



2016 no.3 £5.50 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



*Zrinka Bralo holding up a fake toddler's fluorescent life jacket that she had picked up on a beach in Lesvos*

# EVENTS

**11<sup>th</sup> April** "UK - in or out of Europe – An international perspective" NLC 6.30-8.30pm

**14<sup>th</sup> April** NLC Commonwealth Forum - Malta – a small country with a big influence on the world stage, HE Norman Hamilton, Malta High Commissioner. NLC 7.00-8.30pm

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> May** LI 196th Executive Committee Meeting, Tblisi, Georgia

**30<sup>th</sup> June** Tim Garden Memorial Lecture. Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford. Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE. 6.00-7.00pm

**18<sup>th</sup> July** LIBG AGM, NLC.

**17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> September** Liberal Democrat Federal Conference, Brighton.

*For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.*

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

Liberal International (British Group)  
*Treasurer:* Wendy Kyrle-Pope, 1 Brook Gardens,  
Barnes,  
London SW13 0LY

*email* w.kyrle@virgin.net

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

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

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**Photographs:** Suzanne Fletcher, Trevor Peel.



**A Forum Discussion**  
***UK – IN or OUT of EUROPE?***  
***A Global Perspective***

**11 April 2016 at 6.30-8.30pm**

at the David Lloyd George Room,  
**National Liberal Club**, Whitehall Place, SW1A 2HE

Panel Speakers:

Asta Skaisgirytė, Lithuanian Ambassador (tbc)

Tim Dooley TD, Fianna Fail

Baroness Meral Hussein Ece

Anuja Prashar, Communities for Europe

Chaired by: Phil Bennion, Chair of LIBG



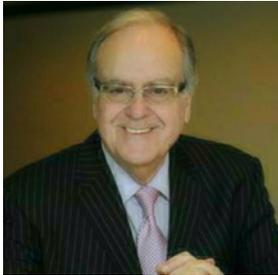
Please RSVP [info@libg.co.uk](mailto:info@libg.co.uk) or book online

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/uk-in-or-out-a-global-perspective-tickets-23087522401>



# NLC Commonwealth Forum

Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
7.00pm to 8.30pm



Guest Speaker -

**HE Norman Hamilton,  
Malta High Commissioner**

with Lord Chidgey in the Chair

*“Malta – a small country with a big influence  
on the world stage”*

Following the successful 2015 Malta CHOGM, Malta will be chairing the Commonwealth until 2018 and in 2017 will be assuming the Presidency of the EU for a critical six month period, Malta’s role is pivotal.

All Club members are invited.

No charge to attend but a Cash Bar will be available.

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**BOOKING FORM**

To: Mrs Louisa Pooley (louisa@nlc.org.uk)  
National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HE  
Tel: 020 7930 9871 Fax: 020 7839 4768

Date	Event	No. of places
14/4/2016	NLC Commonwealth Forum	

Name..... email address.....

Address.....

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*LIBG members welcome, but please contact Mrs Pooley (above).*

# Safe at Last?

## Syrian Refugees in the UK

At the Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary fringe meeting at the Lib Dem York conference we heard an excellent panel of speakers on the issues around Syrians coming to the UK. Zrinka Bralo (Executive Director, Migrant Organise) startled us by holding up a fluorescent life jacket that she had picked up on a beach in Lesvos. It was made for a toddler. She then told us it was actually a fake. It would not have acted as a life jacket, but the parents who would have paid money for it did not know that. It was worse when she showed us a tiny life jacket, for a baby. Also fake. What sort of pressure would a family be under to put their children through such a risky journey? Although Lesvos and the boat journeys have only recently been in the news, we heard that Lesvos had been receiving boats since 1998 – not as many, but they had been coming – and throughout that time had been making people welcome. Contrast that with what happens when those seeking asylum get as far as the UK where the asylum system is so adversarial and so difficult for people seeking sanctuary to get through.

So what can we do about it? Zrinka made the point that good people do good work – but it is the racists who shout loudest and have their voices heard. It is important that we all stand up for those who need us to, get our voices heard, and keep on doing so. She also asked us to push the Government to do more, and ask ourselves – “if this were 1939, would we be the one’s helping Kindertransport?”. There were good questions from those attending, and relevant to what Zrinka said, we were reminded that what was needed was political vision, and much better ways of caring for and supporting people who made it here via the traumatic routes taken. Councils need to be better supported in taking in Syrians under the UNHCR route. There is only one way to stop the traffickers who are profiting so much from continuing to exploit, and that is by making Safe and Legal Routes for those fleeing the atrocities in Syria..



**Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary say is important to push the Government hard on taking more Syrians under the UNHCR route, and we are asking every one of you reading this to ask your MP to sign the Refugee Welcome Commitment to increase the number taken from 20,000 to 50,000 over 5 years to play our part in decreasing the numbers making perilous journeys.**

**<http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Refugee-Welcome-Commitment-Final.pdf>**

The next instalment of the fringe meeting at Lib Dem conference Yasmine Nahlawi (Rethink Rebuild Society: the Voice of the Syrian Community of Manchester) is a second generation Syrian here in the UK which is now her home. She reminded us that Syria itself had taken in over 1 million refugees over recent years, before the atrocities started, from countries such as Palestine and Iraq. We all have responsibilities for each other. Whilst some of the most vulnerable are being taken by the UK, many are just not being considered, and there is more detail of that on the excellent briefing document she handed out at the meeting, which can be found at <http://www.ld4sos.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/03/2015-11-27-Refugees-Event-in-Parliament.pdf>

Please do take the time to read it, it is a good concise summary of a larger document you can if you want more detail, which can be found at

[http://www.rrsoc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Syria\\_Between\\_Dictatorship&ISIS.pdf](http://www.rrsoc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Syria_Between_Dictatorship&ISIS.pdf)

She stressed how important it was, that when people came to the UK they were desperate to learn to speak English. It is the key to living life here, getting a job, and being part of our community. The only provision for asylum seekers is classes when they have been here for 6 months, otherwise it is only what the voluntary sector can provide. She ended with a plea for us all not to restrict our compassion to Syrians, there are people fleeing from many different countries and circumstances. In particular, there are many asylum seekers who are destitute and homeless. She commended to us hosting schemes where people could put up an asylum seeker who was destitute under one of the schemes there are for such in a number of places. In response to questions we were told by the panel how important it was that we built bridges, and not put up walls in the refugee crisis – and what is happening now, whilst bad enough, is going to get worse as climate change makes millions homeless and without the means to make a living.



Baroness Sally Hamwee (Home Affairs Spokesperson in the House of Lords) told us about the new industry in Turkey – making boats that were “disposable” and if they broke up on the sea would collapse inwards, thus trapping those travelling in them.



She made the point that the UK should be a leader in the refugee crisis, and although we had a proud record of welcome, that was now in the past. She described the visa arrangements for reuniting families too restrictive and only very exceptional circumstances indeed were compassionate circumstances taken into account.

This week the Immigration Bill is coming the House of Lords, and there are many dreadful consequences to come from it. She was most hopeful about 2 amendments where there was a chance of changing the bill. One was about 28 days being a maximum time for detention for immigration purposes, an issue that Liberal Democrats have been championing for some time. Some compromises were having to be made to get agreement from others, but there was some hope. The other issue is Tim Farron’s call for 3,000 unaccompanied children to be brought to safety in the UK.

The work and fight for progress on these and other issues will continue throughout the progress of the Bill.

After hearing about all the challenges and difficulties ahead, we were all happy to hear from Lord Roger Roberts that after 10 years of campaigning on the issue, the Right to Work for asylum seekers who have been in the UK for 6 months has been agreed by a good majority in the House of Lords. It has yet to go back to the House of Commons, but it is good progress.

Roger said that it had been often (wrongly) said that the Liberal Democrats were looking for a cause. It is the other way round, he said, there were so many causes looking for a party, and that was us.

*Suzanne Fletcher*

# South Caucasus: A "frozen" conflict turns into a hot war?

As the conflict escalates between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the area of Nagorny Karabach, the co-host of LI's upcoming 196<sup>th</sup> LI Executive Committee meeting and South Caucasus Director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty (FNF), Peter-Andreas Bochmann, explains his views on the situation. He says "propaganda, manipulation, ideological and political abuse, and a non-existent cooperation are worsening the situation" and concludes the conflict is "a humanitarian disaster and a total failure of local and international politics."

Based in Tbilisi, Georgia, Mr Bochmann is frequently in the capitals of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, coordinating among others the Potsdam Process - a unique dialogue platform for senior political partners in South Caucasus, that will have a meeting in the framework of the LI Executive Committee in May.

The new breakout of violence in the disputed region of Mountainous Karabakh is no surprise. Armenians and Azerbaijanis have been fighting for this region since 1988. Casualties among soldiers but also civilians are the result of the heaviest fights after the ceasefire agreement of 1994. What are the origins of this new breakout of violence? How may have interests in this conflict? Are there possibilities to stop the killing? Freiheit.org posed these questions to Peter-Andreas Bochmann, Resident Representative South Caucasus of the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for Freedom.

Since last weekend there have been heavy fights between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the Mountainous Karabakh region. How is the pool of information? Are there any possibilities to get objective information from the conflict region?

Indeed, on Saturday there have been heavy fights between the two sides among the Contact Line in Mountainous Karabakh. But getting objective information from this region is almost impossible – the reports from the Armenian and the Azerbaijani side are too contradictory. Both sides are claiming of having killed more than hundreds of enemy soldiers, but the UN-assessment of 32 killed people on Saturday is the most probable. Now the number of casualties is probably higher, also among civilians. Both sides are operating with heavy artillery and air force. On Sunday the President of Azerbaijan Aliyev announced a return to the ceasefire agreement, but if the fights really stopped cannot be assessed now. News from the region let us fear the worst: Representatives of the unrecognized "Republic of Mountainous Karabakh" are accusing the Azerbaijani side to continue the bombardment of their positions.

How this breakout of violence happened?

Both sides are accusing each other to have started the actions. Presumably there have been an Azerbaijani offensive in Mountainous Karabakh. The Azerbaijani side claims to have responded on fire from the Armenian side. The lack of objective information makes every effort impossible to find a responsible for the escalation. We should not forget, that these fights are the heaviest since 1994, but not an exception. Since the ceasefire agreement of 1994 there have been incidents on the contact line for almost every day – sometimes with deadly result. Already in the last weeks before this breakout of violence we could observe that the incidents between the two sides intensified.

Who may profit from a destabilization of the situation in Mountainous Karabakh?

From a humanitarian point of view nobody. But the Azerbaijani government finds itself under pressure because of the current Oil Price Crisis. The retake of Mountainous Karabakh is demanded by the majority of Azerbaijani people and could be a chance for president Aliyev to strengthen his political position at home. On the other hand, Azerbaijan runs a number of common economical projects with western partners. To destabilize the region would be a foolish decision from that point of view.

The Armenian Army is weak in comparison to Azerbaijan. So the Armenian side would be well advised not to provoke any clashes with the Azerbaijani forces to keep the areas they took in 1994. On the other hand, the conflict gives Armenia the opportunity to present itself in front of the international community as the victim of Azerbaijan. So they can expect the solidarity of their western partners. During the last weeks Armenian diplomats succeeded to gain recognition of the “Republic of Mountainous Karabakh” from two US-States. The success is limited, because the decision of the two states is not obligating the US government to do the same.

According to international law Mountainous Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, even if today the majority of the population there is almost Armenian. There are UN-resolutions demanding the withdrawal of the Armenian forces.

What is the role of Russia in Mountainous Karabakh?

Maintaining the Status Quo was profitable for Russia, due to Moscow’s good diplomatic relations to both sides. Baku and Yerevan have deep economical connections to Russia, for example both sides are buying Russian weapons. Baku buys more modern weapons from Russia, due to the wealthier economy of Azerbaijan. But Russia has treaty obligations towards Armenia as part of the “Collective Security Treaty Organization”. There is a Russian military base in Armenia.

Some experts state that Russia is interested in the spread of violence in the region, to climb the international stage as the pacifier of the South Caucasus. This statement corresponds to the fact that very recently Russia gave Armenia a credit and at the same time weapons. Some of these weapons are the very complicated “Smerch”-rocket systems which we have seen already in action during the recent fights in Mountainous Karabakh. It’s impossible for a crew to learn handle these rockets in a few days.

Other analysts see a connection between the fights in Mountainous Karabakh and the conflict between Russia and Turkey, the protégée of Azerbaijan. But to argue it’s a proxy war could be gone too far. Russia is probably also interested to maintain it’s good relations with Azerbaijan.

There is also the theory claiming that the western orientated neighbor Georgia may be affected from the recent fights. Here in Tbilisi the government officials react very carefully on the situation in Karabakh. Georgia takes no side.

What is your opinion about this conflict, Mr. Bochmann?

I think it’s a humanitarian disaster and a total failure of local and international politics. This conflict is on the international agenda already for decades, but there is no progress. OSCE and Minsk Group are negotiating, all the big powers are taking part in the negotiations – but nothing happens. Both sides are continuously upgraded with military weapons but not showing political will to solve the conflict. And if you follow the more or less private social media you can see how much hatred and lack of confidence there is on both sides. Propaganda, manipulation, ideological and political abuse and a not existing cooperation are worsening the situation. Also there is no possibility of the people from both sides to meet and get to know each other. The region is like a playground of the special interests and non-democratic behaviour. There are no wise statesmen anywhere. The value of the life of a human is declining. We can only hope for the prevailing reason.

The original interview was published in German on the Friedrich Naumann Foundation website.

# Tata leaving UK steel industry in tatters?

**Saeed Rahman**

The decision of Indian steel group Tata to pull out of the UK is the latest phase in the sorry saga of the industry. Leave aside the question of whether Harold Wilson should have nationalized the industry in the 1960s, it has been something of a political football ever since.

There is no doubt that a country has strategic interests in its steel industry, and equally no doubt that these interests come under strain in a globalized economy. China emerged as by far the largest steel producer and with the collapse of domestic demand, has flooded the world with cheap, even loss leading steel. Cameron & Osborne have shown no inclination to stand up to China – in fact the complete opposite. One does wonder what the Conservative party understands by the national interest; unfortunately, one suspects this goes no further than the short term interests of their wealthier supporters.

After nationalization in 1967, successive Labour and Conservative governments were happy to run the UK steel industry inefficiently. If nationalization had brought in industrial democracy, as advocated by the Liberal party and practiced in Germany since the war, there may have been some argument for it, but typically nationalization under Labour simply meant the creation of another over-arching bureaucracy. Despite the general common-sense of steel industry trades unions, Thatcher, of course, had to take them on, and privatised the industry. To be fair, the structural changes in the steel industry were reflected across the western world, and MacGregor did, briefly, make British Steel profitable. The merger of British Steel with Dutch Koninklijke Hoogovens to form Corus Group in 1999 perhaps showed the way forward. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with their acquisition by Tata in 2006, which did bring new investment, particularly in the blast furnace at Port Talbot, but it did shift the focus of decision making outside of the UK and Europe. And as India, the world's fourth largest producer (the UK is 18<sup>th</sup>), feels the pressure from its own domestic issues and Chinese dumping, UK facilities are amongst their most marginal.

The long term solutions to the steel industries problems are inevitably within Europe. Vince Cable has called for short-term renationalisation, though sceptical of the state's ability to run the business. More specifically he has called for the state to take over Tata Steel's pension fund to make the business more attractive to a potential buyer. There is Vince's usual common sense in this, not least because a lot of the pension pot will relate to over-manning of the formerly nationalized industry. Focus has primarily been on Wales; at the time of writing it looks as if Greybull Capital, a UK company, will take over the Scunthorpe plant. The moth balled Motherwell plants have been transferred to Indian Liberty House, with intervention from the Scottish Parliament. It is rather bizarre that the Scottish Nationalists act, whilst Labour, in Wales, sit on their hands.

In October last year, the UK steel employers and trade unions tabled five 'key asks' to save the industry, which included 'fairer business rates' and 'support local content in major projects' – both of which fall under the responsibility of the Welsh Government and neither of which the Government has acted upon. Eluned Parrott AM, the Welsh Liberal Democrat Shadow Economy Minister, said "There are serious question marks over Carwyn Jones' leadership during this national crisis. Despite the magnitude of this issue, the Labour Government appears caught in the headlights and unable to act decisively. It shouldn't have taken nearly a week for Carwyn Jones to hold his so-called 'emergency' cabinet meeting. It's been reported that the Welsh Government has known since Christmas that Tata intended to shut its UK steel business, yet what has Carwyn Jones done since then in response to this crisis?"

"The steel industry has repeatedly asked the Welsh Government to cut business rates, but it has refused to do so. For over 18 months the Welsh Liberal Democrats have called for the reduction in business rates for heavy machinery, but Labour has done absolutely nothing. Time and time again Welsh Liberal Democrats have called for an audit of Welsh procurement, yet what has the Labour Government done? Nothing. Welsh

Liberal Democrats repeatedly called on the Labour Government to publish new guidance for public infrastructure projects that use steel. Has it happened? No.

“Let us be clear, the Conservative UK Government has disgracefully let down communities by its inaction and its decision to veto EU measures to stop the dumping of cheap Chinese steel. That doesn’t get Labour off the hook. For two whole years Carwyn Jones and his Labour Government have sat back and done nothing to properly support this important industry.”

Kirsty Williams AM, leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, added after the debate “The First Minister's response on steel doesn’t go far enough. Wales’ steel industry is of national strategic importance and must be secured for the long term. The thought of a Britain that doesn’t produce its own steel is unthinkable.

“Today was an opportunity to make a clear statement to potential buyers that the Labour Welsh Government will help create favourable conditions. That opportunity has been missed today by the failure to scrap business rates on heavy machinery like steel plants.

“I am equally stunned that procurement did not come up once in the First Minister’s statement. The Welsh Government must commission an audit of Welsh procurement to ensure that we’re setting purchasing criteria that match Welsh steel’s talents. It must also publish new guidance for public infrastructure projects that use steel.

“The last week has been devastating for workers and their families, the local community in Port Talbot, and for the wider Welsh economy. However, we can be confident that we produce the best steel in the world. We need both governments working flat out to ensure a buyer is found and that the plant keeps going while this happens.

## **MEPs call for EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia**

MEPs have called on the EU to impose an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia in response to the country's bombing campaign in Yemen that is causing mass civilian casualties.

The demand echoes calls by the Liberal Democrat MPs in Westminster who have urged the UK government to suspend arms sales to the Saudis, following a UN investigation which uncovered widespread attacks on civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law.

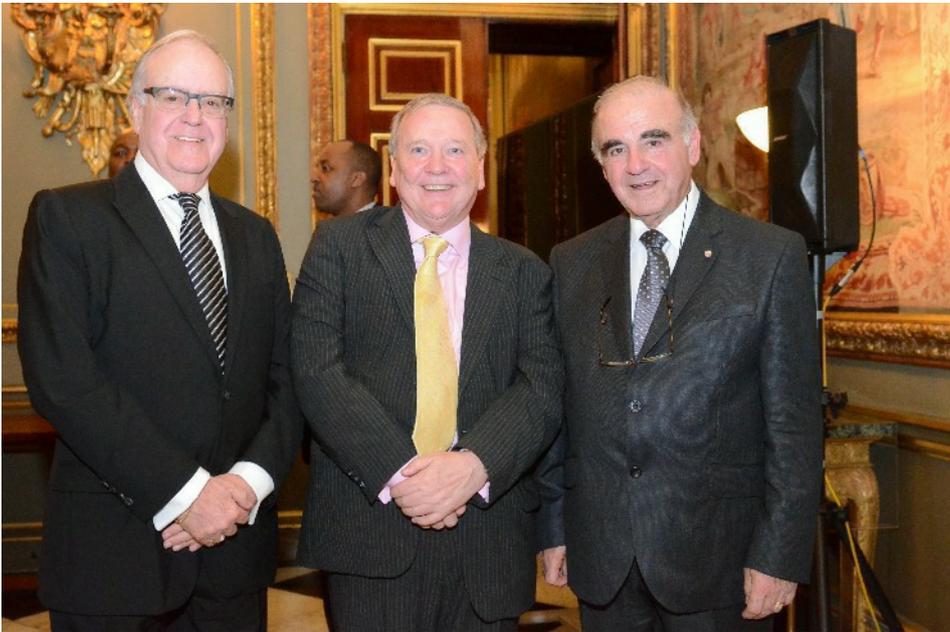
Conservative MEPs today refused to back the joint European Parliament resolution condemning Saudi Arabia for its airstrikes in Yemen, putting forward instead a separate motion that omitted any explicit criticism of the Saudi government. The move comes after intense lobbying from Saudi Arabia including a letter sent to MEPs earlier this week from the Saudi Ambassador to the EU.

Liberal Democrat MEP Catherine Bearder commented: "The EU should use its collective weight to put pressure on the Saudi regime and end this murderous bombing campaign. There is strong evidence that British weapons are being used against civilians in Yemen in clear violation of international law. The Conservatives must stop turning a blind eye to this scandal and support an EU-wide arms embargo until the situation improves."

## **Foreign Policy Trumped**

Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump, who has long shied away from naming any foreign policy advisors, suggested Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March that he was his own top consultant on the issue.

"I'm speaking with myself, number one, because I have a very good brain, and I've said a lot of things," Trump said during a telephone interview on MSNBC's Morning Joe.



Norman Hamilton Malta High Commissioner to London (who is speaking at the NLC

Commonwealth Forum on 14<sup>th</sup> April) with Trevor Peel & George Vella, Malta Foreign Minister at the Reception to mark the end of Kamallesh Sharma's term of office as Commonwealth Secretary General.

## Registration opens ahead of 196th EC Meeting

LI's 196th Executive Committee Meeting takes place on the 20th-22nd May at Tblisi, Georgia. Registration for the meeting is open from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April until the 6<sup>th</sup> of May.

The Republican Party of Georgia will host the Executive Committee Meeting in the Holiday Inn in central Tblisi. For delegates and guests a number of rooms have been secured at a special rate of \$130US (standard room) and \$160US (executive room). The room block and the special rate will be valid only until 19 April or until rooms sell out.

In order to register for the EC please follow this link at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/196th-executive-committee-meeting-20-21-may-tickets-23448149045>

To complete the registration of your party's delegation, please contact Alessandro Bilotta at the LI Secretariat to obtain the needed passcode to access the registration page.

For more general information on the EC, including on the statutory deadlines ahead of the EC, please visit the dedicated page of the LI Website at

[http://www.liberal-international.org/site/196th\\_Executive\\_Committee.html](http://www.liberal-international.org/site/196th_Executive_Committee.html)

The EC in Tblisi is set to gather over liberals from political parties, institutions, and thinkers from around the world, and will offer a unique opportunity to discuss transnational challenges on the frontline between Russia and Europe. Under the theme of 'Safeguarding Freedom and Security' various panel discussions will focus on a range of topics including the threat of Da'esh, the nuclear agreement with Iran, and the impact of increasing cyber-terrorism on the concept of privacy.

## Tim Garden Memorial Lecture by Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford

This year's lecture is by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford.

For booking please contact: [generalenquiries@libg.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@libg.co.uk) marking your email 'Garden lecture'

June 30, 2016 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

## **Moonlight over International Relations Committee the Chris Black tribute report...**

*Longer term Liberal Democrat bloggers will remember the evocatively named 'Moonlight over Essex', the blog of Cllr Chris Black, from Rayleigh, a not particularly notable area of Liberal Democrat support. And, having passed through Rayleigh earlier today, I was reminded of his blog. Hence, the title...*

This evening's meeting of International Relations Committee (24<sup>th</sup> February 2016) was an unusual one, possibly because we spent quite a lot of time on discussions of an organisational and functional nature. As part of the Party's Governance Review, Sal Brinton, in her capacity as Party President, has been meeting with various groups to discuss possible input and likely implications. And tonight, it was our turn.

I have to admit that I hadn't read the current document (habitual Party bureaucrat in 'not paying attention to constitutional stuff' outrage...), but quickly speed read through it to find the key principles. It seems that IRC will become a sub-committee of the proposed new Federal Board (not much different to its current position as a sub-committee of Federal Executive) but there was talk of business plans and more directly elected representation (only five of us are directly elected by Federal Conference delegates at present - myself included). A business plan is certainly a radical concept for IRC, which can be a bit of a talking shop given the lack of connection between it and the relevant backbench committees in Parliament. I personally don't get a sense that we are taken terribly seriously by the foreign affairs enthusiasts in either the Commons or the Lords, and thus don't need to be considered.

But, it was resolved that we would submit some feedback, individual and collective, to the Compliance Review in the next month (note to self, read current document...). I also noted that we need to think much more about our role and purpose, and others raised the issue of what mechanisms might be necessary to improve access and increase diversity.

Discussion then turned to my paper on future ALDE delegation makeup. The general sense seemed to be that the paper wasn't bad, but needed more consideration. In the meantime, my proposals for the 2016 ALDE Council delegation was endorsed by a rare IRC vote, 7-1, after which we were advised as to who the delegates now are. I am not one of them, although I am first reserve and have been led to believe that I might get to be Sal Brinton's understudy in Vilnius in early June. Frankly, I'll be there anyway as consort to the Vice-President, but I enjoy Council (a bureaucrat's natural environment) and like to think that I punch above my weight there.

We then had reports from the International Office on its work with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and from the Liberal Democrat 'Remain' team - all very interesting but not really appropriate for publication yet, I'd suggest. Besides, if you want to know what the International Office get up to, I strongly recommend their reports in Liberal Democrat Voice.

Verbal reports from various groups followed before, almost miraculously, we were done just before eight o'clock - IRC Chair, Robert Woodthorpe Browne, runs a tight ship when it comes to getting through the business. That left me with enough time to catch a civilised(ish) train back to mid-Suffolk and write this meeting report.

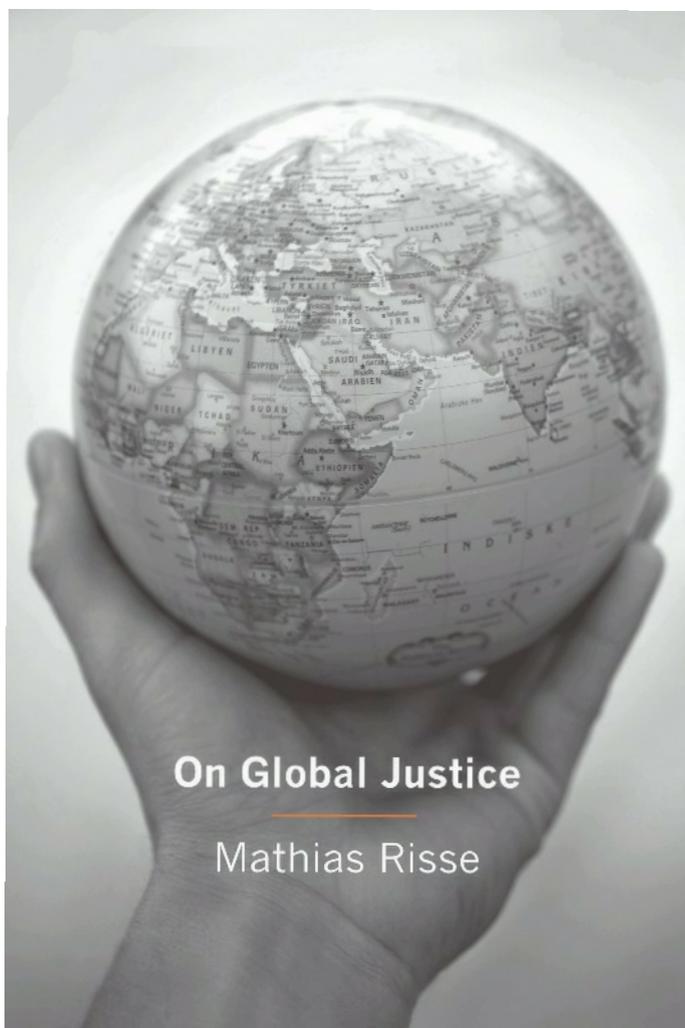
***Mark Valladares***

*Throwing some light on the darker corners of the Liberal Democrats committee system, Mark's article originally appeared in Mark Park's Liberal Democrat Newswire blog.*

# reviews

**On Global Justice, Mathias Risse  
Princeton University Press 2012**

In this broad survey of theories of justice, Mathias Risse, a professor of philosophy and public policy at Harvard, tries to reconcile competing opinions on who we owe our duties of justice to. He explains there are two main camps: statist who think we are only obliged to others within our state; and cosmopolitans who thinks justice extends too everyone equally. Risse finds neither of these positions are satisfactory and presents his own theory. He believes the state is a special unit of justice and there are strong claims of redistribution among its people. But there is also a global justice which is founded on common humanity, common ownership of the earth and membership in the global order. He looks at the practical implications of these grounds of justice, and I would like to highlight two which are relevant to our EU referendum.



In discussing immigration, Risse considers how the ground of original ownership of the earth affects proportionate use of the world's resources. Having argued there is a collective responsibility to make sure all people have their basic needs met, he then looks at what happens next if there are parts of the world which are under- and over-used. Use is defined as the per-capita use rate of common resources. He argues immigration should be permitted until the level of use is very similar in all states, and there should be global coordination.

This is a sensible idea, but the calculation needs to be a lot more nuanced. Being rich in raw materials is of little importance when you consider global migration routes. The key factor which attracts migrants is the quality of a state's institutions to make good use of the resources it has and distribute benefits throughout the population. Requiring migration to a resource-rich but institution-poor state is unlikely to help it develop. Further, a popular country like the UK may be relatively over-using its natural resources, but if its institutions are efficient and capable of generating more work, should it be permitted to deny entry to economic migrants?

More consideration also needs to be given to what happens to migrants when their sending state then

becomes a suitable receiving state. For example, following the migration to western in the EU after the accession of the eastern bloc, what happens now the eastern countries are becoming more wealthy? Should they be required to receive migrants from other states, or would their own returning nationals have a higher claim? This should make us think about whether free movement of peoples within Europe should be used to impose tough migration rules on non-EU nationals.

The second way this book is directly applicable to the EU is when Risse considers the interaction between justice and trade. He finds the literature shows trade liberalization has benefited the world economy,

including people in developing countries. The discussion becomes very interesting when he looks at the link between human rights and trade. This is a foundational belief of the EU, which makes membership (in part) conditional on states meeting basic human rights conditions. He thinks that because states must realize human rights, they must adopt policies which foster development, which include trade liberalization. This may suggest the EU is harming human rights by restricting membership of the trade bloc. However, Risse also acknowledges trade liberalization may have little effect if a state's institutions are weak. This supports the EU's policy of requiring states to be stable and open before they may enter the trade group. The benefits of trade liberalization should also make us consider whether a state which removes itself from free trade arrangements is impeding the human rights of its own population.

This work presents a fresh vision of how our common humanity and shared ownership of the Earth mean we all owe basic duties to each other. Risse argues there is a core of redistributive justice that all people participate in. His work provides many interesting points to consider as we face the possibility of leaving an organization founded on sharing resources.

*Eleanor Healy-Birt*

The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention, by Rajan Menon  
Oxford University Press 2016.

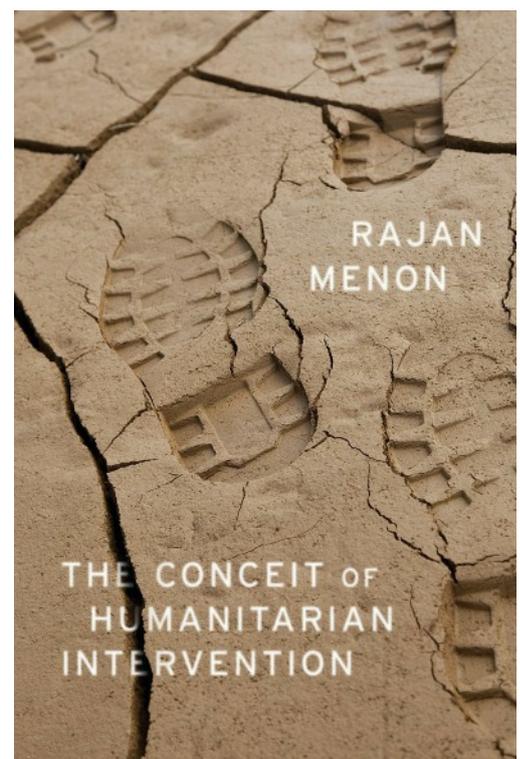
Does the international community exist outside the imagination of the UN, and a few academics and NGOs? Is humanitarian law worth the paper it is written on? Rajan Menon's book demolishes the notion that there is such a thing as global civil society and universal human rights. He argues that countries only intervene to help others when the costs and risks are not excessive and will not harm their national interests. He highlights the inconsistency of an "international community" that turns a blind eye to the mass atrocities in Indonesia, Guatemala, Rwanda and Sudan, while intervening in Libya and Iraq. He also shows in distressing detail how useless and even counter-productive the efforts to nation-build in the wake of our interventions (Bosnia, Libya, Iraq) have been.

At the heart of his argument is what the philosopher John Gray calls it the myth of historical progress: the belief that history is linear, rather than cyclical. "Treaties and declarations and resolutions record states' agreement that the evil of mass atrocities must be extinguished," Menon writes. "But the signatories of these parchments have shown themselves unwilling to undertake concrete obligations with any degree of consistency."

Menon concludes that the global response to the Syrian refugee crisis is proof the international community does not exist. With the exception of Germany, Canada and Sweden, wealthy countries are taking very few refugees, and he notes the reaction of oil-rich Gulf Arab countries who seem to have no interest in helping fellow Arab Muslims in need. Sadly, though, he fails to mention the deafening silence from "brother" African countries when ethnic cleansing and genocide rages in the continent.

Another quibble with this fascinating book is the author's failure to discuss possible non-military interventions such as targeted smart sanctions. If he had explored the other options available, one might feel slightly more hopeful for the human race. As it is, he leaves us to ponder Gray's withering judgement: "Civilisation is natural for humans, but so is barbarism."

*Rebecca Tinsley*

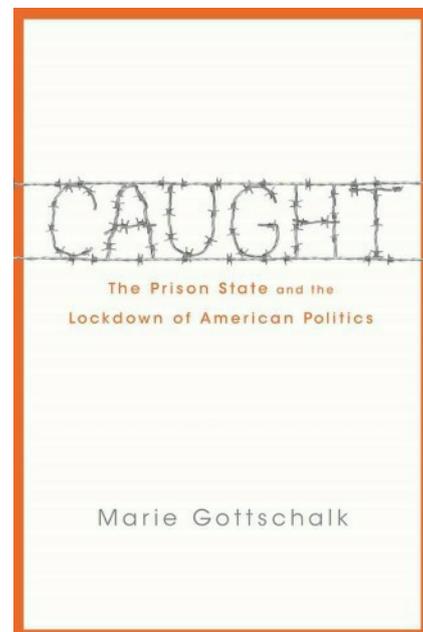


**Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics,**  
by Marie Gottschalk,  
Princeton University Press 2015, paperback 2016

*Caught* is hard-hitting book on all that is wrong with the American carceral state. Importantly, it also shows why previous reform efforts have failed. Although it is an in-depth analysis (containing hundreds of pages of citations) of the situation in the US, it serves as a warning to the rest of the world on what getting tough on crime really means: spending a lot of money to set up a damaging system you are too scared to dismantle.

Reviewed in interLib 2015-05, *Caught* has now come out in paperback with a new preface discussing the death of Michael Brown, shot in Ferguson, Missouri in August 2014 and a few other political developments.

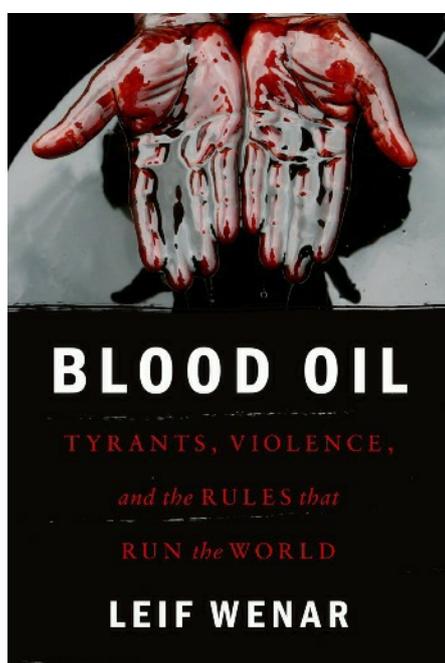
*Eleanor Healy-Birt*



**Blood Oil: Tyrants, violence and the rules that run the world, by Leif Wenar,**  
Oxford University Press

This book is for anyone who has surveyed the world's conflicts, and concluded, reluctantly, that 1) it's all about oil and so 2) there's nothing we can do about it. Rooted in both morality and common sense, Wenar provides practical proposals for how the international community can bring transparency and accountability to the profoundly corrupt places where rulers treat their nation's mineral and oil wealth like a personal bank account.

Wenar illustrates how resource-rich authoritarian regimes use a combination of violence and bribery to control their populations, enabling rulers to sell their nation's wealth to foreigners at will. The buyers treat this stolen property as if the dictator selling it had legal title. In the rare cases when citizens do benefit (Norway, Botswana) strong civil society pre-dated the discover of resources, enabling people to hold their rulers accountable. In the past 40 years, though, oil states have generally become poorer and more violent, while their dictators purchase Western real estate and luxury goods. We, as consumers, are complicit in this theft while we buy products made of oil and other resources. Meanwhile, the citizens of Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, etc., struggle to survive. As the UN Rapporteur on Torture said after a visit to Equatorial Guinea, "They don't even hide their torture instruments."



Throughout the book, the author draws parallels with the slave trade and the consumer boycott of slave sugar. He explores the geopolitical and commercial interests at work in appeasing monstrous dictatorships; and the stupidity of propping up Gulf countries where wealthy individuals fund international terrorism. He also explains how regimes use violence and a pyramid of subordination where patronage buys political loyalty from the military and other cronies.

Wenar's catalogue of greedy and corrupt rulers, and their degenerate behaviour, is depressing. Yet, he also shows how the age-old rule, "might is right" has been eroded. The Kimberly Process, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and Publish What You Pay, all require more responsible behaviour by commodity buyers. Groups like Global Witness, Freedom House and Transparency International shine a light on the kleptomania, human rights abuse and environmental destruction in dismal, resource-cursed nations. And international efforts to stop money-laundering have been given new strength by anti-terrorism initiatives. The author calls for a combination of incentives for those

resource-rich countries adopting more transparent and accountable policies; and personalised targeted smart sanctions on autocrats bleeding their people dry. He also envisages a Clean Trade Act requiring us to stop buying resources from murderous dictators, finding more ethical sources. He provides a shopping list of benchmarks whereby we can measure whether trade is appropriate. Most important, he illustrates how it is in the interests of business and governments (even the Chinese) to abide by a more ethical approach. Layered with examples from history and philosophical musing, Wenar's argument is convincing and empowering.

*Rebecca Tinsley*

## International abstracts

Republican's mindless obstruction has helped create something far worse, Dana Milbank – Washington Post op-ed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016

On the paralysis of US decision making.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/republicans-mindless-obstruction-has-helped-create-something-far-worse/2016/03/11/46ba9022-e723-11e5-b0fd-073d5930a7b7\\_story.html?hpid=hp\\_no-name\\_opinion-card-c\\_1%3Ahomepage%2Fstory](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/republicans-mindless-obstruction-has-helped-create-something-far-worse/2016/03/11/46ba9022-e723-11e5-b0fd-073d5930a7b7_story.html?hpid=hp_no-name_opinion-card-c_1%3Ahomepage%2Fstory)

Lord Avebury - obituary

[http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/14/lord-avebury-eric-lubbock-obituary?utm\\_source=Dr+Mark+Pack%27s+Liberal+Democrat+Newswire&utm\\_campaign=c4b266fc79-LDN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4474065684-c4b266fc79-312529241](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/14/lord-avebury-eric-lubbock-obituary?utm_source=Dr+Mark+Pack%27s+Liberal+Democrat+Newswire&utm_campaign=c4b266fc79-LDN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4474065684-c4b266fc79-312529241)

Lord Roper - obituary

[http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/07/lord-roper-obituary?utm\\_source=Dr+Mark+Pack%27s+Liberal+Democrat+Newswire&utm\\_campaign=c4b266fc79-LDN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4474065684-c4b266fc79-312529241](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/07/lord-roper-obituary?utm_source=Dr+Mark+Pack%27s+Liberal+Democrat+Newswire&utm_campaign=c4b266fc79-LDN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4474065684-c4b266fc79-312529241)

The rage of Trump fans isn't new, I've dealt with it for years, by Dawn M Turner, Washington Post 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Problem is (for the Trumpites), when you're down, looking up is a long way.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/03/29/the-rage-of-trump-fans-isnt-new-ive-dealt-with-it-for-years/>

Government must drop dogma to save UK steel, by Vince Cable.

Financial Times 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b27f0842-f67d-11e5-96db-fc683b5e52db.html#axzz45DkXczxB>

Information is power, and too much of it gets into the wrong hands, by Ed Lucas. Evening Standard 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016

On the Panama leaks and cyber security.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/ed-lucas-information-is-power-and-too-much-of-it-gets-into-the-wrong-hands-a3219291.html>

### *Liberator 377*

Becky Tinsley writes on the problems confronting America's Democrats, whoever leads as presidential candidate – Beyond Hillary & Bernie, and Lord Bonkers reports on the New Rutland primaries. David Green looks at the promotion of liberal democracy as a means of reducing defence spending.