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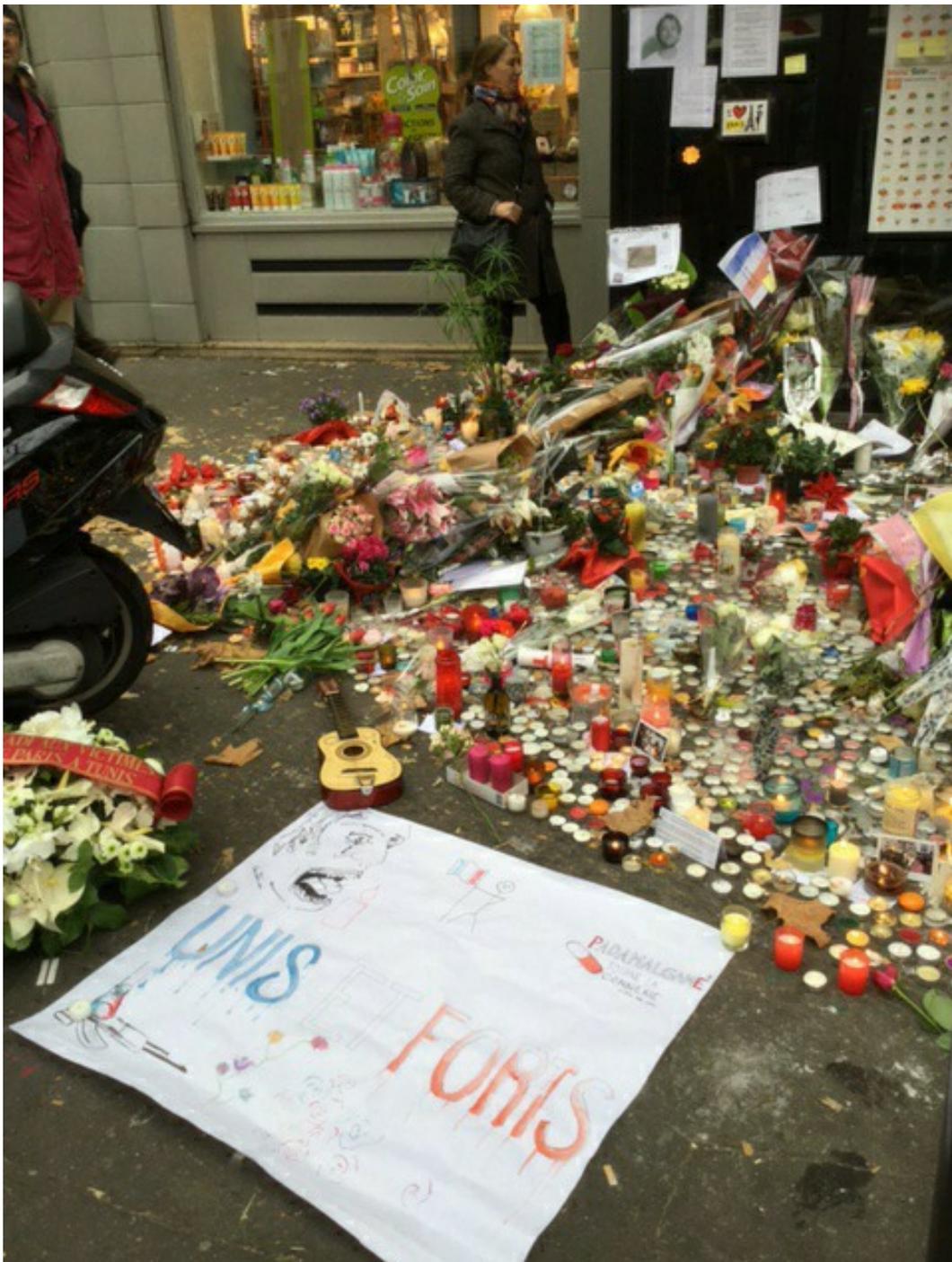
INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group

PARIS

CANADA

KURDISTAN



TAIWAN

ZANZIBAR

SYRIA

EVENTS

29th November Vince Cable at the Cambridge Literary Festival, Cambridge Union Chamber, 9a Bridge Street, Cambridge, CB2 1UB discussing his latest book, *After the Storm*. Tickets £12.00, £6.00 concessions. 10.00-11.00am

29th November Climate Change March, London – assemble Park Lane at noon. Green Lib Dems aim to meet near the Achilles statue from 11.00am moving off to assembly point J for noon. March proceeds to Millbank, ending around 4.00pm

30th November LIBG Forum: Israel and Palestine - two states or one? Britain's decisive role. Sir Vincent Fean. NLC. 7.00pm

8th February LIBG Forum: to be determined. NLC. 7.00pm

29th February Diplomatic reception. NLC

11th-13th March Liberal Democrat Spring Conference, York.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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

Liberal International (British Group)
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Photographs: Dennis Graf (cover), John Pinder, David Walters, Harriet Shone, Phil Bennion, Stewart Rayment

Trudeau Triumphs

John Pinder

Deciding to go to Canada during an election with an incredible conclusion was not an accident. Deciding to go to Canada in the first place was, a result of a chance conversation. I have never been, despite an interest in Canadian politics and a collection of Canadian election results.

Like many, I had been captivated by several weeks of LIB 30 CON 30 NDP 30 opinion polls before I set off for Toronto. As a hardened veteran (I think) of expectations, I studied these results thinking, it can't stay like that. Maybe the polls were going to be as wrong as in the UK. Maybe the polls would themselves generate a particular outcome, such as when they accelerated the 2011 Canadian Liberal election disaster, the party coming third for the first time ever.

I could argue each of the three major party leaders had something going for them. Harper, though described to me as 'grey but sinister', had a base of supporters noting maybe that he was better than any candidate seeking the US Republican nomination; Mulcair seemed to know his stuff and had been combative during PMQs in the Canadian Parliament; Trudeau was the son of you know who but spoke well in his own right, had a resonating message. The Liberals had a block of seats they could hold and gain, but not enough to have a majority. The NDP seemed in good shape, except for having to defend outlandish successes in Quebec, one winner having fought that election from the gaming tables of Las Vegas (but she held on well in 2015).

After a few hours in Toronto, at the start of three fantastic weeks in Canada, I might add, it was apparent the Liberals and NDP had a good ground game, but the Conservative one was pathetic. (Yes, the danger of such assumptions.) There was a phenomenal number, even by our standards, of garden lawn and road side signs, though some people displayed both Liberal and NDP ones. There was good literature around, though angled more to national campaigning than local issues. What interested me was the similarity of this pattern across several ridings and if you walk along Toronto's longer roads you cover plenty of ridings during six hours of perambulating.

A way to weigh things up was to attend an election hustings. Remembering pretty bad hustings in London during our election, where TUSC was objectionable and 90 percent of the audience had made up their minds in advance, I had doubts. The Yorkville-located hustings for the redrawn Toronto University-Rosedale riding had no such issues.

I knew Chrystia Freeland was the Liberal candidate for this riding. I've heard her speak at Chatham House, knew she was a strong supporter of the current Ukrainian government and learnt from her promotional material she has been banned by Vladimir Putin from visiting Russia. After winning a by-election two years ago, she was facing a tough fight against the NDP in a riding containing only half of her previous territory.



Chrystia had plenty of opponents but those on the far left, unlike in the UK, declined the opportunity to perform in public and saturate the meeting with their only supporters. Of the four on the panel, to be well chaired, one was a Libertarian candidate, another a Conservative, somewhat unsuitable for the area but 'cutting his teeth' in the best way he could. Chrystia's main opponent, with a notional 3,000 NDP majority, was television anchorperson Jennifer Hollett, articulate, but perhaps bringing up Tom Mulcair obsessively often.

The audience was more far-minded than a UK election

audience, less well armed with 'gotcha' comments, but everyone knew this was a Freeland-Hollett contest. Both candidates displayed the right credentials to be an MP for their riding, aware of local issues. The Conservative said he had knocked on 65,000 doors in three months. Hmm. May have felt like it. Only one questioner shouted and would not stop, with a question about the Middle East. Most questions reflected that Toronto and its suburbs made a hell of a large sized place and the Federal government should take the whole area more seriously. There were lacerating comments from this well-off audience about Stephen Harper's regime, particularly its violation of norms in the civil liberties area.



I circulated at a wine reception afterwards, picking up a fair slice of Canadian 'opinion' but it was interesting to me how the ascent of Jeremy Corbyn had been picked up and how his foreign policy was viewed- as a total disgrace, in case you were doubtful.

I left Toronto. My next port of call was to a riding a mere 386 kilometres in width. It was hard to see much campaigning. The Conservatives usually obtained about 75 to 80 percent of the vote. All will be revealed- it was in Alberta and did not swing much on election night.

So to Vancouver and election night. Despite warnings about not putting results on Facebook and Twitter, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation told us the Liberals had won the first 33 seats. Of course, people were still going to vote knowing this news. I consider that did damage to the Tories and NDP, and one 80 vote majority winner in Calgary might have been a lucky beneficiary.

Two factors came into play; a desire to kick out Stephen Harper (much less in play in Alberta and Saskatchewan); a recognition Justin Trudeau had run a better campaign than expected. The NDP's problem,

yes, was accelerated by the Niqab issue in Quebec, with 93 percent of Quebecers in disagreement with Tom Mulcair. Once the NDP was seen as in trouble in Quebec, then the NDP was in trouble in Ontario, the Greater Toronto area and Atlantic Canada. But not everywhere. Expected gains from the Conservatives did materialise, but often in tight three horse races. Yet the Trudeau lead was lethal in Greater Toronto for the NDP. Chrystia Freeland won by 10,500 votes, a tribute to her, her prediction (she told me the Liberals could be performing better than polls suggested) and the strength of the Liberal campaign, with its message of change. That change message resulted in defeating every NDP incumbent within Greater Toronto.

In the days that followed, the Canadian media analysed what had been required to make Trudeau prime ministerial. Mulcair was told what his mistakes were and how he had been badly advised by those round him, to pursue a non-radical course, losing the benefits of his combative but intelligent performances in the House of Commons. Harper was seen as likely to be happy with his time in office. But it was goodbye time, however. But the most interesting comment was that Trudeau was advantaged by being seen to take on the tougher challenge- coming from third place, not second.

I was struck by what the UK Lib Dems had to say, including Liberal Democrat Voice. There was a claim the Liberal Democrats had much to benefit from learning about how the Canadian Liberal party ran its campaign. Yet there were two gaps in the discussion straightaway: candidates and where these candidates stood.

I was impressed by the quality of the Liberal candidates, though I am going a lot on television appearances in making such a statement. There was no shortage of women candidates though they tended to be up against female candidates of other parties. In a situation where some Liberals will have been surprised to be elected, I do not believe they will turn out to be weak candidates letting the side down. What matters still more is that the Liberals had the right candidates for the right seats. A victorious Liberal candidate often 'chimed' with the area. Sometimes such a candidate was from a prominent ethnic minority within a riding. So a redrawn highly middle class Sikh riding in Vancouver had a 'good fit' candidate. Once or twice the Liberals made counter-intuitive choices, disagreeing with my thesis, but still a choice able to turf out Conservative or NDP opponents with high swings. A black female candidate in Ontario took out a Conservative sitting

on a 20,000 vote lead with a 23 percent swing: her riding, Whitby, is some distance from multicultural Toronto.



Despite the fascination of election night, with Conservatives knocked out by phenomenal swings, the most important aspect of this first past the post election is that it must be Canada's last. Canada is not as 'tribally local' as the UK, in that the potential for seats (outside rural Alberta or parts of Atlantic Canada) to swing dramatically is everpresent. But the winning party has a 39 percent share of the vote and Conservative and NDP supporters in Atlantic Canada failed to elect one representative. The electoral reform movement has not scored big hits, though the next provincial election in Ontario will be held under AV. AV must be a runner for the next Canadian federal elections, though AMS (not a recognised term in Canada) is also likely to be on the table. I fear that AV might prevail when it should not. The frequency of either federal or provincial landslides means there must be a voting system more friendly to minority choices and overall proportionality. I feel it comes down to how much interest and knowledge of electoral systems Justin Trudeau has at his disposal. At a time when the brushing away of Stephen Harper's cobwebs in the attic must be his first and top priority.

John Pindar

John Pindar is a London Liberal Democrat activist, an Eastern European specialist and currently writing novels

LIBG Forum on Israel & Palestine

November 30th 19.00 to 21.00

Sir Vincent Fean

British Consul-General, Jerusalem, 2010-14, a trustee of Medical Aid for Palestinians and patron of the Britain-Palestine Friendship and Twinning Association.

**National Liberal Club (NLC),
Whitehall Place, London.**

Underground: Charing Cross/Embankment

Vincent Fean

After 38 years in the British Diplomatic Service, Vincent Fean retired in 2014 as Consul-General, Jerusalem. That post entailed promoting UK interests and addressing the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, dealing with President Abbas, the PLO leadership and Ministers of the Palestinian Authority. The Consul-General leads on UK relations with East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza – the Palestinian Territories occupied since the 1967 War.

Before his three year Jerusalem posting, Vincent was Ambassador to Libya (2006-10) and High Commissioner to Malta (2002-06), where he was knighted by Her Majesty the Queen in 2005.

Vincent is a trustee of the British charity Medical Aid for Palestinians, and patron of the Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network. He advocates British Government and European recognition of the State of Palestine, as a big step towards a just and peaceful end to the Occupation begun in 1967, and fulfilment of the aim of two states – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in mutual security.



Kurds and Ways

Stewart Rayment reports on the LIBG Kurdistan Forum

The most interesting aspect of the LIBG Kurdistan Forum was the spirit of compromise from the Kurdish speakers from Turkey. They called on the AKP government to respect the outcome of the elections. No doubt this was in part in response to the June elections, which the AKP plainly hasn't respected, but the results of the October election were also known, if not in full by the time of the Forum. The Guardian had raised doubts as to the fairness of the election, quoting Andreas Gross, the Swiss head of the mission representing the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe (Pace), saying *"This campaign was unfair and characterised by too much violence and fear."* Much of this was directed at the predominantly Kurdish HDP, associating them with the militant PKK – the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, the Kurdish Workers Party, despite the latter being engaged in a peace process with the Turkish government; Turkey has used the war against ISIS as cover to attack the PKK, but the speakers were calling for restraint and diplomatic engagement.

Phil Bennion, chair of LIBG & of the meeting asked the speakers to focus on the future rather than past wrongs. Is there an opportunity for a Kurdish entity to arise out of the current problems of the Middle East? He posed the following questions:

- 1) What prospect is there of progress to a Kurdish state?
- 2) How should the West, particularly the UK & EU help this process?
- 3) Is the fight against ISIS a catalyst towards this?
- 4) Can Turkey play a positive role in the light of yesterday's election result?
- 5) New overtures of the EU to Turkey coming out of the refugee crisis.

Arif Bawecani

The Kurds are the second largest people within Iran; they Shi'a Moslems, Yazildis, Christians and Jews. Under Iran they are second class citizens along with other minorities – Awazi Arabs, Baluchis etc. Iran maintains a strong military presence in the Kurdish areas and the Kurds consider themselves under occupation.

The PSK works for peoples' rights and a liberal democracy in Kurdistan. They seek to work with European Liberal parties. Iran seeks to undermine Kurds in other countries. Arif urged Liberal Democrats to work with Kurdish communities in the UK and to point out human rights abuses in Iran. Pressure should be put on Iran to give the same political rights to their minorities as to Iranians. Phil Bennion responded that as an MEP he had worked for Awazi Arab rights in south west Iran.

Turhan Ozen

Turhan said that the Middle East is a very complex area. People do not fit easily into one camp or another, they are mixed and have strong relationships that go beyond divides; that brought back brotherhood and sisterhood.



He had visited a town on the Turkish – Syrian border, a town under great pressures from the arrival of thousands of refugees. Assad's terrorists had exploded a truck-bomb. Turhan expected anger from the local people, but talking to them in the bazaar he found they sympathised with the people in Syria. Further afield, in Istanbul and Izmir, he found people complaining about refugees, though they were barely effected. Professional people amongst the refugees were finding jobs the cities and they complained about the impact on Turkey's unemployed. People who 'have' cannot empathise with those who 'have not'. The poor have more empathy.

Turhan thought the biggest problem was lack of education. He spoke of 'Black Turks vs. White Turks', the small number of rich families who use the country's resources and exploit the labour of the rest. Since 2002 there had been a shift – a party, the AKP, supported by poor Anatolians in power, which had followed on from the Gülan Movement's bringing schools to the villages. But some of those educated and elected had been corrupted, brought in nepotism and caused a serious split between the two movements. Those in power have to accept the results of the elections.

Turkey has a Kurdish problem, but a grassroots party with a different approach to the establishment may change this. The PKK is a complex entity comprising militant Kurds and some terrorists. Sectarian elements were harboured by Assad in their early years. It is difficult to negotiate with the PKK. The fight was not going anywhere, but then the Syrian civil war broke out. There have been attempts to negotiate but the Shi'a elements have dragged their heels. 200 soldiers have been killed since July, but support for the PKK has declined. The elections show that people want the fighting to end. Turkey is not a homogenous country; polarizing around race is not natural, there is no point in pursuing divisions. The AK and HDP can get along together.

Akif Rizgar Wan

Akif said that he was from Turkey and that Turkey lacked free speech on the Kurdish issue. If the HDP held a rally people were likely to be killed. The Treaty of Lausanne had divided the Kurds between four countries. ISIS was the enemy of humanity.



In June the HDP had elected 80 MPs. Erdoğan did not like that. People were banned or arrested for trying to see the new election process. The KNK did not seek a united independent Kurdistan; the largest Kurdish community in one city was in Istanbul with 5 million Kurds. The peoples had lived together for over 1000

years. He mentioned Rojava and Kobani, where a democratic system was coming across Syrian Kurdistan – three cantons but no government – independent local power – the people decide, not London, Ankara or Damascus. The HDP now has 59 MPs – an umbrella party, not just for Kurds.

What can the EU and Britain do? Britain could play an important role in resolving democratic matters. Erdoğan doesn't want a peace process, but the Kurdish problem cannot be solved by violence. Progress is slow. The Turkish alphabet doesn't have the letters W or X. Turkey doesn't allow names to contain letters that aren't in their alphabet. We need equality. If Turkey can be solved other areas may be resolved – Syria, Iraq, maybe even Iran.

Phil Bennion summarized this as an approach for proper democratic devolution; put aside the independence issue. Language issues remained problem. Wendy Kyrle Pope said that the mosaic of peoples remains; there is de facto devolution in Iraq. On the EU level, Phil said that Germany had been negative towards Turkish EU membership, and I had discussed this with the FDP at the LI Congress and they thought this might now change. Germany has given too little regard to geopolitics in the past and this needs to change. He asked the three speakers to sum up.

Turhan Ozen

The Kurds are themselves a mosaic. He called for a better share of resources, wealth and investment. Nothing had been achieved through the armed struggle. All nations have their difficulties.

Arif Bawecani

Iran is difficult; an occupied country. The West should not just concentrate on nuclear weapons, they should raise issues about the lack of rights of the minority ethnic groups. Iran is similar to the former Soviet Union – it occupies and oppresses nations. People should be able to decide where and how they want to live. The decisions on this would have to be political.

Akif Rizgar Wan

Democratic autonomy – the city decides what it needs, not Ankara or Istanbul. On Women's Rights, 24 of the 59 HDP MPs are women.

Merlene Emerson suggested that the Kurds harness the Chinese Silk Road policy, develop cultural links. Turhan replied that unfair distribution of wealth was the problem. There are 40 different nations in the Caucasus region; Kurdish culture is similarly diverse. Arif said that cultural rights would be welcome; we are in 2015 but Iran has a 1394 mentality which denies

the Kurdish people the right to exist. Resistance through language and culture. Akif said that culture was international. States should not fear people speaking another language – language enriches us. But he added that the Euphrates and Tigris area was a Kurdish region that others sought to control for its resources. He also referred to the Rojava Civic Charter.

A lady (supporting the AKP) said that there should be an increase in rights for all citizens in Turkey through the Democratisation Package. Replies suggested age old problems to be unravelled, opportunities in the past had not been taken up by the AKP. Akif said that the changes that he was calling for were not for Kurds alone. Turhan called for the removal of borders – this had been happening between Turkey, Syria and Jordan, but the process was stalled by war. Peoples linked by trade were harder to disconnect. This was why rapprochement with Iran was so important.

Anuja Prashar said that Phil had opened talking about a Kurdish State – a very British solution, which only Arif had addressed. What was the panellist’s own solution – not mimicking the West, or ISIS militarization? Arif replied that the Kurds were controlled by four countries, denied freedom of speech, but sought a peaceful process, not war. The controlling countries spent millions on weapons to use in Kurdish areas.

Turhan called for more freedom of movement to change the dynamic. Two thirds of the Anatolian population had been forced to move as a result of World War I and a similar number from Greece. The PKK would kill a lot of Kurds if it established a state. People were afraid of it. We should agree to share resources to have peace. The West should negotiate with the real owners (the people), not those taking power illegitimately. Arik said they should be united by independent.

Phil Bennion summed this up as a call to concentrate on proper democratic devolution (at many levels with appropriate democratic structures), none homogenous. There should be a universal high level of expectation on human rights – Liberals might concentrate on this as they were good at it. Turhan called for some form of evolving transnational arrangement in the Middle East, looser than the EU, perhaps like ASEAN. There were problems in different parts of Kurdistan – Iran was most acute. We should not shrink from raising these issues when in negotiations with these countries. We should develop relations in Turkey and the KWP government in Iraqi Kurdistan. As a UN NGO, LI should raise Kurdish issues through the Human Rights Commission. Move forward in the ways suggested, through human rights and devolved political rights.

Stewart Rayment

LIBG Kurdish Forum 2nd November 2015, NLC

Arif Bawecani, for the Party Serbesti Kurdistan (Kurds of Iran)

Akif Rizgar Wan. Kurdish National Congress (KNK) (UK representative) – an umbrella movement

Turhan Ozen, for the Liberal Democrats (a Kurd from Turkey)

- Kurdish Democratic Party was not present – Ahmed Adhem’s visa was declined – he is a senior figure in their international department.

Results of Turkish General Election

Party	Votes	%	MPs	+/-	
AKP	23,699,933	49.48%	317	+59	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – The Justice & Development Party</i>
CHP	12,108,801	25.31%	134	+2	<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – The Republican People’s Party</i>
HDP	5,144,108	10.75%	59	-21	<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi• - Partiya Demokratîk a Gelan (Kurdish) – The Peoples’ Democratic Party</i>
MHP	5,691,035	11.9%	40	-40	<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – The Nationalist Movement Party</i>

Kurdistan under Iran

Arif Bawecani

First of all I want to thank you very much for your intentions to organize a forum for Kurdistan and all parts of KURDISTAN. Our Party, the PSK puts a huge price for your friendship for the Kurds.

As all of you know: Kurdistan is divided among four occupying countries. One part is occupied by Iran - Eastern Kurdistan. Then a part of Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), Syria (Western Kurdistan), and Iraq (Southern Kurdistan).

Today my speech is on Iranian Kurdistan, I and my political party are from Eastern Kurdistan.

A little about Eastern Kurdistan:

East Kurdistan (in Kurdish language is (Rojhilatê Kurdistanê), the second biggest part of major Kurdistan, which has a population of approximately 11 million people in four counties in the Kurdish areas and several counties in Persian populated (Iranian) areas.

The largest city in eastern Kurdistan is Kermanshah as the number for the entire county closer to around 3 million. In east Kurdistan we have many different religions. They are Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam, Yarsani, Yezidi, Christians, and Jewish.

First Kurdish power or autonomy in Iran was in 1946, under Soviet rule and protection, created as a Kurdish state around the town of Mahabad under the leadership of Qazi Mohammed

Kurdish situation in Iran

In the country called Iran is situated 5 large nations that counts over 60% of residents in Iran. These nations are Kurds, Baloch, Arab Ahwaz, Turkmen Sahara and Turk Azeri. Iran is forcing these nations to be Iranian and they had to use only Persian language - Farsi. It is not permitted to study their native language or any of their political or cultural traditions. In all these nations are still struggle against the Iranian regime for peace and empowerment.

Kurds are one of those nations that were always in the struggle against the occupation countries such as Iran. This has cost the lives of thousands of their people for

peace and an independent Kurdistan. The Iranian Islamic regime is a country of stoning, execution, imprisonment, pushing youths to become addicts.



The active Kurds for political, NGO, still getting the death penalty or long prison sentence from the Iranian regime. Iran is also in fact pushing Kurdish youths with easy access and promoting to make them becoming drug addicts to stop them from thinking of politics or their rights. In this way of forcing power, the Iranian regime's policy of capturing and execution of people is increasing. None of the new presidents can change this. For example in Hassan Rouhani's time was more executions than in Ahmadinejad's time. There is a system in Iran that decides over everything based on the obedience to the religion and the "supreme (religious) leader".

Although Kurds live under the worst situation and worst treatment from the Iranian regime ever, they are still fighting for their rights. Iran has strong military presence in all Kurdish areas.

P K Working for Liberalism in Kurdistan

PSK is the short name for the Party Serbesti Kurdistan. PSK is the only Kurdish Liberal Party of East Kurdistan. PSK is neither a military, nor a religious party. Party Serbesti Kurdistan P S K is a Liberal Party, founded in 2006. Our main goal is to work for Kurdish rights, and to boost Liberal Democratic policy in Kurdistan, to cooperate and build friendships with the European and the world's Liberal

parties. We are working for Kurdish rights in Iran as a diplomatic and democratic system. PSK is working in a clandestine way inside Kurdistan, and we cooperate with the International Organization for Kurdistan. Kurdistan Liberal Union has held its first congress in Oslo on 5 and 6 December 2013. Many Kurds and many guests from UK, USA, France and Norway have participated in the congress.

Therefore we need your political support for our Party to have closer ties with British Liberal Democrat Party and the European Liberal Democrats. We want to work on more liberalistic ideas and we need to use your experience in Kurdistan. Also we need your support for Kurds in Iran against all human oppression from the Iranian regime. Iran is also actively working to undermine the establishment of a sovereign Kurdish state in neighbouring countries. I urge you to be sceptical to what comes out from the Iranian regime.

A proposal to the Liberal Democrats in the UK

Finally I give this proposal to our Party Friends. Lib Dem that the Liberal International British Group become more active with all different nations who are living in the UK. For example, the many thousands of Kurds in the UK, thousands of Arabs from Ahwaz, thousands Baluchs and the many other nations that you have in UK with problem with their land concerning peace and democracy. If your international committee focuses on these nations' problems and discuss their case in UK Parliament when you have done a good and human rights issue, also for your good result in the next election in UK.

Arif Bawecani

Arif Bawecani spoke for the Party Serbesti Kurdistan (Kurds of Iran) at the LIBG Kurdish Forum 2nd November 2015, NLC



Phil Bennion & speakers at the Forum.

International Abstracts

Je viens d'envoyer un article sur Marlon James - qui va lire de son livre à Common Good Books à St. Paul, notre ville - avant de voir cet article dans le NY Times. Evidemment les Caraïbes ne sont pas "gay friendly."
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/opinion/sunday/on-being-queer-in-the-caribbean.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

There has (obviously) been a lot about the ISIS in the wake of the Paris & Beirut atrocities, along with Phyllis Bennis's book (see reviews), the following were particularly interesting:

What ISIS really wants, by Graeme Wood.
 The Atlantic March 2015.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980>

How Islamic is the "Islamic State"? Actually not at all, say some experts.

[Stephen Yolland](#)

<http://wellthisiswhatithink.com/2015/11/16/experts/>

This is no time for divisions, it's what the extremists want, by Nick Clegg.
 Evening Standard 19.11.2015

Previously Unknown Lines to the Epic of Gilgamesh discovered in Stolen Cuneiform Tablet, by April Holloway. Ancient Origins. 3.10.2015

Outrage at ISIS vandalism in Palmyra notwithstanding, we forget about the legacy of the destruction of Iraq's museums in the wake of Bush & Blair's illegal war. Iraq showed us the earliest record of mankind's humanity; now Gilgamesh shows perhaps our first environmental concerns.

<http://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/previously-unknown-lines-epic-gilgamesh-discovered-stolen-cuneiform-tablet-020553#ixzz3s1iepq6>

Liberator 375 is largely domestic, Nick Harvey's analysis of the general election campaign being worthy of note. David Grace criticises the business focus of the 'In' campaign for the European Union referendum.

Thanks to Malcolm Barnes, Christine Graf, Steve Harris and Stephen Yolland for spotting these.

Taiwan: A New Tomorrow

David Walters

General elections will be held in Taiwan on 16th January. The offices of the President, the Vice President and 113 members of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan ("Parliament") will be decided upon. The current ruling political party, the pro-Beijing Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT); with its partial Leninist ideology and its record for being responsible for the world's longest period of martial law (1949-87) until Syria, is on "melt down" and heading for an unknown future. The winner of the elections will be Taiwan's liberal Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), headed by Dr Tsai Ing-wen, a Cornell University and LSE graduate in Law. The June 29th edition of *TIME* magazine featured her on their cover as; "She could lead the only Chinese democracy". Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP will win an historic and convincing victory.



Most independent polls for President put Dr Tsai Ing-wen 20% or more above her nearest KMT rival, the only recently nominated candidate Eric Chu. The polls put the DPP generally ahead of the KMT when it comes to seats in the Legislative Yuan. It is almost universally accepted then that Dr Tsai Ing-wen will overwhelmingly win the Presidency, but what Taiwan watchers are less sure of is - can the DPP gain enough of a majority of seats in their equivalent of Parliament? Only then can the DPP begin to implement the long overdue root and branch reforms needed to bring Taiwan into the 21st century and raise its international standing. Taiwan deserves to be closely watched over the coming weeks.

The de-facto independent self-governing island nation of Taiwan is democratic; the shape of a sweet potato or a tobacco leaf, the size of Holland, with a population of 23 million educated, pro western people. Its history reflects its aboriginal foundations and culture, with its earliest peoples being from an Austronesian, not Chinese, heritage. The Maoris of New Zealand originated from Taiwan. DNA research continues to provide evidence that Taiwan's first people are linked ethnically with the Philippines/Malaysia/Indonesia/Madagascar and Oceanic regions. Historically much maligned and discriminated against; today Taiwan's aboriginal peoples are experiencing a resurgence with around a dozen separate tribes or nations officially recognised by the government.

Throughout the centuries Taiwan experienced colonial rule ranging from Holland in the south (1624-1662), to Spain in the north (1626-1683), The Cheng family also known as Koxinga (1662-1683), the Manchu Qing Empire (1683-1895), Japan (1895-1945) and the Chinese Mainland Nationalists, the "losers" of China's civil war, under Chiang Kai-Shek, the Chinese Nationalists or KMT (1945-1996). Yet today no major power recognises Taiwan.

From 1895 to 1945 Taiwan was a part of Japan. Much of Taiwan's future "Asian Tiger" infrastructure was built up during this time. Taiwan's citizens fought as part of Imperial Japan in the Second World War. Over 200,000 Taiwanese served in the Japanese military. Over 30,000 were killed in action. In fact the last "Japanese holdout" was an aborigine from Taiwan who spoke no Japanese or Chinese. When the war ended Japan (and Taiwan) surrendered to the Allies - not to Chiang Kai Shek, not to the Republic of China, not to the KMT and not to the Chinese Communist Party. The Cairo Declaration of 1943 was a statement not a treaty, same for the 1945 Potsdam Declaration. In the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty no "Taiwan receiving country" was ever designated. From 1945 till today then Taiwan has been in legal limbo. The official US and UK positions on Taiwan, in short, reflect this unsettled state of affairs and their non-recognition of various claims by the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan).

Chiang Kai Shek and 2 million of his defeated Chinese Nationalist (KMT) forces and camp followers fled China across the Taiwan Strait and forcibly occupied Taiwan immediately after the civil war (1949). They brought with them much treasure from China. The KMT expropriated all of Taiwan's assets and seized by force the reins of power. From then up till the 1980's the KMT consolidated their grip on Taiwan through martial law, in which the KMT imprisoned around 140,000 Taiwanese and executed around 3-4,000 more. No one has been brought to account for these atrocities. Through China's "stolen assets", the appropriation of Taiwan's assets and their domination of the "Golden Triangle's" drug trade, the KMT have become one of the world's richest political parties.

Decades, demographics and democracy are finally catching up with the KMT. The Chinese "Mainland" elite, the old guard, with their demands to be known as "The Real China" and their plans to "Re-take China", are dying out. Their ridiculous, at times fanciful, claims have either been quietly shelved or are less publicised. As each new generation is born and raised in a recently democratic Taiwan, so too does their separate Taiwanese identify flourish and grow. They don't look towards China; rather it is more towards Japan, especially the younger ones, though many older Taiwanese still speak Japanese, a left-over from the old colonial days. Polls state around 5% of Taiwanese favour "re-unification" (though in truth it is annexation) by China. Over 10% favour immediate Taiwanese independence. The majority are simply content with the existing status quo. In 1996 there were the first free elections in Taiwan. Slowly Taiwan is emerging, blinking, into the light of democracy. The KMT have no answer to a growing sense of a Taiwanese identity and have shown no real signs of reform.

The coming elections will be another step forward in the democracy process. The incumbent President, Ma, who until recently was also Chairman of the KMT, was described by *The Economist* in 2012 as an "ineffectual bumbler" with an approval rating at that time of 13%, though it reached rock-bottom thereafter with a mere 9%. President Ma has served his term time and can no longer run so is bowing out. A seismic change has occurred within Taiwan as a result of all of the above, resulting in enormous street demonstrations for democracy, an economic downturn; perceived subordination by the KMT to China at every level, a "selling out" or "betrayal" of Taiwan by the KMT to China, growing anger over the levels of KMT corruption and human rights abuses, a lack of transparency and accountability in the KMT government, a failure to acknowledge and account for "past sins" (i.e.

past KMT atrocities and murders) and a KMT unwillingness for Taiwan to adopt international standards. Everything is in need of reform; from the schools' curriculum (especially its history!) to housing policy, to the economy, to government institutions to the legislature. Taiwan's judicial system in particular comes in for constant criticism. The incoming DPP then face an Augean stables of a mess. Many wonder if they are up to the job.



Liberal International President Dr Juli Minoves with Dr Tsai Ing-wen in Taipei, August 2015.

Both major political parties, the KMT and the DPP, in the run up to these elections, have strived to get their "houses in order". The DPP, headed by Dr Tsai Ing-wen, has largely succeeded. Dr Tsai Ing-wen cemented her success in June 2015 with a tour of the US including landmark visits to Administration offices. The American Government obviously realises the tide is turning in Taiwan. It is the KMT ship that observers have reported on in detail from their deck chairs as they watch it sink, that has caused most of the ink to be spilled. At November 2014 local elections the DPP trounced the KMT, with many saying this was a sign of what is later to come. Knowing that their ship was doomed, and that Ma in any event could not be the captain of such a ship, a vacuum arose as to who would wish to be at the helm of the KMT's Presidential candidate's campaign when it went down. Into the bridge was thrust Ms Hung Hsiu-chu (or was she pushed by Ma and the KMT Chairman Eric Chu?). Ms Hung is not a leading member of the KMT nor one of its rising stars. Ms Hung's pronouncements over the following months veered to the right of centre and further alienated moderate KMT elements as well as the majority of Taiwanese. Some of the stuff she was coming out with was frankly ridiculous and inflammatory, with ever more pro Beijing opinions and anti US statements. The real leaders of the KMT had to quickly throw her overboard and come up with a new captain. Ms Hung lasted 3 months. Step forth the man everyone thought was the KMT's favoured choice in the first place - KMT Chairman Eric Chu. Mr Chu's

October 2015 nomination has seen no real change in the polls, they are still dire for the KMT. Neither did the voting public think very highly of how Ms Hung was treated. It all just smacked of further “black box” corrupt politics. With just weeks away from the national elections, all the weather vanes were constant in pointing in favour of Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP.

I write this just days after President Ma met with President Xi. Their meeting was “historic” for being historic. Nothing of substance resulted. It was an attempt by the outgoing, “lame duck” Taiwanese President to secure his “legacy” in the history books. Others said it was to underline and cement Taiwanese businesses based in China. For Xi - it may have been useful to throw a spanner in the coming democratic Taiwan elections and/or to throw the DPP off balance in order to help the pro Beijing KMT. Ma had previously promised never to meet with any PRC leader. The news of the meeting itself was leaked by the press, Ma wanted to delay knowledge of it from the people of Taiwan. As one observer noted “No one in the international media is willing to say the truth, that this is a meeting between leaders of two expansionist Chinese parties, not between rival governments, and any “reconciliation” between them can only take place over the dead body of Taiwan’s democracy”. When they learned of it, the majority of Taiwanese were against it, seeing it for what it was - an “outgoing President bargaining away Taiwan’s future”. As usual with Taiwan or Cross Strait Relations, the international press, few of whom are based in Taiwan but instead mostly in China, view everything through a China-centric prism. Hence when the media reported that Beijing is “protecting” cross strait relations, one should bear in mind the hundreds of short range missiles aimed at Taiwan by this same “protecting force”, this same Han “family in which blood is thicker than water”. When the media state that “the possibility of a fundamental shift in relations between the feuding neighbours suddenly seemed possible” one must ask oneself what this shift might be. Does it mean Communist China is about to become democratic and withdraw its missiles and stated right to invade Taiwan by force? Or does it mean democratic Taiwan should be annexed by China? I could go on. Much of the nonsense spewed out by the media is simply due to ignorance. And as always there is the language - Taiwan is not a break away region of China, it was fully Japanese up till 1945 - before the establishment of the unelected communist “People’s Republic of China”. It is not as if Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP are unwilling to talk with China, quite the reverse - they understand fully the need to engage with a vital partner and neighbour - but that such talks must be

conducted with respect, equality, transparency and with no preconditions - in line with the wishes of the people of Taiwan.

The DPP’s liberal credentials are impeccable. It is a full member of Liberal International. Liberal International President Dr Juli Minoves met with Dr Tsai Ing-wen in August this year. It was the third such meeting in the past 2 years. Liberal International’s President also met with former Prime Minister Frank Hsieh, former Foreign Minister James Huang of the DPP and legislator Hsiao Bi-khim of the DPP who is Vice President of Liberal International. Hsiao Bi-khim is also a Legislative Yuan member, as a proportional



Hsiao Bi-khim

Member and is running in the district of Hualien for a regular, directly elected Member in the January 16th election. Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP have repeatedly stated that they understand the need for Taiwan to engage in “across the board” reform, for Taiwan to adhere to international standards and for Taiwan to forge strong mutually beneficial links with partners at “home” and “abroad”. With a firm foundation in Liberal Democracy, Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP hope to raise Taiwan’s international profile and bring Taiwan further into the global family of democratic nations.

In conclusion; the writing is on the wall, the KMT is about to be punished by the voting public of Taiwan. Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP will gain power and have a large IN tray on the following morning. You really should watch Taiwan!

David Walters

David Walters is a retired British Diplomat. He served at the equivalent of the British Embassy in Taipei, Taiwan, from 2004-10.



Climate Change March, London

Sunday 29th November

Assemble -Park Lane at noon.

**Green Lib Dems meet near the Achilles statue,
Hyde Park Corner, 11.00am, moving to
marshalling point J for Noon
(opposite Upper Grosvenor Street)**

**March proceeds to Parliament, ending around
4.00pm**



Climate Change March

The long awaited Paris talks on climate change are finally upon us. This is a chance for the world to come together to address the biggest threat facing humanity and decide on a collective response.

As a party the Liberal Democrats have been extremely committed to the cause of addressing climate change for many years and we're not going to stop now. Nick Clegg signed a pledge with David Cameron and Ed Miliband for the UK Government to seek a deal in Paris to limit temperature rises to 2 degrees. We need to make sure this happens.

Lynne Featherstone

Sam Rainsy warns of return to one-party system in Cambodia amid "constitutional coup"

In a clampdown on civil rights in Cambodia, the country's liberal leader, Sam Rainsy, is facing renewed, politically-motivated, charges of defamation as Prime Minister Hun Sen issues a warrant for Mr. Sam's arrest - a charge he was pardoned for in 2013.

A sign of desperation ahead of the 2017 and 2018 local elections, stripping Mr. Sam of his parliamentary immunity is the latest step in a recent spate of beatings and constitutional violations aimed at weakening the Cambodia National Rescue Party. *The elimination of the only opposition party represented in parliament shows that Cambodia is back to a one-party system* Sam Rainsy has warned.

Describing the latest move against the democratic opposition "disturbing", a CALD resolution – signed by chairperson, Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, calls on the international community to be "vigilant" in monitoring the political developments, contrasting the situation in Cambodia with the "dramatic democratic gains" recently made in Burma.

LI Vice-President, James Huang, also expressed his strong concern at the ongoing persecution of Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy, leader of LI full Member Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP).

Recalling LI's strong support for democracy and human rights in Cambodia, Vice-President Huang said: *We are deeply concerned at the ongoing events concerning Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy, which represent a step backwards for Cambodian people's aspirations for a free and democratic society. It is unacceptable for a democratically-elected member of parliament to be removed from his position based on politically motivated charges. His arrest warrant is based on long-dormant charges of defamation which are also similarly unjustified. This is the latest in a series of provocations against Cambodia's opposition, following the unconstitutional removal of Kem Sokha from his position as First Vice President of the National Assembly. We call on the Cambodian government to immediately revoke the arrest warrant against Sam Rainsy, reinstate his position, and respect the people's wishes for a free and democratic future, in line with recent events in the region. Furthermore, recalling the dialogue between the CNRP and the Prime Minister Hun Sen in Malaysia this May, we also urge the Cambodia government to restart the process of reconciliation and work with the opposition in the spirit of unity and cooperation.*

Zanzibar

Africa Liberal Network undertakes first ever election observation mission. Luke Akel

White sandy beaches, glamorous resorts, history and beautiful architecture. These are some of the things that come to mind when we think of the exotic island of Zanzibar. But for the Africa Liberal Network (ALN), Zanzibar was – and is – much more than that. For the ALN, Zanzibar was the destination for our first-ever election observation mission. Following the unanimous decision taken by the network’s executive committee, the ALN Secretariat arranged and coordinated this mission in partnership with the Liberal Democrat International Office and the Friederich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF). The mission was led by our East Africa Vice President, Rosemary Kariuki (Orange Democratic Movement, Kenya).

Arriving in Zanzibar, the team and I quickly realised that we were truly the ‘guinea pigs’ of this new ALN project, and what an exciting challenge it was! All across the island, the excitement of voters was palpable. We had the impression that Zanzibarians are always ready to engage in their support of their political party. The urgency to get out the vote came from ordinary citizens themselves.

Gearing up to the election day, our observation team had the opportunity to talk to locals, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), representatives of political parties, the police authorities on the island and other important figures.

We all quickly learned that declaring any election as entirely “free and fair” is not a simple task. There will always be a number of issues and challenges. Having said that, we did believe that preparation was sufficient and that Zanzibarians would be able to head to the polls in peace and make their mark. With that in mind, we trusted that a legitimate outcome could be realised after counting the votes.

The enthusiasm of Zanzibarians was undoubtedly refreshing. The sincere interest in the island and its future reflected a real belief that democratic practices and process would offer Zanzibarians a chance to shape their own future. They really seemed to believe that the island’s destiny lay in the decisions each voter would make at the polls. For us, as African liberals, this was tremendously encouraging.

The incumbent president of the island, Dr Ali Mohamed Shein of the CCM (*Party of the Revolution*) faced extremely stiff competition from the first vice president, Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad of the Civic United Front (CUF – an ALN member and liberal party). CCM and CUF billboards, posters, stickers, clothing and other party branded items dotted and decorated the island. It was a matter of either loyalty to the ruling party or a time for change on the island.

As official observers, we had the opportunity to view polling stations prior to the election day. An interesting feature was the voters roll. Each station had printed lists of the voters registered to vote at the station in question. The lists were placed on large cardboard cut-outs outside the station and included not only the voters’ names and identification numbers, but also photographs. Voters were eager to visit the stations well in advance, find their names and details, and make sure they were ready to vote.

In spite of this advanced approach by the ZEC, no official staff were available at the stations to assist voters with their queries. As far as voter education material was concerned, little-to-none was available at the polling stations.

Come the election day, the team split into groups and had an early start. We ensured that we covered a wide area that included suggested “hotspots” of contention, rural areas, as well as the more developed parts of the island such as Stone Town. Long rows began to develop outside the stations, especially closer to the business and densely populated areas of the island. Interestingly, the rows were split into two: one male and the other female. Because of the demographics of the island, this led to much longer female rows. Perhaps even more interesting to note was that this sort of segregation was not directly enforced; it was as though the separation of rows happened organically or out of habit.

Following our return home, we eagerly awaited results from the island. To our shock and surprise, the commissioner of the ZEC announced a nullification of the Zanzibar elections, citing major issues and irregularities. This was in spite of the ZEC’s previous confidence in all the processes and procedures in

place. Some have suggested that it this nullification is politically motivated, as the leader of the liberal opposition announced himself as the winner of the elections.

The observer team have followed up our mission with a comprehensive report. This is available to view and download at

<http://www.africaliberalnetwork.org/2015/11/aln-election-observation-mission-report-zanzibar-2015/>

We have learned a number of lessons from our mission. But perhaps the one that stands out the most is this: Africans are motivated and eager to be involved in democracy. Africa still has hope for democracy, and its people believe in a future which they can shape for themselves and their children. Liberals across the continent must continue to promote these ideals and encourage Africans to see a future of opportunity for all. Liberal solutions exist for Africa and can shape the continent of our dreams.

Luke Akal

Luke Akal is the Africa Liberal Network Coordinator and was a member the team. It was the ALN's first ever election observation mission and took place in Zanzibar in October.



The Observation Team (L-R) are featured: Rosemary Kariuki (ALN VP, East Africa), Hubertus von-Welck (Director, FNF), Stevens Mokgalapa (ALN VP Southern Africa), Roy Jankielsohn (MPL, South Africa), Luke Akal (ALN Coordinator).

Growing UK trading relationship with Africa

The House of Lords debated the importance of bilateral trade between the UK and African countries. In the debate Liberal Democrat peer, Jonny Oates made his maiden speech, talking personally about his experiences in Ethiopia, and his, colleague, former MP Lord David Chidgey argued that the UK should be using trade to ensure a healthy agro-business sector across Africa.



David Chidgey speaking in the Lords

In his speech David highlighted the importance of encouraging Small & Medium-sized Enterprises in Africa: "SMEs are the companies with the flexibility and the ideas for developing world-beating products. They are critical to our economic growth, but often without the financial resources to pursue African markets, develop products and support their customer base."

He called on the Government to *"pledge to recognise fully the development needs of African countries in the agro-food sector and [ensure] that, within the UK's compass, no sub-Saharan African Government will be obliged to implement trade policy measures that undermine their national agro-food sector strategies?"*

Jonny used his maiden speech to call for expanded trade with Africa, saying: *"Trade could and should play an increasing role in that. Expansion of UK-Africa trade offers huge and mutually beneficial opportunities for African economies and British companies. With the right policies, we have a real opportunity to lead the world in a growing trading relationship with Africa."*

Mexico Congress Reports

Liberal International held a highly successful Congress in Mexico City from 28th to 31st October, where we joined by new member parties and debated issues as diverse as the refugee crisis, violence against women and populism. There was a particularly strong representation from parties from both Latin America and Africa.

The Formal Stuff.

We managed to pass a resolution on the Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers only after a “liberal” interpretation of the rules concerning amendments. The original confused asylum seekers and refugees with economic migrants, but lacked any submitted amendments. The movers agreed to allow a number of rewrites and deletions to tidy it up. It was my view that it was vital that we had something to say on the issue and I urged other delegates to agree to the changes. The resolution called for recipient countries to focus on means of keeping asylum seekers out of the hands of the criminal gangs trafficking people into Europe. We also discussed resolutions on Labour Migration, Food Security and the Paris Climate Change talks.

The “World Today” roundup motion hit difficulties, as previous complaints led to an approach which did not allow last minute changes. We resolved that the “World Today” motions needed a different approach in the fast moving world and we would review the format before the next Congress, possibly replacing a formal resolution with an up to date document in the form of a report.

The only new full member was the Liberal Party of Chile, but a number of interesting new Observer Members attended. Union por la Libertad of Argentina was warmly welcomed, on the back of their great success as part of the Cambiemos coalition, in the first round of the Presidential elections. The largest new observer member are the Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya where they are the official opposition. We also welcomed ALDE Romania, a new party formed after the National Liberals defected to the Conservative group in the European Parliament, which is led by former Liberal Prime Minister Callin Popescu-Tariceanu. The SMC of Slovenia, who won their general election this year weeks after their formation also joined us, giving the liberal movement another European head of government. Finally REWMI from Senegal joined us, with no objection from our current party of government in the country. They are a liberal party with a strong regional base.

Ron Paul and Howard Dean

Our two hosts gave us contrasting guest speakers, both from the United States, and seen there as at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Firstly think tank Caminos de la Libertad gave us famed US libertarian Ron Paul expounding his views in front of an audience, many of whom were still in a state of shock after discovering who was to address us. However the balance was restored when Howard Dean spoke to us about the US presidential election prospects (he is supporting Clinton and thinks she will win) on the following evening as the guest of our Mexican sister party Nueva Alianza. Howard had also given us his thoughts on the European situation and the UK referendum at a fringe lunch the previous day. Howard is very much part of the liberal family and had met many of us on previous occasions, such as at a Liberal Democrat conference a few years ago.

Populism

One of the most engaging debates was on the subject of countering the wave of populism that we see disrupting the political status quo across the world, from the Tea Party in the US, to left wing movements like Syriza in Greece and Eurosceptics in many EU countries. We discussed how liberals should counter populism in the session led by Helen Zille of DA, South Africa. She described the super-populism of Malema now coming into the arena as a new challenge to the entrenched populism of the ANC. Speakers from Argentina and Venezuela spoke about trying to oust populist regimes and the coming challenge of clearing up the ensuing economic mess and Hans van Baalen tackled the problem of right wing insurgent populists such as Wilders Freedom party in the Netherlands and UKIP in the UK. All were convinced that we could not win with rationalism alone and that we needed to add an emotional appeal to our arguments. My own view is that this will continue to be a challenge throughout the process of globalisation that we cannot halt and that people are susceptible at this historic juncture to simplistic rhetoric that soothes their feelings of insecurity. To prevail, my own view is that we have to be firm in the debunking of the nonsense that the populists purvey in their attempts to mislead. We must not shirk from taking them on whenever we meet their incoherent proposals and false assertions. We have a battle to fight and fight it we must.

Phil Bennion.

Mexico Report

The 60th Congress of Liberal International, attended by Baroness Kishwer Falkner, Liberal Democrat International Relations Committee Chair (and LI Treasurer) Robert Woodthorpe Browne, and Head of the International Office Iain Gill, together with the Secretary of the African Liberal Network, Luke Akal, was an ideal opportunity for the team to pass on ALN experiences to other developing democracies.

There was a truly global presence with representatives from North, Central and South America, from Taiwan, Philippines and Thailand, from the Middle East (Lebanon and Israel), from Europe, of course, and a strong African Contingent, led by ALN President Olivier Kamitatu. Delegates attended from South Africa, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Morocco.

Our hosts were Mexican liberals Alianza Nueva.

Debates were on Populism vs Constitutionalism - Western Cape Premier and LI Deputy President Helen Zille led this, with representatives from Netherlands, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba; Free Trade; on Women's Participation in Politics; Protecting Civil Liberties in Latin America; the Drugs Trade; Youth Participation in Politics.

Liberal Democrat President Baroness Brinton chaired a panel discussion, organised by ourselves on Human Rights in developing democracies, which resulted in a packed room. Panellists included Baroness Falkner, Olivier Kamitatu, Rosemary Odinga from ODM Kenya, and a member of IDEAL Party of Costa Rica. There were no shortages of questions and interventions from the floor, and the Marrakesh Human Rights Accord was praised.

There were, of course, resolutions to be discussed and Lib Dems had co-sponsored some, amended others, and produced their own text on the Drugs Trade, based on the Conclusions of the Report of the Global Drugs Commission. The Working Groups were chaired by Robert Woodthorpe Browne and representatives from Finland and Germany.

As Liberal International approaches the 70th Anniversary of the Oxford Declaration, a panel will work on an update of this to be adopted at the 61st Congress, and at Executive Committee meetings in Georgia and Kenya in 2016.

Baroness Falkner and Robert Woodthorpe Browne were re-elected to serve on Liberal International's

Bureau. Lord John Alderdice was elected as a President of Honour. The 2016 Prize for Freedom was awarded to jailed Saudi blogger Raif Baddawi.

Next year's Isaiah Berlin lecture will be given in London by Governor Howard Dean, who was a guest of Congress and spoke at 2 events.

Robert Woodthorpe Browne



The Dean and I... Phil Bennion with Howard Dean

Raif Badawi awarded Prize for Freedom.

Delegates at LI's 60th Congress in Mexico City have voted unanimously to award LI's most prestigious human rights prize, the Prize for Freedom, to jailed Saudi liberal blogger Raif Badawi in 2016.

Charged with "insulting Islam through electronic channels" and sentenced in 2012 to ten years in prison and 1,000 lashes for discussing religion and liberal values on his online blog, the Saudi liberal has been awarded LI Prize for Freedom in 2016 for "His contribution to the advancement of human rights and political freedoms not only in Saudi Arabia, but in the region as a whole."

Raif Badawi's wife, Ensaf Haidar, delivered an exclusive video message for the [3rd Edition of LI Human Rights Bulletin](#), where she spoke of Badawi's vision for liberalism and promoting liberal values in Saudi Arabia and called on liberals everywhere to challenge Islamic states that apply harsh versions of sharia as a source of legislation. Ensaf's video can be viewed at <http://us10.campaign-archive2.com/?u=e004d0f19ce07173a8206f4b8&id=35f281b5a6&e=92091bf9ae>

Paris Under Attack

Christine Graf

For the rest of our lives, all of us who were in Paris this November will remember where we were and what we were doing when the attacks happened. That Friday evening of November 13th my husband Dennis and I had been celebrating on the Champs Elysées, having a drink with an Armenian friend at the Renault Café, a space-age dream of a designer café, and we were heading back to our place when the shooting started.

An American friend's son went out to pick up supplies at a small grocery store in the 11th district: suddenly the police were there and he, along with everyone else in the store, was forbidden to leave for a long time, "although I could see my apartment across the street," he said. He could hear loud explosions from the Bataclan, the scene of the greatest violence.

We didn't learn how awful that particular Friday night had been until acquaintances in the U.S. started emailing us in the middle of the night Paris time, demanding to know if we were safe. And then we learned of the horror that had visited the City of Light.

The next market day, Sunday, the market square was almost deserted: angry sellers had brought their goods for sale as usual, but were informed early that day by the Préfecture that they had to leave. Only the covered food market was allowed to open, and when we went there we heard mutterings about the "impact économique" that this was going to have on France. We stopped for coffee at the popular Café des Sports on the square, and a redheaded Frenchman, looking more Irish than anything else, vented his feelings by yelling repeatedly at a small group of people, presumably Muslims, across the street, the words "Islamistes - Fascistes!" and he looked as if he'd like to take on the whole group by himself.

Sunday was a gloomy day. Because it was warm, we went into the 6th district, past the Institut Catholique, where renovations were being done and where we saw posters plastered up against a makeshift barrier put up by workmen: "We French Muslims against the terrorism of the UOIF." (The Union of Islamic Organizations of France, considered by many an extremist group). We have since read in *Le Parisien* that the Federations and heads of French mosques have

launched an appeal against ISIS, demanding an investigation into who is behind this terrorist organization and where they're getting their funds.

We went on to the Jardin du Luxembourg, which was closed and would remain closed for two more days, due to the state of emergency.. Most of the cafés were closed too, and we looked for a place to stop - bakeries and pâtisseries remained open - you can't deprive the French of their bread - but we saw only one café with its lights on.



The next day we were on our way to a shop on the rue de Charonne, and happened upon La Belle Equipe, the restaurant where 19 people, including the owner's Tunisian wife and her sister, had been murdered. A large group was assembled outside, crowded together on the narrow sidewalk, people looking at the flowers, the candles, most in a reverent silence. A few doors away an organization which sponsors "Spectacles et Concerts" had a large red-and-white bouquet of roses and daisies on its door, with the message "Nous sommes Paris" honouring those who died as well as

"tous ceux qui ont vécu l'horreur" (all who lived through the horror) and affirming the strength of the Charonne neighborhood. The nearby Bistrot du Peintre, an old Art Nouveau bistro, rather over-restored but still fine, was almost deserted: two tourists from Vancouver and two or three French people were the only other customers.



Later in the week we heard from a young Parisian, let's call him Charles, a friend in his early 30s, who lives in the area and whom we hadn't been able to reach.

When the attack on the Belle Equipe started he was taking a dance class in an elegant Art Nouveau building "Le Palais de la Femme." He told us, "We heard the gunshots. The last thing you expect in France is for sounds like that to be gunshots. I went there to help first responders and stayed over an hour."

Having had training as a paramedic, he was able to administer CPR, getting people to breathe regularly and helping with the stretchers.

"It was pretty hard," he said, particularly in cases when the firemen told him "It's over. Leave them." The wounded were moved into the restaurant - the dead to the terrace. Funny details stick in his mind, like the two white-haired guys he estimated to be in their 60s or 70s, one badly hurt, one not. The man who was not hurt kept trying to encourage his friend, tell him that he should keep breathing, keep fighting for life: "Come on man, remember those wonderful orgies-- all the girls we've had."

Charles was told by a therapist that he'd need a week to get over the experience. We think that an optimistic assessment.

Now Parisians are beginning to go back to their bistros and cafés, to defiantly return to as normal a way of life as possible before the act of sitting at the terrace of a café became a risky thing to do. They're even heading out to big events like trade shows: on Thursday Helen, who is Welsh and a longtime resident of the Paris area

went with her French friend Florence to a trade fair at the Porte de Versailles. "We were frisked so often it was almost erotic," she reported, commenting on how hard it was for them to even get into the hall to view the displays, many of them featuring kits for do-it-yourself Christmas presents and speciality foods for the holidays, like hams from Italy and saucisson from the South West.

People are pondering: why did this happen to us? And what can we do? Some blame President Hollande for getting France involved in the raids on ISIS strongholds in Syria, just as right-wing Americans blame President Obama for anything that goes wrong. But many feel that the root cause is the disaffection and complete alienation of Muslim youth, most of whom have not been made to feel that they are really French. Natacha Polony on the popular program "Les Grandes Gueules" pointed out that "they refused to fight salafisme [Islamic extremism] in the suburbs for fear of stigmatizing most Muslims." She would like to see French schools do more to make young Muslims feel that France belongs to them too, is really their country.

But ISIS is international: the terrorists in this case, those who brought their kalashnikovs and their bombs against unarmed people sitting at cafés and listening to music might have lived in France but had been radicalized elsewhere, and their ringleaders came from Belgium. As François Hollande has said, "We are at war - a war against terrorists who have decided to bring war against us."

Christine Graf

Christine Graf is author of Paris By Bistro (Arris, 2004) with her husband, Dennis, whose photographs accompany this article.



Crowd outside La Belle Equipe, rue de Charonne.

Statement on Syria

Tim Farron

On Thursday (26th November) we are expecting the Prime Minister to present his proposals for airstrikes against ISIL in Syria to Parliament. Within days of his statement we will almost certainly be asked to vote either for action or against. These are big decisions for us.

I was proud as a party member to support Charles when he opposed the illegal war in Iraq. I was equally proud to support Paddy when he was a lone voice calling for action in Bosnia.

The horrific events in Paris were the starkest reminder that those who act in the name of ISIL are prepared to strike at our closest friends and neighbours.

I have always been clear in my own mind that, whilst military action will be necessary to defeat ISIL, it can never succeed unless there is a much wider strategy. This must address questions of legality and the diplomatic efforts being made to ensure that the coalition of nations confronting ISIL is as broad and effective as is possible.

Today, alongside former leaders Nick Clegg, Menzies Campbell and Paddy Ashdown, and the leaders of our parties in Wales and Scotland, Kirsty Williams and Willie Rennie, I have written to the Prime Minister setting out five fundamental considerations we will take into account before responding to the Prime Minister's request for support for action.

The text of that letter and the five principles are set out here:

<http://www.libdems.org.uk/five-tests-syria>

Yours sincerely,

Tim Farron MP Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Five Tests to Back Action in Syria

24 NOVEMBER, 2015 @ 7:52 PM

Tim Farron said:

“The Liberal Democrats know that to defeat an enemy as evil as ISIL the use of military force is necessary. We will consider supporting extending airstrikes against ISIL in Syria provided the Government's plans meet the five points that I and colleagues have set out today.”

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron has written to the Prime Minister along with former leaders Nick Clegg,

Paddy Ashdown and Menzies Campbell to outline the five principles the party wants to see addressed if they are to support military action in Syria.

The letter, also signed by the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats Willie Rennie and the Welsh Liberal Democrats Kirsty Williams, sets out the specific principles that would be required to be met to secure Liberal Democrat support for military action against ISIL in Syria.

The government has a working majority of 17 MPs and reports state around 15 Conservative MPs have said they will not support the government.

Tim Farron said: *“The Liberal Democrats know that to defeat an enemy as evil as ISIL the use of military force is necessary. We will consider supporting extending airstrikes against ISIL in Syria provided the Government's plans meet the five points that I and colleagues have set out today.”*

“For three years, Liberal Democrats have been consistently united in saying UK military action must be accompanied by a broader international strategy that can defeat ISIL. This was partly achieved with the UN resolution passed on Friday.”

This is crucial to avoid the perception that somehow only “the West” is opposed to ISIL. It is not, and it is only by working with other countries across the world, and within the region, that we can hope to defeat this enemy.”

Letter to Rt Hon David Cameron MP

Rt Hon David Cameron MP

10 Downing Street

London

SW1A 2AA

24 November 2015

Military Intervention in Syria

In advance of your statement outlining your plan for military intervention against ISIL in Syria, we are writing to outline the criteria against which we will judge our response to your proposals.

As you will know our party has maintained a consistent position that air strikes alone will not defeat ISIL in Syria. Deployment of lethal force should never be used simply as a gesture. It has to have effect, and to have effect it has to be part of a wider strategy, especially on the diplomatic front.

We are encouraged by the fact that the Government has at last decided to explain the details of that strategy and look forward to hearing what this is.

The five conditions below give the UK the best chance at having an effective strategy to counter ISIL and make serious progress in ending the Syrian civil war. We call on you to embed them into your plans before they are brought to the House of Commons on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Farron MP

Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon

Former Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

Former Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Willie Rennie MSP

Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

Kirsty Williams AM

Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats

These conditions are:

1) LEGAL

Military intervention must follow an international legal framework. We believe this has been provided by UN Resolution 2249 which urges members to take “all reasonable measures” to defeat ISIL.

This is the instrument with which all those opposed to ISIL have the means to coordinate military action to defeat them, including regional actors on the ground.

2) WIDER DIPLOMATIC FRAMEWORK INCLUDING EFFORTS TOWARDS A NO BOMB ZONE TO PROTECT CIVILIANS

Any military action by the UK must be part of a wider international effort involving all who have an interest in defeating ISIL, as a prelude to ending the conflict in Syria, including Russia, Iran and Turkey.

The UK Government should use all efforts to ensure that the Vienna talks succeed in bringing together the broadest possible support for action to end the war in Syria and effect political transition.

In addition, we call on the government to explicitly work towards ending the Syrian regime’s bombing of civilians with a no-bomb zone to maximise civilian protection and allow for an up-scaling of humanitarian access.

3) UK LED PRESSURE ON GULF STATES FOR INCREASED SUPPORT IN THE REGION

The UK should lead a concerted international effort to put pressure on the Gulf States, specifically Saudi Arabia and the Emiratis, to stop the funding of jihadi groups within the region and worldwide and do much more to assist in the effort to defeat ISIL, establish peace in Syria and help with the refugee situation. They are currently doing very little, despite claiming to be part of the anti-ISIL coalition.

ISIL is not just a Western problem, and this is one way of preventing them from framing the situation in that way.

4) POST-ISIL PLAN

The government must be absolutely clear on what Syria and Iraq will look like post-ISIL, and what post-conflict strategy (including an exit strategy) they propose to give the best chance of avoiding a power vacuum. This must be linked to the above diplomatic framework which will outline steps for ending the wider conflict in Syria.

5) DOMESTIC

We acknowledge that the fight against ISIL is not just in the Middle East: it is within Europe and it is here in the UK. We call on the government to immediately publish its 2014 investigation into the Muslim Brotherhood and also call on them to conduct an investigation into foreign funding and support of extremist and terrorist groups in the UK.

We call on the government to step up its acceptance of Syrian refugees, and opt in to Save the Children’s proposal to re-home 3000 unaccompanied refugee children from with Europe.

There has been a mixed response to this within the Liberal Democrats, in particular, scepticism about the use of bombers and drones.

On Syria, we had a fiercely contested debate at ALDE Congress where Paul Reynolds, David Simmonds and myself did the speaking on behalf of the Lib Dems. We finally succeeded in supporting military action against IS in Syria as well as Iraq, but only as part of a process which puts diplomacy at its heart. Many of our sister parties took some convincing but we finally persuaded them that diplomacy was important, not with IS directly, but with states in the Region that needed to do more to cut off their financial means e.g. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. We also need further diplomatic efforts with Turkey and of course with Russia now that they have intervened. Our amendment was incorporated into a compromise text. Other significant votes were on rejecting text requiring Assad to stand down (we opposed the amendment because we have to talk to anyone willing to address the urgent threat) and a vote to supply heavy arms to KRG to give them the means to cut IS supply lines to Mosul. In the end we largely got our own way and it was with some relief that I heard Paddy on the radio yesterday morning taking a line consistent with the line we took in Budapest.

Phil Bennion.

There is a famous saying by Albert Einstein I am sure you are all familiar; "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."

And now we contemplate another military intervention in the Middle East...

Of course the experience of Iraq shows the consequences of getting it wrong. But Afghanistan was also a failed policy. And under our watch in government, Libya too. Yet whilst much has been said about Iraq, little has been said about Libya. Perhaps we have not come to terms of what we did there, and the hellhole that Libya has become?

The fundamental problem we have is that we seem incapable of being objective in judging whether what we would like to do would actually work, by which I mean do more good than harm. The reason appears to be that we confuse the reasons to do things with our ability to do things. There is no shortage of reasons why we should bomb Syria. Indeed there are plenty of reasons to bomb Saudi Arabia for their human rights record, or China for genocide in Tibet. But at least in those cases we are aware of our limitations, which are not just military but economic as well. So we happily trade with them instead.

One of the few Tory MPs I respect is Rory Stewart who once said rather brutally; "We are not morally obliged to do what we cannot deliver". I would add to that that we ARE morally obliged to be as objective as possible to work out what we can deliver. The moral outrage over the bombing in Paris has made objectivity very hard to do. What if having looked at the options objectively each one that involves military

action will make the situation worse? The evidence that this may be the case comes from the previous failures; we are always wise after the last event, but never before the next one.

There is another added factor that makes this situation an ominous one. The complexity of it all. After all the Russia attacks on Syria took the US completely by surprise. Do we really think we can persuade Turkey not to attack the Kurds, or do we just hear what we want to hear? If they are going to be put in charge of the so called "safe zones" in Syria that could lead to all out war. I would like anyone who is making these kind of decisions to have a thorough understanding of the history, culture and politics of the region and make their case accordingly in Parliament or the US Senate. But that hasn't happened yet.

There are many countries involved in Syria and the tension is building up, with no sign of anyone wanting to back down. There are striking similarities to the build up of the first world war. For that reason, my hope is that Parliament will stop the Tory warpath in its tracks.

Geoff Payne, Hackney Liberal Democrats

Your statement on Syria is obviously heading the party to support air strikes on Syria. Adding more violence into the Middle East from western powers has never succeeded and neither will this. The attacks on Paris were atrocious but bombing Syria is not the solution.

John Faulkner, Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats

It looks like there could be a vote to bomb Syria within a couple of weeks. Whilst I too was horrified by what happened in Paris 10 days ago, I am not convinced that the UK should be joining this mission. Most defence commentators agree that the purpose of an air campaign is to prepare for a ground campaign – air strikes alone are not enough to degrade Daesh. So who are the ground troops? The Kurdish soldiers will certainly take back some land currently occupied by IS but will stop at the borders of their desired future state of Kurdistan. This will leave the rest of the work to be done by others – possibly Iran and Syria with Russia's help. Sunnis including many of those who are not naturally sympathetic to Daesh will see that as an invasion by a Shia force. It is quite possible that Daesh will regroup, with ample opportunity to recruit supporters from a resentful Sunni community. This is why a long term plan is so important – one that involves Sunni Muslims too. This just doesn't seem to be being discussed or reported – the media is full of images of Hollande promising ever stronger attacks on Daesh and David Cameron echoing the battle-cry. I am sure that the debate in parliament will be a good one, but it needs to be informed by a strategic plan. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has said that a strategy that involves air attacks on ISIS without a plan to end the civil war in Syria is "not coherent".

Most of us have a gut reaction of anger to what happened in Paris and wants to see the perpetrators punished. But military action is not free – Syrian and Iraqi civilian lives will be lost, and of course there are economic costs too. It increasingly looks like an international military offensive against IS will take place. But we do not need to participate and we should only do so if we believe it will make the Middle East a safer place and reduce the security threat to ourselves. I, for one, remain unconvinced this is the case.

Cara Jenkinson, Chair of Haringey Liberal Democrats

Why Syria needs a strong Europe

John McHugo

The Syrians arriving in Europe are chiefly fleeing barrel bombs dropped by their own government, although the thuggery of the militias and warlords who now control much of their country provides another strong impetus. The most notorious of these is Da'ish (better known as ISIS), which has managed to instil fear into us in the West. Da'ish's destruction of Palmyra has also affected us directly because Palmyra is part of our own heritage, as well as that of Syria and the Arab world. Almost simultaneously, a photo of a drowned boy, who looked like a doll discarded at the seaside at the end of the family holiday, has finally aroused our compassion for the quarter of a million Syrian dead, and the ten million or more who have been displaced.

The refugees flooding into Europe are only a symptom of the barbarism that is taking place. The question is: how to bring that barbarism to an end and rebuild Syria (and its neighbours)? As any Palestinian can tell you, Western governments have long seen the region's troubles as problems to be "managed", rather than sorted out. This attitude has to change. Make no mistake: the Palestine tragedy which has lasted from 1947-9 to this day, the Lebanese civil war of 1975-90 and the continuing instability in that country, the many crises affecting Iraq since the time of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, and Syria's descent into chaos since 2011 are all linked. I have no holistic solution to offer, but the most urgent of these is now Syria, so here are a few thoughts about that country.

What has happened in Syria is that a revolution has been frustrated as the government used violence against its own population in order to quell dissent. The government lost control of many areas, and violence was soon repaid with violence. Foreign powers began to intervene: Russia and Iran backing the government, and Sunni Arab states in the Gulf encouraging Syrians to rise up, and even promising them wages paid in dollars if they did so. Turkey played its own self-interested game. As time passed, the conflict became increasingly a proxy war, especially as the conflict stoked hatred between different sects, something that the Wahhabi ideology exported by Saudi Arabia encouraged. Syria also became a grisly playground for the identity politics of young Sunni Muslims from elsewhere, who dreamed of establishing a pure Islamic state on somebody else's soil.

Repressive, arbitrary and corrupt though the Syrian government is, its institutions remain strong in the areas it controls. It also retains a degree of soft power in the areas it has lost - it still pays the salaries of public sector workers there. Last November, when I visited Damascus (not as a guest of the government - nor with a government minder) the centre of the city was still calm. There was food in the shops and everything was surprisingly as usual, save for the thud of artillery fire on the besieged enclaves in the suburbs. There is no military solution to this conflict without appalling devastation.

The best way forward is therefore to do whatever we can to defuse the conflict and exert pressure to persuade the parties to negotiate. Before the revolution began, Syria had a strong state structure. That structure is still - just about- intact. If that is destroyed, it will be the Afghan-isation or Somali-isation of Syria. It ought to be obvious to everyone that Britain can do little on its own, but we could offer much to a concerted EU effort. Step forward Federica Mogherini! A coordinated European policy on Syria is needed (and I don't mean merely on humanitarian and refugee issues). If Europe can pull together, it might have the diplomatic and economic muscle to persuade Russia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states to stop making the problem even worse than it is. At some point, too, military action of some sort will be taken by someone. If the doctrine of humanitarian intervention could be pleaded in Kosovo in 1999, then it can be in Syria today. That is why I would back the British government having freedom to take military action. And to anyone who wants to dismember the EU (or the UK) I plead: please do not do so, for the sake of the Syrian people.

John McHugo is a senior fellow at the Centre for Syrian Studies at the University of St. Andrews and the author of Syria: A Recent History and A Concise History of the Arabs. A former chair of the Lib Dem Friends of Palestine, he is an Advisor to Tim Farron on the Middle East. This article originally appeared on Lib Dem Voice in September and is written in his personal capacity and does not reflect the views of any organisation.

Since John is a rare beast in actually knowing something about Syria, I've sought his opinions. A piece attributed to him in an earlier version of this issue did not reflect his views. My apologies. Stewart Rayment

Iraq 2- Why the Lib Dem's Syria conflict position in Parliament is militarily and politically unwise

Paul Reynolds

On Tuesday, Tim Farron expressed the party's position on the coming 'Syria conflict' vote in Parliament in a letter to PM David Cameron.

It set out five conditions for Lib Dem support for an escalation of British involvement in Syria. It will no doubt be taken by the UK government as conditions for Lib Dem support for a general major escalation.

The first 'condition' was that military action against Islamic State in Syria should follow international law. The letter expressed acceptance of UN Resolution 2249. This UN resolution however does not *authorise* actions against IS, nor does it provide a legal basis for the use of force generally against IS in Syria or in Iraq. It only supports states in doing what they are already doing under existing international laws, specifically on IS-held territory. As such this supports existing Russian and Iranian military involvement as much as existing Western involvement. For the UK to attack Syria, whether fighting the Assad regime or IS, it still needs compliance, such as the invoking of Article 5 of the NATO treaty (ie protecting a UK ally, France). France has not invoked Article 5.

The second condition includes UK support for the Vienna peace talks, but perhaps naively and certainly unwisely calls for the UK government to support a 'no-bomb' zone for 'civilian protection'.

In reality however, a 'no-bomb' zone means a *no-fly zone*, militarily enforced against Syrian and Russian fighter planes and against any ground weapons in and around the zone that can shoot down Western planes. Almost certainly this will precipitate two new wars; one between Turkey and a united Kurdish force, and the other between Western forces and Syria-plus-Russia...

This zone, in NW Syria bordering Turkey, was proposed by President Erdogan of Turkey, whose motives are undoubtedly to remove advancing Kurdish forces from the Syrian side of the border. In addition, enforcing this zone would bring anti-Assad forces closer to the Russian bases and Assad's Alawite stronghold. Russia will oppose it militarily, especially given that Erdogan's language has implied it would be

a Turkish annexation of part of Syria, likely including the Turkish-speaking Syrian areas.

The third condition calls for more assistance from Gulf states in defeating IS. This is euphemistic at best.

After it became clear that the Obama's rapprochement with Iran was going to succeed, and after the US became self-sufficient in oil, some Gulf states feared loss of influence. To balance, they sought 'defeat' of Iran's allies in Syria (the Assad regime) and elsewhere. One result of this was the formation of IS; to topple Assad and strengthen 'pro-Saudi' Sunni areas in Iraq. Turkey played a role too. A blind eye was turned by key parts of the US government. The result was a policy was to contain IS, especially preventing IS from going too far away from the cradle and defeating Kurdish forces in the North of Iraq. Little effort was made, for example, to halt the sale of IS oil through Turkey (until the Russian air force intervened).

Thus, the first three Lib Dem conditions misfire, and consequently the fourth (post-IS politics), and the fifth (protecting Europe from IS) are ill-founded.

There *does* need to be military action however; cutting off IS supply lines through Saudi and up the Euphrates River into Syria and lines through Turkey. Thirdly, action to help the Kurds and Iraqi Government in Baghdad cut IS lines to Mosul. This cannot be done successfully however without brutal diplomatic pressure on Gulf states, Turkey, and Russia. This is better than a general 10-year (partially fake) war with IS, with one eye to removing Assad, and two big wars resultant from Erdogan's 'no-bomb' zone.

In the end the West will have to do a deal with Russia over Assad, as I have argued since 2011, when we were in a stronger position to do so. The Russians quietly accept that Assad must go. But without a negotiated settlement there will be no peace or development; just chaos and more terrorism, as in Libya.

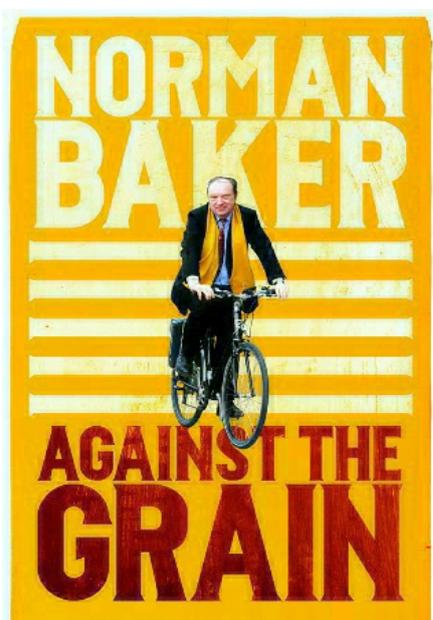
Paul Reynolds works with multilateral organisations as an independent adviser on international relations, economics, and senior governance. This article first appeared on Lib Dem Voice 26.11.2015

reviews

Against the Grain, by Norman Baker
Biteback 2015 £20.00 isbn 9781849549417

I first encountered Norman Baker just after I'd joined the LIBG Exec.; I knew of him as one of the most effective of the talented band of 1997 MPs. A senior civil servant friend said that she could always tell the new MPs with previous local government experience – they hit the ground running when they entered the Commons, and Baker kept up a Marathon throughout, earning the early ire of failed MP and Times columnist Matthew Parris. I had been anxious that LIBG become a more active campaigning organisation, and mooted Tibet as a cause. Norman had made a statement on that country and there was an obvious synergy.

The humorous side of this came when Norman visited St Peter's Primary School in Chailey, in the north of his constituency. The teacher asked the class if they had any questions for Mr Baker, and my seven year old nephew shot his hand up and asked if he knew Stewart Rayment? Norman replied, 'Yes, we've just exchanged emails this morning'.



Norman's autobiography falls into three phases – his local government career and the prelude to Parliament, the back-benches and the Coalition. He devotes a chapter to the Parliamentary Questions that so incensed Matthew Parris – his prize scalp from them being Peter Mandelson, acclaimed by almost everyone outside of the Blair circle – except the Liberal Democrats. I had puzzled about which grain Baker was going against – as we move to the next chapter – the Iraq War, this becomes most obvious. Lord Chilcott has still to report, so far the time being we may as well

take note of Norman Baker's account of how Blair, Straw and a handful of others from the Labour establishment led us into an illegal war, the consequences of which are ongoing, and constitute the greatest threat to our national security. I don't have any particular doubts about the death of David Kelly – the UK weapons inspector, myself – not based on any evidence or deep knowledge of the event, rather the balance of probability. For Baker, some would say this aspect of the Iraq War became an obsession; his point is that the people should not be lied to, that Parliament, as their representative, should not be lied to. The Labour establishment lied consistently and sought to cover their tracks at every opportunity. The grain gets even courser when we come to the 'self-serving and hypocritical' behaviour of the House of Commons in dealing with the question of MP's expenses.

Internationally, Norman is perhaps not the most obvious player, Tibet aside. As an opposition back-bencher, he visited the United Nations in 1997, notes the need to reform the Security Council, if it is to have any legitimacy, and the fact that 18 years on nothing has changed. There is also a note of the one-sided nature of the Special Relationship. Climate Change gets a fair covering, particularly in the context of forestry in Tasmania and man's unwillingness to share the planet with other species in the pursuit of greed.

As a Minister, Baker contrasts his time at Transport and at the Home Office; Transport might be described as a Coalition department, the Home Office clearly was not. Vince Cable's opinion that Cameron and Osborne are wimps in the face of May tends to back Norman's views up. That notwithstanding, he has some respect for Theresa May, though not her poisonous SPADs; he also generally respects Nick Clegg, though critical of times when he, and other central figures – notably Danny Alexander and David Laws, failed to be team players (none of them previously schooled in local government I believe). David Cameron isn't particularly admired; his weaknesses shine through, along with the general nastiness of his party. I'd particularly recommend the chapters on the DfT to councillors and activists, inevitably in opposition these days, since they may reveal initiatives or funding that could be exploited. A criticism occurred to me that there was too much detail in places, but not if the book is intended to be a working document.

International issues invariably came up in the context of Norman's ministerial roles – Female Genital Mutilation had Coalition wide support, but Tibet caused him the most annoyance, when despite being chair of the All Party Tibet Group, as a Minister Cameron forbade him to meet the Dalai Lama during his 2012

visit. The book has a good brief account of Tibet, for those unfamiliar; Labour's betrayal and Cameron's brown nose and all. So after a sterling job Norman deserves a break – if not the one either of us would have preferred, but I look forward to his being back on the campaign trail soon; there is still too much of the grain to go against.

Stewart Rayment

Vince Cable's After the Storm – The World Economy & Britain's Economic Future, by Vince Cable. Atlantic Books 2015 £18.99

Wider in scope and more ambitious in its reach, "After the Storm" is the acclaimed sequel to "The Storm" published after the financial crisis of 2008. Having spent the last 5 years as Business Secretary within the Coalition Government (2010-2015), Vince has the added clout of first-hand experience introducing economic policies that have steered us out of the storm, not least an industrial strategy.

His professed motivation for penning a sequel were to update readers on the state of Britain's economy in "a climate of guarded optimism," and to share his insights, no longer bound by collective responsibility as Secretary of State at the Department of Business Innovation and Science. Whilst the US and UK are expected to record 3% growth this year, Vince's previous analysis of the underlying weaknesses still apply, such as UK's over reliance on the banking sector and on the housing market for recovery and growth.

True to form, Vince does not mince his words when it comes to the challenges he had faced in working with his Conservative colleagues in government. He was denied a place on the Quad that was led from the Treasury, whom he described as "institutionally arrogant, obsessively short-termist and deeply conservative". He also flagged up differences with the Chancellor regarding, for example, RTB (right to buy Council and housing association properties) and on the direction and sale of RBS (Royal Bank of Scotland).

However what is clear from the outset is that the new book has a distinctly internationalist perspective. The first half of the book is devoted to setting "The Global Context" and only in the second half does he deal with "The UK after the Crisis". As Vince is not shy to point out, Britain only contributes 2% towards the world GDP and has less than 1% of the world's population. In a world that is inter connected, we are not invulnerable to the serious issues faced by the Eurozone nor by the fluctuations in international commodity markets. The economic centre of gravity has

undoubtedly been shifting towards the emerging economies and it is now more apt to say that "when China sneezes, the world catches a cold".

Other recurring themes are ideological: free market versus socialism, of growing inequality (with the richest 1% owning a third of the wealth in the US, a quarter in the EU) and the dangers of aggressive nationalism such as seen by the rise of UKIP and SNP. He hints at wider issues such as those concerning internet governance, problems with large scale migration and global warming but could not pursue these in greater depth so as to avoid the book growing into one of encyclopaedic length.

Vince does however devote specific chapters to the "British Housing Obsession" and to "British Banking after the Banking Crash" and stresses the importance of getting the long-term fundamentals right. In Government, he had endeavoured to constrain the financial markets and make banks safer and more amenable to lending via the Vickers Rules and the Merlin Project. But it would probably have to be a future coalition of "progressives", combining idealism with practical policies to break from current short sighted if not calamitous housing policies, unfair welfare cuts and de facto deflationary economic policies.

With in-depth economic and political analysis from a key player within the Coalition Government, "After the Storm" is essential reading to policy makers, academics as well as thinking members of the public. In addition, Vince offers us a liberal/centre left political road map or should I say navigation chart. The storm may be over, but we are warned of some dark clouds in the horizon.

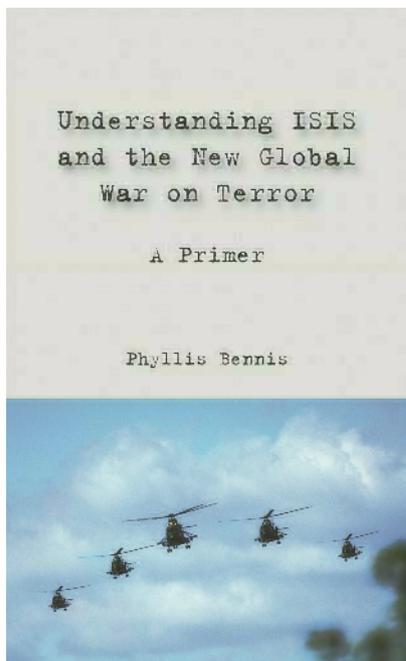
Merlene Emerson

Understanding ISIS and the New Global War on Terror, a primer, by Phyllis Bennis. Olive Branch Press (Interlink) 2015 \$15.00 isbn 9781566560948

Phyllis Bennis has got a bit of form. It's rare to come across an American who understands the Middle East, rarer still that they understand it from a human perspective. Russia admitting that they have forces on the ground in Syria, and dropping bombs, is something that couldn't be anticipated in this book, but that notwithstanding, it is a reasonable summary of events, any why ISIS has the sway, and military capacity that it does. Basically, as most of you will have guessed, it goes back to Mr Bush and Mr Blair disbanding the Iraqi army and sending them back home (probably with their weapons – but hey, they're not exactly in

short supply in the region, especially after the ill thought out Libya).

Phyllis directs the New Internationalism Project of the Washington based Institute for Policy Studies. She is also a Fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam and has written extensively on the Middle East. As an aside, she also edited *The Cafés of Paris*, by Christine Graf, wife of our regular American correspondent, Dennis, back in 1996, and overdue for a new edition.



Whilst directed at an American audience, the primer provides a solid background to events in Syria and Iraq. I particularly liked the section Syrian Women Know How to Defeat ISIS. The argument is for diplomatic solutions, that ISIS seeks to embroil the US (and now Russia, and wouldn't mind you joining in either Mr Cameron) to defeat them on their ground. Since Russia and the USA have conflicted ends (and where is Iran in all this?) the sooner they are resolved, they rein in their respective proxies, and seek non-military ways to end the conflict, the better.

Stewart Rayment

**The Ages of American Law,
by Grant Gilmore and Philip Bobbitt
Yale University Press. Second edition 2014**

It is a difficult task to look through hundreds of years of law, containing millions of cases, statutes and scholarly articles, and then find the themes which have guided its development. Gilmore attempted to do this in his Yale Law School lectures in the 70s, and certainly achieved a grandiose style whilst speaking confidently on the legal history. Once distilled into a book, these ideas suffer under the scrutiny of a reader: the general claim that American law has distinct ages

is too simplistic to be believable, and the proofs offered are too incoherent. The final chapter recently added by Bobbitt is even more susceptible to the latter as he updates the book to the modern "age" and can merely offer a collection of recent anecdotes when it is too early to know what the grand theme is. This book seduces you with its apparent authority, but it is impossible to know whether its claims are true.

The Age of Discovery, according to Gilmore, was a glorious period up to the Civil War when great minds set out to create a rational legal system. The Supreme Court had decided to guide the whole country by weighing in on the rules governing contract, property etc. so no state would be lead astray by parochial mistakes. Court frequently accepted cases from every conceivable dispute as legislatures were slow to act and people needed answers in the light of technological change. It is doubtful whether those involved were consciously building this new world, or whether only the better aspects have survived and all the everyday rubble is lost in the mists of time. For all his claims about judges' extraordinary powers, Gilmore is disheartened they were unable to solve the slavery problem, and so the Civil War broke out, bringing this great age to an end.

The heroic endeavours of judges were a thing of the past in the Age of Faith. Law was seen as the perfect answer to society's ills, as everyone believed it had arrived at the correct answer. Scholars ignored the details of cases and collected them together under overarching principles, which he strongly criticizes but is very similar to his strategy in writing this history book. Meanwhile, judges gave up on creativity and sought only to apply the law given to them. Gilmore strongly dislikes formalism, without considering the benefits of stable rules. He is pleased the myth that law had reached the perfect answer could not be maintained for ever, and a new Age of Anxiety began after the First World War.

Whilst legal organisations desperately tried to preserve law in codifications, and activists busies themselves drafting new statutes, Legal Realism swept the country and everyone believed judges decided cases on personal whims and there was no such thing as legal rules. Law lost its prestige and became a collection of obsolete rules which no one had the energy to keep updating. This is the most disjointed of Gilmore's chapters, as he cites many examples of people doing different law-related activities, and concludes that as they do not all fit together this must be a sign of anxiety. In fact, Gilmore was too close to the action to really assess what was happening in his own time. He finished here, arguing law must continue develop as it

is an unstable reaction to society's needs and can never stand still.

Bobbitt adds the final chapter and brings the book into the 21st century with the Age of Consent. He highlights some new movements since the 1970s, such as the growth of constitutional law and national security, and the battle between Law & Economics and Critical Legal Studies. He suggests what ties this all together is everyone was searching for a justification for law. In reality, it is too early to know what the defining aspect of the current age is. He can point to some academic writings as professors tend to explicitly state what general theory they support, but there is a distinct lack of analysis of real legal cases and statutes.

Sweeping histories are well-suited to ancient eras when we have so little information it is easy to create unifying theories which tie together the fragments. An account of modern legal developments, which are complex and have thousands of actors in the form of judges, legislators and scholars, is an enormous project that should be presented in a thoroughly-researched and thick book. Gilmore and Bobbitt's conclusions may be accurate, but when explained in so few pages they seem little more than ambitious claims supported by a couple of anecdotes.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

The Arandora Star Tragedy, edited by Peter Capella.

Arandora Star London Memorial Trust 2015

Bad things happen in war; friends and neighbours suddenly become enemies, or are perceived as such. That was the fate of over 1500 men from the Austrian, German and Italian communities of Britain who found themselves on the Arandora Star carrying them to internment in Canada, when a German U-boat torpedoed the ship on 2nd July 1940. Mussolini had declared war in Britain on the 10th June and Churchill's immediate response was 'Collar the lot', almost a throw away remark, undoubtedly under duress. Over 800 lives were lost, 446 of them Italians. Most of them were café & restaurant owners, shopkeepers, hoteliers and waiters. Bon viveur that he was, it is likely that Churchill had some personal acquaintance with some, if only fleeting. There was much embarrassing shuffling of feet in Parliament, Red Clydesider David Kirkwood pressing for the truth.

The book is quite an achievement, drawing together biographies, photographs, diaries and the like of victims and survivors. There was an accompanying

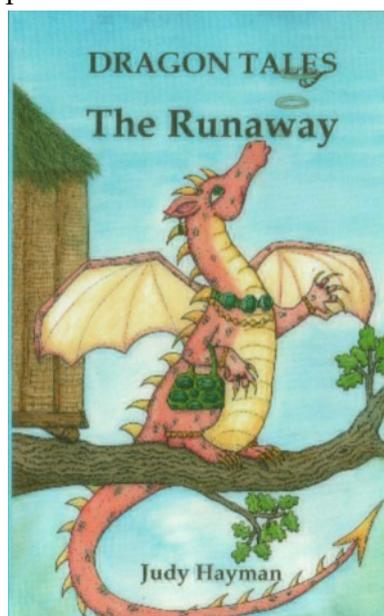
exhibition in Holborn Library. All told it is a sad reminder of why war should not happen, and when it does, the urgency of Liberal vigilance on human rights. Copies might best be obtained through peter.capella@ntlworld.com

75 years on London's Italian community remembers, and as bodies wash up on Mediterranean shores from more wars there is a certain synergy. In 1990 a further 25 years were added before files on the incident would be made public, back in 1940 MPs though the secrecy stank, and editor Peter Capella is somewhat cynical as to what may be disclosed or found 'lost through water damage' this year. Perhaps Archy Kirkwood might take the matter up with the vigour of his namesake? Are you reading this Archy?

Stewart Rayment

Dragon Tales - The Runaway, by Judy Hayman. Practical Inspiration 2015 £5.99 isbn 9781910056288

Judy Hayman's dragons now enter their fourth and most testing adventure as autumn sets in. Without giving too much away (and in any case, the children will cheat, looking at Caroline Wolfe Murray's illustrations) the rescue is deemed to be the most exciting part. Sibling rivalry and stropmy aunts... all part of childhood's experiences (you might be reading the books to a young dragon yourself). Order now for Christmas - Email Judy at judy@haymana.plus.com to obtain copies.



The previous books in the series are:
Quest for a Cave. 2014 isbn 9781910056080;
Quest for a Friend. 2014 isbn 9781910056158;
Quest for Adventure. 2015 isbn 9781910056226

Stewart Rayment

Special Branch, a history: 1883-2006,
by Ray Wilson & Ian Adams.
Biteback 2015 £25.00
isbn 9781849549103

It is something of a mystery, that whilst many of the country's intelligence services have been more open about their past in the last two decades, this has not been the case with the Special Branch. Metropolitan Police intransigence is one reason for this, but I wonder to what extent, of the four primary reasons listed by Adams and Wilson, both service insiders, 'not financially viable due to lack of resources or manpower' stands in the way. There is something measured in the style of the authors – as ex-policemen perhaps? Or that the materials that they worked from were sparse? The pace quickens as one comes closer to the present - how many of these cases had the author's personal involvement?

The Special Branch came into being when Sir William Harcourt, as Gladstone's Home Secretary, instructed Howard Vincent, Director of the CID, to gather information on Fenian activities in the Dynamite War. The Branch would continue mostly under that name, until merged with the Anti-Terrorist Branch in 2006 to become Special Operations 15, and indeed Fenian activities would be upper-most in its interests throughout.



These events show how difficult it is getting the measure of terrorist activities. Two struck me as of recent interest – Ian Gow's assassination in 1990 led to the Flying Bellotti Brother's victory in the ensuing Eastbourne by-election. Ann Widdecombe,

uncharitably sent a message to voters saying "Beloitti is the innocent beneficiary of murder. I suspect as last night as the Liberal Democrats were toasting their success, in its hideouts the IRA were doing the same thing". In the circumstances, the Tories expectations to hold the seat were quite reasonable, but politics is a funny old game, with now certainties – didn't we think Stephen Lloyd was 'safe' in May? David, alas, died last June.

The National Liberal Club bomb in 1991 is not specifically mentioned. It was generally believed, in the Club at least, that the Provisional IRA had intended another target, found it too risky and left their bomb near the Club in panic – any old building in Whitehall might do. I don't recall the damage being great, but I've rarely seen the Club bar as crowded as it was on that night.

Various groups challenging the established orthodoxy came under their purview, with varying degrees of success. In 1917 Basil Thomson – Assistant Commissioner would produce a report on Pacifist – I don't think the Union of Democratic Control was actually pacifist at the time, but Charles Trevelyan, Ramsay MacDonald, C.P.Snow? The Establishment may have cause to fear them, but hardly subversive. It is of some concern, and indeed later embarrassment to the Special Branch, that their relationship with fringe organisations on the right of the spectrum was friendlier. The violence around Sir Oswald Mosley's organisations would take them out of the category of fringe cranks.

Home grown Zionist terrorism is almost forgotten these days, but in the latter days of the Palestine Mandate was a major concern – not least to the Jewish population, in a way that many Moslems will feel today. The focus on Yaacov Levstein, an unrepentant Stern Gang terrorist, whose activities would even lead him to doing bird in Israel, and bomb maker Monty Harris is a brief introduction – David Cesarani's *Major Farran's Hat* (Da Capo, USA 2009) gives a much fuller account.

Messrs. Wilson and (alas the late) Adams' book fills a gap in our knowledge, but cries out for more detail, which perhaps a later edition will provide. Looking at events around us, particularly those of Paris, and we must remember that Tony Blair has made us an equal target, it is understandable that the fringes of political activity will be examined – the book is disappointingly silent of the Young Liberals in that respect – or were we too obviously respectable, even in our wildest days? I doubt it.

Stewart Rayment

**Discontent and its Civilisations, by Mohsin Hamid.
Penguin 2015 £9.99 isbn 9780241146323**

The world might be a better place if more people had seen the film *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*; or better still read the book. It is a truism that fiction often opens things up in a way that facts cannot. Here we have a collection of essays, mostly journalism, though some may be read as stories. A gentle and thought stimulating style, it will give you much pleasure as it enlightens you. I particularly commend *Down the Tube* in the context of Paris and Beirut.

Stewart Rayment

**Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism, by Larry Siedentop
Allen Lane 2014**

This impressive book traces the radical changes in western thinking from Antiquity to the emergence of liberalism. Although we like to think our way of life was founded in Ancient Greece, the idea of a society being made up of independent and equal individuals is far more modern, and was only possible because of the Church's philosophical destruction of older beliefs.

For thousands of years, our societies were fundamentally unequal because people gained their rights and responsibilities according to their position in a particular family. Siedentop argues that Christianity attacked this belief system on many fronts. In the early stages, as the power of Rome increased, local autonomy declined, which lowered the status of heads of families. At the same time, theologians like Augustine presented human will as a complex negotiation between individual desire and God's commands, with no trump card of clan allegiance.

Christianity also emphasised the person because of the soul. People could either use their souls to serve God, or damage their souls by committing sins. And in making these moral judgments, the Church invented a legal system that could pass judgment on an individual's behaviour, regardless of their social status. As the Christian world fractured into feudal societies, the Church increased its rhetoric of having a claim over souls. Importantly, it introduced equality by promoting the 'golden rule' of treating others as you wish to be treated.

The Church's example of a complex governing body claiming authority over a vast population, inspired secular claims of state sovereignty from the 12th century. This was not the authoritarian governance of

the past, because egalitarianism was eroding the concept of master and slave. Citizens had a claim to being treated well, and so the natural freedom to decide how they wanted to live. The philosophical development that culminated in individual liberty set the stage for liberalism to dominate western society.

Siedentop cleverly demonstrates how Christianity transformed western society and produced the key tenets of Liberalism. He then leaves us thinking about how Liberalism has become secularism, which many religious people consider to be the greatest threat they face. Having underlined its moral content, he argues believers should feel a closer connection with Liberalism. Presumably, ardent followers of secularism should also appreciate the debt they owe Christianity. This book promotes a more religious kind of politics.

This is a fascinating exploration of Europe's intellectual and political history and makes a strong case for understanding our way of thinking as essentially Christian. But understanding our past is not going to resolve the current struggle between secularism and religious beliefs. Christianity may have made us equals, but liberalism's demand that we be free to choose our own moral path will always push back against religion's political aspirations.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

**A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien,
edited by Stuart D. Lee.
Wiley Blackwell 2014 £120.00
isbn 9780470659823**

If there was a Tolkien, and we know there was, what confidence it gives us to assert that there was a Homer, a Taliesin, that something around the Arthurian caucus happened, and all manner of others who created what Tolkien styled as 'a body of more or less connected legend'.

Tolkien set himself the task of creating an English mythological tradition. He lamented the too disparate nature of the Arthurian cycle we must presume, though anyone glancing through Graves can hardly find the Greek caucus less disparate. Is England's lack of a mythology an aspect of systematic destruction or our modesty?

Of this we have a fusion of pagan and Christian myth, the truths of one reinforcing the truths of the latter – this being Tolkien's perspective, C S Lewis famously wrote that Tolkien seemingly resolves the dilemma of the Christo-Arthurian cycle by removing the apple. But how does he square trees? In *Mythopoeia* Tolkien says 'in all my works I take the part of trees against

their enemies'. As good a basis for anyone to root their political philosophy as any.

Answers to these, and many other questions spring from this rounded assessment of Tolkien's work – if your Young Liberal branch was anything like mine, you'll be wanting this in your Christmas stocking.

Stewart Rayment

**Lewis Carroll, the man and his circle,
by Edward Wakeling.
IB Tauris, 2015
isbn 971780768205**

I was introduced to Alice at a young age. I don't know who's or what version. Disney did not help, but then, in a psychedelic haze came *The Annotated Alice* and the BBC film. This year is the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It was hastily withdrawn by the author, the edition being beneath the standards that he set himself. The story had been conceived, during a boat trip down the Thames, three years earlier and committed to manuscript (at Alice Liddell's request) as *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* shortly after.

All this is widely known and as the author says in his preface, the last hundred years have seen enough biographies of ... Carroll... to make another seem superfluous. What better person to write one than Edward Wakeling, editor of the ten published volumes of Dodgson's diaries? Having previously focused on Dodgson as a photographer, a pamphleteer and his illustrators, Wakeling draws on the wealth of his editorial role to show the man through his family, friends and acquaintances. I need not say more; if any book makes you feel more at home with Carroll, this is it.

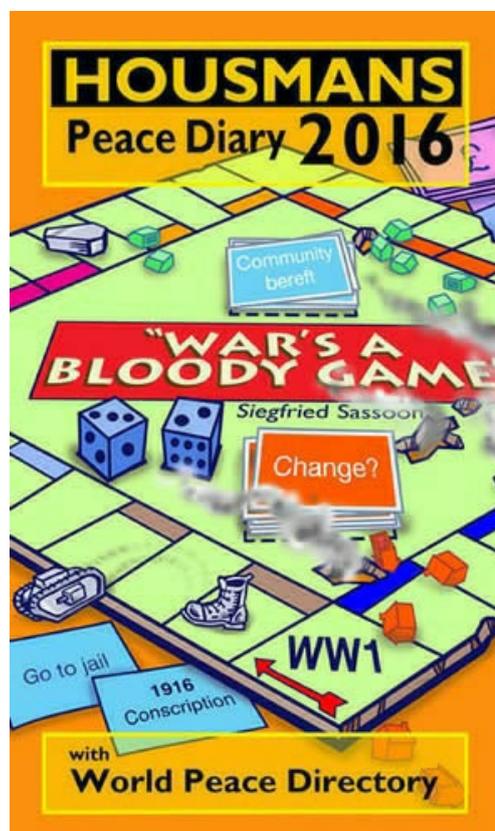
Stewart Rayment

**Housmans Peace Diary 2016.
Housmans, 2015 £8.95**

'The 63rd edition aspires to be both a resource and inspiration for activists and campaigners around the world.' There, that says enough. 2016 is the 100th anniversary of the introduction of military conscription in the UK, an act which split and troubled many Liberals, the pressures of war notwithstanding. To mitigate this, there was also recognition of Conscientious Objection on humanitarian and religious grounds. It got off to a rough start, as is well-known, and the diary's introductory essay recounts that story up to the present. We're also reminded that

2016 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gilbert Murray, a sound Liberal thinker.

With an EU Referendum upper-most in our minds, daily anniversaries such as 6th May 1955 – Western European Union inaugurated might be a valuable prompt for a letter to the press, and since Trident will be on Liberal Democrat minds, China's third nuclear explosion on 9th May 1966 might resonate. The week is headed either with details of a coming event or a pithy quote – for example Arthur Ponsonby (died 24th March 1946) *When war enters a country it produces lies like sand*. How apt is that in these trying times? The appended World Peace Directory contains no UK Liberal references, but that is probably as much down to us – even interLib has trouble getting copy out of them.



I've said enough. You all need a diary – even the geekiest geek admits that. Housmans is at 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX – just round the corner from King's Cross. www.housmans.com

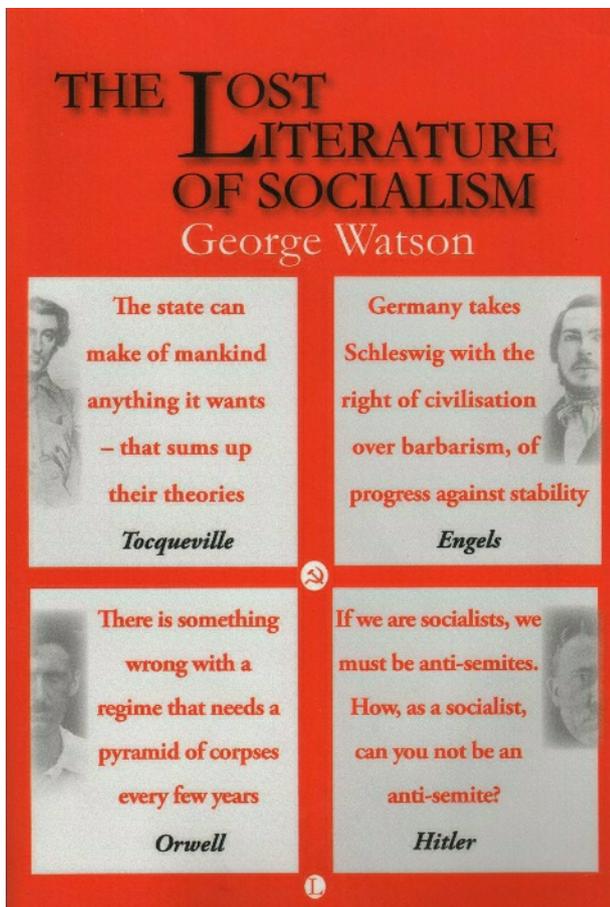
Stewart Rayment

**The Lost Literature of Socialism,
by George Watson.
Lutterworth Press 2nd edition 2010
isbn 9780718892272**

It has long puzzled me that whilst the swastika, a solar symbol common in Hindu & Buddhist iconography, is vilified (understandably), the symbols of socialism –

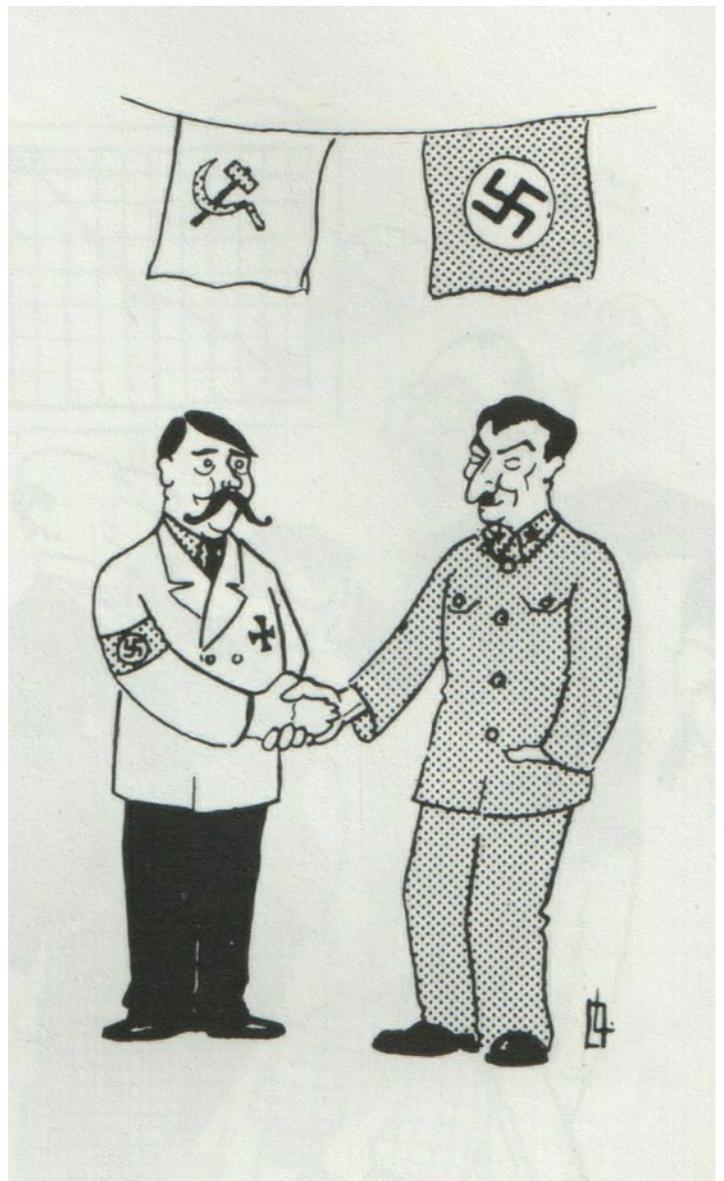
the hammer and sickle, or red star, are considered fashion chic. That the face of a mass murderer like Che Guevara can emblazon a thousand teeshirts.

Socialism is essentially a flawed economic doctrine; when this is applied to politics its dominant strands are generally conservative – even if in what might appear to be a progressive sense. It is paternalistic at least, authoritarian at worst. History confuses many things, the maxim that ‘victors write history’ not least. Since Uncle Joe was our ally in World War Two, we neglect the similarity between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany – the former of which may actually have killed more people. Few recall that Mussolini and Hitler began their careers in socialist parties. Sir Oswald Mosley was a Labour minister; Rotha Lintorn-Orman, founder of the British Fascisti regarded him as practically a communist. How did these people arrive at the position they were in?



Watson’s book devotes much attention to the confluence of Communism and National Socialism, but the roots of this go back much further. Marx and Engels are shown in their true light and the meeting of Marxism with Social Darwinism was a catastrophe, and therein lies the acceptance genocide and mass murder that characterises so many socialist regimes, national or ‘international’. There is, of course, blood on Liberal and capitalist hands, but nowhere as deep as the blood that stains the ‘workers flag’.

Stewart Rayment

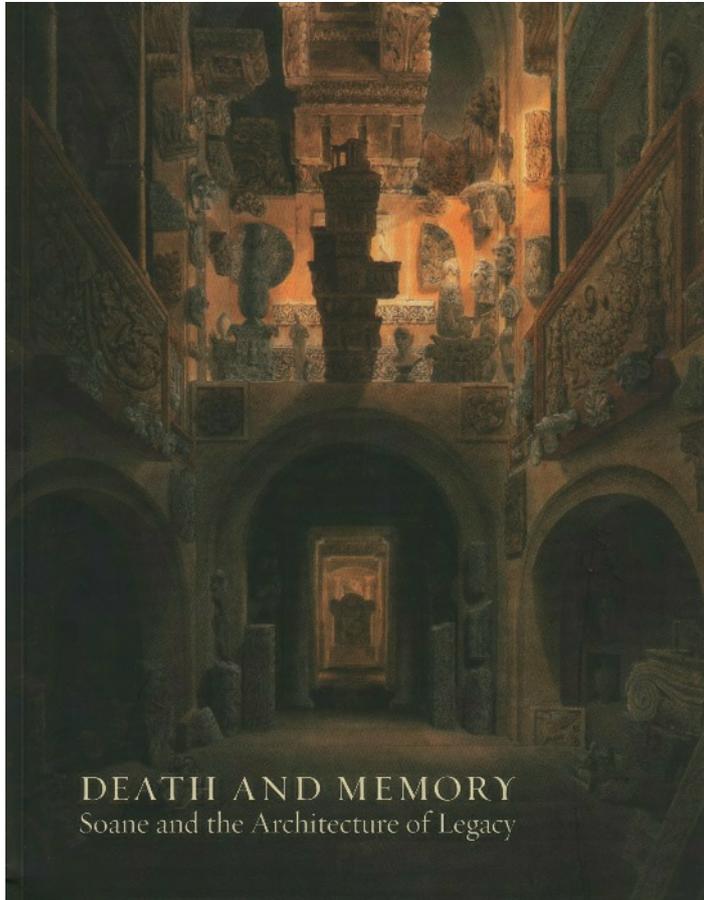


David Low’s take on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is well-known - here’s Osbert Lancaster’s Pocket Cartoon of 25th August 1939

Death and Memory, Soane and the Architecture of Legacy. Sir John Soane’s Museum

Sir John Soane’s Museum is one of the lesser known gems of the world. On the north side of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London, his home and architectural collection was left to the nation, pretty much on the condition that it was left as it was. Soane is not the best known of our architects, probably because much of his work is no longer with us, or has undergone such change as to be barely recognisable – the Bank of England, for example. His best known work is probably the Dulwich Picture Gallery & Mausoleum. He was a master of brick. None of his surviving churches are particularly great, but I’d commend the crypt of St. John, Bethnal Green (the rest of the church much altered).

Soane's wife, Eliza, died 200 years ago; a harmonious marriage, his grief was immense, and never left him. He blamed his reprobate son George for her death, who had published an attack on his father's work shortly before. Soane, who was Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, hence forth determined to leave his working collection to the nation and arranged his house accordingly. Go there and be amazed.



This is the focus of the exhibition. Soane based his own mausoleum on that of Rousseau, near Paris, which suggests a liberal disposition for the time (I know nothing of Soane's politics per se). The design would be immortalised as the inspiration for our telephone box; the mausoleum itself, in St Pancras Old Church cemetery (take the 91 bus from opposite the Holborn tube to St Pancras station – either walk through the station or down the west side of it – Midland Road, and the cemetery is just past the station). We have the drawings of Soane and his students marking the progress of the work and contrasted with that, Soane's other works related to death and how they might have interplayed with his own mausoleum. Many of the Roman and Greek monuments that the Georgian architects drew so much inspiration from were funereal and in his lectures Soane would refer to these, through his drawings and how they related to the architecture of the previous century. Soane particularly venerated Robert Adam, much of whose work survives in his collection.

As I've suggested above, Soane spent the last years of

his life in putting his house in order. Towards the end, he created three sealed repositories, to be opened on the 30th, 50th and 60th anniversaries of his wife's death. They were in fact opened shortly after his death and resealed. The contents turned out to be both mundane and bizarre, and to some extent led to the question 'was this a joke?' However the document *Crude Hints towards an History of My House in Lincoln's Inn Fields*, wherein he visualises his home as a ruin, after the nature of many of the architectural pieces he collected and the glories of Rome that he studied, was the substantial content. The Museum has republished the work in association with the exhibition, together with an excellent catalogue.

A visit to the Museum will always be well rewarded, but the exhibition provides a further encouragement. It is free, but be liberal, these are hard times for small museums, and it is too much of a wonder to allow Soane's crude hints to come to pass.

Stewart Rayment

Exhibition: Death and Memory: Soane and the architecture of Legacy Dates: 23 October – 26 March 2016 Address: Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3BP Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm. Last entry 4:30pm Admission: Free. www.soane.org



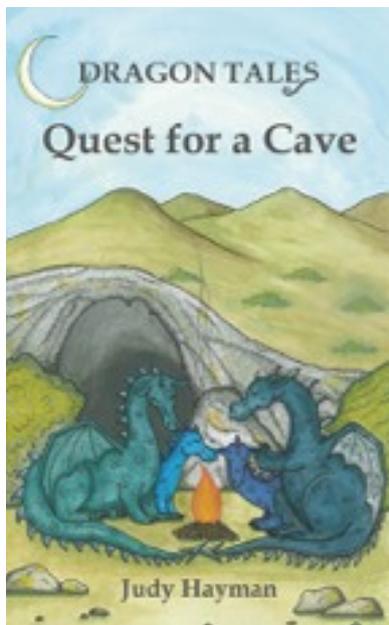
*The Soane Mausoleum in St. Pancras Old Church cemetery, shared with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and the philanthropist Baroness Burdett-Coutts - enough to make it a Mecca for any Liberal!*

*Whilst you're passing you could drop into the British Library's *Alice in Wonderland* exhibition...*

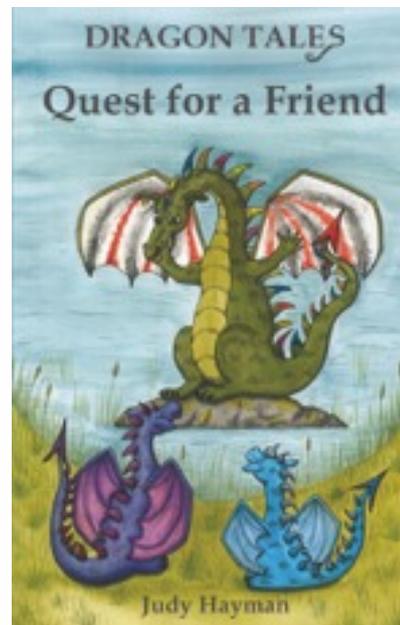
The Dragon Tales Chronicles

by Judy Hayman
illustrated by Caroline Wolfe Murray

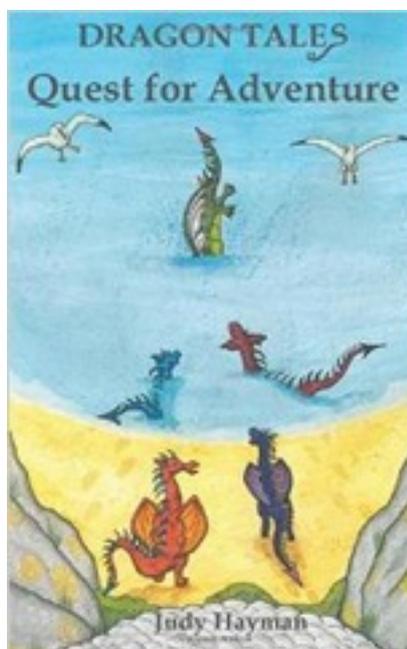
BOOK I Quest for a Cave



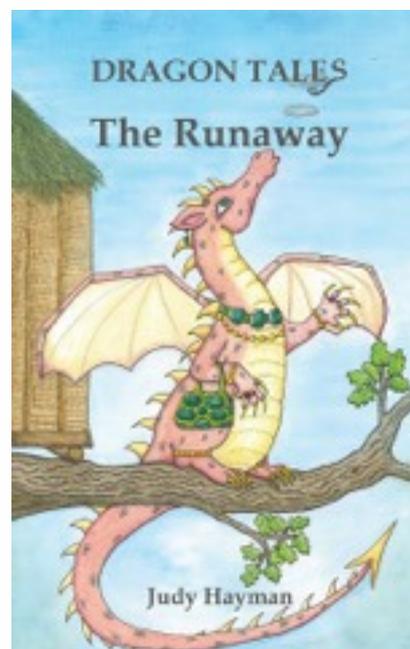
BOOK II Quest for a Friend

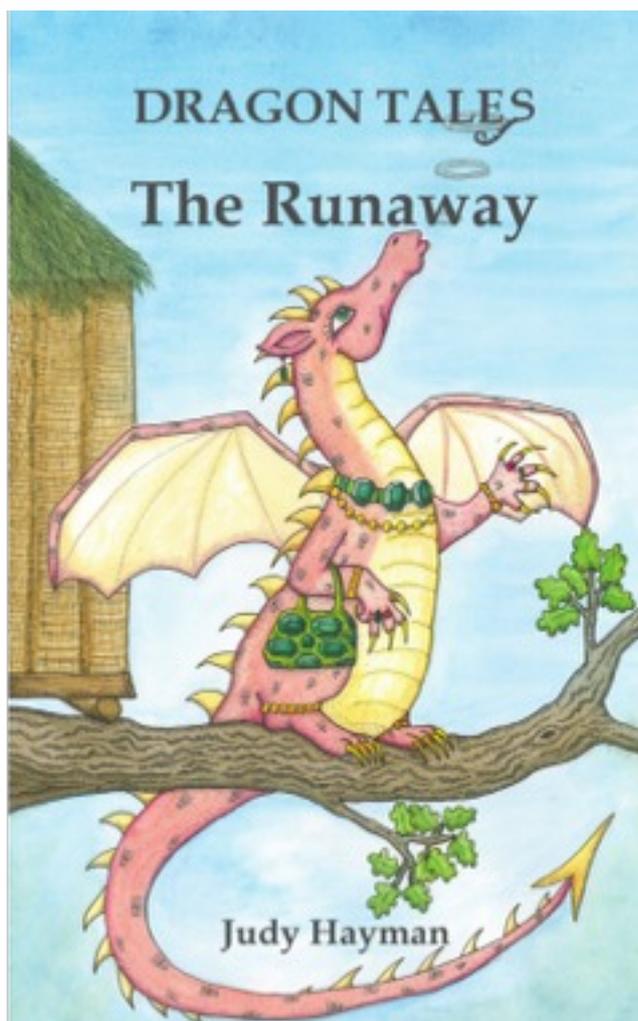


BOOK III Quest for Adventure



BOOK IV The Runaway





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The fourth of Judy Hayman's Dragon Tales Chronicles, *The Runaway* is now available.

It continues the story of Scottish dragons Emily, Tom, Des and their friends, but can be read as a stand-alone adventure.

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Copies of all four books in the series, price £5.99 (or £20 for all four), are available to order from Judy at judy@haymana.plus.com or from Rachel Hayman (01865 792531).