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INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



6th August - 75th Anniversary of dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Never again.

**Hong Kong call for sanctions. UK Foreign Office.
Covid-19**

EVENTS

26th-29th September Liberal Democrats' Autumn Conference. **Will be an Online event.**

23rd October Second reading of Alistair Carmichael's Hong Kong Bill, House of Commons.

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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Underground: Embankment

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Photographs: Stewart Rayment.

Cover photo - a lamp with a Buddhist poem written on it from the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bomb commemoration, Alexandra Park, Hastings. Unfortunately Hastings Against War were not allowed to float the lamps on the lake this year, the Labour council citing health and safety. Maybe they feared a Starmerite purge...



InterLib is published by the Liberal International (British Group). Views expressed therein are those of the authors and are not necessarily the views of LI(BG), LI or any of its constituent parties. Issues of the magazine can be found at the LIBG website, <http://www.libg.co.uk>

Comments and articles can be sent to Lockhart & Hastings, Intellectual Properties Consultants, 29 St Helen's Crescent, Hastings TN34 2EN, email lockharthastings@btconnect.com

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:

17 August: **POSTPONED - DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED**
FORUM WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE
POLAND WHEN WE HAVE A NEW DATE.

Hungary Loss of human rights - worry for EU disintegration? Is Orban out of Control?

14 September

Forum on China

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?

9 November

Annual General Meeting (postponed from July due to pandemic restrictions) followed at 7pm by speaker meeting

7 December

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

Liberal Democrats back calls for Magnitsky-style Sanctions against Hong Kong Human Rights Abusers



Alistair Carmichael at the LIBG Forum on Chinese persecution of the Uyghurs, 2019.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Hong Kong has published the findings of its inquiry into violations of human rights and humanitarian principles by the Hong Kong Police Force, including a series of recommendations.

Following the publication of the report Alistair Carmichael, Chair of the APPG for Hong Kong and Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs spokesperson, said: The APPG's first inquiry into the situation in Hong Kong has vital findings that the Government must sit up and listen to. Among other things, implementing Magnitsky-style sanctions¹ against those who have committed human rights violations in the territory must be an absolute priority. The Government have kicked the can down the road long enough on this. If they are serious about promoting human rights abroad and about our legal duty to the people of Hong Kong then it is time to act. Carrie Lam and the Commissioner of Police must be two of the first individuals up for consideration

under these sanctions. With the situation in the region still deteriorating there's no time to lose and no excuse for delay.

The APPG on Hong Kong recommends:

The UK to lead the efforts to establish an independent mechanism to investigate the situation in Hong Kong, for example:

At the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (or the UN General Assembly) to establish an investigative mechanism to consider the situation.

Work with the International Bar Association to establish a comprehensive and independent inquiry.

The UK to engage in a dialogue with the city's authorities to assist the UN inquiries on the issue.

The UK should urgently impose Magnitsky-style sanctions on those responsible for permitting the excessive police violence at high level in the administration, including but not limited to Chief Executive Carrie Lam and the Commissioner of Police.

The UK should ensure that its bold and encouraging British National (Overseas) citizenship immigration policies, designed to protect Hongkongers and adhere to the UK's responsibilities under the Joint Declaration, are not applicable to those who have encouraged/endorsed the National Security Law, or who have encouraged, supported or condoned police violence.

The UK to provide capacity-building assistance to the Hong Kong authorities to:

Ensure that the independent mechanism for lodging complaints is comprehensive and able to conduct its work independently and effectively.

Strengthen the human rights training to all police officers responding to protests.

The UK to work with Hong Kong authorities to strengthen the human rights protections in the city, as stipulated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The UK to explore whether the targeted humanitarian aid workers fall within the purview of the Refugee Convention and consider how they could be best assisted.

Alistair Carmichael is be applauded for his role in this, as along standing critic of Chinese policies. He spoke passionately at an LIBG Forum on the plight of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang in April 2019. The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, has made some tough remarks about China's human rights abuses recently; it is up to Liberal Democrats in Parliament to hold the government to them. Earlier this week, the South China Morning Post reported that a leading Beijing official, Zhang Xiaoming, had been in Hong Kong over the weekend to discuss whether Legislative Council elections should be delayed for a year.

Saeed Rahman (& Liberal Democrat Press Office).

¹ Sergei Magnitsky was a Russian lawyer who uncovered large-scale tax fraud. While working for Hermitage Capital, a firm based in London and run by the US-born financier Bill Browder, he discovered that millions of dollars of Hermitage tax payments had been syphoned off into the pockets of Russian officials. He was arrested but refused to withdraw his testimony and died in 2009, after mistreatment in jail.

Bill Browder, now a UK citizen, started a campaign to have sanctions imposed on the officials involved – to get the officials banned from visiting the US and using the US financial system.

A *Magnitsky Act* naming the Russians involved was passed by the US Congress in 2012. It was later broadened to become the *Global Magnitsky Act of 2016*, applying to gross human rights abusers anywhere. Other countries, including Canada, Lithuania and Estonia have introduced their own versions of the legislation. There was pressure for the UK to follow suit.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8374/>

Women's Rights Violations

Continuing our long tradition of engaging with the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Liberal International has submitted information about two instances of violation of women's rights to the attention of the CSW Communications Procedure. The submissions were made after consultation with the LI Human Rights Committee and the LI membership.

As many countries take steps to dismantle the rights of women, with the Polish decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence being only the latest example, Liberal International will continue to work actively for the promotion of human rights for women everywhere.

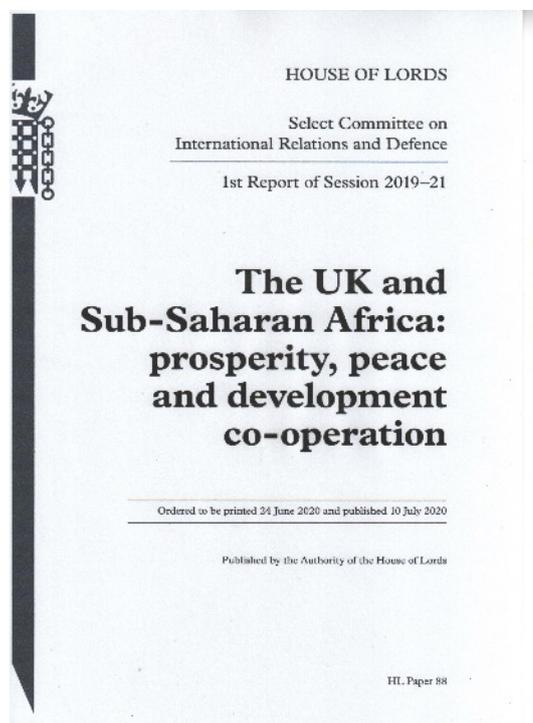
UN Women will bring the two instances, the abduction and abuse of three female activists in Zimbabwe and a triple femicide in Turkey, to the attention of the concerned governments who are required to respond. The CSW conducts such communications as part of its annual programme of work in to identify emerging trends and patterns of injustice and discriminatory practices against women for purposes of policy formulation and development of strategies for the promotion of gender equality.

Does the U.K. government have a foreign policy?

Rebecca Tinsley

This is a review of the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee's report, *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation*¹.

The House of Lords' investigation into U.K. foreign policy asks if there is a strategy guiding the Conservative government. Or is Brexit the only item on its agenda? Why hasn't Whitehall got around to thinking about how it will trade with Africa and other countries, post-Brexit? And, once the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) swallows the Department for International Development (DfID), will attention to human rights and poverty take a back seat, bar the platitudes? (see the FCO's annual report)²



Among its recommendations, the Lords call for action to reduce remittance fees, citing evidence that recipients in the developing world use the money very efficiently, starting small businesses and buying property. Diaspora workers send three times more money back to their families in the developing world than poor nations receive in overseas aid. In Nigeria alone, \$25 billion is remitted, slightly more than the federal budget. Yet, on average, Diaspora workers pay more than 9% of the value of their remittance to the financial institutions performing cash transfers at the stroke of a computer key.

The Select Committee (including two Liberal Democrats, Lord Purvis and Baroness Smith), also calls for a two-year debt standstill in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, as developing countries see their economies shrink dramatically. They advocate a less humiliating UK visa process, while praising the UK's soft power institutions like the BBC World Service and the British Council, both routinely denied sufficient funding.

The peers note that Brexit opens new opportunities for creating a fairer export environment for African producers, but they express surprise that the government appears to have done nothing to prepare for it. Sending remittances could also become less expensive when UK financial institutions do not have to comply with the EU Payment Services Directive, although there is no indication that money transfer companies will reduce their fees accordingly without pressure from the government.

The committee examines the persecution of Christians and religious minorities such as the Uyghurs in China and the Yezidi in Iraq, noting that the UK must demand that Nigeria and Pakistan, the top recipients of UK aid, must do more to protect their Christian communities.

The report catalogues the attacks on Christians by Boko Haram and Fulani militias in Nigeria, (which receives £800,000 a day from Britain), noting the inadequate response of the Nigerian authorities. It is clear, however, that the Lords were divided on whether to highlight the religious jihadist motivations of both Boko Haram and the Fulani militias, despite evidence provided by human rights groups. The Foreign Office prefers to stress the role of climate change and poverty in the increasing violence directed at Nigerian Christians.

In a wide-ranging study of the UK's security and diplomatic priorities, packed with useful data, the Lords warn that Covid-19 could reverse years of progress made in the developing world. They call for stricter action to stop tax avoidance and evasion by multinational companies, and the promotion of government accountability and inter-Africa trade.

Finally, the report highlights the areas of concern - the Sahel, Cameroon, and Somalia - where conflict is increasing, causing human misery and insecurity, with geopolitical implications.

Labour, the Liberal Democrats and several former Tory DfID ministers have condemned Boris Johnson's plan to allow the FCO to take over UK aid, without, apparently, consulting any of the stakeholders involved. This ends the consensus about development aid that had been in place since Tony Blair. The Commons International Development Committee pointed out that similar mergers in Canada and Australia resulted in the departure of experts and the loss of impact and stature of programmes.

It is hard to imagine this government acting on the recommendations in the Lords' report. Platitudes and jargon about human rights may take the place of the political will to raise human rights issues in a more than perfunctory manner.

For instance, on July 14th, the government made it clear they are unwilling to defend the right of the people of Taiwan to self-determination in the face of increasing Chinese belligerence. If ever there was a need to work in partnership with our international allies to speak with one voice, it is surely on Taiwan (and Hong Kong). But it is unlikely this Brexit-consumed administration has the will to form coalitions of like-minded nations.

In a similar vein, the FCO annual report card² boasts of making representations on behalf of the imprisoned British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, while it is clear the government has not expended political or diplomatic capital on this. Can we expect more token gestures such as the well-publicised sanctions on the Saudis implicated in the death of the journalist, Khashoggi, while arms sales continue and ministers make reassuring phone calls to the Kingdom?

It is dispiriting to read weekly ministerial responses to foreign affairs questions from peers and MPs, hoping to nudge the government beyond platitudes ("We continue to raise our concerns at the highest levels." "We remain committed to encouraging the upholding of international law." "We call on all sides to show restraint.").

Parliamentarians concerned about the impunity of governments persecuting their minorities receive bland answers that reek of the same "messaging" by "comms" experts afflicting the rest of Johnson's administration. Moral equivalence guides many of these ministerial responses, indicating that nothing has changed since Srebrenica, twenty-five years ago.

Rebecca Tinsley

¹ *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation* at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldintrel/88/88.pdf>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2019?utm_source=f59cc775-a30d-4d06-9003-3f7380e6278b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The Geopolitics of Covid19

Merlene Emerson

On Sunday 28 June at 1400 BST, a time chosen to suit a global audience, LibDems Overseas (LDO) a g(local) party co-hosted their first webinar with the Paddy Ashdown Forum, the centrist think tank supported by the European Liberal Forum. Participants who joined via Zoom were largely drawn from LDO's 1,000 members and supporters living in over 40 countries outside Europe. The event was moderated by LDO Chair, George Cunningham.

Covid19 has been called a “game changer”, knocking all countries sideways economically and in the sphere of public health. It has also awoken the world to the rise of China, where the outbreak started, and which may be perceived as the nation to come out “on top” after the pandemic.

Our first speaker Dr Christine Cheng, (lecturer in War Studies at King's College London and key member of the Federal Policy Committee) focused on the impact of Covid 19 on UK China relations. Based on a 2019 Delta poll, Brits over-estimated UK's influence in the world as #2 after the US and ahead of China at #3. Cheng recommended that the UK should stay aligned with the EU for greater clout. The diplomatic row between China and Canada sparked by the detention of Huawei's Chief Financial Officer was followed by China's arrests of two Canadians on suspicion of espionage. More recently, Australia's call for an independent investigation into the origins of the Coronavirus resulted in tariffs being imposed on Australian goods. These instances point to a more confident China, ready to defend its ground.

Professor Paul Reynolds, (former lecturer at the University of Westminster and member of the Federal International Relations Committee) was our second speaker and shared a nuanced view of China's growth under President Xi Jinping. With slides of maps of the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ and ‘String of Pearls’ he demonstrated how China's expansion may be driven more by domestic needs and protection of its trade routes especially as the world's largest importer of oil. There have been news reports of China's militarisation of disputed islands in the South China Sea, but another slide showed where the balance of power really lay with the already well-established US military bases across Asia. The key says Reynolds is to try to engage China in the international rules-based system and organisations, and not be stuck in a spat between the super powers.

There followed a lively Q&A with questions coming from the US and Latin America, to Zambia and Indonesia. I managed to get in one, quoting WHO's Director General who famously said “The greatest threat we face now is not the virus itself, it's the lack of global solidarity and global leadership”. Indeed, it was generally agreed that we cannot defeat the virus with a divided world.

If anyone missed the webinar but is interested in catching a recording, you can view it here:

<http://www.thepaddyashdownforum.org/videos/#Geopolitics-In-The-Time-of-COVID-19>

Merlene Emerson

LDO executive <https://libdemsoverseas.com>

Cambodia and EU Trade Sanctions.

Human rights violations perpetrated under Cambodian dictator, Hun Sen, have led the European Union to suspension of the Everything but Arms (EBA) trading scheme between Cambodia and the EU as of 12 August 2020. Hun Sen faces increased international pressure.

With repressions continuously increasing and the situation rapidly deteriorating in the past months, and the coronavirus crisis being used as an excuse to ramp up oppression against opposition representatives and other dissenters, Liberal International encourages the liberal family to sign this petition calling for justice for victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia (see below).

In an LI-hosted webinar on 11th August, moderated by LI Nominal Vice President Emil Kirjas with prominent liberal representatives from both the EU and Cambodia, the panel discussed the actions that the EU is taking to respond to Hun Sen's repression of his country. Cambodia National Rescue Party Vice President Mu Sochua, MEP Svenja Hahn and LI Human Rights Committee Deputy Chair Phil Bennion stressed the importance of the EU to act decisively as the largest export market of Cambodia. 45% of Cambodian exports go to the EU.

“In April, the National Assembly adopted an emergency law despite Cambodia having very low infection rates, giving large powers to particularly the Prime Minister to ban freedom of expression and assembly. Now, there is very heavy surveillance online, causing self-censorship. Several people have been arrested and forced to confess publicly to “spreading fake news,” Mu Sochua explained, outlining the recent development in Cambodia.

Svenja Hahn, active in EU trade policy and a member of the EU delegation to South East Asia and ASEAN, raised the strong economic role of the EU and the attractiveness of access to the single market as a force for good.

“The only criteria to qualify for an EBA agreement is to respect fundamental human rights. In the case of Cambodia, this is simply not the case. We have to draw a red line, and this red line has been passed. The reason it is a partial suspension and not a full suspension, is to not adversely affect the poor people of Cambodia, in particular women,” she outlined.

Reflecting on the importance of using economic leverage to promote fundamental rights globally, Phil Bennion explained: “The EU has to have some form of ethical foreign policy, and if you do not use your economic levers to promote human rights then all is lost. Despots and autocrats make progress when liberals and others do not respond.”

Liberal International and its representatives have raised the issue of the deteriorating human rights situation in Cambodia previously, calling for the EU and the international community to take action. Notably, LIHRC Deputy Chair Phil Bennion was blacklisted by Hun Sen for his pro-democracy work, being banned from entry to Cambodia last year.

LI calls liberal family to sign petition calling for justice for victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia.

<https://www.change.org/p/cambodians-together-we-fight-to-end-impunity-justice-for-state-backed-killings-in-cambodia>

If you missed the webinar you can watch it again on LI's Facebook page.

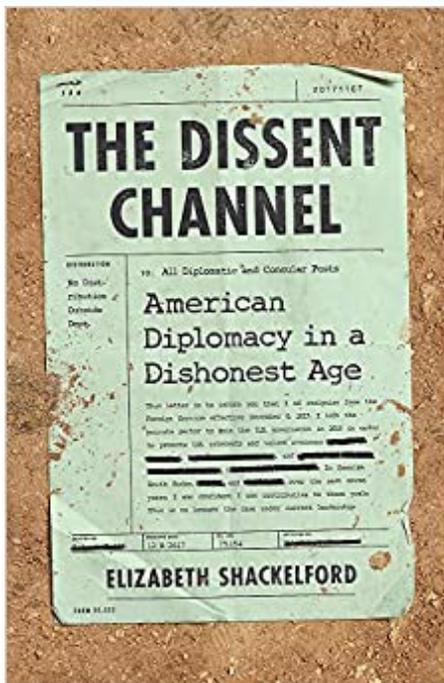
https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=298835218113592&ref=watch_permalink

reviews

**The Dissent Channel: American Diplomacy in a Dishonest Age, by Elizabeth Shackelford, Public Affairs, New York. 2020
isbn 9781541724471**

Western diplomats played a crucial role in the creation of the world's newest nation, South Sudan, in 2011. Representatives of the international community also looked the other way as the country fell apart, thanks in part to their gullibility.

The Dissent Channel by Elizabeth Shackelford explains how the optimism of diplomats soon became embarrassment and denial as the rebels-turned-politicians insulted and robbed them. Shackelford was a former foreign service officer at the US embassy in the capital, Juba. Her page-turning account of the war adds a human voice to numerous depressing reports from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Enough project.



In 2013, only two years after independence from the brutal Islamist dictators in Sudan, South Sudan's leaders launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against their traditional foes that continues to this day. As many as 400,000 civilians (out of a population of 10 million) are thought to have died. Millions more have fled the fighting and are now dependent on the international community for food and shelter.

When South Sudan gained independence in 2011, some of us warned that the historic mutual suspicion between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups might re-emerge. Billions of dollars of overseas aid poured into Juba, unaccounted for, as rebel leaders proved ill-prepared to run ministries. There was no attempt to diversify the economy away from oil, or to encourage South Sudanese to grow their own food, rather than relying on imports from neighbouring Uganda.

Shackelford was posted to the US embassy in Juba a few months before the country disintegrated into violence. She was soon worried by the way in which the US (South Sudan's most generous sponsor) pandered to the president, Salva Kiir. She concluded that America had invested so much money and diplomatic credibility in the new country that it was reluctant to confront the many warning signs: the kleptomania of its leaders, media restrictions, the harassment of UN and US officials, the imprisonment and torture of local critics, and the exclusion of ethnic rivals.

Even when UN staff were beaten by Kiir's presidential guard, the US was loath to challenge Kiir. Instead, diplomats faced daily humiliation by Juba officials who wouldn't return their calls, and attacked America's "neo-colonialism" whenever questions were asked about the missing billions of aid.

On one occasion, South Sudanese soldiers invaded a compound frequented by foreign aid workers, gang raped the women and killed a journalist. Throughout the attack, as the Americans under siege pleaded with the US embassy to send help, their country's diplomats asked the South Sudan government to send soldiers - even though they knew it was South Sudanese soldiers responsible for the violence. The UN peacekeeping mission also refused to send help for fear of offending the Juba government.

As South Sudanese officials openly incited violence against foreigners, the diplomatic community remained in denial. Even as war broke out, and Kiir's Dinka soldiers ethnically cleansed the country of Nuer civilians

and other minorities, diplomats accepted Kiir's groundless claim that the Nuer leader, Riek Machar, had started the fighting.

The US subsequently spent more than \$17 million housing Kiir, Machar and their followers in luxury hotels in Addis Ababa during endless peace talks, always putting the most optimistic spin on the fruitless negotiations. Multiple peace deals later, the suffering of the South Sudanese people continues.

Rather than making good on their expressions of concern, the international community continued to pour money into South Sudan. President Obama and his advisor, Susan Rice, were unprepared to revise their view that Salva Kiir was "their man." Shackleford concludes that Kiir is empowered to continue his reckless behaviour with impunity because he knows that the international community will not make him face any consequences.

It should be noted that, at the time of writing, Susan Rice is among the candidates Joe Biden is considering as his vice-presidential nominee. One unkind insider described Rice as "never having met an African dictator she didn't pander to."

If you know someone considering a career in the foreign service, please suggest they read this book. At least they will know what they are getting into.

Rebecca Tinsley

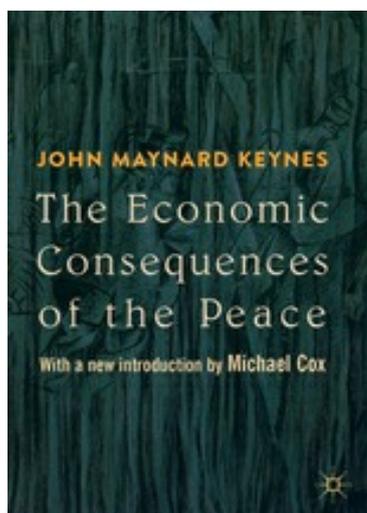
**The Economic Consequences of the Peace, by John Maynard Keynes,
with an introduction by Michael Cox.
Palgrave MacMillan 2019 £22.99
isbn 9783030047580**

A century ago, the last battles of the First World War were being waged, around the conference tables at Versailles and around the globe, as the people battled with influenza. If you walk through any military graveyard of the conflict, particularly in Britain, you might be surprised by how many deaths fall in 1919, after the Armistice; some died of wounds, but far more from influenza. And as, a century on, we battle with Coronavirus, one wonders what Keynes' polemic of 1919 might tell us?

There is, of course, the mythic figure Keynes; we don't tend to bother with the detail. Like Pallas Athena, he bursts forth from the head that guides the invisible hand with *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. He has, in fact, got to this position through a charmed career, up to this point, which led him to the Treasury, where he excelled, achieving, as Cox puts it *overall responsibility for organizing and managing British financial relations with its allies*. This would cast negatively on his opinion of the Americans – he argues for the cancellation of war debt, and the ousting of Asquith would cement class prejudices against Lloyd George. Keynes, of course, becomes reconciled with Lloyd George and his economic ideas form the bedrock of the post-Second World War policy, though Keynes might have been more flexible in their

application and innovation. Economic ideas have their time.

Michael Cox writes an excellent, balanced introduction, setting out the controversies of the book at the time, and as time went on. It remains a controversy, though the myth remains remarkably resilient, in that it provides a simplistic account of what would come to pass in the following decades. One recalls that Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was published before the Terror. Cox points out that much of Keynes' eloquence is devoted to Europe before the war, which he sees essentially as a civil war within European civilisation. Like Burke before him, Keynes was insufficiently familiar with the French to fully grasp their viewpoint, whilst the leaders – Clemenceau, Lloyd-George and Wilson, did not have the free hand their war-weary countries would hardly have given them. His book



certainly played into the hands of the enemies of Lloyd-George and Wilson, who kept America out of the League of Nations. However, the book aided an American change of heart after the Second World War.

I recently had cause to contrast the December 1918 and December 2020 general elections. Not much is usually said of the former, except that Lloyd-George used the coupon to decimate his former Liberal colleagues who were outside of his coalition. As a result, he was effectively leading a Conservative government, which would inevitably tire of him. Keynes writes of the general election campaign in the context of the reparations issue. The dead hand of the press, progressively moves Lloyd-George towards reparations that he previously had little heart for. As Keynes puts it *A vote for a Coalition candidate meant the Crucifixion of Anti-Christ and the assumption by Germany of the British National Debt. It proved an irresistible combination, and once more Mr. George's political instinct was not at fault. No candidate could safely denounce this programme, and none did so. The old Liberal Party, having nothing comparable to offer to the electorate, was swept out of existence.* A footnote adds that the ship chose to sink ignominiously, in silence. The point aside, there are two things to note, the flower of Keynes' prose and his antipathy to 'Lloyd' George, wherein Cox surmises, perhaps, class prejudice. He later concludes *If the General Election of December 1918 had been fought on lines of prudent generosity instead of imbecile greed, how much better the financial prospect of Europe might now be.* Within this passage incidentally, falls the famous remark of a Conservative friend of Keynes on the new House of Commons - *They are a lot of hard-faced men who look as if they had done very well out of the war.*

I haven't found Keynes assessment of the Spanish Flu pandemic, though it is likely that he suffered from a dose of it. What he says however is of equal relevance whilst addressing the Brexit issue more directly. That is, the need for European issues, picking up the wreckage of what he saw as a European civil war, at a European level, which he hoped the United Kingdom (its position then being more exceptional than it is now) would be a part of. By extrapolation this applies to wider international issues.

Stewart Rayment

International Abstracts

China/Kazakhstan

Prisons in the mountains, by Ben Mauk. London Review of Books Vol.41 No.18 26th September 2019
One of the better spin-offs of Lockdown has been the LRB republishing some old articles. China's 're-education facilities' in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are well known, but hey, aren't they what anyone else would call a concentration camp? Ben Mauk reports on the problems faced by Chinese Kazakh refugees who've made it to neighbouring Kazakhstan, but have to deal with a post-Stalinist legal system that kow-tows to Beijing.

https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v41/n18/ben-mauk/diary?utm_campaign=20200718%20icymi&utm_content=ukrw_subs_icymi&utm_medium=email&utm_source=LRB%20icymi.

Syria/Turkey

Turkey joins Syria in slamming oil agreement between US firm, Syrian Kurds, Al-Monitor. 3rd August 2020
This is an important development. There are rumours going around in the light of this agreement, Taysip Erdogan might be preparing a peace deal for Kurds. There is a little chance for any kind of peace but he is dire straits so he might offer something. Also the Americans could push him to do it, in order to leave Assad in dark. But the most important thing is with this deal, Kurds after all, are getting recognition and one hopes this is only beginning.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/08/intel-turkey-syria-slam-oil-agreement-kurds-sdf-kobani.html>

Liberator 402

This is the last print issue of Liberator; in the future it will be a free magazine, available on the internet at www.liberatormagazine.org.uk Unlike interLib, where financial considerations drove us online, greater flexibility (which we found) was central to the Collective's decision, though the catalyst was the magazine's printer since 1979, Lithosphere, going into retirement. Like interLib, Liberator will now be more able to respond to events as they happen – a week is, after all, a long time in politics. There is no immediate international content in this issue. Predictably there is a focus on the Liberal Democrats' leadership elections. There is the usual hand-wringing about the future of Liberalism in Britain – go with Bernard Greaves' optimism rather than Michael Meadowcroft's pessimism. And there are a number of articles around the Black Lives Matter issue, by Stephen Williams, Mary Page and Janice Turner.