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23 February 2010
Newspaper of the
London School of Economics
Students' Union
thebeaveronline.co.uk

The Beaver

Howard Davies unwilling to censor "disagreeable" views held by professor



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Pria Bakhshi

The appearance of the LSE's Director at last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM) was marked by his controversial stance on a professor with extremist views; Davies also provided reassurance on the School's finances.

Davies began his speech at the UGM by discussing how higher education funding cuts would impact the School, saying: "We are affected by cuts just like everyone else ... our research funding has been cut by 13.4% by the government."

He went on to say that LSE's finances were sound, as the School has built up a significant surplus from peripheral activities, such as renting out halls of residence during the summer holidays. Consequently, there are no plans to cut any department spending. The planned investment in the new Student Centre will continue. He explained that, in order to continue financing such projects, he "will allow [the surplus] to fall without making any cuts."

Davies also commented on a recent story in the Guardian, which stated that 41 per cent of lecture theatres and classrooms at LSE were unsuitable for their current use. He pointed out that the information used by the newspaper was

from 2006, "predating the New Academic Building and before the renovations of buildings such as the Towers and Connaught House." He added that over the last three years, satisfaction with lecture theatre space has increased to 88 per cent, and teaching space to 75 per cent.

Davies finally spoke about improving the School's environmental policy, which now has an "aggressive set of targets on reduction of carbon [emissions]". He explained that each student in LSE halls of residence produces 483kg of waste per year. Successful policy implementation will require student help.

The audience first asked whether LSE's policy on resits was likely to change. Davies replied that the school's policy is "quite defensible" - while the School is relatively tight on resits, it balances this strictness by being relatively lax on carrying fails.

He added: "The SU should consider whether it's properly using the opportunities it has through School committees - I encourage you to use those procedures to argue [the resits policy] through."

The Director was also asked about his position on an LSE professor Satoshi Kanazawa who has expressed extreme views, including but not limited to the opinion that all black people are inherently less intelligent than whites and that

feminism is "evil". Davies said that he did not agree with this professor's views, but that he was not about to censor what members of faculty wrote.

When angry audience members asked him how a faculty member could teach objectively while holding such views, Davies went to say that "it is not appropriate for the School to sack people on the basis of their opinions" and urged students to instead make their points known to the professor in question.

On the difficulties that international students have with obtaining student visas, Davies said that the LSE and other universities have made serious representations to the government on this issue. While he will continue to have a dialogue with the border agency and Home Office, he felt "it wasn't a big issue in aggregate," because nearly everyone who had a place at the School got a visa.

Davies then answered questions about the School's music facilities and the fees review.

Finally, Davies was asked about his views on the economy. He jokingly replied that he had raised £652 the night before at the RAG Week People Auction - "It's a leading indicator, but still 30% lower than two years ago".

Anger over LSE professor's "shocking" views

Shibani Mahtani

LSE Professor Dr. Satoshi Kanazawa has once again raised controversy at the LSE with a recent article stating: "half of Muslims worldwide are terrorists or active supporters of terrorism".

In the article published in Psychology Today last Wednesday, he went on to elaborate that half of the Muslims: "would encourage their sons, brothers and nephews to blow themselves up in an airplane or in a crowded market." The article, entitled 'Naked Air', stated that racial profiling and differential treatment of Muslim passengers following the failed Detroit bombing attempt last Christmas was not only legitimate, but necessary unless "we fly naked".

When a concern about Dr. Kanazawa's views, citing the specific quotation above, was raised to LSE Director Howard Davies at his termly appearance at the Union General Meeting (UGM), Davies found these views "disagreeable" but said he was not about to censor what the faculty writes.

Responding to Davies' views at the UGM, first year student Niamh Hayes said: "I am very disappointed with Howard Davies' response; the LSE is an institution famous for its cultural diversity and I would have expected to see Kanazawa's work as a little more than 'disagreeable'."

"While I am very disappointed by his indifference towards a matter that many students find disheartening and alienating, it looks as though it is up to those students ... to do something about it."

In response to the professor's statements, President of the LSESU Islamic Society Talha Ghanam said: "We would strongly question the factual basis for Mr Kanazawa's assertion that half of all Muslims in the world are terrorists. Although LSE should promote freedom

of academia in every department, his piece 'Naked Air' is clearly his strong personal opinion that incites and proposes discrimination against Muslims with no factual basis. We find that view inconsistent with building positive, harmonious and vibrant campus relations."

Dr. Kanazawa's views caused similar controversy in 2006, when he published an academic paper alleging that African states were poor and suffered chronic ill-health because their populations were less intelligent than people in richer countries. As reported in the Beaver, the abstract of the paper noted that: "individuals in wealthier and more egalitarian societies live longer and stay healthier not because they are wealthier or more egalitarian but because they are more intelligent".

In response to the controversy then, which was also reported in the national press by the Guardian, Davies said: "it has certainly created some unpleasant publicity for the School" but believed that nothing could be done on a corporate level as the article was published in a respected journal, The British Journal of Health Psychology. A motion to condemn the professor's "racist" views were put forward at the UGM, but fell after heated debate.

Besides his views on race and racial profiling, Dr. Kanazawa also believes that modern feminism is "illogical, unnecessary and evil". In an article published last August in Psychology Today, he questions the assumption that women have historically been worse off than men. The article states: "The fact that men and women are fundamentally different and want different things makes it difficult to compare their welfare directly, to assess which sex is better off". He also asserts that modern

Ragathon: RAG Week 2010 photo feature page 15



Photo: Ben Phillips

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Editorial Board

Executive Editor
Shibani Mahtani
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Managing Editor
Sachin Patel
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

News Editor
Phyllis Lui
Eunice Ng
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Comment Editor
Nathan Briant
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Features Editors
Madeeha Ansari
Marion Koob
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Social Editor
Mehek Zafar
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Sport Editors
Hannah Dyson
Ollie Townsend
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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Photo Editor
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Design Editor
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design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

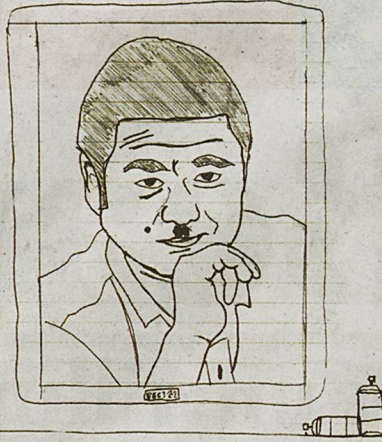
Web Editor
Oliver Wiseman
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

General Manager
Louis Dailencourt
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

The Beaver would like to thank the LSE students who contributed to this issue.

The Beaver is published by the London School of Economics' Students' Union, East Building, Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE. Printed at Guardian Print Centre, Rick Roberts Way, Stratford, London E15 2GN.

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The Beaver

Established in 1949
Issue No. 723

Telephone: 0207 955 6705 Email: editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

BS101: Theories in Evolutionary Bullshit

The start of this new decade has already taught us that it is permissible for academics to hold potentially distasteful views, provided that these opinions do not impede on their teaching. Now, however, the student body is faced by the resurfacing claims of a well-published academic whose controversy-courting research appears to threaten the ability of his students to participate in lectures in a meaningful way. Dr. Satoshi Kanazawa, a Reader in the Department of Management, and the lecturer for the MN101 (Introduction to Psychology and Behavioural Science for Management), has seen his far-fetched ideas on evolutionary psychology cited in a variety of publications, from Psychology Today to the Guardian. But, it would

appear, a classroom in the New Academic Building is a frontier too far, judging by the negative feedback from students, aired at last week's Union General Meeting.

The Director, Howard Davies, did not defend Dr. Kanazawa's views. He did, however, defend his right to teach here at the School, offering the peculiar conflation of opinions such as "individuals in wealthier and more egalitarian societies live longer and stay healthier not because they are wealthier or more egalitarian but because they are more intelligent", with those of economists who he happens to disagree with. Differences of opinion with regard to the importance of the free market are one thing; a substantial regression in women's rights and the equality of ethnic minorities is quite another. What

is particularly troubling is that, to hear the comments of Dr. Kanazawa's students, much of the content of the course he teaches hinges on these unfamiliar views; if students disagree with him, they believe they are not given a fair chance to succeed at the course. This is a clear knocking-down of the Chinese wall that should exist between personal opinion and academic objectivity, and the School is unwise to ignore the concerns of students.

Or, if we are to believe some of Dr. Kanazawa's more fringe beliefs, perhaps all the women who are perturbed by his opinions should knuckle down, buy a few more pairs of shoes, and re-assess their levels of utility.

"Is that what democracy is for?"

Controversial UGMs have always been a trademark of this Union; too often activists thinking that our Union can actually make a difference in the international sphere have ruffled a few feathers in the past year with Israel/Palestine or China/Tibet motions. Heated debate, frustration and anger that we have witnessed in the past cannot compare, however, to the vitriol, antagonism and exasperation at last week's UGM.

For the first time in memory, we saw our Director having to wait half an hour outside the doors of the Old Theatre, while C&S was berated and ultimately no-confident – but not before Chair Michael Lok resigned in a feeble but noble attempt to save the rest of the committee

from judgement.

As entertaining as the spectacle was, we just have to ask – how did we get here? We were promised inclusivity, a better Union, students having their say. These referendums were meant to be the best thing that has ever happened to us, revolutionizing Unions everywhere, heralding a new dawn of student politics (with the happy red jumping figures to illustrate this, in case it was not clear enough). Instead, we have seen the anger and discontent with the way in which this entire referendum process has been run mount up, and finally explode in the face of our Union, with C&S being the first ones hit.

Elections are almost upon us; soon, the two years of Aled Fisher and his reign

as GenSec will be over. Perhaps this entire past academic year will be a forgone nightmare, a quaint thing of the past with much improved Media Group/Sabb relations, tamer UGMs, daisies, bunnies, rainbows, marshmallows, etc. just over the horizon (doubtful, but we can hope).

However, we remember a certain Media Group head standing up on stage at the UGM declaring that the Sabbatical Officers only wanted to push through these reforms; without enough thought, consultation, or taking other views on board, so that a reformed Union would be their legacy. Perhaps it is time for them to face a harsher reality; that this fractured Union, filled with bitter disillusionment and exasperation, will be their legacy.

Contact The Beaver
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk
0207 955 6705

East Building
LSE Students' Union
London WC2A 2AE

Collective

Ajay Agarwal; Shrayans Agarwal; Raidev Akoi; Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang; Ahmed Alani; Madeeha Ansari; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Baker-Marikar; Sean Graham Baker; Pria Bakhshi; Vishal Banerjee; Natasha Bannister; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Noah Bernstein; Graeme Birrell; Alex Blance; Julian Boys; Danielle Brown; Nathan Briant; Ruby Buckley; James Bull; Georgina Butler; Beth Cherryman; Angela Chow; Estelle Cooch; Oliver Courtney; Tomas Da-Costa; Louis Dailencourt; Jonathan Damsgaard; Richard Dewey; Cathy Druce; Marie Dunaway; Louisa Evans; Leon Fellas; Ossie Fikret; Aled Dilwyn Fisher; Katy Galbraith; Ben Grabiner; Siddharth George; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Mira Hamad; Aula Hariri; Poorna Harjani; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Harriet Jackson; Judith Jacob; Felipe Jacome; Alex Jones; Megan Jones; Naeem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Mazida Khatun; Alizeh Kohari; Marion Koob; Vivek Kotecha; Anna Krausova; Ashma Kunde; Dominic Lam; Cherie Leung; Gareth Lewis; Rob Low; Phyllis Lui; Shibani Mahtani; Zeeshan Malik; Nizar Manek; Sophie Marmont; Jamie Mason; James McGibney; Duncan McKenna; Liam McLaughlin; Nitya Menon; Irfan Merali; Anna Mikeda; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Sanjiv Nanwani; Brett Noble; Ryan Ong; Nicolas Oudin; Kyle Packer; Pantellis Palividas; Anup Patel; Jaynesh Patel; Sachin Patel; Ahmed Peerbux; Alice Peltou; Alex Peters-Day; Ben Phillips; Clare Pickering; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Dominic Rampart; Anjali Raval; Ricky Ren; Joe Rennison; Katherine Ripplone; Sacha Robehmed; Joe Sammut; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Dan Sheldon; Katerina Soukeras; Jonathan Storey; Andre Tartar; Su Wan Tan; Kerry Thompson; Oliver Townsend; Molly Tucker; Mark Twyford; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Aliabbas Virani; Simon Wang; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; George Wetz; David Whitaker; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Oliver Wiseman; Natalie Wong; David Woodbridge; Daniel Yates; Alex Young; Calum Young; Sofia Zabolotskih; Mehek Zafar; Sadir Zayadine

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Collective Chair

Cilu Mathew

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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Beaver Collective Meeting

We're looking for a new sports editor - if you think you've got what it takes, submit a 150-word manifesto to:

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

then turn up to the collective meeting on Thursday 25th Feb, 6pm, Room S421



Universities are crumbling, says the Guardian



Eunice Ng

At least 41% of the LSE campus is 'unsuitable for current use', claims the Guardian.

According to the Guardian, such information is the product of a year long investigation into a 'secret database' at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The Guardian was awarded access to that database after a favorable ruling at an informational tribunal, which stated that revealing such information was in the public's interest.

Dozens of universities in the UK have significant portions of their lecture theatres and halls of residences judged structurally unsound. LSE's crumbling 41% are comprised of lecture theatres and classrooms that are 'unfit for purpose'. Imperial College had 12% of its buildings deemed unsafe. City University had 41% of its student residences "unfit for purpose". In all, 90% of the country's higher education institutions have 10% of their campuses deemed operationally unsafe. At its worst, this means that university buildings break fire regulations and could be at risk of serious structural breakdown.

This year, the LSE has seen its share of structural instabilities, with the main staircase at Clement House shut off during Michaelmas terms for foundational repairs.

At last Thursday's Union General Meeting, Director Howard Davies pointed

out that the Guardian's report used data that was outdated and did not take into account new campus developments such as the New Academic Building. Other universities have been using the same defense, stating that millions have been spent on refurbishments since the data was compiled two years ago.

Julian Robinson, Director of Estates said: "There has been significant investment in recent years in additional buildings and capital development including a £71m New Academic Building opened in 2008 and a £36m New Students' Centre scheduled to open in 2012. Our compact location in central London provides us with certain challenges but we have a 10 year £200m capital plan dedicated to create a world class campus commensurate with our academic standing."

"It is too soon to say how government cuts will affect our Capital Plans but are financial model is not heavily reliant on central government funding as other universities. The New Students' Centre which has been set the highest design and environmental quality targets will not be affected and is on schedule to open at the end of 2012."

The School also stressed that currently that none of its timetabled teaching and lecturing space is any longer deemed "unsuitable for their current use."

Continued from front page

feminism makes women "unhappy" and that women do not control money, politics and prestige "because they don't have to", but men do "in order to impress women".

LSESU Women's Officer Jessie Robinson said: "To read Satoshi Kanazawa's work you might think you have gone back sixty years. It's shocking that a lecturer at

the LSE could have opinions so tediously outdated and so fundamentally incorrect.

"Many of Kanazawa's ideas are actually laughable; he has claimed 'the fact that women make less money than men cannot by itself be evidence that women are worse off than men, any more than the fact that men own fewer pairs of shoes than women cannot be evidence that men are worse off than women.' Wow, next time I'm concerned about the pay gap, sexual violence, or political underrepresentation, perhaps I'll just remind myself of life's blessings - shoes. I will always have shoes."

Chair of the LSESU Feminist Society Anna Krausova echoed these sentiments, believing: "While feminism fights for equal rights for women and remains relevant in a global situation of gender discrimination and violence, it is Satoshi Kanazawa's views that seek to normalize the stark inequality between women and men without a grain of scientific evidence that are 'illogical, unnecessary and evil'. We should ask ourselves whether LSE funds should be going into research and teaching based on racist and sexist stereotypes, rather than empirical social science."

Students of the professor were not without similar concerns. Hannah Dyson, a 2nd-year BSc Management student taught by Dr. Kanazawa in the last academic year, felt it was: "strange that such strong, controversial opinions were the basis of our course [MN101: Introduction to Psychology]. Even though I found many aspects interesting, I also thought there should have been scope for discussion and debate. Unfortunately... unless you fully accepted the ideas you were unlikely to succeed."

Dyson further stated that: "Many students, including myself, felt enraged and

insulted by some of the ideas presented as fact".

A spokesperson from the School indicated that they will look into the concerns, stating: "It was argued that these views made it difficult for him to teach mixed-race classes. The School will consider these arguments carefully, though we note that no complaints about his teaching have been received, and will respond more fully in due course".

Union Jack

UGM sketch

Union Jack



Jack is the Beaver's anonymous mole at the Union General Meeting, every Thursday at 1pm

Jack doesn't really have much time for committees like C&S and F&S - he's not really a stickler for rules, and he's never been much of a numbers guy. Any mention of these two hallowed SU snoozefests is sure to induce visions of the accountants in Dilbert - horned devil-human mutants, denizens of a fiery subterranean office. Our LSE equivalents are supposedly a tamer bunch, less concerned with destroying every ounce of soul and creativity in the Union, and more frequently in place to uphold our constitution and protect the

students' democratic rights. And usually, Jack confesses, they're good enough (and meek enough) to carry out their masters' bidding with little fuss. However, stepping into the Old Theatre last Thursday (bell tolling ominously, signalling UGM's impending demise), Jack felt a palpable sense of frustration in the air, directed with not inconsiderable venom at C&S and, in particular, their chair, Michael "unLoking barriers" Lok.

Let's face it: the previous UGM had been something of a flop. Jack could quite honestly have better spent his time at the gym, at the pub, or on Chat Roulette. Nonetheless, his perseverance was justly rewarded last week, as a storm of assorted lefties, hellraisers, troublemakers, and even the odd concerned student, reacted thrillingly to a bleated (and probably belated) call to No-Confidence C&S.

Their reason? The apparent dictatorship of fear presided over by Chairman "unLoking Barriers" Lok, whose power hunger is said to have stretched between the two silhouetted prints of him in the Quad at its peak. (Eunice: er, don't quite understand what you mean by this?) Not content with boring the pants off students with mind-numbing press releases and official statements, Lok stood accused of imposing his agenda on the outcome of the recent referenda on reform, which appears to have sealed the fate of the UGM, courtesy of three misdirected votes.

Simple majority or super-screwup, Jack wasn't too bothered - he just wanted to see justice done and a sense of humility restored to C&S. Or, at least, that's what he understood from the slightly incoherent, drunken ramblings of the grizzled AU stalwart who stumbled onto stage in sup-

port of the No-Confidence motion. This hairy monster, soon-to-be displaced from these very pages on account of his vaulting ambitions, told us all manner of convincing things, delivered with the cautious logic that only an extremely hungover individual can muster.

Crossing swords with our erstwhile Sébastien Chabal-alike was Comrade Lok himself, fresh-faced (after all, which non-Occidental ever has to shave?) and spitting venom into the microphone like Zach de la Rocha on a particularly overcast day. Lok pounded the living crap out of that microphone, and paced the stage with feet heavy enough to crush mountains, it seemed, but not heavy enough to crush the Union. The crowd was in a fine mood for revolt, and even Lok's best rap-metal protestations could not repeal a prevailing mood of anger and discontent. Having assured onlookers that if they wanted C&S to be no-confidenced, then they would stick by their democratic principles and respect the decision, (Eunice: who's they? the audience or C&S?) Lok then completed a remarkable volte-face, wringing every last ounce of drama from what was probably a pretty unremarkable scene... he resigned. Albeit with all the sadness and histrionics evoked by an elephant, shot by a single, tortuous arrow, letting out defiantly hopeless noises.

Despite Lok's pachydermal martyrdom, C&S was subsequently no-confidenced, and Howie "flying business class to Libya" Davies impressed almost everyone with his Oxonian powers of rhetoric.

"Oh Michael: well you came and you gave without taking; but I sent you away, oh Michael..."

Jack doesn't even need to alter the lyrics.

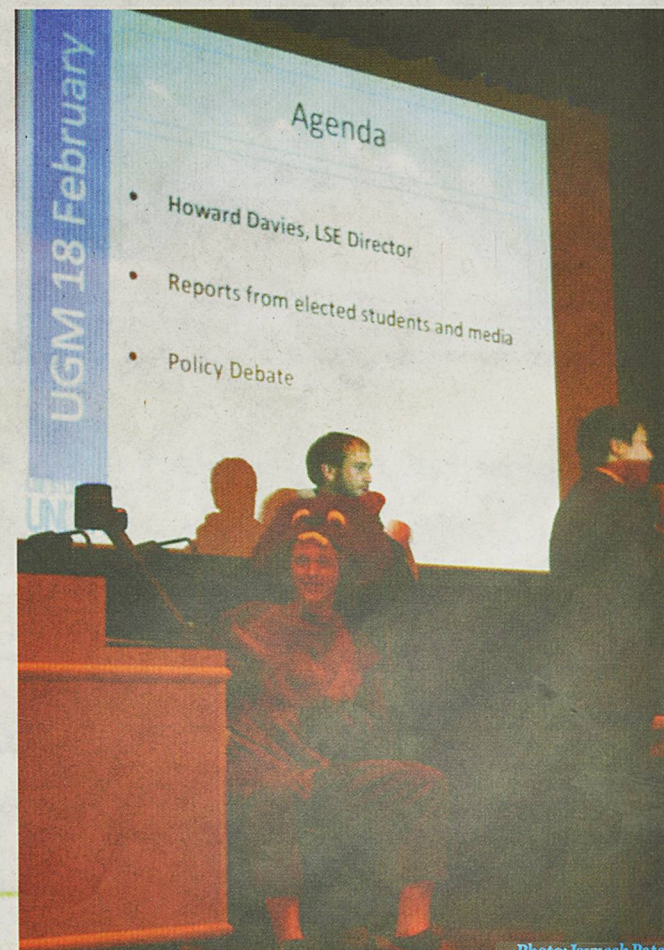


Photo: Jaynesh Patel

No-confidence against C&S passes despite Chair's resignation

Phyllis Lui

Debate still surrounds the results of the referendum and conduct of LSESU elected officials, resulting in the resignation of the Chair of the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S).

Prior to LSE Director Howard Davies' speaking at last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM), a vote of "no confidence" was proposed by 3rd year Economics student Oliver Townsend against C&S.

"I'd like to see them no-confidenced as I am not in position to no confidence individual members of C&S and to sum it up, it was an appallingly biased and badly chaired meeting," stated Townsend.

He continued: "It was a campaign for his point of view, I think he has abused his position as Chair."

Chair of C&S Michael Lok then went up to defend the committee: "In the past 3 weeks, rumours and false accusations have been flying around against this committee, myself and the Returning Officer. We got advice from NUS and legal professionals...we have enough evidence to support our position, we are willing to share that with you."

Another C&S member Franck Magennis spoke for the vote, claiming that "we are trying to gag the UGM...the fact is that the referendum was not conducted freely and fairly". Further, referring to a motion that was submitted regarding the constitutional validity of the referendum, Magennis claimed: "within the last hour, they pulled a motion to discuss the referendum...we are not upholding democracy."

The Secretary of C&S then spoke against the vote. Although she agreed with Magennis' points, she did not feel there

was a need to no-confidence C&S: "I am unhappy about the whole debacle we've had about super and simple majority but I don't think you should be no-confidencing the whole Committee. I think you should come to meetings and ask those who made the decision unilaterally to resign."

Although Lok resigned after the speeches and there was heated discussion regarding whether a vote of no confidence required a supermajority, this was irrelevant since the vote was passed by a large margin.

The controversy stemmed from the results of the referendum, pertaining to the General Meetings Bye-Law which had passed by 3 votes. The 'against' campaign, which started a Facebook group 'Return the LSESU democracy', submitted a motion entitled 'I can and iWill Enforce The Constitution and The Codes of Practice' that was debated in three C&S meetings this past week.

Lok had chaired the C&S meetings, and began the first one by explaining how the committee had arrived at the decision to uphold the simple majority requirement for referendum, as it was not stated explicitly in either the LSESU Constitution or Codes of Practice.

He then tried to close the meeting due to a class waiting outside, but members of the committee voted to continue the meeting elsewhere to discuss the motion. In the second meeting, it was accepted that more discussion was needed, but a vote did not take place as to whether the motion should go on the paper.

A meeting was called before the UGM regarding the 'Union Believes' section of the motion, which led to it being withdrawn from the agenda by C&S. It is unclear whether this result came about due to a complaint that the motion was not put up online 24 hours before the UGM.



In a Facebook message to members of its group, 'Return the LSESU democracy' believed that: "There is a very real possibility that the sovereign body of the Union, the Union General Meeting will be gagged from even discussing the referendum."

An incident occurred during UGM where a student felt she was heckled at by a non-LSE individual. The individual was flying on behalf of the 'against' campaign, and the student had voiced her view on the matter, whereupon the individual accused her of "being full of shit".

LSESU Communications Officer Robin Low said: "The behaviour towards some LSE students in and around the UGM last Thursday was absolutely abhorrent. Students should never feel intimidated on campus, and student representatives should never be so openly abused as they have been over the past week. This kind of behaviour is just unacceptable."



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

A Statement by Michael Lok

When I signed up to chair the C&S Committee, I was prepared to be the scapegoat for what goes wrong; to be blamed for what people don't like and to be pointed at for making the right, yet unpopular, decision. I was correct.

What am I trying to achieve here?

Believe it or not, nothing. In the past week, I've had enough of backstabbing, false accusations and lies. This really is just my final contribution to this Union as ex-Chair of C&S (and possibly the last Chair of the LSESU C&S Committee).

It is time for students of this Union to be told some truths.

"Democracy"

Ever since the release of the referendum results, a group of students began a campaign "to return SU democracy". These people call for the protection of our fundamental rights and the upholding of our constitution. They use all sorts of means to spread messages around that would ultimately lead to the overturn of the C&S committee - the final defenders of democracy and our almighty constitution in this Union.

Ironically enough, the C&S committee was overthrown in a way that certainly does not match their own definition of "democracy", where speakers were given one minute to justify their case, out of which at least 30 seconds were filled with boos and shouts from themselves. Out of those who raised their hands to vote for no confidence, some had no idea why and what they were voting for. They were simply told to be there.

That, in itself, is a good reason for a new UGM system. Yet that is beyond the point this commentary is attempting to make.

"UGM not equal to referendum"

The main argument that the so-called "Democracy" campaign has been focusing on is the provision in our Codes of Practice that says any amendments made to the Constitution through a motion at the UGM requires a supermajority. According to this camp, this means that, in the absence of any explicit requirement related to the passage of referendum, the same supermajority rule applies in the case of referendum. This is a flawed argument.

According to advice from the National Union of Students (NUS) and various top law firms, where there is no explicit requirement, you do not create one - that would be against natural justice and fundamental constitutional principles. What's more is that this position is justified by the fact that where a supermajority is required, it is and would be clearly defined in the Codes of Practice.

For instance, there is no clear provision regarding the vote of no confidence of C&S - whether this requires a simple or supermajority was the last question that my C&S Committee considered. In the Codes of Practice, the clear provision that governs a vote of no confidence for Sabbaticals and Non-Sabbaticals states that a supermajority is required yet there is an absence of the same requirement for C&S. The campaigners, immediately and without hesitation, argued that this means a mere simple majority is required. See the irony there?

One must also recognise that the UGM is not the same as a referendum. UGM procedures need to be more stringent to prevent injustice such as calling a mass of friends to vote blindly on your own motion. Such problems do not exist in the case of referenda.

Before a referendum actually takes place, it needs to go through a referendum motion, which requires a supermajority support at a UGM (which already squares with the requirement on UGM motions that amend the constitution). After that, campaigning for all three sides (for, against, abstain) takes place. The Returning Officer, in consultation with the C&S Committee, closely monitors campaigns to ensure compliance with our Codes of Practice. All these stages are in place to guarantee democracy and to produce a result that truly reflects what the students want.

With all these hurdles in place, why do we need a supermajority requirement? If it poses the same stringent means as a UGM motion, then what is the point of the regulatory framework imposed on referenda?

Secondary Materials

The campaigners have always invoked advice from the NUS, the Charities Commission and lawyers to back their opinion. We have sought and produced a range of evidence that supports our side of the story. Official advice from NUS states very clearly that in all the events that are Returning Officer for, a simple majority would suffice in these circumstances. Moreover, even the Charities Commission's Model Constitution (which they have referred to in several occasions) states that only a simple majority is needed when the change concerns issues such as "General Meetings". Why am I not surprised to see that they no longer focused on these secondary materials and instead hastened a vote of no confidence to get rid of us?

Student Voice vs. the Students' Voice

Through the referendum, we have a clear majority - albeit 49% - that supports a new mechanism for the UGM. This is the Student Voice.

Yet some students, being dissatisfied for whatever reasons or simply too bored during Valentines' Day, decided that they did not like this so they proceeded to fight against it. Why did they not come up with all these posters and Facebook stuff when we published the decision of using simple majority two weeks prior to the actual referendum?

These Students' Voice is trying to trump the clear majority Student Voice.

The Students' Union is here to protect and represent all students of this Union, as per the first section of our Constitution. Accordingly, nothing should be above the Student Voice and what students want from their Union should be respected above all. 475 students voted for this referendum while 472 were against it. While many choose to focus on the difference of 3 and argue that these 3 had made the decision - it is simply a misstatement. It is not the 3 who made the decision - it is the 475 students who did.

One of my friends asked me whether I regret doing all this. I regret that this is what the LSE Students' Union may have become; I regret that this is how far some people could go when fighting for their own interests; yet I certainly do not regret fighting for what I believe is right.

It is unfortunate that such was the end to my C&S career; yet if I had to do it all over again, I would do it the exact same way. At least I went down defending what I believed and being the last man standing for democracy and our Constitution.

Long Live the Constitution. Long Live Democracy.

Michael Lok
Chair of LSESU C&S, 2009-2010

Labour MP wishes to see resurgence of centre-left

Medeaha Ansari

Former MP James Purnell spoke at a public lecture at the LSE on Monday 15 February, four days before he announced that he was standing down from Parliament. Entitled "We Mean Power," the Ralph Miliband programme lecture took place in the Hong Kong theatre and was chaired by Professor David Held. It aimed to examine the response of the Left to the economic crisis and to discuss how the ideology needed to evolve in order to provide progressive solutions. According

to Purnell, the New Labour regime had made Britain a "better country than it was in 1997", but he was there "to say that we must move beyond it." He spoke of how over a decade of incumbency became a disadvantage when it came to popularity, but demonstrating how the "lessons of government" had been learnt could turn it into an advantage.

A large part of the discussion revolved around academics and their interaction with politics. Referring to the work of ex-LSE Professors R.H. Tawney and Amartya Sen, Purnell talked about the abstract ideas of freedom, capabilities and social justice, as well as the difficult task

of translating them into reality through policy. He then moved on to the economic aspect of politics, in particular the balance that must be struck in terms of financial regulation.

"People on the centre-Left," he said, "should embrace [markets] because they do good." At the same time, he presented practical steps to provide people with security from the vagaries of the market system. Not only did he recommend that the government guarantee employment, but recommended steps to increase saving and protect living standards.

Purnell then moved on to the mechanisms by which democracy and public

services could be made more representative of the needs of the population. When talking about social power, he said Labour had been "communitarian in spirit, but not always in practice." He advocated active steps to involve and empower the community through "a vibrant party, that doesn't just represent its voters and members, but knows them and works with them."

Days later, Purnell announced his decision to retrain as a community organizer with the group "London Citizens", which consults a broad range of individuals to draft policy recommendations.



Photo: Phyllis Lui



Meet the Managers

Oliver Wiseman

Last Tuesday saw the second event in the LSE's 'Meet the Managers' programme take place.

The initiative was launched last term as part of the School's plan to strengthen student-staff dialogue, providing a chance for informal discussion with senior managers. Amongst those present were LSE Director of Finance and Facilities Andy Farrell, LSE Dean of Undergraduate Studies Dr. Jan Stockdale and LSE Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Julian Fulbrook.

LSE Chief librarian and information services director Jean Sykes began by outlining the improvements that had been made to printing services as a response to concerns raised at the Michaelmas Term meeting. He announced that all printers were cleaned over Christmas. Several on the library's lower-ground floor have been replaced.

Sykes added that printers are now checked three times a day. Printer uptime - the amount of time a printer is working and ready for use - is now above 90% when it had been 'as low as 75% last term.' When, a postgraduate raised further printing concerns complaining of slow printing speeds, Sykes pledged to investigate the student's proposals for added memory in printers.

Responding to the Guardian report that in 2007, 41% of lecture theatres and classrooms unsuitable for their current use, Farrell defended the School's facilities, pointing out that the figure predated improvements such as the opening of the NAB and the instillation of standardised technology suites in all classrooms, as well as the decommissioning of parts of the School.

Farrell conceded that while "students are rarely exposed" to the "substandard areas of the School", the campus needs improvements. He went on to describe the Guardian's reporting as "sloppy" and "inaccurate in what it leads people to think."

Other issues discussed were potential improvements to student orientation at the LSE, Dr. Stockdale emphasised the importance of "improving students' first impressions" of the School, going on to explain that academic induction was a "priority" with the way in which departments deal with new students and thus in need of reform.

Problems of overcrowding at this year's Freshers' Fair were also raised. Dr. Stockdale said that the School was working with the LSESU on how to improve the event. The debate over whether it should be moved offsite remains unresolved.

The event ended with LSE Secretary and Director of Administration Adrian Hall thanking those present for a "constructive" discussion.

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The Beaver HTML is the new Paper

Giddens: Copenhagen Conference a "fiasco"

Phyllis Lui

The LSE Centre of Global Governance was re-launched as LSE Global Governance last Thursday night at a lecture, followed by a reception.

The lecture was given by previous LSE Director Lord Anthony Giddens, and the three co-directors of LSE Global Governance; Professor Mary Kaldor, Professor David Held and Professor Danny Quah, which was chaired by Professor Henrietta Moore.

Entitled '21st Century Challenges: how global crises provide the opportunity to transform the world', Professor Kaldor began by outlining what the Centre aims to do, to "make the case for better global arrangements".

Professor Held, who is the Graham Wallas Professor of Political Science, believed that there are a number of tests that we face now. Firstly, "whether we can come together to make a trade agreement". The second test concerns financial regulation, third about stemming arms proliferation. The last is regarding climate change, and Professor Held highlighted Copenhagen Climate Change Conference as an example of how nation states acting together does not always generate results.

He also believed that it is a "much more complicated world order" where financial means are used to address global goods and bads, in a world that has "changed very dramatically" since 1945.

"Every week is Afghanistan," said Professor Kaldor, "every week there's a crisis. We are more aware of crises."

Professor Kaldor felt that the US dollar has become "exhausted", and how the States' high spending on 'security' has contributed to the deficit. She further stated that Britain is good at peace keeping, compared to nations like China, who invest heavily in expensive equipment.

Professor Quah was asked by Professor Moore whether he believed the balance of power has shifted eastwards. He

began by saying that LSE Global Governance's is the "breaking down of barriers; intellectual and trade across academic disciplines".

He made reference to how the United States are the technology leader where it is "a repository of soft power", as it is Americans who run Facebook and Twitter. Further, Professor Quah went on to point out that over 60 million people in East Asia have been lifted out of poverty, where they are "basically the entire story [Millennium Goal]". They will also be hitting middle income, which means that they will be "consuming and demanding the same pattern of consumption".

Professor Quah refers to Professor Held's idea of the "paradox of our time", as to how we manage "when our institutions are grotesquely incapable of keeping up".

Lord Anthony Giddens, who was LSE Director from 1997-2003, believed the Copenhagen Conference to be a "fiasco", and he "never thought Copenhagen would produce systematic results" as "Kyoto took years to unfold, [with] no significant impact".

He then outlined what he felt to be the results of the conference. Whilst the United Nations was good at addressing causes, Lord Giddens believed it to be "paralysed in terms of decision-making" and thus the conference has weakened the United Nations.

The European Union was seen as significantly marginalised, even though it had "stepped into vacuum of eight years of George Bush" as it was involved in the outcome of the conference. Lord Giddens also stated that the result of the Lisbon Treaty was to further undermine the EU as it now has more leaders than before.

He also saw the dominance of domestic politics in the States than international meant that "Obama had nothing to offer... as he is paralysed between the Left and Right". However, although China is ambitious, he does not believe that it is ready to assume the role, using Google as an example, though it is "on verge of big transition than time of industrial revolution".

Lord Giddens concluded that one should not be "too pessimistic" in regards to the conference as China has invested heavily in renewable energy, comparing it to the state of New York which has a large carbon footprint, believing it to be the

result of "weak leadership at federal level".

Professor Held believed democracy to be "part of the answer and part of the problem" as it "creates a replacement for princes and princesses" which "binds leaders into short-term politics, and their

vision is tied to borders".

Summing up the importance of the centre, Professor Held stated: "Global governance has to become more representative," as "old orders are breaking down".



Photo: Ben Phillips

FOURTH FLOOR RESTAURANT

GLOBAL WEEK MAY HAVE PASSED
BUT YOU CAN STILL ENJOY GLOBAL CUISINE ON THE
FOURTH FLOOR EVERY DAY
BETWEEN 11.30AM - 2.30PM

Here's a preview of what's on offer this week (22nd - 26th Feb)

<p>Monday</p> <p>LSE CHINESE SOCIETY DAY</p> <p>Cantonese Beef with Water Chestnuts China Town Spare Ribs with Honey and Ginger Ma Po Tofu</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p>HAWAIIAN/POLYNESIAN</p> <p>Hawaiian Pork with Pineapple Polynesian Beef Polynesian Vegetables in Coconut Sauce</p>
<p>Tuesday</p> <p>WEST AFRICAN</p> <p>Nigerian Chicken Yassa Fish Piri Piri Ghanaian Spicy Vegetables</p>	<p>Thursday</p> <p>LSE PAKISTANI SOCIETY DAY</p> <p>Chicken Makhani in Almond & Vegetable Sauce Surmai Tava - Spiced Fish Dish Anday Aaloo Saalan - Spicy Egg Curry with Potatoes</p>
<p>Friday</p> <p>FRENCH</p> <p>Normandy Pork with Apple & Cream Provençal Turkey Escalopes with Black Olives Vegetable Tart</p>	

All dishes served with a suitable accompaniment

If you have any menu suggestions, or would like to discuss celebrating your country's National Day or special event, please contact Lesley or Karen on extension 7713/4



Comment

Lok, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels

Last Thursday's UGM showed exactly why change is necessary

Ben Grabiner

I never needed a reason why our Students' Union reforms are so important it was sitting in the UGM last week. As I sat and watched the comic show of members of the Constitution & Steering committee (C&S) and Union officers counting the votes in favour of passing a no-confidence motion against C&S, I heard a girl behind with her hand up in support of the vote saying to her neighbour "What's this vote about?". I duly turned around and politely asked why it was she was voting in favour of this no-confidence vote and what it is, she thought that C&S had done wrong. Her reply was unsurprising "I don't know but all my friends told me I had to vote for it". After some discussion, she agreed that it was a little bit silly to vote for something just because she was told to and promptly put her arm down.

The UGM, in its current form, is not the bastion of Union democracy that we should be proud of. It has become a forum where debate over (occasionally) crucial issues is crushed down into two-minute speeches and students are regularly pushed in to voting one way or another because of pressure from friends, or even worse, intimidation. Furthermore, rather than encouraging good academic debate and voting on the merits of one's argument it has descended into a game of which interest group can pack the most students into the Old Theatre.

The Constitution & Steering committee, whose role it is to act as the 'judiciary' of the Students' Union and to uphold the Constitution took the decision on Thursday after days of consultation and explicit legal advice that the result of the reform referendum was constitutional. Furthermore, despite considerable pressure from a number of anti-reform campaigners that wanted C&S to overrule the Codes of Practice, they honourably decided to uphold the rules which state that UGM motions must be publicly available 24 hours in advance of a UGM. This is an important requirement which allows students who may want to oppose the motion fair time to prepare.

So, as the anti-reform campaign shepherded in their sheep to the UGM it was to their utter dismay that C&S had stood up to enormous pressure and unfounded accusations of bias and personal attacks and upheld our (albeit pretty shoddy) constitution. Unfortunately, another absurdity of the current constitution is the ease at which it enables the Constitution and Steering committee to be deposed. Imagine if the US Congress were able to oust the Supreme Court judges just because they disagreed with their ruling. In the one minute speeches for and against the no-confidence motion there was no real discussion about the merits of C&S's decision making and I would suggest that the majority of students who voted to no confidence them had little idea of the constitutionality of the decisions made.

Worse still, Michael Lok the upstanding and impartial chairman of C&S was heckled and disrupted in a way that no student who speaks at the UGM should be – especially somebody who has devoted so much time and effort into ensuring that the Constitution is upheld and that students rights are protected. Whilst I have not always agreed with Lok and the C&S Committee's decisions, there is no doubt that he is a staunchly independent professional who cares more than anyone that his and the committee's judgements are fair and constitutional. The vote of no confidence was no more than a political play by a minority of students hell bent on undermining the much needed reforms of the Union.

The UGM is no longer a place for proper reasoned debate and democratic decision-making that is representative of the student body. Too frequently it has become an unfriendly, unwelcoming and factionalised arena where decisions that affect the whole student body are taken by a mere 3 per cent of the student population (at best). The groups that benefit from the current system are the ones who can bring along the most followers and pass whatever they like without reasoned discussion. This is why reforming the UGM in particular is so important; it will finally offer students who are totally fed up with the UGM the opportunity to have their say in our Union. It will give more students the chance to study policy proposals and make informed decisions free from pressure and intimidation and crucially, it will mean a Union that acts democratically on behalf of the many rather than the few.

Moving forward and looking back

The LSESU's Returning Officer defends her decisions during the controversial referendum

Shanti Kelemen

Over the past two weeks, I have been told that I am stupid, incompetent and biased. The Beaver has printed unfounded defamatory accusations. The experience has been emotionally distressing and disappointing. Throughout, I have tried to maintain my composure, treat others respectfully, and keep up with my coursework. I take comfort in the fact that these allegations have come from a small minority of LSE's nearly 10,000 students.

For a political system to function, its members need to accept the outcomes of elections, referenda, and legislation. By refusing to accept democratic outcomes, people devalue others' opinions and the system as a whole. It is ironic that students voted for changes to the UGM, yet last week students tried to use the UGM to block the change.

The referendum was constitutional. C&S declared it as such, despite threats of a "No Confidence" vote. Five students chose to do what they believed was correct, knowing that they would be removed minutes later. Even if one disagrees with their decision, one must respect the courage it took to make it.

Why did C&S, the NUS, and one of Britain's leading charity law firms confirm my decision to use a simple majority criterion for the referendum? The Constitution requires a two-thirds majority for an amendment passed at a UGM. It makes no mention of the standard for referenda, but does state that the UGM may delegate its powers to referenda for issues that are deemed too important to be decided solely at a UGM. The Codes of Practice are silent on the majority required for a referendum; therefore, a simple majority must be the default. Furthermore, the Codes of Practice state that referenda shall be held under "similar conditions to elections." In elections the winning candidate is the one who receives the most votes.

An issue was also raised about why it would not make sense to run the referendum with an Alternative Vote or Single Transferrable Vote system. In an election,

"Re-Open Nominations" (RON) can win. However, "Abstain" cannot win in a referendum. Abstaining signifies a person's desire to not impact the outcome of a vote. If a result were 10 abstentions, 5 Yes and 3 No, then the "Yes" would have it. This mirrors how policy motions are voted on at the UGM.

People are upset, and I sympathize with them even though I disagree with their position. From what I've heard, the argument is that referenda should be bound by the same rules as motions at a UGM. However, the Constitution and Codes of Practice simply do not say that.

Beyond the interpretation of the required majority, the manner in which this complaint was pursued was inappropriate. First, the simple majority standard was announced and printed in The Beaver. Voting opened under those conditions. Had this issue been raised before voting opened, I would have entertained debate and listened to others' opinions. However, C&S had no right to direct the Returning Officer to change the voting procedure with five hours left to vote.

I can assure you that my inbox has emails from both campaigns claiming I was being too soft on the other side

I recognize that for people to accept the outcomes of elections and referenda, the process needs to be fair and legitimate. That's why we have rules. I'd encourage everyone to read my complete report of all complaints and my responses that is published on the LSESU website. Last week's Beaver printed an incomplete version,

which was edited without my permission. I am not sure why The Beaver decided to withhold information from students.

It is easy to only look at things from one side. I can assure you that my inbox has strongly worded emails from both campaigns claiming that I was being too soft on the other side. Some of the rules were ignored by campaigners. In a regular election, the Returning Officer has the power to disqualify candidates. However, in the Referendum I could not disqualify "Yes" or "No". This made it difficult to enforce the rules. Students reported personal attacks and negative campaigning. I tried to direct sanctions at individuals to maintain parity between the two sides, but that proved ineffective. In the end, I had to restrict campaign activities of people who had done nothing wrong to make amends for the behaviour of other people. I wish I had not been put in a position where I had to make that choice. In interest of parity, I believe it was the correct choice.

The process was not perfect. No election or referendum ever is. However, I did everything I could to make the referendum fair. From looking at the vote totals, one can see that the "Yes" and "No" campaigns both won issues by large margins. I gained control of the process when the UGM passed the referendum motion. In an election, the Returning Officer does not have the right to restrict candidates from campaigning on the basis that their current or previously held positions. That would constitute playing god. Similarly, in the referendum, I did not have the authority to restrict one campaign based on the positions held by its members.

It is disappointing that students have resorted to scare tactics to overturn a democratic vote. The natural question to ask, after reading the above, is why am I maintaining my position as Returning Officer? While the past weeks have been unpleasant, on the whole the experience has reaffirmed my commitment to the role. I will not be intimidated into resigning by those who shout the loudest. In hindsight, there were issues that I did not foresee while running the referendum. However, I will stand by every decision I made based on what I knew at the time.

These are my final public comments about the referendum. As I said at last week's UGM, I have moved on. Lent Term nominations closed yesterday. Hustings are this week. Voting is next week. The LSESU goes on. Life goes on.

The majority are disillusioned

Mira Hammad

According to Noam Chomsky "the most effective way to restrict democracy is to transfer decision-making from the public arena to an unaccountable institution". Clearly the SU have been applying Chomsky's idea but they seem to have got the gist of what he was saying a little confused. Restricting democracy isn't supposed to be a good thing.

A little over a week ago a referendum

was held, proposing a number of SU reforms. One of the reforms proposed only managed to get three more votes in its favour than were cast against it. The night before polling started, the numbering of this reform had been switched, seriously disadvantaging those campaigning against it and confusing several people into accidentally voting for it. Setting this pertinent problem aside, even with the votes gained by the switch, the reform did not constitutionally pass. Every other amendment to the constitution has needed a two-thirds majority to pass; indeed the Constitution itself specifies that an amendment requires a two-thirds majority at the UGM. Moreover, the Constitution and Steering Committee in their only quorate vote on the issue of whether a simple majority or a supermajority was

needed, voted unanimously in favour of using a two-thirds majority. However, SU officials have decided to ignore vociferous concerns and objections, and instead have decided to declare the reform as having passed.

This is why, barely a week since the SU took up their stance, there has sprung a Facebook group with over 320 members requesting the return of the LSESU democracy. Within 24 hours of the close of voting 30 complaints had been made regarding the validity of the Referendum results. The Union, however, was (and still is) slow to address the concerns of their students. On Thursday, two students were prevented from even proposing a motion that would allow students to vote upon the validity of the reform. The response of our Sabbatical officers to real student

concerns is simply to assert that students have "misunderstood" the situation and that it is "time to move on". The SU are now not simply imposing their agenda upon students, they are also attempting to shut down any debate.

I have been active in the SU since I came to the LSE in 2008, and indeed I campaigned for some of the officials who are in part responsible for the actions outlined above. I did not at any point envisage being this disillusioned and disgusted with the actions of those who claim to represent me. The Sabbatical Officers made a poor decision when they took it upon themselves and the Executive to campaign for all students to vote "Yes" to all of the reforms, in spite of themselves not agreeing upon all of them. This is because if, as has happened now, students

take issue with a reform that they believe has been unconstitutionally passed, they perceive no neutral point of call which they can appeal to enforce the constitution. Quite the opposite, the situation that has confronted us now is a situation where a sabbatical officer has pressured members of the Constitution and Steering Committee to vote in a way which seemingly conforms to their perceived agenda.

The SU may wish to undermine democracy by ignoring the concerns of students and removing their decision making power; but they are very much mistaken if they do not assume that students will take it upon themselves to hold them to account.



A poster for the Pakistan Muslim League. Nawaz Sharif is located on the far left
Photo: flickr user Omer Wazir

A convergence of powers

The history of the perpetual tussle between the executive and the judiciary in Pakistan can be learned from, but will require the kind of principled actions not usually forthcoming of this government

Asad Rahim Khan

The strange relationship between Pakistan's leaders and its judiciary has often played a crippling influence in the region, felling presidents, prime ministers, and chief justices, validating and invalidating military dictatorship, and dismissing entire governments and judicial benches. Its latest episode was prompted by President Asif Zardari's rickety administration once more going toe-to-toe with an increasingly unyielding judiciary. Zardari attempted to elevate a High Court judge to the country's apex Supreme Court, in a move that was virtually bereft of prior consultation with the prickly chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. It also came on the heels of Zardari callously slighting Chaudhry's suggestion to bring on another retired justice as an ad hoc judge.

In scorned retaliation, Chaudhry's Supreme Court swiftly suspended the president's elevation orders. All this was in turn met by an explosion of activity by the long-seething political opposition, demonizing the president, glorifying the chief justice, and leading self-righteous protests across the country. Zardari's boorish response was to mirror the unrest with partisan shows of support of his own. As effigies of opposition leader Nawaz Sharif were burnt in the streets, Sharif, a hitherto benign rival, denounced Zardari as 'the biggest threat to democracy today', before caring to make a shade more lurid accusations. Throw onto the pile that the Supreme Court recently dismissed a flimsy piece of legislation, foisted by Zardari's predecessor Pervez Musharraf,

which acquitted Zardari and much of his ruling coterie of corruption cases that would have otherwise prevented them from assuming high office, and one begins to comprehend the stakes of this fight. One could also be Zardari's prime minister, who has just attempted to defuse the situation by arriving uninvited at a dinner party hosted by the chief justice, in a sort of water-under-the-bridge gesture. A bizarre quick fix, at best, but at least it is a start.

This standoff between the government and the judges comes at a crucial point for Pakistan, just as its powerful military starts to vanquish a rabid Taliban insurgency in its northern areas, amid a hugely and rightfully unpopular escalation of unmanned drone strikes into the country by the Obama administration. Also, outcomes for such deadlocks between the two branches have become increasingly unpredictable. Historically, such conflicts would be short and lead to the dismissal, or silencing, of one or the other. With the passing of these past several years, this guilty reassurance no longer holds true.

Recent memories of the judiciary's role as an alternately dynamic and abused institution usually stretch back to the events of 1977, when ruling Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was overthrown by army chief General Zia-ul-Haq. In power, Bhutto had fanatically curtailed both the power and jurisdiction of the judiciary, thus drawing the ire of the country's courts, lawyers, and legislators all at the same time. A year after he was deposed, Bhutto was unanimously sentenced to hang by the Lahore High Court for authorizing the murder of a dissident of his own party. The Supreme Court upheld the verdict by a controversial 4-3 majority in February, and Bhutto was executed not long after. When Bhutto's widow challenged the validity of General Zia's military coup, the courts invoked the pert, now-famous 'Doctrine of Neces-

sity', stressing that the widespread unrest under Bhutto 'necessitated', so to speak, a military takeover.

His successor, General Zia-ul-Haq, while the utter antithesis of Bhutto as helmsman, proved similar in his attitude towards the judges. He declared a Provisional Constitutional Order in 1981, a latter-day oath of loyalty to his military dictatorship, requested of the judges. Those who declined were promptly asked to tender their resignations, which they did. When the general dismissed his own government in 1988, the courts overturned his ruling, by which time he had been assassinated in a sabotage-induced air crash.

Hence began the horrifying 1990s when the prodigal heirs; Bhutto's daughter Benazir and General Zia's quasi-successor Nawaz Sharif; began an insipid game of musical chairs for the premiership, in full view of a hardening judiciary. First Benazir's government, then Nawaz Sharif's, were sent packing by the president, charged with relentless incompetence and graft. Once more did Benazir take office, and once more was she sacked by the presidency. This time round she challenged her dismissal, and was rewarded by the Supreme Court re-affirming the president's decision to do away with her government by a whopping 6 to 1 margin. And Nawaz Sharif swept into power once more, to be dramatically overthrown by an enraged army's Pervez Musharraf two years later in 1999.

This was the watershed moment, the cutoff point; and despite the previous episodes of short and sharp clashes between the two branches; when the executive would emerge triumphant in muzzling the judicial spirit in the 1970s and '80s, or when the judiciary would get its way in light of upholding the dismissals of the 'democratic' governments of the '90s, there would be no turning back from a hasty decision made by the brash execu-

tive in the March of 2007.

Around the dawn of that year, General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's last military president, seemed wholly invulnerable in office. The former special-ops commando had deposed Nawaz Sharif to a muted response. Musharraf's reign had, to his credit, thus far witnessed a promising economy, greater liberties for the media, and substantial efforts in the way of education and development. Reckless military operations, rising prices, as well as the self-indulgences of several venal politicians he patronized, had taken a backseat. He had also just penned an exultant autobiography which read more like the escapades of a comic hero to Western reviewers.

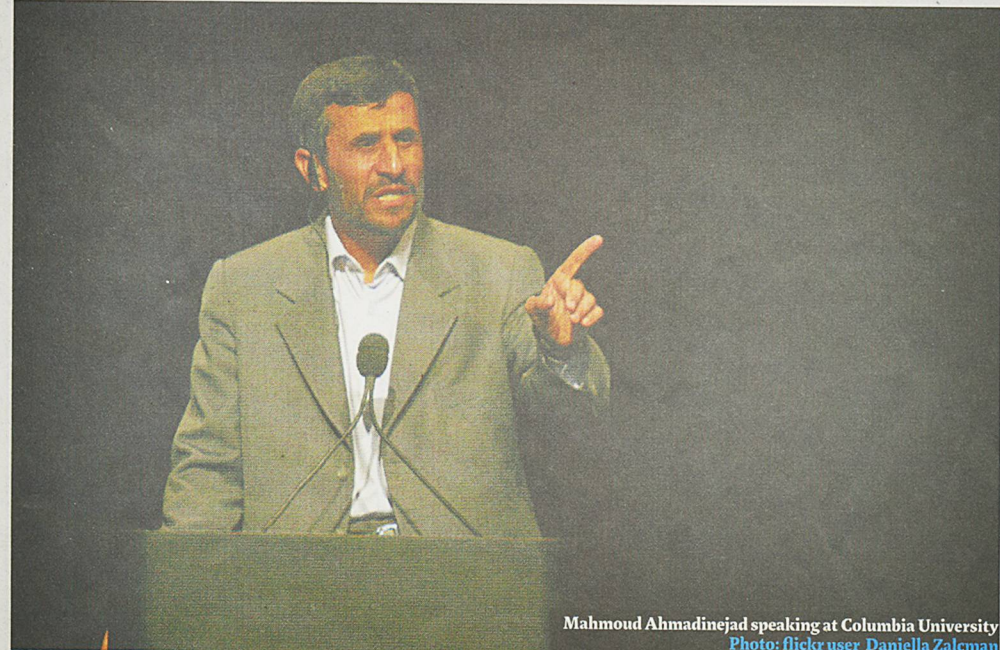
Regardless, Musharraf's rapid downward trajectory initiated itself when he summoned Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, the current Chief Justice of Pakistan and the foremost head of the country's Supreme Court, one cold day in March of the same year. Musharraf in trademark cavalier fashion presented a choice; resign or be charged with misconduct, largely at the behest of then-Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who had been slighted by the Supreme Court's ruling against the government in a landmark privatization case. The chief justice declined either option, both of which the now-dismayed president too waved away, instead choosing to sack the man in an unprecedented move. And soon enough, Musharraf's world came crashing down; mass outrage in civil society, the galvanized lawyer's movement seeking Chaudhry's restoration, and a barrage of attacks from the media he had freed, made Musharraf buckle and begrudgingly restore the chief justice.

Now both spiteful and pitiful, Musharraf, in rapid dictatorial fashion, sacked his own government, dismissed all judges, clamped down on the press, and imposed emergency rule. The end was nigh and,

with federal elections in February 2008 having routed his political backers, and with the 'dreadful' opposition he had swatted away for nine years screaming for his impeachment, Musharraf resigned in August. Zardari assumed the presidency...but conveniently chose not to restore the judiciary Musharraf had sacked. Sharif, himself an enemy of the Supreme Court in a past life, championed the judiciary's cause, incited mass protests, and was ultimately successful in pressurizing Zardari to restore the judges; one Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry at the wheel. And the rest, as they say, is history.

President Zardari, to make use of an exhausted cliché, has struck out each time he has stepped up to bat against the judiciary. They have, via Nawaz Sharif and the lawyers' movement, forced him to restore them to their posts. They have subsequently done precisely what Zardari aimed to prevent in not restoring them; they have reactivated the many cases that technically bar him from holding high office of any kind, let alone the presidency. And they are now contemptuous of his plans to interfere with Supreme Court appointments; suspending his orders, and refusing to ratify alternative measures. He needs to understand what General Musharraf never did; that his latest intrigues are unwarranted, and the last thing the country needs at this juncture is a resultant conflict blown out of proportion by a media that has despised him since 1989, and an opposition that can scarcely wait in the wings. It is only if he totally aborts his stand, and kowtow to the judiciary's decision, will he be able to reinforce an increasingly brittle hold over a state that has little love lost for him.

Looking towards Iran



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speaking at Columbia University
Photo: flickr user Daniella Zalzman

Teresa Goncalves

Once again Iran has been in the news. Although connected, the story was a different one from the usual fret of uranium enrichment. Growing fears of the influence of the Revolutionary Guard and the military loyalty bestowed upon Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have been expressed by American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the reality of the situation is that these indeed are things that the Iranian people are worried about.

Ahmadinejad almost reminds me of a young Reza Khan, the first of the Pahlavi dynasty. A military man, Reza Khan rose through the ranks and in the course of events managed to install himself as Shah. The most important element of his consolidation as the new Iranian ruler was the loyalty of the army. Ahmadinejad is an ex-Guard and enjoys the benefits of having the military powers of the country on his side. Whilst I will be the first to emphasise that the aggressive rhetoric which has been adopted by the Iranian government since 2005, is more often than

not just that, the fact is that the Revolutionary Guard have a long history of harsh repressions and assassinations, especially during the 1980s, and have become even stronger since the contested re-election of Ahmadinejad. It was they who fired upon the protestors throughout the summer of 2009 and who have continued to carry out bloody suppressions. Ever since he came to power in 2005, Ahmadinejad has sought to reverse completely the reformist policies that had been implemented by his predecessors Akbar Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami. His rhetoric has been ludicrous and his obsession with nuclear 'energy' has given rise to much anxiousness in the West.

The 'Twitter Revolution' of late 2009, was a clear indication of the Iranian society's unrest and refusal to accept the government any longer. If Iranian history is anything to go by, much more is still to be expected from the population, which is why Ahmadinejad is seeking to entrench himself through the protection of military command.

However, the Revolutionary Guard is not just a military power, it is also a 'corporate enterprise' making at least £8 billion every year, and allowing it a lot of influence within Iran. Thousands of Iranian people are employed in several of the companies belonging to this enterprise thus raising fears of the massive unem-

ployment that the proposed sanctions may bring. The idea is to isolate the Guard by freezing assets, in order to help empower the people, however this strategy has obvious potential consequences of creating even more repression. The coming weeks will be massively important, with the Republic's 31st anniversary that incited many protests having just occurred, I think that more can be expected in the near future. Meanwhile, China is still reluctant to support the sanctions proposed by the West, fearing that rather than help the situation, they may in fact escalate it. It is a precarious situation: by 'squeezing' Iran too hard, the chances are that more decisions will be made by the government making it even more repressive; furthermore, it may also delegitimise or constrain the reformist protests that have been occurring. Despite the violent strength of the Revolutionary Guard it does not enjoy the benefit of ideological homogeneity and needs allies, as Ali Ansari, a well known Iranian scholar, has emphasised. That Iran is practically a military dictatorship is obvious, the Revolutionary Guard were working within Iran (and without) to reinforce the state's power long before Ahmadinejad and would continue to do so without him. The question now is will the role of the Revolutionary Guard evolve in terms of supplanting the current regime, as is feared, and to what extent?

Bernardo Jurema

Before I start, I should make it clear that I have no personal sympathies to the Iranian leaders, much less to the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as well as to any kind of undemocratic regimes, such as Mubarak's Egypt, or the Saudi Arabia dictatorship. Having said that, the immense pressure on the country placed on the country by the USA, the UK and several European countries is unreasonable.

First of all, there is the stark contrast to the situation of neighbouring Israel. Israel's governments have systematically disobeyed UN resolutions and have undermined international law time and again. Human rights abuses on the Palestinian population have become commonplace. Illegal occupations that amount to land grabs have gone scot-free. And when President Barack Obama's administration attempted a harsher stance towards the Netanyahu government, it was quick to backtrack, and the Israeli government could continue to pursue its illegal anti-Palestinian policies, such as the unlawful settlements on Palestinian land. This is not to mention Israel's "secret" atomic bomb, yet another in a series of acts that show contempt towards the international community and international law.

So why this overwhelming pressure on Iran who has not yet violated international law, when there is incredible lenience towards Israel's regular disdain for international law? Why these double standards?

Secondly, what credibility do western powers have in making these claims about Iran's nuclear potential capabilities and hypothetical intentions? These are some of the same countries that not so long ago were making strikingly similar claims about Iraq. The same underlying process is going on. Again, we are witnessing Western claims based on dodgy intelligence and questionable premises. Often President Ahmadinejad's ferocious speeches are used to back up such claims. Let us not forget that moments before the illegal invasion of Iraq, Saddam Hussein would make claims about his countries military strength and he would boast about his weapons of mass destruction. Such claims were not backed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But, strangely, Western intelligence and leaders were more than willing to believe Saddam's claims. Politicians will always be politicians, be them in Iraq, Iran, the UK or the US. When President George W. Bush announced that he would carry out a

crusade against terrorists, wherever they might be, that was mere politician talk to his domestic constituency. It did not matter that his country could barely wage two simultaneous wars without going bankrupt partly because of their costs, and has no financial nor manpower capabilities to carry out even a third conflict, much less a crusade. President Ahmadinejad is no different. Politicians undermine facts in order to impress voters and so we should not take their words at face value, be them American, British or Iranian.

Finally, we have seen how the militaristic approach has fared. Haven't we learned anything from the past decade? For that matter, haven't we learned anything from the past century? All the major conflicts in the Middle East were created by or intensified by Western meddling into domestic or regional affairs: the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Israel-Palestine conflict; the list goes on. Many of the undemocratic regimes in the region came into power and/or remained there because of Western intervention and open financial and military support: Mubarak's Egypt, the Saudi regime, Saddam himself. The last time the West meddled in Iran's domestic politics, it led to the current regime of the Ayatollahs.

Iran's society needs time to sort out their own problems themselves. The country is divided, and although there are groups unhappy with Ahmadinejad's government, there is nevertheless still strong support in the rural sector. It is up to outsiders to interfere. Furthermore, the "democratic" argument is flawed, because Iran is a much more open society than pretty much all of the main allies of the West in the region.

We have seen that the US militaristic approach to the problems in the Middle East is hypocritical, inefficient and self-serving. The IAEA and the broader international community should be given ample time to sort things out, but Iran has the legitimate right to pursue nuclear energy capability. Developing countries, like Brazil and Turkey, have been very active in trying to reach a negotiated common ground. These two countries, unsurprisingly, have come from closed, inward-looking, authoritarian regimes to open, vibrant, outward-looking democratic societies in less than 30 years - in endogenous and autonomous processes, without outside meddling. Iran does not need bombs, sanctions and isolation; it needs integration with the world and freedom to find on its own the path towards development and democracy.

The alternative is further chaos in the Middle East. And an Iran Inquiry where discredited politicians will defend that their claims were right at the time - even though we know they never were. Are we going to watch that film again? Surely not: remakes are always worse.

Letters to the Editor

Madam - I am utterly horrified by the quality of constitutional interpretation shown by the Returning Officer Shanti Kelemen and C&S Chair Michael Lok. My major concerns with the interpretation are as follows:

Firstly, the Beaver quotes Kelemen as saying "where a level of majority is not specified, that majority must be a simple majority as default".

My reading of the constitution has revealed no rule that supports this contention. It is common practice of constitutional interpretation, in case of a gap in the law, to look into any other guidance provided in the constitution itself. Having done so I find Section 12.1 of the Constitution which states that: "Proposals for any amendment to the Constitution shall be given at least five weeks public notice in term time and shall require the assent of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a quorate General Meeting of the Union". Why the clear guidance provided in this section relating to amendments to the constitution was ignored in favour of using a simple majority, which has no apparent constitutional basis, is beyond me.

My second concern directly flows from the first. As there exists no constitutional basis for a simple majority, there is naturally no definition provided in the constitution of a "simple major-

ity". Despite this, Ms Kelemen frames her statement in such a way as if quoting directly from the constitution: "moreover the rules state that the referendum shall be conducted as an election - where one candidate will win once they receive 50% or more of the vote; i.e. a simple majority". Nevertheless, it seems that even if one would accept simple majority, as defined by Ms Kelemen, as the constitutionally supported threshold, the General Meetings bye-law does not pass with 49.2% of the vote.

Thirdly, the most horrific statement of all: [as advice was sought from NUS and lawyers] their [C&S] decision was "based on the fact rather than opinion". In no functioning democracy in the world is a constitutional decision taken based either on "the fact" or "opinion"; constitutional decisions are taken based on the constitution itself.

Sageb Mahbub
LLM Student

Madam - The 'controversy' over the passing of reforms to the Students Union is to be welcomed as perhaps the last major controversy we shall see for a while. After the reforms in the National Union of Students were passed last year we have seen a rolling out of reforms in other Unions that have crushed grassroots campaigning and

bureaucratised Unions.

One Sabbatical Officer commented after the Union General Meeting last week 'Another farcical UGM at LSE. Good riddance to ye olde constitution!'

It is worth considering this statement for a moment and the meaning behind it. Over the past week over 300 students have joined a Facebook group in opposition to what they deem to be the unconstitutional passing of one of the reforms. An ongoing petition is gathering more and more names. NUS Executive, Black students Officers and Sabbatical Officers nationwide are continuing to sign the petition to support our campaign.

At last week's UGM, the Constitution and Steering committee, that through ineptitude and incompetence had caused this crisis, by ruling in an inquorate meeting that only 50% would be required to pass the amendments to the constitution, were no-confidenced. Now why would an officer of the Union then declare that this farcical? For the first time in many years the Director of the University was forced to wait outside while students took control of their Union again and punished those who had caused this crisis of legitimacy in the reforms. In a C&S meeting an hour before the vast majority of the committee admitted they had made a mistake, something those wanting to push through the reforms without any debate have

neglected to mention to students. I would encourage all students wishing to remain part of an active union that respects its constitution to get in touch at savelsesu@gmail.com and join our campaign.

This is not farcical. This is called accountability and democracy, concepts that some Officers of the Union would do well to acquaint themselves with.

Estelle Cooch
BSc International History '10

Madam - When I came to LSE last year I vowed not to get involved in 'student politics'. I honoured this until I successfully stood for election to the LSE Court of Governors in Michaelmas term; unhappy with the low student satisfaction levels and keen to stand up for 'ordinary' students. It is this desire that compels me to write my very first correspondence to you.

The recent admirable grass roots campaign by many students in trying to get the LSESU, the Chair of the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S) Michael Lok and the Returning Officer Shanti Keleman to respect the SU Constitution has truly shocked me. But what I was most disgusted with was the decision of the C&S Committee to stop a motion regarding the constitutional validity of the referenda from being discussed at all at last week's UGM.

Our SU has had a long and rich history of championing free debate and discussion. Indeed, the successful LSE alumnus John Phelan said in a recent interview with The Beaver that what drew him to LSE was its student-led democracy "these debates often became quite heated, but were always great exchanges of ideas".

The actions of the C&S Committee in bypassing our Constitution and suppressing free speech needed to be met with a loud and clear message: we do not live in a banana republic and will not tolerate the gagging of any criticism.

I am pleased that the very UGM which the SU is now set to abolish voted to send that loud and clear message. The motion of no confidence over Michael Lok and the discredited C&S passed with the overwhelming support of the student body. Ironically, during the UGM one sabbatical officer rushed to declare that any vote would need a two thirds majority; the very threshold that is being ignored by the SU in relation to Article 3 of the referenda.

With up-coming elections, I hope the student body will vote in a desperately needed new sabbatical team on the basis of their democratic credentials, and a new 'Democracy Committee' that will respect our Constitution. Is that too much to ask?

Sarwar Zaman
LSE Court of Governors

Features



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Disharmony and disappointment

Leo Zhi Wei discusses the current state of the Millennium Development goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were an emanation of the Millennium Declaration - a cluster of concrete, specific targets formulated in an effort to accelerate human development in areas of poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality and environmental sustainability within a limited time frame. These goals were launched upon the premise of solidarity amongst countries for the purposes of pursuing greater human dignity in hope for a better world for us all to live in. At present, just a mere five years before we draw near to the 2015 deadline, so much is lamentable about our unfavourable progress, that one is compelled to ponder if these goals were only meant to be unattainable abstractions. Yet, this should not lead us to undermine the importance of the MDGs, for they still remain a viable engine that power the growth of development policy, which is the key to securing a peaceful world for us to live in today.

Good and consistent progress in certain key areas of the MDG initially imbues us with a sense of optimism that the same may be achieved for the other goals as well. For one, an impressive 89 per cent of the children in the world of theoretical primary school age have been enrolled in primary or secondary schools, providing a sound foundation for achieving our target of ensuring that all children will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015. With regards to the goal to reduce child mortality, deaths in children under five have declined from 12.6 million young children to 9 million today, amidst increasing demographic trends worldwide. There is also an escalating number

of women studying in tertiary educational institutions (so much so that men are being outnumbered), giving us reason to be sanguine about global attitudes heading towards a complete elimination of disparity between the male and female gender.

None of these favourable outcomes were achieved overnight, but instead by a sustained and incremental global effort fully devoted to these areas. Dismayingly, many of these progressions were extinguished just overnight; the global financial crisis and economic downturn, one of the biggest juggernauts of this decade, have not only stultified but caused a retrograde of any earlier progress. Advancements in the realms of poverty, hunger, growth and employment have proved to be inextricably linked to the performance of the world economy. An estimation of 55 to 90 million more people living in extreme poverty, and increase from 16 to 17 per cent of the world population suffering from hunger after the downturn are examples of facts that resonate of the grim repercussions of the downturn. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's prediction of the spillover effects of regression in these realms to other areas of health, gender equality and development only devastate us further.

The sudden plummet of results in these areas however, must not detract our attention from the existing deficiencies in progress with respect to health-related goals such as the improvement of maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The numbers for people newly infected with HIV and AIDS-related deaths may have peaked in 1996 and 2005 respectively, but the number of people living with HIV worldwide

Just a mere five years before we draw near to the 2015 deadline, so much is lamentable about our unfavourable progress

continues to proliferate as people infected with the virus are surviving longer. Stagnation in this area has arisen largely because of the failure to provide people in developing countries with the requisite knowledge of the ill effects of HIV and adequate measures for its prevention. And with regards to maternal health, till today, giving birth safely remains a privilege confined to the rich, as evinced by statistics revealing that 99 per cent of deaths from childbirth (both women and girls) occur in developing countries.

Nevertheless, none of these factors will be able to render the actualization of the MDGs as an impossible dream, if only the countries of the world will act together in concert and harmony in an effort to overcome these seemingly insurmountable hurdles. However, the prevailing gaps that exist between performances of different countries and regions in applying and instating the reforms towards the successful completion of these MDGs paints a sobering picture for our dream of global cooperation. The core of this impasse lies in the intractable nature of countries in refusing to relinquish their national interests in the name of greater good; increasing political pressures on US and European governments to embrace protectionist measures, and threats of declining levels of aid to the poorest countries are widening the already stark disparity between the actual and 2010 target. Given this, one is inevitably sceptical of the prospect of establishing a worldwide partnership for development which encompasses a non-discriminatory trading system and enhanced programmes for debt relief (goal eight of MDGs). The debacle at the recently concluded 2009

Copenhagen conference reveals an abject failure of countries to formulate an international consensus on concrete, detailed steps necessary to alleviate the possibly calamitous effects of climate change. If such obstinate attitudes prevail, it is hard to envision any substantial progress towards long term environmental sustainability which the perilous nature of our current conditions so urgently warrant. The consequences will be unimaginable if countries decide to retain such self-centered mindsets in deciding on policies for advancements in other areas of the MDGs in future.

The decision to embark on the journey towards the achievement of the MDGs was not an easy one to start with. Based on the 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report, certain regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania still face significant challenges in attaining almost all of these goals. The sheer magnitude of the difficulty in achieving these targets in their entirety portends the likely 2015 scenario as one in which a majority of countries will fall in between, meeting some, but not all goals. However, it is crucial that we do not bemoan our circumstances or the unlikelihood of the achieving the MDGs, but take responsibility for the time we have lost and the opportunities wasted. Progress has shown to be most modest in areas which require massive structural changes and strong political commitment, and in light of this, countries should come together with firmness and determination in an extraordinary effort to conquer the forces of hunger, poverty, health and development.



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The medals of our defeats

Calum Young argues for a new NATO strategy in Afghanistan

Despite the recent upsurge in Taliban violence, victory is still possible, if London and Washington redefine the war they are fighting in Afghanistan.

When Eduard Shevardnadze - the last Soviet Foreign Minister - arrived in Kabul in 1989, he knew the situation was difficult. The Soviet Union was bankrupt and its satellites were capitalising on this weakness by exerting pressure on the centre. Moscow could no longer afford to maintain its presence in Afghanistan and both Shevardnadze and the international community knew it.

In all fairness, the Russians' dilemma was not entirely of their own making. By the late 80s, the American government was happy to see Moscow humiliated in Afghanistan. The CIA wanted revenge for Vietnam and was only too pleased to watch an erstwhile rival retreat following an overseas debacle. Support from Islamabad was also unforthcoming. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government in Pakistan had opted to tow the American line and she refused to support further intervention. Shevardnadze went home isolated. Two weeks later, he recalled Soviet troops and awaited defeat.

The great irony is that the Soviets didn't lose. For three years after the Russian withdrawal, the government they backed led by President Mohammed Najibullah remained in place. Using networks of patronage, political cunning and the promise of infrastructure development, the combined might of Taliban warlords was kept at bay. This was a temporary victory of sorts for Najibullah,

and it illustrates the path toward securing Afghanistan today.

As the American General Stanley McChrystal has noted, the US cannot shoot its way to victory. Power does not grow out of the barrel of a gun in a country where anyone with the inclination can purchase an AK-47. American power lays in its wallet, not its armoury. Just as Najibullah maintained his position through circulating patronage in a complex web of chieftains and local warlords, so can Washington. The Taliban are not united by ideology, class, or ethnicity. Afghanistan is a nation divided by five-mile strips in a semi-feudal system which governs the localities. 90 per cent of the population lives in villages with fewer than 500 inhabitants. Language and customs change as often as the terrain. Rather, what unites the American enemy is financial convenience.

Most of the often illiterate men who make up the Taliban have fought for numerous other causes in the last twenty years. Allegiances swap according to which ruler holds preponderance over an individual's township, while some fighters have been driven into the Taliban ranks by the coalition's decision to decimate opium production in the opening months of occupation. Afghanistan's biggest industry still remains supplying heroin to the world. If that industry is suppressed by foreign intervention, the challenge to coalition forces is doubled. Troops would be tasked with economic and as well as political rehabilitation.

The way ahead amounts to a sacrifice of ideals. Circulating patronage and allowing opium production to continue will

Power does not grow out of the barrel of a gun in a country where anyone with the inclination can purchase an AK-47

ultimately mean deals with amoral and often violent members of the Taliban elite. This is a subject which both Washington and London are divided on. However, there have been signs that the position of local leaders is becoming more flexible. In a ten-page statement drafted in November of 2009, Taliban leader Mullah Omar pledged that the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan would take constructive measures together with all countries towards mutual cooperation".

This is not to say the British and American troops are pursuing mistaken objectives. Stable democracy, the rule of law and a developing economy based on legal goods are not ignoble goals for Afghanistan. They are merely unobtainable. Coalition forces lack the knowledge to unpick the labyrinth of Afghan politics. Western armies lack language abilities; even now, nine-years on, there is a shortfall of Dari Persian and Pashto speakers. Despite their superficial might, foreign armies are also short of troop numbers and financial capital. At a time when international aid budgets are more stretched than ever, a genuine long term commitment is unlikely. A simple comparison is the number of troops required to restore peace to the Balkans in the mid-90s: in areas of hostility the figure reached 1 soldier per 2,000 of the population. In Afghanistan that figure is currently 1 soldier per 200,000.

What can be achieved has to be reconciled with conditions on the ground. Afghans are not "crying out for their Human Rights" as Mary Robinson, the UN Human Rights Commissioner, declared in 2004. Rather, they are people who for the most part are seeking their next meal or a

roof over their heads. Whether the myriad of Aid Agencies and Development Centres staffed with Western Post-Graduates will ever be able to understand the thought processes of the Afghan populace is in doubt. The difference between the policy-makers and local life is tangible in a nation where the bulk of female inhabitants have never travelled beyond a 5 mile radius of their birthplace.

However, all is not stacked against Washington and London, should they choose a path of dialogue with the Taliban. For centuries the road towards control of Kabul has led through Islamabad and there is reason to believe that Pakistan's current government may welcome American diplomatic efforts. The prospect of civil war developing in the backyard and the loss of Pakistani influence in Kabul is not in Islamabad's interests. Officials also fear the rise of Indian interest in the region which could displace their own sphere of influence. In December 2009, intelligence reports from ISI (the Pakistani intelligence forces) briefed that they would use their power over Taliban officials to initiate discussion - a significant breakthrough in relations.

Success in Afghanistan has ceased to be a question of honour. Coalition forces must do away with anachronistic conceptions of neo-imperialism if they are to achieve real success on the ground and obtain security. Bargains with the Taliban are not easily struck and few diplomats are in favour of dealing with individuals with such violent records. However, these are necessary evils if the success of Najibullah is to be replicated.



Photo: Phyllis Lui

The future of the British left

Ossi Fikret speaks of ideology and political defiance with James Purnell

Many things have been said about James Purnell, the Member of Parliament for Hyde and Stalybridge. He was called "[the] worst secretary of state for social security this country has ever had" by the General Secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union as well as a "philosopher politician" by the New Labour pressure group, Progress. Having been tipped as a future leader of the Labour Party, he resigned from his Cabinet position last June in protest against the leadership style of Gordon Brown. His unexpected resignation sent shockwaves through the political sphere and almost destabilized Brown's premiership. Since then, Purnell has joined the political abyss that are the backbenches of the House of Commons.

On the backbenches Purnell found his voice amongst the cries of the damned career politicians, and currently heads up a project called 'Open Left' within the think tank Demos. This precipitated his lecture, in the Ralph Miliband series, on Monday 15 February, charged with no less a task than renewing the left's ideology.

The British left (by which I mean the Labour Party) have travelled through Dante's Inferno in the process of rejuvenating themselves during eighteen years of Conservative government, ultimately ending up in the ninth sphere of betrayal of its core beliefs, with the resulting half-way house that is (or was) New Labour. Purnell describes this 'third way' ideology as being no such thing. Rather, he sees New Labour as having no core ideology, which led to the government's inability to function correctly. How can an ideologically vacuous government chose between electoral reform, eliminating child poverty, and rejuvenating the NHS? Purnell claims it cannot, and his arguments are

convincing.

This should not be mistaken as an attack on what Labour has achieved over the past thirteen years. Rather, Purnell seems to see Blair's Britain as a bittersweet victory. Sweet for the reduction in poverty and increase in quality of public services (among other things); bitter because so much more could have been achieved, if only the party had had the gall to fight the hard fight on issues such as inequality.

Purnell calls for a Labour Party that places the thoughts of two former LSE professors, namely Amartya Sen and Richard Henry Tawney, at its heart. By combining Sen's 'capability' approach with the humanity of Tawney, Labour would be able to make the tough choices in office that are demanded of it during a period of cuts. Purnell asks Labour to 'choose freedom', as Tawney called for in 1944. Freedom ultimately is a code word for 'power', and should be understood to mean the 'substantial freedoms' to live our lives the way we choose. Freedom, he says, should be at the very heart of what the centre-left do.

He seems to have definitely taken onboard the beliefs of Sen, with his insistence that these substantial freedoms emerge. Purnell appreciates that while measurements, such as the Gini Coefficient, are vitally important, they are simply means to an end and should never be an end in themselves. Similarly the 'good society' must be created over the long-term and through cooperation between the state, market and individuals, rather than through coercion or through gimmicky legislation. For, as Purnell asks, if citizens are obliged to be respectful to one another because the law demands it, they are not being respectful, but are following the letter of the law. On the surface the difference seems superficial, but ac-

Purnell sees New Labour has having no core ideology, which led to the government's inability to function correctly

ording to Sen's 'capabilities approach' the difference could not be any starker.

During the interview I had with Mr Purnell after his lecture, he further elaborated on his theories of what was next for the left. This included a belief that unlike the Thatcherite derision of 'experts', he believed strongly that both experts and 'the people' could both be right on the same issue. This was not some kind of New Labour double-talk, but rather something he understood to have materialized in organizations such as London Citizens, whose Community Organizing depends on a mass movement founded by so-called 'experts' but enacted and empowered by 'the people'.

He sees Labour in the twenty-first century as needing more of a grassroots organization than one which can be obtained through the very superficial means of Twitter. If anything, one gets the feeling that he probably views the appointment of a 'Twitter czar' as verging on ridiculous, since Purnell (who himself uses the micro-blogging site) considers it as "quite undemocratic." As a means of communication, Purnell does not believe that it can replace actually meeting and conversing with individuals in the flesh. At the heart of this belief may be an underlying acceptance that Twitter and all of its distant blogging and social-networking cousins still remain the preserve of those who can afford a computer and the monthly broadband charges. Often it is those in the most desperate of circumstances who are most dependent upon the assistance of their local Member of Parliament.

Within the broad discussion in Sen's 'The Idea of Justice' of the contrast between *niti* (the rules and institutions of justice) and *nyaya* (the realization of justice), Purnell sees his ideological framework as falling under the *nyaya* ap-

proach, given that he believes that a justice which centres upon rules and institutions tends to focus on those who already hold power, namely the wealthy. Such an approach to justice is no form of justice at all, in the eyes of Purnell.

Welfare reform has been at the core of his beliefs since he was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and undoubtedly this is an issue close to his heart, given that it featured heavily in both his lecture and the discussion. He believes – strongly – that Labour must have a tough conversation with itself and accept that reform must happen. This is without a doubt controversial as Purnell attempted to introduce interest payments on crisis loans, which verged on blasphemy within the Labour Party. Although his ideas are radical (and verging on conservative (small 'c') in some cases), one cannot help but agree with his statement that for the vast majority of people "fulfilling your potential" is partially reached by "working". Capabilities are, Purnell would argue, intrinsically linked to our ability to find employment and safeguard our economic independence. Yet with this said, he does add a small caveat that work is not necessarily the right course of action for everyone.

Ultimately Purnell believes, that like the 1997 campaign song, "Things can only get better"; but it can only do so if the party replaces the emptiness of New Labour with something substantial, something real, ultimately, something Labour. Undoubtedly with this in mind he announced, within five days of his speech at the LSE, that he intended to step down as a Member of Parliament to pursue a career in community organizing with London Citizens. On this, one cannot help but admire Purnell for attempting, even if superficially, to put his words into action.



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Walking on the road less travelled

Natalie Wong offers a new perspective on China's controversial policies

The world is ambivalent about China's rapid transfiguration into a major player. At a time when Western conservatism is no longer taken for granted, rather than anticipating how China will fit into the world stage as a new superpower, it is perhaps more helpful to reflect on the current held worldview. Instead of China being the focal point of analysis, let it be a stimulus for a new understanding of society.

Trope it may be, but the media have often had the tendency to exaggerate the importance of what they report. It is not uncommon for journalists in Britain and America to portray geopolitics as drama. This is perhaps something unintentional, but the result is that the reading public has become less critical of the real issues of politics. Whether it is the COP15 at Copenhagen, Iran's nuclear development, human rights, or the Chinese currency, headlines seem to feature plot twists within an ongoing drama than raising useful discussion among the public.

It is too common a view in the West that China, having successfully coped with the financial crisis, is now insistent for the world powers to follow her way of dealing with global issues, along with acting only in her own interests. For example, regarding the Iran nuclear negotiations, China is criticized for prioritizing her energy supply over international security, and for objecting to further sanctions on Iran; yet the West, led by the US, is actually quite certain that Iran cannot develop nuclear weapons soon. Even if a possible threat from Iran exists, economic sanctions have

Headlines seem to feature plot twists within an ongoing drama rather than raising useful discussion among the public

already proved ineffective in curbing Iran's 'intentions'; seeking other means is probably a more realistic alternative. Looking beyond national interests, China serves as a buffer effect for hasty measures against Iran: further sanctions will worsen US-Iran relations, and together with political instability, this may thus lead to greater shocks on a world scale. We are no longer living in an age of confrontational politics. Dismissing Chinese objection merely as irresponsible is too simplistic. How can we evaluate the validity of American leadership on world matters? It is interesting to wonder the extent to which geopolitics are founded on our fear of technology, and values shaped by 'liberal' regimes.

In the domain of climate change, Western media has overplayed the international irritation against Chinese leaders at Copenhagen. In fact, climate change is a continuous issue and it cannot be dealt with like any other international affair. While the summits are crucial to international negotiation, the national leaders have failed to realize (or if they do, they have failed to act accordingly) that environmental issues are more effective if they are incorporated into internal policy making. It is true that China plays a part in disrupting the progress in Copenhagen, and it might even be that in future COPs. However, if we accept that climate change is real and needs urgent attention, the fact that disagreements on targets and numbers are seriously hindering, if not halting, national actions, is alerting. Scott Barrett, a professor at Columbia University, has already shown that rather than an emphasis on emissions targets, there

Superficial interpretations of Chinese policy are not helpful in constructing healthy relations among the world powers

should be greater discussion on research and development and national policies to abate greenhouse gases emissions. Sincerity towards the environment must be internalized into policy making and corporate responsibility. International agreements really ought to be a place for this type of deliberation.

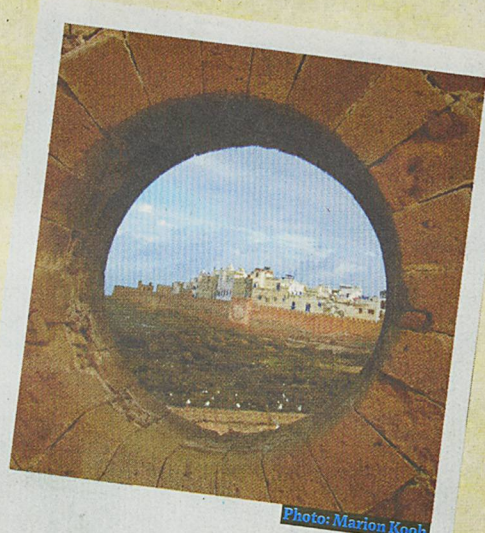
For example, environmental technologies prove to have a massive market in China. The China-US Low Carbon Development Cooperation Programme is a good initiative for a pragmatic approach to environmental targets. It aims to create a business-friendly environment for 'low-carbon, clean-energy' development. Moreover, it could be argued that a reason energy policies are effectively enforced in China is that decisions need not pass through a legislative process complicated by endless debate. In this view, our society has been made socially inefficient by allowing an overt range of conflicting interests in the first place. Perhaps we should develop better formulae to reach consensus in western societies; in this way, we could raise awareness that individuals belong to wider communities after all.

Superficial interpretations of Chinese policy are not helpful in constructing healthy relations among the world powers. Perceptions of China as selfish, or as disrespecting the liberal market, can be too easily formed. One should seek to understand the historic and cultural circumstances of the country. It may be discovered that the underlying reasons of seemingly self-regarding actions have not been properly grasped.

LSE Diary

The unlikely parallel

Marion Koob speaks of Morocco and Belgium's character



At first glance, Morocco and Belgium have very little in common. Their association would appear odd, perhaps aside from the context of an article evaluating the rise of low-cost tourism in North Africa. Yet both have in the past week suffered local tragedies.

Having lived in Brussels for a decade, and travelled to Morocco recently, the unshapely parallel struck me. In reflecting upon the countries, the way in which these two events took place seemed to mirror an element of each country's particular ambience. Unpicking accidents such as the collapse of a minaret at Meknes and a rail collision near Halle, on the outskirts of Brussels, are more telling than even I would have liked to imagine.

Brussels is a grey, dreary city most of the year. Its reputation for harbouring expatriates is exact; 46 per cent of inhabitants claim to have origins outside the country, whilst 27 per cent are indeed foreign. The concentration of both the EU and NATO, in addition to the large offices of many American firms, such as Procter & Gamble or Exxon Mobil, have led to a proliferation of English-speaking schools. Ranging from the American School of Brussels to the two campuses of the European School of Brussels, parents moving in from abroad largely find their pick. This prosperous white-collar wealth, however, must be placed against the backdrop of Brussels's poorer, less glamorous suburbs. Its inhabitants are the primary users of rail services, travelling into work.

These examples reflect an issue on a wider scale; both countries have problems

of infrastructure in different degrees. Belgium's rail system around Brussels is, despite being a substitute for London or Paris' extensive metro systems, catastrophic. Morning commuter trains serving their lines on time have become exceptions, and a few voyages through the European capital's central station with anecdotal aberrances are commonplace. A few years ago, a student was stabbed for his MP3 player in the very same station in the middle of the day. As often happens, significant changes are delayed until a severe turn of public opinion takes its form. Perhaps the aftermath of the crash will offer such a signal to politicians.

Yet, the problem is deeper than a simple (yet important) lack of investment in rail services. In addition to trains, three distinct public transport services bring commuters into Brussels; each are divided by the region from which they originate. And as the relationship amongst Flemish-Walloon politicians remains adversarial, so is the behaviour on the transportation front. Each service, for instance, requires a different type of payment; most often archaic and unfriendly to tourists. Although this is a rather unimportant issue, the problem has been left in a deadlock for decades. The following Friday, another accident was narrowly avoided on a nearby rail line. The government response, as usual, seems to be sluggish.

Morocco, on the other hand, seems determined to wipe the memory clean. King

Mohammed VI has already announced that Meknes' minaret would be rebuilt as soon as possible, and all other ancient constructions of the same nature examined. Beyond royal declarations, the speed at which this will be in reality carried out is a compelling question.

The country seems divided between an exploding tourism industry and the rest of their economy. Drive down the road outside of Marrakech, and the landscape will have changed very little over the past hundred of years. A friend amusingly explains that the presence of numerous donkeys tied to trees on the roadside originates from farmers coming in from small villages in order to attend the local market. They ride or walk next to their animals with their merchandise until the road, where they catch a bus.

The small fishing town Essaouira is another fascinating example of this contrast; despite being at first appearance, nothing more than an average Moroccan coastal dwelling, it is in fact the site of a Gnaoua world music festival which attracts approximately 450,000 visitors every June. The city is also known for having delimited Jewish as well as Christian areas in its past; the now dominant Muslim majority lives in all areas of the city. In the mornings, fishermen stand around by the docks, discussing animatedly. Small boats are used to fish the large, weighty catch, while the bigger, better equipped seek out small game. The boats are taken out to sea only at night. Walking amongst the streets, one quickly discovers what creates the city's energy. The markets are loud, expansive, and filled with numerous other

animals, from monkeys to land-turtles on display in small cages. Naturally, when venturing in some of Essaouira's arteries, one sometimes can't help but wonder whether this seemingly colourful locale display is not put on as a means to dazzle the numerous ignorant tourists. Yet, the streets are also tight-packed with Moroccans attending to their day to day affairs. Snatches of French and Arabic emanate from bustling cafés, discussing the most recent affairs from Rabat and Casa, (as the full name of Casablanca is shortened) whilst sipping strongly sugared mint teas.

Back in Marrakech itself, it is easy to meet young adults studying tourism at local higher education institutions, working part-time in one of the city's hotel resorts. They know the sector is promising, and all have plans to set up businesses of their own. Their outlook on their country's economy is down to earth; they are aware that, sun, a horizon of roughly carved mountains and general cultural stereotype has in a way been set out for rent. And while most are amiable to foreigners, there remains an aftertaste of indulgent mockery in view of the visitor's lack of knowledge doubled with the red burns of most.

It is perhaps this pragmatic outlook which allows King Mohammed VI to declare the immediate reconstruction of the Berdieyenne mosque's collapsed minaret. Artificial disasters also often reveal a failure of the government to ensure the safety of its citizens. Both of these cases could have been prevented via stricter regulation and controls; a weak political will unfortunately responds only to loud alarms.

WHAT IF...

America had never staged the 1953 coup in Iran?

Teresa Gonçalves

The coup of 1953 which ousted Mossadegh out of office irreversibly changed the course of Iranian history. The 1951 nationalization of oil in Iran was perhaps one of the boldest moves in recent international history. Britain could not conceive of the fact that any such state would dare take away their commission. The two years that followed were strained with an unwillingness to compromise. Ironically, America originally sought to be the mediator, refusing to take Britain's side. However, having reached its limit of patience, the election of Dwight Eisenhower was all that was needed for the CIA to take action to secure Iran's submission and Mossadegh's removal.

Had Britain and the US worked with Iran, helping to train engineers, and attempting to reach a compromise to be able to work the oil fields, the story at present may have been rather different, albeit numerous efforts from the UK and the US. The process of democratization which Mossadegh had begun could have further progressed. The confused coalitions which existed then would finally consolidate themselves into political parties; the repressive years which occurred from 1953-1979, including the bloody crushing in 1963 which fuelled the 1979 Revolution, may never have happened.

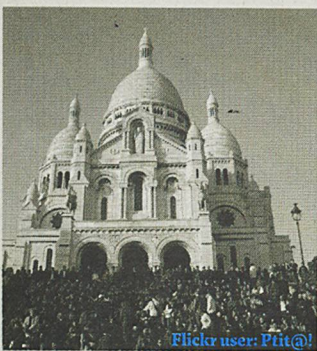
The troubled Iran that we see now might be the regional economic power, having developed its own oil revenues, able to exert a good influence on neighbouring countries and may even have been part of the World Trade Organisation instead of one of the 'Axis of Evil'. It could have joined America, Britain, Japan, China and Russia as one of the leading countries in international affairs. These 'maybes' are not wholly far-fetched, as unlike other countries in the region, Iran is not a product of colonialism. It is an old and historical nation which developed towards the Mossadegh period on its own. Like any country undergoing the initial stages of democratization, mistakes would have been made.

However, the 1953 coup never allowed Iran to take this path. Rather, it swerved it back to the old system of the repressive Shah and 'lackey' Prime Minister. The various strands of Iranian identity were propelled into a confused and polarized society, and the development and awareness that had begun was not allowed to run its course.

Today's Iranian population is driven in its protests against the government by many of the same plights that Mossadegh sought to cure, as well as other new grievances.

Mossadegh certainly had his struggles and the National Front was made up of many different political groups that only came together to support the liberalization that Mossadegh stood for. The fact is that the protests of 1953 which eventually led to Mossadegh's deposal were planned and managed by CIA agents and their Iranian team. They therefore interrupted the natural political evolution of a country, which could now have had a very different future.

Measured musings



Fulfilment in France

Montmartre is the mount of fulfilment for the student-tourist, with the Sacré-Cœur Basilica as the literal crowning glory. After climbing the steps to the architectural masterpiece, one finds that the panoramic view is more niche than from the Eiffel Tower; the market behind more affordable than the Champs-Élysées; and the general quaintness of the area is more reminiscent of Amelie's Paris than any other that can be seen over the course of a rushed weekend.

It also represents fulfilment for the more religiously inclined, with the cathedral being originally constructed during the phase of spiritual renewal following the Franco-Prussian war. Photography is forbidden in order to preserve the sanctity of the place of worship, while visitors are also encouraged to show respect in the way that they dress. It seems slightly paradoxical, therefore, that the cathedral

itself houses a "Souvenir Shop" selling religious items inside.

The image set off a new train of thought, about the role of religion and the forms it takes in the modern day. There are so many images associated with the hill that illustrate the fusion of things both old and new. A chairlift runs alongside the stone steps, an acrobat swings a fiery baton to the music of "Sweet Home Alabama" on the landing. There is an obvious tradeoff between fulfilling the needs of swarming tourists and preserving the spirit of any place. As religion is perceived as old-fashioned by a sizable chunk of the increasingly cynical Europe, one wonders how hard it must be for the keepers of the cathedrals to preserve faith in its traditional practices, while being eagerly absorbed by tourist eyes.

The Sacré-Cœur has its own website, which offers to light a candle if you "send us your prayer intention with a check

for your offering'. Religion, therefore, is catching up with globalisation. On one hand it is offering those who cannot be physically present the chance to perform a ritual. On the other, it seems to belie the concept of spirituality transcending physicality. The outward manifestations of any religion always seem to end up being given precedence over what may have been the underlying concept.

Some of the most beautiful architecture in the world is associated with mosques, temples, churches and synagogues. Throughout history, the followers of various religions invested a great deal of effort in making their places of worship such that they stood as tributes to faith and the faithful. Today, they attract all kinds of people who are drawn by the intricate carvings, calligraphy or sculptures that characterise the different traditional structures. Whatever one's personal beliefs may be, it is important to respect the

foundations on which these structures are built. It is perfectly acceptable for the tourist to be posing outside as opposed to inside. At the same time, it is also worthwhile for the more traditional to recognise and understand the nature of symbolism. Without it, it is difficult to deal with the commercialisation that seems to be seeping into every sphere of life.

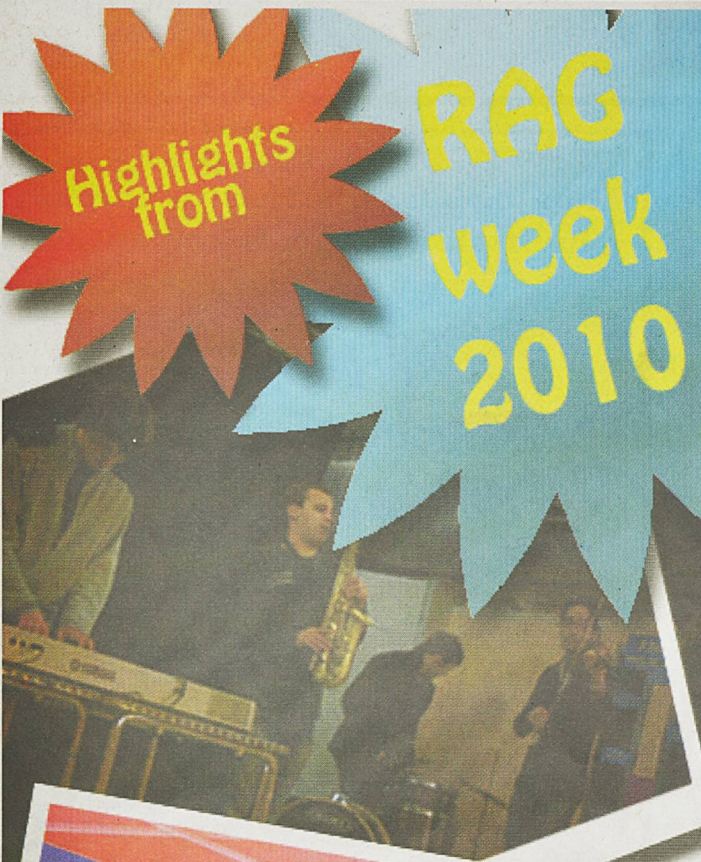
Perhaps the most profoundly simple truth learnt from the summit of Montmartre is that fulfilment is a relative concept. Some would find it on the Champs-Élysées - but then that is where they would go looking.

Madeeha Ansari
Features Editor

Photo

Highlights from

RAG week 2010



Want to join our photography team?
 Contact us at
photography@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Social

OVERHEARD AT LSE

(In library, reading)
Person 1: (suddenly) "He's so CLEVER!"
Person 2: "Who?"
Person 1: "Hobbes!"

(In the library lift a week or so ago)
Person 1: "Yeah, she gets so stressed out, she's all 'Jesus Christ... this, and 'Jesus Christ... that.'"
Person 2: "Is she religious then?"

GV100 class, teacher explaining how some societies are more open-minded than others: "In some societies, you never see homosexuals kissing on the street. Here in London, I see them all the time."
Student: "Where do you go?"

GV100 class, presentation on whether pornography should be banned (with regard to Mill's theory):
"A pigs' orgasm lasts for 90 minutes... Sorry, I digressed"

Guy 1: "I've invented a new board game, called Money Supply Shock!"
Guy 2: "How do you play?"
Guy 1: "One person is the Central Bank, the rest are institutions. The guy who is CB performs open market operations, and hilarity ensues. It's fun for all the family. As long as all the family have economics degrees."

Lecturer: "As the saying goes, Dick Nixon before he dicks you."

"He's left his Facebook on - let's Facebook rape him!"
"Change his political interests, that'll really piss him off!"

Sir Howard Davies at the UGM:
"The average LSE student throws away 483kg of garbage each year. I find this fascinating. It must be the bottles, because condoms are light"

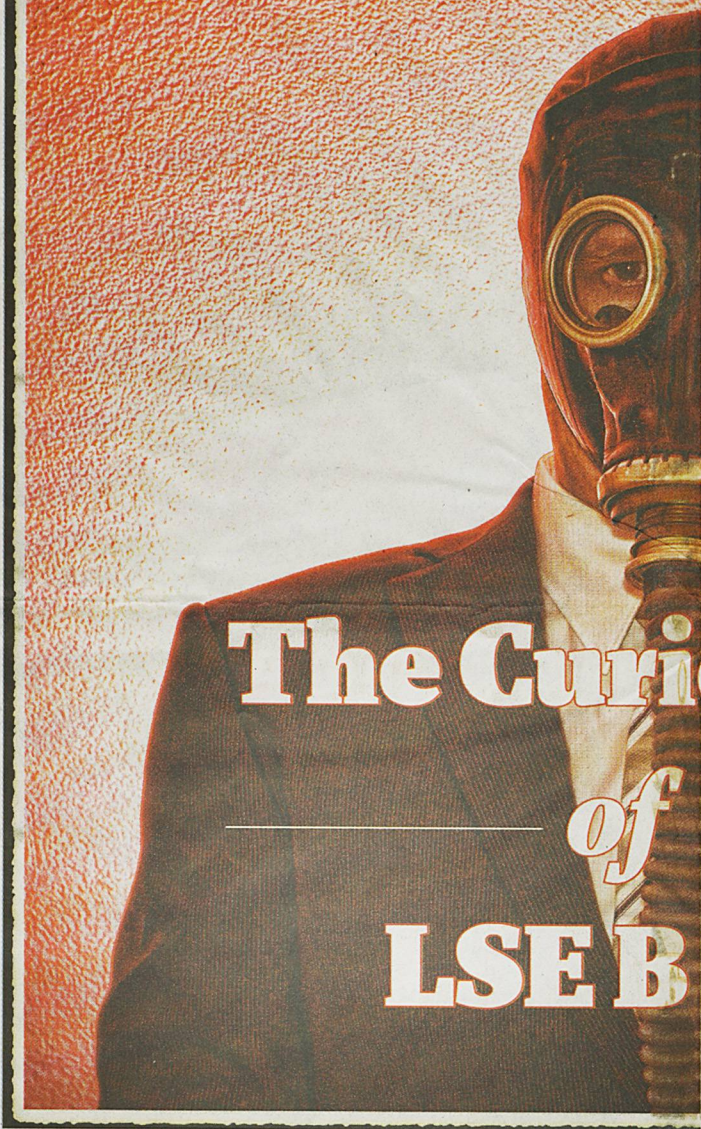
Northumberland House
Person 1: I went to a rough school, someone got stabbed every week.
Person 2: Yeah I used to stab someone every week at school...during fencing.

A few days ago in the library:
Boy 1: "Have you applied for any internships this year?"
Boy 2: "Nah not yet"
Boy 1: "clearly shocked" "Really?!"
Boy 2: "Yeah, my general attitude to life is laissez faire lately..."

IR postgrad: "Yeah the essay's finished, now I just need to pimp my references..."

Academic: "Young people with white hair is not a rare thing at LSE."

Obama has admitted to experimenting with multiple girlfriends and wives over his life. Liar's Poker was, if Liar's Poker was anything, a masterpiece.



The Curious of LSE B

Sayan Palchowdhury sketches the ty

Breaking boundaries

Fahd Humayun invites us to celebrate Pakistan Week



mushaira (poetry) complimented by the serving of tea, paan and dry-fruit. Taking place in the Quad, Ghazal Night promises to be an enriching literary experience complete with sitar playing musicians as the Pakistan Society celebrates the work of the great poets Iqbal, Faiz, Minto and Faraz. Pakistani poetry is both powerful and moving, and this event will be sure to strike a chord with non-Pakistanis at LSE. Then on Tuesday Houghton Street will once again undergo a transformation of colour and form, this time as Lahore's famous 'Food Street' is recreated on campus with stalls bearing free Pakistani food including Gol Gappay, Mithai and Samosay. All through the week there will be a systemic positive portrayal of Pakistani culture and ethos on campus in the form of film nights, dinners, exhibitions and formals.

So the arrival of the bus on Monday is an invitation to you to hop on board, join the bandwagon. This is Pakistan: replacing the you's and I's with one common 'us'. A nation of 160 million patriotic, cricket-crazy, kindred souls is ready to welcome you to partake in the joys of Pakistani-isms. Pakistan Week 2010 will take the term 'Pakistani and Proud' to an entirely new level.

The arrival of a vehicle of brazen shades of orange, gold and green at the mouth of Houghton Street is both an incongruous addition to the campus setting as well as a bold move on the part of the Pakistan Society at LSE. Monday morning will see an explosion of colour, music and festivity on campus, as jubiliations will flood every corner of LSE for an entire week as Pakistani culture is celebrated in full form.

When Pakistan won the ICC World Twenty20 cricket tournament against Sri Lanka in the summer of 2009, a wave of celebration erupted in the streets of both Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The streets outside Lord's became a riot of green, which quickly spread to Leicestershire Square, Oxford Street, and Edgware Road. The win symbolized a much greater victory for Pakistan than was probably understood at the time on the international stage: it came in the midst of political unrest and national bleakness back home. And suddenly there were celebrations in the local streets, with men, women and children basking in the glory of their team's performance. It came as a much-needed boost to the country's millions of cricket fans, as giant screens and cinema houses in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and elsewhere became the centre of public parties and festivities.

Pakistan Week 2010 is both an attempt to recreate the moments of celebration Pakistan has witnessed in its 63 years of history as well as to serve as an ode to the future of Pakistan's position in the international arena. There has been debate surrounding this year's Pakistan Week. Pakistan Week 2009 truly set the bar in terms of reflecting the country's socio-cultural heritage. Pakistan Week 2010 is a little different. Attached are the taglines "Its bigger, its better". And for a good reason - for Pakistani students at LSE this week is a chance to represent Pakistan to the other cultures at university. What you'll see is what you'll get: genuine hospitality and friendships that will last a lifetime. This year's Pakistan Week builds on many of last year's events. Monday will see the return of the much-awaited Bhangra Run on Houghton Street. A party with a difference, this will be a lavish display of Pakistani jazba (spirit) and enthusiasm, with other students getting involved in the dancing, cheering and sharing in the festivities of the occasion. Houghton Street will be transformed into a promenade of public celebrations, with the iconic green and white flag bearing the crescent and the moon flying high in true Pakistani tradition. Monday night will see a mellowing down of moods with an enchanting Mehfil (Ghazal Night), an evening of ghazals, kathak (dance) and

* Sound of glass hitting the table and liquid sloshing around *

Has it ever occurred to you that most LSE students take themselves a little too seriously? From the day we set foot in our first class, we have an insatiable craving to prove to the world that we are the ambassadors/prime ministers/hedge fund managers of tomorrow. This is not atypical of a school of good standing (ranking of 50-something aside), where most students enter touting impressive leadership roles and multiple A-grades in 6th form. Add, however, the sting of an Oxbridge rejection and you have created for yourself the perfect specimen of human capital; one that is not only talented but also driven by a bruised ego to prove to the world that it is the best.

We then go through our 60 weeks of term in a flash, lost in a haze of conferences / committee meetings / attending UGMs / running a business / internship hunts / job searches, and possibly the occasional hour or so of studying; consistently worried about whether we will reach our goals and how good our CV will look when it is plopped in front of that most powerful of people - the graduate recruiter. In pursuit of the perfect job

application the average LSE student has developed the inimitable ability to refuse most forms of self-indulgence. Drugs are largely frowned upon in the School, and we've all read previous Beaver articles on the abysmal sexual track-record we as a school have managed to accrue (huzzah!). But it's all worth it for the future money and power, right?

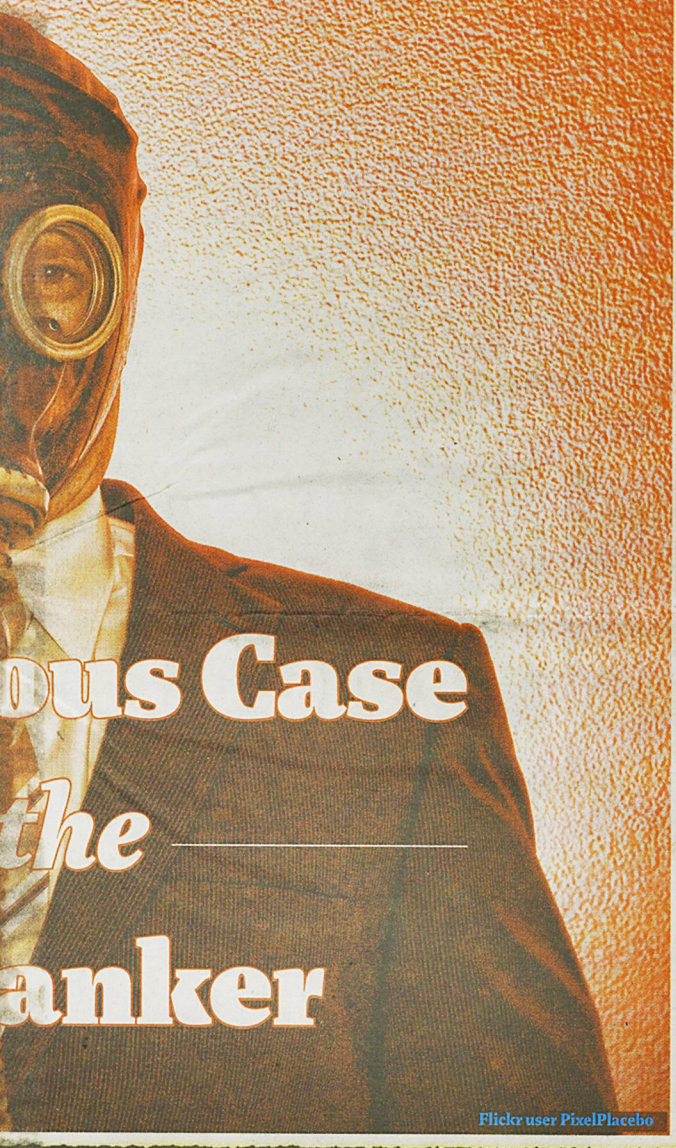
Wrong. What we as a school have forgotten in our collective state of dementia is that indulgence sans obsession as a student has very little correlation to future success. Obama has admitted to experimenting with cocaine, Donald Trump has had multiple girlfriends and wives over his years and the infamous Lewis Ranieri was, if *Liar's Poker* was anything to go by, anything but a sage. Hell, Hugh Hefner has made a fortune off being the living embodiment of a hedonistic lifestyle. So what's the point of denying oneself some good old-fashioned student fun?

The typical LSE student is one that I refer to as the 'banker'. The 'banker' inevitably studies something related to Economics or Accounting and Finance, and most likely takes FM212 as a second year module. Societies of choice generally include the Finance Society, the Investment Society, the Business Society, the Private Equity Society and the Hedge

Fund Society (the latter two there to ensure diversity of course).

The 'banker' can also often be seen totting around a copy of the Financial Times and the favorite topics of discussion between said 'banker' and his acquaintances include markets or the relative prestige-levels of various firms in the city. New words such as 'upside', 'deliverables' and 'hedge' enter the everyday vocabulary of the 'banker', as he or she prepares his or herself for those oh-so-important bulge-bracket firm interviews, about which most of the LSE community would mistakenly believe, a single wrong answer is a one-way ticket to rejection. In fear of this apocalyptic situation the 'banker' frequents company presentations and the LSE hallmarks that are "internship panels", where the wise venerable students of 2nd or 3rd year share their insight and advice on the application process as they simultaneously bask in the glory accredited to those at the LSE who are training to be "masters of the universe". Academically the modus operandi is to do whatever is necessary for a 2:1 and a 'banker' will therefore take the "easier" courses available along the way (after all, they are paying fees only for a bulge-bracket job offer). So peculiar is this group of people that even the FT criticized their behav-

g with cocaine, Donald Trump has had
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ng to go by, anything but a sage...



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Flickr user PixelPlacebo

Typical LSE student

ior in a recent article. Blindly faithful to their approach to life and career-driven attitude, however, the 'banker' inevitably found some consolation in that article in the existence of similar others in Cambridge (that most social of universities). Other 'bankers' may simply view this article as a confirmation that they are on the right path (After all, any publicity is good publicity, right?)

These 'bankers' often think of themselves as trying to make their way in a world of high-finance and big bonuses, and accept that they are at the bottom of the totem pole. There are those at the LSE, however, who view themselves at the top of a totem pole. These are the UGM frequenters and Houghton Street petitioners commonly known as 'hacks'.

'Hacks' come from a variety of courses and often join societies that they feel accurately represent their political views. 'Hacks' are often perceived to suffer from delusions of grandeur and consequently fail to recognize the disenchantment and mass apathy that most students at the LSE feel towards the UGM and their motions. They often view themselves as mini-me versions of key political leaders and while they do perform the noble act of promoting discussion amongst students they often find themselves in wars of political

correctness. If any controversial motion happens to be passed at one UGM, it is almost inevitably appealed at the next, and the UGM is promptly swarmed with people who blindly vote to repeal said motion and who will most likely never show up again.

Instead of consistently enacting real reform, 'hacks' often waste their time (and our money) on well-meaning but utterly redundant motions such as "I want to eat my kebab in the NAB". The only significant change enacted in the last two years that most students benefit from is the 24-hour opening of the library. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the all-controversial recent referendum had less than 1,000 voters cast their ballot, a turnout of sub-16%? Some 'hacks' maintain, however, that they are real student leaders, and often boast email signatures comprising multiple titles in a desperate attempt to assert that they do matter. In reality, however, 'hacks' on Houghton Street are often seen as nuisances or occasionally a great source of entertainment (giant bean can anyone?).

Now I anticipate that plenty of you who take yourselves too seriously are extremely offended by what I've said so far and want to point out flaws or hypocrisy in my way of life. Let me save you some

Road to billions

Artur Majsterek dreams in nine digits

There are only two ways to becoming a billionaire. The first option, of course, is inheritance. But if we are not born into money the only option left to us is to earn it ourselves. The problem with this second option, however, is that no job will ever pay enough for us to earn in the billions – unless of course, we are the Tiger Woods of this world.

So how does an LSE genius pursue this dream of his? The answer is simple: he doesn't. The average student at the LSE does not dream of becoming an entrepreneur. And even if he does, he does not dream in billions.

The road to ultimate wealth is in fact pretty tough. Statistics will tell you that the majority of businesses fail within their first year. If that is not a blow to your confidence, then the fact that the ones that remain are more than likely to perish in their next 5 years might be. Even when you start to think to yourself that you might be the one who makes it through the first 5 years, the prospects are still not bright, as the great majority do not make it big, but stay relatively small, many employing no more than 10 people.

Entrepreneurs are a peculiar breed of people; some admire them and some laugh at them. Some doubt their abilities while others try to copy them. More, still, just watch them. The LSESU Entrepreneurs Society hosts one of the most exciting events to do with starting a new business. Pitch it! has been modelled along the lines of the popular BBC TV program 'Dragon's Den' and now it attracts some of the brightest entrepreneurial spirits from the LSE. The competition is made up of three stages, and in the final stage the winners of each category (commercial and social) are revealed in front of a full audience of critical students, who come to judge the business ideas. It gets really hot as hard hours of long work get ripped apart by the dragons and critics in minutes. This year Julie Meyer and RBS, amongst others, will be on the judging

How does an LSE genius pursue this dream of his? The answer is simple: he doesn't

panel. The competition is intense because the winners can gain the crucial seed funding they might need as long as they impress the judges. If, however, they do not manage to secure the funding they can still win over £3000 worth of cash prizes, as well as the most coveted award; the audience prize.

LSE, unlike other top universities, is not very entrepreneurial; very few LSE graduates go on to create new businesses like Unimaid (student laundry), Nicube (careers oriented website) or teat (food club). Is this merely because we do not hear about such businesses, or is it that we are so engulfed in the race to secure top jobs that we don't try to listen? Rumour has it that it is the university itself that tries to encourage students to search for jobs, rather than to unnecessarily gamble with starting up their own businesses, which statistically works out to be the worse option. Even in a course such as Management, which is meant to be the most entrepreneurial course at the University, we are taught all about the negative side to entrepreneurship, rather than being encouraged to take advantage a market full of opportunities.

It is almost as though the LSE is pressing us into deciding what to do with our lives; most of us will work in a firm for a few years and then, after gaining the necessary experience, will leave the payroll and start up on their own. Many of us will always stay in employment and, in a manner of speaking, live happily ever after. While some of us will take our ideas and try to persuade the world to accept them. Some will make it, some will not. Which one will you be?

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伦敦政经中国学生学者联谊会
LSE Chinese Students and Scholars Association



22nd Feb – 26th Feb 2010 Houghton Street, LSE

Why not set yourself a new year's resolution and learn more about China with ChinaWeek?

There will be massive opportunities to explore Chinese culture and here are only some of the highlights: A Lion Dance will make a vivid kick-off to the week; you will have the chance to show off your sporting talents in the badminton and table tennis tournaments; attend daily lectures and enrich yourselves with all aspects of China; you could even dress yourself as a royal member and have your photo taken. Oh, and don't forget the 'China Week Cash' this Friday night!

Also check out our photo exhibition and booth on Houghton Street for a new taste every day!

If you have any enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact us or check us out on our facebook group 'LSE CHINA WEEK 2010'.

Contacts:

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f.gu1@lse.ac.uk

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time... I was rejected from Trinity College, Cambridge. I also fall hugely within the 'banker' description (gasp). I'm studying for a BSc in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics and was for two years running part of the Alternative Investments Conference organizing team. I often read the FT online and discuss markets.

I am also a failed wannabe hack, as a search of last year's C&S elections will tell you (I lost by a difference the size of Katie Price's bosom). I otherwise take very little interest in student politics, and ran for C&S largely because I felt it was the most apolitical job in the SU possible; recent events of course tell me I was wrong (what's new?).

Having said all this I can only assume any rational person will not accuse me of being holier-than-thou or misconstrue my statements as an attempt to change your lives and will instead recognize that these are musings of a second year student, largely based on my past experiences.

Now if you'll excuse me I'll get back to my pint.

picks up glass off table, liquid sloshes around

Hustings

With elections coming up, **Rees Sutton** explains the roles of the AU exec...

President

The role of AU President or 'EL Presi-known, is one of the most coveted po-a lot of hard work and dedication, plus the LSE AU into bigger and better heroes (the AU Exec), the President making sure that everything runs the point of contact to the Student Union Committee as part-time representing LSE at ULU and the bigger picture of university ing a wider participation rate the AU, securing sponsorship of the AU is another priority, also are introduced throughout the Love Wednesday Afternoons Free' LSE Sports Strategy were top of



dente' as the role is affectionately sitions at LSE, a role which requires a lot of drive and ambition to push things. As Head of a team of 6 tour oversees the whole AU operation, smoothly and in order, and is also Union sitting on the Student SU Exec. The role also entails BUCS meetings, tying in with sport in London and encourag-across LSE. Acting as the face of deals which help fund various arms leading the main campaigns which year. For example, this year, the 'I (I 'heart' WAF) Campaign, and the the priority list.

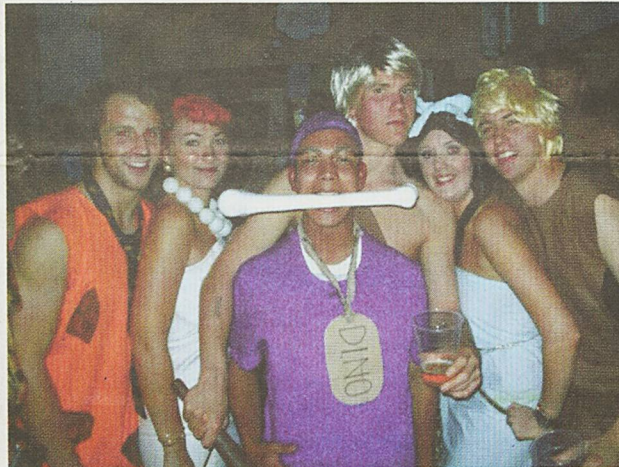
Treasurer

With a penchant for number crunching, the AU Treasurer works on what is arguably the most important aspect for the smooth running of the AU, allocating club budgets. During budget week, the Treasurer is required to work long and painful hours, diligently working their way through the many individual budget request forms, approving budgets, but also taking out ridiculous claims such as 'phone calls to Ireland.' Working closely with the rest of the Exec, staying in budget is a priority, especially throughout the year. They also look at other school funds available apart from the AU Budget which may be under specific criteria, and how clubs can utilise these extra opportunities. This year a financial report is also a main objective for the AU Treasurer to complete, ensuring the AU has a clear, and transparent view of how money is being spent in these tough economic times.

Club Liaisons Officer

A first point of contact for Club Captains, the Club Liaisons Officer is a crucial element in getting club feedback and reporting it back to the AU Exec to enable them to take action. Representing the views of the AU as an Exec is a main priority, and any issues or related queries can be passed on to the president and then taken to the SU Exec for further deliberation. They are also responsible for promoting the AU in Halls of Residence, for instance in interh-

all competitions, and this year, a big part was RAG. During RAG week, the Liaisons officer is in charge of informing the AU of the events which are taking place, and how the AU can get involved directly.

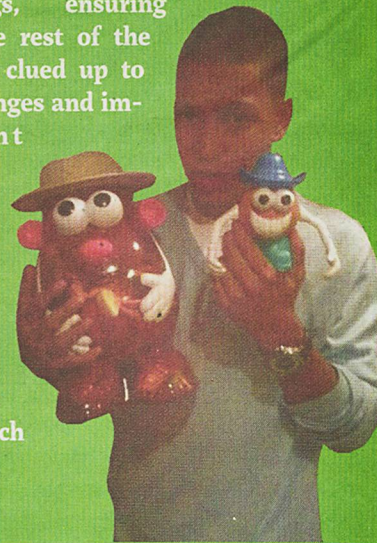


sions which are made. Apart from looking good, they are also responsible for looking at ways in which our current sponsorship deal with KPMG can be improved and researching any other sponsorship opportunities to help better the AU. This year the AU Exec handbook was a main priority for the Secretary, recent reviews calling it 'unputdownable,' a book which outlines everything AU Exec, which successful candidates will enjoy reading!

Secretary

One of the most respected and sought after jobs in the world. FACT.

With more passion than a passion fruit, the AU Secretary will record and distribute minutes from the weekly AU Exec meetings and termly Club Captain meetings, ensuring that the rest of the Exec is clued up to the changes and important deci-



Communications

With as much banter as Rob Fenton, the Communications Officer is responsible for the advertising of the AU. This includes publicising to The Beaver, Pulse Radio Station, Loose TV, LSE AU Website, and the AU E-Newsletter. This is required on a weekly basis ranging from reporting scores to The Beaver, and the 'AU Hangover Show' on Pulse. This year getting the AU notice board up and running was a main priority.



Events Officer

The main events which need to be organised are the Welcome Party, Fireworks Night, Pub Golf, The Carol, ReAUnion, Mr LSE, AU Ball. On a serious note however, they are also in charge of making sure the AU's reputation is not tarnished by adhering to the School's rules about equal opportunities and appropriate behaviour. Also working closely with the President, any event which is planned needs to be put through the school council and approved. For a large event such as the Carol, months of planning is required because this year for example, it faced a massive backlash from various areas of the school, and even on a broader scale, because people believed that offensive terms and stereotyping were being projected by the AU. It is partly the Events officers' job to make sure this does not happen again! They may also look into sporting events in conjunction with other universities. With the help of the rest of the AU Exec, they ensure that events are well publicised, run smoothly and are generally enjoyed by all.

Jonas & Xisco tell it like it is

Our undercover AU sleuths dish the dirt on a week of legendary mayhem

BJ Watson's Machiavellian plan to finally see some new snatch almost came into fruition this week. After being binned by former Bond girl, Katya 'Moonraker' Kornilova, breaking his beloved conk and finally facing the reality of living his life with four eyes, the young upstart suffered a mental breakdown of STK proportions. The result was his return to the dark days of his Heap/Henry rotation system. Self-confidence sufficiently rebuilt after Monday night the scoundrel decided to promote himself from pulling girls in the Championship, to those in the Premier League. Needless to say that since this conversion has been a problem for the Hansen lookalike. The blonde bender descended upon the homesteads of two separate minge from King's Cross Road on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; however, he was unable to even attain a cheeky pull as his attempts at wooing said minge was hindered by a giant mouse and a case of seriously overpeppered scrambled eggs. The minge shall remain un-named; although one was very Glyn-ger and had a presidential manner and the other has a name not dissimilar to David Beckham's current employers.

Friday's Crush descended into mayhem as serial bigamist and all round bad guy, Jack 'Misogyny is my middle name' Follows, had to fend off Josh Olomuleryoghurt after publicly exclaiming that 'woman' spelt backwards is 'kitchen' and that Jasmine Bradfield was lucky to pull Townsend. Hornswaggle Heath had his very own UGM to chair in the early hours of Saturday morning. The happy go lucky homo gave it the el dinko in Jack Tindale's very own erotic fantasy. Eternal advocate of the moisturising power of semen Rajeroni Premachandralal gave a young Bankside fresher his own version of Oil of Olay. The Tiger Tamil quipped, "DAMN! These bitches are so slutty nowadays." Future AU Events candidate,

Megan Properhoe, began campaigning early this week for the FC vote, racking up a cheeky pull with everyone's favourite Telly Tubby, Olly Pervey. Unbeknownst to Megan, BJ had already shagged Povey in the toilets of Zoo Bar; an area that saw a lot more action than in previous weeks... ooo.

Eternal advocate of the moisturising power of semen Rajeroni Premachandralal gave a young Bankside fresher his own version of Oil of Olay

Best Lad: Owly; Sheffield's own Roberto Carlos grabbed himself three goals and two assists, not to mention a cheeky threesome with netball superstars Rhannon Edwards and Hannah Dyson.

Worst Lad: Tom Sumner; You would think for a boy approaching his thirteenth birthday that shedding his V-wings would be an absolute priority, yet it appears that all the young Sumner wants is for an older woman to read him a bedside story.

Given Strivens the el dinko? Planning on voting Nadir Gohar for AU President? Know the location of the FC merchandise? Fended of Charlotte Emma Ryan? Email now at jonas&xisco@thebeaveronline.co.uk, or join our Facebook fan page.

RESULTS

Rugby

1st's 65 - 5 Middlesex

2nd's 0 - 34 Medway 1st's

Men's Football

1st's 4 - 1 Strand Poly

2nd's 0 - 4 UCL

3rd's 0 - 2 Queen Mary's

5th's 3 - 0 UCL 7th's

Netball

4th's 17 - 12 QM 3rd's

LIKE SPORTS?

have banter?
(sorry Fenton...)

We're looking for a new sports editor - if you're interested, email a 150-word manifesto to

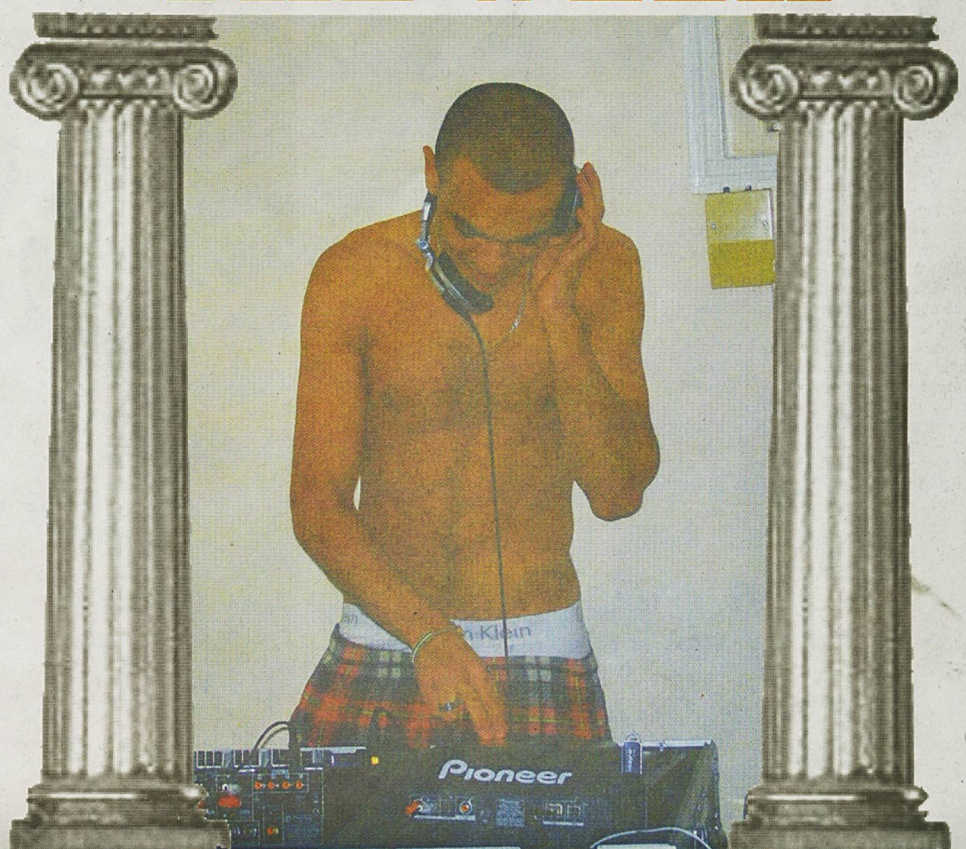
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

by Wednesday 23rd Feb

Much love,
the Beaver sports team x



TORSO OF THE WEEK



Sport



Inside:
Learn about all the
AU Exec roles....

Netball IV team dominate on court

Campfield (Katie Campbell & Jazmine Bradfield)

Having won three in a row we thought it was about time the fourth team finally got some respect for their behaviour (on court at least). For those of you wondering how we managed to actually win a game, let alone three in a row, we have two words. Jess Shannon. Poached from the thirds a few matches too late, Jess has completed the fourth team; slotting into her new role as shooter like Deevy into early (Wednesday night) retirement. The first of our epic wins was some three weeks ago, on a



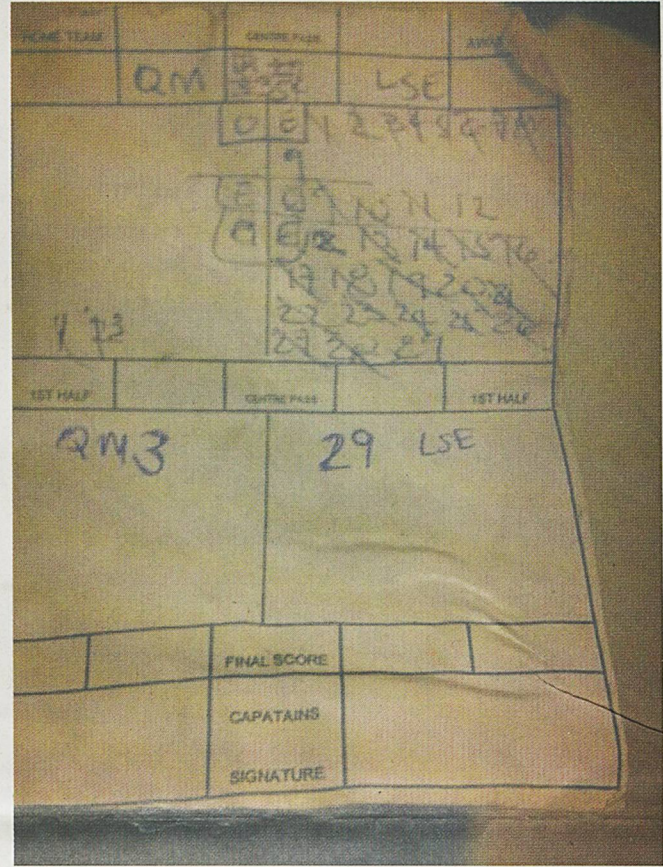
cold and rainy Wednesday afternoon nine dedicated players battled through the chav ridden town of Egham to commence battle with Royal Holloway's fourth team. It was clear from the outset that Jess was exactly what the fourths needed, with some great support from Rachael and Shinling in GA the finishes we'd always dreamed of were finally realised. Although the first quarter was relatively equal on the score card (ending 6-5) it was clear we deserved the win. Ferociously pulling away like a young

Unfortunately, this will be without everyone's favourite "player" Kate Henry, who, due to a wrist injury is rumoured to be resorting to BJ's full time

Ainsworth and Pornstar in the second quarter, and maintaining a convincing win throughout, that's exactly what we did with a final score of 36-21. Our second victory against Queen Mary's fourth team was a far more dramatic affair.

With an umpire who could only be likened to America's next top model judge Miss Jay, and a snowstorm to contend with, the complete lack of knowledge of the rules displayed by Queen Mary's fourth team came as a welcome surprise. Not that the diva's patronising lisps of "lithen girlth"

offered them any help despite his/her total inability to hide its bias. With some great play from centre court veterans Kate Henry, and some kind of glee style routine from Deevy in defence, the fourths strutted their "thuff" all over both Queens of Mary. This one ended in a 29-3 victory, after a strong Campbell-West defence maintained a clean sheet for the first three quarters (unfortunately something neither has managed off the court this year). This week, it was Queen Mary's third team in for a thrashing (or so we thought). Despite total domination in the first quarter, the rowdy east landaeners made a commendable effort to catch up in the next two. Big shout out to Hannah Davies is absolutely necessary here for maintaining order amongst a team even more vocal than us after a pitcher or six. Captain 'mean' Green also pulled some quality chat out of the bag, rallying the troops into a new arrangement; exploiting Swirski's and Jaz's flexibility in multiple positions, as well as Charly's surprising ability to see over the top of the GD in her second ever performance as GA. Being adventurous apparently does pay off, as this one seemed to work. Thanks to a player of the match performance, from Selina, and a "steamrollering" (as described by the GS she was marking) from Campbell, two of our lesser spotted (at Zoo) players kept us in the game. The final quarter was ours, as was our third victory in a row. This week, the mighty fourths face St Bart's at our beloved fortress, Berrylands. Unfortunately, this will be without everyone's favourite "player" Kate Henry, who, due to a wrist injury is rumoured to be resorting to BJ's full time. Nonetheless, we're hoping this week sees the fourth win for the fourth team. May the fourth(s) be with you all.



LSE's Annual Dance Show

From Hollywood to Houghton Street, **Jenny Lee** gives us all the info on the much anticipated dance show, *Flashdance*.

The first day of March, will see the much anticipated, annual dance show, *Flashdance*. Hosted by the LSE AU Dance Club (formally the LSESU Dance Society), LSE's annual Dance Show is bigger and better than ever this year. With a variety of different dances including ballet, capoeira, hip hop, burlesque and jazz, this show promises to be the best yet. The theme this year is 'Hollywood', so expect everything from action to disco, the Moulin Rouge to Michael Jackson...

An overall explosion of Hollywood glamour. LSE AU Dance Club 09-10, is a 350+ member strong non-academic club. We hold weekly dance classes for all our members in a variety of styles and also hold numerous one off workshops to introduce new dance types. We wanted to continue with the tradition of hosting a Dance Show to show that LSE students can dance. We wanted to create a bigger show to mark our first year in the AU and to prove to everyone that Dance is a sport.

Above all, this event is about raising money for charity. The first of which is EducAid, a charity which runs the only free secondary schools in Sierra Leone. Last year, Jenny (co-captain) flew there to volunteer for two months over the Summer. With over 10 years of civil war, their plight has been largely mediatised. Due to the war, education has been neglected and as an academic institution, we hope that any funds we raise will be able to contribute to the amazing work this charity does. For more information visit: <http://www.educaid.org.uk/>.

The second charity the Dance Club are raising for is 'Bisee Books'. Set up in 2008 in memory of 5 girls who passed away in a coach crash in Ecuador, in particular Emily Sadler, a close friend of Jenny's, this charity is close to our hearts. This charity aims to provide books for disadvantaged school children in Puerto Lopez, Ecuador where the girls were due to volunteer. For more information visit: <http://www.biseebooks.org.uk/>



LSE AU DANCE CLUB
HOSTS

FLASH DANCE

Date /Monday 1st March
Time /7.30pm-9.00pm
Location /Peacock Theatre,
Portugal Street
Prices /£8, £10, £12
Email /su.soc.dance@lse.ac.uk

LSE STUDENTS' UNION

All profits go to charity.

**FRIDAY'S
CRUSH
DESCENDED
INTO
MAYHEM**

-Jonas &
Xisco, page 19



WEEK 7 // 23.02.2010.

PARTB@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK
PARTB-(SECTION)@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

03 RANT.

04 LIT / JOURNEYS.

05 FILM.

06-07 INTERVIEW.

08 MUSIC.

09 FASHION.

10 THEATRE / COMEDY.

11 VISUAL ARTS.

12 SEX AND GENDER.

EDITORIAL

I like Oscar Wilde plays and books. His wit and genius knew no bounds. He said

'work is the enemy of the drinking classes'

'I hate predicting things, especially about the future'

'Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative'

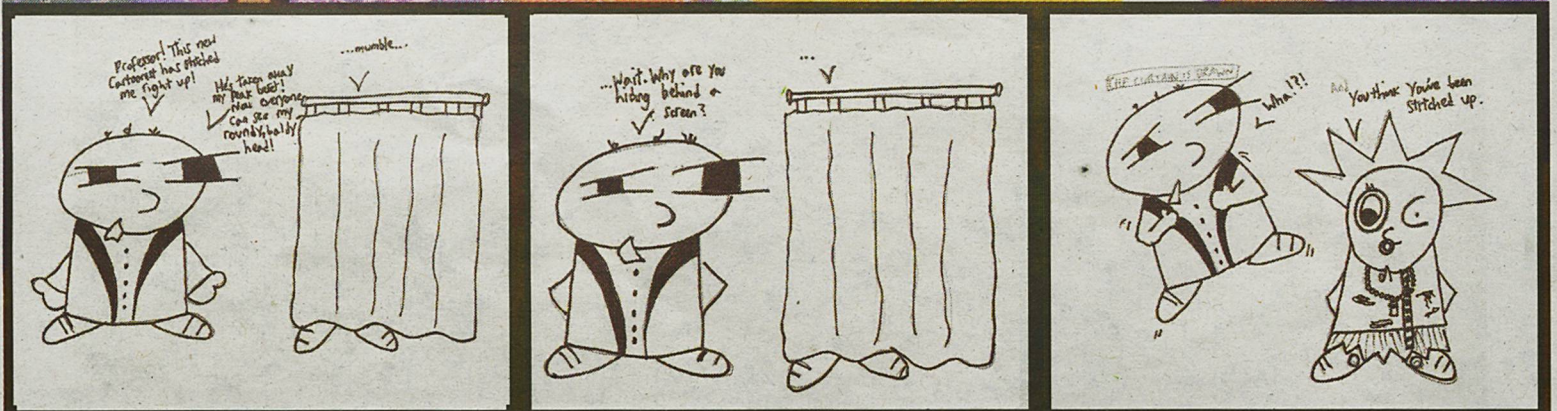
'I am not young enough to know everything'

'Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast'

I like Oscar Wilde

Ahmed Peerbux &
Calum Young
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Frank!
by Ahmed Peerbux



AUNT BEVERLY

Do you have problems? Stuff on your mind that you can't sort out on your own? Why not email PartB's own Agony Aunt/Slut at partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk and see if she can help.

Dear Aunt Beverly,

I am guilty of pretentiousness. Whether it's philosophy or literature, I just can't help but show-off intellectually. In my writing a simple declarative sentence is totally beyond me and I am prone to sesquipedalian scripture in all walks of life. For me, nobody is ever 'depressed', they are dyspeptic. Why be old, when you can be antediluvian.

I also like to explain the roots of my words. For example; carapace (the hard upper shell of a turtle or crustacean) which originated in the 19th century from the Spanish word Carapacho which literally translates as 'of unknown origin'.

How am I to beat this pseudo-circumlocution and become a concise writer?

The Fetters of Foucault - 3rd year

Dear Derrida in disguise

A lot of young people are bewitched into thinking that complicated thoughts need to be expressed in a complicated manner. Remember, some of the profoundest truths are also the simplest. If you can't explain an idea in common language, then the chances are, you don't understand it yourself.

There are two course of action.

The first - set yourself a limit for the number of syllables in a line. Don't stray over it and before you know it you'll have mastered plain prose writing. I advise reading a bit of Orwell. In that literary genius' work you will soon discover the beauty of a well formed sentence free from anacoluthon.

The other option is to head to France. There, the inability to write properly is taken as a sure sign of genius. Tell them you're Lacan's brother and before you know it, literary prizes and best sellers will be heading your way

Best of luck, pet.



Just a Thought

Are Babies worth anything? I don't think so.

When we talk about the worth of human lives, we are talking about something far more specific than merely the clutch of DNA which officially makes us Homo Sapiens. There are specific characteristics which give human life importance and which make its value axiomatic. Following analysis it's clear that whilst an adolescent has these traits, a baby does not.

What makes man special is language, the use of analytic reason and self-consciousness. These high-level cognitive functions separate our species from almost any other. Babies can't do any of this. They can't talk, they are not self-aware nor can they think rationally.

The philosopher Peter Singer poses the following dilemma. A house is on fire, a dog and a baby are trapped inside. The dog universally adored, admired and considered exceptional. In contrast, nobody in the world likes or cares for the baby. Which animal ought to be saved? Singer argued, the dog of course.

Critics maintain that whilst babies do not have any high-level cognitive functions, they have the potential to have them, thus they are innately valuable. However, this logic is evidently bogus. Having something and having the potential to have it are two very different things. The latter does not follow from the former. Is every sperm sacred?

So eat all the babies you want.

A Masochistic Guide to Affording London

AMELIA IUVINO GETS BY ON THE PAIN

1. Attend every meal served in your hall, even if this means getting up at 8:30 every morning. You might lose out on sleep, but you'll get a free breakfast (even better - a breakfast you've already paid for!).

2. Don't eat lunch. Lunch is not a meal served in your hall. Save some fruit from breakfast and eat that. If you feel hungry in the middle of the day, just sleep it off. I promise it works.

3. Go to Borough Market at 5 pm on the weekend, just as it's closing. Collect the jars of jam that have been sitting out all day as samples. There will only be a small amount in each jar, but that's okay. If you have really low standards, you can mix them all together.

4. Drinking is expensive. Sobriety is cheap. Do you really need a drink? If so, only drink tins of K.

5. Start going to lots of museums just because they're free. It doesn't matter if you've never even liked art before. You can learn.

6. If you sit in the Tuns for a couple of hours beforehand, you can get into any party in the LSE Quad without paying the cover. (Note: This will only be useful until you realize that you never want to go to any party in the LSE Quad.)

7. Accept that printing your readings for classes is no longer an option, even if it helps you retain information better to highlight things. Develop the skill of squinting at a screen in the library and scribbling the main ideas in your notebook.

8. Stop using public transportation. You can walk anywhere in central London. If your destination is outside Zone 1, walk to Zone 2 and take

the tube from there. It's cheaper. If it's late at night, walk confidently. The foxes will run from you, and they're probably not rabid.

9. Consider becoming a freegan. Think about dumpster diving. Think about what happens to all of those sandwiches every night when the cafés close.

10. If you top up 10 pounds a month on your mobile phone, you get unlimited text messaging. Never call anyone again. Ever. If you miss a call from someone, just wait until they call you back. If they really want to talk to you, they'll make it happen.

11. Attend any event that advertises free drinks, free food, or free



"If you don't feel deprived, hungry, or unhappy, you're probably spending too much money"

anything. When you see the LSE Christian Society's stall on Houghton Street, go up to it and pretend to be interested in their message so that they will give you a free cup of tea.

12. Lend people small amounts of money.

When they pay you back, it will feel like you just got a gift.

13. If you live in intercollegiate halls, it costs money to have an overnight guest. Limit yourself to having sex between the hours of 6 am and 12 midnight. Or, just limit yourself to having sex with people who live in your hall.

14. Finally, and most importantly, remember that it's all about how you feel, not about numbers or a weekly budget. If you don't feel deprived, hungry, or unhappy, you're probably spending too much money.

LITERATURE

EGGS OR CYST

GARETH LEWIS IS TRAUMATISED AFTER, (AHEM), READING THE EXORCIST

I was a spoilt child, with strict parents. An odd imbalance and strange mis-combination that probably both saved and sullied me. As a kid in this situation, you start thinking, and living, in extremes. You either get much more than you ought – you outperform your own desire. Or you're barred completely from whatever it is you feel is your due. Parents won't shift: you get it all one day and nothing the next. By this point you're a brat – you've got to get your sparkly paws on whatever it is you're after, especially if it's denied from you. It gets you thinking... strangely. You don't get crafty – you get weird.

Perhaps beyond all else, 18-rated films were forbidden. My folks were the kind who would add a couple of years on to your own as a benchmark for what you could and couldn't handle. I could watch 12s when I was ten. 15s when I was thirteen. And, humiliatingly, so on. Through primary and into secondary school, all I remember anybody talking about was the 18-rated horror films they had seen. Since I'd never seen one, I didn't always have much to say. And there was always one film that either made you or gayed you: *The Exorcist*.

It got to the point where everybody had seen this 70s classic (or so they claimed) apart from me. I remember asking my parents if

I could watch it, not knowing what it was, but realising acutely that my idealised future as a person with friends somehow depended on it. Earlier that year, I'd done the same with Eurotrash – asked if I could watch it without knowing what it was. I was told that I couldn't. I think my mother was so squarely disappointed I'd even asked, that she broke down and wept. I'm sure she was asking herself – come the Exorcism – how she'd managed to raise a porn-hungry 8-year-old Satanist. In any case, on both occasions they said no. No way. Not a fucking chance.

Then I found the book. Not many people know *The Exorcist* was a book first, written in 1971 by William Peter Blatty. I found it in my dad's bookcase, and I read it secretly. This is what I mean by 'getting your own way – weirdly'. Anyway, I read it, and it scared the shit out of me.

The whole thing was absurd. My parents were strict on bedtimes too, so there was no way I could flick a lamp on and read through the night. Instead, I had to peel the curtain back behind my bed, and read *The Exorcist* in the amber fog of a nearby streetlight. (To grasp the real irony of this childish predicament, cast your mind back to the infamous film poster, and the bleak silhouette of Father Damien Karras as he stands un-

der a lamppost outside the cursed child's house).

The worst thing was, I couldn't tell anyone. If I'd mentioned at school that I'd read the book instead of watching the film, they would have burnt me. My parents would have been horrified to hear that I'd found it. As a result, the whole experience fucked me up for life. I internalized the horror. I myself was possessed by the traumatic memory of reading *The Exorcist*, forced to live in a nightmare state of perpetual twilight remembrance.

I know it fucked me up because I'm still at it. Like any good Weberian, I internalized my parents' strictness and used it to order my own existence. To this day, I've never allowed myself to engage in fancy narcotics. I don't know what Acid is and I wouldn't recognize Ketamine if I saw it. Still – spoilt kid, remember – you've got to get a hit. Aldous Huxley's *Island* contains some of the most amazing descriptions of psycho-nirvanic weirdness you're likely to come across. I sought baked enlightenment in the pages of a novel. Instead of sallying off to King's Cross with a tenner I got Waterstoned for £7.99 and 14 Loyalty Card points. Pathetic, right? If you want to help, send your drugs to the Beaver office, in a package addressed to me.

THE MORAL JIG

TENDAYI SUTHERLAND RECOUNTS HER EXPERIENCES AS AN LSE GRADUATE

A yard and a half ahead, an albino python weaves its way precariously through the oscillating orifices of the dancer's body. She is splayed out on a period sofa raised a few feet above the ground on an awkwardly occupied stage. A bronzed Adonis stands a safe distance behind the sofa, fiddling with the hem of his loincloth and keeping a watchful eye on the reptilian visitor. Meanwhile, another dancer with a glossy blonde wig that skims her navel gyrates, making the most of the movement allowed by her scanty mock Hellenic tunic.

Down below, a middle aged man yielding a glass ball spins it for his supper. His face is wrinkled, and playful – and he tip-toes with mismatched strips of cloth dangling down his trouser legs. Fagin-esque. Fagin's coat just misses a thorn from the wreath around the temples of the pygmy goat keeper. The keeper is as miniature as his goat – in proportional terms (human : goat). Occasionally, his appropriately proportioned fingers furrow for titbits in his waistcoat pocket. At the entrance two fawns, lacquered in gold, tower above in their stilted hooves. Heads back, necks curved, they stroke their own chests with oversized feathers. Beautiful.

Who am I, what am I doing here, and where am I writing from? My normal answer would be that I am an LSE Government graduate, among other non anatomical facts. But today, the first thing I must say is that I am a "woman". That is what I have been hired out to be for the evening – a pair of fish-netted legs, red lips and peeping buttocks. Tonight, I am a cluster of anachronistic stereotypes. Myself and an army of other female hostesses are hired to look enticing and go on an aesthetically rather than verbally based charm offensive. You might find this, well, offensive. I do. But

I am getting paid for it, and I don't know whether you know, but prostitution and modelling are the two professions in which women consistently get paid more than men. Promotion is not legally classed as prostitution – promoters do not perform sexual acts on wo/men. What promotion does have in common with modelling and prostitution is its use of the female body for profit.

Having studied sociological approaches to gender and the debates surrounding the use of the female body for the procurement of income, I am surrounded by real breathing women who use their bodies as capital – and get paid an excellent fee for it. Later, a prominent female member of a successful company exclaims, hand

"I don't know whether you know, but prostitution and modelling are the two professions in which women consistently get paid more than men."

on breast: "I have never slept with anyone to get to the top! You have to learn how to use your power as a woman, without actually having sex with any one". The enthusiasm and self satisfaction imbued in her statement gives me reason to believe that she is the exception rather than the rule. And then there's the phrase "your power as a woman". I have spent the entirety of my cognisant life flexing my intellectual muscles and procured a degree at the globally prestigious LSE and I now hear that I have been working out entirely the wrong part of my being. Have I, for all my intellectual inquiry into "the causes of things", overlooked an imperative part of female success?

The hard truth hits. Away from the liberal egalitarianism espoused in the lecture halls of Clement House and the Old Building – the embedded sexism in professional life and the luring economic value placed on women's bodies gnaws away at the Obamaesque "Yes I Can!" optimism I brimmed with at graduation. I am deterred from fully committing to other professions and enticed by the world of easy money – as a promoter.

There is, of course, the argument that really there is no difference between commissioning your body and commissioning your mind – most jobs are alienating – in the Marxist sense and the policy advisor commissioned to do research on matters they couldn't care less about is as much enslaved as the woman who parades around as a quasi-apparelled hostess. At least the hostess can forget about what she is wearing, enjoy the party and let her mind wander into intellectual and fantastical rabbit holes that excite her? She still has her mind doesn't she?, and that counts for something – right?

This is complicated. Tonight I am colluding to perpetuate a patriarchal value system. In an individualistic sense, I am earning better money than I could at any entry level job. The system financially rewards my compliance, and, with the mountain of student debt as a not-so-scenic backdrop to my graduate pottering and my single digit bank balance, I see that revolt is costly. I suppose ideological war has never been cheap. The feet on either side of the proverbial, moral fence jig away while I do my commissioned saunter through the soiree. I still have my mind don't I? And that counts for something – right? Right.

JONATHAN STOREY HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY PUT OFF HIS FOOD, INC.



Director: Robert Kenner. **Screenplay:** Robert Kenner, Elise Pearlstein. **Cast:** Gary Hershberg, Michael Pol- lan. **Runtime:** 94 min. **Cert:** PG. **Year:** 2008.

Anyone who has seen *Kill It, Cook It, Eat It, Super Size Me* or *Fast Food Nation* will feel a slight twinge of disappointment when watching the Oscar-nominated *Food, Inc.* Produced by **Eric Schlosser** of *Fast Food Nation* fame, the documentary examines industrial agricultural food production in the United States, concluding that the meat and vegetables produced by this type of economic enterprise have many hidden costs and are unhealthy and environmentally-harmful.

While that may sound like a damning critique, the film is a lot better than I've made out so far. Ridiculously well photographed and written, *Food, Inc.* is split up into three rough segments covering the dangers of battery farming, the health and environmental effects of corn production, and the economic and legal powers of the major food companies (something which may incentivize LSE students to go to see it). Generally, the consensus is that industrialized meat production is bad, and

free-range and organic produce is good. Again, this is nothing new, really. What's interesting about *Food, Inc.* is that it doesn't ram this idea down everyone's throats à la Michael Moore: to its credit, it has faith in the intelligence of its audience to realise that there are opposing views on the subject. Indeed, a whole portion is dedicated to Wal-Mart's take on organic produce, something which Mr. Schlosser disagrees with, but felt obliged to put in after they were the only company to offer any form of rebuttal.

However, it's this focus on the American system that means *Food, Inc.* can't have the same effect when shipped abroad like a McDonald's burger. Because of the vast number of food exposés in Britain, the battery farm segment just doesn't have the same impact that it may have done in the US, where it was deemed 'shocking' by everyone who watched it. Instead of provoking reactions of horror at the horrific slaughter of cattle, many people in the cinema – myself included – looked on with relative indifference. For a film that's supposed to shock us into action, it made only a playful nudge in the right direction. The segments that were the most thought provoking were also the least relevant. As an academic look into the American libel law framework, *Food, Inc.* reveals interesting dimensions into the power of food packing com-

panies. However, one can't really have as much empathy with the farmers as the film would like us to because of the completely different nature of food production across the globe; fleeting mentions to food crises in Ethiopia are the only references to food production outside of the US blunderbuss. Greater awareness means that most of the issues that plague US farmers, such as the rise GM crops, don't have the same impact due to long and fruitful campaigns on a UK and EU level.

While it's hard not to empathise with a mother whose 2-year old son died from e-coli contracted from bad beef burgers – and certainly, this is the emotional heft of the film – the rest of *Food, Inc.* is essentially preaching to the converted. Though well made, the film suffers from being shown to the wrong audience. If you have no knowledge of food production at all, then *Food, Inc.* is certainly a very good starting point into the basic bad points. However, unless you want an academic exercise into the differences in food production in the US, if you've seen any modicum of a food exposé – even a Jamie Oliver documentary – then this film will leave you feeling strangely cold at the end of it. Just make sure you check the labels on whatever food you eat afterwards!

FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, JONATHAN STOREY WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECOMMENDS A SINGLE MAN



Director: Tom Ford. **Screenplay:** Tom Ford. **Cast:** Colin Firth, Julianne Moore. **Runtime:** 101 min. **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 2009.

Single Man tells the tale of George Falconer (Colin Firth), an English expat teaching Aldous Huxley in a small Californian university, as he goes through the motions of a single day: waking up, teaching his seminar, interacting with an unusual student named Kenny (Nicholas Hoult), almost picking up a Mexican rentboy (Jon Kortajarena), visiting his close female friend Charley (Julianne Moore) for dinner; all the while thinking about how he's going to shoot himself at the end of the day. You see, George has been quite depressed ever since the death of his long-term partner Jim (Matthew Goode – shown in flashback) and, after eight long months of soul-searching, has decided to join him in the afterlife.

Colin Firth gives a bravura performance – it's pretty much the best thing he's ever done, which may surprise some of his *Pride and Prejudice* worshippers – and manages to elevate George from a depressed middle-aged archetype into a fully fleshed out human being. In a flashback scene, he is told not only about Jim's death over the phone, but also that he can't come to the funeral despite their 16-year long relationship. What happens after he puts the phone down is one of the most astonishing pieces of acting put on screen. Director **Tom Ford** filmed Firth for 11 minutes without saying 'cut'; he was so enthralled by what Firth was doing. Words alone cannot describe it. Written and directed by Ford – the fashion designer who famously led Gucci out of the brink for the fashion philistines among you – from a novel by Christopher Isherwood (whose previous novel *My Life as a Camera* became the rickonkulously successful *Cabaret*), *A Single Man*

has been praised and criticised in equal measure for its overly aestheticised imagery. It's true: everyone looks beautiful, everything appears like it's in a perfume commercial, but it works! Apart from a very small number of directorial flourishes (one of which involves a tennis match that veers very nearly into soft gay porn), Ford manages to walk the fine line between style and substance and come out with a quality film at the end of it. Unfortunately, *A Single Man* probably won't get the attention it deserves. Colin Firth has been

nominated for every acting award under the sun, but has been the perennial bridesmaid thus far. He will probably end up losing the Oscar to Jeff Bridges, but his performance really isn't anything like what Firth gave. Despite the fact that it's never really made into an issue, the 'gay' theme prevalent means it probably won't find popular success. Still, I implore you to check this film out as soon as possible: you won't regret it.





SATAN HAS ARRIVED



Leeds duo **worriedaboutsatan** are carving out a niche for themselves in electronic music after having released their brilliant debut album **Arrivals** last year. Their eclectic mix of styles and sounds is vital to the British scene and is another example of why the UK is the centre of the universe for electronic music today. **Liam McLaughlin** speaks to **Gavin Miller** and **Tom Ragsdale** about breaking the boundaries of genre and whether they're really worried about Satan

Recently I got into more electronic oriented music after having a longstanding boycott of it, the motivation for which spanned from ambivalence to outright hatred of the genre. Techno was one such genre I used to criticize a lot to exemplify my small-minded and ill-informed opinions on electronic music. To put it bluntly, I saw techno as an annoying, thumping contrivance made especially for troglodytes on E. So when my friend introduced me to something called 'minimal techno' I was cynical. How could techno be minimal? And why should I care? But Leeds based duo **worriedaboutsatan** made me care. Their unique mixture of post-rock, ambient, IDM and minimal techno encompasses a subtle, foggy ambience backed by distant, twittering beats which completely whitewashed my preconceptions of electronic music in general. If it could be this good then I had to reevaluate my dogmatic stance. And I did.

worriedaboutsatan is comprised of Gavin Miller and Tom Ragsdale, and as Gavin explains, originally began as a side project. "Me and Tom used to play in another band together that was much bigger and guitar based than 'satan, and we were always chatting and hanging out, so when that other band fell apart, I asked Tom to help out on this little side project I'd started, and it grew into worriedaboutsatan!"

As I mentioned though, worriedaboutsatan's reference points are not what the ignoramus would expect from an electronic group. "Where we live plays a big part in being inspired" says Tom. "We live in Leeds and we have a fair amount of countryside right outside our door, so we like to draw upon that in our music and visual elements. Leeds is also a decent city in terms of nightlife and being around awesome club-nights is good for us too. The DJs that our friends have brought to the city have really given us some amazing ideas. We also get inspired by our friends too, especially the musical ones. When we hear that someone we know is doing something great with their music we think 'yeah, we can do that too!' Musically, anything really! Initially it was the likes of **Autechre**, **Boards of Canada** and **Trentemøller**, but we've always kept our 'rocky' origins from the likes of **Radiohead**, **dEUS**, and **Deftones**. I don't really like any particular genres, if it sounds good, then it is good."

The real attraction in worriedaboutsatan's music becomes clear when Tom talks about their influences. In keeping an open mind and being inspired by anything and everything has given their music an openness and relevance to people far beyond the electronica genre boundary. Perhaps this is why a jaded rock fan such as myself can still enjoy worriedaboutsatan's music; I can effortlessly share in their palette of influences and creativity without finding a brick wall where my own tastes and musical ethos don't match up with the group's.

One area where our ideas converge is drawing upon nature for inspiration. But to me this still seems a more 'rock' than 'electronica' aesthetic and I wonder if Tom thinks electronic music can convey the elemental feel of nature better than rock music, even though it's produced and played with equipment made from plastic and computer chips. "Yeah of course. I mean, you can draw upon any environment with music, whatever the genre. If you take a band like **Sigur Rós**, you can obviously hear Iceland in their music as it's very beautiful, just like Icelandic scenery. But then you can listen to **Burial** and imagine walking through a town centre at night and taking in all of those noises, the culture. I like his track "Night Bus" because it's just like being on a night bus. The bus is crammed with drunk people, but you're lost in your own thoughts with an MP3 player clutched

tightly in your palm. The beauty of electronic music is of course sampling; the ability to record any sound and use it within your music. Like recording the waves of a river, the wind, cars going by..."

This is true, but the most powerful element of worriedaboutsatan's music is arguably the way they can manipulate obviously electronic sounds into beautiful, organic tapestries which fool you into thinking that the warm sounding melodies are actually real instruments. But with this aural trickery, what is it that compels them to make electronic music over and above more rock-based music? "Good question! I don't think we're trying to make one genre and not another" muses Gav. "I think it's more a melding of all those genres you mentioned, and perhaps some more! We were, and still are, pretty bored of standard post-rock bands who just put a delayed, **Explosions in the Sky**-esque lead somewhere in their songs and hope they can get away with it. With worriedaboutsatan, we're always trying to push things forward a little. We don't want to get pigeonholed or lazy, so everything's always changing for us."

"THE BEAUTY OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC IS OF COURSE SAMPLING; THE ABILITY TO RECORD ANY SOUND AND USE IT WITHIN YOUR MUSIC. LIKE RECORDING THE WAVES OF A RIVER, THE WIND, CARS GOING BY..."

This work ethic is impressive, but considering the diversity of their influences and inspirations, I wonder if the group subscribes to a more rock or electronic perspective when writing. "I think it's a mix of the two. It's a weird process I guess, but it usually starts with me coming up with a little idea; maybe a chord sequence, a beat, or a melody or something, then I'll make a rough draft and then send it on to Tom, who will flesh out the ideas into something bigger and better, and structure it all too. Then we both sit down and go through it, so I guess it owes more to the electronica 'method' if there is one, but also retains a bit of the 'jam' element of the band method, as we're always bouncing ideas off each other."

Talking of creativity, worriedaboutsatan released their debut album in 2009, entitled *Arrivals*. Its cinematic scope and sombre feel is both instantly gripping and dreamily soothing, melding all Tom and Gav's influences maturely into a cohesive and compelling musical odyssey. "It came about from changes we were going through in the band in terms of what we wanted to achieve musically," explains Tom. "We were listening to lots of rock music like Deftones and **Tool**, and electronica like **Aphex Twin** and **Boards of Canada**. But then we started hearing club music and a lot of techno like **Plastik Man** and Trentemøller, and also the first wave of dubstep around 2004

like **Burial**, **Skream**, and **DMZ**. We instantly wanted to play music like these guys and the music we recorded was our 'arrival(s)' into this scene."

Arrivals is certainly an understated and subtle entry onto the scene, but the more you listen to the album, the deeper its gradual build ups become, until you're eventually lost in a heady soundscape. Full of twinkling, glitchy melodies, shuffling beats and gorgeous sonics, *Arrivals* is undoubtedly as relevant to UK electronic music as releases by **Burial**, **Kode9** and **Four Tet**.

Deservedly the album was also received with critical acclaim, earning 8/10 from Drowned In Sound and an impressive 7.6 from the hugely influential Pitchfork. But did these glowing reviews change how worriedaboutsatan were received or have things just stayed the same? "No, I think things have stayed the same from our side. It gave us a massive burst of energy though..." reckons Tom. It seems a little sad that the public eye hasn't been focused on worriedaboutsatan yet, but there's still hope, not least in the fact that some of their music has been used on the ITV soap *Coronation Street*. Cool as this is, a soap opera is an unlikely place for worriedaboutsatan to crop up. Gav explains the story to me before my disbelief gets the better of me. "Well both me and Tom both work for ITV, so we contacted the music department in Manchester and they agreed to put us on, so yes, it is true - there's a video on YouTube of one of the clips in question, and it's had over 18,000 views which is about 17,999 more than we usually get!"

It is recommended that you check out worriedaboutsatan no matter what your musical persuasions are. In a climate of particular fruitfulness for UK electronic and dance music, worriedaboutsatan are at the top of the game, even if no one knows it yet.

And with that, only one final question remains: Tom, are you really worried about Satan? "Yes and no. Yes we are the band, but no we're not worried..."



WORRIEDABOUTSATAN'S DEBUT ALBUM, ARRIVALS, IS OUT NOW ON GIZEH RECORDS, AND THEY'RE ALSO PLAYING AT THE LEXINGTON ON MARCH 31ST.

THE BUTTERFLY EXPLOSION



LIAM McLAUGHLIN REVIEWS THE BUTTERFLY EXPLOSION LIVE @ ICA, 17.02

At the ICA a buzzing crowd awaits up and coming Irish group **The Butterfly Explosion**. After substantial media coverage and tours in Europe and America, the band are finally releasing their debut album this week and tonight's gig is the culmination of their climb to fame. Slowly building up from a ringing guitar arpeggio to a burst of kaleidoscopic noise, the band prove why they are one of the

most promising young rock acts at the moment. Although the band use vocals, main singer Gazz Carr's delicate tones are used sparingly to leave space for the epic instrumentation, brilliantly reminiscent of **Explosions in the Sky** and **M83**. Yes, that good. Although the set was short, the intensity of the performance was palpable and clearly exemplified the spiraling heights which The Butterfly Explosion will no doubt be scaling soon.

SPOON

SACHIN PATEL REVIEWS SPOON LIVE @ ELECTRIC BALLROOM, 16.02

Spoon's 1997 EP was entitled *Soft Effects*; its opener, "Mountain To Sound", was an almost robotic splurge of chunky guitar chords over a barren expanse of tape. Thirteen years on, Spoon trade in far subtler terms on record – the psychoanalytically titled *Transference* possesses compositions of nuanced yet ragged beauty, replete with lovingly painted washes of droning synths and bizarre vocal, yes, effects. Going in to my first Spoon gig, what I wanted to know was how this meticulously arranged chaos that the band have mastered in the studio plays out in a live setting, where everything is instantaneous and nothing can be rearranged or meddled with later on.

Impressively, and perhaps this is a rationale for why so much of *Transference* stems from live demo tracks, the band pulls off the performance with passionate and anthemic aplomb. From the get go, they are unafraid of playing with our conceptions of how their songs, whether new or old, sound and develop. Opener "Don't Make Me A Target" is suitably slow-building, rising to a brutal peak as frontman Britt Daniel conjures the same vocal trickery used in their newer material. Throughout the gig, two things remain constant: the entire band's sonic tapestry-weaving, and drummer Jim Eno's delightedly precise and virtuosic rhythms, which manage to fulfil the same manifesto as opening band **White Rabbits'** arsenal of percussionsists with considerably more economy and considerably less showiness.

The setlist is culled almost exclusively from the band's last four albums (alas, despite numerous calls from the crowd, "Fitted Shirt" is absent, along with anything else from *Girls Can Tell* and its

predecessors), but to be honest, many of the songs are melded into the aesthetic favoured on recent release *Transference* – in particular, "My Mathematical Mind" and "They Never Got You" are subsumed into effects-heavy motorik grooves, much to their advantage. This is evidenced further by the band's mesmerising cover of **The Damned's** 1979 single, "Love Song", which ditches the original's clattering punk in favour of the same droney keyboards that underpin "Before Destruction".

Nevertheless, when it's time to rock out, Spoon prove they're no slouches, with "Rhythm & Soul" and "You Got Yr. Cherry Bomb" dispatched with great vigour and sparkle. *Kill The Moonlight*-era fare, meanwhile, is represented by the classic pairing of "Small Stakes" and "The Way We Get By", and encore closer "Jonathan Fisk", which is delivered with the maximum conveyance of end-of-tether anxiety.

As I've mentioned on previous occasions, it's a crying shame that Spoon aren't bigger fish here in the UK – particularly telling is the fact that on the same night, on the other side of London, bright young things **Vampire Weekend** were busy playing to a sell-out crowd at Brixton Academy. On the other hand, it's always a pleasure to see such masters of their art at close quarters, and in this respect, the Electric Ballroom can't be beaten. This was a really tremendous performance, with a set of songs cherrypicked from a career full of cult classics. Spoon rarely bring their concise breed of art rock to Britain; this was an unmissable opportunity to see them weave their magic over a rainy and miserable London.

Read this review in full on Sachin's fantastic blog: <http://misplacedswag.wordpress.com/>

THE ROUNDUP

WEAK? LIMP? LIFELESS?

HOLLY RUBENSTEIN ON CHERYL COLE'S PERFORMANCE AT THE BRITS

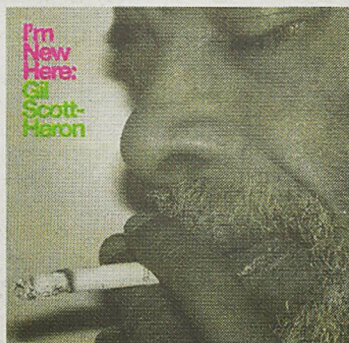
The big news in music this week was, of course, the BRIT awards 2010. The big winner of the night was an emotional **Lady Gaga**, who deservedly picked up 3 awards. The major low point of the night – and I feel guilty as I write this – was **Cheryl Cole's** literally shocking performance of her number one single "Fight For This Love" (which, by the way, contains probably my favourite worst lyric of all time – "Now every day ain' gon' be no pic-nic"). My feelings of affection and overwhelming sympathy for Cheryl – who according to backstage sources was tearful and emotional throughout the day following the revelation that her husband, footballer Ashley Cole, had been involved in yet more scandal by 'sex texting' other ladies – by no means outweighed my utter disbelief that Cheryl Cole...Cheryl Cole!!! had been chosen to represent the British contingent at our national awards show. This, in contrast to the American musical legends like Jay-Z, Alicia Keys and Lady Gaga who took the stage, showing us Brits what music is really all about, and how it should be done. Cheryl's performance can only be deemed an embarrassment. While the American contingent performed live – we would expect nothing less – Cheryl (like her X-factor associates JLS) attempted to mime her way through the performance. But to no avail. Cheryl's lips were moving totally out of sync with the backing track and we could hear her recorded vocals 2 or 3 seconds before she started miming the line she was singing. She was lucky that the edge was taken off by the sympathetic audience, aware that the lyrics "You've got to fight for this love, if it's worth having it's worth fighting for" must have been excruciatingly painful to perform to the nation. Only days previously, Cheryl proved how personal those lyrics were to her by, telling Hello! Magazine, "If it's worth fighting for then fight. And in the case of me and my husband, it's worth it." As she left the stage, host Peter Kay quipped, "You've got to fight for this love - never a truer word spoken". It was an awkward watch.

Considering her current apparent world domination, when you take a step back and realise that Cheryl unfortunately struggles to hold a tune, this really is one of the most baffling stories within the music industry right now. I don't know about you, but I think Cheryl should stick to presenting (and to *Girls Aloud*). Performances like her one at the Brits will only serve to tarnish her otherwise pretty sparkling reputation.

CHARTING RELEASES THIS WEEK

Gil Scott-Heron// I'm New Here N° 39

1970s soul-jazz genius **Gil Scott-Heron** occupies a realm somewhere between poet and musician; throughout this new album he speaks forceful lyrics in a rich gravely honest voice over clanging percussion, bare chords and gauzy electronic effects. This is a succinct album of modernized blues, with elements of a gentle lo-fi sound in a remarkably perfect partnership with the core Scott-Heron early hip-hop feel. Fucking awesome.



THE SHOW MUST GO ON

ALICE LEAH FYFE PAYS TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDER McQUEEN

On Thursday 11th February, the world lost a jewel; a most precocious and pioneering creative mind who, in his curtailed but brilliant life, challenged the field of aesthetics and design the world over. His name was Lee Alexander McQueen.

Immediately following the news of his tragic death, thousands of tributes were made by friends and followers across the globe paying homage to the design legend. He has dressed the elite and celebrated, from Prince Charles to Bjork, Gorbachev to Lady GaGa; each of his designs so astounding, he defied all convention and plausible craftsmanship. But we are not standing on red carpet, we do not frequent the runways of Paris and Milan, then how should we miss him? It is so easy for a name like McQueen's to be circulated as mere fashion jargon, another label of extortionate garments, another boutique to marvel at on Bond Street but his influence is more ubiquitous than you might imagine.

Lee Alexander McQueen was born in Lewisham, South London in March 1969. He grew up as the youngest of six children to a taxi-driver father and mother who was a teacher. From a young age, he would design and make dresses for his three sisters (what a fabulous little brother to have had!) and after attaining one modest O-level in Art, he started a string of apprenticeships at the tailors of Savile Row and theatrical costu-

miers. With impeccable precision and an extraordinary eye for detail, McQueen proved himself as a prodigy in the magic circle of bespoke tailoring. He enrolled at Central Saint Martin's College of Art at the age of 20 and graduated in 1992 with one of the most coveted graduate collections the college has ever seen. It was bought in its entirety by Isabella Blow, his muse and mentor throughout his career. She advised him to prefer his middle name, Alexander for its aristocratic connotations.

"His runway debut in 1996 launched him as Britain's fashion rebel, and the driving force behind alternative and progressive style."

The dichotomy between this regal name and modest upbringing was later to influence the core of his brand. Her death in 2007, was to be a major blight on his three remaining years and along with his mother's death in early February was a contributing factor to his suicide.

His runway debut in 1996 launched him as Britain's fashion rebel and the driving force behind alternative and progressive style. The influence of this show can be seen in almost every modern wardrobe in the world.

He had a fascination with the lower back and spine, so created a trouser to expose this feature. The garments barely covered the models' buttocks and were considered lewd and offensive. "I want to elongate the body", he said, "not show the bum. To me, that part of the body is the most erotic of anyone's body, man or woman." Whether designedly or subconsciously, the waistline of trousers has never been the same

again, sitting precariously on the hips instead of snugly round the waist. This was a revolution in style and a prime example of how the artistry of high fashion trickles right down to the track-suits and jeans of the world's juvenile delinquents.

Following this critically acclaimed show, McQueen was snapped up by LVMH as head designer for Givenchy to succeed John Galliano, his parallel in innovation and anticipation. But this was not the right environment for McQueen. He was stifled by the legacy of the label that preceded him and could not express his outrageous and jaw dropping visions under the pure elegance of Givenchy. He broke off and established his own fashion label under the name we have now recognised four times as British Designer of the Year and Best International Designer of 2003. Alexander McQueen became a phenomenon renowned for his breathtaking shows which have included human chess sets, mountains of refuse, hundreds of live butterflies and a whole arc of taxidermy, wolves and dungeons, scenes so terrifying they invigorate the audience, amazed by his mastery. In 2001 he was the first designer to use a double amputee to model his garments. Aimee Mullins wore intricately carved wooden legs to accompany the designs he had made, showing his complete immersion in nature as a dynamic and changing force, celebrating all aspects of the human form, transforming flaw to beauty.

He redefined the boundaries between aristocracy and poverty, divinity and necromancy, vitality and morbidity. Each collection surpassed its predecessor, capturing the enchantment of nature and the supernatural, fusing them together in a frenzy of exquisite fabric and contorted form.

Labels like All Saints and Diesel have evolved from seeds of Victoriana and industrial elegance which he has planted in the minds of designers from all fields. Any of you wearing skinny jeans or leggings as you read (I would imagine there are a few of you), you must know that 9 years ago, McQueen introduced to the catwalk a narrow and severe silhouette which was considered ridiculous and compromising but which we now take as the bread and butter of our day to day attire. He has managed to condense the aesthetic timeline into a jewel box of precious creations, drawing inspiration from astronomy through evolution and ancient civilisation to Medieval knights and the Industrial Revolution. His show for ss10, Plato's Atlantis, tells a tale of submarine splendour, a culmination of the many experiences McQueen had while scuba diving. His aw10/11 is due to be shown in Paris in early March, I am sure you will agree, the world is on the edge of its tilted seat. The show must go on.

For you fashion cynics out there who cannot understand the multimillion pound industry that drives such transient and intangible couture, let me ask you now; what price would you give to a mind that can conjure a timeless fantasy, a pair of hands that can resurrect the dead, an eye that can see the future? Lee Alexander McQueen was an initiator of inspiration; let him be duly revered and let the world he has left behind aspire to be worthy of his vision.



the abduction of elizabeth canning

EUNICE NG IS ENAMOURD BY BOND

Written by **Steve Bond**, an LSE staff member and long time fixture of the Drama society, *The Abduction of Elizabeth Canning* is based on the real life court case of a servant girl who disappeared on New Year's day in 1753 and then reappeared a month later, claiming to have been kidnapped. A culprit was never found and popular opinion was that Canning had made the story up.

Bond's interpretation supposes that Canning's story is true. At the beginning of the play, an elderly gypsy woman named Mary Squires is being sentenced to hang for the abduction of Elizabeth Canning. Susannah Wells, a brothel madam with whom Mary lodges, is also convicted for complicity.

Mary's conviction rests solely on the testimony of Virtue Hall, a prostitute employed by Susannah, who swore that Mary was the culprit.

The outcome doesn't sit well with Sir Crisp Gascoyne, Lord Mayor of London, who duly conducts another investigation of the case. It soon emerges that it was George Squires, played brilliantly by Callum Hassall, who kidnapped Canning, under orders from Susannah to bring her another working girl. Canning had an epileptic fit during her kidnapping, which caused her to forget her attacker. She was subsequently beaten and imprisoned in an attic room at Wells brothel.

Though it plays like a 'whodunnit', Bond's play is really about how women of the eighteenth century were the victims of social machinations. Mary Squires is a convenient scapegoat because she is a gypsy and therefore not to be trusted. Canning is forced to point to Mary Squires as her abductor, by her over zealous lawyer

Henry Fielding, who is blinded by his position in the English legal system. Virtue Hall is coerced first by Susannah Wells not

to name the true reason for Canning's abduction, and then in court by Fielding to point to Mary as the culprit.

The play is not perfect. Bond relies too heavily on monologues, which makes the show feel sedate at times. Throughout the play, we are told

that Canning's trial is a public spectacle, but none of that excitement permeates into the show. Even so, Bond's dialogue is tight and memorable. He also portrays each of his characters fairly as products of their social circumstances.

The cast's performance more than makes up for any narrative faults. Bethan Haycock portrays Canning as an intelligent woman caught in unfortunate circumstances. Kate Hayes gives a spirited performance as the foul mouthed, manipulative Susannah Wells whilst Kopal Kapoor gives a riveting performance as Virtue Hall, who understands that she will always be used as a pawn by someone else. Nilanthi Sangarabalan is quietly upstanding as the wrongly accused Mary Squires, and Nithin Kaniathara lends the right balance of pomposity and seriousness to Sir Crisp Gascoyne. Amar Shangavi is convincing as Henry Fielding, a well intentioned man who only serves to make things worse for his client. Finally, Callum Hassall is wonderful as George Squires, and the scene where he lashes out at Susannah Wells is by far the best in the play.

Director Sarah Haq and Producer Rui Jin are to be commended for staging a near-professional show. Drama society shows at the LSE have ranged from the laughably bad to wonderfully innovative. I'm delighted to say that *The Abduction of Elizabeth Canning* sits firmly on the latter side of the spectrum as one of the best productions I've seen at the LSE.

THE ABDUCTION OF ELIZABETH CANNING PLAYED FROM 8TH-9TH FEBRUARY IN THE OLD THEATRE, HOUGHTON STREET.



IT CAN ONLY BE COMCOMEDY

GRAEME BIRRELL HAS FOUND A GEM IN THIS IMPRESSIVE COMEDY NIGHT

It's pretty rare to find pub comedy nights that consistently churn out impressive acts – most have one standout standup per night who's maybe thinking about trying to get a show at the Edinburgh Fringe. But this is exactly what

Comcomedy (www.comcomedy.com) seem to be able to do – maintain a standard of pub comedy that other new promoters can only dream of. In their latest night at the Queen of Hoxton in Shoreditch, the lineup consisted of multiple Edinburgh and other festival favorites, as well as acts that have recently won some fairly prestigious comedy awards.

MC **Charlie Partridge** was engaging and funny – a tough job for a pub MC. How he managed to keep his one joke about Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot" sounding like a combination of hovering, playing ping pong, and making soup at the same time I will never know, but nonetheless he entertained consistently and perfectly.

Of the sketch acts on the lineup that night, both **The Three Englishmen** and **Clever Peter** looked impressive – the former garnering 5* reviews from a variety of magazines, and Clever Peter having recently been nominated for Best Comedy Act at the 2009 Brighton Fringe, as well as winning the Argus Angel Award and selling out shows at Edinburgh. And neither disappointed. The Three Englishmen's use of a puppet called Hector with an ostentatious middle-class mother, as

well as Clever Peter's seagull shagging a man, gorilla shagging a man, and a father in law shagging man were all standouts of the night.

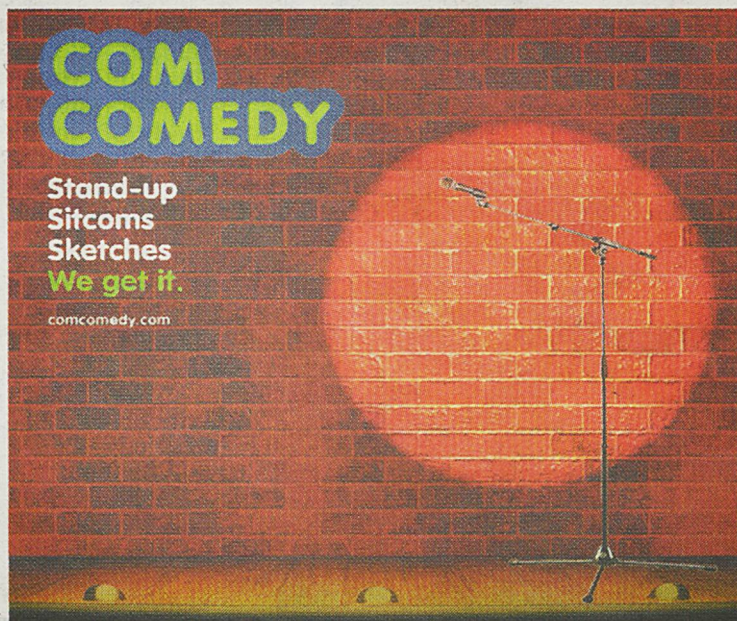
Holly Burn is another act with brilliant Edinburgh reviews under her belt - her cerebral brand of surrealism having won her a number of fans over the past few years. Her set at Comcomedy, however, slightly disappointed and she didn't really live up to the Internet hype she has amassed. She shouted the same phrase "Papa

John? Where are you Papa John" quite a lot, and did a bit about being shop owner, neither of which I really got.

Two stand up comics – **Sharon Court** and **Paul F Taylor** – were on the bill. Sharon Court's fairly original persona as an overweight mother of teenage daughters was entertaining and funny. Jokes about your own kids isn't new territory for lots of comedians, but taking the piss out of them to the point where you know it would embarrass them for sheer entertainment is pretty good. Paul F Taylor – another Edinburgh regular with great festival reviews – produced a sharp and witty set full of simple yet brilliant observations ("I don't like giving fat people a lift... they're heavy and I don't have a car").

The final act of the night was **Rob Broderick & Abandonman**, who (as well as being So You Think You're Funny finalists in 2005) recently won the prestigious Hackney Empire New Act of the Year Award for 2010. Improvised Irish Hip-Hop sounds like a disaster, but Rob pulls it off with a level of originality and sharpness that impresses every time I see him live. Definitely one to watch for the future.

COMCOMEDY'S LIVE NIGHTS ARE EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY IN THE QUEEN OF HOXTON PUB IN SHOREDITCH, £4 ON THE DOOR, £2 NUS.



THE NON-CHRONOLOGY OF ARSHILE

SANDRA SMILEY IS DISCOMBOBULATED



Charting American art's trajectory from its Craft Movement to its Contemporaries requires long consideration of **Arshile Gorky**. A modernist emigre who brought European Surrealism to New York, a semantic leap which engendered American cultural dominance at the beginning of the last century. Born in Armenia, Vosdanig Adoian came to New York an asylum-seeker in 1920. Internal pre-war tumult in Turkey had forced Gorky to flee one hundred miles on foot with his enfeebled mother, who died of starvation there in 1919. Usurping the surname of Slavic poet Maxim Gorky, Vosdanig became Arshile once in the Big Apple, the city in which he would become a household name.

The Tate Modern exhibit marks Gorky's foray into fine arts with his studies on the modernist masters. The expectant seventh floor visitors are greeted by likenesses which Gorky lifted directly from gallery walls and glossy reproductions in art magazines. *Pears, peaches, pitcher* is evocative of Matisse's iconic *nature mortes*, where *Still life with Skull* is a carbon copy of the Cezanne's fleshless capitulum. More engaging are the artist's works of modernist abstraction inspired by the incipient surrealist movement upon his move to New York. The sophisticated coloring, stylized representation and bold geometrics of *Nighttime*, *Enigma*, *Nostalgia* series are so very emblematic of the Art Nouveau era it seems almost an anachronism. In *Diary of a Seducer*, a dimly lit speakeasy and the illuminated brunts of bat cigarettes practically materializes magic-eye style from the shadowy pastiche. These prints, produced on paper to

save money in the precipitant days of the depression, pre-empt the sexy grit of the times seized upon by forties film noir.

Also on show are the artist's experiments with cubism. In his work on Freddy Roosevelt's Federal Art project, *The Artist Formerly Known As Adoian* attempted a more mechanistic form of abstraction to communicate with a mass audience. Though the layman's allergy to modernism saw many of these projects scrapped, Gorky's work indeed graces the wall of a New Jersey airport. The artist's own initiatives, by contrast, like *Garden in Sochi and Khorkom*, exhibit a freer and more unfettered abstract style. Departing from twenty-four-carat Cubism, Gorky dabbled in biomorphics and landscapes in a fantastical recuperation of his storied past. Copious studies and sketches characterize this collection and the heavily encrusted canvases themselves bespeak reworking ad infinitum by the artist. Coinciding roughly with the opening of Gorky's own gallery, these pieces betray the confidence concomitant of the artist's newfound financial security. In works like *The Plow* and *The Song*, he paints vaguely pastoral abstractions with the conviction of a master Chinese calligrapher. They embrace the automatism and free-form techniques that so frustrate the formalist: *Waterfall's* turpentine-thinned greens Gorky's 'gestural abstraction' would inspire Jackson Pollock, William de Kooning and other fledgling paint-flingers on the New York scene.

By contrast to the fun, florid abstractions heretofore, *The Artist and his Mother* series' stark, settled realism arrests and intimidates like a nun on

Palm Sunday. The series constitutes the likenesses of Gorky's family and friends, captured and memorialized in a matte inspired – ironically, as was Warhol's taboo-busting oeuvre a generation later – by the sacerdotal stylings of Christian art.

Despite the virtuosity of the Tate Modern's retrospective, the art buff leaves feeling a bit discombobulated. To explain why will necessitate drilling deep to the roots of western philosophical tradition – don't worry, it'll only hurt for a second. The division of history into ages went vogue with the theology of Cisterian abbot Joachim of Flora (1132-1202). It found fans amongst the metaphysical masters, from Marx and Comte to Hegel and Heidegger, in their respective end-time teleologies. Of course, this convenient schema scores points with art historians as well, making their jobs compartmentalizing the great aesthetic movements just that little bit easier. Gorky's oeuvre, though, cannot be chronologized. The artist's eclecticism, drawing heavily upon the past and prescient of the future, has no final destination, no end-time, no telos. His double-dated tableaux defy order, and his reworking and revitalizing of traditions and trends confuse the chronometric. Skipping over epochs and admixing styles, Gorky's artistic limberness culminates in the rich, varied collection now showing on the Thames.

Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective is on at the Tate Modern til 3rd May 2010

BLOODY HELL

ALICE PELTON THINKS THAT YOU AREN'T A MAN UNTIL YOU'VE GOT BLOOD ON YOUR SWORD

I hate to trot out clichés but when I'm just about to start my period the whole world breaks down. For about 24 hours I feel like my life is over, my boyfriend is shit, my friends are my worst enemies and my degree is a waste of time (no wait, that's all the time.) My erratic hormones got so bad once that I beat my ex-boyfriend up. And guess who it was? Yep, the man I'm on a mission to mention every week - Banjo.

In my defence it was just after I'd found out that he'd cheated on me - one week into working with him at a eight-week long summer job looking after hundreds of screaming foreign children. That night we happened to be working at one of the weekly discos we were forced to organise, where we were made to dress up as fictional superheroes. After spending most of the night sipping from a vodka-filled hip-flask whilst enduring the eighth rendition of 'Reach for the Stars' thanks to S Club 7, I'd had enough. Leaving the disco soon after the kids left, I starting cycling home in my Wonder Woman costume on a main road (probably listening to 'Independent Women' on my newly compiled 'Get Over Him' iTunes playlist.)

Banjo, still in his Batman costume, proceeded to chase me home, shouting something about how I was the love of his life, how I was the woman he was going to marry, and other various forms of bullshit. Being a semi-professional footballer, he soon caught up with me. Furious, I jumped off my bike and screamed 'LEAVE ME ALONE!' But, being Banjo, he didn't.

I was out of ideas. The problem is if your partner lets you down, all they can do is apologise. You can spend hours talking to them about why they did what they did, and how bad they feel and what they can do to help, but the bottom line is - it's up to you to forgive them. I wasn't in a forgiving mood so I asked him if he was willing to let me punch him in the face in order to vent all my pent up anger and PMT induced aggression.

Dutifully he agreed, considering he was used to throwing a few punches himself and was built like a brick-shit house, he reckoned that my feeble right-hook would hardly be a problem.

He thought wrong. Perhaps it was the costume, or the PMT, but all I can say is a super-human strength emerged from within me like I'd never before experienced. Whoever was driving past at that time must have seen the most peculiar scene. A 5'5" blonde Wonder Woman, jumping off a bicycle and punching a 6'3" Batman straight in the nose. Wonder Woman reigned supreme, as Batman stumbled backwards falling onto the pavement. My job there was done, and with my cape billowing behind me, I cycled off into the sunset.

Being on the blob is not just difficult because of the fact your hormones disintegrate into a state of turmoil roughly every 3 weeks. What about having sex on your period? Now this is an issue which divides girls' opinions like the Red Sea (pun intended). Is it acceptable? Do boys really care? And, is the sex actually better?

"What about sex on your period? This is an issue which divides girls' opinions like the Red Sea (pun intended)."

The truth is a lot of women also get pretty fucking horny, when they are about to start, or during, their period. I think it's because we know we can't have sex, and thus, due to the simple fact that all humans want what they can't have; we want to have sex. Meanwhile your boyfriend immediately thinks that it's buy-one-get-one-free blow-job week and eagerly begins to polish his testicles. At this point I usually pretend to break my jaw or claim that I suddenly have a case of oral herpes.

That said, pretending you're on your period can be really useful. (Almost as useful as pretending you need the toilet to get yourself out of every situation.) When in America with Chad this summer, I grew tired of his persistent attempts to have sex with me. He has a hairy chest and therefore a plethora of testosterone (aka. Sam Tempest Keeping). I was forced to tell him that I was on my period and that my periods last a whole two weeks. Strangely, he never questioned me, and just nodded. This is another reason why I'm totally in love with him. He's very accepting of 'who I am'. He doesn't try to 'change me', you know? Seeing as men have never had a period in their lives, secret 'knowledge' about your periods is a trump card that all women have a right to use.

That said, being on your period at the wrong time sucks. Sod's law, if you're on a night out, and 'the decorators are in' you will undoubtedly

pull a Calvin Klein model and want to take him home and have crazy sex. That's just how the Period Goddess rules. This happened to me once when I was out in Salisbury with my infamous best friend Natasha.

Being Natasha, she walked straight up to the man in question and asked 'So you're coming back to Ali's house then?' before I had a chance to tell her that Mr Calvin Klein would have to be a kiss-and-run. This left me with a bit of explaining to do - not wanting to be a cock tease, and not wanting to have the conversation at a later date - I realised I had to tell him pretty soon what was up.

Taking my aside I whispered, 'I'm sorry, I'd love you to come back to mine, it's just...not the right time of the month'.

I'm sure many women have had to say this to a man in their lifetime, it's an awkward moment. He paused and looked at me for a second, taken aback. I didn't know what to say next, so I added:

'All I can offer you is a blow job.'

To which his eyes lit up like a child who'd just been told Christmas was no longer cancelled.

'That's FINE!' he gleamed and practically sprinted outside to hail a taxi.

So that wasn't too bad. At least I remembered I was on my period - near the end of her period Natasha's boyfriend came over to her house for some sexy time. She had left her tampon in, but didn't realise this until her boyfriend was fingering her. (Fingering - let's bring it back people! I might start a campaign...) Pausing, he asked, 'Have you still got a tampon in?'

She was so embarrassed and surprised that she immediately responded, 'On no accounts do I have a tampon in, what sort of reckless woman do you think I am!'

Except her boyfriend persisted;

'No! I'm sure it's in there Natasha! I can feel it!'

Luckily there were a pause in their foreplay, and taking advantage of the pitch-black room and her boyfriend's disorientation, Natasha instantly pulled out the tampon, without her boyfriend noticing, and chucked it down the side of her bed. (Gross I know, but necessary to save humiliation.)

The foreplay resumed, and her poor boyfriend got back to where he was, only to discover the tampon wasn't there.

'What the hell! I swear it was there a minute ago!' He exclaimed.

'I have NO idea what you're talking about' Natasha defended smugly.

To this day her boyfriend is none-the-wiser about the case of the disappearing tampon - poor bloke. He even asked me a few weeks later, in a very serious tone, whether tampons can disappear up inside a woman. I told him that a woman's cervix has an immigration policy akin to Australia, but he didn't believe me.

That's not to say tampons can't at least try to gain entry - the agony of spending 3 hours in A & E waiting to have a lost tampon fished out is a painful memory for many women. Watch out ladies.

Do you want to know who Banjo is? Ask me for sex tips? Hurl abuse at me? Tune into pulse at www.pulse.dj at 8pm this Wednesday.

