



2021 no. 4 June - £6.50 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**UK's TRADE DEALS  
ARE BANANAS**

**CAMEROON**

**PALESTINE**

**Belarus Hijack**

**Sakharov**

# EVENTS

**7<sup>th</sup> June** LIBG Forum on Afghanistan – *see page 3*

**21<sup>st</sup> June** Chesham & Amersham by-election.

**30<sup>th</sup> June** Lib Dems Overseas Zoom Webinar Focus on Hong Kong. 12.00-01.30pm – *see pages 17-18*

**1<sup>st</sup> July** Batley & Spen by-election

**21<sup>st</sup> July** Paddy Ashdown Forum – What makes a good COP? (UN Climate Change Conference). Conversation with LI President Hakima El Haité & the UK Liberal Democrats Leader Ed Davey. NLC 6.30-8.00pm – *see page 19*

**17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September** – Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference.

**October** 63<sup>rd</sup> LI Congress will be held online. Details to follow

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

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

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment, Jonathan Fryer, Rebecca Tinsley, Yabloko, Samir Mansour



# LIBG FORUM

## MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JUNE

### 6.30-8.00pm



## Afghanistan - is peace unattainable?

This meeting is organised by Liberal International British Group, Lib Dems Overseas and the Paddy Ashdown Forum.

It will be held over Zoom. Please register here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yGsSWpvQ1kCVYZLQigoTgoiVfg2RIVhIqMoQVOVpbNUREFNTFNDT0Y2WU5NUklwTVRCVINGMkIDQS4u>

*The US is withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan after President Biden's decision to pull out by 11 September 2021. Its departure means that British and other NATO contingents are also leaving the country. Yet fighting is intensifying with a rising death toll every day. Women and other civil society activists are also being assassinated. The "Great Game" with high stakes is back. Many regional players are also involved. The Taliban is gaining ground on the battlefield. Can 20 years of gains in building civil society, human rights and democracy, be saved? What chances are there now for the intra-Afghan talks to end the war and bring peace?*

18.30-18.32hrs: Welcome by **Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett LIBG Chair and George Cunningham LDO Chair.**

18.33-18.35hrs: Introductions by **Moderator: Mr George Cunningham**, former Deputy EU Ambassador to Afghanistan 2016-2018, Strategic Adviser on Asia Pacific Affairs, European External Action Service

18.35-18.55hrs: **Dr Abdullah Abdullah**, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation in the intra-Afghan peace talks with the Taliban, former Chief Executive Officer of the Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2014-2020).

18.55-19.15hrs: The Views of the **Afghan Civic Democrats\***

- **Mr Kamin Gul Ahmad MP**, Afghan Civic Democrats Leader, member of Birlik (Unity) parliamentary group, member of the international relations parliamentary commission, youth peace ambassador for Central and South Asia.
- **Ms Bibi Gulali Mohamadi MP**, the youngest lawmaker in the Wolesi Jirga (Afghan Parliament), member women's empowerment parliamentary commission, member international relations parliamentary commission.
- **Mr Khalid Pashtoon, former MP**, Senior Adviser to Dr Abdullah Abdullah.

19.15-19.30hrs: **Mr Reuben Culpin**, Head of UNAMA Office in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

19.30-19.40hrs **Response by the Rt. Hon Baroness Northover**, Liberal Democrats House of Lords

Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs

19.40-19.58hrs: **Questions and Answers**

19.58-20.00hrs : **Wrap Up and Thanks**

\* Afghan Civic Democrats work in close association with UK Lib Dems Overseas.

This is the [link to register for the Zoom login details.](#)

[AFGHANISTAN: IS PEACE UNATTAINABLE? \(office.com\)](#)

# **Selling Our Souls for Bananas: Global Britain's Trade Deals, and Reasons to be Fearful**

## **Rebecca Tinsley**

Trade deals being negotiated by Britain reveal cynicism, a disregard for public health and a strange sense of priorities.

The UK-Australia trade deal has received attention because of its negative implications for the British livestock business and animal welfare concerns. Animals can be legally transported across Australia for 48 hours without water, and for a month by sea, according to the National Farmers' Union. Moreover, industrial cattle rearing contributes to deforestation in the increasingly parched land down under. Another recent agreement, with Cameroon, does not rate column inches or airtime, although it sets a distasteful precedent, overlooking the track record of a corrupt and repressive Central African regime. Both deals indicate the British government is conditioning Parliament to expect no scrutiny or debate, regardless of pressure from Layla Moran and Sarah Olney. Despite promises to return sovereignty and oversight to Westminster, this is what Brexit and Global Britain looks like.

### **Bombs and Bananas**

In 2019, the UK sold £50m worth of goods and services to Cameroon, while importing their bananas in return. The total deal is worth £200m, a rounding error in international trade. Compare it to the £41 billion we exported to Germany, our (formerly) biggest market and the customer we shunned because of Brexit, along with the other EU buyers of UK goods and services: Ireland which purchased £27 bn worth, the Netherlands (£24bn), France (£23bn), and Belgium (£13bn). We have literally sold our souls for a bunch of bananas.

It may be distasteful, but there is at least a pragmatic financial argument for overlooking Saudi Arabia's human rights record and its war in Yemen. In 2020, the UK sold the kingdom £3.59bn worth of goods and services, mainly military and oil industry equipment, along with providing lucrative money-butler-type consultancy.

But why does the UK ingratiate itself with tiny Cameroon? Since 2017, respected human rights watchdogs have condemned the Francophone regime of President Paul Biya (age 88, in power since 1982) for persecuting peaceful Anglophone protesters objecting to having the French school curriculum and laws imposed on them. The UN believes a million people have fled into the bush as state security forces burn their villages. Their children have been unable to attend school for four years. Unarmed civilians are caught between government soldiers and the increasingly violent separatists fighting for an independent country called Ambazonia. Cameroon's brutal kleptocrats are worthy of targeted smart sanctions, not photo-ops with Foreign Office representatives.

### **Be Afraid – the facts about US chemicals**

The financially insignificant Australian and Cameroon deals, and the neutering of Parliament's capacity to scrutinise, are a dress rehearsal for the big one: the UK-US negotiations, which began last May. The British public is already alarmed by the prospect of chlorinated chicken. We should also be concerned about American standards of food safety more generally.

The United States Centers for Disease Control estimates there are more than 48 million cases of food poisoning a year in the USA (affecting 14.7% of the population), leading to more than 3,000 deaths annually. The main culprits are salmonella, clostridium perfringens, campylobacter and staphylococcal, found in raw meat, seafood, fish and poultry.

In the UK, a fifth the size of the US, there are 1 million (affecting 1.5% of the population) annual cases of food poisoning and 500 deaths. In other words, the US has almost 10 times the number of cases of food poisoning and more deaths from food poisoning than the UK per capita.

The US Department of Food and Agriculture claims it conducts 160 inspections each week. This amounts to 8,400 inspections a year, covering 172,969 food manufacturers. At the current rate, factories are inspected once every twenty years.

The FDA says it has 8,000 food inspection "positions" but that tells us nothing about how many inspectors are on the road, going into factories. Thanks to budget cuts, inspectors are under increasing pressure to complete their work rapidly. One inspector who would not give his name admitted he stands by a poultry production line, watching carcasses whiz past, with no time to do more than a rapid visual inspection. Food safety, and the use of hormones and pesticides banned in Europe are not the only areas of concern. The US allows hundreds of chemicals in cosmetics and household cleaning products that have been curbed in the EU for decades. The EU bans 1,300 chemicals from cosmetics, while America bans 11, and the US last passed legislation restricting their use in 1938.

President Biden's budget currently being debated in Congress will encourage more American self-reliance and less dependence on importing technology or other goods. Perhaps the British government should also think twice before exposing UK consumers to products coming nowhere near the EU safety standards we are used to. We should also be more discerning about our economic partners if we are as serious about human rights as Dominic Raab claims we are.

*Rebecca Tinsley*

## **Rebuild the Samir Mansour's Bookshop**

During the recent bombing of Gaza, the Israeli military destroyed the Samir Mansour bookshop which housed the largest collection of English literature in Gaza. The shop, which was established in 2008, had thousands of books and was also part of a publishing house that focused on Palestinian writers. The Israeli military said that the strike was intended to destroy HAMAS tunnels, but targeting Palestinian cultural institutions has been commonplace.

Hundreds of young people in Gaza said the bookshop changed their lives, allowing an escape from reality. They say the bookshop gave them "dreams, new friends, amazing memories and a new life."

The book store is going to be re-built from donations. Two American human rights lawyers, Mahvish Rukhsana and Clive Stafford Smith, have set up a crowd funding site to this end, which is more than half way to achieving it's \$250,000 goal. Donate at

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/rebuild-gazas-samir-mansour-book-store>

There is also 'Books for Gaza.' scheme for the donation of books to restart the shop – 'library' is in the French, rather than English context. Watch out for a collection point near you. Please donate both new and good quality second-hand books, of all genres, both fiction and non-fiction for adults and children.

If you are donating second-hand books feel free to write a note in them, for example about why you enjoyed the book or an inspirational note for the reader. If you wish, you could also put your email address in, so that the reader in Gaza can contact you to discuss the literature and create a vital new connection for you both. Core works like John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* could spark some interesting dialogues.

# A tribute to Jonathan Fryer

## John Alderdice

I was honoured though saddened to deliver this eulogy at the funeral of my friend, Jonathan Fryer.

“We have come together, in person and on-line to celebrate, Jonathan Fryer, a remarkable man who enriched all our lives and those of listeners, viewers and readers in many languages, and all around the world. Sadly, in this time of COVID, although we knew Jonathan was very ill, the pandemic restrictions made it impossible for most of us to visit him, and that included Ismael Pordeus, his partner of more than 40 years, and latterly his spouse, who is at their home in Fortaleza, in Brazil, where he is a professor of social sciences and ethics. To Ismael and to Jonathan’s sisters, Jill Leonard, Denise Morris and Hilary Ward we send our most sincere sympathies and condolences on this sad day. I also want to preface my remarks with a word of appreciation to Jeremy O’Sullivan and Adrian Trett, who not only made today’s event possible for us all, but also cared for Jonathan during his final weeks. On my own behalf, and I know on behalf of all of us who loved Jonathan, I want to say a very sincere ‘Thank you’ to Adrian and Jeremy for today’s celebration, but much more importantly for all the loving and sacrificial care they gave to Jonathan during those last difficult days.

Life for Jonathan had not started with such warmth and care. He was adopted at the age of 18 months into a disturbed family home, where his adoptive father sexually abused him over a number of years. That was undoubtedly one of the main reasons why during most of his time at Manchester Grammar School this very



***Jonathan at the Villa Aldobrandini***

bright young man did not do at all well. The early indications of his exceptional abilities, and his concern for others, were not to be seen at school but in the imaginative events he organized to raise money from his neighbours for charitable causes. However, at length his interest in literature, geography and languages began to emerge, undoubtedly through the interest of a good teacher, but also from travelling abroad on school trips which took him away from the home atmosphere he feared and loathed, and to places where he began to realize the real purpose of those school subjects. As he started to travel to other places, geography began to make sense, and on his return home he could read books that had been written about those fascinating distant places. Foreign languages now had a purpose too because they enabled him to engage in conversation with people from different cultures in their own tongues. He won an open exhibition to St

Edmund Hall, at the University of Oxford, to study geography, but the reality of geography was what he really wanted, and just after finishing school and before he went up to Oxford, Jonathan set out on a most amazing trip. Initially it fulfilled his wish to get away from his father, but it opened up a whole new exciting life to him. He travelled overland all the way from England to Vietnam during the war there, and returned through Cambodia, India, Afghanistan, Iran and a clutch of other exotic Middle Eastern countries. He partly paid for his travels by writing articles for the Manchester Evening News, whose editor, Brian Redhead, had the insight and foresight to encourage Jonathan into journalism when he was little more than a schoolboy.

In that amazing trip as a nineteen-year-old he had not only found his calling, but found himself in the process – and if you have not read his autobiographical volume, *“Eccles Cakes: An Odd Tale of Survival”*, you should go home and download it this afternoon. He returned to England and went up to university but switched to Oriental studies with Chinese and Japanese.

Before leaving school, he had become a committed Liberal, inspired, as so many of that generation were, by hearing the Liberal Leader, Jo Grimond speak. He joined the Young Liberals and became a regional officer in the North West and then Secretary of the Oxford University Liberal Club. Elected to Bromley Borough

Council in 1986, he fought five Westminster General Elections in London and almost every one of the elections to the European Parliament between 1979 and 2014. A committed liberal, and an internationalist one, he chaired the Liberal International British Group and the Liberal Democrats' International Relations Committee. He was Chair of Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine and a member of the Council for Arab-British Understanding and it was principally through his international liberal activities that I came to know him many years ago. From the first time I met Jonathan, I found him charming and delightful, and a liberal with whom I could feel a profound empathy. Meeting up with Jonathan and Robert Woodthorpe-Brown was one of the pleasures of international Liberal events wherever they were held – and the more exotic, the better. However, he was one of two people who I always regretted did not have the chance to grace both the hemi-cycle of the European Parliament and the red benches of the House of Lords. One of those two was the extraordinary Richard Moore, who we also lost not so long ago and the other was dear Jonathan. Richard passed away 'full of years' as one might put it in the elegant prose of which they were both masters, but we all feel robbed of Jonathan because we know that had Providence been a little more kindly, we should have enjoyed our friendships with him for longer.

One of the ways Jonathan had found to deal with the adverse experiences of his earlier life was to split off some aspects of it from others. I did not know, for example, that we had a mutual friend, Merlin Holland. Merlin is Oscar Wilde's only grandson and lives near to us in Burgundy. We got to know each other a few years ago and when in preparing for today I came to appreciate that Jonathan not only wrote about Oscar Wilde, but was, along with Stephen Fry and Merlin Holland, a patron of the Oscar Wilde Society, I contacted Merlin. Here is what he said.

*"Dear John,*

*Funnily enough, my knowledge of Jonathan is exactly the reverse of yours. We got to know each other through his interest in Oscar and it was only when I read his obituary that I learned about his very active political life as a Lib-Dem and about his fine work as a journalist.*

*For a good many years now, I have accepted the fact that Oscar Wilde, grandfather though he may be to me, has nevertheless become a sort of public property. He is used like no other British author to promote goods and espouse causes, all of which, good-natured that he was, I'm sure he'd be delighted to do but not, as is so frequently the case, to the detriment of his work as a writer and thinker. It was one of the first things about Jonathan which appealed to me: the fact that he saw Oscar as a whole and fascinatingly complex person and not, as he could have done in his work for the LGBT community, merely as a gay icon. It earned him my undiminished respect in all that he wrote about my grandfather – always balanced, always informed, always readable and eminently sympathetic to his subject."*

I have not yet properly touched upon Jonathan's professional life. For a while he worked with Reuters, but soon realised that he could be even more successful as a freelancer, whether as a writer, journalist, or broadcaster. He published books – fifteen of them – history, travel, current affairs, that memoir of his childhood, and biographies especially of Oscar Wilde and his friends. His became a familiar voice on the BBC's 'From Our Own Correspondent', delivering broadcasts from a total of 162 countries around the world. He spoke on 'Thought for the Day' and wrote for the Guardian, the Independent, the Economist and the Spectator. He taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and at the City University and was in great demand as a speaker for the British Council, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and on cruise ships.

What Merlin says so elegantly was true of Jonathan in every aspect of his life – always balanced, always informed, always readable and eminently sympathetic to the many causes he adopted. The common characteristic of them all, was that they involved people who had been treated unfairly, and Jonathan wanted to right that wrong. When people are badly treated, they not infrequently take it out on others. Those who are abused, as Jonathan was, may become abusers themselves. Jonathan turned his hurt and pain into a passion for justice and freedom and as I tried to draw together the richly coloured threads of his extraordinary life I came to understand that I had really seen only the reverse side of the tapestry. It was

colourful but I was distracted by the loose threats that might have led to something – for example the elections that might have led to a parliamentary career but did not. Now I have begun to appreciate the story told by the front of the tapestry of Jonathan’s life. It is a beautiful picture of remarkable achievement, of kindness and generosity of spirit, a commitment to stand up for those who have been wronged and an engagement in politics not for self-advancement but for the cause of freedom and justice. Jonathan’s was a life that enriched the lives of others all around the world and we have been fortunate indeed to have known him.”

*John Alderdice*

Lord Alderdice was President of Liberal International from 2005-2009

## Tony Greaves

The sudden death on 23 March of Lord Tony Greaves brought to an end a political career which influenced several generations of Liberals who believed that engaging with people in every aspect of their lives was not only morally right but politically astute.

Tony, Gordon Lishman and Claire Brooks were my mentors in the 1960s in that hot bed of politics on the border of north Lancashire and west Yorkshire which produced many outstanding community leaders determined to break with the traditional way of fighting elections, when councillors were only seen every four years and prospective Parliamentary candidates limited themselves to the occasional speaking engagement in draughty village halls.

For a number of years after the 1964 General Election the Young Liberals both nationally and locally campaigned in a completely different way to what anyone had seen before, much to the displeasure of both the other political parties and the Liberal establishment. They believed that if the party was going to survive things had to change and that change had to come from the grassroots.

After a disastrous General Election campaign in June 1970 which produced just six Liberal MPs, Tony and his fellow activists moved a motion at the annual Assembly in Eastbourne three months later which committed a reluctant leadership to ‘pursuing community politics.’ With the benefit of hindsight, it probably saved the party from extinction.

It might be difficult for some Liberal Democrats today to understand how radical that was, but they owe him and a few others a huge debt. It is one of Tony’s lasting legacies that 50 years on every political party now copies what he and his colleagues pioneered.

He was a Lancashire County Councillor for 25 years and represented the Waterside ward on first Colne Borough Council and then Pendle Borough Council while teaching geography at Colne Grammar School. When he was made a life peer on 4 May 2000, he took the title Baron Greaves of Pendle.

Fellow county councillor David Whipp paid this tribute: ‘Although he could be confrontational, Tony excelled at seeking common ground with other parties on local issues. He was an indefatigable fighter for the residents he represented and unfailingly put their interests ahead of party politics or what the establishment wanted. Tony worked hard for open and transparent local government railing against secrecy and decisions behind closed doors. He championed real power to local residents and was one of the architects behind setting up modern parish and town councils in Pendle.’

Rest in peace, Tony, gone but you will never be forgotten.

*David Scott*

# LIBG Webinar on Cameroon

Cameroonian speakers urged Liberal International and the Liberal Democrats to press the international community to stop appeasing the repressive and corrupt government of President Paul Biya. Since 2017, the central African nation has been ripped apart by violence in the Anglophone regions, a former British colony.

Juliette Paauwe of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect described the background to the current crisis. Until independence in 1961, Britain administered the English-speaking regions, using English common law and the UK school curriculum, while France administered the much larger French-speaking regions.

At independence, a referendum gave Anglophones the choice of joining with neighbouring Nigeria or going into a federation with the Francophones (which they voted for). They were not given a third choice: independence.

By the 1970s, the majority Francophones cancelled the federal system and centralised power in Yaounde, marginalising the English-speakers. In a cabinet of more than 30 posts, only one was an Anglophone. In 2016, the French-dominated government tried to impose French laws and education on the Anglophone regions. When English-speakers protested, their peaceful demonstrations were met with disproportionate violence by security services. Soldiers have burned dozens of villages, more than 700,000 people have fled into the bush, 200,000 are refugees in Nigeria and a million children have been unable to attend school for four years.

Paauwe described the polarisation of opinion in Anglophone society, giving rise to increasingly violent and ruthless secessionist militias. Moderate civil society and the church have been marginalised, and all armed actors are implicated in human rights abuses and atrocities.

Professor Chris Roberts of Calgary University illustrated the way in which the Cameroon regime has used its oil revenues and international military support to increase its presence in the Anglophone regions. Yaounde has convinced the international community it is a vital partner in the struggle against Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa, active in the Lake Chad region. Military assets given to Cameroon ostensibly to fight Islamic fundamentalists are being transferred to the Anglophone regions where they are deployed against civilians. Any pressure on Cameroon will have to use economic and military leverage to be effective.



Dr Maggie Kilo is aligned with the Anglophone groups seeking what they call the “restoration” of an independent country called Ambazonia. They do not see any possible future remaining linked to the Francophone regions, and believe their cause is supported by many Anglophones who desire an end to domination by the notoriously corrupt French-speaking elite in Yaounde. She said the Anglophone cause would not rest until its people had secured self-determination. Hundreds of opposition politicians, lawyers and journalists have been detained without due process, and that elections fail to meet the

standards or free and fair polls.

Dr Chris Fomunyoh works for the National Democratic Institute in Washington DC, and hails from the Anglophone region. He urged the Cameroon regime to produce a road map for peace negotiations, showing how Cameroon can move from its current rapidly deteriorating security situation to a new constitutional settlement. Fomunyoh was clear that there could be no military solution to what is a political problem requiring a political solution in the form of a new constitutional arrangement. Inclusive peace talks,

mediated by the Swiss NGO, Humanitarian Dialogue, have been on offer since 2019, but the Cameroon government has resisted calls from the Vatican and the international community to participate.

Dr Fomunyoh had just returned from visiting the Anglophone refugee camps in south eastern Nigeria. His foundation had brought aid to the refugees, who are facing difficult circumstances, and have borne the brunt of a savage military campaign by Yaounde's security forces. Liberal Democrats were urged to play their part in pressing the UK to apply targeted smart sanctions on members of the Cameroon regime and non-state armed actors who are implicated in human rights abuses.

*Rebecca Tinsley*

## **Yabloko host conference and exhibition to mark centenary of human rights defender Andrei Sakharov**

Friday 21 May would have been the 100th birthday of Academic and human rights defender Andrei Sakharov. A photo exhibition prepared by the Sakharov Centre was denied permission at the last minute by Moscow authorities, so ALDE member party Yabloko threw open the doors of its HQ and will host the exhibition to commemorate his life work.

To mark the occasion, the party also organised an international zoom-conference that featured ALDE Party Vice President Henrik Bach Mortensen, Vice President of Liberal International Astrid Thors, ALDE MEP Petras Auštrevičius and many other distinguished Russian and foreign speakers.

Opening the exhibition, Yabloko Chairman Nikolai Rybakov promised to do everything possible so that an even larger number of people would see the exhibition. Starting his remarks in the same manner that Andrei Sakharov began his major speeches, the Yabloko Chairman read aloud the names of 80 current political prisoners of conscience, before condemning the refusal of the Moscow authorities to give a permission to hold the exhibition.

Grigory Yavlinsky, Chairman of the Yabloko Federal Political Committee, said the current authorities are afraid of Sakharov: "What they are doing with his centenary, the fact that Yabloko is accepting the exhibition that was supposed to take place in the centre of Moscow - this is the answer to this question: they still fear and understand the importance of Sakharov, understand the meaning of his every word."

ALDE Party Vice President Henrik Bach Mortensen said: "Yabloko deserves praise for organising this occasion to commemorate the memory of Sakharov, who I remember as a teenager was an ideal for many young people all over the world. He was a remarkable person, very much like the Danish scientist Niels Bohr, in that they started out as very brilliant nuclear scientists and turned into human rights and peace activists."

"To many people in the West, Sakharov was really the first dissident; he was the founding father of the Committee on Human Rights in the USSR. Many people all over Europe, and indeed all over the world, felt that Sakharov was a very worthy winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975."

He noted that Sakharov will remain an icon "for peace-loving Democrats all over the world and particularly in Europe" and that the European Parliament each year awards the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for outstanding contributions to human rights.

"In Europe we have come a long way since Sakharov since 1975. I remember the dreams we all shared just after the Berlin Wall came down and Sakharov was elected to the parliament, when we all believed we



*Andrei Sakharov. The 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, 1989.*

could share a peaceful and prosperous common future in Europe. We were close for some time, but surely Europe and Russia have now drifted apart for a long time. But I believe the memory of Sakharov should help us dream of a future where the whole of Europe, including Russia, can come together.”

Sergei Lukashevsky, the Director of the Sakharov Centre, said: “Today we are going through difficult times, when it seems that in terms of freedom, our country is rolling back somewhere to the early 1980s,” and quoted Acad. Sakharov: “Even when it seems that it is difficult and impossible to do something, we need to build ideals. It is a natural need to create ideals. Even when we do not see an immediate path to their implementation. After all, if there are no ideals, then there is absolutely nothing to hope for. Then there is a feeling of hopelessness and a dead end.”

Watch the full video of the opening of the exhibition at

[https://www.aldeparty.eu/yabloko\\_host\\_conference\\_and\\_exhibition\\_to\\_mark\\_centenary\\_of\\_human\\_rights\\_defender\\_sakharov](https://www.aldeparty.eu/yabloko_host_conference_and_exhibition_to_mark_centenary_of_human_rights_defender_sakharov)

## International Abstracts

### **Turkey**

Claims from an Organised Crime Boss rock Turkey's government, by Carlotta Gall. New York Times 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

*The tip of the iceberg... where the story broke*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/18/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-crime-corruption.html>

Gangster transfixes Turkey with video tirades against political elite, by Ayla Jean Yackley. Financial Times 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021

*The story continues, much more informed than NYT (and the Guardian article which followed).*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/855017081205443/>

### **Gaza**

Gaza Lives Erased: Israel is wiping out entire Palestinian families on purpose, by Amira Hass, Haaretz 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

*Another disturbing article from Haaretz; the families reputedly had connections with HAMAS or Islamic Jihad.*

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/gaza-israel-wiping-entire-palestinian-families-hamas-1.9820005>

### **Vogue June 2021**

Diplomatic Coup. In the traditionally male field of diplomacy, women are taking their place at the top, representing Britain abroad with a distinctly modern mix of tact and tactics. By Olivia Marks. Photography by Greg Kahn., Styling by Patrick Mackie

# From the Conference Fringe.

The Lib Dem Friends of Palestine (LDFP) Fringe meeting was held at the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference in March, weeks before violence flared in Jerusalem, Gaza and elsewhere in Israel, but their guest speaker, Andrew Whitley, covered issues which we can now see are extremely relevant to those events, and to what must happen now the fighting has stopped.

Andrew Whitley, a Middle East expert, told the meeting that simply observing established international law remains key to resolving the conflict. The Fourth Geneva Convention was written to prevent the annexation of land occupied during conflict, and specifically forbids settlement by the victors in land overrun during fighting - exactly what has been happening in the West Bank, where there are now more than 600,000 'settlers'. That the 1950 Convention is not being enforced is a failure of the international community, as is not formally recognising Palestine as a state. He also spoke of the unequal rights of Palestinians who live inside Israel's borders, which amount to an Apartheid regime.



*Samir Mansour and the remains of his bookshop in Gaza (see page 5).*

He welcomed the recent decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to start prosecutions for human rights offences and war crimes in Palestine and Israel. The ICC had previously been held back by the legalistic argument that Palestine is not recognised as a state, and therefore its people are not entitled to the protection of the ICC. The ICC had also had its own credibility undermined by some countries, including the United States. There was cause for optimism that the generous backing the US gives to Israel might change under Joe Biden, although Andrew Whitley's expectations of Biden were not high, a view we have subsequently seen borne out.

The background of decades of illegal occupation of Palestine, and failure by the international community to act, are the real reasons for the violence we saw in May. Commentators speculate about the triggers that set it off, and perhaps the attack on Al Aqsa mosque, or the violence at the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem were deliberate provocations intended to distract attention and disrupt attempts to bring Benjamin Netanyahu to justice; if so they may have succeeded in bolstering the right wing in Israel, although Netanyahu's assumption that it would strengthen his position now looks to be unravelling. Or, conversely, they may have been the opportunity HAMAS needed to enhance its appeal as the true champion of the Palestinian people, and if so, that succeeded too, because ageing President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas has been side-lined, while the popularity of HAMAS has soared.

But none of the violence in May would have happened without the simmering resentment of the Palestinians resulting from decades of neglect by the international community. The ceasefire cannot be allowed to mean a return to the status quo, and must instead be the start of a new peace initiative, one which recognises the enormous change in world opinion brought about by the latest bombing of Gaza. Palestinians have a right to their own state, and their struggle for freedom from oppression is no longer seen as terrorism by many around the world. Protesters sent a stern message to Netanyahu's Israel, and we now need liberal voices to be heard in European parliaments, demanding that the hopes raised in Palestine are not dashed yet again.

*Andrew Daer  
Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine*

# Belarus Banditry

The LI Bureau issued the following statement after the mid-flight hijacking of civilian airliner over Belarus.

*Mid-flight hijacking of civilian airliner is clear signal that Lukashenka is ready to do anything to keep to power.*

*President Lukashenka can now add airline banditry to his long list of wicked acts, elevating the European dictator as a global threat against whose regime the strictest sanctions must be applied.*

*The hijacking of a civilian airliner carrying citizens of numerous nationalities demonstrates that Lukashenka is willing to flout international law and dismiss commercial regulations to persecute his opponents internationally as well as domestically.*

*We call upon all democratic states to act as decisively as the EU has in cutting off Belarus from air traffic and agreeing new sanctions. We urge all these countries to endorse the proposals put forward by the Belarusian opposition – including to prohibit dealings with 24 state-owned Belarusian companies, block key exports from Minsk, and ban new foreign investment.*

*These actions must also aim to free all political prisoners, including Roman Protasevich, whose health there are every reason to be concerned for.*

*The hijacking of the plane was a continuation of the terror against innocent civilians, as hundreds of them are imprisoned and violated in all ways. Numerous are the attacks against media and journalists as well.*

*Liberal International has long been working with and supporting the opposition in Belarus, awarding Aliaksandr Milinkevich the 2007 Prize for Freedom and assisting the coordination council in Belarus in their fight for a democratic future. We insist that a peaceful transfer of power is the only option for a stable Belarus.*

The purpose of the hijacking was to arrest journalist Roman Protasevich, who has been a prominent critic of Lukashenka and his regime. 26-year-old Protasevich is the co-founder of the NEXTA media outlet on social media platform Telegram, which serves as a rare source of independent news in Belarus, especially since the 2020 election, when most outlets were banned. NEXTA emerged as an important medium for opposition forces to share information and organise against Lukashenko. The New York Times says Protasevich has been a dissident since his teenage years. He was expelled from school in 2011 and later from the journalism programme at the Belarusian State University, Minsk, for taking part in further protest rallies. In 2019, Protasevich fled Belarus fearing arrest, and took refuge in neighbouring Lithuania, where he continued his journalism so disliked by the Lukashenko regime. Protasevich was returning to Vilnius in Lithuania from Athens, where he had been attending a conference with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who stood against Lukashenko in the 2020 elections and claims to be the victor. Branded as a terrorist by the authorities, he could face the death sentence. His partner, Sofia Sapega was also detained.

ALDE, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe, in advance of the European Council meeting of 24th May, demanded;

- The immediate release of Roman Protasevich and his girlfriend
- Suspension of all EU flights over the Belarusian airspace
- A ban on all Belavia (Belarus national airline) airplanes from landing in EU airports
- Assertive and unified economic sanctions for the Belarusian government
- Urgent investigation by the International Civil Aviation Organization, including examining Russia's role in the hijacking

Sanctions were already in place against sixty or so Belarusian officials, including President Lukashenko and his son, Victor.

Layla Moran, the Liberal Democrats Foreign Affairs spokesperson said in the House of Commons *It is clear that the Belarusian authorities have no regard for democracy, human rights or the rule of law. They act with impunity because they know Russia has their back.* She added that *The UK hosts the G7 soon, which is an opportunity to raise the issue of the events in Belarus and co-ordinate further international action.*

# reviews

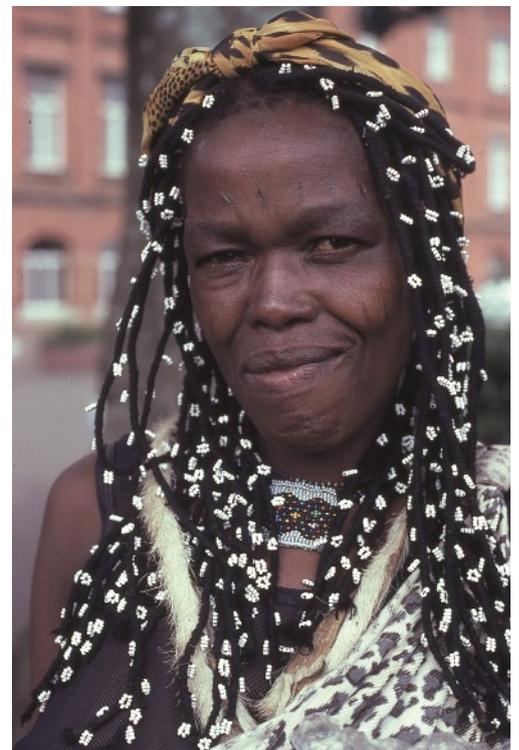
**The Nun and the Pig by Treive Nicholas.**  
**Amberley Books 2021 £18.99**

If you know someone who doesn't understand why Nelson Mandela matters, this is the book for you. Many people below the age of 45 know little about Apartheid South Africa (or the Soviet Union, for that matter). This memoir, by a white British man, recalls his eight months teaching disabled children at a Catholic mission in the Transkei Bantustan in 1980. It is a digestible and enjoyable introduction to the era of white minority rule with its injustices and absurdities. If the reader is unfamiliar with Apartheid, they will soon grasp why it was the focus of so much political activity among those who lived through the era, even though we were thousands of miles away.

The Apartheid state set up Transkei as a nominally independent self-ruling administration, known as a Bantustan. It was home to 2.5 million Xhosa, an ethnic group which has produced generations of the liberation movement's leaders (Mandela, Sisulu, Biko, Mbeki, Tambo).

Bantustans theoretically had their own laws, and whites and blacks were allowed to mingle, unlike in South Africa. However, many black men left Transkei in search of mining work, meaning they were away from home for months at a time, often returning to their families only once a year. Despite their absence, Nicholas notes, it was a fiercely patriarchal society in which the nuns were called on to assert their authority regularly in order to get anything done. The author admired their determination and grace under pressure, as well as their kindness to the disabled children for whom they cared.

Nicholas was 19 when he volunteered at Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School, run by Sister Mary Paule (the nun of the title – the pig was the mission's clapped-out VW bus). He is good at capturing the atmosphere in Transkei, and of popular culture in 1980, describing the physical beauty of the place, as well as the strangeness of living in a pocket of relative liberty compared to the South African state surrounding them.



*Beads, braids, facial markings & cloth colours distinguished different Transkeian clans.*

His photos are superb and evocative. He is at his best when describing the political tensions, the racist system of Apartheid and how it impacted everyday life for the vast majority of citizens whose homeland it is. Whites represented only 19% of the South African population then, yet they controlled almost every aspect of the lives of the non-white population, through so-called pass laws that required them to leave white areas at the end of each day. Blacks had to step off the pavement whenever a white approached, and were perpetually subservient, underpaid, denied proper housing, education, dignity or self-determination. Many lived their whole lives in fear that they would pay the price for infringing apartheid's many discriminatory laws.

When the author visited Durban, he got into trouble for photographing a line of black people standing in the boiling hot sun for hours, waiting for treatment at their dismal section of a hospital, a situation that would never have been endured by the white ruling class, he notes. The (white) mayor of Durban finds the young Nicholas charming and promises to introduce him to young people at the tennis club. They might have been in Surrey, he reflects. Back in Transkei, he is the only white person at a pop concert. He is amazed to encounter the self-important puppet prime minister of the Bantustan filling his car at a petrol station

He returns to Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School, aged in his late fifties, and finds a new generation of nuns running the place with kindness, efficiency (and better funding). However, Sister Mary Paule, whom he so admired, was killed at age 82 by robbers, a victim of the appalling crime wave in the new South Africa. Another of his favourite sisters died last year of Covid-19. There are few reflections on the theological motivation of the mission's founders, donors or sisters, but their decency and commitment speak for themselves.

*Rebecca Tinsley*



*Amakhaya with thatched roofs often extended for miles across the undulating Transkeian landscape.*

**Oxford Encyclopedia of the History of American Foreign Relations, edited by Mark A. Lawrence.  
Oxford University Press 2021 \$595  
isbn 9780190699468 eisbn 9780190699475**

It would be a pity to say that this book is out of date with the recent demise (if not disappearance) of Donald Trump. However, since the table of contents cites neither Trump nor Biden, it may be that we have a reflection on the continuity of American foreign policy and might consider those four years as an aberration. Over 100 scholarly articles, wisely perhaps, terminate with the Obama presidency.

Lawrence's credentials are a long academic career as a historian, focused mainly on the Vietnam war; he is currently Director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum in Austin, Texas, having taught at UT Austin for the previous twenty years.

Before you baulk at the price, Oxford Reference books are available online, from home, to members of many of our public library services, so whether you are approaching the subject as a novice or an old hand checking your memory you have access to a valuable tool which can also be cross-referenced with other sources within the online collection.

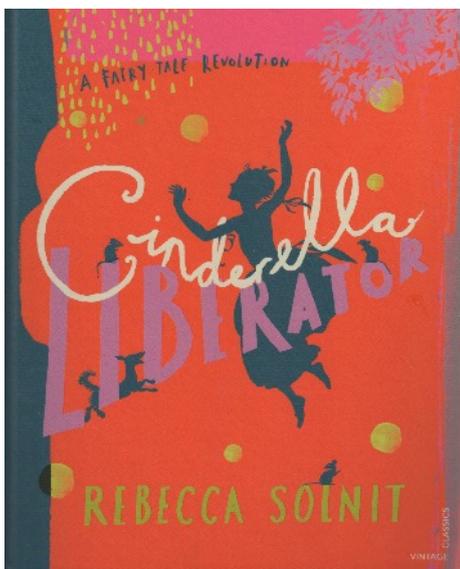
Meanwhile, we look forward to Joe Biden making America great again.

**Cinderella Liberator, by Rebecca Solnit, with illustrations by Arthur Rackham.**

**Vintage 2020 £12.99**

**isbn 9781784876197**

How could I not review a book with the title *Cinderella Liberator*? How can I review a book by an author whose earlier work includes *Men explain things to me* (Haymarket Books, 2014)? I don't have problem with the reinterpretation of archetypal stories; *Ever After*, the 1998 film retelling of Cinderella is one of my favourites. James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (reviewed in *Liberator* sometime in 1994 or 5) have, alas, not always be taken as the spoof they obviously were – the Cinderella is one of the better tales.



But here we have something different, this is serious. Yet Prince Nevermind? Even ♀ would be better... why not Prince Roger?

The story is going along quite well, a bit wordy perhaps, but why this cheap shot of hipster feminism? Charles S. Evans, in his retelling the standard Perrault version where Rackham's illustrations first appeared, poses the question "Have you ever noticed that there are some people whom you are not going to like the first time you set eyes on them?"

Arthur Rackham's silhouette illustrations to *Cinderella* marked a change in his style in 1919 when they first appeared, although *Sleeping Beauty* was his only other work to widely exploit the genre. It is good to see them again, sometimes reinterpreted – those on pages 24 and 25 originally together, sans cake... I spend too much time wondering about the cake.

The real test of any version of the Cinderella story is on that most merciless of platforms, the Christmas pantomime. Will we see Rebecca Solnit's story on the stage? Oh... (I hope so)

### **Stewart Rayment**

**The Novotny Papers 'a bit vulture, a bit eagle'**

**by Lilian Pizzichini.**

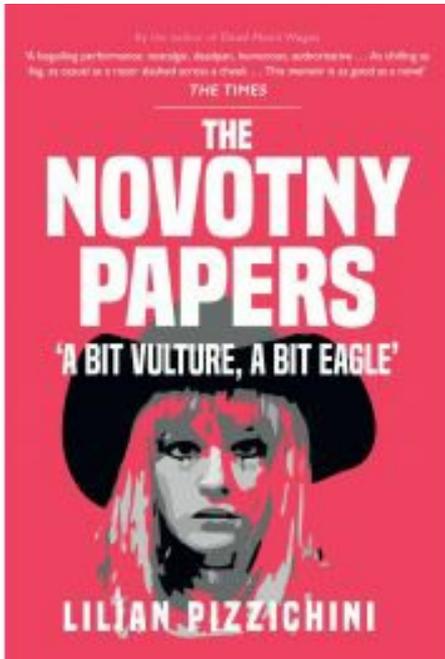
**Amberley 2021 £18.99**

**isbn 9781445697505**

Tittle-tattle. Gossip and name-dropping throughout, but does it go any where? Was Anthony Asquith the Man in the Mask, of Profumo notoriety? After much build up and inuendo we conclude that he was not. The Sex Pistols take a boat down the Thames; Mariella Novotny wasn't there. Why mention it? Nothing is added to the ambience of the story. Michael English, Europhobe Labour MP, won Nottingham West back from the Tories in 1964 and held it until 1983 when the constituency was abolished. He is referred to as Michael E throughout. We don't know what the *faux pas* involving Barbara Castle that kept him out of ministerial office was; he died in 2019, she in 2002. Yet he is referred to as Michael E. No impropriety appears to have taken place over tea at the House of Commons – 'even (t)here... Mariella can find no one to flagellate or fellate'.

Set against the main story is Lilian Pizzichini's to uncover the truth about Novotny, meeting various faded low-lifes, usually in a Soho, which I regret to say, what ever it has, is not the place it used to be.





A short walk to Brown’s Hotel, but by the time we’ve got there I’m lost (more usually the case coming out of Brown’s Hotel). Does her latter-day involvement with the police lead to Novotny’s demise, or has her past caught up with her as she threatens to reveal all? I having a sneaking feeling one should feel sorry for her. Does Pizzichini succeed? There is an awful lot of rubbish out there on the web around the subject; maybe she straightens it out a bit.

None of the above should stop you enjoying the book. If you miss *The Whore’s Gazette*, and let’s face it, it wasn’t the paper in was once Murdoch got his hands on it and whatever the Sun calls itself on Sunday is a pale pastiche, this might stir some memories of the early Sixties. The Profumo affair was part of a time of transition, which in their way, the likes of Mariella Novotny helped to speed on; but look at the hairstyles – they clearly belong to the past.

*Stewart Rayment*

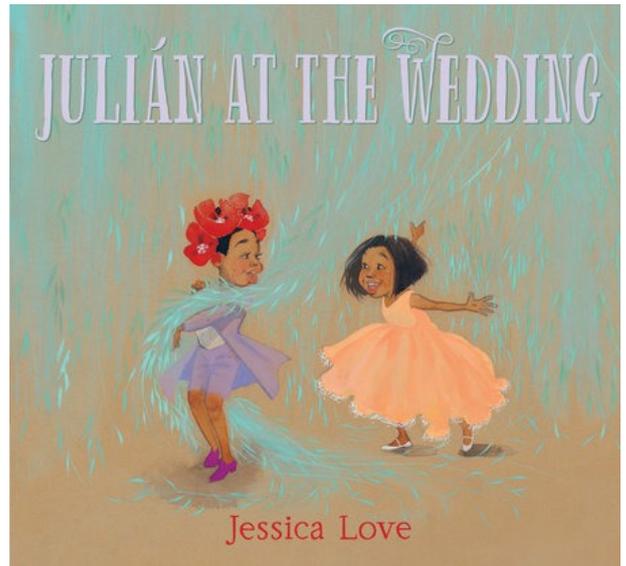
**Julian at the Wedding, by Jessica Love**  
**Walker 2020 £12.99**  
**isbn 9781406397482**

Our friend Julian reappears, this time, going to a wedding with his friend Marisol and the brides’ dog Gloria this time, who leads them astray but all is well in the end. The colour is exceptional.

The following points are only important for their absence from the mainstream, though I’m happy to have reviewed a growing number of children’s books where the main character(s) aren’t white and the ambience isn’t heterosexual; obviously Julian’s Nana is older, but this book depicts age positively. I apologise this might be mistaken for political correctness, another prejudice to be overcome.

Buy this book; buy *Julian is a Mermaid* if you haven’t done so already. You can also buy giclee prints of the work from [jesslove.format.com](http://jesslove.format.com)

*Stewart Rayment*



**International Abstract Late Extra**

**liberator**



- Adapt or die in Scotland and Wales - Nigel Lindsay and Peter Black
- How to help financial inclusion - Claire Tyler
- Football turns on its fans - Howard Cohen

**Liberator 407**

Two international articles in the June issue. In *Dirty Secret Aired*, Martha Elliott hopes the George Floyd case could help America bring its police under control. Margaret Lally explains in *Tories pull up the UK drawbridge*, how government plans for asylum seekers will be cruel and counter-productive but a new campaign will try to stop them. Otherwise, there is coverage of the recent round of elections, the pandemic, football and poverty. There are also obituaries of Shirley Williams, Jonathan Fryer and Trevor Smith. Lord Bonkers battles with the problem of a narrow boat wedged across the canal, threatening the export of Stilton and pork pies.

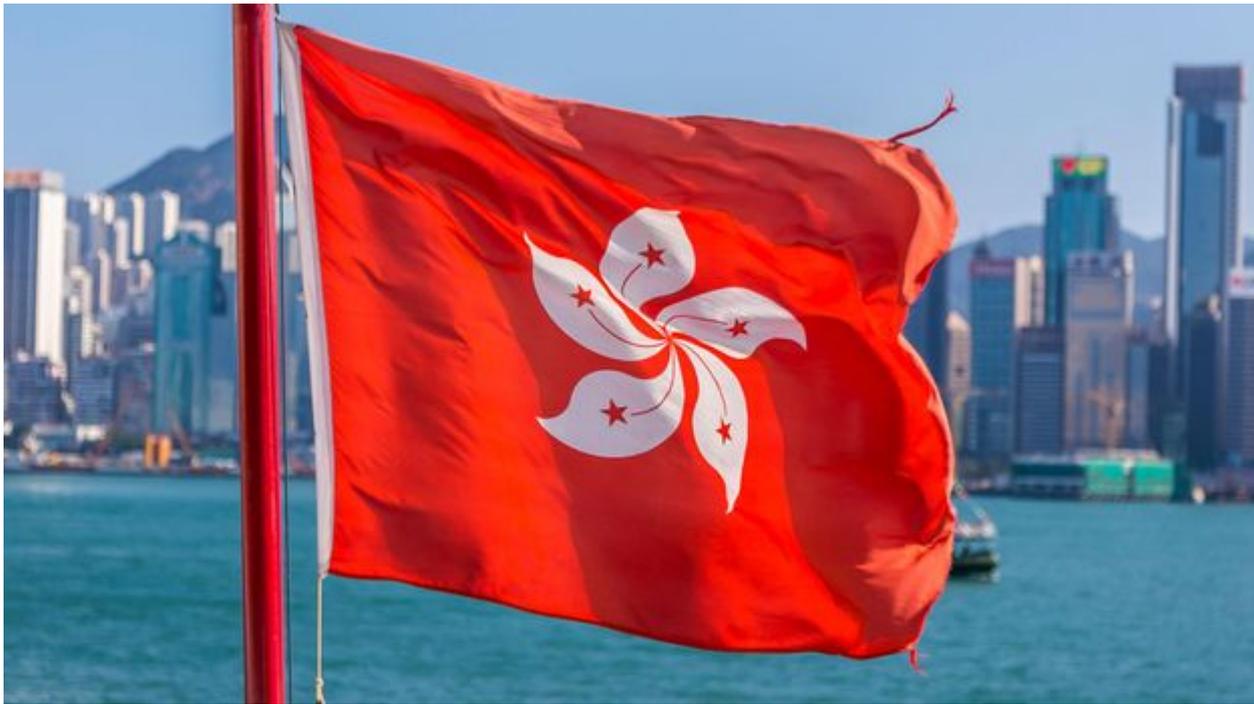
Download free at [www.liberator.org.uk](http://www.liberator.org.uk)

Focus on Hong Kong

# Zoom Webinar

**Date: 30th June. 12.00-13.30hrs UK time (19.00-20.30hrs HK time)**

**Hosted by Lib Dems Overseas (LDO) in association with the Paddy Ashdown Forum**



During the process of negotiating the handover (or return) of Hongkong to China in 1997, the *late Paddy Ashdown* advocated for the people of Hong Kong to be given the right of abode in the UK if China were to renege on promises made in the Sino-British Declaration of 1984. The British Nationals (Overseas) passports were issued in 1987 to HK residents to replace the British Dependent Territories passports and almost 3 million HK residents were entitled to hold these passports.

Fast forward June 2020, after years of protests following the so-called Umbrella Revolution which started in 2014, China has introduced sweeping National Securities legislation as an annex to the Basic Law introducing 4 new security crimes with extra-territorial reach.

This has led to the UK government offering BNO passport holders the right to settle in the UK as from January this year as well as funding a welcome package for HKers amounting to £43million to be accessible through local authority services in England, Scotland and Wales. It has been reported that as of April approximately 34,000 BNO passport holders have applied to the UK under the new visa scheme with pathway to citizenship after 5 years of residency.

12.00- 12.05: Welcome by **Robert Woodthorpe-Browne MBE**, PAF

12.05-12.10: Introductions by the **Moderator: Merlene Toh Emerson MBE**, LDO

12.10-12.30: Key note speaker: **Alistair Carmichael MP**, Chair of APPG for Hongkong. Alistair will update the meeting on his work in bringing the private member's Hong Kong Bill to Parliament and of the scrutiny role played by the APPG that he chairs on the deterioration in civil and political rights in HK and in holding the UK government to account.

12.30-12.50: Views from Hongkongers in Britain

- **Mr Simon Cheng**, co-founder of HKB and former trade and investment officer at the British consulate in HK, who was detained by the Chinese authorities for 15 days in 2019, will share his views on the impact of the National Security legislation on the pro-democracy movement in Hongkong
- **Mr Julian Chan**, co-founder of HKB will be speaking about the work of HKB and the support network and services available to new immigrants from HK to the UK.

12.50-13.00: **Response by Baroness Sal Brinton**

13.00-13.28: **Questions and Answers**

13.28-13.30: **Final Remarks and Thanks**

**[Register Here](#)**

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yGsSWpvQ1kCVYZLQigoTgoiVfg2RIVhIqMoQ\\_VOVpbNUMEZMUpGOEJaMUVHTTJXSFJaNTFPV1VaQi4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yGsSWpvQ1kCVYZLQigoTgoiVfg2RIVhIqMoQ_VOVpbNUMEZMUpGOEJaMUVHTTJXSFJaNTFPV1VaQi4u)

Or via <http://www.thepaddyashdownforum.org/focus-on-hong-kong/>

# THE PADDY ASHDOWN FORUM

## What Makes a Good COP?

### Conversation with Liberal International President Hakima El Haité & the United Kingdom Liberal Democrats Leader Ed Davey



- 21st July 2021
- 6:00 PM 7:30 PM
- [National Liberal Club](#)

What makes a good United Nations Climate Change Conference?  
'Conference of the Parties' COP are yearly conferences, held since 1995.

The National Liberal Club with the [Paddy Ashdown Forum](#), are pleased to present very experienced COP contributors, Hakima El Haité – President of Liberal International & Sir Ed Davey, Liberal Democrats Leader.

Hakima was elected Vice President for the Historic Paris Agreement, and was Environment Minister for Morocco and Chair COP22, is an advisor to COP26 in Glasgow, and will be speaking on her experience on how to make history.

Ed Davey, Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the United Kingdom, has attended 5 COPs and will be sharing his view on how Climate Change Conferences operate, and what his view is on how they can be improved.

To attend, please email [bookings@nlc.org.uk](mailto:bookings@nlc.org.uk) to secure your space – if you are not a member of the National Liberal Club please mention this in your email and let them know you are attending with the Sustainability Forum.  
This event will also be streamed digitally, with the link shared via our newsletter soon.