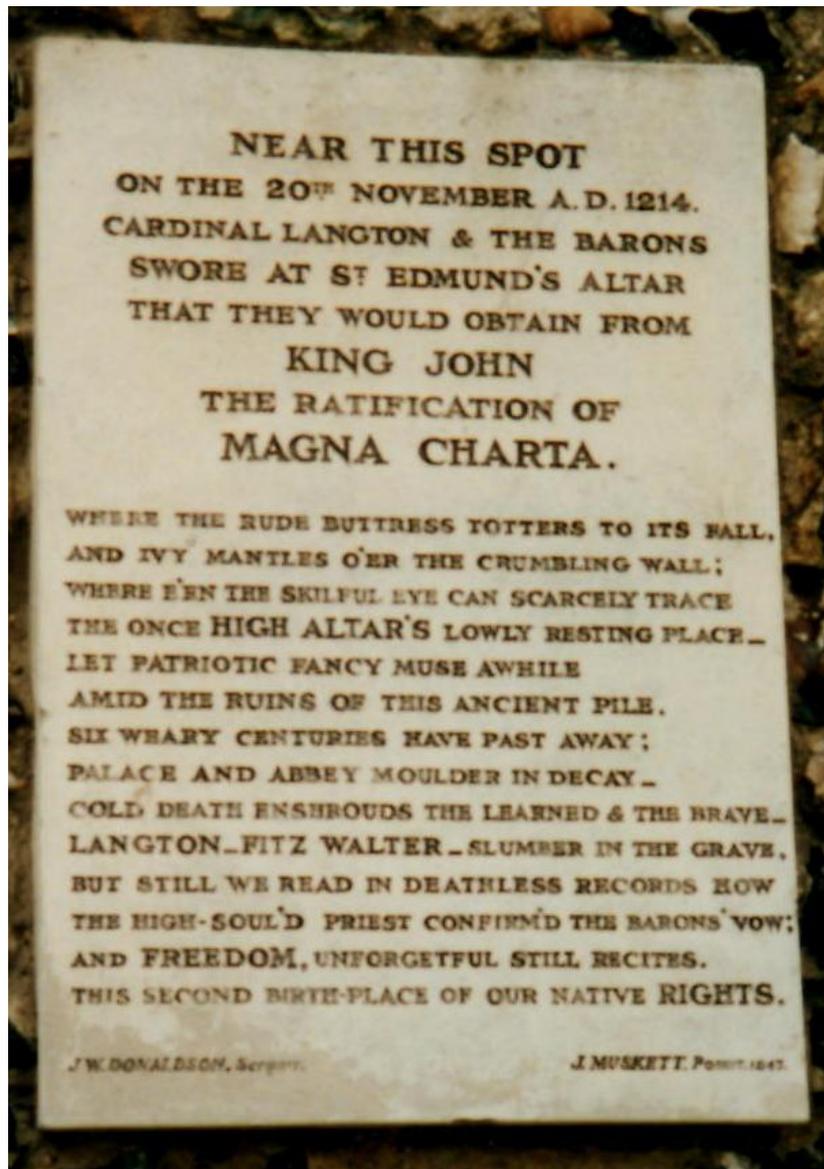




2015 no.2 £5.50 (free to members)

INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



LIB DEMS IN LIVERPOOL

UKRAINE

RADICAL ISLAM

WOMEN'S AND LGBT RIGHTS IN THE BALKANS

LEONORA CARRINGTON AT TATE LIVERPOOL

EVENTS

4th March Annual Diplomatic Reception. 6.30-8.30pm NLC Tickets £25 from

LI(BG), 1 Brook Gardens, London SW13 0LY

5th March Chinese New Year Dinner – New Loon Fong, 42-44 Gerrard Street, London W1D 5QG. Chinese Lib Dems

7th March 2015 Climate Change March <http://www.campaigncc.org/7march>. Assemble Lincoln's Inn Fields for 12.30.

13th- 15th March Liberal Democrats Spring Conference, Liverpool

20th March Liberal International fringe meeting on Europe with Charles Kennedy and panel, Scottish Liberal Democrat conference, 12.45pm-1.45, Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, Bridge of Don AB63

28th March - 5th April IFLRY Conference, General Assembly & Seminar, Vienna.

12th -14th June Liberal International Executive, Zurich

29th June 2015 LIBG AGM. NLC 7.00pm

19th-23rd September Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Bournemouth

29th-31st October 60th LI Congress. México City.

For bookings & other information please contact the Chair below.

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

Underground: Embankment

Liberal International (British Group)

Chair: Wendy Kyrle-Pope, 1 Brook Gardens, Barnes,

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Other: Stewart Rayment

InterLiB is published by the Liberal International (British Group). Views expressed therein are those of the authors and are not necessarily the views of LI(BG), LI or any of its constituent parties.

Comments and articles can be sent to Lockhart & Hastings, Creative Media Centre, 45 Robertson Street, Hastings TN34 1HL, email lockharthastings@btconnect.com

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Cover: *Magna Charta plaque at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.*

City life in wartime in South East Ukraine. Kiron Reid

Vladimir Putin has turned the Russian speaking population of much of South East Ukraine against Russia. His forces are currently winning the battles (end of January 2015), they may detach Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine. They may destroy the goodwill that President Poroshenko has to modernise the country, combat corruption and improve its economy. Because the war is subsuming everything else. But Putin's expansionist nationalist state is creating a rift with the people who are the natural friends of Russia, and causing fear and hostility to his regime in every neighbouring democratic country that was formerly part of the empire of the Tsars and the Soviets. Putin and his regime (backed it seems by most of the Russian public) may bolster Russia's actual control in its immediate environs but at what cost? The man could have been a colossus on the World stage; now the comparisons with a wannabe Nazi or Stalinist seem more and more apt, a man trying to resurrect the barbarity of the past in modern Europe.

I spent two months as a visiting Professor in Zaporizhia in South East Ukraine – the major city in the southerly region next to Donetsk. I arrived in a glorious Indian summer in early October, as hot as Spain in the Summer, and left in early December with the city covered in a foot of snow and bitterly cold (though the cliché was true – it felt colder arriving back in warmer damp England).

Zaporizhzhya National University (ZNU ЗНУ in Cyrillic) is a major State University, the equivalent for Ukraine of a 'modern' UK red brick. The Faculty of Foreign Languages is the University's largest, and the Department of English specialises in British English. Nearly all students learn English. The city is also home of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Centre. Zaporizhzhya is the officially used transliteration of the name from Ukrainian, but my first spelling is common in English; there are at least three other ways (depending on how the Russian or Ukrainian Cyrillic name has been transliterated. Language was political when I was first in the city as an election monitor for the OSCE in May last year (*Liberator* 366). One of three changes I really noticed in just four months was that language was even more political now. The

population of almost all native Russian speakers are now using Ukrainian more as a conscious effort. I noticed it mostly among the young. The two very similar languages are used interchangeably but people were deliberately using more Ukrainian words (for Cheers or good evening), as well as changing from email addresses that end in .ru. Another change was much more visible patriotism. Not necessarily nationalism, but patriotism – flags on display in



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE) Observer Jakub Herold, of Poland, Viktoriya Artemenko, an election candidate who was standing for the strongly reformist Civic Position party, led by Anatoliy Hrytsenko, (but was not elected), Kiron Reid and another Civic Position party supporter.

student bedrooms, ribbons in girls hair or on bags, railings and even trees painted in the Ukrainian flag. Students and Assistant Professors alike were collecting for basic provisions for the troops – on campus, on the main Lenina Avenue, in the shopping malls. Grannies (the archetypal Russian babushka) were knitting socks and jumpers. On the main Russian speaking social media VK ('B' V Kontaktke - In contact; vk.com), girls' romantic and cultural interests are interspersed with pictures of guns and men in

uniform. The University's official web feed and social media is also full of fundraising events for the soldiers in the ATO (Anti-Terrorist Operation), amid typical charitable work and academic events. Thirdly there were more men in uniform around. Not a huge number, but significantly more. This is a city of three quarters of a million people, that has more shopping malls than Liverpool and more coffee shops (and more good tea and coffee) than any typical English city or town. The city was spotlessly clean. There was much dereliction but none of the litter or dogfouling I see in Liverpool. Whether the gangs of old people who swept the University precinct early every morning, and the city's open spaces, just loved their work or were working so hard as they were desperate for money I don't know. I guess both. There is some great beer and excellent cognac but far less drunkenness than in Britain as people always eat when they are drinking. Dancing, sushi and karaoke were other passions in the city.

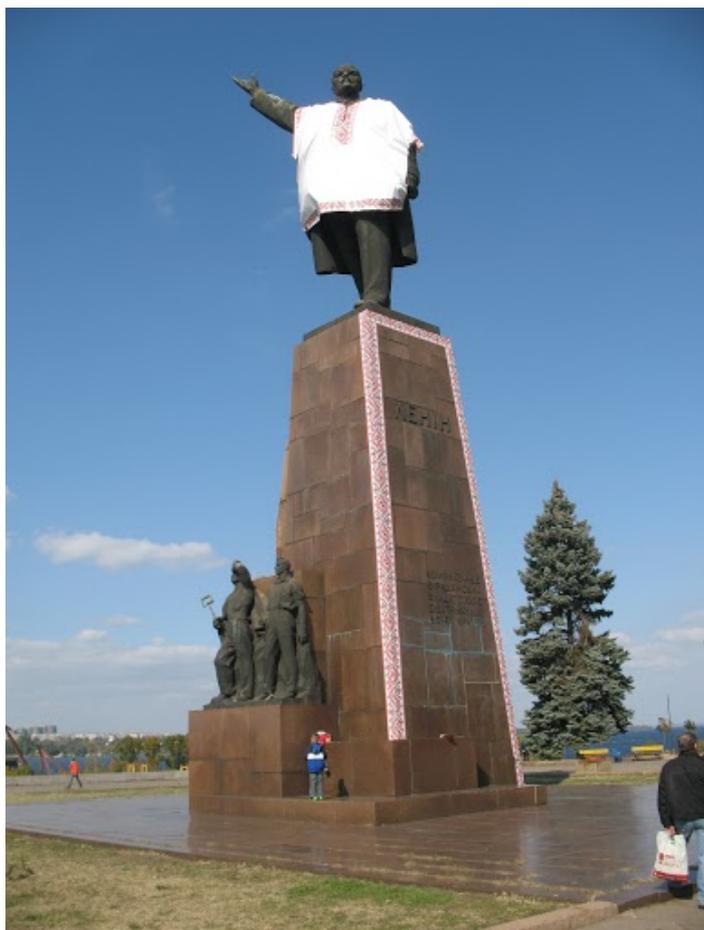
Young people asked me if they would get to be part of Europe. I repeated always that they clearly are European. I was a long way from Hampstead but this could not be anything other than Europe. Zaporizhia is very very Eastern Europe, it is very Soviet, it has influence from the Asian former Soviet Republics, but it is modern Europe. The students all had much better mobile phones and laptops than me; the students and lecturers and Assistant Professors were incredibly smartly dressed in fashionable (often secondhand) clothes; the big supermarkets had nearly all the stuff that we'd have in our big supermarkets. This war that Vladimir Putin has unleashed on his own countrymen's friends and family is not a war on the edge of Europe, it is a war in Europe. It is a crime. While businesses gamble with their investors' money through the lack of rule of law in Russia, while EU governments hedge their bets on business and gas supplies, the war criminals who murdered the passengers of MH17 and their Russian state backers are getting away with it. This is not a hill tribe in Afghanistan. Donetsk and Luhansk are like Leeds and Bradford. This war could be West Yorkshire. Zaporizhia to Donetsk was the equivalent of Liverpool to Leeds. Donetsk was host to England football fans just two years ago. Ukrainian government forces and volunteers are killing civilians with shelling too. The Kremlin's propagandists (their army on social media, and 'left' and 'right' apologists around the world) seize on every real misdeed by the Ukrainian side to make excuses for their war. How can anyone using mortars and heavy artillery on urban areas not be a war crime? The Ukrainian army and government fail to answer this. What they don't do, as the separatists have done at Mariupol, is fire multiple

rockets into a civilian town where there is no war. Does the person who pulled that trigger, does the mercenary who flicked a switch to massacre the passengers of MH17, really do that without President Putin's men knowing. It is state sanctioned terrorism in Europe.

Here we don't know that Ukrainian University degrees are minimum four years long; that a Masters takes two years; that their PhD system is more rigorous. I was incredibly impressed by the quality of students that I taught. Many spoke better English than first year British English students. Compulsory PE lessons, and compulsory Ukrainian politics and language studies in University, seem very nationalist / communist. Speaking at a conference on 'Patriotic Education' was a slightly surreal cultural experience. I argued they should learn from the positive language policy in Wales and the lessons of a modern celebration of different cultures in the north of Ireland. The young people have a rose tinted view that everything is better in America, in Europe, in Britain. I pointed out all the time that most things were the same except many of their buildings, roads and pavements were pretty derelict like ours were twenty years ago. True their mini-van buses (marshrutkas) were mainly an horrendous experience, and the old trams falling apart. True we don't eat lots of types of cabbage, buy bottles of vodka in bars, or have any good soup. Traditional sleeper trains were exactly as described on Seat 61, but the new inter city Hyundais better than anything in the UK. Ukrainian graduates will be very talented on the World stage. What they won't find is that everything is better elsewhere. The post Communist collapse of the health service was one area where I could easily see that things were better under the Soviet Union. To Western cultural eyes some things would seem old fashioned. The huge pride everyone has in the beauty of Ukrainian women (one of the first things everyone asked me was "do you like our beautiful Ukrainian girls?"; and British Universities would not have a Miss University contest with the many entrants in bikinis; the fierce pride of every modern female student in Ukrainian borsch (80% of students). The Universities were also run in a very bureaucratic way. These seem old fashioned but the people simply want to live their lives in peace, preferably able to travel and work freely like other Europeans. Now they can't easily travel to the Crimean or safely to the Sea of Azov coasts which are the equivalent of Spain's costas for the region.

The UK government, the EU and US are totally committed to Ukraine as an independent state. That doesn't mean that NATO or the EU will ride to the

rescue. They won't. Their politicians wouldn't support it because their public won't support it. When I was first in Ukraine I didn't know whether the Russian regime was really behind the war. By the time I was there again it was impossible to believe otherwise. A century after World War I the Russian leader's power grab is killing youth on an eastern front. Across from Zap's famous statue of Lenin (Big Lenin) was a memorial in a little park by a church. It was hung with recent photographs of recently killed young and middle aged men from the city, fighting just 120 miles away.



Some statues of Lenin have been knocked down after the recent Russian aggression, but my favourite is Big Lenin (a few locals have now adopted my description) where clever artistic people keen to protect their history and a symbol of the city, and keen to show their Ukrainian patriotism, dressed him by crane in a giant vyshyvanka, the traditional Ukrainian shirt.

Though as with many things in the region, it seems the dress is in fact common across Slavic nations. Just as the Polish, Ukrainian, Czech, German food and beer is very similar; as is some of the language between Ukrainian, Polish and Czech, and of course the many same customs and very similar language between Russia and Ukraine. All illustrating the absurdity of conflict between any of these people.

Ukraine feels like a still centralised post Communist state where national symbols have been substituted for

Communist ones. Zaporozhia combines the passion of being the birthplace of the Ukrainian Cossacks (at Khortitsa Island) with fierce pride of the part played in defeating the Nazi invasion. The city was the Headquarters of Hitler's Army Group South and entirely destroyed during the war. They had a celebration of their Cossack heritage a day before celebrating the liberation of the city by the Soviet army. A couple of weeks later they commemorated the millions caused by the famine started to persecute the Ukrainian farmers. This is a city that will not accept authoritarian rule from Russia. I did see a few football hooligans, I met some young nationalists and some middle aged and older people happier with the Soviet times. No one wanted war. All want an end to corruption. With some shops selling trousers, women's shirts or jackets that were the cost of a University lecturer's salary for a month; with perfectly kept '70s and '80s Soviet cars (made in Zap) intermingled with the blacked out limousines, with giant Apple branded stores, some people in the city clearly have a huge amount of money but most are struggling. The war is a distraction from ending this disparity.

There is one other aspect of the emergency where the Ukrainian state is falling down. There seems to be little support, and little public sympathy, for the people displaced from Donetsk and Luhansk. I met many students who've had to move from those Universities. They were made welcome. There are more than 50,000 IDPs in Zaporozhia Oblast (region) and I know of fantastic relief work being done by Estonian and Polish charity and local volunteer teams. The war is all over the media, this generous relief of the human cost is not. George Soros is right when he says "By enabling Ukraine to defend itself, Europe would be indirectly also defending itself."

Kiron Reid is a visiting Professor in Zaporizhzhya National University, Ukraine and an organiser of the LIBG North West branch.

Some web links.

ZNU:

http://www.znu.edu.ua/cms/index.php?action=custom%2Fznumain&site_id=73&lang=ukr&interface_lang=eng

Relief work.

[Estonian:](#)

https://www.facebook.com/PomagajUkraine/photos_stream

[Polish:](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/ukrainaheaks?fref=ts>

Stop Fake is a good website and twitter feed to debunk Russian propoganda, though it has unfortunately become more patriotic in tone since it started.

<http://www.stopfake.org/>

International Office promotes women's and LGBT rights in the Balkans.

Harriet Shone

In the run-up to Christmas, the International Office worked with liberal sister-parties in Serbia and Bosnia to promote LGBT and women's rights across the Balkan region.

International Projects Officer Harriet Shone visited Belgrade and Ed Fordham, a leading Lib Dem LGBT campaigner, to meet with our sister-party, the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP). With our support, the LDP has set up a Human Rights Council modelled on the Lib Dem LGBT+ Group, as a champion of the LGBT community in Serbia.

Harriet and Ed held a workshop with representatives of the Human Rights Council (HRC) to hear about their work, building on their role in Belgrade's first ever gay pride march to proceed without harassment. Together with the HRC and LDP trainers, we developed an LGBT curriculum which will be used to equip party members across Serbia with the necessary knowledge and skills to become advocates for LGBT rights.

Reflecting on the progress made during the project, Ed Fordham said:

“This is a unique opportunity to put the rights of the LGBT community at centre-stage on the political agenda. This is one of the first projects of its type in the region and makes an important start to tackling issues surrounding homophobia.”

This project builds on many years of work with the LDP, promoting female representation and youth participation in politics across Serbia. In the coming months, we will be supporting them in rolling out the LGBT curriculum and the continued work of the Human Rights Council.

Meanwhile in Bosnia, the Liberal Democrats took part in a cross-party initiative to increase female representation in politics. Shortly before Christmas, Research Officer Nick Thorne went to Bosnia with

Arfan Bhatti, Candidate Liaison & Diversity Officer at HQ, to deliver trainings in communications and blogging to female candidates from our sister-party, Nasa Stranka.

Founded in 2008, Nasa Stranka already has 50% women on its party lists, ahead of the 40% government quota, earning the party its nickname as the ‘women's party’. It is also one of the only parties



Ed Fordham with LGBT activists and members of the new LDP Human Rights Council at the LDP HQ in Belgrade.

in Bosnia to identify itself according to its ideological principles rather than along ethnic or religious lines.

In a meeting at the party HQ, Secretary General Albin Zuhrić said:

“Nasa Stranka has established itself as the leading liberal and socially progressive voice in Bosnia. With continued support from our international partners such as the Liberal Democrats, we will give women an equal voice in Bosnian politics.”

In February, the International Office will return to Bosnia to train female candidates in campaign strategy, helping prepare them for the 2016 Bosnian local elections. We will be looking for a female councillor to take part in a university seminar at Sarajevo university, where they will act as a role

model and champion for women in politics. In March, we are bringing a delegation of top female candidates to London, to meet leading Lib Dem women and gain a deeper insight into the Lib Dem campaign for the upcoming general election. The project will also include training on gender mainstreaming, bringing together political parties and women's groups from across Europe, to discuss practical steps to incorporate gender issues into the parties' policies and internal organisation.

Through long-term projects such as these, working with trusted local partners, the Liberal Democrats strive to help under-represented groups become more involved in the political process.

If you would like to hear more about our projects, or enquire about training opportunities, contact us on international@libdems.org.uk or [@libdeminternat](https://twitter.com/libdeminternat).

Harriet Shone

International Projects Officer, Liberal Democrats

AN AWARD 'FOR ALL OF THE WOMEN WHO DON'T HAVE A VOICE'.

The 2014 Liberal International Prize for Freedom laureate is Ms. Waris Dirie, who has brought global attention to the suffering inflicted by female genital mutilation (FGM). Liberal politicians and guests from five regions of the world came together in the parliament of the United Kingdom to honour her on 30th January.

Receiving the award at a special ceremony in the House of Lords, Ms. Dirie said: *"This award is for all the women in the world who are like me and this award is for all those who don't have a voice or opportunity to fight for their freedom."* A victim of FGM herself, the Somali-born campaigner added: *"I am happy to be standing here today as it means we all recognise that there is a huge problem about FGM."* Waris founded the Desert Flower Foundation to raise awareness and combat FMG in Vienna in 2002, and

the Desert Dawn Foundation, which raises money for schools and clinics in her native Somalia.

Commenting on the progress that the Liberal Democrats have made in government in raising awareness of (and tackling) FGM, Minister for the Home Office, Lynne Featherstone, said: *"Before the Coalition there were no referrals of FGM cases to the criminal system". "This government remains determined to eradicate FGM so that no girl*

or woman has to endure the shocking physical and psychological effects of this terrible crime" Minister Featherstone added having presented the award with LI President Dr. Juli Minoves. The extent to which the governments' determination to tackle FMG is down to Lynne Featherstone's determination should not be understated.

Ahead of the presentation, LI President Dr. Juli Minoves said: *"By giving Liberal International's highest award to Waris Dirie, we want to make people aware that this gruesome practice of Female Genital Mutilation needs to be outlawed."*



Graham Neale writes that a friend in Ravenna, Italy has turned to parody to expose the local mayor as an eco-villain. He's getting regular calls from the press, and has been invited to meet the mayor to discuss the issue. The simplicity of the graphic cuts across language issues.

I think the mayor, Fabrizio Matteucci, is of the centre-left Partito Democratico, who ironically, in this context, have an olive branch in their logo. We hope it has been extended to resolve the issue, whatever it was. The arms of Ravenna have faced a number of parodies over the years...



Happy
Chinese New Year

CHINESE LIB DEMS LUNAR NEW YEAR BANQUET

Chinese Lib Dems will be hosting a Lunar New Year banquet again this year on 5th March 2015 at the **New Loon Fung Restaurant**, London Chinatown.

**Guest Speaker
Simon Hughes MP**

<http://chineselibdems.org.uk/en/event/detail/2015-03-05/lunar-new-year-banquet-1>

We have deliberately kept the price low (£30 per head for 8 course meal including wine), if you book by 22nd February.

RSVP to pkfling@gmail.com

Book and pay either by bank transfer to

Barclays a/c no. 80669423 Sort Code 20-36-16

or send a cheque payable to the Chinese Liberal Democrats

c/o Philip Ling, 4 Frobisher Court, 52 Norman Road, London SW19 1BN

Liberals Speak Out on Ukraine Crises. Back Anti-War March in Russia

Ahead of the delicate ceasefire agreement brokered in Minsk, liberals from Russia and Europe have drawn attention to the high-stakes of the conflict in Ukraine in their parliaments and in interviews with the media, backing the anti-war coalition march in Russia which is to be led by Yabloko.

Speaking in an interview with the award winning Russian newspaper, Novaya Gazeta, LI Prize for Freedom laureate, Grigory Yavlinsky, co-founder of Yabloko, warned of the dangers in the West's perception of Russia. *"In Russia it does not work to approach the situation by trying to turn the "bad guys" in to "good guys" because the system leads citizens to believe almost any promotion of lies",* Yavlinsky said. Likening the current democratic deficit to that of the Soviet era. He added: *"Once the lies stopped working, legitimacy disappeared and the system collapsed... The economy simply cannot survive such political decisions [but] the price of oil is not the decisive factor."*

In Europe, LI President of Honour, Hans van Baalen MEP, spoke with Euronews in the European Parliament, telling reporters: *"Putin has to prove that he is honest. If Putin proves not to be honest there will be a lot of things that have to be done, but I don't speculate now on that, I am an optimist."*

Addressing the House of Lords in Parliament, LI Vice-President, Baroness Kishwer Falkner, championed the promotion of core liberal values within Russia to resolve the conflict in Ukraine. Raising awareness of the actions to be undertaken by Yabloko, Baroness Falkner asked whether her peers were *"aware of the anti-war rally on 1st March, organised by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Grigory Yavlinsky and Alexei Navalny, the champions of freedom and democracy in Russia?"* Russian member party, Yabloko, has taken the bold decision to call for opposition rallies across Russia to protest President Putin's meddling in Ukraine. The statement called for the establishment of a peacekeeping mission to be deployed to the conflict zone to ensure the safety of residents in the region. Calling for a wider internationalist approach should peace talks fail to be implemented, Baroness Falkner added: *"What conversations is it [the OSCE] having with the relevant UN agencies to explore the possibility of UN peacekeepers being the basis of verification of any ceasefire agreement?"*

Truth

Not

Myths



**Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary
Fringe Meeting**

Asylum Seekers - Tell it like it is - Truth not Myths
14 March at 13:00-14:00 - ACC Liverpool, Room 4A
<https://www.facebook.com/events/773050246116629/>

Jeremy Thorpe

Wendy Kyrle-Pope reviews Michael Bloch's recent biography.

“On 29 April [1979], five days before the poll and ten days before his trial...Jeremy celebrated his fiftieth birthday. It had been an extraordinary career: President of the Oxford Union at twenty-one; Member of Parliament at thirty; Leader of the Liberal Party at thirty-seven; effectively offered the deputy premiership of Britain at forty-four; now facing the prospect of losing his parliamentary seat within a week, and going to prison in two months”.

This extract comes at the end of the chapter on Jeremy Thorpe's prosecution, on the eve of his trial in the summer of 1979, and summarises the milestones of his life. Michael Bloch started his research for this biography in 1992 and interviewed hundreds of Thorpe's friends, colleagues and lovers, and the subject himself. The book could not be published until after Thorpe's death because of the explicit detail in which the author writes about the circumstances leading to what was one of the most infamous and closely followed trials of the C20th. Bloch's tone veers at times between the censorious and the prurient, investing prescience to events which may not be accurate. For example, Bloch writes, that the Thorpe household, for all its outward normality, was *“haunted by ancestral secrets... The spectres of homosexuality, alcoholism, violence and mental instability hovered in the background”*. However, the book moves at a fantastic pace, and, like its subject, is never dull, and Bloch does trace the provenance of Thorpe's Liberalism and internationalism.

Most readers of this review will know about Jeremy Thorpe's political career; Jo Grimond said, albeit sarcastically, that *“He's the life and soul of the Party”*, but to attempt to understand Thorpe, you need to look at his incredible antecedents and early life, which Bloch does in wonderful detail. The cast of characters who were his family and their extraordinary personalities go a long way to explaining Thorpe's genetic makeup. His two grandfathers were huge, larger than life figures. His paternal grandfather was an Irish Evangelical Anglican archdeacon of rigid and intolerant views, and a renowned preacher (Thorpe's antipathy to Ulster Unionism may be a reaction to this). His maternal grandfather was an MP, *“Empire Jack”* Norton-Griffiths whose adventures would be unbelievable in a novel. (This biography is worth reading for the tale of Empire Jack alone). From his maternal grandmother he inherited his love and talent for music, and acute class consciousness.

His father was an altogether gentler figure than the Archdeacon. A delicate child, he went to Oxford, then the Bar and in the First War was commissioned as an officer, but due to his ill health, spent most of the at war doing legal work. He became an (Unionist) MP and campaigned on liberal subjects such as the welfare of ex-servicemen and the end of discrimination against illegitimate children. *“Thorpy”* was a wonderful speaker and mimic, *“possessing the quality (which he passed to his son) of being able to lighten any atmosphere and entertain any company”*. He was probably homosexual, his interest in women *“was largely guided by the desire to marry an heiress”*. And he did, in the form of *“Empire Jack's daughter Ursula, a formidable figure, “exhibiting the traits associated with Lady Bracknell”* who sported a monocle most of her life. In Thorpy she saw charm and eloquence, with a brilliant political career in front of him. Neither lived up to what the other had hoped for (Thorpy lost his seat a year after their marriage; and Ursula's father's business empire failed most spectacularly), but they lived comfortably, and Jeremy, their only son and his two sisters, had a happy childhood

Thorpe was, like his father, a sickly child. He was prone to the usual childhood illnesses, and suffered from a petit mal epilepsy. Bloch notes that *“Freud... advances the theory that petit mal tends to be associated with ...homosexuality and a love of gambling and risk taking”*. At 6, he developed tubercular glands which nearly carried him off, as it had many of the Thorpe side of the family. He recovered, and, whilst very strict with his sisters, his mother *“filled him with precocity and a sense of his own importance”*. Their home attracted the great and the good of the day, with whom he was allowed to mix. He was popular with other children, but a terrible show off. He loved dressing up, and clothes, especially of the Edwardian style, became an important, almost integral part of his life. His sister Camilla encouraged him to develop a taste for *“being naughty and getting away with it”*.

“Empire Jack” had shot himself a few months after his grandson's birth, so Thorpe never knew him. His place was taken by David Lloyd George, who was the father of Ursula's best friend and bridesmaid, Megan, and whom he called Tada, grandfather. He spent a great deal of his formative years with the Lloyd Georges, and Tada was always his political idol, his template. His relationship with him established his Liberalism,

despite the fact his own family were Tory. His internationalism may have been awakened by his exposure, in the mid to late 1930s, to the increasing number of Jewish friends being forced to leave Germany.

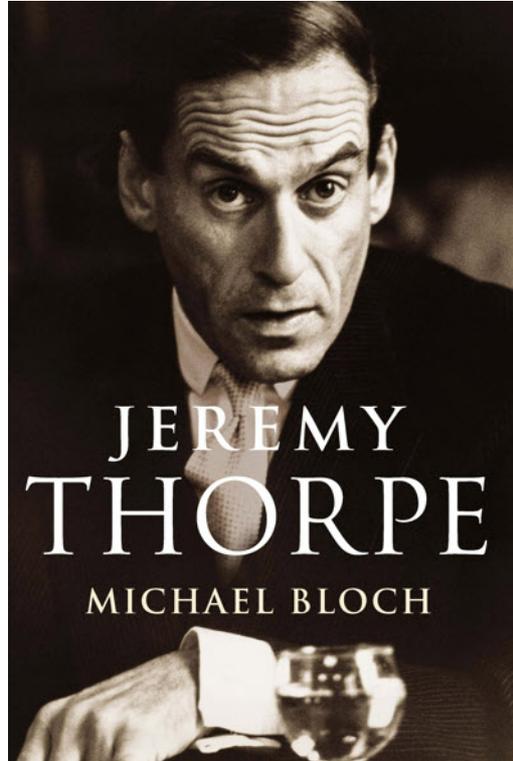
After war broke out, Thorpe and his sister were evacuated to their rich aunt in Boston. Two events from this exile stayed in his memory, influencing his

political heart – the re-election for the third time of President Roosevelt, and Pearl Harbour. In 1943, Thorpe and his sister returned home and he went to Eton. He was happy there, and popular, despite the fact he was neither sporty nor very academic, “he never wanted to go too deeply into anything, but always aimed to know just enough to get by”. He won prizes for the violin, posed as an aesthete, his posing disguising an important knowledge of porcelain. His political ambitions and Liberal loyalties were also revealed at Eton; he told his friends, at the age of 16, that he would be prime minister, and of the “old Liberal Party”.

His father died in 1944, a bomb blast a few months earlier having engendered a stroke. Thorpe was so distressed to see his father so physically reduced, he hitch hiked to the West Country to fetch a faith healer, but to no avail. His fees at Eton and subsequently at Oxford and the Bar were covered by his rich uncle, who owned a hat factory. Thorpe expressed his gratitude by wearing hats throughout his life. Thorpe was called up for National Service when he left Eton, but decided it was not for him, so he staged an epileptic seizure and was invalided out.

Oxford was a glorious time for Thorpe. He split his life between the Oxford Union and Liberal politics, signing up to the Oxford University Liberal Club on his first day. He had little time to study, and only achieved his modest degree with the help of a kind friend who had done the work and kept excellent notes. He and Thorpe retreated to the country for 4 weeks, during which Thorpe crammed enough to pass. The kind friend failed. His career at the Bar was only a stepping stone to where his real ambition lay, to be a Member of Parliament. He campaigned vigorously and found a seat in North Devon, coming a good second in the 1955 election. He helped build up the local party and was elected four years later.

For the first part of this biography, up to Thorpe’s career at the Bar and early political involvement, Bloch follows the usual timelines, but then, for the middle of the book, he adopts a two-tiered approach, a chapter on the public side of Thorpe’s life, then the next on the private, racier double life, which was very promiscuous. This does underline how separate his private and public lives had to be. Some of the detail is perhaps unnecessary, but it puts in context his



relationship with Norman Scott, brief in reality as it was, a relationship which was to overshadow the rest of his life.

In political terms, Bloch traces how Thorpe revived the fortunes of the Liberal Party, bringing them inside Downing Street with the Lib-Lab coalition. He writes at length of Thorpe’s television career, which not only brought him great fame, but raised the profile of the Party. He became Leader after just 7 years at Westminster. His influence on Harold Wilson was enormous; Wilson always defended him and put his prosecution by the press and in court down to a South

African Secret Service Conspiracy. For a Party of, at most, 14 MPs, Thorpe achieved an influence on foreign policy in Rhodesia, South Africa, and Cyprus and on joining Europe, which our in-coalition party and their 58 seats, can only envy. Thorpe resuscitated an almost defunct Party organisation with his Winnable Seats system, the target seat system of today, and although he did attract a lot of money into the coffers, mismanagement by him and others did not give it the financial stability that was so needed. He campaigned for forms of Devolution for Wales and Scotland. He helped found Amnesty International.

In personal terms, his first marriage to Caroline Allpass, who bore his son Rupert, was surprisingly happy. He was devastated when she was killed in a car crash, just two years after their marriage. His equally successful second marriage to Marion Stein, a talented musician, close confidant of Benjamin Britton and former wife of the Earl of Harewood, lasted all her life, dying just 9 months before he did.

The centre of the book is the Trial. Thorpe, his friend the former MP David Holmes, and two others were charged with conspiracy to murder Scott. The gunman, a pilot called Andrew Newton, had already

been convicted of attempted murder and the shooting of Rinka, Scott's Great Dane. Bloch trained as a barrister, and shows just how flimsy the prosecution case was as virtually all the witnesses were liars, Scott especially, whom the judge described as "a neurotic, spineless creature". All four defendants were acquitted, but the damage to Thorpe was done.

After the trial, Thorpe was only 50, the brief euphoria of acquittal was soon replaced by a vindication of George Carman's prophetic closing address to the jury; "a political life and a political future are now irreversibly denied to him". A financial scandal, books and articles rehashing the trial, and the diagnosis of Parkinson's effectively closed the door to any new career. He was not allowed to advise on the 1980 transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, despite his extensive knowledge of that country; his attempts to work with the Aldeburgh Festival or in Race Relations at the GLC were turned down; and even the organisation which he had co-founded, Amnesty International, would not accept him. He kept his illness secret, but it showed in his face and his body, leading commentators to believe he drank or took drugs and that "his bitterness seemed to weigh like a coat of lead".

Supported by his wife Marion and loyal friends, and travelling still, he made a life of sorts, despite his worsening illness. 1987 proved to be something of a revival in his fortunes when he was elected President of the North Devon Liberals, the seat Nick Harvey too back in 1992. His book *"In My Own Time"*, published in 1999, was less an autobiography than a miscellany of encounters with the famous, and key episodes in his career. It was kindly received, for his own sake rather than the book's merits, and reviews lamented *"how sadly his style was missed in an age of conformity"*.

Thorpe once said to his speechwriter *"You write the guts and I'll add the fizz"*, which sums up his life, and this biography, exactly.

Wendy Kyrle-Pope

Jeremy Thorpe, by Michael Bloch
Little Brown 2014 £25.00

L

LIBERALS CALL FOR UNITY AFTER COPENHAGEN ATTACK

In the wake of the deadly attack against freedom of expression in Copenhagen, Denmark last week, which claimed the lives of two Danes, the country's liberal leaders have called for solidarity and unity.

Commenting on the attack, LI President Dr. Juli Minoves said that he was "Extremely touched... by the terrible attacks in Denmark" and has written a letter of condolences to the Danish authorities. Expressing his sympathies, Juli added: "These murderous attacks against freedom of expression, human rights and our liberal democratic values, and against the Jewish community in Europe, must make us even more firm in our defence of these values."

The leaders of both LI member parties delivered strong statements. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the leader of the opposition and leader of Venstre, condemned the attack and cautioned for a careful but diligent response. "I am filled, like any other, with anger at these terrible and cowardly acts. But the anger should be controlled. We must not give in. We must show solidarity. We must stand together. And we must cherish the values on which Denmark is based," he said in a statement.

Morten Østergaard, the leader of Radikale Venstre, which is part of Denmark's governing coalition, called for unity after the attacks saying: "It is so utterly pointless, and in these hours there are no words, no consolation, and there will never be a good explanation of why this man should lose his life during a peaceful debate about one of the cornerstones of our democratic society, namely freedom of expression. (...) We stand strong and stand together."

Diplomatic Reception **6.30-8.30pm 4th March** **National Liberal Club**



Once again, the ever popular Diplomats' Reception will take place at the National Liberal Club on 4th March 2015. Join Tim Farron and the usual suspects imbibing before the serious business of the general election...

Tickets cost £25.00 and are available from Wendy Kyrle-Pope at 1 Brook Gardens, Barnes, London SW13 0LY.

Leonora Carrington at Tate Liverpool

Stewart Rayment

Good wind, ill wind, I present to you the Bride of the Wind.

Who is the Bride of the Wind? Can she read? Can she write French without mistakes? What wood does she burn to keep warm?

She warms herself with intense life, her mystery, her poetry. She has read nothing, but drunk everything. She can't read. And yet the nightingale saw her sitting on the stone of spring, reading. And though she was reading to herself, the animals and horses listened to her in admiration.

So said Loplop when introducing the Bride of the Wind in the preface to *The House of Fear*¹.

Carrington had first met the Bird Superior in London in 1937, and promptly escaped her suffocating family environment and set up home with him in France.

Marcel Jean² wrote 'Carrington had made paintings & drawings without any formal training until she was 19, when she started attending Ozenfant's studios³ (in London), but her composition owed nothing to the 'purist' preoccupations of the former director of *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Ernst served only to lead her more surely in the direction of a strange kind of painting: dreams and obsessions tinged with humour, confrontations of semi-hieratic, semi-caricatured personages in a space and among objects outside the confines of rationality – works often assuming the nature of a direct satire on Leonora's own social background, which was English upper middle class...'

Nadia Choucha⁴ says that 'Initially Carrington was influenced by Ernst, although she became to influence his work in the 1940s both in style and content'. She regards their relationship as important in the comparison of their different approaches to occult (notably alchemical) imagery. The shamanic robes of Carrington's *Portrait of Max Ernst* (c.1939) are echoed in Ernst's *The Robing of the Bride*, as are the hands from her own self portrait, *The Inn of the Dawn Horse* (1936-37).

Hans Richter⁵ surmises that Ernst 'seems to have had an irresistible effect on female surrealist (who) have all learned how close Max Ernst's primeval and

unearthly phenomena lie to the realm of Faust's 'Mothers', and how they lend themselves to reinterpretation by Woman within her own universe'.

Shortly after moving to France, they settled in St. Martin-d'Ardèche off the lower Rhône. The relationship was not smooth, as Ernst would sometimes rejoin his wife, Marie-Berthe, but it was a fruitful and creative period. When war broke out, Ernst, as a German citizen, was interned twice. The turmoil of this put considerable strain on Carrington and she was under a psychic collapse as she escaped to Andorra and then Spain. In Madrid, under some disorientation, she was raped and incarcerated in a sanatorium in Santander, where she was subjected to physical and chemical abuse, whilst her parents tried to regain control over her. In Lisboa, she escaped her Nanny, took sanctuary in the Mexican embassy, marrying a Mexican diplomat to gain passage to that country, where she remained for much of her life. When Ernst was able to return to St. Martin-d'Ardèche, Carrington was no longer there, and he too had to get out France fast. Peggy Guggenheim facilitated his passage to the United States, where they later married.

In 1943 Carrington told the story of her mental adventure, in *En Bas (Down There)*⁶. The passage through madness is a stage in shamanic and alchemical induction, leading her 'across the initial border of Knowledge'. Carrington retains a strength throughout, despite being overcome by physical and chemical force. Her friend Catherine, who aided escape to Andorra, persuaded her that her attitude 'betrayed an unconscious desire to be rid for a second time of my father: Max, whom I had to eliminate if I wanted to live'. In 1943 Carrington may also be reacting to the loss of her lover to the wealthy Guggenheim in the book, however *Portrait of Max Ernst* shows her shamanic totem, the white horse, frozen in ice, but also within the lantern in his hand, illuminating his creativity. The horse and her other totem, the hyena, would recur throughout her work, along with many other animals and birds. Does *The Poms of the Subsoil* (1947), with its ghost-like birds, speak of this also? (Unlike the paintings mentioned earlier, images of which are widely accessible, this does feature in the show).



The Poms of the Subsoil (1947)

Amongst the émigré Surrealist community in New York, Carrington exhibited in The Art of This Century Gallery show *Exhibition by 31 Women*⁷- the first to be devoted to modern women artists. in 1943. Guggenheim would ruefully say of this "I realized at I should have had only 30 women in the show" as Ernst, who had selected the paintings, left her for Dorothea Tanning, one of the artists represented. Carrington however, settled in México, where she would marry Chiki Weiss, study the Cabalah and other esoteric works and added the mysteries of the native culture to those of the Celt that she inherited. In 1948, the catalogue of her solo exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New Year proclaimed 'I am armed with madness for a long voyage'.

Having achieved that which most Surrealists only dreamt of, Carrington would now transcend it. Despite Whitney Chadwick's *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Little Brown, 1985), it is only really in this century that women artists have been recognised in their own right within surrealism. Despite their theoretical stance the surrealist patriarchy was more comfortable with woman as muse in their heyday⁸.

Whilst her Irish heritage was acknowledged in a major exhibition in Dublin in 2013 and there was a major exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 1991, and a joint exhibition in Chichester in 2010, Carrington has been largely ignored as a British artist. Perhaps this is because most of her work was conducted in France and México. She does not appear to have been involved with the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936. Speaking with a number of younger women artists recently, they were totally unaware of Carrington (though one might put this down to the poverty of Art education in the UK).

It is thus fortuitous that the Liberal Democrats have chosen to stage their Spring Conference in Liverpool

at the same time as the city's Tate Gallery is hosting a major retrospective. I would encourage all delegates to slip out to it. I am intrigued by some of her work before her meeting with the surrealists – after the fantastic book illustrations of Dulac or Neilsen perhaps. Does this herald some posthumous reconciliation with the Carrington family? The exhibition features work throughout Carrington's long career. Better known works include *The Giantess (The Guardian of the Egg)* and *The Temptation of St Anthony*²(both 1947), *And then we saw the Daughter of the Minotaur* (1953) and perhaps most spectacularly, *The Magical World of the Mayas* (1963), the monumental mural from the Museo Nacional de Antropología in México City. Amongst the later works are theatre and film collaborations, hats – creativity without bounds.

There are also a number of works by Carrington's friend and collaborator, the Hungarian surrealist, Kati Horna – from her S.nob series *Oda a la necrofilia*. Horna also settled in México.

For those of you who won't be in Liverpool, but will be at the 60th LI Congress, México City has a few of her sculptures on Reforma which is one of the main streets downtown. The mural should be back at the anthropology museum in Polanco and David Weiss believes that the modern art museum in Chapultepec also has some pieces. I thank David for this Information.

Stewart Rayment

Leonara Carrington is at Tate Liverpool, 6 March-31 May. Details: tate.org.uk Carrington is exhibited alongside Cathy Wilkes as part of Tate Liverpool's spring season, *Surreal Landscapes*. Also running concurrently in the ground floor Wolfson Gallery is the photographer György Kepes. Leonora Carrington is curated by Francesco Manacorda, Artistic Director and author Chloe Aridjis with Lauren Barnes, Assistant Curator.

¹ Leonara Carrington: *The House of Fear* (1939). Virago 1989 – with *The Oval Lady, Little Francis & Down Below*.

² Marcel Jean: *The History of Surrealist Painting*, 1959 - pages 323-324 include Carrington's commentary on *St Anthony*.

³Amédée Ozenfant's early career was as a Cubist, but he came to regard Cubism as 'a decorative art of romantic ornamentism' and thus at the bottom of his artistic hierarchy, as expressed when he developed Purism with Charles Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier). The Purist Manifesto 'fears the bizarre and the original'; Jean is quite right, though

developmental. Carrington had also received some artistic training at her finishing school in Florence.

⁴Nadia Choucha: *Surrealism & the Occult*. Mandrake, 1991.

⁵Hans Richter: *Dada Art and Anti-Art*. Thames & Hudson, 1965.

⁶*En Bas* [reprinted in English translation as *Down There* in *VVV No. 4*, New York, February 1944]. See ¹ above.

⁷The Art of This Century Gallery, by Justin Wolf. <http://www.theartstory.org/gallery-art-of-this-century.htm>

⁸ Whitney Chadwick: *Women, Art & Society*. Thames & Hudson, 2007 also puts this succinctly.



The Giantess (The Guardian of the Egg) 1947

The Poms of the Subsoil Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts University of East Anglia. © Estate of Leonora Carrington / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2015

The Giantess (The Guardian of the Egg) Photo: Pim Schalkwijk © Estate of Leonora Carrington / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2015.

RADICAL ISLAM

The efforts to get LIBG working in the regions continued with our inaugural Birmingham debate, “Radical Islam: How should we Respond?” Around 30 turned out despite heavy snowfall to hear our excellent panel debate the issue and over half posed questions in the following Q&A session. The speakers were Baroness Kishwer Falkner, Liberal Democrat spokesperson on International Affairs in the House of Lords and LI Bureau member; Jehangir Malik, UK Director and co-founder of Islamic Relief and Nozmul Hussein, Chief Executive of Birmingham based NGO, Community Foundation and Lib Dem member.

Despite all three speakers taking a broadly liberal approach, there were areas of disagreement and differences in emphasis. The audience was mixed with around 60% Muslim and British Pakistani, Kashmiri, Bangladeshi and Somali communities all represented. Nozmul Hussein stressed that terrorism was not especially a Muslim issue and that the vast majority of terrorist attacks worldwide or in Europe were not perpetrated by Muslims. He thought that the poor economic performance and high unemployment in Muslim majority areas contributed to disaffection amongst Muslim youth and that the government was not doing enough in putting the necessary resource into these areas.

Jehangir Malik pointed to the poor schools in many Muslim areas and recounted his own experience in overcoming this problem. He said that it was vital to foster a sense of belonging in all non-indigenous communities and that all British people had a role to play in this process. He said that we must get beyond the point at which migrant communities’ loyalty was questioned. He agreed with Nozmul that terrorism was not a particular Muslim problem, but that the leap from that position to “It is not my problem” is far too easy. We have to acknowledge that there is a problem that exists in our communities.

Kishwer Falkner was most robust on this point, insisting that British Muslims must face up to the problem that some in their midst were rejecting this country and its values and the communities must commit to tackling this from within. She rejected the idea that Muslims were victims in this country and that poverty was a major causal factor of radicalism. Other deprived groups do not resort to terror. She also spoke strongly in defence of freedom of speech and said that we must not be cowed into suppressing it in any way.

Many of the questions from the audience explored the relationship between freedom of speech and responsibility. There was a strong consensus in favour of free speech, but a number of comments suggested that a bit more sensitivity towards people's religious beliefs would be desirable, albeit not codified in any law. Coming in the week following the Charlie Hebdo killings, the debate was robust, but of a high calibre. The best summary of the challenge ahead came from Councillor Jon Hunt who lamented the lack of real integration, even in Birmingham where religious, racial and cultural tolerance are as good as anywhere.

Phil Bennion



Debate on Radical Islam: how should we respond? - 29th January, Birmingham, was the inaugural meeting of LIBG's West Midlands Branch.

LIBDEMS AGAINST TRIDENT

Meeting on Saturday 14th March 13:30-14:30
Venue: Liverpool One Bridewell (upstairs room),
1 Campbell Square, Argyle Street, Liverpool, L1 5FB
Unfortunately there is no disabled access

AGENDA (provisional)

Discussion on a motion for September.
Taking the group forward.

Guest Speakers: CND Chair Kate Hudson
& Tim Farron MP

Directions: From the Conference Centre head past Jurys Inn to the road. Cross over and head down the right hand side of Liver Street. When the road bends to the left carry straight on to Seddon Street. At the end of this is Argyle Street. Turn right, and you want the first opening on the left. On the map in the back of the agenda it's by the "A" of Argyle St.

Bridewells are, of course, old Nicks and Liverpool One Bridewell is set in one such. Appropriately for the meeting, it was used by the British and US armies

to house conscientious objectors during World War II, and in one or two places, anti-Churchill slogans can still be seen daubed on the walls of the cells.

In the early 1980s, the Bridewell became a recording and rehearsal space for the resurgent Liverpool music scene. Frankie Goes to Hollywood reputedly wrote "*Two Tribes*" in what's now the gents' karzi.

Liverpool One Bridewell features in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2013 and 2014. Beers include 'The Governor' by Marco Pierre White, courtesy of Manchester brewer JW Lees, and Bridewell say 'We also have two hand pulls with a regularly changing selection of well kept real ales from various brewers including brewers such as Liverpool Organic and Lancaster Brewery'. Those of us from down south may find the prices highly competitive.

INTERNATIONAL ABSTRACTS

Minister's gift for Taiwan mayor turns out to be portent of death. Evening Standard 27th January 2015
Transport Minister Baroness Susan Kramer's gift of a watch to Ko Wen-je, the mayor of Taipei, was taboo according to Chinese custom.

Putin: bad, sad or mad? Who knows, is the short answer, but all three features can be found in the Russian president's thinking and behaviour, by Edward Lucas.

<http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/putin-bad-sad-or-mad/> 5th February 2015

Physicians for Human Rights–Israel Publishes a First Experts Report on Operation Protective Edge.

<http://gazahealthattack.com/about/>

No surprises really, the impact of the West's weapons testing range – Gaza.

Election Fever or Futility in Africa? by Rebecca Tinsley. Liberator 370. *The short-comings of the electoral system in Africa and beyond.*

Gridlock in Washington, by Dennis Graf. Liberator 370. *Stateside after last autumn's Mid-term Elections.*

Muted Jazz, by Sophie Bridger and Robbie Simpson. Liberator 370. *Puzzled by The European Azerbaijan Society's events at Liberal Democrat conferences? The authors argue that they should not be there.*



International Office gears up for a Spring Conference like no other

The General Election is less than 70 days away and shaping up to be one of the most exciting and unpredictable in living memory. With this extraordinary election as a backdrop, this year's Spring Conference in Liverpool is set to be one of the busiest and best yet!

This year, the International Office will be welcoming a record-breaking number of diplomats to our Spring Conference, representing countries as diverse as Japan, India, Ethiopia and the Netherlands. We are providing them with a tailored international programme, including an exclusive briefing, in which leading party figures including Sir Malcolm Bruce and Baroness Randerson discuss the topic: "Where will the 2015 Election be decided?"

On Saturday evening, from 19.45-21:00, the International Office is hosting a fringe debate entitled: "Islam in the Modern World: a Liberal Response to Rising Radical Islamism at Home and Abroad." William Wallace, the Government spokesperson on foreign affairs in the House of Lords, will chair and our panel includes Baroness Kishwer Falkner and Maajid Nawaz, PPC for Hampstead and Kilburn.

They are joined by leading Liberal voices from the Middle East and North Africa, Khadija El Morabit, Vice President of the International Network of Liberal Women and Deputy Minister for the Environment in the Moroccan Government, and Saly Sayah, Secretary General of the National Liberal Party of Lebanon.

We anticipate a lively discussion with time for questions after the debate. A short reception will follow the event, with refreshments provided. Please do come along to room 4A and take part.

In addition to this packed programme, the International Office is hosting a delegation of 20 party campaigners from a diverse spread of countries from the Middle East, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. We have designed a bespoke training programme for our delegation which will provide them with the necessary campaign skills to hit the streets with three of our constituency campaign teams in the week following Conference. By sending our

enthusiastic international volunteers out on the streets to campaign, we will give them practical experience of waging an election campaign, all while helping our local Lib Dems fight in battleground seats.

With the Party gearing up to full election-mode, we are excited to contribute to our local campaigns and to introduce our international guests to the Liberal Democrats at their best: working together on the campaign trail!

For more information about our Conference programme, don't hesitate to get in touch with the International Office on international@libdems.org.uk <<mailto:international@libdems.org.uk>>.

Harriet Shone

ANC DISRUPTS DEMOCRACY, BUT ZILLE FIGHTS ON...

Across the country South Africans have expressed outrage that LI Deputy President and Western Cape Premier, Helen Zille, was prevented from delivering her State of the Province Address (SOPA) last week after disruption from the Opposition ANC forced parliament to be suspended.

The state of the province address is important because the law requires the ruling party to deliver a plan to the people. Speaking in an interview with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Helen Zille, who also leads the Democratic Alliance, said: "It wasn't an accident that the ANC disrupted it [the SOPA] because they are worried about the progress that the Democratic Alliance is making not only in the Western Cape but countrywide."

Describing the ANC's repeated disregard for the democratic process, Zille added: "It is unprecedented in South Africa's history that people are prevented from hearing the premier be accountable to the public... a real blow against our democracy." Setting out the flagship goals contained in her Address, which was tabled in written format owing to the disruption, Helen Zille said: "The new thing is the game-changers. Energy security, growing the economy for job creation, access for high-speed broadband, and to deal with the legacy of apartheid."

Despite the obstacles inherited from national government and rapid urbanisation, the liberal-governed Western Cape enjoys fuller employment and better delivery of basic resources than any other province. Explaining this remarkable achievement,

Premier Zille concluded: "Progress isn't an event it's a process. No government, anywhere, is going to deliver a good life; what governments do is provide opportunities the context for a growing economy in which people can change their own lives."

CHILEAN AND MOROCCAN LIBERALS LEAD DEMANDS FOR ABORTION REFORM.

Less than one month after Liberal International put the spotlight on women's reproductive rights liberal legislators in Chile and Morocco are challenging the status quo, speaking out to demand women's right to control their own bodies, and delivering advances.

In Morocco, Ms. Fouzia Elbayed MP of LI full member, Union Constitutionnelle, made an unprecedented appeal in an open letter to the Minister of Health to decriminalise abortion and grant more rights to women. Addressing the need for better and fairer access to healthcare, Ms. Elbayed said:

"Morocco has cut many strides in the field of human rights, and we should not shy away from the reality of pregnancy. We have to admit the existence of this medical and social reality and face it with effective solutions. The current legislation on abortion does not take into account the balance of power in society, which is why it needs to be amended and brought into alignment with the transformation of the Moroccan society."

"The right to an abortion will be a great achievement for Moroccan women as they will be empowered to control their own bodies: a right which embodies the control of personal choice and individual responsibility alike", the Moroccan liberal parliamentarian added.

In Chile, LI member Partido Liberal (PLC), continues to give crucial support to a series of historic reforms enabling a parliamentary majority to vote in favour for a much debated law decriminalising abortion in an increased number of cases.

Commenting on the law that will further enshrine women's rights into Chile's legislation, Mr. Vlado Mirosevic MP, the leader of the PLC, said: "We will defend with all our strength [the belief] that it may be women who decide about their bodies rather than the state, and that a certain religious belief may not be imposed on all of society, particularly on those who do not belong to it." He continued to ensure that "the new law brings the freedom of choice back to women so that it may be they who decide if they want to terminate their pregnancy, without an obligation to anyone [else]."

NORTHERN IRELAND MINORITY ETHNIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Alliance South Belfast MLA, Anna Lo, has welcomed information that Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) will fund £1.1million for the Minority Ethnic Development Fund for the 2015/16 financial year; however she expressed her concern at the delay in finalising the details. The current funding stream is due to end on 31st March, but how the next round of the fund is going to be delivered has not been decided.

Anna Lo said: "I welcome the decision to maintain the same level of funding for the Ethnic Minority Development Fund; however it is extremely alarming that OFMDFM have yet again taken far too long to come forward with details on how the Minority Ethnic Development Fund will be delivered. The current programme is due to end in six weeks and all the organisations sponsored need to know if they are being funded for the next year. The department has indicated that they would need to go through a number of procedures to run and monitor the fund before they were in a position to advertise for applications. This will take months. The risk is that if there is a delay between funding streams, organisations will be forced to make redundancies or close down. I cannot understand why all the organisations currently funded by this programme cannot have their funding extended for another year in order to ensure continuity of the service provision from these organisations.

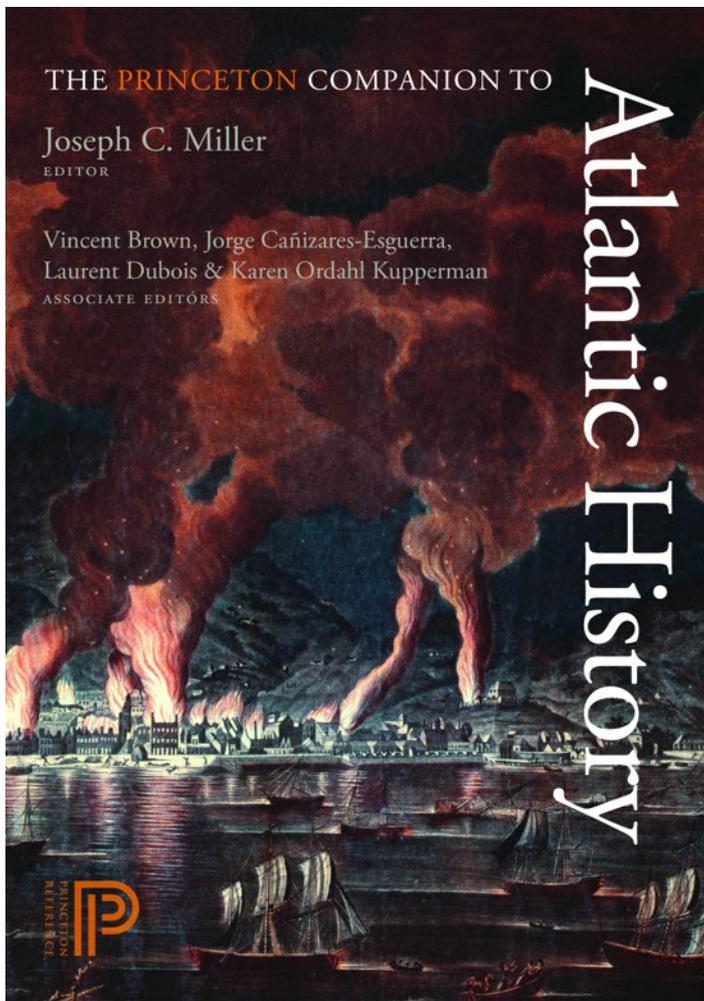
"This is a very valuable funding programme and ethnic minority organisations are dependent on it. There have previously been problems over the renewal of this fund but OFMDFM's Race Unit seem not to have learnt anything from the difficulties in the previous rounds. Whilst groups have been told there will be a fund for 2015/2016, there are no details as to how this fund will be accessed.

"I urge OFMDFM to urgently publish details in order to put the minds of those involved at ease. I tabled a priority written question to their Department six weeks ago asking when these details would be published, and despite being required to provide an answer within days, they have not yet responded. This is unacceptable and it is extremely important they provide these organisations with the information they require as soon as possible."

REVIEWS

The Princeton Companion to Atlantic History,
edited by Joseph C. Miller.
Princeton University Press 2015 £44.95
isbn 13 978 0 691 14853 3

Princeton has brought us what purports to be the first encyclopaedic reference on Atlantic history. We shall all be a lot better informed for it. Atlantic history really means the Age of Discovery and after. I find no reference to St. Brendan or the Vikings in the index, and given an essentially 'European' perspective (wherein I include white America) this is not unreasonable – which said, reference to earlier African and Native American developments, with which we are, alas, less familiar, are valuable.



Consider for example the essays on Christianity, which show much earlier penetration than most of us probably consider and a much earlier impact within the African continent, whereby many slaves arriving in the Americas might already practice *a syncretic blend of Catholic and local beliefs*. This alas, exposes the duplicity of the Church, effectively maintaining that some souls were more equal than others at a time

when the same equality of souls was being argued to extend human rights in Europe.

Laurent Dubois' essay *The Nineteenth Century, Consolidation and Reconfiguration* is a particularly brutal awakening the short-comings of our past, as one might expect from a professor best known for his work on Haiti, the exception to the principles of the French Revolution. *Paradoxically, the liberal humanism of politics in Europe and North America was intimately intertwined with Africa and parts of Asia through brutal military occupation*. Not many surprises there, but an essay worth reading in itself.

Predominantly historical, interlaced with anthropology and economics, this is a very useful book that one will be able to dip into in those odd moments and come out much better informed.

Stewart Rayment

States and Power in Africa,
by Jeffrey Herbst.
Princeton University Press 2015.

How refreshing; an account of Africa's troubled modern nation states which is unburdened by the deadening hand of politically correct white academic angst. For years colonialism has been blamed (specifically the Berlin Conference of 1884-5) for creating artificial countries which struggle to survive without massive injections of foreign aid. Yet at independence African's new rulers were keen to hang onto to those very colonial borders, although they had not existed in pre-colonial times.

Herbst explains that pre-colonial Africa rulers calculated it was too expensive to administer large areas. Land was so plentiful that farmers put little effort into cultivating and irrigating it, making it worth too little for rulers to tax. In addition, there was so much unpopulated land that Africans fled, when attacked, rather than defending their territory, meaning there was little attachment to land, as opposed to ethnicity.

This slice of history is relevant today because most African rulers prefer to take a share of mineral exports and customs duty, rather than go to the trouble of taxing their citizens (and being accountable to them for their mismanagement and theft). The result, Herbst argues, is that the urban elite capital, "steal so much that the state starts to crumble."

And Africans now facing attack by their own governments flee, as their ancestors did. However, now they must cross borders and live in refugee

camps in unwelcoming countries. National identity does not extend much beyond support for football teams.

Just like the white slave traders, pre-colonial rulers only went into the hinterland to capture women, slaves and cattle. So it is today, where some African governments have little control beyond the suburbs of their capital cities, neglecting their rural population (still the majority of people in Africa).

At independence African leaders undermined efforts to create EU-type regional bodies to which they would have to cede power. The Organisation of Africa Unity's role was thus to promote the rights of states, not individuals. Hence Biafra and Rwanda were "internal affairs," Herbst points out; and governments were legitimate as long as they controlled the capital. *"The UN since 1945 has basically been a decolonizing machine: its primary purpose has been to proclaim as quickly as possible that every country is able to rule itself and to keep reiterating that claim irrespective of the facts on the ground. For instance, even though it was obvious to all concerned that Somalia had collapsed by Dec 1992 when the US/UN intervention force was being planned, no one seriously considered trusteeship or other legal concepts other than continuing the fiction that Somalia was still a sovereign nation-state."*

Citing the fate of Ken Sara-Wiwa and other champions of oppressed minorities, Herbst writes "It remains ironic, given the amount of time Africa leaders devote to preaching the need for African solutions to African problems, that those who are committed to thinking of alternatives to the western-designed states of Africa may be in considerable jeopardy."

Herbst acknowledges it is up to Africans to re-imagine how to exercise power, but he points out the West could "show the atmosphere has changed" by "decertifying" countries where rulers abuse their own people and rob the national treasury. The international community could also direct aid toward regional projects encouraging links between countries, thus stimulating trade and development. That would, of course, require wealthy Africans to invest in their own countries, something that is still sadly in its infancy.

Rebecca Tinsley

Misbehaviour

Art Pavilion, Mile End, London, February 2015

Misbehaviour is a mixed media exhibition project curated by artist Katja Rosenberg. (Art Catcher Ltd), at the CMR Gallery in Redruth, Cornwall, October 2014 and at The Art Pavilion, Mile End, London, February 2015. The project featured contributions by 50 artists from Britain, Germany, France, Slovenia, Portugal, New Zealand and the United States. It was supported by the community art projects ArtEast and Southbank Mosaics and the social regeneration programme Streets of Growth, and the Bow based community group The Geezers, which was formed by former Liberal Democrat councillor Ray Gipson.

The Geezers project was part of their on-going campaign *Where's My Boozer Gone?* about the vanishing pubs of Bow (and elsewhere), which, as Ray said, particularly impacts on the social life and well-being of older men. Louise Gridley, captured the Geezers, drawing them socializing and then reproducing them as *The Geezer's Last Supper* (acrylic on canvas £2000.00). Lucy Schofield assisted the Geezers with a walk-in pub installation.



Game of the State. Johanna Zhang©

Dissent and the challenge to authoritarianism is a unifying theme of much of the exhibition. Internationally, I was struck by the work of Johanna Zhang, five drypoints entitled *The Story of Cao Shunli* (£1000.00 or £200.00 each). Cao Shunli (1961–2014) was a militant Chinese petitioner who died in police custody in March 2014. She was typical of the kind of

person you might find in your Focus Team – not unlike Ray in many respects – a community activist, who extended her own cause – not untypically, housing rights, to those of her neighbours. Cao Shunli's story starts with the unveiling of a protesting banner during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (*Game of the State*); she went on to use her legal experience to assist others with the same problem. However she was confronting a far more malign socialism than the tenants of east London. Cao was arrested, sentenced to a year's Re-education through Labour. She was force-fed, tortured, but continued her protests after her release until her death, which was hardly unconnected.
<http://www.johannazhang.com/>

The whole exhibition can be viewed at:
http://exhibitions.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/5/8/1258901/misbehaviour_catalogue_kr20150215.pdf

Stewart Rayment

The Prostitute State, how Britain's Democracy has been bought, by Donnachadh McCarthy. 3 Acorns Publications, 2 Coleman Road, London SE5 7TG, 2014 £12.00 isbn 9780993042805

This is a very disturbing book, particularly so for Liberals and Liberal Democrats, because that is where Donnachadh's mainstream political experiences took place, but it would be naïve to interpret or use this book as an attack on the Liberal Democrats, because the same situation in the Labour and Conservative parties is much worse. What is the problem? It is the position and influence of lobbyists, usually corporate lobbyists, within the political system; how it extends to (or comes from) the media and permeates academia. Even the Green party is not immune. Anecdotally, Donnachadh told a meeting, when this question was raised, of how he had criticized the recyclability of tetra packs in an article that he wrote for *The Independent*, only to receive a defence from a party member, who was in turn a lobbyist for a manufacturer. His advice to Green party members – read this book, learn and apply, before it is too late.

I sometimes wonder what a number of people that I've known through politics actually do. A lot of them fall into the category of public relations or lobbyists. To get things straight, I describe myself as an intellectual properties consultant – that is, I advise and help people in a specialist area of law concerning (mainly) trade marks, patents, copyright and the like. People can do these things for themselves, but alas, in my experience, frequently fall short of the fast moving complexities of the field. On occasions I've

employed (or attempted to employ) people in PR or worked for them. The opinion that I formed, which has been backed up by people working in the field, is that they by-and-large know nothing in particular, except perhaps that they may have made useful contacts and may have some experience of the systems in which those people operate. On the other hand, I'm aware of some of the campaigns that such people have led, in the course of their jobs, and would not necessarily fault them on these. Typically some of these people had been blazing a trail for the party across the 1970s & 80s, had no particular career development outside of politics, and when needs must, found themselves gravitating to PR as a job that matched their skills.



Donnachadh McCarty speaking at St. Leonard's Central in February

The late Richard Holme features heavily – I first came across Holme as Liberal PPC for Braintree. David Scott had turned the new seat into a three-way marginal in February 1974, but had burnt himself out in the process. The seat was thus attractive and Holme jumped in. He expressed some fairly dodgy views to my mind, calling for a kind of National Service for youth – perhaps something like the American Peace Corps – but it wasn't anything neighbouring Young Liberals would have much truck with. He was always suspect, and later became associated with the 'quick fi' in politics – something much loved by that ilk, whereas I've always been a long haul man. I recall a conversation – why did Holme have so much influence in the party? The reply was not so much about money, simply that he gravitated in the right circles and was 'available' to do things (in an under-resourced party) when something like a general election came up.

As I said, this is a deeply disturbing book. Much of its content is in the public domain, but Donnachadh has

brought it together, exposing the extent to which lobbyists promote a narrow range of vested interests across the body politic, the media, and academia. In addition to this he exposes the relationship between these and the use of tax havens. Whilst we may not be too surprised about the extent of this within the Labour and Conservative parties, the degree to which it penetrates the Liberal Democrats is distressing.

On pages 43 & 44 is a non-exhaustive list of prominent LDs who are caught up in the lobbying gutter. At a recent gathering of Liberal activists, of both social and economic persuasions, I canvassed opinions of those listed – were they the good, the bad or the ugly? The results were mixed and not always predictably so. Whilst the youngest member of the panel frequently didn't know who the people in question were, older members may have interacted with some of those on the list since at least the 1970s. This tended to promote more positive views, where as more recent arrivistes were seen through from the outset.

There is a serious international issue, which is the extent to which corporate lobbying is associated with off-shore tax havens. This is probably an issue that has to be dealt with at the supra-national level (if it is not too late, in terms of the turkeys voting for Christmas, which bedevilled Donnachadh's struggles within the Lib Dems).

Depressed, Donnachadh urged me to read on to his final chapter which calls for *The 21st Century Great Democratic Reform Act*. We certainly need it and amongst others, the proposals of the European Initiative for Media Pluralism are very sound. But what of controlling the lobby? Certainly necessary, would it be like asking the turkeys to vote for Christmas, as has been seen in the feeble attempts at bank and media reform under the Coalition government. Donnachadh's message should by now, be well rehearsed in Liberal Democrat circles, though his departure will make it less familiar to newer members. In terms of saving the planet, first get your own life in order, then extend it to your institutions; stop sponsoring the corporates in your buying, support local small scale capitalism, every penny you spend in a mainstream supermarket is likely to be sponsoring tax avoidance through the prostitute state. He has been impressed by the Occupy movement and advocates non-violent direct action – indeed if you want to raise any issues with him personally, he'll be at Occupy Murdoch, around the Little Shard, London Bridge, March 23rd-29th. Donnachadh perceives the corrupted media to be the weakest pillar of the prostitute state.

There is likely to be much soul searching in the Liberal Democrats in a few months time; an excellent opportunity for them to clean up their act. This book gives much food for thought in that process.

Stewart Rayment



**Greek and Roman Political Ideas, by Melissa Lane
Penguin 2014 £7.99 isbn 9780141976150**

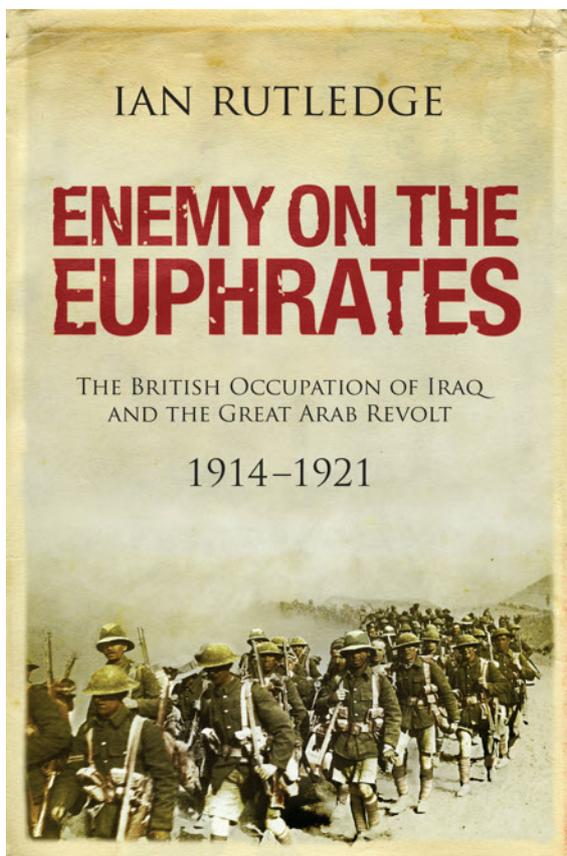
I was so disgusted by the revelations of Donnachadh McCarthy's *The Prostitute State* that I had to get back to basics. Most of the ideas underlying western politics were enunciated by ancient Greece and Rome. I will not pretend that the Athenian Democracy wasn't capable of heinous crimes, but some of the ideas beneath it were more advanced in the control of elites than what passes for democracy today. Whilst there were limits to the citizen base, that base was more actively engaged than our media-sedated masses. Revisiting the roots of democracy may give us some ideas of how to re-engage our citizens.

Lane has provided us with a useful little book, warts and all. Those of us who have the audacity to seek election should read it and get a grounding of what they are supposed to be doing.

Stewart Rayment

Enemy on the Euphrates, by Ian Rutledge
Saqi 2014 isbn 9780863567629

The more one reads of British policy on Iraq, the more despicable it becomes. Only the sheer stupidity of subsequent American policy, on which coat tails we invariably hang, can match it. It was about oil from the outset. Whether it is the betrayal of the Sharif of Mecca and his sons or the most humble marsh Arab, the element of deceit cannot be under played. Reflecting on the bombardment and storming of Khafajiyya in his *Loyalties*, Arnold Wilson records that he “*recognised one of them... Sheikh ‘Asi’s qahwaji. The coffee-maker looked up... O Wilson, why have you brought this on us? It is you who have lead these men here. Was it for this that you ate our bread and wandered our marshes and made maps? Treachery was in your heart and lies on your lips, and now the blood of your brothers is on your head...*” We do not know if God forgave Wilson, but he went on to become a director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. At the height of the war, the daily output of the company’s Masjid-i-Sulayman field would have accounted for little more than the daily fuel consumption of one of the Royal Navy’s battle cruisers if operating at full speed. If that is the scale of the problem in 1916, think of it now.



The less pleasant parts of our imperial history tend to get swept aside; set aside the conflicting promises made to different parties throughout the war – Rutledge thinks the lesser known 1917 Baghdad Declaration and the 1918 Anglo-French Declaration are those that most

raised the aspirations of Iraq, the high-handed bullying of Wilson’s administration sparked full scale rebellion in 1920. It never had a chance of success and once the British had managed to reinforce their mostly Indian army, a blood-thirsty revenge would set in, which exposed the divisions in Iraqi society, familiar to this day. Indeed the scenes of the action and some of the family names have a striking familiarity in contemporary events. Not Churchill’s greatest moment, as War Minister in an age of austerity charged with the task of reducing the burden of imperial expansion on the tax payer. Iraq would be the testing ground of the RAF as policeman of a recalcitrant empire. What would later be styled ‘weapons of mass destruction’ were used. Ian Rutledge and Saqi are to be congratulated for correcting this omission, particularly in drawing on Arab sources.

Much of the book is detailed military history and if you don’t have a taste for that but want a greater understanding of Britain and Iraq read the afterword and the chapters on oil and any others where the headings appeal to you.

Stewart Rayment

Migrants In Translation: caring and the logics of difference in contemporary Italy, by Cristina Giordano. University of California Press. 2014

The lives of women trafficked into prostitution in Italy makes an interesting topic. However the deadening hand of academic nit-picking in the book under review leads to frustration rather than enlightenment. The author, an anthropologist at UC Davis, follows the progress of Nigerian and Eastern European women in the sex trade as they are processed by the Italian system, from police station to refuge hostel to rehabilitation and training.

The women seem to be treated with cultural sensitivity and kindness compared to the reception they would get in the UK, but Giordano is not satisfied. Why? Because officials aim to get the truth from the women to ensure they are not economic migrants. Because the same officials seek to fit the women they interview into recognisable categories so they can find them the appropriate help. Because the nuns who train the women to earn a less hazardous income view them as victims and wish to offer them redemption. They are nuns, after all.

We are told some women on the streets in Italy knew they were going to be prostitutes and that the state is therefore denying them agency, treating them as

helpless. This may be so in some cases, but the reader is given no context and no figures for how many women and girls are tricked into being trafficked into the sex trade in Italy, and how many accept prostitution as a first step to getting a residency permit. The book discusses at tedious length the innocuous phrases used by officials, rather than allowing the women themselves to speak. Ironically, it is the author who ends up denying the women ‘agency.’

Giordano is annoyed at the largely well-meaning police and nuns who might not use exactly the right jargon to describe confusing situations in which women keep changing their stories. Surely her anger would better be directed at the brothers and fathers of the Nigerian women and girls who think so little of them that they sell them into a life of sex slavery, physical violence and disease.

Due to my experience with Sudanese dissidents and asylum seekers in the UK I read this book expecting to be exasperated by the Italian officials and police for their attitudes to the trafficked women. Instead, it seems this aspect of the Italian system tries to do the right thing, given limited resources. And sneering at nuns who wish to rehabilitate sex workers seems ungenerous to say the least. I searched in vain for any practical suggestions to improve the system, given the financial restrictions on a nation in recession.

One gem emerging from the book is the trouble the nuns have in getting the Nigerian (Christian) women to attend mass: the women tell them they’ve already had enough of priests, servicing them as they do in brothels and on the streets of Italy.

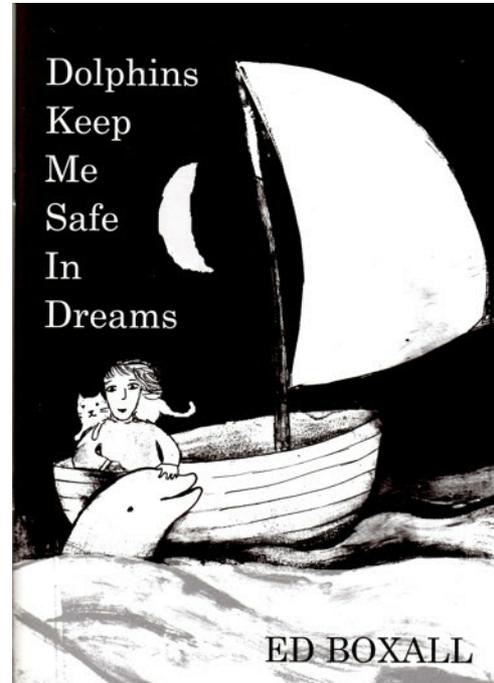
Rebecca Tinsley



From *Pipeline, Trafficking to Italy*, Photographs by Elena Perlino Schilt Publishing 2014 isbn: 9789053308240

Dolphins Keep Me Safe In Dreams, by Ed Boxall
The Pearbox Press, 88 Mount Road, Hastings,
TN35 5LA. 2014 £6.00
isbn 9781782803102
www.edboxall.com

A charming little book resolving the problems of going to sleep, beautifully illustrated from drawings, collages and prints. Dolphins rescue the sleeper from



the threat of goblins to worlds of unicorns and a dear departed granddad. Children will sleep easier and adults derive much from the artwork.

Stewart Rayment

A brief word about Magna Charta, which was signed 800 years ago, and underpins, at least symbolically, many of our liberties, not only in Britain, but across

the world. Nobody should imagine that the robber barons were any less self-interested than bad King John, who immediately tried to renege on the deal, but he and his successors would restate it, eventually into statute law.

Only three of its clauses remain in force: the freedom of the Church of England, the liberties and customs of the City of London (& other towns) and the right to trial by jury... and how many of those come under attack from various sources in this day?

The Charter was signed on 15th June 1215, something for Liberals everywhere to celebrate.

Liverpool... the international bits.

I was amused to find Leonora Carrington's *Evening Conference* will be exhibited at Tate Liverpool as the Liberal Democrats hold their last conference in the twilight of the Coalition. Carrington is a much ignored British artist, probably because she spent most of her life in Mexico. I don't know much about her politics, except that she left Mexico in 1968 in protest to the brutal put-down of student demonstrations and that she was active in the Womens' Movement. Take some time out from the conference to visit this exhibition.

Liverpool... historically one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Britain, yet the international agenda is sparse, and worse, much of it clashes. I note that LibDems Against Trident are taking their fringe outside of the conference centre – probably not a first, but a reflection on the costs that interest groups within the Liberal Democrats have to bear, which also accounts – short conference aside, for the sparsity of the international fringe.

Fringe Saturday lunchtime 13.00-14.00

Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats and Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary - Asylum Seekers - Tell it like it is - Truth not Myths
Panel of speakers include: Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager, and Durani Rapozo, Complex Needs Social Worker from Asylum Link Merseyside. Chaired by Issan Ghazni, EMLD. Durani's been through the Asylum System and we can learn from his personal experience.

ACC, Room 4 A

Humanist & Secularist Liberal Democrats - Caste Discrimination: is the government blocking reform, and why?

The government was supposed to consult in summer 2014 on making caste discrimination unlawful. Why hasn't it happened? Why should it matter? With Julian Huppert MP, Meena Varma (Dalit Solidarity Network), Jo Swinson MP (invited). Chair: Gordon Lishman.

ACC, Room 7

Fringe Saturday 13:30-14:30

LibDems Against Trident - Guest Speakers: CND
Chair Kate Hudson & Tim Farron MP

Venue: Liverpool One Bridewell (upstairs room), 1 Campbell Square, Argyle Street, Liverpool, L1 5FB
Unfortunately there is no disabled access

Directions: From the Conference Centre head past Jurys Inn to the road. Cross over and head down the right hand side of Liver Street. When the road bends to the left carry straight on to Seddon Street. At the end of this is Argyle Street. Turn right, and you want the first opening on the left. On the map in the back of the agenda it's by the "A" of Argyle St.

Fringe Saturday mid evening 19.45-21.30

International Office - Radical Islamist Terror and Islamophobia on the Increase: does Islam Need a Revolution?

Join the International Office and guest panellists for a heated debate on contemporary issues relating to Islam, ISIS, modernity, and many more. Speakers include: Martin Horwood MP; Majid Nawaz, PPC for Hampstead and Kilburn and author of 'Radical'. Others TBC.

ACC, Room 4 A

Fringe Saturday late evening 22.00-02.00

Glee Club

Join us for the ultimate end-of-conference celebration! Cash bar. Happy hour prices 22.00-22.30 and 23.30-00.00: Glass of house wine and selected bottle beers all £3.80. Pick up your copy of the Liberator Songbook and come and 'raise the roof'!

ACC, Room 11.

Sunday 15th Conference Chamber

09.00 Emergency Motions

09.45 Policy Motion - Freedom of Expression in Europe & Beyond