI eventually acknowledged, rather casually, that the troops 'shouldn't have over-reacted' (Jakarta Globe, 13 June 2012). But their rampage amply demonstrates how the authorities persistently view Papuans as living bare lives, unworthy of protection or value.

The Wamena example is much more complex than what we see on the surface for two reasons. First, the violence fits into a long pattern that arises out of, and reinforces, the difficult relationship between locals and the army garrison permanently stationed in this area. This relationship has long been marked by cautiousness, suspicion and sometimes hostility. **For many people in Wamena, the recent violence is reminiscent of the 2003 Wamena case, for which prosecution is still pending with the Attorney General. In 2003, there was an intensive military operation in the Wamena area following the burglary of the military arsenal there. According to a National Human Rights Commission investigation, during the search for the stolen weapons, soldiers indiscriminately arrested and tortured at least 30 innocent civilians, killed nine others and forcefully displaced the population of 13 villages.**



Pic © Budi Hernawan

Second, at the community level, the recent incident triggered a communal dispute between the family of the boy who was injured in the motorcycle crash, and those who suffered losses when the army ran amok. These victims blamed the family of the boy for the whole affair, and for the community's suffering as a result. Some have demanded compensation from the family of the boy. Whilst this dispute can be settled by a payment agreed by both sides, the scars left by the dispute will remain recorded in the collective memory of the Wamena people.

In a different setting, the killing of a **Papuan activist Mako Tabuni** on 14 June further illustrates another example of the bare life status of Papuans. Mr Tabuni was an outspoken leader of West Papua National Committee (KNPB), a political organisation which campaigns and advocates for a referendum for Papua. Following a rally he helped organised, the police ambushed him while he was chewing betel nuts with his companions. Instead of upholding due process and arresting and processing Mr Tabuni according to regular police procedures, the police shot him dead, claiming that he resisted arrest and possessed weapons. This incident immediately triggered mob rioting around the crime scene and the burning of shops owned by non-indigenous Papuans. Innocent people became victims, regardless of their ethnic background. **The incident has fueled tension between indigenous and non-indigenous Papuans, and there is a danger of serious communal conflict in the future if these tensions are not carefully addressed.**

An exit from violence?

Given the escalation of violence, the response of the president is inadequate. If the highest policy maker in the country has already dismissed the Papua conflict as being just small-scale, not as significant as other world trouble spots, and perhaps therefore not really worthy of attention, what can the Papuans expect? Can Papuans expect that the international community will invoke the principle of the responsibility to protect and intervene on their behalf? But apart from perhaps Vanuatu, no country has placed Papua high in terms of its national interests and foreign policy. **Almost all the nations that count have repeatedly stated publicly to the Indonesian government that Papua is purely a domestic matter for Indonesia and that problems there fall within Indonesian jurisdiction in accordance with the principle of national sovereignty enshrined in the UN Charter.** Furthermore, Indonesian foreign policy has deliberately isolated Papuans from international attention.

However, from history we learn that the weak cannot always be defeated by force permanently. In their recent book, **Why Civil Resistance Works**, **Erica Chenoweth** and **Maria J. Stephan** demonstrate that non-violent resistance movements have a higher success rate than movements that rely on armed struggle. Based on 323 case studies worldwide between 1900 and 2006, their study shows that non-violent resistance succeeded 53 per cent of the time, in comparison to only a 26 per cent success rate for armed struggle. In other words, it is not impossible for the Papuans living bare lives to reclaim their dignity by resorting to non-violent means. The prospects may seem remote, and the present outlook may seem bleak, but there is hope in resistance.



This picture released by the Papua Cooperation Forum shows a supporter carrying the portrait of slain vice chairman of the National Committee for West Papua, Mako Tabuni, center, and the banned Morning Star flag during his funeral in Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia, on June 16. Photo: AFP / Papual Cooperation Forum / Septer Manufandu.



Elephant Aid International. Working to improve elephant welfare.

Elephant Aid International (EAI) provides education and hands-on assistance to improve the lives of captive held elephants worldwide.

EAI projects include elephant foot care, mahout and elephant training and the creation of elephant care centers and retirement homes.

Our work is based on respect for elephants and the culture and traditions of the countries in which we work, appreciation for the men and women who live and work with elephants and the knowledge that small changes can make a huge difference.

EAI projects engage mahouts, local NGOs, tourist facilities, elephant welfare groups, researchers and government officials in joint efforts to:

- Improve living conditions for elephants in captivity.
- Offer alternatives to the use of chains to control and contain elephants.
- Eliminate abusive training by teaching mahouts humane methods of care.
- Facilitate the establishment of lifetime care centers (sanctuaries) across Asia.

In spite of a long history of coexistence, elephants and humans in Asia are now competing for limited land and food resources. How governments deal with the problem will determine whether elephants have a place in this rapidly developing world and what that place will be.

We cannot wait to see who will fix the pressing problems facing captive and wild elephants. EAI believes we must all be part of the solution - *one world, one elephant at a time. Please join us.*



A Carol Buckley Project

ELEPHANT AID INTERNATIONAL
One World. One Elephant at a Time



Amazon Watch is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin. We partner with indigenous and environmental organizations in campaigns for human rights, corporate accountability and the preservation of the Amazon's ecological systems.

For more information visit www.amazonwatch.org

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