

The Beaver

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LSE stung amidst Libyan uprising Gaddafi-funded Global Governance programme arrested

Sachin Patel

Popular uprisings in Libya and continued disagreement among the North African country's ruling elite have compelled the LSE to halt a global governance programme funded by the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF), according to a statement released by the School on Monday.

The GICDF is chaired by Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi, a son of Libya's longstanding dictator Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. In January 2010, the Beaver reported the foundation pledged £1.5 million to the LSE to support the activities of Global Governance, a global issues research centre within the School.

The donation, to be paid over a five-year period, was intended to develop a "research programme on North Africa, focused on politics, economics and society", according to a statement from Global Governance. To date, the foundation has given the School £300,000 to support the centre's "work on human rights, women and development, democracy and civil society, and economic diversification".

But on Monday, in light of "current difficult circumstances across the region", the LSE released a statement saying it will "stop new activities" within the programme, pending further review from the LSE Council, the School's highest decision-making body.

The Council originally decided to approve the donation after two meetings in 2009. During the first meeting, held on 23rd June, the Council noted, "Saif Gaddafi was considered by many to be a reformer". However, minutes from the meeting acknowledged "the principal risk of acceptance was reputational".

At the second meeting, held on 20th October, Council members reviewed a letter from Fred Halliday, a former LSE professor, which advised against accepting the donation, in light of the "widespread condemnation" of Libya's handling of the return of Abdelbaset Al-Megrahi, the only individual convicted for involvement in the Lockerbie bombing in 1988.

In response to Halliday's advice, Professor David Held, a co-director of Global Governance, said a "U-turn at this

juncture...might cause personal embarrassment to the Chairman of the Foundation, Dr. Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi".

Held later joined the GICDF's Council of Trustees in a personal capacity, but resigned after Council members raised concerns about a perceived conflict of interest during a meeting held on 20th October, 2009.

Saif, an alumnus of the LSE, earned both an MSc and a PhD at the School. His doctoral thesis was entitled "The Role of Civil Society in the Democratisation of Global Governance Institutions".

When the decision was made to accept the donation, Professor Held characterised the contribution as a "a generous donation from an NGO committed to the promotion of civil society and the development of democracy".

In a televised speech delivered at 1 AM on Monday morning, Saif said his father would fight any revolt "to the last bullet".

But Saif's speech has been criticised by many, including a former chief spokesman of the Libyan government. Mohamed Bayou, who stepped down from his position last month, said, "I hope that [Saif] will...change his speech to acknowledge the existence of an internal popular opposition".

The School's statement said the "highly distressing news" about violent protests compelled the LSE to "reconsider [its] links [with GICDF] as a matter of urgency".

The GICDF's donation is not the only collaboration between Libya and the School. In 2007, LSE Enterprise, which designs executive education programmes for public bodies and private organisations, delivered a course to officials from the Libyan Economic Development Board, preparing them for a "sweeping programme of reforms" to regulatory systems, change management, public governance in the 21st century, and accountability.

The School said the LSE Enterprise programme has finished, and no further courses are planned.

A statement from the School confirmed work on democratisation in North Africa funded from other sources unrelated to the Libyan authorities would continue.

No wonder they look a bit RAGged



For students, it was a chance to 'get their own back', as the Sabbatical Officers volunteered themselves for a gunging in aid of RAG Week

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Photos: Teddy Nicholson

Graduate Teaching Assistants left unpaid for months

Calum Young

Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) claim the LSE has repeatedly underpaid its teaching staff and failed to provide adequate classroom support during the current academic year, according to an interdepartmental survey conducted in January.

The survey, conducted by a number of GTAs with the backing and support of the University and College Union (UCU), comes at a time when many GTAs have raised concerns about bureaucratic inefficiencies leaving them without an income for the first five weeks of the Michaelmas Term 2010.

LSE Human Resources (HR) policy dictates academics should see pay rises with each additional year of teaching experience, regardless of whether that experience was obtained at the LSE or at another higher education institution.

A survey of 100 GTAs, across thirteen departments, however, revealed 34 per cent of those who had taught at the LSE during the 2009-10 academic year had not seen an increase in pay. A further 28 per cent of respondents said they were uncertain whether or not they had received additional financial remuneration.

For many PhD candidates, teaching undergraduate courses provides their primary source of income.

This is not the first time GTAs have spoken out for higher salaries and im-

proved advising and guidance.

Janet Hartley, pro-director for teaching and learning at the School, told the Beaver this week that during her tenure as chair of the Teaching Task Force during the 2007-08 academic year, she "spent some time" on the issue of GTAs, holding open meetings for the instructors and soliciting feedback from individual departments.

"The overwhelming concern and complaint of GTAs at that time was the lack of fairness and lack of transparency of

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Solidarity strike EGM mired in controversy

Alexander Young

About forty students attended last week's Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), held on Thursday, 17th February, during the hour before the weekly Union General Meeting (UGM).

The meeting was coloured with controversy, as the Students' Union's Democracy Committee came under criticism for its timetabling and administration of the meeting.

The EGM was held after more than 300 students signed a petition calling for one, in order to debate whether the LSE Students' Union should back a strike in solidarity with the University and College Union (UCU).

The emergency motion called upon the Students' Union to "support industrial

action by campus unions against austerity measures".

UCU members are expected to vote on a strike later on this month, ostensibly in response to proposed changes that could allegedly "threaten the jobs, pensions and working conditions of university staff", according to the emergency motion's authors. Critics of such changes say they will make it easier for higher education institutions to cut jobs and services.

At Thursday's EGM, Robin Burrett, a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology, questioned the Democracy Committee's decision-making process, asking why the debate could not have been "timetabled for fifteen minutes in the hour of the UGM".

UGM Chair Jack Tindale responded, saying the petition for an EGM necessitated a meeting separate from the UGM, given the prior confirmation of LSE Direc-

tor Howard Davies's address at the UGM that was to follow.

Education Officer Ashok Kumar claimed the meeting was rescheduled to "undermine" the nature of debate at the EGM, and therefore called for a vote of "no confidence" in the Democracy Committee. But Alex Rodin, chair of the Democracy Committee, responded by saying the EGM was designed as a meeting separate from the UGM, adding it was the responsibility of those proposing the EGM to "get as many people interested as possible".

After the meeting, the Democracy Committee told the Beaver that while the Students' Union could have "done more to advertise the EGM", it is also the "responsibility of campaigners on both sides to take the initiative and encourage students to debate and vote".

Following a question from Kimia Pezeshki, an undergraduate studying

philosophy and economics, concerning the possibility of a temporary suspension of Thursday's EGM, in order to draw more attention to the motion, the meeting descended into chaos.

Tindale said a suspension was possible, given that it was "up to the chair to close a meeting" and such a measure would result in the meeting merely "technically overrunning".

Burrett said he supported Pezeshki's proposal, and Tindale agreed to suspend the meeting. The Democracy Committee upheld Tindale's decision, telling the Beaver after the meeting that while such a choice was "unorthodox", it was also "reasonable", given the "challenging conditions" Tindale faced chairing a "shambolic" meeting.

Second-year government undergraduate Lois Clifton initiated debate over the motion, concerning the possibility of a

student strike in solidarity with the UCU, citing the disparity between the cuts to education-sector pensions and the high salaries of vice chancellors. Proposed changes to the baseline remuneration of academics could result in pensioners receiving £36,000 less over a twenty-five year period. In contrast, Clifton said nineteen vice chancellors currently earn over £300,000 per annum.

"Lecturers got charged with police horses with us, they got kettled with us, they spoke at our occupations", Clifton said. "The only way we can fight these cuts to education is by fighting with them and supporting them".

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Young Turks rise up

The news that Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) at the LSE are dissatisfied with the School's conduct regarding remuneration (see page 1) is doubly disappointing for this newspaper. Firstly, we believe the School has a duty to negotiate pay in a responsible manner, where possible, in order that members of staff from every strata of the LSE community are fully rewarded for their service. Secondly, we fear the issues faced by GTAs which are raised in the survey are having a knock-on effect on teaching quality and, consequently, student satisfaction.

First, with regard to the mechanics of GTA pay, this newspaper acknowledges the School's view that such teaching should not be carried out solely in order to gain a wage. Rather, the purpose of the GTA is to gain valuable teaching experience, preferably in a discipline that complements one's PhD work. We do not dispute that working as a GTA has this effect; however, it also fulfills a fundamental function in the School that few others are clamouring to perform – teaching the other half of students who land on Aldwych as undergraduates. One's interaction with GTAs as an undergraduate cannot be downplayed: experiences in the classroom shape one's time at the LSE, and so it is important to create the best possible circumstances that will facilitate this good teaching.

Unfortunately, this newspaper does not believe these circumstances are being created. From the findings of the survey, there is widespread evidence that GTAs are not being credited for teaching experience gained elsewhere. This is curious: if the School truly believes working as a

GTA is good experience for a career in academia, they should include in their calculus such work that has been performed at other institutions. After all, we find it unlikely that would-be PhD candidates applying to the LSE have spent time at second-rate universities.

Second, the protracted (and unsatisfactory) receipt of remuneration documented in some cases does little to improve the environment in which GTAs are working. As Mr. Cushman of the UCU says, many GTAs feel compelled to take on extra classes because of constraints on how much they are able to earn from teaching one module; consequently, their limited time is stretched further, meaning preparation for classes can suffer. This newspaper believes the notably low student satisfaction scores LSE achieves are related to this fact of reality for GTAs. ☹

Young rationalists of a different kind are rising up across North Africa, and, somewhat bizarrely, the School must play its part in proceedings, specifically those in Libya. The knowledge that a Gaddafi-backed charitable foundation has been funding an LSE research centre is not a revelation to readers of this newspaper. It does however remain a source of alarm to us that the School entered into such an arrangement over a year ago.

Minutes from the Council meetings which discussed the deal would be comic, were its consequences not so worrying. There is a casual acceptance that an LSE-educated son of a dictator would inevitably shed his past, and lead Libya into a bold, democratic future. Recent events suggest such optimism was misplaced. ☹

Union Bashō

All in the mind

First UGM, then rowing across the channel. Wonder what he said.

The Sabbs were quiet at last week's UGM, glancing around nervously to see if anyone had noticed their flip-flop.

Collective

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OH MY BLOG
Check it out!

Howard Davies – “Going straight to £9,000 isn’t right”

Vincent Wong
Senior Reporter

In his termly Union General Meeting (UGM) address last Thursday, LSE Director Howard Davies criticised universities that have already indicated intentions to raise fees for UK students to the government-mandated maximum of £9,000 per year.

Davies said such universities’ decisions were “ill-timed”, considering schools only received details of fair access requirements and their obligations to the national scholarship scheme last week. He also said that in some cases, the decisions were “not very carefully justified”, giving the example of an “odd” reason which suggested that fees were a signal of degree quality.

Imperial College London has announced its intention to charge £9,000 in annual fees, and administrators at Oxford and Cambridge appear to have indicated that they intend to do as well.

The Director went on to say he did not think that, in the case of the LSE, charging maximum fees would necessarily be the right thing to do.

He said the School’s Academic Board would reach a decision on fee-setting in May, and that it would consider the views of departments and the findings of the Students’ Union, among other sources.

Davies also spoke about national immigration reforms. He said he thought the availability of visas to attend the School would not be “particularly affected”, but the reforms’ provisions for term-time work and plans to abolish the post-study work visa were “not at all good”.

He commended the Students’ Union’s lobbying efforts, and assured attendees at Thursday’s UGM that the School would continue to offer its support to such campaigns.

“I think there is some appetite at the official level to find a way of not completely abolishing post-study work visas,” Davies said, adding the government is “discovering that [its commitment to significantly reduce net migration was] an unwise commitment to have given”.

Davies ended his speech by detailing how the School would address concerns about overcrowding in the LSE Library.

He said in the short term, access for external visitors would be restricted

during the exam period. In the long term, he added, it would be possible to move the LSE Research Laboratory, currently located on the library’s fourth and fifth floors, to the Land Registry’s Head Office building, which the School purchased last fall and will take possession of in May 2011.

Davies then invited comments and questions from the audience. Kimia Pezeshki, a philosophy and economics undergraduate, expressed concerns about the possible effect of higher fees on the composition of the application pool and student body.

“Debt is what puts the poorest off going to university,” Pezeshki said, urging the Director to ensure fees were not raised higher than was necessary to cover the loss of teaching grants.

Davies responded by saying that, compared to what regulators considered ideal, the composition of the application pool and student body were “not a huge problem”, and it would be difficult to deal with such an issue at university level.

Another attendee asked Davies if he thought it is sensible for the LSE to accept funding from private sector firms, such as Goldman Sachs, despite the possibility of a conflict of interest.

Davies said that he had no issue with the idea. He added that he considered Goldman Sachs a “good employer that can be worked with”, citing the company’s work with the School on widening participation and employment opportunities for women and the disabled. He also emphasised that the money comes from the Goldman Sachs Foundation, which he described as a “entirely respectable organisation which makes its own decisions”.

Sachin Patel, a philosophy and economics finalist, expressed concern that the failure rate for certain modules seemed to be higher among students of joint honours programmes than those of specialist degrees. He asked the Director if the School had plans to tackle the problem, by, for example, offering tailored courses for joint honours students.

Davies responded, saying the School had been looking at the issue. He said the failure rate for MA100 was especially concerning. He added that while it appeared that in some cases students had been choosing course too difficult for their aptitudes, the School also had a responsibility to inform students about course

prerequisites.

Eden Dwek, a first year undergraduate studying geography with economics, asked the Director if he thought the LSE100-branded plastic folders, glossy dividers and Personal Response Systems (PRS) were necessary.

Davies, who teaches LSE100’s “Who caused the global financial crisis?” module, said his experience with the PRS systems had been “interesting”, adding other departments used them, too. He also said it was difficult to cater for the preferences of all students, and course expenditures were under continuous review.

Other questions concerned the School’s facilities.

Students’ Union Postgraduate Officer Daniel Kroop asked if the School would be devoting more resources to dealing with information technology (IT) problems, after the roll-out of Windows 7 at the start of the academic year caused significant disruption.

Davies said the School is considering altering the processes through which such changes are enacted, adding there should be a “standby arrangement” in case Moodle crashes, as happened earlier on in Lent Term.

Disabled Students’ Officer Polly McKinlay expressed concern that the School did not seem open to wheelchair users, citing the lack of wheelchair access to the Quad and the “very many, very heavy” doors around campus, which she said “even normal girls” found difficult to open.

Davies replied that it was “no part of [his] ambition” for the School to be inaccessible to wheelchair users, and would gladly look into any problems.

Another attendee asked Davies if he thought LSE Careers should do more to promote the third and public sectors.

The Director said the careers service is increasing students’ exposure to such fields, adding that in the past, he had written to students, encouraging them to broaden their aspirations and look more to the public sector. Davies also said the largest single employer of LSE graduates was the UK Civil Service, and that the LSE was the largest supplier, internationally, of graduates to the United Nations Development Programme.

UNION JACK

Two hours of Emergency General Meeting and UGM meeting this week – half of striking and lecturers’ strife; the other half, Sir Howard Davies. Well, that would only be telling only a part-truth. The EGM wasn’t an hour long. It was over five minutes after it had started, to be perfectly honest, and then another forty minutes passed—or so it seemed—before it restarted.

Kicking off, Lois Clifton started pledging her support for a possible student strike, claiming it’s necessary to strike against possible net £36,000 pension money lost in the future, and nineteen vice-chancellors around the country taking a 20 per cent pay rise over the last year. But not our Howie D, remember (more about him later).

Then the meeting went a bit awry, to say the least. In an attempt to extend the debate to fill the whole hour—bear in mind, it had gone on for about five minutes, maximum—Emma Kelly came up and told us her parents would be unhappy if she were to not support strike action because they are both “fucking lecturers”. Whether that is in a Howard Kirk-style relationship from The History Man, and her parents are both having sexual affairs with lecturers behind each others backs, or whether they’re actually lecturers, Jack isn’t sure. Then Kelly’s talk of how she “loved” Margaret Thatcher was surreal, even if it was an attempt to extend the meeting.

The best speaker on stage at the EGM was Matt, a PhD student. He was nice, politically savvy, reasonable, not pushy, and didn’t look militant. It’s a real shame for the School that there aren’t more Matts around in the Union, rather than shouty anarchists and anti-Christis—even if his talking of long-term solutions were probably more hopeful than possible. People often just don’t think like that, unfortunately.

Despite Matt, Kelly and others’ attempts to get the meeting to last as long as possible, it quickly started to fail. Anger was expressed at the Democracy Committee—but Jack thinks had the Old Theatre been bursting with people, it wouldn’t have been called a “fucking joke”, potentially “undermining our motion” and complaining for it to be cancelled and rearranged. Jack supposes if you get 300 people to sign a petition on something that’s seen to be important and yet bring just over a tenth of that to discuss the motion, it’s not really the Democracy Committee’s fault. Still, writing ex post, that’s pretty immaterial, since lots of people who didn’t come to the meeting clearly voted.

Anyway, Archduke-Supreme-Leader Tindale seemed to cave in from pressure, and Jack and friends were left waiting in the Old Theatre. The time was spent listening to Fatboy Slim, KC and the Sunshine Band and Feeder. Wow, Jack thought, and still thinks: what an awful waste of time. When the meeting did resume, the arguments continued in exactly the same vein, so much so that Jack asked whether he’d been flung into a parallel universe. An odd, odd meeting, indeed. It overran slightly before Howard Davies came in for UGM, which made the delay a bit more pointless. With regard to Howie D’s address to the then-UGM, it was good, he’s good, he’s nice and he makes a lot of sense on a lot of his issues. That said, Jack noticed that his eyebrows are increasingly getting more and more Denis Healey-like. That is, bushy.

next generation of students”, Cushman said. “This is why staff and students should support each other. We face the same assault from the same source”.

“We have campaigned and marched together in the past, and I am glad we will campaign together in the future”, Cushman added.

Even so, some have called into question the nature of the campaign for the motion; an email was sent to all members of the Students’ Union urging them to vote following the conclusion of the meeting.

Sachin Patel, a philosophy and economics finalist, told The Beaver, “In all my time at the LSE, I have seldom seen a Students’ Union lobby its members in this way, just to take part in a vote.” He added, “It is as if they are abusing their powers to push through their own agendas.”

By the time voting closed on Friday at 5PM, the motion had reached a quorate number of votes, passing with 240 “yes” votes to 122 “no” votes.

Nobel laureate shares his research with students

Vivek Kotecha

LSE’s latest Nobel laureate, Professor Christopher Pissarides, delivered a lecture about his research into the economics of the labour market and search frictions last Tuesday, 15th February, at the LSE.

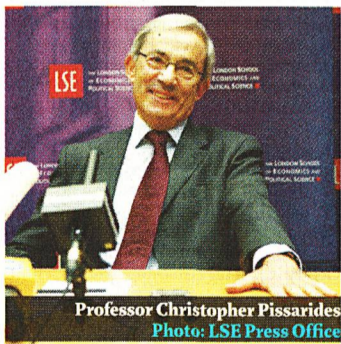
Tuesday’s lecture provided students the opportunity to hear a version of a lecture given in January in Stockholm, when Pissarides accepted the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

The event, chaired by LSE Director Howard Davies, provided attendees with insight into the research that led to Pissarides’ prize, and gave them the opportunity to ask the Nobel laureate questions.

Pissarides, who was accepted for neither undergraduate nor graduate studies at the LSE, described how he first became interested in search theory as an undergraduate at the University of Essex. Search theory was a hot topic at the time, with academics from such American institutions as Northwestern University moving to Essex to develop the theory.

The LSE ultimately accepted Pissarides’s application to pursue a PhD in economics at the School, which he chose over offers from Northwestern and Harvard. Pissarides said London’s moderate weather, and its relative proximity to Cyprus, his home country, were his main reasons for choosing the LSE over the other two universities. He described the LSE in the 1970s as “very intimidating”, a place that “left graduate students alone” with “little help”.

Pissarides said he was drawn to search theory, because he considered it a realistic theory for unemployment. He said he believed job seekers take time to find employment because they are looking for a good match. Other theories at the



Professor Christopher Pissarides
Photo: LSE Press Office

time modelled workers’ decisions based upon a distribution of wages, with low-wage job offers being rejected.

After a more detailed explanation of the theory, Pissarides invited questions from the audience. Davies asked Pissarides whether he had any explanations as to why US unemployment has stayed high for such a long period of time. Pissarides said part of the problem was that the recession has not had uniform effects across all the sectors of the economy, with, say, construction affected more than other services. Due to the difficulties associated with retraining people to work in different sectors, unemployment is bound to be higher for longer, Pissarides said.

An audience member raised the question of whether those public sector workers who were likely to be laid off following the implementation of the UK government’s budget cuts would find alternative private sector employment quickly. Pissarides said much of the current job growth in the UK is coming from the personal services sector, as it is easy for public sector workers to retrain into hence public sector workers should not have much difficulty in finding new employment.

Democracy Committee conduct criticised

» continued from page 1

Matt Wilde, a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology, provided a second defence of the motion, condemning the “casualisation of labour” within academic circles. Wilde also spoke of the level of work given to graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) and teaching fellows for low wages, saying, “having overworked, insecure and underpaid is not conducive to a world-class university”.

The EGM saw little opposition to the motion. In the end, second-year history undergraduate Emma Kelly, whose parents are both university lecturers, spoke out against the motion in an ostensibly sarcastic capacity, calling Margaret Thatcher a “lovely lass”. Second-year philosophy undergraduate Jakob Schaefer opposed the motion in a similar fashion, citing how the German government treats its trade unions as reason not to resort to student-approved industrial action.

When the meeting returned from its recess, the opposition to the motion stood down, and the motions’ proposers fielded questions.

Mike Cushman, UCU branch secretary at the LSE, told The Beaver after the EGM the UCU “welcomed the support of the LSE Students’ Union”.

“If we do not make a stand now then there will far fewer opportunities for the

News in brief

WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS

According to Clare Hemmings, Director of the Gender Institute at LSE, the subject of gender studies, though often perceived as being niche and in decline, is in fact in high demand. The Gender Institute at the LSE is largely credited as being the largest of its kind in Europe and was last year granted status as an independent department at the LSE. According to Hemmings, since its founding in 1993, the number of staff and faculty in the department has tripled, with a total of over 100 members. Dr. Hemmings identified that the undergraduate courses are weaker than the postgraduate programmes, as the subject is not studied at school.

BORDER HOP

According to fullfact.com, an online organisation dedicated to promoting accuracy in the media, the only information on the number of illegal workers in the UK is that provided by research from the LSE and Institute for Public Policy Research. The study finds that the number of adult workers who are in the UK illegally stands at 620,000, with 155,000 people claiming illegal benefits. The study does also note a proportion of these adults will have “arrived on working visas, are unlikely to be working or will in due course leave”. The LSE report stands as the only body with reliable figures according to the organisation.

BANK ON IT

The Standard Bank, a global bank that originates in South Africa, has offered eight scholarships to students at the LSE for the next 3 academic years. The scholarships are available to students from emerging markets, in particular those from Brazil, China, Russia, Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa, to study a Master’s programme in the Finance Department. Each scholarship will cover tuition fees and offer an additional £2,000 for expenses. Professor Webb, Head of the Department of Finance, said, “These scholarships will give the opportunity to students, who would normally have been unable to attend LSE, to study in a world class environment”.

DEBATE IT OUT

The Students’ Union Debate Society, awarded the best society award last year, hosted 60 debate teams from around the world last Saturday at the LSE Open debate tournament. Students from as far as Germany and New Zealand were hosted in Clement House to debate topics such as “This House Would Legalise Blackmail in Contracts”. The event upheld the Debate Society’s reputation as one of the premier debate organisations in the UK. The Chief Adjudicators for the event were Anser Aftab and John Ashbourne; Scott Macdonald was the Convener of the event.

A SCEPTICAL ECONOMIST

Bjorn Lomborg, author of The Skeptical Environmentalist, gave an impassioned speech at the LSE last Wednesday at an event hosted jointly by LSE Events and the Students’ Union Economics Society. Lomborg spoke of the bias in media reporting of climate change and the implications that this have for governmental policies. LSE’s Dimitri Zenghelis, who contributed to the Stern Review as well as for Gordon Brown’s government on the issue of Climate Change acted as respondent, to counter the controversial views of Mr. Lomborg.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia, launch Russian Business Week at the LSE with a talk on Russia’s international relations and status in the world. Lavrov said that a new hotline would be installed to help improve communication between the UK and the Kremlin. With regards to these tense relations, Lavrov told the audience that he could “see no reason that [British-Russian] relations cannot be closer”. Lavrov cited the successful partnership between BP and state-owned Rosent as being an effective example of how the two countries can work together productively.

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India Week spices up campus

Shrina Poojara
Senior Reporter

Last week, hundreds of students at the LSE participated in eleven events showcasing Indian culture and tradition as part of the School's annual India Week.

The week's events, organised by the LSE Students' Union SPICE (Society for the Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos), ranged from dance workshops and yoga classes to lectures on India's position in the world. The SPICE committee said it aimed to immerse the LSE in Indian heritage.

The week launched in what a SPICE committee member described as "truly Bollywood fashion", with an Antakshari singing competition in the Underground. This musical performance showcased the best of Indian musical talent at the LSE. Later in the week, SPICE continued the insight into Bollywood by subsidising a movie screening of Hindi family drama film, *Patiala House*, at the Cineworld in Trocadero.

SPICE offered a taste of traditional cuisine by offering forty-five LSE students a subsidised meal at Masala Zone, a popular Indian restaurant in Covent Garden.

To highlight India's reputation for sporting excellence, the society organised an India-Pakistan Cricket Match at the

prestigious Lord's cricket ground.

To conclude the cultural taster, SPICE, in conjunction with RAG, hosted a fashion show in the Quad to highlight the best of Indian trends. The fashion show was interspersed with some of Timeless's best performances. Neel Malde, a second year economics and geography student and one of the performers in the show, said, "the fashion show was a great deal of fun to participate in and it was really encouraging seeing such a great crowd turn up to see it".

The show was followed by the Bollywood Fusion-themed Crush which drew on the best of Bollywood and western music. The sold out event ended a two week run of cancelled Crush events. Nikita Gupta, a second year maths and economics student, said, "Crush was so much fun. I've missed it these past couple weeks so it was so cool to see it back and so packed with people dancing to Bollywood music".

Students were also invited to learn more about the position of India on the world stage with a student panel discussion entitled 'India and Her International relations'. The panel fielded questions on issues related to India and her neighbours, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This event was followed up with a talk on Sino-Indian relations by Shashi Tharoor, an Indian former Minister of State for External Affairs, held at the end of the week.

Siddharth Gopakumar, first year accounting and finance student, President of SPICE and the co-chair of India Week 2011, said, "To me, India Week is very important because it is an opportunity for us to reach out to the very international student population at the LSE and showcase our Indian culture. Considering that India is a growing superpower, it is essential that the world also recognizes it for its huge diversity."

Anushka Shah, a second-year undergraduate government student and fellow India Week 2011 co-chair, added, "India Week 2011 is not about bringing together the Indian community at LSE, and neither is it just a week of colourful song and dance. It is one week dedicated to making the world more knowledgeable about this beautiful nation of over one billion people."

Michael Lok, the International Officer at the Students' Union, said, "India Week is one of the highlights of the international calendar here at the Students' Union and once again, SPICE has put together a diverse range of exciting events. I am particularly impressed by the initiative shown in teaming up with RAG and putting together a Fashion Show. SPICE has done an excellent job and everyone involved should be extremely pleased with what they have achieved."

Weekly Crush no longer on the cards – Students' Union

Bethany Clarke
Senior Reporter

The cancellation of recent Crush nights has led many students to question the future of the LSE Students' Union's weekly student night.

Crush was cancelled during both weeks four and five of the Lent Term, due to anticipated low attendance during weeks in which essays are due, according to event organisers.

Attendance at Crush, they said, has historically been busiest at the beginning and the end of each term, with a lull in attendance in the middle of term, when students have heavier workloads.

Alex Bond, the Students' Union's assistant commercial manager, told the Beaver, "Crush is not packed every week," and said it is generally less busy than it was ten years ago due to an increase in student nights at local nightclubs.

"Crush has to compete with many more student nights that are happening now in and around London, not just on a Friday but throughout the week as well", Students' Union Activities and Development Officer Charlie Glyn told the Beaver.

Crush includes a "lot of hidden costs" Bond said, including the costs of a disc

jockey, sound technician, additional bar staff, security staff and the clean up expenses. Bond said such costs make for significant losses when Crush attendance is low.

The event could "become unfashionable" if it is regularly poorly attended, Bond added.

But Bond said Crush will most certainly not close permanently, adding that the Students' Union "obviously wants to continue to run" the event, which has been a hallmark of the LSE's social scene for years. The decision not to hold the event every week reflects what Crush organisers believe students want, he said.

Bond said the decision not to hold Crush every week represents a "more sustainable long-term business plan" than opening every week to smaller crowds, and emphasised that profits from the event directly benefit LSE students.

Glyn confirmed that Crush profits support Students' Union activities, telling the Beaver, "All of the Students' Union's commercial activity goes back to funding membership services like societies and sports clubs, so it's obviously really important that we do not waste money".

"If we close the Tuns at 11PM instead of 2AM on a couple of Fridays to do that, then so be it", Glyn added.

Crush will continue to run every week

during the Michaelmas Terms, when students have less work and are therefore keener to attend, Bond said. The student night will also be held during the six weeks LSE Summer School is in session.

Next year, however, Crush will be held during the first, second, tenth and eleventh weeks of Lent Term.

The Three Tuns and the Underground will remain open during normally-scheduled hours.

Crush organisers have also hosted other events they say are "better suited to what students wanted" Bond said, adding many students just prefer a drink on a Friday night, rather than the full Crush experience. For example, on 4th February, instead of Crush, there was a free screening of the Six Nations tournament.

Throughout the Lent Term, there will also be a series of specialised Crush nights. Last Friday, the Students' Union German Society and the Society for the Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos (SPICE) held a well-attended joint Crush.

Working with societies helps Crush organisers ensure the event covers its costs and attracts more students.

While Crush will not be held this Friday, the Tuns will remain open until 11PM. Crush will return with a Bhangra-themed night on Friday, 4th March.

Amnesty International Society spotlights Burma

Kareem Elawi

Last week, the LSE Students' Union Amnesty International Society organised Burma Awareness Week, holding events between Monday and Wednesday, with the aim of raising students' awareness of conditions in the south-east Asian country, which has operated under military rule since 1962.

On Monday, the society operated a stall on Houghton Street, distributing informative materials from Amnesty International to students. The society also collected signatures for a petition requesting the release of Ko Mya Aye, a pro-democracy activist who was most recently incarcerated in 2007.

Daniela Schofield, a master's student studying gender, development and globalisation who helped organise the week, said the society selected Ko Mya Aye because he appears to be suffering from angina while in prison, but is being denied medical treatment. As it was Valentine's Day, the society also sold roses to raise money for Amnesty's Protect the Human project.

On Tuesday, the society organised a screening of the documentary *Burma VJ*, which covers the pro-democracy uprisings of 2007. The documentary was filmed covertly by video journalists, one of whom attended Tuesday's screening and answered student questions after the event.

On Wednesday, the society operated another stall on Houghton Street, serving Burmese tea. Whilst continuing to collect signatures for the Ko Mya Aye petition,

the society also distributed "action cards", postcards with information about Burma and a form students can sign, pressing for the release of a political prisoner. The action cards included details about Zarganar, a Burmese comedian who had been imprisoned for openly criticising the military regime.

Schofield told the Beaver the week's greatest success had been its stalls on Houghton Street, saying they provided "an excellent opportunity to speak with people about the situation in Burma, answering any questions they might have".

Burma Awareness Week contended for attention with India Week 2011, which also ran stalls on Houghton Street in an effort to raise the campus profile of India. But rather than being overshadowed by another society's events, Burma Awareness Week was complemented by India Week, Schofield told the Beaver. "It was nice to be on Houghton Street at the same time," she said.

Students' Union International Officer Michael Lok told the Beaver national societies' awareness weeks are arranged independently by societies. Given the limited number of weeks in a term, overlap is inevitable, Lok said.

Activities and Development Officer Charlie Glyn told the Beaver the Students' Union part-time officers have been working to address such overlap in national awareness weeks.

Both Lok and Glyn said they encourage societies to hold days, or singular events, rather than themed weeks, whenever possible.

RAG Week unites societies in benevolence

Aimee Riese
Senior Reporter

The LSE Students' Union Raising and Giving (RAG) Society hosted its annual RAG Week last week on campus. The week's activities raised money for three charities: St. Mungo's, Women for Women International and African Street Child Organisation.

Last Thursday, 17th February, saw the second-ever Battle of the Halls, hosted at the Purple Turtle in Camden. The evening's festivities took the form of a competition, in which the LSE hall of residence that was able to attract the highest proportion of its residents won. Nearly 250 LSE students attended, with Carr-Saunders Hall crowned as the "Most Social Hall 2011".

John Wilson, a first-year law undergraduate told the Beaver he enjoyed the event, but added, "Rosebery was robbed".

Battle of the Halls raised around £2000. A popular new edition to RAG Week this year was "Gunge-A-Sabb", held last Friday, 18th February. Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada, a former RAG President, said she was optimistic she would not be gunged. But both Gerada and Education Officer Ashok Kumar were gunged on Friday on Houghton Street, raising £170.

RAG decided to capitalise on the fortune of Valentine's Day falling within the designated RAG week. The Valentine's stall on Houghton Street, selling Valentine's chocolates, raised over £80. Recipients were informed by email to collect their gifts from the stall. Other RAG activities held during the week included

speed dating, a pub quiz, bingo and a salsa-dancing workshop.

RAG worked together with other Students' Union societies to hold further fundraising events during the week. SPICE (the society for the promotion of Indian culture and ethos) sponsored a fashion show on Friday night, and the Athletics' Union raised over £800 through Wednesday's Mr. LSE competition. The Debate Society raised over £100 in its Valentine's Cup, and the Rowing Society raised over £600 in its Rowathon, with Howard Davies making an appearance on the rowing machines on Houghton Street.

During the week, students could also donate their library fines to RAG, as well as purchase RAG week merchandise, such as "RAG Me Senseless" and "London School of Alcoholics" tee shirts.

In the successful tradition of selling comical LSE related apparel on Houghton Street, this year RAG designed a range of t-shirts to sell to LSE-ers. T-shirts bearing the LSE logo with the name 'London School of Alcoholics' were a sell-out. Shakira Chainrai, an undergraduate studying Government, said, "The t-shirts are funny. Lots of people have seen mine and laughed at it. And, they are surprisingly good quality given the price, I wear my 'London School of Alcoholics' t-shirt to the gym!"

RAG President Alex Peters-Day told the Beaver she was extremely pleased with the week, saying, "RAG Week has been amazing. It's always a very unifying time on campus, and it's amazing to see how involved societies and groups get!"

A final event will be held on Tuesday: the RAG Week and Development Society People Auction.

Raising fees beyond plugging funding gap "completely unjustifiable" – Students' Union

Oliver Wiseman

The LSE has a chance to be "bold, radical, and imaginative" in setting fees, argues an LSE Students' Union paper outlining student feedback on changes to tuition fees. The paper, based in part on a six-question survey of 350 students, states a strong preference for "any increase in fees only plugging the deficit created by the cut in the teaching grant from the government" but says the School should not feel "resigned" to doing so.

According to the paper, which will inform Students' Union initiatives in the months to come, the Students' Union's consultation and research has a clear message: "Students believe that higher fees should not be the accepted norm." The paper goes on to say an increase in fees, beyond the amount needed to fill the gap in the removal of the government teaching grants, would be "completely unjustifiable".

The accompanying questionnaire surveyed student opinion on five issues, including the role of the Students' Union in fee-making policy, the extent to which home and EU undergraduate fees should be increased, the merits of cross-subsidisation of subjects, the fairness of the difference between international and domestic fee levels, and fees for part-time students.

Sixty-five per cent of respondents were opposed to cross-subsidisation between subjects. The suggestion that the LSE charge more for courses with higher-earning graduates and less for others was made by LSE Director Howard Davies at last term's Union General Meeting (UGM). At last week's UGM, Davies ruled out such a policy.

Seventy-seven per cent of respondents to the survey agreed with the statement "fees should be different for international students, compared with EU and home students because EU and home students pay for part of their education through general taxation".

Seventy-nine per cent of respondents agreed that "it should cost the same overall to study on a part-time basis as a full-time basis".

The paper suggests a broader re-orientation of the LSE's budget, calling for the School to spend more on bursaries, scholarships and grants, and criticising the School's financial targets that exceed the Higher Education Funding Council recommended surplus of 3 to 4 per cent.

According to the minutes of a Finance Committee meeting held in November 2010, the LSE estimates a surplus of £19.2 million which is between 8 and 9 per cent.

The paper calls for the University to "consider instituting grants for various living expenses for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, such as travel or book costs."

The School's Academic Board will reach a decision on fee setting for the 2012-13 academic year at a meeting this May, after which the LSE Council will have to approve the resolution.

After a vote in the House of Commons

on the subject last December, the government-set fee cap will increase to £9,000 pounds for home and EU undergraduates matriculating in 2012. Universities who charge more than £6,000 will have to satisfy government-set requirements relating to participation in Higher Education of students low income backgrounds.

At last Thursday's UGM, Davies spoke out against universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial, that have indicated a desire to charge £9,000. Davies said he did not necessarily think charging £9,000 would be the right thing for the LSE to do.

The paper also highlighted the importance of widening participation in the question of fee setting. According to the

paper, "It is imperative that the budget [for the widening participation department] be subject to no further efficiency savings and in fact should have its budget increased".

German Symposium 2011

EUROPE'S FUTURE - DECLINE OF THE WEST?

14 February, Waldorf Hilton hotel

Marion Koob
Senior Reporter

Dr. Thilo Sarrazin asserted the need for nations to "adhere to their own cultural identity" in a panel discussion with three other eminent German thinkers.

Henryk M. Broder, Ali Kizilkaya and Professor Hellmuth Karasek joined Sarrazin for the opening event of the Students' Union German Society's annual symposium, held last Monday night.

The lecture, entitled "Europe's Future - 'Decline of the West?'" was angled as a debate on integration. The selection of the panel, however, was disputed by numerous students within the LSE and the University of London whom, prior to the lecture, had submitted an open letter of protest regarding the issue.

At least fifty students stood in front of the lecture's final venue, the Hong Kong Theatre in Clement House, in opposition, at about 5:30PM, half an hour before the discussion was to begin.

Due to security concerns, the German Society chose to move the audience and lecture to the Waldorf Hilton hotel on the Aldwych, against the wishes of the LSE and the Students' Union, who had demanded that the society postpone the event.

Svenja Ziegert, head of press relations of the German Society, told the Beaver, "It would have been impossible to postpone the discussion, as many of the speakers were to fly back the following day."

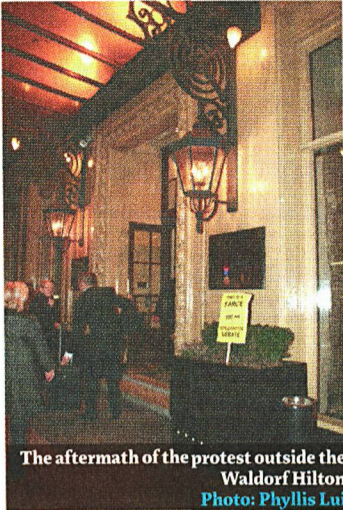
"It was doing it now or never," she added.

"The panel was chosen on the basis of those who accepted to speak at the Symposium. We sent out around two hundred invitations, and received around twenty positive responses," Ziegert said, "The discussion topics are then chosen around those who have accepted to speak. It's tough to get high-profile speakers, and we are grateful to those who agreed to come."

Before the lecture began, a protester began to argue with Broder, a journalist at Die Welt, as the latter was making his way to the stage. Responding to shouts from the audience that he should leave the room, the protester responded in German, "You shouldn't be here. You're supporting fascism."

According to a member of the audience, Broder then insulted the student twice as he left the room.

Beginning an hour and a half later than the scheduled time, German Society Committee member Niklas Röhlung opened the lecture to the moderator,



The aftermath of the protest outside the Waldorf Hilton
Photo: Phyllis Lui

Die Spiegel journalist Jan Fleischhauer, by quoting George Orwell: "Freedom is telling people what they don't want to hear."

Broder described the protests as a "kind of appeasement," adding, "If this was the British army, they would no longer be in a position to win a battle. Now, it's Britannia waves the rules."

He then spoke of his pessimism regarding "the current atmosphere". Noting that the issue of multiculturalism had made its way into the speeches of European heads of state such as David Cameron, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, Broder said, "The EU doesn't know what to do about immigration," adding, "It's not going to carry on for long."

Sarrazin, an economist who has been criticised for allegedly Islamophobic views, said one of the principal problems of immigration in Germany was the Turkish community's refusal to mix with Germans. "90 per cent of Turks in Germany marry Turks," he said, adding that this issue is accentuated by "immigrant minorities developing into majorities, as they bear more children than the native population."

"This doesn't mean the demise of Germany," he said. "After winter there is always spring. I am in favour of cultural diversity, but nations need to adhere to their cultural identity; there is a certain historical continuity."

When later asked by a member of the audience to define the German identity, Sarrazin replied that it was unnecessary. "The French, English, also have their own cultural identity," he said.

Karasek, a literary critic, explained that in his view, different religions are considered differently, Islam being taken more seriously by its followers than Christianity. According to his argument, as a younger religion, Islam had not gone through the same process of "enlightenment" as Christianity or Judaism. "Immigrants from Muslim countries have reached a high number; a critical mass," he said.

Taking a different outlook, Kizilkaya, the chairman of the German Islamic Council, said, "Muslims practice their religion more. Why is this a threat to society? You should feel free to exercise your rights."

"Assimilation means giving up your own identity. If this is voluntary, fine; but you can't expect people do to so," he added.

Kizilkaya then argued for the necessity of finding a peaceful way of living, with religious diversity.

"The panel was unbalanced," said Zahabia Saleem, a master's student in international relations after the lecture.

"They are reinforcing their own arguments without being constructive."

"It makes it obvious that their arguments are ridiculous. It's not a discussion, it's a lecture," added Rachel Diamond, a student on the same programme.

Meanwhile, Christoph Herpfer, a master's student in economics and finance, said, "I don't understand the rage about the panel being biased. It's out of proportion. They should be given a right to free speech."

Dominic Ponattu, a third-year studying government and economics, told the Beaver, "The discussion was highly polemical rather than arguing over solutions. This is probably not the picture German public figures and academics want to give off abroad."

"The German Society will not take position on the content of the lecture itself," Ziegert said, "However, we were happy that there was room for questions and that a variety of opinions were voiced from within the audience."

She added the German Society was surprised by the attention the event had attracted. Numerous national German newspapers, including Die Welt, Der Tagesspiegel, and the Frankfurter Allgemeine covered the story, as well as the UK's Independent and the Jerusalem Post.

"Our main regret is that because of the Hilton's security requirements, we couldn't let students without tickets into the lecture", Ziegert said. "Many who really wanted to come were disappointed."



The panellists, from left - Ali Kizilkaya, Thilo Sarrazin, Jan Fleischhauer (moderator), Henryk Broder, Hellmuth Karasek
Photo: LSE Students' Union German Society

THE NEXT GENERATION OF MEDIA FINANCING MODELS

17 February, Hong Kong Theatre

Sachin Patel

Three prominent figures in German journalism stated the case for why quality print journalism must be kept alive during a German Symposium event held last Thursday, 17th February, at the LSE.

Harald Ehren and Christoph Keese, both of whom were instrumental in the development of the Financial Times Deutschland, joined Guardian media and technology reporter Mercedes Bunz in a panel debate on the next generation of media financing models.

All three panelists agreed that the rapid development of the Internet has not translated into increased profitability for newspapers, though each offered different suggestions to safeguard a "bright future". The event's moderator, Charlie Beckett, who is director of the LSE's media policy think tank, POLIS, offered insight as to how German journalism is perceived in the UK, asking the guest speakers if "some kind of German miracle is at work".

Ehren, who is now editor-in-chief at fischerAppelt, a public relations agency, said consumers still see newspapers as sources of "good, safe information" and described most blogs as "simply talking and chatting", without sufficiently informing readers. Ehren said his agency has been monitoring the influence of social media in order to best advise his clients, and used the example of a global soft drinks manufacturer as evidence for why his industry now depends on a combination of traditional media and online social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Keese, who was previously editor-in-chief of the Financial Times Deutschland and now serves as president of public affairs at Axel Springer, a publishing house, was more aggressive about the future of quality journalism. He admitted the industry was being challenged "by the addition, not the substitution, of the Internet", but said this addition presented more opportunities than threats.

"It's difficult to make money through journalism on the Internet," Keese said, "But we want to."

Keese compared the current climate of print journalism to that of the film industry, saying newspapers "need a share of the ticket being paid for at the entrance to the cinema".

"If nobody gives it to you, you ask more persistently," he added.

Keese also discussed the game-changing effects of Apple's App Store, which he said was "already big money" for both Apple and publishers. "As a publisher, you'd better be in the game now," he said, though he acknowledged that at present, everyone but newspapers is able to make money through the Internet.

Keese also said pay walls were "interesting", in that "experience shows, once people are used to quality journalism, they will pay for it".

Bunz, who has worked for the Guardian and founded a magazine about aspects of the electronic lifestyle, was critical of the business strategies being pursued by AOL, an Internet services company which has recently invested heavily in content production.

Bunz said people "don't care about actual news every second of the day", and

called on newspaper leaders to consider not only different platforms, but the different situations in which people consume news.

"The revenue stream has become a revenue delta," Bunz said, adding news organisations made "big mistakes" during the infancy of the Internet by concentrating on serious news coverage.

"Only 10 per cent of newspapers are actually news," Keese noted, agreeing with Bunz that newspaper publishers must invest in related industries which are profitable, namely classified advertising.

"Sixty classified companies come up with a quarter of our revenue," he said, adding that this industry is growing "at a very fast rate - projections are for 50 per cent of revenue to come from digital, non-journalistic assets."

Keese said the challenge was now to make money through online journalism, and capitalise on the popularity of newspaper websites. "In every developed country, newspapers are the top ranking websites," he said, adding predictions made five years ago, that user-generated news would overtake proper journalism, had been proven wrong. "It's not that easy," he said, "Who filters out the pressure groups? You need a curator to give a non-biased view of news."

At present, the combined revenue brought in by the online publishing industry is €200 million - roughly one-tenth of the revenue of web giant Google.

Keese said he believed people would be willing to pay for news content as long as it was easy. He said the new infrastructure, being built by Google, was "an important announcement".

Bunz agreed, saying most publishers work with Google because they are "the frenemy". But Bunz also questioned whether money was all people should want to get from digital journalism.

"It's a real threat that having to pay for news will make it more elite," she said.

Keese said there was little risk of newspapers shutting down if circulation kept falling, but he warned of the "big danger of papers falling into the hands of people who don't understand independent journalism". Referring specifically to oligarchs and industrialists controlling the media, as in Russia and in Italy, he said "society should have a close eye on whether this changes the type of journalism we get".

Third-year philosophy and economics undergraduate Caspar Gerleve asked the panel if the proliferation of low-end, trivial journalism was making it harder for quality journalism to reach the surface. Ehren said such a change has made people "less willing to pay for anything", while Keese said he was "torn as to whether journalism is of better quality now". He said, "Before, there was too much fat, and as you grow fatter, you grow slower. But some industries require a lot of reporters - if you cut down too much, the cliff approaches faster."

In the end, Ehren noted that from a public relations perspective, quality journalism through well-paid journalists was still necessary.

"Journalists are the gatekeepers to readers getting good coverage," he said, however, adding, "But paid content doesn't work. People won't pay for extra information which they can find elsewhere for free."

Israel Soc speaker cancels in security scare

Chris Rogers
Senior Reporter

The LSE Students' Union Israel Society was forced to cancel a lecture scheduled to be held last Monday, 14th February, after the speaker, Mudar Zahan, expressed concerns about his safety.

Mudar Zahan, a Jordanian of Palestinian heritage, describes himself as a Palestinian nationalist. Zahan, who lives in the UK as a political refugee, has worked as a strategist for the Embassy of the United States in Amman, Jordan, and writes for several pan-Arab media outlets, including the Arab Times and the Jerusalem Post.

Zahan attracted considerable attention last year after he published an article in the Jerusalem Post, heavily criticising the Jordanian government's treatment of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. In the article, Zahan referred to Jordan as an "apartheid" state. As a result of backlash to the article, Zahan has said he "will not publish any articles or reports in any language related to Jordanian domestic or foreign affairs".

According to Zahan, he has been "basically banned" from writing for several other Arabic publications, as a result of several other controversial comments

"toward taboo issues in the Middle East".

Gabi Kobrin, president of the Israel Society, told the Beaver the society invited Zahan because it "wanted to engage with a moderate voice from the other side of the debate".

"Zahan has an interesting perspective having been a struggling refugee", Kobrin added.

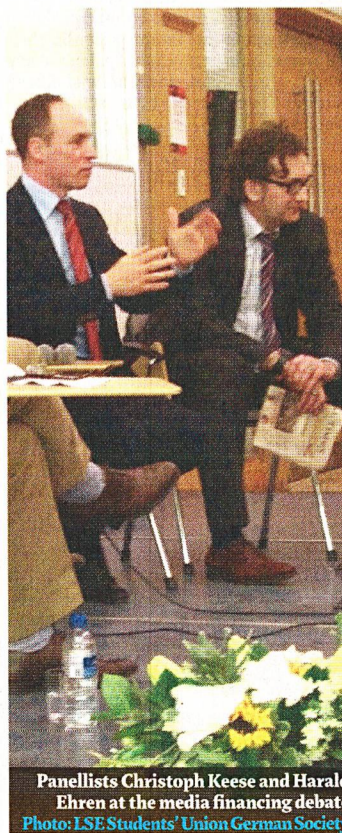
Kobrin said, "I do not think it had to do with the German Symposium since Mr. Zahan has had similar security problems before and he has ongoing safety issues especially when it comes to speaking in public."

Kobrin said should Zahan's security circumstances change in the future, the society would be willing to reschedule the event.

"We would definitely host Mr. Zahan again", Kobrin added.

Kobrin said the society does not anticipate similar problems with any of its upcoming speakers. She said no other events this year are expected to be cancelled for security reasons.

"Speakers are keen to come to the LSE to speak to Israel Society, but obviously not at the expense of their personal security", Kobrin said.



Panellists Christoph Keese and Harald Ehren at the media financing debate
Photo: LSE Students' Union German Society

Mr. LSE bares all for charity

Mehek Zafar

The LSE Athletics Union (AU) held its annual Mr. LSE contest last Wednesday, 16th February, in the Quad, in a night that was enjoyed by contestants and audience members alike.

The contest started with the twelve participants introducing themselves, by way of their names and an interesting fact. The eventual winner of the competition, Oliver Cook, a second-year government undergraduate, took the limelight in this part of the competition, stating that he was the youngest man to row the channel. This was followed by a "downing contest" where each contestant downed a pint, answered the judges' questions, and performed their talents.

One of the participants, Matt DeJesus, a second-year economics undergraduate, bench pressed a girl twelve times.

"I chose my talent because I really couldn't think of anything else I was good at, and could do for two minutes", DeJesus told the Beaver.

One audience member told the Beaver, "It was really entertaining. Guys that didn't impress judges got whipped cream in the face".

Moreover, contestants told the Beaver they had a great time showcasing their talents. One participant, first-year geography and economics undergraduate Alex Haigh, said, "I really enjoyed it, despite embarrassing myself a little bit".

"It was great to do something for my team and do something funny for charity", Haigh added.

DeJesus agreed. "It's a charity, and it's obviously a bit of fun", he said. "It's a really good way to involve the whole AU community".

The Mr. LSE contest served as more than just entertainment, raising £800 for the LSE Students' Union Raising and Giving (RAG) Society.

"Whoever says it objectifies anyone doesn't have a valid argument", Haigh said. "The contestants have agreed to do this, they are able to make their own decisions, and they have decided that this is a good, fun thing to do for their friends and for charity".



Photo courtesy of LSE Athletics Union

Cook, the winner, told the Beaver, "Winning Mr LSE has been a childhood dream come true, I want to thank everybody that has made it possible: my mum, the judges, my make up artists, RAG, my fellow contestants, and most importantly everyone who came to support the event". He added, "what better way to watch a man do a backflip, someone snort pepper whilst karate chopping a plank, a concert pianist, or a semi professional hip thruster, all in the name of charity, and of course the greatest title on Earth?"

"GTAs take on more classes...because the pay is insufficient" – UCU

» continued from page 1

pay between departments", Hartley said, adding the Teaching Task Force recommended, and the LSE Board of Directors accepted, the establishment of new, fractional contracts for all GTAs to work on two bands according to qualifications. Hartley said such new contracts were introduced during the 2009-10 academic year.

Steve Harris, head of LSE Human Resources, told the Beaver, "All LSE GTAs are employed on salaried contracts and, in common with all other salaried staff, are eligible for annual incremental progression up the scale within the standard range for their salary band, as well as any general pay awards which are applied to the scales".

The GTAs's survey also revealed junior academics who had taught at an higher education institution other than the LSE were more likely to have their prior teaching experience ignored by HR than their counterparts, who had taught only at the LSE. Of the 27 per cent of respondents who had taught elsewhere, 93 per cent had been placed on the lowest payment band,

according to the survey. This is despite HR guidelines stating all experienced GTAs should be placed above the minimum pay level.

"When new staff join the School, staff negotiate their starting salaries with departments within the relevant salary range and in light of HR starting salary guidance, and departments advise HR accordingly", Harris told the Beaver, adding, "Previous equivalent, or more senior, experience of teaching at other institutions would be a factor that would be taken into account in determining salaries".

According to certain GTAs, contracts placing teaching assistants on the wrong pay scales were slow to be corrected. Some GTAs told the Beaver they were advised by members of the UCU to sign a faulty contract or face months without pay.

One GTA in the Department of International Relations, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told the Beaver, "It was a question of timing. It was either sign the contract, which I knew to be wrong, or face upwards of eight weeks with zero pay, while HR corrected it". "This issue has got nothing to do with new rights for GTAs", the source added. "It is about individual departments and HR following existing guidelines".

Some GTAs claim there has been a

lack of synchronisation between individual academic departments and HR in resolving such issues.

A PhD student in the Department of Accounting, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told the Beaver, "After I had been advised about what was going on, I went to the departmental secretary, but to little affect".

Some critics claim there is a link between the gripes of GTAs and the LSE's relatively low performance in student satisfaction surveys and other university rankings.

Last year, the Sunday Times University Guide graded the LSE's teaching quality 134 points, out of a possible 250, compared to University of St. Andrews, which scored 178, the University of York, which earned 180, and the University of Durham, which received 184.

"The LSE treats our teaching contracts as though they are doing us a favour by giving us classroom experience at all," an assistant in the Department of Geography, speaking anonymously, told the Beaver, adding, "The reality is with the current pay structure; there is no incentive to innovate, reform or improve. The same courses are taught over and over, unchanged from the year before."

"It is true that GTAs take on more classes than we, or they, might like to, because the pay is insufficient", Mike Cushman, UCU secretary at the School, told the Beaver, adding, "Consequently, the quality of teaching may suffer".

"GTAs already do more work than they are paid for", Cushman said.

Entry-level GTAs are currently compensated £7,068 per annum, according to the School website. GTAs are paid to teach classes, attend course lectures, hold office hours and carry out one hour of class preparation.

"One element of the Students' Union campaign this year was to bring post-graduates into the fold", Education Officer Ashok Kumar told the Beaver, adding, "We have consistently pushed the university to increase the training, establish collective bargaining, and increase and standardize the wages of GTAs".

Controversial film-maker Visits Hayek Society

Liam Brown

Filmmaker Martin Durkin delivered a lecture last Thursday evening, 17th February, at the invitation of the LSE Students' Union's Hayek Society, discussing the difficulties he finds being a neoliberal in the British media.

A filmmaker and managing director of WAG TV, an independent television production company, Durkin has attracted controversy for his documentary films, produced for Channel 4. One of his most-recognised films, 2007's *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, faced stiff criticism for its suggestion of political motivation behind the scientific consensus on global warming. Ofcom, the independent regulator of UK communications, was swarmed with complaints, but ultimately ruled against any action censoring the film.

During Thursday's lecture at the LSE, Durkin criticised Ofcom and British public broadcasters. He claimed that due to the political views of many working for these institutions, a neoliberal viewpoint is not tolerated on UK television networks.

"The middle class, anti-capitalist views of the people who are in the BBC are given free reign", Durkin said, adding, "Likewise, at Channel 4."

Durkin said he believes this would not be the case if British broadcasters were privatised, and regulators relaxed restrictions on British television programmes. He said if the UK adopted a regulatory system similar to that of the United States, whereby broadcasters are influenced primarily by ratings and not by political ideology, different political positions would be more tolerated.

Durkin also said the British public wants neoliberal ideas, pointing to the success of such newspapers as the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*.

Also on Thursday, Durkin discussed his latest film, *Britain's Trillion Pound Horror Story*, produced for Channel 4. The

film, a polemic deriding the expansion of the UK's public sector and increases in state control over education and health care, is Durkin's first since *The Great Global Warming Swindle*.

Durkin described the years since *The Great Global Warming Swindle* as spent "inside the Channel 4 cryogenic freezer", but added he was happy to be making documentaries once again.

In regards to the UK health care system, Durkin told Thursday's audience, "It's obvious NHS hospitals are awful".

Durkin said the UK should look at privatising education, in a manner similar to charter schools in the United States.

Durkin also discussed his plans to produce two other films, including a documentary about Margaret Thatcher's eleven years as Prime Minister of the UK, as well as an exposé on the British greenbelt system and state planning.

Nick Zaiac, a General Course student and member of the Hayek society told the Beaver after Thursday's event that he enjoyed the talk, saying, "I found it to be very enlightening".

Many who attended the lecture expressed similar sentiments. Indeed, a number of audience members went with Durkin to the pub after the lecture for an informal chat about neoliberalism in the British media.

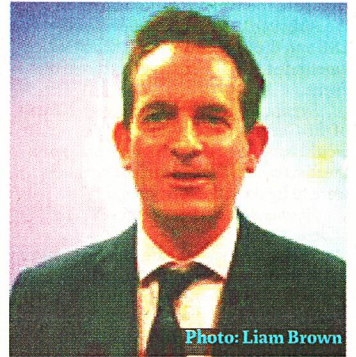


Photo: Liam Brown

Ex-President of Bolivia reflects on status of his nation

Marion Koob
Senior Reporter

Carlos Mesa, a former president of Bolivia during a lecture at the LSE last week. The lecture, held on Tuesday 15th February, was chaired by Dr. Francisco Panizza, a senior lecturer in Latin American politics in the LSE Department of Government.

During the lecture, Mesa highlighted the progress Bolivia has made toward ensuring indigenous rights since Evo Morales, the country's current president, took office in 2006.

"The population of Bolivia has the highest percentage of indigenous peoples in Latin America, along with Guatemala", Mesa said. "Evo Morales has become their political face".

Morales has said he is the first indigenous Latin American head of state. In 2009, he initiated a constitutional reform, the first of its kind in the region, to hold a separate clause recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, notably their ownership over certain natural resources.

"This is a positive change, but comes with the risk that the non-indigenous segment of Bolivia be excluded from the public discourse", Mesa said.

Mesa also spoke of increasing economic disparities among Latin American countries.

Mesa said Central American nations, notably Mexico, currently compete with China with respect to exports to the United States, while trade within South America had increased dramatically.

"Brazil will be one of the greatest five economic powers in twenty years, while Bolivia has little significant industrial development and 90 per cent of Venezuela's economy relies on oil exports".

Mesa also said Latin America has diverged in its political responses to the failings of neoliberalism. While Chile and Brazil have chosen a "centre way", combining a recognition of the role of the market and a strong commitment to social investment, he said, many countries, such as Venezuela, have maintained radical, anti-market rhetoric while, in practice, avoiding its implementation.

"The Venezuela economy is still very dependent on trade with the United States", Mesa said, adding, "Yet overall, there is a new respect for the role of the state—a sentiment that if something belongs to the state it is also mine".

Regarding Bolivia, Mesa argued it is essential for the country diversify away from its reliance on natural resources, adding, "they are always a chance and a malediction".

"Our infrastructure and geography has made us less competitive than other countries in the region—we should remedy to this".

During a question-and-answer session following the lecture, one student raised a question about Venezuela's influence on the current Bolivian government.

"Undoubtedly, there are strong ties between Hugo Chavez and Morales", Mesa responded. "But Morales distinguishes himself in aspiring to be a leader within the region on the matter of indigenous rights".

After the event, Panizza told the Beaver he thought it was a "very good presentation".

"While he is in opposition to Morales, I thought he was always fair and balanced in his appraisal of the Bolivian government", Panizza said, adding, "He showed a sophisticated understanding of the country's problems".

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GRIMSHAW
SOCIETY

UK, you truly are a heartbreaker.

Comment
- page 8

Comment

Sam Vimes

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE *Medical miracle or bureaucratic balls-up?*



LANGTON

If I was to name a few of my favourite things about Great Britain (aside from Keith Richards and Yorkshire pudding) it would be the National Health Service.

Without meaning to sound too dramatic, free health care is a significant benchmark for a civilisation to reach, and should not be threatened, purely on the basis that citizens deserve it as both a social and moral right. It is a depressing state of affairs when someone is turned away from a hospital because they lack the correct insurance, or simply cannot afford treatment. We should be immensely proud of the NHS, and shouldn't let the odd deluded American or insane neo-liberal make us think otherwise.

It has, however, come under major criticism due to its inefficiency in both cost and delivery of service. This accusation is unfortunately quite difficult to defend against. Nationalised industries are pretty infamous for being inefficient and costly, but that is not even a remotely good enough reason for privatisation. Those who find Thatcherist ideology boner-inducing often seem to think the only way of making something cost-efficient is to privatise it, which would in turn lead to better service delivery due to increased competition.

No, put your boner away. The competitiveness that gives rise to cost efficiency and high quality services can be implemented without privatisation, and without exposing a delicate service such as health to a money orientated market. Regulating hospitals, setting targets, and giving doctors and staff incentives can imitate the competitiveness and resulting efficiency

of a private market without excluding less well-off members of society. Health care being anything less than nationalised in a country such as the UK is nothing short of immoral.

Just as a side-point, the idea of the NHS was proposed as a universal form of welfare to help improve and rebuild Britain after the Second World War. Being one of the greatest post-War developments, you'd have to be quite heartless to be against it. Not only are you completely immoral, but you're against what was one of the most important systems of welfare in Britain's development after our conflict with the Third Reich. If that's not logic, I don't know what is.

Besides, I think most of us would agree the NHS doesn't do a too bad of a job. With a bit of regulation and a few incentives it can fulfil the government's moral obligations, while at the same time leaving the neo-liberals among us nearly as satisfied as they are after a furious session over a Thatcher portrait.

Not only is the NHS an obligation of the government, and perfectly capable of offering a high quality service cost-efficiently, but it has become symbolic of Britain's dedication towards its people, and it should get nothing but love in return. After an altercation with a lorry last year, my heart melted at the sight of an NHS vehicle arriving next to me, because it is a symbol to be trusted, regardless of how it is sometimes portrayed in the media. Those with a fetish for the free market can tempt us with promises of a better service and accusations of inefficiency, but it will take more than that to erode the country's affection and trust in the NHS.

So, the next time you get cut up by a lorry, or find yourself with itchy genitals a few days after taking someone home from Crush (I jest, LSE students don't need sex when there's essays to write), the NHS will welcome you with open arms, and you can nestle safely in its beautifully free bosom. ☺

Free health care is a significant benchmark for a civilisation to reach, and should not be threatened

Social injustice might actually reside within the NHS, not in its absence.

As has emerged over the preceding weeks, my sympathies lie within that area of the spectrum that is traditionally occupied by the Conservative Party. I have defended the indefensible – the Big Society and budget cuts; desired the undesirable – tuition fees increases; and praised the un-praiseworthy – free schools. On a campus with a political wing that, shall we say, doesn't treat these views with fondness, establishing myself as a beacon of Tory scum was a silly move. But please, reserve your judgement for now for I am about to commit a graver sin. I am about to ask (insert drum roll here): do we even need the NHS?

Only an article challenging the existence of the People's Liberation Army or the Indian Railway Service could lose me more friends than this. The NHS employs more than 1.3 million people in the UK. That is over 2 per cent of the total workforce. The PLA employs 2.3 million people; Indian Railways, 1.5 million. Though the number of employees in these cases are greater, they represent a far smaller portion of their respective workforces. Perhaps this isn't intrinsically problematic. Perhaps NHS employees enjoy their work, and they all contribute in their various ways to keeping the British population healthy and alive. Sure. But as I said, I am going to think the unthinkable. I am going to defy the orthodoxy, and suggest that social injustice might actually reside within the NHS, not in its absence.

There are numerous weapons with which one can sneak up on the great, fat, bloated NHS beast and deliver it with a fatal blow. Let me use efficiency. It is comparatively uncontroversial to assert the supremacy of free, capitalist markets as generators of efficiency. If a product is delivered in a free market, prices, producers and products find themselves subject to the ruthless vicissitudes of supply and demand. Competitive markets that reward innovation and consumer-satisfaction, and that punish inefficient production and delivery (all through the



WILLIAMS

medium of price) have, historically, been proven as the ideal habitat of production and exchange. Harnessing market forces for the purposes of health care delivery is a better option than simply having the state using tax revenues to monopolise the provision of public health care. We wouldn't allow the state to monopolise the lawnmower industry. We understand that lawnmowers are better if provided by private firms with strong incentives to deliver good lawnmowers in a competitive market. Why doesn't the same principle apply to healthcare? If we want superior quality care, leaving it to private firms in a competitive market makes the most sense.

Of course, stopping here is probably too unthinkable. Government playing a role in regulating the standard of care that is provided (as it does in other industries that it doesn't monopolise) is certainly desirable. Adopting a scheme of compulsory insurance, with tax-revenues financing the demands of the very poorest, would also work. I am told the German system operates like this, to great effect.

I am reminded, too, of a quote from Hayek. Giving the government the power to regulate economic exchange, or monopolise the provision of important goods, centralises power. As we know, power corrupts. Vulgar managerial salaries and the self-serving creation of a vast and intractable bureaucratic jungle in the NHS have demonstrated this. And where do we find ourselves when faced with such a powerful and monolithic governmental machine? Well on the road to serfdom. I don't like the sound of where this one goes. ☺



NHS - a circus?
Photo: flickr user Dubber

Quick COMMENT

Why have you stopped going to Crush?

Because it's shit, and it always was.

– Duncan McKenna, 2nd year, BSc Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method

Going to Crush is a gamble as to whether you're going to have a good time or not – the last time I went, it really wasn't worth the trip.

– Shrini Poojara, 2nd year, BSc Economics

Lent term work load is insane and I prefer having a relaxing Friday night by going to the pub

– Deep Shah, 1st year, BSc Mathematics and Economics

It doesn't get busy until very late and there are better places to go where you don't end up soaked in snakebites and other people's sweat.

– Thomas B Nguyen, 2nd year, BSc International Relations

I come back home most Friday evenings. I would never bother to stay back for Crush.

– Harshil Shah, 2nd year, BSc Economics

No one goes to Crush because everyone thinks no one else is going! It's a self-perpetuating cycle of non-attendance.

– John Peart, 1st year, BSc Government and Economics

If more people went I'd go but no one does

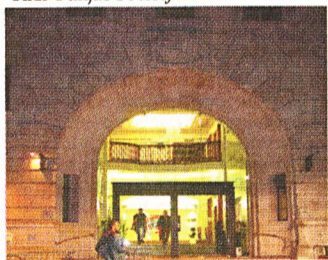
– Christopher Toft, 2nd year, BSc Economic History

No one got over the trauma of the first Crush of 2009. That's why.

– John Maguire, 3rd year, LLB Laws

I like going when it's Bhangra Crush. It's a good place to jam but that's only when there is an event that everyone knows about.

– Ravandeep Kaur Khela, President, Sikh-Punjab Society



NEXT WEEK...

Lets See Europe- What else can LSE stand for?

Send in your submissions!

Email comment@thebeaveronline.

The concept that 'prison works' was first argued by Michael Howard, then the Home Secretary, in 1993 and subsequently quoted by politicians from across the political spectrum. This mantra laid the foundations for a rise in the prison population from just over 40,000 in the early 1990s to 85,000 by 2011. Both the Conservative and Labour governments aimed to reduce offending by increasing prison numbers. Not since Douglas Hurd was Home Secretary in the late 1980s has any front-bench politician encouraged sparing use of prison sentences. This view has been increasingly influenced by the modern obsession with 'risk' and the belief that prisons are needed to protect the public from dangerous criminals. The argument is that tough prison sentences deter criminals and reduce crime rates by taking offenders off the streets.

However, the 'prison works' mantra is finally being challenged, and the challenge is coming from an unlikely source. In the green paper 'Breaking the Cycle', Conservative Justice Secretary Ken Clarke has proposed significant changes to current sentencing practices and prisoner rehabilitation programmes. Clarke has used statistics on recidivism to highlight the current failings of our prisons. Rates in the UK are high; "despite a 50 per cent increase in the budget for prisons and managing offenders in the last ten years, almost half of all adult offenders released from custody re-offend within a year".

Relationship status: It's complicated

Is Facebook responsible for the undoing of the 'I do'?

Andreas

Kuersten



Recently there has been a number of opinion articles and blogs decrying the effect that Facebook and other social networking sites are having on marriage. These sites are accused of destroying an ever-increasing amount of unions and ruining this institution's sanctity. But is there anything there to be destroyed? For me, these social networking sites are actually taking a bite out of romance, not marriage.

This is because there is a fundamental flaw in the idea that marriage is some holy institution that can be defiled by any sort of activity, actor, social networking site, etc. It is not the magical representation of love that people seem to make it out to be. It's true that those involved make certain vows, proclaim things, and make a show of commitment, but in the end they are simply exchanging jewellery and words. They are not casting spells of loyalty over one another or themselves and the promises and vows they make are just as flimsy as any others. Those who get married remain the exact same people who they were before the ceremony or act and the only things holding them together remain their own personal love, devotion, and respect for one another.

Further dismantling of any sort of mystique from the institution of marriage is the fact that it has been completely co-opted by the state. It is simply a sanctioned label for two people who have chosen to engage in a legal contract together; those who do gain a certain state status and state benefits.

These assertions are backed up by information from the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) which keeps track of marriage and divorce statistics in the United States. In 2009 for every 1,000 people there were 6.8 marriages and 3.4 divorces. This gives marriage a 2:1 advantage, but also means that marriages have only a 50 per cent chance of success. According to the Office for National Statistics this chance is even smaller in the United Kingdom. Here, there were approximately 136,026 divorces in 2008 compared with 232,990 marriages, giving marriage only a 42 per cent chance of success. Not too prosperous for such a highly held union.

With this in mind we can now turn to what has been labelled as the reason for why social networking sites are said to be ruining the sanctity of marriage. These sites make it infinitely easier for people to reconnect with lost loves from their past. Contact is made, phone numbers exchanged, meetings arranged, old flames rekindled, and marriages ended in order to

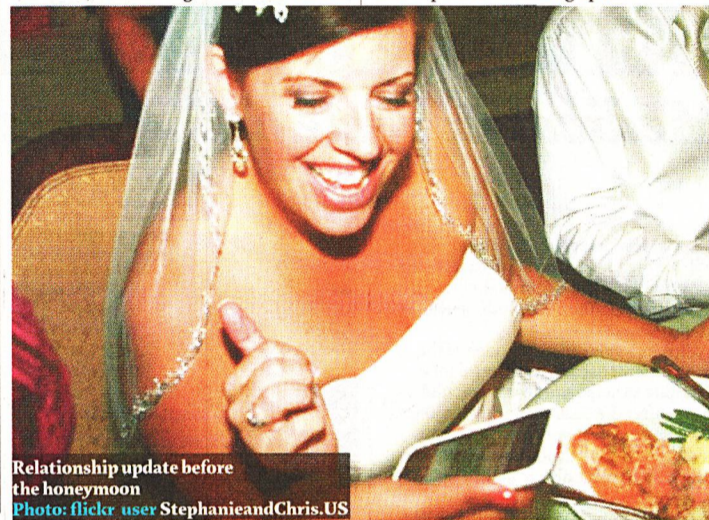
pursue 'the one that got away.' According to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 81 per cent of its members have either used or been faced with evidence from social networking sites in divorce cases. As reported by Currents earlier this year, a reverend in New Jersey even got to the point where he banned Facebook because twenty couples from his church divorced or had marital troubles because of the site after spouses reconnected with former loves.

Yet this situation should not be viewed with respect to its impact on marriage. Marriage is after all, as argued above, simply a legal label with no inherent value of its own. What matters is the love, devotion, and respect that may or may not exist beyond this label. This is what is at stake with the growing use of social networking sites, and through this lens what is occurring can be seen as both sad and romantic at the same time. Half of these spouses are ending up heart-broken

as they are left for others, while the other half are discovering what they had been missing and getting a second chance to be truly happy.

With regard to those born into a world where these sites are commonplace is where this discussion leads back to my argument that social networking sites are actually having a detrimental effect on romance rather than marriage. As these sites became popular, those who previously had no convenient method for finding and contacting lost loves suddenly gained this ability and were able to be reconnected after extended periods of time of feeling helpless to do anything. Those growing up with this option at their fingertips, however, no longer have this chance at reconnection and romance. They have the means to contact anyone from their past constantly at their fingertips and therefore any reunion with a former love after a long time is simply an admission of laziness and the fact that this former love ranks fairly low on one's list of priorities. One cannot say, "I've finally found you after years of trying everything!" One can only say, "I finally decided to actually put some effort into looking for you by typing your name into a search bar, friending you, and writing you a quick message." All within a matter of minutes. Considerably less romantic.

So don't let a superficial focus on marriage distract you from what is really disappearing through social networking sites. Something ingrained in our culture that is actually magical and romantic is being lost: the chance at reconnection and the fulfillment of long lost love. So long to actual reunions on the order of countless modern films and novels through which such occasions have become synonymous with romance and something to be aspired to. This is what should be lamented.



Relationship update before the honeymoon
Photo: flickr user StephanieandChris.US

Prisoner's dilemma

Jail time will be wasted time if offenders are not rehabilitated

Alice

Ward



(Breaking the Cycle, 2010)

The argument that prisons are failing because re-offending rates are high presumes that the aim of prisons is to rehabilitate offenders. There are many who would argue that the focus of our criminal justice system should be on punishment and deterrence, and not on helping offenders become useful members of society. Clarke's response to this is that "the criminal justice system cannot remain an expensive way of giving the public a break from offenders". He is absolutely right in this assertion; the idea that the justice system's only aim should be punishment is outdated and proven to be ineffectual. Of course the system should be able to deliver punishment, but this needs to be carefully balanced with a primary focus on effective rehabilitation programmes. For many first time offenders and petty criminals, a prison sentence is not the answer.

In the green paper 'Breaking the Cycle' Ken Clarke has proposed initiatives to reduce re-offending and significant changes to current sentencing practices. Providers will be paid to reduce re-offending, and Clarke plans at least six new rehabilitation programmes. Clarke's proposals aim to transform prisons into places of hard work, instead of enforced idleness. The hope is that education and useful skills will provide prisoners with a means of finding work once leaving prison. Prisoners themselves certainly think this will help, 68 per cent named a job as the most important factor in preventing them going back to a life of crime. In terms of sentencing Clarke proposes an emphasis on unpaid work as part of community sentences, alongside tagging and curfews. This looks to be a step in the right direction; prisoners starting a community

punishment under probation supervision have a re-offending rate 7 per cent below those discharged from short-term prison sentences of twelve months or less (Ministry of Justice Reoffending Statistics 2010). Judges will have to decide between short custodial sentences that offer little prospect of reform, but deliver the punishment expected by the public, and community sentences that appear lenient but offer a better prospect of breaking the cycle of re-offending.

Despite these positive signs, there are some aspects of the plans that are concerning. Efforts are focused on rehabilitation within prison, yet it is only a low number of defendants that actually end up with prison sentences. Focusing on those who enter the prison system will not have maximum impact on the level of crime. The government must also examine the root causes of crime, and attempt to address deeper issues in society. The 'rehabilitation revolution' is set in the context of the Big Society, aiming to increase the role of communities in crime prevention. One way of giving more power to local people is the introduction of directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners. The goal is to increase accountability but in reality this risks over-politicising the police. Another challenge for Clarke will be initiating a 'rehabilitation revolution' among cuts to the budgets of many vital charities involved in rehabilitation, such as mental health and drug and alcohol charities. This will prove extremely difficult for prisons attempting to improve their rehabilitation programmes.

Clarke's 'rehabilitation revolution' is attempting to bring about much needed and generally positive change in our justice system. There are some concerns that need addressing, but Clarke has initiated a debate which we desperately need to have. Finally, the government is admitting that prison doesn't always work.

It's you, not me

The UK will break up with all international students post graduation

Griffin

W. Carpenter



As soon as I entered the LSE as an overseas student, I really thought we made a connection. Now, after only a few months together, you've broken my heart.

"We can't go on like this". With Home Secretary Theresa May's first words to Parliament outlining new immigration reforms, I knew it was over. Her guarantee that "we will have to take action across all routes to entry – work visas, student visas, family visas" was just cruel detail, and the crushing blow was delivered with the proposed closure of the post-study work route.

I thought you and I were going to work out. I thought we might even be looking at our future together. But no. Believe me, I'm all too familiar with rejection, but I think I deserve a real reason. I don't understand, immigrants have "no recourse to public funds" and are therefore not able to claim most benefits, tax credits, or housing assistance paid by the state. Further, visas for international students have been shown to increase trade between donor and recipient nations. Least I even mention that these immigration reforms will do little to curb numbers because students and workers from other EU countries cannot be restricted from entering the country.

I don't wish to sound cruel, but there is something rather ironic about this nostalgic yearning to return to years of prosperity and global power by denying me, and all those like me, the chance to contribute to that prosperity and to be a part of your life.

It seems that one inescapable conclusion remains: there's another man. He's from an area of high unemployment, he reads the tabloid press about ethnic

conflict, and most importantly, he votes. In his mind if I work, I'm stealing a job from a 'native Brit'. If I don't work then I'm a dole scrounger. For you, his opinions matter much more than my objections. Unfortunately for him, the jobs being cre-

I thought you and I were going to work out, I thought we might even be looking at our future together. But no

ated in the new economy require British workers and students to have access to affordable education and training. Recent news about cutbacks and reforms tells me your future together is damaged.

UK, you truly are a heartbreaker.

Get involved at
www.lsesu.com/campaigns/dge

Thilo in the thick of it

From the Hong Kong Theatre to the Hilton – was holding the panel discussion justified?

Marina Gerner



The LSE showed embarrassing double standards when it decided to cancel an integration debate which involved Thilo Sarrazin and Henryk Broder, on its premises, while failing to cancel a lecture by Abdel Bari Atwan only a few months earlier.

A spokesperson of the LSE cited “safety and security reasons” as the explanation as to why they decided to withdraw its offer to host the debate on its premises. Meanwhile, Sir Howard Davies was in Sicily and could not be contacted.

Within half an hour the organisers of the German Society managed to redirect the event to the nearby Waldorf Hilton, moving the sound system, three camera teams, twenty accredited journalists, hundreds of students who came to see the event.

The reasons for the protests against the debate as well as its following cancellation seemed so abstruse to me, I had to draw myself a ‘mind map’ in an attempt to understand the course of events.

The questions that have to be asked are: who are Thilo Sarrazin and Abdel Bari Atwan, and why were they invited to speak at the LSE?

Atwan is editor-in-chief of London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper. The LSE Students’ Union Palestine Society invited him to speak on the subject of how much influence the Zionist lobby exerts in the US and UK in December. Mr Atwan accused Jewish students of “bombing Gaza”, referred to the “Jewish lobby” and refused to condemn Hamas, saying: “Would you want me to condemn those who are resisting the occupation?” (as reported by the Jewish Chronicle). He has previously been captured on video in 2007 on MEMRI TV saying: “If the Iranian missiles strike Israel – by Allah, I will go to Trafalgar Square and dance with delight if the Iranian missiles strike Israel.”

The integration debate which was scheduled to be held on Monday was hosted by the German Society and involved Thilo Sarrazin, who has become the focus of attention for protesters against the debate. Sarrazin has been described as an “anti-Semitic banker” by the Independent as well as the Facebook group of protesters. However it is important to note that he is neither an anti-Semite nor a banker.

Sarrazin used to be a politician and was the head of finance of the State of Berlin and subsequently served on the executive board of the German Bundesbank. Since the release of his book *Germany Does Itself In*, he’s been asked to leave the Social Democratic Party and has also decided to step down from his position at the Bundesbank. And this book is the only thing he is nowadays representative of in German Society.

Allegations of him being an anti-Semite stem from his comment that “Jews share a certain gene of intelligence.” In post-WWII society it understandably causes outrage to speak of Jewish genetics, however, I personally do not take his comment as anything but a compliment.

According to Halacha, a person who is born to a Jewish mother is Jewish (genetic definition) as well as a person who converts to Judaism (confessional definition). Both definitions have existed alongside each other for centuries. German-Israeli writer Chaim Noll argues that while it is understandable why it is a taboo to relate Jewish identity with genetics in Europe, it is a different debate in Israel. Although research into Jewish genetic makeup by scientists such as Doron M. Behar and Harry Ostrer, who published articles linking Jewish identity and genetic constellations, led to a range of debates, these debates are conducted more openly and without hysteria in Israel, without the immediate fear of allegations of racism, writes Chaim Noll.

Jonathan Hoffman, chairman of the UK Zionist Federation, responded to

protesters about the alleged anti-Semitism involved by stating that “Sarrazin’s statement is not wholly accurate, for two reasons. One, because it is possible to convert to Judaism and because not all Jews share a particular gene. But certainly some do.” He added that “Sarrazin’s statement may have been inaccurate, but it certainly was not anti-Semitic. Anyone who says it is plain wrong.”

Protesters also claimed Sarrazin to be xenophobic, yet, when asked on the panel he described transformations in the German population as a natural phenomenon “in the same way that winter is abolished by spring”. He insisted that he was in favour of immigration, as long as they were willing to integrate into German society by accepting its democratic values and laws. When criticised by the audience for presenting flawed statistics when discussing the disintegration of Turkish immigrants in Germany, Sarrazin replied that he would be happy to see an alternative research to his own, and that he is willing to debate different solutions.

In contrast, when Atwan was challenged by a student, he responded with petty insults. While Sarrazin was willing to engage in a constructive debate, Atwan clearly wasn’t. There are more differences between the two cases that seem to be of significance.

Firstly, Sarrazin was invited to speak at the LSE as part of a panel, whereas Atwan came to speak alone. The three other speakers on the panel were Ali Kizilkaya, the chair of the Islam Council of Germany, Hellmuth Karasek, literary critic and Henryk Broder, writer and journalist, who is by the way, Jewish. It is interesting to note that all speakers of the integration debate, apart from Sarrazin, have a migrant background, a point which speaks for itself.

Secondly, what is the broader framework in which a lecture is chosen to be held at the LSE? The panel discussion falls into the broader integration debate that is taking place in Europe and that was thematised by Merkel as well as Sarkozy and Cameron, in their respective speeches on the ‘failure of multiculturalism’. Which broader framework does Atwan’s lecture fall into, if not into that of anti-Semitism?

The third difference lies in the conduct and atmosphere a lecture creates at a university. While the panel discussion took place in a peaceful manner, apart from one protester shouting “fascists” at the audience, Mr Atwan descended to the kind of statements that made at least one audience member leave the venue in tears. These three differences cannot be ignored.

The protests in Egypt have shown that Facebook groups such as “We are all Khalid Saeed” can mobilise masses and become symbolic of a whole social movement. Yet, the group that organised itself on Facebook to protest against the panel discussion does not speak for or represent the German students of the LSE.

Anyone who attended the panel discussion can bear witness that those protesters could have hardly posed a security threat to the event. They were almost outnumbered by the number of security people present at the venue. It is therefore hard to believe that the university felt it could not have provided adequate security for those protesters.

I do not say that I agree with Sarrazin’s point of view, neither do I want to restrict Atwan’s freedom of speech, but we have to differentiate between free speech and hate speech.

Days before the event, the German Society received emails from the LSE’s Free Speech Group, giving the green light for the event, before it was spontaneously cancelled. Where was the Free Speech Group when Atwan came to speak?



Sarrazin’s falling-out with the LSE
Photo: LSE Students’ Union German Society

THE DAY I LEFT THE GERMAN SOCIETY

As an opening event for its Symposium, the German Society chose to invite Thilo Sarrazin to a panel discussion on Valentine’s day. Sarrazin turned best-selling author in Germany saying that immigrants with Arabic backgrounds had less able children. According to him these groups were eroding the key German resource – “intelligence” – through their higher birth rates. All political parties in Germany have distanced themselves from this ideology, which is eugenic and racist.

This did not stop the German Society from inviting Sarrazin. Instead, they also invited Sarrazin’s few public supporters, like the journalist Henryk Broder, to his aid. The tickets for the event quickly sold out, but students were told there would be places on a first come first serve basis. An hour before the scheduled event I queued up in front of the Hong Kong Theatre. Thirty minutes later we were informed that the event would take place in another venue, which would be bigger so that more people without tickets could find a place. We were lead to the nearby Waldorf Hilton, where we waited another hour. When all the people with tickets had finally gone through, the hotel shut both doors and instructed us to leave. “We are a five star hotel. Please go now.”

Most people had come to speak up against this gentleman’s racism, which is applauded by his book sales and has earned Sarrazin millions of Euros in royalties. It is sad that the LSE hosts such a tentative event and it is embarrassing how the German Society staged it. While walking to catch the Tube, I met Henryk Broder on his way to the Hilton. That was an hour after the event was scheduled to start. I did not talk to him. He was on his way to a discussion designed to be comfortable for him, while I was on my way to leave the German Society.

Jan Bergerhoff

Maximilian Thorman



The idea of courage is a very odd phenomenon. It is something understood and known, often aspired and sought after, yet often mistakenly interchanged with the idea of celebrity. Whereas the idea of courage carries in it the notion of merit and fame, I can gain celebrity by stealing the LSE penguin from outside the bookshop.

A similar mistake seems to have been committed by a group of people demonstrating against the debate about “integration”, held by the LSE Students’ Union German Society last Monday within the context of their German Symposium. Invited was Dr. Thilo Sarrazin, a controversial former central banker, and his appearance seems to have triggered the idea in some that this is something to gain fame from easily.

It must be noted, first of all, that Thilo Sarrazin is an author. In eight chapters he wrote about wrong incentives of the welfare state, the problem of lack of education in large parts of the poorer population, the challenges of globalisation and long-term growth and the integration of immigrants. All are topics that should be of some interest to the student of an institution dedicated to the social sciences. Sarrazin, without doubt, has a weakness for statistics and number crunching and comes up with some solutions that require discussion. He is, however, neither a racist nor a fascist. He himself gives examples in his book of how the same statistics can be interpreted in different ways. During his discussion of education and immigration he extensively quotes arguments by Muslims, such as Navid Kermani, Necla Kelek or Seyran Ates. Much of what he writes in his book is not new, and has been said before. It is noteworthy that most of his ideas and analyses regarding immigration are quoted rather than originating from his own head.

There is a firm stance against fascism in Germany. Extremist protests attract public attention through their counter-movements rather than through the number of attendees. It is easy to speak out openly against any form of racism in Germany and difficult, thankfully, to argue in favour of it. When a small group of people, wanting to read ideas of fascism in Sarrazin’s book, think they are courageous by protesting against a demagogue, well, they are not. None of the students in the audience attended the panel discussion because they were eager to hear a rhetoric blow against all forms of immigration but because they were interested in the personality of Sarrazin and because they wanted to hear arguments. At least the latter seems to be a strange concept to

some. Criticising a panel discussion because they do not regard it as “representative”, but at the same time demanding to read a declaration that represents the criticism of only a handful is a quite funny way of leading oneself ad absurdum.

Instead, by students that call themselves “academics” I would have expected the ability to raise their hands during question time if they did not agree with him. Yet, all this brilliant group came up with were statements such as “Immigrants are leaving because of you”, “Look, I am not German and I am integrated” and “There are not enough women in this room”. Even the representatives of the Free Speech Group, however quick to censor Sarrazin on campus on the day of the debate, were unfortunately slow to censor themselves. Not very impressive and rather an embarrassing indication that no one was really interested in engaging with the disputants.

The Students’ Union was not much help either. Instead of supporting a free debate, opening up a discussion for students or trying to communicate between the different parties, it thwarted success as best as it could. The Community and Welfare Officer, as quoted last week, relayed the Free Speech Group’s advice, that of postponing the debate to another day. I doubt this is something one would dare say to Goldman Sachs if it threatened one’s graduate scheme. It’s a good example of how even power that reaches from the Kingsley Rooms to the Quad can corrupt. Angela Merkel, who apparently enjoys high authority as a literary critic even at the LSE, would have called this proposal “not helpful”. It seems to me a good idea to first consult foreign heads of state before inviting people to the LSE, especially if they have not read the book. Unfortunately, the Students’ Union only cares for a discussion if it is in complete ignorance about it. The éclat caused by Abdel Bari Atwan was foreseeable and it says a lot about the Students’ Union and students that protested not against him but against Sarrazin. This is bigotry and hurts the reputation of this university more than a half-talented German author could. Anti-fascism always blossoms best where it meets no resistance.

It is an embarrassment for the LSE that the German Society felt compelled to move the event to the Waldorf Hilton, causing a degree of disturbance and costs that were not justifiable. The university does away with itself if it is neither able to grant the right of free speech to someone who clearly moves within the boundaries of the constitution nor engage in a critical discussion with him. Granting the right to speak to Gaddafi, to the Al-Mujaharoun or to the Russian Foreign Minister, but not to Sarrazin, is a violation of the great democratic tradition this country once found itself in. Next time he should just offer attendees internships, and I reckon the complaints will stop. After all, it is always about celebrity at this university – never courage.

Letters to the Editor

Sir – I was appalled to read that a German Society spokesperson claimed they were “not aware” that the invitation of right-wing populist Thilo Sarrazin to the annual German symposium “would attract this much protest” (“German Society rejects School’s advice, moves debate off-campus”, *The Beaver*, 15th April 2011). In fact, Messrs Sarrazin, Fleischhauer and Broder all have dubious reputations – albeit of varying degrees – as professional provocateurs in Germany, cynically promoting book sales by stirring up controversy. Knowing this business model, it is absurd for the German Society to claim they were surprised by the reactions to the guest list. Germany’s future ‘elites’ here at LSE should live up to their social responsibility of fostering unprejudiced debate in wider society. Instead, the German Society is exploiting political scandal to promote their symposium – an act as irresponsible as their guests’ antics. LSE students claiming *ex post* a lack of analyti-

cal ability “to understand the causes of things” is just pathetic.

Yours sincerely,

Carsten Nickel

The Beaver | 22 February 2011

Features

On Clegg, condoms and Howie D.

Luke Smolinski interviews the Guardian's Steve Bell

Steve Bell, satirical cartoonist for the Guardian, has a beard which looks suspiciously like Karl Marx's. Were this the only characteristic the two men share, I'd dismiss it as pure coincidence. However, the similarities do not end there. He told me that Blair was a man of the right, that the Guardian is "not left-wing" and that the Labour government of the 1970s was not left-wing enough for him. With views like these, he is on the fast-track to being sneered at in a Beaver editorial.

We began by talking about the 1980s. He said that when he woke up on the morning after Margaret Thatcher was elected in 1979, he thought he was in for four years of "utter bleeding misery". He said, "I never knew it would drag on for 11 years of the old bitch!"

He said that while the press praised her at the time, he saw her as a psychopath. "But 90% of the press was right-wing then," he said, adding that it was just the same today. So much so that people think the Guardian is left-wing. "The Guardian is not left-wing," he said, "The Guardian has always been a liberal paper. But Margaret Thatcher called herself a 19th-century liberal."

I asked him who his favourite person to draw at the moment was. He said it was David Cameron. Bell said it took a while to get Cameron right. He toyed around with depicting Cameron as a jellyfish and then as a balloon, because of his smooth shiny face and his bulgy eyes. Inspiration struck during the election when he saw the posters of Cameron's airbrushed face. From that point on, Bell's Cameron has had his face squeezed inside a condom.

I asked him if he was irritated by the unmemorable blandness of Nick Clegg's

face. He said that cartoonists had been struggling with Clegg for that reason and because of his swift rise to power. Indeed, he said he felt he had not yet grasped Clegg. "But then his personality is ill-defined," he said, "He looks and acts like a pasty-faced version of Cameron."

He said that John Major was fun to draw. Bell's Major is always depicted with his underpants over his suit. He said this was because he saw him as a "crap Superman". It just seemed to work if Major went around wearing a pair of blue Y-fronts over his grey suit.

Despite wondering why Tony Blair was ever elected as leader of the Labour Party, Bell said that he had as just as much fun skewering Blair every week. He said that he was overjoyed when he realised Blair had the same "mad left-eye" as Thatcher had. This proved to him that they were related in more ways than one.

I asked Bell if most of his cartoons were driven by anger. He said that some were, but that sometimes he was motivated by just wanting to have a laugh. Martin Rowson, another cartoonist for the Guardian, said that he hated Tony Blair with a passion, which he said was the driving force for his cartoons. You get the sense from Bell's hearty laugh and general joie de vivre that it is a sense of fun, not rage, that motivate his cartoons.

"Cartooning is a defensive medium," he said. "It is pointless to attack just for the sake of it." In saying this, Bell goes in the tradition of English satirists like Swift and Hogarth who believe that satire cannot just be either knee-jerk cynicism or universal ridicule: if it is to have a point, satire must be the ridicule of vice, folly and humbug; it must attack character, not personality. Indeed, Bell clarified that

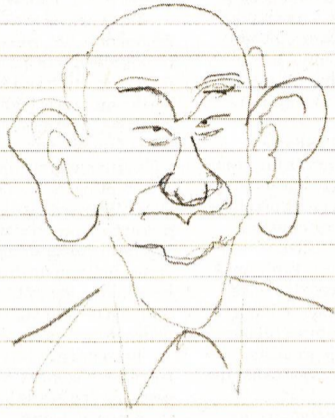
Clegg and Cameron are "nice young men, just their politics are a disaster".

I asked him what his inspirations were. He said that Punch was; he enthused about Popeye – "which came on at 5:25 twice a week" – saying he couldn't describe how good it was; the Beano, too, was an inspiration. Leo Baxendale, who drew Little Plum, The Three Bears and The Bash Street Kids, was his favourite. All this led him into drawing from an early age. He said that he still gets the Beano now – "for professional reasons". "Yes, for professional reasons," I agreed.

I asked about his comedic tastes, but they didn't go very far past the 1970s. He "never managed to 'get' The Office", and when pressed, Little Britain and Harry Hill got murmurs of approval, but I feel they aren't his particular favourites. He assured me he has "catholic tastes".

He cited That Was The Week That Was, the satirical show of the early-60s, as an influence. He was delighted that his parents let him stay up to watch it, even if it was jokes about the politics of the Macmillan era. His words took me by surprise, as it reminded me he was born in 1951. Despite being a man nearing 60, it shows in neither his appearance nor his personality. He comes across as nothing but a big kid.

To close, I asked him if he would draw Sir Howard Davies for me. He said that he'd drawn him before. "When?" I asked. "When he was head of the FSA, talking bollocks about some economic bollocks." The word "bullshit" also came up. Despite admitting that he was "shit on-the-spot", he caricatured Sir Howard quite proficiently. A keepsake for the archive, I think. ☛



Steve Bell caricatures Howard Davies

Silence towards the Arab world

Gurdeep Chhina criticises inconsistency in Western policy

The world has watched with awe and amazement as the Arab world has undergone a sweeping transformation; regime after regime of outdated, autocratic dictators has toppled in quick time. Tunisia and Egypt have already undergone their revolutions, whilst their Arab neighbours wait as protests put on the pressure for reform. As anti-government forces sweep through Libya and Bahrain, the West remains fearful and hesitant as the regimes they were complicit in creating begin to fall.

Recent events in the Arab world have led the US to seriously re-think their policy and relationship with the leaders of these nations. America's policy in this part of the world has been centred around their own diplomatic needs, but has been placed under the self-proclaimed banner of 'peace keeping'. Silence in the face of Arab regimes that display varying levels of oppression has only aided the regression of political reform amongst nations. As if the silence was not bad enough, the outright aiding of these dictators by the West shows the limit of the extent of their concern for the actual needs and wants of the Arab people. Playing catch up with international opinion, it is only after the violence displayed by the authorities against protesters that the British Foreign office is reviewing its arms deal with the repressive authorities of Bahrain. In an attempt to legitimise this long standing hypocritical stance, the West has up until now successfully painted a picture of an uncivilised and unstable society, unfamiliar with freedom and rooted in violence and terror. The influence of this portrayal can be seen clearly in the American media, as journalists expressed surprise at the idea that protests were dominated by secular, pro-democracy Egyptians.

Washington's priority in the Middle East has too often been the Israel-Palestine conflict; the pressing need for democratic reform has been overlooked and a blind eye has been turned to the oppres-

sion and brutality of leaders like Mubarak and Ben Ali. This was all in exchange for a tolerable attitude towards Middle East peace talks. The needs and the rights of the Arab people have been ignored for far too long and now the issues that have been pushed aside are being forced in to the limelight. There were past efforts made by the Bush administration to push for some reform, but these were resisted in light of the Iraq war. Political reform was absent from Obama's policy, but now the Western world is being forced to catch up and speedily adjust to the transformed situation, and they are not doing a good job of it.

The inconsistency within Western policy is painfully obvious. Tony Blair, who is now a leading figure in the Middle East Peace talks, described Mubarak as "a force for good", but following his downfall he was quick to express reticence, announcing that Mubarak's departure was "a pivotal moment for democracy in the Middle East". The inconsistency is telling – the West is not in control, and they are certainly not aware of what will happen next.

The apparent inconsistency of the West, however, is not solely explained by its complicity in the creation of these states. The presence of Islamists has made the West nervous.

After overlooking, even aiding, the oppression within the Arab world, to hesitate in the face of the protests that are toppling these autocratic regimes is surely completely detrimental to the 'power to the people' motto they are attempting to carve. At the very best, the West's silence contributed to the virtually non-existent political reform within the Middle East and in the worst interpretation of events, they were partly responsible for the creation of these oppressive regimes. If there had been consistent backing of political reform and a less self-interested approach to relations with Arab nations, things may have turned out differently. Regime transformation would have taken place gradu-



Photo: Flickr user muhammad

ally, as opposed to the rapid and sudden collapse that is being witnessed now.

To dwell on America's potential to prevent upheaval, however, is to miss the point completely. These protests are about the Arab people finding their long lost voice. The West is wrong to use fear of Islamic regimes to be hesitant in supporting the will of the people. They would be completely overlooking the issues that brought about these protests; decades of political corruption and oppression, high

youth unemployment and regimes out of touch and unresponsive to the needs of their population. The drive for reform came from the silent majority, the crowds gathering in Tunis and Cairo were not mobilised by Islamists, they were mobilised by a genuine need for reform.

Although it is predicted that Islamists will undoubtedly do well out of Egyptian elections, their presence does not in any way define the sweeping reform that has hit the Arab world. The protests were

not against or in favour of the West; they were indifferent to anything but their own situation. Regardless of the nature of the system that replaces the old regimes in the Middle East, after prolonged silence and complicity it is not up to the West to call the shots. ☛

A shaky science

Kieran Nelson wonders if revolutions can be predicted

In 1927, the American social scientist Lyford P. Edwards wrote: "We hear some talk about substituting peaceable evolution for violent revolution, but... until a serious effort is made to understand revolution, no rational technique for dealing with it can be expected... until we have thousands and tens of thousands of completely trained technicians investigating social phenomena with the same zeal and detachment that the physical scientists display in their work, we shall never escape violent revolution."

Today, the prevailing academic view is that any attempt to scientifically understand social phenomena such as revolutions is doomed to failure, for the social sciences can never be exact. But there remains today a small minority of scholars who are prepared to view revolutions as natural phenomena, much in the way that meteorologists view hurricanes. While predicting the weather hour by hour is impossible, it is possible to detect preconditions—such as abnormally warm air and water—before a hurricane has actually formed. The recent wave of uprisings across the Arab world has rekindled the idea that perhaps, by examining underlying social and economic preconditions, revolutions can be predicted.

With his 1927 book, Edwards began the American sociological tradition of the study of revolutions. This tradition stood in marked contrast to the Marxist tradition prevailing in Europe, which took it as an element of faith that revolutions were caused by a newly-developed economic class claiming power at the expense of an old one. As the 20th century moved forward, and as social scientists debated the merits of each view, their theories were being rapidly put to test by the two mutually antagonistic superpowers fighting to win the faith of the world.

The Soviet Union, using the technique of workers' agitation, sent agents to China, Southeast Asia, Africa, Western Europe, and even America in an attempt to bring down the capitalist societies of the world and pave the way for international socialism. And to counter these subversive forces, the USA was working on projects of its own.

Project Camelot was a US Army program developed in 1964 to assess the susceptibility of a given society to violent revolution and internal war. Chile was to be the first case study of the programme, but when the information emerged that the United States was attempting to manipulate foreign societies, a wave of bad

press in both Chile and America forced Robert McNamara to cancel the project the following year. But there were allegations made that the techniques developed in Project Camelot were used during the removal of Allende and the installation of Pinochet in Chile in 1973.

However, it is entirely possible that such allegations are apocryphal. The revolution in Iran in 1979 showed that the United States could neither predict nor engineer revolutions; in fact, US pressure on the Shah forced the Iranian government to create many of the conditions that led to the revolution. Ten years later, the communist governments of Eastern Europe toppled in a way that was entirely unexpected by both America's leadership and its social scientists. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 was equally unexpected. After this period, there was a movement throughout American universities to change the name of "Political Science" departments to "Government" departments, since it was clear that politics was not and would never be a science.

But nevertheless, 1991 was a landmark year for those who still believed that revolutions could be viewed as natural phenomena. This was the year that Jack Goldstone published *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, the most extensive recent work on the study of revolution. In it, he developed a theory that revolutions were caused by a combination of population growth, rising food prices and falling wages, state fiscal crisis, and severe elite divisions.

In 1994, Goldstone was approached by the CIA to bring together America's leading social scientists to form a project which became known as the Political Instability Task Force. It compiled every case of revolution and civil war in the world since 1955, and examined the underlying social and economic conditions of the parent societies. The model they developed was purportedly able to predict political instability two years before it occurred, with an 85% degree of accuracy. The project continues to this day. Only the highest councils of the CIA know whether or not the current unrest in the Arab world fits the model, and whether or not the Task Force's theories will have to be revised.

But whatever the state of current research, the preconditions of revolution have recently become a topic of interest in the Western press. It is speculated that food prices and unemployment were the main underlying factors in the recent uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and other Arab

nations. However, it is obvious even to the lay reader that such explanations are deeply unsatisfying: many Arab countries have had those conditions for months if not years, and there is no convincing explanation for why the uprisings occurred precisely when they did.

Knowing this, I searched briefly for economic statistics of the Arab world which were readily available in online databases. What I found confirmed immediately the most ancient of all wisdoms concerning the causes of revolution.

After 1789, the French scholar Alexis de Tocqueville stumbled upon a curious paradox: that French society had never in its history experienced such a rise in wealth as in the twenty years preceding the revolution. Thus, he concluded that "the French found their position more intolerable the better it became." This view was taken up by James C. Davies in 1962, whose watershed paper coined the phrase "revolution of rising expectations." He examined that a prolonged period of economic growth preceded Dor's Rebellion of 1841, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. His theory was later applied to the Irish Revolution, the Haitian Revolution, the English Civil War, the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe, and countless others.

And the pattern seems to hold for every nation in the Arab world experiencing unrest today. Out of a set of eleven countries, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the UAE, and Yemen, all have experienced economic growth that has exceeded 40% in the past five years. Egypt, Jordan, Libya, and Oman saw their economies more than double in this period; Syria and the UAE saw over 90% growth, and Iran's GDP grew by 76%.

Before we speculate upon why economic growth seems to cause revolution, it must be noted that many of these countries, which did experience growth, are not experiencing unrest. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Syria are among them, which prompts a search for further economic conditions. An examination of these economies shows that their GDP per capita scores are the highest in the region. Oman and Saudi Arabia have over \$14,000 per capita, while the UAE has over \$50,000 per capita. Furthermore, other economic indicators, such as the Gini coefficient, show that the wealth distribution in Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, is the most equitable of all the listed nations.

In contrast, countries such as Egypt,

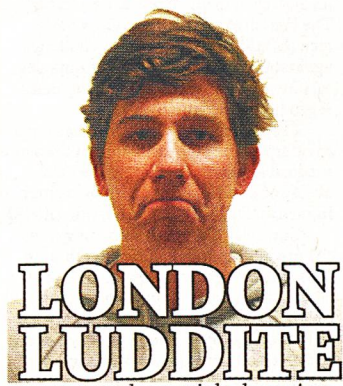
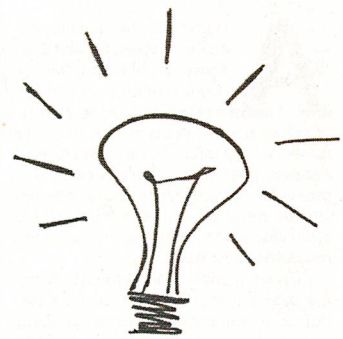
Tunisia, Algeria, and Iran have markedly lower GDP per capita. It is also well known that a large part of the citizens of these nations live in a state of abject poverty, while the elite of these nations live in luxury. In the past few years, the poor of these countries have been getting richer in spite of, not because of, their governments. It is this rise in economic power of the most indigent citizens, also noted in the French, Russian, and Irish revolutions, which seems to be the most explosive factor in the Middle East today. Egypt and Tunisia have seen their governments replaced by national uprisings. Unrest in Jordan led to its cabinet replaced; unrest in Yemen led to the pledge of its president to quit power after his term is complete. Unrest in Algeria began at the beginning of January, even before the unrest in Egypt. Unrest has erupted in Libya. And Iran experienced a wave of unrest in the summer of 2009, and as we speak we are seeing that unrest rekindle.

The marked exception to all of this is Syria. Syria has experienced a near-doubling of its GDP in the same time period, and its per-capita income is far lower than Algeria's or Iran's. Its wealth distribution is far more unequal than Egypt. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that the Syrian regime is one of the most corrupt, brutal, and oppressive in the region.

The case of Syria is enough to show that no matter what theory is used, the science of predicting revolutions is still a shaky one. Perhaps, on the case of Syria, it is fair to say that the jury is still out. It should be recalled that Romania, the most repressive and brutal of all Communist regimes, was the last and hardest of the Eastern European dominoes to fall.

As a final note, it must be remembered that no economic analysis, whatever its power, can hope to predict the actions of individuals, or the outcome of a revolutionary situation. No theory could have predicted the rapid fall of Tunisia, the abdication of Mubarak after 18 days, and the crushing of the 2009 uprising in Iran. No theory can predict what will transpire in Algeria, Iran, and Bahrain in the next few days.

But likewise, no one asks a meteorologist whether a hurricane will tear up this or that tree, or whether or not a certain house is in more danger than the one beside it. For hurricanes, as for revolutions, it is enough to know that the storm is coming. ☞



LONDON LUDDITE

...a layman's look at science

Homeopathic remedies: help or hindrance?

Oliver Wiseman

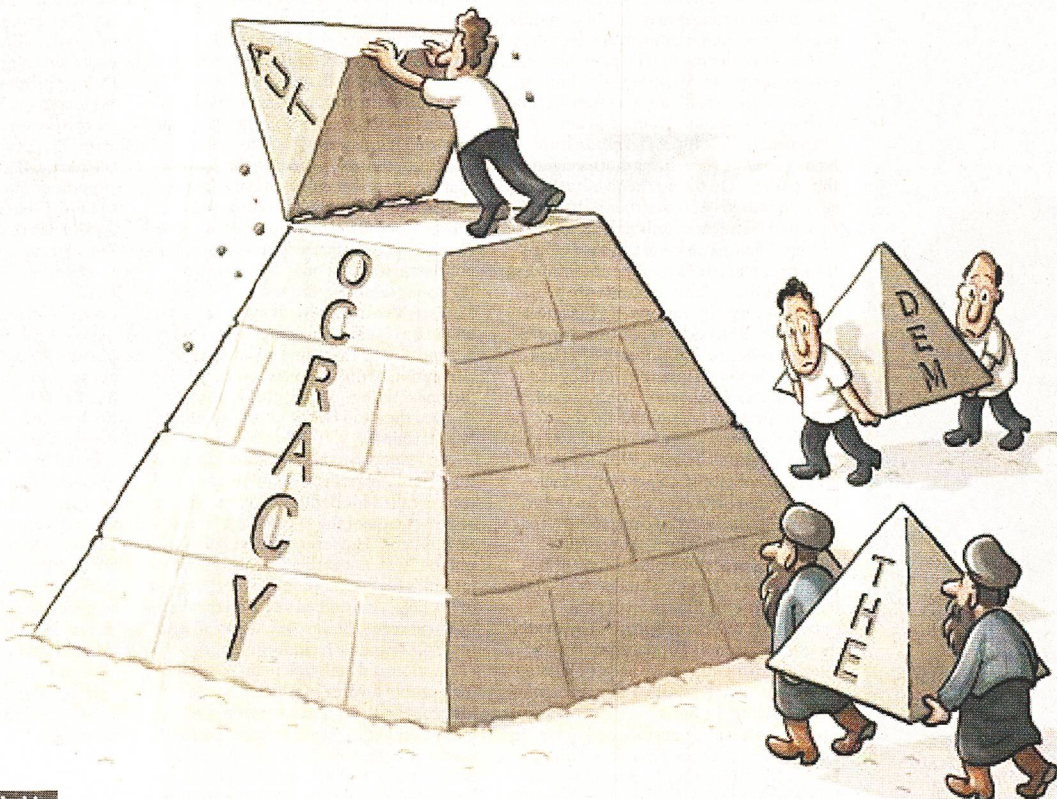
Your correspondent likes to think of himself as a rational man. Perhaps this explains my (distant) admiration for science. Imagine, then, my reaction to last week's revelation that a third of NHS trusts fund homeopathy. Investigation into the issue revealed the less surprising but equally irritating fact that the University of London Students' Union (ULU) subsidises homeopathic treatment. This means that for a reasonable £10, you can run along to Malet Street for a pseudo-scientific diagnosis of any given ailment.

My initial indignation at these discoveries soon subsided, giving way to a worry that my cynicism was unfounded. I had to put to bed the fear that a Birkenstock-wearing homeopathy advocate would be able to win me round, or at least humiliate me. In short, I had to hit the textbooks (read Wikipedia).

Given this is the LSE, and our pursuit to *rerum cognoscere causas*, we should start at the beginning. Homeopathy is a form of alternative medicine involving the treatment of patients using diluted versions of the exact thing that might cause the problem in the first place. For instance, someone struggling with sleep deprivation might be given a small dose of caffeine. The founding father of Homeopathy, Samuel Hahnemann, pithily called this the law of similars, summarised in the axiom "let the like be treated with the like". The logic in this is not forthcoming. The most useful function this motto appears to serve is as an explanation of counterintuitiveness.

Comical as one might find the concept of homeopathy, its prevalence is shocking. The NHS is believed to have spent £4 million on such treatments, including four homeopathic specific hospitals. A wide array of scientific studies, including several carried out on behalf of the House of Commons' Health Committee have found homeopathic treatments to be no more effective a remedy than a sugar pill.

In the UK, homeopathy is generally used as a supposed cure for minor and somewhat everyday problems. Elsewhere, the role of homeopathy is more dangerous with grave infectious diseases, such as Malaria and HIV, being fought with the law of similars. Forgive this week's deviation from this column's tendency to poke fun at the sillier corners of the world of science but I think a call to arms is justified. That our National Health Service puts its name to homeopathy is counter to its fine tradition of upholding public health. ☞



Outpatient abortions

Iman Sana Teemul writes on the morality of stay-at-home abortions

A High Court legal bid to enable women to take the abortion pill within the comfort of their own homes was rejected last week. Pro-life campaigners welcomed the judgment for its stalling effect on the relaxation of abortion laws in the UK. Advocates of pro-choice however, condemned the decision for missing a golden opportunity to strike down an anomalous, outdated and restrictive legal rule.

Under section 1(3a) of the Abortion Act 1967, any treatment for the termination of pregnancy must be carried out in an approved medical place. UK charity, The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) launched a fierce challenge against this law, arguing that it imposes an unwarranted restriction on women's reproductive autonomy.

The claimants called upon the court to interpret the statute in light of dramatic medical advances, including the availability of abortion pills taken by women to induce an Early Medical Abortion (EMA).

Currently, a woman who has gained the medical approval of two doctors to have an abortion can request to have an EMA within the first nine weeks of the pregnancy by taking two sets of abortion pills two days apart. The first stage of an EMA occurs once the doctors have signed the statutory certificate (HSA1) and involves taking a 200mg dose of mifepristone. The woman is then permitted to leave the hospital or clinic to allow time for the drug to be taken up in the gastrointestinal tract. The second stage requires the woman to attend the hospital 48 hours later to have 800mcg of misoprostol administered.

BPAS claim that these procedural requirements are unnecessary and a woman should be allowed to take the second pill at home, as is already permitted in the US, Sweden and France. The charity maintains that self-administration of the prescribed drug outside of a controlled medical environment is safe and therefore it is illogical to require a woman to take the drug in a public medical setting where she is deprived of the privacy and comfort

she would gain from taking it in her own home.

Chief executive of BPAS, Ann Furedi argued "It cannot be morally right to compel a woman to physically take tablets in a clinic and to subject her to the anxiety that symptoms will start on the journey back when her doctor knows it is safe and indeed preferable for her to take these at home."

Determining where the law should lie on the abortion pill issue necessitates a delicate balancing act

Nathalie Lieven QC, argued on behalf of BPAS that it is time for the law to recognise that "medical science has moved on". In court, she submitted a cunning interpretation of the statute, which if accepted, would have circumvented the current injustice caused by section 1 (3a) whilst side-stepping the need to rewrite the law.

Ms. Lieven admitted that in 1967, Parliament would not have intended for "treatment" to constitute the entire process of termination. She urged the court, however, to apply an updating construction to modernise the law alongside developments in medical science. Accordingly, she argued that the law should narrow the definition of treatment so that it includes only the prescription and not the administration of the abortifacient drug.

Mr. Justice Supperstone dismissed this argument as a far-fetched attempt at interpretive gymnastics. He reasoned that "the Claimant's submission runs counter to the natural and ordinary meaning of the word 'treatment'". According to a dictionary definition of medical treatment, he concluded that it must "embrace the taking of an abortifacient drug" and consequently failed the claim.

However, for supporters of the right of women to choose, this judgment is laced with a silver lining. Mr. Justice Supperstone added, "The Secretary of State has the power to approve a wider range of place, including potentially the home," hence ruling that it is the responsibility of the legislature to put a price tag on the value of a woman's reproductive autonomy.

It is no wonder BPAS left the court with a spirit of optimism despite losing its claim. Furedi said: "BPAS will pursue its case to provide an Early Medical Abortion service that is based on evidence and best international practice."

However, BPAS should not expect immediate legislative change on abortion to follow from this judgment. The present Health Secretary of State, Andrew Lansley, is fervently against the legal provision of home abortions and it was his office which opposed BPAS' claim.

Nevertheless, the judgment signifies that BPAS has made a foot in the door towards repealing the paternalistic legal rule in question. Undoubtedly, the issue will be subject to future parliamentary debate and Lansley's successor could well be more inclined towards the cause for legislative change.

Determining where the law should lie on the abortion pill issue necessitates a delicate balancing act. Arguably, denying a woman the chance to take the abortion pill at home imposes a straitjacket on her right to reproductive self-determination and as a result entrenches paternalistic values. Many women would choose to undergo the second stage of an EMA within their homes in the hope of experiencing more comfort and privacy. Teenagers, in particular, may expect to find the experience less intimidating and traumatic.

Furthermore, the rationale underlying the 1967 legal rule requiring women to terminate their pregnancies in an approved clinic or hospital was to protect women from having abortions in dangerous backstreet conditions. If taking the abortion pill without medical assistance is safe, the rationale behind the rule has been rendered otiose.

A recent Pilot Study backed by the Department of Health investigated the possibility of women having abortions at home. 172 women took the second pill in a health centre under the supervision of a nurse. The ensuing report revealed some of the women experienced pain and one woman suffered haemorrhaging. Shirley Butler, manager of the project, dismissed that this was a cause for concern. She said "if she had been at home she would have called our helpline and she would have been given help". However, just imagine the practicalities of receiving medical advice over a phone line whilst in this potentially fatal situation.

Having a medical abortion at home removes the safety net of having medical professionals at hand in case something goes wrong. Therefore, it would also be likely to increase the anxiety women experience prior to the abortion and make it a more traumatic experience. Legais-

ing medical abortions within the home would thereby further endanger both the physical and mental health of women. In light of this, the benefits of privacy seem insignificant.

The legalisation of home abortions also raises other legitimate practical concerns. What if the woman is prescribed the misoprostol drug and uses it after nine weeks of pregnancy? What would happen if she took an overdose or an underdose of the pills? One might also speculate about if the pills got into the hands of a child or an adult who mistakes them for his or her own medication. Mr. Justice Supperstone was also concerned that ruling in favour of BPAS would open the floodgates for less proven abortion pills to be taken outside approved medical locations.

The possibility of having a medical abortion at home is also morally problematic. It may blur the boundaries between contraception and abortion. This concern was echoed by pro-life campaigners who accused BPAS of attempting to make abortion "little more than a pill popping exercise". Revising the law would result in the emergence of so-called 'bedroom abortions' and send out the message that having an abortion is a morally trivial issue.

Andrea Minichiello Williams, CEO of Christian Concern said that ruling against BPAS "is a welcome message in a society which has been led to believe that abortion is an easy answer to an unplanned pregnancy."

A small sacrifice in a woman's reproductive freedom should be the price society is prepared to pay if we are to continue to take abortion seriously. Ronald Dworkin, a famous legal theorist, once expressed the cause for a "paradigm liberal position on abortion". He said that this position "rejects the extreme opinion that abortion is morally unproblematic, and insists, on the contrary, that abortion is always a grave moral decision."

Crystallising this heart-felt sentiment requires that we retain the law's current prescription of paternalistic values. ☛

Berlusconi's shame

Elizabeth Lowell surveys Italian tolerance for political scandals



Flickr user: spiritolibero85

From Egypt to Tunisia, Iran to Bahrain, this has been a month of seemingly endless protests. Amidst the startling footage of celebrations in Tahrir Square and security crackdowns in Iran, it's been easy to miss the less dramatic tensions brewing in Italy. While easily dismissed due to their outrageously salacious nature, the charges against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, alleging that he paid then-underrage Karima el-Mahroug (also known by her stage-name, Ruby Heartstealer) in exchange for sexual favours and abused his power to hide his indiscretions, are having serious repercussions throughout the country. On the weekend of 12th February, hundreds of thousands of Italians took to the streets of Italy and various cities throughout Europe to protest against the Prime Minister's treatment of women. Although these demonstrators are presenting a very different set of grievances, their sentiments echo those of many other protesters across the globe: they've had enough, they want change and they are determined to make their voices heard.

The protests are notable for their broader implications as a commentary on gender relations in Italy. With a female employment rate of 46 per cent, which is 13 per cent below the European Union average, Italian women consistently find themselves limited by narrow societal definitions of female roles. Many critics attribute these lagging standards of equality to media objectification of women, particularly on channels owned by media mogul Berlusconi. For decades, Italian television programs have been populated by "veline," barely-clothed showgirls who, while holding the occasional sign or score card, serve a mainly aesthetic purpose. In an interview with the New York Times, Danda Dantini, editor in chief of Italian Elle, highlights the problematic effects of

the high visibility of these veline, saying, "In Italy, women are suffering because they see themselves caught between two images, that of the happy housewife or the 'velina.' Little else is represented on television."

Many of the women participating in the weekend's protests not only expressed disgust at Berlusconi's personal life, but also extended their criticism to his involvement in furthering gender inequality in the country. Beyond the simple objectification of women in his media outlets, Berlusconi is also responsible for ushering many showgirls into political positions, thus perpetuating the concept that beauty and promiscuity may be the fastest way to success for young women. Prosecutors allege that Nicole Minetti, one such Berlusconi-backed former-showgirl politician, was responsible for recruiting young women to attend the Prime Minister's so-called *bunga bunga* parties where he is said to have met el-Mahroug. A 2009 poll by magazine attests to the perception of the veline as a pathway to fortune, finding, "young girls in Milan showed their top choice of profession was to be a veline".

In response to his objectionable portrayal and treatment of women, the protesters called for Berlusconi to resign and organised under the rallying cry, "if not now, when?" However, a better question may be "why not earlier?" This is not Berlusconi's first sex scandal. Over the course of his nearly seventeen years on the Italian political scene, Berlusconi has weathered multiple scandals including charges of corruption and embezzlement, as well as a high profile divorce in which his wife cited his propensity for underage women as a reason for ending the marriage. As for the media culture, objectification of women is hardly a new phenomenon: veline have been a fixture on Berlusconi's programmes

since the 1980s.

So the question remains: why now? Or rather: why not sooner? In a debate on the New York Times's website, participants propose various explanations for why the Italian public has accepted Berlusconi's antics for so long. Panelists point to Berlusconi's strong influence over story framing through his media empire as well as public willingness to overlook politicians' private indiscretions and focus on their governmental actions as reasons for his longevity. Federico Varese, a criminology professor at the University of Oxford, notes that despite losing popularity with the public, Berlusconi has retained the support of many members of the elite due to his pro-business policies, and their loyalty has cushioned him from serious repercussions in the past.

However, Berlusconi may now find himself in a predicament from which not even his media monopoly and elite connections can save him. With public opposition to the Prime Minister mounting, his political challengers are capitalising on the discontent. In a recent interview with Reuters, Rosy Bindi, the female president of the opposition Democratic Party, referred to Berlusconi as "the sultan, the emperor" and asserted that his behaviour has tarnished the image of Italian women. On 15th February, Berlusconi was indicted and ordered to stand trial before three female judges, all randomly chosen. If found guilty, he faces a possible prison sentence and the end of his political career. Even if he survives the legal battle, his political future is less certain. Should he remain in power after this ordeal, however, the answer to the protesters' question seems quite clear: if not now, never. ☛

Fianna's fall

Maeve Glavey engages with Irish political discourse

Ireland is holding its breath in anticipation of the general election set to take place this Friday, February 25th. It is the first time the country will go to the polls since before the global recession devastated the economy. With unemployment at 13.5 per cent and emigration at its highest since the 1980s, the stakes are high.

The election was called by Prime Minister Brian Cowen after the coalition government collapsed in January. The government, led by Ireland's largest party Fianna Fáil, had faced a storm of criticism over its handling of the economic crisis. Fianna Fáil has been in government constantly since 1997 and has traditionally had broad based support across the Republic. That support, however, has now plummeted, and Ireland's other major parties, Fine Gael and Labour are gearing up for leading a new government. The Green party (Fianna Fáil's former coalition partner), Sinn Féin, and a number of independents are also running in the election.

In the wake of EU financial support and a controversial IMF loan, Economic recovery is the issue foremost in everybody's minds. Fine Gael is leading its campaign with a five point plan to 'get Ireland working'. Its manifesto focuses largely on job creation and reducing the budget deficit by reducing waste and cutting down on public sector inefficiency. Labour's 'One Ireland' campaign pledges to increase jobs by providing support for small and medium enterprises to grow. This has been a key issue of concern over the past two years, as the flow of credit had stalled due to the banking crisis, and Irish businesses struggled to keep their doors open. With many multinational corporations shutting down their Irish operations as well, the prospects for employment have been bleak. Fianna Fáil, which is now led by Micheál Martin, also takes up this issue, adding a focus on exports and attracting new investment to Ireland to create more jobs.

Closely tied to the economic strategies of the competing parties is a focus on

education. Many unemployed people have found it hard to get work as they possess non-transferable skills. All parties have indicated a commitment to retraining and supporting job-seekers in their efforts to move into new areas of work. Less has been said on the contentious issue of the reintroduction of third-level education fees. Tuition fees were abolished in the 1990s, but many advocate reintroducing them to help bring in cash. However, proposals to do so in recent years met with mass student protests across the country. Labour in particular has voiced concern over costs for students of university and post-secondary courses and vowed to reduce these. As for secondary education, a debate has sprung up in recent weeks over whether to drop the Irish language from the compulsory curriculum. All students are currently required to study the language until they leave school. Fine Gael advocates making it optional and is met with opposition from Fianna Fáil and others who fear the decline of the national language.

Reform of the health service and tax systems are also on the table. Ireland has long suffered from a messy hybrid health system. Fine Gael and Labour both propose introducing a system of universal healthcare. Failure to reform the health system during its time in government has been one of the major criticisms Fianna Fáil has faced. The two parties have also spoken of commitments to keeping income tax down, with Fine Gael adding a commitment to reducing PRSI, again part of its economic strategy. The smaller parties have had less to say on these issues, and are concentrating their focus on the economy and in the case of the Green Party, sustainable development.

With so many important issues being discussed, the results of the election are not easy to predict. Recent opinion polls place Fine Gael in the lead, and the party will be keen to gain enough seats in the election to govern on its own. Labour comes in second, and the two parties could possibly find themselves ruling in a coalition, if neither obtains a majority of

seats. Support for Fianna Fáil is extremely low compared to what it enjoyed in the past and it seems unlikely to return to government. Its difficulties during the crisis and the general desire for change and a new direction in Ireland is likely to work against it when voters cast their ballots. No matter what government Ireland elects next Friday, the road ahead will be difficult and recovery will not come quickly. The country faces great challenges in attracting investment, recreating confidence in itself in international markets and indeed with its own public. However the election of a new government based on the people's choice should provide a good base for this process. Once a new government is in place, it can concentrate on these issues as well as on marking out a new path for Ireland in the future.

ELECTION PREDICT 2011
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FIANNA FAIL	COLD FRONT, HEAVY SHOWERS!
FINE GAEL	BRIGHT SUNSHINE!
LABOUR	SUN WITH SOME CLOUD COVERAGE!
SINN FEIN	THUNDERY CONDITIONS!
GREEN PARTY	OVERCAST WITH STRONG WINDS!

Map of Ireland showing predicted seats: FINE GAEL *34, Sinn Féin *10, green party *1, Labour *24, FIANNA FAIL *16.

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Pirate politics

Alexander Young speaks to Pirate Party UK's Loz Kaye

Speaking to Loz Kaye without the knowledge that he is the leader of Pirate Party UK (PPUK), one would be forgiven for assuming that he might well be a Liberal Democrat activist. His concern for civil liberties in the United Kingdom seems earnest and without reserve: something generally missing from today's political elite. Indeed, even his rhetoric smacks of the disappointed activist: "I am disappointed with the fact that the Liberal Democrats aren't delivering in the way that we would have hoped" was his response when I confronted him with the startling similarity between the civil liberties focus of both the Liberal Democrats and PPUK. In spite of this disappointment, he concedes, in the "interest of fairness" as he points out, that the Coalition's input has not been negligible in this regard. He cites the rebranding of control orders with Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (T-Pims) as the ultimate in disappointment from Liberal Democrat compromise, while still considering the abolition of ID cards and "rolling back of certain CCTV policies" as achievements of the party. This appears to be symptomatic of what he calls the 'new politics' that PPUK stands for: rational debate over issues rather than commitment to ideology.

The party's manifesto for the 2010 general election states that the party is "neither left-wing nor right-wing" and is committed to discourse on the issues of "copyright and patent law, privacy law and freedom of speech". This, for me, begged the question as to whether he thinks that this lack of left-right identification will come to harm the party and eventually force it into choosing a position on the left-right spectrum in order to garner votes, just as the Greens did in Europe. He mentioned the fact that party members

continue to email him with question as to this tenet of the party's position, and went on to explain that he had in fact received emails on this issue shortly before talking to me. In his answer, he articulated the necessity of this position for the party: he said that it wouldn't be "credible" for the party to have a "detailed economic policy" given their current status and affiliation to the international Pirate movement's focus on digital and civil liberties issues. However, he didn't rule out more detailed policy in the future: "our focus on intellectual property (IP) does position us as a party with an economic focus: voters have responded well to our arguments of implications of IP for the NHS, with pharmaceutical companies being able to establish a monopoly and essentially price gouge. Health policy is incredibly salient in the UK, and that helps us. Supporting net neutrality and digital inclusion is vital for economic development and growth in the coming years: there are also profound implications for the creation of an equitable economy to be drawn from digital issues. This has implications for social policy and educational policy. We need to start being clear about how our ideas are about much more than 'how much should a digital download cost?' If we do this, our policy can be broadened from the base of our ideas."

It seemed a natural progression from here to asking him about the potential for electoral and political reform in the UK: the nature of the party as being politically focused rather than broad-based in its policies places it at a certain disadvantage within a First Past the Post electoral system. The party's "flat structure", as he put it, necessitates deliberation within the party on issues as to whether to support campaigns such as Yes to AV: the executive of the party has little constitutional room to move without member support.

"We're about much more than 'how much should a digital download cost?' If we do this, our policy can be broadened from the base of our ideas."

However, support for the campaign was 'overwhelmingly' supported by party members. He sees "AV as being consistent with a more responsive kind of politics which gives voters greater choice as to who will be their representative. It will mean that MPs will actually have to work to get votes: it should cease to be enough to get out your core support and get elected." When pushed to give his personal view on whether AV is enough for the sort of political reform necessary in the UK, he responded with a resounding "no": he stated that the House of Lords as an unelected chamber was an "anachronism" and he would "personally like to see an elected upper house". He added to this, "we're happy to deal with what's on the table with the AV vote. I think that AV as a stopgap may be sensible: the British people tend to be cautious about change, so a little upgrade may be sensible just to whet appetites. Further down the line, I think that we absolutely deserve a bigger shakeup but I think that that is definitely something for the future."

The integrity of the party's support for reform is bolstered by Kaye's refusal

to endorse the House of Lords in so far as its support for the ends of PPUK is concerned: the Digital Economy Bill was vehemently opposed by the party and really saw any problems in its passage through Parliament in the House of Lords. When asked about the epistemic value of having appointed and highly-qualified people in an upper house, such as Lord Lucas (one of the most vocal opposers of the Bill), he responded that "there's no reason why we shouldn't have people as qualified as the Lords are advising in Commons Committees, but it's hypocritical to say that we should, as PPUK, support the institution of the Lords as they happen to agree with us. What is key is trying to promote a larger diversity in who elected representatives are, and that is something the PPUK is trying to put on the agenda. We need people in positions of influence who actually have a technological background because such interests are woefully underrepresented. This is why the Digital Economy Act became such a bad piece of legislation."

Having spoken enough about the failings of UK politics in the information age, it seemed salient to ask about what differentiates PPUK from the swathes of smaller parties in the UK. Kaye placed great emphasis upon the way in which the party organises as campaigns: he agreed with the assertion that PPUK as party of social media and commented that it was the "first 21st century political movement" in view of the fact that the manifesto and constitution was drawn up collaboratively on a Wiki and that open and free discussion about party policy occurred online. The fact that the party doesn't have constituency offices was posited as a boon with members being able to "freely help each other across the country, and indeed, as we are an international movement, parties in other countries". The online

element of their electoral campaigns was also given great importance: indeed, in the Oldham East and Saddleworth by-election, the election was called for Kaye by a blogger who compiled a metric of online coverage of campaigns. The ability to quickly liaise with constituents through Twitter and the like enabled Kaye to meet concerned parties quickly and be able to address their concerns. He doesn't place too great an import on social media in the UK, however: he states that "while the impact of social media on politics has been a bit overemphasised, it is growing as a key area of activism and while the electoral impact can't really be seen yet it will be seen eventually due to the nature of increased access to information through such services."

Fortunately, the past year and a half of campaigning on the part of PPUK doesn't seem to have sapped Kaye's sense of humour: when asked what he would do if he were to miraculously become head of the BPI, he made it his first point that he'd love to appear on MTV's Cribs. "It's not the houses of musicians that you want to see, it's definitely those of record label executives" being his rationale for such a claim. In the process of turning back into a professional politician, he answered "I'd want to do more than anything is stop the ridiculous types of things that force people into piracy. Things like DRM and region-coding on DVDs and Blu-Rays. If people want to watch Spirited Away, they have no alternative but to pirate it in mainland Europe, save for a multi-region DVD player - can I get it on iTunes? Can I buggery. If you start to open things up, people can sell their works more effectively".

Does the emergence of parties as earnest and committed as PPUK seem to be signal a new age in UK politics? I can only hope.

'Aldwych before Albania'

Eden Dwek discusses advances and setbacks in the mobile industry

London: the largest urban zone in the European Union and the world's largest financial centre. Immersed in culture, history, landmarks and politics: it is a bustling metropolis. It is the city with the highest GDP in Europe and attracts people from all over the world. With all this on its side, you would think that you would be able to get a decent mobile phone signal!

Living in the centre of London, I have reached the conclusion that I cannot rely on Orange to provide me with a consistent, reliable mobile phone reception, especially when I'm around the LSE campus. The density of workers, and in turn, Blackberrys and iPhones, means that networks' cell towers are overloaded with data connections. Consequently, users are suffering from intermittent drops in signal and often an inability to get online on their phones. It would seem that the solution would be simple: put up more cell towers, thus increasing carrying capacity of the cellular carrier in congested areas. However, this is not possible. In central London, Orange has one of the densest networks of cell towers and major expansion is thus not viable.

However, after thousands of complaints, last year, Orange decided to get their act together and on 11th May 2010 announced a merger with T-Mobile's UK operations. The transition would take over a year, but the end result would be a single network, with the resources of the two providers and a better quality of signal for customers. Nine months on, both Orange and T-Mobile customers have access to each others' 2G signal (for voice, text and slow internet) and the merging of the two

I have reached the conclusion that I cannot rely on Orange to provide me with a consistent, reliable mobile phone reception

3G networks is expected in the coming month or so. Therefore, despite data issues continuing to plague customers in central London that rely on a 3G signal, these woes are soon to be alleviated. Whilst this merger is a significant step for the two companies, it is considered irrelevant in a global technology context. I, however, think that many international phone providers will be watching Orange and T-Mobile closely, as it could be a sign of things to come.

The mobile phone industry has exploded over the past 10 years. Comparing a Nokia 3210 to the latest smart-phones is farcical. Ironically, Nokia admitted last week that their mobile phone line has not kept up with innovation and is suffering dramatically, leading to a deal being made with Microsoft. People are expecting their phones to act as shrunken computers, as more of our lives are planned and based around the small device we keep in our

pockets. There is one service that all mobile phones need, no matter where you are in the world, and that is a comprehensive cellular network in place. Networks have all the power, being able to call the shots on model availability, phone subsidies and contract lengths. As Orange reduces the Big Four UK networks (Vodafone, Orange, T-Mobile and O2) to the Big Three, it looks like oligopoly will be the consequence.

By Orange "improving customer satisfaction and network quality" they are putting themselves in a strong financial position to dictate the future market. No doubt, in a few years time, the improved infrastructure will no longer be sufficient, and the Big Three may become the Big Two, giving them a further stronghold on customers. Even if this doesn't happen, collaboration between the major networks will allow them to artificially increase pricing in order to boost profit. Since the mobile phone industry has such a high price of entry, it is unlikely that new competition will enter the market. The only hope for the end consumer is that Ofcom and other regulating authorities enforce anti-competition rules and restrictions to protect customers.

Could this work in our favour on an international level? The issue of roaming charges is high on the European Union's agenda. Thanks to the EU, since summer 2009, the maximum price to make a call abroad has declined from 43 cents to 35 cents, and from 19 cents to 11 cents to receive a call abroad. What would happen if mobile networks in different countries started cross-border mergers? A reduction in the variety of national

mobile phone networks, to be replaced by international networks could truly benefit customers. No longer will we have to worry about roaming charges, as our calls, texts and data used abroad would come out of our monthly bundles. Worrying about 'disabling data roaming,' the function that means that you are not charged ridiculous data prices when on holiday would no longer be an issue. Calling a friend in Camden would be the same price as calling someone in Cambodia. Surely this is the optimal solution: a true amalgamation of cellular networks, creating social benefits and reducing the relative space between people. Even if this incurred a slightly higher line rental, due to the reduction in providers and thus a reduction in competition, it would still benefit the consumer in the long run, and reduce monthly bills on aggregate. In this way it seems like we need to allow a monopoly to be created, in order to create the most cost efficient outcome.

This idea of an international mobile network is still years off. Mobile phone technology is evolving constantly. We must first sort out coverage issues in Aldwych before we can think about merging with Albania. The one thing that is obvious is that the networks hold all the power, and once they've called the shots, we'll all be following one-by-one on their predefined route.

WHAT IF...

...Japan was divided? (Pt. 3)

Jack Tindale

GIn 1960, Inejiro Asanuma was the uneasy Prime Minister of a weak minority government led by his own disunited socialists. Despite shrugging off innumerable assassination attempts by hardline neo-Fascists, his administration, support from the Farmer-Labour Party notwithstanding, was always on the verge of a successful no-confidence vote.

However, the fact that Asanuma was able to survive as leader of South Japan for over a decade remains only the first part of his much-respected legacy. The establishment of a developed welfare state which remains a beacon for the rest of East Asia, revitalising a moribund Cold War economy and the successful hosting of the 1968 Tokyo Olympics all represent the unquestionable victory for social democracy in the previously highly conservative political culture of the home islands.

Despite irking Hayato Ikeda's opposition in 1967 after making a well-publicised visit to Premier Bulganin's Soviet Union, the normalisation of relations with the leader of the Communist world placed South Japan in a perfect position to act as a natural arbiter in the Indochinese War. Peace between the two Vietnams was ensured following the Third Round of the Kobe Talks at the end of the decade. Asanuma retired soon after at the age of seventy, his Premiership still ranks as the longest in modern Japanese history.

The Japanese People's Republic, increasingly drawn towards Anti-Revisionist China, especially following the Soviet-influenced coup which deposed Kim Il-Sung in 1974, formally broke with the Kremlin after the death of Mao Zedong the following year. Unlike her increasingly prosperous neighbour to the south, Hokkaido endured a miserable period in during the next two decades. Isolated from international trade, increasingly repressive and subsidised by only occasional rice shipments from Beijing, the Hardship Winter of 1987, which saw over 500 000 deaths out of a population of less than twelve million marked the fall of the elderly Sanzo Nosaka from office. Internal disputes within the JCP, coupled with mass student protests, saw the fall of the regime in 1990. Reunification of the two nations came three years later after a long period of international aid and economic restructuring.

Today, United Japan retains the same system of proportional representation which marks out the country as unique amongst the region. Hideaki Anno's recent victory at the polls as leader of the Socialist Party's Seele faction continues to demonstrate the pluralistic nature of national politics. In a break with JSP tradition, Anno has already make overtures towards a more interventionist foreign policy, especially with regards to the proposed attempts to unite the continually divided non-Communist Pacific Rim countries into a common trade bloc, dubbed by detractors as the "Asian Instrumentality Project".

Regardless of the perceived utopianism of the current Diet however, Japan has flourished since unification in a way that other post-Cold War nations have failed to. At his inauguration in 2008, Colin Powell pledged to support Japan as "the beacon that the new democratic order in Asia shall follow", only time will be able to see if such hopes are to be realised.



Flickr user: RSNY

Measured musings

Typical to British political discourse, there is yet another rift in UK-EU relations forming. Rather than the typically dull discussion over how much we pay out to the EU to get so little back, we appear to be facing a far more problematic issue: the potential conflict between the Coalition's proposed British Bill of Rights and the European Convention on Human

Rights (ECHR).

Born of the row between the European Court of Human Rights and the UK over prisoner voting and the ability of convicted sex offenders to appeal against their lifetime registration with the police under the edict of the ECHR, this current dispute has reignited concerns about national sovereignty within the EU. Whilst Justice Secretary Ken Clarke has said that the UK government will continue to adhere to the European Court of Human Rights' rulings, he has also intimated that he aims to redress the balance between national

courts and the supranational European courts. Given the fact that the UK is to take the chairmanship of the Council of Europe in November, this 'redressing of balance' may be attempted sooner rather than later. Combining this with Lord Woolf's fears that having a second convention on human rights in the form of the British Bill of Rights would lead to a 'complication in the position' of judges by having two potentially conflicting statutes to rule against.

Given that the prototypical judge is old, white and male, this plurality of

conventions poses a potential problem for the import of Europe within the British judicial system. Due to the nature of judicial discretion allowing for judges to choose between conflicting conventions when ruling on given cases. This has a knock-on effect for the evolution of a European identity within Britain: as this ability may serve to undermine the shared institutions and legal practices which could serve to form the basis of a supranationalism upon which such an identity could be formed.

If Europe is to survive conceptually in the minds and hearts of Britons, it may be

that we have to abandon any old vestiges of British nationalism and accept that that concept is beyond saving and has been dead for a fair time now. Indeed, Shami Chakrabarti's stating that 'we have a Bill of Rights in this country. It's called the Human Rights Act and is thoroughly British, European and universal in its values' is indicative of how little salience British exceptionalism has in the real world.

Alexander Young
Features Editor

AIRBAG

K-RO'D: As the lovely JStor announced last week, he is no longer at the helm of HMS PartB – my heart is still sinking. The season of renewal, rebirth and new beginnings is, however, only a month around the corner and in true Beaver fashion we can Christen a new recruit.

Apologies for the earlier nautical references; wording this from afar is proving tragically difficult, and as I am writing from my family home in Plymouth – whence the Pilgrim Fathers set sail for America (never to return, it is important to add!) – all things ship-based are the most exciting things from which to draw inspiration.

VORBEDACHT: Christen me and the water will turn to to vinegar. My name's the closest you're going to come to getting a crossword.

Is it a persona?

In any case, I'm new and looking forward to this, but not new-new, so Whoopee!

Fashion – Alice Leah Fyfe | Film – Aameer Patel | Literature – Presca Ahn | Music – Masaya Tanikawa | Satire – Luke Smolinski

PARTB

Sex and Gender – Alexander Young | Technology – Eden Dwek | Theatre – Chris Finnigan | TV – Simon Chaudhuri

LSE LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Soviet Folly of George Bernard Shaw

Aameer Patel reflects on the LSE performance of *Fourteen Little Red Huts*, a satire of George Bernard Shaw's visit to Soviet Russia

During a history lesson long before I thought about choosing a university, a teacher of mine ridiculed the writer and LSE co-founder George Bernard Shaw for the comments he made about his visit to Soviet Russia. Andrei Platonov's 1932 play *Fourteen Little Red Huts* embodies that contempt. On 9th February, as part of the LSE Literary Festival, the Language Centre staged the first act of the play – in the Shaw Library, ironically enough.

Like many, Shaw visited the USSR under a propaganda initiative devised with the expectation that the carefully staged visits would lead to positive portrayal in the West. The visits happened during Stalin's brutal agricultural collectivisation programme, which led to the deaths of between four and ten million people. Although reports of the widespread famine had already reached the West, naturally, they were not based

on journalistic investigations. Upon his return, Shaw concluded that such reports were unfounded and slanderous, since he had seen no such evidence.

The central figure in the play is Edward-Johann Louis Bos, whose name signals that he is a stand-in for more than just one Briton (indeed, visitors to the USSR came from all over Europe). But he bears a particularly strong resemblance to Shaw.

Angus Wrenn, co-ordinator of LSE's literature modules and one of the play's directors, said of this resemblance, "I see more and more of Shaw in Bos. All those deliberately paradoxical, controversial remarks, the obsession with old age and imminent death, and specific details such as drinking milk – Shaw was a famous teetotaler and is reported as drinking milk on the trip." Perhaps Shaw was in fact a little naïve or susceptible to flattery: "He was greeted on arrival at the station by a crowd singing not the 'Internatio-

nale' but 'Hail Shaw!'"

Bos is 101-years old, another direct reference to Shaw. Wrenn said, "[Shaw] celebrated his 75th birthday while in Russia in 1931, and this age was regarded as very old at a time when most working men were dead by 70. Overall, however, Bos is definitely satirical – an exaggeration of characteristics to the point of the ridiculous – rather than a balanced portrait of Shaw."

Wisdom does not come with age or even experience, and it is somewhat ironic that this is one of the themes in Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, written a decade earlier. It should be stressed however, that Shaw was not alone in his folly – Walter Duranty, for example, also denied the existence of a famine (despite comments to the contrary even in his own newspaper) but won a Pulitzer Prize for his reports from the USSR.

The LSE production of the play – with Howard Davies finely leading a solid cast

made up mostly of Russian language students – was a modern one, and it was not difficult to see Bos's similarity to prominent figures today, in their pomposity and arrogance. "There are certainly parallels between the way he behaves and recent politicians and public intellectuals," said Wrenn. "Qaddafi comes to mind, or perhaps Khrushchev, knocking his shoe on the table at the UN. More recently, George W. Bush on the aircraft carrier at the end of the Iraq War, and Hillary Clinton's comments about her time in Bosnia."

Wrenn also commented on the play's effective use of black humour: "The style in so many ways (quite independently) anticipates the Theatre of the Absurd embodied by Beckett and Ionesco in the 1950s." Platonov's reasons for writing a play are also interesting, though the literary form certainly lends itself well to such humour. "Platonov had no realistic prospect of ever seeing it publicly

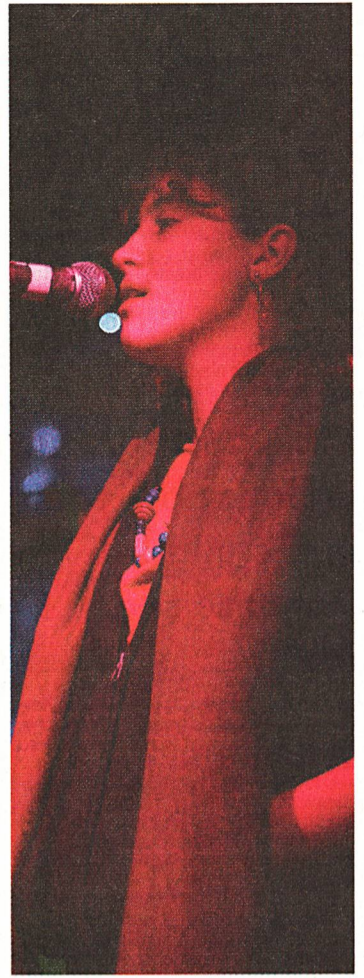
performed in Stalin's time, and that begs the question of why he produced a play in such circumstances (all the more so as the vast majority of his output is prose fiction). Perhaps it was the sheer theatricality of the charade which was involved in the USSR welcoming figures like Shaw, the Webbs, Romain Rolland, Henri de Barbusse and others which pushed him into this literary form."

Elements of Platonov's work have been described as prophetic. I understand why. He is marvellously subversive, but with greater nuance than his more famous contemporaries and successors. The clarity and penetration of *Fourteen Little Red Huts* is astounding.

Read more highlights from the 2011 LSE Literary Festival in next week's PartB Literature section.

Soft pop, 'Southie' grime and quirky folk: Look At Me SE15

Masaya Tanikawa reviews a night of fresh local talent with Look At Me London founder Marie-Claire Denyer



A few times a year, music production company Look At Me London hosts a celebration of fresh local talent from South East London. 'SE15' draws a young, passionate crowd – demand often exceeds venue capacity. Competition amongst the bands is fierce, too: **Marie-Claire Denyer**, organiser and director of the night, receives several requests for each show. An event that was once aimed at the younger hip-hop crowd has become fashionable for music fans of all ages and genres.

On the night of 22nd January, The Montague Arms opened its doors to a wide roster of bands and artists. Spanning reggae, hip-hop, folk and plugging the gaps between, SE15 showcased yet another successful line-up.

"These nights have really grown a lot with such a wide musical spread. The first one focused only on hip-hop, with vocals over backing tracks and such," remarks Marie-Claire. "That's not to say that hip-hop isn't welcome. I think the hip-hop scene in South East London to be recognised."

Hip-hop did make an appearance this time around, performed to experimental finesse by East London-born artist El Mingo. Her eccentric appearance reflected the unusual timbres and structures in the backing tracks.

"I've been around for about a year. I've always done music throughout my life, in bands and such. Got bored of waiting around for people all the time, so one day I just went solo. Haven't looked back since."

Peckham-based duo Insight kicked the gain up a few notches with their eclectic mix of Janelle Monáe-inspired hip-hop and radio pop. Having played at prestigious venues like the IndigO2, Daniel Vincent and Joel Fender have been singing together for the past three years. They met at the well-respected Brit School.

"When we sang together for the first time we saw greatness," recalls Daniel. "Our voices just blended together

"When we sang together for the first time we saw greatness; we really belonged together"

so beautifully. We knew we belonged together."

A studio album is in the works; the duo calls themselves 'perfectionists'. "Coming from a social area like Peckham, it's very easy to think in a one-directional manner music-wise. A lot of people think, 'oh look, two black guys, hip-hop' but we're not like that. We just love music and the rush of playing to a live audi-

ence," beams Joel.

Wielding a flute and a mandolin, Liverpool-born folk artist Laura J Martin headlined the event. Heavily influenced by her time abroad in Japan, Laura weds the experimental flavours of David Bowie and Sea of Bees with traditional aspects of Japanese folklore. The resulting tunes are packed with quirky folk-tinged melodies, warped and mangled into intricate textures through her favoured use of a loop station.

Katy & The Elders also returned to the stage, welcomed by deafening cheers and screams. Flanked by percussionists and a guitarist, Katy sang to backing tracks from their upcoming debut record as a sonic wave of Britpop, ska and reggae washed over an equally lively crowd. 'Southie' grime and rap artist Rio-Soundz also made an appearance – his delicate rhyming techniques echo that of fellow grime artist Conrad The Scoundral.

Playing host to the night was talented MC and hip-hop artist 'Infecta', known otherwise as AJ. With appearances on Channel 4, BBC and MTV, AJ was hailed by the Times as "an influential, inspirational and motivating young leader".

Born in the 'slums' of South East London, AJ was the perfect host with amusing jokes and thoughtful spoken word performances that kept music lovers' hands in the air.

"The nights have expanded in lots of other ways too," says Marie-Claire. "There's more structure. It's taken on a sort of format, with proper headlining artists and DJs playing sets in-between artists."

This time around, her sisters took on DJ duties under the name of '2manydenyers'. "I try to keep things frugal budget-wise, so I bring in family and friends to help out whenever I can. I'm really trying to avoid having to dig into my own pockets as I need to make profit from the nights in order to continue with them and build on the concept behind them. I highly recommend 2manydenyers

"Doing it all on my own has been challenging... But the nights have improved with such a wide musical spread"

by the way, I'm booking them for my next birthday party!"

SE15 is funded by Southwark Council and Southwark Arts Forum, this time in partnership with the Newcomen Collett Foundation. "Southwark Arts Forum told me if I had any money left over from the last night, which I did, it would go to this

one," she explains, "So I made sure I had some left over, though I had to look for further funding and that's where Newcomen Collett Foundation comes in.

"They're also Southwark-based, and they helped fund the first Look At Me night. They're always really helpful, especially in terms of getting funding. There's not a multitude of forms you have to fill in, which makes a nice change."

Southwark Arts Forum stay behind the scenes during SE15 nights. "They take a back seat when it comes to organisation, which is nice since I can just get on with it. Sometimes they come down to gather statistics for future funding, and they're always extremely supportive."

Feedback has been consistently positive throughout the year, so Marie-Claire hopes SE15 will carry on. "The recent nights haven't been for just under-18s unlike the previous ones, so the quality of music has been that bit better. Things were hectic, as they always are with these nights," she says. "I'm hoping to get other event managers on board over the next few months, since doing it all on my own has been a challenge."

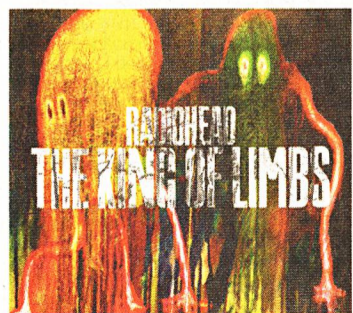
The new Look At Me London website will be completed by this summer, but for now updates can be found at:

www.myspace.com/lookatmelondon

Music videos produced by Marie-Claire are available for viewing at: <http://vimeo.com/lookatmelondon>

Radiohead – The King of Limbs

Sachin Patel shares his first impressions of the Oxford quintet's latest rush-release



All I will say on the method of this album's release is that its genteel but unanticipated announcement reflects perfectly the content of it.

I would liken *The King of Limbs* to two forebears, both stylistically and contextually: Radiohead's own *Amnesiac* (2001), and Blur's pre-departure farewell, *Think Tank* (2003). Like the former, *The King of Limbs* is hype-free, glitchy, and

pits the organic against the synthetic in an extremely natural way. Like the latter, this album is limber and light-footed, and betrays a substantial African influence. This is music to listen to while floating above a pastoral idyll – but with the brevity of a Tube journey.

In spite of this overriding sensation of the folksy, the album opens with its least accessible foot forward: "Bloom" does exactly what it says on the tin, but in an unexpected way. From clattering percussion atop a piano loop incorrectly labelled Glass-ian, Thom Yorke moans indefinitely, his words practically yawning out. But the secret weapon is the bass – another link to *Think Tank*, which featured Alex James's nimble fretwork more prominently than any other instrument. Here, Colin Greenwood's style recalls that of Dave Holland, who manned the double bass on Miles Davis's *In A Silent Way*, or, more recently, a more leisurely Thundercat, as heard on Flying Lotus's 2010 magnum opus *Cosmogramma*.

A strong emphasis on groove is borne out on a couple of songs – "Morning Mr Magpie" is hypnotic, as is the

21st century Can of "Lotus Flower" – but always there is elegant counterpoint from (Colin) Greenwood. Brother Jonny is less apparent on the guitar, but his role in the electronics department is probably not to be understated. *The King of Limbs* is a very modern album in its use of loops and wafting samples, never more so than on quasi-instrumental "Feral", which rubs ghostly fragments against tribal percussion. Rather than simply paying homage to their dubstep contemporaries, it's nice to see Radiohead refreshing an already tired genre.

But *The King of Limbs* has its six-string moments too, and it's here that the Amnesiac comparisons start to make even more sense. "Little By Little" is a strange mash-up of "Dollars & Cents" and "I Might Be Wrong", right down to the insistent drumming of Phil Selway. A little later, "Give Up The Ghost" channels campfire songs through a reverb spring, with an army of Thom Yorkes backing up the vocals in bewildering fashion – cooing, barking and resonating like E-Bowed guitar.

Amidst all the skronky jazz and

studious krautrock, you'd be forgiven for thinking *The King of Limbs* has no heart. Luckily, "Codex" saves the day. Funereal piano and occasional sub-bass thumps are the soundtrack to the now-expected Yorkeian contemplation on mortality, and it's true, this is a gut-wrenchingly beautiful composition. Strange chord changes and mournful woodwind only augment the melancholia.

The inclusion of a song like "Codex" speaks volumes about this album. Radiohead may still be able to surprise their

fans with a totally unexpected release, but the songs themselves don't quite beguile the listener like they used to. This is a solid release, building upon the "seduction songs" favoured on 2007's *In Rainbows*, and introducing orchestral and electronic textures by turns majestic and occasionally sinister. But there's no confusing this for a Kid A or an OK Computer – even at their most rural, the Radiohead of 2011 are just too lush and inviting.

Spotify Spotting

What Elin Lindstrom, postgraduate student at the Gender Institute, is listening to this week:

Vampire Weekend
Oxford Comma

Lisa Ekdahl
Papillas Samba

Cat Power
Living Proof

Usher
Confessions Part II

Colombiafrica
Zarandía Champeta

Clybourne Park, Wyndham's Theatre

Jonathan Storey indulges in a bit of casual racism at the theatre

A retired Bostonian teacher sitting two seats away from me fell asleep during the first act of *Clybourne Park*. He snored like a stegosaurus for what felt like half an hour, but in fact could only have been half a minute, before my friend woke him with a gentle tap. We were situated in the front row as well, having gotten up ridiculously early (8:30am on a Wednesday... what, no sympathy?) to buy ultra-cheap tickets for what we'd been told for the past two months was the 'hottest show of the season' by every theatrical advertisement around Leicester Square. To their immense credit, the actors on stage reacted as if everything was par for the course. A freight train

“The cast remain unflappable even in the midst of immense snoring”

could have smashed through one of the sides of the theatre, instantly killing many patrons, and the cast would have reacted as if a small fly had entered the room. It may not seem so, but this is an immense compliment not only to the professionalism of the actors but also their thespian skills, as nothing signals repression greater than a whole heap of stiff upper lips.

Indeed, the first act of *Clybourne Park* is all about repression. Set in 1959 in a house in the eponymous neighbourhood of Chicago, the main narrative concerns Russ and Bev (Stuart McQuarrie and Sophie Thompson), a WASPY middle-class couple, a few days before their planned

move. Complicating matters is the news that the family moving in happens to be African-American. The local community sends the head of the Rotary Club, Karl (Stephen Campbell Moore) and his deaf, pregnant wife Betsy (Sarah Goldberg) to convince Russ and Bev to sell their house to the Church discreetly so as to

play therapist and get Russ and Bev to open up about a recent tragedy befalling them.

While the first act is all about racial tensions bubbling up under the surface, ready to erupt like a volcano, the second act takes place fifty years later in the same house: the area has become

ally open society.

The cast from the first act play different characters in the second: this allows Thompson and McQuarrie to take a relative breather from their heavy theatrics of the first act and means Goldberg, Msamati and Brown can shine in the second act. Out of all of the performances, the

line in the entire play. Goldberg, virtually non-existent in the first act due to her character's incapacities, blossoms in the second act as a wife deeply ashamed of her husband's racist jokes yet desperately wanting to keep her own brand of racism under wraps. Brown, calm despite so much pressure on her character in the first act, transforms into a passive aggressive ice queen in the second act and becomes riveting to watch as a result. The men have occasional moments of brilliance, such as McQuarrie's monologue at the end of the first act, or Campbell Moore's decidedly un-PC jokes in the second act, but this is the women's show first and foremost and they run away with the glory.

The play itself gets better as it goes

“The depiction of racism adapts to the changing times”

along. Anyone reading the posters and expecting a 'laugh riot' will be disappointed if they just watch the first half, which is more amusing than hilarious, though integrates its themes better with the narrative. The second half is much funnier, but tends to overplay its politics and make everything slightly more obvious. The way it links the actions of the characters in the '50s to that of the present day adds a level of poignancy not present in the first half. Only a minor superfluous setback at the very end puts a slight damper on an overall brilliant production.

Clybourne Park is showing until 7th May 2011



avoid the 'inevitability' of house prices falling in the area. Thrust into the middle of this tense atmosphere are housekeeper Francine (Lorna Brown) and her husband Albert (Lucian Msamati), an African-American couple used by both parties to facilitate their own points about race relations in the 1950s. Interjecting with his own brand of annoying optimism is the local minister, Jim (Sam Spruell), trying to

predominantly African-American, and a white couple are thinking of altering their new house, to the annoyance of the new local community. A neighbourhood watch meeting, fit with lawyers arguing about easements, results with similar racial tensions emerging in a distinctively twenty-first century way. Gone is the outright racism in a repressed society; in its place is the repressed racism in a more gener-

women come out on top. That's not to say there are any significantly weak links – Msamati is occasionally boring in the first half, but often very good in the second – but that the cast is very good as a whole and individually. Thomson has most of the best lines both in her roles as Bev, which allows her to be annoying without being completely grating, and as lawyer Kathy, which results in the biggest laugh

Greenland, NT

Christopher Finnigan examines a play about everyone's favourite topic

There is always a worry when giving the stage over to a production which is political and strongly polemical that instead of putting on a play you end up giving a lecture. The more contentious and opinion-splitting the issue, the quicker the audience will turn off and have their minds made up from the word go. *Greenland*, currently showing at the National Theatre, at times perilously balances on this divide and at others superbly succeeds in provoking the audience to take a step back and rethink their attitudes on the apocalyptic issue of climate change.

The subject is an incredibly difficult one to tackle, and praise is deserved for simply endeavouring to adapt such an important one. Climate change is incredibly complex, yet the play embraces this problem head on and explores it from every personal angle available. From the African leader, to the climate scientist, to the political adviser, to the family, to hippie protesters, the confused teenager and the aspirational Cambridge applicant; they are all there. It predominately centres around these relationships, each consisting of only a few members and demonstrates how they are all confronting the unwelcome news of the planet warming at such a daunting speed. By focusing on the human aspect the play shows the divisive and highly resistant feelings that we have when it comes to judging climate science.

One revealing relationship, whose dynamic is not restricted to the ethical demands of climate change, is between two friends played by Amanda Lawrence and Natasha Broomfield. They address the audience, as if it was their psychologist, and divulge how one feels their relationship is strained because of the other's unrelentingly reminders of her duties to the climate: no carbon-emitting car or no Starbucks coffee imported from South America. "Why can't you make these changes", she frustratingly shouts. "Oh, how this love for the environment has changed you" the other replies.

To avoid the changes the environment requires of us we see through this play how we dismiss the truth of its unhealthy state. All of the relationships symbolise how we, when informed about climate change, fail to rationally engage and think what our response should be; we feel alienated, up against the ropes defending our habits and luxuries from a fierce opponent; we find many ways to reject its truth and wrangle free of its responsibility imposing consequences. With no well-

organised plan to act and guide believers against the climate sceptics, we witness their efforts fall on deaf ears as their message is drowned out. A young daughter leaves her parents and searches out fellow activists, ending up disappointed by a tree-hugging group who are making scant progress.

The structure of the play is fluid and fast, yet erratic and messy in the beginning and end. It takes a while for you to get to grips with the characters, who are the vehicles for communicating the play's message. We see a child hanging from the ceiling in a trolley and bad language spilling out the characters like oil from a burst pipeline. This artistic mark that the four writers have put on it seems at the start, to create not an illuminating introduction to climate change, but rather bewilder the audience with a little too much.

There is no interval during the play - it is two hours exactly - but what demarcates the halfway point is a short dance to the Copenhagen negotiations, where this earth-shattering theory is handled at the end of a pristine suit in a dense political agreement instead of the protester's emotional front-line. Here the politicians stand in stark contrast to their citizens. Bureaucracy turns passionate advocates into sterile robots. Lifeless creatures gather with their deputies and advisors to hammer out an agreement to the amazement of the kind, warm, humble and ultimately naive Malian President (Tonji Lucas). "Don't lecture the audience", he tells his advisor (Tobi Bakare), "they are an educated middle-class, they know the seriousness of climate change and the effect it will have on our country". His words form a mirror as the audience looks back at itself through his sad but true evaluation of them.

The play, if you will excuse the pun, breaks the ice with its audience slowly, but cracks it just enough for them to reflect on how our responses to climate change are varied, irrational and deeply personal - and at present not what's required. It's not all social and political commentary; it's at times funny, engaging and dramatic. However, you do leave with an ambiguous taste in your mouth: neither trumpeting future possibilities nor drowning in the failed past.

Greenland is showing until 2nd April 2011

Angelheaded Hipsters

Christopher Finnigan continues his National Theatre expedition looking at Beat photography

The Beat Generation, while over quickly, inspired much of the hippie movement of the 1960s and produced some of the best modern literature and poetry to ever originate from America. Non-conformist, hedonistic, spiritual, political and experimental, its lead poet (and now unofficial photographer), Allen Ginsberg, claimed: "it was just a bunch of friends looking to get published".

Before the term became vacuous as it was absorbed into popular culture, it was selected by Jack Kerouac as he thought it possessed a 'melancholy smear'. It reflected its sad usage in New York slang with words such as 'beat-up' and 'beat-down'; it was for the people at the bottom, empty, alone and rejected by society.

Comprised of writers such as Jack Kerouac, Carl Solomon and Neal Cassady, it centered around New York City eight years before Dylan and the Greenwich Folk crowd came to dominate its bohemian scene. Emanating directly from one of the city's many subcultures, Ann Charters, their biographer, characterises it as "an intricate web of perceptions, judgements, feelings and aspirations". The group who resided near Columbia University were unwilling to conform to socially conservative America that was compromised of unjust hierarchies, quaint family life and unhealthy fetishes to consumerism.

So when, in 1953, Ginsberg - not

a materialist by nature - spontaneously made a purchase (a Kodak Retina Camera), he didn't discard the item but instead carried it around with him for the next ten years as this group made their quick accent in America's rapidly changing cultural landscape. The exhibition, which currently adorns the hallways of the National Theatre, is of the contents of that Kodak Camera - and a few other prints from later on in Ginsberg's life and other like-minded artists.

Titled *Angelheaded Hipsters*, the exhibition allows us to glimpse into the world of the Beat Generation through its main protagonist. This exhibition is not in London's most popular theatre for its quality of art; instead it is present because of its rare candid insight into this influential and extremely creative time. Only a few gave the Beat Generation its pulse and, fortunately, they all orbited around Ginsberg. We see Kerouac solemn on a summer's evening on a balcony in downtown Manhattan, and Ginsberg himself naked, legs crossed on his bed staring mischievously into the mirror. We view this era not through one artist's expression - the photos are simply candid instead of adopting any idiosyncratic quality - but rather through its main, highly influential characters.

When you encounter the opening wall you are told that, even though Ginsberg did get some use out of his Kodak, he disposed of it in 1963, condemning it to some nondescript drawer. This introduc-

tion creates a feeling of excitement; like accidentally stumbling across a treasure chest which was never intended to be discovered. It also gives the exhibition a feeling of authenticity, a work that wasn't destined to adorn any wall, but rather a private family photo album.

The best photos are undoubtedly of Kerouac. Physically imposing, his strong jaw and tough appearance are starkly contrasted by his kind and gentle disposition, which are communicated through his non-judgmental, understanding and warm face. They capture the author of *On The Road* and *The Dharma Bums* in an enigmatic way; he appears a multi-layered man: troubled, inspired and thoughtful. There is also a chronological order to the photos, which allows us to witness the demise of this great mind. Towards the middle of the collection we see him almost deformed, unrecognisably slouching - "looking like his father", Ginsberg annotates - drunk in a chair stationed at the side of a small bland room.

Entertainingly, we see the evolution of 'Ginsberg The Hippie'. Initially his identity takes on the appearance of a Jewish intellectual; clean-cut, well-dressed, rimless glasses and all, which quickly morphs into scraggy hair, bushy beard, two-sizes-too-big shirts and thick, darkly rimmed glasses.

Many of the photos in the second half of the exhibition were not taken by Ginsberg (although some are). They all have a continual obsession with academics, artists and authors; from Bob Dylan to Madonna to Harvard psychologists, they all pop up. The photos not taken by Ginsberg are by other photographers who were 'inspired' by his photos. The only particular similarity is vaguely in style - which doesn't appear to be original - and subject type; people disposed to a life of thought and creativity. Nonetheless, they remain intriguing. There is also a photo of Ginsberg's infamous Howl poem that won him national notoriety, for those ignorant or forgetful of why Ginsberg made such an impact.

Ginsberg once remarked that "art is a community effort", and it is these words that are on show in all their glory in this nostalgic exhibition. "A fleeting moment in a fleeting world" is how Ginsberg, before his death in 1997 characterised the Beat Generation and that is precisely what we glimpse with these photos taken from a truly unique angle.

Angelheaded Hipsters is showing until 20th March 2011



I Need Personal Journeys...

Inese Zapa speaks to William Fichtner about acting, travelling, and his new film **Drive Angry 3D**

You've worked on a wide range of genres and formats, ranging from soap operas in the '80s (As the World Turns) to action films (The Dark Knight, Armageddon) and comedies (Date Night), as well as the popular TV series Prison Break. Why such diversity – chance or choice?

Choice. I have been picking and choosing my life, I choose a job when I know that the things I read are exciting for me and I really know I want to do that, and I wish those came every day. Sometimes I take the rough characters thinking of not doing that for a while after, of playing something else, but this something else does not come along for a while. And that is completely fine, and then you wait. And that is a good thing.

A typical question, but required by journalistic etiquette. Do you have a favourite role?

A question I really like right now! The role of the The Accountant in Drive Angry is one of them, in terms of work, it has definitely been the best time I have ever had working on a movie. The script struck me the first time I skimmed through it. I'm here today only because it's so easy to talk about it. Altogether I'd say I have three or four favourite roles.

“I need to act in a certain way, it just comes through physically. Everything is physical. Your body represents what is going on”

In Drive Angry you play The Accountant from Hell. How rational are you on both sides of the frontier, here and in Hell?

As a character, as a guy who works in Hell, there isn't really a reference point. There is no experience in which the work in Hell can be based on. The exciting part is that you can do whatever you want in there. The whole sequence of being alive, then dying and going to Hell, then getting a job in Hell while having a human form, having the accountability about who stays



in Hell, who breaks out of Hell, the whole compilation of this must be interesting. Also, when was the last time The Accountant saw a woman? What about things like music, sex, smells, sounds, just getting back to Earth for a little while? The curiosity about what exactly I could do with this is how the rationality goes. I have not yet even seen what has come out of this.

Is it often that you avoid watching your own films?

I ask my wife to go. I say, 'Kim, would you go?' She goes, and afterwards I ask her how it went.

Patrick Lussier, director of Drive Angry, in the context of the film once said that 'fear is healthy. It keeps you alive'. However, every unit of fear requires an opposition in terms of strength. What gives you courage?

I think, to whatever degree of success, but I need to find out who the character is. This might not directly correspond to the question, but there is a certain commitment to dive into that character, instead of playing myself. In a lot of roles it is possible and easy to simply play yourself, but I do not want to play me. The commitment and joy of finding the

person of the character is what gives me courage. Also, it's my mother (gives me courage).

Do you feel a difference in working for a 3D production?

Not really. The change lies in the technical side of the process. It's a visual experience, not emotional. It's not a part of acting. Patrick has already shot a couple of

“It never got to a point where I would watch myself to do something deliberately for 3D”

3D films, he loves technology, and, more importantly, he's good at it. Making a '70s road movie with wild characters, hot cars and all the other dullness into a 3D pro-

duction – that is something unprecedented. It happens while shooting, you move your hand out, and Patrick says 'Hold on, this would look really cool in 3D!' But it never got to a point where I would watch myself to do something deliberately for 3D. Neither do I want to. Let the look stay as it is. Stay away.

The title of the film implies a certain version of road-tripping across the States. Any memories?

During my twenties, every summer I would work before college restarts, and save the money. Then, I would get my car out and drive. I've been to every single state in the lower forty-eight. I could be on my way to Florida and decide to take a detour through South Dakota, miles away.

Cars and speed. How important is this combination for you? From what you've said before, the answer is clear, but I'm eager to find out the extent.

I don't have my kid on the screensaver of my phone. I have this red '70s road runner!

You lent your voice to the character Ken Rosenberg in the popular

Grand Theft Auto video games. How much does the voice tell you about a person? Does recording for such a format ever feel like giving yourself away beyond the confident limits of control?

In the studio, you have a microphone and you have some space. That is what I need. I need to act in a certain way, it just comes through physically. Everything is physical. Your body represents what is going on. As long as you feel like being in the moment, you are in the right place, disregarding of whether someone sees you on the screen or not. I don't know if I am. I am not the person who finishes shooting at the end of the day, just like it was with Patrick. I want to reshoot. He sends me away, he says, 'go home'. You never know beforehand. You just do something and then see what happens.

What would you have done otherwise, as a career, after having seen what happens?

Something with unexamined woods, I might have been a forest ranger. Or a fighter pilot. I need personal journeys.

... And Inese Zapa's final words on the film

New Release



Director: Patrick Lussier
Screenplay: Todd Farmer **Cast:** Nicolas Cage, Amber Heard, William Fichtner **Runtime:** 104 minutes **Cert:** 18 **Year:** 2011

The most captivating aspect of *Drive Angry 3D* is the human idea of symbiosis in two seemingly incongruent strangers, in Milton (Nicholas Cage) and Piper (Amber Heard). Also notable is the willpower inherent in the main characters. It is portrayed through a production based on manipulation of the upper layer of human emotions through the effective humour and intense 3D effects.

Patrick Lussier and Todd Farmer are quite successful in creating amusing contrasts, for instance, locating the exquisite ending of the film in the vastness of a rough and grimy Hell.

Overall, even though it may not be everyone's cup of tea, for an audience seeking a speed/chaos/sex/rock combination, *Drive Angry 3D* will be very enjoyable.

Drive Angry is released in cinemas on 25th February 2011

New Release

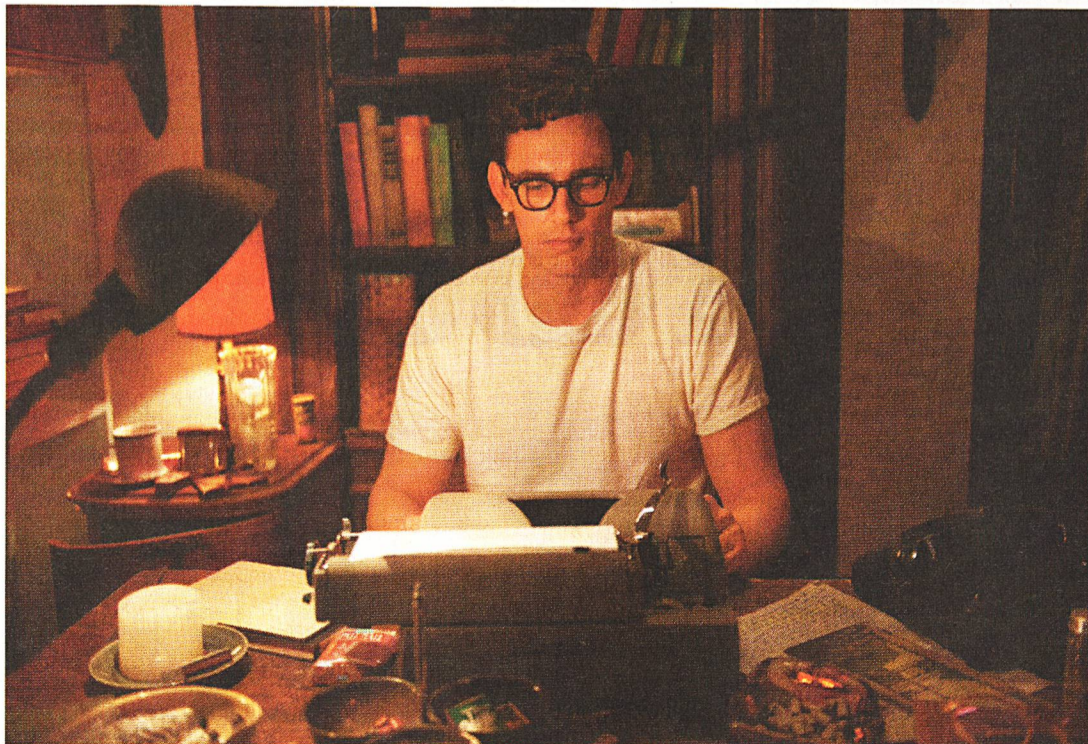


Directors: Rob Epstein & Jeffrey Friedman
Cast: James Franco, Jeff Daniels, David Strathairn **Runtime:** 84 minutes **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2010

Howl could have been an awesome film. I mean, think about it for a second. For the first time, a poem being the centre and central character of a movie, with all the possibilities it offers, the collage and montage of images, entanglement of meaning and pictures, of sounds and words. And I'm not talking about just any poem, I'm talking about Howl, Allen Ginsberg's 1955 masterpiece, the cornerstone of the Beat Generation, along with Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957). A five pages-long poem, filled with jazz riff-like sounds, tribal rhythms,

“The film depoliticises a poem that foreshadows the social struggles to come and the misery to stay”

an attempt to grasp the dreams and realities of the US kids of the Eisenhower generation. A scream of sex, pain and hallucination, a song about their everyday



life where Buddhism, beers and mescal rhymed with racial segregation, Vietnam war and criminalised homosexuality.

The poem was and still is revolutionary; Epstein and Friedman's film is not. It is hard for me to write this, because, it's rare even to hear about poetry these days. I thought this film would be a gem – it turns out it isn't, for many reasons.

They decided to focus their narrative on the Howl obscenity trial (1957) and its reconstitution, barely mentioning the historical context of the poem's creation, of the lives of other members of the Beat Generation (Burroughs, Kerouac, Corso, Cassidy), barely showing how they rooted their poems, novels and short stories in jazz and bebop, how they found

inspiration and escape in clandestine journeys on freight trains across America.

Throughout the film, you hear the voice of James Franco (playing 29-year old Ginsberg) reading the poem. But when it comes to figuring the poem on the screen, which should have been their central concern, Epstein and Friedman miss the wonderful creative chance they

had. They switch to a DIY Paint-like animation with common figurations of poetic images, not digging very far in their interpretation. They avoid emphasising

“Epstein and Friedman miss the wonderful creative chance they had”

too much the sexual and kaleidoscopic experience of Howl. You end up watching a movie about a poem that was and still is a scream of spiritual and sexual liberation, represented on the screen with the lame figuration of a man and a woman holding hands and flying into the sunshine. Come on, even the image of Jeff 'The Dude' Lebowski, wearing a bathrobe and flying over L.A. in his hallucinations, goes further in representing the untranslatable.

Since the film is all about the Howl obscenity trial, it ends with victory for Ginsberg's editor. And when the credits roll, you have a bitter taste in your mouth, because you just watched another movie where the good guys win and the bad guys lose (no more Indians, the cowboys killed them all). The film depoliticises a poem that foreshadows the social struggles to come and the misery to stay. You would be better off buying collection Ginsberg's collection of poems.

Howl is released in cinemas on 25th February 2011

Alexandre Tevin **Howl**

The Burmese Harp Aameer Patel

Classics

Directors: Kon Ichikawa **Screenplay:** Natto Wada **Cast:** Rentarō Mikuni, Shōji Yasui, Tatsuya Mihashi **Runtime:** 116 minutes **Cert:** 12 **Year:** 1954

"The virtue of suffering has no rival, since, from the shock it causes, intoxication falls away and there arouses compassion."

(Bodhicaryavatara 6:21)

The harp is a wonderfully dynamic instrument. It glistens in concert hall and jungle alike, whether made of brass or branches. Kon Ichikawa's tale of war weary Japanese soldiers in Burma begins just before the Second World War ends. Led by their chorusmaster Captain (Rentarō Mikuni), the company's homesick songs are accompanied by a natural born harpist, Private Mizushima (Shōji Yasui). They sing to raise their spirits and they sing to trick the enemy, with the harp at times evoking surrealism akin to more enchanting productions of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Their attempt to deceive the enemy is unnecessary. Japan has surrendered, and they are joined in the universal language by their British captors, who share their yearning for home. The significance of surrender to a soldier is remarkably captured – the immediate transition from being the ultimate master of destiny, with extensive power over life and death, to becoming a powerless subject. Mizushima's company accept their lot, but others are not so sensible to the precedence of life over humiliation, and he is tasked with persuading one such company to follow the central command.

He fails. Only surrender brings defeat and if even a single soldier fights on, the motherland is not defeated. Stubbornness has consequences, and as a surprise sole survivor, he encounters a

desolate landscape. Ichikawa masterfully captures his isolation in a vast and unforgiving environment.

The physical and mental transition from soldier to wandering monk are independent, but both are derived from necessity. As his body requires nourishment, his tormented mind requires attention. His path is based on a precedent from his old enemy, when, in his robes, he encounters British soldiers giving a dignified burial to the unknown Japanese soldier.

"You were horrified when you saw a few corpses in the charnel ground. Yet you delight in your village, which is a charnel-ground thronging with moving corpses." (Bodhicaryavatara 6:21)

His transformation is such that even his old company, now focussed equally on being reunited with their harpist friend

"Ichikawa strokes rather than strikes and his gentleness is deeply affecting"

and returning home, are not able to firmly establish the monk's identity. The choice to tell his story in flashbacks – after he is sighted, is an inspired one, as our position is almost as uncertain as that of his comrades.

Uncertainty and longing pervade in a painful solitary life devoted to the service of mankind and only subsequently, oneself, but the film simultaneously emanates warmth in its sincerity. Ichikawa strokes rather than strikes and his gentleness is deeply affecting. As is their last physical meeting, where the harp transends all that words could transmit and becomes



a mode for unadulterated explanation, emotion and shared understanding.

As prisoners of war, his company are unable to actively pursue their suspicions, but they nonetheless do so as best they can. Memorably, they teach a parrot a message for their seemingly metaphor-

phosized friend. In time and with his explanatory letter, the fate of the parrot proves even more touching.

The Burmese Harp is often categorised as anti-war. It certainly is, Ichikawa is not idly dismissive and to label it so is probably a step too far. His actual subject

of human folly is more universal, and the result, without using the word lightly, is profound.

The Burmese Harp is available now on DVD and Blu-ray as part of *The Masters of Cinema* series

PRIVATE B



Fashun.

Yun Git

Wham bam fank you mam! That's right! Fashun's very own Yun Git is yet again out on the prowl, looking for the hottest SPICIEST fella on campus! (By which I mean the NICEST DRESSED, fashionistas, not the one adorned in tar-ragon!)

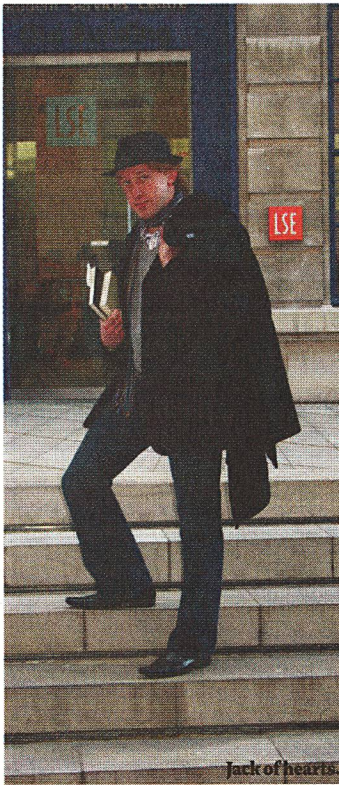
And this fella is so **Hot. And. Spicy.** that he made my tongue go all tingly, and I had to run it under cold water for at least 5 minutes. (Yun's not too good with the ol' spice!)

But as that old saying goes, if you can't cook, get out of the kitchen!

Which was when Yun realised that she was writin' a fashun column! This week, Jack Tindales emerges from the cupboard known to many LSE-goers as "UGM" to talk to the Beaver's finest fashun writer, Yun Git - or, as I like to call myself, Lady GitGit!

Now, as many of my fashun fans know, Yun loves a bit of "UGM" (whatever that stands for) and she particularly likes a man who can chair a "UGM" discussion. So was I in for a treat today!

He swaggered in, hair tussled, Hugh Gaitskell book in hand, looking like a sexy kitten - in a hat! You can keep your hat on, as the old saying goes! Unless you're a kitten! (Never force a feline to wear a hat, that's what I always say! Top Cat, listen up!)



Meow, meow, as the old saying goes! Now, it could be the alcohol speaking, but this guy's a keeper!

The clothes are from a clothes shop.

Bye for meow!

Letters to Sir Sucha Petal

Sir - We write in response to your article published on 15th Feb. I acknowledge your attempts to be editorially balanced, but this is absurd.

Entitled "LSE Football match against Kings", the article gave undue weight to the LSE team, set out on a smear campaign against the other team, and deeply damaged Kings' reputation and credibility by publishing the score.

It was nothing but the combination of insinuations, assertions and factual information. In printing this, you have - knowingly or unknowingly - participated in a campaign of harassment and intimidation, unrivalled in the 21st century.

All I can reasonably expect is an apology in full and an article entitled, "Why we love Kings".

May Dupp, 2nd year Economics student.

Sir - I am writing to complain about a piece in last week's Beaver which is grossly offensive, flagrantly elitist and showed an utterly disreputable bias. The piece purported to be some sort of poetic creation, but there was no rhyme, no rhythm and the thing didn't even make sense!

The alleged "poem" started, "Leaves blew in the breeze." Firstly, I am staggered at the blatant bias towards the so-

called "leaves" already. Secondly, to claim that "all" the leaves acted accordingly as a homogeneous group is a serious generalisation. Where is the evidence for this? What, were they all too lazy to stay up on the tree? Were they all foreign leaves, huh? HUH?

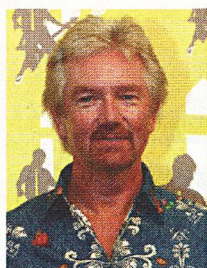
I am angered and sickened. I have been physically sick twice, before being sick on my own sick. I hope you die. Twice.

Best wishes,

Ann Grey, 2nd year Economics student.

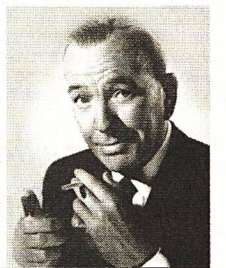
Noel 1901

THE POOR
Should they be allowed?



EDMONDS

Poor people are everywhere. In your schools, your homes, your workplaces, your bathtubs - but NOT your universities. We cannot raise fees full stop. Full stop. Comma, colon: semi-colon; dash -



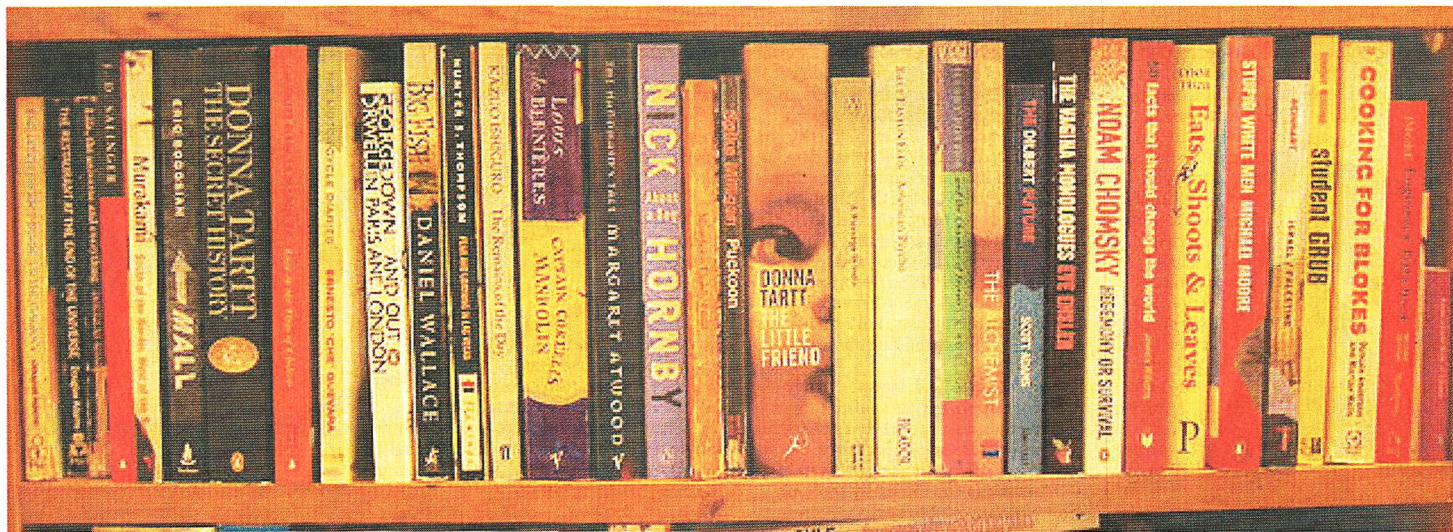
COWARD

Poor people are bastards. The sooner we destroy every last one of the ragged, scrounging, socialist chimney sweeps, the better. Oh, so long as we can still have the conservatory extension.

NEXT WEEK:
Colonel v Colonel
GADDAFI.
versus
MUSTARD.

Girl power's taking over! LSE ladies hit the literature highway

Rasha Touqan says it's time ladies took the top prizes



Just last week the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) held a panel discussing female writers and their place in the current world of publishing. Surprisingly, it wasn't a talk about the glorification of female writers. There was no self-congratulating look at prominent female writers from the bygone years. Instead, we had a sobering look at what publishing is like for female writers today and how it hasn't changed for the last ten to twenty years. The panel looked at women from an industrial point of view as writers, readers and even characters. And there have been some very sobering statistics.

Among the panelists were writer and co-founder of the Orange Prize for Fiction Kate Mosse, publisher Lennie Goodings and the Gender Institute's very own Mary Evans. It was refreshing to see the topic of female readership tackled from a relatively statistical point of view. According to studies women buy more, read more and write more than men. A staggering 60% percent of book consumers are women. Although 40% are men, only 30% percent actually read the books they have consumed. How they managed to get a hold of that statistic is beyond me. It was also a shock that female writers publish more and sell more books than male writers. Something I personally would not have deducted. Yet, the main discussion jumping point is that male writers get more accolades and recognition.

Out of the acclaimed Man Booker Prize winners, there are only fourteen female winners. It seems the topics that female writers tackle are undermined as domestic. There is a misunderstanding that female writers can only write about issues of family and the home. Meanwhile, if a male writer covers the same topics, it is considered contemporary literature. It is alarming how when male writers write about issues like domestic abuse it is viewed as groundbreaking. Meanwhile female writers have been doing it for years, but it has been overlooked as sensational. What is even more alarming is how in a field where women dominate, they are pigeon-holed within certain genres. Heaven forbid should a woman want to venture into what are assumed as male-oriented areas such as fantasy, science fiction or even horror. One example is that of J.K. Rowling. Apparently she was advised by publishers to put her name down as J.K., as opposed to Joanna, since they believed that male readers might dismiss a book written by a woman. Male readers would assume it was a more feminine story. As a result, they would assume that it had themes that would not appeal to them.

There were many other things touched upon that were really intriguing and could beg an entire other debate. Do awards really affect readership? Are books that don't win awards in danger of having a lot less readers? One panelist said that

“Heaven forbid should a woman want to venture into what are assumed as male-oriented areas such as fantasy, science fiction or even horror.”

there were some amazing books by female writers that don't receive awards, in spite of deserving them, and twenty years down the line these books would simply disappear as a result. It made me think of my own personal experience of procuring books. Interestingly, studies show that women rely more on a word-of-mouth basis for selecting books. Meanwhile men rely on reviews, awards and figures of authority. I personally don't believe that awards are everything. I recall in the years of my adolescence looking through Listmania! Lists on Amazon in search of interesting novels. If people are passionate about reading, a good book will be found!

It may seem like the same diatribe about men overlooking women. Yet, the discussion wasn't about women being better than men. It was about being able to write and have your writing recognized without the hindrance of gender preference. The panelists did put through time and time again how literary work should be recognized for its artistic integrity, for its actual words. It shouldn't be valued because a man or a woman wrote it. There were attempts to enhance readership by sending books to convicts without really telling them anything about the authors and those who enjoyed the books did so in spite of the book's authorship. Writing should not be gendered, but it seems that even in the 21st century, it seems that it remains very much so.

Jackie O's Ugandan Prose

Jackline O. Amaguru

Why Ugandan ladies are loving Mr. President this election

The past week was pretty eventful indeed. Monday morning started with yours truly giving a presentation with my classmate on corruption in Iraq for a Social Policy class seminar. Oh, and I had a McDonald's for Valentine's Day – that's enough detail for now, more later. Then, I had another presentation due for Thursday, on whether the application of criminal justice contradicts humanitarian principles and practice, focusing on the ICC. I wonder what I was thinking choosing to deliver two presentations in the same week! My classmates can testify that this was a rather suicidal move.

Next, I had to glue myself to my phone and computer for online radio, Facebook, Twitter and monitor.co.ug to follow the Presidential and Parliamentary elections back home in Uganda. God bless whoever invented the internet! Give them a Nobel prize already! Anyway, back to Uganda, the incumbent President Museveni (M7), was looking to increase his twenty-five years in office by five more.

The truth that opposition parties and the “western democracies” don't want to hear is that he has a lot of popular support – especially among young ladies, women and rural residents. Those make up the majority in the voters' register, and democracy means the voice of the majority goes, right?

Well, I was really worried that when M7 won (when, not if) the opposition would take to the streets and pull a “Mubarak”, resulting in a replica of Benghazi, Libya. Whenever he is asked when he will ever leave power, M7 answers something like: “when the people think so, they will vote me out”.

Well, many Ugandan women would vote for M7 any day, anytime! Many older women, who remember the insecure past of the country credit President Museveni for the peace enjoyed over the years (except in the north until recently) and the exceptional discipline of the army. Knowing Uganda's past, that's a big deal.

Another big factor that has won the hearts and minds of women is that M7's government has literally raised the status of women in society. From appointing a woman Vice President in the early 1990s to reserving seats for women in the Parliament. Our women MPs actually talk and rock the boat! Also, all girls get extra 1.5 points to their A-Level results so as to increase their chances of university admission.

The fruits are already manifesting. In Kampala today, men are still at the helm but corporate Kampala is seeing more pretty faces. Also, many women are minting money in commercial farming and informal business regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. However, the young ladies like to flaunt it. I could bet you that six out of ten posh cars in Kampala are driven by young high flying ladies. And these days, the regular woman doesn't take “nonsense” from abusive partners in silence but actually reports them.

It is no wonder I once heard that someone labeled we Ugandan ladies, “Museveni's spoil brats”. Well, for once I'm happy to be called a brat if it means good things for women too. However, just like “spoil brats” would dump an abusive partner, isn't it time for us to ask ourselves if we are being abused by our Sweetheart's government? And about my Valentine's Day saga.... Oops, I've reached my word limit.

AGONY UNCLE: MY PENIS HELL

I'm an average guy. I do average things. But I don't like being average.

I've always felt a little inadequate at this university, throbbing with over-achievers. I feel that the only way to enhance my prospects is to enlarge my assets. To be quite blunt, I am considering a penis enlargement surgery. Let's talk about the fellow, ‘pun intended’; we shall call him little J. It's not that little J is little by standard condom sizes, it's just that when I compare myself to the heroes of my porn collection, I feel as though I have nothing to offer the world.

Add to this my mediocre grades and bad skin, and I'm sure you can see why I feel the need to raise the bar in this one aspect of my life, the aspect that is, perhaps, most easy to correct. Before giving it to me (advice, you pervert) there are a few things I think you should know; I am circumcised. Recovery time is not a problem as I am sexually and depressingly so, highly inactive.

So, I come to you for advice, please rise to this challenge. Prescribe me pills,

recommend a surgeon, or erect my self-esteem. All I want is to feel the accomplishment of a woman saying “AAAAAH!” and not “Oh.” I want to become the best at something. And STOP LYING WORLD, SIZE DOES MATTER.

I know they say cosmetic surgery helps no one but if there is a doctor out there that could give me a few inches (or a whole foot, I don't mind) and with it, the pride that comes with her saying “It's not in yet?”, I have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

I want to join Cameron and his Big ‘Society’ in the most literal way. May I? - Little J's (not so proud) owner

As a fellow man, I can understand the insecurities one can have over their penis. Well, I say I can understand – obviously I have a complete schlong, so I can't really. But size is a very personal issue. Some like their latte tall, others venti; differences are what make us special.

Worrying about the size of your genitals is a risky road. You'll probably

never have the perfect penis – though there almost certainly isn't such a thing – and so losing sleep over whether it looks quite right, or a little odd, is an endless and pointless task. In any case, this donkey dongle you seem to be lusting after probably wouldn't be favoured by many women, or men. Going from ‘Is it in yet?’ to ‘It won't fit in’ is hardly progress.

I think what your question really boils down to is your own self-esteem, and issues surrounding your own sexual performance. Having an imperfect face is nothing to be ashamed of; just about nobody is fully happy with their physical appearance. And if they were, they'd probably have such a humongous ego nobody would want to sleep with them in the first place. As for whether you're actually capable in bed – that comes with practice. No man has ever begun as a Casanova in the love crib, but with time and confidence you can become one. Just look at me: I haven't always been a don in the devil dorm of love, you know.

So the task ahead is in looking on the positive side of what you've got. Try massaging your genitals a few times a day

whilst saying positive words – this may help build a positive relationship with your nether regions and enhance your perception of the area. Alternatively, you may want to compare it to friends' penii; what you'll probably find is that they too do not have packed privates. You could even try combining the two above ideas.

However, if you really do what to enlarge your man-bits, then there are a few things you should consider. First of all: it's vital you find a reliable surgeon. The last thing you want to end up with is a botched boomslang! Also, you need to decide what size you want. The average male penis is between five and six inches when fully erect, though the size of it un-erect bares no relation. Therefore it would probably be unhealthy to grow it any greater than that. You may want a big-boy, but too big and things might become a little difficult!

Don't rush into anything though. If you've had one bad experience, don't let that ruin altogether your sexual self-esteem. Give it a few weeks, or a few more sexual experiences before making the judgement. Or you may just have a really small dick.

LSE Travel Diary

Simon Chaudhuri delves into life on Croatia's Dalmatian coast

A little-known fact about the Old City of Dubrovnik is that its walls, and contents, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. What does our very own United Kingdom have to compare to such a grand offering? That other mainstay of Europe's jet-setting elite - Bath, Somerset. Comparing the two is like chalk and cheese, Dubrovnik is popular with Italy's rich and famous, who need a place to dock the yacht which isn't the Côte d'Azur (too popular with the uncouth Yanks and Brits). Whereas Bath is popular with... Bristolians? Not quite the same is it?

Entering the City of Dubrovnik at night, with the City's 3km of walls lit up by industrial lights, truly feels like entering another world. The walls have been so well preserved that the first thing that came to my mind was that it felt like part of some elaborate Disney film set. All the more so when we discovered the Guards of Dubrovnik, in period dress, watching over the main entrances to the City; rather like London's iconic Queen's Guard, but a bit friendlier.

We stayed in an apartment in an old stone house dating from 1667, with all the comforts

of the 20th century (free wifi, a modern bathroom and kitchen). Our agent, Dubrovnik Apartment Source is run by an excessively friendly American couple who fell in love with Croatia and married in Dubrovnik. They have a large range of affordable apartments in Dubrovnik, many of which benefit from fantastic locations - our apartment was on a side street just off the Stradun, Dubrovnik's main street (see photograph). To say that our location was central is a gross understatement. Having left our windows open overnight, we'd be woken by the (relatively) early morning march of the City's guards, complete with drums that echo around the old stone town.

We were fortunate enough for our visit to coincide with the City's annual Dubrovnik Summer Festival which is an opportunity for the City to show off a wealth of talent in the arts. A former performer includes

Croatian actor Goran Višnjić, best known as Dr. Luka Kovac from the hit television show, ER.

We managed to catch an amazing live orchestra and opera in the main square one evening, but what was just as enjoyable was a surprise performance of 'No Woman, No Cry' by a couple of buskers on the steps of one of the town's ancient churches.

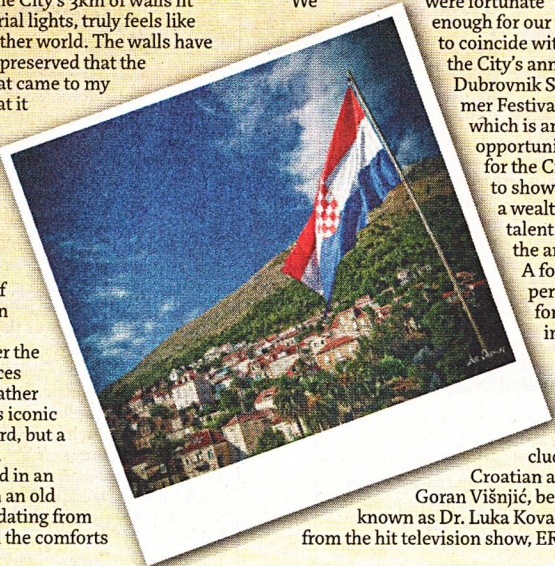
While Dubrovnik has much itself to offer, including a host of museums, galleries and churches, a huge attraction is using Dubrovnik as a springboard to a wealth of other discoveries. As Dubrovnik is a port town, with a fully functioning harbour, it presents a great opportunity to hop on a ferry and visit some islands. The Elaphiti Islands are close and popular with tourists, with Šipan, Lopud and Koločep being the largest inhabited ones. We only had time to visit Lokrum, a large island, sometimes considered to be part of the Elaphiti, just 20 minutes on a ferry from Dubrovnik harbour. Lokrum is a beautifully lush island with a small salt lake, rocky beaches and a monastery, dating from 1023 but abandoned since 1798. Although it was swarming with tourists, Lokrum is large enough to get lost and find some privacy if you wish.

On the mainland, we spent a day sun-worshipping at the seafront town of Cavtat, exploring the town's beautiful beaches and archaeological sites. We also hired a minibus with a few other tourists and took a day trip to nearby Montenegro - which proved to be disappointing, perhaps because our guide's English was not so strong, and his French proved to be merely his English with a French accent.

For the nightlife, consider the East-West beach club, just outside the city walls and popular with celebrity visitors to Dubrovnik. EastWest was declared

to have the world's third most beautiful beach by Marie Claire in 2006. Sandy beaches are difficult to come by in Dubrovnik so EastWest is well worth a visit if a few days of rocky beaches leaves you sore.

Dubrovnik offers what normally seems to be an impossible combination for students - glamour and comfort at a reasonable price. Compared with some other European destinations - particularly those in Italy and Spain - Dubrovnik offers great value for money. Food is quite cheap, little money needs to be spent on taxis and one ticket from the tourist office gains access to many of the City's attractions. So cross Dubrovnik off your Bucket List before Croatia joins the EU and your wallet will thank you dearly.



Volunteering: an underrated social activity?

Pam Runacles mulls over the ethical dilemmas surrounding volunteering

Volunteering has been defined as a willingness to work on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain. Such altruistic work clearly indicates that any hint of incentives sullies its integrity and can potentially, over-time, dissolve the fundamental concepts of volunteering. Arguably, the provision of incentives, such as financial rewards, defeats the entire purpose of volunteering and has the dangerous effect of promoting selfish, individualistic attitudes rather than responding selflessly to community needs.

In this sense what needs to be addressed are the larger ethical values involved in voluntary work and its motivation. There has been significant debate on this topic within the third sector, with some suggesting that the fundamental obstacle in voluntary work is actually getting more people interested and therefore involved for stable and extended periods. By contrast, there are those who argue that voluntary work should remain purely altruistic, as the provision of financial or material incentives blurs the boundary with paid work. Let me elaborate on the problems with providing incentives in voluntary work: it may not go unnoticed that this could illuminate the solution to a larger ethical debate.

Without doubt, providing rewards for voluntary work would shift the nature of volunteering from an apparent pure or free 'gift' relationship to one based on contract and reciprocity between the individual and the state or economy. Examples include Gordon Brown's abortive proposal of 2007 to reduce student tuition fees for volunteers (a far cry from today's situation) and the provision of concert tickets under the Orange Rockcorps scheme. Similarly, incentives can also take on the less tangible form of benefiting one's work experience and job prospects, thus suggesting the potential for material gain in the future. What is apparent is the potential of such incentives to alter the appeal to volunteer and simultaneously reduce the stability of the sector, because interest in volunteering would be fleeting once the incentives are removed. Likewise,

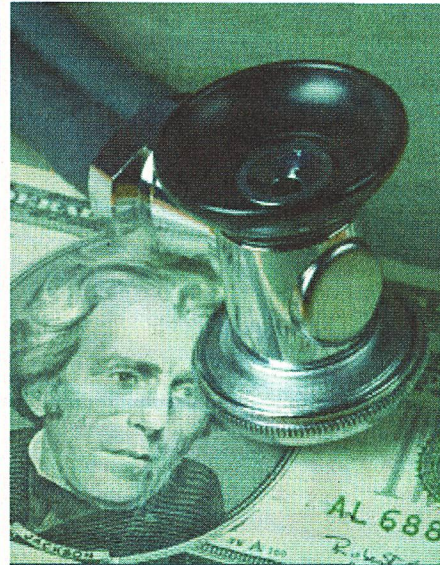
on a larger scale, businesses engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be viewed as having the ulterior motive by participating in such philanthropic work of enhancing profits through boosting brand awareness and consumer loyalty. For instance, Tesco and many other corporations encourage their employees to volunteer in their community based projects. However, staff members are paid to do so, therefore raising the question about the sincerity of the employees and companies' desires to 'volunteer' and benefit society. If CSR is merely a tool for attracting customers and increasing stakeholder support, such volunteering loses its philanthropic shield.

Yet such a debasement of incentives in voluntary work loses sight of the actual positive impacts generated in society. Surely, what is fundamentally important and essential is increasing voluntary action and benefiting the wider community with or without the presence of incentives. In particular, during this harsh economic climate to encourage volunteering through incentives is essential to maintain impact. It is simply too idealistic to argue that volunteering should remain as a 'pure gift' relationship under these economic circumstances, if incentive-driven volunteering can benefit both volunteer and society in a win-win situation.

However, this is not to say that I believe that voluntary work should be paid by the hour, as this obviously reduces it to paid work. What I am suggesting is that some form of recognition, whether it be tangible (eg, vouchers) or intangible (CV experience), should be given to such services. This would psychologically boost the morale of the volunteer and therefore increase the chances of his/her voluntary involvement in the future. Therefore I believe that there is nothing wrong in offering incentives to volunteers, but when such incentives are primarily orientated at benefiting the relevant volunteer or company (rather than the needs of the community), this is where volunteering loses its altruistic outlook and integrity.

Why have you stopped going to Crush?

Comment - page 8



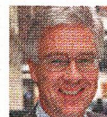
Date: 12th March 2011
Venue: Hong Kong Theatre, LSE

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CFO and Deputy CEO, Everything Everywhere (T-Mobile and Orange merger)



Colin Mayer
Dean of Saïd Business School, University of Oxford



Same event, same behaviour

UNDER PRESSURE
The stage is set. The contestants are ready. The hosts are (reasonably) sober. It can only mean one thing: Twelve people making absolute asses out of themselves. For charity. GG did their bit and paid the three quid, assured it would be donated to some form of RAG affiliated charity. And then proceeded to spend fifteen quid on Apple Sourz, once again because GG is that type of charitable mythological creature. But I digress. Upon finding a front row position to stand (squeezing in next to Georgie 'Pushy Mother' Gately), GG was ready to witness some great chat and view some truly spectacular talents. But instead, all was to be heard were the mutterings of some kid with sunglasses on indoors, a very enthusiastic German (no one knows what about) and a kid with three bollocks.

MAN ON MAN ACTION
Once the rounds whittled down the contestants to those who were deemed to be talented, GG watched one chap snort five packets of pepper and someone trying to sing Jedward without the use of a microphone. Thankfully, Mrs. Georgie Cook's intense choreography sessions paid off as the crowd witnessed a truly inspiring Eric Prydz dancercise routine before someone then did a back flip, proving that there are actually some genuinely athletic people in the AU. Suitable gasps of shock and awe rang through the crowd and it was no surprise that these two 'talented' chaps with the addition of a steroid enhanced badminton player made it through to the gruelling final.

COMMANDO
It seemed that Mr De Zeus had failed to dope for the final round and dropped out whilst GG was still listening to the first rendition of "Eye of the Tiger". Back-flipping Joe Shaner marginally lost out to the man of endurance and stamina that is Olly Cook, much to the delight of his mum in the front row. Though according to

sources who may not be named, and Strivlah, his lower body endurance is far more impressive. Speaking of lower bodies, apparently Joe's endurance even extends to going commando for Thursday 10am classes. Rumour has it Strivlah has built a shrine with the discarded boxer shorts.

BELT UP
On the subject of lower body accessories, GG has heard that an anonymous 2nd Team netball girl dutifully handed in the belt that was removed in the throes of passion by none other than the FC's concert pianist and part-time Oasis fan and brother of Chris Liu, Nik. To avoid the embarrassment of simply handing it back to Nik herself, she decided it would be more to discreet to hand it in to a Tuns staff member. As far as plans to avoid embarrassment go, that has to be up there with Alex Haigh's plan to sing Jedward, without using a microphone.

MISS AU
The only antic from Zoo bar last Wednesday that has permeated GG's consciousness was the somewhat disappointing news that esteemed Mr LSE judge Jenny AU let herself, her family and the entire LSE student body down, by pulling Jack 'Free labour for the Labour Party' Phellows. The girl that is admired by every man and woman in the AU for her breath-taking beauty may never look the same again, as GG heard that a little bit of her soul left her lips as soon as they touched those of PhatPhellows.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
That's all for this week gossipers, GG hopes to see you all in the Quad again this week for Hustings, as no doubt twelve more people get up on stage to make complete asses of themselves. Until then, stay away from Phellows.

You know I'm watching xoxox

BARCOCK JIZZED IN HIS PANTS WHILST IN BED WITH A MAN

Some lessons learned...

Ben Bostock

A 3pm pushback meant a ridiculously early start to the day for the Men's Hockey 2s on Wednesday the 9th of February. Playing King's is always a big occasion, so solid shifts were needed from everyone involved. It was therefore great to see that Raul "T.B." Shah was taking it seriously to turn up in what can only be described as a pair of tights. Honorary guest keeper Ed "Tranny-Shagger" Timpson chose to psyche himself up through other means, namely by skipping the entire length of the pitch, which was, of course, duly noted. The match started at a standard 2s pace, but we finally got stuck in with a Shanx "Donkey-Kong" Tandon slap in at the far post, shortly followed by a genuine squeal of lonely celebration. Dick-of-the-Day nomination ideas were beginning to take form.

A well placed hit from the 22 by Shaz "Crafts-Master" Huq saw a dubious deflection land it in the top corner of the goal, and assuring the referee that it had of course touched an LSE stick within the D, we were 2 goals clear. King's moment of glory came from an incredibly injected short corner, which must have travelled a solid 4 mph. Alessandro "bake-me-a-pizza" Ferrara and Mani "Abercrombie & Fitch" Lidhar must have clearly been too dazzled by the speed to take the ball, which allowed a cheeky King's hit in to end the first half 2-1.

The second half saw LSE much more on top of things. A well struck shot from the top of the D by Neel "el capitan" Popat deflected off a Kings player's foot on the line, getting us a penalty flick. Stepping up to the line was Ben "Token" Bostock, converting to make it 3-1. Our fourth goal came shortly afterwards, stemming from a solid run up the middle by Gio "Judas"

Bolton, and ending with another goal from Bostock, and earning him the man of the match honours. This came hand in hand with the task of creating the dirty pint for the dick of the day, helped of course by the ever horrifying input of barman known only as Louis Cypher. The £20 behemoth comprised a curdling of guinness and baileys as per, added to which were Sambuca, Knob Creek, tequila, vodka and gin to name but a few of the spirits. On the condiment side of things, lea and perrins, balsamic vinegar, mustard, and of course Louis's signature measure of tobacco around the rim of the glass. This tasty banquet was awarded to Timpson in lieu of Shanx, who had once again evaded a vote which was tipped in his favour.

Timpson's antics, to name but a few, included far too much incestual banter being drunkenly screamed for almost the entire journey back from Ipswich the previous week, in addition to happily cause the bus to smell, in his own words "...like dead children". Seeing off the monstrosity in little over one verse, he proceeded to attempt to join in taps and 20+1, knowing the rules for neither. This schoolboy error, coupled with the unleashing of the Queen, led to seven further downed pints for the sorry submariner, who continued to 'woof' at whatever number came his way in 20+1.

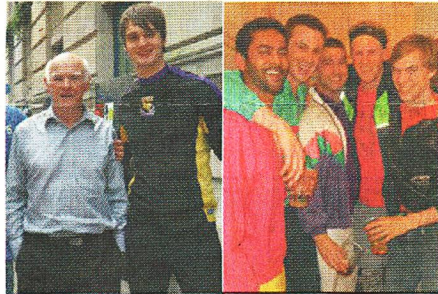
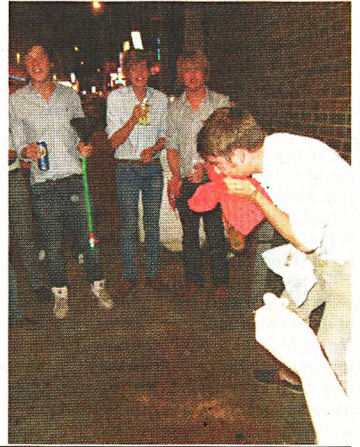
However, in an outrageous turn of events, it was Gio who was to be the first casualty, manufacturing a magnificent lake of chunder at the entrance to the pub, after seemingly only a couple of pints. The bus journey home saw Timpson rush off the bus into the middle of Sloane Square to be violently sick into the fountain, which was then followed by a more casual urination into the nearby bin.

Arriving back at Bostock's house, Timpson would play no further part in the night, choosing to fall asleep at 8pm in his garden whilst the rest of us made our way to Shoreditch for team dinners. Dinners

came hand in hand with the shocking promotion of Bostock (least improved player award winner) to vice-captain, almost as shocking as the amount of time Popat needs for his hair before a night out. This meant the spot for Social Sec. was up for grabs, and following two offensively average speeches from George and Arjun, we decided to try again at end-of-season dinners. Fines, (surprisingly eluded by Shanx...) saw a punishment half pint for Gio for his earlier misdemeanor, but most of this ended up back in the glass with a dark tinge added. After a run in with the police for being short on the bill, it was off to Verve. Verve was shit. So it was back home to Zoo...

Lessons to be learned from the day were:

- * If you're Gio, stop after one beer
- * Don't try and make an ad hoc drunken speech for social secretary
- * Don't go to Verve...

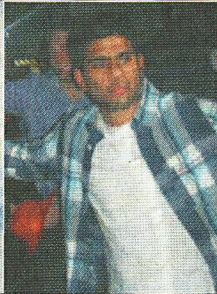


Hendrick Sheer: Seemed a little confused at what would get him cheers from the audience. FYI, the English aren't that enthused by German culture.

Aroop Mukharji: Shame he went out in the early rounds, heard he's pretty nifty on the guitar.



Rob Rogers: he was born with three testicles... enough said.



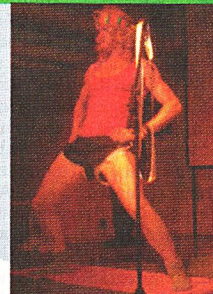
Vikrant Shah: He was off his face for the rest of the night after snorting the hard stuff...65 sachets of pepper



Matt De Jesus: Word on the street is that him and Dewi had blows after he announced his interest in Miss Lauren Deevy



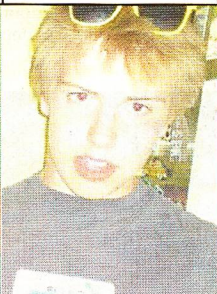
Joe Shaner: despite losing at the final hurdle, he got a pretty good consolation prize...Strivlah. (sorry we couldn't find a photo anywhere, Joe's keeping a low profile now)



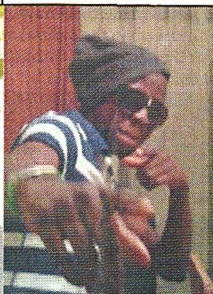
Ollie Cook: He had it all to take the title: stamina, dance moves and a great wig.



Nick Liu: His talent let everyone know that the FC can't sing 'Stand by Me' without the lyrics in front of them.



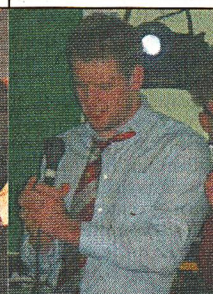
Alex Haigh: He was unable to live up to the high standards set by Jedward...



Demola Aofolaju: This Tinchy Stryder look-a-like seemed more interested in the football, at least that's an excuse for his poor performance in the Q&A.



Ruari Hourihane: He seemed a little confused of his cultural heritage, the most Irish man at LSE was wearing a union-jack tie.



Tom Lennon: Sadly this year's performance was even worse than his previous effort - he didn't even get a chance to show off his impressions.

LSE's finest: Meet the new Mr. LSE

ARSE OF THE WEEK



Sport

The Beaver | 22 February 2011



GG spills the beans on Mr. LSE's winners and washouts

LSE Karate team delivers a belting

Sam Mir

The LSE Karate team gave yet another superb performance at this year's KUGB Southern Regions Championships. The competition took place on 12 February 2011 in Crawley and the LSE squad came back with gold and bronze, once again confirming its reputation of being one of the best martial arts clubs in the South of England.

The competition started with the men's categories where Velin Djidjev showed some of his best skills in both the individual kumite (fighting) and kata (set forms). Kata was Velin's speciality on the day. In the qualifying rounds he easily defeated his opponents with one of his strongest Heian katas - Heian Godan. His kata impressed with a balanced combination between agility and power. He marginally lost after a 2-round draw match in the semi-finals against a national squad's member and a central referee's final decision. Unfortunately, in this championship the rules were such that the ones who lost to the two finalists do not compete again for the bronze.

In the kumite, Velin gave an equally solid performance. He comfortably won his fights with and again narrowly lost in the semi-finals to the eventual winner in the category. His presence was felt as the only credible opponents for Velin were the national squad's members for both Katas and Kumite. Velin demonstrated that in LSEKC both areas are trained hard in order to deliver consistent high performance. LSEKC doesn't create Kata or Kumite specialists, it creates well rounded, high class Karatekas!

The club's reputation was then left in the hands of Karine Dussimon in the women's individual kata and kumite

events and she did not miss the chance to impress.

First were the kata rounds where Karine took several comfortable wins with the katas from Heian Shodan to Heian Godan. Her great experience distinguished her notably from everyone else. Her katas were an excellent demonstration of top quality techniques combined with great focus. She quickly progressed to the final where she chose the technically advanced kata Enpi. Her outstanding performance granted her the bronze, leaving her marginally behind the first two places, which again, were taken by national squad members.

In the kumite, Karine took proper revenge. She defeated her opponents in the qualifying rounds with great composure and perfectly timed punches to the chin. She executed with lightning speed some round-the-house kicks battering the face and bodies of her poor opponents! She had clear-cut victories in all of her preliminary fights with the opponents score always being at zero, leaving absolutely no doubt about her superiority over the

others.

The final turned out to be more difficult but Karine stood up to the challenge. With the opponent leading 1:0 she turned the game around demonstrating her great karate spirit. After the referees not even seeing her kick to the opponent's face she decided to change her strategy. Another two swift back-hand punches turned the final score to 2:1 in her favour and she won the gold. She was awarded with a big trophy under the applause of the audience as well as the referees and fellow competitors.

The LSE Karate club's success was underlined by another event in the following week. Only three days after the KUGB Southern Regions competition was the Kyu grading organised at the LSE premises. All six attendees from the club passed their grading and were awarded with higher belts. With the determination and dedication of the senior belts and the hard work of the juniors, the future of LSE Karate certainly looks bright.



Karate competitors proudly showing off their silverware

Letter to the Sport Editors

Dear Editors,

We find your comment that 'no-one in the AU gives enough of a crap to write in' highly offensive. We would have you know that J is in fact a most esteemed member of the Table Tennis Society, despite having never attended any matches or practice sessions. He also claims membership of the Ski club, despite having never seen snow. W suspects he was just curious. Dry slopes FTW (strictly in a skiing sense).

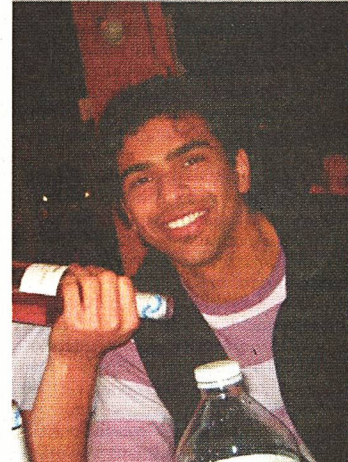
Anyway, we find the assertion that there is only one Zoo Bar to be unfounded. There are in fact several establishments of some repute called 'Zoo Bar', including our personal favourite in Lincoln, Nebraska, which Sacha Baron Cohen is rumoured to frequent.

Also, the claim that 'Lush Sam shat himself' seems ridiculous. One can surely shit ones pants, but to shit oneself? J finds that the only way in which one could shit one's self, would be to never shit at all, thus crapping all over ones insides. W feels that ones 'self' can never be shat out by one's self, though doubtless the Japanese and their anime logic could find a way around this.

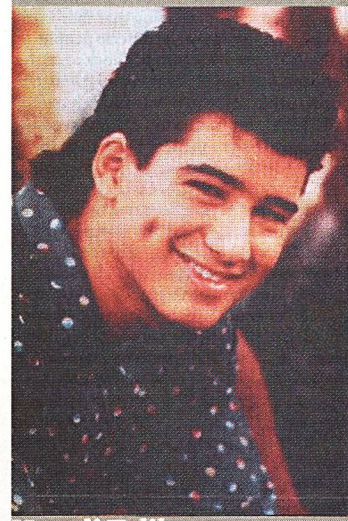
Finally, nitpicking aside, we feel it unfair to your readers to boldly announce the shitting, but leave it unelaborated. We expect a full page story next (this) week.

Yours, UROTSUKIDŌJI,
DoubleEwe & Jay

LSE Lookalikes No. 59



AC Slater (Saved by The Bell)



Hamdi Talib

Smedley's Corner

Stuart Smedley

Among fans and the media in England, the UEFA Europa League has come to be seen as the Carling Cup of European football - a competition with so little value that its participants should not really give a toss about it.

And given the entertainment value of the matches involving Premier League sides competing in continental contests last week, the conclusion can be made that this is how clubs view the tournament formally known as the UEFA Cup too. While Spurs and Arsenal fought hammer and tong against AC Milan and Barcelona in the Champions League - both sides recording extremely impressive victories, Man City and Liverpool went through the motions during their Europa League ties and were held to goalless draws in hopelessly drab matches.

Despite both playing away from home, the latter two had few excuses for their failure to win for their opponents were nowhere near of the same illustrious nature as those that the two North London teams defeated. It was Greek outfit Aris Thessaloniki that Manchester's second side failed to overcome, while the Merseysiders could only draw with Sparta Prague, who had not played competitively since December.

Yet there is one thing about the Europa League that arguably makes it more appealing than the Champions League and more deserving of being taken seriously, even if its contestants don't quite match the lustre of those dining at European football's top table.

And that is its inclusiveness. The 32 teams currently fighting for its trophy come from an astonishing 17 national leagues, ranging from sides based in England and Spain to Belarus and Russia via Poland and Turkey.

Meanwhile, the 16 clubs left in the Champions League come from just seven nations. Eliminate Danish champions FC Copenhagen and Ukrainian heavyweights Shakhtar Donetsk (as may occur prior to

the quarter finals) and you're left with just five countries - England, Spain, Germany, France and Italy - being represented in UEFA's flagship competition.

Considering UEFA has 53 members, it is quite embarrassing that a small, wealthy bunch of national leagues have come to monopolise places in its latter stages. While these teams are typically of an extremely high calibre, their perpetual presence has killed whatever romance the Champions League once had. Year after year, the same stock of teams make it through to the last 16, meaning that they have become all too familiar with one another.

Instead, continental club competitions should really possess a novelty factor.

In comparison, the Europa League is a shining example of how egalitarian European football should be. And with it drawing upon teams from a multitude of countries, it maintains the ability to produce rare, unique matchups.

It was former French President Charles de Gaulle who stated Europe ran 'from the Atlantic to the Urals'. And his vision is being borne out in footballing terms in the Europa League, rather than by its bigger brother, which continues merely to stretch from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean when the serious stuff begins. For the sake of the competition that must change.

It's often said that sport and politics should not mix. However, the current situation in Bahrain, where Formula One's season opening race is set to take place on March 13th, highlights how much of a fallacy this statement is.

As soon as the first shot was fired by a Bahraini soldier in the direction of peaceful protesters demonstrating against the ruling royal family's autocratic ways, the race should have been cancelled. However, Bernie Ecclestone, F1's President, has so far failed to do so, deciding instead to express hope that his sport's curtain raiser will go ahead as planned.

The 80-year-old has previous when it comes to making tactless remarks. But this one - coming in the face of innocent citizens being killed by the forces belonging to the man whose wealth built the circuit - is surely the most distasteful yet.

Sport can be a force for good, but not in this instance. Should the race go ahead it will go down in ignominy with other tainted events such as the 1978 World Cup in Argentina and 2008 Beijing Olympics that took place while egregious human rights abuses were being committed in their shadow.

Sport is not a matter of life and death. It is far less important than that.

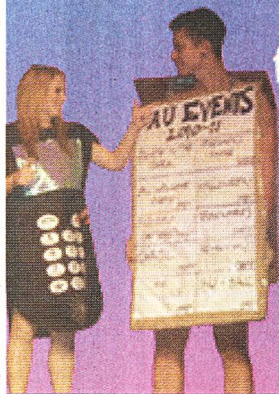


Bahrain's luxurious F1 track

AU ELECTIONS
2011

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Your chance to grill your
future exec, along with a
fancy dress showcase



8.30pm ! Quad ! Weds 23rd