



2022 no. 7 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**ReJoin Demonstrators, London 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

**Western Hypocrisy    Sudan    Leila de Lima**

**Kachin Myanmar    Cuba**

# EVENTS

**1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> November** - UNFCCC Climate COP 27  
Egypt (Sharm El Sheikh)

**8<sup>th</sup> November** – Free trade as a tool to save the  
environment. European Liberal Forum & Paddy  
Ashdown Forum – by Zoom 1.00pm see page 17

**8<sup>th</sup> November** – LIBG Forum - President Xi's next  
five year: what should Europe's strategy be? – by  
Zoom 6.30pm see page 3

**14<sup>th</sup> November** – LIBG Forum – The US Midterm  
Elections see page 4

**24<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> November** 51<sup>st</sup> IFLRY General Assembly,  
Amsterdam

**28<sup>th</sup> November** – LIBG AGM – by Zoom 6.30pm  
see page 4

*For bookings & other information please contact the  
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Underground: Embankment

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**Photographs:** Mohammed Nossier, Rebecca  
Tinsley, Liberal International, Rappler, Kachin  
News Group, IFLRY.

Cover Photograph – Steve Eason



# President Xi's Next Five Years: What should Europe's Strategy be?

**November 8, 2022 6:30 pm - 7:45 pm**

A webinar organised by the UK Liberal Democrat Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) in association with Liberal International British Group and the Liberal Democrat European Group.

To be held online. Please register at this link:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_rdEhPoIESj6R7p9lmdAU7g](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rdEhPoIESj6R7p9lmdAU7g)

Despite a slowing Chinese economy - World Bank forecast at 2.8% GDP growth in 2022, behind the rest of Asia - and ¼ billion of its citizens under zero-COVID restrictions and lockdowns, Mr. Xi is being anointed for an unprecedented third five-year term as supreme leader. With rising frictions with the West, his support for Putin and intimidatory moves against Taiwan, what will President Xi do next to cement authoritarian China as the dominant world power in an increasingly destabilised world? And what should Europe be doing about it?

18.30: Welcome by Lord Jeremy Purvis, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and International Development, House of Lords.

18.35: Short Introduction by moderator George Cunningham, Chair of the UK Liberal Democrat Federal International Relations Subcommittee on China.

18.40-19.10 10-minute presentations by panellists:

**Professor Kerry Brown**, Renowned Sinologist. Director of the Lau China Institute at King's College, London, author of several books on Chinese politics including "Xi Jinping: A Study in Power" this year.

**Reinhard Butikofer MEP**, Chair of European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the People's Republic of China; Member, EP Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and EP Delegation for Relations with the USA.

**Vera Kranenburg, Clingendael** Netherlands Institute of International Relations, focus on Chinese foreign relations, European China policy and the role of technology in geopolitics.

19.10-19.45: Comments and questions from participants and responses from panellists.



# The US Midterm Elections - What the results mean for the future of American politics

**November 14, 2022 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

If the Republican Party triumphs in the US midterm elections on 8 November, a new influx of Trump-approved candidates will enter Congress.

What are the consequences of their victory? Will Joe Biden become a lame-duck president? Will he seek re-election in 2024? Will a newly invigorated Republican Party roll back women's and LGBTQ+ rights?

Will Congress reduce or stop support to Ukraine?

## **Speakers:**

**Mark Bergman**, Speaker Pelosi's Cabinet of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Washington DC

**Martha Elliot**, political journalist, author and activist, Maine

**Professor Alethea Paradis**, Democratic Party activist, California

Webinar to be held jointly with the Paddy Ashdown Forum. To register click here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/weL3HCcs9F>



# LIBG

## annual general meeting



**November 28, 2022 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

The agenda for the 2022 AGM, a nomination form and the minutes of the 2021 meeting may all be seen by the links here or are in the LIBG AGM 2022 folder on the LIBG website [www.libg.co.uk](http://www.libg.co.uk)

The meeting will be held on Zoom, details of which are on the agenda.

Lord Purvis, Lib Dem foreign affairs spokesperson in the House of Lords, has been invited to speak immediately after the AGM.

# The Illiberal hypocrisy of Western Nations! Mohammed Nossier

Western nations' declaration of liberalism is questionable! Certainly, western citizens adore liberal values, but this tendency doesn't naturally translate into their foreign policies, as claimed. Western nations' clear economic and military supremacy has empowered them to politically dominate the world. This state of affairs has led the western governments to mistakenly perceive liberalism as a notion that is administered top-down towards rest of the world unnoticing their hypocritical illiberal behaviour.

Liberalism lies in believing that the universe constitutes a multiplicity of identities, qualities, ideas, etc. offering each citizen the power of autonomy to create his or her own blend that is protected by the law correspondingly, obliges individuals to recognize peers'. In short, I respect your partialities, while you mine Liberalism isn't about abiding by the latest technology, trend or a given norm; it is merely about having the right to choose as long as these choices don't harm others.

While hypocrisy is best exhibited in having a gap between claimed values and given actions. In fact, many western scholars implicitly acknowledge their states' hypocrisy. Realpolitik that places values aside entirely in service of their nations' interest is not hypocrisy, but a pure act. Manoeuvring between value and interest based on a given nation's needs or a politicians' desire is ultimate hypocrisy!

The United Kingdom's Partygate scandal, wherein a number of social gatherings took places at the garden of 10 Downing Street and other government buildings involving British Prime Minister Boris Johnson while the entire nation was practicing a complete lockdown, clearly exhibits the hypocrisy of the British Government – Britain used to be a world example of law enforcement inclusive of government officials.

Johnson, who inherited the premiership instead of being elected in his own right, his misconduct was not enough to force him to resign. On the contrary, he managed to remain in power for almost seven months until he submitted his resignation last July, under pressure from conservative party members amid unrelated scandals. To underscore the lack of consequences for deceiving the British Parliament, Johnson, even after being forced out, has been presented to be the secretary general of NATO and could nominate himself again for the premiership.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a clear violation of another country's sovereignty. However, the European Union suspension of Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, media outlets, from broadcasting in western nations is a clear disruption of freedom of expression. This is no different from autocratic nations that only broadcast the ruling's party's narrative. In democratic nations, criminals have the right to explain their motive before being convicted; the same notion should be applied to Russian media outlets.

Furthermore, Western nations have been welcoming Russian oligarch's investments for years, while knowing that these funds might be illegally or immorally sourced. When a political need arose, western nations decided to freeze the oligarch's money, regardless of respective regulations that previously secured their money.

Calling Idrissa Gana Gueys, the Senegalese footballer who plays for Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) France by the National Council of Ethics of the French Football Federation to explain his boycotting of a football game



that expressed solidarity to the LGBTQ community is a clear illiberal act. As stated by Idrissa, his contract with PSG obliges him to play football, not to advocate for political or social stance!

Discriminating against any ethnic, sexual or religious group is an immoral act that warrants censorship, as it harms the individual. However, expressing solidarity or refraining from doing so, is a pure liberal act. Associating Idrissa's stance with being a Muslim and calling for sanctioning the player by French sport professionals are illiberal behaviours.

Moreover, America National Rifle Association's advocacy of putting weapons in schools, to defend children against – is . Arming school teachers may and certainly won't secure the safety of innocent children citizens freedom to own and carry a gun shouldn't infringe on others' individual's right safety.

The utmost illiberal hypocrisy of western nations lies in their relationship with Arab autocrats who are offered a blind eye when economic ties in western favor wherein falloff result in casting a light on the autocracy's human rights' violations. When Egyptians were fighting for their freedom early in the course of their uprising in 2011, then-Vice President Biden described late President Mubarak as a democratic ruler. Then, when the uprising intensified, President Obama, switched gears, called on Mubarak to leave the presidential office immediately.

Westerners tend to set and standardize the norms that suit them perfectly, applying them to the rest of the world or modifying them when needed. For example, western economists, for years, defined an economic recession as two consecutive quarters of declining GDP, which is the current case of the US declared by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). But now, the NBER and many other American economists are declining to say the US is in an economic recession, which might have a negative political impact on President Biden and for the Democrats in the coming congressional elections.

Western nations true achievement is their application of democracy, clearly backed up by rule of law saved them from internal power struggles. However, when it comes to nation-state conflicts, western governments tend to exercise their economic and military power applying sanctions on disputed countries western nations an edge

The present decay of democracy and leadership in western nations at large and the United States in particular, will negatively affect their economic supremacy. The most significant pillars of western modernization its institutions and fair regulations; weakening will negatively reflect on western economic superiority Trumpism is an indication of this phenomenon. Aside from democracy, Westerners deserve credit for their widely diversified innovations that better serve human development but always sold to the rest of the world at a price when needed.

The economic and military superiority of western nations certainly an advantage, but does not mean that every Western concept is a model for the rest of the world. My concern here, as a non-western citizen, isn't the domestic political dynamics of Western nations, but their desire to enforce their norms and policies on the rest of the world that is refined by self- deceptive values of sincerity and liberalism.

***Mohammed Nossier***

# Sudan's Christians at risk as hard-line Islamists tighten grip

## Rebecca Tinsley

Thousands of peaceful Sudanese protesters were met with tear gas this week on the first anniversary of the country's military coup. Away from the streets of Khartoum, a state of emergency has been declared in Blue Nile where regime proxies allegedly killed an estimated 250 ethnic Black Africans. This comes as diplomats brokering negotiations between the junta and opposition urged the military not to resort to more violence.

According to Lord Alton who is secretary of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan and South Sudan, "Sudan's military elite is up to its old tricks, stirring up ethnic conflict over land in the country's poor, neglected regions. These tactics enable its own supporters to claim property by using proxy forces who attack minority groups. Since the military coup a year ago, the security situation in Darfur, Blue Nile and Kordofan has deteriorated dramatically, with innocent civilians killed in their hundreds and displaced in their thousands. The UK should place targeted smart sanctions on the leaders responsible for this misery."

### **The Islamists are back**

In 2019, thirty years of Islamist military rule ended after massive popular democracy protests overthrew Field Marshall Omar Bashir, indicted by the ICC for genocide in Darfur. However, the security services seized power from a civilian-military transitional government in October 2021. The junta claims to be consolidating power to protect the transition, saying the military will eventually hand over to civilians, there-after staying out of politics.



*Khartoum, 25<sup>th</sup> October - Thousands of peaceful protesters were met with tear gas on the first anniversary of the military coup.*

Since the coup, the rapid reinstatement of discredited Islamists in the country's civil service has caused alarm among pro-democracy groups, civil society and Christians. The transitional government, established after the 2019 popular uprising, had purged the civil service of Islamists due to their alleged corruption. As reported previously on ICN Christians are facing a fresh wave of arrests, harassment, and the confiscation

and destruction of church property. Many Christians live in the marginalised areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and in informal settlements and displaced people's camps around the capital, Khartoum.

Despite diplomatic efforts, little progress has been made forming a new government representing civilian aspirations. The military is reported to have agreed on a draft constitutional document written by the country's Bar Association. This would allow the appointment of a civilian prime minister who would lead the country through elections by 2024. However, the future role of the military remains contentious because Sudan's broad network of community resistance committees have little faith the junta will keep its word.

### **Peace without justice?**

Sudan commentators warn that even if a constitutional settlement is reached, there will be no lasting peace without justice for hundreds of thousands of Sudanese from the marginalised regions who were killed by the Bashir regime. Human Rights Watch reports that the coup leaders have faced no consequences for the repression of civil society since they seized power a year ago. Human rights groups have urged President Biden to apply targeted smart sanctions on coup leaders to prevent further unchecked corruption and plunder of state resources. In a letter signed by leading activists including Lord Alton, the US president was warned that the Sudanese regime was falling back on a tried and tested strategy, deliberately pretending to cooperate while buying time to establish full control. The activists warned of a dangerous trend toward the normalisation of military power.

### **Land Grab**

Sudan experts believe the violence and land grabbing in Blue Nile state and the other marginalised regions is being stoked by the military elite in Khartoum as a way of rewarding their supporters in peripheral areas. Videos on social media show armed militia from the Hausa ethnic group taunting the Berti people, calling them "pagans" and "drinkers". In the video they threaten to behead the local Berti leader, using the invocation, Allahu Akbar (Allah is greater).

Volker Perthes, the UN's special representative in Sudan, commented recently that "a country with 5, 6, 7 or more different armies will never be stable." He said military leaders should not play a political role and political leaders should not have private armies.

### **The Putin Connection**

Under the military regime, Sudan has renewed its close ties with Russia, exporting gold to bolster President Putin's balance of payments, and utilising the controversial Russian mercenary Wagner Group, accused of war crimes in Africa.

Yet, analysts say Sudan desperately needs access to the international financial markets. Inflation reached 395% in 2021, and decades of asset stripping by the elite has hollowed out the economy. Arguably, there will be neither peace nor prosperity while Sudan sides with Russia, thereby deterring international financial organisations like the IMF or World Bank from lending assistance.

Activists in Sudan and beyond continue to urge the UK, US, EU and other concerned international actors to apply tough target sanctions on those implicated in human rights abuses during Bashir's reign and since the coup.

### **Rebecca Tinsley**

*This article first appeared in Independent Catholic News 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022*

Rebecca Tinsley's novel about Sudan, *When the Stars Fall to Earth*, is available in English and Arabic from Amazon.

# ‘Set her free’: Leila de Lima hostage-taking puts her continued detention in the spotlight

For over five years, former senator Leila de Lima has been detained in the Camp Crame Custodial Center, waiting out the resolution of drug-related charges filed against her by the Duterte administration in 2017. The real reason for her detention is her opposition to President Duterte’s War on Drugs, which resulted in thousands of extra-judicial killings<sup>1</sup>.

On 9th October, in a botched escape attempt by Abu Sayyaf Islamist terrorists, the former Philippine Senator Leila de Lima was held hostage in a gaol rampage which resulted in the death of three inmates and serious injuries to one policeman and another inmate. One of the three inmates reportedly ran to the cell of the former legislator, blindfolded her and aimed a blunt object to her chest after his two co-inmates were killed by the police in their foiled escape attempt from the maximum-security detention facility. Senator de Lima was eventually released unharmed when the police shot and killed her hostage-taker.

Leila de Lima contested the Philippine General Election earlier this year, but coming 23<sup>rd</sup> on the Liberal Party’s list was not elected. The Bureau of Liberal International (LI) and the Executive Committee of Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) express serious concerns on the capability of the Philippine National Police (PNP) to ensure the safety and security of former Senator de Lima as evidenced by this incident. That she is still being detained together with suspected members of terrorist organizations is a travesty of justice, especially given the dubious charges against her. Instead of the suggested transfer to another detention facility, the Marcos administration should withdraw the remaining charges against her so she could be immediately and unconditionally released.



Former Senator de Lima has already suffered enough for more than five years on charges that could not stand in court. For her to be subjected to this grave security lapse is too much. The only course of action should be to set her free.



<sup>1</sup> Leila De Lima ‘first political prisoner’ of the Duterte regime in the Philippines. *interLib* 2017-03 pages 3-4. “The world is watching” LI president reminds Duterte as Prize for Freedom awarded to Leila De Lima in Manila. *interLib* 2018-07 pages 5-7

*Leila’s supporters outside the Muntinlupa Court on 10<sup>th</sup> October for the hearing on her two remaining drug charges.*

# Burmese Blitzkrieg

## Saeed Rahman

A festival in Kachin State to celebrate the founding of the political organisation, the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) 62 years ago was bombed by the Tatmadaw. Artists, musicians and families were there and are amongst more than 80 people reported killed. The Burmese military sent military jets, probably Yak-130s to bomb the festival. They also blocked attempts of the injured to reach hospitals.

The attack took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at Anangpa near the Hpakant township, an area controlled by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) Brigade 9. Amongst those killed in the attack were actor Lahtaw Zau Ding, singer Aurali, singer Glau Yaw Lwi, and pianist Ko King, along with the commander of Brigade 9. The attack has been widely condemned as it would have been known that the festival would attract a large civilian audience and can also be seen as an attack on Kachin culture.



The KIO was formed on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1960, and its military wing, the KIA a year later. They have had a chequered career over the years, but can be considered, as one of the better organised opposition groups to the military Junta, to have established something of a de facto state, although this is constantly challenged, and sanctuary for the regime's other opponents. Despite China's support of the Junta the KIO/KIA have a rapport with the Chinese, hungry for their jade and other natural resources.

The Tatmadaw clearly under-estimated how Myanmar had moved on during the brief period that there was some democracy in the country. Their attempts to beat the population into submission have failed; guerrilla resistance from either the Peoples' Defence Forces of the underground National Unity Government or those of the various ethnic groups including the KIA, rely on tacit support from local communities, despite displacement – perhaps 500,000 people. Trying to beat the country into submission with attacks of this kind, and widespread use of torture and rape are having the opposite effect. Desertion and demoralisation are symptoms of a growing weakness in the army.

What the forces against the Tatmadaw lack is a response to its air power – it may be interesting to see how Russian losses in Ukraine impact on this. The bombing of Anangpa is not an isolated incident and one might guess that the following blockade on roads to hospitals relied on helicopter deployed troops, though this hasn't appeared in reportage. Whilst ASEAN states, particularly Thailand, and also India & Bangladesh have interests in resolving the conflict, as indeed, does China, it is China that would rule out a no-fly zone as an attempt to resolve the humanitarian crisis.

Faced with this, what might western countries do? The UK government has been particularly mealy mouthed over Myanmar. The Burma Campaign is urging people to lobby the Foreign Secretary to impose sanctions on the Tatmadaw and to halt the supply of aviation fuel. Restricting the flow of fuel, can only be a palliative though it might carry a more powerful message. A short email can only aid that.

*Saeed Rahman*



## Cuban Family Code

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September, the referendum on the new Family Code was held in Cuba, which was approved with more than 65% of the votes. In this new code, not only basic sexual freedoms such as equal marriage are recognized, but also child marriage is prohibited and new channels of protection are offered to women who suffer gender-based violence.

Undoubtedly, this new code implies an advance in individual and civil liberties that is extremely important in a country that has lived under a dictatorship for almost 60 years. Around 46,000 neighbourhood

meetings were held to discuss the Family Code, something that has been a feature of Cuban democracy since the revolution. However, it should be noted that full democracy and political rights on the island are far from being respected since only the proposals of the Cuban Communist Party are put to the vote and it is not allowed to campaign against them.

## Young Liberal Elections

Peter Banks retains the post of International Officer of the Young Liberals. The three places on the International Congress Delegates Committee went to Eleanor Kelly, Adam Lawless and Arthur Wu.

Co-Chairs of the Federal Young Liberals Executive Committee are Fergus Ustianowski and Janey Little. Co-Chairs of the English Young Liberals are James Green and Joe Norris. Joe Thomas is Chair of the Welsh Young Liberals and Jack Clark Chair of the Scottish Young Liberals.

We look forward to working with them all.

## Housmans Peace Diary

Every year Housmans publish their world-renowned Housmans Peace Diary - this is the 70th edition. It includes a World Peace Directory listing more than 1400 national and international peace, environmental and human rights organisations from around the world.

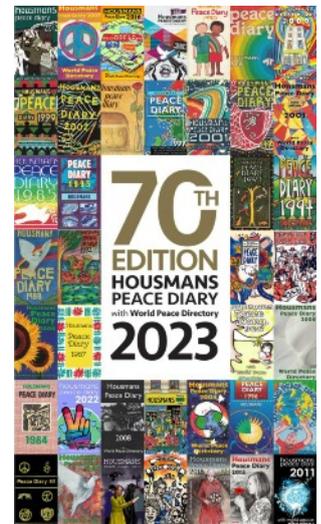
This year's feature marks 70 years of publication of the Peace Diary, looking back at the origins and development of this peace movement institution.

The Housmans Peace Diary is a non-profit service to movements around the world working for peace, social justice and the environment.

It's in pocket format, with a week to a view, and gives notable dates and anniversaries as well as a weekly quotation. It includes calendars, a forward planner for 2024, and space for notes. It is particularly useful for flagging up items for your social media.

This year's cover designer is Lois Iredale. The retail price of the 2023 Housmans Peace Diary is £9.95.

Mail order via [housmans.com/shop](https://www.housmans.com/shop) or call them on 020 7837 4473 to place your order. Housmans are at 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, near King's Cross



# International Abstracts

## **Liberator 414**

Robert Woodthorpe Browne explains what Liberal International does; we may carry it in the next issue as an aide-memoire. Rose Stimson writes of her Ukrainian refugees, no thanks to the Home Office. Rebecca Tinsley writes on decolonising aid and the danger it poses to well-functioning NGOs in developing countries. Martha Elliott looks at the USA and the shadow of Trump and John Martin writes on Kosovo (this was a review of the book *Dragon's Teeth* in interLib 2022-06). There is an obituary of Ruth Coleman-Taylor, who is much missed by all of us. Otherwise, there is the usual hand-wringing around what the Liberal Democrat are up to, or not, including a plea by David Grace to reoccupy the opposition to Brexit space – many party members would agree with him. Lord Bonkers is back, with revelations of the rise of one Elizabeth Truss. Liberator can be read free of charge at [www.liberatormagazine.org.uk](http://www.liberatormagazine.org.uk)

## **Journal of Liberal History, Issue 115 Summer 2022**

David Dutton concludes his biography of Percy Molteno, a Gladstonian in foreign policy, this episode covers the First World War, which he opposed, losing his seat to Lloyd George's coupon in 1918 and largely at odds with the party leadership(s) up to his death in 1937. John Ayshford's John Stuart Mill: a neo-Athenian republican may go back too far to really count as international, though it is highly commended. There is also a report of the fringe meeting The Two Davids: Owen versus Steel, an obituary of Ronnie Fearn and a review of *Ruling the World: Freedom, Civilisation and Liberalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*, by Alan Lester, Kate Boehme & Peter Mitchell (Cambridge UP, 2021), mainly focussed on the role of James Stephen, permanent under-secretary to the Colonial Office 1836-47: gallant efforts but more generally, one wishes it had been so. I do not like the new A5 format.

## **Journal of Liberal History, Issue 116 Autumn 2022**

In contrast to Percy Molteno in the previous issue, the lead international article is Solving the 'Problem of the Twentieth Century' Lord Davies of Llandinam's internationalist alternative to appeasement, by Ewan Lawry. Otherwise, there are articles on Cromwell's statue outside the Palace of Westminster and Lord Rosebery's limp out of office in 1895, this year's local elections and a meeting report on the 1992 General Election. I do not like the new A5 format.

## **Vogue October 2022 (British)**

Front & Centre – Rachel Donadio meets Ukraine's Olena Zelenska, the wife, mother and First Lady carrying the weight of a nation.

*If that isn't tempting enough, the photographs are by Annie Leibovitz. And for the first time, a solo male cover – Timothée Chalamet.*

## **USA**

American Jews start to think the unthinkable, by Dana Milbank. Washington Post 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

*2% of the population, 55% of reported religious hate crime.*

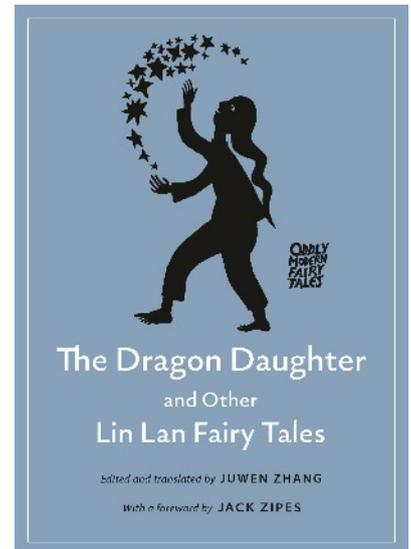
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/10/28/american-jews-exile-fears/>

# reviews

**The Dragon Daughter and other Lin Lan Fairy Tales, edited and translated by Juwen Zhang.  
Princeton 2022 £14.99 isbn 9780691214412**

Is this the mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells? Far-far-away being apposite, as echoes of Perrault and the brothers Grimm are retold amongst their siblings on eastern shores. Li Xiaofeng (李峰) and his colleagues collected and reinterpreted folk stories in China from the 1920s under the Lin Lan pseudonyms. Folk stories often contain universals, the 'Cinderella' story is common to many cultures; the earliest known version of Ye Xian (叶限) was first published during the Tang dynasty around 850, purporting to have taken place before the Qin and Han dynasties (c.200 BCE). In our own ethnocentric little world, the Viking raids were probably the main feature. However, the efforts of Duan Chengshi (段式) though probably gathered from peasants, like his precursors and followers, were written for elites. Just as the stories collected (& modified) by the Grimms, Hans Christian Andersen et al, were part of a Romantic nationalism and cultural awareness. Li Xiaofeng and his colleagues saw part of their role as educating and raising popular consciousness.

The Qing dynasty collapsed in 1912, having been under assault from western and Japanese imperialisms for the previous 70+ years. Prior to the century of humiliation, China was probably the largest economy on Earth and is now reasserting itself as such. Li Xiaofeng and his colleagues saw part of their role as educating and popular consciousness raising. Working in the 1920s & 30s, it is not difficult to see how their efforts faded – the second Sino-Japanese war (I wonder why our histories don't start World War II in 1937?). There had been skirmishing throughout the 1930s, Shanghai, home of the Lin Lan's publisher, was attacked by the Japanese in 1932 and captured after a significant and long-drawn-out battle in 1937. After 1945 came the civil war with the Communists triumphing. Perhaps more specifically significant was the westernising switch from a vertical to horizontal setting of type in China, making reprints costly outside of Taiwan.



As the title suggests, these are fairy stories, more specifically tonghua, and dwell in the realm of the superstition, so despite their peasant or proletarian pedigree, they would run counter to the orthodoxy of Communists. Li Xiaofeng appears to have retreated from public life after the 1940s until his death in 1971. Zhou Zuoren (赵景深), his collaborator, who introduced the concept of tonghua to China, died in 1967. Zhao Jingshen (赵景深) survived the Cultural Revolution, Zhao being made honorary president of the Chinese Institute of Folk Literature, when it was founded in the year before his death, 1985. He had taught at the Fudan University until his retirement and folklore studies are now widely pursued in Chinese universities. Fudan, on the other hand, changed its constitution in December 2019, removing the phrase "academic independence and freedom of thought" and replacing it with a "pledge to follow the Communist party's leadership". Shape shifting is a recurring feature in the stories, hardly surprising as it features in Chinese reality – consider how Deng Xiaoping transformed Marxist-Leninism into a 'Socialist Market Economy'.

Juwen Zhang escapes the problem of many folklorists by presenting stories. His analysis is largely focussed on the publisher, New North Books and its collectors, interpreters and authors. It may not be known where the stories were collected, although Anthony Christie<sup>1</sup>, who is aware of Lin Lan as a source, speaks of the story of Meng Jiang Nü (孟姜女) as pre-Han in its origins, developing around the time of the construction of the Great Wall and popularised from Ming times. Christie suggests that Lin

Lan stories are derived from “different sources and provides a good example of an evolved Chinese folk-story.”

But enough of this, we simply must thank Juwen Zhang and Princeton for bringing us these tales; hopefully they will consider an audio book, because they come from an oral tradition and are best read aloud. Of my own readings of Chinese folk tales on Young Liberal camping holidays, things are probably best left unsaid, though the jokes still come up when old friends meet many years after.

*Stewart Rayment*

<sup>1</sup> Chinese Mythology, by Anthony Christie. Paul Hamlyn 1968.

**Ideology and Identity: The Changing Party Systems of India  
by Pradeep K. Chhibber & Rahul Verma  
Oxford University Press, USA 2018, £18.68  
isbn 9780190623883**

A highly insightful book into Indian politics, *Ideology and Identity* goes beyond the stories and views of individuals; goes beyond sociological analysis of communities. Chhibber and Verma take a macro view of the history of Indian politics, identifying statism and the politics of recognition (and affirmative action for certain communities) as the two overarching and consistent cleavages running through India's political history.

They divide India's electoral history into four phases, from the Congress Party's hegemony between 1952-67, to the era of the BJP's hegemony from 2014. The Congress Party has weak grassroots leadership and depends mainly on elites and consequently has been vulnerable to cannibalisation by regional parties running on platforms of statism or more clearly supporting affirmative action for historically marginalised communities.

Where the Congress Party has not faced this cannibalisation but faces only the BJP, such as (ironically) in states such as Gujarat, it continues to be competitive. Voters accept gifts from politicians of all hues and sometimes it is a given, but patronage politics does not influence who they cast their votes for. Voters and politicians will switch between parties, but for the most part, only parties that fall within the same ideological spectrum. Charismatic transformational leaders play a role in winning votes, but only insofar as mobilising the base of the ideology they espouse. The politics of India is ideologically driven.

*Imaduddin Ahmed*

**Credible Visions: The Politics of Ideas in India and Developing Democracies by Bilal Baloch  
Cambridge University Press 2021 £64.58  
isbn 9781316519837**

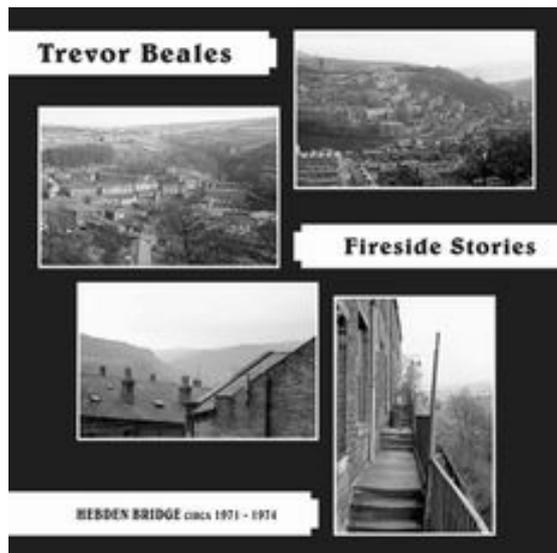
Like Chhibber and Verma, Baloch endeavours to make the case that it is ideology that guides India's politics. Unlike Chhibber and Verma, Baloch does not use regression analysis of Indian polling data to make this case. Where Chhibber and Verma clearly translate the results of their analysis to make the case that India is split along the two cleavages of statism and identity, Baloch strays into a narration of political movements – against the corruption of Indira Gandhi's administration and then again, a later Congress Party where the movement was led by Anna Hazare – to argue that anti-corruption is an ideology. This is a strange argument to make since there is not one Indian party that makes the case for corruption; corruption is not a dividing cleavage. If anything, the use of anti-corruption movements in India's politics to strengthen parties that are ideologically driven serves to undermine the argument that India's politics are strongly ideological. Baloch does also identify a socialism versus liberalism cleavage, and a Hindutva and majoritarianism versus secularism and protection of minorities cleavage. These cleavages are lost somewhat in the lengthy narration of events and arguing for anti-corruption as an ideology.

*Imaduddin Ahmed*

## **Fireside Stories (Hebden Bridge circa 1971-1974), by Trevor Beales**

**Basin Rock 2022 LP c.£20.00 CD c.£10.00 download £7.00**

Anti-counter culture loner folk from a teenage attic in the heart of rural northern hippiedom. Today the valley town of Hebden Bridge in west Yorkshire is world-renowned as something of a bohemian backwater.



It wasn't like this back in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, when a disparate selection of radicals, drop-outs, heads, musicians, artists and writers started to be attracted to the Calder valley. Local lad and future poet laureate Ted Hughes called the area "the fouled nest of industrialisation".

Over time, those seeds of radicalism and collectivism ensured Hebden Bridge evolved into a place where people could be themselves and all shades of individual oddness not only tolerated but actively encouraged. But back at the turn of the dreary 1970s it remained a monochrome world defined by its unforgiving surrounding landscapes, where the old gritstone over-dwellings were stained with soot and rain lashed down for weeks.

It was here that Trevor Beales, who was born in 1953, grew up, and from where he drew musical and lyrical inspiration. Perhaps it was this dual nationality heritage, unusual in the valley's largely white working-class population at the time, that gave the teenager Trevor Beales' music an outsider's perspective. The discovery of Bob Dylan, Django Reinhardt, The Byrds and James Taylor at a young age, led to him picking up a guitar at the age of ten, and he was soon writing his own originals and performing them at local (though often remote) folk clubs and pubs.

Recorded in the attic of the family home at Ivy Bank in Charlestown on the verdant wooded slopes at the edge of Hebden Bridge between 1971 and 1974, these early recordings are collected here for the first time and mark Trevor Beales' long-overdue solo debut. In these songs is a suffer-no-fools sense of realism that is defiantly northern, yet also expresses a worldliness that belies Beales' young years, whilst also showcasing an inherent storyteller's ear for narrative.

Here is a postcard from the past at that crucial musical period of transition, when the idealistic exponents of the 1960s emerged into an austere new decade that was to be shaped by strikes, rising unemployment and economic upheaval. Two aspects of this music make it remarkable: Beales' natural ability showcases a sophisticated guitar-picking style that was leagues ahead of many of his (older, more recognised) contemporaries. This is music that can confidently hold its own with pioneers such as Davey Graham, Michael Chapman, Bert Jansch and Jackson C Frank, as influenced by jazz, blues and steel guitar as any of the old songbook classics from ancient Albion.

Secondly, his lyrics are a far cry from either the naïve bedroom scribbles of a teenager who has barely left his upland home, nor do they fall foul of the type of lazy clichés and sub-Tolkien imagery that was still in abundance in the early 1970s. Most remarkably the earliest songs here were laid down less than a year after he left school (an unearthed report written by his headteacher on July 3rd 1970 noted he had "a considerable ability and interest in music", though his education ended abruptly when he simply walked out of a science lesson one sunny day while at sixth form, never to return).

Trevor's music is grounded in reality – his reality. 'Then I'll take you home', for example, considers the guru Marajai, who encouraged his acolytes to give over their worldly possessions, yet who drove a Rolls Royce and lived like a playboy. Unsurprisingly, this latest in a long line of spiritual charlatans found several followers in Hebden Bridge, and Beales casts a disdainful eye over the growing popularity for such false prophets.

With its ancient narratives and propensity for myth-making, folk has certainly produced its fair share of cult figures who have enjoyed rediscovery or career resurgence and with this debut compilation of home

recordings, rescued from cassette tapes, Trevor Beales might just be the latest addition. Certainly, he was the real deal. Crucially, Beales' music is never jaded or cynical, but instead possesses a poet's ear, a strong sense of self and some sound critical faculties. and much of it recorded at an age when he could neither vote nor order a pint of heavy.

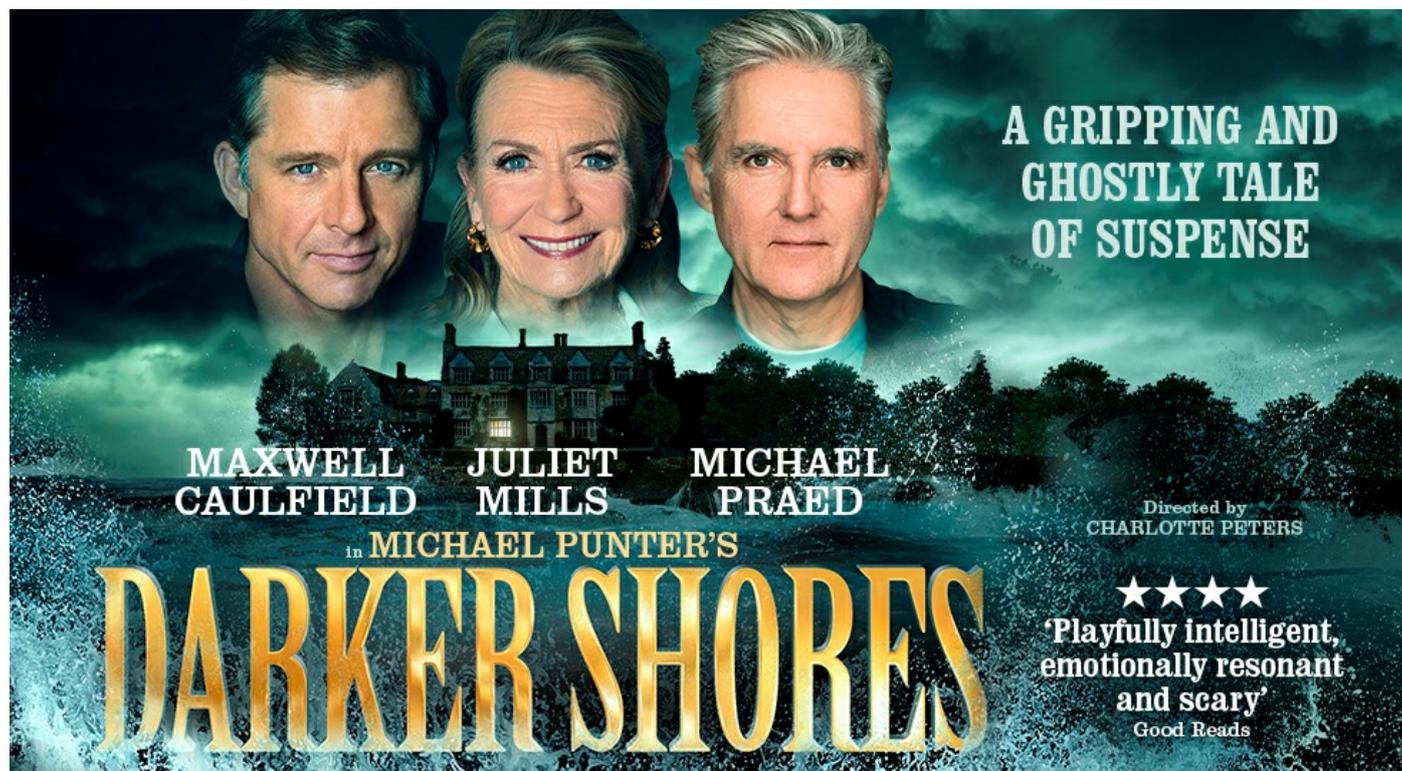
Trevor Beales died suddenly and unexpectedly on March 29th 1987, aged 33. He left behind Christine and their young child Lydia.

“Ace Todmorden label makes a significant discovery on its own doorstep: a superb cache of ‘loner folk’ songs recorded in the early-70s by Hebden Bridge’s answer to Nick Drake” *Uncut* "defiantly northern and out of this world" *folk radio*.

Support your local independent record store – use them or lose them, otherwise

<https://trevorbeales.bandcamp.com/album/fireside-stories-hebden-bridge-circa-1971-1974>

*Benjamin Myers*



It's Christmas 1875 and Professor Gabriel Stokes (**Max Caulfield**) takes lodgings at The Sea House cared for by Mrs Hinchcliffe (**Juliet Mills**), on a desolate stretch of the East Sussex coast.

No sooner has he arrived than the troubled history of the house comes to the fore with unexplained and mysterious happenings.

Having enlisted the help of Tom Beauregard (**Michael Praed**) an American spiritualist, the two embark on a terrifying journey to discover the truth.

**Following the traditions of the finest ghost stories, Darker Shores is a gripping and shadowy tale of suspense.**

Played to an almost full house at the Devonshire Park, Eastbourne, now moving to the Arts Theatre Cambridge, Malvern Theatre, & the Yvonne Arnaud, Guildford. Punter has been described as Britain's best undiscovered playwright.

<https://www.cambridgeartstheatre.com/whats-on/darker-shores> 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> November

<https://www.yvonne-arnaud.co.uk/whats-on/darker-shores> 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November

<https://www.malvern-theatres.co.uk/?s=darker+shores> 21<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> November

# Free trade as a tool to save the environment

November 8, 2022 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Organised by the European Liberal Forum in cooperation with The Paddy Ashdown Forum.

For registrations see here:

<https://www.eventbrite.be/e/eu-mercosur-free-trade-as-a-tool-to-save-the-environment-tickets-440290309167>

At first glance, global trade would seem incompatible with environmental protection. Yet, also, the inverse can be true - the changing condition of the biosphere modifies trade patterns. Harmonised liberal sustainably viable trade agreements have the opportunity harness the benefits of trade while reducing environmental costs. By doing more with what we have and improve access to new technology integration can diminish the use of inputs such as energy, water, and other environmentally harmful substances. Similarly, trade and investment liberalisation can provide incentives to adopt more stringent environmental standards as sectors become ever more exposed to environmental impositions as well as finding it the most profitable thing to do. Consequently, this trade agreement can stimulate the use of better cleaner production processes, better more functional decision making, and technologies.

Speakers will be announced soon.

## 'EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement' Series

Negotiations on the free trade agreement between the EU and the Mercosur nations of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay has taken more than 20 years. For many this free trade agreement is seen to undermine the EU's climate ambitions as well as be a threat to sustainability on the South American continent. The series of webinars will deliver accurate and validated specialist knowledge on this Agreement, the criticism it has provoked and its impact on the climate and environment. In addition to the webinars, a series of papers will be published written by the experts.

The Four webinars will discuss:

Protectionism - does it show its face?

How can cooperation strengthen food security?

Free trade as a tool to save the environment

Where is the EU / Mercosur FTA going and why does it matter?

Earlier webinars are on the PAF website.