



## 25 Years On, Where Are We All Now?

Simon Hix

I graduated with a BSc(Econ) in Government and History from the LSE in the Summer of 1990, so 25 years ago this year! Apart from wondering where all those years have gone (!), I have also been wondering what happened to my fellow Government department graduates from a quarter of a century ago. I am still in touch with quite a few people from that time, but have sadly lost touch with many others. So I did some research to find as many of the others as I could.

But, before we get to that, let me tell you about a few things that struck me when looking back through the departmental archives. First of all, only 45 people graduated from the department in 1990, whereas 93 students will graduate this year. Part of the increase in student numbers is explained by the fact that we have more undergraduate degree programmes now. In 1990 we had only two main degrees: BSc Government, with 19 students; and BSc Government and History, with 21 students. We also had two smaller programmes: BSc Government and Law, with 4 students; and BSc Russian Government, History and Language, with only 2 graduates in 1990. The Government, and Government and History programmes still exist and continue to attract excellent students, but the Government and Law, and Russian Government, History and Language programmes were withdrawn at some point. Instead we have two other joint degrees: Government and Economics; and Politics and Philosophy. And in September 2015 we are launching two new joint degrees: Government and International Relations; and Philosophy, Politics

and Economics [yes, you read that right, LSE will finally have a “PPE” degree!].

The second thing that struck me was that the gender balance of the undergraduate student body does not appear to have changed much between 1990 and 2015. There were 15 women and 30 men in my graduating class in 1990, whereas this year there will be 32 women and 61 men graduating from our degrees. Interestingly, our current first and second years are closer to gender parity; for example, of the 112 students in the second year this year, 47 are women (42%). So perhaps the 2014-15 cohort is an outlier.

Third, only 4 out of the 45 got a First in 1990 (about 9%). In contrast, 23 out of the 101 graduates in 2014 got Firsts. Is it easier to get a First now? To be honest, I don't think so. Students today study considerably harder than we did in the late 1980s, and the teaching and the courses are generally better today than they were back then. On top of that, “in my day” it just wasn't cool to get a First, although we were secretly jealous of the few superstars who did.

So, what has happened to us in the intervening quarter-century? I managed to track down about 30 of the 45 who graduated in 1990. I found 5 journalists, 5 in government service of one form or another, 5 academics, 3 in the corporate world, 2 in the world of arts and culture, 2 in public affairs and consulting, and (perhaps surprisingly) only 3 who either hold or have held elected office. But, as social scientists we must recognize that

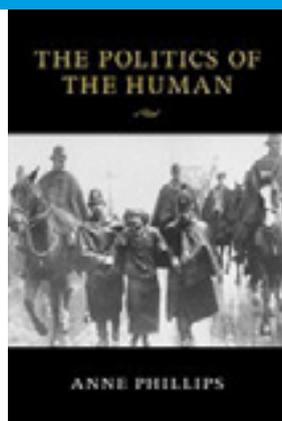
this is not a “representative sample” of the 45 graduates, as it is no doubt easier to track down people in academia, the media, politics, and the arts – who show up in Google searches or even have their own Wikipedia entries – than people in business or less public professions. Nevertheless, the graduating class of 1990 is an impressive bunch!

Starting with the “politicians”, Michiel van Hulten, who was General Secretary of the LSE Student Union, went on to be elected as a Dutch Member of the European Parliament. He then returned to Dutch politics, becoming Chair of the Dutch Labour Party. At a completely different level of government, Susan Brown and Alex Hollingsworth are Oxford City Councillors. Susan worked in communications for the Labour Party for 8 years, but these days works in communication and engagement for the NHS. Alex works in publishing and was Leader of Oxford City Council until he stood down in 2006. Alex and Susan are a couple, and met at LSE, “on election night, actually”, Susan recalls!

Next the journalists. Shaun Ley is a prominent political correspondent for the BBC, and is currently presenter of *The World This Weekend* and *The World at One* on BBC Radio 4. Emma Hurd was for many years a leading correspondent for Sky News. She reported from New York in the aftermath of the World Trade Centre bombings on September 11, 2001, then spent several years reporting from conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa, including in Israel/Palestine,

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# Staff News: Highlights



**Professor Anne Phillips** has published her new book *The Politics of the Human* (Cambridge University Press, March 2015). She has recently returned from Athens, where she gave a lecture on the topic of the book in the Megaron Plus lecture series – a series on New Ideas for a World in Change, jointly organised by the Megaron (Athens concert hall), the LSE, and the LSE's Hellenic Alumni Association. In Feb-March this year she was a Visiting Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, working on a paper on Exploitation. <http://www.cambridge.org/9781107475830>



**Dr Denisa Kostovicova** has been awarded a Research Fellowship for 2015-16 by the Leverhulme Trust. Dr Kostovicova will look at 'Reconciliation Within and Across Divided Societies: evidence from the Balkans'. Using her knowledge of all of the Balkan languages, and building on her work on civil society in post-conflict contexts, Dr Kostovicova will study the RECOM process in the Balkans. This unique, locally-driven NGO initiative for establishing facts about war crimes gathers civil society groups from all ethnic groups in the region. The research will provide a systematic evaluation of a claim that a regional character of contemporary wars has to be addressed with a regional approach to transitional justice, and identify conditions conducive to reconciliation across the ethnic divide.

## Is a peace agreement within sight in Colombia?



For over 50 years Colombia has been affected by political violence. The human and material costs of violence have been enormous. The conflict has so far left an estimated 220,000 dead and around 6,000,000 people have been displaced from their homes and their lands. The material costs are difficult to calculate but run into billions of US dollars and have significantly hampered Colombia's development potential and the quality of its democracy. Since October 2012 the Colombian government and the main rebel armed group, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) have been engaged in negotiations in Habana, Cuba, towards a peace agreement with the aim of reaching a final agreement

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Syria, Iraq, Sudan/Darfur, Zimbabwe, Congo, and South Lebanon – for which she won a coveted New York Television festival Gold Medal. Justin McCurry is The Guardian's Tokyo correspondent. Gareth Harding has for many years been one of the leading EU journalists in Brussels. He is currently Director of the Missouri School of Journalism Brussels programme and he also runs his own communications agency, Clear Europe (where Michiel is now a senior advisor). And Thomas Feiling is a prominent journalist, writer and documentary film-maker.

In the world of arts and culture, probably the most famous of our graduating class is Fiona Weir. Fiona is one of the UK's leading film and TV casting directors, and has cast many well known films including all of the Harry Potter movies. Ekow Eshun is an art and culture journalist and broadcaster, is a former editor of Arena magazine, and for many years was Director of the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London.

In government service, the most notable of our graduating year is Joy Drucker, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary in the US Department of State, in the Obama administration. Tom Parker has also had an interesting career working for government, as an intelligence officer (a counter-spy!) and a United Nations war crimes investigator. In public affairs and consulting, Dr Dafne Ter-Sakari

an is a prominent political risk consultant, specializing in advising on investments in Russia. Will White, meanwhile, is Director of Global Communications at Baker and McKenzie, one of the world's largest law firms.

Finally, to the academics. In addition to myself at the LSE, there is Matt Matravers, who is a Professor of Politics at the University of York. Malcolm Mercer is a professional historian with the Royal Armouries, and is Curator of the Tower of London History and Special Collections at HM Tower of London. Nick Sitter is Professor of Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest. And Tim Andrews is an Associate Professor of International Business at Thammasat University in Thailand, after many years of business experience in the UK, France, and Thailand.

I have no doubt missed many other fellow Government Department graduates from 1990 who have gone on to great things. To them I apologise. What I would like to think, though, is that we all share a connection to a great institution, and that the things we learned and the people we met in and around Houghton Street in the late 1980s has helped us enjoy our lives and fulfill our potential. I met my wife, Beth Ginsburg, as a General Course student in my second year as an undergrad. So that's certainly true for me!

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# Department of Government Research Groups' News



The Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation (CARR) is leading three year collaborative research project on Transboundary Crisis Management. This project, funded under the EU's Horizon2020 programme, bring together seven international universities, think tanks and consultancies to research EU-wide and national crisis management capacities. More information can be found on the project website: [www.transcrisis.eu](http://www.transcrisis.eu). In addition, CARR has organised a set of regulators' forums to bring together those regulators that, as yet, have not had a platform to discuss common problems and challenges, such as those relating to inspection and enforcement, the detection and management of failure, the role of stakeholder involvement or questions about transboundary regulation. CARR held a number of successful workshops and seminars, ranging from the future of regulation in higher education, the regulation of standards in public life to the study of regulatory agencies. More information on CARR's activities can be found under [www.lse.ac.uk/carr](http://www.lse.ac.uk/carr).



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by the end of the year.

In order to better understand the prospects and challenges of the peace process **Francisco Panizza**, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Head of the Latin America International Research Programme at LSE IDEAS, organized a one day conference on 12 May on "The Colombian Transition: Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Context".

The event, was hosted by LSE IDEAS, and brought together UK-based and Colombian scholars in panels that addressed the main questions currently being subject of the negotiations: transitional justice, illicit drugs in a post-conflict scenario, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and rural development. Among the LSE scholars that contributed to the panels were Dr Kirsty Ainley from the International Relations Department, Dr John Collins from LSE IDEAS, Professor Gareth Jones from Geography and Professor Tony Hall from Social Development. The highlight of the event was a public lecture by



## The Comparative Politics and Comparative Political Economy network

The Comparative Politics and Comparative Political Economy network was created in the 2014/15 academic year as successor to the comparative politics lecture series and research seminar organized by the CP group in previous years. The CP/CPE network involves not only faculty and PhDs from the Department's Comparative Politics group, but also academics and students from other research groups in the department as well as the Departments of International Development, International Relations, and the European Institute, among others. CP/CPE's main activity is a research-focused lunchtime seminar that is convened at least every second week, in which a mix of local and foreign speakers discuss their research and progress. 2014/15 international presenters included Staffan Lindberg (Lund), Ian Shapiro (Yale), Kathleen Thelen (MIT), Steven Levitsky (Harvard), Robert Bates (Harvard), Jane Gingrich (Oxford), and Peter Hall (Harvard). Several of the events were organized jointly with other units such as PSPE, the African Political Economy group, the Political Theory group, and LSE IDEAS. CP/CPE also organized two half-day faculty workshops, on "Liberalism and Inequality" in Michaelmas Term and the "Politics of Piketty" in Lent Term, as well as a full-day PhD workshop in Lent Term in which "mid-career" PhDs with a CP-related dissertation topic presented on their research in progress. Many of them came from across the School; CP/CPE events were well-attended and have led to the emergence of a real cross-departmental research community on CPE matters. The network will continue to operate with broadly the same format in 2015/16, but aims at even more cooperation with other units and centres across the School, including the Middle East Centre and the new Institute of Global Affairs.

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Mr Sergio Jaramillo, the Colombian Government High Commissioner for Peace and the Colombian Government chief negotiator in Habana, that was chaired by Professor Michael Cox, Director of LSE IDEAS.



Government Department Visiting Fellow [Dr Jill Stuart](#) has won this year's prestigious Margaret Mead Award Lecture for social sciences from the British Science Association. Dr Stuart specialises in the law, politics and ethics of outer space exploration and exploitation and was selected in recognition of her cutting-edge research.

The LSE nominated Dr Stuart for the Award, which she won after a competitive selection process. She will present her Award Lecture at the British Science Festival in September.

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## Women in Conflict: violence, injustice and power - Denisa Kostovicova

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What happens when many US women join the military and serve their country in Iraq? They get sexually abused by their fellow soldiers. This shocking finding by award-winning journalist, novelist and playwright Helen Benedict, inspired a debate on Women in Conflict organised by the Conflict Research Group at the LSE. Every day, on TV screens, in the social media and in the newspapers, we are reminded of the many ways in which women are involved in conflict the world over. Many are killed, injured or raped. Others blow themselves up. At the same time, ever more women are joining the military and international peace keeping missions. Do these developments tell us a complete story of women's role in conflict? What is the real story of power, equality and justice from women's point of view? This was the topic of a debate organised by the Conflict Research Group (CRG) on 28 April at the LSE. The CRG is a multidisciplinary group based at the Department of Government that gathers scholars and researchers at the School with an interest in conflict. The opening of the play *Lonely Soldier Monologues* at The Cockpit in London was an occasion to bring together academia and the arts to make sense of the turmoil of contemporary conflict from the perspective of gender. *Lonely Soldier Monologues* is based on

Helen Benedict's ground-breaking book *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (2009). Helen Benedict is an award-winning novelist, journalist and playwright specialising in issues of social justice, and a professor of journalism at Columbia University in New York. *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* documents the stories of women in the US military who served in Iraq and the many challenges they faced, including sexual assault from their fellow soldiers. Her writings inspired an ongoing class



action suit against the Pentagon on behalf of women and men who were sexually assaulted in the military. It also inspired the 2012 Oscar-nominated documentary *The Invisible War*, in which she appears. Her work on women soldiers won the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism. Helen Benedict joined us for the debate alongside Dr Katherine Brown from King's College, London, and Dr Marsha Henry, from the LSE. All speakers put the issue of gender at the forefront of their analysis of conflict and security. Helen Benedict took us through her

research and the story that unfolded, revealed a pattern of sexual abuse suffered by many young and often vulnerable U.S. recruits, both during the recruitment process and while they were on duty in the deserts of Iraq. Dr Brown compared the motivation of women to join national armies and those joining guerrilla and terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda or the IS. Dr Henry extended the comparison further and explored the increasing numbers of women, particularly those from the global South, serving in international peace keeping missions. The ensuing discussion involving the audience touched on a number of issues, including: What motivates young women to join the military? Should women join the military in the first instance? Should they be segregated within the forces when they do join? How are economic inequalities reproduced and reflected in greater numbers of women soldiers? Is domestic violence connected with sexual abuse in the military? Do women who join terrorist organisations follow their politics, or are they merely victims drawn into the conflict unwittingly? Complex questions elicited an equally nuanced and considered debate.

The voice of women soldiers who suffered in Iraq at the hands of their friends was brought alive in front of the LSE audience by a short preview of the play. Prav Mennon-Johansson, a theatre producer and director whose PMJ Productions brought the play to London, queried whether the abuse of female soldiers by their own comrades-in-arms is consigned only to the U.S. army. Bringing the play to the UK aimed to shine a light on human rights abuses suffered by female soldiers in the UK, as the US story had been dismissed by some of Mennon-Johansson's British

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interlocutors, 'It doesn't happen here!'. In 2013, two staged readings of *Lonely Soldier Monologues* were performed at The Brixton East Theatre and Arts Theatre in the West End, London. Audiences were shocked, outraged and interested. People wanted to find out more about the issues discussed. The London play and a series of events that accompany it provide an opportunity to continue important discussions on this and the related issue of domestic abuse.

Lively discussion at the LSE showed us how important and challenging the issue of human rights, women and conflict is. The event drew a wide and diverse audience, and the topic attracted significant media attention. Informed about the LSE event, the BBC contacted us, with a request to put them in touch with the playwright. As a result, Helen Benedict was a guest on BBC4's weekly discussion programme *Start the Week*, a day before the LSE debate. The event at the LSE was also attended by college students from Shooters Hill school in London. Our events manager Tom Ward was contacted by their sociology teacher who inquired about bringing a large group of students to the event. We took the opportunity to have an informal chat with them. The students found the

event stimulating, and experiencing a debate at the LSE inspiring, not just for the pursuit of their studies but also for considering university education, and possible application to the LSE.

A recent report of the conviction of the British army sergeant who was found guilty of 13 sex attacks on seven female recruits demonstrates how timely this debate is in the United Kingdom.

Above all, the LSE event showed that putting gender at the forefront of analysis is critical, not just for gleaning the many roles of women in conflict, but also for understanding the very nature of conflict and politics around it. The debate it prompted reached far beyond a packed LSE theatre.



The 2014 REF exercise ranked the LSE Government and International Relations Departments' joint submission first in the UK for the percentage

of its research graded world leading or internationally excellent (88%). LSE also came top in the Politics and International Studies REF panel in terms of the most research publications graded "world leading" (4\*); the absolute number of top-rated research outputs.

The Department of Government also submitted 4 Impact Case Studies, demonstrating the impact of our research on politics and policy-making in the UK and elsewhere in the world:

- **Improving digital era public management in UK central government**
- **Strengthening democratic accountability in the European Union**

- **More equitable and humane asylum policies in the European Union**
- **Improved public budgeting and performance auditing**

To find out more about our world leading research, visit the LSE research impact website.

## Cumberland Lodge 2015



This year's conference, organised by Professor Mark Thatcher, was entitled "National Identity in an Internationalised World" and was attended by over 60 students and staff from the

department. Eight speakers – **Rt Hon Margaret Hodge** MP, Labour MP for Barking and Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, **Dame Tessa Jowell**, former MP for Dulwich and West Norwood, **John Denham**, former MP for Southampton, **Denisa Kostovicova** and **John Hutchinson** from the Government department, **Montserrat Guibernau** from Queen Mary, **Luiza Bialasiewicz** from the University of Amsterdam, and **David Goodheart**, director of DEMOS, all kindly gave up their time to speak at the Lodge. The talks were interesting and varied, and covered an impressive range of topics. Themes included "Migration and Politics" and "The Emerging Politics of English Identity".

Spending the weekend at Cumberland Lodge isn't just about enjoying the talks. The Lodge is a wonderful and atmospheric place to spend a weekend, with beautiful rooms, excellent food and a cosy bar, and is a good base for exploring the sprawling grounds of Windsor Great Park.

# The Crisis in Greece - Stephanie Rickard



Greece has submitted new proposals to its creditors in an attempt to finally end the deadlock over the release of further bailout funding. **Stephanie J. Rickard** writes that the present impasse could have been avoided if the strategy pursued by the International Monetary Fund in previous loan programmes to other countries had been repeated. Drawing on a study of democratic countries under IMF programmes, she notes that the IMF has typically relaxed loan programme requirements in the leadup to elections. By failing to do so in the Greek case, the foundations were set for Syriza to come to power on an anti-austerity platform, making a compromise far more difficult.

With no deal reached between Greece and its creditors despite months of negotiations over the release of further financial assistance, the country opted to delay a €300 million debt repayment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that was due on 5 June. The Greek government now intends to bundle together several payments totalling €1.6 billion into a single payment due on 30 June, while fresh proposals have been communicated to creditors in an attempt to secure additional bailout funding.

This impasse could have been avoided. The IMF, an institution that for decades has loaned money to countries

in distress, successfully sidestepped Greece-like drama in the past. The IMF accomplished this by relaxing the reforms required of borrowers in the run up to elections. In [a recent study](#), I and my co-author Teri Caraway, find the IMF softened mandated labour market reforms in loans negotiated within six months of a pending election. The further away elections were, the more stringent the reforms required in exchange for financing.

The IMF typically softens required reforms prior to elections to avoid precisely the situation now playing out in Greece. Tough reforms give opposition parties ammunition to use against the government and increase the chances that the incumbent parties will lose. In Greece, the painful austerity policies demanded by international lenders resulted in a series of convulsive protests that shook the nation and ultimately led to the election of a new anti-austerity government under Syriza in place of the previous New Democracy-led government fronted by Antonis Samaras.

Newly elected governments feel little obligation to abide by the terms of an existing loan agreement. Following the 1987 elections in Argentina, for example, the new Peronist-dominated Con-

***“Greece’s creditors are paying the price for not relaxing their conditions prior to the 2015 election.”***

gress tried to undermine the government’s reforms, especially those at the heart of the IMF loan programme. The resulting policy paralysis contributed to the collapse of the IMF programme.

In Greece, the newly elected government led by Syriza’s Alexis Tsipras sought to re-negotiate the terms of their loan programme. If the ‘Troika’ of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF had dialled back the required reforms prior to the 2015 Greek election, things might be very different today. Syriza may not have won office and the ensuing stalemate that has crippled the country may have been avoided.



Yet, few attempts were made to soften the requisite reforms prior to the 2015 election. We can only speculate as to why. One possibility is that the IMF suggested toning down the reforms but was overruled by the European Commission and the European Central Bank. In our study, all of the loans we examined were made by the IMF alone – unaccompanied by other institutions, like the European Central Bank or European Commission. Perhaps the dynamics of the Troika have led to different lending practices. Of course, we do not know what went on behind closed doors so we can only speculate about the internal dynamics of the Troika.

The IMF has a history of lending to countries in crisis and as the “lender of last resort” for decades the Fund has presumably discovered expedient negotiating and lending strategies. The European Commission and European Central Bank would be wise to take note, particularly of the importance of democratic elections, which influence not only national politics but also the international economy.



# democratic dashboard



The Democratic Dashboard is a project established by Democratic Audit, based in the Public Policy Group. It has two broad aims, to build an open-access database of electoral results at a variety of levels, including local, general, European and devolved, and to present this data in an accessible, citizen-focused way. The first phase of this project was to concentrate on an information portal for the 2015 General Election. The Dashboard idea was initiated and overseen by **Professor Patrick Dunleavy**, and the Project Lead was **Carl Cullinane**. Funding was provided by the University of Canberra Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, along with the LSE Government Department, LSE Central funds, and some internal funds. However the site was produced with significant budget restrictions. DemocraticDashboard.com went live on the 27th of March, shortly before the Election Campaign began. By entering a postcode, or clicking on a map, it would take a user to their constituency where they would receive extensive information on their local area, including recent election results, 2015 candidates and social media profiles, forecasts and local polling; along with a variety of local information including party finances and area demographics. This information was presented using an engaging array of maps, graphs and infographics. A blog also accompanied the constituency pages, with regional election previews, along with analysis of European election votes, the effect of marginal and safe seats on political equality, and interactive maps featuring constituency polling and forecasts from the Election Forecast team. The site partnered with VoteMatch, one of the most popular Voter Advice Applications, in order to provide voters with their own constituency context, once they had considered the policy issues at hand. This partnership has been very successful, and the two services complemented each other very well. As of May 8th, the day after the Election, the site had received over 200,000 visits and over 400,000 pageviews. On Elec-

tion Day alone, it received 50,000 pageviews. At one point shortly after midnight, the volume of traffic briefly took the site down. The social media campaign was led by the LSE's official Facebook account, and a dedicated Dashboard Twitter feed @DemocraticDash. Over a short period of time, it amassed over 2,500 followers, over 800,000 tweet impressions and 1400 retweets, including notable mentions from Armando Iannucci, Huw Edwards, the New Statesman and the Guardian Datablog, among others. The site received endorsements from Graham Allen, Chair of the Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee, and Cristina Leston-Bandeira, Speaker's Commissioner on Digital Democracy. During the campaign Democratic Audit staff conducted interviews and produced content for the Royal Statistical Society Blog, the Huffington Post, the Daily Mirror, Newsweek, the LSE Alumni Echo, the LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog, and the LSE General Election Blog. Of particular interest to media outlets was the research on 'Voter Power' and the electoral system, along with the challenges of collecting and displaying Open Data. Staff also made several appearances on television discussing Dashboard research, among other election issues such as electoral reform, including BBC News, UTV Ireland, SVT (Sweden), Al Jazeera UK and Al Jazeera Arabic. The Dashboard received mentions on the Guardian Election Live blog, the Channel Four website, the Conversation, the official Facebook UK Politics Portal, among others. Audit staff were also invited to give a presentation on Open Data and the General Election at the Department of Communities and Local Government. This was well received, with particular interest in the highlight on poor and uneven collection of Local Elections data. This is largely left to private individuals to collect, and an issue that needs to be dealt with urgently. Staff also contributed to the 'Reading Dashboards' ESRC project, based in the University of Warwick.

Feedback was generally excellent, with users praising the ease of use and depth of data. The interactive mapping aspect of the project also proved particularly popular, with the Constituency Polling maps and the projected declaration times maps the most popular pages on the site. In terms of regions, Scotland was by a distance the most commonly accessed, followed by London and the South East. Bristol West was the most frequently visited constituency page, a Three Way Marginal between Labour, the Lib Dems and the Greens. Seats where the Greens were competitive ranked highly on the site, with Brighton Pavilion and Norwich South also in the top group of seats. High-profile seats such as Sheffield Hallam, Thanet South and Bermondsey and Old Southwark were also in the top ten. Alongside these, popular seats tended to include Labour-Lib Dem marginals, along with an array of London Labour seats. The LSE's own constituency of Holborn and St. Pancras ranked ninth. The first phase of the project can hopefully be adjudged a significant success, expanding the reach of Democratic Audit research and attracting wide praise. It is hoped that this success can be built on in the run up to next year's Local and Devolved Assembly Elections, along with a possible EU Referendum. With further funding, the Dashboard can be developed into a permanent citizen resource, offering comprehensive, authoritative and accessible information on elections and democratic representatives to citizens across the UK.

## Editor's Note

**We hope that you enjoy this issue of Dispatch Box. If you have any stories or news that you would like to be included in the next edition, or any memories of the department that you would like to share, then please contact the editor Sue Sharkey ([s.sharkey1@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.sharkey1@lse.ac.uk)).**

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# Past and Present - Professor George Philip

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The LSE was founded in 1895, exactly 120 years ago. I have been on the academic staff since 1976, 39 years ago. It would be surprising if there had not been major change during this time. However some things have not changed, For one thing the LSE is, as is the Government Department, a good place to work. Morale has remained generally high and I have certainly enjoyed my time here. Tenured staff still enjoy a high degree of personal freedom despite the fact that we are today under far more pressure than was the case in the 1970s. In those days there was no suggestion that students should evaluate their lecturers and class teachers. Teaching loads were light and a lot of 'teaching' was done in the pub.

Today the physical environment of the School has improved out of all recognition. So have teaching resources. When I first joined the School, the building in which most of us had our offices –Kings and Lincoln- was a slum and the School Library was almost without books. There was nowhere to put them. I learned later that some of my students seriously wondered whether the location of my own office was the result of some kind of disciplinary action. Today slum-like conditions are

much more likely to be found in other parts of the country than at the School.

## From 'Red' LSE to technocracy

When I joined the School, its political radicalism was already on the decline. Some of its radical reputation was in any case exaggerated. But there was still a degree of student activism sufficient to trouble the authorities. Ralf Dahrendorf, who was an immensely popular Director, worked hard to eliminate focal points around which opposition could organise. In fact my first encounter with the directorate came when I was asked to go to (Pinochet's) Chile to check out a group of would-be alumni who wanted the School's recognition. Were they respectable figures or were they closely associated with the dictatorship and as such potentially scandalous? I reported positively but I suppose it served me right when a year or two later I once again met a familiar figure in Chatham House in London. I was still trying to



work out who he was when he pumped my arm warmly and identified himself in front of my Left-wing friends as the new Chilean ambassador.

## Internationalisation

Dahrendorf internationalised the School largely in order to demobilise it. The story may be apocryphal but one overseas student is said to have responded to an invitation to join a demonstration by saying 'I support your cause and would like to come but it is costing me a lot of money to be here and I cannot afford to absent myself from classes'. What started as a political tactic soon became a financial policy. When the Thatcher government started its cutbacks in higher education, the School was well placed to take on additional overseas students, which protected it from the worst consequences of the austerity. Further unintended consequences of this new approach included a significant increase in post-graduates and overseas students which further changed the composition of the School.

It may today seem lazy for the Department (and the School) to cope with any and all financial shortfalls by increasing fee levels or recruitment levels. But the policy did help very considerably when we had to cope with sustained public spending cuts and an indifferent public opinion. If we now have to think again about core offerings, we will do so from a much better situation than might have been the case.

Meanwhile the Department has become much less political as has academic life generally. The development of computer technology and the end of the Cold War have certainly played their part here. So have changes within academia. Job applicants tend to be recruited later in life. I was recruited at 24, which may have been untypically young but in those days was certainly not remarkable. Today most 24 year olds are still doing doctorates or even Masters. Recruits also face the demands of tenure, which is now a real test. So is coping with the London property market and/or the demands of commuting. As a result of these more adverse conditions there is much less time for political activity and also less inclination. Meanwhile at the other end of the academic life-cycle, academics are less willing to retire due to less generous pension arrangements. (I had no choice on medical grounds). To adapt Marx' famous aphorism, 'political scientists have only interpreted the world. The problem is to earn a living from it'

