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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Tom Dale

1931-2019

EVENTS

26th-29th September Liberal Democrats' Autumn Conference, Online. *See pages 5-6*

14th October Isaiah Berlin Lecture: The 10 Commandments of Isaiah Berlin – Henry Hardy. 14.00-15.00 UK time. *See page 19*

20th October Liberal International Extraordinary Virtual Congress. Online.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment, Rebecca Tinsley. Essex Chronicle or as stated.



Chinese Liberal Democrats have an online survey on the situation in Hong Kong. To participate please go to <https://chineselibdems.org.uk/en/survey/survey-on-the-situation-in-hong-kong>



LIBG 2020 PROGRAMME



A programme of events for LIBG has been organised by the executive for the rest of the year. It is intended that these will be held physically at the National Liberal Club starting at 6.30pm in each case, but also broadcast online. These arrangements will obviously depend on both corona virus restrictions and technology.

Details of online access, speakers and exact subjects will be announced nearer the time for each. Please check the forthcoming events link on the LIBG website, www.libg.co.uk

The events are:

2 October - 6.30 pm by Zoom (email adrian.trett@gmail.com for details nearer the date).

Poland & Hungary LGBT+ Rights - joint hosting with LIBG, LGBT+ Lib Dems and LDEG

Jarek Kubiak, founder of Polish Rainbow UK.

Magda Oldziejewska, The Feminist Library

are both activists recently met in London at the Polish Embassy protests Saturday, Aug 15, 2020 - against the latest Polish government crackdown on Polish LGBTQ activists. They are key protagonists based here with a very active group of supporters.

Anna Júlia Donáth & Katalin Cseh

are both prominent MEPs from the Hungarian Momentum Party and part of the Renew Europe group in the European parliament.

Chair - Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett

12 October

75 years of peace with the UN – is it still upholding the spirit of supporting human rights or does its form need to change?

Register for the webinar at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mEvmgp0UReKFtOSd5FK-PA

9 November 6.30pm

Annual General Meeting (postponed from July due to pandemic restrictions) followed by a speaker meeting at 7.00pm

7 December

What's happening to the USA's global position and what are the threats?

The United Nations at 75: why - and how – should it be reformed?

October 12th 2020

London 6:30 PM | Europe 7:30 PM
USA East Coast 1:30 PM | West Coast 10:30 AM

[CLICK HERE](#) to register
or visit www.bit.ly/LIBGWebinar



Professor Allan Rock

former Canadian ambassador to the UN



Aicha Elbasri

former UN spokesperson in Darfur
and whistle-blower



Hillel Neuer

Executive Director of United Nations Watch,
a Swiss human rights organization



Professor Myles Wickstead | Chair

Visiting Professor (International Relations),
King's College London

Liberal international British Group

| www.libg.co.uk

For webinar registration concerns, email tinsleyrc@aol.com



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AUTUMN CONFERENCE THE INTERNATIONAL BITS

The Liberal Democrats' Autumn Conference is held online this later this week, from Friday 25th to Monday 28th September. The International Agenda is thin, but this is an experiment. LIBG for example, have their next Forum just after of the conference on the 2nd October..

Saturday 26th

- 10.00am Question & Answer session on Foreign Affairs and looking beyond the end of the Brexit transition period. With Baroness Lindsay Northover (Foreign Affairs spokesperson in the House of Lords) and Baroness Sarah Ludford (Euope spokesperson in the House of Lords).
- 12.00-12.50 Fringe: Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine – Yehuda Shaul, Breaking the Silence.
- 18.45-19.35 Fringe: Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

Sunday 27th

- 10.00 Topical motion
- 10.50 Policy motion: Racial Justice Cannot Wait
- 12.00-12.50 Fringe: Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel – Sir Ed Davey in discuss with LDFI chair Gavin Stollar.
- 16.00-16.50 Fringe: Liberal Democrats Overseas – Frozen Pensions to Lost Pensions, dealing with Britain's pension mis-steps
- 16.00-16.50 Fringe: Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary AGM
- 16.00-16.50 Fringe: Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar – Brexit in times of Covid-19
- 17.25 Policy motion: Europe

Monday 28th

- 17.00 Consultative session: The World after Covid-19
- 18.05 Topical motion
- 18.50 Policy motion: Hong Kong's Future

https://www.libdems.org.uk/a20-agenda?utm_campaign=agenda20%20members&utm_campaign=a20_agenda_members&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nationbuilder&utm_source=libdems



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT FRIENDS OF PALESTINE FRINGE MEETING



Yehuda Shaul, from Breaking the Silence

The fringe will start at midday on Saturday 26th, and run for an hour, during which there will be a Q&A opportunity.

Yehuda, an Israeli Jew who served in the IDF, set up Breaking the Silence with some friends in 2004, when he left the army. He wanted fellow ex-soldiers to be able to speak out about the realities of being in an occupying army, and to bring into the open some things soldiers might prefer not to speak about, and which some Israeli politicians might prefer not to hear about.

Yehuda continues to campaign in Israel for justice for the Palestinians.

Meet the Liberal Democrat leader: A conversation with Sir Ed Davey



Join the Board of Deputies and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel for a discussion with new leader Sir Ed Davey about key issues of concern to the Jewish community. Sir Ed will be in conversation with LDFI Hon. Chair Gavin Stollar, with a vote of thanks from Lord Monroe Palmer.



Sunday 27th September
12:00 - 12:50PM

Join us on YouTube,
Facebook and Twitter



 **BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS**
ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Lib Dems Overseas Conference Fringe Meeting Sunday 27th 13:00-13:50

Frozen Pensions to Lost Pensions - dealing with Britain's pension mis-steps

No one's getting younger. • This concerns everyone. • Triple lock threatened. • Half million pensions frozen abroad. • Our pensions under attack. • What's to be done?

Join:

Baroness Sal Brinton

John Duffy, International British Pensions

Pensioner Testimonials

Moderator: • George Cunningham, Chair Lib Dems Overseas



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

LD4SOS Annual General Meeting - Sunday 27th September - 4p.m. for a prompt start

After the AGM business an open forum to discuss pressing issues faced by seekers of sanctuary in the UK including the right to work, detention, housing, unaccompanied children and family reunion, with contributions from campaigners and Parliamentarians. Have your say!

AN EMERGENCY MOTION FOR OUR VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

If you are attending the Federal Liberal Democrat conference, James Cox of LD4SOS has submitted a draft Emergency Motion on our behalf arising from the issues the current crisis has highlighted. If Conference Committee accepts it for the ballot, we would be grateful for your support.

Trophy Hunting: Time for Governments to Act

Eduardo Gonçlaves.

It is almost exactly 5 years since Cecil the lion was shot by American dentist and trophy hunter, Walter Palmer. It was one of the biggest media stories of recent times. However, little has changed since then. Another 6,000 lions have been shot by trophy hunters since 2015. There are today just 20,000 lions left. The US government believes they could be gone by 2050. This would be the first-ever extinction of a big cat since the sabre-tooth tiger disappeared in prehistoric times.

So how did we get here? And how are trophy hunters allowed to shoot endangered species just for fun?

First, the basics.

Trophy hunting is a huge global industry. The scale of the killing is extraordinary. In the last decade as many as 1.7 million animals were killed by trophy hunters. Of these, about 300,000 were species protected by law.

Americans make up about two-thirds of the world's trophy hunters. Hunters from Britain and Europe make up most of the rest, although there has been a huge rise in the number of Chinese trophy hunters over the past decade: they are now 2nd in the global league table.

The animals most popular with trophy hunters include some of the most iconic – and threatened – members of the animal kingdom. Animals popular with British hunters include cheetahs, leopards, monkeys, elephants, zebras, lions, hippopotamuses, and polar bears.



Cecil and Jericho. (Photo: Brent Staplekemp)

CITES - the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species - supposedly protects threatened wildlife. The most vulnerable can only be killed or traded in “exceptional circumstances”. However, trophy hunters are – controversially – exempted. Hunting trophies, it says, are “personal or household effects”. Wildlife traffickers have gleefully exploited this loophole. In recent years, the gall bladders of almost 5,000 bears have been traded under the guise of ‘hunting trophies.’ The bile within them is used in traditional Chinese medicines. Over a 7year period, rhino horns worth up to \$300 million found their way onto the black-market courtesy of this ‘loophole’. A recent trial in South Africa heard how a leading Thai gangster was flying in Vietnamese peasants and prostitutes who pretended to be rhino trophy hunters.

South Africa is the hub of the African safari industry. However – to many people’s surprise – the global trophy hunting capital is Canada. This is large part due to its huge bear hunting industry. Over the past decade as many as 130,000 bears were shot for ‘sport’. Canada is the only country that still allows polar bears to be shot by trophy hunters. There is a thriving trade in polar bear fur too. Some 50,000 polar bears have been shot for their skins or for so-called ‘sport’ since the 1960s. Today there are only 20,000 polar bears left.

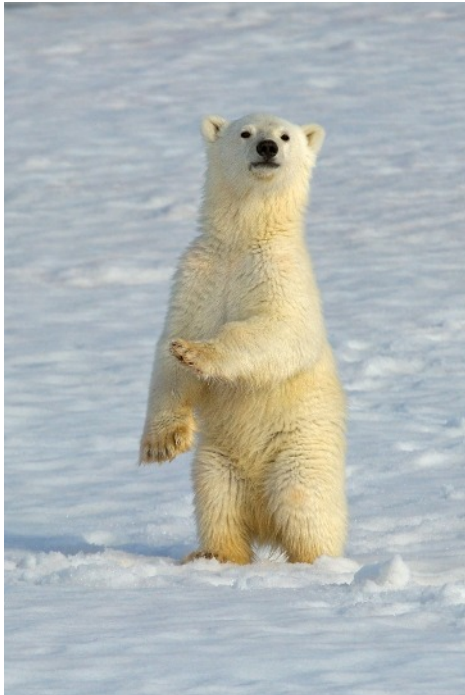
British colonial authorities in the 19th century actively encouraged trophy hunting in Africa and India, in part to help settle new areas. A £50 permit gave you the right to shoot huge numbers of animals including

an unlimited number of lions and leopards. John Alexander Hunter, who died in 1963, killed 600 lions and 1500 rhinos.

Wildlife numbers began to fall dramatically. At the beginning of the 19th century, there were 20 million African elephants. By the beginning of the 20th century, there were just 10 million. Today, there are less than half a million. Elephants are still the most popular ‘big game’ species for British hunters.

Lions have seen a similar collapse. There were an estimated 1.2 million at the turn of the 19th century. By 1950, there were approximately 450,000. Today the population is estimated to be just 20,000. There are fewer lions than there are rhinoceroses or orangutans. Yet the slaughter continues. Spanish lion hunter Antonio ‘Tony’ Sanchez-Arino’s tally is currently 340 lions. Sanchez-Arino has also shot 1,317 African elephants and hundreds of rhinos and leopards.

Scientists say that trophy hunting in parts of Africa has had the single greatest impact on local lion populations – far greater than persecution, poaching or natural mortality. Yet the number of lion trophies being taken home jumped by 14% over the past decade. There is growing interest in lion hunting from hunters from Eastern European and South American nations, as well as China. In 2017, hunters from no fewer than 57 different countries travelled to Africa to shoot a lion.



Polar Bear (Photo: Andy Rouse)

Britain is one of the worst countries in the world when it comes to shooting ‘canned lions’ – where animals are bred in captivity and shot in an enclosure. It is a great deal cheaper than spending weeks in the bush. The lions will be generally tame and often think an approaching hunter is in fact a keeper bringing it dinner. A gas engineer from Norfolk recently boasted he had shot a lion from a distance of 8-9 yards.

The industry has wielded huge power behind the scenes, ensuring that governments and international bodies alike have allowed trophy hunting to continue. Safari Club International (SCI) has spent over \$140 million on lobbying since 2000. Its Political Action Committee (PAC) is one of the largest in the US. PACs are used to funnel financial contributions to the campaigns of election candidates. Ryan Zinke, who became US Interior Secretary – and the man responsible for America’s hunting laws and trophy regulations – has received thousands of dollars from SCI’s PAC. So has Senate leader Mitch McConnell; Mike Pompeo, the US Secretary of State; and former House speaker John Boehner. In 2016, contributions were made to the

campaigns of candidates in over one third of House of the Representatives seats and half of Senate seats.

SCI has a powerful in-house team of lawyers too. It has filed briefs with the US Supreme Court including about the right to hunt exotic wild animals on private ranches in Texas where you can shoot giraffes, zebras and kangaroos. It has been involved in a cases involving imports of elephant and lion trophies from endangered populations, and hunting in America’s wildlife refuges.

Another leading group calls itself ‘Conservation Force’. It was founded by SCI President John J Jackson III, one of the world’s all-time leading lion and elephant hunters. Conservation Force represents 200 of the world’s main hunting bodies. It has been almost single-handedly responsible for some of the most significant rulings by governments and international bodies on what you can or can’t bring home a trophy of. It succeeded in getting elephant trophy imports from much of Africa allowed again, and getting several endangered animals ‘downlisted’ into lower categories so there were fewer restrictions. They’ve defeated efforts to stop white rhino hunting. When the state of New Jersey decided to ban hunting trophies coming in through its airports or seaports, Jackson and Conservation Force took the state to court – and won.

Lions – perhaps surprisingly – are classed as ‘Vulnerable’, not ‘Endangered’ on IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species. This has been a subject of some controversy. Their calls fell on deaf ears.

The industry has worked hard to keep lions off the IUCN’s list of species classed as ‘Endangered’ (it is currently categorised as ‘Vulnerable’ on the IUCN Red List). Scientists say that the overwhelming majority of lion populations “have declined at a rate that meets the criteria for categorisation as Endangered.” In 2015, the IUCN Red Data survey recommended that the lion be upgraded to ‘Endangered’. Safari Club International responded by funding a \$1.3 million campaign to prevent this. Jackson has sat on IUCN’s lion experts committee for over a decade, despite having no scientific qualifications.

The current outlook is worrying. Safari Club International continues to encourage members to shoot large numbers of animals. It has 80 different prizes, one of which is for hunters who shoot animals from more than 100 different species. British trophy hunter Malcolm King has won dozens of these awards and is thought to have shot hundreds of animals. South Africa, the centre of the African hunting industry, has seen a 50% rise in hunting trophies leaving the country over the past decade. Its canned hunting industry is expanding into animals such as zebras. Several traditional European markets such as Germany are continuing to grow. More Eastern Europeans are going trophy hunting – there’s been a 40% growth among Russian clients - while China has seen a staggering jump of 1200% in the number of trophies coming into the country over the past 10 years.

The public, meanwhile, is overwhelmingly opposed to trophy hunting. A recent Survation poll revealed 86% of people in Britain want trophy hunting banned. The government has promised to ban imports from endangered species. However, a YouGov poll revealed that only 14% of people believe a ban should apply only to endangered animals. More than three-quarters wanted the ban to be universal.

Defra conducted a public consultation on trophy import laws which concluded in February. Since then, George Eustice has shrugged off questions from cross-party MPs and journalists about the government’s intentions. In the aftermath of ‘Cecil-gate’, Rory Stewart and Liz Truss – as Defra ministers – promised repeatedly to ban trophies. Let’s hope history isn’t about to repeat itself.

Eduardo Gonçalves

Eduardo Gonçalves is the founder of the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, and formerly Chief Executive of the League Against Cruel Sports.

More information can be found at the Campaign’s website www.bantrophyhunting.org and they can be followed at <https://www.facebook.com/bantrophyhuntingcampaign/>

There is also a petition at <https://www.change.org/p/united-nations-ban-trophy-hunting-stop-poachers-end-imports>



Egypt and the United States: A Tale of Two Authoritarians! Mohammed Nossier

Having an American president who has engaged in numerous instances of manipulation of power for over three and half years, which may include the possibility of ruining the 2020 presidential election by refusing to accept its results should he lose, prompts us to ponder whether the United States is a truly democratic nation that honours its “checks and balances” ruling system – or if President Trump’s clear abuse of power calls into question the very essence of United States democracy.

“Democracy Dies in Darkness”, the *Washington Post* slogan, is well-understood by President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi of Egypt who instantly and deliberately plunged his entire nation into total darkness after he assumed power in 2014, convinced that his vision alone is enough to lead the country! Al-Sisi has successfully de-politicised Egyptian citizens and, more noteworthy, intensified polarization in Egyptian society by maintaining a cruel friction between his supporters and opponents, authorizing him to further expand his iron-fist rule!

In contrast, the United States is a truly enlightened nation; the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and assembly, along with the casting of ballots. However, politics is no different from any other given industry; naturally, the clear majority of the population doesn’t grasp its essence and can be misguided easily. Meanwhile, the commendable attribute of empowering all citizens to cast their votes can lead to bringing an unfit president to power as a result of citizens’ “innocent ignorance”!

Polarizing American society while offering certain economic privileges to given segments of the population has enabled President Trump to sustain core groups of loyal supporters who value their personal gains over the genuine advancement of their nation. Likewise, sidelining the entire society and expanding political prosecution have served to strengthen Al-Sisi’s grip on power in Egypt. While each president has applied a different means of polarization (“Al Sisi’s harsh stick and Trump’s illusory carrot”), both have realized identical ends that serve their political interests at the expense of their respective nations.

“I am building presidential palaces and I will build more” was Al Sisi’s response to past accusations demanding to know why a poor and significantly indebted nation would be constructing presidential palaces when it already has countless fabulous palaces – outnumbering many advanced, and even wealthy, nations. A clear downside of autocracy is its inadequacy in outlaying government expenditure.

“I have to see. Look. I have to see. No, I’m not just going to say yes”, answered Trump when asked whether he would acknowledge losing the presidential election. In fact, the question in itself over-empowers a civil servant with a despotic authority. Any president who remains in the Oval Office beyond his tenure should receive the same treatment as an American citizen who illegally occupies state property; the security apparatus forces him to leave and he is subsequently tried in court!

The instinctive mishandling of power by both presidents has created a special bond between them, highlighted by the tyrannical practices they have in common as illustrated by the unnecessary up-scaling of military institutions, threatening to deploying



military troops domestically to serve their political interest, empowering security apparatus to deal with lawbreakers or political opponents offensively and the development of notions that clearly serve the rulers' powers instead of their nations.

A vital downside of Egypt's absolute autocracy is the barring of critics from voicing their opinions; as a result, the ruler lives in a completely illusory world, believing that his fellow citizens wholeheartedly admire his policies. In the United States on the other hand, freedom of expression is unimpaired and political elites are constituted of well-educated citizens – nevertheless, the U.S. president is empowered enough to ignore his citizens' voices and even to make fun of them!

Moreover, the United States is naturally a power-driven nation that often prefers to capitalize on its military power rather than diplomacy! Its yearly military expenditure exceeds USD 700 billion, accounting for more than one-third of the world's total military expenditure; a substantial budget allocation that is certainly not needed to protect U.S. borders, hasn't helped the U.S. to successfully dominate the world, nor made American citizens at large proud of this false supremacy!

Since the 1952 Free Officers Movement until this moment, Egypt has been mostly ruled by military officers; however, Al-Sisi has explicitly extended their power to govern the entire nation. While Egypt's relationship with the United States has been going through the usual ups and downs, a steady bond has been formed between the military institutions of both countries, honoured by USD 1.3 billion annually in U.S. military aid to Egypt since the signing of the 1979 Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel to the present time.

Some may argue that Egyptians often seek political asylum in the United States; therefore, there is no comparison between the clear autocracy of Egypt and the temporary "decline" of democracy in the United States. Certainly, the status of democracy in the U.S. is more advanced than it is in Egypt. However, the U.S. constrains its citizens, offering them personal freedom space that may be utilized to the maximum – yet Americans are not empowered enough to influence national policy, which remains exclusively in the hands of the president and political elites.

"Catch me if you can," describes the present status of U.S. democracy, best illustrated by Trump's bullying politics. Democracy should not be viewed as an occasional event that only happens during elections, but as a mechanism that is meant to progressively advance citizens' quality of life, equally and explicitly. In fact, if we balance American citizens' superior literacy and the constitutional rights they enjoy against Egypt's deprivation in both areas, we may come to realize that the democracy practiced in the United States today is almost equivalent to that practiced in Egypt.

Mohammed Nossier

This is the Chinese moment.

Rebecca Tinsley

China is taking advantage of the lack of American leadership, combined with the pandemic, to assert itself in Hong Kong and around the globe. But the problem is not with China, but with the West, and the corrupt leadership of the many developing countries with which China has carefully built relationships. China is behaving rationally and opportunistically, whereas we, the West, are making things easy for China to expand its economic, military and ideological reach.

The West

We (particularly the UK and the US) are disengaging from multilateral institutions just when we should unite with other countries, creating informal alliances to demand reciprocal trade policies from China. We have drastically cut our soft power: for the first time, the US has fewer embassies than China; it chairs only one of the UN's 15 agencies, while China chairs four; our diplomats are starved of funds; the UK has cut the BBC World Service and the British Council; and foreign students are made to feel unwelcome.

We lecture China on its values, while being incapable of seeing how hypocritical we must appear from a Chinese perspective; we condemn China for propping up repressive regimes, while we kowtow to Saudi Arabia; our oil companies happily worked in Nigeria during the worst years of military rule; we continue to work in Angola, Gabon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea, unconcerned by their regrettable human rights records.

Our short-sightedness means we forget how many democratically elected governments we undermined (Congo - Lumumba, Iran – Mossadeg, Guatemala and Chile).

For years, Western foreign policy experts said Chinese expansionism was purely economic. Yet, since the early 1960s, China has assisted developing countries, showcasing their mode of governance; cancelling presidential term limits; entrenching the one-party state; crushing minorities; restricting free speech; centralising the state; and dealing exclusively with the ruling elite.

China in Africa

China says it does not intervene in other countries, but with economic partnership come weapons to maintain the status quo. At the UN, China protects its client states from criticism, and in return, many Muslim majority countries signed an open letter in 2019, supporting China's treatment of the Uighurs; and in June, they backed the Hong Kong National Security Law.

China has a perfect understanding of the weakness of the developing world, with its feeble institutions and corrupt elite. Unlike Western aid agencies, the Chinese do not harbour misconceptions that the African elite will use loans for the common good. Unlike during the 19th century scramble for Africa, this time, too many African elites have agency and choose to do deals that enrich themselves and cheat their citizens out of revenues for mineral wealth.

When Angola was negotiating a World Bank loan, it was pressed to be more transparent. China, however, offered the loan with no political conditions. That deal and subsequent loans are opaque. However, we know repayment is not in the number of barrels of oil, but for the dollar sum owed. This does not work to Angola's favour with a low oil price. But its elite did not care because their Swiss bank accounts were healthy. Angola's foreign debt is \$50 billion, of which 40% is owed to China.

In the DRC, Chinese mining companies will pay no tax until the Congo repays the loans, which will be never. Congo is so indebted that it owes China the equivalent of 25% of its entire economy.

In Sudan (China's biggest investment), it propped up a brutal and racist regime for decades, selling it weapons and allowing soldiers to use its oil facilities as bases to attack the African ethnic minorities. According to an African Union source, if China was engaged with serious governments, the relationships would be very different.

The semantics of human rights?

China says human rights are the right to food, shelter and clothing; and the collective right to sovereignty, not being humiliated by colonialist nations. Yet, by China's own standards, it has failed because Africa is not getting more prosperous. Chinese see for themselves that infrastructure is not maintained, there is a skills shortage and insufficient competent management. Whereas the Chinese Communist Party's model has lifted 850 million Chinese out of poverty, its approach is failing in Africa.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

The West could re-engage with the developing world, making aid contingent on governments taxing their own citizens (and thus being held accountable by them). We could stop subsidizing our own agriculture and dumping our surpluses on developing world markets, thereby putting local farmers out of business. We could stop laundering the money of tyrants, doing PR for repressive regimes, and selling dictators weapons. Moreover, the US especially needs to rebuild partnerships through multilateral institutions and informal groups that can reinforce rules-based commerce and finance, trade and shipping. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and India have a vested interest in working together with us to counter Chinese muscle-flexing.

Rebecca Tinsley



Rebecca Tinsley spoke at the LIBG Forum Webinar *China: killing the goose that laid the golden egg?* on Monday 14th September. Her earlier article *Africa, oil and COVID-19* which appeared in *interLib* 2020-04, deals with some of the issues raised in this article in more detail. Rebecca is director of Waging Peace.

Illusions and Delusions about Peace in the Middle East

A commentary by Andrew Whitley

Barely 10 days after President Trump made the surprise announcement that, with US help, Israel and the UAE had agreed to “normalise” their relations, Dominic Raab is this week making his first official visit to Israel and Palestine as Foreign Secretary. The Consulate-General in Jerusalem – the UK’s interlocutor with the proto-state Palestinian institutions in Ramallah – said his visit would “affirm Britain’s willingness to help facilitate a return to Israeli-Palestinian dialogue as a step towards a lasting peace”.

Cajoling the Palestinians into resuming direct talks with Bibi Netanyahu’s government has been a consistent theme from London for some time. It chimes with what Washington, too, has been urging. Influential Arab voices such as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia have also been saying the same privately to the Palestinian leadership and to foreign visitors. The unmistakable message to the Palestinians from all of them is: Get on the train, fast, before it is too late; it is already leaving the station. If you do not act now you will be left behind. Johnson and Trump may be at odds these days over policy towards Iran, but they are in close lockstep over Israel and its improving relations with the Arab world. It seems they also concur on how to go about tackling the unresolved Palestinian question.

What is there to object to in resuming bilateral peace talks? After all, at the end of the day, the conventional wisdom goes, it is Israelis and Palestinians who will have to live with each other, to share the land and its resources. • To try and answer that question, one must first ask what the British Government has in mind when it presses President Mahmoud Abbas to reopen direct talks after a breach of six years. One must press for the details, including on what role the United Kingdom itself envisages playing and in what international context.

First, on what substantive basis should talks resume? Should they be based on Trump’s “Deal of the Century” unveiled in January – a plan widely denounced as providing cover for further Israeli land grabs in the West Bank? The British Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary have repeatedly said that the plan can be a useful starting point for peace talks. Is the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem then going to be the venue once again for clandestine talks-about-talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators? I would not bet on it.

Should the talks be based on existing, international-agreed, parameters and Security Council decisions which Britain helped craft, starting with Resolutions 242 and 338 after the June 1967 war and continuing to UNSCR 2334 of December 2016, which bans Jewish settlement building? This is what the Palestinian leadership itself and many others continue to insist on.

What about the Arab Peace Initiative (API) launched by then Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz in 2002? As recently as 2015, most Arab states were still working jointly on promoting this initiative, which they saw as an international support mechanism for the Palestinians. Today many Israelis and foreign observers consider the API to be a dead letter. They would note – correctly – that when the UAE agreed to normalise relations with Israel there was no mention of it. It would be a big mistake though to ignore widespread popular sentiment in the Arab world against the UAE/Israel agreement. For all the spin from Abu Dhabi about the UAE having normalised relations with Tel Aviv in order to forestall Israeli annexation of the West Bank, most Arabs see the deal as a blatant betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Arabic social media commentary has made these opinions crystal clear.

In the theatre of the absurd that passes for much of international diplomacy these days, a more accurate way of viewing the new Israeli/Emirati relationship is to see them as a couple in a clandestine relationship who have finally decided to go public with their declaration of love. The US-brokered accord is about many things: responding to a perceived mutual threat from Iran; Israel’s and the pro-Israel lobby’s enduring relationship with power in Washington; trade, investment, and technology; and the Emirates’ appetite for ever more advanced Western weaponry. But it is not at all about the Palestinian cause. And the British

Government assertion that the agreement will give a “much needed boost for peace in the region” is likely to prove mere wishful thinking, with little substance to back up the claim.

During an era when the news coming out of the Middle East is unrelentingly bleak, it may appear churlish to be dismissive of what, to many, will seem like a rare ray of sunshine. The Balfour Project believes strongly in Israel’s right to live in peace and security in the region, to be accepted and integrated into its neighbourhood. But it believes equally passionately that one must not, and cannot, deny or ride roughshod over Palestinian rights – individual and collective, human or national – in the process. That is the trouble with the Johnson Government’s rush to take advantage of what it calls “new dynamics” resulting from the UAE agreement with Israel to press the Palestinians prematurely into resuming talks.

Deeply divided and at an historically weak point, the Palestinian national movement is not ready today to enter into unconditional, and unprepared, talks with a vastly more powerful adversary – one moreover that will still have the full weight of the United States behind it regardless of who wins the November elections. Nor should talks be on the basis of the Trump plan with its archipelago of *bantustans* masquerading as a Palestinian “state”. This plan and the Israeli threat of *de jure* annexation of much of the West Bank, temporarily suspended by Netanyahu in response to the accord, are mortal threats to international law.

While waiting to see whether there will be a new tenant in the White House next January Britain could usefully start to prepare the diplomatic ground for a more structured peace initiative that has a better chance of success. This would, of necessity, be one that could (a) command a broad consensus in the international community and (b) be based on human rights, international law, equity, and mutual security. To get there, though, will require real leadership and a willingness by Britain to forge its own path, not to simply continue playing Sancho Panza to America’s Don Quixote. The United States remains the indispensable actor on the stage of the Israeli/Palestinian drama; but that does not mean other states cannot make valuable contributions, not least by pressing Washington to be more even-handed.

To regain credibility on the stage it once dominated as the Mandate power for Palestine, Britain should abandon failed policies. Not the least is its self-defeating refusal to deal with Hamas, the party that won the last, internationally recognised, elections held in Palestine almost 15 years ago. It should then press Fatah and Hamas into real political reconciliation, so as to be able to present a broad common front towards Israel ahead of any new peace talks. It should also encourage Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) to forge a new working relationship. (The Palestinians’ unilateral withdrawal from “security coordination” with Israel is having many unintended negative consequences for ordinary Palestinians.) The two sides cannot avoid dealing with the other. Britain should also press Israel to transfer all of the taxes it collects on behalf of the PA without any unlawful confiscations. This money, after all, is the PA’s lifeblood. Without the ability to pay its civil servants and security personnel, the entire shaky edifice of Palestinian state-building under occupation will likely soon collapse, leaving Israel to deal with the mess. In that worrisome scenario a new violent *intifada* could easily erupt, one made even more dangerous for being effectively leaderless.

For its part, the Palestinian leadership should dispense with its old ritualistic reflexes such as calling for emergency meetings of the Arab League and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation whenever it faces a crisis, as if these states were capable – or willing – to pull Palestinian chestnuts out of the proverbial fire. The UAE has just proven the contrary. Critically, what is missing today, though, is a real sense of Palestinian agency: to end the occupation and fulfil the century-old, collective dreams of self-determination.



The Conservative Government’s newfound wish to get involved again in the thick of an issue one of its Labour predecessors tossed to the United Nations in 1947 should be welcomed by all who care about the UK helping bring a modicum of peace to the region. Parliamentarians from all four nations of the United Kingdom, especially those in the Houses of Commons and Lords, should thus pay close attention to what happens next – and stand ready to call the Johnson government to account if the gap between its rhetoric and actions yawns too large.

Is the Raab trip going to be the harbinger of a period of much more active, muscular, and sustained British diplomacy, as befits its proclaimed post-Brexit role on the world stage? Or will it prove to be just another walk-on part in this mad theatre of illusions and delusions called the Middle East? We fervently hope events will show it is the former, not the latter.

Andrew Whitley

Andrew Whitley is founder and executive director of Geo-Political Advisory Services (GPAS), a UK-based consultancy that works on the alleviation of armed conflict in the Middle East and Asia. He was previously Policy Director and interim Chief Executive of The Elders, the organisation of global figures founded by Nelson Mandela. He has worked as a journalist with the BBC and Financial Times and later, with the United Nations. He was the founding director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division.

This article was first published by the Balfour Project. Further details of the Balfour Project, including their webinar series, can be found at <https://balfourproject.org/>

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I commend to you Andrew Whitley's thoughtful analysis, below, of current British Government policy on the Israel/Palestine conflict. Andrew asks if our Foreign Secretary's recent visit signals sustained Government commitment to a just end to the 1967 Occupation, or was a walk-on part of little consequence. Either way, Britain has responsibilities from the time when she made contradictory promises and ruled in Mandate Palestine. Today Britain can exert influence, if she chooses to do so.

The PLO Leadership pressed Dominic Raab now to recognise the second state – Palestine – in the two-state outcome which Britain maintains is right for both peoples. The Balfour Project continues to advocate Government recognition of Palestine alongside Israel. Mr Raab's response to Abbas? It's when, not if – but it's not now. Which begs the question: if not now, when? The two-state outcome is disappearing before our eyes: British action is needed.

Mr Raab urged the PLO to re-engage with Israel, including resumed security cooperation, and to re-examine President Trump's 'Deal of the Century', which discards international law and does not bear serious examination. It was never intended as a basis for negotiation; it is an instrument of coercion of the Palestinians. Can Britain rediscover her own voice and work for an outcome which respects international law and UN Security Council Resolutions? Hope springs eternal – and with hope, a determination to press our Government to do what is right.

Sir Vincent Fean

Sir Vincent Fean

Chair of Trustees, Balfour Project.

In his diplomatic career, Sir Vincent Fean was Consul General to Jerusalem, 2010-2014.



Yabloko makes gains in Regional Elections

Yabloko, our sister party in Russia, is congratulated for winning 47 liberal deputies in the Regional Parliaments & Councils elections. Nikolay Rybakov said *For us it was a tough election, with many violations of the rights of our candidates and falsification of the results. However, we have received representation and continue to work for our voters!* Yabloko won 13 seats in the 2016 regional elections. The elections were held over three days from 11th-13th September to avoid over-crowding and risks from Covid-19, but critics have said that this made electoral fraud easier. Pro-Putin United Russia won, of course, but lost their majority in Tomsk (where Alexei Navalny was poisoned), Novosibirsk and Tambov.

The Fast diminishing playground of the Turkish regime.

A.Kurt.

As things are getting hotter and proving much more difficult than it looked before, the Turkish government tries to avoid any armed conflict in Mediterranean Sea, Syria and Libya too. However, a short while ago defence minister of Turkey, General Hulusi Akar, gave a short interview to Channel 4¹ and said “we will keep looking for oil in the areas which Greece announced that its their waters”. At a first glance, it does look confusing because Turkey is having sort of secret talks with Egypt about Libya, trying not to make Russia angry because of the Idlib region in Syria and clearly avoiding a clash with Greek navy. In fact, the defence minister himself is representing the closest ally to the Western world in current regime of Turkey. He defused or tried to defuse disagreements with USA in the past. Because of the nature of forces which made up of current regime coalition things do not seem clear in the eyes anybody who is foreign to the tricks of Turkish politics. When it comes domestic affairs regime immediately becomes very hawkish but behind the scenes, they try to solve the problems without telling or shoving the nation. Domestically they want to show themselves as heroic, brave and ready to fight with anybody.

Nationalism, Islamism, hatred of western civilisations are the first three principles of their ideology. They had a good run until a few years ago than economic conditions began to changed, they run out of cheap money mostly results of FED policies. Couple of years ago foreign investors started running away, despite the high interest rates even hot money was avoiding the Turkish markets, then came the Covid-19. Now they are left with huge budget deficit, high inflation, high unemployment and chronic lack of capital. It is widely expected that government will have to apply heavy capital controls. There are already some measures taken; tax on foreign savings and limitations of buying foreign exchanges particularly USA dollars. Foreign think tanks started to mention of possible debt crisis. Turkish CDS running over 500 points. So, it does look pretty bleak.

When we come back to the words of defence minister which we heard from Channel 4 interview; it does not reflect the real intentions of the regime but it is actually aimed to domestic affairs rather than the rest of the world. It should not be taken seriously.

A.Kurt

¹ <https://www.channel4.com/news/we-are-not-pursuing-any-kind-of-imperialistic-aims-we-are-protecting-our-rights-turkeys-defence-minister-on-dispute-with-greece>



— Liberal International supports —
Lebanon 2.0 & Min Beib la Beib's relief effort



Light up
BEIRUT

Help Liberal International help Lebanon

DONATE

The global liberal family, supporting an initiative from the Lebanese students of our democratic training academy programme, is asking for your help to raise funds for the families worst-affected by the Beirut blast.



www.just-help.org/c/Lebanon2pt0

Young Liberal leaders organise support for Lebanon

The explosion in Lebanon on August 4th shocked the world; entire neighbourhoods of the city were wiped out in seconds, leaving thousands upon thousands injured and hundreds dead or missing. The damage is extensive and the Lebanese people are in need of support through this difficult time. See page 24 for further details of how to donate.

2020 Isaiah Berlin Lecture: The 10 Commandments of Isaiah Berlin – Henry Hardy



**Date: 14 October
2020**

**Time: 14:00 –
15:00 [UK Time]**

Live on Liberal International's [Facebook page](#).

Keynote speaker: Henry Hardy

Henry Hardy is an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford. He is Isaiah Berlin's principal editor, and one of his literary trustees. He began editing Berlin's work in 1974 as a graduate student at Wolfson. He was a commissioning editor at Oxford University Press from 1977 to 1990, and has been working full time on Berlin since 1990. He has edited or co-edited eighteen of Berlin's books, as well as a four-volume edition of his letters. His memoir of working with Berlin, *In Search of Isaiah Berlin: A Literary Adventure*, was published in 2018. He is also the editor of *The Book of Isaiah: Personal Impressions of Isaiah Berlin* (2009).

Welcome remarks – Dr. Hakima el Haité,
Liberal International President

Chair – Prof. Lord Alderdice, Liberal
International President of Honour



Sir Isaiah Berlin was one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century – a man who set ideas on fire. His defence of liberty and plurality was passionate and persuasive and inspired a generation. His ideas – especially his reasoned rejection of excessive certainty and political despotism – have become even more prescient and vital today.

Tom Dale

Two men, who were synonymous with Liberal International, and the British Group in particular, born within a few days of each other in 1931, they passed away within the same year, 2019. Richard Moore's reputation stayed with him to the end. But Tom Dale succumbed to a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease in September 2011 and soon disappeared from the public scene. Tom died at 3.00am on the 11th November 2019.

Both men can be said to have had a heroic career in Liberalism¹ going back to the dark days before Grimond – yes, we've been in the position the Liberal Democrats now face before.

There are three incidents in Tom's life to justify that claim; since I didn't know Tom at the time, I apologise for any vagueness. In the 1950 General Election, a young Tom persuaded Clement Davies that the party should take out insurance against losing more than 50 deposits – we lost 319 (only surpassed in 2015 with 335), out of 475 candidates, and only 9 MPs were returned, but avoided financial disaster.

Tom's second piece of financial wizardry came in 1967. An old school chum, Chas Chandler, persuaded Tom to book Jimi Hendrix for a concert. A complete unknown in January 1967, before the release of Hey Joe, The Wind Cries Mary and Purple Haze, Hendrix's fee was £50.00. I think the concert had been booked for November, by which time the Jimi Hendrix Experience were the hottest act on the scene, the show shifted to a much larger venue and sold out. Tom offered Jimi the going rate, but Hendrix, ever the gentleman, told Tom that he had taken a chance, booking him when he was nobody and he would honour the £50.00 contract. There was a downside however. LIBG made so much money that they got out of the habit of fundraising



Tom with Russell Johnston

My third instance is the Battle of Brightlingsea. Tom fought for Brightlingsea all of his political life, but I am referring to the public protests against the export of live animals from that small port between 16th January and 30th October 1995. The good people of the town, old and young, simply mostly women, sat down in the narrow road to prevent lorries reaching the quay. Under the threat of legal action by one of the exporters, the police changed their tactics, turned up in full riot gear, as if this were the miner's strike, and behaved like thugs. Tom, as local County Councillor, turned up to witness the demonstration and promptly sat down in the middle of the road, to the protests of his driver, 'But Sir, you're chair of the Police committee' or words to that effect.

Tom first contested the Harwich Division, against Julian Ridsdale (who stood as Conservative and National Liberal) in 1959, taking 12.4% of the vote. In 1964 he increased this to 19.7%, but Jo Grimond's breakthrough did not occur and in the snap election of 1966 he was down to 17.6% and in 1970, by which time Ridsdale had dropped the 'National Liberal' pretence, 13.9% of the vote, still 3rd. His Labour opponent in that election was Andrew Phillips, who now sits on the Liberal benches of the Lords as Lord Phillips of Sudbury. It was undoubtedly tough being a Liberal Democrat candidate in the Coalition years, but believe me, it was tough back in the 1960s when the party was first struggling to regain its reputation.

Tom's local government career was more successful; as the community politics of the 1970s & 80s built a more stable base to work from was built up. Tom was Town Mayor of Brightlingsea, one of the Liberties of

the Cinque Ports, and represented the town on Essex County Council for around 35 years to 1997. When the Tories lost overall control, he was vice-chair 1994-95 and chair of Essex County Council 1995-96. Tom was a Tendring District Councillor from 1979 to 1995 and a St Osyth Parish Councillor from 1979 to 1989.

Tom's roles within the Liberal party and the Liberal Democrats were primarily in the international field. Organising Secretary of the British Group of Liberal International from 1965 to retirement in 1996 at 65 and International Officer to the Liberal party, subsequently Liberal Democrats, from 1976-1986. Tom was also Secretary to the Liberal Summer School, 1967-1974 and personal assistant and chef de bureau to Jeremy Thorpe during his leadership of the Liberal party from 1967-1976;

As Organising Secretary of LIBG there were times when Tom held the organisation together. It was at one point, very much the refuge of the Thorpe old guard in the party. David Griffiths, who headed the reaction against this, later said that he had thought Tom was the problem, holding the Group back, but now realised that he was covering for everybody else. Thankfully there is now something of a working executive.

Thomas Edward Dale was born in Clacton on Sea on 14.3.1931; the family home was Whyers Hall Farm, Beach Road, St Osyth (now The Good Life Inn). They moved to the Warren Farm, St Osyth, when grandfather retired his father worked both farms. After kindergarten in Carnarvon Road, Clacton, Tom went to St Osyth C of E Primary School then Colchester Royal Grammar School and the independent co-ed Gosfield School. His association with Gosfield was a lifelong, as a teacher from 1952 to 1960, as a governor, chair of the governors for many years, finally retiring in 2014. Tom's National Service was with Royal Artillery at Shoeburyness - 1950-1952.



Having gained A levels by correspondence course he won a place at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art for a year and then to the London School of Economics where he read International History, with doyen of the New, Dr. Ralph Miliband as his tutor. Tom was President of the London University Students Union (1957-58) after the LSE. He remained in the student milieu for the next few years, running "International House" a club for overseas and indigenous students in Cambridge for about 5 years between 1960-1965. Tom also took a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, at the Institute of Education. Education would dominate his public life. He served on the governing body of Essex University from its inception in 1964 and he subsequently became a member of the University Council. He also served on the governing body of Colchester Institute and

Brightlingsea Senior Secondary School. He was a Life Member of the National Liberal Club, in which he served as Chairman of the Club's General Committee for 6 years.

Prior to 1967 homosexuality was illegal in Britain, which must have coloured Tom's life in those years; I didn't know him for some years after, when I think I would describe him as comfortably but quietly out – a generation that had known official persecution as well as the excesses of the intolerant.

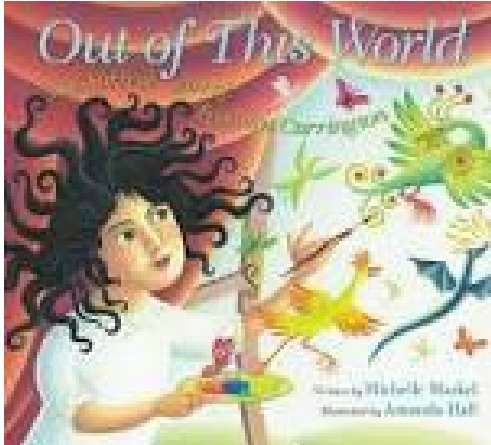
I was warned of Tom long before we met at elections and the like. Essex Liberals had been split in the rift between economic and social Liberalism in the early 1960s, and the Keynesians still viewed their opponents with suspicion a decade or so later. It would probably be fair to say that he was on the right, or establishment side of the party, but we go farthest when we all pull together, and Tom was part of that; loyal, enthusiastic, good company. It is a tragedy that dementia blighted his last seven years. I can only sketch his life, helped by the likes of his close friend Janet Russell, but there are few of his generation to call on now, he never got to make a record himself and our conversations were almost always of the present.

Stewart Rayment

reviews

Out of This World, the Surreal Art of Leonora Carrington, by Michelle Markel, illustrated by Amanda Hall.
Balzer + Bray 2019 \$17.99
isbn 9780062441096

This is a beautiful and charming introduction to perhaps one of the most important artists of the 20th century. Amanda Hall captures Carrington's imagery without its often-menacing symbolism. Michelle Markel and Amanda Hall have teamed up before, in 2012 they produced a book on Le Douanier – The



Fantastic Jungles of Henri Rousseau... safer ground. Hall's Aesop is quite well-known.

This is a children's book, aimed at 4-8-year olds (I wish more publishers would tell us that), so it is not surprising that it doesn't go into the detail of the tragic and often dangerous earlier life of Leonora. Carrington was a rebel to that last, and that might have been brought out more in the telling (taking the book more into the teenage market perhaps). However, Markel has focussed more on Carrington's life after settling in Mexico, if the traumas are barely touched on, and the art produced therein, which is probably less well known than her earlier work.

The line that might almost be lost is *nothing kept Leonora from painting – not struggling to earn money, not tending to her husband and children*. Perhaps a perennial problem for the woman artist. Her second husband, the Hungarian photographer Chiki, was also a refugee from Nazism, and establishing themselves in a new country was a struggle. If the line is almost lost, Hall pick this up in the illustrations, though the reality was certainly much harder.

You can see more of Amanda Hall's work at <https://www.amandahall-illustration.com/> and Michell Markel's at <http://www.michellemarkel.com/>

Stewart Rayment

interLib reviewed Leonora Carrington's retrospective at Tate Liverpool in issue 2015-02

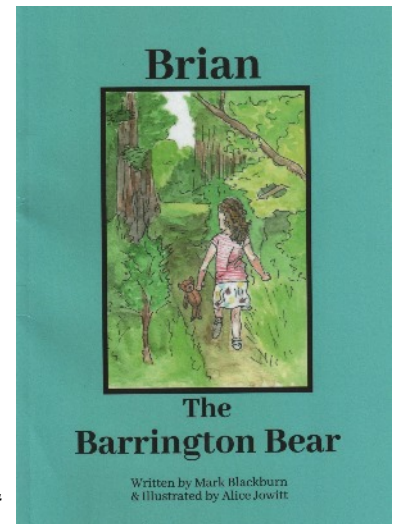


Brian the Barrington Bear, by Mark Blackburn, illustrated by Alice Jowitt.
isbn 9781838097622

What does one do during Lockdown? Write the children's book that has been delighting your offspring and get it published is an obvious answer. Mark Blackburn is probably best known to us through the Social Liberal Forum. He contested Westminster North in 2010, against the Labour MP Karen Buck, also been a member of the LSE Liberal Society in her day; and Somerton & Frome in 2017. Barrington is in that constituency. I don't know that part of Somerset, my Shepton being the one further north, but I think we can assume that the Barrington area is Alice Jowitt's 100 Acre Wood.

Brian's is a story in the Velveteen Rabbit mode, and one doesn't doubt that the core events of the tale did happen. His adventures, or misadventures, are charming, but love works in mysterious ways and redeems all. We look forward to his further adventures, some the author should take seriously.

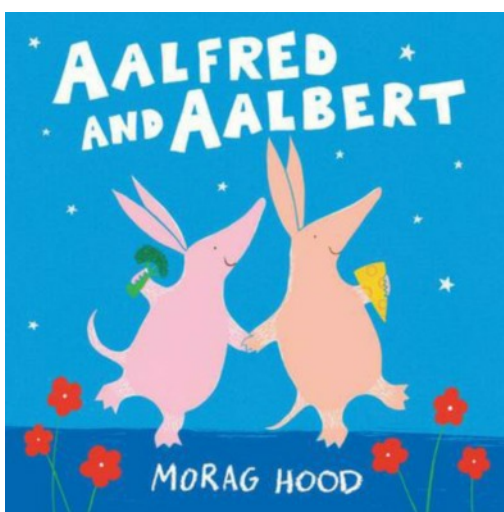
Hard copies of the book can be ordered from Waterstones <https://www.waterstones.com/book/brian-the-barrington-bear/mark-blackburn/alice-jowitt/9781838097608> (though I'm sure your local independent bookshop would oblige, a need the trade more than Waterstones) and the eBook from Kobo <https://www.kobo.com/gb/en/search?query=mark+blackburn> The hardback is £9.99, soft cover £4.99 and eBook £3.99.



Stewart Rayment

Aalfred and Aalbert, a love story, by Morag Hood.
Two Hoots 2020 £9.99
isbn 9781509842957

At some point in the early 1970s, the Union of Liberal Students (ULS) adopted the Aardvark as a mascot on the basis that there was no record of an aardvark having ever harmed a human being; as Eduardo Gonçalves' article earlier in this issue suggests, I wish it could be said that no human being has ever harmed an aardvark. There are, of course, few records of animals harming human beings, unless provoked, but ULS didn't go very far through the alphabet. I no longer have the badge alas, having given it to a homeless person some decades ago in the hope that it might bring them some luck.



This is the story of two aardvarks, and how they eventually meet, more by luck than the efforts of a little bird. Aardvarks are, of course, highly territorial.

Morag's aardvarks are a little more adventurous than their cousins in their diet – ULS gave little thought to the devastation of ants and termites, nor the aardvark cucumber; but then authors have been trying encourage children to eat broccoli since at least Raymond Briggs' The Puddleman. Trees - yes it does work...

Morag Hood has had considerable luck since her debut in childrens' literature in 2018. She had previously studied at the Wimbledon and Cambridge schools of art, and is now based in her hometown, Edinburgh.

More can be found at <http://www.moraghood.co.uk/>

Stewart Rayment

Order these books through you local independent bookseller, in good time for Christmas, all things considered. They need you support more than ever..

The Uneven Path of British Liberalism from Jo Grimond to Brexit, by Tudor Jones.

Manchester University Press 2019 £25.00

isbn 9781526143006

As Jones acknowledges, this is not a new book. The first eleven chapters appeared as *The Revival of British Liberalism from Grimond to Clegg* in 2011 (Palgrave Macmillan). I'm not sure to what extent, if at all, they have been revised. Michael Meadowcroft reviewed that book in *Liberator* 350, January 2012. MUP have clearly noted his comments on pricing, previously £60.00. It is comfortably priced to appear on the bookshelf of any committed Liberal, and I say that earnestly because the Coalition follies and Brexit have led to a considerable turnover in Liberal Democrat membership.

One of the themes of the book is the apparent conflict between social and economic Liberalism within the Liberal party and the Liberal Democrats, something I would say that is not widely understood by either side. The 19th century Liberal party became progressively interventionist in its social policies, backed theoretically but the likes of Mill, Green, Hobhouse & Hobson, through to Beveridge and Keynes in the last century. The counter-current – Spencer, Belloc & Chesterton (whose Distributionism recurs along the uneven path), through to Hayek, as a refugee from Nazism ensconced in the LSE.

The uneven path of British Liberalism

FROM JO GRIMOND TO BREXIT

TUDOR JONES

This dialogue created a lack of unity in the party in the 1930s to 1950s, but Grimond's leadership brought things to a head. Jones alludes to this, but hasn't fully come to grips with it, part of the problem I suspect being that few of the protagonists are still with us. The Institute of Economic Affairs had been set up earlier in the 1950s by Oliver Smedley and Anthony Fisher, but Fisher, and Ralph Harris, the director, were suspicious of Smedley's links with the Liberal party and they parted company in 1959. Anthony Seldon had joined the IEA in 1958, but would continue to influence John Pardoe. Smedley went on to a colourful career, including Britain's second pirate radio station Radio Atlanta, which became Radio Caroline North. The battleground of Liberal Assemblies in the late 1950s must have been fascinating, the enmities long-lasting. I recall in my own constituency two decades later, the likes of Pastor Burgess, Tom Dale and Peter Linfoot being spoken of as the forces of darkness by Cyril Pohl, an arch-Keynesian, with heretical views on the Gold Standard that I no longer recollect. Jones cites Nancy Seear in an *Unserving State* group publication, which I think is the best summary of the overall position *Liberals normally favour the system of free enterprise with a large*

number of competing firms, and oppose the growth of State-owned industry and private monopolies.

The IEA would go on to have a major impact on the Tories. Harris, himself a Tory, would become a senior advisor to Margaret Thatcher, who should be recognised as an economic liberal, but a political Conservative – a poisonous combination and the central problem of neo-liberalism. If the Grimond generation, and community politicians were primarily social Liberals, the Orange Bookers tended to be classed as Thatcher-lite. I never really got past the idea that they (like Tony Blair for instance) saw Thatcherism as the new norm that they had to respond to and accommodate themselves to. I was never fully convinced that, perhaps with the exception of Vince Cable, the fully understood the dynamic between social and economic Liberalism in the way that, say Frits Bolkestein of Holland's VVD, generally regarded as on the right of LI, did.

One thing is clear, that Internationalism has been a continuous thread throughout Liberalism, long before Jones' saga. High points would be Grimond on Europe, Thorpe on Rhodesia, Steel on South Africa, Ashdown on Hong Kong and Bosnia, Kennedy on Iraq. Buy this book, you won't regret it.

Stewart Rayment.