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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Mark Rutte – Isaiah Berlin Lecture
Chinese Liberal Democrats visit China
Egypt South Africa

EVENTS

25th February Diplomatic Reception, NLC 6.30-8.30pm tickets £25.00 from the Chair (below)

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

7th- 9th March Liberal Democrats Spring Conference, York

28th- 30th March Scottish Liberal Democrats Spring Conference, AECC, Aberdeen

24th March Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats, NLC

4th-6th April Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Welsh Liberal Democrats) Spring Conference, City Campus, Newport.

24th-27th April LI Congress, Rotterdam.

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

12th June Tim Garden Memorial Lecture: Sir Menzies Campbell MP will speak on 'Whither Europe?' Chatham House 6.00pm

30th June LIBG AGM followed by joint meeting with Liberal History Group on 1914.

4th –8th October Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Glasgow

XXth October 129th Liberal Party Assembly, Friends Meeting House, 8b Summerfield Road (off Bath Road), Chapel Ash, Wolverhampton

For bookings & other information please contact the Chair below.

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

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Congratulations to Robert Woodthorpe Browne on his becoming an MBE in the New Year Honours List.



From the Chair...

A busy year stretches ahead of us at LI(BG). Our first new branch, at Oxford, opens with a very topical debate on the future of International Aid, on 5th March. Speakers include Rebecca Tinsley of Waging Peace, and is organised by Liberal Youth's International Officer Ab Brightman. This is a very exciting development, as it is the start of the creation of to a Liberal International which is less London centric, and to bring debate on international matters to, literally, a pub or college near you. The North West region is trying to found a branch, and we will help any other local group or region do the same.



International Liberalism is about grass roots talking to grass roots, encouraging debate and firing the imaginations of the politicians of tomorrow. Often people are more passionate about the great injustices in the world than in issues closer to home, and thus introducing them to Liberal philosophy via international issues is sometimes the portal through which they pass into greater political activism.

In this age of the Internet, where all the information on any country, any movement, any ideology is but a click away, we forget that the best form of communication is face to face. We can come to meetings with a wealth of background information, contacts, and an initial understanding of an issue, but it is the unique human interaction that stimulates real debate.

Having said this, we still have some great events in London. The annual Diplomats' Party is on 25th February at the National Liberal Club. A forum on Egypt is planned for 2nd June at the same venue, and a joint meeting with the Liberal History Group on 30th June, to commemorate the beginning of the First War, (and this is also the revised date of our AGM). The annual Garden Lecture is on 12th June at Chatham House, with Sir Menzies Campbell on "Whither Europe?"

Wendy Kyrle-Pope

Diplomatic Reception

The ever popular Diplomats' Reception will take place at the National Liberal Club on 25th February 2014.



Tickets cost £25.00 and are available from Wendy Kyrle-Pope at 1 Brook Gardens, Barnes, London SW13 0LY.

The 2013 Isaiah Berlin Lecture

Mark Rutte

‘All my ideas I owe to Britain. Ideas to do with showing tolerance, working for a decent society, and realising human beings aren’t perfect. And a deep belief in the empirical method, taking experience and observation as the only source of knowledge about our world. All that comes from Britain.’

These are not my words, but I can relate to them. And to the country of Shakespeare, Dickens, Mill, Locke and... *Yes Minister*. The speaker was Isaiah Berlin, and he paid this tribute to Britain in an interview with a Dutch newspaper in 1983. I can understand why Berlin was grateful that his parents had chosen to come to this country. A country where Isaiah, born in present-day Latvia, was able to lead a long, productive and successful life. A country where his parents felt secure enough to build a new life for themselves. A life founded on freedom, security and prosperity, in a country where neither fascism nor communism ever took root.

Liberals owe a lot to the philosophy of Isaiah Berlin. His distinction between negative and positive freedom still provides a useful tool for analysing our own ideas. It touches on the question of whether our actions increase or decrease the liberty of the individual, or of the collective. To Berlin, positive freedom was about the desire to shape your own life. To be your own master. To lead your life as you see fit.

It is government’s task to put in place the conditions to make that possible. Positive freedom requires government involvement. But Berlin warned that involvement must not become interference. That can give rise to social and political tensions. Consider for instance the debate in the United States about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, ‘ObamaCare’. In Europe, we take compulsory health care cover for granted, but in the US it is a deeply divisive issue. It pits the advocates of positive freedom against the advocates of negative freedom. The argument is about more than what the programme costs. It is also about freedom and the role of government.

Supporters of the Act want everyone, regardless of income, to have access to health care. This is government using positive freedom to actively support people. Opponents of ObamaCare are outraged at the compulsory nature of the Act. They can’t tolerate the idea of being deprived of their freedom not to take out health insurance. As they see it, this infringes their inalienable right to individual freedom. Berlin quotes from Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* to capture the essence of negative freedom. ‘A free man’, says Hobbes ‘is he that [...] is not hindered to do what he hath the will to do.’ Opponents of ObamaCare want to be able to decide for themselves whether or not they are insured. And they don’t see why they should pay a fine if they aren’t. In their eyes, government is interfering in the private domain – an argument traditionally employed by people who support the concept of negative freedom.

The example of ObamaCare shows that tensions between positive and negative freedom can run high. It all comes down to the question ‘Who is responsible for what?’ In relations between people, between people and government, but also in relations between governments. And this brings me to Europe. Here in Europe many people are asking a similar question: ‘Who’s in charge? Us or Europe?’

Let me say that the Netherlands, and I myself, support European cooperation. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We know that cooperation within the European Union adds value. The single market is worth between 1,500 and 2,200 euros a year to every person in the Netherlands.

But we have to look carefully at which tasks are better performed by member states, and which by Europe. The European Union is a practical partnership between countries which share many of the same values. Freedom, security, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. And it was an economic project from the very beginning. But Europe is not an end in itself. It is a means to increase prosperity, employment and security.

When the present Dutch government took office, we carried out a survey. We analysed existing rules drawn up in Brussels, and rules that were being proposed. We came up with a list of areas we think the Netherlands should be responsible for, like health care, education and taxation. Our aim is not to negotiate opt-outs in these areas, but to work towards a better division of tasks between the EU and its member states. In the spirit of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Our guiding principle should be this: make policy as close as possible to the people it affects. So issues like wage bargaining, pensions and termination of employment should not be dealt with at EU level. We in the Netherlands think these are matters for the member states. These are fundamental principles of national labour markets and social security. This is why the Netherlands also opposes setting a European minimum wage. Economic differences within Europe are too great for us to regulate this kind of issue at EU level.

When people discuss a balanced division of tasks between Europe and the member states, they often end up with a list of what Europe should not concern itself with. But we also need to say what Europe should do. Elections will be held again next year, and we will have a new European Commission with a new President. What priorities should the new Commission set? I would suggest two: making the single market more robust and stimulating international trade.

Earlier this month, the UK's Business Taskforce highlighted precisely these two tasks as being vital to Europe's economic future. The Taskforce, whose members include Marks & Spencer chief executive Marc Bolland, published a report describing the barriers facing British business. The title, '*Cut EU Red Tape*', sums up the message of the report. Its main criticisms centre on needless EU rules.

Besides barriers to trade, the report also describes opportunities. Opportunities to make Europe lean and mean, to make it easier for firms to do business both at home and abroad. This means not only scrapping unnecessary rules, but also making sure future rules are, and I quote, 'unashamedly pro-growth' and 'pro-innovation'. By amending or scrapping rules, says the report, 'billions of pounds, euros, zloty and kroner could be saved, while thousands of new firms and new jobs could be created.'

The single market is the engine for growth and jobs in Europe. A strong single market is also the most visible and tangible evidence of the EU's added value. Euro-

peans feel it in their wallets. And we haven't realised the full potential of the single market. If we want to earn more money within Europe's borders, we need to take steps like implementing the Services Directive more fully and more effectively. This will increase the EU's earning capacity.

Let me give you an example. In the Netherlands the service sector accounts for 80% of our national economy. But the figure for the export of those same services is nowhere near that: only 20%. Dutch firms, like their British counterparts, face barriers to the problem-free export of services. So far, the Services Directive has yielded Europe's economy an extra 100 billion euros. Further implementation of the Directive could raise that amount to 330 billion euros. It's an opportunity we can't afford to ignore.



Another potential growth area for the European market is the online economy. Modern economies rely heavily on the internet. So the European Digital Agenda is a key initiative for the incoming Commission, and its implementation should be speeded up. The sooner we have broadband internet in place across Europe, the sooner we can promote extra growth. According to estimates, implementing the European Digital Agenda will result in 5% extra growth and 3.8 million extra jobs. These figures provide clear insight into Europe's opportunities for growth. This is the future. This is the added value of European cooperation.

But that cooperation is not limited to trade within Europe's borders. Economic opportunities exist all around the world. We should seize them with both hands. If we want to attract foreign investors and

future trading partners, we have to get Europe's financial house in order. And that is exactly what we are doing. Introducing stricter budget rules. Giving support to member states facing financial problems, on condition that they carry out reforms and comply with strict budget rules. Creating a mechanism for banking supervision as a step towards a banking union. All these measures will build confidence in Europe among current and potential foreign trading partners. It makes Europe, as a trading bloc, a strong and attractive partner for free trade agreements. Agreements that mean better access to foreign markets, make Europe more competitive, and reduce costs.

We are now working on free trade agreements with a range of countries: from the United States and Japan to Asia's emerging economies. These agreements could deliver lasting economic growth of 2% for all European countries and two million new jobs. The more trade agreements we reach with other countries, the more the people of Europe will benefit.

The trade agreement between the European Union and Canada concluded earlier this month will generate about 12 billion euros a year for the member states. It will now be easier for European companies to do business with Canada as customs duties and trade barriers are reduced or eliminated completely. This means more trade, so more prosperity for the European member states as well as Canada. The Netherlands stands to earn between 600 million and 1.2 billion euros a year under the agreement.

To recap, it comes down to three things: a stronger single market, Europe as an international trading bloc and a clearly defined division of tasks between member states and the EU.

We are heading in the right direction. We are working hard to restore financial calm and stability. We are working hard on our own investment climate. We are working hard on innovation and reforms. We have all we need to look to the future with confidence. And more and more we are getting results for the people of Europe. That's good. But also essential. Because the EU still draws a lot of distrust and scepticism. In the Netherlands and here in the UK. These are feelings we have to take seriously. This means doing more than simply noting that they exist. It means we have to show people the benefits that Europe brings. Not only in tables and diagrams. But the benefits it brings to their daily lives.

According to the Commission's Eurobarometer opinion poll, people are optimistic about the future of the EU in 19 of the 28 member states. That means that people are

pessimistic in nine member states. You can't lift that pessimism by making speeches, and that's not my intention. You can only do so by delivering tangible results. By making the single market stronger. By increasing economic ties with the rest of the world. By making it clear what tasks should be carried out by Europe, and what can be done by national governments. These are three things that the UK also cares deeply about. Which is why we must continue to work together. Because that is what it will take to reform Europe from the inside.

Europe is home to about 7% of the world's population but we account for about 20 to 25% of the world economy and 50% of global spending on social security. We cannot assume that this will always stay that way. We have to work hard to make changes and reforms in good time.

I stand here today in the country that became the home of Isaiah Berlin. The country he associated with tolerance, decency, humanity, knowledge & freedom. The country that gave him the chance to become one of the greatest intellectuals of his day. This country offered him a home, prosperity and opportunities. And this is precisely what every member state wants for its people. This is why we all need to pull together to make Europe an economic powerhouse. So that every European can realise their full potential. What is good for the individual, is good for us all. We have everything we need to make Europe work in our best interest. But that means we have to get to work. And that's something you can rely on liberals to do.

The Isaiah Berlin Lecture was delivered by the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, at the National Liberal Club, London, 30th October 2013



Mark Rutte chats with members of the audience.

Postcard from China: reflections from a visit to Guangdong province.

Sarah Yong

After returning from my first ever trip to China, I felt a 'postcard' was in order to summarize this wonderful experience. It was a huge honour to be asked to represent our Party along with fellow Chinese Lib Dems Merlene Emmerson, Alex Payton and Steven Cheung on this visit by official invitation of the Chinese Government in the Guangdong province in Southern China. The trip was organized by the British Chinese Project, a not for profit organization that works to increase awareness and greater engagement in politics by the British Chinese population. Our sixteen strong delegation included representatives from all three main parties and staff from the British Chinese Project.

As the first province in China to 'open up' Guangdong is of strategic importance economically to China. Being on the coast and bordering Hong Kong has

allowed trade, investment and growth to boom at an impressive rate over the last few years. The purpose of our visit was to find out more about the Government and economy in this part of China and learn how Guangdong and the UK can better work together for mutual benefit. Our busy week comprised of meetings with Government which included a very important meeting with members of the Guangdong Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), best described as the political advisory body which forms part of the Government. We also met Government advisors, economic experts and visited successful businesses.

Industries are very much on the move in Guangdong and businesses and the Government are very keen not to be recognized just for their manufacturing power which has traditionally been the case. It was important for our hosts to ensure we were shown through business visits that Guangdong is on the cutting edge of development in the technology and increasingly knowledge industries. What was particularly interesting from our discussions was that Guangdong is keen to promote itself in its own right as a key place for Britain to do trade and business with. Indeed as a west country girl I was pleased that one of the things discussed was the twinning of the province capital Guangzhou with Bristol and how the two cities could tie up in the future for trade and investment.

One of the reasons the Guangdong Overseas Office was particularly keen to have our delegation visit is because Government and Business see the overseas Chinese as extremely important in achieving some of their key aims, namely projecting Chinese culture abroad, bringing back skills to the country and perhaps most importantly providing the local knowledge abroad for Chinese investment and business ventures. Increasing representation of Chinese in Government in Britain is very important to the BC Project and all the delegates from the three main parties. From our discussions it was very clear that this is something equally important to business and Government in China. Indeed I was overwhelmed at the well-wishing we got from every meeting for future UK elections.

I have returned feeling there is lots to be positive about in China, something I wasn't sure I would feel at all. One thing that was clearly projected from our hosts in many of our meetings was that the Chinese way of Government works best for them, their history and their situation. It seems to me China does not care whether it is perceived as 'good' or 'bad', but it does care it is seen as strong and as a nation that should be respected. As a social media lover, the simple inability to be able to get onto my Twitter and Facebook account for the whole week brought home the reality of state control the people still have to endure. Free speech as we know it is certainly, by our standards still a very long way off. However, China is undoubtedly changing because the state is increasingly opening up more and more to the rest of the world. Reform of the enterprise approval system is happening, meaning companies wishing to do business abroad can be sanctioned to do this much quicker; they are certainly chomping at the bit to do this. As China increasingly goes global, coupled with a very switched on youth, many of whom are able to hack through the Government blocks on social media and banned websites, I believe the Government will be able to control free speech less and less.

China is a nation on the move and the next decade will be fascinating. At present it looks unstoppable economically. For the West, fostering good relations has never been more significant politically, economically, socially and culturally for peace and

prosperity. For Britain there is a huge opportunity for Chinese investment here and increasing understanding of China will boost this more and more. The overseas Chinese in Britain as the third largest ethnic group and have a key role to play. It has certainly therefore never been more important to have increased Chinese representation in all levels of Government; this will be a real positive for the Chinese in Britain and for British – Chinese relations and prosperity as a whole.

Sarah Yong is a Liberal Democrat Somerset campaigner and a Vice Chair for Chinese Liberal Democrats.



Alex Payton, Merlene Emerson, Albert Ho Chun-yan, Steven Cheung and Sarah Yong, at LegCo. Albert Ho is Secretary General of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, and was chairman of the Democratic Party from 2006 to 2012.

Pearl of the Orient. Alex Payton

Should the Head of State be elected? Who should be allowed to be a candidate, and who should be allowed to vote?

Hong Kong currently faces these questions in its quest for universal suffrage and a democratic future, and was the recurrent theme during the second part of the trip to China organized by the British Chinese Project, in which I and three other Lib Dem delegates – Merlene Emerson, Sarah Yong and Steven Cheung – took part along with representatives from the other two main political parties and several enthusiastic BC Project staff.

We had barely arrived in Hong Kong when we were whisked into the British Consulate to meet the Consul-

General, Caroline Wilson, and Sarah Docherty the Head of Political and Communications Sections. The security at the Consulate is so tight that even Mrs Wilson has to surrender her mobile to get in. The British Government is in a highly sensitive position in Hong Kong, illustrated by a recent difficulty over translation of the phrase ‘we support the aim of universal suffrage’ – a word was used to translate the word ‘support’ that in Chinese has the sense of ‘active support’ and so was taken to indicate an intention by the British to interfere. Participation in the reform of Hong Kong politics is thus a diplomatic tightrope, and Mrs Wilson was careful to make clear that the policy of universal suffrage is emanating from Beijing.

After a meeting with Kevin McLaven of the British Council learning about the work they are doing in soft diplomacy to wave the British flag, it was on to the Legislative Council to meet with the President Jasper Tsang who is intended to be effectively equivalent to the Speaker of the House of Commons or Lords, where we engaged in an intriguing political discussion that raised as many questions as it answered.

The government, it seems, is entirely non-political (including the Chief Executive) and consists of employed officials. The Chief Executive alone in the government is currently subject to a limited form of election by a complicated committee consisting of 1200 electors – not that many considering that even my relatively small council ward in the UK consists of over 3000 electors. In broad practical terms it seems as though Humphrey Appleby really is in charge. The Legislative Council’s role is only to pass or deny legislation put forward by the government, by a simple majority (or two-thirds majority for constitutional issues).

In the UK the government agenda is set by politicians, who derive a mandate from having been elected. In Hong Kong one is driven to question how the agenda is set and by what mandate given that, as Mr Tsang said quite forcefully, the civil service running the government often have no real experience of engaging with the citizenry. One delegate also pointed out that lobbying, which is a problem in this country, must be even more difficult to control there when there is no direct accountability to the people.

And if the political parties’ role is restricted to, effectively, the ability collectively to veto what comes through from elsewhere, one wonders how a politician can ever have and put forward a positive agenda for what he or she believes is needed for the country. In a conversation (LD-only) with a former Chinese Lib Dem intern and with a founding member of Lib Dems Abroad, after the formal tour had ended, we talked

about protest marches in Hong Kong and how the public have become much more politically engaged in recent years, however in my view mass marches alone cannot in the long term be a practical day-to-day solution.

It is hoped that electing the Chief Executive by universal suffrage will solve some of these difficulties, making the person at the top more universally accountable. Strangely the Chief Executive is still to be a non-political post – but given that he or she will, one presumes, have to campaign on political issues to get elected I am not sure how that is literally going to be possible.

In the meantime elected politicians have little real power, reduced effectively to a lobby group with a collective threat of veto. But then imagine if you were to live in Hong Kong and had an idea of how the country should be run – I suspect you probably wouldn't join a political party, you would join the "non-political" government. And if that is what the politically interested are indeed doing, then the apparent relative powerlessness of the political parties in Hong Kong has become a vicious circle, and the hard politics would still exist, but it would simply have become mostly hidden from view. One of the merits of a democracy is its transparency, and it is to be hoped (non-actively, of course) that the universal suffrage proposed by Beijing for the Chief Executive will be a key step on the path to a full democracy for Hong Kong.

I am grateful to BC Project for organizing our study tour, the Chinese Government for the earlier part of our visit to China, and to the many people who hosted us and were so generous with their time. The whole trip to China was a real eye-opener for someone who has heard of this part of his heritage for so many years, without ever until now having been to visit. China is an economic power-house that has the curious by-line that the majority of the population still lives in less than first-world conditions. It was made clear to us that China intends to continue its economic expansion for the foreseeable future: I very much hope that the UK as a potential trading partner will benefit greatly from that, and let us hope that in China it is the population as a whole who will also see some of the benefits.

Alex Payton is a Liberal Democrat councillor in Newbury, was Parliamentary Candidate for Havant in 2010 and is an Executive member of Chinese Liberal Democrats.

The articles on China were also published on Lib Dem Voice.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE MAKES STUNNING ELECTION GAINS ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA

LI full member, Democratic Alliance, has won 5 by-elections – including 1 seat from the ruling ANC - and has seen success across all communities throughout the South Africa following a staggering 22 by-elections.

LI Vice President of the Bureau, Tim Harris MP, said: "DA supporters are proud of our achievements in these by-elections. Our support grew in every by-election that we contested around the country, showing that we are the party that represents *all* South Africans. All South Africans are realising that the ANC is failing to deliver for hard-working people. There remains much work to be done, but one clear message that comes out of these results: the ANC is in decline, the DA is growing and next year's elections will be a two horse race between the DA and ANC."

Eastern Cape DA leader, Athol Trollip, praised the party's "stunning growth". Trollip said: "We grew from 33% of the vote [in the 2011 local government election] to 44% of the vote, in the face of desperate intimidation by the ANC." Trollip continued: "In ward two in Mnquma the result was particularly exciting, where we grew from 8.7% of the vote to 21%." Such results reveal that the DA is on track to deliver strong results in the 2014 elections in the Eastern Cape.

Speaking of what the country-wide results mean, DA leader in Limpopo province, Jacques Smalle, said: "The DA continues to grow in all communities across South Africa. The by-election results from around the country show a similar trend: the DA retained all of its wards with increased majorities, and made inroads into the ANC support in every ANC ward we contested."

These results demonstrate undeniably that the presidential elections next year will only be clear battle between the DA and the ANC

How Egyptians are trapped in polarity & prejudice

Mohammed Nossier

“I accuse you of high treason!” is a phrase frequently used by Egyptians in the course of political discourse. Most of the people who use the phrase don’t really think of its actual meaning, but it is a good tool for polarisation and expressing prejudice. Apparently, Egyptian society prefers accusations and criticism to discussions and debates. Soft phrases such as, “you don’t understand me” or, “I am not able to convey my opinion” are no longer part of Egyptian vocabulary; instead, people start with a strong conclusion condemning their opponent(s), then search for validation.

Almost three years after the Egyptian revolution, this state of affairs is one of its biggest consequences. Politics is polarising Egyptians into two groups exchanging vehement and ruthless accusations; a group accused of being non-Egyptian and an opposing group charged with being non-believers. Life in general and politics in particular, are meant to be dynamic, offering tens of solutions to any single issue. The forced classification of society into a couple of categories (for or against the Muslim Brotherhood or the military) is certainly not a good path for Egypt, and it shows how narrow-minded society has become.



Mohammed Nossier

Egyptians have over-exerted their mental capacity with arguments and justifications flavouring their perspectives, thus creating an illusionary life based on conversing peers who obviously endorse their arguments. They leave no room, however tiny, open to the possibility of their being mistaken – let alone to being persuaded by their opponents’ arguments. This

phenomenon is further widening the gap in society where each group is enjoying its own sphere, completely removed from reality. Meanwhile, the few people who realize the danger of this phenomenon and who are trying to narrow the gap find themselves accused of conspiracy or espionage.

Polarisation requires adopting a hardline perspective in order to be successful in your task. Thus, each group is building cumulative radical positions that are converting Egypt into two separate extreme societies. Those who are currently in power are working on legitimising their ideas into firm laws that they harshly enforce, under the impression that they will eventually control the society. Repeating the mantra of “nothing to lose” opposition groups are resorting to violent resistance. Nevertheless, each group is apparently proud of its behaviour, believing that it can achieve its goal through intolerance and prejudice. This kind of behaviour eventually becomes habitual, spreading even to non-political activities.

The media that is supposed to increase citizens’ awareness on various political topics is mainly pitting Egyptians against one another. Since the Muslim Brotherhood’s media has been banned, the media’s incitement of the public is in one direction only – as if the Brotherhood’s supporters would ever buy the other side’s arguments. Egyptian media today is working on developing a number of unfounded narratives supported by untrue arguments that, while they might have limited impact on some citizens, are definitely forming a senseless society.

In return, the Muslim Brotherhood, unable to publicly present counter-arguments, have decided to play the role of the victim, concentrating on dragging the government into numerous violent events that eventually conclude with causalities. Being victimised has not only enabled the Brotherhood to present Egypt to the world as a country that lacks justice; it has also helped to sustain unity within the group.

To successfully lead and manage a polarised group, you need to apply a number of tactics and tools. These include; establishing a very narrow political framework; requesting supporters to blindly follow their leaders, allowing for no room to doubt or

question policies; applying a double standard of values and abandoning democratic principles, such as equality, human rights, and tolerance, which, if applied, would definitely weaken the group.

Egyptian rulers and the respective governments in power must understand that their supporters represent a maximum of between one-quarter to one-third of society. However, to legitimise their position, democratic mechanisms created the run-off system wherein the elected ruler must obtain fifty percent plus one of the votes and citizens are obliged to vote again, choosing between the second-best options (in other words, the best of the worst.) Obviously, this does not reflect an actual increase in the number of an elected ruler's supporters; it is simply a means of legitimising the ruler's position.

Therefore, in most well-established democratic countries, elected politicians work on accommodating some of their opponents to form a strong and popular government that will also help them to unite society. Conversely, in Egypt the ruler and his minority supporters focus on manipulating the political scene, working on marginalizing opponents, and thus further dividing the State. This was Morsi's fundamental mistake, and the current interim government is emulating this error.

From a cultural perspective, Egyptians have always been proud of themselves and of their country's history. The poor flip side of this is that their tendency to believe that they know it all, that they are always right. Eventually, this attitude leads to the formation of rigid opinions justified by invalid arguments. Another negative cultural consequence is that large portions of Egyptian society tend to lean towards the current ruler, regardless of the ideology he espouses. They simply want to be affiliated with power. The support of this self-serving group is certainly misleading, since they are sure to abandon the ruler if they don't receive the desired benefits.

Regrettably, Islam has somehow been wedged into this polarisation. Each group believes strongly that God supports and endorses its position and that its casualties are martyrs. Islam condemns prejudice, yet Egyptians use their love of religion to justify it.

The mistake committed by all Egyptian governments is the adoption of a "winner-takes-all" philosophy. Backed by election results or by citizens expressing their support in demonstrations, these governments are convinced that they own Egypt. Any group that has obtained the privilege of leading and which is in power must work on containing opponents, not sidelining them. Egyptians have always been proud of

their soft power. In this fragile transitional period, Egypt is strongly in need of applying the forces of sympathy, consensus, persuasion and less authoritative enforcement.

Mohammed Nosseir is an Egyptian Liberal Politician working on reforming Egypt on true liberal values, proper application of democracy and free market economy. Mohammed was member of the Higher Committee, Headed the International Relations of the Democratic Front Party from 2008 to 2012. This article originally appeared in Daily News Egypt on 16th December 2013.

reviews

The Little Yellow Book, reclaiming the Lib Dems for the People, edited by Robert Brown and Nigel Lindsay. Liberal Future 2012

This is an excellent set of essays by members of the Scottish Liberal Democrats and deserves wider readership. Most of it relates to domestic issues, from a broadly Social Liberal perspective.

Internationally, Gillian Gloyer, who was International Vice Chair of the Scottish Young Liberals and now earns her living by 'fomenting democracy' around the world, writes of the 'Lessons from the Arab Spring'. They are, indeed, inspiring.

Gillian begins by contrasting the "colour" revolutions of the former Soviet empire with the Arab Spring. She goes into some detail on the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. The absence of political parties from these revolutions was part of their success in mobilizing ordinary people and notably, women. How the power elites regained control? Elections were crucial in this and were not, as she says, always friends of new democracy – something of paradox you might think, but then did anyone think the Muslim Brotherhood winning an election was going to achieve anything in Egypt that Liberals might see as positive?

But what are the lessons? Gillian points out that those of us within established political parties may be too close to the system to see its faults (I would add, especially when one is working through elected office). She cites our inability to engage with the "Occupy" movements beyond ignoring them in the hope they'll go away.

She cites the use of social media in the constitutional discussions in Iceland. The need to be better at

listening to what people are saying online, in the same way that we tried to listen to people offline in the days of community politics, and to translate these concerns into political proposals that ought to be achievable. That social justice and civil liberties are wanted.

That should be enough to whet your appetite. The book can be ordered by post £9.00, plus 50p p & p per copy, (cheques made payable to "Liberal Futures") from Nigel Lindsay, 4 Church Road, Bo'ness, West Lothian, EH51 0EL nigel.lindsay@waitrose.com

Stewart Rayment

**Red Cloud, by Bob Drury & Tom Clavin
Robson 2013**

'White man speak with forked tongue' – the inevitable way to begin this review. As a Chinese General put it to the military historian Peter Maslowski, American fought a 300 year war against the Native Americans. In this, they were quite prepared to consider, and use genocide. The Battle of Little Big Horn (1876) is probably the best known Native American victory in this series of wars. It was a pyrrhic victory. Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull would effectively be murdered in captivity.

Red Cloud (Mahpiya Luta in Lakota) did not fight in the Great Sioux War of 1876-77. He had seen the writing on the wall. Red Cloud's War (1866-68) is the substantive Native American victory of the wars, and whilst the Treaty of Fort Laramie is an on-going source of litigation, it too was soon to be a pyrrhic victory.

Clavin and Drury spin us a ripping, though at times gruesome, tale, full of adventure. But apart from a brief epilogue they are little concerned with events after 1868, which is a pity because these are probably Mahpiya Luta's finest moments as he transcends from successful war chief to politician and diplomat. Even here, everything was stacked against him and his people.

Native Americans don't make many headlines over here – in common with indigenous peoples everywhere I suppose (who noticed the Israelis evicting Bedouins from the Negev desert in the Autumn to make way for settlers?). One ripple involved the National Football League's Washington Redskins.

A few American sports writers have begun boycotting mentioning "Redskins" in their columns and protesters have started calling for the name to be changed outside

Washington's games. Democratic-Farmer-Labor Congress woman Betty McCollum, co-chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus, wrote to the owner of the Washington team, Dan Snyder saying "Native Americans throughout the country consider the term 'redskin' a racial, derogatory slur akin to the 'N-word' among African Americans or the 'W-word' among Latinos... Such offensive epithets would no doubt draw wide-spread disapproval among the NFL's fan base. Yet the national coverage of Washington's NFL team profits from a term that is equally disparaging to Native Americans."

Stewart Rayment

INTERNATIONAL ABSTRACTS

American Conservatism & language. Orwell drew our attention to the manipulation of language to dubious political ends. George Lakoff demonstrates the on-going problem for American liberals from the front page of the New York Times.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/the-new-york-times-uncove_b_4339256.html 25th November 2013

Twinned Cities now follow different paths. *New York Times 12th January 2014*

Divergence between Duluth, in Democrat controlled Minnesota, and Superior, in Republican controlled Wisconsin (both separated by the St Louis river & a bridge and the ideological battles in America).

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/13/us/twinned-cities-now-following-different-paths.html?Action=click&contentCollection=Politics&module=MostEmailled&version=Full@ion=Marginalia&src=me&pgtype=article&_r=0

How to offend almost everyone. Dennis Graf looks at the extremism of America's Republicans. *Liberator 363*

Tower of Babel
David Grace looks at the ALDE Congress in London, November 2013 *Liberator 363*

Can Kurds be Liberals?
Jonathan Fryer reports on the inaugural Kurdish International Liberal Congress in Oslo, 6th-7th December 2013 *Liberator 363*

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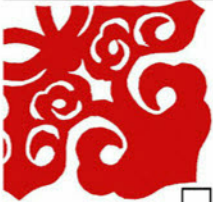
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