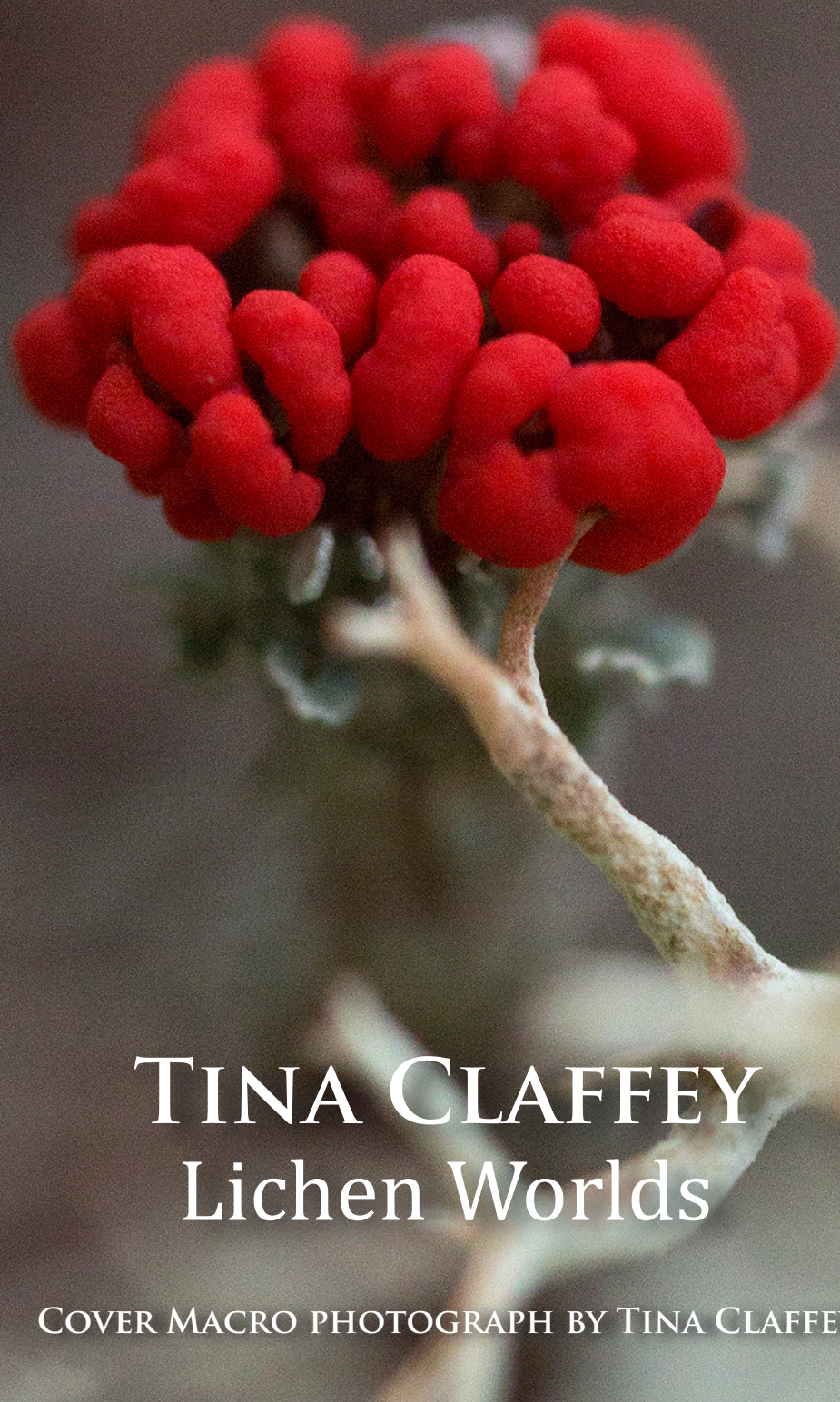


2010 - 2020



FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
MARCH 2021



TINA CLAFFEY

Lichen Worlds

COVER MACRO PHOTOGRAPH BY TINA CLAFFEY



Cat whiskers, Laos. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

Live Encounters Magazine (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. **Please help by donating any amount for this just cause as events are threatening the very future of Live Encounters.**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor
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Tina Claffey is an award winning nature photographer and author of 'Tapestry of Light-Ireland's bogs & wetlands as never seen before' released in October 2017. For almost 10 years, she lived and worked in pristine wilderness areas in Botswana, and this experience awakened in her an appreciation of the natural world of Ireland. Her observations and unique perspective of the flora and fauna of the unspoilt raised bogs and wet woodlands of the Irish midlands are celebrated in her work.
<https://www.tinaclaffey.com/>



TINA CLAFFEY

LICHEN WORLDS

Text & Photographs

I love to get 'lost' in the bogs, eskers & wetlands of Ireland with my macro lens.

The macro lens allows me to capture what cannot be seen by the naked eye, and capture scenes that defy our sense of reality, glimpses of other miniature worlds that co-exist with us.

Much of the flora and fauna are at ground level, so capturing my desired shot requires me to lie down, sometimes getting soaked in the process as I look for new perspectives and ways of seeing.

Many species of lichen can be found on the bog. They belong to the genus known as *Cladonia*.

Lichens are ancient and simple plants that result from a symbiotic relationship between fungus and bacteria. They form many interesting shapes including antler horns, pyxie cups, matchsticks and bearded types. The presence of the lichens is an indication that the area is free of air pollution.

They are so wonderful to photograph, and when viewed closely by the macro lens, I can really be transported to another world.

Little lichens creep through the boardwalk as I enter into a miniature menacing forest, where lichens twist and contort as they reach to the sky.

Scarlet tipped Devil's Matchsticks entice with their scarlet bouquet, while others stand tall like a tree with scarlet fruit. Ghostly Reindeer lichens nestle among fallen orange bracken ferns, while the Pixie cup lichens entice, as their cups are filled with morning dew. As I am drawn to the orbs of dew, they magnify lichens within lichens, worlds within worlds.

Tina Claffey

Devil’s Matchstick Tree.



©Tina Claffey

Lichen Orb.



©Tina Claffey

Pixie Lichen World of Dew.



©Tina Claffey



©Tina Claffey

Pixie Cup Lichens.

Golden Cladonia.



©Tina Claffey



©Tina Claffey

Menacing Lichen Forest.

Reindeer Lichen Tree.



©Tina Claffey

Ruffle Lichen.



©Tina Claffey



©Tina Claffey

Lichen Broadwalk.

Born in Munich 1954. 1973 studied with Ernst Fuchs and Salvador Dali. 1970 he painted *still-lives* in Switzerland introducing curved mirrors which reflect objects in most surprising ways and led to a proposal for the –elegant Universe. Moving to Tuscany in 1980 landscape and atmospheric effects crystallized to intense, portraits of nature. Since 1984 living in Bali. In his search for the- abstract. Papua New Guinea – Warriors combine the archaic with the futuristic. Wolfgang's motto – aesthetic = ethic – points to places where humans experience the Good, the True and the Beautiful.



THE THIRD EYE

ARTWORK & TEXT BY

WOLFGANG WIDMOSER

You observe a water lily-pond.

An endless variety of forms appear and evolve with the movement of the light.
 Manifold reflections make You aware that everything is connected –
 An intricate net of live and death and new life.

The mirror-ball reflects the overall situation and places the observer inside the object.
 Your eyes perceive a 3-dimensional world embedded in a multidimensional Universe.
 As quantum physics explains all objects are energy – an energy that the observer perceives.
 Observing the ever changing situations Your consciousness is expanded to the point
 when You realize that You Yourself create the reality You are perceiving.
 You see the plants and the plants also see You –
 They have a consciousness and the flower becomes more beautiful the longer You look at it.

Painting is an attempt to order colored patches on a surface as to inform the observer
 of a possible reality that might manifest as an expanded consciousness.
 A dynamic balance is needed to create the realistic illusion
 of the world apparent in color and shapes.

The mystery remains and the process has no end.

The lily pond is teaching me the secrets of the Universe.

So far I found an incredible beauty at the core of the world.

Wolfgang Widmoser



Dancing on a cloudy day - Oil on canvas - 160 x 100 cm



Dawn - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm



Dancing in the afternoon - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm



The Temple - Oil on canvas - 160 x 100 cm



Rainbows - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm



The Shadow - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm



The Drop - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm



Sunrise - Oil on canvas - 180 x 150 cm

Peter Daly, amateur photographer, lives in the West of Ireland. Since taking up the camera, I have concentrated on sporting events. Local press and clubs have included some of my work to accompany match reports. Recently, I had four photographs published in "The Toughest Season.....A Year Like No Other". It is a beautiful photographic narrative of how our national games, gaelic football and hurling, survived at local club level against the challenges of the pandemic keeping our young people focused and their sanity intact. With sports events limited, I began to concentrate on wildlife photography. I have discovered a whole new world. The sounds, the colours, the freedom are intoxicating. The photographic challenges are as addictive as they are therapeutic.



PETER DALY

WEST OF IRELAND

Text & Photographs

Pandemic, lockdown, restriction,
A short journey,
Standing on the cusp, camera in hand,
Hearing the soft whispers in the wind,
Seeing the colours, life, waterscape, landscape,
Touching, heaven, calmness & peace,
Breathing, fresh, crisp, untainted air,
Tasting sweet, spiritual freedom,
Smelling intoxicating aroma of Mother Nature,
My soul is consumed, enveloped beauty,
I sit, I contemplate, how lucky am I,
This is the West of Ireland.

Peter Daly



Robin - Resident. Ireland's most widespread garden bird.



Dunnoek - Common resident throughout Ireland.



House Sparrow - Resident. One of Ireland's Top 20 most widespread garden birds.



Dunnoek - Common resident throughout Ireland.



Collared Dove - Resident in towns and villages throughout Ireland.



Blackbird - Resident, and winter visitor from Norway.



Redshank – Enroute from Iceland to West Africa.



Young Swan - Winter visitor to wetlands throughout Ireland from October to April.



Lapwings - Residents, summer visitors from the Continent (France & Iberia) and winter visitors (from western & central Europe).

Vũ Tuấn Hưng is a professional photographer and tour guide based in Hồ Chí Minh city. He is a tour guide for mainly German speaking tourists. His photographs feature in numerous publications across the world. If you are visiting Vietnam and need his assistance please email - vietnaminfos@gmail.com



Vũ Tuấn Hưng

VŨ TUẤN HƯNG

PHONG NHA

Photographs

Phong Nha Cave is a cave in Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Quảng Bình Province, Vietnam. It is 7,729 metres long and contains 14 grottoes, as well as a 13,969 metre underground river. While scientists have surveyed 44.5 kilometres of passages, tourists are only allowed to explore the first 1500 metres.

Phong Nha cave, from which the name to the whole system and the park is derived, is famous for its rock formations which have been given names such as the “Lion”, the “Fairy Caves”, the “Royal Court”, and the “Buddha”.

Its cave system features underground passageways and river caves filled with stalactites and stalagmites.

The stalagmites that used to stand at the cave’s entrance apparently inspired its name: Phong Nha means ‘Wind and Teeth’.

Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phong_Nha_Cave

01.



















Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia. His writings, based on his projects and extensive field based research in Indian conflict theatres of the Northeastern states and the left-wing extremism affected areas, have appeared in a wide range of academic as well as policy journals, websites, and magazines. This article republished by permission of www.mantraya.org

DR BIBHU PRASAD ROUTRAY

COUP D'ÉTAT IN MYANMAR: HISTORY UNFOLDS IN SLOW MOTION

Abstract

Following a coup d'état on 1 February 2021, democracy in Myanmar took a back seat. Ever since the results to the parliamentary elections were announced in November 2020 in which the NLD secured a landslide victory, the military had been expressing its displeasure, calling the elections a fraud marred exercise. The coup has been condemned by a large number of countries. The US has even called for a reversal of the military's move. This analysis examines the outcomes of the coup and its larger impact on the future of democracy in Myanmar.

A new regime assumed power in Myanmar in the early morning of 1 February 2021. Two and half months after the National League of Democracy (NLD) registered a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections drubbing the military-backed political party, the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) detained the state counsellor and leader of the National League of Democracy (NLD) Aung San Suu Kyi along with a host of political leaders, and announced a state of emergency on its Myawady TV channel. The emergency, it said, would last for a year. Without giving a time frame, the military has also declared its intention to hold [fresh elections](#). The declaration was signed by the First Vice President U Myint Swe, who is a military appointee. He will now be serving as Myanmar's acting president.

Below are the seven observations that can be drawn from this coup d'état, which almost everyone who study Myanmar knew was in the making.

Below are the seven observations that can be drawn from this coup d'état, which almost everyone who study Myanmar knew was in the making.

1. Cohabitation model does not work: Unless the civilian government completely surrenders to the military, the co-habitation model of a powerful military and an aspirational civilian government does not work. In Myanmar, the so-called political reforms have not occurred since the end of the direct military rule in 2011. While the Tatmadaw retained enormous concentration of power through the 2008 constitution, the continuous effort of the civilian government to bring changes to the state of affairs is an irritant. The model has worked in countries like Pakistan because of the skewed nature of civil-military relationship.

2. Not a surprise move: Almost everyone, including the global powers, saw this coming and did nothing to prevent it. Since the results to the November 2020 parliamentary elections were announced, the Tatmadaw had not minced its words about its complete disapproval for the polls which it termed as 'fraud marked'. Few days before it finally decided to go ahead, the commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing had announced that he intends [abolishing the 2008 constitution](#) that allowed the 'fraud-marked' elections to go ahead. No warnings to prevent the military from implementing its plan was made by those countries who have now expressed their anguish about the move.

3. A powerful military: In spite the so-called march of democracy in the last decade that witnessed the holding of two parliamentary elections, Myanmar's military remains a very powerful institution within the country. Even while the country faced no existential threat from any external power and only mini rebellions on its periphery from the ethnic insurgencies, several nations rushed in to ink pacts and gifted weapon systems which even included a [submarine](#). In the bid to counter China's growing role, military diplomacy unveiled by a slew of nations including the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia appears to have emboldened the Tatmadaw that continues to cast itself as the protector of the nation.

4. End of the road for democracy: The last time Tatmadaw [undermined the results of a popular mandate](#) for the NLD was in 1991. It presided over the country's fortunes for the subsequent two decades. The 1 February development could mark the start of a similar period of military rule, unless the West or the U.N. decides to intervene with a purpose. However, such chances are remote.



Image Courtesy: South China Morning Post

The Tatmadaw's actions are bound to find some levels of tacit approval from Myanmar's powerful neighbours like China. In the name of bringing order to a chaotic country, the Tatmadaw should be able to sail through the initial days marked by global outrage.

5. A test for Biden Administration: Among the reactions made thus far, the United States' has been the strongest. It not only condemned the development, but [warned of a response](#) 'if these steps are not reversed'. In contrast, most other nations expressed only [concern](#). It remains to be seen how the new Biden administration goes about handling what is essentially its first major diplomatic challenge. Its steps to 'reverse' the state of affairs and restore democracy in Myanmar will be keenly watched.

6. Economic interests vs Sanctions: The conventional reaction of nations in such circumstances has been to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on the country. Similar sanctions had been imposed on Myanmar throughout the 1990s and continued till 2008, before the military unveiled a quasi-military regime. In the past decade, Myanmar's growing economy and the business opportunities it offers has been found to be extremely lucrative for a large number of nations. Both geopolitics and geo-economics make Myanmar a potential partner for countries belonging to different blocs. The world's bilateral trade with Myanmar has registered sharp increase in the past years. China, Thailand, Japan and India have emerged as the country's four largest trading partners. The U.S.-Myanmar trade was to the tune of US\$1.28 billion in 2020. While the Tatmadaw would have calculated the risks, it is taking by carrying out a coup, will the West risk its economic interests over promoting democracy in Myanmar remains a key question. While sanctions will have no major impact on the Tatmadaw in the near to medium term, it will simply result in China and Myanmar's other neighbours usurping the share of the country's trade with the sanctioning nations.

7. China gets to adopt Myanmar, yet again: There have been several news reports in the past about China's declining role in Myanmar. Among other factors, these are sparked by local civilian protests against Chinese infrastructure or investment projects in the country. Despite that Beijing remains deeply entrenched in Myanmar and shares deep bond with the military, the civilian leadership, and even with some of the ethnic insurgencies that are fighting with the military. If there is a single nation which has a clear idea about the turn Myanmar's democracy is taking in the post-parliamentary elections period, it has to be China. China's overarching role in Myanmar will limit the capacity of other nations to build pressure on the Tatmadaw.

Prognosis

Nations around the world have used the chaos onset by the Covid-19 pandemic to suppress democratic aspirations. Myanmar's military has gone even a step further. In the last two and half months, it appears to have prepared well for the coup. If allowed to run through its plan, Tatmadaw will write a new constitution that in all likelihood will further cement its position in Myanmar's body politic. It is likely to receive support from a host of small anti-NLD political parties and the nationalist Buddhist groups. On the contrary, Aung San Suu Kyi does not seem to have prepared the NLD well for a long hiatus away from power. Even a one-year military rule may prove to be too serious a setback for the future of democracy in Myanmar.

Mark Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photo-grapher. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*). In August 2020 the fourth publication, *Live Encounters Books*, was launched. He has edited, designed and produced all of *Live Encounters'* 208 publications (till March 2021). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*; *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. <https://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Ulyseas/e/B01FUUQVBG>



Wild green turtles pasted with colourful transfer stickers for sale to children.
 Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

MARK ULYSEAS

Democracy the new fascism?

Democracies in the true sense do not exist. But *nationalism* does and is often confused with the former.

A glance across the world of democratically elected governments will reveal its (democracy's) true nature – benign plutocracy, where the rich get richer and poor poorer.

A democracy has now become *the Nation*. And under the banner of nationalism with its rising army of woke liberals and activists many professionals from all walks of life are falling prey to a word, phrase or even a minor human error... their entire careers being forfeited. The combination of nationalism and new activism (woke liberalism) has given rise to the culture of –*if you are not with us, you are against us*. This disturbing trend is fast evolving into a hegemonic mindset that seeks to reset societies into what is perceived as 'rightful thinking and living' even to the extent of attempting to rewrite historical wrongs. The usual suspects that support such an endeavour are the media, political and social. Each takes sides in different countries, according to their own agendas, to direct the flow of thought towards one destination – keep the masses entertained. And surprisingly this has become quite easy with the control of the electronic media, political parties and a section of religious leaders. Those living within the walls of such dominions falsely believe they live in freedom. But is *this* freedom?

In the words of Vandana Shiva —

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

The *Nation* and *woke liberalism* are two sides of the same coin. Both complement each other by imposing their diktat as to what they perceive should be the values of a society. Both create a fear of being singled out for individual thought and both seek punishment: one by the power of the state and the other by the power of an exclusive group. There is no escape from either the thugs of nationalism or those of woke liberalism.

Perhaps the reason why there is a rise in nationalism and woke liberalism is that people, the ordinary folk do not have the luxury of free thought. They are living on the precipice of sheer uncertainty – high prices, joblessness and caring for their families. Therefore, the shenanigans of the rich and powerful are not to be interfered with for fear of reprisal.

Each society has its own cultural peculiarities and hence one size doesn’t fit all. The blanketing of all societies with a universal code is like attempting to force a round peg into a square hole.

The COVID pandemic has created a perfect storm for those with agendas to enforce long held nationalistic beliefs on the populace. And this reflects in their treatment of people. Conspiracy theorists aside one *must* listen to the people especially those who have lost their jobs and those that are handicapped both mentally and physically, their needs. Presently, it would seem that all these hard working folk are being treated as sheep that do not possess any powers of reasoning. This is unfortunate as these are the very people who elected the politicians to power.

Democratic nationalism and *woke liberalism* are being ‘marketed’ by folk akin to snake oil salesmen of yore. The elixir against all societal ills, guaranteed to take away all forms of thought that don’t conform to these two ‘proven’ methods. It is backed by a section of the media. Hence, the global footprint is scary.

Democracy is the big lie that masks its true identity — *fascism*. And woke liberalism is complicit in this deception by creating its own form of fascism by being so far left that it is *right*.

In the words of Joseph Goebbels —

*“If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.”**

Will the renaissance of free thought return to revolt against these two frauds? And how will the powerful electronic media respond to this threat? And will the revolution, if it comes, become a ‘customer’ for technology to exploit? And will anything intrinsically change for a more peaceful and non-violent world?

Perhaps the only truth that exists is in the nature of the beast, *humanity*.

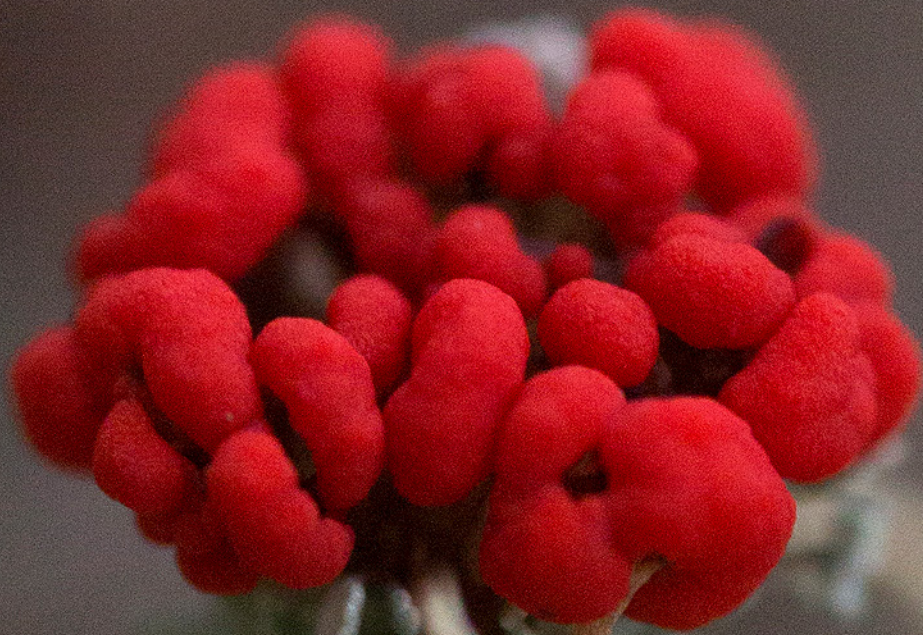
* <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/joseph-goebbels-on-the-quot-big-lie-quot>

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