



2013 no.2 £5.00 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**Falling In Behind the People of Gibraltar.**

**The Garden Lecture: Egypt: Syria: Jo Grimond:**

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**9th September** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**14th –18th September** Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Glasgow

**18th September** 175th anniversary of the establishment of the Anti-Corn Law League by Richard Cobden, 1838.

**5th October** 128th Liberal Party Assembly, Friends Meeting House, 8b Summerfield Road (off Bath Road), Chapel Ash, Wolverhampton

**17th-19th October** 191st Executive Committee of LI. Antigua, Guatemala.

**4th November** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**13th January 2014** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**3rd March 2014** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**2nd June 2014** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**7th July 2014** LIBG AGM

*For bookings & other information please contact the Chair below.*

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NLC= National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE  
Underground: Embankment

*Liberal International (British Group)*

*Chair:* Wendy Kyrle-Pope, 1 Brook Gardens, Barnes, London SW13 0LY

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*InterLiB is published by the Liberal International (British Group). Views expressed therein are those of the authors and are not necessarily the views of LI(BG), LI or any of its constituent parties.*

*Comments and articles can be sent to Lockhart & Hastings, Creative Media Centre, 45 Robertson Street, Hastings TN34 1HL, email lockharthastings@btconnect.com*

***Note to contributors: interLib welcomes reports of international events at party conferences etc. Please send these to us by 30th September while they are still fresh in your memory. Reports of the LI Exec in Guatemala and other copy should be received by the end of October 2013.***

# SYRIA

On 29th August 2013, a hastily recalled Commons voted against the Government, so now there will be no British military intervention in Syria.

Would the outcome have been different if David Cameron has waited for the Arms Inspectors' report, which would have confirmed that it was Assad's government forces who used chemical weapons against their own people? Or is the spectre of Iraq still overshadowing all other considerations, even the Responsibility to Protect?

Any military action against Syria would hurt an already damaged population.

LI President Hans van Baalen MEP spoke out against the use of chemical weapons in the conflict in Syria, but pointed out that "We are already much too late with a military response. Resistance forces in Syria have already been radicalised. We have to target the infrastructure of the Assad regime and support moderate forces. This is not without risk, but without taking risk nothing will happen."

For the 24th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Liberal International has submitted a written statement on the ever deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Syria, calling "for an increased international aid to refugee hosting countries and assisting organisations."

Rather than wring our hands on the sidelines, should Britain now put all our considerable expertise and experience into finding a diplomatic solution to the Syrian situation, and all our heart and soul, and the money saved on an armed intervention, into humanitarian aid for the millions of Syrian refugees abandoned in thousands of camps in the lands surrounding their beleaguered homeland?

**Nick Harvey MP President LI(BG) Wendy Kyrle-Pope Chair LI(BG)**



# From the Chair...

I have a long list of thank yous. To our past chair Julie Smith; to Adrian Trett and Mark Smulian for their help in running the day-to day business of LI(BG); to John Pindar for organising the election; to Robert Woodthorpe-Browne, Jonathan Fryer and Peter Lesniak for their advice and support; to Emil Kirjas and his team at LI.

We are lucky to have an executive with so many strings to its bow. Merlene Emerson and Anuja Preshar were in action as Dragons and Elephants, a debate on China and India and the relationship they have with the UK. Nick Hopkinson organised the huge and very successful meeting on Kurdistan in March. As the on-going plight of the Kurdish diaspora is much in our minds, we hope to replicate this meeting in other UK cities, as part of our Great Expansion plan for LI(BG)

We are most grateful to Lady Garden and all who organised the now annual Tim Garden Memorial lecture at Chatham House in June; this year Sir Stuart Peach gave the lecture. And it is important to the world at large. Last year's speaker, John Snow, who spoke on Iran, said on Radio 4 that he had only been allowed to enter Iran to cover their recent elections, after years of being banned, because of this. They have heard of us in Tehran.

We have had two excellent joint meetings with Liberal Youth this year. One on Burma, with Nic Dunlop, the journalist and photographer who is an expert on South East Asia, who opened our eyes to the internal conflicts between the many peoples of Burma. And then this spring, when we linked up by Skype to a brave Gay Rights activist, who gave us an idea of how difficult the situation is for not just Gay people, but of anyone who does not fit the profile of Putin's Russia. Amnesty International sent us their horrific report on Human Rights (or the absence thereof) in Russia today. And Peter Tatchall most generously turned up after one of the biggest days in his campaigning life (the Same Sex Marriage debate) and blew us away with his take on gay rights being the thermometer for human rights in any society. A week after our meeting, the Russian Parliament outlawed any reference to homosexuality in schools.

Development of new branches and more partnerships will play an important role in LI(BG)'s Great Expansion Plan. We will continue to hold joint meetings with LY. Our Scottish Branch will not only

organise our Fringe Meeting in Glasgow with Scottish LY, but help us run our joint stall with our good friends ELDG. William Powell and I are planning an event in Cardiff to introduce LI(BG) and ELDG to the Welsh people in the

autumn. And any of you who live outside our Westminster bubble, do let us know if you would like to have an LI(BG) event, especially but not exclusively in a university town or city (because LY will help us), and we will support and fund you.

We need new members and sponsors to keep us going. Despite careful financial management, our healthy looking accounts disguise the fact that much of our bank balance came from the late Ronnie Fraser, and this will not do. However, those who are drawing up your wills at the moment, or have suddenly come into money, do not forget us.

The last very important final thank yous. To Simon Hughes, our retiring President, who has done so much to promote and support LI(BG) in his three years at our head and to Nick Harvey, who succeeds him and has stated his willingness to continue Simon's good work and his enthusiasm for the Great Expansion Plan

And to our sometimes forgotten hero, our Stewart Rayment who single handedly designs, edits and produces our excellent organ, interLib, for us. Make Stewart happy by sending him good copy on world events, covering our meetings and reviewing apposite books and films.

But thanks chiefly to you, our members, for your support, interest, input and vast collective experience. The world needs LI and we have to make it realise that.



# Military Strategy in an Unpredictable World

Lord Garden Memorial Lecture, 6th June 2013

**Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach KCB CBE ADC**

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, UK

Baroness Garden, ladies and gentlemen, members: it's a great honour for me to be asked to do this, and a privilege. It is very much in memory of Tim, who I did know well. We both did the master's of philosophy course at the University of Cambridge as serving officers, where we were both tutored by Dr Philip Towle, who has recently retired. We were both directors of defence studies of the Royal Air Force, and Tim very much influenced me in my thinking in that role.

Perhaps more importantly for tonight, we were both what I would like to call – and I will explain this later – joint officers. I've now completed seven joint appointments, including the chief of joint operations, the head of military intelligence, the commander of the Joint Forces Command, and now the vice chief of Defence Staff. I know Tim was also a joint officer and I think he was always very fresh in his thinking, prepared to embrace new ideas and to try and move with the times we're in rather than – as often the military are accused of – looking backwards. Of course, later in his life Tim was very distinguished both in academia, at this place – which he loved – and of course in politics. He would be delighted to hear I'm not going to talk about politics tonight.

But of course Tim was always, as a junior and as a senior officer in the Royal Air Force, and as a defence officer and a joint officer, interested in the world.

Geostrategically, the world, of course, is changing. You can see it on the TV screens; you can see it on the internet. You can see it in your own travels. As our secretary of state, Philip Hammond, said in the Shangri-La Dialogue – by another organization in London – last week in Singapore: the shift to Asia is now real. Much predicted, probably, in this room, maybe by some of you – but it's now very real. Comes with that, all sorts of issues in Asia which may well yet have security implications, including potentially issues between states. It was rather fashionable for a while to talk about those state-on-state type issues, even in places like this and the Royal College of Defence Studies and RUSI, that these issues may well have diminished – but probably not.

Of course, we see before us the sectarian nature of many conflicts and the ferocity of those conflicts literally unfolding before us in Syria and elsewhere.

We also see the sub-state group, the group that doesn't really play by the rules – a theme I will return to – that doesn't abide by any known norms but is quite happy to embrace technology as presented. We also see the breakdown of cohesion that both sectarian conflict and these sub-state groups can cause and can inflame, often in places in the world where people have lived cheek-by-jowl, side-by-side, as neighbours, for hundreds if not thousands of years.

So the shifts and the changes are very real. We've seen it across the so-called Arab Spring and we've seen it elsewhere. So even if the number of conflicts are reducing, the ferocity and the nature of them is still very violent.

The 'so what?' from all that is, of course, if you then fold in the resource competition aspects of our world, be it for minerals or resources or water, and all the competition around technology access and use – the use that, for example, international extremists and terrorist groups use the internet frequently, if not totally – then this is a very uncertain time. Tim, in his time in the military, wrote about this. I have both of his books and they are still very well written and very taut, both his first book – which was influenced by his tutor when he was doing the MPhil at Cambridge – on deterrence, and his second book, which I will actually talk about in a little more detail at the end, called *The Technology Trap*, published by Brassey's in 1989. It's a surprisingly refreshing read but also very topical.

Here the 'so what?' from the world we're in. I think Tim would have approved of us now having a National Security Council. It's a good thing. We now have a structure in the heart of the British government that deals with security at the national level. We have a National Security Strategy, which we in the Ministry of Defence contribute to, where we use all of our national capabilities to build UK prosperity, to extend our influence and to strengthen our security.

These are not just words. I can say one thing on the record: as the operational commander during the NATO operation in Libya two years ago, the National Security Council – then very new and young – was very active in managing that crisis, or managing that situation. We've developed further strategies; again, I think Tim would have liked them. The one that is finding its feet quickly is the International Defence

Engagement Strategy, which I think would chime with Chatham House, which is the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office working closely in countries, through embassies and high commissions, on engagement and on upstream capacity-building and on how to engage with the militaries of other countries, and so on. Building Stability Overseas, with a DFID element, is another example of a subordinate strategy to the overall National Security Strategy.

The word ‘strategy’, perhaps – I do agree with Hew Strachan – we need to be cautious about. It is an overused idiom these days. There is a risk it loses its meaning. But the National Security Strategy certainly justifies that word.

What else we are doing that is a change from former times is we now engage in defence diplomacy, guided by country plans, guided by the ambassador and the high commissioner. But it is a real thing and we are getting better at it. We’ve still got a long way to go. We still need to do better at language training and cultural awareness, but we are doing that.

One thing I would say, and I speak now as a former commander – the first commander of the Joint Forces Command – is the UK Defence Academy – which I know Tim would have approved of, where we’ve concentrated the staff colleges and subordinate courses, the higher command course and the excellent library, in a lovely location down in Shrivenham – now a decade old, has definitely found its feet. My contention, certainly here at Chatham House, will be we don’t actually perhaps value it enough as a national asset, which it is. If the enthusiasm of others to join us in the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom is any measure, then we would be absolutely overwhelmed with overseas students. So maybe we’re getting something right. So I think professional military education in this uncertain world is a very important point.

Which leads me to my theme for tonight really, which is: I am, as the vice chief of Defence Staff, the first to say that the UK armed forces have to modernize and learn for the world we’re in. We have a great deal of operational experience now. Our young men and women, be they soldiers, marines, sailors or airmen, have served extensively around the world. You only have to visit them and see them on parade to understand that. They have at times a humbling level of operational experience and a great deal of experience of the uncertainty of conflict in the world. Some of the things they do are very brave, very courageous, and are equally as brave and courageous as their illustrious forebears in their units, be they ships, regiments or airplanes. You see that in the citations for bravery on the annual Operational Honours List.

But perhaps more importantly for a strategic discussion, we are very serious about learning and applying lessons. Some of you may well be familiar with the phrase ‘our way in war’ – I don’t think it’s a particularly useful one nowadays, but there is certainly something about the British approach to the world we’re in, and the engagement opportunities our armed forces represent.

So in my job as the commander of the Joint Forces Command, we have been working on the ‘so what?’ from that statement and we’ve been working on a discreet paper – not necessarily highly classified but not necessarily on the public record either – about how to adapt to that world. We are now working on a new Defence Joint Operating Concept. The big idea in that is to use the UK military instrument – the armed forces – as a contribution to the whole-of-government effort. That’s such an obvious thing to say, isn’t it? But of course we have come from a background where we were either subordinate to a grand strategy of NATO or another international body, but now it is very clear that that is what we are doing: contributing to a whole-of-government effort.

We do this in a number of ways. The ones that I’ll gloss over quite quickly, because they are pretty easy to explain, are our standing commitments. We also have, and I’m sure this is well understood at Chatham House, we now have an Overseas Territories White Paper, the first one for many years. Of course the armed forces are part of that, in order to defend the Overseas Territories.

Perhaps more exciting in a way, and perhaps a little bit



*Sir Stuart Peach and Robert Woodthorpe Browne*

Operating Concept the forward engagement approach: to go to countries at their request – not at our insistence, but at their request – to assist in capacity-building and training and so on. Again, the brand, if you like, of the UK armed forces is strong and a lot of countries want that support. It might be as simple as border surveillance activity, training police forces, or coast guard training – that's quite a high-demand signal at the moment. You might think this is all pinprick activity; some of you may challenge me on it. But my word, if some of these countries had a better coast guard, had better border surveillance, had a better ability to understand what is going on around their borders, then obviously they are in a better place to guarantee their own national stability. So forward engagement is an important part of our construct and we will do that by the use of our adaptive forces, be they Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army or Royal Air Force.

Things go wrong though, and as we have seen in the last decade, things go wrong sometimes quite quickly. So we still need to retain the harder edge, the ability to respond quickly and react. We are very keen to do that in an international sense. This scene is changing quite fast.

One of the things Tim taught me when I was a young officer – we call it flight lieutenant, the Navy call it lieutenant and the Army call it captain. I was flying an airplane called the Canberra, as Tim did, and we operated all over the world. Tim, as a great internationalist, would have been pleased to hear me state that one of the things we are working on and are very passionate about is putting NATO at the heart of UK defence. We have over a thousand British personnel serving in NATO, in addition to those units that we allocate to NATO. That's important. NATO's demise may even have been predicted in this room following the end of the Cold War, and other various ideas and crises have been and gone. But I was at the major NATO event last week and I can assure you that NATO is alive and well.

We have very traditional allies. We all know who they are, the United States in particular. I will return in a minute to the other thing I think Tim would have heartily approved of, which is our very close relationship now with the French, which we are working on. I am leading on the military segment of that and it's real. It's different in the sense of its depth, its automaticity and this sort of strengthening of our sharing activities.

But we also need to reflect, in this uncertain and ambiguous world, that we need new partners as well. We need other people to explain what is going on, to deepen and help us with our understanding. We saw during the Libyan operation the Royal Air Force flying

with Arab air forces for the first time in that sort of way. We've seen, in Afghanistan, 50 nations in the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan. So you can see the core of our activities still residing around NATO, but adapting the core alliance to meet the needs of other crises and crisis response.

The way we do that, which is perhaps a bit different to other nations, is – I'm not going to say we're the world leaders, that would sound a bit too confident. But we're certainly very serious in Great Britain about joint action and joint activity. That's why I say I think Tim would have been very pleased with the fact, as a joint officer – I am very much a joint officer – that that is automatic.

It's very easy for copywriters and armchair generals to highlight differentiations between the single services but if you go to Afghanistan and other operations where one of the services is maybe the dominant force, they actually work together, and we're always stronger when we work together.

We all rely on each other. We all are integrated at the right level. We deeply admire the tribes and the backgrounds, the ethos we come from, and that can be as competitive as you need it to be, in an appropriate setting. But we are joint by definition. Many of our allies often quiz me and my colleagues and friends as to how we manage to do that.

The Joint Forces Command is a good example of that, where we now have 40,000 people under one command doing all the enabling for operations, from the special side, the intelligence side, medical, cyber and so on. We are working closely with the French, as I said. The Combined Joint Expeditionary Force will go live in a year, couple of years' time. We are also working on an idea that David Richards, as the chief of Defence Staff, launched at RUSI at Christmas: to embellish that and create a Joint Expeditionary Force with other nations. That is very topical and very active work. I'm not going to tell you which nations they are yet because we are still in negotiation with some of them.

But we are very serious about finding and working with new partners. With one of those partners, for example, which I know would be welcomed in this sort of audience – I work, for example, as the vice chief, as the commander of Joint Forces Command, as the chief of joint operations, very closely with DFID and the Stabilisation Unit. So the idea that there are all these little silos in the security sector in the UK – we are now very much integrated. We're always looking for new ways to work closer together and develop our depth of understanding.

If there's one lesson from the last decade or so that we need to be really honest about, and I think this would



chime with Tim too, it's understanding what you're doing, where you're going, what is going on. Easy to say in an environment like this, on a warm evening in London, but quite difficult in a tribal militia environment where people – several hundred groups in Syria at the moment – who is who in that terrible situation? So trying to develop those ideas, put meaning around them, work with friends and allies, and share information is exactly what we're trying to do with those adaptive forces, and through being true to our friends in the world and engaging on a persistent basis – which we do and continue to do.

I think if there's a way of me trying to bring this to life, I'd say in my operational experience – continuous operational experience since the mid-1990s – operations are now defined by complexity and not by scale. Anywhere there are conflicts, there are so many complications and complexities that we need to understand, both the issues and indeed the constraints, before we do anything. Have we always been good at that? I'm not sure. We're definitely learning and we're getting better at it. The constraints under which we operate are also important to be honest about. The relative power – I mentioned Asia at the beginning – the relative shift in balances is changing quite quickly. We must pay attention to public support, and public support is a very hard thing to measure. In a coalition, multinational environment, it may be very different between the members of that coalition, which becomes quite hard to manage in an operational setting. Many people like to talk – and I did listen quite carefully, when I was the head of operations and in my last job, to organizations which I have the highest regard for, such as the ICRC – about the changing nature of international law.

It's also very true to say, and I think it's an important point, that the sub-state groups that wish us harm and other extremist groups that wish us harm pay no respect for symbols. That's a very important point and it's something, for those who are interested, the ICRC has quite a lot of writing on this. It has been a terrible time for the ICRC. They have lost a lot of people who are just trying to do the right thing and brave things. So disrespect for symbols in an area where the disrespect for international law by sub-state groups is a very interesting and difficult situation.

Also the media – I know some of you are here tonight. All I'd say about that is the 24/7 nature of media is one issue. Another issue is if you are in a coalition environment or a complex environment and you're a long way from home, whose media are you dealing with? Dealing with your own is one thing, but dealing with the media of those 50 nations in ISAF, as I think every commander of the ISAF would tell you, is another matter. I think a couple of people with a lot of operational experience in the room would agree with

me. You have to take all this into account, which is precisely why professional military education, university education, and thinking about what you're doing and reading history is very important.

The other thing I would now like to turn to, which is equally at times a constraint and at times an opportunity – and you can quiz me on this, because Tim wrote this very fresh book called *The Technology Trap*. We went through a phase in my military career, now spanning 40 years, where

technology was always going to answer the difficult problem, wasn't it? But it always turns out to be a bit late, a bit more expensive than we were promised, and not quite as good. That phenomenon, which Tim wrote about in his book – he set himself the challenge in his preface of answering that, he thought, rather cynical phrase, and at the end he concluded in this excellent book that we needed to do more to improve the technical knowledge of policy-makers.

What a fresh remark that is. I would strongly associate myself with that remark. We need to do more to integrate science, R&D, in a more sophisticated and mature way. We are working on that right now in the Ministry of Defence.

We also need to accept that pursuing exquisite technology to a sort of almost ridiculous extent will take you down the route to fewer and fewer platforms and the ability to do very much at all. Tim wrote that in 1989 and it's true today. Equipment which is good enough is exactly what I'm sort of advocating and working on in my job, and I think Tim would agree.

The other thing I think we should do more of in this complex, ambiguous and uncertain world is be prepared to experiment. If you were to go and see the training we now undertake for the brigades deploying to Afghanistan, you would be really struck, all of you, by how sophisticated it is, by how complicated it is, in order to prepare our boys and girls for what they're about to discover in Afghanistan. That's not by accident. It's taken us a while to get there but it is now – looking through the lights, many of you have experienced it – it is a very sophisticated operation in and of itself. Therefore, that is an important point. But if you're going to do all that, you've also got to be prepared to be challenged and prepared to get it wrong and change. Again, I think Tim would agree.

Well, so what? The UK armed forces reflect the society we're in as well as the world. We are changing quite quickly. We are very serious about defence reform. My former new command was very much a testament to that, through the wisdom of Lord Levene and his report two years ago. That now is going well. We are adapting. We are coping with that uncertainty



and we're also dealing with the austerity challenge. That of course, in my current post, is very topical.

It's very clear to me, and a very serious comment too, that Tim's legacy is very real. I can feel it. Tim's freshness of thinking, his positive energy put into both the international scene and his time in the Ministry of Defence – and my own service – has endured. That, I think, is a tribute to the man, and a great privilege to be asked to remember him. Thank you.

*Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach gave the 6<sup>th</sup> Garden Lecture at Chatham House on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013. He was appointed Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013.*

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the British Group took place at the National Liberal Club on the 8th July.

Those elected to the executive were: Jerry Asquith, Merlene Emerson, Nick Hopkinson, John Innes, Wendy Kyrle-Pope (chair), John Pindar, Anuja Prashar, Mark Smulian (secretary) & Adrian Trett (membership). Sir Nick Harvey was elected president for 2013-14. By usual practice the chair and other officers except where noted are chosen by the Executive.

The meeting was followed by a reception and the Forum 'The Elephant and the Dragon - India, China and our relationship with them'.

## **LI(BG) at Glasgow**

We have a joint stall with LDEG in exhibition area – volunteers are needed to staff the stall.

LI(BG) fringe - Tuesday 8 -9.15pm ***Who is are enemy in Europe and The world?*** Joint Fringe - Liberal Youth, LDEG, LI(BG) and British Influence in Europe.

Defence is the topic - confirmed lead Speaker Sir Nick Harvey - President of LI(BG), chaired by Robert Woodthorpe Brown with Dr Julie Smith, - Defence Working Group Chair, Adam Nathan - British Influence in Europe amongst other - speakers yet to confirm ( at least 2)

***International Reception*** 6.30 pm Tuesday evening.

## **Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel Conference Fringe Meeting**

### **Crossing the line: Israel, Palestine, language and anti-Semitism**

**Monday 16th September - 20.00-21.15  
Campanile - Picasso 2**

An expert panel considers the importance of sensitivity when commenting on Israel, Palestine and the Middle East. Speakers: Gavin Stollar (Chair, LDFI), Alistair Carmichael MP (Chief Whip), Lesley Klaff (Sheffield Hallam University), Mark Gardner (CST), Maajid Nawaz (Hampstead/Kilburn Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate)

### **Lib Dem Friends of Palestine Fringe Meeting in Glasgow:**

#### **Gaza: trauma, trials and natural gas**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 6.15 - 7.30 pm  
Campanile Hotel, Glasgow. No passes needed.**

Col. Desmond Travers of the Goldstone Commission has investigated every military incursion into Gaza since Cast Lead.

He will discuss not only the value to the Israelis of Gaza as a test laboratory for their weapons systems but also their intent of ongoing siege to control the natural gas reserves offshore in Gaza.

An expert on trauma and disability, who has worked extensively in Gaza, Prof. Colin Green, Emeritus Professor of Surgery at University College, London will look at the mental and physical damage caused by Israeli weapons. He will also discuss the immense profitability to Israel of her 'defence and security' technology which has become her main export industry.

### **LibDem Friends of Turkey and Ethnic Minority LibDems**

**LibDem Engagement with Local Communities  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 20.00 - 21.00**

Half of the population in London is of ethnic minority background. The success of Liberal Democrats in London will depend on our ability to engage with minority communities. LibDem Friends of Turkey has been working to connect with the Turkish speaking community living in London and has been working with our councillors, GLA members, MPs, and MEPs.

Our speakers, including Sarah Ludford MEP, Lynne Featherstone MP, and Stephen Knight AM, will be looking at this topic from the European, national and local perspective to share their experiences.

We will also have Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece and Turkish Ambassador Unal Cevikoz as hosts of the evening. Turkish scholar Ziya Meral ([www.ziyameral.com](http://www.ziyameral.com)) will also make a short speech about the Turkey-UK relations and hope to have visits from Simon Hughes and Nick Clegg as well.

Room Castle 2, Crowne Plaza, Congress Rd, Glasgow G3 8QT

RSVP: [info@ldfot.org](mailto:info@ldfot.org) 07799 142527

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## International Abstracts.

Lining the Pockets of Africa's Elite. Becky Tinsley, *Liberator* 359 June 2013  
*Giving 0.7% of GDP as foreign aid is simplistic. Too much ends up in the wrong hands but actions that cost little would achieve more says Rebecca Tinsley*

The South African war and its effect on the Liberal alliance. James Fargher. *Journal of Liberal History* issue 79, Summer 2013

*Impact of attitudes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer war between Liberals and the Irish Nationalists.*

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Liberal Democrats International Office  
at  
Autumn Conference 2013, Glasgow

### Winning Elections – The Muslim Vote

- The International Office welcomes you to a lively discussion on targeting Muslim voters throughout the UK. The Panel will include the President of the Arab Alliance of Freedom and Democracy, as well as speakers from our sister parties in Egypt and Tunisia in addition to key Muslim activists within the party. Sunday 15th September, 2000-2115 | SECC – Morar

### Winning Elections – The South African Vote

- Discussion on best practice strategies for engaging South African voters in the UK. Join delegates from our sister party from the Democratic Alliance Tim Harris M.P., Rt Hon Simon Hughes MP and campaign organisers to discuss targeting of international diaspora in key Liberal Democrat constituencies. Monday 16th September, 2000-2115 | SECC – Morar

### Secularism v Political Islam - What Next, Where Next

- The International office in cooperation with the Arab Partnership Fund hosts a delegation of political leaders from Tunisia and Egypt to share their perspectives on recent events and political dynamics in the region. Issues to be explored will include recent popular movements in Turkey, Tunisia and Egypt. Tuesday 17th September, 13.00-14.30 | ECC, Ness

For more information please contact:

**International Office**

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**STRONGER ECONOMY. FAIRER SOCIETY.**

# Spain has turned its back on Gibraltar dialogue.

## Dr Joseph Garcia

In December 2011, the Liberal Party of Gibraltar was elected into Government in an alliance with the Labour Party (GSLP). This followed many years of working together in Opposition. This election coincided with a new right-wing Partido Popular (PP) Government coming to power in Spain.

The PP had pledged in its election manifesto to turn its back on dialogue with Gibraltar. They were true to their word within weeks. A Trilateral Forum had been established in 2004 where the Governments of the UK, Gibraltar and Spain met at different levels on a regular basis in order to discuss Gibraltar related issues.

In 2006 this resulted in an agreement over the payment of pensions to former Spanish workers, a new Gibraltar air terminal which was built next to the frontier fence, telecommunications, frontier flow, the inclusion of Gibraltar airport in EU civil aviation measures and the setting up of an Instituto Cervantes cultural institute on the Rock.

The new Spanish Government, soon after its election, announced its unilateral withdrawal from the Trilateral Forum for dialogue. This effectively left the United Kingdom and Gibraltar at the discussion table and Spain outside the door of the room. The Forum counts on the continuing support of the Conservative-Liberal coalition Government in London. It enjoys the support of the Lib-Lab Government in Gibraltar and also of the main Opposition parties in London and Madrid.

This means that only the present Spanish Government, the Partido Popular, is totally opposed to tripartite dialogue. In April 2012 the Foreign Secretary, while restating the UK and Gibraltar commitment to the Trilateral Forum, proposed to Spain 'ad hoc' meetings to deal with issues as these arose. This was not taken up at the time and how matters will progress in this regard remains to be seen.

On a separate note, this position of the present Spanish Government raises all sorts of questions as to how any future Spanish Government can be trusted to honour anything they sign about Gibraltar after the high-level political agreement that had been signed in 2004 by their Socialist predecessors has been dumped with no qualms.

However, the situation is more serious than that. Not content with dismantling the forum for dialogue, the Spanish Government is now set to unravel the different agreements that were arrived at in 2006 under that framework. Madrid has already thrown a spanner in the works over the inclusion of Gibraltar in new or amending EU civil aviation measures. They have threatened to impose restrictions on civil aircraft using Gibraltar airport (the restrictions imposed by General Franco on military aircraft were never removed). In short, the Spanish Government have publicly threatened to dismantle everything that their predecessors had done.

This translates into a campaign of economic sanctions which seeks to undermine different pillars of the Gibraltar economy. One of these is tourism.

The effect of the policy of the current Spanish Government has been reflected in the way in which it operates the border between Gibraltar and Spain. This has resulted in lengthy delays of up to seven hours, both to enter Spain and to leave Spain. The Spanish customs authorities stop every vehicle in order to generate these unnecessary delays.

In just one single weekend the Gibraltar Government distributed 11,000 bottles of water to persons waiting in the queue to cross into Spain. Those waiting included children, the elderly and the infirm. Some people were taken to hospital in Gibraltar after hours of waiting in 30 degrees of August heat.

There is no doubt that Spain is entitled to conduct checks on persons and goods crossing the border. However, such checks must be proportionate and Madrid must provide adequate resources at the single crossing point. There are, for example, four lanes of traffic leaving Gibraltar which then merge into one single green lane at Spanish customs. This alone creates a bottleneck which is compounded further when the policy of checking every car means that this solitary green lane is effectively suspended as cars are stopped there in order to create a tailback.

The delays are deliberate and politically motivated. They are a carbon copy of those imposed by General Franco in the 1960s which were designed to bring

Gibraltar to its knees. Franco failed and his successors will fail too. The Spanish Foreign Minister's first public words on Gibraltar, to a UK MEP, were "Gibraltar Espanol!" This bore echoes of Franco's policy and now with hindsight was a harbinger of what was to come.

But Franco's Spain could flout the laws of common decency and behaviour at its border with Gibraltar almost with impunity. The present Spanish Government is constrained by the laws of the European Union and by the views of many of its own citizens, including politicians, who do not agree with what is happening.

The EU has already taken an interest in the matter and observers are expected at the Gibraltar- Spain border in September. The right of EU nationals to freedom of movement over an EU border is being undermined and threatened by Spain almost on a daily basis. The irony



is that those most affected are thousands of Spanish and other EU workers who live in Spain and work in Gibraltar. This group have no choice but to commute back and forth every day. The measures also affect tourists of many different nationalities.

In the final analysis, there are vital Liberal principles at stake in the dispute that Spain has chosen to generate over Gibraltar. Freedom of movement is not the only one. At base, this is about a small people in a small country who are being openly bullied by their large neighbour next door in order to browbeat them into submission. We should stand up to bullies because this is part of what being a Liberal and what being a Democrat means.

*Dr Joseph Garcia is the Liberal Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar .*

## **Russia and IOC Must Not Bully LGBTI Campaigners**

Liberal International has launched a global campaign calling on governments participating in the 2014 Winter Olympics to show solidarity with LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) persons in the host country, Russia.

*Responding to threats from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which indicated that athletes who show support for the LGBTI campaign in Russia will be punished, Chair of Liberal International's Human Rights Committee, Abir Al-Sahlani MP, said: "We are committed to making sure that the fundamental principles of the Olympics are followed throughout the Winter Games in Sochi, 2014."*

Commenting on the launch of LI's campaign, which calls upon the National Olympic Committees to carry the rainbow flag and wear rainbow pins, Chair of Liberal International's LGBTI working group, Frank van Dalen, said: *"Instead of showing solidarity with the LGBTI people in Russia, the IOC has taken a seat at Putin's table. Liberal International calls upon all participating governments to join forces and to act together."*

In a separate letter, Liberal International has called on the IOC President, Jacques Rogge, to reconsider his position on punishing athletes who support LGBTI peoples living in Russia – a direct violation of articles 2 and 6 of the Olympic Charter.

## **NLD to Campaign For Public Awareness of Burmese Constitution**

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi MP, party leader of the National League for Democracy (LI Partner), has announced that her party will start a campaign to increase public awareness of the Burmese constitution.

The Burmese Parliament has recently instituted a committee to review possible amendments to the country's constitution. In the committee the NLD is represented by seven Members of Parliament. Commenting on the NLD's campaign, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said: *"All can give suggestions to review the constitution. We are planning to give public education about the constitutional amendments. This is because the people need to understand the constitution. Most people do not know what is written in the constitution. Only few people have read it."* The NLD organised the first free congress in the party's history earlier this year in March.



# June 30 Was Neither a Revolution Nor a Coup, It's Egyptian Política! Mohamed Nossier

Is it a coup or a revolution? Well, for the millions of non-politicized Egyptians who were in the squares and streets on June 30th in a successful attempt to get rid of Morsi, it makes no difference; in any case, the majority is literally not able to differentiate between both events. What occurred was certainly a mixture of both coup and revolution (in addition to other factors), but it is best compared to an Egyptian way of life; 'walking like an Egyptian'.

Many events after January 25th, 2011 remain unknown to the Egyptian people. While the one-year rule of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was in the process of a natural miscarriage, the misbehavior of Morsi and his regime led to a forced abortion, in the first quarter of pregnancy, in keeping with Egyptian cultural and religious beliefs regarding a child born of sin, a child that shouldn't belong to the 'Mother of the World', as Egyptians often proudly call their country.

In his 369 days as Egypt's ruler, Morsi never understood what it takes to rule a country like Egypt. He believed the fact that he was a legitimate president (which also made him High Commander of the Armed Forces) and that he had been officially recognized by the entire world, was enough to ensure his four-year tenure. He was under the impression that repeatedly invoking his status as legitimate president would keep him immune from the anger of millions of Egyptians who strove to oust him from power. Morsi was a legitimately elected president, but he lacked a basic understanding of Egyptian political dynamics, and that is why he was unable to complete his term in office.

Morsi was on the wrong track, on most of the critical issues. He was not able to accomplish any progress at all in dealing with Egypt's internal and external challenges, from minor domestic challenges to the external threats facing the government. Egyptians had high expectations after the revolution, but they eventually had to face an inefficient government under which their economy and security declined further. In addition, Morsi was manipulating the political scene by appointing his affiliates in all government organizations and institutions, giving them privileges, and enabling terrorist groups to expand in the Sinai, threatening Egyptian national security.

Egyptians, who had become adept at deconstruction (and substantially less able to construct), determined that Morsi was a target to be rid of. Along with his allies, Morsi managed to provoke all Egyptian political forces; government authorities, business people, intellectualists, State institutions, including the judiciary (accused of corruption), the police (brought up to pursue the Muslim Brotherhood), the army, anyone claiming to be a revolutionary, and most of the media. These powerful forces and government authorities may not be the majority of Egyptians, but their collective and organized efforts, supported by the military, gave them enough power and influence to get rid of Morsi.

Although the media talks about politics 24/7, this political phenomenon is new to Egyptians who are very much a short-term oriented society, focused on their daily economic and security problems and less engaged in politics, of which they have a relatively limited understanding. However, Egyptians recently were dragged into and engaged in complicated political terminology, such as 'constitution', 'roadmap', 'military intervention', 'parties', 'elections', etc. Nevertheless, the majorities of Egyptians don't really care about these definitions, or even understand their dynamics; they are looking for 'a functional leader', someone who can help their daily struggle with economic and security problems. Morsi had become a burden, a dysfunctional president who managed to unite many Egyptians in the wish to topple him, regardless of the consequences of this action, which Egyptians didn't really bother to think about or to anticipate.

Elections, at large, is a new concept for Egyptians, but they were happy to stand in long lines for hours to vote for their favorite candidates in both the parliamentary and presidential elections. However, what mattered most to them was whether this process would eventually have a positive impact on the economic and security crisis they had been living with since early 2011. When both aspects deteriorated under Morsi's rule, Egyptians were more than happy to get rid of their legitimate president for the sake of improving their daily lives. They also sacrificed the democratic process in order to get a new leader. Even if state institutions were not cooperating with Morsi,

as he claims, the blame lies on him for his administration's poor policies.

There is more to democracy than the ballot box. The rule of law, independent institutions, freedom of expression, human and minority rights, and other factors, are all necessary components of democracy. In addition, and of equal importance, is the acceptance of the democratic mechanism by the citizens and their willingness to abide by it. These aspects create a functional democracy that Morsi was not keen on building. Nor was he able to enforce the rule of law and empower institutions. After he was done with the elections, he began to manipulate some institutions such as appointing a general prosecutor whom Egyptians saw as the Muslim Brotherhood's man. In addition, he did not understand the fact that having won the presidency by a very narrow margin (52%) required him to handle his opposition very carefully. He needed to win over the opposition by offering compromises. He managed, on the contrary, to lose a large segment of the supporters who had initially voted for him. Perhaps, if Morsi had worked on building a truly democratic nation through empowering institutions, it might have saved him.

Over a decade ago, when there was a technical conflict over presidential votes in the United States between former President George W. Bush and his challenger, former Vice President Al Gore, the United States Supreme Court, as an independent authority, was the one that determined the winner. In Egypt, we can't claim to have independent institutions or authorities that Egyptians can rely on and trust to settle political conflicts. Thus, the military is getting more involved in politics, to the benefit or detriment of Egypt.

In well-established democratic nations where there a clear system of checks and balances in place, wherein each institution and authority plays a significant role in a relatively smooth mechanism that concludes in free and fair elections, the military does not play any political role and its interference in politics is not welcome. However, in the case of Egypt, which is still struggling to build its democratic pillars, and where the above-mentioned mechanism is non-existent, the military is still perceived as a political savior and Egyptians welcome its role in politics. For decades, the army managed to establish itself as a strong entity, playing a hidden political role during the Mubarak era and a clear and present one in the wake of the January 25th revolution.

In the early days of the revolution, Mubarak commanded the army to handle Egypt's internal security, deploying its troops and tanks in the streets.

Eventually, it was the army that played an essential role in ousting him. After Mubarak's ouster, the military became the main player in Egyptian politics, becoming the country's official ruler for almost 17 months, and producing the worst kind of roadmap that helped to bring the Muslim Brotherhood to power, and resulted in the Brotherhood passing a biased constitution that favors an Islamist agenda. While the military did not have a vision or a plan in its attempt to rule Egypt after the January 25th revolution, it definitely had a proper plan in the recent event of Morsi's ouster.

Moreover, Egyptians are accustomed to being ruled by autocratic and strong presidents (Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak are clear examples). In the January 25th Revolution, Egyptians managed to drop the phenomenon of an autocratic leader - but they never expressed disinterest in strong leadership. Morsi was a weak president who lacked the basic skills necessary to lead and drive a large country like Egypt. Thus, he did not last long, and during the short period of his presidency, it was clear that he was not even able to manage government institutions, which employ about one-third of Egypt's labor force.

Opposition forces failed to offer Egypt an alternative leader, or to run a coherent organization, or even to create some form of harmony among themselves, and the same can be said of the revolutionaries. The latter were scattered among the various political forces, and have almost disappeared from the political scene. Basically, they were working to get rid of Morsi and his regime, but it was quite clear that they could not produce an alternative leader. Most of the political figures who opposed the political role of the army after January 25th, 2011, (a position clearly expressed in a number of their demonstrations) are today happily welcoming and defending the military's re-entry into political life.

It was quite impossible for the Egyptian military to look on as Morsi established his Islamic State, risking Egyptian national security issues that would have taken the country in an unknown direction, without interfering at an early stage to stop him. Thus, in the absence of alternative political leaders or established civil independent institutions, the military, as a well-functioning entity, decided to interfere explicitly in politics. As Egyptians were searching for a strong leader, the military managed to offer its Commander as a de facto president, who may even be the coming one.

On June 30th, it was the combination of millions of citizens on the streets, along with members of

Mubarak's old regime and government institutions, in addition to the military institution which played a leading role in diffusing the potential chaos that could have resulted from the outbreak of violence between the millions of pro and anti Morsi Egyptians. On the following day, the military decided to lead and manage the revolution rather than leave the revolutionary momentum and action to the politically immature rebels and unorganized protestors in the streets. Therefore, with very short notice, the military grabbed this wave of uprising from the streets and established an upper hand as the leading entity in control.

Even though the Islamists were voted into power through the ballot boxes, Egyptians are still not ready and not willing to be ruled by 'Islamist phenomena', which delivers hate-filled and threatening discourse on a daily basis, nor are they willing to disregard the big question mark regarding the affiliation of these phenomena to terrorist groups. The influential traditional Egyptian elite, known to hold key positions in almost all government institutions, and control large segment of the Egyptian economy, still reject this phenomenon. Morsi stupidly managed to keep this segment of the society worried and threatened by his group, and they eventually managed to get rid of him. This segment of the society hates the Muslim Brotherhood and is enchanted at the prospect of dismantling the organization, at the expense of weakening the democratic process.

During his tenure Morsi resembled the appendix that does not add value to the body and got inflamed. The pain kept increasing through days and nights until a military sergeant managed to remove it, with the help of a nursing staff made up of the majority of Egyptians.

Western politicians are in love with defining political situations; they see democracy in black and white, not noticing the in-between colours that nations go through until they reach a stable democracy. In a recent Aspen seminar that I attended in Naples, Italy, the majority of participants defined June 30th as a clear military coup. Fair enough. However, for 30 years, these same governments and politicians used to recognize and praise Mubarak (who was clearly an autocratic president), none of them expressing any criticism. The January 25th revolution itself was backed by the Egyptian military, but western governments did not raise any warning flags at that time.

Is Egypt in better shape after the two events of January 25th and June 30th? Not yet. The intention of establishing a truly democratic country governed by

the rule of law and the application of justice is still a dream in peoples' minds. The reality on the ground is something quite different. Getting there will require either a leader with clear integrity, or a third wave of uprising. Democracy is like a seed that matures with time and good care. The three presidents who ruled Egypt between January 25th and the present were, and are, trying to deal with Egypt's daily struggles; not to protect this seed by completing the democratic package.

Egyptians must fully understand and digest democracy and its mechanisms, interlocutors and consequences to be able to abide by it, and this is definitely not the case today. What happened in Egypt over the last 30 months is comparable to a very heavy meal that Egyptians are still struggling to understand and digest. Egyptians are going through a cleansing process with strong waves of uprising in each of which they manage to get rid of a number of toxins. But the ailment remains and still rules the country.

Egyptians have always worked to avoid the devil by accepting a mediocre system. We got rid of Mubarak and a few of his affiliates, but the mainstay of his system is still in place. Now, we are in the process of getting rid of the heads of the Muslim Brotherhood, but their supporters are definitely still active, and their philosophy of hatred will remain, or even increment in the society. Egypt is certainly in need of a third wave of uprising that works on creating the 'New Egypt'; for which not a single building brick has been laid till now. This wave will only take place with the emergence of a new generation of politicians who should takeover from current ones.

*Mohamed Nosseir is a member of the Free Egyptians Party political bureau*

## **Syrian Conflict**

The National Executive Committee of the Liberal party passed the following motion at their June 2013 meeting:

*We believe that the arming of rebels in Syria will only intensify the spiral of violence and sectarian divisions in the country and wider Arab World however much we find the Assad dictatorship distasteful, we reiterate the Liberal principle of self determination of nations and believe democracy must evolve driven internally not imposed by armed intervention.*

The 128th Annual Liberal Party Assembly will be held on Saturday 5th October 2013 at the Friends Meeting House, 8b Summerfield Road (off Bath Road), Chapel Ash, Wolverhampton WV1 4PR.

# Jo Grimond

## the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth lecture (the international bits)

### The Rt Hon Lord (David) Steel of Aikwood KT KBE

I was on graduating offered and accepted the full-time job of assistant secretary of the Scottish Liberal Party. One of my tasks in that august role was to organize a pre-election tour for the Leader in the summer of 1964. So I was Jo's bag carrier (as we call them in the trade) as we travelled from hall to hall. All went well in Inverness and Caithness & Sutherland where we knew Russell Johnston and George Mackie had good chances of winning, but in Stornoway and especially Ross & Cromarty things were different. Neither Jo nor I knew the newly adopted candidate Alasdair Mackenzie. Gaelic was his first language and he was already into his sixties, was an expert on sheep but not thought to be so on politics.

The town hall in Dingwall was packed to the rafters, and Alasdair who had never addressed more than a local NFU meeting panicked and said he could not make the supporting speech, and that I should do so. I insisted that I was only there to take the collection to cover the costs, and he spoke for about three minutes. Then Jo wowed the audience. Unfortunately I had decided we would have questions, and of course Jo answered superbly. Then a man in a loud tweed suit with a pukka voice – obviously up for the grouse shooting – got up at the back and insisted on addressing his question to the candidate: “What is the Liberal Party policy on defence?” I looked at Jo. Jo looked at me. We both looked at Alasdair, and I could see my sparkling career in the party about to disappear. Alasdair got very slowly to his feet, cleared his throat noisily, and said very slowly: “The Liber-al par-ty will de-fend Brit-ain, the common-wealth and the free world”. He sat down to tumultuous applause, and went on to win the seat and be an excellent MP. It was a model answer.

Today I want to suggest that Jo Grimond left us and the nation five distinct legacies;

**First** was his deep devotion to life as a constituency MP.

Jo Grimond's **second** legacy was quite simply the Liberal Party. It is difficult for a younger generation

to realize how close the party came to extinction, having been in the nineteenth and early twentieth century the great reforming party of government. Yet extinct as the dinosaur it nearly became. Jo Grimond not only revived the old Liberal Party he played a crucial role in the events leading to the formation of today's Liberal Democrats.

His **third** legacy was to shake Britain out of its imperial past with policies more attuned to the realities of the second half of the twentieth century. The American Secretary of State Dean Acheson was frequently quoted as saying that Britain had lost an empire but not yet found a role. Jo was among the early fighters against imperial nostalgia. He spoke against racism at home, and against the conduct of the colonial administration in Kenya at the time of the Hola Camp massacre.

On South Africa he said of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960: *“I believe something happened which has made a dividing line in history such as we sometimes see. I do not think things will ever be quite the same again.... The prime cause of all this is the attempt to impose a wholly unworkable and repugnant system – a system of race superiority”*.

But perhaps the most controversial and uniquely Liberal commitment was his espousal of entry into the European Economic Community and opposition to the creation of the so called independent nuclear deterrents of Polaris and Trident. In those days he did not wait for policy debates at the annual assembly – together with a small group (usually consisting of Frank Byers, Mark Bonham-Carter, Arthur Holt and Donald Wade) he would simply pronounce new ideas in the Liberal News to the astonishment of us humble readers of that much missed paper.

When the UK government stayed out of the talks leading to the Treaty of Rome the six Liberal MP's divided the House criticizing the failure to join the EEC and I think they were joined only by two or three others against the united forces of the Tories and



Labour. Jo wanted us to take the lead role in a new united Europe instead of constantly – as today – being out-manoeuvred by the original powerful members. He described its creation as “the disappearance of the cloud which has lain over Europe for a thousand years – the plague of Western European wars - which has been so completely expunged that new generations do not even appreciate the boon of its dispersal; it is alone worth any petty tribulations that the EEC may inflict”. That sentiment was echoed by the late and great Sir Alastair Burnet who was presenting the ITV all-night results programme of the first European Parliament elections in 1979, at the end of which he told the remaining viewers: “35 years ago the people of Europe from the Shetlands to Sicily were at war: today the people of Europe from the Shetlands to Sicily have elected a parliament. Goodnight.” It is noteworthy that David (now Lord) Hannay who was Prime Minister Ted Heath’s chief negotiator on our belated entry wrote in his recent book that Britain’s problems with the Common Agriculture Policy and especially the Common Fisheries Policy were because of our lack of vision – our failure to enter at the start as a founding member - as the Liberals alone had advocated.

Jo Grimond showed the same attitude to imperial pretensions on the issue of Britain acquiring an independent nuclear deterrent. He was opposed to the Polaris project and later the Trident one believing them to be “unnecessary, dangerous and expensive” and argued that they made little additional contribution to that of the West as a whole and that they were maintained for “out of date reasons of national prestige”. In the 1959 election he set out the policy: “We of the Liberal Party say that Britain should not make its own nuclear deterrent. We believe the nuclear deterrent should be held by the West on behalf of the West as a whole and not by individual countries.”

He was not a unilateralist but wanted to limit our nuclear participation to co-operation within NATO, not attempting to run our own independent deterrent: “Must we not abandon many of our ideas about sovereignty and pool much of our resources and our arms?” he asked.

For that reason he was fully supportive when David Owen and I went to discuss with President Mitterand and Mr Chirac the possibility of reducing our deterrent jointly with that of the French, and he would have been doubtful about our present attempts to find a cheaper independent deterrent than Trident. Indeed this week’s report of the Public Account Committee questioning the capability of the Ministry of Defence

budget on equipment underscores the huge savings we could have made over the decades if the Grimond policy had been pursued at the outset, and we had confined our deterrent role to providing bases for NATO operations.

My **fourth** suggested Grimond legacy was Scottish home rule as we used to call it.

My **fifth** and final suggested legacy is much more imprecise – it is the personality of Jo Grimond itself...

Jo Grimond was one of the last real orators in our country. It was the job of the leader to inspire and fire up his annual party audience to go out to greater endeavours. Nowadays all the party leaders are made to behave like performing seals ambling around an empty space chatting to their audience. In 1963 when the party was at a particularly low ebb he thunderously addressed the pre-election Assembly in Brighton with his most famous quote: “In bygone days the commanders were taught that when in doubt they should march their troops towards the sound of gunfire – I intend to march my troops towards the sound of gunfire”. And so he did, and those of us who followed him and even more had the privilege of knowing him and counting him as a friend will be forever grateful.

*The Rt Hon Lord (David) Steel of Aikwood KT KBE gave the lecture: The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jo Grimond’s birth, at Firth Kirk, Finstown, Orkney, Saturday.18<sup>th</sup> May 2013, 2.00pm.*

*For reasons of space only the ‘international bits’ appear here (most of them), but the the full lecture may be found on the LIBG website [www.libg.co.uk](http://www.libg.co.uk) The lecture will also feature in the next issue of the Journal of Liberal History.*



**Jo Grimond with Gordon Lishman at the 1975 Young Liberal Conference in Scarborough.**

# Peace, Reform and Liberation

## Duncan McLaren – the Member for Scotland.

### Willis Pickard

British Liberals have a long and honourable record in questioning the need for force to solve international conflicts. But when countries fall out it takes more than a peace movement in one to minimise the threat of war. There has to be internationalism, and one little remembered initiative long before the League of Nations, much less the United Nations, centred on a series of Peace Congresses in nineteenth-century Europe. These attracted interest and commitment from radical Liberals in Britain, as I learned in researching the life of Duncan McLaren (1800-86) for a book titled "The Member for Scotland" which was published in 2011.

McLaren, an Edinburgh businessman and religious Dissenter, became known south of the border through his work in promoting the opposition to the Corn Laws in the 1840s. His organising and money-raising skills brought him to the attention of the two radical Liberal leaders of the time, Richard Cobden and John Bright. McLaren, in promoting Dissenter opposition to the religious establishment of the day, created a Scotland-wide campaign using the same techniques as the Anti-Corn Law League were developing south of the border. A political alliance was cemented when McLaren married John Bright's sister, Priscilla. Her Quaker opposition to the use of force influenced McLaren's political thinking. Liberals welcomed the uprisings in 1848 that made heroes of Kossuth in Hungary and Mazzini in Italy but many British radicals worried that freedoms were being pursued at the cost of militant nationalism, revanchism and bloodshed.

The Peace Society, founded in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, seemed to offer a way of avoiding conflict, and it grew in influence in the 1840s with congresses in various European capitals. Cobden in particular became concerned at a threat of war with a new Napoleon in France, and Russian ambitions towards the Turkish empire brought a bout of bellicosity into British politics. In January 1853 there was a Peace Congress in Manchester, Bright's parliamentary constituency. Amid mounting anti-French hysteria, the delegates tried to revive the spirit of the corn-law campaigns across the country. A fund of £10,000 was sought to train lecturers and distribute

anti-war leaflets.

By this time McLaren was Lord Provost (civic head) of Edinburgh. He attended the Manchester meeting, along with his wife and brother-in-law. During the summer he was at Bright's home in Rochdale suggesting another peace conference in the Scottish capital in October to maintain momentum. Cobden was more responsive than Bright to the idea, arguing from an economic and financial position that wars and associated military establishments were crippling expensive. Another radical MP, John Benjamin Smith, put the case well: "It requires a little moral courage to face the rampant war spirit which seems to exist all over the country."

The conference duly convened. Two hundred thousand leaflets had been distributed in Scottish towns. McLaren brought in large numbers of Dissenter ministers and prominent laymen. The originally booked hall was too small. As Lord Provost McLaren gave the opening address. He correctly identified two streams of Peace Society supporters. One group argued that "war in every form and for every purpose is unlawful, as being opposed to the precepts of Christianity and the whole spirit of the New Testament." The other group limited its disapproval to "the war spirit wherever it may be found." That was the Peace Society's stance, McLaren said, and he was backed up by Cobden who pooh-poohed threats of invasion and added: "Nations don't perish from without: they always perish by suicide from within." The press, however, led by the "Times", was largely in bellicose mood and roundly criticised the proceedings of the congress. There was amusement when the meeting was invaded by Sir Charles Napier, a Scottish naval hero soon to be leading a Baltic expedition against Russia. Pushing onto the stage he insisted on making a speech in which he claimed to be as fond of peace as anyone but "I am not one of those who will support non-resisting opinions." Bright was optimistic. He spoke of "a great intellectual gathering." But unfortunately for peace campaigners Turkey declared war on Russia on the second day of the conference. One delegate was not deterred. A leading Quaker, Joseph Sturge, set off by himself to lobby the Tsar in

St Petersburg, to no avail. Britain went from brash confidence to calamity in the Crimea - and in the Baltic Napier was blamed for a fruitless expedition.

Resisting the war spirit did Bright and Cobden no good. At the election of 1857 both were ejected from Parliament. McLaren wisely resisted pressure to stand. He did not become an MP until 1865, at the age of 65. He was animated throughout his career - in civic politics and for 15 years in the Commons - by outspoken resistance to the Whig (and latterly Liberal) establishment. Just as non-Anglicans became an increasingly influential section of the Liberal Party in England as the franchise grew wider, so McLaren's introduction to politics came as a spokesman for Scottish Dissenters who felt sidelined by the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Even the great Disruption of 1843 when a third of the Church of Scotland left to found the Free Church, Dissenters in

other denominations like McLaren were not much impressed. They wanted churches to have nothing to do with the apparatus of the state, for which they should not have to pay. Likewise, churches should not depend on the state for their upkeep. Rugged individualism - in economic terms self-help - was the order of the day.

My study of McLaren's public life is about his constant challenges to Whigs who by family and profession (mainly in the law and through landholding) regarded themselves as the nation's natural leaders. Scotland after the first Reform Act of 1833 (a year later than south of the border) was overwhelmingly Whig or Liberal. The Tories were always in a minority, and this meant that most of the struggles for political supremacy were within the Whig/Liberal party. McLaren clashed with the representatives of

the elite, including incomers like Thomas Macaulay, the writer, who as a Whig minister of war held one of the two Edinburgh seats. Macaulay, urbane and cultivated, had no time for the squabbles of religiously animated Scots Liberals. He declined to visit his constituency on a Sunday (or indeed at almost any other time) because he would have to choose which church to attend and thus offend partisans of the other denominations. McLaren also clashed with the Whiggish "Scotsman" newspaper and eventually sued

it for libel, winning the considerable sum of £400.00.

Belatedly in his seventies as MP for Edinburgh McLaren's assiduous pursuit of and support for Scottish issues at Westminster earned him the soubriquet of "Member for Scotland." He and his family - three sons became Liberal MPs - helped to build the Liberal hegemony north of the border which enabled William Gladstone to challenge and win the marginal seat of Midlothian in 1880 after campaigns that drew thousands onto the streets of Edinburgh and small surrounding towns. Nationally, Disraeli's Tories were ousted from power partly because Gladstone denounced their jingoism. Yet no Liberal Government could match the expectations of supporters in the country who distrusted imperial adventure or mixing with Europe's autocrats. The peace message still resonated at party gatherings. But the exigencies and

inhibitions of government blunted it. Shortly after McLaren retired as an MP in 1881 (and handed over his seat to his eldest son John) Bright resigned as a Minister over its incursions into Egypt.

Gladstone's third administration was a disappointment to both brothers-in-law. The Bill to give Ireland home rule was the final straw for the 85-year-old McLaren. Distrust of Gladstone as much as a policy disagreement led him to break with the Liberal Party. John Bright, still in the Commons, had to decide how to on Ireland. He was given a little extra time before committing himself. While Parliament voted he travelled to Edinburgh for the funeral



***Duncan McLaren, all his days  
a peace campaigner.***

of Duncan McLaren. The trio of Bright, Cobden and McLaren had sought to advance the causes of peace and political reform. As with today's Liberals in government, they faced constraints and setbacks. They are remembered, however, for the principles that drove them.

*Willis Pickard is chair of the Scottish committee of LIBG. His "The Member for Scotland: a life of Duncan McLaren" is available, price £20.00 from Birlinn publishers - [www.birlinn.co.uk](http://www.birlinn.co.uk)*

**Edwardian Requiem, a life of Sir Edward Grey,**  
by Michael Waterhouse.  
Biteback 2013

# Reviews

If Sir Edward Grey were reading this book, either at Fallodon or The Cottage, he would admire the way its subject moved between the duties of high office and the pleasures of country life. At home with the high handed intrigues of the French or Germans; taking a trout, perhaps unusually with a wet fly, or noting the song of a wren. How much smaller those who occupy the Palace of Westminster seem these days.

Grey was Foreign Secretary under Campbell Bannerman and Asquith. One of the LImps – and imperialist in matters of foreign policy, he had strong ties with the radical wing of the party when it came to domestic social reform. He practiced this in his relationship with trades unions in his business life.

The big question about Grey has to be ‘did he start the First World War?’ The answer is of course ‘No’, but as a leading player it is worth recalling his role in these events. Lloyd George in his *War Memoirs* treats him unfairly, but then he would, seeking justification for his own position, and of course, publishing coinciding with Grey’s death, he could no longer reply.

A general criticism might be levelled against Grey that he did not consult his Cabinet colleagues enough. When first elevated to Foreign Secretary, Grey had not previously held high office and the party was immediately in the midst of the 1906 general election. Waterhouse thus considers Grey’s early days credible if a touch naïve. Furthermore, as Waterhouse rallies, with a major domestic agenda, which was to brew into serious battles with the Lords, most of his colleagues saw Grey as a pair of safe hands and were happy to let him get on with it. Andrew Adonis in the *New Statesman*, thinks this position was naïve, even suggesting that Grey might have stopped the war; like Lloyd George he no doubt has his motives. Philip Zeigler, in *The Spectator*, is more realistic. We all have the benefit of hindsight.

Grey was undoubtedly gutted by his failure to stop the war. *The efforts of a lifetime go for nothing. I feel like a man who has wasted his life.* How often is that the case in the uncertain world of politics? Slaving away at European peace over a decade, averting war in 1912, but with circumstances overwhelming two years later. Waterhouse’s text may be within the established canon, but his evidence supports that view, especially when read in the context of the turmoil of day to day politics.

One of the early problems in Grey’s tenure was the Denshawai Incident. Waterhouse doesn’t really deal with this. How much of the current ‘shit’ in Egyptian politics can be traced back to the heavy hand of British Imperialism in affairs such as this? We are not merely dealing with a group of British army officers on a pigeon shoot in an Egyptian village, one of whom is ‘killed’ ... On 13<sup>th</sup> June 1906 five officers, an interpreter and an Egyptian policeman shot the domestic pigeons of the villagers of Denshawai to their justifiable annoyance. More seriously, they accidentally shot the wife of the religious leader of the village, Abd el Nebi, who struck one of the officers with a stick. Other villagers threw stones at them.

The officers surrendered, by were unable to appease the villagers until elders intervened. Two escaped, but one died of heatstroke. The other contacted the British army, who promptly killed an Egyptian who had tried to help the man who died of heatstroke. However, instead of punishing the officers, the British authorities viewed the matter as nationalist resistance to their rule and sentenced Abd el Nebi and another to life imprisonment, 26 others to hard labour & flogging, and Hassan Mahfouz, owner of the pigeons, to death. Indeed Guy Aldred, the British anarchist was sentenced to 12 months hard labour for commenting on this (and other incidents) in *The Indian Sociologist* in 1907.

George Bernard Shaw was acquitted rather more lightly for *John Bull’s Other Island*. How much detail did he really have of the hanging (brutal enough as it is) against Grey’s assertion to the House that ‘*the punishment was carried out in a humane fashion with no callousness or thoughtlessness demonstrated*’? It sounds like a load of bollocks to me. Once rid of Lord Cromer, the British Consul-General (who seeing the writing on the wall, resigned shortly after the Liberals came to power), Grey was able to instruct Sir Eldon Gorst, his successor, to release the survivors.

Once the First World War commenced there is an element of anti-climax in Grey’s career. Waterhouse frequently refers to Grey’s encroaching blindness, but does not furnish detail of it. My friend and mentor Norman Smith, the first Liberal whose election I was able to assist and a man very much in Grey’s mould, fought against blindness in public life for many years without the resources that would have undoubtedly been available to Grey. There are obvious reasons why



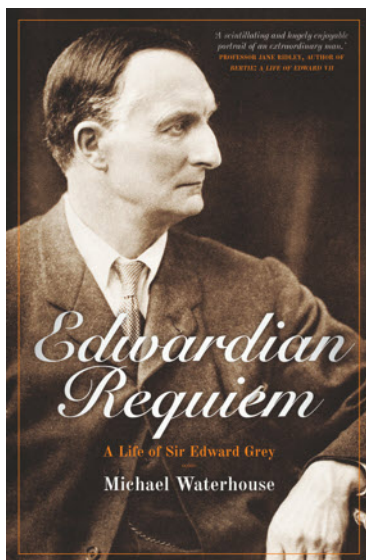
the period 1906 to 1913 should be treated in more detail, but after that Waterhouse presents us with more of a sketch which is somehow less satisfying.

Was Grey a great Foreign Secretary? Waterhouse considers that he was not a Canning or a Palmerston; does this confine him to a second division? There have been 37 Foreign Secretaries since Grey; were any of them great? Many were perhaps more eminent in office than Grey, but not usually as Foreign Secretary; MacDonald, Eden, MacMillan, Home, Callaghan & Major went on to be Prime Ministers of various reputations. Reading, the only Liberal to have served, was too brief in his tenure to have made an impact before the ill health that perhaps should have given Grey respite, took hold. Simon served as a Liberal National, and let alone Appeasement, perhaps we'd rather not think of him.

Eden and Bevin to my mind, stand out. Although by then Prime Minister, to Eden we owe the disaster of Suez – the pigeons of Denshawai coming home to roost. Bevin? We have the disaster of Palestine and the betrayal of Tibet; was the partition of India the best policy, was it inevitable? Thereafter, so often the post of Foreign Secretary seems a convenient place to put an over-mighty member whom a Prime Minister cannot exclude from the Cabinet, but may not much relish – consider MacMillan-Butler, Wilson-Brown, Blair-Cook.

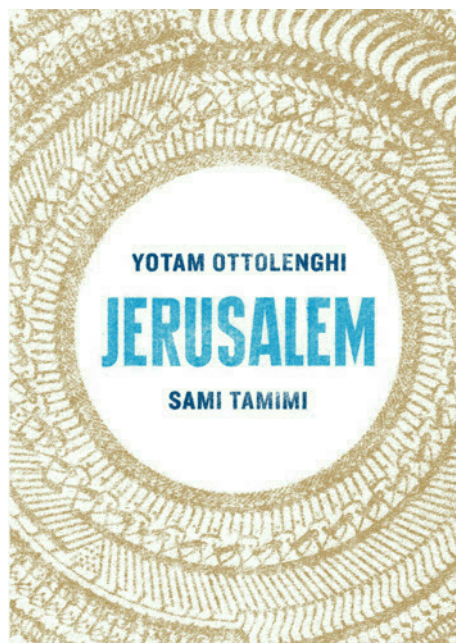
Michael Waterhouse fought Leicester East against Tom Bradley (who would shortly join the SDP) in the Conservative interest in 1979. A century on from the events that shaped the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is timely to have a reappraisal of the role of one of the key players. There may well be a case for Grey as the greatest Foreign Secretary of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; I would certainly put him in the first division.

### *Stewart Rayment*



### **Jerusalem, by Yotam Ottolenghi & Sami Tamimi** Ebury Press 2012 £27.00

It has always been my contention, drawing opprobrium from zealots of both Israel and Palestine, that the peoples of that country have more in common with each other than they do with some of their neighbours. Their democratic traditions are stronger to begin with. It doesn't surprise me that, unlike their supporters in the west, particularly those with another agenda, many of my Palestinian friends at least, share that view. One of the problems for the Israelis is that in the wake of 1948 Jewish communities across the Arab world, whose roots went back millennia, were cast out of their homes and sent to Israel. Their descendents are the majority of the Israeli population, with all of the attendant fears of family experience.



Ottolenghi and Tamimi therefore contend that Jerusalem is a melting pot, or more specifically, cooking pot of all that is best across the region. They chart the confluence of Arab and Jewish dishes and are excited by the prospect of these bringing peoples together, as indeed it has brought them together. The caution has to be, as I think Amos Oz pointed out, you can drink a lot of cups of coffee before you get peace. But heroism at least to try it.

What does one make of this as a cookery book? What do you know of the cuisine of Israel/Palestine? The latter at least is sorely neglected, over-shadowed by its Lebanese neighbour. Elizabeth David is sparse; there is Claudia Roden of course. I found Christiane Dadoub Nasser's *Classic Palestinian Cuisine* (Saqi, 2008) good, although as it was written for her native audience, a lot is taken for granted. *Jerusalem*, with its authors more grounded in the west, doesn't suffer

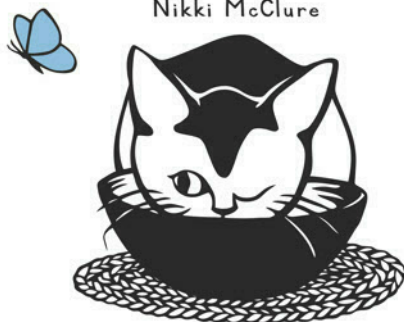
from this to the same extent, though a recipe for Pomegranate Molasses wouldn't go amiss for those of us in small provincial towns (the Lamb-stuffed Quince with Pomegranate and Coriander is superb – just when you were wondering what to do with all of those quinces). For the record, a cup of pomegranate juice (that's an awful lot of pomegranates), half a cup of sugar & a quarter cup of lemon juice; heat until sugar dissolved, then simmer until reduced to about a cup. Some supermarkets do stock it, but if you're in London pop along to the bottom of Edgware Road and one of the little Arab grocers there.

A lot of people will probably have received this book for Christmas; it is beautiful. But don't leave it on the shelf. It is quite straight forward to use, especially if, as is inevitable, you allow a bit more time for preparation, perhaps reading through the day before, in case there is something common-place in Arab cooking - like pomegranate molasses, that is less easy to come by here. You'll never overlook kohlrabi again.

*Stewart Rayment*

## HOW TO BE A CAT

Nikki McClure



**How To Be A Cat, by Nikki McClure  
Abrams Appleseed 2013 £9.99**

As Scat Cat sings in Disney's *The Aristocats*, 'Everybody wants to be a cat' - so here's the perfect manual. It's a beautiful book, illustrated by the cut paper technique and excellent for early readers – in less than twenty words it has lots of tricky consonant combinations.

*Stewart Rayment*

**istemi, by Alexei Nikitin  
Peter Owen 2013**

Before the Iron Curtain was drawn back, writers like Milan Kundera gave us insights into life under socialist tyranny. Twenty years on, what is it like in

those countries? Alexei Nikitin paints a grey picture of contemporary Ukraine – made worse by his frequent allusions to the weather (which tell us we have little to complain about).

The board game Diplomacy once enjoyed a certain vogue in the circle of my Young Liberal branch – taking place over a long weekend, it could prove fatal to relationships as new alliances were forged; the game has remained on the shelf for a long time. How much worse if the antics of a group of bored students falls foul of the KGB... ?

Jump to the present and panic strikes when an email of this past lands in the surviving protagonists' mailboxes. The detective work relies too much on chance but one wonders what happens next. If this is downtown Kiev it is grey indeed.

*Saeed Rahman*

**The Return of Feminist Liberalism,  
by Ruth Abbey  
Acumen 2011 £15.19**

What is feminist liberalism? Why not liberal feminism? The author's decision to use the former is clearly explained: a feminist liberal is a liberal first and foremost, someone for whom feminism is a consequence and extension of their liberal principles. The three authors covered in this work (Susan Moller Okin, Jean Hampton and Martha Nussbaum) all take a position which intrinsically links liberalism to feminism, and so attempt to reconcile two potentially conflicting doctrines. Their reasons for doing so, and their successes and failures in achieving this aim, are the focal point of this book.

Liberalism was the fertile ground from which feminist thought arose, but the relationship between the two turned sour over time as liberal principles were used to prevent the advancement of the feminist agenda. Abbey highlights several sticking points, such as the public-private sphere separation, which justifies non-intervention in domestic issues at the heart of feminist concern, and liberalism's primal value of the individual, which makes it easy to ignore group oppression. Despite the catalogue of differences between the two doctrines, and the majority of modern feminists who reject liberalism, there are those who believe the two can be reconciled and are, in fact, necessary to one another. This book is far from biased, with criticisms and counter-criticisms examined at every turn, but it seems that Abbey believes that Okin, Hampton and Nussbaum can hold their own against their detractors, and that feminist liberalism is not a contradiction in terms.

The three authors who are examined advance radically different ways of chiming liberalism with feminism, and they provide excellent examples of the diversity within the liberal school of thought, not to mention the feminist one. Okin does not believe that the liberal principle of individual freedom can be supported whilst the domestic sphere is seen as private and hence untouchable. She sees the egalitarian family at the heart of society. Her most radical proposal for crossing the public-private divide is her suggestion that the salary of the working adult in a household should be paid equally to both members, even if one of them exclusively carries out housework. The importance of the family to the outside world lies in its function as a school, as it informs children's beliefs about gender and power. Her most criticised work is her analysis of the treatment of women in other cultures. She suggests that multiculturalism, understood as the promotion of cultural group rights, can be bad for women as these protected cultures may internally discriminate against women. Okin's beliefs are therefore sometimes at odds with the liberal tradition, and her work on feminism requires a re-formulation of some liberal principles.

Hampton shares Okin's desire to re-mould liberalism to allow scrutiny of the private. She extends contract theory, the foundation stone of the liberal ideal of a public sphere of civil rights, to a tool for analysing every relationship, including personal ones. If a relationship is just then no one is oppressed, and the contractual device helps us uncover the unfair burden on one party in an unjust relationship. Hampton is also attached to the Kantian belief in the equal intrinsic worth of every individual. Contrary to many feminists, she supports abstraction of the universal equal being to further feminist goals because it allows us to compare the treatment of an individual to the ideal and see if they are being oppressed.

Nussbaum is very ambitious with her human capabilities approach as she believes she has identified ten capabilities which are fundamental to all humans at all times and all places. Here is clearly a liberal theory applicable to everyone, from which feminist arguments can emerge, as women are most often those lacking minimum fulfilment of the ten capabilities. Once again, it enables the crossing of the public-private frontier, by giving the State a central responsibility in ensuring access to the ten capabilities. Like any universal theory, there are criticisms to be made about how we can be sure these are the fundamental needs of every person and society. Abbey seems least satisfied with Nussbaum out of the three writers, as she does not feel that this point has been satisfactorily proven. However, she prefers

Nussbaum's nuanced study of other cultures to Okin's, which can be simplistic or disparaging.

The book finishes with a look at modern feminist liberals and how the common feminist criticisms of liberalism are being overcome. The breadth and depth of Abbey's analysis throughout is outstanding, and in less than three-hundred pages she carefully brings together and explains hours of reading of original works. For any adherent to the feminist or liberal tradition who feared they had to forsake the desirable values of the other 'side', this book is testament to the reconciliation possible between two of the most important modern worldviews.

*Eleanor Healy Birt*

**A Concise History of the Arabs, by John McHugo  
Saqi Books 2013 £20.00**

"A Concise History of the Arabs", as a title, belies the content because this is not a text book. John McHugo's approach is more personal than that and in both the Preface and the Acknowledgements he emphasizes this. He may have had to sacrifice extensive detail to achieve conciseness but the book's success comes not from a terse succinctness but from its page-turning readability. Light touches of human detail help as well, such as why Assad's father turned to revolution or the analysis of the First World War and its aftermath as the colonial powers behaving like landlords re-negotiating amongst themselves the leases they needed to impose so as to delay democracy, almost as if the Inevitability of Independence was like the Right To Buy.

In places this making of history familiar is perhaps too loose; it would have been interesting to know which were "...the many states from the wider Muslim world that joined the US-led coalition" that set about the liberation Kuwait in 1990. As is the explanation that Saddam Hussein (as well as Arafat and other Arab leaders) had only a limited understanding of the West and its psychology because they had had little exposure to the West prior to coming to power. This may or may not be true but it is weak - after all it would be hard to claim that even the West understands itself and its own psychology.

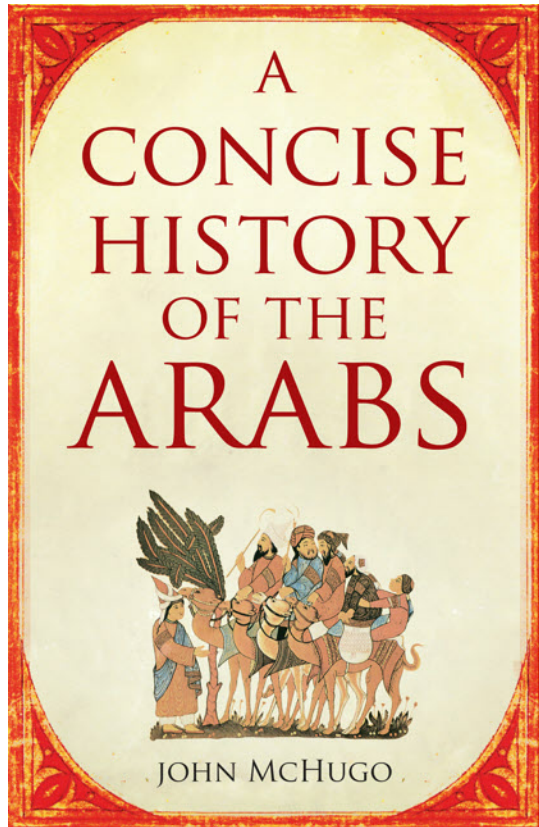
The book has an essential Glossary of Arabic Terms and Words (intelligently and assertively placed at the front) with 75% to do with Islam (the translations from the Koran are by the author). At the back there is an excellent Further Reading list and a treasure-trove of a Bibliography.

I don't usually read history books. I shall read more



now. In fact, I only picked this up so as to get a handle on what was happening in Egypt where my daughter and son-in-law have been working as teachers for the last five years. I reckon I can now talk to them in an informed and coherent way. The son-in-law teaches History and at the time of Tahrir while their American colleagues were getting on 'planes home quicker than you can say "Freedom Fries" they told us they just had to stay because all around them there was progress – History was going on. They are still there, only now it seems History is going wrong.

*Jim Pennington*



**Le Livre Blanc, attributed to & illustrated  
by Jean Cocteau  
Peter Owen 2013**

Books about sexual love often struggle; I wouldn't dream of plodding through some of today's grey outpourings. Cocteau, who we generally take to be the author of *Le Livre Blanc*, condenses his ecstasies and his pains into around 55 pages, give or take another dozen or so illustrations, which is just as well, for once started you will not want to put the book down. The book is about love, particularly homosexual love and is disarmingly honest. I would commend it to anyone considering their sexuality.

Peter Owen have reissued the book on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cocteau's death – here is a name we know, but know little of – a couple of films that you probably haven't seen (*Orphée & La Belle et La Bête*)

and a novel (*Les Enfants Terribles*). Whilst a Renaissance Man in his day, politically on the right, he went of fashion as the socialist left became culturally ascendant – it also took a long time for Wodehouse, who made similar mistakes, to be rehabilitated.

*Stewart Rayment.*

**The Member For Scotland, a life of Duncan McLaren, by Willis Pickard  
John Donald, 2011**

Duncan McLaren was probably not an easy man to get on with; despite his undisputed Liberalism and Radicalism, it took me a while to get into his biography as it grasped the controversies of mid-Nineteenth century dissenting churches and their impact on the politics of the day. The broad brush of the national myth tells us that there were Whigs and Radicals and that they went on (if in more detail with the Peelites) to form the Liberal party. What that doesn't tell us is of the struggles between often patrician Whigs and those Radicals in days when party allegiance was a more fluid matter.

What we know of McLaren these days is mostly that Thomas Babington Macaulay, Whig, lost his seat in Edinburgh in 1851 over the Maynooth controversy. St. Patrick's College, Maynooth was a Roman Catholic seminary training priests. The purpose of funding the college was to improve the quality of Irish Roman Catholic priests, but this evoked widespread, often bigoted opposition. McLaren's personal issue was that the State should not fund churches at all, but as a leader of Edinburgh's dissenting community, the niceties of this are easily lost. Willis Pickard goes some way to redress this. He also affords us more detail of McLaren's business and private lives than Mackie's 1888 biography.

It is difficult for us to precisely relate to Victorians without books like this. To the national myth again, we have the apparent paradox that the Radicals might also be those associated with dark Satanic mills. How is this so? We might ask, and without looking at their careers in detail it is impossible to judge.

McLaren seems archetypal in this respect; a self-made man of strong religious persuasion, and of great concern for all around him. He embraces the causes of the working class, of Parliamentary Reform, including the enfranchisement of women, of Peace.

Willis Pickard's book should be available on all good stalls at the Liberal Democrat's Glasgow conference

*Stewart Rayment*