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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



International Achievements of the Coalition

NATO's Nuclear Threat

Egypt, Greece, Kashmir, Russia.

EVENTS

17th-21st September Liberal Democrat Federal Conference, Brighton.

17th September LIBG/LDEG Fringe *Brexit: International Perspectives*. Sandringham Room, Metropole. 8.15pm

15th October Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru/ Welsh Liberal Democrat Conference. Ramada Plaza Hotel, Ellice Way, Wrexham, LL13 7YH.

24th October Liberal Party Assembly. St Columba's United Reform Church, Priory Street, York, YO1 6EX

7 November LIBG Executive, NLC

28th November LIBG Forum: The future of Kashmir. NLC

9 January 2017 LIBG Executive, NLC

6 March 2017 LIBG Executive, NLC

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

NLC= National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE
Underground: Embankment

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment, Lindsay Northover, Nikolai Tyudorovskiy, Aadil Ishtiyayq.

International Liberal Democrat achievements during the Coalition Lynne Featherstone

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a polite term for cutting off women from any power and control over their own lives – let alone any sexual pleasure. Across the world millions of girls and women are subjected to this violent abuse. Cameron appointed me Ministerial Champion for Violence against Women Overseas. Nick Clegg reshuffled me from Home Office to Department for International Development (DFID) – and the rest as they say – is history.

My roles coalesced in the most helpful way. When I had been at the Home Office, a woman came to see me with some young girls. This was Nimko Ali – fearsome campaigner against FGM. She literally took me by the collar and shook me into doing something to stop this child abuse; this violence against women and girls that strode the world.

When I walked into DFID practically the first thing I said was we are going to address FGM. Happily, one of the top civil servants there felt same and she was working on a program to tackle FGM. In life – timing plays a role. Africa herself was moving to ban FGM as a practice – at least in law. The UN in December 2012 banned it worldwide. The African Union banned it and at that point in time 25 different African countries banned it too.

I launched a £35 million program to tackle FGM to support this African movement – the biggest donor program in the world aimed at eradicating this practice. I also brought it home here – as we have thousands of girls who are mutilated in this country every year.

That is probably one of the greatest international achievements that we can claim. And of course – I brought it back to this country too – where we had dramatic impact. Most people had not heard of FGM when I started – but as a consequence of the international program and publicity we garnered – things changed here too. Many new laws were introduced and it has become mandatory for front line workers to report a child at risk amongst many other measures.

There is much else that we did on violence against women; on women's empowerment; on contraception; on micro finance; on educating girls and much, much more. But the emphasis and changed importance of tackling FGM would never have received the funding, energy and world prominence that it did without Liberal Democrats.

All of this must be credited to the tireless work of the campaigners over decades. Standing on the shoulders of giants – the brave women campaigners who had fought for years to get support and legislation worldwide against FGM – we did make a difference. Not enough. There is still a huge way to go as FGM and violence

International Achievements of the Coalition 2010-2015

A reasonable amount of time has passed since the Coalition, and something of a consensus is developing that it is likely to be looked on favourably by historians of the future – certainly in the context of what came before, and what followed. Whether or not it was a successful strategy for the Liberal Democrats remains to be seen. The outcome of the last general election was inevitable, in the context of British politics. Any observer of the fate of junior partners in, for example, Fianna Fail's coalition governments in Ireland might recognise that the Lib Dems did well to survive at all in the House of Commons. It is a good time to record the achievements of the Liberal Democrats in the international field during the Coalition, and the principle players have been asked to record their experiences to that end. We hope that more of these will follow, but commence with those of Lynne Featherstone and Lindsay Northover.

against women is still endemic and epidemic throughout the world. Women still have virtually no voice, choice or control over their lives and it sadly will still be a very long time before they have.

FGM got a great deal of coverage – both in this country and elsewhere – but another huge achievement (in my view) that happened only because of Liberal Democrats didn't get any real coverage.

This was on disability in the developing world. You haven't heard about it? That is because no one seemed to care – except those who have a disability or those amazing, disability specific, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who fundraise, campaign and deliver programs for that section of society. The media certainly are not interested. Governments in the developing world are not interested. At that point, most of the big international NGOs were not interested.

When I arrived at DFID as Parliamentary Undersecretary of State I was given a list of my duties. As well as my continuing role as Overseas Ministerial Champion for tackling Violence against Women and Girls – I had responsibility for just about everything there was going except humanitarian aid and economic development. In a list a mile long I noticed one word – 'disability'.

I asked my civil servants what we did about 'disability' – and found out that we were delivering a few programs here and there. It seemed to me that given developing governments did not care that much about their own people with disabilities – many would be left behind. The incidence of disability in the developing world is huge – the aftermath of disease, lack of health care, lack of immunization, conflict and poverty.

I asked my private office to set up an advisory group to help me take this mission forward – and they were amazing. I started to push the idea of 'no one left behind' which proudly I now note has crept into almost every document published by DFID.

I set out two goals. One was to push and push for disability to be in the new Sustainable Development Goals which happened (not just me pushing I hasten to add) and the other was to mainstream disability in DFID – so that every one of our many in country offices would have to ensure that people with disabilities were addressed in our programs – which we also achieved.

I was helped in this mission by the Chair of the International Development Select Committee – Liberal Democrat MP, and now Lord Malcolm Bruce. Under his leadership the Committee carried out a review on DFID and disabilities – and of course – the recommendations strengthened my cause by recommending that DFID should have a framework for disability. Bingo!

The civil servants, who worked in DFID and my Liberal Democrat Special Adviser, Monica Allen, were as enthusiastic as I was to this cause and helped me every inch of the way. One particular instance that springs to mind – when I was trying to push the case for attention, mainstreaming and financing for disabilities in DFID - was a trip they suggested to Uganda.

Uganda has probably the best constitution of all African countries in terms of disability rights. Practice on the ground – not so much. But to bring attention to my cause both in terms of our own government, DFID and internationally I needed something or someone who would raise the issue above the noise of competing pressures.

Ade Adepitan was a gold medal Olympian for wheelchair basketball and a Channel 4 presenter of many programs. It was arranged for me to meet him to persuade him to come with me to up the ante of the trip. He



did agree. What a difference he made – both to the prestige and impact of the visit – but also to those with disabilities who he met.

One example (of many) of the impact he made was with the Kampala Wheelchair Basket Ball team. Ade was on one side – the side that won – needless to say. He would be up and down the length of the pitch and shoot a basket before the other could turn their wheelchairs around. At the end of the session Ade did a Q and A with the players. They moaned and groaned as to how could they ever be any good because their wheelchairs were so dreadful. Ade was furious with them. He berated them: ‘Don’t you ever blame your wheelchairs. I had a wheelchair just as bad as yours – but I am who I am because I practiced 8 hours a day and shot 600 baskets a day – it’s not the chairs it’s your attitude to disability.’

That night at a reception I gave a speech and Ade gave a speech and afterwards a guy came up to me who was from the world bank and said: ‘we’re building a hundred schools here and I hadn’t even thought about accessibility – I am going to go back and change all the drawings’. That ball just started rolling. So often it is just that people haven’t thought about it.

I can’t tell you all that happened – but making disability one of my missions at DFID changed everything. Just as with FGM though – these are not issues that can be rectified overnight but you have to work in a direction – and one day that change becomes viable and visible.

So there are just two small examples of international work that happened because Liberal Democrats were in government – just two of many because there isn’t the space to cover them all. There is a new LGBT strategy in DFID because I instigated it – carried on by Baroness Northover who succeeded me there. There is a raft of work on climate change. There is much more on Violence against Women. But no room to relate it here.

I had wanted to work internationally for some time when Nick reshuffled me from the Home Office to DFID. We had not had a minister in DFID – but we had had one in the Foreign Office. Nick decided that we couldn’t really get bangs for our LibDem bucks at the Foreign Office as William Hague was in command and it was very difficult to make separate progress. Hence he decided to stop having a minister in the FCO and insert one into DFID – me!

So it’s thanks to Nick – as we really did change the world – just a little bit!

Lynne Featherstone

Lynne Featherstone, Baroness Featherstone of Highgate, is the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Energy and Climate Change.. She was Ministerial Champion for tackling Violence against Women and Girls, 2010 – 2015; Under Secretary of State Home Office and Minister for Equalities, 2010 – 2012; Under Secretary of State DFID, 2012 – 2014; and Minister of State Home Office, 2014 – 2015. She was one of the chief architects of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2014.

Chinese Liberal Democrats’ 10th anniversary

September 18, 2016

88 Preston Street, Brighton, East Sussex

Join us in celebrating our 10th birthday at Autumn Conference in Brighton with an 8 course Chinese meal with wine.

Date: 18 September 2016 Time: from 8.15 -10pm

Venue: China Garden Restaurant, 88-91 Preston Street, Brighton BN1 2HG

Special Guests: Lord Paddy Ashdown and Lord Menzies Campbell

Ticket price: £30 per head.

To book your place email Phil Ling at pkfling@gmail.com.



What have the Romans ever done for us? Lindsay Northover

The refrain in the Monty Python film, *The Life of Brian* - “what have the Romans ever done for us?” (besides roads, sanitation, medicine, public order, peace etc) - often came to mind during the Coalition as we were battered by the right wing press and above all, insidiously, under the radar, by our Coalition colleagues.

So it is good that *interLib* is asking us about Coalition achievements in the international field. But I want to start at home, looking at the Coalition per se, not least because we drew experience from our continental colleagues and because our experience, albeit in our challenging first past the post political system, must add to theirs.

It was not an accident that the first coalition in the UK for many decades was led on our side by Nick Clegg, former MEP, multi-lingual, with a multi-cultural family, deep EU experience, a true European.

We consulted our Liberal partners throughout Europe. I recall their advice vividly. Lousewies van der Laan from the Netherlands presaged - coalition is like an uneasy marriage which will end messily in divorce. Then you go out and find a new partner.... But she did not doubt its worth.

So what impact did we have? What did we help Britain, and its place in the world, to be?

After the 2008 crash, the Tories wanted to cut to the bone, especially from those who were not likely to vote for them. We acted as a counter balance. The low paid were taken out of tax, even though Cameron had said this was impossible. In those critical early days, with a double dip recession on the cards, Lib Dems weighed in against such deep cuts. Vince Cable and Chris Huhne in particular (both economic heavy-weights and recognised as such by our Conservative colleagues) demanded investment – Vince’s business hubs, biotechnology, the railways (where investment surpassed anything since Victorian times).

There was an industrial strategy - identifying where Britain’s strengths in our highly competitive interconnected globalised world lay. We battled against the Home Office (always trying to reduce migration figures) to ensure that our outstanding universities could attract international students. I had a Home Office trouble-shooter who sorted things when Imperial College contacted me about Chinese doctors, half of whom had not received visas for a postgraduate course. Ditto for a Chinese student coming to UCL. By contrast, note the drop in international student numbers under this Government.

We led on the green agenda internationally. I heard from so many international sources how Chris Huhne in Durban hammered home an international agreement that paved the way for the Paris Climate Change conference. His successor at DECC, Ed Davey, helped to secure the strong EU agreement critical for Paris, for which Amber Rudd his Tory replacement claimed credit while at the same time dismantling the green agenda in her Department.

There was Kate Parminter’s policy of 5p on plastic bags, ridiculed by our Tory colleagues - now trumpeted by Tesco’s, Sainsbury’s and the like for reducing the use of plastic bags in England by 80%, with the implications of that for our environment and our seas.

Then the quiet but extraordinary work of William Wallace, in the Cabinet Office, on the so-called “Competences Review” - the Tories deciding that all Government departments should identify where the EU had over-reached itself. This was turned into a balanced assessment by officials of where EU regulation assisted, as well as where it might need to be reformed. The overwhelming conclusion was that actually

things were pretty good. William then needed to keep an eagle eye out for where Ministers, not liking this conclusion, sought to “amend” the conclusions reached.

And the EU itself. It has been said that David Cameron made his promise of an in/out referendum assuming that the Lib Dems would stop this in a putative post-2015 coalition. Unfortunately the Tories also took actions that prevented us being their human shield - with the huge effect of the Brexit referendum on Britain and its place in the world, and the collateral damage to David Cameron’s political career.

But the way that Government worked was also shaken up in Coalition, in a positive way - even though the Head of the Civil Service Gus O’Donnell did not actually manage to influence all levels of the civil service. I entered the Department of Health as a Lords spokesperson and was shown a substantial document outlining what officials thought an incoming Tory Government might do, based on what Andrew Lansley had said as Shadow Secretary of State. I asked for the Labour version, and was given a slim document on what was thought Labour might have done if re-elected. I asked for the Lib Dem version. I was told they hadn’t prepared one. I asked for the Coalition version, based on the Coalition agreement. They hadn’t prepared that either. Not helpful.



But after a rocky start, Government was different in the Coalition. You couldn’t have sofa Government. Yes there was the Quad at the top – Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Chancellor and Chief Secretary to the Treasury. But partly because Lib Dems were completely outnumbered in all Departments, we all had to make sure that we scrutinised everything we could, and demand that permanent secretaries kept us in the loop. Tory junior Ministers could simply assume they carried out instructions from higher up. Lib Dems in Government, except in the rare instances where there was a Lib Dem Secretary of State, could not.

I recall the looks of astonishment when the Leveson Report came out when I, as the only Lib Dem in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, at a very junior level, deputy for the main Lords minister, took exception when the Secretary of State indicated that the PM was not minded to implement Leveson, and nor was she, so that was the Government’s view. I pointed out that they were just one part of the Coalition, not the Government per se, unless the Deputy Prime Minister accepted their view. Which of course I knew he would not. Even the Permanent Secretary looked at me in surprise, and then finally said that I was right. Our party’s parliamentary structures, with back bench groups, peopled especially from the Lords, scrutinising everything, was vital. We had a grasp of policy and its implications not rivalled among our Coalition colleagues.

Our party had of course always been international, far more so than the Tories, whose international view focused mainly on the loose collection of Commonwealth countries. For some Tories, too, looking across the Atlantic held an appeal.

For us, relations with our near neighbours on the continent of Europe, were the chief imperative. That is where our major market was, with our financial services in the lead, and many multinational companies basing themselves in Britain, to trade into the EU. The EU had been the foundation for peace since the cataclysms of the Second World War. We fought constantly against Tory euro-scepticism.

Our party had long engaged in so many international issues. Vince was more proactive than any previous Secretary of State on the arms trade; we signed up to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Ours was the first UK Government to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNI for aid. It was Mike Moore’s private member’s bill, then taken through the Lords by Jeremy Purvis, which enshrined this in law. In the

Department for International Development, we helped to make sure that girls and women were front and centre of our outstanding aid programme, with Lynne Featherstone's campaign against FGM – a practice that epitomises the inequality of women and girls, getting unprecedented traction. The world signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals which replaced the Millennium Development Goals, aiming to end extreme poverty by 2030, while leaving no one behind, and we focused on those who were most likely to be left behind – such as those with disabilities, the elderly, others excluded such as LGBTI individuals.

Our view of Britain was upbeat – we helped to secure economic stability, that the least well off were supported in school, that with Steve Webb's transformations pensioners could be pulled out of poverty. We sought to ensure Britain led in the world, acting cooperatively in the EU, and leading internationally on such critical areas as climate change.

There are important international lessons from our experience in coalition. We contributed so significantly not only to what Government did but also to the way that Government was conducted. Coalition necessitated a different model from that which led Blair and his sofa Government into Iraq, or that which allowed Cameron's fateful decision on Brexit.

We had always sung the praises of coalition government – the need to build consensus, to ensure that the majority is taken with you. As stable Government settled in, this quickly dawned on the right-wing press, and on the Tories. They wanted to govern alone. And so we were hammered, without the resources to counter that.

But maybe history will see things differently, and maybe our experience will add useful lessons to our colleagues internationally when they find themselves on the cusp of major political change.

Lindsay Northover

Baroness Lindsay Northover is Liberal Democrat Principal Parliamentary Spokesperson for International Development. In the Coalition Government she was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for International Development, 2014-15. Between 2010 and 2014 she was Government Spokesperson at various times for DFID, the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Department for Education, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Women and Equalities, the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Environment and Climate Change.



Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel



**Liberal Democrat
Friends of Palestine**

BREXIT and the Middle East - Consequences for Anglo-Israel relations?

**An expert panel discuss Anglo-Israel relations
post BREXIT, including trade agreements,
prospects for peace and anti-Semitism.**

**Speakers: Eitan Na'eh (Deputy Israeli
Ambassador), Tom Brake MP, Baroness Sarah
Ludford, Lord Jonny Oates and Gavin Stollar
(LDFI Chairman).**

Refreshments provided.

Hilton: Osborne Room

Sunday 18th September. 18.15-19.15

How Can Justice for the Palestinians Be Achieved?

Monday 19th September, 19.45-21.00

Sandringham Room, Hilton Metropole.

*The confirmed speaker is Palestinian writer and
broadcaster Ghada Karmi, but we hope to have Ben
Ehrenreich (tbc) author of The Way to the Spring.*

A world looking increasingly unstable and likely to get worse before getting better.

Chair's Report to LIBG AGM 18-07-2016

When I took over as chair a year ago I described a world looking increasingly unstable and subject to populist incursions; a problem likely to get worse before getting better. The General Election at home had made an EU in/out referendum almost inevitable leaving us in LIBG with the likelihood of having to quickly refocus our efforts from melt down in the Middle East and the resulting refugee crisis to the urgent task of helping the effort to keep the UK in the EU.

We quickly agreed this as our new No1 priority and a grouping was formed in August involving LIBG, LDEG, Catherine Bearder MEP, Graham Watson and Lib Dem HQ. As roles were allocated the work was taken up by Iain Gill at HQ and by extra staff recruited to Catherine Bearder's office. A parallel Lib Dem campaign to the cross party campaign was agreed and this was branded as INtogether, LIBG played a full role with many of our Committee members either acting as regional Coordinators or as regular speakers in debates against Brexit opponents. Others put their efforts into the Stronger In campaign or took up dual roles. I have to thank everyone for their best efforts despite the regrettable result but also acknowledge that much of our other work on political and human rights issues around the world has been put to one side over the last six months.

The Middle East remained the other dominant issue for LIBG over the last year. A year ago the refugee crisis was at its height and the response from EU member state governments was woeful, refusing to accept a share out and to cooperate with each other, despite the best efforts of the EU institutions. Islamic State was still threatening to expand its territorial control, although its advance seemed to have stalled. However, the outrage in Tunisia suggested that it might begin to pose a greater threat as an international terrorist organisation. This seems to have been borne out throughout the year, not least with the tragic events in Nice last week. On a slightly brighter note, IS have lost territory recently and there is guarded optimism that their regime could soon go into a significant retreat, which may lessen their attraction to the disaffected.

LIBG organised two related events in the autumn, one on the future of Kurdistan, the other concerning Israel and Palestine. The outcome of the first was somewhat surprising in that the Kurds of Turkey seemed to be more interested in political, democratic and human rights than in separatism. In Iran the human rights situation was even worse, with Kurds allying with Baloch and Arab minorities to demand rights for minorities. Syrian Kurds had a temporary accommodation with the Assad regime and were proving an effective force against IS, whereas in Iraq, the KRG had separation firmly on the agenda, but were still cooperating with the Iraqi federal government and Turkey in the fight against IS. Their call to the international community for heavy arms for this purpose was not being adequately heeded.

At the second event Sir Vincent Fean gave a comprehensive but provocative assessment of the situation in Israel/Palestine with particular reference to the chances of a two state solution. He lay the blame for lack of progress squarely with the Netanyahu government and their lack of respect for Palestinian human and property rights. It is also clear that the dispute is a running sore that poisons relations across the Middle East as well as more broadly between Moslems around the world and the established powers and international political structures. It did become necessary for the Chair to intervene in a somewhat passionate debate to restate our commitment to Israel's right of existence and to condemn violence by all sides. However, there was a substantial consensus for a two state solution, despite a conspicuous lack of optimism that this could now be achieved, given the extent of land taken from Palestinians for housing developments.

In the meantime, we have continued our commitment to representing the UK at Liberal International meetings and events around the world and I have to thank Robert Woodthorpe Browne, Jonathan Fryer and Mark Smulian for their efforts and also acknowledge Kishwer Falkner and Sal Brinton from the House of Lords for their contributions to delegations. LI Congress took place in Mexico City in October where we

renewed our acquaintance with Governor Howard Dean, who was also the speaker this spring at the Isaiah Berlin lecture. We welcomed Union por la Libertad of Argentina and ALDE of Romania (new party of former liberal PM Tariceanu) into the LI family.

Earlier in the year I had the honour to speak on behalf of LI at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva where I delivered the statement condemning the continued imprisonment of Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Another international concern has been the threat of a resurgent Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. This was the subject of our well attended fringe meeting at autumn conference last year and was raised again by our Lithuanian speaker at our spring forum event on the EU referendum. There is great fear that Brexit could encourage Putin to extend his Ukrainian adventures to other independent states formerly part of the USSR in a revanchist effort to shore up his popularity in Russia. The UK's commitment to European security is now doubted by many of our neighbours and needs to be restated.

The threat of Russia was observed most closely at LI Executive meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia when we visited the host country's front line with Russian occupying forces. We were able to speak through the barbed wire "border" to a Georgian farmer who had been separated from his land by the Russian occupation.

We thought long and hard before going ahead with our annual signature event; The Diplomats' Reception, as member attendance has been falling off in recent years and as a result the losses incurred have been growing. Wendy Kyrle Pope took on the task of organisation and sending out invitations. The diplomat turnout was down, due partly to another diplomatic event at an embassy, but partly due to our reduced influence in Parliament. Wendy worked very hard both to make the event a success and to ensure that it did not lose too much money. Despite the lower numbers those who did attend experienced an enjoyable evening. However, we decided at the following Executive Committee that we would not hold the event next year, but would look at ways at making it sustainable for future years, possibly as a less frequent event.

The work of LIBG has been skewed in recent months by our concentrated focus on the referendum campaign and I would like to thank Stewart Rayment for making sure that InterLib kept a broad outlook during this period. His excellent work as editor has been invaluable. We now need to redirect our efforts to a number of ongoing and emerging issues around the world. I would welcome suggestions from the membership for our immediate priorities but here are a few to start with:

- 1) UK relations with the EU and commitment to European Security.
- 2) Containing Russia in the new context.
- 3) Turning the tide on Islamic State and dealing with a possible upsurge in terrorist atrocities.
- 4) Human rights in Iran.
- 5) Maintaining economic and democratic progress in Africa.
- 6) The liberal counter-revolution in Latin America
- 7) The possibility of a Trump victory in the US and its international implications.

It is clear that we have much work to do in the coming and subsequent years and we must not allow the setback of losing the referendum here in the UK get in the way. I would like to thank Nick Harvey for his role as a highly active President who has added strength to the organisation and it is with regret that I have to announce that he has to stand down. I would also like to thank all of the officers for their support over the last year in keeping LIBG on track. Wendy has done a great job as Treasurer and also has been a constantly available source of good advice and she warrants a very special "Thank You" from the Chair. I would also like to thank Nick, Merlene and Anuja for their help with events, John Innes for looking after the members and the database and John Pindar for acting as Returning Officer. There has been an all-round level of commitment and hard work that is commendable, ably coordinated by Mark as Secretary, who has dealt with all matters in a timely manner. Thanks Mark. Finally, I would like to thank the Club for providing a splendid venue and for doing all they can to make our events a success. I think that we can be pleased with our team effort this year. Thank you for all of the valuable help.

Phil Bennion

Crisis in Kashmir

Phil Bennion

When the ongoing thaw in relations between India and Pakistan moved forwards with efforts on a personal level between Messrs Modi and Sharif, Kashmiris could have been excused some hopes that their almost 70 years of partition and repression might be coming to an end. However events of recent weeks have shattered hopes and set any progress back by years.

The return of repressive measures from the Indian Army and security forces in Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir and the deaths of over 70 Kashmiris harks back to the situation before the thaw when young activists were "disappeared", bodies discovered in remote places and the Indian Army allowed to investigate its own alleged atrocities. Mr Modi's rhetoric has been intolerant and Mr Sharif has claimed that all of Kashmir belongs to Pakistan. Whereas India has always been reluctant to discuss Kashmiri autonomy citing Sikh ambitions for their own homeland, political parties in Pakistan have traditionally supported self determination for Kashmir and indeed the area of Kashmir under Pakistani military control has never been subsumed as a province and has its own government, albeit somewhat supine to Pakistan.

During my time in the European Parliament I tried to launch a new initiative to find a way forward. Legally Kashmir has never been incorporated into India or Pakistan as its status was left unresolved by the hasty British withdrawal in 1947. The Maharaja's government at the time was left to decide, but before anything could be resolved, a rebellion in Muslim south west of Kashmir, supported by informal militia from Pakistan, threatened to overthrow the Hindu Maharaja. He called on India to help put down the rebellion. The Indian Army responded to the request but reached a stalemate at what is now the Line of Control. The Indian Army never left and the militia were incorporated into the Army of Pakistan. Kashmiri separatists argue, with some justification that Kashmir is a state under occupation of the Indian and Pakistani armies.



Nehru offered Kashmiris the chance to join India on the condition that it be confirmed by a referendum and the UN passed a number of resolutions at the time demanding self determination through such a referendum. The referendum never took place and the Kashmiri provincial government in the Indian occupied area and the Azad Kashmir government evolved.

The intervening time has led to entrenched positions. India will not discuss the matter as it fears the outcome could be a "victory" for Pakistan, due to its obsession with Chinese threats and its inherent insecurity over Indian unity. Pakistan has traditionally supported self determination but largely on the assumption that the Muslim majority in Kashmir would vote to join Pakistan. This position is now shaky because more and more Kashmiris seek independence rather than a future in Pakistan. Finally, the Kashmiris themselves focus

entirely on the 70 year old referendum promise from both Nehru and the United Nations. Fresh thinking is urgently required.

Realpolitik determines that India will not open the matter as long as there is a possibility of territory transferring to Pakistan. To achieve this Pakistan must clearly drop all claims on Kashmir and present India with a compromise solution. India may listen if Pakistan propose autonomy for a unified Kashmir with guarantees that it could not use that autonomy to opt to join either India or Pakistan. Both countries are dependent upon water and power resources flowing from Kashmir and have successfully employed a water sharing agreement for decades. Hence the fears of losing Kashmiri territory to the other is not unfounded.

The separatist absolute demand for the referendum is also a barrier to a solution, as India fears that the majority Muslim population might use a referendum to opt for Pakistan. I have sounded out the separatist groups on my proposed solution and they have been surprisingly willing to consider it.

My proposal is that the Line of Control is opened in several places to allow family ties to be re-established and cultural links to grow. This is followed by the formation of an All Kashmir Forum to negotiate which powers be ceded by India and Pakistan to an autonomous elected authority. India and Pakistan retain their military bases and zones of occupation as Kashmir effectively becomes a joint protectorate. After 10 years a trilateral treaty guarantees water and power provision for both India and Pakistan as well as strategic regional defence needs of the two countries from an independent Kashmiri territory. Kashmir agrees to remain unified and independent, a position assured jointly by India and Pakistan.

Of course there are complications, not least Pakistani moves on Gilgit Baltistan and the fate of the area occupied by China. However the greater threat for the Kashmiri people is that the Line of Control becomes a permanent border and division becomes a permanent reality. It does not take much probing of civil servants in the two regional powers to find such a "pragmatic" approach. With human rights abuses on the rise and repression back on the agenda it is time for a new initiative and the UK has a role to play. It was our hasty exit in 1947 that left the fate of Kashmir unresolved. It is in this spirit that LIBG will be hosting a Forum on Kashmir on 28th November at the National Liberal Club. Do come along and join the debate.

Phil Bennion

The future of Kashmir is the subject of the LIBG Forum event on 28th November at the National Liberal Club.



Young boy giving tahiri to CRPF (India's Central Reserve Police Force) cope during curfew in Srinagar. Tahiri is a layered dish of rice and vegetables. Photos: Aadil Ishtiyaq

NATO: Increasing the role of nuclear weapons

Susi Snyder

The Heads of State and Government that participated in the NATO summit in Warsaw Poland on 8-9 July 2016 issued a series of documents and statements, including a Summit Communiqué¹ and the Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security². Whereas the majority of countries worldwide are ready to end the danger posed by nuclear weapons and to start negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, both NATO documents reaffirmed the NATO commitment to nuclear weapons, and the Communiqué included a return to cold war style language on nuclear sharing.

Setting a bad example: NATO weakens commitment to nuclear disarmament

The summit documents weaken previously agreed language on seeking a world without nuclear weapons by tacking on additional conditions. Instead of simply saying that NATO is seeking to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, now NATO is seeking to create the conditions “in full accordance with the NPT, including Article VI, in a step-by-step and verifiable way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.” Not only that, but instead of creating conditions for further reductions, now the alliance only remains “committed to *contribute to* creating the conditions for further reductions in the future on the basis of reciprocity” (emphasis added).

NATO member states needs to address the inherent proliferation push that results from their own refusal to end their reliance on nuclear weapons. With three nuclear armed member states, five states hosting US nuclear weapons, at least 15 states actively involved in NATO exercises practicing nuclear attacks, and a consensus document re-emphasising the intention to keep the ability to threaten others with nuclear weapons as long as nuclear weapons exist – NATO continues to set a bad example.

Tightening the nuclear noose on the host states

The last several summits, since about 2010, had effectively removed language that explicitly linked the concept of ‘burden sharing’ with nuclear weapons, and had no direct reference to the forward deployed US nuclear weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. This document however adds new language and says:

NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture also relies, in part, on United States’ nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and on capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned. These Allies will ensure that all components of NATO’s nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure, and effective. That requires sustained leadership focus and institutional excellence for the nuclear deterrence mission and planning guidance aligned with 21st century requirements.

This puts pressure on NATO members not only to make sure that they’re meeting the agreed target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, but also to make sure that they remain actively ready to participate in decisions to use nuclear weapons. By agreeing to this language, NATO heads of state and government have acknowledged that they are not acting in good faith towards a nuclear weapons free world, but instead will invest significantly in this weapon of mass destruction. It also means that despite efforts by several host countries, there is less scope for an alliance wide decision to remove the US nuclear weapons from Europe. This is not surprising though, the removal of forward deployed nuclear weapons has happened in the past, with host countries asking forgiveness for changing the posture, instead of permission to do so beforehand.

The fact that this escalatory language was agreed at the highest level by NATO members shows that there is significantly less interest in taking any disarmament or non-proliferation responsibility at this time, reaffirmed by the Communiqué itself which says “We regret that the conditions for achieving disarmament are not favourable today”.

Leaving it up to Russia to make the next nuclear move

Through the repeated emphasis throughout the documents on reciprocity, NATO almost looks as if it is handing over decision making power over its nuclear weapons future to the Russian Federation, instead of leading the way towards de-escalation. For an alliance responsible for 60% of global defence spending, this relinquishing of control is plain peculiar. The document suggests that any future reductions are dependent on reciprocal action by the Russian Federation. Even the issue of transparency, a priority issue for a number of host countries (particularly the Netherlands & Germany,) is now contingent on reciprocal action by the Russian Federation.

And then there's Turkey

The recent coup attempt in Turkey brings additional, and clearly unanticipated, concerns to the continued nuclear sharing practices in the alliance. Turkey has a slightly different situation than the other host countries. Turkey hosts the most American bombs (about 50) of the approximately 180 in Europe, but Turkish planes are not currently certified to drop the bombs in the same way the others are. Instead, use of nuclear weapons from Incirlik (the Turkish base where they are stored) would be done by US pilots. Currently, US (and German) pilots are stationed there, as Incirlik is used to fly (non nuclear) bombing missions over Syria. The chances that the nuclear weapons on the base could be stolen or used is slim, but it is not zero.

Opportunities for disarmament in times of tensions: the humanitarian initiative

In the last three years, nearly all NATO members (the exception being France) have participated in at least one of the conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. These conferences have reaffirmed that nuclear weapons are unique, and that there is no way to adequately prepare for or mitigate the consequences of their use. While the majority of state have seen this as an impetus to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate the weapons, the small group of NATO states have instead chosen to ramp up the rhetoric on nuclear weapons instead, saying:

If the fundamental security of any of its members were to be threatened however, NATO has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that an adversary could hope to achieve.

NATO continues to say that its deterrence is based on a mix of nuclear and conventional forces, but this language boldly returns to cold war style rhetoric, and increases the ongoing escalation that is leading to a new nuclear arms race.

While the majority of the world recognizes that nuclear weapons should never be used again, under any circumstances the minority – those within NATO and Russia- are increasing the possibility of use. It is important to remember that all significant nuclear weapons treaties that are currently in force were negotiated during the Cold War. The increased perception of threat inspired creative action by those not engaged in the conflict, resulting in multilateral agreements with positive global ramifications. Multilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons have not progressed during decades of reduced great power tension leaving one to wonder if the rising threats now are the incentive needed to galvanize the international community to finally negotiate the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Without clear milestones, timelines, and consequences there is no incentive for progress on nuclear disarmament or penalty for failure to disarm. This shows how the step-by-step approach advocated by NATO members has effectively become a delaying tactic. A nuclear ban treaty would eliminate the distinction between recognised nuclear weapon states and nuclear armed states, and put the focus on the illegality of the weapons, regardless of who possesses them. This would facilitate the delegitimizing of the weapon, and provide the legal underpinning to complete all of the 'steps' necessary to achieve and maintain a nuclear weapons free world.

In the past we've seen that rising tensions can force countries to reconsider the role of nuclear weapons. Most of the major disarmament and non-proliferation treaties were negotiated in times of heightened tensions: The Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963), the NPT (1970), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (1987) and bilateral treaties such as the SALT and first START agreement. It is in those moments that governments seem to most aware of the insane dangers posed by the continued possession and threat of use of nuclear weapons by some states. The idea of the NPT, the cornerstone of multilateral nuclear weapons disarmament was introduced by Ireland, a small non-aligned country that changed the world for the better. NATO has never been a leader when it comes to international law or international humanitarian law, but it always manages to adapt to whatever the rest of the world decides. Although these nuclear weapons addicted NATO states are not likely to join negotiations on a new treaty in a positive and cooperative manner, as the global context is changed through new multilateral negotiations to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, all NATO heads of state (and the democratic countries they represent) will take notice and find ways to embrace the change, as they always do.

Susi Snyder, July 21, 2016

Susi Snyder is a peace and security analyst and advocate with a focus on nuclear issues with PAX (formerly IKV Pax Christi) in the Netherlands. She was previously part of the Geneva NGO Committee for Disarmament

¹ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm

² http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133168.htm?selectedLocale=en

Next steps in the post-Brexit era – the French connection

MoDem Royaume Uni, the UK branch of the French Liberal party Mouvement Démocrate Europe du Nord, held an inaugural meeting, Next steps in the post-Brexit era, at the offices of Liberal International on Thursday 7th July 2016.

12 people attended with 3 from MoDem, 3 visitors from abroad, 3 interested parties and 3 other French nationals, with a wide span of ages ranging from young adults to retirees provided a multiplicity of perspectives and concerns. Mathieu Capdevila, of MoDem, set the scene via a quick recap of the effects of Brexit vote on European nationals. Thereafter, everyone took turns on their perspective. There followed a few interchanges focussing on these three themes:

- o residence status of EU nationals was tops
- o then impact on cultural and economic exchanges
- o finally desire to keep informed & help move the process

Mathieu wrapped up the meeting, reiterating MoDem's one-point plan to reintroduce ethics into politics. Those who could then met at nearby Ridley Bar for the Euro 2016 France vs. Germany football semi-final.

Anybody interested in joining or future activities of the group should contact Marianne Magnin marianne.magnin@gmail.com or Mathieu Capdevila mathieu_capdevila@yahoo.com

Andrew Zolnai

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE OF EUROPE: ATHENS

Wendy Kyrle-Pope

The crisis besetting the Greeks is all too evident in Athens this summer. Like a beautiful woman who has not been able to afford to go to the dentist since 2008, fine buildings stand next to abandoned or unmaintained wrecks, like missing teeth, and everywhere daubed with graffiti. The Athenians themselves are waiting; any hope of a return to an economic normal has gone, and they live day to day. Gone are the weekly fish feasts for most; everyone lives on salads, bread, a little pasta. Every household has a larder of tins and dried food to last a fortnight, candles and a few euros under the mattress in case of another emergency, bank closures and power cuts. It is like the Second World War, minus the fighting.



And the Greeks keep alive the memory of that war. Almost without exception, they place the blame on Germany as the authors, the perpetrators of the debts, the crisis, the misery. When one gently points out that no one has been more patient, more generous than the Germans, they swell up like puff adders, hissing and writhing about in frustration and loathing. When I was there in the (heady, happy) days before the Referendum, many feared Brexit for no other reason than they believed that the UK acted as a break on Germany.

“We owe the equivalent of 20 years’ total revenue from the whole country; what hope have we of ever repaying that?” is the general consensus. The new taxes introduced on employers and employees are harsh, bordering on draconian, and counter-productive, so no one employs anyone if they can help it. Instead, workers band together in loose cooperatives or collectives, so they can be taxed as individuals rather than companies or employers,

thus avoiding the worst of the tax increases. No one seems to get the idea that one really ought to pay some tax.

The rich haven’t got that message either. The swimming pool tax has been paid in Athens by only a few hundred out of an estimated 14 thousand. Green covers are placed over the pools or bushes moved to the edge to hide them from drones (official and unofficial) which patrol the skies. The rich keep their yachts in the marinas of their old enemy, Turkey (which welcomes the trade). The rich continue to party like it is 1973, with the Posidonia (the annual ship owners’ week in early June) as extravagant as ever, a parade of luxury cars,



yachts, endless parties and imported Russians prostitutes flown in by the plane load (an unnecessary expense as the downturn has created far more perfectly nice Greek ones).

In the countryside and down the coast from Athens it is the same story; abandoned villas and hotel projects, empty apartments by the sea. And olive groves and orchards left to rot. It is the agricultural policies of the EU that have enraged the Greeks most. They cannot understand why they have to import olive oil when they have masses of it. Some want the whole EU experiment to end, and damn the consequences. “We have 300 days of sunshine a year, beautiful food, a coast line and islands to die for. We would survive expulsion”. They may have to.

Putin and the Gutting of Russian Civil Society

Rebecca Tinsley and Yulia Andreeva-Friemon

It seems that Vladimir Putin anticipates trouble during the elections on September 18th: the Russian president has taken the precaution of creating a new 400,000 strong National Guard, answerable to him. They will ostensibly fight terrorism, but they have the authority to put down civil unrest, shooting without warning.

The Russian leader may well fear a repeat of the widespread demonstrations following the Kremlin's manipulation at the 2011 ballot. Citizens uploaded more than 5000 clips of serious polling irregularities, prompting the Kremlin to act swiftly to criminalize a wide range of on-line activities. For instance, any content regarded as "extremist" or "violating the established order" can be taken down. The media and internet watchdog, Roskomnadzor, has the power to interpret such vaguely defined terms such as "extremism," "inciting hatred," or "mass disorder." A recent court case confirmed that Russians can face two years in prison for simply liking a Facebook post critical of the authorities.

According to Gregory Feifer, writing in Foreign Affairs, "Russia has become a police state in which the wide discretion that law enforcers enjoy renders the law virtually meaningless."

In the five years since the last parliamentary poll, Putin has tightened the noose on all potential sources of opposition, aided by a pliant Duma. As the result of a recent law restricting foreign funding of non-governmental organisations, an estimated third of NGOs have closed. Many NGOs have been branded as "foreign agents," implying their ulterior motives. Following seven decades of Communist Party indoctrination that the state provides everything in the workers' paradise, there is no tradition of public donations to support charities or campaign groups. Added to this is a residual Stalinist suspicion of people coming together on a voluntary basis to help others. Hence activists and those advocating for change struggle to find popular support or funding.

When Putin was appointed by Boris Yeltsin in 1999 the former KGB officer came to the job distrusting the media and horrified by the "period of instability" Russia had endured during the 1990s. Once at the helm, Putin quickly set about taking private sources of news into public control, or under the wings of his supporters. A recent law forbids Russian media from having more than 20% foreign ownership, and increasing restrictions have pushed the likes of Forbes and Pearson Group out of the market.

There have also been less subtle ways in which the space for free speech has been eroded. The Committee for the Protection of Journalists believes 27 reporters have been killed since 2000, and scores have been verbally or physically attacked. This climate of intimidation has resulted in an environment in which media practice self-censorship. Yet, even obedient journalists find themselves in trouble if they do not pay close attention to the Kremlin's messaging. For instance, Russian volunteer soldiers who went to fight in eastern Ukraine were the subject of praise until it was abruptly decided that encouraging people to take initiatives beyond the Kremlin's command and control set an unwelcome precedent.

Now, the Perspektiva NGO estimates that only 5% of Russians access independent media. Opinion polls show that increasingly, Russians appear to accept the Kremlin's version of events in Ukraine, Crimea and Syria. In the place of facts or analysis, there are conspiracy theories that typically portray Russia as a victim of foreign plots. Putin's friends in the media willing project a paranoid world view that manipulates many Russians' feelings that they have been humiliated by the West, and America in particular. The popular media narrative exploits this sense of grievance: Russia, once America's equal, was brought low in the 1990s, and is now increasingly surrounded by NATO and the EU, unfairly battered by sanctions and a sagging oil price. By implication, only President Putin can keep Russians safe against these sinister foreign forces and the extremist enemies without. And he alone will decide what "extremism" is.

Readers who are old enough may perceive Soviet heavy-handedness in the Kremlin's reshaping of the media and NGO environment. What is different this time, however, is the power of social media, which is much more difficult to control than printing presses or TV stations.

Roskomnadzor can take down any website it wishes, but it requires many operatives working around the clock to keep up with innovative young people who insist on the freedom to mock those with power. Our hopes for a more tolerant Russia, at ease with itself, rests with them.

Rebecca Tinsley and Yulia Andreeva-Friemon



The spectre of Communism beneath the surface of Putin's Russia.

Rebecca Tinsley is Director of Waging Peace. Yulia Andreeva-Friemon is a Master's student at Bennington College, Vermont, USA.

Come and see LD4SOS AT THE FEDERAL CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON

- 17 September 13.00–14.30 Annual General Meeting Surrey 1 Room, Hilton Metropole. Suzanne Fletcher founder member and retiring Chair will report back on the work so far of LD4SOS. Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno, Honorary President of LD4SOS, will update us on topical work relating to asylum seekers and refugees in the House of Lords. Also discussion on the way forward for LD4SOS. Bring your lunch!
 - 17 September 20.00–20.45 First Timers' Reception Brighton Conference Centre. We will have a display, leaflets and two members to meet first time attendees at Conference.
 - 18 September 13.00–14.00 Fringe meeting Osborne Room, Hilton Metropole What now for Asylum Seekers in the U.K.? Join with Debora Singer MBE, Policy and Research Officer at Asylum Aid and Alastair Carmichael MP Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for Home Affairs to discuss the critical issues facing asylum seekers in the UK and what we can do to help.
 - 18 September 19.45-21.00 Joint fringe with ALDC Sandringham Room, Hilton Metropole Refugees welcome here – local communities welcoming refugees and unaccompanied children A discussion about how local councils and communities can support Syrian refugees. Speakers: Suzanne Fletcher, LD4SOS, Cllr Jeanette Sunderland, Bradford, Baroness Shas Sheehan and others
- TBC. Chaired by Cllr Baroness Kath Pinnock, ALDC
- Throughout Conference Exhibition Stand H10 Brighton Conference Centre – shared between EMLD & LD4SOS



**Liberal Democrats for
Seekers of Sanctuary**



Justice, Tolerance and Inclusiveness will help Egypt regain its Moral Values!

Mohammed Nossier

There is no question in the minds of Egyptians that we have lost most of our moral values and virtues over the past decades. No Egyptian will argue this fact; what we do argue about is the reason behind this deterioration in moral conduct. I am convinced that if we seriously and genuinely want to bring back our waning moral integrity, we must work on regaining three specific, essential values: justice, tolerance and inclusiveness.

Justice is something that the majority of today's Egyptian citizens have never experienced! In my opinion, the entire Egyptian society is a victim of injustice, in one way or another. Although injustice would seem to imply favouring a few people at the expense of many others, in reality it also has a negative effect on those who belong to the privileged portion of society (who initially, and deliberately, helped to create social injustice) – even if they have not noticed this yet.

Egyptian society generally is not a tolerant one! We tend to focus on, and cling to, our own ideas much more than to implement any degree of tolerance by entering into constructive dialogues with others. Believing that we are always in the right seriously narrows our chances of understanding others' perspectives and accepting the fact that they simply have different views. Actually, inclusiveness is an attribute that does not fit our cultural temperament, which is founded on exclusiveness. Egyptians tend to be proud of their individualistic superiority; they believe that they have been blessed with being ahead of everyone else and they only value their lives when undermining others.

Furthermore, understanding the true meanings of justice, tolerance and inclusiveness is a challenge for Egyptian society. Our society is constructed to deliberately indulge a very tiny portion at the expense of the majority. Citizens are pleased when the law is bended – to the detriment of others, obviously – in their favour, we tend to be narrow-minded concerning many issues (which clearly leads to the rejection of others' ideas), and we often distance ourselves from those who belong to a different religion, gender, ethnic group etc.

Even though our country offers clear business opportunities, the absence of justice discourages many Egyptians and foreigners from investing in Egypt. Any investor, regardless of background, knows that at some point in the course of his enterprise's operation, he could be faced with a business dispute and need to resort to an efficient judicial mechanism and a proper application of the rule of law – which, unfortunately, are non-existent.

Egyptians affiliated to the current ruling regime are living happily in their exclusive bubble, believing that Egypt was created only for them. The deliberate marginalization of citizens who differ with the ruling regime's policies, including the total exclusion of a large portion of society, political Islamists, (whose beliefs and behaviour I personally disagree with), is transforming both the secular opposition and the political Islamists into a vicious opposition force and creating many additional enemies of the ruling regime.

The Egyptian state is fully aware of these deficiencies; it takes advantage of them to better manipulate Egyptians by constantly capitalizing on the absence of morals. Individual citizens work hard either to obtain their missing rights, or to benefit from and extend their unjust acts; in either case, the citizen relies on the state, which is in charge of controlling these issues. The state is conscious of the consequences of this policy and is happy to implement it to further empower state entities – without any regard for the application of true moral values.

‘Getting back the Egypt we know’ will require prompting Egyptians to embrace the moral values and virtues that we all used to live by. The vast majority of Egyptian citizens have suffered in one way or another from the absence of justice; thus, we need to have fair laws and we need to ensure their proper enforcement. By helping us to think of the entire Egyptian society as a single unit, the principle of inclusiveness will strengthen and unify our society, doing away with the current social polarization. Egyptians need to understand that all citizens, even those who think, act and behave differently, are entitled to the same citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Mohammed Nossier

Mohammed Nossier is an Egyptian Liberal Politician working on reforming Egypt on true liberal values, proper application of democracy and free market economy.



**Liberal International British Group (LIBG)
and Liberal Democrat European Group (LDEG)**



BREXIT: international perspectives

The BREXIT referendum result has momentous consequences for the UK, EU, NATO and our international partners.

How is the international community reacting to the UK electorate's decision to leave the European Union?

How will the Article 50 process and recasting our trade relations with EU members evolve?

How will Brexit affect the UK's political, security and economic relations with our partners, in particular Ireland and Germany?

What are the implications for the UK's economy and inward investment?

This timely fringe session will involve the participation of Liberal International British Group, the Liberal Democrat European Group and Liberal Democrat members, diplomats, journalists, and other opinion formers.

Speakers:

Jacqueline Minor, Head, European Commission Representation to the UK

Timmy Dooley TD Spokesperson on Communications, Environment and Natural Resources, Fianna Fáil, Republic of Ireland.

Jeffries Briginshaw, Chief Executive, BritishAmerican Business

Nick Hopkinson (chair)

Sandringham Room, Hilton Metropole, Brighton BN1 2FU

Saturday 17th September 8:15pm-9:30pm

Visit us at Stand 22 in the Conference Exhibition

reviews

Eccles Cakes, an odd tale of survival, by Jonathan Fryer

In my experience the best Eccles Cakes in the world come from the Pump House Bakery, 1 Pump St, Orford IP12 2LZ (pumpstreetbakery.com); since I don't live there, I am fortunate in having the 1066 Bakery, in Hastings as a close runner-up (www.1066bakery.com). A pilgrimage to each is well rewarded. When does an Eccles Cake become a Banbury Cake? Jonathan does not answer that tricky question, in what turns out to be an autobiography.

The book barely covers the first nineteen years of Jonathan's, half of which covers a few months. Orphaned, abused, mis-schooled; it seems incredible that this is the past of someone so familiar to so many of us as a friend and colleague. No child should suffer sexual abuse, no one should. Most of us, I hope, don't. It is courageous to recount these things, and useful for a wider understanding, not least for those of us who have to deal with such problems as councillors.

So, scarred, how do we arrive at the person we know. Jo Grimond set him on the road to Liberalism, and foreign travel, against the background of the Vietnam war, his internationalism. We know that he will end up in Oxford, that his first travels will lead to a career in journalism, and of course, his politics, but the book doesn't quite get there. We know he has a visa to get into Syria – the bravado that only a school-boy could pull off; but does he get there? Only the next nineteen years will tell.

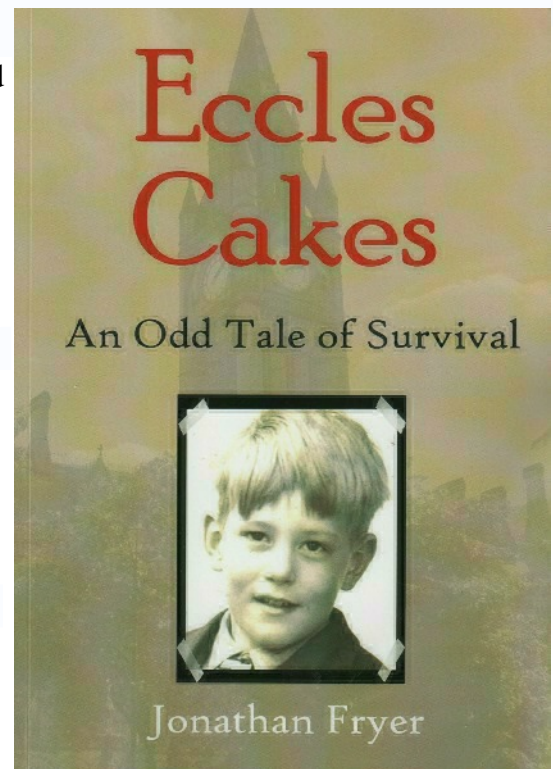
Jonathan's book is available on Amazon, both as an e-book and paperback, and will be available at the LIBG stall in Brighton. Jonathan will be signing copies between 1.00pm and 2.00pm on Monday 19th September.

Stewart Rayment

More Than You Wanted to Know: The Failure of Mandated Disclosure, by Omri Ben-Shahar and Carl E. Schneider. Princeton University Press 2014

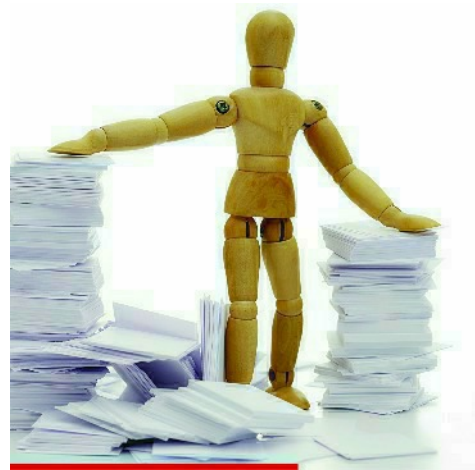
This is a very persuasive book on the danger of policy-makers avoiding thorny issues by giving consumers lots of information and hoping they make the right choice. Mandated disclosure requires specialists offering complex products and services to give the public sufficient information so they can make sensible choices. It is logically appealing because it should prevent dominant parties from pulling the wool over our eyes. But, Ben-Shahar and Schneider argue, it is a harmful failure. And they have amassed the results of hundreds of studies to prove it.

Ben-Shahar and Schneider explain extensively why mandated disclosure does not work. The diligent Chris Consumer "starts his morning recklessly ... by hoping that the mandated warnings ... on the bottle of his daily vitamin have not changed since he last read them." By lunchtime, Chris has only managed to open a web browser, pay for a car repair and receive a package because he spent so long reading the terms and conditions for each. People need to be highly literate and numerate to process the complex information being presented. But in one study, only 3% of the population were literate enough to understand information in a juror pamphlet. Most problematic of all, we humans are decision-adverse and think the cost of understanding all the information is much higher than any benefit it will bring in helping us make a better choice.



The authors convincingly argue there is no way to save mandated disclosure by doing it better. Simplifying information is self-defeating because important points will be left out. Even when disclosure works in a very limited area, it becomes a victim of its own success as disclosure is encouraged to solve more problems, and people become overwhelmed and stop paying attention. This book is a comprehensive survey of the world of mandated disclosure and finds there are few examples of well-written disclosures.

The most important section is an explanation of why disclosure is harmful: it stops real policies being drafted. Bad practices are allowed to continue, as long as they are disclosed somewhere in a statement that is thousands of words long. We all know people who are struggling to make ends meet will still take pay-day loans with dangerously-high interest rates, regardless of whether the rates are disclosed on TV adverts. Worryingly, the disclosure regime exacerbates inequality as those with the poorest literacy rates are least helped by disclosure, and least capable of challenging any bad consequences. Although disclosure seems like it should be helpful, we need to more aggressively challenge this solution which can only help 3% of the population (if they can be bothered to read it).



**MORE THAN
YOU WANTED
TO KNOW**

The Failure of Mandated Disclosure

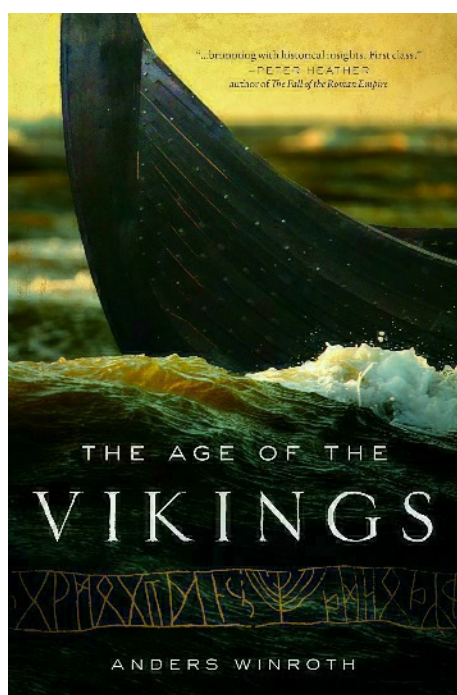
OMRI BEN-SHAHAR
CARL E. SCHNEIDER

This is an American book, and so reveals the failings of mandated disclosure in the country that is probably most committed to the cause. It is an important warning to the rest of the world to reconsider our own venture down this path. Next time we consider a policy which requires a dominant party to explain complicated information to its weaker customer, we should stop and ask why. If a practice is so harmful we would expect consumers to avoid it if they knew of its existence, we really should just regulate it properly.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

**The Age of the Vikings, by Anders Winroth.
Princeton University Press 2016
isbn 9780691169293**

Winroth provides us with a rehabilitation of the Vikings; he offers us one set of murderous cut-throats in a world of murderous cut-throats and concludes that they were any worse than those around them, and that certainly the great Christian king Charlemagne had nothing to boast about in terms of a higher morality.



So, when a small number of them weren't about the seasonal business of rape and pillage, the rest were tending their farms or trading. Through this came the embryonic Russia, the towns of Ireland, the discovery of America and much more. Eventually small chieftainships would coalesce, not without competition and as these grew into kingdoms they would adopt the practices of their neighbours to the south. Most notably the Christian Church as the only body capable of providing the necessary bureaucracy to match these ambitions, where after they fade into the general European milieu. Having shared Danish kings, after Hastings our national focus turns south. But the Whigs were not alone in looking to the Saxons and Vikings as antecedents of our democratic traditions.

Drawing extensively on archaeology and a growing body of research, Winroth presents his case well.

Stewart Rayment

**David Bomberg: A Sense of Place.
Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne.**

Bomberg resonates amongst most of us as one of a group of young modernist artists impacted by the First World War. Of Polish-Jewish descent, from London's East End, he cut his teeth amongst a group that met regularly in Whitechapel Library to discuss their work. His colleague Rosenberg would not survive the war. As is typical amongst British artists, there after Bomberg suffers neglect, though fellow artist and sometime leader of the Lib Dem group on Tower Hamlets Council, Janet Ludlow, named one of her cats after him.

Recoiling from the war, as so many artists of his generation did, Bomberg's modernism found new expression in landscape. His mastery of perspective and light particularly shines in the selection of works for the

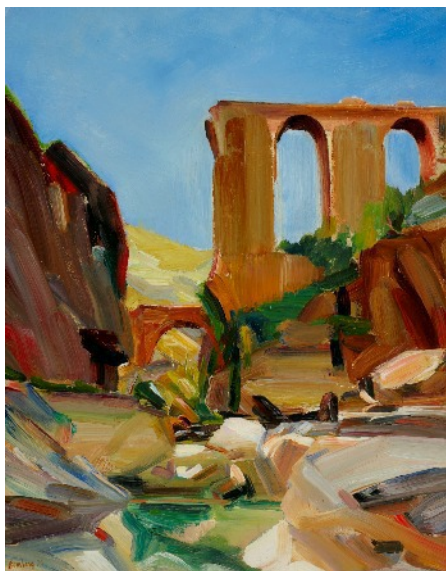


Palestine. 1926.

Concurrently the Towner is showing *Some Are Nights Others Stars*, featuring works by Michael Armitage, Ruth Claxton, Tiffany Chung, Siobhán Hapaska and Isaac Julien. The title of the show alludes to *Ashes* by Serbian poet Vasco Popa that begins in loss and rallies against destructive forces and dehumanisation until we become the dreamer and the dreamt, 'both star and night'. I was most struck by Chung's *An Archaeology Project for Future Remembrance* (2013) which explores a district in Ho Chi Minh City that was razed to the ground to make way for a redevelopment project – redolent of some of the work of Ai Wei Wei. Be puzzled by the uprooted olive trees in constant agitation, by Siobhán Hapaska, until the significance of their title, *Intifada* (2015-16) sinks in.

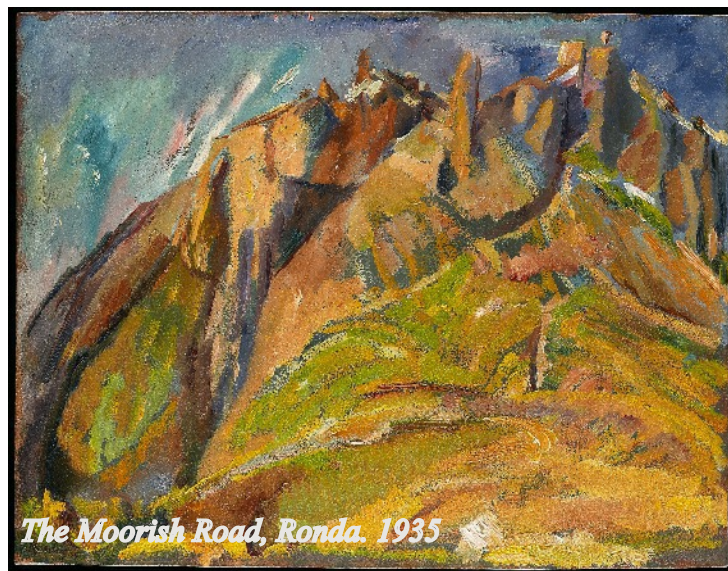
Those of you coming down to Brighton for the Autumn Conference will undoubtedly want to take some time out to help reinstate Stephen Lloyd as MP for Eastbourne – it is only a short train journey away. Contact Stephen's team at <http://stephenlloyd.org.uk/en/>. The Towner's Bomberg exhibition is an extra enticement – they have a Ravilious collection too. What greater temptation do you need?

David Bomberg: A Sense of Place. Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, until 25th September 2016.



*The Broken
Aqueduct, Wadi
Kelt near
Jericho. 1926.*

All images
courtesy of Ben
Uri Gallery and
Museum. © The
Estate of David
Bomberg. All
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DACs 2016



The Moorish Road, Ronda. 1935

1066 Three Kings

The Battle of Hastings is a story that everyone thinks they know. Two blokes meet on a field, fight for a bit, one gets shot in the eye and the other one wins. That was my view until about two years ago, when I toured the battlefield with a friend who teaches history in the US. He told me the backstory of the battle – feuds, betrayal and deceit - and it suddenly all came to life in my mind like a very good episode of *Game of Thrones!*

This backstory, shocking and exciting, is what we explore in the play *1066: Three Kings*. King Harold came from a family called the Godwins. They had slowly been grabbing land and titles over the previous three decades by helping the Viking King Canute (he's the one who tried to send the sea back) to control England. So, for many English people, the Godwins were traitors who had sold the country out. When Canute died, and feuding broke out amongst his sons, a prince called Edward (later called the Confessor) was recalled from Normandy to be King of England. The head of the Godwin clan (maybe 'firm' would be better – they were pretty gangster!) was implicated in the death of Edward's brother, so there was no love lost between them. When Edward died, Harold claimed the throne, but Edward's friends in Normandy had other ideas. The rest, as they say, is history!

When I heard about the Root 66 Festival I thought it would be a great opportunity to premiere the story where it all began. The Stables theatre produced my play *Darker Shores* in 2010, and I had been amazed by the quality of the production. Directors Niall Whitehead and Barbara Ward have assembled a talented cast of actors from the town, and we have recruited some fantastic artists to help us tell the story, including guitarist and composer Gary Ryan and illusionist Darren Lang. For the shows on October 8th and 9th, we will be joined by the student acting company of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota, who will perform a set of medieval songs with a modern twist! They are one of the finest young companies in the US. And Minnesota has its own Vikings, of course!

The play is the story of Hastings, made by the people for the people. It's going to be quite a show!

Michael Punter

October 2016

Box office 01424 423221 Book online at www.stablestheatre.co.uk

Friday 7 and Saturday 8 October at 7.30pm - Sunday 9 October at 3pm
Monday 10 to Friday 14 October at 7.30pm
Adults £13 - Under-18s and groups £10 - Members £8 - £2 off first night tickets

FIRST NIGHT
£2 OFF
ALL TICKETS

1066: Three Kings

A history play for everyone by Michael Punter

LOTTERY FUNDED
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Hastings
Borough Council

Stables Theatre



Brighton – the international bits

There are two big policy issues internationally this year, Safe & Free, which stems from the Liberty & Security policy paper, addressing concerns of terrorism, and of Europe, which naturally, dominates much of the fringe; with exceptions (such as our own fringe) we have concentrated on issues beyond the EU and Brexit, which, the usual suspects notwithstanding, are scant.

Saturday 17th September

10.35–12.05 F8 Policy motion: Safe and Free,
13.00–14.30 Consultative sessions: Nuclear Weapons

Fringe Saturday lunchtime 13.00–14.30

Spokespeople Q&A sessions Saturday 17th September 13.00–14.00 FCO, DfID & Defence. In Brighton Centre, Meeting Room

Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary (LD4SOS) Annual General Meeting Suzanne Fletcher MBE, founder member and retiring Chair, reports back on LD4SOS; Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno, Honorary President, talks about work in the House of Lords relating to asylum seekers. ALL welcome to discuss the way forward for LD4SOS. Hilton, Surrey

Spokespeople Q&A sessions Saturday 17th September 15.00–16.00 Energy & Climate Change, DEFRA. In Brighton Centre, Meeting Room

Fringe Saturday early evening 18.15–19.30

Members' Rally - Britain's place in the world Join Tim Farron and guest speakers for a rally on our outward facing, optimistic and tolerant vision for Britain. Brighton Centre, Auditorium

Fringe Saturday mid evening 20.15–21.30

Liberal International British Group (LIBG) and Liberal Democrat European Group (LDEG) BREXIT: international perspectives The BREXIT referendum result has momentous consequences for the UK, EU, NATO and our international partners. Senior German, Irish, US and Chinese speakers will examine the political, security, economic, and trade implications with Nick Hopkinson (LDEG) & Phil Bennion (LIBG). Hilton, Sandringham

Sunday 18th September

Fringe Sunday lunchtime 13.00–14.00

Social Liberal Forum Hanging together or hanging separately: Can the Left work together? David Howarth (SLF Council) discusses with Green MP Caroline Lucas, Labour MP Lisa Nandy and Lib Dem Chris Bowers their new book 'The Alternative: Towards a New Progressive Politics' (copies available at the meeting). Chair: Gordon Lishman (SLF Council). Hilton, Buckingham

Green Liberal Democrats GLD Annual General Meeting – Members only Catherine Bearder MEP will be speaking about our future involvement with Europe and implications for Post-Paris agreements. Also we will be holding our annual Elections, as well as having the current Executive reporting on the year's work. Hilton, Gloucester

Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary (LD4SOS) WHAT NOW for Asylum Seekers in the U.K.? Join Debora Singer MBE, Policy and Research Officer at Asylum Aid, and Alastair Carmichael MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Home Affairs, to discuss the critical issues facing asylum seekers in the UK and what we can do to help. Hilton, Osborne

Fringe Sunday early evening 18.15–19.15

Catherine Bearder MEP BREXIT – What’s Next for Liberals? Join Guy Verhofstadt MEP, leader of the ALDE parliamentary group in the European Parliament, Nick Clegg MP, Charles Grant, Director of the Centre of European Reform, to debate what’s the next step for the Liberal approach to Brexit. Hilton, Ambassador

Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar, Reception Speakers: The Chief Minister, The Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP; The Deputy Chief Minister, The Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP. Hilton, Lancaster

Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel BREXIT and the Middle East – Consequences for Anglo-Israel relations? An expert panel discuss Anglo-Israel relations post BREXIT, including trade agreements, prospects for peace and anti-Semitism. Speakers: Eitan Na’eh (Deputy Israeli Ambassador), Tom Brake MP, Baroness Sarah Ludford, Lord Jonny Oates and Gavin Stollar (LDFI Chairman). Hilton, Osborne

Fringe Sunday mid evening 19.45–21.00

LibDem International Office and Alliance of Liberal Democrats in Europe (ALDE) What does Brexit mean for the rest of Europe? Join the International Office for a discussion on the repercussions of Brexit on Europe and liberalism, offering a wider look at the crisis unfolding in Europe. Chair: Baroness Ros Scott, with speakers from liberal parties across Europe. Hilton, Buckingham

Liberal Reform Free Trade after Brexit. An exciting opportunity for international trade, or a devastating blow to the UK’s free-trading status? What does Brexit mean for free trade? Vince Cable and others discuss. Hilton, Edinburgh

ALDC – Liberal Democrat Campaigners & Councillors / Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary Refugees welcome here – local communities welcoming refugees and unaccompanied children A discussion about how local councils and communities can support Syrian refugees. Speakers: Suzanne Fletcher, LD4SOS; Cllr Jeanette Sunderland, Bradford; Baroness Shas Sheehan (invited); and Citizens UK (invited). Chaired by Cllr Baroness Kath Pinnock, ALDC. Hilton, Sandringham

Chinese Liberal Democrats

Join us in celebrating our 10th birthday at Autumn Conference in Brighton with an 8 course Chinese meal with wine.

Time: from 8.15 -10pm

Venue: China Garden Restaurant, 88-91 Preston Street, Brighton BN1 2HG

Special Guests: Lord Paddy Ashdown and Lord Menzies Campbell

Ticket price: £30 per head.

To book your place email Phil Ling at pkfling@gmail.com

Monday 19th September

09.00–09.30 F26 Emergency motion or topical issue

09.30–11.00 F27 Policy motion: Europe

Fringe Monday lunchtime 13.00–14.00

RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and WWF Think Global, Act Local? Securing a post-referendum future for the UK’s environment. An opportunity for senior politicians, stakeholders and specialists to debate how to ensure a positive future for the UK’s environment following the EU referendum, and in the context of an increasing devolution and localism agenda. Host: Baroness Parminter. Hilton, Edinburgh

Fringe Monday mid evening 19.45–21.00

Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine Working for Justice for Palestinians. LDFP fights for the rights of the Palestinian People and the meeting will discuss recognition of the state of Palestine, ongoing settlements, human rights abuses and other topical issues in the current conflict. Speakers tbc. Hilton, Sandringham

Fringe Monday late evening 22.00–02.00

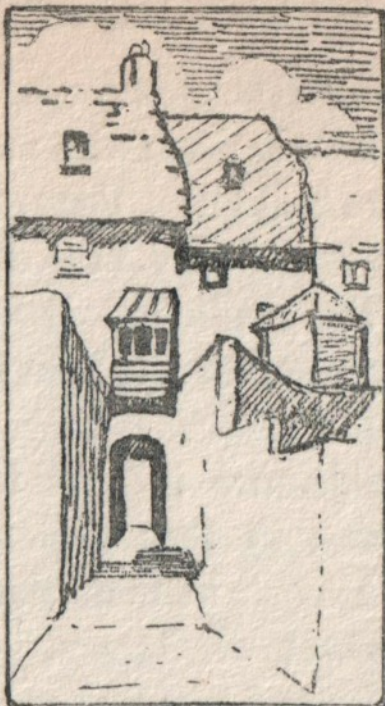
Glee Club Join us for the ultimate end-of-conference celebration! Pick up your copy of the Liberator Songbook and come 'raise the roof'! Cash bar. Note: this event starts at 22.00 and ends at 02.00. Hilton, Balmoral & Buckingham

Tuesday 20th September

09.00–09.45 F35 Emergency motion or topical issue

Beyond the conference, Brighton and Hove are wonderful towns to explore. Brighton Museum & Art Gallery host FASHION CITIES AFRICA, if you want to stay ahead sartorially this is a must. The Royal Pavilion is equally international, recalling its use as a hospital for members of the Indian Army during the First World War. Brighton's Indian links incidentally go back at least to 1814, when Sake Deen Mohamed opened the town's first vapour baths and became shampooing surgeon to the Prince Regent. Hove Museum features BIRDS OF A FEATHER, drawings and paintings of exotic birds from the Booth Museum (which itself focuses on natural history, and is in Dyke Road, BN1 5AA, a little out of the town centre). One could enthuse about the shops – the Lanes and the North Laine, but I'd particularly mention Resident Records, 28 Kensington Gardens, North Laine BN1 4AL, which has to be open of the record shops in the country. There is also the quirky Two Kats & A Cow Gallery (167 Kings Road Arches, Brighton Beach, BN1 1NB).

Do something for the local economy – spend your money in small independent cafés and stores – you can see the corporates in any generic Euro-city



TO see The Lanes at their best you should visit them at that magic hour when twilight is deepening into night. The shadows that have been lurking there for centuries slide from their corners and throw their dark hoods over the old houses.

George Aitchison

Illustration

Stella Langdale

'Unknown Brighton' 1926



The National Liberal Club Political & Economic Forum

has great pleasure in inviting you to

“Europe after the Brexit vote: the case of the Baltic States”

on

Monday, 26th September 2016, from 7.00 pm to 8.30 pm

Lord Chidgey will preside and Guest Speakers are:

HE Asta Skaisgiryte, Lithuanian Ambassador to the UK

Rt. Hon. Tom Brake MP, Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs Spokesperson

Baroness (Judith) Jolly, Liberal Democrat Defence Spokesperson

Vytis Jurkonis, Freedom House, Lithuania

The Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, regained their independence from the Soviet Union in 1990-91, making rapid progress in political and economic reforms, becoming EU and NATO members in 2004.

Russia’s increasingly aggressive posture, annexation of Crimea and continued destabilising activities in Eastern Ukraine has led to increased fears about security of NATO’s Eastern member states, including the Baltic States. In response, NATO decided to strengthen its deterrence measures and to increase its military presence in the Baltic States and Poland.

NATO leaders agreed to deploy four multinational battalion-sized battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in 2017, from the UK, Germany, Canada and the US.

This decision sends a clear signal about NATO’s determination and readiness to respond swiftly to any aggression against any NATO Ally. The question remains if this will be enough to calm down Russia, or will NATO have to Step up its presence in the Baltic’s in the future.

Open to all members and invited guests, no charge to attend, Cash Bar will be available from 6.30pm.

BOOKING FORM

To: Mrs Louisa Pooley (louisa@nlc.org.uk) National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HE

Please reserve places at the NLC Political & Economic Forum on Monday, 26 September 2016

Name..... email address.....

Address.....