



newsletter of liberal international british group

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50th years of the British Group

Tom Dale

At the end of the Second World war a call was heard in both Belgium and Norway for a revival of international Liberal cooperation, which had existed in a primitive way before the war. This feeling came together at a conference in Oxford in 1947 where the Liberal International was founded.

The people behind this conference included John MacCallum Scott, whose father had been a Liberal MP and PPS to Winston Churchill when a Liberal MP, Sir Percy Harris, who had been Liberal Chief Whip throughout the war but had lost his seat in the 1945 General Election, Senator Roger Motz, the Belgian Liberal party leader, who wanted his party to play a role in the move towards a united Europe; Hermond Lannung, a leading members of Denmark's Radikale Venstre, Max Salvadori, a leading anti-Fascist, who had been imprisoned in Italy, and Don Salvador de Madariaga, who had served in the anti-Fascist government in Spain.

The conference was held in Wadham College, Oxford and was opened by the Liberal Party leader Clement Davies MP. Liberals from nineteen countries were present including Huntley Sinclair representing the Canadian Liberal Party.

The Liberal International was formed, but many problems remained, especially in the United Kingdom, as its activities were 'low down' on the Liberal Party's agenda - particularly in financial support. As a result a separate organisation was established, The British Liberal International Council. This organisation was soon renamed the Liberal International [British Group] and it quickly became the principal voice of the International in Great Britain, with a membership and a programme of activities. It contained within its ranks many prominent British Liberals including Lord Layton, Sir Perch Harris, who became its chairman, Professor Dennis Brogan, Rose Macaulay, Michael Kaser, Alistair Buchan, Wilfred Roberts MP and Lady Violet Bonham-Carter.

The International had set up its headquarters in St. James's Place and the British Group operated from the same address with a separate programme of activities: weekend schools and study courses in places like Buxton; tea time lectures at Church House, Westminster - the first given by Learie Constantine; and fundraising events.

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CHINA: MEDIA FREEDOM ATTACKS DESPITE OLYMPICS PLEDGES

The Chinese government continues to violate the rights of journalists in spite of assurances to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that the 2008 Beijing Olympics would foster improvements in human rights and of specific pledges of wider media freedoms, Human Rights Watch said today.

Just 11 months before the 2008 Beijing Games begin, journalists in China continue to face physical abuse and harassment from police and plainclothes thugs who appear to work at official behest.

“The continuing harassment and physical abuse of journalists in the countdown to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing raises serious questions about the sincerity of government pledges to greater media freedom,” said Sophie Richardson, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. “The Chinese government seems to see a free media as an enemy rather than a watchdog of public safety and social stability.”

As part of its 2001 bid for the 2008 Olympics, the Chinese government expressly assured the IOC that it would loosen its long-held grip on the media during the Olympic Games. That commitment is consistent with the obligation of Olympic host cities to comply with Article 51 of the Olympic Charter, which stipulates that the IOC should take “all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games.” Moreover, Article 35 of the Constitution of the People’s

Republic of China specifically guarantees “freedom ... of the press.”

In late 2006, the Chinese government announced new freedoms for accredited foreign journalists as part of its IOC commitments. The temporary regulations, in effect from January 1, 2007 until October 17, 2008, allow foreign correspondents to freely conduct interviews with any consenting Chinese organization or citizen.

Despite those temporary rules, on August 24, police prevented a group of seven foreign journalists, including two camera crews and a radio journalist, who attempted to visit Yuan Weijing, the wife of jailed human rights defender Chen Guangcheng, prior to her scheduled flight to Manila to receive an international human rights award on her husband’s behalf. One of those journalists told Human Rights Watch that the police on duty outside Yuan’s Beijing residence forced the journalists to accompany them to the neighbourhood police post, where they were subjected to a lengthy “registration” process in order to get access to the residence.

The authorities subsequently barred Yuan from leaving China and forced her to return to her native Shandong province. The Associated Press reported that a group of “government workers” abducted Yuan from a Beijing-bound bus on August 31 and forced her back to Shandong.

In another recent incident, Yixing court officials in Jiangsu province barred The New York Times and the South China Morning Post from entering the courtroom to cover the August 24 trial of environmental activist Wu Lihong, who was sentenced to three years in prison on

extortion and fraud charges that observers have described as politically motivated. Officials gave no reason for restricting access, saying only that the proceedings were “an ordinary trial.” Reporters who waited outside the courthouse for the verdict were subject to harassment by plainclothes police, who demanded to know why they were there, what questions they wanted to ask, and what their equipment was for.

“Barring journalists from covering an ‘ordinary’ trial raises questions about the integrity of the legal proceedings,” said Richardson.

Human Rights Watch pointed out that the temporary regulations also do not extend to Chinese journalists or Chinese nationals who work as assistants or translators for foreign journalists the same freedoms they do to foreign journalists. As a result, Chinese journalists remain particularly vulnerable to retaliation from local authorities who do not want embarrassing issues covered.

In mid-August, five Chinese journalists, including a reporter from the government mouthpiece People’s Daily, were interviewing witnesses to the Fenghuang bridge collapse in central Hunan province. Plainclothes thugs interrupted the interviews and kicked and punched the journalists, who were then detained by the police.

The government is also tightening controls over domestic media content ahead of the 17th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, which begins on October 15. The congress, which is held only once every five years, is a period of heightened sensitivity for the government, as it is the forum where the next generation of the party’s leadership will be unveiled.

On August 19, the media authorities demonstrated their power to control the press by requiring that five of the country’s largest newspapers – the People’s Daily, Guangming Daily, Economic Daily, People’s Liberation Army Daily and the Beijing Daily – run near-identical front pages. The Chinese government offered no explanation for the stage-managed front pages, which all led with an article on China’s leaders’ personal involvement in efforts to rescue miners in a flooded mine shaft and included photos of President Hu Jintao’s state visit to Kazakhstan.

On August 31, the government ordered domestic internet search engines, including Google China, China Yahoo, and Baidu.com, to remove all “illegal and unhealthy content” within a week without providing any criteria for making such judgments and without clarifying what penalties might result.

“Such vaguely worded content prohibitions are an obvious direct threat to all media, as they encourage self-censorship of news or postings which could embarrass the government ahead of the Party Congress,” said Richardson.

Those efforts have extended to the closure by government authorities of numerous internet data centers, which host thousands of servers. Unplugging these internet data centers to squelch “illegal” content ahead of the 17th Party Congress has affected thousands of web sites, forums, and blogging platforms in provinces including Guangdong, Henan, Sichuan, and the eastern coastal city of Shanghai.

“If the Chinese government is serious about combating corruption and easing social unrest, why is it stifling media and abusing journalists, especially

when they are crucial in exposing precisely such threats?" Richardson said. "Such actions make a mockery of the Chinese government's commitments to its own citizens and the IOC."

To view the August 2007 Human Rights Watch report, "You Will Be Harassed and Detained: Media Freedoms Under Assault in China Ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games," please visit:
<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/china0807/>

To view the Human Rights Watch web center, "Beijing 2008: China's Olympian Human Rights Challenges," please visit:
<http://china.hrw.org/>

A J Cohen

A petition on Media Abuses in the Peoples Republic of China will be on the LIBG stall at the Lib Dem's Autumn Conference. You may like to take it up with your local constituency - I suggest one to the President of China (which we can deliver to the Chinese Embassy), something along the lines of:

We the undersigned, while welcoming China's deeper engagement in global affairs and the holding of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing are nonetheless concerned about ongoing curbs on freedom of expression in the People's Republic and call on the Chinese government to respect that principle in both the letter and the spirit.

Jonathan Fryer

AND NOW THEY'RE COMING THE 'OLD CHINA' WITH LI

I am sure that you will be as shocked and dismayed as we are about the recent decision of the NGO Committee of the United Nations to recommend the withdrawal of LI's consultative status to the UN's ECOSOC Council. It is simply not the case that LI breached the UN Charter through the statement made by one of its delegates at the Human Rights Council on March 29, 2007. The fact that WHO membership for Taiwan was raised by the delegate was nothing untoward. It is clear that this action is being taken just because the person was a member of our member party, the DPP in Taiwan. LI has always fully complied with United Nations regulations without incident ever since being granted consultative status in 1985.

Ever since its establishment in 1947, the Liberal International, with over 100 affiliated political parties and cooperating organisations worldwide, has time and again proven a credible and constructive partner of the national and international organizations and institutions in furthering the core values of free-market economies and the respect for human rights, individual freedoms and democracy worldwide.

We have always fully respected the diplomatic status of China, and will continue to do so in the future, however we also expect our freedom of expression and communication to be respected and protected, particularly in an international body established to guarantee and promote the protection of human rights and the freedom of expression everywhere.

On behalf of all our member parties around the world, and in the name of freedom and justice, I respectfully ask

you to do everything in your power to urge the governments of ECOSOC member countries to vote against the recommendation of the NGO Committee at the upcoming ECOSOC Council in Geneva, on July 20, 2007. Considering its fine credentials, constructive engagement and pursuit of universal goals, continued consultative status of the Liberal International within the United Nations will be to the benefit of all.

John Alderdice

AMERICANS ARE IN A FOUL MOOD

Americans are in a foul mood. It's been an unusually hot summer with strange weather. Floods in the upper Mississippi Valley, droughts elsewhere and temperatures in California usually seen only in places like Baghdad. The economy is shaky and there's talk of another war, this time with Iran.

President Bush is unpopular; his public approval ratings are at an all time low – some surveys say 25%. Congress is even lower, probably under 20%, near the range at which Vice President Cheney has been hovering for many months now. Television comics freely poke fun at Bush and many ordinary people feel that he is something of a “loser,” an incompetent. The current Republican seekers of his office often seem to be running away from his record.

Democrats don't seem popular either. They control both houses of Congress, at least in a technical sense, though in fact, they don't have the votes or the will to effectively challenge Bush.

Bush seems to want to continue the war pretty much as it's being conducted now and then hand it over

after the election to the next President to solve. When the next President starts pulling out of Iraq and if things go really bad, Bush will be able to claim that someone else “lost” Iraq. His supporters will probably be as embittered as their fathers were after the Vietnam debacle.

A big worry for many Americans is health care. Although American medical care at its best is extremely good and many people here do get care on a high level, it is very costly and insurance is absolutely essential. Not everyone can get insurance and even when they do, it may not be adequate. Health insurance companies are not highly regarded.

Most independent scholars feel that some sort of single payer system is the only real answer, but only a handful of back bench politicians advocate this approach. We do have a government-run, single payer system for people over 65 called Medicare. It's wildly popular and one would think that extending this to other people would be one possibility, but it is seldom suggested. Everyone running for President has a vague plan. Platitudes abound, of course, but aspirants on the Democratic side seem to want the government to force insurance companies to offer better policies. Republicans suggest that some tinkering with the tax code can solve the problem. George Bush seems to feel that there is no problem.

Many Americans who are young and relatively healthy are satisfied with their own level of care. Most of them receive “free” insurance through their employers and this vast group of people would probably fight to keep the status quo since they would have to pay more were they forced into a single payer system with rates

predicated on the health condition of the average middle aged person.

We have a system of “legalized bribery” (aka “campaign contributions”) and drug and health care companies are among the biggest contributors. Thus, a single payer system is not an option; the private insurance companies and drug companies are powerful and will fight any serious change which might harm them. They were able to get the government to eliminate its ability to negotiate drug prices for Medicare. There is widespread fear that buying their cooperation in health care reform might be costly.

Illegal immigration is another huge problem, especially in border states like California, Arizona, Texas, but also in many other places. We have twelve million people here illegally, far too many to expel. Thousands come in every day through the porous borders. Americans have mixed feelings on this emotional subject. The illegal immigrants are admired for their hard work. Many Americans profit from their cheap labour. The powerful Roman Catholic church sympathizes with them, too.

Democrats tend to favor some sort of program to eventually absorb them and give them a “path to citizenship” - “amnesty,” the opponents call it.

This is understandable – most of these people would probably vote Democratic.

Republicans are very much divided. A number of Congressmen advocate tough measures and the national party is trying to quiet them down. The party is reluctant to concede the rapidly expanding Hispanic vote. Bush, along with a number of prominent Democrats

and influential Republicans, has tried to propose a middle ground – a compromise that would allow the illegals to stay and work, but would provide heavy fines and force them to leave the country for a time if they wish legitimate entry. This plan is disliked by the activists on both sides.

Presidential candidates are now chosen through a state level “Primary” election. These voters select delegates pledged to support a certain candidate. By tradition, Iowa, a small, rural state west of Chicago is the first. This is a “caucus” state. Small groups of enthusiasts come together and choose delegates to a state convention. All of the candidates devote a great deal of attention to Iowa since a winner there receives enormous national attention and can get a real “bounce.” Jimmy Carter was an unknown when he entered the race in Iowa. He emerged the victor and eventually won the nomination and then the presidency.

It’s very early in the political season, but it appears that Hillary Clinton, the wife of Bill Clinton, has a lock on the Democratic nomination. She initially seemed to be a rather abrasive person, but to the surprise of most people, she has become very popular in her “home” state of New York. Up to now, at least, she’s run a good campaign. Her theme is “experience” and “competence.” Polls show her with a strong lead over the next challenger, Barack Obama, a young and appealing Senator of mixed racial heritage and thin resume. His father was African and his mother was from Kansas, the most American of all states. His theme is meant to suggest JFK – youth and “change.”

Running well behind nationally, though doing well in Iowa, is John Edwards, the last Vice Presidential

candidate. His unspoken claim is that he's "electable." Among most Democrats there are strong doubts about the possibility of either a woman or a Black man as winning the Presidency. Edwards has also staked out a position to the left, something appealing to many of the primary voters, though this might weaken him in a general election.

Even further behind are Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut, a white-haired veteran in Washington ways, Senator Joe Biden, a loquacious specialist in foreign affairs, Bill Richardson, half Mexican and Governor of New Mexico and Dennis Kucinich, an elfish little Congressman from Ohio and a perennial candidate. He's far to the left of everyone else.

The Republicans have a list of leading candidates who seem to be especially unsatisfactory to their Christian radical right Fundamentalist base. Well ahead today is Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of New York City during the 9-11 attack. He impressed many people with his self confidence during the aftermath. He has flaws, as he admits. His personal life, his many marriages and liaisons as well as his alienation from his children do not mesh with the "family values" demanded by the Republican base. He's been criticized by many New Yorkers and has had problems with some of his appointments. His friend and police commissioner, Bernard Kerik, was highly questionable. Rudy is an especially abrasive person, even for a New Yorker. He has little experience in foreign affairs. His strength is that he is able to project a sense of toughness, something which Republican voters look for. This may trump everything else.

A new candidate is Fred Thompson, a former Senator from Tennessee who succeeded Al Gore. He's a lawyer and a long-time Washington lobbyist who in recent years has become a well-known television actor – playing people very much like himself. Thompson is the great unknown, but he has been running second behind Giuliani, even during the time when he was not a candidate. He wants to be a Reagan style candidate and it remains to be seen if he can project this image. He has the reputation of being – well, lazy. His image is laconic and "mellow."

Running hard with lots of money is the former governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney. Romney is a highly successful and admired businessman. He's handsome and looks as if he has just walked out of the pages of a comic book. He's also a Mormon, a religious group deeply distrusted and disliked by most of the people who vote Republican. Thompson will probably be his greatest threat.

There are other candidates with little chance of success. Senator Sam Brownback and the Reverend Mike Huckabee are the sentimental favorites of the Christian right. The most interesting candidate is Representative Ron Paul of Texas, a former physician specializing in obstetrics-gynecology. He's a "Libertarian" and is opposed to almost every government program. He carries the nickname, "Doctor No." Paul is the lone opponent of the Iraq war in the Republican stable.

American politics are usually very volatile, and this year will be especially so.

Dennis & Christine Graf

Annual General Meeting

The following officers were elected at the Annual General Meeting.

President: Malcolm Bruce, vice-presidents: Sharon Bowles, Jonathan Fryer, David Griffiths (also General Secretary), Charles Kennedy, John Melling, Richard Moore, Graham Watson & Robert Woodthorpe Brett, treasurers: Moira Brown (membership) & Ahmad Mallick, executive: Barbara Emmerson, Wendy Kyrle Pope, Sue Simmonds, Janice Turner, Anneliese Waugh, Tom Dale, Gary Lawson, Baldev Sharma & Mark Smulian.

The Executive meeting of 23rd July confirmed Jonathan Fryer as chair for another year. The post of vice-chair was contested - Sue Simmonds and Gary Lawson both seeking election, but at Gary's suggestion it was decided to divide the job between them.

At present there are four executive committee vacancies to be filled, and also the post of minutes secretary. Any members who would wish to stand for these should contact the General Secretary immediately.

50 YEARS OF THE BRITISH GROUP

(continued from page 1)

The International began preparations for its second World Conference, planned to be in Zurich in 1948. Meanwhile the British Group had been growing with people like Peter Calvacoressi joining its ranks. Its activities were designed to raise funds, recruit members from the Liberal party and from outside its membership and to educate party members and others of their role in world politics.

Tom Dale

LIBG Garden Party

Anneliese Waugh has a knack of choosing good weather when she hosts her annual garden party at Moor Park, and this year was no exception, the welcome as warm as the day.



Jonathan Fryer & Sharon Bowles

The scheduled guest of honour, Lord Russell-Johnston, was sadly prevented from getting to the venue because of heightened security measures in central London. But at very short notice, former LIBG Chair, Sharon Bowles, MEP, stood in and treated guests to an impromptu presentation on her work in the European Parliament and an overview of the EU Reform Treaty, rescued from the ruins of the aborted Constitution.

Jonathan Fryer

SOMALILAND

Most people, even Liberal International members, are unaware that in the Horn of Africa there is a country which has a democratic government, follows the rule of law, and is not at war with itself or anyone else.

Somaliland is the former British Protectorate, with joined the former Italian colony only 4 days after its independence to form Somalia.

Decades of strife internally and with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region, followed by the dictatorship of Mohamed Siad Barre, led the Northerners to revoke the Union when Barre finally fell and rival warlords fought over the South. Thus Somaliland was reborn.

Mohamed Yusef, a Somaliland-born Liberal Democrat who was educated in the UK, does much to promote awareness of an African success story and arranged for the Somaliland Foreign Minister Abdillahi Mohamed Dualeh to speak to a Forum of LIBG at the National Liberal Club.

Mohamed introduced the theme, and expressed his excitement at the tourism and investment opportunities: pristine beaches and diving opportunities which made Sue Simmonds's mouth water!

The Minister gave the historical background. There is no question of a reunion with the troubled South. The problem is that the African Union, post Biafra, refuses to recognise secession. The Somaliland situation is much closer to that of Eritrea, a historically distinct country handed to Ethiopia against it will after World War II. Ethiopia is friendly, but will not be the first Country to recognise Somaliland because of historic rivalries which would lead to its motives being questioned.

The EU will not go against the African Union in this matter, but does ensure that about half of its aid to the former united Country is distributed in Somaliland.

The Minister emphasised the Liberal principles of his majority party: freedom under the law, democratic multi-party state, full human rights,

etc. A visit was proposed to meet the ruling party, perhaps from Liberal International, to decide whether they would be welcome applicants. Also, it was proposed that the African Liberal Network be asked to sound out member parties in Government, and notably President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, concerning an initiative within the African Union to recognise Somaliland.

Robert Woodthorpe Browne

IRAQ - A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR

The English Speaking Union hosted a meeting at their Dartmouth House for an event jointly sponsored by the ESU, LIBG and the British German Association. Probably the largest part of the audience was brought in by CAABU, the Council for Arab-British Understanding, of which many Liberal Democrats are members.

Count von Sponeck addressed a packed meeting, chaired by ESU Director General Valerie Mitchell. Count von Sponeck was introduced by ESU Council Member (and LIBG member too!) Saroj Chakravarty, and I summed up at the end. Several Iraqis were in the audience, many well known to the Count.

Count von Sponeck is highly critical of the UN Security Council and, most especially, the US and British Governments whose general sanctions penalised a whole generation of innocent Iraqis, wrecking their previously good health and education services. With high child mortality, where previously Iraq had been a textbook case of development, Count von Sponeck said that never again must the World community declare

war on a whole nation. Where sanctions are necessary, they must be targeted and properly enforced.

Von Sponeck's book, praised by both Noam Chomsky and John Pilger as "essential reading" and "immensely sad", chronicles how the sanctions regime was a bureaucratic botch, whose effect was to wreck the Iraqi infrastructure, notably health, education and agriculture, just as effectively as armed conflict would have done.

The trouble is that it was the non-combatants, Saddam's victims, who bore the brunt.

Von Sponeck does not excuse the monster that was Saddam Hussein, but nor does he think that non-co-operation with the humanitarian programme was significant. Rather, there were constant delays in sending food and medicine, paid for by Iraqi oil revenues, because the British and Americans had to check everything umpteen times for fear of dual use, and at times over half of the supplies ordered were held back.

The Iraqis also paid the huge costs of the UN operations in both Baghdad and Geneva out of these same oil monies – some 30% of revenues. He criticises the Security Council on many counts. For its wilful ignorance of what was going on; for the deliberate lack of co-ordination between different UN bodies on the ground; and for their failure to stand up to the unholy alliance of Americans and Brits who clearly had their own agenda – regime change.

After addressing a peace meeting in Sedgefield in 2005, he told me the story of a factory accused of making chemical weapons. He visited it on one of his tours, and found the place abandoned years ago with rats everywhere. He reported this to a German general who refused point-blank to relay it to NATO HQ: "That

is not what Washington wants to hear!"

The Americans and Brits demanded his sacking by Kofi Annan, who responded by calling von Sponeck in and renewing his contract. He resigned six months later, in his own time.

The moral of the book is that, however evil a regime, sanctions must be targeted. From being the best educated in the Arab world, the Iraqi youth has missed out on schooling. Child deaths and general mortality soared to third world levels. And Saddam had lots of palaces.

The Iraqi people, not Saddam and his cronies, were the victims of this different kind of war, waged by the UN at the behest of the Americans and ourselves.

I do commend von Sponeck's book to LIBG members. It is a terrifying indictment of both the Major and Blair Governments and our representatives at the UN, including Sir Jeremy Greenstock, so often lauded in the press, but wholly obstructive on the Iraq issue. The job of a diplomat is to lie abroad, it is said.

Robert Woodthorpe Browne

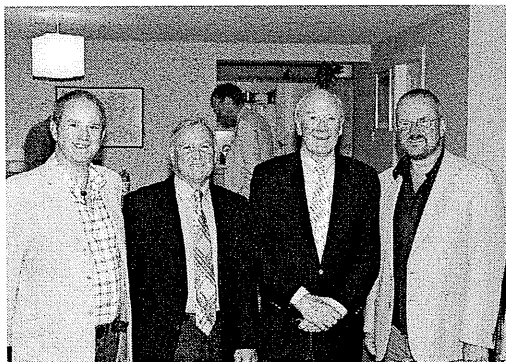
*A Different kind of War – The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq, by Count Hans-Christoph von Sponeck.
Bergbahn Books*

SCOTTISH SECTION GARDEN PARTY

Annual Garden Party of the Scottish Section of LIBG on the 19th August was a huge success.

A gathering of over 85 people heard Guest of Honour, Sir Menzies Campbell MP, attack the Government

over its disastrous war in Iraq and its poor record on civil liberties at home.



Iain Smith MSP, Malcolm Bruce MP, Sir Menzies Campbell MP, Ron Waddell, Chair of LIBG Scottish Section (left - right).

The event was attended by Malcolm Bruce MP, Iain Smith MSP, people from all over Scotland and a group of Liberal Democrat activists from Newcastle.

Held at the St Andrews home of John and Karen Barnett, the event was organised jointly with North East & Central Fife Liberal Democrats. It is hoped that future events can be organised in partnership with other Local Parties around the country.

John Barnett

CHINESE LIB DEM'S DINNER

LIBG members and supporters joined forces with the Chinese Liberal Democrats for a joint dinner in convivial surroundings on 26 June in the Russell Restaurant at the School of Oriental and African Studies, a part of London University.

Speakers included LIBG Chair, Jonathan Fryer and, as guest of honour, Anna Lo (Alliance Party) of the Northern Ireland assembly. Anna's address provided some entertaining

and informative insights into the challenges of working within the Stormont Assembly and dealing with some of the strong personalities there!

She explained how she came to emigrate from Hong Kong to Northern Ireland, how the Chinese minority has grown in size and stature within Northern Ireland's diverse community over the past thirty years or more and how the traditionally politically-neutral Chinese, motivated almost exclusively by business goals, have been slowly persuaded to take a more active part in local politics.

Her comments made it clear that Anna has forged a distinct role as an advocate not only of the province's Chinese population, but also resident's right across the community. It was this engagement which secured her successful election to the NI Assembly earlier this year. The audience all agreed that British liberals should seek to emulate her success and engage with local Chinese communities right across the UK, to encourage them to participate actively in the electoral process.

Gary Lawson

LIBG AT BRIGHTON

Members are, as ever encouraged to come and help out on the stall and generally promote the Group's events. Wednesday is the big day, with Colin Eglin signing copies of his memoirs *Crossing the Borders of Power* from the stall at 1.00pm. Colin was one of those who kept the flag of Liberalism flying in South Africa's darkest days.

Our fringe meeting on Migration takes place in the evening at 8.00pm in the Regent Room of the Grand Hotel.

TIM GARDEN

Defence analysts are rarely gifted with the ability to expound their views in terms accessible to the general public, but Tim Garden, who has died from cancer at the age of 63, was a notable exception. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq, he became the pundit of preference for a number of TV and radio stations at home and abroad, as well as a regular commentator both in newspapers and online.

Charles Kennedy, then leading the Liberal Democrats and coming under heavy fire from both Labour and Conservative MPs for his opposition to the launching of the Iraq war, shrewdly nominated Tim for the House of Lords, where he took his seat as Baron Garden of Hampstead in 2004. The party thus gained a significant voice which was listened to with respect and attention.

Long before entering politics, Tim had in fact established himself on both sides of the Atlantic as an authority on security issues and international relations, not least when he was director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London during 1997-98, and as a visiting professor at King's College London and Indiana University.

Tim was born in Worcester and attended King's school in that city. His father was an electrical engineer and Tim was the first member of the family to go to university. He read physics at St Catherine's College, Oxford (which later made him an honorary fellow), demonstrating an early love of flying by being a member of the Oxford University Air Squadron. In his second year, he met a fellow undergraduate, Susan Button, who became his wife after graduation, when they were both

aged 21. By then Tim had joined the RAF, but he realised only a fortnight before the wedding that he should have obtained his commanding officer's permission before making the arrangements. The officer concerned was not amused.

Tim flew Canberra light bombers in Germany before becoming a flying instructor on Jet Provosts. Later, he commanded a jet flying training unit, a Vulcan bomber squadron (responsible for delivering Britain's nuclear deterrent in those pre-Trident days) and a helicopter base.

In the early 1980s, he took time out from active service to do a postgraduate degree in international relations at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Some air force colleagues viewed all this university education as suspect, but it enabled him to go on to become director of defence studies for the RAF, lecturing on strategic studies in the UK and internationally, and writing his book *Can Deterrence Last?* (1984). From 1985 to 1987, he was station commander at RAF Odiham in Hampshire, where he flew Chinook helicopters and the Aerospatiale Puma.

The next six years were spent working in the Ministry of Defence in London, including a period as assistant chief of the air staff. He published a second book at this time - *The Technology Trap: Science and the Military* (1989). His final appointment at the MoD was as assistant chief of the defence staff (programmes), a role that gave him responsibility for long-term planning for all three armed services, about which he developed forthright opinions.

After a period as commander of the Royal College of Defence Studies, he retired from the air force in 1996, with

the rank of air marshal (and a knighthood, awarded in 1994). As one of his colleagues later commented, "Tim had to leave the air force early, as the service wasn't big enough for him." Tim had other interests to pursue. Having become fascinated by computing, he set himself up as a website consultant, before taking over at Chatham House. His own website and weblog on foreign and security issues developed into something he specially valued.



The worlds of thinktanks and academe offered a more diverse and sometimes more stimulating arena for social interaction and debate, though Tim always enjoyed tackling some of his more reactionary fellow servicemen head on. He caused a stir at one Fleet Air Arm annual Taranto/Falklands dinner after his retirement, when he expounded loudly on the benefits of immigration, silencing one red-faced diner with the parry, "Besides, who's going to pay for your pension?"

He could be a stimulating companion at the big table at the predominantly conservative Beefsteak Club, of which he was a member, as well as the more

predictable National Liberal Club. He was truly a man of many parts.

When Tim first became involved with the Liberal Democrats early in the new millennium, both locally in Camden and nationally, many people wrongly assumed that because of his military background, he would be on the conservative wing of the party, whereas actually he was an impassioned radical - a Guardian-reading member of the Fabian Society, with a taste for bright red ties.

Though intellectually rigorous, he was immensely gregarious. Even after his elevation to the peerage, he would bounce up to strangers and say, "Hi! I'm Tim Garden!" He found some of the formality of the upper house disconcerting, declaring that people's reluctance to use first names there made him feel like he was back at school.

His informality helped make him popular with Americans, though he was sometimes highly critical of what he openly called the "hyper-power". For a while, he also questioned whether NATO should continue to exist. He was a firm advocate of European integration and of a proper European security and armaments policy, in recognition of which President Chirac appointed him a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 2003.

Tim was not just a keen European, but a true internationalist. For the final three years of his life, he was president of the British group of Liberal International, in which capacity he chaired a packed and emotional fringe meeting on Israel/Palestine at last September's Liberal Democrat conference in Brighton, keeping a cool

head when some present were losing theirs.

He maintained a deep interest in the Middle East and was a member of the Anglo-Jordanian Society. In 2000, he advised the Palestinian Authority on negotiations with Israel, under the auspices of the Adam Smith Institute. But his fairness and integrity meant that he was respected on all sides in that tortuous situation, and he got a warm reception when he supported his wife Sue when she stood as LibDem parliamentary candidate in the 2005 general election in Finchley and Golders Green, which has one of the largest Jewish populations in Britain.

The party soon understood what an asset they had acquired in Tim. He became a key figure in the parliamentary foreign affairs team, and got elected to several party committees and policy working groups. All the while, he continued to write articles prolifically, to travel giving lectures, and to be interviewed any time there was a major development in Iraq or Afghanistan, or when the issue of replacing Trident came to the fore.

Earlier this year, he started to feel tired, but a hospital check-up revealed that the problem was not exhaustion, but pancreatic cancer, which was rapidly spreading to other organs. He remained in hospital for about a fortnight, before returning home to spend his final weeks in the care of his family. He is survived by Sue and his two daughters.

Jonathan Fryer

Timothy Garden, defence expert and Liberal Democrat peer, born April 23 1944; died August 9 2007

Richard Norton-Taylor writes: Tim Garden was the epitome of the - not so new - generation of high-ranking military figures who belied a commonly held presumption that they had a one-dimensional, even blinkered, approach to the world around them.

He would always ask the right questions, which the government would invariably sidestep, about the consequences of its defence and security policies, or its reluctance to confront urgent problems. But he never indulged in histrionics or partisan point-scoring for the sake of it. Far from it. Indeed, he was, in many ways, the ultimate, quietly spoken, rationalist. For a journalist writing on military, security, and foreign policy issues, and how they marry, or don't marry up, he was a trusted source and invaluable sounding board. You could always rely on him to point you in the right direction.

When I met him for the first time after he was appointed a Liberal Democrat spokesman on defence, he remarked that one of the things he had been told as a newcomer by elderly peers was that membership of the House of Lords added 10 years to your life. It is a tragedy that his membership there was cut so short. He will be seriously missed, in that place and much further afield.

Reprinted from *The Guardian* Tuesday August 14, 2007



CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

NB. Please check the conference guide in case of amendments made to event locations or room numbers

SUNDAY 16th SEPTEMBER

Main Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>EVENT TYPE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
10:00	Europe	Consultative Session	Grand Hotel – Charlotte Room
14:50	Academic Boycott of Israel	Policy Motion	Brighton Centre Auditorium

Fringe Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>HOSTS</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
18:30 – 19:30	Human rights and civil liberties – home and abroad (speakers include Sir Menzies Campbell)	CentreForum Conference Rally	Brighton Centre Auditorium

MONDAY 17th SEPTEMBER

Main Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>EVENT TYPE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
09.55	Zero Carbon Britain (Climate Change Policy Paper)	Policy Motion	Brighton Centre Auditorium
14:50	Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission	Speech	Brighton Centre Auditorium
15:15- 16:00	Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP	Q & A Session	Brighton Centre Auditorium

Fringe Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>HOSTS</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
13:00 – 14:00	The Future of Europe	LDEG with ALDE	Holiday Inn – Arundel 1
13:00 – 14:00	Europe – the debate	ALDE Group	Holiday Inn – Arundel 2
13:00 – 14:00	End elder abuse across the EU	ALDE Group	Thistle Hotel – Renaissance South
13:00 – 14:00	Trade and Climate Change	Sajjad Karim MEP	Old Ship Hotel – Regency Suite
18:15 – 19:30	The new government and Africa	BBC World Service and British Council	The Grand – Charlotte Room
18:15 – 19:30	Palestine – the road to statehood	Council for Arab-British Understanding and Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine	Old Ship Hotel – Regency Suite
18:30 – 19:30	Humanitarian Intervention – a liberal approach	Liberal Democrat Lawyers Association	Holiday Inn – Lancing 2 and 3
19:00 – 20:30	Role of renewable energy and implications for EU targets	British Wind Energy Association and European Commission	Friends Meeting House, Main Room
19:45 – 20:45	Climate Change Question Time	Institute for Public Policy Research (ippri)	Holiday Inn – Ashdown Suite
20:00 – 21:15	Does Europe need an FBI?	LDEG with ALDE	The Grand – Pavilion
20:00 – 21:15	Palestine – a two-state solution	Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine	Old Ship Hotel – Tudor Suite

TUESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER**Main Events**

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>EVENT TYPE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
14:50	Michael Moore MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Foreign Secretary	Speech	Brighton Centre Auditorium

Fringe Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>HOSTS</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
13:00 – 14:00	Europe going local	ALDE Group – EU Committee of the Regions	The Grand – Empress Room
13:00 – 14:00	EU, Turkey and the Kurdish question	Peace in Kurdistan Campaign and Kurdish Federation UK	Quality Hotel – Fir Room
18:00 – 19:00	Technology to the rescue: can technology save us from climate change	Social Market Foundation/Carbon Trust	Thistle Hotel – Keats and Shelley Rooms

18:00 – 19:30	Great Energy Debate	LDEG with ALDE	Grand Hotel – Alexandra Room
18:15 – 19:30	The way forward to peace	Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel	Thistle Hotel – Renaissance North
18.15 – 19.30	The Health MDGs: what next?	European Alliance Against Malaria, Results, Action for Global Health	Thistle Hotel – Wordsworth Room
20.00 – 21.15	Globalisation: a liberal response	CentreForum	Holiday Inn – Lancing Suite
20:00 – 21.15	Climate change: the good news	ALDE Group	Old Ship Hotel – Regency Suite
20:00 – 23:00	Reception Dinner hosted by the High Commissioner of India	High Commission of India	The Grand – Albert Room

WEDNESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER

Main Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>EVENT TYPE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
14:50	Lynne Featherstone MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for International Development	Speech	Brighton Centre Auditorium
16:30	Israel and the Palestinian Territories	Policy Motion	Brighton Centre Auditorium

Fringe Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>HOSTS</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
13:00 – 14:00	Liberal International South Africa Forum	Liberal International	The Grand – King’s East
13:00 – 14:00	Bringing peace to the 21st Century – Lord Ashdown discusses his new book	CentreForum	Quality Hotel – Walnut Suite
13:00 – 14:00	Energy policy and climate change	Fabian Society and EDF Energy	Thistle Hotel, Renaissance South
18.00 – 19.30	The impacts of climate change	Met Office	Quality Hotel – Beech Room
18:15 – 19:30	The International Reception (by invitation only)	Rt Hon Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP. Sponsored by Bloomberg and Tradebook Europe	The Grand, Alexandra Room
18:15 – 19:15	Winning the ‘war’ on terror. What price for securing our liberty?	Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr)	Holiday Inn – Ashdown 1
18:15 – 19:30	Future of Europe question time	Foreign Policy Centre and KPMG	Thistle Hotel – Renaissance South
18.15 – 19.30	Terrorism – a new consensus?	Liberty	Thistle Hotel – Keats and Shelley Rooms

THURSDAY 20th SEPTEMBER

Main Events

<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>EVENT TYPE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
11:45	Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP	Speech	Brighton Centre Auditorium

NB THERE ARE NO FRINGE EVENTS ON THURSDAY

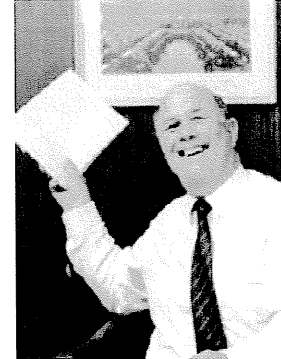
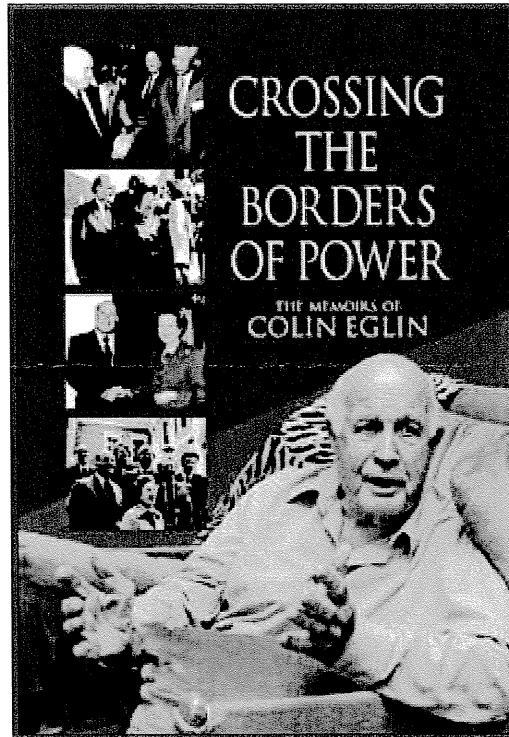
CONFERENCE STALLS

The following stalls may be of particular interest to international visitors, but please wander around the venue to explore the full range of stands.

<i>STALL NUMBER</i>	<i>STALL HOLDER</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
PS22	Electoral Commission	Brighton Centre – Entrance Foyer
P74	Liberal Democrat European Group	Brighton Centre – Entrance Foyer
P102	Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel	Brighton Centre – Entrance Foyer
P106	Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine	Brighton Centre – Entrance Foyer
P124/126	International	Brighton Centre – Entrance Foyer
164	BBC	Brighton Centre – First Floor (Hewison Hall)

Crossing the Borders of Power

The Memoirs of Colin Eglin



Colin Eglin was at the frontline of the making of South African history for the second half of the 20th Century. He served in parliament through the terms of seven prime ministers and presidents – from JG Strijdom to Thabo Mbeki – and under five constitutions, from the Union constitution to the constitution of 1996, to which he made a huge contribution.

In the negotiations that followed Nelson Mandela's release from jail in February 1990, Mandela described Eglin as 'one of the architects of our democracy'. Eglin continued to make his impact in parliament over the first ten years of South Africa's transition to democracy.

Here this doyen of South African parliamentarians chronicles in a personal and human way his career in public life during what will surely be remembered as the most dramatic and traumatic half-century in the political history of South Africa.

These meticulous memoirs set out, for the first time, the full story of the Progressive movement – the golden thread of liberal opposition that began with the founding of the Progressive Party in 1959, and functioned not only as the official opposition, for many years under Eglin's principled leadership, but as the outspoken conscience of the country when moral government in South Africa seemed an impossible dream.

Colin Eglin was named by *Leadership* magazine as the parliamentarian of the century. His story provides searching personal insights into the major actors in South African politics during the second half of the 20th century, into the intricacies of party politics and parliamentary life, and into the tensions and the triumphs of the constitutional negotiations. He reflects on a lifetime of service to his country and to the cause for which he worked and fought with patience, courage and relentless determination.

Jonathan Ball Publishers ♦ ISBN-10: 1-86842-253-4 ♦ ISBN-13: 978-1-86842-253-1
Trade Paperback ♦ R225

EVENTS

15–20th September Lib Dem Autumn Conference, Brighton.

Sunday 16th September Liberator/ Liberal Democrats for Peace & Security "*The unwinnable war on terror*" Craig Murray, former British Ambassador in Uzbekistan.

Glyndebourne 1, Holiday Inn Hotel.
8pm-9.15pm

Monday 17th September CAABU/ Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine. Palestine: *The Road to Statehood* Stephanie Koury, Andrew Phillips & William Sieghart. Regency Suite Old Ship Hotel (Secure-Zone)* 6.15-7.30pm

Tuesday 18th September Peace in Kurdistan Campaign/Kurdish Federation UK *EU, Turkei and the Kurdish Question* Fir Room, Quality Hotel 1.00-2.00pm
Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel *The Way Forward to Peace* Michael Moore MP, the Israeli ambassador. Renaissance North, Thistle Hotel 6.15-7.30pm

Wednesday 19th September Colin Eglin's book launch 1.00pm
LIBG Fringe Meeting - *Migration* Gloria Gomez (Latin Front) & speakers from LI Bureau. Regent Room Grand Hotel 8:00-9:15pm

6th October Liberal Party Assembly Friends Meeting House, 8B Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton

9th October Forum

7th November Annual Dinner, NLC

18th November Lib Dem London Region Autumn Conference & AGM *Diversity, ethnicity & the Liberal Democrats* Dunraven School, Leigham Court Rd, Streatham, London SW16 9.30am - 5.45pm

18th December Mince Pie Party NLC

---NLC= National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

Underground: Embankment

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