



We must face the shadows

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FORTY years ago the Six Nations Council of the Iroquois Confederacy published an address to the Western world.

Named *A Basic Call to Consciousness*, it had been presented the previous autumn to a summit in Geneva of NGOs of the United Nations.

It said: "The act of taking without asking" — the act of colonising entire peoples, and exploiting the Earth — "is attributable to both children and immature cultures alike.... For centuries we have known that each individual's action creates conditions and situations that affect the world."

The document holds that "spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics." If I might riff on that, without the I am of consciousness, there can be no we are. Without an inner

psychological life, there can be no outer political life. At least, not one that humanises.

The psyche can be both of individuals, and collectively, like of nations as communities writ large. That, and not just land, must be decolonised. As the Iroquois said: "What is needed is the liberation of all the things that support Life."

In Greek mythology, Psykhe was the goddess of the soul, the very seat of consciousness. Her consort, Eros, was the god of love.

Our basic call to consciousness in 2018 must be to bravely face the shadows in the psyche of our own and other nations.

To do what we have to do, but keep an open and a truthful heart. To not back others into fighting corners. To cultivate a politics where "Blessed are the merciful...."

