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in this issue

The Arab Springs? 8 years
later: Hopes and Challenges

New columns: 'Genferei!'
and 'Case Postale 1672'

A Broke Girl's Survival
Guide to Geneva

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From left to right: Anand Menon, Rainer Mensing, Yasmine Hung, Harvey Parafina, Amrita Bhatia, Phasawit Jutatungcharoen, Kaavya Hari, Riya Sarin, Laure Deriaz. Not present: Francis Shin, Manasvi Hemmige.

A Letter from the Editors

Dear readers,

At the time of its printing, it would have already been a year ago that The Graduate Press had been reborn from the ashes of past publications. The press has had a long, perilous existence in the Institute, but through the efforts of our members over the past few semesters, we stand here today with a small contribution that will hopefully go on for the years to come.

An active student press is important to any educational institution — whether to voice concerns regarding the administration, or to give students the platform to express their thoughts and opinions. The history of the Institute has seen a rocky path for student publications, with none being able to sustain themselves for long. This remains to be a challenge even now, especially in an institution where we often find a lack of space to gather collectively and share ideas. This can perhaps even find its way to other aspects of our student life, resulting in a lack of expression and engagement (collective, or otherwise) among ourselves.

The main motivation behind this print edition therefore, is to create a stronger and more present press culture, well as to leave behind a tangible archive to serve as inspiration for future students. We, the editors of this edition, hope that this can serve as a platform for you to share ideas and critically engage with the rest of the IHEID community. We encourage you to participate in building this culture, by reading the articles and hopefully contributing as well.

The Graduate Press
2018-2019

THE ASIA MEMORANDUM

By Julia E. Rozlach

Dear Members of the IHEID Community,

I am writing to you today to encourage you to consider whether our Institute (which, it should be stated, refers as much to students as its teaching staff) is doing enough to prepare us for playing an active role in what might well become known as the Asian Century.

In my opinion, it is not.

I would like all of us, from those who studied about Asia before to those who have little knowledge of, or even interest, in the region, to give it a brief thought now. Why, you might wonder? Above all, because regardless of what discipline you focus on, be it environmental governance, global health, or even the security dynamics in the Middle East, Asia is becoming increasingly impossible to ignore. Are you ready to embark on a quick journey to the Eastern hemisphere?

If so, fasten your seatbelt, sit back, relax, and enjoy your flight – but be prepared for the occasional turbulence.

The Background

There exist multiple terms for the changing nature of the current world order, with its centre of gravity crawling further and further to the east. It has been referred to as Easternisation (by Gideon Rachman), Asianisation (by Parag Khanna), the Asian Century, the Century of Asian Power (by Eiichi Shindō) or, more interestingly to us here in Europe, the Dawn of Eurasia (by Bruno Maçães). There seems to be widespread consensus about the fact that the time for ‘the West’ to lead the world is over. In terms of GDP growth, improving standards of living, the sheer population size, technological and scientific innovation, or even morally frowned-upon state activities such as Internet

censorship or political manipulation, Asia is not merely catching up with the West. The fact is that Asia has been, or soon will be, outperforming it.

This, however, brings us to the first important conundrum and a potential rabbit hole: all right, Julia, you have made your point, Asia will be the future powerhouse, but what exactly do you mean by ‘Asia’? Where does it start, and where does it end? Do we include the Middle East and Turkey? How about Russia, where does it belong? Hang on, what about the infamous ‘Indo-Pacific’, does it mean Oceania counts as Asia, too? Should we not split Asia into smaller units such as East/Southeast/South Asia for the sake of simplicity? Do Indonesians, for instance, consider themselves ‘Asian’ in the same way as, say, Mongolians, or the Chinese diaspora abroad? Do we conceptualise Asia alongside ethno-racial divisions or more culturally, and what role does religion play in it? One might wonder if, with this avalanche of questions, we have more or less covered Asia’s identity dilemmas, but this is, in truth, just the tip of the iceberg. We are talking about a region of such immense diversity that one twenty-minute slot at the beginning of one of the Institute’s only Asia-related courses with a limited class size is definitely not enough to help us realise what exactly we are dealing with.

And we are dealing with Asia, regardless of our initial interest and specialisation. Those of us studying trade or security simply cannot disregard the omnipresence of the People’s Republic of China. Pick up the *Tribune de Genève* from as recently as April 19, and you will see the 5G debate (in which the Chinese tech giant Huawei is suspected of either already engaging in or potentially having to engage in espionage on behalf of the Chinese government) occupying the front page. On the most basic level, a significant percentage of IHEID students come from Asia, so even if professionally we might be occupied with a different region, it

could prove a useful exercise to every now and then try and look at the world from our friends' perspective.

Some might argue that Switzerland, or any other country in Europe, should first focus on its own regional matters, and only then worry about other parts of the world. While there are obvious merits to such an approach, because we do have our own fires to put out in Europe, this is no excuse to simply forget about Asia's existence, because it is knocking on our doors right now. Like it or not, consider it a threat or an opportunity, but the Belt and Road Initiative is here, and it is here to stay at least in the near future. It should be noted that the Belt and Road would not only bring us closer to China, but also the other states participating in the project, and how better to benefit from increased cooperation than by knowing exactly what our partners have to offer, and what we can offer them?

The Problems and Their Possible Solutions

In terms of preparation for the advent of the Asian Century, the Institute's efforts can be likened to the Japanese Self-Defence Force. We are receiving some training, particularly on China or India. We have a brilliant, constantly increasing stockpile of resources (big credit goes to the IHEID Library which, as far as politics, IR, and history are concerned, is as well-equipped as that of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge; go on a stroll around its underground corridors and see for yourself how many Asia-related resources can be found down under). We have a chance to go on exchange with universities in multiple Asian countries. There exists a Student Initiative on Asia, which brings us culturally closer to our fellow Asian students. We have all this, and yet a closer look reveals a lot can still be done.

Yes, there are several Asia-related classes we can take each semester at the Institute and I have had a chance to register for two, thus being able to attest to their quality. However, behind the illusion of diversity of choice

lies the fact that many of these are taught by the same professor, and while his expertise cannot be doubted, would it not be more beneficial for students to at least have one or two more experts, if only to exchange notes and observe seemingly the same issues from a different point of view? At least, given that interest in Asia is only bound to increase in the next few years, it could be a good idea to increase the size of Asia-related seminars so that more students could broaden their knowledge about the region. Although some of the non-Asia-focused courses allow for 'open' essay questions where, if a student so desires, they can write about Asia or any other continent, most rely on the syllabi.

While this is understandable, given that we sometimes struggle to even do the readings on the list, let alone do extra research, in the same syllabi, Asia is frequently just an afterthought. One week, or even one reading, among many. This is fine and well – researchers have their own areas of expertise, but precisely for this reason hiring an extra Asia specialist or two could already have a significant impact on students' performance. For instance, if we have a separate class to discuss the nuclear negotiations with Iran, having another one in which we study the largely failed but still intriguing handling of the nuclear threat of North Korea could allow for fascinating insights and more informed comparisons. The goal, after all, is not to train a herd of Asia specialists: this is not what the Graduate Institute does or should do; its aim is to educate future diplomats, leaders, economists, negotiators, or international organisation employees, and it is historically rooted in a different region altogether, Africa and the Middle East. My point is: the more we know about the world outside of 'the West', Asia forming an important part of it, the better professionals we will become, but admittedly, as graduate students we could take the first steps by ourselves.

Another problem I can see is the relative scarcity of Asia-related events. We have had



a few lectures this year, be it a discussion of the state of Chinese democracy or the upcoming event co-organised with Asia Society Switzerland on the Indian elections. What could be interesting is a few more opportunities for students to actively participate in discussions of Asia outside of the classroom: how about setting up a 'Window to Asia' week with movie nights, Asian food in the cafeteria, student-led policy discussion groups, or whatever else there would be demand for? It would not have to be only Asia, other underrepresented but important regions could have their own Window Weeks, and with the international student body that we have, it might well give us an option to go on an academic trip around the world with people passionate about their region or country of choice. How about setting up a platform, for instance through social media or a subpage on a website, where students could recommend resources on given topics to those unsure of where to start from? Here, I am calling out to the students, because we ourselves could drive the change, at least if we saw the need for it. Only one question now remains: do we?

Show of hands

Dear Members of the IHEID Community,

If you read this far, first of all thank you for accompanying me until the end. Second, I

would like to discover how many of us see the issue in a similar way. Does the Graduate Institute have an Asia Problem? Is the closest we come to East Asia the daily Air China flight to Beijing from the Cointrin Airport? Do you have an idea of how we can use the resources available to us for more useful purposes than extra holiday reading? Most importantly, we do have Asia here at the Institute, but would you like us to have more?

Spare a thought about what I said, compare it to your own programme, and get in touch: feel free to take my name and surname, separate them with a dot, and stick @graduateinstitute.ch to it, then tell me what you think. If there are more of us who think along similar lines, we could get together and prepare ourselves better for the era of Asia's growing importance. If not – at least be aware there is someone in here who cares about the issue a great deal; and more people like me might already be on their way to the Institute.

Let us do this, and together strive to remove the 'Far' from the Far East.

Julia E. Rozlach

1st year Masters in International Affairs
(Global Security major, East Asian Studies in previous life)

THE ARAB SPRING

EIGHT YEARS LATER; HOPES & CHALLENGES

By Kareem Gerges

In 2011, millions of people from different backgrounds and orientations filled the region's streets, chanting for 'bread, freedom and social justice'. Eight years later, did they achieve their demands? Have the region's authoritarian regimes learned anything from the revolts? Ultimately, were they successful revolutions or mere protests doomed to failure?

These are a few questions out of many that demand reflection eight years after the protests. Many claim that the revolts are nothing but a series of failures, others, albeit fewer, consider it a success. However, instead of succumbing to cynicism and hopelessness or daydreaming of an idealistic utopia, it is important to go beyond binary labeling, while examining and acknowledging both the successes and the failures. Although the region's authoritarian regimes have persisted, the hopes and dreams of the revolution/s persist as well.

The case of Tunisia's experience during the past eight years shows the importance of moving beyond a binary judgement and that the road to democracy is full of complex challenges. It is no secret that Tunisia is widely considered to be the only success story of the Arab Spring, yet the country continues to face significant challenges while some authoritarian practices reminiscent of the Ben Ali regime continue to persist. After toppling its longtime dictator, the country held its first free parliamentary elections in 2011, enabling the once-banned Islamist party, Ennahda, to win and form the cabinet. The following year has been tumultuous, as the new government tried to control protests and violence throughout the country. In 2013, after the assassination of two prominent secular politicians, Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi, huge protests erupted against the harsh living conditions and the threat of Islamization of the state and the curtailing of human rights. The crisis, however, was resolved in 2013 when

Ennahda agreed to organize new elections, thanks to the negotiations among the political parties facilitated by the Tunisia National Dialogue Quartet - a group of human rights activists, labor union leaders, and lawyers - who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for facilitating a peaceful and democratic transition of power, in which the secular parties won the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014, albeit with low-turnout. In the same year, a new constitution was accepted and was considered the most progressive in the region. However, public frustration has increased since 2011 as the country continues to face significant political, security, and economic challenges. From 2014, the socio-economic situation had worsened, as the unemployment rate - particularly among the young and educated- increased from 23 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2018. Meanwhile Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index saw an improvement of only one point from 2012 to 2017, taking into consideration the allegations of corruption and in-fighting within the president's party, Nidaa Tounes. Several terrorist attacks had also shocked the population and heavily damaged the country's tourism industry. Since 2011, nearly 100,000 highly educated and skilled workers have left the country, and Tunisia remains one of the largest contributors of foreign fighters to ISIS. The Transitional Justice Commission, created in 2013 to address human rights violations committed between July 1955 and December 2013, has faced significant obstacles: the parliament's attempt to prevent the extension of its mandate, the alleged government obstruction of the commission's findings, and the passage of a government-supported amnesty law for civil servants who committed acts of corruption, all of which threatens the effectiveness of the Commission.

Moreover, human rights violations remain a major issue. Since the government declared a state of emergency in 2015, security forces have carried out thousands of arrests and house raids without judicial warrants, arrested bloggers and activists, restricted civil liberties, and allowed for torture and abuse in prison to take place without accountability. These are (only?) some of significant challenges facing Tunisia. However, the country will hold its second direct democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2019, representing an important opportunity for civil society and progressive leaders to push



the country a bit closer to the hopes of the 2011 Revolution. Tunisia's experience shows that that road to democracy is anything but straight and filled with set-backs and challenges, but also of opportunities for a positive change.

Compared to Tunisia, Egypt's case seems grimmer, yet strings of hope endure. The country witnessed its first free elections in 2012, bringing the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the once-banned moderate-Islamist organization, into the forefront of the Egyptian political arena, as it dominated

the parliament and won the presidential elections under its nominee, Mohamed Morsi,. However, the MB missed a golden opportunity during its year in power, as it played by the repressive and exclusionary Mubarak playbook. After mass protests against the MB in July 2013, the Egyptian military led by then-Minister of Defence Abdel Fattah el-Sisi intervened and detained Morsi while dispersing pro-MB protestors in August through an extremely violent and bloody operation, resulting in at least 1000 deaths which is still considered to be one of the largest mass-murders committed in one day. After Sisi was elected as President in 2014, he steered the country into a state of unprecedented severe repression. In the name of security and the fight against terrorism, Sisi led a violent crackdown on civil-society, pushed for draconian laws allowing for unaccountable surveillance, and prosecuted journalists, peaceful activists and any form of opposition, whether expressed online or not. Through extrajudicial killings and rampant corruption, Sisi's security campaign had claimed the lives of hundreds if not thousands of civilians and security forces and led a coopted Parliament into passing bills that solidified the president's control over the judiciary, which consequently issued mass-execution and prison sentences in sham trials. In addition, thousands of peaceful liberal and Islamist activists have been detained, often without charges, while subjected to unimaginable torture and abuse. According to Human Rights Watch, at least 60,000 people have been arrested on political grounds. Recently, the regime had also forced the passage of constitutional amendments removing the four-year two-term presidential limits, and a extending the term into six years, in effect allowing Sisi to remain in power until 2032/34. In addition, the socio-economic situation has not improved; in fact, it had worsened particularly after the government devaluated the currency in 2016; losing more than half its value and skyrocketing inflation into 30 percent, all while wages continue to stagnate.



In spite of these grim realities, the hopes of the Arab Spring are not dead; on the contrary, they remain alive, even if they are yet to materialize. Almost any observer of social media trends and of public opinion across the region can see how the people are engaged in political discussions and holding on for the hopes of a brighter future. Of course, not everyone on social media is pro-democracy, though it is worth remembering that it was the social media generation who organized and led the Arab Spring. Moreover, even in a severely censored environment such as in Egypt, on-ground dissent has been witnessed. Recently, hundreds protested against the government's highly contentious sale of the two islands, Tiran and Sanfir, to Saudi Arabia, and dozens were detained as a result. Following the disastrous train crash in February 2019, Ahmed Mohy stood by himself in Tahrir square holding a sign reading: "Step down Sisi". Within minutes, he was detained and prosecuted on trumped-up charges. These examples show how many are still resisting and fighting for change.

Witnessing the revolts in Algeria and Sudan, the toppling long-time dictators, and how they are learning and adapting from the mistakes of the prior revolts show that people across the region still believe in the vision of the Arab Spring. A vision for a new social contract between the ruler and the ruled



founded on respect for human rights, social justice, and democratic principles. These are not merely utopian ideals; they represent the values of the vision which thousands of people across the region have sacrificed their lives for.

As long as the region's authoritarian regimes remain, neither security nor peace can ever be achieved, as these regimes could not exist without manufacturing the insecurity and conflict they claim to fight against. In fact, it is their *raison d'être* and inherent of their structure. As long as these regimes remain, the conflicts in Syria and Libya and the horrific war led by Saudi Arabia on Yemen that created one of the worst humanitarian crises will continue, in one form or another. If there is anything the region's rulers should learn from history, it is that doubling-down on the same playbook of the Mubaraks, the Assads, the Bashirs, and so on will only perpetuate instability, conflict, and insecurity. The revolts of 2011 were not in vain nor are they dead. Rather, they are part of a continuing pattern of resistance and fight for a better future.

IS THERE AN ETHICAL WAY TO CAPTURE PAIN?

By Amrita Bhatia

The two documentaries I discuss in this article are 'Survivors' and 'Still Recording' screened as a part of the '17th Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains' held in Geneva from 8th to 17th March, 2019. In the span of 10 days, the FIFDH screened many films related to human rights violations and showcased debates among diplomats, NGOs, survivors, artists, activists, journalists and others on the same.

Capturing conflict, pain, and suffering on camera is perhaps the most morally-challenging task visual artists face. Generally seen as a medium to express your own self, the task of showing what others feel puts the artist in a rather precarious position regarding ethical questions of what to record and show. At the same time, one does wonder how these moments will be recorded in history, if not via the advantage of audio-visual medium today. Two questions now become important to ask: first, is the purpose of these documentaries to record a set of events and experiences as a part of recording history, or is it to spread awareness in the contemporary world about the same? Second, in considering who is watching them and how the films are made, how ethical is it to record people as they experience pain?

The two documentaries look at different instances of immense affliction, and deal with all the questions I posed above. *Still Recording* records the violence caused by and during the civil war in Syria after the Arab Spring of 2011. We see this primarily through the eyes of two young men — one a dutiful soldier and the other a rebel full of revolutionary zeal. We see bombings, death, conversations, and their daily lives from their physical perspective. The few times that subjects interact with the audience are very powerful, almost conversational, but not seeking sympathy. *Survivors* explores the ebola epidemic of 2014 in Sierra Leone, and the

protagonist is the driver of an ambulance. Apart from driving patients, he is involved in rescuing people where he physically carries a patient by himself. He is ill-treated by the authorities, but is eventually acknowledged and remunerated for his efforts.

A commonality between the two is that the interviews are always shown as an attempt for survivors and spectators to express their discontent, as against asking for help and mercy. Camera angles are also important to see how the directors attempt to show us the reality. As in other media, we only see a version of it, in *Survivors* the visuals of an ambulance driving through markets, lanes, residential areas becomes a visual used repeatedly as a lens into something more than the epidemic — the surroundings, the environment, the “normal”. Interviews were always shown in a square frame, as if telling the audience to only focus on the facial expressions of the interviewee.

It is probably too strong a criticism to say that visual media does not take into account the ethics of filming faces and identities of people involved in these painful experiences. Far from taking into consideration concepts like consent and permission, I wonder if there is a loss of empathy on the end of the people behind the camera. As we see in popular media today, there is a degree of desensitisation that can be accredited to wide availability of images that



show violence. This begs the question posed by Patricia Spyer and Mary Steedly, “In what ways does media technology itself transform the ‘message’ of the image?” How different is it to see a picture of a bomb blast, versus seeing the entire sequence play out with sounds of destruction and masses screaming?

We are able to see a “pre”, “during” and “post” in the video format, something that images lack. This does help us perceive the incident more holistically, but how different is the impact? Spyer and Steedly rightly point out, “Visual media technologies not only ‘select’ particular audiences but also ‘train’ those audiences in specific modes of spectatorship and enjoyment.” These videos seem to be aimed at eliciting a specific response from the viewer that is beyond disdain and pity — empathy. Both documentaries carry messages for the viewers, which then begs the question of who is actually watching them? Who is the target audience for these recordings and where is the film being showcased? Is it people in similar situations of political turmoil, or publics unaware of the same? If

it is people in privileged spaces and positions of power, do they really need to see harsh visuals to be able to understand the extent of a problem? When leaders are not accountable and political institutions are under attack, the camera becomes a silent way to scream. Who is listening, watching, reacting, and how? The reaction of audiences generally depends on their own social situations and how relatable the content they are viewing is to them. Is it the visual of violence that affects the viewer, or is it significance and meaning it carries?

This brings us back to the question of the ethics of filming individuals who are, in that moment, experiencing pain, and also the beautification of the same. The debate around aestheticising these visuals is rather tricky. While on the one hand it does help to question what constitutes as beauty and would it lead to more hunger of such scenes, on the other hand, aestheticising would contribute to enhancing the moral and political context of the visual, and evoke “desired” responses. In the two documentaries mentioned, there were few scenes in which suffering was

romanticised or made into a spectacle. The documentaries both attempted to personalise and depersonalise people in the frame — we are shown scenes of crowds and commotion where we can hardly see faces, but also shown close-ups of people injured, moaning in pain, or dead. In some cases, the audience is told a short backstory, but others remain estranged bodies. Both can become spectacles in their own way, but spectacles don't always have to be celebrated; they have the potential to set the wheels running for changing situations of those (very real) people. These responses are probably the kind that directors of both movies hope to extract. At the same time, Hans Belting, a German art historian, talks about the fact that responses are constantly evolving, and visual media provide answers that would only satisfy a few, at a given point in time. How these responses are created generally depends on the question of 'how' the subjects of an image and the image itself are being portrayed and created, as Belting puts it — "The how is the true statement, the real speech of pictures." The contract of photography is also no longer with the subjects of the photograph, it is now a relation that involves more than simply the subject and the photographer — it also includes the audience.

On a side note, there was also a very apparent non-inclusive representation in both documentaries. We often associate civil war with soldiers fighting, young men rebelling and other masculinist images of bloodshed and war, what is often left out of these representations is the aspect of gender. *Still Recording* did not show a single woman's perspective on the happenings in her homeland, whereas issues such as sexual assault, trafficking of young girls, and radicalisation of women by the ISIS have been rather common instances. Not only are the everyday lives of women concealed, but so is the sexual nature of conflict. In the movie *Survivors*, we see women in their primary roles as caregivers in two forms: either mothers whose labour pain is filmed

and then valorised, or nurses complaining about bad working conditions and low wages. Apart from one woman's interview, we hardly see them as agents who are facing the epidemic as it is. Our sources of knowledge in both movies are two men. This makes me wonder if the makers of these well-received documentaries even acknowledge the gendered paradigm of these socio-political events that occur, or if we still live in a world where the masculine experience is deemed as the human experience. Is this ignorance ethical?

Maybe, instead of asking what is ethical or unethical, a conversation about the content being helpful despite being unethical would provide more closure. Having said that, a response to the question of ethics and portraying pain could be that these films say something rather powerful, perhaps something that should be more impactful than the violent incidents portrayed. The fact that much of this is the "default" for Syria and Sierra Leone, that this is the "normal" and the everyday, these documentaries show us but one layer of this complex web of problematic realities.



A JOURNEY OF SELF-EXPLORATION

IN A TIME OF CHALLENGES

By Anonymous

Who am I? This is a question everyone asks throughout their life.

To many, higher education is a ticket to a career. To some, a diploma is what we are expected to attain, representing intellect and wisdom. To me, studying is finding myself. Telling a story of the self involves an immense amount of self-acceptance and trust for interlocutors. Storytelling is the revision of the self. It does not require writing or public speaking, but an open mind to willingly listen. Everyone needs an open mind for the self and others.

Success has yet to be defined

Aiming to climb the social ladder, studying is told a path to success. In grad school, doubts and self-questioning made the detours of my life roller-coaster. This is normal to all of us. Rushing in herds towards social expectations seems a norm, but we deserve time to reflect

on who we are and what success means to us individually. To me, success is one being the perfect version of the self and persistent in goals, while accepting failures.

Where is the destination?

In the journey of finding ourselves, we are easily distracted by comparing with others, stepping over one another and burying our uniqueness. Competition reflects enmity, insecurity and denial of failures. Outscoring and outshining others reduces trust, empathy and supports in human relationships. No matter how far and hazy the destination is, we need to ask what impact we can make, given our privilege of receiving education. Perhaps we can give each other encouragement, until an aspiring but unnoticed candidate overcomes the job-hunting hurdle. Every individual has his or her very innate capacities that are meant to shine. We need to help each other find them.

Valuing vulnerability

Not showing vulnerability is often perceived as a norm, showing emotional control to others. I have gone through depression. Perfectionism and not seeking help tore myself apart. In two years of grad school, I learnt to acknowledge and appreciate mistakes. Each coin has two sides. Giving too much importance to fame keeps us from facing failures of ourselves and others, but mistakes do not mean right or wrong. They make us resilient and turn ourselves into a crystal ball of self-understanding. Beauty from within is inferior to masquerading as the superficial self. Material items and money do not fill the soul.

From self to others

Coming from a reserved culture, assertiveness, emotional expression and help-seeking were not in my dictionary. Facing diversity and adversity, I often felt powerless to rebut political differences, insensitive assumptions and overt criticisms. By understanding how I feel, I started to put myself into others' shoes and stand up for myself.

A small gesture of respect and acceptance can show civility. Depression is a black hole absorbing light and energy, even more so for me as an introvert who frequently over-analyses and judges myself. Sugar-coating things with fake smiles on my or others' stiff faces was not a remedy to others' false interpretations and prejudice. Camouflaged consolation cannot win against an outpouring of empathy. Kindness, compassion and empathy override premature judgments that subtly affect others.

Alternative narratives

Some start out being well-off. Some do not. Being raised from grassroots, no one in my family is educated enough to guide me through life. The future is obscure for

many others who do not even see a path to education. My parents barely remember the twenty-six English characters. Some are, on the other hand, entitled to leisure, knowledge, networks and personal care for children whose future will not begin in deficit.

It took me a while to overcome the disadvantage of being left behind socially. I reframed my story. I accepted who I am and learned to move on with my own strengths. At least I was born safe and protected. I opened my first 'Gratitude Journal'. Every day, I write down about five things I feel thankful for. By focusing on positivity, I make better choices in a positive emotional space.

To our future selves

No matter where we are led to, it is worth spending time to reflect on who we want to be. My upbringing taught me to reshape my personal story and express empathy and appreciation, to my family, others and myself.

Life is never easy, but challenges nurture success. I learned to accept myself from the wistful reminiscence of the past, from family upbringing to grad school.

Allowing lament and anguish that are hidden under carpets to come to light takes courage. History makes the future better. Late-blooming flowers emerge gloriously in times of difficulty.

BAKING WITH ADITI

Interview by Kaavya Hari

Aditi Dhir is a first year Master in Development Studies (MDev) student and baking enthusiast. In this interview, she discusses her passion for baking and her future plans. There are details on how to get hold of her cakes at the end of the page.

What motivated you to start baking? Who is your mentor?

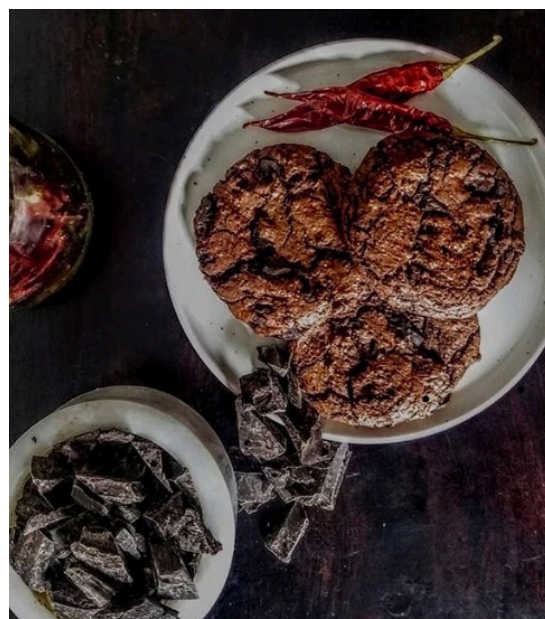
I watched my mom baking ever since I was three years old. My sister and I have been helping our mom ever since we were young, from taking orders to marketing the products. I started to fully immerse myself into baking during the summer of 2018, when I was at home recovering from a broken leg. I also started specializing in product photography, in order to help my mom with her business.

What is your favorite cake and why?

My favorite cake is tiramisu because I absolutely love the taste of coffee. Every time I make a tiramisu cake, it becomes richer in the taste of coffee.

Is this your alternate career plan? Do you plan to mix baking with development?

There are days when I think I should do this full time, but I would really love to work in the field of development. If I do combine baking with development, I want to go beyond the conventional areas such as baking sales or baking as therapy. It would be nice to think about something very meaningful.





What is your business model? Do you plan to scale up?

My business model is very simple, I do marketing through my Instagram handle. I think it makes it more organic and less stressful. I have also explored apps which connect home chefs in Geneva, but I haven't pursued it much. Since I've had less time due to the course work, I've been doing this part time. I plan to scale up much more during the summer, if I'm available.

What about baking classes?

Again, I'll be organizing them over the summer if I'm free. I already organized the 'vegan baking workshop' during the Sustainability Week. I felt that people really enjoyed it, so I'm excited have more such sessions.

Any tips for aspiring bakers at the Institute?

Keep exploring and keep trying new recipes. Feel free to ask me any doubts and call me for food tasting sessions.

Last question, cooking or dancing?

I think cooking while dancing is ideal.

See more of Aditi's baking on her Instagram account [adt.browniewala](https://www.instagram.com/adit.browniewala)

WORK AS A CONSULTANT IN REGTECH

GENEVA CONSULTING NETWORK:
INTERVIEW WITH FRANCO
MOSCIATTI

Interview by Petr Vishnevskiy

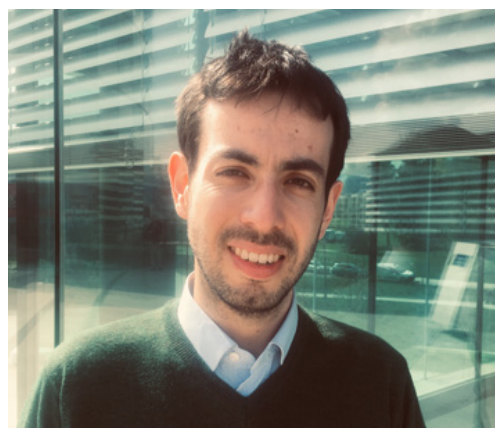
Geneva Consulting Networks starts a series of interviews with consultants in Geneva and beyond. Our first interview is with Franco Mosciatti who works in Polixis, a Geneva-based company founded by one of the Institute's alumni, Gagik Sargsyan. Polixis provides advisory solutions to banks and financial institutions on regulatory and political risks. We talked to Franco about his background and studies at the Institute, his duties at Polixis and what is it like to work in a RegTech firm.

You are now a second-year MDEV student at the Institute. Can you tell us about your previous background?

I studied law in Chile, at a Catholic University there. I graduated and passed my bar exam and I got a law degree in 2013. I started working in an NGO on labor law – that was the focus of my career. I was working part-time in the NGO and also with a labor-law professor on labor law cases, but in the private sector. Sometimes I worked as a consultant for another NGO in some law programs that they had.

Why did you decide to change your path and go into development studies here in Geneva?

When I was working at the NGO with migrants, I started thinking about the topic of migration in general: labor and migration law is only a small piece of all the migration cycle. I met a Chilean-American girl who was studying at the Institute. She did her internship at an NGO in Chili. She told me about the Institute and about this program that I was interested in and I decided to extend my horizons.



Why did you decide to go to Polixis?

I was interested in it because my area of interest was not only labor or migration law but also topics in relation to Latin America. An internship in Polixis was offered through the Career Service. They needed someone from Latin America to analyze the regulatory data about the sub-continent. I decided to apply, and I got the job.

What kind of duties do you perform?

Basically, I have to do regulatory data analysis of Latin America. For example, now we are working on Argentina, Brazil, and Panama. I have to analyze specific issues regarding banking, labor law, all the regulatory information about those countries and summarize it. I provide this information to the team of engineers, which is located in Armenia. Let me explain this. For example, I have to study Brazil. I go into the web, learn a lot about Brazil and I check all the big data that they have about politicians, the judicial branch, the Congress, etc. Then I have to select which of that information is the most important and then send it to the team of engineers in Armenia. Then they put that information into the software called ARDIS.

How would you define regulatory risk?

Basically, a customer of Polixis wants to know something about a person or a country, let's say Argentina. The customer has access to ARDIS and checks Argentina or a specific person. He or she will find information about the situation in Argentina, new laws that will come into force, what is happening in the Congress right now, new elections, etc. So with the database that

ARDIS offers to him, he can get a clearer picture about how Argentina is functioning and if he is willing to invest his money or not. Also, a person from Argentina may come here to Geneva, for example, and ask for a loan of money. So ARDIS can also help to check whether it is a well-known person, how he or she is connected, if he or she is a politically exposed person.

What are the countries of coverage?

Before I came to Polixis, it was mainly focused on the CIS countries and they are expanding right now to Latin America. At the end, they want to have information about everywhere and have an expanded database in order to cover most of the jurisdictions.

During the Connexion day, the CEO of Polixis said that people working in Polixis are expected to work not only on one area of expertise as law but also on political and economic issues. Is that true?

Yes, for example, one of the areas that I have to analyze are politically exposed persons. These persons have ties with politicians and banks have to be very careful with these types of persons when giving a loan to these persons. You have to be aware of political connections in the Congress or the members of the family of the president. You have to analyze a lot of information from the web, from the newspaper and you have to choose which one is trustworthy and what is not and to give your opinion about politics.

Are you expected to travel to the places to give information or is your research is limited to publicly available sources?

Right now it is publicly available sources because we have just started on the data collection process for Latin America..

Do you have a big team here, in Geneva?

No, it is small: it is mainly the founders of the company. We also have a small office in Paris and in London, but the main team is in Armenia because there we have engineers

and data developers. I talk to them every day.

What is your usual day?

It starts at 9 am. I talk with the team in Armenia to organize the day, to discuss the problems from the previous day, problems with collecting and putting the data in the software. After having the talk, we start working. We organize our day together and decide what is important and what is not and whether there were any mistakes in the previous day or not.

Do you think that there is a risk in terms of human mistake? Does your company have any rules or systems that help to avoid that?

Yes, we are always checking information. I am supervised by a person in Armenia and this person is supervised by Gagik, our CEO. We have about two checks of information and we are continuously checking it. Not only humans make mistakes but also sometimes the software produces some mistakes and the humans have to correct it, so we are always checking and double-checking this information.

Do you have other duties?

Sometimes you collect the data and send it to engineers, who are not supposed to know anything about Latin America, which is in Spanish. There are some issues on putting the information into the software. So my duty is not only to analyze the information and interpret it, but also to write it to the engineers, so that they understand it and put it into the system. That is also another thing that I have learned, and I am still learning: how to gather information and write it properly so that a person who does not know anything about Latin America, its politics, could also understand it and put it into the system properly.

I suppose this is one of the main skills that any consultant would need?

Yes, and it is the hardest one. You are dealing with people that have no background: they are neither lawyers nor political scientists. They are engineers and they have to understand

what you are saying clearly because at the end of the day, it is the data that is sent to the client who may not understand it either.



A BROKE GIRL'S SURVIVAL GUIDE TO GENEVA

By Valeria Nechaeva

This detailed list is a result of me trying to lead a comfortable and fulfilling life in Geneva on a budget (not an easy task). While I carefully watch over my spending now, it has not always been this way. In fact, I never counted money before and could easily spend everything I had in my wallet on a whim. On top of that, I have severe food restrictions, which make the task of saving even harder than it already is.

Therefore, re-evaluating my spending habits in Geneva has been a painful (but overall a very successful) process, which is why I have decided to share its main takeaways. Hopefully, they will save you some money as well as stress. The list is by no means exhaustive, and if you know other tips, please comment and share them with the community.

Disclaimer: Sadly, I am not being paid to write this article. I understand the internal biases and privileges of my identity as a white female who speaks fluent French. I have avoided overly obvious or ethically ambiguous suggestions to the best of my ability. I take no responsibility for the use or misuse of the advice provided.

Part 1. Grocery shopping

Grocery shopping is, in a way, a compromise between the time and the money you have. Someone with lots of time and little money may be willing to spend hours researching coupons and promotions and going to five different chains to buy select items in each, and for someone in a different position, the small savings gained this way may not be worth the time. However, there can be a middle ground. By investing time

initially to establish your grocery shopping routine, you will benefit from it without significant time commitments later on. Here are my tips for creating your system.

Sign up for loyalty programs

It usually costs nothing to sign up for a store bonus card and download their app. This allows you to see all their promotions without needing to physically go anywhere, thus saving your time and making your grocery shopping easier. Most importantly, loyalty programs award you bonus points, and with those you may be able to get more than 10% of what you spend back. And if you manage to combine the two (buy on promotion and get a part of that money back), you very well may be spending less than you would in a cheaper store with no bonus programs (or in France).

Pro-tip: some chains run their weekly promotions from Tuesday to Saturday, while Mondays are reserved for preparing and arranging the items. Thus, your discount options on Monday may be limited.

Weigh in the costs of shopping in France

I go to France to shop for many staple items like oil and, flour. Shockingly, not everything is always cheaper in France; it is also important to weigh in the time, effort, transportation costs, exchange rates, etc. against the potential gain. If you decide to go, remember that it takes time (multiple trips) to familiarize yourself with a new supermarket and its brands, so be patient. If you are taking public transport, make sure to check all the schedules in advance, as your cellular data may not work across the border. Give yourself plenty of time, shoving the first items you see into your bags because you are late for a bus will not do your budget any good.

Invest in a shopping cart

Skip this one if you own a vehicle or are strong enough to carry all the groceries on your back. As for me, I find that losing out on the saving from larger purchases would cost

me a lot more than a cart over the course of more than 2 years (I bought mine for €20). There are often discounts on getting multiple items, and buying in bulk tends to be cheaper in general.

Pro-tip: use a portable scanner available at the entry of many grocery stores. This allows you to scan your items and put them directly into your shopping cart as you go, thus avoiding baskets and the hurried cumbersome packing of everything at the end. Plus, you see the exact sum of your purchases at all times (which is a good enough reason to take a scanner whether you own a cart or not).

Try small family-owned businesses

There is a small family-owned food store in the center of Geneva where I feel at home. The owner and the employees know me now and we chat a lot. On multiple occasions I have received items for free, for instance, in the form of holiday gifts, or sometimes I am offered recently expired items that can no longer be legally sold. Going there on Saturday mornings can be particularly advantageous, since everything expiring that weekend is on sale. While the expiration date part is true for most grocery stores before shutdown for Sunday, I wouldn't recommend doing all of your groceries on Saturday, as stores are crowded and some items may be sold out.

Pro-tip (applies to big and small stores alike): if you really like an expensive item and are willing to wait, check the expiration date and come back then. If that batch is still available, enjoy the discount!

Look into waste-free, ugly produce, and other initiatives

I buy most of my vegetables at a small storage house/market that sells produce rejected by supermarkets, at very affordable prices. Plus, you might find enterprises like grocery stores and restaurants that engage in social initiatives and give food away for free or at a discount, instead of throwing it out at the end of the day.



Part 2. Banking and saving

Become friends with your e-banking and mobile banking portals. Transfer what you can to your savings account regularly, even if it is very little (and be careful with withdrawing that money, because you may be charged for doing it too soon or too often). Eliminate hidden payments (for instance, if you are being charged for paper account statements that you do not need, convert them into the electronic format).

Bonus points

Some banks award you bonus points based on your turnover. While you may be tempted to treat these points as “gifts” and spend them on items you would not otherwise buy, you could also use them towards grocery shopping, transport passes, and other necessary expenses. They have an expiration date though, which is yet another reason to be on top of your account.

Personal accounts

If a place where you frequently spend money sells gift cards or has a personal account program, it could be a great way to set your spending limit (this also applies to paying with your student card in the cafeteria). In

the beginning of a month, deposit a certain amount into your account, and you will begin to understand how much you really spend there. Plus, depositing that money right away will allow you to see how much you have left for your other expenses in a given month more clearly.

Part 3. Activities and cultural life

Museums and art galleries

You probably know that the first Sunday of every month is a free museum day in Geneva. However, this does not apply to all museums – some may never be free and some have other open days. Therefore, it is important to check before going. However, art galleries tend to have free entree (since they are selling the paintings). I find them to be a great solution for instances of feeling artsy while broke.

Free tickets

The University of Geneva culture portal has a free ticket page, on which you have many options, including films, concerts, theatre and dance performances, night clubs, and more. You can log in with your IHEID account and claim one ticket of your choice per week (they run out fast though, so be

quick!). In addition to that, once you know the cultural scene, you can subscribe to the pages of specific places that interest you (art centers, concert halls etc.) and see when they have free events.

Film screenings

Going to a movie theater in Geneva is expensive, but there are a few options you have if you want to watch something on a big screen for free. Universities and student residences regularly organize such events, and are many free screenings around the city, especially in summer. There are also several annual film festivals, and if you become a volunteer you will be able to watch the films for free. Lastly, select movie theaters have occasional free screenings (these typically are old films, so sadly you will not be able to watch the newly released ones).

Sports and exercise

University of Geneva offers a great variety of activities at a very reasonable cost. You may be able to attend a sport of your choice for as little as CHF 50 per semester, but the prices vary significantly from one activity to another. Some classes like swimming require an additional pass into the facilities purchased separately (i.e. the pool), which adds to the cost. Other activities, like dance, can be tried for free during the first week of the semester. Similarly, many dance/yoga studios in the city will offer you a free trial class and student discounts if you decide to continue.

Community centers

There are free activities that take place in so-called “espaces de quartier.” Each part of the city has their own. I have been attending interpretative dance classes for more than a year now, completely for free. Although some of these centers are designed primarily for the elderly, they are open to everyone. I greatly enjoy my weekly expressive art sessions with a small group of body-conscious members of the community.

Part 4. General advice

Speak up if you are treated unfairly

I certainly do not advocate making a living off complaining to managers. On the other hand, customer loyalty and satisfaction are taken very seriously here. On several occasions I was offered compensation for unpleasant experiences. One time, when my credit card was not working, the cashier began to talk to me rudely and accused me of trying to steal. I wrote a complaint, after which the top management contacted me and scheduled a meeting, and offered me a gift card in compensation.

Be open-minded and co-operate with others

And finally, this one goes without saying and applies to all aspects of life. I have had a successful language tandem, where my tandem partner and I have greatly enhanced each other's language learning, completely for free. If you live in a shared apartment, you may benefit from not needing to buy certain items or buying them collectively. If you live in a student residence, you may find many useful items that are left behind by those who move out. Look into having potluck dinners, which allow you to have an enriching culinary experience with a vast variety of food, while only investing in one dish. Possibilities are endless!

Good luck and happy money-saving!

1989 IN WORLD HISTORY

INTERVIEW WITH ACHIM MERLO

Interview adapted by Yasmine Hung



2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, one of the first events in a chain reaction that would lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The significance of the year 1989 within the larger context of the Cold War has been hotly debated among historians – the Soviet Union only came to an end in 1991, and Communist regimes elsewhere prevailed – but it was undeniably a turning point in the lives of the many Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain who had been separated for nearly half the century.

The recency of this event means that there is a relative abundance of sources that one can draw on in comparison to the study of earlier events and periods. The opportunity for historians to interact directly with people who have lived through certain events is a boon that adds a certain authenticity to counter or fortify mainstream narratives, expanding on the subjective experiences and memories of people whose lived experiences are overlooked in the course of the writing of history. In particular, the question of a historian's own role in reflecting

upon their own experiences while aiming to achieve a relatively objective distance from their subject of study is the topic of lively debate and unresolved questions.

At the Institute, we are lucky to have a student who was one of many first-hand witnesses and participants in the events at the Berlin Wall when it came down, physically and metaphorically. Achim Merlo is a second-year PhD student at the Graduate Institute specializing in European history, and has been willing to share his personal reflections on his experience of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

The following interview is a conversation between Amza Adam, a student of International History, and Achim. This was adapted from the transcript of a podcast entitled “1989 in World History,” produced as part of a course offered by the International History department at IHEID, which can be found on their website. Credit for the content should be attributed to the original producers of the podcast episode. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

When one thinks about the end of the Cold War, a series of events and dates come to mind, which can vary considerably depending on academic affinity, nationality, and especially personal experience.

In my case, I was born at the cusp of the end of Cold War in 1988. When I reflect upon this period, the memories of what I learned in school emerge. I think, for example, of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, I think about all the different documentaries I have seen on the fall of the Berlin Wall. In other words, I have a very bookish and detached memory of that moment. But for you, Achim, it is very different, right?

Yes, you are right. For me the end of the Cold War is not only an abstract historical period that I have knowledge of, but it is also something I have experienced.

Could you tell us what you mean by that?

I was in Berlin when the fall of the Berlin Wall took place. I was one among many who had participated in pulling down the wall – I was there with a hammer and a chisel in hand.

So you were part of history! Please tell us more about your personal encounter with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

As a German youngster, I became invested in the idea of contributing to unify the country. The pressure was rising on a daily basis, and I personally liked the German chancellor at the time, Helmut Kohl. He was a great man able to manage a difficult process not only between the superpowers, but also with the old hostility and preoccupations from France and Britain. At home, we spoke every day about what was going on in Berlin, but also in Hungary first, on the border with Austria, and in other neighbouring Eastern European countries. In the evening daily “Tagesschau,” at 8pm, we could see from home the events coming upon us. The overall mood in West Germany was exciting, but also puzzled, and then, at a certain point, I decided to leave

home and move to Berlin, to take part in the protests, which were happening in the western part.

My grandmother had served as a frontline nurse during the war and was in what was then a very different Berlin. She was particularly proud of the idea of a reunification of Germany, so she blessed my journey. I took with me a hammer and a big screwdriver from home that I used as a chisel to break chips out of the wall in the following days. With thousands of other young people gathering there in Berlin, I became then what was nicknamed at the time a “Mauerspechte” – a wall woodpecker. That is, in a nutshell, how I think about the year 1989 up until 31st December that year. That was when I saw for the last time the Soviet Union flag waving at the Brandenburg Gate until exactly at midnight, when it was taken down and stripped into pieces by the multitudes of surrounding celebrators, including myself.

Thank you very much for sharing such a personal story. By listening to you, I think that we can get an idea of the atmosphere of Germany during that period, and in particular, this need to participate in the reunification of the country.

Achim, your position as an “actor” of history puts you in a very original position – you understand this event as both a participant with subjective experiences, while at the same time, you contend with it on the level of a professional historian. How do you think a historian such as yourself should deal with personal experience? Should you detach yourself from it? Or should you rather plunge into your feelings and memories?

Thank you. Perhaps it is too gratifying to be called an “historical actor.” I think that as a student of history, one should keep a distance from that “micro” experience in order to better grasp the events – if you want to zoom out and have a bird’s eye view.

I think you should neither detach yourself nor plunge into your feelings and memories. It is in combining the memories and the literature that you will have the whole picture. In this sense, the only difference is that you have lived during that time, and the closer it remains, the more accurate could it become. At the end of the day we are limited generational human beings. Moreover, we tend to interpret events in a context that is always different from the past. That is why I think we do not know better, for example the history of the Roman Empire, today than perhaps our scholar ancestors thousand years ago, when the first universities appeared and when Latin was the lingua-franca used among them.

So Achim, let's continue and dig further into your experience to extract the main concerns of the German people were in 1989. How would you describe your perception of the socio-political changes that were happening in Germany? Were you aware of the historical impact of the Fall of the Berlin Wall?

At the time I was just a teenager, and all the fuzz of the cold war politics and the Soviet Union itself were a distant story that I did not consider. At the time, the main priority was to take down the Berlin wall; it was the reunification of Germany. The concept of "Einheit und Freiheit," (Unity and Freedom) the historical German question of the German people was still on the table for many years, since basically the partition of Germany after WWII. Even West Germany's first chancellor Konrad Adenauer in reality never thought that Bonn was really the capital of Germany; it was considered as a provisory seat. The wall represented, therefore, that physical impediment dictated from the two superpowers over Germany, against that German concept of unity and freedom. One needs to understand that in the context of the previous historical settings, before WWII, in the German mind the Weimar Republic represented indeed an achievement compared to the imperial period, but. It was the dichotomy between cultural flowering and the political disorder



which also characterized Weimar that led to the immoderate politics of the thirties. Hitler therefore came on a specific time and with a particular mission to establish unity of the Germans, at home and with those abroad, and reply to the Versailles humiliation with a “Grössdeutsch lösung.” Hitler’s geopolitical ideas and policies, from a German point of view, tried in preserving the European balance of powers, while extra-European powers were condemning Germany to mediocrity and, ultimately, all of Europe to external domination, which in fact, after WWII, really happened.

Connecting this situation during 1939-1941 to the situation of the Cold War and the agitations of the last months of 1989, it was beyond my scope of just hammering down the wall. Frankly, it was not even about democracy in the GDR. In fact, if you look back, whether the GDR was a democracy is a controversial issue, and that is why several “Ossis” (Germans originating from the Eastern part) still today feel nostalgic about the GDR, and even about the social system.

Anyway, as I said, in 1989 I was in Berlin just for freedom and unity, and that was clearly wished for and shared on both sides of the wall. In other words, yes, there was a wish to change and destroy that chain that was represented by the Berlin wall. But

that this later went on so far to change the whole international context, the collapse of the Warsaw pact, the Soviet Union and even the end of the Cold War – I was not really thinking about it. This can only be seen now, from a distance.

How about now? How do you understand your experience after almost 3 decades have passed?

Now, after all these years, I feel I was indeed part of that popular enthusiasm that was able to challenge a rigid geopolitical system, at least for Germany, but at the same time, we should not forget that the ground was prepared for that. The “wind of change” was already blowing in the previous years, and I remember Gorbachev with his Perestroika program to rescue what was basically left of the Soviet Union. Right or wrong, many people in Russia have accused Gorbachev to have been the instigator of the collapse. Perhaps Perestroika and Glasnost were just a solution to postpone an evident disintegration of the Soviet system, but instead helped to accelerate it. But it was part of a longer process that can be seen by looking into the internal political struggles within the Soviet Union itself.





CLIMATE JUSTICE IN GENEVA

By Derya Senol and Dario Siegen

The first global climate strike took place on Friday 15 March 2019 as part of the #FridaysForFuture student uprisings, organized by a wide network of young people who use digital media and organized democratic structures. For a country like Switzerland, where protest culture is anything but pronounced, this is particularly impressive. The movement addresses the following three demands to politicians: a declaration of a national climate emergency, net zero domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and climate justice. The students do not shy away from bold action and demands.



A REINVIGORATED MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE?

By Francis Shin

Despite the founding principle of the UN – collective security – the UN Security Council (UNSC) has faced serious difficulties in countering the escalation of violent conflicts since its inception, only acting in a relatively limited capacity. However, there is one tool that the UNSC was given at its formation that has been relatively inactive: the Military Staff Committee (MSC), which was created to be an active agent of the UNSC to preserve global security. To face the security challenges of today, the UNSC should maybe consider increasing the MSC's role in areas of peacekeeping operations, armament inspections, and counter-terrorism campaigns.

Articles 26 and 47 of the UN Charter outline the MSC's role. It was supposed to “advise and assist” the UNSC in military operations and armament regulation, as well as establish a rapid reaction air force contingent to be used at the UNSC's discretion. However, the Cold War made consensus among the UNSC's Permanent Five (P5) members problematic to achieve, even as some peacekeeping operations were approved. Consequently, the MSC was reduced to an advisory role within the UNSC, despite how interest in achieving armament control and oversight increased between the Western and Eastern Blocs. However, once the Cold War ended, the collapse of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and several other states caused great concern to the international community as arms proliferated, terrorist groups thrived, and genocidal campaigns became worryingly prevalent.

To counter the growing instability of the post-Cold War world, UN peacekeeping operations greatly increased in number and size; nevertheless, the UN peacekeeping

operations were sometimes too passive to be effective, necessitating the reevaluation of their mandates to include offensive operations against insurgents, especially after UN peacekeepers failed to prevent the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. Moreover, because UN peacekeeping mandates began to include state building initiatives, multiple UN organizations began dealing with the same issues in different manners, creating inefficiency. For example, in Afghanistan, the Taliban negotiated with several UN and UN-aligned aid agencies; but with no unified authority to provide organizational cohesion among the agencies even as part of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), confusion ensued, causing the negotiations drag on and increasing operational costs.

Meanwhile, disarmament and inspection regulation agreements continued to be negotiated between states, with such interstate cooperation only growing to include counter-terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. However, tensions between states have grown despite their common foes, especially as relations between the US, China, and Russia become increasingly contentious in recent years. Illustrations of deteriorating security arrangements include the agreements between NATO and the former Warsaw Pact, like the Treaties on Open Skies and Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Both have been hampered by accusations of violations levelled against the US and Russia; in the case of the CFE, Russia stopped cooperating with its terms entirely by 2015. All these issues demonstrate the need for a more consistent form of global security governance, and the MSC can provide a platform to formulate such policies.



By turning the MSC into an umbrella organization to coordinate UNSC activities, the MSC can unify several bureaucratic structures under one authority. In terms of UN peacekeeping and other missions, a unified command structure aids the formulation and implementation of UNSC policies. Returning to the case of UNAMA, which already is supposed to be a unified authority answering to the UNSC, overcoming issues like communication between UN and UN-aligned agencies could be easier if the UNSC could have more direct oversight over UNAMA through the MSC. The increased efficiency correspondingly decreases operational costs in the long term, alleviating some pressure on the UNSC's budget.

As well as that, because the MSC already has oversight over armament regulations under the UN charter, states and other actors can view it as a less biased inspector and enforcer of security arrangements. This can prevent disputes over treaty violations like the security agreements between NATO and the former Warsaw Pact. And, with the rise of transnational terrorist groups, the necessity of

international cooperation to better confront these threats has already drawn states together; even though there is disagreement on which groups to label as 'terrorist,' there is some consensus on the labeling of some groups. Nonetheless, such cooperation would be better achieved through the MSC, as the MSC would provide a platform for states to formulate international (and therefore more comprehensive) counter-terrorism plans.

Meanwhile, there are potential drawbacks to empowering the MSC. For example, the MSC's revival could create more gridlock within the UNSC instead of streamlining consensus-building, especially if the P5 feel their own national interests are under threat from a stronger UNSC. This could incentivize the P5 to veto UNSC resolutions more often. In terms of armament regulations, states that are already part of multilateral security agreements might feel that international bureaucratic oversight overcomplicates those arrangements and makes them harder to enforce, potentially thwarting future diplomatic initiatives.

IS MILITARY CONFLICT ON THE HORIZON?

U.S. DESIGNATES IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

By Younes Zangiabadi

The Trump administration formally announced its plan to designate Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization. This is the first time that the United States designates an official branch of the armed forces of a foreign government as a terrorist group. The move has long been advocated by Iran hawks, such as the White House National Security Advisor John Bolton, to roll back Iran's influence in the region and pressure the IRGC to stop its support for militia groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. After the announcement by Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, Prime Minister Netanyahu wrote on Twitter thanking President Trump, "Once Again you are keeping the world safe from Iran aggression and terrorism."

Iran's retaliation was quick. Only hours after Pompeo's announcement, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif released a statement addressed to President Hassan Rouhani, who also heads the Iranian National Security Council, requesting the council to designate the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. military unit responsible for the Middle East and Central Asia, to be placed on Iran's list of terrorist entities. The request was immediately approved and adopted by the council. Before US decision was announced, the head of the IRGC Mohammad Ali Jafari warned that "the U.S will no longer have calm in west Asia if it decides to designate the Guards as a terrorist organization."

Similar warnings have been made by senior Iranian parliamentarians. Heshmatollah Falahat Pisheh, Chairman of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, who said that "Iran will retaliate by designating the

US army as a terrorist group in the next few hours."

It remains to be seen whether any other country will join the US in designating the IRGC. Previously the European officials have warned against such measures saying that such measures will only escalate tensions in an already volatile region. However, Canada's House of Commons voted in June of 2018 for a motion proposed by the Conservatives calling on the government to list the IRGC as a foreign terrorist entity under the Canadian Criminal Code. Since that motion was passed in 2018, the Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale has confirmed that various options are being considered before formally implementing this in practice.

The special extraterritorial operation branch of the IRGC Quds Force is currently listed as a terrorist organization in both Canada and the US. However, many experts believe that listing the entire military apparatus as a terrorist entity will have serious legal, technical, and security challenges on both regional and international levels.

Reza Nasri, international law expert from Geneva's Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies believes that such "designation would have serious international ramifications on the legal regime governing the laws of war; It would have unintended consequences that may seriously jeopardize regional efforts to fight terrorist organizations like the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and affiliates." It's reported that the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence agencies share similar concerns.

Furthermore, the diplomatic engagements in the region would be strikingly complicated, especially in Iraq and Lebanon, where Iran has close relations with the political parties and Shia militias. The U.S. will be legally obliged not to have contacts with foreign officials who have been in communication with the members of a designated organization, in this case the IRGC.

With both countries now considering each other's military units as a terrorist entity, the possibility of military confrontation will reach dangerously high. Currently, tens of thousands of U.S. troops are serving in the Middle East with approximately 5,000 operating in Iraq. Last week, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his disconnect about this situation, urging Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mehdi, during his visit to Tehran, to demand U.S troops leave Iraq "as soon as possible".

Once in effect on April 15th, there will be more economic and travel sanctions on the IRGC. This provides the U.S with more leeway to prosecute any group or individual linked to this branch of Iranian military. "This action will significantly expand the scope and scale of our maximum pressure on the Iranian regime. It makes crystal clear the risks of conducting business with, or providing support to, the IRGC", Mr. Trump said in a statement.

According to the U.S Department of State, "It's a crime for a person in the US or subject to the jurisdiction of US to knowingly provide 'material support or resources' to or receive military-type training from or on behalf of a designated FTO." Yet, an Iraqi diplomat who was interviewed under the condition of anonymity for this report said, "we are confused by the generality of the US statement". He added "The U.S has been in the region long enough to know some of our military organizations, namely Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi has official and public collaborations with IRGC in the fight against the Islamic State...We still don't know the scope of the

sanctions but we are assessing the potential impact that could have on Iraq."

The U.S has already imposed some of the most comprehensive sanctions on Iran and the IRGC, raising doubts about the effectiveness of the new sanctions associated with designation of the military elite. Richard Nephew, a sanction expert at Columbia University showed his skepticism in a tweet where he wrote. "The practical effect of this form of sanctions pressure perspective are nil given CISADA and IRGC sanctions."

It is not yet clear what IRGC's designation exactly mean in legal and technical terms. But what is easy to recognize is that this provocative measure put both countries another step closer to a conflict in an already troubled region.

It is expected that there will be renewed pressure from the Conservatives on the Government of Canada to follow suit. However, the Trudeau government might consider the ramifications of such action on the peace and security in the Middle East as well as the possibility of dragging Canada into a catastrophic military confrontation in the region.

RESULTS N/A

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE 2019 THAI ELECTION (PART ONE)

By Phasawit Jutatungcharoen

March 20, 2014. The Royal Thai Army had just declared martial law for the purposes of restoring peace. Soldiers were placed at various areas and main roads, seizing all television stations in Bangkok. Two days later, head of the army General Prayuth Chan-o-cha held talks between the caretaker government and rival protesters. After a long deadlock, General Prayuth ultimately told all present at the meeting: “Sorry, I must seize power.” At that moment, a coup d’état was launched. Thailand was under the rule of a military junta.

The context behind this coup is essential towards understanding why many consider the Thai election in March 24, 2019 to be one of its most important in the history of the country. After all, it was the first election in eight years. Aside from a possible return to democratic rule, a surge of young Thais were eager to submit their ballot for the first time in their lives. Nevertheless, the larger story of the election is one marred with controversy, conflict, and confusion. As such, understanding the context surrounding the election may help clear up the true implications it has on Thai politics and democracy.

Background

2014 was not the first coup in Thai history, nor was it the second. Since 1912, Thailand had gone through at least 20 coup attempts, 12 of which were successful. The ability and capacity of the military to intervene in Thai politics is well-documented to the point of being unremarkable. The success of a coup also hinges on its rationale, which it often receives from intervening in an environment of political instability. The regularity of such coups is perhaps a testament to the level of influence that the military has on the country.

The lead up to the coup could only be explained by understanding one man: Thaksin Shinawatra. Thaksin was the country’s Prime Minister

in 2001, as well as one of its richest men. His party, the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) had just won the elections through a platform based on universal access to healthcare and policies that would benefit the rural farmers, turning them into a base of support. However, his policies and rhetoric were also seen as “populist”, and he was accused of corruption and selling national assets to foreign entities. With protests from the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD), also known as the “Yellow Shirts”, it all culminated in the 2006 coup that ousted him from power.

Despite Thaksin’s “self-imposed” exile and conviction in absentia, his support was still strong. A rival protest group against the “Yellow Shirts” called the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) or the “Red Shirts” continued to support Thaksin against the government under the rival Democrat Party. A new “Thaksinite” party called “Pheu Thai” was also formed, led by Thaksin’s sister, Yingluck. Pheu Thai would go on to win the 2011 general election, but also prompted anti-Thaksin protests led by former Democrat Party secretary general Suthep Thaugsuban.

The Pheu Thai party would face many crises and controversies, such as the 2011 Thai floods, the failed rice-pledging scheme, and the Amnesty Bill, which some fear would pardon and allow for the return of Thaksin. Massive protests led to further chaos with demonstrations, disruption of voting, and sporadic cases of violence, leading to at least 28 deaths and hundreds of injuries. The Constitutional Court would end up removing Yingluck and other ministers from office, though many criticized that this move was politically motivated. Amid this disruptive crisis, the chaotic environment would be followed by military intervention and martial law.



The Military Junta Regime (2014-2019)

After the coup, the government would be dissolved and the existing constitution repealed. In its place was the establishment of the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) and the introduction of the 2014 interim constitution, which would remain in force until 2017. The constitution was controversial as it had been approved without public consultation, as well as absolving all past and future actions by the military concerned with the coup. Most importantly, it included Section 44, which empowered the NCPO leader to issue any order “for the sake of the nation”, all of which were deemed “lawful, constitutional and final”.

Prayuth would begin his “Return Happiness to the People” campaign, promising the resumption of Thai democracy. Elections had previously been set to take place on July 20 until the instigation of the coup, so the NCPO promised to hold general elections after making reforms and drafting a new constitution. However, these elections were frequently set on arbitrary dates or delayed. Elections were promised as early as the end of 2015, but would be delayed at least five times for various reasons, including the referendum for the draft constitution, completion of reforms, new election laws and delayed royal decrees.

The regime also saw the referendum of a new constitution on August 7, 2016. It

proposed that the 250-member Senate would become a fully appointed chamber rather than partially elected like previously, at least for the first five years. With most members approved by the NCPO, they would have veto power on constitutional amendments and would be able to vote for the Prime Minister in combination with the House of Representatives. The referendum also asked whether non-members of the parliament would be allowed to become Prime Minister if there were a deadlock. While people could vote freely, they were banned from criticizing the draft, monitoring the referendum or expressing intention to vote against the draft constitution. These controversies led to accusations of the military attempting to retain its position after the end of the transition. The referendum would pass at 61% with a 59% turnout.

With the passing of a new constitution, numerous delays and the ascension a new king, the five year long regime would finally set the date of the election on March 24, 2019. As such, it is now crucial to understand the changes behind the electoral laws, the main contenders in this new election, and the controversies that have beset the election prior to the date of reckoning.

This is Part One of a three part series on the Thai 2019 Election. Part Two will discuss the process of the election itself.



THE MARTIN ENNALS AWARDS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

WHY IT MATTERS

by Kareem Gerdes

On 13 February, the 2019 Martin Ennals Awards ceremony took place at Salle Communale de Plainpalais, in Geneva, attended by the public, as well as, by representatives of the local and federal Swiss authorities, international organizations and foreign dignitaries. The most significant, however, was the presence of the award's nominees, to whom the attendees gathered to pay their utmost respect and salute their inspiring and extraordinary courage to defend and fight for human rights, in the midst of significant threats and challenges.

Although the Awards may not enjoy a popularity akin to the Nobel prize or the Oscars, they are no less important. On the contrary, the MEA's

importance cannot be appreciated enough, as they honor and highlight the stories of those who risk their lives to fight for basic human rights; to create a better life for themselves, families, communities and beyond. In an ever increasingly globalized and interconnected world, their struggles are not in isolation or separate from ours. Their victories over injustices are our victories. And their defeats and oppression are ours, as well. This is why we should not only care about the Awards, but we must recognize and support in any and every way possible the fights of human rights defenders all over the world and share their burdens in our own struggles for human dignity and freedom. Here are briefs of the inspiring stories of the 2019 MEA extraordinary nominees.

Marino Cordoba - Colombia

Marino Cordoba, a Colombian community leader, has been fighting for the rights of Afro-Colombians and other marginalized groups, since early 1990s. He comes from the Riosucio region in north-western Colombia, a resource-rich forest that has been subjected to the control and exploitation of paramilitary groups linked to powerful economic interests. Thanks to the activism of leaders like Marino, the constitution was amended in 1991 to recognize the rights of Afro-Colombians over their natural resources and environment, in addition to allowing them to politically participate in the Colombian congress.

However, on 20 December 1996, only seven days after the government acknowledged the land rights of Cordoba's community, the government initiated a joint military and paramilitary attack "Operation Genesis", to force out the Afro-Colombian community from their lands and take over their possessions.

Consequently, Cordoba hid for weeks in the jungle, then took refuge in Bogota. In 1999, Cordoba founded AFRODES (the National Association for displaced Afro-Colombians), in which he worked on helping the displaced and legally assisting them to be able to return home. Due to his mounting activism, Cordoba was attacked and shot in the leg in 2002.

Cordoba's supporters in the US Congress helped him seek asylum in the US, where he continued activism for his community and managed to get Congress to link military assistance to human rights. However, in 2012, despite the high risks, Cordoba decided to return to Colombia and continue to defend the rights of Afro-Colombians. Thanks to his determined activism, an "Ethnic Chapter" was included in the 2016 peace agreement signed between the government and the Farc, to ensure the protection of the rights of the country's ethnic groups.

Regrettably, since the signing of the peace agreement more than 400 ethnic and social leaders have been killed in Colombia, including Marino's own son, Wilma, in 2017. Nonetheless, Marino continues to fight and stand up for the rights of Afro-Colombians.

Eren Keskin - Turkey

As a lawyer for more than thirty years, Eren Keskin has played a significant role in establishing and strengthening civil society in Turkey, through her influential fight for human rights, particularly for the Kurds, women, the LGBTQ+ community, and for recognition of the Armenian genocide. In addition to other associations, Keskin is a founding member of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), widely considered as the most prominent human rights organization in Turkey that works on the rehabilitation and treatment of torture survivors.

In 1995, Keskin was sentenced for 6 months in prison, for using the word "Kurdistan" in an article. During that period, she encountered women who were sexually assaulted and forced to undergo strip searches in prison. Consequently, to fight violence against women in prison, Keskin co-founded the project, in 1997, "Legal Aid For Women Who Were Raped or Otherwise Sexually Abused by National Security Forces". Till this day, Keskin continues to lead legal work and activism for victims of sexual abuse and rape.

As a principled and vocal human rights activist against sexual violence and injustice, Keskin has faced numerous threats and physical attacks. She was assaulted in 1994 and in 2001. Additionally, she has been targeted by mainstream press and state authorities. From 2013 to 2016, Keskin held the title of Editor-in-Chief of the Özgür Gündem newspaper, in a sign of solidarity with the editorial staff that was imprisoned, after the coup attempt in 2016. As a result, Keskin was convicted and sentenced to 12.5 years in prison, due to trumped-up charges

of publishing articles that ‘degraded’ the Turkish nation and ‘insulted’ the Turkish president. She is currently free, pending an appeal. Till this day and in spite of significant intimidation and harassment, Keskin continues to fight for the rights of minority groups and the most vulnerable communities in Turkey.

Abdul Aziz Muhamat - Sudan

The third nominee and recipient of the 2019 Martin Ennals Award is Abdul Aziz Muhamat. Aziz is an extraordinary brave and resilient advocate for refugee rights. Due to the conflict in Darfur, Aziz was forced to flee and seek asylum. After flying to Indonesia, he attempted to reach Australia by boat, yet he was intercepted midway and forcibly transferred by Australian authorities to Manus island. Although Aziz was granted refugee status in 2015, yet he has been denied entry into Australia.

For several years, Aziz has worked tirelessly and passionately with fellow refugees to ameliorate their abysmal living conditions and to find a welcoming host country. He sent over 4000 voice messages to the award-winning podcast, The Messenger, detailing the inhumane and cruel treatment asylum seekers are subjected to. Aziz helped organize peaceful protests, wrote letters to politicians, co-led a mass hunger strike, and utilized other peaceful methods to protest cruel practices and policies.

On 31 October 2017, Australian authorities left Manus Island, to force the refugees to move to other facilities, without regard to their repeated rejections. Consequently, the refugees held daily peaceful protests, requesting to be allowed to seek asylum in a third country. The protests continued while the authorities cut all services, such as water, electricity, food and medical care. After 24 days of peaceful protests and horrendous living conditions, the refugees were forcibly removed by the authorities, without regard to their legitimate concerns.

During the 24 days of protest, Aziz has been an influential leader; encouraging and supporting his fellow detainees; managing the distribution of smuggled food and medicine; medically treating his mates by facilitating doctors’ consultations by phone, and so on.

In his award acceptance speech, Aziz said that “the cage has made me strong...we are known as a number, they erased our names, if I don’t use this number I don’t get anything...when you’re powerless nobody listens to you”. Ultimately, Aziz urged the ceremony attendees to “speak up for your rights, overcome your fears”, to remember that “freedom is not free, it requires sacrifice”.

Although New Zealand offered to accept 150 of the island’s asylum seekers, the Australian government rejected such proposal. Nonetheless, Aziz remains determined to help his fellow refugees to leave Manus Island and find a safe and welcoming host country.

These brave human rights fighters have devoted their lives for the betterment of their communities and for the pursuit of a bright future. They have risked their own lives and that of their families and loved ones. In pursuing a better life, these activists have been also fighting for all of us. All over the world, one can find countless examples of people trying to fight for a better future in all sorts of ways. In an era in which human rights have increasingly become a subject of cynicism and ridicule, it is all the more imperative to recognize, promote and join-in the efforts of human rights defenders all over the world.

NEW COLUMN – GENFEREI!

By Rainer Mensing

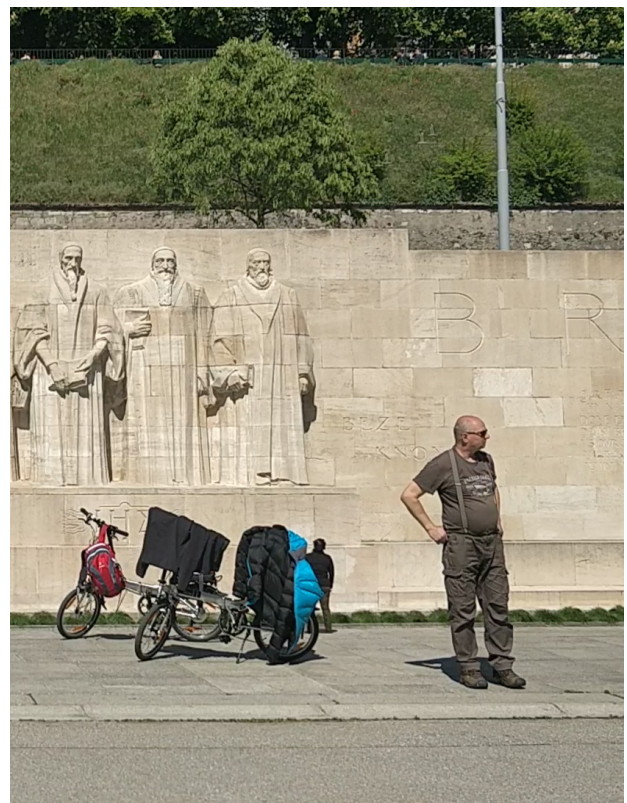
Oh Genève, what a speckless space. Sparkling clean, organized, almost underwhelming in its orderly working. The trains, the buses, the boutiques, the banks, the lights, the happy people and the endless Apéros. The little cleaning cars swirling through the city, restlessly vacuuming and flushing every single one of those cigarette buds off the surface. A worthy home for us speckless, righteous elites, who wish to project thy image onto the world.

Alright, I apologise for that mediocre attempt at sarcastic poetry. If you have ever cycled in this city, you know that there is anarchy in this city. But then again, it did surprise me to hear that within Switzerland, Geneva has built such a reputation for corruption, mismanagement, scandals and scurrile policy that the Swiss have found a word for it - 'Genferel'.

'Genferel', or 'genevoiserie' en français, is the official 'hashtag' for Swiss national gossip about Geneva. There is even a Prix Genferel awarded annually to the 'worst-off' Geneva public

administration or some other political fault pas happening in the Canton at the far end of the country. With the Swiss being swiss, there is even a strict definition to be found on the official website. A 'Genferel' is:

- accepté par tous, mais si mal ficelé qu'il se démonte de lui-même en coûtant très cher.
- bloqué par un conflit stérile entre autorités agissant pour défendre l'intérêt du peuple bien-sûr.
- qui ne se fait jamais, mais revient sans cesse sur le tapis, comme le sparadrap du capitaine Haddock.
- qui se réalise enfin, mais devenu inutile vu le temps écoulé entre le constat du besoin et la réalisation.
- lourd de conséquences imprévues et s'effondrant avec une élégance ou un retentissement particulier. La touche artistique est cruciale ici.



Curious to know what has been officially entitled 'Genferei'? The first official award was given in 2011 to the Geneva State Council, because they forgot to send a representative to the late Bishops funeral. Following that, there have been public officials attacking each other with buckets of water (2013), expensive museum renovations being eventually thwarted by public vote (2016), or hamstrung ticket pricing politics within the Geneva public transport (2017). Maybe you recently heard about Pierre Maudet, the Geneva state council member who got his luxury trips to Abu Dhabi paid for by the Crown Prince? Or his mother in law, a judge, who fell asleep during the hearing of a murder trial? These are probably in the running for this year's nominations.

Right, most things labeled 'Genferei' kind of ironically suggest that overall, things run pretty well in Geneva and Switzerland. This is not to say that Maudets' corruption scandal is not worth mentioning, it sure is, but I know for a fact that there is more going on here. Things that I would call a 'Genferei' are termed as such, not because they make you roll your eyes or giggle, but because they are outrageous. These are things happening right now, every day, without most people even noticing them. Maybe they are things that most people just accept as the way it is, or something that happened in the past, in Geneva's history, that is to be forgotten or repressed.

I am, probably like yourself, new to this city. For this reason, I want to create this column in our new Graduate Press. A place where we can unearth a few of these controversial aspects of Geneva. A space for a little bit of investigative journalism and awareness raising about the place we all spend an important part of our lives in.

There are already a few things on my mind that I would like to share over the coming

issues of The Graduate Press. But what about you? Is there anything that you know about Geneva and that you think would fit into this column? Maybe you did some critical research about life in Geneva? Or you know a story that is not as serious but, in your eyes, a 'Genferei' that your fellow students should know about? If yes, please feel very welcome to contribute.

And finally, a small disclaimer from my side. The content of this column certainly does not have to follow the 'official' definition I quoted above, mainly because I don't want to get into trouble with the local journalists for abusing their term. Also, to be qualified to understand what 'officially' makes a 'Genferei', you would probably have to have lived here for a while and call it your home. This column has its own flavor, an outsider perspective of unexpected realities. Still, if you are Swiss or even genevois*e... you got me, we'd love to hear from you!

For now, my first column post will take on the Geneva Freeport. Get in touch if you have some insights for me, otherwise stay tuned!

Thanks!

Rainer

P.S: Contact me at rainer.mensing@graduateinstitute.ch if you wish to get in touch or submit a story as part of this column.

CASE POSTALE 1672

By Harvey Parafina



There is something I always find peculiar with the way the TPG tram on line 15 bends from Rue de Lausanne to Avenue de France, as it ascends towards the United Nations. The cramped residential and commercial buildings all of a sudden give way to a clearing with feats of modern architecture of glass and concrete that seem to tower the rest of the city.

Taking cue from from Pierre Ruetschi's reflections in *Tribune de Genève*,

Les espaces y sont dégagés, on y respire un air vivifiant, comme si on montait en altitude. Moins charmant mais plus stimulant, plus épuré aussi. ... Autre registre, autre territoire, celui de la Genève internationale. Nous voici donc au centre du monde!

From the Picciotto Student House and Maison de la Paix to UNHCR and Palais de Nations itself, their grandness and the powers they hold can keep us in awe of the difference of the city within the city. Ruetschi puts it quite well: it is easy to think that we are at the center of the world.

His article came at the time when the issue on Pierre Maudet, one of Geneva's state councilor,

was about to be forgotten.¹ While at the same time, a majority of Genevois would not have known of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' pivotal role in easing the tensions between Russia and the United States regarding the INF (Immediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty), and that on the same day that he has spoken to students at IHEID on the importance of press freedom. The two cities seem to exist in different worlds, and yet we speak of the same Geneva.

To know that such impressions of Geneva come not only from those from the outside, but from a Genevois, gives a bit of comfort that we're not alone with how I see and experience the city. His reflection gives an impression that perhaps there is something that can be said about the city we live in. Various conversations with friends, most of whom are living here for the first time,

Pierre Maudet, a rising Swiss politician, met his fall a few months back as he was exposed to have "hidden a part of the truth" to the public. He was being investigated on his first-class business trip in 2015 to Abu Dhabi with his family, all paid for by the foreign government. There were suspicions that he had met with the Crown Prince Sheikh of Abu Dhabi in the said trip, and when a contract under his supervision was awarded to a company from Abu Dhabi.

would often produce their own impressions: a global city that is nowhere comparable to London or New York, neither in its size nor the energy that it exudes. For a time, I even thought, “Geneva has nothing else to offer.”

However, such thoughts come at a juncture when put under Humean light: impressions arise only when there is established contact. First impressions can last, but without encountering it, how well do we really know Geneva?

The Project

The early stages of writing this column was mostly spent thinking about how it was possible for me to have lived in the city for seven months, and only spend what I approximate to be 80% of the time on Avenue de France. An exaggeration perhaps, but this should come as no surprise given that I live in Picciotto, a mere four-minute walk from my room to the hallowed halls of Maison de la Paix.

What strikes me, however, is how within that time, I wasn’t aware of my own lack of interest in the city itself. Surely, it is understandable: I have more urgent, more important things to do. I do prefer not getting piled under the rubble of exams and paper deadlines. But it is in thinking that perhaps that there is nothing else to discover betrays the supposed endless curiosity that humans have.

Reflections such as these make me wonder, “What else is there to see and experience in the city?” Is there anything that I have missed? It is from these simple questions that Riya and I have started thinking about the spaces we occupy and interact with in the city.

The City as the Lens

Our original intention for this project was simple: to get to know the city better. We’ll ask various people from the Institute

about their favorite place in Geneva, and conduct the interview in that space. On the one hand, we are able to map out the city from the perspective of students, by placing ourselves and those who read this outside the international bubble of the Institute, and in the city itself.

On the other hand, however, after several interviews, we realized that one’s experience in the city cannot be separate from their experience at the Institute. The goal is not only to get to know Geneva, but to discover our sense of place in the Institute, in the city, and hopefully our own place in the world. In the same way that the Institute is not separate from Geneva, neither are we from the spaces we involve ourselves in the city. We do not only look at the city, but we also use the city to look at ourselves.

As mentioned, we have already conducted several interviews -- three, to be precise -- that only aimed to answer something simple, “What is your favorite place here, in the city?” Over the next few months, we will be releasing the interviews on our website, in the hopes of pushing the conversation forward.

The project in itself is, at best, slightly vague in its objective and its ambition. It dreams of trying to answer, “What is it about the city that we want to say?” *Est-ce simplement l’ennui de la vie étudiante?* We don’t know either. We’re aware that it is difficult to make sense of this while in the thick of things. However, we’re hoping that through this project, we get to take a step back, and take the city and ourselves as objects of our boundless curiosity.

We’d love to hear your thoughts. If you have anything to say about this column or any other piece in the future, write to us at gisa. thegraduate@graduateinstitute.ch.



‘FRIENDSHIP IN LONELY TIMES’

By Paras Arora

1st-year Master's candidate

Department of Anthropology & Sociology

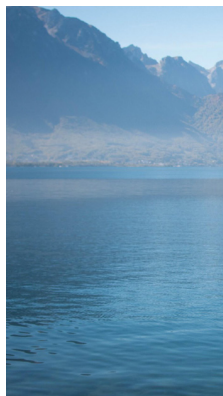
POSTCARDS FROM: MONTREUX

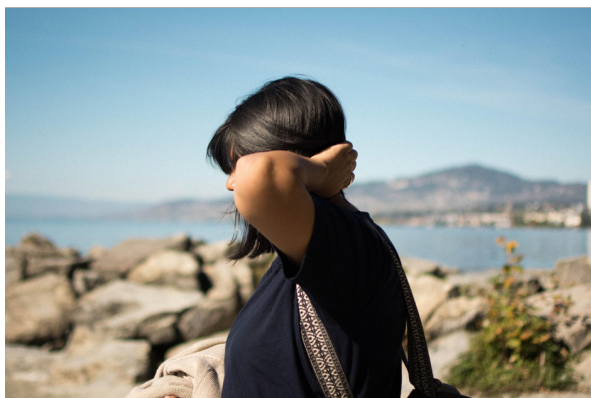
By Riya Sarin

Studying in Geneva, it's sometimes easy to forget that we live in one of the most picturesque places in the world. Less than 2 hours away in any given direction, lie quaint towns, castles and mountains. It might be hard to take out the time to travel often, but some travel, I feel, is essential.

Sometime last October, two friends and I made the trip to Montreux. We took the train there, explored the market by the lake and then walked a little over an hour to visit the Chateau de Chillon. It was a beautiful, sunny day marked by a nice lunch, a visit to the town's cathedral and the constant presence of the lake. It was much like other small European towns with its winding lanes and building with multicoloured shutters. There was nothing breath-taking or life changing about Montreux, but it was still a day that stands out in my memory. It was a slow day, relaxed and carefree, it marked a change of space, a change of view. It allowed me to step out of the small world I had made for myself in Geneva and made me realise that I live halfway across the world from where I was born. I didn't think about what to make for dinner, nor did I think about my next response paper.

This small rambling is not meant to herald a wave of travelling or force anyone to examine their lives; it's just a small reminder to sometimes take a step back, to look at things in a different way. Travelling allows me to step out of my head in much the same way photography does, and hopefully these words and images will serve as a refreshing pause to your day. In these images, I haven't included any of Montreux's famous sites (the previously mentioned chateau and cathedral). Those are things one should go and see for themselves. I have however included images that remind me of that day and the way it made me feel.





IHEID DOMINATES THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019!

By Aditya Pant

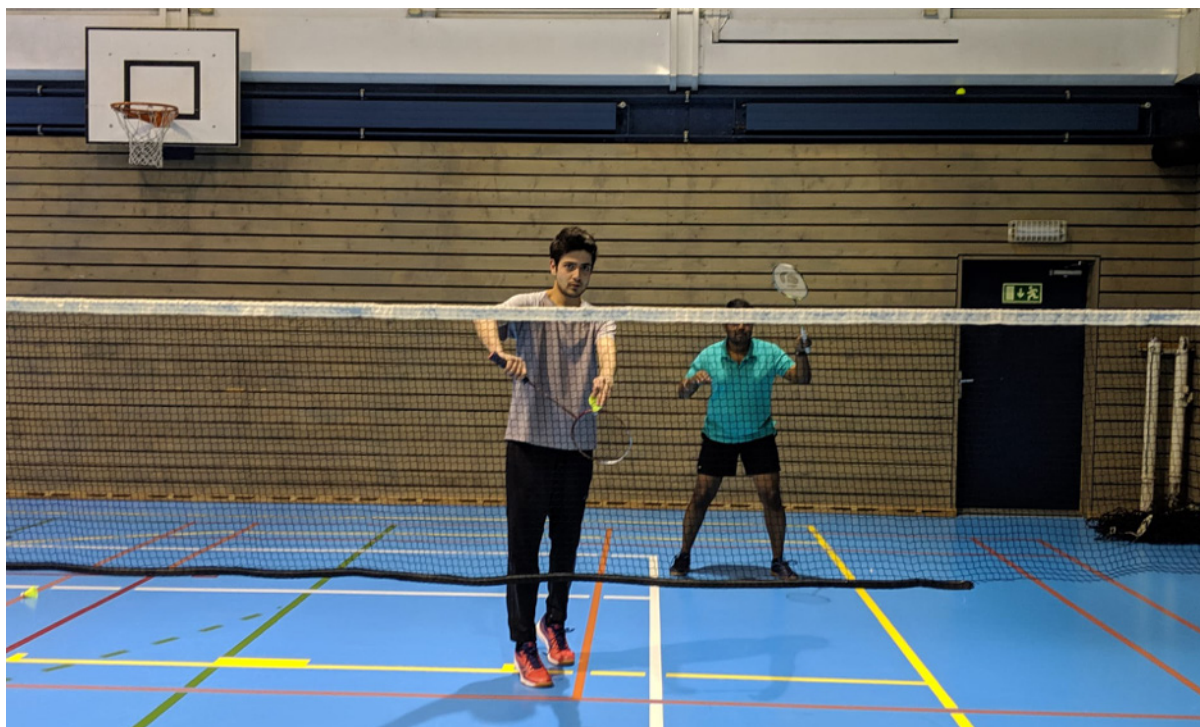
There was an extraordinary haul of 8 medals won by the students of the Graduate Institute at the University of Geneva Badminton Championship 2019. Conducted over 4-11 April, the tournament attracted players from a number of Swiss Universities.

What made the victories even sweeter was the fact that all categories had winners from IHEID. Additionally, all the students that participated in the tournament won a medal.

The star of the tournament was Tejal Ambedkar, who successfully defended her Women Singles crown from last year and added the Mixed Doubles crown, with Narayan Nathani, to her impressive tally. Her performance was clinical throughout the tournament; she did not drop a single set! Karun Gopinath won the Bronze

medal in the Men's Singles category. He paired up with Aditya Pant to win the finals of the Men's Doubles category, dropping only one set throughout the tournament. They dropped this set against compatriots and practice partners Girish Deepak and Narayan Nathani during the Semi-Finals. In an exciting play-off, Deepak and Narayan got the better of their opponents to grab the Bronze medal.

- Women's Singles - Tejal Ambedkar - Gold
- Men's Singles - Karun Gopinath - Bronze
- Men's Doubles - Aditya Pant and Karun Gopinath - Gold; Girish Deepak and Narayan Nathani - Bronze
- Mixed Doubles - Tejal Ambedkar and Narayan Nathani - Gold



QUEERING IHEID

By Juliette McHardy

The Queer International Student Assembly (QISA) was formed this semester with the intention of resurrecting the work of the defunct Rainbow Initiative. To ensure the effort's success, and because queer welfare is everyone's welfare, QISA was formed under the Welfare Committee to permit us time to grow and to explore the feasibility or desirability of becoming an independent initiative. Our enduring aim has been to create a safe and open space for IHEID's queer community while reaching out to allies and queering up the broader IHEID community.



We have pursued this mission with fervour starting with our inaugural drinks at the semester's beginning and our first general meeting the week after. At our party we had gay trivia, cheap cocktails and introduced ourselves to IHEID's queers and allies. At our general meeting we established our programme of work for the semester and also hosted all who attended for a RuPaul's Drag Race viewing afterwards. It turned out that IHEID's queer community was vibrant and pride. With the addition of some organisation, this was all we needed to get QISA off to a fantastic start.

And so we proceeded with a variety of efforts to strengthen the queer community and bring some queerness to all at IHEID. One of our most successful ideas has been Queer Brunches, of which we have held two, where we

bring together queers and allies for delicious food and fun chats in a safe and open space. We have also been pursuing an effort, dubbed Queer Care, to compile a list of queer friendly healthcare providers that we can share with the Welfare Committee and also to anyone who approaches us. This is an important issue because many LGBT+ students feel alienated or isolated by conventional healthcare providers. This can both cause a reticence to seek out care and cause care received to be lower quality due to a lack of full disclosure. We have already made substantial progress on Queer Care and will continue working at it over the semester (any tips are appreciated!). Our final other main effort has been holding the La Fête du Printemps party at the Picciotto Common room to bring some queerness to everyone interested and make more people comfortable joining in with QISA. It was a very well attended and fun party that has given us plenty of ideas on what to do for next semester.

Finally, we have a number of upcoming efforts such as providing a free condoms box to promote safer sex, continuing the Queer Brunches and RuPaul gatherings and also planning and supporting events for Geneva Pride week (29 June to 7 July). We'll keep you all posted on these events and if you want to specifically receive updates from us please email gisa.qisa@graduateinstitute.ch to be put on our mailing list. All queers and allies fully welcome!



BE A PART OF THE DISCUSSION!
SEND IN YOUR SUBMISSION TO GISA.THEGRADUATE@GRADUATEINSTITUTE.CH