



MUNITY POST-DISPATCH

JANUARY 30, 2020

ONE PATH DOES NOT FIT ALL

ASSEMBLING A THIMUN DELEGATION

by Natasha Faruqui

An invitation to THIMUN is incredibly coveted. Currently, there is a waiting list of schools vying for the opportunity to attend the conference. Once a school receives that invitation, it is up to the school itself to decide how to select the students that they choose to bring.

So how do they decide?

Çelikhhan Baylan (Delegate of Côte d'Ivoire, Historical Security Council) is about as experienced as they come. He has been participating in MUN for four years. His school, American Collegiate Institute in Izmir, Turkey, has participated at THIMUN for 27 years. The MUN club at ACI is the most serious club at the school; the two directors are the Principal and Vice-Principal.

"We meet until 6:30 every Wednesday and Thursday, which equates to around five hours of MUN time per week," Baylan said.

Prospective delegates must take an entrance exam to gain admittance to the club. Questions on the exam cover topics ranging from current events to historical knowledge to knowledge about the United Nations. From there, 60-70% of students pass the exam and are able to join the club.

But that is only the first step. After that, students are judged based on their performance in mock debates, other MUN conferences and their draft resolutions, which go through several rounds of edits by supervisors before THIMUN.

"I would say our school probably overachieves," Baylan added.

While many students like Baylan

"I would say our school probably overachieves,"
Baylan added.

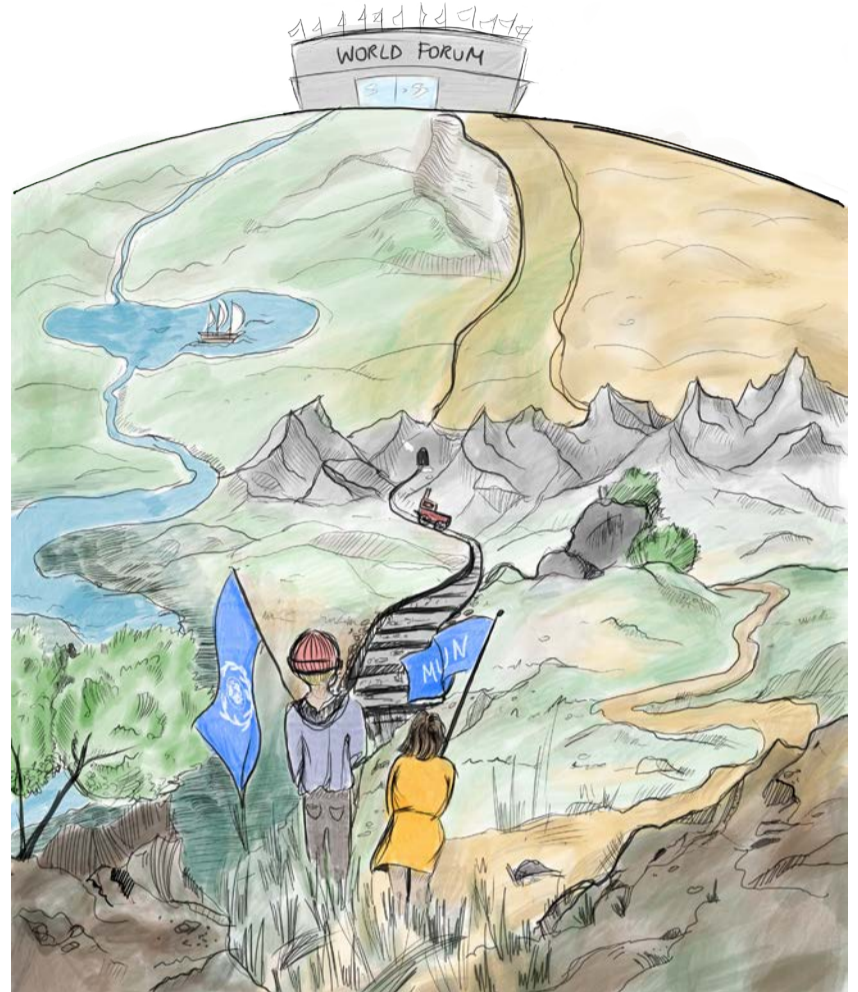
travel to THIMUN after spending months competing for coveted delegation spots, others were not required to prepare as extensively. Alyza Capriles (Delegate of

Cyprus, Special Conference 1) from the International School of Curaçao acknowledged that, for some students, THIMUN is an opportunity to learn more about world affairs more than it is a stressful culmination of years of work.

"It's not super competitive to get into delegations," she said. "As long as you're a good student and you show that you're committed, there's a pretty good chance you'll be able to go."

As much as THIMUN is an academic experience, it is generally acknowledged that the conference is also a social opportunity for students to make connections with peers from across the globe.

"I know a lot of kids from other schools just come for fun. Some of the kids in my committee didn't even write resolutions," Capriles added.



Artwork by Dariia Panasenko



"I know a lot of kids from other schools just come for fun. Some of the kids in my committee didn't even write resolutions,"
said Capriles.

In terms of deciding which students get to attend THIMUN, some delegates question the wisdom of a non-standardized selection process across schools. While some may argue that this juxtaposition between heavily-prepared delegates and delegates just coming to learn more about MUN may hinder the goals of the conference, Capriles begs to differ.

"Maybe these kids who came here just to have fun learned something here at THIMUN and gained an interest," she said. "It's not necessarily a bad thing, and for students that are more prepared than other delegates, this only helps. You're able to sound like you know what you're talking about in debate and be more of a part of the experience."

MUN Director Kassiani Eleftheriadi of the Arsakeia School of Patras-Athens shares a similar mindset. "I'm not that into competitiveness all the time for the kids. I don't like it," she said bluntly. At her school, any student who demonstrates an interest in THIMUN is free to go, so long as they have proven that they are hardworking during their time in MUN club.

Stephen Okoth (Delegate of Brunei Darussalam, GA1) hails from Aiglon College in Ollon, Switzerland. He believes that while students join THIMUN through different processes, this does not affect the THIMUN experience as a whole. "The world is big and there's always differences across schools," he said. "No particular case is similar to another, and there's no one way to fix this so that it is the same in all schools. It's not one size fits all, and it does not need to be. As long as everyone learns something while they're here, I don't think it really matters how different delegates got onto their delegations."



Delegates Respond to Trump's Mideast Plan

by Gabe Fleisher

After years of speculation, U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled his long-awaited Middle East peace plan on Tuesday, detailing a proposal that would offer Palestinians a path to statehood but largely sided with Israeli demands.

"My vision presents a win-win opportunity for both sides," Trump declared at a White House ceremony, flanked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "A realistic two-state solution that resolves the risk of Palestinian statehood to Israel's security." Although the American leader described his blueprint for peace as "a historic opportunity for the Palestinians to finally achieve an independent state of their very own," Palestinian leaders immediately rejected the plan upon its announcement.

Trump's 181-page proposal would create and contribute \$50 billion towards a disjointed Palestinian state that would have a capital on the outskirts of east Jerusalem, although the bulk of the contested city would remain under undivided Israeli control. Israel would also be allowed to maintain its settlements in the West Bank, while agreeing to a four-year moratorium on constructing new ones. Palestinians would be granted freedom of movement through tunnels between the West Bank and Gaza; Israel would continue to marshal security of the territories.

In a fitting microcosm of the global power struggles they are attempting to model, delegates at THIMUN broadcast divided views on Trump's proposal. "I think that the cooperation of the state of Palestine is extremely important," Jules Penot (Ambassador of Yemen, General Assemle 1) said.

"[It is important] to not only favor the USA's ally, Israel, but also to increase cooperation [with Palestinian representatives]."

"The idea of creating a two-state solution is definitely something that Costa Rica would look forward to in the future," Ben Stettin (Ambassador of Costa Rica, GA6) added.

"However, I think that there is a crisis and the Palestinian refugees are something that must be handled and it doesn't seem like Trump's resolution is addressing this issue, which Costa Rica sees as a problem, especially with the humanitari-

an concerns that we're trying to avoid."

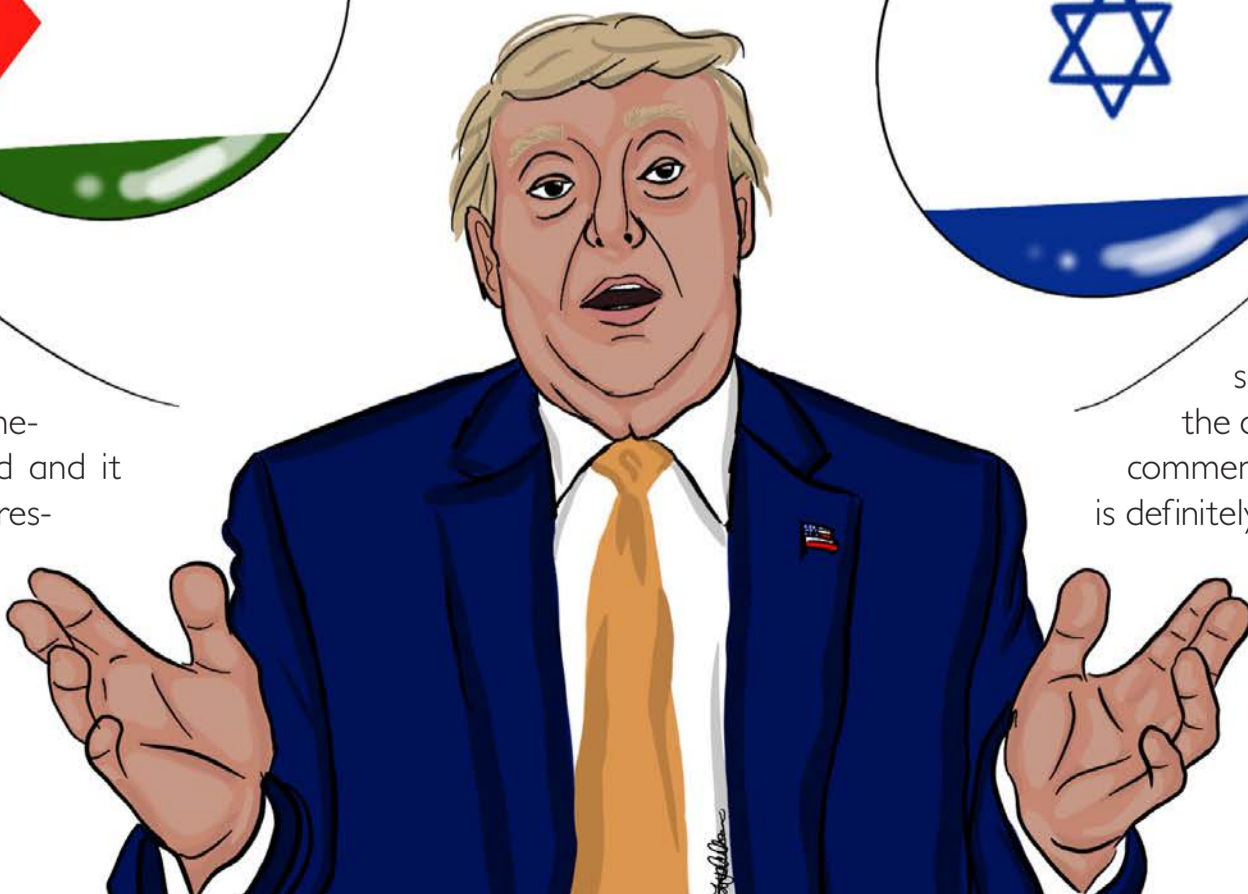
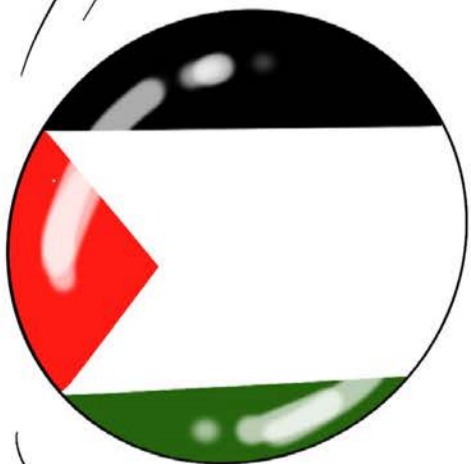
Stettin called the proposal a "very one-sided solution" that "mostly listens to and accepts the Israeli demands while ignoring a large part of the Palestinian demands." Penot agreed that Palestine's strenuous objections would likely doom the U.S. approach, describing it as "unrealistic" and "unfeasible."

At least two supporters of the plan could be easily located at the World Forum: the plan's main author, the United States, and its longtime ally, Israel. "We're going in the right direction, step by step," David Tack (Delegate of Israel, GA3) opined. Tack said that he has no doubt that his government will continue to back the plan: "Those points definitely reflect our political ambitions and that's why I'm sure that we will collaborate in that sense."

Joshua Stearnes (Delegate of the United States of America, GA4) acknowledged that the proposal is "Israeli-leaning," but maintained that it is in line with long-standing U.S. policy. "The U.S.' general opinion on most world issues is to not leave them in a constant state of perpetuity and to allow things to happen and to move on instead of always being stuck in the same state, so I think the point of this plan is to take some action in order to try and solve the issue that has been in that area for decades," he said.

Stearnes expressed optimism that "if President Trump manages the situation correctly," a solution to the ongoing quagmire could be found. Echoing Trump's Tuesday comment that he "was not elected to do small things or shy away from big problems," the delegate also said that he believed the plan to be a continuation of Trump's style since taking office. "One of President Trump's main ideas is to try and just keep moving and take action, as he plans to do in many of the issues we're discussing in my committee today," Stearnes said.

But not everyone at THIMUN was as easily persuaded by the U.S. president's vision for the region. "From the delegation of Iraq, the only comment we could give is that he is definitely gonna [mess] something up," Daksh Khanna (Ambassador of Iraq, GA1) confidently predicted.



Do Native Speakers Have an Upper Hand in Debates?

by Fatima Djalalova

THIMUN unites delegates from more than one hundred countries, filling the halls of the World Forum with a buzz of unique accents and languages. Hearing a word in an unknown language immediately conjures pictures of exotic culture and provokes musings about the possible meanings of the word. But do the benefits of the language diversity extend beyond piquing one's interest in the unknown? What effect does this multilingualism have on the conference, especially the debates and performance of delegates?

The BBC article "The Huge Benefits of Working in Your Second Language" uncovers that despite the limitations non-native speakers may face when it comes to working in their second language, the analytical process happens more effectively in one's non-native language due to the fact that people are more psychologically and emotionally distant from their non-native tongue. Curious to uncover if that is true, the delegates were asked how their language proficiency affects their performance at the conference. Ramid Kadirov (Delegate of Latvia, General Assembly 1), whose first language is Russian, answered that "[being multilingual] allows for a different perspective, a multilateral thinking which helps me to assess the problem from all angles and come to a valid conclusion through critical thinking," resonating with the claims of the BBC article. Therefore, this advantage in critical thinking stems from the ability to look at the concepts from the angles of different cultures. Moreover, Annique Snow (Delegate of Serbia, General Assembly 1), who speaks three languages fluently, shared that

"speaking multiple languages helps with meeting new people and working together."

On the other hand, being a native speaker has its advantages when it comes to making speeches and forming agreements. Snow shared that "speaking English fluently makes it easier to discuss my ideas with other delegates as I understand what is being said, and I can also strongly support my own arguments. This helps my confidence as I know what to say when and don't necessarily need to search for the right words." Mihir Sharma (Delegate of United Kingdom, Security Council) echoed Snow's words, highlighting that "it is a lot easier for people to understand you



Layout and Artwork by Charlotte Widmaier

if you can speak English in a clear and concise way." At the same time, these experiences underscore the reasons for reluctance to make speeches and present in the non-native tongue. Idil Gorgulu (Delegate of the Economic Commission for Africa, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1), a native speaker of Turkish, mentioned that

"when it comes to delivering a speech in front of more than a hundred people, getting nervous is inevitable."

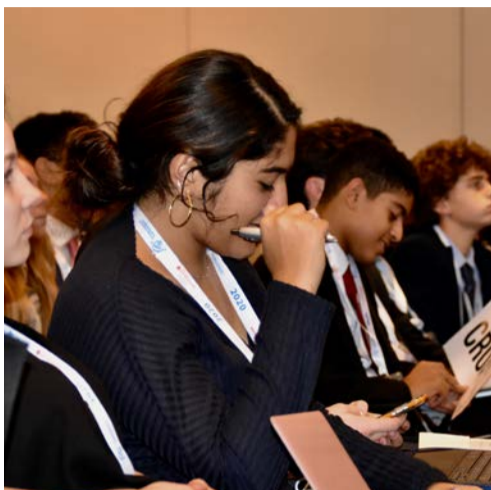
THIMUN also helps delegates advance their English and open new roads for improvement. Gorgulu shared that "since English and Turkish come from different language families, it is very hard for me to pronounce some words in English. I am still in the process of trying to overcome this issue and improve my pronunciation. [...]"

"Thanks to Model UN, I have started to overcome my insecurities and improve my accent. My performance in the debates has highly increased, and I am learning a lot from the native speakers here at THIMUN. This unforgettable experience will help me boost my confidence and public speaking skills."

As a result, both native and non-native speakers have their own advantages. While non-native speakers may experience more difficulties with expressing their ideas freely, their proficiency in more than one language expands their understanding of the world and gives birth to novel ideas. The most fascinating aspect is that all of the students approached for the interview were multilingual. This reveals that the language diversity at THIMUN exemplifies the universal goal of preserving language diversity and encouraging learning of new languages.

Contentious Debate In GA1

by Christina Busco



The General Assembly 1 (GA1) started their day by resuming a closed debate on the resolution submitted by Jamaica on the question of nationalism being used as a political tool. The delegate of Uruguay spoke fervently for the fifth amendment of the day, which stated that “all ideologies of religious extremism that use their faith as an excuse for committing violent crimes including but not limited to: a) murder, assassination, and homicide; b) violent religious and racial persecution; c) exploiting vulnerable populations; d) disturbing national and global stability

and security; e) war crimes and human rights violations.”

During the Point of Information (PoI) session, the delegate of France quickly showed support for the amendment but also angered the chair by his response. Nevertheless, the delegate of Seychelles jumped to defend the delegate of France, confirming that “we believe that the problem should be attacked from its root.”

The amendment was not supported by all. The delegate of Costa Rica stated in their PoI that the amendment was a clear violation of the seventh article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Still, by the end of the heated discussion, the amendment was passed.

Returning to the debates on the resolution as a whole, the delegate of Bolivia pleaded that all delegates in the room “must question what nationalism has done [for] the world.” Bolivia further explained that many nations in GA1, including his, were founded on nationalism, but his climactic declaration received negative responses.

Photographs by Julie Andersen

While Bolivia faced strong opposition, the resolution submitted by Jamaica passed with an overwhelming majority, and clapping was in order.

GA1 debated another resolution submitted by the Russian Federation on the question of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Russia opened his elaborate speech by stating that “no man, country, or organization will be able to stop human development.” However, the delegate did not receive much support, and many delegates questioned the misinformation about robots and weapons, as well as the lack of democracy. In the end, the resolution was rejected.

Overall, even though delegates in GA1 engaged in heated and controversial discussions, they managed to pull through in a respectable manner.



The heated debate in the Sustainable Development Commission Sub-Commission 2 started off when the Togolese Republic submitted the resolution on the topic of universal birth registration.

The delegate of the United Kingdom took the floor and spoke in favor of the resolution. The delegate addressed the efficiency of the third clause that “urges all member states to transfer their archives [...] into Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems [...] in order to ease and expedite the process of registering all births.” The UK delegate highlighted that having an online system would prevent records from destruction by natural disasters and, therefore, provide a safe environment for universal birth registration.

Following the speech by the UK, the World Health Organization (WHO) submitted an amendment that suggested free medical checks for children. During the Point of Information session, the delegate of WHO further indicated that the medical checks are provided by professionals and that the WHO is willing to help less developed countries to set up institutions to ensure the medical checks are free. The delegate then addressed the problem of reaching children in rural areas with the aid of the WHO and other countries, un-

derscoring that “this is the goal of the conference.”

Afterward, the delegate of Liechtenstein, a co-submitter of the Togolese Republic’s resolution, spoke for the UK’s amendment. He accentuated that children deserve receiving health care and urged that all member states vote for the amendment at hand. However, Liechtenstein’s speech raised doubts. When asked “how is this amendment related to birth registration?,” Liechtenstein responded that even though the amendment did not directly address the question, it greatly paralleled other clauses and did not hurt the resolution as a whole.



SDC2

by Yunrong Chen

Health Care for Children or Education for Parents?

Dissatisfied with Liechtenstein’s answer, the delegate of France raised her placard and questioned the amendment again. She maintained that the amendment did not resolve the problem and was redundant, as the rights of children were already stated in the original

resolution. The delegate of France was backed up by the delegate of Mexico, sharing that “ensuring the health of children is not directly related to birth registration.”

After being openly challenged by the WHO, the delegate of Mexico further emphasized that the problem lay in the lack of education and extended distance in rural areas, encouraging that all delegates focus on the topic.

As a result of voting, the amendment failed to pass.

After several other

amendments were made to the original resolution, the main submitter, the delegate of the Togolese Republic, made his final speech. He underlined the fact that the resolution included all of the information needed to solve the problem, and pointed out that the key was the lack of education of parents. The resolution passed and clapping was in order.

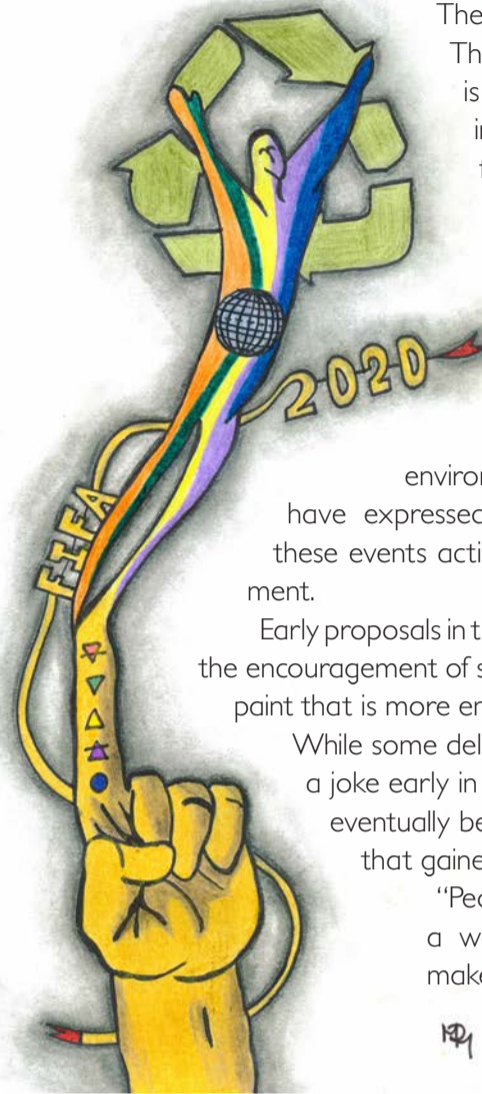


Photographs by Selina Demaré

Layout by Yuzine Yi

Kicking Off The World Cup: Managing Environmental Impact Through Sports

by David Wolfe Bender



The General Assembly Third (GA3) Committee is tasked with examining the environmental friendliness of major sporting events and venues. With major international sporting events – such as FIFA's World Cup – occurring every year, environmental advocates have expressed their concerns that these events actively hurt the environment.

Early proposals in the committee involved the encouragement of sporting venues to use paint that is more environmentally friendly.

While some delegates thought it was a joke early in the debate process, it eventually became a real proposal that gained some support.

"People actually found a way to take that and make it work," Court

Hyken (Delegate of Egypt, GA3) said.

"We looked up paint that took little energy usage to make."

There are, however, other solutions that some delegates thought would be more effective in solving the issue.

"Reducing waste in any way possible would be good," Namrata Ganwani (Delegate of Cyprus, GA3) said. "For example, using biodegradables and eliminating single-use plastics is a really great solution."

There are some stadiums around the world that recently improved their environmental initiatives. Hard Rock Stadium (Miami, Florida, USA) is a candidate stadium for the 2026 World Cup competition. In December 2019, just months ahead of FIFA's announcement of which stadiums will host World Cup games, the stadium announced that they are moving towards a "plastic-free" model.

Hyken said that plans like Miami's stadium contribute to a larger theme: the impact that sports can have on environmental progress.

"Sports is incredibly influential," he said. "It's throughout the entire world, and it has a lot of potential [to] implement change. It's really good for raising money and awareness."

Another prominent example of a similar initiative was the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic

games. Ahead of the games, Brazil announced their intentions to use a cut of their profits to help the struggling Amazon rainforest ecosystem, something that some delegates applauded as a method of a country helping the environment through sports.

"[During] those Olympics Games, Brazil said they were going to allocate a ton of funds to the rainforest," Hyken said. "But none of it actually went there."

Ganwani commented that there are some proposals around the world that could influence the work they are doing in their committees.

"Qatar is hosting the World Cup in 2022," Ganwani said. "They are making a sustainable, single-use stadium."

That stadium – which some are already dubbing the most environmentally friendly stadium in the world – is made up of entirely recycled materials, and it can be dismantled after the event.

Both Hyken and Ganwani encouraged their fellow delegates to stress this issue in their committee, as they believe it's important. They do, however, recognize that it's an issue without an easy solution.

"It's not work that comes effortlessly," Hyken said. "It's worth it."

The room erupted into laughter as the Human Rights Commission Sub-Commission 2 (HRC2) passed their first resolution of the conference. Upon being questioned on why this achievement took more than half the conference, Isha Mati (Delegate of Chad, HRC2) said, "Part of the reason why so many resolutions are failing is because our expectations of what the resolutions should be are too precise. We believe that each resolution must tackle each and every aspect of the problem, and that's simply not feasible without crossing the four

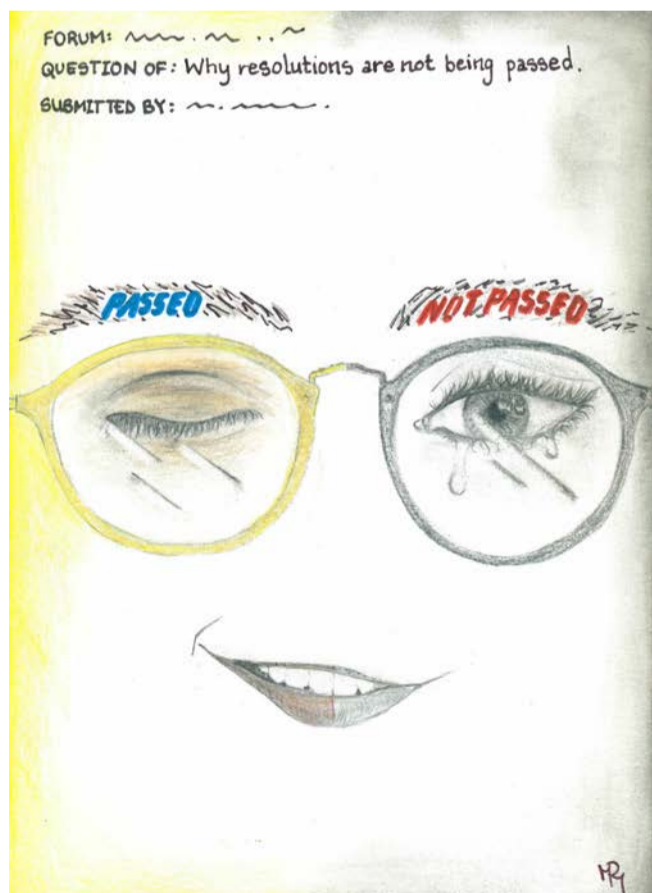
page limit."

With an influx of resolutions zooming into THIMUN, 46 of them have already bitten the dust. Is it because their clauses were not fleshed out to their best ability? Is it favoritism? Are there other unstoppable forces of fate at play at the World Forum?

A popular opinion among the delegates was that there was not enough time to defend their resolutions. According to Luke Ashworth (Delegate of Belarus, General Assembly 2), "There were some criticisms about our resolutions' vagueness, but part of it was that we did not have enough time to defend it."

Mariana Samsun (Delegate of Cameroon, General Assembly 6) echoed the concerns of many delegates when she said, "I think it didn't pass because my committee was pretty destructive." She added that many delegates seemed to be finding more faults in the resolutions rather than collaborating on solutions, which ultimately decreased the quality of constructive debate.

On the contrary, other delegates like Vikram Sivashankar (Delegate of the Kurdish Regional Government, Advisory Panel on the Question of the Kurdish Region) believe that "there is a certain level of favoritism; however, considering the fact that these delegates were some of the most active delegates in committee, it makes sense that their clauses were more trusted than others." He added that "the lack of competitive nature in our committee serves as a great instigator for



Artwork by Martina Rodriguez

RESOLUTION GRAVEYARD

by Suakshi Soni

healthy debate, so if anyone's resolution fails, it is always for a valid reason. Delegates in my committee genuinely collaborate to make our resolution better, which is something really unique to THIMUN."

However, some delegates have been trying to come up with solutions to avoid their resolutions "going to that big ranch in the sky." As Devavardhan Bajla (Delegate of Chad, GA6) stated, "If I could do it all over again, I would probably just talk to more people before I presented it. Talking to more delegates would not only help align others with my resolution it would also lead to collaboration which would result in a better resolution."

Layout by Yuzine Yi

“Fake News”: Trump’s Threat to Democracy

by Amalia Anhalt

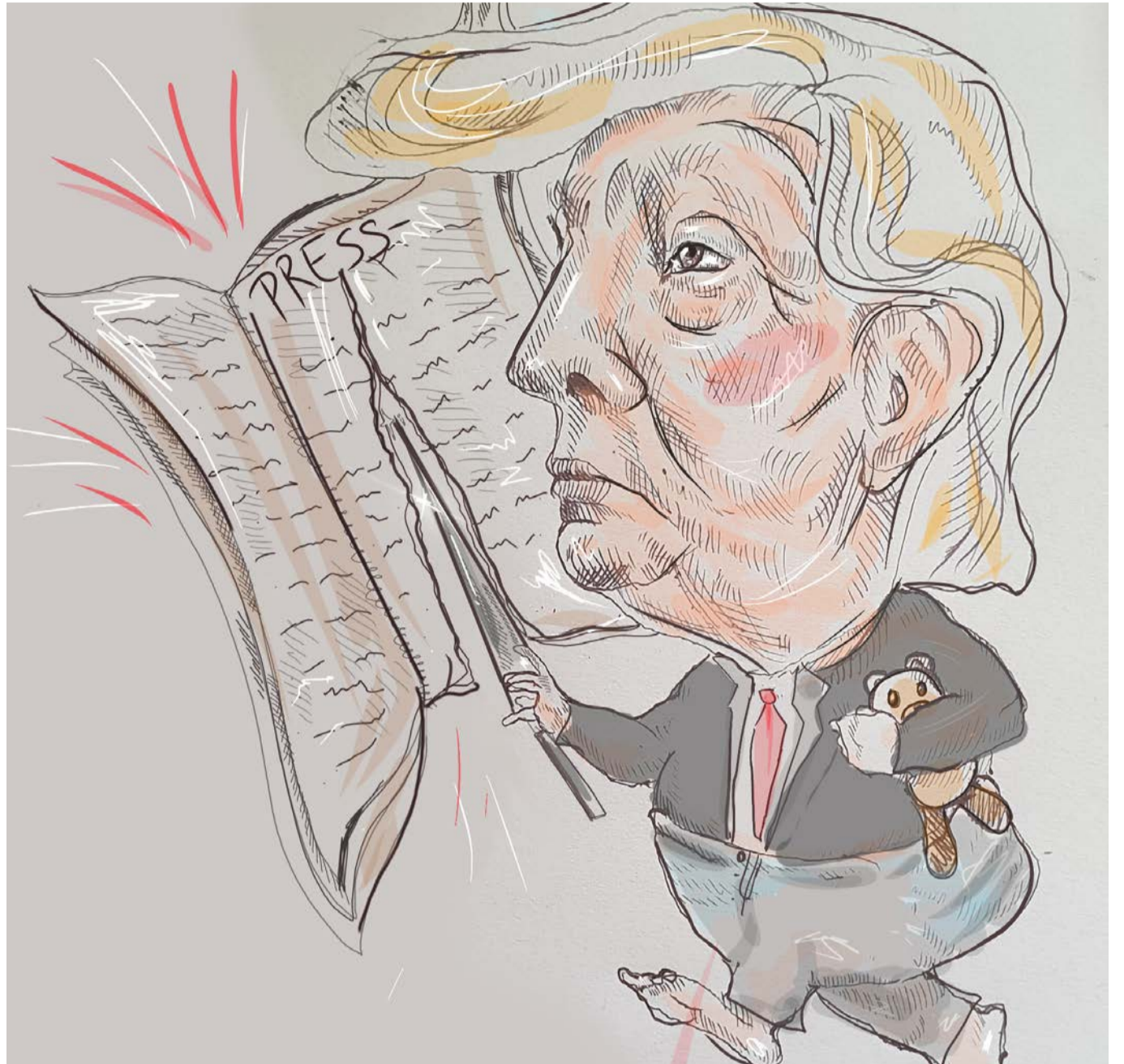
America. Many remember it as the leader of the free world, admired for its might, quality of life and the freedom it has promoted so uncompromisingly. But what is America now?

To many Gen-Zers like myself, America is becoming a kind of dystopia, an example of how rapidly institutions can collapse and unwritten rules can disintegrate, a foundation for our cynicism. I would argue this is rooted partially in the behaviors of President Donald J. Trump, whose actions undermine fundamental American values, such as the freedom of the press. Let us examine how this new reality is shaping the industry of journalism, and what that means for our understanding of truth.

Since the French Revolution, journalism has earned the title of the “Fourth Estate,” or the honorary fourth branch of government next to the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Journalists are the intermediaries between politicians and the people. They objectively report on and scrutinize politics, making them an essential part of how a democratic electorate perceives the government, and consequently how it votes. The perception of journalism in American society as informative and truthful has proven to be fragile under a president who consistently undermines it. President Trump is well-known for his use of the term “fake news.” He does not use it sparingly when referring to coverage that he deems unfavorable, such as when he denied that officials other than former national security adviser Michael Flynn were involved in deciding what to discuss about sanctions in phone calls with Russia. The Mueller investigation and criminal information from Flynn’s guilty plea for lying to the FBI proved that other officials were, in fact, involved, according to the Washington Post. President Trump’s behavior erodes respect for reported facts.

Likewise, President Trump has sharply criticized books such as Bob Woodward’s *Fear: Trump in the White House*. After excerpts were released pre-publication, President Trump even hinted at altering the libel laws to apply more broadly, as reported by the New York Times. Libel laws exist to prevent defamation but are designed to apply only in very specific cases in which lies that damage an individual’s reputation are deliberately spread. Demanding the president be put above criticism by journalists undermines the freedom of the press enshrined in the First Amendment. While it is not within the president’s powers to simply change these laws, one should not ignore the extremity of this stance. A president with loyal supporters making such allegations directly threatens the health of America’s liberal democracy.

How fundamentally America has changed is evident in the fact that the Inter American Press Association, an organization that sends delegations to places in the Americas where



freedoms of the press are under attack, sent a delegation to Washington, D.C. in early 2018, according to Time. This cements the prospect that America is slowly heading down a dangerous path, where people will not have access to facts about their leaders if they are not approved by said leaders.

In addition, President Trump has exacerbated the polarity of American media. Appearing frequently on shows such as Fox and Friends and allowing Fox commentators such as Sean Hannity to boast of their close relationship with the president evokes the feeling that Fox’s coverage is favorable to the president, even if their news coverage is more balanced. According to a Newsweek article from July 2019, President Trump had made about eight times more appearances on Fox News than on any other news outlet. At the time, he had given some 60 interviews on Fox News platforms and zero appearances on CNN, which has a more liberal bias to Fox’s conservative one.

In fairness, former President Barack Obama had a challenged relationship with Fox News. However, I would argue it is not comparable to President Trump’s relationship with the news media, as Fox pushed unfounded conspiracy theories against Obama. Most notable was the Birther movement, in which individuals falsely claimed that Obama was not born in the U.S.

and thus could not be president. While Obama has stated that he perceives Fox’s point of view as “destructive for the long-term growth of a country,” according to FactCheck.org, this is a far cry from dismissing unflattering news stories as “fake news” continuously.

Ultimately, American journalism is under threat. Threatening the freedom of the press threatens America’s existence as a liberal democracy, especially during a presidency in which the ‘free and fair elections’ characteristic of liberal democracies has already been challenged. The state of America’s media landscape is concerning overall; both right- and left-leaning outlets cause Americans’ understanding of truth to be warped, and thus different.

It is our responsibility, as a new generation, to demand objective reporting to the fullest extent possible, to inform ourselves of different perspectives to get a better understanding of actual facts, and then to not let the facts be threatened by anyone with a vested interest in a different “truth.”

Artwork by Paree Rohera
Layout by Selma Choden

Time to Cancel Call-Out Culture?

by Seo Eun “Sunny” Choi

Call-out culture is a phenomenon that has risen rapidly in the last decade and reached one of its peaks in 2019. This can be defined as a form of public shaming that calls attention to an individual and their wrongful acts. While on paper, call-out culture sounds like a good cause, where the evil is punished by the righteous, its execution has slowly derailed this movement from its original direction. Now, the toxicity of call-out culture can be seen seeping out of Twitter threads and behind posts by anonymous entities online.

So what went wrong?

While some people paint themselves as social justice warriors inspiring change and promoting activism with call-outs, others manipulate the tool to bask in the spotlight. By stirring up petty drama, they gain the attention of the public. Some key examples can be found within the YouTube community, especially with last year’s “can’t-miss” drama between two social media influencers Tati Westbrook and James Charles. These call-outs were laced with exaggerations and personal attacks that depicted a clear shift from circulating knowledge for the good of the people to spreading misinformation for their own attention and benefit.

Another recent petty incident occurred when Michael Bloomberg was called out for shaking a dog’s snout, causing an unreasonable stir. Individuals such as Jack McGuire, a blogger and social media director at Barstool Sports, tweeted: “I know I’m told to stick to sports, but I just can’t stay silent on this. I have disqualified Mike Bloomberg from the presidential race for shaking a dog’s face.”

Felix Herden (Ambassador of Benin, General Assembly 2) expressed concerns regarding today’s call-out culture. “In itself being called out for doing something wrong is not necessarily a bad thing; that’s how our whole judication [sic] system works. You do something bad you get the punishment,” he stated. “However, nowadays, people sometimes get called out for things that are completely ob-

scure or [for something that] people thought they did because of a lack of evidence or [...] knowledge of what happened.” He believed that the constant calling-out of individuals without knowledge of the context or intentions was what led to extreme toxicity, especially through the use of social media, where call-outs spread like wildfire.

The change in the intention of call-outs could be attributed to the anonymity Internet users enjoy. When you call out somebody in real life, your actions lead to consequences such as the loss of a friendship. However, with everyone having the ability to hide their true identities behind personas and usernames, it has become much easier to say whatever is on your mind — even if the claim is unfounded — and still leave the conversation unscathed, as evidenced by the study “Studying Invisibly: Media Naturalness and Learning” by psychologists Ina Blau and Avner Caspi. Blau and Caspi found that in anonymous settings, participation but also risk-taking and offensive language flourished.

Without burdening Internet users with tangible consequences, call-outs have allowed cyber-bullying to dominate the digital landscape. In an article from the Medium, Rachel Wayne mentions the use of the Internet’s idea of fighting fire with fire. She writes, “Like many attempts to promote social justice, calling out has benign beginnings and legitimate uses, but has, among many people, devolved into bullying. And bullying is never okay, even if it’s in response to bullying.”

These venomous comments that people spit out without a second thought harm the individuals at whom they’re directed: they can emotionally and mentally damage these people and have devastating consequences. Recent suicides in South Korea’s K-pop industries such as Goo Hara and Sulli are said to have been strongly influenced by malicious comments and Internet trolls. Emma Kelly from Metro in her article “How many more celebrities have to die before trolling is taken seriously?” states

“

“The toxicity of call-out culture can be seen seeping out of Twitter threads and behind posts by anonymous entities online.”

”

that on a video, where Sulli expressed fear when jumped by a male fan with a camera, comments said, “If you’re that scared, just retire” and “You’re drinking alcohol at a cart bar and couldn’t predict that something like that would happen.”

There’s no single correct way of calling other people out. However, taking a more empathetic approach in your criticisms and not ganging up on others will make your statements much more effective. “Personally, I think people should be [called-out],” noted Emma Colom Bildstein (Delegate of Tunisia, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1) . “But never in a destructive manner. Rather, it should be constructive criticism at best.” Furthermore, Herden added that the intent of the speaker should be taken into account as well. “It’s important to always do your research before you accuse somebody. However, accusations should be avoided in the first place through proper communication!” he said.

Rather than thinking of punishing the individual who has said or done anything offensive, attempting to clear up misconceptions or guide the person to a better direction is what we should all strive to do.

“

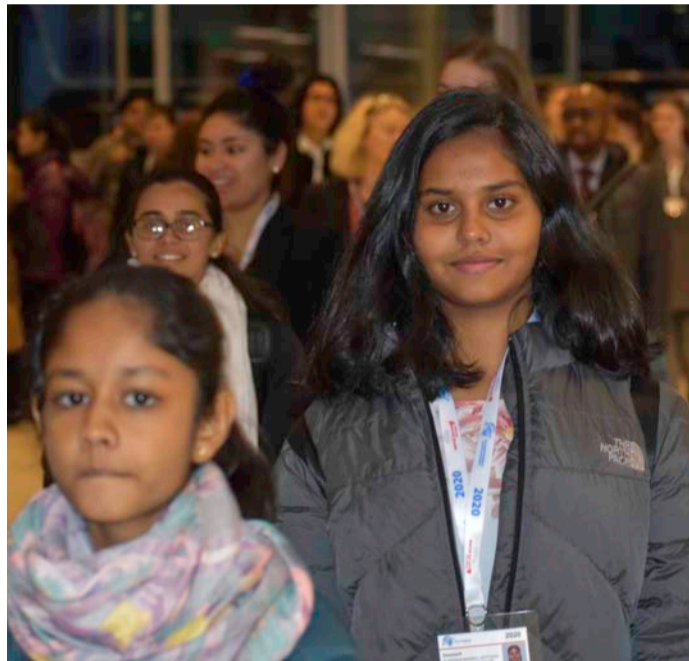
Rather than thinking of punishing the individual who has said or done anything offensive, attempting to clear up misconceptions or guide the person to a better direction is what we should all strive to do.

”

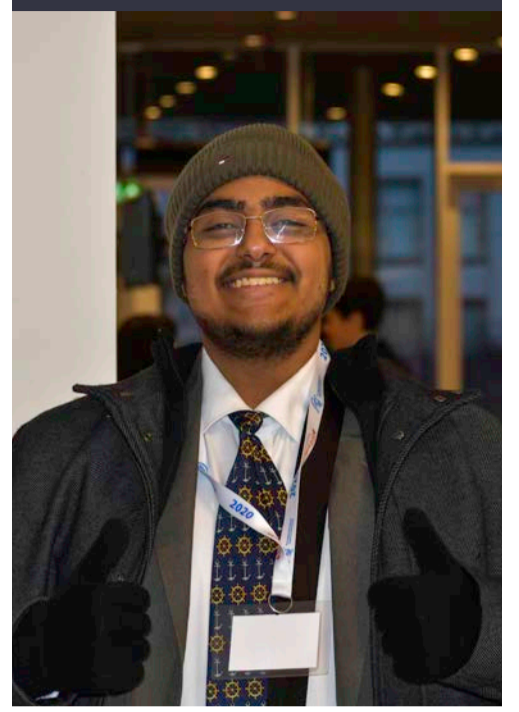


Artwork by Tep Khemarin Chan
Layout by Adina Cazacu-De Luca

MUNITY JAN 2020



MUNITY JAN 2020



Photographs by Julie Andersen & Selina Demaré & Emre Erçakır & Tamar Kreitman
Layout by Selma Choden

Variety of Ages at THIMUN

by Carrie Zhang

THIMUN welcomes a diversity of people who differ in language, ethnicity, gender and more. That diversity also includes age. While most delegations bring eleventh and twelfth graders or students ages sixteen and up, a select few bring delegates as young as thirteen.

Oskar Pickering (Delegate of Benin, Economic and Social Council) said that THIMUN “is for anyone as of seventh grade but it’s more likely to go to the older grades because they are more experienced.”

Does the difference in age cause problems for younger delegates?

For Pickering, an 8th grader, the only challenge he faced was “being called cute.” Pickering commented, “People treat me like [any other] delegate. A slightly younger delegate, but a delegate nonetheless. That slightly annoys me when they treat me like I’m a little bit younger [and therefore] a little bit more inexperienced because I’ve actually done quite a few conferences.” Pickering chuckled. “It’s kind of fun proving them wrong.”

While some delegates like Pickering have not faced obstacles in the conference, other younger students have. A delegate, who wishes not to be named, said, “[The other delegates] view me as younger and with that, less experienced — meaning, they think that my ideas are not as good as theirs.”

At the same time, the

delegate has been able to overcome some of those initial challenges by explaining their ideas more thoroughly and speaking to the other delegates one-on-one.

Yet the diversity in age can also be beneficial. Students like Emma Poma (Delegate of the Netherlands, Human Rights Commission Sub-Commission 2), a ninth-grader, noted that she can learn from older delegates because they are more experienced.

While the difference in ages may affect younger delegates by initial judgments or differences in skill sets, older delegates may also be affected. Ricardo Sáez (Delegate of Armenia, HRC2), who started attending MUN conferences in the seventh grade five years ago, said that he enjoyed seeing seventh and eighth graders at THIMUN. “They’ve gotten so far in so little time,” he said. “If any seventh or eighth-grader can come, I’d tell them to come because it’s a great experience for them.”

Other delegates shared similar views with Sáez. Although Katie Xu (Delegate of Egypt, ECOSOC), an 11th grader, was initially surprised by the number of pre-teen students here, she commented, “They’re trying their best, and they’re definitely doing better than I would have at their age.”

Older delegates added that often times, younger students have the knowledge. What they lack is articulation, and while they express their



passion and knowledge, there are still older delegates who are not entirely acclimated to their presence.

An anonymous delegate commented, “Knowing that we travel around the world to come here and have to debate with people four or five years younger than us sometimes isn’t as motivating because we know how hard we worked, and sometimes the levels of maturity can be a little different and [...] that decreases the level of debate.”

These delegates acknowledge the advantages of the diversity of opinions. However, they view THIMUN as an MUN conference that requires more complex language, writing, research and communication skills that younger delegates may lack.

At the same time, there are still older delegates who attend that lack the dedication and determination that the younger students have.

However, some delegates still see the value in an exclusive up-

perclassmen conference. The anonymous delegate concluded, “I still see something that is important about having a more unified set of ages just in terms of shared educational goals and the ability to connect with people my age from around the world.”

MUN directors play a large role in selecting the delegates that attend THIMUN. All delegations typically have an age limit — middle school and up — but it varies how high that limit is. Furthermore, when choosing delegates, MUN directors often analyze a student’s past experience.

Manatsu McCluskey, an MUN director, selected multiple middle schoolers for her school’s delegation this year. McCluskey said,

“We wouldn’t bring just anyone [...]. It’s the passion. It’s the interest, and when that’s paired adequately with a certain level of maturity, we decide to give them a chance.”

Although skill sets are important, MUN director Murga Nick from Schutz American School said upperclassmen tend to exhibit a higher skill level. Nick concluded, “It really comes down to who best meets the criteria I mentioned, and oftentimes it’s the older students who better succeed.”



Photographs by Tamar Kreitman
Layout by Melody Tai

When Culture is Commandeered: Navigating Appropriation in GA3

by Emma Nathenson

In 2012, the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show sent models down the runway in variations of Native American dress, inflaming the debate around "cultural appropriation." Many have heard the term "cultural appropriation" applied to the fashion industry or hairstyles, but this phenomenon is widespread and built on a long history of power imbalances. Cultural appropriation — the act of taking others' items, traditions or heritage as one's own — is incredibly prevalent and difficult to discern. General Assembly 3 (GA3) has been tackling the topic, especially in regards to war tokens and artifacts in Western museums, which have been known to display items stolen from oppressed cultures.

"When do I say, 'this belongs to me?'" questioned Joel Tan (Deputy Chair, GA3). Indeed, what are some of the barriers in the way of safeguarding culture traditions, and how might one distinguish where globalization ends and appropriation begins?

Court Hyken (Delegate of Egypt, GA3) explained that an obstacle in the way of cultural empathy is that "sometimes people have an opinion and they get really stuck in it. It's not maybe the easiest thing for them to embrace others." Hyken shared that creating distinct guidelines regarding cultural appropriation has been difficult, and offered conflicting concerns about the role museums play. "I think the law currently is that if a museum is occupying an artifact then it's currently property of the museum," said Hyken, and not property of the origin country. "I think that it is important to respect other cultures and a lot of the things that we're talking about in our forum is how that should be dealt with, and I don't know

if I've fully been able to form my opinion on that."

According to Alex Sauter (Delegate of the African Union, GA3), a head submitter on the topic, the issue is that, "for many years Africa has been exploited and taken advantage of by Western countries." While the debate is difficult to navigate, Sauter added that "misappropriation is mainly caused by people not being informed of what the culture is as a whole. Generally when they are informed, they really appreciate it a lot more, rather than just make fun of it."

The path to a resolution has not been a clear one; delegates are

struggling with drawing the line between honoring and appropriating.

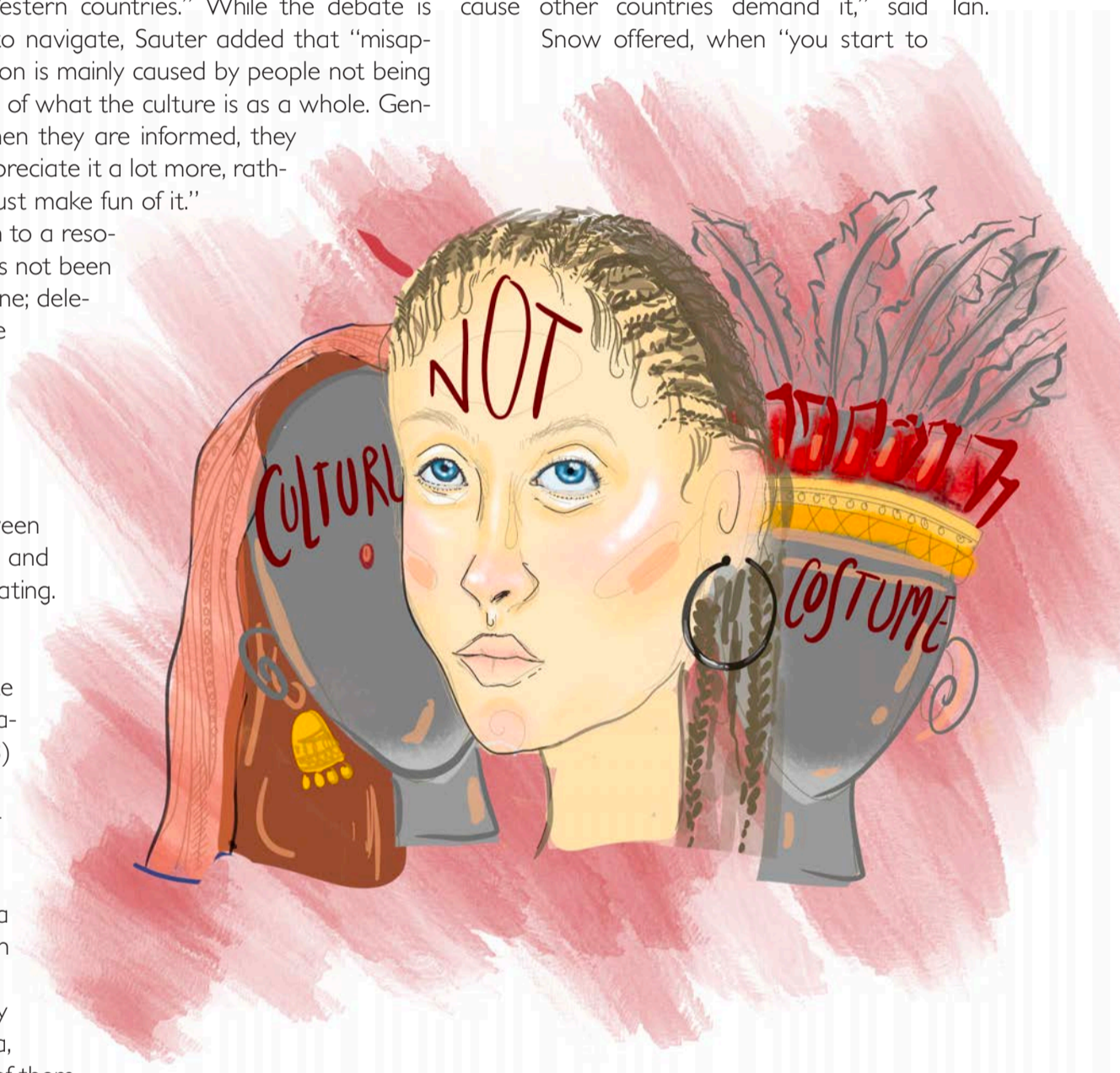
Jordan Snow (Delegate of El Salvador, GA3) believes "It's a really hard thing to put into a resolution because it's a very grey area, so a lot of them have been very vague. We're really struggling to make very concrete plans to move forward and protect cultural heritage."

Hyken suggested "having a conversation and hearing out others and understanding, even if you aren't necessarily in agreement," could be key steps in minimizing cultural insensitivity and appropriation.

"It should be between the member state [from which the artifacts are from] and the museum to decide," said Sauter. He claimed that it is within the country of origin's purview to reclaim or display their artifact. "It's their culture, so they have the right to decide," he explained simply. Creating stronger guidelines aimed to prevent misappropriation "should be a discussion facilitated by the UN (and) very diplomatic."

Although educating citizens and nations on cultures and traditions is a vital effort, it alone does not suffice in deconstructing the power imbalances that fuel appropriation.

Indeed, "even though you might say the UN advocates for cultural heritage, ... It really needs a lot of galvanizing of international powers. It's not going to be easy to convince countries to give up their 'loot' because other countries demand it," said Tan. Snow offered, when "you start to



take the good parts of the culture without taking the entire culture and you're leaving all the struggles and historical prejudice related, and not even considering that, and only taking the parts that you want for yourself, I think that's where the line is drawn. I don't think that's acceptable."

So far, the road to a resolution on this topic has been rocky. Perhaps the GA3 will navigate the grey area, and build a framework that recognizes the underlying racism, colonialism and privilege that cultural appropriation is rooted in.



Photographs by Tamar Kreitman

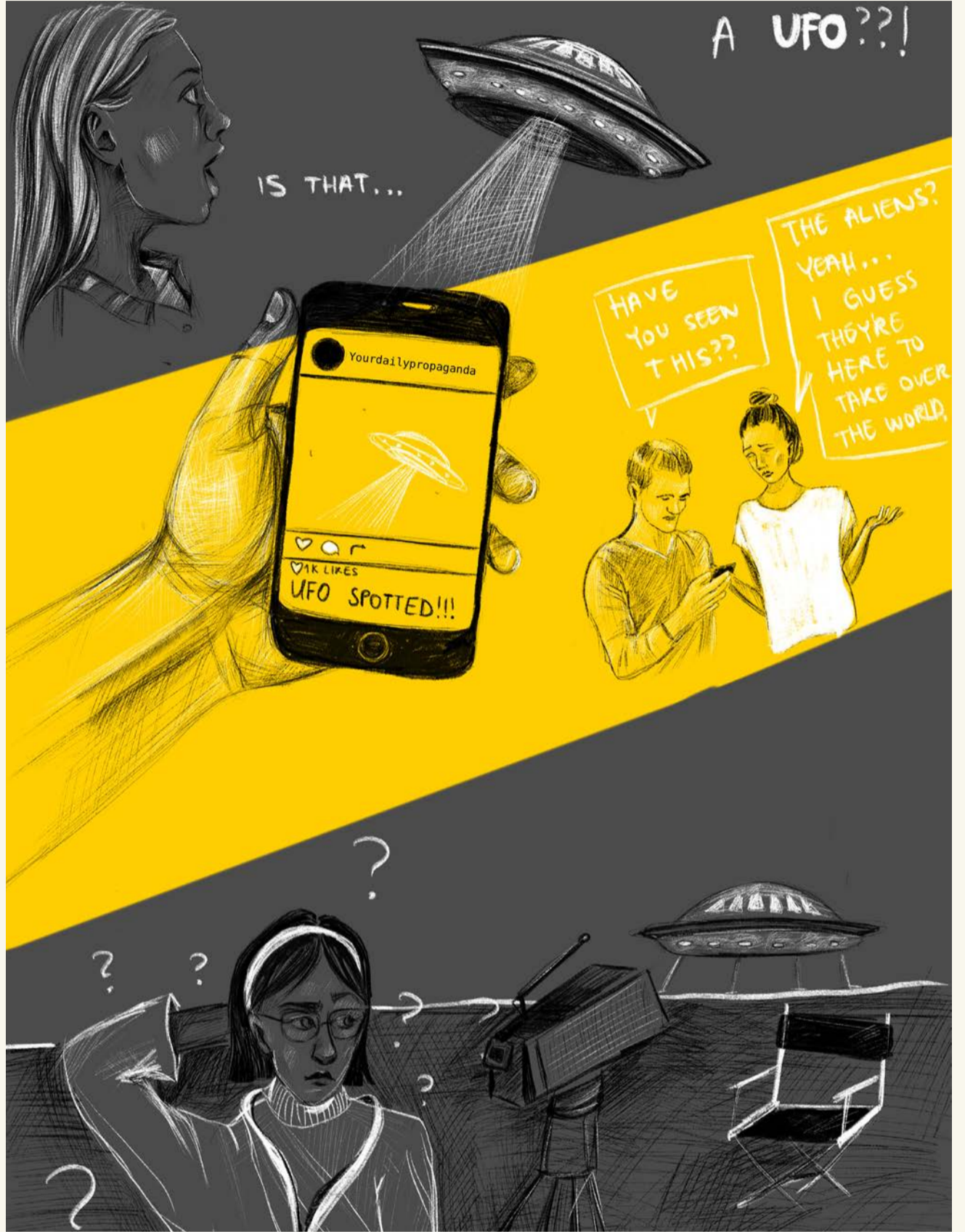


Artwork by Parea Rohera
Layout by Melody Tai

Cartoon Collection



Artwork by Paree Rohera



Artwork by Dariia Panasenko



Artwork by Tep Khemarin Chan



Artwork by Valentine Leroux



Artwork by Tep Khemarin Chen