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# INTERLIB

## Journal of the Liberal International British Group

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35+ 初選  
53 名被捕者

### 6名組織初選被捕者

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\*為昨日被捕的泛民主派初選參加者  
 註：泛民35+初選有51人參加，警方昨日拘捕47名參加者（見上圖）；未有被捕的包括正流亡海外的許智峯及張麗珊，以及正被羈押的譚得志和在囚的黃之鋒

# EVENTS

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Alistair Carmichael's Hong Kong Bill was deferred again, with no date fixed as yet for its return to the House of Commons

**9<sup>th</sup> March** – LIBG Forum on Turkey by Zoom (provisional)

**18th- 21st February** - Young Liberals online conference.

**19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> March** – Liberal Democrats Spring Conference.

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

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Photographs: Liberal International, Chinese Liberal  
Democrats, Green Liberal Democrats.

Cover image: Front page of Hong Kong broadsheet  
Ming Pao Jan 7, 2021. Twitter

# Boğaziçi Boogie

## A. Kurt

Major cities in Turkey are witnessing protests again. Since the Summer 2013 (Gezi protests) things had been relatively calm but a short while ago calm waters disappeared and protests were back. It all started with Erdoğan's appointment of a new rector to University Boğaziçi. Melih Bulu is a prominent AKP member. He was a parliamentary candidate of AKP in the last elections but failed to get elected<sup>1</sup>. Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, the University of Bosphorus, is without a doubt best university in Turkey. It is the hardest one to get into and once you have graduated, the best job prospects are certain things. Boğaziçi was founded by an American foundation in 1863, but in 1971 it became a state university. It is also one of the few unis in which most classes are in English. In the history of university there has never been a rector who is not approved by own academics and they feel that they have not been involved in the process<sup>2</sup>. To many, he is selected simply because he is a hardcore AKP member. First students started protesting against him, then academics joined them. A short while after, other university academics and students joined the protests. Last week police detained nearly 100 students than let them. Police raided the students addresses around 5.00 am with machine guns.

Immediately after that protests gathered more pace and getting more support from society at large. Parents of these students are the people who had lived through the 1980 coup d'etat so they know what would happen to persons who are detained by so called anti-terror teams. When protests starting to take streets (there are numerous videos of old ladies, by-passers and other unrelated people) ordinary citizens showed their discontent. Erdoğan's biggest fear is another 2013 summer (Gezi). So, the Erdoğan regime changed tactics again and started to spread a different story about protests. His newspapers and tv channels are broadcasting that LGBT groups are behind all the protests. They are trying to get the support of AKP voters of Istanbul, Ankara and other large cities. But these tactics did not work, on the night of 2nd of February it was very visible particularly in Istanbul and Ankara protests were supported by many people. In the meantime, the police response is getting heavier; another round of arrest took place. This time more than hundred people were taking into custody. More than 10 them were given house arrest; the others let go. According to present law, protests are legal. Despite this legality, Istanbul and Ankara state administrators announced meetings are banned. In one video the police tried to arrest a civilian, but then that civilian turned out to be plainclothes police officer so they let him go. The video went viral.

The effect of pandemic, high inflation, high unemployment, almost no state aid to the people who lost their jobs as a result of pandemic has created a very explosive atmosphere in the country. Now everyone is aware if you are not a member of ruling party you cannot get a job, you cannot get state contract basically you become an untermensch.

On top of these issues there are very serious geo-political worries rising. Possible USA and EU sanctions, NATO membership problems and situation in Syria. It is known that Erdoğan has signed some sort of secret agreements with China; he gets money and in return says nothing against China about the Uighur problem. Russia is building a nuclear reactor plus selling S400 missile systems. So far, he has managed to juggle all these complicated relations but his hands are getting weaker.

If the current protests will not be suppressed by heavy handed tactics, this has the potential of spread to the larger part of the society. It may turn into a second Summer of 2013.

Except for a very few, very short reports, nothing has appeared in western media about the Turkish protests. There is a clear double standard when it comes to geo political worries. That is understandable up to a point. Erdoğan has never kept his promises and he never will in the future. To leave Turkey to burn, just because of a handful of hedge funds are going to make a profit out of the current economic climate is not acceptable by any standards let alone western democratic standards.

*A. Kurt*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-university-rector-melih-bulu-protests-recep-tayyip-erdogan/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-55596638>

What BBC Turkish is saying is technically right, but there are issues. First of all, this has never happened before in this university; the rector has always been elected by the academics. Secondly there are allegations of plagiarising about his doctorate. On top of all this, the land on which university stands is one the most valuable sites in Istanbul. The real plan is to remove the university from where it is now to a different location, then selling the that land to constructions companies (possibly to a company with links to the AKP)

*LIBG will be holding a Forum on Turkey, by Zoom. provisionally on 9<sup>th</sup> March. More details will follow.*

## William Townsend appointed secretary general.

The bureau of Liberal International has appointed the Liberal Democrats' William Townsend secretary-general of the global federation after he was made acting secretary-general last year.

Announcing his appointment, LI President, Dr Hakima el Haité said: "I am very pleased that William is the new secretary-general of Liberal International. He is well known to the global liberal family and has demonstrated the professionalism and experience to deliver for Liberal International our member parties over many years."



"William has delivered high-level political meetings on every continent on which LI has a member party and proven himself to be a strong administrator of our global network. In doing so, he has earned the trust of the LI bureau and won the confidence of our global membership", Dr El Haité added.

William, who comes from the former Liberal Democrats stronghold of Cornwall, UK, has over 10 years' experience in politics and international affairs. Having moved to London, he worked on national and international campaigns and in political communication.

On confirmation of his appointment, William said: "Liberal International is a force for good in the world and it is a privilege to be taking over as secretary-general of an organisation that has, for 74 years, been at the vanguard of strengthening

international cooperation among the world's liberals."

"I'm honoured to be able work daily with inspiring political leaders, energetic partners, and a dedicated secretariat who are all so ambitious about what we can achieve together. This is a challenging yet exciting time to be taking over as secretary-general; the pandemic has motivated us to be at our most inventive and I am looking forward to working with the bureau to roll out a new range of political initiatives in 2021", the LI secretary-general added.

# A World Haunted by Genocide Denial

## Rebecca Tinsley

When he was asked about the Sudanese regime's ethnic cleansing in Darfur, Turkey's President Erdoğan said<sup>1</sup> "It is not possible for a Muslim to commit genocide." When Mark Zuckerberg defended<sup>2</sup> Facebook's policy of allowing free speech for Holocaust deniers, he thought Holocaust deniers aren't "intentionally getting it wrong." Evidently, his views have "evolved" since then.

Meanwhile, 63% of Zuckerberg's generation in America don't know<sup>3</sup> that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and half of them thought fewer than two million died. The organisers of Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27<sup>th</sup>) admit they tend to be preaching to the converted, rather than enlightening the masses who are still ignorant.

Now, Linda Melvern, a leading expert on the Rwandan genocide, has documented the continuing campaign to deny the existence of the plan to exterminate the Tutsi minority in 1994.

"Like those who tried to prove the gassings exaggerated in the Nazi concentration camps, they too were determined to minimise, obscure and diminish what happened," with "no shortage of scholars, regional experts, journalists and military officers to appear in court in their defence," she writes in her latest book<sup>4</sup>. Melvern's catalogue of international reactions to the slaughter of the Tutsi could equally apply to what followed the Holocaust: at the heart of both is denial that a genocide took place and that a genocidal ideology drove it, rather than a series of regrettable incidents.

During and after the Holocaust, as with Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, there was a deliberate campaign of misinformation and lies produced by "respectable" academics and journalists. There was also a well-organised evacuation and protection of those implicated in genocide by governments and institutions. Criminal proceedings became forums in which the dead were dishonoured and survivors were humiliated. Then, adding to the trauma, there has been the premature release of those convicted of the greatest crime of all, genocide.

The international community has a poor track record on recognising the power of exclusionist ideology. Just as world leaders in the 1930s ignored the classification, discrimination and dehumanisation of Germany's Jews, so the United Nations refused to confront the poisonous ideology permeating Rwanda, and the massive arms purchases, in the four years running up to the 1994 genocide. Melvern produces the evidence to show that during the slaughter, UN members took the word of the murderous regime's ambassador rather than the evidence from satellite photos of the systematic extermination of Tutsi.

Melvorn writes that the US government considered a raid to destroy the Rwandan radio station directing the genocide, but considered it too expensive (about \$8,000). They justified this as proof of their belief in free speech. Meanwhile, Tutsi were killed at a faster rate than the Nazis murdered the Jews; it was the largest slaughter of children ever known.

It may not surprise readers familiar with France's record during the Second World War to learn from Melvern that the French authorities armed, trained, evacuated and protected Rwanda's killers. French officials, aided by the BBC, have repeatedly accused the Tutsi (without evidence) of starting the genocide by shooting down the Rwandan president's plane; this is akin to the Reichstag fire.

There has since been a global effort to suggest (again with flimsy evidence) that there was a double genocide when the Tutsi systematically killed Hutu, thereby perpetuating the view that conflict in Africa is caused by savage tribes rather than manipulative politicians. In an echo of Nuremberg and the Japanese war trials, judges have released the architects of the genocide on the grounds that they were model prisoners.

The international community embraces moral equivalence because it lets them off the hook for repeatedly ignoring the evidence of incipient genocide. Whether it is Nazi propaganda in the 1930s, or Milošević's "Greater Serbia" speeches, or Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya, our diplomats and officials choose not to acknowledge the power of hate speech and exclusionary ideology.

Decision-makers finally react when it is too late, and the human and economic costs are vastly more than they would have been if warnings had been heeded. But, as Melvern writes, you cannot kill an ingrained ideology with a gun. Refusing to confront the power of ideology allows genocide denial to flourish. The result, as the Anti-Defamation League survey<sup>5</sup> found in 2014, is that a third of people around the world don't believe the Holocaust has been accurately described as six million Jewish people systematically murdered by the Nazis. Most people don't even know it happened. That should give us all pause for thought.

Rebecca Tinsley

Rebecca Tinsley started the human rights group Waging Peace after visiting Darfur at the height of the killing. A sister charity, Article 1, supports Sudanese refugees in the UK. Her novel about Sudan, "When the Stars Fall to Earth" is available from TinsleyRC@aol.com

This article first appeared in The Times of Israel 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

<sup>1</sup> <http://asbarez.com/73093/erdogan-defends-al-bashir-says-muslims-incapable-of-genocide/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/opinion/facebook-holocaust-denial.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/survey-finds-shocking-lack-holocaust-knowledge-among-millennials-gen-z-n1240031>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.versobooks.com/books/2945-intent-to-deceive> Intent to Deceive, denying the genocide of the Tutsi, by Linda Melvern. Verso 2020 isbn 9781788733281

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/05/the-world-is-full-of-holocaust-deniers/370870/>



## Lunar New Year Celebrations

February 13, 2021 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Join us in ushering in the Year of the Ox at our first Zoom Chinese New Year celebrations.

Guest Speakers :

**Sir Vince Cable**, former Business Secretary and author of "The Storm", "Free Radical" and "China: Engage!" And introducing former Member of European Parliament and Councillor **Ms Luisa Porritt**, Liberal Democrat London Mayoral candidate for GLA elections in May 2021, plus **Jenny Wilkinson**, chartered accountant and former Parliamentary Candidate, standing as the Libdem Mayoral Candidate for West Midlands in May.



Ticket price: free

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# What can we do about the Amazon?

## Soy, Brazil, the EU & the Amazon

### Keith Melton

The European Union is taking a tough line with Brazil about the deforestation of the Amazon. European Parliament deputy Pascal Canfin, who is president of the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety says, "Brazil can't figure on the international scene as the



country that doesn't want to cooperate. It would be a terrible economic decision".

Canfin is a member of *Republique En Marche*, President Macron's party in France. Only last year Macron called for a big increase in the amount of land devoted to growing Soy, as a means of providing an alternative to buying soy from Brazil. The EU imports around 14 million tons of the product from Brazil. Although it is estimated that only 5% of Brazilian soy is grown in areas which have contributed to

deforestation in the Amazon, public pressure is exceptionally strong that the Amazon must be protected from the deliberately set fires attributed to farming in the country.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro claims that the EU is challenging the country's sovereignty on the issue and it is all a ploy towards protectionism by the European bloc. Pascal Canfin insists that there is no protectionist motivation by the European Union on the plan to restrict Brazilian soy.

"The goal is not to stop importing Brazilian soybeans, but rather Brazilian soybeans that are unable to prove that they do not contribute to deforestation. We are not against Brazilian soy itself, but against a production method that we no longer want to endorse," he said.

Following Joe Biden's inauguration as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the US, it now looks as though Bolsonaro has become isolated and may well have to start backing down from his apparent hard line on Brazilian sovereignty. Biden has clearly signalled his administration's environmental credentials by signing back up to the Paris Accord

#### **Truth & Lies - Brazil's VP Mourão Advocates New Development Model for Amazon Region**

The Rio Times of February 4<sup>th</sup> reports that Vice President Mourao of Brazil who is also the President of the Amazon Council, is calling for more "Development" in the Amazon Region. In that article he is reported to have announced the results of the council's efforts last year...

"What were the preliminary results? First, a slowdown in deforestation, albeit not enough to fully celebrate yet. But from June last year until December 31st, in these seven months, we managed to reduce deforestation by 17%, when compared to the same period in 2019", he said.



The Amazon Council has the task of coordinating federal initiatives in the Amazon region, including cooperation with states, municipalities and civil society.

The trouble is that his claims of a slowdown in deforestation seem to be far from the truth - or, at the very least a significant mis-representation of statistics to disguise the truth! Year on year the deforestation figure has gone UP by nearly 10% on 2019 and by around 47% as set against 2018. And if you compare the 2020 figures against the target set in legislation against which the Government's actions should be measured, the figure is even more concerning.

The target established in the "*Plano para Controle do Desmatamento Ilegal e Recuperação da Vegetação Nativa*" was to reduce deforestation to no more than 3,925 km<sup>2</sup> by 2020. The ACTUAL figure is more like 11,088 km<sup>2</sup> - an uplift of **182%** on the target. (According to: *Portal TerraBrasilis* (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE), 2020); <http://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br>)

### **Brazilians want their Amazon protected**

Bolsonaro's Government is not only isolated now, it may also be running into problems at home. More than three-quarters of Brazilians think Amazon rainforest fires have hurt the country's image - and that environmental protection should become a priority for the country, even at an economic cost, a new survey has found.

According to the Rio times today (5<sup>th</sup> February 2021), the study on climate change views, organized by Brazil's Institute of Technology and Society and the U.S.-based Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, found younger Brazilians in particular see global warming as a major threat to their lives now, as well as in the future.

More than 90% of those questioned said worsening fires in the Amazon were hurting Brazil's quality of life and were a threat to the planet.

More than eight in 10 Brazilians said the fires had hurt the nation's international image, and 78% thought they could hurt trade between the South American giant and other countries.

It remains to be seen whether these views of younger Brazilians will actually be felt at the ballot box. The next presidential election is due for 2022 so the next president would take over the reins in 2023. The question for European politicians is whether taking a stronger line on Bolsonaro will help or hinder the actual safety of the Amazon from ruinous exploitation.

As far as the Green Liberal Democrats are concerned, we take the view that the lies of the Brazilian Government should be exposed in the same way the lies of Trump and Johnson should be exposed. We will certainly be taking every opportunity during this important year of the next Climate Change Summit in Glasgow to highlight the huge role the Amazon has for cooling the world, sucking CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere and locking it into the trees.

The problem with the deforestation is twofold. Killing the trees kills their ability to soak up carbon dioxide - but it also releases tons and tons of the stuff which had been locked into the trees themselves for millennia.

### ***Keith Melton***

Keith Melton is Chair of the Green Liberal Democrats  
This article first appeared on February 5th 2021

# The Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia: Post-War Ramifications and International Response

## Jon Abbink

Nearly three months after the Ethiopian federal army took over the northern Tigray region of the country in a well-organized and rapid offensive, the structure of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)—the political party in power for thirty years before Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed—has been dismantled and its leaders killed, arrested, or under pursuit. While the situation on the ground is far from normal, some stability is gradually returning to daily life and economic activity.

The attack on federal army bases by TPLF forces on November 4, 2020 that sparked the wider conflict was stealthy and unprovoked. Ethiopian federal soldiers of the Northern Command were humiliated on the orders of the TPLF's leadership. The attack was used as justification by Abiy to dismantle the party, as the November attack was ostensibly an attempt by the TPLF to take over the army's heavy weaponry and return to power in Addis Ababa. The TPLF, however, seriously overestimated its own strength and popularity.

It is difficult to ascertain whether serious armed clashes are ongoing—although pro-TPLF propaganda suggests this. It is certain that this war has been devastating and that abuses have been committed by both the TPLF and federal army, although in vastly different proportions.

From the start of the conflict, international observers of many kinds have been warning—and sometimes exaggerating—of the likely destabilization<sup>1</sup> of the Horn of Africa region and the expansion of the armed conflict into neighbouring countries. But indeed, the international ramifications and the ways governments are responding to the Tigray war need more attention.

Three of Ethiopia's neighbours—Eritrea, Egypt, and Sudan—have had varied reactions. Eritrean forces seem to have been present on Ethiopian soil, and perhaps still are, although not on the invitation of the federal army. According to a recent Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Report<sup>2</sup> they may have been involved in looting and will be pressed to withdraw soon. To be noted also is that the TPLF has sown confusion by having some of its troops wear Eritrean uniforms (produced in the Almeda Textile factory in Adwa, Tigray).

More complicated is the position of Sudan and Egypt. Although no armed conflict is expected, relations are tense between Ethiopia and Egypt, as President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi adamantly refuses to accept the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile. Egypt has been working to destabilize Ethiopia via proxy parties in the country and support to Sudan. It is rumored that before the recent war there was even a rapprochement between the TPLF and Egypt.

Egypt has tacitly urged Sudan to pressure Ethiopia on its western border. Currently, there are tensions<sup>3</sup> in the al-Fashaga<sup>4</sup> area (with armed incidents), and negotiations on the border are stalling. It would be politically difficult for Sudan to now press claims on agrarian lands cultivated by Ethiopian farmers since it has condoned this activity for decades. There are also domestic issues at hand, as Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese military, wants to assert his power vis-à-vis Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.

In addition to East African countries, the responses of international actors have had significant ramifications. Support for peace and rebuilding in Tigray is vital and has been started by the federal government, though much of it will also be accomplished with support of international donors. The complication is that Abiy and his government are wary of the interference, complaints, and demands made by the international community. This is especially true after the largely negative responses of the international community to the federal army's campaign, e.g., by humanitarian agencies, media, United Nations' agencies, the European Union, think tanks, and even by an assortment of scholars marshalled by alarmist letters from Tigray and TPLF members protesting the war. The pattern of almost categorical rejection of the government's military operation, demands to negotiate with the TPLF, allow unconditional humanitarian access, and cease hostilities will make Abiy wary of any pedantic international involvement.

Although there continue to be skirmishes in Tigray and grave humanitarian challenges<sup>5</sup>, the chorus of international voices against the course taken by the Ethiopian government belies the complicated reality and difficult choices that lay ahead. The TPLF, of course, was the strongest party in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPDRF) and ruled the country for decades. Abiy's decision to merge the ethnic-based parties<sup>6</sup> to form the Prosperity Party was precisely to overcome the divisions wrought by the EPDRF. The TPLF chose to spoil the reputation it had—for example by boycotting the Prosperity Party—and sought to destabilize Ethiopia through support of violent insurgent groups in western Oromia, Benishangul, and Amhara regions.

The low level of development in the Tigray region damaged the TPLF's reputation and is part of the reason for the humanitarian fallout from the conflict. For instance, well before the war, some 950,000 people were in dire humanitarian need<sup>7</sup> (28 years after the TPLF came to power). They had, however, heavily invested in their military with the aim of maintaining autonomy from the federal government.

Since Abiy became the leader of the EPDRF in 2018, the TPLF has systematically refused collaboration with Addis Ababa. While Tigray's autonomy as a region was fully supported by the new federal government, the end result of the TPLF's policy has been the party's demise<sup>8</sup>, with their leaders fleeing and most being killed or captured. For example, the former foreign minister and Ambassador of Ethiopia to China, Seyoum Mesfin, was a key TPLF leader and was found in a very remote area, where he was killed after his security detail opened fire on approaching federal soldiers.

In these circumstances, the federal government now faces three challenges, which will be closely followed by the international community. The first is to connect with the grassroots and people of Tigray to help rebuild the region in a way that gives them ownership. The second is to further open up humanitarian access. And third—apart from bringing to trial TPLF offenders—is to avoid federal army highhandedness and abuse, and hold transgressors responsible. In responding to these, the federal government will likely draw its own course based on the interests and needs of Ethiopia, i.e., follow a domestic agenda. Abiy does not see unconditional response to the concerns of the international community—especially if expressed in moralistic terms without historical and contextual knowledge—to be in the interest of his country or its people.

In fact, for international observers and donors, the regional context and history are crucial to any response. Most important, however, is to not underestimate the dramatic impact of the shocking attack on the federal army bases on November 4 and the November 9 mass murder<sup>9</sup> in Mai Kadra, carried out by TPLF-affiliated armed groups. These two tragic events were the catalyst for Abiy and the federal army to pursue the conflict to its end: dismantling the TPLF and building a new Tigray. The international community would do well to recognize this in any offers of support to, or condemnation of, the Ethiopian government.

*Jon Abbink is Professor of Politics and Governance in Africa in the African Studies Centre at the University of Leiden.*

This article first appeared in IPI Global Observatory, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 [The Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia: Post-War Ramifications and International Response | IPI Global Observatory \(theglobalobservatory.org\)](https://www.ipi.globalobservatory.org/)

<sup>1</sup> [Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: How the conflict could destabilise its neighbours - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/ethiopia-57444444) 14.11.2020

- <sup>2</sup> [Brief Monitoring Report - Humera, Dansha and Bissober .pdf - Google Drive](#)
- <sup>3</sup> [Ethiopia says Sudan invasion violates bilateral agreements \(borkena.com\)](#) 14.1.2021
- <sup>4</sup> [Sudan Accuses Ethiopia of Escalating Tensions Over Disputed Territory | Voice of America - English \(voanews.com\)](#) Naba Mohiedeen 15.1.2021
- <sup>5</sup> [Starvation crisis looms as aid groups seek urgent Tigray access | Humanitarian Crises News | Al Jazeera](#) Zecharias Zelalem 19.1.2021
- <sup>6</sup> [Ethiopia's ruling coalition agrees to form single party ahead of 2020 vote | Reuters](#) 21.11.2019
- <sup>7</sup> [Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update | Situation Reports \(unocha.org\)](#) (The most recent update – 4.2.2021 says ‘Three months on since the start of the conflict in Tigray, the humanitarian situation across the region is extremely alarming and continues to deteriorate rapidly.’)
- <sup>8</sup> [Ethiopia parliament dissolves Tigray leadership - BBC News](#) 7.11.2020
- <sup>9</sup> [Ethiopian refugees speak of how they fled to Sudan \(republicworld.com\)](#) 23.11.2020

Readers may also be interested in Jon Abbink’s article Leader to watch 2021: Abiy Ahmed, which first appeared in ‘The World in 2021 Milan, It.: Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), pp. 53-56.

## International Abstracts

Britain braces for not-so-special relationship with Biden, by Nahal Toosi & Doug Palmer. Politico 31.12.2020

*What you voted for Brexit bunnies.*

[Britain braces for not-so-special relationship with Biden - POLITICO](#)

### Turkey

Erdogan’s great game: Soldiers, spies and Turkey’s quest for power, by Laura Pitel. Financial Times 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021

<https://www.ft.com/content/8052b8aa-62b9-40c9-a40c-d7187d5cd98a>

This was the first of four articles on Turkey’s geo-political ambitions

### Journal of Liberal History, Issue 109 Winter 2020-2021

Nothing much of international note in this issue: What Honor (Balfour) did next, by Helen Langley; William Ewart Gladstone, by Simon Heffer and a review of Kenneth Clarke, Kind of Blue: A political memoir, David Cameron, For the Record and Oliver Letwin, Hearts and Minds: The battle for the Conservative Party from Thatcher to the present, by Duncan Brack.

Some cornerstones still in place (the Liberal party 1945-55) by Tudor Jones, does state that *the cause of international cooperation* was one of the *unifying themes that pervaded Liberal policy* throughout the period. Jones’ *Uneven Path of British Liberalism* was reviewed in interLib 2020-08 and should find its way to your bookshelf soon, if it isn’t already there.

There are also obituaries of Liberal historian and activist Roy Douglas and of Ann Winfield.

### Liberator 405

International content comes in Martha Elliott’s look at the legacy left by Trump and Rebecca Tinsley’s assessment of Vince Cable’s *China Engage*. Peter Johnson gives some insights into the role of participatory democracy in Taiwan’s response to Covid-19. Lord Bonkers has to call on some old connections to get out of trouble Stateside.

# **LI Bureau condemns China's arrests of political opposition in Hong Kong and calls for release of political prisoners**

The Liberal International (LI) Bureau strongly condemns the continuing violations of fundamental political and human rights of HongKongers by the Chinese authorities. The arrest of an international lawyer amongst the 53 people detained in early morning raids on Wednesday, 6 January 2021, represents an escalation of Beijing's suppression; demonstrating the dangers of dissent in the would-be new Hong Kong that China seeks to create.

The arrested former legislators and activists, who participated in the opposition's primary elections last year, have been charged with plotting to overthrow the government. This is the latest example of Chinese authorities using the national security law to aggressively persecute and silence its critics. Arresting pro-democracy activists only days after signing the EU-China investment agreement demonstrates the cynicism of the authorities in Beijing.

LI stands by our previous statements in support for democracy and the people of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong administration must, without delay, drop these fabricated charges against legitimate political actors and immediately release them from detention. Further, the administration must cease committing further acts that intimidate, harass, and threaten the political opposition in Hong Kong. We call on the European Union to act in coordination with the incoming US administration to ensure that the Chinese crackdown on Hong Kong has consequences. We know that liberals across the globe will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with HongKongers until they have won their fight.

STATEMENT: 7 January 2021

## **Liberals call for COVID-19 vaccines accessible to all**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Liberal International has been on the frontline calling for the measures to combat the consequences of the pandemic are fair, democratic and respectful of human rights. Following the development of effective vaccines against the virus, significantly supported by public funds, we are extremely concerned by the current distribution plans and inaccessibility of the vaccines to the developing world.

This pandemic transgresses national borders and will only be finally resolved when vaccines are accessible to the whole world. And in order for these vaccines to be effective, the deployment should be proportionally fast to all the regions of the world.

Cooperation among companies in production of COVID vaccines cannot just be a commercial goal but a public safety must. Instead of country-based protectionism and nationalism, there is a need for greater investment in production and global distribution, especially by those countries and industries that have the means.

Liberal International's President Dr Hakima el Haité supports the resolution on the ethical, legal and practical consideration of the COVID-19 vaccines adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, led by liberal president, Rik Daems. Both Dr El Haite and Mr Daems support the World Health Organization's efforts under the auspices of COVAX – ensuring global and equitable access to the vaccines and urging governments and the pharmaceutical industry to improve cooperation towards making this a reality.

*Dr Hakima el Haité & Rik Daems*

# **LI Bureau Denounces Military Coup in Myanmar**

Since 2015 the Liberal International Bureau has observed with cautious optimism, and encouraged with vigour, the slow transition towards democracy in Myanmar. It is with great alarm that we note the military seizure of power in the country in recent days and denounce this significant step backwards, away from the development of political and human rights.

The LI Bureau extends our support to the people of Myanmar and the democratic forces in the country. We call for the immediate release of the detained by the army and the restoration of the country's communication systems.

As a signatory country we urge the military leaders to uphold the principles set out in the ASEAN Charter pertaining to the rule of law, good governance, and respect for fundamental freedoms by returning control of the country to a democratic, political leadership in the interest of the Myanmar people and peace and stability in the wider region.

The Burmese military, led by Min Aung Hlaing, has arrested political leaders and human rights activists, including Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. State media has been taken off air except for military owned channels. In a statement the military said it has imposed a state of emergency for one year. All political prisoners should be immediately and unconditionally released.

The military is trying to justify its actions by claiming there was voter fraud in elections in November 2020, when the military political party, the Union Solidarity Development Association (USDP), suffered a crushing defeat to Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), formerly a member of Liberal International.

Burma Campaign UK today called for a robust international response to the military coup in Burma which took place this morning. This should include sanctions against military companies and support for a global arms embargo. The UK already has its own arms embargo, but otherwise, the Tory government's response has been lack-lustre.

For the first time the Burmese military is facing charges of genocide against the Rohingya in an international court. But instead of joining the case and trying to secure justice for the Rohingya, the British government is standing on the side-lines doing nothing.

## **Democracy must not be further delayed in Somalia**

The Bureau of Liberal International is deeply concerned by the election deadlock that continues to undermine the soon-to-be-held presidential and parliamentary elections in Somalia.

A political stalemate of this kind will once again hinder work towards democratic consolidation and participation as the elections rapidly approach. Democracy delayed is democracy denied and further undermines efforts to promote peace and stability in Somalia and across the Horn of Africa.

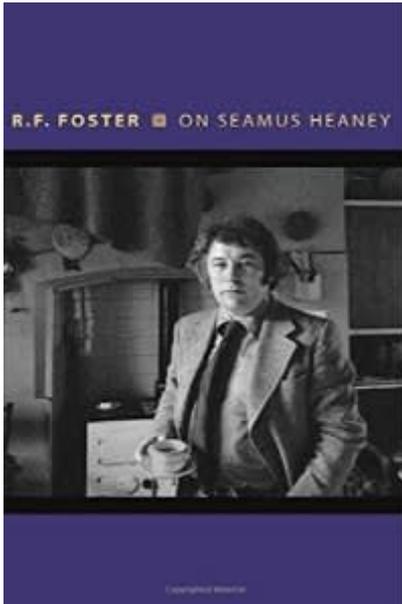
Together with our member party in Somalia, CAHDI Party, we urge Villa Somalia to be attentive to the interest of people of Somalia and in particular the next generation of Somalis. Having missed the opportunity to hold an election under the 'one-person-one-vote' system, it is essential Somalia not lose out on the opportunity to deliver on its obligations to implement the 30% quota of female members of parliament.

President Mohamed Abdulahi Farmaajo must now step up to lead Somalia in a responsible, statesmanly manner to ensure a peaceful and timely election.

# reviews

**R.F. Foster: On Seamus Heaney.**  
**Princeton University Press (Writers on Writers) 2020**  
**isbn 9780691174372**

Poetry remains alive and well in Ireland, be it primarily amongst the rural older generation whose oral tradition has not yet passed, so coming from that background, it is unsurprising that it should produce one of our greatest poets in Seamus Heaney.



The Troubles as a backdrop, death is prevalent in Heaney's work. Like Dante, Virgil is companion to his journey; or is it Yeats (be they the same person?) Setting the Troubles aside, Heaney shares with Yeats of being a poet of transition in Ireland; a transition throughout his life, but accelerated towards the end as the European Union brought the Republic out of the Third World – even in the last decade (he died in 2013) the change has been beyond recognition, something one realises too late. Where else will old Ulster dialect linger on?

We think of R.F. Foster primarily as a historian, as editor of the Oxford History of Ireland and a number of other accessible works, but he is also the biographer of Yeats appropriately. Princeton University Press couldn't have chosen better for their *Writers on Writers* series. Foster has followed Heaney since *North*, in 1975 and still recalls the sensation. My first encounter with Heaney was *The Haw Lantern*, though sometime after 1987, and there is much unread. If time allows, what better way to spend

Lockdown as Foster gives depth to our understanding of Heaney's poetry.

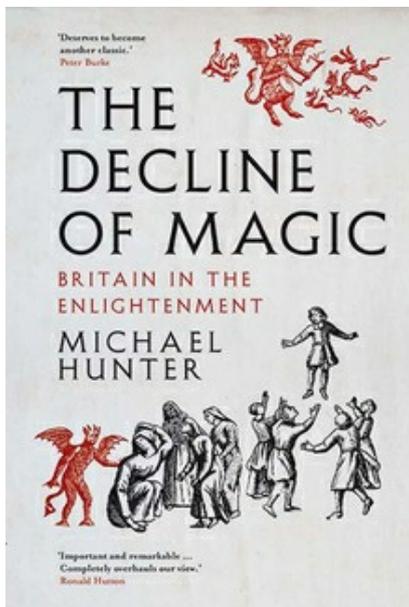
**Stewart Rayment**

**The Decline of Magic: Britain in the Enlightenment, by Michael Hunter.**  
**Yale University Press 2019 £25.00**  
**isbn 9780300243581**

How do people make up their minds concerning important issues of their day, about which it is difficult to remain neutral? And how do beliefs and ideas that start off as marginal, and sometimes even dangerous, gradually become accepted as the norm? Michael Hunter examines the ways in which educated people in Britain jettisoned belief in magic between approximately 1650 and 1750: in doing so, he provides a compelling and erudite account that shines light on the origins of the English Enlightenment, while teasing out the complex processes of intellectual change that underpins his study.

In order to appreciate the centrality of magic in pre-modern European societies, it is helpful to remember that life at that time had no scientific rationale: instead, human existence was understood in religious and occult terms. This was accentuated during fifteenth century, with the Renaissance and the Reformations, which involved great revivals of magic and religion that in turn helped to set the context for the witch hunts of early modern Europe. This means that when doubt concerning magic really started to take root in the latter half of the seventeenth century, those at the vanguard had to challenge a number of prevailing orthodoxies.

Michael Hunter has devoted much of his prolific output to both the study of Robert Boyle, England's preeminent scientist before Sir Isaac Newton, and the early Royal Society. Both feature a lot in this book.



But for any reader expecting to hear that it was the scientists of the Restoration who abandoned magic in favour of science, and that everyone else then followed suit, a surprise is in store! As Hunter explains, Boyle was a deeply religious man who gave magic a lot of thought: the problem was that by implication the rejection of phenomenon such as spells, witches, astrology, and second sight called into question the supernatural events of the Bible, especially miracles wrought by Christ. For Boyle and many of his peers, scepticism of magic was perilous because it led to atheism. Yet some of the Fellows of the Royal Society were uncertain of magic, so the organisation solved this thorny problem by adopting a corporate silence on the matter. It conducted no experiments into magic, which only later in the eighteenth century was misinterpreted as disbelief. But in some quarters the supernatural *was* derided at this time. As Hunter explains, it wasn't the scientists who mocked it, rather it was the wits and freethinkers who patronised the coffee houses. Iconoclastic young men who had grown up during the Civil War and Interregnum and seen authority challenged on an unprecedented scale, the wits had read Hobbes.

Key targets for the wits were magic and priestcraft, both of which were mocked for relying on the ignorance and credulity of the people, it was argued. Thus the wits were tarnished as irreligious, provoking an orthodox backlash in the form of earnest books arguing for the reality of the supernatural realm and denouncing the wits as atheists and libertines. Joseph Glanvill's *Saducimus Triumphatus* (1681) is particularly noteworthy in this regard. Initially, this rear-guard action made the wits' heterodox opinions too dangerous for much of the reading public, a development that delayed the broader reception and acceptance of anti-magical views. It took the Mechanical Philosophy, deism, and especially Newtonian Science to make such ideas safe enough for educated people to accept them. Hence by the 1730s there was a consensus that the universe operated according to a set of laws, while God had receded from being omnipresent to a more distant, non-interventionist deity. All this rendered magic too capricious, something that just did not fit into the new world view. Consequently, doctors began to pathologise witches as mentally ill, ghosts were relegated to children's tales, and the Hanoverian monarchs had no need of a Dr John Dee to provide them with astrological advice.

Hunter's book weaves a gripping account, with chapters forming case studies on important themes including the notorious poltergeist case of the 1660s, The Drummer of Tedworth; the ambivalence of the Royal Society; the changing views of medical men; and second sight in the Highlands of Scotland. The methodology of the book is particularly noteworthy for its investigation of the ideas of the wits and freethinkers, the bulk of which were expressed orally before 1690s, as committing them to print was too hazardous. This means that a lot of the anti-magical ideas are accessed at one remove, in pamphlets that describe coffee-houses and denounce their irreligious patrons, and in the weightier tomes of men such as Glanvill. Despite the obvious bias of the apologists for magic and the supernatural aspects of Christianity, they coalesce in their attack on free thinking. The wits are castigated for having too much confidence and not enough education, and for being dissolute characters on a high road to atheism. Inadvertently, the apologists allow us access to new heterodox ideas of the Restoration that otherwise would be almost lost to us, and so we should be grateful to the likes of Glanvill.

We must end on a sobering thought, however. Key issues such as whether magic was real or a con trick, and whether its practitioners were authentic or deluded, and the intellectual ramifications of such views, were hotly debated. Yet as Hunter observes, in reality it was a dialogue of the deaf. 'People just made up their minds and then grasped at arguments to substantiate their preconceived ideas, with a new generation simply rejecting out of hand the commonplaces of the old' (p. 46). Discussing the poltergeist Drummer of Tedworth, Hunter explains that 'it really does seem as if it was a predisposition to believe or to disbelieve, rather than any decisive piece of evidence, that was fundamental to dictating people's response to what occurred' (p.120). Despite this being the beginning of the Age of Reason, there is a noticeable lack of evidence of people weighing up both sides and then making up their minds or changing them. This is revealing, not just as a theory of intellectual change, but for readers who like their history to appear particularly relevant to its time of publication. Current debates in the UK include the furore over Brexit, and

the extent to which the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic has been disastrous. Do we examine both sides and make informed decisions based on the strongest evidence, or are we already committed to one side from the very beginning? And what constitutes reliable evidence? Returning to the Restoration, for those who believed in the supernatural, the ghostly Drummer of Tedworth was proof enough in itself; for doubters, it was a hoax even though no evidence was forthcoming to support this, despite the whole house being searched more than once and floorboards taken up. One is left wondering if Hunter's readable and meticulous book on early modern England has put its finger on a human quality that transcends any given period.

**Stephen Brogan**



*'World leaders have sent their best wishes. Vladimir Putin says he will take care of the election'*

**The Best of Matt 2020, by Matt Pritchett**  
**Orion Publishing 2020 £7.99**  
**isbn 9781409191483**

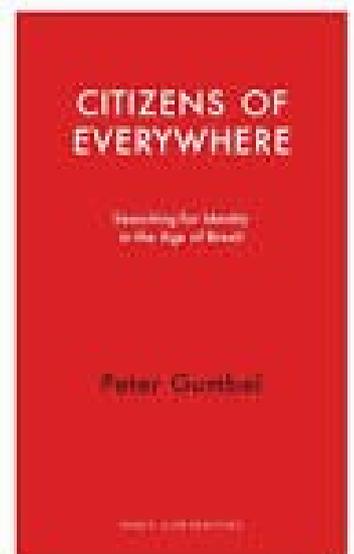
What does Matt have to say about 2019-2020? 38 pages on Coronavirus, at least 6 on Brexit, 8½ on the General Election (2 cartoons per page). Two of the latter feature the Liberal Democrats, but we cheat – one of those appeared in issue 2020-01. Lockdown meant we weren't about to get Matt's wisdom alongside his wit on this year's collection. What will 2020-21 bring – well the American elections for one thing (the annual sneak preview). We might expect that Brexit, which has been fine fodder for the last five years will recede, and would wish the same of Coronavirus. So, come on Sir Ed Davey, get out there and give one of our greatest cartoonists something positive to immortalise.

**Stewart Rayment**

**Citizens of Everywhere: Searching for Identity in the Age of Brexit, by Peter Gumbel.**  
**Haus 2020 £7.99 isbn 9781913368074**

At the Conservative Party conference in October 2016, in the wake of the EU Referendum, the then Prime Minister, Theresa May, spoke derisively of “citizens of nowhere” — people who had unpatriotically abandoned their native attachment to Britain in favour of a European or even global identity. It is one of the few phrases for which Mrs May is likely to be remembered, and I doubt whether history will look on it kindly. Like Brexit, it represented a giant step backwards, away from internationalism and the values at the heart of the European project. For many Remainers, the intervening four years have been painful and even some arch-Brexiteers have, where possible, applied for a passport of an EU member state, having realised that they had curtailed their own freedom of movement. The Johnson government — personified in the smirking Home Secretary, Priti Patel — now trumpets with pride the fact that it has ended freedom of movement. As British exceptionalists, they could not bear the idea that any European had the automatic right to come to Britain if they wished. And for lots of their voters in Brexit Britain, free access to the Continent was never a high priority.

For the Paris-based British journalist, Peter Gumbel, Brexit has made him feel like an orphan, abandoned by the Britain that he thought he knew. That sense of alienation is all the more acute because his Jewish grandparents had fled Germany shortly before the War, having their citizenship and most of their property stripped from them in the process. The family assimilated into the British way of life. But as Gumbel recounts in his rather moving short book, *Citizens of Everywhere: Searching for Identity in the Age of Brexit*, the atmosphere around Brexit prompted him to claim the German citizenship that he was entitled to as a descendant of Jews whose citizenship had been removed. Moreover, he had come to understand that whereas Britain had been the open nation fighting against Nazi Germany, today's Germany better represents the ideals and values previously cherished by Britain. Reconnecting with the

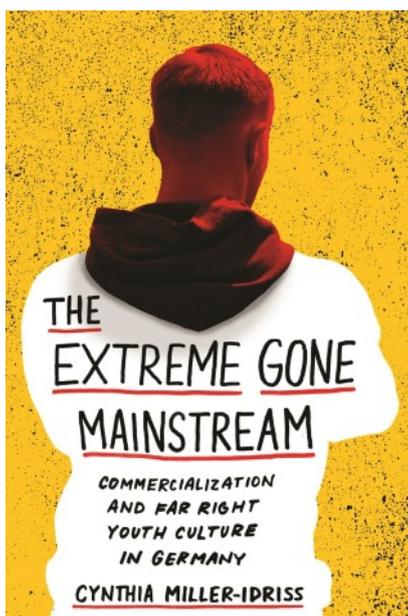


German part of his identity actually started when he was younger, learning the language and then revelling in its literature, not least writers like Thomas Mann and Stefan Zweig who went into exile to get away from the Third Reich. As a foreign correspondent for much of his life, Peter Gumbel also experienced some of the great events of the late 20th Century, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union — positive trends against which Brexit has established an unwelcome counteraction. By analysing both his particular personal circumstances and wider aspects of identity, the author has provided an eloquent and thought-provoking thesis that will resonate with many Brits who feel equally alienated by Brexit. As a Citizen of Everywhere, he is far from being alone.

*Jonathan Fryer*

**The Extreme Gone Mainstream, commercialization and far right youth culture in Germany,**  
by **Cynthia Miller-Idriss.**  
**Princeton University Press 2020**  
**isbn 9780691170206**

*Far right youth today eschew the 'old' neo-Nazi or skinhead style of shaved heads, bomber jackets, and high black boots that had become popular with British and German far right youth in the 1980s and 1990s. Instead, they embrace a broad array of styles and clothing with multiple coded symbols conveying varied aspects of far-right ideology and beliefs.* Cynthia Miller-Idriss has already run through a familiar sociology of the attraction of the far right to certain disaffected youths. It comes down to what Aristotle said, we are a social animal, and have a need of peer acceptance. She adds to this analysis how clothing, as outward symbols, can be a factor in this interaction.



I should add, at this point, that I do not hold the view that all skinheads, particularly with the dress code cited above, are racist or far right, that is too easy a stereotype, typically adopted by the far left. I recall some of the debate around Rock Against Racism and reggae – how can you like reggae, a black music, and be a racist? Well, simply it didn't universalise. There were skinheads in my Young Liberal branch in the late 70s and early 80s; it was a major social force in the town, so attracted all kinds. If you recall the opening lines of *The Specials Do the Dog... All you Punks and all you Teds, National Front and Natty Dreads, Mods, Rockers, Hippies and Skinheads...*; well the Teds in a small market town were well into middle age at the time and I don't recall of any Dreads, no National Front members, though it was a sign of the times that Jerry Dammers should identify them as a youth cult; but all the rest were present alongside a majority following the fashion mainstream. You can see them in the short-lived cartoon strip run in *Liberator* at the time; unfortunately, one of the Punks changed her hairstyle regularly, breaking the first rule of

cartooning. How distant that seems; no longer in the milieu, I'd be hard pressed to recognise the far-right in Britain today (well, no actually... outside Wetherspoons, taunting a Peoples' Vote demonstration last September – unfortunately I didn't photograph them, but white, probably England football shirts were prevalent, but this lot were no longer young); well over a decade ago, British National Party (BNP) members were finding a new home in UKIP. An aside, in *The Guardian* report of the retirement of Brian Parker, the last BNP councillor (2.5.2018) was described as 'having a taste for 70's knitwear'.

Some brands are picked up by the far right by default – the N(...azi) on New Balance trainers (worn by supermodels in London & dads in Ohio!), Alpha Industries bomber jackets – a plainly American logo, unless you're on the German far-right, for whom it references a banned Brownshirt (SA) logo; upside-down, (the logo was on a Velcro label, so that you could personalise it), it became V(aterland) and a symbol of readiness to fight. Alpha is less fashionable now in far-right circles. Poor old Lonsdale was even more unfortunate – LoNSDAle – the capitals recalling the initials of the Nazi party, showing beneath a partially opened bomber jacket. In Holland, the association was bad enough for young racists to become known as

Lonsdale Youth in the earlier years of this century, but the brand was favoured by skins and mods long before then, Paul Weller used to wear it in the late 1970s and you wouldn't associate him with racism, it was more about looking sharp.

The brand Thor Steinar purportedly doesn't have official connections with far-right groups but its logo has been banned in some Lande, though the bans have been overturned in higher courts. Others such as Ansgar Aryan are more blatant. Their current line includes *White Lives Matter*, of course they do, a misogynistic *Antifa Girls need discipline* (presumably aimed at the American market, though there are German groups that use the name), and a number of tee-shirts harking back to a militarist, probably National Socialist past. Their *Truth About Communism* tee-shirt claims 'around 130 million deaths' (as few as that?). It has constantly baffled me why Communist iconography is acceptable – the mass-murderer Che Guevara for instance.

Germany has constitutional means for banning National Socialist imagery, but 75 years on there seems to be less of an appetite for exercising it, particularly at a local level, where administrators may not be aware of the initial nuances. German football clubs that have taken a stand against racism and homophobia can find themselves targeted, and it only takes a small number of agents provocateurs to inflame violence that can be very damaging for a small club. How does this square with the rise of AfD?

Miller-Idriss raises the point that whilst clothing can be an entry point in youth radicalisation, it also provides a point of engagement to challenge the assumptions that go with that clothing – I frequently challenge people wearing Che Guevara tee-shirts for example. This might be an area where Young Liberals and their ilk could be active. I go back to my Young Liberal days – we did engage with our local National Front youth; school aside, we had a meeting with them, disagree, went to the pub together, and then, as we often did in summer months, went off to an old viaduct, lit a fire, drank more and still disagreed. One of them was on the national exec of the NF youth movement. I bumped into him in the street in London a few years later and he told me that the evening had changed his life – they'd really loved the bonfire and camaraderie, and he'd started to question his values, he still didn't agree with us, but was now a Conservative, but simply not treating them as dirt, as many socialists did, had started the change.

### ***Stewart Rayment***

**JFK Volume One 1917-1956, by Fredrik Logevall,  
Penguin Viking 2020 £30.00  
isbn 9780241185896**

Anyone interested in politics and campaigning will enjoy this new biography of President John F Kennedy. Over the years, your reviewer has read many books about the Kennedy family, but Fredrik Logevall's contribution adds a wealth of information, thanks to recently released letters and documents.

The young politician emerging from Volume One (650 pages, without the end notes) is more intellectual, well-travelled, thoughtful, talented and braver than previous biographies reflect. But he is also a user of people (not just women) who is careless with his friends and his possessions, confident his wealth can easily replace the expensive watches or dedicated cronies he casually loses along the way.

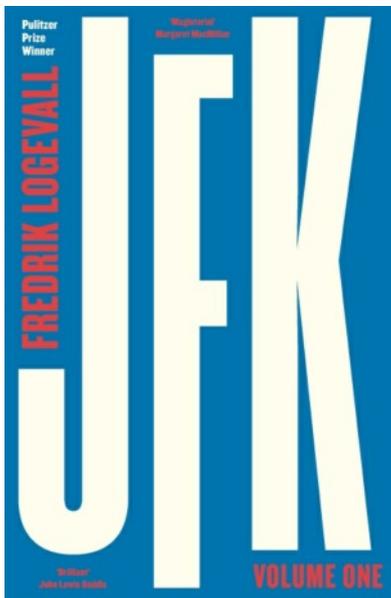
The book covers the Kennedy and Fitzgerald clans from their arrival in the USA, through their involvement in Boston politics, Joe Kennedy's disastrous term as US ambassador to London ("the concept of honour in international affairs was foreign to Kennedy"), JFK's war in the Pacific, his older brother's death, JFK's successful campaigns for the House of Representatives and the Senate, ending with the decision to run for president.

JFK's fearsome father, Joe, vowed to make a million dollars before he turned thirty-five, a goal he easily achieved, thanks to insider trading and disreputable stock swindles. He raised his children to always win, even if that meant cheating. Joe appeased Hitler because he could only see the economic cost of losing Germany as a market. We are told that he prepared his children for a life of public service, but the family did

little that was charitable, beyond funding the Catholic church, so one has to conclude that public service amounted to pursuing political office, thereby missing out on more profitable careers in the private sector. For generations, the Boston Brahmins shut the Kennedy family out of their charmed circle because they were Irish Catholics. “God damnit!” Joe exclaimed, “I was born here. My children were born here. What the hell do I have to do to be an American?”

Yet, his generosity to the church had compensations. When he went to Rome, Ambassador Kennedy had a front row seat for the coronation of Pius XII. Kennedy assumed, without permission, that he could bring his ten strong family, taking the seats of the Italian foreign minister, Count Ciano, and other bewildered dignitaries.

Joe’s priest-ridden wife, Rose, has been caricatured elsewhere as silently enduring her husband’s constant philandering. But here, she is an intelligent woman who is a far more capable political organiser than Joe. Throughout her youth, Rose accompanied her politician father, Honey Fitz, to Boston events, watching him schmooze and charm the Irish Catholic voters with his saloon bar jigs and singing. She understood how the Massachusetts Democratic machine worked, and later in life, she rallied her daughters to provide an impressive support team during JFK’s campaigns.



Some previous biographies of John Kennedy have suggested his heroism during the Second World War has been overblown. Yet, Logevall claims this is not supported by the facts. When JFK’s patrol boat was sunk by the Japanese, he saved lives and provided extraordinary leadership and courage.

Joe and Rose had directed all their energy toward their eldest son, Joe Junior, a thuggish and spoiled boy who lacked JFK’s charm and intellect. Logevall suggests Joe Jr. might have been so annoyed by JFK’s heroism that he volunteered to fly a dangerous mission, searching for V1 emplacements, thinking he could upstage his younger brother. He died as a consequence, and Joe Senior’s ambitions shifted to JFK, despite the fact that John did not share his appeasing stance and was embarrassed by his father’s closeness to Joseph McCarthy (the parallels between the liar and demagogue McCarthy and Trump, including their friendship with Roy Cohn, are startling).

JFK was so fascinated by politics that he covered the campaign of his friend Alastair Forbes, the Liberal candidate at the Hendon South byelection in 1945, and spent hours in the gallery at the House of Commons. When JFK’s first book, *Why England Slept* was published, and for years after, his detractors said it had been ghost written. Logevall has seen the original notes, and Kennedy’s dreadful spelling and grammar convinced the biographer that it was all JFK’s work. However, the arrival of Ted Sorenson on his staff added a new gloss to every word he wrote and spoke.

If the book has a fault, it is the writer’s naivety about the extent to which Joe Kennedy’s millions ensured his ambitious children were untroubled by quotidian problems. JFK was a lazy student and made little effort in Congress. He was sloppy and selfish, letting his staff pick up the pieces left in his wake. He spent a great deal of time vacationing in luxury in Europe or at the family mansions in Palm Beach or Hyannis Port. He worked hard, however, when he had a goal, such as winning an election or writing a book. He was also in astonishing pain for most of his life, suffering from a disintegrating spine, Addison’s disease, malaria and venereal disease. Yet, he never allowed his suffering to show in public, flashing his irresistible smile and radiating vitality.

The chapter on his 1952 senate race is a masterclass in campaign organisation, as is Logevall’s telling of the wheeler-dealing on the Democratic Convention floor in 1956. (The book is worth reading for these sections alone). Years later, the Obama campaign would also bypass the Democratic Party machine, creating its own army of volunteers, with equal success.

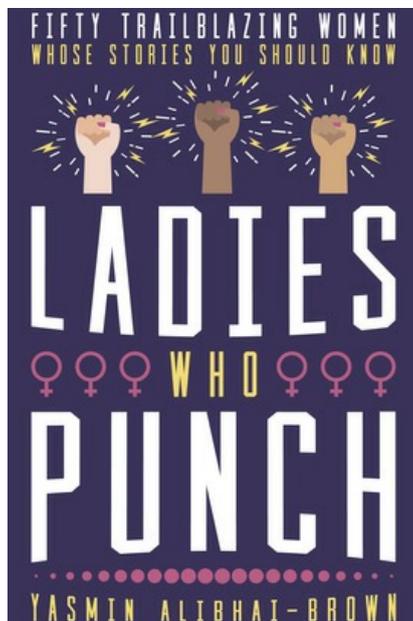
JFK charmed almost everyone he met (tellingly, Eleanor Roosevelt saw through him), but he was remote, like his mother, and treated women appallingly. However, he was also a deep thinker, intellectually curious, and cultured. He loved spending time in Britain with his elite friends, but in the USA, he had staff and cronies, rather than equals.

Logevall describes the way in which JFK used his father's money and connections to travel the world, meeting leaders, in a way no other future president could, giving him a sophistication about foreign policy shared by few Americans then or since. We should all be grateful he did, because when JFK was tested, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, he disregarded the advice of Cold Warrior military men and, arguably, saved the Western world from a nuclear holocaust.

*Rebecca Tinsley*

**Ladies Who Punch by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown**  
**Biteback Publishing 2020 £16.99 isbn 9781785904769**

Ladies Who Punch relates the histories of women who have made a significant impact on the world in the past, present and probably future.



Each chapter is short and, dare I say it? punchy which makes this an easy book to read as you can dip in and out if you so wish.

I am naturally suspicious of Alibhai Brown as her newspaper columns usually recite too easily the tedious left-wing caricatures of toxic masculinity, colonialism and racism etc. To be fair, though, in this book she gives the examples of Tories Margaret Thatcher, Penny Mordaunt and Baroness Warsi as figures for respect and admiration. As you would expect the book features a high number of non-white women which is excellent as those individuals are probably still less well-known than their white counterparts.

The choice of women for this volume is naturally a matter of personal preference – here I find many I heartily agree with, one or two I wouldn't bother with (Princess Di) and several I knew little or nothing about, but of whom I am glad to be better informed. The life stories of all are inspiring to some extent. If I had a criticism it would be that too many of the women selected are journalists, writers or reporters, no doubt reflecting the author's own background. Personally, I would always favour those who do rather than those who write about doing.

The idea of producing a book about noteworthy women is not as new as some may think. In my own bookshelves I find *'Heroines of the Sea'* published in 1958 and *'Living Biographies of Famous Women'* published in 1942. It would be hard to say to what extent such stories influenced me. Perhaps not enough. At any rate there cannot be too many such publications since the need to inspire women to fight their corner is as great as it ever has been.

*Gwyneth Deakins*