

**LIBERTY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
2010  
12 June 2010 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster**

**Resolutions passed**

**1. Universal Jurisdiction**

Liberty is committed to the principle that there should be no impunity for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and related serious crimes under international law and calls upon H.M. Government to adhere to its obligations under the Geneva Conventions and other international instruments to ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are available to ensure that adequate and effective investigations into such crimes are undertaken and that those accused of such crimes who arrive in the U.K. or its dependencies are charged appropriately, in order that the U.K. does not become a haven for those sought for international crimes and demands that the government to be formed after the UK General Election on May 6th 2010 amends the UK's 2001 International Criminal Court Act to assert universal jurisdiction for people of all nationalities in the UK's territory.

**2. Independence of Legal Aid**

This AGM believes that access to justice must be guaranteed for every individual in the UK – rich or poor. This AGM recalls an earlier and recent AGM motion which deplored the erosion of access to justice in England and Wales and called on the Government to halt over-hasty reforms to the legal aid system.

This AGM notes with deep concern that such reforms have continued and that further cutbacks to legal aid have been recently proposed.

This AGM also expresses deep concern at recommendations, in a recent report commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, that the Legal Services Commission be abolished and its functions transferred to the Ministry of Justice. Legal aid funding is predominantly used to allow individuals to defend or challenge decisions made by the Government or an arm of the state.

Independence in legal aid decision-making is therefore paramount. Damaging conflicts of interest will result if one Government department is required to sit in judgment on whether funds should be released to challenge its own actions or the actions of another department.

This AGM therefore:

- urges the Government to scrap proposals that would further reduce legal aid provision for the most vulnerable
- urges the Government to reject proposals for independent legal aid provision to be abolished
- urges the Government to ensure that independence in legal aid service provision is retained

### **3. Human Rights Act**

This AGM is concerned that despite binding itself together with the language of civil liberties and a number of welcome policy announcements, the new Government has failed to make the protection of the Human Rights Act a non-negotiable element of its Coalition agreement.

We note that the proposed Commission to explore a British Bill of Rights was announced in response to a media storm about terror suspects who cannot be deported to a place of torture. This does not bode well for any project designed to enhance rather than reduce the protection of the Human Rights Act.

This AGM therefore:

- reaffirms its commitment to the non-negotiable protection of the Human Rights Act
- resolves to engage with the new Government (including any new Commission) and the wider public (via Liberty's "Common Values" campaign) to promote better understanding of and commitment to the Human Rights Act.

### **4. Protest in Parliament Square**

This AGM deplures attempts to clear Parliament Square of nonviolent protesters. We are deeply concerned by the forced removal of those protestors in May in preparation for the Queen's Speech, an occasion on which the Government claimed to be committed to protecting civil liberties.

We are distressed by the Mayor's threat of legal action and his own determination, along with the declared zeal of a number of Members of Parliament, to bypass our most basic liberties and force demonstrators from Parliament Square.

The AGM is disturbed to note that the new Government's previous promises to "restore the right to peaceful protest" abandoned at the first hurdle, and is saddened to see the irritation of a few being placed above the right of everyone to dissent. We therefore resolve to work to hold the new Government to its word and demand that it respect fundamental liberties.

We agree to continue and step up Liberty's work, both protecting the right to demonstrate and defending demonstrators themselves whose liberties are curtailed outside and well beyond the seat of British democracy.

## **Liberty's Council**

**The following 15 members were elected to the Liberty Council to serve a two year period from 2010 – 2012:**

Mona Arshi, Camila Batmanghelidjh, Caspar Bowden, Bill Bowring, Tom Cleaver, Madeleine Colvin (Vice-chair), Michael Ellman, Martin Howe, Francesca Klug, Nicola Lacey, Jean Lambert, Doreen Lawrence, Ian Loader, Sarah Ludford, Mazin Zeki

**They join the 15 members who were elected in 2009 to serve until 2011:**

Lucy Armstrong, Frances Butler, Louise Christian, Emma Dring, Shaheed Fatima, Alex Gask, Fiona Horlick, Julian Huppert, Michael McColgan, Terry McGuinness, Sonali Naik, Nick O'Shea, Deok Joo Rhee, Joanna Shaw, Stephen Ward

**And Liberty's Treasurer**

Tish Andrewartha

## **Liberty's Conference and Appeals Committee**

Javan Herberg was elected unopposed to serve for three years on the Conference and Appeals Committee. She joins Owen Davies, who becomes Chair of the CAC and is now in the second year of his three year term and Maya Lester, who is now in her final year on the committee.

## **Liberty's Auditors**

Gotham Erskine were re-appointed as Liberty's auditors for 2010 – 2011.