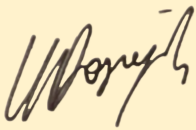


Minutes - Dr Shashi Tharoor | The Cambridge Majlis 23-24 | Easter Term

On Tuesday 13th June 2023, the Cambridge Majlis hosted Shashi Tharoor at the Law Faculty. By far the most popular event since the revival, Dr Tharoor was greeted by rapturous applause and quickly settled into eloquent discussion, every bit the elder statesman. He provided well-rehearsed responses to the questions posed to him by President Ananya Jain, arguing in one such instance that in order for parties to create a successful coalition against Modi's BJP, it was necessary to think "not just about getting the maths right, but getting the chemistry right" to ensure effective opposition. Tharoor also critiqued India's position on conflict in Ukraine, arguing that post-independence values of state sovereignty, peaceful diplomacy and the inviolability of borders have been shunned in favour of "mealy-mouthed" descriptions of the conflict as "an act of God" with no reference to Russia as aggressor. Elsewhere on international relations, he bemoaned the inability of successive governments to secure jobs in India following the exodus of multinational companies from China, while following questioning on Indo-Pakistani relations, he talked at length about the parallels between the sporting and political relationships between the two nations, with tensions flaring in parallel between the two countries' cricketing bodies. Following questioning on Kashmir, he focussed on the as yet limited tangible impact of the revocation of Article 370 - which he had argued against - though cautioned that it was too early to say whether Kashmir would appear more attractive to investment, or what real impact it would have on the levels of violence and casualties in the region. At the forefront of many of his answers was the economy, making note himself that his pursuit of wide scale liberalisation of regulations put him on the right of his party. Undeniably, his answers were diplomatic. When questioned about caste, in spite of his recent biography of Ambedkar, he danced around the issue, asserting that too stringent a focus on anti-caste discrimination legislation in the UK, as has been recently enacted in California, would bring unsightly "domestic elements" to the international stage. One of the final audience questions touched on identity, specifically, whether Tharoor, born in London, had ever faced an "identity crisis", prompting him to wax lyrically about his conviction in his identity as an Indian, with an amusing anecdote about his refusal of British citizenship during an early visa application. He ended the event with an appeal to the Majlis to continue encouraging healthy discussion, before being hastily escorted by the executive committee through scores of attendees hoping for an autograph, or a selfie, or a handshake, and into Selwyn College, ready to conduct another comfortable engagement on his whistle-stop tour of Cambridge.



Keirit Kaur Dosanjh - Vice-President (Internal) The Cambridge Majlis 2023-4

