



2020 no. 10 £6.50 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**Julia Mickiewicz gaoled by Lukashenko**

**LOBBY YOUR MP FOR ALISTAIR  
CARMICHAEL'S HONG KONG BILL TODAY**

**BELARUS**

**UNITED NATIONS FORUM**

# EVENTS

**30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October** *Scottish Liberal Democrats Virtual Conference. Online. See <https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/conference>*

**5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> November** IFLRY - international seminar "Hands off My (Civic) Space: Freedom of the Press & Free Expression" – Athens, Greece. See <https://www.iflry.com/call-for-application-for-the-international-seminar-hands-off-my-civic-space-freedom-of-the-press-free-expression-november-5th-8th-2020/>

This will be a hybrid event with an online and offline dimension. Due to travel restrictions, IFLRY are limiting the in-person participation to applicants from the EU; however, join us for our complementing online offer from all over the world—and make this a truly international activity.

**21<sup>st</sup> November** Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Cynhadledd Ar-lein/Welsh Liberal Democrat Online Conference. See <https://www.welshlibdems.wales/2020-conference>

**20<sup>th</sup> December** IFLRY – 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Online – 2.00pm Berlin Time

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

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Underground: Embankment

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# CONTENTS

LIBG 2020 Programme	page 3
Light up Beirut, Young Liberal leaders organise support for Lebanon	page 4
Hong Kong, What Next, by Merlene Emerson.	page 5
Belarus human rights leader gaoled after sham trial.	page 6
The beginning of the end for Lukashenko in Belarus? By Rupinder Singh	pages 7-8
How to reform the United Nations (Forum Report), by Rebecca Tinsley.	pages 9-10
Liberal International Report of Gender Equality launched.	page 10
A dialogue between Layla Moran MP x Emily Lau (former chair of Democratic Party, Hong Kong) with Friends of Hong Kong	pages 11-13
International Abstracts	page 14
Reviews	page 15

Photographs: Julia Mickiewicz, Borrowed from Valzhyn, Forum speakers.



# LIBG 2020 PROGRAMME



A programme of events for LIBG has been organised by the executive for the rest of the year. It is intended that these will be held physically at the National Liberal Club starting at 6.30pm in each case, but also broadcast online. These arrangements will obviously depend on both corona virus restrictions and technology.

Details of online access, speakers and exact subjects will be announced nearer the time for each. Please check the forthcoming events link on the LIBG website, [www.libg.co.uk](http://www.libg.co.uk)

The events are:

## **9 November 6.30pm**

Annual General Meeting (postponed from July due to pandemic restrictions) followed by a speaker meeting at 7.00pm

## **7 December**

What's happening to the USA's global position and what are the threats?



— Liberal International supports —  
Lebanon 2.0 & Min Beib la Beib's relief effort



Light up  
**BEIRUT**

Help Liberal International help Lebanon

**DONATE**

The global liberal family, supporting an initiative from the Lebanese students of our democratic training academy programme, is asking for your help to raise funds for the families worst-effected by the Beirut blast.



[www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0](http://www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0)

## Young Liberal leaders organise support for Lebanon

The explosion in Lebanon on August 4th shocked the world; entire neighbourhoods of the city were wiped out in seconds, leaving thousands upon thousands injured and hundreds dead or missing. The damage is extensive and the Lebanese people are in need of support through this difficult time. Please donate at the link below:

<https://www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0>

# Hong Kong, What Next?

## Merlene Emerson

The Liberal Democrats held their first virtual conference from 25-28 September and passed a motion on the last day on Hong Kong's future. Sovereignty over HK passed to the Peoples Republic of China back in 1997 but "one country two systems" still has 27 years to run. It is therefore incumbent on the UK government to continue to press the Chinese government on their treaty obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration. This, the proposer of the motion as well as of his Private Members Bill on Hong Kong, Alistair Carmichael MP, has sought to do time and again, including acknowledging UK's obligations to the people of HK and not just the holders of the British National (Overseas) passports.

There were many impassioned speeches from different perspectives: Cllr Sarah Cheung Johnson challenged the tone and patronising language used in the motion, Dr Christine Cheng pointed out the need for context and a more coherent China policy and David Chalmers borrowed a Chinese proverb "to kill a chicken to scare the monkey," alluding to Taiwan as the monkey on China's back.

I spoke after Christopher, Liberal Democrat Overseas member from Hong Kong who in a moving speech thanked the Liberal Democrats for our support for Hongkongers. He wore a mask in his pre-recorded address in part to obscure his identity, though others sought to do so in sympathy with Joshua Wong who bizarrely had recently been arrested for having worn a mask at a rally in violation of a ban on masks imposed last year.

I updated conference on recent events including the postponement of the Legislative Council elections due to have been held on 6 September to a date next year. The official reason was due to health concerns over Covid19, but one suspects that the HK authorities are biding their time to purge Legco of pro-democracy candidates given the results of the District Council elections last year. I also highlighted the ambiguity, breadth and extra-territoriality of the new National Security Law. Under article 38, the law would equally be applicable to non-HK residents, namely, you and me.

We have an opportunity to Act, Alistair Carmichael's private member's Bill is before Parliament

### **The second reading of the Bill is scheduled for 23 October 2020.**

Everyone is urged to lobby their MPs to support the Hong Kong Bill which is supported by members on both sides of the House.

In the words of Carmichael "The idea of global Britain... is meaningless if we are timid in the advancement of international human rights. Human rights are nothing if they are not universal. What is good for us here must also be good for those in Hong Kong. This House must make its voice heard on essential values such as the rule of law and liberal democracy."

*Merlene Emerson*

# Belarus human rights leader gaoled after sham trial.

Julia Mickiewicz – pro-democracy campaigner and member of the Belarus Coordination Council – was scheduled to meet with high-level liberals in Sweden on 14<sup>th</sup> October; instead Belarusian dictator Lukashenko has detained her in prison in Belarus, well-known for its brutality.

This weekend, Julia Mickiewicz, member of the Belarus Coordination Council, was arrested by the Belarusian authorities. In a sham trial she was sentenced to 15 days in prison for taking part in and organising the mass protests for democracy that have been ongoing across Belarus for several weeks.

Julia Mickiewicz was due to be in Stockholm, meeting with among others LI Bureau member Abir al Sahlani, MEP, and Kerstin Lundgren, MP, foreign policy spokesperson for Centerpartiet. Instead, she is in detention in a Belarusian prison, where it is by now well known that political prisoners are treated brutally.

Alexander Lukashenko must accept and respect the will of his people and step down. The global attention and popular support that activists such as Julia have won since August this year demonstrate that there is no place in Europe for such dictators. We urge the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners, including Julia Mickiewicz, to recognise the universal human rights of their citizens, and to allow the country to conduct free and fair elections.

In a webinar discussion with LI Human Rights Committee Chair Astrid Thors on October 2nd, reported in interLib 2020-09, Julia Mickiewicz asked the international community to remember the Belarusian people and to show the regime that they are not alone.

Women started taking a lead in demonstrations in Belarus in response to the violence from the police. After Facebook appeals, women decided to march and the protests became peaceful. They wear white clothes, even wedding dresses, and have flowers in their hair. At first the police attitude changed for a while, no one was arrested; but they soon reverted to kind, threatening gang rape to those arrested. Julia's arrest remains substantially unreported in the West, outside of Sweden.

Liberal International continues to stand with the democracy movement of Belarus.

Kerstin Lundgren, MP

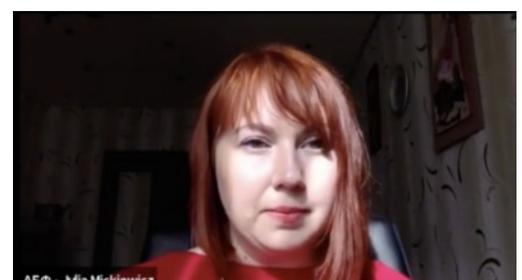
Third deputy speaker of the Swedish parliament and foreign policy spokesperson for Centerpartiet

Abir al Sahlani, MEP

LI Vice President and LI Human Rights Committee Member

Astrid Thors

LI Vice President and Chair of the LI Human Rights Committee



# The beginning of the end for Lukashenko in Belarus?

## Rupinder Singh

Belarus is, by one measure, the geographical centre of Europe and also has the less savoury marker as a country with the “last dictator in Europe”. Like most autocrats since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, president Lukashenko was elected fairly in the post-Soviet politico-economic rubble in 1994 and remained popular for at least a decade, able to continue a planned economy, continued state ownership of assets and, unlike the ‘oligarchisation’ of formerly national assets in Russia and Ukraine, continued job security at state factories albeit at massively reduced real wages, continued subsidisation of basic food supplies and retained much love from the large cohort of pensioners in the country who were paid regularly and unlike mass arrears in Russia in the Yeltsin Russia of the 90s.

Magic money tree? Niet, he mastered playing off Russia against the West but fundamentally the economic model relied on cheap Russian energy and the subsequent clearance of energy arrears by selling of prized Belarusian assets: “Russification of Belarus” which I first wrote about in the late 90s whilst an economic advisor there. That model has come to an end as Putin’s Russia has become more aggressive in its approach to its “near abroad” and ended the energy premium that previously meant both cheaper domestic energy pricing for Belarusian consumers and industry but also for Belarus’s ability to arbitrage by selling higher priced petrochemicals made in Belarus to the EU.

The country suffered horrendously and disproportionately during World War II as a soviet republic – and the USSR lost 17-20m relative to say 420,000 in Britain including the 40,000 poor civilians who died from the German bombing. Every family was affected and this left an imprint on the Belarusian psyche – Belarusians are generally passive and conservative in character but also strong-willed and well educated and these characteristics define the changes afoot.

The “social contract” in many former soviet states of citizenry happily turning a blind eye to authoritarianism in exchange for economic bliss started to fade over the last decade in Belarus. Despite a fantastic health system that helped to deal with the Chernobyl fall out after 1986 that hit Belarus, Lukashenko’s response to Covid showed he was out of touch with an increasingly digitised population able to bypass the previously hypnotic reach of state-controlled media to muzzle any anti-Luka sentiment.

Lukashenko lost the 6<sup>th</sup> presidential bid for presidency in August by a heavy margin but remains as leader, nominally in power but without legitimacy – both domestically and internationally. The difference with a similar recent event in another ex-soviet state of Kyrgyzstan is that Lukashenko has been willing to use force to face down sustained protests. Russian president Putin - himself in a quandary on how to respond – sanctioned a threadbare financial line that was sufficient for Belarus to pay back Russian banks and keep the Belarusian budget ticking along but Belarus faces major liquidity and potential trade issues even if Russia and potentially

China step in. A Democratic presidency in the US can be expected to further sanctions and economic squeeze.

Recent measures announced by the EU, US and the UK have been co-ordinated and have had the desired effect of pressurising the regime – Lukashenko spoke to political prisoners recently and continues to face continued protests. The indications are that the Belarusian state apparatus is generally tired of him and whilst Russian military engagement cannot be fully discounted it remains unlikely given the political risks to a Russia already itself suffering from western sanctions, Covid related economic slowdown and a major economic hit from falling prices for hydrocarbons. The role of the OSCE remains the ideal avenue for a co-ordinated and peaceful resolution coupled with an exit strategy for Lukashenko and the promise of major financial support packaged from the IMF and also the EU for stabilisation and structural reforms. Britain should continue to press for the OSCE to oversee fresh and fair elections in Belarus.

**Rupinder Singh**

*Dr. Rupinder Singh is a member of the LIBG Executive. He is a Policy Advisor on Economics, Budget Support, Aid and International Affairs and has worked for the EU/UNDP/World Bank/Commonwealth Secretariat/OECD, CEPR, CETRAN Lisbon, EIU, Bank of Finland/ECB & as an advisor to over 40 governments. He was Chief Economist of Belarus Economic Trends that advised the Belarusian Cabinet in the 1990s and has since advised on political and country risk aspects.*



# How to reform the United Nations.

## Rebecca Tinsley.

Any attempt to reform the United Nations must come from its members, rather than expecting the current UN system to change. Speakers at Liberal International British Group's October webinar concluded that only coordinated action by the UN's liberal democracies could salvage the reputation of the UN Security Council or the Human Rights Council, on which some of the world's worst human rights abusers sit. Speakers, and those who asked questions, repeatedly mentioned the UN's failures to prevent atrocities in Rwanda, Syria, Myanmar and China.



Allan Rock, Canada's former UN ambassador (and a member of Jean Chretien's Liberal cabinet for ten years) outlined previous failed attempts to dilute the veto power of the permanent five (P5) Security Council members. He suggested ways in which existing international law could be used to circumvent the P5's power when it came to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. He urged the International Court of Justice to give an advisory ruling on whether the P5's veto undermined the body of international humanitarian law, such as the 2005 Responsibility to Protect Doctrine, requiring preventative action in the face of gross human rights abuses. A copy of his paper expanding on his themes is available here <https://libg.co.uk/en/document#document>.

Aicha Elbasri is a former UN spokesperson who blew the whistle on the UN's collusion with the Islamist Sudanese regime. When she was stationed in Darfur, she witnessed the way in which peacekeepers received no support from UN HQ in New York when they tried to investigate attacks by Sudanese armed forces against unarmed civilians. She was not optimistic about the ability of the UN to reform itself, suggesting that a new group of democratic countries must arise to have any impact on atrocities committed by nations against their own citizens.



Elbasri stressed that the UN was originally established to ensure security between states, not to further a human rights-based agenda that protected

individuals or minorities from their own rulers. She pointed out that small nations will continue to bear the burden of inaction by the larger states. The redline is genocide, she said, and the UN utterly fails the test of legitimacy. The P5 has never acknowledged that genocide is happening anywhere, while it is ongoing, and it ignores the proxy wars happening in Syria and Libya. For instance, in Libya, Haftar had been given the green light by the P5 to attack a government recognised by the UN. The P5 won't relinquish its veto power, she concluded; hence the need for an alternative.

Hillel Neuer runs UN Watch, an NGO which points out the hypocrisy of UN member states, and urges reform to advance the cause of liberal democracy and human rights. For instance, in early October, Arab



and Muslim countries on the UN Human Rights Council condemned Israel for its treatment of women. Similarly, many Arab and Muslim countries have refused to criticise China for its treatment of the Uighurs. He suggested that the Council must have the power to throw member states off the UN Human Rights Council when they fail to uphold its ostensible mission.

Neuer refuted the notion that the UN General Assembly is the world's parliament because many rulers are the product of undemocratic elections. Regional bodies have members with good human rights records, such as

Costa Rica, and it is those nations that should be representing regions. Sitting on the UN Human Rights Council gives human rights abusers a false badge of legitimacy and protects them from scrutiny. Neuer pointed out that the EU nations never raise their voices in meetings where governments responsible for atrocities also sit, because they are furthering commercial interests or engaging in vote deals behind the scenes.

The webinar was attended by 123 people from 21 countries including Argentina, Rwanda, the US and Ghana. A recording can be found here <https://youtu.be/QXlgDurH7Gw>.

**Rebecca Tinsley**

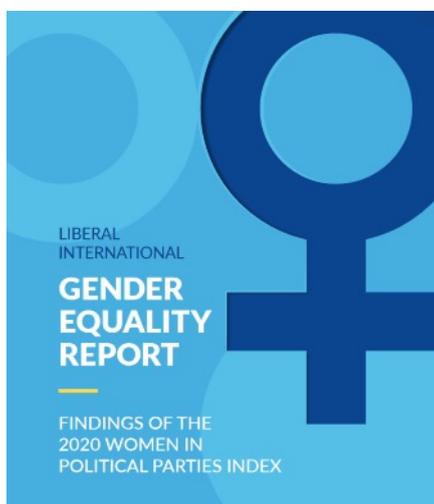
*The LIBG webinar: The United Nations at 75: why and how should it be reformed, took place on 12th October 2020*

# Liberal International Gender Equality Report Launched.

LI are proud to launch the inaugural Liberal International Gender Equality Report!

This report presents the findings of the 2020 Women in Political Parties Index, the first of its kind tool developed by Liberal International to assist our membership in evaluating and improving their inclusivity as political parties.

The Index is based on a self-assessment survey, which was opened to the LI membership for the first time in March 2020, and all eligible parties were able to submit their results until June 2020. The result of this data collection is presented in this report.



The results find that in many ways, liberals are at the forefront of the global fight for gender equality. The global liberal family is consistently ahead of the regional trends for representation of women in parliaments, and many have comprehensive training programmes to strengthen and empower female candidates.

Despite this, many challenges remain. Many liberal parties have still never elected a female leader. Work remains to ensure that our party structures are equipped to record and follow up the threats and harassments we know that female candidates and politicians face. We must continue to actively acknowledge these challenges, and to train and educate our memberships as we strive to become more inclusive as political parties.

In providing these results, Liberal International's objective is to assist our member parties in promoting greater participation of women in politics, which research consistently shows benefits political parties, countries, and governments.

# A dialogue between Layla Moran MP x Emily Lau (former chair of Democratic Party, Hong Kong) with Friends of Hong Kong

Friends of Hong Kong is honoured to arrange a dialogue between the Liberal Democrats and the Hong Kong Democratic Party on the morning of 21 October 2020. The dialogue was ahead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Hong Kong Bill which Friends of Hong Kong have worked closely with the Liberal Democrats both in drafting and campaigns.

While there is a long way to go for the Hong Kong Bill that Friends of Hong Kong campaigns with the Liberal Democrats, as Layla points out the Hong Kong Bill is a useful mechanism to push forward other legislations in parliament in relation to human rights.

It is indeed rich for Peking to say legislations from western democracy on human rights are breaches of trust between the west and China. China's pattern of behaviour against neighbours and ethnic minorities like Taiwan, the Uyghurs, Inner Mongolians and Tibetans is consistently aggressive and flouting human rights as recognised by the United Nations.

The dialogue between Layla and Emily can be viewed here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/thedphk/videos/2272614736217729>

## Background

The British National (Overseas) Citizens scheme offered by the Home Secretary is a much valued response. It is a response to UK's responsibility over British Nationals and provides a safe haven to a certain group of HongKongers and attracts talents into the UK economy. However, it falls short of providing a comprehensive response to China's multiple breaches of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and continuous disrespect to rule-based international order. The Liberal Democrats and Friends of Hong Kong believes strongly in human rights and the need to respond to aggressions against people, tragically a reality in Xinjiang's concentration camp – of which is becoming an apparent genocide against the Uyghur people, open conflict in Kashmir with Chinese soldiers crossing into India's territory and military threats against Taiwan.

The Chinese Government's attack on international human rights must be resisted.  
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yho4hctv921p2zk/AACkOhXs5c64Rvpj4TayAND\\_a?dl=0&preview=Tibet\\_Parliament\\_Projection.mp4](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yho4hctv921p2zk/AACkOhXs5c64Rvpj4TayAND_a?dl=0&preview=Tibet_Parliament_Projection.mp4).

**The UK has a comprehensive legal framework that includes the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 and The Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020. In Alistair Carmichael MP's words, "There is no point by boasting the introduction of Magnitsky sanctions if we cannot be prepared to use it."**

At the Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference during the F31 Policy Motion: Hong Kong's Future, Carmichael reminded how valuable it is if actions are taken as soon as human rights issues arises. If the Thatcher's ministry has listened to Paddy Ashdown's call for British Citizen passports for all people of then British Hong Kong, China would probably have think twice about imposing draconian and abusive laws on a land with 5 million British Citizens. Also, will the Chinese government in Beijing have been so keen to make multiple breaches of the international treaty of 1984 between Britain and China if from day 1 the UK have stood firmly to tell Beijing that imposing a provisional Legislature of 1997 and voiding the previously elected Legislature is an unacceptable breach?

It has now come the time to implement sanctions against Hong Kong & Chinese officials and a life-boat solution for ALL HongKongers. The people of Hong Kong wishes to pressure for a sanction regime to exert more pressure on Communist China against her abuses and occupation against the Uyghurs and Tibetans.

**There is already a bill in Parliament – The Hong Kong Bill. Now is the time to stand firmly as Global Britain, respecting international order and assisting the people who are oppressed by authoritarian regimes as they fight for the identity and culture.**

### **Layla Moran’s speech to Autumn Conference**

The Chinese Communist Party (‘CCP’) have used “labour camps” to produce products that are sold worldwide. Layla calls for our government to ban these products from our markets immediately. Also, firms such as Disney’s *Mulan* with ties to such atrocities should not be embraced.

There are already bans, and rightly so, against Chinese companies strongly linked to the Chinese military and the CCP. Huawei is developing monitoring system used in the (labour) camps, Bytedance (TikTok’s parent company) also stands accused of working with the CCP to censor and monitor Uyghurs. We should not allow our entertainment data be used to fund companies who help to repress human rights in other countries.

The Liberal Democrats, like former leader Paddy Ashdown, have never been afraid to lead from the front with it comes to Britain’s place in the world. Carmichael reports to the Conference at least 60 MPs have stood firmly for legislations to be implemented in view of China’s abuse on human rights. Nothing is going to change the Liberal Democrats cross-party approach to stand firmly with all people on democracy and human rights.

### **The Hong Kong Bill**

The Hong Kong Bill is Alistair Carmichael’s proposal to ensure the all in Hong Kong has a lifeboat policy. Carmichael sees this as a matter of urgency to seek government support for his Bill. In his <sup>1</sup>letter in The Times on 2 June 2020, he recalled the late Paddy Ashdown argued Beijing could ignore the declaration [Sino-British Joint Declaration] if they did not feel there would be any repercussions. Probably on this basis, he thinks <sup>2</sup>“It’s self-defeating not to offer the same [the same lifeboat assurance] opportunity to everyone.”

**The Hong Kong Bill is not a mere BNO rights advocacy Bill; more importantly, it is a civil liberties Bill. It will also be the best clarification for the Government’s proposal to protect BN(O)s.**

Any concerns of the legal rights of BN(O)s arise during these fluid times are addressed by the Hong Kong Bill.

The Hong Kong Bill:

- i) Provides for the fact that BN(O) holders will automatically be recognised as British Citizens
- ii) Dependents of BN(O)s are catered for to apply to join their sponsor
- iii) Provisions exists for BDTCs to apply to come to the United Kingdom
- iv) The Secretary of State would not refuse a visa application or an application for Leave solely on the basis of politically motivated prosecutions.
- v) Six-monthly reports of Hong Kong will become more detailed and make judgements on the seriousness of each concern. The reports have to be presented for parliamentary scrutiny.
- vi) There will be duty to consider sanctions on HKSAR Officials based on existing English Laws.
- vii) Any breaches of Human Rights in Hong Kong are to be seriously considered by Government and Parliament. These considerations will also affect trade decisions.
- viii)

Friends of Hong Kong (‘FdsHK’) **Bill team** helped drafted provisions for the Hong Kong Bill. We are very happy to be capable of making the effort with such a small team. In late May 2020, Liberal Democrats members of FdsHK submitted our draft of the Hong Kong Bill to the Liberal democrats Federal Party Foreign Affairs Desk to which we received the reply that they are “impressed” and gladly “will run (it) by the Bills office”. Since then, momentum for the Hong Kong Bill is growing in Parliament and newspaper editorials.

<sup>1</sup> The UK must give all Hongkongers a path to citizenship, The Times, 2 June 2020

<sup>2</sup> Give all Hongkongers the right to live in Britain, say MPs, The Times, 9 June 2020

## Momentum for Hong Kong Bill

Our first great news came not long after we finished drafting the bill. On 3 June <sup>1</sup>an opinion poll shows some 68% of British respondents agree all BN(O) passport holders should be allowed a pathway to citizenship. When Friends of Hong Kong employed Savanta Comres to conduct a poll in December 2019, 46% supported British Citizenship rights for BNOs.

**Significance:** Polls shows those who favour reducing the number of immigrants coming to Britain is <sup>2</sup>58% or <sup>5</sup>52%. Both Friends of Hong Kong and Redfield & Walton polls suggests otherwise – **British voters welcome BN(O) passport holders from HK.**

The day later, on 4 June, the Spectator favours, just as in the late 1980s, to confer all BN(O)s directly the rights to British Citizenship. Furthermore, The Times reported on 9 June that Conservative Jeremy Hunt MP (also former foreign secretary) and committee heads including Stephen Timms MP, Chris Bryant MP (Labour) and Sarah Champion MP (Labour) supports the Hong Kong Bill. The article went further in quoting former Brexit Secretary David Davis MP saying Raab's proposal does not offer the level of certainty needed.

**Significance:** Paddy Ashdown warned before he passed away that “what we had done to the Hong Kong people was worse than Windrush.” The erosion of freedom in Hong Kong and the national security legislation shows that “the deal” signed between Thatcher and Deng in 1984 is failing to protect the rights and freedoms of British National (Overseas) in HK. **The UK Government has explicitly responded to these concerns both through Raab's proposal and stance on 2 June in the Commons and PM Boris Johnson's letters penned to the SCMP and The Times. Cross-party support, especially from the Conservatives aisle, is growing.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://redfieldandwiltonstrategies.com/widespread-support-for-welcoming-hong-kong-bnos-even-as-immigration-attitudes-remain-hardened/>

<sup>2</sup> Migration Observation Poll <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources.briefings/uk-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attudes-and-level-of-concern/#kp1>

# International Abstracts

## Liberator 403

Liberator 403 is the first online only issue of the magazine. International contents are on the US elections, Will Russia rescue Trump again? By Martha Elliott, a Democrat activist; Who Won the Iraq War? By Rebecca Tinsley; My Enemy's Enemy, by Jonathan Fryer (published in *interLib* 2020-07 pages 6-7 as **The Iran-China Love-In**); Dangerous Waters, by Suzanne Fletcher, focuses on refugee crossing from France; in Iron Curtain Twitchers, Ruth Coleman-Taylor recalls a Young Liberal trip to Czechoslovakia, shortly after the Russian invasion. Otherwise, there is plenty of advice for Sir Ed Davey, now that he is elected leader of the Liberal Democrats. The magazine can be downloaded at [www.liberatormagazine.org.uk](http://www.liberatormagazine.org.uk)

## Journal of Liberal History, Issue 108 Autumn 2020

International content is derived from The two Henry Redhead Yorke, Radical to Liberal: The BME presence in British politics 1790-1850, in which Amanda Goodrich puts forward the argument that Dadabhai Naoroji was not the first Liberal MP from a Black or ethnic minority background. John Stewart, the Tory MP for Lymington from 1832- 1835 is generally credited as the first such MP, though as Goodrich points out, 18<sup>th</sup> century records may be imprecise. Otherwise Jo Swinson is interviewed as former Liberal Democrat leader, there is analysis of the 2019 general election, and of the performance of past Liberal Democrat leaders, and Jaime Reynolds continues his investigation of Liberal women in local government with Lady Meriel Howard, mayor of Llanelli..

## Turkey

What's next for Erdogan after eastern Mediterranean and Caucasus? By Cengiz Candar

Candar's article is very much in line with what correspondents on the Turkish front line are telling us.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/10/turkey-russia-armenian-azeri-war-erdogan-adventurist-policy.html>



## The Balfour Project



## Jerusalem: From Past Divisions to a Shared Future?

Tuesday 27th October 2020

10am - 6pm GMT

[Click here](#) to reserve your place at our one-day online conference.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_RuLBQvBPTQWg6TUIqJkA5g](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RuLBQvBPTQWg6TUIqJkA5g)

The conference is free but please [consider a donation](#) to the charity to keep us going.

# reviews

**Calligraphies of the Desert, by Hassan Massoudy.**

**Saqi Books 2020 £10.00 isbn 9780863561771**

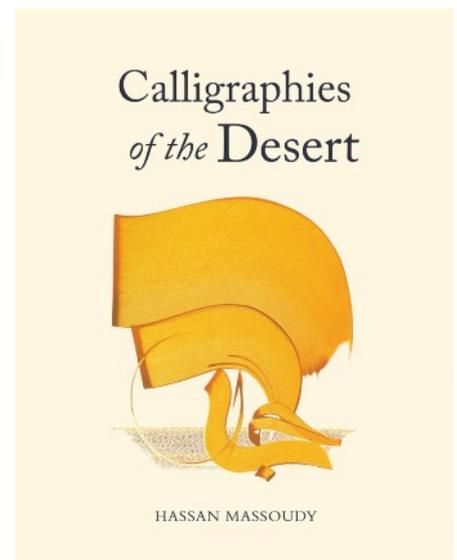
The desert has long exercised an almost mystical draw over Europeans, with its vastness, its beauty and its cruelty. As that great travel writer, Wilfred Thessiger, who wandered the Empty Quarter of southern Arabia, recorded, “No man can live this life and emerge unchanged. He will carry, however faint, the imprint of the desert, the brand which marks the nomad, and he will have within him that yearning to return, weak or insistent according to his nature.” How I know that yearning, ever since my first glance of the Sahara as a student, later fed with Arabian sands, the Gobi, the landscapes of Mauritania, Namibia and more. Like the novelist Paul Bowles at times I have sensed the danger in its attraction; at others, greeted it like a friend, alongside Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869):

*So in its silence and its desolation*

*The desert spoke to me far better than the crowd*

Most striking of all for me has been the variety. Each desert is different in form and colour. And it is that vibrant difference which the celebrated Iraqi calligrapher, Hassan Massoudy, explores so impressively in his exciting new volume of work, *Calligraphies of the Desert*. Each double-page spread has a quote or two, ancient and modern, (not just European but often Arab or Persian — even Chinese) while facing is Massoudy’s calligraphic representation. Just as an anthology of texts this book is a pleasure to dip in and out of, but savouring the artistry and tones of the calligraphy at the same time gives them so much added value. One can meditate on them for hours and, yes, be tempted back into the desert in one’s mind if not yet in person. Massoudy’s French wife, Isabelle, contributed a short but lyrical introduction that serves as a fitting doorway to what is beyond. This book may be small in size but it is immense in vision, as limitless as the desert itself.

*Jonathan Fryer*



## **Institute of Race Relations Library Sale 22/10/2020**

The IRR have donated a wonderful collection of approximately 300 books from their library, which we will be offering in a special in-store sale from 11am on Thursday 22nd October 2020 onwards. As you might expect, the books are primarily on themes of race, ethnicity, immigration, and international politics. The collection includes academic books as well as trade titles, with many copies in immaculate, as-new condition. As ever with all Housmans sales we will be selling the books at £1, £3 and £5. The sale will continue while stocks last - for at least two weeks we expect - with additional stock being put out daily.

Please note we are operating social distancing policies within the shop, so you may be asked to wait outside, or stand away from the sale table. And a reminder: we require all our customers to wear a mask and sanitise hands on entry, and would ask that you make payment by card only. Thank you!

**Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX**