

2024 no. 4 £5.00 (Free to members)



# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**Brighton Lib Dem Conference Reports**  
**US Elections Israel-Gaza-Palestine Sudan**

# EVENTS

12<sup>th</sup> November LIBG AGM 6.30pm by Zoom  
(see page 3)

12th November Liberal Democrat Friends of  
Ukraine AGM 7.00pm – by Zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83056446723?pwd=7slgoZfD0yR0GPJyEvYl5CwzJpTjwv.1>

15th-17th November Democratiaid  
Rhyddfrydol Cymru/Welsh Liberal Democrats  
Conference, Metropole Hotel & Spa, Temple  
Street, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5DY

16<sup>th</sup> November Scottish Liberal Democrats  
Conference, Salutation Hall, Perth

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

21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 Liberal Democrats Spring  
Conference, Harrogate.

*For bookings & other information please  
contact LIBG at*

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Friends of Ukraine.

Cover Photograph– Stewart Rayment –  
Patchwork Get Involved visitors to conference

Deadline for next issue 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024



# **LIBG AGM**

## **12<sup>th</sup> November : 6.30pm By Zoom**



Please be advised that the Annual General Meeting of Liberal International (British Group)(LIBG) will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 12 November 2024.

The meeting will be held on Zoom on the link below.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89121041060?pwd=KST3p2X0HKHDXJO6nYWZbquLVlhuN2.1>

Meeting ID: 891 2104 1060

Passcode: 456835

In the event of any difficulty logging in please contact: [iainsmith675@btinternet.com](mailto:iainsmith675@btinternet.com)

### **ELECTIONS**

Elections will be held for the following positions: President, Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, 12 ordinary members of the executive

Nominations must be received by the start of the AGM clearly indicating 'LIBG nomination' in the subject line of an email and indicating for which post a nomination is made, the consent of the nominee and name of a proposer, who should be copied in: [generalenquiries@libg.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@libg.co.uk)

In the event of a contested election, ballot papers will be sent out after the AGM by a returning officer appointed by Liberal Democrat HQ.

### **AGENDA**

- 1) Minutes of the 2023 AGM
- 2) Apologies for absence
- 3) Matters arising
- 4) Chair's report
- 5) Approval of Annual Accounts
- 6) Proposal on subscription level, details to follow.
- 7) Membership report
- 8) Results of the annual elections
- 9) Election of honorary auditor
- 10) Constitutional Amendment proposed by John Barnett and Iain Smith. NB this is intended to formalise the position of LIBG Scotland and any branches of LIBG that may exist
- 11) Closing remarks

12) It is anticipated that a guest speaker will then address the meeting.

Notice of any resolution a member intends to move at the AGM must reach LIBG by 29 October 2024, endorsed by at least four members who are copied in: [generalenquiries@libg.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@libg.co.uk)

Please notify any apologies for absence to the secretary: [mark@marksmulian.co.uk](mailto:mark@marksmulian.co.uk)



# LIBG at Brighton

## ‘Trump, Harris and the Future of Transatlantic Relations’

A very packed room with over 137 attendants at this year's Liberal Democrat autumn conference was testimony of the unabated interest of Liberal Democrat members in international affairs. LIBG was heartened by the show of interest in this crucial area of policy.

The event, organised by Liberal International British Group (LIBG), was entitled ‘Trump, Harris and the Future of Transatlantic Relations’ and featured a panel of three distinguished speakers: Yevheniia Kravchuk - Ukrainian MP and Vice-Chair of President Zelenskyy's Servants of the People party, Caroline Voaden - former MEP and newly elected MP for South Devon -, and Mark Bergman - U.S. political analyst and Democrat campaign strategist. The panel was introduced and moderated by Irina von Wiese, Chair of LIBG.

Mark Bergman, a political analyst and member of the National Finance Committee of the Democratic Party in Washington DC, refused to forecast the November 5th result. However, he left the meeting in no doubt that a Trump victory would have catastrophic consequences for Ukraine. He said that while Trump wants to withdraw the US from NATO, not all of his advisors shared this view, and that there was a chance that wiser heads might prevail. Phil Gordon, Kamala Harris's likely national security advisor, has a track record suggesting not so much intervention (he was against the Iraq invasion and the hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan), but of fighting to uphold the liberal, democratic values of partner nations. Rather than isolationism or America first, a Harris administration would see America as one among partners, working collaboratively.

As the event took place a day after crucial UK-U.S. talks about the use of NATO long range missiles for attacks into Russian territory, there was some discussion of the divergence - if any - of opinion between Western allies. Mark Bergman expressed doubt that any such permission would be formally announced but may soon translate into action on the battlefield. He also thought that Putin was unlikely to follow through with his threat of nuclear strikes for fear of losing crucial support from China.



Prompted by an audience question, Mark Bergman argued that while a Trump administration would spell bad news for Ukraine and transatlantic relations in general, it remained to be seen whether moderate advisors such as Mike Pompeo could influence the White House to take a less isolationist stance than Trump suggests.

On U.S. - UK relations, Mark Bergman said that the UK's withdrawal from the EU had weakened both key allies and the West as a whole, and closer UK-EU ties therefore were essential for the Biden (and a further Harris) administration.

Yevheniia Kravchuk MP spoke about her gratitude for Western support and reiterated her government's plea for permission to use NATO missiles into and on Russian territory. She explained the rationale behind the Kursk incursion and the need for a military solution to stop Russian imperialist expansionism for good. Like Mark Bergman, she argued that Ukraine had crossed Putin's 'red lines' at previous occasions without major consequences and the West should call Putin's bluff and not be bullied. Asked if Russia's opposition groups and individuals like Vladimir Kara Murza could bring a post-Putin Russia back into the fold, Ms Kravchuk expressed doubt and said that transforming the political

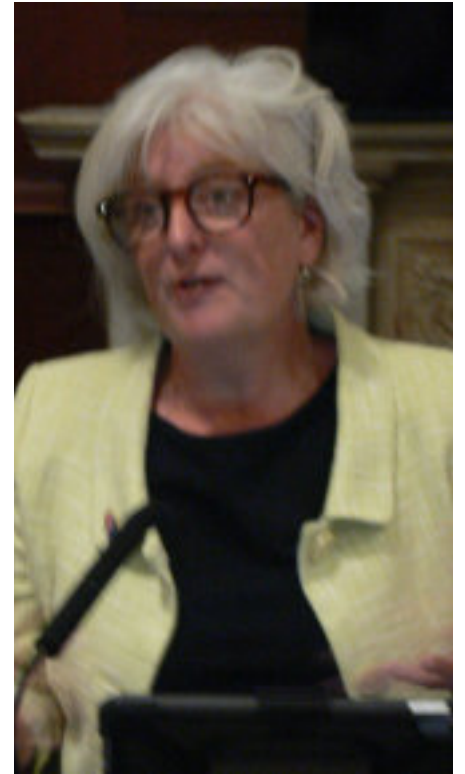
landscape was a very long process. Western politicians had fallen into the Realpolitik trap for too long, and this had only emboldened Putin in his imperialist ambition.

The meeting was an opportunity for members to listen to the new MP for South Devon, Caroline Voaden. She spoke of the Liberal Democrats' support for Ukraine and her hope that the new government will seek to repair the broken trust between the UK and the EU. As a former MEP, she had seen the power of a multilateral approach and emphasised the importance of Britain's place in the heart of Europe, as a constructive partner, for the relations with both the U.S. and Ukraine. This would be even more urgent if Trump wins the elections.

When discussing the likelihood that Putin would respond to the use of Storm Shadow missiles on Russian soil, Caroline Voaden took the view that a massive cyber-attack was more likely than the use of equivalent missiles by the Russians. She felt the British public was in no way prepared for such an attack, and that the government should be educating people to understand the scale of disruption that is possible, should the Kremlin decide to unleash its cyber capabilities on the UK.

The audience discussion focused on defence and security cooperation, the prospect of Labour's promised to 're-set' UK-EU relations and the U.S. elections campaign. There was also praise for Ukraine's continued battle for democratic values and the role of Liberal International in supporting liberal parties both in Ukraine and in Russia.

*Rebecca Tinsley & Irina von Weise*





# Liberal Democrats at Brighton.

Buoyant with 72 MPs the Liberal Democrats must consider their Autumn conference at Brighton a success. The International Agenda was dominated by the Israel-Gaza War. The fringe events of both the Friends of Israel and Friends of Palestine were full houses. The former saw members of three hostage families and Magen Inon, who also addressed the conference hall earlier on Sunday, who had lost all of his family, yet called for peace and reconciliation. A harrowing event but one of the most memorable. Husam Zomlot, head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK (having been kicked out of Washington by Trump) spoke at the LD FoP events, a man to watch, of Fateh, not HAMAS and tipped as a likely successor to Mahmoud Abbas. The fringe meeting of ActionAid and Medical Aid for Palestinians, in the ghost spot before the Leader's speech on Tuesday was equally gruelling – time to stop the cycle of war and tackle the menstrual cycle.

The Israel-Gaza Conflict saw the only purely international issue to be debated at the conference. This was very much a staged debate, opened by Layla Moran MP in her closing role as foreign affairs spokesperson (she goes on to chair the Health and Social Care Committee in the new Parliament) and closed with the ubiquitous Lord Purvis. Drafted between the Lib Dem Friends of Israel & Palestine and Lib Dems for Peace in the Middle East, it was clearly a compromise that probably satisfied nobody. However, the important thing is that it was debated at all. Jewish Voice for Labour reports that the word 'genocide' was banned from the Labour party conference.

LIBG focussed on the US Presidential election but otherwise the other major international focus, with receptions by ALDE and Ambassador Serrano & the EU Delegation to the UK. We shared a stall with



LDEG once again and leave it to them to cover most of the EU events, including the receptions of ALDE and Ambassador Serrano & the EU Delegation to the UK. Victoria Evans should be awarded the Order of Ashdown for staffing the stall. We were awarded the best merchandise stall by student visitors to the conference after Wealden's Gareth Owen-Williams brought berets and Council of Europe flags (yes, it predates the EU) from the Last Night of the Proms (sterling work by the European Movement).

Otherwise, the governments of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar held fringe events. LD4SoS updated us on refugee matters and the Lib Dem Friends of Hong Kong staged an exhibition on China's manipulation of the United Nations over Taiwan. Reports of these can be found throughout or in the next issue.

*Stewart Rayment*

## Lib Dem Friends of Palestine at Brighton

In partnership with the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP), the Lib Dem Friends of Palestine co-hosted two events on Sunday 22 September at the fringes of the Liberal Democrats' Autumn 2024 conference. Between the two events, we counted over 250 distinct attendees, which included the party CEO, the party Deputy Leader, at least 23 MPs, several peers, councillors and assembly members as well as former MEPs.

Speakers included the Palestinian Ambassador to the UK Husam Zomlot, Deputy Liberal Democrat Leader Daisy Cooper MP, Director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) Chris Doyle, Director of the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP) Tayab Ali and LDFP Chair Anne-Marie Simpson.

# Lib Dem Friends of Israel at Brighton.

This year, LDFI decided, given the circumstances in Israel and Gaza, to dedicate our efforts at conference to the people who needed us most. The people the media and the most politicians across the world seem to have forgotten, **the hostages**.

We connected with the *UK Hostages and Missing Families Forum* so our Fringe meeting and presence in Brighton be dedicated to raising awareness of their loved ones' plight. To do this we needed family members to come and tell their stories and we needed our Party's new 72 leaders to be prepared to come and listen.

We were informed almost immediately, "we'll get you the families, if you can get us the Parliamentarians", a build it and they will come approach. We arranged a private dedicated space in the Hilton Metropole and circulated a schedule to all 72 MPs and the similar sized group of Lib Dem Peers. The results were better than we could have imagined. We ended up having small sided meetings with over half of our 72 MPs and a handful of Peers from our group in the Lords.

The fringe event was held in the Brighton Centre on the Sunday evening at 7.15pm. It was attended by around 50 people. Along with Hostage families, Rt Hon Tim Farron MP was on the panel.

Since our meetings, LDFI are so very proud that six of our parliamentarians have tweeted about the hostages and everyone who met Sharone (Oded Lifschitz' dad), Michael (Or Levy's big brother) and Adam (Tsachi's cousin) undertook to use their social media, questions and speeches in Parliament and media appearances where relevant to raise the plight of the hostages.

Amongst those we engaged with was Calum Miller MP, our new Foreign Affairs lead in the Commons, alongside Lord Jeremy Purvis (Lord FA lead) and our outgoing spokesperson and friend, Layla Moran.

You'll no doubt be aware also, there was the conference emergency motion on Israel/Gaza. Hon Chair Gavin Stollar OBE and a number of our members spoke, most notably Cllr Laurence Brass.

If you wish to watch the speeches, use the link below. Gavin's is at **17.34**. Laurence's is at **40.50**:

[Conference Replay: Autumn Conference Day 3 - Afternoon Session](#)

[youtube.com](#)

All that's left to say is thank you. Thank you to our members, our new Parliamentary team for engaging, thank you to Nivi Feldman the coordinator of the UK Hostages and Missing Families Forum, to the relatives of those taken who so capably and passionately made their loved one's case despite the emotional strain it was clearly taking.

## Ishvinder S Matharu

Honorary Executive Committee Member, Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel

[Hostage families meet over half of Lib Dem MPs in effort to keep loved ones at the forefront of politicians' minds - The Jewish Chronicle](#)

**Or Levy**  
33 years old

Or Levy and his wife, Eynav, left early on the morning of October 7th to drive to the Nova Music Festival. The young couple arrived at around 6:30 a.m., quickly realizing that the celebration of music had turned into a massacre. The situation would rapidly deteriorate after their arrival. Or and Eynav were able to escape the horrors for a short time, heading for their car when a barrage of rockets began pounding the surrounding area. Then, they took refuge in a roadside bomb shelter, where they spoke to their family for the last time at around 7:30 a.m.

The family waited for days in complete darkness about whether Or and Eynav had survived. After several days, the families were notified of the heart-wrenching news that Eynav had been murdered inside the shelter during the attack. Or, they discovered, was taken captive to Gaza.

Eynav and Or have been married for five years and share a two year old son, Almog. The two met 14 years ago in high school, where they were friends. Their families say that the two share many loves: love of music, adventure, and family. The couple kept a tent in their car for spontaneous road trips, and they recently took a family vacation to Thailand.

Guela Levy, Or's mother, says that "they were a lovely couple, two people who worked very hard, and together they raised their child in an amazing manner, with a completely equal distribution of work... with a lot of love and warmth." Since October 7th, their son has been living with his grandparents. For months, he has been without a mother or father.

**Oded Lifshitz**

Oded (84) is a journalist and life-long peace activist, and a founding member of Kibbutz Nir Oz. Together with his wife Yocheved he campaigned tirelessly for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. In their retirement, Oded volunteered with Road to Recovery to transport patients in need of medical treatment from Gaza to hospitals in Israel. Oded is a committed, involved grandparent to 11 grandchildren and a great-granddaughter, a pianist and passionate gardener who speaks fluent Arabic, English and his mother-tongue Hebrew.

On October 7th, both Oded and Yocheved were abducted by Hamas as one in four members of Kibbutz Nir Oz was either brutally murdered or taken hostage. Yocheved was freed from captivity after several weeks. Now an active campaigner for her husband's release, Yocheved says that her purpose in life is "to bring my Oded home," adding that she "will keep protesting until all of the hostages are back." Twenty-nine of the 101 hostages remaining in Gaza today are members of Kibbutz Nir Oz.

Yocheved was beaten as she was abducted to Gaza on the back of a motorcycle, cheered on by hundreds of civilian Gazans. Once in Gaza she and other hostages were taken through a spiderweb of tunnels. Oded was kidnapped separately. He was last seen by Yocheved on October 7th, unconscious and drenched in his own blood outside their home after being shot by Hamas. However, testimony from returning hostages informs us that Oded reached Gaza alive and was treated along with other hostages in the hospital in Khan Yunis. Oded remains in captivity today.

**Tsachi Idan**  
49 Years Old

Tsachi, a husband to Gali and father of four, was born and raised in Kibbutz Nahal Oz. He works in the tech industry, loves to play soccer, basketball, and tennis, and loves listening to music. After witnessing the murder of his daughter, Ma'ayan, on October 7th, he was taken hostage by Hamas.

That day, as the brutal attack on their small community unfolded, the Idan family took shelter in the safe room in their home. An explosion rattled their home and shattered their windows, allowing terrorists to forcefully enter. Hamas captured a neighbor's child and used the child to coerce the Idans to open the door to their shelter. They knew that doing so would be a deadly mistake for their family, so Tsachi held the door to the room shut and Gali hovered over the children.

As this unfolded, Ma'ayan, who was 18, rushed to help her father keep the door shut. The terrorists were able to force themselves through and immediately shot and murdered Ma'ayan. The rest of the family was forced to exit the shelter, leaving Ma'ayan's body behind. The family, now on the floor in their house, was joined there by other families who were in Hamas captivity. After hours of turmoil, Tsachi was forced into a vehicle with another father and two women from the kibbutz and brought into Gaza. The men have not been seen or heard from since that day.

Gali is determined to bring Tsachi home, and insists on the release of all Israeli civilians held by Hamas. The family, now displaced from their home, finds themselves confronting a new reality without Ma'ayan and with Tsachi as a hostage in Hamas captivity. Their story speaks to the psychological torment that families of hostages and lost loved ones face.

# Liberal Democrat Friends of Ukraine at Brighton

The Liberal Democrat Friends of Ukraine held a successful and enjoyable fringe event for members at the Brighton conference, organised by local parliamentary candidate Michael Wang in historic St. Pauls church hall in West Street. Ukrainians living in the Brighton area kindly hosted the gathering and prepared a delicious lunch.

Members were delighted to hear from Yevheniia Kavchuk, member of the Ukrainian parliament and deputy chair of the parliamentary faction of the Servant of the People party. Other speakers included Kira Makahon, who runs The Ray of Hope, a Brighton based organisation of Ukrainian volunteers who put on events for the local Ukrainian community and collect and deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and Ed Lucas, Lib Dem politician and journalist. All emphasised the need for continued support for Ukraine as it fights to uphold liberal values, freedom and democracy on behalf of all of Europe.

We also had a conference stand (shared with Liberal Democrat Friends of the Armed Forces) and recruited 65 new members. We hope to continue to grow our membership at forthcoming regional conferences - if anyone would like to help with this task please get in touch at [ldfriendsofukraine@outlook.com](mailto:ldfriendsofukraine@outlook.com) - Slava Ukraini!

*Julia Fletcher*



# Liberal Democrat Friends of Hong Kong at Brighton

Federal Party Conferences are always the golden opportunities for any lobbying organisations to pursue their campaigns. That was why our association, Liberal Democrats Friends of Hong Kong, followed the suit and put a lot of effort in the Autumn Conference in Brighton this year.

We the Liberals are facing enormous challenges from authoritarian regimes. It is not only about the interference of our democratic process and way of living, but also in terms of our industrial capacity and survival of our industry. Therefore, the main themes of our campaign this year focused on:

1. How China misused UN resolution 2758 to pursue its 'One China Policy' and isolate Taiwan from international stage
2. How China used Hong Kong to avert trade sanctions against authoritarian regimes such as Russia, and how China assisted Russia in Ukraine war via Hong Kong
3. How Chinese state subsidised car manufacturers dominated Electronic Vehicles (EV) market in an unethical way.



These 3 themes are very important because China was trying to exploit the relatively liberal entrepreneur policies in Hong Kong to benefit Russia in its effort to win the Russo Ukrainian war and using its lack of oversight on its environmental policies and labour protection law to undercut its EV price and dominated the European EV markets. China also actively isolated Taiwan by using its influence in the United Nations, and the foundation of these effort was how they interpreted UN Resolution 2758 for their own means.

We need to defend Taiwan's liberal democracy interest on the world stage. It is also as much our democratic interest for regional democracy and stability.

During the conference we have created an exhibition at our stall to promote our campaign. We have a flood of Lib Dem parliamentarians coming to our booth to show support for Human Rights and Civil Liberties, especially as liberal democracies join hands to fight against challenging regimes.

We had a detailed discussion with the diplomatic representative from Taiwan on how we can support Taiwan in trade and regional stability. Most importantly, the diplomat from Taiwan appreciates our research into China's misinterpretation of the 'One China' policy and its act on changing UN documents as a barrier to Taiwan having even a quasi-relationship with the United Nations.



Other than our exhibition, we have also published a China Focus newsletter to promote our campaign. We have also published an article on *interLib*<sup>1</sup> to highlight how China misused UN resolution 2758. It was well received by our visitors and some even expressed interests in our work on EV market too.

Other than our campaign on China, there are also a lot of interest from local parties on how they can engage with Hong Kongers communities in their local areas. We have a lot of 1 to 1 discussions with representatives from local parties. During the conversations, not only we provided a lot of advice on how to connect with the communities, but the local representatives also kept us updated on new Hong Kongers communities developing in some areas which was only recently developed.

Moving on, MPs have agreed to work with us to submit questions and motions in Parliament and we have agreed a clear strategy. The engagement at Brighton's Conference will be put to good use for the growth of liberal democracy.

We are also going to engage more with local parties after this conference. Part of our plan was to participate in regional conferences, so we can have a more in depth conversations on local issues. We will organise our first fringe event in the East of England regional conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. It will be an introduction on Hong Kongers communities and how we should engage them. We will also set up a stall in this conference to promote Hong Kongers community. It is our first trial, and if it is well received, we will organise similar events in other regional conferences in the future.

**Larry Ngan**

<sup>1</sup> *interLib* 2024-3 pages 21-24

# The Israel-Gaza Conflict - an immediate bilateral ceasefire and securing two states

Emergency policy motion

As passed by conference

**Submitted by:** 10 party members

**Mover:** Layla Moran MP (Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs)

**Summation:** Lord Purvis

## Conference notes:

- I. The ongoing humanitarian devastation in Gaza, where now over 40,000 Palestinians are now estimated to have been killed and vast numbers have life changing injuries.
- II. That almost one year on from the deplorable 7 October terrorist attacks which killed over 1,100, many survivors are traumatised including by the use of sexual violence and there remains an ongoing hostage situation, with over 100 Israelis still held by Hamas.
- III. The clear risk of escalation across the region, with increased tensions in August 2024 raising concerns about a regional war, and increased violence in the West Bank in the context of ongoing trauma to the Palestinian people.



*Layla Moran proposing the motion.*

- IV. The role of Iran, which continues to destabilise the region including via its Revolutionary Guards, its supply of arms to its proxy terrorist groups Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, and the military responses which it threatens against Israel.
- V. Ongoing cases at the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, and the UK's Government's July 2024 decision to stop potential arrest warrants which the ICC might issue, including against Israeli PM Netanyahu and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.
- VI. The ICJ's advisory opinion in July 2024 that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal.
- VII. The millions who have been displaced by this ongoing conflict since October 7, with almost 2 million displaced in Gaza, around 135,000 Israelis displaced from Northern and Southern Israel, and over 1,000 Palestinians fleeing their homes in the West Bank in the face of spiking settler violence.
- VIII. The conflict's impact in the UK, and applauds the work done by NGOs, faith groups, local authorities and others to combat unacceptable race and hate crime including against

- I. Jews, Israelis, Muslims and Palestinians, and to bring people together rather than divide them in the face of community tensions.

## Conference believes that:

- A. Only a political and diplomatic solution, not a military one, will resolve this conflict, get Hamas out of power and deliver a lasting peace.
- B. A two-state solution is the only way to deliver the dignity and security which Palestinians and Israelis deserve.
- C. An immediate bilateral ceasefire is desperately needed, to resolve the humanitarian devastation in Gaza, get the hostages home and provide space to secure a two-state solution.

Conference accordingly reaffirms:

- i. The Autumn 2021 Federal Conference motion F39, Towards a Lasting Peace.
- ii. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to a two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine both exist with secure boundaries based on 1967 lines.

## Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Work to bring about an immediate bilateral ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict, including:
  - a. Demanding the unconditional release of the remaining hostages.
  - b. Pressing for more access for humanitarian aid and essential supplies into Gaza.
  - c. Providing all necessary assistance, including aid, to UNRWA to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and ensure that the recommendations of the independent Colonna report are implemented as quickly as possible, thereby assuring that all work to support Palestinians in Gaza is of the highest possible standards and integrity.
2. Uphold the role of international law and international courts, including respecting in full the ICJ advisory opinion that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal and upholding its findings, and accordingly:
  - a. Introduce legislation to cease trade with illegal Israeli settlements in occupied territories.
  - b. Work to reduce heightened tensions in the West Bank, and accordingly including connected entities in the scope of sanctions against anyone in the settler movement that uses or incites violence, building on the work of the US and EU.
  - c. Work to end the use of arbitrary administrative detention of Palestinians by the IDF.
3. Enacting a presumption of denial for arms exports to governments listed by the Foreign Office as human rights priorities, and therefore immediately suspending arms exports to Israel, in accordance with similar decisions taken by previous UK governments of all political parties.
4. Recognising the existential threat of Iran not just in the Middle East but to Western democracies, by:
  - a. Proscribing Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.
  - b. Conducting an audit of UK-based assets owned by Iranian officials, in order to freeze those assets.
5. Press for a two-state solution, including by:
  - a. Immediately recognising the state of Palestine.
  - b. Working with the peace-builders in Israel and Palestine who call for two-states, to wrestle control away from the extremes.
  - c. Working with the international community to identify future democratic leaders of Palestine, with a view to having swift elections in Palestine as soon as possible in the hope of uniting Gaza and the West Bank under one democratically elected voice.
  - d. Investing in peace, such as via the International Fund for Middle East Peace, and using trade as a tool for peace, ensuring that Palestinians and Israelis benefit.

Conference further calls on Liberal Democrats to engage with all their ALDE and Liberal International sister parties to secure a two-state solution based on 1967 lines in the region, including Israel's Yesh Atid party.



**Leon Duveen**  
*Lib Dems for Peace in  
the Middle East,*

**Gavin Stollar**  
*LD Friends of Israel*

**Anne-Marie Simpson**  
*LD Friends of  
Palestine*

**Lord Jeremy Purvis**



# House of Lords Bill to recognise Palestine.

On September 17th, 2024, Baroness Northover filed a bill to recognise Palestine, House of Lords Bill to recognise Palestine. It reads as follows:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3771>

A BILL TO Make provision in connection with the recognition of the State of Palestine.

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

## **1 Recognition of the State of Palestine**

(1) The Secretary of State must, within one month of the passing of this Act, take such steps as are necessary to ensure the Government of the United Kingdom formally recognises Palestine as a sovereign and independent state on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, and the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in the State of Palestine.

(2) In this section, “pre-1967 borders” has the same meaning as in resolution 76/10 (2021) of the UN General Assembly.

## **2 Status of the Palestinian Mission to the UK**

(1) The Secretary of State must, within one month of the passing of this Act, take 10 such steps as are necessary to—

(a) afford the Mission of Palestine in London status as a full diplomatic mission, and

(b) afford the members of the diplomatic staff all applicable privileges and immunities thereby accorded under the Diplomatic Privileges Act 1964.

(2) For the purposes of this section, “diplomatic mission” is to be read in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations done at Vienna on 18 April 1961.

## **3 Duty to report to Parliament**

The Secretary of State must, within two months of the passing of this Act, lay before Parliament a report outlining the steps taken in pursuance of the requirements under this Act.

## **4 Extent, commencement and short title**

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) This Act comes into force on the day on which it is passed.

(3) This Act may be cited as the Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Act 2024

# Sudan – liberals in the House of Lords Debate 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

10.06am Moved by Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab), The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

That this House takes note of the situation in Sudan.

10.19am Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Con)

## **10.28am Baroness Suttie (LD)**

My Lords, it is always a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, because she always brings such authority to a debate.

I too thank the Minister for initiating this important debate and congratulate him on his comprehensive and powerful speech. It is very welcome that we are having this debate today; a debate in government time is long overdue. As the Minister and the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, said, this sometimes feels like the forgotten war, yet it is so far from forgotten for the millions of displaced, sick and starving of Sudan. It is stark to see

quite how little coverage of the war there is, as the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, said, compared to the coverage of what is happening in the Middle East or Ukraine.

I worked on a project in Sudan from 2022 to 2023—I refer noble Lords to my register of interests. Indeed, my last visit to Khartoum was in April 2023 with my noble friend Lord Purvis, just one week before this awful civil war started. By the time we left Khartoum, the roads were all closed, the pro-democracy campaigners were facing the Sudanese Armed Forces on the streets, and the air was thick with tear gas. Then, just one week later, on 15 April, the full-blown civil war started.

It is the most cynical of wars. It is not a war about ideals or ideology but about personal wealth, power, influence and access to natural resources—and all at the terrible expense of ordinary people, especially women and children, who now face starvation on a catastrophic scale. It is estimated that 37% of the population faces severe food insecurity. It is a war that, in many ways, has become a proxy war for current geopolitical tensions. During my visits to Khartoum, the Wagner Group was clearly visible in the streets of the capital, and at that time it was supporting the RSF. However, there is evidence that Russia is now cynically switching sides in its bid to maintain access to the Red Sea.

Both sides in this war—the RSF and the SAF—are accused of international war crimes. There are truly appalling reports of soldiers using rape as a weapon. Even before the fighting broke out, the UN estimated that 3 million women and girls in Sudan were at risk of gender-based violence. It is rightly described as “one of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history” by UN officials.

Yet after President Bashir was removed in 2019, there were genuine hopes that the transition to a civilian-led Government based on human rights and the rule of law might be possible. Certainly, in September 2022, during my first visit to Sudan, I was struck by the optimism and hope when talking to my Sudanese colleagues. At home in my flat, I have a copy of Hussein Merghani’s wonderful watercolour from 2019, which shows hundreds of people, including women and children from Atbara, travelling by train to join the sit-in at the military headquarters in Khartoum in April 2019. The painting is optimistic and shows the strength of public support at that time, across the country, after the revolution in 2019, for a different future for Sudan. It was an all too fleeting time of optimism.

One of the people I got to know while working in Khartoum was Samia El Hashmi. Samia is an eminent Sudanese lawyer and women’s rights activist who was working with the Sudanese Bar Association. After the revolution, Samia helped to draft a new constitution for Sudan which enshrined human rights and the rule of law. In many ways, Samia for me embodies the many wonderful and highly educated people I met in Sudan—people who just want to live a normal life in the country that they love but who had to flee for their lives when the fighting started in April last year.

The history of relations between Sudan and Britain is long and complex, but this shared history creates a special bond between our nations. We should not forget that the University of Durham’s Sudan archive preserves much of the history of Sudan. With this shared history comes responsibility. After the December revolution, the UK rightly played an important role with the quartet in supporting the democratic transition and promoting civilian government, political security and stability, economic reform and human rights. This is a process which should be continued and revived whenever—as we all hope—this conflict can be brought to an end.

I do not have an instant solution for how we can bring about peace to Sudan. I am sure many noble Lords speaking in the debate today are much better qualified and placed than me to make suggestions in that regard. But as my friend Samia has said to me, Britain can and must continue to play a trusted role and do all in our power to work with others to bring about an end to this most bloody of conflicts.

In his concluding remarks, I would be grateful if the Minister could say a little more about the Government’s position on increasing the arms embargo to cover the whole of the country. I welcome what he said in his opening statement: that the Government will do all they can to ensure that those guilty of the most appalling war crimes—particularly against women and children—will face justice through the International Criminal Court.

Wars can too easily become about just statistics, but for me, this is personal. It is about the Sudanese people I had the opportunity to get to know and work with during my visits to Sudan. They desperately want the international community to give them some hope that the conflict can be stopped and that they can return to their country and start to rebuild once again from the rubble.

#### **10.34am Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB)**

My Lords, I join the noble Baronesses, Lady Suttie and Lady Anelay, in thanking the noble Lord, Lord Collins, for the way in which he introduced today’s important debate. He has a long-standing commitment to

to the people of Africa, and he will bring humanity and expertise to the many challenges that he will face as Minister for Africa—the most urgent of which is the catastrophic war in Sudan.

On Wednesday, the Minister attended part of a two-hour briefing which I chaired on behalf of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan. I pay tribute to the outgoing chair, Vicky Ford, and the incoming chair, of whom I have great expectations; Rachael Maskell, the MP for York, is a wonderful Member of Parliament, and I know that she will follow well in the footsteps of Vicky Ford. During that meeting, we heard harrowing contributions from Geraldine O’Callaghan of the World Food Programme, Sibongani Kayola of Mercy Corps, Will Carter of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Sudanese women’s shuttle diplomacy initiative.

Along with the mass displacement of what is now approaching 11 million internally displaced people—adding to the 120 million people worldwide who are displaced—we learned that “famine is no longer a threat. It is a reality”.

We heard that people are dying of hunger; that skeletal children are some of the nine out of 10 who are suffering from some form of malnutrition, with 14 million children in need of humanitarian support; that 16 humanitarian aid workers have been killed in Sudan this year; and that ever-present dangers have compromised the delivery of aid to starving people. We heard that food is being used as a weapon of war.

A Sudanese lady doctor told us that 95% of hospitals and clinics are closed; that disease, including cholera and dengue, is raging; and that 19 million children are out of school and education, and, inevitably, are likely to be used in human trafficking and other forms of exploitation, or as child soldiers. We heard that those responsible for atrocity crimes have acted with utter disregard for the suffering that they are inflicting on their own people, and that impunity and the failure to bring to account those responsible for the genocide of 2004 have sown the seeds for a war which, because of other competing global priorities, fails to make the media’s small print, let alone the headlines.

We often say that black lives matter. If that is so, why has the world been so silent about the suffering in Sudan? We glibly say, “Never again”, and then, in a total failure of international statecraft, we watch it happen all over again. There is no greater indication of the failure of international justice and accountability than Sudan.

I joined the all-party parliamentary group over 20 years ago, after travelling to Sudan during the second Sudanese civil war, which raged from 1983 to 2005, and in which 2 million people died of killing, famine or disease and 4 million people were displaced. It ultimately led to the death of the country itself and to partition. In October 2004, I went to Darfur. The *Independent* newspaper carried my report under the words: “If this isn’t genocide, then what on earth is?”

As many as 300,000 people perished, and 2 million people were displaced. Atrocity crimes included the Government-backed Janjaweed’s systematic rape of women and the burning and looting of villages—90% of which were razed to the ground—all driven by an ideological hatred of difference. The International Criminal Court said it was genocide. Omar al-Bashir and some of the others involved in those crimes have still not been brought to justice.

Reports of new outrages in early 2023 led to the all-party group asking me to chair a new inquiry. Our report, *Genocide All Over Again in Darfur?*, described the consequences of daring to think you can neglect the issue of justice. We concluded that, whatever happens when the violence in Sudan ends, there will be no lasting and credible peace without justice.

On 18 July 2023, I tabled a Private Notice Question asking the Government, “following the discovery of mass graves and an increase in crimes targeting non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur, what assessment they have made of the risk of genocide in that region”.

I quoted the current prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan KC, who had told the United Nations Security Council the previous week that we were “in peril of allowing history to repeat itself”.

He said that Darfur was “not on the precipice of a human catastrophe but in the very midst of one. It is occurring”.

At the time, the noble Lord, Lord Collins, asked the then Government “what we are doing to put pressure on Sudan so that people cannot act with impunity in the future”.—[[Official Report, 18/7/23; cols. 2206-07.](#)]

To find the answer to that crucial question, I hope that the noble Lord will agree to convene a round table to examine with Members of your Lordships’ House ways for us to honour our duties under the 1948 UN convention on the crime of genocide, which lays upon us, as a signatory, the duty to predict, prevent, protect and punish. We do none of those things.



What will be done about the horrendous evidence not just from the past but in this week's fact-finding mission report given to the United Nations Human Rights Council? I was appalled to read, yet again, about the same things that I have myself seen. The report detailed instances of rape and sexual violence occurring now, with the rape of girls as young as eight and of women as old as 75. I repeat: girls as young as eight years of age. The fact-finding mission attributed these crimes to "men wearing RSF uniforms ... who victims referred to as Janjaweed".

It said that international crimes are being committed by the SAF and the RSF, including "murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture; and committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment".

Crimes against humanity intersect with the persecution and forcible displacement of people on grounds of ethnicity and gender. Karim Khan says that the current situation in Sudan is within the purview of the ICC's mandate. He has been collecting and analysing the evidence. Can the Minister tell us how the UK's war crimes unit is working with him and other like-minded nations?

We should not foolishly imagine that what happens in a faraway place stays there. In the foreword to our report, I said: "More refugees will be coming our way if we do not act now and address the situation".

The failure to tackle root causes both fails the displaced and plays into the hands of those who wickedly whip up fear and hatred of refugees. Undoubtedly, the immediate priority must be humanitarian aid. The situation is too urgent to wait for permission from the men with guns to enter Sudan. Does the Minister agree? In the Security Council—this was referred to by the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay—the United Kingdom should call for an international intervention force under UN or African Union auspices, and initiate a Chapter VII mandate to do so. Can the Minister tell us whether that is our intention?

Building on something said by the noble Baroness, Lady Suttie, I say that we must do far more to support Abdalla Hamdok and those Sudanese people who are committed to the popular democratic calls for peace, justice and freedom. In our all-party group's report, we talked about a "tantalising" glimpse of hope but, if hope is to be sustained, it needs more than a glimpse—it must be a long-term commitment.

Sudan deserves much better than the SAF and the RSF. Since independence in 1989, the SAF has been an army only ever deployed against its own people. Wars end when one side clearly wins, when one side surrenders or when one side becomes exhausted, none of which seems to be about to happen. Both have weapons, money and, sometimes, opaque external support driven by jihadist ideology, as was referred to by the noble Baroness. What is our strategy for dealing with this?

At the end of today's debate, I would like to give the Minister a book of pictures drawn by children in Darfur, which was put together by Waging Peace. I hope that it will always be a reminder to him to keep them ever in his thoughts and actions.

10.44am The Lord Bishop of Leeds

10.54am Baroness Amos (Lab)

11.04am Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con)

11.14pm The Archbishop of Canterbury

11.24am Baroness Cox (CB)

### **11.30am Lord Oates (LD)**

My Lords, I declare my interests as chief executive of United Against Malnutrition and Hunger and a trustee of the Royal African Society. I am pleased to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Cox, with her great knowledge and experience of Sudan. I join others in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Collins, on his appointment as Minister for Africa. It was a pleasure to work with him in opposition and I welcome the renewed focus and vigour that he is bringing to addressing this crisis in Sudan. I very much welcome his powerful opening statement.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Khartoum and to meet with many brave people who were standing against military tyranny, and campaigning for peace and a return to civilian rule. Tragically, hopes that such an outcome might be achievable were ultimately betrayed by the self-interest and greed of the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. The result, as we have heard from the Minister and other speakers, including my colleague my noble friend Lady Suttie, who has such knowledge of the area, is catastrophe. Tens of thousands of people, perhaps well over 100,000, are already dead. Over 10 million people have been displaced from their homes, with 2 million of them externally displaced, causing tensions and instability in surrounding countries and driving migration further afield.

It is facile to pretend that there are simple solutions to a crisis of this scale and complexity. None the less, there is much more that the world can and should be doing to address the situation in Sudan and, as the penholder on Sudan in the Security Council, the UK obviously has particular responsibilities in this regard. I strongly agree with what the noble Baroness, Lady Amos, said in her powerful speech about how, ultimately, the political track is the most important, because we have to have a political agreement and resolution if we are to bring a sustainable end to the suffering, but I want to focus on three areas of practical action in my remarks today. The first is humanitarian access, the second the funding of the humanitarian need and the third the accountabilities of the parties to the conflict.

Humanitarian agencies tell us that hunger has become the primary cause of suffering for the people of Sudan. The World Food Programme estimates that over 8 million people, as we have heard, face emergency levels of food insecurity and that 755,000 people in 10 Sudanese states are facing starvation and death. Access to provide humanitarian relief to people in the greatest need is severely constrained by the warring parties. Aid deliveries are hampered by lengthy clearance and bureaucratic hurdles imposed by the Sudanese Armed Forces and, in RSF areas, by violence, threats to the security of convoys and attempts to elicit bribes. The World Food Programme told the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan—the noble Lord, Lord Alton, referred to its excellent briefing—that 45 separate negotiations are required to get aid from the Adre border crossing point into Darfur. Meanwhile, the trucks that left Port Sudan three weeks ago for Zamzam refugee camp, where famine has been declared, have still not got there.

The situation, of course, is highly complex, but there are things that the UK and the international community could do to improve the supply of aid into these regions. First, international organisations argue that we should specifically delink negotiations for humanitarian access from ceasefire talks, so that if such talks fail, as they currently tragically are, a track to humanitarian access can continue separately. Secondly, we need to be willing to take greater risks and be innovative with our approach to aid if we are to reach the people in the most desperate need. That means being more open to supplying aid through local NGOs on the ground, which have the best chance of reaching the hardest areas. Innovative approaches to get food where it is needed are also required, which the UK could champion.

In addition to direct funding to supply food, emergency therapeutic supplements and medicines, the international community needs to use cash transfers and market mechanisms where they are the most effective means to reach people. Markets continue to function in Sudan and cash transfers can be the most effective methods of providing vulnerable people with the means to access food and other necessities. However, if such transfers are not to drive inflationary spirals, investment is required on both the supply side and on the demand side. Market operators need access to liquidity to meet increased demand, but they also need the assurance the cash transfer model can provide that demand for increased supply will be sustained.

The second area that I want to focus on is funding. The UN appeal for Sudan is only a third funded and the regional refugee response just 8.5% funded. The failure of the international community to come anywhere close to meeting these funding needs is short-sighted in the extreme. The shortfall in the Sudan appeal points to a likely spiralling of the hunger crisis within Sudan, greater displacement of people internally and externally, and further pressures on surrounding countries. Likewise, the almost complete failure to fund the regional refugee response is morally unacceptable, placing as it does huge burdens on neighbouring countries least able to bear them. It is also catastrophically short-sighted, as a failure to address the refugee crisis regionally is only likely to see migrant movements towards our borders and those of our partners. While the UK contribution is welcome, much more is needed to meet the scale of the refugee crisis.

According to data from the *Economist* magazine, 60% of the refugees in the camps around Calais are already from Sudan. Meanwhile, the UK expends huge amounts of aid funds intended to be used overseas to meet in-country refugee costs. Sudan demonstrates the counterproductive folly of this approach and I hope that the new Government will change it. I hope that, in his response, the Minister can reassure us that the UK will use its role as penholder to urgently convene donor countries to step up to the plate on both the Sudan appeal and the refugee response appeal, and to explain to them the catastrophic consequences of failing to do so.

Lastly on funding, while commitments are welcome, it is disbursement of those commitments that make the difference. Can the Minister look at how the £97 million pledged by the UK Government can be disbursed as rapidly as possible, utilising the approaches proposed by the humanitarian agencies, while being prepared to raise our risk tolerance for humanitarian funding?

On the accountability of warring parties, particularly what seems to be the deliberate use of hunger as a strategy in this conflict, can the Minister tell us what progress there has been towards the UK's ratification of the amendment of Article 8 of the Rome statute to include starvation as a war crime in the context of conflicts not of an international character, as organisations such as Action Against Hunger have repeatedly urged? Can he also tell us what efforts have been made to reiterate the responsibilities of warring parties to comply with Resolution 2417?

No one who listened to the testimony given to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan on Wednesday could come away anything other than horrified by the suffering of the Sudanese people that they bore witness to, or by the silence and indifference of the world to that suffering. The leader of the delegation from the Sudanese women's shuttle diplomacy initiative powerfully conveyed to us the sense of abandonment that the Sudanese people feel: "We have the right also to live as humans, but we are forgotten", she said. We must ensure that the people are not forgotten, but we must do much more than that. We must use our role as penholder at the Security Council to galvanise international action to resolve this conflict and end the terrible suffering of the Sudanese people. I welcome the Minister's obvious commitment to this end.

11.40am Baroness Ashton of Upholland (Lab)

11.48am Lord Stirrup (CB)

11.56am Lord Anderson of Swansea (Lab)

12.06pm Baroness Helic (Con)

12.15pm Baroness Uddin (Non-Afl)

12.24pm Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (CB)

12.33pm Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab)

12.43pm Lord Bellingham (Con)

1.06pm Lord Davies of Brixton (Lab)

As I am leaving, the Minister is under no obligation to answer any questions which I ask, but I very much hope that he will answer the question raised by the noble Lord, Lord Oates, about cash rather than food. This issue was raised by a number of organisations at the APPG meeting on Wednesday. It runs through all aid efforts. We must give agency to the people whom we are helping. To the extent that providing money rather than food is a key element of that, I very much hope that my noble friend the Minister can answer the point raised by the noble Lord, Lord Oates.

1.07pm Lord Verdirame (Non-Afl)

1.15pm Baroness Goudie (Lab)

1.23pm The Earl of Dundee (Con)

1.28pm Lord Howarth of Newport (Lab) [V]

1.37pm Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB)

**1.43pm Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD)**

My Lords, this has been an exceptionally well-informed debate, and I thank the Minister for securing it in government time and for opening it in such a powerful way. I commend him and his work. I also welcome very warmly the appointment announced during this debate of Richard Crowder as the head of the British mission and the special representative. I have met with him and I wish him well in his work. This gives me an opportunity to put on record my thanks to his predecessor, Giles Lever, for his dedication and service.

Many civilians recoil sometimes from the conflict in Sudan being termed a "civil war". Perhaps it meets a dictionary definition, but the impression it gives is that it is some form of popular-backed conflict between civilian-backed forces. This is a conflict inflicted on the civilian population from two forces seeking advantage over the other, with external vested interests in the resources they will then seek to control. In 2024, they seem to define "resource" as including children forced to bear arms.

The severity of the crisis over the last year and a half is matched only by the wilful ignorance of the western media and political class in highlighting the need for the man-made humanitarian horror to end. I politely disagree with those who have said it is a forgotten war. It is not a forgotten war yet, but it is a wilfully ignored war now.

Although the Ukraine conflict retains a permanent heading on the Disasters Emergency Committee webpage, as it should, the Sudan conflict, which is bigger in its impact on civilians and with a humanitarian crisis on a much higher scale, warrants no mention at all—not on the front page or on any page. I hope the Minister might feel it justified to convene all those NGOs and charities as part of the Disasters Emergency Committee so that there is an appeal, for which the Government will offer matched support. My noble friend Lord Oates was absolutely right when he said that the UN appeal is only one-third funded. The Paris conference appeal earlier this year



was only half matched, with the UK Government offering no extra support then. I welcome the modest extra support that the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, referred to and I look forward to clarification on that in the Minister's winding. It is a strategic error that this funding is not being provided, not just a moral outrage.

The debate has had three distinct elements: the need for urgent humanitarian assistance, as my noble friend Lady Suttie indicated; the need for those with vested interests to move from profiteering from conflict to being part of peace; and the need for long-term civilian government. I will touch on all three as well. I need not repeat the litany of statistics of the crisis; although they merit repeating constantly to shame us all, noble Lords have done so powerfully throughout the debate.

The Minister referred to the recent ALPS initiative in Geneva. Will he respond positively to the calls by civilian groups that the UK not only supports the process externally but participates in it? This was a call from the women's shuttle diplomacy group, referenced in this debate, whom I met personally on Tuesday afternoon.

We heard about the exodus of those fleeing the savage conflict. More support can now be given to many of those who have fled the country: it is not necessarily being impeded. At Chatham House earlier this week, I heard that the diaspora community, which has worked so hard and committed so much support to communities back home, is now struggling to do so. What can His Majesty's Government do to expand flexible cash support, as my noble friend Lord Oates said, not just for those within Sudan but potentially for the diaspora community, which has means by which support can go back to those communities?

The unforgivable blockage of aid inside Sudan by both belligerent forces, which is leading to wilful starvation of young mothers and children, is being carried out with too much impunity. This is most acute in the deliberate attacks on schools by the RSF or civilian medical centres by the Sudanese Armed Forces, with medicine being taken away from lactating mothers and from children, as fighters seem to be given priority, as the SAF says. Will His Majesty's Government provide extra support to emergency response rooms, communal kitchens, education shelters and youth response committees, as all these are being provided by the civilian population within Sudan, who need extra support now? The need will be greater in the weeks ahead.

This leads me to the second theme. The UK's status as pen holder has been referred to. The question is not the merit of the UK being the pen holder but what we are writing with it. The last Security Council resolution was as long ago as June, which related to the tragedy of Al-Fashir. There needs to be a new Security Council resolution, and I hope the UK high-level delegation to UNGA will start to propose it. We need clearer statements of UN fact on breaches of international humanitarian law. We need the triggering of measures under Security Council Resolution 2417 on starvation as a war crime, which has been referred to in the debate. We need to designate no-fly areas for aircraft and military drones, many now supplied by Iran and near neighbours. As we have heard, civilians have been attacked with weaponry from China, Iran, Russia, Serbia and the UAE. The UK must now make the case for widening the arms embargo beyond Darfur.

After months of campaigning and repeated calls in this House, I was pleased that the previous Administration proscribed the Wagner Group. I fear that some operatives have been transferred into Russian state entities, which, as we heard, are now advising elements of both the SAF and the RSF, not just in the protection of their gold trading interests but in the provision of misinformation, disinformation and false narratives given against civilians. This also supports elements of the previous al-Bashir regime seeking to obfuscate their intentions and to seek legitimacy, including suggesting that civilians should settle for an autocratic and non-civilian Government. No.

A UK-sponsored UN Security Council resolution should outline clear corridors for supply of medical aid and food, ensure that there is no impunity for deliberately targeting food production and, crucially, start now to outline the basis upon which civilian government services will be restarted, including civilian commercial airspace, money transfers, basic business lending again, an infrastructure reconstruction authority, internal free passage, profiteering-free telecommunications, reducing the state capture of any ceasefire arrangements, and take action on preparing consideration of a UN Security Council resolution potentially including UN security for Khartoum airport. Before the war, Khartoum was home to 60% of the population. There is no future to a Sudan without a functioning civilian airport in Khartoum. We also see the so-called mercenaries from the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan, and action needs to be taken to reduce those.

Actions of such a nature are not just for a humanitarian response; I agree 100% with the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, that actions in these areas are in the UK's strategic interest. Sudan's Red Sea location is close to the Suez Canal, a major conduit of world trade, where we have already deployed military force against Houthi attacks. I am sure the House is aware that even previously in the conflict in Yemen, Sudan was the origin of the highest number of child soldiers deployed by both sets of the war in Yemen.

That General Hemedti recently visited South Africa, and General al-Burhan met Xi last week, shortly followed by visits to Chinese arms companies, is surely a warning for strategic interest. Prior to the war, 8% of Sudan's economy was through gold exports, but precious little was able to be used for public services, which were

already at unnecessarily low levels. The previous technocratic Ministers attempted to put the economy on a stable footing, with global support, but after the coup and especially after the war, the resources of Sudan have been used and exploited not for the Sudanese but for military and personal advantage.

I also believe that the UK can take action, as we heard in the debate, on the renewal of the mandate of the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan. Given the critical role played by the FFM, I hope the Minister will respond to that when he sums up. Furthermore, I believe that the UK must be a leading power, establishing the practical basis upon which any future agreement is not just a cessation of hostilities to divide territory but to engage civilian government. I am grateful for the UK support for Taqaddum—the Minister is aware of my interest and involvement over recent months. The Minister and others referred to the former civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. It is worth reminding the House that he is the only civilian Prime Minister in Sudan in 35 years, and that he is president of the civilian Taqaddum, as the noble Earl, Lord Dundee, indicated. I spoke to Abdalla Hamdok this morning before this debate—he is in Nairobi just before travelling to New York and Washington. He wanted me to relay a specific message to the House, that “the unity of Sudan can only be provided by civilians, for all regions and all ethnic groups” and “civilians are the backbone of a unified Sudan”. He also said of the crisis: “Do not entertain that there can be two edifices, there is no military solution to this”. I agree with him.

I wish to close on a personal note if the House will indulge me. I have visited the country on many occasions since 2018 and have come to admire greatly Sudanese friends during the recent horrors of war. Their bravery, persistence, tolerance and optimism are truly humbling. These traits belie how some may categorise the country—not in this debate but elsewhere. Some might put it in the “too difficult” box or into the “well, what can we expect?” category, or they will say, “Well, it’ll become like Somalia or a new Libya or Syria”. The women whom we have all met this week, or the young women in exile whom I have met over the past few months, reject this. They reject the war; they reject the human rape and rape of resources. They reject the military persecution of civilians; they reject those who seek legitimacy on the back of actively blocking aid and food to their own people, to the villages and the communities; they reject the cynicism of external forces that will seek actively to exclude civilians from running their own country.

The noble Baroness, Lady Amos, indicated that it did not have to be this way, and it did not. I had the great privilege of being with my noble friend Lady Suttie in Sudan before the war, working with civilians on the framework agreement, facilitating dialogue. Before the war, I met General Burhan<sup>1</sup> and General Hemedti<sup>2</sup> separately—what has happened since is profoundly disturbing—to make the case at a last ditch that war was not inevitable. However, I could not reflect just on that. As we started our general election campaign in this country, I happened to be in Addis for the launch of the Taqaddum conference with them. As I watched the Sudanese—from all parts of society and all parts of the country, from women to young people, from the professions, from rural communities and urban areas—who had left the country under great security risk themselves to be at a civilian conference, many of them not sure that they would be allowed home, I could do no other than reflect that I had the privilege to be with them as we were embarked on a remarkable democratic process here at home, where we were engaged in the right to choose who governs us and to hold them to account, and where, if we change our minds about them, we can have a peaceful transition of power. That is what they want. I hope that the Minister will make it his mission that they will have what we take for granted.

1.56pm Lord Callanan (Con)

2.04pm Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab)

I say to the right reverend Prelate and other noble Lords that there is no doubt that we are dealing with a fast-changing situation, as was illustrated by the noble Lord, Lord Purvis. I told him earlier than an announcement on the Special Envoy for Sudan was imminent, and his phone was operating quicker than mine. I am pleased that the announcement has been made and that Richard Crowder is our special representative for Sudan.

#### Column 1814

In response to the noble Lord, Lord Oates, we are committed to ensuring that aid is allowed to reach those in need. Starvation must not be allowed as a method of warfare; we have made that clear. The parties involved in that must be held to account and we will be pursuing that point. Our message remains absolutely clear: the obstruction of aid by the warring parties must stop in order to save countless innocent lives.

Motion agreed. House adjourned at 2.31 pm *House of Lords Hansard, Volume 839*:

<sup>1</sup> General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan Abdelrahman al-Burhan has been Interim President of Sudan since 2021 and the Chair of the Transitional Military Council from 2019 & the short-lived Sovereign Council. He is Commander-in-Chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

<sup>2</sup> General Hemedti - Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti. Leader of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which grew out of the Janjaweed, a conglomeration of Arab tribal militias mostly drawn from camel-trading tribes and active in Darfur and parts of Chad. Hemedti is of the Mahariya tribe of the Rizeigat community in Darfur. Despite rising under al-Bashir, and amassing great wealth under his rule, Hemedti sided with those overthrowing the president in the 2019 uprising. He became the deputy head of the Transitional Military Council, but became sceptical of the army under Burhan, with whom his RSF was to merge.

# International Abstracts

## Journal of Liberal History Issue 123: Summer 2024

International perspective is most clearly through Juha Kolumäki's Finnish Liberalism between the wars, with an afterword on subsequent developments. Ian Cawood's piece on Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman recites his position on the Boer War. Important online resources have become available, of Richard Cobden's letters and the Victorian House of Commons. The archives of the McDougall Trust have been transferred to the University of Warwick, focused on electoral reform, including the papers of Enid Lakeman. Neil Stockley reports on the Group's meeting on the 1847 Financial Crisis and the Irish Famine – his opening remarks on Kwasi Kwarteng's 'Growth Plan' should be recited in on-going attacks on the Conservative party – the people need to remember these things, kick the Tories while they are down and keep them down. Equally *What Have the Liberals Done for Us?* Should be part of everyone's frontline library.

## Journal of Liberal History Issue 124: Autumn 2024

One might excuse the focus on recent events in Sir John Curtiss's analysis of the general election,,, not as good news as you might like to hear. William Wallace's *The Origins of Liberalism* draws on the Europeans & trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas with the home-grown. Otherwise, Jim McGowan writes on the relationship between Gladstone and Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator. Simon Morgan's *Cobden and his constituencies* draws our attention to the recent online database of his letters, from which we might hope for much fruit and there is a report of the meeting on *Greening Liberalism*.

## Liberator 425

Dominated by the General Election, Martha Elliott looks at Kamala Harris's late entry in the US Presidential race. Simon Banks reappraises John Rawls. RB looks at the Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) and former MP David Ward – pull yourselves together Lib Dems and stop acting like Kier Stalin.

## The Liberal Dispatch

Spotlights South American voices ahead of Liberal International's historic 64th Congress in Santiago, Chile. María Corina Machado shares her journey from activist to opposition leader in Venezuela, while Rosa María Payá highlights Cuba's repressive regime as a global threat. Eliecer Feinzaig discusses Costa Rica's environmental policy reforms, and Maiara Patrício Coral and Carlos Da Costa critique Brazil's role in the BRICS, pointing out the forum's lack of meaningful economic cooperation and disparities in political and economic freedoms among its members. Chile's liberal youth leaders - Fernanda Ulloa and José Miguel Gallo - advocate for transcending political divides, emphasizing shared values of democracy, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility.

## US Presidential Elections

Yearning to turn the page, by Art Cullen from Art Cullen's Notebook <[artcullen@substack.com](mailto:artcullen@substack.com)> 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024

*Sceptical of Tim Walz at first, this editorial commentator from Iowa is a convert; let's hope there are more of them.*

[Yearning to turn the page - Storm Lake Times Pilot](#)

Opinion Debates don't matter. Except when they really do,  
by Jennifer Rubin. Washington Post 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024

*A comprehensive putting in the boot; let's hope it fits...*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/09/15/debates-mattered-this-year-harris-trump-biden/>

## Ukraine

Why North Korea's Deployment of Troops to Russia Really Matters, by Keith Johnson. Foreignpolicy.com 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

*President Zelenskyy's announcement that North Korean troops were reinforcing Putin's forces received some mainstream coverage in the UK but was generally muted. North Korean officers have been supervising use of Korea's weaponry for some time, and 10,000 doesn't perhaps, sound like many. Why? Was asked, and the Financial Times (26.10.24) reported hostility and racial slurs from Russian soldiers. Johnson's perspective is much wider, too which one might add the nightmare of elite troops gaining battlefield experience. Time for the Israel-Gaza, now Lebanon to be brought to an end and the that support diverted back to Ukraine.*

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/10/23/north-korea-troops-russia-war-ukraine-explained/>



# Reviews

**The Rise and Fall of Imperial China: The Social Origins of State Development, by Yuhua Wang. Princeton University Press 2022 £30.00 isbn 9780691215167**

When we were criticising the Chinese Communist Party on its poor human rights record, we first need to understand the state-society relationships within China. Many historical studies analysed this issue in different eras, yet not many can provide the full pattern of its development throughout Chinese History. I must admit Yuhua Wang's new book 'The Rise and Fall of Imperial China – The Social Origins of State Development' is a rare work which can provide a general yet clear theory on how China state-society relationship changed from 6<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This work is rather unique because he analysed China state-society relationship history by using social science terminology and provided a persuadable theory. He first explained we can classify state-society relationships in human history into 3 models (Page 7-15):

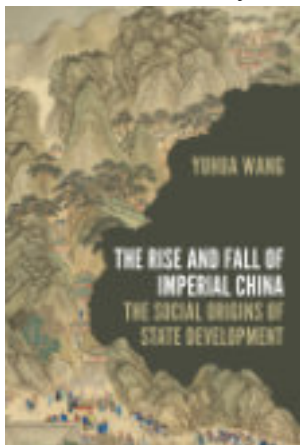
Models	State-society relationship	Relations between sectors in societies	Strength of State
Star Shape	Strong	Weak	Strong
Bowtie Shape	Some	Some	Somehow loosen
Ring Shape	Weak	Strong	Loosen

Professor Wang explained throughout Chinese History, the state-society relationship had been changed due to external challenges (Such as climate changes and foreign interference) (page 16-18).

In Tang dynasty, the power laid squarely on central government and the power from local society laid heavily in the area around the capital (where most aristocracy resided), hence the state was strong, the society was weak (Star Shape). But in latter centuries, the longevity of dynasty was extended in the expenses of the strength of state (From the evolving Bowtie Shape in Song to Ring Shape in late Qing). It happened when the central government allowed the civil service exams to be more competitive without expanding proportionate to the population growth. It became less likely for clans to succeed in civil service for more than a generation, hence they had less chance of using bureaucracy to keep themselves prosperous.

Therefore, clans have less motivation to rely on the states (Such as unlikely to move near the capital to progress their career and seek other career prospects to accumulate their wealth). Civil service filled up with gentries who were more interested in maintaining the clan interests, hence the state became less successful in pushing reforms which would strengthen its fiscal and military power. This resulted in the decline of fiscal capacity which caused the fiscal decline in premodern era (From 15% of its GDP under Song to less than 1% under Qing) (Page 5 and 24), hence civil service system was less financed, and rampant corruption followed.

It was unique also because huge amount of data was used to debunk and challenge other historical theories on the state-society relationships in imperial China. The prime example was when he explained how the



state increasingly relying on civil service exams to fill up their ranks, and the evolving nature of the civil servants in terms of their social background. He argued based on his data, in Tang dynasty the government still relied heavily on aristocratic kinship to fill up the ranks, while in Southern Song dynasty a significant majority of the ranks was filled via civil service exams. (Page 97-100) Professor Wang then carried on by analysing the social background of those supporting and opposing Wang Anshi fiscal reform in Song dynasty, and concluded its failure was due to under constant opposition from gentry with less kinship relations with other officials with the aristocratic class, and more interested in protecting local clanship interests.

Like most books on elaborating the historical pattern over a long period of time, however, there are some unanswered questions remained.

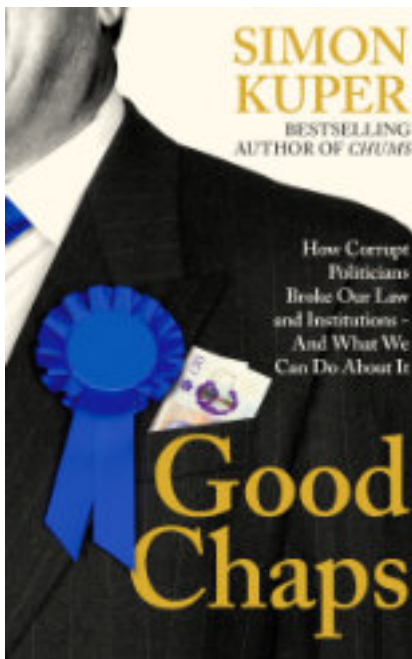
The most significant issue was Professor Wang chose to skip analysing Yuan altogether. The only part mentioned Yuan dynasty was at the end of chapter 4, as he claimed he ‘would describe how the development of social transformation that had germinated during Song dynasty were reinforced during the Yuan era’ (Page 129). Yuan dynasty lasted around 100 years and the political system is very different from other eras in Chinese history, including the civil service exam system.

Another missing piece was about the relationship in late Qing. As the book mentioned the local gentries gained a lot of power after the Taiping rebellion, most of the major industrial developments in the Self-Strengthening Movements were taken place afterwards in the stronghold of the powerful militia. The 1911 Revolution could also highly be related to the state-society relationship, since it all started with ‘Railway Rights Protection Movement’, which was the local gentries protested their economic interests when the government nationalised the local railway networks.

The last unanswered question was how to imply the theory into modern China. As Professor Wang said, ‘Lessons from China’s past and present indicate that state building should go beyond a narrow focus on strengthening bureaucracies to make elite social structures more compatible with a strong state and a durable regime’. (page 220)

The increasing suppression of civil society in China and Hong Kong proved the CCP is less tolerant with different voices, and President Xi is certain to remodel the state-society relationship into the ‘Star Model’. Yet the conflict of interests and the gap of development (Social and economy) among different parts of China, including Hong Kong was really large. The takeaway from Wang’s work was that centralising the power may work in early imperial China, under the condition of most elite population resided around the capital and had a aristocracy class, but it is no longer the case in modern China.

*Larry Ngan*



**Good Chaps, how corrupt politicians broke our law and institutions - and what we can do about it, by Simon Kuper.**

**Profile Books 2024 £9.99**

**isbn 9781805221227**

The British euphemism for corruption is sleaze, which has the benefit of not attracting legal action when bandied about. The Financial Times journalist, Simon Kuper, argues that the UK’s ruling elite turned to self-enrichment when the last generation to fight in World War Two exited the political system, taking their sense of public service with them. Up until then, Kuper writes, rules weren’t thought necessary because most good chaps generally knew the boundaries of ethical behavior.

Then came Mrs. Thatcher’s buccaneer capitalism, and Brexit’s rule-breaking contempt for deep state internationalists and their institutions. Money poured into British politics, and the ruling class justified its self-dealing because their friends were coining it in the City, hedge funds and property development, making MPs feel relatively poor. Thanks to Boris, the pirate king, greed and sleaze were normalised, leading to public cynicism about all politicians and institutions.

Kuper’s list of scandals (Tory and Labour) is familiar to those who follow the news closely. However, he paints a devastating portrait of a nation circling the drain. Covid-VIP lanes; golden visas for friends of the Kremlin, dodgy Chinese and Gulf Arabs; cash for honours; Crispin Odey, Bernie Ecclestone, Ben Elliot, and Richard Desmond’s return on investment in Robert Jenrick; the timid Electoral Commission, and Lord John Nash’s 47,000 invoices, to mention a few milestones on the road to Nigeria. Most recently, the Tories refused to return Frank Hester’s donations, and their senior treasurer was in the torturing kleptomaniac Hosni Mubarak’s cabinet.

Kuper reckons Labour’s generous individual donors (Sainsbury, Lubner, Vince) are motivated by morals. His concern is with the gold rush of corporates and consultants who offered Starmer pre-election “help” in the form of policy advisors (See Peter Geoghegan at Open Democracy). Morgan McSweeney’s failure to report vast sums donated to Labour Together resulted in a tiny fine. Will Labour tighten the rules? Why would they?

*Rebecca Tinsley*

**How Migration Really Works, by Hein de Haas**  
**Penguin 2024 £10.99 isbn 9780241998779**

In the current divisive cultural climate, this book is a great curative to what the author describes as '21 myths' about migration.

He tackles, first, the right-wing propaganda that migration is at an all-time high. Noting that current international migration figures as a percentage of the population are little different to those found 50 years ago, remaining relatively low and stable, he points out that most migrate short distances too. In our country a continual fire is kept burning by tabloids such as the Mail, and the trollsphere, claiming numbers coming here to claim asylum are disproportionate and pushed here by the EU. It is useful to note that those coming from, say, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan almost all stop in neighbouring states.

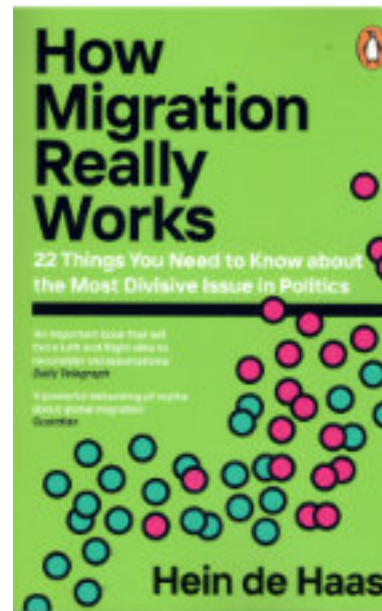
As a percentage of world population, 0.3% are refugees, and 3.3% are 'international migrants'. Now, the UK last year did have a large number of immigrants, but under 10% were asylum seeking, and a small percentage of those came 'by boats in the Channel'. The bulk of our immigrants have been workers and students, the former primarily to take shortage area skilled work, and the latter paying high fees to our colleges and universities. It is worth noting that international student applications are down considerably, which is an economic issue for higher education establishments. Those migrating to the UK for work are more visible than those we booted out over Brexit, by dint of being darker skinned, but there are arguably few more (possibly less, even, though growing) than have left – there is an employment crisis in a number of sectors, and ironically some of these sectors do not offer sufficient salary for our EU neighbours to be replaced, under current income restrictions, by migrants from further afield. Thus, as de Haas puts it, 'most immigration stems from active labour recruitment'.

As to 'illegal' migration, the bulk of the numbers, by far, have been into Greece, followed by Italy and Malta, and these figures are fifth of what they were 10 years ago (Spain is currently experiencing the largest numbers, but they are still relatively low). You don't read that in the Mail, now do you? It doesn't suit the narrative.

De Haas notes, too, that in fact there is 'no evidence of a rise in 'bogus' asylum claims', most asylum seekers are fleeing oppression and war, often from countries destabilised by US and UK foreign policy, both historically and today. Warfare is the primary driver of asylum-seeking migration. And overall, the world is more peaceful than in the past – the takeaway here is that the refugee 'crisis' is actually a 'political crisis'. 'The data clearly defies the widespread belief that the West is besieged by a rising tide of refugees', and we know who spreads this toxic opinion. The fact that our asylum process in the UK is beyond capacity is, too, a politically created crisis, as the outgoing administration deliberately bottle-necked the bureaucracy, in part to keep the numbers granted legitimate asylum down so as not to annoy a far-right they increasingly relied upon to retain power. And he illustrates how 'Brexit accelerated immigration', in a chapter on how closing borders doesn't work unless your goal is to create a public obsession with immigration!

As with so many issues, such as Cameron's 'Brexit', an education system designed to discourage critical thinking, a culture designed to 'divide and conquer' thus not interested in teaching citizenship or ensuring social cohesion, this short-termist refusal to process asylum applications in a timely fashion has come back to bite our elites on the proverbial arse. The author notes that, globally, cultures have been becoming more homogeneous. I think it is clear that, in Europe and America, there is a backlash against diversity which, again, can only be a largely manufactured 'crisis', and those pouring petrol on the flames they also sparked in the first place are known to us. Overall, 'diversity is no threat to social cohesion and national identity'. This conclusion may surprise some readers, but the UK since the Tories took power has gone out of its way to stop education of those granted asylum for integration by cancelling English and Citizenship programmes once delivered by every FE college. These cuts cost jobs locally to many teachers, whilst also ensuring integration be made more difficult. Again, a politically motivated and created 'crisis'.

On the other hand, de Haas notes that despite war being a primary driver, migration is often about investing in a better future. As noted above, much of our inward migration is for work and is encouraged by our government. Important skilled jobs can be filled, that our own population is insufficient for, thus 'migration is an investment in a better future' for both migrant and Britain. Just ask the NHS, for example, where we'd be without it. Obviously, if our own education system was better at creating career aspiration amongst our





children we may end up with more nurses, doctors, engineers, etc... but again, the Tories were the ones who cut processes such as Aim Higher, and careers advice in schools has always been appalling.

This book is an important tool in countering many more myths around migration. These include the beliefs that 'immigrants steal jobs and drive down wages', 'undermine the welfare state', 'produce mass segregation', 'send crime rates soaring', amongst other things that can be proven wrong by use of, erm, FACTS! Conversely, he shows how 'we need migrants to fix the problems of ageing societies' is a myth. And, as shown on our very own streets so recently, the book gives a factually rigorous proof that 'public opinion has turned against immigration' is also a myth. De Haas rounds his book off with a call to both left-wing and right-wing to absorb the lessons the reality of migration and thus help make future decisions by politicians and opinion amongst the public more nuanced and helpful.

**Tim Barton**

**The Queen in the Cave, by Jùlia Sardà.**  
**Walker Studio 2021 £8.99**  
**isbn 9781529524239**

This is a *Where the Wild Things Are* for girls. Most of them, and the lead protagonist, Franca, older than Max, it goes further, being more obviously a rite of passage. It further has the interplay between siblings with contrasting anticipations of the passage.

This was the first book Jùlia Sardà wrote, having cut her teeth previously as an illustrator. The illustrations are sumptuous; its not surprising that *One Day in Wonderland* came just before (with Kathleen Krull, 2020). Sardà hails from Catalunya and the book draws on childhood memories of growing up. It is hardly surprising since this was the landscape that brought us Joan Miró and Salvador Dali that the magic would seep through.

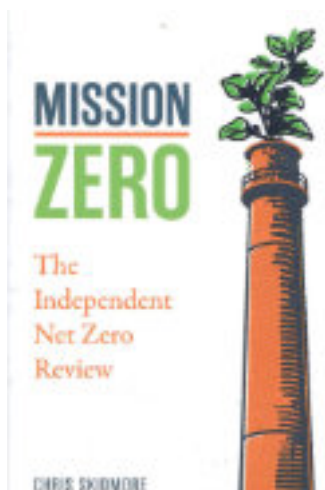
Suitable for the Christmas stockings of 7- to 10-year-olds if you don't have a caga tió.

**Stewart Rayment**

**Mission Zero, the Independent Net Zero Review, by Chris Skidmore.**  
**Biteback 2023 £14.99 isbn 9781785908477**

I hope I don't need to suggest that this book should be in the hands of the member holding the Climate Change portfolio in every Liberal Democrat council group. Even though the spending restraints of the last and probably this government don't give you full rein to implement its proposals, the book remain there to guide, to hone your arguments, and put forward practical suggestions.

Coming from a Tory-Boy who kept pretty dodgy company in the Free Enterprise Group, this may be surprising, but he did oppose Brexit. Despite this, he progressively slipped up the greasy pole, then as Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, signed the UK's Net Zero Pledge into law. Whether this was a step too far, Johnson moved him to another department within days, with a further move in the Autumn, which we might take as a sign of the instability of the Johnson government. He was then culled in the St Valentine's Day Massacre of 2020 and eventually called for Johnson's resignation in July 2022.



Instead of twiddling his thumbs thereafter, in September 2022 Skidmore set up the Net Zero Review, which was published the following January. In the course of this Skidmore announced that he would not be seeking re-election and took up a consultancy with the Emissions Capture Company Ltd. Telling us he would vote Labour in the General Election, we hope he isn't going to be disappointed in that decision.

The Institutional Investors' Group on Climate Change thought that Rachel Reeves' first budget fell short of what was required, lacking a comprehensive strategy (and around an eighth of the commitment touted during the election campaign). £7.8 billion over two years doesn't really cut it, and its up to the 72 in the Commons to state the case.

**Saeed Rahman**

