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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



**Russia - Women at G20 - Turkey
South China Sea - Populism**

EVENTS

15th May LIBG Forum on East Africa. **Postponed due to General Election**

18th-21st May 61st Congress of Liberal International, Andorra. The Congress will mark the 70th anniversary of LI.

8th June General Election

10th June Liberal Democrat Women's Conference. Cheltenham (with speaker from Yabloko).

19th June National Liberal Club Diplomatic Reception. 6.30-8.30pm £25.00 **see page 16**

22nd June Lord Garden Memorial Lecture – Nick Clegg – Chatham House, London. 6.00pm. Dinner available afterwards at the NLC. **see page 13**

24th June Liberal Party Summer Assembly the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE. 12.00-3.00pm -agenda includes Climate Change.

6th September LIBG AGM 6.30-8.30pm NLC

16th-19th September Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference. Bournemouth.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Photographs:

Stewart Rayment, Nikolai Tyudorovskiy, Adrian Trett.

Cover photos: Unite For Europe National March, London. 25th March 2017

Perhaps now, more than ever, we need the liberal democratic values of Europe'

Theresa May - 30th March 2017... well, that's what she said!

ASSESSING RUSSIA

NICK HARVEY

Do Brexit, Trump and the rise of populism in Europe signal a disintegration of western institutions? Has NATO become irrelevant or do we need it more than ever at a time of Russian expansionism?

Two notable quotations are of relevance to this question: Mao Tse Tung's assertion that, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," and von Clausewitz's observation that "War is the continuation of politics by other means."

It is a sobering thought that the UK's real defence spending figure is now below 2% of GDP, and across the EU it is much less. By contrast, Russia spends 5.4% of its GDP on defence. Be in no doubt that President Putin is now involved in a major power play on the global stage. Some people misread him entirely and believe him to be mad. He may be bad, but he is certainly not mad. Seen through Russian eyes, his actions are perfectly logical. It took Russia 150 years to secure its naval base in Crimea. How did we expect them to react to the possibility of suddenly finding it located inside the EU and NATO? Similarly, their only Mediterranean naval facilities are in Syria – were they likely to welcome finding them under the control of an American puppet regime?

I believe that Russia has no serious ambition to recover its stranglehold over Poland, Hungary or the Balkans. But, by moving our sphere of influence right up to its border, as Russia perceives it we have 'moved our tanks onto their front lawn'. Small wonder they react badly. Putin invaded Crimea, using force, not diplomacy, to achieve his objectives. He succeeded by calculating correctly that the West hadn't the will to repel Russia. Russia has made the decisive difference in Syria by backing Assad, and is increasingly seen worldwide as a powerful and determined military force, which sticks by its allies and gets the job done.



Note that Russia flew missions into Syria from an airbase in Iran; and observe its rapprochement with Turkey: their shooting down of a Russian plane all forgotten now. A Russian-Turkish-Iranian alliance is an essential piece in Putin's jigsaw. There are serious dangers of such an axis. Erdogan's increasingly Islamist Turkey is at odds with the West, abandoning its EU ambitions and potentially even withdrawing from NATO (a possibility, rather than a likelihood).

Note too, that addressing the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party last July, President Xi Jinping delivered a speech in which he called for a military union with Russia that would render NATO 'powerless' and 'put an end to the imperialist desires of the West.'

So, what might be Putin's overall strategic ambitions? An editorial in Italy's La Stampa newspaper reckoned that Russia's policy on Ukraine, its actions in Syria and its reconciliation with Turkey show Putin's determination, "to create a new international order and slash the clout of the United States."

La Stampa continued: "In Ukraine Putin wants to weaken Washington's credibility as guarantor of Eastern Europe, in Syria he shows Russia's greater capability to fight jihadists than a US-led coalition of more than

60 countries, and in Turkey he seeks to prompt divisions in Ankara-NATO relations.” It portrayed the image of the West as torn by contradictory approaches to migration and terrorism and exhausted economically. Mounting threats from the arc of instability around Europe’s south: terrorism and unmanaged migration; the return of foreign fighters; humanitarian catastrophe in Syria, all contribute to strains within Europe. Eastern Europeans focus on threats they feel from Russia, while Russia responds to threats it feels from NATO. Cold winds are blowing through Europe’s security cohesion: the web of treaties, arrangements and understandings developed since World War II to ensure that Europe, the bloodiest place in the twentieth century, avoids tearing itself apart.

Russia and NATO blame each other. Moscow points to abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the introduction of destabilising new military technologies. NATO points to Ukraine, Russian snap military exercises and irresponsible threats. Miscalculation or accident between nuclear Russia and nuclear NATO is Europe’s greatest risk. The growing volatility of ‘the global atmosphere’, giving rise to fear, could easily cause situations to escalate – with potentially disastrous consequences.

Might the Baltics be the showdown? The credibility of NATO’s central tenet: ‘an attack on one is an attack on all,’ could be on the line. And attacks include those by rabble-rousers, unbadged combatants and in the



cyber domain. The West had better mean what it says: if we are found wanting, NATO will be a dead duck.

Three things are needed to stop the rot:

First, Europe’s leaders must recognise the security problems to be as grave as they are, not as they might wish them to be. The optimism following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 bred complacency. The focus has been too much on European construction and not enough on problem-solving. The EU and NATO must attend more to unfinished, neglected, business in the western Balkans. The

Minsk agreements on Ukraine are sticking plasters on wounds that will not heal. Leaders must give deeper attention to how to manage the high-risk competition for spheres of influence.

Second, Europe must do far more on its own account – and the UK, despite Brexit, must remain centrally involved. Europe has legitimate expectations of President Trump, but in believing that Europeans must do more for their own defence, he is not alone: the US has got a bad deal. Much depends on how isolationist Trump’s America wants to be, and how far the EU is serious about the pursuit of ‘strategic autonomy’ – the ambition to which its leaders have committed.

Not all is bleak: counter-terrorism collaboration has grown, and cyber defences are slowly improving. And for all the lack of solidarity on migration, Europe may increasingly find collective solutions that better address migration’s root causes. But it’s a safe bet that, for several decades, even with increased effort Europeans will remain heavily dependent on the US for their own security. And both sides are basically stuck with that.

Third, and crucially, we must develop tri-partite dialogue between Europe, America and Russia, to work to restore the rules of the game – or establish new ones. An agenda might include:

- An end to the idea of expanding NATO to countries close to Russia, at least while there is mistrust between NATO and Russia.
- NATO anti-ballistic systems in Poland and Romania, addressing their real roles and efficiencies.
- Assess the true impact of the economic sanctions against Russia, which are at least as penalising for the EU as for Russia (but not for America!)
- Economic exchanges: reliable supply of oil and gas to Europe from Russia and the Middle East.

- Strong and open collaboration between the West and Russia against terrorism and the behaviour of certain Muslim countries.
- The West accepting Russia-Syria agreements (eg: on bases), and agreement on Syria, including on Assad.
- Reflection on Turkey's role, including in the problems of Middle East and Daesh.

But, in concert with ceding ground on some of these points, Europeans in return must wake up. They must acknowledge that allies and national security must be constantly earned through their own efforts and increased investment. European leaders need to explain to their publics that Europe is not the safe place they have dreamt of since 1989, that Europe's defence will remain dependent on US military capabilities for a long time to come, and that this is not just a necessary but a good thing.

Nick Harvey

Nick Harvey's speech on Russia was delivered at the Liberal Reform fringe meeting on 18.3.17 at the Liberal Democrat's York Conference. Nick was MP for North Devon from 1992 until 2015, and the Minister of State for the Armed Forces from 2010 to 2012.

(With thanks to the European Leadership Network, among others, for analysis and commentary).

Chrystia Freeland delivers reality-check on Female Empowerment at G20

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, has championed female entrepreneurship during The Women20 Summit panel, which took place on 25th April as part of the G20 programme in Berlin, Germany this week. Alongside other high-ranking political figures including Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US Presidential advisor Ivanka Trump, IMF Chief Christine Lagarde, Minister Freeland said that there is still much more work to be done to support women in business.

"Women and girls are powerful agents of change, and Canada supports efforts to abolish laws and standards that inhibit women from realizing their full potential," Freeland said in a statement released prior to her departure to Berlin. "Gender equality is a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world."

The panel focused on financial inclusion and the challenges faced by businesswomen. During her intervention, the Liberal Party of Canada Minister reminded the audience of the "very deep political and social reasons women have been cut out of positions of economic power", adding that bold actions and a strong political effort are needed.

"In Canada, we like to think of ourselves as an enlightened country; our Prime Minister is a feminist. He appointed a 50-50 gender-balanced cabinet," she said referring to the ongoing discussion with the White House regarding the creation of councils for female entrepreneurs. "We have been talking much about the developing countries, [...] but we still have work to do at home"

Furthermore, Minister Freeland underlined the importance of mentorship and mutual support among women, but not only. In response to the reported negative reaction to Ivanka Trump statement regarding her father, Freeland said: "I have a view that is backed up by sociological research, behind every successful woman there is a very supportive father."

Emphasising LI's commitment to women's rights and strengthening bonds between LI and LPC, LI President, Dr Juli Minoves, was in Vancouver last week where he met with Canadian Liberal MP Hedy Fry, Chairwoman of the Standing Committee on Status of Women and Canada's longest-serving Member of Parliament.

The Suicide of a Nation

Barbaros Devecioglu

The infamous Turkish referendum is over. According to the official results, Erdogan will be the world's most powerful new dictator, who is going to rule Turkey; No one dares to question; for how long, nobody knows anyway most probably till he dies.

More than 3.7 million votes are under heavy suspicion of being fake or illegally added to the ballot boxes. Independent observers have pointed out that more than nine thousand ballot boxes might have been fiddled with. OSCE observers, independent Turkish observers, video feeds and everything else are telling us that, we have been conned by the president and his men. He lost seven big cities, which must have been a big shock for him, also lost the majority first time in fourteen years. On the other hand, even before the official result published, he appeared on the state tv and he claimed that he won only with a one the half percent margin. It is in vain to say if this would have happened on any democratic country... Rigged results does allow him to realise such drastic regime change.

The most unfortunate fact (my opinion) around forty percent of the voters had voted for him despite everything said, written and seen. It might easily be called a mass suicide; from now onwards everything absolutely everything will be decided by him and him alone; there will be no accountability no checks and balances nothing of the sort will be exist. Roughly the half of the Turkish population seems to accept this new regime. What is going to happen the other half? So far nobody knows. Ignorance and idiocy run amok on Turkish soil. The people who said "no" at the last referendum are not seeing any light at the end of the tunnel. Economy is on the edge of the cliff, freedom and civil rights particularly freedom of the press rapidly disappearing, heavy talk of bringing back the capital punishment. So the new regime will certainly have an autocratic even proto fascist character.

It was simply a tragic suicide of a nation. There is not a single nation had prospered had peace had progressed under a dictatorship; so Turkey's future look very bleak even dark. Possible future events might drag the country into a cul-de-sac. Every action has its own conclusions. When a complete regime change takes place in a country with comically one and half percent majority (even that is not right because they rigged the votes anyway) one can safely assume the future will not bring anything good to that piece of land.

When, Erdogan followers woke up heavily ideology induced sleep; it will possibly too late salvage the country. At the end, someone has the pay the bill, regardless of which side they taken before.

Child Refugees - the dead hand of Tory compassion

The Home Office has turned down repeated offers from fostering agencies that would have allowed up to 100 child refugees a week to be given sanctuary in Britain, according to the chief executive of the UK's largest fostering and adoption charity.

The revelation further contradicts the government's explanation for winding down the Dubs scheme. Ministers defended the heavily criticized decision by claiming that councils had no more spaces to accommodate child refugees from Europe. Yet it has emerged that, as far back as September 2015, Home Office officials met with fostering agencies to discuss the placement of Syrian child refugees, unaccompanied minors and the working of the Dubs scheme. The move would have provided instant extra capacity for Britain to accept children and could have operated alongside or instead of councils offering spaces for unaccompanied minors, an option that would have enabled the government to move towards its commitment to helping unaccompanied minors.

Roger Roberts

The South China Sea

LIBG Forum

Bill Hayton, author of *The South China Sea, the struggle for power in Asia*, opened the Forum, setting the scene for the issues. The respective claims of China, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia are, each claim as contentious as the other. Semi-nomadic ‘sea gypsies’ were probably the first discoverers of the South China Sea; essentially stateless peoples. There was Arab and Persian penetration by the 7th century and empires rose and fell around its fringes into the early colonial era. Either the Portuguese or the British probably first named the waters the South China Sea. Earliest surviving Chinese maps, such as the Selden Map of approximately 1610 show trade routes hugging the coast. The centre of the sea, with its uncharted reefs and shoals was dangerous and avoided.

Names are something of a give-away to China’s claims. Zengmu Anshu, the southernmost point of the Chinese claim, is a direct translation of the English James Shoal,

from the characters forming the sound J M. The claim is thus founded on a transcription and also a cartographic error – there is no island. In 1907 Japan occupied Pratas Island and the US government informed the Chinese of this, ultimately provoking China’s interest. In 1927, as part of the debates in the new Chinese republic about the country’s borders, private individuals drafted the so-called ‘Map of National Humiliation’ showing the lands that China had lost to its neighbours and colonists. These included the Paracel islands.

French, the colonial power in Indo-China (Vietnam) grew interested in the 1920s. In 1933 they formally annexed the Spratly islands. Chinese interest grew in response and after the Second World War the Kuomintang government formally extended its claim to the Spratlys and published an official map showing an eleven-dashed line around the sea. Vietnam’s claims go back at least into the 19th century, when they started salvaging wrecks for the cannons for use in their wars.

The Philippines’ interest is more recent, dating from the 1956 Cloma Claim. Tomas Cloma had sought to create a new independent country on one of the islands and sought Philippine support. Marcos put him in gaol instead, but Philippine interest grew with speculation for oil in the 1970s. Taiwan has retained the original Republic of China claim from the 1940s and occupies the largest of the Spratly Islands, known as Itu Aba (Taiping Dao in Chinese). Malaysia claimed Swallow Reef and four other features in 1980 and went on to develop artificial islands there.

In July 2016, Chinese claims to its ‘historic rights’ within the entirety of the dashed line claim were found to be incompatible with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). An international tribunal also found that none of the Spratlys are islands in the full sense and they therefore don’t generate any exclusive economic zone.

Prof. Stephen Tsang replied that Bill’s description, whilst it might have historical merit, was not acceptable to the Chinese government. To the Chinese government and nationalists this is the South China Sea, the name alone tells us who owns it.

The security issue is real to China. China is committed to defend its core national interests. There can be no concessions. They will use force if necessary. The South China Sea is not core as yet¹ but the Chinese authorities deployed retired officials and academics to claim that it was until the Americans pushed back. In



Bill Hayton



Prof. Stephen Tsang

2010, in Hanoi, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton did so and stated that the USA regarded the South China Sea as international waters and that freedom of navigation was paramount.

Island building is important in the claims. The Chinese navy and air force almost has the capacity to secure its sea lanes of communication. These are busy shipping routes, bringing supplies to China. Security of the South China Sea previously rested with the USA. China now has that capacity from its naval base on Hainan island. China does not like the USA monitoring the movement of its submarines.

Taiwan also has coastguard stations on the biggest islands. The original line was drawn by the Kuomintang. Taiwan plays by international rules, as if it were treated as an equal. However, no country treats Taiwan as an equal. It would not be able to sustain its claim over the islands. The People's Republic of China would see a Taiwanese withdrawal of its claim as a step towards Taiwanese independence. Thus, even the DPP will say that China's claims are as strong as any other; they don't have much choice over that.

The People's Republic of China – Taiwan is the most important relationship in the South China Sea.

Veerle Nouwens then spoke of the European Union dimension. The EU has no official position on the claims, but has an interest in trade and is a dialogue partner with ASEAN, with a treaty and cooperation. The EU urges a peaceful settlement and cooperation.

The ASEAN Code of Conduct, especially Article 5, calls for self-restraint, including inhabiting the islands and shoals. The EU urges regional agreement and respect of international law; it is not militarily involved. In the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling of 12th July 2016², Hungary, Greece and Croatia were against the PCA over China, on whom they depend for trade and investment, and have their own territorial disputes. Increased EU involvement in Russia important. France xx freedom of navigation – has called on EU to hold joint patrols (they probably won't happen, it would require an escalation of matters. The UK plans to send any aircraft carrier to the Pacific in 2020. Matters depend mostly on the development of USA/China relations. Trump has been very vocal against China; would change provoke a reaction? The peaceful cooperation of the South China Sea and ASEAN is important.

Shao Zheng, Counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, speaking from the floor, said that Secretary of State Tillerson would be in China in the next few days, and that it was preferable to let diplomats solve the problems rather than navies. The People's Republic of China had no problem with freedom of navigation. 2,000 years had passed since the Chinese discovered the South China Sea.

Questions:

Now that Trump is in power what would be policy of the USA? Obama had advocated a pivotal role in Asia. Veerle Nouwens replied that there was uncertainty as to what Trump's foreign policy would be, especially in Asia; also Tillerson's. Both had back-tracked. It would depend on what Trump's relationship with China would look like. North Korea was important and strengthened US relations with South Korea and Japan. But South-East Asia remained unclear – comments had been made over Cambodia and war reparations. Stephen Tsang said that Obama had turned George Bush's words about pivot into policy. The real issue was economic relations between the USA and China; if these were put on an even keel a lot could be resolved. If not, it would spell trouble. The USA doesn't have a position on the disputes, only freedom of navigation in the South China Seas. They had not conducted any freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Seas; if they did so, how would China respond? Before Trump, 60% of the US fleet was deployed in the Pacific, under Bush, then Obama. If they did carry out full freedom of navigation operation it would be big news. In normal times this might not be an issue, but if carried out at a sensitive time in the People's Republic of China's calendar domestically, things might escalate.

Bill Hayton said that the Trump administration sees China as a threat (bodies such as the Navaro Heritage Foundation). Trump follows a white, male, working class agenda. Jane Wolsey argues there could now be a positive bargain – China recognises the status quo and the USA recognises China’s security concerns. The Taiwan phone call was a deliberate ploy (Trump calling xxx, the Taiwanese President). Usually we might expect China to make a move after a new President’s inauguration – in 2001 the EP3 incident, 2009 USS Improbable. First there was a large US naval deployment, testing four Trident missiles – Trump had got in first. With Tillerson in China, maybe there is a deal around?

Merlene Emerson asked about possible solutions.

Stephen Tsang said that nobody has a clear claim. There is scope for joint initiatives – in oil exploration, for instance, and to work out formulas to share. But these are not on the agenda at the moment, and China claims overall sovereignty and has the security issue.

Veerle Nouwens added that there were similar considerations, more than economic. China’s position was that they were willing to negotiate bilaterally, but not multilaterally, so couldn’t do deals on fishing, oil or mining. Other interested parties were not part of the deal. Phil Bennion interjected that China was the biggest player, but that ASEAN was a match.



Veerle Nouwens

Bill Hayton said that rules involved everybody – the USA and Japan attempt to agree. The 3rd UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) forms a basis for the division of maritime resources. China ratified this in 1996, the UK has, but the USA hasn’t. Why doesn’t China follow UNCLOS? Their fishing, oil and mining lobbies. The problem is that coastal China is surrounded by islands and thus does not have a large exclusive economic zone. First flag principal – keep what you possess. Veerle N added that China could lose the Paracels but gain in the south, but the south would have to be a multilateral agreement. Bill Hayton gave an example of the rigidity of the trying to reach settlement. China and Vietnam had reached a settlement – more or less 50:50 along the Gulf of Tonkin. It would be easy to extend this agreement further, until a point where the Paracel islands became an issue, but China had stalled on this, because one of the dashes on the line lay closer into Vietnam and they were not prepared to sacrifice that point.

Veerle Nouwens said that bilateral agreements were not feasible. There is a need to build strategies in trust rather than China’s intentions; they have to back up words with actions. Solutions had been reached between Taiwan and Japan & Taiwan and the Philippines; there are precedents there but they haven’t been engaged. Shao Zheng said that China’s policy was clear, they accepted joint developments, with the Philippines for example, and would stick to that policy. China had 14 land neighbours and agreements with 12 of those. They were willing to talk directly and to work with ASEAN – a dual track, on a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. Arrangements had been made with the Philippines over fishermen.

International Law? The Shingwa Report – China had extended its maritime jurisdiction to cover all seas. Chinese courts had tried around 1,600 cases against alleged infringers. They are building China into a major maritime power. Russia and China made a statement on this in 2016.

Bill Hayton said that international law was in crisis, with only the EU to stand up for it, and they were tied up with Brexit. China wants to bend international law to its own interests. If it comes to enforcement mechanisms against fishing boats, there could be problems.

Stephen Tsang said that the Chinese government upheld international law so long as it worked in China’s interests. China was unexceptional in this. China is a continuing rising power, that sees that they have

wrongs to right, and now they can do that. Does an international ruling serve my national interest? If I have no choice I follow it, but if I do have a choice, and it doesn't, I won't follow it.

Veerle Nouwens. China is using UNCLOS in their arguments up to a point. Off the eastern coast of the Philippines for example. China says these waters might be part of the Philippines continental shelf, but they are not Philippines territory. Philip Bennion said he agreed with Stephen Tsang and there were parallels such as US attitudes on Climate Change, but he agreed with Bill Hayton that international law was at a crisis point if these matters can't be diffused. Small countries must stick together. Bill Hayton said that he was optimistic, since the July 2016 ruling China had been living up to it; Chinese oil companies have not drilled on the wrong side of the line, there have been fewer fishing clashes, and the Philippines had been allowed to fish the Scarborough Shoals.

Was there a submarine lobby in China around their Hainan base at Yu Lin?

Scarborough Shoals was not a base yet, but the Spratlys are, which might thus provide a triangle with some very deep water in which to hide intercontinental ballistic missiles, should the Chinese Communist Party ever feel threatened with the loss of power.

Bill Hayton: The Chinese Communist Party was a stakeholder, but not involved in the post-World War Two settlement. The People's Republic of China had been at the United Nations since 1971 and in UNCLOS since 1973. The USA is not in UNCLOS. Also the customs of international law are important in maritime disputes. History should be considered. China should talk to the Philippines and Vietnam.

Veerle Nouwens: China should have a strong role in security in that Asian Pacific and elsewhere. The South China Sea is an issue of sovereignty and territory. The Code of Conduct addresses more than the previous Declaration of Conduct. Coast Guard cooperation between China and ASEAN – bases for disaster relief, at least in theory. Hopes that the Philippines will help as current presidency of ASEAN.

Stephen Tsang: History is important. It is not true that China has to live with a post-World War Two settlement that was shaped by the NATO lobby. The Chinese Communist Party was present at the creation of the post-war order – a leading player. Not just Roosevelt. Chiang Kai Shek had advocated the United Nations as early as 1942. The People's Republic of China as the successor government, inherited everything he had done. You can't pick and choose. You can say that China was badly done by the USA playing the lion's role. China actually used and supported the UN regularly as it worked to their advantage. It is not for Trump to say 'this bit doesn't work, we don't want it'.

Bill Hayton closed, saying that there is a massive country, with nuclear weapons and the risk of war, but we don't worry about it – India, but with China, somehow, we don't trust them.

The LIBG Forum on The South China Sea was held at the National Liberal Club, London on the 4th April 2017. Notes by Stewart Rayment with help from Bill Hayton & Stephen Tsang.

¹ In March 2010 PRC officials told US officials that they consider the South China Sea a "core interest" on par with Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang.

² PCA Case No. 2013-19 In the matter of the South China Sea Arbitration between the Republic of the Philippines and the Peoples' Republic of China.

<https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf>

Populisms in a Post Truth World

LIBG-MoDem Forum

On the evening of 5 April 2017, two months before the French Presidential elections, LIBG held our first joint forum with MoDem (Mouvement Démocrate), France's liberal, centrist party. Given the recent rise in populist parties and politicians across Europe and in the US, the topic for debate was "*Populisms in a Post Truth World*".

Chairing the forum was Mathieu Capdevila, President of Northern Europe MoDem and an EU policies expert, who also introduced the speakers:

- **Lord Malcolm Bruce**, Member of Parliament for Gordon from 1983 to 2015 and the chairman of the International Development Select Committee from 2005 to 2015
- **Dr Sean Hanley**, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Central and East European Politics, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL
- **Marianne Magnin**, Board Chair of the Cornelius Arts Foundation and MoDem's Parliamentary Candidate for Northern Europe.

Lord Bruce began by asking what constituted "populism". How do some politicians manage to motivate large sections of the population against the 'elite' or 'outsiders'? Citing Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, he said that Brutus spoke in prose, but Marc Anthony spoke in poetry. The answer was in being able to relate to 'people like us' and to have mass appeal.

In the UK, there had always been an assumption that things would work out. David Steel had famously said that we have a Constitution that was not worth the paper that it was not written on! There were no good reasons why the EU Referendum should have been given the weight it has been given, and to be taken as 'binding' as opposed to 'advisory'.

However, what we needed to do now was to acknowledge that the electorate, in particular those who have been left behind, had valid reasons for voting against the establishment. If the market were the 'invisible hand' and technology had made jobs redundant, then we would need to find solutions to manage the UK economy better and share the wealth more equitably.

Dr Sean Hanley who spoke next said that academics viewed 'populism' slightly differently from politicians and think tanks. There was on the one side the 'immoral elites' and on the other side the 'put upon poor people'. Populism was akin to an empty vessel into which one could pour any ideology, whether from the left, the right, the centre or even a lifestyle movement.

The Chairman had previously posed the question as to whether Fukuyama was correct in his thesis in 2008 of 'the end of history' with Western liberal democracy. Dr Hanley whilst agreeing that the thesis still held, observed that there were nevertheless governments in a number of countries such as Russia and Hungary which continue to undermine democracy. They have captured the media, brought the NGOs under their control and have nullified institutions on administrative pretexts.

However, things could still move very quickly. Populism was not just about fringe parties but also affect mainstream parties as seen in the election of Trump in the US.





Marianne Magnin, Mathieu Capdevila, Malcolm Bruce & Dr. Sean Hanley.

Last but by no means least, was Marianne Magnin. She commented on the sense of nostalgia that had affected a number of western nations, such as France. It was a time when people recall feeling safer and when there were fewer foreigners. But there was a distinct sense of irony there too: all the 11 Presidential candidates had claimed that they would want to bring about greater order to French society whilst at the same time offering radical change. Was there not a conflict there?

There was similarity with UK in so far as there was no PR voting in the presidential elections. There was therefore a risk that the French electorate would do one of 3 things: vote against the Government, vote

for an extreme party or “absenteeism” ie not voting at all.

Ms Magnin said that France needed a strong and inspiring leader more than ever before. Since 1789 there had been 5 Republics, 2 Monarchs and 2 Empires, but now was time for everyone to become activists themselves. She was keen to bring back hope to the French people and have a society that was ready to defend its liberal and democratic values.

The meeting was then open to questions from the floor:

Was populism an accident in history or an important trend that would last?

What of Turkey?

Could populist movements be anticipated and prevented?

What of media moguls, did they lead or follow?

How was it possible that Marie Le Pen had support from LGBT voters?

I spoke up in praise of France’s integration policies and Lord Bruce agreed to the limitations of multiculturalism in the UK. Many of the fears of uncontrolled immigration was as much to do with the rationing of public services as on identity politics. Ms Magnin stressed the importance of understanding the drivers for the refugee crisis from across the Mediterranean and the need to help build bridges and create a real alliance with countries in the Middle East and North Africa to solve the crisis.

It was all in all a most inspiring and fruitful discussion and hopefully only the first of more similar joint events with other sister parties.

Merlene Emerson MBE

The LIBG/MoDem Forum, Populisms in a Post Truth World, was held at the National Liberal Club on 5th April 2017.

LIBG Annual General Meeting

The LIBG annual general meeting previously advertised for 10th July has had to be postponed due to the general election being called. It will now be held on 6th September at the National Liberal Club, London. Details will follow.

**John Innes,
Membership Secretary**

Countdown to Congress: here's what awaits in Andorra

With delegates coming from every continent to network, share best practice, and adopt a liberal manifesto for the twenty-first century, Liberal International's 70th-anniversary Congress in Andorra will send a message of strength and determination from liberals worldwide: we have a clear, common vision for our planet and for humanity.

The 70th-anniversary congress will be a time to celebrate how far liberalism has travelled – from political representatives of 19, mainly European countries, gathered in Oxford, UK in 1947 to the truly global federation of more than 100 parties and partners that define LI today, 70 years later.



In less than one week Liberal International will be starting the Congress at which we the world's oldest, longest running global political federation will celebrate its 70th anniversary. Whether in Andorra or not, don't forget to engage with Congress online using the hashtag #Liat70 – send LI a message and it will be displayed on a huge screen in the main auditorium.

On Friday, parliamentarians from South Africa, Venezuela, the Philippines, and Hungary will see experts guide liberals through a practical programme of political skills to tackle populist autocrats, in a panel organised by LI cooperating organisation, FNF. Key elements

of the Liberal Manifesto for the twenty-first century, to be adopted in Andorra, will be scrutinised by a Swedish Peoples' Party-panel before the hotly debated topic on individual versus group rights is undertaken in a British Parliament-style debate between LI President of Honour, Lord Alderdice, and Cambodian MP, Tioulong Saumura (CNRP).

Saturday sees former Prime Minister of Thailand and Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats Chairperson, Abhisit Vejjijva, address how liberalism and survive and thrive in a time of post-truth politics. Later in the day, liberal ministers and MPs will equip delegates from different regions of the world with the skills to win and how to be popular without being populist while sponsors APCO share the seven secrets of political communication.

The full programme can be found at http://www.liberal-international.org/site/file/Andorra%20Congress%202017/Draft_Programme_0512.pdf

Tim Garden Memorial Lecture

June 22, 2015 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Chatham House 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

Speaker: Nick Clegg MP

Chair Robin Niblett CMG, Director of Chatham House

Baroness Sue Garden will also speak.

Dinner is available afterwards in the National Liberal Club a price of £40.00 (two courses including wines)

Those interested in attending the lecture and/ or dinner should contact Robert Woodthorpe Browne at: robertbrowne@cix.co.uk and go to <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event> to enrol

Dinner will be 2 courses n/e £40 including wine

reviews

The Battle for Yellowstone, morality and the sacred roots of environmental conflict,
by Justin Farrell. Princeton University Press, 2017
isbn 97806911664342

Recently, Eastbourne's Liberal Democrat controlled council polled local residents asking whether they would prefer Eastbourne Council should sell the freehold of its four Downland farms or make cuts to frontline services. The decision of the public was that they wished the council to retain ownership of the farms and the council will honour this. The potential sale of the farms is off the table. Much of the issue was around public access to open space in the South Downs National Park.

Local councils have borne the brunt of the Tory government's brutal austerity programme which has seen Eastbourne's grant reduced by £6 million per annum, an astonishing 60% constriction! These cuts have hit all councils very hard and are having a devastating impact on frontline services, though almost uniquely, Lib



I've trudged over these farmlands for many years; I wouldn't say there is anything spectacular about them (that is reserved for the white cliffs beyond), but they are part of an overall landscape of open Downland. Whilst I love this terrain I wouldn't compare it to Yellowstone – the world's first national park. When Justin Farrell commenced this book, he probably couldn't imagine that Donald Trump might become President of the United States, probably didn't even think that the Republicans might win the election, and even if they did, may not have thought them so malign, since it is understood, or at least believed, that there is something of a consensus Stateside for their national parks. National Parks contribute an estimated \$646 billion each year to the US economy, in stimulus from recreation and create 6.1 million jobs. Yet Congress is looking to asset strip national parks¹. Utah Republicans seek to reverse the Bear's Ear National Park – one of the last acts of the Obama administration. Trump's ego is peeked by tweets from park employees on climate change – they are now forbidden to tweet. So, I'm sorry Justin, it looks like the battle for Yellowstone is just starting.

The Guardian article cited below tells us that Arizona Republicans, funded by oil and mining interests, even have their eyes on the Grand Canyon hinterland. That said, this book may provide some of the answers. Amongst its studies, we find old westerners combining to fight fracking proposals at Hoback, Sublette County, Wyoming. These people were not naturally against the energy industry, nor generally against its extraction, but deemed Hoback 'too special to drill'. The broad coalition required the focus on the specific issue. There may be lessons from that for activists in the UK.

There is also a study of the reintroduction of wolves in the Yellowstone National Park in 1995. This is an issue that has been mooted in the Britain since the 1960s, so advocates on either side can draw on Farrell's analysis of the sociology of their American counterparts. The Buffalo is less of an issue for us, though the European Bison was once native (there is a shortage of survivors generally, making the gene-pool poor, and attempted reinduction in the Alladale Wilderness Reserve in Sutherland was unsuccessful). Since Farrell's focus is primarily on the sociology rather than the ecology of this issues around reintroduction and maintenance of species he opens arguments that are not usually encountered, and valuable as such, though I would add the caution, at least for UK readers, that the hunting lobby is much less of a player here, though it too maintains an interest in conservation.

Stewart Rayment

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/19/bureau-land-management-federal-lease>

Flâneuse by Lauren Elkin.
Chatto & Windus, 2016 £16.99

For centuries the flâneur, one who rambles about, exploring a city, has been celebrated in literature. What about his female counterpart, the flâneuse? In her book of this title, Lauren Elkin brings to our attention the literary women who have dared to venture out, to acquaint themselves with whatever city they find themselves in. She objects to how the flâneur has from the 18th century on, been described as invariably male, as if, she says, "a penis were a requisite walking appendage, like a cane."

Much of the narrative concerns Elkin's own experiences. A native New Yorker, she is also quite at home in London and Paris, so these are cities she focuses on, like Jean Rhys, Virginia Woolf, and George Sand, all flâneuses who told of their walks in the city. Elkin also touches on Venice and Tokyo, but more lightly, more like a tourist and not a resident. (In Paris at a talk last Fall, she admitted that being a flâneuse can have its negative side: she's had unpleasant encounters with men, been harassed and even groped).

Still she has a marked preference for downtowns, the city centers. Elkin rightly rejects the American suburbs: "A culture that does not walk is bad for women." She invites us to think of all the rebellious suburban women who have been killed off in literature, noting that the city supplies the best chance of a just world, that can take place only if one has the freedom of movement that a city can offer.

Such freedom came easily to George Sand, an early "liberated woman," who identified with the working classes, with ordinary men and women.

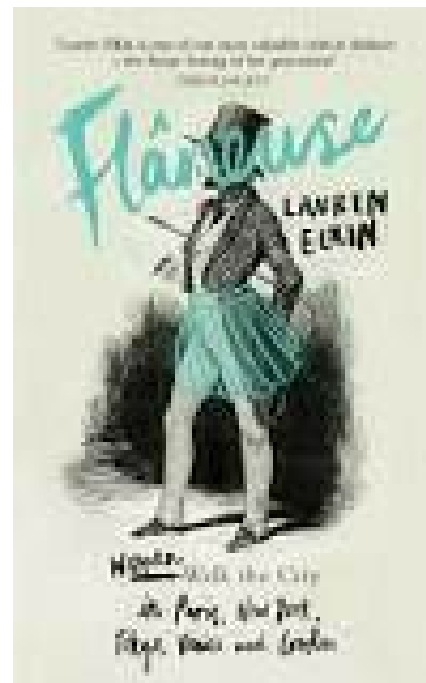
To reinvent herself, Sand had to forego the conventional clothing of the time and put on mannish attire, a jacket and pants in heavy grey cloth, this in itself illegal behavior for a woman in the 1800s.

As a walker with a lively curiosity about cities, Elkin once followed a man whom she identifies as "X" to Tokyo, "just to avoid choosing not to." Her life in Tokyo was affected by this increasingly tense and unrewarding relationship, and by her stay with him in a modern high-rise apartment circled by highways was hardly the right place for one who likes to learn a city on her feet. But she concludes, although the relationship ended, she learned to love Tokyo on its own terms.

Elkin contributes a look at the lives of major writers and their interaction with their cities. She shows the city as a place favourable to revolution, led by women in 1789 and by students in 1968. It is here that she stumbles, treating the uprisings of 1968 as a mere student frolic, while Mavis Gallant, whom she cites, saw them as a deadly serious social upheaval causing deprivation and destruction in her immediate neighbourhood, and John Ardagh, in *France and the New Century*, mentioned that these uprisings brought in serious revolutionaries, Maoists, Trotskyites, anarchists and others with a potential for violence.

In *Flâneuse*, Elkin leads readers on a merry romp through literature, history, and film, adding her own stories to the mix. This is a book that merits re-reading and will inspire the reader to take another look at certain classics. She leaves us with phrases and thoughts to savour: "Postcards are the wanderer's flare signal, shot up into the dark, an announcement of presence." As an immigrant, she says, "you will always feel exposed, as if you're missing your top layer of skin." And, as a woman, a flâneuse, "we reserve our right to disturb the peace, to observe, occupy, and to organize space on our own terms." A worthy objective!

Christine Graf





Janet Berridge, Chairman, National Liberal Club,
 has the honour of inviting you
 to the National Liberal Club Diplomatic Reception
 in association with

Liberal International (British Group) and The New European newspaper
 on

Monday 19th June 2017, from 6.30pm to 8.30 pm

Guest of Honour - The Rt Hon Nick Clegg, MP
 Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union
 and Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade.

The cost of attending this "event of the year" is £25.00 per person

The Club has invited all Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the
 Reception. Availability is, therefore, limited and so it is on a "first come" basis

RSVP

National Liberal Club,
 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE
 Tel 020 7930 9871 Fax 0207 839 4768
bookings@nlc.org.uk

Dress - Lounge suit
 or equivalent for ladies

BOOKING FORM

National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HE
 Tel: 020 7930 9871 Fax: 020 7839 4768 email: bookings@nlc.org.uk

Date	Event	No. of places	Price per person	Total £
19-June-2017	NLC Diplomatic Reception		£25.00	

Name..... Remittance enclosed for £ _____

Address.....