

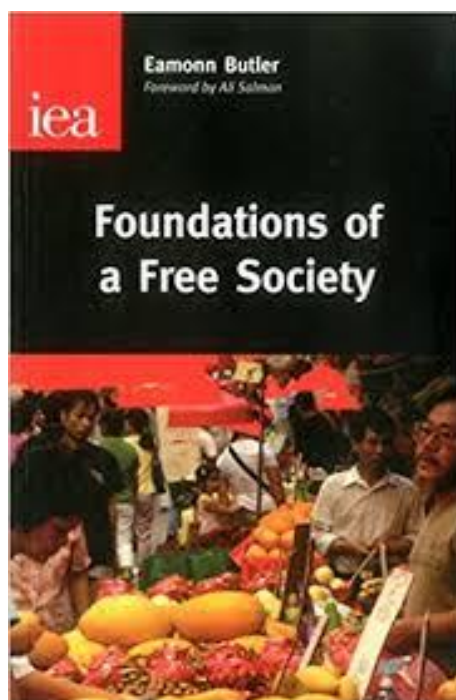
NETWORK FOR A **FREE SOCIETY**

The Power of a book: Foundations of a Free Society.

March 2018

In January 2011 Network for a Free Society set out to make the texts and ideas that explore and promote the principles and foundations of a free society available in countries and languages where they were not currently accessible. The reasoning being that if no teachers or students have access to these ideas, there is little chance of anyone understanding why millions around the world have long since escaped from poverty while there is little opportunity to do so in their country.

Believing that freedom is the solution to poverty we searched for a book that covered the bases of a free society in a rigorous but easily understood way. First in our mini library of classical liberal texts on the CD Ideas for a Free Society, where to our surprise none really fitted the bill, and then we asked many of our colleagues, but no one could identify exactly the book we wanted. Eventually we decided a new book was needed.



Fortunately we found people who believed in the creative power of freedom and the power of ideas. Eamonn Butler Director and co-founder of the Adam Smith Institute and an absolute master of presenting complex ideas in easily understood ways agreed to write it on a voluntary basis. Emma and Alan Gibbs, entrepreneur extraordinary and one of the most determined promoters of free societies on the planet, agreed to help with the funding and Philip Booth editor of the IEA at that time and responsible for the stream of inspiring and influential texts published by them over many years agreed that the IEA would publish it.

Between them they have made it possible for thousands of people they may never know in places they may never visit to understand and promote the principles and practise of a free society.

The resulting book *Foundations of a Free Society* was published by the IEA in 2013. It was promoted by them and throughout the think tank movement and by many others and immediately resonated with those who were trying to make the case for freedom.

Eamonn Butler blogged that “the free society is not a random collection of selfish individuals, it is something complex and organic, and based on deep values – not values that challenge other moral systems but values that make cooperation and social harmony possible”.

It is no easy task to build a free society out of an unfree one. The institutions of today's free (or more-free) societies have grown up over hundreds or thousands of years and reflect local history and circumstances. There is no blueprint we can give people to build their own. But we can at least give them a rough outline of the sorts of foundations they need to build freedom – or, in the case of those of us in the supposedly free West, to rebuild it.

The English Version of Foundations of a Free Society

In late November 2014, “*Foundations of a Free Society*” won the prestigious Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award. Named after the late business and think-tank entrepreneur, this award was given annually to the think tank that published the study that has made the greatest impact on public understanding of a free society.



At the time the IEA said “Foundations of a Free Society” has been widely distributed by the IEA at conferences including European Students for Liberty Conferences, the IEA annual student conference – “THINK” and the Atlas Liberty Forum.

3000 copies of the book have been published and most distributed at its sixth from schools conference, and to colleges and universities across the UK. There have been nearly 5,000 unique views of it on their website and it continues to be one of their most popular books receiving requests for copies and translations on a regular basis. They are frequently approached by think tanks and free market groups across the world wanting copies including the Auckland Rate Payers Alliance, the European Resource Bank in Istanbul and the St Andrews Free Market Society to name just a few.

Brad Lips is CEO of Atlas Network, a support network for about 480 independent civil society partners in 94 countries who promote free societies and identify and resolve barriers to opportunity, enterprise and prosperity in their countries. In 2017 he wrote in their flagship publication Freedom’s Champion:

“I do think there are many audiences that remain sadly unaware of our classical liberal principles. That’s why I’m enormously grateful for books like Eamonn Butler’s Foundations of a Free Society, published by the Institute of Economic Affairs. It’s a wonderful primer that’s been translated into more than 10 languages by Atlas Network partners since it was published four years ago. We simply can’t expect Arabic speakers to implement a Lockean political economy if John Locke’s ideas haven’t been translated to their native tongue”.

Promoting the book to a wider audience

One of the great advantages of IEA publications is that they, and all translated versions, can be freely downloaded from the IEA website, permission for translations is always given if sought and they are very generous in sending books to organisations anywhere in the world who want to use them to improve understanding of a free society in their countries. They are therefore widely available throughout the world so long as there is a sufficient connection to the internet and the cost of it is not too high which is certainly not always the case.



Foundations for a Free Society, was included on the 3rd edition of the CD Ideas for a Free Society published by NFS in English in 2014. 50,000 copies were made with 40,000 of these now distributed in about 60 countries, many in Africa and Asia, by NFS partners at events where they would be explored with and explained to a student audience.

A strength of this book is that each chapter will stand alone so making it an ideal basis for a series of seminars or other events and particularly where there may be no experienced person to lead these discussions as is so often the case on these continents.

It has now been translated into 14 languages including Spanish, Korean, Malayalam, Icelandic, Slovenian, Polish, Kiswahili, Farsi, Armenian, Arabic, French, Turkish, Khmer and Amharic. 8 of these were with the support or encouragement of NFS thanks to the

generosity of our donors, and many are available in hard as well as soft copy.

In addition the text is on the CDs in other languages that were published after 2014 including in Arabic and French and the most recent one for Afghanistan which has texts in Dari, Pashto and Farsi so as to be readable by those in Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan where Farsi is widely understood.

13,000 copies of the CD ready for shipping in 2014 to Nigeria, India and Bosnia



The copyright of the CDs Third Edition is more relaxed than on the earlier editions and although there are still restrictions on publishing the individual texts for profit, or putting many on line, it is now possible to make copies of the entire CD. This is often done especially where it is uncertain whether the CDs will actually be allowed into a country and/or how much they will be taxed/bribed if they are. The only disadvantage to copies being made by anyone anywhere is that we no longer know how many are created and distributed annually.

Apart from shipping copies NFS funds the in country production of up to 10,000 copies annually for partners in Africa and Asia where they cannot be imported. Although perhaps surprisingly it is cheaper to make them in Europe in large numbers and ship them than to make them in country in smaller numbers. In addition other partners just make their own as needed and at their own cost.

For instance The Friedrich Naumann Foundation in South Africa told us in 2016 that they copy and distribute the CD whenever possible although they did ask if it was OK for them to distribute the material on memory sticks now as increasingly computers don't take a CD. Bhakti Patel, of the Centre for Civil Society in Delhi told us in 2017 that they give a CD in English to every student on any of their courses or at any of their events and they have over 8000 student alumni coming from all over India and neighbouring countries as well.

Despite their apparently 'old' technology the CDs are still very much in demand particularly in Africa. 2000 were sent to partners in Ghana in January 2018. 1000 will be sent to partners in Zambia next week, another 1000 to South Sudan, 2000 to Uganda and 2000 hundred to partners in Tanzania. 2000 copies of the French CD will be made in Burundi for distribution to students there, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Rwanda this year.

About a new edition and 6 of the 14 translations.

Africa

Shortly after it was published Adedayo Thomas produced an African version of the book in Nigeria with an added forward and different cover which he has since given out at events he has organized in many African countries.

At the University of Technology in Akure, the Students for Liberty Club he helped form, discussed one chapter of it a week on their university radio station.

The Students for Liberty Club at the University of Technology in Akure



And here are the books at a Students for Liberty evening in Uganda in 2018 along with the CD which it is also on.



Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda

The French translation is probably the most widely used translation to date. It was managed by the Institute Coppet who also created the French CD which was launched in 2014 and is being used in many countries in Francophone Africa including Mali, Morocco, Lebanon, Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.



The person who has made the most use of it in French, or possibly in any language, is Aimable Manirakiza a Burundian student who we met late in 2015 when he was just setting up a Students for Liberty group in his country. He had been inspired at an SFL event in Kenya earlier in the year where he had also been given one of the CDs in French and was keen to get more because it was the only source he knew for such texts in his country or indeed region.

As the customs would not allow them into Burundi we funded them to produce 2000 themselves. Then later Aimable persuaded NFS to support a quiz contest amongst the SFL University groups that he was setting up. It would be based on specific chapters of Foundations

of a Free Society to ensure the students studied them carefully. He and his team would visit each university to discuss the concepts and make up teams. Later they revisited each university again with 150 multiple choice questions on the second chapter of the book, the Moral and Economic Benefits of Freedom and ran the first round of the contest.

Later the winners at each university met centrally for the final where there were another 150 multiple choice questions on the Free Enterprise & Trade chapter. The contest was hard work for SFL but generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm amongst students as well as coverage in the press and interviews on radio for Aimable. So there were many opportunities for him to talk about the book and the ideas in it to a wider audience.

Aimable being interviewed on radio in the Congo in 2017 about the quiz and Foundations of a Free Society



They then visited the Congo and Rwanda and set up SFL groups in them too and last year NFS funded their 2017 International University Quiz contest. With 6 universities in the Congo and three in Rwanda in addition to the 9 in Burundi they first ran the training and team making in each of them, then on another visit ran the quiz contest in each of the 18 universities and on following visits the three

country finals between the winners from each university. Finally the international final with the best teams from each country competing against each other in Burundi who were the overall winners.

Aimable recently wrote that “the only sources for our competitions, our recommendations, our publications, our debates within our Clubs or in our new program and our campaigns since 2016 were based on the texts of the CDs” which “are our only sources of francophone inspirations”.

He followed up that their first major event was totally based on the book Foundations of a Free Society and that it will be used during the Debates Conferences of our Centre for Development and Enterprise: Great Lakes Academy 101 because its content is very flexible in the discussion with anyone who doesn’t know our philosophy of change. In short, it is an important base to begin learning our ideology.

Group photo for the SFL Great Lakes Conference, November 2017



In November 2017 they ran the first ever SFL conference in Burundi with over 300 students attending from all three countries and some excellent international speakers. Most participants will have taken part in the quiz contest in their own country and so already learned a great deal from Foundations of a Free Society.

Since the first university group was set up in 2016 3000 students have taken part in their events and studied texts from the CD and principally they were from Foundations of a Free Society and all of them will have taken away a CD.

Now they are building a think tank, the Center for Development and Enterprise: Great Lakes so watch this space.

Armenia.

It seems that Armenia is particularly short of both classical liberal texts in their language and of people to lead discussions about free societies. Arto Grigoryan of the Armenian Liberty Students Organisation coordinated the translation of Foundations of a Free Society so that they could use chapters as the basis for their regular student discussion groups.

Then when we were approached by Armenian lawyer Armen Gyulazyan who wanted to run seminars on the foundations of a free society for young Armenia lawyers Arto was able to send him their translation. Armen responded that the book is 'so simple and same time so full an explanation....' and that if they could get the funds "they he would like to give it section by section to everyone in the seminars but not only one copy each but several copies to one person so it could be distributed among their lawyer friends and colleagues.... And could be on their tables and read in any free moment".

And they did get the funds and were able to introduce a younger generation of Armenian lawyers to these concepts.

Iran

Foundations of a Free Society, was translated into Farsi by Bardia Garshasbi when he worked for NFS. It was published in hard copy in Iran and distributed there quite widely although it is always difficult to know how much it was used. However it is also available on the IEA website and another managed by Bardia.

Then last year it was included on the Afghan CD “Thoughts for Peace and Prosperity” which will be widely used in Afghanistan, including outside Kabul, and will also be understandable by those in Iran and Tajikistan because Farsi is very close to Dari.

In addition it will shortly be available on a popular website in Iran www.bourgeois.ir and also in sections in a hard copy journal which sells between 30,000 and 40,000 copies a quarter. The related web platforms which they use for translated videos have 9000 followers on both Telegram and Facebook so a big new potential audience."



In the window of a book shop in Iran



Official government website in Iran promoting Farsi version of Foundations of a Free Society there

به وجود آمدن ایدئولوژی های بسته و فاشیستی داشته باشد. مقاومت مردم کوبانی، رؤیای ریژک، خوانش ریژک از هگل و نقد عقل فاشیستی (مصاحبه با بختیار علی) از دیگر مطالب تأمل برانگیز این کتاب است.

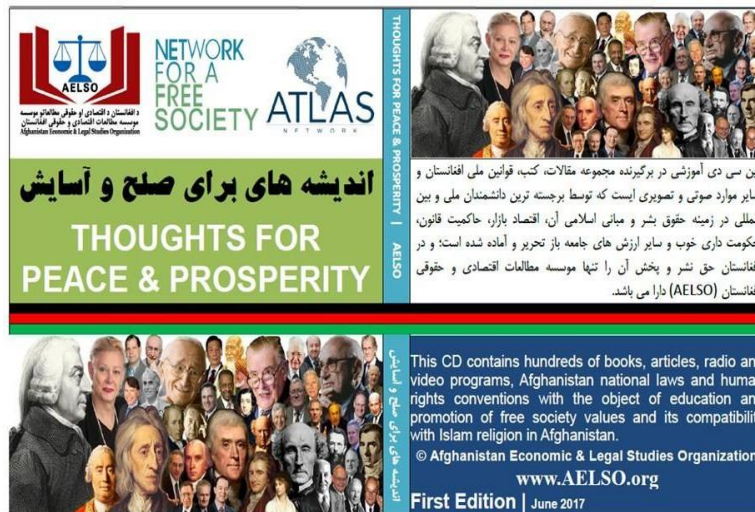
■ بنیان های جامعه آزاد

«بنیان های جامعه آزاد» نام کتابی نوشته ایمون باتلر با ترجمه بردیا گرشاسبی است که توسط انتشارات سارگل با همکاری بنیاد جهانی اسلام منتشر شد. ایمون باتلر، اقتصاددان، نویسنده و متفکر اسکاتلندی، در این کتاب ضمن ارائه طرحی کلی از اصول تعیین کننده یک جامعه آزاد، با زبانی روشن و مستدل به تشریح برکات اجتماعی و مزایای اقتصادی پرشماری می پردازد که آزادی برای جوامع انسانی به ارمغان می آورد. نویسنده در این اثر نشان می دهد که سیاست های سلطه طلبانه و قاهرانه کشورهای مدعی آزادی از غرب تا چه اندازه بنیان آزادی های فردی مردم این کشورها را فرسوده و آسیب پذیر کرده و به ایجاد جنگ و آشوب در بسیاری از کشورهای آفریقایی، آسیایی و آمریکای لاتین دامن زده است.

■ از انقلاب دوم امریکا تا...



The CD recently launched in Afghanistan with texts in Dari, Pashto and Farsi and including Foundations of a Free Society in Farsi



Copies of the Amharic version on their way to students in Ethiopia

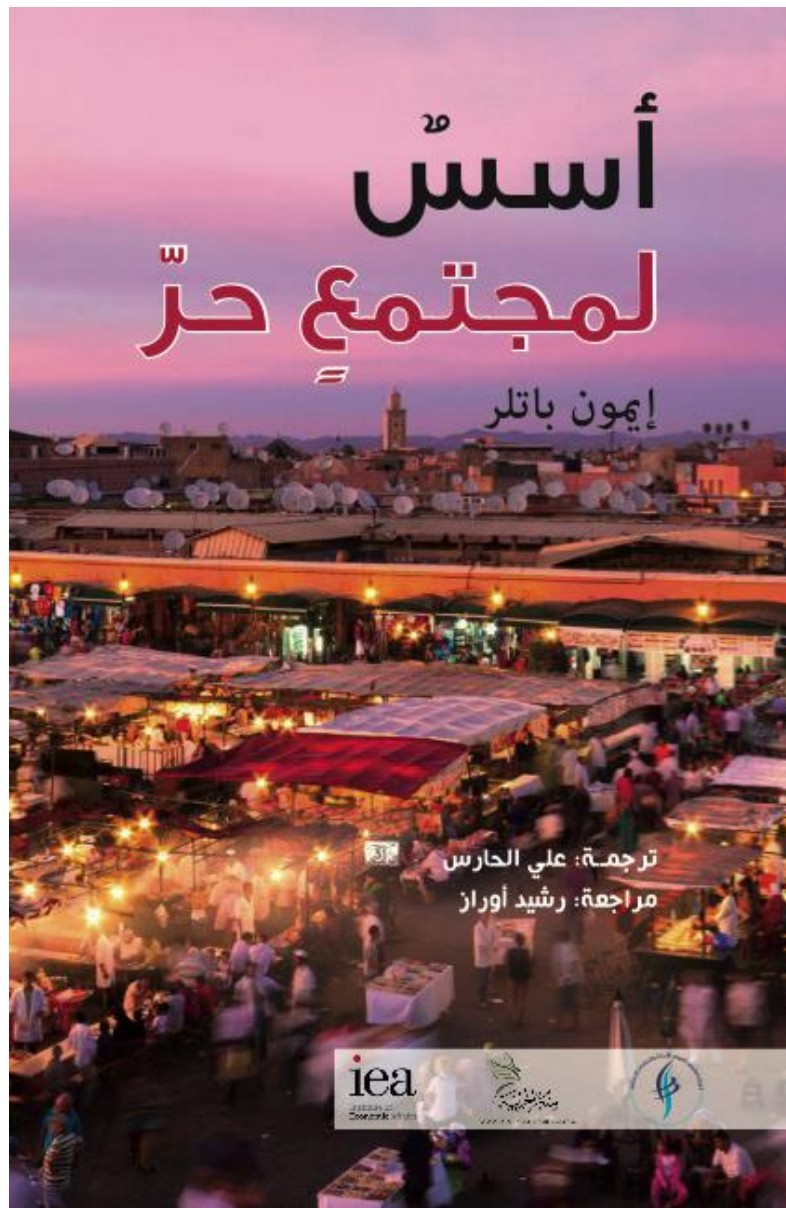


Amharic

Amharic is mostly spoken in Ethiopia but also in Eritrea and Egypt which are again places where such books are barely accessible so Kidus Mehalu, our partner in Ethiopia translated it into Amharic and has been distributing it in Ethiopia and amongst Eritrean refugees in Kenya.

Arabic

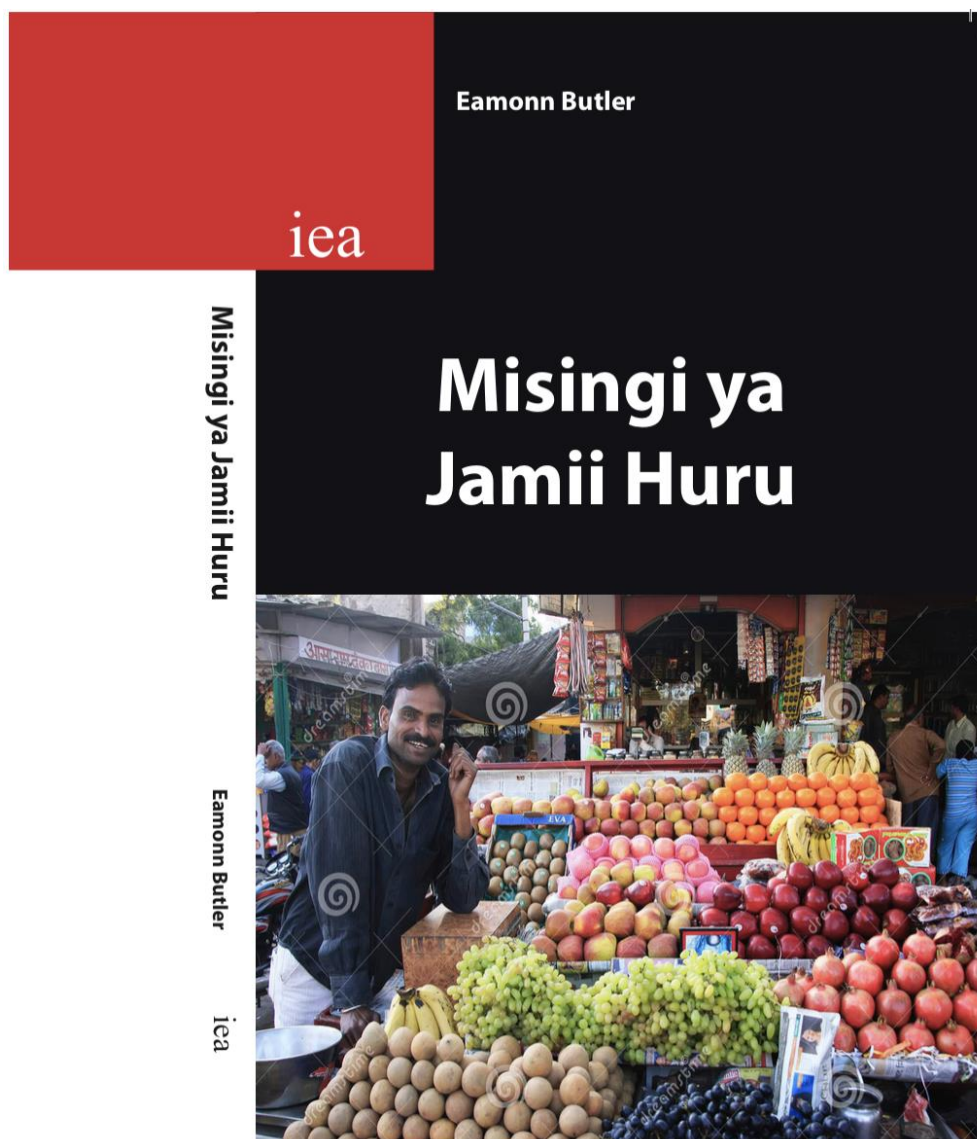
The Arab Centre in Rabat has arranged the translation of about 80 classical liberal texts which then go on their website and are used for their work promoting freedom in the Mena region. Numbers of them are also published commercially in hard copy and distributed from Egypt and Morocco. This has only become commercially viable because the translation work, which NFS has supported over a number of years, was already done. It will also appear on the websites of other Arabic speaking organisations in the region.



Tanzania,

Isaac Danford of the Uhuru Initiative for Policy and Education translated the book into Swahili in 2014, because it is the native language for about 5m people in Africa and the second language for another 135m so this translation made the book available to an enormous audience.

It has been used for their student work in Tanzania and with more funding they could make it more widely available.



Conclusion

At NFS we believe that books are still an essential part of the process of promoting free societies and the benefits they bring. We think the story of Foundations of a Free Society shows us something of both how books work their magic and the number of people in the world who are passionately searching for a system that gives them hope and opportunity.

It will take time to see any benefits this book may have on the lives of real people suffering from poverty and repression because changing the climate of opinion and then policy is not a quick process. However the reception it is receiving should encourage everyone who believes in free societies to do everything they can to get these ideas into the hands of others who will spread them far beyond those we could possibly reach ourselves even with all the new technology.

A big thank you to all those who were part of this story, especially our donors, and please continue to support us so that others we don't even know can benefit from the ideas in which we believe.

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