



2014 no.6 £5.00 (free to members)

# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**Sir Menzies Campbell delivering the Garden Lecture**

**World War I:**

**Ebola: Egypt**

# EVENTS

**6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September** Liberal Party Assembly, Exmouth Community College.

There will be a reception on the evening of Friday 5th September at a local hotel for those intending to arrive on that day. Further details email:

sir.henry@ukliberals.org or www.liberal.org.uk

**8<sup>th</sup> September** LIBG executive. NLC 7.00pm

**4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October** Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Glasgow

**7<sup>th</sup> October** Liberal Democrats for Peace and Security Fringe Meeting: Rethink Trident: The 2015 Manifesto Debate. Campanile - Picasso 2. 18.15-19.15

**7<sup>th</sup> October** LIBG Fringe Meeting: Europe of the Regions and the Demise of the Nation State - 20:00 - 21:15, Shuna Room, Crowne Plaza Hotel Glasgow

**3<sup>rd</sup> November** LIBG executive. NLC 7.00pm

**7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> November** 193rd Executive Committee Meeting of Liberal International, Hong Kong

**20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> November** 35th ALDE Party Congress, Centro de Congressos de Lisboa, Portugal.

**22<sup>nd</sup> November** Scottish Autumn Conference, The Vine Venue, Dunfermline.

**12<sup>th</sup> January 2015** LIBG executive. NLC 7.00pm

**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015** LIBG executive. NLC 7.00pm

**29<sup>th</sup> June 2015** LIBG AGM. NLC 7.00pm

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

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

*email* w.kyrle@virgin.net

*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*

# CONTENTS

Britain and Europe: A Common Future –  
The Garden Lecture

*Sir Menzies Campbell MP* Pages 3-8

International Abstracts Page 8

Liberal Internationalism and World War One.

*Robert Falkner* Pages 9-12

Musical Chairs Page 12

Uncertainty Negatively Affects the  
Egyptian Economy

*Mohammed Nossier* Pages 13-14

Ebola: An African Disease

*Rebecca Tinsley* Pages 15-16

Reviews Pages 17-20

Oxford Conference Page 20

*Photographs: Stewart Rayment & Mohammed Nossier*



***Members at the post-AGM Forum on World War One.***

# Britain and Europe: A Common Future

## Sir Menzies Campbell MP

In this audience I doubt that I am alone in a profound sense of anxiety about the role of the United Kingdom in the European Union and indeed the future of the Union itself. This is not simply because of recent election results and in due course I shall come to those. My anxieties have been heightened by recent events on the fringe of Europe which suggest that the settlement of the post-Gorbachev era has come to an end.

The European Union, together with NATO, has provided an interlocking architecture for stability on a continent where rivalries and territorial ambitions have in the past had their expression in conflict and destruction.

It is commonplace for those who can broadly be described as Eurosceptic to argue that NATO alone has provided that stability. In my judgment, such an analysis is flawed.

We now recognise a distinction between hard power and soft power, usually as mechanisms for maintaining and even expanding our influence and interests.

We do so sometimes by demonstrating military capability, sometimes economic superiority and an express or implied willingness to use them. We do so to export our values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

But I would argue that if our soft power and hard power are exportable, it is only because they are the glue that binds Europe and the transatlantic alliance together. Our joint commitment to these principles is as much for the strengthening of our relations *inter se* as it is for compelling others to change their ways

We do not admit to the European Union those who do not share our values nor to NATO those who likewise do not accept its principles.

It is self-evident that neither soft power nor hard power in the EU or NATO are as effective as when they are operating in tandem. It can be described as a modernisation of the old Theodore Roosevelt maxim

to speak softly but carry a big stick. Or, as he put it more elegantly, “the exercise of intelligent forethought and of decisive action sufficiently far in advance of any likely crisis.”

This analysis of mine is neither seen nor discussed by those whose determination to reach the goal of separation concentrates on what they claim to be the intrinsic merits of withdrawal from the EU without understanding the evolution and continuing contemporary relevance of NATO and the EU and their individual contributions to hard power and soft power.

Those who argue for withdrawal seem blind to the consequences for the political as well as economic stability and security which NATO and the EU acting together provide. This is further echoed, for example, in the debate about Scottish independence and similarly characterized by a failure to understand and recognise that separation inevitably means that common values will be replaced by competing interests.

In Europe the competition might be economic or political. The consensual nature of the EU could be replaced by more assertive behaviour.

It remains to be seen if Putin's Russia will be content with its recent self-aggrandisement, but if there was any doubt about the need for NATO and the EU to confirm and retain the joint purposes of both organisations it is surely more than extinguished by the events of the last few months. In my judgment, this is no time to abandon or even to threaten to abandon collective purpose economically, politically, or militarily.

None of this is to argue that Britain's relationship to the European Union now and in all time coming should be framed only by the blunt alternatives of in and out. For, self-evidently, (if I may be forgiven the solecism) there is a third alternative.

But it is time for *Nostra Culpa* and acknowledging the failure to press the case for reform of the EU. It is as



nihilistic to say that the EU does not need reform as it is to say Britain must either be in or out. This is a union which can be revived while at the same time its core values are preserved. For the United Kingdom this is more likely achieved by constructive engagement rather than the threat to withdraw. Those of us who support Britain's continued membership of the European Union have failed on two counts. I do not exempt myself from this criticism. Our first failure has been to concede ground to the sceptic argument by failing adequately to continue to put the case for membership and by relying too much on the assumptions of 1975. One indication of this failure has been political parties' unwillingness to speak up for Europe, even in the most recent elections to the European Parliament, to the extent that when one party leader decides to make the European case his decision to do so is not universally approved of in



**Sir Menzies Campbell and Stephen Sackur**

his own party and regarded with surprise and scepticism by pundits and commentators.

In short, we have not defended our corner. Now is the time to do so. But it is also time to pursue along with allies the reforms which will allow better implementation of the principles of the institution of the EU in a 21st century which provides a very different context from the post war and Cold War environment in which the EU was conceived. For example, information technology was provided by the fountain pen and the telegram, and globalisation and international competition were not even on the horizon. These changes are symbols of a more competitive world in which there is an overwhelming need for flexibility and reduction in bureaucracy.

In short, we have failed to make our case either for the principle of reform or the utility of doing so. It is no wonder therefore that the resulting space has been

filled by misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and prejudice.

This year we celebrate many milestones in the European Union, 15 years of the euro 21 years of the Maastricht Treaty and 63 years since the beginnings of a common market. These are impressive numbers which remind ourselves of the virtue of cooperation among very different nations, political ideologies, cultures and populations. But a particular anniversary being commemorated this year highlights not only how remarkable but how imperative this cooperation has been. It is the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of World War I, said to be the war to end all wars, a prediction which proved at once both optimistic and unachievable. Within 21 years there was another brutal conflict.

By contrast, with the exception of conflicts in Eastern Europe, the latter half of the 20th century saw a conflict free continent. The major European nations- the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy- who were previously at each others' throats, committed themselves to peaceful co-operation, not conflict. The horrors of ever-modernising war were a spur towards that cooperation and common purpose. If they had behaved in the same way as their predecessors after the First World War behaved as a result of the inadequate settlement after the First World War, instability would have lingered, suspicion remained, and war erupted again. With the European Union was created a partnership of trust. It would have been unthinkable either in 1945 that Germany- or Italy, for that matter- would have been welcomed into the early structures which led ultimately to the formation of the European Union. Amidst controversy, the EU was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, but the citation is certainly justified even if the award itself was not, because the award was made for the stabilising role the EU has played in transforming most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace. The two institutions of the EU and NATO showed a much more attractive alternative to Soviet communism. Growing integration in a more democratic Europe was exemplary in influencing Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal to embark upon the road to democracy. The EU provided, too, the inspiration which motivated the countries emerging from the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union to be ambitious in wanting to embrace the principles of democracy and respect for human rights. The Baltic states have regained their independence and countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia have abandoned command economies and embraced the values which underpin the original rationale for European integration. All of this is astonishing when

you consider that these post-Soviet countries as recently as 1989 were under totalitarian government. Much of their transition has been aided by financial and political assistance and guidance from the European Union. Poland, for example, has received about 67 billion euros since 2007, which amounts to about 3% of their GDP. The result, however, has been a 65% increase in their per capita GDP.

Progress for Poland is intrinsically valuable, but how does that help the United Kingdom? The stability, security, and safety of the continent is in the interests of all of us. We all benefit from peace. Only the manufacturers benefit from war.

We are not only donors, we are recipients as well. Development plans and investment in job creation bring a direct benefit from our membership of the European Union as is the £8 billion on its way to the United Kingdom to assist economic progress. EU wide investment will help to improve our rail network and upgrade our energy supply. British scholars have received Erasmus grants. To leave the EU would close the door on further such opportunities. The Westminster government of its own volition can invest in northern England, in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, but our efforts are stronger and more effective with the advantage of EU assistance.

The years since the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community have not been without problems, but they have been characterised by peace and prosperity previously unthinkable. I would argue that the disaffection which has grown up inside the European Union is not born out of weakness of the institution but from a lack of proper direction. The EU is the first of its kind. Never before had nations so different and previously so hostile to one another attempted such an ambitious effort at economic and political coexistence. But Britain's failure to join the European conversation until the 1960s meant that it was in no place to offer leadership until long after our accession. We have done much to shape the European Union, but not nearly as much as France and Germany. With greater engagement we would've had greater influence.

Our adversarial political tradition does not sit easily with the consensual European model. But influence comes from the ability to affect change. If we were to leave the European Union or persist in electing members to the parliament whose motive is, at best, disruption and, at worst, destruction, our influence and our ability to affect change would be much diminished.

British governments have failed to explain the singular nature of a political and economic union embracing 28 countries. Many people find it distasteful to talk about the love of their country, but we should be proud of our history and of our nation's achievements. But it is arrogant to assert either expressly or by implication that we enjoy an unblemished record or that we have occupied some golden age of perfection when the facts are different. Those who argue for disengagement dream of an England that never was and a Britain that never can be.

It is worth reminding ourselves that 25 years ago Great Britain led the argument that as soon as practicable all of the countries which had escaped the communist straitjacket and were capable of doing so should join the European Union. In part we did so to provide an institutional foundation for their ambition of democracy and, in the case of NATO, to provide security to underpin that democracy.

So what should we do now about the Union and our place in it? Should we focus on popular contemporary concerns or long-term objectives? Even to pose the question is to answer it. The objectives of the EU are shortly stated- peace, prosperity, and security in common purpose with like-minded democratic states respectful of human rights and accepting the primacy of the rule of law. These are lofty ideals and may not always be immediately obtainable in the union of 28 states. It would be too much to expect that in all situations and all circumstances these principles could be infallibly applied. But they are a benchmark against which all behaviour within the EU should be measured.

Is the answer for Britain to hold a referendum? A referendum should only be a last resort when all other options are spent. The United Kingdom is still in a position to bring about the reforms of the European Union that are necessary and beneficial to us and all other members. Accepting the principle that a referendum would be justified if it was proposed to transfer additional powers of substance from London to Brussels, an in/out referendum would only serve to confirm among even our most sympathetic allies that we are determined to leave the EU unless we get our own way.

After such a long and painful fight to recover stability in our economy after the recession, now is certainly not the time to scare away businesses or investment. If you were considering a major investment in the UK between now and the possible date of an in/out referendum, would you pause for thought? If your investment, either existing or potential, rests on access

to the single market, would you not want to see the outcome of such a vote? Even supposing you were neutral on in or out, would you not want to take account of the disruption to the economy which UK withdrawal might cause? Attractive though it might seem, you cannot expect to vote for withdrawal and the next day complete that process. What uncertainties would there be and what would be the economic consequences of these?

Let me turn now to the issue of security. Inside or outside the EU we would continue to be part of the arrangements between ourselves the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand which are unique in the field of intelligence sharing. But on a different level the sharing of criminal intelligence, the coordination of police activity, and the European arrest warrant are essential elements to enable the United Kingdom government to fulfil its primary responsibility to protect its own citizens. There should be no barriers in an age when crime knows no borders to our ability to find and arrest criminals. Membership of the EU makes sense as do common arrangements. The European arrest warrant has put hundreds of criminals behind bars who would otherwise be a risk to us and to our allies. Does the warrant need reform? Of course it does! Would the UK be better off without the Warrant? Of course not! Would we be best off with a reformed Warrant? Of course we would.

In this, the year of the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, to which I have already referred, and the 70th anniversary of D-Day, it is inconceivable that Europe would now be riven by the war and destruction which these last two major conflicts caused. Because of the unifying effect of membership of the EU and NATO, we no longer need to resort to force to resolve disputes in the way in which it was commonplace before the creation of the union. But because we're not going into battle every few years does not mean that we do not need effective military capability. Contrary to misunderstanding- either deliberate or innocent- there are no plans to create what is emotively described as a European army.

The Treaty of Lisbon makes clear that the United Kingdom or any other member state can remain separate from any deepening of military ties. But there is much to be gained from military co-operation. Take the United Kingdom for example. Since the end of the 1990s our defence budget has been much reduced so that, for example, in the army, numbers have been cut from 102,000 to 82,000. Other countries under the burden of austerity have required to make similar decisions. Only four members of NATO reach the

NATO recommended expenditure level of 2% of GDP per annum on defence. But within the EU framework we and our allies can coordinate military spending and hence maintain our joint capabilities.

NATO is the bedrock of our defence, but cooperation between the members of the EU can make our contribution to NATO more effective at a time when either by "pivot" or "rebalancing" the United States, while not intending to abandon Europe, is looking to the Europeans to make a greater contribution to their own defence and security. The principles to be applied are easily stated- common procurement, force specialisation, and interoperability. All can be followed by members of the EU without replacing or undermining NATO, but complementing it.

In this recent election, immigration played an important part. Listening to UKIP one might believe that on any day now an entire eastern European nation will be at our doorstep demanding entry. And even if they don't steal our jobs they will be living off the fat of British benefits system. The facts, however, speak for themselves. 9/10 jobs in Britain are held by Britons. At present there are about 2.3 million EU nationals living in the United Kingdom, while about 1.7 million Britons live abroad in EU member states. Though we often focus on migrants coming to the United Kingdom, let us not forget what pulling out of the EU would do for those 1.7 million Britons living in other member states. It would be more difficult for them to work and travel. So what are these 2.3 million doing while living in the UK? Between 2001 and 2011, migrants put £22 billion into the UK economy. One out of seven new businesses is started by migrants. That is hardly an invasion and shows migration benefits the United Kingdom far more than is popularly recognised or acknowledged.

Is there a need for reform of the right of free movement? Of course. Is the UK alone in pushing for reform? Several other member states have already discussed the possibility of transitional arrangements to prevent vast migration and it is frequently pointed out that it is entirely possible to make changes in the circumstances in which migrants can claim benefits. There are allies for the UK in this matter, but again, this requires engagement, not exceptionalism.

But it is the economy which lies at the very heart of the European Union. We are still recovering from 2008 when we learned in a very painful way that we are unable to pretend to be able to act alone. In America they have gone some way towards cleaning the house, but we have no say in the regime which they now have wish to establish. But in the European

Union we do have a say over regulations to prevent irresponsible banking behaviour. Leaving the EU would give us as little influence of the decision-making role in Europe on these matters as we have in the USA. We have been prime movers in effecting change.

Last year, the UK, led by the former Lib Dem MEP Sharon Bowles, worked hard and successfully to achieve influence over relevant EU regulations. Now



**Menzies Campbell & Sue Garden**

for any decision made, for example, by the European banking authority, there must be a majority not only of Eurozone countries but also of non-Eurozone countries, such as the United Kingdom. This is an example of our influence as well as the trend towards reform, but it also illustrates what we would lose by withdrawal.

Pulling out of the European Union would jeopardise our economic recovery. Why have both the USA and China recently voiced public concern about the possibility of exit by the United Kingdom from the EU? They have said that trade relations would be threatened. The USA is our second largest trading partner. Our largest trading partner, with more than half of our total trade and three times that of the USA, is the EU.

Leaving the single market and trade agreements already in place can only hurt us both in the short-term and long-term. Any economist, no matter how politically isolationist, understands that increased competition brings about lower prices for the consumer. Free trade agreements with emerging economies mean fewer barriers and more access for our goods and services. Through the European Union we have negotiated agreements with South Korea, Colombia, Peru, Canada, and Singapore.

Because of the signing of the South Korea agreement by the EU, British exports in that country have increased by £2 billion. In the event of withdrawal from the European Union we would lose the benefits of the access which flows from all of these agreements. We could renegotiate and seek to expand our own individual agreements, but how could we expect to negotiate terms as favourable as those given to the largest economy in the world?

But no institution is perfect and let me return to the issue of reform. Nor can institutions, however well founded in principle, ignore the changing environment of public opinion and expectation. Reform as conceived among those of our European allies who are sympathetic to our cause is unlikely to extend to rewriting the treaties or even amending them. In an era of scepticism, even only an attempt at amendment of the treaties would be fraught with risk, particularly in those countries where such action requires to be endorsed by referendum.

Mrs Merkel's recent civility when addressing both houses of parliament in the Royal Gallery should not be taken to foreshadow sympathy or support for anything like the changes which David Cameron needs to obtain in order to satisfy the most sceptical of his backbenchers. Most easily achieved will be steps which enhance the single market and reduce bureaucracy. Nor should it be difficult to achieve agreement, for example, on qualifying periods for the rights to benefits without breaching the principle of freedom of movement and capital which lie at the very heart of the single market. But the most important prize would be proper application of the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity to which the treaties pay lip service but which are frequently ignored either in the framing or the implementation of legislation. Agreement that more political weight should be attached to these principles should be the centrepiece of Britain's case for reform. Clipping the wings of the commission should feature strongly in our approach. To make Juncker the President of the Commission would be deeply divisive in my judgment. His appointment comes from another era. To argue that there is majority support for him is to ignore the principle of the tyranny of the majority.

Perhaps we can make a domestic reform entirely with our own competence by agreeing that the UK government will not gold plate any regulations which come out of Europe and often act as an unnecessary burden for British businesses.

Let me conclude by a recital of things which support my conclusion that Britain's best interests lie in membership and engagement in a reformed Europe.



In 2012 Britain contributed £8 billion to the EU or one penny in every taxpayer's pound. Hardly excessive.

Birmingham City Centre was remodelled with £6 million from the EU.

The EU takes half of our exports and supports three million jobs. The car industry in this country owes its success to good management, a skilled workforce, high investment, and access to European markets.

The EU has improved performance throughout its membership in areas such as human rights, equal pay, and discrimination.

The EU employs fewer people than Derbyshire County Council.

It is the world's largest market - 80% of firms that trade in the UK do business with Europe. 60% of UK goods exported fall under the umbrella of trade agreements between the EU and worldwide markets.

Those of us who support our membership of the EU must support its reform if we are to be credible in our advocacy for Britain's continuing engagement in Europe. It is no longer enough to be in favour of the European Union. Old assumptions can no longer be taken for granted. Highlighting the cost of withdrawal and the uncertainties which Britain would face is no longer enough. Only wholehearted commitment will suffice.



*This year's Tim Garden Memorial Lecture was held at Chatham House on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Sir Menzies Campbell spoke on Britain & Europe, A Common Future. The meeting was chaired by Stephen Sackur, presenter of HARDtalk on BBC World News.*

# International Abstracts

Liberator has been a lively source of international material over the summer.

**Liberator 366** (June) carried articles on the European Elections by Andrew Duff and more generally by Michael Meadowcroft, Mark Smulian & Simon Titley. Kiron Reid wrote on the Ukrainian presidential election, with obvious reference to Russia. Howard Cohen wrote on the prospects for Liberalism in Hungary and Mathew Hulpert on Fair Trade, specifically a new group within the Liberal Democrats, Fairtrade Future.

**Liberator 367** (August) carried an article on the Iraqi elections and the early days of the ISIS insurgency. Rebecca Tinsley, of Waging Peace, wrote human rights, specifically in the context of the Summit on Rape, held in London in June. George Potter wrote on the EU and there were articles on the First World War by Jonathan Calder (on Charles Masterman), David Grace (on the origins of the EU in the Treaty of Versailles), David Dutton (on Lord Loreburn). Gareth Epps reviewed Jeremy Browne's *Race Plan*.

[www.liberator.org.uk](http://www.liberator.org.uk)

**Felix Dodds'** new book published, again, with Liz Thompson and Jorge Laguna Celis - *The Plain Language Guide to Rio+20: Preparing for the New Development Agenda* – is now published as a kindle download only and priced at \$9.99/£6.07

**Paddy Ashdown** : *Western intervention over Isis won't prevent the break-up of Iraq* The Guardian 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Also commentary – *Middle East borders are being redrawn in religious war, says Paddy Ashdown* The Guardian 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014.



# Liberal Internationalism and World War One.

## Robert Falkner

My topic is the impact of the war on liberal internationalism. The first question is ‘What is liberal internationalism?’

We all have an intuitive notion of what ‘liberal internationalism’ is about. Foreign policy not just about the national interest – Liberals reject the notion that Realpolitik is the sum of all foreign policy.

It is also about the pursuit of the common, global, good. The global good can take on many different forms – peace, stability, justice, human rights – It is ultimately about enhancing the lives and the freedom of individuals and societies. This applies to all individuals and societies, wherever they can be found on the planet.

There is thus a strong cosmopolitan strand running through liberal internationalism, although liberal internationalism is realistic about the need for nation states and for national defence.

Liberal Internationalism is activist in the sense that it urges us to get involved in international affairs, not to remain in a state of splendid isolation; global issues matter (“internationalism”). Liberal internationalism is progressive in the sense that it believes in the possibility of moral progress in world politics; we should aim to promote this progress. But liberal internationalism is also pragmatic about international affairs; accepts that ethical objectives need to be pursued in an imperfect world; it is not revolutionary (as, for example, socialist internationalism). But the difficulty in defining liberal internationalism sets in when we ask how these objectives in foreign policy – Global good; freedom and wellbeing; cosmopolitan ethics; moral progress – can be realized.

While there is broad agreement on the ends, liberals fiercely disagree over the means. There is no simple, straightforward ‘liberal manual’; in fact, there are several different varieties of how we can realize liberal goals. This makes it difficult to speak of liberal internationalism as a single and clearly defined doctrine; it is more like a broad church, an intellectual tradition that has gone through several transformations over time, and that is still evolving in response to current affairs.

It is also important to note that Liberals (capital ‘L’) don’t own the brand “liberal internationalism”, it is influential in many different political ideologies. After WWI, for example, many liberal internationalists abandoned the Liberal Party (which was in government during the war) and joined the Labour movement: Norman Angell; E.D. Morel (UDC); Leonard Woolf. Some like John Hobson were already with Labour from an earlier point. Today, certain liberal internationalist beliefs can be found to have influenced the neo-conservative revolution in US and British foreign policy. Strangely enough, both Tony Blair’s advocacy of the Iraq invasion and Charles Kennedy’s rejection of it can both claim to reflect certain liberal internationalist influences.

In order for me to discuss how World War I affected the liberal tradition, I need to briefly map the broad intellectual territory of the pre-War era, and then highlight the main reactions in intellectual shifts. Inevitably, there will be simplifications; I can’t do justice to all strands of liberal thinking. I will not consider liberal imperialism and liberal pacifism from the discussion.

(not part of liberal internationalism, strictly speaking).

The three core elements of the liberal creed (in relation to international affairs) can be summarized briefly.

Underlying harmony of interests in world society: all people have an interest in peace and stability. Where war and conflicts occur, they are not inevitable, they run counter to underlying interest of all concerned. (Adam Smith: historical evolution of societies, from agrarian to commercial, bringing out civilized and peaceful instincts).

Individual liberty is the core value – in domestic society as much as in international society. It gives rise to the notion of human rights (liberals advocate the protection of human rights) and democracy as founding principles of international order. In a world that is made up of democracies that respect human rights, war is unlikely to pose a threat (Immanuel Kant: Perpetual Peace, based on republics; Tom Paine & attach on monarchical principle – influenced US

liberal thinking, suspicion of European foreign policy, secret diplomacy)

Rule of law: best way to ensure that society is orderly, that the rights of individuals are protected; it is one of the main liberal innovations to argue that even governments operate under the rule of law; and for liberals, the same applies to international relations; international society is not a law-less world  
John Locke, father of the rights-based thinking;  
Jeremy Bentham – concrete proposals for international organization; Woodrow Wilson – closest to a practical plan for new liberal order).

If we look at these three core elements of classical liberalism, we can see the three major practical approaches that characterized liberal thinking in the run up to WWI:

Harmony of interest – best realized by a system of free trade; e.g. Richard Cobden promoted non-intervention as a core norm, believed in inevitability of peace (e.g. Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* 1909)

Individual liberty, human rights & democracy: spread of democracies will prevent war; democracy promotion as practical policy. Public opinion would rein in militaristic elites (e.g. Union of Democratic Control, formed in 1914; opposed to military influence in government – Charles Trevelyan - Liberal & Ramsay MacDonald – Labour).

Creation of international law and international institutions will regulate the behaviour of states, ensure peace and stability. Grand projects to create international courts, institutions, to establish a system of collective security (Woodrow Wilson's academic work).

It is not hard to begin to realize that the reality of international relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries posed some tricky questions for liberals. If free trade and the principle of laissez faire should prevail, did this mean that great powers such as Britain should uphold non-intervention under any circumstances? Even when the rights and dignity of people in other nations were at risk? e.g.: Richard Cobden advocated non-intervention as a general principle of international relations. This was severely tested when war broke out.

If the democratic will of the people expressed itself in nationalist forms, in an ever greater desire to form national forms of government based on ethnic identity, should liberals respect and support national self-determination, even if it risked international stability

and peace? J.S. Mill had supported national self-determination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Woodrow Wilson came to this conclusion, but with problematic consequences in the interwar years. With every new nation came a new minority problem. And if not all nations had achieved a level of political progress that made them members of the community of liberal democracies, would liberal states have to treat them differently to fellow democracies?

Would the rules of Realpolitik apply when dealing with undemocratic states (19<sup>th</sup> century 'uncivilised')? Not just colonies, but Germany under Kaiser! In other words, was there a civilizing project embedded in the



liberal internationalist creed? One that justified the use of force and intervention? William Gladstone certainly came to this conclusion when in 1882 he authorized the bombardment of Alexandria and subsequent occupation of Egypt. He saw this as 'England's duty'. What I am arguing: there is no settled tradition of liberal internationalism, it evolved largely in response to events and new forms of thinking. And that is where WWI was to be a major influence.

### **How did World War One affect liberal internationalism?**

It is fair to say that, on the whole, most liberals greeted the War with dismay although they certainly came to accept and support it. Liberals could find reasons to support the war: – to uphold international law (Belgium's neutrality), to defend civilization against fight militarism, or to fight '*the war to end war*' (H.G. Wells).

But as the war dragged on, and the horrors of modern warfare became all too apparent, liberals struggled to come to terms with the nature of what was happening at the frontline. To some at least, the war appeared to be a senseless slaughter of soldiers without purpose. Or at least it obscured its initial purpose. H.G. Wells sums up liberal unease with the war when he commented after a trip to the Italian Front in 1916: *“This war is queer... It hasn't exactly that clearness of light against darkness or of good against ill. But it has the quality of wholesome instinct struggling under a nightmare. The world is not really awake.”*

To be sure, Wells and other liberals of his generation were not against the war out of some pacifist sentiment.

Some liberals did go in this direction, many didn't. But there was a distinct liberal ambivalence about the war, about its causes, about how it was conducted, and especially about how it was brought to an end (esp. peace treaty). In the words of the military historian Michael Howard, the Versailles agreement *“lay on the liberal conscience like a burden of original sin”*. If this was supposed to be the war to end all wars, would not the punitive regime of Versailles stoke new war fears?

Therefore fair to say that WWI became the greatest challenge that the liberal belief system encountered, and this happened exactly at the time when liberalism was at its height, at least in the Anglo-Saxon sphere.

Let me look at this challenge in more detail, for it had a lasting effect of liberal internationalism. War shattered some widely shared certainties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The post-Napoleonic era had been largely peaceful; it seemed as if the liberal vision was coming true, that scientific progress and economic interdependence would bring out civilized and peaceful sentiments in societies; this was no longer a certainty! [Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion* not republished until 1933]. Not only had Nationalism reared its ugly head, it had also shown itself to be a powerful and lasting force in international affairs; in fact, the war unleashed a powerful surge of nationalist sentiment, and liberals such as US President Wilson may have accepted it but struggled to keep it under control.

Thus: the very notion of progress in international affairs seemed doubtful. The carnage of the trenches called into question the idea that moral progress was happening. But if progress in international affairs was no longer assured: what was left of the grand liberal project of civilizing international affairs? How should liberals conduct foreign policy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

Would they have to accept certain realist premises about international relations – about the balance of power, the inevitability of war? How could international order be established? Interdependence alone was not sufficient: Britain and Germany had been the most economically interdependent major economies in 1914 and yet this did not make war impossible. What role did military force play in the pursuit of liberal objectives? Could it still be employed for liberal ends? Major shift in post-war liberal internationalism:

1. Cobdenite ‘peace through trade’ argument entered into terminal decline; Never recovered from the shock of the First World War. The first great strand – commercial pacifism – disappeared. It has somewhat resurrected in academic debates (globalization) but not a powerful strand of liberal internationalism

2. Main lesson that came to dominate liberal thinking: peace had to be organized; not automatic result of harmony of interests. Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points: wanted notion of blame to be linked not so much with the state that lost the war, but with the international system that allowed war to happen. A new international structure was needed: information exchange; open diplomacy; reconciliation and resolution of conflicts through formal processes of dialogue and arbitration. Liberals invested their energy in the creation of international organizations and international law. Leading academic thinkers of the time - Alfred Zimmern at Oxford focused on the League of Nations; Philip Noel-Baker at LSE focused on disarmament. The Lockean and Benthamite tradition of liberalism came to the fore: international law and institutions, collective security and public diplomacy, dominated the liberal discourse in the 1920s and 1930s.

3. The other main strands – focused on individual liberty, democracy – did not seem to offer much hope in the interwar years. Democracy was under serious threat; with the rise of Nazism and Soviet communism, It seemed as if state planning and authoritarian states were becoming every more popular. No sign of democracy providing a solution to international problems. This theme would only resurface in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century again, once democracy had spread to the developing world.

## Conclusion

WW1 posed one of the biggest challenges to liberal internationalism, to have a transformative effect. The certainties of 19<sup>th</sup> century were gone; no longer belief



in inevitable progress, in automatic effects of liberal markets or scientific rationality. Liberal internationalism had to adapt and develop strategies for taming power politics, rather than overcoming it. Liberal internationalism became more pragmatic, more realistic. The interwar years were a hostile era for the growth of liberal ideas; forced into retreat, they only resurfaced with the Second World War. It took until 1945 for liberalism to recover.

Despite the setbacks that liberal internationalism suffered, the sweet irony of history is that many of its core beliefs were realised in late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The United Nations is a much stronger international organization than the League, and much closer to liberal ideals. There is sustained legalization of international relations (e.g. in trade). Human rights and democracy have spread around the world. War between states, in the traditional sense of aggression brought about by expansionist intentions, has become ever rarer; close to an international taboo. A background trend: general decline of violence (as Steven Pinker has argued in a recent book).

Thus moral progress has happened. But not a linear movement; there are set-backs on the way. Kant's and Berlin's famous phrase of 'the crooked timber of humanity' certainly applies to international society. What we have learnt is that this moral progress is not an automatic process; needs careful nurturing, political support, and compromises. Absolutist moral imperatives don't work in international affairs and liberal internationalism has lost some of its 19<sup>th</sup> century naiveties due to World War I; but it is a much more robust tradition of internationalist thinking and practice today.

*Robert Falkner is Associate Professor in International Relations at the London School of Economics and an Associate Fellow of Chatham House.*

*Robert Falkner spoke at a joint meeting of LIBG and the LibDem History Group at the National Liberal Club, London, on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.*



## Glasgow Conference Events

### International Office / Africa Liberal Network

#### Liberal Democrats: Pioneering work in Africa.

A discussion on the work of the Liberal Democrats in Africa helping shape economic and human rights policy.

Speakers: Rt. Hon Andrew Stunell MP, Iain Gill, International Office/ Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Baroness Kishwer Falkner and reps from Africa Liberal Network.

**SECC, Carron 2 Saturday 4th October 20.15-21.30**

\*\*\*\*\*

### International Office / ALDE -

#### European Liberals

#### LibDems & Europe - In or Out Referendum

Martin Horwood MP, Chair of the Backbench Committee on International Affairs, Louise Van Der Lann of D66 Netherlands and ALDE, and Iain Gill, Head of International Office, will lead a strategic discussion on the in/out referendum.

**SECC, Leven Sunday 5th October 18.15-19.15**

# Musical Chairs

Two former chairs of LIBG now have new roles.

Sharon Bowles is now an independent non-executive director at London Stock Exchange Group after her successful role as chair of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament. The Stock Exchange obviously has more bottle than the Bank of England!

Julie Smith is now a member of the House of Lords. Julie is a member of Cambridge City Council; Senior Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) at Cambridge University; and Fellow of Robinson College. Apparently Dick Newby wants Julie to focus on Europe, but she hopes to keep up defence & wider international interests.

# Uncertainty Negatively Affects the Egyptian Economy

## Mohammed Nossier

Egypt is in need of a coherent economic vision complemented by explicit economic policies. Undermining both, or using economic initiatives as substitutes and surprising citizens with an assortment of mega investment projects, (even if they are beneficial) will not do our country any good.

In a very short period, Al Sisi has managed to make the economic future of Egypt both uncertain and truly dependent on his person. He thinks, acts and regulates the Egyptian economy entirely based on his own ideas and understanding. To make matters worse, Al Sisi has yet to declare what he has in mind. The result is that Egypt's future is today completely subject to the perceptions of a secretive leader, amidst an economic climate where businesspeople are adopting a "wait and see" rather than an "expand and prosper" position.

Egypt is in need of huge investments to revive its economy and reduce its high unemployment rate. There is consensus among all experts, including current and past governments, on this issue. The question is how can businesspersons expand their investments in a country that has an unclear economic vision, numerous uncertainties and that is led by unpredictable President?

Investors, whether they are Egyptians, Arabs or foreigners, need to see a light at the end of their investment tunnel, as well as a good, clear path leading to the end of that tunnel; in other words, an economic vision that determines the government's economic intentions supplemented with well-defined government policies and regulations. Neither the vision nor the policies have been delivered - nor is there any sign of the intention to do so.

What is presently happening in Egypt is increasing the elements of the unknown and consequently incrementing market risks, concluding, finally, in keeping investors away. The government should be working on minimizing economic uncertainty, and leaving investors to struggle with the market risks, not with both. The present poor government policy has kept Arab and foreign investors from investing in Egypt, while Egyptian investors continue to hide their savings abroad.

Al Sisi is currently demanding that Egyptian businesspeople donate large amounts to the 'Long Live Egypt' fund, running a massive campaign that aims to collect a total of 100 billion pounds - but the type and magnitude of projects to be financed through the fund have not yet been defined. Espousing genuine ideas to revive the economy is not, in itself, sufficient; taking a number of sensible measures to persuade investors to consider Egypt as a profitable investment zone is necessary. That has not yet occurred.

Egyptian businesspeople may express their love for Egypt by placing their knowledge and efforts in diversified investment projects and assuming the financial risks involved. However, by encouraging Egyptian businesspeople to contribute to the fund rather than to invest directly in their own economic projects, Al Sisi - deliberately or unintentionally - is conveying the message that the 'Long Live Egypt' fund will do a better job promoting the economy than would private diversified projects.

In reality, however, this is an economic drawback! It is certainly a better idea to encourage wealthy Egyptians to invest a large portion of their fortunes in different investment projects managed and owned by themselves. Thousands of ideas and projects, managed and owned by a large number of Egyptian businesspeople, means that the risk of failure would be spread among a variety of projects and people. This would definitely have a better impact on the economy than the creation of a single account where one person - who may either succeed or fail - bears the risk of billions of pounds.

Furthermore, the market often reacts strongly to its leaders' decisions, behaviors or even indications. Al Sisi, with all his persistence, talent for cornering people and excellent promotional skills, has only managed to bring in less than ten percent of the fund's targeted goal. People willing to contribute to the fund have certainly done so already, in goodwill; the constant repetition of the call for donations is simply perceived as a threat by both Egyptian investors & citizens at large. Further pushing will adversely affect the business environment in Egypt.

A similar phenomenon, but with different arrangements, is now taking place in Egypt; Al Sisi believes that Egyptian businesspersons overprice their products (which is one hundred percent true for many product categories). This is happening because of the government's poor economic policies that facilitate monopolies, wherein corruption plays a key role.

Thousands or perhaps millions of Egyptians are willing and able to trade in the same products and accept lower profit margins. However, since the government does not back them up by battling corruption, these private businesspersons refrain from taking part in corrupt monopoly deals. Al Sisi's offer to solve the problem by selling the same products in military outlets at a lower profit margin is a temporary and inappropriate solution. Egypt is in need of proper anti-corruption laws that guarantee a fair and equal chance to all merchants. Once this is done, profit margins will drop significantly and thousands of new businesspeople will seize the opportunity and expand their businesses.



The symbolic messages emitted by the Egyptian leader right now will lead to shrinking the economy, and people will do their best to hide their money. Rumours that Al Sisi may nationalize the private sector or apply taxes on personal savings (which I personally believe would be difficult to apply in practice) have already had an adverse effect on business-people and ordinary citizens, causing them to reduce their investments or to hide their money.

Mubarak used to boost the Egyptian economy by relying entirely on a limited number of businesspeople who were affiliated to him, assigning most of the largest economic projects to them. It was a corrupt structure, but a clear one, wherein many businesspeople competed to be included in the former President's close circle, to eventually obtain a larger slice of the cake. The Mubarak phenomenon is no longer valid. Nevertheless, hoping to revive the

economy through a single channel (the President) constitutes another drawback.

Egypt is in strong need of moving away from the Mubarak business era and developing a new one. There are many initiatives that could be placed on the table; maintaining the present uncertain state, in which Egyptian businesspeople (whether affiliated to the old regime or not) are not aware of a new economic vision and policy is definitely harming the economy.

Egypt is a country that can generate millions of investment opportunities leading to very successful projects. Reviving and flourishing the Egyptian economy must occur through enabling fair competition and enacting proper laws that will protect investors from being trapped into corruption. The country needs an entrepreneurial mind-set able to identify business ideas that would then be offered to investors to tackle and assume the associated risks. Depending on a single, secretive mind that intends to direct the entire economy is a highly risky venture for the Egyptian economy.

### ***Mohammed Nossier***

*Mohammed Nossier is an Egyptian Liberal Politician working on reforming Egypt on true liberal values, proper application of democracy and free market economy.*



## **Europe of the Regions and the Demise of the Nation State**

October 7- 8:00 pm - 9:15 pm

Shuna Room, Crowne Plaza Hotel Glasgow

Our fringe meeting at the Liberal Democrat conference, held jointly with the Liberal Democrat European Group.

After the Scottish referendum on independence, what are the implications for other parts of Europe where some wish to break away from the nation state of which they form part?

Speakers:

Jordi Xucia (Catalan MP)

Cllr Graham Garvie (European Committee of the Regions)

Others to be announced.

Chair: Robert Woodthorpe-Browne



# Ebola: An African Disease

## Rebecca Tinsley

If ever a disaster represented Africa's challenges, it is the Ebola outbreak. The crisis has its roots in poor governance, superstition, poverty, ignorance and underlying it all, the ruling elite's indifference to the woes of the vast majority of their citizens. Yet, at the same time the Ebola epidemic has shown African medical workers at their best, literally sacrificing their lives to save patients, limiting the spread of the much-feared virus.

The fact that there is no known cure for a disease that has been around since 1976 also reveals the unpalatable truth about the pharmaceutical industry: there is little incentive to research the diseases killing poor people in the developing world. There's more profit in statins, weight loss and erectile dis-function.

At the time of writing, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates almost 1500 have died of Ebola, making this the largest ever outbreak. The majority of cases have been in rural Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. However, there are daily reports of new cases reaching Nigeria, DRC and as far afield as Darfur in Sudan. WHO claims 20,000 are potentially at risk.

Like AIDS, the virus has crossed from animals to humans. Ebola started in rain forest fruits bats, a delicacy for some West Africans. It spreads through bodily fluids like blood and sweat, causing devastating internal bleeding, diarrhoea and vomiting.

The current epidemic began in February in rural Guinea, moving rapidly to neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone. Yet it wasn't until the end of August that the region's health ministers met to discuss a common approach. Some have faulted the international community (in this case a euphemism for the world's rich donor nations) for responding inadequately. However, none of the usual suspects (neo-colonialism, imperialism, the World Bank or IMF) can be blamed for how long it has taken West Africa's ruling elite to react.

According to Medecin Sans Frontieres's Brice de la Vigne, "It is simply unacceptable that serious discussions are only starting now about international leadership and coordination." He castigates Africa's

efforts when confronted with a potential continent-wide disaster as "chaotic."

The ever-reliable Africa Confidential newsletter calls health services "grossly inadequate," blaming an absence of a co-ordinated information strategy across the region, thanks to the lack of interest displayed by the urban ruling classes who rarely leave their walled compounds to venture beyond the city.

According to the Sierra Leonean scientist Aiah Gbakima, quoted in Africa Confidential, the Ebola crisis reflects a bigger governance problem. Regional political elites neglect remote rural areas. For instance, when Liberia finally reacted to its Ebola outbreak, it put the testing facility close to the capital Monrovia, not in Lofa or Nimba counties, several hours away, where the disease is rife.

Although Ebola appeared in Guinea in February, officials sent no medical workers to the affected area, Guinee-Forestiere. It was left to MSF to dispatch staff. Similarly, when Ebola reached Sierra Leone in May, the government made no effort to send specialists to the affected area. Instead they made patients travel by ambulance for half a day along atrocious roads.

Once they reached the Sierra Leone facility, they found health workers inadequately equipped, working 12 hour shifts, exhausted by wearing biohazard suits in stifling heat and humidity without air conditioning. The government promised staff \$30 a week danger money which it never paid. When the nurses went on strike the health and sanitation minister, Maitta Kargbo told Parliament the nurses were spreading Ebola through promiscuous sexual activity. The nation's leading virologist then died, like so many other medical workers. Finally, after six months, the government deployed troops to quarantine the worst affected area. It also took the Liberian authorities until the end of July to declare a state of emergency, after 227 deaths.

For many in the ruling class it would not occur to them that they should protect or help their citizens. Their priority is to enrich themselves and their families, then their clan and ethnic group. Until well-meaning

Western donor governments grasp this simple fact, many so-called development projects will chiefly serve to fatten the already bloated kleptomaniacs in charge.

For instance, during the 2005 Liberian poll, my fellow election observer was a member of the Cameroonian ruling class. For four days she refused to leave our vehicle during the day to interview rural voters because she thought them “dirty and stupid.” “Why do you want to talk to them?” she asked me, her beautiful features contorting in disgust.

She was, of course, correct to describe the mass of the electorate as ignorant and superstitious; all the more reason to educate them about the disease, rather than leaving them to their horrific fate. Some in the developed world are reluctant to mention a profound impediment to stopping the spread of illness; many poor, rural Africans blame bad spirits or curses, not germs or viruses. Even the leader of an East African nation lauded by the West as sophisticated and enlightened keeps a witch doctor on his staff; he consults him regularly about which route to take to avoid the evil spirits laying in wait for him on the road.

Commentators were shocked when villagers in a remote part of Liberia burned an ambulance sent to collect an ill person. Yet, seen from the villagers’ point of view, they had good reason to suspect any representative of the government because no one had bothered to visit them before. With barely functioning schools and clinics, and dreadful infrastructure, they could be forgiven for thinking the worst when officials from Monrovia suddenly appear. The locals feared the ambulance was bringing Ebola in order to spread the disease so their gangster-rulers could ask rich white nations for money to tackle the outbreak (money from which the villagers knew they would never benefit).

Also in Liberia, a quarantine ward was looted by locals who declared there was no Ebola. The patients escaped and the villagers ran off with blood-soaked mattresses, delighted to have improved their living conditions. Seen from their perspective, it was rational behaviour because they believe the virus is the result of displeasing ancestors or due to a government conspiracy to rip off gullible Westerners.

Sadly, some aid groups are squeamish about confronting such persisting ignorance for fear of being thought racist. The spread of Ebola, like AIDS, is a consequence of the population’s profound ignorance, widespread illiteracy and a justifiable suspicion of their rulers. Compounding this is an almost non-

existent health system in many remote areas, neglected for decades. Remarking on the 2006 election in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a local said his village had no school, no doctor or nurse, no water source and no electricity. But for the duration of the election cycle there had been an electoral registration officer, thanks to the UN, EU and other donors. No wonder rural Africans are suspicious of the intentions of strangers.

Although the Wellcome Trust is fast-tracking drug trials, there is no prospect of a cure for Ebola. Writing in the *New Yorker*, James Surowiecki points out there is no decent return on investment in research into what the WHO calls “neglected tropical diseases.” Between 1975 and 2004 there were roughly 1500 new drugs launched of which only 10 were targeted at dengue and Chagas, which between them kill half a million people a year. Malaria and TB kill another two million a year, but the victims are poor people living in undeveloped societies. They make less promising customers than people in wealthy places who want long-term treatment for high cholesterol or diabetes.

AIDS was spotted in 1959 in the Belgian Congo where people ate (and, like many Africans, continue to eat) monkey. However, the virus was ignored by the rich world, and in turn by Africa’s ruling class, until it was too late. An estimated 39 million people have died of AIDS (compared with 16 million in World War I, currently being remembered for its hideous waste of life). Many believe the greatest contribution to tackling the disease was made not by an internationalist, liberal leader but by George W Bush’s PEPFAR programme.

What can be done, short of a more effective but massive investment in infrastructure, public health and education? One cost-effective approach to finding a cure is for governments to give prize money for the development of new medicines. The Obama administration is offering 150 cash prizes for technological breakthroughs.

However, until a nation’s elite is held accountable by its long-suffering people a perfect storm of ignorance, bad governance and poor health facilities will condemn thousands to a hideous death. In the meantime, the unsung heroes in this tragedy are the health workers who have died, more than 60 at the time of writing.

*Rebecca Tinsley is Director of Waging Peace.*

# reviews

**Helen Suzman *Bright Star in a Dark Chamber*,  
by Robin Renwick  
Biteback 2014 £16.99**

Helen Suzman was one of the heroines of the last century. After Nelson Mandela, whose name comes next in typifying the struggle against Apartheid? If it is not Helen Suzman, then her name will come up shortly after.

Robin Renwick's biography is variable. It contains none of the revelations of his *A Journey with Margaret Thatcher*, except perhaps that Helen Suzman may have played a significant role in the Iron Lady's assessment of Mandela and the future of South Africa.

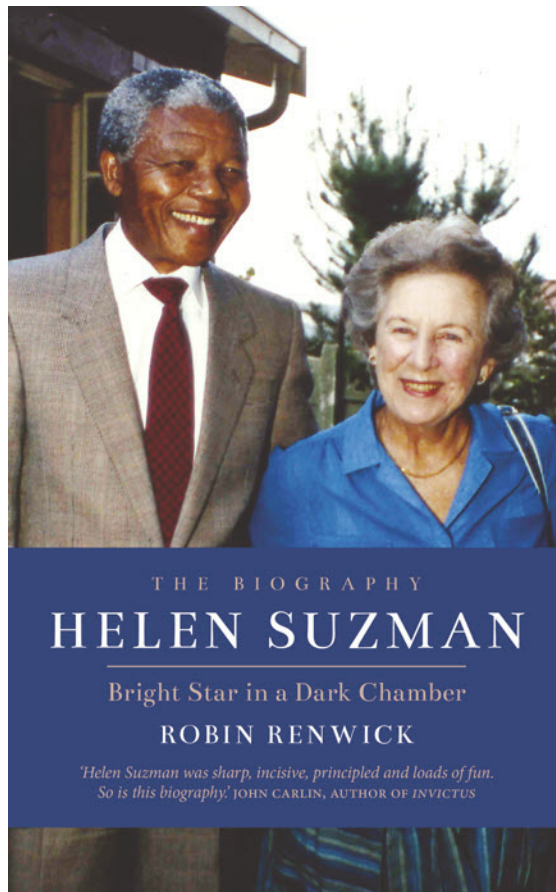
Renwick was our ambassador to South Africa from 1987 to 1991. His biography is strongest where he has personal dealings with Helen Suzman; earlier in her career I found it sketchy, but perhaps he wanted to make clear the depth of her crusade for human rights against the Apartheid regime. 13 years of this were alone, when she was the sole member of the Progressive party in the South African parliament. Since the descriptions of most National party MPs make the average rabid Tory back-bencher seem like a pussy cat, and we know too well that Apartheid South Africa wasn't adverse to killing its opponents, this took tremendous courage; something appreciated by the older ANC leaders if not some of the younger ones.

A specific example – in 1986 Conor Cruise O'Brien was to speak at Witwatersrand university. At the time the ANC had called for an academic boycott of South Africa and student demonstrations prevented the lectures. Helen Suzman, as a believer in academic freedom, though the university had behaved weakly in the incident. O'Brien devotes several pages to it in his *Memoir My Life and Themes*, but doesn't mention Helen Suzman. He was lecturing on siege societies – comparing South Africa with Israel and Northern Ireland; I don't doubt he had some interesting things to say. The first three weeks of the lectures went well, but from the fourth, there were student demonstrations, taking an increasingly violent turn. O'Brien's offer to debate the issue with those students was more reminiscent of a kangaroo court. It later transpired that government agents provocateur were involved in the demonstrations. O'Brien ended the lecture series, but the University of Cape Town's enquiry into the matter was sordid and itself led to clashes in the Senate. Patrick O'Brien, who travelled

with his father to South Africa, would have been classified as 'coloured' by the apartheid authorities; notwithstanding what Conor had to say, itself a challenge to that regime.

So we await a more detailed assessment of Helen Suzman's life, but Renwick has provided a framework for this and will be an accessible starting point.

*Stewart Rayment*



**The Snowden Files: The Inside Story of the World's Most Wanted Man by Luke Harding.  
Guardian Books 2014 £12.99.**

For the last year it has been impossible to pick up a newspaper, look at news online, or listen to most radio or TV news broadcasts without Edward Snowden's revelations being relevant. Now the DRIP legislation (Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Bill) in the UK Parliament has brought it to the fore again.

This is a good book. It reads quite like a thriller. I bought *the Guardian* book as I'd not read any of the background on Edward Snowden before and thought I ought to know some of it. Luke Harding's book answers a lot of questions and convinces me that Snowden was genuine in wanting to expose breaches of the US constitution by mass surveillance, thought that going to reputable journalists was the only



practical way to expose the breaches of privacy without being ignored or jailed in the US, and sincerely believed that he had taken sufficient security steps so that no one would be put at risk by his revelations.

The younger Snowden comes across as an immature, right wing young man with little World knowledge. He can't be blamed for that and is clearly bright, in fact highly intelligent – and though there are large gaps in the narrative, an influential year in Japan just glossed over (and what has happened to his girlfriend in Hawaii) – he becomes an idealist. I'd been puzzled as to who Glenn Greenwald, the journalist who broke the story was. If he was such a successful journalist for *the Guardian* why had I never heard of him? I'd never realised that it was *the Guardian* America that broke the story and that Greenwald was an American living in Brazil. Harding shares the credit around with others. The book is quite well indexed.

Nevertheless there are major gaps in plausibility. Why Hong Kong?? (Snowden travels from Hawaii to Hong Kong to make his revelations). Why does he end up in Russia? The (now civil) libertarian Snowden must be sick to the core to find himself stranded in Putin's increasingly brutal elected dictatorship in Russia – where every two steps of forward progress are followed by some three steps back. The book suggests that his route to asylum in Ecuador (assisted by Julian Assange and Sarah Harrison of WikiLeaks) had to go through Russia and that he was stranded in Russia by the US government blocking onward travel. So the USA administration under Barack Obama caused the situation.

Obama should have some backbone. He should invite Snowden back under amnesty to help solve the legitimacy and security problems. Or else another government with backbone – Angela Merkel's Germany – should do it. Some criticism of the authorities is unfair on secrecy. I want some secret intelligence to stay secret; I want government advice to stay confidential while necessary for quality of debate at high level; I don't want everything public and on trial. And Liberty – please! Greenwald's partner, David Miranda, is stopped under anti-terrorist legislation. Invasion of liberty – don't be stupid. His partner had just helped leak a load of secret information including from the UK and he flies into Heathrow with material for Greenwald. Have these guys never watched a single spy movie. What did they expect to happen. The *Guardian* is to be commended for its work in bringing Edward Snowden's revelations to light. It is quality important journalism of the highest standard.

*Kiron Reid*

## **Into the Whirlwind, by Eugenia Ginzburg Persephone 2014 £12.00**

I don't know why I read socialist reality; each page, each paragraph gets worse and worse as an account of human suffering and man's inhumanity to man. Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, first as a radio broadcast introduced me to the genre. I'm probably not alone amongst Liberals in not drifting into a socialist camp on account of such books. At the time, Young Communist and Young Liberal branches could be quite close – Vietnam and Apartheid being uniting issues; sex, drugs & rock'n'roll aside. This would persist, particularly in student politics, throughout the 70s and probably accounts for the number of Commies who joined the SDP, though typically not the Liberal Democrats. Invariably middle class, the mothers of some of these zealots must have been something like Yevgenia Ginzburg before her fall.

The fallen Ginzburg meets Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, some of whom are pleased to see Bolsheviks on the receiving end. Ginzburg herself thinks that her fall is a mistake and never admits to Trotskyism (who would?). Some of her fellow Bolshies can't bring themselves to believe that Stalin is behind all this (and thus remain a 5<sup>th</sup> Column in the camps). Ginzburg is a bit savvier than this, but hasn't renounced Bolshevism – at least not by the end of this book (there is a sequel). Stalin's personal complicity has been known at least since Khrushchev's speech *On the Personality Cult and its Consequences*, at the 20th Party Congress, and in trumps since the fall of the Soviet system. Ginzburg's memoirs were only published in samizdat form inside Russia before then however.

So this is what Marxist socialism really is. Within this inevitably grim subject matter we experience extraordinary gestures of humanity and the strength of poetry. One wonders how much the latter enabled the prodigious feat of memory that Ginzburg achieved. A great book, and as usual, beautifully presented by Persephone.

## **Stewart Rayment**

**Syria from the Great War to Civil War,  
by John McHugo.  
Saqi 2014 £17.99**

This book follows just a year after John McHugo's Concise History of the Arabs which is a great help to anybody trying to understand the historical background to Northern Arabia – the Levant. In this book the author homes in on Syria to explain the

background to the current civil war. He starts with Greater Syria – the Ottoman Province and shows how France and Britain took advantage of the Ottoman decline to carve up Syria to suit its own agenda. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 led to the artificial divide between Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Then later the division of Palestine to create a Jewish state happened in such a chaotic way as to leave decades of misery and distrust and rankles especially in Syria because of the annexation of the Golan Heights in 1967.

The French mal-administered Syria – of that there is no doubt. The author shows how decisions made by democratic governments in Paris to suit their own interests undermined all chances of creating any kind of democracy in Syria. The chaos they left behind after World War II paved the way for a dictator to emerge in the form of Hafez Al Assad. John McHugo gives some sympathetic treatment to the modernising of the country that took place under the rule of Hafez – particularly the education reforms, the improvements to the economy and his genuine, but rebuffed, attempts to reach peace with a disinterested Israel. Although a socialist, he did continue the traditional patronage system with his own kind of corruption. He did his best to keep a lid on sectarianism and himself in power by deploying the notorious brutality of the secret police. Steadily his family and their cronies lost touch with the resentment that this was generating across the country. This has left a particularly nasty legacy that undoubtedly did much to provoke the present civil war.

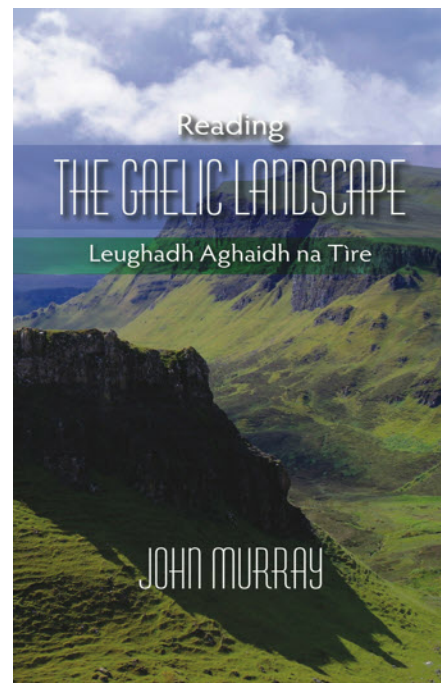
Basher Al Assad comes across as a man too young for power and rather out of his depth as he struggles from one crisis to another – not really in control of his own government, but at the same time quite happy to continue the brutal practices of his father's regime. The author reflects on the current civil war and, although he went to press in April 2014, he accurately predicted the emergence of ISIS as a regional power force. To those who are now suggesting that boundaries should be redrawn to reflect the new realities (separate states for Sunnis, Shias and Kurds etc.), he warns that this could only come about with western interference and that could cause even more problems.

Well worth reading – not least by Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries before they do any more harm in the Levant!

**John Kelly**

## **Reading the Gaelic Landscape, Leughadh Aghaidh na Tìre, by John Murray/Iain Moireach. Whittle Publishing 2014 £16.99**

Sometime last Autumn there was some ribaldry about the possible British descent of Lord Bonkers; it is well known that the founder of the line came over with the Conqueror and the name is derived the Norman French *bon coer* – Anglicized into Bonkers over the centuries (the bastard line *Goodheart* splitting off somewhere along the way). I suggested a possible Irish line from *Buinn na coir*, which I purported meant *at bottom, good, or ultimately decent* or something like that, which would similarly Anglicize into Bonkers. Bonkers, my source told me, is *glan às a' chiall* – I'm at a loss to translate it (though *chail(l)* is 'lost' I think). His lordship did not enter into the debate. If I had John



Murray's book to hand at the time my task would have been easier, possibly even accurate.

Murray's book is of the toponymy of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd – basically the Highlands and Islands, so central to the survival of the British Liberal party. It follows that the names have a deep meaning, though understanding of this is now largely lost as Gaelic is only spoken by some 60,000 people in Scotland, most of whom live on islands where Norse place names predominate. Murray writes of the campaigns against Gaelic, of the class prejudices of cartographers, or the inter-relativity of Gaelic culture in Ireland and Scotland (one might also add Scots culture) all of which makes exciting reading, before delving into the culture of the tongue.





## CONFERENCE CAPTION COMPETITION

Never let it be said that Simon Hughes is a man of few words... but what is chair Wendy Kyrle Pope saying to Nick Harvey?

Hand your answers into the LIBG stall at Glasgow (or email to [lockharthastings@btconnect.com](mailto:lockharthastings@btconnect.com))

The starting point for the book however is the hill-walker or skier and these are the people who will derive most from the book. One of the joys of party conferences is getting out of the train a modest distance from one's destination and crossing the last leg through hill and vale. Not so easy with Glasgow from the south, but I pour over my map... drop my bags and take the train on to Ardlui – that's *Aird Laoigh* (the *point of the calf?*), cross Loch Lomond - *Loch Laomainn* and walk down the east side (the West Highland Way) to Milngavie on the north side of Glasgow. That's about 40 miles I'd guess, so two days, or maybe pick up a bus at the bottom of the loch... either way.

If your imagination isn't fired by the prospect read John Buchan's *Huntingtower* – yes I know that's south of Glasgow – Ayrshire, Galloway... embrace the spirit. Dickson McCunn would have been a good Liberal, after all. How much more you'll get from the walk with Murray's book in your pocket.

**Stewart Rayment**

## Conference on Liberalism in the 21st Century

In a meeting in Barcelona with Senator Carles Gasoliba, LI President Dr. Juli Minoves have discussed the upcoming series of LI Conferences on Liberalism and the 21st century the first one of which to take place at Oxford University in December.

The discussion focused on the state of liberal values and how best to tackle new challenges in a multipolar world where state actors are not as prevalent as they were before. Explaining the significance of having such a prominent liberal and renowned economist like Senator Gasoliba involved the LI President said: “ I count on Carles to contribute to our first reflections on Liberalism in the 21st century which we are organizing at Oxford University in December with Lord Alderdice as our host. This needs to be truly a global exercise because liberalism is not confined to any continent or group of people. Old ghosts of intolerance and fear are being revived everywhere and we must target them with effective appeals to liberalism and reason. It is not the first time we fight this. We must prevail”.