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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Haiti South Africa USA Georgia

EVENTS

21st August Celebration of acquittal of Senator Leila de Lima (24th June), Filipino political prisoner. Mama Geny's, 1 Cambridge Gardens, Hastings TN34 1EH (tel: 07968 845426 in advance please). 6.30pm

31st August "Internationalism in a troubled World" Royal Scots Club in Edinburgh. 12.00-14.00 see page 11.

14th-17th September Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Brighton

29th November-1st December 64th Congress of Liberal International. See page 2024-01 or LI website.

For bookings & other information please contact LIBG below.*

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

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Photographs – Bent Nicolajsen, Liberal International, Stephen Brogan.

Cover Photograph – Democratic Alliance's final rally in Johannesburg 26th May, before South Africa's historic election, by Bent Nicolajsen



Deadline for interLib 2024-03 Conference print edition is 26th August 2024. Online edition 9th September 2024. Articles related to international debates or fringe events welcome. Volunteers are needed for the LIBG stall at conference.



LIBG Conference Fringe Event



Trump, Harris and the Future of Transatlantic Cooperation

**Saturday, 14th Sept at 1.00pm
(Grand Hotel, Regent Room):**

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The outcome of the U.S. presidential elections in November will determine not only the future political ties between the U.S. and the UK, but has wider implications for NATO, EU and UK security and defence cooperation, the war in Ukraine and the response to this war in the EU and UK. Join LIBG for a panel discussion with U.S. political analyst Mark Bergman, Caroline Voaden MP, (other panellists to be confirmed) and Irina von Wiese, Chair of LIBG.

Liberal International British Group

Haiti après émeute

Sherly Fabre

The situation in Haiti today is dire and a lot of Haitians at home and in the diaspora are horrified when they think of what lies ahead for them and their loved ones. The same foreign powers responsible for the disastrous state of Haiti, are now asking Haitians to believe that more foreign intervention -which has not worked and caused more problems and death in the past - will now resolve the crisis.

What will happen if the past is prologue is that troops are going to go into poor neighbourhoods and start shooting, men women and children will be affected by this. Many people who have no connection to the gangs will be affected. Because the Biden administration doesn't want to have American troops carrying out these attacks they sent Kenya, a country that until August 2023 had no ties or diplomatic relations to Haiti.

The US is exploiting Kenya's need for aid to get Kenya to Haiti to do the US's political bidding. This move is so wildly unpopular in Kenya a Kenyan minister recently stated that they are doing this for the money, in a bid to try to get public backing.

What is not being talked about is the fact that we now have a transitional council in Haiti that could have decided if and how we want international help; however, sending Kenya in now will only help the status quo that got us into this situation in the first place.

The Haitian people as well as Haitian grassroots organizations want a chance at a real democracy and at real sovereignty by allowing the transitional government the ability and the help it needs to bring stability back to the country without foreign intervention that will surely lead to more bloodshed and displacement. The US is once again attempting to control and manipulate the process in order to maintain elite rule in Haiti.

Instead of the Biden Administration is providing weapons and equipment - military aid to the notoriously repressive Kenyan police they could be provide real aid at most or a hands-off approach at least to assist Haiti in this situation.

Kenyan troops will not bring stability, just more bloodshed. We are all watching this in horror and heartache.

Sherly Fabre

See also:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/hygiene-and-sanitation-keys-epidemic-prevention-among-displaced-populations-port-au-prince-metropolitan-area> 6.8.2024



Another Election; Another World.

Phil Bennion.

In late May of this year I travelled to South Africa representing the Bureau of Liberal International to support our sister party Democratic Alliance in their bid to deprive the ruling ANC of their parliamentary majority, I was joined by fellow LI Vice President Henrik Bach Mortensen who was representing the political foundation of our Danish sister party Venstre, who co-funded the mission with Friedrich Naumann Foundation of the German FDP. Africa Liberal Network (ALN) President Gilbert Ouedragou from Burkina Faso joined us alongside the Danish and German hosts. The main participants were young African politicians already forging political careers in their own countries and the programme was designed to enhance their understanding of free and fair elections from both an institutional and practical perspective. LI delegates known to us over the years were present including Jawad Chafil of Union Constitutionnelle of Morocco and former D66 International Officer Martine van Schoor, who currently works in Malawi. In addition there were delegates from sister parties in Gambia, Ghana, DRC, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, for whom the mission was a serious training and education event. The DA's Penny Tainton directed the programme with insight and good humour throughout.

Our first engagement was the Gauteng DA rally in a stadium in Benoni. Key DA figures were readily available for conversation and I spent some time with both Western Cape Premier Alan Winde and DA leader John Steenhuisen, as well as my previous contacts Solly Msimanga (opposition leader in Gauteng) and my friend Solly Malatsi, who has subsequently become a cabinet minister in the Government of National Unity and is a key contact for us in the DA. One of the questions raised was why the demographic of the rally crowd was so different than that of the political leaders. The DA has a balanced leadership team which includes white, black, mixed race and Asian South African, but the 20000 or so rally attendees were almost entirely young and black. Penny explained that middle class South Africans are not dissimilar to middle class Europeans and raucous mass rallies are just not their thing. Having witnessed the election rallies in Taiwan in January I can appreciate that rallies are a cultural phenomenon. The big parties are in competition with each other in pushing attendance estimates to the media.

Our days were spent mostly in seminars with various speakers. The purpose being to train the young African delegates from around the continent in the delivery of a free and fair election and how a campaign should be organised. Ashor Sarupen (now an MP) gave a detailed account on how to use data in an election campaign. He also explained why the DA had new challenges in growing further as a party, with the need to make inroads into the black vote beyond the urban middle class. He explained the debate within the party on the need or not to have a black leader and why they had decided to take a neutral view on this. All other political parties in South Africa are racially defined and the DA is determined not to be. Over the course of the week it became clear to me that the choice of Steenhuisen was not a retreat into the comfort zone of the white electorate. The two Solly's look like future leaders but neither are quite ready. Msimanga has progressed hugely in the last two years but is leading the party in Gauteng Province and is not in the national legislature. This is clearly his own choice as he is getting the experience of being party leader in the most important province. The other potential leader is Siviwe Gwarube, the DA Chief Whip. She gave us a rundown on the coalition possibilities on the morning after the election before joining the DA team negotiating with the ANC. She has also since joined the cabinet. These three all grew up in the DA and are unlikely to repeat the experience of Mmusi Maimani and Herman Mashaba in splitting and founding their own parties. They range in age between 34 and 44 and are the key figures under Steenhuisen, whom they all back with obvious enthusiasm.

Werner Horn MP gave a session on the electoral system and rules in South Africa. Again it was very clear that there was full confidence in institutions to deliver a free and fair election. In his session he focussed on what the budding African politicians should look out for in terms of voter registration, use of technology, polling station management and potential for intimidation of voters near polling stations.

The most entertaining session was given by freelance governance guru Nick Clelland, currently an author, formerly an MP and campaign director for the Lib Dems under Charles Kennedy. He dealt with disinformation as a global threat, giving numerous examples and proposed that education is the best way of dealing with it. He continued with advice on campaigning and concluded that the best campaign issues are binary; for or against. He stressed that this doesn't mean that liberal politicians should ignore complex

issues, merely that they should focus on the binary ones for campaigns. E.g. Do you want sewage in your rivers? He thinks liberals around the world fail in elections because they choose the complex issues which interest them most for their campaigns. This is misguided. He went through the process of how an effective campaign team should go about identifying these binary issues, then delivering a campaign around them.

On election day we arrived at our first polling station around 20 minutes before it opened, so that we could assess the opening-up process. We had 3 polling stations for our group in the eastern Gauteng former mining areas of Germiston, Benoni and Springs. The first is mainly black but also includes a percentage of whites. The polling area was likely to be majority ANC or MK, but it was within the ward of DA Councillor Neuren Pietersen, who I have also met previously. The second was an Asian majority area, where the locals treated us to cups of sweet milky tea and the third was mixed middle class but mainly white. The first opened late and the third had problems with the online identification, which resulted in queues of 3-4 hours, but otherwise there were no problems. Supporters of different parties got on well and even the party representatives in gazebos nearby were friendly to each other. In Springs I had a good chat with the local DA Councillor and her ANC opponent who seemed to be good pals. We stayed until the polls closed at 9pm. Voters queuing at all of the polling stations were keen to chat with us and younger voters were particularly saying that it was time for change, although some of those may have been attracted by Zuma's populist MK or the radical leftist EFF.

The counting takes place inside each polling station immediately and are chalked up on a board once agreed by the party representatives and two copies of the result signed by all parties. One is posted up for public scrutiny and the other taken to the local election office and only then uploaded onto the electronic results site. Any discrepancy or disagreement can cause delays of a couple of days for some polling stations, but the first results started to trickle in by 1.30am. By the time we got up for breakfast a picture was beginning to form and it was clear that the ANC had lost its majority. Our session with Siviwe was most helpful, as she made it clear that the DA had decided in advance to consider coalition and that she would be one of the negotiators.

I made some good friends on the trip and contacts in our sister parties in all of the countries represented. We kept in contact and all wish the DA success in its mission to "Save South Africa".

Phil Bennion

Phil Bennion is a former MEP and a Voce-President of Liberal International



Biden and Trump

Christine Graf

For better or worse, the United States has a way of producing strange and vivid characters. Every country does. But here they get elected to high office. Years ago, my home state of Minnesota picked a colourful character, the ex-wrestler Jesse “the Body” Ventura, as governor. Jesse now looks like a sober statesman compared to Donald J. Trump, or, as President Joe Biden calls him, the Former Guy.

Few people are stranger than the 45th president of the U.S. At the recent Republican Convention in July, masterminded by Trump, there was a notable lack of elder statesmen on the stage. George W. Bush was not there. Nor were many of those who had held high office during the Trump years: General Mark Kelly and General Mark Milley, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were absent, as was Bill Barr, the Attorney General, which is not surprising, as Trump has suggested he’ll seek “retribution” from them and others for real or imagined slights in a future administration.

It’s clear by now that the Republican Party has become a cult of Trump. Moderate Republicans, the few still out there, avoided the Republican convention: Maine Senator Susan Collins had a “full schedule”, and said she plans to write in the name of Nikki Haley this November. Republican senators Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Todd Young of Indiana also had other commitments. Senator Mitt Romney, the only senator to vote for Trump’s impeachment, stayed home. Rex Tillerson, who served as Secretary of State, was not there. Neither was Secretary of Defense Mark Esper. No doubt the fact that both had written accounts of their experiences with Trump had something to do with their absence. And of course, Vice President Mike Pence, the focus of the angry mob, the mob that Trump encouraged on January 6th, didn’t show up. But Hulk Hogan and Marjorie Taylor Green were onstage, doing their bit to enliven the proceedings.

In fact, for people who, like Trump, never get around to reading a book, much about the story of his administration can be deduced from the titles that have been written about it. To name a few, there’s “Confidence Man,” “A Very Stable Genius”, “Only I Can Fix It”, “The Man Who Sold America,” “Peril” and rather prematurely, “Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show.”

Joe Biden and Donald Trump are polar opposites: Trump saw that back in 2019, when he sought to disqualify his most formidable opponent by pressuring Ukrainian President Zelensky to find damaging information on the Bidens. To reinforce that demand, he withheld a White House meeting with Zelensky and \$400 million of already approved — and desperately needed - military aid from Ukraine. In January 2020, the Government Accountability Office, a non-partisan watchdog, concluded that the White House had broken federal law by withholding Congress-approved aid to Ukraine.

What was there about Biden in 2019 that could make him an opponent to be feared? He was old, in a country that worships youth. He had baggage, albeit from years ago, when he was seen as too soft on questioning Clarence Thomas, when Anita Hill came out with her testimony of having been sexually harassed by the man, and Thomas went on to be one of the most conservative members of the Supreme Court.

But Biden had appeal to white working-class men, one of the most elusive voting groups for Democrats. Biden campaigned on his plans to improve conditions for the working class, by reducing taxes and cutting the cost of pharmaceutical drugs, pledges that he has kept. Many years ago we asked our mother-in-law about a pleasant woman who had been her neighbour.

“Oh, she lost her house,” we were told. “She has diabetes, you know.”

Biden has worked to change that sort of story, capping the cost of insulin for retirees at \$35 per month, although the limit still doesn’t apply to people under sixty-five.

Shawn Fain, head of the United Auto Workers union, likes to recall the time when Biden walked the picket line with striking autoworkers. That’s something one cannot imagine Trump doing.

Trump’s appeal is still partly based on his having been a TV personality on “The Apprentice.” He tries to exude self-confidence and project the image of a successful businessman, even though he was not one: he went through six bankruptcies and had to depend on millions in aid from his father. In 2020 the vote for

Trump was in many cases a protest vote against the so-called elites who had chosen Hillary Clinton as the Democratic candidate. Trump's appeal to the working class doesn't fly in places like New York, where he's infamous for hiring workers who get the job done, and then inventing some excuse not to pay them. An electrician I know said it had happened to his brother-in-law, a contractor: "He wired much of Trump Tower and Trump refused to pay," he said. "It bankrupted his company." But the sorry facts about the Trump record don't make it to Fox News, the news source of choice for many Republicans.

Trump had declared himself against the deployment of troops abroad; the working class, whose sons and daughters had served - and many had died - in foreign places and in dubious wars like the one in Iraq could relate to what he was saying.

Although Biden has never served in the Armed Forces himself - he had medical deferments due to childhood asthma - he respects those who do, and his late son Beau Biden served in Iraq. The President's speeches typically end with "God bless America and God protect our troops."

With Trump it's another story. Former General Mark Kelly was the longest-serving chief of staff in the Trump administration. When asked about Trump he was open about what had shocked him most: "What can I add that has not already been said?" Kelly said, when asked if he wanted to weigh in on his former boss: "A person that thinks those who defend their country in uniform, or are shot down or seriously wounded in combat, or spend years being tortured as POWs are all 'suckers' because 'there is nothing in it for them.' A person that did not want to be seen in the presence of military amputees because 'it doesn't look good for me.' A person who demonstrated open contempt for a Gold Star family - for all Gold Star families - on TV during the 2016 campaign, and rants that our most precious heroes who gave their lives in America's defense are 'losers' and wouldn't visit their graves in France." [Gold Star families are those like Kelly whose son or daughter died while serving in the military.]

What happened under Trump? Many voters tend to forget or forgive the Trump administration's friendliness to foreign dictators including Putin, his tax cut for the wealthy, the ban on immigrants from Muslim countries, and his efforts to put up a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Much could be said of his mishandling of the Covid epidemic, which killed a higher percentage of people here than in any other First World country.

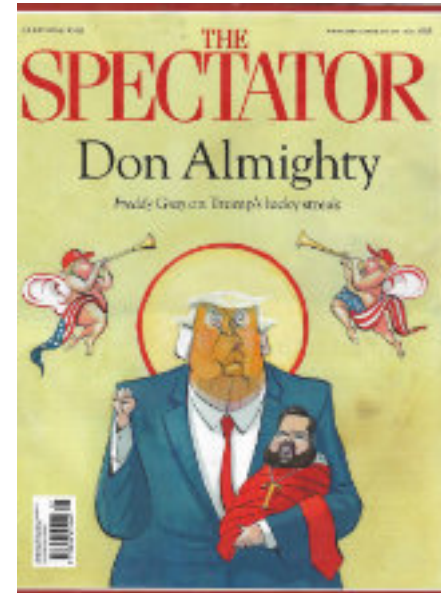
By contrast, among other things, the Biden Administration has passed a Gun Safety Law that has reduced fatalities, an Inflation Reduction Act, to cut down on greenhouse gases and support green power sources, and a Reformed Electoral Count Act, intended to prevent a future January 6th attempt to use fake electors to counter the wishes of the people and install a would-be dictator.

Possibly one like Trump, whose plans as described in *Time* magazine are those of a dictator, which he has announced he intends to be on Day One. He wants to deport more than 11 million people by building migrant detention camps and using the military. Red states could monitor women's pregnancies and prosecute those who violate abortion bans. He'd be willing to fire a U.S. Attorney who didn't carry out his orders to prosecute someone, breaking with a tradition of independent law enforcement that dates from America's founding. He's weighing pardons for all accused of attacking the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, more than 800 of whom have pleaded guilty or been convicted by a jury. And he might not come to the aid of an attacked ally in Europe or Asia if he felt that country wasn't paying enough for its own defense.

The clearest sign of the difference between Biden and Trump and their followers relates to the respective court cases affecting them both. Joe Biden's son Hunter was found guilty of lying about his drug use on a federal background check form, and of possessing a gun while addicted to, or using illegal drugs. In Donald Trump's case, a New York jury found him guilty of all 34 charges in a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election through a hush money payment to silence porn actress Stormy Daniels, who said the two had had sex.

The jury in Hunter Biden's case do not need to hide. Those who found Donald Trump guilty are still concealing their identities: they have to, for their own protection. And a "Go Fund Me" appeal has been started for Stormy Daniels, who continues to receive threats against her life.

Christine Graf



As leading Tories brown-nose Trump, is there a sense of irony in The Spectator's cover?

Support of Georgia's pro-EU opposition

“Above all else, we are democrats... What unites us is our common belief in fundamental freedoms that unite any democracy. We are friends of Georgia!” It was with these words that LI Vice President Henrik Bach Mortensen opened a press conference at the end of a day of political meetings in Tbilisi, Georgia on 28th July. Liberal International had just concluded its first-ever cross-party mission of 17 MPs, secretary generals, international officers, and other political party officials spanning Europe and one representative from each of the Centrist Democrat Union, Progressive Alliance, and Socialist International.

Alarmed at the Georgian government's adoption of the Russia-inspired foreign agents' law in June, the brutal crackdown against peaceful protesters, and the sabotaging of Georgia's accession towards membership of the European Union, Liberal International initiated a political mission inspired by the cross-party work of the National Democratic Institute. Meeting with US organisations, EU diplomats, civil society organisations (CSOs), and leaders spanning the political spectrum in Georgia the group sought to listen, support, and strategise with the pro-EU parties ahead of critical parliamentary elections in October.

While the majority of the people in Georgia – including President Salome Zourabichvili – seek a closer relationship with the European Union, the Georgian Dream government's steps towards Putin's Russia prompted backlash across Washington and most European capitals.

The group's message to the Georgian parties and CSOs was clear, as VP Bach Mortensen noted: *We may come from different political traditions, but we are united here because each of us believes Georgia should take its place in the EU.*

Later this year, observation missions will be launched to monitor the elections in Georgia with the Parliamentary Assembly in the Council of Europe (PACE) mission, which will be led by Iulian Bulai MP (USR, Romania). On June 27, PACE adopted a resolution where it pointed out that the Foreign Agents Law “is bound to have an adverse effect” on the conduct of the parliamentary elections in October, called for its repeal “in its eternity without any delay” and said that recent developments in Georgia raise serious doubts “about the country's commitment to international democratic norms and Euro-Atlantic integration, and about its willingness to honour its membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe.”

Ahead of the mission to Georgia, LI appealed for action on human rights violations in Georgia amid the adoption of Georgian government's Russian style “Foreign Agents” law to the United Nations Human Rights Council. The statement emphasised that the “Foreign Agents” law threatens and endangers the fundamental human rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression and jeopardises Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration processes. It underlines that the worsened human rights situation in Georgia, especially due to continuous excessive use of force by the police.

The mission was made possible due to the generous support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation South Caucasus and the ALDE Party.

Before the mission LI appealed for action on human rights violations in Georgia amid the adoption of Georgian government's Russian style “Foreign Agents” law to the UNHRC. Outraged at the news that the governing Georgian Dream had, on Tuesday 28th May, rammed through parliament the so-called ‘foreign agents law’, Hakima El Haité, the LI president announced: *“This law serves only the interests of the government and their financial backers and has now jeopardised Georgia's path towards EU membership.”*

The statement read:

Urgent Appeal for Action on Human Rights Violations in Georgia: Georgian Dream's Russian style “Foreign Agents” Law

Your Excellency, we, Liberal International, have the honour of addressing you in your capacity as Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression.

In this communication we would like to bring to your attention the ongoing crisis in Georgia caused by the Georgian Dream's reintroduction of the controversial Russian-style “Foreign Agents” law.

According to the law, any organisation that receives more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources will be declared as “organisations acting in interest of a foreign power” and will have to be registered in a database. The law does not differentiate between civil society/non-governmental organisations, media, .

humanitarian aid organisations, etc. Consequently, delegitimising and stigmatising them, undermining their public trust and curtailing their activities.

With the amendment made during the second reading, the law will not only affect any legal person, but any natural person as well. Thus, giving the authorities a right to enquire any type of information, including confidential information. In case of refusal, there are financial penalties in place which cannot be stopped even in case of appeals. As a consequence, financial penalties could be set several times leading to bankruptcy of a legal and/or natural person.

The law was initially introduced in March 2023 by the party Power of People backed by the ruling Georgian Dream. Following the mass demonstrations and international pressure, the law was voted down and withdrawn at its second plenary reading with a promise from the government that it would not be reintroduced in future.

Despite the promise, the Georgian Dream reintroduced the law in April 2024 causing another wave of protests and international criticism. Only this time, the Georgian Dream government declared to adopt the law while discrediting the protests, political opponents and alienating international partners.

Despite continuous mass protests, calls and warnings from civil society organisations and international partners, the government's parliamentary majority adopted the law on May 14 during its final plenary reading.

The “Foreign Agents” law threatens and endangers the fundamental human rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has expressed his concerns regarding the adoption of the law underlining that this “legislation seriously undermines the freedoms of expression and association”.

The law does not comply with the international democratic standards and takes Georgia away from its European and Euro-Atlantic integration path, supported by a vast majority of the Georgian population. It creates a hostile environment for individuals, organisations, political parties and the media to work freely in their respective capacities. It aims to discredit and discriminate against them, restricting political competition, and plurality.

Liberal International strongly condemns the adoption of the “Foreign Agents” law, attacks on civil society organisations, activists, journalists as well as disproportionate use of police force against peaceful demonstration that opposes the Russian style legislation.

Recommendations:

Liberal International calls on Special Rapporteur to:

1. Strongly condemn the adoption of the Russian style “Foreign Agents” law.
2. Call on Georgian authorities to unconditionally withdraw the “Foreign Agents” law and uphold its international obligations to respect human rights.
3. Call on the Georgian government to end the use of excessive and unproportional police force, specifically use of water cannons, pepper spray, tear gas and rubber bullets against peaceful protesters.
4. Call on the Georgian government to end police brutality, notably the beatings and attacks of protesters, political opponents, media representatives and civil society organisations.
5. Monitor the cases of human rights violations in Georgia amid permanent mass protests in the streets of the capital, Tbilisi.



Scottish Group News

The Scottish Group are holding a reception and panel discussion on "Internationalism in a troubled World" at the Royal Scots Club in Edinburgh on Saturday 31st August, 12.00-14.00. Panel is Lord David Steel, Christine Jardine MP and Lord Jeremy Purvis.

We are launching a LI Scotland Newsletter in early September. This will contain reports of activities, articles, opinion pieces and forthcoming events. This will be emailed to LIBG Scottish Members. We are also looking to set up a LI Scotland page on the LIBG website.

We are planning an in-person event/AGM in mid-November. The aim is to have a discussion about the implications of the US Election results, possibly with a leading Scottish based academic and someone from Democrats Abroad. Details to be finalised.

Sir Graham Watson

International Abstracts

Journal of Liberal History Issue 122: Spring 2024

Stéphanie Prévost and Iain Sharpe proclaim a 'Special Issue' on Liberal Politics and Empire. Stéphanie goes on to write of *Liberal Internationalism and Imperialism: Odd bedfellows for ethical Liberals?* Martin Pugh discusses *The Liberals and India*. In *John Rober Seeley, Liberalism and empire*, Jon Parry analyses his book *The Expansion of England*. Luke Blaxill's *Sane Imperialism* looks at how the matter was treated in elections between 1880 & 1914 and Richard Toye examines this through manifestos in Liberal Party, Empire and Commonwealth, 1900-1979.

Liberator 424

Not surprisingly, this issue is dominated by the general election, though it wouldn't be *Liberator* if it didn't show concern for its downsides. Within that context, George Cunningham looks at overseas voters, and David Grace on the balance of pro-EU forces in the new Parliament. Internationally, that leaves Marianne Magnin reporting on the French general election and how the country's democracy could recover from Macron's gamble.

NATO Summit, Ukraine

It's worrying to see the prime minister cheerleading for war. Will Ukraine turn into Starmer's Iraq? By Simon Jenkins. *The Guardian* 15th July 2024

USA – Republicans and Kamala Harris

Why Some Republicans Can't Resist Making Vile Attacks on Harris, by Adam Serwer. *The Atlantic* 25th July 2024

'The offensive is an expression of the GOP's values and its policy agenda, which, for this brief moment, is on display in all its ugliness.'

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/racist-sexist-attacks-kamala-harris/679232/>

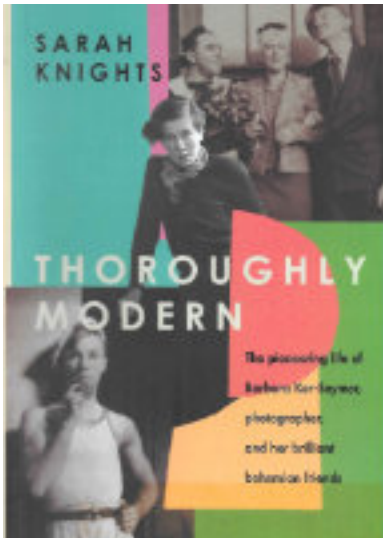
USA – Republican foreign policy

It's all about priorities, by Alex J. Roudandeh. *Newsweek International* edition July 12th-19th 2024. Vol. 183 No. 1

'These Republican foreign policy pragmatists hope to influence Donald Trump...' Not if Harris and Walz have their way

...'

Reviews



Thoroughly Modern. The pioneering life of Barbara Ker-Seymer. Photographer, and her brilliant bohemian, by Sarah Knights
Virago 2023 £22.00 isbn 9780349011516

I first came across Barbara Ker-Seymer whilst wandering around the Tate (Britain of course) in 2014. There was a Seymer amongst Maldon Young Liberals, so I paid the small exhibition more attention than I might otherwise, and duly enlivened otherwise routine letters with the scant details available.

Sarah Knights' biography fills in the gaps, though much may be still out there. In many respects it is the probably platonic menage de trois between Ker-Seymer, Frederick Ashton and Edward Burra (and their assorted lovers) – high camp as you can imagine, through 1920's and 30's bohemia. Bar progresses from flapper to fotographer; known for her portraiture, (best known perhaps for her Nancy Cunards) she also worked for Harper's .

Bazaar. She was a favourite of Jean Cocteau, and you don't get much more louche than that. Had more of her work survived or been attributable, she would be better known. The war ended all of that, the ambience, the ability to run a photographic studio and most of her archive. Afterwards, she didn't go back, but opened one of London's first laundrettes at 21 Tachbrook Street in Pimlico.

Joie de vivre notwithstanding, Bar was a hard-working and astute business women, rebelling against the conventions of her time. The reviewer that drew my attention to Knights' book thought she was part of an unpleasant wastrel group of people, but I found otherwise, a generally liberal outlook on life, particularly in her concern for the declining Edward Burra in his later life. We all have our warts and might have done things better but look on the positive side of life. Here is a handbook of how to go against the grain.

Stewart Rayment

Patti Smith Quartet at Somerset House, 21 July 2024

Patti Smith, punk poet, rock n roller, and charismatic patron saint of all who are marginalised, performed a mesmerising set at Somerset House last night. Against the backdrop of a full moon, she sang for an hour and a half, casting a spell of holy communion over the audience.

Ghost Dance, the haunting, almost-medieval sounding lament for Native Americans, from her album *Easter* (1978), was sung for them and for the Palestinian people today. Patti's late husband, Fred "Sonic" Smith, guitarist from the rock band MC5, was remembered in her beautiful cover of Lana Del Rey's *Summertime Sadness*, and then

again in her spinetingling *Because the Night Belongs to Lovers*. Near the end of the evening, she remembered Kurt Cobain, as it's now thirty years since his death. *About a Boy* is Patti's own haunting song dedicated to Kurt; she then covered *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, making the song completely her own. Patti is renowned for being only too familiar with loss and grief, and her work laments those she has lost whilst celebrating the magic and beauty of life. For ninety minutes she held us all spellbound, a woman in blue jeans with a microphone and four musicians. A true star needs no gimmicks. Her love of life and her strange, beautiful voice were truly inspiring.



Stephen Brogan