

Personal Statement

2015, Human, Social and Political Sciences, Churchill College

After I got my first camera at age 12, I decided to become a professional photographer. I practiced as much as I could, went to exhibitions and was intrigued by the work of one photographer in particular: Robert Capa. Not only was he an outstanding photojournalist, but also an excellent writer. His memoirs, documenting his work during the Spanish Civil War and WWII, armed only with a camera, was what first drew me to politics and international relations. My choice to study these subjects was confirmed in advanced history, literature and social science lessons in school. An additional social history class opened my eyes to political philosophy, as we discussed the various iterations of social contract theory, most prominently in relation to Hobbes and the state's monopoly of violence. This remains a controversial issue, as even democracies struggle with abuses of that monopoly. In this context, we compared Proudhon's notion of anarchy as a utopistic form of living with Hobbes' negative view of it as the chaos of excessive individual freedom that must be overcome. This knowledge proved useful in an English-language IR course when we discussed the concept of anarchy among states. The lack of a central authority in the international arena is especially apparent in cases where the UN Security Council (UNSC) fails to act, since a post-Cold War era of cooperation so far failed to materialise. To explore whether we have entered a multipolar world order, I read David Shambough's *China Goes Global*, which convincingly argues that despite its huge military force China is currently only capable of projecting power effectively in the Asia-Pacific region, given its lack of equipment and technology. We also discussed the responsibility-to-protect doctrine, originally intended to give the international community a right to intervene to prevent mass atrocities. Recently, however, it has been reinterpreted by some countries, for example when Russia used it to justify intervening in Crimea. In an essay, I assessed this intervention in the light of Russia's previous territorial disputes and its foreign policy in general. I found that in many ways, this action is just the latest, more forceful example of Russia's assertiveness in such disputes, for example the "frozen" conflicts in Moldova and Georgia.

Participation in international conferences and events had a formative effect on me. 2 years ago I received a scholarship for a month-long Youth Leadership Program in the US. In Washington, Raleigh and Chicago, I volunteered at NGOs and studied the US government by talking with state senators and scholars. This experience spurred me on to participate in further exchanges in Austria and Germany, as well as Model European Parliaments in Slovakia and Model UN conferences in Budapest, Istanbul and Ljubljana. As member of 2 MUN societies I am also part of the organizing team for a university-level MUN conference in Budapest. Acting as UNSC ambassador of Rwanda and debating Crimea showed me once again the UNSC's inability to act in situations involving the P5. I am currently writing an essay on another such failure, the Rwandan genocide, in which I also explore a hypothetical UN or US intervention.

Photography continues to be my passion. I do paid work as a sport and events photographer, for which I had to develop my research skills and self-reliance, as I am 100% self-taught. I am also the president of a student photography society where I organise workshops, events and competitions. I canoed for 7 years and I also did bike messenger racing, but my favourite is sailing. Joining a sponsored team gave me the opportunity to travel to the J24 European

Championship in Sweden and to German championship races in Kiel and Berlin. We also came 3rd in the ORC Hungarian Championship.

As politics and IR have a stronger tradition in the UK with a more international perspective than in Hungary, I am confident a British university is the right choice.