

New Horizon

1st
ISSUE

JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY

*“Thus a vital Nationalism and Liberalism
within society can be seen as a perquisite
for a healthy people as a vital head and
heart is for a healthy body”*

HEAD & HEART:

Balancing Man's dual political nature

see pages 4 & 5

OLD TITLE • NEW IDEAS • NEW HORIZON

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If you would like to comment or contribute on this issue please write to
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Editorial

Editor: Graham Williamson

This magazine is designed to showcase (and debate) the ideas and policies of the National Liberal Party, the ideology of National Liberalism and historical antecedents. One of these latter, in the UK, was the Liberal National Party 1931-1948/68. This was basically composed of Liberals who had disagreed with their Party leadership's policy to support the Labour Party in Government and a dogmatic refusal to support import tariffs in a time of recession.

These 'rebels' were eventually doomed to fail (and largely absorbed into the Conservative Party), but at certain times had more MP's than the Liberal Party, once had more votes in a General election, and might have survived under a more visionary leadership. This 'division' was not without precedence, for earlier periods had thrown up their own contemporary 'patriotic liberals', whether Chamberlain's Liberal Unionists or Lord Rosebery's 'Liberal Imperialists'. Indeed, there have been other 'Liberal' figures in and even outside the party who some suggest represent an 'alternative liberal tradition' (see <http://www.david-boyle.co.uk/history/belloc.html>). Wider still, we can find empathy with early European national liberals such as Guiseppe Mazzini, Orla Lehmann and Gustav Stresemann.

Thus, today's National Liberals, pay homage to an old and noble tradition; indeed the very title of this magazine, the New Horizon, is a nod to the Liberal National in-house periodical, first brought out in 1942.

In our first issue the lead article explains that liberalism and nationalism/patriotism, function in political philosophy like the head (liberalism) and heart (nationalism) in the human body i.e. *"Thus a vital Nationalism and Liberalism within society can be seen as a perquisite for a healthy people as a vital head and heart is for a healthy body."* There are also Book reviews from yours truly on the Philosopher Yael Tamir's seminal work 'Liberal Nationalism' and a recent biography on Liberal National MP and Minister, Leslie Hoare-Belisha.

We also include a section on party news which, in this issue, features articles based around some five key areas highlighted in a new Party recruitment leaflet. These discuss Civil Liberties (including the introduction of a CL watchdog), Democracy (in particular, greater use of Referendums), Environment (because to love your country must include loving your ecology/land), National Health Service (ensuring it has a greater national priority than present e.g. cutting overseas interventions) and the Economy (promoting apprenticeships and even a little of the Liberal National's protectionism!). We would welcome contributions. Please e-mail us at natliberal@aol.com.

We hope you enjoy this issue of what we hope will become an important tool in the National Liberal Party's armoury and assist in the revival of the National Liberal idea.

Head & Heart

Many people believe that Liberalism and Nationalism (Patriotism) are opposing philosophies. By the 20th Century Liberalism was seen as antagonistic to Nationalism. In crude terms, Liberals placed the rights of individuals above all whilst Nationalists believed the group was everything. Thus Liberals and Nationalists were often locked in political conflict over the nature and function of the state. **It was not always so.**

In the 19th century many (political) Liberals believed that the only way to create (in opposition to the multi-national monarchies/aristocratic rulers) and maintain (in a stable environment) individual freedom was within a community of equals. The nation (a people sharing a language, culture and history) was such a community. Nationalism was the pursuit of turning a 'nation' into a state. Thus such Liberals adopted nationalism as part of their creed and became known as National Liberals. Indeed many saw **Nationalism as an aspect of Liberalism.**

The end of history?

The success of peoples to craft out nations throughout Europe and largely create representative democracies within them

boded well for the future. A commentator writing just before the Second World War (and fearful of the future) bemoaned the loss of an earlier age where Liberalism and Nationalism were working together towards a "completer humanity". Further, it was felt *"History.... was reaching, its final phrase, and increasing development of the rights of the individual and of democracy within Nation-States was all that the future would have to chronicle. The battle for liberty had been won at last; all the 20th century would need to do would be to garner the harvest."*¹ Unfortunately, it never worked out that way.

The plethora of 'nation-states' after the First World War should have paved the way for peace rather than conflict but, since many of the states were bureaucratic constructs (creating national minorities in the process) and the democracy forcibly implanted, Europe descended into war as Authoritarian and Totalitarian forces took over as Liberalism withered and Nationalism 'hijacked' by extremes. Thus Nationalism and Liberalism became in conflict as adherents of the former increasingly rejected the latter as an obstacle to the 'greater unity of the people' whilst they in turn saw them (correctly) as a threat to the 'people's freedom of choice.' The terrible 'excesses' of so-called

Nationalists ultimately led to the pendulum swinging towards Liberalism and a suspicion of nation-states in general (at least in Europe). That suspicion still exists today.*₂

What then is the **natural order** of their relationship?

The Heart

Both philosophies appeal to different aspects of Man. **Nationalism is an emotion**, a belief in a group loyalty that may require a sacrifice for the greater whole. In its basic sense it is the reason why we pay taxes the benefits of which we may not receive in return. Some theorists would say this is a 'social contract' i.e. we pay for peace of mind. We sacrifice our freedom of action towards laws and enforcement because it suits us e.g. a protection against the strong or the criminal. A Nationalist would say that it is our duty to make that sacrifice, being also a product of past and future generations i.e. we owe it to our families not just as a selfish choice. A *National Liberal* would say that an individual's family, community and nation require a *proportionate* form of sacrifice i.e. that which does not also take away his individuality or liberty. In all senses the Nation represents Man's heart. It is an emotional feeling that justifies sacrifice and duty. Mazzini says that it has a call upon the **duties of man**.*₃

The Head

Liberalism on the other hand **appeals to the intellect**. We



Mazzini

are born as individuals and we seek a way of life that allows us to enjoy its' fruits. How we organise ourselves, how we interact with others is dictated by our mind e.g. we should be able to choose our form of

governance whilst still maintaining at 'arms-length' the designs of the state. This freedom to choose is essential as is the freedom to limit the control that a state exercises upon our lives. Liberalism, or more properly Liberty, is represented by our head for we choose to be free. A *National Liberal* would say that liberty (from an omnipotent state) is crucial to Man's well-being. Mazzini says that it is one of the **rights of man**.

The early revolts of the 19th century illustrate the differences of Man's Dual nature (Head or Heart). Such revolts were either Liberal or Nationalist in their nature (unlike the more National-Liberal revolts in 1848). Although mainly inspired by political liberalism (the head) the only successful revolt (in Portugal) was that inspired by nationalist impulses (the heart). Reaction in Europe was too powerful to be overthrown so whilst the masses might shout for liberty they would not fight (and inevitably die) for it. Where inspired by the heart i.e. nationalism they will do so even when the cause seems, in practical terms, lost.

A necessary balance of 'Head & Heart'

Thus a *vital* Nationalism and Liberalism within society can be seen as a perquisite for a healthy people as a *vital* head and heart is for a healthy body. A National Liberal thus seeks to harness and maintain a balance between the needs of the nation and the individual as a doctor would between the needs of head and heart. One cannot be complete without the other.

Addendum:

*₁ H. Featherstone, "A Century of Nationalism" (London 1939), P.9.

*₂ One commentator however has suggested that, at least amongst Liberal political scientists, opposition to national discourse was restricted to a short period between the 1950's & 1980's and that liberal nationalism is again rising (as national liberalism once did 150 years previously). Dr S. Miscoiu, Liberalism against the Nation: A False Hypothesis of the Historical Analysis, Arts_and_Humanities, Journal for the Study of Religions and ideologies, 12, 2005, P.49 - 55

*₃ G. Mazzini, "The Duties of Man" (Lugano 1860)

NATIONAL LIBERALISM IN ACTION!

Whilst the *New Horizon* is dedicated to promoting, dissecting and discussing the ideology of National Liberalism, we cannot forget those National Liberals who are attempting to put this into practice. We know that there are individuals (groups?) who ascribe to the movement's ideals throughout the Europe, from Turkey to Scandinavia and beyond, even globally. Here in the UK some are involved in pressure groups such as English Green (a non-socialist green movement), whilst others are in the political party - the National Liberal Party.

We shall dedicate a section each issue to those operating in the 'real' rather than our 'cyber' world. In this first issue we host articles supporting and expanding on the NLP's latest recruitment campaign that focused on Five key policy areas; Civil Liberties, Democracy, Environment, Economy and the NHS.

CIVIL LIBERTIES -

A PRECIOUS COMMODITY 'HARD TO OBTAIN EASY TO LOSE'

In December, nearly 400 years ago, the English Parliament passed an act entitled the 'Bill of Rights'. It put down limits on the powers of the Sovereign (Monarch) and set out the rights of Parliament and the rules for freedom of speech therein, the requirement to regular elections to Parliament and the right to petition the monarch without fear of retribution. This built upon various other 'events' such as the much earlier Magna Carta of 1215. This is the first recorded document where a King, previously ruling under a 'Divine Right', accepted that his 'subjects' had rights, including the right not to be gaoled without trial. In time, similar various pieces of legislation came to cover the whole of the United Kingdom and make up Britain's '**Unwritten Constitution**', in particular the concept of individual rights and liberties. It took many years, much struggle, blood, sweat and tears to achieve.

TAKING LIBERTIES.....

Today however, we see an increasing encroachment upon our civil liberties and individual freedoms. The phrase an '*Englishman's home is his castle*' is more than just a quaint phrase. It reflects an historical view that a Government's writ largely remained outside our 'ramparts' and did not extend to personal affairs. In reality this has broken down ever since the end of the first World War with increasing attempts to interfere in our 'private lives' or 'private views' (should they not conform to the PC - left or right - of the day). It wasn't always that way*

Technology, whilst a 'liberating' force for many individuals is also being used to enslave us too. CCTV, continual push for biometric ID cards, communication eavesdropping and monitoring, to name just a few developments that will make it increasingly easier for any future Government to turn 1984 into a reality.

History shows that once liberties are surrendered they are very difficult to restore.

For National Liberals however the defence of personal liberty is at the heart of our mission. Governments struggle, at best, to resist the lure of power and often seek to centralise authority into their hands. This will inevitably impact upon individual freedoms. In times of heightened threats to national or personal security, Authority will seek to restrict their citizens movements and expression. What are and are not acceptable restrictions are of **supreme importance** to many. Outside of Authority, National Liberals must be part of societies 'civic conscience'. Inside of Authority, they must ensure the 'correct balance' is struck between personal freedom and collective security and responsibility.

To assist in maintaining this balance, we call for the Government appointment

of a specific **Civil Liberty Watchdog**, with some executive blocking powers, to ensure our civil liberties are maintained in the face of private or public threats.

The **National Liberal Party** will continue to expose, and campaign against, the steady encroachment of our individual freedoms and civil liberties. Whilst the main political topics of the day; the economy, immigration, Europe and education presently hold the attention of sections of the public, political parties and the media we believe that concern over loss of civil liberties will one day hold **everyone's** attention.

** As the famous historian A.J.P Taylor stated in his book 'English History: 1914-45' 'Until August 1914 a sensible law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and the policeman. He could live where he liked and as he liked. He had no official number or identity card.'*

The Nature of Democracy

To hear David Cameron and William Hague on television and radio, anyone might be forgiven for believing that the United Kingdom, in its democratic institutions, is the last word in 'democracy'. Westminster flatters itself as the 'Mother of Parliaments' which implies that it is a model for other nations to emulate.

We do have much to take pride in. For much of the past millennium the word of the Sovereign was law. The King was set on his throne by God and had a 'divine right' to govern in any way he pleased, however capricious and arbitrary he might have been.

Magna Carta

This arbitrary power was first challenged in England in 1215 at Runnymede when

King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta – the Great Charter of the Liberties of England – by feudal barons. This set down the principle that the King is also **subject** to the law of the Land.

When Charles I refused to be bound by the Law he had to be defeated by parliamentary armies in 1642-49 and eventually executed for his treason.

The Glorious Revolution of 1689 finally vanquished the doctrine of 'the Divine Right of Kings', as practised in France by the 'Sun King', Louis XIV. Louis was the absolute dictator of France and James II wanted to have the same dictatorial powers in England, Scotland and Ireland.

In England, the principle had become well established that elected

representatives of his subjects should check the King's actions and that those representatives should be able to make laws. It was by no means truly democratic, but it was a significant step away from absolutism. It is not surprising that James encountered strong opposition, which led to his removal by William of Orange and his defeat at the Boyne. The Constitutional Monarchy and parliamentary government finally put down roots.

At first the vote in the UK was restricted to certain classes; all of them male. New Zealand adopted universal suffrage for all citizens in 1893. In Britain it was in

supported other candidates is deemed irrelevant. According to its apologists, this system enables stable government with a workable majority in parliament. Its detractors, in contrast, point out that such a government is in danger of losing touch with the people it purports to represent. Once 'the people have spoken' their elected representatives can ignore their wishes for up to five years. These parliamentarians are often at the mercy of party whips that use a mixture of threats and promises to keep them in line.

Democratic deficit

In a divided society this can be dangerous if one section of the community is, in effect, always excluded from decision-making by a form of parliamentary despotism. The (failed) attempt to replace FPTP with the Alternative Vote earlier this year was intended to address this democratic deficit. AV would have been an improvement on FPTP, but inferior to the Single Transferable

Vote system of Proportional Representation as used in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has one major flaw in its system, however, as it is governed by a mandatory five-party coalition. There is no opposition, so no alternative government is waiting in the wings to take over if the incumbent regime messes things up. No matter who you vote for, the government always gets in!

In Westminster FPTP elections, we get the chance to 'throw the rascals out' every four or five years, but once elected our parliamentarians can do whatever they like without reference to the electorate.

Direct Democracy

One suggested improvement might be a system of direct democracy where Members of Parliament act as popular delegates. This worked well in ancient Athens where everyone knew almost



1928 and as late as 1971 in Switzerland. Democracy as an idea seems to be catching on, albeit slowly.

What is Democracy?

But what exactly is 'democracy'? We hear of 'liberal democracy', 'representative democracy', 'parliamentary democracy', 'majoritarian democracy', 'direct democracy' and 'consensus democracy'. All that these have in common is that somewhere in the process, somebody gets to cast a vote and somebody or something wins a majority. Is that it then?

Is democracy simply the rule of a majority?

Apologists for the 'First Past the Post' system of parliamentary representation argue that it is. A candidate with the support of, say, 26% of the total poll is deemed elected even though his 'majority' is tiny. What counts is that he is out in front. The fact that 74% of voters

everyone else but seems impractical in a modern largely anonymous society. How are MPs to be brought closer to the people?

The National Liberal Party suggests that we introduce referendums as a regular consultative constitutional measure. The party is circulating an on-line petition which states;

Everyday important decisions are made by Government which directly affects the people. However the people are never consulted as part of the decision making process. The war in Afghanistan is just one example of this.

The National Liberal Party and the undersigned call for the introduction into law the use of Referendums based on the successful direct democracy system used in Switzerland, allowing people to vote on major issues such as Europe (including renegotiating the Lisbon Treaty), Nuclear power, immigration, the creation of an English Parliament and going to war.

Go to <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/consult-the-people.html>

Switzerland: a practical application of 'Direct Democracy'

In Switzerland regular elections are held to elect representatives to their Federal (national) Parliament. As in Northern Ireland, the use of PR ensures that the party split in the number of representatives more closely resembles a party's percentage vote than clearly is the case in Westminster. This allows government to reflect the 'popular will' by forcing the main parties to act in coalition. Significant minority opinion and minor parties are not shut out of influence. The government will still get in, but it will vary in response to the shifting strengths of the constituent parties in the parliament.

In addition to this superior electoral system, Switzerland operates three

mechanisms of Direct Democracy: Referendums, Initiative and Recall. Referendums cover votes on Government proposed changes to the Constitution, important Federal (National) laws or International treaties. Initiatives allow the public themselves to call for changes to the Constitution or Federal law. Recall allows the electorate to petition for a re-election of public officials for unacceptable behaviour. Had a similar system been operating here, electors could have petitioned for the recall of those MPs who fiddled their expenses to pay for duck ponds and for similar abuses of office.

This form of Direct Democracy institutionalises the voters' right to decide on issues themselves. Implementation of these measures would go a long way to address the 'democratic deficit' in the United Kingdom.

These ideas are **anathema** to the European power elite for whom democracy is a bit of an inconvenience. Whatever might be said of the former Prime Ministers of Greece and Italy, they were at least elected to office. Not so their 'technocratic' successors. It ought to be astonishing that these changes of government were given such an easy ride by the press. Witness the howls of protest when Mr Papandreu announced his intention to put a euro-zone bailout scheme to a popular referendum. Within days he was forced to cancel the referendum.

For the EU 'Eurocrats', democracy is all very fine as long as the people make the 'right' decision. When this does not go according to plan, the aberrant nation is bullied into voting again, as happened when the people of the Republic of Ireland rejected the Nice Treaty in a constitutional referendum.

In contrast, Switzerland today is **prosperous, peaceful, democratic** and not a member of the European Union. There's probably a lesson there for us all.

Ecology: The Silent Fourth Pillar of National Liberalism

A look at the fourth pillar of National Liberalism and aspects of the National Liberal Party's Environment policy

Liberty, Independence and Democracy. The **three pillars** of National Liberalism from which our vision for these isles is born. It is these three pillars which define our philosophy and separate us from other ideologies. Each is important in the creation of the type of society and nation we wish to rebuild from what are basically ashes after decades of mismanagement by the two party state. However there is perhaps a **silent pillar** of National Liberalism which is possibly the most important of all, as it is the pillar which influences everything and which our very survival depends upon. Ecology.

To believe ecology is separate from other issues is wrong. We are all part of the ecological cycle and our actions have an impact and implications. Where we live, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, how we get to work and even where we work all have some form of impact on the environment. Then you have to look at population, energy, waste disposal and the economy. Each has an impact on our ecology. Therefore ecology is not just something for fanatical recyclers or New Age elements of society, it is something that should be of the utmost importance to us all.

Unfortunately there are those in this world (mainly in big business and their puppets in Government) that do not care about ecology and go about its destruction simply to exploit the land for short term gain. Others will destroy it through lack of care and education. Neither takes into account that the natural environment does not belong to the present generation, but is merely leased to us from our children and our children's children, and so on. It is our responsibility

to care for it for their sake.

Much has been mentioned in recent years of our impending energy crisis. This has been caused by governments looking for short term **quick fix solutions**, rather than having the will and foresight to plan ahead for the nation, rather than their big business masters. All three of the main parties, plus UKIP, the BNP and the English Democrats favour nuclear power. Yet we know from Japan (and previously Chernobyl and Three Mile Island) the devastating consequences when something goes wrong and the ecological balance is disrupted. Add to this the risk of a terrorist strike, plus the potential time bomb which is the disposal of nuclear waste, and we can see the political parties



A green and pleasant land: more than just a phrase!

mentioned only have short term gain as their priority believing building a few nuclear plants will solve the current energy problem. They do not consider future generations, but opt for a quick fix solution. It is also worth noting that we will have to

import vast quantities of uranium to fuel nuclear power stations, therefore we will still be at the mercy of international

developments in relation to our energy supply.

The nuclear lobby have recently promoted the merits of thorium as an alternative to uranium. Indeed thorium is far safer, and less waste is produced, even though it is a commodity we would still have to import. However there is still a huge question mark over the long term safety of thorium nuclear waste, a risk Con-LibDem-Lab-UKIP-BNP are willing to take. As National Liberals we recognise that if something goes wrong with the storage of atomic waste (both thorium and uranium) it will cause a major ecological catastrophe, and therefore we view nuclear power as a risk not worth taking. In any case, by the time sufficient tests have been carried out into thorium derived nuclear energy, renewable forms would have become more efficient.

It does seem the Con-LibDem-Lab-UKIP-BNP parties wish to put all their eggs in the nuclear power basket. Likewise they are content to allow new properties to be built with no form of renewable energy incorporated. There have been vast leaps forward in renewable energy, particularly solar power in recent years, leaps which can only get bigger. The National Liberal Party advocates that all new properties should be designed to incorporate solar panels, ground source heat pumps or other practical forms of renewable energy.

The National Liberal Party believes in **greater research and development** into all forms of renewable energy - thus making them more efficient and cheaper in the long term. In the short term clean conventionally powered stations, an increased usage of micro generation, greater energy conservation and the introduction of renewables can provide sensible, safe and practical options.

Population is another example of where successive governments have betrayed this country and added to the destruction of our environment. England is the most densely populated country in Europe with a population that is not sustainable. Social and economic factors have led to this, yet

still governments refuse to grasp the nettle and deal with the situation. It is **swept under the carpet** in the hope some future government will tackle the issue. Population is a sensitive issue and the Con-LibDem-Lab politician's fear their careers will be damaged if they touch it – or to put it another way they care more about their careers than the country, the environment and future generations.

The reality is; More population = more houses = more roads = more green fields lost = more wildlife habitats lost = more food required = more energy consumption = more waste = more pollution. As National Liberals we can see we need to work and develop solutions to all factors which contribute to environmental destruction, placing the people, the country and the environment before personal political career aspirations. This is clearly something other parties fail to recognise.

At present we have not mentioned the Green Party, who are often regarded as the political haven for the eco-conscious voter. But are they a true friend of the earth? At one time the Greens (or as they were once called the Ecology Party) did truly represent everything green and in addition to this supported social justice. They were concerned about the growth in population and recognised this as a contributory factor towards environmental destruction. Today admittedly they have many policies that are eco-conscious; however their social policies would contribute towards environmental destruction. The real green party is a deeper shade of orange in the shape of the National Liberal Party, a party closer to the original Ecology Party which eventually became the Greens.

Liberty, Independence and Democracy are its core pillars, but encompassing them all is the silent pillar of ecology. As National Liberals we love our country. Ecology encompasses many things as we have shown. Therefore **to love our country we must also love ecology**. In the National Liberal Party we recognise ecology is not just for fanatical recyclers, but for all of us. The future depends on it.

ECONOMICS Pt 1

The Economic Roots and influences of National Liberalism

SOME PEOPLE reading this issue of *New Horizon* will have already heard of the National Liberal Party. Those that have may have a fair idea from our name what our (political) ideological roots are. Indeed, some folks may even know about a few of our policies. However, it's probably a safe bet that not many would be aware of what economic ideas influence and guide the NLP!

Most people instinctively know that there is something drastically wrong with our economy. After all, why do we always seem to have endless cycles of boom and bust? However, trying to explain how the entire economic system works in plain and simple terms is another matter!

Therefore, we've deliberately kept this article short and sweet. Our intention is to produce a series of articles on the economy that will eventually form a 'blueprint' on how to get Britain back to work. Firstly, however, we need to trace the economic roots of National Liberalism.

IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS?

THE National Liberal Party is rightly proud of its ideological roots. As many readers may know, they largely stem from the ideas of those who formed the Liberal Nationals (LN) headed by Sir John Simon in the early 1930s.

According to David Dutton's book *Liberals in schism – A history of the National Liberal Party*, an early form of economic nationalism was the driving force behind

the formation of the Liberal Nationals. He noted:

"In 1930s Britain the Parliamentary Liberal Party was divided over the measures they believed were required to govern a Britain rocked by a world depression. A minority (ultimately coalescing under the LN banner – Ed) had come to believe that protectionist measures, contrary to Liberal dogma in favour of Free Trade, were now necessary to save British workers jobs."



Sir John Simon

The NLP's political roots are also unique in that they represent a combination of two classical ideological trends: Nationalism and Liberalism. This fusion of nationalism and liberalism means that we give equal weight to 'national questions' (concerning all of the

nations and peoples of the British Isles and in principal, beyond) as we do to 'liberal questions' concerning the individual.

BEYOND CAPITALISM & COMMUNISM?

This fusion of nationalism and liberalism provides us with a general position that can be best summed up as being '*Neither Left nor Right - Neither Capitalist nor Communist.*'

It's probably easy to envisage how one can take a political position that's '*Neither Left nor Right.*' For instance, some subjects – like Britain's membership of the EU and our involvement in foreign military adventures – clearly transcend the traditional 'left/right' political divide.

It is not so easy to see how one can

advocate an economic idea that's '*Neither Capitalist nor Communist*'? Many readers might assume that capitalism and communism are the only two economic options that have ever been advocated? Surely they're the only two systems that have ever been tried? Indeed, can there be some sort of 'Third (or any) Way' that goes beyond capitalism and communism?

To answer these questions it may be best to look first at the **economic ideas** that influence and guide those involved with the NLP.

VARIED INFLUENCES

Some of these influences – and the people who have promoted them – include, the liberal national interpretation of classical liberal free trade, the progressive yet pragmatic Liberal National party approach to labour relations and economic affairs e.g. Earnest Brown's tenure as Minister for Labour or even earlier, Lord Rosebery's call for Britain to become (and Britons to be part of) a 'great property-owning democracy'. Then there are 'visionary' ideas such as the Distributism of GK Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, monetary

reform ideas (including elements of Social Credit), even some early socialists such as Kier Hardie and Bob Blatchford and Guild Socialism (as advocated by the likes of William Morris, GDH Cole and Arthur Pentty). The ideas of the Co-operative movement, the Chartists and Levelers and support for small businesses and shopkeepers, and some libertarian economists, are also of interest.

Therefore, it could be said that our economic ideological roots represent a **synthesis** of various radical, free-thinking ideas that seek to offer a genuine alternative to orthodox capitalist and socialist (or communist) solutions.

In future issues of *New Horizon* we'll take an-depth look at all of these ideas – and the people associated with them. More importantly, we'll also look at how they relate to modern day conditions, look at some of our distinctive economic policies, how we can get the economy back on the straight and narrow including how we can get Britons, especially our young, back to work via apprenticeships and limited forms of protectionism.

MY CONCERNS FOR THE NHS –

A personal viewpoint from the National Liberal Party Secretary Glen Maney

I was an employee of British Rail when it was broken up. I worked in the Revenue Protection Department in the Fraud team. Working closely with the British Transport Police we were effective. Then came privatisation.

It was going to be, according to John Major's Government, the best thing for the passenger, the railway's customer. Competition would drive down prices and everything in the commuter garden would be rosy! Of course it didn't turn out like that.

Cutting back

Despite massive Government subsidies

paid to private companies from taxpayer's (passengers) revenues, the first thing these shareholder beholden companies did, was to cut back on staff and get people multi tasking on poorer contracts and lower money with the odd cut to safety practices being seemingly unimportant? My department was closed because you "*can't audit a deterrent value*", so in 1997, six months after my section of British Rail had become North London Railways, the successor to SilverLink, I was made redundant.

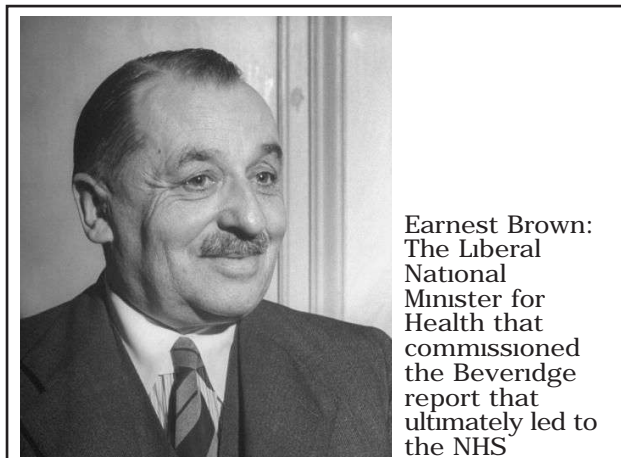
I'm not going to go too deeply into what has happened to fares because for every set of figures I produce, some Government department will dispute them using some cost index that suits. **You** however, the

passenger, will know just how deeply your pocket has been affected. Price rises of over 200% since privatisation can be found. Has the average wage trebled in the last 16 years without promotion? The answer is NO.

The shareholders of these companies however have done very nicely though, thank you very much! In August we learned that Stagecoach, owner of the South West Trains and East Midlands Trains franchises, had risked the rage of passengers, green campaigners and trade unions with plans to return £340m to shareholders – including an £88m windfall for the brother and sister who founded the group. This was just days after they announced another set of fare increases, some as high as 13%!

NHS our National Pride

So what has all that got to do with the



NHS our **National pride**, providing free health care to our citizen's since 1948. Well let me explain.

As the House of Lords prepares to scrutinise the *Health and Social Care Bill*, doctors' leaders of all disciplines are questioning the place of choice and competition in the health service. The Government's proposed model for the NHS is very similar to the one that sold off the utilities and indeed that of the railways. A level playing field of providers all operating on a platform, be it Network Rail, the National Grid or British Telecom http://www.openreach.co.uk/orpg/home/aboutus/aboutus.do?JSESSIONID_orPortal=TRyT7v19mpmHv4qGw66JdTLzC2wwNn029d3c0vBVqgrTImTVvGWX!-1074746243.

Effectively privatizing the NHS

It is a complex piece of legislation, but the overall concern of many doctors and campaigners is that, in its current form, it will allow much of the £85bn NHS budget to pass directly into the pockets of private companies and their shareholders.

The core reform will see the end of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) which currently decide where NHS money is spent.

The idea is that a set of Commissioners (I wonder who'll appoint these no doubt trustworthy and incorruptible guardians of our health?!) will decide how it's spent instead, using the flawed currency of the National Tariff for Health Services or the even more ill thought out National Outcomes Frameworks. They will 'commission' from any qualified provider whose sole credentials will be a registration by the Care Quality Commission.

The illusion of choice

We can all agree with the Prime Minister that an ageing population, an open door immigration policy for EU residents and costly technological advances, create new challenges to which the NHS needs to respond. But what have choice and competition got to contribute to the answer?

Choice is an illusion created by people to sell you something. The free market in which the mightiest US private healthcare companies compete and provide health services in a mixed economy is a fallacy. Competition creates huge, monopoly suppliers. Many of the private companies are faceless and unaccountable. Private companies have to grow, have shareholders to satisfy, and are not immune to failure. When they fail who picks up the pieces? However flawed our NHS and social care system, it is there for all to see and it is accountable.

So why would we put our NHS at risk?

The Government even admits that NHS management costs run at not much more than 3%, compared with nearly 20% for

the US. Why would we want to copy their model? A few quick windfalls for a few select rich people?

Procurement procedure legal teams employed out of the NHS budget to oversee contracts with private suppliers will be experts in cross company litigation and will cost millions in legal fees alone; money that won't be going to front line care.

So what's the point

The point is they **want to be seen to be doing something**, anything, because of the huge challenges that lay ahead.

I'd be cynical to think that it's just another way of keeping the poor in their place and creating a two tier system for the haves and the have nots, as they have done in other parts of our society, like education. Surely not !

I personally think that long term investment and cutting management structures and Government convened Quangos is the

way forward.

If a private company has equipment we need, let's buy it for the NHS. It's the people's money for the people. If we don't bomb any middle-eastern countries for a while, when they have internal disputes, we'll have the money!

When a private company takes over a public company the first thing they do, just as they did on the railways, is to cut costs. How do they do that? They cut staff and they cut services. Is this what you want for your NHS?

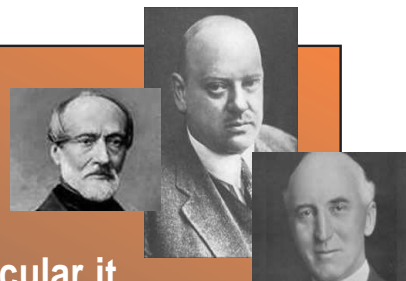
Do we want to follow the American model, as shown in Michael Moore's documentary "SICKO", and have people who can't afford to pay private company prices, operating on themselves? Have an infant mortality rate for the lower social economic groups, rising year on year? NO me neither. Sadly however I think that's exactly what we're going to get under the ConDems!

Don't forget, I've seen it first hand once before, on the Railways.

A member of the National Liberal Executive is hoping to launch a political Foundation dedicated to researching and promoting the tenets of National Liberalism. In particular it will research the works and lives of leading personalities of the UK's Liberal Nationals (1930-48) and similar world figures up to the present day.

It will also seek to develop ideas and policy whilst promoting and nurturing National Liberalism globally.

We are seeking a serious sponsor(s) for this work which will be launched within two years. Details and funding are open to negotiation. Can you help? If you are interested in promoting an alternative liberalism then contact natliberal@aol.com



Strategy

Building a Grand Coalition of the Centre

All political parties, let alone ideologies, believe that they have the answers to their countries problems. Some may consider their role to influence the many, but most believe that only by achieving undiluted 'power' and the implementation of their policies can they deliver salvation.

Of course, most never even achieve recognition, let alone exercise any influence or power. There are many reasons for that e.g. a political system that rewards the big, established parties and seeks to deny minor parties representation, a public culture that absorbs its 'political' knowledge via the mass media (which is inevitably linked to the establishment) and the basic 'conservative' nature of the voter.

The National Liberal Party is no more protected from these influences than any other. Yes, we have an ideological basis for existence, we attract a lot of interest, even more so sympathy, and we have some attractive policies. We would be naive however to believe that we will grow at some point exponentially into 'power' or that something will propel us there as some form of political 'sling shot' e.g. a recession or social meltdown.

Sole power unobtainable

The reason is not down to having/not

having the ingredients for a successful political movement, something altogether different (although an important factor - see p17). It is simply that voters/activists in today's Western society, with its many social attractions, with complicated lives and vulnerable financial structures, are not committed to political struggle. And of those that are, there is no reason to believe that they will embrace only national liberalism, or any other radical idea, but more likely to be split, for many reasons, along multi-ideological or party lines.

If then, most radical yet centrist parties (our milieu) are doomed to, at best exist, or at worst wither and die, what should they do?

Unity in Diversity

Some may suggest they should seek unity. There may indeed be some parties that are so close ideologically (or have none at all) that they could merge? However, for various reasons (good and bad), this is unlikely to attract the majority. Ideological nuances, policy focus and ego's will preclude any 'unity' and end in 'disunity' if forced.

The National Liberals, for example, would not expect to attract all disaffected activists/voters to its banner. Our focus on liberal issues e.g. civil liberties, would not motivate everyone even if in

agreement. The same could be said for other parties. However, the issues such as centrist parties hold, and it has to be said many Independents, e.g. democratic reform, civil liberties, Euro-realism, (non-racist) patriotism, could form the basis of agreement. Those issues could be promoted by a loose co-operative body. Those issues could even be promoted in turn. If certain parties (or individuals) focus more on promoting their 'hobby horses' so be it. By maintaining party identities we allow people to express their ideological differences. By working in a voluntary campaigning body we benefit by sharing resources where appropriate. Thus the phrase 'Unity in Diversity' perhaps ideally describes the concept of a working coalition.

A 'Grand Coalition of the Centre' would work by bringing together all small centrist parties and Independents working in a loose campaigning body. This body would from time to time mobilise its constituent parts to promote an idea through literature distribution or to campaign/protest on the

streets if some principle e.g. civil liberties were under threat.

The National Liberals have supported an embryonic coalition in recent times known as the People's Alliance (UK), an all-party campaigning body. It is a template for co-operation. It could also develop into an electoral alliance and even a legislative coalition.

Let us build the centrist, common-sense alternative!

It won't be easy dropping egos and putting aside policy differences or emphasis but the end result would be worth it. It would benefit from the synergy of its parts working together. If it cannot be brokered, the country will continue with a Lab/Con see-saw with only extreme alternatives realistically on offer. If a member of another party reads this and is inspired, then contact the National Liberals (natliberal@aol.com) for further discussion. From small acorns....

Education

What are the ingredients of a successful political party?: An idiots guide

A successful political movement normally requires more than one of the following strengths: A personality(s), popular policies, a committed and sustainable organisation and an attractive ideology.

Any movement that has all these 'qualities' would certainly be a force to be reckoned with but any that only had one of them is likely to fail.

For example, a personality will always be attractive to many, often a celebrity, and may also attract the much desired media attention. The impact of ex-MP and TV personality Kilroy-Silk is a good example. His 'defection' to UKIP, understandably attracted his media contacts and other 'celebs' e.g. Joan Collins and propelled

them into the limelight. The result in the 2004 European elections was a very large increase in their vote and seats (being more under PR than 'First past the post'). Subsequently however, he fell out with them and the glow of victory became tarnished (it is not a co-incidence that their present leader, Nigel Farage, retook his position following the 'lacklustre' performance of his then successor Lord Pearson). Personalities can boost a party but they can also damage it if they leave. Better to have such personalities as figure heads only.

Being populist can attract support and, if topical, significantly boost votes. For example, the Greens benefited in the Euro elections in 1989 from the (first) discussion about dangers to the environment by

winning 15% (but no seats!), the Referendum party came from nowhere in 1997 to score nearly over 800,000 votes in the notoriously difficult 'first past the post' system because Europe was on the national (and Conservative party) agenda and the far-right generally does better when stories abound of migrant influxes. Equally of course, voters and activists can dry up when the issue is no longer 'sexy'. Better to espouse firm and broad based policies that later become popular.

A strong, efficient party with a committed membership can ensure that ideas and policies can be promoted even if the media are reluctant to. The problem is, it means nothing if the policies are unattractive or hard to sell. The history of the far-left is a perfect example of an ideal(s) that has attracted firm believers full of dedicated endeavour but little or no support. The most successful group in recent years, Respect, arguably relied upon ethnic minority votes as they chimed with opposition to the Iraq war but then drifted away when it was no longer topical (see populism above) leaving Respect to

indulge in the far left's (and right's) favourite pastime - faction fighting. Better to ensure you have some popular policies and focus on those.

Ideology is the foundation upon which a successful movement, as apart from a transient party, is based. Parties are that or populist. The 'idea' is not necessarily holistic, it could be an attitude such as Conservatism or single-issue based as with the Greens. It is however very difficult to sustain a party, let alone a movement, without it and many a party languishes or dies because no-one really knows why it exists (or seeks it out). A party based on a big idea(s) will attract the best activists.

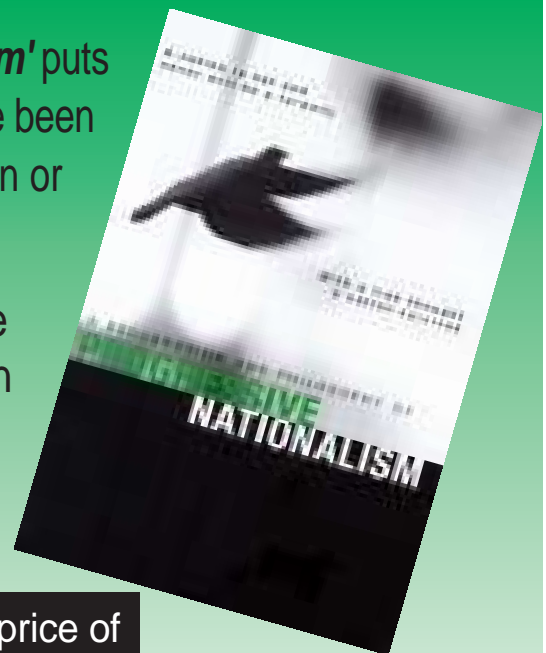
Of course, success might come with some 'magic bullet' e.g. a large benefactor or a well-timed alliance, but in the absence of winning the political lottery, hard-work selling a good product will take you far. If however you actually want to implement some of your policies (!) then find some good partners and multiply! (see A Grand Coalition of the Centre on p.16)

Read the alternative patriotism that balances a love for nation, its people and the environment.

'A Declaration of Progressive Nationalism' puts into words what many political thinkers have been searching for and lacking in orthodox green or patriotic circles.

Read how Nationalism, Social Justice and Environmentalism can be fused in an holistic ideology. *"You will find yourself drawn to its pages as if they were familiar texts".*

Copies of this book are available for the price of £5 (inc P & P) made out to G. Williamson, c/o PO Box 4217, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4PJ.



Book review:

Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (ISBN 0-691-00174-X)

This book must become classic reading for any budding National Liberal theorist (Indeed it will open the eyes of a few liberals and nationalists too!).

The book, although well written, is no read for the casual thinker because it sets out to reconcile the philosophy (and practices) of Liberalism and Nationalism (or national feelings) within a rigorous theoretical framework (Ms Tamir is a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Tel-Aviv University)

Coming from a Liberal background (she was a founding member of the Israeli *Peace Now* movement) she explains her motivation as 'an ongoing personal commitment to pursue a national vision while remaining faithful to a set of liberal beliefs'. She therefore shows how many of the ideas that underpin national feeling also cross over into Liberal ideas e.g. however the cake is cut; it is always shared within members of the 'club'. This is almost always within a state. For nationalists that should be a nation but even the most extreme of Liberals accept that there have to be limits to who can benefit.

Indeed, she believes that nationalism can contribute to liberal thinking and

interestingly focuses a significant portion of her book on the cultural rather than political nature of Nationalism.

Complementary rather than in conflict

She explains why Liberals have in modern times (in contrast to the majority of their 19th century predecessors) become antipathetic to national feeling, viewing it as atavistic, irrational and dangerous. They believe liberalism and nationalism to be in conflict and, quoting from the philosopher Gellner, are in a "tug of war between reason and passion"¹. Yet, these philosophies should not be seen in conflict, but **complementary attributes within all individuals** (see the lead article 'Head & Heart' in this issue of *New Horizon*), and Tamir devotes a whole Chapter to the 'Idea of the Pearson'.

Yael Tamir sees the theory of "Liberal Nationalism" as combining liberalism's commitment to personal autonomy and individual rights, with nationalism's belief in the importance of community, especially national ones, and historical continuity. She claims it to be a "*direct descendant of the cultural pluralism of Herder and the liberal nationalism of Mazzini.*"²

Although some of the concepts have

been promoted by early political philosophers, it was only in the 1990's that the phrase was coined and backed by others e.g. W. Kymlicka and D. Miller. It has been used to underpin civic nationalism, as opposed to ethno-nationalism. However, since LN writers focus more on the cultural rather than political aspects on nationalism, it is more accurate to say the philosophy actually underpins **cultural nationalism**.

Although Tamir says she wrote the book to introduce national values into the liberal discourse, she accepts that some "National ideas have indeed fuelled some of the most devastating regimes"³ but, rightly, points the finger at ethno-nationalists or other 'nationalists' that add on additional elements e.g. Fascists (who contradict 'polycentric' nationalism i.e. what is right for me is right for you).

She is just as scathing of some Liberals (and others no doubt – Ed), "*Liberals often align themselves with national demands raised by "underdogs," be they indigenous peoples, discriminated minorities, or occupied nations, who plight can easily evoke sympathy. But if national claims rest on theoretically sound and*

inflicted on others in the past."⁴

Assimilation: the answer tonational minorities?

If there is a criticism of her work at all, it is her desire to offer a prescription to every permutation of national life which sometimes leads to utopian solutions or scenarios e.g. when dealing with immigration and supra-national entities.

She offers three guidelines in dealing with immigration. The first distinguishes between asylum and immigration (National Liberals touch upon this in <http://nationalliberal.org/?p=3293>). The second says that citizenship cannot be revoked and thirdly, that immigration can only be restricted to create or maintain a 'viable majority'. She is uncertain however what, in practice, that might be.

She says, ultimately, that preserving cultural homogeneity is contingent upon the welfare of other nations/peoples. Thus, because an immigrant may have moved for 'instrumental considerations' i.e. economic benefit, and has not made a cultural choice, it should be treated as a desire to assimilate? Whilst philosophically true, it doesn't really 'square the circle' of allowing/enlarging a national minority whilst maintaining a harmonious society? **Assimilation** is not only a way of ensuring the well-being of the wider society but surely benefits the immigrant, otherwise they will labour under a burden e.g. language and cultural difficulties etc?

Tamir does suggest nations should embark on efforts to improve the standards of living in poorer countries on moral i.e. the ability of all the planet's citizens to pursue their individual and collective goals, and prudential grounds i.e. there would be a reduced desire to migrate. Since most voters are not philosophers it is the latter argument that is likely to be understood!



Yael Tamir

moral justified grounds, one cannot restrict their application: They apply equally to all nations, regardless of their power, their wealth, their history of suffering, or even injustices they have

Economic considerations trumping cultural?

Tamir, in the last few pages, tends to spoil what was up to then a thoroughly well thought out theory. From nowhere, she suggests peoples will cast aside linguistic and cultural differences in favour of economic considerations. Thus, in the interests of industrial progress (pre-Euro!), nations will surrender their sovereignty to a regional body e.g. the EU. She does however soften this vision by admitting that the future is still uncertain. Furthermore *"a post national age in which national differences are obliterated and all share in one shallow universal culture, watch soap operas and CNN, eat McDonalds, drink Coca-Cola, and take*

*the children to the local Disneyworld, is more a nightmare than a utopian vision."*⁵

As an aside she does make an incisive comment on 'single-issue' movements, *"Ideological movements flying only one flag, be it equality, liberty or national liberation, are to be viewed with suspicion. Human beings have a wide range of interests, preferences, and needs, and a sound political philosophy will attempt to balance all of them rather*

*than pursue one at the expense of all others."*⁶

Saving both ideas

In a call to her ideological cousins, Yael Tamir urges liberals (and we might say nationalists too) **not to surrender** the idea of nationalism to conservative, chauvinist, or racist ideologies. Equally, we would say that Liberalism should **not be surrendered** to a globalist vision of the world where nations are seen as impediments to progress rather than its' engine. As one earlier reviewer says:

"[Tamir's] case for a 'liberal nationalism' would save liberalism from a shallow universalism, and save nationalism from its darkest impulses. Tamir's achievement is to bring moral clarity, and hope, to one of the most vexing political questions of our time."-- Michael Sandel, Harvard University, US

Notes

1. Tamir 1995, p. 5.
2. Tamir, p. 79.
3. Tamir, p. 4.
4. Tamir, p. 11.
5. Tamir, pp. 166-167
6. Tamir, pp. 162

Book review:

'A little chit of a fellow' A biography of the Right Honourable Leslie Hoare-Belisha – Ian Grimwood

There is a dearth of information and research on the Liberal National/National Liberal party in British politics. Only in very recent times has this begun to be addressed. Leading the charge is the liberal historian and progenitor of a new perspective on the LN's, Professor David Dutton. He has written a number of articles culminating into a biography of Sir John

Simon (regarded as the party's founder) and his seminal work, *Liberals in Schism – A history of the National Liberal Party (2008)* (see book review at <http://nationalliberal.org/?p=918>). However, I am sure he would be the first to admit that our knowledge is far from complete. Any biography of a leading LN figure is therefore a welcome addition to a small but growing 'library' on the party

and its figures.

The author Ian Grimwood follows a standard chronological sketch of Hoare-Belisha (HB) from his upbringing in a middle-class Jewish family, his debating skills in the Oxford Union, his service in the First World War, his election as a Liberal MP and his defection to the new Liberal National Party. He focuses however on HB's Ministerial achievements and there were many.

He describes his time as Minister of Transport and the introduction of the Highways Code and the famous 'Belisha Beacon'.

His less well-known stint as Secretary for War was equally significant as he pushed hard to improve both the Army's efficiency and make it a popular career choice for the average man. The author isn't exaggerating in suggesting that, like Haldane before the Great War, HB

considerably improved the Army prior to the Second. Unfortunately, opposition to change from the 'Brass hats' and the Government's parsimony weakened those changes. Ultimately, his opponents in the Conservative party and the Army, some perhaps motivated by anti-Semitism, persuaded the Prime Minister (Chamberlain) to sack him and his pride prevented him accepting a demotion.

Up until that time, in an early example of 'spin', he had put to good use his early and continuing work in journalism in promoting his reforms

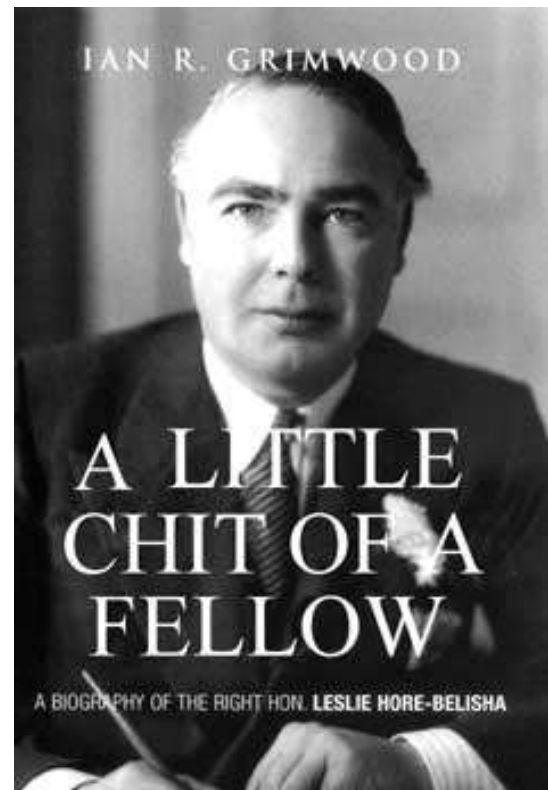
The Liberal National Party

The weakness of the book is its neglect of his work and views on the Liberal National Party. We know that he was a senior figure at the beginning of the split with the Liberal Party yet his hard work in building its organisation and his belief that it represented a fundamental breach and, as he put it, *'We shall have to fight and I think take the offensive for the soul of Liberalism, maintaining we are in the*

Rosebery tradition' is largely overlooked.

He partly redeems himself by highlighting HB's document 'The Manifesto', which pledged support for the National Government's measures (effectively tariffs), and encouraged PM MacDonald to call a General Election and ultimately introduce selective tariffs. One of their first acts was the aptly named Abnormal Importation Bill designed to prevent the dumping of imports into the UK. Grimwood quotes HB *'Goods were flowing into our ports and doing damage to those employed...*

*There had been abnormal importation [82 more vessels arriving in the Port of London in the first 10 days of November 1931, compared with a year earlier]... The result of doing nothing would be to steal work from our own workmen.'**



His eventual disillusionment with the Party was due to their inability or unwillingness to support him when threatened with the sack. Under Churchill from 1940 to 45 the LN's role was much dismissed and had effectively become a spent force. The war was probably was their death knoll. As with their birth the book glosses over their effective death.

HB's subsequent move over to the Conservatives is explained by his (and many others) fear that the new Government might emulate the planning of Eastern Europe and thus Liberals and Conservatives had to unite in the defense

of individual liberty. Post-War his life was dominated by a whirlwind of travel visiting political figures throughout the Western world and the colonies, pre-occupied the Cold War and attempts to prevent another European war.

Strong personalities

Whilst most LN's thought they had no cards to play when faced with Conservative demands at 'unity' the fact that he beat a Conservative candidate on three occasions before the split (and before he had developed his public persona) highlights the possibility that strong LN personalities may have been able to retain their seats if they had refused to kow-tow to their Conservative partners demands?

It was also interesting to note the author's

criticism of 'orthodox economics' concerning the balancing of the books by cutting expenditure rather than borrowing given the recent furore over Government debt. The book was however published in 2006!

Overall the book was interesting and easy to read although it focussed too much on his Ministerial career and too little on his political. One hopes that it will stimulate other biographies of leading LN figures eg. Earnest Brown, Walter Runciman and Robert Hutchinson which will help us understand this interesting party and their political position.

*P.33

'A little chit of a fellow 'A biography of the Right Honourable Leslie Hoare-Belisha – Ian Grimwood (Book Guild Ltd) 2006 – ISBN 1 857769945

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Some of the promotional posters announcing the arrival of this issue of the New Horizon

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- * Book Review 'The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, national identity and Europe, 1830-1886'. *Why did the patriotic liberal become a minority figure?*
- * Were the Liberal Nationals a one-off?: Part I - Lord Rosebery's 'Liberal Imperialists.'

Opinion

- * Building the 'Grand (or little) Coalition of the Centre'. *Can lessons be learnt from History?*

Ideology

- * (New) Overseas Figures - Was/Is X a National Liberal?

Strategy

- * The Power of Ten. *What does it take to make an idea unstoppable?*
- * (New) Guest pieces from overseas National Liberal and others

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