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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Images within this issue are of a violent nature, but we cannot hide from them. Individual tragedies such as these are what refugees and economic migrants are fleeing, they are part of the legacy of imperialism as much as problems in countries like Nigeria (or any other conflict area).

EVENTS

- 30th January 2017** Isaiah Berlin Lecture. 1.00pm
Chatham House
- 9th February 2017** Chinese New Year Dinner and
Auction. Guest Speaker: Prof Kerry Brown. £45.
7.00pm NLC. RSVP info@chineselibdems.org
- 18-19th February 2017** Cymdeithas Lloyd George –
Lloyd George Society Weekend School. Hotel Com-
modore, Llandrindod Wells.
<https://lloydgeorgesociety.org.uk>
- 20th February 2017** LIBG Forum on French elec-
tions, co-hosted with MoDem. NLC
- 4th March 2017** Rights Liberty Justice Pop-Up Con-
ference – *The Supreme Court Article 50 decision &
beyond*. Bermondsey Village Hall, near London
Bridge Station
- 6th March 2017** LIBG Executive, NLC
- 13th March 2017** LIBG Forum on the South China
Sea. NLC
- 17th-19th March 2017** Liberal Democrat Spring Con-
ference, York.
- 25th March 2017** Unite For Europe National March
to Parliament. 11.00am London
- 15th May 2017** LIBG Forum on East Africa. NLC
- 18th-21st May 2017** 61st Congress of Liberal Inter-
national, Andorra. The Congress will mark the 70th
anniversary of LI.

*For bookings & other information please contact the
Treasurer below.*

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

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LIBG Forum on the French elections co-hosted with MoDem (Mouvement démocrate)

7.00pm 20th February 2017

National Liberal Club



Nigeria and the legacy of military rule

Rebecca Tinsley

“Congratulations to our governor on his first year in office,” reads the vast hoarding by the main Abuja-Jos road. A chubby-cheeked man with perfect teeth beams down on passing motorists. You don’t need small print to know the poster was paid for by the businessmen who bankrolled the successful candidate. A hundred kilometres later another benevolent ruler favours travellers with his cherubic grim. “My heart goes out to all the people of south Kadema,” reads the inscription. Meanwhile, his grateful voters carefully negotiate the atrocious highway between Nigeria’s capital and Jos, a city of nearly a million souls. In the words of a local journalist, “We ignore the government as much as possible because it does nothing for us. There hasn’t been running water in Jos for thirty years, and we have power cuts all the time. The schools and hospitals are in poor shape, and bureaucrats take the salary of goodness knows how many ghost employees.”

An educated middle class native of Jos can expect to make about £1100 a year; his or her state assembly member will enjoy £800,000, including salary, car and allowances. Even if northern Nigerians weren’t coping with terrorism - Boko Haram has killed and displaced more people than Al Qaeda and ISIS, the jihadists who inspired them – they would have good reason to complain.

According to Human Rights Watch, one local government area spent 2.4% of its revenues on maintaining its crumbling primary school infrastructure while 30% went on salaries and expenses for the offices of its chairman and legislators. Another local government chairman spent huge sums on a series of non-existent projects, including a "demonstration fish pond" with neither water nor fish, and a "football academy" that was never



built. Yet another budgeted for 100 "functional committees/protocol officers" whose responsibilities were unclear; their salaries exceeded those of all the local government's health sector employees.

In addition, Nigeria’s politicians steal an estimated \$6 billion of oil revenues each year. Nuhu Ribadu, the head of Nigeria’s anti-graft agency, estimated in 2006 that since independence \$380 billion has been stolen or wasted by the elite. The poverty rate was 28% in 1980, and it is now 68%. Nothing has changed since 1983 when Nobel laureate Chinua Achebe wrote, “The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character.”

A priest in Jos offered me this analysis: “We have no instruments of accountability. The rot set in when the military took over, shortly after independence. We had decades of their incompetence and thieving. People became conditioned not to challenge authority. They were afraid to ask where the oil revenues had gone, or why leaders took such high salaries. Now, the military has gone but the culture of entitlement continues. People haven’t got used to casting aside their fear and self-censorship.”

One sinister by-product of Nigeria’s corroded politics is the growth of terrorism. Politicians in the north-east created private militias to fight their struggles in the streets, intimidating voters and election officials. Then, after the elections, the politicians stopped paying the militias, leaving violent, unskilled young men ripe for recruitment by religious extremists.

Such is the West's lack of interest in Africa, Boko Haram is only mentioned when one of the 273 Chibok girls, kidnapped in 2014, reappears. This chilling but not unusual escapade was made famous when Western politicians and celebrities tweeted about it (#bringbackourgirls). Sadly, the hash-taggers ignored the previous and subsequent massacres of schoolchildren, teachers, polio vaccination workers, clerics, Christian congregations, and security forces. Boko Haram is also slaughtering Muslims who disagree with their ideology.

Officially, the nationwide death toll is 20,000, but when I visited the so-called Middle Belt of Nigeria in November 2016, I was told 20,000 had been killed in Jos alone. The government's reluctance to admit the toll taken by their home-grown terrorists is indicative of their denial and, until recently, indifference. President Buhari claims Boko Haram has been "technically defeated." Yet, the attacks continue, driving an estimated 2.6 million Nigerians to flee Borno state, Boko Haram's hub. The region is on the point of famine because the constant threat of attack, and landmines, prevents farmers getting to their fields.

I interviewed village leaders who said they phoned for help constantly while their communities were under siege, only to be ignored by the security services. Human Rights Watch alleges that when they finally do show up, soldiers are reputed to harass and kill Muslim citizens, thereby stirring up anti-government feeling, reinforcing Boko Haram's recruitment message: "Christians are evil, only we are good and pure, education is a Western abomination, as is democracy."

In Mike Smith's book about the terrorist group he accuses former President Goodluck Jonathan and his cronies of leveraging the suffering caused by Boko Haram to their own partisan ends. Having ignored the rebel insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria for years, Jonathan finally responded, first by saying the Chibok abductions were a hoax, then by blaming his opponents for Boko Haram's activities, suggesting political



enemies were engaged in a conspiracy against him. His wife allegedly had protesting Chibok mothers arrested, accusing them of trying to sabotage her husband's re-election campaign.

A more profound cynicism lies behind the rise of Boko Haram; the marginalization of the country's poor north-eastern states. The Nigerian Government's own White Paper concluded that Boko Haram "draws the bulk of its membership from...the vast army of unemployed youths, school drop-outs and drug addicts that abound in the affected areas."

Boko Haram's victims are also poor, mainly from the north, and therefore unseen by the bloated, super wealthy elite running Nigeria. In sophisticated Lagos, the commercial capital in the south, 92% of women are literate, while in the north-east only 10% are. Despite astonishing oil wealth, Nigeria scores abysmally on the UN human development index, coming 153 out of 187 countries. While the government devotes 20% of its budget to the military, it spends only 1.9% on education. And while 50% of people have access to electricity, power cuts are so frequent they jeopardize anyone trying to run a business involving machinery. In Nigeria, 68% of people live on less than \$1.25 a day, yet almost everyone can watch Nigerian soap operas at their neighbourhood bar, witnessing how wealthy the big city elite is. No wonder there is resentment, coupled with a sense that the political class is beyond redemption.

There used to be manufacturing in the north, but jobs vanished when the World Bank and International Monetary Fund demanded an end to subsidies and tariffs. China promptly dumped its heavily subsidised products on Nigeria, thereby destroying local firms who couldn't compete with the artificially low prices of Chinese goods. Once the local textile, flip flop or bike factory was out of business, the Chinese then raised their prices. The West also dumped its agricultural produce on Nigeria, often in the name of "aid," bankrupting local farmers. Add to this the intolerant Muslim clerics preaching Wahhabi-Salafi ideology, funded by

wealthy individuals in the Gulf, and the conditions were ideal for insurgency.

Thousands of traumatized civilians continue to flee the violence. Network for Africa, the charity I founded, is hoping to train a network of local people to be lay counsellors, helping survivors manage their post-traumatic stress disorder. Raising the necessary funds will not be easy; all donations are gratefully received. Please visit www.Network4Africa.org/donate/

Rebecca Tinsley is Director of Waging Peace.



Please visit www.Network4Africa.org/donate/



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INDONESIA - THE SLEEPING GIANT AWAKES!

Howard Henshaw

On 20th. October 2014, 53-year-old Joko Widodo assumed control of the world's fourth most populous nation with an estimated 300 million inhabitants occupying the Indonesian archipelago of 17000 islands stretching from Sumatra, immediately west of Singapore to Irian Jaya which is the western half of the island of New Guinea straddling Australia.

Joko Widodo is the leader of the Democratic Party of Indonesia "Perjuangam" which literally means "struggle" in the context "striving to achieve", or, PDI-P, as the party is more commonly known, being the Senior Party in a Government Coalition and a full member of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, a Cooperating Organisation within Liberal International.

During his first year in office, Widodo recognised that he did not have an overall parliamentary majority And was severely hampered by elements within his own party led by its founder, Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia's first President, who still harbours political ambitions of her own. However, Widodo cleverly outmanoeuvred her by enlisting the support of Golkar, the country's second largest party together with other smaller coalition parties, each of which were given a position in the Cabinet, although it is reportedly still firmly under his personal control. Widodo has therefore succeeded in cementing the support of about two thirds of the country's MP's., ensuring that he is no longer reliable on one party for his Political survival.

During his second year in office, he has therefore emerged as a much stronger leader with Presidential Support currently running at 68%, the highest since he took office in October 2014 and he is now beginning to push ahead with the difficult economic and political reforms on which he had campaigned in his election manifesto.

His top priority is the installation of a strong system of law enforcement, to eradicate the endemic corruption which has hampered the country's development, ever since independence 50 years ago. Coupled with this Widodo is concentrating on improving the basic



Joko Widodo

infrastructure of roads, railways, bridges, tunnels and airports to relieve the intense congestion on all the major highways on the main islands of Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan(Borneo). He has also placed Health and Education high on his list of priorities throughout the archipelago.

Joko Widodo's "zero tolerance" policy on drugs and illegal fishing in Indonesian waters has already upset several neighbouring countries, including Malaysia, China and Australia, with many death penalties having been carried out on foreign nationals for drug offences and he has demonstrated his resolve by embarking on military aircraft exercises in the South China Sea against China's illegal fishing in Indonesian waters, stressing that he will never compromise on Indonesian sovereignty.

As leader of the world's largest Muslim country, he insists that Islam and Democracy are fully compatible, although he adopts a softer approach to religious and cultural groups than many of his Middle Eastern cousins. He has, however, been strongly criticised by human rights groups over his strong stance on sexual

crimes, including chemical castration, by military medics, where necessary and has advised that the Islamic doctrine does not accept homosexuality.

In conclusion, Joko Widodo, who is frequently referred to by his nickname, “Jokawi”, is riding high in the popularity stakes in Indonesia and is rapidly gaining a reputation as the dynamic strongman amongst South East Asian political leaders who practices what he preaches in terms of health and general fitness. Furthermore, his charismatic and photogenic presence should ensure that he emerges as a major “Liberal” player on the world political stage for at least the next decade.

Howard Henshaw

Alderman Howard Henshaw is a former Liberal Democrat Mayor of Fylde (Lytham St. Anne’s and district) and a retired Overseas Director of Standard Chartered Bank. He has spent 25 years overseas in many developing countries, including Indonesia which he directly covered as the International Manager of Standard Chartered Bank in South East Asia in the 1980’s. Although now retired, he has many friends in the Far East which he still visits on an annual basis.



Happy New Year to you! The Chinese Lib Dems would like to invite you to celebrate the **Year of Rooster** with us at the National Liberal Club.



Date and Time: 9th February (Thursday),
7pm - 10pm

Venue: National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HE

Tickets: £45 per head for a four course dinner including a glass of wine. Cash bar available on the evening.

Guest Speaker: Professor Kerry Brown

(Director of the Lau Institute, Kings College, London, who will share with us his thoughts on UK China relations post-Brexit.)

The Imperial College of London Lion Dance Team will be performing at 7pm at the Foyer. Guests to be seated in the Lloyd George Room by 7.30pm.

Menu

Starter: Mixed dim sum platter (including prawn toast and spring rolls)

Hot and Sour Soup

Main course: Braised Duck with a Plum Sauce with Rice and Vegetables

Dessert: Toffee banana with Lychee ice cream

Jasmine Tea and Fortune Cookies

(Vegetarian/Vegan options available on request)

RSVP: info@chineselibdems.org.uk Please advise us of any dietary restrictions.

Some culture and politics of Georgia.

Kiron Reid

History is everywhere in Georgia – I walk down a street and there is the mission of the first British Commissioner to the Transcaucasus, Oliver Wardrop. Next to a nice little restaurant recommended by the British Embassy, and near the monolithic modern state chancellery. Tbilisi is a spectacular mix of old and new. The historic old town, with Armenian and Jewish quarters, Persian influence, is being renovated so you have completely derelict buildings and streets next to beautifully restored or modernised old houses and only five minutes, through the maze of side streets, from key heaving tourist spots. It took me several visits to get my bearings and feel acclimatised at all – walking around is the best way to do that, making sure you have a map and a guide book. For getting further around the city the metro system is simple and quick and covers some of the key locations. You can walk between the main tourist sites but for the highlights of the historic and modern buildings – best seen lit up at night – then a drive around the city is best. Asking around you will get a driver and car for a reasonable price but obviously check the seatbelts work.

British people will find something very familiar about Georgia. Flags. For several days I found it slightly odd that so many cars – all the cars – had England flags on. St. George is also very prominent. I was also surprised to find that this small country (about three times the size of Wales) has a passion for rugby. Such that the new British ambassador, a Scottish rugby fan, has been able to watch Scotland v Georgia as an official duty. Justin McKenzie Smith has himself made a flying start having arrived at the expanding mission at a busy political time in the country. The British Embassy are very prominent in cooperation among an energetic ‘Western’ diplomatic community. The Norwegians, the Dutch, Poland and Canada, Germany, Estonia are very active and the US diplomats appear to join in the collegiate approach.

How do I come to know this? Because I was fortunate to spend two months in September – November 2016 as the equivalent of a regional organiser for an international election observation mission. I’ve spent a lot of time in Ukraine, and expected Georgia to be different to but still quite similar to other former Soviet republics and Eastern block states. It was very different. Sure many things were familiar, and you can get all the same stuff as at home (mostly) but Georgia was very different from what I expected. Yes the people are almost all as friendly as they are reputed to be, yes they have an abundance of fresh produce and wine, yes the country has amazingly varied landscapes (from almost lunar to lush plain to mountain to lake in the space of twenty kilometres). The influence of herbs and spices on the food will delight British lovers of spicy food (even when you are not near an Indian restaurant). Many things being very traditional is nice (with a still colourful different look in Azeri and Armenian areas); undeveloped outside the larger towns and tourist spots. The big problem with adjusting was not being able to read or write the alphabet at all. Like when I went to places using Cyrillic before I could read Cyrillic, but with a script entirely different to ours. Whenever stuck though there’d usually be someone to ask. More English is spoken than anywhere I’ve been in Europe except Brussels and Odessa (although in many places no English is spoken at all, fair enough). When I was just gawping at the wonderful fresh bread in a supermarket the English graduate assistant took me into the bakery to see the baker making the bread in the clay oven. The bread was probably the most fantastic part of the food and I saw why everyone has their favourite bread kiosk, as well as cheese shop and purveyors of the Khachapuri (cheese filled breads usually – many breads with other fillings are found but not the lovely cabbage everywhere in Ukraine) and Khinkali (wonton type thick past filled with mince which is adored but I found much blander than the less common potato or nice mushroom varieties).

While the country has many of the same problems as other former Communist countries in SE Europe, one area where it seemed much better was in a functioning and affordable health system. The older minorities, and many older residents speak mostly Russian. Signs in Tbilisi are mostly in Georgian and English after Saakashvili’s programme but older signs have Russian second. A Welsh style policy of encouraging the national language enables the promotion of Georgia’s rich culture, but requires being mindful of the needs of those unable to speak it, especially among some of the older generation and national minorities.

Police reform was a key policy under Saakashvili. The glass walled new police stations are everywhere – in town centres and prominent at the side of every highway. The police appear to do no patrolling at all of the type British police do. There also seems to be much internal politics – in how officers are moved and possibly promoted. They certainly don't enforce the road traffic laws. I met many smart bright professional officers. Even on the front desk of a rural station they could greet me in English. Two things they do differently are interesting. The police are still very visibly found in each community – those police stations. Police cars drive round all the time with their flashing lights on. Not with sirens blaring but with the lights going. I thought at first this was the police being arrogant pushing in, after a while found it strange, and then my partner pointed out the obvious, it was about visibility. You notice the police patrol cars driving round everywhere as they have their lights on. If the police want to be invisible they can do that too, but the 'State Security' seem obvious as State Security. (In second round run-off elections burly young men in blacked out SUVs sat outside many voting places but they may have been paid by candidates, not security, or just 'taking lunch to their mates').

There is unashamedly some political interference in elections. Local authorities strictly enforced rules on poster sites against some opposition parties but not the ruling party. The authorities are appointed by the people in power, and the fear was – back to Soviet times – that if you were seen to support the wrong side your job would go. I heard credible reports of such intimidation. However, as many international and citizen observers reported, breaches during the elections were mostly very minor, and there was little attempt to hide the fact that key public servants were mostly supporting the government. Domestic and international observers were present all over the country and it was clear, despite the antics and atmosphere in the run up, that on the day in virtually every case people could go to the voting booth and vote for who they wanted. A near majority (48%) voted for the ruling Georgian Dream and with opposition United National Movement gathering only just over a quarter of the vote, other smaller parties (including LI affiliated Republicans, the mainstream European style Free Democrats, and Labor and the rest) failed to make an impact. Jobs. Income. Welfare. Public services. These are all real issues for voters and only some of the candidates made a real effort to address them. One opposition candidate proposed relocating the main Tbilisi rail station to his outer district to ease congestion and create jobs. I was reminded of it when a colleague mentioned that part of the HS2 plan is to do something similar in London – one part of that plan that could unequivocally bring benefits to more than travellers in a few locations.



Rpublican Party office in Rustavi smashed.

I recommend visiting Georgia. I flew (for work) on Turkish airlines via Istanbul – not a great schedule (late night arrival) but comfortable reasonably priced flights. Unlike the fortunate Poles we don't have budget airlines to the far side of the Black Sea. My work took me to the capital, the ancient capital Mtskheta a short distance away, and off the tourist trail but also only 30 km away the large largely post-industrial, post-Soviet city of Rustavi, and smaller towns including largely Azeri populated Marneuli (a prosperous trading town on the Baku

– Tbilisi highway). I enjoyed the time in each place, from the wide boulevards of 19th C commercial Tbilisi, to the twisting streets of the old town (once I got to know it a little) to stopping in a border village and being made tea by two timeless Muslim old ladies in colourful dress at their shop by the village pump. Castles, or more often churches, are on every high spot. This is a country where Muslim and Christian (of different denominations) and Jew live peacefully together. Georgia is certainly more exotic than many standard destinations. What were the disbenefits – traffic, terrible traffic in Tbilisi and consequent air pollution; appalling driving standards; waste, with no concept of recycling at all, except informal by rummaging. A lack of environmental concern though I saw work on conservation of wetlands and some nice new cycle lanes in Rustavi (which had terrible speeding traffic but not as congested as Tbilisi – on the edge of both cities you still had to watch for cows in the highway). Plastic bags. Plastic bag manufacturers must be the richest people in Georgia – even richer than election poster printers. While many traditional crafts and products are still in use, there is an obsession with giving out plastic bags. Out and about I was horrified at

huge volume of money spent on new gold leaf for churches (though they at least are good for tourists unlike the millions spent on elections) when improvements to basic living conditions and infrastructure are desperately needed. I didn't find it inspiring that drivers all had icons in the front of their cars – they weren't doing a great job of preventing accidents.

There is undoubtedly nostalgic 'wasn't it all wonderful in the Soviet Union' feeling among some. Trade, geography and shared history favour close links with Russia. Politically only fringe parties advocate any warmth towards Russia, not surprising in a country with two hundred thousand plus 'internally displaced people' many living in appalling conditions, and about a fifth of the territory is occupied by Russian troops supporting breakaway regions that are basically incorporated into Russia. For reasons of security or perceived Western and European values, mainstream political parties all favour joining NATO, and the EU, no matter how unrealistic that seems from Western Europe. The Georgians have demonstrated their commitment by significant contributions to the NATO operations in Afghanistan, something I don't think is known in Britain. You are used to seeing EU flags across Europe but I regularly had to explain I never saw NATO flags on public display anywhere else. Many of the key political and administrative figures had degrees and diplomas from British, American or German and other Western European Universities.

British people seem popular in Georgia. Britain's longstanding support for the country's independence is well known (I hadn't remembered that British war graves in Batumi commemorate those with Britain's forces opposing the Bolsheviks). Apart from Americans, returning Russian tourists, businessmen from Turkey, and visitors from neighbouring Azerbaijan and Armenia, the capital has many Polish visitors and professionals (in fact the Poles get everywhere, in a good way), Estonians and others from the Baltic States (close friends from Soviet times and from resisting Russian and Soviet oppression) and neighbours from other Black Sea countries. Turkey, India, Azerbaijan, and of course China are investing in Georgia as you would expect on the new Silk Road. It is certainly open for business but needs to shake off bureaucracy and the impression that the bureaucracy may hide corruption. Georgian people are very proud of their wine and I unashamedly preferred the more western European over traditional styles. Twice when I was sat alone reading and working in restaurants I was invited over to join parties by the hospitable local people.

Both the Bradt and the Lonely Planet guide books are good. The Lonely Planet is more concise being combined with Armenia & Azerbaijan, the Bradt has more off the main tourist locations. Before you go you can find Georgian cultural events to immerse yourself in in London. I was fortunate (as stand in correspondent for Shakespeare Magazine) to attend a Georgian Embassy and British Georgian Society event celebrating the country's national bard, Rustaveli, and connections with Shakespeare, at the Royal Asiatic Society. It is a sign of the close relationship that Georgia's ambassador to the UK, Tamar Beruchashvili, is a former Georgian Foreign Minister. Keep an eye on their various pages and you'll soon find things Georgian cultural events to attend. There is also a Bristol Tbilisi Society which celebrates nearly 30 years of twinning.

Kiron Reid was a Long Term Observer for the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission to Georgia.
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/261521>

This article accompanies a political piece about Georgia in the latest *Liberator* magazine.
<https://liberatormagazine.org.uk>

Since writing in his *Liberator* article that UNM needed to adapt and come out from under Mikhail Saakashvili if it was to mature and gain public acceptance. However, the United National Movement is obviously misnamed. It appears to have split. Kiron didn't expect it to break up so dramatically. He reports that most of the parliamentary representation are reported as in fact forming a new 'fraction' rejecting Misha. He has loyal supporters but should really stop meddling in birth both Georgian and Ukrainian politics. Become an elder statesman.

If his nemesis Bidzina Ivanishvili would also let his Georgian Dream party mature - he claims not to be the real controller - then the politics could move to a more principled, professional and less intimidatory and self-interested or sometimes aggrandising model.

International Abstracts

A Prayer for America, by Ruth Marcus. Washington Post 8.11.2016

Trump's foreign policy is already disturbing and what it will be is anyone's guess; does he know himself? A quick run-through some of the statements he may come to regret.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-prayer-for-america/2016/11/08/05fee4d2-a5e8-11e6-8fc0-7be8f848c492_story.html

US against the world? by Francis Fukuyama. Financial Times 12.11.2016

Fairly succinct analysis of the troubles of our time, Trump, Brexit. Is this the beginning of history?

<https://www.ft.com/content/6a43cf54-a75d-11e6-8b69-02899e8bd9d1>

Russia suspends nuclear agreement, ends uranium research pact with United States, by Lidia Kelly. Reuters World News 5.10.2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-nuclear-uranium-idUSKCN12521J>

The Conscience of a liberal, by Paul Krugman. New York Times, 14.12.2016

Economic analysis, longish and a bit wonkish (Krugman says it himself), but well worth reading...

<http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/>

Intellectuals for Trump, by Kelefa Senneh. The New Yorker 9.01.2017

American Conservatism after Trump.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/09/intellectuals-for-trump>

Why Amsterdam is giving up on natural gas, by Feargus O'Sullivan. The Atlantic City Lab
Thanks to Mark Pack for this one. Aside from generally a good idea, some interesting side issues internationally.

http://www.citylab.com/cityfixer/2016/11/amsterdam-natural-gas-ban-2050-climate-change-regulations/508022/?utm_term=0_c83c98fcef-76859476f6-420899097&utm_content=bufferb4ed3&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Revealed: How developers exploit the flawed planning system to minimise affordable housing, by Oliver Wainwright. The Guardian 25.06.2015

From the archive, but of on-going significance (if not especially international – however Liberals in the UK are rebuilding their base from the bottom up).

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jun/25/london-developers-viability-planning-affordable-social-housing-regeneration-oliver-wainwright>

Chrystia Freeland: Trudeau's first star candidate becomes his brand ambassador, by Aaron Wherry. CBC News 11.01.2017

Background to Canada's new Foreign Minister. Emil Kirjas tells us that he would take Chrystia's appointment as welcome news for LI. At the meeting of LI President with LPC President in September, LPC president confirmed that Chrystia is pushing LPC to stay in the international liberal family (and cover its overdue fees). She is in direct contact with the LI Secretariat. Interestingly, at the event in Chatham House when she spoke in 2015 Emil had hinted she would be a future Foreign Minister of Canada.

<http://www.cbc.ca/1.3929718>

Beware the dark art of Russian blackmail, by Christian Caryl. Washington Post 11.1.2017

And it seems they are already playing their trump cards...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/01/11/beware-the-dark-art-of-russian-blackmail/?hpid=hp_no-name_opinion-card-a%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.1a05d527ab5f

Liberator 381

Is dominated by Brexit, with useful articles by Tom Clifford, David Grace, Michael Meadowcroft & Jennie Rigg. Tony Greaves looks at Labour & Momentum. Belinda Brooks-Gordon calls for changes to Liberal Democrat policy on sex workers, drawing on Swedish legislation.

Liberator 382

By contrast, is admirably international; so much so that it is also being emailed to LIBG members, who may wish to subscribe. It carries the companion piece to Kiron Reid's article on Georgia, which is in this issue of *interLib* and also carries Rebecca Tinsley's article on Nigeria. Trump features heavily. Tom Arms expands on his Pax Americana article of *interLib 2016-08*, and there are articles by Christine Graf and Deborah Storr. Margaret Lally reports that Nepal's earthquakes have worsened an already dire situation for girls and young women at risk of trafficking into slavery and sex exploitation, updating her article in *interLib 2015-06*. Brexit supporter David Green argues that it's time for new thinking on internationalism after the referendum. It seems pointless to republish those articles not already in the magazine when they are available in *Liberator*. They will eventually be available on their website www.liberatormagazine.org.uk but why not subscribe? Domestically, Nick Harvey questions the Liberal Democrat's core vote strategy, Claire Tyler writes on child mental health, Lester Holloway questions whether John Alderdice's review of barriers to black and minority ethnic members in the Liberal Democrats amount to much, Michael Meadowcroft questions Paddy Ashdown's latest wheeze and Alan Sherwell looks at the Journal of Liberal History's review of the Coalition. With Lord Bonkers and Radical Bulletin what more could you ask for?

European Parliament Brexit Chief to deliver 2017 Isaiah Berlin Lecture in London

The European Parliament's chief negotiator for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, Guy Verhofstadt MEP, will deliver Liberal International's 2017 Isaiah Berlin Lecture at the world-renowned think tank, Chatham House, this month.

On 30th January Mr Verhofstadt, who is also in the contest on behalf of the ALDE Group (LI full member) to become the next president of the European Parliament, will speak about the challenges facing Europe amid growing illiberalism across the continent. The former prime minister is expected to discuss developments surrounding the United Kingdom's plan to withdraw from the European Union, after the UK's prime minister triggers article 50 of the EU's charter, which is expected to happen in March this year. Mr Verhofstadt's lecture comes ahead of crucial elections in France, Germany, and the Netherlands, where the incumbent governments all face a tough fight against the rising tide of populism in their respective countries.

Unfortunately, the lecture is fully booked, and has been so since very shortly after bookings opened, but it is possible to go on a waiting list for cancellations via the LI website.

The Lecture will also feature an opportunity to buy a signed copy of Guy Verhofstadt's latest book, *Europe's Last Chance: Why the European States Must Form a More Perfect Union*.

'Jeremy is Innocent': The Life and Times of Jeremy Thorpe and Marion Thorpe

Monday 6th February 2017 / 07:00 pm Liberal History Group

Lady Violet Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

Jeremy Thorpe led the Liberal Party over three general elections from 1967 to 1976. Immensely charismatic, he virtually doubled the number of Liberal MPs. Yet...

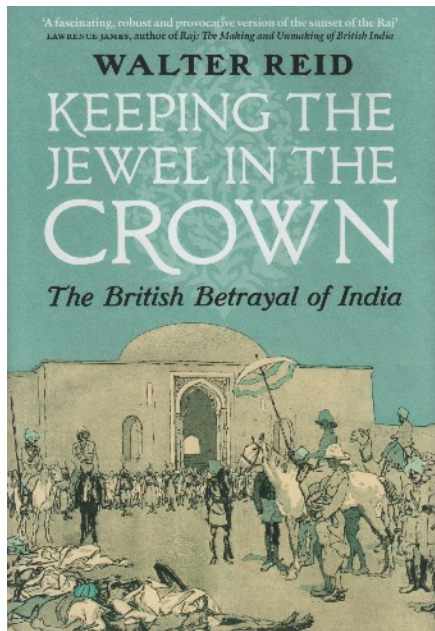
Ronald Porter (obituarist for The Independent) will present an illustrated talk after the Group's AGM

reviews

Keeping the Jewel in the Crown, the British Betrayal of India,
by Walter Reid.
Birlinn 2016
isbn 9781780273365

‘It ended horribly’ so opens the second paragraph of the introduction, summing up the end of the British adventure in India. ‘perhaps 16 million forced to leave their homes... 200,000 deaths... the true figure may be around a million.’ A century earlier Macaulay had spoken in the House of bringing good self-governance to India. The reality was ‘a silent connivance in holding back political progress for as long as possible – until finally Britain could postpone it no longer and finally had to scuttle out at short order, leaving chaos behind.’

Morley, Montagu and Reading come over as well-meaning, but ineffective in the procrastination of others, but there is little detail on their tenures. Otherwise, Liberals weren’t a great deal of help. Churchill was a big

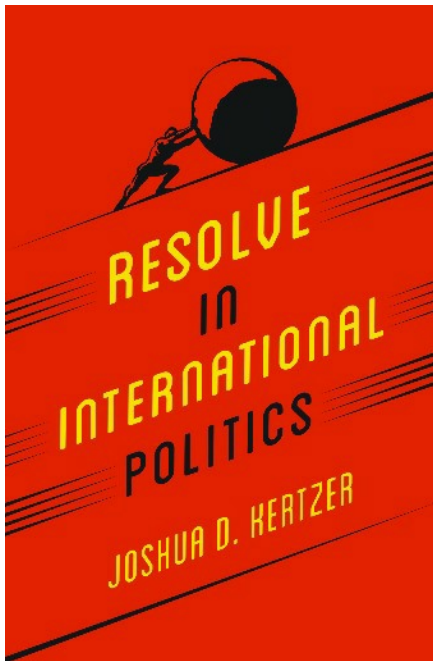


problem, consistently wrong on India; Attlee wasn’t much better, except in the sense of approaching the subject from the opposite direction – like Cripps, pretty much in Congress’s pocket. And the leaders of India? Gandhi? Most people probably view Indian independence through the prism of Richard Attenborough’s cinema hagiography of 1982. Gandhi was no saint; a hypocrite comes up commonly as an opinion of British officials (and indeed shared by the only Indian of my acquaintance who knew him – and also thought his treatment of Kasturba, his wife, was outrageous). As with Churchill, his greatness masks the warts. Nehru fares little better; Jinnah only slightly – the position of each constantly vacillating. These men knew the game was up for the British, but could have played their hand better – a constant source of frustration. I wonder to what extent their intransigence might have delayed independence if war hadn’t intervened? It certainly made them less prepared. He heroes, if there are any, are surprisingly Irwin, later vilified as Halifax, and Wavell, both frustrated by everything that goes above. Those who tried to move things on were horribly aware of the inevitability of inter-

communal violence, and the sense that the masses of India were about to be handed over to an elite as distant from the majority as the Raj. I asked a colleague for his opinion of the independence process – born and bred in Britain, he didn’t really know much about it, but recalled a family story that his pregnant grandmother and grandfather had crossed the line in Punjab under a mattress to stave off the hail of stones; they were, I’m afraid to say, lucky.

I find this a mixed book; where it is good – on Irwin for example, it excels, but elsewhere it can be patchy – perhaps for Reid, the narrative only gains pace with Irwin? Attenborough aside, those who know anything of the departure from empire know that it was hardly glorious, so it is useful to have a book to put a bit of flesh on the rout. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka pick up the pieces with varying success, but many of the issues that caused knowing officials to doubt the virtue of haste are still with us, as the pages of *interLib* frequently remind us.

Stewart Rayment.



Resolve in International Politics, by Joshua D Kertzer.
Princeton University Press 2016 £32.95
isbn 9780691171609

Resolve has long been recognised as an aspect of International Relations (IR), but as a concept it has often appeared frustratingly intangible. Harvard's Assistant Professor of Government, Joshua Kertzer, effectively fills the resultant lacuna in scholarship with this cogent and persuasive analysis of resolve, taking into account both situation (circumstances) and disposition (people's inherent willpower). He models experiences both in the laboratory and on the basis of post-War US military interventions, drawing on other academic disciplines, such as psychology, as well as IR theory. The book is indeed theoretical and some readers may find the lack of detail regarding the post-War scenarios a little disappointing, but the writing style is engaging and this will doubtless become a standard text in the field.

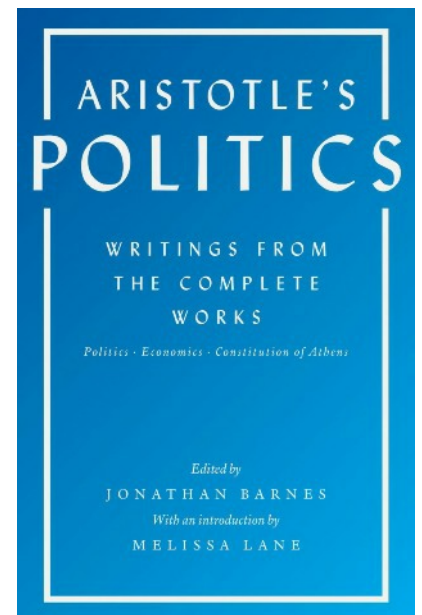
Jonathan Fryer

Aristotle's Politics, writings from the complete works Politics. Economics. Constitution of Athens, edited by Jonathan Barnes.
Princeton 2017 isbn 9780691173450

I confess that in these dark days, the temptation to review this book was the hope that Melissa Lane might give us some enlightenment. Alas she sticks to the brief. For enlightenment, see her *Greek & Roman Political Ideas* (reviewed *interLib* 2015-02), which was published as *The Birth of the State* in the USA. Instead we have a historiography of the works, whether Aristotle wrote them, or whether they are Aristotelian. Primarily lecture notes perhaps, or works to that end, one wonders to what extent they were anachronistic in their time given the Macedonian ascendancy? However, their impact is on-going. Man is a social animal, hence the family, the village and the polis. Politics is the business of the polis. Politics come in many forms, perfect or imperfect. Democracy is the corrupted form of a constitutional polity, but perhaps the least imperfect of the imperfect forms. A philosopher is of his time, and Aristotle was more – a natural scientist, but his attitude to women (did Phyllis sort him out?) and slavery are blots on his copy-book with dire consequences; his concept of the natural slave does not even match with apparent Greek practice at the time – primarily a factor of war and oppression.

A more attractive, and thus more easily read (it has air) edition than the trusty Penguin of my undergraduate days, though if you are in that position it is still worth looking at T A Sinclair's introduction.

Stewart Rayment



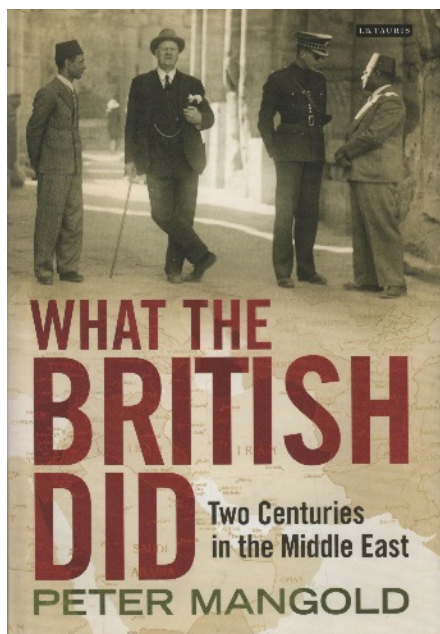
Liberator Books

Some of the books reviewed in *interLib* and its sister magazine *Liberator* are available for purchase through Alibris – www.alibris.co.uk – search 1951 store. However, readers might approach directly for a discounted rate. If the book that interests you is not listed on Alibris do enquire – it may be available, though not listed, or we can contact the reviewer to see if they wish to sell the book – lockharthastings@btconnect.com

**What the British Did, two centuries in the Middle East, by Peter Mangold.
IB Tauris 2016 isbn 9781784531942**

Oh dear... Mangold takes the long view – over two centuries of involvement, but early on states that blunders like the outcomes Suez in 1956, Aden in 1967 and the 2003 Gulf War were foreseeable and thus should not have been entertained. However, short-sightedness has been a problem from the outset – vacillation over policy in Iran from the Napoleonic wars to at least the impact of oil, but whatever their disappointments, Iran would probably have not remained an independent nation without some measure of British protection, however slight. The chapter heading *Riding two horses at once* (Palestine) might equally be applied to (Saudi) Arabia.

Liberals fare as badly as the rest – what were Gladstone’s motives in Egypt? Merely bounced by that subordinate oaf General Gordon? Hartington & Dilke (one of the few British politicians with any experience of the world beyond western Europe at the time) didn’t help.



If, however, soft imperialism didn’t work in Iran & Egypt, (Iraq, Palestine), there is some consolation in the Gulf states and to a lesser extent, Jordan. Saudi Arabia and Yemen remain a problem (alongside the more obvious). Why didn’t the South Arabian Federation work, when the Gulf states did? Personalities on the ground were part of the key, a key also to what went wrong elsewhere, coupled with the extent of Britain’s perceived interests. Too often we were arrogant with misguided notions of some supposed superiority. Too insensitive or indifferent to local circumstance. Neither America nor Russia have learnt from the mistakes.

There is a fine list of Dos and Don’ts in the summation. They would hold us good in most situations, you should look them up at least, in what is a rather good overview of Britain and the Middle East. The last one ‘Remember Kipling’s *If*, the poem the Eden cabinet forgot.’

Stewart Rayment

“I’ve got so much to read.”

But you still need *Liberator*. The only independent magazine for liberals has been a forum for debate since 1970 and also shines some light into dark corners of the party.

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