

BAISMAG

ISSUE 18

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THE CONNECTIONS ISSUE



DEAR READERS

We have been able to squeeze in another issue before the end of the first semester, that may be shorter in pages but not in quality.

An inquisitive issue, questioning how social media in society affects us and what we can do about it. Additionally, we outline a perhaps pessimistic yet realistic view of the future of right-winged parties throughout the world.

Equally important to this issue, we have a great announcement to make:

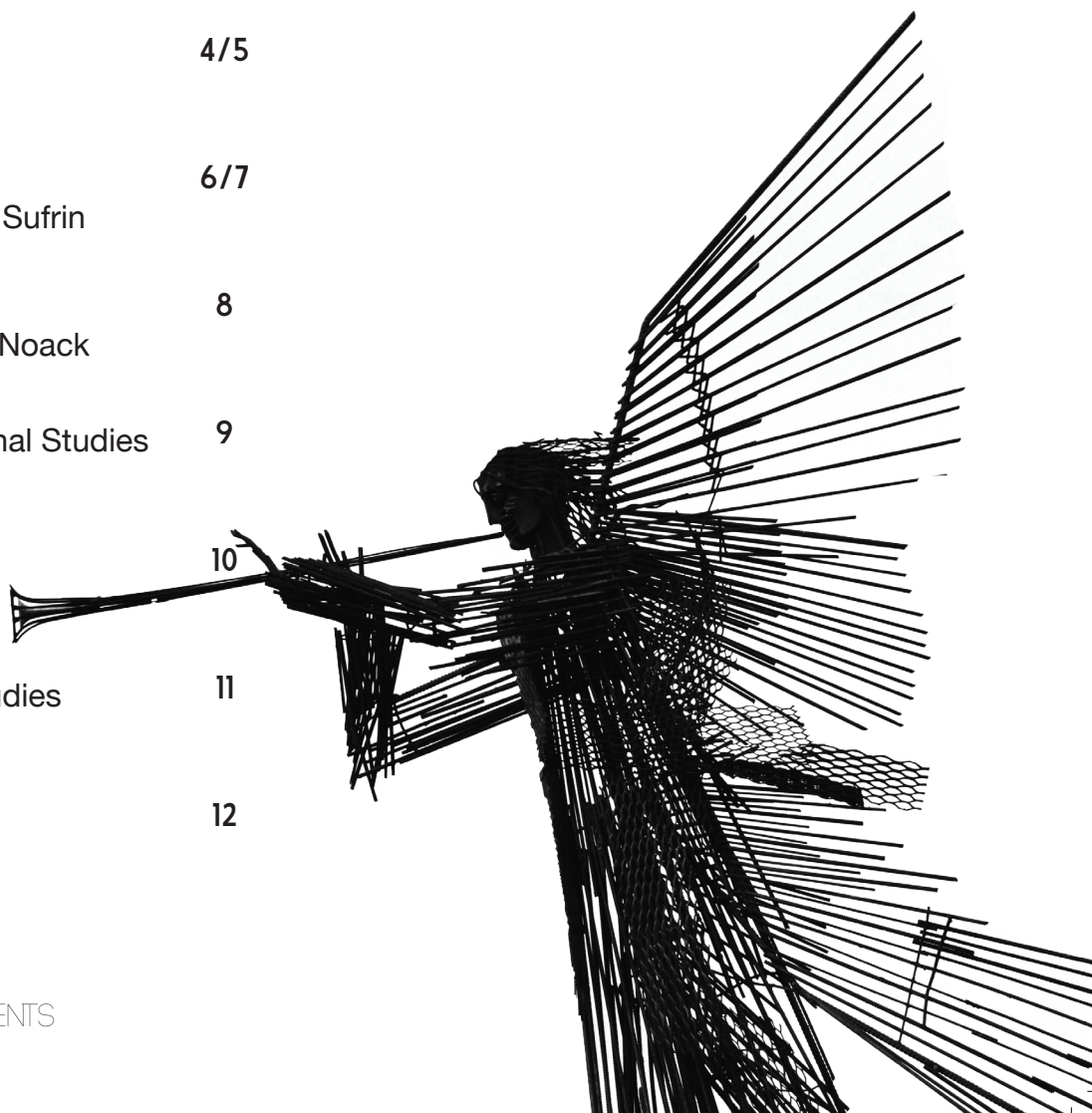
We are creating a BAISMAG website!

This new platform will facilitate the possibility to write **blogs** and our new project for **video journalism**. Through this platform we are limitless, we are not constrained by time, space or money. The time-intensive process involved with printing issues will be greatly decreased meaning contributors can write about current affairs! Obviously not limited to such pieces, all contributions can be posted on the upcoming website.

Having said that, we need help with this new endeavour; of course bloggers will be centre to this, but also people who are interested to work on the video journalism project. Specifically, the new position of **Online Editor** will have to be filled, a person who will head the new platform. If you are interested in any of these positions contact us at baismag@gmail.com or find us on Facebook. That having been said, the printed issues will remain our primary focus, so fret not, and enjoy this illustrious issue!

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MINDFULNESS 101



Our busy schedules and our hectic lives often impede us from completely connecting to our surroundings.

This statement reflects a standard common for most Millennials today, a standard of sharing, liking and FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), one that allows for the glorification of the virtual in place of the literal. This can be seen through various social media outlets, which can steal hours of sleep and productivity away from us. Such platforms can be used for the elevation of beauty standards through the very simple process of sharing carefully handpicked pictures that cater to our obsession of the image. This is not to say that the Internet and social media aren't also platforms for artistic expression, creation and leisure... but many times, they are not. This incessant need to always be present in the World Wide Web robs us of time we could be using to connect to our surroundings and ourselves. This is but a friendly reminder that it doesn't have to be that way.

Being part of this growing capitalist, consumerist society, we often forget how our mental and our physical health are our primary jobs, rather than our image, university or our careers. What is it worth being an attractive millionaire if you are mentally unhinged? For this, I ask you to contemplate "mindfulness". Mindfulness is about being aware of every moment of every day in which you are not working or doing anything. It is about being content and in-synch to your true self, however difficult it might be. It is a means of reestablishing peace and stability by bringing your thoughts back to the current moment, reminding yourself that you have everything you require in the present.

Humans spend most of their time on "maintenance" without even realizing it: taking care of our appearance, preparing for a job, studying for an exam... Mindfulness urges you to take your "maintenance" time to reflect and connect with your surroundings, thereby aiding the preservation of your mental health. It is a journey to self-actualization and understanding, which can have immense health benefits.

Therefore, I challenge you to do some of the following mindful things this week:

Sit quiet for three minutes, bringing awareness to your heartbeat, connecting with your "here and now";

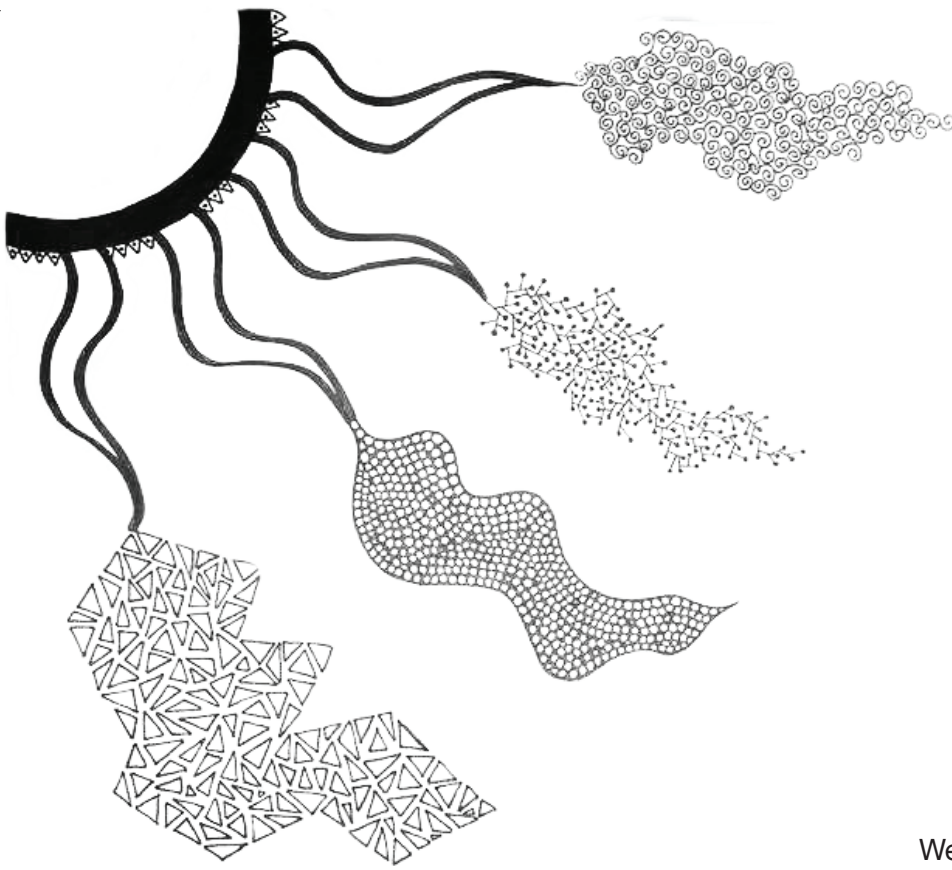
Tell yourself that you are "worthy and strong", as creating mantras helps implant and materialize the exact thing one is uttering;

When you go out to a park, look at flowers and plants with fresh eyes, as realizing and taking in nature reminds us how organic beings are real and beautiful, and that you are one of them;

Forgive yourself when you make mistakes, as they are common to every individual that walks the earth.

But most importantly, remember to always be in the present 100%.

BY MARIA BARROSO RAIMUNDO

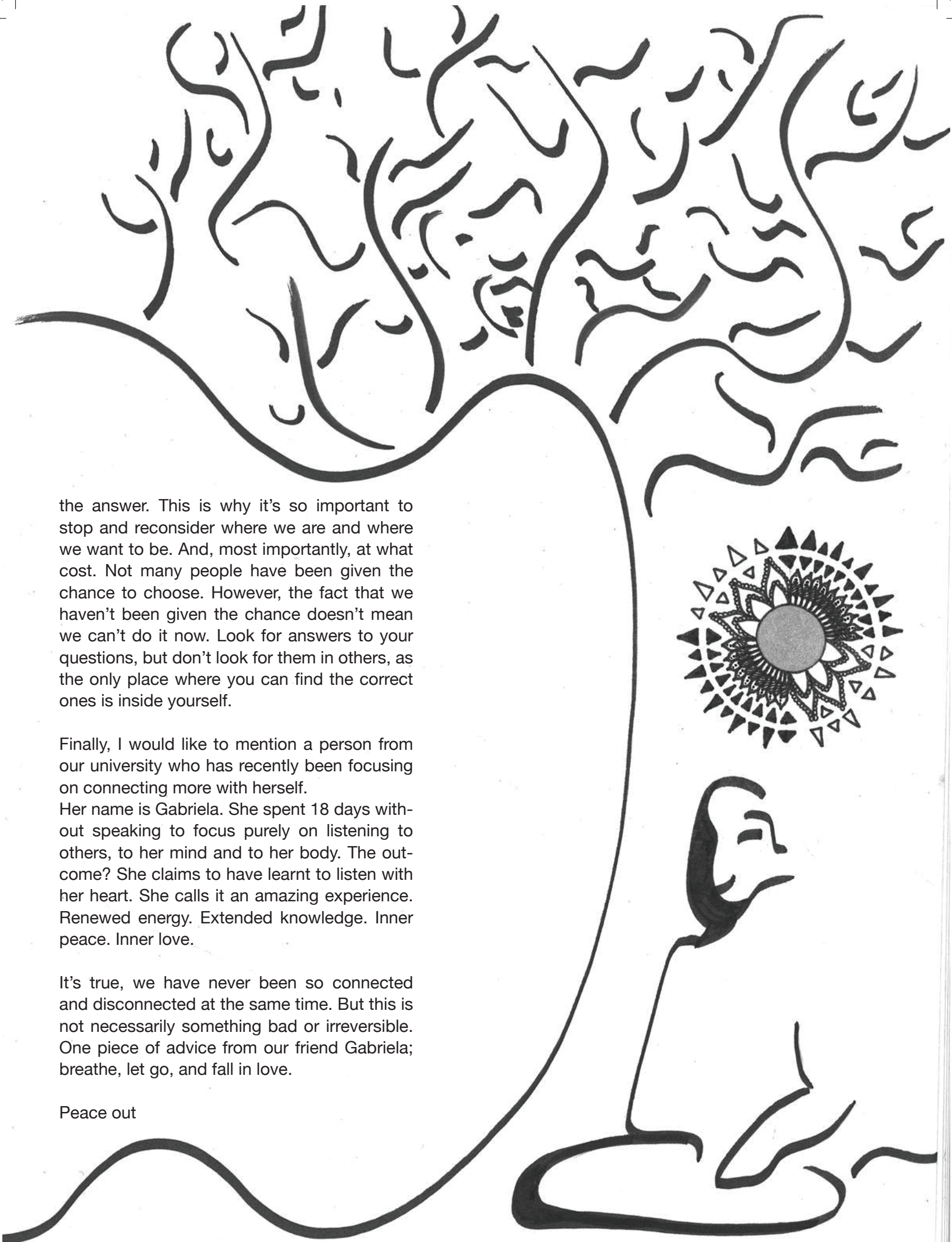


CONNECT WITH
yourself

BY: SANDRA CANTA

We live in an era in which we are increasingly interconnected with each other. Living abroad is no longer a problem when it comes to communicating with our loved ones. Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, and many others solve this issue for us. One would argue that we are doing well; we are able to reach the opposite end of the world within seconds with the click of a mouse. We are connected, how amazing is that! However, we still struggle to connect with ourselves. Try to ask yourself, when was the last time you listened to your body? When was the last time you had a day without being connected with anyone but yourself? No electronics, no distractions, no places to be, just you and your inner peace.

But what does it really mean to be connected with oneself? For me, it means listening to your body; observing and realising how we really are, being patient and caring with our flaws, and most importantly, loving ourselves for all of these. In this highly interconnected world, we are constantly rushing around and seem to forget the importance of being at peace with ourselves. We constantly judge and criticise ourselves for not being good enough which puts us under a huge amount of unnecessary pressure. It's unbelievable! Oftentimes we decide to take certain courses of action, but if we were to be asked why, we wouldn't even know



the answer. This is why it's so important to stop and reconsider where we are and where we want to be. And, most importantly, at what cost. Not many people have been given the chance to choose. However, the fact that we haven't been given the chance doesn't mean we can't do it now. Look for answers to your questions, but don't look for them in others, as the only place where you can find the correct ones is inside yourself.

Finally, I would like to mention a person from our university who has recently been focusing on connecting more with herself.

Her name is Gabriela. She spent 18 days without speaking to focus purely on listening to others, to her mind and to her body. The outcome? She claims to have learnt to listen with her heart. She calls it an amazing experience. Renewed energy. Extended knowledge. Inner peace. Inner love.

It's true, we have never been so connected and disconnected at the same time. But this is not necessarily something bad or irreversible. One piece of advice from our friend Gabriela; breathe, let go, and fall in love.

Peace out

Is there good in Fascism?

Applying Orwell to Trump

by Samuel J.
Forrest Sufrin

As I read George Orwell's 1937 book, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, I was not expecting to find an analysis that resonated so well with Donald Trump's ascent into politics and the White House. To my surprise, it seems as if Orwell's insights are not only accurate but can also provide solutions to this outburst of extremist right-wing politics. In presenting this analysis, I will quote *The Road to Wigan Pier* extensively as I aim to relate these quotes to our current political environment.

"When I speak of Fascism in England, I am not necessarily thinking of Mosley and his pimpled followers. English Fascism, when it arrives, is likely to be of a sedate and subtle kind (presumably, at any rate at first, it won't be called Fascism)."

Especially today, fascism seems to be a loose term used to degenerate the opposition at the membership level of politics. However, if we look at Trump's brand of politics, which is not being described as fascistic in mainstream politics, does certainly demonstrates fascist traits. If one applies Robert Paxton's definition then some resemblance is likely to be found.

"a form of political behaviour marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion."

Orwell's next understanding looks at the initial credibility of the candidate:

"...for experience shows (vide the careers of Hitler, Napoleon III) that to a political climber it is sometimes an advantage not to be taken too seriously at the beginning of his career."

This observation seems to apply perfectly to leaders of the far right today: Geert Wilders, Nigel Farage, and Trump immediately come to mind when one thinks about political leaders that were not taken seriously at first but are turning into political heavy weights.

Orwell points to the left as a source of the problem:

"We have got to admit that if Fascism is everywhere advancing, this is largely the fault of Socialists themselves."

Trump's success can partly be attributed to an absolutely appalling opponent, but beyond this it seems as if the left in the western world is falling down on two important fronts. Firstly, it is not taking seriously the contrast of the right despite its ability to reach out to the working class. Secondly, the left seems stuck between supporting candidates who "softly" align with the status-quo of neo-liberal economics and candidates who are pushing to break it, which has essentially split the left. This causes a problem because it allows neo-liberalism to continue to create huge amounts of inequality, triggering desperate situations from which the far right can mobilize its support by opposing the status-quo.

Orwell gives us some recommendation in his next four quotes:

"In order to combat Fascism it is necessary to understand it, which involves admitting that it contains some good as well as much evil."

"The feeling that first draws people into the Fascist camp, may be less contemptible [than its grand solutions]."

"Everyone who has given the movement so much as a glance knows that the rank-and-file Fascist is often quite a well-meaning person—quite genuinely anxious, for instance, to better the lot of the unemployed"

"It is far worse than useless to write Fascism off as 'mass sadism', or some easy phrase of that kind. If you pretend that it is merely an aberration which will presently pass off of its own accord, you are dreaming a dream from which you will awake when somebody coshes you with a rubber truncheon. The only possible course is to examine the Fascist case, grasp that there is something to be said for it, and then make it clear to the world that whatever good Fascism contains is also implicit in Socialism."

Orwell makes a very profound point here. We must see that the rank-and-file of the far right, like those of the left, see their families, friends, and communities being destroyed and, much like the left, they seek solutions for this destruction. This is a commendable desire. If the left can demonstrate that they are aiming to rectify the very same destruction as the far right, then perhaps we can all turn our backs on neo-Liberalism and start building a new economic system, one that listens to all the groups it encompasses. This must be done through humble communication at all levels of society; one must demonstrate that our problems arise from an economic system that need reorganising, not from a minority that needs deporting.



DAWN OF THE COMING *PERIL?*

BY: ISIDORO CAMPIONI-NOACK

Winston Churchill said “A love for tradition has never weakened a nation, indeed it has strengthened nations in the hour of peril” talking about nationalism in the UK. These words are very true, perhaps not so relevant nowadays because of globalization and the constant connection we have with the “other”. Although, I believe that while globalization did contribute to homogenizing cultures and advancing relations, it has backlashed as people feel their way of life being threatened, and the “lash” is in the form of nationalism.

Throughout Europe we find that there are numerous nationalist and populist parties that have gained increasing support over that past years. While Brexit is the most flamboyant symbol of nationalism, we also find the rise of the Freedom Party in Austria and the National Front led by Marine Le Pen in France, to mention a few. But we all know that the rise of nationalism is not constrained to Europe: US (Trump), Russia and China also have become more conscious about their identities.

But why is the rise of nationalism bad? Why is it good? People say it unifies nations, allows them to work collaboratively and efficiently towards a common goal, and perhaps in some nations it works because of their history and principles (like in the US). But for most

countries, a better word for describing “unifying” people, is “gluing” them together with a narrow view of the world. Inherently it creates dichotomies and scapegoats, the most obvious example being US popular fear of China stealing their jobs. It may sound like I am using the US as an example for all the evil in the world, but I assure you I am not targeting them, I simply study the region and lack examples for other nations.

Nationalism is a double-edged sword here; firstly, on an intra-national level it calls for stronger military, protectionism and hegemony perfectly illustrated with the US. Donald Trump promises to take the upper hand in relations and show the “others” who is stronger, making America great again. Secondly, nationalism obviously leads to demand for nationalist parties and leaders, that also tend to be exponentially anti-democratic. In 20th century Europe, the nationalist parties tended to become dictatorial. In 21st century the EU is very divided, and there is no denying nationalism has been, and will be on the rise. Who knows what these parties will become? Not totalitarian dictators, that’s a thing of the past, but maybe single party regimes.

A love for tradition has strengthened a country in the hour of peril, and nationalism is growing around the world. Are we facing the dawn of a coming peril?

ECONOMICS

IN THE BA OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

BY: MAX LEMBKE

“Economics is everywhere, and understanding economics can help you make better decisions and lead a happier life.” As the economist and writer Tyler Cowen points out, economics is everywhere and impacts all of us. Economics is not just about overcoming market failure or efficiency. It was here yesterday, it will be here tomorrow, it should be here now. Economics helps to explain the decisions, choices, behavior of politicians but also of individuals. Consequently, economics is a tool for everyone to deconstruct our surrounding in both an academic and private domain.

Economics has undoubtedly been in the midst of our BA. Nevertheless, we students are not given the option to evolve our skills further. Many students feel that extended economic courses are missing in the BA. They would like to extend their knowledge and delve further into the concepts introduced in the first year courses. This could,

as for many subjects, be covered in electives focusing on statistics or extended macro and micro economic courses. Especially students that would like to transfer into other programs such as an MBA, but lack options in their choice of electives. This is not only good preparation for our future but often also necessary in order to avoid pre-masters that can take up to a year.

So far this desire has been sparsely articulated throughout different years and there has been a lack of organization in achieving this desire. Noticing the growing interest by many students, I have decided to demonstrate that demand is present. Consequently, I have created a survey so everyone can indicate their interest. If you would like to have more economics in the BA, check it out. You can find all the links and discussion in the International Studies Facebook Groups (BAIS2014, BAIS2015, BAIS2016 and BAIS Good Student Bad Student).



REFLECTIONS FROM CHERNOBYL

BY FRANCIS FARRELL

You may have read in the news recently, towards the bottom of whichever website you frequent, that an enormous new confinement facility has been rolled into place over the destroyed Reactor no. 4 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. This huge arch, the largest moving structure ever built by man, was slid over the old makeshift structure to prevent further radiation leakage from the reactor. Its placement represents the end of an era, and I was there to see it happen.

Radiation retains its frightening image to this day because of how invisible and intangible it is; you don't feel or see anything at all as beta particles shred through your DNA, changing the very nature of who you are. Yet not even this much was understood about it by the people of pre-perestroika Pripyat in the days following the accident. Firefighters rushed in to control the radioactive blaze in the reactor's core in the first few hours, all to later die incredibly painful deaths in a small lonely radiation unit in Moscow. Residents sent their children to school the next morning, only to be confused and angry as they were ordered by officials to take their valuables and evacuate the city. They never returned.



Over the next few months, after the robots and machines broke down due to the radiation, hundreds of workers, still bombarded with it themselves, were tasked with erecting the “sarcophagus”, a huge shell of steel and concrete around the reactor, and possibly the greatest feat of emergency engineering in history. The workers wore crude lead armour as they scaled the roof of the reactor, working shifts of thirty seconds to clear the debris, pitifully ignorant of what they were truly being exposed to. I was lucky enough to be one of the last people in history to see the product of their labour.



Thirty years on, the exclusion zone is an eerie place. While the apartments in Pripyat itself have long been gutted, we had the chance to visit some tiny villages, deep in the zone near the Belarussian border, hardly touched by looters or tourism. Visiting an abandoned Soviet school was like walking into a time one only reads about in books. Lenin and Kom-somol propaganda all over the walls gave the school an ominous atmosphere, but picture books, paintbrushes and report cards left on the desks remind you that this was the daily life of many children, not some post-apocalyptic film set, that you are exploring. Nowhere else in the world can you get such a raw snapshot of history.

People who travel to Chernobyl, who explore the overgrown streets and Soviet interiors of Pripyat, often return fundamentally changed. For me personally — apart from the huge smile that donned my Soviet-tragic face the whole time — the exclusion zone is, before everything else a place to reflect on the best and worst of humanity, on the insignificance of our lives in the grand scheme of things, and of the relentless reconquista of nature. It is a place like no other.



"OH YEAH, THE STUDENTS ARE ONE BIG COMMUNITY! WE SHARE SUMMARIES, POST MEMES, RIDICULE OPINIONS, ARGUE POINTLESS ARGUMENTS, THINGS LIKE THAT."

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



BY MICHAEL HAUWERT

LET'S GET NAKED AND DRAW



by Tamara Krosch

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