



FRED HALLIDAY

*Maxine Molyneux*

# Simon Frederick Peter Halliday

## 1946–2010

FRED HALLIDAY (as he was always known), who died from cancer in Barcelona on 26 April 2010, was a writer, teacher and public intellectual whose work spanned two closely related fields: the post-colonial societies of the Middle East, and international relations. Although he was not afraid to change his mind on key matters, there is one strand that runs through all of the forty-plus years of his writing career: his belief in linking theory and practice. For him they were never separate realms. Concepts must always be tested in the crucible of events; and events must always be understood not just as a jumble of facts, but with their interlinkages, purposes and conceptual frameworks all part of the picture. He battled increasingly against the threefold fault of much public discussion of international issues: lack of historical depth, lack of linguistic skills, and lack of feel for the complexities of dealing with other societies. He travelled to one troubled society after another, always with the aim of developing a more profound understanding. His command of languages was legendary. He may even have understated it when he wrote in his CV in 2006: ‘Fluent: German, French, Italian, Spanish. Working knowledge: Russian, Portuguese, Persian, Arabic, Latin. Elementary: Modern Greek, Dutch.’ In his last years he also learned Catalan.

In his writing and research he owed a debt, which he readily and frequently acknowledged, to Maxine Molyneux. She was inspirer, partner and critic. They met in 1971 and married in 1979. Throughout her academic career she has had a particular interest in gender, development and human rights issues. Since 1994 she has been at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the School of Advanced Study (University of London) where

she is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute. Many of the enduring themes of Fred's work were strongly shared with Maxine. These can be roughly summarised in a series of interlinked propositions. (1) The global market is not, as dependency theorists present it, merely a force for underdevelopment and impoverishment: it is also a force for development, and one that stimulates new political and social forces. (2) The politics of specific states have to be understood within a broader regional and global whole. (3) The state has to be understood sociologically: both state and society respond in complex ways to the international environment in which they operate, and for example the ethnic homogeneity of states is a myth that impedes serious analysis. (4) The role of women is a critically important factor in understanding any society, including its role in international relations. (5) Revolutions have major repercussions internationally as well as domestically, and are as important as other more familiar factors in international relations. (6) Outside powers, even when they intervene militarily, have only very limited ability to change the political and social order within a society.

It was my pleasure and privilege to have known Fred for about forty years. I always found his take on international issues to be both challenging and refreshing: this was partly because he approached problems from a different political angle from that of many colleagues, myself included, but also because he had deep knowledge of different societies, especially in the Middle East. In this short survey I cannot do justice to all his work: he published some twenty books in English, over eighty-five chapters in books, and more than 100 journal articles, as well as countless contributions in the electronic and print media. Nor can I trace all the influences in his intellectual journey. His path has been seen, in one provisional assessment, as from 'revolutionary socialist' to 'critical liberal'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it could be better viewed as from an initially Olympian revolutionism to a richer and more diverse form of internationalism. Such characterisations inevitably fail to capture the full picture. The purpose of this memoir is simply to sketch and appraise some of the main landmarks of his life and published work.

### Early life and education

Fred, was born in Dublin on 22 February 1946. His father, Arthur Halliday, a Yorkshireman from an austere Methodist and Quaker background, ran

<sup>1</sup>Alejandro Colás and George Lawson, 'Fred Halliday: achievements, ambivalences and openings', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39 (2010), 235–58.

a successful shoe-manufacturing business in Dundalk in the Republic of Ireland and was highly respected as a good employer. His mother, Rita (née Finigan) was a local Roman Catholic from a middle class background. Both families, despite their very different backgrounds and loyalties, came from what Fred would later call, with pride, the ‘dissident middle classes’.<sup>2</sup> His parents’ wedding—controversial because ‘mixed’—had taken place in a church far from Dundalk, with some local gravediggers as the only witnesses.

Fred was the youngest of three brothers, whose naming involved complexities.<sup>3</sup> The eldest, Frederick David Patrick (born 1937), known as David, went into the shoe business. The second, John Arthur George (born 1939), known as Jon, became a well-known writer on international politics. Jon was critically important, especially in Fred’s early years, in helping to shape Fred’s future evolution: Fred and Jon came to share a passionate interest in international politics, one that did not diminish with time.

The Halliday family home was in Dundalk, the main border town with Northern Ireland, which has a tradition of sympathy with the Irish republican cause and indeed was the headquarters of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Fred was to remember, with fear, the onset of the IRA campaign of 1956–62 and its effects on a divided community. Thus began a lifelong interest in conflict, and a sense of obligation to understand it. In 2005 he was to say: ‘If I had to sum up what is for me the bedrock, personal, political experience, it is the Irish question. I grew up in Ireland. I think troops out of Ireland was a completely irresponsible slogan, just as I think troops out of Afghanistan was an irresponsible slogan.’<sup>4</sup>

It was a standard condition for a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic that the children should be brought up Catholic. Fred’s first school, from 1950 to 1953, was the Marist School in Dundalk—the primary school for St Mary’s College.<sup>5</sup> In 1953–63 his Catholic education

<sup>2</sup>In a lecture at the LSE, 30 Jan. 2008.

<sup>3</sup>The naming of the children was one of several areas of contestation between Fred’s parents. It had been a temporary success for Arthur that the eldest had as his first name Frederick—which came from his family in Yorkshire: however, it was a success for Rita when the boy came to be known by his second name, David. When the third child was born in 1946 he got ‘Frederick’ as his second name. This time, as ‘Fred’, it stuck.

<sup>4</sup>In a long and illuminating interview with Danny Postel, Chicago, 23 Nov. 2005, published in *Salmagundi*, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, Summer 2006 issue, and available on <[http://www.opendemocracy.net/columns/halliday\\_21.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/columns/halliday_21.jsp)>, accessed 9 Jan. 2011.

<sup>5</sup>The primary school for St Mary’s College, Dundalk. St Mary’s College secondary school, established by the Marist Fathers in 1860–61, was the first foundation of the Society of Mary in Ireland. More information at <<http://www.maristdundalk.com/History.html>>. See also the website

continued at Ampleforth College—the fee-paying monastic boarding school attached to the Benedictine monastery of Ampleforth, at a very isolated spot on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors. This famous school, which aimed to provide well-to-do Catholic pupils with skills appropriate to an elite, was also attended by his brothers. Sending the boys there was a compromise between two potentially contradictory pressures: their father’s attachment to Yorkshire and their mother’s Catholic faith. Until 1957 Fred attended the preparatory school, at Gilling Castle, across the valley from the school and abbey. Then he went to the main site of Ampleforth, starting at age 11 in the separate Junior House. A fellow-pupil and lifelong friend, Edmund Fawcett, recalled their meeting there in 1957: the other boys were mainly taken up ‘in field games and keeping rabbits. Fred was preoccupied with the Chinese occupation of Tibet. That’s the boy I want to be *my* friend, I thought. To my lasting good fortune, Fred was.’<sup>6</sup> In a subsequent response to an enquiry from me he provided a fuller picture of the Ampleforth years 1957–63 and Fred’s subsequent ‘gap year’:

Fred’s home life was not easy, which kept him I think on edge, and he threw himself into school. Not into sports, hobbies or the cadet corps, but into books and debating. He shone at both. He led the school team that won the Inter-Schools Debating Competition. He played the piano moderately well but did not, that I recall, paint or act. The school was a funny mix: English establishment (which Fred reacted against) and Benedictine learning (which he took to). He was a critic, not a rebel. He was deputy head of his house and became a school monitor.

Clever boys did maths or classics. Fred’s gifts were more linguistic than mathematical. So Latin and Greek were as good as given. His most eminent teacher was Walter Shewring, an Italianist and translator of Homer. The one he liked most, I suspect, was Philip Smiley, a stickler for accuracy and mocker of authorities. Both were lay teachers. The librarian, Fr Dominic Milroy, I recall, encouraged argument on all topics, including religion.

When he left the school he was still thinking of becoming a priest. At 16 or 17 he joined a school party of boys and monks that visited Lourdes to help the sick. It was the time of Vatican II. Social-minded radicalism, marching for peace and liberal Catholicism seemed a natural mix.

Fred was internationalist by experience. Irish boys, as they were known, arrived at school on a different train from the rest of us. Small countries under the thumb were a natural, if precocious, interest. When we met at 11 Fred was already a close follower of the news. As a big issue, anti-colonialism was cutting across the Cold War. He was up on Dien Bien Phu and Suez. Lumumba was a

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of the Marist Fathers in Ireland, <<http://www.maristfathers.org/ministries.html>>. Both accessed 27 Dec. 2010.

<sup>6</sup>Edmund Fawcett, introductory remarks at the tribute to Fred Halliday held in Beveridge Hall, Senate House, London, 4 May 2010.

hero. He spent the summer of the 1961 Algerian crisis in Paris learning French. His reading then was more Fanon than Marx. In 1963 we visited Prague together and met dissident writers. I'd say Fred's outlook was anti-imperialist, but not nationalist. Of course, that landed him in interesting puzzles. He was, after all, being schooled in the least national, some would say most imperial, of faiths. Tibet was an interesting case. Hazily I recall that he wasn't for *retardataire* Tibetan monks. On the whole he was for Chinese imperialism because he was against the American kind. He entertained us with a ditty: 'Let's liberate Formosa, let's liberate it now. Let's take it away from Chiang Kai-shek and give it back to Mao.' China appealed to Fred at school also as an anti-Soviet power—thus opening up for him a winding path to Trotsky and the New Left.

He spent his gap year learning German in Munich, where he found a very beautiful Iranian girlfriend. His Catholic faith was already weakening. To the priest in a confessional at the Theatinerkirche on Odeonsplatz, Fred told me later, he owned up to the temptations of 'Materialismus'.<sup>7</sup>

This picture of Fred at Ampleforth was confirmed after Fred's death by the above-mentioned Father Dominic: 'Fred was a towering and passionate thinker from an early age, impatient of complacency and shallowness, and a rivetingly good speaker. In a very wide-ranging and compelling way, he anticipated the "Student Revolution" of 1968 by an entire decade.'<sup>8</sup> Even at the time, his teachers saw that Fred was exceptional. As the school's reference for him in his application to Oxford University stated, he was in

... a group of wide and varied interests, which led them to argue more about music, D. H. Lawrence, atom bombs, and the sins of their elders, than about the rival merits of Sophocles and Euripides. ... He has perhaps not turned out quite as good a Classical scholar as we hoped: but he is a good linguist and has an interest and flair for modern tongues.

He is an earnest Irishman, with a gift for debating and a fund of honest indignation about the wrongs of others; but he usually generates more light than heat, and he is saved by humour and geniality from celebrating wrongs of his own. He will be an able man when he has grown to full stature and will make his mark in some good cause: a most conscientious person of high ideals and admirable performance.<sup>9</sup>

He went on to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at Queen's College, Oxford, 1964–7. He had applied to the college for a modest scholarship intended to enable men from any of a dozen schools in the north to train for the priesthood—and had received in response a modest cash award of £12 but not the title of scholar, and apparently no priestly

<sup>7</sup> Edmund Fawcett, email, 30 Dec. 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Obituary in *The Ampleforth Journal*, vol. 114 (Sept. 2009–July 2010), p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> Signed by Rt Revd William Price, Headmaster of Ampleforth, 25 July 1963, on Fred's Oxford Colleges Admissions Office application form.

obligation.<sup>10</sup> He was a deeply interested and engaged student: for example, he kept full notes on lectures given by Thomas Hodgkin, the writer on pre-colonial and colonial history who in 1965–70 held a lectureship in the government of African states.<sup>11</sup> In his first year he became Political Editor of *Isis*, the weekly student magazine, contributing a regular column about conflicts and crises around the world. In his second year he became President of the Oxford University Labour Club, in which capacity he organised a meeting in March 1966 addressed by Colonel Caamaño, former President of the Dominican Republic—believed to have been the last time that Caamaño appeared in public.<sup>12</sup> It was at Oxford that he first met some of the leading figures of the New Left. He took part in weekly meetings at the Oxford Union with Tariq Ali, Mary Kaldor and others. To some contemporaries he appeared to be very earnest: others already saw the witty side which was later to be a striking feature of his public persona. He gained a very good First in his final examinations in 1967.

He then proceeded directly to do an M.Sc. in Middle East Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, 1967–9. He was awarded a distinction mark. At SOAS he studied under some very different teachers. Those with whom he engaged intellectually included P. J. Vatikiotis, the historian of Egypt, who was anything but a Marxist; and Bill Warren, who was one, but, in a variant of traditional Left condemnations of imperialism, argued that capitalism and imperialism could be engines for development in the Third World, and who also emphasised the central truth that there are no simple answers.<sup>13</sup>

### New Left start

Even as a student, Fred embarked on a career of study, writing and advocacy that hardly followed a standard academic pattern. In 1968, while studying at SOAS, he became a member of the editorial committee of *New Left Review* (*NLR*). He worked actively in this capacity until 1983.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Michael Riordan, Archivist, the Queen's College, for this information and for showing me the Ampleforth reference.

<sup>11</sup> Later Fred made these notes available to Thomas Hodgkin's biographer, Michael Wolfers, who confirmed to me on 12 Jan. 2011 how much he appreciated this assistance.

<sup>12</sup> This meeting is described in the introduction to Fred's last book, *Caamaño in London: the Exile of a Latin American Revolutionary* (London, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> See Bill Warren's posthumous work *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism* (London, 1980).

<sup>14</sup> His brother Jon had been a member of the *NLR* editorial committee since early 1967. Fred's name first appeared in issue no. 47 (Jan.–Feb. 1968).

At the same time he made major contributions of his own on a range of controversial and difficult international topics.<sup>15</sup> His long involvement in the New Left, crucially important though it was to the development of his thinking, proved ultimately to be disappointing.

He was also briefly on the editorial committee of the irregularly appearing and short-lived paper *Black Dwarf*, edited by Tariq Ali. An issue in June 1968 had the headline, across the whole front page: 'WE SHALL FIGHT, WE WILL WIN. PARIS, LONDON, ROME, BERLIN.'<sup>16</sup> In 1970 there was a parting of the ways, and Fred later recalled the *Black Dwarf* episode as unhappy. He then became the full-time Foreign News Editor of *Seven Days*, from October 1971 to May 1972, when it folded. There he shared an office with Maxine, also a full-time staff member as Arts and Culture Editor.

The commitment to the New Left involved extensive writing and editorial work. In the first of many contributions he would make to collective works, he wrote a chapter, 'Students of the World Unite', in a book edited by New Left comrades that was inspired by the events of 1968.<sup>17</sup> He would later think of this chapter as embarrassing and 'ultra-leftist', but it has also been deservedly praised as 'astonishing for its global breadth of knowledge'.<sup>18</sup> From about 1971 until 1975 he had a close association with New Left Books (NLB), the degrees of involvement varying greatly due to his other commitments. Already in 1970 he had translated for NLB *Marxism and Philosophy*, by Karl Korsch (1886–1961), an independent Marxist thinker from Germany who had emigrated to the USA in 1936.<sup>19</sup> Fred's Introduction to Korsch's book was scholarly and illuminating.

Another publication in 1970, when he was only 24, was an edited collection of writings by Isaac Deutscher, *Russia, China and the West*. This was very much part of his *NLR* activity: after Deutscher died in 1967, Perry Anderson of *NLR* had proposed that Tamara Deutscher ask Fred to edit this posthumous collection. Fred did this with great professionalism, his editorial contributions always clear and to the point. He refers

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. his first really substantial journal article, 'The Ceylonese insurrection', *NLR*, 69 (Sept.–Oct. 1971), pp. 55–89.

<sup>16</sup> Facsimile of *Black Dwarf*, 1 June 1968, available at <<http://www.1968andallthat.net/node/43>>, accessed 7 Jan. 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (eds.), *Student Power: Problems, Diagnosis, Action* (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp. 287–326.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Howe in his excellent article 'Son of the Bani Tanwir: the work of Fred Halliday (1946–2010)', available at <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/author/fred-halliday>>, accessed 22 Jan. 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy* (London, 1970).



positively to Karl Marx's journalistic writings, and it is not difficult to detect the influence of their style and approach in much that Fred himself would write in the next four decades. Indeed, Fred's enduring commitment to serious scholarly journalism was based on admiration for many distinguished exponents of this art, including not only Karl Marx and Isaac Deutscher, but also Conor Cruise O'Brien and Eric Rouleau. Fred wrote about Isaac Deutscher, as he might have written, *mutatis mutandis*, about Marx—or indeed as others might later write about Fred himself:

Deutscher was not always correct in his predictions; no writer on current affairs ever could be. But the value of his analysis and predictions, true or false, lay in his constant awareness of the broader significance of individual events and of their relationship to underlying political trends in Soviet history. . . .

The immediacy and freshness of current affairs is fused with the long-term perspective of history.<sup>20</sup>

In 1975 he was appointed to the largely advisory position of Fellow and Assistant European Director of the Transnational Institute (TNI) in Amsterdam; and from 1979 to 1983 he was Senior European Fellow.<sup>21</sup> Founded in 1973—and working closely with a partner organisation, the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) in Washington DC—TNI was committed to a transformative agenda and to supporting various activist and liberation movements. In 1976 Fred had a horrific reminder of the perils of activism. Orlando Letelier, previously Chilean foreign and defence minister and ambassador to the US, had been appointed director of TNI. Deeply opposed to the rule of General Pinochet in Chile, he had persuaded the Dutch government to cancel a \$60 million loan for Chilean industrial development. On 21 September 1976 Letelier—together with Ronni Moffitt, a young fund-raiser at IPS—was assassinated by a car bomb in Washington DC. Investigations revealed the involvement of the Chilean secret police. Despite this searing experience, Fred's association with TNI was relatively unproblematic. He remained based in London, and although his responsibilities at TNI were far from negligible they left time and opportunity to do the research and writing on the Middle East

<sup>20</sup> Isaac Deutscher, *Russia, China, and the West: a Contemporary Chronicle, 1953–1966*, ed. Fred Halliday (London, 1970), p. xiii.

<sup>21</sup> His CV of December 2006 lists the period with TNI as 1975–83. So does his entry in *Who's Who*. However, TNI itself says: 'Fred was a TNI fellow for 12 years, between 1973 and 1985.' <<http://www.tni.org/article/former-tni-fellow-fred-halliday-dies-age-64>>, accessed 28 Dec. 2010. Probably the term 'fellow' was being used flexibly to encompass different degrees of involvement. Fred certainly maintained a close association with TNI for many years after 1983.

and East–West relations that was his real calling, and on which he was beginning to publish extensively.<sup>22</sup>

### Interpreter of revolution: Arabia, Ethiopia and Iran

Fred was sufficiently attracted by the concept of revolution to base most of his published work around that theme, but his scholarly devotion to facts, in all their awkwardness, gave his work a flavour very different from, indeed opposed to, the shrill advocacy of much writing on the Left.

His first major book, published in 1974, was *Arabia without Sultans*.<sup>23</sup> The very title, engaging and prescriptive, proclaimed his anti-mystificatory intent. He presented Arabian society, not in terms of tribal oligarchies or (in the case of Iran) militarised monarchy, but in the context of capitalist development and exploitation, and with a focus on local elites seeking to maximise their positions within a global market. This book established Fred as an important and attractive writer about the Middle East, particularly because he had an analysis of politics in which radical movements faced the enmity of regional conservative states; and a vision of change that was distinct from most of those currently on offer in the region, including from the USA and USSR. It was based on first-hand experience, including of Dhofar, where he had joined the guerrillas as a reporter in 1970, supporting their struggle against the Omani state. The book made his reputation, and appeared subsequently in Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Persian and Turkish translations.

However, as he handsomely conceded nearly thirty years later in the second edition of *Arabia without Sultans*, its analysis had limitations as well as virtues:

*Arabia* partook not just of the perspective, but also of the tone and language of the revolutionary left of this epoch: in this sense it is a document of its time. It did, on a number of issues, notably nationalism and ‘underdevelopment’, seek to distance itself from the prevailing views on the left, but it partook, nonetheless, of the Marxist perspective of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It reflects some of the rhetorical delusion of that outlook. More than one critic commented, justly, on its haphazard use of the concept ‘imperialism’.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> One key outlet for his writings from 1976 to 2001 was Middle East Reports (Merip). For details see <[http://www.merip.org/mer/mer255/halliday\\_oeuvre.html](http://www.merip.org/mer/mer255/halliday_oeuvre.html)>, accessed 22 Jan. 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (Harmondsworth, 1974).

<sup>24</sup> Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans*, 2nd edn. (London, 2002), ‘Introduction to the Second Edition’, p. 2.

He went on to enumerate some key respects in which the book, and the critical perspective of that period, retained their validity. However, this led him into further self-criticism. The book had deliberately focused on the revolutionary movements of South Arabia, especially in North and South Yemen and Dhofar:

But here, above all, history was to overtake the book. The year after *Arabia* was published (1974), the guerrilla movement in Dhofar, which had been the revolutionary pivot of the book, was crushed by an Omani state reconsolidated after the coup of 1970, and by a combination of British, Iranian and Jordanian intervention. . . . in the face of external pressure and internal divisions alike, the South Arabian revolutions were, from the mid-1970s, forced into a retreat from which they never recovered.<sup>25</sup>

Such setbacks did not stop Fred's interest in revolutions, either in the short run or in the longer term. It had been his continuing interest in revolutions, including in Dhofar after the setback of 1975, that informed his 1977 pamphlet criticising the UK government's line on mercenaries:

The British government is not opposed to mercenaries as such, only to people fighting in wars of which the government disapproves. . . .

The British Empire may be all but gone, but the role of Britain . . . in counter-revolution and counter-insurgency throughout the world is still a considerable one. . . . Socialists have therefore a continuing, if not increased, duty to reveal and oppose activities of this kind.<sup>26</sup>

If the revolutionary cause had failed in Dhofar, there were other places where it could be picked up. In the events in Ethiopia from 1974 onwards, and in Iran in 1977–9, his belief that revolutions remained an important part of international politics found vindication. What was much more in question is whether either of these revolutions could be seen as historically progressive. Fred knew both these countries, and wrote about both of them with characteristic incisiveness. He published a work on Iran first, then one on Ethiopia.

In Iran, the popular revolt against the Shah's rule, which began with university protests in October 1977, led to the Shah's departure in January 1979 and then to Ayatollah Khomeini's return to Iran on 1 February. Fred's book *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, was completed in 1978 and appeared in 1979. In its final sentence he correctly foresaw the Shah's departure, but not what came after: 'It is quite possible that before too

<sup>25</sup>Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans*, 2nd edn. (London, 2002), 'Introduction to the Second Edition', pp. 4–5.

<sup>26</sup>Halliday, *Mercenaries: 'Counterinsurgency' in the Gulf* (Nottingham, 1977), pp. 10 and 22.

long the Iranian people will chase the Pahlavi dictator and his associates from power, will surmount the obstacles in its way, and build a prosperous and socialist Iran.<sup>27</sup> In an afterword written in 1979 after the fall of the Shah he wrote: 'The Shah and his associates have been driven from power through a mass mobilization which must rank among the most epic chapters of the international revolutionary movement in this century.' He added: 'It cannot be emphasized often enough that the Islamic character of the movement, and in particular Khomeini's leadership, were relatively late in establishing themselves.'<sup>28</sup>

Fred's next book concerned a social revolution that had begun long before the fall of the Shah. In Ethiopia, social unrest in February–September 1974 led to the ousting of Emperor Haile Selassie, who had ruled the country since 1930. The left-wing military junta which took over—the Provisional Military Administrative Council (the Derg)—presided over a revolution of sorts. Fred and Maxine visited the country in 1977 and 1978, and in their book *The Ethiopian Revolution* they identified some similarities with France in 1789 and Russia in 1917:

As in the earlier cases, those who began the process did not complete it. But among those actors one—the radical military—was able to displace its political competitors and consolidate a new post-revolutionary order. If such resulting conditions were not the product of some original intentionality, they cannot be seen either as purely contingent and haphazard, or as betrayals of some alternative post-revolutionary system that would otherwise have been easily attainable. It is precisely in the balance between structural causation and purposive action that the outcome of these revolutions can be discerned.<sup>29</sup>

How did Fred and Maxine react to the many problems associated with the period of Derg rule—including killings without trial (especially intense in 1974 and 1977–8), the Ogaden War against Somalia (1977–8) and the secessionist movements in Eritrea and Tigray? They addressed these issues directly, raising sharp questions both about the use of terror and violence and about the depth of the social transformation involved.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, the book recognised frankly the vagueness of such socialist ideas as informed the policies of the Derg. It explored the regime's consequent vulnerability to outside ideas and assistance: those imported from the Soviet Union were not always appropriate to Ethiopia's circumstances. Above all, the book is a notable exploration of the whole idea of revolution

<sup>27</sup> Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 1st edn. (Harmondsworth, 1979), p. 309.

<sup>28</sup> Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 2nd edn., 'Afterword', pp. 310 and 317.

<sup>29</sup> Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London, 1981), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 37, 41 and 122–3.

in the Third World: the forms it can assume, the types of social arrangement sought, and the dangers inherent in the process. The book thus addresses the very areas on which revolutionary theory has traditionally been weakest, and is for that reason a notable contribution.

With the wisdom of hindsight it would be easy to say that *The Ethiopian Revolution* did not see the extent of failure of the revolutionary regime in Ethiopia: the huge famine of 1984–5, the withdrawal of Soviet assistance, and the eventual collapse of the regime in 1991. However, the authors did recognise at least some of the limits of what had been achieved in Ethiopia. The concluding chapter is a remarkable mixture of doubt and certainty. It contains a classic expression of honest doubt within a Marxist framework: ‘The outcome of the Ethiopian revolution could be that the country embarks on a transition to socialism. Alternatively, Ethiopian society could, after a period of oscillation, become one in which capitalist social relations predominate.’ At the same time it is confidently assertive on some general conceptual issues, for example: ‘Socialism is a period of transition between capitalism and communism.’<sup>31</sup> The tension that is so evident here between core principles and observed practice continued, sometimes even in accentuated form, in Fred’s later writings. A puzzle remains, not just in this book, about how he adjudicated between the costs of revolutions and the progress they sought.

### The ‘Second Cold War’

In the early 1980s, at a time of considerable Western concern about perceived Soviet advances from Angola to Afghanistan, Fred produced a short book which brought much of his thinking about crisis and revolution together, relating it to broader themes of international politics. Originally published in the US under the title *Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis*,<sup>32</sup> a revised and retitled edition, published by Penguin in the following year as *Threat from the East?*, gained a wider readership.<sup>33</sup> It was based, as he said in the preface, on visits to the countries concerned, including South Yemen (1977), Ethiopia (1977, 1978), Iran (1979), Iraq (1980) and Afghanistan (1980). A sustained critique of Western, especially US, policy, it reinforced Fred’s reputation as a public intellectual of the Left. He

<sup>31</sup> Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London, 1981), p. 269.

<sup>32</sup> Halliday, *Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis* (Washington DC, 1981).

<sup>33</sup> Halliday, *Threat from the East? Soviet Policy from Afghanistan and Iran to the Horn of Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1982).

defined the 'arc of crisis' as 'running from Afghanistan through Iran and the Arab Middle East down to the Horn of Africa'. It denoted 'as much an anxiety in the human mind as a delimited territory'. His book was based on two assumptions: first, that 'the sources of political change within these countries lie as much in factors operating within them as they do in the operations of external states'; and second, that 'analysis of the ways in which events in the region affect East–West relations' should be combined with 'evaluation of the manner in which the policies of major outside powers affect developments within the countries of the region'.<sup>34</sup> He argued throughout that a 'New Cold War' was taking place, and that 'the positing of a "Soviet threat" as an explanatory tool for understanding the events in the Arc during the late 1970s, or as a means of legitimating US policy, cannot survive critical analysis'.<sup>35</sup> On the Russians in Afghanistan he said (wrongly, as we know with the benefit of hindsight): 'They will only leave when the Kabul government itself is strong enough to cope with the rural opposition that remains.' Yet he was very critical of much in the Soviet record: 'The Soviet Union has not just given general support to the regimes it favours, but has done so in such a way as to condone or support some of their more repressive characteristics.'<sup>36</sup> He concluded this notably prescriptive essay:

The lessons of this study can therefore be summarized as follows: the events of the Arc of Crisis cannot be reduced to a simple picture of Soviet trouble-making, and Soviet policy is one that permits substantial negotiation between East and West on issues of concern in the region. A straightforward adversary policy is not justified by the facts, and fails to realize the potential for reducing tension that exists.<sup>37</sup>

1983 saw the publication of his last book to appear while he was a TNI Fellow, *The Making of the Second Cold War*.<sup>38</sup> Its core argument was that the East–West détente of the early 1970s had been dangerous for the two main power blocs in the world. The USA in particular felt threatened, not just by the development of Soviet military power, but by revolutionary movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. While the New Right in the US along with other political forces in the West reinforced a sense of economic and military threat, a socialist Europe might yet emerge to undermine the political legitimacy of both the USA and the USSR. His

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 7 and 9.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 116 and 117.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>38</sup>Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London, 1983).

book was open to some obvious criticisms: in particular, that the conflicts and tensions of the early 1980s, serious as they were, were hardly comparable to those of the late 1940s; that it presented an oversimple view of their causes; that its coverage of the East–West military balance avoided some hard issues that had contributed to concern in the West; that it was notably weak on eastern Europe, especially Czechoslovakia; and that, in characterising the British role in the 1982 Falklands War as ‘patriotic carnage’, it had failed to make any reference to the key international principles which Britain claimed to be defending.<sup>39</sup> It was not his best book, but it appealed to readers who wanted to be able to set their criticisms of Reagan’s and Thatcher’s policies—for example over the Euromissiles controversies of the time—in a broader international perspective.

### Arrival at LSE, departure from *NLR*

In 1983, at age 37, Fred left the TNI. He took up what was initially a temporary teaching post at the London School of Economics (LSE). This was the start of a momentous change in his life that was to bring him to the heart of a major national and international institution. The new direction had many origins. It had been at the suggestion of Philip Windsor, Reader in International Relations at LSE, that in 1982–3 Fred became a visiting fellow at the LSE’s Centre for International Studies. During that year it was Professor Susan Strange, at that time Convenor of the International Relations Department, who encouraged him to start teaching. Like Fred, she had a background in journalism, practice, and academe, and liked to stir things up. Other reasons for the change included the need for a more regular source of income than freelance writing could provide.

Later in the same year, 1983, he left the editorial committee of *New Left Review* on which he had served for fifteen years. This departure was bitter, relating as it did both to the way *NLR* had been run and to broader ideological issues. Perry Anderson, editor of *NLR* from 1962 until he stepped down formally at the end of 1982, and still the dominant influence, had been critical of him on a number of grounds, one being in connection with his writing in the ‘bourgeois media’ such as *The Guardian*. This implicitly challenged Fred’s deep commitment to serious journalism, and accentuated his not-so-latent concerns about the way *NLR* had been

<sup>39</sup>I made these points in a review in *New Society*, London, no. 1075 (23 June 1983), p. 481. Such criticisms were not a problem between us: Fred regarded disagreement as entirely normal.

run. A reply from Fred with proposals for reform included the memorable phrase: 'Quite simply the NLR ... takes itself far too seriously ... There is an element in our discussions and in our Themes of a self-appointed general staff without any troops at our command.'<sup>40</sup> He regretted what he saw as the scheming which created a difficult emotional atmosphere that had affected his work for NLB as well as *NLR*. There was also an underlying issue between revolutionary and somewhat theoretical perspectives on the one hand and the radical incremental reformist type of politics to which Fred had been moving on the other. In late 1983, Fred, who believed in a more open engagement with the outside world than *NLR* was taking, felt he had to resign. Anthony Barnett, who was also writing regularly in the *New Statesman* and *The Guardian*, and who had earlier worked with Fred on *Black Dwarf* and *Seven Days*, resigned as well. Both were members of the small group of regulars who had run the *NLR* editorial committee, decided the journal's contents, and produced it. Eight other members of the nineteen-strong editorial committee resigned with them.<sup>41</sup> For Fred, however difficult things at *NLR* had been, it was still a wrench. It was not a total break: he did write some further articles for *NLR*. Yet the resignation was also an escape from an ideological ghetto.

The departures from TNI and *NLR* were the beginning of a new phase in his life: for the next twenty-five years he would be in the UK's (and arguably the world's) largest department of International Relations, with all the pressures and rewards of teaching large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students. He would be working with colleagues, and students, with very different backgrounds, intellectual frameworks, political positions and preoccupations. For Fred's intellectual development and public profile, the change was highly beneficial.

He was hardly a newcomer to LSE. In October 1978 he had registered to do a Ph.D. in LSE's Department of International History, with which he was to have a less than happy experience. So while he had been working on other topics—including Iran and Ethiopia—he had an uncompleted thesis weighing him down. He had eventually fixed on South Yemen's

<sup>40</sup>The reference to 'Themes' is to the editorial section of *NLR*, which had this title. The September 1983 letter is mentioned in Colás and Lawson, 'Fred Halliday: Achievements, Ambivalences and Openings', p. 237, n. 2.

<sup>41</sup>The other eight were Jon Halliday, John Merrington, Juliet Mitchell, Roger Murray, Tom Nairn, Lucien Rey (Peter Wollen), Bob Rowthorn and Gareth Stedman Jones. A brief note about the resignations of the ten appeared in *New Left Review*, no 142 (Nov.–Dec. 1983), p. 4. For one account, see Duncan Thompson, *Pessimism of the Intellect? A History of New Left Review* (Monmouth, 2007), pp. 123–32.



foreign policy as its subject, completing the thesis in 1985.<sup>42</sup> The revised version, published five years later, is mentioned below.

From the start of his teaching there in 1983, Fred warmed to LSE. In early 1985 events took a surprising turn. Having applied for a full lectureship and been beaten to the post for it by Christopher Coker, he was then encouraged by some friends among his colleagues to apply for a new professorship. His appointment was controversial, meeting some resistance at LSE. A colleague in another department phoned me to say how outraged he was that a Trotskyite had been appointed a professor at LSE. *And* he hadn't even got his doctorate yet! *And* he had been turned down for a lectureship only shortly before! This colleague asked what was to be done about it. I said he should wait and see: Fred had an interesting mind and a unique approach, and would prove over time the appointment was the right one.

In response to a congratulatory note from me, Fred suggested a meeting: 'I need to orientate myself in my new position, and would welcome your advice on a number of questions.' He added that he could be found at home 'quite a lot of time at the moment: baby + scripts = domesticity.'<sup>43</sup> His life had indeed changed, especially with the birth of his and Maxine's son Alex on 21 March 1985. As he told me when we met in Oxford that June, 'in a single year I became a professor, a doctor, a father and an orphan'. He wondered whether he was the same person at the end of that year as he had been at the beginning. He was, thank goodness. But at the same time he was never afraid to develop intellectually. One year later, when I was appointed to the Montague Burton Professorship at Oxford, he wrote to me: 'Clearly, in addition to the other more established conditions, an unorthodox past is now a sine qua non for holding a chair in international relations. An equally unorthodox future must surely follow.'<sup>44</sup>

Fred himself gave us many revealing indications of how his underlying views on international relations developed. LSE was central to this. It was very different from the places where he had previously worked. His inaugural lecture in 1987, appropriately on the subject of internationalism, conveyed a subtle understanding of the need for, and pitfalls of, internationalist approaches.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup>S. F. P. Halliday, 'Aspects of South Yemen's Foreign Policy, 1967–1982', Ph.D. thesis, LSE, 1985. A copy is held in the LSE Library's theses collection.

<sup>43</sup>Halliday, letter to the author, 2 June 1985.

<sup>44</sup>Halliday, letter to the author, 18 April 1986.

<sup>45</sup>Halliday, 'Three concepts of internationalism', *International Affairs*, London, 64 (1988), 187–98.

In his characteristically witty and rich remarks made at his LSE retirement dinner in 2008, he described the huge effect that immersion in International Relations at LSE had on him after arriving there in 1982–3: ‘My induction into IR came as a severe intellectual shock. . . . Of the theoretical landscape of IR I was wholly innocent.’<sup>46</sup> As well as attending lectures by two role models, Michael Banks and Christopher Hill, ‘I studied, and found myself in some considerable agreement with, the main tenets of the English School.’<sup>47</sup>

To some this must have sounded as shocking as if Richard Dawkins were to confess that he had become a Roman Catholic. But actually there is a logic in it: the ‘English School’s’ emphasis on interest as a guide to state behaviour; its recognition of the diversity of experiences, forms and beliefs of different societies; its belief in studying history, including the history of ideas; and its scepticism about grand schemes for the total reform of international relations—all these can be seen as positions to which Fred had been moving anyway.

It would be wrong to attribute all of the intellectual changes that Fred underwent from 1983 onwards to the LSE alone. During Fred’s twenty-five years at LSE, events—especially the end of the Cold War, discussed further below—continued to impinge on his thinking. In any case, to present Fred’s development simply as an LSE-assisted induction into the ‘English School’ would do less than justice to the richness and complexity of Fred’s world-view. As Christopher Hill put it at the memorial event at LSE:

Fred himself accepted that the subject of IR was virtually new to him on appointment as Professor in the Department, and he worked enormously hard to master its literature. Being the person of talent and enormous productivity that he was, this did not take him long. It led him to be attached to the subject, as he was to the Department as an institution, and to many individual colleagues, to say nothing of the hundreds of students in whose development he played a major part. But Fred had too broad interests, and too strong a commitment to sociological understandings of the world, to be satisfied with a pure English School approach, even assuming that this has indeed been the orthodoxy in recent decades in the Department—which has to be doubted. He was, however, consistent throughout his time in the Department in placing great emphasis on both the *international*, which he thought all other subjects should learn from, and on the importance of *the state* as a counter-balancing factor to

<sup>46</sup>Halliday, ‘Personalities, Events, Ideas: Twenty-five Years in the LSE Department of International Relations’, revised text of remarks made at IR Department Dinner marking departure of FH from LSE, Cooper’s Restaurant, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 22 May 2008, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup>Halliday, ‘Personalities, Events, Ideas’, p. 4.

more structural understandings of the world, whether materialist or ideational. And he saw the Department as the institutional guarantor of these two, inter-linked, perspectives.<sup>48</sup>

He loved International Relations as taught at LSE—the tension between realism and idealism, the interest in theory without forcing colleagues or students to fall into one or another paradigmatic camp; the commitment to studying most if not all the continents, and most if not all of the ideas. But he loved the department more for its potential than its achievements. It had lacked strong links with other disciplines at LSE. It was his strong presence that changed its standing in the School. As Hill has said, ‘Fred was himself a lion, the defender of the pride whom we needed to lift our status and our activity onto a more confident plane. It was the combination of intellect, drive and charisma which set him apart.’<sup>49</sup> He did his stint as convenor of the department, and served on some of the major committees of the school. He continued to be notably productive. In the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise, covering the years 1996 to 2000, he submitted four single-author works: a performance that must have taken a personal toll. He went on to publish five more books in the next five-year period.

### End of the Cold War

How did the end of communism in Europe, and the concomitant end of the Cold War, impinge on Fred’s life and work? This was perhaps the greatest change on the global political landscape in his professional lifetime, comparable in importance to the process of decolonisation from the 1940s onwards, and it presented challenges to those who, like Fred, had been at least as critical of Western policies as they had of Soviet ones.

Until the 1980s, Fred had written virtually nothing about European international politics. Shortly after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia he told me that eastern European countries had not interested him much because they had never had real revolutions, communist rule having been imposed on them largely from outside. This was the very reason that they did interest me, but that’s another story.

<sup>48</sup> Christopher Hill, ‘Tribute to Fred Halliday’, LSE, 3 Nov. 2010, p. 2. Available at <<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalRelations/pdf/CJHtributetofred.pdf>>, accessed 29 Dec. 2010.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

Perhaps because his interest in eastern Europe was limited, he misread some of the signs of the end of the Cold War. As late as 1989 he said of the US–Soviet competition about how societies (especially in the Third World) should be organised: ‘This competition, far from disappearing, was continuing through the late 1980s on the terrain most central to it, around the forms of government and socio-economic system to be found in third world societies, and, by extension, in the more developed world . . . There was little in the negotiations of the late 1980s to suggest that this underlying conflict had ended.’<sup>50</sup> The subsequent collapse of Communist Party systems in Europe forced him into a rethink, not least about revolutionary socialism, which he pronounced dead.<sup>51</sup>

The events of 1989–91 also threw up specific issues that forced him to stake out new positions. The Iraqi invasion, occupation and annexation of Kuwait in August 1990 was the occasion of a dramatic shift. In *Arabia without Sultans* he had described Kuwait as ‘a viciously reactionary state with an untarnished record as a supporter of imperialist interests’.<sup>52</sup> Sixteen years later, when it was attacked by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, he was absolutely clear in his support for the US-led coalition. To many it was a shock to find Fred, anti-imperialist to his finger-tips, actually favouring a Western incursion into Arab lands to restore oil-rich Kuwait’s sovereignty. Yet his reasons were powerful. It was partly a matter of interstate morality—if one state could invade, occupy and annex another with impunity, the result would be tragedy. And it was partly also a matter of political systems—Fred could recognise a thug when he saw one, and Saddam Hussein was one such.

His political stances had consequences for him. During and after the 1990–1 Gulf War there was a falling-out with erstwhile comrades on the Left, some of whom were quick to suggest betrayal. Also as the 1990s progressed he sensed danger from another quarter. Although he had by now a more nuanced understanding of the strength of political Islam than he had shown in the 1980s, he remained a bitter and outspoken critic of Islamic extremism.<sup>53</sup> Against the background of his record of criticism of Islamic forces in Afghanistan and Iran in the 1980s, and the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie in 1989, he had good reason to fear it.

<sup>50</sup> Halliday, *Cold War, Third World: an Essay on Soviet–US Relations* (London, 1989), p. 163. See also a similar statement on p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Halliday, ‘Revolutionary socialism is dead’, *Workers’ Liberty*, London, no. 16 (Feb. 1992), pp. 17 and 20.

<sup>52</sup> Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans*, p. 434.

<sup>53</sup> Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London, 1996), especially the chapter on ‘The Iranian Revolution in Comparative Perspective’, pp. 42–75.

Despite these pressures, in 1994 he managed to produce *Rethinking International Relations*, his most considered survey of the world after the Cold War. This was a ‘a double response—to developments in political and social theory and in the academic study of International Relations, and to changes in the international system itself over the past years, most particularly the collapse of the Soviet bloc’.<sup>54</sup> It is a collection of essays (many of which were adapted from versions published elsewhere) rather than a fully developed coherent whole. Yet, as subtle and rich as anything in the field, it is proof of how in his LSE years he had matured into one of the most interesting and original thinkers anywhere on international relations.

### Return to revolution

The end of the Cold War changed much for Fred, but not his interest in revolutions. In 1990 he published *Revolution and Foreign Policy: the Case of South Yemen, 1967–1987*, the updated version of his 1985 LSE doctoral thesis. The year of its publication, 1990, was the year in which the two Yemens (North and South) merged to form a single state. Its subject having, in a sense, ceased to exist, the book had diminished impact. Yet it is based on an intimate knowledge of the country and of the Yemeni dialect. As the Chair of the British-Yemeni Society stated in his obituary of Fred: ‘Visiting Yemen in May 2010, I was astonished at how many people spoke of him with fondness and deep respect. He is remembered for the way he has helped explain Yemen to the world and for his long friendship with the country and its leaders in both the old north and south, and for his wonderful ability to tell jokes in the right Yemeni voice.’<sup>55</sup> Fred’s book provides a subtle account of the politics of South Yemen in the twenty years following the British departure from Aden and the Protectorates in 1967. Not a particularly elevating story, it leaves the reader wondering just how much of Fred’s early belief in revolution, already tempered by some of his difficult encounters with contemporary history—the defeat of the guerrillas in Oman, and the failure of the Iranian masses to take the path he and others had indicated—could survive in light of his frank account of developments in what at that time was called the People’s Democratic

<sup>54</sup>Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. ix.

<sup>55</sup>Noel Brehony, obituary published on the British-Yemeni Society website, <<http://www.al-bab.com/bys/obits/halliday.htm>>, accessed 7 Jan. 2011.

Republic of Yemen. Already in the acknowledgements, Fred noted with feeling: ‘Neither before nor after independence has the nationalist and socialist movement in South Yemen been characterized by strategic unity, or by the ability to resolve conflicts in a democratic and responsible manner ...’<sup>56</sup> He is particularly interesting on the corrosive effects of the quest for the unity of North and South Yemen:

For most Yemenis, it has, since the 1950s, been an article of nationalist faith that the two Yemeni states should unite and that this could be attained in the foreseeable future. No political leadership has been able overtly to contradict this, and all political parties have sought to mobilise the popular sentiment on unity, for their own purposes. At the same time, the issue of Yemeni unity, like that of Arab unity more generally, has been a cause of considerable friction between the Yemeni states, both because of disagreements on how this unity is to be achieved and because each has used the commitment to unity as a legitimation for interference in the internal affairs of the other.<sup>57</sup>

Fred saw South Yemen as a classic revolutionary state: hosting countless guerrilla and opposition groups from other states, the promoter of a radical new stand in international relations, and often in conflict with its neighbours and other states in the region. Yet he also notes the degree of accommodation that developed between the revolutionary state and its non-revolutionary neighbours. The book thus embodies a puzzle which was also evident in his earlier work on Ethiopia. How much was Fred a critical advocate of revolution, and how much a sympathetic but worried observer? The first seems gradually to yield to the second.

His 1999 book on *Revolution and World Politics* propounded a much more nuanced view of revolution than his earlier works. He asserts, powerfully, the continuing importance of revolutions, both in the domestic lives of states and in international politics. However, there is little echo of the idea—which had been reflected for example in his 1979 work on Iran—that there is a single ‘international revolutionary movement’ with common purposes that transcend borders. And he recognises that revolutionary states can fall as well as rise.<sup>58</sup> This is a book of extraordinary maturity and insight: the finest and most scholarly expression of Fred’s enduring claim that neither revolutions nor international relations could be understood in isolation from each other.

<sup>56</sup> Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy: the Case of South Yemen, 1967–1987* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. viii–ix.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>58</sup> Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: the Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (Basingstoke, 1999).

## Last decade

It was while at LSE that Fred had a major mental breakdown. I can give neither a full description nor a full explanation. Early symptoms included renewed concerns for his safety after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In light of his experiences in the 1990s, when he had had some reason to fear Islamic extremism, these concerns were not without foundation. There was also a deep sense of frustration: he had warned the US not to support the Muslim fundamentalists in Afghanistan, and had not been heeded. And, quite simply, it had become almost impossible to be optimistic about the Middle East: this was itself enough to induce depression in one so deeply committed to progress in that region.

Under unremitting pressure to perform from the media as well as the academic world, he continued to function remarkably effectively. Indeed, in the changed landscape after 9/11 Fred was sometimes at his very best. A seminar he gave in Oxford in March 2002, entitled 'Travels in Badargumentstan', was a brilliant, witty and honest presentation on contemporary issues. It went well into injury time—and not one person in that crowded room would have wished it to stop. It was in 2002 that he was elected to the British Academy—a timely recognition of his many achievements, not least as a public intellectual.

All this was followed by Fred's collapse in 2002–3. It accompanied his efforts to complete the manuscript of his major book on the Middle East.<sup>59</sup> He later said that his collapse was 'a result above all of my own inability over many years, and against the advice of family and friends, to maintain a balanced life'.<sup>60</sup> The harsh pace he had set himself, and the self-imposed requirement to keep up with so many peoples, ideas, countries and realms of knowledge, must all have exacerbated the normal difficulties and strains of academic life. Constantly being expected not just to perform a range of different tasks, but to dazzle in them, had taken a toll. So too had grim turns of events in the past two decades in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and elsewhere. None of this was helped by the sense that governments, including his own, neither appreciated his insights nor heeded his advice. This sense, shared by many academics, was particularly strong in Fred's case and endured throughout his career. After Labour came to power in 1997,

<sup>59</sup>Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge, 2005). This was completed after he began to recover in late summer 2003.

<sup>60</sup>Halliday, 'Personalities, Events, Ideas', p. 6.

and having previously helped Robin Cook on Middle East issues, he had been disappointed not to have been consulted.

The collapse was the sombre background to a storm in a teacup at LSE. This concerned the seventy-fifth anniversary of the International Relations Department in 2003. A book had been compiled by two graduate students, Harry Bauer and Elisabetta Brighi, who had stepped into the breach for the department when a commissioned history had failed to materialise.<sup>61</sup> Fred had certain objections. According to Hill, Fred was concerned that the book ‘did not do his role in the Department justice, nor the sets of interests which he cared most about’.<sup>62</sup> In his valedictory lecture five years later, he was more specific about the issues in this episode: ‘We do not do enough to promote our claim, originally articulated by Justin Rosenberg in a *Millennium* article of the mid-90s, to be potentially the hegemonic discipline of the twenty-first century, and the most creative and open-minded department in the world devoted to it.’ He recounted that the upshot of his discomfiture was that, in the spirit of fellow Dubliners, including Jonathan Swift, James Joyce and Oscar Wilde, he ‘wrote a short anecdotal, rambling and satirical, history of our Department. . . . Luckily, wiser souls in the central administration prevailed and the text was never sent. Files were duly deleted. Indeed, I believe no copies now exist . . .’<sup>63</sup>

Notwithstanding all these problems, in 2005 he was elected to the senior International Relations post at LSE, the Montague Burton Chair. This was a vindication of the controversial decision, taken twenty years earlier, to make him a professor. It coincided with his slow recovery from breakdown, and also with his turn towards a new outlet for his work, and new pastures.

From 2004 onwards he published about eighty columns on the openDemocracy website.<sup>64</sup> He said many times that this ‘saved my life’. He now had a world outlet that he deserved, and the lack of which had gnawed away at him. Many of these columns are collected in a posthumously published book.<sup>65</sup> A further change came in 2005. From then until his death he was increasingly committed to work in Barcelona. For three years to

<sup>61</sup> Harry Bauer and Elisabetta Brighi (eds.), *International Relations at LSE: a History of 75 Years* (London, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> ‘Tribute to Fred Halliday’, LSE, 3 Nov. 2010, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Halliday, ‘Personalities, Events, Ideas’, p. 16.

<sup>64</sup> A selection of his columns is at <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/author/fred-halliday>>, accessed 13 March 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Halliday, *Political Journeys: the openDemocracy Essays* (London, 2011).



2008 he was part-time Visiting Professor at the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), a newly established (2004) centre for postgraduate education and research in politics and international relations. In April 2008 he took up a Research Professorship at the Institució Catalana de Recerca I Estudis Avançats (ICREA) which enabled him to continue working closely with IBEI. In 2006 he and Maxine had separated: Fred moved out from their Highgate home to a flat in Bloomsbury that henceforth served as his London pied-à-terre.

In this period he was winding down but not ending his involvement in LSE. In 2008 he formally retired from his professorship, and began a three-year Research Associateship. In summer and autumn 2009 he urged the school to reconsider its decision to accept a donation of £1.5 million from an organisation closely connected with the Gadaffi regime, following this up in October with a strong memorandum warning of 'the reputational risk to LSE'.<sup>66</sup> His opposition to the LSE's dealings with the regime long predated 2009: he had also warned against, and actively opposed, the acceptance of Gadaffi's son, Saif al-Islam, as a doctoral student. His stance was amply justified. Following demonstrations in Libya in early 2011, and their violent repression by the authorities which initiated civil war, Sir Howard Davies, Director of the LSE, stated on 28 February 2011 that LSE's decision to accept this funding had 'backfired'; and on 3 March, amid continuing controversy about the LSE's extensive involvements with Libya, he resigned from the directorship.<sup>67</sup>

Fred's last few years of association with LSE are mainly remembered for occasional lectures there—none more memorable than the one in 2009 on the thirtieth anniversary of the Iranian revolution. Based on personal experience, extensive study and mature reflection, it evoked vividly the pathos of revolutions—the heroism and the cruelty, the aspiration and the decline. It received a standing ovation.<sup>68</sup>

Barcelona remained his main focus. Still recovering from his period of ill-health, he enjoyed the spirit of Barcelona: a great cosmopolitan city

<sup>66</sup>Halliday's memo 'LSE and the Qaddafi Foundation: A Dissenting Note', dated 4 Oct. 2009, was considered by the LSE Council on 20 Oct. 2009. The memo, and the minutes of the two LSE Council meetings that considered the donation, are available at <<http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/63095/response/159233/attach/2/JeewaFOIBinder.pdf>> accessed 10 April 2011.

<sup>67</sup>The text of Howard Davies' letter of resignation of 3 March 2011, and of the LSE Council's decisions of that date, are at <[http://www2.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2011/03/director\\_steps\\_down.aspx](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2011/03/director_steps_down.aspx)>, accessed 13 March 2011.

<sup>68</sup>Lecture on 'The Islamic Republic of Iran after 30 Years', 23 Feb. 2009. Available from: <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/podcasts/publicLecturesAndEvents.htm#generated-subheading24>>, accessed 24 Jan. 2011.

where cultures meet, albeit one that remained in some respects introverted.<sup>69</sup> In Barcelona, as he explained in his 2008 retirement dinner speech at LSE, he sought ‘to do what I can to promote IBEI as a new institution, with a staff and student body as lively and diverse as that of LSE, and . . . to make whatever contribution I can to Spanish and Catalan intellectual and academic life’.<sup>70</sup> He relished the chance to make Barcelona a centre for debate and academic reflection on international relations and politics. Alas, ill-health supervened, this time in the form of the cancer that was to kill him in a Barcelona hospital on 26 April 2010.

### Fred’s legacy

Fred’s analysis of international problems became ever more profound. Like Isaac Deutscher, he may not have got all his predictions right, nor all of his analyses. His willingness to recognise this was one of his many strengths: not only did it make him a much more attractive and interesting writer than those who pretend never to have put a foot wrong, but also it took him on a journey of continuous and creative intellectual development. He had six notable qualities that were the basis of his achievements.

First, he was a public intellectual, of a kind of which we have too few in the UK. He had the essential characteristics of the public intellectual: a lively awareness of ideas, an engagement with the big issues of the day, and an ability to communicate with a range of audiences and in all forms of media. He clearly saw his mission as to overcome the narrow and suburban preoccupations and mental frameworks of the Western world, and especially of the English—whether of Left or Right. He always expressed himself pithily and comprehensibly: he was not the kind of public intellectual who hides behind a smokescreen of obfuscatory language.

Secondly, he could never be satisfied with abstract ideas that left human perception and volition out of the picture, nor with top-down views of order. He emphasised the simultaneity between the two realms of domestic and international. He believed that theory had to relate to the world, and to the ideas and aspirations of actual people. Therefore the most important research method was speaking with people at all

<sup>69</sup>Halliday, ‘Barcelona o Catalunya: the real thing’, written five months before he died, and posted on <[www.opendemocracy.com](http://www.opendemocracy.com)> on 9 June 2010, accessed 3 Jan. 2011.

<sup>70</sup>Halliday, ‘Personalities, Events, Ideas’, p. 14.

levels, from heads of government to peasants, doctors and rebels in distant provinces.

Thirdly, he had extraordinary courage: not just the courage to visit dangerous places and people but also to change his mental framework, and to disagree with erstwhile friends and comrades. As Denis MacShane, MP, who had been a junior minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the Blair Government, has said: ‘Precisely because he came from a background of political solidarity with anti-imperialist and anti-authoritarian campaigns Fred had an empathy and understanding for the oppressed. Unlike the useless fools of crude anti-Americanism who excuse tyranny providing it is hostile to the West, Halliday dissected causes and effects and was as critical of Saddam Hussein and Iranian Ayatollahs as he was of the Shah and other undemocratic rulers.’<sup>71</sup>

Fourthly, he rescued internationalism from its besetting sin, namely an essentially chauvinistic approach which wants the entire world to be more like one’s own society. Whether it comes from Right or Left, this kind of internationalism has led time and again to disaster. In Fred there was a permanent tension between a strong strand of universalism and a celebration of difference. That the tension was so strongly felt, and remained so unresolved, is what gave his work a particular, even unique, edge.

Fifthly, he had an unwavering belief in the necessity and possibility of change in the Middle East. From the publication of *Arabia without Sultans* in 1974 onwards, he and his writings were seen, in the region and beyond, as a focal point in debates about change. His principled rejection of the whole idea of a ‘clash of civilizations’ was based on a belief that political ideas are by nature international, and cross borders as easily as the wind and weather. His thoughts on how change might be achieved varied over time, and he was self-critical of some of his earlier pronouncements favouring armed revolution as *the* way. His underlying belief in change was to be vindicated—alas posthumously—in the ‘people power’ revolutions in the Middle East that started in Tunisia and Egypt in 2010 and 2011.

Finally, he did the most important thing that any teacher can do: to convey to successive generations of students, and to a wider public, his huge enthusiasm for, and belief in, the study of politics and international relations. Particularly in his lectures he displayed a dazzling combination of intimate knowledge of distant societies, mastery of many languages,

<sup>71</sup> Denis MacShane, in the collection of tributes to Fred Halliday on <<http://www.opendemocracy.net>>, accessed 3 Jan. 2011.

humour, hard facts, conceptual clarity, and above all independence and integrity. It is in this combination that his enduring legacy lies.

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