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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



COP 27

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

TAX

US MIDTERMS

EVENTS

8th March LIBG Forum - A look to Afghanistan and Iran on International Women's Day - see page 2a

10th-11th March Scottish Liberal Democrats Spring Conference, Dundee, Apex City Quay Hotel, Dundee.

17th-19th March Liberal Democrats Federal Spring Conference, York – see page 21

25th-26th March Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru, Welsh Liberal Democrats Conference, University of Wales Trinity St. David's IQ Building, Swansea.

2nd-6th May 206th Liberal International Executive Committee, Ottawa.

4th May Local elections

23rd-26th September Liberal Democrats Federal Autumn Conference, Bournemouth.

21st October Liberal Democrat Town & Parish Councillors Conference, free event, online, provisionally 10am-1pm.

28th-30th October Scottish Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, The Town House, Hamilton.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment, Felix Dodds, Liberal Democrats, Forum speakers, Liberal International, family of Paddy Beck.

Cover Photograph – Liberal International

Our condolences to Barbara & family on the death of former LIBG Chair Robert Woodthorpe Browne. Please forward any memories of Robert by 8th March for inclusion in our next issue.





LIBG celebrates



International Women's Day with a look to Iran & Afghanistan 8th March 8.00pm

For International Women's Day on 8 March 2023, LIBG is delighted to invite two distinguished speakers for an event on women's rights and women's fight for justice in Afghanistan and Iran.

Please join MIT Middle East historian Dr. Pouya Alimaghani and Mariam Jalalzada, an expert at the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), at 8pm GMT for presentations and debate with LIBG members. Chair: Irina von Wiese.



Link

<https://ucl.zoom.us/j/99440501611>

Eventbrite Link

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-look-to-iran-and-afghanistan-on-international-womens-day-tickets-570504082067>



LI Bureau: on the anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine

One year ago, in flagrant violation of international law and Russia's obligations to global conventions, Vladimir Putin anticipated his conquest of Ukraine would be concluded in three days. In contrast to his objectives, Mr Putin was successful only in mobilising one of the greatest coalitions against tyranny and oppression in Europe since the 1930s. Far short of successfully seizing Kyiv, Vladimir Putin has galvanised an continent and reinforced a formidable transatlantic alliance: German defence policy overturned, historically nonaligned Finland and Sweden to join NATO, and Ukraine on an accelerated path towards European Union membership.

Unbowed and unconquered we salute the people of Ukraine who have endured terrible suffering while placing themselves and their country at the vanguard of our fight for freedom. In so doing, they have shown Mr Putin that a sovereign people will not readily be subjugated.

We applaud in particular our 2022 Prize for Freedom laureate, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who, leading from the front, has come to personify Ukraine's tenacity in the face of such overwhelming odds.

As the war enters its second bloody year the stakes could not be higher. While we remain concerned at the global impact of Russia's war, notably rising food and energy prices as well as surging inflation, we urge those countries, presidents, prime ministers and peoples who oppose tyranny and cherish freedom to stay the course and do everything in their power to ensure Ukraine's decisive victory. With hundreds of civilians killed and millions of people around the world facing starvation we demand President Putin ceases Russia's hostilities, withdraws Russian troops and open negotiations in pursuit of peace.

In an increasingly divided world, where the global order is threatened from numerous aspects and angles, we are convinced that Ukraine's victory will epitomise the shape of the liberal world order. Together we must remain steadfast in our commitments to Ukraine, to liberalism, to victory.

23/02/2023



Was COP27 a Success or a Failure?

Felix Dodds and Chris Spence



COP 27 was both better and worse than expected. It's finally over. After the anticipation and build-up to COP27, the biggest climate meeting of the year is now in our rear-view mirror. The crowds of delegates that thronged the Sharm el-Sheikh international convention center for two long weeks have all headed home to recover. Many will be fatigued from long hours and sleepless nights as negotiators tried to seal a deal that would move the world forwards.

Did all this hard work pay off? In our opinion, COP 27 was both better and worse than we'd hoped.

Failing to Follow the Science

First, the bad news. COP 27 failed to deliver what the science tells us was needed. With the window of opportunity closing fast on our goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C or less, COP 27 did far too little on the all-important issue of mitigation—that is, cutting emissions.

The case for urgent action keeps getting stronger. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) make for grim reading about what to expect if we let temperatures rise too much. Nowadays, though, we just need to read the newspapers to catch a glimpse of the future.

The head of the key negotiating Group of 77 – 134 developing countries – was Pakistan which has been dealing with the worst floods in its history, leaving 1717 people dead and dealing an estimated \$US40 billion in damage. In 2022 in the USA, there were 15 climate-related disasters which each exceeded \$1 billion in costs.

Meanwhile, in Africa, according to Carbon Brief's analysis of disaster records, "extreme weather events have killed at least 4,000 people and affected a further 19 million since the start of 2022."

Since this COP was billed by some as the "Africa COP", one could expect a strong response to such news. The pressure was therefore on at COP 27 to respond to such disasters. Attending COP27 were 112 world leaders and over 300 government ministers: not as many as at COP 26, but still a good number. Something like 27,000 people from governments, intergovernmental, stakeholders, and journalists also attended the COP. This was to the backdrop of the UN Secretary General warning us that we needed to "cooperate or perish," to take urgent action to take us off "a highway to climate hell".

Messing up on mitigation: And yet progress on mitigation was modest, at best. While some delegations pushed hard for stronger commitments on cutting emissions, the appetite in some quarters just didn't seem to be there. After being pressured to do more in Paris and Glasgow, China, India, and some of the oil-producing countries appeared reluctant to take much more in Sharm el-Sheikh. They feel developed countries, which are historically responsible for the bulk of emissions, should be doing more themselves, rather than coercing others. The result was a negotiated outcome with little more on the table than we had in Glasgow. For instance, delegates could not agree to ramp up their language on fossil fuels, much to many people's disappointment.

Finance: Likewise, there was not too much to report on the issue of climate finance. The \$US100 billion annual support for developing countries initially promoted by Hilary Clinton at the 2009 Copenhagen COP

and enshrined in the Paris COP in 2015 will be reviewed in 2024 with a new figure being hopefully agreed then for 2025 implementation. The Global South has been talking of this new sum numbering in the trillions to help adapt and mitigate against climate change. And yet there were few signs of movement towards anything of that magnitude.

Given that the North has still not met its pledge of US\$100 billion by 2020, it's clear a lot of movement is needed in the next couple of years. Yet news from outside the conference, such as the US House of Representatives now having a Republican majority, does not bode well.

For a meeting billed as the “implementation COP” where climate action was taken to another level, the news on mitigation and finance was therefore disappointing.

Just prior to the start of COP27 the lead negotiator for Egypt Mohamed Nasr underscored: “science reports were telling us that yes, planning is not up to expectations, but it was implementation on the ground that was really lagging behind.”

Exceeding Expectations—the Loss and Damage Fund

There were some bright spots, however.

Perhaps most surprising was the agreement to create a ‘Loss and Damage’ fund to help the most vulnerable countries. This has been a key issue for almost 30 years, particularly for small island developing countries.

In Glasgow this looked very unlikely to be resolved in the Sharm COP, but with a late change of heart by the Europeans and eventually by the USA and others in the OECD, this is perhaps the most significant and surprising outcome from COP 27. Even as recently as October, the signs were that OECD countries were not on board with calls for a new fund. However, at COP 27 the “trickle” of earlier action in this area turned into a flood. Interestingly, it was Scotland at COP 26 that started things off, with a modest, voluntary contribution. More recently, Denmark, Austria, New Zealand and Belgium had also financial commitments to loss and damage, now amounting to \$US244.5 million. Mia Mottley Barbados’ Prime Minister has called for a 10% windfall tax on oil companies to fund loss and damage caused by climate change, which could raise around \$US31 billion if it had been introduced for 2022. Still, the signs a fund would be agreed at COP 27 had not been good.

This makes the final outcome all the more welcome. The idea, the door is now open for the most vulnerable countries to receive more support. A goal has now been set to fully operationalize the fund at COP 28 in a year’s time. For the most vulnerable nations, this cannot come quickly enough.

Global Goal on Adaptation: Another positive development, albeit on a more modest scale, was in the area of the ‘Global Goal on Adaptation’. Here, delegates agreed to “initiate the development of a framework” to be available for adoption next year.

A lot of work will need to be done at the intersessional meeting of the UN Climate Convention’s subsidiary bodies in Bonn in June next year to prepare for this, including how to measure progress towards this Goal. An approach similar to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 might be appropriate, perhaps?

Article 6: Another of the Glasgow breakthroughs was that on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on carbon markets and international cooperation. COP 27 saw some solid work undertaken on how to operationalize this both in market and non-market approaches. There are still a lot of sceptics on this will have a genuine impact and how to ensure not double counting or even that any off-sets are real. An approach that is more ecosystem-based than just trees is gaining momentum. Such a change, if it happens, also offers a real chance to





link the two major UN conventions on climate and biodiversity.

Agriculture: The work on the Koronivia Work Programme on Agriculture went down to the wire. The outcome was a four-year open-ended working group reporting at COP31 (2026). Some controversy on the term ‘food systems’ may see its first workshop address this issue. It will also look at how we can better integrate the programme’s work into other constituted bodies such as the financial mechanisms of the convention. The Green Climate Fund has given only \$US1.1 billion for adaptation on agriculture. It says one of the major reasons for this is the:

“Lack of integrated agricultural development planning and capacities that consider maladaptation risks and investment needs across the agricultural sector, climate information services and supply chains.”

While these outcomes on agriculture, adaptation and Article 6 may seem modest, they should be welcomed as steps in the right direction.

Coalitions of the Willing: One of the outcomes from the Glasgow COP was the launch of ‘Coalitions of the Willing’; groups of countries and stakeholders wanting to move quicker on an issue than they might under the official UN negotiations, which are consensus-driven and involve more than 190 countries. In Sharm el-Sheikh we saw a number of countries join the Methane Pledge, including Australia and Egypt. China joined the meeting on the Pledge and committed to its own national methane strategy.

In Glasgow, 137 countries had taken a landmark step forward by committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. With the imminent return to leadership in Brazil of President-elect Lula da Silva, there is renewed hope that real action on the Amazon forests is possible again. Lula committed Brazil to reaching zero deforestation and was hailed as a hero by many when he turned up at COP 27 during the second week.

Meanwhile, the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ)—the global coalition of leading financial institutions—committed to accelerating the decarbonization of the economy. GFANZ, which includes over 550 of the world’s leading financial institutions, has committed to reduce their financed emissions in line with 1.5 degrees C. With \$US150 trillion of combined balance sheets, the accountability mechanism announced of a new Net-Zero Data Public Utility is yet to prove if it is effective in holding the finance sector to their commitments. However, if it can deliver on its potential, this could be a game changer.

There was plenty more activity at COP 27 where the results are harder to measure. Most people at these large UN climate summits are not negotiators and COP 27 was full of “side events” and government and stakeholder pavilions each with its own set of events and agendas. Country pavilions provided a venue to talk about their challenges, issue pavilions on oceans, food, water, health, education, and resilience highlighted their issues and how they fit into the climate agenda. These enable critical issues to be discussed in a more open way than could be under taken in negotiations. Ideas were shared, connections made, and partnerships for further action shared. The upshot of all of this activity is hard to measure, but probably considerable. The thematic days organized by the Egyptian Presidency also gave space to these issues and helped bring together ideas that may ultimately find their way into future UN decisions. In this respect, too, the quality of the side events and pavilions at COP 27 exceeded our expectations.

On to Dubai and COP28

Was COP27 a success or failure? When it comes to keeping up with the science, the answer can hardly be positive. The call to “keep 1.5 alive” hangs in the balance and is still on “life support”. In that sense, COP 27 had very little impact on our current trajectory, which is a likely warming



of 2.4-2.8 C by the end of the century. On the other hand, the promise of a loss and damage fund, as well as modest successes on adaptation, Article 6, agriculture, and actions outside the official negotiations, mean COP 27 delivered some bright spots of success.

Looking ahead to next year, COP 28 will be important as it marks the the first “global stock take” to judge where things now stand. We hope this will focus world leaders to increase their pledges (or “nationally determined contributions”) significantly. It will be interesting to see how the United Arab Emirates, as COP 28 host, performs. As a major oil producer, it faces some serious challenges in transitioning to a net zero world. At COP 27, there were rumours the UAE was ramping up its team and bringing in additional external expertise ahead of next year. This is certainly a good sign if COP 28 is to deliver the kind of groundbreaking outcomes the science now demands.

Felix Dodds & Chris Spence

This article was originally published with Inter Press Service

Felix Dodds and Chris Spence are co-editors of the new book, *Heroes of Environmental Diplomacy: Profiles in Courage* (Routledge Press, 2022). It includes chapters on the climate negotiations held in Kyoto (1997), Copenhagen (2009) and Paris (2015). And was reviewed in *interLib* 2022-06

Golden Visas

On 25th January, Conservative MPs voted against a Liberal Democrat amendment to the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill in the House of Commons which would have forced the Government to release their review of the so-called Golden Visa scheme.

Golden visas were one of the ways that Putin's cronies managed to get access to the UK - with very few questions asked and many a blind eye turned. For the first seven years, after their introduction by the Labour government in 2008, there were minimal checks on the source of funds, applicants did not need a UK bank account and there were no specific money-laundering checks. The review that was conducted examines more than 6,000 golden visas which were issued during that time for national security risks - over half of all those issued during this period.

Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Layla Moran (MP for Oxford West and Abingdon) who led on the amendment, criticised the Government for trying to publish a summary of the review’s recommendations, rather than the review itself. She had raised the matter with Home Secretary Suella Braverman in October last year, having earlier raised the question of the visa’s use by Russian oligarchs in the wake of the renewed invasion of Ukraine.

“The public have a right to know the truth about the Government’s actions on Golden Visas, but Conservative MPs have decided to sit on their hands.

“Frankly, the whole thing stinks of a cover-up. We know Putin’s cronies used and abused this scheme - so why won’t the Government give us the full picture?”

“If the Conservatives have nothing to hide, then they have nothing to fear. Liberal Democrats will keep pushing until the review is published in full.”



This new Israeli Government? ‘They don’t care about the world’

Vincent Fean in conversation with Alon Liel

VF: Alon’s career has been in the Israeli diplomatic service, including a stint as ambassador to South Africa. And he recently gave an interview to South African media about the parallels and the differences between the experience of apartheid in South Africa and what’s going on in the West Bank today. He is a member of the Policy Working Group with Ilan Barouk, another former Israel Ambassador to South Africa. I’d like to thank Alon for the intervention that the PWG made to help to prevent the move of the British embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Just to complete the CV, in the time of Ehud Barak (1999-2001), Alon was permanent secretary, director of the Israel Foreign Ministry. So he’s an insider, who’s retired, and is now trying to influence policy from the outside, as I suppose most of us are: he in Israel, we in the UK. Alon, the first question is on the recent (November, 2022) Israeli elections, which have seen a large move to the right. In Israel, what would you say are the implications of that?

AL: These elections created an entirely new and unprecedented situation. First of all, in most countries the citizens are voting about their own fate, about their own future. Here in Israel, we are voting about the future of two peoples. Not only Israelis, but also Palestinians. They don’t vote, they don’t have elections of their own. And when we voted this time, we voted on the fate of everybody between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. The outcome was, as you well know, that there was a strong shift to the right, by the way, not by a big popular majority. But it so happened that two of the party’s anti- occupation parties didn’t meet the 3.25 per cent threshold. If they had both met the threshold, it would have been a tie, but they didn’t. And the victory of the right to the extreme right is the overwhelming result.

Now. It’s not only that we have different parties, or different personalities, that are very, very different in their nature, even from the previous government, which was a mixture of right and centre-left. But regarding the Palestinians, we have a dramatic change, a *very* dramatic change. The next coalition will be such that the two most controversial racist figures will hold two responsibilities. One will be the Minister of National Security. And the second will be the Minister of the Treasury, but responsible also for the occupied Palestinian territories. Now, this is not only a political change, it’s a legal change. Because, as you know, we captured these territories back in 1967. There was a certain interpretation of the Geneva Convention that said that when you occupy territory, and you do it on a temporary basis, the military has to run the show. And until these last elections, our military ran the show, we had the army present in the West Bank, and the civic administration was a military civic administration, a general was the head of it.

Now, the control of the West Bank is moving to a civilian head, the control is moving to politicians, not only that do not care about the Palestinians but many of them are settlers themselves, and so on. But it’s an administrative, regulatory change that moves military control over to the heads of the civilian government, which means, for all purposes, practical annexation of the territory. It’s not a declarative annexation. But when you move the control to the political hands, to political figures, and they run their country in control of the border police, for instance, they’re civilians in control of the army, of military units, beyond the Ministry of Defence, beyond the Chief of Staff, meaning we see a change that is really very dramatic, and can have, of course, many, many effects on the ground. And I’ll spell some of them out.

First of all, a big push for the settlements. These are the ministers, these are the parties of the settlers, they get control of the West Bank. So they get the control of the wellbeing of the settlers, on the expansion of the

settlements and on the treatment of the Palestinians. Now, this, of course, puts these politicians, with this political line, in direct confrontation with the local population, and the army is kind of shoved aside. You know, one of the big arguments as a result of the elections is who will run our army. Because there was no such argument until now that the Chief of Staff is running the army. But now the Chief of Staff and even the Minister of Defence will not be in control of the whole army, especially not in the matter of dealing with the territories. So this is a dramatic change.

I don't know how the Palestinians will react. Their reaction might be in two different directions. One, a total collapse of the Palestinian Authority. The PA had a kind of reaction that said, look, as long as we had to deal with the military administration in discussing the issues of our security we could handle it. But now, when we have to deal with a racist politician, we don't want to deal with them. One of the possibilities will be a total collapse of the PA and a more direct handling of the daily life of the Palestinians by the new Israeli government, including essentially civilian things like health, education, and such matters.

This is a dramatic turn for the worse.

Another possible response, and we see it emerging—though I don't know if this will take shape—is more violence by the Palestinians. We are seeing more incidents, more violent incidents already. But I think that the political Palestinians are, of course, very much aware of the balance of power and very much aware of the possible aggressive Israeli response. So I don't know if it will take this direction. But just to sum up, and I'll be glad to elaborate in more questions, I don't want to say a U-turn but it's a dramatic turn. Until now, things were not proper on the West Bank, but this is a dramatic change for the worse.

VF: Thank you, Alon. Concerning, the marginalization of the peace camp. You mentioned the threshold and the fact that anti-occupation parties failed to break through Knesset vote threshold. But over the years, maybe since the Second Intifada, what we used to call the peace camp is getting smaller and smaller. Could you say a word about the trend towards if you like nationalists voting, which seems to be what's happening.

AL: First, as to what happened in these elections, Meretz is, of course, one of the two parties that I mentioned that didn't meet the threshold. And this is terrible, because they will probably dissolve, I don't think the party can continue to exist. The reason is that all the polls showed that they met the threshold, even quite comfortably. And the result of it was that they took huge loans, because if you meet the threshold, you get the money back. And once they didn't meet the threshold, they entered enormous debt that I don't think the party can recover. So just to remind you, this was the only left party, Zionist left, Jewish Left Party, the only one—even the Israeli Labour party didn't deal with occupation at all, even inside Meretz. We already had people that thought we should move to over the centre. But this is an important blow to the Jewish Zionist left. This tendency is a tendency of the last 20 to 25 years already that the right wing is getting stronger. And there are many reasons, of course, some of them demographic. We have a nationalistic religiously Orthodox coalition that includes the Orthodox community and the ultra-Orthodox community. And they're growing demographically by far more than the rest of the population. I think an average ultra-Orthodox family has seven, eight kids. And this is showing the growth in numbers, in the alliance, the plenary, the very strong alliance that Netanyahu created in the last three decades between the nationalists and the old orthodox; this is demographically stronger, they have more young people. And I think also the fact that they had the leader, who is considered by about half of the Israeli population very charismatic and effective, and a strong leader. And the left didn't produce such a leader. So these were some of the reasons that things started shifting to the right.

Another reason I can give you is the very big economic success of the country. The country is doing very well. The standard of living is growing, infrastructures are improving, we have a gap between rich and poor, but the macro figures of the economy are very good. And the high-tech industry has developed, we have become a very technological country, our military industry is doing very well, our intelligence services are excellent and have their leverage. And as a result of it the country is getting stronger, and more successful, and the world responds to this. It is more popular in the world and in the Middle East. And people say this

is a formula that is working. So why change? But the sad story is that today we have, in fact, only one anti-occupation party in Parliament. It is small, five members out of 120 and it is an Arab party. Okay, again, on every answer, I'll be very glad to elaborate at a later stage.

VF: Can I take you on the point of Arab and Jew? And the question as to whether in the future it's possible to envisage a party, which combines the two, if you like the Jewish left, and the Arab, Arab Palestinians? I know it's on your mind. Could you say a word about that?

AL: Much more than a word. In these elections, in the last elections, among many things that happened, we saw a much clearer division between Arabs and Jews. Arabs voted for Arabs and Jews voted for Jews. As a result of it, we have now two Arab parties...one can be defined as anti-occupation. The second is more civic, is more fighting for a budget for the Arabs and civil equality but not dealing with the occupation. But the 10 members of the two Arab parties are completely isolated in our parliament. Nobody is considering them as a potential partner for anything. So in fact, we have instead of 120 seats in parliament, we have 110 members. They get the salary as a Knesset member, but they cannot combine with anything...nobody needs them. As a result, some of us, including people who were Meretz candidates in safe places *until* these elections, are launching this week a party that we registered already, a Jewish-Arab party on an equal basis. This will be called All its Citizens, or maybe the Citizens Party, meaning equality between *all* citizens. If you have if some of you have friends in Israel, we are organising a conference on the 16 December in Tel Aviv. Israeli friends of yours are invited among the names you might know, that are involved. It's not easy, because the Arabs have three parties, three separate parties: one is an Islamist party, a religious party. So obviously it's difficult for them to cooperate with Jews politically. And the one that didn't get into the Knesset this last time is very nationalistic and never really cooperated with Jews in the past...we'll see; it's only the beginning.

VF: Yeah. You mentioned the fact the fact that economically and even in terms of international relations, with the Abraham Accords, Israel is thriving, and Western governments are very reluctant to exert pressure on Israel, for many reasons. Would you think that maintaining the differentiation between the Green Line sort of 1948 Israel, and the settlement enterprise, the settlement project, is important? And in that regard, would banning settlement products, which is I think SNP Lib Dem Liberal Democrat policy here in the UK? Would that have an impact on the mentality, on the thinking of Orthodox rabbis?

AL: Really, before I tackle the question, you must understand this newcomer into the Israeli political arena, and their decision making: I put it a little bluntly, they *don't care* about the world. I would even push it a little further. They hardly *know* there is a world. They live in their own world. It's very different from the Israel you knew, very different, even, from a leader like Netanyahu, who grew up in the United States, who was the deputy ambassador in our embassy in Washington, who was our ambassador to the UN, and knows the world very well. These people do not show any interest in the world, by the way, not also in the Jewish Diaspora. The secular Jewish Diaspora. These are people that get their instructions from God, from the Bible: the international community, international pressure, it's not relevant to them. I don't know how much they are even fully aware of the whole international mechanism that the world has built since the Second World War. So if we spoke in the past, of international pressure, of boycotts, this is a different way of thinking...for these people...it will not impress them. On the other hand, they will use it even more than the previous government to prove to the Israeli public that the world is anti-Semitic. And as Jews, we will always be criticized, and so on. So this is this is a little bit about the type of the people.

The governments of the world need Israel...it has gas and weapons.

But now about the world, all of you. I'm speaking now of governments, governments have now their own problems, with Russia and Ukraine, with the energy problems, with this coming winter. Governments, as you know, in Britain, have to take care about the emergency needs of British citizens. And they need the world, they need the United States, they need even Israel, where the stronger Israel is, the more it is needed. In Europe and in Britain, the volume of trade is big. Israel has gas now that it is exporting in the form of

LNG to Europe, as well as weapons. The West wants Israel to supply weapons to Ukraine, to support the Ukraine on humanitarian aid. I mean, imagine Vincent, you are the Prime Minister, and somebody comes to you with a list of benefits that the British Government has from the Israeli side, and with the list of benefits it has from the Palestinian side. On one side, you will see a very impressive list. On the other you will see nothing, nothing. So it's very difficult for every government in the world, every government in the world unless it is a functioning only on ideological motivations. Any government that is functioning on a *realpolitik* policies, it's very difficult to confront Israel. Now, it will be even much more difficult with this government. Because when I told you that this government doesn't care so much about the international community, the response of this government can be much more aggressive than when previous governments responded. So I think we shouldn't expect too much from governments.

But as you know, the world has changed and governments are not the only player on the globe. And when it comes to civil society, civil society organisations, human rights organisations, religious organisations, the media, here, I think, a lot can be done, because this will have an effect on the image of Israel, or the overall image of Israel. And even if governments are kind of paralysed, I don't think all Israelis will love a change to their overall image via ongoing criticism. You know, we are a very global country, we are strong, but from this aspect, we are also vulnerable. Take for instance, the World Cup. Some 20,000 Israelis went to Qatar. They felt and feel very uncomfortable. They're very unwelcome. We always had tens of thousands of Israelis going to World Cups; I was among them. I was in South Africa for the World Cup and in Russia four years ago. But this time it was difficult. Some of these fans came back in the middle and people said, what's happening? Why do they hate us so much? So obviously, most of the people will say nothing will help us, we were born Jews. We will die hated Jews. And that's it. But I think it has some impact in companies, Israeli companies that are based on tourism, based on international commerce, based on a selling technological products, any kind of response, non-governmental response, especially from the business community, but also from civil society organisations will have some impact, especially on the half of the population that is against this government. But we are so disillusioned from world behaviour, that to tell you the truth we don't have high expectations.

VF: Now. Can I take you back to your speech? In your talk at the Balfour Project conference at King's College London, in 2018, I remember you said, and it struck me, that if Britain as a government recognised the state of Palestine alongside Israel there would one day be a Palestinian state. We are hoping that the next government, if it changes colour, might recognise the state of Palestine. It's not a given, not a given. Keir Starmer is a very cautious man. And the people around him are telling him to be even more cautious. But it is SNP policy. It is Lib Dem policy to recognize the state of Palestine alongside Israel. This brings me to a question: is the two-state solution in your head dead or alive? What are we working for?

AL: Let me let me start by answering by pulling it to the two extremes. First of all, the fact that Britain didn't move its embassy to Jerusalem. I don't want to say it's a miracle. But it is it is of crucial importance. If this would happen. It would be a big step toward the mortal blow of the two states idea. So the prevention of it, I welcomed it. But I hope it will not come back on the on the agenda of this British administration. But first of all, thank God this didn't happen. On my previous remark, I still say if Britain will recognise Palestine as a member state of the UN the effect will be unbelievable. I would think that such a thing, if they do it and stand behind it, will create a Palestinian state. And I will explain: first of all, I don't think it will happen. I don't see such a thing in the pipeline. But you asked the question, if your government will do it, stand behind it and say, we promise that in the Balfour Declaration, we'll give the right of self-determination to the Jewish people but not at the expense of the indigenous population; therefore we recognize the state of Palestine... first of all, Israel will kick out your ambassador. No kidding. And we'll pull back our ambassador from London. Now, if the British government can tolerate it, the international impact will be unbelievable. Unbelievable. Because then some countries that were afraid to do it will also do it.

British recognition of Palestine would be a game-changer.

This will be unbelievable. Again, I don't see it happening. But I want to explain here that what Trump did, by moving the embassy to Jerusalem, and in this the United States was not followed by anyone in the world

except two Latin American countries. Nobody in Europe followed it. Nobody in the western world followed it. Nobody. So here if Britain would have joined this would have been an unbelievable development. So only the Americans have the Embassy in Jerusalem now. And as you see Biden didn't change it, the Democratic administration didn't change it. So I can attribute a lot a lot of importance to such a British move. And if this will happen, it will be a game-changer as to the two states. Look, there is nothing on the ground in Israel that is pointing in this direction. And the fact that we have such a government that is going probably to not only practically annex but also legally annex Zone C, Zone C is 60 per cent of the West Bank, we are not headed toward a two-state...but I still think this should stay the goal. Even if it looks at the moment unachievable, because what does look achievable? What does look achievable is Israeli control of the whole territory, meaning in fact, one state, meaning in fact, an apartheid state. I don't think that can last forever, but it is also so immoral, so unjust that the two states is still the cleaner outcome; the more functional thing, although we are far away from it politically.

VF: My last question is about apartheid, and on the meaning of apartheid. Given your experience, could you say what you think our approach, the bulk of project approach should be on the word. There are some in our country who call Israel an apartheid state. There are others who say that what we're witnessing in the West Bank in particular, but also in Gaza in a different way, is the practice of apartheid. But do not label Israel as an apartheid state, per se. Our own government does not use the word. What would your advice to us be?

AL: First, I think you know, Vincent and maybe many of you, that we the Policy Working Group, which is a group of ambassadors, retired ambassadors and academicians, we use the term apartheid only on the situation on the West Bank. And we see the situation there. Even similar to the South African apartheid, although for us apartheid is far beyond the South African apartheid, but they're nominally even nominally 15 per cent of the population, or maybe now 16-17 per cent of the settlers are controlling the lives of over 80 per cent of the population, backed so far by the military, the military, takes care of the security and so on. And they, we saw it as West Bank apartheid. And we so far rejected the definition of the whole country is where there's apartheid, because still, the Arab population can function, is functioning, is voting, the Arab Israelis. I mean, we're very cautious about it. I think we are about to cross this line. Because what I described as an answer to your first question is happening. And if there is a spillover of the political, a control of the country of Israel, the political, on the West Bank, not the military, the political, then the responsibility of Israel, to the West Bank, apartheid is direct responsibility. It's not channeled through the military. It's a direct responsibility of the state, of the government, of the cabinet, to this West Bank, and I think it will be much easier for the international community to define Israel as apartheid as a result of the changes, not only because of the result, the nominal result of the election, but of the actions that the new coalition will do regarding the control of the West Bank. So I think, first of all, I think we should see another two or three weeks, we should see the full structure of the government. Netanyahu realizes that this could be extremely, extremely problematic, internationally, the *civilian*, direct governmental control of the lives of the Palestinians, not control by the army. The guy that has my position of 20 years ago, the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said recently that thing that we're most worried about is that Israel will be defined as apartheid internationally.

We know a lot, a lot. And I told you quite a lot about what was already given to these new parties, the right-wing parties, we have to see it happening, we have to see this government sworn him. And if it is true, that these two racist leaders or racist parties will come to fully control the West Bank, I think Israel will be becoming an apartheid state. And my recommendation to the Balfour Project is, first of all, to use the apartheid term on the West Bank, because this is apartheid. But I would hesitate to use it about Israel if *the military* is still controlling the West Bank. But the settlers, the settlers in the municipalities, and the backing the settlers are getting from the government and so on, all this makes the occupied territory apartheid. But I think if this will be completed this change, of moving from military control to governmental civilian control of the West Bank, then then I think more bodies in the world will be free to use this word "apartheid", and you will take your decisions about it.

This is an address by Alon Liel, a leading member of the Policy Working Group in Israel, an NGO that works to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, now in its 56th year, and opposes Israel's policies towards the Palestinians. Sir Vincent Fean, former British Consul-General in East Jerusalem, now vice-president of the Balfour Project charity's Board of Trustees, introduced Alon to the Balfour Project's Advisory Forum in a virtual Zoom meeting on December 6, 2022. Balfour Project is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Charity number SC047090

Unintended Consequences

Grahame Jackson and Harriet Brown

Does an international system to combat tax evasion help tyrants and jeopardise LGBT communities?

Imagine a world in which you have fled a country, Country X. This country has killed your parents and burnt your house down. You escape. It's a long and arduous journey and you end up in Britain, or France, or Germany or Italy, or any other developed economy. How would you feel if you got a job in a bank, and someone said: "OK, because people avoid tax, we send information to Country X about people who live in Country X to help it collect tax"?

For years a preoccupying 'global' aim has been to reduce tax avoidance; this article *does not* advocate for tax avoidance, or for allowing it to happen. We do not believe that abusing the principle - established by the English courts many years ago - that a person is entitled to organise their affairs so that they pay less tax, is a sustainable method of approach for either professionals or taxpayers.

It is a detriment to the tax base and, therefore, a detriment to every one of us.

GREATER EVILS

However, it is also fair to say that we do consider there to be greater evils. It is important for policymakers to understand that the requirements imposed by international tax information exchange regimes might have something other than a purely tax effect so that a balancing of the 'evil' of tax avoidance must be balanced against the other 'evils' that fall to be considered.

So, let's understand what we are talking about. For the last 25 years the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (as a result of instructions from the G7 and G20) has been mounting a number of projects which have now been distilled into the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project. One of the main pillars of this is the implementation of a global information exchange regime between tax authorities called the Common Reporting Standard (CRS).

The CRS is designed to allow countries to exchange information between themselves about the financial accounts held by residents of one country in another country. The aim of this is to prevent individuals avoiding (or evading – its original primary purpose) tax in their country of residence. This is achieved by the authority in one country providing information that 'financial institutions' (rightly, included in quotation marks since its definition includes many things that would not ordinarily be considered as such) are obliged to provide to the authority in the other countries.

Before 1999 a person in the UK could just put money into a bank account in, say, Jersey, or France, or Denmark, or India or wherever and without a specific request for information that account would remain secret, and tax would not be paid in the UK on any income earned from the deposit, unless the taxpayer themselves declared it. CRS is designed to stop that being possible.

The design of CRS means that it requires cooperation between not only tax authorities but also financial institutions, which are required to identify all non-resident account holders and report to their local authority the name, address, tax identification number and value of the account of the non-resident account holder. This is aimed at stopping people 'hiding' money in low tax jurisdictions and failing to declare that money. That is a laudable aim and the CRS and its predecessor the EU Savings Directive has brought an end to much of the low-level tax evasion that was previously occurring using offshore accounts in the names of individuals. It is not foolproof but the CRS in conjunction with other provisions is a very powerful tool in the armoury of tax authorities.

However, it does have some unintended consequences. The system is intended to be reciprocal in nature and in the ordinary course of things countries which are participants exchange information with all other countries with which they have 'activated exchange relationships'.

In short, the information must flow both ways (there are certain circumstances where information will only flow one way – a key example being some Caribbean countries that have no income tax, and therefore no need for tax information, which nonetheless provide information to other countries. Why they do this requires a consideration of the prevalent political climate that is beyond the scope of this article).

In order to be truly effective, the CRS must include as many jurisdictions as possible. It is also attractive to jurisdictions to join. After all, what cash hungry country would not want to be able to detect its residents' bank accounts in foreign banks? And so, a combination of self interest and the OECD's desire to cover the globe in its entirety with this regime has led to a total of 119 jurisdictions becoming what are known as 'participating jurisdictions' by November 2022.

The list continues to grow; in December 2022 Burkina Faso entered into the Amended Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters which is the framework document that allows the CRS to operate (and also mandates information being exchanged on demand in some cases). There are also now more than 3,300 'activated exchange relationships', which are bilateral agreements between two jurisdictions to exchange the necessary information, rather than merely a commitment to the principle of the CR).

This is all well and good when viewed from a Western or OECD perspective. The continued expansion of 'participating jurisdictions' means that coverage of the anti-tax avoidance net continues to grow and the benefits of that are available to countries not only in the high-income bracket but also in the lower income bracket; surely that will help economic development and political and social change will flow?

This would seem to us to be naïve. The ever-increasing demand for 100% coverage (setting aside the USA's refusal to join in) means that jurisdictions in which there is currently little realistic hope of such political and social change are being signed up to the CRS. Reviewing the list of participating jurisdictions, we can see countries with very problematic human rights records such as Burkina Faso, Liberia, Kazakhstan among many others.

ILLEGAL TO BE GAY

To focus on LGBT rights for a second, the BBC lists 67 jurisdictions in the world where it is "illegal to be gay". Of those, 29 are participating jurisdictions for the purposes of CRS, which means they are in the system and exchanging information with other jurisdictions but not necessarily all, and the UK lists 16 of them as 'reportable Jurisdictions', that is jurisdictions with which UK actively exchanges information.

The law obliges banks to actively engage with information gathering for these countries, and the actions of the banks will necessarily increase tax takes for those countries.

It is difficult to understand how this can be squared on the one hand with the ever-increasing trend of financial institutions embracing their LGBT staff with the creation of Rainbow Networks and diversity and inclusion campaigns and on the other the active assistance in the tax collecting process for jurisdictions where being gay can get you arrested. It is unlikely a direct donation to these countries would be tolerated. This is to say nothing of the invidious position that LGBT+ staff are placed in if they work either in a financial institution's or HMRC's CRS departments.

This is to discuss the personal moral predicament of the individuals that carry out the CRS process. From a wider moral perspective does the urge to stop tax avoidance and evasion by UK residents justify the material assistance given by the British government to regimes the social and political aims of which are so far removed from our own in the collection of their tax?

This moral calculus has been entirely absent from the debate. Should the UK actively assist in tax collection (by providing information) for a regime such as Azerbaijan, which Human Rights Watch described as waging “a vicious crackdown on critics and dissenting voices”? Or Ghana, which Human Rights Watch described as carrying out “arbitrary arrests and detention of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people”?

The question is why would the UK not sell weapons to a country which it then assists in collecting tax so that country can buy weapons elsewhere? Why would the UK demand human rights violations stop and then help to collect the money with which the person carrying out those violations is paid? It could be said that providing information to assist in collection is too remote to matter. Or that the benefits – to the UK (including a moral benefit, in the case of tax evasion, and in the case of tax avoidance if one considers tax avoidance to be immoral – some do, some don’t) – outweigh this moral digression.

That is not a question that we can answer concisely here; it is, perhaps, a question that has to be decided by each person for themselves. The issue that we perceive, however, is that it is a question that isn’t even being asked.

We do not believe that the CRS is worthless because it has at its heart this moral tension. We believe that the CRS is a valuable tool in the fight against evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. People should not be able to hide money in banks abroad in breach of their tax obligations. That is fundamentally damaging to our society.

However, we believe that the CRS is not a morality free zone, nor a free win for the UK’s tax authorities, as designed at present it mandates complicity in revenue gathering for regimes that we oppose and decry in all other aspects. Instead, we have proposed that an intermediary status is created whereby countries which meet objective tests about their human rights records are permitted to become participating jurisdictions and the other members continue to collect information on their behalf but do not exchange it until their human rights records improve. That would permit the CRS to be used not only as a tool for anti-avoidance but also as a lever for change in the jurisdictions effected.

Grahame Jackson & Harriet Brown

Grahame Jackson is a solicitor in Gibraltar who specialises in tax and business.

*Harriet Brown is a barrister. They authored *A Practitioners Guide to International Tax Information Exchange Regimes* and present the podcast *International Tax Bites*.*

Global Liberal family set to meet in Ottawa, Canada for 206 ExCom this May

Liberal International will convene its 206th executive committee in Ottawa between 2-6 May 2023. For five days the global liberal family will come together at the seat of political decision-making in Canada – the federal capital – as LI returns to North America for its first statutory event in the region for 14 years.

Together LI full member, the Canadian Group of Liberal International (CGLI), delegates will not only contribute to developing liberal policy and engaging throughout the ExCom between 2-4 May with new applicant parties are cordially invited to fully participate in the Liberal Party of Canada convention which takes place (4-6 May) at the same venue directly following the conclusion of the 206th executive committee meeting.

With a liberal party in government and a G7 country ExCom delegates will have access to a host of political fringe events and the opportunity to mingle with minister and parliamentarians as well as hearing from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

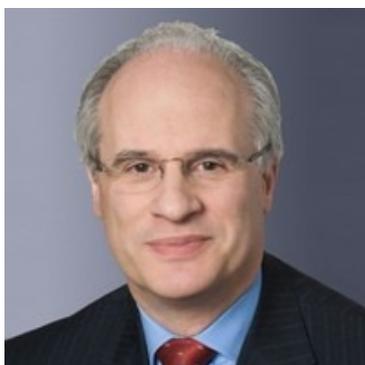
More information, including registration, statutory deadlines and reduced rate hotels and air fares will be made available shortly – so please check the LI website <https://liberal-international.org/> on a regular basis.

The US MidTerm Election Results

Rebecca Tinsley

When this webinar was planned, it was assumed the Democrats would take what President Obama famously described as “a shellacking” on November 8th. However, the Republican red wave never materialised: Democrats held the Senate, and the GOP only just captured the House of Representatives. In state assemblies and in all-important races for state attorneys general and secretaries of state (the people who can reject ballots), Democrats did particularly well.

As our speaker Mark Bergman noted, the party in the White House usually does badly in midterm elections, particularly with an unpopular president (Biden’s approval rate is in the 40s) and with high prices at the petrol pumps. During the campaign, party insiders feared they would be punished for lacking a clear message, or that the “big tent” (party activists calling for the defunding of the police) would scare off potential voters. Yet, this year, the drubbing the Democrats feared never happened.



According to Bergman, who is involved in various Democrat National Committee groups, “Trump was a gift to the Democrats.” The Republicans fielded 300 Trump-approved candidates who had been present at the January 6th invasion of Congress. Many more GOP candidates ran on The Big Lie (that Trump won the 2020 vote). Happily, those Republicans parroting Trump’s talking points generally did worse than more moderate Republicans as voters rejected their message.

It is particularly striking that moderate, independent suburban women turned out for the Democrats because of the overturning of the Roe v Wade abortion law (the Supreme Court’s Dobbs ruling). “The GOP has no idea how angry women are,” could be heard before the vote. It turns out that swing voters/young people/women were concerned about how Republicans would handle reproductive rights. At state level, ballot initiatives to protect choice also passed in unlikely places like Kentucky. Democrats recaptured the personal liberty message from Republicans.

Another issue was in play: voters rejected the Republicans’ challenging to democratic institutions in the wake of the 2020 presidential result. Since May, Biden had been ignoring the advice of strategists by talking about how grave the stakes were if the Trump Big Lie went unchecked. Biden’s instincts were right.

Martha Elliott described the way in which states gerrymander voting districts to favour those in power in state legislatures. Because so few states are marginal, gerrymandering is common. It goes hand in hand with reducing the number of voter registration centres and polling places, meaning that minorities find it more difficult to vote.

Alethea Tyner Paradis examined how young people voted on November 8th. Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2005) were much more politically engaged than previous generations, and they turned out in impressive numbers.



Yet, their enthusiasm is not for political parties but issues like the economy and inequality, choice, the environment, gun control, racism and student debt. One in eight US voters are age 30 and under, and by 2025, a third of voters will be young people. This will work in the Democrats favour if they resist the temptation to dilute their message with vague platitudes about bipartisanship.

Young people are looking for solutions, and they believe the government has a role in providing solutions (more so than previous generations). For instance, they want

universal health care, decent housing, and much more help with student debt which, they fear, has killed the American Dream. They are concerned by values such as finding employment that allows a work-life balance, that is non-exploitative (hence a re-engagement in trade unions). They are motivated by both fear and hope, Paradis said. They look for authenticity, and the Democrats will need to offer something positive to keep their support.

Rebecca Tinsley

The US MidTerms Forum was held jointly with The Paddy Ashdown Forum on 14th November 2022.

Speakers were:

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

Dr. Samar awarded the 2021 Prize for Freedom in New York

Liberal International presented the 2021 Prize for Freedom Award to Dr. Sima Samar at a high-level ceremony in New York City on the fringe of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level week.

LI President Hakima el Haité and LI President of Honour Juli Minoves presented the award to Dr. Samar at The Yale Club.

Nominated by Free Democratic Party Germany, Dr. Samar began her career as a medical doctor providing health care in Afghanistan's most isolated and marginalized region and experienced displacement and statelessness herself as the conflict in Afghanistan escalated. She went on to serve as Afghanistan's first ever female Vice President, Minister of Women's Affairs, Chairperson for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and as UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Sudan, and has been selected by the UN Secretary General to be a member of the High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation and, as of 2020, a member of the High-Level Panel for Internal Displacements.



President Haité and Dr. Samar also appeared on high-level UNGA fringe panel hosted by Alliance of Her, European Liberal Forum, and Friedrich Naumann Foundation alongside Belgian Prime Minister Alexander de Croo, UN Women Deputy Executive Director Anita Bhatia, and Speaker of the Seimas of Lithuanian Parliament Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen.

The Prize for Freedom is awarded annually by Liberal International to honour an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the advancement of human rights and political freedoms. Other recipients of the award include Ukraine President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**, Venezuelan politician **María Corina Machado**, and imprisoned Filipina politician and activist **Leila de Lima**.

Paddy Beck 1938 – 2021

Paddy Beck was someone I knew mostly from Liberal conferences; she would regale me, either at the Liberator or LIBG stall, about issues she was involved with, with acronyms and abbreviations that meant little to me. She was primarily a Women's Liberal Democrats (WLD) person, but passionately focussed on women's international issues, to which she devoted tremendous energy and dare I say it forbearance.

Paddy was born Ann Wilkinson in London on 8th November 1938. As a young child her family travelled widely, she moved with her parents multiple times between London, Portugal, and South Africa. From 1949-1952, she studied at Poles Convent, Hertfordshire, which she described as a strict boarding school. She had to wear white ankle socks on top of stockings to play tennis and learned to really useful skills like eating an orange with a knife and fork! Thereafter, she studied at the Channing School, Highgate, and at 15 moved to Parktown Convent school, Johannesburg. Helen Suzman had been an earlier student there.

When asked Paddy would describe two strands to her life that governed what she did and the person she became. The first strand was politics, nothing annoyed her more than people saying that politics don't matter, or that they are something that doesn't really affect them. The politics of apartheid government in South Africa changed Paddy's life dramatically. The second strand was how the accident of being born a woman changes the chances you get in life. She never tired of campaigning and giving her voice to support women around the world whose circumstances were less fortunate than her own.

In 1954 she graduated from Parktown Convent with a 1st class university entrance matriculation, but being female, her parents didn't think it was important or financially viable for her to go to university. Instead, she left home and went to work in a bank as a trainee bookkeeper. Her ability was recognized early on, and she was enrolled in the banks Chartered Secretaries and Administrators program. She became one of the first women, and the youngest person ever in South Africa, to pass the ICOSA exams. Despite her stellar performance, she was disgusted to find that being a women meant that her salary was substantially less than male counterparts without her qualifications or experience.

In 1958 she first met her future husband, John Meiring Beck. John came from a South African medical family with some interesting political connections. His great uncle was Sir Johannes Henricus Meiring Beck, a Senator in the founding government of the Republic of South Africa and author of the "Beck Act" in 1902; the Illegal Practices Prevention Act designed to reduce the corrupting influence of money in politics.

In early 1960 Paddy left South Africa to work as an au pair for a wealthy Swiss family living in what at the time was Yugoslavia, she also briefly worked as a personal assistant for Henry Oppenheimer before traveling on to meet up with John again in England. They married in London in November 1960 then moved to Edinburgh where John studied for his FRCS. They returned to London where John was offered a post at Hammersmith Hospital, then a year later moved to Rochford/Southend. Their first child, Lucy, was born in January 1963.

In 1964 the Becks returned to South Africa. John had been offered a post to train as a surgeon under Sir Christian Barnard developing his pioneering work with heart transplant patients. Later John specialized in paediatric surgery, which under the Apartheid system meant he was working in three different hospitals (for white, coloured and black patients). John and Paddy had two more children during this time, James, and



Janet. With 3 children under the age of five, between 1968 and 1970 Paddy decided to complete her schooling and studied at UNISA, the University of South Africa in Pretoria. She was the only student in her year to earn a double major first-class BA with Honours, in English and History.

Appalled by the injustices of Apartheid, Paddy and John wanted to leave South Africa. In 1972 John had a chance encounter in Baragwanath Hospital (Soweto) with Professor John Goligher which led to a move to Leeds as the first Paediatric surgeon in the Yorkshire Region. Paddy took up a post at Crossgates Middle School and later as a senior English teacher at Lawnswood High School.

Paddy joined the Liberal party in 1972. Many South African exiles gravitated to the Liberal party, because of the support it gave to colleagues in South Africa and Peter Hain, another exile and chair of the Young Liberals, was very much the public face of opposition to Apartheid in the UK.

John was struck with lymphoma in 1990 and Paddy took early retirement from teaching to care for him and to focus her energy fulltime on politics, as an agent, constituency chair, PPC and a local councillor. In April 1992, Paddy fought the Elmet constituency coming 3rd with 6,144 votes (10.4%). She also stood in the Wetherby by-election to Leeds City Council in July 1992, coming 2nd with 772 votes (16.3%) +5.2%

In 1993 Paddy was part of a Lib Dem study tour of the newly independent Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) focussing on women's issues. Her main interest was with the Women Liberal Democrats (WLD), where she was on the Policy committee, and was also their link with the ANC Women's League. Paddy was passionate about the minimum wage, which was not popular in the Liberal Democrats at the time. She worked with Shirley Williams for nearly a year to get this accepted by a small majority at the 1994 Lib Dem Conference.

In 1995 John retired and the Becks returned to South Africa¹ to work part time to pay something back to the country from which they, as white people, had gained so much. They worked in a semi-rural area (Mpumalanga) for a year where Paddy set up English literacy classes for adults in two local Methodist church halls. Unfortunately for health reasons they had to move to Cape Town in January 1997 where Paddy worked part time as the voluntary administrator for Amnesty International. John continued to work part time in the non-white areas of Cape Town (Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain) until a further bout of lymphoma in October 1998 forced him to fully retire from medicine and to return to UK for treatment.

In 2000 Paddy was asked to represent WLD on WACUNA. After her first meeting she received a letter from Thelma de Leeuw inviting her to join UNIFEM UK Yorkshire branch. She was a very active member of the Yorkshire branch from then on including serving as Treasurer for her last 2 years. In October 2003 she attended an international conference in Dakar, Senegal as the International Officer for WLD. She took that opportunity to visit the Senegal office of UNIFEM which covered the Francophone & Lusophone countries in West Africa and the Gambia. She was so impressed by the women she met there that she was even keener to work towards improving the status of women in Africa and the rest of the developing world.

Paddy was an individual member of the following women's organisations: - National Council of Women (NCW); Womenkind Worldwide; Josephine Butler Society; UK Women's Link with Afghan Women (UK-WLAW). She also supported FORWARD (active against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)) and ECPAT (link with trafficking).

In 2001, thanks to Lois Hainsworth, Paddy represented the British NCW at the UN Conference against Racism in Durban South Africa. She was also the Northeast Regional Secretary for UNA-UK. She remained a member of the Liberal Democrats and WLD but from January 2004 was no longer active politically as she did not want any party political party constraints on her commitments to UNA and UNIFEM.

One might note the absence of LI and LIBG in all of this, as I wrote at the outset, I primarily associated her with WLF and WLD. Paddy and Ruth Chernoweth attended a Liberal International Executive Meeting in London in mid-October 2011, on behalf of WLD as observers in the build up to a day's conference is "Responsibility to Protect". They been asked to suggest something to contribute to R2P from a woman's

angle. Her interest was primarily in the use of this R2P and the Libyan experience. Paddy was particularly engaged with Libya and the position of women in the Arab Spring at this time.

In 2015 Paddy slightly reluctantly agreed to Chair WACUNA (Womens Advisory Council to the UNA UK - posh name for a small group, as she called it!) to keep it going; at 77, she said her short-term memory was getting a bit dicey. She was also helping Winchester Liberal Democrats and there was plenty to do to help various women's groups internationally.

John died on 20th January 2016 after 55 years of a very happy marriage. Lymphoma had been a recurring problem since 1990; he fought it successfully, but it ultimately brought about his retirement, the Becks return from South Africa, and a move to the Winchester area, New Alresford, Hants, to be nearer their family. Whilst caring for him in his last days Paddy said she would withdraw from women's issues internationally - when ready thought she would help young carers or kids in difficult circumstances with their homework, reading etc. I don't doubt that she succeeded in this, but Alzheimer's set in towards the end of life and her last couple of years suffered accordingly.

Paddy's demise has left a lot of gaps to fill in many organisations and hopefully there are women (& men) to step into the roles. The biggest gap will be those chats at conferences for me and many others; we'll miss her.

Stewart Rayment

¹ *Personal memories of Elizabeth Sidney, by Paddy Beck. In interLib 2011 no.2 page 17 makes reference to this period in Paddy's life.*

My thanks to Lesley Abdela for sharing material for this obituary.

International Abstracts

Liberator 415

Kiron Reid reports from Zaporizhzhia on how Putin's war has united Ukraine in a way it never was before and Martha Elliott feared the worst in the US midterm elections, but explains why voters unexpectedly shunned Trump in *America gets it right*. In *UK Failing the Fairness Test*, Claire Tyler argues that a new relationship with Europe and a commitment to help people struggling with bills are needed to restore trust in politics. Steve Yolland decries that the Liberal Democrats' "internationalism is muted" in his critique of their policies in *In the Pale Orange Shadows*, which like other content is primarily domestic. Norman Baker on King Charles III, J. Frasier Hewitt gives a former insider's look at the Tories and William Tranby argues for taxes (at least somebody gets it). Liz Barker calls out the decision to cancel conference – quite rightly. Lord Bonkers' XI cancels a fixture in China because of their government's persecution of the Uighurs.

You can download Liberator 415 for free at: <https://liberatormagazine.org.uk/back-issues/>

Journal of Liberal History, Issue 117 Winter 2022-23

Two primarily international articles; Brendon Jones' *Herbert Lewis & the South African War, 1899-1902*, which Lewis broadly opposed, and Kenneth Morgan's *Lloyd George's French Connection* shows some of the best and worst moments of the Wizard. Hugh Gault writes on Sefton & Derby; Derby was both in the India Office and Disraeli's Foreign Secretary, but Lancashire is the main focus. Otherwise, Michael Meadowcroft writes on the 2022 local elections in cities and Duncan Brack on the New Liberalism. There is a report on the Lib Dem conference fringe on Liberals & the balance of power 1923-31 and an obituary of Nigel Jones, Lord Jones of Cheltenham. Letters are lively; it is intriguing to see the scars of the Alliance and Merger are still raw after all of these years.

Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Putin's massive mistake, Lawrence Freedman on Ukraine and the lessons of history, with Chauncey DeVega. MSN Salon 22nd November 2022

Commentary on the Russian invasion of Ukraine is difficult to assess, especially in the gutter press and when you compare accounts from around the world, however, Lawrence Freedman is a reliable source on the battlefield at that stage.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/putin-s-massive-mistake-lawrence-freedman-on-ukraine-and-the-lessons-of-history/ar-AA14mYEb?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=81b99fa1ed8e47168e7e63cf2a7ed61a>

USA

Inside the 6. Jan Committee, by Robert Draper By Robert Draper and Luke Broadwater
Photographs by Philip Montgomery. New York Times Magazine 23rd December 2022

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/23/magazine/jan-6-committee.html?>



LIBG & LDEG AT YORK



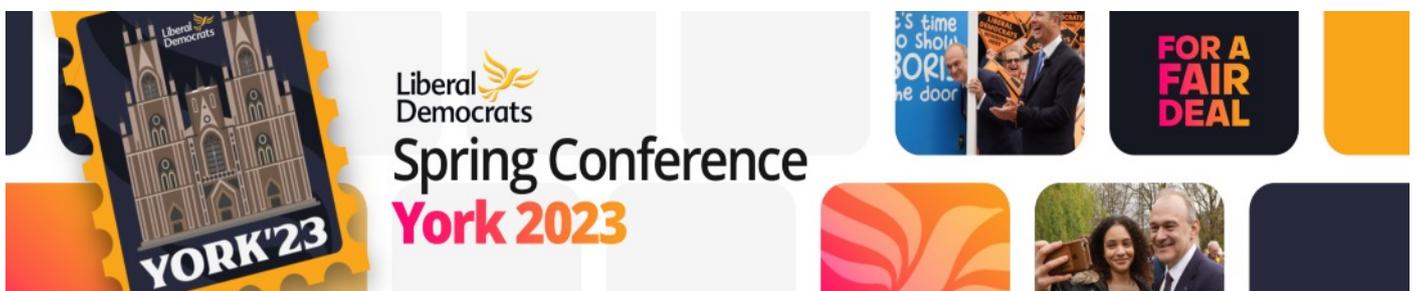
SATURDAY 18th EARLY EVENING 18.15-19.15

Liberal Democrat European Group & Liberal International British Group

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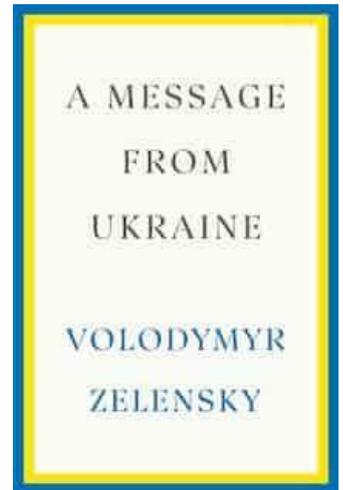


reviews

A Message from Ukraine, speeches 2019-2022, by Volodymyr Zelensky.
Hutchinson Heinemann 2022 £9.99
isbn 9781529153545

As it says on the label, this is a collection of keynote speeches by Volodymyr Zelenskyy from his inaugural address of 20th May 2019 through to Ukrainian Independence Day on 24th August 2022. Many of these will be familiar from UK press and television coverage.

Arkady Ostrovsky, Russian and eastern Europe editor for *The Economist*, sets the context, which we all know too well in his preface, opening that Volodymyr Zelenskyy's most important speech was his shortest, 32 seconds delivered 38 hours after the Russian invasion "Good evening, everyone. We are still here..."



£0.60 of each print copy sold in the UK will go to Ukraine24, set up by President Zelenskyy to collect charitable funds to aid Ukraine in defence & demining, medical aid and rebuilding Ukraine.

Stewart Rayment

Russia's War on Everybody and what it means for you, by Keir Giles
Bloomsbury Press 2023 £18.00
isbn 9781350255081

"You may not be interested in Russia, but Russia is interested in you".

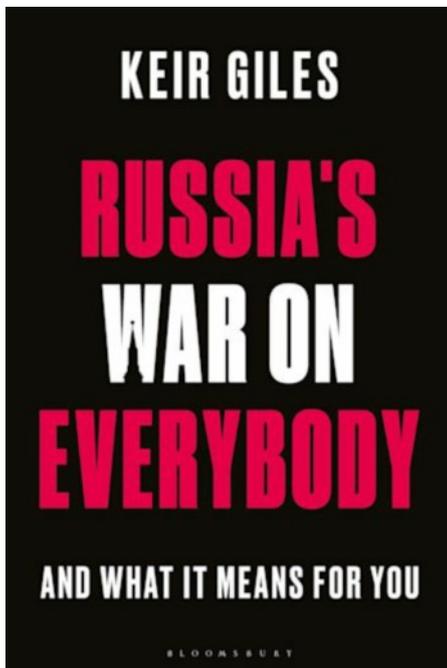
Russia's paranoia since the fall of the Soviet Union has led to its modern-day war with Ukraine and hybrid warfare with much of the rest of the world, especially 'the West'. This hybrid warfare includes 'all of society' attacks involving the weakening of countries via misinformation, divide and rule tactics and encouraging the mistrust of democratic governments.

Keir Giles, Senior Consulting Fellow for the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House and Director of the Conflict Studies Research Centre, has been warning about Russia for decades, saying that President Vladimir Putin and others have always viewed Russia as being at war with the West without open warfare. The West was wrong to consider we were at peace.

Putin knows exactly how to destabilise other countries, but he wants Russians to think the reverse is happening. This is because the paranoia is real and he believes the West wants to destroy Russia. Because of this he neglects the Russian people and mainly focuses on foreign affairs.

Giles dedicates his book to Putin for finally convincing the world of Russia's evil intentions through the invasion of Ukraine. However, it is far more than a book about the war in Ukraine and delves into Giles's extensive knowledge of the country, the people and the regime. This is an interesting and informative book. A good read but without an optimistic ending.

In a chapter entitled 'Nobody is too unimportant' Giles outlines how ordinary citizens throughout the world, including in the UK, can become entangled by Russian hostile operations. For example, the cloning of passports of Russian visitors, the targeting of civilians living near to NATO bases, or cyber-attacks on members of particular, rather ordinary, groups that could be of use in the future.



Most people are aware of Russian disinformation and how elections such as Trump's in the US or a referendum such as Brexit in the UK may well have been highly influenced by Russia, but they do not see how it has affected themselves on a personal level. Yet Russian operatives are expert, and this is what they do on a daily basis – destabilise and subvert. This is not just in countries of interest such as NATO members and African states.

Russian ministers and ambassadors are also excellent at using poker faces to deny and counter truths that are blatantly obvious. “We did not invade Ukraine.” “It is a special operation.” Unfortunately, some international politicians and even states believe or pretend to believe the propaganda, or broadcast whatever Russia wants them to.

Russia sees itself as a great power and therefore a global actor which must have a global presence. For example, African countries may be used as platforms for Russian disinformation. Ireland might naively believe it's not a target due to its 'neutrality'. Russia and its leaders

must be seen as strong and anyone who does not stand up to them is seen as weak. Dialogue and diplomacy have little impact.

At a time when most of the West wanted to ignore Russia, Putin invaded Ukraine in order to control or annex it. Instead, Ukraine has become part of the West and the West has become hostile to Russia in the way Putin feared. Also, NATO enlargement on Russia's borders will happen. The fear is that things can only get worse and it is essential for the rest of Europe that Russia should not succeed in Ukraine. There is also the possibility of Russia becoming a global terrorist state.

So, what can be done about all of this? Helping individuals who are directly intimidated might be difficult without far more expenditure on security, and some online Russian targets end up having their profiles boosted by the attention and do not feel under threat. Many Russia enablers in the UK – politicians, academics and others - know exactly what they are doing whilst others are unwitting, unpaid accomplices often categorized as 'useful idiots'. In the past the latter might have been hoping that Russia could develop into a peaceful neighbour in Europe, but there can be no excuses now.

We need to look at the long-term trends. Many Liberals in the West have tried to foster a more benign Russia and hoped a new generation might bring about change after Putin. This won't happen and this book is about Russia's war. Russia is more than one man. It is at war with all of us, so the UK needs to defend itself in conjunction with the rest of Europe. Collectively and individually.

There is no reassuring ending to this book. We have left it too late, especially in the UK by permitting those on the payroll and the useful idiots to allow the government to turn a blind eye to disinformation, to subversion, to destabilisation, to the undermining of our democratic processes and to the extensive laundering of dirty money. Although there is more happening in the areas of cybersecurity and anti-psychological warfare now, it all seems set to continue indefinitely.

In a Coda, Giles does actually express the possibility of some optimism further down the line. There is more opposition to Putin in Russia now due to the war, the sanctions and the economic downturn. If Russia fails badly in Ukraine, there could be a gradual change in thinking. Meanwhile, he says “Russia is everybody's problem, and it's not going away any time soon.”

Dr Carol Weaver

How to be a Good Politician: 2,000 Years of Good (and Bad) Advice, by Vince Cable
Ebury Press 2022 £16.99

isbn 9781529149654

We only need concern ourselves with the international stage in Vince's opus; others have covered the rest. Out of power for a century, British Liberals do not feature heavily amongst the bon mottes, Winston aside. Princess Lieven, wife of the Russian ambassador, said of Palmerston that "Europe depended on which leg – the left or the right – he put out of bed first." She would probably have known. Stephen Hawking has (almost) the last word on that matter.

Mainly 20th century examples, whilst the quotes themselves may primarily entertain, the trials and tribulations of political life are just below the surface in the joining text. Is the international stage the apex or the ante-room to decline?

Reviewing this book in *Liberator* Jonathan Calder wrote "This should be in the lavatory of every aspiring politician." This was not in a pejorative sense, how better than to wile away those moments than with choice words of wisdom.

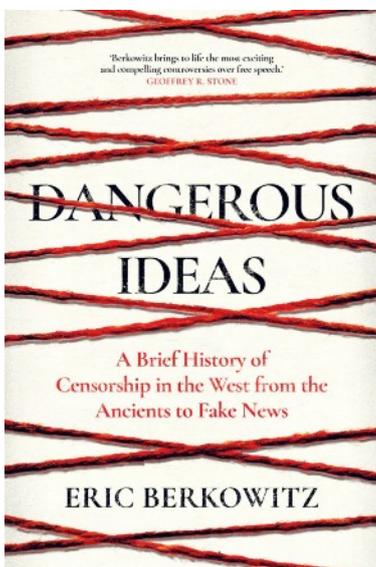
Stewart Rayment

Dangerous Ideas: A Brief History of Censorship in the West from the Ancients to Fake News
by Eric Berkowitz
The Westbourne Press 2021
isbn 9781908906427

Dangerous Ideas is a comprehensive survey of censorship, tracking the motive and enforcement of a myriad of restrictive laws over thousands of years. As Berkowitz argues, "the urge to censor is as old as the urge to speak".

The structure of the book is a simple chronology, beginning with the Old Testament and ending with the Trump administration. The range of people and ideas who have been either promoted or prohibited over the years is a credit to human creativity. Alongside the obvious endorsements of political leaders, there have also been controls imposed on gossip, sex, scientific method and even bad quality writing. The modern concept of 'freedom of expression' is slow to emerge and has proven itself to be quite unstable.

There are many examples of the unintended consequences of the cat-and-mouse game between censors and speakers. The categories of permitted books in France in the 18th century, which ranged from *privilège* (fully endorsed) to *simples tolérances* (the authorities would look the other way) had economic consequences; the



less 'approved' a book was, the more interested the public became. Book burnings of entirely forbidden texts were an excellent way to increase (illicit) sales. Most attempts to prohibit certain ideas seem to wither away until the next great danger is found and the censors return with vigour once more.

Berkowitz presents his book as a historical account and does not take a side on whether censorship is good or bad. To the modern reader, any account of pre-20th century censorship will come across as a criticism; many of the 'dangerous ideas' that were banned in the past now seem laughable. So for the majority of the book, it seems like Berkowitz is in favour of absolute freedom of expression. But as the book approaches more recent times, it is harder to take a simplistic view when confronted with the 'dangerous ideas' that we actually perceive as a threat. It is a lot easier to support the suppression of false information on the spread and treatment of Covid-19 than the love life of a French king.


**HOW TO BE
A POLITICIAN**
2,000 Years of Good
(and Bad) Advice



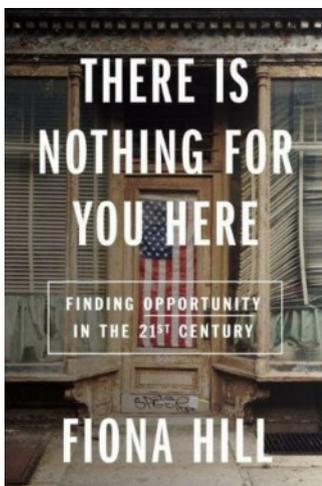
VINCE CABLE

Berkowitz prefers to let his historical account speak for itself rather than advocating any particular line. The messages that stood out were: (1) no society can resist the urge to censor; (2) no censorship regime is impermeable.; and (3) the fact of (2) does not cancel out (1). Censorship is here to stay. And like every generation, we will make our own decision on what speech should be prohibited, which our descendants will enjoy laughing about one day.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

There is nothing for you here, by Fiona Hill.
Harper Collins. 2022 £22.00
isbn 9780358574316

Fiona Hill had her 15 minutes of fame when she testified at Donald Trump's first impeachment trial on Capitol Hill. An expert on Russia and Ukraine, she has had a distinguished career working for US security agencies and Washington think tanks. Her book contains tasty insider revelations about Trump's profound ignorance of international relations and his contempt for US foreign policy specialists. He regurgitated the views of the autocrats who were blatantly manipulating him, such as Putin and Erdogan. He also preferred the unhinged rantings of Fox News presenters, rather than State Department briefings which he could never



be bothered to read unless they contained flattering references to him. Trump was and is as vulgar and charmless in private as he appears. Hill's book confirms one's worst suspicions about the chaos gripping the White House during Trump's blundering reign, and the personal moral chasm where there should have been integrity.

Yet, the larger part of Hill's message is about the hollowing out of the US and UK economies following Reagan-Thatcher era de-industrialisation, and the political and social consequences of allowing whole regions to collapse due to neglect and indifference. She draws on her experience growing up in Bishop Auckland, the daughter of an unemployed coal miner who ended up as a hospital porter. When she shone at school, her father advised her never to return to the northeast, saying, "There's nothing for you here." Hence, she is now a US citizen,

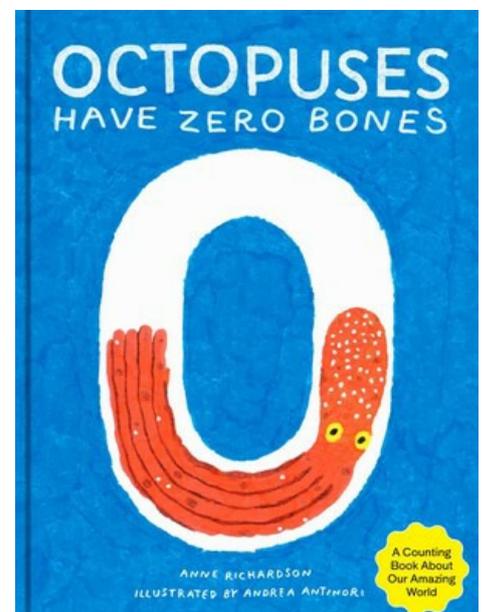
working at the top of the foreign policy establishment in DC. Although she says she experiences discrimination because of her gender, at least she is not mocked or judged because of her accent, as she was in the UK. The misogyny she encounters is as trivial as criticism of her clothing choices and as serious as the way ostensibly liberal institutions systematically pay women significantly less. A fascinating read for those who crave more evidence that Donald Trump must not return to the White House in 2024.

Rebecca Tinsley

Octopuses have zero bones, by Anne Richardson,
illustrated by Andrea Antinori.
Tra Publishing 2022 \$19.99/ £17.99
isbn 9781735311524

Subtitled 'A counting book about our amazing world' (and beyond), this beautiful book will help tell the small people in your lives how many beans make five through many challenging concepts. Watch out for it in a small independent bookshop near you.

Stewart Rayment



Now go back to page 2 if you missed the message.