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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Jonathan Fryer. R.I.P.

EVENTS

The 2nd Reading of Alistair Carmichael's Hong Kong Bill was deferred again, with no date fixed as yet for its return to the House of Commons

19th April – LIBG Forum on Cameroon by Zoom

21st April - Wear a Blue Shirt for Political Prisoners

6th May - Elections across the UK.

September – Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Photographs: Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett, Burma Campaign.

Cover image: Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett



LIBG FORUM

MONDAY 19th APRIL



The World's Most Neglected Conflict: Cameroon

April 19th 2021 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Cameroon has been ruled by President Paul Biya, age 88, since 1982. He continues to win elections that no international monitor considers free and fair, and his country is ranked among the world's most corrupt and repressive by Transparency International and Freedom House, respectively.

In 2016, Biya's Francophone-dominated regime tried to impose French-speaking judges and teachers on the English-speaking regions, representing 20% of the population. Peaceful Anglophone protests were crushed with what impartial human rights groups described as disproportionate force. The UN estimates 700,000 civilians (out of six million Anglophones) have fled to the bush and beyond. UNICEF says one million children have been out of school for four years. Local civil society groups believe 5,000 people have been killed. Meanwhile, hundreds of opposition figures are imprisoned without due process.

Armed militias have emerged, demanding a sovereign country called "Ambazonia," and rights monitors believe all armed sides are behaving with impunity. The former colonial powers, the UK and France, offer bland calls for the respect for international human rights law, but neither government will apply pressure on Cameroon to attend inclusive mediated peace talks offered by the Swiss and the Vatican. Our webinar speakers will offer a variety of views and analysis on the way forward. Please join us.

Speakers:

Dr Chris Fomunyoh of the National Democratic Institute, Washington DC

Juliette Paauwe, the Global Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect

Billy Burton, Toronto University Database of Atrocities

Maggie Kilo, Ambazonian activist

This meeting will be held online.

Link to register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3XYpwWqDTZyvWrA_tIZkew

Erdoğan: From Turkish-style President to Erdoğan: Fascist Dictator

Ahmet Kurt

From the middle of March 2021, politics in Turkey became very toxic. First went the MP status of a very prominent member of the HDP, Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu; his MP status was stripped by the votes of governing party members. He will most likely end up in prison; because he has already been given a sentence. He was given a week to put his business in order. Gergerlioğlu had uncovered the existence of naked strip searches which government had been trying hide it.

Two days after this event the high court opened a closure case against the HDP (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi – the Peace & Democracy Party*) by accusing the party and its members being terrorists and helping the terrorist organisation. Then late Friday evening an official announcement made by the president's palace that Turkey officially left the 'Istanbul convention'. This convention was signed by Tayyip Erdoğan himself at 2011 as part of the adaptation of the European Union Human Rights Convention. The Istanbul Convention had been given Turkish and Kurdish women certain rights and protection.

A second surprise came shortly after that on 20th March; it was the removal of the head of central bank, Naci Ağbal. Only a day before central bank raised the rates by 200 points up to almost 20 percent. Ağbal was appointed to that post only a four months ago. On 30th March Erdoğan removed a central bank deputy governor, Murat Çetinkaya to a further fall in the lira.

The day the rates were raised, government mouthpiece Yeni Şafak newspaper published a front-page piece condemning the raise. Funnily enough the author of the article, Şahap Kavcıoğlu, is now heading the central bank. He is an ex AKP MP. A few days ago, the central bank had its monthly meeting with the new governor. As expected, the bank kept the rates as it was. Immediately after the announcement Turkish lira fell sharply, but at the end of the day revalued (magically) again. No one has enough courage to admit it, but selling US\$ assets from the back door policy is still going on.

After a less intensified couple of weeks, there came the warning letter from retired 104 former senior naval officers including 10 retired admirals. It was published close to a midnight; for people to Turkish politics a midnight letter signed by army officers usually means a thumping of a coming "colpo di grazia".

The ten Admirals were arrested but a few days after that were let go. In fact the letter was addressing the dangers of leaving the Montreux Convention¹. It is not a secret that Erdoğan wants throw the Montreux Convention into the dustbin of history, and also wants to build a new seaway passage which would be alternative to the Bosphorus. (Kanal İstanbul²). This should be the subject of another article, so I'll cut it short about Montreux for now.

So in the light of these developments at first we can safely assume interest rates will start coming down, possibly from June onwards. There are several reasons why Erdoğan and his Islamic coalition want low rates. Apart from the technical ones, big reason is the interest rates are not compatible with their religious ideas. This is what government says for keeping the religious part of its voters happy. In reality Erdoğan is supporting business owners and large construction companies who are having very hard time to in the sense of making profit at the moment. And they need cheap government money/loans in order to keep going and building useless airports, roads, and other very expensive projects. Kanal İstanbul is one them. Every single large construction project is working under a certain payment guarantee. Every contract is also signed in London and payments guaranteed by UK courts. It is important to add, there are absolutely no checks and balances of budget details which would give us how much money lost or funnelled. Recent legislation

forbids journalists to write about these contracts because they are now a 'state secret'

Then we heard that the infamous 'Kanal Istanbul' project now has a state finance guarantee from state banks, because the project failed to attract foreign finance so Erdoğan decided to give the project a state guarantee, otherwise everybody knows this insane project had no chance of finding any finance.

Around the same time famous Gezi Park ownership (property ownership) was taken from Istanbul municipal and given to religious charity/foundation by the order the government. Later we learnt actually that no such religious charity exists. Gezi Park has been a significant symbol in the eyes of Erdoğan as well as rest of the Turkish nation. Because he tasted his first major loss in the Gezi Park at 2013. Since then, Gezi is bleeding wound for him.

He is out the make radical changes. Because this is the only way that he could keep his power base. He knows under any regular election he would lose drastically. He cannot afford to give up government or his power. There is only one way for him to follow; that is more oppression, more jailings, more secrecy and absolutely no opposition at all.

In a pessimistic scenario; we might see a Sunni Islamic dictatorship in Turkey and the rulers would be his family. Otherwise, I fear there will be a wide range of uprisings and rebellion would take place against his rule. Both options will certainly lead to Turkey into very dark direction.

The biggest challenge that Erdoğan is facing now is the missing 128 billion dollars from the central bank. The Opposition is running an almost guerrilla campaign about this issue; billboards, social media, stickers almost everywhere in Istanbul one can see the question where are the 128 billions? Police are raiding opposition party branches and collecting the billboards and other material but according to Goggle, of Erdoğan the most asked question by Turkish people to Goggle last week was 'where are the 128 billions? It was good that LIBG held a forum on Turkey, but there are a lot more questions that the West needs to be asking and you won't particularly like the answers.

Ahmed Kurt

¹ The Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits is an international 1936 agreement, signed in 1936. It gives Turkey control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles and regulates the passage of naval warships not belonging to Black Sea states. It guarantees the free passage of civilian vessels in peacetime. The Convention has been controversial in restricting Soviet, now Russian naval access to the Mediterranean Sea.

² Kanal Istanbul is a project under construction for a canal linking the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, ostensibly to relieve congestion in the Bosphorus. It potentially circumvents the Montreux Convention and in January 2018, then Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım announced that the canal would not be subject to the Convention. Turkish critics of the canal say that it is environmentally disastrous.

Wear a Blue Shirt for Burma



Wednesday 21st April is the seventh anniversary of the death of U Win Tin, a former political prisoner and a hero of Burma's struggle for democracy and human rights. On this day around the world, people will be wearing a blue shirt in memory of U Win Tin and all the political prisoners still in Burma's jails. It is particularly pertinent this year as Burmese people continue to resist the military take-over.

U Win Tin, a journalist and founding member of the National League for Democracy, was one of Burma's longest serving political prisoners, describing his time in jail from 1989 until 2008 as living in hell. On his release he refused to hand over his blue prison shirt, and pledged to wear a blue shirt every day until all political prisoners were released. He carried on wearing a blue shirt until his death of which this is the seventh anniversary.

Wear a Blue Shirt for Burma's Political Prisoners

On 21 April, honour the memory of U Win Tin by raising awareness and taking action for the release of political prisoners still in jail. Please wear a blue shirt or blue clothing, post pictures of yourself wearing blue on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and let people know that there are still political prisoners in jail in Burma, and that they need our support. 3,141 people were arrested following the Army's coup according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Post a picture of yourself on Facebook, Twitter etc using the hashtag #blueshirt4burma or on Instagram: @blueshirt4burma.

Meanwhile, our friends at the Burma Campaign tell us that despite the brutal crackdown on protesters since the military coup, people have been using humour to challenge the military, and especially the head of the military, Min Aung Hlaing.

Activists in Myanmar asked us to join them in using humour to undermine the authority of the military and of Min Aung Hlaing. Some had a suggestion which the Burma Campaign was able to help with: Min Aung Hlaing toilet paper. Even before the coup, Min Aung Hlaing was using the military controlled police force to arrest people who made jokes about him and the military. After the coup he blocked the Wikipedia website after people kept changing the page about him to make jokes at his expense, including his height.

Protesters glued pictures of Min Aung Hlaing to the street knowing police and soldiers would not run over his face to arrest them, such is their respect for him. That's why we've

produced Min Aung Hlaing toilet paper! As one activist from Burma told the Burma Campaign, "this is a humiliation for Min Aung Hlaing, he will hate it. It's brilliant!"



Burma Campaign UK will receive a percentage of every sale of Min Aung Hlaing toilet paper, to support our campaigns. You can buy a roll from Toilet Face for £5.89 and can personalise it with your own message for a further £2.00. Buy yours at [Min Aung Hlaing Novelty Toilet Paper : Toilet Face](#)

Worldwide delivery is available.

Thank you for your support.

Standing with Myanmar – Military rule and the struggle for democracy in Myanmar

Yeow Poon

History appears to be repeating itself in Myanmar with the military unwilling to relinquish control. Will thousands be killed again, as massive numbers of people nationwide protest in the streets and are engaged in civil disobedience?

Following independence from British colonial rule in 1948, disagreements amongst political elites, the civil wars with ethnic-based groups and anxieties over communist influence led to General Ne Win forming a caretaker government in 1958. An election was held in 1960, but when minority groups pushed for a loose federal structure, which were seen by the military as separatist movements, General Ne Win took over in a coup d'état.

Since then, for the next 30 years, Myanmar was ruled by the military. In 1974, a new Constitution was established and a one-party system was adopted, whereby military officers resigned and governed through the Burma Socialist Programme Party. Protests were held against military rule throughout the 1960s and 1970s, which were crushed, culminating in a major unrest and widespread pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988. Thousands were killed. Martial law was declared in 1989 and Burma was renamed Myanmar. In May 1990, free elections were held and the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won 392 out of a total 492 seats (about 80% of the seats). However, the military junta refused to cede power and continued to rule the country. In 2007 a protest led by Buddhist monks was dealt with harshly. Conflicts with regional ethnic groups continued with the Kachin, Shan, Lahu, Karen, Rohingya and ethnic Chinese rebels. In addition, international sanctions also impoverished the country.

In 1997, Myanmar was accepted into ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and took small tentative steps toward reforms. A referendum conducted in 2008 led to a general election in 2010, which was won by the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, claiming 80% of the vote. Further reforms were introduced, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, amnesties for political prisoners and relaxation of censorship. Ceasefire agreements were also made with 14 out of 17 rebel groups.

In 2015 the NLD won the general election and the first non-military president since 1962 was elected. In November 2020, the NLD won again with an even larger majority. The military responded under the pretext of electoral fraud with another coup, declaring that another election will be held after a state of emergency for one year.

Together with the UN, ASEAN and other international bodies, we urge the military leadership to respect the will of the people of Myanmar, exercise restraint and stop the use of lethal force. Great strides have been made since 2010 in integrating with the global economy and reforming government institutions to better serve the people. The latest February 2021 military coup is a setback to the progress made. We therefore urge the military authority to step back and release NLD members, peaceful protestors and those engaged in civil disobedience.

We stand with and support the people of Myanmar in their non-violent call for the government they elected to be re-instated, for parliament to resume and for elected representatives to fulfil their mandate. We urge the military authority, the NLD and the elected government to start a dialogue to find mutually acceptable solutions. We call on ASEAN, together with the UN, to work towards enabling Myanmar to return to civilian rule. In the meantime, we support the call for an arms embargo to the military in Myanmar.

Yeow Poon

Dr Yeow Poon, is Chair of Chinese Lib Dems & Chair of Policy in the West Midlands.
This article first appeared in Libdem Voice

Jonathan Fryer

Dear Friends,

I'm utterly devastated to announce the death of Jonathan Harold Fryer, this afternoon, 16th April 2021. He will be remembered by many people whose love and affection that Jonathan received over these past few weeks will never be forgotten.

He was diagnosed with a terminal illness on 24th March and as per his request, he has asked me to share the photo (cover) of him on Easter Sunday, 5th April 2021, in the Gardens of St Joseph's Hospice, enjoying the sunshine, drinking Campari Negroni and telling me about his adventures and travels around the world.

It's been an honour and privilege to have cared for Jonathan for these past three weeks to ensure that he left us in the most peaceful, serene and painless way possible. I trust I did my best to support him in his hour of need.

RIP JF

Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett.
Chair LIBG.

Campari Negroni

Campari Negroni

1 ounce gin (higher end of market best)

1 ounce semi-sweet vermouth rosso (Quady's if you can get it, but again, up-market is best.)

1 ounce Campari

Rocks

Slice of orange to garnish

Fill an old-fashioned glass with rocks and pour the ingredients over it; squeeze the orange slice gently as you add it, stir and serve. Drink it slowly; it is strong.

This classic cocktail aperitivo was created by Fosco Scarselli for Pascale Olivier de Negroni de Cardi, Comte Negroni, who ordered gin to be added to his Americano instead of soda at the Caffè Casoni (now the Caffè Giacosa), Florence, in 1919. Camillo Negroni, to whom the aperitivo is usually credited may only have existed after one cocktail too many.

We will carry obituaries of our departed colleagues in the next issue, which will appear after the May 6th elections. If you would like to make a contribution, please email it to us at lockharthastings@btconnect.com

International Abstracts

Russia

Could Putin invade the Baltics next? By Leon Aron. The New European 9.4.2021 (& previously Politico 15.3.2021)

Leon Aron is associated with the American Enterprise Institute, generally regarded as conservative or worse, neo-conservative in its outlook, though Robert Doar's presidency may moderate that. Aron came to America as a refugee from Russia in 1978, and writes on the Russian leadership. There's nothing particularly startling in the article – Aron has written before on Putin's 'Soviet' as opposed to purely Russian agenda. We know that Soviet Russia transferred large Russian populations into the Baltic states, and that Putin has used these to destabilise other former Russian colonies – Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia not least, particularly in times when his grip on domestic affairs is sliding.

[Could Putin invade the Baltics next? | The New European](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/03/15/russia-putin-invasion-ukraine-baltics-nato-475527)

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/03/15/russia-putin-invasion-ukraine-baltics-nato-475527>

The counter-argument was put by John Lough at Chatham House back in 2017; since then, the British government, not least, has had its head up its backside, so one wonders how much he was heeded on our shores at least.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2017/02/handling-russia-should-not-be-so-difficult-west>

Myanmar

Aung San Suu Kyi allies set up 'unity government' against junta, by John Reed. Financial Times 17th April 2021

Some positive news at least, formed of MPs from the National League for Democracy in hiding or in exile, and including representatives from the country's ethnic groups – Duwa Lashi La, of the Kachin minority is acting president. This appears quite promising and LI should look into it.

<https://www.ft.com/content/65d18000-f728-441e-8197-d637ac73cece>

Also Radio Free Asia

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/crph-government-04162021185851.html>

Liberator 406

Liberator 406 opens with an Augustinian take on Ed Davey's position on the EU, not his best decision in the eyes of struggling local parties. Deadly Textbooks, by Rebecca Tinsley and Twins in Trouble (on suppress of Gay Rights in Poland), by Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett were both in interLib 2021-02. Margaret Lally provides some arguments for campaigners when the Immigration detention system comes up on the doorstep (supplement these with the regular briefings of LD4SoS). Much coverage is given to the late, lamented Tony Greaves; our sympathies to his family. Lord Bonkers regrets that 'the Hotel Splendide, Antibes, seems a distant dream' in these locked down days, though he does throw his lot in with Leicestershire until his 'campaign to have first-class status restored to Rutland' bears fruit.

<https://liberatormagazine.org.uk/mdocs-posts/liberator-406/>

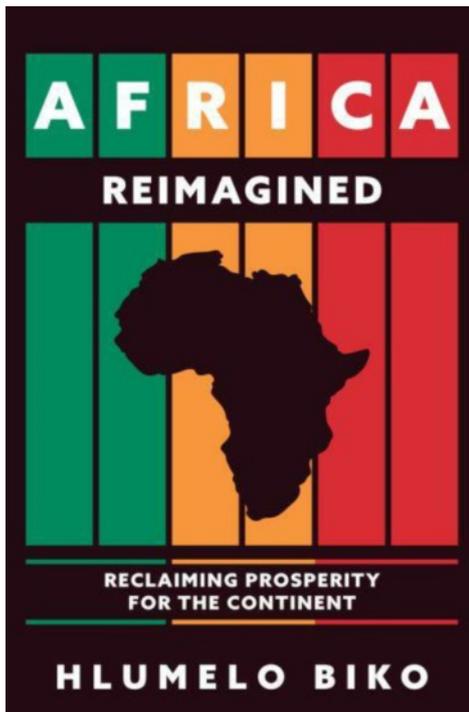
reviews

Africa Reimagined: reclaiming prosperity for the continent, Hlumelo Biko.

Amberly Books 2021 £20.00

isbn 9781445699721

This passionately-argued book blames Africa's post-independence failure to thrive on the elite's futile attempts to imitate Western models of democracy and capitalism. Instead, the author (Steve Biko's son) recommends returning to traditional African values, making his father's Pan Africanist dreams a reality. Some of his solutions should resonate with Liberal Democrats: federalism, devolution of power and spending to a local level, PR elections and cooperative economic partnerships.



Biko laments Africans' lack of self-confidence, rooted, he claims, in insufficient appreciation of Africa's pre-colonial contributions to world history and knowledge. He is disparaging of African elites adopting Western ways and values, thereby making Africans feel their culture is second rate.

He imagines a continent where a few economically viable airlines link cities, rather than the current mess which makes it quicker to fly from Lagos to London and then back to Yaounde, than to fly to the next-door country. He envisages towns using their economic scale to buy goods at a discount and selling them at cost to citizens, eliminating middle people and getting better value. He wants investment in rural areas, stemming the flood of people into city slums; and he calls for children to be educated in their local language, proud of their heritage. Leaders should have "skin in the game," sending their children to local schools rather than despatching them to the UK; and using local hospitals rather than Swiss clinics.

So far, so good. Who could deny that the tiny, privileged African elite has warped Western democracy to its own ends, denying accountability or transparency to its beleaguered citizens?

Yet, problems arise with the definition of Africa values, and the misty-eyed view of pre-colonial history on the continent. Biko glosses over centuries of inter-communal warfare and enslavement, with his sentimental view of a bucolic paradise untouched by disease, cattle theft and conflict.

Your reviewer tried to contact the author to ask him to define the customary values he so admires, but to no avail. In my experience, tradition can include panels of elders in Uganda beating women who do not give birth each year; village chiefs in Mozambique who are drunk by ten in the morning, living off the taxes they impose on fearful subjects who approach Big Men literally on their knees; village chiefs in Liberia who have their pick of pre-pubescent girls; widows forced to marry the brothers of their dead husbands, thereby spreading the HIV that killed their men; and a dowry system that forces girls to stay with the violent older men to whom their parents have sold them.

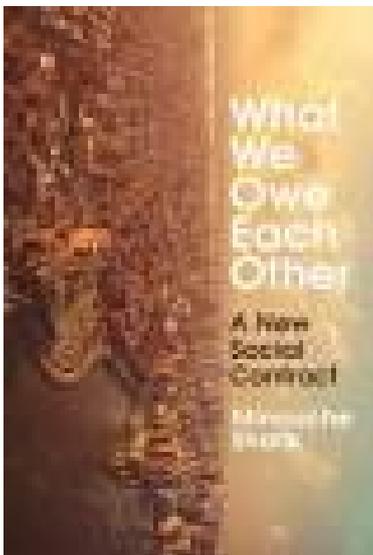
The city slums that Biko hates offer untold opportunities to young women, finally able to control their lives away from their male relatives, keeping the money they earn, and choosing their own friends. The materialism he sneers at allows women to purchase labour-saving devices, thereby liberating themselves from hours of drudgery.

Biko hates political parties, but in many cases, African parties aren't ideological but based on ethnicity. He praises traditional African habits of cooperation (*ubuntu*), yet why do so many villages fail to build a well or a road or a solar power grid that would benefit everyone? Answer: there is no meaningful sense of society, just clans and family ties.

Biko's contempt for immigrants includes people from the sub-Continent of India/Pakistan/Bangladesh who have been in Africa for generations. Yet, he has little to say about the Chinese, the new colonialists, leaving African governments deep in debt.

His Pan African vision of an EU-style continental entity includes the Arab majority nations of North Africa, where Black Africans face appalling racism. How likely is it that those countries will vote to submerge their identity into a United States of Africa? I understand his anger about the state of Africa, but its solutions are based in ideals that will exclude 50% of the population: women. I'm sorry he didn't respond to my attempts to interview him.

Rebecca Tinsley



What We Owe Each Other, a new social contract, by Minouche Shafik
The Bodley Head 2021 £18.19
isbn 9781847926272

Minouche Shafik presents a back-to-basics international assessment of the Social Contract between governments and citizens as we move to a post-Covid economic and political world. She presents multiple-choice and flexible suggestions for dealing with the problems we face.

Minouche has a lot of form; she is currently Director of the London School of Economics, was a deputy governor of the Bank of England, and has experience at the World Bank and IMF. She sits on the cross-benches in the House of Lords. Only there since last summer, she has yet to make much impact, but great things are expected of her.

Clearly written in a matter-of-fact style that wastes no time and flows well, with useful international statistics and comparisons. As it tweaks your memory, use it for your microeconomic decisions as well as the obvious macroeconomic.

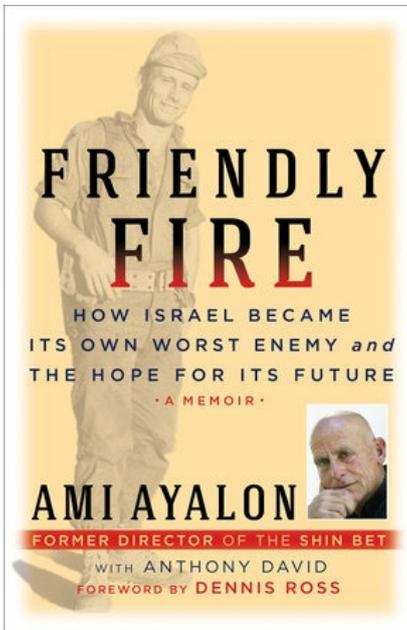
Joanne Lynch.

Friendly Fire: How Israel Became its Own Worst Enemy and the Hope for its Future by Ami Ayalon
Steerforth Press 2020

Something I admire about Israeli society is its ability to produce mavericks. There are plenty to choose from. From around 1987, with access to Israel's state archive, a number of revisionist historians blew apart Israel's view of its own history. Some went further, like Shlomo Sand, whose *Invention of the Jewish People* (2009) argued that 'the Jewish people' was a construct, and proceeded to undermine crucial ideological building blocks for Zionism's claim to Palestine.

There has been another category of maverick, however, of battle-hardened elite leaders anxious for Israel's future. In 1988 Yehoshafat Harkabi, former head of Israeli military intelligence, published *Israel's Fateful Decisions*, warning his compatriots of the imperative of making peace, most particularly with the Palestinians not for their sake but in order to save Israel from catastrophe.

He foresaw that Israel's inability to surrender conquered land in return for peace would cost it the unquestioning support it enjoyed in the west and would ensnare 'Greater Israel' in a demographic trap, unable to divest itself of its non-Jewish population. He pleaded for self-criticism concerning Israel's share in responsibility for the conflict. In 2008 Avraham Burg, another distinguished public servant, made another



impassioned plea in *The Holocaust is Over* for his fellow Israelis to recognise the reality of Israeli strength as an opportunity to make a generous and productive peace with a prostrate adversary, warning of the dangers of clinging to victimhood, an unhealthy state of mind that risked taking Israel down a darkening path.

Now, such prophets have been joined by another member of the elite, Ami Ayalon, former commander of Israel's elite naval commandos, then commander of the navy, director of Shin Bet (the internal security agency) and a Knesset and cabinet member.

In 2012 Ayalon took part in a landmark film documentary, *The Gatekeepers*, in which with five other Shin Bet directors he discussed the futility of counterterror security operations since 1967.

The futility lay in the fact that they did not deter but simply intensified the Palestinian determination to resist. To Ayalon's chagrin, however, the film director omitted his overriding concern, the imperative of making a generous peace as the only viable exit from this impasse.

Ayalon is understandably concerned by the profound moral and psychological damage which control of "an archipelago of apartheid-style Bantustans" will do to the controlling society. He quotes Rabbi Yeheshua Leibowitz, a relentless critic of the occupation: "The corruption characterizing every colonial regime will also infect the State of Israel. The administration will on the one hand have to deal with suppressing Arab rebel movements and on the other cultivate quislings, Arab traitors."

In confirmation of the truth of Leibowitz' prophecy, Ayalon remains haunted by a friend's story who, six weeks after the 1967 war, witnessed a reserve officer casually kick over the barrow of Fanta drinks of a harmless old Palestinian vendor. "That was what power could do to us." But he experienced it himself in the Gaza Strip refugee camp, in the look of utter hatred on the face of a refugee 15-year-old. Thoughtful Israelis must, Ayalon implicitly demands, ask themselves "What are we doing to ourselves and to our captives?"

With the realisation by 2000 that the occupation was not likely to end, Ayalon felt, "Our democracy was, bit by bit, devolving into a tyranny." For Palestinians, of course, it has been a tyranny since the occupation began. Ayalon recognises the folly of Israel in ignoring the Saudi peace offer of 2002, a full withdrawal in return for a full peace with the Arab world, and he knew – as did his chosen Palestinian interlocutor, Sari Nusseibeh - that George W Bush's much vaunted Road Map to Peace was a roadmap to nowhere. What happened, however, was that the Palestinian Authority's ability to govern was eviscerated in the Second Intifada, and it progressively lost the confidence of ordinary Palestinians.

Israel's deliberate overkill simply made things worse. Of Operation Cast Lead in 2009 Ayalon admitted Hamas "won because they understood the nature of modern warfare better than we did". The Hamas 'win' was to gain the Palestinian street, while Israel disgraced itself internationally.

What's to be done? Like Harkabi and Burg, Ayalon urges mature self-examination: "The fact that we have become a booming economy and the fifth strongest military force on earth, vastly beyond anything our Arab enemies has at their disposal, does nothing to dull our basic insecurity... [which is] whipped up by populist politicians to get elected." Ayalon knows what will happen if Israel fails to overcome that sense of insecurity, but allows ex-prime minister Ehud Olmert spell it for him: "If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses, and we face a South Africa-style struggle for equal voting rights (also for the Palestinians in the territories) then, as soon as that happens, the State of Israel is finished."

It is not only Israelis who should take note. If a binational state is what Israelis fear above all, Palestinians should obviously think about how they can put this fear to effective use in their struggle for emancipation.

David McDowall