

# TBS-LSE IPE London Study Trip 2017





## Background

From March 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, the International Political Economy Major (IPE) students embarked on a study tour of London. The trip was sponsored by the London School of Economics and was designed to coincide with the IPE Major Senior Dissertation projects, which consider different aspects of free trade and its impact on the Tunisian economy, state and different social issues. In particular, the trip aimed to provide students with the comparative perspectives of different academics, civil society and political actors working on the areas of the global political economy and trade. Our visits ranged from a private tour of the Islamic Art section in the British Museum, to meetings with several professors from the London School of Economics and School of Oriental and African Studies, from attending a contentious municipal meeting on a new private-public partnership housing development in North London, to discussions on global trade with organizations like War on Want, Jubilee Debt and the British Trade Union Congress. It was an incredible and transformative learning experience.

*Here are some excerpts from students' reflection papers on the London Student Tour*

### **Hijene Bouchnak:**

“On March 19th, IPE major students from Tunis Business School touched down at Heathrow Airport in London for a short study trip sponsored by the London School of Economics. For most of us, it was our first trip to England. Indeed, we were armed with great expectations and eagerness to learn more about the UK. This study trip was a great opportunity for self-reflection and assessing and consolidating what we have learned in our IPE courses at TBS. It gave us an opportunity to reflect on the theories and concepts we have read about and discussed in class, and to apply them to real world issues. This journey was full of a series of insightful and informative lectures and meetings. Getting to meet professors whose work we have read and discussed in our International Political Economy and International Relations classes was such an amazing experience.

It was a pleasure sharing my research topic and receiving feedback from various SOAS and LSE professors and civil society activists. In the end, I would like to thank everyone who made this trip possible for a truly incredible time!”

**Hela Kacem:**

“The London trip was one of my best academic experiences during my four years at TBS. Not only was it great to discover one of the most culturally rich and interesting cities in the world with my classmates. We also had the opportunity to be exposed to so much new information in such a short amount of time. The intensity and stimulation personally filled me with an enthusiasm and renewed drive...

Overall this trip helped to clarify and further understand many of the notions and ideas we have studied in class as we could discuss their real life applications and ramifications. It also helped us to establish contacts with activists from London and Arab countries who are fighting for the same causes we believe in. But I think above all what this trip did was remind us of a very important cause that we tend to be distracted from as we are busy with our course work and trying to figure out ways to build a stable future. This is our right and duty to put all of our effort into making our country and nation better. And to maintain the belief that our efforts are never too small to make an impact.”

**Youssef Abdelaziz Balti:**

“I would summarize the London Trip in three words: insightful, comprehensive and critical. It gave us a unique understanding and different perspective on International Political Economy and International Relations. In fact, it was very interesting to see that people in Europe, or the “Global North”, were also deeply concerned about “Global South” issues and prosperity. It was also quite astonishing to realize that people in the U.K., a “developed country,” are concerned with many of the same social, economic and political issues that Tunisia, a “developing country,” are facing today.”

**Sahar Méstour:**

“We all had that big smile on our faces and that sparkle in our eyes because we all knew that it was going to be an experience of a lifetime and an opportunity to grow on all levels. The trip encompassed many wonderful meetings with many interesting and leading scholars. It was great to meet people whose articles we had read in class, as well as many amazing civil society actors and museum curators...

With all these interesting meetings and incredible discussions, my first study trip was over but its memory will forever be engraved in my heart and soul. It was a breath-taking journey through which I have met an incredible number of interesting people for whom I developed a huge amount of admiration.”

**Mourad Khaled:**

“The trip to London was extremely enriching in multiple ways. Our different meetings with activists, professors and civil society actors helped to broaden our knowledge and understanding of different International Relations and International Political Economy themes. As a conclusion I would say that during the London trip we met a lot of extraordinary people that are passionate about what they are

doing. We definitely learned a lot from them. We also had the chance to attend lectures at prestigious universities and we engaged with some of their students.”

**Oumaima Jegham:**

“The whole experience was enriching and beneficial to our general knowledge, self-development as well as to our senior dissertations. During this trip we got the chance to meet with great academics who showed a lot of interest in what we do and offered to help. It was also really exciting to meet the dedicated civil society actors who focus not only on UK and European issues, but also on more worldwide issues, including those concerning Tunisia. This was a great source of inspiration and hope for a better future.”

**Oumaima Garrach:**

The London trip was a lovely, amazing journey. In fact, it was my first journey outside Tunisia. I discovered a different culture, had an opportunity to meet nice people and to learn from their experiences and knowledge. What made the trip even more special is that I got to share this journey with my friends and my dear professors and that together we were able to represent the first promotion of International Political Economy abroad.”

**Rihen Tagazi:**

“I cannot put into words how amazing this study trip was and how rewarding it truly is to be able to do something like this. What I really enjoyed was not only absorbing and learning all this new information, but also putting in practice what I have learned through the IPE curriculum and being able to relate this to the many meetings we had. It was personally satisfying to integrate material from the IR and IPE classes...”

I am very grateful for this educational experience. Getting the chance to talk with students and faculty, and to explore the research being generated in different prestigious institutions has helped me to develop a clearer picture of what I would like to do in the future.”

**Nada Trigui:**

Robert Brasillach once said that “History is written by the victors”. I would add “in the words of the victors.” As we communicate through every moment of our lives, we utter combinations of words, coupled with infinite varieties of nuances, connotations and innuendoes that create perspectives and trigger interpretations to convey meaning.

The London Study Trip trip helped me to better understand and think critically about the role of universities, dominant discourses and media in shaping our understandings of our world and who we are and thus our opinions and attitudes towards our environment and ourselves. This is especially the case in relation to aid, trade and governance.”

**Oumay'ma Lahmar:**

During our trip our schedule was busy, informative and very interesting. I found myself with my colleagues moving from a university to another, from one lecture to another, from an association to another. I met with people I could have never met by my own. Professors, researchers, activists... All had brilliant mindsets with well-founded and critical thinking that contributed to enlightening and opening new doors in my mind.

The trip was helpful in my academic and professional advancement aims. It was like a dream and I woke up when I came back to Tunisia full of energy and motivation to keep working harder for the success of my country.”

**Sarra Ben Khelil:**

“This intensive three days trip was one of the best experiences I have ever had. The lectures and meetings gave me a lot of good food for thought and helped to deepen my knowledge and perspectives in the field of International Political Economy. This experience has also motivated me to continue my research and to always keep critically thinking about what is happening around me. Therefore I would like to thank all the participants that made this trip happen and helped us have an incredible experience.”