

liberator



**Harriet Smith
1954-2006**

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COMMENTARY

THE MING DESTINY

All leaders grow into the job, and eventually grow out of it, and the difficult circumstances in which Ming Campbell became Lib Dem leader always made it likely that there would be an awkward transition phase while he found his feet.

Campbell and his party are, for better or worse, stuck with each other until after the next general election. It hard to see any situation short of incapacity in which anyone would wish to go through another leadership election before that, despite excited media speculation to the contrary.

Nor does it seem remotely credible that Charles Kennedy will suddenly overcome his health problem, mount a coup and resume office, again despite excited speculations.

There continues to be muttering about Campbell's abilities as leader, not because he has perpetrated some outrage or alienated parts of the party, but because he appears unsure in the job and unclear about what he would like the party to be and the country to become.

It must be difficult for any member of the public to form a view on what it would feel like to live in Campbell's Britain, what would be different about it and what, even in the most general terms, his government would do and not do.

The party knew that it was getting an elderly lawyer of conventional opinions – in liberal terms – and voted for a steadying hand.

But steadiness has its limits as a virtue. The third largest party has to live by its wits and grab public attention whenever it can, firstly to remind voters it exists and secondly to try to lodge some message in their minds.

One problem for Campbell is that he does not do passion. He won great respect over the period of the Iraq war and after for his authoritative assault on the government. But he was shadow foreign secretary then, not leader, and could safely leave the indignation to Kennedy, who did it well.

Contrast that with the party's profile on the current Lebanon crisis. As of early August, Campbell was the only senior politician who had articulated the widely held view in the country that Britain should press for an immediate ceasefire and not supply arms to either side.

He had an open goal, with bombs falling and the government tagging along behind America, and David Cameron tagging along behind the government. Yet we got caution, not outrage.

In a quite different field, take tax policy. The 50p top rate tax band was simple, explicable and easily grasped by anyone remotely interested. It said something about what the Lib Dems felt about fairness and about the wealthier contributing to improve the lot of those less fortunate.

The new policy claims to tax the very rich, though not in ways that most people are likely to memorise easily, to impose 'green' taxes and to cut taxes for the poorest payers.

It has alternately been a matter for conference to decide, or a trial of strength between Campbell and 'activists', depending on whether Campbell has been trying on any given day to cultivate the party or let his spin doctors score a cheap headline. For example, on 1 July stories were planted in the media warning that Campbell would face a "tax test" at conference, yet on 6 July party members received an e-mail from Campbell saying "... our party conferences are part of the lifeblood of the party. Unlike the other parties, we have real, substantive policy debates – and without the results being fixed in advance."

The new tax policy is nuanced, complex and may even be right. But as with the Lebanon crisis, where is the passion about what it could deliver and where is the communication with the public? A tax policy could be perfect, but still be useless if it is made to look baffling and sound boring.

Political parties have detailed, costed, policies so that they cannot be caught out and could implement them if they had the opportunity. But that is not the same as, in the current fashionable phrase, constructing a narrative of the society they hope to create and articulating that effectively.

There is a crucial difference between programmes and values. The party needs to give people positive reasons to support it (and by logical extension, positive reasons for some to oppose), which come from connecting emotionally rather than from hoping the voters will pore over policy details.

The Lib Dems have not done badly under Campbell. May's local elections were disappointing but could have been a great deal worse, and Bromley and Chislehurst was almost an astonishing coup, and one that suggests the party's potential remains intact despite indifferent opinion polls.

A Guardian leader made the telling comment that Campbell did not appear to be enjoying his job (in signal contrast to Cameron) and that this unenthusiasm communicated itself to the party and public.

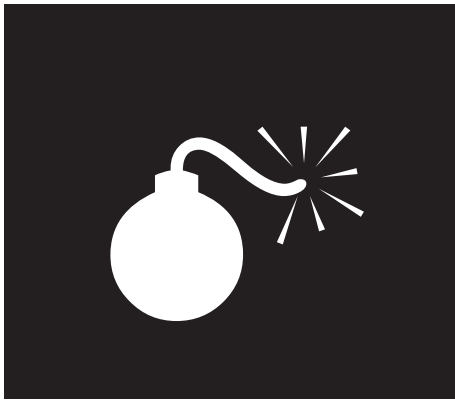
There is the problem. The party wanted a steadying hand, but not just that.

Campbell needs to learn simplicity, clarity, vision and passion, or at least how to give the impression that he has grasped all four. Anyone fighting a seat at the next election will hope that he succeeds.

LIBERATOR 313

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Copies will be posted the following week to readers not at conference.



RADICAL BULLETIN

HOW BLUE WAS MY SUBURB?

There are plenty of examples of misplaced optimism in Liberal Democrat by-election campaigns, but Bromley and Chislehurst was a rare example of misplaced pessimism.

While some of those on the ground believed it to be winnable, almost no-one else did.

The result was that the campaign was under-powered and might have pulled off a surprising win with some more outside help.

On the face of it, a leafy outer London suburb with a five-figure Tory majority did not look very promising, particularly as Bromley and Chislehurst has, for more than 40 years, been whatever is the opposite of a target seat.

Resources have been devoted to neighbouring Orpington, held by the Liberals in the 1960s and almost regained in 2001, with the result that little attention has been paid to Bromley and Chislehurst.

The lack of outside help brought forth a coruscating letter to Liberal Democrat News from former Orpington candidate Chris Maines, who suggested the sale of 'I didn't go to B&C' badges.

Maines made a series of veiled criticisms of holders of party officers who failed to attend.

This is understood to be a reference to a party body that shifted its executive meeting from Westminster to Bromley, at the suggestion of campaigns chief Chris Rennard, only to be rebuffed by its executive members, almost all of whom sent apologies "due to the changed circumstances". The sole attendee thus declared the meeting lacked a quorum.

And who were these people who think parliamentary election campaigns too trivial to merit 15 minutes on a train? Step forward, er, the Parliamentary Candidates Association.

One other PCA executive member was in the borough – candidate Ben Abbots.

STRUCK OFF AND DIE

A row is in the offing for conference over the termination of specified associated organisation status for Delga, the Lib Dems' gay and lesbian group, and for Aldes, the equivalent for engineers and scientists.

What these disparate bodies have in common is that they have fallen foul of a bureaucratic review of SAO status conducted for the Federal Executive.

Back in 2002/03, the FE resolved to review the status of SAOs (and mere AOs, which have less extensive constitutional rights) after a row over granting SAO status to Aldes.

The argument was that Aldes did not represent any specific interest group such as did Delga, LDYS or the

Association of Liberal Democrat Trade Unionists, but was merely concerned with internal lobbying.

So urgent did the FE deem this review that it was put off until after the 2005 general election, and after a long and tedious document on the subject was produced which caught the attention of no-one.

Since no-one had worked out the time needed to complete the review between the general election and conference, it did not happen last year either.

Thus at the start of April, a mere four years after the whole thing started, SAOs and AOs were asked to provide accounts, a copy of their constitution and other documents such as a schedule of activity.

This demand was widely ignored since it coincided with most people's local election campaigns.

After those elections, Cowley Street official Kate Heywood sent out a further demand, and added a desire to read 250 words on "why your organisation should retain its status" within two weeks or status would be automatically suspended.

A three-strong review panel chaired by Paul Farthing had the unenviable task of wading through these details, and appeared to reach decisions on the basis of whether SAOs conformed to narrow rules rather than, say, the signals sent to groups of voters by disowning Delga.

Thus Delga was hooped for its lack of formal bureaucracy and Aldes for being a little under the 250-word requirement. ALDTU was well below 250 words, so its fate appears sealed.

ITS THAT MAN AGAIN, AGAIN

Liberator Collective member Catherine Furlong suffered a rather trying shock when she attended a recording of a celebrity West Wing quiz show, intended for transmission with the last episode of the series.

Among the 'celebrities' on the panel was Winchester MP Mark Oaten, who seemed to have embarked on a campaign of attempted rehabilitation, after January's sordid newspaper revelations, by appearing on light entertainment shows.

Oaten's craving of the limelight had not gone down entirely well in his Winchester constituency (see letters page, and Liberator 311).

Now he has, and not before time, announced that he will stand down at the next election to free himself to work in the developing world.

The Antarctic, the Gobi Desert and Pitcairn are no doubt among places crying out for Oaten's singular contributions to public life.

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

“What shall we do with Charles?” is a question that does the rounds of Westminster as, assuming the former leader overcomes his health problems, some suitable role must eventually be found for him.

One idea is that Scotland’s Lib Dem MEP Elspeth Attwool will stand down at the next election, allowing Kennedy to go to Brussels as head of the party’s list in Scotland.

Just one problem. The next Euro elections are in 2008, a year before the next expected Westminster ones.

Does that mean that the rules against ‘dual mandates’ would force a by-election in Kennedy’s seat?

QUOTA UNQUOTE

Party president Simon Hughes took the unusual step of submitting a holding motion to reserve a slot at conference to discuss the equality and diversity review. This nearly gave conference a rare chance to debate something that did not exist.

The holding motion was submitted because, although the review body was commissioned by the previous conference and supposedly monitored by the Federal Executive, as of early July it had not actually met. Its one meeting then brought forth a hasty ‘report’ limited to initial recommendations.

The final version of Hughes’s motion says that the gender, ethnicity and disability of candidates should be “considered” when assigning target status to seats, though it is unclear how much weight he thinks should be given to these factors.

It also seeks to commit the party “to the objective of proportional representation for women, black and minority ethnic people and those with disabilities with the same priority as proportional political representation and agrees to campaign vigorously for these objectives in every way possible throughout the remainder of this parliament”.

Sounds fine, but what does this mean? Quotas in all public elections? Quotas in parties’ own selection processes? Locally set ‘proportionality’ to reflect differences between, say, Lambeth and Lewisham? What exactly is the party being asked to ‘campaign vigorously’ in favour of?

ONLY CONNECT

Iraq war supporter Gavin Grant has been made convenor of something called the Liberal Democrat Communications Agency, a post from which he can no doubt advise Ming Campbell on his image, fresh from his experiences in Mark Oaten’s aborted leadership bid.

Campaign Committee chair Ed Davey enthused that he had “an amazing response from party members with over 40 expressions of interest” in joining this ‘agency’.

Given that there was a general invitation to party members who work in public relations and public affairs to become involved, and that hundreds do so, 40 seems a bit underwhelming.

Davey says the agency’s main task is to have communications ideas bounced off it and do work for free for which the party would otherwise have to pay.

He says the campaigns and communications committee will be the client and “the agency will operate under our instructions”.

Will Grant – always a man with a strong, and very right-wing, political agenda – be happy with this arrangement?

UP, UP AND AWAY

The Mitcham and Morden Gold Toilet has been awarded this year to an entire region.

In a motion entitled with the unfortunate Americanism ‘homeland security’ (how many inhabitants of the UK ever used that phrase before the US invented a government department of that name), London region called for airborne nuclear bombs.

It urges the replacement of Trident by “an independent airborne deterrent, focussed on deterrence and a proportionate response to a nuclear attack”.

A ‘deterrent focused on deterrence’ is an interesting concept, as is a ‘proportionate’ response to a nuclear attack. What does that mean – that instead of incinerating some foreign city, as Trident can, only part of one should be obliterated?

The toilet is awarded for the worst motion submitted to each conference, in honour of Mitcham and Morden’s 1983 effort on the precise siting of public conveniences.

Cardiff Central, South and Penarth is the lucky recipient of the silver toilet for a motion on standby lights, which called for legislation to ensure these were switched automatically switch to ‘off’ mode, and that a tax should be imposed on new electric appliances with a standby mode. Did someone mention the nanny state?

A special award goes to Sleaford and North Hykeham’s motion on the National Health Service. This had to be disqualified from the toilet category because the words in question formed part of its appeal against Federal Conference Committee’s quite reasonable refusal to take a motion that merely called for “support for NHS staff”.

The appeal read: “We recognise that the early part of the motion calls for support [for NHS staff] but this is set out so as to provide a gurney on which the conference can operate as it dissects the motion ready to present the health body to the nation.”

EMPTY PLATFORM

According whether you’re the police or the Stop the War Coalition, between 7,000 and 20,000 people marched through central London on Saturday 22 July in opposition to Israel’s action against Lebanon and Palestine.

Events obviously mean that demos of this kind are thrown together rather quickly and LDYS isn’t the rapid response unit that the Young Liberals used to be.

But where were the Lib Dems on the platform? Menzies Campbell had been the most coherent critic in Westminster, and the only party leader to attack the use of disproportionate force. Jenny Tonge has frequently graced such platforms and there is no shortage of other possibles. Were the Lib Dems even asked?

When the massive demonstration against the Iraq war took place in February 2003, the assorted Trots and tankies involved in its organisation were less than enthusiastic to have Charles Kennedy speak, even though he was one of the invasion’s highest-profile critics. Did the same happen again?

STILL PUNCHING ABOVE OUR WEIGHT?

The failure to agree an EU constitution has closed off one solution to Britain's overstretched defence commitments, so it's time for a radical review of them, says Tim Garden

The new millennium has seen global security taking a turn for the worse, while the commitments of Britain's depleted armed forces have been growing.

The 2002 US intervention in Afghanistan has generated demand for UK security assistance there, and this has increased very significantly over the past few months. The rushed intervention in Iraq of March 2003 resulted in new regional security problems, and an extended commitment for both UK forces and overseas aid. Pre-emptive military responses by the US or Israel to a perceived Iranian nuclear threat would have profound implications for UK forces in Iraq. The growing ferocity of the exchanges between Israel and Hezbollah and Hamas threaten the stability of the region.

We have seen the Royal Navy prepare to evacuate British citizens from Lebanon. Conflict in sub-Saharan Africa has continued, and at times has required UK forces to be deployed under UN, EU, NATO or national auspices. The Balkans still require troops. A quarter of a century after the Falklands conflict, we still keep a force defending the islands.

Even nuclear weapons are back on the agenda, as North Korea and Iran ignore international opinion, and as Tony Blair tries to rush through an early decision on the future of the British deterrent.

We are often in danger of looking at each of these crises as though they can be resolved in isolation. Yet decisions in one area of foreign and security policy have an impact in others.

Afghanistan is currently a much more difficult problem than it need have been because of the intervention in Iraq. In October 2001, Jack Straw, made a promise that we would support the rebuilding of Afghanistan into a viable democratic state, so that terrorists could no longer have a safe haven there. Like so much else, the unnecessary intervention in Iraq in 2003 spoiled this plan. The subsequent chaos in Iraq meant that the problems of Afghanistan were put on the back burner.

Hamad Karzai asked for 50,000 troops to help him secure the country. NATO sent a tenth of that number, and could do little more than secure the capital Kabul. Meanwhile, the United States continued its offensive operations in the east of the country to try to find Osama bin Laden using special forces and airpower. Gradually, NATO has extended

reconstruction to the north and west; but the south and east along the border with Pakistan have remained bandit country. The opium poppy harvest has again flourished, and finds its way to the streets of Britain. Now British forces find themselves with a growing commitment in Helmand province, and one that may last for many years.

The traditional international structures to promote peace and security have also suffered setbacks. Reform of the UN makes slow progress, and US attitudes, coupled with UN corruption scandals, have reduced the effectiveness of this key organisation. NATO has been damaged by the tensions between members over the Iraq intervention, and by arguments over force commitments for Afghanistan. The US has only recently realised, perhaps too late, the costs of failure to consult with allies.

European defence co-operation has also been hampered by Iraq, but also by the failure to agree a new EU constitution. The divide between the rich and poor peoples of the world widens both through protectionism by the rich and inadequate governance in the poor. Poverty, repression, disease and ethnic disputes increase the sense of despair among the developing world, and will lead to more conflict.

Natural catastrophes are also presenting challenges to governments. They have much in common with the man-made problems that stem from conflict. As climate change increases the intensity and frequency of some environmental disasters, governments will be under pressure to provide more reliable responses than the current ad hoc arrangements, and this will have to be provided by the military.

Meanwhile, UK security policy remains traditional in its structure. By far the largest share of resources (2.2% of GDP) goes to the Ministry of Defence to fund the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. International Development has yet to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GDP.

Diplomacy, through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is smaller still. In resource terms, the MOD:DfID:FCO budgets are in the ratios 32:5:2.

Separately from these three departments concerned with external affairs, the intelligence services and the Home Office have important security roles. While the measures taken since 9/11 have increased co-operation between these different government departments, the relative allocation of

resources is little changed. Only in conflict prevention pool budgets is there a small amount of flexing between departments to meet common security challenges.

With the exception of the nuclear deterrent, the UK no longer plans or provides for military defence of its territory against an attack by another state. Furthermore, it is assumed that any major military operation will have to be undertaken as part of a coalition force. These two planning assumptions have removed the underpinning for particular force levels, and have allowed a progressive reduction in combat units to meet budgetary constraints. In an analysis of five years ago, I predicted that by 2020 the defence budget would be down to 1.3% of GDP and the armed forces frontline would be half the size it was in 2000. The trendline since has not caused me to revise these figures.

As our reduced armed forces have to undertake more overseas operations for indeterminate periods, they find themselves in increasing difficulty. The size of the army, navy and air force is calculated on assumptions about the number and nature of future commitments.

The National Audit Office has reported that these 'defence planning assumptions' have been exceeded every year since 1999. Too few troops means that they must be repeatedly deployed to operations with insufficient time back home for training and family life.

This leads to earlier retirement from the military, which means more recruits are needed and experience levels fall. The problem is much worse in some specialisations than others. Medical services are in short supply and, as a result, reservists are used disproportionately. But repeated call-up of reservists brings new problems for recruiting and retention to these hard pressed areas. Even when the troops do get home, they have to live in depressing unmodernised accommodation that would be condemned for any other group in society.

While the growing problem of lack of people to undertake these complex nation-building tasks is of concern, there is a parallel problem in terms of shortages of appropriate equipment. The lack of helicopters and suitable vehicles for Iraq and Afghanistan hits the headlines when soldiers are killed by roadside bombs.

The Ministry of Defence equipment budget is in trouble as the growing cost of future projects causes problems. The big money is currently being spent on Eurofighter deliveries. The two new aircraft carriers with their joint strike fighters will be the next big spender, and beyond that Trident replacement looks ready to eat up funds. There is a long list of aircraft, submarines, ships and vehicles that are fighting for priority in a crowded defence programme. The most expensive are the high technology war fighting capabilities which will be delivered many years ahead. Yet our troops need the tools for the stabilisation and reconstruction now.

All this is a problem for any government, and it is easy to criticise them for having too many commitments, too few troops and inadequate equipment.

It is however also a problem for Liberal Democrats. We support international institutions. We want our armed forces to help bring stability to regions where war, famine, terrorism, earthquake or other disasters happen. We do not want to leave ourselves undefended. The riposte when we criticise military overstretch will always be to ask which mission we would abandon. When we identify shortcomings in accommodation, pay or equipment, we must be ready to say what we would do about the defence budget.

Of course a Lib Dem government would not have invaded Iraq, but we might still have called for a UN international force to help sort it out afterwards. Our commitment then might not have been so very different in scale from the current one. We would have supported a better and earlier response in Afghanistan, and that would have led to another demand on our forces.

It is difficult to see that we would want to be less involved in trying to promote stability in lawless parts of the world. Should we then advocate spending more on defence? This seems unlikely when we look at how much the defence budget already overshadows the other elements of public spending, particularly those which also promote security and improve conditions around the world.

Yet there is a growing realisation that the current approach cannot be sustained. We are in danger of ending up with expensive new military equipment but no-one left to operate it.

If the defence budget is fixed, either commitments must reduce or spending priorities within the budget must change. Commitments could reduce if allies took on more of the burden. In the Cold War, we shared the security burden with other NATO members. This is proving more problematic now as some nations prefer to opt for the less challenging missions, and they know that they must bear the costs if they volunteer to deploy. On spending priorities, it is politically difficult to move away from the traditional big ticket items, which are all too often seen as supporting national industries. Again the logic is to look to allies to share the costs of the most expensive systems. Yet, with the honourable exception of the NATO airborne early warning aircraft, there seems little enthusiasm among nations to operate joint owned defence systems.

All this could have been transformed if the EU had been able to move forward in the defence and security policy field. Between the 25 nations, the €180bn that is spent on armed forces each year could provide and sustain ample capability. Yet sovereignty issues hamper even minor co-operation. Indeed, we see a move to more national solutions for defence as the focus moves to countering terrorist attacks at home. The Blair government's choice of defence partnership with the US has thrown up problems of access to key technology.

So what should we Lib Dems say? Perhaps it is time to take a leaf out of the New Labour plan of a decade ago. Then they announced that they would carry out a Strategic Defence Review on coming into office, and that is what they did in 1998. The world has changed in unforeseen ways since that review. If we are to have appropriate forces to support our foreign and security policy aims, we will need to be prepared to do an equally radical reappraisal of defence priorities. Britain's days of punching above our weight are numbered if we continue on the current course.

Tim Garden is Liberal Democrat defence spokesman in the House of Lords and a former assistant chief of the defence staff.

WHY THE NATWEST THREE FELL FOUL OF LABOUR

Bankers accused of fraud would not normally arouse the instinctive sympathy of liberals, but the NatWest case revealed an unbalanced extradition process that the government would not have agreed with any country other than America, says Willie Goodhart

The NatWest Three (or, as some prefer to call them, the Enron Three) have been shipped off to Houston. The judgment of the Administrative Court indicates that the evidence against them is, on the face of it, strong (though of course it has not yet been challenged) and that Texas is an appropriate forum for their trial. Leave to appeal from that decision was refused by the House of Lords. Why is it, therefore, that their extradition has met with almost universal condemnation by the media, and by Liberal Democrats and Conservatives in both Houses of Parliament?

The answer needs to start a few years back. Extradition arrangements between the USA and the UK have been governed since 1977 by a treaty that is theoretically still in force. That treaty provides that a request for extradition must be supported “by such evidence as, according to the law of the requested Party, would justify his committal for trial if the offence had been committed in the territory of the requested Party”.

This test required a slightly higher level of evidence for extradition from the UK to the USA than the other way round. In the UK, evidence supporting committal has to establish a case to answer – that is, the evidence must be sufficient, if not rebutted, to justify a conviction. In the USA, committal requires ‘probable cause’ – that is, evidence that would give rise to a reasonable belief that the person concerned is guilty. The need to show probable cause is written into the American Constitution.

In March 2001, negotiations began for a new extradition treaty to replace the 1977 treaty. The treaty was signed on 31 March 2003. Under that treaty, it is provided that: “a request for extradition of a person who is sought for prosecution shall be supported by for requests to the United States, such information as would provide a reasonable basis to believe that the person sought committed the offence for which extradition is requested”.

The effect of this would be to retain, for extradition from the USA, the test of probable cause. For extradition to the USA, no such information is required. This makes

extradition to the USA much easier than extradition in the other direction.

The treaty was negotiated in secret, as is the usual practice. There was no parliamentary scrutiny of a draft treaty, and ratification of treaties requires no parliamentary process. Liberal Democrats in both Houses of Parliament objected to the lack of reciprocity in the treaty as soon as it was published, but by that time we were too late.

But the treaty has not yet come into force. This is because, under the American Constitution, treaties have to be ratified by the Senate. The Senate has not yet ratified the treaty, apparently because of pressure by Irish-American organisations and the American Civil Liberties Union. Senators will not do anything before the congressional elections in November that might alienate the Irish-American vote, and it is far from certain that they will ever ratify the treaty.

So the 1977 treaty remains in force – or at least it would do so, but for an extraordinary step taken by the British government in December 2003. Using powers given to it by the Extradition Act 2003, which had just come into force, the government made an Order, which exempted a number of countries (including the USA) from the need to provide evidence of guilt in order to obtain extradition. In effect, this Order gave the USA the benefit of the new treaty even before it had ratified it. One effect was, of course, to remove any incentive for the Senate to ratify the treaty.

The Liberal Democrats in both Houses objected to the inclusion of the USA Order and voted against it in December 2003. The Conservatives abstained. It is under that Order that people are now being extradited to the USA. In almost all the other countries to which the Order extended, the arrangement to dispense with evidence was reciprocal.

In dealing with extradition to the USA, the government has made two fundamental errors. First, it should never have agreed to the unequal treaty with the USA. I accept that there could have been no valid objection to reducing the test for extradition to the USA from the ‘case to answer’ test to the

slightly lower 'probable cause' test used in reverse. This could in fact have been achieved by omitting six words – “for requests to the United States” – from the Article of the treaty mentioned above. There is no justification, however, for the total removal of the need to show some evidence of guilt at the extradition hearing.

The second fundamental error was to include the USA in the Order made in 2003 as a country to which people could be extradited without evidence. This was a tactical error, because (as already mentioned) it removed any incentive for the Senate to consent to the treaty. Worse, it exposed residents of the UK to extradition under unequal arrangements at a time when there was no obligation under the treaty or otherwise to do so.

The NatWest Three have gone, but there are about 50 more people in the pipeline. They are a mixed bag but the largest single group is those sought on charges of fraud. Four are sought for terrorism-related crimes. Contrary to views expressed in debate by the Conservatives, they are as much entitled as anyone else to protection from unjustifiable extradition. The ordeal faced by anyone extradited to the USA on the basis of unfounded allegations of terrorism would be far worse than that of the NatWest Three or anyone else who may be extradited on allegations of financial crime.

So what needs to be done? First, and most urgently, the government should immediately revoke the Order made in 2003, so far as it applies to the USA. This would mean that

we would return to the original 'case to answer' test and extraditions currently in progress would have to be reconsidered on that basis.

Then, the government should tell the Americans that they are not prepared to exchange instruments of ratification – the final step in bringing a treaty into force – until the treaty has been renegotiated and the six offending words have been removed from it, so as to make the treaty fully reciprocal.

There is a final lesson here as well. Treaties should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny before they are signed, and should require parliamentary approval before they are ratified. It is hard to believe that the 2003 treaty would have emerged in its present form if that had been the case.

One last question – why did the government get into this situation in the first place? Was it because it was prepared to lean over backwards to please the Americans by handing over people wanted by them, even on unequal terms? It is true that the Americans were barred by their Constitution from extraditing without probable cause. But the British negotiation should then have insisted on probable cause for extradition the other way as well. It is hard to believe that the government would acquiesce in such an unequal arrangement with other countries.

Lord Goodhart QC is the Liberal Democrat shadow Lord Chancellor

LIBERATOR IN BRIGHTON

Two fringe meetings at the Liberal Democrat autumn conference

BEYOND INCREMENTALISM

The launch of a new booklet, edited by Graham Watson and Simon Titley. What follows the Meeting the Challenge policy review? If the party is to base its policies and campaigns on coherent values, and thus build its natural constituency, it must be less muted and more assertive.

Speakers include Graham Watson MEP, Baroness Ros Scott.

Sunday 17 September - 8pm-9.30pm

Hilton Brighton Metropole - Balmoral Room

GENERATIONAL EQUITY

*(Meeting co-hosted by ALTER)
Young workers create most of Britain's wealth, yet they are being stung by the quadruple whammy of graduate debt, inflated property values, pensions and income tax. By ignoring land value taxation, is the party's tax commission missing a trick?*

Monday 18 September - 1pm-2pm

Hilton Brighton Metropole - Cambridge Room

SLEEPWALKING TO DISASTER?

The Liberal Democrats have been centralised without anyone noticing, so does anyone care, asks James Graham

Am I right in thinking that the Lib Dem grassroots are quite happy with the degree of centralisation that the party has been undergoing for the past three years?

I ask because no-one seems to be particularly concerned about it. As a member of the Federal Executive, I opposed much of it, supported some of it, but never got the impression that many people cared either way. Eight months ago, I quit the FE due to work commitments and I thought it was time to put some of my concerns on record. But my main concern is not so much what is happening at the centre of the party, but the culture of indifference that has allowed such a situation to evolve.

The party has been slowly centralising control for some time now. In 2003, the decision was made effectively to merge the role of chief executive with director of campaigns, and in 2005 this role was further expanded to have overall control of the Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats.

I don't, I should point out, have a particular problem with either of these reforms. I can see good reason for wanting to coordinate better POLD with the campaigns department and the rest of Cowley Street.

Where I have a problem is that this has gone hand in hand with a culture that does not respect democratic decision-making and has furthermore sought to minimise scrutiny under the guise of professionalism. Specifically, I have a problem with a chief executive who constantly pleads that he is accountable to the party's Federal Executive but who takes that to mean he has *carte blanche*. And I have a problem with the fact that those senior figures around him are quite happy with this state of affairs.

Take the party's campaign budget. The general fund – which pays Cowley Street staff salaries, pays for party administration and administers grants to the odd specified associate organisation – is run by the Federal Finance and Administration Committee and thus at least theoretically is subject to scrutiny by the Federal Executive (the fact that, in my three years on the FE, that committee was never offered anything more than a *fait accompli* to rubber stamp is by the by).

The campaign budget, on the other hand, is not only beyond the purview of the Federal Executive, but outside of that of the FFAC too. All that either committee ever gets to see is a few unannotated figures.

Meanwhile, access to the FE's minutes has been severely restricted. One of Simon Hughes's first acts as federal president was to force through a standing order amendment to block members from being able to access minutes via Cix and the Extranet. The 'replacement' – an occasional

summary by the president himself in Lib Dem News – has not succeeded, I think it is fair to say, to shine much light on the inner workings of the party.

What's more, there are serious questions about whether Cowley Street actually maintains much of an archive of official records. Last year, I requested a copy of the findings of the Race Equality Advisory Group, which the FE adopted in 2003, only to be told that no copy could be found. Eventually, I had to get a copy from the report's authors.

There is a worrying tendency from the centre to respond to democratic decisions made within the party by either ignoring them or, where that does not work, 'reviewing' them until the 'right' decision is made.

The REAG, established by former president Navnit Dholakia, is a good case in point.

It sets out, in detail, a proactive and fundamentally liberal approach to targeting ethnic minority communities and increasing the number of black and minority ethnic candidates. As chief executive, it was Lord Rennard's responsibility to ensure that this plan happened.

None of it, however, has ever been carried out. On taking office, it soon became clear that Hughes did not agree with many of these proposals either, and attempted to get the party to adopt his own.

When this approach failed, he set up yet another review. The motion to spring conference this year, which basically sought to endorse the original REAG strategy, was passed overwhelmingly, but conference in its infinite wisdom accepted an amendment that made the whole thing subject to, you guessed it, yet another review.

My understanding is that Simon Hughes and Lord Rennard have now got their way. Congratulations to them, but it should be pointed out that the past three years have been totally wasted by such manoeuvring, and it does raise serious questions about what actually constitutes a decision in this party.

The Gender Balance Task Force is another example. It has been endorsed by two conference motions, the latest one (in September 2005) calling for the body to be properly resourced. Yet for the past six months, the GBTF has not been allowed to fill its vacancy for an administrator. This has now been rectified but only on a temporary six-month basis. A strategy that can boast a strong track record of success, albeit a limited one due to it being repeatedly starved of resources, is slowly grinding to a halt.

None of this would concern me quite as much if this centralism and secrecy was producing good governance, but I can't see it. In the general election last year, the party hierarchy effectively decided to junk the themes and values

laid out in the manifesto carefully and democratically prepared by the Federal Policy Committee, in favour of a 10-point plan of policy soundbites that did well when market tested. I can't find a single individual who now agrees that was a good move.

The decision to accept the controversial £2.4m donation from Michael Brown was made, it is unclear by whom, without recourse to the FE, the FFAC or even a party treasurer (Reg Clark resigned from the post a few days before the donation was accepted, citing a wish to spend more time with his business interests).

Maybe it is too easy to say, with the benefit of hindsight, that accepting this was a mistake. But was a single eyebrow really not raised when he insisted on donating via a limited company (which had yet to file a single set of accounts with Companies House) because he was not registered in the UK to vote?

And then there is the Liberty Network. At a time when budgets for things such as the GBTF, ALDC and LDYS were being squeezed until their proverbial pips squeaked, this new 'high net worth donor' scheme was flooded with cash from central funds.

In 2003, it raised £84,000, just £30,000 of which was passed onto the party (i.e. 64% of money raised went on administration). In 2004, it raised £145,000, just £45,000 of which was passed onto the party (70% went on admin). That means £100,000 of party funds was tied up for three years until it was eventually declared a failure.

I know this because the accounts are published on the Electoral Commission's website and the only reason they were discussed at the FFAC was because I raised the matter myself. Until that point, it was just an embarrassing little secret that no-one wanted to talk about.

I'm bringing all this up because I am uncomfortable with the direction the party centrally is going and, fundamentally, I don't think it actually works.

The sense I get, however, is that it is happening with the passive assent of the wider party. I'm all too aware that, during my time on the FE and the FFAC, I was in a distinct

minority. The people I would lock horns with on committee are re-elected year after year by conference representatives, and those same representatives are notable by their absence when conference debates the various reports from federal committees. The argument for all this indifference, I suppose, is that if it ain't bust, don't fix it, yet if no-one is actually paying attention, how will we know if it really starts to go badly wrong?

Meanwhile, the rush to concentrate power into the hands of a single person continues apace. The party announced in July that Ed Davey had been elected unopposed as the new Campaigns and Communications Committee chair. In the same press release, it was announced that Menzies Campbell had appointed Rennard as the chair of the general election campaign.

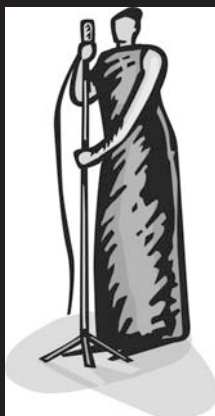
Is it not reasonable to ask how a member of staff – for that is what Lord Rennard is – can be chair of an executive committee? Why do we need this post when the CCC chair has always fulfilled the role? Who will be ultimately responsible for decisions made in the general election – the CCC chair or the general election chair?

Much of this will be dismissed as a personal attack on Lord Rennard and I can't deny his personal style has put my nose out of joint on more than one occasion. Yet my underlying argument remains: why are we – a party with such an admirable record on challenging power – handing so much control to one, relatively unaccountable, individual?

The irony is, if the leader, elected as he is by one member one vote, sought to expand his power base in this way, much of the party would be in uproar. Healthy liberal scepticism appears to fall by the wayside when it comes to someone who goes by the nickname 'God'.

James Graham was a member of the Federal Executive 2003/05 and a member of the Federal Finance and Administration Committee in 2005. He can be contacted at: semajmaharg@gmail.com or via his blog: <http://theliberati.net/quaequamblog>

The 2006 New Liberator Songbook



revised with additional songs and old favourites - will be available at Liberal Democrat conference at Brighton in September from the Liberator stall - essential for the Glee Club

OBITUARY: HARRIET SMITH

Liberator collective member Harriet Smith died on 1 July, aged 51, after suffering from cancer. We pay tribute to her roles in Liberator, the Liberal Revue, the party and her professional work

Harriet Smith was a lifelong liberal. Born in Edinburgh in 1954, her father Robert was a Liberal councillor and later a grandee of the Scottish Liberal Party. Her late mother Brigid was a familiar figure at Liberal Party assemblies, regularly in charge of the speakers' card table.

Harriet moved to London in the late 1970s and began several periods as an employee of the Liberal Party and later the Liberal Democrats. Her first job was for the Liberal Party Organisation policy unit, and it was during this period that she first joined the Liberator Collective.

The magazine was changing from a Young Liberal paper into the magazine it is today and she was around to help with commissioning writing and the production in the age before word processors, the age of cut-and-paste onto art boards using the famous Cow Gum.

After various jobs in the voluntary sector, she became press officer to Paddy Ashdown in the early part of his leadership.

Harriet had left Liberator in the early 1980s, but returned soon after the merger and become one of the corps of willing typists used to prepare the magazine in the days before electronic copy.

She never lost her affection for the Palace of Westminster, where she knew so many people and some of her friends became MPs or peers. Later, she joined the Parliament Choir. She sang many times and gave her last elegant performance in November, despite her illness.

Of course, she continued to work for the party as a volunteer and was elected to the Federal Conference Committee, where she served for many years, latterly as vice chair, a post she held until her death.

Harriet loved party conference, the politics, helping to run it, the debates, the gossip, the late night bars and being among friends from all over the country.

In 1992, she went to help her friend Nick Winch who was the agent for Bath. She was there at the kill when Don Foster won Bath from the Tories and this splendid result wedded Harriet to Bath. She returned in 1997 to help ensure the seat was held and continued her association to the end.

She made many friends over the years in Bath. At her funeral, one of them, Nicole O'Flaherty, delivered a tribute on behalf of Bath Liberals that was fine and moving and one of the most hilarious I have ever heard at a funeral. Harriet would have approved of the comedy.

It was for comedy, or perhaps more accurately satirical songs, that Harriet will be remembered by most readers who attended conferences. She made an enormous contribution to the Liberal Revue spanning 20 years. She would go off and find a well known song and adapt it suitably laced with satire.



Then would follow weeks of rehearsal, as she usually picked technically demanding pieces, and when the performance came, there she was in dressing rooms glamping up, or sometimes doing quite the opposite, and having a ball. But above all she loved being out there on stage.

Of her so many appearances on so many stages, I have picked a few.

At the 1992 conference revue, Harriet played the part of the old soothsayer Seear (as in Nancy Seear), in Mark Smulian's adaptation of *Up Pompeii*. She was hilarious as she burst onto the stage in an extraordinary green wig howling and wailing.

In that same show, she played a belter of a Shirley Bassey number "I'm a chiropodist, David Mellor's chiropodist," around the time of Mellor's toe-sucking scandal. A very demanding solo piece, which she rehearsed over and over again, always by her side at the piano was the revue's great musician Janice Turner.

Her last solo performance in the revue, as it turned out, was in Bournemouth in 2004, where she once again chose a technically demanding song, which required another fabulous wig, the Dusty Springfield number "I close my eyes and count to ten". She used it to put her elegant stiletto into the then home secretary, David Blunkett.

I know it was a success. The next day, that hard taskmaster Tony Greaves came up and told her he loved it. That made her very happy.

She is survived by her father Robert and sisters Alison and Kirsty.

Peter Johnson, Liberator Collective member

Harriet Smith was born a Liberal, and lived as a liberal. She studied politics, architecture and Italian at Edinburgh University, a typically personal combination, and her first proper job was at the National Library in Edinburgh.

After her time at party headquarters, she worked for several years for the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, the beginning of a lifetime spent working for those who succumbed to crime, and the communities affected by criminals.

She would later work for the Prison Reform Trust, the London Action Trust, and lastly the Lambeth Crime Prevention Trust.

Only a true liberal would have been able to dedicate herself to such causes for about a lifetime. At other times, she freelanced for campaigns and charities including a brief spell with the Blue Cross animal hospitals.

Throughout her life, Harriet was part of the Liberal Party, and then the Liberal Democrats. Her views might be described as 'libertine left', being tolerant of all behaviour bar intolerance itself.

She was married for seven years to Roy Hastings-Comfort, a Liberal Party agent. When the marriage ended, Harriet became a very familiar participant in party activities.

While happy to sing to conferences, or chair them, Harriet never neglected her Liberal duty to be on the doorsteps, either as agent, organiser or foot-soldier, even as a 'paper' general election candidate in Motherwell North in 1997.

Yet another passion was her love of animals. Anyone travelling with Harriet would need to know that there would be responsibilities to any roadside stranger. Bird-swerving while driving was a Harriet speciality, despite damage to vehicles and risks to herself.

With Harriet, there were many, many moments of happy-go-lucky calamity: taps would come off in her hand; a computer would mysteriously crash, losing hours of work. Watching her cook was hair-raising. More seriously, she would walk into a moving bus in Istanbul; or would fall victim to a mad interior design expert, who nearly destroyed the building in which she lived in Hove.

Harriet was not famous, but knew hundreds of people, for lots of reasons. Her personality, her willingness to help, her cheerfulness, her generosity and her courage were all inspirational, as were the scrapes she got into.

Despite the Calamity Jane aura, Harriet was a dependable and loyal friend to all who knew her, always willing to help anyone, even when she herself probably needed more.

Like her mother, she succumbed to cancer, too young. In our age of fame, media and celebrity, it is astonishing how many will miss this relatively unknown woman, so full of talent and character, who was just not interested in the limelight.

Colin Darracott, former Liberator Collective member and Liberal Democrat councillor in Bath.



Harriet and I met in 1961, aged six, at a Jean Brodie-type establishment for the daughters of Edinburgh burghers, to which neither of us were particularly suited. She coped by rebelling, constantly questioning and infringing the milliard minor rules such places thrive on.

This was a constant source of frustration to our mistresses, as Harriet was very bright and effortlessly charming, excelling at those subjects she enjoyed, especially English, but had little time for maths or the sciences.

She was an accomplished gymnast and fencer and, when Edinburgh's pavements were frozen, took great delight in sliding down them (while I skittered like a hen). She was fearless and fun.

Political activity was in her blood (inherited from her Liberal parents). As soon as they could walk, she and her sister Ali shoved leaflets into letterboxes up and down the tenements of Edinburgh. This is why the words of the Liberal Revue's finale *Climb Every Staircase* had a particular resonance for her.

She had a unique curiosity and way of looking outward into wider world, and had little time for the inward looking cabals and coteries which defined the school days of most. This otherness, combined with her sense of adventure, made her a far more engaging, exciting companion.

Harriet's voice, both musical or speaking, was one her most distinctive features. She sang beautifully, and achieved the impossible in quietening the mass of bored, giggling girls at prayers whenever she read the lesson. It was that voice, so assured, so clear, so expressive that so many of us will miss the most.

Wendy Kyrle-Pope, Liberator collective member.

Harriet was one of the initial group of people who helped set up Lambeth Crime Prevention Trust in 1997. When the original director left in March 2000, Harriet stepped into the breach.

Originally, LCPT had its offices in two small rooms over the Brixton registry office with three staff.

In 2002, we moved to larger premises in the centre of Brixton. This move coincided with Harriet's disastrous builder experiences in her new flat in Hove, so one can imagine the stress that both the events caused her, but being 'H' she survived both.

Under her leadership, LCPT grew from strength to strength. In 2003, one of the projects, the Working Women's Crack Project, won the Andy Ludlow award. By 2004, the staff team had grown to 14 posts, working with young people, illegal substances, anti-hate crime (including domestic violence) and residential security.

Harriet's love of plants came to the fore in the new office. She made friends with a local plant stall holder and, for the first two months every Thursday, she would appear with the plant man in tow carrying another large potted plant for the office. She was extremely conscientious about watering and feeding them. I am really pleased to say that the plants are still thriving and remind us fondly of Harriet

Jean Carpenter, acting director, LCPT

BUSH – DOING THE LORD’S WORK?

America’s stance on the Middle East has to be understood not just in terms of foreign policy but of the influence over American politics wielded by religious fundamentalists, says Dennis Graf

These are difficult days for America. Iraq is spinning out of control. Our president seems powerless to control events and he’s mocked nearly every night by television comedians.

Both political parties have lost the confidence of the public and now Israel, our agent in the Middle East, is at war. Even the weather, the extreme heat over the entire United States, seems unnatural and strange.

National cable news television coverage of the Lebanon fighting has been, at least initially, literally non-stop. Rupert Murdoch’s Fox Network and the American CNN presents news and commentary almost entirely from the perspective of Israel.

This is what most Americans want to see and hear. There is very little sympathy for the Arab cause.

Many people, though, have been quite horrified by the images of war being brought to civilian population and the infrastructure of Beirut, and they’re not sure why this destruction and death is happening. It is said that 90% of Israelis believe that what their government is doing is necessary and probably a solid majority of Americans on both the right and the left agree.

They expect the warring sides eventually to accept an outside multinational force on the southern Lebanese border – probably a European one. Most Americans are getting tired of the Middle East fighting and they would probably welcome that, especially if US troops were not involved.

It’s quite impossible to understand the American entrance into the Middle East without knowing a bit about teachings of Christian fundamentalism, especially the doctrine of the ‘end times’.

These believers, and there are many millions of them, especially in the American south and the south west, believe that they know what is going to happen in the future. There are people within this movement who welcome this war, not because they like to see people killed, but because of an understanding that God has to unfold history in this way.

When James Inhofe, an influential Republican senator, said that the Middle Eastern conflict is “a contest over whether or not the word of God is true”, he is expressing a fairly widely held idea.

These radical Christians don’t control the national agenda, but they do have a strong influence over it. Through their massive number of voters in some key states, and with their strong, but informal, alliance with Jewish groups deeply sympathetic to the survival of Israel, they were able to help elect the current president.

There is a rather peculiar relationship between American

Jews and the radical right wing Christians, the group that is providing much of the current Republican base. They have formed an informal alliance, at least in their support for the president’s hawkish Middle Eastern foreign policy. For many American Jews, the survival of Israel is, quite understandably, a matter of highest concern and for many fundamentalist Christians, it also is – though for quite different reasons.

People with these religious convictions are not isolated minorities. A CNN/Time (magazine) poll in 2002 found that 59% of Americans believe that the prophecies in the Book of Revelation will eventually come true. The same poll finds that 36% believe not only that the Bible is the Word of God, but that it must be taken literally.

It’s difficult to describe these beliefs in simple terms without making it sound like parody, but these people believe that Israel is the key which will unlock God’s further plan for the future. He will judge other nations, specifically America, by the how well they treat the Jews and the nation of Israel.

Most fundamentalists teach that Israel must live within its original Biblical borders before Jesus can return; that’s why there was so much American support for the building of the illegal settlements. After Jesus returns and snatches the ‘born again’ Christians and whisks them away to heaven, there will



be seven years of anguish on the earth, 'the great tribulation'. Most of these people think that the 'end time' is very near and there will finally be a great battle at Armageddon, a place often identified with modern day Iraq.

There's a great deal of intense pseudo-scholarship explaining the various arcane theories discussing when all this might happen.

Not all fundamentalist or evangelical Christians believe in this, and probably not very many in Britain, but these ideas have taken hold in America and have even spread outside the traditional fundamentalist movement. The most astonishing publishing success in recent years has been the *Left Behind* series, books that explain all this in sensational and popular terms. Probably half the people buying these books are not fundamentalists.

These ideas have quite clearly had an effect on the popular American imagination and, hence, even on American Middle East foreign policy. The Christian right has been able to provide much of the political muscle for the policies of the neo-conservative intellectuals in Washington DC. Thus, in some ways this widespread American support of Israel is as much a religious as a political decision

Probably 80% of Americans would consider themselves at least vaguely Christian, though this number is dropping about 1% a year and one can see a time in the future when Christians might be in a minority. The Christian fundamentalist leadership considers the Jewish community in the United States as an ally and most ordinary Americans now view Judaism as a positive force. Of the fundamentalist 'born again' Christians, 71% in a recent poll saw Islam as dangerous.

Muslims are 'fair game' now. Billy Graham's son, the heir to the religious empire, has called Islam a wicked and evil religion. When the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination, called the Prophet Muhammad "a demon-possessed paedophile", he sounded like a mirror image of the craziest member of the Taliban.

In an anti-Muslim rant, the quite preposterous Ann Coulter, the blond and long-legged darling of the ultra right, wrote "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity." After this, she was put on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Many people see affinities between the United States and Israel. Both were nations 'founded on a dream', a widely shared idea promising the possibility of a better society. Both have deep religious Judeo-Christian roots (Americans like to view the two faiths as essentially linked). Citizens of both countries tend to see themselves as, if not morally superior, at least given an exemption by God, to do what they feel that they need to do. Both countries also tend to believe that, at the end, only brute military force will protect them.

Almost the entire American political establishment today accepts and follows without serious discussion the Middle Eastern policies of the Israeli government. There have been only a very few obscure politicians in recent times who have publicly questioned this, and they were quickly tossed out of



office. The assumption is that refusing to stand with Israel is political suicide.

Virtually no one in the corporate mass media questions this unprecedented bond, either. A few journalists on the traditional right – Pat Buchanan is the most prominent example – or on the far left sometimes do, but very few average Americans ever hear any real criticism of Israeli policies.

Yet, in spite of this solid political backing of Israel and the very infrequent questioning of its policies, the American public is split. A recent CNN poll finds that only 38% approve of Bush's performance in the Lebanon crisis. Although 65% want the US to stay out of the conflict entirely, there is a deep and widespread sympathy for Israel – nearly 60%, with only 4% cheering for the Hezbollah.

We probably have less anti-Semitism in the United States than in most European societies. Jews have, in general, done well here and a young person today can grow up without hearing anti-Semitic comments. I worked in an American school for 30 years and I can't remember ever hearing any anti-Semitic slurs, though this might not have been the case had I worked in an urban school with many Blacks or Muslims.

It is considered quite daring, almost reckless, to point out what everyone knows very well. The 'Israel Lobby', the Jewish political pressure groups, are strong, determined and very effective. People strongly sympathetic to Israel hold key posts in the think tanks as well as the media, the foundations, communications and the leadership of both political parties.

Pro-Arab, especially pro-Palestinian, voices are very weak and muffled and, in any event, they're not heard by most of the American public.

At the moment, it appears that Israel is determined to wipe out the Hezbollah through military force and the Bush administration is giving them the green light to do so. The White House is facing very little public criticism since it's not clear what Israel could do differently.

Even if bad decisions were made in the past, the current crisis suggests no good answers, only a number of bad ones.

Dennis Graf lives in Minnesota and writes regularly for *Liberator* on American politics

FROM GREEN HOPES TO GRIM RESULTS

The Deep Greens' fear of progress has blinded them to poverty alleviation and led them to abandon liberalism, argues Thomas Papworth

Tony Beamish (*Liberator* 310) was right to criticise Iain Sharpe for deriding his Deep Green sentiments as “mumbo-jumbo”, though he then fell into the same trap with regards to monetarism.

We write off anti-growth environmentalism at our peril. The truth is that Beamish's views are neither ‘mumbo-jumbo’ nor ‘witchcraft’. They are simply wrong.

Beamish's argument, and one that he shares with such luminaries as David Cameron and the King of Bhutan, is that “the use of gross domestic product as the sole measure of economic progress is ridiculous” and that we must limit physical growth.

It is notable, however, that no alternative to GDP is offered. This is not just a careless omission. GDP is precisely quantifiable, whereas alternatives are either based on spurious calculations (genuine progress indicator) or no empirical data at all (gross domestic happiness; general well-being).

Furthermore, the suggestion that GDP is not the same as happiness or well-being misses the point.

Liberal economists do not claim it does. However, there are some social indicators that most of us would agree are a fair indication of happiness and well-being within a society, and they bear a striking correlation with GDP.

It is no coincidence that, as GDP per capita rises (and it is per capita rather than national GDP that is of relevance), life expectancy and the number of years children spend in school also rise. Meanwhile, infant mortality and death in childbirth fall. The proportion of people at risk of malnutrition declines; standards of literacy rise.

And most interestingly of all, for liberals, as per capita GDP rises, so does the demand within society for good and representative government, civil liberties and the rule of law. It is this last correlation that gives me such a sense of optimism about the future of China.

Beamish's “growing dysfunctionality of economics and societies” we can dismiss.

The “dysfunctionality of economics” is the fundamental basis of his thesis; he cannot therefore use it as part of the argument, any more than I can prop something up against itself. As for the “dysfunctionality of societies”, this is the perennial whine of those who look back to some Arcadian golden age when it was safe to leave one's door unlocked and the worst that youths got up to was stealing apples.

Our society may have problems, but it has been a long time since wife-beating was considered a private matter or children were sent up chimneys.

So it is “the growing demands that the industrialised world is putting on the planet's finite resources” that is the crux of his argument. And it is mistaken.

There are no physical, social or psychological limits to the expansion of a species that has gone from ape to astronaut. Indeed, the techno-fixes so widely reviled by the Green lobby are our salvation, not our doom. Let us look at carbon emissions (what better example is there?).

While it is true that we are burning more fossil fuels than ever before, it is also true that we are doing so with increasing efficiency: it takes far less oil to produce a unit of production now than it did 10 or 100 years ago. Meanwhile, we are finding new sources of energy all the time; wind and wave power may not yet be economical, but that day will come, and with it hydrogen fuel cells and solar energy, and perhaps one day nuclear fusion that really will be “too cheap to meter”.

Of course, there are externalities to our expansion, and Beamish is right to rail against the perverse subsidies that distort the market.

As liberals, we should oppose all subsidies (including those to Green energy), trust to the price mechanism and allow the market to decide.

Is nuclear energy too expensive? Nobody knows better than the companies that would like to build nuclear power stations. But their decisions should be based on the fact that they will receive no subsidy for building capacity, that no price guarantees will obtain, and that they will be held accountable for the clean-up costs of nuclear waste.

If they still believe that they can make a profit, then they will rush to build new power-plants; but if they cannot profit without price-fixing, guaranteed purchases or the promise of governmental bail-out if things go wrong, then they will not. The undistorted price mechanism works.

Before readers race to condemn me as an unreconstructed industrialist, note that I am not suggesting that we should ignore the environmental impact of our behaviour.

I cycle home with panniers full of paper because my office does not recycle and have harangued my local council for only collecting paper and glass. I welcomed Ming Campbell's speech on 6 July proposing that we raise taxes on environmentally harmful behaviour. But I also believe that, as long as people face starvation, ignorance or bondage through lack of resources, we must increase the wealth of society. I therefore welcome Ming's speech because he acknowledges the need for our economy to grow.

While liberals have a proud tradition of progressive optimism (we embrace positive change and look to a brighter future), ours is in essence a moral philosophy.

It is therefore the immorality of environmental extremism that is most repellent. In the first instance, it would condemn the starving masses of the Third World to misery in perpetuity. At a time when we are rightly agonising over the suffering of billions, the Asian successes that have lifted over half a billion out of poverty are a lesson to us all.

That poverty-alleviation could not have been achieved if China was not building a new coal-fired power station every week. Wind turbines would not have provided enough power (at all, let alone cheaply enough) to enrich the starving masses of the east.

Nor will impoverishing the west help the billions whose salvation lies in trade with the richer world.

So on the one hand it is both naive to expect, and wicked to demand, that the Third World slows its economic growth for the sake of future generations when the current generation is already desperate.

On the other hand, if the developed world sacrifices economic growth for environmental security without the Third World following suit, it will be ineffective and harmful to both developed and developing nations.

Of course, it is not the chattering (i.e. middle) classes that will suffer from this economic Luddism. By exploiting their unrivalled ability to extract favours from the enhanced state, they will continue to enjoy relative prosperity. It is the poor on every continent that will suffer.

Energy prices raised by environmental taxation will reduce employment and wages, while driving up the cost of consumer goods; insisting that food be sourced from close to home will raise food prices and shift the balance of power from labourers to land owners.

But this is as nothing compared with the ultimate evil lurking in the heart of environmental extremism; the suggestion that the world is overpopulated. One scientist recently suggested that the planet cannot sustain a population greater than 2bn. Yet the proponents of overpopulation theory are suspiciously quiet about their proposed solution, and understandably so. Only two cures can exist for this supposed ill: enforced birth control or a mass cull.

Which leads me nicely to the final failure of environmental extremism (and one that is, I suspect, going to cause the most controversy), which is that it is inherently illiberal.

In this I must separate those who live an extremely environmental life from those who would advocate extreme environmentalism as a matter of public policy. I have the utmost respect for those who make their own bio-diesel between trips to the composting toilet. I admire their practicing of what they preach and as a liberal I would stand by their right to erect a wind turbine on their biome. But it is a very different matter for environmentalists to demand that others bend to their will.

Of course, government must step in to ensure that polluters meet the costs of the externalities of production. Liberals rightly condemn imbalances in the system that subsidise environmentally harmful activity. What I am concerned with is the dirigiste nature of environmentalist (as opposed to liberal) solutions.

Matthew Huntbach's statement (as paraphrased by Beamish in his article) that "a fundamental rethink of our economic ideas is now necessary", is not a call for a new economic theory but for a new economy.

Yet the capitalist system is not a grand design that was imposed upon mankind by the enlightenment bourgeoisie and which can therefore be replaced by a new and better-designed system.

It is a product of liberty, as natural as culture or community. Of course it can have damaging side-effects, because liberty can have damaging side-effects, but as liberals we must progress from the principle that limits to freedom must be rare and restrained.

The alternative, that we design a new economics to replace the old, liberal market that we are so often told can "fail", is a manifesto we have read before. Communism was built upon the supposed failure of the liberal economic order, and so was fascism.

Am I seriously suggesting that environmentalism must lead to fascism? Is it so surprising? I refer the reader to the issue of overpopulation I raised. Men and women will breed if we let them. If we want to alleviate the putative population crisis, enforced birth control is the only solution other than mass-murder. Is enforced birth control liberal? Of course not. Is it harmful? Ask the Chinese.

Liberalism was born out of a desire to free the individual from the power of the state. Yet environmental dirigisme requires that the state be given vast power to plan and control our lives. And, as with socialism before it, it will become an ever-expanding and all-pervasive tyranny. Free Trade is already condemned by even some moderate Greens because it requires fossil fuel-burning ships and planes in vast numbers; they would rather we sourced our goods locally. The logical solution for the environmentalist planner would be to ban the import and export of goods, or at least raise tariffs to discourage sourcing from a distance. Protectionism by another name, it would remain an abrogation of our right to freedom of association and of contract (our freedom to trade with whomever we wish) and would have the same deleterious effects upon our economy.

The demand for housing is rising but we do not wish to see further urban sprawl, so instead the government will expropriate the houses of the room-rich to give to the room-poor. Perhaps they would ban (or at least punitively tax) the private use of internal combustion engines too. Examples are legion, but perhaps the point is a more general one. To seek to save our environment by controlling our lives the environmental extremists would sacrifice the liberty at the heart of our society.

If Beamish likes to cast himself as a 'deep green', I like to see myself as a 'deep orange'. In the words of the Liberal Democrat paper that Sharpe quoted early in his article (Liberator 305), It's About Freedom.

Thomas Papworth is a member of Beckenham Liberal Democrats

A LIGHTNING FLASH TO IGNITE LIBERALISM

The subject of London's newest museum, Benjamin Franklin – American founding father, inventor, political activist and writer – was an important figure in liberalism's early development, says Stewart Rayment

Benjamin Franklin is probably best known in Britain as the man who invented electricity. This, of course, is not true but his discovery of the connection between electricity and lightning by flying a kite with a metal key attached during a thunderstorm remains an indelible impression and was a landmark in science.

One knows a man by what he does and with whom he associates, for Franklin, born in 1706, predates Liberalism as a defined political philosophy. Yet through his actions and his words, Franklin helped define that philosophy for the generations that followed him.

His early career as a printer brought him into politics. This was perhaps inevitable in the days when a printer was likely to run foul of the authorities.

Franklin's brother James, to whom he was apprenticed, started *The New England Courant* in 1721, in opposition to the *Boston Gazette*. This in itself brought him into conflict with the New England establishment and his criticism of the policies of Cotton Mather sent him to gaol twice, during which time Benjamin ran the paper.

Benjamin also contributed anonymously to the *Courant*. His *Silence Dogood Letters*, ostensibly from an opinionated widow, anticipated the homilies of *Poor Richards's Almanack* from 1728. Moving to Philadelphia, the almanack and his *Pennsylvania Gazette* brought Franklin financial independence, where after he was able to indulge his political and scientific interests.

Franklin became clerk to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1736 and rose to become postmaster general, and most famously their agent in London, in the prelude to the American War of Independence, and of course for America in Paris in the early years of the French revolution. Pennsylvania had an odd constitution. Established as a colony following the grant by Charles II to the Quaker William Penn in 1681, his descendants remained proprietors.

They thus not only enjoyed the property under private law but also exercised gubernatorial authority to administer it under the monarch. Penn's Frame of Government of Pennsylvania went through four drafts between 1682 and 1701 and is a key document in the development of democracy.

By the 1730s, the assembly was divided between Thomas Penn's proprietary factor and Quakerism. Thomas Penn had converted to Anglicanism by this time. Franklin managed to remain free of either faction, and rose on his own merits despite conflict, particularly with Penn.

William Penn cultivated a much friendlier relationship with his native American neighbours than was pursued in other states. This was probably not as rosy as reported in Voltaire's *Letters on England* but, despite sharp practices by the colonists, general harmony seems to have prevailed in Pennsylvania down to Franklin's time. There was much more intermingling in the first two centuries of America's history and he had close friends from the native American community.

In 1744, he was negotiating for the colony with the Haudensawnee, a delicate matter, as different tribes assessed their best advantage in the balance of power between themselves, the British and the French. Franklin is not alone in the observation that the personal freedom that seemed to prevail in Indian society rubbed off on to the frontiersman. This is something of the stuff of *Last of the Mohicans*, written about a century later, but it is an interesting speculation that the differences in socialization between Americans and the more visibly class-ridden Europeans have their antecedents in the early cultural interchange.

The War of Austrian Succession – King George's War as the colonies saw it – renewed hostilities between the French and British. Pennsylvania was little affected at first. Philadelphia was raided by French and Spanish privateers but, following William Penn's more enlightened policies, enjoyed relative peace with its native American neighbours. Thus with Quaker pacifism, the assembly was disinclined towards British demands that they contribute to the cost of their defence.

Franklin wrote *Plain Truth* in 1747, pointing to the need for a voluntary military association for defence. He later secured several cannon from the governor of New York to this end – in increasing numbers as the evening grew more drunken. The Seven Years War (1754-1763, so perhaps better described by its usual American name, the French and

Indian War) actually started stateside and moved to Europe. Western Pennsylvania was a major theatre.

Contrary to what one might suppose, Franklin saw the reasonableness of many British demands on the American colonies, and only opposed them when they became unreasonable. At one point, he even favoured the British Crown taking over direct rule of Pennsylvania rather than acting through the proprietors. He wrote “The foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British Empire lie in America” – prophetic in more ways than he could have imagined.

On the 26 July 1757, Franklin arrived in London as agent of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, found his letters of introduction useless and immediately found work as a printer to enable him to embark on his real tasks. His home, 36 Craven Street, is now London’s newest museum. Franklin mixed with progressive society in London, both political and scientific; there was some overlap. In the Thursday Club, the Club of Honest Whigs as he called it, Franklin rubbed shoulders with its founder, John Canton (the first man in Britain to verify his electrical experiments), Richard Price and Joseph Priestly.

Franklin was taken unawares by the Boston Tea Party in 1773. He still hoped for a rapprochement between Britain and America and successfully lobbied the Rockingham Whigs for a repeal of the Stamp Act (the means by which the colonists would contribute to the considerable costs of their defence). On return to America, however, he quickly saw how matters had progressed.

One of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, Franklin is the only one to have contributed to and signed all four of the documents that created the new nation – the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), the Treaty of Paris, which established peace with Britain (1783), and The Constitution (1787).

Although Thomas Jefferson is generally credited as the main author of the American Constitution, Franklin’s contribution is evident. Speaking (through an intermediary, James Wilson, since he was too weak to deliver it himself) at the Constitutional Convention on 17 September 1787, Franklin said:

“I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us, and there is no form of Government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered, and believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in Despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic Government, being incapable of any other”.

Well, they seem to have got there now. Incidentally, at the signing of the Declaration he made one of his many famous sayings “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately” – my advice to any Liberal group in office.

As I said, every schoolchild knows that Benjamin Franklin invented electricity; he did invent, among many other things a lightning conductor and bifocal spectacles. His last written work, some four weeks before his death, was an appeal against slavery (which had been glossed over in the realpolitik of the establishment of America.

He had become president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1787. A year after his death 1790, his autobiography was published – in Paris, in

French at first, translated into English shortly after; it remains a classic of the genre.

Franklin contributed heavily to the liberal tradition that emerged in America in the eighteenth century, flourished in the nineteenth, and created the New Deal and the Great Society of the twentieth. The Jeffersonian vision of a classless society of yeoman farmers linked with political and religious freedom, democratic participation and economic independence – essentially the American Dream – would not be far from Franklin’s ideal polity.

America has moved along way in 200 years, and although they don’t vote for it, that dream still seems to be a part of the American psyche. Americans should look at the transition of Rome from republic to empire, look again at the likes of Franklin and question what they really want.

Stewart Rayment is a member of the Liberator Collective.

The Benjamin Franklin House is located at 36 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NF – website: www.benjaminfranklinhouse.org

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LOSECHESTER

Dear Liberator,

Thanks for the articles on Mark Oaten. Yes, it has been painful in Winchester as, despite requests to shut up, he has recently told the group leader that he intends to keep on publishing and appearing on TV.

He cost us dearly in May, we lost control and left a particularly backward Tory party in control.

I am not saying he was completely to blame, as it's arguable that Winchester is normal Tory country and with a 'decent' leader they were always going to come back.

But Oaten came up enough times on the doorstep to suggest his actions were hurting us. For instance, people were reluctant to put up posters.

**Cllr Ray Love
Winchester**

WAS LONDON COMPLACENT?

Dear Liberator,

In reply to the letters of Tim Beaumont and Dominic Mathon (Liberator 311), I welcome anything that expands the understanding of the Lib Dem performance in last May's elections.

I had originally penned an article on what had gone wrong in Tower Hamlets, where my experience was most direct, and was asked to extend this to cover (inner) London generally, where I drew on the experiences of my colleagues.

I'm not sure if 2006 was a record for Liberator candidates. Members of the collective were elected in Camden and Southwark and stood in Hackney, Reading and Tower Hamlets. We also provided two agents in Liverpool. Since some of the unsuccessful candidates and other activists with whom I spoke spent their time in Islington, I had a fair amount of information on that borough, which confirmed my own observations of the last general election, when we narrowly missed Islington South. Incidentally, the feedback I had from Sutton, on reduced majorities, spoke of complacency.

Incumbency – and also being blamed for doing the government's dirty work – is certainly a factor and as yet we don't seem to be developing the tools to deal with it.

LETTERS

In Lambeth, I'm afraid most of my information came from the press and my observation of Labour activists – disenchanted with Blair and the government, yet willing (for the first time in a long while) to go out and get the job done. So I know nothing of the corruption alleged in Labour's literature and hope someone else can enlighten us. However, this shouts aloud that negative messages from other parties, especially the principal opponent, must be answered.

The article went through several versions, not least its final edited form. One of the points that was lost that did occur to me was the Labour made a point of targeting group leaders – smart move. It seemed pretty obvious to me, but my colleagues didn't feel it was substantiated. Labour took a bruising, mostly from the Lib Dems in inner London at the general election, and it seems is fighting back. As I said, old Labour activists, despite everything, were motivated again – Lib Dems, perhaps, insufficiently so.

Stewart Rayment

DOUBLE DUTCH

Dear Liberator,

That *The Dividing Line Between Success and Failure* (Liberator 311) is a right riveting read you can't doubt.

However, at various points in the second half of the twentieth century, the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP - Free Democrats) and the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD - People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) have played significant roles in the governments of Germany and the Netherlands, and of Europe, and have made major intellectual contributors to Liberalism – be those of D-66 (Democraten '66) more in tune with *Liberator* (paradoxically since they started life as a breakaway from the Dutch Catholic Conservative party rather than on the left).

There are good reasons for studying foreign Liberalisms. Considering our own 'strange death', we discover that Liberalism was also in decline in other countries in the interwar period; we were not alone. The rising tide of totalitarianism in that time is well known. Was there something in particular about German Liberalism that failed to prevent it?

A twofold answer emerges to that question, though I would have liked the book to be more rigorous on the subject. In the short term, German Liberal parties were closely associated with the Weimar republic and its failure – so much so that the FDP chose not to use the word 'Liberal' in their name. The Dutch also (for various reasons) had negative feelings about the use of 'Liberal', some harking back to the interwar period.

The longer view is that German Liberalism was never as intellectually rigorous as that of its neighbours. Humboldt, admired by Mill, is only an exception to this only in parts; Kant and Hegel? Kant maybe, but way off in the realms of metaphysics whereas British Liberalism, via Utilitarianism, is firmly rooted in common sense.

Hobhouse notoriously described Stalingrad as a battle between left and right Hegelianism. Yet if you read Hegel's lesser, more journalistic, work, he was plainly in the Liberal camp as it might have been nascently defined at the time. I suppose in British universities Hegel is looked at too much in the light of his misinterpretor Marx.

The Dividing Line... is academic and heavy going, but there are some interesting threads in it that might be picked up by someone looking for a PhD thesis.

**Syaad Rahman
Tower Hamlets**

**Conspiracy To Murder
by Linda Melvern
Verso 2006 £9.99**

Last month in a Rwandan village, a man beckoned me into his hut. He pointed at a pile of rags, saying he found them while digging his garden. Then he handed me a thighbone with some skin and tattered fabric clinging to it.

“The trousers look like the ones my neighbour wore.” Together we counted 36 sets of skeletons in the pile.

The 1994 genocide, brilliantly chronicled by Linda Melvern in this book, still makes itself felt in every corner of Rwanda on a daily basis.

Melvorn struggled to find a publisher, because it seems we can cope with Hollywood dramas about Rwanda, but not the bald facts about the west’s complicity.

The United Nations now offers clichés such as ‘never again’ but, as Melvern shows, the UN refused to consider the genocide in Rwanda as it occurred. UN diplomats and politicians deliberately misrepresented Rwanda as a civil war and a humanitarian disaster, and denied the genocidal intent of the government, all because they lacked the will to intervene. Starved of information, the Czech ambassador had to get factual reports from Human Rights Watch. Shades of Darfur.

David, now Lord, Hannay, the UK’s man at the UN, played a major role in keeping Rwanda from being discussed. Hannay wanted a ceasefire, which was like telling the Jews in Lithuanian villages to stop shelling the approaching Wehrmacht in 1941.

The UK and US line was that intervention would make no difference. Yet the magnificent UN commander, Romeo Dallaire, told his bosses he could save half a million lives with a few more troops and some political will to back him up. His reports were ignored, and almost a million people were murdered.

There is good reason to blame the then UN secretary general Boutros-Ghali, who personally brokered the deals to supply the Hutu with arms.

But those high-minded defenders of human rights, the French, must also take a bow. They shipped in 31 planes of weapons to arm the genocitaires, and sent 40 senior

REVIEWS

military advisers to train the murderers. French soldiers searched for Tutsis, alerted the Hutu soldiers, and provided satellite phones to assist them. Why? To preserve ‘francophone’ Africa, of course.

Bill Clinton lied and still lies when he protests, “We didn’t know what was happening in Rwanda”. Melvern has the proof that he, and John Major, were warned in advance, and knew exactly the scale of the murder. They also knew that knocking out the Radio Milles Collines would have denied the government its means of organising the murderers.

The only honest comment comes from Lord Hurd, former friend and business associate of Slobodan Milosevic, who admits the UK had no interest in Rwanda, hence we did nothing.

Melvorn’s research into the west’s role continues and builds on her excellent first volume, *A People Betrayed*. As the UN looks for reasons not to stop the genocide in Darfur, her work is as vital as ever.

Becky Tinsley

**People Power and
Protest Since 1945:
a bibliography of
non-violent action
by April Carter,
Howard Clark and
Michael Randle
Housmans 2006 £7.50**

Adam Roberts’ *Civilian Resistance as a National Defence* appeared in the wake of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia; it was inspiring. Not surprisingly, it disappeared from bookshops quite quickly and, so far as I know, wasn’t reprinted.

As a pacifist, war, indeed violence, has always been a problem. In youth it was easy to oppose both

Czechoslovakia and Vietnam. Things became more complicated; pacifism became more personal.

In the Falklands and the first Gulf War, an aggressor needed to be checked. As Yugoslav tanks rolled towards Slovenia, I mused on lines similar to Jeremy Thorpe’s “bomb the rail link to Rhodesia” – an account of the battle of the Somme brought me back to reality – yet such an action might have checked later conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo where we could hardly stand back.

And what of the conflicts where we have stood back – Chechnya, Palestine, and now of course Lebanon? For the first time in my life, I feel ashamed to be British. With all those ships in the Mediterranean, could not Blair have said to Israel (and Hezbollah) “stop”?

Housmans have provided a timely resource for all peace activists to dip into and use.

Stewart Rayment

**Moving Mountains,
the race to treat
global AIDS
by Anne-Christine
d’Adesky
Verso 2006 £14.99**

This is a very north Californian book: anti-Bush, anti-globalisation, anti ‘big pharma’ (the author’s term for the western pharmaceutical industry).

Men ‘have’ HIV, but women are ‘exposed’ to it; it’s not homosexuals but ‘men who have sex with men’; and I’m not at all sure that the author knows just how most men become infected, generally not – as too many still believe – through homosexual contact, though this book leaves that open to doubt.

It is not poverty but ‘resource poor settings’ that block the way to treatment, and only the best treatment will do, paid for by employers or insurers, while well over half of the

infected worldwide don't have access to either!

I was surprised to see no mention of the word 'orphan' in either the introduction or in the recently added epilogue. I had to read to page 100 to see it for the first time.

Yet orphans are the single biggest – and lasting – issue in the whole tragedy of global Aids, with 2.6m of them in Africa by 2002, and now over 500,000 in little Malawi, with its population of 11m, more than half of it under 18.

The book is not short of howlers. Zaire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are described as two of Uganda's neighbouring countries; "40% of Botswana's adult population of 1.7m is HIV-positive" while it only has 1.5m people, half of them adults.

It describes 87% of adults and 98% surviving on treatment as "30% better than people who get none". But since they will all die, the figure is not 30 but 100 per cent. And "forecasters predict 500,000 Aids related deaths by 2010" in South Africa if no action is taken, but without action, of the 5m infected in 2000 at least 4m will be dead by 2010.

None of this may seem important, but I constantly felt the need to check the source of some pretty sweeping statements, and found that if there was a foot-note (in 78 pages of them for a

text of 330 pages) that they were usually either an expansion of the same assertion or there was a reference to a media report, a source I do not readily trust.

The book has lots of data but is short of hard figures; as a result, it makes comparisons of very different situations. It describes China's predicted number of HIV cases of 10m as being an "unbelievable statistic" but, as a proportion of the population, 0.6%, the rate is exactly the same as in the United States.

In common with a lot of Aids activists, she praises the efforts of the Brazilian government in getting treatment to all its infected people, without pointing out that the adult rate of infection there is 0.7%. In Malawi it is 14%, 20% in South Africa and 35% in Zimbabwe.

It matters. Because without hard figures, all the books, articles and demonstrations of the anti-globalists will continue to achieve nothing. Bush and Co can go on saying, with some justification, that people don't know what they're talking about.

When figures from \$10m (at one point in the book) to \$35bn, in a recent UN report, are given as the cost of achieving universal treatment, and no one pins anyone down, they can go on

underplaying the issue, which is exactly why so little is being achieved.

The greatest strength of this book is the reports of successes that really have been scored in 'resource poor settings', though none as poor as rural Africa.

It reports the often thoroughly dishonest battles fought – particularly by 'big pharma' – to stop quite incredibly cheap generic HIV-drugs from reaching the poorest parts of the world. All the excuses for not bringing treatment

to the poor are broken down one by one. You can watch the "mountains being moved", although it's exhausting at times.

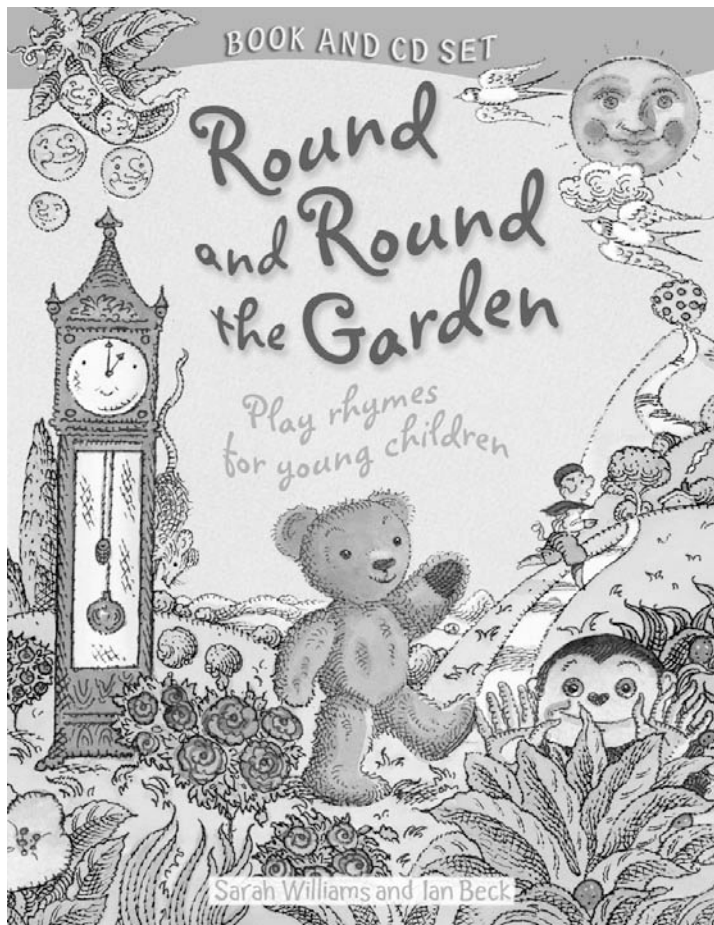
Sadly at the end, having knocked down so many mountains, a whole lot are put up again. By the time I had finished the chapter 'AIDS: a new model for public health', so many obstacles to easy treatment had been put in the way again, that I felt I had managed to get only half way up the Matterhorn.

And it's unnecessary. I've now used the drugs for four years, and so have friends for much longer. It needs medical guidance, but it's not very complicated. So what a pity that, after beating down so many barriers, a whole load more seemed to be raised up again – and a lot of it out of date too.

As an anti-globalist and anti 'big pharma' book, it has a powerful message. But as one that will do what it wants to do – to get treatment to all who need it – it's too short of hard, up-to-date facts and figures. The book was re-issued in July. As such it needed more than just a new 'afterword' (December 2003) and epilogue (December 2005). The content should have been brought up to date too, and quite frankly (as someone interested specifically in Africa) it sadly lacks understanding of the true poverty of rural Africa, which is still where 65% of the victims of global AIDS live.

But the author certainly knows her stuff where treatment is concerned and the reader is richly rewarded by the huge amount of research that went into producing this book.

Tim Pascall



Round and Round the Garden, Pudding and Pie both compiled by Sarah Williams and illustrated by Ian Beck Oxford UP 2006 both £7.99

Beck's work dates from the 1980s, but has a delicious retro feel to it – an eternal summer of childhood. You will probably best recall him for the sleeve design of *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. I'm pleased to see that hand movements of the original 1983 edition of *Round and Round the Garden* are still with us, and

better still, both now have CDs of all the nursery rhymes.

At first I felt that OUP had tried to be too clever with the CDs, but they grow on you. The singers are fine, it is right that young ears should be offered good voices, but some of the music is over sophisticated for the material it conveys.

For *Pudding and Pie* it works well because a lot of the nursery rhymes have such a well-established tune that it prevails. This is less successful with *Round and Round the Garden*, particularly since some of the rhymes are typically recited rather than sung. The toddlers that these works are presumably aimed at expect a degree of familiarity and lose focus with the sophistication, which is a shame because Beck's artwork is very appealing to them.

Stewart Rayment

David and Winston: How a Friendship Changed History by Robert Lloyd George John Murray 2006 £9.99

This good-natured book examines the friendship between Lloyd George and Churchill, opening up some novel views of twentieth-century history in the process. It is illustrated with photographs from the Lloyd George family album – the author is David Lloyd George's great grandson – and contemporary cartoons.

Two aspects are of particular interest. We tend to think of Churchill as the High Tory who was his country's saviour in 1940, but this book's most vivid portrait of him is as the young radical Liberal of 30 years before. Elected as a Tory in the Khaki election of 1900, he crossed the floor over free trade to join the Liberal benches in 1904. (On rejoining the Conservatives in 1925, he remarked: "Anyone can rat, but it takes a certain ingenuity to re-rat.")

As a Liberal MP, Churchill was entirely won over by Lloyd George's radicalism and became his great ally when he joined the Cabinet in 1908. He was an immensely dynamic figure and some commentators remarked that he might have led the Conservative Party at a very young age if only he had stayed with it – he was certainly a more compelling figure than Bonar Law. In

the First World War, when it became clear that Asquith was on the way out, there were those who thought that it was Churchill who would become prime minister rather than Lloyd George.

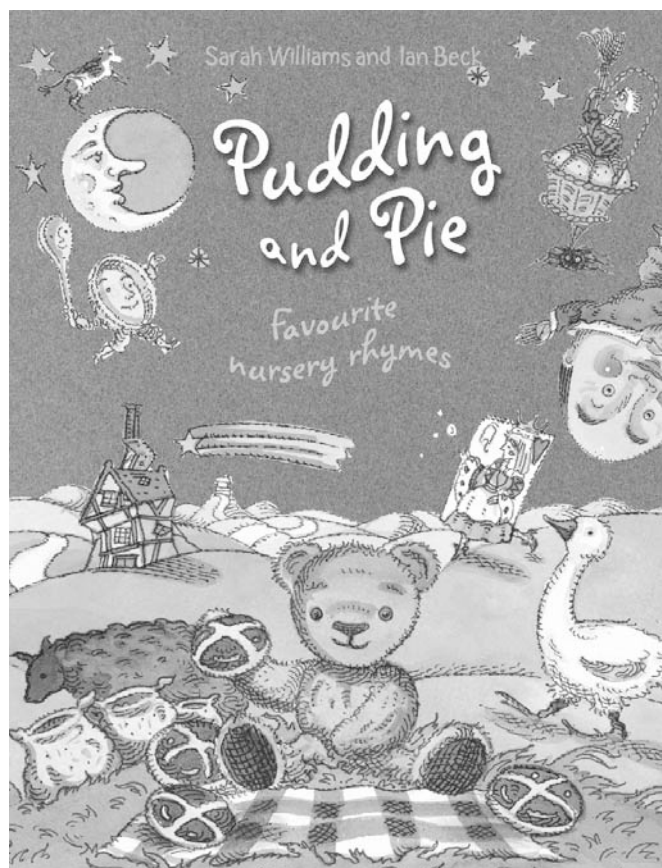
The book's other interesting theme is the debt Churchill owed to Lloyd George when he became prime minister in 1940. For Lloyd George had already shown him what needed to be done to win a twentieth-century war: a unified allied command, a concentration on the production of munitions and a willingness to overrule the generals and admirals.

In many ways, the two men offer a contrast in political personalities. Lloyd George, for all his radical passion, was a pragmatist and dealmaker; Churchill was a romantic. You can see this contrast in types in the reminiscence of A.J. Sylvester, Lloyd George's personal secretary, after the Welshman had called in the railway union leaders and avoided a threatened strike:

"Afterwards I went to the Home Office to see Winston. He was very angry with the results. There he stood before a huge map showing police stations all over the country, and all the available forces ready to take action wherever necessary. His mind was on a fight."

It was beer and sandwiches versus a more Thatcherite approach – Lloyd George later complained of Churchill's tendency to "get his maps out". Still, the pragmatic way is not always right: we are still living with the consequences of Lloyd George allowing the six counties to be treated separately when Home Rule came to Ireland.

Robert Lloyd George's grasp is not always as sure as his ancestor's was, and there are a number of errors in the book. The idea that the first Labour government published the Zinoviev letter has escaped from a lost Sellars and Yeatman work called *1906 and All That*; Charles Masterman was not a civil



servant but the minister who took Lloyd George's health insurance legislation through the House in the teeth of extraordinary opposition; Masterman's wife Lucy was not Gladstone's granddaughter; and C. P. Scott's dates are certainly not 1905-80.

These errors do not detract from the book, which can be recommended in particular for those seeking fresh light on Asquith's government. Talking, however, of the Mastermans reminds one of the best source of all for understanding that administration: Lucy Masterman's biography of her husband. Charles Masterman served under both Churchill and Lloyd George, and he and Lucy became friends with both families. As a result, she is able to paint an intimate portrait of the leading personalities of the era. David Lloyd George quotes from it several times, and it is to be hoped that a publisher will bring it back from the undeserved obscurity in which it currently languishes.

Jonathan Calder

CORRECTION

Virginia Tilley's *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock* (reviewed by Mike Gwilliam in *Liberator* 311) is published in the UK by the University of Manchester Press (2005) at £17.99.

Monday

To Wimbledon to watch an afternoon's lawn tennis. When I arrive, I get the most terrible shock: the linesmen and umpires are all dressed like little Steel; every man jack of them sports a blue shirt with a white collar. I down a stiff Pimms to steady my nerve, but even so am obliged to make my excuses and leave before the final set. Besides, I have always had mixed feelings about these championships: year after year I bid for the ball boy contract, only to find that Barnardo's had undercut me again. The Well-Behaved Orphans were only asked to officiate once, and funnily enough that year both the gentlemen's and the ladies' singles were won by unseeded players and I rather cleaned up at Ladbroke's.

Tuesday

Walking along an obscure corridor at Westminster, I spy the Conservative member for Suffolk South coming towards me. Ever one for a jape, I wait until we have almost drawn level before greeting him with the words "Yo, Yeo!" Would you believe he does not laugh? Some people have no sense of humour.

Wednesday

The afternoon finds me in Notting Hill, reconnoitring the route of the carnival procession on behalf of the Rutland Morris Men. Passing a rather grand house, I spy a familiar figure with a shining pink face climbing a ladder; he is followed by two speechwriters, a man carrying a clean shirt and another with an inflatable Boris Johnson. Yes, it is the leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party, David Cameron, and he is busily erecting windmills on his roof. To his credit, Cameron has been an enthusiast for wind power since his days at Eton, where he employed two fags to fan him. However, being something of an expert on these matters through my discussions with Malachy Dromgoogle, I cannot help but notice that he is rather overdoing it. I point this out, but the fellow is not to be told and continues to put up more sails. The inevitable happens: the wind gets up, there is a horrible sheering noise and the whole roof takes off with Cameron and his entourage still aboard. I gather they were last seen passing over High Wycombe.

Thursday

These days, one cannot have one's footman open the *Manchester Guardian* for one without coming across an article by Lord Hattersley. It happens that I knew the young Roy Hattersley; he was 14 when I first met him and, as a scion of one of the area's leading Labour families, already an Alderman of Sheffield. He would insist upon being borne into the council chamber shoulder high by cloth-capped workmen, while the various ward parties would vie for the honour of presenting him with meat-and-potato pies. With gravy running down his chin, he would spray pastry crumbs over the assembled company while demanding that the council pull down all the terraced houses and replace them with tower blocks. "And I want a multi-storey car park and pedestrian underpasses and a gyratory system and I want them now!" he would demand in a barely broken voice, while stamping his foot. In short, he represented all that was best in the municipal socialism of the 1960s.

Lord Bonkers' Diary

Friday

I was sorry to see that fellow Michael Brown sent to gaol. If anyone had it in mind to send him a cake with a file in it, I think that would be a nice gesture.

Saturday

There can be fewer sadder tales than that of Mark Oaten – or Rising Star as I still think of him. This innocent Red Indian brave, through a strange concatenation of circumstances, found himself elected Member for the historic city of Winchester. It must have been a shock to someone more used to hunting buffalo or

putting arrows through the hats of passing stagecoach drivers, but at first he made a good fist of things and was re-elected a couple of times with a juicy majority. However, as is so often the case, fame turned his head and he began to get ideas above his station (which is Waterloo for Winchester, incidentally). In rapid succession he had himself made Kennedy's Parliamentary Private Secretary ("Rising Star carry heap big firewater," as he once remarked to me), Chairman of the Parliamentary Party and Shadow Home Secretary, jettisoning his moccasins and acquiring a suit along the way. In this last post he hit upon the idea of making prisoners study. (Locked up and made to learn Latin verbs? It sounds just like public school and I am sure the European Court would step in.) Then hubris took hold of him and he stood for the leadership of our party. I need not recount here the distasteful details of his fall here (they may be purchased separately from the Bonkers Head Press under a plain brown wrapper), but that was the end of poor Rising Star. Now he is attempting to make a living in show business. I cannot see it working for him, but when he calls today I use my good offices to find him a part in a keep-fit video being made in Jamaica by a friend. Its name? *Pilates of the Caribbean*.

Sunday

It gives me no pleasure to see Lord Levy in trouble with the Old Bill. In the 1970s, he was the manager of my old friend Alvin Stardust – in those days a regular denizen of the "hit parade" and frequently to be heard inviting listeners to be his coo ca choo – and I learned nothing but good of him. In particular, he would use his influence in the music world to secure work for aspiring Labour politicians who were temporarily embarrassed for funds. In those days, there was a popular group called The Wombles whose members dressed in the most amusing furry costumes. The advantage of that garb was that simply anyone could appear on stage as a Womble and the audience would be none the wiser. Over the years Jack Straw, Margaret Beckett and Dr John Reid were all pleased to dress up and earn a few bob in this way. I also recall that a struggling young lawyer named Anthony Blair would occasionally appear if briefs were slow coming in. Just as a Roman Emperor would keep a slave on hand to whisper "remember thou art mortal" in his ear from time to time, so our current Prime Minister would be well advised to have an aide say "remember you're a womble" now and then. "Re-member-member-member what a womble womble womble you are," he might add.

Lord Bonkers, who was Liberal MP for Rutland South-West 1906-10, opened his diary to Jonathan Calder.
