



2023 no. 2 £7.50 (free to members)

INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



ROBERT WOODTHORPE BROWNE 1943-2022

YORK CONFERENCE

CHINA

NICARAGUA

TURKEY

EVENTS

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 10.00am-1.00pm.

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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London SW1A 2HE
Underground: Embankment

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment, Keith Melton, Dr. Yeow Poon, Julio Vanini (LI)., Sam Churchill.

Cover Photograph – Stewart Rayment.



LIBG & LDEG AT YORK



SATURDAY 18th EARLY EVENING 18.15-19.15

Liberal Democrat European Group & Liberal International British Group

The Windsor Framework

FIRC, LDEG & LIBG are co-hosting a debate focusing on the Windsor Framework and its implications for Liberal Democrat Europe policy and how we can better communicate that policy to the wider public.

Chair - Hannah Bettsworth Vice Chair of FIRC

Sir Graham Watson - former Lib Dem MEP

Christine Jardine MP

Baroness Sal Brinton

Novotel, Meeting Room 1 & 2

LDEG FRINGE SATURDAY 18th 13.00

**Developing links at a local government level
between the UK and EU**

Chair - David Chalmers - Chair of FIRC

Sean O'Curneen the Secretary General of the Renew Group of the Committee of the Regions is unable to join us but we are hoping to have a video message or video link.

Tom Brake - CEO of Unlock Democracy former Lib Dem MP - Brexit Spokesperson and candidate for Chair of European Movement.

Prof. Antonine Godbert

Catherine Bearder - former LibDem MEP

Novotel, Room 3



YORK: The International Bits

Friday 17 March 2023

FRINGE FRIDAY 17th MID AFTERNOON 15.00-17.00

International Security Consultation Session

This is an opportunity for members to engage with the policy working group on International Security and Defence. Chaired by Jonny Singh.

www.libdems.org.uk/members/make-policy/international-security

Novotel, Fishergate Suite

Saturday 18 March 2023

09.10–09.30 F2C Report: **Federal International Relations Committee**

11.25–12.35 F8 Policy motion: **The UK's Nuclear Deterrent**

FRINGE SATURDAY 18th EARLY EVENING 18.15-19.15

Liberal Democrat European Group & Liberal International British Group Leadership on Europe

The LibDems have established a consistent policy towards the EU but are we doing enough to tell the public of our position? Is this time to take advantage of the post Brexit chaos - show real leadership on the Europe question? Come join Saturday night's lively debate to find out.

www.LDEG.org.uk

<http://www.libg.co.uk>

Novotel, Meeting Room 1 & 2

Green Liberal Democrats

Updating our Climate Change Policy

With Wera Hobhouse & Kevin Langford Lib Dem Policy on Climate Change, voted for in September 2019 is reviewed. Impacts of Climate Change have developed significantly since then. Green Lib Dems report on our project to update key aspects of our Climate Change Policy.

www.greenlibdems.org.uk

Twitter: @GreenLibDems

Hilton, Bootham Room

FRINGE SATURDAY MID EVENING 19.45-21.00

Born Free & League Against Cruel Sports

Why the wildlife protection & animal welfare vote matters at next election

Leading animal protection campaigner, writer & broadcaster Dominic Dyer will chair a panel focusing on the importance of animal welfare & wildlife protection to voters. Using exclusive polling carried out by Born Free a panel of leading campaigners, vets and politicians will discuss what voters expect from the next Government when it comes to protecting animals at home & abroad.

www.bornfree.org.uk

Twitter: @domdyer70

Novotel, Meeting Room 4

FRINGE SATURDAY MID EVENING 19.45-21.00

Tamil Friends of Liberal Democrats Tamil Friends of Lib Dems Fringe Event

Tamil Friends of Lib Dem formed in 2008 for the purpose of liberal values within the Tamil Community of whom an estimated 400,000 living in London and its surrounding areas. Our aim is to support the party and bring awareness to the people of the United Kingdom, in the island of Sri-Lanka and around the world. Speakers details to follow. Twitter: @tfolibdem1

www.facebook.com/people/Tamil-Friends-of-Liberal-Democrat

Novotel, Meeting Room 3

Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary (LD4SOS)

Liberal Democrat Policy on Asylum and Immigration Alistair Carmichael MP Spokesperson for Home Affairs in conversation with LD4SOS Council member Dr. Ruvi Ziegler (Associate Professor in International Refugee Law, University of Reading) discusses the future of Liberal Democrat policy about asylum seekers and immigration policy in general.

Hilton, Micklegate Room

Liberal democratic and Unity movement of Cyprus

The Unity of Cyprus & Liberalism of the Profession in UK We will discuss the unity of Cyprus and how to approach each community of Cyprus. Also we will speak about the liberalism of professions and how regulators can negatively affect many UK professions.

www.facebook.com/people/KAlexandrou-Theodotou

Hilton, Walmgate Room

Glee Club

(starting at 22.00 until 01.00)

Join us for the ultimate end-of conference celebration! Pick up your copy of the Liberator Songbook and come 'raise the roof'!

Novotel, Fishergate Suite

Sunday 19 March 2023

09.00–09.45 F16 Emergency motions / topical issues



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

LD4SOS AT THE FEDERAL SPRING CONFERENCE MARCH 2023

Visit LD4SOS at Stand 16 in the Exhibition Hall

York Barbican, Paragon Street, York YO10 4AH

Friday 17 March 16.30 – 18.15

Saturday 18 March 09.00 – 18.00

Sunday 19 March 09.00 – 12.00

- Collect our latest information sheets
- Sign up to receive our Newsletter and other information
- **Join us** or renew your membership (Membership only £10 per year (unwaged £5).

Whilst we are an Associated Organisation of the Party we do not receive any central funding and rely on our membership fees and donations to pay for our presence at Conferences.

- Treat yourself to an orange pen (£1 suggested donation)
- Meet like-minded people

Of course all help on the stand is welcome.

Free WIFI is available within York Barbican – no password is required.

Network name: Barbican Free.

You will be asked for your email address. Click “Get online” (red box on the top left). Accept “Terms & Conditions”.

LD4SOS Conference Fringe: Liberal Democrat Policy on Asylum and Immigration

19.45 Saturday 18th March 2023

In the Micklegate Room at the [Hilton York Hotel](#), 1 Tower St York YO1 9WD

Chaired by LD4SOS Chair, John Skipworth

Alistair Carmichael MP **Spokesperson for Home Affairs in conversation with** LD4SOS Council member Dr. Ruvi Ziegler (Associate Professor in International Refugee Law, University of Reading) **will discuss the future of Liberal Democrat policy about asylum seekers and immigration policy in general.**

There will of course be opportunity for you to **join in** with the conversation

A Special General Meeting will follow the fringe and start about 20.45

This SGM is in lieu of the 2022 AGM which was not held due to the cancellation of the Autumn 2022 Federal Conference

An opportunity to change the narrative on Nuclear Weapons

Keith Melton

Since the UN Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) came into force in 2021, it is a matter of fact that Nuclear Weapons are now prohibited and illegal under International Law. Liberal Democrats, as law-abiding internationalists must recognise that fact and behave and act accordingly. We have an opportunity to change the narrative on these weapons of mass-destruction.

Multilateralist, respecting international law and learning from history

International security has become a distinctly hot topic since Putin's very aggressive "Special Military Operation" was launched against Ukraine just over a year ago. Clearly most people recognise it for what it was, an invasion of another sovereign country, by a despot of questionable sanity, with a very large army under his control.

Of specific relevance for this article, however, is the debate prompted (I was going to say 'sparked' but decided that was, perhaps, an inappropriate verb!) by Putin having "*moved the goalposts of the conditions under which Russia would launch a first nuclear strike.*" (**Chatham House**)ⁱ

That Chatham House paper of September 2022, points out that Putin's "*deliberately ambiguous and dangerous*" threats have significantly moved Russian nuclear doctrine from its oft-stated position that "*Russia would only use nuclear weapons first should the **existence of the state** be threatened, rather than its 'territorial integrity'.*" 'Territorial integrity' now includes annexed Ukrainian land!

The problem with this, for people of a Liberal persuasion, is that there has been a sort of 'equal and opposite knee-jerk reaction' to crank up the level of rhetoric and nuclear weapon state of readiness on all who oppose Putin's brand of madness. This is, of course, perfectly understandable, but highly dangerous, in that it also cranks up the risks to the world and everyone in it.

The **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist** has reset the minute hand on the Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight, "*largely but not exclusively due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine*".

The Nobel Peace-prize-winning organisation, ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), have said, quite clearly, in an article published in January this year that "*This year's Clock announcement must not be followed by the usual hand wringing, resignation and excuses, but with urgent action to avoid nuclear war. ICAN has a roadmap for ridding the world of nuclear weapons in four steps: prohibition, stigmatisation, negotiation, elimination.*"ⁱⁱ

And it is in this context that we have put forward an amendment to the Nuclear Weapons motion to be debated at the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference in York very shortly.

Dealing with Nuclear Anxiety

ICAN point out that, as the nuclear threat grows, it is very normal for people to experience nuclear war anxiety as a result. "*The existence of nuclear weapons entails an existential threat to our world and everything we hold dear, which in many ways can be regarded as a greater threat than people's possible individual fear of their own death.*"

The KILL ZONE

I was fifteen in 1962, the year of the Cuban missile crisis. Both my home, my school and our family business were within 3.7 miles of Waddington RAF station which was the home of the Vulcan bombers



which carried the British nuclear weapons of mass destruction. The 100% kill zone of a `modest` 1 megaton bomb is said to be at least 6 kilometres – just over 3.7 miles. **The KILL ZONE** is shown relative to the Waddington RAF base in the attached Google Earth screen shot and, as is apparent, the family business, home and my school are clearly within the deadly target area!

So, it seems quite likely, then, that my views of nuclear weapons were somewhat influenced by this proximity with death. I recall noting that just after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote “Mankind is faced with a clear-cut alternative: either we shall all perish, or we shall have to acquire some slight degree of common sense”.

We have relied on luck for too long.

We may, in fact, need some UNCOMMON sense if we are to avoid an accident (*perhaps “incident” would be a more appropriate word?*) that obliterates humans and much other life from the Earth.

It is now well known that, in the midst of the Cuban Crisis, Vasily Arkhipov, Chief of Staff of a Soviet Flotilla of four diesel submarines, who was one of three keyholders for the nuclear weapons on the submarine B59, ***saved the world from Armageddon***. The submarines were out of touch with Moscow. The sub’s captain and the other keyholder were going to activate their missiles. Arkhipov refused to use his key and, thereby, prevented the apocalypse.

Twenty-one years later, in September 1983, the Soviet Union shot down Korean Air Lines flight 007, which had strayed into their air space. Three weeks after that the Soviet early warning system raised the alarm that five missiles from the US were headed their way. Duty Officer Lt Col Stanislav Petrov disobeyed orders and chose to ignore what proved to be a false alarm – and Petrov also, ***saved the world from Armageddon***. But we have relied on luck too often for comfort now.

Addressing the morality of Nuclear Weapons

His Excellency Josiah Bainimarama, the Prime Minister of Fiji, speaking in 2022ⁱⁱⁱ, pointed out that on a planet with a Global Food Crisis; and a runaway Climate Crisis; and still suffering from a rampant zoonotic pandemic, nuclear weapons “...do not feed us, do not clothe us, nor do they keep out the rising seas!”

As a Liberal, I believe weapons of mass destruction are wrong and immoral and have always said so. Indeed, much of the position of our Lib Dem policy is predicated on this moral argument, but caution and a degree of political pragmatism have kept the Party from following this philosophy to its conclusion and has tended to follow the maxim of deterrence. However, we need to ask *‘what is actually being deterred by such a policy?’*

As we all discovered in February last year, nuclear weapons cannot prevent conflict among states, but they do heighten the risk of miscalculation that could end life on earth. Already Vladimir Putin has miscalculated Ukraine’s resolve and the West’s determination to support an heroic Ukrainian President determined to stand firm in the face of aggression.

Part of that miscalculation was based upon the fact that western powers did not step up to the plate after Russia had invaded and annexed the Crimea. And, clearly, Putin believed a quick win was possible with a speedy push along the main roads and the quick capitulation of Kyiv. But that was not to be.

The Nuclear Weapons motion - `Establishment View`

It is to be expected that we Liberal Democrats should respond to this security threat within Europe, being the good, international, Party we are. However, I fear that the motion drawn up by the parliamentary defence team errs too much on the side of an ultra-cautious approach to defence policy, probably not wishing to rock the middle-of-the-road approach thought to be necessary in order not to frighten off the soft conservative vote.

There is too much reliance on the status quo and too much acceptance of the notion of `deterrence` referred to above. As the ICAN team suggests, `deterrence` is built on fear and though it may have worked in a way when there was an equilibrium between `blocs` in what was known as the `Cold War` it has clearly not deterred Putin from International aggression.

And Putin`s threats to use nuclear weapons are being delivered *in order to stop* Western non-nuclear support for Ukraine, in fear of what could happen if they overstep a line in the sand. The trouble, as always, is that the `line in the sand` is deliberately vague and ambiguous.

We, Liberal Democrats, need to be able and willing to be part of the solution - but blandly supporting the status quo is not going to move the needle at all. It is not going to shift the Doomsday Clock by one second, never mind one minute! The evidence over my lifetime – 75plus years spent entirely in the Nuclear Age – is that downward shifts in numbers of nuclear weapons have only come about during negotiations; and those negotiations have often been spurred on by a response to a crisis of the scale of the Cuban missile crisis sixty years ago!

We need a change of direction...perhaps this Crisis will become the opportunity for movement.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

You may well hear from those opposing our amendment that the UN Treaty is “Unilateralist”, but as the research briefing in the House of Commons Library tells us, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons^{iv}, in fact, “*is the first multilateral, legally binding, instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years.*”

As we identify in the amendment, the treaty tells us this in its own words. So, the paragraph we have quoted, which is to be inserted in the “Conference notes” section of the motion, includes the following sentence... **Signatories should immediately remove them from operational status, and destroy them as soon as possible, but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties**

“*Not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of State Parties*” – in other words the final stage will be multilateral. And my contention is that the seriousness of such negotiations will be highlighted by the fact that at least one Nuclear Power has decided to sign the Treaty.

Choosing a Direction of Travel

This is all about choosing a direction of travel. Sadly, the Lib Dem motion on the Agenda for York is static in this regard and is what ICAN calls a “*wringing of hands*”. I believe we Liberals can and should do better. Through our well-established Liberal values, we need to say, loud and clear, that WE are ready to move the process of nuclear disarmament forward.

The amendment also specifies that signing the Treaty should happen in the lifetime of the next Parliament after the forthcoming General Election. It is pretty clear that the current Tory Government would not be open to such a move and any possible iteration of a future Tory government is also highly unlikely to think this is a good idea.

However, I think we can be reasonably confident that the General Election is going to have a significant effect upon the political makeup of Parliament. I do not think that is in doubt.

I want us to be in the vanguard of change – Liberals always have been, because we do not have the baggage

of vested interests to weigh us down. And we have a set of values which we need to proclaim rather than hiding them from view in order to not rock the boat!

Let's move together with the United Nations

UN General Secretary **Antonio Guterres** said recently that...

“As a global family, we can no longer allow the cloud of nuclear conflict to shadow our work to spur development, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and end the COVID-19 pandemic. Now is the time to lift this cloud for good.”

Achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the UN and was the General Assembly's first resolution of 1946. The UN Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons has been signed by 86 countries and 66 countries have already ratified it. This change, if we make it at the Conference in York, will be the fulfilment of truly Liberal Values consistent with those stated in the preamble to the constitution, namely...

The universal liberal values of internationalism, human rights, the pursuit of peace, and the rule of law, as well as our commitment to each generation having the responsibility to protect the planet, its ecosystem and all its peoples.

So, I hope that those of you reading this who want to move more swiftly to getting rid of Nuclear Weapons will register for the Conference, even if you can only get to the online version – and cast your votes in favour of the amendment to support the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons!

Keith Melton

Keith Melton is a directly elected member of the Liberal Democrats Federal Policy Committee and Chair of the Green Lib Dems

“Ambiguous nuclear threats heighten catastrophic risks”, Article, www.chathamhouse.org September 2022

“Dealing with Nuclear War Anxiety”, Article, ICAN website, <https://www.icanw.org>, January 2023

High level address to the First meeting of the UNTPNW States Parties, June 2022,

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1s/k1sbslstum> accessed March 2023

“Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons”, Research Briefing, HoC Library, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/> 13th June 2022

Further arguments on this issue were developed in:

Nuclear Weapons – a Liberal Democrats rethink, by Keith Melton interLib 2022-06e pages 13-17, the print version of which is available .

Honduras & the Prohibition of nuclear weapons, by Sandy Jones & Kevin White. interLib 2020-11 pp 15-16

Now's the time to debate Nukes. Johnson said so... interLib 2021-02 page 13

Nuclear treaty withdrawal risks global instability. interLib 2019-01 page 23

A guide to the motion and amendment can be found on pages 27-31

Robert Woodthorpe Browne MBE (1943-2022)

Funeral Oration for Robert Woodthorpe Browne John, Lord Alderdice

There are those whose death leaves friends and family deeply sad – an unfilled chair at the table, a gap in the conversation, and a valued opinion missing from the discussion. Robert’s death does all of these things, but in addition it marks for me the end of a very particular era in the British Liberal contribution to the international Liberal family. The period was mainly marked by the remarkable contributions of two Scots and three Englishmen. The Scots were Lord Russell Johnston and Lord Steel of Aikwood. Russell has passed on and David has retired from the House of Lords and public life and is no longer able to attend our international liberal events. The three Englishmen were Richard Moore, Jonathan Fryer and our dear and much-loved friend, Robert Woodthorpe Browne. There were others who made remarkable contributions to international political liberalism in the wider sense, notably two of my former colleagues in the House of Lords, Eric Avebury, and Paddy Ashdown, but no-one devoted their time and energy to the European and worldwide liberal organizations like those three liberal musketeers, Richard, Jonathan, and Robert. Robert was particularly devoted to Liberal International, and that is why, when he recently stood down from continuous service on the Bureau as Treasurer and Executive Vice-President, he was unanimously appointed a Patron of LI – a high honour, and one that I know Robert appreciated. Some LI colleagues have made remarkable efforts to be here despite snow, freezing conditions, plane cancellations and train strikes. I want to recognize the herculean efforts of Robert’s inseparable LI twin brother, Manfred Eisenbach, who made it from Germany despite the best efforts of British Airways to frustrate him. My good friend Juli Minoves, like myself a President of Honour of LI, made it from the high mountains of Andorra, and Executive Vice President, Henrik Bach Mortenson came all the way from Denmark. I also want to note that the current LI President, Hakima El Haité from Morocco, the Deputy President, Karl-Heinz Paqué from Germany, our other President of Honour, Annemie Neyts from Belgium and Bureau members Astrid Thors from Finland and Art Eggleton from Canada had all wished to be here but were prevented by various different travel challenges. All of them specifically and personally asked me to express their grief and condolences to Robert’s wife, Barbara and son, Robert, and at the start I wish to do just that on their behalf, on my own behalf, and indeed for all of us. I also want to acknowledge the presence of Phil Bennion, a very old friend of Robert’s and himself an Executive Vice President of LI. That almost the whole top echelon of LI planned to travel such distances is itself a remarkable testament, not only to the way that his service to LI was appreciated across the globe, but also that he was loved as a person. We are also joined by many British Liberal Democrat colleagues, including members of the Federal International Relations Committee, who have come from closer to home, but often with considerable difficulty, and others such as Baroness Sal Brinton and Joyce Onstad who were prevented by COVID infections have sent their sympathies. I trust that at this sad time this demonstration of friendship and appreciation will be some comfort to Barbara, Robert, Max, Emma, and the whole family circle here today.

We are all here not only because we appreciated Robert’s extraordinary liberal activism but also because we enjoyed his company – not something that can be said of all political colleagues. Spending time conversing over a meal, close to home or in some distant part of the world was a delight to Robert and to everyone who joined him at table to share his love of good food and wine and to hear the latest from his fund of amusing stories and fascinating anecdotes. We all have our own memories of such times. For me a very special memory is of an al fresco dinner together in Barcelona on my birthday. We were at a Liberal International meeting but when Robert heard it was a special day for me, it was typical of him that he made it into a special meal.

His love of travel was apparent from an early age. After a childhood in Woodford, Essex, and attending St Ignatius’ College, Stamford Hill, Robert studied at the Universities of Poitiers, Barcelona and Birkbeck College, London where he gained his BA Hons in Spanish. He was a very proficient linguist who loved languages and I often benefitted at international meetings from his fluency in Spanish, French and German.

That love of language also served LI well when he became the natural chairman of those complicated processes, so beloved of liberals, of developing, adapting, and amending the World Today motions at LI Congresses. He revelled in the opportunity to find just the right words to enable liberals of different persuasions and parties to agree a text. It will be extremely difficult to find anyone who is able and willing to do that, indeed I just cannot imagine someone who will have the grace, skill, firmness when necessary, and the good humour that Robert brought. He was remarkably adept, and liberal colleagues from around the world loved him and his way of doing business. But Robert was not just a 'front of house' man for LI or the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe. His enduring support for the London based secretariat of Liberal International is well-known and he was a source of personal guidance and calm for many Secretaries-General in both political and business management challenges.

He was indeed very good at business, with an international career in reinsurance. He worked both as broker and underwriter, including membership of Lloyd's, concentrating initially on the Third World. He took particular pride in having been the founder of the African Insurance Conference which he accomplished when working in Mauritius and he was delighted to attend and address the Conference when it celebrated its 50th anniversary this year in Nairobi, Kenya. Never one to stand still, after 20 years concentrating on Africa and the Middle East, Robert moved on to Central and Eastern Europe following the end of the Iron Curtain era, becoming a consultant to major international insurance companies there.

But it was politics that really fired him up. He stood six times for Westminster and twice for the European Parliament and had he been a conservative or a socialist I have no doubt he would have been elected to both, and indeed appointed to the House of Lords, where the peers would have loved him. Robert was however a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal and he was no mere card-carrying member, but an activist at every level of the party. In addition to campaigning for elections – local, parliamentary, and European – he ran, for many years, the International Relations Committee of the Liberal Democrats along with Jonathan Fryer, was a delegate for the Party to innumerable meetings of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe, and become an irreplaceable member of the Bureau of Liberal International.

As if all of this was not enough, he was a member of the Gresham Society Committee, promoting the free lectures at the City of London's first University College. He was an active member of the London livery company known as the Worshipful Company of World Traders and was its Master in 2016-17. He was an inveterate traveller who visited more than 150 countries so he was very appropriately a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He was a Council Member of Britain's premier international think-tank, Chatham House, a Board and Committee member of the British German Association, Vice Chairman of the Tuberos Sclerosis Association, and Chairman of Sustainable Viability Limited. He was the driving force in the founding and activity of The Paddy Ashdown Forum, and I must express our thanks to Christopher Gleadle, the CEO of the Forum for his work in organizing today's events – thank you very much Chris, on behalf of us all. and yes, Robert did find time for hobbies including forestry and Lowestoft porcelain.

Now, at liberal events near and far, you and I will find ourselves looking around in vain for Robert, a smile on his face, a glass in his hand, moving around talking to fellow liberals, picking up the sense of what was going on, and the latest piece of news and chat. And if we miss him, as we surely will, I fear that after COVID, the cost-of-living crisis and the Russia-Ukraine war, Robert's death may be the last straw for some international airlines which may now go to the wall! Aside from political meetings, Robert and Barbara loved travelling to the sun and the snow, to scenery and special places. She has lost not only a fun travelling companion but a dear partner in life's journey.

We have lost a great encourager of young, aspiring, liberal politicians, a stout defender of freedom and human rights, and a tireless worker in the liberal cause, but most of all we have lost a deeply loved friend.

I must end by returning to those with whom we are especially here to mourn, and to whom we all wish to bring comfort – to Barbara, Robert, Max, Emma, and the whole Woodthorpe Browne family circle. Our deepest sympathies go to you in your grievous loss and at this sad time.

John, Lord Alderdice

Robert Woodthorpe Browne

Robert Woodthorpe Browne was born on 26 May 1943 in Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. He studied at St Ignatius' College, Stamford Hill; Universite de Poitiers; Universidad de Barcelona; and Birkbeck College (London University), where he gained a BA (Hons) in Spanish; he also spoke French and German.

Robert joined the Liberal Party, whilst still at school, in 1960, and enjoyed prominent positions with the Young Liberals. In 1966 he married and he and his wife, Barbara, have one son, Robert. He worked as a reinsurance broker and consultant specialising in Russia (of which, his knowledge will be greatly missed in today's circumstances), Central and Eastern Europe and Third World countries.

Robert first stood for the Liberal party in Harlow in 1979, taking 8,289 votes, 15.7%, coming third. He stood twice for the Liberal Democrats in Kensington & Chelsea; first, in the general election in 1997 taking 5,668 votes, 15.3% against Alan Clark, and then against Michael Portillo in the by-election in 1999 taking 1,881 votes, 9.4%, in both cases, coming third. Portillo had been a high-profile casualty of the 1997 general election, and the by-election was marked by Gay Rights campaigners picketing him. Robert rose above this, saying that Mr Portillo's personality was "of zero interest to the majority of people here ...I did not fight on personality last time and we have no intention of going down that route this time, although I believe some of our opponents might."



He stood for Mid Worcestershire in 2001 winning 8,430 votes, 18.8% but coming third. Robert has also stood for the Liberal Democrats in European elections. So far as I am aware, Robert's only elected position was as a Parish Councillor for Pebworth, Worcestershire in 2002. In 2005 Robert took on the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his Sedgefield constituency, maintaining his customary third place with 4,935 votes, 11.9% - only 1,037 behind the Tory, increasing the Lib Dem vote by 2.9%. You can immediately detect from these, that they were seats and circumstances where Liberals were not likely to win, but where, by the nature of the campaign and media attention, a credible candidate was needed. Robert was one of many chairs of LIBG who have gallantly filled that role.

Robert was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and as a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, helped arrange LIBG's Garden Lectures there, after the death of Tim Garden, Lord Garden of Hampstead.

A member of the Royal Forestry Society, Robert planted a 17-acre woodland in 1992. Family connections led him to become a member of the English Ceramic Circle, being a direct descendant of the managers of the Lowestoft Porcelain Factory (1756-1802). There have been Roberts in the family from at least that time, the company being Robert Browne & Co., around 1770. Robert was also a member of the Gresham Society, which supports Gresham College.

Robert held a number of posts within Liberal Democrat or Liberal related organisations, including Chairman of the Parliamentary Candidates Association from 1997 to 2000 and Chairman of Liberal International (British Group) 2001-2004. Afterwards he moved on to chair the Federal International Relations Committee of the Liberal Democrats and led their delegation to LI Executives and Congresses for over a decade. He was a Patron and Bureau Member of Liberal International, serving as Vice-President and Treasurer for many years,

Robert was one of those listed as endorsing an advert that appeared in 2002 in The Guardian and the Independent on Sunday entitled 'End the Israeli occupation now for a Palestinian State'. His lifelong philosophy was "total liberty of individual expression and opportunity within a social framework." In all of this, his service to Liberalism was selfless.

Liberal International has lost its steward

Anders Mertzlufft

Robert Woodthorpe Browne died after a brief illness at the age of 79. A truly global guy has left us. BBC World Service and The Economist Newspaper – these are the media that I regularly consult when I want to have reliable and competent news about world affairs. Since I came to know Robert – a few years ago when I began to be active in Liberal International – he came to my mind every time that I switched on the radio to listen to the BBC or skimmed over the pages of The Economist. Often enough, I asked myself why this is so. The answer is straight and simple: more than anybody else I knew; Robert represented the global spirit of British cosmopolitanism and liberalism.

First to his cosmopolitan spirit: He spoke four languages fluently. From his native English, he could easily switch to French and Spanish – and to the mother tongue of his wonderful wife Barbara, to German. And not only did he switch easily to these languages. More than that, he was a connoisseur of the history and culture of these countries; and he loved their food and wine. A European citizen par excellence! And a global one at that as no country in the world was far enough for him to be studied and travelled. As late as in mid' 2022, he was the first representative of Liberal International to visit the new Global Development Hub of our Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in Nairobi. He always stood ready to support global networks. And it is of high symbolic significance that his home, not far from the Underground Station “Earl’s Court” in London, was literally on the way of the Piccadilly Line to Heathrow Airport, the gateway to the world.

His liberal spirit was closely connected with his cosmopolitan outlook. By passion and conviction, he was a global Liberal; in Britain, he joined the Libdems (at that time still called Liberals) in 1960, no less than 62 (!) years ago. He worked hard to make liberalism operate efficiently and smoothly – and, of course, with a worldwide scope. He helped to run the London office of Liberal International at the residence of the Liberal Club in London’ Whitehall Place – giving as much as possible support to the professional staff at any time of the day, week, month or year. He was the steward in the back. As to organizational matters in London, nobody could match his invaluable competences and contacts. He also supported the members of the Liberal International Bureau (including myself) at any moment we chose to pick up the phone and call him for advice. And that advice was always helpful, knitting us all together and evening out any differences of opinions or priorities, but at the same time taking a clear stand. When leaving, after his long time in the Bureau, he was elected to become a patron of Liberal International – and it is hard to think of anybody else being more apt to take over this kind of honorary duty.

Liberal International will miss him dearly. And so will all in the global liberal family. And even more so Barbara, his widow, and his son Robert will miss him. Our thoughts are with them. A great Liberal has gone. We will never forget him.

Anders Mertzlufft

Friedrich Naumann Foundation

International Womens' Day 8th March

LIBG looks at Afghanistan & Iran

Mariam Jalalzada works for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), a US government oversight organisation reporting on the impacts of American reconstruction policies in Afghanistan. It was particularly painful to report on the collapse of the Afghan army and government in the wake of U.S. troops withdrawal, especially with regards to women's rights and access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

When the Taliban came to power in August 2021, they slowly started taking away women's rights by banning them first from high school, and then a year later, they banned them from universities too – this coming at precisely the time when they might otherwise sit entrance exams for which they had been preparing. There were protests on the street, women were arrested, thrown gaol, beaten. These types of protests, although small in scale, hadn't happened under the first Taliban government. Further Taliban statements banned women from gyms, bathhouses – despite a long established tradition on womens' bathhouses in the country.

Women were also banned from working for international organisations and thus lost their source of income. The United Nations predicts that 2023 will see the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world in Afghanistan. In some of the international bodies 30% to 50% of the staff were women, leaving them unable to function properly or to close. The Taliban statements usually come out of Kandahar, which is the religious centre for the group, and at times over-ruling the Taliban's cabinet in Kabul.

The Taliban wants international recognition, but these actions are creating the opposite effect. The USA, UN & EU have made statements about in reaction to the Taliban's harsh treatment of women but have not yet taken any action.

Pouya Alimgham, a MIT Middle East historian who has written on revolutionary movements in modern Iran, opened by saying that while the West was very much fixated on the issue of the hijab in recent years, it has been a contested issue in Iran for more than a century.

In the run up to the revolution, voluntarily wearing the hijab became a symbol of support for the revolution, even amongst those who were not religious (or even Muslim). The Shah was a secular autocrat, who was installed by the Anglo-American 28 Mordad coup of 1953 against the democratically-elected government of Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq. Thus, the hijab came to symbolize an Islamic alternative, the movement for independence from the US, and support for the radical clergy that headed the revolutionary uprising of 1978-79. Incidentally, the donning of the hijab as a symbol of the revolution made it easier for revolutionary state to mandate it.

On the eve of the revolution in 1979, illiteracy in Iran was at 63.5% - 51.8% for men and 75.6% for women. One of the post-revolution goals was to improve schools as a means to achieve social justice by closing the educational gap between rich and poor. The Islamisation of the school system against 'godless dens of vice' was a means by which the state sought to achieve this aim. The government's goal was to 'create the ideal female citizen who is socialised, politicised, and Islamised, and can serve traditional needs of a religious society, such as child-rearing, as well as meet the modern demands of the country.' More religious women were empowered by these changes, but the state fell short in other areas.

Before the revolution, people from conservative religious backgrounds saw women's schools as a potential threat to the family honour, especially since male teachers often taught young girls, and such families refused to send their daughters to school. To encourage their education, steps were taken to Islamise the curriculum, men would teach boys and women teach girls, and the hijab was mandated. Consequently, more girls and women gained access to education. By 2008, female literacy had dramatically increased to 96 %.



The government needed women as well as men, with women serving a double role in nation-building. Empowering women in this regard, however, was a double-edged sword as many girls came of age more educated and connected to the wider world, and began connecting the dots to the social and political ills of their society, especially as they related to women's issues.

The theory of the hijab is that it supports modesty and the institution of marriage by discouraging pre-marital sex. It is also argued that it encourages productivity in

the economy as men are not distracted by women. Above all, it was supposed to create a moral society. Many women, including women who wore the veil, objected to it becoming compulsory. There were demonstrations four decades ago – these were some of the largest spontaneous demonstrations in the history of the women's movement.

So, the demonstrations that followed the death of Mahsa Amini are not without precedent. On 13 September, Iran's 'morality police' arrested and reportedly beat a 22-year-old Kurdish woman for 'improper hijab wearing', apparently causing her subsequent coma and death in the hospital three days later. The Kurdish slogan 'Women, Life, Liberty' has been adopted by demonstrators. Mass demonstrations aside, small, almost mundane acts of resistance have also taken place. Late in September 2022, Donya Rad was arrested following her posting a photograph of herself and another woman eating in a restaurant without their heads covered on social media, which went viral. Many of the participants in these demonstrations are school girls. Their burning the hijab is a protest not just against the hijab being compulsory, but against government authority, as is waving the hijab like a flag, while hair is uncovered. Other women cut their hair.

Questions:

Imad Uddin asked what people in high-income countries could do for women in Afghanistan or Iran?

MJ – It was difficult before the Taliban, even more difficult now. There is more to women than what they wear. We need a lot of noise from those who can make it. The Taliban are trying to take women as hostages to make a point against the world willingness to work with the Taliban or try to help the people.

PA – Be consistent. The Iranian government deflects criticism by comparing US policy on Iran with that of Israel or Saudi Arabia.

Wendy Kyrle Pope should Aid traded for women's rights?

MJ – Organisations are closing down in protest. Do you want people to starve because girls aren't going to school?

Stewart Rayment asked about the concept of Gender Apartheid, following the morning's news¹.

MJ – It would make working with the Taliban harder.

Julliet Makhpila of Black Liberal Democrats pointed out that depriving girls of education was commonplace across much of Africa, thanked the speakers and congratulated LIBG for hosting the event.

The LIBG Forum was held by Zoom on 8th March 2023. It was organised by Dr. Imad Ahmed and chaired by Irina von Wiese.

¹ <https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/iranian-and-afghan-women-lawyers-and-leaders-launch-global-campaign-to-officially-recognize-gender-apartheid-301765723.html>

China - What Next?

Dr Yeow Poon

When the England China Business Forum (ECBF) was established in early 2013, David Cameron visited China later in December, and Xi Xing Ping returned the favour in 2015. We had a period of a golden era relationship with China, and we were scrambling to understand how to enter the market in China, build business relationships and protect our interests.

The situation began to change when Donald Trump imposed tariffs on imported solar cells and certain washing machines in 2018. Joe Biden continued the policy of constraining China and trade barriers are now expanded to include a large variety of goods and, more significantly, the tech sector. The US, UK, NATO and the G7 increasingly see China not just as a systemic competitor but also as a security threat. There is escalating talk by Western politicians from all parties of decoupling for both economic resilience and security reasons, as well as upping military forces around China.



*England China Business Forum, Birmingham 2023.
Dr Yeow Poon third from right.*

So, what's next? I would like to address two issues from the perspective of the impact on UK businesses trading with China.

First, how realistic is decoupling in the short and medium term? Second, will there be a war over Taiwan?

Let's look at some trade figures.

In 2021, China was the UK's largest import partner and sixth-largest export partner for goods. Our trade deficit in 2021 was £44.8 billion in goods, partially offset by a £5.7 billion surplus in services^[1]. The

figures for 2022 is slightly lower but is expected to rebound in 2023.

Foreign direct investment into China in 2022 rose 8% from a year earlier to USD 189.13 billion. Increases in FDI from the UK was 40.7% and the EU 92.2%. FDI into China was 46% into manufacturing and 28% into high-tech industries^[2].

For the full year of 2022, China's global exports rose 7% to USD 3.6 trillion^[3] and China's trade surplus grew to a record \$877.6 billion^[4] despite weakening U.S. and European demand and Zero-Covid controls that shut down various industrial cities in China.

It does not appear from the trade statistics that economic decoupling is going to happen anytime soon. Why? Western countries have generally taken two strategic approaches to decoupling from China.

The first approach is to become less reliant on China, especially with advanced chip technology. The US Chips and Science Act will invest USD52.7 billion to develop America's semiconductor industry. The EU will also be investing more than €43 billion to support its Chips Act until 2030. The US has gone further, blocking Chinese firms from acquiring advanced chip technology and prohibits American citizens and companies from assisting China's semiconductor industry.

According to some views "Washington is now purposely and openly working to hold back Chinese economic progress."^[5]

Allied countries such as the EU, Japan and South Korea, under tremendous pressure from the US, have agreed to impose export restrictions on lithography machines. However, draconian trade protection policies will not only impact China but will have unintended consequences. Industry leaders such as ASML, a key supplier of lithography equipment, warns that sanctions will accelerate the development of Chinese competitors.

"If they cannot get those machines, they will develop them themselves. That will take time, but ultimately they will get there ... The more you put them under pressure, the more likely it is that they will double up their efforts."[\[6\]](#)

There is also a strong possibility of a boomerang effect, as the supply chain that provides the raw material for semiconductors are primarily located outside the US and EU. China alone manufactures 79% of the global supply of the quality of silicon needed for chip manufacturing[\[7\]](#).

For us in the UK, even if we have a cohesive industry strategy on how to decouple, it will require considerable resources over several years. The UK has been working on a semi-conductor strategy for the last 2 years. It appears that the UK wants to increase semi-conductor production using existing programmes[\[8\]](#), possibly £1bn over several years[\[9\]](#), which is plainly insufficient if the UK wants to be a global player. It is very doubtful whether our current politics and economic system are able and willing to sustain the cost and investment needed.

A House of Commons Committee report stated that it is not clear "that the support or attention currently offered by Government is at anything like the scale which is needed to secure our supply of semiconductors and to deliver the future prosperity of the semiconductor industry."[\[10\]](#)

The second strategic approach to decoupling from China is for western companies to relocate to other emerging economies, such as Mexico, India and Southeast Asia. There are however significant constraints. For example, Vietnam with a population of just under 100 million will only be able to absorb so much industrial capacity. India and Indonesia with much larger populations will need many years to build up its industrial and transport infrastructure before they can be manufacturing powerhouses.

"China's rise wasn't all about cheap labour ... modern infrastructure was a big factor in drawing global companies to use the country as a manufacturing hub."[\[11\]](#)

One interesting thing about China's trade figures is Southeast Asia. As a bloc, ASEAN has the 3rd largest population in the world with a median age of 30.3 years. In 2019, ASEAN overtook the European Union to become China's largest trading partner. In 2020, about 25% of ASEAN's foreign trade is with China and ASEAN accounted for 14.7% of China's total trade. With the launch of RCEP (the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) in 2022, Southeast Asian economies are expected to grow substantially in coming years.

The point being made here is that for many countries in the Global South, China has become the more important trading partner. This is a highly significant change in global trade that UK businesses ought to take note of.

It does not appear that Western attempts to decouple, sanction and constrain China will have significant impact on China's economy. So, what can derail this somewhat rosy picture for trade with China? There is one major uncertainty. The issue of how US politicians will play the 'bad China' card during the US presidential elections in 2024 and whether the US will cross China's red line by declaring Taiwan as an independent country.

The current signs do not appear good. The US (and NATO) is increasing their military assets in an arc from Japan to Philippines. Japan is being encouraged to militarise. The frequent scare mongering news of 'bad China' is conditioning people in the US, and perhaps to a lesser degree in Europe to a potential hot war with a 'hated' enemy. For examples, a US Air Force general sending out a memo saying his guts tell him there

will be a war with China in 2025[12], the warnings of smart light bulbs spying for China and the furore over a balloon from China flying over the US.

One key factor would be how quickly the US can remove its dependence on Taiwan for advanced semi-conductors. TSMC first fab in Arizona will be completed in 2024 and a second fab in 2026[13], with a total investment of USD40 billion. When completed, the 2 plants are expected to meet the US demand for 600,000 wafers annually[14]. Will the US be more likely to start a war then?

According to a WSJ op-ed "Washington looks to be playing for time - not time to rearm and prepare for a fight, but to reduce Taiwan's importance to the U.S." [15] for semi-conductors.

Even if the WSJ op-ed is true, there is always a risk of mishaps and/or miscalculations. However, a war between the US/NATO and China will lead to the closing of the South China Sea, East China Sea and Sea of Japan. The result will be disastrous for the global economy, as the closing of shipping lanes will seriously disrupt supply chains between East and West.

To conclude, an open war between the US and China over Taiwan is very unlikely in the short term and medium term as the disruption to the global economy will hit every country hard.

Still, the propaganda and political rhetoric from both sides will get worse, and there is always the risk of a mishap. However, past experiences from the Cold War with the Soviet Union, as well as incidences between the US and China over the years, indicate that nuclear powers have means to defuse and walk back from critical situations.

British businesses must therefore continue, even increase their trade with China. There is a strong expectation that after lifting the restrictions of Zero-Covid, there will be an increase in consumer demand. IMF forecasted that China's economy will grow by 5.2% in 2023, but will settle below 4% in the medium term[16]. According to Andrew Seaton, Chief Executive of CBBC, [17] "There is a broad expectation of a strong revival in business and economic activity, particularly from Q2 onwards. As The Economist recently said about the new policy: 'This year's biggest economic event is already underway'."

Of course, in trading with China, we ought to be clear-eyed, as with any business relationships in any country. The UK government could also be clearer about its economic, industrial and security strategies, based on medium and long term level headed assessments rather than short term political gains.

The Head of CBI has warned that "Global investors are shunning Britain because the Government has no coherent economic plan and is failing to keep up with volcanic policy changes in the US and Europe"[18]. Finally, as UK businesses, we should be striving to reduce the trade imbalances by strengthening the promotion of our services and becoming better in manufacturing. Overall, although I have some concerns, I remain optimistic that trade between the UK and China will continue to grow.

Dr Yeow Poon

Dr Yeow Poon is chair of Chinese Lib Dems

[1] [UK trade with China: 2021 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/external-trade/uk-trade-with-china)

[2] [China Foreign Direct Investment - December 2022 Data - 1997-2021 Historical \(tradingeconomics.com\)](https://tradingeconomics.com/china/foreign-direct-investment)

[3] [China Exports - December 2022 Data - 1981-2021 Historical - January Forecast \(tradingeconomics.com\)](https://tradingeconomics.com/china/exports)

[4] [China's trade surplus swells to \\$877.6B as exports grow | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/china-trade-surplus-swells-to-877-6-billion-as-exports-grow-b2111111.html)

[5] [America is turning towards protectionist trade policies and it's going to affect you \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/economy/america-is-turning-towards-protectionist-trade-policies-and-its-going-to-affect-you)

[6] [Sanctions move China to replace chips supply chain - Asia Times](https://www.asiatimes.com/news/economy/sanctions-move-china-to-replace-chips-supply-chain)

[7] [US Chip Sanctions on China: Analysis and Implications - China Briefing News \(china-briefing.com\)](https://china-briefing.com/news/us-chip-sanctions-on-china-analysis-and-implications)

[8] [UK government set to subsidise chip manufacturing in bid to cut overseas reliance | IT PRO](https://www.it-pro.com/news/uk-government-set-to-subsidise-chip-manufacturing-in-bid-to-cut-overseas-reliance)

[9] [Britain to challenge China with £1bn subsidies for computer chip makers \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/economy/britain-to-challenge-china-with-1-billion-subsidies-for-computer-chip-makers)

LI welcomes freeing of 222 Nicaraguan political prisoners

Liberal International welcomes the freeing of 222 Nicaraguan political prisoners on February 9 who were flown to the United States to live in exile, including Félix Maradiaga, leader of Blue & White National Unity party, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, an editor of the newspaper *La Prensa*, and Mauricio Díaz, former ambassador & leader of Citizens for Liberty.

However, LI echoes the statement of the Latin American Liberal Network (RELIAL) in expressing regret at the violation of those former prisoners' political rights. For their dissidence, political participation, and defence of democracy and rule of law, they have been stripped of their citizenship rights and forced to leave Nicaragua.

Former LI Vice President and National President of the Nicaraguan Party Citizens for Liberty Kitty Monterrey celebrated the release of the Nicaraguan dissidents and stated on Twitter, "All Nicaraguans need to be able to live in freedom and democracy."

LI urges President Daniel Ortega to release all of Nicaragua's political prisoners who were detained for exercising their political rights and to restore democracy and civic freedoms in Nicaragua.

Others amongst those released included 21 women and LGBTQ+ activists who spoke of the misogyny and homophobia of the Nicaraguan prison system. Dora María Téllez, herself a former Sandinista guerrilla commander, leader of the leftist Unamos party and a queer dissident, had been held for 605 days in the men's wing of the El Chipote prison. All of those released had their Nicaraguan citizenship revoked and are now stateless. At least 30 political prisoners, including a Catholic Bishop, refused release as a protest and remain incarcerated. openDemocracy covered the stories of some of those released and this can be read at:



Image credits: Julio Vanini via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ungaman/27614111387>

https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/nicaragua-women-lgbt-human-rights-prison-ortega/?utm_source=oD%20Daily%20SEGMENT&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Government%20%E2%80%98monitoring%E2%80%99%20human%20rights%20lawyers&kx=jtgJ1MuiHXUha9Cwwkx043pvnI0ZDtVG9urvhGlxYEKR70KLOtnAqEaz3AyyBpMU.YjCYwm

China{ What Next? Continued for page 19:

[10] [The semiconductor industry in the UK - Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee \(parliament.uk\)](#)

[11] [Global Trade Is Shifting, Not Reversing - WSJ](#)

[12] [U.S. four-star general warns of war with China in 2025 | Reuters](#)

[13] [TSMC Announces Updates for TSMC Arizona](#)

[14] [TSMC to up Arizona investment to \\$40 billion with second semiconductor chip plant \(cnbc.com\)](#)

[15] [Will the U.S. Really Defend Taiwan? - WSJ](#)

[16] [IMF lifts 2023 growth forecast on China reopening, strength in U.S., Europe | Reuters](#)

[17] [What China's reopening means for British business - Focus - China Britain Business Council \(cbbc.org\)](#)

[18] [The world is giving up on Britain, warns CBI chief \(msn.com\)](#)

A Seismic Change for Turkey?

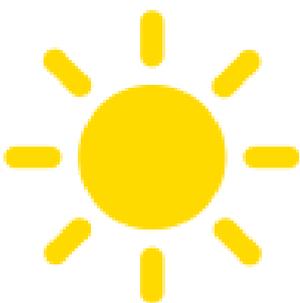
A. Kurt

The earthquake was expected, scientists warned the authorities numerous times. Despite the warnings nothing was done, in fact the Erdoğan government believes such events is god's doing so mortal humans could do nothing to prevent such occurrences. There is no definitive record exists yet but according to some estimates around 50,000 building destroyed. The official death toll stopped just before the 50,000 as I write. Unofficial estimates of loss of life ranges from 100,000 to 200,000.

Two weeks after the event there is no drinking or washing water, lack of tents, lack of food, no toilet facilities, no security, no safe conditions for the survivors. this has never happened before. Red Crescent (equivalent of red cross) reached the disaster areas after two and three days, also it was revealed that the Red Crescent were selling the tents to private charities instead of delivering to people who were homeless because of the disaster. The head of Red Crescent defended the practise by saying the organisation was partially working as a private company. Thousands of people died because of faulty building, many more died because of lack of relief effort, lack of help when they were under the rubble. Along with the buildings state itself also completely collapsed too.

I thank your MPs Layla Moran and Alistair Carmichael for their calls on the Home Office to introduce a bespoke visa route for earthquake victims, like the Ukraine Family Scheme. I support the Ukrainians, and I think the scheme was very much driven by the British people, but the rest of the world notes your government's exceptionalism in dealing with Ukrainians versus all other refugees – not least those who helped you in Afghanistan and Iraq.

There have been many construction amnesty regulations passed in the last twenty years. Construction is the most important vote winning factor in Erdoğan years. not just houses, for roads, bridges and airports (and many other construction projects). The expectations of amnesty had driven people to build without any rules. Bribery and political favouritism become a daily occurrence in the construction industry. Erdoğan's bigger backers are in the construction field. He personally sees construction as a main vote winner. In the last earthquake a lot of new buildings collapsed. in theory they should have stayed strong but this did not happen instead some old buildings pre 70's stayed intact. unless you pay the right amount to the right people you cannot build anything in Turkey. Accountability and strong buildings are the two important missing things under the current regime of Turkey. as always none of the real culprits will be punish instead a few scapegoats or small fishes will do a short time.



The opposition alliance which consists of six parties - Altılı Masa – the Table of Six, had a big hit by Meral Akşener's leaving the opposition bloc on 3rd March. According the polls Akşener's iYİ parti (Good party), have at least 11 percent of vote in the next election. Her leaving the alliance bloc could have made life much easier for Erdoğan. Then 48 hours later she was back to the alliance bloc. Almost every poll shows opposition presidential candidate Kılıçdaroğlu wins

under the normal conditions. He should win but conditions are not normal so it is hard to predict what is going to happen in two and a half months' time. There have been death threats and the latest rumour is that the Kurdish HTP will be banned before the election.

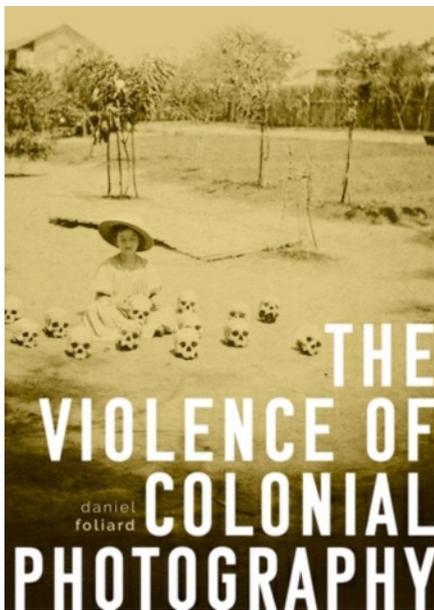
Head of the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – Republican People's Party), Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is an Alevi person. The Alevis have been seen as an enemy by Turkish state, always persecuted for their resistance to Turkification – there were rebellions in the 1920s & 1930s. This negative attitude against them has increased under the era of Erdoğan governments. Erdoğan has used the Sunni card since he entered his political life, whilst the Alevis follow a non-Sunni mystical form of Islam.

A. Kurt

reviews

The Violence of Colonial Photography, by Daniel Foliard.
Manchester University Press 2022 £16.99
isbn 9781562163318

Many years ago, a distant relative died and for want of anyone else, I ended up with his possessions which included a photograph album. He had been a career soldier and most of the photographs related to that period in his life. Part of his military service was during the Great Revolt, *al-Thawra al-Kubra*, against the Palestine Mandate and featured a dead Palestinian fighter, shot during an attack on a camp. What do you do with old albums of distant relatives? Eventually I donated it to his (then) regimental museum. I spent too much time thinking about whether to retain that series of photos, but in the end decided not to. The museum was, incidentally, extremely grateful. Most of their collection related to officers and information about NCOs and other ranks was scarce, something you might think of if in the same position.



I also have a book, somewhere in the attic, commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 – *Sixty Years A Queen*. It is full of images of the quelling of ‘native rebellions’ as the British Empire drove into places nobody had heard of before – though more of imperial glory than anything gruesome – aside from the image of someone shouting ‘Floreat Etona’ to a former school chum before catching a bullet in some cavalry charge, or the treacherous General Charles Gordon defying orders and meeting death at Khartoum. Such was the pluck the British Empire was made of in the national myth.

Let us look further at George William Joy’s painting of *The Death of General Gordon*, as it is probably more familiar to readers. Painted eight years after the incident was widely reproduced as a colour lithograph as part of the mythicising process. Gordon has the high ground, looking down on the mob about to kill him, calm and dignified, set against a tempestuous mass in the assault. A notorious evangelical, Gordon is a

martyr to the Christianising mission of imperialism, part of its ostensible justification. Gladstone and his government took a lot of stick for a soldier who was disobeying orders. Joy claimed that his painting was historically accurate, though his source, Wingate, was not present and only had it second hand. Yet it resonates through to the 1966 film *Khartoum* and even to *The Four Feathers* film remake of 2002.

Even in my school days half a century ago, we were starting to consider whether the action of Cecil Rhodes et al in south and central Africa were justified. The expansion of Empire is littered with the pirate attacks of British commerce all over the world, invariably sanctioned by the Tories and if not always by Liberals, accepted as a *fait accompli* when they returned to office. Many of these, I think of Burma, Myanmar, remain as trouble spots to this day, and I wonder how deep the scars are?

Daniel Foliard focusses primarily on the British and French imperialisms, often in conflict, yet collaborating in their portrayal of the imperial adventure - much a common culture after all. The photograph is a delay in time; the image of a moment, captured for some eternity, be that, in most cases, a short one. However, that image may be contrived and managed in its execution and especially dissemination. The technology of the time was more suited to a posed photograph; the scene could be created. A photo can be altered and the selection process, editing, publication, are conscious acts in themselves (desperation to find a suitable image aside, why do I use this or that image on the cover of this magazine or inside it? Choices are made – and at least one ‘health warning’ has been posted in recent years.

You will gain both in knowledge of imperialism and photography from this book, so don't be shy. You will see the images in your newspapers, even on the television in a different light.

The camera was (is) part of the arsenal of imperialism as much as the gun; you shoot with both.

Stewart Rayment

**Butler to the World, by Oliver Bullough,
Profile Books 2023 £10.99
isbn 9781788165884**

This is an important book. It is also an uncomfortable read for those innocent souls who believe corruption is what foreigners do. Oliver Bullough has made his name exposing the role London's bankers, accountants and estate agents play in annually laundering hundreds of billions of pounds/dollars for oligarchs, drug lords and dictators. The UK's private schools are kept afloat educating the offspring of people who have ruthlessly stolen from poor countries; house prices in Chelsea are buoyed up by kleptocrat Russians; luxury goods emporia bow down before mafia bosses; and the Conservative Party hands out peerages to donors whose fathers ran the Lubyanka.

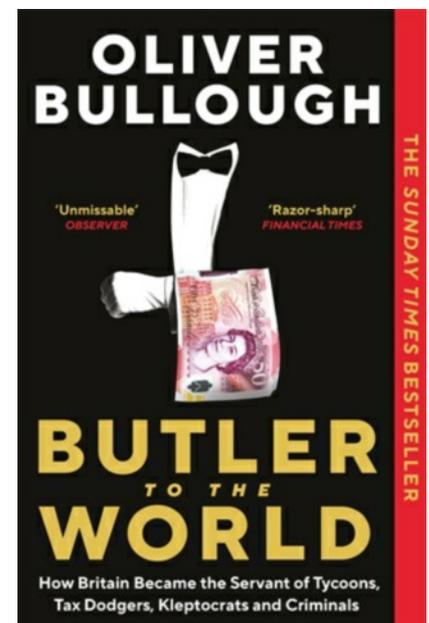
The annual cost of organised crime to people in Britain is estimated at GBP 37 billion, with fraud costing another GBP 193 billion – that's GBP 4,000 for every adult in the UK. According to Alison Barker of the UK's Financial Conduct Authority, money laundering matters because, "It pays for human trafficking. It facilitates drugs. It cheats society of a legitimate economy. Money laundering deprives schools, hospitals and roads. It causes violence and intimidation. It makes our communities unsafe."

Bullough provides unedifying evidence of just how low Britain has sunk since the humiliation of Suez, when the UK needed a new global role. It found it facilitating the creation of offshore shell companies, as well as Scottish Limited Partnerships which hide the identities of beneficial owners. And by allowing online and telephone gambling to be based in Gibraltar, the government has unleashed a socially devastating industry that preys on the weak-willed. Attempts to regulate gambling such as stopping tantalising offers being sent to addicts who have said they want to stop gambling are defeated by a government that counts among its generous donors the owners of online "gaming" sites.

The common refrain is, "If the UK didn't provide these services, and make billions from laundering money, someone else would." The same argument applies to supplying torture equipment to Saudi Arabia, of course. It was also used to justify the slave trade.

Liberal Democrats should ask why a Lib Dem peer from our most distinguished family lobbied for Dmitry Firtash, an oligarch indicted by the FBI. It was Labour's Margaret Hodge and the Tory Andrew Mitchell who made sure the UK finally reigned in its semi-detached foreign territories. But Bullough says new laws need sufficient well-qualified staff to enforce them. The National Crime Agency is pitifully underfunded. Unexplained Wealth Orders are an improvement on the old system of averting the eyes, but without resources, this is a token gesture. The UK has 22 different regulatory agencies but a quarter of them do no supervision and 90% had not identified the riskiest companies when Bullough started asking them questions. The Americans are much more serious: they fined HSBC \$1.9 billion for laundering Mexican drug money – not that it deterred HSBC for long.

The UK also needs to clarify its relationship with the likes of Gibraltar, Jersey, etc. In 2019, the Royal Navy rescued an Isle of Man oil tanker from the Arabian Gulf: the Isle of Man expected its ship to be saved although it pays no tax toward maintaining the UK's Navy.



A Kenyan economist I know reckons the UK could stop sending any aid to Africa if only it cracked down on the African elite using Britain to launder the money they have stolen from their wretched populations.

Chance would be a fine thing.

Spare, by Prince Harry
Penguin Random House 2023
isbn 9780593593806

I start with a poem.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

Emily Dickinson

Prince Harry, the author, with J. H. Moehringer, of “Spare”, would like more than anything to be a nobody. In “Spare”, he describes how he came closest to it when he was serving with the British forces in Afghanistan, wearing the same uniform as everybody else, subject to the same discipline.

While not wanting to admit it, many Americans can't get enough news of the royal family. We don't subscribe to Netflix, but our friends who do raved about “The Crown,” the probably rather fictitious account of the characters and events going on in and around the the palace. Years before, we also grieved over the death of Princess Diana, although not to the same extent as the British. We were puzzled to see her two young sons, one only twelve years old, following their mother's coffin into Westminster Abbey, and wondered how this could have been expected of them.

And the one who was only twelve at the time still has not recovered. For years Harry resorted to “magical thinking”, imagining that his mother could not possibly have died, that she must be in hiding, and going to rescue him eventually.

A friend in Tucson, Arizona recently related her own connection to Harry: “We both lost our mothers when we were twelve,” she said. She described how although she was surrounded by a large and loving family, for years she felt angry and “acted out,” until the time in her mid-teens when she was finally able to come to terms with what had happened.

Years later Harry had a driver retrace the route that Diana and Dodi's chauffeur had taken from the Ritz, to find out if it was dangerous, possibly a winding tunnel near the Pont de l'Alma, something that might make the crash understandable. Instead, with his chauffeur speeding through at 65 mph, Harry realized that it was quite straightforward, not dangerous at all, that the crash and deaths of everybody but the bodyguard must have been caused by the chauffeur's being blinded by flashes of the paparazzi' cameras. And those flashes were, he sadly concluded, the last thing his dying mother would have seen.

He describes how his discomfort with the royal role increased as he himself became the target of the “paps”, as he calls the paparazzi. Much of what he did in his teen years was misinterpreted or presented in the worst possible light. Getting into the army was a temporary refuge, where he could wear the uniform and be treated like everybody else.

Once out of the service, the question was what to do next, besides the usual assignments given to a member of the royal family. He thought of increasing his charitable work, promoting the interests of the handi-capped. But his personal life was empty. One promising relationship after another ended, when girlfriends found the glare of publicity, the aggressiveness of the tabloids, too much to bear. His closest relatives were cold and remote. And then he found Meghan.

One wonders why Meghan's short tenure as the wife of a royal turned out to be so difficult. We remember articles in *The Spectator* by the late Henry Fairlie, who described the annual onslaught of American tourists with about the same enthusiasm with which his ancestors must have regarded the invasions of the barbarian hordes. (Later, paradoxically, Fairlie moved to the U.S.) Many of his countrymen may feel the same way. Meghan was worse than a tourist: she was there to stay, or so it seemed. Her being American, and worse still, an American of colour, provided a feast for the tabloid vultures to pick at. With such a background, she would have to be pushy, rude, demanding, she would have to have all the negatives commonly associated with her countrymen. An obvious outsider, she had to attract suspicion. The last American who got close to a British royal was Mrs. Simpson, and we all know how that worked out.

The one revelation in "Spare" that continues to appall is how the Family decided to go along with the tabloid press and the distorted picture it presented of Meghan and Harry, even if in the end this meant losing one of their own. In what sort of world should Harry receive worse treatment than his uncle Andrew, friend of the late convicted paedophile, Jeffrey Epstein?

And what about the British press? The extreme and negative criticism related in "Spare" did not emanate solely from the tabloids. Valentine Low writes about the royal family for the *Times*. In his book "Courtiers", written about the same time as "Spare," there's less criticism of Prince Andrew - although Low does mention his frequent profane outbursts and cluelessness as a trade envoy - than there is of Meghan Markle. Low devotes the last three chapters of his book to slamming her.

We learn in "Spare" that not a penny from the royal coffers goes to provide protection for Harry and Meghan and their young family in the U.S., a real issue in this country where there are more guns than people and even churches have to post signs outside forbidding firearms.

What Harry has done is to remove the Wizard's screen, lift the magician's veil, expose what's going on in the places we are not allowed to enter. Like Marcel Proust, knowing more now about the privileged, we find ourselves with a sense of let-down.

As Alain de Botton tells it in his book, "How Proust Can Change Your Life", Proust "went to Madame Y's parties, sent flowers to Madame Z, ingratiated himself with Prince Constantin de Brancovin . . . And then realized that he had been sold a lie. . . . He recognized that he was better off staying at home, that he could be as happy talking to his maid as to the Princesse Caraman-Chimay."

And that turns out to be the essential message that we take from "Spare."

Christine Graf

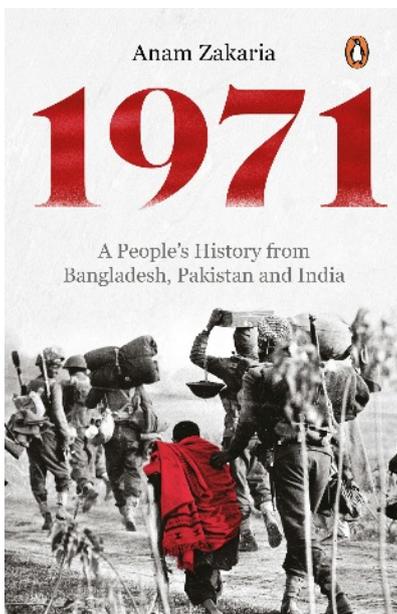


1971: A People's History from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India by Anam Zakaria
Vintage Books 2021 £11.99
isbn 978-0143454038

Zakaria masterfully weaves together a thoroughly researched history of military, diplomatic and judicial affairs with interviews of people in Pakistan and Bangladesh to understand the various truths and lived experiences as events on the ground unravelled. She digs deep to unearth nuance. Yes, there were atrocities at the hands of the Pakistan army. There were also atrocities at the hands of Mukti Bahini. How in Bangladesh, Bengalis claim the trauma of violence as an exclusive experience, ie. exclude Biharis and pro-Pakistan Bengalis.

She unpacks the internal political tensions between Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – who, like Muhammad Ali Jinnah before him, advocated a weak federal centre – and secessionists, and how Rahman's popularity would likely have fizzled had the outcome of the 1971 election been respected. She compares the state textbook accounts of history in Pakistan with what is taught in private schools and finds significant differences. She interviews children in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

Unlike most books that cover weighty topics, Zakaria has made this eminently readable, and targeted the lay reader. She is after all, a school teacher. Her readability is facilitated by her use of the first person since the interaction with her respondents provides context to what they say.



Having guided the reader through the worst parts of 1971, illuminated the Pakistan state's facile takeaway from 1971 that it was India's doing and not its own, and also illuminated the problematic divisions that exist in Bangladesh's politics today, Zakaria leaves us with the ongoing hardships of those whom have been left stateless in Karachi and at Geneva Camp in Bangladesh.

Imaduddin Ahmed

Appendix to Keith Melton's article, pages 7-10

F8 - Proposed Amendment to Nuclear Weapons Motion

The Spring Conference Agenda has the long motion F8 "The UK's Nuclear deterrent" and, since the amendment seeks to change a number of aspects of the motion, this explained should help to indicate where, why and how those changes impact on the motion as a whole..

In the motion, below, we have **marked in red** those elements that cannot be reasonably incorporated with our different starting point. Then we show the amendment and *then* we have reprinted the whole motion as amended.

F8 The UK's Nuclear Deterrent

Mover: Richard Foord MP (Spokesperson for Defence).

Summation: Layla Moran MP (Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs).

1 Conference reaffirms:

- 2 I. The universal liberal values of internationalism, human rights,
- 3 the pursuit of peace, and the rule of law.
- 4 II. The duty of the United Kingdom to keep its people safe.
- 5 III. Our long-held desire to negotiate towards a world where nuclear
- 6 weapons are put beyond use.
- 7 IV. Our belief that the United Kingdom is safer and more prosperous
- 8 when working with multilateral institutions, including NATO.
- 9 V. The United Kingdom's long-standing legal and moral obligations
- 10 to pursue global disarmament.

11 Conference notes:

- 12 a) Our 2017 policy on nuclear weapons, policy paper 127, Towards a
- 13 World Free of Nuclear Weapons, which recommended a change in
- 14 the UK's nuclear posture from Continuous At-Sea Deterrent
- 15 (CASD) to a medium-responsiveness posture with no continuous
- 16 deployment.
- 17 b) That the global security environment is characterised by new
- 18 levels of instability, including rising tensions over Iran and the
- 19 fragmentation of nuclear arms control agreements, and has
- 20 deteriorated following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in
- 21 February 2022.
- 22 c) Russia's veiled threats as to its readiness to use nuclear weapons,
- 23 on the battlefield or elsewhere.
- 24 **d) That the UK's nuclear weapons are declared for the defence of**
- 25 **NATO and so play a key protective role for our allies.**

26 Conference believes that:

- 27 i) Vladimir Putin's Russia poses a clear threat to our national
- 28 security and that of our NATO allies.
- 29 **ii) We have no wish to see the current conflict in Ukraine escalate,**
- 30 **yet in these circumstances NATO must retain all the necessary**
- 31 **elements of a credible nuclear deterrent.**
- 32 **iii) Abandoning the current posture of continuous at-sea deterrence**
- 33 **(CASD) would send the wrong signal to Vladimir Putin – and to**
- 34 **our European allies about our willingness to come to their**
- 35 **defence, weakening the credibility of the UK's nuclear deterrent**
- 36 **at a delicate time.**
- 37 **iv) Taking a step down the nuclear capability ladder at a moment**
- 38 **when it is so unlikely to be reciprocated will sadly do little to**
- 39 **further our ambition of global disarmament.**

40 v) The challenging security environment and rising nuclear risks
41 should embolden the UK to make a renewed push for global
42 disarmament, and while the strategic context is challenging,
43 opportunities which arise in the future must not be squandered.
44 vi) The UK Government's approach to global disarmament has been
45 at best counter-productive and at worst in breach of legal and
46 moral obligations.

47 Conference therefore calls on the UK Government to:

- 48 A. Maintain a minimum, credible nuclear deterrent.
- 49 B. Maintain the current posture of continuous at-sea deterrence.
- 50 C. Examine the option of a future move down from continuous at-
51 sea deterrence to a medium-responsiveness posture as a
52 credible step to demonstrate leadership on nuclear
53 disarmament, if and when the strategic environment is more
54 conducive to progress.
- 55 D. Reduce nuclear risk by establishing a declaratory policy of 'No
56 First Use' for the UK's nuclear deterrent.

57 Conference urges the UK Government to pursue global disarmament,
58 including by:

- 59 1. Reversing plans to increase the cap on the stockpile of nuclear
60 weapons; and associated reductions in transparency commitments.
- 61 2. Publicly recommitting to the UK's obligations under the Non-
62 Proliferation Treaty.
- 63 3. Making global disarmament a diplomatic priority for the Foreign,
64 Commonwealth and Development Office.
- 65 4. Looking to engage further with non-Nuclear Weapon States on
66 disarmament initiatives, including the Stockholm Initiative and the
67 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (while acknowledging
68 that the UK cannot sign that Treaty).
- 69 5. Given the unlikelihood of disarmament developments with Russia
70 under the present Russian Government, Conference believes that the
71 UK Government should also explore opportunities to pursue
72 disarmament initiatives with other Nuclear Weapon States, including:
73 a) Engaging with other Nuclear Weapon States regarding bilateral
74 adoption of transparency measures.
75 b) Continuing engagement with Nuclear Weapon States which are
76 yet to engage with the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.
77 c) Encouraging remaining countries which have not ratified the
78 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, which Russia has
79 already ratified, to do so.

Proposed Amendment to "The UK's nuclear deterrent"

Under Conference reaffirms...

After line 3, add a new paragraph ll) and renumber

ll) That each generation has a responsibility to protect the planet, its ecosystem and all its peoples.

Under Conference notes...

Delete lines 24 & 25 – and replace with new paragraph d) – and add new paragraphs e), f) and g)

d) That the UK's nuclear weapons (less than 2% of the global weapon 'stock') are declared for the defence of NATO, though nominally in control of the UK Government in extremis.

e) The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. Signatories should immediately remove them from operational status, and destroy them as soon as possible, but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties

f) That the present UK Government and its predecessors have refused to sign and ratify the UN Treaty and, instead, has prioritised developing a replacement for the Trident nuclear weapons capability with a negative impact on conventional weapons spending and the armed forces

g) The failure of many NATO allies, including the UK, to properly resource their conventional armed forces in order to be ready to respond to conventional military attack

Under 'Conference believes that' ...

Delete lines 29 – 39 and replace with new paragraphs ii), iii) and iv)

ii) nuclear weapons do not make anyone safer and, in fact, pose an existential threat to all

iii) nuclear weapons cannot prevent armed conflict among states and heighten the risk of miscalculation that could bring an 'Age of Mass Extinctions' leading to the end of human life on Earth.

iv) we must accelerate our efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons

Under 'Conference therefore calls on' ...

Delete line 48 – 54 adding new paragraphs A), B), C) and D) and renumber as appropriate

A) to meet its commitment under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue effective measures towards nuclear disarmament.

B) immediately cancel the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system

C) halt plans to reduce the size of the regular Army from 82,000 personnel to 72,500 by 2025

D) urgently review the overall scale of all branches of UK armed forces in light of newly established NATO commitments

Under Conference urges...

In lines 67 & 68, delete the words (while acknowledging that the UK cannot sign that Treaty), add a hyphen and replace with the following words...

“– whilst undertaking to sign this UN Treaty within the life of the Parliament following the next UK General Election.”

So the final motion would read as follows:

Conference reaffirms

I) The universal liberal values of internationalism, human rights, the pursuit of peace, and the rule of law.

II) That each generation has a responsibility to protect the planet, its ecosystem and all its peoples.

III) The duty of the United Kingdom to keep its people safe.

IV) Our belief that the United Kingdom is safer and more prosperous when working with multilateral institutions, including NATO.

V) Our long-held desire to negotiate towards a world where nuclear weapons are put beyond use.

VI) The United Kingdom's long-standing legal and moral obligations to pursue global disarmament.

Conference notes:

- a) Our 2017 policy on nuclear weapons, 'Towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons', which recommended a change in the UK's nuclear posture from Continuous At-Sea Deterrent (CASD) to a medium-responsiveness posture with no continuous deployment.
- b) That the global security environment is characterised by increasing instability, including the fragmentation of nuclear arms control agreements, and has deteriorated following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.
- c) Russia's veiled threats as to its readiness to use nuclear weapons, on the battlefield or elsewhere.
- d) That the UK's nuclear weapons (less than 2% of the global weapon 'stock') are declared for the defence of NATO, though nominally in control of the UK Government in extremis.
- e) That the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. Signatories should immediately remove them from operational status, and destroy them as soon as possible, but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties.
- f) That the present UK Government and its predecessors have refused to sign and ratify the UN Treaty and, instead, has prioritised developing a replacement for the Trident nuclear weapons capability with a negative impact on conventional weapons spending and the armed forces.
- g) The failure of many NATO allies, including the UK, to properly resource their conventional armed forces in order to be ready to respond to conventional military attack.

Conference believes that:

- i) Vladimir Putin's Russia poses a clear threat to our national security and that of our NATO allies.
- ii) Nuclear weapons do not make anyone safer and, in fact, pose an existential threat to all.
- iii) Nuclear weapons cannot prevent armed conflict among states and heighten the risk of miscalculation that could bring an 'Age of Mass Extinctions' leading to the end of human life on Earth.
- iv) We must accelerate our efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons.
- v) The challenging security environment and rising nuclear risks should embolden the UK to make a renewed push for global disarmament, and while the strategic context is challenging, opportunities which arise in the future must not be squandered.
- vi) The UK Government's approach to global disarmament has been at best counter-productive and at worst in breach of legal and moral obligations.

Conference therefore calls on the UK Government to:

- A) to meet its commitment under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue effective measures towards nuclear disarmament.
- B) immediately cancel the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system.
- C) halt plans to reduce the size of the regular Army from 82,000 personnel to 72,500 by 2025.
- D) urgently review the overall scale of all branches of UK armed forces in light of newly established NATO commitments.

Conference urges the UK Government to pursue global disarmament, including by:

1. Reversing plans to increase the cap on the stockpile of nuclear weapons; and associated reductions in transparency commitments;
2. Publicly recommitting to the UK's obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty;
3. Making global disarmament a diplomatic priority for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office;
4. Looking to engage further with non-Nuclear Weapon States on disarmament initiatives, including the Stockholm Initiative and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – whilst undertaking to sign this UN Treaty within the life of the Parliament following the next UK General Election
5. Given the unlikelihood of disarmament developments with Russia under the present Russian Government, Conference believes that the UK Government should also explore opportunities to pursue disarmament initiatives with other Nuclear Weapon States, including:

- a) Engaging with other Nuclear Weapon States regarding bilateral adoption of transparency measures.
- b) Continuing engagement with Nuclear Weapon States which are yet to sign the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.
- c) Encouraging remaining countries which have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, which Russia has already ratified, to do so.



I am delighted to report that the UK now has a king who chose this week, when the government is forcing through a horrible and possibly illegal immigration bill, to visit Waging Peace's persecuted Sudanese refugees. He told them, "I'm glad you're safe now."

Rebecca Tinsley
Waging Peace

Photo: Sam Churchill