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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



AMERICA AND THE ARABS

ISAIAH BERLIN LECTURE 2024

HARRIS & WALZ STOP OIL NOW

LEILA DE LIMA & VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

CHINA & TAIWAN VENEZUELA ELECTION

EVENTS

14th-17th September Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Brighton.

28th September National Rejoin March, London.

5th October Liberal Party Assembly, The Great Barr Hotel, Birmingham, B43 6HS.

19th October Green Liberal Democrats Conference, Nottingham University Business School.

26th October March for Clean Water, London

29th November-1st December 64th Congress of Liberal International. See page 2024-01 or the LI website.

21st-23rd March 2025 Liberal Democrats Spring Conference, Harrogate.

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CONTENTS

LIBG Conference Fringe	page 3
Isaiah Berlin Lecture, by Timothy Garton Ash	pages 4-11
Walzing Kamala, by Christine Graf	pages 12-14
Venezuela Election	page 14
Direct Action on Climate, words from an Activist, by Ludi Simpson	pages 15-16
Leila de Lima acquitted as last bogus charge dismissed.	page 17
The USA needs to offer the Arab World more than friends with benefits, by Mohammed Nosseir	pages 18-19
Vladimir Kara-Murza freed from Russian Prison	page 20
China in the United Nations, by Larry Ngan	pages 21-24
Reviews	pages 25-36
Brighton: the International Agenda	pages 37-40

Photographs– Mark Smulian, Liberal International. Stephen Brogan

Cover Photograph– Mark Smulian– the Sphinx at Giza, as inscrutable as US Foreign Policy?

LIBG is sharing a stall with LDEG at Brighton, volunteers are needed to help run the stall, which is at Stand 42 on the ground floor of the conference centre.

The deadline for the post-conference issue of interLib is 30th September; we welcome reports of international debates and fringe events at the conference.



LIBG Conference Fringe Event



Trump, Harris and the Future of Transatlantic Cooperation

**Saturday, 14th Sept at 1.00pm
(Grand Hotel, Regent Room):**

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The outcome of the U.S. presidential elections in November will determine not only the future political ties between the U.S. and the UK, but has wider implications for NATO, EU and UK security and defence cooperation, the war in Ukraine and the response to this war in the EU and UK. Join LIBG for a panel discussion with U.S. political analyst Mark Bergman, Caroline Voaden MP, (other panellists to be confirmed) and Irina von Wiese, Chair of LIBG.

Liberal International British Group

The Rise and Faltering of a Free Europe

The Isaiah Berlin Lecture 2024

Timothy Garton Ash

It is a great pleasure to be here in this temple of Gladstonian Liberalism. I belong to no political party but a lifelong liberal and see myself very much in that tradition and when I say ich bin ein Berliner, I refer not just to the city which means so much in my life but to the philosopher Isaiah Berlin who I had the privilege to know and who was a great English and European liberal and our subjects tonight Europe and Freedom were two subjects about which he cared a great deal and which have been leitmotifs of my own life as I explain in the book

If we think about Europe and freedom the last 50 years, 50 & a bit, half century, we have in my viewer a rather clear shape. When I started travelling to continental Europe, KarlHeinz, of course we are in Europe here make no mistake, as we are in Oxford, in 1972 Europe was still a continent of dictators, we forget that; we did the numbers for this book. 289,000,000 Europeans were living in democracies 389 million in dictatorships, not just the entirety of eastern and South Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union but of course Spain, Greece and Portugal under extreme right wing or fascist dictatorships. Across the next roughly speaking 35 years until about 2007, you have painted with a broad brush a remarkable spread of freedom, of democracy and the core institutions of the geopolitical West in Europe. Think about it, 1972 just six members of the European Economic Community as it was then, in just 15 of NATO. By 2007 27 members of the European Union as it has become and 26 of NATO an extraordinary, unprecedented enlargement, by the way including the Baltic states which in 1989 still did not exist formally on those political maps of Europe although they always existed in the hearts and minds their own peoples of course.

This was not one of a continuous upward curve, that's not how history works. There were major setbacks. There was the declaration of a state of war, *Stan wojenny* in Poland in 1981¹. There were five terrible wars in former Yugoslavia and of course there was 9/11. But one of the interesting things I found when working on this book is that 9/11 while it clearly was a major turning point in Middle Eastern history and in U.S. history was not, with benefit of hindsight, the great turning point in European history. The great turning point in European history was 2008, the nearest simultaneous eruption of the global financial crisis and Vladimir Putin's seizure of two large chunks of Georgia, about 20% of the sovereign territory of Georgia in 2008 started a cascade of crises which continues all the way down to the 24th of February 2022, Putin's full scale invasion of Ukraine which closes what I call the post-Wall era, the era that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall on the 19th November 1989. The global financial crisis segues into the Great Recession in many of our countries and of course the Eurozone crisis, under which southern Europe suffered so much for many years. 2010 already Victor Orban, that great young hero of 1989, I remember him well from those times, 2010 already started the demolition of democracy in Hungary. So much so that today you have a full member state of the EU that is no longer democracy, it's what political scientists call a competitive authoritarian system. 2014 of course, Putin's seizure of Crimea and as Ukrainians always remind us, the beginning of the Russia-Ukrainian war; it didn't just begin in 2022 and has now been going on for 10 years. 2015 the refugee crisis. 2016 Brexit, the election of Trump, great successes for populists in France, Marine Le Pen and German in the AfD in the 2017 elections, Covid and all the way down to the beginning of the largest war in Europe since 1945 which continues to this day. So, if you want a high point of the quest for Europe whole and free. to use a great phrase of President George H.W. Bush delivered in Mainz in 1989, arguably it was somewhere around 2017 because since that time we have seen it clear regression in many respects, including if I may say so the really shaming fact that it's difficult for the president of the Liberal International get a visa to come to Britain.

But still, Europe is one of the largest concatenations of the free and relatively rich in today's world. If you look at Freedom House's 2023 report on freedom in the world, we can argue about that definitions of free countries, partly free countries, but nonetheless 34 out of 84 free countries by their definition in Europe and many of those countries are rather small, so it's only 7% of the world's population. But many of them also quite rich so it's 17% of the world's GDP. So, there's still an awful lot to defend in this Europe of ours.

But I want of a larger part of my lecture to address the question of why having done so well for so long across the 35 ascending years, we had this downward turn, we've had this cascade of crisis, because I think when we address that question it actually brings us to the question what is to be done now and I'm going to look at three, and I mean there are many, many, many topics one could cover I'm just going to pick out for reasons of time three lessons of history, mistakes that I think we made which have lessons for us today.

The first is, to put it most simply, the fallacy of extrapolation. Broadly speaking we took the way history had been going for so long and particularly since 1989 and kidded ourselves it was just gonna go on going that way. As Thomas Bahgeot, a wonderful German intellectual diplomat puts it, we took the most nonlinear event in modern European history, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, and turned it into a linear projection. Or to state this in the most general terms we confuse history with a small 'h' with history with a large 'H'. By the way I'm afraid you can't do that in German because all nouns have initial capital letters, but the thought is there nonetheless. History with a small 'h', history as it really happens, always the product of the interaction between deep structure and process on the one hand and conjuncture, chance, collective will and individual leadership on the other; that's how history really happens, that's how 1989 happened. 1989 was actually a one in a million chance example of historical luck, what Machiavelli called Fortuna and we turned it into history with a capital 'H', an inevitable process of the expansion of freedom, the neo-Hegelian idea that Francis Fukuyama explored in his book *The End of History*, although the illusions I want to insist didn't come so much in the early 1990s when actually those of you were around will remember we were very uncertain of the way things were going; they came in the early-to-mid 2000s when everything seemed to have gone so well, But history is not a process, freedom is not a process, freedom is always a struggle this is what the Ukrainians are reminding us off today. For me the word of the decade is the Ukrainian word volya, and volya is a really interesting word because it combines some meanings in one word of freedom and the will to fight for it; it contains the root *will*, by the way in the Ukrainian version not the Russian version of the same word interesting semantic detail. And volya is what we need even in the most established western liberal democracies; freedom always has to be fought for. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. So that's lesson number 1 for now. Not a process, no automaticity; it always has to be fought for.

Lesson number 2, if you look back to those times early to mid-2000s there are just multiple examples of hubris. Of course, the hubris of the United states marching into Iraq and believing that if you topple the dictator somehow democracy would automatically emerge from below; by the way an illusion said by what had happened in 1989. The illusions of Tony Blair's Cool Britannia, believing that you could just go on opening, opening, opening, opening your culture, opening your markets, opening your borders and there wouldn't at some point be a reaction against it. The hubris of the European Union itself, which of this time like to speak as if it had found a model of post national transnational governance which the rest of the world had simply graciously to follow. I could go on with the listings of hubris but I'm going to focus on what the hubris of a globalised financialised capitalism now I formulate that very carefully, not the loose formulation neoliberal, globalised financialised capitalism because as he wonderful German historian Jürgen Kocker points out, it's a combination of these two things globalisation and financialisation which have given us the problems we have. One outside on its own or the other on its own might not have, it's a combination of the two and it's globalised financialized capitalism which in large measure led us into the global financial crisis starting in 2008 which had touched our long term consequences and which also has given us levels of inequality not seen for 100 years. Vertically, socio-economically, rich and poor; horizontally between different areas of our own countries and globally, in all three dimensions. According to a very careful study of world inequality edited by F Alvarado published by CUP between 1980 and 2018 the top 1% talk a larger share of global growth, twice the share of global growth than the bottom 50% right/ And as Thomas Piketty points out in his excellent latest book, one of the effects of this has been and here I'm trespassing on KarlHeinz's territory as an economist, but I think the statement holds, that it is extremely difficult to tax effectively the very rich, the billionaires, all global multinational companies and that has major impacts on our own society, including as Piketty writes, a feeling of anger and resentment at this perceived inequality. So, we thought at the time. that globalisation would give global aggregate gains. It did, it benefited hundreds of millions of people in countries like China and India, but we also thought, and this was a mistake, that those global aggregate gains would not just justify, argue about that, but compensate for specific local losses. Populism told us something very different. If you feel hard done by in the post-industrial north of England or the South East of Poland or northeastern France or wherever, it might be it doesn't make it any better for you the globalisation has helped hundreds of millions of people in China and India. And it wasn't just economic inequality, in the same period we were getting more what I would call cultural inequality, the inequality of attention and respect, that is to say people in the poorer parts of our countries, people often without higher education, felt that they were simply not being seen by cosmopolitan liberal metropolitan elites in clubs like, dare I say, the National Liberal Club all other more hip venues even, and of course by the media and by people in universities. They were being simply not seen. They were ignored and they were disrespected, and the combination of the economic inequality and the cultural inequality has given us a wave of anti-liberal populism which draws upon the problem and is still drawing upon deep aquifers of resentment and anger deep, deep wells of resentment not yet exhausted. And therefore, we as liberals with a small 'L', I'm using the term with a small 'L' implying the broader family, need to pay attention to equality and by the way also to sovereignty, because one of the problems have not been able to fix tax the billionaires and global multinational companies is actually the problem of sovereignty who is the sovereign for Facebook? Who is the sovereign for a billionaire? Now this for me is both a normative and a practical point. There are many

of them represented by different parties in the Liberal International; it's quite a broad church. My kind of liberalism is the egalitarian liberalism of Ralf Dahrendorf and Ronald Dworkin.

So, what Dahrendorf argued actually in a letter in a lecture if memory serves to the Liberal International is the liberty, liberty requires what he called a common floor, a common starting point of housing, of healthcare, of education and he emphasised with meaningful work for all, and it's on that basis that you have a genuinely liberal society. Ronnie Dworkin put as his central principle of his kind of liberalism that there should be, and I quote "equal respect and concern for each citizen" or for each member of the society. So that's a normative statement right a statement of principle about liberalism you can agree with that or disagree but even if you disagree with that you must agree with the practical political point that if we're going to address this wave of anti-liberal populism in Europe in the west and globally, we have to do something about these levels of economic and cultural inequality. So that's my second point. How we do that is of course a complicated and difficult question to which I have no ready answers, but I just want to emphasise what the challenge is and just how important it is.

My final lesson of history which leads to a what-is-to-be-done is this. The German historian Reinhart Koselleck has a wonderful essay entitled *The Unknown Future and the Art of Prognosis*³ and Koselleck makes a very simple but very powerful point which is that the more often a phenomenon occurs in history, the more likely we are to be able to make probabilistic statements when that phenomenon recurs. So I think we can make the statement we shall all die with a reasonably high level of probability because in rather large historical data set there's no known example to the contrary, at least, known to me. Wars, revolutions, what happens to people when they stay too long in power, these are recurring phenomena where we have so many examples from history that when it recurs again you can say ah ha! I think we can make an intelligent guess, not a prediction, but an intelligent guess about how things might develop.

Now one such phenomenon is declining empires. Let me tell you something about declining empires; they don't like it. Ask the British, the liberal imperialists many of whom enjoyed themselves in this club. Ask the French. Ask the Portuguese. who were fighting to defend their colonies in Angola and Mozambique until the early 1970s until the end of the dictatorship, the Revolution of the Carnations, which the 50th anniversary of which we just celebrate.

Empires fight back, so when the largest remaining empire in Europe the Soviet Russian empire softly and suddenly vanished away with hardly a shot fired in anger but in just four years in 1989 and 1991, we should not have assumed that was the end of the story. We were not wrong, we were not wrong to try very hard, as we did to build a partnership for modernization and democratisation in Russia in the 1990s, that was not a mistake. But when the empire started striking back, you could argue in Chechnya, most clearly 2008 Georgia and then unambiguously 2014 Crimea in the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine; then informed by history we should have said 'yeah, we know, we understand, we know what's going on, that's what's declining empires do, they strike back. And I would argue that if we had adjusted our policy much more fundamentally after 2014, reduced our energy dependency on Russia instead of increasing it, gone after the dirty money swilling around the city also known as Londongrad and many other cities in Europe, armed the Ukrainians much more effectively, sent a much clearer and stronger message to Putin and to his potential allies of the cost, we might not be in the mess we are today, I'm not going to say we would not have been, but we might not appear. But we failed to learn that lesson of history until 2022.

Now what follows from that in my view, is that we need a clear-sighted strategic commitment, not just not to allow Ukraine to lose but to enable Ukraine to win to win this war against Russia. That is not only the best thing for Ukraine, because that's the only way in which it can truly become a flourishing democratic sovereign European country, it's also in the longer term, the best thing for Russia; not in the shorter term perhaps but in the longer term it's a hard truth but it's the truth that actually which Richard von Visinger spelt out to Germany in his famous speech in 1985 when he said basically dear compatriots, guys, the best thing that happened to us was defeat; all our successes, our freedoms, our democracy our prosperity, have been built on defeat. Now obviously it is not possible, faced with a nuclear armed power like Russia, to have total defeat in that sense, its self-evidently not possible. But I would argue that the maximum feasible defeat, we could argue about what that is, history will tell, is also the best thing longer term for Russia, As Zbigniew Brzezinski used to say, 'With Ukraine Russia is still an empire, without Ukraine Russia has to start trying to be a more normal nation state' and fundamentally I think that's right. Now losing empire and finding a role can take quite a long time; ask the British. Dean Acheson said that about us in the early 1960s and some would argue we're still trying, but it's a start.

And finally, and finally, in the eyes of the rest of the world and some of the opinion polling, global opinion polling that my Oxford research project did with the European Council on Foreign Relations last autumn demonstrates this, our credibility is at stake. In that polling, either majorities or pluralities in countries like .

China and India, said that Russia is at war with the West, not with Ukraine, with us, with the West. They think Russia is likely to win in the next five years and then quite shockingly, majorities or pluralities in many of these countries say the EU is likely to fall apart within the next 20 years. And what is more when you look in detail of the data, those who say Russia is likely to win, those who say the EU is likely to fall apart, are quite closely correlated, they overlap. So are make no mistake, all western and European credibility is at stake in this struggle. And then of course we have the challenges of European defence especially if Donald Trump is elected to the US, re-elected U.S. President on Guy Fawkes Day, suitably enough 5th November, and the tasks of EU and NATO enlargement.

So those are my three lessons of history, which have 'to do notes' at the bottom of them.

Let me conclude by saying this; contrary, if you'll allow me to say so, by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Germany, my title today is not *The Rise and Fall of a Free Europe*, it is *The Rise and Faltering of a Free Europe*. Somebody at the Naumann Foundation, dear KarlHeinz, translated this as "Aufstieg und Scheitern des Freien Europe", The Rise and Failure of Free Europe. Ladies and gentlemen, Free Europe has definitely not failed or fallen. As I said at the beginning, most of Europe is still free, slightly less than in 2007. We still have the best Europe we've ever had, still the best Europe in the historical perspective that we have ever had, and there is absolutely nothing inevitable, this is the point about the small 'h' versus the large 'H' history, nothing inevitable about what happens next. The mistake we made then was to believe that a continued ascent was inevitable. Let's not make the mistake now of believing that a continued descent is inevitable. It's not inevitable, it's up to us, and liberals in the broadest sense should be in the front line of defending a Free Europe. Thank you very much, I look forward to the discussion.

Questions: Karl-Heinz Paqué

So, I will immediately when I come home check who made this translation error. Faltering is not failing. OK ladies and gentlemen we have another let's say maximum of 20 minutes to go. This is why I immediately open the floor to you for your questions your comments. Please tell us your name and your affiliation and ask questions make comments.

I just start with one opening question the two inequality's that you described as a major point the power of the polarisation of our societies, the one is an economic one where you may discuss measures of redistribution or whatever, where you can do something tangible against it and you can of course discuss whether it's the right diagnosis, and other points to the polarisation in cultural the matters is a much more difficult thing to encounter. What would you recommend what can our societies do? Even we liberals, in a streak of self-irony, you mentioned a wonderful ambience here and of course we are many educated urban people in the liberal movement. I would like to know from you what can we do to close the gap?

TGA

It's a great question. in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*, the wife of the of the miserable and failing salesman says at some point 'attention must be paid', she says attention must be paid and that's I think it's a start of the answer Karl-Heinz, attention must be paid because the truth is if you read *The New York Times* or *The Guardian* or the *Süddeutscher*, or *Le Monde*, there was very little reporting about the poorer parts of our countries, about people in the post-industrial north or in small towns until the populist wave. There was lots reporting about the rest of the world. And certainly very little reporting done with imaginative sympathy. For me one of the very important parts of Liberalism is the liberal imagination; what you find in a novelist like Charles Dickens, the ability to think what it must be like to be really poor or to be forced into a life of crime or to be an illegal migrant, that imaginative sympathy which was so lacking, I think in media and scholarship and culture, that's one part of the answer. The other part or another part is this. As you will vividly recall one of the great liberal projects of the second-half of the 20th century was the expansion of higher education. (KHP)*Bildung is good I said*. Well exactly, education is a civil right. Tony Blair said that we must have 50% of our population, of our kids going to university. We did and what was the result? The unintended consequences would split our societies down the middle 50:50. Between those who went to universities, spoke languages, love travelling, liked Europe, lived in big cities and those who didn't. So, working out ways that we can do in education, in working life, in communal life and civic life for that other half of our society, too me that is another very important part of the answer.

K-H P:

Thank you very much. Irina; thank you,

Irena von Wiese

I am the chair of Liberal International British Group, former member of the European Parliament and as my name suggests I'm a Brit with both German and Russian roots and thank you very much for a really engaging

talk. My question is about another potentially declining empire which you only mentioned tangentially in your talk, and that is the United States and it seems to me that that the West, Western Europe has relied on the US support, both financially, obviously terms of defence, NATO, Article 5 promise for a long time. With the prospect of Trump potentially returning to the White House and potentially losing that support to some degree, where does Europe stand and are we sufficiently equipped to make Ukraine win even if we do no longer have that support?

Graham Watson

Thank you, Tim, for a fascinating lecture. Also, another former MEP and the Convener of Liberal International, Scotland. I want to ask you about something that happened towards the end of the Cold War. You use the phrase the liberal imagination. Towards the end of the Cold War in Germany, Willy Brandt and particularly Hans-Dietrich Genscher, decided that the German, sorry that the American British idea that we should set up Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe and encourage those under Soviet domination to rise up against their oppressors, and the sending of spies through Vienna was not perhaps the most intelligent way to go about things. They started quietly through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and argued, perhaps were proven right, but by talking to the oppressors we would actually expose the contradictions in their society and bring their societies crumbling down. Were they wrong?

TGA

I thank you for two excellent questions. US a declining empire? Look at the US economy, seems to be doing pretty well compared with ours. But what I think we can say is probably withdrawing empire, which is something slightly different. And honestly, this year I will be in on the 6th of June I will be in Normandy, because it says 80th anniversary of D-Day. 80 years on from the beginning of liberation of Western Europe should we really be depending so much on the United States? It pains me greatly to say this, but Donald Trump had a point when he said European should be spending more on that defence. So let's hope it's not Trump, but if it is Trump the question is which Trump? Extreme Trump? Very extreme Trump? Or pardon my French, bat-shit crazy Trump; those are the options. So extreme Trump might do what the Heritage Foundation's plan for his presidency says which is rapidly withdraw abroad on the US conventional presence in Europe but keep the nuclear umbrella. Right? Now in that circumstance if we start now, we are not doing enough now, building up our defence industry, building up our conventional capacity. While some of us are some of us aren't. I think we can certainly secure the defence of the NATO currently. I think we can secure the defence of what Ukraine currently controls. One has in all honesty to say it becomes more difficult to recover territory for Ukraine, to recover territory and I say that with great pain because let's not kid ourselves, if the territorial division remains what it is now with Russia occupying one fifth of the country, right? A territory the size of Portugal and half of Slovenia, that's a defeat, it's a defeat for Ukraine and it's a defeat for us, so let's not kid ourselves. So I hope very much it'll be another outcome, that we will be able to do more for Ukraine, but that I think is sadly realistic answer.

Now Graham, to your question I think Radio Free Europe did a fantastic job. Volna Europe, Freies Europa, wherever you went in Eastern Europe people absolutely loved it. I think it was really important. They made a big mistake in 1956 in relation to Hungary when the Hungarian service specifically called on Hungarians to rise, giving them the impression that the West would come to their aid, but they didn't make that mistake in 1968 or 1981. But it needed the detente as well. It's always the two tracks, right? it's a containment, it's a powerful messaging, we're with you, we support you, but it's also the constructive engagement. So for me that's a lesson for our engagement with China now, most importantly, and I would say for our engagement with the post-Putin Russia. It's very difficult to see how you do it with Russia as it is today, but I would just add one last thing. There are now millions of Russians outside Russia in our countries and elsewhere, Georgia as well. And they are the most anti-Putin pro-Navalny of all Russians. We should do much more to support for them and communicate with them,

Sean O'Kearney

Hello, my name is Sean O'Kearney and I'm subject of the Liberal Group in the European Committee of the Regions which is the EU body that represents some national governments. We're in the temple of Gladstonian Liberalism and just few yards up the street and there's another great British intellectual who's not often considered a political scientist but I'm referring to Isaac Newton who's buried not that far away from here. Myself, having studied physics just up the road at UCL many years ago and then politics at Birkbeck College just up the road. I've always been fascinated by Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion which says every action has an equal and opposite reaction because I find that in politics that is frequently the case, perhaps not equal but definitely an opposite reaction and I'm interested, and this my question, whether you perceive because you were talking about how you always have to fight for freedom, you can't take it for granted, whether you would consider that indeed that law of physics could equally apply to political science? thank you.

Peter Schrader, University College, London

My question is related to what has just been said, and that is the question of liberty, of liberalism and those people who are arguing the populist case. They don't necessarily, in the argument at least, do it against liberty they have just a different notion of it. So that the crucial question it seems to me to be you know to be in charge of what that actually means, and my question to you would be how can you make this argument towards them and saying well you're talking about this but this is not liberty this is pseudo-authoritarian, but they do it in the sense of if you look at Brexit sovereignty and all these things you mentioned so it seems to be important to not be only vigilant but be really in charge of the argument.

Howard Serrata, National Liberal Club

From a historical perspective, it seems to me, the issue for Europe as it has been over the past 150 years, is German, is ultimately a matter of Germany. It's ultimately a matter of the decisions that German leaders and German population make. So the question really arises can we count on the Germans, ultimately, to recognise importance of these values you install are they willing to stand, to make the changes which have been necessitated by recent geopolitical events, do they recognise that they could no longer live permanently under the American military umbrella?

TGA

Thank you very much excellent questions. By the way the other person who's just down the road who I thought you might be referring to is John Stuart Mill, very few people know he is just down there. For me the mistake that much contemporary political science make is to think the laws of politics are like the laws of physics. They're not, politics is a very different business and much less predictable and so there's no action with equal and opposite reaction, right? Sometimes with a big reaction, sometimes there's a small reaction, but normally there's a reaction. So, I've always felt the word reactionary was actually a very useful one taken quite literally. So, if you look at Poland for example, and the Law and Justice Party, in my view people say oh this is the old Polish political culture, in my view a lot of that was precisely reactionary you had this revolutionary liberalisation, democratisation, modernisation, Europeanisation, everything changed, and a rather traditional society reacted against it. So, there's a lot of truth in it but not a Law of Physics.

OK. On Populism. you're absolutely right, they very of say we're for liberty but against liberalism. They also by the way, say we're for democracy but against liberalism; we speak for the people against these liberal elites. So, for me the lesson in that is to keep reminding people that liberty is the core value of liberalism Friedrich Naumann Stiftung Für die Freiheit, exactly so and that is something that got rather lost at least in the way liberalism was communicated in in the last 30 years. Germany? this is I think what we call *ein abend zu füllen*, a subject to fill a whole evening, brief commercial I have just written a large essay for the *New York Review of Books* on Germany as we approach the 75th anniversary of the Federal Republic of Germany, the 23rd of May, notable anniversary, so the longer answer to your question is contained in that essay⁴ which will be online on May 2nd. The short version is this, I have no doubt that most Germans are deeply attached to these values at home; the question is a level of commitment to supporting them abroad, right? That's the question on the table and one of the points I make in this essay is it in the seventy-five years Germany has had three great moments strategic choice. Konrad Adenauer's concept, binding West Germany into the Europe-Atlantic West. Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, on which I went through the damn thick square book, it was hinted at a major initiative and Helmut Kohl's decision to bind German unification into European unification. In each of these three moments three things came together, a notable leader, an international setting and a domestic debate. And I would say that at the moment we have the international setting, which absolutely calls for such an adjustment, we very much have a domestic debate, a very lively domestic debate, so we're waiting for the leader.

K-HP

Thanks for answering, so this is the opportunity for me to say thanks to our Ambassador Miguel Berger that he's with us tonight. Final round. You have another 5 minutes with overtime already

Henrik Bach Mortensen, LI Vice President, Denmark.

First of all thank you very much for reminding us that freedom is not a given thing but something we should fight for all the time and isn't it wonderful that there is a Ukrainian word for this and secondly for reminding us about Isaiah Berlin and his necessary distinction and inclusion of positive and negative freedom from liberals such as us, these are two very basic things which we should never lose sight of. Of course, to us as Liberals freedom is essential. But is? it is? it can we be certain that freedom is important and the value to all human beings? Could it, or will it have the same meaning to the Chinese population and the Chinese citizen, as it has to liberal Europeans. Or can we imagine that China and other major countries can last without admitting freedom to the citizens?

Phil Bennion, former member of the European Parliament & Vice President of Liberal International

Part of what we need to be doing better I think for this fight for liberal values and also for European values his messaging or propaganda as we might call it. It seems that we're losing the propaganda war in Africa in a big way and I know from Juli Minoves, former president, the president of honour, that we seem to be losing it in central and South America as well, What can we do, and what can Europe do, I mean Britain as part of that, to improve its messaging and prove its propaganda to compete with what we're seeing from China with TikTok and its and its use of propaganda through those channels and also particularly Russia today, which permeates pretty well all of the messaging going around us.

From Momentum Mozgalom, Hungary

In your lecture explored the idea these illusions having led us astray, these big moments where we thought that this time it would be different. like building democracy in Iraq, how an empire might not strike back, etc., my question is what similar illusions do you see today that may lead us astray again, if especially if it's to replicate, and what is your process for identifying these illusions in our thinking today?

TGA

Goodness, what a demanding set of questions, let me work backwards through those, there is a famous saying of course is that history is like his life is lived forwards and understood backwards so the historians process of identifying the illusions has to waited little time and see what happened, that's our privilege, but I think we have swung from too much optimism to too much pessimism. I think one of the illusions maybe a lack of belief in ourselves. One of the other things we found in this survey which was done in 10 major non-European countries, China, India, Turkiye, Russia, US, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Indonesia, Brazil; I mean it was a very, very large survey, was that while these countries quite liked having good relations with Russia despite the war in Ukraine, when you ask the question where would you like to live? it was the US or Europe. And then actually, even when you ask the question whose standards on human rights do you prefer? it was the West. Who's standards of Internet regulation would you prefer? the West. So we have still within this normal soft power which consists in the attractiveness of our own way of life and I I think we shouldn't succumb to too much self-doubt about that, because part of Volya is precisely the self-belief in freedom. Now in relation to, and I'm so glad you didn't use the phrase global South because I think that the first thing we should do if we really want to win over the global South is to stop talking about the global South; talk about in dividual countries. I mean there's a lot to be said in answer to this, but time presses, so I would say preach less listen more, right? I mean the EU in particular, but we as Europeans are terrific preachers. We've gone around the world for decades lecturing people about democracy and the rule of law, you know, human rights and all of that, there about. This really gets on peoples noses, partly because they do remember the colonial past where we weren't particularly keen on these values. And now of course, they say what about Gaza ? yeah they say, double standards, what are you talking about? So, listen more. Try to understand how Indians or Chinese or South Africans or Brazilians see their own country, their own culture, their own place in the world and then build a conversation on the basis of that. And the challenge to us is this, they're all absolutely up for a purely transactional interest-based conversation, that's quite how they like to carry on, right? We'll do Russia on this in China on that and you on this. We, as Europeans, in particular those of us who believe in the project of the European Union, have to talk by values too, and how we strike that balance between interest and values is now becoming even more difficult.

Finally, universalism, a great place to end. How long do we have? Universalism in 2 minutes. There are two versions of universalism broadly speaking, normative and descriptive, right? So if the question is 'in societies and cultures as currently constituted in their self-understanding does the value of freedom have the same salience as it does in our own?' the answer is probably not. Certainly not in the official culture of China or Russia I mean the thought is definitely still there, but not the same salience. But what we're talking about is a normative universalism, that is to say we believe that if you were free individually and collectively you would live better, more fulfilled, more dignified lives; this is a proposition that we make to you. And in that sense I think we should absolutely remain universalistic, it connect to the point about our self-confidence. This is our proposition to other people, and honestly you know there are millions and millions of people in these societies who privately actually believe this, including many millions who have studied with us and live in the West and share our values. So I don't think that we should resign from a confident proud universalism about liberty, about the value of liberty in that normative sense.

K-HP

Well, I'm very thankful for your contributions and I'm very thankful for the positive upbeat note that you had in your last three answers, especially with respect to the universal values, especially with respect to the soft power, which I think is massively underestimated and also with respect to warning us against preaching, education of preaching, which is a special characteristic of Germans in particular. We'd love to preach the

to the world and we shouldn't, I think, I was tempted to say the rest of the world, which is of course not the right way of putting it, but those we have to convince of these universal values and who share them deep in their heart but who have their absolutely legitimate interests in the world in a shaping a new liberal world. We should not preach to them but we should cooperate with them and we should motivate them.

Now we went in some overtime and the German Liberals, at the moment, in the present political discussion have proposed that overtime should be taxed lower than the normal time, and now after this kind of intellectual overtime I know why. Thanks very much I found it was an extremely inspiring discussion, that is was a wonderful lecture at the beginning, thanks very much Timothy for being here in this Gladstonian ambience; thank you.

The Isaiah Berlin Lecture "The rise and faltering of a free Europe" was delivered by Prof. Timothy Garton Ash on Monday, 29 April 2024 at National Club, London.

¹ *Stan wojenny* – martial law in Poland. On 13th December 1981 the Military Council of National Salvation, which was headed by General Wojciech Jaruzelski, imposed martial law in Poland. It lasted until 22nd July 1983. The hopes of millions of Poles were crushed, while the chance of introducing democratic changes was lost for many years.

² *Une breve histoire de l'égalité* - A Brief History of Equality, Harvard University Press, 2022 - ISBN 9780674273559

³ In: *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Reinhart Koselleck & Todd Samuel Presner. Stanford University Press, 2002 pages 115-130.

⁴ <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2024/05/23/big-germany-what-now-timothy-garton-ash/>

Timothy Garton Ash is the author of eleven books of political writing or 'history of the present' which have charted the transformation of Europe over the last half century. He is Professor of European Studies in the University of Oxford, Isaiah Berlin Professorial Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford, and a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He writes a column on international affairs in the *Guardian* which is widely syndicated.



From left to right: Henrik Bach Mortenson, Sir Graham Watson, Karl-Heinz Paqué, Timothy Garton Ash, Irina von Wiese, Phil Bennion, David Chalmers.

Walzing Kamala

Christine Graf

Back in July when Joe Biden believed he could beat Donald Trump, Democrats thought of November and the upcoming election with a sick feeling. As Fintan O'Toole wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, "this [Joe Biden's] fantasy is becoming a horror story ... There will be no divine hand to swat away the bullet that is headed for the heart of the republic."

The hand that did swat away the bullet might well have been that of Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of the House, whose fragile appearance belies the fact that she's a consummate politician. A close friend of the Bidens, she made no secret of her contempt for Trump: she approved of his impeachments, and she's declared that such a man should never again be allowed near the Oval Office. Polls that indicated potential Democrat losses in the House and Senate motivated her and others to speak up about it.

Almost as soon as Biden announced his departure from the race, and his endorsement of Kamala Harris, an excited frenzy erupted amongst Democrats, never-Trump Republicans, and many in between, a frenzy that has not died down.

Is Tim Walz "Minnesota Nice?"

Now that Kamala Harris has picked Tim Walz of Minnesota, a relative unknown, to be her VP, the arrows are flying. Soon we'll be hearing that Minnesota is not at all nice, that it's in fact a communist hellhole, its morale undermined by "Comrade" Walz, as Trump has taken to calling him. In his view and that of many Republicans, Walz has erred by promoting policies considered leftist, including a law restricting guns, one guaranteeing women's rights to abortion, and another giving schoolchildren free food.

Are Minnesotans nice? I've lived here for more than two decades and I can testify that they will go out of their way to help strangers. Back in 2007 when a bridge connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis collapsed during rush hour, people jumped into the Mississippi, risking their lives to save strangers. If you stop at a supermarket in mid-winter during a cold snap and your car won't start, somebody in the parking lot is quite likely to pull out his "jumper cables" and give your battery a boost to get you on your way. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz leaned into this Minnesota tradition during his acceptance speech: "Growing up in a small town . . . you learn to take care of each other. The family down the road [whom you have nothing in common with] they're your neighbours, and you look out for them."

Who, exactly, is Tim Walz? When Kamala Harris introduced him to the nation, she said he's a man born in a small town in Nebraska, who moved to small-town Minnesota where he taught high school history and geography for years. She emphasized that he coached football and led his team to a state championship. Coaches are important here - Kamala passed over an astronaut and a swing state Senator to choose Walz. She used the word "coach" numerous times when she introduced him: in the U.S. team sports are followed with a reverence that other people reserve for religion.

Former students, when interviewed about Coach Walz, tend to talk not so much about his winning strategies as about his positive attitude and the encouragement he gave them. Gwen Walz, Tim's wife, is from a small town in Minnesota and taught English at the same school as her husband, Mankato West. The Walzs discussed their students together and tried to help them thrive, including when the couple served as prom advisers. According to Sherri Blasing, their principal and neighbour, the couple strategized to make sure no one had to attend prom alone.

Walz served for years in the National Guard, attaining a rank of master sergeant; he left the Guard to run for Congress, representing a conservative rural district. A lifelong hunter and a crack shot, he was so appalled by school shootings that he decided to try to pass laws restricting guns, at least here in Minnesota. The National Rifle Association used to give him an "A" rating: now he gets an "F" from them.

Minnesota drew the attention of the world in 2020, when George Floyd was murdered by the police in broad daylight on a street in Minneapolis. Normally the police are not held legally liable for the death of a suspect, even when they are clearly in the wrong. Walz made a difference when he appointed Attorney General Keith Ellison, who'd worked against police brutality, to lead the prosecution. Ellison appointed a talented team of prosecutors, and Derek Chauvin is in prison today. Shortly after Floyd was killed, Walz called a special session of the legislature that passed police reform bills, banning chokeholds, requiring officers to step in if a colleague was using excessive force, and banning "warrior-style" training for police officers.

Walz is not your usual politician, certainly not part of the East Coast elite associated with Democratic leaders. His degrees are not from Harvard or Yale, but from Mankato State, a college affiliated with the University of Minnesota. If he and his wife, also a teacher, do get to Washington, they will be unique in that they don't own a home and can't boast of much wealth between them.

Improbably, Walz may have succeeded through being down-home and plain-spoken, an "America's Dad" kind of guy. He doesn't use a fancy vocabulary, and he popularised a single word for the Dems' main opponents: "weird." He has said over and over that the Republicans' platform, their plans for changing the country through project 2025, are downright weird.

The word caught fire: soon it was in the mouths of the pundits and the other politicians. It succeeded because it was relatively inoffensive. Walz wasn't calling the other side fascists, although their Project 2025 for a second Trump administration, which includes a national ban on abortion, and the rounding up of millions of immigrants for deportation certainly has a alarming sound to it, as does the Former Guy's admiration of dictators and assertion that he'll join them on Day One.

More recently, Walz has added to "weird" a basic principle here in the Midwest: "Mind your own damn business!" This terse demand typically gets yells of assent and thunderous applause from the crowds at his and Kamala's rallies.

Is Vance Weird?

If there is a Republican equivalent, Trump would never have chosen a Walz: he is not sufficiently photogenic. In 2016 the Former Guy considered, then rejected, former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie for VP because he is overweight. (In fact, Trump has been heard referring to Christie as a "fat pig). Not exactly svelte himself, Trump slathers on the orange makeup, and JD Vance, his choice for Veep, is said to enhance his eyes by the judicious application of black eyeliner. For Trump, image matters. Even when he narrowly escaped assassination he had the presence of mind to raise his fist in defiance, an image that to some seemed to confirm his election this November.

Veeps traditionally act as the attack dogs of a presidential campaign - according to *The New York Times*, Mr. Trump called Vance a political "athlete" and urged him to attack, attack, attack. Republicans fear Walz, viewing him as a threat - "they're going after him", as Chris Wallace, formerly a pundit on Fox News, said recently. Vance has been happy to comply with his orders: he has attacked Walz's record with the National Guard, possibly in an effort to reprise the successful Swift Boating of presidential candidate John Kerry. A problem with that is their records of service: Vance served for just 4 years in the Marines, enough to get veterans' educational benefits. His service was in the public affairs section, and as he wrote, he was "lucky to escape any real fighting." Walz served for 24 years with the National Guard, leaving only when he decided to run for Congress.

Originally Vance attracted attention with his best-selling memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*, about his precarious childhood in Ohio's Rust Belt. He was raised mostly by his grandparents, as his mother was addicted to drugs. Many of the people JD knew were similarly afflicted; few had aspirations for the future. It's curious that while Vance knew families around him broken by drugs and alcohol, their children neglected and often abused, he favours an absolute ban on abortions. This is a policy detailed in Project 2025, that could be implemented nationwide in a second Trump administration.

As Vance tells it, his road out of poverty was through hard work and the discipline which he learned from the Marines. This led to a law degree from Yale, and employment in Silicon Valley, where he attracted the attention of Peter Thiel, a billionaire who bankrolled JD's run for the Senate and recommended him to Donald Trump.

With Biden out of the race, and Kamala Harris in the spotlight, some think Trump is having second thoughts about his choice for VP. Vance comes across as somewhat odd. For one thing, he has the consistency of a weather vane: in 2016 he saw Trump as America's Hitler, and now he can't gush out enough praise for him. Mike Pence, Trump's Vice President, was similarly devoted for four years, and on January 6th, 2020, we all saw how far this got him: the mob chanting "Hang Mike Pence" were, if anything, urged on by his boss, the man who'd encouraged them to assemble in the first place.

But so far Vance seems content in his role. He makes the required extreme statements, as when he slammed Tim Walz for having "actively encouraged the rioters who burned down Minneapolis" back in 2020. If Minneapolis has been burned down, it has escaped our notice. And then there's his "cat ladies" comment: Vance has lamented that the U.S. is run by "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives." This has not gone over well with many women voters.

As of now, the results of the coming election are still uncertain, but polls have become more favourable to Democrats since Kamala took over the top of the ticket.

For Trump, the day that Biden quit the ticket and threw his support to Kamala was a terrible one. He is clearly upset by Kamala's rallies, denying that anybody shows up and stating that it's all "fake news." He will doubtless cry foul if he's defeated in November and has plaintively suggested - wished? - that Biden will yet emerge as the Democratic candidate.

The best approach to piercing the Trump bubble could be by humour. To start with, Walz's use of the term "weird" was deflating in itself. Trump tries to lure Black voters by suggesting that immigrants will take "black" jobs. Michelle Obama took on this subject at the Democratic Convention: "Who's going to tell him the job he's currently seeking might just be one of those Black jobs?" And Barack Obama followed, describing Trump as "a 78-year-old billionaire who has not stopped whining about his problems since he rode down his golden escalator nine years ago," and suggesting by gestures that Trump's obsession with the size of Kamala's rallies might signal a very personal problem for him. The crowd responded with raucous laughter.

At the Democratic Convention, no speaker underestimated the dangers of a possible Trump win. Senator Warnock of Georgia pronounced Trump a "clear and present danger to the American republic." Texas representative Jasmine Crockett compared the candidates: "Kamala Harris has a resumé: Donald Trump has a rap sheet." For Democrats, the theme is freedom. Tim Walz, in his acceptance speech, did something that few politicians dare to do: he took on the National Rifle Association, declaring that although he believes in the 2nd Amendment, freedom "should include your kids' freedom to go to school without being shot dead in the halls." Only in the U.S. could such a statement be remotely controversial.

The best person to take on Trump might well be a former prosecutor. Kamala knows she's a threat to him. As she likes to say at rallies, recalling her work: "I took on perpetrators of all kinds: predators who abused women, fraudsters who ripped off consumers, cheaters who broke the rules for their own gain." She knows Donald Trump's type and she has him scared.

Christine Graf

LI calls for a full and accurate count of all the votes in the Venezuelan election

Liberal International strongly condemns the Venezuelan regime's brazenly fraudulent election results, which falsely declare Nicolás Maduro as the winner, allegedly, with 51.20% of the vote. These results, announced by the regime-controlled National Electoral Council (CNE), starkly contradict the voting records from the tables by the unified democratic opposition. The opposition, led by candidate Edmundo Gonzalez and the unjustly disqualified candidate Maria Corina Machado – leader of LI member party Vente Venezuela – reported a decisive victory with 70% of the vote.

LI further calls upon the National Electoral Council (CNE) to release the full results down to the polling division level and to conduct a hand count of all the printed vote slips. This hand count should be done and to do so in a transparent way, complete with independent and international observers. LI stands firmly with the Venezuelan democratic opposition under the MUD, whose meticulous monitoring of all voting centres aligns with analyses from expert polling firms.

Dr. Hakima el Haite, President of Liberal International, emphasised, "We support the courageous efforts of Maria Corina Machado and Vente Venezuela. The people of Venezuela have spoken clearly in favor of democracy, peace, and against dictatorship. The regime must count all the votes fairly and transparently and respect the will of the people."

Vlado Mirosevic, from LI full member party Partido Liberal de Chile and President of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, has long denounced the human rights abuses in Venezuela. He stated, "The dictator Maduro must count all the votes and recognise the election results. The eyes of the world are on this election. This could pave the way for a peaceful transition to democracy, a significant breakthrough for Venezuela and the entire continent."

Felipe Kast, Senator from Chilean LI full member party Evópoli, and officially invited as an observer by the opposition, was deported from the regime and has denounced the human rights abuses in Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela. He stated, "We must continue to stand with Edmundo Gonzalez and Maria Corina Machado and the Venezuelan people. Liberals worldwide are united and we have only one voice in defending truth and the will of the people. The Venezuelan people deserve peace, freedom, and democracy. We demand full disclosure of the votes, accountability from international observers, and the right to a recount."

Understanding and responding to this blatant threat to democracy not just in Venezuela but throughout South America, Liberal International will host its 64th Congress this November in Santiago, Chile. The congress will be held in collaboration with LI's member parties, Partido Liberal and Evópoli.

For 25 years, the opposition has faced harassment and disqualification, yet they remain at the forefront of the electoral process, representing the widespread discontent among the Venezuelan people due to the dire economic situation.

Liberal International stands in solidarity with the Venezuelan people's right to freedom, democracy and self-determination. The fight for equality, fraternity, and democracy continues, and the people of Venezuela deserve its freedom from tyranny.

July 29, 2024

Direct Action on Climate – words from an activist. Ludi Simpson

I write as one of the G7. The Gatwick Airport 7 were arrested for ‘locking on’ and for ‘interfering with national infrastructure’. These are two of the new crimes in the 2023 Public Order Act brought specifically to deal with Just Stop Oil non-violent action. By implication the law also dismisses the activists’ demand for more government action on climate.

By contributing to the messages that oil kills and that no more should be extracted or burned, I believe that I was no more than a spokesperson for the United Nations,¹ the International Energy Agency,² and other co-operative international organisations that have identified that “Fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions.”³

When a dire injustice is being ignored by government to the point of deepening harm on a people, then we know from the suffragettes, anti-apartheid campaigners and many others that purposeful direct action can be a successful and historically legitimate method of rousing politicians to act. It is all the more legitimate with climate activism, when the lives of all future humans are at risk.

I’ve heard many times: ‘I agree with what you want, but the way you go about it is just wrong’. And my response is always ‘You show me a more effective way and I’ll join you’. I have signed petitions, joined campaigns, and voted for the most climate-aware politicians. I have done so for many years and will continue to do so, but they haven’t achieved change. The political system favours the status quo, makes change more slowly and expensively than this climate crisis allows for, and the resistance to change is extremely powerful. Oil companies invest millions to protect their billions, just as tobacco companies did. It will take a firm hand to steer a new course.

I’ve also heard ‘Thanks for being so brave’. That makes me uncomfortable, because I don’t feel brave. I feel well-prepared. There’s nothing difficult about sitting down in an airport, being handcuffed, processed in a police station, sitting and lying in a police cell for 24 hours, or being the defendant in a court case. There is plenty of practical experience handed down, and knowledge of the outcomes of court cases. The experience is passed on in briefings, zooms, training workshops.

The room for anxiety is reduced by eliminating uncertainty and working things out together. Before an action there is legal guidance given by CASP, the Climate Action Support Pathway. The experience of activists in prison has generated a Rebels In Prison Support advice network. These are facilities that can be found online. While the activity is planned away from the limelight, the people involved are not hiding themselves, we are proud of what we have done and do it in the open.

If after all the preparation there is still uncomfortable uncertainty, there is no pressure on any individual to continue. After an action there are debriefings, both practical and emotional. I’d welcome more people beginning the process, by joining the chats and zooms that Just Stop Oil, Defend Our Juries, and similar organisations offer.⁴

Just Stop Oil trains for and engages in avowedly non-violent direct action. The emphasis is on supporting a message, and safety is ensured by training to de-escalate any tensions. There is no resisting arrest. All protests involve some kind of disruption, but disruption is the medium only. The aim is to shift political opinion.

I am not anti-politics or anti-politicians. In the end, it will not be a Just Stop Oil government that ensures a transition to renewable energy by 2030, which is still just possible and very necessary. It will be politicians who step up and insist on a redirection of industrial investment. They will prioritise new jobs in renewable energy and transfer the skills in the fossil fuel industry to other productive tasks, focusing on what services will benefit everyone, rather than on profit for the few. It will take a firm hand to steer a new course. Politicians with understanding, care and guts.

Liberal Democrat policy from the 2024 election was to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. But many of its members know that is far too slow a transition, and it is those members who will step forward to do the job. LibDem climate-related policies include worthy items from installation of heat pumps to local energy grids, but they are not worth much without a stop to North Sea oil and gas exploration. What’s needed is the combination of running down the fossil fuel industry and a rapid shift to non-fossil fuel use in transport

and heating. Tough but necessary. A crisis demands policies to match. It was done for COVID. We need to do it to achieve global cooling.

The daring and radical spirit of the Young Liberals of the 1960s and 1970s remains in the hearts of many Liberal Democrats. It is needed in the foreground. Politicians who will put the message that ‘Oil Kills’ before their fear of challenging business as usual. It is not right that those who are speaking the truth were imprisoned in August for 4-5 years for the ‘conspiracy’ involved in attending a zoom meeting about direct action on the climate issue. They are not the criminals.



In that trial as in some others, the judge did not allow defendants to explain their motivation. That prohibition on defendants speaking their truth undermines the jury’s absolute right to acquit a defendant according to their conscience.

The United Nations Aarhus Convention⁵ defends public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. Michael Forst is the UN’s Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders. Since his first visit to the UK at the start of 2024 he has condemned the UK justice system’s “severe crackdowns” on environmental protestors, including the prison sentences issued, the bail conditions and the restrictions on peaceful protests. On Daniel Shaw’s sentence to 4 years in prison, Michael Forst commented: “Today marks a dark day for peaceful environmental protest, the protection of environmental defenders and indeed anyone concerned with the exercise of their fundamental freedoms in the United Kingdom.”⁶

For the love of life, for the future of humanity and nature, make every action matter.

Ludi Simpson

Ludi Simpson was Professor of Population Studies at the University of Manchester before retirement.

¹ New funding from governments for fossil fuel exploration or production is “delusional” and will only “further feed the scourge of war, pollution and climate catastrophe.” *Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN, 2022*

² “If governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investment in oil & gas from now, from this year”, *International Energy Agency, 2021*

³The opening sentence of the UN’s summary of causes and effects of climate change: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/causes-and-effects-climate-change>

⁴ <https://juststopoil.org/come-to-a-talk/>

⁵ <https://unece.org/environmental-policy-1/public-participation>

⁶ https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/Aarhus_SR_Env_Defenders_statement_following_visit_to_UK_10-12_Jan_2024.pdf and https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/ACSR_C_2024_26_UK_SR_EnvDefenders_public_statement_18.07.2024.pdf.

Leila de Lima acquitted as last bogus charge dismissed

On June 24th Leila de Lima was acquitted of the last charge against her; she had previously been released from prison on bail in November 2023.

“De Lima’s acquittal in this last outstanding case is long overdue, and every day she spent in jail until her temporary release in November 2023 was a gross injustice. She was viciously targeted by the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte solely for her efforts to expose human rights violations in the so-called ‘war on drugs’. The dismissal of the last drug-related allegation against her is a clear rejection of concerted government efforts to silence her and undermine her human rights work.

Amnesty International’s Montse Ferrer, said “As de Lima fully regains her freedom, we urge the administration of President Marcos to work towards ensuring an enabling environment for her and for many other human rights defenders in the Philippines who continue to be targeted because of their critical work.

“We also challenge the Marcos administration to impartially and effectively investigate those responsible for the unfounded allegations against de Lima that led to her arbitrary detention and the other human rights violations she has endured – and continues to endure – and bring them to justice in fair trials.

“The government must work towards what de Lima, Amnesty International and many other human rights defenders have been tirelessly calling for: an end to the continuing unlawful killings and other violations in the ‘war on drugs’, accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the thousands of victims and their families.”

Background

On 24 June, Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court Branch 206 cleared former Senator and human rights defender Leila de Lima of the third and last charge of conspiracy to commit drug trading. In his decision, Judge Gener Gito granted de Lima’s legal motion that technically called for the dismissal of the case.

On 13 November 2023, the same court provided de Lima temporary liberty as it granted her bail application in the same case, with the bail amounting to PHP 300,000 (US\$ 5,349). De Lima faced three fabricated drug-related charges in total, two of which were dismissed by two different courts in 2021 and 2023.

Before her release on bail in 2023, de Lima had been detained at the headquarters of the Philippine National Police since her arrest on 24 February 2017 on drug-related charges.

The authorities arrested de Lima after she sought to investigate violations committed in the context of the so-called “war on drugs” under the former Duterte administration from 2016 to 2022, including the extrajudicial execution of thousands suspected of using or selling drugs. As in the case of de Lima, there has been almost no justice for the victims of these abuses and their families, nor accountability for the perpetrators.

Court proceedings against de Lima in the last six years have been marked by undue delays, including the repeated failure of prosecution witnesses to appear in court with some saying they were coerced and threatened by former government officials to fabricate allegations against her, and changes in judges handling the cases against her. In 2018, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that the detention of de Lima was arbitrary because of the lack of legal basis and the non-observance of international norms relating to the right to a fair trial. Amnesty International had designated her as a prisoner of conscience, solely imprisoned for her legitimate human rights work.

During her imprisonment, in 2022, Leila de Lima was kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf Islamist terrorists in an attempted jailbreak. Leila was on the Partido Liberal’s senatorial list in the 2022 elections, but with the drop in their vote, failed to get re-elected. Bongbong Marcos, son of the former dictator Ferdinand, won the presidency, with Sara Duterte, daughter of the former president, as vice-president.

The political persecution of de Lima reflects the broader context of increasing impunity for human rights violations in the country, including killings, threats and harassment of political activists, human rights defenders, members of the media and other targeted groups.

The US needs to offer the Arab World more than friends with benefits

Mohammed Nosseir

The relationship between the Arab world and the US is transactional, meeting some needs on each side without any meaningful sharing of values or long-term goals. The shifts in foreign policy driven by American elections are part of the problem, making America an unreliable partner for Arab states. The dilemma of the US' foreign policy is often laid in its swift change between serving its interest or abiding with its claimed values. A stance that requires the US to offer a fair and consistent approach to foreign policy that would facilitate solving some of the ongoing conflicts in the region.

The current cooperation between the two parties effectively caters to each party's needs and interests. Arab rulers need the US's security, protecting them mainly from Iran—a status that qualifies Arab nations to meet the US interest in expanding its military sales in the Middle East. For example, Saudi Arabia, the world's second-largest importer, purchased more than three-quarters of its major weapons systems from the US. Sustaining Iranian threats means expanding US military exports to the Arab world. Meanwhile, the US has achieved energy independence; thus, Arab oil is of no value. Severing ties between the US and Arab world is no longer mutually assured economic destruction.

Although the United States has been involved in a number of political developments in the Middle East, such as building a temporary port for Gazan citizens or the Abrahamic Accord, these are fragile activities that have nothing to do with advancing peace and prosperity in the region. While Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates, which have no conflict with Israel, have signed the normalization accord, the port idea has been a flop, and the US is trying to reconstruct it again.

Whereas the United States often focuses on advancing soft power and encouraging many autocratic nations to adopt democracy, its opponents often collaborate with universal nations to develop tangible projects, such as China's Build and Road Initiative and Russia's development of a new nuclear plant for Egypt. People view these projects as more feasible and long-lasting than US rhetoric. People perceive the US as the universe's technology-driven superpower, while China and Russia are more cohesive with the Arab world.

Meanwhile, China, which used to play the role of "world manufacturing," produced competitive products for the world under Western brands, but it has now reversed this role by developing its own brands, such as Haier, Huawei, and WeChat, which are expanding globally into new markets. Equally, China has slowly but surely began to interfere in the long-lasting conflicts in the Middle East by mediating the Saudi-Iran Deal and by hosting the Palestinian conflicting parties (Fatah and Hamas) for unity talks.

In fact, the political dynamics of the US are significantly more complex than those of Arab nations. In addition to the State Department's official role in advancing foreign affairs, Congress has its own influences. Many renowned journalists and pundits follow the political corridors of Washington, combining their thoughts to formulate foreign policies that may not always be beneficial for international affairs. The US allows foreign nations to influence its policies through lobbying, a tactic that has proven successful only for the Israeli lobby, which has been advocating for Arab-Israeli normalization at the expense of solid lasting peace in the region.

Moreover, US dynamics frequently lead to the creation of policies primarily driven by its current interests, which shape its relationship with any given nation. The US, as the world's largest economy and superpower, has the capacity to implement many constructive reforms worldwide, but it is reluctant to do so because it doesn't serve its immediate interests.

Nevertheless, the United States often offers its assistance with a variety of flawed policies, adhering to a global doctrine of ambiguity. The US has never clearly stated that it will defend Saudi Arabia if it is attacked by Iran or even Taiwan if it is invaded by China. It always wants to offer double-meaning statements that could be explained in either way; however, it is happy to sell its military weapons to their allies.

Meanwhile, in the predominantly autocratic Arab world, a single individual, the ruler, shapes its foreign policy. They are content to implement the United States' policies in the region, provided they can maintain

their tenures indefinitely and feel protected from any international threat. The weakness in this relationship stems from the US's tendency to manipulate Arab rulers, exploiting their lack of democracy and violating their citizens' rights when they don't align fully with the US.

During the course of the Arab Spring in 2011, President Biden, who served as the vice president of Obama at the time, initially backed up Mubarak by stating that he was a democratically elected president, and in a few days, when the protest intensified, Obama asked Mubarak to leave immediately. The United States frequently shifts course to advance its immediate interests, often bolstered by its professed values.

The United States used to hold a significant position in the minds of many Arab citizens, serving as a "role model" for advanced nations that prioritize professions, freedom, and the rule of law. However, these and other less significant pillars are in decline. Meanwhile, the US often asserts its status as a superpower, which is commendable, but it is important to remember that this status is driven by a single individual who is responsible for the nation's ultimate superiority. In a few months, it's anticipated that this person will either be an elderly convicted candidate or a woman who lacks the necessary experience in managing the complexity of the Middle East.

The continued interference of the United States in each single conflict in the Middle East that included Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine without showing any single constructive progress in these conflicts has led Arab citizens to hold a strong cultural belief in conspiracy theories and often overestimate the power of the United States, blaming it for every "hostile" event in the universe. Meanwhile, limited mediation by China in the region has managed to settle a couple of disputes.

Moreover, the inconsistencies of US foreign policy due to its regular swap between Democratic and Republican administrations have led many nations to discredit American foreign policy, viewing US politics as a chaotic system with more failures than successes.

Ironically, despite facing sanctions from the US for nearly two decades, Iran has been enhancing its influence by involving Arab countries like Iraq and Syria in its alliance, along with two important proxy groups: Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthi in Yemen. Moreover, the United States' intense support for Israel in its current war on Gaza has significantly distanced many Arab citizens from the US, either directly or indirectly, by aligning them with the US-named Iran block of the axis of evil who are offering themselves as axis of resistance to the US.

The United States is a short-sighted nation that formulates foreign policies based solely on the interests of its president. It tends to rely on beneficiaries worldwide to realize its missions. The US has lost its credibility in the Arab world, either as a fair broker for the Arab-Israeli conflict or as a truly democratic nation that capitalizes on its power to make this world a better place.

Meanwhile, Arabs, similar to the rest of the world citizens, want to live in peace and prosperity that could only be achieved by applying true democracy and genuinely addressing regional conflicts.

Thus, The United States needs to review its foreign policies thoroughly, engaging more with Arab citizens and offering substantial solutions to the present conflicts instead of being a manipulator, to be able to sustain its commanding status and regain world trust. Foreign affairs depend on consistency and dependability. The Arab world needs more from the US to turn friends-with-benefits into a committed relationship.

Mohammed Nosseir

Mohammed Nosseir is an Egyptian economist & Liberal politician. He was a Democratic Front Party higher committee member from 2007 to 2012 and a Free Egyptian Party political bureau member until 2013.

This article first appeared in iai News (Institute of Arts & Ideas), 29th July 2024

Vladimir Kara-Murza freed from Russian prison

“When a group of officers burst into my cell at 3 a.m. on July 28 and told me to get up and get ready in 10 minutes, my first thought was that I was going to be led out to be executed.” These were the opening words of Vladimir Kara-Murza’s article in *The Washington Post*¹. On August 1st 2024 a prisoner exchange between the United States and Russia, the largest since the end of the Cold War, led to the release of twenty-six people. The prisoner exchange took place at Ankara Esenboğa Airport in Türkiye; the Turkish government acted as a mediator.



The bureau of Liberal International welcomes the release of Vladimir Kara-Murza, recipient of the Liberal International Prize for Freedom, from a Russian prison. This event highlights the grave human rights abuses faced by political dissidents in Russia. We remain deeply concerned for the many prisoners of conscience who continue to be unjustly detained in Russia and beyond.

Dr. Hakima El Haité, President of Liberal International, emphasised, “The release of Vladimir Kara-Murza brings much-needed relief to his resilient family and all who have stood by his cause. However, his imprisonment and treatment are stark reminders of the severe repression faced by those who challenge authoritarian regimes. Vladimir’s freedom is a testament to the power of international solidarity, yet it also underscores the harsh reality of political persecution in Russia.”

The global trend of increasing authoritarianism, where governments imprison political dissidents and violate

basic rights and individual freedoms, is alarming. Russia’s treatment of opposition figures like Kara-Murza is a glaring example of this disturbing pattern. We also condemn Russia’s conduct in unjustly imprisoning Western personalities to leverage them in exchanges, a tactic that undermines international norms and human rights.

Since his unjust imprisonment in 2022, Liberal International and our member parties have fervently supported and advocated for Kara-Murza’s liberation. As a Liberal International Prize for Freedom laureate, his struggle has always been ours. We provided a stage for Evgenia Kara-Murza, Vladimir’s courageous wife, in London and Ottawa. There, she stood with Liberal parliamentarians and campaigners, boldly calling for his release.

The liberation of courageous individuals like Kara-Murza underscores the urgent need to stand against tyranny and advocate for fundamental freedoms. This event should galvanize the international community to intensify efforts in the fight for human rights and to uphold the core values of equality, justice, and democracy. Together, we can inspire change, challenge authoritarian regimes, and uphold the principles we champion.

We eagerly anticipate collaborating with Vladimir Kara-Murza to advance his vision for a free and democratic Russia.

Also released were Lilia Ayratovna Chanyшева, Ksenia Fadeeva, Evan Gershkovich, Rico Krieger, Alsu Khamidovna Kurmasheva, Kevin Lik, Herman Moyzhes, Oleg Petrovich Orlov, Vadim Ostanin, Andrei Sergeyevich Pivovarov, Patrick Schöbel, Aleksandra Yuryevna Skochilenko, Demuri Voronin, Paul Whelan and Ilya Valeryevich Yashin.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/08/29/vladimir-kara-murza-prison-putin-freedom-ukraine/>

China in the United Nations: How PRC used UN to pursue its “One China Policy”

Larry Ngan

So, Taiwan has been part of China for centuries, yet the US and its allies are preparing for war with China over it. They are not the foreigners trying to get their hands on the island...”

This line does sound similar to propaganda statements from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It also appears to be shared by George Galloway, the Workers Party of Britain leader and former Member of Parliament of Rochdale. He also presented ‘Taiwan Untangled’, a documentary TV programme broadcasted by China Global Television Network (CGTN). CGTN has used Galloway as a speaker from Europe to try to show its citizens that even Europeans support its our views, and secondly CCP tried to promote their agenda, like ‘One China Policy’, to the audience in Europe.

Was the PRC the replacement of ROC?

In the program, there was a section explaining how United Nation expelled Republic of China (Taiwan) by saying ‘when the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 recognised the PRC as the sole legitimate representative of China to the United Nations.’ This line tries to follow the content of the Resolutions:

“Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Considering that the restoration of the lawful rights of the People’s Republic of China is essential both for the protection of the Charter of the United Nations and for the cause that the United Nations must serve under the Charter,

Recognising that the representatives of the Government of the People’s Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People’s Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council,

Decides to restore all its rights to the People’s Republic of China and to recognise the representatives of its government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organisations related to it.”

However, the CGTN documentary carried on by saying,

“Resolution 2758 was highly significant, it meant the diplomatic recognition of China (In English subtitle it was written as PRC, contradicted from the original words from the interviewee) by the United Nations (in 1971). It resolved the fundamental question of Chinese government legitimate representation at the United Nations.”

“During the Cold War, US-led efforts played with the idea of recognising “Two Chinas” but even then they knew it could never fly...”

“Throughout recorded history, it is clear Taiwan has been an integral part of China...”

The documentary first purposely phrased the Resolution 2758 as an act to finally make China to be recognised in the United Nations and only recognised since 1971. It also failed to recognise that the ROC is also a Chinese representative and represented the Chinese seat since the inception of the United Nations after the Second World War.

By failing to recognise the legitimacy of the ROC representation, today’s PRC narrative effectively says China has only been admitted to the United Nations since 1971 as the PRC and that the ROC has no representation in the body. This is factually erroneous and far from the legal view both as Taiwan’s historical rights in international law and the definition of the Resolution.

Firstly, legally what the resolution did was to transfer the UN Security Council and general assembly seats from ROC to PRC. It was more a leveraging of power between Beijing and Taipei governments instead of excluding Taiwan from all UN positions. (Such as World Health Organisation)

Secondly, the documentary also ignored the fact that the Taiwanese elected their own representatives in the legislative and executive branch of its administration, and the existence of a separate civil government running Taiwan and its territory at all. Taiwan had been colonies of a number of countries, not to mention the Taiwanese indigenous population originated from Southeast Asia (not China as mentioned by Galloway). China did not rule officially Taiwan till 1661, after the remnant of the Ming Dynasty expelled the Dutch colonists.

Only through some complex diplomatic incidents which will warrant future discussions; only the PRC remained as the sole representative in the United Nations. The ROC delegation vacated their seat in 1971.

A new platform for the PRC to insert its narratives

Since its admission to the Security Council and main body, the PRC started its diplomatic propaganda 'One China Policy' almost immediately. First, in November 1972, they used the chance of passing Resolution 2908 during the 27th session of the UN General Assembly to remove Hong Kong and Macau from UN list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, while recognising China's stance and request over the questions of Hong Kong. The original purpose of this resolution was to force the existing colonial powers to grant independence to the remaining colonies as soon as possible, since those colonies on the list would be ultimately be granted independence if the residents in the regions wanted to become independent.

The rights to choice by the residents in colonies were guaranteed under the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was passed in 1960. Therefore, the original intention was not to exclude any colonies from the list. However, the Chinese representative in the United Nations took this chance to enforce its One China Policy by ignoring the will of Hong Kong and Macau citizens on self-determination.

The motion was passed by a 99:5 vote, which is a big margin. China therefore used this to justify its claims over Hong Kong on the coming years, particularly during the negotiation with the United Kingdom in the early 1980s. Resolution 2908 consequently prevented the peoples of Hong Kong and Macau from their right to self-determination.

The narratives to exclude Taiwan damages global stability

Unfortunately, what the UN assembly did not realise was that it was only the first step for China to exclude Taiwan from involving in international affairs and interacting with international organisations, even during global crises. In an article titled '*The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan's Access to the United Nations*' published by Jessica Drun and Bonnie S. Glaser on German Marshall Fund of the United States. It explained,

"The PRC's effort to rewrite Taiwan's status at the UN ramped up in the 1990s and early 2000s at the same time as the Island's democratization. The PRC has since worked to "internationalise" its "One China" Principle and to conflate it with UN Resolution 2758, a revisionist shift from the original intent of the document."

"Beijing has managed to further institutionalise and normalise its stance on Taiwan within the UN by signing secret agreements with the UN bodies, restricting Taiwan's access to the UN and its facilities, and embedding PRC nationals across various levels of UN staff. The UN and its specialised agencies have not made the text of these documents, such as that of the 2005 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between PRC and the World Health Organisation (WHO), available to the public or to any entity beyond the main signatories, though leaked guidance memos provide insights into the scope of the MOU's content."

The most famous example for this institutionalisation was during the SARS crisis in the 2000s. Taiwan was one of the most affected regions after Hong Kong and China. Throughout the outbreak, 346 cases were reported and 73 people unfortunately were dead due to SARS. Taiwan was in the lockdown since 2002, so it was trying to interact with international community in order to resolve the crisis as soon as possible. On May 2003, Taiwan sent a group of 40 government officials to the General Meeting of WHO, and submitted a request to allow its representative to sit in the WHO general meeting as observer. During the general meeting, the Vice Premier and the Health Minister of PRC Wu Yi rejected the request by explaining the request directly violated the 'One China' Policy in the United Nations. She went on by saying this action is an attempt to interfere Chinese domestic affairs, consequently the action would turn into the 'Two Chinas' or 'One China One Taiwan' Policies.

To make the matter worse, Taiwan was not allowed to participate in the global outbreak alert and response system of the WHO. The system is designed to cope with events such as SARS. WHO also delayed the data

system is designed to cope with events such as SARS. WHO also delayed the data from Taiwan for several days, which could be crucial when the health authorities in Taiwan attempted to trace the movement of the virus carrier. David Cyranoski, Lecturer from Kyoto University Institute for Advanced Study of Human Biology, published an article titled *'Taiwan left Isolated in Fight Against SARS'* on Nature on 17th April 2003. He explained Researchers in Taiwan are being shut of the global investigation because their country was not recognised by the WHO, which is coordinating the study. He went on explaining the research wanted more data on SARS after it affected 2 Taiwanese patients in early March. 'But WHO officials told (the researchers) that they should instead approach the PRC in Beijing, which the organisation does recognise.'

Eugene Chien, the former foreign minister of Taiwan, published an article titled *'Beyond SARS: Give Taiwan WHO status'* on New York Times on 16th May 2003 and explained the difficulties Taiwan faced at that time. It reads as,

'WHO also refused to provide any assistance, such as providing Taiwan's scientists with the sample viruses needed in their research toward treatment and vaccines, or sending any experts to advise us on containment efforts. Repeated letters from our Ministry of Health and medical experts to Gro Harlem Brundtland, director-general of the WHO, went unanswered.'

Recent US-Taiwan relations

After the SARS pandemic ended on 2003, PRC continued its effort to restrict Taiwan at the UN. PRC also attempted to use its narrative of the 'One China' principle as embedded in Resolution 2758 to call into question the legitimacy of longstanding US policy on Taiwan – including the US Taiwan Relations Act.

Some member states such as United States realised PRC attempt to re-define UN Resolution 2758 and has pushed back against UN statements claiming that Taiwan is a province of the PRC, including issuing a 2007 "non-paper" asserting its position that Taiwan's status is not yet determined.

The PRC's stance on Taiwan was further hardened after the Taiwanese Presidential election 2016, in which the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Tsai Ing Wen won by a landslide. (The Taiwanese President is elected by universal suffrages .) According to the article *'the Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 to Limit Taiwan's Access to the United Nations'*, before 2016, Taiwan was still permitted to have access to targeted UN specialised agencies. But after the 2016 election, Taiwan was once again blocked from UN participation under the pressure from China on adopted the 'One China' principle embedded in Resolution 2758. The article further explained,

"The extent of PRC efforts to codify the "One China" Principle into the UN system is pervasive—no issue item, memo, or note is too small or insignificant for Beijing and its proxies to overlook—and their influence and reach is wide-ranging."

The examples shown on the article included Taiwanese (ROC) passport holders were denied entry into UN buildings and offices, amending the languages of other UN agencies by adopting PRC stance in WHO which resulted in preventing Taiwanese representative to have access to any UN specialised agency, and preventing Taiwanese access to UN resources or attending UN organised forums and events.

The most prominent example was how PRC amended the internal guidelines on preventing Taiwanese passport holders' entry into the UN buildings and offices. The article reads as,

"In one instance in June 2017, a Taiwan professor, Liuhuang Li-Chuan, and her students were denied entry into the public gallery of UN Human Rights office in Geneva after being told that their international student identification cards were not an acceptable form of documentation and that only documents issued by the PRC would be allowed. The professor says she was shown a document of internal guidelines provided by the UN staff checking in visitors. ... (The guidelines) revealed that a combination of ROC national identity card and ROC passport was deemed unacceptable while a ROC passport with a Mainland Travel Permit for Taiwan Residents was permitted."

For those who did not have knowledge on Mainland Travel Permit, it is a kind of travel document issued by the PRC required for Taiwanese citizens to travel to Mainland China. Without the possession of this Permit, a Taiwan citizen cannot visit Mainland China. Once registered to it, the personal data of the applicants will be kept by the authorities in Mainland China and restricted only by the PRC government. The permit holders would also be seen as politically aligned with Mainland China by the Taiwanese authorities, which could cause trouble to the students and the professor if they applied for one, not to mention there is no legitimacy to force a Taiwanese to apply for such. Such a move from PRC was attempting to force Taiwanese citizens to pick a side: Either you supported 'One China' policy, or you will be rejected to have any access to UN facilities and resources.

Implications

Should other countries worry about it? Should we focus on learning these repeated narratives and projected by British politicians like Galloway? We should.

The PRC's method to drive Taiwanese out from UN institutions can be used on countries who are hostile to PRC, or challenges the PRC in order to secure its way of life. Needless to say, Beijing has increasingly infiltrates the British democracy system to subjugate its views while we, rightfully, allow Beijing to exist.

The PRC excluded the Taiwanese was just based on the voting result on one resolution. Subsequently, Beijing uses its powers to push to amend all interpretations of internal documents in order to achieve their aims and building foundations for a false narrative. These did not fall into any vote in the UN General Assembly, hence easily unnoticeable due to minor changes undertaken discreetly. Failure to tackle this subrogation could bring our allies into a bad position such as in the event of increasing hostility perpetuated by China in supporting Russia or threats against Taiwan.

Larry Ngan

Larry Ngan is Chair of LD Friends of Hong Kong and a member of the Federal International Relations Committee, writing in a personal capacity.

¹ UN Resolution 2758 'Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations.', United Nations Digital Library, Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations.

² Taiwan Untangled, CGTN, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVYTugFYols&pp=ygUWdGFpd2FuIHVudGFuZ2x1ZCBtb3ZpZQ%3D%3D>

³ United Nations Resolution 2908, 'Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.', United Nations Digital Library.

⁴ 'How China Stripped Hong Kong of its Right to Self Determination in 1972 – and Distorted History', Hong Kong Free Press, 8th Nov 2016.

⁵ Jessica Drun and Bonnie S. Glaser, 'The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan's Access to the United Nations', German Marshall Fund of United States, 24 March 2022.

⁶ '2003年國務院副總理吳儀 指台灣以觀察員身份出席世衛會議是一場鬧劇 - 新聞檔案', TVB News, Link on youtube: <https://youtu.be/VOyC16S612w?si=arMDUYeI4z5m6wxA>

⁷ David Cyranoski, 'Taiwan left Isolated in Fight Against SARS', Nature, 17th April 2003.

⁸ Eugene Chien, 'Beyond SARS: Give Taiwan WHO status', New York Times, 16th May 2003.

⁹ Jessica Drun and Bonnie S. Glaser, 'The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan's Access to the United Nations', German Marshall Fund of United States, 24 March 2022.

¹⁰ Jessica Drun and Bonnie S. Glaser, 'The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan's Access to the United Nations', German Marshall Fund of United States, 24 March 2022.

¹¹ Jessica Drun and Bonnie S. Glaser, 'The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan's Access to the United Nations', German Marsh

An exhibition based on this article will be held at the stall of Lib Dems Friends of Hong Kong during the autumn conference. Stall number H2 on the first floor.

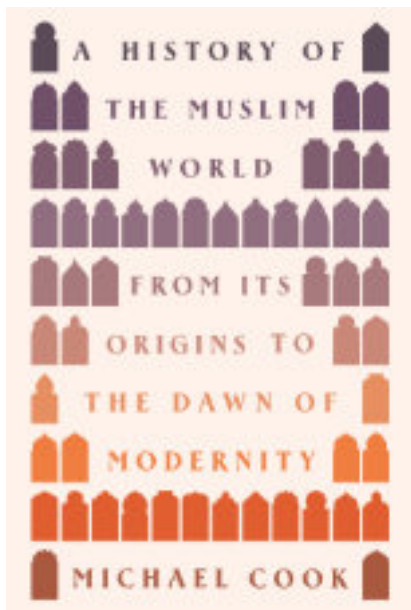
Reviews

**A History of the Muslim World from its Origins to the Dawn of Modernity, by Michael Cook.
Princeton University Press 2024 £35.00 isbn 9780691236575**

When I was a student, I had a friend who used to curl up every winter with a Russian novel. She said it would get her through the cold and dark months, and she would emerge refreshed when the spring appeared. Books are getting shorter these days, but there is still a place for the lengthy tome. Michael Cook's *A History of the Muslim World from its Origins to the Dawn of Modernity* is a case in point. 846 packed pages before end matter would not disgrace Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy.

Cook was born in 1940. He is one of the most erudite scholars of Islamic studies produced by western academia in his generation, and has long left behind the academic controversies in which he once indulged. It is hard not to see something valedictory about the book (he hints at this in an interview on his publisher's website). The result is a fascinating work. It is written in a lucid and witty style that always tempts you to carry on reading to the bottom of the page, and then to turn over to the next one. A laconic, understated humour as well as an eye for human detail pervade the book. The Crusaders are described as "improbable invaders from western Europe". That is probably exactly how they appeared at the time to the Muslims (and Christians and Jews) of the Fertile Crescent.

Structure is inevitably a problem with any book of this length, and Cook has given careful thought to this. The book is divided into three parts: The Emergence of the Muslim world (six chapters), The Muslim world from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries (eight chapters), and Epilogue: a single chapter that deals with the Muslim world and the West since 1800. Each chapter begins with an italicised passage of about a page that provides a road map for the chapter. One of the reasons for this is to enable readers to skip parts of the book that may not interest them. Within the chapters themselves, sections and sub-headings are used helpfully and liberally.



He is very aware of the limitations and challenges of the historian's craft. As he elegantly states in the Preface, "The fraction of past humans whom we know even by name is exiguous, and the proportion of named individuals whose lives are known to us in any fullness is tiny. And yet the body of surviving source material for the history of the Muslim world is far greater than a single historian could ever hope to handle." Throughout the book, he draws the reader's attention to the limitations on our knowledge. Sources can distort, as well as cast light. Thus, Egyptian papyri survive disproportionately from areas on the fringes of the Nile Valley, but the most important written records would probably have been made in the cities on the Nile, and these have been overwhelmingly lost. How do we know the picture we can glean today is not seriously lopsided?

This is a work of geography as well as history, and Cook gives full rein to the effects of both physical and human geography on his story. After the first three chapters, which take us as far as the Abbasid caliphate in the ninth century, he ceases to attempt to condense his study into a single narrative thread. Islam was now present from the Atlantic to the Indus, and the book fans out with different geographically based chapters. Those on the break up of the caliphate in the West, in the East, and in the central Muslim world complete Part One. In Part Two, the geographical spread is even more pronounced. After dealing with the Turks and Mongols in Central Asia, he turns to Iran, and then to the rise of the Turks and the Ottoman Empire. Later chapters deal with India, including the Mughals, and the spread of Islam in Africa and areas around the Indian Ocean. The final chapter in Part Two deals with the Arabs during this period.

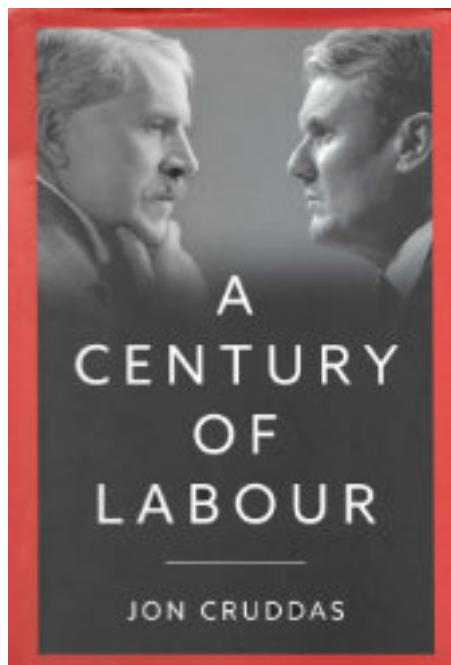
Cook is fascinated by state formation, how and why it occurs, and the processes by which states arise, thrive and decay. He has a similar curiosity about issues of cultural change and survival, particularly questions such as how and why languages become dominant and drive each other out, and why

communities and individuals convert from one religion to another. These are some of the preoccupations that drive the book. Unlike certain historians, he is always refreshingly honest about the limitations of the present state of scholarly knowledge, but if you wish to find out, say, what we currently know about the stages by which the Egyptian population moved from speaking Coptic to Arabic, and the majority also moved from Christianity to Islam, this book will tell you. It will also give you an insight into such possibly obscure questions as the most likely reasons why Islam spread in, say, Somalia, but much less in Madagascar. The reader who shares the author's enthusiasm for such topics will find this a rewarding book, as will readers who had no previous interest in them but find themselves drawn into such intriguing new worlds by Cook's writing. His treatment of the many Islamic empires of East and West and their problems and achievements will enthral readers.

The studied objectivity, sometimes almost determinism, of this book makes it often hard to know what the author's own perspective is. Nothing wrong with that - he is to be congratulated for leaving his own views out of it. Yet I occasionally felt that I would have liked to hear more of those views, which he has generally succeeded in keeping to himself.

If you are looking for a big book to curl up with and wish to emerge with a scholarly overview of the history of Islam and the Muslim world, Cook is the writer for you. Alternatively, if you are interested in just one or two of the many topics dealt with in it, you will have more than your money's worth.

John McHugo



**A Century of Labour, by Jon Cruddas.
Polity 2024 isbn 9781509558346**

Portrayed as a leftie, Cruddas never quite fitted into the rent-a-Trot coterie of, say Corbyn and he is lately associated with the conservative Blue Labour movement. Jon Cruddas paints a picture of Labour history in his own image. I don't immediately recognise it, dwelling on the spirituality and evangelism of the movement. Most of my reading of Labour history has come from a trade union or libertarian perspective,. Most of my experience of the Labour party, if you exclude our being mortal enemies, has been in terms of pragmatism. You don't find much spirituality and evangelism there, though I don't doubt that it was there, or that at stages in a political career one might have found it. But even reading Cruddas these elements frequently belong to the Independent Labour Party (ILP) or to movements like Guild Socialism, which were perennially marginalised by the dominant statist Fabianism.

What follows from this is that the history of the Labour party gets progressively less interesting as time goes by – from the Wilson

governments onwards, you might say. Paradoxically this is the span of Cruddas's political career. Over this span, the Labour party has said goodbye to the working classes, I recall a couple of nice middle class boys boasting of how they were down-sizing British industry in their day jobs. Cruddas himself would be critical of that; Labour has become a machine for electing career politicians. Are these people 'better' than their Tory counterparts? Sometimes, you might think, but it comes down to the individual. Along with most of the electorate I've always been sceptical of Starmer, do not let the scale of Labour's victory mask that it was the Tories who lost the general election rather than Labour that won it; within three weeks of his administration my allusions to him as 'Kier Stalin' seem to be true.

These reservations aside Cruddas presents us with a thorough history of the Labour party over the 124 years of its history. Knowing your enemy is the first step towards defeating it. Blue Labour? Is that a problem? I look at the people associated with it and see more of the same; some of them even did time with the Liberal Democrats – that should be a warning. We are now faced with five years of a Labour government, maybe more, with the impending destruction of the Tories. Cruddas shows some of the cracks in Labour's past history. Use them.

Stewart Rayment

**My Name is Not Refugee, by Kate Milner
Barrington Stokes, 2017 £7.99 isbn 9781911370062**

'We have to leave this town, my mother told me, it's not safe for us, she said. Shall I tell you what it will be like?'

So begins this simple story following a parent and child who travel overland to find sanctuary.

The adult and child reader can embark on this journey together stepping through the stages in a refugees' journey, all structured to help the readers identify with the experience. It frames a conversation with descriptions of the stages in the journey, with questions grounded in the child's ordinary reality, *How far could you walk?*

It is left to the sensitivity of the adult reader as to how much of the actual harsh reality of such a journey to introduce.

The simple, engaging, pleasant sketches are a mixture of darkness and colour. The shaded parts set the atmosphere of the terrible challenges, without closing down the possibility of ordinary life carrying on. We recognise images of refugees from the media, people in long, long lines, but at the same time we get to explore the individual human story within.

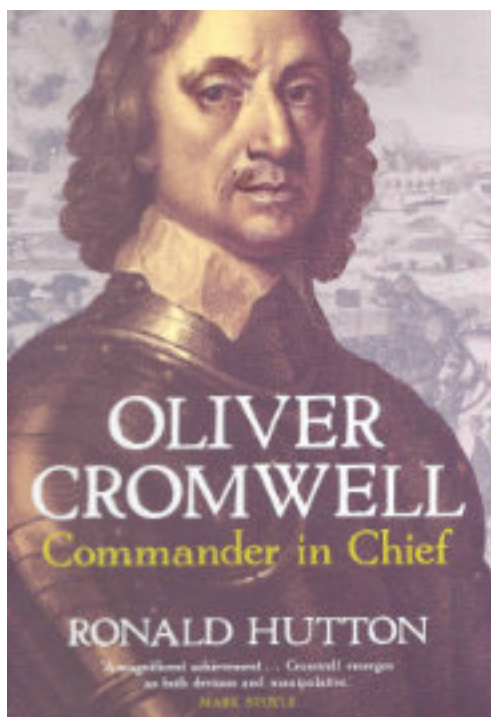
The question of the choice to make the story's characters white, and not of colour might be the intention to take this issue away from the margins and into the mainstream.

Whether this story is of use to a child of refugee background, I would say only in a therapeutic session.

My name is not Refugee is a book to be lingered over, perhaps planting a seed for a conversation to continue over days.

I look forward to a sequel taking up where this story left off, the story of the settling-in stage of a refugee's journey.

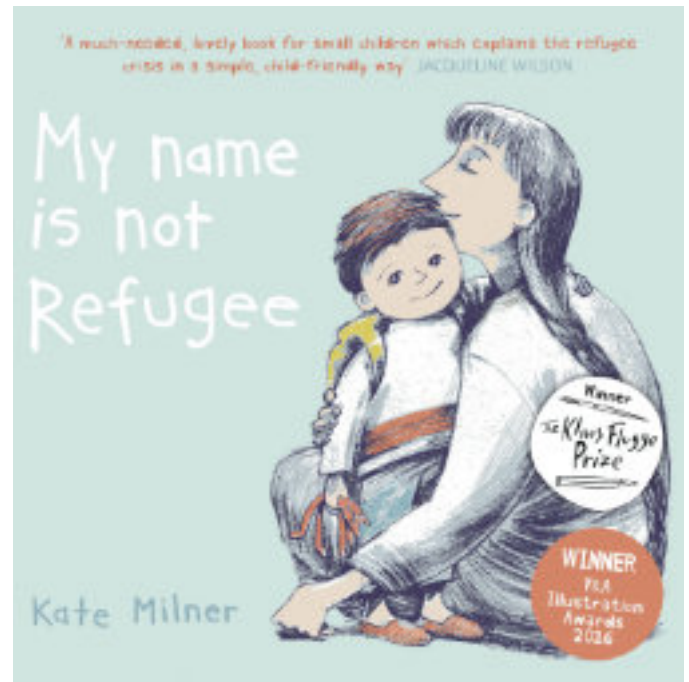
Kathy Briscoe



**Oliver Cromwell: Commander in Chief, by Ronald Hutton.
Yale University Press 2024 isbn 9780300278941**

Hail the second volume, long awaited, of Ronald Hutton's biography of Oliver Cromwell. In his introduction, Hutton confesses that it might not have happened, depending on the critical reception of his first volume¹ and his ability to wrestle with the complexities of 1647 (could there have been any doubt on either count?). 1647 apparently defeated the powers of C. V. Wedgwood.

Thus, we cover the defeat, trial and execution of Charles I, and Cromwell's subsequent campaigns in Scotland and Ireland. The siege of Drogheda is often regarded as the greatest wart on Cromwell's career, especially within the nationalist Irish national myth, though even there it has been subject to revisionist thinking. The difficulties of battlefield communication in the 17th century at Wexford aside, Cromwell did, by and large, keep his word – surrender and be spared, fight on and be slaughtered. Limerick does not feature in this book, but Cromwell had left Ireland by then and the campaign was in the hands of his lieutenants. Hutton's verdict is 'could have done better, but nothing unusual in the context of warfare at that time'. The policies of the Rump, or Purged Parliament, as Hutton calls it, do not necessarily.



fit the epithet ‘Cromwellian’, a 19th century misnomer.

This volume covers the seven-year period to the expulsion of that purged Parliament. Cromwell is a commensurate politician; what he doesn’t do can be as important as what he does, the key being how an action may relate on his reputation, which he took great care of at the time. His motivation is frequently stressed as freedom of worship for Godly Christians – wherein he excludes Catholics; always a minority position, beyond the New Model Army.

Cromwell, of course, lives to 1658 and had not yet become Lord Protector at the close of this book. We anxiously await the third volume. Dwelling primarily on domestic politics, Hutton might go back to the first Dutch War as there is probably more that could be said on that.

Stewart Rayment

¹ The Making of Oliver Cromwell, 2021. Reviewed interLib 2021-08 pages 25-26

Beyond the Law: The Politics of Ending the Death Penalty for Sodomy in Britain,

by Charles Upchurch.

Temple University Press, 2021 £32.00

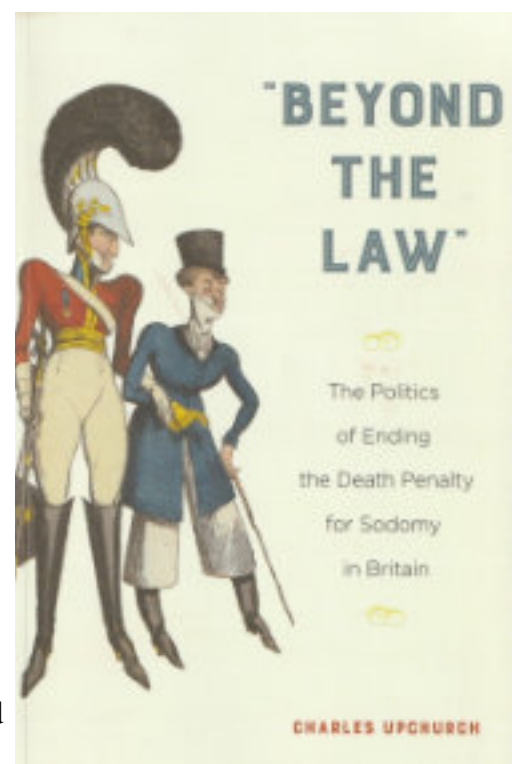
isbn 9781439920343

The early history of homosexual men in Britain, and of men who engaged in homosexual practices, has traditionally started with the eighteenth-century Mollies, after which attention turns to the abolition of the death sentence for sodomy in 1861. Mollies were working class gay and bisexual men who formed a lifestyle for themselves centring on the taverns that catered for them, the Molly Houses. ‘Molly’ was a contemporary slang term that referred to a sodomite, a reminder that the modern definition of homosexuality had yet to be created. Before it came into being, people were labelled according to what they did, or were thought to do, rather than what they were believed to be. The Mollies have attracted lots of scholarly attention because they are the first gay men visible in the historical record, which is exciting; they were incredibly brave too, risking arrest, persecution, and punishment – which could be a capital sentence. The abolition of the death sentence for sodomy has similarly garnered a lot of historical interest, not least because it looks like a key step on the road towards a more humane society. More on this in a moment.

What about the years in between, the first half of the nineteenth century? This period has attracted less attention, traditionally being seen as eclipsed by what came before and after it. This is despite the execution rate for sodomy accelerating at this time. London and Middlesex have the best records, revealing that between 1800 and 1835 (the date of the last execution for sodomy) approximately one man each year was hanged, compared to one a decade in the previous fifty years. This chilling increase is seen as part of the harsh conservative crackdown that Britain experienced as a reaction to the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

Charles Upchurch’s book focuses on the first half of the nineteenth century, revealing it to be well worth investigation. A blend of the history of ideas, and social and political history, Upchurch’s study analyses the debates for and against the abolition of the death sentence for men caught engaging in homosexual practices. This public discourse was aired in letters to the press and in books, although those for abolition used pseudonyms, so great was the public odium concerning the ‘crime’. An exception was the social reformer and jurist Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who plays a key role in Upchurch’s reappraisal. Bentham argued that it was immoral to punish men for consensual acts committed in private that did no harm to anyone, in an unpublished dissertation-length manuscript but also far more succinctly in his very influential *An Introduction to the Principles and Morals of Legislation* (1789).

Further to the public discourse, the House of Commons debated the punishment for sodomy, voting to abolish the death sentence in 1835, only for the Lords to refuse to pass the bill. Even so, from then onwards all death sentences were commuted to transportation or imprisonment. In 1840 and in 1841 the issue was debated again in the Commons, with the same results. Upchurch’s discussion of these events is hampered by a lack of sources, but some of the gaps are filled by, for example, shining light on the personal relations and kinship

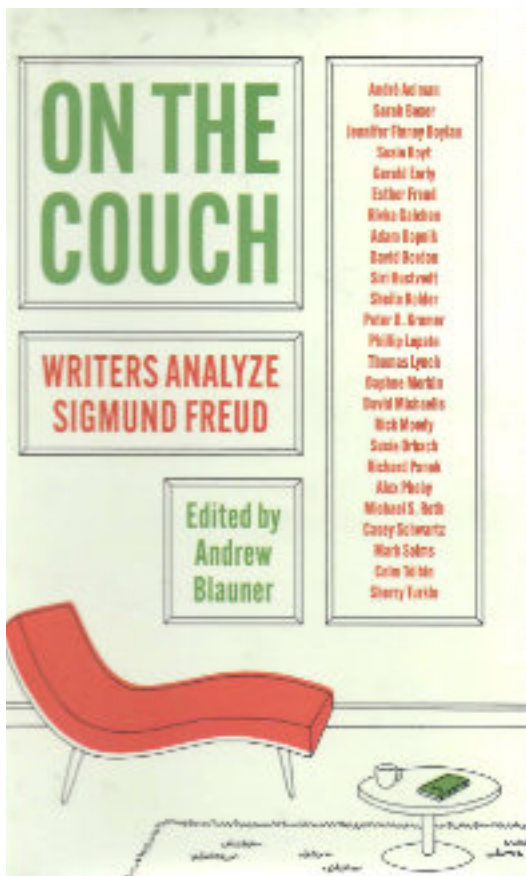


networks relevant to the men behind the abolition campaign. He also reveals the party-political uses of the sodomy debate, for example, the way which radicals exposed the hypocrisy of the upper classes. Aristocratic and other well-connected males who were caught with their trousers down with other men weren't prosecuted or executed, they were ostracised or allowed to flee into exile abroad. The scaffold was reserved for the lower orders.

Upchurch's book is a welcome addition to history of LGBTQ people in the UK. He argues that the eventual abolition of the death sentence in 1861 was brought about largely due to the de facto ending of capital sentences that had been in place since 1835. But if the political classes no longer wished to judicially murder homosexual men, this does not mean that toleration was arriving. The 1861 Offences Against the Person Act quintupled the maximum sentence for attempted sodomy. In other words, prior to this, a man could receive a two-year sentence for 'indecent assault'; afterwards, that rose to ten years.

Upchurch's book covers a lot of ground, mostly successfully. But there are places where more context would further illuminate his study. The debates and changes to legislation were part of the Age of Reform, yet this backdrop, especially its rationale, is at times sketched only lightly. We could also learn more, I am sure, from a closer look at the ostracism of well-heeled homosexual men. The novelist and MP William Beckford (1760-1844) is a case in point. He was disgraced in the 1780s when his love letters to another man were discovered, and the affair reported in the press. Yet Beckford remained in England, albeit in self-imposed internal exile. But unlike many other men in his position, he did not flee abroad. Later, he would play an important role in helping Bentham with the abolition campaign. There must have been degrees of ostracism, suggesting degrees of toleration. How this worked in everyday life is currently left to our imaginations.

Stephen Brogan



On the couch, Writers analyse Sigmund Freud, edited by Andrew Blauner. Princeton University Press 2024 £25.00 isbn 978 0691 242439

There's a track on the second album by The Nice, *Ars Longer Vita Brevis*, called *Happy Freuds*, rather appropriately it follows *Daddy Where Did I Come From* and *Little Arabella*, a suitable case for treatment. Back in 1968, apart from struggling with A Levels, we read and discussed relative merits of Freud, Jung and Adler; I came I down on the Jungian side and would read much more of these later on. Scouting around favourite bookshops in the context of this review, I was surprised at how little there was on the shelves. Listening to my children's conversations at a similar age I don't find them talking about the masters of psychoanalysis; what are they missing? Why has education failed to fire their curiosity?

I was at first resistant to reviewing this book. As I anticipated, it is primarily American writers that analyse. 25 in all, even Colm Tóibín is Irene and Sidney B Silverman Professor of Humanities at Columbia University.

Scrolling through the index there is no mention of any of the Freud's with whom I'm acquainted though it is obvious that Clement and Lucian did not get on with each other; there is a passing allusion in Esther Freud's *Sigmund Freud and Me*.

Sigmund and his household escaped the Nazis, his sisters did not. In Esther Freud's encounter with Philippe Sands, grandson of another escapee, he tells her of his watching the evidence of Treblinka survivor Samuel Rjizman, who in footage of the Nuremberg trials states *that one of the many acts he witnessed was a grandmother income accompanying labouring daughter to the Infirmary made to watch as the newborn baby was slaughtered, then her own daughter, before she herself was shot*. This goes beyond the brutality of industrialised killing, it is gratuitous, and is something that all followers of populists ought to reflect upon, the end of their road. *I could not help but feel contempt at the Labour party's co-option of the Union flag in the recent general election. Luckily much of life with Lucian is lighter – but to who was the victim of a*

phone prank referring when they shrieked *No, no connection with that filthy pornographer*, the Grapefruit or the Pip?

That is the tone of Esther Freud's contribution, the absence of discussion of the past and ancestors. Clearly the traumas of war and they're devastating impact on the family make something to forget. I'm disappointed to turn the page and find it ending and made a mental note to seek out *After Summer* in Gaglow.

Casey Schwartz in *The Freuds*, writes mainly about the favoured daughter, Anna, whose deeds were noble, perhaps more so, but did this analyse Sigmund?

Colm Tóibin's *Freud and the Writers* puts Henry James and Thomas Mann on the couch alongside Sigmund. It is a sadly poignant piece for today as we consider the probability of the Ukrainian war breaking beyond those confines; in some cases it already had in some cases it already has in Gaza, a cunning diversion that the West fell for. Both James and Mann were quarter up in the jingoistic patriotism of the opening of First World War. Sigmund Freud too, shared these emotions though his reactions were more moderated. In his reflections on war and death, he deplores the *lack of insight that our great intellectual leaders have shown*. Freud writes *the transformation of impulses upon which are component our cultural adaptability rests can... be permanently or temporarily made regressive*. Without doubt the influence of war belongs to those wars forces which can create regressions... war forces people to take a side, as a Jew, Freud views for the first time, being an Austrian; Henry James writes Asquith about taking British nationality. Thomas Mann is simply wrong, it is not the State that defines the *limits to human activity*, making his contribution to what turned out to be a slippery road. As Germany went down that road Mann in turn, would have to escape. As our awareness of our growing proximity to war in our own garden grows, it is worth pondering this essay alone.

Read Jennifer Finney Boylan for a closer perspective of her contribution... I ramble too much; read the book, a collection of short essays to expand your mind and meditate on.

Stewart Rayment

**Navigating Identity: From Hong Kong to Toronto, edited by Mitchell Ma.
Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library, 2024
isbn 9780772710918 isbn 9780772710925 (eBook)**



Canada had a long history of Hong Kong diaspora community since 1980s. Vancouver for example is for long the favourite destination for migrants with Hong Kong origins. Richmond, used to be largely associated with agriculture, became 'North America's most Asian city' according to BBC in 2012¹. Canadian tertiary institutes were famous of their detailed studies on different communities in the country, so did they made significant contributions to Hong Kong history, and it would not be surprising a new research project on Hong Kong Canadian diaspora being undertaken under such circumstances. As one said "If you do not know where you come from, you do not know where you are going."²

'Navigating Identity: From Hong Kong to Toronto'³ is a very good example. It was published by Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library, with support from University of Toronto School of Cities as Graduate Fellows

Knowledge Mobilization Project 2023-24. It is a collection of articles written by a selected group of Hong Kong Canadians. They came from a variety of social background, from the recent arrivals from Hong Kong to those who were born and bred in Canada but had a Hong Kong heritage. From students to professionals and founder of charities, and from those singletons to families.

The articles covered a variety of topics rather than single-mindedly focused on the cultural difference: How food culture impacted the adaption of the style of living in Canada, how pop culture being a medium to express themselves, how cultural difference impacted the interaction of Hong Kong Canadians with the rest of communities, how they need to adjust to their career since their professional qualification back in Hong Kong may not be recognised in Canada, how the change of racial relationships changes over time, and how some came to terms on their identity of being 'too native' to be Chinese, but 'not native' enough to be Canadian.

The presentation of the articles was a bit like an exhibition in an art museum, except it is presented with words instead of portraits. There is a main theme of the whole collection: The identity of Hong Kong Canadian. There are some good quality articles, such as the 'New, Life, Migration', which detailed how they viewed their identity, and their views on Canada from 3 different point of views from the same family; and the 'Winter Solstice' which described the recent arrivals thoughts on migrating from one country to the other, and how she used her culinary skills to resolve how she missed Hong Kong.

The style of writing on some articles in the collection are contradicting yet interesting. Some of them, such as 'A Diasporic Hongkonger, A Social Worker, And Someone Who Persists' are in a more political literature style of writing; while 'My "Three in One" Life – Painting, Writing, Music' reads more like a charity profile on an annual report, detailing how the charity grows and its potentials in the future. There is nothing wrong with their writing styles because they reflected their experiences in Canada. While other articles in the collections are about the journey of the Hong Kong Canadians living in the country, these 2 articles seemingly pulled us into another angle on how Hong Kong Canadian community originated and evolved.

Speaking as someone moving from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom back in 2000s, these articles reminded our daily struggles on coming to terms that we are living in a completely different country, and this is not Hong Kong. The food culture is different, the local communities were speaking languages other than Cantonese, the way of communication is different, finding friends became a struggle because of cultural differences (Particularly for LGBT communities). These created a sense of insecurity and it would take years for anyone to overcome, some succeeded, some may fail and return to Hong Kong.

Therefore, this book could also reflect the struggles faced by Hong Kong British, particularly those recently moved from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom under the British National Overseas Visa (BN(O) visa) program. According to the figures from the Home Office, up till Q2 2023, up to 182,000 Hong Kong citizens applied for BN(O) visa, quite some had already moved to this country. The Hong Kong British became one of the fastest growing diaspora groups in this country. Some struggled to find their way to integrate into the British society, while some already found their answers on how to interact with local communities through political establishment and non-government organisations. This book can offer some insight on how academia in the United Kingdom can conduct similar research in the UK.

All in all, this book is a very interesting read. Of course, further studies on this topic would be required, but as a source for understanding what challenges Hong Kong Canadians were facing, this work is highly credible. I am looking forward for the future publication from the School of Cities from University of Toronto, and I would be glad to recommend this book to our readers.

Larry Ngan

¹ BBC News: 'Canada prepares for an Asian Future', 25th May 2012. Link: [Canada prepares for an Asian future - BBC News](#)

² Venus Cheung, 'Shared Languages', edited by Mitchell Ma, *Navigating Identity: From Hong Kong to Canada*, Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library & Mitchell Ma, 2024, Page 32-33.

³ <https://schoolofcities.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Hong-Kong-diaspora-booklet.pdf>

The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments and Warps our Economies, by Mariana Mazzucato and Rosie Collington. Allen Lane 2023 £10.99 isbn 9781802060263

I wanted to love this book. The argument made by the authors is enticing and they have articulated something many of us have long suspected: consultants with no particular expertise receive large sums of money for poor quality work which could and should be done internally. The problem was that Mazzucato and Collington never quite manage to seal the deal with tangible, damning evidence.

The book goes through the history of consulting chronologically. The big example at the beginning is IT outsourcing - most governments stopped developing their own IT capabilities and hired external companies instead. Over time, IT infrastructure became so complex that it was impossible for governments to bring it back in-house as they had little internal IT knowledge. Mazzucato and Collington criticise this approach. But more could have been done to explain (a) why a specialised IT consultancy is different from a specialist internal IT department, whose work (presumably) most other civil servants would not understand either; and (b) what specific IT skills governments lack and how this has hindered them.

More recent examples come from the Covid-19 pandemic, when both established consultancies and newly-created companies received government contracts to provide various public health services, particularly in the UK. Mazzucato and Collington argue that the UK government should have used its own extensive public health expertise to run the programmes, and also used this as an opportunity to learn and prepare for future pandemics. This all sounds very logical, but it would have been helpful to have more detail on what exactly the external companies were doing; and how the government could have done the same work - for example, did it have enough people or would it have needed to quickly recruit new employees? If the latter, how would these new employees benefit from the government's institutional knowledge and would this be any cheaper than hiring an external consultant?

There are some good, specific examples of consultancy gone wrong in both the private and public sector. However, at times the authors just default to listing consultancy contracts and how much they cost. We are supposed to infer that they were poor value for money. I would have preferred more information on what the consultants were doing and how the maths would stack up if everything was brought internally. I wanted some 'gotcha' moments which emphatically showed the problems caused by consulting. All too often, the evidence of bad practice was a report written in the same woolly language as a consultant would use, with no empirical evidence.

This book makes some good arguments against the consultancy industry but should be seen as the start of a research journey. With more detailed empirical evidence, the authors may be able to build a devastating case against 'the big con'. As things stand, they are not quite there.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

As a footnote to this, and a warning to those in office, I despaired at the willingness of managerialists in my council group to bring in consultants to tell us how to suck eggs; not only was it a waste of time and money, but also demoralised our staff, who felt we could not trust them. Stewart Rayment.

Hillbilly Elegy: a memoir of a family and culture in crisis, by JD Vance.
Harper Press 2016 isbn 9780062300546

Although it was published in 2016, this book is topical because of its insight into the man who will likely be America's next vice-president, and may succeed Trump in 2028.

Hillbilly Elegy was hailed as an anthropological work which helped explain the Brexit vote, the failure of Hilary Clinton's presidential campaign, and the global rise of populists like Trump.

In short order, Vance went from being a venture capitalist to a Republican politician. He started as a 'never Trumper', but then reality bit, and he humiliated himself to win the Senate primary in Ohio. When he campaigned for Vance, Trump reminded the audience of this, telling them, "Vance kissed my ass."

Reading Hillbilly Elegy in 2016, Vance's anger was striking, as was his brutal analysis of what had happened in America's left-behind places. Yet, he gave no hint of what should be done to improve the lives of the millions of working class citizens with whom he identified. There was plenty of self-pity due to Vance's tough upbringing, and a measure of sneering superiority because he had the grit to make it out of hillbilly country, whereas his feckless family were still drinking moonshine, taking Oxy in their trailer parks, and were in and out of prison.

Vance gave a blow-by-blow account of the factors that limit the ambitions of people born in places like West Virginia where mining and heavy industry have shifted off shore. Addiction and a lack of self-confidence contribute to creating an atmosphere in which few people know a university graduate. Equally, moving to somewhere with better employment prospects is unimaginable because people lack the resources and connections to believe mobility is possible. In other words, Vance's working class are in a death spiral.

Two observations stick with me, eight years after reading Hillbilly Elegy: although the vast majority of Vance's friends and neighbours claim to be religious, few of them attend church, strive to lead a Christian life or even watch tele-evangelists. Vance was also annoyed that "his people" believe they work harder than Vance and his fellow metropolitan financial whizzes. Yet, he observed, they made much less effort, preferring to embrace their victimhood, excusing their inability to thrive.

Vance's book made no attempt to offer a road map out of this depressing situation. As his politics evolved, he blamed immigrants, climate activists, minorities, and left-leaning Americans for the nation's perceived decline. On the campaign trail he continues to focus on the left behind working class, verging on Marxist analysis at times.

His populism is potentially more dangerous than Trump's or Farage's because he is not simply a tool of corporate interests who want lower taxes and less regulation. He could harness a wider swathe of Americans in rejecting the country's existing democratic institutions. The planet is in danger if Vance gets his paws on real power.

Rebecca Tinsley

**Final Approach, my father and other turbulence, by Mark Blackburn
Claret Press 2023 isbn 9781910461747 ebook 9781910461754**

Mark Blackburn contested Somerton & Frome in the 2017 general election. His efforts were part of the Liberal Democrat's slow recovery in David Heath's old seat but were hampered by the brief rise in the Labour vote under Corbyn. Despite Sarah Dyke's spectacular by-election win and her going on to win Glastonbury & Somerton in the 2024 general election, with Anna Sabine winning Frome & East Somerset, they should not be complacent following the massive boundary changes that created those seats; I don't doubt they have been carefully designed. The zeitgeist of the election was with them, but Reform UK polled more than their majorities in either seat; dig in ladies.

Blackburn briefly alludes to the 2017 campaign, where the sins of the father were used against him... one doesn't doubt that the Lib Dems would have done the same, yet 29% of all our MPs went to a private school, 11 to Eton. 15% of Labour MPs share this background, no change from the 2019 election in percentage terms. Naturally, one would like this to change; there are many groups over represented in Parliament, about 20% of adults in the UK are reckoned to have had private education. Slapping VAT on education fees à la Starmer seems more an indication of his spitefulness rather than an attempt to bring proportion into the process.

Blackburn had previously contested Westminster North in 2010, against Karen Buck, who would have been in the LSE Liberal Club with him back in 1977 before the dynamics drove her to Labour. He attained the standard Lib Dem vote for the constituency, improving on his predecessor's performance, and like the rest of us, has stood in countless local contests all over the place.

But returning to the 2017 election, dismissed in a couple of short paragraphs, this is something we might have wished to learn more about, along with the similar events in the lives of Blackburn père & fils.

David Blackburn contested Brentford & Isleworth in February 1974, taking 17% of the vote but coming third. Dinners with Jeremy Thorpe are mentioned. Mark's grandfather, Cyril, fought Islington East in 1935 coming third with 2,670 votes; he was selected to fight the 1940 general election, had it happened, but the Liberals did not contest the seat until 1964. Cyril, instead, fought Pam's old constituency Tiverton in 1945 & 1950, again coming third, with respectively 7,418 and 6,885 votes (both of the former



Tiverton & Honiton seats are now in Liberal Democrat hands after Richard Foord's by-election victory).

What we really want to know about is David's relationship with the Liberal party after 1988; he was a major funder. This does not feature in the book, probably because Mark wasn't aware of it. I haven't probed this closely, not managing to speak with those in the know as yet. My own recollection goes back to the May 1997 general election. The Liberal party generally fought about a dozen seats, and in that year, for the first time Bethnal Green & Bow, where Terry Milson took 6.6% of the vote and thus held his deposit. This was a marked improvement on Steve Radford holding his deposit in Liverpool but their losing it everywhere else. Covering the Assembly for Liberator I was told that this had been critical in retaining Blackburn's funding for another year.

However, this is incidental to the book. It is clever. Without thinking about it, it took two chapters for me to suss the chapter headings... I won't spoil it for you. It is a father-son relationship, cloudy from the outset for the predictable reasons, and how those clouds were navigated. The trials and tribulations of business adventures over the last few decades are a reminder of how tough it is for those who carry the torch of small business. You don't have to know the author to enjoy the book, read it as an adventure in modern life.

Stewart Rayment

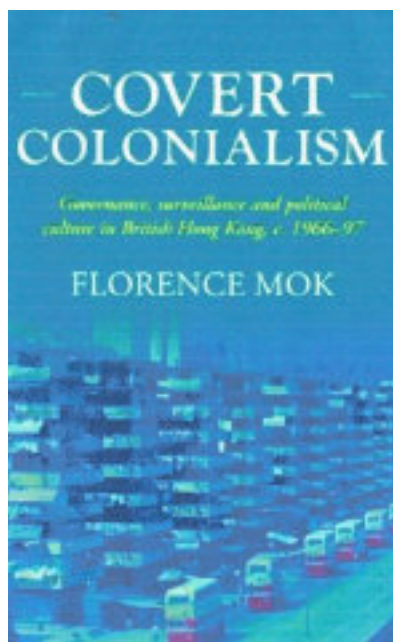
Covert Colonialism: Governance, surveillance and political culture in British Hong Kong, c. 1966-97, by Florence Mok. Manchester University Press 2023 £85.00 isbn 9781526158192

Professor Florence Mok began her new book by saying

'... I must thank my hometown, Hong Kong. In 2019, I saw the best and worst of humanity. It reminded me why my job is important and why we must get the history right. I will never forget the obligation of being a historian and will always try to make a tiny difference to the world through history.' (Page X)

As one who was indirectly involved in the 2019 movement, I can feel her passion which motivated her to write her new book 'Covert Colonialism: Governance, surveillance and political culture in British Hong Kong, c. 1966-97.' The question is: Can her new book live up to her intended goal?

In this book, Professor Florence Mok wanted to elaborate how HK government used government institute such as Town Talk and MOOD to collect public opinions 'covertly', and how the collected public opinion affected the government policy decision making, because the general consensus in the academia was that the colonial authorities had a 'hands-off' attitude towards Chinese community, and would only intervene if necessary.



The topic was rarely discussed in the past. For most lobbyist and political analysts in Britain, we have some understandings on how public opinion was conveyed through certain newspapers, ended up in the red boxes of civil servants, and potentially became policies. In the case of Hong Kong, we only knew Kaifong organisations and Po Leung Kuk played a role. We also knew City District Officers were deployed to collect public opinion, but no one elaborated how they did the job, and whether they adopted the UK civil service terminology on collecting public opinion. Of course, we can't expect any Humphrey Appleby in Hong Kong to manipulate the opinion polls, but how it works remained an unexplored area.

However, here was where the problems started.

Professor Mok first elaborated how Town Talk and MOOD collect public opinions on Chapter 1, and explained the limitations of these organisations, such as shortage of manpower, lack of scientific sampling, and lack of resources. It is a very detailed chapter in elaborating the terminology used by these institutes, and the difficulties facing the organisations. The problem was, when we were talking about collecting public opinion through sampling, a question always roused was that how objective could the institute adopted.

Statistics and tables would be used to prove the authenticity of the quantitative sampling, such as polls, or in the case of qualitative sampling, some samples of the detailed oral reports. Throughout chapter 1, I couldn't see any report sample on how disorganised the report produced by Town Talk or MOOD as some government officials claimed, or how it even looks like in picture.

For example, when Professor Mok claimed on page 28: 'due to constraints in resources and manpower, not all Chinese newspapers were analysed. Fourteen other Chinese language newspapers, which accounted for a daily circulation figure of 248,000, were not consulted.' How did they pick those Chinese newspaper? Was it based on political views, or merely readership? Were the target audience professionals like Financial Times? Or were they just gossip newsletter like the Sun?

The latter chapter further proved Maths and Statistics were not the strength of Professor Mok. For example, on page 178-180, when she tried to elaborate how illegal immigration in the 1970s affected government policies by quoting the illegal immigration figures, instead of presenting the year to year or the month of the year to the month of the previous year figures, she only quoted the figures between January and April 1978. It made the crisis lasted for only 4 months, but indeed, the crisis lasted throughout the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s-1970s.

Another issue with this book was the correlation between the cases Professor Mok picked to elaborate the main theme of the book. She used 6 case studies to elaborate how CDOs, Town Talk and/or MOOD conveyed public opinion to government officials and affected the decision-making process. After reading through the chapters, a question dinging around my head throughout: Is it necessary to use 6 case studies instead of 1 or 2? What are the correlations between these cases and why were they chosen?



Unfortunately, only chapter 5 successfully proved how MOOD affected the government decision on handling the Golden Jubilee crisis. In other chapters, however, the author either elaborated as if the CDOs acted as a running commentary, or the reports produced by the institutes such as MOOD had little relevance with the whole situation. If the conclusion was that these institutes produced only limited effect on the decision-making process, this is still a discovery because it could show how little weight was the public opinion despite the effort of CDOs. The author was just unable to draw correlation between the case studies and the work produced by CDOs and the ‘covert’ public opinion institute as she claimed.

All in all, this book had a major contribution on raising the awareness of the colonial authorities attempt to collect public opinion in a ‘Covert’ way as she claimed. It was the ability of the author for not being able to elaborate how they operated, how successful

these institute achieved, and whether they could be compared to the counterpart in the UK civil service. It was unfortunately a missed opportunity.

Larry Ngan

(P.S. Here is a clip of the newspaper Wah Kiu Yat Po dated 31/12/1971 on reporting the CDO and Town Talk activities publicly. In the other words, how ‘covert’ these institutes are?)

Little Englanders: Britain in the Edwardian Era, by Alwyn Turner. Profile Books 2024 £25.00 isbn: 9781800815308

Every now and then a Lib Dem friend or two will say to me that they wish we could be bolder policy-wise as a party. Whether or not the Liberal Democrats will get a chance to put their policies into practice nationally any time soon is debatable, but we can at least be proud of the achievements of the last Liberal peacetime government, as a new history of Edwardian Britain reminds us.

Alwyn Turner has made a name for himself with acclaimed histories of Britain in the 1970s, 1980s and beyond, which place more emphasis on the popular culture of the day than many history books. Now he’s turned his attention to that short but eventful period between the death of Queen Victoria and the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.

When Henry Campbell-Bannerman became Liberal leader in 1899, The Times quoted some militant Liberals who predicted that he would turn out to be “a warming-pan from which neither light on not heat can be expected”. But observes Turner, “there are times when a warming-pan prime minister is precisely what the nation needs, supplying calm reassurance at a time of radical change. And the Liberal government [of 1906-14] was truly radical”.

One of its first, if now largely forgotten, measures on assuming office was the Education (Provision of School Meals) Act which allowed local authorities to levy a special halfpenny rate in order to provide lunches for poor children – and, as a result, by 1910 the London County Council was providing nearly 8.0m meals a year at more than 800 of the schools under its control.

A much better-known piece of Edwardian Liberal legislation was the introduction of old age pensions, a measure which ‘wrong-footed’ the Tories and showed that the Liberals were “no longer the part of laissez faire economics”, writes Turner, a historian with an eye for the telling detail, who goes on to record the reaction across the country to the introduction of the (admittedly modest) state pension on 1 January 1909.

A giant bonfire was lit on White Horse Hill, Wiltshire, to mark the occasion, the town band paraded the streets of Braintree, Essex, playing Hail, Smiling Morn, and many Liberal Party branches held celebratory teas for pensioners. Altogether some half a million people benefited from the new pension, including, notes Turner, a 91-year-old ex-soldier who’d been on duty for Victoria’s coronation and a 104-year-old who could remember her brothers going off to fight Napoleon.

The other big piece of legislation for which the Liberal government of the time is remembered is Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' (a term coined by the Liberal supporting Daily News) in which he proposed to introduce a super tax on the rich, and a land tax which would hit land-owning aristocrats, to pay for the cost of building Royal Navy dreadnoughts and funding a National Insurance (health and unemployment) scheme.

As anyone who has studied the era knows, the Tory-controlled House of Lords rejected the budget, triggering two general elections in 1910, and it was only after the Liberals – led by Asquith – won the second poll, albeit by the skin of their teeth, that the People's Budget was finally enacted in 1911.

The big surprise for me was learning just much of a Marmite figure Lloyd George was at the time. Progressive papers like the Daily Chronicle might have approved of his budget but the Daily Express dubbed it the 'Red Flag Budget', the Evening Standard called it "the beginning of a socialistic revolution", and the Western Morning News thought that LG – the dominant political force of the era, says Turner – was resolved "to introduce communism into this country".

There is much else to engage the reader besides politics, and I particularly enjoyed the passages on the changing face of Fleet Street, the cultural phenomenon that was music hall (Marie Lloyd was the era's 'Queen of the Music Hall') and Horatio Bottomley, the East End-born chancer turned millionaire fraudster and maverick Liberal MP.

All in all, a must-read for anyone interested in Edwardian Britain and the achievements of its landmark Liberal government. Surely destined to be voted one of the history books of the year.

York Membery.

Grace Jones at Love Motion Festival, Crystal Palace Bowl, London 26 July 2024

No other pop star can compete with Grace Jones when it comes to projecting supersonic art house style and magnetism. She opened her show at the top of a 25-foot platform, dressed all in black, wearing a huge gold skull mask, singing Iggy Pop's *Nightclubbing*. It was the perfect way to set the tone for the show that followed: decadent, uncompromising, and a bit threatening. When she sang *Private Life*, you could feel the contempt she had for an ex-lover. With *Demolition Man*, she got into a frenzy playing the cymbals before rolling round on the floor with them and smashing them up, tossing her drumsticks into the crowd. With *Pull Up To The Bumper*, she jumped off stage, riding through the crowd on a roadie's shoulders, singing, laughing, blessing people, looking for a joint.



The fact that Grace is 76 is incredible. She has the energy of an energetic someone half her age: strutting, hula-hooping, climbing up scaffolding. Every song featured a full or partial costume change, including capes, masks, sunglasses, and headdresses. The woman is a dynamo -- potent, vital, and relevant. In other words, she might have been performing for almost fifty years, but we are not there to see someone whose glory days are over, going through the motions. Quite the opposite. It's 2024, some 6,000 people have come to see her, and she means business. Her mantra is 'Let's party!' and who better to get down with than Grace Jones? She partied with Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, and Divine, to name just a few of the legends with whom she easily held her own. But don't be fooled, there is more going on at a Grace Jones gig than just hedonism. When she intones 'My Jamaican guy' she owns that yardie and smashes down the patriarchy. Later, she dressed as a black woman going to church on a Sunday, cartoon-style of course. She sang *William's Blood*, a song that exposes the hypocrisy and misogyny of the Christian church. And Grace should know: her father was a preacher who brought her up strictly, but now she is having the last word.

Yet my lasting impression of the evening is how much Grace was enjoying herself, and how effortless she made it all seem. Slugging back glasses of Merlot on stage; hitching up her crinoline and flashing her knickers; dancing in a laser show that lit up her diamante bowler hat; laughing and joking both with the audience and her team backstage. At the end of the night, her beautiful face dazzling, she came out just in a basque, panties, and stocking feet, and humbly thanked everyone for coming. There was no grand finale. How could there be? Each one of her songs had been pitched as high as somebody's else's big final number. What a star!

Stephen Brogan

Brighton: The International agenda

As usual, international affairs are better represented in the fringe than on the conference floor.

Saturday 14th September

CONFERENCE

10.35 Consultative session. F7 **Climate Change**

FRINGE SATURDAY LUNCHTIME 13.00–14.30

Liberal International British Group Trump, Harris and the future of North Atlantic cooperation
Join LIBG for a panel discussion with European and U.S. experts on security and defence cooperation within and beyond NATO.

The Grand Hotel, Regent Room

CONFERENCE

15.10 Policy motion. F12 **Europe – Restoring Links for Young People**

15.55 Question and answer session. F13 **Defence and Veterans**

FRINGE SATURDAY MID-EVENING 20.15–21.30

SOCIAL LIBERAL FORUM, LIBERATOR Layla Moran MP: The Rising Storm: Populism, Nationalism, Scapegoating; Global Liberal Responses.

Layla leads discussion on: What's so powerful about populism, playing to simple fears, nationalism, and hating "the others"? How do Liberals restore faith in democracy, pluralism, tolerance and powerful citizenship? How can Liberals build global respect for human rights?

The Grand Hotel, Empress Room

Sunday 15th September

CONFERENCE

10.25 Topical issue

FRINGE SUNDAY MID-MORNING 11.30–12.30

UK in a Changing Europe Single Market to EU membership – political strategy or fool's errand?

The Liberal Democrat manifesto described re-joining the Single Market as a path towards EU membership. Should this be a serious aim for the party? Can they pressure the new government over this issue? And does it make political sense to do so?

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1A

Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine: Israel-Palestine, past, present, future - Why international law and human rights matter

On the panel, Tayab Ali (Head of International Law at Bindmanns LLP & Director of ICJP), Chris Doyle (Director of CAABU), Layla Moran MP (invited), Husam Zomlot (Head of Palestinian Mission to the UK).

The Grand Hotel, Charlotte Room

Falkland Islands Government: The Falkland Islands – Self-determination in the 21st Century

Join Al Pinkerton MP; Leona Roberts, Member of the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly, and others as they discuss how Falkland Islanders are making the 21st Century case for self-determination and how Liberal Democrats can support them. www.falklands.gov.fk <https://twitter.com/FalklandsinUK>

The Grand Hotel, Regent Room

FRINGE SUNDAY LUNCHTIME 13.00–14.00

Humanist & Secularist Liberal Democrats "No one should be enslaved..."

Why a secular state would benefit everyone Chair: Jenny Wilkinson. Panel includes Tom Gordon MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough, Andrew Copson - CEO, Humanists UK. See HSLD Facebook page for updates on panellists.

he Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1A

Liberal Democrat European Group (LDEG): Resetting UK-EU Relations.

Now that the UK and European elections are over, what can we as Liberal Democrats do to help re-set our relations? Come and discuss with speakers from our sister parties in Europe and the European Movement.

The Grand Hotel, Charlotte Room

Social Liberal Forum, Liberator: Liberal Alternatives to the Conventional Wisdom of Political Economics
Keynes: “It takes a generation before an economic idea is accepted – then it’s out of date”. Liberals can lead the break away from outdated assumptions about tax, public spending, helping good business and investment to thrive. Fair risk, fair rewards.

The Grand Hotel, Consort Room

Lib Dem Friends of Ukraine Social: St Paul’s Church, West Street, Brighton BN1 2RE - 13.00 - meet the local Ukrainian community!

CONFERENCE

16.50 Party business

F26 Federal International Relations Committee Report: questions and accountability

FRINGE SUNDAY MID EVENING 19.45–21.00

Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel: How do we move towards peace whilst the hostages remain in captivity? As tensions continue to escalate between Israel and Hamas, since 7th October 2023, how do we move towards peace whilst the hostages remain in captivity? The Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel (LDFI) host a panel discussion including family member’s of hostages held by HAMAS. Panellists: Tim Farron MP, Sir Ed Davey MP (for part) and LDFI Honorary Chairman, Gavin Stollar OBE.

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1B

Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary (LD4SOS): New Government - new approach for Seekers of Sanctuary?

A panel discussion by experts in this field including yet to be confirmed Parliamentarians, looking at our policies and how we can achieve them with Labour in power. Chaired by LD4SOS Chair John Skipworth with Dr Ruvi Ziegler, Reading University.

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1C

LDCRE in Association with SLF & LIBERATOR: PUTTING RACE BACK ON THE AGENDA

Six years after the Alderdice Review told the party what it had to do to become more racially diverse, and four years after the Thornhill Review insisted that the party fulfil Alderdice, the Lib Dems still do not reflect our society. LDCRE commissioned a “where are we now“ review by eminent journalist and race equality professional Janice Turner, launched today. Speakers: Baroness Floella Benjamin, Baroness Meral Ece, Christine Jardine MP and Janice Turner.

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1D

Monday 16th September

FRINGE MONDAY MID MORNING 11.30–12.30

His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar: SMALL BRITISH NATIONS: What we want from the EU?

Baroness Northover chairs discussion including Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Dr Joseph Garcia (leader of the Gibraltar Liberal Party). Brexit aftermath - relationship needed with EU to protect our small nations. Participants tbc.

www.gibraltar.gov.gi

The Grand Hotel, Alexandra Room

Centre for European Reform & Delegation of the EU to the UK: Working together towards an inclusive world order Panellists: Layla Moran, Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon (invited); Alec Russell, Financial Times (invited); Pedro Serrano, European Union Ambassador to the United Kingdom; Baroness Julie Smith, University of Cambridge (invited); Chair: Ian Bond, Centre for European Reform. www.cer.eu

https://twitter.com/CER_EU

The Grand Hotel, Empress Room

FRINGE MONDAY LUNCHTIME 13.00–14.00

Born Free, IFAW, HSI, Four Paws, League Against Cruel Sports: Why the wildlife protection and animal welfare vote matters

A panel of leading animal protection campaigners, vets and politicians will discuss what voters expect from the new Government and MPs of all parties when it comes to protecting wildlife and animals at home and abroad.

www.bornfree.org.uk <https://x.com/bornfreefdn>

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1B

His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar: His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar Reception

The Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia CMG MP will be attending and host the now traditional reception.

www.gibraltar.gov.gi

The Grand Hotel, Charlotte Room

CONFERENCE

14.10 Emergency motion: Israel-Gaza Conflict

FRINGE MONDAY EARLY EVENING 18.15–19.15

EU Delegation to the UK EU Reception with Ambassador Serrano: EU Reception hosted by H.E. Mr Pedro Serrano, EU Ambassador.

Guest speaker: Layla Moran, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson (invited). This event is by invitation only. To register please email DELEGATION-UNITED-KINGDOMRSVP@eeas.europa.eu

Invitation only The Grand Hotel, Alexandra Room

Antisemitism Policy Trust: Are we living in a new antisemitic age?

Antisemitism post 7 October In the wake of HAMAS's attack on Israel there has been an explosion of anti-Jewish racism. Our panel will explore whether this is the beginning of a new antisemitic age and what the future holds for British Jews. (Conference Pass Holders only). <https://antisemitism.org.uk>

The Grand Hotel, The Pavilion

FRINGE MONDAY MID-EVENING 19.45–21.00

The ALDE Party International Reception: Supported by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and the National Liberal Club. www.aldeparty.eu <https://twitter.com/ALDEParty>

Invitation only The Grand Hotel, Alexandra Room

Safe Passage: Routes to safety for refugees: how to prevent deaths in the Channel

Most refugees take dangerous journeys to reach safety because there are no safe routes. We need change. Hear from Safe Passage International and experts on how to end the smugglers' monopoly, and discuss what's needed to protect those seeking asylum. www.safepassage.org.uk

The Grand Hotel, Regent Room

FRINGE MONDAY LATE EVENING 21.30–

Glee Club (starting at 22.00-01.00) Join us for the ultimate end-of conference celebration! Pick up your copy of the Liberator Songbook and come 'raise the roof'!

The Grand Hotel, Alexandra and Empress Rooms

Tuesday 17th September

CONFERENCE

09.00 Emergency motions or topical issue discussions

FRINGE TUESDAY LUNCHTIME 13.00–14.00

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom – European Dialogue UK-EU Liberal Dialogue: Towards a New Chapter of Market Integration with the EU

Panel discussion featuring Germany's Free Democratic Party. FNF's UK-EU Liberal Dialogue brings together liberal lawmakers and stakeholders from the UK, Berlin and Brussels for an in-depth discussion on economic and trade issues, building connections on the basis of synergies. www.freiheit.org/european-union

The Brighton Centre, Meeting Room 1A

ActionAid UK & Medical Aid For Palestinians Spotlight on Gaza:

Health Sector, Gender dynamics & human rights in the crisis International humanitarian organisations ActionAid UK and MAP, both with a presence in Palestine, discuss why the health system, gender and human rights need to play a crucial role in the humanitarian and political response to the crisis in Palestine. www.actionaid.org.uk

www.map.org.uk <https://twitter.com/ActionAidUK> <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal>

The Grand Hotel, Empress Room



FRIENDS OF UKRAINE SOCIAL

Lunch provided. Meet with other members and the local Ukrainian community

SUNDAY 15.09 13:00	St Paul's Church West St, Brighton and Hove, Brighton BN1 2RE	
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We will be having a fringe social for those coming to Brighton at St Paul's Church, West Street, Brighton BN1 2RE, 1.00pm 15th September! Expect authentic Ukrainian food prepared by the local Ukrainian community, as well as short performances. This will be a great chance to get together and catch-up. All members of Friends of Ukraine invited!

RSVP: <https://forms.gle/HqN9m8RpnW4RznoD6>

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