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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Ashdown, Ignatieff, Dahrendorf

EVENTS

7th September - Executive

7.00pm NLC

19th–23rd September Lib Dem Autumn Conference, Bournemouth.

Monday 21 September President Obama's Quest for Middle East Peace - LD Friends of Israel - Highcliff Marriott Hotel, Dorchester Suite 2 - 20.00-21.15

Tuesday 22nd September LD Friends of Palestine - Ed Davey & AGM - Connaught Hotel, Priory 1 -20.00-21.15

Wednesday 23rd September Presentation of LI Prize for Freedom to Eric Avebury by John Alderdice, President of LI - 14.30

26th September - Liberal Party Assembly, Friends' Meeting House, Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton

29th October–1st November 56th LI Congress - Cairo

2nd November - Executive

7.00pm NLC

9th November - Forum on China

7.00pm NLC

7th December - Party in memory of Russell Johnstone - cash bar-

7.00pm NLC

11th January - Executive

7.00pm NLC

1st February - Forum on India

7.00pm NLC

1st March - Executive

7.00pm NLC

12-14th March Lib Dem Spring Conference, Birmingham

15th March - Diplomatic Reception

7.00pm NLC

24th May - Forum on Brasil

7.00pm NLC

7th June - Executive

7.00pm NLC

June tbc - Lord Garden Memorial Lecture, Chatham House

26th June - Garden Party, Kensington

19th July - AGM, followed by short Executive & optional dinner - NLC

6th September 2010 - Executive

7.00pm NLC

18th–22nd September Lib Dem Autumn Conference, Liverpool.

All events other than the Diplomatic Reception, the Garden Party & post-AGM Dinner are free for members. There will be a cash bar at the Russell Johnson Party.

For bookings & other information please contact the Organising Secretary below.

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

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"What will the world look like in the Obama era?"

The Tim Garden Memorial Lecture

Paddy Ashdown

In this speech, there will be history and poetry. And, on a slightly more prosaic level, I will also unveil for you, tongue in cheek of course, Ashdown's Third law of international relations in the post Obama world.

Let us start with the poetry.

It comes from Rabindranath Tagore's poem "*Unity in Diversity*"

"We are all the more one, because we are many
For we have made an ample space for love
in the gap where we were sundered,
Our unlikeness reveals its breadth of beauty,
with one common life,
Like mountain peaks in the morning sun"

We are about to enter an age in which Tagore's great statement will be one of the few signposts we have for a safe passage through dangerous times.

Three factors make the years ahead completely different from those of the last century – and some are of a nature which we have never before encountered.

The first of these factors is not unique. But it is not going to be any more comfortable for that.

We are on the edge of one of those periods of history when the pattern of world power changes; when the gimbals on which the established order is mounted, shift and a new order begins to emerge. And these are, almost always difficult times for the weak, tough for those whose power is waning and usually bloody for almost everyone.

Trail you hand over the side of the boat and

feel the tide. Economic power is running away from the nations gathered on the shores of the Atlantic and towards those gathered around the rim of the Pacific.

This economic recession is not like any other we have recently experienced. We will not, this time plummet down and then bounce back comfortably to where we were, before it all started. This is about something much deeper. Underneath the tectonic plates of global power are shifting. And when it is over we in the Western nations will, relatively speaking, be weaker and those in the Eastern nations will be stronger.

The last time we saw a shift of power on this scale was when the leadership of the world passed across the Atlantic from the old powers of Europe to the emerging power of the United States in the last decades of the nineteenth century. And we all remember the convulsions which followed that collapse of empires and the emergence of a new order. Only then power shifted, but the values, mostly, didn't. This time, we are experiencing not just a change of order, but a change of values too.

Now it is important to be clear exactly what is happening here and what is not.

I am not saying that the rise of nations like China and other far Eastern powers will be smooth or comfortable for them either. There are some propose that Chinas ascent will follow the line of the straight line graph. Yesterday China was here. Today they are here. Draw a line between the two and extend it and that is where China will be at a given time in the future. I do not believe that. China's ascent to great power status will not be smooth. Beijing is trying to do

something very difficult and, in a Chinese context, very dangerous, too. Their economy may be largely liberalised. But, unlike India, their society is not. And my guess is as they begin to loose the bonds of their old communist structures in favour of a freer society, as they must, there will be considerable turbulence in China too – look at the increase of protest and disturbance already occurring in China and you might well conclude that this has already started. Beijing is certainly frightened by it – and they have every reason to be. Chinese history is littered with instances when this great nation, as disparate and ethnically diverse as Europe, stands at the edge of greatness and then descends into dissolution and chaos.

But – and here is the point – though this may alter the time scale and manner of China's rise, it will not, I think, change the basic fact that great power status is her most likely ultimate destination.

Nor do I agree with some of my more left wing friends who tell me, often with ill disguised glee, that we are seeing the end of American power in the world; that the United States has passed the zenith of its glory.

I do not believe that this either. You know a power which still has a claim to greatness, by its ability to change. The symptoms of decline in nations, as in humans are scleroticism, institutional arthritis and resistance to change. And the United States shows none of these - as the still remarkable election of Barack Obama very clearly shows. And for those who wish, then note another example; look at the lightening fast changes brought by General Petraeus which, in a matter of only a couple of years has changed the US Army from a great lumbering dinosaur incapable of effective action against insurgents in Iraq, into the world's most effective counter insurgency army; leaving, I regret to say, the British Army now trailing some way behind. No European Army – indeed none in the world, I think – could have made such a change with such speed.

No - I do not think that we have seen the end of the American century yet. The US

looks likely to be the world's most powerful nation for one or two decades to come, which is as far ahead as it is wise to make predictions. But, though the United State's position as the world's pre-eminent power, is not likely to change, the CONTEXT in which she holds that position is now certain to.

We are no longer looking, as we have for more than the last half century, at a world dominated by single super power. The globe is no longer going to be mono-polar in the way it has been for the life times, of most in this room. The growth of new power centres means the emergence of a much more multi polar world – one which will look much more like Europe in the nineteenth century. The great British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, used to refer to the five sided balance of power in nineteenth century Europe as “The European Areopagiticus” or “The Concert of Europe”, in which he saw Britain's role as always playing to the balance in order to prevent any single power dominating and thus keep Britain out of continental entanglements. I think the world of the next few decades will look much more like that.

And this will have a number of rather important consequences.

One will be a rise in regional groupings – of which history may say the EU was the first albeit highly imperfect, example.

Second and linked will be an increase in protectionism and probably a reversal of the movement towards free trade of the last half century – with all implications that carries for a destructive period, of beggar my neighbour economic policies.

The third implication of this new pattern of world power is for us in Europe. In such a multi sided world the eyes of the US are likely to be just as much, west across the Pacific as east across the Atlantic. The Atlantic relationship will remain be a key relationship on the European side and on the American one too. But it will not have anything like the unique importance as a lynch pin for all other policies, as it has had over the last half century. I am not sure that Europe has fully realised it yet, but the US security guarantee,

under which we have all sheltered since World War Two and which has given many of our European neighbours the opportunity to take a free ride on Uncle Sam for their national security, no longer exists. There are still United States soldiers left in Europe, to be sure. But very few of them. And almost all are here, not for our security, but to support their operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

My guess is that Europe will be less important to every future US president, including Barrack Hussein Obama, than we have been to every past one, including George W Bush. Indeed, having loved to hate him, we Europeans may well find ourselves rather missing George Bush before too long. Firstly because we were able to shelter behind complaints about his unilateralism, as an excuse for not getting our own European act together. It may not be long before America's new President calls our bluff by posing us a challenge for concerted European action with the US, which we have neither the institutions nor the will for effective co-ordination, to respond to.

Secondly because George Bush may well turn out to be the last US President to have had an emotional tie to Europe. In future we are likely to be judged by Washington, not on the basis of history, but on a rather cooler, even brutal appraisal, of what we can deliver when it comes to pursuing our joint interests – and here the answer is not much, if Afghanistan is anything to go by.

The United States is increasingly going to have interests in the world which do not always coincide with those of Europe. And Europe is going to have interests in the world which do not always coincide with Washington's. For Europeans this will mean having a rather more subtle and sophisticated foreign policy in the future, than simply hanging onto the apron strings of our friendly neighbourhood super power, as we have in the past. And for both of us – that is the US and Europe – it means developing a much more mature relationship, in which we can sometimes disagree without shouting betrayal every time.

It also means that if NATO is to prosper – perhaps even survive, then it will do so

better to the extent that it fulfils the dream of Kissinger and Kennedy of a twin pillar NATO, where the European defence structures are co-ordinated enough to offer something closer to a partnership of equals, than our present an unequal dialogue between a giant and a parliament of pigmies.

And there is a final consequence, from this new situation in which we Europeans find ourselves. If we cannot in future count on the US as our protector of last resort and friend for all circumstances, then it is also true that things are more threatening for us elsewhere, too. We now have an increasingly assertive Russia, prepared to use the lever of energy, skilful at dividing and ruling, asserting the old Brezhnev doctrine of spheres of interest and backing it with military force when the opportunity arises. And beyond that we have a rising China and increasing economic power in the East. If we do not realise that the right reaction of Europe to these new and much more difficult circumstances, is to deepen the integration of our institutions, especially when it comes to defence, foreign affairs and economic policy, then we are fools and the next few decades are going to be much more painful than they need to be for us. As Nick Clegg rightly says, the choice for us in Europe is to be stronger and safer together. Or weaker and poorer apart.

The last and arguably most important consequence of this new shape to world power is this; we are reaching the beginning of the end of perhaps six centuries of the domination of Western power, Western institutions and Western values, over world affairs. We are soon going to discover – no, we are already discovering - that, if we want to get things done, such as redesigning the world economic order, or intervening for peace, we cannot any longer just do them within the cosy Atlantic club; we are going to have to find new allies in places we would never previously have thought of. And they will probably prove less congenial and more demanding than we find it comfortable to cope with.

I suspect that Iraq and Afghanistan will be the last interventions we attempt, depending on Western power alone. In future, if we cannot

find wider partners for these affairs we will probably not be able to do them.

The global financial crisis has made it very plain. If we want a more ordered world at a time of great instability, we are going to have to provide a space at the top tables for nations that do not share our culture, our history, our world view or even, in many cases, our values. This is going to be uncomfortable, even painful.

And it is going to need a new way of thinking. And we are going to have to accept deals we would have hitherto have found completely unpalatable.

I suspect it will not be long before we look back at the deal we spurned when the Dohar trade talks failed, with the nostalgia that comes with the realisation that this was an opportunity lost and the chagrin that accompanies an understanding, that we are not going to get anything as good again.

The second factor which is likely to make these the times to try men's souls, is that, we are seeing a double shift of power.

Power is now not just shifting laterally from West to East; it is shifting vertically, too. It is migrating out of the structures of the nation state, which we created to hold it to accountability and make it subject to regulation and the rule of law, and into the global space, where the instruments of regulation are few and the framework of law is weak.

Look at the institutions which are having difficulties at the moment – national governments, political structures, the old establishments. And note that nearly all depend on the nation state and find their range of action confined within borders of the states to which they belong. Now look at those institutions which are growing in power and reach. The internet; the satellite broadcasters; the trans-national corporations; the international money changers and speculators; international crime; international terrorism. And note that all operate oblivious of national borders and largely beyond the reach of national regulation and the law.

Now, for a time, being unregulated and free of the constraints of law, suits the powerful. But sooner or later, lawless spaces also become attractive, not just to the builders, but to the destroyers too. That's why Al Qaeda is there, using the internet, satellite broadcasting, our systems of global mass travel and even the very systems of global finance that they are dedicated to destroying, in order the better to destroy us. It is calculated that some 60% of the 4 billion dollars taken to fund 9/11 actually passed through the financial networks housed in the Twin Towers.

International terrorism loves the the global space precisely because it is a lawless space - as lawless as were the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan.

Now there is a rule of history. Where power goes, governance must follow. And if it doesn't chaos, conflict and turbulence are the consequences.

What makes this even more urgent – even more dangerous – is that it is not just power that has been globalised; problems have too. The uncomfortable truth which our politicians in Westminster refuse to acknowledge and our old institutions can find no way to cope with, is that there is now almost no problem which affects our citizens well being or our nation's future, which can be solved within the nation state or by its institutions alone; not our ability to protect ourselves; not our the cleanliness of our environment; not our capacity to tackle global warming; not our health; not our jobs; not our mortgages. All of these and more now depend, not on the actions of our governments, but on their ability to work with others within a set of institutions which are global in scope and international in character.

The problem is, as the global financial crisis has showed and the issue of global warming showed before it, we have neither the institutions nor the political leadership to do this.

If one of the key phenomena of our time is the globalisation of power, then one of the key challenges of our time is to bring governance to the global space. And the extent to which we are able to do this

successfully – while ensuring democratic accountability -- will, in large measure determine the extent to which we will be able to manage the period of turbulence and change ahead.

By the way, I suspect that this task of bringing governance to the global space will be achieved more through treaty based institutions, such as Kyoto, the G20 and the WTO, than through a further spawning of UN based institutions – but that is a subject for a different time. We, meanwhile, have a third factor to cope with which is now shaping this age in a way which is different in scale from anything we have ever seen before. Our increasing global interdependence.

Well, of course nations have always been connected. What happens in one nation has always been of interest and importance to its neighbours and allies. That's why one of the oldest functions of government is diplomacy. But today's interdependence is of a completely different order. Nations today are not just linked by trade, commerce and diplomacy, they are intimately interlocked in almost every aspect of our daily lives. What happens in one can have a profound, direct and immediate consequence for what happens in another. An outbreak of swine flu in Mexico affects becomes relevant to our health in Britain, mere hours later.

The collapse of Lehman brothers in the US sets in train a domino effect across the entire global economy in days.

The revelation of 9/11, is the revelation of our time.

That, even if you are the most powerful nation on earth, the consequence of ignoring what is happening in a far away country of which you know little and care less, can be death and horror one bright September day in one of your most iconic of cities.

You see, today everything is connected to everything.

Imagine for a moment, that I am not Lord Ashdown of Norton sub Hamdon, but Lord Roberts of Kandahar. He was, of course the last General to invade Afghanistan and the

only one since Alexandra the Great to make a success of it -- not least because, like Alexandra he didn't try to stay. He went in and out, in very quick and rather bloody order.

His, too was a war of vengeance – it was a punitive expedition to avenge the terrible defeat of the British Army at the “massacre in the snows“ of 1842.

The year now is 1879, the war is the Second Afghan War. And here he is, “Bobs” Roberts, telling us how he did it.

What is he saying? He is telling us about the number of troops he had. About the performance of his Indian soldiers, the Sepoys. About the importance of his “screw guns”, the mountain guns which were the British equivalent for knocking down Afghan villages, of the US B52s today.

Please note what he is NOT talking about; he is NOT talking about poppy fields. Not because they were not there. The poppy has been grown in Afghanistan for centuries. But in his day, the poppy simply didn't matter. Today Afghanistan's poppy fields are directly connected to crime in our inner cities. Everything is connected to everything. He would not have talked about a mad mullah in cave preaching a doctrine of jihad. There were plenty of those too. But in 1879, they didn't matter either. Today, what Osama bin Laden says, is directly connected to what happens in that terraced house in Bolton. Everything is connected to everything. He wouldn't have worried about what we now call collateral damage or dead civilians. They didn't matter, for the world didn't know about them until weeks or even months later. Now the picture of that wedding party inadvertently blown apart by US high explosive is on television and computer screens around the world, a matter of minutes later. And those images really matter in the battle for public opinion which is now the critical battle which has to be won in operations such as these. Everything is connected to everything. And this interconnectedness applies not just to the external relations between nations. It applies to the internal organisation of nations, too.

Imagine now that we are talking about the defence of Britain, forty years ago, when I was a British soldier. What would we have talked about?

We would have talked about the size of our army, our navy and our air force. We might also have talked about the strength of our allies. And that would have been it.

The enemy was outside the walls and the job of keeping them there fell exclusively to the Minister of Defence.

Now, because everything is connected to everything, the enemy is not outside; it is inside.

Now we have to talk about everything. Defending the country is not just the job of the Ministry of Defence. It is also the job of the Ministry of Health, because, as we have seen recently, part of defending ourselves, is defending ourselves against pandemic disease. The Ministry of Agriculture is also involved, because food security is part of our security, too.

As is the Ministry for Industry, because the lack of resilience of our internal systems is a key point of vulnerability to our enemies. As we know, the Home Office is involved too, because the enemy are not just foreigners from another country, they can also be our own citizens whose loyalties lie with those whose beliefs are inimical to everything we stand for. Defending Britain is no longer a job just for the Ministry of Defence. It is now a job for every Department of Government. And our ability to defend ourselves effectively depends on our ability to bring all their activities together in a networked and interlocking way. But the problem is that our Governments are just not structured to do things in a networked and interlocking way. They are made up of vertical stove pipes, steeped in a stove piped culture and are run, in the main, by people with stove piped minds.

And there is a reason for that. Our current Government structures took on their present form – as they did in every advanced Western democracy - in the nineteenth century. And they followed the structures

which were in fashion at the time – the structures of the Industrial Revolution and the era of mass production. Strong command chains; vertical hierarchies; specialisation of tasks – you can see it all in Charlie Chaplin's film "Modern Times". And this was right; it was appropriate for the times. It suited the age.

But it does not suit our age. For this is the age of post industrial structures. Of flat hierarchies; of networks and networking, dedicated to bringing disparate inputs together at a single focal point, which, in the market place at least, is the satisfaction of the customer. The armed forces have understood this. Led by the US they have now restructured themselves to fight the networked battle using all arms to achieve what they call an Effects Based Strategy.

Some Governments too are beginning dimly to realise this and have invented new language, like "the comprehensive approach" in the hope that this will solve the problem. But mostly, in so far as the "comprehensive approach" exists at all, it does so in theory in Whitehall, but is pretty well absent in practise on the ground where it matters.

Meanwhile government structures and cultures remain resolutely stuck in the past. Ministers are judged on how well they defend the territorial integrity of their Department, preserve its budget and defend its pay roll. Senior Civil Servants ditto. Networking with other Departments is regarded as a threat, not an opportunity. And I doubt if anyone in government, outside the Ministry of Defence, has ever heard of an Effects Based strategy. The screaming of gears we hear in Whitehall is the sound of vertical hierarchies and stove piped minds knowing that they ought to be networking, but finding it impossible to do so. We probably need a wholesale restructuring of Government along more modern lines – but I somehow doubt this is going to happen. So we may have to be satisfied with at least changing cultures.

Time now to unveil Ashdown's third law for the modern age. And here it is.

In the modern age, the most important part of what you can do, is what you can do with

others.

It is institutions ability, not to do, but to network, which matters most. The key part of modern structures is not their internal order, but their external docking points.

It is not the effectiveness of the hierarchies which matters most, but the efficiency of the interconnectors.

And if you want to see the price of failing to understand that, you need look no further than Afghanistan. Here the chief reason for the fact that we are losing, lies, not in the ineffectiveness of the Afghan Government who we love to blame, but in our own complete failure to have any co-ordinated international plan; in our inability to work together between the nations of the coalition; in our determination to see Afghanistan solely through the prism of the place in which we each happen to be fighting - the British in Helmand, the Canadians in Kandahar, the Dutch in Uruzgan, the Germans in the Panjshir valley, the US in their B52s; and in our refusal to co-ordinate ourselves in order to produce a single countrywide strategy which enables us to speak with a single voice and act with a single purpose. The real scandal is Afghanistan, is not that our soldiers don't have the right boots, or enough helicopters. It is that they are paying with their lives because our politicians cannot or will not get their act together. And what applies between nations in Afghanistan, applies within them, too. Though there have at last been late but welcome improvements in the ability of the civilian peace makers and reconstructors from DfID to interlock with the military on the ground, we are still not able to do what needs to be done -- bring the rebuilders in straight after the solders have finished fighting. When Afghan and British forces retook Musa Qallah, it took several weeks for DfID to arrive and start the reconstruction which should have begun the moment the fighting stopped.

It does not matter if you are an army unit, or an NGO, or an aid deliverer like DfID, or a Ministry like the Foreign Office the most important part of what you can do, is not what you can do alone, but what you can do with others.

And as it is within governments, so it is between them. The age when even the most powerful can expect success if they choose to at act unilaterally, is over. The last great experiment in unilateralism was George W Bush's determination to abandon the multilateralism of his father and insist on the invasion of Iraq, even though America was – beyond the largely cosmetic support of a few – alone in the enterprise.

In the new multipolar world which we entering, nations will raise the chances of success in their enterprises to the extent that they can make them multilateral and raise their chances of failure, if they are unable to do this. There is one other completely new aspect of our new interconnected world which s worth mentioning.

From time immemorial, the means by which men (and they usually were men) organised their defence against their enemies was through collective defence – through banding together with others, in tribes, in nation states and, when these proved insufficient, in Alliances like NATO, in order to create more powerful collective defence structures than their enemies. And the more powerful these were, the more secure we were. But one of the revelations of our time is that now, with the advent of weapons of mass destruction and because everything is connected to everything, we increasingly share a destiny with our enemy. The notion of collective security is, in many cases having to give way to an understanding of the importance of common security, too.

It was this revelation of a shared destiny and an understanding of the importance of common, rather than collective security, which underpinned the nuclear arms reduction talks which took place in Geneva in the 1970s when I was a diplomat there. It is this notion that Barack Obama is seeking to reach out to, in his accurate understanding that the greatest threat to us all today, comes not from other nuclear powers, but from the threat of nuclear proliferation. It was the understanding, at last, that the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland were partners in a shared a destiny, rather than enemies in a zero sum conflict, that laid the foundations for the Northern Irish peace

process. And it is Israel and some of its Arab neighbour's failure to understand that they share a destiny with each other which is, arguably the greatest single barrier to a secure Israel, within a peaceful in the Middle East.

I am NOT saying here that we will not need collective defence. Our capacity to defend ourselves in concert with our allies will always be important.

But increasingly in the future, when we think about how to secure ourselves, we will have to think also about, not just how we destroy our enemies, but how we may be able to live with them too.

This concept is not new of course. For it has always been the proposition of poets and saints and visionaries, that we should learn to live together.

The great poem of John Donne's "*No man is an island*" says it all "*every man's death affecteth me, for I am involved in mankind. Send not to ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee*".

Gladstone said it too, in 1879, when Lord Roberts was invading Afghanistan, in his great second Midlothian campaign. He said: "*Do not forget that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan amongst the winter snows, is no less inviolate in the eye of Almighty God as can be your own. Do not forget that he who made you brothers in the same flesh and blood, bound you by the laws of mutual love. And that love is not limited to the shores of this island, but it crosses the whole surface of the earth, encompassing the greatest along with the meanest in its unmeasured scope*"

But here is the difference between their age and ours.

For Donne and for Gladstone, these were recommendations of morality. For us they are part of the equation for our survival.

Paddy Ashdown

Tim Garden Memorial Lecture
Chatham House, 30th June 2009

Tiananmen Square Massacre

On the 20th anniversary of the massacre of thousands of unarmed students in Tiananmen Square, the Liberal International salutes their memory and the courage of the persecuted dissidents who continue to demand a system of government worthy of the greatness of Chinese civilisation. The Liberal International recalls that the Communist Party has been in sole power in China since 1949 and still fails to respect fundamental human rights and so rules China as a despotism and not, as it claims, as a Peoples Democracy.

Richard Moore

Dalai Lama Visits Typhoon-hit Taiwan

Exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama has visited Taiwan aiming to console victims of typhoon Morakot, the worst typhoon to hit Taiwan in 50 years. The Dalai Lama was invited by heads of southern Taiwan cities and counties to visit the disaster-stricken area and comfort the survivors.

Bi-khim Hsiao, International Director of the Democratic Progressive Party(DPP) and LI Vice President commented: "The Dalai Lama is very popular and well respected in Taiwan, and as in his two previous visits to Taiwan, he has embodied messages of compassion, peace, and hope. We believe the messages he represents are particularly relevant to Taiwan at this moment when we are recovering from the tragic losses suffered during typhoon Morakot... In regards to the criticisms of China and the provocative statements made by China's official responsible for religious affairs, we believe they are not helpful for enhancing mutual understanding and sympathy across the Taiwan Strait. Such behaviour of Chinese officials runs contrary to the expectations of the Taiwanese people who anticipate the spiritual compassion and peace that the Dalai Lama represents."

The DPP has mobilised volunteers to help in the recovering process and distributing food and water to the flood victims in remote villages and has set up a relief fund www.help taiwan.blogspot.com to help the disaster victims.

LIBERAL VALUES IN TOUGH TIMES

The Isaiah Berlin Lecture

Michael Ignatieff

Liberalism is a family of common allegiance. We believe in limited government in the service of individual liberty and fiscal responsibility in the service of social compassion.

Our creed is a pragmatic vision of good government that adapts to context. The context that matters to me is Canada. So tonight I will focus on what liberalism looks like when viewed through a Canadian lens.

Let me begin with the commitments that all liberals share.

Being a liberal is a habit of the heart. Before it became a political label, 'liberal' was a synonym for 'generous'. A liberal helping on a plate was a generous helping. A liberal person was both a generous host and an open-minded thinker.

Liberalism should never lose its founding association with generosity of heart and openness of mind. These are the habits of heart that we need to keep to save our beliefs from curdling into political correctness or ideological dogmatism.

A liberal politics puts freedom first.

A liberal's disagreement with a socialist or social democrat comes down to this: we both seek equality, but the only equality a liberal thinks is worth striving for is an equality of freedom.

A liberal's disagreement with conservatives comes down to this: we both seek freedom, but a liberal believes no one can achieve it alone. There is such a thing as society, and government's purpose is to shape a society in which individual freedom can flourish.

We put freedom first but we are not libertarians. We think that individuals cannot be free without a free society. The institutions that create freedom include, but

are not limited to, public education for all, free access to medical care, retirement pensions in old age, assistance for the disabled, public security in our streets and the protections afforded by a sovereign nation state.

The liberals who fought to create these institutions were inspired by the belief—best expressed by Franklin Roosevelt — that men and women who live in fear are not free. Liberal government exists to lift fear from the souls of free men and women.

A society without fear is unthinkable without equality before the law. A person discriminated against because of their gender, race, creed, sexual orientation or economic circumstance is not free.

Liberals believe that freedom is indivisible, and that to defend our own, we ought to defend those of our fellow citizens, and those fellow human beings outside our borders who call for our help.

Liberals are optimistic about human nature but sceptics about power. To control power, liberals believe that majority rule needs the checks and balances of an independent judiciary, a bicameral legislature, a free press, and charters of rights that protect individuals and groups from the tyranny of the majority.

We regard government neither as an unlimited good nor as a necessary evil, but rather as the framework of opportunity that makes liberty possible.

Our view of economic power is as sceptical as our view of political power. We believe in free markets and free competition because we want to protect individuals from economic tyranny. But we know that markets do not naturally serve the public interest. Left to themselves, they generate unwelcome externalities, like extreme income inequality and pollution of the environment. Protection

of the public interest requires regulation. The challenge is to achieve the proper balance: allowing markets to allocate risk, reward and resources, while safeguarding the public interest with skilful, precise and light regulation.

Today there is a new challenge to the liberal idea of limited government. In order to avert systemic economic collapse, governments everywhere have intervened in markets, taking over banks, car manufacturers and insurance companies.

All governments are now recognising the potential moral hazard of these interventions. Bailouts create the expectation among risk takers that they can return to risk-taking with impunity, because they will be rescued once again. When governments step in, ordinary citizens wonder why their taxes are being spent to rescue a foolish few from their mistakes.

The fact is that the mistakes of a few were threatening the livelihoods of the many. Governments stepped in to save the jobs of auto workers, to keep credit flowing for small businesses, and to preserve the pensions and investments of small investors.

Protecting the public interest in this way is what government is for. But these new demands for intervention leave the role of government in a free society anything but clear.

Socialists decry bank rescues as state bailouts of failed capitalist elites while conservatives decry intervention as creeping state socialism. Other conservatives, like the ones in power in Canada, have been forced to carry out liberal stimulus programs their own ideology previously rejected, only proving that it is tough to do something well when you don't believe in doing it at all.

Liberals might be expected to welcome the interventionist turn. The problem is that we don't actually believe in big but in good government. It is not obvious that we get good government when government is asked to do everything.

Market deregulation may have led the global

economy to the edge of disaster, but heavy-handed government intervention may only slow economic recovery. Further government bailouts may push the deficit up to unsustainable levels. Further government borrowing may push up the cost of credit and reignite inflation.

Liberals accept the necessity of deficit spending to get the economy going again. But we want the scarce resources of government to be invested strategically on public education, science and technology and the infrastructure, especially green energy, that creates long term growth.

In the short-term, governments may have to own banks, insurance companies and car manufacturers, but in the medium term, they should return these businesses to the private sector as soon as they have recouped the public investments necessary to keep them from going under.

Governments will need to regulate markets but will have to find a way to do so without stifling market innovation. Governments can require markets to be transparent to both buyers and sellers and they should set capital and collateral requirements for lending, backed by tough sanctions.

If the global economic crisis presents challenges for every liberal government, not every government handles them the same way.

Liberalism, Berlin taught us, is not a bloodless breviary for rootless cosmopolitans. It is a fighting creed for men and women devoted to the fate of their particular national communities. So it is with me.

The Canada I grew up in, the Canada that shaped me is a liberal Canada. My party fought for publicly funded healthcare for all. We campaigned to guarantee charter rights of equality for all Canadians. We have stood for recognition of the national identities of our constituent peoples. We believe that government has a standing responsibility to overcome inequalities of life between rural and urban, northern and southern, eastern and western regions. Finally, we believe that our example of a bilingual, multinational,

multicultural nation state has a lot to offer to a wider world of nations ravaged by linguistic, cultural and national conflict.

We are a cold northern nation of 33 million people spread out across the second largest expanse of territory of any nation state. Canadians understand that individuals can survive and prosper only by banding together in community.

Canadian rights culture strikes a distinctive balance between the individual and the collective. Individual freedoms are not unlimited or unconditional, as they are in the American constitution. In Canada they are “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” These words appeal to a tacit understanding of a distinctively Canadian balance between liberty and community.

A liberal Canada is very different from a liberal America, even under a Democratic administration. Next door, American liberals are still fighting for rights — public health care, a woman’s right to choose and a person’s right to marry the person of their choice — that are settled questions for most Canadians. Affirmative action programs created in the 1960’s by American liberal administrations are now under court challenge. In Canada, affirmative action is explicitly mandated in our charter of rights and freedoms.

The Canadian idea of limited government is also different from the American. Our domestic market — a weakly populated band of settlement a hundred kilometres deep and five thousand kilometres long—was too small and diffuse to mature without the fostering hand of government. With the most powerful nation on earth on our doorstep, Canadian governments had to master the complex balancing act of protecting a domestic market, maintaining our sovereignty and keeping our American border open to trade, ideas and peoples.

The enduring character of our linguistic, cultural and national differences has also shaped our philosophy of government. One hundred and forty two years ago, four

independent British colonies agreed to form a federation. Three were majority English speaking, Protestant and ordered by English common law. One of them was Catholic, French and ordered by the French civil code. And then there were the aboriginals, recognised by treaty, as constituent peoples. From the beginning, we had to make a complex unity out of these differences. We had to anchor collective rights to language and education in our constitution. We had to respect claims to land and territory that pre-existed our political foundation. We had to learn to compromise, to reach out across divides that have broken other countries apart. As we have expanded to ten provinces and three territories, encompassing five distinct economic regions, and providing a welcome to immigrants from every land, we have sustained the whole edifice of our federation on the constant practice of conciliating difference across languages, identities and cultures.

Government is central to Canadian survival, but at the same time, our federation distributes its powers so that no single order of government can dominate. The decentralisation of our federation allows government to be close to the people and keeps its powers in check, while safeguarding the necessary rights of self-government of our regions and founding peoples.

The sheer difficulty of keeping this complex unity together has bred compromise and conciliation into the Canadian soul. Because our unity cannot be taken for granted, we understand that pragmatic political leadership and moderate government are conditions of our survival.

This is the deeper reason why conservative ideologies run into difficulty with us. Getting government off the back of the people is not a persuasive slogan for a country like ours. Canadians know that wise government is essential to keep regions from falling behind, to keep Canadians equal and to keep us together. They also know that liberal habits of mind — compromise, generosity and pragmatism—are as important as government itself.

The now officially disbanded Progressive Conservative Party of Canada basically accepted liberal Canada and its vision of enabling government. The Conservative Party currently in power is a different animal entirely. Its leadership harbours an incurable distrust of liberal Canada. It cannot conceal its instinct that less government is invariably better government. For liberals, limited government is the condition of Canadian existence.

The battle between liberal and conservatives in our country is therefore a battle over the role of government in maintaining the unity of the country.

In other countries, the unity of the state is a settled question, and so a politics of division can have no fatal consequences. In the United States, intense partisanship, attack ads and ideological vituperation do not endanger a country that settled the question of its unity in the American Civil War. In our country, a politics that arouses ethnic and regional resentment, creating wedges in order to mobilise a conservative base vote, is playing with fire. Last December, the current Prime Minister sought to survive a constitutional crisis of his own making by playing region against region and language group against language group. In our country, this is a dangerous game.

Canada is sturdy and enduring, but it is also fragile. All politics, in our country, is the politics of national unity. Leadership that fails to understand that is bound to fail.

Furthermore, in a time of crisis, leadership is about preparing a country for the future. Crisis foreshortens time horizons. All we can think about is getting through the crisis. Leadership is about pushing these time horizons back and preparing for the future.

Conservatives tend to believe that when markets correct and growth returns societies simply adapt to new economic conditions. In reality, without foresight and planning by government, people can be left unprepared for new opportunities. The new economy that will emerge from the creative destruction of the last eighteen months will need new skills, and government will need

to invest continuously in scientific and technological training for the next generation. That new economy will have to support ever larger numbers of older people on a shrinking base of the working employed. So a government with foresight will have to encourage immigration, raise productivity support retirement pensions and provide health care for those who have left the workforce. It will have to do all this while stabilising climate change and pollution. Markets cannot do this alone. Without action by government, the future will not be prepared for our children.

Liberalism is well-suited to these tasks because liberals believe in government and understand that pragmatic adaptation is a better guide for leadership than ideology and dogmatism.

Isaiah Berlin always believed this about the liberal creed. He remains an inspiration because he was so lacking in doctrinaire rigidity, so sensitive to context and national character, so realistic about the limits of the possible and so committed to the possibilities of a compassionate politics.

For a liberal, governing is always about choosing. Choices between good and evil are obvious enough, though hard; the choices that bedevil democracies are choices between competing goods. Berlin was often asked how a liberal should make such choices. One of his replies is worth quoting at length:

You weigh up the factors as best you can, you rely upon all the knowledge at your disposal, scientific, your own experience, your general sense of what is likely to occur, what human beings are like, what the world is like. You discount your capacity for error, you listen to persons you think wise, in the end you decide as you decide, and you are responsible for what you have done, and if what you have done is foolish, then no matter how pure your motives, you have committed a crime. All you can say— all you can ever say — is that you have done your best to behave well in accordance with such moral values and such facts as you possess.”

The humility of this is as becoming as the

stoic willingness to take responsibility for failure. This may make a liberal politics sound like a lonely road indeed. But Berlin did not believe liberals faced the hard choices of politics alone and without guides or inspirations. Always and everywhere, liberals could turn for help, first to the enduring principles of the liberal creed, and then to their country, to its institutions, its memory and its traditions. His motto might be said to have been: in all matters of principle, stand fast for freedom and in all particulars, let your nation be your guide. Mine is Canada. Thank you for listening.

Michael Ignatieff MP,

Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

Isaiah Berlin Lecture, National Liberal Club, 8th July 2009 hosted by LI and the Canada Club.

ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY



After 20 years of Garden Parties in Moor Park we had a delightful change this year. Our chairman, Dr. Julie Smith, invited us to Cambridge. We had the pleasure of enjoying the beautiful gardens of Clare College, by the River Cam. A typical English Tea was served in lovely surroundings and brilliant sunshine. It was a splendid occasion; all who came had a most wonderful time. Thank you Julie.

Anneliese Waugh

GAZA

The Lib Dem Friends of Palestine were in close contact with senior members of the Lib Dem team in the weeks leading up to Conference, culminating in the Conference Motion which was passed. It was moved by Edward Davey MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Foreign Secretary and Lord Wallace of Saltire (Lords Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs) did the summation. The full text of the motion said:

Emergency motion: Gaza

Conference notes:

- i) The terrible loss of life and destruction of property and infrastructure that took place during Israel's attack on Gaza between December 2008 and February 2009, with hundreds of civilians and children killed.
- ii) The indiscriminate firing of rockets by militants from Gaza at Israeli civilians that has terrorised the population in southern Israel and also killed civilians and destroyed property, which Israel claims justified their military attack.
- iii) That both the European Union and the British Government declared that Israel's military action was disproportionate.
- iv) Recent Amnesty International reports that have highlighted breaches of international law by both the Israeli Defence Force and HAMAS.
- v) The appalling state of the public infrastructure in Gaza following the long blockade, especially the sewage and water works, with the resulting threat of a major health epidemic such as a cholera outbreak.
- vi) Existing party policy setting out comprehensive proposals for an alternative path to peace, as well as calling on the European Union to review whether Israel is in enduring breach of Article 2 (on human rights) of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Conference believes that:

- a) The root cause for the continuation of this cycle of violence is the failure to reach a comprehensive and final peace settlement based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the legitimate rights of Syria (part of whose sovereign territory is under Israeli occupation) and the recognition of the State of Israel by the member states of the Arab League;
- b) A sustainable solution will only be reached in the context of two separate states, mutually

recognised and internationally accepted, which are viable, peaceful, democratic and exist within borders which are secure and based on the situation before the 1967 conflict.

Conference approves the party leadership's call during the crisis for both sides to cease fire and for a suspension of British and EU arms sales to Israel as well as the suspension of the update to Israel's Association Agreement with the EU.

Conference therefore calls:

1. On the UK Government to propose to the United Nations Security Council an international tribunal with powers to prosecute and compel the appearance of suspects and witnesses to investigate whether war crimes have been committed by Israel, HAMAS and any other parties during Israel's attack on Gaza, with the intention that there should be full accountability for any or all persons who ordered or executed such war crimes, including criminal penalties and the payment of reparations.
2. On all parties to agree a permanent ceasefire and an opening of the border crossings into Gaza, as the first step to negotiating a comprehensive and final peace settlement, with negotiations to take place on the basis of good faith, the principles of international law, all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and reference to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.
3. For a new initiative by the British Government to work with the European Union and the United States to provide assistance to all parties to prevent arms smuggling into Gaza.
4. For Britain and the European Union to make it clear to Israel that the existing EU-Israel Association Agreement will now be suspended if Israel does not urgently lift the blockade of Gaza, including of construction materials essential for rebuilding Gaza's basic public infrastructure such as sewage and water works, schools and hospitals.

Motion Ends

In other words, it is now official party policy that there should be an international tribunal to look into war crimes committed by Israel, HAMAS and anyone else, an arms embargo on Israel, and a suspension of the update to the EU Israel Association Agreement. As you will remember, it was already party policy that Israel's trade privileges granted by the EU should be reviewed and suspended if Israel was in breach of its human rights obligations under that Agreement. The party now also calls for the suspension of those privileges if Israel does not lift its blockade of

Gaza.

The Liberal Democrats now have a morally and intellectually coherent position which both Labour and the Conservatives lack and I would like to thank you all for your continued support.

John McHugo

Chairman, Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine

The British Group submitted their own Emergency Resolution on Gaza to the LI Executive, eloquently moved by our chair, Jonathan Fryer, but it was deemed to be 'too detailed' to constitute an 'emergency resolution'.

PRIZE FOR FREEDOM

Liberal International has presented an annual Prize for Freedom since 1985. The Prize is presented to an individual that made an outstanding contribution to human rights and political freedoms. This year it has been awarded to Eric Avebury

Lord Avebury has been a member of the Liberal Party since 1960 and as Eric Lubbock was MP for Orpington from 1962—70, during which time he was Chair of the Parliamentary Civil Liberties Group. He entered the House of Lords in 1971.

Throughout his time in politics, he has been at the forefront of human rights activism both within and beyond Parliament. He founded the Parliamentary Human Rights Group in 1976 and having chaired it for 21 years now acts as Vice-chair. He was the Liberal Spokesman on Immigration and Race Relations until 1983 and went on to found the Parliamentarians for East Timor in 1988. He acts as Vice-chair on the Parliamentary Group for Tibet and as a member of the Liberal Democrats Foreign Affairs Team. Lord Avebury speaks frequently on conflict resolution and human rights issues in Parliament.

Beyond Parliament, Eric Avebury has campaigned on a wide range of global issues. Of particular note is his advocacy for the rights of people in Peru, Cameroon and Iran where he regularly speaks for the victims of poverty and discrimination. Lord Avebury has been co-chair of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Commission (promoting implementation of the Peace Accords of 1997 with the Bangladesh Government) since April 2008. In his capacity of co-chair he has travelled several times to Bangladesh.

Lord Avebury is also the President of the Kurdish Human Rights Project and has visited the Kurdish region of Turkey four times. He was in Ankara earlier this year (2009) launching the Turkish translation of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, to which he contributed the foreword. In 2009 he was awarded the Liberal International Prize for Freedom for his contribution in campaigning for the protection of human rights in many countries across the globe.

John Alderdice, President of LI will represent the Prize to Eric at 2.30pm on Wednesday 23rd September at the Liberal Democrats' Autumn Conference.

Previous winners of the Prize include Raul Alfonsin (1985), Benazir Bhutto (1989), Vaclav Havel (1990), Aung San Suu Kyi (1995), Martin Lee (1996), Helen Suzman (2002) and Sam Rainsy (2006), so Eric's in good company.

LI BUREAU

Charles Kennedy MP was nominated by Ming Campbell to be a Vice President of LI and British member of the LI Bureau at the Marrakech Congress three years ago. After two terms of office, Charles has informed Nick Clegg that his constituency and other commitments make it necessary for him to stand down. Nick has nominated Robert Woodthorpe Browne, Vice Chair of LIBG and Chair of the International Relations Committee of the LibDems to replace Charles. Robert will take over at the end of the Cairo Congress in October.

From the Chair

Dear Colleague,

I write as the incoming Chairman of LIBG, having recently had the honour to succeed Jonathan Fryer.



For those of you who don't know me, I'm a Cambridge lecturer in European politics and fellow of Robinson College and a long-standing Liberal Democrat. My first encounter with Liberal International was being asked to write the official history for the 50th anniversary in 1997. So my connection goes back some way but not nearly as far as many! I look forward to working with you and our liberal and democratic colleagues around the world. In particular I am very keen that we expand our membership and raise the profile of LIBG through meetings, the website and, of course, *InterLib*.

There have been several other changes on the Executive over the summer. Graham Watson MEP, Andy Watkins and Olly Wells have all stepped down and we extend our thanks to them as well as to Jonathan for their service. Baroness Scott, Baroness Garden and Gordon Lishman have all agreed to become Vice-Presidents and Richard Moore becomes a Patron. Stewart Rayment has re-joined the Executive and Dirk Hazell and Claire Yorke have joined for the first time, in Claire's case to help foster links with the new Liberal International Parliamentary Forum, details of which are outlined elsewhere in this edition of *InterLib*.

The incoming Executive is committed to improving communications, starting with a complete overhaul of the website, which I hope will be in place by October. We also hope to strengthen links with other groups in the Lib Dems with an interest in international affairs. If you have any ideas about this, do let me know.

In the next few months we will continue the series of Forums on the 'BRICs', which started in April with a fascinating talk at Pushkin House. I'm delighted to say that we have finally been able to reschedule the event to commemorate Russell Johnstone; it will form a slightly delayed St. Andrew's Day party – on 7th December.

I hope to see many of you over the coming year.

With best wishes,



DA prevents ANC dominance

The Democratic Alliance (DA), a LI Full Member party, became the largest opposition party of South Africa during the recent parliamentary elections, attaining 67 out of 400 parliamentary seats, an increase of 20 since the previous elections. The unprecedented gain meant that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) led by Jacob Zuma fell short of achieving an absolute majority, which will require it to make more political compromises.

In the country's Western Cape Province, the DA achieved an absolute majority, prompting its leader Helen Zille to step down as the Mayor of the city of Cape Town to take up her post as premier in this region.

With its outright majority in the Western Cape, the DA do not need a coalition partner, but Mrs. Zille did not exclude talking about the possibilities of a coalition: *'You only go into coalition if you do not have enough seats to govern on your own. But I will consider inviting competent people from smaller parties to join us in government, because they add value,'* she said.

CAIRO 2009

The 56th Congress of the Liberal International will be held in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt from Thursday October 29th until Sunday November 1st 2009. Hosted by LI member party the Democratic Front Party (DFP), the central theme of this pre-eminent liberal event for 2009 will be 'Education for the 21st Century', and will gather hundreds of liberal leaders and thinkers from around the world.

Hotel accommodation

Liberal International has arranged for a special accommodation deal with the Semiramis International Hotel for the duration of the Cairo Congress.

These are the rates that will apply for bookings received before the 1st August:

Single standard room(city view)
US\$ 160.00

Double standard room(city view)
US\$ 175.00

Single club room(city view)US\$ 210.00

Double club room(city view)US\$ 225.00

Nile View supplementUS\$20.00

Close to the hotel is the Egyptian museum, a 5-minute walk. The downtown and garden city area are around the hotel and offer a fascinating insight to art deco architecture constructed during the occupation by the French and the British at the turn of the century. 5 minutes by taxi is the old palace of the last King of Egypt, a fascinating step back in time.

A special LI booking code to get a discount when booking this hotel will be made available shortly. In the meanwhile, to make a booking, please contact LI events organiser Antonella Fabiani at antonella@liberal-international.org, or via telephone at +44 (0) 207.839.5905.

Liberal International Parliamentary Forum

Margaret Thatcher seems an unlikely host for a group of young liberals debating international affairs. Yet, under the watchful gaze of the portrait in the parliamentary meeting room that bears her name, rather than the Iron Lady herself, the Liberal International Parliamentary Forum (LIPF) meet once a month over a glass of wine to debate and discuss the topical issues of the day. Under the patronage of Liberal International British Group, the LIPF aims to give young, like-minded liberal professionals, parliamentary researchers, academics and specialists the opportunity to assert their views amongst their contemporaries as well as guest speakers drawn from MPs, Peers and regional experts.

The group launched in Autumn 2008 with a debate led by Jeremy Browne MP on the impending US elections and the impact of a new administration on international relations. Since then they have tackled democracy in Latin America, the Middle East Peace Process, energy and conflict in the Caucasus, and Climate Change. Debates are lively and entertaining, offering insightful perspectives from the cosmopolitan mix of members.

Designed to give young professionals access to those in the field and the opportunity for them to air their views and share opinions, as well as present their own work, meetings are deliberately informal. Debates are free flowing with questions directed at participants rather than the Chair and members are actively involved in the group: invited to recommend further topics for discussion, to present themselves or suggest people they would like to hear speak.

Since its inception, the group has attracted such impressive speakers as frontbench MPs Norman Baker and Malcolm Bruce, Chatham House Associate Fellow, John Mitchell, and Head of Latin America at Business Monitor International, Rahul Ghosh.

The group is constantly expanding its base and hopes to reach out to all those liberals interested in international affairs. With future debates planned on Iran, nuclear

disarmament, international terrorism and Europe, the Liberal International Parliamentary Forum invites fellow liberal, social democrats and even Thatcherite Tories to join the debate.

Chris Phillips

Reviews

A Fortunate Life, the autobiography of Paddy Ashdown.

Aurum Press, 2009 £20.00

The Liberal party and the Liberal Democrats have been blessed by the internationalism of their leaders. The book fell open with the statement *'it was a clear and distinguishing radical position that was consistent with our Liberal Democrat internationalist traditions, gave us a raison d'être for our existence and some much needed pride in ourselves'* concerning the issuing of UK passports to all the 3.5 million ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong who were British subjects.

Having read that, whatever criticisms I might have of Ashdown's leadership ceased to be relevant in the context of *interLib*. To some extent Paddy's sojourn in Hong Kong may have aided his taking that position, but it came naturally to the party. What a lost opportunity for Britain – our Canadian cousins laughing all the way to the bank.

There are four other distinct international moments in Ashdown's leadership; Bosnia, the Maastricht Treaty and Kosovo. There is no need to recite these; all of them correct positions to take. As we know Paddy went on to be the Rt. Hon Member for Sarajevo – Fitzroy Maclean might even concede that Ashdown knew something of what he was talking about on Bosnia.

Stewart Rayment

Obituaries

RALF DAHRENDORF

Ralf Dahrendorf was a European Liberal intellectual who also pursued political careers first in Germany and then in Britain. Over a long academic career his writings influenced political and social thinking on both sides of the Atlantic; after 1989 he was supported democratic transition in the former socialist states of central and eastern Europe, not only through his writings but also through engagement with new political elites.

Dahrendorf stood out both from his personal history and his intellectual stature. Born in Berlin, he was imprisoned in early 1945 for involvement in a schoolboy anti-Nazi group. His father, a Hamburg Social Democrat who had been arrested in 1933, had already been rearrested, having been involved in the July 1944 plot. Dahrendorf and a friend were released by their SS guards as the Red Army advanced, with papers forbidding access to any further education. Two years later the family had to be rescued by the British from occupied Berlin after his father was one of the tiny minority of Social Democrats who opposed the forced merger of the SPD with the Communist Party. When Dahrendorf entered the Lords 35 years later, he invited the British major who had organised their escape – by then Lord Annan – to escort him for his introduction.

After studying classics and philosophy in Hamburg the British government offered him a scholarship to study for a second doctorate at the London School of Economics. At the LSE he revelled in the conflicting academic approaches of Popper, Miliband, Titmuss and others, and drafted what became *Class and Class Conflict*, a major influence on the rising generation of sociologists in Europe and North America. By 29 he was a full professor in Hamburg, moving on to Tübingen and then in 1966 to the new university of Konstanz. By 1968 he was also a rising star within the FDP and a member of the Baden-Württemberg Landtag. When an FDP conference in Freiburg ran into student

demonstrations at the university, he proposed a debate with their leaders. His dialogue with Rudi Dutschke, sitting on an open trailer in the packed main square, captured national attention – demonstrating Dahrendorf's commitment to managed conflict as the basis for democratic society. In 1969 he became a foreign office minister in the German federal government, in the SPD-FDP coalition led by Willi Brandt and Walter Scheel; and then in 1970 was nominated one of the two German members of the European Commission.

Four years in the Commission showed that he was impatient with the constraints of bureaucratic politics. Finding the atmosphere 'like a church' in which European integration was the orthodox religion, he aroused a storm of controversy with a critical article in *Die Zeit* (thinly disguised as by 'Wieland Europa'). He afterwards accepted that he had misjudged his audience and the style of his argument, though his criticisms were well-founded. In 1973-74 he moved portfolios, developing European programmes in education and science which extended EEC policies into new fields.

In 1974 he returned with his family to London to become director of the LSE, also giving the 1974 BBC Reith lectures on the theme 'The New Liberty'. He had a deep affection for the LSE, set out in his *History of the London School of Economics* (1995). He saw the School as an intellectual resource for informing public policy, attempting unsuccessfully to promote the LSE as the base for a 'British Brookings'. He also himself served on several government enquiries. At the end of his term Huw Wheldon, then chairman of LSE Governors, described him as 'the most popular German in Britain since Prince Albert'.

He had remained formally on leave from the University of Konstanz, to which he returned in 1984. He had become chairman of the FDP party foundation in 1982, but the party had moved to the right, uncomfortable with his commitment to social inclusion and a wider definition of citizenship. His thoughts, therefore, of reviving his political career in Germany came to nothing; he was happier in his frequent visits to American universities, and in his role as a trustee of the Ford

Foundation. Three years later he returned to Britain as warden of St. Antony's College, Oxford – a graduate college specialising in international studies – and the following year he became a British citizen. He immersed himself in the complex academic politics of Oxford, raising money to develop its European Studies programme, and began to act as an informal adviser to Paddy Ashdown, then struggling to revive the fortunes of the infant Liberal Democrat Party.

At a time when opinion polls were discouraging and the direction of the party contested, he threw his intellectual weight behind the Liberal Democrats, in private and in print. He was invaluable to Paddy Ashdown on policy and principles, insisting that the Liberal commitment to both an open economy and social justice was a viable alternative to Thatcherite conservatism and to Labour commitment to centralised state direction. In the early 1990s the Dahrendorf Commission, with an impressive membership, argued the case for a 'citizens' Britain', combining social cohesion, political engagement and a competitive market economy. In 1993 Ashdown nominated him for the Lords. But he was too uncompromising, and too committed to his individual liberty of opinion, to be comfortable even on the Liberal Democratic benches, and after several years moved to the Lords cross-benches, distinguishing himself by chairing the Select Committee on Delegated Powers for several years. In the 1980s he was one of the early Western intellectuals to develop contacts with dissidents in eastern Europe, working with George Soros (an LSE graduate) and others. Once the Berlin wall came down he travelled extensively across the region, taking part in conferences and political dialogues, working with Soros's Open Society Foundation, helping the region's universities to regain their independence and their reputation. His own experience of growing up within a dictatorial state gave him a natural sympathy with the problems of transition. He was now a European public intellectual: contributing articles in newspapers and journals in a wide range of countries – a long-standing columnist in *Die Zeit* and *La Repubblica*, as well as the author of over 30 books. In his last years he

returned to Germany, and to German academic research.

He was never entirely comfortable in any of the posts he held, except at the LSE; he was instinctively a liberal dissenter, who enjoyed questioning the ruling consensus whatever it might be. He excelled in the world of ideas, but rebelled at the necessary compromises and half-truths of party politics. He derived great pleasure from the occasion when he was taken ill in Florence, and the paramedic in the ambulance recognised his name as a leading sociological writer: a reputation that stretched across the continent. Many of those who knew him well found themselves disagreeing with him on practical political issues (and on personal issues, as he moved in his seventies from his second wife to a younger third wife in Germany) but retained immense affection for his company and for the quality of his arguments. He believed in the power of reasoned argument, and in the ability of reasonable people across national borders to find common ground in shared values.

William Wallace

Cyril Rose

With the passing of Cyril Rose on 11th November last at the age of 86 years, and after a long illness, the British Group lost one of its most dedicated servants. Not only was he the Group's Secretary for 37 years, also editing its newsletter for much of this time, but he carried out this role with a genuine passion for Liberal principles and their application in the international arena.

I first met Cyril in 1952 when, at the age of just sixteen, when on arriving at Pinner Hill Golf Club on one Saturday morning, I was invited to make up a fourball with two of our most distinguished members, both of whom had a reputation for playing for large side stakes. They told me that my partner would be this accomplished young fellow from Bedfordshire, and he turned out to be Cyril. Not only did we proceed to win the match comfortably and then pick up three byes. The lesson that I learned at that early stage was

that Cyril was intensely competitive, and my subsequent knowledge of him, both on and off the golf course never changed my mind.

In earlier times, Cyril had been educated at University College School and then spent six years with the RAF during the Second World War. After completing his flying training in Canada, he flew Bristol Beaufighters with Coastal Command. These aircraft carried torpedoes and were renowned for making precision attacks on enemy shipping at wave-top height over the North Sea. Cyril also served in the Middle East, Italy, Greece and Cyprus. Soon after our first meeting, he married Joyce Woolf and they began to raise their fine and highly accomplished family – Gillian, Steve and Andy – in Moor Park, Northwood, very close to where I have lived for all of my life.

About seven years had passed before I was to meet Cyril again, during which time I had completed my national service in the RAF and then joined the Liberal Party. We were to meet by chance when both campaigning during the Harrow West by-election in 1959/60. I had read about his activities in the meantime, however. As a regular reader of that great Liberal newspaper the *News Chronicle*, I could hardly not have been aware of his successful campaign to gain admission for Jewish members into golf clubs. It has to be remembered that there was a far greater degree of cliquishness in clubs of all types in those days. Sadly, this stretched to a wholly detestable degree of anti-semitism. By this time, Cyril had become the chairman of South West Herts Liberal Association and I became aware of another of his qualities, namely his compassion.

I was to meet Cyril for a third time later in 1960 when I joined the British Group of Liberal International. He was already the Secretary, and it was not long before he was instrumental in me becoming the Treasurer, an office that I was to hold alongside him for the next twenty seven years. I recall that, in those early days, Cyril was also the moving force behind the LibIntern Discussion Group, which regularly held stimulating meetings in an upstairs room over a pub just off Piccadilly, directly opposite the Ritz. In these days, the prominent nonconformist theologian

Dr. Nat Micklem was our President and the distinguished Professor Hugh Tinker was our Chairman, and my fellow Treasurer was Herbie Aarons, a South African liberal exile and another of Cyril's golfing chums. I mention this particularly, because it illustrates the crucial role played by Cyril in putting together the essential components of the British Group in those early days.

My initial overseas visit on Liberal business was in 1964, when Cyril and I travelled together to Paris as members of a fraternal delegation of the Liberal Party to the Parti Radical. That trip is worthy of mention for several historic reasons. The delegation was led by Frank Byers and included other distinguished Liberals of that time such as Heather Harvey, Nancy Seear, Richard Lamb and Len Skevington, all of whom were also very active members of the British Group. This was also my initial meeting with Russell Johnston, who had first been elected for the Inverness constituency only weeks earlier. He wore his kilt throughout, stimulating great fascination among the French. Two events are worthy of mention. The first, which took place in a suite of offices on the Boulevard St Germain des Prés, had been advertised as a round table. I recall that when we arrived, we were confronted with no less than seven notables of the French Fourth Republic, including several former prime ministers, of which there had been many among French radicals and their associates. We were also received at the Palais du Luxembourg by another great French Radical, the President of the Senate Gaston Monnerville. He served as President of the French second chamber for twenty one years from 1947 to 1968. It is interesting to reflect, in this year of Barack Obama's ascent to the White House, that he was a mulatto from French Guiana. And when we observe conditions in the present day in *les banlieus* of Paris, there seems to be something of a paradox. Gaston Monnerville derived great amusement from reminding us that the grand office that he occupied and the fine ornate chair in which he sat had once been occupied by no less than Napoleon Bonaparte. Sadly, within years of that visit, the Parti Radical was irrevocably fractured, and ever since we have had great difficulty in finding French counterparts with whom we can work within the Liberal

International.

In 1967, when the LI Congress was held at St Catherine's College Oxford to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Liberal International's foundation, Cyril caused a considerable stir among the delegates present. This was because he took the initiative of tabling a motion to the effect that the Peoples Republic of China should take up the permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, which at that time was still occupied by Chinese Nationalists from Taiwan. (This change was actually to take place five years later). Cyril always enjoyed recalling this event, which was a manifestation of another of his characteristics, namely his devilment. I also think that we should see this as just one more confirmation that Cyril was never a man of the establishment.

I suppose that I must have travelled abroad on almost fifty occasions on British Group business in the ensuing years, and Cyril was present on many of them. There was, for example, the first ever LI Congress outside of Europe, which was in Ottawa, Canada in 1979, when the great Pierre Trudeau was at the peak of his power, although paradoxically then out of office for a short period of about six months. Another was the Congress in Tel Aviv in 1984, just after the first intifada, when a small group of us, including Cyril and Joyce, took advantage of the occasion to take a ten-day bus trip throughout Israel and the West Bank, from Massada in the south to Kiryat Shamona, Baniyas and the Golan Heights in the north.

Despite all these distractions, I feel sure that it was his family that gave Cyril the greatest pleasure and satisfaction in life. Although she insists that she is first and foremost a mother, Gillian is now a Consultant Gynaecologist at Queen Charlottes, now part of the renowned Hammersmith Hospital; like his father, Steve pursued a career in retailing before moving into charity work; and, after spending some years in banking, Andy moved into the crucial area of financing public/private sector infrastructure projects. And Cyril always gave great support to Joyce: when she served in the roles of President and Chairman of the Executive of the Liberal Party, over the three years when she was National Chair of the

Magistrates' Association and in her various other public offices.

To the last, we will remember Cyril for his very sharp brain. Mercifully, this talent did not desert him when his physical health deteriorated in later life. As his life ebbed away in the nursing home in those final months, Joyce would visit Cyril each afternoon and they would do *The Times* crossword together. It has been a great privilege to have shared so many interests over so many years with a friend such as Cyril. We will miss him greatly, for his wisdom, his courage, his humour and his compassion. We can rejoice that, apart from those last few agonising years, he lived a long, enjoyable and rewarding life, and my thoughts are often with Joyce, their three children and their eight grandchildren.

Derek Honeygold

Britton Goudie

A large congregation in Perth Methodist Church was fitting tribute to Britton Goudie whose belief in and support of the Liberal cause never wavered.

Although his family roots were in Shetland, he was born in Birmingham in 1914 and spent most of his professional life as a lawyer in London. Having moved to Scotland in 1978 he was candidate for Perth & East Perthshire in the 1979 General Election and settled in Scone where he remained, with his wife Joan, as an active member and office bearer and became a diligent councillor on Perth & Kinross District Council. His role as a long standing committee member of the Scottish Section of Liberal International and constant urging that activity must triumph over lethargy were valued greatly.

His faith, formed in boyhood days, in Liberalism and Methodism derived from the same source. He was a local preacher for 60 years. To all who know him he has left an enduring example and memory of a great Liberal.

R Ian Elder



Patsy Ramsay

When ever there was a lack-lustre bye-election somewhere in the East End that few could be bothered with, chances were that Patsy would be one of those you'd bump into. She served on the LI(BG) executive for many years - a committed Internationalist and one of its more useful members, since she actually did things rather than just talked.

Patricia Ann Donohue was born on the 16th February 1932 in Kew, Surrey. Together with the rest of her family she survived one of the first V2 rocket attacks on London that damaged her home in September 1944 and killed some of those in her neighbourhood. Covered in shattered glass it enforced her life long hated for war and its consequences.

She attended Michael Hall School, in Minehead (during the evacuation), Forest Row & the Rudolph Steiner school in Hannover as 1st unaccompanied minor allowed to visit post war Germany in 1949-1950, this took a year of badgering the Ministry.

Member of the post war Anglo-German Friendship Association led to meeting Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Anthony Eden at social evenings, although in terms of German politics she always preferred the SPD and FDP coalition that followed under Willie Brandt.

Patsy married Murray Ramsay on 23rd May 1953. They had two children, Anthony & Clare, and brought their family up in Cuffley, Broxbourne and finally Harlow (1972-1984).

Patsy had a long Liberal heritage, which she felt stemmed in part from her Steiner education - one of the other causes for which she had great energy and affection. She was a Liberal councillor for the Old Harlow Ward of Harlow, taking the seat from the Conservatives in a bye-election in 1981. Her husband Murray served as a JP in Harlow.

On retirement in 1984 they moved to the Isle of Dogs where their work for the cause was unstinting to the end. Just before her death Patsy was researching the activities of the BNP in east London with the possibility of court action against them.

Patsy was also a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners.

Patsy died on the 2nd August 2008 after a first fatal stroke, no warning, she just passed away, leaving family and friends shocked, but glad there had been so little fear of death or suffering. Murray had died earlier in November 2004 after a 2 – year battle with cancer, perhaps the aftermath of a courageous, if reckless rescue of a colleague when working in the nuclear industry.

A great sense of humour and lover of life, she leaves children and grandchildren whom she adored.

Stewart Rayment