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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



PANTS TO LUKASHENKO

BELARUS LGBT+ RIGHTS IN HUNGARY & POLAND

SOMALIA HONG KONG

EVENTS

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For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Cover image:

White-Red-White flags have featured in the recent disturbances in Belarus, which is a good example of where flags have been contested. The white-red-white flag waved by demonstrators was used by a short-lived independent state in 1918. It was then suppressed by the Soviet Union, permitted as a means to encourage anti-Soviet sentiment by a Nazi puppet administration, suppressed again by the Soviet Union, then used by the pre-Lukashenko independent Belarus before the president changed it back to something similar to the Soviet-Era state flag.

Mark Smulian

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Photographs: Cover borrowed from Valzhyn, Liberal International, Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett



LIBG 2020 PROGRAMME



A programme of events for LIBG has been organised by the executive for the rest of the year. It is intended that these will be held physically at the National Liberal Club starting at 6.30pm in each case, but also broadcast online. These arrangements will obviously depend on both corona virus restrictions and technology.

Details of online access, speakers and exact subjects will be announced nearer the time for each. Please check the forthcoming events link on the LIBG website, www.libg.co.uk

The events are:

12 October

The United Nations at 75: why - and how – should it be reformed?

As the UN marks its 75th year, even its supporters know it must be reformed. The veto power of the Permanent Five on the Security Council often stops the enforcement of international humanitarian law. And the Global South seeks a bigger voice in decision-making. But what can be done to make the wider UN System, with its many agencies, more effective? Our panel of speakers have intimate knowledge of UN institutions. Please join them as they chart a way to strengthen the power of multilateral action.

Professor Allan Rock, former Canadian ambassador to the UN

Aicha Elbasri, former UN spokesperson in Darfur and whistle-blower

Hillel Neuer, Executive Director of United Nations Watch, a Swiss human rights organization

Professor Myles Wickstead, Chair, Visiting Professor (International Relations), King's College London
Time

Oct 12, 2020 06:30 PM in [London](#)

Register for the webinar at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mEvmgp0UReKFtOSd5FK-PA

9 November 6.30pm

Annual General Meeting (postponed from July due to pandemic restrictions) followed by a speaker meeting at 7.00pm

7 December

What's happening to the USA's global position and what are the threats?

The United Nations at 75: why - and how – should it be reformed?

October 12th 2020

London 6:30 PM | Europe 7:30 PM
USA East Coast 1:30 PM | West Coast 10:30 AM

[CLICK HERE](#) to register
or visit www.bit.ly/LIBGWebinar



Professor Allan Rock

former Canadian ambassador to the UN



Aicha Elbasri

former UN spokesperson in Darfur
and whistle-blower



Hillel Neuer

Executive Director of United Nations Watch,
a Swiss human rights organization



Professor Myles Wickstead | Chair

Visiting Professor (International Relations),
King's College London

Liberal international British Group

| www.libg.co.uk

For webinar registration concerns, email tinsleyrc@aol.com



2020 Isaiah Berlin Lecture: The 10 Commandments of Isaiah Berlin – Henry Hardy



**Date: 14 October
2020**

**Time: 14:00 –
15:00 [UK Time]**

Live on Liberal International's [Facebook page](#).

Keynote speaker: Henry Hardy

Henry Hardy is an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford. He is Isaiah Berlin's principal editor, and one of his literary trustees. He began editing Berlin's work in 1974 as a graduate student at Wolfson. He was a commissioning editor at Oxford University Press from 1977 to 1990, and has been working full time on Berlin since 1990. He has edited or co-edited eighteen of Berlin's books, as well as a four-volume edition of his letters. His memoir of working with Berlin, *In Search of Isaiah Berlin: A Literary Adventure*, was published in 2018. He is also the editor of *The Book of Isaiah: Personal Impressions of Isaiah Berlin* (2009).

Welcome remarks – Dr. Hakima el Haité,
Liberal International President

Chair – Prof. Lord Alderdice, Liberal
International President of Honour



Sir Isaiah Berlin was one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century – a man who set ideas on fire. His defence of liberty and plurality was passionate and persuasive and inspired a generation. His ideas – especially his reasoned rejection of excessive certainty and political despotism – have become even more prescient and vital today.



— Liberal International supports —
Lebanon 2.0 & Min Beib la Beib's relief effort



Light up
BEIRUT

Help Liberal International help Lebanon

DONATE

The global liberal family, supporting an initiative from the Lebanese students of our democratic training academy programme, is asking for your help to raise funds for the families worst-affected by the Beirut blast.



www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0

Young Liberal leaders organise support for Lebanon

The explosion in Lebanon on August 4th shocked the world; entire neighbourhoods of the city were wiped out in seconds, leaving thousands upon thousands injured and hundreds dead or missing. The damage is extensive and the Lebanese people are in need of support through this difficult time. Please donate at the link below:

<https://www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0>

Lukashenko knows only one weapon: threats.

Julia Mickiewicz

As protests calling for free and fair elections and the resignation of Alexander Lukashenko, the dictator who has held power in the country for 26 years, continue across Belarus, Liberal International brought together Julia Mickiewicz of the Coordination Council of the Belarusian opposition and LI Human Rights Committee Chair Astrid Thors to discuss the latest developments in the country. Julia Mickiewicz joined the conversation directly from Minsk, Belarus.

“We have a fighting spirit and we are definitely going to continue,” Julia Mickiewicz said, explaining that in addition to the protests a wide range of strikes are taking place at factories and universities across Belarus. She explained that in many ways the situation is still the same as it has been for the past months, with daily protests everywhere in the country. Echoing the comments of Olga Karatch in Liberal International’s previous webinar, she urged western governments to stop funding Lukashenko’s regime. “In the last 2-3 years there was a very fruitful dialogue between the EU and Belarus, and lots of EU aid money was spent on different Belarusian state institutions. One of our requests to the international community is about economic sanctions, to stop giving money to the regime,” she said.

Commenting the fact that Lukashenko has not been included on the list of individuals sanctioned by the EU, Julia Mickiewicz said that “Lukashenko is the number one criminal in this country and he should be on the sanctions list, but I understand why he was excluded.”

Conveying her shock at the images of innocent people being brutally detained that have consistently been emerging from Belarus, Astrid Thors asked how much the Coordination Council knows about how many have been detained and how they are treated.

In her response, Julia Mickiewicz stressed that Belarus is in a state of legal collapse. She explained that arrests are being carried out not only by uniformed police officers, but also by people in civilian clothing who refuse to disclose who they are or why you are being arrested or beaten. The protestors have also noticed the presence of infiltrators, some of them Russian, who try to incite violence during demonstrations to discredit the peaceful nature of the demonstrations.

“Lukashenko lives in another reality; he doesn’t really know or understand what is happening in the country. He either refuses to recognise what is happening or does not understand it. He knows only one weapon: threatening the people,” she said.

During the protests, certain members of the Coordination Council have been particularly prominent, and Astrid Thors asked about the latest developments for author and Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich and Maria Kalesnikava, who was detained on the border after destroying her passport to stop her own deportation. Julia Mickiewicz confirmed that Alexievich is safe in Germany, and that relatives and friends have been receiving communications from Kalesnikava who remains in custody. “Maria’s letters have asked us to continue, continue, continue and never give up. She reminds us to believe and remember that we are incredible,” she said.

When asked what individuals and activists in other countries can do to help the protests in Belarus, Julia Mickiewicz thanked for all the support the movement has been receiving from supporters in other countries. “Write about what is happening, talk to your friends, remember us. It shows the authorities that we are not alone, and that you believe us and stand with us,” she concluded.

To watch the webinar go to

<https://www.facebook.com/LiberalInternational/videos/337716484156166>

LGBT+ Rights in Poland & Hungary.

Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett

It was a pleasure to Chair our first collaboration between LIBG, LDEG(Liberal Democrat European Group) and LGBT+ Liberal Democrats on LGBT+ rights with three fabulous speakers, Katalin Cseh, Hungarian MEP from the Momentum Party, (part of Renew Europe), Jarek Kubiak and Magda Oldziejewska who are both Polish activists based in London trying to establish support and solidarity for their LGBT+ friends in Poland.



The discussion focussed on the need for international solidarity and to create a new movement of forces in order to counteract the increase in the past decade or so whereby the rise of far-right activists globally have interconnected forces with funding, educational institutions, religious support and political parties to back them up in their pursuit of denying LGBT rights around the world.

Katalin alongside her Hungarian MEP colleagues including Anna Donath have been fighting the retrograde steps that Hungary has been taking with for example rejection of transgender rights earlier this year under President Urban. In Poland, the recent re-election of President Duda, and his openly homophobic comments, along with the LGBT free zones has meant a severe step backwards to that which had been experienced during the period 2005-2015, commented on by Liberal Democrat Councillor from Leamington Spa, Daniel Russell who lived there with his Polish boyfriend and felt things had improved, but these recent backward steps which is why Jarek, established the Facebook group Polish Rainbow in UK, with multiple demonstrations outside the Polish Embassy in August for which I attended to show my support with our LGBT+ brothers and sisters both here and in Poland.

Magda, a queer Polish activist in London, has also been organising rallies for the past five years in solidarity with feminist, pro-democratic and LGBT+ communities recognising that this danger to human rights is not only just LGBT rights but also women's rights around abortion laws and the general crackdown

on democratic rights, and rise of authoritarian governments not only in Hungary and Poland but also outside the EU in Belarus and Russia.

We urgently need to recognise the seriousness of this threat and the need to organise on an international scale to counter this dangerous trend. In order to facilitate the knowledge sharing from our webinar, I am including links to read from all our speakers and there will be a follow up task force being put together to concentrate our work on this issue.

Resources and Social Media links for learning about and supporting LGBT+ activists in Poland and Hungary

- The Feminist Library, <https://feministlibrary.co.uk>
- Stop Bzdurom, <https://www.facebook.com/stopbzdurom>
- “Worse than Communism and Nazism put together” - War on Gender in Poland, https://www.academia.edu/21504550/Worse_than_communism_and_nazism_put_together_War_on_Gender_in_Poland
- Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe, <https://core.ac.uk/reader/160110010>
- All Out - To Poland With Love, <https://action.allout.org/en/a/to-poland-with-love/>
- Open Democracy - How a harsh Polish abortion bill sparked women’s strikes around the world, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/how-a-harsh-polish-abortion-bill-sparked-womens-strikes-around-the-world/>
- City for LGBT+, <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/w9epagub/register>
- Campaign to create ‘equality homes’ in Poland, <https://zrzutka.pl/2bkztk>

Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett

Chair of Liberal International British Group

The LIBG Virtual Forum on LGBT+ rights event on Poland & Hungary took place on 2nd October 2020

Liberal International calls for female representation in Somali elections at UN HRC

On 2nd October, the Somali authorities published the timetable for the parliamentary and presidential elections taking place in 2020 and 2021. Throughout the month of December, candidates to the two chambers of parliament will be elected.

It was previously anticipated that these elections would be the first direct elections on the basis of one person, one vote since 1969. However, the Somali authorities have decided to hold the elections under the previous system, which relies on clan elders or other delegates, almost all of whom are male, to select representatives. This results in a process where 99% of the population have no vote.

In a written statement to the 45th Session of the UNHRC, Liberal International has called for the electoral process and its international supporters to respect the 30% female quota guaranteed by the Somali Constitution. LI also calls for female representatives to be included in Cabinet positions as well as in other public authorities, such as the judiciary system and the police force.



The full statement can be found at

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/250/46/PDF/G2025046.pdf?OpenElement>

Liberal Democrats overwhelmingly carried the policy motion on Hong Kong

Larry Ngan

We are glad to learn that during the Autumn Conference of the Liberal Democrats, a motion was tabled to debate on their Hong Kong policy.

In the motion, the conference called for:

1. Expand proposals so **all Hong Kongers are given right of abode** and a pathway to citizenship in the UK.
2. Develop an **international ‘lifeboat’ system** if the situation in Hong Kong deteriorates.
3. Secure a transparent, independent **investigation into the protests**, including into police violence.
4. Call for the appointment of an UN special envoy or rapporteur on Hong Kong.
5. Work with other countries to encourage Beijing to **retract the new security law**.
6. Enact Magnitsky legislation and hold **Hong Kong and Chinese officials to account for any gross breaches of human rights**.
- 7.

The motion was carried by the margin of 397 to 6, and is now an official policy of the party.

The content of this motion coincided with those in the upcoming private member bill (The Hong Kong Bill 2019-2021) tabled by Rt. Hon. Alistair Carmichael MP our Home Affairs Spokesperson, which will be scheduled for 2nd reading on 25th October.

Speaking in supporting the motion and the ‘The Hong Kong Bill’, our proposer of the motion, Carmichael, said, ‘There is no points for introducing the Magnitsky Sanction if we are not prepared to use it.... I said that to you Prime Minister again, now it’s the time for your actions to match your rhetoric. There is a bill in the parliament supported by the millions... Stick it up, give your time, and turn it into law.’

Cofounder of Friends of Hong Kong, Nicholas Chan from Sevenoaks, says “We can no longer allow China to suppress our free speech, our free identity, we can no longer allow the Peking government to tarnish the image of ordinary citizens, no matter anywhere in the world or in China ... as Alistair has pointed out in his Hong Kong Bill that would be put forward on the 25th October. If we are sceptical on providing Hong Kongers a safe haven, then we are saying we are unconvinced about our unique policy – the Kindert-ransport. That policy helped no less than ten thousand Jewish children during the Second World War. They were young children saved by us in this country, from their destructed homes afar. Also indeed, through the Magnitsky action we will put forward our duty as Liberal Democrats for the oppressed. If this amendment would be supported, we would be a truly global Britain and standwithhongkong.”

As the other cofounder of Friends of Hong Kong, we believe, the Hong Kong government is bleeding the life stream of the city to death: this city is unique because of its belief in democracy and liberal values, its judiciary independence, creativity coming from freedom of speech, and its public safety.

Hong Kong’s legislative assembly was to be elected with universal suffrages under the Basic Law (the constitution of HKSAR). Yet, Beijing kept deferring the adoption of wider suffrage. Worse, there are vote bribing in early years, and in recent years by threatening individual candidates through blackmailing. In all elections coaches arrive at polling stations organised by Chinese companies and gifts were handed out to voters. On September 2020 the election was postponed altogether. The excuse was COVID 19 though the city suffered a much lower infection and mortality rate than countries like Singapore which had their general elections held without delay.

Was Hong Kong less democratic during British administration? No. Hong Kongers used to have county level elections (there were a municipal council for urban affairs and another for rural affairs) before the handover, but this was taken away as part of Beijing's agenda. Furthermore, Hong Kongers were promised the same elected 1995 Legislative Council to be carried over during the handover, but this was taken away by Beijing and replaced with an appointed provisional legislature on 1 July 1997. This represents the beginning of China's flagrant violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The action from the Hong Kong government is erasing the judicial independence from existence. First the National Security Law ('NSL') enabled Hong Kong and Chinese authorities to by-pass the Hong Kong Judicial system in order to prosecute. The civil right to demand a court search warrant was also deprived. Suspects of any nationality can be extradited to Mainland China without going through the HK legal proceedings. The Hong Kong government also put political pressure on the judges and staff in the judiciary so they would not challenge government decisions on the matter. In fact, the imposed national security law enforces the HK government to provide any assistance as demanded by Beijing.

The draconian NSL also suppressed the freedom of speech by unfettered arrests and putting political censorship on mass media. The owner of the most predominant opposition newspaper Apple Daily, Jimmy Lai, was arrested with violating the National Security Law. The headquarters of Apple Daily was ransacked by the Hong Kong Police on the very same day. Recently, the government redefined the definition of journalists in order to kill off the press who are critics of government policies.

The Police also made targeted arrests on young people. When the National Security Law was first imposed, a 15 year old was charged on the very same day for violating the law. Young people being stopped by police in public spaces became a daily routine in the city. Some are as young as 12 years old, arrested for 'Possession of offensive weapon', just because they went for stationary shopping or going to school. The young and ordinary citizens are no longer feeling safe to carry their daily routine at all.

The research from the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (www.pori.hk/pop-poll/hksarg/h005 and www.pori.hk/pop-poll/hksarg/h004) shows a consistent decline of satisfaction. It was a net value of -11.4% right after the handover (23/09/1997) and currently stands at -43.4% (17/04/2020). Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Government's performance on protecting human rights and freedom went from a net of -0.7% at the handover to -38.6% this year.

The persistent negative values in polls means seemingly immoderate measures such as Magnitsky sanctions that Hong Kongers and our allies call for are proportionate responses. Hong Kongers call for governments around the world to implement such sanctions to remedy the gross breaches of human rights.

We should keep in mind: most of these senior government officials and police officers committing such brutality and suppression have British citizenship, yet the British government remained passive on taking any active action. What this motion can do is to hold them into account through independent investigation under international observers, and impose sanctions empowered by our current legislation.

We, Friends of Hong Kong, supported this motion not only because we support civil right movements in the city, but as Hong Kongers we do not want our city to lose our uniqueness. Therefore, we will try to do everything we can no matter how little we can achieve to protect our identity. #Standwithhongkong

Larry Ngan

Larry Ngan is Co-founder of Friends of Hong Kong and Data Officer, Brent Liberal Democrats

Hong Kong Motion passed at 1st LibDem Virtual Conference. Cllr. Marguerita Morton

"Conference I am a Councillor from Tunbridge Wells and a member of the Chinese Liberal Democrats. I am British citizen of ethnic Chinese origin, living in the UK, since 1964. I came to this country as a child of 11 because my adopted parents thought coming to live in the UK would be a better future for me and for my educational development.

When I left HK, it was not a democracy in any sense of the word. It is right to point out that in the 155 years since China was forced to cede HK to Britain in an unequal treaty after the Opium wars, it was never given universal suffrage.

The Chinese people living in HK made up about 94% of the population. They were mostly refugees fleeing from China seeking a better future for themselves and their children.

It is probably an unknown fact that the Chinese Communists supported the British during the Second World War and acted as spies for them warning of the coming Japanese invasion. In spite of this, Britain supported Chiang Kai Chek, a Nationalist, after the war. By and large, the people of HK went about their business and cared very little about its governance. They were happy to live in peace, to be able to set up businesses and to prosper.

The new generation, who have not experienced British rule since 1997, did not experience the prejudice that was based on the colour of ones' skin. The Chinese were excluded from educational opportunities, top jobs, membership of clubs and even inter racial marriage before WW2.

Despite all of the terrible history of HK, I would still vote for the motion because the one thing that I care about most is protection of international human rights. Political, economic, cultural, social and family rights and freedoms and the freedom of person are written into The Sino-British Joint Declaration. The special features in the provisions concerning Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms in the Basic Law boil down to the following two basic points:

- (1) The law provides multi-level protection for Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms.
- (2) The law provides for the Chief Executive to be the head of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and accountable to the Central People's Government.

Whilst I agree with one of our speakers that the Security Law has legitimacy under the Basic Law, it does not give free rein to the Central People's Government to trample all over the rights and freedoms of Hong Kongers by use of such draconian measures.

Conference, I will therefore ask you to vote to support the Motion and the Amendment."

Extract of a 3 minute speech by **Cllr Marguerita Morton at the Conference**

The full text of the motion is set out below:

Conference notes that:

- i) The UK and China signed the Sino-British Declaration in 1984; it was lodged at the United Nations, and included a 50 year long commitment to ensure that Hong Kong functions under a 'one country, two systems' framework in order to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.
- ii) The late Lord Ashdown campaigned to provide the right of abode to the people of Hong Kong if China ever reneged on the promises enshrined in the Handover Declaration.
- iii) In the last 18 months, up to two million people, across different socio-economic backgrounds, have taken to the streets of Hong Kong, calling for democratic reforms as well as protesting against the Extradition Bill introduced in February 2019.
- iv) Investigations by the Hong Kong government's Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) into reports of police use of rubber bullets, tear gas, water cannons, and firing live ammunition lacked the power to subpoena witnesses, and a panel of foreign experts working on the investigation stood down after they claimed their concerns went unresolved.
- v) Beijing passed the 'national security law' on 30 June 2020; the law criminalises activities including undermining the power of the central government, as well as giving the National Peoples' Congress the power of interpretation of Hong Kong law.
- vi) The UK Government have stated that the law is a violation of the Joint Declaration, and have pledged that British National (Overseas) status holders and their dependents will be eligible to live and work in the UK for five years, after which time they can apply for settled status, and after a further year, seek citizenship.
- vii) There are currently almost three million BNO status holders and dependents; the BNO status scheme closed in 1997 and the status cannot be inherited, so many young Hong Kongers are not eligible.
- viii) Conference regrets that, following the disqualification of 12 candidates, including six elected politicians, the Hong Kong government has postponed the holding of Legislative Council elections scheduled for 6 September 2020 for a year on the pretext of safety concerns over COVID-19; the use of the new security law to eliminate political opponents serves to undermine the rights of Hong Kong people to freely choose their political representatives.

Conference believes that:

- a) The UK has a moral and legal duty to ensure that democracy, the rule of law and human rights are upheld in Hong Kong.
- b) The UK must stand with the people of Hong Kong in their fight for human rights, calling for an independent investigation into police violence, and for universal suffrage in fair elections.
- c) The so-called security law represents a flagrant violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the UK must therefore ensure the people of Hong Kong have the right to live in the UK so that their rights and freedoms are protected.

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Expand their proposals so that all Hong Kongers are given the right of abode and a pathway to citizenship, regardless of whether or not they have BNO status; as well as to provide an international 'lifeboat' system if the situation in the region deteriorates.

2. Help ensure a truly transparent, independent investigation into the protests, including police violence in the region; and to call for the appointment of a UN Special Envoy or Rapporteur on Hong Kong.
3. Work with other countries, including the G7 and the EU, to encourage Beijing to retract the 'security law', which contravenes the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
4. Enact Magnitsky legislation and encourage mutual action from other countries to hold Hong Kong and Chinese officials responsible to account in the event of any gross breaches of human rights in Hong Kong.
5. Monitor the impact of the new security law on the rights and freedoms guaranteed the people of Hong Kong under the Joint Declaration and use its influence to persuade the Hong Kong government to hold legitimate Legislative Council elections as soon as possible.

Diplomats' Briefings at Conference

Traditionally, daily briefings with leading Party figures take place at autumn conference for registered diplomats. Members of the Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) can also attend these. This time, there were just two such briefings, online, the first with Layla Moran MP and Baroness Lindsay Northover (Foreign Affairs spokesperson in the Commons and Lords) and the second with Baroness Shas Sheehan (International Development spokesperson in the Lords).

Only a dozen diplomats registered for the virtual conference, but one hopes that figures will revert to much higher levels once we are back to an "in-person" or blended format.

FIRC as usual held a committee meeting on the Sunday afternoon and was pleased to note how recent efforts by FIRC's Europe/Brexit sub-committee (CEUB) had strongly influenced the Europe motion passed by Conference, reiterating the Party's belief that the UK should be part of the EU and looking forward to regaining membership at some time in the future.

Jonathan Fryer
Chair, FIRC



The Balfour Project



Jerusalem: From Past Divisions to a Shared Future?

Tuesday 27th October 2020

10am - 6pm GMT

[Click here](#) to reserve your place at our one-day online conference.

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RuLBQvBPTQWg6TUiqJkA5g

The conference is free but please [consider a donation](#) to the charity to keep us going.

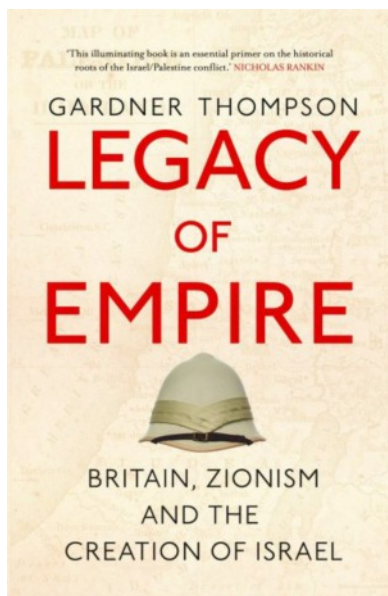
reviews

Legacy of Empire: Britain, Zionism and the Creation of Israel, Gardner Thompson.
Saqi Books 2019 £20.00 isbn 9780863563614

On 18 February 1947 the Labour Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, stood up in the House of Commons and declared, “We have reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem [of Palestine] to the judgement of the United Nations. We shall explain that the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, and that the obligations undertaken to the two communities in Palestine have been shown to be irreconcilable.” Those obligations had been set out 30 years earlier in the deceptively brief Balfour Declaration, which was in the form of a letter from the then (Conservative) Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, to a leading member of the UK’s Jewish community, Lord Rothschild, stating, “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, *it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.*” [my italics] For three decades successive British governments (and their representatives on the ground following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War) had struggled to reconcile those irreconcilables, trying to appease both the Zionists, who had won the backing of Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George for their “return” to the historic land of Israel, and the Palestinian

Arabs who were alarmed by the growing immigration of predominantly European Jews into Palestine. That alarm turned to outright hostility in the mid-1930s and in true colonial fashion, the British administration put down the consequent Arab Revolt forcefully, while at the same time sending messages to London that a further Jewish influx would only inflame the situation.

But after the Second World War, a mixture of collective sympathy and guilt over how appallingly Jews had suffered under Nazi rule — even worse than under earlier Russian and eastern European pogroms — as well as a nimby-esque policy of wishing to limit the amount of Jewish immigration into Britain and North America, led almost inevitably to the creation not of a Jewish homeland within Palestine but of the Jewish state of Israel in a substantial part of the previously mandated territory. Partition (as happened simultaneously in the case of India and Pakistan) seemed to be the only logical way forward, and that is what the fledgling United Nations decided after Britain threw in the towel.



This is the context for Gardner Thompson’s admirable history of Britain, Zionism and the Creation of Israel, *Legacy of Empire*. Unlike many books written about what would become designated as the Israel-Palestine conflict Thompson’s eschews polemic, instead adopting a cool, rational approach and a judicious, critical use of a wide range of diverse sources. Some readers may be disappointed that the author does not overtly take sides regarding Zionism itself, though it is hard not to be shocked by the stated Euro-centric view of “the Arab” from Chaim Weizmann (who would become Israel’s first President): “His laziness and primitivism turn a flourishing garden into a desert.” It was Weizmann, too, who articulated a plan (communicated in 1941 to the Soviet Ambassador in London) “to move a million Arabs now living in Palestine to Iraq, and to settle 4 or 5 million Jews from Poland on the land which the Arabs had been occupying.” That wasn’t quite what happened in the event, but the extent of Palestinian dispossession in 1947-1948 was on a similar scale; small wonder Palestinians still today refer to it as the *naqba* or Catastrophe and see it in terms of ethnic cleansing. Because of the very irreconcilables mentioned earlier, there were bound to be winners and losers, whatever happened.

Frequently the whole issue of Israel-Palestine is shrugged off as being impossibly complicated, as well as insoluble, but as Noam Chomsky (quoted by Thompson) has said, although the world treats it as a multifaceted and complex story, it is in fact “a simple story of colonialism and dispossession.” The great virtue of this book is that the reader is provided with the tools necessary to understand how colonialism was a determining factor in the territory’s destiny a century ago, as it remains today.

Jonathan Fryer

**London’s Lost Music Venues by Paul Talling
Damaged Goods Books 2020 £14.99**

This is the perfect book for an ageing hippy or an ageing punk, or anyone who wishes they had been. Paul Talling is ‘Derelict London’, author of the eponymous books, website and walks. He is a former manager, promoter and record producer in the punk era so has considerable personal knowledge of his subject. This book has been in gestation for a long time as regulars on his walks know! It is a considerable work of research with photos and old tickets from gigs of yore.

The book consists of photos and brief histories of around 130 ‘lost’ smaller live music venues all over London. Some are well-known e.g. Eel Pie Island, the Marquee club - others probably less so other than to immediate locals.

Most of the venues were pubs of which many have been turned into flats. A few have changed into boutique bars. Some have disappeared completely to be replaced by more flats, shopping centres or one implausibly turned into a police station. The photos reflect what splendid buildings so many of the old pubs are or were.

Rod Stewart and Reg Dwight seem to have played in every pub in London. The lost venues hosted plenty of other major stars not just before they were famous but when they were – the Supremes in the Ricky Tick in Hounslow! More obscure acts included Thatcher on Acid, Screaming Custard, Ken Dodd’s Dad’s Dog’s Dead and Angela Rippon’s Bum. I can’t think why they didn’t make it.

Familiar to the regulars on the Paul Talling walks are his stories of violence and mayhem e.g. ‘110 people were hospitalised and the venue was burned down after being petrol bombed’; ‘the band were attacked by skinheads with pickaxes as they unloaded their gear . . . the attackers were beaten off with the help of Irish workmen drinking in the public bar’; ‘Bourbonese Qualk subsequently performed behind coils of barbed wire armed with crowbars and baseball bats as a defence measure’. ‘I got kicked out of there . . .for being drunk and disorderly and throwing another lairy gig-goer across a table full of the venue manager’s mate’s drinks’.

As a footnote It’s nice to see the section on east London near the front of the book not placed at the back as every other book about London does.

I wonder what will be the historic music venues post-COVID. Photos of dozens of back bedrooms? Paul Talling says in the Introduction that he isn’t writing social history. But he is! In a most entertaining way. History doesn’t have to be boring – read this book and see.

Gwyneth Deakins

It is worth checking out the Damaged Goods website <https://damagedgoods.co.uk/> they are primarily a record label, where you can find many of the sons and daughters of ’77 – The Lurkers, The Pork Dukes, The Revillos... and keep up with the action.



Extraordinary Virtual Congress

As announced earlier this year, the onset of COVID19 caused Liberal International – like many global organisations – to postpone our international events, specifically our 63rd congress. This was not a decision we took lightly but with the interests for the health and safety of you, our membership, foremost in our minds.

In these unprecedented times and with the physical meeting of our 63rd congress still postponed we must act again, now, to ensure that we are compliant with our statutes and constitutional obligations.

Among other duties, Liberal International is bound by our constitution to convene a congress every 2 years – which at present means ahead of December 2020. With an in-person meeting no longer feasible this year owing to the pandemic, the LI Bureau has approved a process for calling a **1 hour-long virtual extraordinary congress** to be held. This meeting will centre solely on resolving the *essential administrative matters of LI*.

Date

Tuesday **20th October 2020** at 15:00-16:00 BST/UK-time.

Register

We are asking member parties to be conscious of the size of their delegations due to the ‘virtual space’ in Microsoft Teams – of course, the administrative session will primarily be held to announce the results of the online voting, which will be live on Tuesday 29 September. After wider consultation, 1 authorised party representative will be required to cast their vote on behalf of the party. Voting will close on Sunday, 18 October 2020.

Registration opens on Monday, 14 September and closes on Tuesday, 6 October 2020* Is Password protected – To register please contact your party’s International Officer

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/liberal-international-extraordinary-virtual-congress-tickets-120525786873>

Venue

Congress will be convened virtually using the video conferencing platform, Microsoft Teams. To facilitate a smooth experience please download Microsoft Teams in advance by clicking the button on the LI website.

<https://liberal-international.org/what-we-do/events/congress-meetings/extraordinary-virtual-congress/>

Programme of events

An exciting programme of political events will be published soon.

Please note that all events advertised are promoted in British Summer Time (GMT+1). Event timings will revert to GMT after 25th October.

Process

The purpose of this extraordinary congress meeting is to ensure that – despite COVID19 and the enormous limitations imposed on our international federation by the global pandemic – LI remains compliant with its constitutional statutes and obligations to you, our members. Starting at 15:00 BST on Tuesday 20 October, a brief virtual executive committee meeting will precede the virtual congress. Please see this important process that will lead up to this meeting.

Important deadlines

- Monday 14 September – Registration opens
- Tuesday 15 September – Statutory documents circulated to international officers
- Tuesday 29 September – Digital voting form circulated to international officers
- Wednesday 14 October – (Extended) Registration closes
- Sunday 18 October – Voting closes
- Tuesday 20 October – Virtual congress administrative session on Microsoft Teams – links shared with registered delegates only

FAQs

Registration:

1. **Why is LI holding this virtual congress now?** The purpose of this extraordinary congress meeting is to ensure that – despite COVID19 and the enormous limitations imposed on our international federation by the global pandemic – LI remains compliant with its constitutional statutes and obligations to you, our members.
2. **Why must I register in advance for a virtual congress?** Registering in advance will allow the LI Secretariat to know which of our members will attend allowing us to vet and allocate unique voting codes specific to one party representative.
3. **How many people from my party can register?** We ask parties to be conscious of the size of their delegations – of course, the administrative session will primarily be held to announce the results of the online voting form. This is due to the Microsoft Teams platform we will be using as they have a limited number of ‘virtual space’ in order to join the meeting.

Voting:

4. **Can I vote?** All parties or groups with full member status are entitled to vote, as per [the LI constitution](#). If your party is not entitled to vote you will still be eligible to attend the virtual congress administrative session on 20th October, if you reserve your ticket in advance.
5. **How does my party vote?** Three weeks ahead of the congress, your party’s international officer will receive a digital voting form (available in the three official languages of Liberal International). Your party’s nominated voter will complete a declaration confirming that s/he is empowered to vote on the three essential questions that LI will put to the membership. Once the questions have been answered your form is submitted and your party’s votes allocated according to your preference. It is advised that consultation within your party on the questions being tabled take place ahead of submitting your vote.
6. **Who can vote?** Emails will be shared with the international officers of our member parties. In consultation with their member party, one person will be asked to complete the voting form and cast their party’s votes, as is typical an in-person congress. The person completing the form will be asked to confirm that they are eligible to vote on behalf of their party. The LI secretariat may contact a party’s international office to confirm the credentials of a person who has completed the voting form.
7. **What questions will we feature in voting on and why?** The voting form will ask voting members of the LI Congress and Executive Committees to approve three questions.
 - i) In order to remain compliant with the [LI standing orders](#), Congress will be asked to approve three scrutineers to ensure that the votes are accurately counted and recorded.
 - ii) The constitutional reform committee chairman will present congress with the full and final version of the constitutional amendments, on which Congress will be asked to vote. This will conclude a 2-year process of streamlining the LI statutes and making them fit for purpose as LI develops into a stronger, more global organisation appealing to new parties and partners.
 - iii) Voting members of the Executive Committee will be asked by the LI treasurers to review and approve the LI budget for 2021.
 - vi) The acting secretary-general will ask the membership to extend the LI statutes by 12 months, owing to COVID making in-person meetings impossible in 2020. LI must, according to its existing statutes convene a congress every 2 years. With this not possible in the traditional manner, the congress, as the highest decision-making body of the Federation may approve an extension.
8. **Will anyone know how I have voted?** Voting at in-person congresses is done publicly in plenary. The digital congress will, through the voting form shared with your party 3 weeks prior to the congress meeting, not be public. While the membership will hear the final outcome of the votes on 20th October, on this occasion only the election scrutineers will see how individual parties have voted.

9. **When will the results be announced?** The results of the voting will be declared during the extraordinary virtual congress administrative session, which will be held at 15:00 Uk-time on 20th October 2020.
10. **How do I ask a question?** The secretariat invites questions related to the process or format of the virtual congress ahead of time – [contact us via email here](#). However, the challenges LI faces – widely varying timezones, possibly poor internet connections, etc – mean that questions related to the queries related to questions on the voting form cannot be addressed during the administrative session – not least because this virtual meeting is centred on announcing the results.
11. **How long will I have to vote?** We recommend reviewing the questions with you party in advance and completing the voting form in one sitting. Once submitted, votes cannot be amended. Voting will close on Sunday 18 October 2020.
12. **How are the votes counted?** Votes will be counted by the election scrutineers appointed by the LI executive committee & the LI congress.
13. **Will my party receive the same amount of votes as the last congress?** Every party's votes are checked between statutory events. They are calculated according to a specific formula which includes factors such as the number of members and parliamentary representation among others.

Congress:

14. **I'm interested in joining the administrative meeting... but how do I take part?** In order to partake in the Congress administrative meeting, we recommend that at least one party representative be present. We are asking parties to be conscious about the size of their delegations. This is due to a limited amount of space in the virtual meeting. Nonetheless, you will have to register via Eventbrite, the access code will be shared with your party's International Officer.
15. **Will there be any political component to this virtual congress?** In fact, over the course of the congress period, LI will feature more political fringe events than ever! Look out for our fantastic digital lineup happening throughout October.
16. **The admin session is only 1 hour long? What format will the meeting take?** The format will be virtual, via Microsoft Teams. A detailed agenda can be found in the programme [TBC]
17. **Why aren't you presenting new members and bureau candidates at this congress?** Due to COVID19 this meeting will deal only with the essential administrative functions of Liberal International.
18. **Will there be an executive committee meeting?** Yes, a short an essential executive committee meeting at 15:00 UK time on Tuesday 20th October will precede the virtual congress. EC delegates will also be asked to vote when the online voting form is circulated on the 29 September.