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**PAX AMERICANA
HONG KONG, ISRAEL/PALESTINE,
TURKEY, UNITED NATIONS.**

EVENTS

28th November LIBG Forum: The future of Kashmir. United or Divided? NLC 7.00pm

4th December Chinese Liberal Democrats Annual General Meeting. New Loon Fung Restaurant, Gerrard Street, London W1. 11.30am

9th January 2017 LIBG Executive, NLC 9th February 2017 Chinese New Year Dinner and Auction. • Guest Speaker: Prof Kerry Brown. £45. 7pm National Liberal Club. RSVP

info@chineselibdems.org

20th February 2017 LIBG Forum on French elections, co-hosted with MODEM. NLC

6th March 2017 LIBG Executive, NLC

13th March 2017 LIBG Forum on the South China Sea.

17th-19th March 2017 Liberal Democrat Spring Conference, York.

15th May 2017 LIBG Forum on East Africa.

18th-21st May 2017 61st Congress of Liberal International, Andorra. The Congress will mark the 70th anniversary of LI.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Pax Americana—The End

Tom Arms

It is the beginning of the end of Pax Americana.

For 71 years the world has sheltered under the wings of the American eagle. The result has been one of the longest periods of prolonged peace, prosperity and political advancement in world history.

The US created the United Nations; rebuilt a devastated Europe with the Marshall Plan; established NATO to defend Europe from Soviet aggression, pushed back the Chinese and Russian communists in Korea, protected Japan and the Philippines; provided billions of dollars in aid to help hundreds of nations emerging from centuries of colonialism and championed the cause of free trade which has led to unparalleled global growth.

Alright, it has not been perfect. Vietnam was a massive miscalculation. The rise of Jihadism has its roots in Washington's Middle East policy. And world growth has been at the expense of American manufacturing jobs. The world pie has grown, but America's slice of it—although still bigger than anyone else's—has shrunk from its post-war heyday.

Has it been worth it? Well, the American electorate clearly don't think so. They have voted in a president who wants to tear up trade agreements, build walls, impose tariffs, deport millions, end climate change agreements and shrink America's defensive umbrella.

Why should the rest of the world care? Is it just because we don't want the free ride to end?

No, because as flawed as it was, America was the best super power ever. Oh yes, it was overpowering, arrogant and determined to protect American interests. Any and every country does that. But its foreign policy was built on a domestic base of representative democracy and a strong will to do the right thing.

Throughout history we have seen that the exit of a world power leads uncertainty and war as the powers-in-waiting compete to take on the mantle of numero uno.

So, who are the contenders? China, Russia, and, possibly a European Union which is currently floundering in a post-Brexit sea.

China makes no secret of its ambitions. It believes that its top down authoritarian-style government is superior to bottom up western democracies. For proof they hold up the example of their economic success.

Then they point their finger at the self-destructive presidential campaign which America has just endured—and will continue to suffer from for some time.

The Chinese are busily projecting their economic, political and growing military power. Africa is one example. The South China Sea is another. America's nuclear umbrella and 72,500 US troops in Asia are a significant deterrent to Chinese dreams.

Russia is another authoritarian wannabe, if only because Moscow is bitter at losing the Cold War. The economic failure of Putin's corrupt state capitalism has hindered him somewhat, but his willingness to compensate by flexing Russia's residual military power has won the respect of President-elect Trump. Instead of trying to contain Russia, he talks of combining forces with the untrustworthy bear to fight ISIS at a time when the Jihadists appear to be on their knees.

For the time being, the authoritarian regimes of China and Russia have found common cause in offering themselves as alternatives to Western democracies. But it won't last.

The only democratic alternative is the EU. However, Brexit has exposed the weakness of its political institutions and eliminated the member with Europe's longest and best-established democratic traditions, largest military and closest ties to the United States.

Britain was the balance that prevented either French or German dominance of the EU. At the moment, economic powerhouse Germany is in the ascendant, but if Europe is to play a bigger international role than it needs a unified military establishment. France—with its nuclear arsenal—is best placed to play the defence role. This leaves the two European powerhouses competing for political supremacy.

So, America, rest in peace. I am afraid that the rest of the world will not.

Tom Arms.

Tom Arms is a broadcaster and columnist focused on world affairs. His weekly podcast can be heard at www.lookaheadnews.com. Tom is also available for public speaking engagements.

We must seek global solutions to migration and refugee issues

“We much jointly seek adequate solutions to the economic challenges of global development,” said Dr. Dzheydet Chakarov - Vice President and member of the LI Bureau at the international conference. Current challenges facing united Europe – the strengthening of nationalism in the context of the ideological, migration and economic crisis. The conference was organized marking the 18th anniversary of the youth of MRF in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Dr. Chakarov pointed out that migration is not only from countries with active war zones, but also from extremely poor countries in Africa and Asia. “We can see mass migration of people who seek a better living standard, education opportunities, available healthcare etc. Solutions should be sought locally in these countries while the developed world should assist their economic development and strengthening of democracy,” said Dr. Chakarov. LI Vice President said that today we live in conditions of globalization and that “developed countries cannot remain an isolated island of security and prosperity while countries and whole continents struggle with extreme poverty”.

He added that Liberal International has successful practices in this regard. Chakarov spoke of Cote d'Ivoire as a great example where President Alassane Outtara succeeded in bringing about accelerated economic development on the basis of stable democratic governance. “The liberal principles that President Outtara endorsed translated into higher standards of living for the people of Ivory Coast and excellent prospects for the country” said Dr Charkarov. “This is good practice,” he continued, “realized with the support of Liberal International and the international community and it can be an example for solving similar issues world-wide”. Dr Chakarov led an LI Election Observation Mission to Cote d'Ivoire in 2010 and supported the election campaign of President Outtara.

The event was greeted through video link by LI Secretary General Emil Kirjas who urged the young people and young liberals to be proactive citizens, to express their views, to participate in election processes and to vote. “You have the key to your future”, he said, reminding that “if the young people voted massively at the UK referendum the country would have likely decided to stay in the EU.”

The Youth wing of MRF is led by Ilhan Kyuchuk MEP, member of the LI Human Rights Committee.

The Turkish Coup Attempt from a Liberal Activist's Perspective

SUSANNA RAPP

On the 15th of July, something that few could have predicted happened: late on Friday evening, a faction within the Turkish military attempted to seize power in Turkey.

The situation in Turkey was chaotic; soldiers closed off the Bosphorus Bridge between Europe and Asia; shootings and bombings lasted all night and tanks rolled in on the Atatürk Airport in Istanbul.

Turkish President *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan* and his supporters stopped the coup attempt quickly. In a television broadcast made via the mobile application Face Time Erdoğan ordered the Turkish people to go out on the streets and fight those who had turned against the government.

Nazlican Kanmaz, international officer of the liberal Turkish youth organization 3H Movement, was at her friend's wedding when the coup began. She explains over the phone what the situation was like from North Carolina, USA, where she studies philosophy.

About all Turkish liberals were in the same place, and we were in a way trapped there.

Media reported that many Turks went out on the streets to stop the coup attempt. According to Kanmaz, it was primarily Erdoğan's people, supporters of the conservative governing party AKP.

The others, like me, were locked down and did not go out. It was not like the protests in Gezi Park, where we fought for our individual rights, more like the individual against the state.

I was horrified by what happened. Soldiers who just followed orders, and also other people were killed. It was so unnecessary. Most of those who were on the streets, on both sides, were innocent.

During the chaotic night, about 300 people died and over 2,000 were injured. Kanmaz says that the coup attempt was very unexpected, almost unthinkable, because Turkey, despite its problems, still is a democracy.

Even if Turkey is not a Western democracy, it is still a democracy. Having a military coup attempt was strange, no one had expected it. There were no signs that it would happen.

Turkey has a long history of coups and many still have unhealed scars after them. The underlying cause to the coups has often been a generally unstable society or a concern about the country drifting away from the secular values. Turkey is secular according to the constitution, but there has been tension between the religious and non-religious population for a long time. The majority of the Turkish population is Muslim, but there are many who do not practice their faith.

Kanzmaz says that the military had a lot of power, especially in the coup that took place in 1980, when the Turkish military lead by Kenan Evren took power. His constitution is still Turkey's fundamental law even though it has been changed and modified many times. The latest coup has awoken discussions about a constitutional reform. It is feared, however, that it may be a way for Erdoğan to further strengthen his power. Erdoğan was elected president in 2014, but before that he had served as prime minister for over ten years.

Especially Erdoğan seemed somehow powerless after the coup attempt – and he is the most powerful man in Turkey. But he found a way to turn the situation around through the purge.

After the failed coup a state of emergency was declared. It gave Erdoğan power to govern without the support of Parliament for three months. Since mid-July, around 60,000 people have been dismissed, suspended from their jobs or arrested. There are many people from the military or the police, professors, officials and journalists, but also for example football referees. The manoeuvre has been seen as Erdoğan's way to ensure his position. Kamaz explains:

Many people were killed or disappeared after the coup in 1980. Most people prefer that people are arrested instead of people being tortured or disappearing. People on the street are okay as long as their friends and family are safe. But of course many, especially those with higher education, are unhappy.

We at 3H are for example trying to work for plurality and diversity, no matter how it looks. But if one gets punished for it, we can't create a democratic base for minorities, young people, women and other political views. At the moment it is dangerous to try to raise awareness, they can arrest you at any time if you are different.

After the coup attempt the preacher Fethullah Gülen¹ and his followers were accused of being the coup plotters. Gülen has lived in exile in the US since the late 1990s, and Erdoğan has demanded that he is handed over to Turkey. However, according to the US State Department, the inquiry was not connected to the coup attempt.

Gülen's supporters have networks all over the world and spread their Islamic faith through missionary work. Kamaz explains that Gülen and Erdoğan were close friends and allies until a corruption case in 2013, where prosecutors that were linked to Gülen accused ministers of the AKP and Erdoğan's son for corruption.

About three years ago, Erdoğan started to accuse Gülen for trying to establish a parallel state and take power.

According to Kamaz, Erdoğan is always trying to position himself in opposition to something in his politics, such as the Gülen movement or the Kurds, despite the fact that there is no real opposition any more.

There aren't as many voices in the political sphere anymore, because of Erdoğan claims that we must be one nation in order to be able to defend ourselves against the parallel state.

The nationalist spirit has increased lately, and many Turks are very proud of the Turkish values. Kamaz says that there is a risk that groups, which are in the margin for Erdoğan, are falling outside his nation building project. Earlier the situation looked more hopeful when for example representatives from the pro-Kurdish party were elected to the parliament in 2015.

Currently Erdoğan is very popular in Turkey. In June 2015, his party AKP experienced a drop in voter support and failed to get a majority in parliament. In a new election in November the same year the party was able to take about 60 percent of the seats. The opposition is formed by the social democratic party CHP, the left-wing pro-Kurdish party HDP, and the far-right party MHP.

Erdoğan gets his power through his voters and he refers to the will of the people. He says that his people are with him – if they weren't they would not vote for him.

At the start of Erdoğan's term as Prime Minister the situation was better, the economy turned around because of the liberal fiscal policy. But after the protests in Gezi Park things began to change, it became clear what kind of state Erdoğan tries to create, a more Islamised country.

After the purge there were speculations about Erdoğan's part in the coup attempt. Some people suspected that Erdoğan himself orchestrated the coup attempt to close out dissidents. Kanmaz doesn't take a stand for any of the various theories, and says she doesn't know what to believe. The problematic thing is that the government now uses the failed coup as a way to get as much power as possible. Kanmaz fears that Turkey's democratic values will suffer.

Even Erdoğan's crazy actions have been legitimized by the coup attempt.

She believes that some AKP supporters will eventually begin to realize what is happening in Turkey, and that the country after that will not have a conservative government in a long time.

Until then, the next ten or twenty years, we must mobilize.

Another thing that worries Kanmaz is the xenophobic trend that has grown stronger in the EU recently. Turkey's possible membership in the EU has created debate and also appeared in the campaigns for Brexit.

It is difficult to see what is going on in Turkey from the outside. If I were to stay in Europe, I would certainly also be skeptical about Turkey.

My biggest problem with the news I have seen in Europe is that nobody knows anything about Turkey. They only see Anatolia (The Asian part of Turkey). It is clear that we should also accept that part and that they vote for Erdoğan. But at its heart, Turkey is much more of a cosmopolitan country. What you see in the news are generalizations and simplifications, it does not make the situation better at all.

This article was originally written in Swedish for Liber, the members magazine of Svensk Ungdom, an IFLRY member organisations from Finland. The author of the article, Susanna Rapp, is the magazine's editor.

¹ <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/10/17/turkeys-thirty-year-coup>

Scottish Group AGM

The annual general meeting of the Scottish branch of LIBG heard a critical analysis of western policies in North Africa from Farres Moussa, who was born in Tunisia and as a businessman in this country maintains a close interest in Libya and Algeria as well as his homeland. A former Lib Dem councillor in the London Borough of Sutton, Farres now lives in Edinburgh where he is a candidate in next year's council elections.

He argued that interventions like the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi were based on deep misunderstanding of local cultures and politics. The result across north Africa has been greater instability rather than a flowering of western-style democracies, and he noted that the British Lib Dems had supported the attack on Gaddafi. There is deep concern in Europe about the desperate attempts by emigrants to cross the Mediterranean. Farres said that 140,000 people leaving Libya were predominantly of sub-Saharan origin and unsettled in post-Gaddafi society.

The AGM elected a largely unchanged committee with Willis Pickard remaining chairman, Karen Freel secretary and John Barnett treasurer.

Willis Pickard

THE CALAIS CRISIS

So much has happened in Calais and other places in northern France in the last month, where people of all ages have been treated so badly and left to live in squalor with no understanding or hope of what will happen to them next. Since the demolition of the camp the focus has rightly been on the young people under 18. The Government has failed them all.

There are those who are entitled to come to the UK as they have family members here (called the “Dublin 3” children) who could and should have been processed far more quickly and have now started arriving. Also, those children who are on their own, but we should be taking several thousand of, as part of our humanitarian response to the crisis (Called the “Dubs amendment” children), none of which had arrived till very recently, and only then because of huge public pressure.

Meanwhile nearly £2 million is spent on building a wall in Calais. There have been many appeals for people to make representations one way or another to their MPs and Amber Rudd, and thank you to all of you who have taken part.

Roger Roberts has just not stopped pressing the Government on this, and has on record 19 questions to the Government since June this year. Read more in this article¹. He took the time to say ‘thank you’ to all the voluntary and charity organisations working in the camps in Parliament too².

There is a very good summary of what Baroness Shas Sheehan has done and said in a House of Lords debate on 1st November³. It is well worth reading through what she says in full and the rest of the debate which also has Roger Roberts and Baroness Barbara Janke speaking. Shas starts off telling of how she has been going to the Calais camp to see for herself what the situation is for a year now. Her horror at the awful



Shas Shaheen visits the remains of Jungle Camp.

conditions, and how charities such as Save the Children are not allowed to be there to work and help.

Shas quotes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴ as to why our Government needs to act. She said *“Our duties could not be clearer. However, not only were the most horrendous conditions allowed to persist, but the plight of unaccompanied minors with family reunification claims on the UK was alleviated at only the slowest possible rate. Only in the last few weeks, faced with a barrage of adverse publicity concerning the demolition of the Jungle, have we seen any sense of urgency from the Government.”* She goes on to describe how she was there for the past

week during the demolition and her urgent, detailed, pleas to Amber Rudd, describing what is happening and just what has to be done. A simple ask *“once those who seek sanctuary arrive on our doorstep in Calais, surely we can treat them with humanity and some dignity”* we all applaud.

The report being discussed, a Government response to the EU Home Affairs committee, is here <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-f/unaccompanied-minors-in-the-eu/HOL-EU-Committee-Children-in-Crisis-report-Government-response.pdf>

Every day the situation changes, there are new crises, occasional improvements, and ways that you can help. We update our Facebook page several times daily, tweet regularly, and put items on the website such as this with Tom Brake and Shas Sheehan⁵.

AND WHEN THEY GET HERE....

As this article by Refugee Action in the Guardian⁶, so graphically describes, it is not the end of the journey when the unaccompanied minors arrive in the UK, but the beginning of a new one of a different but still difficult sort.

The Government have just produced a safeguarding strategy for unaccompanied children here, which is welcome, but we have concerns about how long it is going to take to implement, May 2017 is a long time ahead for a crisis here right now.

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/4791_government_will_produce_safeguarding_strategy_for_unaccompanied_children

¹ http://www.libdemvoice.org/roger-roberts-writes-we-must-do-more-for-the-calais-children-52347.html#utm_source=daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=email

² <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2016-10-12b.1883.5&s=speaker%3A13477#g1885.0>

³ <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2016-11-01b.598.0&s=speaker%3A25460#g621.0>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child

⁵ <http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/869>

⁶ https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/31/journey-child-refugees-britain-legal-process-homelessness-government?CMP=share_btn_tw



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary



Thanks to Scott Anderson & Michael O'Conner for this... The Bookloft is at 332 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230 USA



Hastings Supports Refugees volunteers sorting clothing for Syria in Christ Church, Blacklands. Organisers were overwhelmed by the town's generosity.

Going Between Miranda Pinch

As a member of the Liberal Democrats Friends of Palestine executive I am often introduced as the Jewish member of the committee. In fact, as my mother was a Jewish refugee from Czechoslovakia in 1938, I am indeed fully Jewish, as the Jewish test of heredity goes through the mother's line and not the father's.

My mother was a secular, agnostic, Jew and married a non-Jewish Englishman. Consequently, I was never brought up as a Jew. When I was seven years old we moved to Golders Green in North London, a very Jewish area. Our neighbours were Jews, yet my mother never admitted to being one herself. Later I understood that she was both afraid and ashamed to admit to it. Afraid, because of the Nazis and all that she and her family had suffered, and ashamed, because of how the Palestinians were being treated by other Jews.

As a child, I had rather an identity crisis because of that, but can happily identify myself as both a Jew and a Christian now. I am neither a convert to Christianity as my religion has never been Jewish, nor am I a Messianic Jew, as I don't believe in much of what such Jews proclaim. Having had an in-depth conversation with a Rabbi a few years ago, I can say that I belong to the Jewish Tribe and am proud of my Jewish heritage, while following a Palestinian Jewish Rabbi, Jesus, (rather more than a rabbi to me) whose teachings I follow. For those who cannot accept Jesus, do have a look at the teachings of Rabbi Hillel from around the same period. He is well known for his expression of the 'Golden Rule': "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn." (1)

The strange thing is that all through my life I had a deep desire to spend 3 months (yes, exactly 3 months!) in Israel and Palestine to experience the situation for myself. However, it was not until 2008 that I received an email notification of an application to participate in an international team in the West Bank for 3 months with EAPPI; a programme under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. My life changed dramatically at that point

So, after superb training by the Quakers here in the UK, I joined a team of 4, a German, a Canadian and a Swede, living in Hebron and the South Hebron Hills alongside Palestinians as an Ecumenical Accompanier (EA). You can look EAPPI up on Google (2) to find out what we did and how the programme has developed since then.

Not only did I experience first-hand huge injustices taking place under the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, (see the weekly reports from PCHR (3) and UNOCHA (4) that give regular up to date information), but I also learnt a great deal more about my Jewish roots. I even found myself working alongside Israeli Jewish human rights activists such as Machsom Watch (5), Women in Black (6), Btselem (7), Breaking the silence (8), Ta'ayush (9) and others, and came to realise their incredible courage, working against the tide of Israeli policies and opinion.



I will also add that while I was serving as an EA in Hebron we were taken to Sderot in Israel close to the Gaza border, where we spoke to residents. We also spent time in Haifa and West Jerusalem where we interacted with people on different sides of the conflict in order to broaden our perspective. We were encouraged to express our position, not as supporters of either Israel or Palestine, but as supporters of human rights and international law. This education encompassed history, geography, religion, economics, reporting, photography, writing and much more and has been a sound basis on which I have continued to build my activism.

Since then I have been venturing between Israel and Palestine, Christianity and Judaism as well as having a growing appreciation of Palestinian Islam and have good friends and contacts within each. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, like all religions, have different strands, and are products of different cultures. It is so important to recognise those diverse aspects and not to generalise. Hence my title for this piece and my blog, 'Going Between' (10). This is mainly written during and after my visits to the area.

One of the greatest injustices suffered by Palestinians under occupation is that I, a Jew, with descendants from Bohemian Europe and no evidence to date of any link to Palestine, have a 'right' to claim a place in Israel or the West Bank as a Jewish Israeli under Israeli law. However, the right of many Palestinians to remain, though they have lived in that land for generations, is threatened on a daily basis, with no hope of returning to lands and homes from which they have been continually dispossessed since 1948.

As we approach the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, it is important to remember that the location of the Jewish homeland in Palestine was actually encouraged by Christian Zionists. It is equally important to remember that the programme of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which are illegal under International Law (Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49), receives financial support from Christian Zionists in the US. With so much debate around the term 'Zionism' and 'anti-Semitism' it is worth noting why Christian Zionism has such a vested interest in the return of Jews to what is often termed 'Greater (Eretz) Israel' (there are various opinions as to what area this encompasses, some of which are very controversial). While many Jews believe that when the twelve tribes of Israel return to 'Eretz' Israel, then the Messiah will come; many Christians believe that, when the twelve tribes of Israel return to 'Eretz' Israel, then there will be the Second-Comeing of Christ and all those gathered there will either be converted to Christianity or destroyed! To me that sounds very anti-Semitic indeed. This 'Christian' perspective is based on a certain interpretation of the Book of Revelation; one which many Palestinian Christians believe to be spurious. (There is a wealth of literature on the subject, though I particularly recommend a reading of the Kairos Palestine Document written by Palestinian Christians (11))

I would like to end with a quote from the New Testament Bible, which is, to me, one of the most important Christian passages and which describes clearly what the Christian response to the land that is referred to as 'Holy' should be. John 4. v23-24. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, *"believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."* No mention of land ownership here, just the opposite. Whether you believe that salvation comes via the Jews or not, it certainly cannot be found in the land. The Israelites had already been instructed in Micah 6. v8: *"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* Those passages seem a very long way from the reality that is Israel and Palestine today.

Miranda Pinch - 31/10/16

Another link of interest: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161001-a-year-of-revolt-who-were-the-palestinians-killed-by-israeli-forces/>

- (1) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_the_Elder)
- (2) (<https://www.eappi.org/en>)
- (3) <http://pchrghaza.org/en/?p=8427>
- (4) <http://www.ochaopt.org/reports/protection-of-civilians>
- (5) <https://machsomwatch.org/en>
- (6) <http://womeninblack.org/vigils-around-the-world/europa/israel/>
- (7) <http://www.btselem.org/>,
- (8) <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/>
- (9) <http://www.taayush.org/>
- (10) mirandapinch.com
- (11) <http://kairospalestine.ps/>

Miranda Pinch participated as an Ecumenical Accompanier on the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). This article reflects her personal viewpoint and does not necessarily represent the position of EAPPI nor Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

António Guterres to be the next UN Secretary General: Good choice, bad process.

Adil Najam

The next secretary-general of the United Nations, most everyone agreed, was supposed to be a woman. To be exact, a woman from Eastern Europe.

Now it is clear that it is going to be António Guterres, former prime minister of Portugal. Guterres is not from Eastern Europe. And he's certainly not a woman.

Guterres is generally considered a good choice. The process by which he was chosen, less so.

Among those who, like me, have long studied the United Nations and how it makes its leadership choices, hopes had been raised that this time around things would be different. They were, but not nearly as different as they needed to be if the process is to be seen as globally representative.

A more open but still flawed process

The way we choose the world's chief diplomat has always been badly flawed. Essentially, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) find someone they can all live with. If even one says no to a candidate, the candidate is out.

They then tell the rest of the Security Council, and ultimately the 193 states represented in U.N. General Assembly, to live with that choice. Invariably, they do.

The result, most often, is a lowest-common-denominator choice. Someone who would not "rock the boat." Someone who would not "spring surprises." In the worst case, it gives you the super-pliant Kurt Waldheim (Austrian, 1986-1992) who elevated the role of the P5 even more. In the best case, you can get a Dag Hammarskjöld (Swedish, 1953-1961) who tried more than anyone else in that office to rise to the organization's founding vision.

This time, as the search for Ban Ki-moon's successor and the United Nation's ninth Secretary-General began, there were calls to make the process more transparent and more consultative with the rest of the member states. Cosmetically, it was. But, mostly, cosmetically.

Largely on the valiant insistence of U.N. General Assembly President Mogens Lykkeetoft from Denmark, an attempt was made to open up the process. For the first time ever, the candidates took part in public debates where they outlined their vision and priorities. These were globally televised. Informal dialogues with the U.N. General Assembly were held. A series of "straw polls" were taken in the Security Council, and results made public.

P5 still calls the shots

All of this was new, and starkly different from prior processes which had been held entirely behind closed doors, with nothing except carefully planted rumours leaking out.

At the end of it, however, it was the major powers who came out of the Security Council after their sixth straw poll to announce that they had a "clear favourite". The choice had been, according to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Powers, "remarkably uncontentious, uncontroversial."

There was no doubt in anyone's mind whose choice it was.

And, by this time, the choice was also no surprise. Guterres had come out ahead in all six straw polls. None of the six female candidates had consistent, or even significant, support. Nor did any of the candidates from Eastern Europe.

At least one of the female candidates, Argentine Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra, was not fully confident of the process. Last month the journal *Foreign Policy* reported her as saying, “You don’t have a chance if you’re a woman ... It’s not a glass ceiling. It’s a steel ceiling.”

The “steel ceiling” is not just for women. It is really for any candidate not backed by the P5.

The crucial sixth straw poll on Oct. 5, 2016, was the one where the P5 could use their veto votes. Every candidate except for Guterres was vetoed by one or more of the P5. Danilo Türk of Slovenia, who at one point had seemed like Guterres’ closest competition, was vetoed by as many as four of the permanent five. Four other candidates had three vetoes. Apparently, this was not a field of candidates that the P5 was very fond of.

In short, the P5 made certain that António Guterres was the only one left standing. However, it should be noted that even he got only four of the P5 voting affirmatively for him. A mystery fifth permanent member chose the “no opinion” card, effectively abstaining and letting him be crowned as the “clear favourite.”

The door, maybe, is not shut as tight as it once was. Light as well as sound can now peep through more than ever before. But at the end of the day, the process for selecting the secretary-general of the United Nations has remained the same.

The P5 decided. Then they told the rest of the Security Council they expected a formal vote by acclamation. On Oct. 6, they got that. Now, they expect a consensus vote from the U.N. General Assembly. Most likely, they will get that too.

On balance, the process of selecting the world’s diplomat-in-chief this time around became a little more public, and a lot more interesting. However, it is no less flawed than it ever was.

A clear favourite

By all indications, however, the choice that has been made is a good one. Although the U.N. has never had a woman leading it during its 70 years of existence, and even though António Guterres, at 67, will become the second-oldest person to hold the office (Boutros Boutros-Ghali was 70 when he became U.N. Secretary General), there is much to like about this choice.

Guterres will be the first person to hold the office who has served as the chief executive of his country. Experience and a political sensibility can add much heft to the office. As Prime Minister of Portugal (1995-2002), and much more as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2005-2015), he has demonstrated a resolve to tackle tough problems.

In the latter role, he was able to not only work with the major powers but to nudge – sometimes push – them to go where they might otherwise have not. This is a skill that should come in very handy in his new role.

Probably the last thing Guterres is thinking about right now is how the 10th Secretary-General of the United Nations – his successor - will be selected. One hopes, however, that someone is thinking about that question and how it will be answered in five years, or 10. Hopefully, he would have helped open the process of selecting secretary-general even further – making it not just more public, but more representative.

Adil Najam

Adil Najam is Dean of Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University.

This article was originally published on *The Conversation*. Read the original article at <https://theconversation.com/antonio-guterres-to-be-the-next-un-secretary-general-good-choice-bad-process-64851>

António Guterres was Prime Minister of Portugal 1995-2002 & President of the Socialist International 1999-2005.

The World is My Passion

Tom Arms

My lifelong passion is international affairs and it needs your help. An understanding and knowledge of the world and how it works creates untold opportunities. Refusal to learn can create unthinkable dangers. That is why for the past 45 years I have focused on studying, researching, writing and broadcasting about world affairs.

But the problem I have consistently faced is the brick wall of public apathy and the traditional media's unwillingness to smash through it.

I have always advocated a free press supported by healthy profits, and will continue to do so. But the downside of such an institution is the media's need for readers and viewers dictates that they pander to the public taste, which, in too many cases, fluctuates between the banal and the parochial. International relations rarely falls into either category.



I know from hard experience that finding space in a general circulation newspaper or time on a popular broadcast news programme rates alongside climbing the Matterhorn backwards in a blizzard on the difficulty scale. As one editor explained: "Foreign news don't sell papers, and we are in business, not education."

Well, to steal a phrase from a former British Prime Minister, the sky is now turning black with the wings of chickens coming home to roost.

The world is a dangerous place. American and European populist politicians are on the rise with their message of xenophobia and simplistic solutions. A hegemonistic Russia is entrenched in the Middle East – courtesy of a Syrian civil war that threatens to engulf Europe with a terrifying flood of Muslim refugees. Islamic fundamentalists are rushing to fill the void left by collapsing or inadequate moderate Arab regimes. Repeated failures to lift a billion Africans out of the poverty trap adds to instability and the refugee nightmare. Climate change is extending deserts and pushing sea levels inexorably higher. And finally, the fatal attraction of authoritarianism is presented as an alternative by the financial success of China.

Bad news sells news, so at last foreign news is news. But it is news based on the lowest common denominator of fear rather than an attempt to explain, understand, and even celebrate, both our commonality and our differences.

I don't claim to have the answers. But I do claim to have the experience and the ability to pose the questions which is the first step to finding the answers.

Of course, foreign news has not been totally ignored until the recent past. The think tanks and learned journals of the ivy-clad towers have produced reams of stultifyingly boring and expensive reports aimed at a pin-striped elite who have perpetrated the dangerous myth that international relations is far too complicated for the tiny minds of the masses.

So I started LookAheadnews.com. It is about world affairs. It is free. It is entertaining. One of its prominent features is a diary of the next week's main news events around the world. Why? So that people can try to influence events before they happen. They can participate in the world around them, rather than merely spectate.

LookAheadnews.com is given away to Talk Show radio programmes across America. It is not sold to the high-brow National Public Radio. It is handed out for free to the Talk Show audiences who have for too long been fed an audio diet of parochially-minded radio shock jocks. The need is not to preach to the converted but to enlighten the misguided, misinformed and badly led about the existence and concerns of a world beyond American shores. It is a world of which all Americans need to be aware and in which they need to play their part.

Lookaheadnews.com is also a podcast. That is why it is a dot com. It is a weekly compendium of my radio broadcasts. The podcast is also free. It is free at any time to any one in the world who wants to know what is happening in the world next week and to listen to a discussion of world affairs which is heard by a large audience of US radio listeners.

The podcast, however, is not free to advertisers. At the moment those marketing philanthropists are conspicuous by their absence from both the website pages and the audio podcast. The site is only a few weeks old and has some way to go before it piques the interest of Saatchi or the WPP Group. The first week saw over a 1,000 unique visitors. And it continues to grow.

But it needs support. Not money, just eyeballs, ears and clicks. It needs people to visit the website. To listen to the podcast. To read the column "Observations of an Expat." Visitors can be quickly transmuted into advertisers' cash. And that cash can be used to continue distributing world affairs broadcasts to American listening audiences-- an audience that, for all our sakes, desperately needs to be better informed about the world around them.

Stop, Look and Listen to Lookaheadnews.com

Tom Arms

Anglo-American Tom Arms is a broadcaster and columnist focused on world affairs. He produces and presents a regular programme for US radio and writes a weekly column called Observations of an Expat. He also lectures on foreign affairs. Former positions include Diplomatic Correspondent, Foreign Editor, Editor, Foreign Correspondent and Founder and CEO of Future Events News Service. Publications include "The Encyclopedia of the Cold War," "The Falklands Crisis" and "World Elections On File." He is a member of the Liberal International Development Group and the Foreign Affairs Group. If you are interested in receiving a weekly free summary of his broadcast then write to him at tom.arms@lookAheadnews.com

Save Our Citizenship

After the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU earlier this year, over 16 million 'remain' voters face having their right to live and work across the EU taken away from them. As EU citizens, we are entitled to visa-free travel across the 27 member states, we have the freedom to live and work anywhere on the continent, and we have the same access to all essential services in EU countries as people from each of the member states do. There is absolutely no precedent where people have lost citizenship of one nation without either a war or that nation ceasing to exist. Therefore, it is vital that the Government commits to protecting our EU citizenship in any Brexit negotiations. Charles Goerens, Parti démocratique MEP from Luxembourg has tabled a constitutional amendment asking that the EU consider adding the option of an associate citizenship for those who feel aligned to the European project but are members of former Member States. In addition to this, the amendment also considers that they be extended the freedom of movement currently enjoyed by EU passport holders in the UK and abroad, and a vote in EU elections.

Amendment 882

Advocates to insert in the Treaties a European associate citizenship for those who feel and wish to be part of the European project but are nationals of a former Member State; offers these associate citizens the rights of freedom of movement and to reside on its territory as well as being represented in the Parliament through a vote in the European elections on the European lists;

We're asking that the responsible parties, including Prime Minister Theresa May and European Council President Donald Tusk, work to ensure that any Brexit negotiations allow for those who voted to remain in June do not have their European Citizenship and stripped from them, and that British citizens are able to keep and renew their EU Passports going forward as they may wish, and readers are invited to sign a petition at <http://www.saveourcitizenship.eu/> to that end.



Charles Goerens



Chinese Liberal Democrats Annual General Meeting

Please join us for the Chinese Liberal Democrats Annual General Meeting

Date and Time: Sunday 4 December at 11.30am

Venue: New Loon Fung Restaurant



Proposed Agenda:

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of last AGM and matters arising
3. Co-Chairs' Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts
5. Election of members of Executive Committee*
6. Future Projects and Events for the year ahead
7. AOB

* Nominations are welcome for the posts of Chair, Vice-Chairs (2), Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Development Officer, Communications and 3 further Executive Committee posts.

After the formal business, there will be a talk by guest speaker, Ms Zoe Reed, Chair of SACU (Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding) who will be speaking about her new book "A Bridge Between Hearts - Anglo-Chinese Friendship and Understanding". This will be followed by an informal dim sum lunch at £10 per head.

Democratic Party becomes largest pro-democratic party in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Democratic Party (HKDP) emerged victorious at the elections for the Hong Kong parliament and will have the largest group of legislators (7) in the pro-democracy caucus of the Legislative Council (LegCo). They played an important role in the rejuvenation of the political landscape and in the success of the pro-democracy camp to achieve a veto right in the LegCo.

Emily Lau, Leader of the Democratic Party, who opened for the 193rd LI Executive Committee in Hong Kong in November 2014, analysed the results with "great hope" that "will motivate Beijing to let Hong Kong develop itself on its own under 1-country-2-systems", and "to allow genuine democracy to develop". Emily Lau showed leadership by stepping down from the LegCo, allowing a young party member to take the parliamentary seat.

In an exclusive interview for the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, DP Legislator Chung-kai Sin expressed satisfaction with the results¹. He said: "We are the largest opposition party in the new Legislative Council. Overall, as an opposition we have gained three seats and now represent 30 deputies. The most important thing on our agenda now is to prevent a further term of [the Hong Kong Chief Executive] CY Leung." Expressing belief that the election result will have no impact on the relations of Hong Kong with the rest of the world, Mr. Sin cautioned: "If Beijing continues its tough line on Hong Kong, the relationship between Hong Kong and Beijing will deteriorate and the tensions will increase."

In the autumn of 2014, Liberal International was the first political international on the ground to support Democracy in Hong Kong. After spending time with the student protestors from the Umbrella Movement, Liberal International issued a presidential statement² in which it concluded that it "has seen first-hand that the protests are genuine" and they are "a clear demonstration of Hong Kong people's desire for democracy." LI President Dr. Juli Minoves told the media: "We are here to show our solidarity to these great [young people]. They're young, they're risking a lot... and it gives us a lot of courage to go back to our own countries... and be more courageous as politicians."

A number of those young leaders are now elected members of the LegCo. HKDP is a Liberal party which shares the values of Liberal International, but is precluded from membership in international political organisations based on the constitutional provisions of the Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Its past president and iconic pro-democracy fighter Martin Lee is the sole individual member of Liberal International.

¹ <https://www.freiheit.org/content/hongkong-waehlt-gegenwind-fuer-pekung>

² interLib 2014-08 and [http://www.liberal-international.org/site/file/Hong%20Kong%20Exec%202014/Statement on the Hong Kong protests.pdf](http://www.liberal-international.org/site/file/Hong%20Kong%20Exec%202014/Statement%20on%20the%20Hong%20Kong%20protests.pdf)

Forthcoming events.

The Future of Kashmir; United or Divided

Lady Violet Room, NLC Monday 28th November, Speakers Lord Qurban Hussain, Jay Iqbal (JKLF), Shazad Iqbal (All Parties Committee – Kashmir), Nitasha Kaul (Westminster University), Phillip Bennion (LIBG), Chair Jonathan Fryer. All welcome.

Also at NLC, The French Elections on 20th Feb, co-hosted by MODEM.

13th March Forum on South China Sea

15th May Forum on East Africa



Report from Marrakech

Phil Bennion

COP22

Liberal International Executive coinciding with COP22 in Marrakech inevitably meant that one of the major themes would be climate change. Happily, large snowfalls in the mountains in the days before our arrival will help the supplies of irrigation water next summer; unlike our visit 10 years ago for our Congress when a major topic was the lack of winter snow in the Atlas Mountains as a result of climate change. My trip to the Draa valley confirmed the problems as I witnessed the abandonment of date palm plantations due to lack of melt-waters.



COP22 - Phil Bennion with two Moroccan student biomass entrepreneurs.

One of our sessions took place within the COP22 Village where we were guests of Moroccan Environment Minister Hakima el Haite. In a spirited presentation, she was optimistic following the Paris agreement that India and China would stay aboard, but understandably worried by the US position. However, she pointed out that Paris had been a big step forward whatever the Trump administration decides. She also talked about projects in Morocco and the positive approach of her government. Afterwards I toured the exhibition area making contacts with renewable technology companies in Morocco. I was struck by how similar this was to a renewables event in the UK with companies demonstrating their innovations.

Back at the Executive Committee venue we had one session on climate change and renewable technologies, where our speakers from the developing world were positive about biomass, bio-fuels wind and solar solutions. There was considerable gloom concerning the Trump victory so I did intervene to suggest that we should not give up on efforts to convince the US government of the need to step up measures just because of an electoral defeat.

More women needed in politics

We held two sessions on women in politics. One was concerned with violence against women in politics, which is a major issue in some countries. The violence is less likely to come from opponents than from the woman's own family. Conservative societies still see political engagement as a male role and use force to prevent politically motivated women getting involved. The Liberal International Human Rights Committee is currently pressing for a more enlightened societal approach to women in politics.

The other session was a workshop on barriers to women's engagement in politics. It was notable that in Europe the parliaments elected by proportional representation have more women for instance. Our first past the post system allows some women to be elected in safe seats, but the task of spending 10-20 years trying to wrest a seat from an incumbent is not attractive. The bullying and confrontational nature of some political cultures is also a discouragement, as well as institutional bias through working arrangements not suiting women and particularly mothers. The overall view was that progress was being made but much more was needed.

New Members from Africa

No less than 5 new parties joined Liberal International from Africa in Marrakech and all are significant players in their countries. UPC from Burkino Faso were represented by their leader, who is also leader of the opposition. They are emerging from a long period of "Big Man" rule (as Helen Zille expressed it) and are

the main party of opposition. A strong proposal came from the speaker from PPP of Ghana, where they have made a breakthrough into parliament since 2012. In a country where the government has switched every few years between left and right, with little or no centre ground, the PPP is relatively new. They have used the legal system successfully against the government and have made their mark as a progressive political force. AND of Madagascar confirmed their observer status after making a guest appearance in Tbilisi. They are effectively a peasant movement with strength in rural areas and a strong party structure across the country. APR from Senegal are one of the main parties emerging from the split in our existing sister party, so we now have parties in both the government coalition and opposition. I particularly welcomed the application of CAHDI from Somalia, who took part in the transitional government and are currently fighting to remain in parliament as elections approach. They are very active in the diaspora in the UK and are engaging with ex pats on the reconstruction and stabilisation of the country.

The UK was represented by Baroness Kishwer Falkner, Robert Woodthorpe Browne, Jonathan Fryer, Merlene Emerson and myself; all but the first being members of LIBG Exec. It was good to discuss global issues with new friends and old, including Helen Zille from South Africa and current President Juli Minoves from Andorra. Our next meeting will be the Congress in Andorra from 18th-20th May 2017.

Phil Bennion

Phil Bennion is chair of LIBG and a former MEP.



Helen Zille & Phil Bennion.



reviews

**Winifred Nicholson, Liberation of Colour, by Jovan Nicholson
Philip Wilson & MIMA 2016 isbn 9781781300466
and exhibition at MIMA Middlesborough, Nottingham & Falmouth.**

Winifred Nicholson came from an old Whig and Liberal family. Her father, Charles Roberts was MP for Lincoln, 1906-1918, losing when Lloyd George gave the Coupon to the Tory, and briefly, for Derby in 1923; her brother, Wilfred Roberts was MP for Cumberland North 1935-1950, famously supporting the Republic during the Spanish Civil War. Her mother, Lady Cecilia, grandfather, George Howard and great grandmother, Mary Parke were all proficient artists, by degree, George also being a patron of the Pre-Raphaelites, notably Burne Jones, as well as introducing his granddaughter to painting. Travels in India with her father, who had been Under-Secretary of State in Asquith's government, brought an understanding of light and colour into Winifred's work, which was to remain dominant throughout her career. Shortly after her return she met Ben Nicholson, whom she married, forming one of the important partnerships in British art of the last century.

Typically, of the arts establishment, her work has been somewhat over-shadowed by that of Ben Nicholson. The Courtauld's exhibition of 2012 Mondrian | Nicholson in parallel made scant mention of Winifred, yet one sensed an impact. This is confirmed in the book. Mondrian valued Winifred's opinion, and probably her sense of colour. She, and her sister-in-law Nan Roberts were Mondrian's first buyers in Britain. The Tate's retrospective is long past, so the current exhibition at Middlesborough, moving to Falmouth and Nottingham can set the record straight. The exhibition is curated by Jovan Nicholson, the artist's grandson, who has brought us an excellent monograph which carries the work forward.

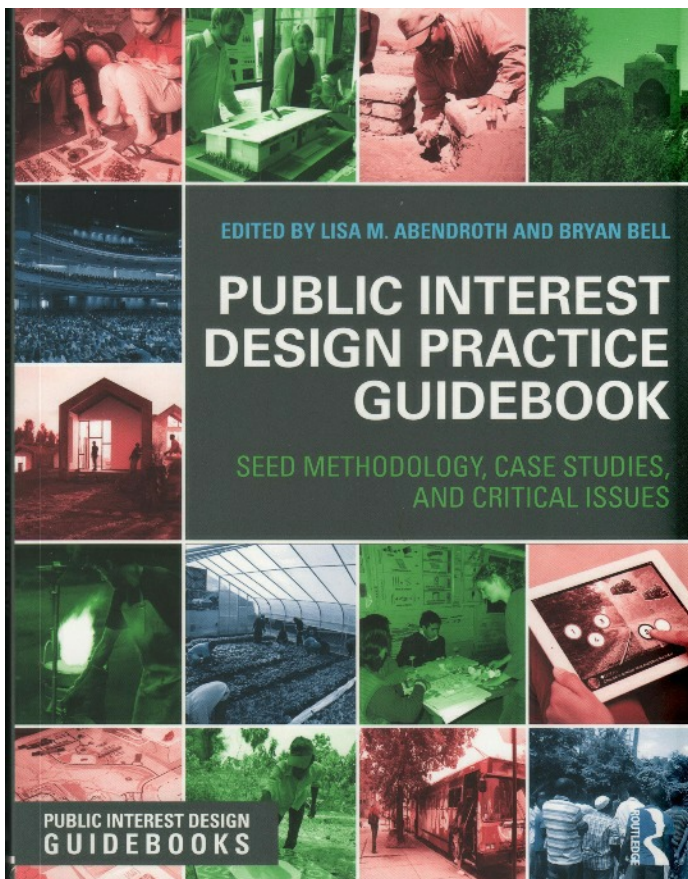
Winifred Nicholson Liberation of Colour is at MIMA, Middlesborough until 12 February.

Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, Nottingham 4th March to 4th June *Open Tuesday-Sunday Inclusive*
Admission Free - <http://www.lakesidearts.org.uk/exhibitions/event/3332/winifred-nicholson.html>
Falmouth Art Gallery – dates to be finalised – June to September 2017

Stewart Rayment

Polyanthus and Cineraria. 1923 Private Collection





intended, might actually work, and second, because it gives them a range of case studies that might be meaningfully mined for inspiration. Looking at this from an international perspective, many are Third World. The only disappointment I have with the book, is not the book itself, but the lack of interest that some architects and planners of my acquaintance showed in it. Doesn't that tell you something in itself? Put the book to good use.

Stewart Rayment

**Thorn Kings poems from English Battlefields,
by Clare Mulley.
The Battlefields Trust 2016 £3.95
isbn 9780995630406**

Contrary to the national myth, 1066 is not the last time that we were conquered by a foreign army, Louis VIII of France made a pretty good crack at it, his armies besieging Lincoln & Dover before the death of bad King John caused the rebel barons to backdown. But this year was the 950th anniversary of Hastings and Stamford Bridge, more so than the

death of John, and Magna Charta had its day last year.

Whether Hastings was the main inspiration for this set of poems, which otherwise revolve around Towton, Bosworth and Naseby, I'm not sure. Clare Mulley is poet in residence to The Battlefields Trust; her poems reflect the shortcomings of battle – death, rather than the glories, whatever they might be.

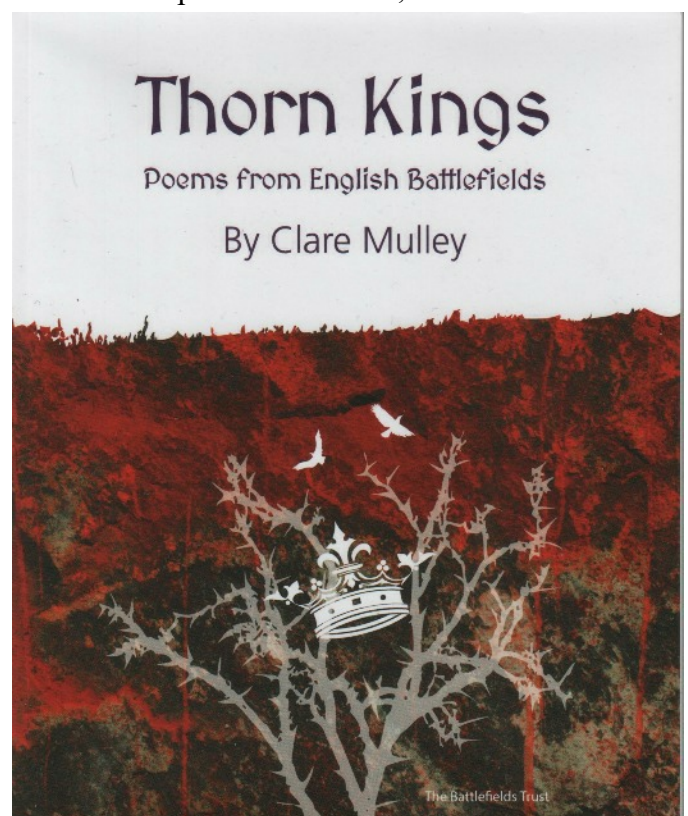
However, there is a plea for the protection of battlefields, so far as they are known, too often open to development. Although much of the action was known to have taken place in the town, the main area of the main area of the Battle of Lewes is probably under fairly recent housing – though at the time it was probably thought that the main fighting had been further up the Downs, as shown on Ordnance Survey maps. So, if such a field lies in your manor, give some thought to its past – even if you only consider the tourism potential.

The poems and their equally eloquent plea can be obtained from The Battlefields Trust, 29 Wolseley Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3EA.

Stewart Rayment

*Songs are of Kings, but battles are of men;
the creatures of the field and by-lanes
tongues steeped in the rich sod that they
must steward
but never can gain, following where the herder leads
and bought and sold like sacks of grain.*

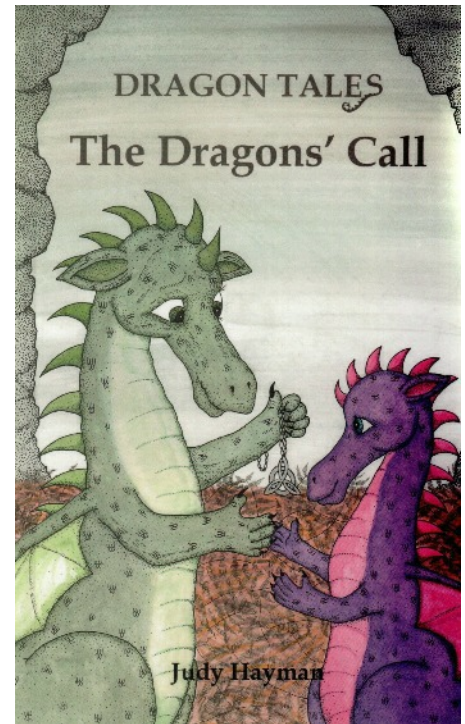
The Forgotten



Dragon Tales – The Dragons’ Call, by Judy Hayman.
Practical Inspiration 2016 £5.99
isbn 9781910056486. isbn ebook 9781910056493

Winter lingers on, but life also goes on and the dragons have to face its on-going struggles, not least mortality; introducing children to that part of life’s cycle is something any family is likely to have to come to terms with, and it is useful to have a well written resource to that end. Sadly we also leave the dragons with this volume, though all but one live on... and just as the stories were really getting interesting you’ll no doubt complain... come on Judy, there is at least another book in there, you’ve already given that away!

For those who have not picked up this series over the last three years, our dragons lead a domestic life, more akin to Kenneth Grahame’s Reluctant Dragon, or Elliott (Pete’s Dragon – the remake of the film starts slow, but is amazing) than Toothless (Susan Cowell – How to Train Your Dragon) and certainly not Tolkein’s Smaug. In this they share the life of children in the countryside and all that can bring to them – albeit at the cost of isolation. Yet isn’t the alienated isolation of the car, computer and television somewhat worse? The series as a whole addresses the issues of growing up in a rural setting and how to make the most of it; the adventures are those that anyone can have if they look for them.



Judy has stood in the Liberal interest on a number of occasions, notably achieving a second place in East Lothian before ending up as Convenor of the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

Email Judy at judy@haymana.plus.com to obtain copies and put in a reservation in your public library (use them or lose them – it’s all part of the fight).

The previous books in the series are:

- Dragon Tales - Quest for a Cave. 2014 isbn 9781910056080;
- Dragon Tales - Quest for a Friend. 2014 isbn 9781910056158;
- Dragon Tales - Quest for Adventure. 2015 isbn 9781910056226
- Dragon Tales - The Runaway. 2015 isbn 9781910056288
- Dragon Tales: Dragons in Snow. 2016 isbn 9781910056424. isbn ebook 9781910056431

So that’s some of your Christmas present problems solved.

Stewart Rayment



LIBG Forum

The future of Kashmir

28th November: 7.00pm

National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

Underground: Embankment





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on 020 7930 9871 or visit www.nlc.org.uk

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