

A black and white watercolor illustration of a river scene. A small boat is positioned on a narrow section of the river, which is flanked by dark, textured banks. The water is rendered with light, wavy lines, suggesting movement. The word 'triveni' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the middle of the image, with a horizontal line passing through the top of the letters. The overall style is artistic and evocative.

triveni

Editors Note

One of the most meaningful and eventful aspects of my Welham life is the completion of Triveni. Over the past few weeks I drew, I wrote I edited and occasionally looked at my screen in complete despair when ideas didn't strike, all to bring this issue to life. But I wasn't alone, my technical editor? Spectacular. Passionate and always ready to push boundaries (or deadlines). Together we have built something we are pleased with.

This Founder's issue is my last as an editor and we have tried to make it count. We have looked outwards because everything happening around us is shaping the world we are growing into. And if there's one thing I hope you take away, it's this: don't ever call yourself apolitical. Politics will impact you either way, caring about it might make a difference for the better.

The magazine cover, beautifully designed, captures the theme: Triveni - Confluence of Three Rivers. Just like when rivers meet and flow together, the political and historical worlds also have a lot of confluences of ideas, beliefs and events. Sometimes blending smoothly, sometimes clashing, but always shaping something new.

Read, question, argue, learn. That's the whole point.

Signing off,

Tushti Arora

Editor-in-Chief

Contents

Are We Speaking Right?

The Welhamstitution

Before the Phones Rang

Rouge

Aruna Asif Ali

The Madman Theory and
The Lost Promise of Uncle
Sam

The History of Founders

Pen or Protest: The Paradox
of ICS

Democratic Backslide or
slide back into Democracy

Capitalism's Assault on
Humanities

On the Edge: Thailand and
Cambodia

Pastry Wars

Rage Quit and Credits

Speaking is political discourse. Whatever you speak is a political statement because nothing in this world is devoid of politics. Chances are whatever you may speak next is 30% matter and 70% politics.

If such may be the nature of dialogue today, the question arises what is the right way to conduct it? I know what it is not:

1. Cutting someone off when you hear someone slightly diverge from your opinions
2. Being loud in a disrespectful way (loudness or rather passion is valid when it serves as a tool for justice)
3. Have a mindset as narrow as a hair strand's breadth
4. Demagoguery- the action of winning support by exciting the emotions of ordinary people rather than by having good or morally right ideas

Now moving on to what political discourse is ideally:

If political discourse was synonymous to political wars it would be called so, however that is not the case. Political discourse is for clarity.

Someone I look up to when I think of talking articulately is Bernie Sanders. A man aged 84 expresses his opinions so calmly yet so strongly. He is a Democrat supporter and he engages in a non-violent and constructive dialogue with Trump's supporters. He speaks logically. Thanks to my YouTube feed I came across his channel. His approach is simple and something we can all learn from: target the what, the how and the where.

ARE WE SPEAKING RIGHT?

"By the end of it you would have delivered intense clarity with calm respect and succeeded in your goal of finding common ground on a shared need; the need of the hour."

If you want to test your learning: as a junior, approach a senior and tell them why "Sunday fries should be changed to 'alternate'. Sunday fries" if you are a senior then vice versa. If you can carry out this discourse while addressing the what, the how and the where, then that's a big first step.

Another example is definitely Sashi Tharoor. Yes, his vocabulary is as vast as the vistas of England but that's not what makes him so great at political discourse. It's his ability to adapt to everyone's needs, he doesn't flex his vocabulary to a common man but rather switches to simple Malayalam.

He is spontaneous; he processes information at the speed of light and comes up with flawless arguments on his feet. This can be attributed to his extensive knowledge on a variety of subjects and his love for reading. That in itself is a big takeaway. I could add on to his greatness but if you wish to know more watch his interview with Al Jazeera, *"Maybe it will dissuade the future Pahalgams"* Shashi Tharoor on India and Pakistan. It is evidence of all that I mentioned so far.

My motivation to write this article was simple: the growing intolerance of opposing views. Your position on the political spectrum, the right, the left,



the centre, does not mean you pedestalise just one idea. It's a political 'spectrum' not a political 'box', let's treat it like a spectrum and make full use of the fluidity it offers.

Be more open to new ideas, engage in healthy debate, break the echo chambers and be political (in the right ways).

-Tushti Arora
SC

The 'Welhamstitution' (the greatest constitution) is an attempt to amend school life with bold and often wildly impractical demands that juniors believe are their fundamental rights.

1- The Saturday Half Day Act proposed by *Sanghvi Dhankar (B1)* is a rare bipartisan bill which aims to unite juniors and seniors alike in the noble pursuit of Saturday freedom.

2- In the wake of the long and exhausting wait for e-source access, the Junior School Laptop Provision Bill, proposed by *Manya Agarwal (B1)*, emerges as a witty reminder that while aiming high is admirable, keeping one's feet firmly planted at the e-source sign-up sheet might be the more realistic choice

3- Compulsory ten-day break after exams: Triveni editors eagerly await a congratulatory handshake from *Naira Jain (B1)* for championing this truly 'genuine' demand.

4- The Science Classes Sleeping Act, proposed by *Arna Agarwal (A3)*, calls for a compulsory twenty-minute nap in science classes for 'processing information better.' As History and Political Science students, we understand the sentiment even if science is not exactly our struggle. Goodnight, and keep dreaming!

5- The 24/7 Convenience Store Act, very conveniently proposed by *Shriya Bhargava (B1)*, reminds us that the path to academic excellence begins with a packet of chips at 2 a.m.

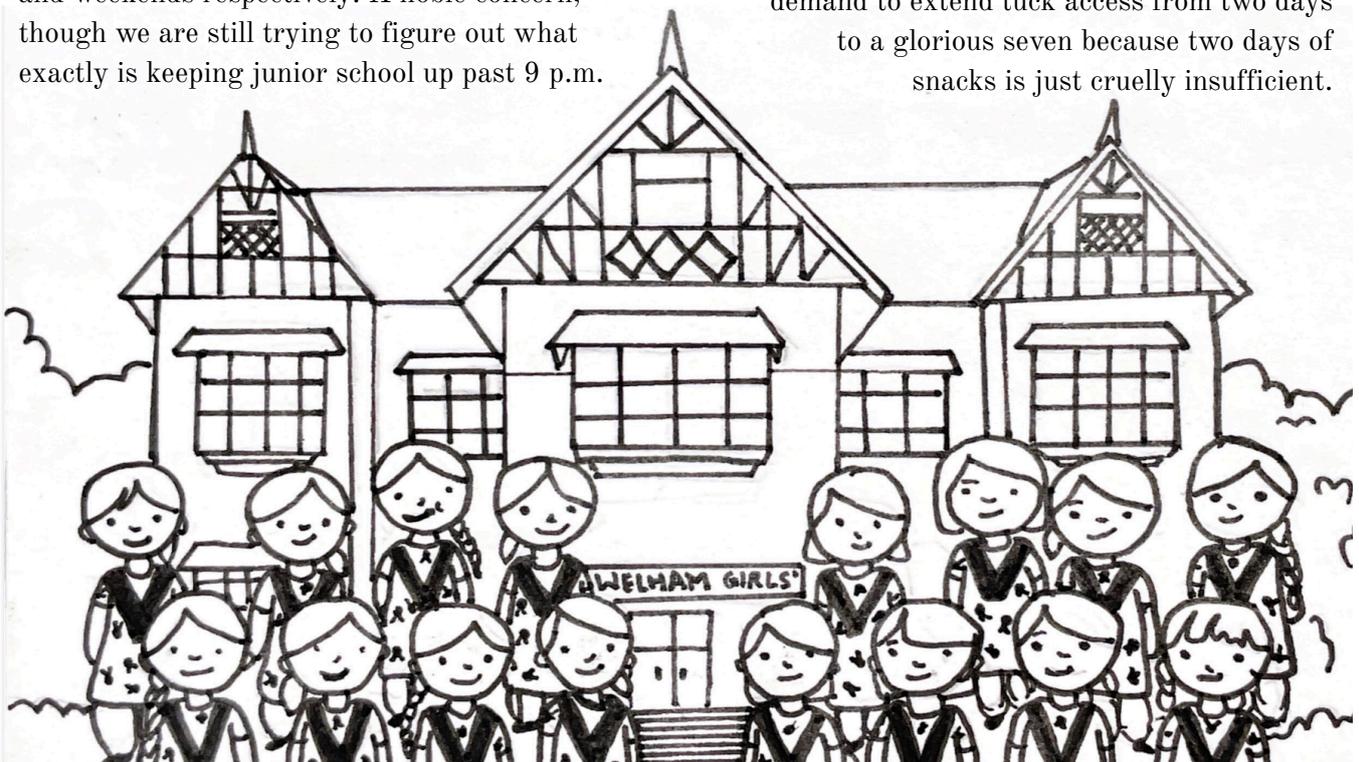
6- The Co-Curricular Representation Act proposed by *Trisha (A3) and Zoya (A3)*, seeks official recognition for MUN and Debate as activities. They believe diplomacy and dissent deserve a place besides Wednesday SUPW.

7- The Casual Sunday Demand has been supported by an overwhelming majority, because nothing says 'rest day' quite like spending it in PJs.

8- The Sports Expansion Act proposes new additions such as cricket and football, and in one particularly ambitious case, ice skating. Ready for the Winter Olympics next term?

9- The Sleep Security Act by *Vrinda Singhi* calls for a sound sleep of 8 and 10 hours on weekdays and weekends respectively. A noble concern, though we are still trying to figure out what exactly is keeping junior school up past 9 p.m.

10- The Full-Week Tuck Act is a unanimous demand to extend tuck access from two days to a glorious seven because two days of snacks is just cruelly insufficient.



BEFORE THE PHONES RANG



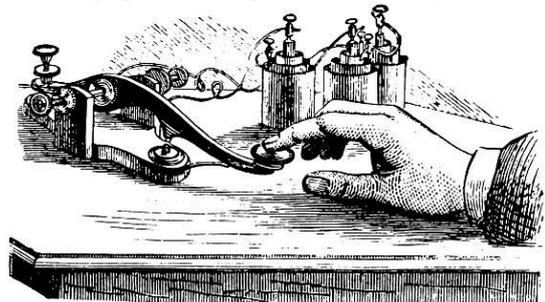
Take a moment and just think of a very significant invention that changed the course of history forever. Like most people, the telephone probably just came to your mind. Invented by Alexander Graham Bell in the 1800s, it was one that changed human lives for decades to come. But before this revolutionary invention, communication was way, way more different.

First, there were people named “town criers”. A person would literally shout out important news to a whole community in public squares. The town crier would often ring a bell to gather people’s attention, then announce news like royal decrees, public events, or even market prices.



The most stereotypical passenger pigeons, also known as pigeon posts, were trained to fly back to a specific location. So if someone had to send a message across a long distance, they would tie a little note to a pigeon’s leg and let it fly.

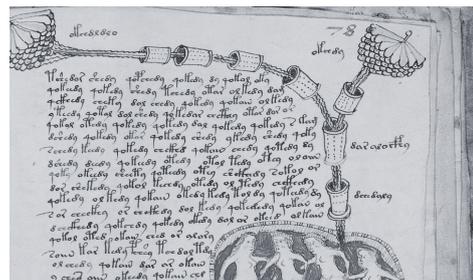
The telegraph, developed in the 19th century, revolutionised long-distance communication by transmitting messages via electrical signals using Morse code, a combination of dots and dashes. It allowed for rapid, efficient messaging across vast distances, laying the foundation for modern telecommunications.



Drums, war drums, in ancient times, involved a ‘drummer-boy’ in the army. Different beats at different intervals meant different things. Ever heard of the Aztec Death Whistles? Shaped like a human skull, when blown into, they make a blood-curdling noise eerily similar to a human scream. You are basically saying “back off” to your enemy, but just in a more horrifying manner.



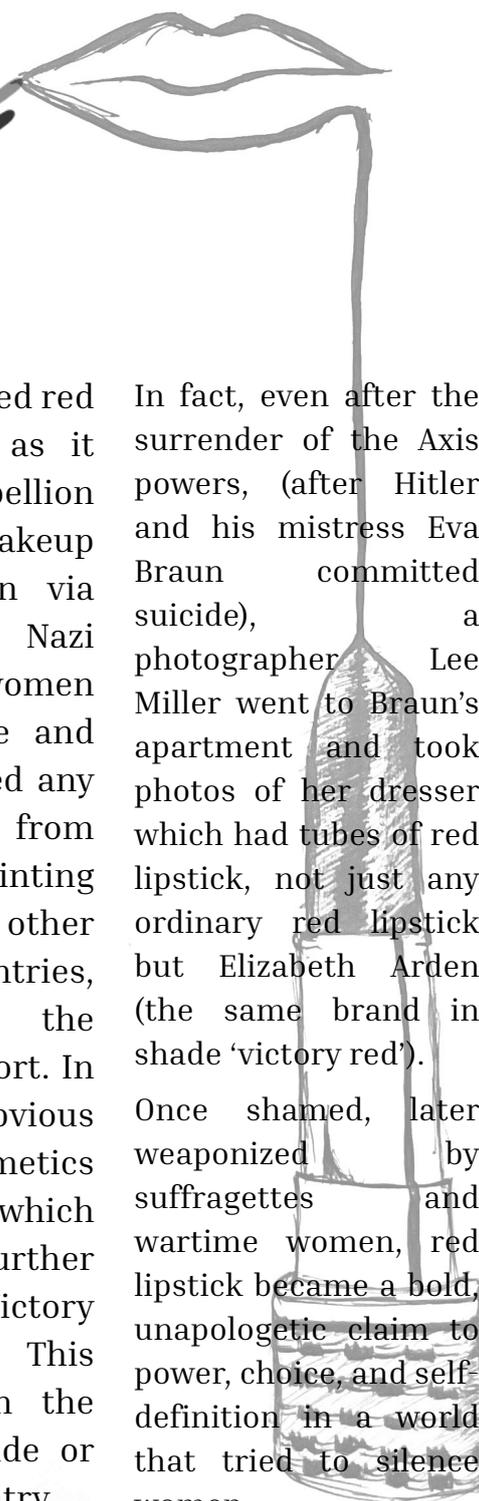
Although this was done after the telephone, here is a little bonus. Enemies used to send ciphered messages in World War I and II. But here is the thing; historians who have deciphered the toughest ones have still not been able to decipher the Voynich Manuscript.



But that is a story for another day.

-Arshia Goyal
BI

Rouge



How did lipsticks go from a tiny metal case with a push up lever to the jumbo sized plastic swivel?

The origins lie with the ancient Egyptians, where wearing red lipstick was frowned upon as it was associated with certain disreputable women. You would be surprised to know that this was a common thought all the way till the early 20th century. In the 1900s with the emergence of the women's suffrage movement, several suffragettes decided to wear red lipstick to shock men. At the time wearing red lipstick was not commonplace, and many women still opted for lighter colours. However, by the 1930's every second woman in America could be seen adorning red lipstick. That is not where it ends.

The story goes that Hitler hated red lipstick, of course he did as it symbolised female drive, rebellion and independence. To him makeup or any form of expression via fashion was anti-Aryan. As Nazi propaganda went: German women would be clean, wholesome and fresh-face. Thus he prohibited any of the women around him from wearing makeup or from painting their nails. Meanwhile on the other side, in the Allied countries, women were entering the workspace to aid the war effort. In the war economy it was obvious that the production of cosmetics took a backseat, yet the ones which were manufactured were further enhanced by their names 'Victory Red' or 'Patriot Red'. This encouraged women to don the shade in order to show pride or 'red patriotism' for their country. The red lipstick truly has a wonderful timeline. Within a few decades it went from being immoral and deviant to patriotic and courageous. Most importantly, it became a symbol for opposing the strict rules Hitler had for women, and fascism.

In fact, even after the surrender of the Axis powers, (after Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide), a photographer Lee Miller went to Braun's apartment and took photos of her dresser which had tubes of red lipstick, not just any ordinary red lipstick but Elizabeth Arden (the same brand in shade 'victory red').

Once shamed, later weaponized by suffragettes and wartime women, red lipstick became a bold, unapologetic claim to power, choice, and self-definition in a world that tried to silence women.

-Gurmat Kang
SC

अरुणा आसिफ अली

हलचल थी सड़कों पर, सूचना पड़ी कानों में,

फुस-फुसाकर, चीख-चिल्लाकर खबर निकली अखबारों में।

भारत की बेटी ने तिरंगा फहराया, नौ अगस्त की शाम गोवलिया मैदान में,

अरुणा-अरुणा नाम जप रहे सब, कोलाहल मचा बाज़ारों में,

स्वतंत्रता संग्राम का हिस्सा बनाने की ज्वाला उसने जलाई लाखों में।

पोस्टर लगे दीवारों पर, उसे बंदी बनाने को,

मान बिखेर कर झुकाने को, माँग अरुणा की हो रही,

लड़ती रही वह डरी नहीं, छिपकर इंकलाब रचती रही।

स्याही से स्वतंत्रता की अग्नि उसने प्रज्वलित करी,

थमी नहीं, सहमी नहीं, लक्ष्य की ओर वह बढ़ती रही।

रत्न भारत की बनी, नेत्री राजधानी की रही,

प्रेरणा की वह किरण बनी, शाँति, साहस, और समन्वय की प्रतिमा थी वही।

Aruna Asif Ali

There was a stir in the streets, whispers reached every ear.

In murmurs and in loud cries, the news burst through the newspapers clear.

India's daughter raised the tricolour high, on the evening of 9th August at Gowalia Maidan,

"Aruna! Aruna!" the people chanted. Her name echoed through the markets' clamour and fanfare.

She lit a flame in millions – a fire to join the freedom struggle there.

Posters lined the walls to capture and confine her,

To break her pride and make her bow.

Their demands grew louder.

Yet she fought on, fearless and free, weaving revolution from the shadows.

With ink she kindled the fire of freedom's light,

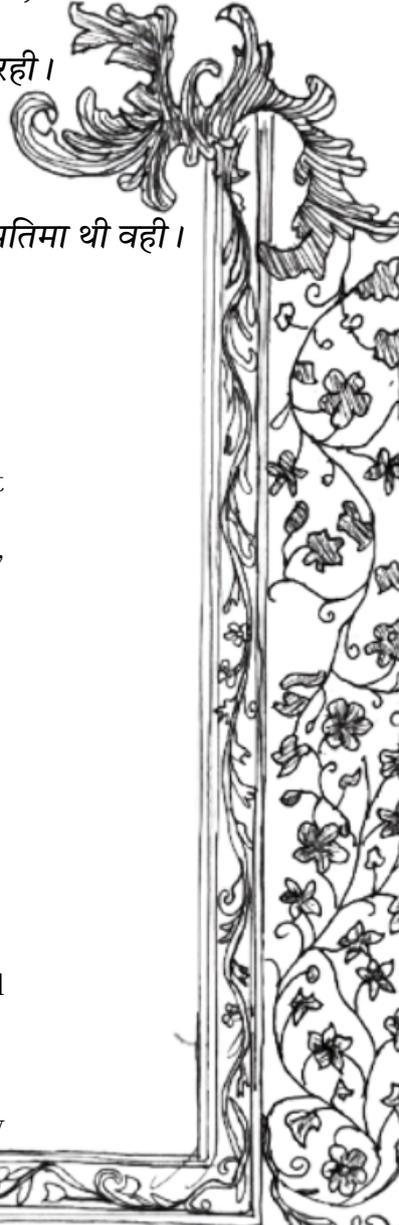
She never stopped, nor did she fright, always marching towards her goal with might.

A jewel of India she became, a leader of the nation's heart,

A ray of inspiration she stood, the very image of peace, courage, and unity from the start.

-Arya Sharma

AI





THE MADMAN THEORY



Why would a sane person, rather a political leader, want to be perceived as mad? The answer is simple, either they are mad -which is unlikely considering their position of power, or their 'madness' is performative. In the words of Machiavelli- "The Madman Theory posits that a leader can manipulate their image to achieve political ends. By presenting themselves as unpredictable or irrational—akin to a madman—a ruler can instill fear or confusion in their adversaries."

This behavioural pattern comes to light under the presidency of Donald Trump, who has not failed to self proclaim his impulsivity and unpredictability. He is undoubtedly inconsistent and not much of an empath, and that's why people and nations are wary of him, feeling the need to put up a defensive front and letting the world order revolve around his whim. But to spare Donald Trump the credit, he is not the first to use this tactic. Richard Nixon, the 37th US president ran his foreign affairs centering around this image of being a madman. It was in his time that US was at war with Vietnam. It was beyond frightening for the Vietnamese to know that a madman held the nuclear button. His decisions were made to appear reckless, and it was initially a rather genius tactic driven by fear. Regardless, USA lost the war so its safe to say things didn't end well for Nixon. Neither did they end well for Saddam Hussein, another prominent 'mad' figure in world politics. Hussein like the others craved power, he wanted to achieve hegemony over the Persian Gulf and that involved chemically attacking a town, invading Kuwait and eventually led to him being a subject of US hegemony.

This tactic is undeniably smart, but at what cost?

To achieve a greater degree of power, only to be perceived as a psychotic person who should be devoid of any power is probably what led to the downfall of these leaders in the past. When we see a madman on the street, we are scared, keep our distance and don't want to give them a reason to harm us so we might drop a penny in their bowl, but how many of us would turn to that street again if we know the object of threat is still around. Similarly, these intentionally madmen may have their way now but in democratic nations, especially, the public will know not to go down that street again. However, far less can be said about the path that ordinary Americans are taking – or being forced to take – today.

*-Maanya Kohlli
SC*

Uncle Sam is usually shown as a white-haired man with a tall star-spangled hat and a serious stare and is the embodiment of the U.S government, symbolising military power as well as one of the world's largest growing democracies. The name comes from a man named Samuel Wilson, a meat supplier during the War of 1812. His meat barrels for the army were stamped 'U.S.'. and soldiers jokingly called that 'Uncle Sam's' meat. Over time, Uncle Sam became the face of America, famously pointing at you in old military recruitment posters saying, "I Want YOU." He stands for the government and America's power, but lately, his confident image is being questioned.

The Lost Promise of Uncle Sam

In the gaze of both allies and rivals, the downfall is evident. The United States is now viewed as a 'flawed democracy', a demotion from the foundation of American Exceptionalism as the U.S claimed to be. Uncle Sam's reputation has been damaged by the polarization, inefficiency, and stagnancy that cripple Washington. The authority of the government diminishes when it appears incapable of taking action or ensuring the safety of its citizens.

This behaviour is used as a weapon by the people outside the U.S. Nowadays, autocratic leaders turn heads at Uncle Sam as a failed example of democracy. Only when Uncle Sam ceases to appear as a representation of chaos and a representation of chaos more than democracy, and exhibits strength, fairness and stability, will he stand for his powerful image once more.

*-Priyanjali Sharma
PreSc*

The way we remember...

There's something about Founder's Day at Welham that makes time pause. Maybe it's the way the campus feels, like it's remembering. Or maybe it's the way stories come alive, of old traditions and moments that shaped us. In this centrespread, we sit down with the teachers who've seen Welham Founder's through its seasons. They share memories that made them smile, changes that surprised them, and the little things that have stayed the same. It's a love letter to the school we call home. And what better way to honour a history magazine than with the history that's closest to our hearts.

Favourite memory of Founders?

"I have lots of favourite memories of Founders but I particularly remember the founders when I had come in for the first time, that was way back in 1997. We had recreated the entire Paris theme and we had some very naughty welhamites going around in Paris speaking in French and English. We had recreated a French café. That year Ms. Shabana Azmi was the chief guest and she sat in the cafe and even talked to the girls. To put it up I had worked from ten a.m. to eleven p.m. I would be with the girls and as I was a young teacher and the girls also warmed up to me. We had a whale of a time organizing it. At the exit we had a painter in a typical French style with a canvas and easel who was taking the reviews of everyone who was visiting the French exhibition."

-Ms. Vibha Kapoor

"The Founders was on the 'old stage', there was no auditorium, so we would pray for no rain.

Mr. M.F. Hussein came for founders. The memory is clear. He used to walk barefoot, he walked on the bajri. He painted for two hours effortlessly. His painting of Luv and Kush still gives me goosebumps.

Somewhere in 90's we had an elaborate yoga production, and I was in-charge of costumes. The production was...just spectacular!

How can I forget the 50th Founders. Dadi Pudumji taught children how to make puppets, the puppets were huge, and they also made one of a welhamite. I'm so lucky to be associated with each and every Founders. I was not just a teacher but a learner. With each Founders I have grown."

-Ms. Neena Agrawal

"When I gave voice over to plays of Munshi Prem Chand. I was the सूत्रधार. I enjoyed it a lot."

-Mr. Sudhir Kanthola

"Every Founders is special to me.

When I initially came, I was given two big classrooms to put up the exhibitions. The rooms were so large the ideas weren't striking me. But then suddenly I looked at my two year old son's story books. One room we converted into the Arctic and the other into a tropical rainforest. We had made wood cuttings of different animals. Students would come in at different times of the day and start painting whenever they had the time. You never had to look for welhamites."

-Ms. Vanshree Scott

"I remember when Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya, the chairperson of SBI, came. I was so fortunate to share the stage with her. She really liked what I did for the stage background for cultural day. Even Ms. Melba Pria praised it. I remember Ms. Jyotsna Brar's expressions like 'the trees you made Chavvi...are divine!'"

-Dr. Chavvi Jain

"I still remember in 2010, we took characters from comic strips and displayed them in the chemistry exhibition. We used dry ice and Cinderella as a character. Cinderella was first a small kid then she came out of the fogginess of dry ice and becomes a beautiful young woman.

We also used Harry Potter spells to create dust and smog. From small B3s to SCs everyone was included, it was lots of fun to display chemicals like this."

-Ms. Jyoti Vasudev

"Definitely the dances. The kind of bonding with the teachers. with all the goofiness and the naughtiness of the dancers was the highlight."

-Ms. Vani Singh

"We did an entire programme on the cosmic evolution. I had to research a lot, I was very involved. It was a very new experience for me and that is why it is very special in my mind and my heart."

-Dr. Neera Kapoor

"When I organised Bada-Khana for the very first time and it was a success."

-Ms. Anu Gupta



What has changed over the years and what has remained constant?

"With regard to what are the similarities in Founders with the past. Founders is always an entire school's effort. Everyone gets involved. It is the camaraderie, the sweat and the toil. It has always nurtured interpersonal relations between juniors and the seniors. The combined efforts which everyone puts into making it a success. The Execs' enthusiasm remains the same."

What has changed over the years, I feel is that college admissions have come up so the seniors sometimes tend to take a backseat. Earlier the Founders was run by the seniors themselves. Secondly I feel the levels of excellence have gone up. Earlier what was just a home grown exhibition has reached professional levels."

-Ms. Vibha Kapoor

"See with evolving times things always change. The kind of presentation changes but I think the ethos, the ideas of Welham will always remain the same. Over the years you will always find that welham spirit radiating off all the activities you see in Founders."

-Ms. Vani Singh

"I think we have retained the essence from very beginning but we have brought in a lot of new things, we have introduced new ways to conduct exhibitions we have changed our thought process when it comes to having cultural programs or how to involve more communities. Our girls have come up with exhibitions where we are trying to raise money for donations so I think over the years things have improved for the better but essentially the ethos has been the same."

-Ms. Shefali Thapliyal

"Founders was earlier for three days, third day used to be a fete. Children would attend that, go for a day's out and come back to school. The next day all students would line up near the old stage and go visit all the exhibitions. There also used to be high-tea with the chief guest where the teachers and the chief guest would interact. That is something that has changed and the holidays after founders have increased. The effort that goes in is still the same."

-Ms. Neena Agarwal

"Change is inevitable and welcome. So a lot of things have changed over the years, the way we function, the programs we do for Founders and the type of events have changed. A lot of things have been cut down and a lot has been added. We have become a lot more tech-savvy. Many things are happening for which we are taking help from technology. The best part, which is still there, is we enjoy every moment whether it was years back or now or maybe in the future. Each one of us just tries to put in our best, so that has remained constant despite the many changes."

-Dr. Chhavi Jain

"What remains same is coming together, the various minds, the various thought processes working towards one thing. It's a conglomerate of ideas, being a geography teacher I must use this word."

-Ms. Vatsala Dubey

"What has changed over the years is the structure of exhibitions. They have become more professional. We have expanded exhibitions. In terms of similarities concerned...the tensions, the stress and the excitement of the children and their joy remains the same."

-Dr. Neera Kapoor

"The outcome of the hardwork which the girls put in remains the same. Be it for exhibitions or productions, each year the girls put in a lot of hardwork and dedication which ultimately gives amazing results. What changes is that earlier we used to have a 'fête' on the third day of Founders which is no more. The girls would really enjoy the fête."

-Ms. Anju Gupta



One word for Founders

"One Big Fat Indian Wedding!"

-Ms. Vibha Kapoor

"A Moment of Pride"

-Ms. Jyoti Vasudev

"Nostalgia"

-Ms. Vani Singh

"Excitement and Mayhem"

-Dr. Neera Kapoor

"Celebration"

-Ms. Neena Agarwal

"Buzzzz"

-Ms. Shefali Thapliyal

"Craziest thing in School"

-Dr. Chhavi Jain

"Collaboration"

-Dr. Neera Kapoor

"Collaboration"

-Ms. Vanshree Scott

"Celebration"

-Mr. Sudhir Kanthola

"Forum"

-Ms. Vatsala Dubey



PEN OR PROTEST

THE PARADOX OF ICS



While the British Raj scorched India in the fires of colonization, many Indians stood close not only watching, but sometimes lighting the very flames. The Indian Civil Service (ICS), often called the “steel frame” of British rule, was designed not to serve Indians, but to enforce the Crown’s authority, extracting revenue, implementing colonial law, and maintaining control over millions. For years, it remained almost entirely British, with the entrance exam held in London and structured to exclude Indian candidates.

Yet, against the odds, some Indians broke through. Satyendranath Tagore, the first Indian to enter the ICS in 1863, was posted in distant districts like Bombay and Ahmednagar. Though committed to reform, his influence was limited by the system’s rigid hierarchy and his isolation as the lone Indian officer for years. Surendranath Banerjee, who entered in 1869, was dismissed on a technicality officially for procedural irregularities, but in reality due to racial bias. His dismissal radicalized him, and he became a pioneering nationalist leader, founding the Indian National Association and later joining the Indian National Congress.

Some chose to walk away by choice. Subhas Chandra Bose passed the ICS exam in 1920, ranked fourth overall. But within a year, he resigned, writing to his brother that he could not serve an empire “whose sole aim is exploitation.” He later became a revolutionary icon, forming the Indian National Army to fight British rule militarily.

But many others stayed. Men like A. N. Jha and Brajendranath Seal believed that serving within the system could offer space to protect Indian interests. Others, like Sir C. Sankaran Nair, joined the ICS but later resigned to protest British repression particularly after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Even so, for every such principled departure, many remained in service, enforcing laws and policies that hurt their own people.

Were they traitors or trapped in a system with no easy exit? The ICS offered prestige, stability, and influence but at the price of complicity. Many Indians held the matchstick of empire in their hands, some trying to douse the fire from within, others fueling it, knowingly or not. History, in its complexity, offers no clean verdict only the weight of impossible choices.

-Rudranshi Majmudar
PreSc

Recommendations:

“MY FRIENDS” BY HISHAM MATAR

Winner of the Orwell Prize for political fiction, this novel explores the lives of three Libyan exiles in London, inspired by the 1984 Libyan embassy shooting.

PERSEPOLIS (2007) – FRANCE/IRAN

Animated film about growing up during the Iranian Revolution; explores politics, war, and personal freedom.

BOB DYLAN – “THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

Iconic protest song capturing civil rights movements and social change in the 1960s.

THE PRADHANMANTRI SERIES

Indian documentary-drama television series, hosted by Shekhar Kapur, that chronicles the history of India from 1947 to the modern day through the tenures of its prime ministers.

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDE OR SLIDE BACK INTO DEMOCRACY?

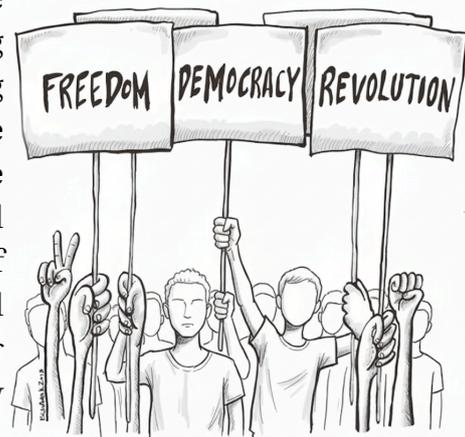
Ever wondered why some African states face military coups and authoritarian rule while others remain relatively stable? The answer often lies in democratic backsliding and the gradual weakening of democratic norms and institutions such as independent judiciaries, free media, and political opposition. Instead of outright coups, power is taken away when leaders frequently manipulate the electoral process or change constitutions to extend their tenure in office. This trend, though global, is particularly alarming in Africa, where political elites consolidate power and economic crises are used as justifications to tighten control under the guise of maintaining stability.

The dangers of backsliding are most visible in two countries, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni has just been elected to run the country again for a seventh term, extending a rule that began in 1986. Amid growing discontent, his government recently passed a law reinstating military trials for civilians, a move seen by many as a direct attack on civil liberties and judicial independence. Veterans of the opposition, such as Kizza Besigye, have been denied bail on false charges and remain in prison, while campaign offices have been raided and activists report torture following state-sponsored abductions. Even Museveni's son, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has created fears with claims such as kidnapping and threats against rivals. This is not merely about leadership extensions, it is a full-scale erosion of basic political space.

On the other hand in Zimbabwe, President Emmerson Mangagwa is consolidating control through legal tools that attack dissent rather than guns. In April 2025, Mangagwa signed the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act, granting sweeping powers to censor and de-register NGOs. He also passed a 'Patriotic Bill' that criminalizes criticism of the government as threats to the 'national interest', effectively curbing free speech. Ahead of hosting a regional summit under SADC, the government has intensified a crackdown which harasses student activists, labour organizers, and opposition parties, in the name of maintaining security and public welfare. And all this time, Mangagwa has been reshuffling top generals and police chiefs, not to strengthen democracy, but to shield himself from any coup attempts or revolts.

Even though what is happening in the two nations is far from identical, they showcase the same effect where authority is maintained by power elites not by broad consent but by silencing everyone around them. They prove that democracy is nothing but a shell, complete through elections, yet empty in implementation. Across the continent, people are reacting in different ways. In Sudan, for example, many citizens have taken to the streets, rising up to demand a return to civilian rule after years under military control. Their protests show just how much they want democracy and are willing to fight for it. On the other hand, in places such as Rwanda, some people seem to support a strong, centralized government, believing it brings stability and growth even if that means giving up some political freedoms. These different reactions show just how complex things are, and how people's hopes and fears shape their views on democracy.

The path to democracy in Africa has always been difficult, whether it be in times of Kwame Nkrumah, who despite being celebrated as a founding father of independence in Ghana, was also accused of consolidating power and curbing dissent, or Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who while admired for his vision of African socialism, established a one-party state that limited political freedoms. Yet people find their way to restore it and protect the progress which has been made. In the end, the future of democracy will not be decided by dictators trying to silence people, it will be shaped by the diverse voices of citizens, whether they are rising up or finding ways to live with the system, all demanding that democracy survive.



*-Sharanya Maheshwari
PreSC*

Capitalism's Assault on Humanities

“We use humanities to understand our world, but more than that, we use it to justify our world.” In today's world, it is often said that we live in an age of innovation, science, and technology. But what is ironic is that universities, which once stood as powerful holders of knowledge, are now increasingly dominated by disciplines such as engineering, business, and computer science. By contrast, the humanities, which delve into our history, values, and shared culture while exploring the very essence of being human, seem to have lost their place.

This decline is not just about the shrinking number of students who choose to major in subjects like philosophy, literature, or history. It is also about the diminishing value that these fields hold in the eyes of both academic institutions and society at large. How often are we told by our parents not to opt for humanities, or how society seems to raise its eyes on the intellectual ability of any student who has taken up these subjects.

The humanities are viewed as leisure activities, subjects that do not offer immediate economic benefits. The growing emphasis on STEM fields highlights this trend. While STEM is undoubtedly important, it is also essential to recognize that the humanities offer something that cannot be measured. They teach us how to think critically, how to question the existing system, and how to choose what is right for us. In fact, this death of the humanities is occurring precisely because of the benefit that the capitalist system gains from it.

Capitalism thrives on exploitation, control, and manipulation. In this system, education is no longer about cultivating minds capable of questioning power or understanding society deeply. It is about producing workers. This promotes an anti-intellectual culture, where emotional manipulation replaces critical thinking.

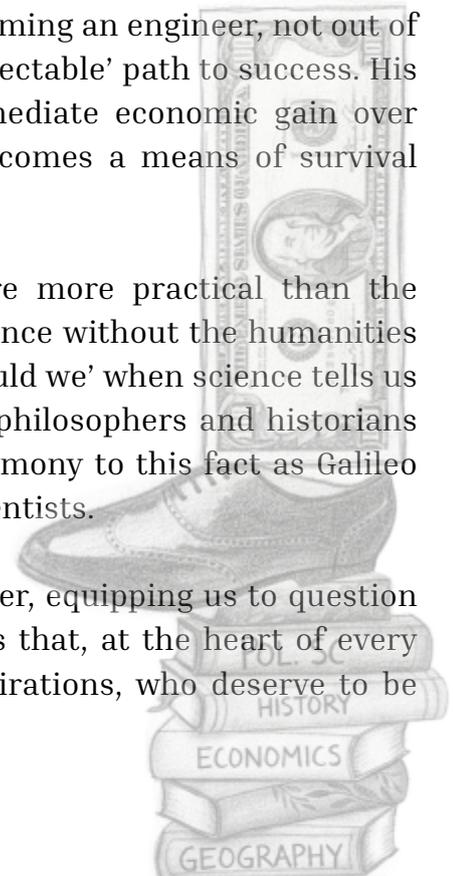
Take, for instance, the aspirations of a poor child who dreams of becoming an engineer, not out of passion, but because society convinces him that this is the only ‘respectable’ path to success. His choice is not truly free; it is shaped by a culture that prizes immediate economic gain over intellectual or creative fulfilment. In such a system, education becomes a means of survival rather than self-discovery.

Today's world also clings to the toxic myth that the sciences are more practical than the humanities. This false divide is not only shallow, but dangerous. Science without the humanities risks becoming blind progress. The humanities remind us to ask ‘should we’ when science tells us ‘can we’. Consider artificial intelligence: engineers can build it, but philosophers and historians must question its impact on human identity. Great minds bear testimony to this fact as Galileo read Dante, Einstein turned to Mozart, and Tagore conversed with scientists.

But despite their decline, the humanities are now more vital than ever, equipping us to question the narratives shaped by those in power. The humanities remind us that, at the heart of every historical event, there are real people, with dreams, fears, and aspirations, who deserve to be heard and understood.

And as George Santayana rightly said,
“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

-Pratishtha Agarwal
PreSC



On the Edge: Thailand and Cambodia

The Thai Cambodian crisis began the way any early 2000s movie did, a scandal and a leaked phone call. In June 2025, a 17 minute phone call was leaked between Paetongtarn Shinawatra, former Thai prime minister and Hun Sen, the former leader of Cambodia who still holds power as the president of the country's main political party and the father of its prime minister. The phone call began with Paetongtarn calling him uncle, and during which they appeared to agree with each other on many times despite historically strained relations between the two countries, and recent conflict leading to the death of a Cambodian soldier. Things further escalated when Paetongtarn referred to a top Thai military general as an opponent and heavily criticized the Thai military, promising to take care of Hun Sen's 'concerns'. The phone call was released by Hun Sen himself, on his Facebook page. Following the leak, were allegations of criminal conspiracy and breach of diplomatic protocol which led to the suspension of the Thai government.



Former Thai Prime
Minister:
Paetongtarn
Shinawatra

"Though the scandal dramatically escalated tensions, relations between the countries had long been characterised by frequent border clashes."

Another contributory event was the injury of five Thai soldiers due to a land mine explosion. This led to cutting off all diplomatic relations between the two nations. The next day airstrikes by both countries struck major civilian districts along the borders, and raised humanitarian concerns.

Former Leader of Cambodia:
Hun Sen



Since then guns along the forested border have been silent but the conflict in no way has been inactive. An army of Cambodian social media warriors, backed by state-controlled English language media channels, have

unleashed a flood of allegations and inflammatory reports, many of which turned out to be false. They reported that a Thai F16 fighter jet had been shot down, posting images of a plane on fire falling from the sky - it turned out to be from Ukraine. Another unfounded allegation of Thailand dropping poison gas was accompanied by an image of a water bomber dropping pink fire retardant. This was really from a wildfire in California. Thailand responded with official statements of its own, but often they came from multiple sources - the military, local government, health ministry, foreign ministry - which seemed distorted and further weakened Thailand's argument that Cambodia, whose rocket had barraged into civilian areas, was the responsible for escalation.

PASTRY WARS

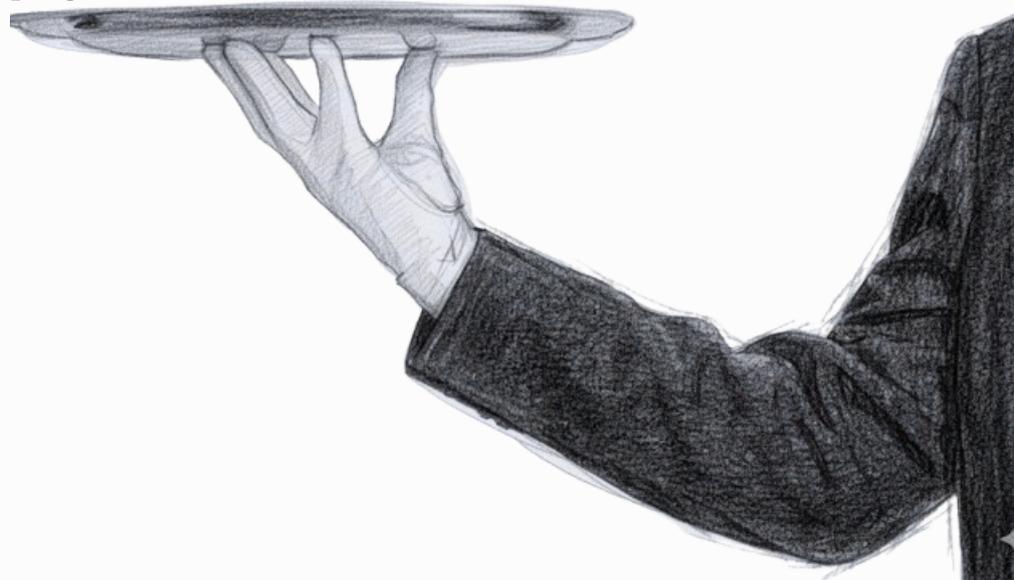
Trump's uncompromising foreign policy is one that sparks great interest and debate, especially in Latin America. It is one that seems to play on his whims and fancies, personal rivalries and targeted vengeance at people who stole his candy. Take, for example, the recent move to revoke Colombian President Gustavo Petro's visa after his participation in a pro-Palestinian demonstration, or the tendency to label Latin American drug-trafficking and criminal organizations as terrorist groups or the commonly known 'tariff war'. All his policies are reflective of one palpable feeling that seems to reverberate through the pages of history: irrational colonialism.

It is interesting and surprising to note that some countries of South America have long been a victim and witness to this irrational colonialism, especially in the 1900s. It has played a key role in shaping its history, identity and ideology. It has also played a major role in the disparity of development and poverty rates that are prevalent between most Western nations.

Of these, a particularly sidelined yet extremely relevant incident is the "Pastry War" of 1838-39 between France and Mexico. Legend has it that a French pastry chef named Monsieur Remontel in Tacubaya, Mexico, claimed that Mexican officers looted his bakery. His shop was worth less than 1,000 pesos, but he demanded 60,000 pesos in damages. (Like asking for a court case after someone dents your bicycle.) France escalated the claim to 600,000 pesos and sent warships to conduct naval blockades around Mexican ports, and all over pastries. It is believed that the French troops were armed with baguettes at the inception of the war.

This does not exist in isolation. The Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 saw Spain and Portugal carve up the New World with an imaginary line, ignoring the indigenous people. This is a classic example of irrational colonialism. Centuries later, the Soccer War of 1969, a short but intense conflict between El Salvador and Honduras, erupted over deep-rooted social issues and nationalist tensions, showing how colonial legacies still fuel conflict. The War of the Pigtail (1821), although less known, also reflects the chaotic struggles that followed colonial rule. These moments are not isolated. They are all part of South America's long history of being shaped by outside powers and messy rivalries.

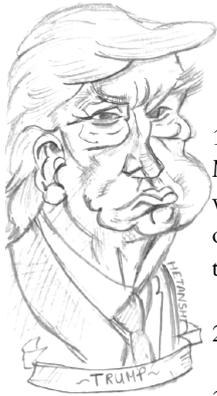
Today as South America stands plagued with massive drug cartels, mafias, a huge supply of illegal immigrants, existing as a developing nation in a literal western world, we see it stand not only as a symbol of rising hope but one which emerges from the depths of vengeance and smothered progress- a slow, dark horse.



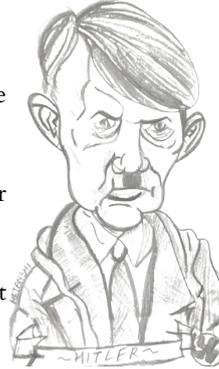
*-Prarthana Goenka
PreSC*

RAGE QUIT

Who said it: Trump or Hitler?



1. "We pledge to you that we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the... We pledge to you that we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within"
2. "The hour of retribution will come"
3. "They are poisoning the blood of our country, they are not humans, they are animals"
4. "It's in their genes and we got a lot of bad genes in our country right now"
5. An opponent... which consists not of human beings but of animals.



After getting multiplicity of these answers wrong, you have probably 'rage' quit. Next time, listen to your teacher. And hey, try reading a newspaper once in a while. It has no side effects. In most cases.

If you are one of the fortunate ones who have got a few answers right. The reward lies in not a chocolate but in the power of your knowledge. Additionally, you shouldn't take this as a sign to give up on keeping up.

Answer Key
 1. Trump
 2. Hitler
 3. Trump
 4. Trump
 5. Hitler

Connections

ATLANTIC	DUNKIRK	BENAZIR BHUTTO	CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT	NANDI-NDAITWAH	THRONE	SHBASH CHANDRA BOSE
IRON DAGGER	ANGEL MERKEL	HITLER	MUSSOLINI
BOARD GAMES	BULGE	GOLDENMASK	BRITAIN

Answer Key
 Claudia Sheinbaum - Benazir Bhutto
 Angel Merkel - Nandi-Ndaitwah
 (They were the first women leaders of their country)
 Atlantic - Dunkirk - Bulge - Britain
 { Battles of World War II }
 Iron Dagger - Board Games - GoldenMask - Throne
 { Objects found in the tomb of Tuttenkhamun }
 Mussolini - Subhas Chandra Bose - Hitler - Franklin D. Roosevelt
 { All of them died in 1945 }

The End

Teacher-in-Charge
 Dr. Tanushree Verma

Editor-in-Chief
 Tushti Arora

Technical Editor
 Sharanya Maheshwari

Art Editor
 Sarah Goyal

Special Thanks
 Ms. Sukanya Chowdhury

Illustrators
 Yagyana Sharma
 Sairra Kaur Mann
 Sana Gupta
 Hetanshi Agarwal