



2019 no.1 £6.50 (free to members)

INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Schools Out! On the 15th February thousands of school students went on strike over government inactivity on Climate Change. Theresa May condemned them, but she's doing frack-all about it...

EVENTS

19th February Chinese Liberal Democrats' Lunar New Year Dinner – see page 32

22nd-23rd February Scottish Liberal Democrat Conference, Hamilton

9th March Women: shaping the future, making a difference. Liberal Democrat Women. Richard Mayo Centre, Kingston-upon-Thames. 9.45-4.30 Contact mary@maryreid.org.uk

16th-17th March Liberal Democrat Conference, York

23rd March Final Say March, London

2nd April LIBG Forum: subject tbc NLC

3rd June LIBG Forum: "USA Today" a look at the America of Trump. NLC

24th June NLC Diplomatic Reception

14th-17th September Liberal Democrat's Conference. Bournemouth

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, Intellectual Properties
Consultants, 29 St Helen's Crescent, Hastings
TN34 2EN, email lockharthastings@btconnect.com*

CONTENTS

In Iraq, Iran and Turkey are the real winners,
by Rebecca Tinsley. Pages 3-6

Ayşe Düzkan Page 6

Syria and its future, by John McHugo Pages 7-8

Damascus, by Jana Salem Pages 8-9

The state for liberalism in the Middle East,
by Guy Burton Pages 10-12

Obituaries: Paddy Ashdown Pages 12-15

Paddy Ashdown, the politician who
stood for something, by R.Tinsley Pages 12-13

Paddy Ashdown in Bosnia, by Kemal
Pervanić Pages 13-14

Chinese Lib Dem Tributes to the late
Lord Paddy Ashdown, by Linda Chung
& Merlene Emerson Pages 14-15

Obituary: Joyce Arram, by Monroe Palmer P.15-16

LI Congress Dakar, by Phil Bennion Pages 17-19

LI Human Rights Committee 1st
December 2018, by Phil Bennion Pages 19-20

Four foreign elections you should pay
attention to in 2019, and none are American,
by Mark Pack Pages 21-22

Bedouin Villages. Page 23

Nuclear treaty withdrawal risks global
instability Page 23

Lib Dems at York – the international bits... Page 24

International Abstracts Page 25

Reviews Pages 26-31

Chinese Lib Dems' Lunar New Year Banquet
and Auction Page 32

Photographs: Rose Rayment, Rebecca Tinsley,
Stewart Rayment, Chinese Lib Dems, York Tourism

**PUT IT
TO THE
PEOPLE**
PEOPLE'S VOTE MARCH

**SATURDAY MARCH 23, 12pm
HIGH NOON**

JOIN THE MARCH: PEOPLES-VOTE.UK/MARCH

In Iraq, Iran and Turkey are the real winners.

Rebecca Tinsley

The US is trying to create a Middle Eastern coalition to undermine Iran. They are sixteen years too late.

On the 13th February, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hosted a meeting in Warsaw¹, aimed at forming a Middle Eastern coalition against Tehran. Yet, at the same time, the Trump Administration has confirmed² most US forces will exit Syria by May, leaving a regional vacuum that benefits Iran, Turkey and Islamic State.

This could provoke a new surge of migration and, paradoxically, put America's closest ally, Israel, in peril: Iran is stockpiling weapons along the border³ between Syria and Israel, and its proxies are poised to menace⁴ the Israeli state. Yet, on January 3, President Trump said Iran could do what it wanted⁵ in Syria.

An Islamic state of mind

If one thing unites the Christian, Kurdish and Yezidi people in northern Iraq, it is contempt for American claims that Islamic State (IS or Daesh) is defeated⁶.

“Daesh change their tactics according to the circumstances,” says Sister Ilhan, an eighty-two-year-old nun I met in Qaraqosh on the Plain of Nineveh. “They shave off their beards, and melt back into the community, waiting until the West loses interest. Again,” she adds, pointedly.

Iraqi religious and ethnic minority groups interviewed for this article say the West has never understood Islamism, the ideology, as opposed to Islam, the religion. The Iraqis and Syrians who survived IS's bloodthirsty rule know it isn't simply a matter of killing a few thousand jihadis, or causing their retreat. IS's aims aren't necessarily about occupying territory, as western politicians or military analysts understand it.

Gill Lusk, an expert on Islamism, comments, “The short-termism that characterises the age is in stark contrast with the Islamist view, which is the ultimate in long-termism: the political horizon is literally infinity... International politicians and the media often talk as if “jihadists” (who they believe can be militarily defeated) and Islamist politicians (who can supposedly be negotiated with) were qualitatively different. In fact, they are two sides of the same ideological coin.”

Lusk draws parallels with the National Islamic Front's 1989 coup in Sudan. “The NIF spent some 14 years preparing to take power, placing sleepers in strategic positions in the armed forces and civil service; sending trained cadres to fill “hardship posts” for teachers in remote areas of what was then Africa's largest country; setting up charities, especially in areas of famine or especial poverty, to provide aid or services that central government failed to provide. Such tactics were also used by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, helping to ensure that Mohamed Morsi won, briefly, the presidency in 2012.”

While Iraqi prime minister Haider al-Abadi echoes Trump, proclaiming IS is defeated⁷, just across the border in Syria they killed four US military personnel and dozens of Kurdish Peshmerga in January. Moreover, there were 1,600 IS attacks across Iraq in 2018. Trump recently told⁸ Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he can “have Syria”, emboldening Ankara to eliminate its enemies, the Kurds, the only efficient military presence keeping civilians and religious minorities safe from IS.

Pari Ibrahim from the Free Yezidi Foundation says, “It is folly to suppose that thousands of Daesh adherents will simply stop fighting or change their ideology. And it is impossible to imagine that Turkey, of all countries, would be a force to contain Islamic extremism.”⁹

She was alluding to the years in which Ankara turned a blind eye as IS recruits travelled through Turkey to Syria and Iraq¹⁰. Turkey also reputedly allowed¹¹ IS smugglers to move oil and historical artefacts across the border¹². Moreover, many in the region claim Erdogan shares IS’s Islamist ideology.

Although the US spent \$26 billion training Iraq’s army¹³, there is little confidence in them. Sister Sarah, a nun I met in Telusqif in northern Iraq, recalls how the army vanished when IS attacked Mosul in 2014, abandoning US munitions for the Islamists to seize¹⁴. “One minute they were there, telling us they would hold back Daesh, and the next moment we realized we were alone. They didn’t even tell us they were



Rebecca Tinsley with the Dominican Sisters in Telusqif, northern Iraq.

leaving. I thought I’d be gone a couple of days, but it was three years before I could return. All my books from my studies in Britain had been destroyed. Our convent had been used as a Daesh rape centre,” she continues. “They left empty Viagra packets all over the floors.”

The Plain of Nineveh is still contested by rival military camps, as it has been since Alexander fought Darius III of Persia. Outside the convent in Telusqif stands a Kurdish Peshmerga outpost, and yet the city is in Iraq. The nuns struggle to convince local Christians not to emigrate to safer, more tolerant places. Although there have been Christians present since 100 AD, their numbers have fallen from 10% of the Iraqi population in 1950 to 1% now.

Where did it all go wrong?

The Iraqis interviewed for this article traced their problems back to the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

“We wanted Saddam gone, OK? We hated that guy. But errors were made,” a Kurdish businessman explained over lunch. We sat in the shady garden of a restaurant, high in the mountains of northern Iraqi Kurdistan, admiring the bubbling aqua marine water of the Ava Sin river.

“Right from the start, the Americans only cared about guarding the oil ministry in Baghdad,” he said. “They just shrugged as the criminal element ransacked the national museum. That sent a clear message.”

The lack of security was compounded by the American administrator Paul Bremer’s decision to fire the entire Iraqi army and security services. The Kurdish businessman, who once ran a pizza parlour in London, told me,

“The Americans thought every Baath Party member loved Saddam. They didn’t understand that no one got a job or a university place unless they joined. It was just a means to an end. Then, Bremer allowed new political parties based on Shia or Sunni identity,” the businessman continued. “How can you create a fresh national identity when so many people feel ignored by the guys with the power and money? Now, everything benefits the Shia.”

“The 2003 invasion? Tehran won,” his colleague, a property developer from Erbil, added. “Now, Iraqi security is in the hands of the Badr Brigade from Tehran. And the Popular Mobilization Forces, who take their orders from Iran.”

According to the Kurdish businessman, Iraq’s disenfranchised Sunnis were incensed when aid vanished, and the only reconstruction happened in Shia areas. Al Qaeda seized the opportunity to recruit disenchanted,

unemployed Sunni soldiers into their ranks. Then Islamic State arrived, and “the hard-liners left Al Qaeda and joined Daesh.” Now, “The government in Baghdad doesn’t control anything beyond the suburbs.”

America missed another opportunity when IS was beaten back in 2017, the businessman said. “You guys needed to tell Baghdad to spread the reconstruction funds between the Sunni, Shia, Kurds, Christians and Yezidis.”

A Yezidi charity worker confirmed the allegation that only Shia had benefited. “For the first eighteen months, we didn’t see any money, although we know there’s been billions of dollars pouring into Iraq. It’s arriving now, but it’s too late for many people who’ve already left. “

An assistant to a Catholic bishop told me, “The United Nations asks the officials in Baghdad how the UN should distribute grants, and the authorities send them to Shia villages,” she explained. “We had one UN project in our area, just one, for a population of 120,000: the UN were supposed to refurbish a school destroyed by IS. They re-plastered the outer wall of the compound, painted it, and then sprayed the logo of the UN agency on the wall. The school rooms inside are still unusable.”

“If the PKK leaves, IS will take their place”

The Kurdish property developer drove us to a remote valley where the PKK, the Turkish Kurdish militia, hides. “If the PKK leave, then Islamic State will take their place,” he said. He warns that young people will emigrate, due to lack of security or economic opportunities. “Erdogan has bought our leaders,” he said, giving as an example a fifty-year oil deal with Erdogan, signed by the Barzanis, Iraqi Kurdistan’s ruling family¹⁵.

Several Kurdish business people shared his view, saying infrastructure and procurement contracts go to Barzani cronies who then subcontract to Turkish firms. “They do a rubbish job, these Turks, because they’re being given just a slice of the money allocated for the project. I despised Saddam because he killed so many of my people. But only Saddam’s family was corrupt. Everyone else followed the rules. If an engineer messed up, or took a bribe, Saddam let it be known that the guy had been buried alive in concrete.” Consequently, Saddam-era roads and buildings “are still pretty good compared to the crap built now.”

There are 18 Turkish military bases¹⁶ within Iraqi Kurdistan, hunting the PKK, and since 2015, there have been hundreds of aerial attacks by Turkey, resulting in the deaths of 460 Kurdish civilians¹⁷. In January, a crowd protested outside one of the bases, claiming that every Kurdish family in the area had lost someone because of Turkey’s inaccurate bombing campaign. The Turks shot one of the protesters dead, injuring ten others¹⁸.

On the top of a mountain is a sprawling compound, memorializing the Barzani family; three enormous pavilions, with a restaurant that can feed a thousand at a sitting. The lawns are emerald green against the surrounding dun-coloured hills, while the empty buildings are kept cool in summer and warm in winter. We were the only visitors to Kurdistan’s own corner of North Korea that day.

Kurdish institutions are so distrusted that few keep money in a bank. In restaurants, female diners carry big handbags containing the sum total of their family’s wealth, in case a burglar breaks into their home while they are out.

“We made matters worse for ourselves,” the real estate developer commented. “The Barzanis want to go down in history as the leaders who delivered Kurdish independence. So, against the advice of America and Europe, they held a non-binding referendum in 2017. It caused a bust-up with Baghdad, and they closed our airport and sealed us off for six months.”

When I asked about the vote, he sniggered, “The Germans think they’re so clever because they know the result of their elections within a few hours. But that’s nothing: we Kurds know our results three months before the polls open.” His smile faded as he considered how vulnerable the people of northern Syria and Iraq will be when the Americans leave, and the Kurdish Peshmerga is attacked by Daesh and the Turks. As

for the prospect of Iran tightening its grip on Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, he said, “My son has tried to sneak into Britain to find work on seven occasions. He’s failed every time, but I’ll be giving him money to try again.”

Rebecca Tinsley is the founder of Network for Africa, a charity that trains local people to become lay counsellors for the survivors of conflict and genocide. She also founded Waging Peace, an NGO campaigning for human rights in Sudan.

This article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. It originally appeared in Open Democracy on 14th February 2019

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/rebecca-tinsley/in-iraq-iran-and-turkey-are-real-winners>

¹ [https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/02/iranian-opposition-kurdish-pompeo-summit-warsaw-poland.html?utm_campaign=20190207&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%20Newsletter%20%20\(1\)%09www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/02/iranian-opposition-kurdish-pompeo-summit-warsaw-poland.html?utm_campaign=20190207&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%20Newslet](https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/02/iranian-opposition-kurdish-pompeo-summit-warsaw-poland.html?utm_campaign=20190207&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%20Newsletter%20%20(1)%09www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/02/iranian-opposition-kurdish-pompeo-summit-warsaw-poland.html?utm_campaign=20190207&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%20Newslet)

² al-jazeera

³ theatlantic.com

⁴ <https://www.weeklyblitz.net/world/iran-tiptoeing-toward-israels-northern-border/>

⁵ www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-official-in-shock-as-trump-says-iran-can-do-what-they-want-in-syria/

⁶ https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/rebecca-tinsley/trump-syria-exit-coalition-isis.html%3Futm_campaign=20190207&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Middle%20East%20Minute

⁷ <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/01/25/islamic-state-2019-assessment.html>

⁸ www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/trouble-turkey-erdogan-isis-and-kurds

⁹ <https://www.freeyezidi.org/blog/free-yezidi-foundation-report-withdrawal-of-us-troops-from-syria/>

¹⁰ <https://www.theweek.co.uk/60065/how-are-british-jihadists-travelling-to-syria-and-iraq>

¹¹ link doesn't connect

¹² <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraq-foils-smuggling-usd13-mn-antiquities-smuggling-turkey/>

¹³ <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/09/iraq-army-security-force-billions/>

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/world/middleeast/mosul-iraq-militants-seize-us-weapons.html>

¹⁵ www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-iraqi-kurdistan-agree-on-50-year-energy-accord-6742

¹⁶ <https://ekurd.net/turkish-military-bases-kurdistan-2016-07-20>

¹⁷ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/death-above-iraqi-border-villages-bear-brunt-turkish-air-strikes>

¹⁸ <https://www.meforum.org/57680/kurdistan-region-of-iraq-caught-between-turkey>

Ayşe Düzkan

Journalist Ayşe Düzkan has completed nearly two weeks in jail for joining a solidarity campaign for a well know Kurdish newspaper by working for it one day as an editor in chief. There are nearly two dozen more journalist and intellectuals also have been trying by courts and accused of helping a terrorist cause. Ayşe Düzkan is the first one who got an actual jail term in this case. When this series trials started no one thought that the court decision would be jail terms, rather than a fine and postponed sentences. But with Ayşe Düzkan's sentencing the general atmosphere took a different turn. According to the sentence which was given to her, she will stay in the prison more than a year. These type of jail terms are aiming to crush any democratic means of protests. Also spreading fear to those who would be dissidents and thinking of joining the protests of any kind. President and his government possibly hoping that democratic protests would turn into undemocratic means than they could justify their oppressive regime.

Last note: Apart from a few voices in the EU or anywhere from western democracies there is absolutely no reaction coming for these unjust jail terms.

Syria and it's future.

John McHugo

LIBG looked at Syria, "Past, Present and Future", at the National Liberal Club on 5 December. The speakers were John McHugo (author of *Syria: A Recent History* and a member of the Lib Dem Foreign Affairs advisory group), Chris Doyle, the Director of the Council for Arab British Understanding (CAABU) and Jana Salem, a Syrian journalist based in Damascus. Her comments were strictly on a Chatham House Rule basis only. No photos were taken and the event was not recorded.

John set the scene by explaining how Syria got to the point where demonstrations for freedom and democracy were met by a violent response in 2011, and this degenerated into armed conflict. In his view, Syria's best chance to evolve into a modern, democratic nation state was lost in the aftermath of the First World War. This happened when the imperial ambitions of Britain and France, coupled with the promises in the Balfour Declaration, frustrated the constitutional monarchy that was proclaimed in Damascus.

Syria was put under a French mandate, very much against its will. France tried unsuccessfully to split Syrians along religious and sectarian lines, but conceded independence to the country grudgingly at the end of the Second World War. Syria was now a fragile parliamentary republic beset by multiple internal and external problems, and facing calls for social revolution. It was a democracy, and religion was largely absent from political life, but politics became increasingly chaotic and was punctuated by military coups. The nationalist and socialist Ba'th party eventually took control in the 1960s. Land was distributed to peasants and many businesses were nationalised, but coups and military purges continued. Stability was only restored when the minister of defence, Hafez al Assad, seized power in 1970.

The death of democratic politics and Soviet style socialist measures antagonised many in the pious Sunni merchant class. At the same time, members of the Alawi minority (to which the Assad family belonged) came to constitute the backbone of the feared and unaccountable internal security services. Clans, tribal leaders and members of Ba'th party organisations such as student, worker and peasant groupings joined militias and were issued with arms. Syria became a country divided between those with a stake in the regime and those excluded. Corruption increased exponentially. All this led to the introduction and growth of sectarian politics.

From the time of the bloody suppression of an Islamist insurgency in Hama in 1982 (if not before), fear of the internal security services ensured that no opposition group - democratic or otherwise- could emerge. When Hafez al Assad died in 2000, he was followed by his son, Bashar al Assad. This was not purely a dynastic succession. It occurred because the elite had confidence he would safeguard their interests. In the decade before the Arab Spring demonstrations spread to Syria in March 2011, there was a certain amount of economic growth as a result of neo-liberal policies. These were marred by corruption (notably in the president's immediate circle). There was a sharp widening of divisions between the "haves" and "have nots" while the middle class was squeezed.

Historians will probably always speculate what might have happened if Bashar al Assad had tried to ride the wave of protests in 2011 by making himself the leader of the calls for reform, and trying to implement them. But the terrifying security state created by his father was the guardian of his rule, and genuine reform would have meant confronting the powerful vested interests on which he relied for support. When protesters began to respond in kind to the violence meted out to them, the hardliners in the regime whose instinct was to revert to the tactics used in Hama in 1982 won the argument. The result was that Syria descended into civil war. Chris Doyle focussed on the role of outside interventions on one side or other in the conflict. In fact, it is not right to call it a "two-sided conflict". Turkey now controls a portion of northern Syria, the regime cannot sustain itself without Russian and Iranian support (to say nothing of the assistance it is receiving from Hizbollah and mercenaries recruited from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan), while Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia the

USA and the European powers have at times backed different opposition factions. Israel also has its own red lines in Syria. There is a possibility that Syria will remain split between a number of different zones of control for the foreseeable future, and the competing powers have their own interests to protect. Protecting their interests has been their main concern, not the welfare of the Syrian people and bringing peace and reconciliation.

He was not opposed in principle to intervention under the R2P principles (very unlikely to occur because of deadlock in the UN Security Council) or humanitarian intervention, but it has to be properly thought through and have specific goals, which has not been the case in the past. He stressed the way in which foreign parties have used Syria as a battle ground for their ambitions and to extend their regional influence. By way of example, the list of "Friends of Syria" group of countries established in 2012 following an initiative by President Sarkozy of France would have appeared to the Kremlin as though it might just as well have been called "the enemies of Russia". The exclusion of Russia made it unlikely that the group could bring peace to Syria, given Russia's strong links to the regime, which have been continuous since the 1950s. He also criticised western countries that had given many Syrians the impression that the West would come to their aid if they rose up against the regime, but had not thought through how they would do this. The result was that the Syrian people now felt abandoned by the West.

He considered that the conflict might well have run its course by now because of the exhaustion of the parties, were it not that the foreign parties intervening were able to sustain the conflict and, on the basis of a brutal cost/benefit analysis, may continue to do this. The best hope for the future lay in much franker dialogue and less grandstanding. He hoped that there were signs of this in talks held between Russia and Turkey concerning the cease-fire in Idlib.

John McHugo.

The LIBG Forum on Syria was held on 5th December 2018 at the National Liberal Club, London.

Damascus

Jana Salem

My name is Jana. I'm a Syrian journalist based in the Syrian capital Damascus.

This month I had the chance to visit London for a week. It wasn't my first Western experience as I have visited many European countries in the past few years, but coming to the UK has a special effect on me. It is great to be in country that has always played a significant role in the politics of the Middle East, where my country is located.

During my visit, I met great people at Liberal International. We talked for more than an hour about my country, Syria, that is now torn apart by unprecedented brutal war that began seven years ago. I had 15 minutes to give a brief about how life looks like in my city, Damascus, that is under the control of Syrian government. I believe many of you are hearing about how the war is drawing to an end in Syria, and that the Syrian government is taking back control on all the country and getting ready for the reconstruction/re-stabilization phase, where the West is expected to play a vital role. Other fresh news also talk about how many Arab and Western countries are re-establishing or preparing to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Syrian government, as if we can easily forget the past seven year and erase all our losses.

So I was given fifteen minutes to talk about Damascus, and this couldn't be enough in any way to describe how millions are living in a post-war environment that is full of losses, poverty, corruption and lack of proper life conditions, and at the same time full of great spirit of people who still love their country and want the best for it.

Thus, I chose specific messages to focus on, and I think it is my duty to repeat those messages over and over again, due to their importance to us, Syrians who are working hard to build a better future for Syria, Syria that we hope to free from tyranny, corruption and clientelism that are now controlling our country. Here I would like to mention that I was myself between the first demonstrators who went out to the street in March 2011 demanding and chanting for freedom, justice and dignity. Live bullets and then tanks of Syrian army and security forces “Mukhabarat” were waiting for our peaceful movement, that later turned into this terrible proxy war that we are still living until now.

War is over? This phrase is far away from being the truth about Syria. Syria is a destroyed country now. Thousands of people have lost their lives. Around 6 million are refugees outside the country, and other 6 million are internally displaced after losing their houses. Around 80 percent of Syrians now live under poverty line, and more than 50 percent do not have any employment opportunities. The UN estimates that war has cost \$226 billion to Syrian economy. Corruption inside the country is now on its highest level and is taking many directions, both horizontally and vertically, and in all government institutions without exception, and without any signs of possible reforms in the near future. Freedom of speech and media are at their worst. Journalists are being arrested for the simplest reasons, and we feel as if we are living in a kingdom of terrifying silence where we are not allowed to raise our voices. Jana is not my real name, and I would never dare to write to you with my name or share any of my personal details, as I still live inside this frightening kingdom.

Unfortunately, the tunnel that my country is walking in today is very dark and very long, it seems endless. Nevertheless, I cannot help myself but feeling hopeful. Nothing lasts forever, and this hope needs also some actions.

It is for sure that we are longing to see our country rebuilt and recovered from this long war, but rebuilding and stabilization cannot be accompanied with corruption. How can we imagine giving a corrupted government, where nobody is able to perform anything without paying bribes, and where law and order have no place at all, millions of dollars? How are we talking about reconstruction and re-stabilization while millions of Syrians are still scattered all around the world without being able to come back for the same security fears they had seven years ago, and while more than 200 thousand Syrians are disappeared without trace, mostly in regime prisons, and while this regime, that killed and displaced millions just because they wanted a better life, is still in power? For the international community to act like that, is a direct and clear message for all countries around the world: do not ever dare to revolt against oppression, or you would have the same fate as Syrians. And you tyrants, go kill your people and destroy your countries, and you would be awarded with more power and more money. The Syrian context is changing rapidly. I don't have magic solutions as I'm not politician. I'm a journalist who lives between people, and feels their daily suffering and pain. I might have some advice, especially for key people inside the UK, the country that I still hope would be able to play a positive role in the future of my country.

Whenever you want to take actions, please consider the Syrians themselves.

If you want to participate in reconstructing Syria, please think about those who are outside the country and cannot have any role in deciding the future shape of their cities, the shape that would be decided by politicians and businessmen, not by the real owners of the lands. Please think about those who are still living in a semi-destroyed houses waiting for this massive reconstruction machine that would swallow their neighbourhoods and their dreams. If you want to participate in any political solution, please consider those who are still in prisons, waiting for a glimmer of light. If you are not able to change politics, please try to make life easier and better for Syrians. Those are the ones who paid the bigger price while fighting for their main cause: dignity and freedom.

Wish you a very happy new year!

Jana Salem

The state for liberalism in the Middle East

Guy Burton

Looking back, 2018 was not a good year for liberals and liberalism in the Middle East. The Freedom House think tank categorised all the countries in the region as “unfree,” with the exception of Morocco, Jordan and Kuwait as “partially free” and Israel as “free.” Yet taking a longer view, there are possibilities that their fortunes may improve.

Over the course of 2018 this seemed unlikely. Although Israel was classified by Freedom House as free, its response to Palestinian protests during 2018 was harsh. In March, Palestinians began protests demanding the right of refugees to land from which they had been displaced. They also protested the ongoing Israeli blockade of Gaza and the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem at the end of 2017. In the clashes that took place during the year, over 150 Palestinians were killed.

Meanwhile, in Syria the Assad regime was steadily clawing back control of much of the country, helped by its Russian and Iranian allies. While the retreat of the extremist militant Islamic State group was welcome, the return of Assad did not lead to greater liberty and tolerance. New legislation known as Law 10 required Syrians to prove ownership of their property by returning to the country and providing within one month of government plans in areas marked for reconstruction (later extended to one year). Many criticised it as a way to disenfranchise many of the Syrians who had fled the country for fear of persecution and who dare not risk returning.

The Saudi crown prince, Muhammad bin Salman (MbS), was implicated in the assassination of a Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, in his country’s consulate in Istanbul in October. MbS perhaps thought that his action would be overlooked, especially given the international disregard following his decision to place several members of the royal family under house arrest for alleged corruption and the Saudis’ forced resignation of the Lebanese prime minister at the end of 2017 (subsequently revoked). Instead, global condemnation was widespread, although US President Donald Trump tied himself in knots to excuse MbS while Russian President Vladimir Putin embraced him publicly at the G20 meeting in November.

Staying with Saudi Arabia, both it and its UAE ally saw their intra-Gulf dispute against Qatar harden. The crisis began in the wake of Trump’s first overseas visit in mid-2017, when he left sufficient ambiguity for the Saudis and Emiratis to believe he backed them against Qatar’s independent foreign policy. Among the issues that riled them included Qatar’s rapprochement with Iran – a key Saudi rival – as well as its support for Islamist movements and armed groups and the conduct of the Doha-based Al Jazeera news network. But instead of isolating Qatar, the Saudi and Emirati-led boycott arguably pushed Qatar to build closer ties with both Iran and Turkey in 2018 and to take steps to increase its economic self-sufficiency. One of the most notable aspects of this was the construction of a dairy industry from scratch.

Meanwhile, Turkey’s own strongman, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, continued his pursuit of rivals and dissidents. The country hemorrhaged both people and money, with many of them taking their capital with them. Erdogan made matters worse when he opposed the Central Bank’s efforts to control inflation by increasing interest rates. He demanded they remain low, exacerbating an economic situation that saw the lira’s value fall by 30 percent against the dollar and increasing prices for everyone.

In May President Trump pulled the US out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany). Iran had agreed to limit and reduce its nuclear programme in exchange for a lifting of sanctions and more economic opportunities, including investment. Trump took the decision despite evidence that Iran had continued to abide by the

agreement. The Europeans, Russians and Chinese all expressed their disappointment at the US decision and promised to continue with the agreement, although their solidarity began to waver ahead of the US restarting sanctions in November.

These developments occurred against a trend of general malaise across the region as a whole. In 2011 people power in the form of the Arab Spring swept the region, leading to the downfall of authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Those advances then hit a wall with the Saudis' intervention in Bahrain and Assad's growing repression in Syria. By 2013 counterrevolutionary forces seemed in full swing, most visibly in Egypt where a coup brought General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to power in July. A month later, the new regime forcibly repressed protestors, leading to over 600 deaths.

In Syria, the initial optimism of the uprising had been blocked by the regime and the country was disintegrating rapidly into a vicious civil war fought by several sides. In Libya, the unified opposition had similarly fragmented, resulting in ongoing violence and warlordism and the separation of the country among different groups. The same fate would also befall Yemen, where a pre-2011 struggle between government and groups seeking greater autonomy was exacerbated by the involvement of external actors, led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE after March 2015.

For these three countries, the impact of war will be felt beyond the present and for at least another generation. According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Syria, Yemen and Libya experienced the greatest falls in human development in the region between 2012 and 2017.

The Middle East was also underperforming in countries which were less at risk from conflict. Overall, the state of human development across the region as a whole is at the higher end of the medium range on the UNDP's own scale. Meanwhile, in terms of happiness, the average score across the whole region was 5.1, where 0 equals the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life.

While happiness was lowest in countries at war, they were highest in the Gulf – which is also where human development is on a par with some of the richest parts of the world. Yet when comparing the findings between 2008-10 and 2015-17, there has been a decline in levels of happiness – and that includes the Gulf. Amid this gloom though, there are reasons for optimism. In Iran, protestors took to the streets at the beginning of 2018. The initial reason was rising prices, but they soon adopted a critical view of the government. Although the government eventually shut them down, they did not completely disappear and protests continued to bubble across the country throughout the year.

In Saudi Arabia, much attention was focused on the government's decision to end the ban on women driving and more forms of public entertainment, like cinemas. The youthfulness of both MbS and his desire to modernise the country has been cited as reasons for the changes.

But perhaps just as important as MbS's "pull" factor is the "push" side of the equation, from society. Since independence, the region's leaders kept control through a bargain with society. In exchange for remaining in power they would provide generous welfare provision: public education, healthcare, housing and often a government job. What paid for this social contract were high energy prices in the case of oil and gas producers in the Gulf and generous (Western) aid provision among the rest.

For decades the good times rolled – until they no longer did. Before the Arab Spring, international organisations like the UNDP and World Bank were already reporting on the poor quality of public services and job opportunities in the region and public dissatisfaction was growing at the unresponsive nature of the government to these ills.

Seen in this light the uprisings that took place in 2011 were unsurprising. Moreover, it is not evident that any of the countries that faced public unrest have responded sufficiently to the challenge. Consequently, while Assad, Sisi and the ayatollahs may think they have contained any internal threat, it may be that their grip on power turns out to be illusory.

So far, only the Gulf states seem to be actively grappling with the issue. In large part they have been helped

by the greater wealth they already possess, enabling them to propose ambitious economic diversification and restructuring efforts. The most visible examples of this are the massive sovereign wealth trusts they have established, the funds of which they have invested around the world. At home, they are courting foreign businesses to set up and encouraging their citizens to retrain and prepare for alternative types of careers outside of government.

Given their recent nature, the outcome and impact of these measures is currently unknown. But Gulf leaders know they must succeed or they risk facing the same fate as those who fell in 2011. However, it may well be the case that the reforms they have embarked on may well bring about exactly what they fear.

As societies become less dependent on government for public goods and income, they will become less beholden to elites and more autonomous. While some will keep a conservative outlook, others will demand a greater say, not just in terms of economic choice, but political ones as well. The days of exclusive government will be over. If and when that happens then, the prospects for liberals and liberalism in the Middle East – which seem so uncertain in 2018 – must surely improve.

Guy Burton

Guy Burton is Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics Middle East Centre. He has previously held teaching and research positions at universities in Palestine, Iraq and Dubai. Before embarking on an academic career, he worked for the Liberal Democrats in Parliament and local government.

It is often said that the UK's Liberal Democrats and Liberal party have been lucky in having leadership that was truly internationalist. With Paddy Ashdown there was no doubt.

Paddy Ashdown, the politician who stood for something Rebecca Tinsley

Paddy Ashdown once said that a politician should have one issue – any issue – for which they are prepared to be lined up against a wall and shot. For Paddy, that issue was Bosnia. He knew it would not win him votes, but it was the moral litmus test of the 1990s, along with the more obscure Rwandan genocide. Parliamentarians mocked him for his relentless championing of the Bosnian Muslim cause, accusing him of being sanctimonious. He was one of only two voices in Parliament (the other was Conservative MP Patrick Cormack) who consistently raised the Balkan wars, warning that the Serb leader, Slobodan Milosevic, must not be appeased by an indifferent international community. His efforts were ignored, and he was belittled by arrogant Foreign Office ministers and officials, implying Paddy didn't understand the “ancient ethnic hatreds” in play, as they always do when they are looking for a reason not to confront a dictator.

The FCO response to Paddy's dogged questions came via their hapless ministers, and the gormless PM, John Major. It followed the standard Whitehall play book: they denied there was genocidal intent behind Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing; they minimized the scale of the atrocities; they placed equal blame on the Serbs, who were slaughtering unarmed civilians, and the Bosnian Muslims, who made up 90% of the casualties; they regarded the architects of the genocide (the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs) as their partners in the search for peace; they wasted years on futile negotiations; and they sent humanitarian aid in place of a political solution to a political problem.



Right from the beginning, Paddy knew that Milosevic, Mladic, Karadzic and their drugged-up, alcoholic Serbian thugs would run away if the international community showed the slightest unity of purpose. And so it came to pass, belatedly, not via the useless European institutions, but thanks to Bill Clinton and a hand full of cruise missiles.

Paddy instinctively grasped what the FCO still cannot see: that bullies only respond to having their bluffed called, not appeasement. He understood that the occasional morally equivalent chastisement from London, Brussels, Paris or Washington would have no effect on Belgrade. Rather, he advocated consistent pressure from a united international community, with serious consequences for broken promises. As the Serbs shelled Sarajevo at their leisure, and the bodies piled up, and the UK public woke up to the genocide being perpetrated within two hours' flying time of London, the diplomats responded with a toothless peacekeeping force with no mandate to protect civilians. Paddy predicted this pitiful policy would fail, as it did, culminating in Srebrenica.

After the war, it emerged that Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary urging appeasement of Milosevic, and his FCO mandarin, Pauline Neville-Jones, had formed a company to privatize Serbia's public utilities for Milosevic. Throughout the slaughter, they promoted Milosevic as the man who would bring peace to the Balkans, ignoring his central role as the prime mover in creating Greater Serbia. Both Hurd and Neville-Jones now sit in the House of Lords, regarded by the media and their peers as wise and respected commentators on foreign affairs.

Nor did Labour cover itself in glory over Bosnia. John Smith told colleagues, "Our people don't care about this kind of thing." Meanwhile, Labour MPs like John Reid and Jeremy Corbyn had a knee-jerk sympathy for their former Communist comrades in Serbia, and a suspicion of any cause, such as the Bosnian Muslims, supported by the USA.

Paddy's track record meant he was well-equipped for his role as High Representative (2002-2006). Below is a Bosnian view of Paddy's impact, written by Kemal Pervanic, a survivor of the Serb concentration/torture camps, and a heroic man I have the honour of calling a friend.

Paddy always stood out as one of the few British politicians who had a "backstory," a distinguished and varied life before entering Parliament. He had been tested, unlike today's bland, carefully-coiffed, sausage-machine politicians (Cameron/Blair/Miliband/Clegg) who went straight from elite schools to Oxbridge to working in their party's research department or being an intern, to being elected. Paddy had been through character-forming experiences, and it showed. Parliament is all the poorer for the absence of people of moral backbone like Paddy Ashdown.

Rebecca Tinsley is a trustee of the Bosnian Support Fund.

Paddy Ashdown in Bosnia

Kemal Pervanić

My history with Paddy Ashdown goes back to when he visited the Manjaca Camp in the summer of 1992 while I was detained there. Subsequently he wrote a forward to my book and our paths crossed a number of times since then. However, one event that sticks out more than most was when I was asked to translate for Paddy shortly before he assumed his post of the High Representative in 2002. He asked to have a meeting with the members of the UK Bosnian diaspora as he wanted to hear from them what important changes might make the Bosnian state become a more functional society which one day could move toward European integration.

As I sat with him, I said, 'I am here to interpret for you.' He smiled and replied 'my commiserations'. It quickly turned out there was no need for me to interpret as everyone spoke some English. One of his first

statements was that he wanted to be the servant of the Bosnian people. So, I used my opportunity to participate in the discussion too. He clearly wanted to help us Bosnians to change the country for the better. I then tried to explain to him that The Dayton Peace Accords represented a complicated political system akin to a tight noose around our necks. It did not allow space for Bosnian citizens like myself to change it without some form of outside intervention. I tried to argue that the same international community which put such a system in place had to take some responsibility for it, which he clearly interpreted as some sort of unfair moral obligation, and he snapped back at me, 'What do you want me to do? To be a Turkish Pasha?' Paddy's knowledge of Bosnian politics and the general mentality of the Bosnian people was perhaps lower than mine at this point in time.

Yet, during his ensuing tenure, Paddy probably came closer to the Bosnian people than any previous or subsequent High representative. Perhaps coming from both catholic and protestant backgrounds, plus having served in combat zones outside the UK and in his homeland of Northern Ireland, equipped him better for the role he performed in Bosnia. Perhaps he understood better the mentality of fear suffered by ordinary citizens and he wanted to help them to escape from that fear by helping them build strong state institutions which would serve their interests and provide the necessary security, rather than to serve the interests of the same elites who took the country to war. He used the huge powers vested in him by his office to push through a raft of reforms which created the foundations of the functional state: he created unified armed forces, he brought together security services and he unified customs service. In a way, he had to behave like a benevolent Turkish Pasha in order to do that. Additionally, he created the conditions for the Bosnian parliament to pass many reforms which would bring the country closer to EU integrations.

However, the Bosnian politicians voted them down, and to his regret he left his tenure before he would get another go to put this failure right. Since his departure, Bosnian politics has been in progressive decline. Paddy Ashdown built on the successful foundations laid by his predecessor, Wolfgang Petritsch, probably the only High Representative more popular than Paddy himself. It was not just his huge political or personal experience that had enabled him to do a good job in Bosnia – it was the mettle that none of his successors seemed to have to continue pushing through the reforms needed to save Bosnia from the repeat of the carnage of the 1990s.

*Kemal Pervanić's documentary, [Pretty Village](http://www.theforgivenessproject.com), is available online, as is his book, *The Killing Days*. Visit www.theforgivenessproject.com to support his work in Bosnia.*

Chinese Lib Dem tributes to the late Lord Paddy Ashdown

"The news after coming home from a pleasant dinner with a friend last night was like a splash of cold water. We thought he was immortal. I sat between him and his wife Jane at our Chinese Liberal Democrats dinner last September at the time of the Brighton conference. We chatted, gossiped and laughed. He was as inspiring and as funny as ever during the occasion. There was no inkling that he was ill.

Seventy-seven is a comparatively young age, and when we heard he had cancer in October, like him, we brushed it off. We thought he would conquer it, of course. We thought he would always be with us, he would continue to be our patron, unique in being a politician who could understand Chinese, ready to give his generous help, humour and courage to fight for what we all believed in, a wish to create a kind, prosperous, and just society.

The heavy sadness of the loss sunk in, and tears came on; we were so privileged to know him and to have his support. We shall miss him very much, and send our deep condolences to Jane and his family."

Linda Chung, Co-Founder, Chinese Liberal Democrats

†@merleneemerson 22 Dec 2018

“Absolutely gutted to hear of the passing of former @LibDems leader @paddyashdown. What a hero and giant of a man.”

“Born in India, brought up in Northern Ireland, a Royal Marine, a diplomat and a politician, Paddy’s was more than “a Fortunate Life”. A consummate internationalist with a vision for Liberals to be a force for good, he had championed the rights of Hong Kongers post 1997 and encouraged the Chinese Liberal Democrats to widen our remit beyond the concerns of the Chinese community in the UK to lobbying on foreign affairs. Only a year ago he wrote to Theresa May with Chris, Lord Patten, Hong Kong’s last British Governor, calling on her to challenge Beijing over its erosion of the former colony’s rights and freedoms when she travelled to China on three-day trade mission.



At annual gatherings at Autumn Conference Paddy would be the draw to our dinners, usually over-subscribed, bringing the house down with chants in Mandarin 自由民主黨 萬歲! Long live the Liberal Democrat's!

Paddy fought for the Party and for our values to the end. Wishing Jane and the family our deepest sympathies and condolences.

Joyce Arram

Respected member of Executive of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel, Joyce Arram passed away on 11th November 2018. Joyce was a keen supporter of Israel all her life as well as being Deputy President of the Liberal Democrat Lawyers and a keen supporter of the National Liberal Club, indeed she was one of the earliest women members to be admitted to club membership. She always read at the NLC Annual St. David’s Dinner.

She was a committed Liberal and will be sadly missed by many in the Party.

She was born in the maternity wing of the Whittington Hospital on the 24th March 1935. She left this world in the same hospital on the 11th November, after a fall at home. Joyce always claimed that she was a real cockney on the basis that Dick Whittington heard the bells of Bow Bell on Highgate Hill just outside of what is now the hospital. She said that this is confirmed by the statue of Dick’s cat just outside the hospital. Joyce was evacuated to Wales when she was 6. She ended up at the village of Argoed just outside Blackwood. There she was taken in by the deputy headmistress of the local junior school, Olwen Harler, and her mother. This was the start of a lifelong friendship. This is the reason why Joyce had such an affinity with Wales. Joyce’s evacuation tag can still be seen in the Museum of London. Joyce spent the whole of the war in Wales and continued to visit Olwen and her family. She was so close to Olwen that when Olwen retired and moved to Carmarthenshire, and she eventually died, she left her cottage to Joyce. Joyce continued to visit the cottage and was part of the village community. She entered into village life and often won prizes at the local horticultural events for her produce grown in her garden. Joyce threw herself into the Welsh culture and belonged to many Welsh societies such as the Welsh biological gardens and the Antiquarian Society

Joyce was educated at Camden High School, part of the Girls Day School Trust.

Joyce was a very community minded person. She organised her neighbours in Summerlee Gardens, Finchley so that her street was a community in its own right. She arranged street parties, visits to the panto for the children of the street and was in the front of the campaign to protect the small municipal orchard at the end of her cul-de-sac. She did not let her green fingers stay in Wales and was a member of the local horticultural society and submitted her vegetables in the annual competitions.

Joyce was a member of a number of organisations and societies. She was on the council of the RSA, belonged to the RHS, National Trust and English Heritage.

When Joyce started work in the legal profession she was a Managing Clerk. However, she saw that this role was undervalued and was a leading light in ILEX which transformed legally trained support staff into a

professional vocation. She was also driving force in obtaining a Royal Charter for ILEX

One story from the Swinging Sixties was that along with other 'young' liberals she went to the Caribbean to help in the elections. After the result she and the others tasted the local liquid hospitality a bit too much and spent a few hours in the local judiciary 'hotels' for being drunk and disorderly. I understand that in the morning when they had sobered up, they were let go and no charges were laid. Perhaps this was Joyce seeking to understand fully the legal profession!

Lord Monroe Palmer

Joyce Arram cut her teeth in Parliamentary elections in 1966 in Essex South East; the seat hadn't been contested by a Liberal since 1950 but she took 11.7% of the vote against Bernhard Braine who would ultimately become Father of the House. Joyce first contested Ruislip Northwood in 1970; Reg Walker had steadily built up the seat since 1959, but was squeezed in Wilson's 1966 election. Joyce's career there would follow a similar pattern. In February 1974 she took 25.77% of the vote, in third place but only 263 votes behind Labour. Squeezed again in October 1974, she fell back to 21.37% of the vote.

Joyce regularly fought local elections in the London Borough of Barnet, contesting the East Finchley ward between 2002 & 2018, probably earlier.



LI Congress Dakar

Phil Bennion

A strong team represented the Liberal Democrats at the somewhat chaotic Congress in Dakar from 28th November to 1st December 2018. The delegation was led by FIRC Chair Robert Woodthorpe Browne, although as a Bureau member he was rarely able to sit with us. In that event the delegation was co-ordinated by myself, Vice Chair Phillip Bennion. The delegation included Sir Graham Watson, Merlene Emerson, George Cunningham and Joyce Onstad. Charles Anglin was also registered with the party but was present due to his current work with politicians in Sierra Leone and did not join the delegation, although he did make some excellent interventions in breakout sessions. The team worked conscientiously and coherently throughout and were effective in achieving our aims, both in delivering the texts that we desired and in furthering our good personal relations with other delegations.

The first day was free, so George Cunningham, his wife Florence and I teamed up with Indian blogger and campaigner Nikhil Pahwa and South African MP Ross Purdon to visit the island of Gorhee, the largest slave export point in the whole of Africa. The visit was a moving experience and past visitors had included Nelson Mandela, Barak Obama and Pope John Paul II. The opportunity to forge a relationship with Nikhil was important as George and I were able to enlist him in the project to develop a Liberal International Indian Group, a priority as we have no sister party or other political presence in India. Nikhil's online campaign organisation has millions of followers and by the end of the Congress he was keen to take the leading role in developing an LI Group. The relationship with Ross is also important as he is the DA nomination to the new LI Climate Justice Committee and is their environment spokesperson in parliament. Our representative on the new committee is Duncan Brack and we can help with introductions.

The first official event was an evening debate on liberalism in Africa at the Friedrich Naumann offices in downtown Dakar. The Conference hotel was 25 miles out on the motorway to the airport and the transport issues were evident straight away. The buses were 2 hours late by which time some of us had resorted to expensive taxis to get to the venue. The general view of the panel was that Africans are steeped in trading traditions and that free markets are natural to them. There is no reason why political liberalism too should not thrive in Africa.

Due to various world events the World Today motion was already out of date in numerous respects. For the UK section in particular the Brexit text was superseded and I was asked to draft completely new text, which was agreed as a replacement. The US mid-terms, the situation in Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Brazil and many others were also significantly changed by elections and other events so many delegates were busy redrafting. George Cunningham also drafted some completely new text on the election in Afghanistan which he spoke to in the debate. We also changed the text on Pakistan to reflect the Asia Bibi judgement and concerns for her safety, as well as expressing concerns about the PTI government pandering to religious conservatives. Additionally, the highly provocative Taiwan resolution was withdrawn, but some firm text on Taiwan and China added to The World Today in its place.

The Congress itself was opened by the Prime Minister of Senegal who made a very thoughtful and ideological speech in which he connected a liberal world vision with policy on the ground at national and local level. Retiring LI President Juli Minoves thanked his successor-to-be Hakima Elhaite for her work in setting up the new Climate Justice Committee. Hakima was Environment Minister and took the COP to Marrakech a couple of years ago, but her party is now in opposition following elections last year.

We heard reports from the African Liberal Network from Stevens Mokgalapa MP and Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats. Francis Abaya of Philippines gave a most disturbing report on the progression towards dictatorship under the rule of President Duterte in the Philippines where the institutes of state are under further attack. The situation is deteriorating and democratically elected representatives now live in fear of opposing the President's will. There was bad news from Myanmar where the government had failed to

stop persecution of the Rohingya and from Cambodia where LI member CNRP had been banned and sham elections had taken place without the opposition. CNRP were represented at the Congress and made a plea that we do not forget them. However on the brighter side checks and balances had proved effective in South Korea in actions against the former President and of course in Malaysia where Anwar Ibrahim is now free and his party part of the government.

Hans van Baalen reported from Europe where we now have eight EU prime minister's which we could not have imagined 20 years ago. He looked forward to a successful European Parliament election in alliance with En Marche.

The report from RELIAL was quite gloomy as Kitty Monterrey described the situation in Nicaragua where the population suffer poverty and the impositions of organised crime and the undermining of democratic institutions.

Kenneth Wollack of NDI gave us a talk on the projects they are currently supporting and in particular the fostering of the participation of women in politics. LI Human Rights Officer Tamara Dancheva has just completed a two month secondment to work on this project in Washington DC. He expressed concern also that moderates in politics were being squeezed and quoted Madeleine Albright saying "we need to rebuild the militant middle".

Budget

The budget is currently under significant pressure as no less than 18 member parties were due to be disaffiliated due to non-payment of subscriptions. Congress agreed to defer this process so that a renewed attempt could hopefully recover the situation. Merlene Emerson made a telling intervention asking whether corporate sponsorship of Congress had been considered, particularly as ALDE had succeeded in doing so. Director General Gordon MacKay answered that this was indeed a long-term aim but firstly LI needed to clarify the nature of its legal identity to the UK tax authorities.

Resolutions

The session was ably chaired by Robert Woodthorpe Browne who allowed text changes to The World Today to reflect events that had rendered some of the text outdated.

We also passed a resolution on land reform from DA South Africa and another on gender and climate change from INLW. The resolution on Chinese interference in Taiwan was incorporated into The World Today and the one on Agricultural Free Trade was withdrawn due to being factually incorrect in places, with a view to bringing an improved resolution to the next Executive Committee.

Overall assessment

In my view our hosts used the event to promote themselves and particularly President Macky Sall to an excessive degree. Our Bureau member Robert Woodthorpe Browne had warned of this problem in advance and had opposed the venue.

The facilities at the conference centre were good, as was the on-site hotel, but the bussing of delegates up to 1 hour from the city, and vice versa to evening events in the city elicited chaos. Buses were hours late disrupting timetables with delegates getting back to hotels close to 2 am and needing to be in meetings at 8 the following morning.

The African heads of state session ran so late that the administrative agenda was under constant review and debates often started several hours late. Our Human Rights Committee scheduled for 1300-1500 on Friday finally started at 1600 and was adjourned at 1700 and finished on Saturday.

Delegates remained remarkably patient. The secretariat worked incredibly hard to deal with the problems. The work was eventually done and done well and the delegates were happy with the final outcomes. We saw some great speeches from the likes of Mmusi Maimane and we made friends and contacts with delegations from across the world.

Phil Bennion

LI Human Rights Committee

1st December 2018

Phil Bennion

Inclusivity Barometer

The main discussion concerned our wish to set up a global inclusivity barometer as a unique product by which LI can gain a stronger worldwide profile. This idea came forward from Boris van der Hamm at the last meeting.

Tamara Dancheva had been on secondment to NDI in Washington largely contributing to research which would support this project. Tamara's research had been restricted to female participation in politics but could be relevant to other minorities. Data is easier to get on women as gender is generally a known characteristic. Getting data on other minorities is difficult as it largely depends upon self-identification, which is often not forthcoming.

This engendered a broader discussion of practicality. It was decided that proportions of female candidates and those successfully elected is data easily found, both from the IPU and national sources. Some data on religion or race may be possible but sexuality would be difficult. Hence we decided to proceed with the gender project as the core, but add on other inclusivity factors in ad hoc pieces of work. We will try to publish the barometer annually so that countries can be compared when looking at the electability of women and other under-represented groups.

Abir al Salani suggested that we also produce a handbook as a guide for political parties to improve their own inclusivity performance. This was also agreed as the second string of the project and all committee members were asked to submit a piece of work on their own party's efforts and processes to Tamara, who will compile a draft handbook for consideration by the committee.

Closing Democratic Space

I was asked to report on the new working group on The Closing Democratic Space. The Chair Asa Soderstrom was not present and had been tied up with elections in Sweden. Hence we had only made some ad hoc contributions, most notably on the issue of Cambodia and giving support for CNRP in their efforts to lobby the EU on removing EBA privileges from Cambodia due to the banning of the opposition and imprisonment of its leader Kem Sokha.

I had asked back in July about deploying the new LI parliamentarians network to raise the case of Leila de Lima worldwide through a coordinated campaign of parliamentary questions. At the time this was not possible as the network awaited the arrival of Nationbuilder software. This is now up and running. The network is an ideal vehicle to deliver campaigns on cases and issues identified by the Working Group.

I was given the task of driving this forward and identifying a worldwide inventory of places where democracy is being pushed back. It was decided that the Working Group should be open ended rather than task and finish.

Blacklisting

A Dutch initiative on blacklisting individuals was discussed in relation to the Cambodian request for targeting Cambodian politicians individual assets. This was seen to be similar to the EU Magnitsky Law and we agreed to look at the feasibility of advising our political colleagues on bringing in similar laws. Boris will lead on this with my assistance.

Calendar

Oral presentation to the next UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. My suggestion of supporting the Cambodian campaign was universally approved and agreed. I am to consult with CNRP and Paul Reynolds over a draft text.

Climate Justice Committee will have overlapping business with HRC. We were asked for ideas on coordination. I suggested co-option of a member of each committee to the other, as we do with Lib Dem committees. Chair Astrid Thors agreed with this and would propose it to the Bureau. She suggested that it should be the only direct responsibility of the committee member involved to ensure sufficient focus.

I was to work with Tamara on coordinating our input to the IPU and ensuring that we have a presence.

Geneva Summit on Human Rights. Marina Shuster and myself have indicated that we may register for this. We were asked to urge our own Foreign Offices to participate.

Other Business

EU aid to Tanzania has been cut back. Did anyone know why. I suggested that it could be due to government repression of opposition. I suggested we contact Catherine Bearder who is on ACP delegation at the European Parliament and may know the answer.

Finland looking to hold a Human Rights event as part of its presidency of the Council of Europe next year.

Naomi Blumenthal suggested that water issues creating human rights concerns. Could we look at a project, possibly jointly with Climate Justice Committee. I informed secretariat of the interest of Ed Davey on this issue.

A question was asked on the future of the COTONE agreement.

Next meeting would be attached to the next Executive Committee and would be the last of our current mandate. Call for nominations for the next mandate should go out in March.

Manfred Eisenbach said that initial thoughts on combining LI Exec with ALDE Council were probably not feasible due to the demanding job that ALDE will have in the immediate aftermath of European Elections. Hence we would arrange a stand alone LI Exec and HRC in Europe in June.

Phil Bennion

Four foreign elections you should pay attention to in 2019, and none are American.

Mark Pack

It's a common feature of UK news, and UK political news in particular, that we pay a disproportionate amount of attention to the US. That's why shootings in the US often receive headline coverage in the UK when other deaths, greater in number and greater in impact, in other countries get little attention.

It is also why two different internal party contests got very different levels of media coverage in the UK last year. One was an internal contest to choose the next leader of the governing party in a country whose economy is the largest in Europe, whose political influence on the EU is massive and whose past plays a dominant role in our culture. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer is now set to become Europe's most powerful politician thanks to winning the contest to succeed Angela Merkel as the CDU's leader – a victory that got only a little media coverage in the UK.

By contrast, a contest in the US to decide who would be the Democrat candidate for a seat that amounts to just one of the 435 that were up for election for that body – and whose victor is now the equivalent of a new backbencher – received a burst of media coverage in the UK, and especially amongst political news for political geeks.

The victory of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in a Democrat primary for the House of Representatives certainly has some good news value – shock result, talented winner – but the contrast with that of Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer says much more about the UK's obsession with US politics rather than with the likely future impact of each person's victory. (After all, even if her talent takes her a long way in politics, as Beto O'Rourke shows, Ocasio-Cortez losing would not have been the end of it for her career.)

Already we can see a similar pattern on the way for 2019 with UK political news starting to focus on the US Presidential primaries and caucuses which start in 2020. Sure, the next President of the US will matter to us in the UK too. But the level of detail already being discussed around the dates on which the Californian primary postal ballots will be issued (there will be lots of them, and they'll be early, most likely hugely cutting the perceived traditional influence of the early New Hampshire and Iowa contests) suggests a repeat of that 2018 mismatch in coverage is on its way.

So in an attempt to balance things up a little, here are four other overseas elections which will, crystal ball permitting, matter the most in 2019 to those of us in the UK, along with their scheduled months.

Indian Lok Sabha, the lower house (April 2019)

Although I have no data to prove it, I have a strong suspicion that standard news values in the UK haven't really caught up with just how many people in the UK have personal links with the Indian sub-continent. It makes the contrast between coverage in the UK of natural disasters in that region and in the US even more striking. A possible impending natural disaster in the US will get UK headlines. For the Indian sub-continent, impending is not enough. It has to have happened and caused widespread death to do so, and even then the coverage can be fleeting.

In addition, India's growing influence globally matters for us in the UK too. There's been much talk about the shift in global power towards China and what that might mean. Less noticed so far has been the plausible route by which India ends up overtaking China¹ for economic power and international influence. A route which, as it involves a democracy rather than a dictatorship, could bring many positives with it. Regardless, India matters, and so its elections matter.

European Parliament (23rd May 2019)

If Brexit has gone ahead by then, then these contests will still be important to the UK – especially for the

opportunity they give for extreme populism to prosper further or to be beaten back. It's a big test for reviving liberalism.

And if the UK is not yet out of the E.U. – for example, due to an extension of the Article 50 period – then this contest in the UK will be a roller coaster of political theatre with multiple opportunities to upend the political system. Will a new centre party use them as a launch pad for success, in the manner that UKIP and before the Greens used such a contest to grab a share of the national political stage? Will Nigel Farage manage to launch a new party, kill off old UKIP and create a successful new UKIP? Will the current Labour coalition between a Eurosceptic party leader² and a heavily Remain voter base (about 4:1³ at the moment)³ splinter? Will the Liberal Democrats, possibly under a new leader⁴, manage to use them for a Parliamentary by-election style dramatic leap back into the political headlines? And what on earth will happen to the Conservatives, especially if still under the leadership of Theresa May?

Canadian House of Commons (October 2019)

Justin Trudeau's previous election victory both gave heart to liberals around the world – aggressively promoting liberal values (except, ahem, u-turning on electoral reform) can still work. It's also often touted as a model for the Liberal Democrats⁵.

In addition, then to being important for Canadians, the results of this election will have an impact on the political bubble mood in the UK.

Australian Senate and House of Representatives (November 2019)

Politics in Australia is a wonderful soap opera of absurdity at times. (Even Brexit struggles to match for absurdity the extended crisis over politicians suddenly discovering they were foreigners⁶.) It's also got an important impact on the UK because of its global impact: Australia has often been one of the most vocal obstructive voices to effective global action on the environment. Who wins matters for us too.

I will of course be obsessing about the detail of Californian postal ballot dates in 2020 too. But I hope I'll also remember the importance of these elections. And if I let them all pass by without any further blogging, please do beat me over the keyboard with this post...

List compiled with the help of Election Guide⁷, where you can find the many other foreign elections which didn't make the cut.

Mark Pack

Originally posted on Mark's blog on 6th January. If you don't already follow Mark's blog, which is essential reading on UK politics and Liberal Democrats in particular, there is probably enough to whet your appetite here. <https://www.markpack.org.uk/157223/four-foreign-elections-2019/>

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdukoutas/2018/04/21/indias-economy-on-track-to-beat-china/> 21.4.2018

² <https://www.markpack.org.uk/153744/jeremy-corbyn-brexite/> 18.6.2018

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jan/05/brexit-corbyn-electoral-catastrophe-yougov-poll>

⁴ <https://www.markpack.org.uk/156976/new-year-new-lib-dem-leader-probably-ldn-119/> 24.12.2018

⁵ <https://www.markpack.org.uk/135354/liberal-democrat-newswire-73-is-out-lessons-from-canada-for-the-liberal-democrats/> 5.11.2015

⁶ <https://qz.com/1130468/australia-dual-citizenship-scandal-an-obscure-citizenship-requirement-is-bringing-down-australias-parliament/> 15.11.2017

⁷ <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/> Amongst the more interesting we might cite the Israeli Knesset (12.2019), the Philippines Senate & National Assembly (13.5.2019), the South African National Assembly (5.2019) and the Ukrainian President (31.3.2019) & Supreme Council (10.2019).

Bedouin Villages

In recent years the Israeli Government has been stepping up the demolition of Bedouin villages because they were in inconvenient places for Israeli development. One village attracted a great deal of attention in 2018 - Khan Al Ahmar in East Jerusalem.

Concerted international pressure was ignored by the Israeli High Court which approved the demolition of this village. However, Liberal Democrat MP Alistair Carmichael provoked Theresa May into making an unusually strong statement in October:

My right hon. Friend the Minister for the Middle East met the Israeli ambassador on 11 October. He made clear the UK's deep concerns about Israel's planned demolition of the village of Khan Al Ahmar. Its demolition would be a major blow to the prospect of a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital, and I once again call on the Israeli Government not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village, including its school, and displace its residents.



On the 20th October 2018, the Israeli Government announced that it would postpone demolition until a negotiated resolution could be found. The Jerusalem Post reported that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda had warned Israel that the forced relocation of the village was a “war crime,” which would be in line with the 4th Geneva Convention. The school in the village is internationally funded.

Nuclear treaty withdrawal risks global instability

Responding to reports that Russia has suspended its involvement in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, following the United States' decision to also suspend their involvement, former Liberal Democrat Leader Lord Campbell said:

“These developments are both alarming and depressing. Gradually piece by piece the security architecture which followed the end of the Cold War has been destroyed.

“The world is a much less safe place with nuclear weapons when they cease to be the subject of treaties and agreements. Although both Putin and Trump deny it, there is a severe and continuing risk of a nuclear arms race which will bring instability throughout the world.”



Despite these game-changers in nuclear politics, the proposed motion to the Liberal Democrats Spring Conference in York calling on the government to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, did not make it on to the agenda although it attracted the support of 60 members (the second highest level of member support for any motion). Hiding behind the mantra of ‘We’ve done Trident’ the Federal Conference Committee has missed the opportunity to debate a wider range of international issues. Aside from those raised by Ming, Iran comes most urgently to mind. Whilst it is clear that the UK has a one trick government, the Liberal Democrat’s focus on Brexit to the apparent exclusion of all other politics risks the danger of them being perceived as a one trick pony and with the divisions in both Labour and Conservative parties a broader approach is needed.

The other international motion that did not make it onto the York agenda was the Relocation and Boycott of the 2022 World Cup, which is to be held in Qatar. *interLib* had thought that Embracing the Sustainable Development Goals was to have been on the agenda, but that doesn’t seem to be the case.

Lib Dems at York – the international bits...

Not usually renowned for its international content, the Spring Conference is dominated by constitutional matters, but York itself has much to enjoy.

Saturday 16 March

11.05–12.50 F6 Policy motion: Europe 39

Fringe Saturday lunchtime 13.00–14.00

Social Liberal Forum and Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary: An Effective and Compassionate Approach to Immigration and Asylum

Anticipating the Immigration Bill to be debated this spring, MP Sir Ed Davey and Suzanne Fletcher (Chair of LD4SoS) will propose amendments that celebrate and harness the positive contributions that immigrants and asylum seekers offer our communities and our economy.

Novotel, Meeting Room 1+2

Fringe Saturday early evening 18.15–19.15

Liberal Democrat European Group Liberal Democrat European Group AGM and ExitfromBrexit Discussion:

LDEG members and new members (who can join for £10 at the door) are welcome to review LDEG's recent activities, and then brainstorm with Tom Brake MP, Catherine Bearder MEP (tbc) and Nick Hopkinson on the latest ExitfromBrexit developments.

Hilton, Bootham Room

Fringe Saturday late evening 22.00–01.00

Glee Club

Join us for the ultimate end-of conference celebration! Pick up your copy of the Liberator Songbook and come 'raise the roof'! Novotel, Fishergate Suite



International Abstracts

How US billionaires are fuelling the hard-right cause in Britain, by Georges Monbiot. The Guardian 7.12.2018

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/07/us-billionaires-hard-right-britain-spiked-magazine-charles-david-koch-foundation?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR33R-un7-DJsotOGtgYEMx9Et-gkvArxJ9Pm6PYPwDTlvrXdsQE9Xlzl_A

Prayer for the Day, by Anna Magnusson. BBC Radio 4 23.1.2019

Recalls to action of engine inspector & trades unionist Bob Fulton in blacking work on 4 Rolls Royce jet engines in the wake of Pinochet's coup in Chile in March 1974. We may need more actions like this if Brexit goes through.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000257h>

Radi><

Trump and Xi will agree at Europe's cost, by Renaud Giraud. 24.1.2019 (originally in Le Figaro)

Problems of Sino-American rapprochement for the EU.

<https://radix.org.uk/trump-and-xi-will-agree-at-europes-cost/>

How Venezuela could tie up the west, by Renaud Giraud. 31.1.2019 (originally in Le Figaro)

A general swipe at the bad eggs in the basket – China, Russia & Turkey (and Trump), and how standing up to Maduro in Venezuela might send the right messages.

<https://radix.org.uk/how-venezuela-could-tie-up-the-west/>

USA

Dismantling of democracy from the inside: it happened Venezuela, Russia - and Wisconsin? by Amanda Erickson. Washington Post 6.12.2018

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/12/06/dismantling-democracy-inside-it-happened-venezuela-russia-wisconsin/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.66179ee80e2a

The People vs. Donald J. Trump, by David Leonhardt. New York Times 5.1.2019

A mid-term review.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/05/opinion/sunday/trump-impeachment.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fopinion&action=click&contentCollection=opinion&ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront>

Turkey

Journalist Pelin Ünker sentenced to jail in Turkey over Paradise Papers investigation. The Guardian 9.1.2019

This is despite the former Prime Minister's sons saying it was a fair cop... further sentences have taken place since, notably that of Ayşe Düzkan, a prominent feminist and deputy head of the Turkish journalist's union Basın, the disturbing trend being that they have not been commuted to fines.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jan/09/journalist-pelin-unker-sentenced-to-jail-in-turkey-over-paradise-papers-investigation>

Journal of Liberal History Issue 101 / Winter 2018-19

Devoted to Gladstone's first government, international content is sparse – a few paragraphs in John Parry's policy overview. Prussian and Russian assertiveness and the Pope imagining he was infallible put constraints on domestic policy and signalled the end of Cobdenist foreign policy. Despite Cardwell's army reforms, the armed forces tail still wagged the Parliamentary dog. The 3rd Ashanti War is mentioned in this context, also in the David Brooks' analysis of the 1874 General Election. It is a reminder that there were formal African states before colonialism.

Liberator 394

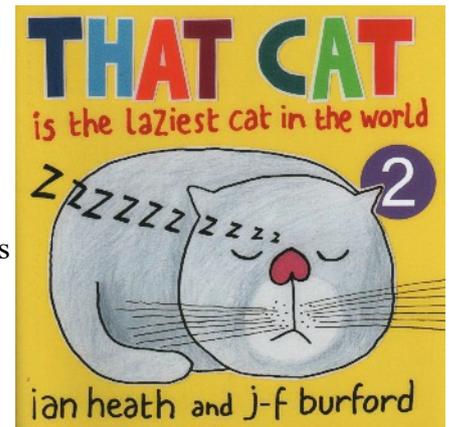
Primarily domestic, but the usual diet of Brexit includes the views of from Austria, Denmark and Germany. Our obituaries of Paddy Ashdown and Bosnia appear in print form should you prefer it. Otherwise Gwyneth Deakins, Gareth Epps, Tony Greaves and Michael Meadowcroft write on Liberal Democrat matters.

reviews

That Cat is the laziest cat in the world 2,
by Ian Heath and J-F Burford.
That Lazy Cat 2018 £7.99
isbn 9780995691018

I'd have sworn that cat hadn't moved an inch since his first adventures were reviewed in *interLib* (2018-01 page 24), but as those first adventures posed, 'what next? Where next?' All is revealed. You can buy the books and limited prints through the online shop at www.thatlazycat.co.uk or at good independent bookshops like the one by Kew station.

Stewart Rayment



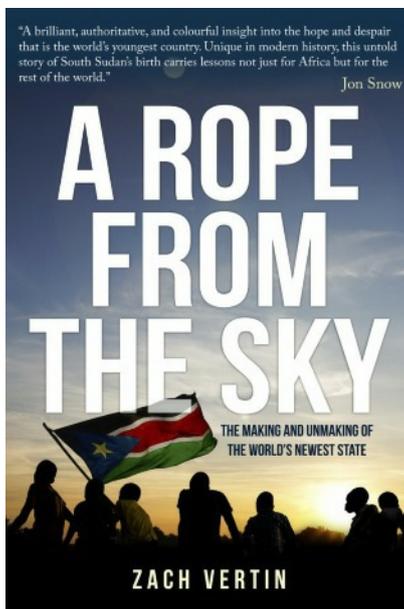
A Rope from the Sky: the making and unmaking of the world's newest state,
by Zach Vertin.
Amberley Books 2018 £18.00
isbn 9781445686943

The story of South Sudan reveals what goes wrong when greedy rebel war lords try to become peace-time leaders; and when the international community casts common sense to one side in its haste to "solve" a diplomatic problem. Zach Vertin's compelling account reflects the giddy optimism surrounding Juba's independence in 2011, leading to today's bloody tragedy. He is the master of his subject, and anyone wishing to understand how tribalism, nepotism and kleptomania continue to destroy Africa should read this book.

Vertin worked with the US's special envoy to the Sudans during the crucial period when the world's newest nation was finding its feet, following its secession from Khartoum. He skillfully illuminates the ego-based conflicts between the leading South Sudanese politicians, President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar. Both men continue to manipulate ethnic identity issues to hold onto their power bases and fill their offshore bank accounts, with no regard for the 400,000 civilians who have been killed since 2013. Half the South Sudanese population has been displaced in the civil war which they ignited and continue to provoke. Meanwhile, the international community has handed over an estimated \$5 to \$7 billion to the fledgling government, without demanding accountability or transparency. This aid has built luxury homes for their

leaders in Kampala and Nairobi, while their 12 million citizens remain illiterate, malnourished and terrorized by militias. Peace deals will probably come and go until South Sudan's donor countries get serious about holding Kiir and Machar to their promises.

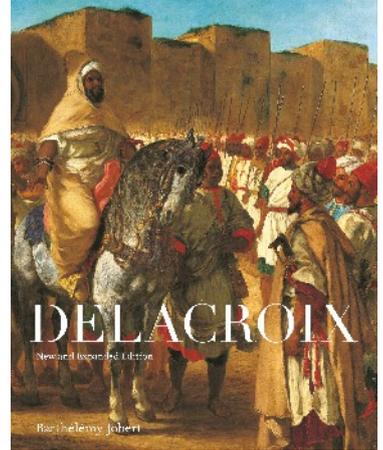
Since Vertin's book was published, there has been a new and ironic twist in this miserable story. At the time of writing, there are popular protests across Sudan against the same Khartoum regime that waged decades of war against their southern Sudanese black African citizens. Khartoum's racist ethnic cleansing led to two million deaths, and the eventual secession of South Sudan. President Bashir and his cronies are using deadly force against unarmed protesters. But his former adversary, Salva Kiir, is standing by Bashir's regime, and rumoured to be offering to send troops to keep his erstwhile oppressors in power. There is truly honour among thieves.



Rebecca Tinsley

Delacroix, by Barthélemy Jobert.
Princeton, new & expanded edition 2018
isbn 9780691182360

Liberalism often suffers in Art, its very success in the late 19th century making it appear bourgeois and establishment, something to be reacted against in the light of superficially more attractive ideologies – anarchism, socialism, communism and their bastard offspring, fascism. More than a century on, we now have the establishment that has borrowed the name ‘liberal democracy’ though not necessarily as we would understand it, embattled with similar superficial populist strains. Yet, in its revolutionary period Liberalism was associated with great Art, Goya, Redon and of course, Delacroix, whose *Liberty Leading the People* is perhaps one of our best-known icons. He had previously nailed his colours to the mast with his *Scenes from the Massacres of Chios*, 1824.



As a leading Delacroix scholar, this new edition was timed nicely for last year’s retrospective at the Louvre and New York’s Met. I don’t discern a major shift in his thinking. Jobert looks at Delacroix’s work from the perspective of where it came from and what it achieved rather than dwelling too much on what it influenced (as for example, the recent exhibition at the National Gallery in London (*interLib* 2016-07 pages 27-28)). He sees

Delacroix as seminal in giving Romanticism an expression in art and defining it against a Classicism to which he might, in a transformed sense, be said to return. Like most great artists Delacroix ultimately transcends labels. Jobert remains a core study for gaining a greater understanding of the artist.

Stewart Rayment

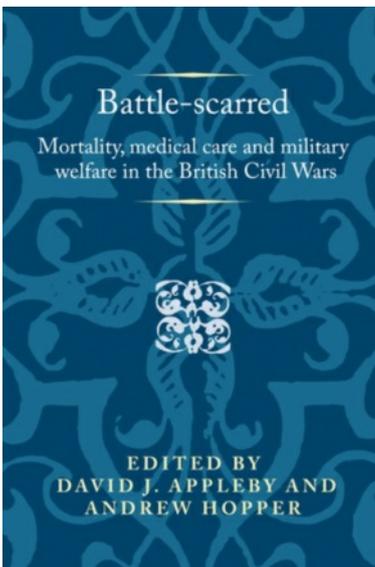


Donate to Support #EqualityinTanzaniaonGlobalGiving
globalgiving.org

Battle-scarred, mortality, medical care and military welfare in the British Civil Wars,
edited by David J. Appleby and Andrew Hooper.
Manchester University Press, 2018. £75.00

It is a tragedy that the problems of the battlefield dead remain with us in much the same way as they did in the Seventeenth century. The editors of this collection of essays have a considerable reputation in their field set out to establish how these problems were dealt with.

Ian Atherton's *Battlefields, burials and the English Civil Wars* recounts the failure to identify mass graves, both by customary recollection and modern archaeology, but provides a wealth of archival material, including those of minor encounters as well as the better-known battles, Marston Moor, Naseby etc. From this you will get a better picture of the actuality of the Civil War.



Hooper's contribution 'To condole with me on the Commonwealth's loss': the widows and orphans of Parliament's military commanders, might also be of interest, a sorry story of shabby treatment in the main; does anything change?

Does Katherine, Lady Brooke wear the posy shown in her portrait at the execution of Archbishop Laud? Scottish ministers and nobles were imprisoned in the Tower of London after seizure at the Committee of Estates in Alyth, Dundee in 1651 (the Committee was the functioning Scottish Parliament, which had recognised Charles II as king after the execution of his father). Recalling Hooper above, the Scots appear to have been rather better at providing for the prisoners than Parliament their widows and orphans. Will Theresa May, should she last so long, attempt to emulate the Rump Parliament or little Franco - Mariano Rajoy, when Scotland asserts its independence in the wake of Brexit?

The editors see their work as extending our understanding of the Civil War to the experiences of the ordinary man & woman. The Long Parliament

established the principles of care for the wounded and bereaved and so set in place the chain that continues to the present.

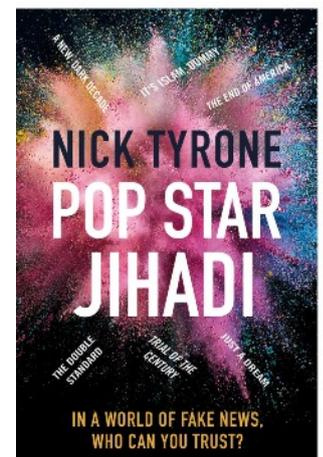
Stewart Rayment

Pop Star Jihadi by Nick Tyrone.
Radix 2019 £7.99
isbn 9781912880003

Radix became the first think tank to release a novel, *Pop Star Jihadi* by Nick Tyrone, when it is published in e-book format on Jan 29th and paperback on Feb 7th. Nick Tyrone was previously executive director of Centre Forum and writes for LibDem Voice from time to time.

Pop Star Jihadi is an exploration of how, in a world where media is fragmented and debate so polarized, it becomes impossible to know what's real any more, even when the truth is revealed. With the decline of investigative journalism and the explosion of the blogosphere, echo chambers and alternative facts, Nick Tyrone explores the corrosive effect of fake news on contemporary society.

In his blog – nicktyrone.com the author writes *I have seen investigative journalism sadly decline over that time period and, particularly in respect to Brexit, journalists and media figures either present information absurdly poorly or just as bad, not thoroughly questioning MPs or other figures who come on news programmes about either exaggerated or in some cases straight out false information.*



The Politics of Disgrace in Bourbon France.

Stephen Brogan

Today we live in a world in which corruption and hypocrisy in politics seem to be more pervasive than ever. The Tory government lurches from one crisis to the next – Windrush, Grenfell Tower, Brexit, to name just a few. At the same time, politicians who are exposed as liars or cheats no longer resign, unless the heat they generate becomes so intense that they are deemed to be scorching the government’s reputation too much. In which case their resignation appears to be forced. Even then, once gone there is a good chance that within months they will be recalled to high office. One only has to compare the fall of John Profumo or Cecil Parkinson, say, to that of Amber Rudd, to make the point. Whilst politics has always been a power game, and hence never immune from sleaze and dishonesty, in the past there were greater penalties for failure. The government and politics of early modern Europe provide a wealth of case studies that illuminate the rewards and punishments of people involved in public life. High politics was structured around a system of patronage, at the centre of which were the various crowned heads and royal courts of the ancient regime. This system allowed for the meteoric rise of highly skilled politicians and administrators, royal favourites, and ambitious courtiers, to name just a few of those who could benefit from monarchical favour. But as contemporaries were acutely aware, the wheel of fortune was capricious and the very same characters could plummet into disgrace and risk losing everything. Professor Julian Swann’s lively, erudite and richly documented new book analyses the politics of disgrace in France between the reign of Louis XIII and the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Swann explains that this period experienced a remarkable transition in the politics and lived experience of disgrace, making it a fertile ground for study. His book opens with a chilling account of the violent assassination of Concino Concini, *maréchal d’Ancre*, in 1617. Concini co-ruled France alongside his great friend Marie de Medici, the queen mother, on behalf of the sixteen-year-old Louis XIII. Concini had accumulated numerous offices and the control of royal patronage, all of which made him a very wealthy man, while his apparent strength was underpinned by his wife’s



The assassination of the *maréchal d’Ancre*. *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.

lifelong friendship with the queen mother. Yet Concini’s power rendered him vulnerable because many of the French elites greatly resented an Italian having so much control of their government. Even worse, he had failed to gain the young king’s favour. Concini was ambushed en route to a meeting at the Louvre and shot dead in cold blood – by order of the king, who viewed him as an over-mighty subject and hence an enemy. The destruction of the Concini family was then ensured by his wife’s trial and execution for the bogus charge of witchcraft; his son was banished; and his fortune fell into the hands of the young king’s favourite the duc de Luynes.

Thankfully the brutality of Concini’s fall did not set a precedent for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, it harked back to French Wars of Religion and was, in fact, the last time that a French

monarch had an ambitious aristocrat murdered in cold blood. From the seventeenth century onwards, the crown sought to pursue those who were disgraced through legal means rather than summary measures. However, the Bourbons soon found out that the problem with putting disgraced ministers and the like on trial was that the judiciary could not always be relied on to deliver the verdict that was required. The young Louis XIV wanted his former *surintendant des finances* Nicolas Fouquet sentenced to death, but the court delivered a sentence of life imprisonment despite the king hand-picking the judges. Examples such as this help to explain the rise and predominance of the *lettre de cachet*, the system of political disgrace that bypassed the law courts and came to dominate Bourbon France and hence looms large in Swann's study. The *lettre de cachet* was a written order (or very occasionally a verbal command) issued in the name of the king that could expel an individual from the royal court, or commit them to internal exile or to prison, or even banish them from France altogether. Best defined as a 'direct, written expression of the royal will' (p. 10), these commands were issued in their thousands during the period under investigation. As is to be expected, the *lettres de cachet* targeted people from the governing classes who had incurred their sovereign's displeasure, especially aristocrats, ministers, generals, magistrates, and senior clerics, but as Swann makes clear, troublesome 'clerical small fry' (p. 13) such as priests and nuns were equally vulnerable given the never-ending disputes connected to the problems of Jansenism and the papal bull Unigenitus. What may come as more of a surprise is to learn that during the eighteenth century it is possible that the majority of the *lettres de cachet* were issued at the request of families who wished to punish the excesses of unruly relatives such as libertine sons and disorderly daughters. So these orders could combine the political and the social, and in some cases can be viewed as part of a drive for higher standards of morality.

One of the key questions at the heart of Swann's compelling account is why did these people acquiesce with the *lettres de cachet* and the process of imprisonment or banishment? Why not resist or take flight? On the one hand a functionalist answer to the query fits neatly within well-established historiographical developments that argue for the strengthening of the power of the French monarchy and the state during the era of absolutism. After the havoc of the wars of religion, Henri IV and Louis XIII increased France militarily and co-opted the nobility into service to the crown, to the extent that the Bourbons tamed the aristocracy. By the second half of the seventeenth century it made no sense for the victims of a *lettre de cachet* to resist a show of force. Yet as Swann argues, this is at best only half of the answer. On the whole, it was only possible for the crown to strengthen its powers because it was generally agreed that a strong monarchy was far preferable to political instability or civil war. This consensus then takes us into the lived reality of disgrace as well as its theoretical conceptualisation. An unexpected knock on the door at two in the morning usually meant that one was destined for imprisonment, whereas a later awakening at dawn almost certainly heralded internal exile. The former was far more severe than the latter and, especially during the first half of the seventeenth century, could trigger resistance or adventurous and heroic escape attempts. By contrast, a summons to exile was typically met with meek submission. Swann's book contains many breath-taking examples of resistance to incarceration as well as poignant accounts of people calmly accepting their fall from grace and their new life in exile. Incidentally, a vivid depiction of a nobleman being awoken by soldiers ordering his immediate exile can be found in Stanley Kubric's film, the masterpiece *Barry Lyndon* (1975).

In terms of the mentality that underpinned the acquiescence under scrutiny, people bowed to the will of their sovereign because they were influenced by an honour code, or because they understood it to be an expression of divine providence, or because they made sense of it by reference to stoicism. And very often the three rationales were combined. Beginning with a sense of honour, the *maréchal* François de Bassompierre was representative of many when, during his impending arrest following the Day of Dupes in 1630, he weighed up the pros and cons of escape. 'I would never compromise myself by a flight which would cast doubt upon my integrity', he later wrote (p.100). Only the guilty ran away, whilst Bassompierre also believed that after a life time of loyalty to the crown, if he was to be imprisoned it would only be for a short spell. In fact, he was wrong, and he spent the next twelve years in custody, but the point here is that it was beneath him as an aristocrat to attempt an escape.

This honour code was underpinned by a belief in divine providence. Whether or not someone privately accepted their guilt and punishment, passive obedience became the normal response because events were understood as being part of God's inscrutable plan. In a deeply religious age, people were imbued with

notions of the Fall and of Christ's salvation through suffering. Submission to God's will was one and the same as obeying the king, who ruled by divine right. Resistance was therefore sacrilegious. As one nobleman put it in 1771, 'it is necessary to tremble and place everything in the hands of providence, which wishes to punish and chastise us. We all merit it, and must accept our punishment in atonement for our sins.' (p. 117).

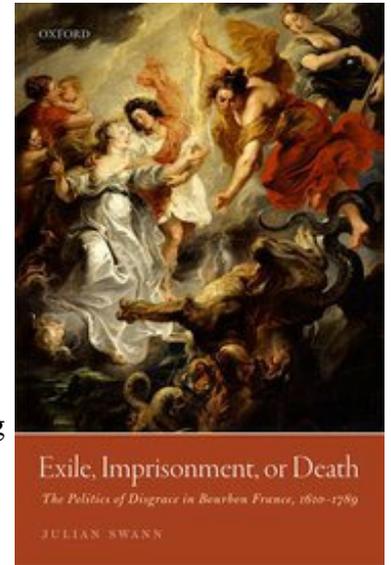
The hardships of disgrace included the sudden loss of one's occupation, financial privation, isolation, and no doubt a vulnerability to despair and what we would see as depression. The pressure on an individual was made worse because a *lettre de cachet* included no information concerning the alleged crimes or misdemeanours of the person concerned, nor any clue as to how long their punishment would last. The unfortunate victims had one other model to draw on for support, that of stoicism. Since the Renaissance people had been educated in classicism, the texts of which were full of accounts of the fall of heroes and the fortitude with which they often accepted their fate. The ancients

explained these surprising and melodramatic twists by reference to the caprices of the goddess Fortuna. If, on the other hand, someone's fall was more hubristic, then even this could have its consolation. As the cardinal de Retz knowingly observed 'There are times when disgrace is like a fire which purifies all the bad qualities and illuminates all the good' (p. 123). Thus many people who found themselves with lots of time on their hands as a result of their fall took comfort from prayer, meditation, reading the scriptures and other reflective activities. Though of course, people being people, these virtuous activities were not mutually exclusive from petitioning friends at the royal court to speak to the king on one's behalf, or to try and alleviate one's circumstances in other ways.

Exile, Imprisonment or Death has many strengths. It deftly combines political, cultural and intellectual history. It contains numerous case studies that illuminate its perceptive theoretical underpinnings. It reveals much about the workings of Bourbon France in relation to power structures and the complicated yet personal ways in which the political classes negotiated with each other. It is a welcome reminder of the importance of religion, honour and duty to the educated people of Enlightenment France. And it is telling and in places entertaining with regard to the murkiness and the underbelly of high politics and the hefty price that some people paid for their miscalculations.

Exile, Imprisonment or Death: The Politics of Disgrace in Bourbon France, 1610-1787, by Julian Swann. Oxford University Press 2017 £85. ISBN: 9780198788690.

Stephen Brogan FRHistS is Visiting Lecturer, Early Modern History at Royal Holloway, University of London



WOMEN:
**Shaping the future,
making a difference!**

A conference for Liberal Democrats to
celebrate International Women's Day

Saturday 9th March 2019
9.30am to 4.45pm
Richard Mayo Centre, Kingston

 Book today: www.libdemwomen.org.uk/conference2019

Lunar New Year Banquet and Auction

February 19, 2019 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM
New Loon Fung Restaurant, 42-44 Gerrard Street

Chinese Liberal Democrats invite you to join us in ushering in the New Year of the Pig with an eight course banquet at the New Loon Fung Restaurant in the heart of Chinatown.

We are delighted that the LibDem Mayoral Candidate for GLA elections in 2020, Ms Siobhan Benita will be our special guest speaker for the evening. Chair of London Region Liberal Democrats Mr Ben Sims is our guest auctioneer, and back by popular demand, we have performing for us, the inimitable Chinese Elvis aka Paul Hyu!

Tickets are available at £38 per head or £350 for a table of 10.

Contact info@chineselibdems.org.uk for bookings and payment details.

Menu

Deluxe Platter

*(Steamed Spinach Dumpling, Vegetarian Spring Roll, Chicken Satay Skewer,
Salt & Pepper Broccoli & Marinated Cucumber with Garlic)*

Crispy Aromatic Duck

Steamed Sea Bass With Ginger & Spring Onion

Stir Fried Duo Seafood With Celery Served In Bird's Nest

Deep Fried Crispy Chicken

Beef Brisket Hot Pot

Monk's Vegetables

Mix Vegetables Fried Noodles

Steamed Jasmine Rice

Seasonal Fruit

(Please advise us of on any dietary restrictions)



in-words presents

As a Man Grows Younger by Howard Colyer

Tuesday 19 to Saturday 23 February 2019

A man is looking out to sea, and waiting for a knock on his door, and he fears he will be taken on a boat ride by the not-so-secret police, and that he'll be diving deep.

A writer tries to remain true to himself under Fascism. *As a Man Grows Younger* is a dramatic monologue set in Italy in the 1920s, inspired by the friendship of two writers, Svevo and Joyce, and their roads from obscurity to fame.

My parents gave me the name Ettore Schmitz.

I gave myself the name Italo Svevo.

James Joyce named me Leopold Bloom.

*I'm his Ulysses, people are reading about me far and wide,
only they don't know it's me when they read his novel.*

Brockley Jack Studio Theatre

410 Brockley Road, London, SE4 2DH

Box office: www.brockleyjack.co.uk or 0333 666 3366
(£1.50 fee for phone bookings only)

Tuesday 19 – Saturday 23 February at 7.30pm
(NO performances: Sunday, Monday, 14+)

Tickets: 16, £13 concessions

in-words



AS A MAN GROWS YOUNGER

A play for one voice

BY HOWARD COLYER



19 - 23 February at 7.30pm

Booking: 0333 666 3366
www.brockleyjack.co.uk