

An account of events at the LSE Freshers' Fair on Friday, October 4th:

We (Abhishek Phadnis and Chris Moos) arrived at the Fair at 10 am. In silent protest at our treatment the day before (see account of events of October 3rd), and still unsure as to what parts of the t-shirts had allegedly caused "offence", we put tape (with the words "Censored", "This has been censored" and "Nothing to see here") over the faces of the "Jesus and Mo" figures on the t-shirts.

Shortly after midday, the LSESU Deputy Chief Executive Jarlath O'Hara approached us, demanding we take the t-shirts off as per his instructions of the previous day. We explained to him that we had covered the "offensive" parts this time, and offered to use our tape to cover any other areas deemed "offensive". He refused to hear us out, insisting that if we did not take off the whole t-shirt, LSE Security would be called to bodily remove us from the premises. He left, warning us that he was summoning LSE Security to eject us.

At about 2:30pm, Paul Thornbury, Head of LSE Security, delivered a letter from the School Secretary Susan Scholefield. The letter claimed that some students found our t-shirts "offensive", even though we had covered up the "offensive" parts of the t-shirts. It claimed we were in possible breach of the LSE Harassment Policy and Disciplinary Procedure, and that our actions were "damaging the School's reputation", and "undermining the spirit of the LSESU Freshers' Fair and good campus relations at LSE". It concluded by asking us to "refrain from wearing the t-shirts in question and cover any other potentially offensive imagery", and warning us that the School "reserves the right to consider taking further action if warranted".

Shortly thereafter, having completed our work at the stall, we began packing up. As we were about to leave, Paul Thornbury returned to confirm we were leaving. We told him that we were, and as we left the room, we saw that he was accompanied by several security guards, LSESU General Secretary Jay Stoll and Deputy Chief Executive O'Hara. The Security officials left the building at the same time as we did, confirming our impression that they had only been there to monitor us, like the two security guards positioned at our stall the day before to stop us attempting to put our t-shirts back on.

We can confirm that the aforementioned Students Union and LSE Security staff were the only visitors to our stall who expressed offence at our clothing. We had students from all kind of backgrounds come to us to express their support and astonishment about the heavy-handed actions of the LSE and LSESU, including several students who self-identified as Muslims.

We are still in shock about the intimidating behaviour of the LSESU and LSE staff. Again, we strongly reject the claim that our clothing or behaviour could be reasonably interpreted as "harassing" or "offensive". In any case, we believe that in an open and multi-cultural society, there can be no right not to be offended without undermining freedom of expression, which is essential to the functioning of universities as much as of wider society.

We have written to the LSE Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning, Paul Kelly, and the Head of LSE Legal and Compliance, Kevin Haynes, expressing indignation at our treatment and seeking a full explanation of the grounds of the allegations against us. We are still awaiting a detailed reply.

Abhishek Phadnis & Chris Moos