



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

EXHIBITION GUIDE

Stolen! Theft in the archive

12 October 2026 – 18 March 2027

Stolen! Theft in the archive

This exhibition explores stories of theft in different forms: the attempted burglary of documents smuggled to LSE Library, stolen art, wealth taken by others, ideas obscured by the published record, and histories robbed by silence. They show how theft shapes what we remember and what we forget. Who has stolen what from whom?

In this exhibition guide, we expand on some of the stories presented throughout the exhibition, explain why the themes were selected, and explore how they made their way into the LSE Library collections.

Cover illustration by Jonathan Ing

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Who stole the Fabian Window?

Daniel Brambilla-Payne



I thought the stealing of the Fabian window was an interesting way to explore the founding of LSE. A story that has been told many times before, the window's theft gives us the opportunity to reveal histories which are often hidden, such as the role that partners Caroline and Joan played in that history, and who were partners both romantically and in business. I've also been fascinated by the life of Frank Podmore. Whilst it's problematic to apply modern terms to people from the past, it's possible he may have had relationships with men. Along with Havelock Ellis, there is queer history hidden in the founding of LSE.

Caroline Townshend (1) and her partner Joan Howson (2) ran a business together making stained glass windows. In 1910 Caroline built a window which depicts Fabians and founders of LSE hammering together a new world (3). But who were the Fabians?

Caroline was a member of a socialist debating club founded by children's author Edith Nesbit and her husband Hubert Bland, historian Edward Pease, author of the first English book on homosexuality Havelock Ellis, and others. By 1884 the club needed a name. Fellow member of the society Frank Podmore (researcher of ghosts and telepathy who would later die in suspicious circumstances) coined the name "The Fabian Society" inspired by the warfare tactics of Roman statesman Quintus Fabius Maximus



Verrucosus the Cunctator (280-203 BCE). In battle, Fabius favoured gradually wearing down the enemy from the sidelines. Frank saw this as a fitting metaphor to align with the Society's aim: to erode the enemy (capitalism) and bring socialism to Great Britain.

In 1894, Fabian member Henry Hunt Hutchinson left £20,000 in his will "to the propaganda and other purposes of [the Fabian Society] and its Socialism". And so, LSE was born under socialist origins (4).

Caroline's window stayed in her studio until her death where it was then purchased by the Webb Memorial Trust. In 1978 it was stolen (5) (the thief never identified), then resurfaced at auction in 2005 where it was re-purchased by the Webb Memorial Trust then gifted to LSE in 2017. It now sits proudly in the Shaw Library which is often thought to be named after George Bernard Shaw but is named after his wife Charlotte Payne-Townshend (6), who was instrumental in financing the beautiful library (pop in and see it. It's on the 6th floor of the Old Building).

“

Frank Podmore ... coined the name "The Fabian Society" inspired by the warfare tactics of Roman statesman Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus the Cunctator (280-203 BCE).



What are the objects on display and how did they get here?

1. Labour candidates standing for election at Fulham Borough Council with photograph of Caroline Townsend, 1912, ILP/6/21/2

The archives of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) were formed by many deposits to LSE Library from a range of sources over a long period of time, including ILP members. The ILP was formed in 1893 and co-founded the Labour Party. The organisation still exists today as Independent Labour Publications.

2. A photograph of Caroline Townshend and Joan Howson, LSE/SMALL LSE DEPOSITS/184

This photograph shows Caroline and Joan at a craft exhibition called "The Seagull Pottery" which was formed to provide employment for refugee artists from Europe. Because of their connection to LSE, Mark Westcott (great nephew of Joan Howson) kindly donated this photograph to LSE Library.

3. Replica cross section of Fabian Window

On loan to LSE Library from Sophia D'Angelico (Donor Relations, LSE)

4. Sidney Webb's address to the Hutchinson Trustees outlining the idea of an LSE, LSE/MINUTES/1/1

Sydney Webb was one of the founders of LSE and his material along with Beatrice Webb's was donated to LSE. This is known as the PASSFIELD collection as Sydney was made Baron Passfield of Passfield Corner in 1929.

5. A press cutting from *The Times*, 1978, FABIAN SOCIETY/1985/339

The archives of the Fabian Society have been formed from many deposits to LSE Library from the organisation as well as members, over a long period of time. This press cutting is from a 1985 accession which was transferred to LSE from Nuffield College, Oxford.

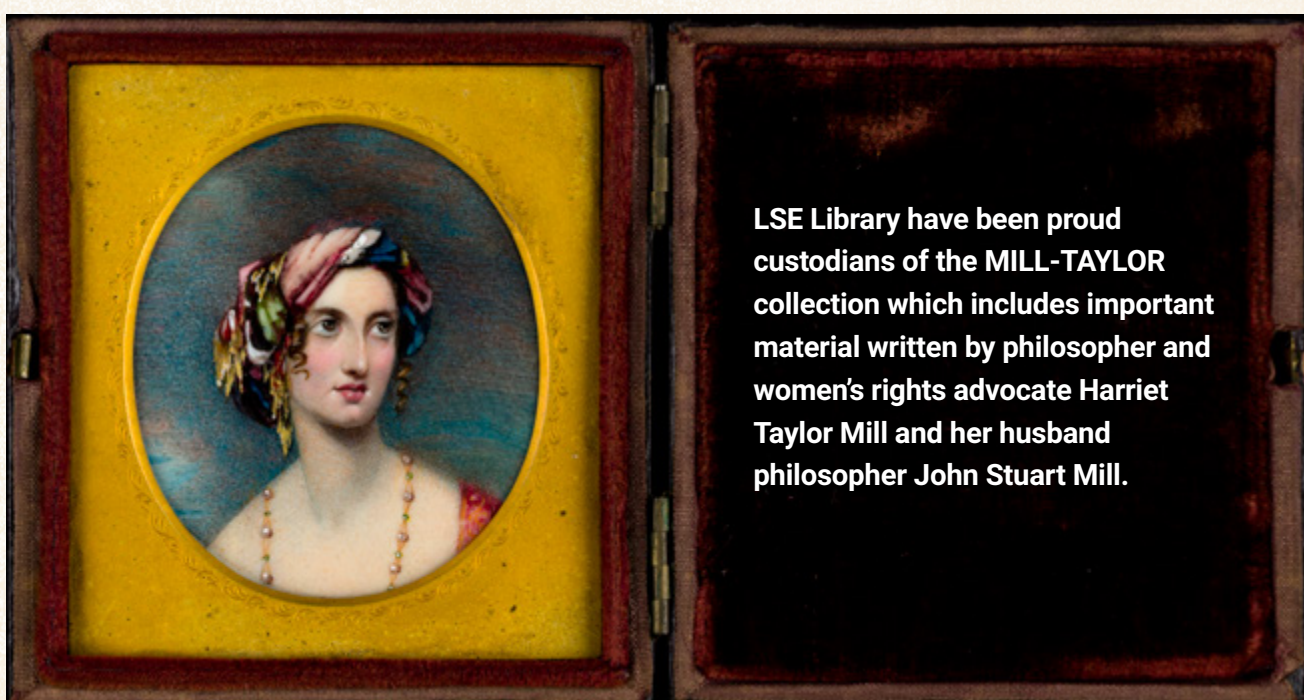
6. Photograph of Charlotte Shaw and Bernard Shaw, c.1898, PASSFIELD/14/29

This photograph was removed from Beatrice Webb's diaries and stored separately to help with their preservation. This forms part of the same PASSFIELD collection mentioned above, relating to the early founding of LSE.

Harriet Taylor Mill and her Stolen Legacy

Daniel Brambilla-Payne and Jo Ellen Jacobs

The classic text *On Liberty* has always been published as being authored by John Stuart Mill as the sole author, despite John writing “it belongs as much to her as to me”, referring to his wife, Harriet. A new edition published in 2026 for the first time lists Harriet Taylor Mill as the rightful co-author. But what does this have to do with LSE Library?



LSE Library have been proud custodians of the MILL-TAYLOR collection which includes important material written by philosopher and women's rights advocate Harriet Taylor Mill and her husband philosopher John Stuart Mill.

In February 2024 LSE Library was approached by an international group of academics who were researching this collection hoping to publish a new edition of the classic text *On Liberty*, with Harriet Taylor Mill listed as the co-author for the first time. All previous editions only publish her husband's name, John Stuart Mill.

We invited Jo Ellen Jacobs, one of the editors of this book and author of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, to choose objects from the Mill-Taylor archive and respond to our exhibition theme “Stolen!”.

Daniel Brambilla-Payne

“ By marriage I mean a legal obligation wh[ich] binds any person to live with, or be dependent on, another, against their inclination – wh[ich] makes the person of one human being the property of another.

No government has a right to interfere with the personal freedom. Every human being has a right to all personal freedom which does not interfere with the happiness of some other...

Transcript from page 19 of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, edited by Jo Ellen Jacobs

“...by such a system, that is enough to keep alive the faith that such a time may come.

I should think that 500 years hence, among the whole mass of absurdity by which former ages like to be remembered, there will be nothing which will so excite wonder and contempt as the fact of legislative interference in matters of feeling – or rather in the expression of feeling. It seems to me just as absurd that there should be legislation about marrying as about shaking hands.

Transcript from page 20 of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, edited by Jo Ellen Jacobs

Jo Ellen Jacobs, Millikin University, writes:

Many writers whose ideas have been stolen are victims of a partner who silenced them. But what if your partner proudly proclaims your co-authorship, but others refuse to believe him? Who is the thief then?

Harriet Taylor Mill's ideas weren't pilfered. They were buried and ignored. Her writings weren't transcribed from the manuscripts in the LSE until nearly 150 years after her death. What was robbed was her legacy.

Harriet Taylor (1) was pregnant with her third child when she met John Stuart Mill, a budding philosopher (2). They quickly fell in love and started their intellectual lives together by writing about a subject that was keenly pertinent to their situation: marriage. They wrote about their recognition that marriage laws and public pressure for women to marry inhibited their ability to live a flourishing life (3, 4). Later they were mutually appalled by domestic violence (5). These two issues illustrate the core tension of the “harm principle” (6) which is central to *On Liberty* – one of the most important political treatises in philosophy. Harriet Taylor Mill and John Stuart Mill wanted to increase freedom for women who wish to divorce, work, inherit money, or serve on a jury. Yet they also demanded that laws change to decrease the freedom of those who tyrannize over women. Seeing how the general theory grows out of these concerns transforms how readers engage with the text.

With the new edition of *On Liberty* as a co-authored text, we hope to restore what was taken from Harriet Taylor Mill and all readers – an understanding of *On Liberty*'s deep connection to women's issues (7).

Two important notes written by Harriet Taylor Mill appear in the exhibition, indication that she was thinking about arguments that would later form part of *On Liberty*.

What are the objects on display and how did they get here?

The provenance history of how the MILL-TAYLOR collection came to be at LSE Library began with the Library purchasing a collection of correspondence from antiquarian bookseller Robert Ridgill Trout in November 1926. It included hundreds of letters written by or to John Stuart Mill and his stepdaughter Helen Taylor. Over the years since then, this collection was added to with a series of purchases and donations. Retired archivist Sue Donnelly described the collection as an “archivist's nightmare: papers scattered across the globe, bound in unwieldy volumes and gathered together in a piecemeal way” (*Journal of Liberal History* No. 70, Spring 2011)

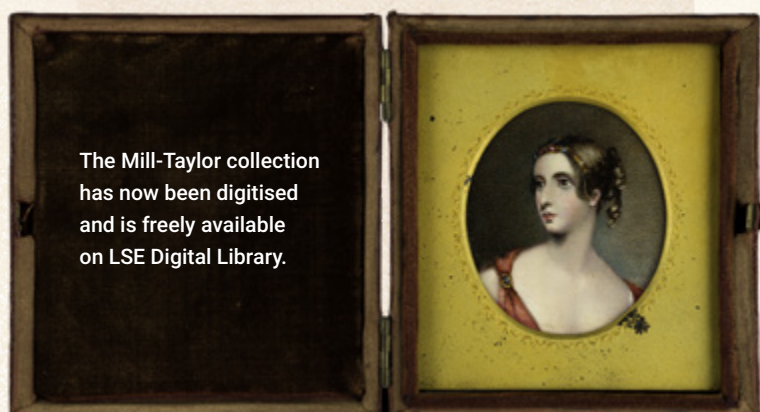
1, 2. Miniature Portraits of Harriet Taylor Mill
[unknown date], MILL-TAYLOR/Box 10

3. Postcard featuring portrait of John Stuart Mill
painted by G. F. Watts, 1873, MILL-TAYLOR/Box 10

4. “I should think that 500 years hence...”
Manuscript by Harriet Taylor Mill on legislative interference in matters of feeling, MILL-TAYLOR/Box 3, 79 [Transcript is from page 20 of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*]

5. “No government has the right to interfere...”
Manuscript by Harriet Taylor Mill on the nature of the marriage contract, MILL-TAYLOR/Box 3, 77 [Transcript is from page 19 of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*].

6. Mill, J.S. and Mill, H.T. (2026) *On Liberty: With Related Writings*. Edited by P.N. Turner, J.E. Jacobs, H. McCabe, L. Osburg, M. Schefczyk and C. Schmidt-Petri. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company



Marxism

Jakob Toet Jorsal, Maria Nesheiwat, Aaron Parmar-Cunio, Isabella Paterson, and Bruno Villalobos

The poster below (also appearing in the exhibition) shows Angela Davis holding a microphone with the quotation: “The real criminals in this society are not all of the people who populate the prisons across the state, but those who have stolen the wealth of the world from the people”. Inspired by this quote, we worked with LSE postgraduate students studying a course on Marx and Marxism, taught by Dr Bruno Leipold. We hosted a workshop where the volunteers looked through the archives to select objects that relate to the theme of the exhibition using the theoretical knowledge they had gained from their course. Here are the stories they told:

Wage or Theft?

In *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx (1, 2) developed his radical critique of labour under capitalism. He famously observed that under this economic system, capitalists own the means of production, while the direct producers, the workers, are forced to sell their labour power in order to survive. While this appears to be a just exchange on the surface, Marx theorised that capitalist profits rely on a “surplus” of value created by the worker. This surplus is a form of unpaid labour and is necessarily “appropriated” by the capitalist in order to make profit, raising the question of whether labour exchange is truly fair, or rather, a concealed form of wage theft.

Marx’s work heavily influenced 19th and 20th century labour movements, particularly in Britain. British industrial workers (3, 4) used the injustice of “theft” as a way to agitate against capitalists and organise workers to fight collectively against their poor working conditions, building union density which could more effectively leverage power to demand fairer wages and improved conditions. For decades thereafter, class-based conflicts continued to use “theft” to motivate the organising efforts of different workers’ organisations (5), with different social groups around the world applying these themes to their respective struggles against exploitation.

What are the objects on display and how did they get here?

1. Letter to Heinrich Heine from Karl Marx, ARC/001

The depositor of this letter is unknown, and the Library’s accession register simply says it has “been here for many years”. It’s likely this was purchased from a specialist bookseller.

2. Photograph of Karl Marx, COLL MISC 0705/53

This is a copy of a photograph of Karl Marx. The original was taken in Algiers, in 1882 by photographer E. Dutertre (did you know this was the last photo ever taken of Marx?). The copy made its way to LSE Library as part of a collection of photographs of people involved in the Labour Movement, donated by G. R. Edwards.

3. Wheatley, J. (1908) *How the Miners are Robbed*, ILP, ILP/5/1908/76

The archives of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) has been formed from a large number of deposits to LSE Library from a range of sources including ILP members over a long period of time. The ILP was formed in 1893 and co-founded the Labour Party. The organisation still exists today as Independent Labour Publications.

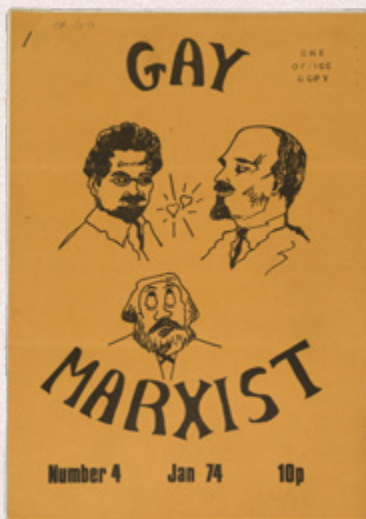
4. Clynes, J.R. (1909) *What are you worth?* ILP, ILP/5/1909/16

Same provenance as above.

5. McGuffin, J. (1971) “What Capitalism Really Means? Part 1 Poverty” *Free Citizen, Newspaper of the Peoples Democracy*, Vol. 2 No. 32, 7EAW/C/17

This item comes from the papers of Elizabeth Wilson and Angela [Weir] Mason which were donated to the Women’s Library in 2001, before the collection’s transfer to LSE Library. Mason is an LSE alumna, and a feminist and gay activist who became Director of Stonewall in 1992. Her partner, Elizabeth, is a scholar writing on feminism and popular culture.





Labour Beyond the Factory

Different social movements have expanded Marx's initial critique of workplace exploitation. Socialist-feminists have identified how capitalism also relies on the "social reproduction" of workers, such as the domestic labour necessary for meeting their basic needs (1, 2) This labour encompasses caregiving, house-work, emotional labour, and childbearing, all of which are vital in maintaining a continuous supply of workers to meet capitalist market demand. Because this labour is unpaid, socially devalued, and largely falls upon women to perform, working class women suffer a "double-oppression" wherein they must provide unpaid labour within the home. Marxist-feminists like Angela Davis (3) – through her philosophical work and activism in the Black Power Movement – worked to combat racial injustice, labour exploitation, and devalued domestic work.

LGBTQ+ theorists (4, 5) have also recognised capitalism's dependency on heteronormative relationships for the social reproduction of workers. This critique drove an understanding of how social institutions under capitalism stigmatise and exclude non-normative gender and family structures. The valuation of the nuclear family therefore owes its endurance not to a given feature of human nature, but to its effectiveness in facilitating the reproduction of the working class. From this view, feminist and queer Marxists helped to trigger a "politicisation" of the "private sphere," giving a new understanding to gender, sexuality, and its connection to the political economy.



What are the objects on display and how did they get here?

1. "Notes on use-value, exchange-value, labour-power and women as labour-power", 7EAW/C/17

This item comes from the papers of Elizabeth Wilson and Angela [Weir] Mason which were donated to the Women's Library in 2001 before that collection's transfer to LSE Library. Mason is an LSE alumna, and a feminist and gay activist who became Director of Stonewall in 1992. Her partner, Elizabeth, is a scholar writing on feminism and popular culture.

2. ILP Leaflet "What socialism means for women?", 1908, ILP/5/1908/75

The archives of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) were formed by many deposits to LSE Library from a range of sources over a long period of time, including ILP members. The ILP was formed in 1893 and co-founded the Labour Party. The organisation still exists today as Independent Labour Publications.

3. Collection of posters, MCINTOSH/10/25

These collection of posters come from the papers of Mary McIntosh, a British sociologist, feminist and political activist.

4. Gay Marxist, Number 4, Jan 1974, HCA/JOURNALS/71A

The Hall-Carpenter Archives is one of our flagship collections holding the papers of activists and organisations that campaigned for LGBTQ+ rights. It was named in honour of pioneers Radclyffe Hall and Edward Carpenter but there is very little relating to them in the archive. The collection is shared between the Bishopsgate Institute, the British Library, and LSE Library.

5. Lesbian Left. A Collection of Papers by Women in Lesbian Left: a Socialist Feminist Group, Spring 1977, 7EAW/C/17

This item comes from the papers of Elizabeth Wilson and Angela [Weir] Mason which were donated to the Women's Library in 2001 before that collection's transfer to LSE Library. Mason is an LSE alumna, and a feminist and gay activist who became Director of Stonewall in 1992. Her partner, Elizabeth, is a scholar writing on feminism and popular culture.

Matteotti: Freedom, Life and Truth Stolen

Silvia Gallotti

A reference to an “attempted burglary” in one of the documents made the Matteotti material held at LSE an obvious choice for an exhibition about theft. As I began to work with the collection, it became clear that the story extended beyond a single act of theft. It is a story about how much a dictatorship can take from us: freedom, life and truth.



Giacomo Matteotti, an Italian socialist and opposition leader, was kidnapped and murdered by a Fascist squad on 10 June 1924. At the time, he was working on a second edition of his book *The Fascisti Exposed. A Year of Fascist Domination* which was first published anonymously. In the book, Matteotti wrote about the violence of the Fascist regime towards its opponents, with detailed facts and figures (1). A few days earlier on 30 May 1924, Matteotti delivered a speech in Parliament to challenge the validity of the recent elections which saw Benito Mussolini winning the majority.

A typescript copy of “the records of the preliminary enquiry into the Matteotti murder” was deposited at LSE Library by Professor Gaetano Salvemini (2), a socialist academic who fled the regime in August 1925. The documents include witness depositions, arrest warrants and reports and show that the fascist government instigated the murder and that Mussolini was implicated. Salvemini used the documents to write his book *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (1927) before giving them to LSE.

In 1955, in an article in *Il Ponte*, Salvemini writes that “...the night after that delivery, there was in the Library an attempted burglary, which was useless as the documents had already been locked away in a safe” (3). No other mention to this attempted burglary has been found yet, but we know the documents were considered at high risk by the Library. This is confirmed by the minutes of the Library and Research Committee minutes, March 1927: “With reference to the Matteotti documents, the action of the Librarian was approved; and it was agreed that only enquires with a letter of expectational recommendation should be allowed to consult the documents, and that in any case such consultation should take place within fixed hours and under direct observation of one of the staff.”

In an article from the *Westminster Gazette*, 12 January 1927, we read: “The Fascist government would undoubtedly give much to ensure the destruction of this one surviving copy, and the school authorities are apprehensive concerning such vital document”.

Amongst the papers given to LSE, the deposition of Otto Thierschwald, member of the Fascist “Ceka” established by Mussolini in 1923, tells us how Mussolini ordered his men to

follow Matteotti and never lose sight of him – the fascist regime deprived Matteotti of his freedom before it took his life (4). The arrest warrants of some of the perpetrators, including Cesare Rossi and Amerigo Dumini, carry the accusation of “illegal deprivation of personal freedom”.

Matteotti’s mother, his wife Velia and his three young children were robbed of a son, a husband and a father. The deposition of Matteotti’s mother is particularly touching when she says “...sometimes I think it might be useful that I, poor old woman, talk to the suspects who have already been arrested and touching their heart with my claims, might one of them taken by remorse, tell me with my poor Giacomo is and if dead, where he was taken and hidden”.

Velia and her children were persecuted for many years until her death in 1938. In 1932, Sylvia Pankhurst formed the Women’s International Matteotti Committee with the intention of sending a delegation to Italy to negotiate for the future welfare of Velia and her children (5). The committee also wanted to draw the public attention to the injustices of Fascism in Italy and send medical help to detainees at Ponza, where opponents to the regime were imprisoned. The Committee’s objectives were stated in an international petition.

The fascist dictatorship denied the right of Matteotti’s family to know the truth about the murder. Instead of ensuring the perpetrators were brought to justice, the two magistrates in charge of the investigation, Mario del Giudice and Umberto Tancredi, were assigned to different roles and a show trial was held in Chieti, in March 1926. The proceeding resulted in drastically reduced sentences, and the perpetrators were freed shortly afterwards thanks to an amnesty for political crimes that Mussolini issued in July 1925. Velia Matteotti decided not to take part in the trial (6).

The documents on display remind us of the many forms of theft a dictatorship can inflict – freedom, life and truth. They also point towards the real reason behind Matteotti’s murder, a truth that, even after 100 years, has yet to be fully recovered.

What are the objects on display and how did they get here?

1. Matteotti, G. (1924) *The Fascisti Exposed: a Year of Fascist Domination*, ILP, ILP/5/1924/40

When Matteotti came to London in 1924, he arranged for his book *Un Anno di Dominazione Fascista* (which he wrote in 1923 and was published anonymously in 1924) to be translated. The book was published in autumn 1924 by the Independent Labour Party (ILP). LSE Library holds the ILP archive which includes a collection of pamphlets published from 1893 to 1975.

In the preface of the edition on display Oskar Pollak writes: "I remember another word he [Matteotti] spoke during his short stay in this country. He was speaking of the sufferings of his fellow-workers in Italy. 'The worst – said he – what even the strongest amongst our people cannot stand is that, for the last two years, when a man leaves his home in the morning he does not know whether he will return that night...'. He said it very quietly. And then he went back – to die".

2. Letter from Salvemini to Mr Headicar, LSE Librarian, 30 Nov 1926, Matteotti/Salvemini depositor file

This letter comes from the depositor file of the Matteotti/Salvemini accession. When an archive collection is deposited with LSE Archives, the correspondence and paperwork related to the donation is kept in order to ensure the history of collection and important contextual information are preserved.

3. Salvemini, G. (1955) "Nuova Luce sull'Affare Matteotti". *Il Ponte*, anno XI, n. 3, La Nuova Italia, Firenze

This journal includes an article by Gaetano Salvemini about the book by Mario del Giudice *Cronistoria del processo Matteotti*, written in 1947 and published posthumously in 1954. Del Giudice carried out the preliminary investigation into the Matteotti murder, with judge Umberto Trancredi.

A photocopy of the first two pages of this article was inside the first volume of the Matteotti documents deposited by Salvemini at LSE. In 2026, LSE Library acquired a copy of the issue of the journal.

4. Vol 1 of Matteotti documents with deposition of Otto Thierschwald, SR 1042/1

In 1926, Salvemini manages to receive a copy of the papers from the preliminary enquiry into the Matteotti case from G.E. Modigliani, lawyer of the civil party in the case, and Umberto Zanotti-Bianco, an Italian antifascist historian and social activist. In Salvemini's words, they are "the most significant parts of the evidence collected by the Examining Judge in this Enquiry". Bound in 4 volumes, they include examinations of the defendants, depositions of witnesses, and memoranda.

A fifth volume contains the closing speech of public prosecutor Santoro in the enquiry against General Emilio De Bono (or "Santoro Proposals" as Salvemini refers to in his *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*) and was smuggled out of Italy by Salvemini in August 1925.

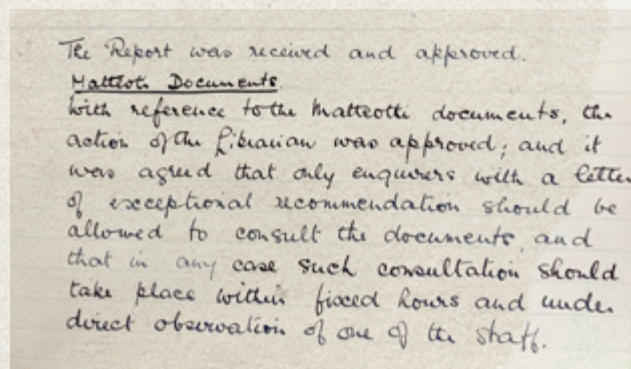
The reason for Salvemini to donate the papers to LSE Library probably lies in the fact that he was a good friend of Alys Russell, wife of Bertrand Russell, one of the spiritual and financial founders of LSE. When in London, Salvemini stayed at Alys's place where she frequently hosted other LSE connections, such as Harold Laski and Graham Walls.

5. Sylvia Pankhurst letters to Hugh Franklin re Women's International Matteotti Committee, Sept 1932, 7HFD/A/4/07/20 and 7HFD/A/4/07/33

These letters come from the collection of papers of Hugh Franklin and Elsie Duval, which were deposited at The Women's Library around 1975. Hugh and Elsie, who fought for women's right to vote, went to prison many times, and were forced fed and released under the Cat and Mouse Act, married in 1915. Amongst their papers there are many letters from fellow suffragists and suffragettes, including these two letters from Sylvia Pankhurst.

6. Nenni, P. (1926) *Perche' l'opposizione non è a Chieti*. Partito Socialista Italiano, JF(45)/E8

This pamphlet was written by Pietro Nenni and published by the Italian Socialist Party underground press at the beginning of 1926, just before the start of the farce trial in Chieti. It is a very rare pamphlet, copies of which were confiscated and destroyed by the Italian police at the time. It is unknown how it came to LSE Library. It could have been part of the pamphlets 'published in a clandestine way' mentioned by Salvemini in his letter from November 1926 (2).





Was anything stolen from Hansa Mehta?

Professor N.G. Jayal

Pioneering Indian feminist Hansa Mehta (1897-1995) was responsible for the gender-neutral phrasing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, having prevailed upon the UN Human Rights Commission to change the wording of Article 1 from “All men are born equal and free in dignity and rights” to “all human beings”. She was a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and India’s first woman Vice-Chancellor.

Hansa’s involvement with the international movement for women’s suffrage began in England in 1920. She sailed to London in 1919, reportedly to study journalism and sociology at the LSE.

However, her name is altogether missing from archival records at the LSE, and there is no proof of her attending LSE, even without graduating. This is not unusual for the times, but the mere repetition of the LSE connection has given it the status of a “fact.”

1. If something is missing, is it necessarily stolen, and does that absence imply an agent responsible for the theft?

Intriguingly, while Hansa herself writes about staying at the Lyceum Club at the suggestion of her mentor Sarojini Naidu, she makes no mention of her life as a student in London.

2. How might we interpret the silence of the archive, which doesn’t say that she studied at LSE but also doesn’t say that she didn’t?

3. The contribution of Sarojini Naidu to the freedom movement in India, and her proximity to Gandhi, is well known. That Naidu studied at King’s College London is however less well-known. So whether or not we can prove it, does it really matter if Hansa studied at the LSE?

"I have a list here of nearly a hundred prominent women of all communities who have expressed a desire to associate themselves with this ceremonial. There are hundreds and hundreds of other women who would equally like to participate in this function. It is in the fitness of things that this first flag that will fly over this august House should be a gift from, the women of India. (Cheers.) We have donned the saffron colour, we have fought, suffered and sacrificed in the cause of our country's freedom. We have today attained our goal. In presenting this symbol of our freedom, we once more offer our services to the nation. We pledge ourselves to work for a great India, for building up a nation that will be a nation among nations. We pledge ourselves for working for a greater cause, to maintain the freedom that we have attained. We have great traditions to maintain, traditions that made India so great in the past. It is the duty of every man and woman to preserve these traditions so that India may hold her spiritual supremacy over the world. May this flag be the symbol of that great India and may it ever fly high and serve as a light in the bloom that threatens the world today. May it bring happiness to those who live under its protecting care."

Hansa Mehta speaking at the presentation
of the national flag, 14 August 1947

Who owns knowledge?

Hannah Boroudjou and Wendy Lynwood

We work in copyright and research data at LSE Library. When the curator invited us to use the exhibition's videowall to explore theft from our own professional perspective, we could instantly see a connection between our work and the theme of the wider exhibition. We regularly consider questions of ownership, access, and recognition in the course of our work. After several discussions, what follows are the content, and issues, that we thought it important to highlight.

Who owns knowledge?

During 2010 and early 2011, Aaron Swartz, an internet activist and one of the early architects of Reddit, used his network access at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to download around four million academic journal articles from JSTOR, a subscription database of scholarly research. He did not sell them or use them for personal gain. His stated aim was to make publicly funded research freely available to the people whose taxes had paid for it.

The US government prosecuted him on multiple federal felony counts. Many in the academic and internet communities felt that the charges were disproportionate. Swartz had exposed a genuine tension at the heart of academic publishing: that research funded by public money routinely ends up behind commercial paywalls that many cannot afford to access. Swartz died by suicide in January 2013, aged 26, before his case came to trial and is regarded by many as a significant, if controversial, figure in the history of open access advocacy.

Open Research

The move towards greater openness in research was pioneered by the open access movement, which emerged through the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) in 2002, in response to the widespread inaccessibility of publicly funded research. BOAI define open research as "free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of...articles... or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers."¹ In practice, open research aims to make research outputs freely and permanently available, without charge to the reader. This includes both academic publications and the data that underpins them. The practice of sharing research data specifically is known as open data, and the movement is often collectively referred to as open research to emphasise that the free sharing of all scholarly research outputs is encouraged, not just publications.

The movement has gained considerable momentum in the last decade, with research funders, governments and institutions increasingly requiring grant-funded research to be published open access. UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), the public body which is tasked by the British government to allocate research funding, has mandated that every publication resulting from a UKRI grant must be published open access since 2013. Any data that underpins publications must also be freely shared in a recognised repository, as far as ethical, legal and commercial considerations allow.

However, the sharing of research data tends to lag behind the sharing of open publications, particularly in the social sciences. Since 2016, the publisher Springer Nature has published an annual report "The State of Open Data" in which they examine attitudes towards data sharing in universities and other institutions. While significant improvements have been made since they compiled the first report in 2016, in 2025 they found that whilst support for open practices has increased, support for global funder mandates on practices like data sharing has decreased significantly, with a reduction in support as high as 20-30% in some territories².

These concerns are often linked to anxieties about ownership, recognition and credit for data sharing. In addition, institutions are being asked to absorb the costs of supporting open access publishing. For example, one common open access funding model relies on article processing charges (APCs), which allow research articles to be made freely available to readers on publication. Spending on APCs has risen substantially, with an estimated \$8.3 billion spent globally between 2019 and 2023³.

As open research practices become more widely adopted, debates have shifted from whether research should be openly available to how openness should be funded and supported, and who should bear the costs. While significant progress has been made, many research outputs remain behind paywalls and research data is not always openly shared. More than twenty years after the Budapest Open Access Initiative, the question Swartz posed about who should have the right to access publicly funded research remains the subject of debate.

AI, authorship, and copyright

Academic scholarship has proved an important source for data-hungry Large Language Models such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini. In 2024, a group of authors filed a suit against Anthropic (the company behind Claude), alleging that it had used millions of books, a significant proportion of them pirated and obtained from shadow library websites, to train its AI systems without permission or payment. In June 2025 a federal judge ruled that whilst using legally acquired books for AI training could be seen as fair use under US copyright law, downloading pirated copies could not. The case settled in September 2025 for \$1.5 billion, covering the rightsholders of nearly 500,000 works. Mary Rasenberger, CEO of the Authors Guild, described the settlement as sending a clear message that AI companies “must pay for the books they use just as they pay for the other essential components of their systems,” noting that companies worth billions had “stolen from those earning a median income of barely \$20,000 a year.”⁴ The parallel with the Swartz case has been widely noted. An individual who sought to make knowledge freely available faced criminal prosecution; corporations that used pirated material for commercial purposes faced civil litigation.

Court battles over AI and copyright have unfolded against a turbulent policy landscape. In the United States, Donald Trump signalled that requiring AI companies to pay for training data was simply “not doable”⁵, and moved to remove the head of the Copyright Office shortly after it published a nuanced report on the issue.⁶ In the United Kingdom, the government proposed allowing AI companies to train on copyrighted works unless rightsholders actively opted out, a position rejected by 97% of consultation respondents; the proposal was subsequently abandoned.⁷ The situation remains unresolved.

Bartz v. Anthropic is one of a growing number of cases worldwide in which rightsholders are challenging AI companies’ use of training data. Together they raise broader questions about what it means for the outputs of human intellectual labour to be absorbed, at enormous scale, into commercial AI systems. Academic research, like all writing, represents an investment of time, expertise, and creative effort. The question of whether and how that investment should be acknowledged and rewarded extends well beyond any single legal case.

“Companies worth billions had “stolen from those earning a median income of barely \$20,000 a year”.

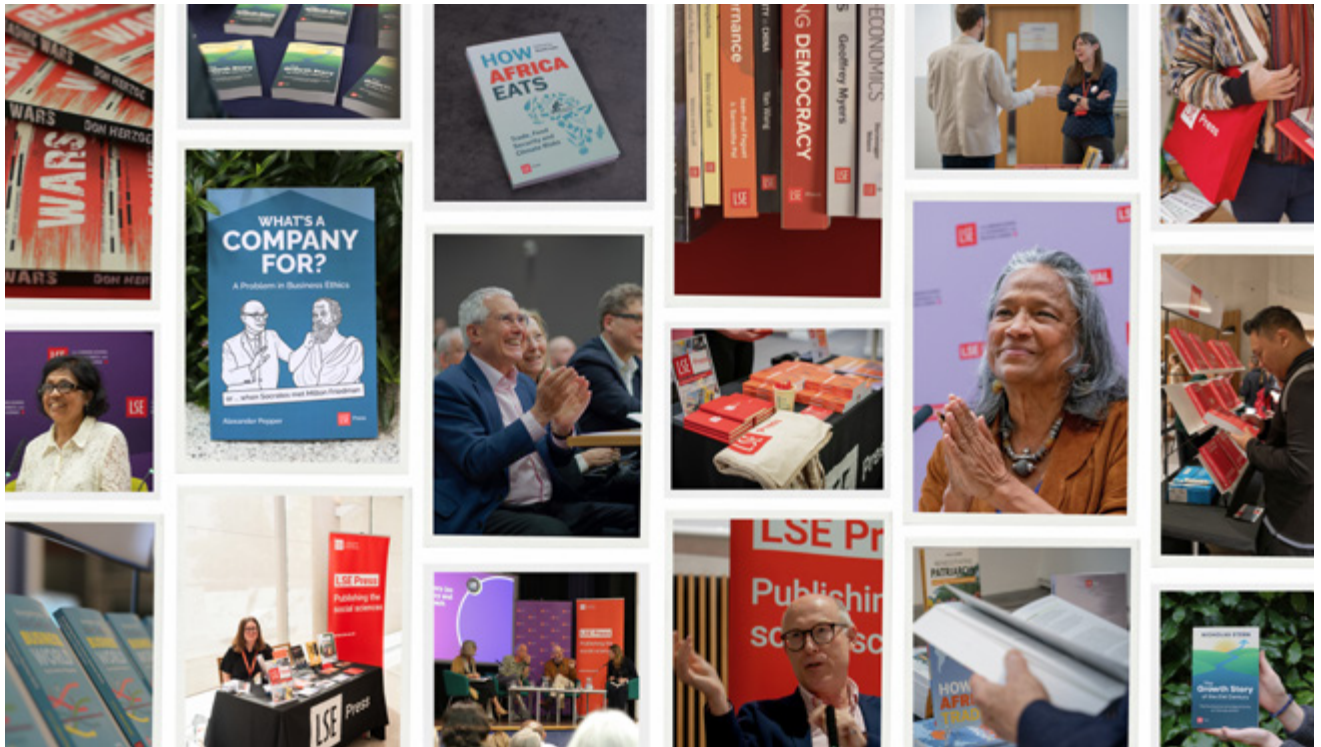
Mary Rasenberger, CEO of the Authors Guild

When research is absorbed into AI systems without acknowledgement, the loss is not only financial. Legal settlements can secure compensation for the use of someone’s work. They cannot secure recognition of it. The scholar whose research has shaped an AI system’s understanding of a field may never be named or credited; the connection between person and contribution is broken.

This is not an entirely new phenomenon. The erasure of intellectual contribution, through uncredited collaboration or unacknowledged influence runs through the history of scholarship. Whilst Generative AI is new, the underlying question about who receives credit for the creation of knowledge has deep roots.

- 1 Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2024. *Frequently Asked Questions*. Available at: budapestopenaccessinitiative.org [Accessed 3 August 2026]
- 2 Digital Science; Nature, Springer; Figshare, Team; Hahnel, Mark; Smith, Graham; Toogood, Megan; et al. (2026). *The State of Open Data 2025: A Decade of Progress and Challenges*, PG.10-11. figshare. Presentation. doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.30823079.v6
- 3 Haustein, S., Schares, E., Alperin, J.P., Hare, M., Butler, L.A. and Schönfelder, N., 2024. *Estimating global article processing charges paid to six publishers for open access between 2019 and 2023*. arXiv preprint arXiv:2407.16551.
- 4 *Key Updates on the \$1.5 Billion Anthropic Settlement* – The Authors Guild (Sept 5, 2025) authorsguild.org/news/anthropic-settlement-key-updates/
- 5 variety.com/2025/politics/news/trump-rejects-ai-training-compensation-1236468459/
- 6 npr.org/2025/06/06/nx-s1-5399781/copyright-office-explainer-perlmutter-trump
- 7 computerweekly.com/news/366640523/UK-government-puts-brakes-on-opt-out-copyright-exemption-for-AI

“In 2025 (Springer Nature) ... found that whilst support for open practices has increased, support for global funder mandates on practices like data sharing has decreased significantly, with a reduction in support as high as 20-30% in some territories.



LSE Press

Ellie Potts

Open research is largely supported through public research funding, with funders and institutions mandating and resourcing the sharing of publications, data, software, and methods so that publicly funded research can be accessed, reused, scrutinised, and built upon by others.

Since the late 2010s, increasing numbers of institutionally-based publishing houses, such as LSE Press, have been established with a mission to support the open research movement, rather than publish for profit.

LSE Press is a non-profit open access publisher of high-quality social science books and journals that have the potential to influence academic debate, public policy and the broader conversation.

We are part of a wider movement of institutionally-based publishers and non-profit publishing infrastructure providers coming together to bring about change in scholarly communications and provide an alternative to extractive publishing business models. LSE Press is a founder member of OIPA.

Without exception, all LSE Press publications are free to read online and download in PDF, Mobi and ePub formats. Press publications have been accessed over 5,000,000 times across the globe, with over 18,000 followers across social media and communications channels.

Low-priced paperback editions of all LSE Press books are available to buy from online retailers and order from bookshops.

As a non-profit open access publisher, LSE Press is committed to equitable models of publication, including via a diamond open access model – i.e., no fees for authors or readers – via support from LSE Library and collective funding schemes such as the Open Book Collective and the Open Journals Collective.

Books published by LSE Press have been widely reviewed in the media and academic journals. *How Africa Trades* won the Business Council for Africa's Business Book of the Year 2024 and *Renegotiating Patriarchy* has been shortlisted for the ACLS Open Book Prize/Arcadia Open Access Publishing Award.

LSE Press welcomes proposals for books in the social sciences and related disciplines, as well as those that bridge disciplinary boundaries. We particularly welcome proposals that address the global challenges of our time, reflecting our belief that social science research is essential in understanding and responding to the complex issues currently facing societies around the world.



Find out more at
press.lse.ac.uk/publish

Archives at LSE Library

Archives belong to us all. LSE Library archives and special collections document change in British society and politics over the last two hundred years. Our aim is to make these collections available via our digital library, group visits, school workshops, public events, reading room availability and public exhibitions, like this one!

Some of the collection highlights include:

The Women's Library – gender equality pressure groups and campaigners covering the history of feminism from the late 19th century onwards.

LGBT+ collections – including the Hall-Carpenter Archives which are strong on campaigns for gay rights from the 1950s onwards.

Charles Booth archive – an influential inquiry into poverty in London in the late 19th century.

Welfare and social security – including the “discovery of poverty” in the late 19th century and the welfare reforms of the early-mid 20th century.

Peace and internationalism – pressure groups, activists, international organisations and individuals working for peace, disarmament and greater international cooperation from the late 19th century to the present day.

Britain and Europe – material related to a federated Europe including campaigns for and against the UK's membership of the Common Market and EU.

LSE history – archives on the development of the social sciences in the UK, with an emphasis on the history and intellectual legacy of LSE and its members.



Charles Booth's key for colour coding social class



She: Journal for the Home

Ways to see the archives

Search our collections and catalogue
lse.ac.uk/library/collection-highlights

Make an appointment to visit our Reading Room
library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

Browse our digitised resources
digital.library.lse.ac.uk

Request a workshop for schools, higher education and community groups
lse.ac.uk/library/whats-on/archive-workshops-for-groups

Come to our public events!
lse.ac.uk/library/whats-on

Don't know where to start? Get in touch!
library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

Contributors

With thanks to all of those who contributed to the exhibition, including:

Hannah Boroudjou is the Research Data Librarian in the Open Research Services team at LSE Library. She works with colleagues within ORS to advise researchers on matters related to open data and data management, including on the institutional data and publications repository LSE Research Online (LSERO). As well as her work on open data, Hannah is also the operational lead for the Library's SafePod and SafePoint Hub service and works with the data library team to help users gain access to secure and confidential data.

Daniel Brambilla-Payne is a curator looking after the politics archives and special collections at LSE Library. He is also a registered archivist (RMARA) and works to connect people with the cultural heritage that belong to us all. *Stolen! Theft in the archives* is his eleventh public exhibition.

Chelsea Collison is the Learning and Participation Programmes Producer for LSE Library. She works closely with the archive curators to tell the stories of the collections to a wider audience via workshops with primary and secondary school pupils and public events for university students and beyond. Chelsea specialises in using learning outside of the classroom to increase public awareness, appreciation, and curiosity for heritage, history, and social sciences.

Silvia Gallotti is a qualified Archivist with extensive experience working in higher education, and in the private and public sector. At LSE Library, she develops workflows for the processing of born-digital archives and manages the archives management system. She recently worked on the digitisation of the Matteotti documents held at LSE and in 2024 spoke about their history at a seminar on Matteotti's life and the significance of these documents.

Philippa Grand is Head of Publishing at LSE Press, the School's non-profit open access university press for the social sciences. She has over twenty years' experience working in academic publishing, specialising in the social sciences, and is passionate about helping create a scholarly publishing ecosystem in which knowledge is treated as a public good. She is also Co-Deputy Chair of the Open Institutional Publishing Association, of which LSE Press is a founder member.

Jonathan Ing is Head of Design at LSE where he leads the School's in-house Design Team and oversees the strategic development and application of the LSE brand across print, digital and environmental communications. Combining creative direction with brand governance, he works with colleagues across the School to deliver impactful design that communicates complex ideas with clarity, consistency and purpose. Jonathan has extensive experience in brand development, design systems, exhibitions, publications and digital communications, and is particularly interested in the creative application of AI to enhance design practice, innovation and accessibility. He is passionate about creating design that is distinctive, inclusive and enduring, helping one of the world's leading social science institutions communicate its research, teaching and global impact.

Jo Ellen Jacobs is Professor of Philosophy at Millikin University and editor of *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, and one of the editors of the new edition of *On Liberty* published with Harriet Taylor Mill as the rightful co-author. Jo Ellen curated the section of the exhibition relating to Harriet Taylor Mill.

Niraja Gopal Jayal is a Professor and Avantha Chair at King's College, London. She was formerly Professor at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and presently also Centennial Professor (2019-23) at The London School of Economics, in the Department of Gender Studies. Professor Jayal undertakes research in the fields of citizenship, democracy and welfare in India.

Jakob Toet Jorsal is an historian, currently doing a Masters in History of International Relations with a focus on international relations between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. With a background in middle eastern studies, he is interested in how transnational radical movements in the 20th century influenced the emergence of the modern states in the Arabian Peninsula.



Jakob Toet Jorsal, Maria Nesheiwat, Aaron Parmar-Cunio, Isabella Paterson, and Bruno Villalobos



Daniel Brambilla-Payne, Chelsea Collison and Silvia Gallotti

Lisa Kosky is a Senior Designer at LSE's Design Unit. She loves a visual and typographic puzzle. She especially loves working with the library archive team in showcasing the collection across visual and digital touchpoints at LSE and beyond.

Wendy Lynwood is Copyright Officer and Academic Support Librarian for Law at LSE Library. Her work spans legal research support, copyright advice, and information literacy teaching across LSE's academic community. She is following the current wave of AI copyright cases with interest, hoping the legislative responses that follow will encourage rightsholders to continue to engage with the Open Access movement.

Maria Nesheiwat is currently pursuing a Masters in Political Theory at the LSE. Interested in critical feminist studies as a theoretical scope for intersectional social policy and democratic theory.

Aaron Parmar-Cunio studied a Masters in Political Sociology at the LSE. Interested in left-wing political strategy, nationalism, and the left's strained relationship with class. Academic work focused on contemporary left-wing projects, including Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party and Your Party.

Isabella Paterson is an International Relations graduate currently pursuing a Masters in Political Theory at the LSE. Academically focused on environmental ethics, critical theory, and cultural studies. Experience in nonprofit administration and NGO research, hoping to pursue a career in social advocacy and political organising.

Ellie Potts joined LSE Press in 2022. She manages the Press's marketing strategy and budget, social media, book marketing campaigns, and branding. She was named a Rising Star by The Bookseller and ALPSP in 2025 and she achieved a Distinction in a Level 6 CIM Marketing Management apprenticeship. In collaboration with LSE Library's Learning and Engagement Officer, Chelsea Collison, Ellie offers "Introduction to Publishing" workshops as part of LSE Library's Learning programme for schools.

Bruno Villalobos is a Political Scientist, currently doing a Masters in Political Theory at the LSE. Has done fieldwork on democratic backsliding and state repression in the Andes as well as on climate justice policy. Interested in the intersections of different branches of political philosophy, particularly critical and democratic theory.

With special thanks also to Library colleagues involved in the digitisation of the Harriet Taylor Mill and John Stuart Mill collection, including Giancarlo Carrozza, Maddy Clark, Dean Hinks, George Jukes, Paul McFarlane, and Robert Miles. We also thank Kate Silverston and Colin Lindley, who design and manufacture bespoke mounts to safely display our objects in the exhibition.

Contact us

All events are free and bookable
via LSE Library's Eventbrite link:
[LSE Library.eventbrite.com](https://lse-library.eventbrite.com)



The Library Gallery is on the ground
floor of LSE Library.

More details (location, virtual login
information etc.) included upon
booking for each event.

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