



Monday 2nd May 2016
The Lion Hotel

Minutes

o Introduction

Viv Shilton sent her apologies. Despite it being a bank holiday, there were 12 members present: Harold, Helen, Joy, Ken, Margaret H, Margaret T, Mike, Pam, Phil, Viv B, Denise and Irene. For the last 2 months, there has been a surplus of money given for coffee, which I had put in the charity box in reception, but we have now decided to give it to the staff who serve the tea and coffee.

o Discussion Topics

A short summary of the subjects and discussions follows:

Should the bereaved of Hillsborough be able to sue for financial compensation?

- o Phil, explained that financial compensation is awarded in relation to how much financial loss has been incurred through the death of the victim. Even where the deceased/injured is a minor, there can be loss of income.
- o Any compensation awarded would have to be paid by the police, who have been found to be at fault, and the football club which could be judged to have contributed to the deaths/injuries by their use of 'cages' to restrain spectators, and exits too small to allow more than one person through at a time.
- o The length of time the plaintiffs had waited must also contribute to the compensation awarded. A typical case usually takes about 2 years to settle. After 27 years, this case has already cost the government (i.e. us, through our taxes) £17 million to defend the police.
- o We came to the conclusion that this case should be treated like any other case and it must be left to the judge to decide the how much compensation is due.
- o One good outcome of the Hillsborough disaster is that the football grounds are much safer places for the spectators.

Is anti-Semitism rife in the UK?

- o This topic has come to a head because of Ken Livingstone saying that Hitler supported Zionism. Harold thought it entirely possible that this was true – after all, Eichmann was a Zionist and he was in Hitler's inner circle. In any case, most members thought that Livingstone's declaration was not racist.
- o We then fell to differentiating between the words Zionist and Jewish and we had to remind ourselves that the Jews are the only race to define themselves as a religion too. So if Livingstone was being 'anti' the Jewish religion, then he wasn't being racist.

- Pam, like Jeremy Corbyn is 'anti' the Israeli government because of their aggressive behaviour towards the Palestinians, but this is not being anti-Semitic.
- In fact, with regard to the situation between Israel and Palestine, we British are partly responsible for having created the state of Israel after WW2.
- There was a strong feeling in the group that accusations of racism were being used by Tory MPs and even the Jews themselves to cause problems in the Labour Party and oust Jeremy Corbyn.
- On the other hand, it was agreed that there has always been anti-Jewish sentiment in the west since the Middle Ages -largely because the Jews have been very astute in financial matters and this continues to the present day. There is still a feeling, especially in the USA, that you have to be a WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant) to be admitted into the highest circles.
- However, most central banks are run by Jews, as is the Media and maybe the Jews themselves are fanning the flames of the argument because of the impending election.

Are we global or national citizens?

- We took a vote before the discussion and the result was that 9 out of 12 members consider themselves to be global citizens first.
- This is a changing scenario. Seventy-five years ago, we would have said we were national citizens. Nowadays, with the internet, TV and radio we are much more conscious of the world as a whole – especially when thinking of the environment or food and water supplies.
- Moreover, politically-speaking, we need global approaches to these questions in order to stand up to the power of the global corporations.
- Mike, feeling himself to be a thoroughly global citizen, thinks it was only chance that he was born into a rich country and that each life on earth is worth the same as his own. Everybody should be able to move around the world when and where they wish.
- There was, however, an opposing force which makes us feel we belong to a smaller group or tribe. Denise for example, considers herself variously a Londoner, a British and a global citizen according to the subject matter under discussion and which may tend to make us defensive of accepting outsiders.
- Nevertheless, we all agreed that the movement towards globalisation is on the march – in matters of language and culture particularly and we think it pointless to revert to tribal mentality in wanting, for example, an old language to be resurrected, when the trend is to want better communication worldwide.

○ Future Topics:

- *What constitutes good manners?*
- *Should the statue of Clive be removed?*

If you have any more to offer, please email me at:

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○ Next Meeting:

- The next Café Society Group meeting will be on Monday 6th June at 10.00am at The Lion Hotel