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## Anti-Semitism in Israel Racism Against Arabs and Arab Jews

Mark Ulyseas





The Shatkona (star) is a symbol used in Hindu yantra that represents the union of both the male and feminine form. More specifically it is supposed to represent Purusha (the supreme being), and Prakriti (mother nature, or causal matter). Often this is represented as Shiva / Shakti. The Shatkona is a hexagram and is associated with the son of Siva-Sakthi, Lord Murugan.



The Shatkona has a more esoteric meaning to many Hindus. They see the lower triangle as representing the three states of a human soul Vishwa (waking), Taijasa (dreaming), and Prajna (deep sleep). The upper triangle represents the three cosmic qualities of the macrocosm (God and the Universe); Virat (the physical world), Hiranyagarbha (the subtle world, Eswara, the great Lord, or God. A mediator can reach a state of Samhadi, where the boundaries between the self and the macrocosm are lost. This state (turia) is represented by the shatkona.

Stylistically, it is almost identical to the Jewish Star of David and the Japanese Kagome crest.

Sri Yantroddharaka Ajaneya courtesy Swami of Virupaksha Temple, Hampi, Karnataka, India.

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## Anti-Semitism in Israel - Racism Against Arabs and Arab Jews

### Mark Ulyseas

This is an in depth look at the State of Israel from the point of view of Israeli academics, writers, activists and the media reports. It traces the historical aspects that have led to rampant racism in this country.



## A Witness to Israeli Racism Speaks Out

### Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month prior to outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She remained in regional Jewish journalism for over 20 years, leaving full-time writing to help run a family business and then completed a range of general office work. Wood and her husband, Brian Fink emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and live in Karmiel, Galilee. She features in *Smith Magazine's* new *Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and contributes to *Technorati*, *Blogcritics* and *Live Encounters* magazine. Her stories - [Website](#) and journalism - [Website](#)



## A Better World is Still Possible: Longing and Belonging in an Age of Transition

### David Morgan

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



## Papua is not a problem but the way we talk about Papua is

### Dr Budi Hernawan

Dr Budi Hernawan, Research Fellow at Abdurrahman Wahid Centre of the University of Indonesia and Lecturer at Paramadina Graduate School of Diplomacy based in Jakarta.



## “Decisive Storm”: Saudi Arabia’s attack on the Houthis...

### Dr. Stig Stenslie

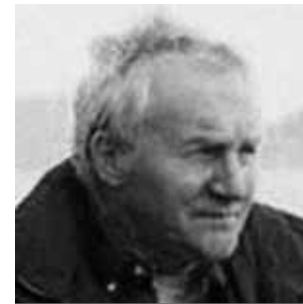
Stenslie, head of the Asia Branch of the Norwegian Defence Staff, has held visiting fellowships at : the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies in Oslo, National University Singapore, Columbia University New York. A doctorate in political science from the University of Oslo, he is author of several books: *Marte Kjær Galtung, 49 Myths About China* (Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming 2014), *Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia: The Challenge of Succession* (Routledge, 2011) and, with Kjetil Selvik, *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East* (IB Tauris, 2011).



## Exile

### 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. [www.randhirkhare.in](http://www.randhirkhare.in)



## Why Can't We Have Our Own Gods?

### Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published 7 poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection *Ripple Effect/Arlen House*; children's story, *Michel the Merman*, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ). He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. [www.terry-mcdonagh.com](http://www.terry-mcdonagh.com)



## The Addict Archetype

### Dr Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the #1 Best-selling author of *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. She is a Blogger, Intuitive Success Coach and International Psychic Medium. She has practiced as a mental health and chemical dependency counselor for over 30 years. [www.12weekstoselfhealing.com](http://www.12weekstoselfhealing.com)



## Viva La Cuba!

### 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. [www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com](http://www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com)



## Chicken Kathi Roll with Pickled Red Onion Relish

### Perinaz Avari

Perinaz (Peri) Avari is a proud Parsi Zoroastrian, native of cosmopolitan Mumbai in India and hospitality professional who's been on many 'food adventures', especially during her 10 years working for the Taj Group of Hotels in India. Now living in America, Peri shares her hospitality wisdom and passion for Parsi and Indian food by creating simple recipes with a global appeal, through her informative articles and world travel adventures on - [Peri's Spice Ladle](#)



## Vada Pav - Here comes the Hot Fritter

### Aryaa Naik

Aryaa is currently the Head, Creatives at Gyaan Adab Centre. Her educational qualifications include Bachelors in Philosophy from Ferguson College, Pune, Post Graduate diploma in Social Communications Media from Sophia College, Mumbai and Masters in Gender, Culture and Development Studies from the University of Pune. Her experience includes script writing and feature writing for publications such as Times of India, Femina, Life 365 and Maharashtra Herald. [www.gyaanadab.org](http://www.gyaanadab.org)



## The Salt Prints

### Chaitanya Guttikar

Chaitanya Guttikar became devoted to creating hand-crafted photographs while pursuing his doctorate in mathematics at Princeton. He first encountered alternative photographic processes in 2007 during a gallery visit in New York and fell in love. In May 2010, he left his professorial job at the University of Miami to return to India. He is now the director of the Goa Center for Alternative Photography (Goa-CAP).



# Anti-Semitism in Israel

## Racism Against Arabs and Arab Jews and its effects

Mark Ulyseas

“And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about it in the wrong way. The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. As it is, they are co-shares with the British in despoiling a people who have done no wrong to them.” - **Mahatama Gandhi** ((Gandhi & Zionism: ‘The Jews’ November 26, 1938. [www.gandhiserve.org/www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.gandhiserve.org/www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org))

Whenever someone criticises the State of Israel the knee jerk reaction from self-appointed gendarmes of Judaism is to accuse the person of anti-Semitism. It is obvious that these people confuse Zionism with Judaism because if both were the same then all Jews would be happily settled in Israel. But this reality escapes a [German Judge](#) who has ruled that anti-zionism is code for anti-Semitism!

The term anti-Semitism was created in 1879 by German agitator Wilhelm Marr to label anti-Jewish campaigns. The use of the word anti-Semitic in describing solely anti-Jewish feeling/action is incorrect because the word comes from **Semite**. It refers to the ancient peoples of the Middle East, which includes Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Akkadians, Arameans and their descendants. The anti-Semitism that we witness in Europe, USA, Israel and elsewhere is not just directed against Jews but also Arabs!

With the rise in anti-Jewish feeling, particularly in Europe (where anti-Semitism has been intrinsic to the population well before Islam), there has been a 40% rise in migration to Israel. Some claim that this violence, threats and intimidation against Jews is also a reaction to Israel’s ‘dealings’ with the Palestinians and the Arab world in general. The propaganda mills keep churning out conflicting reports from both sides. The bloody conflict last year has prompted a number of **IDF soldiers** to come forward and report that they were ordered by their superiors to shoot indiscriminately at the Palestinians. What is the truth? How does one discern what is right or wrong? Perhaps it is time to take a closer look at the State of Israel since its inception. And what better way to do this than by listening to what its own citizens have to say. The prickly issue that invariably causes much angst is the decades old discrimination of Arab Jews and others by Ashkenazi (white) Jews.

**PROFESSOR ELLA HABIA SHOHAT** IN HER ARTICLE, **‘DISLOCATED IDENTITIES...’** [writes](#),

‘I am an Arab-Jew. Or, more specifically, an Iraqi Israeli woman living, writing and teaching in the United States. Most members of my family were born and raised in Baghdad, and now live in Iraq, Israel, the United States, England, and Holland. When my grandmother first encountered Israeli society in the ‘50s, she was convinced that the people who looked and ate so differently—the European-Jews—were actually European- Christians. Jewishness for her generation was inextricably associated with Middle Easternness. My grandmother, who still lives in Israel and still communicates largely in Arabic, had to be taught to speak of “us” as Jews and “them” as Arabs. For Middle Easterners, the operating distinction has always been “Muslim,” “Jew” and “Christian,” not Arab versus Jew. The assumption was that “Arabness” referred to a common shared culture and language, albeit with religious differences...What for Ashkenazi immigrants from Russia and Poland was a social aliya (literally “ascent”) was for Oriental Sephardic Jews a yerida (“descent”).’

Picture in the background is the 'Calanit' (anemone) Israel's national flower.

A huge majority of Israelis (95 percent) believe that at least one population group in Israel is subject to forms of racism. According to a survey, when Israelis were asked which population groups suffered from racism, if any, 79% replied that Ethiopians suffered from racist attitudes and 68% said they believed the Arab population was subject to racism. Only 4.4% of respondents believed there was no racism in Israel toward any of these groups. [The Jerusalem Post](#)

The recent violent protests by Ethiopian Jews in Israel against the police beating of an Ethiopian Jewish IDF soldier (in uniform) is reflective of the deep rooted malaise. And this cannot be wished away for it is also inherent in the political set up. Take for instance PM Benjamin Netanyahu's words on Arabs during the election campaign. He did apologise (it was quite obvious that he had spoken his mind) but the damage had been done. So did he mean Arabs which included the Arab Jews? Or was it only Arabs – Muslims and Christians? How does one distinguish between the two?

Arab citizens of Israel face entrenched discrimination in all fields of life. In recent years, the prevalent attitude of hostility and [mistrust towards Arab citizens](#) has become more pronounced, with large sections of the Israeli public viewing the Arab minority as both a fifth column and a demographic threat. [The Association for Civil Rights in Israel](#)

**STEVEN BECK IN HIS ARTICLE, RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY: RACIST INCITEMENT BY STATE FUNDED RABBIS** [says](#),

“What should be done? Removing state-employed rabbis guilty of racial incitement from their positions is the obvious first step, but in some ways that will only strengthen their positions by turning them into martyrs in the eyes of their impressionable followers. What we really need in Israel is a structure for allowing citizens of all religions and backgrounds to interact with each other. This almost never happens because Israel is so segregated. The schools are segregated between Arabs and Israelis, between religious and secular Jews, and segregated even further in the religious sector by gender.

There are programs that try to humanize Arabs to Israelis and Israelis to Arabs, but they are too few in number. When you have no personal experience in dealing with your neighbors it is easy to believe any horrific story a person in a position of authority tells you about them. This has been true throughout Jewish history in the Diaspora. Now that we are the majority, we are becoming guilty of the same sin. One legitimate criticism of this article is that I do not dissect the other side of the conflict.

The reality is that there are far more Muslim clerics, in all Arab countries, that use their positions and pulpits to teach hate, violence, and anti-Semitism than the 50 rabbis that are abusing their positions here in Israel. It is not my goal here to present a comparison of who is worse. I am a Jew living in Israel and it is my hope that by taking ownership of the actions of the religious leaders in my own community, their voices will one day be so marginalized that the comparison will be obsolete.”

“From the perspective of official Zionism, Jews from Arab and Moslem countries appear on the world stage only when they are seen on the map of the Hebrew state, just as the modern history of Palestine is seen as beginning with the Zionist renewal of the Biblical mandate” - Professor Ella Habiba Shohat

Civil and human rights is the bedrock of a democracy. A democracy means equal rights for all citizens of a State. Is this happening in Israel? No. And why is this so? Why is there continued racism against Arabs and an *unhealthy* attitude towards Arab Jews that borders on the pathological? Is it a socio-economic problem that is being confused with racism? Or, as some claim, is it a mix of both insidious elements? Some will attribute the ground realities to multiculturalism. The side effects of forcibly attempting to amalgamate people from different cultures based purely on a common religion. But what about social values and customs particular to a Jew from another culture?

**SEPHARDIM IN ISRAEL: ZIONISM FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ITS JEWISH VICTIMS BY PROFESSOR ELLA HABIBA SHOHAT** (*Ella Shohat, Social Text, No. 19/20 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 1-35, Published by Duke University Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466176>*) bites the bullet and lays bare the heart breaking historical aspects of the State of Israel, its intrinsic racism and the role of the European Ashkenazim in perpetrating a fraud on the Arab Jews and Arabs. Her essay, written over two decades ago, resonates even today as Israel faces an unprecedented rise in racism and violence. The following excerpts (*reprinted by special permission of Professor Ella Habiba Shohat*) highlight the genesis of hate, racism and land grab.

- Zionism claims to be a liberation movement for all Jews, and the Zionist ideologists have spared no effort in their attempt to make the two terms “Jewish” and “Zionist” virtually synonymous. Zionism has been primarily a liberation movement for European Jews. Sephardi Jews were first brought to Israel for specific European-Zionist reasons which deployed its energies and material resources differentially, to the consistent advantage of European Jews and to the consistent detriment of Oriental Jews...Prime Minister David Ben Gurion repeatedly expressed contempt for the culture of the Oriental Jews: “*We do not want them Israelis to become Arabs. We are duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies, and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallized in the Diaspora*”. Over the years Israeli leaders constantly reinforced and legitimized these prejudices.

- “*One of the great apprehensions which afflict us...is the danger lest the predominance of immigrants of Oriental origin force Israel to equalize its cultural level with that of the neighboring world.*” Golda Meir projected the Separdim, in typical colonialist fashion, as coming from another, less developed time, for her, the sixteenth century (and for others, a vaguely defined “Middle Ages”): “*Shall we be able,*” she asked, “*to elevate these immigrants to a suitable level of civilization?*” Ben Gurion called the Moroccan Jews “*savages*” at a session of a Knesset Committee, and who compared Sephardim, pejoratively (and revealingly), to the Blacks brought to the United States as slaves, at times went so far as to question the spiritual capacity and even the Jewishness of the Sephardim. The PM praised European Jews for having “led our people in both quantitative and qualitative terms”



“...the notorious incident of the “kidnapped children of Yemen”...some six hundred Yemenite babies were adopted by childless Ashkenazi couples (some outside Israel)... the Yemenites (natural parents) were told that the children had died of natural causes.” - Professor Ella Habiba Shohat

“The paradox of secular Zionism is that it attempted to end a Diaspora, during which Jews suffered intensely in the West and presumable had their heart in the East – a feeling encapsulated in the almost daily repetition of the phrase “next year in Jerusalem” – only to found a state whose ideological and geopolitical orientation has been almost exclusively turned toward the West.” - Professor Ella Habiba Shohat

**SEPHARDIM IN ISRAEL: ZIONISM FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ITS JEWISH VICTIMS BY PROFESSOR ELLA HABIBA SHOHAT** (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/466176>) - contd...

- Zionists writings and speeches frequently advance the historiographically suspect idea that Jews of the Orient prior to their “ingathering” into Israel, were somehow “outside of” history, thus ironically echoing 19th century assessments, such as those of Hegel, that Jews, like Blacks, lived outside of the progress of Western Civilization.

- An essential feature of colonialism is the distortion and even the denial of the history of the colonized. The projection of Sephardi Jews as coming from backward rural societies lacking all contact with technological civilization is at best a simplistic caricature and at worst a complete misrepresentation. Metropolises such as Alexandria, Baghdad, and Istanbul, in the period of Sephardi emigration, were hardly the desolate backwaters without electricity or automobiles implied by the official Zionist account, nor were these lands somehow miraculously cut off from the universal dynamism of historical processes. Yet Sephardi and Palestinian children, in Israeli schools, are condemned to study a history of the world that privileges the achievements of the West, while effacing the civilizations of the East.

- Filtered out by a Euro-centric grid, Zionist discourse presents culture as the monopoly of the West, denuding the peoples of Asia and Africa, including Jewish peoples, of all cultural expression. The rich culture of the Jews from Arab and Moslem countries is scarcely studied in Israeli schools and academic institutions. While Yiddish is prized and officially subsidized, Ladino and other Sephardi dialects are neglected – “*Those who do not speak Yiddish*,” Golda Meir once said, “*are not Jews*” – Yiddish, through an ironic turn of history, became for Sephardim the language of the oppressor; a coded speech linked to privilege.

- Sephardi children are inculcated with the historical memory of “our ancestors, the residents of the shtetls of Poland and Russia,” as well as with a pride in the Zionist Founding Fathers for establishing outposts in a savage area. Jewish history is conceived as primordially European, and the silence of historical texts concerning the Sephardim forms a genteel way of hiding the discomfiting presence of an Oriental ‘other’, here subsumed under a European-Jewish “*We*”. The European-Jewish scorn for Eastern-Jewish lives and sensibilities—at times projected onto the Sephardim by Ashkenazi orientalising “experts” who claimed that death for Sephardim was a “common and natural thing” – was evident as well in the notorious incident of the “kidnapped children of Yemen”. Some six hundred Yemenite babies were adopted by childless Ashkenazi couples (some outside Israel)...the Yemenites (natural parents) were told that the children had died of natural causes.

- Although Zionist historiography concerning Sephardim consists of a morbidly selective “tracing the dots” from pogrom to pogrom (often separated by centuries), part of a picture of a life of relentless oppression and humiliation, in fact the Sephardim lived, on the whole, quite comfortably within Arab-Moslem society.

- Sephardi history can simply not be discussed in European-Jewish terminology, even the word “pogrom” derives from and is reflective of the specificities of the European-Jewish experience. At the same time, we should not idealize the Jewish-Moslem relationship as idyllic. While it is true that Zionist propaganda exaggerated the negative aspects of the Jewish situation in Moslem countries, and while the situation of these Jews over fifteen centuries was undeniably better than in the Christian countries, the fact remains that the status of dhimmi applied to both Jews and Christians as “tolerated” and “protected minorities” was intrinsically inegalitarian. But this fact, as Maxime Rodinson points out, was quite explicable by the sociological and historical conditions of the time, and not the product of a pathological European-style anti-Semitism.

- The Sephardi communities, while retaining a strong collective identity, were generally well integrated and indigenous to their countries of origin, forming an inseparable part of their social and cultural life. Thoroughly Arabized in their traditions, the Iraqi Jews, for example, used Arabic even in their hymns and religious ceremonies. The liberal and secular trends of the twentieth-century engendered an even stronger association of Iraqi Jews and Arab culture allowing Jews to achieve a prominent place in public and cultural life. Jewish writers, poets and scholars played a vital role in Arab culture, translating, for example, books from other languages into Arabic. Jews distinguished themselves in Iraqi Arab-speaking theatre, in music, as singers, composers and players of traditional instruments. In Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Tunisia, Jews became members of legislatures, of municipal councils, of the judiciary, and even occupied high economic positions; the Finance Minister of Iraq, in the forties, was Ishak Sasson, and in Egypt, Jamas Sanua-higher positions, ironically, than those achieved by Sephardim within the Jewish state.

- Ethnic discrimination against Sephardim began with their initial settling. Upon arrival in Israel the various Sephardi communities, despite their will to stay together, were dispersed across the country. Families were separated, old communities disintegrated and traditional leaders were shorn of their positions. Oriental Jews were largely settled in *ma’abharot*, remote villages, agricultural settlements and city neighborhoods some of them only recently emptied of Palestinians.

...while discussing his opposition to Knesset legislation that would offer same-sex parents the same tax breaks as their heterosexual counterparts, Ben Dahan told Maariv that homosexual Jews were superior than gentiles — gay or straight. “A Jew always has a much higher soul than a gentile, even if he is a homosexual,” he said. - *Rabbi Eli Ben-Dahan, Deputy Defense Minister, The Times of Israel*

**SEPHARDIM IN ISRAEL: ZIONISM FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ITS JEWISH VICTIMS BY PROFESSOR ELLA HABIBA SHOHAT** (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/466176>) - contd...

- As the absorption facilities became exhausted, the settlement authorities constructed “Ayaror Pituha” (development Towns) largely in rural areas and frontier regions, which became, predictably, the object of Arab attack.
- The paradox of secular Zionism is that it attempted to end a Diaspora, during which Jews suffered intensely in the West and presumable had their heart in the East – a feeling encapsulated in the almost daily repetition of the phrase “next year in Jerusalem” – only to found a state whose ideological and geopolitical orientation has been almost exclusively turned toward the West.
- Those Sephardim who continue to constitute the majority of the Jewish blue-collar workers are constantly placed in competition with the Palestinians for jobs and salaries, a situation which allows the elite to exploit both groups more or less at will. The considerable government expenditures for West Bank settlements, similarly, prod some Sephardim to move there for economic reasons – rather than the ideological reasons that motivate many Ashkenazi settlers – and thus provoke Palestinians. Finally, because of the segregation between the two groups, Sephardim and Palestinians in Israel tend to learn about each other through the Ashkenazi-dominated media, with little direct contact. Thus the Sephardim learn to see the Palestinians as “terrorists” while the Palestinians learn to see the Sephardim as “Kahanist fanatics,” a situation which hardly facilitates mutual understanding and recognition.

Some claim Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. I don’t agree. Free elections are only one element of democracy. There are other contributing factors like equal rights for all citizens. In Israel this is not so as civil and human rights are subjective. And this has been proven time and again by disturbing incidents.

It appears from historical accounts that racism by the Ashkenazim was also prevalent in India. In Jew Town in Mattencherry, Cochin, in the Indian State of Kerala hundreds of years ago there were two synagogues - the Black Synagogue and the Pardesi (white) Synagogue. The Black Jews were forbidden from entering the Pardesi Synagogue.

When the State of Israel was born the Black Jews left India for the *homeland* where they were given farmland on the volatile border with the Arabs. Unknown to them, they acted as a buffer for the Ashkenazim against the Arabs.

As Reuben Raymond (Indian Jew), a community leader, explained, the reality of life in Israel from what they imagined it to be was a shock to many Indian Jews. “In India, we never had to fight for our rights but in Israel we did, and this was something new for us,” he says. “In the early '50s, people had a problem because of their colour. They were subjected to differential treatment in everything. In employment, they got bad jobs and had less money. One group even returned to India in 1952.” [Outlookindia](#)

**SAMI MICHAEL**, Israeli journalist, acclaimed novelist and President of *The Association for Civil Rights in Israel* has termed Israel as “*The most racist state in the industrialized world*”. He describes himself as an Arab Jew, a patriotic Israeli (not Zionist) and an Iraqi. [+972mag.com](#)

“.....the rise to power of the right in general, and of the Haredi right in particular, the racist divide has become an almost acceptable fact. Racism is gradually becoming entrenched in Israeli society with the political strengthening of the religious right. Racism is directed at Jews from Arab and Islamic countries, immigrants from Ethiopia and Russia, Arab citizens of Israel, Palestinians in the occupied territories, refugees and working migrants, gays, and the list goes on. The rising tide of racism continues to mount with the encouragement of Knesset and government members, both through infamous public statements and by legislating draconian anti-democratic laws against outsiders, foreigners, and against human rights organizations. In any case, Israel can pride itself on having the dubious title – the most racist state in the developed world.

**ACRI.ORG's** latest report - **EAST JERUSALEM: FACTS AND FIGURES 2015** - Presents a reality - that of [persistent neglect and increasing violence](#) that those in power in Israel refuse to acknowledge:

These figures are well known to the authorities: Palestinians constitute 37% of the population of Jerusalem. 75% of them live under the poverty line. 33% of Palestinian students in Jerusalem do not finish Year 12. Only 64% of households are properly connected to the city’s water network. Only 7% of the postal workers operating in Jerusalem provide services to the Palestinian neighborhoods. 39% of houses are built without permits. There is no urban development, and the city will not even fix broken roads in neighborhoods beyond the separation barrier. During the summer of 2014, there were fierce confrontations with the police, following which at least 5 children lost their sight in one eye due to the use of sponge-tipped bullets. The youngest of these children was 6 years old.

Unfortunately, discrimination also exists against Israeli women. Organisations like [irac.org](#) led by Civil & Human Rights Activist, **Anat Hoffman** have been fighting at the forefront for women’s emancipation in all walks of life, including the right to pray at the Wall.

Perhaps it is time to redefine the State of Israel, truthfully. Is it a creation by European Jews to fulfil their dream of a homeland? Is it exclusive or inclusive? Exclusive for whom – European Jews or all Jews? Inclusive for whom – all Jews and Others?

The Begin-Prawer plan, first approved by the Knesset in September 2011, was a five year economic plan that could potentially have caused the demolition of 35 “unrecognized” Bedouin villages in the Negev and the forced expulsion to urban areas of 40,000 Israeli Bedouin. These villages either existed before Israel was founded or were created in locations to which the Israeli army moved Bedouins to in the early years of the state. **Early Zionist documents even prove** that 2.6 million dunam of land was recognized as belonging to the Bedouin prior to the establishment of the state. As “unrecognized villages,” they receive no services, their homes are automatically considered “illegal” and are subject to demolition, and their crops are sprayed and killed. - **Rabbis for Human Rights**

Israel has to address the Palestinian issue. The two nation theory must be made a reality. Its policy of bulldozing Palestinian homes to make way for the building of homes for Jews has now reached about 70 Bedouin families living in Umm al-Hiran. The residents have lost their battle in the Supreme Court with a ruling 2-1 going against them. For some Jewish settlers the question is about law and order, not civil and human rights. Further, the land *apparently* belongs to the government.

There are about 240,000 Bedouins in Israel, descendants of the 13,000 who remained in Israel after its creation. Most members of the community, estimated at 65,000 at the time, fled or were forced out during the 1948 war, said **Eli Atzmon**, an expert on Israel’s Bedouin community.

Interestingly, the **RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (RHR)** have said that this policy is against international law and tradition. Its open letter followed PM Netanyahu’s announcement that over 400 Palestinian homes in Israel controlled part of the West Bank will be demolished.

“Thousands have been forced to build without permits, and great human suffering is caused when hundreds of homes are demolished each year in Area C alone,” **RHR stated in their letter**, adding that Israeli planning and zoning laws “severely restrict the ability of Palestinians to build homes, even on the lands that the State recognizes as belonging to them.”

According to the rabbis, there has been “no representation or true ability for Palestinians to determine how to properly plan for their communities since local and district planning committees were abolished in 1971. The army plans for them.

The self-hypnosis of *exceptionalism* must be discarded along with age old pathological racist tendencies based on colour, language, region and faith.

I grew up with Armenians, Iranians, Tibetans, *Indian* Jews, Nepalese, Burmese et al. We celebrated each other’s festivals. Did all the things that children normally did in those days like bunking school and covering for each other. We never spoke about our religion or for that matter, country. We were one...as one tribe. When my Jewish friends left for Israel I lost them in the labyrinth of international intrigue. When my other friends from the Middle East departed I lost them to the vagaries of insidious politics.

And now all that one reads and hears is about slaughter of civilians and the wail of mothers moaning their dead.

Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home including Palestine not by aggression but by loving service. A Jewish friend has sent me a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilisation by Cecil Roth*. It gives a record of what the Jews have done to enrich the world’s literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the will, the Jew can refuse to be treated as the outcaste of the West, to be despised or patronised. He can command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action. - Mahatma Gandhi, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)

This essay is about insaanyat...humanity and how it has been lost in the mad rush to be ‘*exceptional*’. To be exclusive. Above the rest, above the perceived great unwashed. That my God is Greater than your God. The overall effect of mindless violence, hate and the deliberate distortion of history that some have manipulated to devastating effect, is truly disheartening.

Now that you have read what prominent Arab Jews, Jews in general and others with a conscience have to say about the continuing strife in Israel...let us ask the question – *Do Jews need a Homeland?* This is what **Mahatma Gandhi** had to say...

“Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home.

The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French. If the Jews have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or do they want a double home where they can remain at will?” (*Gandhi & Zionism: ‘The Jews’ - November 26, 1938. www.gandhiserve.org/www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org*)

A week ago the UN declared Israel as the worst violator of human rights in the world. This is viewed by many as more a political gesture than one based on fact. So how do we rate human rights? Here are some questions that can lead us to the answer:

01. How many people killed by bombs, starvation?
02. How many countries subjugated by political or economic colonisation?
03. How many countries invaded illegally, and since occupied in the last few hundred years?
04. How many legitimate governments brought down by outside Powers jostling for control of a country’s natural resources?
05. How many people have been made unsuspecting guinea pigs by pharmaceutical companies?
06. How many women and children raped, murdered or trafficked?
07. How many people killed or displaced by ethnic cleansing?
08. How many countries that manipulate the lives of their citizens through invasive surveillance?
09. How many of the above affected people get justice?
10. And are there equal rights for all in any country in the world?



Ms Ayelet Shaked (Israel's New Justice Minister) last year likened Palestinians to "snakes" in a post later removed from her Facebook page but widely reported on by the Israeli media, and said all Palestinians, including mothers of attackers, should be eliminated. – [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au).

The above answers will reveal that in fact there are no worst or best countries when it comes to human rights. It is simply subjective degrees of subjugation through humiliation, torture and death. The justification may come under the banner of promoting 'democracy', when in reality it is 'imposing' democracy.

Human rights violations exists in Israel just like it does in many other countries. But the utterances by politicians and government officials does not endear them to any right thinking person, not in Israel and not anywhere else in the world.

But this 'problem' appears to be growing since the period of the first PM of Israel Ben Gurion who called Moroccan Jews 'savages'. PM Netanyahu and his new cabinet appear to be on a roll...with Likud lawmaker Tzipi Hotovely saying

"the time has come to tell the world that we're right – not only smart." Hotovely, who favors the annexation of the West Bank and opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state, told envoys, "We must return to the basic truth about our right to the land." She also cited the 11th-century Bible commentator Rashi, who explained the Bible's focus on the story of the Jewish people's origins in the Land of Israel and its exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land was meant to shore up the Jewish claim to the land in subsequent generations. [The Times of Israel](#)

This is exactly why opinion is growing against Israel because there appears to be no difference between the statements of Israeli politicians and those leaders of the Muslim faith who use the Koran as an excuse to commit acts of inhumanity.

The reports by the *Rabbis for Human Rights* on the demolitions of legitimate homes of the Palestinians suggests that racism has become intrinsic to governance. And this is probably why organisations like the UN and others point accusing fingers at Israel because it is giving them reason to do so.

Often when the subject of Israel's abusive actions are highlighted in the media the gendarmes of the absurd scream anti-Semitism. This reaction has now convinced many that Judaism and the State of Israel are synonymous.

Hence, anti-Jewish feeling is rising in European countries and the USA. And this has helped the propaganda of Hamas, Hezbollah and to some extent Iran. Europe through the ages (before Islam and even after) and certain parts of the USA have displayed and continue to display inherent qualities of anti-Semitism by white non-Muslim people. The Holocaust was committed by a white European.

Israel is threatened with severe existential dangers if the existing leadership does not have the wisdom to understand that Israel is not located in the peaceful northern regions of Europe but in the turbulent center of a tormented Middle East. We have no place in the Middle East in the future since we made ourselves detestable to it, after we have stressed day and night that it is detestable to us. So very detestable. If we do not find a solution besides the machine gun and the tank – which we have already seen to be helpless against a barefoot child with a stone in his hand – we may lose it all. The State of Israel is liable to become a passing phenomenon like the First Temple and the Second Temple. - *Sami Michael* [+972mag.com](http://+972mag.com)

But this glaring truth usually escapes many when it comes to Arabs speaking up for their rights in Israel. The Arabs are viewed as the great unwashed, illiterate masses that follow a medieval religion, who are bent on exterminating the Jews. *Only* the white European Jews are *head and shoulders* above the rest (even the Arabs Jews in Israel are unequal).

The Arabs can't be trusted with a nuclear weapon but Israel can, a country that has threatened Iran with a nuclear strike, courtesy PM Benjamin Netanyahu. The response from Iran is unsurprisingly predictable. Iran views Israel and USA as two sides of the same coin and therefore the feeling is mutual.

The term *Arab* has now become synonymous with Islam whereas an Arab could be either Muslim, Christian or Jew.

It is said that 43% of all Jews in the world reside in Israel, 39% in USA and the rest mainly in Canada and Europe. A small percentage is scattered all over the world. Many Jews hold two passports and this is where the problem lies. To which country does the Jew hold allegiance to? And this question is often asked by detractors of Israel. Why does the State of Israel permit its citizens to hold two passports if Israel is the *homeland* of the Jews? I have asked this question to many Israelis and the answer has been the same "because in some countries the Israeli passport is banned". This makes a mockery of being a citizen of the Jewish *homeland*. What is the worth of an Israeli passport? A get out of jail card? A Jewish identity card?

All these factors add to the overall image of the State of Israel, which at present is in dire need of an overhaul, no thanks to its arrogant politicians and their actions.

**Could it be that Israel needs a 'Gandhi' more than ever in its decades old existence to lead it unto the path from which it has strayed, the path of being 'a light unto nations'?**

The enemy is within. And it is called *exceptionalism*. And it can't be fought with guns and hate. One hopes that those with wisdom in Israel acknowledge the failings of the past and work towards a brave new world, that is, if some have not already begun the journey.

I shall leave you now with these words of **Hillel The Elder**, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

"Explaining the inexplicable: Natalie Wood takes a fictionalised look at the racist underbelly tearing the seams of Israeli society ..."



## ‘A WITNESS TO ISRAELI RACISM SPEAKS OUT’

**Anna Grynhaus**, Social Affairs Editor, *Liberal Israel* and Modern Orthodox **Rabbi René Bloch** examine the tensions tearing the fabric of Israeli society.



The Ethiopian Memorial in Galilee Park, Karmiel.  
Photograph © Brian Fink

I was dashing through my office door, desperate to join our news team on Rabin Square, Tel Aviv, when René Bloch rushed past, almost knocking me flat!

Apologies and explanations brief, Bloch suggested that we go together to observe the Ethiopian protests first-hand. Soon we were dodging police stun grenades and water cannon as we pushed our way through the huge and increasingly violent mob screaming for minority rights. With little time to think, it barely occurred to me that the riots were happening on the streets between *Liberal Israel's* offices and the square named after the premier whose legacy is synonymous with peace.

Then Bloch shouted: "Protest? A rally against racism? It looks like another war zone!"

All this had begun when I arranged to meet him to discuss his experiences fighting racism inside the IDF during last year's war in Gaza.

We had been due to discuss minorities other than Ethiopians. But events overtook us when the protests erupted and Bloch arrived before I could postpone our date.

He is among veterans of Operation Protective Edge who feel some personnel lost their sense of morality during the campaign and he came to our magazine, hoping that we'd offer him a platform for his views.

A French immigrant with experience of physical antisemitism in his home-country, he found it 'inexplicable' that the Israeli police should brutalise anyone – let alone those from an ethnic minority. How could they "even consider striking a uniformed soldier without provocation? Soldiers and police are like first cousins. After all, they both protect fellow citizens", he said.

In civilian life, Bloch is an academic attached to Tel Aviv University. But he has also seen action in several wars and was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant during the campaign.



A French immigrant with experience of physical antisemitism in his home-country, he found it ‘inexplicable’ that the Israeli police should brutalise anyone – let alone those from an ethnic minority.

The culprits are racist because they wish to differentiate between ethnic groups in society and want this difference to be enshrined in law, even to the extent of Arab citizens losing the right to vote or having basic health care.

**Below is his verbatim view of how the underlying schisms of Israeli society are cracking its democratic facade.**

Today’s events are just the sort of situation I predicted – and dreaded – when I argued with my military colleagues.

“Many times in the mess hall I found myself to be an appalled, powerless witness – a mere bystander - to the unashamed naked racism I met, even within my own unit.

“I approached *Liberal Israel* to set the record straight when the magazine learnt – mistakenly - from my friend – your correspondent - Yotem Levi that I’d suffered racial abuse from other personnel.

“That’s not true. But what is undeniable is that there’s another war erupting on our streets and it’s a battle we must all join to repair the integrity of Israeli society.

“In France, yes, I was a victim. But here in Israel I am safe because I am white and European. Yet as an ordinary serving soldier, I felt ashamed -personally betrayed - by other men’s naked prejudices and their hate speech.

“My unit is formed mainly by people who come from middle to low socio-economic backgrounds. During the war, they made murderous remarks about whether or not to kill Arabs. Even genocide was justified. The talk became quite hysterical.

“Some people insisted that all Arabs were terrorists and then went on to make other hateful remarks.

“There are no Arabs in my unit. But there are Druze and they never make racist remarks. Instead, I heard extremist views expressed by both religious and very secular Jews – like Russians. Their views may sound different but the end result is the same.

“Undemocratic values go hand in hand with the views they express. They even talk about wanting to have an apartheid kind of system where Israeli Arabs don’t have any rights; or accuse anyone who dissents from the mainstream of being a traitor. I was – still am - very frightened to think that these people may hold the majority view in Israeli society and that among them were those who recently helped to elect the new government.

“Did I punish them for their hate speech? Even with the rank of staff sergeant, I do not have that authority. I do not have a command. They are my peers.

“I have never tried to talk them out of what they say, because I have to continue living and working with them and want to avoid conflict. But how I did not scream out in rage, I don’t know.

“Their divisive talk is not about envy or only about poor education – although both play a part. The culprits are racist because they wish to differentiate between ethnic groups in society and want this difference to be enshrined in law, even to the extent of Arab citizens losing the right to vote or having basic health care. They say Arab ‘lives are not important. It’s O.K. to attack Arab citizens as a response to Palestinian violence against Jews’.

“So, yes. Whether we discuss Arabs or Jewish ethnic minorities, I think it’s both about poor education and the type of upbringing that doesn’t sanctify democratic values and equality under the Law. The remedy must lie with legislation that protects equality while punishing racism and racist activity. Even more important perhaps, we need education that teaches pluralistic and democratic values. But I worry that neither of these are presently possible under an administration that looks like becoming ever more right-wing and undemocratic.

“When we arranged to meet, you asked me about the controversy surrounding Arab Knesset member Hanin Zoabi because of her actions during the last war.

“Ideally, I support all Knesset members’ right to express their views, especially when they represent a section of the population that is not often heard. But there must be a limit to that freedom of expression should it endanger State security or is extremely offensive to some citizens (like justifying murder).

“Yet I’m unsure if such behaviour causes racism. It already exists. But certainly, it does nothing to help to make it go away. »





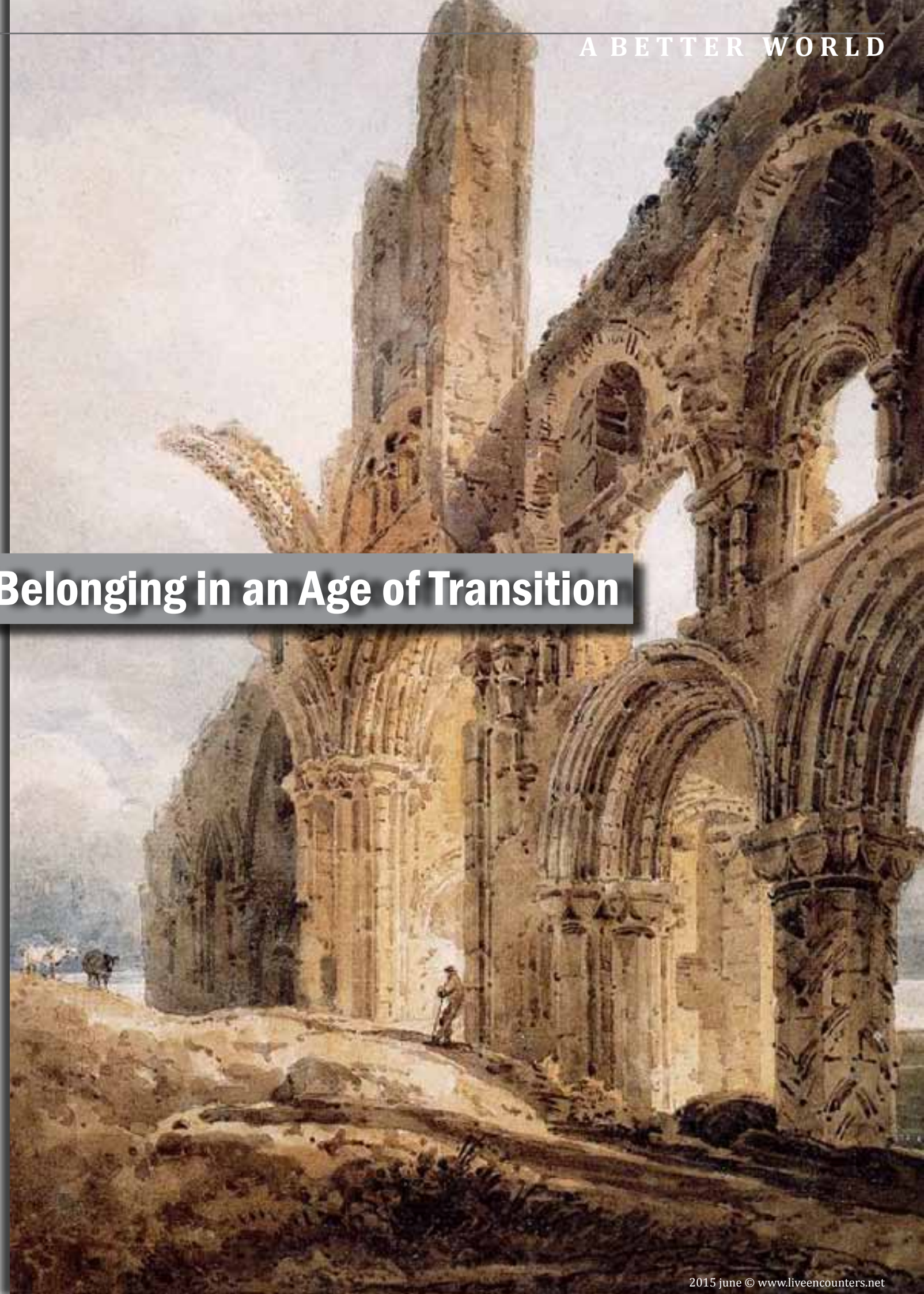
*As the Italian writer Amadeo Bordiga argued, capitalism is driven by a "ravenous hunger for catastrophe and ruin". It is a system that thrives on destruction.*

## A Better World is Still Possible: Longing and Belonging in an Age of Transition

For far too many people in this global village life literally has taken on the condition of a living hell; it is not only the grinding poverty, starvation, insecurity, destitution, slavery in all but name in sweatshops, the bonded labour, the vulnerable who are trafficked, the anonymous "illegals" working unprotected by law in the twilight economies of the world's great cities where they clean the smart offices of the law firms, banks and brokers; there are those who are even more vulnerable who are at the mercy of the market, those who are compelled to sell their bodies as sex slaves, child prostitutes and escorts, and finally those even more vulnerable who are forced to sell body parts, kidneys, blood, even eyes, to raise money to survive. For these people, the nightmare world portrayed in the futuristic novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, isn't just an unsettling fantasy about farming humans for their organs; it's very close to their own reality. For too many, the marketplace truly is a dystopian tyranny with little or no escape route.

Communal, ethnic and political rivalries apparently continue to spread like wildfire in the modern world. The mutual hatreds among neighbouring peoples, who seem to have forgotten that after all they are of the same species, sharing the same lands and relying on common resources for their own sustenance, is a shocking feature of modern existence. Tensions and divisions appear to be exacerbating and the mounting casualties of the ever lengthening catalogue of atrocities committed by human against human is tragic to reflect upon.

Indeed, there are other trends that give cause for hope and that demonstrate people moving closer together. This fragile but remarkable planet on which we all inhabit provides our common shelter and all the basic necessities and fulfilment that we require, amply sufficient to satisfy our appetites and enable us to carry on a very comfortable existence had we the foresight to realise this and were we able to set aside the greed, lust, animosities, petty squabbles and disputes that scar us all. Within the cosmic scheme of things, historic tribal conflicts are really little more than fist fights in a school playground, mere skirmishes of almost no significance, when examined within the context of the challenge of climate change that threatens the very survival of life on earth; why fight for a tiny patch of land when the full entirety seems poised for immanent destruction?





The gleeful demolition of the treasures of Hatra and Nimrud were acts of mindless hatred and were a full-scale assault on our sensibilities. The threat to Palmyra is equally an affront to our shared values and it is now a living nightmare that such destruction is even being contemplated. ISIS remains a threat to humanity and we should not need the destruction of another ancient treasure to remind us that it represents anti-life.

As I write I hear in the news that another historic site in the Middle East that should be cherished for all time as part of the glorious heritage of human civilisation is in danger of destruction from the zealots of ISIS (Islamic State). Ancient Palmyra in Syria seems increasingly at risk from ISIS fighters who have now captured the site. A true wonder of the world, Palmyra has been described as the "Venice of the Sands" and was unlike any other city of the Roman Empire. What remains of Palmyra today is still magnificent and provides rich evidence of an ancient prosperous civilisation that thrived on the edge of an oasis of date palms and fertile gardens. For centuries the ancient city's vast field of stone columns, arches and ruins astonished travelling traders and later tourists. It is remotely located in the middle of the Syrian Desert about half-way between the Mediterranean coast and the valley of the Euphrates. The site is particularly difficult to protect because of its huge size and remoteness. Palmyra was a cosmopolitan culture with an international outlook and as such it presents a challenge to the bigoted ideology of ISIS. It is feared that this important treasure will go the same way of ancient Hatra and Nimrud which were bulldozed when the rampaging ISIS took the territory. Of course, some understandably insist that it is difficult to become too emotional about the plight of a collection of stones while babies are dying in such high numbers, but the world surely cannot look on as a passive spectator as the heritage of humanity is systematically and so wantonly destroyed before our very gaze. The gleeful demolition of the treasures of Hatra and Nimrud were acts of mindless hatred and were a full-scale assault on our sensibilities. The threat to Palmyra is equally an affront to our shared values and it is now a living nightmare that such destruction is even being contemplated. ISIS remains a threat to humanity and we should not need the destruction of another ancient treasure to remind us that it represents anti-life.

We should not forget, however, that the US forces inflicted their own destruction on many precious sites during their saturation bombing of Iraq and during the intervention following the collapse of the Saddam Husein regime. In fact the US military had long made vandalism a central principle of foreign policy as the terror waged on Vietnam showed. So how can we expect the US - that land where culture is reduced to shallow entertainment and only the new is really valued - to protect ancient Palmyra now? In any case, one suspects that ISIS in Iraq and Syria are simply acting like subcontractors in the global building industry while the world powers are main contractors biding their time. In taking their electric saws and bulldozers to priceless ancient monuments ISIS is literally clearing the ground for a future real estate boom when the ravenous speculators and developers in their smart suits arrive on the scene expressing a passionate determination to rebuild the country.

It is truly alarming that there is not more international outrage at the prospect of the threatened destruction of this marvellous example of a past civilisation. The destruction of the cherished common

The destruction of English monasteries under King Henry VIII was a huge act of vandalism and theft by the state of lands and property owned by the Church. Henry, like the Viking hordes who came before him, was another bearded fanatic wielding an axe and tragically such hideous zealots inflict similar destruction on our world today.



Portrait Henry VIII by Hans Holbein

heritage that we are witnessing today in Palmyra, however, is not an isolated incident or act of zealotry unique to ISIS or to modern history. In the 19th century visionary intellectuals such as John Ruskin warned the public about the threats to fine old buildings posed by the processes unleashed by modern commerce such as the speculative developers, ill-planned renovations and shoddy workmanship. The commercial spirit of the age was seen to be highly detrimental to the health of people and their built environment. Greed and unrestrained profiteering are still wreaking havoc on the urban environment worldwide to this day.

Ruskin's visit to Italy inspired one of his most important works, *The Stones of Venice*. Today that unique city remains under serious threat from developers and the desire of local businesses to profit from maximising its tourism potential. Venice is thus a victim of its own success. Once again informed observers are warning that the city is under threat. In an investigative report titled "The death of Venice", published in The Independent newspaper on 14 May 2015, the writer described how "corrupt officials, mass tourism and soaring property prices have stifled life in the city".

The article went on to warn that poorer people are being forced out due to soaring house prices, a trend that is by no means exclusive to Venice but, actually, common to most modern cities: "What's more, over the past two decades, property owners have increasingly converted apartments into hotels or rentals, driving up the costs of permanent housing. The result: only the wealthy can afford to live here. Three decades ago, more than 120,000 people called Venice home. Today, there are 55,000. By 2030, some demographers predict, there will be no more full-time residents."

The wholesale destruction of both the built environment and natural landscape has been a continuing feature of human history since records began. It is a process that is often erroneously misnamed as "progress". To illustrate the point, let's turn our observations to English history where the experience of its suffering people illustrates very well the theft, vandalism, wanton destruction and ruthless greed inflicted by a very powerful against the wider community by the use of brute force, intimidation and the full power of the state.

The destruction of English monasteries under King Henry VIII was a huge act of vandalism and theft by the state of lands and property owned by the Church. Henry, like the Viking hordes who came before him, was another bearded fanatic wielding an axe and tragically such hideous zealots inflict similar destruction on our world today. Land grabbing, theft and the brazen abuse of power are the same processes doing the same kinds of damage although in very different contexts.

The Act of Supremacy in 1534 declared Henry VIII the Supreme Head of the Church of England, signalling the separation of England from Rome. This act and subsequent legislation gave the Crown the authority to disband monasteries in England, Wales and Ireland, to appropriate their income and dispossess them of all their assets. All precious metals, all altar furnishings and other high-value items such as bells, candlesticks and roofing lead, became the King's personal property to dispose of at its will.

The dissolution marked the forcible transfer into private hands of lands which to an extent had been widely used by the community. The monasteries had been an integral part of village life for centuries and they performed important social functions at a time when there was no welfare state, no public health service nor any formal education available to the vast majority of people. From this perspective, the destruction of these institutions was a crime against the public and a great loss.

Simple greed and power motivated the King. A survey conducted by Henry's minister Thomas Cromwell found that the monasteries held about a quarter of all the cultivated land in England. Clearly, this was a sizeable amount of land and an important source of power outside the control of the country's secular authority. This was of course the era that marked the decline of feudalism and the birth of modern capitalism.

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The term 'dissolution of the monasteries' encompasses all the religious establishments that were appropriated by the Crown. Between 1536 and 1540 it took possession of some 800 monasteries, abbeys, nunneries and friaries. Many were perceived as corrupt as they had accumulated great wealth and lands. But the establishments had offered a whole way of life to more than 11,000 monks, nuns, friars and canons. They were also centres of learning in a largely illiterate and poorly educated population. It was a major theft of church assets. Important monastic libraries were also destroyed and many valuable manuscripts were lost forever.

Many former monasteries were sold off to big private landowners, invariably friends and associates of the monarch. Many more were simply left to ruin, such as the picturesque Tintern Abbey, in Monmouthshire. Its ruins stand in an exquisite landscape and were later to inspire Romantic poets and painters such as Wordsworth and Turner. These buildings stand as monuments not to human vanity but to what was thought to be a greater power beyond our transient existence.

The very names of such places as Lindisfarne Priory and Glastonbury Abbey immediately instil a sense of enchantment and sublimity. With the rise of the Romantic Movement in the 18th century



*Lindisfarne Castle on Holy Island, near Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, England.*

old ruins became cherished for their historical associations and spending time around remnants of a past age especially when found within a splendid natural setting gave them an almost a therapeutic quality. The profound respect for earlier civilisations going back to antiquity was an attitude that is also seen in the growing popularity of collecting. Ancient artefacts, pieces of masonry and antique statues became highly desirable objects as they remain so to this day. Sigmund Freud's huge collection of ancient Greek and Egyptian figurines perhaps betrays an exceptional mania for collecting but it is representative of a modern obsession for collecting and preoccupation with the past which is widely shared among the population. It is a trend that lingers on and is part of the legacy left by the Romantics to future generations. Freud and collectors like him would no doubt insist that such objects were cherished not for any monetary value but for their intrinsic qualities as samples of human creativity and the grandeur of past civilisations. It is an attitude that is totally admirable.

This destruction marked the real and symbolic defacement inflicted on historic buildings. All items of property were stolen and the systematic stripping and dismantling of the removable assets of the buildings took place. Valuable lead and glass were ripped out to be sold off or reused, along with stones that made up the buildings themselves. Henry waged a fanatical war against images that were deemed superstitious. In 1538 pilgrimages to shrines and the offering of money or candles to images or relics were prohibited. Many shrines were destroyed and references to the pope and St Thomas Becket were banned.

The process of destruction became more extensive under the reign of Edward VI when destruction became much more systematic. Many religious images were to be utterly destroyed 'so that there remain no memory of the same', which meant that public art such as ornaments, carvings and artefacts were defaced, whitewashed or obliterated to erase them from public memory.

In the 17th century the Puritan version of Protestantism became zealous in its aim to root out very last vestige of what was perceived as idolatry from the public domain and popular custom. These campaigns occurred with the blessings of Parliament. In the years 1643 and 1644 parliamentary ordinances were adopted against "monuments of superstition and idolatry". Representations of the Virgin Mary and other saints were to be prohibited, as well as the carrying of crucifixes, plain crosses, angels and even inscriptions invoking prayers for the dead. Such things were to be utterly demolished by order of law. Those who sought to enforce the legislation genuinely believed in what they were doing. They believed that they owed a duty to God to eliminate all evidence of idolatry as this was the only means of combating the dangerous spread of sin. As a result many paintings, stained glass, even music and religious ceremonials came under attack as they were seen as sinful and contrary to God's wishes.





*ISIS destroying artefacts.*

The campaigns of destruction during this period were comprehensive, systematic and very well organised. When one reads of such idiotic activities carried out by perfectly normal human beings one can easily despair of the destructive and self-destructive impulses displayed by humanity with alarming frequency throughout its history. Humanity is a true Janus with both a beautiful and an ugly face: it has been remarkably creative and built great civilisations, but at the same time, it has often carried out the most appalling atrocities against fellow human beings and all the other creatures who share this fragile earth.

## Enclosures

The wars and conflicts that have continued unabated for a decade or longer in the Middle East, with a central focus on Iraq and Syria, can usefully be viewed as part of a history of enclosure movements worldwide. There has been a pattern of human conflicts involving land enclosure and encroachment on previously common lands throughout history in all locations and within every civilisation. Often great ruthlessness, up to and including genocide of entire populations, has been inflicted on people who stood in the way of the juggernaut of change, alternatively known as "progress".

The Christian religion devised the myth of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, a glorious garden where no human was permitted to own any portion of land and where even the very concept of ownership was unheard of until Eve was seduced by the serpent and man began to yearn for possessions. This myth explained the human condition in a simple story to illiterate people who were in desperate need of some comforting thoughts. It was a myth that enabled communities in distress to make some sense of their sufferings in this world, to endure their lot while hoping for a better time in the sweet hereafter.

The process of enclosure of formerly common or waste lands took place over many centuries, in fact it has happened at least as long as there has been civilisation. The first enclosures occurred when the first cities were founded with the onset of urban civilisation. Landed estates likewise were also initially established on what had previously been land that had been held in common or had remained uncultivated. These appropriations, disruptions and mass displacement of peoples are all part of the dynamic of capitalist development where nothing is sacred. The very concept of "ownership" as such was quite unheard of before the start of the process of codifying law when it began to be drawn up by those who had exercised their strength to overpower other members of the community and had used brute force against rivals to take control and accumulate wealth for themselves.

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In the 17th century following the defeat of Royalist forces in the great Civil War (or "English Revolution" as historian Christopher Hill described it) many landed estates held by families who had fought for the deposed King Charles I were appropriated and handed over to those loyal to the Commonwealth.

As Hill says "The estates of all substantial Royalists were sequestrated, that is, taken over by county committees, which collected rents and fines and assigned leases. The lands of more than 700 Royalists were confiscated and sold...It was an upheaval comparable with the dissolution of the monasteries," (The Century of Revolution).

Of course, not all lands changed hands and the law continued to be enforced with utmost severity against the "lower orders" who sought to argue for the rights of the poor to make free use of commons and waste lands. Brutal suppression was to be the fate of the so-called Diggers or "True Levellers" led by Gerrard Winstanley who had taken over waste land near St George's Hill, Surrey. This popular action by a group of impoverished men and women, who had joined together to cultivate a barren stretch of land that seemed to be owned by nobody, was to be mercilessly suppressed. They had seriously misunderstood the intentions of Parliament's rebellion against the King if they thought that they had fought for the land to be taken as a "common treasury for all", which was how Winstanley interpreted the Christian message.

Incidentally, and perhaps unsurprisingly, St George's Hill is today a very expensive piece of private real estate.

The meaning of enclosure is to take over or take possession of land for exclusively private use. It means to take into private hands by force what was once held in common or by the community. The process of appropriating land and other natural resources into private hands is the basis of the entire modern economy.

In his book *Keywords*, the cultural critic Raymond Williams offers some fascinating reflections on the changing meaning of the word "common": it meant commons as in common or ordinary people and a community as distinct from the lords and nobility. The enclosure movement gathered pace in the latter half of the 18th century with the onset of full-blooded capitalist commerce. Enclosure met with significant popular resistance which had to be carried out anonymously because of the severe punishments that would be inflicted on any act of defiance from the common people. The law was used to protect the "men of property", not defend the rights of the ordinary men and women.



Countries such as Libya and Tunisia that had to be rebuilt following the Arab Spring were defined by the IMF and World Bank as “countries in transition”. Huge conferences were held in the world’s capitals to draw up programmes of assistance led by the international community. Transition became the official term for an assisted reconstruction stage following a humanitarian intervention, such as the bombing of Libya – in fact, it might more accurately be seen as a rebranding of the old conquer and plunder methods of a bygone era. The outcome of dependency and exploitation seems very familiar.

### Modern Ideology

People can be taught to accept the world as it is despite all injustices being largely avoidable, the needless inequality, suffering and cruelty inflicted on fellow humans, accepted as facts because of the power of ideology. According to Raymond Williams any moment in time contains three strands of ideology: there are old ideas that are on their way out; also dominant ideas that are held by the majority of people; finally, there are emergent ideas fostered by avant-garde segments of the population and which may become part of the mainstream in generations to come. Today, it seems, the dominant ideology is becoming ever more facile. More and more people simply don’t believe what they are being told anymore. This is a positive development if it means that people are starting to think for themselves and make their own choices. The stunning election result in Scotland where a rejuvenated Scottish National Party campaigning on a progressive social democratic programme swept the board must be a cause for celebration, as is the Green party’s million-plus votes won.

### Lost in Transition

Countries such as Libya and Tunisia that had to be rebuilt following the Arab Spring were defined by the IMF and World Bank as “countries in transition”. Huge conferences were held in the world’s capitals to draw up programmes of assistance led by the international community. Transition became the official term for an assisted reconstruction stage following a humanitarian intervention, such as the bombing of Libya – in fact, it might more accurately be seen as a rebranding of the old conquer and plunder methods of a bygone era. The outcome of dependency and exploitation seems very familiar.

The degradation of language in modern political discourse insists that human “aspiration” is simply about making money. People aspire to become “filthy rich” and want to emulate the excesses of the super-rich glitterati whose apparent constant partying is a fixation of modern journalism. “Aspiration” has now come to dominate contemporary British political debate, a fact that was manifest during the recent general election campaign and has become even more dominant following the shock result which returned the right Conservatives with a slim majority, thus confounding all pre-election opinion polls which had been predicting a “hung” Parliament and another coalition government. The Labour Party is judged to have failed miserably because it had been unable to represent “aspirational” working people.

When in 1906 the first ever Labour MPs were elected to Parliament, numbering in total 45, each were asked to name which books and writers had most inspired them; overwhelmingly they replied



*Elections in Tunisia.*

John Ruskin and his work, *Unto This Last*. This anecdote is usually cited to show how little British Labour was influenced by Marx, who after all was a resident in London for much of his active life. In 2013, when asked about their summer reading, Labour MPs replied with *This Boy*, the autobiography of their fellow MP Alan Johnson and *Five Days in May* by Labour peer, Lord Adonis, which betrays a definite narrowing of interests. And despite the fact that one Labour frontbench spokesperson, Tristram Hunt, was previously a historian and author of several bestsellers, and at least one of the runners for the current Labour leadership race, Liz Kendall, has a first in history from Cambridge, Labour politicians today seem totally incapable of projecting an inspiring vision that resonates among the public. They seem to know little of their own history or that of the people whom they seek to represent. Their remedies for political reform appear based on not much more than public relations and the findings of opinion pollsters; hence, all their talk of “aspirations”, the “politics of envy” and being “very relaxed about people getting filthy rich”, as Peter Mandelson once notoriously said. Not so long ago the British Labour Party, one of the world’s most successful social democratic parties, stood boldly for “a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.” Sadly, that is no longer the case.

Surely aspiration should more broadly be understood as striving to do good in society, to help your fellow men and women, to care about the planet, to make a mark as a pioneer in a specific scientific field or creative endeavour. Human creativity has sadly been reduced to the ability to make lots of cash, rather than to appreciate art, express one’s creativity in various fields, painting, poetry and music. Art is no longer seen as a basic expression of what it means to be human, but as a means of entertainment or temporary distraction. The world of art and opera are too often seen as largely for the wealthy: “opera is not for the likes of us”, ironically stated by those think nothing of paying hundreds of pounds for a football season ticket or to attend a rock concert.

But at a deeper level there are aspirations that are shared by all humanity for a harmonious existence, free from harm and conflict, where they can be free to take pleasure in exploring life in all its sensuous possibilities. It is simply that in an ever increasingly unequal global community the opportunities for enjoyment and experiencing all that life has to offer will of necessity remain circumscribed to fewer and fewer people as long as the underlying inequalities are not seriously addressed.

There's a democratic deficit and a deep contradiction in an advertising system that relentlessly promotes conspicuous consumption; it whets appetites that it cannot possibly satisfy. In the consumer society “exclusive” goods, luxury services and the best products are offered to everyone who cares to casually flick through the pages of a magazine (real or online) or walks into the local shopping mall;

© David Morgan





*Palmyra theatre.*

### **Modern Ideology** *contd...*

but how can a product be truly exclusive if it really were the possession of everyone? But to those people existing on a minimum wage, of which there are sadly growing numbers, these advertisements must appear like a very cruel joke. To people compelled to use food banks, it is the basics of life that are becoming elusive. That's certainly true of social divisions not only in the national context of the affluent economies, of Europe and elsewhere, but all over the world there are millions who remain excluded from even the most basic opportunities to enjoy life, let alone to become conspicuous consumers.

But while there is life, there must be hope. The persistence of hope will continue while humans have a breath within them. The blue flower was a motif in German Romanticism mentioned in a novella by the writer Novalis. The search for the blue flower represented hope, inspiration, beauty, love and desire. It symbolised a metaphysical striving within each individual consciousness for the infinite and a constant questing for all that's good. This is an existential quest and indicates a human yearning for quite a different order and quality of life setting it totally apart from the crude, materialistic "aspirations" for accumulating ever more wealth that obsesses British politicians evident during the 2015 election campaign and Labour leadership battle. This is the cult of materialism that is destroying the world.

There is evidence of the beauty of existence all around us but we need the free time to truly open our eyes properly and learn to see. Tiny tantalising intimations can be discovered in our mundane surroundings and in contemplation of the beauty of nature: in the magnificent radiance of a sunset in a clear sky; the magnificence of a mountain view; the rolling waves on the deep blue ocean; the rustle of a gentle breeze through trees; the natural music of the dawn chorus; and the intricate textures of new flowers in bloom. The wonders of nature are infinite and life can be glorious as we would realise if we but had sufficient free time and opportunity to enjoy and contemplate them fully.

The precious luxury of free time was systematically denied to the great mass of the people until onset of the 20th century when the social advances initiated by the organised workers' movement forced concessions from the ruling order and welfare states were founded under an emerging democratic system and vastly improved conditions of working.

The law began to work for everyone rather than simply upholding an unjust system. In marked contrast, we now find ourselves in an era when all these social gains are being eroded and even our free time is once again under threat to become a luxury enjoyed by the privileged few. That is, if we let it happen.

That fragile blue flower long ago imagined by the Romantics represents the hope that is within our grasp if we would only wake from our enchanted slumber and seek it out. But there is a long struggle ahead before that point is reached. We will be getting to our destination when there is more public outrage at the imminent destruction of hugely important world heritage sites such as Palmyra. What is required is nothing less than a totally new sensibility.

The traditional methods, vehicles and agencies of social transformation have mostly been widely discredited through historic mistakes and have thus lost much of their effectiveness; namely, the cadre party, organised labour, and in recent years the new social movements, the anti-globalisation networks and social forums, to name but the main ones, have all failed to challenge corporate power despite raising their dissident voices against injustice.

Nevertheless, we must stubbornly insist that a better world is still possible and our battered global village is simply threatened with redevelopment and can be shaped in whatever direction we choose. The world may be in transition but there is nothing inevitable about the conclusion. Perhaps the screams of agony that we hear echoing around us are really the birth pangs of a new world that is struggling to be born. It must be that there is still a future as long as life is not extinguished and the possibility of sharing the world's resources on a fairer basis not just with the sustenance of all humanity but with all the living creatures which equally draw their sustenance from a common environment. That fragile blue flower long ago imagined by the Romantics represents the hope that is within our grasp if we would only wake from our enchanted slumber and seek it out. But there is a long struggle ahead before that point is reached. We will be getting to our destination when there is more public outrage at the imminent destruction of hugely important world heritage sites such as Palmyra. What is required is nothing less than a totally new sensibility.



A blue flower (German: Blaue Blume) is a central symbol of inspiration. It stands for desire, love, and the metaphysical striving for the infinite and unreachable. It symbolizes hope and the beauty of things  
[wiki](#)

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## PAPUA IS NOT A PROBLEM BUT THE WAY WE TALK ABOUT PAPUA IS – DR BUDI HERNAWAN

Reprinted from [The Conversation.com](http://TheConversation.com)



Image: A Korowai man and child in West Papua © Survival International [LINK](#)

Many of us were surprised but pleased when Indonesian President Joko Widodo announced early this month that the decades-long restriction on foreign journalists in Papua **would be lifted**. Access to Papua for international press and observers has been a longstanding issue. It was not only raised by rights organisations but also featured prominently during the 2012 **Universal Periodic Review** on Indonesia at the UN Human Rights Council.

But the pleasant surprise did not last very long. Less than 24 hours later, Minister for Security and Political Affairs Tedjo Edhy Purdijatno **told Indonesian media** that the access will be subject to the scrutiny of an agency. Indonesian military commander General Moeldoko confirmed this statement separately, saying that the government has yet to formulate new rules of the game for foreign journalists. Without waiting for further instruction from the national authorities, Papua police acted independently by announcing that foreign journalists will have to report to them.

While these statements reflect the ongoing conflicting policies on Papua, they reveal something much more problematic: the framing of Papua as a problem.

Papua is not a problem. The way we talk about Papua is.

### Conflicting policies for Papua

This is the fundamental issue that we have to address. Papuans have repeatedly expressed their concerns over crimes against humanity, including the recent **killings of four students** by the Indonesian security apparatus in Paniai. But the response of the government is simply to delay the case until it withers away.

They asked for an evaluation of the Special Autonomy Law, but the response was establishing **UP4B**, a government task force to accelerate economic development programs. This policy perpetuated the existing conflicting policies of Papua until the team finished its term last year.

Papuans have raised their voice over the shifting demographic composition, with an increased influx of people from other islands coming to Papua. The government responded by planning a new transmigration program, overlooking the creeping threats of ethnic conflicts.

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Since the territory was integrated into Indonesia in 1969, the name of the land has changed three times, illustrating the ways in which the government construed the land of Papua: from Irian Barat during Sukarno's period to Irian Jaya during Suharto's period and back to Papua under Abdurrahman Wahid, widely known as Gus Dur.

### Conflicting policies for Papua contd...

Papuans have asked for dialogue with the national government, but so far the government only holds closed-door meetings with the [Papua Peace Network](#). They asked for open access for foreign journalists, but the response is a cacophony of mixed messages.

The government's off-target responses have often been informed by analyses that typically frame Papuans as incompetent. These analysts hold the view that government services in Papua such as health care, education and public services are declining because the groundwork personnel, who are largely Papuans, are absent from their work. This analysis is partly true if they isolate the case to the local level.

But such analyses ignore the question of conflicting government policies on Papua that contribute to the low quality of implementation. The Papuan public service is an integral part of the larger government machinery. Even when a policy has clear guidance and is equipped with strong supervision and mentoring, implementation could go wrong; let alone when there are conflicting policies with minimal supervision.

### How outsiders frame Papua

If we look back to the history of Papua, since their first encounter with outsiders Papuans have been construed according to the mindsets of the outsiders. The first encounter with the [Sultanate of Tidore](#) through the hongi fleet between the 17th and 18th century was marked by violence and slavery. Although the contact was limited to the Islands of Raja Ampat, the Bird Heads area and the Island of Biak, this mistreatment illustrated that Papuans were framed as objects by the sultanate. Following the unconditional transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to Indonesia in [1949](#), the Dutch retained then West New Guinea as the last resort of its imaginary empire legacy in Asia. In 1966 Yale historian Arend Lijhart described this act as "trauma of de-colonisation".

Since the territory was integrated into Indonesia in [1969](#), the name of the land has changed three times, illustrating the ways in which the government construed the land of Papua: from Irian Barat during Sukarno's period to Irian Jaya during Suharto's period and back to Papua under Abdurrahman Wahid, widely known as Gus Dur.

The change was not merely about names. It was also about different visions of Papua.

...let Papuans speak for themselves. It is not a romanticism. Rather, it is a call on national and international policy-makers that Papuans should be given space to speak for themselves, whether with the national government, foreign governments, foreign journalists or international observers, so they are no longer framed as a problem.

Sukarno envisioned the liberation of Irian Barat from the Dutch. Suharto promised a glorious and prosperous Irian Jaya. Gus Dur simply showed respect for Papuans and listened to their wishes by restoring the original name of the territory into the original name. As a result, among the three names, Papuans highly appreciate only the last change.

### Friends in the Pacific

Papuans have been subjected to various framings without proper consultation with them. So, it is understandable that they have shifted their attention from the national government to the [Melanesian Spearhead Group](#).

Although the Western world may never hear about this forum, Papuans found genuine dialogue and a warm welcome from the members of this sub-diplomatic forum in its neighbourhood: the Pacific. They found ample space to express themselves as members of the Melanesian family. They have no worry about being judged or measured against foreign criteria any more because they have their own say and can speak for themselves despite all formal procedures.

### Listen to Papuan voices

This is what we missed in the discussion of opening access for Papua: let Papuans speak for themselves. It is not a romanticism. Rather, it is a call on national and international policy-makers that Papuans should be given space to speak for themselves, whether with the national government, foreign governments, foreign journalists or international observers, so they are no longer framed as a problem.

Gus Dur set a clear example of how to engage Papuans with respect. This example can be translated into some form of governance that accommodates Papuans' concerns in a comprehensive policy based on justice, peacemaking and a spirit of reconciliation.

The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) is a resource centre integrating knowledge and experience to strengthen peacebuilding policy and practice. Established in 2008, it collaborates and promotes collaboration with a wide network of researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Norway and abroad.



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## **“Decisive Storm”: Saudi Arabia’s attack on the Houthis in Yemen**



### **Executive summary**

On March 26th 2015, Saudi Arabia launched airstrikes on the Houthis and their allies in Yemen. The operation, “Decisive Storm”, was supported by a coalition of Sunni Muslim countries. The military campaign was initiated after Yemeni President ‘Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, on March 25th, asked the UN Security Council for assistance in stopping Houthi militia advancing towards Aden. For Saudi Arabia’s new king, Salman, the military operation is beneficial for several reasons. First, the king hopes that the campaign against the Houthis will strengthen the standing of his son, Muhammad bin Salman, and that a successful end result will make the young prince respected as an effective leader. Second, Salman sees the attack on the Houthis – portrayed as clients of Iran – as an opportunity to rally support among Saudis for the new king and the monarchy. Third, by building a broad coalition behind the military campaign, King Salman seeks to establish Saudi hegemony in the Sunni Muslim world. The operation against the Yemeni Houthis reflects Saudi Arabia’s new adventurous, militaristic foreign policy, and comes with great risk. Hence, the new foreign policy doctrine is controversial within the royal family, and Salman’s decision to attack the Houthis was contested.

### **Introduction**

On March 26th 2015, Saudi Arabia launched airstrikes on the Houthis and their allies in Yemen. The operation, “Asifatul al-Hazm” or “Decisive Storm”, was supported by a coalition of Sunni Muslim countries, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (except Oman), Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan. The U.S. provided logistics and intelligence and has a joint planning cell with the Saudis. The military campaign was initiated after Yemeni President ‘Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, on March 25th, asked the UN Security Council for assistance to stop Houthi militia advancing towards Aden. Until recently, Hadi had been staying in Aden, but has now fled to his allies in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia’s stated goal is to “protect the legitimate government of Yemen” (i.e. Hadi as Yemen’s legitimate president), and to stop the Houthi movement claimed by the Saudis to be a “terrorist organisation” backed by Iran. For Saudi Arabia’s new king, Salman bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Al Sa‘ud, the military operation is beneficial for the following several reasons.



By giving so much power to Muhammad bin Salman, the king bypassed his older sons, who are placed in far less important positions, not to mention a number of older and far more experienced nephews, specifically commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, Mitab bin ‘Abd Allah, and Foreign Minister Sa‘ud Al Faysal.

### Grooming the special prince

First, it is likely that the king, through the operation, hopes to consolidate the position of his favoured son, Muhammad bin Salman, who, in the wake of the royal succession in January, was named chief of the royal court, the world’s youngest defence minister and head of the newly established Council of Economic and Development Affairs. This representation of the prince is underlined by the government-controlled Saudi media portrayal of the young prince as “commander in chief”, who decisively leads the attacks on their neighbouring country to the south. The media has published numerous photos of him engaging in activities such as directing the war from his office, visiting soldiers on the battlefield and sitting in the cockpit of a fighter jet, among others. Within the royal family, as well as among ordinary Saudis, many reacted negatively to the appointment of the young Prince Muhammad bin Salman – who is in his early 30s – to these prominent positions by his father. Some claim that Muhammad bin Salman has far too much influence over his father, and express fears that he will become a very powerful gatekeeper as the 82-year-old king’s health deteriorates further. He is also accused by some of being corrupt. There is a tendency amongst Saudi kings to have a favourite son, often the youngest born, creating a source of jealousy and discontent within the royal house.

By giving so much power to Muhammad bin Salman, the king bypassed his older sons, who are placed in far less important positions, not to mention a number of older and far more experienced nephews, specifically commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, Mitab bin ‘Abd Allah, and Foreign Minister Sa‘ud Al Faysal. In terms of age, experience and reputation, there is also a wide gap between Muhammad bin Salman and his elder cousin, 55-year-old Muhammad bin Nayif, who is deputy crown prince, interior minister and head of the Council of Political and Security Affairs. Through the military campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, King Salman arguably aims to strengthen the standing of Muhammad bin Salman and make the young prince respected among his half brothers and cousins as an effective leader, allowing him to stand on equal footing with his older cousin Muhammad bin Nayif.

### Playing the nationalist card

Second, there are good reasons for believing that King Salman, through the military operation, is playing the nationalist card. Salman probably sees the attack on the Yemeni Houthis – whom the Saudis portray as clients of Iran – as an opportunity to rally support among Saudis for the king and the monarchy. This is important, as the king is facing considerable challenges at home – a wide range of cultural, socio-economical and political concerns – and there are few issues that unite the divided Saudi nation. Moreover, the military operation serves as an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to flex its military muscles and restore “honour” after the humiliation of the “defeat” against the Assad regime and Iran in Syria.

Saudi press is backing the military operation unequivocally. “We see this as brotherly support for our neighbours in Yemen”, an op-ed in Arab News stated, with a large cartoon of warplanes scattering rats in a desert.

The threat of Iran, coupled with the deep-rooted Shia-phobia of Wahhabi Islam, is one of the few issues that has the potential to unite broad segments of the Saudi population. King Salman’s aggressive action addresses Saudi public opinion that is increasingly concerned about Iranian power surrounding the kingdom, perceived Saudi impotence in the face of this power and the downscaled presence of the U.S. in the Middle East, thus leaving the region vulnerable allowing Iran to expand its power.

The fact that the government has acted is now a source of broad public pride within the kingdom. Saudi press is backing the military operation unequivocally. “We see this as brotherly support for our neighbours in Yemen”, an op-ed in Arab News stated, with a large cartoon of warplanes scattering rats in a desert. On Twitter – a useful barometer to measure popular trends in Saudi Arabia – nationalistic tweets abound, supporting the kingdom’s military action against Houthis in Yemen. The popular cleric Salman al-‘Awda tweeted his support for the military operation with references to the “acute need to shore up growing Iranian regional influence”.

### Establishing hegemony in the Sunni world

Third, by building a broad coalition behind the military campaign, King Salman seeks to establish Saudi hegemony in the Sunni Muslim world. The Saudis are alarmed by Iran’s presence in Iraq and Syria and are terrified by the prospect of a U.S. nuclear deal with Iran. Like other GCC governments, Saudi Arabia feels increasingly surrounded both geographically and politically by Tehran’s growing regional allies and influence, and fears that a nuclear agreement will further strengthen Iran’s power in the Middle East.

The war against the Houthis has been brewing for months, and, since coming to power, Salman has consulted with leaders of, among others, the other Gulf monarchies, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan, with the aim of creating a Sunni bloc. As the military operation shows, the king has succeeded in setting up an alliance with considerable military capacity. According to Saudi media, more than 100,000 Saudi troops, including members of the Saudi security ministries Ministry of Defence, Saudi Arabian National Guard, Ministry of Interior and General Intelligence Presidency, and Pakistanis, are in southern Asir and Jizan provinces. The media also reports that these troops are supported by over 100 Saudi fighter jets, plus 30 United Arab Emirates fighter jets, 15 each from Bahrain and Kuwait, 10 from Qatar and 6 from Jordan, as well as the presence of Pakistan and Egypt air and naval forces. On March 29th, the heads of the Arab League countries agreed to the creation of a joint military force – which has long been an ambition of the 22 member states, but had proved unattainable – that eventually could be deployed to bring stability to Yemen. The creation of this force was a major success for King Salman and demonstrated Saudi leadership in the Arab world.

Not only Saudi Arabia but also the UAE and Qatar have flexed their military muscles in recent years and participated in air operations in war-torn countries as far away as Libya. The rich Gulf kingdoms are among the world's largest defence spenders, and it is reasonable to believe that they have a desire to participate in conflicts to acquire operational experience.

### Establishing hegemony in the Sunni world *contd...*

Beyond its rhetorical support for the Houthis in Yemen, it is unclear the extent to which Tehran has in fact supported them militarily, through either weapons assistance or military training.

Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia has felt an acute need to draw a red line in its own backyard and to set an example for Iran. Iran, for its part, has condemned the attack, but it is unlikely that the country will involve itself in the conflict. This is because Iran has limited military capabilities, given the country's heavy involvement in Syria and Iraq, as well as the ongoing nuclear negotiations in which Tehran aims to reach an end result that eases the sanctions against the country.

### Big game, big gamble

Saudi Arabia's operation against the Yemen Houthis is a continuation of the adventurous, militaristic foreign policy initiated by the late King 'Abd Allah, but it is on a larger scale and has far greater risk. Under 'Abd Allah, the kingdom cast off half a century of caution and restraint in regional security affairs and decided to use its own muscles to protect national interests and reduce its long-standing security dependence on the U.S. The kingdom's preferred instruments of foreign policy were traditionally diplomacy, money and religion. Over the past six years, more or less in parallel with the reduction of U.S. military presence in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has undertaken smaller-scale military campaigns in neighbouring countries, beginning with the 2009 war against Houthi rebels in northern Yemen, followed by the deployment of Saudi troops into Bahrain to shore up the regime there early on in the Arab Spring, and then the recent anti-ISIL campaign in Iraq.

Not only Saudi Arabia but also the UAE and Qatar have flexed their military muscles in recent years and participated in air operations in war-torn countries as far away as Libya. The rich Gulf kingdoms are among the world's largest defence spenders, and it is reasonable to believe that they have a desire to participate in conflicts to acquire operational experience.

The new foreign policy approach, referred to as a "doctrine" by Nawaf Obaid at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, is controversial within the royal family, and King Salman's decision to attack the Houthis was contested. The king's decision to act was taken only after extensive discussions, in which the arguments of his son and defence minister, Muhammad bin Salman, prevailed over those of the veteran foreign minister Sa'ud Al Faysal. Within the royal family, there is a rift between younger princes, represented by Muhammad bin Salman and Muhammad bin Nayif, who keep pushing for a more proactive foreign policy, and older princes, fronted by Sa'ud Al Faysal, who is an advocate of "the old thinking" of diplomacy.

...the king is arguably trying to use the campaign to establish Saudi hegemony in the Sunni Muslim world. The operation against the Yemeni Houthis reflects Saudi Arabia's new adventurous, militaristic foreign policy, and comes with huge risk.

The younger princes have long been frustrated with the way the old guard has implemented and exercised policy, and the attack against Yemeni Houthis indicates that the younger generation has gained greater influence over foreign policy.

Sa'ud Al Faysal's reluctance is understandable, because of the huge risk inherent in this military operation. The list of things that could go wrong for the Saudis is daunting.

The Saudis could simply fail, enabling the Houthis to take full control of Yemen. That would be a spectacular embarrassment – in particular for the king's son, Muhammad bin Salman – and it cannot be ruled out, as the Saudi armed forces have minimal combat experience. The military intervention in Yemen in 2009 was a failure, which led to the disgrace of Prince Khalid bin Sultan who then commanded the Saudi forces. Significant collateral damage – which is a likely effect of the air campaign – will trigger international criticism directed against Saudi Arabia, a severe burden for the new king. Moreover, the bombing could have the negative effect of strengthening al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – the arch-enemy of Saudi Arabia – which previously has been fought by the Houthis. It might even open the scene for ISIL. The physical destruction of the already poverty-stricken Yemen caused by the air campaign increases the chance that the kingdom will confront the negative effects of a failed state across its porous southern border. Finally, although not very likely, Saudi Arabia's intervention could escalate the conflict into a regional proxy war. The longer the "Decisive Storm" rages, the more damage will be done to stability in and around the southern Arabian Peninsula.

### Summary

In summary, King Salman's decision to attack the Houthi militia in Yemen addresses a number of urgent domestic political needs. It is plausible to believe that the king hopes that the military operation will strengthen the standing of his son, Muhammad bin Salman, and rally popular support among nationalist Saudis who are fearful of an expansionist Shia Iran. In addition, the king is arguably trying to use the campaign to establish Saudi hegemony in the Sunni Muslim world. The operation against the Yemeni Houthis reflects Saudi Arabia's new adventurous, militaristic foreign policy, and comes with huge risk. Therefore, the new foreign policy doctrine is controversial within the royal family, and Salman's decision to attack the Houthis was not an easy one to make.





## EXILE

Here's where I was born,  
 Drawn by old hands  
 And a woman's cry –  
 Into a world of mother-song,  
 Wood fires, light creased green,  
 Fish-flips in ponds,  
 Smoke rising blue at dawn.

Here's where I grew up,  
 Among these palms of dates  
 And bamboo groves,  
 Laughter of friends and rivers  
 In my ears,  
 Seasons sliding on a wayward wind.

Here's where they laid me down  
 Among the maimed and dead  
 My village cindered  
 And the stench of dreams  
 Shrouded the land I loved so well.

Now, moving on steel and glass  
 Holding dreams I do not understand,  
 Languages pass me by  
 Flowing along the sidewalks -  
 Till I am left alone  
 With my own tongue.

I speak to the people inside me  
 They do not answer,  
 I wave to them, call out to them,  
 Reach out to them,  
 They do not answer;  
 Stranded among voices, faces,  
 Unknown tongues,  
 A smile-mask engraved on my face,  
 I walk the world,  
 My past floating inside me  
 In a fishbowl.



Drawing by Randhir Khare from his new series MANDALAS OF MY HEART  
 which is part of his 7th solo exhibition opening in November this year.





I used to teach at an International school and often overheard young peoples' conversations on background and religion. It made me wonder why we adults seem to need to use religion and culture as an instrument of power. Children keep things simple. Sadly we seem to gradually lose this simplicity as we get closer to adulthood. This poem was published in BOXES – my poetry collection for young people.

### Why Can't We Have Our Own Gods?

My friend was born Christian.  
I was born Jew.  
We go to the same school,  
live in the same street,  
like wearing the same clothes,  
like eating the same food,  
love swimming,  
love playing volleyball,  
don't like doing homework,  
don't like getting up.

I go to the synagogue  
on Fridays and Saturdays.  
She goes to her church  
on Sundays.

My mother tells me  
we are the Chosen People.

My friend's mother tells her  
their God is their Saviour.

I told my mother and  
she told her mother  
we had seen gods laughing,  
singing and dancing together  
in a circle of moonlight.

They both said: *you  
couldn't have. You are  
too young to understand,  
but one day you will.*

But we do understand.

We talk to our gods.  
They dance with us







## THE ADDICT ARCHETYPE

*The creativity of your subconscious mind not only shows up in dreams, but also shows up as archetypes in your life. **Archetypes** are overlying patterns that show up in all cultures that are seeded in the psyche. Some examples of archetypes are mother, judge, teacher and healer. When you begin to look at these patterns in your life, you can unleash your creative energy.*

In this article, I will explore the **Addict Archetype**. This overall archetype includes addiction to alcohol and other drugs, food, sex, and gambling. You may also identify the addict as a workaholic, gluttonous or as one who compulsively consumes.

*Several years ago I was sitting with a client in my office. He was a man in his late 30s who worked as a flight attendant. He loved his job, but often gambled at the casino and lost his money. He was out of control. I sat with him and outlined a plan for him to move into recovery and quit his gambling. This included weekly sessions to stay focused on his goal. In an attempt to get his attention, I also outlined what would happen if he didn't follow this plan, which included losing his job and his home. Having counseled addicts for over 30 years, I could see that he was not going to stop his gambling and would lose everything. Although he did come to see me weekly for a couple months, he didn't follow through with the recovery plan. I don't know where he is now, but I felt sad when I saw his house was up for sale. Addiction is a powerful archetype and without help, it can take you over.*



The sign that something is wrong continues and you deny the problem until eventually the addiction takes a toll on you and you “hit bottom.” For an addict to finally see they have a problem there are usually issues that arise in their primary relationship, with their friends, at work, with their health or with the legal system. Sad to say, many people do not recover and end up dying of the addiction.

Everyone is affected by addiction in his or her life, whether by his or her own addiction or by someone they know. In the beginning the experience is fun, exciting and often a great adrenaline rush. You love the high! Somehow you start chasing the high and it gets harder and harder to maintain. It takes more of the substance or process (such as gambling or shopping,) more money, more time and the high is not as great as it once was. Activities you were involved in, times with close friends, the quality of your relationships waiver and all of the sudden, the addiction becomes the center of your life.

Eventually, you are preparing for the high, being high or recovering from the high and it is a vicious cycle. Denial sets in and you don’t understand why other people are not joining you or happy for you. Others begin to try to change you or confront you about your behavior and rather than see the problem, you begin to see your friends, colleagues and loved ones as the problem.

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For a workaholic, hitting bottom can be losing his family because he worked so many hours that his relationships deteriorated. Whether his wife became tired of being left alone and had an affair or divorced him, or his son no longer wanted to spend time with his dad because he had been ignored for so long; the obsession with work takes a toll.

With alcoholics or drug addicts their behavior changes when they are using and this usually causes anger or hurt feelings in others. The addict becomes defensive and adamant they are not the problem, and their personality begins to change even when they are not actively using. The family and friends usually rally to help, but end up enabling the addict and then they feel out of control. Resentment and low self-esteem takes over the family and the addiction continues.

Underlying this pattern of addiction is pain coming from a loss of power. Along the path, the addict loses touch with being honest, clear and direct. Her thoughts and feelings become masked with “half-truths” and direct lies. She becomes disempowered. She experiences shame and she becomes out of control. Her life develops into one of deceit, denial and often betrayal. In Alcoholics Anonymous, a program of recovery for alcoholics, they say, **“You are only as sick as your secrets.”**

So what to do when you have the Addict Archetype? you be doing?

The Truth – that is the answer in the process of recovery. What is the truth underneath all these lies? A good place to start is to stop and take a clear inventory of yourself. Write out what your dream is for your life. What would you like to see your life like in five years from now? What would you be doing? Who would you be with? What are your relationships like? What do you do for play? Then look at where you are now. Are you living the life that you dream?

As difficult as it is, it is necessary to learn to identify this archetype. One of the best ways to become aware is to notice if others have said something to you like “You drink too much,” “You are always working,” or “You are losing too much money when you gamble.” As much as you want to resist what they say, there is a part of you that hears the truth.

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What are your values – honesty, integrity, and compassion? There are too many to list here, but you can list your own values and then look at the incongruence between what you believe and what you live. That is the plight of the addict. What they say is not what they do. They become caught in a vicious downward cycle and turn to the substance or process to gain control, only to continually lose personal power.

In the case of addiction, the bible verse John 8:32 “the truth will set you free” is so accurate. I have been an addictions counselor for over 30 years and although there are other ways of entering into recovery, the best solution for the most people is the 12 Step Programs. You can find them for many addictions and if not for your particular case, you can use the basic steps for Alcoholics Anonymous and change the addiction word.

The 12 Step programs allow for the components that support recovery from addiction. There are simple steps that result in a Spiritual Awakening that has been miraculous for many. The recovery process is one of getting honest with yourself and with others. There are meetings where you can share with others. In the meetings you gain support from others outside the meetings as well and you get a sponsor who will guide you individually and act as your accountability partner. And this is all free.

If you have the Addict Archetype, allow yourself to research more about this issue and find the best treatment for you. For friends and family, you can also attend Al-Anon, a 12 Step group. You will find others there with whom you can share and learn how to love an addict, but not the behavior. You don’t have to do this alone.

By understanding and working with your Addict Archetype, you will learn to access your natural path of health and move toward your Divine Soul purpose.



**Visit Cuba now before the old world fades into sterile modernity.  
Viva La Cuba!**



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Street Scene Havana





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Carnival in Santa Clara Pic © Joo Peter



Cinema Hall, Havana Pic © Joo Peter





Lovers on Malecón, Havana Pic © Joo Peter



Street scene, Havana Pic © Joo Peter





Prado in Havana Pic © Joo Peter  
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Street Vendor, Havana Pic © Joo Peter





Santeria Cult altar in a private home in Havana Pic © Joo Peter



Students of the Flamenco dance at the historic theatre of Cienfuegos, Havana Pic © Joo Peter





*My family's favorite Chicken Kathi Roll recipe with a filling of spicy shredded chicken cooked in a broth. Pickled red onion relish and a sprinkling of Indian Chaat Masala (optional) add unbeatable taste to this outstanding classic Indian street-food wrap. Photograph/Recipe © [www.perisspiceladle.com](http://www.perisspiceladle.com)*

## Chicken Kathi Roll with Pickled Red Onion Relish

### Makes 4-5 Kathi Rolls

#### Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken, breast or thigh meat, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/3 cup chicken broth (or water)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 bay leaf
- 4-6 homemade ( my recipe is here ) or store-bought Roti-Chapati or Plain Paratha
- 2 well-beaten eggs
- Indian Chaat Masala (optional, to sprinkle over the filling)

#### Chicken marinade

- 2 teaspoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon ginger garlic paste (or ½ teaspoon each minced garlic and grated ginger)
- ½ teaspoon ground red chili or Cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon cracked black peppercorn
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon salt

#### Pickled Red Onion Relish

- 2 tablespoon red or cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon brown sugar or white refined sugar
- 1 cup thinly sliced or chopped red onion
- ½ cup thinly sliced or shredded carrots
- 4-6 large mint leaves, finely shredded
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro leaves
- 1 fresh Serrano or Thai green chili, very finely minced (*optional, fresh chilies have a strong spice kick*)



Pic © Perinaz Avari

#### Directions

01. Bring all the ingredients for the onion relish together in a bowl. Make sure the vinegar has coated the onion and carrots. Leave aside at room temperature for at least 1-2 hours for the flavors to marry.
02. Marinade the chicken pieces with the canola oil, spices and salt. Refrigerate and let the chicken marinate for at least 2-4 hours; no harm done if the chicken is marinated up to a day in advance.

#### To Prepare the Chicken

01. In a saucepan, bring the broth or water and lemon juice along with the bay leaf to a boil. Add the marinated chicken to the hot broth; cook covered for 10-12 minutes.
02. The chicken will be cooked through and most of the liquid will be absorbed, (or boil the liquid till it gets absorbed.) Using two forks shred the chicken into chunks, as finely as desired.

#### Assemble the Chicken Kathi Rolls

01. Heat a flat griddle; lay the homemade or store-bought Roti-Chapati or plain Paratha on it. While one side is heating up or cooking (read note below) evenly spread 1-2 tablespoons of well-beaten egg over the side facing up. Flip the flatbread, so the egg can cook.
02. Lay the Roti-Chapati or Paratha, egg side up on a flat surface. Add a generous helping of hot shredded chicken down the middle, top it with desired amount of pickled red onion relish and a sprinkling of Indian Chaat Masala (if you have it on hand.)
03. Fold the flatbread to create a wrap, using parchment paper to hold it together and catch drippings from the roll.
04. Always serve Chicken Kathi Roll freshly assembled, for the best experience.

#### Note on Roti-Chapati or Plain Paratha

Indian flat bread can be made at home with simple dough using this recipe . However, they are also sold, cooked and frozen, or uncooked, at regular and ethnic stores in many western countries. In either scenario, Roti-Chapati and plain Paratha can easily be reheated or cooked on a hot griddle, before serving.



## VADA PAV - HERE COMES THE HOT FRITTER

Spicy potato fritters, fried potato dumplings, spicy potato cutlet, potato patty, a yummy potato spicy ball wrapped in chickpea flour batter. Call it what you may. This reigning king of snacks of the western belt of India is not just a snack but a culture. The vada itself can be an explosion of spice, but there is something to calm the palate - the pav (bun). The vada and the pav meet in perfect harmony in the Indian version of a burger, replace the ketchup and mustard with mint or tamarind and dry garlic chutney and voila! You have the perfect answer to a hunger pang – the Bombay Burger, aka Vada Pav. One bite produces the entire range of flavors found in an Indian buffet. It is a marriage of different layers of tastes, spicy, tangy, and sweet; and this is the one dish you can relish as breakfast, lunch, snack or dinner.

Go to a city like Mumbai or Pune and you will see vada pav stalls lined up at every busy street corner. Affordable and readily available the snack has people from different walks of life huddled elbow to elbow outside their favourite vada pav stall to get their fix of this hot and spicy Indian answer to a burger. Some prefer to chew on it at leisure while others just swallow it fast – and of course others take a parcel and to enjoy it in the comfort of their privacy. It is believed that vada pav was invented in Bombay by Ashok Vaidya, a snack vendor who ran a street stall just outside the bustling Dadar station. Vaidya came up with this recipe in 1971 as an answer to the demand of the hungry ever-moving commuters who seemed in desperate need of a snack on the go.

Since then, the vada pav has satisfied and pleased the palate of millions as breakfast, lunch, dinner and most importantly a snack on the go. As is the case with most street foods, the vada pav too has undergone purification and standardization attempts. In 2008, an elaborate festival called the Vada Pav Sammelan (vada pav convention), was sponsored by the Shiv Sena, a regional political movement in Mumbai. 27 popular vada pav vendors participated in the convention where people were invited to come and taste vada pavs and give their verdict on the best quality and recipe. The best vada pav, to be picked was to be standardized under the 'Shiv Vadapav' brand and soon to be launched Maharashtra fast-food chain. For the hygiene conscious chains like Goli Vada Pav and Jumbo King Vada Pav have managed to get this quintessential king of street food off the streets and into a McDonald's like safe and cool avatar. Such is the popularity of this spicy fritter that it has now found a place next to tall glasses of cool alcoholic drinks at pubs and eateries dressed up as butter toasted vada pav or mini vada pavs à la sliders. This batter fried potato delight has become such a culture icon of Maharashtra, that in a recent controversy involving an Indian English author's remark on the culture of the state of Maharashtra, the self-proclaimed defenders of culture in Mumbai landed up outside her house with a plate of vada pav to give her a "real taste" of the Maharashtrian culture.



The batata (potato) vada is not just restricted to street food stalls, canteens, restaurants and enthusiastic personal kitchens, its star quality earned it a prominent place in a romantic song in a Hindi film in the late 80's. The song, Batata Vada had the delightful snack playing the role of cupid as the lyrics indicated - *Dil jo mujhe nahin dena tha dena pada, Batata Vada, batata Vada* (my heart which I didn't intend to give, I eventually had to, potato fritter, potato fritter) [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). A song in Marathi, the state language of Maharashtra is called *Ya Baicha Batata Vada* (this woman's potato fritter) talks about her culinary expertise in churning out the perfect batata vada.

From the poor man's food to the snack on the go, from the middle class branded delight to the rich man's gourmet meal, the vada pav has travelled many plates. Whichever plate you choose to pick make sure it's on a rain-drenched afternoon accompanied with a hot cup of chai.

### Ingredients

- 600 gms of potatoes
- 1 one inch piece ginger
- 10-12 cloves of garlic
- 4-5 green chillies
- 1 1/2 cups of gram flour (besan)
- 1 tspn of red chilli powder
- salt to taste
- a pinch of soda bi-carbonate (baking soda)
- 1/4 tspn turmeric powder
- 2 tblspns of chopped coriander leaves
- Oil to fry

### Directions

1. Boil, cool, peel and mash the potatoes and keep aside. Make a paste of ginger, garlic and green chillies.
2. Prepare a thick batter of besan with water, red chilli powder, salt and soda bi-carbonate. Heat a little oil. Add ginger-garlic-green chilli paste.
3. Add mashed potatoes and turmeric powder and mix well. Add chopped coriander leaves and salt to taste. Let the mixture cool. When cold, form lemon sized balls.
4. Heat oil in a kadai. Dip the potato balls into the besan batter and deep fry in hot oil till light golden brown.
5. Serve hot with chutney or sauce of your choice.



## The Salt Prints

In July 2011, I along with three friends (E. Dias, P. Madhavan and V. Nathan) retraced the steps that Mahatma Gandhi took in 1930, walking from the Sabarmati ashram to the village of Dandi on the western shore of Gujarat. The journey consisted of about 450 km and 25 days of walking through fields, highways, riverbeds and swamps. We stopped at the same villages as the first march, always attempting to stick to the Mahatma's original route and places of stay.

Two things made the strongest impression on me. First that even though very little remains of Gandhi's thought and influence on the surface, his strategies and some of the practices he implemented still endure, not only because they played a big role in shaping India, but because they have existed in other forms long before he came along and appropriated them for the freedom struggle. Secondly, in rural India photographs are a means of acknowledging the dignity of the subject and paying respect – a reason for joy and celebration, a reason to feel dignified and important, a means to become eternal.

These photographs are thus my way of paying respect to the people who shared their stories with me.



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The Solemn Farmer





Siesta outside thread factory  
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Phoolan Devi's Guru



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