

2010 - 2020



Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
APRIL 2021



MIKYOUNG CHA
LA PAZ

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKYOUNG CHA



©Mark Ulyseas

Spring. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



**SUPPORT LIVE ENCOUNTERS.
DONATE NOW AND KEEP THE MAGAZINE LIVE IN 2021**

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
markulyseas@liveencounters.net

Donate

All articles and photographs are the copyright of www.liveencounters.net and its contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the explicit written permission of www.liveencounters.net. Offenders will be criminally prosecuted to the full extent of the law prevailing in their home country and/or elsewhere.



CONTRIBUTORS

MIKYOUNG CHA
DR GRETA SYKES
DR HOWARD RICHARDS
PETER DALY
MARK ULYSEAS
KATHLEEN MARY FALLON

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



MIKYOUNG CHA
LA PAZ
BIENVENIDA A BOLIVIA
Text & Photographs

I visited La Paz in Feb-March of 2020 around the time of the Carnaval when the streets were awash with a profusion of colour and there were wide spread celebrations.

*Traditionally, the feast also was a time to indulge in sexual desires, which were supposed to be suppressed during the following period fasting. Before Lent began, all rich food and drink were consumed in what became a giant celebration that involved the whole community, and is thought to be the origin of Carnival.**

Of all the places I visited in South America, Bolivia stole my heart.

These photographs are not of a professional nature but I am sharing them so that the readers, wherever they are in lock down, may get a glimpse of the vibrant ethos of the Bolivians and perhaps travel there one day.

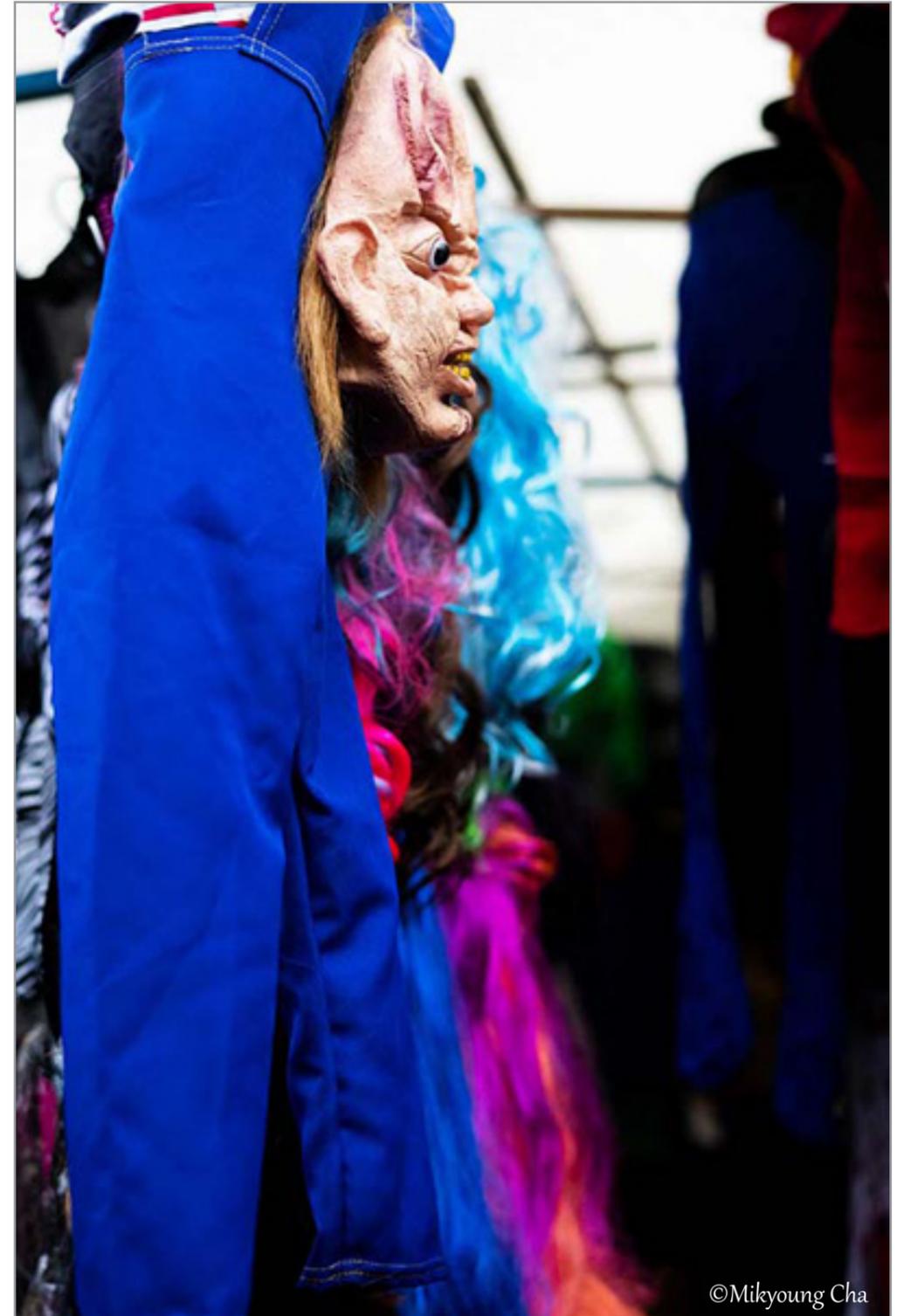
**wikipedia*

Mikyoung Cha

View of the *San Francisco Basilica* from a side street. It was built in the 18th century. It took Aymara workers ten years to construct this beautiful imposing church and monastery. The influence of the Aymaran culture is reflected in the inclusion of symbols – snakes, birds and dragons.



Dance with the devil.



©Mikyoung Cha



Story has it that the bowler hat was originally intended for railway engineers working in Bolivia. When a tradesman discovered that hats received in the shipment were too small, he peddled them to the local women who quite fancied them. The craze caught on and the rest is history! (<https://www.bolivianlife.com>)



A street band to serenade revellers.

Woman in a bowler hat selling flowers. Under the hat, the *cholita's* black locks are parted at the nape of her neck and woven into two braids. At times, she uses dark alpaca wool to add volume, length, and weight to the locks (traction keeps the hairdo in place). (<https://www.latam.com/>)

The term "cholita" had a negative undertone and was used as an insult at indigenous girls. However, in the course of time and because of the strong pressure put on promoting minorities and fighting racism, the term became softer and today it's used mostly jokingly. (<https://travelandkeepfit.com/>)

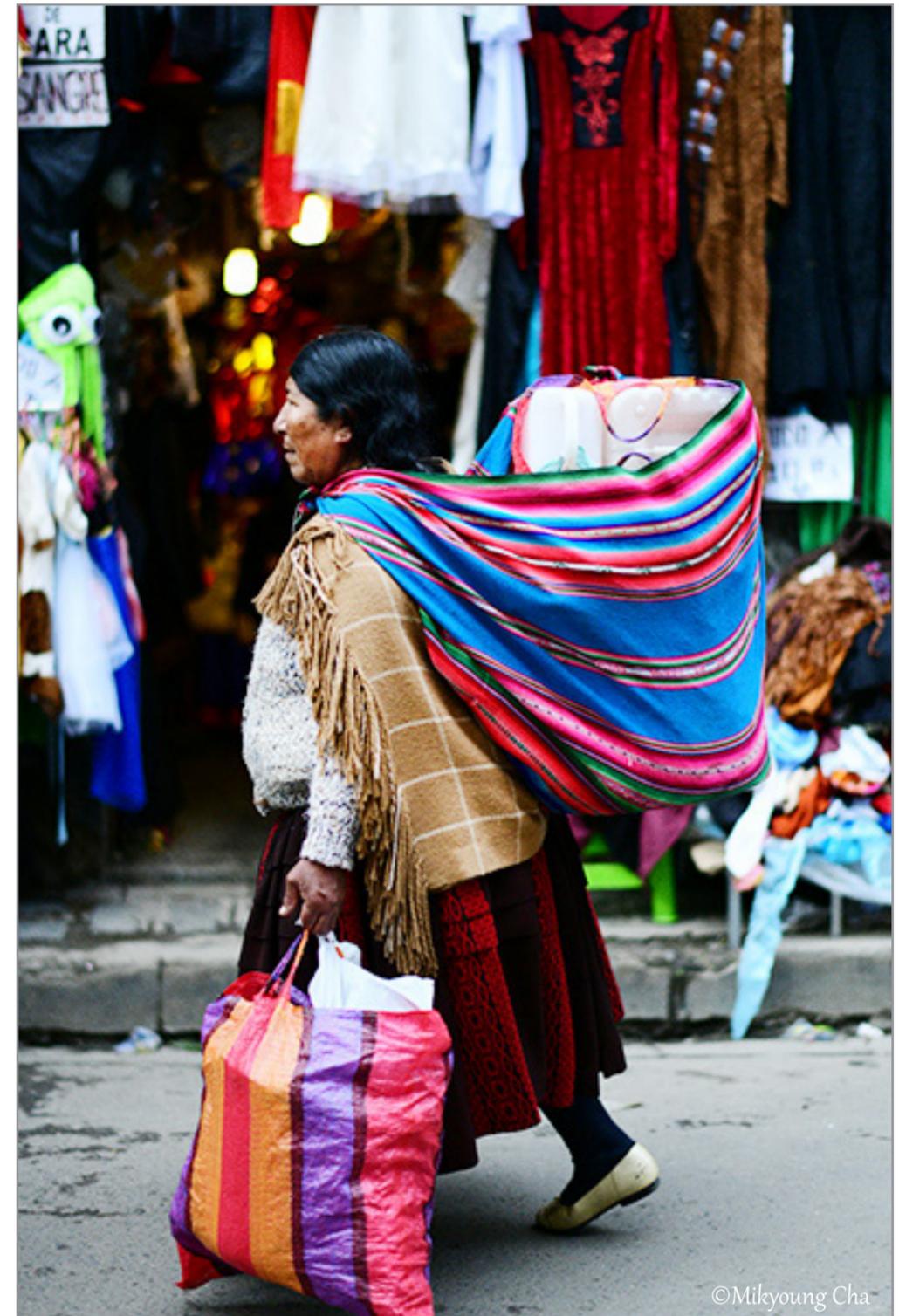


Many *cholitas* drape a shawl over their shoulders. This can either be a plain woolen blanket or a colorful, intricately designed silk number, depending on the wealth of the owner. They are usually held together with an ornamental brooch.
(<https://theculturetrip.com/>)



©Mikyoung Cha

The *aguayo* is a colorful piece of cloth embroidered with indigenous patterns that wraps around the cholita's shoulders and rests on her back. It's used to carry all sorts of things including shopping and even babies. (<https://theculturetrip.com/>)



©Mikyong Cha



An old lady in her bowler hat taking part in the festivities.



©Mikyoung Cha

Revellers.



La Pollera - The pleated skirt achieves its voluminous look by using up to 8 meters of colorful cloth. The skirt reaches all the way down to the ankles, considered to be the most attractive part of a woman by many Bolivians. The skirt also has to be really high up to make the girl's bottom look big; another desirable trait in Bolivia. (<https://www.bolivianlife.com>)



©Mikyoung Cha

Young Bolivians having fun.

Dr Greta Sykes is a German/English writer and artist. She is a trained Child Psychologist and has taught at the Institute of Education, now, UCL, London. She has produced two volumes of poetry, the most recent called *The Shipping News* and other poems, as well as two novels, *Under Charred Skies* and *The Defeat of Gilgamesh*, 2020. She is co-chair of the Socialist History Society and contributes to their publications. She is an Associate Researcher at UCL on Antiquity and the Middle Ages with a focus on women's emancipation. Her essays can be found on academia.edu and liveencounters.net as well as on <https://www.gretasykes.com/>
The Defeat of Gilgamesh, An ancient epic history of love and power by Greta Sykes is available at her website, Amazon and publisher <https://www.austinmacauley.com/book/defeat-gilgamesh>



DR GRETA SYKES

SIREN SONG OF MAKE BELIEVE

THE POPE'S VISIT TO IRAQ AT A TIME

OF WESTERN CONFIDENCE WOBBLE

During early March Pope Francis held a historic meeting with Iraq's top Shia cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, making a powerful appeal for peace in a country torn by sectarianism and violence. Their meeting in the holy city of Najaf was the first time a Pope has met with such a senior Shia cleric since the 7th century. Pope Francis condemned violent religious extremism during an inter-faith prayer service at the site of the ancient city of Ur, where the Prophet Abraham is thought to have been born.

'We believers cannot be silent when terrorism abuses religion,' he told the congregation, which included members of religious minorities persecuted under the Islamic State group's three-year rule of much of northern Iraq. The pope urged Iraq's Muslim and Christian religious leaders to put aside animosities and work together for peace and unity. "This is true religiosity: to worship God and to love our neighbour," he told the gathering.

Two weeks earlier NATO countries held the 'Munich Security Conference' to confer about their present situation and set goals. The context could hardly be more daunting. The Western world is still struggling to cope with Corona virus infection rates. Their under financed health services are barely coping to track and trace or vaccinate people. Vaccinating the whole world is necessary, but difficult, when private companies are in control of vaccines. While Russia's cheap Sputnik V is used by fifty different nations around the globe and China is helping to inoculate people far and wide, the West remains stingy, competitive and disorganised, whereas China has almost eliminated the virus and returned to normal. Such viruses are not naturally in nature, but arise out of humans' polluting our natural environment. Poverty and overcrowding are further causes. The main polluters on earth are the rich countries of the world.

Dr Greta Sykes

The illiberal and nationalist tendencies in the West undermine the hegemony of the West. The unspoken dimension is the demand for globalisation to achieve an ever cheaper labour force to maintain the unipolar world dominated by the US.

The Gini Index, a statistical measure of income inequality, indicates that countries like Germany and the UK have an index of 75% whereby 100% would be total absolute inequality and 1% would be complete equality. Growing food queues are an indication of poverty in the UK. Nevertheless, poverty and inequality were not at the heart of the Munich conference. It is helpful to take a look at what matters are concerning NATO countries.

The Munich security conference report

With an opening reference to Oswald Spengler's 'The decline of the West' the report of the conference outlines the present difficulties which they call 'Westlessness' a perceived weakness of the West:

'Part of the challenge is that we have lost a common understanding of what it means to be part of the West. All this occurs against the backdrop of the relative rise of the non-Western world and a mounting number of global challenges and crises that would require a concerted Western response. This Munich Security Report sets out to make sense of what we refer to as "Westlessness".'

Spengler's premise was that each culture has a determined course from the beginning towards its decline - apparently like a law of nature. At the recent conference the attendees were reassuring each other in their capacity to master what they saw as the challenges to their model of the world and not follow in the footsteps of the dire predictions by Spengler. The report labels the regions of their concern as follows: Mediterranean - 'Nightmare Nostrum', Middle East - 'Dire Straits' and South Asia - 'Seize-Fire Fighters'.

The terminology illustrates poignantly their perspective of the world as one of combatants and in need of corrections. On a small planet that is realistically allowed ten years from now to save it from overheating, viewing parts of the world as in need of political or economical intervention, seems at best irresponsible, at worst downright criminally neglectful. Their reasoning is summed up in the following passage:

'For the past decades, the answer to the question what it was that kept the West together was straightforward: a commitment to liberal democracy and human rights, to a market-based economy, and to international cooperation in international institutions.'

These postulates are the West's religiously repeated categorial imperative. In the next paragraph they explain who or what is threatening their postulates:

'Today, the meaning of the West is increasingly contested again. We are witnessing "the decay of 'the West' as a relatively cohesive geopolitical configuration anchoring a normative model of global order in which commitments to human rights, democracy, and the rule of the West is due to the rise of an illiberal and nationalist camp within the Western world.'

Mike Pence warned in his speech that "we cannot ensure the defence of the West if our allies grow dependent on the East...'. From this perspective, the most dangerous development for NATO, sometimes understood as the "executive arm" of the West, is neither the rise of other great powers nor instability in its neighbourhood but rather the rise of illiberalism and the instability of the West's collective identity.'

The passage suggests that at the heart of their concern is Western Europe's economic ties with Russia and possibly China. Nord Stream 2, the gas pipeline from Russia to Germany which is currently being built to link Germany directly with Russia, has been in the eye of the storm for months. Sanctions are placed on companies who take part in building it. The US wants Germany to buy their fracked gas, an extremely expensive alternative.

'The best example of this is Germany's participation in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project - a joint effort between Russia and Germany to expand the flow of hydrocarbons directly into Western Europe - bypassing potential regions of instability in Eastern Europe targeted by the US specifically to impede Russian-European cooperation (Russia Today).'

In Summary their argument goes as follows. The world has regions of trouble that they need to intervene in. The close relationship of Germany and Russia is dangerous and needs to be undermined. NATO is the executive arm of the West and needs to be ready to intervene.

The illiberal and nationalist tendencies in the West undermine the hegemony of the West. The unspoken dimension is the demand for globalisation to achieve an ever cheaper labour force to maintain the unipolar world dominated by the US.

Siren songs of make-believe

The terms liberal, democratic, market-led, 'working with international institutions, human rights, are friendly and seductive notions which sound well in our ears and feature as desirable in our minds. Yet they are but siren songs of make believe. Behind the façade of niceties lies a cruel world of wars, genocide, exploitation and slander. A recent figure from research done by CODEPINK tells the dreadful truth of wars the West conducts on our behalf: Since 2001 the US and its Allies have dropped at least 326,000 bombs and missiles on the Middle East and Africa. Their language tells us via mainstream media that these bombs have served the causes of democracy, liberalism and human rights. One may ask how can dropping bombs do that? Western media are eloquent in hiding the truth by referring to the siren song of Western postulates. The powerful and catastrophic difference between 'Schein und Sein' or appearance and essence can be deconstructed as follows:

'Liberal' - means all behaviours that don't interfere with the dominant credo of the globalised business model. People and businesses are encouraged to engage in any colourful variation of individual liberty, including trans, woke and cancel culture and expect the support of the media. This is achieved through the set up of numerous NGOs who can quickly broadcast an individual's issue seen as furthering such causes. The aim of such strategies is to pervert any cohesion among the bourgeoisie and working people leading to forms of unity and thus maintain distracting number of issues which hinder an awareness of the class struggle we are all part of.

Democratic – an economy dominated by global business interests which permit elections once in four years between parties so similar that one wonders how to tell the difference; as well as a mass media that is fully tuned into supporting global business and speaking out against viewpoints that could endanger globalisation. Anyone speaking out against their postulates will be silenced, lose their job or even their freedom (Julian Assange). This so-called democracy is held up as an ikon of the West in order to be able to argue that other states are run by dictators, such as North Korea or are deemed undemocratic, such as Russia and China.

Market-led and working with international organisations – means subjection to globalisation, in particular the tech giants Facebook, Google and Microsoft, the arms trade and the pharma business. Globalisation always means labour and trade union rights, gained through hard struggles by workers, are got rid off and workers are given less pay for their work, reduced rights, holiday or sickness pay.

The media are subservient and in a sense totalitarian in their uniform presentation of the siren songs of make-believe. Philosophically minded journalists comment eloquently on cultural phenomena, like 'woke culture', freedom of expression, democracy, or human rights in terms of 'our values' without situating them within the parameters of 'whose freedoms and culture' are being talked about or what the material reality is behind such phenomena, like the ownership of the means of production. As Marx pointed out, philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it.

Human rights – means finely tuned application of rights for some individuals that fit in with the globalised business model, while thousands of other individuals and groups are silenced and forgotten. The so-called 'White Helmets' are celebrated, turned into heroes, a film with Oscars, to perpetrate the West's lies about Syria, and the people of Yemen are murdered with bombs supplied by the UK and US to Saudi Arabia, and sanctions on medicines and food increase the death and starvation toll of women, children and men. A person who does not fit in with their model of human rights, such as Julian Assange, is kept in prison without having committed a crime.

The media are subservient and in a sense totalitarian in their uniform presentation of the siren songs of make-believe. Philosophically minded journalists comment eloquently on cultural phenomena, like 'woke culture', freedom of expression, democracy, or human rights in terms of 'our values' without situating them within the parameters of 'whose freedoms and culture' are being talked about or what the material reality is behind such phenomena, like the ownership of the means of production. As Marx pointed out, philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it. The West is experiencing their own frailty but are unable and unwilling to address their internal contradictions which is causing their weakness, basically, because they insist on maintaining capitalism/globalised business and finance with all its evil, vindictive and destructive aspects. The thought of socialism remains like a red rag to a bull since 1917.

The two culprits

As per the Munich security conference report the two culprits that are posing an internal danger to the model 'West' is illiberals and nationalists. Illiberals are people that quarrel with the dominant credo discussed above. In Germany they are above all members of the AFD, now termed a rightwing extremist party, although it is the second largest party in Germany and the only one that offers alternative views. Therefore to have alternative views is illiberal and a danger. These views include a criticism of Merkel's migration policies. As a necessary part of the West's wars in the Middle East and Africa, as mentioned above, migration will result. Indeed, it is willed, as cheap labour continues to be easily available to the rich nations due to migration – exactly a reason why parties like the AFD are against it.

The second culprit are nationalists. We note that they are not called patriots, but nationalists so that they can easily be portrayed as Nazis. Nazis is in Germany the most extreme accusation, but due to the media it has become almost commonplace to accuse someone of being a Nazi, similar

The Nazi guilt is purposefully instrumentalised in order to ease migration into the country and silence any opposition by being outraged at so called illiberal or nationalist views. Die Nazi Keule, the Nazi axe is used to silence anyone objecting. This opens the path for big business and finance to graze freely in Germany, a rich country with many resources. In order to provide the right atmosphere, diversity posters and reprimands are everywhere and other cultures are prioritised. The German language is bathed in English words, the Christian churches have been silenced into obedience, Christmas is just one festival among many.

to accusing someone of being an anti-semitic. Patriots are people who love their country and its culture. It is not something one can accuse them of. But nationalist is an accusation and it is used to denigrate, berate and isolate someone. Once labelled, as it happened with Jeremy Corbyn in relation to anti-semitism, someone's public life comes to an end. In this manner countless people have been removed from public life, writers like Ruediger Safranski in Germany and politicians like Thilo Sarrazin.

Most people when asked would agree that it is worthwhile and essential that a nation's cultural achievements should be celebrated and maintained in the best possible way. We celebrate Shakespeare and Dickens in Britain. People don't know how to prevent globalised business and finance destroying local particularities of a town and stop them from turning them into the dull sameness of our inner cities with the same shops in every town in Europe. Most people want their own language, literature and spirituality celebrated and not turned into a multicultural no-man's-land that lacks in history, roots and local stories. As a famous writer said 'if I go to Italy I want to see Italian culture, eat Italian food and hear Italian language.' Such demands are natural and worldwide fulfil the wishes of people when they have a choice. People in the West, under the scourge of globalised finance and business don't have that choice. Their choice, however, expresses itself in what are called illiberal and nationalist views, wrongly labelled thus. A culture that wishes to survive must defend its language, literature and spirituality, otherwise they will be obliterated. The German case is notorious. The Nazi guilt is purposefully instrumentalised in order to ease migration into the country and silence any opposition by being outraged at so called illiberal or nationalist views. Die Nazi Keule, the Nazi axe is used to silence anyone objecting. This opens the path for big business and finance to graze freely in Germany, a rich country with many resources. In order to provide the right atmosphere, diversity posters and reprimands are everywhere and other cultures are prioritised. The German language is bathed in English words, the Christian churches have been silenced into obedience, Christmas is just one festival among many.

Germany is no different in that respect from other Western countries. Literature's role in public life, reading the classics is deemed unfashionable. A culture destroys itself. The Christian culture itself has become suspect. Christians in the rest of the world who suffered greatly from persecution in the Middle East, such as the Yazidis, were blanked by the West's mainstream media. The Christian world has turned a blind eye to their needs and to the important heritage they represent in relation to the Christian culture, history and tradition.



Photograph by Thomas Wolf
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colognecathedralatnight.JPG>



Pope Francis meets The Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Husayni Al-Sistani.

A globalised capitalist system requires no borders of any kind, be they physical, language, literature or spiritual ones. A globalised world should look the same all over the planet, with glossy high rises to show off and hovels and barracks for the labouring classes. 'Capitalism produces free economic subjects, not bound by nation, language, literature or spirituality. They are just customers, not citizens, owners and buyers of products and politically freed from meaningful political involvement.' (Thomas Degering). This is exactly the situation the Munich Security conference is keen to maintain, based on the assumption that it will lead to a continuation of their unipolar world. Externally, they will use economic and military pressure to continue the US hegemony to dominate. The main challengers to this situation are considered to be Russia and China. Therefore maximum pressure is put on Germany to stop working with Russia on Nord Stream 2 and the US fleet is positioned in the Pacific close to China.

The Pope in Iraq

The West's media kept a low profile about the Pope's visit to Iraq. Iraq is a painful reminder of lies that had to be used to give the order to attack and remove Saddam Hussain from power and destroy the country's infrastructure. This makes the visit of the Pope this month poignant.

The visit was largely absent from Western mainstream media and, where discussed, they tried to gaslight, sabotage or sectarianize the meeting, usually under barely disguised layers of "Shi-ite threat" propaganda. Basically, Francis and Sistani were delivering an anti-war, anti-genocide, anti-sectarian, and anti-occupation message. Such a message does not fit with the West's model of the world as one of combatants who need to be corrected, punished or reprimanded, a position that the vengeful God 'West' sees as their duty, but couched for the media in the siren song of make-believe democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Bepe Escobar adds, "The statement from Sistani's office explicitly refers to "displacement, wars, acts of violence, economic blockades, and the absence of social justice to which the Palestinian people are exposed, especially the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Similarly, Pope Francis in his pilgrimage condemned those who instrumentalize religion to engineer wars – to the benefit of Israel, the Saudi oily hacienda, the empire, and all of the above. He prayed at a church destroyed by ISIS/Daesh."

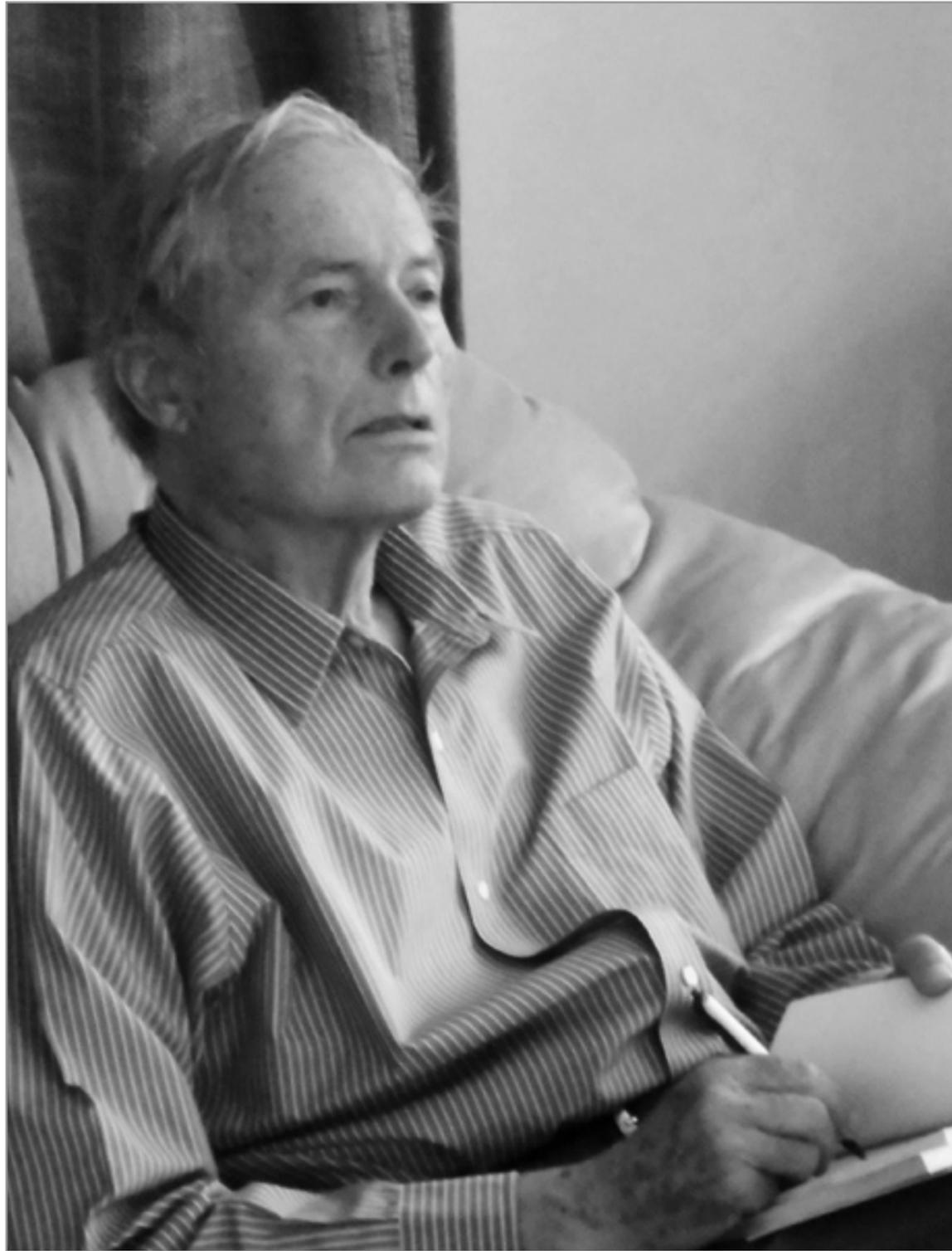
The visit was largely absent from Western mainstream media and, where discussed, they tried to gaslight, sabotage or sectarianize the meeting, usually under barely disguised layers of "Shi-ite threat" propaganda. Basically, Francis and Sistani were delivering an anti-war, anti-genocide, anti-sectarian, and anti-occupation message. Such a message does not fit with the West's model of the world as one of combatants who need to be corrected, punished or reprimanded, a position that the vengeful God 'West' sees as their duty, but couched for the media in the siren song of make-believe democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The terrible suffering of the people of Yemen, the slave markets and refugee crisis in Libya, the continued Western interference in Syria and the many other scenarios of war and destruction around the globe paint a devastating reality that people in rich Western countries fail to face up to by occupying themselves with tittle tattle of woke or cancel issues, or scandal stories about the Royal family. Meanwhile, the actions decided at the Munich Security Conference continue to speak louder than words.



Pope Francis prays at a church destroyed by Daesh in Mosul, Iraq.
Photograph courtesy : <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-03/pope-francis-general-audience-apostolic-journey-iraq.html>

Dr Howard Richards (born June 10, 1938) is a philosopher of Social Science who has worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He holds the title of Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College, a liberal arts college in Richmond, Indiana, USA, the Quaker School where he taught for thirty years. He officially retired from Earlham College, together with his wife Caroline Higgins in 2007, but retained the title of Research Professor of Philosophy. A member of the Yale class of 1960, he holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa Barbara, a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the Stanford Law School, an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) from Oxford University (UK) and a PhD in Educational Planning, with a specialization in applied psychology and moral education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. Dr Richards is a Catholic, a member of Holy Trinity (Santisima Trinidad) parish in Limache, Chile, and a member of the third order of St. Francis, S.F.O www.wikipedia.org



DR HOWARD RICHARDS

WHO ARE WE?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

It may help to precede my answers with a methodological remark, starting from Heidegger's *Jedes Fragen ist ein Suchen* (Every question is a seeking). (*Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), on or near p. 5 in every German or English edition I know): I seek to articulate a vision, a guide to action. I seek to choose some words and to put them together in ways that are brief enough to be readable, clear enough to be intelligible, and true enough to be adaptive.

My answers are:

Who are we? We are the species whose ecological niche is the creation of culture.
Where are we going? We are going to a global mosaic of green and open societies.
How will we get there? We will get there by transforming capitalism.

Who are we? We are the species whose ecological niche is the creation of culture.

The same natural sciences that deconstruct pre-modern stories that facilitated social cohesion in centuries past, construct ecological worldviews facilitating social cohesion in centuries to come. They give a rational basis and an emotional basis for creating functional communities.

The physical necessity of ties that bind is demonstrable. Hard-wired tendencies of human emotions favour cooperation.

Tom Berry and others have proposed the earth story as a community-building story for the diverse global community.

Dr Howard Richards



<https://pixabay.com/photos/wind-farm-energy-green-sustainable-1209335/>

The earth story is a comprehensive metanarrative that honours diversity, includes everyone, and makes sense of rational progress. It has the simple virtue of being true. It is what really happened. We, humanity, are, in fact, creators of cultures. We have always been creators of cultures. We are biologically coded to be culturally coded. We have the capacity to invent cultural codes that can be passed on to a next generation that will modify them as they learn them. This capacity has given us an evolutionary advantage over other species.

Where are we going? We are going to a global mosaic of green and open societies.

A global mosaic

Whatever improvements we may make to meet human needs better, to include the excluded, and to harmonize with nature, we must start with what is. We do not make history on our own terms. We make it on terms previous history has dealt us. Previous history has dealt us a diverse world.

The premises of transformation must necessarily be working hypotheses tailored to a particular here and a particular now.

As Aristotle observed – more than two millennia before Emile Durkheim made the same observation – the result of the wholesale sweeping away of the existing norms is *anomie*. *Anomie*, also known as social disintegration, leads us away from, not towards, the social cohesion needed to cope with humanity’s physical challenges.

It is not feasible to challenge the rise of the extreme liberalism that Frédéric Vandenberg has called pathological autonomy by crafting a new global communitarian moral code to which the bulk of humanity could pledge allegiance. Miraculously, we do have a global consensus (on paper at least) on basic human rights (which now include the right to an identity and to a culture). We have an earth story. Both must be supplemented with a post-colonial ethic of mutual respect for diversity.

To get from norms to actions we need what Catherine Hoppers calls “discourse coalitions.” For example, a Muslim, a capitalist, a socialist, a Hindu, and so on, can work together *manos a la obra* (putting their hands to the task) – articulating what they are doing each in their own terms. The physical bottom lines – such as clean drinking water and reversing desertification—are the same. The discourse coalitions respect identities.

Consequently, if we are going anywhere, we are going to an inclusive global mosaic of diverse cultures each functional on its own terms and in its own way.

Green

The reason why we are going to a green future is that we cannot possibly go to any other future. Failing to maintain the delicate equilibriums of the biosphere is not an option.

Human cultures whose constitutive rules and basic norms drive capital accumulation incompatible with the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, and the facts of biology are not sustainable.

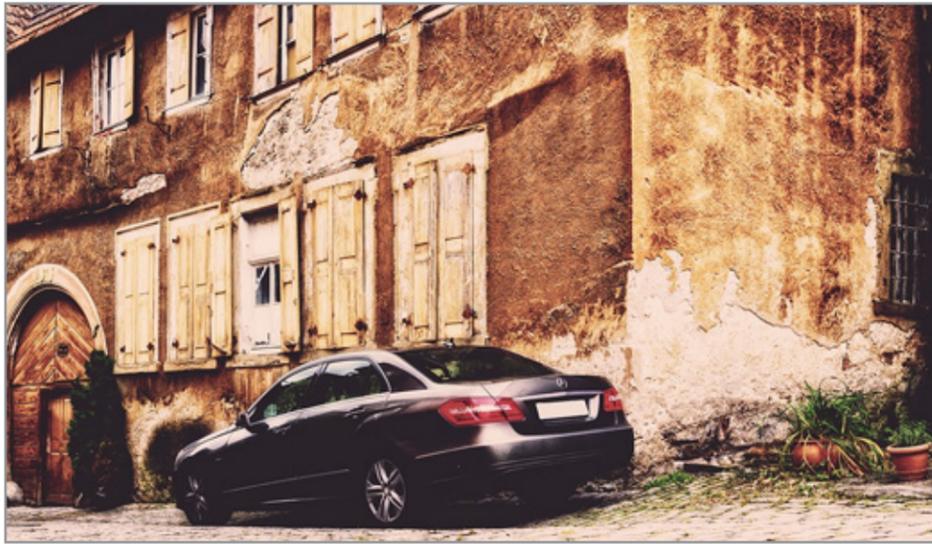
Open

In his book *Collapse* (2005), Jared Diamond relates how several traditional societies destroyed themselves without knowing what they were doing. Modern societies seek to avoid collapse due to ignorance by deliberately organizing themselves to criticize themselves. They are, in principle, open societies. Every act of government is scrutinized by opposition parties that may become the next government. Institutionalized science is self-governing through peer review. A free press and freedom of speech guarantee that no news of predictable disasters will remain hidden. The unintended bad consequences of good intentions educate. They teach the experts and the public not to repeat the same mistakes. The classic case advocating an open society is *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1944) by Karl Popper.

However, I employ “open” not in a Popperian sense, but rather in a hyper-Popperian broader sense. For two reasons:

First, Popper was often dogmatic, and sometimes was clearly wrong, about what is and what is not science.

Second, in his later years Popper fell in with a tough crowd known as the Mont Pelerin Society. Milton Friedman, another member, in his speech accepting the Nobel Memorial Prize in economics (1976), saw inflation and in the long run greater unemployment as unintended consequences of attempts to construct a welfare state with full employment. Popper’s philosophy became identified with a school of thought which held that the verdict of science was that social democracy failed. In the words of another member, Friedrich von Hayek, it would be “fatal conceit” to try it again.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/mercedes-auto-road-old-contrast-4685977/>

But if Popper had followed the advice he himself had given as a younger man, he would not have given up on *liberté, égalité et fraternité*. Instead he would have considered treating as variables some of the parameters unsuccessful social democracies had treated as constants, such as free trade, growth measured by GDP, and what Bowles and Gintis call “the exit power of capital.”

Consequently, I use a wide hyper-Popperian sense of “open,” when I conclude that the future we are going to, if we are going anywhere, is an inclusive global mosaic of green and open societies.

How will we get there? We will get there by transforming capitalism.

I will develop this thought as a gloss on a line borrowed from Amartya Sen: “Capitalism can generate mean streets and strained lives unless it is *restrained* and *supplemented* by other –often *nonmarket*—institutions.” (*Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol. 41 (2003). p. 1247. I have italicized three words and slightly altered others to disentangle them from a context irrelevant here.)

By restraining capitalism

When we restrain, we impose conditions. The government decrees for example that firms must negotiate wages and working conditions with labour unions, or close. Or reduce their ecological footprint, or close.

You get the picture. Restraint gives business a choice. Obey or quit. Although there are usually some intermediate penalties short of closure, like paying fines, the principle is that a firm may not operate in a territory without the consent of that territory’s government.

Logic and history teach us that companies often choose option two. They quit. Or they move to another place where there is less restraint.

There is an elephant in the room. However many academic discussions there may be about whether market failure justifies government intervention, in reality a government has little power to intervene. As Michael Kalecki puts it, capital has a veto power over public policy because it has the power to cause an economic crisis. As Jeffrey Winters puts it, major economic players choose which laws they will obey when they choose where to locate.

Sen’s suggestion that we could transform capitalism by restraining it, turns into the question, How can territorial governments restrain global capital?

I would submit that the first thing we must do to find an answer is to cleanse our minds of mythologies that portray globalization as brotherly and sisterly love, as if big were beautiful; as if every new common market and every ceding of national sovereignty to the universal principles enforced by the World Trade Organization were a victory for universal human solidarity. The opposite is the case; small is beautiful; human scale is beautiful; a global mosaic of open societies capable of governing themselves and choosing their own paths will be beautiful when we achieve it.

Second, I feel gratitude for spiritually and ethically enlightened self-restraint among capitalists. In recent decades, as the power of democracies to restrain capitalism has been dissolving, there has been a remarkable increase of self-restraint by capitalists. It has been demanded and monitored more by civil society, consumers, and institutional investors than by governments. The stars are intelligent capitalists. They see the handwriting on the wall: Unrestrained capitalism is taking everybody directly to where nobody wants to go: injustice, violence, chaos, uncontrollable pandemics, and ecological disaster.

Karl Marx, in the preface to the first edition of *Capital* made it clear that he was not blaming capitalists for capitalism. Capitalists, like his dear friend Friedrich Engels, were quite capable of having good intentions. But they, like everyone else, were prisoners of social relations they did not create, whose imperatives they were compelled to obey. If Karl Marx could believe that some capitalists sincerely desire to transform a system that holds them and everyone else captive, why can’t we?

By supplementing capitalism

Given that globalization has weakened the capacity of governments to restrain capitalism, let us turn to supplementing capitalism.

If we depended on it less, we could to restrain it more, not only by government action society but by everything Sen and Dreze call public action, carried out by a variety of actors including thought-leaders in the business world itself.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/bangladesh-village-market-3541408/>

We could rely more on municipal water and light companies, public banks, non-profit hospitals and schools, state-owned and province-owned enterprises, families, public-private joint ventures, worker-owned enterprises, permaculture, mutual insurance companies, pension funds owned by their participants, public ownership of minerals and other natural resources, unions, nature preserves, eleemosynary foundations, public parks and beaches, community currencies, neighbourhood food banks, asset based community development, cooperatives, monasteries, and *the people's economy*, to name a few.

The *people's economy* (the *economia popular* of Jose Luis Coraggio) consists of small enterprises whose main purpose is to support a household. It is often lumped with multinational corporations, as if the first were small scale capitalism and the second large scale capitalism. But their resources and their purposes are quite different.

For Sen and his co-author Jean Dreze, markets are among the instruments that can be used to promote human capabilities. Their ideal is not a two-toned world, where markets organize most human activity, backed up in case of market failure by governments. It is an open world of innumerable possibilities.

When markets do not work or do not work well, there are many other options. Some are ancient institutions fallen into disuse that might be revived, like the Jubilee year for forgiving debts (Leviticus 25, 8-13) or the Pharaoh's system for storing grain as it was harvested and distributing it in winter (Genesis 41). Some have been used for many centuries and are still used today, like the Subak system for irrigating rice fields in Bali. Others are recent social inventions, like Doctors without Borders; while still others are future social forms that we today cannot even imagine.

Many have good reasons to fear that change may dismantle institutions that have brought prosperity and freedom to many people. Major change might again –as it sometimes has—break what works more than it fixes what does not work. An unbounded open approach responds to this concern. It creates and makes visible so many options that the number of situations where the only possible way to fix what does not work is to break what does work approaches zero. Sen and Dreze appear to have had some such point in mind when they rejected two-option models, market or government. *L'imagination au pouvoir!*

By creating more nonmarket livelihoods

The key is to align for the common good. The hypothesis is that when humans unite in what Martin Luther King Jr. called a beloved community, they find ways to care for each other and to cope with the challenges nature poses. Markets not sufficiently “restrained and supplemented by other –often nonmarket—institutions” inevitably mass produce losers. To win in a market receivables must exceed payables. Buyers must buy whatever one has to sell. They must buy enough of it at high enough prices to produce revenues sufficient to cover expenses and to provide an income to live on.

But for reasons that are not anybody's fault, or the fault of any social class, but simply the fault of logic, not everybody can be an economic winner in the marketplace. Not everybody can sell more than they buy because a sale and a purchase are the same thing seen from two points of view, that of the seller and that of the buyer. Not everybody can have more receivables than payables. Summed over the whole market, receivables must equal payables; so, if some people are winners; then without sufficient restraining, supplementing, and non-market employment, others must be losers. Many sleep in their cars or on the sidewalk; many try to cross the Mediterranean in leaky boats, many walk on foot from Honduras to the US border. There are many useful ways people can contribute to society without generating revenue by selling something. The fact that there are not enough paying customers to produce revenues sufficient to justify hiring everybody and paying them wages, does not mean that the unemployed are not persons that the economy should be serving, not rejecting.

To take practical steps toward including people the market excludes, one might review one's own budget to see what, if anything, one is able to contribute to funding non-market employment. It merits priority. Without dignified livelihoods for all, it is hard to imagine an end to racism, or war, or fascism, or the dying of the biosphere –or any of the evils whose underlying causes include the humiliation of economic losers. If one is an entrepreneur one can define one's vocation as creating social surplus to contribute to society. This can usually be put in writing by changing just a few words in a business plan.

If one identifies with two centuries of struggle of working people for social justice and/or with the achievements of social democracy and the achievements of civil rights movements; or whatever one's identity may be or may become; one can find a way to join a discourse coalition whose members have in common that they care, they understand, and they are activists transforming the system.

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

PETER DALY

OUR GAELIC GAMES

Text & Photographs

Gaelic Football, Hurling, Camogie,
 Our Identity, Our Culture, Our Tradition,
 Nationalism, Patriotism, Heroism,
 Volunteerism, Inclusionism, Traditionalism,
 A Way of Life Itself,
 Song & Dance, Music & Language,
 Families, Parishes, Tribalism,
 Clubs, Counties, Provincialism,
 In search of the Holy Grail,
 Colour, Noise, Excitement, Drama,
 Skill, Passion, Pride,
 Battleship, Partnership, Sportsmanship, Friendship,
 Social Games, Championship Games,
 Creating, Connecting, Lifelong Interacting,
 Leaders & Legends,
 Engaging, Empowering, All Consuming,
 Dublin, Dubai, Delhi, Dingle, Darwin, Every Corner, Everywhere,
 Mother, Father, Daughter, Son, Everyone,
 Generations, Commemorations, Salutations,
 Our DNA,
 Where We All Belong.
 This is The Gaelic Athletic Association.

Hurling: Full contact team game, ancient gaelic origin played by men. Called Camogie for females. Each player plays uses a hurley made from the ash tree. Fifteen players a side. The aim of the team is to score a goal (three points), where the ball, called a sliotar, is played into the opponent's net or a point when hit over the bar. Hurling is a fast sport played with great passion.





Hurling.



Hurling.



Hurling.



Hurling.

Gaelic Football: Fifteen a side played by men and women. The football is played with feet and hands, scoring same as Hurling.





Gaelic Football.



Gaelic Football.



Gaelic Football.



Gaelic Football.



Photograph: <https://pixabay.com/photos/beijing-opera-mask-china-woman-1160109/>

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'* 210 publications (till April 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>



MARK ULYSEAS

REALPOLITIK - BASHING CHINA WHILE DOING BUSINESS WITH IT

The present trend of China bashing has become a contagion following the unleashing of the virus. Conspiracy theories run riot. Did it originate in China from a laboratory or was it transmitted from animal to human at a wet market? Or was it engineered by the deep state to attain global domination of the masses?

Is this the opportune time to make China pay now that the whole world is affected by the pandemic?

— *"The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China."* <https://ge.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

— *"What is not revealed is that the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) had funded the controversial Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has already been on record confirming and defending this funding, saying it was "to protect American people from labs that aren't up to standard."* <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/why-would-the-us-have-funded-the-controversial-wuhan-lab/>

Despite the pandemic, the US-China business model appears to be thriving. The deafness to political spiel couldn't be more apparent.

“China was being groomed to become a low cost producer for U.S. multinationals since the time of Republican President Richard Nixon. That got the ball rolling. The idea was not to turn it into a manufacturing hub at the expense of the U.S., but an open China would become a more middle class China and a middle class China would overthrow the Communist Party elite. So the experts believed.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/04/30/>



<https://pixabay.com/photos/china-mosaic-forbidden-city-dragon-1760838/>

Threats by world powers and actions against China have not worked.

The following are a series of news reports that reveal the true nature of realpolitik.

— “China’s exports surged 60.6% over a year earlier in the first two months of 2021, after factories reopened and global demand started to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.”

<https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2021-03-07/chinese-exports-surge-as-global-demand-recovers-from-virus> March 7, 2021.

China was the United States’ largest supplier of goods in 2020.

US Imports in 2020.

— In 2020, U.S. goods imports decreased from all of top 4 import suppliers, Canada (down 15.4 percent), Mexico (down 9.1 percent), China (down 3.6 percent), and Japan (down 16.8 percent) (Table 4). The apparent dip in Chinese exports to USA is a drop in the ocean.

<https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/reports/2021/2021%20Trade%20Agenda/Online%20PDF%202021%20Trade%20Policy%20Agenda%20and%202020%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

China ends 2020 with record trade surplus as pandemic goods soar.

— The bumper year also underscores China’s role as the fulcrum of global supply chains even as political tensions with the U.S. and other trading rivals simmered.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-14/china-s-trade-surplus-hits-record-as-pandemic-fuels-exports>

China overtakes U.S. as Europe’s main trading partner for the first time (February 2021).

— “The latest figures, released by Eurostat, showed that China now has an even bigger role in how European economies perform. The Chinese economy is performing slightly closer to pre-Covid levels in comparison with other parts of the world, where restrictions are still taking a toll on activity. The European Union seems willing to strengthen economic ties with China.”

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/16/china-overtakes-us-as-europes-main-trade-partner.html>

Profits override patriotism.

— “Companies may move supply chains out of China, but not necessarily to the U.S. More companies leaving China does not necessarily represent a win for American workers. Many companies that are moving some facilities out of China — including Samsung, Hasbro, Apple, Nintendo and GoPro — are relocating to countries where wages are even lower.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/22/business/companies-may-move-supply-chains-out-of-china-but-not-necessarily-to-the-us.html>

“China, the world’s second-largest economy, is expected to see 8.1% growth in 2021 as economic activity continues to normalize and domestic COVID-19 outbreaks remain under control. It is further expected to grow by 5.6% in 2022.” <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/the-fastest-growing-trillion-dollar-economies-in-2021-2021-02-05>

“China’s export-led economy has actually benefited from lock downs in western countries. Western demand for services like entertainment and travel may have declined, but demand for household consumer goods and medical supplies has increased. Chinese exports to the US have reached record levels despite the high tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. China could now overtake the US as the world’s largest economy within five years, twice as fast as previously predicted.” <https://theconversation.com/world-economy-in-2021-heres-who-will-win-and-who-will-lose-152631>

How the USA groomed China from a sweatshop into the world’s manufacturing hub.

— “China was being groomed to become a low cost producer for U.S. multinationals since the time of Republican President Richard Nixon. That got the ball rolling. The idea was not to turn it into a manufacturing hub at the expense of the U.S., but an open China would become a more middle class China and a middle class China would overthrow the Communist Party elite. So the experts believed.”

— “All of this happened during the Cold War. U.S. business owners had to placate labor because labor had an alternative model — Soviet communism. If business owners didn’t work with labor, it added credence to the Soviet model, and that put businesses at risk of labor disputes and potentially even revolts.”

The lethal combination of *controlled* capitalism and communism is helping China expand its financial and military power across the world through fair means or foul. It has learnt many lessons from the USA and other western powers, the primary being the building of a vast industrial base that has resulted in the phenomenal increase in its GDP from US\$ 0.3 trillion in 1985 to US\$ 14.7 trillion in 2020.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/panda-panda-bear-sleep-rest-relax-1236875/>

— “Then the Cold War ended, and labor was kicked to the curb. It all went abroad in the late 1980s and 1990s, culminating into a mass exit once China joined the World Trade Organization under Democratic President Bill Clinton.

— “Both parties were pro China because the business industry constituents wanted more certainty regarding U.S. China trade relations. Prior to joining the WTO, China’s favored nation trading status was up to the political whims of the American Congress.”

— “A recent whitepaper prepared for a policy conference, “Policies to Improve the Competitiveness of U.S. Manufacturing”, organized by Indiana University and the Hudson Institute, also notes that an increase imperative of shareholders over labor equated to cost cutting labor in order to maximize shareholder profits.”

— “The Chinese just did what the Japanese did times a million...It’s spider to the fly stuff. Why is everything made there? You have to ask every board and CEO of big industry. They were told ‘come to China and we will give you a 50% devaluation of the currency, plus cheap labor, plus free land, plus no interest rate loans, no safety or environmental regulations that are going to drive up your costs 30%.”

— “China’s Made in China 2025 plan includes plans to expand in areas such as blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductor and chip making technology, along with biotech...” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/04/30/why-is-the-us-is-so-ridiculously-dependent-on-china/?sh=5e346de356b5>

The lethal combination of *controlled* capitalism and communism is helping China expand its financial and military power across the world through fair means or foul. It has learnt many lessons from the USA and other western powers, the primary being the building of a vast industrial base that has resulted in the phenomenal increase in its GDP from US\$ 0.3 trillion in 1985 to US\$ 14.7 trillion in 2020.

So what do the western powers have to bleed China by a thousand cuts — Their moral version of civil and human rights and sanctimonious ranting for religious freedom, independence for Tibet, a country that China invaded and occupied, and strenuous objection to the ongoing persecution of the Uyghurs? What has the USA actually done for the Tibetans other than shout from the rooftops?

The persecution of the Uyghurs is only air time in the media and some ineffectual sanctions and for preaching from the democratic pulpit. Other than this, there is little or nothing that can be done short of invading China. And China is not Iraq.

The disheartening aspect of so called western civilisation is the unseemly cracks in its societies that have surfaced with the rise of woke liberalism, reverse discrimination of adverse proportions, cancel culture and the attempts to right historical wrongs in retrospect by the reset button of growing mob mentality. Has the violence for and against *Black Lives Matter* contaminated the voice of reason?

Crowds in the thousands continue to protest the lock down in many western countries. Inept democratically elected governments are unleashing the police on the civilian crowds. There are instances of police beating, arresting and in some cases setting their dogs on the protestors. The western concept of civilised debate appears to be thrust aside by the rise of democratic fascism. These disturbing images have been viewed by millions of Chinese and ‘promoted’ by Chinese media.

Google, Youtube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are officially blocked in China, a country which has created its own versions such as Weibo, Renren, YouKu and WeChat. This helps the Chinese government to keep a strong grip on the media, social and otherwise. Perhaps this is also to do with prevention of data harvesting by the aforesaid western media?

The *Human Factor*, in relation to the Chinese people, is not about the perceived *non-freedoms* that are bandied about by western powers but by an elevated standard of living, a certain pride in one’s country. Chinese nationals are proud of their new status for which they have worked hard to achieve. Perhaps the western powers see China as a push over *nouveau riche rural society* that does not possess the finer aspects of modern civilisation. The colonial hangover is apparent here.

My conversations with Chinese travellers and business folk can be summed as: When people are faced with hunger they will choose food over faith. And when they are poor they will choose money over freedom of speech. And when they have money, they have freedom, freedom to travel and buy whatever they fancy. And send their children abroad for higher education (Chinese spend billions of dollars every year to study in western universities). They are of an ancient culture. They consider themselves to be hard-working and patient people.

Military encounters, innocent people killed on the border, nationalist fervour with the ban of Chinese apps in India and the breathless reportage are but side-shows. The main draw is trade between the two countries. India and China, despite the numerous disagreements, cannot afford to disengage from trading with one another.



Royal Bengal tiger. <https://biologydictionary.net/bengal-tiger/>

In the present state of affairs, the people of a country are deliberately lumped with their government. Hence, the omissions and commissions of the government are attributed to not only the said government but the ordinary citizens struggling to live a life of dignity. And this is why ordinary Chinese people have become the target of international abuse.

As long as it's international trade without the spice of military confrontation *realpolitik* will hold. But there are too many *ifs* and *buts*. The hawks on either side would rather see a military victory to achieve a *revised* business arrangement than a negotiated peace. Perhaps the history of *The East India Company* is an unpleasant reminder.

The only way to deal with this new power is to engage with it through *people to people* contact, back room negotiations, and more importantly to isolate the *gung-ho wallahs* on all sides.

Keeping face is a defining cultural aspect of many Asian countries, China no less. Therefore, public verbal confrontation of any manner only exacerbates the situation and should be kept at the minimum decibel level.

India - China

Who won the battle and who won the war at the Indo-China border?

2020 trade with China

– “Trade between India and China from January to December 2020 stood at \$77.67 billion. Though lower than the \$85.47 billion traded between the countries in the 2019 calendar year, this figure was still higher than the \$75.95 billion traded between India and the US last year.”

– “In the (ongoing) financial year 2020-21, provisional data for the April-December period show China ahead of the US in India trade – \$60.63 billion compared to \$55.00 billion.”

– “Trade between India and China from January to December 2020 stood at \$77.67 billion. Though lower than the \$85.47 billion traded between the countries in the 2019 calendar year, this figure was still higher than the \$75.95 billion traded between India and the US last year.”

– “In the (ongoing) financial year 2020-21, provisional data for the April-December period show China ahead of the US in India trade – \$60.63 billion compared to \$55.00 billion.”

– “The Chinese economy is undergoing a certain amount of change because China is focussed a lot on domestic demand... That way, it will need iron and steel for its infrastructure needs. Whenever infrastructure projects have been prioritised in China, India's exports of iron and steel to that country have gone up,” Prof Biswajit Dhar of the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at Jawaharlal Nehru University said.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-in-a-tense-year-china-trade-stayed-robust-7206718/>

Realpolitik is the mantra

Military encounters, innocent people killed on the border, nationalist fervour with the ban of Chinese apps in India and the breathless reportage are but sideshows. The main draw is trade between the two countries. India and China, despite the numerous disagreements, cannot afford to disengage from trading with one another.

China has matured from a rural society into a juggernaut of sheer wealth, military might and burgeoning space power. The commercial, political and military ties with Russia is growing rapidly. We must be grateful to the USA for this. There is no going back, now.

A new world order is in place and it cannot be *business as usual* anymore.

In the words of Chinese philosopher and military strategist *Sun Tzu* (544–496 BC),

“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”



Kathleen Mary Fallon most recent work is a three-part project exploring her experiences as the white foster mother of a Torres Strait Islander foster son with disabilities. The project consisted of a feature film, *Call Me Mum*, which was short-listed for the NSW Premier's Prize, an AWGIE and was nominated for four AFI Awards winning Best Female Support Actress Award. The three-part project also includes a novel *Paydirt* (UWAPress, 2007) and a play, *Buyback*, which she directed at the Carlton Courthouse in 2006. Her novel, *Working Hot*, (Sybylla 1989, Vintage/Random House, 2000) won a Victoria Premier's Prize and her opera, *Matricide – the Musical*, which she wrote with the composer Elena Kats-Chernin, was produced by Chamber Made Opera in 1998. She wrote the text for the concert piece, *Laquiem*, for the composer Andrée Greenwell. *Laquiem* was performed at The Studio at the Sydney Opera House. She holds a PhD (UniSA).

Credibility Gulf is a one-woman performance piece. The author performed it over many months, and at many venues, during and after the first Gulf War. Presently, Kathleen is working on a collection titled 'X marks the spot: writing on violence – war and race'.

KATHLEEN MARY FALLON

CREDIBILITY GULF

(Postmodern agitprop for one performer with many voices)

Publicity blurb

Credibility Gulf was a short piece written and performed by Kathleen Mary Fallon during the first Gulf War at a women's event at the Sydney YWCA in 1991.

In January, February and March 1991, we, the public, at home in Mediadrome, audience the terrorist tactics of a media carpet bombing, courtesy U.S. of A. Productions. Deliberately induced into an altered state of consciousness, a traumatised state (are we still in that state?) by 24-hour, live-death coverage we were shocked, suspended out of our normal consciousness and routines into the televised, sanitised, horror of the first Gulf War. The instant, participatory-event information with which we were smart bombed relied heavily on the ephemeral nature of TV reporting. In my fury and horror at the war itself, and also at the media coverage, I took the language sludge of this coverage and tried to make some sense, my own sense, out of this non-sense. The simple act of conscious intelligence, which perhaps makes us human, was something deliberately made impossible by sound-bite, visual-grab, photo-opportunity reportage. It looked like information, it sounded like language but it wasn't.

This strategy for mass and massive dissociation relied upon the ephemeral nature of the reporting, on media-induced memory loss, a memory as thin and vulnerable as the A3-sized piece of newspaper we wrap the garbage in, as fleeting as a click of the TV remote. My strategy was to turn TV into theatre, the throw-away language into the relative permanence of performance, the puffed-up, self-importance of Pentagon decision-makers into material for stand-up comedy.

The weapons I chose were humour and satire. Let's laugh at the war-mongering buffoons – Sir General Buck Blackhead, Resident Shrub, CNN's comedian-journo Weasel Stark, Bobby Do-I-Listen-To-My-Head-Do-I-Listen-To-My-Heart Hawke. It's a start!

Kathleen Mary Fallon, photograph by Joseph O'Connor.

Costume

Performer wears military-style costume of camouflage cap, mirror sunglasses and khaki T-shirt printed with skull and cross-bones and text – ‘KILL EM ALL LET GOD SORT IT OUT’. Four silver Christmas stars on red, white and blue ribbons are pinned ostentatiously to the left breast with large safety pins (‘a mess of fruit salad’ as the Yanks call this military medal shit) as well as the insignia for his knighthood hanging from ribbon around his neck. The performer also wears a large silver-banded wristwatch and black leather boots. Around the hips on an ammo belt hangs a large, sheathed knife, a water-bottle, an American flag with a yellow ribbon tied around its handle. Two pencil-sharpener hand grenades hang like testicles off the front of the belt.

Technical requirements and props

A lapel microphone, a lectern, a clipboard a ceremonial box with Blackhead’s fifth star in it.

Characters

Sir General Buck Blackhead (BB)

Resident Shrub (RS)

CNN’s comedian-journo Weasel Stark

Bobby Do-I-Listen-To-My-Head-Do-I-Listen-To-My-Heart Hawke

Poet

Peace Protester

Batte Midler

Introduction

(By MC or taped)

‘You should know about Adolf Eichmann...a man who couldn’t bear to be unsuccessful; who spoke in slogans until the very end...a maser of that lethal use of language which brings yearning for absolute political equality to some and annihilation to others – annihilation at the hands of persons who are permitted to commit murder without remorse by a language stripped of conscience.’ From *A Model Childhood* by Christa Wolf.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we are honoured to have with us, all the way from n DC (Dissociation City) and Conberra, live and in real-time a number of very distinguished guests. I will, for once, break with protocol and introduce the General before the Resident. I speak of none other than the recently beknighted, brilliant, military, Mensa-minded four-star General – Sir General Buck Blackhead who is here, in Melbourne this evening, anticipating the presentation of his fifth-star by that convicted technophile and thyrotoxic, Resident Shrub.

CNN comedian-journo, Weasel Stark, will anchor this deeply moving and historic occasion.

(Voice from off-stage) Make way for the Sir General! Make way for the Sir General!

BB: Way to go! Way to go! Way to go!

(Making cross-hair signs with fingers and targeting audience) Take-it! Take-it! Take-it! *(Exploding bomb)* Oh yeah!

(Removes his cap and mirror sunglasses)

OK Scudbusters settle down, settle down.

(Counting his stars) Four-star – one, two, three, four ... one’s missing – Sir (yes, I’ve been beknighted by Queen Elizabeth herself) *(He presents the knighthood insignia hanging from his neck)* General Buck Blackhead, redeploying, mission accomplished. Everything you got from World War 2 in a fraction of the time. We gave the Iraqis some good advice, they didn’t choose it, now they’re gunna lose it. We cut it off and we killed it. Six weeks, six days of picture perfect assault. A text book war and we’ll write the text books.

BB: *(Checks watch)* Twenty-two hours. *(Bends over and farts.)* Fart! *(Takes hand grenade pencil-sharpener off his belt, sharpens pencil and writes on his clipboard)* Ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and eighty-eight sorties.

WS: *(Puts pencil on hand grenade and uses it as a microphone)* Good evening viewers. This is your stand-up, lie-down roll-me-over- and-I’ll-whistle-Dixie-for-you comedian-journo, Weasel Stark reporting live – Bang! Dead! *(Does a sort of pratfall)* from Rhiad.

Hey! Ever seen a news starved, pool reporter, in a media blackout, looking for a visual-grab, sound-bite scoop to deploy? (*Thrusting microphone frantically into audience*) Were you on the scene? Was anyone an eye-witness? Did you see the blood, the body bits? (*Back to being reporter*) Oh! Folks! It's ugly, ugly.

Tonight! I'm speaking to a man who really knows how to put steel on his target – Sir General Buck Blackhead. Sir General, I hear they call you Buckin' Buck. Why is that?

BB: Gee! Shucks! I dunno.

WS: Could it be that you got a bit of a temper there, Sir General?

BB: Well... blush, goof aww ... they say I throw things when I get mad but, ahh, I don't throw things.

WS: What about the Jackpot Road to Basra Sir General?

BB: Designated killing box 87B, the most target-rich environment in the whole darn theatre of operations. 170k of bumper-to-bumper, going-to-the-beach-on Sunday type traffic coaxed into the killing fields. EXPAND ORDNANCE! (*Makes cross-bars sign with fingers and then explodse. All as if masturbating and then orgasming*) Take it! Take it! Take it! Ooh yeah! It's a turkey shoot, man. It's fish in a barrel, rabbits in a sack, target practice. Thousands of carcasses of soft-skinned vehicles, belly up. Killing box 87B impacted, rendered non-operational – a healthy days bombing.

WS: Yes, there are images of war out there folks.

What about co-lateral damage Sir General? Has there been substantial interdiction of the live-ware component of the enemy war machine?

BB: You're not going to draw me out on that one Weasel. What I can say, on that point, at this time is that Pentagon Central Casting is in negotiations at the moment with Totally Hidden Video for sole rights to the footage shot from the camcorders attached to the nose cones of the laser guided missiles. They have already developed one pilot show called 'The Unluckiest Man in the World' featuring an Iraqi's face as the sophisticated smart bomb travels elegantly down the highway towards him, travels through his windscreen, through his cranial casement and impacts, directly on target, killing the military transport behind him.



Kathleen Mary Fallon as Sir General Buck Blackhead. Photograph by Joseph O'Connor.

WS: Ever thought of joining NTNA Sir General? Nana-Techno-Necropheliacs Anonymous? *(To audience)* The war is over but endo-colonisation is only just beginning. *(Saluting)* You know winning Sir Generals are national heroes back where I come from, Sir!

BB: *(Overexcited)* Oh boy! Oh boy! You got my fifth star with you ...?

No Weasel, it's the common-s-mud foot-soldier who is the real hero. (And especially the forty percent Black contingent who couldn't even get jobs pumpin' gas for the oil companies we're fighting for.) Over the past months he has sustained and absorbed massive numbers of sports injuries, road accident fatalities and friendly fire. It's hell out there man. He's out there in the desert playing Worst Case Scenario Charades and Hey-Buddy-Wanna-Come-Over-Saturday-Night-And- Write-A-Programme-For-My-Missile. No, he's the real hero. I just wanna get the job done and get home to my beautiful wife of 32 years, my two lovely daughters, our six-year-old dog, a parakeet, two cats and especially my sixteen-year old son, Buck Junior the Third.

WS: Could you share that Best Case Scenario with us Sir General?

BB: We've been to chapel, after roast turkey and apple pie the whole darn family is standing around the log fire and I'll say, 'Son, I want you to have these' and I'll pin my wings on his chest just above his heart and he'll say, 'Oh boy! Oh boy! Daddy does this mean I can be a Scudbuster too? ... Thank you sir. I sure hope I can stop neutralizing the dog, shooting crack and live to be worthy of them.' And his Mom and his sisters will be smilin' and cryin' as he sings, 'America! America! ...'

WS: Ironically, these are the things a soldier thinks about out there on the battlefield – the good things of life. Could expand for us Sir General?

BB: Twenty-three hundred hours. *(Bends and farts)* Fart! Nine-thousand, nine-hundred and ninety-nine sorties.

Yes, Weasel. It brings back memories of my old Daddy, *(Salutes to the heavens)* 'Sir', when he was head of the secret police for the Shah of Iran. He handed me his high-voltage cattle prod and said, ' Son, now go out and cut your teeth on Middle-eastern politics.' *(Maintaining salute and getting very sentimental and emotional as he speaks to his Daddy in heavens)* Watch me take this bad boy Saddam out Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Are you watching?

WS: Sir General, we have just crossed live to the nerve centre of the war machine. Let me guess. The khaki camouflaged phone on my left must be your command phone and the *(Salutes)* the red, white and blue one on my right must be THAT OTHER PHONE. Tell me Sir General, do you ever call Him on it?

BB: No, actually, He calls me.

WS: Well, viewers, just who does Resident Shrub call? We know he calls Sir general Buck Blackhead in Rhiad cause he just told us He did. We know He didn't call Prime Minister Kaifu in Tokyo cause now the Japanese aren't going to give us any more money, but He also called Bobbie (no not Bobbie Batista CNN Atlanta, not that Bobbie but Bobbie Do-I-Listen-To-My-Head-Do-I-Listen-To-My-Heart Hawke in Conberra, Australia. Crossing live now to Prime Minister Hawke in Conberra, Australia.

BH: *(A submissive fem. Bent over to take it in the arse. Using microphone/telephone as dildo. Speaks coquettishly to audience)* Well, I took a twenty-five minute phone hook-up from Resident Shrub in the early hours of this morning. I think that shows you what kind of relationship we have.

WS: Hell, I wouldn't want to job of cleaning the telephones where he lives. We're about to cross back now in real-time to Washington DC *(Dissociation City)* where Resident Shrub is about to address the nation. Is that you CNN? I'm sorry CNN, you'll have to repeat that, you're breaking up ... We've got some real interference here. *(Crys)* Techno-fault! Techno fault! It seems someone has activated one of those rogue portable telephones again. Techno-fault! Techno-fault!

Poet: On the eve of the Gulf War, in the shadow of the new Citistate Novatele Luxury Hotel Complex in Darling Harbour kids play Tank Tag in a camouflaged enclosure. They shoot at their little brothers and sisters from their mini-tanks while, on the other side of the wire, their brothers and sisters shoot back from their machine gun nests. 'Good shot!' shout Mum and dad at the fence.

And what will the women weave into their carpets now, the women who have already learnt to weave the tank, the machine gun, the man kneeling with the bazooka on his shoulder? Large looms will be necessary to weave the Persian carpets showing B52 and BLU82 carpet bomb attacks and around the border will they weave, in Arabic script, the story of the thousands of soldiers suffocated in their bunker-tombs deep under the desert? Are the women sitting now where the cross-hairs

meet above them, on the receiving end of the sign of the cross?
 and so the kids play Tank tag at Darling Harbour
 and Mrs Warboys, the army wife, cuts the grass
 and Schwartzkopf reads his camouflage-covered bible
 and the stock-market reached its Gulf Crisis peak in October
 and prostitutes in Sydney say their workload has doubled since the war started
 and camo-chic hits the streets of new York
 and a truck driver spends his weekend painting NUKE THE KOOK on the side of his van

and I redesign the Australian flag with Old Glory where Joh Bull used to be and two white domes for
 Nerrunga and Pine Gap to replace the Southern Cross
 and I draw scaled-down rectangles of my TV screen with lines
 converging to the point in the middle
 and in the green-brown water of the Dawn Fraser Pool I kick a quick
 desperate freestyle to avoid that vortex, that point in the middle I long to slide into
 and I wonder if some woman in Baghdad or Basra is doodling cross-hair cursors all over the inside cover
 of her notebook
 and I dream that the US is playing cats cradle with thousands of kilometres of red tape around the fertile
 crescent. Our cradle of Civilisation is enmeshed in an intricate, sinister and web-like entanglement.

And thousands of Iraqi POEs file across the desert from the right of my TV screen to the left and I make
 rough calculations – 65,000 POWs, 650,000 Iraqi troops, that leaves 585,000 – where they? After 100,000
 bombing raids, where are they?

And then Mr Godfreys, the vacuum cleaner salesman commiserates with a customer, 'Looks like there's
 been a Desert Storm on your Persian carpet lady but sit back and let Godfreys do the work.'

WS: CNN? CNN? Is that you? We're back. Dissociation City, real-time, CNN State.
 Standing by for Resident Shrub's address to the nation.

Can you information me yet CNN as to whether it will be the intimate-fireside-chat format, the whoops-
 a-daisy-dashing-to-the-john-when-you-caught-me-caughtshort-in-the-Rose Garden al fresco or the let's-
 talk-grown-ups-over-the-Big-Brown-Desk-in-the Oval Office assemblage?

RS: *(Standing behind the lectern, he speaks in the soft, slow voice of a hypnotist in the process of
 inducing the hypnotic state in his subject. He holds up two fingers in the up-you gesture) Pax Americana!
 (Then he does the thumbs down)*

We don't want to destroy Iraq, its people, its culture.

I promise I won't come in your mouth.

We are Americans, we have a unique responsibility to do the hard work of freedom and when we
 do freedom works.

We don't want to destroy Iraq, its people, its culture.

This is hurting me more than its hurting you.

The New World Order, quite simply will be a time when war is obsolete. NO MORE WAR! It will be
 a rule-writing period and America will write the rules.

No more war! No more United Nations! No more church! No more Pope! No more Freedom of the
 Press! No more Nature! No more History! A New World Order – a virtual reality. A New World
 Morality – a virtual morality.

MIGHT! MIGHT! MIGHT!

Yankee MIGHT, MIGHT MIGHT.

Is RIGHT! RIGHT! RIGHT!

Work can be fun when you're holding the gun.

Where the Liberators are the terminators.

(Makes the 'read my lips' sign) We don't want to destroy Iraq, its people, its culture.

I'm doing this for your own good.

The War is over. The Peace has just begun.

The Total Peace of Deterrence is Total War by other means. Speed is the essence of War and technology
 is the producer of Speed, a technology that has replaces nature. Pure, 100 percent guaranteed, 24
 hour, 7 day a week, War. Build your bunker in the suburbs and stand firm on a PWF, a Permanent
 War Footing. Fight the War on Crime, the War on Drugs, the War on Words, the War on the Media,
 which ever War you want – Canon the Big Gun in copiers, Pea Beau – a better kill for your money,

Nintendo Gameboy – picking it up is the easy part but, when you have the designated friends and foe codes, putting it down is a different story.

Peace Protesters: *(Beside the lectern, sings inanely as if stoned while making a peace sign)*

All we are saying is give peace a chance

All we are saying is snowflakes in hell.

RS: *(Continues in his soft, seductive hypnotic induction voice)* Fellow Americans, from midnight Eastern Standard Time I declare America a Geo-religion and CNN is its State. A State of Telecommunications, populated by its target market, with its own regulating international Time-zone, drawing on a Captive Ausience.

BB: *(Clearing his throat)* Mr resident, Sir, with all due respect, aren't you forgetting something? *(Indicating space on his 'mess a fruit salad' for his missing fifth star)*

RS: It is with profound afterthought that I here present you, Sir General Buckey with your fifth star. Wear it as a decorative anachronism, just like the ground war, which was, militarily speaking, also a decorative anachronism. *(Dropping fifth star on the floor beside BB)*
And now here is Miss Batte Midler to sing our new National Hymn, which I am told was top of the Iraqi hit parade last month.

Batte Midler: *(Making the cross-hairs, take-it sign with her hands into the audience)*

God is watching us

God is watching us

God is watching us

From a distance

(Making explosion gesture with her hands)

BB: *(Picks up star and pins it on beside other four stars)* That's it Scudbusters. *(Putting on his cap and sunglasses)* I have a literary career to get off the ground. Thanking you, and, as we say in Dissociation City, 'Stay on the right side of the censors now, won't you. *(Making the cross-hairs sign to the audience)* Take-it! Take-it! Take-it! Oh! Yeah! *(Making exploding bomb sign with his hands)*

(As he exits) Way to go! Way to go! Way to go!



Kathleen Mary Fallon as Sir General Buck Blackhead. Photograph by Joseph O'Connor.

2010 - 2020



Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
APRIL 2021



COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKYOUNG CHA