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Durban-Corbières,  
France

To the Liberal Democratic Party,

The UK LibDems political party has lost its way; sustained assault on its political narrative has rendered it irrelevant, unable to appeal to the populace and left its membership ignored and abandoned. Nationalism as pushed by the two main political parties has won the day for now but countering it with internationalism is to misunderstand their success and plays into their fascist and, indeed equally, socialist agendas where the individual is sublimated into the state and trampled by the mass. Being liberal is outside the paradigm of right and left. Being liberal is about individuals fulfilling their potential with tolerance and mutual respect, thus amplifying the invisible bond of humanity; it is the intrinsic creative lifeblood of our existence.

The promotion of simplistic binary solutions and explanations, the fear of standing out from the crowd, the unquestioning compliance with a prevailing group, the accusation of conspiracy to counter scrutiny along with the suppression of difference and the undermining of rational fact-based truth and debate are the weapons of despair and fear. Focus and identification of the collective, versus the promotion of the individual, pervade our language; in some measure these exist within the party. The party versus persons, the state versus the citizen, the market versus the consumer and, the worker and society versus the individual is group-think overriding the individual. This is how liberalism has been defeated from within as well as from without; so-called liberals have been complicit in this descent into oblivion.

So what's to be done? Radical up-thinking is required now. The narrative must put the individual at the heart of its credo; such that policies can be formulated which embed, protect and promote individual creativity in the context of liberal meta-values such as tolerance and equality. Definition must preclude reliance upon groups which are in opposition to liberalism. The enduring conundrum is that to get liberal voices heard requires individual liberals to come together to effect societal change. This change must begin and end with the individual. Unambiguous leadership is pivotal and clear thinking is crucial to success. These attributes are not apparent in the UK LibDems and thus have rendered them politically irrelevant. The "Liberal" brand is broken in that individuals with a shared passion for the fulfilment of creative individuality are institutionally suborned under the burden of an oppressive "Party" which has become a monster in its own right. It is an inflated bureaucracy which serves no other purpose than to ossify decision making, create institutional cabals and impose the will of the party upon questioning minorities and individuals. The "democratic" label is a fig leaf for an illiberal political party which is just like any other traditional political entity; corrupt! The cure is to kill off the three-headed monster of Leader, President and CEO, sweep away the dead hand of bureaucratic and top heavy Federal Committees, Party Organisations and Headquarters Staff and create the space for local leadership to effect change based upon individual aspiration. Put individuals at the heart of activity in the community and society at large. It is just not going to happen, is it?

The Federal Board's much delayed decision to reject the proposal to reallocate the subscriptions of members who live outside the UK is unfair, unthinking, undemocratic, illiberal and fundamentally cynical and corrupt. It belies a deeper malaise of institutional dysfunction and arrogance. The duplicity of those involved is unforgivable. The membership abroad has been ignored and is now abandoned. The very last straw.

The ruling hierarchy undemocratically manipulated the opportunity to unambiguously declare its European credentials by voting to rejoin the European Union by "fixing" the last conference vote; this was but one example of a cabal at work. The leadership could not find its way out of a wet paper bag. The volunteer grass-roots has been subsumed into the commissariat by apparatchiks.

I joined the LibDems in 2016 as the only pro-EU party, founded LibDems in France Local Party from nothing and was subsequently elected Chair for the next three years. I now find myself as a volunteer, not only ignored, abandoned but insulted, and pushed to resign from the Party. Utterly, utterly shameful. I intend to redirect my efforts towards a more fruitful, liberal and welcoming future.

Paul Fisher

