

The Beaver

The Newspaper of the LSE SU

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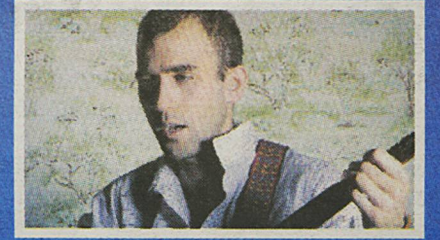
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Churchill victory contested

Chris Heathcote
News Editor

Winston Churchill, the newly-elected Honorary Vice-President of the LSE SU has been declared unconstitutional after a vote by the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S).

C&S is made up of seven elected student representatives and is responsible for ensuring that the Union constitution is adhered to. It was to the committee chair, El Barham that James Caspell, the Treasurer of the LSE SU Green party, complained.

Caspell told the committee that he felt the former British prime minister broke the Students' Union's Equal Opportunities policy because he had allegedly made racist remarks towards Palestinians, Jews, so-called 'uncivilised people' and the disabled.

To demonstrate his point to the committee, Caspell produced a series of quotes made by Churchill in the years before the second world war between 1910 and 1937.

Churchill is alleged to have said at a War Department meeting in 1919; "I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas...I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes," and told the Royal Commission on Palestine in 1937; "I do not admit... that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia... by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race... has come in and taken its place."

Finally, according to the *Sunday Herald* newspaper in 1920 Churchill uttered an anti-Semitic slur by saying; "This worldwide conspiracy [of international Jews] for the overthrow of civilisation...has [been] steadily growing."

After hearing the evidence, the committee accepted Caspell's claim that Churchill was unconstitutional by a narrow vote of 3-2.

A week of controversy has followed with the two sides continuing to dispute whether Churchill has actually broken the constitution or not and whether C&S has

the legitimacy to declare a democratically elected candidate unconstitutional and move towards removing them.

The problem is confounded by the fact that one member, Mark Power was absent and had he voted, most accept the result would have been different.

Since the vote, pressure, much of it political, has been mounting from various quarters for C&S to revisit their decision. In an attempt to head off an open conflict, a second vote has now scheduled for today.

But the tension shows no sign of abating because members on both sides have promised to take action if the result does not go their way.

On the political right, two furious members of the committee have already promised to table a vote of no confidence if the committee continues to oppose Churchill.

If their motion was to pass, and some claim it could, then all seven members would be forced to resign and a by-election would be held.

However, the left have

responded in kind. The suggestion that two candidates on the left might also be willing to resign over the issue has only served to raise the stakes ahead of Tuesday's vote.

Even LSE SU General Secretary, Will Macfarlane has become involved.

In an email leaked to *The Beaver*, Macfarlane demanded that the committee members explain themselves. In it he said "this does strike me at first as being a politically motivated decision."

If the committee's ruling is upheld at a second meeting today and endorsed by the Union General Meeting (UGM) in a vote supported by a 2/3 majority, Churchill's term of office could be terminated and nominations reopened.

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, member of C&S, insisted there would be no undemocratic precedents.

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LSE Director Howard Davies speaks at the UGM on Thursday, spending the day in a wheelchair to advertise Disability Awareness Week. / Photo: Mark Donahue

£10 for NUS Cards?

Kheng Lim

The National Union of Students (NUS) is in trouble financially and could be bankrupt in 8 years time if something is not done urgently, according to NUS National Treasurer Martin Ings.

One proposal for raising revenues is the charging of a fee for the issue of NUS cards. This proposal is the brain child of Martin Ings and was unveiled at the NUS's London and South East regional conference held on November 1.

NUS cards are currently issued free of charge and offer discounts at a variety of outlets such as HMV, Topshop, Endsleigh and Pizza Hut.

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NUS Treasurer calls for £10 NUS card

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The fee is expected to be £10 but this figure is not final and could well increase as plans for the card are further developed.

The NUS claims that the range of discounts could be expanded to include a wider range of outlets such as supermarkets, and could even double up with the ISIC international students card and the Transport for London (TFL) student discount card, though Ings admitted that he hadn't approached anyone and was not sure of the plan's feasibility.

It has also stated that the card would be a far more 'technological' card, although what that means is far from clear.

Under the proposed scheme, NUS cards would still be issued free of charge but they would be for identification purposes only.

Students would have to pay the fee for the 'technological' card in order to reap the full commercial benefits.

As a sweetener, the NUS has

proposed to reduce its members' affiliation fees in tandem with the revenue raised from the card, arguing that this would make both the NUS and its members better off in financial terms.

This proposal was met with opposition from the floor. Matt Willgress, LSE Students' Union Postgraduate Students' Officer and NUS delegate has told *The Beaver* that this would be "a great mistake" if it went through.

He also added: "Student officers up and down the country are up in arms about it though so I'd be surprised if it went through."

Speaking to *The Beaver*, LSE Students' Union General Secretary Will Macfarlane said: "Our national union has been the main voice against increased charges on students through fees due to the funding crisis in the HE sector and now is turning round and saying it intends to charge students a direct fee for the first time due to its financial problems."

"That is horrendously hypo-

critical."

"Furthermore, there seems to have been little research into the whole project. The NUS claims the card and its offerings can be improved," he said.

"What if Tesco or Transport for London say no? There's no real reason for them to agree to effectively bail the NUS out and if the card cannot be greatly improved from its current state, what reason is there for its cost to go up from nothing to £10-plus every year?"

He did add however that he thought that the idea of expanding the range of services of the NUS card was good in principle, it was just that he was concerned about its financial impact on students.

Financial issues in general stirred up much controversy at the conference.

A series of financial reforms were, in fact, discussed at an Extraordinary Conference, yesterday.

No figures or strategic

overview of the reforms were presented however.

However NUS Women's Officer Jo Salmon admitted that such reforms would reduce the size of conferences.

This provoked uproar, with delegates such as the LSE's Mark Power arguing that cuts should come from administrative changes rather than at the expense of democracy.

Delegates were also angered by the fact that the extraordinary conference had been called at two week's notice, which meant that most universities would not have time to organise cross-campus ballots to elect delegates.

The LSE is lucky that the timing of the Michaelmas term elections fits in nicely with this extraordinary conference, enabling us to send delegates.

Apart from that, delegates were also upset that they were only given four days to submit proposals for debate at the conference.

It is likely that the turnout at

the conference would be very low due to these reasons.

These controversial moves are a latest in a series of cost cutting measures taken by the NUS, which have included the selling of its London offices and its relocation to Manchester.

Finance aside, other areas of discussion included the 'Education, education, education' campaign.

After pressure from delegates such as LSE Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer Sian Errington, NUS Education Officer Hannah Essex agreed to hold a national event regarding higher education during the run-up to next year's General Election.

At the same conference, a student from the Federation of Islamic Student Societies was elected to the NEC, which was welcomed by delegates as a positive move in response to allegations that the NUS is not serious in fighting Islamophobia.

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Churchill declared unconstitutional by C&S

continued from page 1

"The proper course of action would be to bring our ruling to a UGM as stipulated by our Constitution, to calmly explain the issues and have a vote.

"No one is being disenfranchised, as members of the far-right keep claiming. Only if two thirds of the UGM voted our way would a re-election be held. And all students can vote at a UGM," he said.

But this last claim is bitterly disputed by some Jewish students at LSE, such as Daniel Freedman who have responded by saying: "Winston Churchill...was one of

the best friends the Jewish people have ever had. It is an honour to have him as our vice-president."

Freedman went on to attack the committee by calling their behaviour "absurd and insulting."

He went on to say; "It is simply a reflection of how little respect the far-left, who dominate C & S, have for the democratic voice of students."

Alykhan Velshi, who nominated Churchill for election, said he was furious with the situation: "Churchill fought in the Boer War to prevent South Africa from being taken over by Afrikaners. Churchill, therefore, was one of

the first opponents of the apartheid regime," he commented.

Velshi added; "Accusing Churchill of racism, by extension, implies that the hundreds of people who voted for him are racists too."

Meanwhile, James Eyton, a member of C&S who voted against the motion, branded those who agreed with the complaint as "sore losers" and accused his colleagues of "bending the constitution as they see fit."

Explaining the motivation for his complaint, Caspell, told *The Beaver*: "many people would have

voted for Churchill as a war 'hero' without knowing his racist views... Any election of a racist makes a mockery of the Union, its constitution and all of its great efforts to combat racism."

The fiasco surrounding the election of the Union's honorary vice-president follows an equally controversial series of events in the race for honorary president, as reported by *The Beaver* last week.

The only candidate, another former conservative prime minister, Margaret Thatcher was resoundingly rejected by students forcing nominations to be

reopened.

There is still a chance the same could happen to Churchill, although Union insiders are confident that C&S's decision to hold another vote on the issue with all members present, will lay the dispute to rest.

It is expected that Power's vote along with the rumoured decision by C&S Vice-Chair Jimmy Tam to change his stance on the issue will produce a 4-2 vote in favour of Churchill remaining as Honorary Vice-President.

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Star-studded 'debate' predicts gloom for four more years

Nastaran Tavakoli-Far

Former Foreign Minister Robin Cook MP stressed that the UK must make a choice between working with the US and Europe in a one-sided debate at the LSE last Thursday.

In the public debate by the Fabian Society regarding 'America and the world - after the election' Mr Cook was the main speaker with the LSE's Professor Michael Cox, John Kampfner from *New Statesman* magazine and Jef McAllister from *Time* magazine also speaking.

Cook, who was Foreign Minister under the Labour government between 1997 to 2001, commented that Tony Blair's attempts at building a bridge between the US and Europe has not worked and is unlikely to work in future due to the widening gap between Europe and the US.

He stated that the UK must choose to either work with Europe or the US, the former being the more logical choice.

Cook said that we 'need to work for a strong Europe as an alternative pole - not just for our-

selves - but for the rest of the world'.

The Bush administration was also heavily criticised for its lack of diplomacy, for believing that complex historic problems can be solved with simple military solutions and for regarding allies as 'a sign of weakness'.

Furthermore, Mr Cook was very pessimistic about any positive developments being made in the Middle East.

Professor Cox said that the election has shown that the US is more different than we thought and that this gap will only widen.

The attacks of September 11 tapped into a deep patriotism held by Americans and, he argued, their belief that the US is morally superior.

He also said that the majority of Americans do not care for international opinion and that the UK needs to reconsider exactly what is its 'special relationship' with the United States.

He agreed with Cook that the UK must seriously consider closer ties with Europe.

Blair was seen as a tragic figure by John Kampfner who said that Blair has been very naïve in

thinking he could influence the Bush administration.

Jef McAllister spoke of how Bush won votes for his policies on terrorism and as his 'morality'.

He predicted that either Bush will continue with similar policies in his second term or will become more moderate and a 'unifier', perhaps to keep the Republican party together.

McAllister also stressed how Bush's foreign policy has severely

tarnished America's reputation in the world, especially in the Middle East.

All speakers agreed that an attack on Iran would have huge diplomatic consequences and the US has ignored the importance of adhering to the principles of International Law at Guantanamo Bay.

The growing influence of China as an economic power was seen by Cook and Kampfner as

being potentially crucial to 'controlling' the actions of the US.

At the end of the debate there was consensus that all speakers spoke eloquently and were very well informed; however one observer questioned whether the event could be publicised as a "debate" due to the similar opinions expressed by all candidates, with no comments made in favour of Bush and his administration.



Panelists often found themselves repeating the opinions of their counterparts. / Photo: Mark Donahue

Sir Howard answers questions at UGM

Alison Ball

Last Thursday Director of the LSE Sir Howard Davies addressed the UGM to update the Students' Union on the progress of planning and development strategies. Davies spoke from a wheelchair, spending a day with mobility impairments in support of Disabilities Awareness Week.

After formally opening the new wheelchair ramp to the Old Theatre stage, Davies announced that the refurbishment of Houghton Street was almost complete and awaiting only the connection of power to the blue lights by the London electricity board in the near future.

He added that it was disappointing that the newly paved street was already dirtied by many pieces of discarded chewing gum.

Davies went on to discuss progress on the 24 Kingsway project, informing the UGM that architects are currently competing to win the project, and if the undertaking keeps on schedule completion is estimated to be in 2007.

To accommodate planned increases in student intake it is hoped that the new building will house library resources and also more student study and computer facilities.

Over-stretched Library resources have been a focus of student grievances recently, and Davies recognised this. In addition to planned meetings with the Librarian to discuss recent changes to borrowing rules, he announced that the success of 24 hour access to the Library during the 2004 exam period would



Davies addressed a barely quorate UGM on a wide variety of topics. / Photo: Mark Donahue

mean that the scheme will be extended this year.

The recent appointment of Sir Martin Harris as the first director of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) appears to cause few concerns for Davies. He spoke of his confidence in LSE's compliance with the regulations which promote fair access for students from low income groups.

LSE was listed as the 11th best university in the world in last week's Times Higher Education Supplement international league table. Davies appeared pleased by this, despite the LSE's recent placing as the world's 223rd best university by a table compiled in Shanghai. He joked that as a Manchester City

fan he learned long ago the league tables have little value.

The Director offered to answer students' questions, and was asked by Anti-Racism Officer Farhan Islam what the LSE does to encourage representation of ethnic minorities on the staff. Davies replied that the market for academics is not purely global, and if the LSE represented a pure microcosm of world ethnicity 25 percent of staff would be Chinese. He told Islam that the LSE had no staff ethnicity targets and instead aimed to recruit the world's leading academics irrespective of their colour.

Davies was also queried as to whether more cheap residences could be provided for LSE stu-

dents, who pay far more in accommodation fees than most other UK students. He answered that strict rules made it impossible to cross-subsidise the halls of residence from other academic sources, and that because central location is important so the halls may be rented during vacations, costs are inherently high.

When asked whether the plans to increase student intake would cause congestion on the already crowded LSE campus, Davies assured the UGM that after the completion of the 24 Kingsway project and the occupation of Tower 3, the LSE would have sufficient capacity to support the increases.

LSE planning for hall on Houghton Street

Simon Chignell

The LSE this week confirmed plans for residences on Houghton Street and in Trafalgar Square, and admitted that it would continue to seek accommodation close to LSE, rather than opt for cheaper accommodation further out.

Director of Finance and Facilities at the LSE Andrew Farrell has set an eventual target of 4000 LSE accommodation spaces.

However even in 2006, when Crispin Street and Drury Lane residences have been opened, the LSE will still be some 1000 spaces short of this target.

A potential Houghton Street residence would not be in the newly acquired Tower 3 building, but would be part of a new structure when St. Clements is eventually demolished.

Farrell admitted that if used for accommodation, the LSE would look to "maximise occupancy", with smaller rooms but more facilities available on the doorstep all around campus.

The touted Trafalgar Street residence would add 250 rooms to the LSE's portfolio.

However Farrell commented

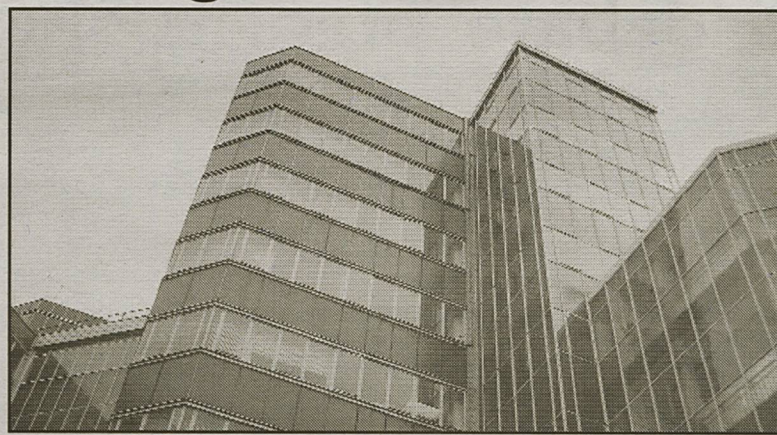
that "at the moment there is only a 25 percent chance of this project going ahead" citing problems of competition for such desirable buildings for such housing companies as Unite and Jarvis and difficulties in formulating a deal with backers of the project that would not result in higher rents for students.

He also argued the case for centrally-based accommodation, claiming that "East London residences would not be much cheaper, and additional travel costs as well as the difficulty in letting-out such residences in the Summer mean that it is actually better value to have residences closer to the LSE"

Farrell also unveiled controversial plans to put up rents on the most popular halls such as High Holborn in order to finance cheaper rents in other LSE residences.

Plans for such cross-subsidises were met with caution from SU Residence Officer Rishi Madlani: "I can see that it might make economic sense, however I don't think it is fair that students should be subsidising their fellow students."

"The focus for the School and the SU is now on affordable



The St. Clements towers, due to be knocked down eventually.

accommodation." Madlani also welcomed the idea of a Houghton Street residence, speculating "it would add more life to the LSE and hopefully attract more top students from around the world."

In his interview with The Beaver, Farrell also outlined potential plans to eventually close the Brunch Bowl on the 4th Floor of the Old Building, and relocate the facility to a different part of campus, with the new Garrick facility possibly shouldering some of the catering burden.

He expressed the intention to turn the current Brunch Bowl area into a study area with sofas

and open plan space as well as desks, in order to divert demand from the stretched library facilities.

When questioned on the change the acquisition of 24 Kingsway would have on LSE, Farrell intimated that it would address the problem of space for course collections, as well as solve the problem of finding a space in which to relocate archives from the Library Basement, where they are in danger of becoming damaged from dampness.

He added that plans were also afoot to move the Government department into Connaught House building in the near future.



Union Jack

The first Howard-attended UGM of the year left Jack feeling like he was back at the Hallowe'en party he had attended the weekend before.

The Old Theatre was treated to many terrifying sights, including Howard Davies' impression of Dr. X, Justin Nolan's impression of a man with facial hair, and the most frightening sight of all - a heartfelt appeal by Oliver Ranson for "pretty girls, especially redheads" to contact him.

It appears to Jack that UGMs this year are proving harder to open than those new doors they've installed in C120.

Nat Black's admittedly impressive debut as UGM Chair has been hampered only by her inability to get the bloody thing started. Jack's Swiss pocket watch timed this week's meeting as starting at nine whole minutes past the hour of one.

It worries Jack to think that the UGM is becoming much like his love life with Mrs Jack - slow to start, a bit of moaning in the middle before the end comes round all too quickly, with either side having little to show for the effort.

Guy Fawkes may have been 24 hours away, however the Loony Left decided to celebrate it early by bringing their Guy to the bonfire of the UGM.

Jack wonders why the Swizzers decided to roll out this pantomime American to talk to the assembled throngs about his brother.

As tragic as the case may be, a hall full of students munching Benjy's sandwiches and debating the provision of bike sheds is hardly the audience for war stories.

For Jack, having to watch this token gangly Yank wheeled out by Mad Vlad and his cronies was only marginally less painful than having to watch Nas Massoumi display her thong to the entire upper tier.

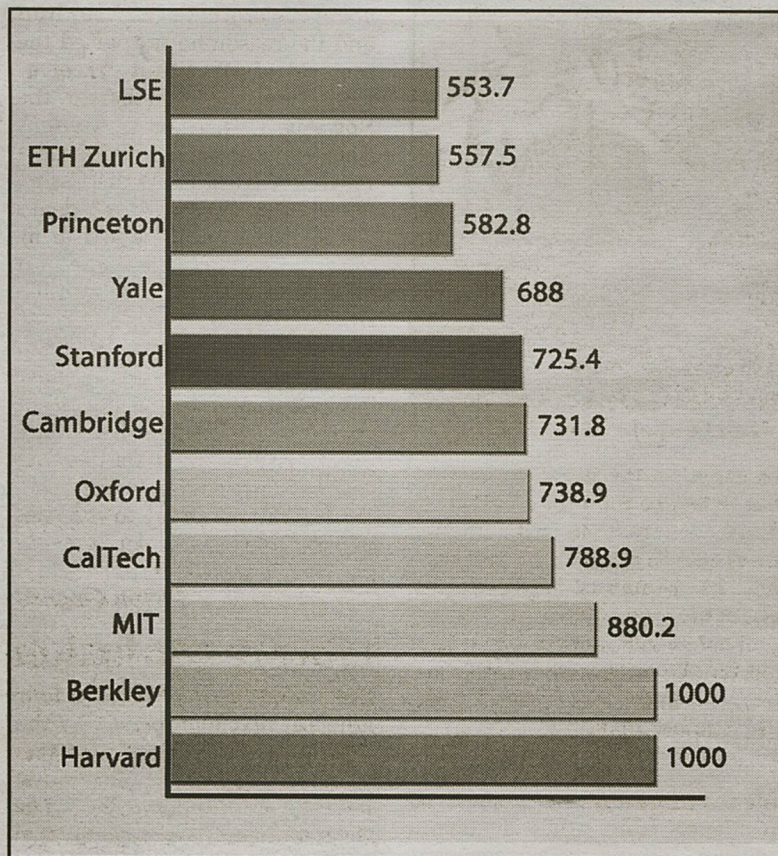
However Nas's dress sense did prove useful for Jack - it reminded him to pop into Woolworth's on the way home and buy a new cheese wire.

Howard D wheeled himself from behind the curtains for his bi-annual Teflon-talk to the masses.

Big H looked cool under the immense pressure of questions such as "Are there any Manchester United fans in Manchester?" and "Where in LSE can you park your bike?"

If Jack was Head Honcho, he would answer the former with "No, they're all in London", citing J. Nolan as an example, and answer the latter with "Nars Massoumi's posterior".

We are the champions of the world; LSE named 11th best university in global survey



The LSE's position and the ten institutions ranked above it. Scores are shown out of 1,000 and based upon peer review, research impact and academic citations.

Andhalib Karim

The LSE's position as a leading educational institution was once again confirmed last week when the university came 11th in the world.

The ranking rated the world's top 200 universities and was compiled by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES).

The School leads the way above the other ULU colleges with Imperial College, University College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) coming in at fourteenth, thirty-fourth and forty-fourth respectively.

These results would appear to emphasise London's significance as a centre of global educational excellence.

The world rankings are the first of their kind to draw on the views of academics around the world, surveying 1,300 academics in 88 countries across all academic disciplines.

Universities were measured against each other by comparing qualities such as their student to staff ratios, the success of the university in attracting overseas stu-

dents and elite academics, and the number of times research papers published by the university have been cited.

These factors are designed to reveal the intellectual vitality of the institution.

THES Editor John O'Leary commented on the survey, saying "Leading universities increasingly define themselves in terms of international competition."

The new league table encourages these comparisons and there are plans in the coming months for another table focusing on core academic subjects.

Seven out of the top ten institutions are American, with Harvard University leading the rankings followed by California University Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The rankings show US dominance in the education market with 62 of its universities listed in the top 200.

The UK, Germany and Australia, have respectively 30, 17 and 14 university entries in the rankings.

The UK's top two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were

ranked fifth and sixth respectively, after only the top four US universities.

Vice Chancellor of Oxford John Hood welcomes the news claiming "It has been achieved in spite of serious under-resourcing."

At the present time Harvard University boasts an endowment of nearly £12.7 billion. This draws attention to growing concerns about whether top British universities are receiving sufficient funding to successfully maintain their "international competitiveness against the aggressive investment trends across the Atlantic", as Hood explains.

However, the newly compiled rankings have had some criticisms.

The table of 200 institutions includes universities from only 29 different countries and has received criticism suggesting that it is biased towards the English speaking world.

These critics propose that the excellence of western universities may be attributed to their aggressive recruitment of students and staff from abroad.

Vocation, vocation, vocation across the UK

Jess Brammar

The introduction of top-up fees will see more universities offering vocational subjects, *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times* reported last week.

From 2006 top universities including the LSE may charge maximum fees of £3,000 a year in addition to the current cost of studying.

With the cost of university education set to go up, students and their parents are reportedly becoming more concerned about universities providing students with the skills that will make them employable.

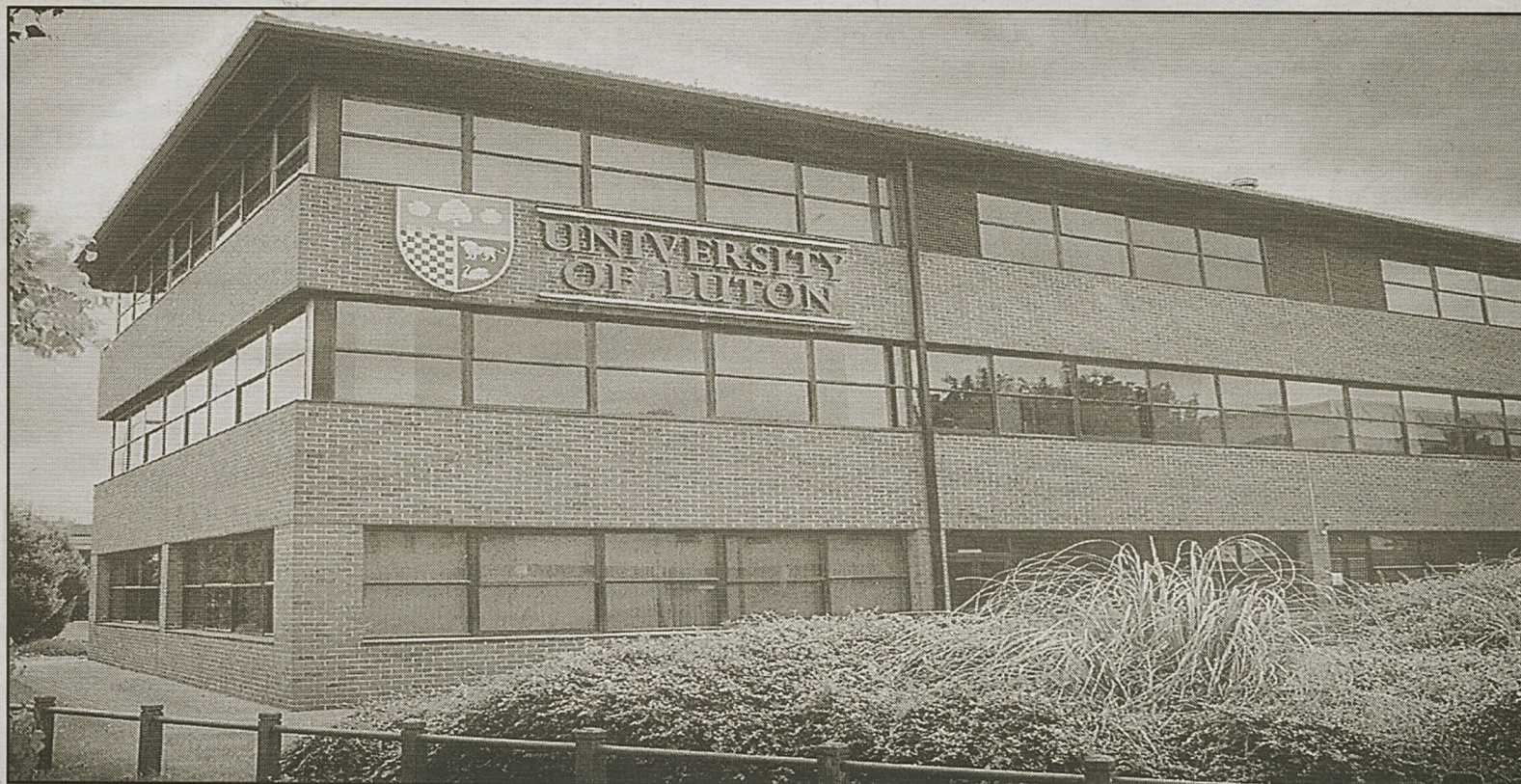
The move towards less academic subjects will mainly affect students at newer universities, particularly those institutions which were previously polytechnics and gained university status in 1992.

The aim is that the younger universities will offer job prospects to rival those of older, more established institutions.

According to *The Financial Times* newspaper, degrees in more practical subjects such as computer games design and work-related courses such as risk management are being introduced this year.

By contrast, traditional academic courses such as English literature, languages and pure sciences are on the decline across the country.

Luton University, which tends to score highly in surveys of grad-



Luton University stopped offering history degrees some years ago to focus on the more popular and employable vocation-based courses.

uate employability, stopped offering history degrees a few years ago.

Despite oversubscription to many academic university courses, some top universities are having to work hard to attract students for less popular courses such as chemistry and maths.

A number of leading universities, among them Birmingham which reported a 28 percent increase in chemistry applicants this year, have sought to push up

applications through 'aggressive tactics'.

The *Financial Times* survey also highlighted the divide between the newer universities and the collegiate and red brick institutions.

Younger universities were found to offer degrees more tailored to market demand, than the more established red-brick institutions which have always relied on traditional courses.

In particular, degrees specific

to the media and social care industries are being provided by increasingly former polytechnics.

Older universities were found, however, to rely largely on the prestige of their reputation to ensure a high rate of graduate employability, rather than even attempt to make their courses more vocational.

In this year's *Sunday Times* University Guide, LSE was ranked ninth in the country for graduate employability, with only

4.4 percent of graduates unemployed six months after graduating, despite its range of degrees being heavily weighed in favour of traditional academic social sciences.

There is no suggestion that this news will affect the School's course policy.

It is highly unlikely that the LSE will begin offering vocation-based courses or even move towards a more practical approach in its existing courses.

Dyke critical of government conduct

Tom Jenkins

Former Director General of the BBC Greg Dyke pledged not to vote Labour at the next General Election during his public conversation with Howard Davies last week, entitled "the BBC, the government and populist television."

Dyke remained heavily critical of the government's conduct in the months precluding the Iraq war, although he stopped short of accusing Tony Blair of lying.

Instead he referred to him as a "zealot" and branded him "grossly incompetent", particularly over his treatment of intelligence relating to the nature of the weapons of mass destruction and the notorious 45 minute claim.

Blair's former aide and close personal ally Alistair Campbell earned the epithet of "a nice bloke that sometimes goes mental" for his role in the creation of the 'sexed-up' Iraq intelligence document.

Dyke likened the 'with us or against us' modus operandi of Downing Street to that within the infamous Nixon White House.

In defence of their behaviour he added "in every time of conflict, the government of the day will seek to control the BBC".

With reference to BBC's charter renewal process, Dyke struck an optimistic note, suggesting that public's cynical treatment of the Hutton report verdict will ensure the BBC gets a fair deal.

He also called for major reforms of the way the corporation is governed, criticising the current system of "appointing the classic and rather tedious great and the good" to the Board of Governors rather than "recruiting people with the specific skills required."

He believes the current board has failed to guarantee the Corporation's independence post-Hutton, by acquiescing too quickly to Campbell's call for heads to roll.

He rejected the assertion that the BBC should be subject to the jurisdiction of Ofcom, the commercial television regulator, citing the BBC's unique status as a public service broadcaster as the mitigating reason.

He fears that under Ofcom



Greg Dyke wasn't quite this popular when he spoke at the LSE.

commercial considerations would dominate.

Dyke proudest achievement is the pioneering Freeview project, which saw a limited number of digital channels provided on a free-to-air basis as a rival to BSkyB.

He stressed the importance of preventing the media from being monopolised by Murdoch, whom

he suggests the government sold out to before the 1997 election.

In contrast to his caustic frankness in discussing other topics, he remained tight-lipped about his own future.

Last month he was linked to a bid for ITV with former LWT colleague and old friend Sir Christopher Bland.

More languages means more sex

Matt Sellers

A new survey pioneered by the Michel Thomas Language Centre and featured in last week's issue of *The Guardian* newspaper, indicates that polyglots, people who are proficient in more than one language, on average have higher salaries and better sex lives.

The survey finds that many companies are willing to reward a second language with an average 12% pay hike, and workers earning above the national average salary may see even higher gains.

These are estimated at 20%, resulting in an extra £9,000/year or £423,000 over a lifetime.

There also appears to be a positive correlation between one's language skills, sex life, and self-confidence. 'Because of the widespread perception that multilingual people are sexier and more intelligent, learning a second language could improve your self-esteem' writes Polly Curtis of the *Guardian*.

The study also shows that multilingual women favour a partner equally proficient in a multitude of languages.

LSE students will welcome this study's findings, because a very large proportion can consider themselves polyglots. Nicholas Byrne of the LSE Language Centre reveals that approximately 2,000 LSE students are enrolled in language courses, while a more modest 200 or so are taking languages as a degree option.

The undergraduate prospectus on LSE's website boasts that the student body is geographically diverse.

It states that 14.4 percent originate from Europe but out-

side the UK, while 23.2 percent travel to the LSE from Asia. A further 9.3 percent are North Americans and African students represent 3.2 percent of the student body.

The survey's findings regarding higher earnings may seem unsurprising to most, because many employers aggressively recruit bi- and multi-lingual graduates over their mono-lingual counterparts. However the report's findings on the supposed sexual success of polyglots will surely be welcomed on Houghton Street.

LSE moves to disaffiliate from UofL service

Prashant Rao
Executive Editor

The LSE Careers Service is actively pursuing an agreement with the University of London Careers Service which would allow our Careers Service to disaffiliate.

The decision, expected to be finalised in the middle of Lent term would allow the Careers Service to provide a more personalised service for students, with increased continuity among careers advisors.

Under the current arrangement, careers advisors are often moved between the different University of London careers services.

According to Fiona Sandford, the head of the Careers Service, with the high percentage of international students and postgraduates at the LSE, the School did not benefit from the constant rotation of advisors.

"We need to understand the global nature of our students.

"We need to have a Careers Service that helps students who are looking to work in the City or Westminster, as well as those who have more global aspirations," she said.

Sandford went on to say: "While other London colleges such as Imperial or King's have similar student bodies, the LSE is unique among them, with our diverse student composition."

She assured *The Beaver* that students would feel no immediate effect and that "service should only go up."

The most fundamental change would be that advisors would now be employed directly by the School, though the Careers Service would still purchase products and services from the University of London Careers Service.

This is the latest in a series of moves in the past two years that have seen the Careers Service expand greatly, more than doubling its staff in that time period.

Editorial Comment, page 9



The LSE is negotiating its exit from the University of London careers service, but insists that it will still retain close links.

Brief News

UGM Speaker

Dante Zappala of the organisation "Military Families Speak Out" made a surprise speech at last week's UGM. Zappala spoke about his brother's death in Iraq and the reason he supported the removal of all military involvement. Invited by members of the Socialist Worker Student Society, Zappala was almost moved to tears when discussing the nature of his brother's death whilst serving in the US army reserve, however he was cut short by the chair due to time constraints, and when questions were taken, many students questioned his controversial view that all troops should be immediately withdrawn from the region. At the end of the meeting many students were heard questioning the relevance to students of inviting such an outside speaker to the UGM.

Simon Chignell

Library confusion

The introduction of the new four hour set text loan period by the Library at the beginning of this term has caused confusion about the new borrowing rules. *The Beaver* has received reports from disgruntled students complaining that the new scheme prevents them from putting holds on three-day or one-week loans when set-texts are available. Talks with the Library have however indicated that these claims are unfounded and it is still possible to make a request for any three-day or one-week loan book, regardless of the availability of set-texts. The controversial new set-text loan period is to be reviewed in February, after the completion of Library users surveys, which are due to be conducted in conjunction with the Students' Union later this term.

Raihan Alfaradhi

Planet Shared

Last Saturday LSE students were among over 500 other from across the UK at the annual 'Shared Planet' conference in London. Organised by the People and Planet organisation, the event is Europe's biggest student conference on poverty, human rights and the environment. Former Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP opened the day, calling Climate Change "a bigger international threat than terrorism." He also expressed hope that the Russian ratification of the Kyoto Treaty would lead to real global action and raised the prospect of economic sanctions on the USA should it continue to refuse to sign up. LSE People and Planet Chair Dinka Jasarevic and LSE SU Environment & Ethics Officer Joel Kenrick both attended workshops, and Kenrick said "I now hope to work with the LSE to adopt the demands of the 'Go Green' campaign, hopefully including a powerful Environmental Policy."

Simon Chignell

Degree system faces axe after 200 years

Tanya Rajapakse

A report released last week by a government-appointed review has recommended sweeping changes to the way degrees are awarded.

At present degrees are classified as first, upper second, lower second, and third.

But the review wants them all to be scrapped because it says that it does not provide adequate differentiation of performance.

The report, produced by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Group, a government appointed body which was created last autumn following the government's white

paper on higher education, states that "efforts should be made to develop a common higher education credit system."

It acknowledges that the present system is both "robust" and "internationally recognized" but is of the view that it does not provide effective measurement of student achievement.

The survey was headed by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor of Leicester University.

The higher education minister, Dr Kim Howells, commented in an interview with *The Guardian* that "the current degree classification system has been in place for around two centuries and

served us well."

However, Professor Burgess and his group concluded that the current system did not fulfil its objectives and that it was time to consider alternatives.

Burgess concluded that "any development of the current degree classification system is for the sector to determine, in consultation with students and employers."

Lady Warwick, chief executive of Universities UK, said; "These wide-ranging issues are of great importance to institutions, students and wider stakeholders. The recommendations propose quite a radical change."

An LSE spokesperson stated

the School's staff might contribute to a group which to be convened by Professor Burgess to discuss how the recommendations set out in the report can be furthered.

In a statement to *The Beaver* they said that "The School would generally echo the view that it is absolutely essential that any changes do not undermine the high international standing of UK degrees."

The report comes amidst increasing concern about the rising number of top-level degrees being awarded.

According to *The Guardian*, 2,200 more students got firsts last year compared to 2002.



Prof Robert Burgess said after 200 years it was time for change.

LSE students join vigil for victim

Matthew Willgress

On Friday night, more than 1,000 people, including large numbers of LSE students, attended a candle-lit vigil in memory of a gay barman who was murdered by homophobic thugs.

David Morley, 37, and from Chiswick West London, was attacked as he walked along London's Hungerford Bridge with a friend at night.

The motive is believed to have been homophobia, which according to some is on the increase across the capital. Only last Thursday, a similar incident occurred.

This was not the first time Morley had suffered for his sexuality. Nine years ago he narrowly avoided death or serious injury when he was drinking in the Admiral Duncan gay bar in Soho when a nail bomb was detonated there. So far, three have now been arrested.

In a show of support and sympathy, LSE students joined those who gathered at a packed St Anne's Church, in Soho, for the Vigil. Others held candles in the street.

Simon Bottomley, the LSE SU

LGBT officer, who knew people who had been at same place as Morley on the night of the murder, commented on the high numbers of LSE students at the vigil by saying; "we all live in London and this kind of thing shouldn't happen anymore. It has really shaken a lot of us up and we wanted to show our respect for David's friends and family as well as the unity of the lesbian and gay community and our shared values."

A tribute from London mayor, Ken Livingstone was also read out.

"David Morley was well known and well loved in London's lesbian and gay community," Mr Livingstone said, adding that "he would do everything in his power to bring about justice."

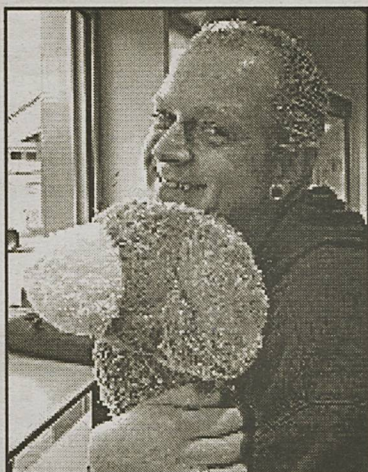
Mr Morley's friend Steven Allen believed that the gay community had been pleased detectives had acted so quickly and the high levels of support they had received.

Another friend, Sally Graham added that, "This is the second time he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, but for all of us here today he will be in the right place at the right time, which is a

very special place in all of our hearts."

At last week's Union General Meeting, Education & Welfare Officer Sian Errington said that the priority given to handing out personal attack alarms this year would continue in the light of such attacks, adding that "discrimination, hatred and prejudice have no place on our campus and we will continue to do our best to fully stamp it out."

This week is LSESU LGBT awareness week and is aiming to raise awareness about rights and equality in the UK today.



David Morely, killed by thugs.

LSE 2nd rate for 1sts

Mike Fauconnier-Bank

Obtaining a first class undergraduate degree at the LSE is easier than at Nottingham University, a recent study has revealed.

The research examined the way universities up and down the country award first class degrees and discovered huge differences.

Some institutions were found to be awarding firsts even for students who scored only around fifty percent over their course.

The study, called the differences "shocking" and found that it is easiest to get a first from Sunderland University, where students could achieve the award with a minimum average mark of just 50.8 per cent across their full course.

The minimum average mark of 52.5 percent needed to be awarded a first at the LSE would only give a student at Nottingham University an upper second.

The School calculates classifications based on the aggregate of nine marks, including all second and third year courses and an average of the best three from a student's first year results.

In order to be awarded a first, an LSE student must achieve five

first-class marks of 70 percent or over, as well as passing 11 of the 12 courses taken over the three years.

The 52.5 percent is based on the average of five marks at 70 percent, with a further six minimum pass marks, at 40 percent.

However, Jon Curran, an economist at the London Metropolitan University and the lead author of the study, admitted in *The Times* that his calculations were "based on the lowest possible hypothetical set of results needed to gain a first, which would be unlikely in practice."

He conceded that the majority of students would in fact be awarded a first with much higher grades than the bare minimum.

An LSE spokeswoman was quoted as saying: "To the best of our knowledge, no cases anywhere near as extreme... have gone before a departmental examination sub-board or the school-wide examination board."

Consequently, the School claims the study does not devalue degrees awarded by the School, which was listed as the 11th best university in the world, in *The Times* higher international league table, last week.

Universities to get umbrella body

Jeff Berman

Negotiations have begun to create an all-encompassing body to represent all of Britain's universities.

A controversial merger of the two existing organizations, Universities UK, which represents university vice-chancellors, and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), which represents college principals, is currently being discussed, according to *The Guardian*.

For an institution to own the title of University in the UK the permission of the Privy Council is required. The merging of these two bodies is a further blurring of the distinction between universities and other higher education

institutions.

The Dearing report recommended that the "numerical criteria for awarding university status should be reduced."

The joining of these institutions appears to indicate that they both anticipate fewer differentiations being made between universities and higher education colleges in the future.

Many heads of research-based universities however reportedly resent being linked to non-research institutions, while some heads of higher education colleges are fearful of losing their influence in a larger body.

These negotiations come after a decision to lower the criteria for prospective universities so that colleges without research degree-

awarding powers may still obtain a university title.

Currently, eight colleges have applied for university status under the new rules, while another applied before the recent changes to the criteria.

If successful, all nine colleges will seek membership of Universities UK. The departure of these colleges would weaken SCOP as an organization, while at the same time taking research opportunities away from institutions within Universities UK.

SCOP currently oversees the education of approximately 200,000 students, and its colleges are strongest in programs such as teacher education and creative arts.

Collective Meeting

The Beaver will be electing:

Managing Editor

2 blink Editors

on Monday 15 November at 6 pm in Room S75.

All may stand for blink Editor.

Only Collective members may stand for Managing Editor.

All Collective members are eligible to vote.

Citigroup Day on Campus.

Want to find out what Investment Banking is all about?

Citigroup invites **penultimate year** students from any discipline to participate in the LSE Day on Campus on **25th November 2004**.

Citigroup Day on Campus is designed to give you the opportunity to learn more about our 2005 Summer Internships and the daily activities across our business areas, within our Corporate and Investment Banking Group.

Detailed below is the timetable of the day: (please note you can come along for one or all of the sessions. However some will be running simultaneously)

Time: Event:

09:00 – 10:30	Skills session. <i>CVOnline application workshop & Interviewing and Assessment centres.</i>
11:00 – 13:00	Global Transaction Services Case Study OR Capital Markets Case Study.
14:00 – 16:00	Trading Game OR Investment Banking M&A Case Study.
18.00 – 20.30	Networking Event and Drinks Reception.

To sign up for the Citigroup Day on Campus, please e-mail campus.queries@citigroup.com stating LSE Day on Campus in the subject box, clearly indicating which session (s) you would like to attend. The spaces are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Further details will follow regarding room locations.

The deadline for sign up is 18th November 2004.

We look forward to meeting you,
Citigroup Campus Recruitment

www.oncampus.citigroup.com



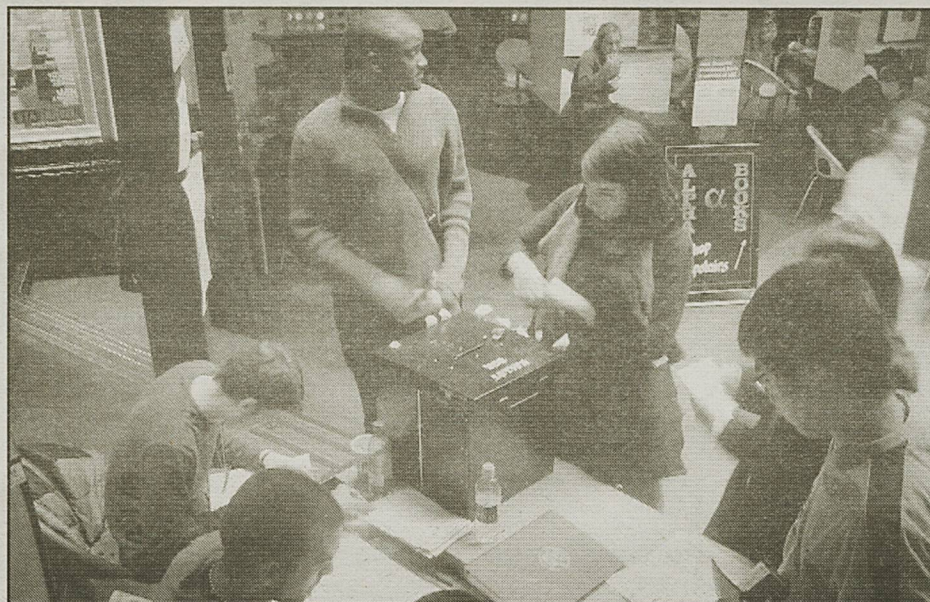
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Representing students

The starting point of this article will be to give a quick overview of the recent Student Union elections, as part of a more general contribution about where our union should be going. Firstly, it is worth noting that whilst one cannot draw sweeping generalisations from the result of any election, it isn't the case that nothing can be learnt from the results as some seemed to have suggested in *The Beaver* last week. Indeed, such a view is particularly unwise this year considering the sizeable increase in the number of votes – the views of over 1000 students should not be dismissed.

The Beaver did point out an interesting phenomena in that only three candidates on the LSE Conservative's endorsed list of candidates – Alykhan Velshi, Daniel Freeman and Chris Heathcote – were elected. However, the key thing to analyse isn't which party or faction does best out of elections but what, in the main, the candidates who did best stood for.

Candidates who campaigned on the basis of support for democratically agreed existing union policy, supporting an inclusive, active union did best. Examples of such issues candidates campaigned on include opposition to rises in fees, in favour of prioritising campaigning against all forms of discrimination, working for free Wednesday afternoons, tackling problems with halls spaces, and a genuine commitment to environmental / ethical issues. Candidates seen as effectively representing students on these and other issues, such as Rishi Madlani (Residences Officer) and Sian Errington (Education and Welfare Officer) did particularly well. Errington's vote on a platform of "campaigning against racism, fee-rises and halls privatisation" of two hundred and twenty three first preferences (25%) for NUS delegate was particularly high considering a well contested field of ten candidates. There has been coalescence around this kind of agenda over



Matthew Willgress responds to recent debates in *The Beaver* regarding the Michaelmas Term elections

recent years stretching right across the union, from people on the 'left' to many regarded as part of the 'centre' (in so far as these terms have explanatory value.) It is an agenda that students of various persuasions can agree on in that it puts the interests of students at its core. The number of candidates of various personal party-political allegiances, including having none at all, campaigning on such an agenda perhaps at least partially explains the higher than usual turnout in this election.

The Students' Union needs to work in this direction and vigorously campaign on these issues. The priority for this union must be to represent students effectively, defending the interests of students whenever they come under attack – whether that be in the financial form of fee rises or

the social form of discrimination. We need to work with other groups in society such as NGOs and trade unions when they agree with us on these matters. Whilst the union undoubtedly shouldn't endorse specific political parties or candidates, this doesn't mean the union giving up on any politics as some have argued. Issues such as the rise in Islamophobia and recent spate of homophobic attacks both do affect our members and are explicitly political. So how can our union now move forward? Where people do agree they should co-operate, all different sections of the union such as the Executive, societies, the AU and halls committees need to have a positive working relationship, and the Union must do even more to campaign on and discuss issues LSE'S diverse range of students care about.

Letting LooSE on TV

Eliot Pollak and director-general John 'Greg Dyke' McDermott exclusively unveil the opening day schedule of LooSE TV, the LSE's new TV channel.

6.00am - Breakfast with Proust:

Highbrow start to the day as the iconic French philosopher Marcel Proust guides you through the morning papers. Hosted by Ant & Dec.

7.00am - Songs of Praise:

The 47 different religious societies in the 'inclusive' LSE all battle to get their hymns heard in this half-hour programme

7.40am - Howard's Way:

The big D offers advice on how to transform a thriving and respected academic institution into a training ground for obsessive and obsequious city wannabes

8.30am - Trisha:

'Nobody understands me anymore!' - English-speaking LSE students pour out their hearts to Trisha. Subtitles available

9.35am - Wish you could Hear Gameshow:

Contestants in the upper tier of the Old Theatre attempt to hear Sian Errington's weekly UGM report before deciding it really wasn't worth the bother after all

10.00am - Changing Rooms:

Laurence Llewellyn Bowen takes £800,000 of your money and turns a warm, friendly and profitable pub into a vacuous space with all the atmosphere of a yoghurt

'After his abject failure to produce a decent website, K's job, like Adrian Mutu's nose, appears to be on the line.'

10.30am - Ready Steady Book:

200 students race to take out that all-important single copy of a set-text as the essay deadline looms

11.00am - From Rush Hour with Love (Film):

Remake of the Bond classic as two LSE students fall in love on the tube

12.30pm - The Lunchtime News (as reported by *The Guardian*):

Cartoon suitable for the under 5s.

1.00pm - Live UGM (Repeat)

2.00pm - Houghton Street (soap opera):

This week, after his abject failure to produce a decent website, K's job, like Adrian

Mutu's nose, appears to be on the line. With guest appearances from Ant & Dec

2.30pm - Student Politics Daily (comedy)

3.00pm - The GC:

Drama in which rich, self-obsessed, American General Course students mope around campus in cacophonous cliques, discussing how amusing it is that the word 'leisure' is not pronounced 'leeez-zure'

4.00pm - CLSETV:

An hour of kids programmes presented by Angus Jones

Including: 4.05pm - Postman Shat:

A report on the Royal Mail

4.15pm - Mr Benn:

Mr Benn pays his daily visit to the costumiers in order to change his political attire, a trick that he hopes will result in enough people voting for him as Gen Sec. Starring Rishi Madlani as Mr Benn

4.35pm - Blue Peter:

A day in the life of the AU President

5.00pm - Murder She Wright:

Suspense thriller as exotic chefs attempt to poison as many students as possible before a team of crack detectives, based in the Columbo Bar, catch the culprits. Possibly featuring one of Ant & Dec

Part two to follow next week folks...

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If you have written three or more articles for *The Beaver* and your name does not appear in the Collective, please email thebeaver@lse.ac.uk and you will be added to the list in next week's paper.

The Beaver is available in alternative formats.

The Beaver

Comment

Confused & Superfluous

Whether one supported the candidacy of Winston Churchill or not, it is beyond ridiculous that the Constitution & Steering Committee decided to declare him unconstitutional and move to possibly repeal his election victory. It is indeed disappointing that C&S even gave cursory consideration to this motion, let alone passed it.

Churchill is not remembered for his anti-semitic comments - he is recognised as one of this country's greatest leaders, wartime or otherwise, a man who is remembered for his stand, with the leaders of the United States and Russia, against a racist ideology that propagated genocide. He is remembered for standing against racism.

At no point during the campaign was any complaint filed against Churchill's candidacy nor was any campaign launched against his candidacy as was the case with Margaret Thatcher. Those who disagreed with his politics or thought him a racist (thin arguments on which to declare him unconstitutional) are displaying poor judgment in demanding that his victory be annulled: the fact is, no one likes a sore loser.

The argument also goes above and beyond whether Churchill was a great man or a racist as proponents of the motion have argued: 451 students voted for him - what greater argument can there be for the strength of a candidate than a mandate?

Furthermore, C&S's decision to vote again at 3pm today is another indication of the struggles this particular iteration of the Committee have had with adhering to the document they are assigned to protect. Case in point: last term, the Committee, whose meetings are public and free for all to attend, decided to vote in secret to elect its chair.

While the time to critique that particular decision has passed, the current fiasco is in a similar mould. C&S selectively decides which parts of the Constitution it would like to uphold and displays appalling disregard for the remainder.

They must now be careful as, much like their decision to use secret balloting, they have now set a precedent - one wonders where the line is and whether it has, in fact, even been drawn.

Paying for our discounts

How much did our Union spend in affiliation fees to the NUS and on NUS Conference last year? £11,497.

Apparently, though, that is not nearly enough as the NUS's National Treasurer has tentatively tabled a motion to charge students £10 for their NUS card. If the motion does get passed, then we as a Union will be asked to pay even more for an NUS that does not represent our interests.

The NUS is designed to protect the interests of home undergraduates - take, for example, the campaign against top-up fees last year. How did that campaign in any way represent the interests of international students or postgraduates who, coincidentally, represent three-quarters of the

LSE's full-time student population?

There is still a very strong argument for a focused national union for university students, one that is truly inclusive and offers real involvement potential for international students and post-graduates.

The NUS, though, does not fit this bill - the National Executive Council is nothing more than a training ground for career politicians.

Mandy Telford spent two years as President of NUS Scotland before her time as NUS President - was she at all in touch with students' concerns nationwide? How was she any different from any other elected politician in the country?

£11,497.

Some news is good news

While The Beaver has never shied away from criticising the School for its policies, we cannot help but applaud the Careers Service's decision to disaffiliate from the University of London Careers Service. Our student body is like none other in the country and to lump us together with scientists at Imperial or arts students at Goldsmith's

only serves to hurt student interests.

Well done, then, to the Careers Service for fighting for better service for the LSE student, whether they be City-facing investment bankers, Westminster-facing career politicians, or international students looking to get a job back home.

Letters to the Editor

The Beaver offers all readers the right to reply to anything that appears in the paper. Letters should be sent to thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk, and should be no longer than 250 words. Letters may be edited prior to publication. The deadline for submission is 3pm on the Sunday prior to publication.

Dear Sir,

The sobering reality of just how tough it is being a non able-bodied student at the LSE was brought home to me last Monday. Having spent three-and-a-half years ambling slowly, wandering aimlessly or striding purposefully around the campus, around the pitches at Berrylands and around the Three Tuns, it was always going to be a shock to spend one day as a wheelchair-bound student. An incredible shock to be completely unable to access my office, or to move quickly from the Tuns to the Quad, for instance.

When a journey that would take thirty seconds and half a second's thought became a marathon struggle to meander through the students blocking every inch of Houghton Street, to reach the East Building lifts and then to wait patiently for everyone to clear you a path, the sheer magnitude of the struggle wheelchair-users face at LSE every day became so very clear.

The absolute frustration of encountering a solitary stair - one solitary stair after minutes of labouring to wheel myself up and down lifts, up and down corridors and having to retrace my entire route, left me feeling embittered and, more than anything, helpless. I do not feel it would be condescending in any way to say that I respect and admire the phenomenal tasks that each disabled student at the LSE faces and overcomes on a daily basis.

The practical problems of access are massive, and the financial resources that would be required to make our campus entirely accessible to disabled students are huge, yet I am certain that more could be done to aid the day-to-day problems faced by wheelchair users. The work done by the disabilities office and the Students' Union Disabilities Officer is of immense value to disabled students and the School itself makes every effort to improve the quality of the LSE student experience for many students who face a wide-range of disabilities.

It is a challenge to attend the LSE at any rate, and it is a challenge to find the motivation or the wherewithal to attend even a modest percentage of classes and lectures, but to have the added disincentive of a largely inaccessible campus, cobbled streets and cramped and busy student areas and yet still avail themselves fully of the LSE student experience is something that I believe we should all be aware of and respect.

Gareth Carter
LSE Students' Union Treasurer

The Beaver would like to make the following correction:

It was reported in Issue 606 of The Beaver that the inability of students

Dear Sir,

I was shocked at the election of Winston Churchill as Honorary Vice-President of the LSE.

The slogan attached for justification was that he was "the saviour of Europe." Now, what could be meant by that? Surely, nobody will deny the decisive role of Russia and the U.S. in defeating Nazism. So presumably, we are to take it metaphorically. A man who wholeheartedly stood against and propagated anti-fascist values, such as no punishment for relatives of perpetrators, or no killing of innocents unless necessary.

Do I really have to remind anyone of things like carpet bombings against civilian populations under his rule? Consider Dresden, where around 100,000 people were killed in February 1945, less than three months before total occupation and the end of the war. What was left of the enemy was retreating, even fleeing on all fronts. 14- and 60-year olds were recruited. Dresden was crowded with civilian refugees from the east, where 13 million were to lose their homes. Had there been any possible threats, such as soldiers, they would have been fighting, or were trying to hide anyway. But Churchill killed most of them. Many of these children, women and old men burned to death. And this was not the only case like this. Most German cities were bombed similarly, also at this stage of the war.

And I have not even mentioned his earlier crimes against humanity, such as the use of gas to kill tens of thousands of civilians in the Middle East. But, I am sure, I do not have to tell anybody. People know this. So, if LSE's honour has been lost, we might want to recede to drawing a positive conclusion about individuals. We have no evidence to say that more than 451 of our fellow-students admire and honour large-scale burning festivals of the deprived and devastated.

Felix Stengel

Dear Sir,

I felt that your contributor Kheng Soon Lim missed the point completely regarding his Fox hunting article and letter follow up. Attending Winchester does not make you a member of the middle class and Mr Lim clearly does not understand the intricacies of the British class system.

It was in fact somewhat arrogant of him to advertise his former

to access some key texts online was caused by faults with the Library's online journals system. This was incorrect. The Library's online resource management system 'the

Alma Mater as an indicator of his own class. Being a member of the Countryside Alliance is also not an indicator of class as the group is a highly differentiated one in terms of background.

Mr Lim, you cannot hide slanderous remarks by saying that "it was an opinion" column. As the letters page is also opinions may I add you are clearly "new money", you understand nothing about the fox-hunting debate and the passion which pro-Huntsmen feel for the issue.

You highlighted it yourself, "I returned to the UK". A non-resident commenting on something which they do not understand is as bad as the Guardian reading dwellers of Islington trying to interfere in rural affairs.

James Eyton

Dear Sir,

Over the past few weeks, there has been much criticism of the content of The Beaver in the letters page. While criticism is always valid and welcome, one should refrain from using this as a platform for personal attacks:

1. Referring to members of the collective as 'weasels' and stating that they 'deserve blows under the belt' is unacceptable and incredibly rude. It is possible to make civilised criticisms without resorting to disrespect.

2. Opinion pieces express opinions and are obviously going to be biased and 'opinionated'. If someone feels very strongly about an opinion piece, it is better for the individual in question to write a counter-argument rather than accusing the original writer of being 'opinionated'.

3. Some people complain that The Beaver is too 'left-wing'. Everyone is welcome to write for this paper and if one feels that the paper is one-sided, the best option would be to join the Collective and contribute your own opinion.

Much effort is needed to write any piece for The Beaver and we feel that people are not respecting the amount of work members of the Collective put into creating this paper on a weekly basis. We hope that in the future, criticism will be more respectful of this fact.

Nastaran Tavakoli-Far and Kheng Soon Lim

Electronic Library' remained up and running without problems. ATHENS is not a Library system.

The Beaver would like to apologise for this mistake.

Features

blink

Editor: Matthew Sinclair
(thebeaver.blink@lse.ac.uk)

Features

The communists are revolting

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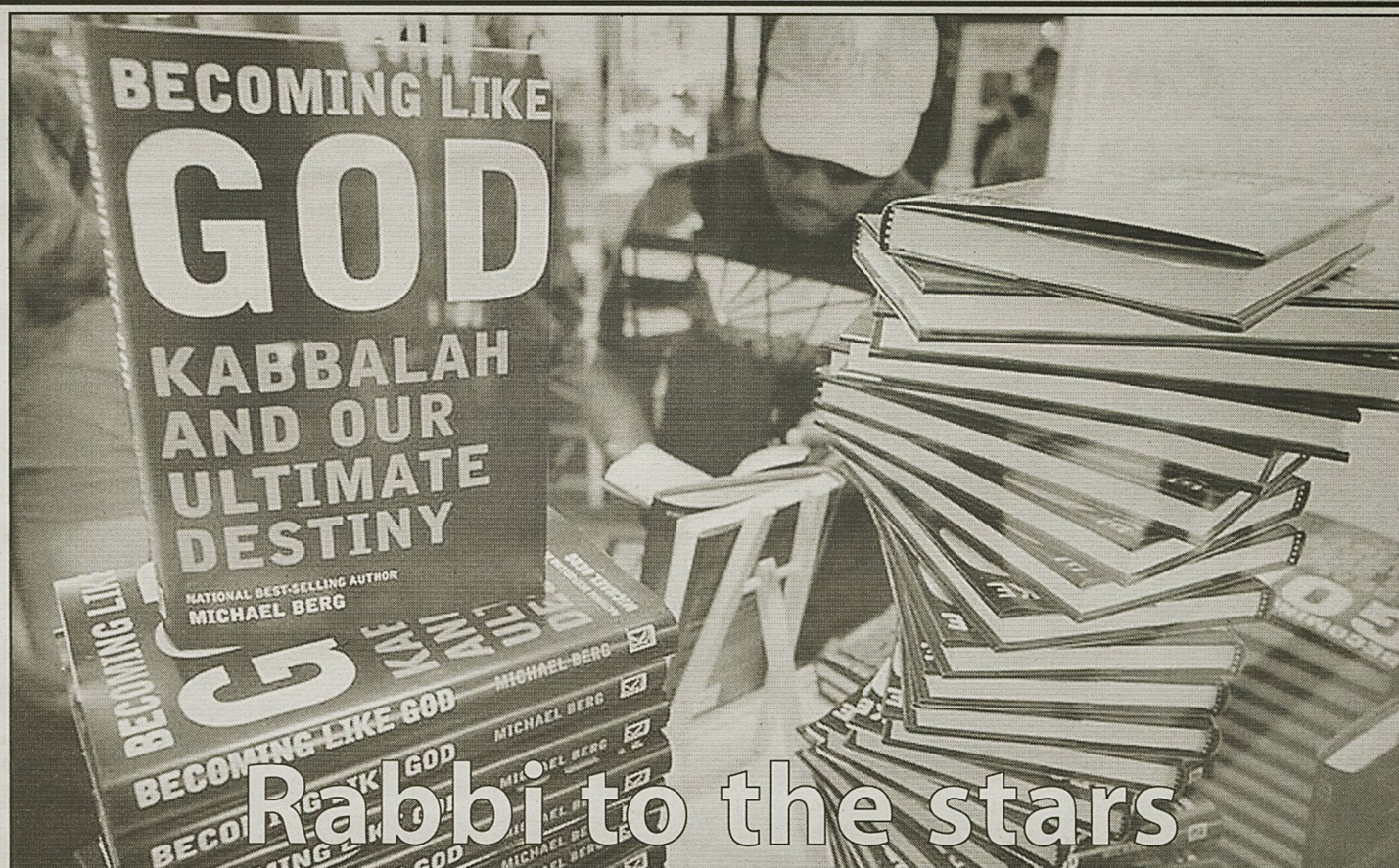
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Rabbi to the stars

Kaballah is the latest fad amongst the rich and the famous - you're nobody if you don't don the red string. But is it simply all a load of kaballs? Eliot Pollak goes to investigate.

It's not every night that the opportunity arrives to visit a regular haunt of Madonna and Demi Moore. Most evenings, they come round mine. But last Sunday, I had the chance not only to mingle with the great and the good of the world of celebrity, but also to interview the man seen by many as the king of modern-day kabbalah, Rabbi Michael Berg, the head of the Kabbalah Centre in Los Angeles and of its various offshoots across the world.

Hundreds of thousands of people flock through the doors of the various centres each year to learn more about kabbalah. As an orthodox Jew myself, I don't associate my own religious beliefs with the material expounded by Rabbi Berg. Rather, I do acquiesce with the material, rather object to the way holy, abstruse texts have been cheapened by Berg. Indeed, the Office of the UK Chief Rabbi recently were forced to issue a statement separating themselves from the centre claiming, "it does not fall under our remit or that of any subsidiary body of ours." The reason Berg fascinates me however is due to his traditional orthodox upbringing, the breadth of his knowledge would put many a prominent Rabbinical figure to shame. The very people pillaring him for his antics were his teenage friends. Is he deliberately misleading the masses, corrupted by the money he is making? Or does he genuinely believe that ancient Jewish mysticism, barely studied even amongst the most scholarly of Jews in 2004, could help Britney Spears lead a more meaningful life?

Arriving at the Kabbalah Centre in central London, I am struck by the beauty and sheer scale of the building, rumoured to have been funded by sales of Madonna's most recent album. As I climb the stairs, I pass a myriad of classrooms. I suppose I am most staggered by the numbers of people studying. Why are they all here on a Sunday night? Do these people not own televisions! All the surrounding talk of energies and red strings made me feel slightly uneasy - I don't associate either with my own faith. The students are undoubtedly wealthy. Twenty eight pounds for a bottle of kabbalah water is for the great majority (and excuse the awful pun,

a mere drop in the ocean.

I begin the interview by asking some technical questions about the nature of the kabbalah Rabbi Berg teaches. He almost appears relieved that I have started by prying into the subject, not the A-list participants. He stresses that his kabbalah is, "from the original sources and teachings. Although people often look at our ideas and believe them new and revolutionary, much of it is rooted firmly in tradition."

As mentioned above, teaching kabbalah to all and sundry is anathema in Jewish orthodox convention. Allow me to present a little background to the controversy. Jewish tradition dating back thousands of years has always articulated the esoteric nature of kabbalah; only Jewish men of at least the age of forty, who have amassed sufficient wisdom in the canon of Judaic literature may study the kabbalah texts. I push him on this issue. "Throughout history we have had gentiles who have studied kabbalah. Newton studied it as did many of the greatest minds throughout history. It is the source of all spiritual wisdom - one cannot be surprised at the ambit of its popularity." He goes on to point out to me that the greatest kabbalists through the ages, even those feted by the orthodox Jewish world, taught kabbalah to an eclectic range of folk. He thus justifies his establishment of kabbalah schools for children. "As long as I'm being true to myself, know that I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, other peoples' opinions will not influence my life."

Seemingly I proffer, Berg believes that in spite of Jewish tradition, the opportunity to study kabbalah should be indiscriminate. Possibly as a result of the horror etched onto my face, Rabbi Berg does admit to one constraint. "I think one must believe in a creator. Without that belief, one cannot believe that there are laws above earthly decrees which discuss how to live one's life. Kabbalah students must believe that we all have the spark of the creator within us, a spark that can assist us." Yet it is apparent that Rabbi Berg does not demand from any potential student an intrinsic Jewish belief as to the composite of the metaphysical.

I ask the Rabbi as to why he thinks

kabbalah has become so popular amongst so many? The growth in its interest has been exponential in recent years, emerging out of a lull in its study throughout the twentieth century. Does he see it as a replacement of values lost from an earlier age, or more of an addition to twenty-first century lives? "Certainly it's an addition. People feel they wish to search for something deeper. They don't accept religious dogma, they rather seek deeper explanations of why things are happening in their lives. People simply want to know more."

I couldn't close the interview without alluding to Madonna and his other famous clientele. Whilst I acknowledged the huge benefits such celebrities were bringing to his movement (as well as his bank balance,) I asked whether he agrees that the 'tabloidisation' of kabbalah was ultimately a sad by-product. I explained how I feel that it demeans my religion, as an important component of Judaism becomes subject to mockery in the pages of the Daily Mirror. Surely the profound nature of the ancient kabbalistic texts means that they deserve better than being used as an amulet for the rich and famous? Berg prefers to solely examine the positives. "More people want to know about it and want to study it as a result of our publicity. The genuine people will always be interested in content rather than who is studying with us." He does add however that he, "will teach anyone, be they famous or not famous, regardless of background."

So as I exit the centre with my free copy of his latest book (reasonably priced at all good bookshops etc,) what conclusions do I draw from our dialogue? Firstly, and possibly most importantly, Rabbi Berg is a most pleasant and very decent man. If he is fraud or a conman, at least he is a very affable one.

My ultimate impression is that through his spreading of kabbalah, he genuinely believes he is carrying out the will of his creator, and more than that, bettering the world at the same time. Extending kabbalah to the masses is how he expresses his version of the Jewish faith. Yet after an unnerving evening at his centre, I am not sure if it is a version I want a part in.

Features



The communists are revolting

Still winning elections.

Steve Gummer tracks down Dr. Alan Sked to ask him about the current furore in the Students' Union over the election of Winston Churchill as Honorary Vice-President.

As the news pages have already reported, various Trotskyite members of the School, attempted to repeal the strong electoral success of newly named honorary vice-president Sir Winston Churchill this week. LSE's left-wing leftovers have sought to emulate their former Soviet comrades by violating the outcome of yet another free election. They claim that our esteemed wartime leader was a racist, was guilty of ethnic cleansing and even racism against Jews. Whilst I refuse to give that final accusation any kind of consideration in this article--the defeat of Hitler in World War 2 is surely proof enough of Churchill's record on Judaism-- I decided to take some of their other absurd propositions to an unsuspecting Dr. Alan Sked, the distinguished international historian at LSE and a strong defender of Churchill's credentials:

Q. One of the first allegations I found on a Communist website was that as Home Secretary he put forth a proposal to sterilize roughly 100,000 mental degenerates. Is this true?

A. Yes: it was one of many proposals based on eugenics, which were to be found in Europe and the USA before the first world war. Whilst this policy sounds terrible today, at the time it was considered progressive thinking. Liberals, socialists and many other politicians, intellectuals and writers were impressed by eugenics. It was a debate about the advancement of our society by keeping our working class fit. It was based on the doctrine of Social Darwinism and was kicking around in Scandinavia and the US mid-west until the 1960's. I fail to see, however, how this makes Churchill a racist, as it was about the preservation of our own stock. And whereas, such proposals were not implemented here, Communists in Russia, China and elsewhere simply exterminated their class opponents. They really believed in eugenics! Kulaks, bourgeois and aristocrats were all physically removed from the gene-pool.

Q. What about the role of Churchill in the Allied invasion of Bolshevik Russia in 1917? He was war minister at the time and followed a deliberate policy of obstructing the birth of a new ideology.

A. There's no doubt that Churchill was a strong counter-revolutionary. Yet it was the Bolshevik Revolution itself that was democratically illegitimate: it crushed Russia's

first democratically elected assembly and replaced it with an authoritarian dictatorship; in effect it 'strangled the baby of Russian democracy in its cradle'. To oppose this regime was therefore a liberal, progressive instinct, a defence of true freedom. When you reflect on the atrocities of Stalin's rule, the purges, and the brutality of the Gulag, can you really fail to feel regret that Churchill failed?

Q. How would you respond to the claim that Churchill sought to use chemical weapons (gassing) upon the Kurds?

A. The use of gas in conflict is of course barbaric. But Europeans used it against each other in world war one and afterwards it was still considered a powerful weapon in the military arsenal. Churchill's advocacy of it, therefore, was not racial and although our condemnation of it today is both moral and right--it is none the less anachronistic in this context. Churchill would most likely have used gas and chemical weapons had the Nazis invaded Britain in 1940--i.e. against Europe's self-styled master-race. I repeat, using such a weapon was not racist. The key was military effectiveness.

Q. With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Churchill once said, 'I do not agree that the dog in the manger has the final right to the manger even though he may have lain there for a long time...[of Palestine] I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a higher grade race... has come in and taken their place.'

A. Here one must consider the situation of Palestine in the late 1930s when he said this. For example, the Palestinian leader was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He was a Nazi sympathiser and a racist anti-Semite, who, during world war two would be given a personal tour of Auschwitz by Himmler, following which he would ask Hitler to help him deport Palestinian Jews there. You can decide for yourself where you think true racism was to be found at this time. Furthermore I think Churchill was mostly alluding to the growing modernisation of the Jewish areas of Palestine, where Jews had already built up democratic institutions, including a free press, free political parties of all shades, and free trade unions, had established a large number of Hebrew publishers, orchestras and cultural foundations, and had even begun

to make the desert bloom.. Churchill was simply recognising their achievement and saluting the growth of a new western type culture. As for the 'dog' imagery, this isn't a biological reference but the use a common English idiom; perhaps his socialist critics should try to improve their comprehension of the English language.

Q. Apparently Churchill was very friendly with Mussolini?

Certainly after the First World War this was the case. Both were trying to prevent the spread of Bolshevism. Indeed he probably saluted Mussolini's work in Italy in the early years as he confronted many of the political problems that had long been recognised as difficult to remedy there. Mussolini was extremely popular in the Western world until his invasion of Abyssinia and his support for Franco in Spain. Today, we rightly condemn all undemocratic regimes, but between the wars, faced as many thought they were by a choice between Mussolini and Bolshevism, Churchill chose Mussolini and would have considered him--rightly-- an infinitely milder ruler than either Lenin or Stalin; then, when Mussolini joined forces with Hitler, Churchill opposed him. According to respectable research, communism killed 100 million people during the twentieth century, fascism--mainly Hitler's--25 million. Churchill's contemporary instincts were correct. But today we are correct to condemn both fascism and communism--including the contemporary variety as witnessed for example, in the rape of Tibet by the Chinese communists, who are still opposed to granting democracy even to their own people.

Q. Lastly, since Churchill traditionally has not got a great deal of credit for being scholarly, is it entirely appropriate that he be tied to the LSE at all?

That's nonsense. Although he didn't go to university, he did win a Nobel Prize for Literature. He was a brilliant speaker and writer, whose record as a statesman will be studied as long as the LSE remains a scholarly institution. The man was one of the first lines of defence against the brutalities of Hitler and Stalin, one of the few strong enough to openly resist totalitarian dictatorship. Indeed, if you judge a great man by his enemies--Trotskyites included-- that is surely reason enough to respect, admire and salute Winston Churchill.

Musings

Learn to love the winners...

Matthew Sinclair

Germans love us again. They've decided to let the area bombing issue go; Arthur Harris has been let off. The Queen was welcomed with open arms and Union Jack flags. Apparently polls suggest they see Britain replacing them as the new leading country in Europe.

Such a belief is not without foundation. Current trends are a poor guide to the future in such matters, but if things continue as now Britain will have the largest economy in Europe (larger than a still more populous Germany) by around 2030. It has already moved from the also-ran of the seventies to the richest, per capita, large country in the EU.

Different countries approach success differently. Before the wars Germans loved us for the success of our imperial endeavour and tendency to start wars for the slightest of reasons (upset Gibraltarians). Now they like us... because we are rich. This suggests that the German dislike of America isn't likely to last so long as the Americans aren't led down the road to penury by Bushonomics. Germans dislike Luxembourgnians, of course, despite their wealth; that might be because of Luxembourg's fine work hiding the wealth of the rich Germans who's taxes are supposed to support a bloated welfare state.

By contrast the French hate winners, unless they're French. Watch them develop a deep dislike of the Chinese on, or around, the date that the French economy is rendered smaller than the Chinese. General policy has been to dismiss the new power as mercenary and soulless. "A nation of shopkeepers" for the British; Jose Bové for the Americans.

Americans are somewhat untested in the sour grapes department. Whether this changes within the next decade or not will depend on what happens when the Communists stops lending them money. If they find themselves humbled by a foreign power perhaps all this "celebration of success" will turn into a rather less ecstatic dislike of foreigners taking their jobs. John Kerry may have simply been a little early with his "Benedict Arnold CEOs" call to arms.

Britain's attitude to winners is generally to try and claim the credit. Americans are proud of their country's achievements; we put their success down to an "Anglo-Saxon legal culture". If the Indians ever make some money we'll be citing their heavy dependence on the fine work of the Indian Civil Service and the superior railways we built them.

In contrast with the French, however, we tend to dislike home grown success. GlaxoSmithKline becomes, arguably, the world's premiere pharmaceutical company and, no co-incidence, we gain a toxic animal rights movement. Richard Branson is "smug". Good universities are "elitist".

This is probably a worse fate than the exceptional French or the sycophantic Germans. It means we do silly things like fail to arrest Tony Benn.

Politics

Why fair trade coffee? Why not free trade coffee?

Cliff Chow argues that fair trade coffee is unfair to coffee growers and does more to line the pockets of middle men.



A large free-trade coffee, please." I often imagine myself ordering a cup of free-trade coffee at the Plaza Coffee Shop. I have not summoned the courage to do so, lest I be turned away as a heartless, capitalist pig. Considering that there are quite a few free-market proponents among us at the LSE, somebody here must have shared my whim. The "free-market fundamentalists" among us may even get upset over the fact that the Plaza Coffee Shop only sells fair-trade coffee. (Though not too upset because they could buy regular coffee at the Quad. The coffee wagon there, however, only sells fair-trade coffee).

Those who prefer free-trade coffee to fair-trade coffee pose this question: Is fair-trade coffee so good? Is it all sweetness and light? For starter, free-trade coffee is cheaper. David Zehner of the Columbia Business School puts Starbucks' "retail price premium," the price difference between fair-trade coffee and free-trade coffee, at approximately £0.82 per pound. £0.82 is actually not much, and it is certainly not a lot for a good cause. If £0.82

'It subsidizes-therefore encourages-coffee growers to continue growing coffee when they should in fact diversify their crops.'

makes life better for coffee growers in developing countries, I am more than happy to pay up.

I am reluctant to pay £0.82 more for

fair-trade coffee, however, if only 45% of that goes to the coffee growers, while 55% goes to coffee tycoons like Starbucks. The 45-55 apportion is what Zehner arrived at. While most of us assume that the premium that we pay for fair-trade coffee goes entirely to helping coffee growers, the truth is quite different. We are helping Jim Donald (president of Starbucks North America) more than the people whom we intended to help. I do not doubt that the 45% can make a tremendous difference to the coffee growers. But the point, as Zehner points out, is that a socially conscious LSE student would contribute more to a grower's income by donating £0.82 to coffee growers than by buying a pound of fair-trade coffee.

One might argue that fair-trade is good in the sense that the premium that we pay-of which only 45% goes to the coffee growers-might not have been donated anyway. Perhaps, but I do not think that we are too keen to donate regularly to Jim Donald. The apportion of the premium, as important and simple as it is, seldom comes to our mind. We do not bother to ask "how much goes to the coffee growers?" Why do we goof? Part of the reason is that fair-trade coffee is communicated in such a moralistic, politically-correct light that it stifles critical appraisal and debate. When you see the smiling lady on the fair-trade coffee poster at the Quad; when you hear how fair-trade "guarantees a better deal for third world coffee producers," you naturally and even instinctively sympathize with the fair-trade cause, or you dare not

raise objections. Kitsch advertisement and politically-correct clichés move us to embrace a cause all too readily.

They make us think not as critically as we normally would. The fact that Jim gets a bigger share of our premium than the coffee grower in Central America is important but not fair-trade coffee's biggest problem. It's biggest problem is that it subsidizes-therefore encourages-coffee growers to continue growing coffee when they should in fact diversify their crops. Similar to the experience of earlier banana republic economies, coffee growers suffer because they are held hostage by coffee's fluctuating price, to which the proper solution is crop diversification, not subsidization.

The fair-trade scheme, being essentially a price floor scheme (it guarantees coffee growers a minimum price above market price), only encourages coffee growers to overproduce coffee, but does not provide the right incentives for them to diversify crops and to respond to market reality. It cures only the symptoms but not the disease. The popularity of fair-trade coffee at the LSE shows that we are good people. We think of fair-trade coffee as a simple way to make a real difference. I do not doubt the goodwill of the LSE students, but I urge that we think critically about our daily cup of fair-trade coffee. I am afraid that fair-trade coffee is one of those misguided efforts in helping developing countries, and I am afraid that our sympathies are exploited.

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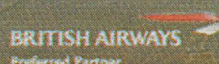
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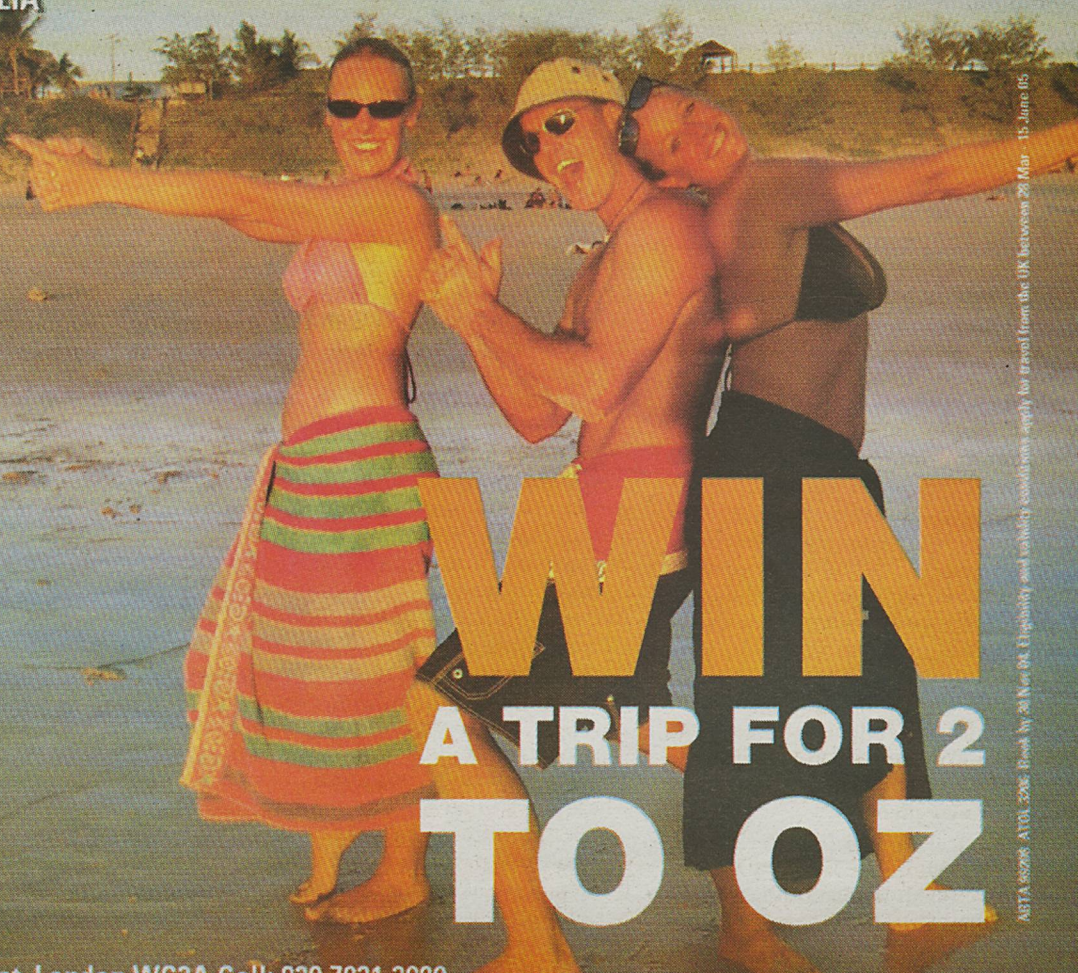
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Politics

Alexander George examines the similarities between George W. Bush and the pantheon of "great" presidents. He finds that the current president would fit in well with the legends of presidential history.

Bush now has a golden chance to join the greats



George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan. The pantheon of America's great presidents. Soon to be joined by George W. Bush?

You stop reading, shocked. How in my wildest dreams can I even remotely think about comparing Bush to the above figures. They are revered as giants of history. Bush, in spite of last week's re-election, is derided as a dumb, ignorant, gung-ho moron. Yes, there are differences between them. The words of Lincoln, FDR and Kennedy, in particular, are found among great speeches in history. Bush's words, by contrast, feature in the comic 'Bushisms' industry. Additionally, Bush has made several mistakes and pursued certain policies, particularly his social ones, which I disagree with. However, no, I am not currently drunk. I am serious here. I have seen enough in Bush's first term to think, with improvements in the next four years, he could also join these greats.

What is the highest common factor between great leaders? Strong leadership in turbulent times. America has had many good presidents - notably Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, even Bill Clinton - but they can't be considered truly great because their presidencies occurred in quieter waters. Washington, meanwhile, forged the new nation after he won the long and hard War of Independence. Lincoln won the Civil War. FDR fought the Depression and World War Two. Kennedy showed his steel in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Reagan won the Cold War. Now Bush is strongly and steadfastly fighting the War on Terror. September 11th was the defining moment in world history since the Cold War. It exposed the fact that Islamic Fundamentalism was not a minor nuisance, but a lethally potent threat to the free world. Bush realised this and reacted accordingly. Critics who accuse him of

'What is the highest common factor between great leaders? Strong leadership in turbulent times.'

gung-ho warmongering should remember his response to September 11th. Did he launch cruise missiles at different targets on September 12th? That was Clinton's response to terrorist threats under his presidency. No. He planned it strategically and coherently, declaring Al-Qaeda must be destroyed and the Taleban government ousted. He then assembled a coalition of the willing, before taking the war to Afghanistan. The war is only half complete. The Taleban are gone but Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda remain at large. This isn't a short war though. No one knows how long it will last. What voting intentions showed last week, however, was that Americans overwhelmingly support and trust the President on fighting terrorism. Like Lincoln and FDR, the incumbent war president has won re-election. An ultimate victory against Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda could place him on the same pedestal.

Another major thread connecting America's great presidents has been a fight for freedom. Washington fought for freedom of self-rule; Lincoln championed freeing slaves; FDR defended freedom against fascism, and Kennedy and Reagan did like-

wise against communism. Bush is leading a quest for freedom from terror and freedom of democratic rule. If successful democracies eventually flourish in Afghanistan and Iraq, his ideal will have been vindicated.

Unfortunately, Iraq is his Achilles heel. He now has the mandate to cure this. I had some doubts about the Iraq War, certain reasons for war have now been proved false and the post-war occupation has been a shambles. However, I have no doubts about Bush's desire to create a stable, democratic Iraq. After September 11th, he realised that terrorism thrives in repressive dictatorships. People want democracy. This is a bold and noble vision. If I had any advice on how Bush could reach out to the global community for greater assistance and win Arab hearts and minds, I'd say 'It's the style, stupid.' His rhetoric after September 11th was brilliant. His rhetoric in making the case against Iraq failed him. It sounded too aggressive and brash, and won America few friends. However, there is no reason why he cannot bring other nations back onside because the substance is basically Kennedy's 'pay any price, bear any burden, support any friend, oppose any foe' mantra. The free world loved JFK for that. Much of it now reviles Bush for the same thing. Yet, Kennedy's Alliance for Progress is no different to Bush's coalition of the willing. Plus when one follows the Iraq air strikes and sanctions policy of the internationally popular Clinton, its logical conclusion is that of Bush. His substance is morally right and convictive. Only the style must change. Replacing the unpopular and incompetent Donald Rumsfeld would be a good start. The success of the recent elections in Afghanistan gives hope still to Iraq. Critics may snipe at its imperfections, but a little democracy is better than totalitarian dictatorship. It evolves, like it did in Britain or America. Plus, I am confident that Bush will now invest heavily in the Middle East peace process. It was ham-

pered in his first term by the pressures of the Afghan and Iraq Wars, plus the need to placate the passionately pro-Israel religious right. He will now be freer to commit more time here. It may seem implausible now, but if Bush delivers stable democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan, ensures Israel's protection and safety, and establishes a viable, democratic Palestine, he could be loved in the Middle East just like FDR, Kennedy and Reagan were loved in parts of Europe.

Finally, there are many personal similarities between Bush and some of his illustrious predecessors. Bush had been a failed businessman before entering political life; Lincoln constantly suffered failures before assuming the presidency. Bush overcame alcoholism; FDR conquered crippling polio. Bush won the presidency narrowly and controversially four years ago; Kennedy won in similar circumstances in 1960, and would have easily been re-elected had he not died. And most striking of all is this next comparison. Bush is held in contempt by many today; Lincoln and Reagan were considered monstrous simpletons by many contemporaries. That view does not feature in either man's legacy today.

So can Bush join the greats? He has a golden opportunity. Should he worsen his mistakes, he runs the risk of notoriety like fellow Texan Lyndon Johnson. Should he remedy them and build on already strong accomplishments and his vision, he will be considered one of history's giants. Few will bet on this, but remember Bush is always 'misunderestimated.' Many never expected him to become president. Few felt he could cope with the challenges of a wartime presidency. Fewer still thought he would win re-election. His elevation to the first-class rank of presidents would be poetic justice to the doubters. If so, maybe we should erect a Mount Bushmore.

Hacktivist



Settling

Tracy Alloway

This is the price of optimism (in combination perhaps, with a bit of a gambling problem). In accordance with a bet made with Daniel Freedman, I will be devoting precious column space to congratulating Bush on his victory in the U.S. elections. Before I begin however, I should warn you all, that in order to do this, I have had to ingest approximately three pints of Stella and the remaining half of a bottle of six pound wine. Spelling errors, off-topic tangents, and minor bouts of incoherence should therefore be ignored....

Congratulations President George W. Bush Jr. on your recent success. You must be feeling quite pleased with your achievement (After all, your win was the narrowest victory for an incumbent president since Woodrow Wilson in 1916). Your campaign was more effective; your doctrine of "America is at war, it's not the time for a new president" successfully backed a large segment of the American electorate into a corner. You have proven, once and for all, that you are indeed better than your father.

Your second term however, will not be easy. Despite receiving a "mandate" from the American populace, according to CNN, Newsweek, and even FOX News polls, a majority of Americans still believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction. You will have to clean up your own mess in Iraq now. You will have to think up new justifications for chipping away at the civil rights of Americans. By your last year in office (seven years after 9/11) it will not be so easy to excuse your mistakes and embarrassments with the need to battle terrorism.

But, Mr. President, all is not as bad as it seems. This time around you won't need to defend yourself to the electorate. You won't even need the cooperation of the Democratic politicians, seeing as the Republicans have managed to extend their majority in the Senate and House of Representatives. There will probably be openings on the Supreme Court - a chance for you to fill them with the most conservative judges you can find. Yes, Mr. President, all of your wildest dreams could come true; war with Iran, the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, and the banning of gay-marriage are all within your reach now.

The world is trembling in anticipation of your next move, Mr. President, better make it one that shows off the "confidence" and "faith" (i.e. the "stubbornness" and "ignorance") of the America we all know and love.

That's all I have to say. This election, along with that cheap wine, have both left a bad taste in my mouth that I'm eager to forget. Consequently, I will, through the miracle of alcohol, be attempting to destroy the memory of November 2nd with a serious vodka offensive. Cheers.

Politics



A matter of principle

Kheng Lim argues that states based on an ethnic groups are less stable than those based on principles.

During a dinner party I once attended, the host asked an Israeli guest what he thought of the current crisis in the Middle East. The Israeli answered; "The problem is that these Arabs have too many babies. Once they overtake us Jews, Israel will lose its identity as a Jewish state. It's like those black people here having too many kids and swamping the white population. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

The entire table gasped in horror. There was a dull thud. A British Asian woman had passed out and fallen off her chair.

I've added this little anecdote to illustrate the idea of what I term the ethno-state, which according to my definition is a state that bases itself on exclusivity. For instance, in Japan, China and Korea, the whole idea of national identity is based on the concept of the Japanese, Chinese or Korean race. Although a black or a white individual can technically be a citizen of these states, he or she can never be a part of the Japanese, Chinese or Korean ethnic group. Likewise, the national identity of Israel is based on that of the Jewish 'tribe'. One can be a black Jew, a white Jew, an Indian Jew or a Chinese Jew, after all, the concept of Jewishness is not a racial one. However, one cannot be a Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Taoist or Buddhist and simultaneously be a member of the Jewish faith. It goes without saying that Arab citizens of Israel, who happen to be predominantly Muslim or Christian, are definitely not Jewish.

Since these states define themselves on such narrow grounds, it is hard for ethnic minorities to fully identify with the state they belong to. At the risk of angering the LSE's "We Love Israel" lobby, let me pick on the Zionist state to illustrate my point. Imagine that you are an Arab Christian who happens to hold an Israeli passport. You live and work in Israel, pay your taxes to the Israeli Government and vote in Israeli General elections. However, everyday you are reminded that you are living in a Jewish state. Your passport has a menorah emblazoned on its front. Your national anthem, although having a beautiful tune

waxes lyrical about the Jewish heart beating in the Jewish breast. Your national flag has a Star of David and a Jewish prayer shawl pattern. Your country's politicians go on and on and on like broken records about how Israel is the national home of the Jewish people. How do you reconcile this with your Arabness? If your state's national identity is based on something that is not you, how can you identify with it?

"Ah!" the Zionists cry. "But our Declaration of Independence offers [theoretically] equal rights to all non-Jews living in the state." That may be true but I find it hard to believe that one can 'buy' someone's loyalty with economic or political gifts. If one cannot identify with his state, that is it and no amount of money can reverse that.

The polar opposite of the ethno-state is the 'state of principles', namely a state whose national identity is a set of ideals. An excellent example of such a nation state would be the United States. In the United States, national identity is not based upon race or religion, despite George W. Bush's attempts to re-orientate America's national identity towards an evangelical Christian state. The United States defines itself with the idea of rugged individualism, entrepreneurship and a love of freedom and democracy. These ideals cross all racial and religious boundaries. One can be black, white, Asian or a native Americans and share these values. Likewise, one can be a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jew and hold these ideals true to his heart. As a result, no matter what his background, a holder of an American passport can always identify himself fully with his nation of citizenship.

Many of these 'states of principles' are new nations, for instance Canada which was created in 1867 defines itself by multiculturalism. Singapore (1963) defines itself as a small state with few national resources but which has succeeded on the international stage due to its human resources. Australia (1901) defines itself by a muscular egalitarianism and South Africa (1994) defines itself as 'the rainbow nation'. However, there are many 'ethno-

states' that have transformed themselves, in fact it was an 'ethno-state' namely France that started this trend. The French Revolution was a watershed in world history because for the first time, a state was defined as 'a nation of its citizens'. To be French, one has to hold true to the principles of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' and that is it.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is yet another nation that has made massive strides in transforming its concept of national identity. Whereas fifty years ago, most Britons would define their nation as an Anglo-Celtic, Christian nation, attitudes have undergone a remarkable shift. Although traces of this old mentality still prevail, the idea of the 'nation of principles' is becoming more and more dominant.

What then are British principles? One would be the idea that four nations namely the English, Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish, despite having their differences can pull together in a time of need. [Note: these are regional nationalities and not ethnic ones - one can be English and black, or Northern Irish and Chinese] A recent example would be the moment of silence for the murdered Briton Ken Bigley during the England vs. Wales football match that united the four nations of the British Isles. Of course, the most obvious example would be the two world wars. Another important British value is the principle enshrined in the Magna Carta that states that no man can be imprisoned without trial. In other words, the individual has the right to be protected from an over-bearing Government, which is something that David Blunkett should think about. A third possible value would be that of moderation and tolerance.

More and more states are moving in this direction and this cannot be anything but a good thing, for it is only through defining itself on principles that a state can offer what philosopher Michael Dummett calls 'first class citizenship' to all its inhabitants.

International

International Correspondents: Stefanie Khaw and Kristin Solberg

The Right Approach



Bush wins, U.S. healthcare loses

Dimitrios Rovithis maintains that by not electing John Kerry the U.S. missed out on some good ideas for healthcare reform.

Health care reform was a major issue during the United States presidential election campaign. The Democratic Party candidate Mr. Kerry advocated the creation of a government sponsored health program while Mr. Bush favoured less radical reforms.

Forty-five million Americans currently live their lives without the benefit of a health insurance safety net. The presidential candidates had voiced their opinions and they couldn't be in sharper contrast. Mr. Kerry promised to reduce the number of uninsured by 27 million, and Mr. Bush by about 2.4 million. The numerical difference speaks directly to a difference of philosophy. Mr. Kerry saw a big payoff in investing in people without health insurance whereas for Mr. Bush, the big payoff comes when tax dollars are not collected, but remain in the pockets of wage earners to be spent as the individual, not by the government.

Mr. Kerry's plan would have cost \$653 billion in its first 10 years, and if fully realized, would have insure ninety-five per cent of the U.S. public. It would have dramatically reduced the number of uninsured by having the federal government assume from the states all the costs of providing health care to children under Medicaid. In return, states would have increased the number of low-income families and adults who are eligible for assistance under the program. By contrast, Mr. Bush's health care proposals will cost \$90 billion during the same decade and provide health insurance to an additional 2.4 million Americans through the relatively reserved application of fiscal and market reforms aimed at making coverage more affordable.

Meanwhile a new survey conducted by 'The Commonwealth Fund' indicates that patients in several industrialized countries with national health care programs are more satisfied with their care than patients in the United States, where most people's health care is arranged privately.

'Americans are the most prone to say that their health care system needs to be reworked, with one in three calling for a total renovation.'

The survey of patients in five industrialized nations namely Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States asked a number of patients to discuss their perceptions of their health care system.

Its findings were indeed interesting; Americans are the most prone to say that their health care system needs to be reworked, with one in three calling for a total renovation. In sharp contrast, patients in the United Kingdom, are most satisfied, the least likely to call for rebuilding of their system and the most likely to say the system works more or less well. It's a finding that may be surprising to many Americans, who commonly think nationalized health care leads to long lines and reduced quality. The survey of patients' perceptions paints a different picture. Britons say they pay less to visit a doctor than their counterparts in the other survey countries, and they are often able to see a doctor the day they call for an appointment. In addition, Britons reported the fewest instances of inaccurate test results, and said they were quickly notified of any problems revealed by their tests.

Health policy experts, however, stress the fact that the results of this study are based only on patients' perceptions of care, not documented facts about each nation's

health care system. But they believe the study can help policy makers develop ways to deliver what people want from their health care systems.

Part of dissatisfaction with healthcare is due to its high cost. The survey finds that more than twenty-five percent of Americans who participated in the survey reported spending more than \$1,000 on medical bills in a year. On the other hand, the UK stands out as the most protected, with the majority of patients saying they had no out-of-pocket costs. In each country, some people report that cost prevented them from seeking out medical treatment. This is most severe in the United States, where the study finds forty percent of Americans sometimes decide to forgo treatment for financial reasons. To a lesser degree, cost is an issue in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Again, the survey finds British patients have the fewest complaints, with only one in ten saying fees keep them from visiting a doctor or taking the proper amount of prescription medication.

Cost is not the only barrier to medical care. Many Americans and Canadians say it is difficult to get a doctor's attention on nights, weekends and/or holidays. The United States and Canada also stand out on this as patients there are the most likely to say they went to the emergency room because they didn't have access in the community. It should also be pointed out that these are the same two countries least likely to have same day access to their doctors. Equally, the majority of New Zealanders and Australians say they were able to get an appointment right away the last time they were sick; forty-one percent of British patients say the same thing.

Mr. Bush's re-election simply means that another opportunity for a major restructuring of the problematic United States health care system (which is in need of instant solutions) has been lost, at least for the next four years. Pity.



We won

Daniel Freedman

It's been a good week. First, that great champion of individual freedom against the communists of the LSE Students' Union, Alykhan Velshi, along with myself, was victorious in the SU elections - without putting up one poster or handing out one flier - simply running on our well-known views. Next, U.S. President George W. Bush was re-elected. And to top it all off, the news came in that Arafat no longer rules the PA - so there's hope for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

As you might be aware, I made a bet with the fair lady in the column opposite on the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections. If President Bush was re-elected, her column would have to extol his virtues, and if John Kerry had won - vice-versa. Thankfully Kerry lost, otherwise filling this column would have been quite a struggle. I'm sure she'll keep her word, but as the American people don't trust the Democrats to do a good job, I'm not sure I should either, so I'll add some comment as well.

Despite the millions spent by Soros et al, the efforts of the New York Times and the (UK) Guardian, and the endorsements for Mr. Kerry from Bin Laden, Kofi Annan, Kim Jong Il and Jacques Chirac - President Bush was re-elected. With a victory in the popular vote of over 3.5 million, coupled with Republican gains in both houses of Congress, President Bush and the Republican Party now have a clear mandate from the American people.

These voters were reaffirming their belief in the ideology of the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan. For me, this ideology was perhaps best summed up at the Republican Party's convention by Arnold Schwarzenegger. The "governator" - in a speech I recommend you all read - asked rhetorically what makes someone a Republican. He answered: "if you believe that government should be accountable to the people, not the people to the government...if you believe a person should be treated as an individual, not as a member of an interest group...if you believe your family knows how to spend your money better than the government does...if you believe this country, not the United Nations, is the best hope for democracy...if you believe that we must be fierce and relentless and terminate terrorism...(if) you have faith in free enterprise, faith in the resourcefulness of the American people."

This is the president's, and his party's, mandate. It means more tax cuts - letting people decide how to spend their own money - and naturally cutting back government spending at the same time. It means more free-market measures in healthcare and education, such as introducing vouchers to schools - letting parents, not bureaucrats, choose where to educate their children. It means pushing for a reduction in subsidies and trade barriers. It means stopping activist-judges imposing their values on others. And it means ensuring this freedom is protected - by actively continuing the war on terror.

Here's to a great four years.

Right legal nation

Alykhan Velshi explains why Bush's Supreme Court nominees will embody the rule of law.

Of this much we can be certain: President Bush's re-election is a victory for the majesty of the law. In his second term, the President, with the Senate's approval of course, will appoint at least two judges to the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, a conservative who is battling cancer will be retiring very soon. He will likely be followed by Justice John Paul Stevens, an 84-year-old left-liberal. Bush may also replace Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, who is 74-years-old, neither liberal nor conservative, just erratic and unreliable; and Ruth Bader Ginsberg, a 71-year-old liberal, who has previously battled cancer.

The judicial philosophy shared by all potential Bush nominees is known as "strict constructionism", which is hostile to any attempt to impute meaning to the Constitution not foreseen by the founding fathers or plainly apparent to the "ordinary man." They will be particularly unreceptive to judicial activism, which is premised on the notion that the Constitution is ever-changing and flowing; strict-construction-

ists think the Constitution is as dry as Janet Reno's hymen, and, likewise, shouldn't be fooled around with.

From my perspective, the best candidates are those willing to uphold the Constitution, even when the decision itself proves controversial. Two judges come immediately to mind: Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III, best known for his hostility to racial preference programs and author of *One Nation Indivisible: How Ethnic Separatism Threatens America*, and Judge J. Michael Luttig, who hollowed the Violence Against Women Act because it violated the states' prerogative to legislate on gender-motivated crimes. Both are viscerally opposed by the left-liberal establishment, are staunch federalists and distinguished jurists in their own right.

Two hurdles the President must overcome are Senator Arlen Specter and a Democrat filibuster. Arlen Specter is a Republican in the same way that Hillary Clinton is a heterosexual: nominally. Senator Specter is poised to become the next Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he has pledged to fight

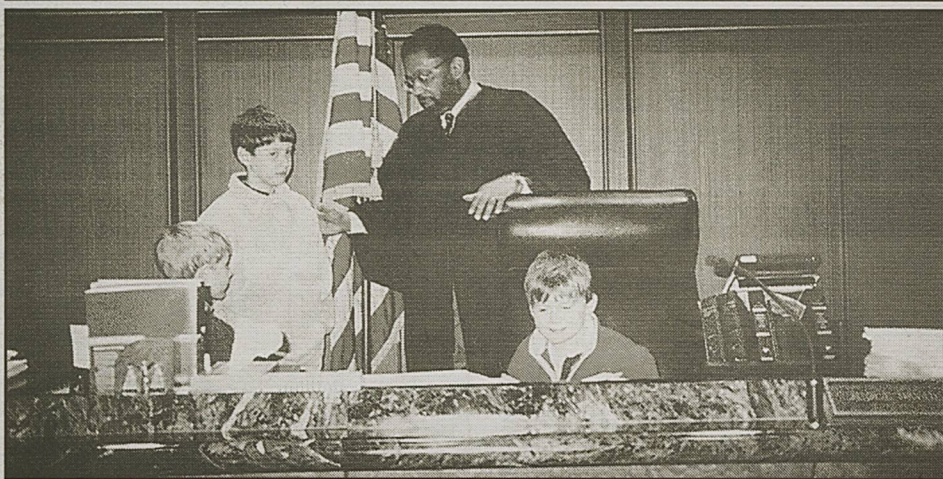
Bush's conservative nominees. Conservative Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, are maneuvering behind the scenes to deny him the Chairmanship, or at least neutralise his influence by increasing the Republican majority on the committee.

In Bush's first term, Democrats filibustered many of the President's lower court nominees. For this mischief-making, voters punished Senate Democrats representing traditionally Republican states, even defeating Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle. As a result, many Democrats will be weary of filibustering Bush's nominees.

Liberals in America, realising they lack the legislative capability and popular mandate to enact their political platform, have resorted to using activist judges to impose their ideology through the courts. Conservatives, understandably miffed, turned out in record numbers to put their man back in the White House and, it is hoped, stack the court in their favour: that's what happens when you fuck with conservatives.



The next Clarence Thomas?



Legal aid now known as the Community legal Service Fund is a system of Government funding which entitles a person [depending on their financial resources] to free legal representation. The Legal Services Commission administers the scheme, and is responsible for its two elements; the Community Legal Service, which provides access to legal information and facilitates funding for civil cases; and the Criminal Defence Service, which provides representation and advice for people facing criminal charges.

There are many organisations involved in providing free legal aid, both in the private and public sector, ranging from law firms many of whom specialise in legal aid, to Citizens Advice Bureaux and Law Centres. The Legal Services Commission has even set up its own website called Community Legal Service Direct to help deal with the public's legal problems. It provides free information, help and advice on a range of common legal issues.

Public funding is available for most areas of the law, with notable exceptions being personal injury claims, which instead are normally pursued under conditional fee arrangements, and cases arising from the carrying out of a business and defamation cases.

Up until recently law firms could do any type and any number of legal aid cases that it chose to do providing that the client concerned was eligible for legal aid. The Access to Justice Act 1999 has brought about some important changes to the legal aid system. Firms now need a contract with

the Legal Services Commission before they are allowed to do legal aid work. Such contracts are only awarded to firms who meet the Legal Services Commission quality criteria, and become a 'preferred supplier'. It is similar to a franchising scheme where the Legal Services Commission grants franchises in different areas of law to firms who meet its stringent standards for quality service provision. Even once this has been achieved they can only do work on an agreed number of cases, and are likely to be paid a fixed sum rather than the more lucrative hourly rate. Firms will have to move away from individual payments calculated at the end of each case, to standard fees that do not represent the cost of the exact number of hours spent on each particular case. It is hoped that this will reward most, the solicitors who deal with cases most efficiently.

So why all this change?

The simple answer is cost. The government for years has been trying to control the spiralling cost of the legal aid budget. So the easy solution has been to concentrate on what legal services the public needs rather than on what the law firms wish to provide. Running alongside this is the need for lawyers to accept that they cannot expect to receive the same amount of remuneration for work carried out in the public sector than they would for private sector work. It is also hoped that these changes will introduce greater levels of accountability to the quality of work undertaken.

Recent headlines have also brought a

Legal aid in need of...

Alexander Rosenthal examines problems with the new system of legal aid currently being implemented.

"The new legal aid system had created a post code lottery, with many areas turning into 'advice deserts' where it was difficult to find publicly funded solicitors."

firm up to £8.5m.

The Law Society has however warned that this new system threatens to cause an exodus of legal aid solicitors into better paid private work. Nearly a quarter of firms doing family-law legal aid work dropped out of the scheme between January 2000 and June 2003. The Law Society claims that this is increasingly marginalising people most in need of legal aid, who will find it even harder to find a firm willing to represent them. They point out the growing costs on the criminal legal aid budget where for example spending on asylum cases rose from £35m 1997-1998 to £174.2m in 2002-2003. These overspend on the criminal legal aid budget, which have to be uncapped, erode the budget for assistance in civil cases.

Further criticism of the new system has come from the Citizens Advice Bureau who at the beginning of the year published a survey, claiming that the new legal aid system had created a post code lottery, with many areas turning into 'advice deserts' where it was difficult to find publicly funded solicitors. Among its recommendations was that the civil legal aid budget should be ring-fenced to prevent the spiralling costs of criminal cases reducing the civil aid budget; and that the present means-testing approach should be reviewed, so as to help more people and not just the poorest.

So what are the alternatives? The Law Society has suggested a number of different options for curbing the cost of litigation, in order to reduce the legal budget, these include more stringent controls on barristers and expert witness fees and a shift to a more European style inquisitorial approach for certain types of cases, a move away from the present adversarial approach; and greater use of mediation and arbitration where possible.

Some fifty years after the legal aid scheme was introduced the government has launched its Fundamental Legal Aid Review, it is hoped to be a far reaching study which will look at the long term future of the system, a system which now costs £2 billion a year. This report should reach the Lord Chancellor's desk by the end of the year - so watch this space for even more changes.

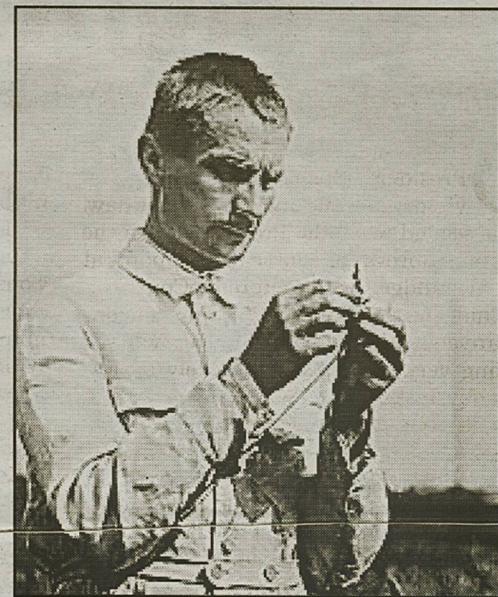
stark reminder of the possibilities of fraud in the old system. A ten year investigation by the Serious Fraud Office has revealed the biggest legal aid fraud in British history. A law firm in Cheltenham used the green legal aid forms [the documents used by solicitors to claim reimbursement from the Legal Aid Board] as a license to print money, up to 90% of the legal aid forms submitted were fraudulent., earning the

Politics



Leading Conservatives have spoken out against Bush

Centre-right and anti-Bush



Lysenko championed ideological science before the Republicans

Andrew Goldfinch describes how Conservatives in the UK have more in common with Democrats than the Republicans.

Pennsylvania goes to Kerry. Fanfares. Fireworks. A ten cannon salute. Triumphant cheers, wild applause. News just in: ABC calls Florida for Bush. Disbelief. Muttered and murmurs. Darkness. Sadness. Silence.

Oops the yanks did it again. Yes folks the chimp is back for another term. As one who has what could be described as centre-right tendencies, I am somewhat concerned at this election result, for reasons I will set out shortly. But I think our left-wing friends needn't to be too upset by The Return of the Chimp saga.

Consider if Kerry had won. In this country it is increasingly the norm to be vehemently anti-American. Indeed among the chattering classes one is not usually considered an intellectual unless one openly sneers at America. The cliché of "we hate Bush, not America" is merely a thin veil masking vulgar anti-American resentment. Let's not sugar coat this: left-wingers intensely hate America. We all know that. They will never forgive the US for the collapse of their beloved USSR. If Bush lost the election those who enjoy sneering at America would have been robbed of their spurious justification for doing so. And this would be disastrous to left-wingers, as anti-Americanism, disguised as anti-Bushism, is central to their identity, just as anti-Semitism is central to a Nazi's identity.

Lefties are obsessed, utterly obsessed, with Bush. Lefties hate capitalism, individuality etc, virtues key to America's unrivalled success. And so they are angry, so very angry, at the US, with hatred so deep as to make the Old Testament god look like a softie. To them Bush is America-made-flesh. The BBC and Channel 4, those great bastions of the liberal elite, devote hundreds of hours of documentaries year on year attacking America in programs that are supposed to be about Bush. Increasingly the call for European unity is defined by anti-Americanism. As one of my lecturers said recently, Europe must unite to "stop America". With Bush gone a very empty hole would soon develop within our left-wing friends. The left-wingers need Bush. They live and breathe him. Bush is their great adversary, their great satan, an enemy who gives meaning to their dull, little lives. Bush and those ghastly Bolsheviks who hand out those silly pamphlets and occupy stalls on Houghton Street are one, two sides of the same coin.

The free market, minimum state interference, emphasis in the individual, cre-

ativity, and innovation, but with a genuine concern for society as a whole. These are the noble qualities that have made America great. These are qualities that lefties intensely hate, but qualities I, and the majority of people, deeply admire. But it is all too often assumed that if one holds these virtues then one should logically favour Bush over Kerry. But for me centre-right values drive me in favour of Kerry.

Many on this side of the pond crudely assume that the Republican Party is the American equivalent of the Conservative Party, and the Democrats the equivalent of our Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.

But the Democrats in the US are not the wacky socialists bent on destroying the middle-classes we unfortunately still find rampant in the Labour and Lib Dem parties. Instead, the Democrats are closer to the "one nation" faction of the Tory Party and are very pro-middle-class.

With regards to today's Republican Party, there really is no UK equivalent. I suppose one could say they stand midway between the "new right" Tories and the BNP. The Republican Party under Bush is significantly different from the Republican Party of the Regan years. The Neocons have now taken control of the Republican Party, and are backed up all the way by their evangelical Protestants allies. Whereas Reagan always had the good sense to only pay lip service to the nutty Religious Right in the US, Bush really is one of them.

The mistake of thinking Democrats = Labour, Republicans = Conservatives derives from assuming that the left-wing versus right-wing dualism in American politics is the same as the left-wing versus right-wing dualism in European politics. There is no socialism in the USA. It has never been part of their collective psyche. There is simply no dualism of socialism versus free market principles, left versus right as we understand those terms, in America. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are socialist. Instead, the political dualism of left versus right in the USA is increasingly identified as being between secularism and the Religious Right, with the Democrats representing the former, and Republicans the latter. Key issues include abortion and homosexual marriage, things that simply aren't political issues in this country. America is a country with two rival cultures, between New England and the Western seaboard versus the Bible belt and mid-West states. These two cultures, the advanced secular

versus the backward religious, are battling for dominance. And it appears that the latter is winning.

One can trace this neurosis back to the early days of America. The Founding Fathers of the USA were Britons who aspired to revive in America Anglo-Saxon democratic and legal traditions that they believed were being corrupted back in Britain by good old King George III and co. But a large amount of early immigration to America was by religious fundamentalists who were, quite frankly, kicked out of Europe for being so odd. The different outlooks generated by these two cultures, between the north and south, directly led to the schism that erupted into the American civil war. With the advent of Darwin, traditional religious belief in Europe gradually declined, and what remained was of a liberal variety. But in southern states of the US the opposite occurred. American Protestantism became even more extreme. It became fundamentalist and invented all sorts of wacky ideas such as creationism to survive. These people, who now number well over seventy million in America, are the main supporters of the Republican Party.

In essence the Republican Party is now the political wing of the southern Baptist churches. Republicans openly talk in stark (and, needless to say, primitive) terms of absolute "good versus evil", "evil doers", and "crusades". The world is black and white, and America is right. "You're either with us or against us" thus saith the Bush, echoing the Gospel of Matthew's "He that is not with me is against me".

Unsurprisingly the Republican Party is becoming incurably anti-scientific (against stem cell research, denies global warming etc) and is beginning to become a real threat to scientific progress by preventing federal funds from being allocated to cutting edge research. As one American, a supporter of Bush, recently told me when I mentioned this to him, "All research is pagan and atheist. We were created by God and God is our saviour! That's all you need to know!" The Republican Party, in short, is becoming the new Lysenkoism.

One cannot fully understand Republican foreign policy without understanding the evangelical world-view. The Republicans give almost unconditional support to Israel regardless of her actions. Evangelicals believe that Israel's existence is vital to their "end times" (where, apparently, Jesus returns to start Armageddon - or worldwide genocide of unbelievers - o

happy days indeed). In other words a fairytale is the reason for their fanatical support for Israel. Just think about it. Much of the Islamic world hates the West because so many Americans fanatically and blindly support Israel (even giving her war planes) no matter what she does, and those Americans who do so because of a delusional fairytale!

The Neocons who drive the Republican Party believe that it is America's destiny to fight an epic battle against "evil". Originally they saw this evil as Communism, but now they view it as radical Islam. Because of this you can bet a good fiver that America under Bush will invade another Islamic country, probably Iran, within the next two to four years. The Neocons are driven by an unconscious maxim to 'attack or be attacked'. Permanent war - the so-called "war on terror" - is the Neocon and Religious Right's answer to the Marxists' 'permanent revolution'.

How, then, can any centre-right European support such a party or candidate of such a party? I, for one, simply cannot. Some say that we should support Bush and his Neocon chums because they can best deal with the threat from radical Islam. But the Neocons etc were the ones who caused radical Islamics to attack the West in the first place. How can the cause of a problem be the solution to the problem? All the Neocons and their allies are doing is causing Islamic terrorism to increase.

George Soros, that most distinguished of LSE graduates, is hardly a woolly socialist and yet he has been one of Bush's most fiercest opponents. The left-wingers cannot provide a credible critique of Bush. Only the sane, rational centre-right of Europe can.

Bush now has control of the Congress. And, with the prospect of him appointing another judge to the Supreme Court, these are indeed dangerous times for America. I don't want to see the USA transformed from an open society to a Protestant theocracy. We who are of the centre and centre-right must not, in ignorance, think of the Republicans as Tories with Texan accents, but as a movement alien to our way of thinking, a movement that has caused the mess that we're now in in Iraq, and a movement that is causing millions of young Muslims around the world to hate us in the West.

Politics



Tomlinson's reforms

Zuhra Bahman supports Tomlinson's ideas for reforming British secondary education.

When I started my A Levels, I wanted to study politics, law, sociology, psychology, mathematics, physics and economics; I even fancied some hair dressing and plumbing on the side! But under the current educational system in the UK I could only fit five subjects in the first year and in second year I had to narrow my choice down to four. I felt I did not have a lot of choice. When time for applying to universities came I realised that it was extremely hard for me to give a full picture of my skills and knowledge to the university of my choice as I did not have any proof such as certificates to prove that I knew what I knew. To me, any change in the UK education was welcoming. Therefore, when the Tomlinson Report on education was published this October I got hold of a copy to see for myself if any positive change was being proposed. Following is what I understand of the report and its potential impact.

Tomlinson is the former head of the Office for Standard in Education (Ofsted), he was commissioned to investigate the current post 14 education system in the UK and make recommendations for change. He was also responsible for investigating and making recommendation when thousands of A Level students had problems with their exam results in 2002.

Tomlinson's report identified a range of problems in the current education system that consists of GCSE's, AS and A levels. In his report he refers to problems such as the high number of drop outs aged 16, lack of interest in education by young people, too much pressure through external exams, too little pressure on the brightest student (in other words some bright stu-

dents are not stimulated enough and find the system too easy and restrictive,) and the complaints from employers about low standards of vocational qualifications and lack of basic numeracy and literacy skills. He proposes to scrape the current system and gradually introduce a diploma system.

The new diploma will have four levels. Entry level will replace pre-GCSE level in current system, foundation level will be equivalent of GCSE grade D to G, intermediate level will be equal to GCSE's level C to D and finally the advanced level will be equivalent of A levels. Students will be able to move forward in this system at their own pace. They will be able to take either pre-set modules or study a number of modules of their own choices which will be called "open diplomas". Although the diploma system will provide a lot of choice, it has some compulsory components that students need to pass, which are mathematics, information-communication technology, and communication skills. The students can progress through the system at their own pace, paving the way for age mixed classes in the future.

The number of external exams has been reduced. In lower levels of the diploma students have to complete a number of internal assessment including an extended project. The range of grades available is also increased. In the diploma system, brighter students can work hard and get grades such as A+ and A++. On completion of the diploma the student will have a "transcript of achievement", that will include the students grades in compulsory core subjects, other grades, information about other activities such as voluntary and paid work, other responsibilities such as being a young carer.

There has been, over all, a positive response towards the Tomlinson Report. The Labour government have hinted that they will include the recommendations of the report in their manifesto, of course after making their own alterations to it. There is some confusion as to whether Mr. Blair actually wants to keep A Levels while adopting the proposals of Tomlinson's Report.

Schools and teachers have welcomed the proposed changes as they believe that the current system does not offer much choice to the students, puts too much extra pressure on the teaching staff and is not inclusive towards different abilities. Universities have also shown some support to the report. One university admissions officer I spoke with said "at the moment we offer university places based on the student's predicted grades, this creates chaos every year as students fail to achieve their predicted grades. Diplomas will give universities opportunity to offer places to students based on their real grades."

Employers have also welcomed the proposed changes as they have been complaining about the low level of basic skills in employees and the bad reputation of vocational skills. The new system, they believe, will ensure that every young person has the same level of basic skills in numeracy and literacy.

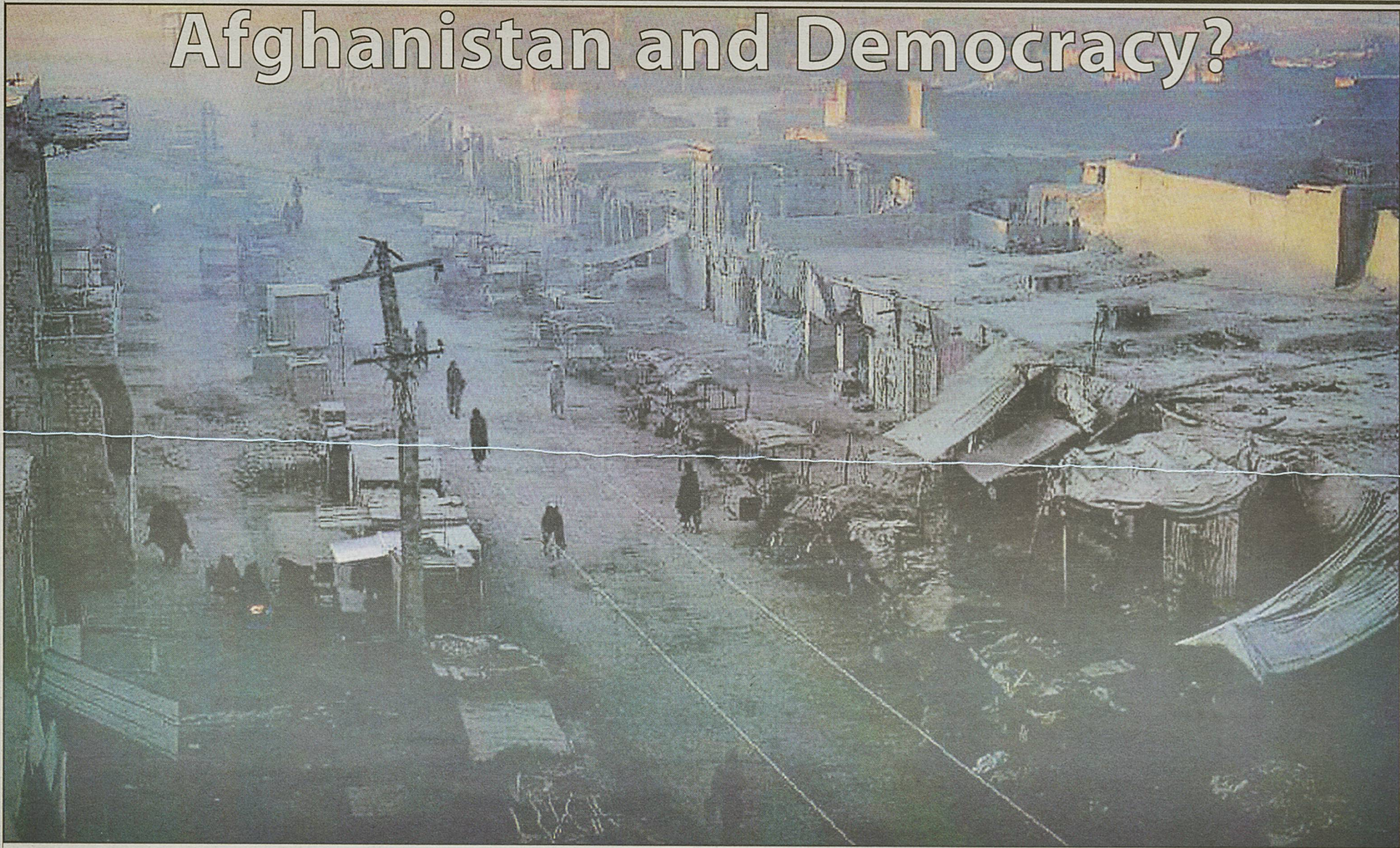
The way the system proposes to document the achievements of young people has been praised by a range of bodies. The final "transcript of achievement" that the young person will receive at the end of their diploma will not only have information about the academic achievement of the young person but will also have infor-

mation about their other skills that they gain through other activities outside of education system. British Red Cross, that has a large body of young volunteers welcome the proposed changes. Andrew Lloyd of British Red Cross's Education department said "British Red Cross is committed to promoting and providing volunteering opportunities to young people. We also recognise the unique contributions that young people make as volunteers and we are aware that young people gain skills while volunteering for us and else where. Greater recognition of young people as volunteers and their contribution to the community is always welcomed by the British Red Cross." Other organisations such as Community Voluntary Services, the Duke of Edinburgh and Millennium Volunteers will have a greater role in the proposed new system.

The diploma has been compared to several other education systems such as the International Baccalaureate, the European Baccalaureate and the American SAT's. The proposed diploma however is thought to be different from these other systems as it gives the student the opportunity to use skills gained outside the conventional education system and it gives broader choice.

I, as a student consider Tomlinson's suggestion a positive step. It will give students more choice, better and consistent quality of key skills, less bureaucracy and an appropriate amount of pressure. There is a long way to go for this report to become part of the education system. It needs to be adapted by a government, passed through the parliament and become a law before it reaches the students and this may take more than ten years.

Afghanistan and Democracy?



Mina Bahadur sees Afghanistan's democracy as illusory and ill-suited to such a devastated country.

Even before George W. Bush's four more years in office had been announced, on the afternoon of 2nd November Tony Blair in PM Question Time addressing the Commons wanted to "...congratulate President [short pause] Karzai..." to which there was a burst of laughter. Afghanistan's election results were due to be published strategically before the American elections however delays occurred because of "complications", namely the incident with the faulty ink on Election Day. This "mishap" resulted in a number of the candidates in the election to boycott and is just one example of why Afghanistan is not ready for the democracy that the West is imposing on them.

Nevertheless, 9th October 2004 marked the first step of a country devastated by war for almost a quarter of a century towards democracy with the first ever direct presidential election in the country's history. Approximately 22,000 polling stations were operational in all districts of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and over 8 million votes were cast.

Unsurprisingly Hamid Karzai, the interim President imposed by foreign powers since the Bonn Agreement, received the majority of votes in 21 of the 34 provinces. Karzai received 55.4% of the total vote which provides him with the mandate to govern the country for the next five years. Yunus Qanooni, backed by Karzai's former Defence Minister (Mohammed Fahim) and former Foreign Minister (Abdullah Abdullah), came in second place with 16.3% of the total vote. His support was mostly from the north-east; a part of the country consisting mainly of ethnic Tajiks; the second largest ethnic group in the country after the Pashtun. While Karzai's support was largely from the latter group, his running

mates were chosen specifically for their appeal to a wider range of ethnic loyalties. Karzai shunned Fahim, his former first vice president for the younger brother of the "Lion of Panjshir" (Ahmad Shah Massoud) - Ahmad Zia Massoud - an ethnic Tajik and Karim Khalili, an ethnic Hazara leader as his choice for second vice-President. This potentially dangerous decision was intended to go some way in healing the deep ethnic divides visible throughout the country. This approach, as well as Karzai's attempt to abandon the image of a cabinet crawling with warlords, has obviously been successful in his election bid. The people did not vote for Karzai because of his platform or because of his particular political ideology but he has dual ethnicity which is, in essence, what has gained him the victory, since more or less all Afghan leaders for the past century have been ethnic Pashtuns. He was standing as an Independent and such terms as centre-left or centre-right or liberal or conservative cannot be used to accurately describe any of the candidates standing in the election because the Afghan populace, as a whole, has little notion of these concepts. This is yet another reason why Afghanistan is not ready for this type of Westernized democratisation. Afghanistan's political situation at this very moment could be described as a sort of primitive democracy. The largely illiterate population are not ready for any type of democracy since the young of a country ravaged by war for almost 25 years inevitably know very little other than war, killing and to put it bluntly barbarism. If we look at the situation using Marxist terminology where society and its economy goes through stages, beginning with barbarism, developing to feudalism and then to capitalism and eventually to socialism, Afghanistan

"The largely illiterate population are not ready for any type of democracy since the young of a country ravaged by war for almost 25 years inevitably know very little other than war."

is in the period of feudalism at the moment with "former" warlords (who still have not been disarmed or brought to answer for the innumerable charges of violation of human rights, among others against them) still wielding significant power, indeed, a number of whom were in Karzai's initial cabinet. Since Karzai has exempted these powerful warlords in his new cabinet, safety fears about the President, who has had numerous attempts on his life over the past three years, have grown significantly.

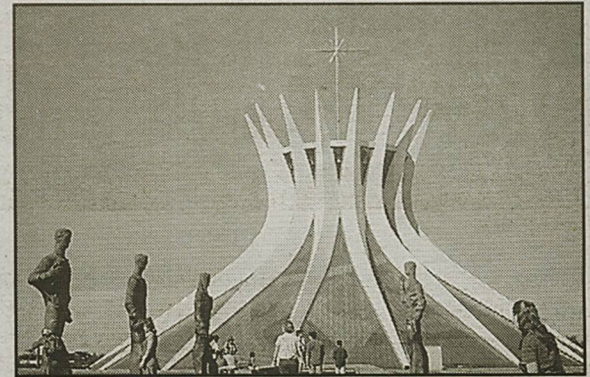
Despite drives towards freeing these oppressed peoples, one of which was to empower women with the right to vote (most of whom voted for the only female candidate - Massouda Jalal who came in sixth place - largely for the fact that she was a woman), Afghanistan remains an underdeveloped country in need of years of rebuilding, restructuring and re-educating the people before any real progress can be made.

Take this in no way that I endorse the actions of the Taliban in Afghanistan (or anywhere else) but since the end of the Taliban regime, the rise in child abductions has risen in Afghanistan significantly. According to unidentified sources, children are being abducted and vital organs being removed which are then sold over the border to Pakistan. All this because the people have no fear of being held accountable for their actions. For such a populace the only thing appropriate is a type of authoritarianism, where they are told what to do from above but only for a specific period of time. Gradually, as they become more educated, they should be given more and more freedom which will eventually lead to a type of democracy which will indeed be warranted. As one might guess, this task will take decades to accomplish.

Focus on: Brazil



Joao Gilberto - pioneering Bossa Nova musician



A scene from Brasilia - purpose built city.

Camila De Assuncao Appel is a Brazilian. She educates Alex Moore, who knows very little about Brazil. Stefanie Khaw and Kristin Solberg supervise the process for blink.

The Starting Point

Our two subjects share some of their initial knowledge of Brazil

Sao Paulo is the 3rd biggest city in the world. The UN predicts that it will be the 2nd biggest city next year when its population hits 19 million.

Brazil received more than 4.5 million immigrants from 1882-1934.

We run our cars on alcohol. We pride ourselves in our various energy sources: natural gas, solar energy and alcohol.

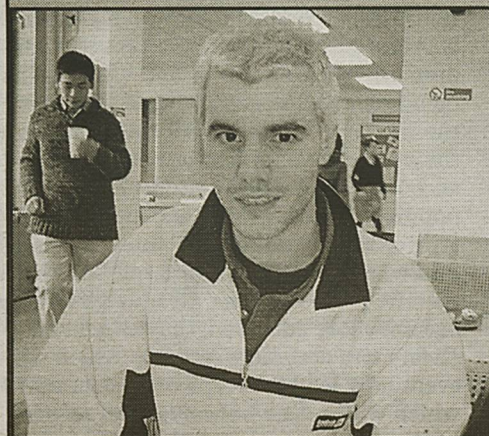
The island of Fernando de Noronha hosted the biggest surfing contest in the world.

We are the biggest consumers of beer.

Rio de Janeiro is a huge gay centre. A gay parade in Sao Paulo saw 100 000 people taking part.

If you don't vote, you'll get fined. Voting in Brazil is compulsory.

I've heard about millions of Japanese trying to sing in Portuguese. Bossa Nova songs are really popular in Japan.



Camila's Brazilian Facts



Alex's Brazilian "Facts"

Brazil's football team are champions. They have a lot of football players in Brazil.

Nice looking women, football, beach parties and the big statue of Jesus in Rio de Janeiro come to mind when I hear the word Brazil.

An Education

Where is Brazil and what are its neighbouring countries?

Alex: It's in South America. Peru is a neighbour. Is Chilli around there?

Camila: Brazil is neighbours with all the countries in South America (whips out map and gives us a geography lesson), except Chilli and Ecuador.

What's its form of governance?

Alex: Democracy?

Camila: Yes. We have a president, a legislative system (congress and parliament), and a judiciary system (the courts).

It's like a mini USA?

Camila: Yes. There are twenty seven states divided into five different regions. Our president is left-wing but he is not a communist. His presidency is really symbolic because he comes from a lower income background. Our former president, Fernando Cardoso was also a very credible sociologist. In fact, he'll be coming to the LSE on the 15th of November to chair an event.

What are Brazil's main exports?

Alex: Coffee, agricultural products, football.

Camila: Yes, we do export football. We also export coffee, soya beans, orange juice, corn, pork and beef.

Imports?

Alex: Machinery and military weapons.

Camila: We don't import too many of those. Apart from electronic goods, we import a lot of goods for industrialisation purposes such as pesticides.

What about Brazil's history of war?

Alex: No idea, to be honest.

Camila: Brazil waged local wars with Paraguay. We were affected by the two major wars of the last century but not as much as Europe and America. The wars caused immigration on a large scale.

Alex: Do you get a lot of Japanese people?

Camila: Yes. The immigration process resulted in there being many Japanese, Germans, Portuguese, Libyans, Syrians, Italians and Koreans.

What's the capital of Brazil?

Alex: Rio de Janeiro. Is that in Brazil?

Camila: It used to be Rio de Janeiro. Now its Brasilia. It's the only 'planned' city in Brazil. It's a well planned city and it was developed to become the political centre of

Brazil.

How many people live in Brazil?

Alex: 200 million?

Camila: Almost correct. There are about 182 million people.

What is its main religion?

Alex: Christianity.

Camila: Yes. Because we were colonized by the Portuguese, 75% of Brazilians are Catholic. The 2nd biggest religious group are the Evangelicals which are growing in number.

What can you tell us about Brazilian culture?

Alex: Beach parties, football and samba music come to mind.

Camila: Yes, we do have a lot of beach parties. We have three very diverse cultures. We've got influences from the Europeans, we have the Indians who were the original settlers in Brazil as well as the Africans who were brought in due to the slave trade. Capoeira comes from Brazil. Bossa Nova music comes from Brazil.

Are there any famous people from Brazil?

Alex: Ronaldo.

Camila: Pele, Gisele Bundchen. There's Paolo Coelho who's a famous writer and Ayrton Senna who was a Formula One Driver.

Have any celebrities visited Brazil?

Alex: Margaret Thatcher.

Camila: There are many actors and singers who have visited Brazil. The Rolling Stones came before. We always hear people mention, '...so and so is coming to Brazil'.

What are Brazil's main sports?

Alex: Football and beach volleyball.

Camila: That's true. Along with indoor volleyball, gymnastics, boxing and Formula One racing.

Is Brazil a rich country?

Alex: Not really.

Camila: It is a rich but unequal country. It's part of what people used to call the Third World. We are naturally rich in terms of agriculture. Our GNP is very high. The average per capita income is £1370 but the minimum wage is only about £45 a month. Most of the country's wealth is held by the upper 1% of the population. Our biggest challenge is bridging the income gap.

Features



The panel in all their glory.

Pulling their punches

Arti Kumria went to the "debate" on America after election. It didn't impress.

It could have been a showdown of epic proportions. In the red corner, former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and in the blue, Jef McAllister, London Bureau Chief of Time magazine. And just to get things off to a bloody start, LSE's fighting fit Professor Michael Cox up against the 'smooth operator', the New Statesman's Political Editor John Kampfner.

Some of the biggest guns of London's political commentating scene battling it out for supremacy on the question of America and the World - after the election. Now that would've been something.

But the reality of last Thursday's public debate was quite different. Organised by LSE and the Fabian Society, a left-wing think tank, the event was everything you'd expect - four intelligent, articulate speakers commenting on the Bush victory and the future of the global power paradigm

post-Election 2004. While 'everything you'd expect' was obviously its great appeal, this may have been its greatest failure.

Because we wanted more. Such high calibre speakers should've been challenged, put to the test and compelled to actually debate the issue at hand. As it was, those on the panel pretty much agreed on the policies that the second term Bush Administration would forge ahead with. It's difficult to debate when there's no one on the opposing team.

McAllister suggested the world would be left with much of the same or that Bush would become a "moderate" over the next four years. Perhaps, he mused, Bush might feel like his work is done and become a "compassionate conservative". Hmm, unlikely, both he and we concluded.

Up next was Cook, empathising with our obvious despair and offering commis-

erations all round. He gave a damning assessment of the power struggles within the Administration itself, and a harsh run-down of the numerous stuff-ups of the last four years. The occupation? "A disaster". The military? "Heavy-handed". The Middle East? "No opportunity". The answer? "Europe".

Cox followed with the "miserablist" approach he admitted others accuse him of. Summing up the US view of the world, he put it thus: "We are Rome". This, he suggested, was the "real America". An America alone; an America different. He, too, offered an enticing solution. "We must do things ourselves," Cox urged. "We cannot be simply waiting for Godot."

The last of the Mohicans was Kampfner. Focusing on the "unmitigated disaster" the Bush victory could be for Blair, he argued this was the British PM's own fault. It was his policy towards the US

that was, Kampfner said, "Blair's great tragedy". Both Blair and the "other tragic figure" in the whole affair, Colin Powell, could've and should've done more to reign in the neoconservatives.

Great stuff. But while questions were taken and answered, the audience was left wondering: Is it a really a fight if we're all on the same side?

I mean, let's face it, most of us watching were LSE students. We're also either lefties (like the speakers) or pseudo-leftie rich kids trading on the name. What we didn't want to hear was what we wanted to hear.

We wanted a battle, a showdown and for the righteous, us, to prevail. We needed a couple of right-wingers, US lovers or Bush supporters at whom to hurl our anger. It would've made us feel better. But more importantly, with McAllister, Cook, Cox and Kampfner on our side, at least in one contest we knew we would've won.

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International

International Correspondents: Kristin Solberg and Stefanie Khaw



Wasted Years

Sarbo Saha would like to see India move forward with a rational economic agenda rather than attempting to justify old mistakes.

Someone pinch me- it's not even December, and yet this year has been a roller coaster ride through the chaos of global politics. In particular, this year has seen something utterly extraordinary occur in India: the former BJP government now holds the dubious distinction of being thrown out of office amid extraordinary economic growth and improving relations with the rest of the world, especially Pakistan.

The Indian election result in May was truly amazing- yet in retrospect, perhaps inevitable. The resounding verdict was clear to all: India has not done enough to help its huge and growing population as a whole. After almost 6 months, it is time for us to look back, quietly and carefully reflecting on all that India did right- and wrong.

India has much to be proud of. The middle classes have expanded greatly to almost 300 million people- almost 30% of our population. The economy has grown at an excellent 6% annualised rate since liberalisation began in 1990. We tested our first thermonuclear weapons in 1998; despite the international condemnation that followed, it showed that India could not and cannot be regarded as a minor world player. Unlike other nuclear powers, we have not hypocritically signed the NTBT and NPT while wielding nuclear arms. India is currently self-sufficient in non-petroleum commodities. We boast some of the finest engineering universities anywhere in the world with the seven Indian Institutes of Technology. Indeed, Silicon Valley's miraculous growth during the 1990s owed much to the contributions of brilliant Indians like Vinod Khosla. Despite the best efforts of the BJP-led coalition, India maintains a strong secular tradition in government. We have gone from being a debtor to the IMF to one of its largest contributors in the space of a decade. We are self-sufficient in grain production, after having endured years of humiliation and starvation in the early 1950s. There is promise in India; not for nothing did the BJP issue the "India Shining" press campaign.

Yet our pride in our achievements

must not hide our great failures. We are currently a good ten, perhaps twenty years behind because of our Central Planning Model of the last century. We started out after independence in 1947 full of such hope and optimism. We fervently believed that the market was not efficient and that the state knew precisely what was best for the people.

How wrong we were! In his excellent book, *India Unbound*, author Gurcharan Das points out exactly where we went astray. We were so sure of ourselves; the "accepted" view at the time was that state intervention was the way forward. But we failed to realise the now "obvious fact" that no matter how much money the state injects into the economy, if the people do not have the incentive to improve their own lives, they will surely have no incentive to work harder and therefore work towards completing government goals.

At first we were enthusiastic. We taxed businesses out of existence. We built roads, schools, hospitals, railroads, steel mills- ironically, these shrines of the devotees of the socialist god are also the foundations for our growth today. Over time, however, the canker of corruption, so common to all socialist systems, began to set in. Our bureaucracy began to balloon beyond all reason. To illustrate the lunacy of our tax system, note the example of JRD Tata, one of the builders of the Tata business colossus: not only did he have to pay 97% wealth tax on his businesses, but he also had to pay state taxes on top of that! Every year he would have to sell off some of his assets just to pay government taxes, because he was taxed at over 100% of his income! We did not see this as madness, and today we are paying the price for it. We had our chance with Indira Gandhi's government before 1975. We should have thrown off the shackles of a corrupt, inefficient system; but again we failed. It was not until the 1990s that we finally got the message.

Back then, PV Narasimha Rao's government saw the need for urgent reform- and carried it out. Of particular note was a slight, soft-spoken and gentlemanly Sikh economist named Manmohan

Singh, our finance minister at the time. Back in his student days at Cambridge, he wrote a low-key article criticising, ever so quietly, the socialist model of growth and output. It was ignored. During the early 90s, though, he had a chance to put ideas into practice. He slashed our budget deficit from an unsustainable 8.5% of GDP. He greatly simplified our tax code, encouraged business investment and liberalised an outdated and inefficient public sector. Yet even these reforms did not go far enough.

This year, India faces the consequences of 20 wasted years. We had so much time to see our mistakes, yet we could not. Hindsight is, it is true, always 20/20; but even now, we may not be doing enough to prevent another few years from slipping by without notice. Our list of problems is enormous. We have a growing population, without any effective population-control measures- and nor would they work, for that matter. Indira Gandhi tried in the 1970s and all it did was to help throw her out of office after the Emergency of 1975. 80% of the country is still involved in agriculture, not IT- indeed this is one of the reasons the BJP lost May's election. Although the foreign media tends to greatly exaggerate the problems caused by Hindu nationalism in India, the fact is that it exists and is a deadly political force. The vast majority of the people have no reason to believe that India is in fact "shining".

However, corruption is by far our biggest problem. Calling India's bureaucracy "Byzantine" is like calling a hurricane "a spot of bad weather". Consider this: in Singapore one can set up a new business within a year. The government is transparent and efficient in its handling of the required documentation. In India, one would be lucky to set up a new business in 7 years, and never mind the bribes required! Corruption runs rampant in a system where oversight is difficult and transparency is impossible. A report released by the Public Affairs Centre late last month indicates that up to one in four Indian MPs face criminal charges ranging from "murder to extortion to rape". Indeed, the Chief Minister of Bihar was indicted years ago in a major cattle-fodder scandal;

yet he remains one of the most powerful men in India, 7 years later.

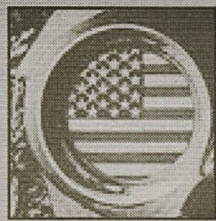
Despite our great strides in IT and textiles, we have a long, long way to go. Whereas China raced ahead of India during the 1980s, because it embraced market reform, India languished in a prison of its own making. We have our chance now to put our wasted years behind us. As long as our politicians rail against market reform in order to reap the short-term political gain of the popular vote, nothing will happen. Our inefficient systems will continue to creak along, supported by the government, until they either fall apart by themselves or are bailed out. Let the profitable monopolies remain, by all means, but we must be prepared to take the short-term pain of disbanding or privatising our unprofitable ones in return for long-term gains in efficiency and profit.

With autocratic governments in both Pakistan and China, India has proven that a federal democracy in South Asia can move itself and its people forward. The problem is that we aren't moving fast enough. We need to attract more foreign direct investment, more money for commercial infrastructure, more exports, and a more business-friendly environment. We must try to ensure that rural areas experience growth and progress. We cannot afford any longer to leave the base of our population behind.

India has its chance, right now. We can either dwell upon our 20 wasted years, searching for justification for the madness which once gripped us. Or we can realise that we truly have an extraordinary chance within our reach, and use it. India's economic, military and political position has never been stronger. We really do have the chance to transform ourselves and our society. It's going to take a lot of work and an incredible amount of political will. Most importantly, it will take time. If we do not want our children to look back and ask what we did with our own wasted years, as we today ask the same question of those who came before us, it is my hope that the current Indian government under Prime Minister Singh will see the urgency of the task. The future will not wait for us.

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Edited by Carolina Bunting



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Sufjan Stevens

sianbeynon dreams of getting up close and personal with the magical Michigan based singer-songwriter

If he was a liquor, he'd be a fine Scotch (Oban). He enjoys knitting and playing frisbee amongst other pastimes, one of which is fishing, and he's fished a lot although no fish would suffer at his hands for he'd throw it back into the water. The nuances that Sufjan Stevens shares through his music are of the same type that make him into the delightfully polite, charmer that he is.

During the gig, Steven's fine eye for seemingly pointless detail conjured up a sense of childish enchantment. His performance wasn't weakened by this, but in fact it projected a bashful, yet endearing enthusiasm to the crowd. A crowd that Sufjan claimed would be mainly middle-aged, divorced men who were also recovering alcoholics. Not typically the type to while away an evening listening to songs about what Sufjan did when he was eleven and had a vision of gods trumpets...or of his girlfriend, Robin's paisley dress at sixteen...or the time they watched the VCR all night long...yet I did see his point, there was a large showing of grown men. Perhaps they were recapturing a simple boyish perspective on life, or maybe they just like his music. The lat-



ter is highly understandable as 'Michigan,' his latest album has been received warmly by the industry, and from the quality of the performance, Stevens proved to have the talent that matched.

The evening was a gentle lullaby of soft, sweet songs and at times with his voice was barely above a whisper. His mastery of the guitar and banjo provided for a smooth finger picked accompaniment.

which was perfectly balanced with the delicate melodies. The evening had an organic, homespun atmosphere, although the whole affair was neurotically organised. He kept referring to a map of Michigan which neatly placed every song and, paradoxically, offered a businesslike delivery of his jumbled stories and meanderings. Sufjan confessed to me his obsession with order and classification and how this relates to his approach to music. 'Michigan' is one of many concept albums he hopes to release, each of which will offer an idiosyncratic 'Stevens' analysis of every state in the US, until the entire country has been covered. No mean feat.

Stevens is an unlikely, nervous star; his ambition is huge yet well hidden in the humbleness that bombards you with apologies and applause (he clapped more than the audience). His approach to music is skilful and pure and ignites a childlike pleasure that many have lost and this is what sets him apart from many others.

Franz Ferdinand

nathancapone gets all hot and sweaty watching Franz Ferdinand at the Brixton Academy

Brixton may not be the world's most glamorous place (that honour goes to Basingstoke) but the appearance of this year's Mercury Music Prize winners at the Academy definitely brought a certain radiance to the south London borough.

It's 9.40 p.m. and expectations in the four-and-a-half-thousand-strong crowd are running high. Scotland's finest have already garnered a reputation as a razor-sharp live act. After a rough and raw 30-minute set from support band The Kills (think a grungier White Stripes, but better for it), the crowd are almost breathless with anticipation. Then at a quarter to ten the curtain rises and the Franz stride out in characteristically slick threads, launching straight into the rapid-fire riff of Michael to rapturous applause. Finishing with a flourish and holding his guitar aloft, lead singer Alex Kapranos is quite simply the epitome of cool. Entirely unfazed, he addresses the frenzied crowd while nonchalantly sipping on a glass of wine, "Hello London, we are Franz

Ferdinand". And that's it: everyone is hypnotized.

The set proceeds with the bouncing bassline of 40 and spiky, staccato guitars of Tell Her Tonight which get the crowd jumping like the floor is made of rubber.

As the intro to dance floor classic Take Me Out breaks down into its pounding drum beat and strutting riff, the three guitarists march to the edge of the stage with guitarist/keyboardist Nick McCarthy strumming like he has a million volts of electricity pulsating through his body. The band is enjoying this as much as the fans.

They proceed with the rest of their album, highlights being the superb Dark of the Matinee and the keyboard-driven Auf Achse. Two new songs are played, including the highly infectious Your Diary, which will be on the future album. The encore builds up in style with Kapranos crooning into the microphone on Jacqueline before



the bass kicks into the sing-along chorus of 'It's so much better on holiday'. Upping the tempo on the final song, the Franz put out an incendiary version of This Fire with everyone screaming "Gonna burn this city!" with flaming passion as Alex leaps backwards into the crowd.

The sure sign that this had been a good

gig was that by the end my shirt was completely soaked in sweat. And such was the crowd's enthusiasm that most of it wasn't my own. Franz Ferdinand come highly recommended live.

ALBUMS

Cult of Luna -
Salvation

If you haven't heard of seven-headed Cult of Luna yet, then I can assure you that you haven't missed anything too world-shaking. Although their origins in North Sweden might promise a true experience as the university town Umea already brought us The (International) Noise Conspiracy, the band's third album *Salvation* reminds me more of the lift in *20 Kingsway* - claustrophobic, dragging and untrustworthy - than the epic they were obviously aiming for.

What I perceived largely as a wall of noise and detached fragments fails to emotionally engage the listener into anything thought-provoking. The post-apocalyptic sound indicates suicidal themes, however Tiger Lou's voice is incomprehensible and lacks the strength or demonic authority to deliver any real dark message. One ought to acknowledge the brave

attempt to create something unique and not to ride the present Top-of-the-Pops-version-of-Rock wave but the album could be much improved simply by reassembling the songs into smaller pieces.

Surprisingly enough the album seems to grow on you, as by the second or third listening I began to see visions of a dark avant-garde 60s movie or some public execution in slow-motion unfold that the band could perfectly musically accompany, even if the itching urge to fast forward did not disappear. Thus if you need background music *Salvation* is alright but if you're after something grandiose you're much better off with Tool or Dreamtheater.

(millenwolde-selassie)

James Yorkston & The
Atheletes - Just
Beyond The River

Maybe these songs were always there.

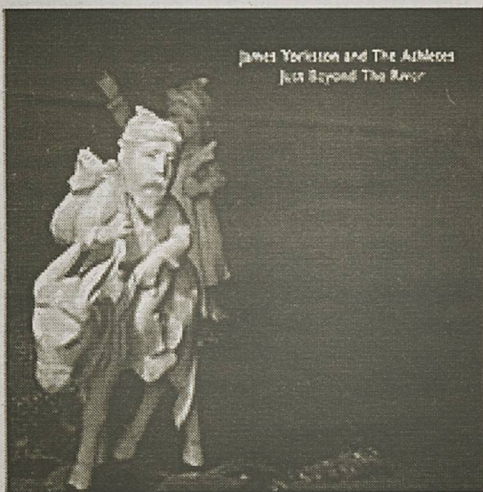
"I wanted it to sound like there were no effects used on it whatsoever" Yorkston notes on his website. A vision shared, oddly enough, by Four Tet's Keiran Hebden who also wanted a "raw, natural record".

The finished product reflects this manifesto - it recalls another time, far from the maddening pace of the modern age. A record of stark acoustic folk - whose roots lie in the landscape and traditional ballads of the Scottish Highlands - far darker in tone than anything on 'Moving Up Country' (Rough Trade's Album of the Year 2003). The sound far closer to

Bonnie Prince Billy's 'Master & Everyone' than the more 'upbeat' singles lifted from his debut LP

This shift towards a more sombre, introspective sound is apparent from the impressive opening track, 'Heron', in which every instrument can be heard, fully capturing The Athlete's live sound. The LP ploughs this furrow throughout closing with a reworking of the traditional ballad 'The Snow It Melts the Soonest' - which Yorkston describes as a combination of Can & Planxty (an Irish group which fused traditional music and contemporary folk). And you know something, he's not far wrong.

(elliotsimmons)

Green Day -
American Idiot

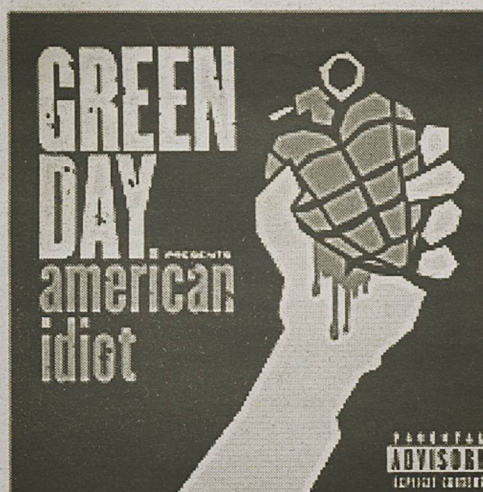
Green Day return with their first proper album in four years, and have had a go at creating something different to their previous efforts. The grown-up children of suburban boredom have gone on the offensive against the inanity of life in a 57 minute rock opera, complete with recurring themes, characters and motifs. Fair enough, American society and culture being in a sick state isn't, as a concept, a particularly radical departure for Green Day; but the attempts at structuring the ideas into a semi-coherent whole set 'American Idiot' apart from their previous albums. Unified by twin themes of a suffocating mass culture and a political "red-neck agenda" intolerant of objection, a set of surprisingly diverse songs follows three central characters in a

tour of their various lives.

This ambition of concept culminates in the two nine-minute, five-part epics, which tell stories while seamlessly changing style and tempo. This reflects the structure of the album as a whole, where the power-balladry of 'Are We the Waiting' flows into the Clash-influenced 'St. Jimmy': the contrast works well to introduce such a dynamic character and is a high point of the album.

All this comes at a price, however, and not every song stands well on its own, with some seeming to lack energy and pace, which is probably a first in a Green Day album. However, the better part of the album is not afflicted this way and is worth at least a listen.

(aedanlake)



SINGLES

Keane: This is the Last Time

Another slice of annoying drivel to numb your mind to. Inevitable stars of the award season amaze with their talent for the unamazing. The most exciting thing on this single is a dodgy effect that sporadically crops up throughout. Let's hope that the record company have finished rinsing this album before the inevitable follow up.

(laurencekavanagh)

The Earlies: Morning Wonder

Marinated in swooshing sounds, pretty tinkles, delicate melodies, the sweet atmospherics of Mercury Rev and shy boy harmonies, The Earlies make thoroughly cute music. 'Morning Wonder' adorably teases for over 2 minutes before fully blossoming, the instrumental b-sides being equally pleasant. Perfect to place between your Air and Granddaddy records.

(nastavakoll-far)

Dogs Die in Hot Cars: I Love You 'Cause I Have To

Exuberant poppy ska fun from Glasgow's other band of the moment. This isn't as substantial or complex as previous single 'Godhopping', and certainly isn't representative of the album as a whole, but is highly enjoyable and infectious. A bit oddball, with the band's wit coming through here as slightly obscure lyrics, this is worth a listen.

(aedanlake)

The Delays: Lost in A Melody

Another catchy psychedelic pop tune from the Southampton four-piece enhances their reputation as one of Britain's more talented young bands. Designed for the dance floor, it's a step away from the Byrds-esque jangly guitars of their previous singles. Pulsating electronica sparkles over sharp guitar chords and singer Greg Gilbert's vibrant falsetto voice. It comes across like the La's on ecstasy. Not exactly groundbreaking, but a lot of fun.

(nathancapone)

Hell is for Heroes: Kamichi

While this is more chaotic than anything off the band's debut album, the neon handshake, hell is for heroes still can't resist an anthemic chorus. It makes for a good unpretentious rock song, that should sound better live, but for a new listener there may not be anything groundbreaking here.

(sherifsalem)

film

edited by Dani Ismail and Sarah Coughtrie

No matter how many times you save the world, it always manages to get back in jeopardy again



The Incredibles

FREE TICKETS

ruksanazaman sees movie... writes review...

Director: Brad Bird
Voices: Craig T Nelson, Holly Hunter, Samuel L Jackson, Brad Bird
Release Date: 19 November
Running Time: 121mins
Certificate: U

Incredible by name and incredible by nature, this is a great action packed comedy about superheroes discovering their more ordinary human side...

The Incredibles follows the adventures of a family of former superheroes rediscovering the true source of their powers – in one another. Once one of the world's top masked crimefighters, Bob Parr aka Mr. Incredible (**Craig T. Nelson**) fought evil and saved lives on a daily basis. But fifteen years later, he and his wife Helen, formerly the ultra-flexible Elastigirl (**Holly Hunter**) have been forced to retire and take on civilian identities in the Superhero Relocation Programme. Today they live as mere mortals and lead all-too-ordinary lives with their three children – who go out of their way to appear 'normal'. As a clock-punching insurance man, the only thing Bob fights these days is boredom and a bulging waistline. Itching for action, the sidelined superhero gets his chance to rescue the planet, and his own sense of self-worth, when a mysterious communication summons him to a remote island for a top secret assignment. With the fate of the world hanging in the balance, the family must come together and once again find the fantastic in their family life.

This film is no ordinary animated picture with Pixar (the people who gave you Toy

Story and *Finding Nemo*) giving you stunning visuals and computer generated images that will take your breath away. The ways of using the family's collective powers for the fight of good against evil are pure genius and leave you hanging on the edge of your seat wondering how they'll get out of one tricky situation after another.

The comedy moments are not spoof pisse-takes as with *Shrek* and *Shark Tale* but still seriously funny. The characters alone are sheer brilliance. Watch out for Frozone (**Samuel L. Jackson**) the uber-cool superhero that freezes everything, and Edna (**Brad Bird**) the diminutive fashion diva who specialises in designing costumes for an elite superhero clientele – she's not intimidated by anyone and will not take no for an answer – deliciously funny!

Despite not believing in superheroes, the film still feels strangely realistic. Although the characters are superheroes, they're still just like anyone else when it comes to relationships and their feelings. You share their emotions as you watch them feel sad, frustrated, happy and bewildered.

The film is unpredictable, fast-paced and entertaining. It has so much energy that the overall effect is like you're watching a James Bond film with better versions of Superman and Catwoman on Tracy Island fighting an evil Chris Evans look-alike. A rollercoaster of a ride, *The Incredibles* is definitely not one to miss – go watch it!

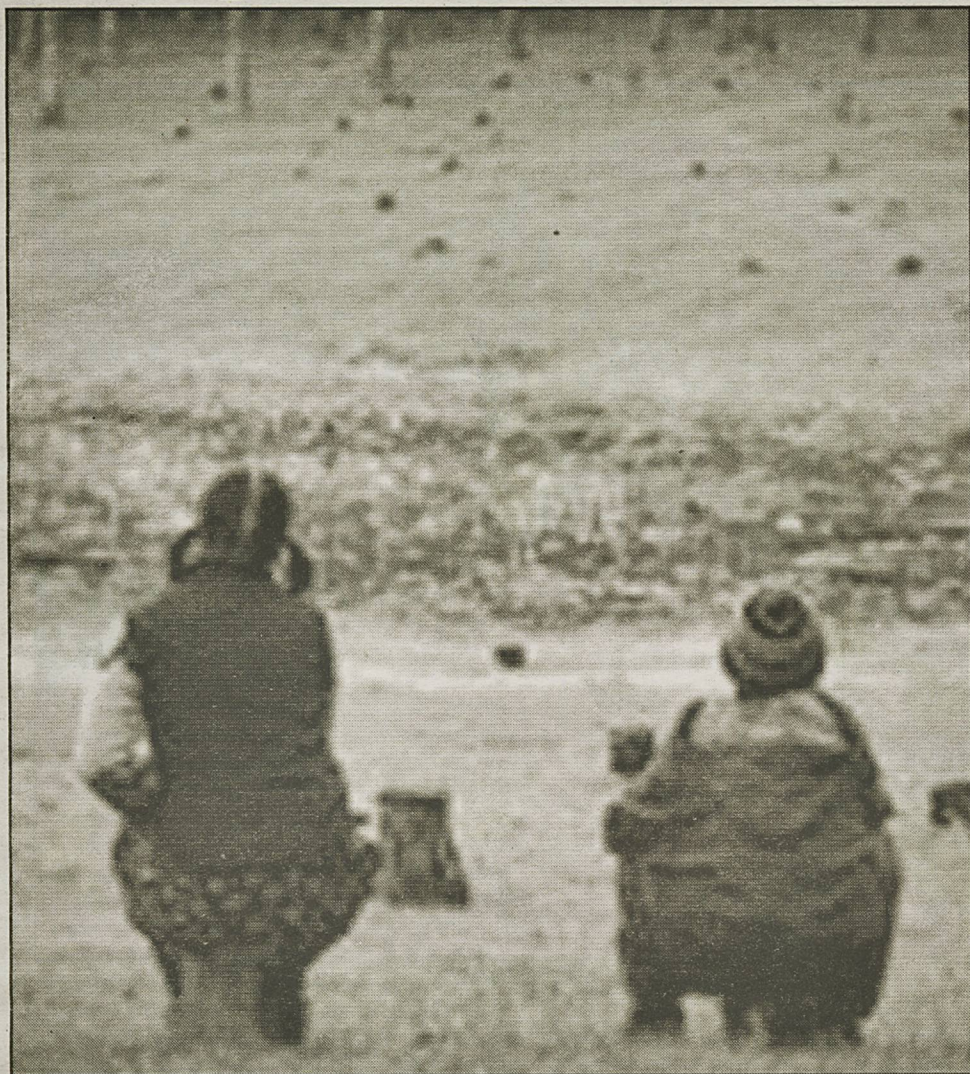
If anyone would like some free tickets to go see THE INCREDIBLES please see below. We were going to write something catchy and clever but can't be bothered.

Just visit : www.filmfactory.co.uk/incredibles to take a wee test to win some tickets. They're free. Really people. Go for it.

A promotional graphic for the movie 'The Incredibles'. At the top, the word 'THE' is written in large, white, block letters on a dark red background. Below this, the four main characters (Mr. Incredible, Elastigirl, Dash, and Violet) are shown in their superhero suits, standing in front of a large, stylized yellow and black 'i' logo. At the bottom, the word 'FACTOR' is written in large, white, block letters on a dark red background. Below the entire graphic, there is a line of text: 'Take the test at www.filmfactory.co.uk/incredibles and get your free preview tickets'.

Roads to Koktebel

astridchang reviews Russian London Film Festival offering



Directors: Boris Khlebnikov & Alexei Popogrebsky

Starring: Igor Chernevich, Gleb Puskepalis, Vladimir Kucherenko

Release Date: 10 Dec

Running Time: 105 minutes

This alluring drama is about the relationship between a boy and his father, who are on a journey from Moscow to Koktebel in search of a new beginning following a tragic past. As they traverse the vast landscape with little money and little food, chance encounters with different characters who inhabit the isolated Russian terrain reveal more of their father-son relationship, or lack thereof.

Arrival at their final destination Koktebel, a Crimean sea-side town by the Black Sea, will come to represent the father's hopes of regaining respect following failure, and the son's hopes for a new and better reality. This plot however, is deceptively simple. There is a darker element to this story and it is only in the very final moments of the film that we fully grasp the meaning of what is actually a tragic and moving tale of failure, lost hopes and unfulfilled dreams. I wouldn't want to reveal too much, but yes, this is serious drama.

It is the impressive craft of the film though, that takes centre-stage. So even

if you're not for sad, brooding plots, go for the artful production of the film. Cinematography is poetic and the still-shots have a photographic quality that capture the latent majesty of the Russian landscape. Silence is powerfully employed in this film and it is amazing how much is conveyed simply through a close-up shot of a stoic stare or a forced smile. With so much attention to visuals and very minimal use of dialogue, Roads to Koktebel has an engaging quality that demands us to deduce meaning from ambiguity.

Praises aside, the acting is mediocre and laughs are few and far between. At times, artfulness crosses the line and the element of trying-too-hard transforms hitherto impressive creativity into artful artifice. Also, it would be safe to say that some may find the film excruciatingly boring as it is very slow-moving and doesn't really take-off.

All said and done, go for it if you're looking for a refreshing change from our usual explosive Hollywood fare. There is no car-chase, no Pitt-esque eye candy and no happy ending. Instead, it is Roads to Koktebel's grace, movingly humble plot and artistic qualities that will make it worth a watch.

*** 1/2

London Film Festival

helenbutler throws her advice our way...

Dubbed 'The most anticipated fortnight in the London filmgoers' year' the London Film Festival comes to a close this Thursday with the existential comedy *I (heart) Huckabees*. So, did the festival live up to the hype?

As is so often the case, excelling in one field seems to go hand in hand with failure in another. Several films which were outstanding technical feats on small budgets lacked interest and substance. Conversely, many well-conceived ideas were let down by amateurish camera-work / music / animation / Foley. Projects which managed to straddle the two camps were rare.

One such project which seemingly effort-

lessly coupled technical competency with artistic flair was Sejong Park's "Birthday Boy", (a short as part of Animation Programme 1). Beautifully crafted, it tells the experience of a young boy during the Korean War. Magnificent attention to detail rarely found in mainstream animation made this screening a delight.

Despite the emphasis on originality and creativity which accompanies film festivals, there was a shocking number of projects based on ideas which have been more than overworked. Indulgent film school 101 ideas combined with clichéd concepts were too common (Satinder Singh's "Balloon" a sad example of this: uninspired design coupled with a horrendous score)

In your local cinema...

The Ring 2

So I heard that they were making this sequel, but it's release seems, to me, to have come out of nowhere. And it sounds really shit, too. How can the story change exactly? Let's brainstorm. Will watching a certain Paris Hilton porn segment kill you? Watching Celine Dion sing live in Las Vegas, 280 nights a year? Yes, but it won't make much of a movie. Get a grip. Go watch Bridget Jones 2 instead.

Bridget Jones: The Edge Of Reason

The first film stole most of the second

book's material, so they're stuck making up story lines that include throwing a dumpy Zellweger out of a plane into a pile of shit. Cute Colin Firth stars but his character has a stick so firmly rammed up his British arse that all he can do is stand there silently, in the knowledge that movement will severely injure him.

The Hillside Strangler

For the sick and twisted of you, this follows the story of two cousin rapists as they rape and murder women across the 70's, disposing of them later.

Unfortunately, the quality of the programming was not the only problem. Suffering slow and inaccurate booking staff (how can you mis-book 75% of my tickets?), endless queues for returns and enduring the company of numerous pretentious artsy types ("I once wrote a play... The lead was played by eight different actors, not all of them female! Can you imagine?") is enough to put anyone off.

Regardless of all this the film festival this year was well worth a visit, because when you do come across a good film, a film you would scarcely have had the chance to see otherwise, it more than outweighs the bad. Especially when you are presented with the opportunity of being able to meet the filmmakers after the screening and complement them on their work yourself. However, a word of advice for next year: book in advance and, when you do so, speak very slowly, and very clearly.



Prime evidence you shouldn't be sleeping with your relatives, you stupid perverts

On the internet...

It seems to be a dry week for decent DVDs and I'm not going to insult you by recommending *Elf* or *My Boss's Daughter*, so this week I thought I'd scour the web to find a couple of excellent movie related websites and cut and paste the links in a lazy, last minute panic.

The ultimate site is Ruthless Reviews, *Where Pornographers Debate Nihilists about Pop Culture*. Their Glossary of Porn has prevented Dani and I from doing any work for the past three weeks at <http://www.ruthlessreviews.com/porn>

[glossary.html](#). Anyone who can provide proof of having completed #76, *The Flying Camel* will win the eternal respect and admiration of Beaver Film.

Maddox's *The Best Page in the Universe* is a collection of venomous rants by a sarcastic pirate. Whether he is in fact Gareth Carter masquerading as a maths student in Idaho remains to be seen, but do read a few postings, starting with *Five Things Wrong with LOTR* at <http://maddox.xmission.com/lotr1.html> if you're a movie fan. More later...

Anyone interested in writing for beaverfilm? Contact us on thebeaver.art@lse.ac.uk

Riding Giants

eugeniamitchelstein watches fit men get wet...mmm...

Enormous, powerful waves wash up the screen at the beginning of this documentary. Only after a few seconds do we see the surfers, the leading characters of the film, tiny against the imposing masses of water. *Riding Giants* is a history of surfing, told through the stories of the most famous surfers in United States: **Greg Noll, Jeff Clark** and **Laird Hamilton**.

The movie follows surfing from its origins in Polynesia to present-day big wave wave-riding in the open sea. The rebirth of surfing in California at the beginning of the 20th Century, the migration to Hawaii's Waimea Beach in the fifties and the search for the perfect wave are portrayed. Surfing is described as a way of life, rather than a sport, and a religion, rather than a hobby. Two surfers even say that riding the wave can only be compared to the birth of their children.

The photography and fast-paced editing are the best features of this film, conveying the presence of the sea in all its

might. Nevertheless, after a while, all the images of the surfers riding the waves start to look alike, and the film could do with being shorter. The director even uses a split screen to show the difference between Waimea Beach, in Hawaii, and Mavericks, in California, but the truth is they look very similar.

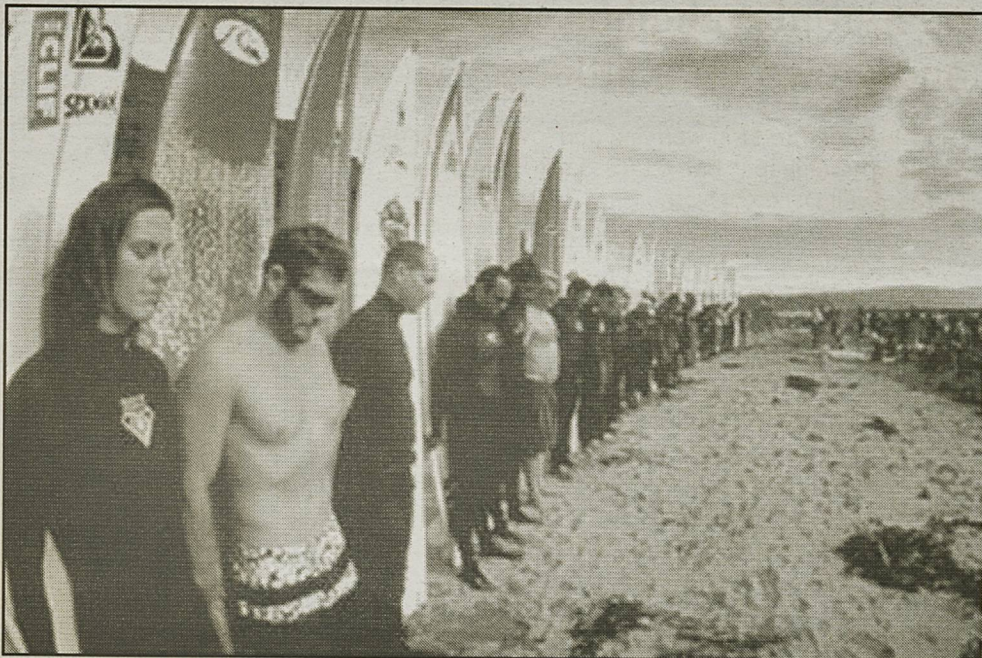
While *Riding Giants* never gets too technical, so that it can be easily watched by people who have no idea of surfing, it will probably be more enjoyable for those who know and love the hobby/religion/way of life.

The documentary claims to be a history of surfing, but it is completely focused on the United States, notably California and Hawaii, and on American surfers. However, it doesn't portray wave riders as icons of the American way of life, but as examples of a counter-culture, as Noll puts it, "no watch, no money, no car, no nothing: just shorts and a T-shirt. Screw the money, I'm having all the fun I possibly can!" Nevertheless, *Riding Giants*

doesn't analyse the commercial aspects of professional surfing at present times, and renders a non-critical, idealised vision of the sport. If you are a non-surfer, *Riding Giants* is the kind of documentary you

Director: Stacy Peralta
Starring: Jeff Clark, Darrick Doerner
Running Time: 105 mins
Release Date: 3rd December

would enjoy on TV, but it is not worth going to the cinema, unless –of course– for the ladies who want to watch tanned, muscular guys riding the waves.



The Women

sianbeynon, on the other hand, gets an oestrogen extravaganza



Director: George Cukor
Starring: Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford
Running Time: 133mins
Release Date: 5th November

Talons out, and ensure they're painted "jungle red" – we have a contender for the hole left since *Sex And The City* was gouged out our lives, and this one is almost as old as Samantha. *The Women* is a witty, fast-paced catfight of a film that, despite the absence of men, certainly doesn't lack balls. This 1939 George Cukor release opens at the NFT very appropriately on November 5th, ready for the fireworks, and perfectly illustrates the mastery of the director, especially when capturing various sides of "la femme".

We find ourselves thrown into a hive of activity from the start. A head spinning beauty salon sequence sets the tone and we are soon dragged into the messy details of a sordid love affair. Much to the dismay of happily-wed housewife Mary Haines (**Norma Shearer**), her doted upon husband Stephen is hooked by a feisty perfume counter girl, Crystal Allen (**Joan Crawford**). News travels fast, especially among the pack of merciless, sly ladies of society, hungry for gossip led by a superbly sharp performance by **Rosalind Russell** as queen bee Sylvia Fowler. Despite the advice of her mother, Mary decides that her only option is a divorce to save her pride and independence. Yet,

still the film snaps and claws its way to its rightful, if somewhat predictable, conclusion.

I was convinced that the 135 strong female cast would become restrictive and turn to a quirky farce, yet the plot managed to unfold naturally and by the end I barely noticed the lack of men. On the contrary, I was disgusted at the thought of introducing a male character to destroy the delicate webs that had been spun by these women. The characters were meticulously represented and refreshingly varied, aided by a tight script from Anita Loos. Off screen discrepancies between Crawford and Shearer added to the curtness of their meetings on screen, and this spark, along with the superbly talented cast, kept the film fresh where it could have slipped into a soap opera style melodrama.

This sophisticated posse of sherry-obsessed New Yorkers created a lavishly amusing watch and offered a prophecy of what was to follow in cinematic history. The determined grit of Crystal Allen, Sylvia Fowler and Contesse de Lave match that of the most headstrong of 21st century women. Ensure that you see this film before the rumoured remake, as I doubt it will do Cukor's classic justice.

See below for a retrospective of Cukor's life

The Mastery of George Cukor

ionmartea makes a tribute to one of Hollywood's best

Despite delivering some of the most atmospheric, yet grand, films of the Classical Era, George Cukor has less admirers in the young crowd than he deserves. His *Gaslight* remake is hardly matched in suspense even by Hitchcock's best. *The Philadelphia Story*, along with Capra's *It Happened One Night*, is easily one of the funniest works of the period.

My Fair Lady, for which he won his only Academy Award for Best Director, comfortably finds its place among the best of Hollywood's musicals. And Shakespeare has rarely been more extravagant than in *Romeo and Juliet*, despite the obvious miscast of the middle-aged Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer as the Florentine teen-lovers.

What makes Cukor great is the way he hides beautifully crafted sets behind the quality of performances and the intensity of the plot. With 19 Oscar nominations for acting, his films boast some of the best from Ingrid Bergman, Katherine Hepburn, James Stewart, Judy Holiday, Greta Garbo, Cary Grant, Bette Davis, Rex Harrison, Judy Garland, Ronald Colman, Kirk Douglas, Joan Crawford, Spencer Tracy – a gathering of talents any film lover is unwise to omit.

Unarguably, Cukor was a Hollywood director, but on this occasion the term can be hardly derogatory. He had the ability of choosing scripts that boasted in literary ingenuity matching the European productions of the time delivered by Carne or Renoir. And, in his own words, give him "a good script and [he'll] be a hundred times better as a director". On this occasion, arrogance was synonymous with truth.

Catch a collection of Cukor's films at the National Film Theatre all this month.

visual arts

edited by Caroline Bray

Recycled Rhetoric

nastarantavakoli-far looks at some same ol', same ol' political art and grows up a little

'How I learned to stop worrying and love to stop the bomb'

Venue: The Alphabet Bar, 61-63 Beak Street, Soho.

Dates: Until December 5th.

Open: Monday-Friday 12noon - 11pm, Saturday 5pm-11pm, closed Sunday.

Tube: Piccadilly Circus - 382m Oxford Circus - 383m.

Oh what nostalgia! Some background facts: Nastaran Tavakoli-Far, born in Tehran, raised in London. Aged 16, listened to political punk rock bands such as Anti-Flag and Propagandhi and plastered her walls with the socio-political montage art of Dead Kennedy's artist Winston Smith. And today? Studies Economics at the LSE, exchanged Anti-Flag for John Coltrane and didn't even back Kerry. Still got the Smith art up though. Pure nostalgia.

Set to coincide with the American Presidential Election, this exhibition is full of alternative/punk rock art that revels in ridiculing American Foreign policy, which kids like myself have come to know and love - and then tire of. In fact, Jamie Reid - of *God Save the Queen* and Sex Pistols fame - even has a few pieces on show. All the art featured is certainly bold and striking. Starting with Reid, *They Speak With Forked Tongues* is a brutal, brightly coloured piece comprised of thick slashes of scarlet and green staining faded in the style of Wild West 'Wanted' posters and emblazoned with the word 'lies'. Next up, *Swastika Eyeballs* is a picture of Queen Elizabeth, with safety pinned lip and swastika eyes, sporting the oh so passé 'God save the Queen' slogan. Exactly what relevance this has to George Bush's foreign policy totally escapes me. Furthermore, after 25 years of international change is it plausible to just make a bland repeat of one's now outdated work?

Andrew Moore's cartoon strip-esque portraits are especially irritating. In one, Bin Laden is pictured with the phrase 'Tonight Matthew I'm going to be . . . Sting' and Saddam with 'Ringo I love you yeah yeah yeah'. These pieces are not only



Kennard's Defend to Death.



The Alphabet Bar

totally random and cheesy, but artistically crude.

Peter Kennard's two pieces are much more intelligent. *The Financial Times* (strangely c.1995) depicts a hand tearing a newspaper. Simple yet moving, the roughly and hurriedly drawn charcoal hand upon the crumpling black and white text is highly evocative. *Hour Glass* consists of a skull in the top half of an hour glass and the UN sign in the bottom. Time has almost fully run out is the point which Kennard has captured. With a 50's poster hue to the work, the piece is a clever parody of patriotic America.

However, this whole 'let's ridicule the 50s again despite it having been done much more intellectually and creatively by artists 20 years ago' is really wearing thin. Elina Joipii has a series of such work with nurses tending to wounded soldiers and both parties looking utterly blasé. I've seen this all before only much better done. Sadly, this is the great flaw of not only this exhibition but much political and 'meaningful' art of all types. 'Appreciating' such art these days is like wearing a bright pink Che Guevara t-shirt and being passionately anti-free trade; very 'in' despite no one really knowing what the art is trying to express, who Che was or why free trade is so heinous.

I met the curator of this show while visiting the exhibit and was told that this exhibition is to involve people in politics more. I respect this. I do not believe that art must be detached from politics. Nay, supreme art is that which cleverly and lucidly interacts and deals with it's surrounding world. However, I feel it's a real shame when any form of art is reduced to random and vague sloganeering and little artistic creativity. A truly revolutionary work such as Goya's *Execution of the 4th of May* to this day chills the heart. None of this exhibition's work does so today, let alone in years to come.

But hey, don't listen to me, this is worth a visit just so that you can make up your own mind. The work is generally interesting, a nice change to anything else you may catch showing now. If you have yet to be initiated into the world of 'alternative' art, this is a great exhibition to attend. It's just that as an ex-Dead Kennedys patch wearer, I think I've grown up.



Weekly Wander

As the sun rose on May Day, 1912, the nannies and their young charges who strolled through Kensington Gardens were greeted with a strange sight. Peter Pan, pipe in hand and surrounded by fairies, stood cast in bronze, watching over their play. In the dead of night the statue by George Frampton had been placed in the Gardens as a gift from J M Barrie, author of the book *Peter Pan*.

Barrie lived at 100 Bayswater Road, near to the site of the statue, when he wrote his great novel. Peter first appeared in the stories Barrie told to the sons of his friend Sylvia Llewelyn Davies and was named after the youngest of the boys and Pan, Greek God of the woodlands. The elder brother, David, tragically died in a skating accident at the age of 13 and is also said to have inspired Barrie's tale. In dying young, a strange comfort may have been found in the idea that David would remain a boy forever.

1902 saw the first appearance of Peter Pan in *The Little White Bird* and two years later he appeared again in *Peter Pan or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* which went on to be a very successful stage play. Finally, in 1911 the play was adapted into the novel *Peter and Wendy* which is now published as *Peter Pan*.

Kensington Gardens was the site at which Peter landed in Barrie's story after his flight from Neverland and provides a beautiful home for this fantastical character. Away from the reality and rush of the city, take some time to visit Peter. Sit back, settle into your childhood memories and let your imagination fly away as he serenades you with his pipe.



Peter Pan by George Frampton

literature

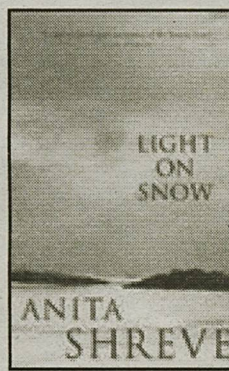
edited by Ion Martea

New Releases



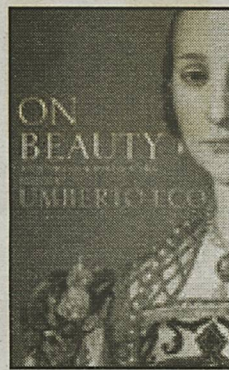
**All the Poems:
Collected Poems**
Muriel Spark
(Carcanet Press)

Though famous mainly for her work in fiction, Muriel Spark is primarily a poet. The vibration of the verse transpires with the musicality of our daily existence, her poems excelling in precision and scope. A wonderful tribute to one of the most talented British poets of the last century.



Light on Snow
by Anita Shreve
(Little Brown)

Hearts beat with poetic tact in this story about the love between parents and their children. Stricken by grief, a father and his 12 year old daughter rediscover the key to each others souls after finding an abandoned baby in the snow. A book that will make you call your parents on a daily basis with the warmest of wishes.



**On Beauty: A
History of a
Western Idea**
Umberto Eco
(Secker & Warburg)

Eco's critical appreciation of beauty, from as far as Ancient Egypt to contemporary street fashion, is remarkable in all aspects. Both history and aesthetics, but ultimately desire, are the driving forces of a text that indulges in the beauty of writing. Perhaps Eco is unforgivably indulgent, as this is a reference book.



Playing with Fire
by Peter Robinson
(Pan)

The latest in the series of Inspector Banks' detectives, proves also to be the best literary achievement Robinson has delivered so far. A novel which starts in heated fire with the explosion of two narrow boats, warms up in understanding the cause of the fire. Artistry or drug addiction? A crime treat.

Discovering America

The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader

ionmarte in Red Alert

In times like this, it is quite hard to depoliticise art. A book that could have gone into total obscurity a week ago, stands defeated, reminding with poignancy about the lack of genuine freedom of expression in the 'democratic' West.

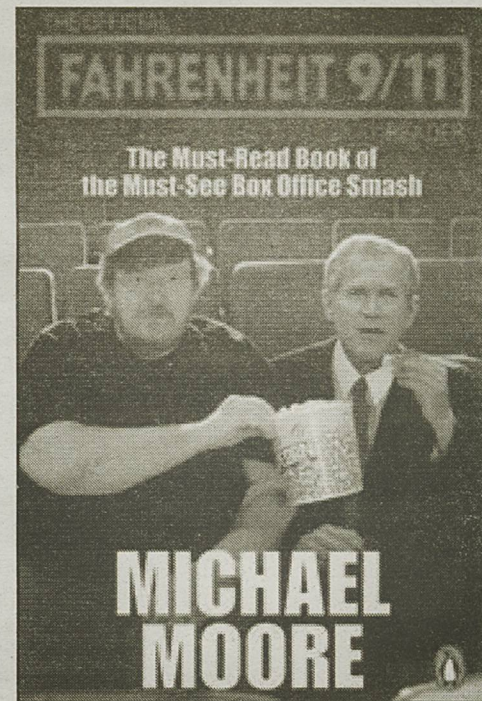
Moore's award winning documentary gets a screenplay release, with additional background material which brings more clarity to the content of the film. Reactions from Clinton's "every American ought to see it", to Madonna's "I don't think I ever cried so hard at a movie in my life", also find their place towards the end of the *Reader*, easily demonstrating that this isn't your usual screenplay.

But despite its political importance, Moore has delivered a play which boasts with a charming take on tragic-comedy. The usual up-into-your-face style so characteristic of his earlier work, is significantly toned down on this occasion. Nevertheless, we do get our share of laughs, and slight annoyance at the documentarist who is not ashamed of admitting his subjectivism as the basis for objectivity. The tragic, however, lies at the

Publisher: Penguin Books
Release Date: 21 October 2004
List Price: £8.99
Paperback 368 pp.

core of our ignorance and general acceptance of public media as 'the voice of truth'. And it is exactly here where Moore's genius hides, in his ability to exploit that acceptance, by leading us slowly, and willingly towards his views over the matters concerned. We reach a point in which "he is so wrong" ceases to be delivered through our lips, and the text becomes undisputed truth.

We are not concerned with the content itself on this occasion, so it is rather insignificant whom you have favoured in the 'Historic' Election in order to enjoy reading *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Moore gives us a lesson on trust, and through trust the courage to question our own beliefs. The story of the patriotic Lila Lipscomb who, by losing her son in the Iraqi war, makes a significant U-turn in her devotion, is testament to the success of the book. It seems that only when we are faced with a shock powerful enough to open our eyes, do we



wake up and choose a path. But it is a matter of intellect whether the path is the right one.

Arguably, *Fahrenheit 9/11* is not that big of a shock afterall.

Lyrical Effigies

The Magic Instinct
by John Keating

Find me
When the lines overlap
And the characters interrupt
Look at me
Like your eyes are not focused
And you don't care about your footsteps
Hold me
so that I can break
like sand through your fingers
Tell me
About the perfect ending
With happiest moments
But before all of this tell me
not to resist this
magic instinct

"Young Lady,
flatter me,
and ask me
Why,
but
please,
don't give me
time to answer."

The Weight of Years
by Lawrence Kavanagh

The last twine was in place
And the seventh support
Could be kicked away;
Leaving the meat hanging
Cold and ready for sale.

But as the weight gave pull,
Its true force became known -
Generation of oak groaned
And in suffering jeered.
For, slowly at first, the oldest
Witness was giving way.
Long high time all life had
Drained, but old resilience resisted.

Female Avowal
by Harald Nax

"Did I mention my Eros?
She is a pagan, so doesn't believe
Likewise the boy,
and like ruckus negated,
wants
as firm stands but one,
still-standing is elsewhere."
Stay with the point, young man,
I do, I do,
did you have something to eat,
Alas damsel, never mind, i just may not.

**Existence is Not a
Predicate**
by Victoria Peckett

The boy is a predicate.
A proud paean
To the two most selfish words
In the dictionary:
I am.
Constellationally, he rules.
Concepts flock to array themselves
At his centre
As if, by association
They might be
Thought.
But the boy is a predicate
The Leibnizian God,
Unfolding mathematically,
Radiant and cold.
He cuts them all down to size.
He scythes ideas like atoms
With the subtlest
Of inflexions:
Truth has no windows -
The perfection of the singular.

The thought of the week...
"I...I...I'm...uh...uh...I can't imagine what it must be like to lose a son or a daughter, or a husband, and or a wife, for that matter, and I...it pains me."
George W. Bush (*Fahrenheit 9/11*)

theatre

edited by Saalim Chowdhury

Buried Child

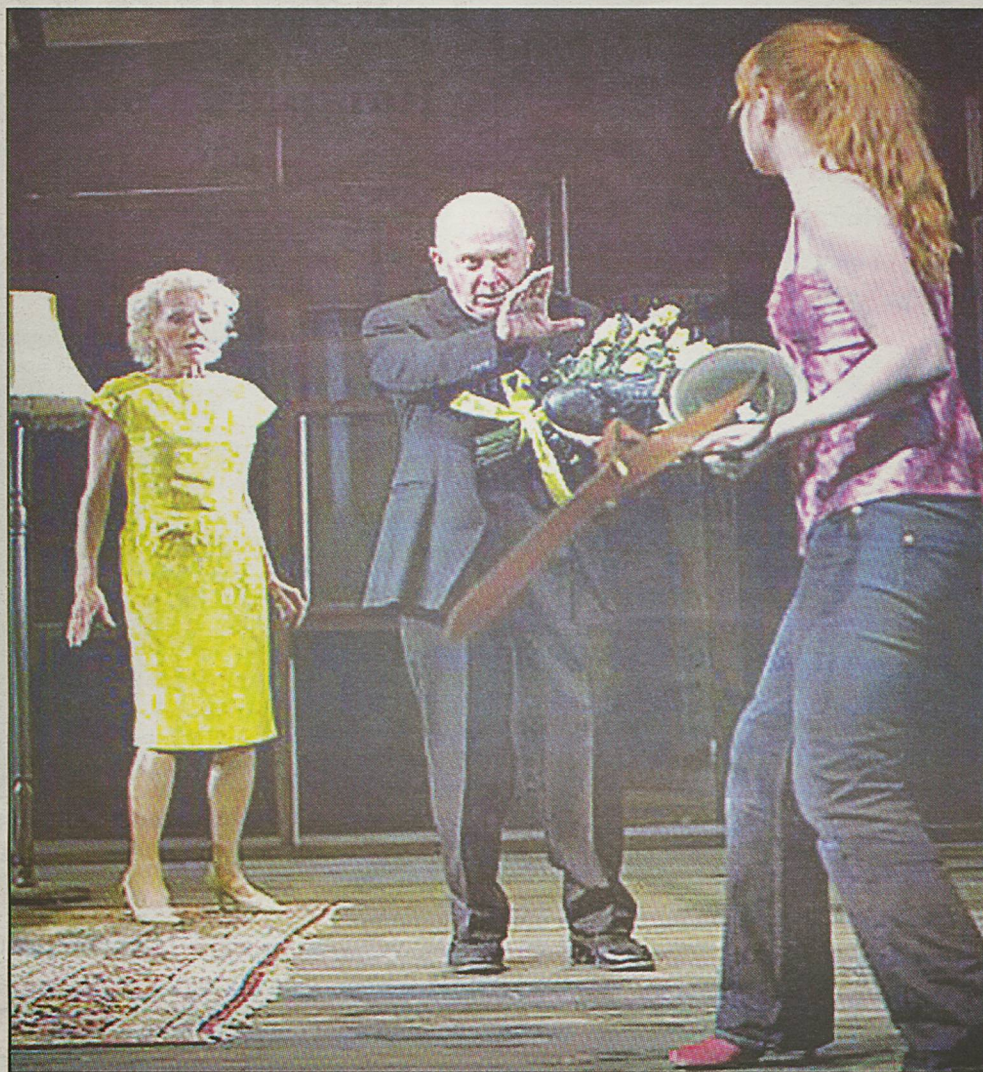
carolinabunting gets to explore the more unusual forms family life

Director: Matthew Warchus

Venue: Lyttelton Theatre

Ticket Prices: £10-£35

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk



It's been years since you've last seen your family. You decide to drive down from New York accompanied by your crazy bitch of a girlfriend to reconnect with your roots in the 'Heartland of America'.

The nostalgia hits you as soon as you walk up the dilapidated porch. You try to ignore the putrid stench of senility, and storm into the house hoping to dig your confused head in your grandparent's welcoming bosom. Instead, the old man rotting on the couch refuses to acknowledge your existence and claims, "I'm nobody's grandfather - least of all yours". Your father Tilden, who was supposed to be in New Mexico, wanders in, covered in mud, dripping wet, carrying bundles and bundles of vegetables. He stares at you, slightly stupefied, incapable of identifying his own son. At this point your girlfriend, Shelly, starts to lose her cool and quite reasonably insists on leaving the place she unwittingly compared to a Norman Rockwell cover". Welcome to Vince's absurd life.

Sam Shepard's humorously tragic parody, *Buried Child*, earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1979. The characters are truly inspired, a menagerie of psychological disorders. The half-immobilised Grandpa Dodge violently coughs his life away, surreptitiously chugging down refreshing

gulps of whiskey while squabbling away with his alcoholic, fundamentalist philandering wife. Then there's Bradley, the malicious younger son who ever so brilliantly chopped his own leg off with a chainsaw.

Shepard has a talent for tragedy and brilliantly reflects on the unbearable, destructive nature of the family nucleus. All the members carry the burden of a terrible secret (check out the title if you're having trouble figuring out what it is). Denial, being their only ticket into purgatory the members of the family are slowly forced to confront their past. The sickening confessions bring to light their hypocrisy and explain the downfall of the All-American family. The acting is grotesque and fantastic, special commendations to Emmet Walsh as Grandpa Dodge. In spite of the brilliant quality of the dialogue and overall superb acting, some crucial loose ends were left untied - mainly why and when the family decided to 'forget' Vince (the chronological inconsistency of the plot can be a little frustrating). Otherwise, *Buried Child*, is an intelligent and amusing spectacle on the corrosive nature of the family unit.

Theatre for Chavs.

saalimchowdhury on theatre for everyone

The LSE is renowned for many things - Nobel prizes, educating al-Quida terrorists, and of course - CRUSH. There, in a vain attempt to disguise my public school/Oxbridge accent and integrate, I tried to emulate half the student population speaking no English, only Econometrics. Alas, as a Psychologist it was not as effective as I would have hoped.

I had realised that I was missing something. My scarf was collegiate opposed to Burberry. The ladies clearly could not afford clothes that fit them as they were exceedingly small and unflattering, their make up akin to that of an 8 year old girl playing with Mummy's dressing table. I had realised that this fine institution was indeed full of Chavs. In this spirit I thought it apt we explore how we can bring theatre to these esteemed and valued members of our community.

First thing we need to do is dispel the myth that only those of the gentry can gain entry to the theatre. The fact is since the 1950s they are all broke and willing to take money from anyone. But as many of you will quickly sight the prices as a barrier entry. (Yes I'm saying tickets are normally expensive). But with a bit of plan-

ning, it can be no more expensive than seeing a piece of Hollywood trash at a big cinema.

Student Standby's

Show up about 45-60 minutes before the shows are about to start, grab your handy LSE or NUS card, and ask for a student standby ticket. The normal procedure is that they will let you have the best seats in the house available for their lowest price (Usually £5-15). Admittedly, it can mean you are sitting in the gods (chav translation: in the back of the theatre), but equally can mean you are right in the front. My most successful standby ticket allowed my girlfriend and I to share a private box, which can add a whole new dimension to theatre.

Standing Tickets

It's not glamorous, but who said being a student in London would ever be! A Ronseal type affair you get to stand somewhere, often the wings or the back of the auditorium, but you pay hardly anything for it - about a £5. Not many theatres do this, the National Theatre does this more than most. It's a bit like going to a concert standing up, and can be a bit more sociable at the same time.

First Nights

For some shows, particularly new writing or less well known venues, offer a discount for attending the first few nights, as attendances tend to be lower before the main reviews come out. It's great if you are just wanting to try something new or a little avant-garde. Also the Royal Court and the Lyric Hammersmith offer discounted/flat rate days earlier on in the week.

Lastminute.com

Click the theatre option, you can avail of some fantastically discounted tickets. It works on the old fashioned principle of

booking lastminute to sweep up the empty (ergo becoming cheap) seats. Notably there is a fab 'Tickets for a £10' area. If you have the technology (most chavs seem to) you can even book from your mobile phone. There are other commercial organisations selling discounted tickets, which can be great value if you are particularly keen on sitting in a particularly good seat.

A thought has dawned on me. By knowing how to play the theatre market to get cheap tickets does that make me a chav? Dear lord, I had better purchase a Burberry hat and some Tiffany jewellery.



about

edited by Joanne Lancaster

Busaba Eathai

babertzaka on why canteens have changed since school...



Photo: Stacy-Marie Ishmael

The first time I passed this restaurant I thought 'wow' (or something to that effect) - for the venue is truly one of a kind. This chain of Thai restaurants are situated in the heart of London, (Wardour Street and Store Street), and have atmospheres lively enough to match their locations. Regardless of day or time this restaurant is always packed (I've even seen queues on some nights) and this seems to add to the whole feeling of the place.

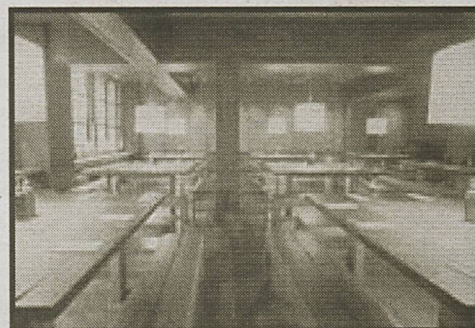
The seating is unconventional at best; large tables, able to accommodate 9 peo-

ple, dominate the restaurant interior and a mixture of customers share all tables. This canteen style seating, however, adds to the experience and is an excellent way to liven up the restaurant, as people tend to have to raise their voices to be heard.

The food is truly amazing and relatively inexpensive - a three course meal would probably cost somewhere around £15-£20, but what I have found is that the main courses are sufficiently large enough by themselves and these can be anywhere from £7-£12. Thus, depending on your budget, there is always something

to suit. The cool thing about the food here is that it is a very modern take on Thai food which incorporates the best of traditional cooking in a way that appeals to both people who like to try new things and for those who are less adventurous.

Things to try are the 'Sen chan pad thai' and the 'Chilli prawn fried rice' - both amazingly different and completely tantalizing dishes.



"Canteen-style" eating at Busaba Eathai

Overall I think this is an amazing restaurant, and moreover a great night out, however a few points to note: the service can at times be hurried as there is always a queue of people waiting to take your seat. If you're going on a romantic night out don't go here as you won't be able to talk privately, be aware that this is a strictly non-smoking restaurant and that if your group size is larger than 9 people you may have to split across two tables. But don't let this dissuade you - if you're sick and tired of staying at home and cooking pasta, beans on toast or ready meals and the like - get a bunch of friends together and you'll have a great time.

106-110 Wardour Street, Soho, London, W1F 0TR
22 Store Street, London, WC1E 7DF

The Clarence

graceduffy discovers who ate all the pies!

The Clarence, Whitehall, is one of those wonderful accidental finds. A day out in London with my other half left us starved and we agreed to go in to the next place that served food. To my utter delight what we found was easily the best pub lunch I have ever had!

The speciality is pies (for which they have - deservedly - won many awards, some of the best pastry I have ever tasted) or sausages (I recommend either the spring onion sausages with cheddar cheese mash or the stilton and red onion ones, bloody lovely!) which will set you back a mere £7-8, a bargain considering the quality of the food and the size of the portions. Drinks are reasonably priced so it's an all round cheap afternoon out in a lovely relaxing environment.

Food is served from 11am to 9 pm and



because it's only a 2-minute walk from Leicester Square it's perfect for lunch on a tourist/shopping day out or for dinner before a night up west (always a good idea to get something substantial in you before a big night out!). In case you hadn't guessed I really like this place and have already gone back for seconds, I thoroughly recommend that you all do the same!

53, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HP
Nearest tube: Charing Cross

London Landmarks #3

Hampton Court Palace

Buckingham Palace may have closed for the year, but London isn't short on Royal Palaces to explore!

Opening Times: 9.30am- 4.30pm, last admissions 3.30pm

Cost of Entry: £7.70 in advance

Location: Direct trains from London Waterloo to Hampton Court (Travelcard Zone 6)

Why Visit: The palace is spectacular; if you're interested in history it's amazing. Henry VIII is the most famous resident but many other kings and queens have lived here. The palace offers free guided tours. The grounds are beautiful at any time of year, and the (world famous) maze is lots of fun. If you want to wind someone up, plenty of websites have directions to the centre! The palace also contains a collection of renaissance art.

On the Downside: If you're not interested in art, history or architecture you WILL find it boring. £7.70 is not cheap, and as the price of the maze and grounds have gone up significantly in the past couple of years it no longer makes sense to visit just for these.

More information/ Booking:
<http://www.hrp.org.uk>



The main gates of the palace

Been anywhere nice recently?

About needs writers and ideas!
If you're interested in reviewing pubs, clubs, restaurants or anything else that takes your fancy email
thebeaver.art@lse.ac.uk

Your Guide to What's On This Week

email: su.societies@lse.ac.ukT
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Y**Alternative Entertainments Society**

Are you an entertainer or just up for lots of fun?

Then you should definitely come to our practises down in the **Old Gym** on **Tuesdays 2-3pm and Thursdays 1-2pm**. We do juggling, balloon modelling, diabolo, poi, yo-yo, devil sticks, and manipulations with fire props. Also, new for this year: aerials and face painting. We are also open for suggestions, if there is any activity you would like to do. If you have any questions please contact society president (Jana) at j.zolotarevskaja@lse.ac.uk or society secretary (Yasha) at su.soc.altents@lse.ac.uk

LSESU Film Society & Amnesty International Society present...

Date: Tuesday 9th November
Location: New Theatre (E171)
Time: 7pm
Film: Lilya 4-ever

Salsa Society

We have classes weekly ranging from beginners, improvers, intermediate to advance! These stages are conducted every week throughout the year even during the holidays. The classes are as follows:
Tuesday : SOUND, Leicester Sq 7.30-9.30pm

AFRICA FORUM

Tuesday 9th November
Discussion Group on Changing Urban Lifestyles
L08 6-7.30pm

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Y**The first Psychedelic Society party:**

Wednesday 10th Nov, 8pm-1am.
Underground Bar. £3 members/£4 non-members. Psy-trance, massage, trippy decor, good people.

LSESU Film Society & Indian Society present...

Location: Hong Kong Theatre (D1)
Confirmed Time: 2pm-3.30pm
Guest speaker: Javed Akhtar

The highly acclaimed Bollywood director, screening writer, lyricist, etc, Javed Akhtar will be available to answer questions from a limited number of Film Society and Indian Society members.

LSESU People & Planet society:

First climate change campaign meeting will be at 1 pm next Wednesday (Nov 10) in room D106.
Discussion on STOP ESSO after Bush victory and other issues!

We would like to inform you that tickets for the popular **LSE Bouzoukia Night** are now available for sale.

Tickets can be purchased from Thursday 4th November until Tuesday 9th November from 10 am to 2 pm on Houghton Street opposite the LSE Student Union.

Every ticket includes free food (souvlakia), free drinks and unlimited wine.

Ticket prices are as follows:

Members: £7
Non-members: £9
£5 for late door entrance (only wine)
The Bouzoukia Night is organised in association with the **LSESU Cypriot Society** and will take place on Wednesday 10th November from 19:00 to 1:00 at the LSE Student Union (the Quad) on Houghton Street.
There will be live Greek music performed by a Greek band, Greek food (souvlakia), free drinks and unlimited wine.

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Y**LIBERTY @ LSE PRESENTS...**

I.D. CARD
TALK AND DEBATE -
IS OUR LIBERTY BEING
THREATENED?

Thursday, November 11th
5-7pm, Room S78

Further information on ID cards available from Liberty @ LSE Society on Houghton St., Tuesday and Thursday 12-2pm this week.

JET Program Presentation

There will be a speaker from the Japanese Embassy, who will give a presentation on the JET Program. The Program is run to provide students an opportunity to teach English in Japan. All those interested in working and/or visiting Japan should attend!

6:30pm, S75
Presentation with Q&A session

Japanese snacks will be provided

LSESU Film Society presents...

Location: New Theatre
Time: 7pm
Film: Bridget Jones' Diary

LSE Kazakhstan Society would like to invite you to an evening of KAZAKH MUSIC AND DANCE performed by famous Kazakhstani artists. This is a chance for you to hear the enchanting sounds of traditional musical instruments "kobiz" and "zhetigen" mixed with modern music styles. For fashion and dance fans there will be Kazakh dance performed by professional ballet artists wearing national clothes.

21:00
OLD THEATRE, OLD BUILDING

The LSE SU Malaysia Singapore Society

Theatre trip to Les Miserables at the Queen Theatre.
Prices are yet to be confirmed.
Date - Thursday, 11th November 2004 Contact for further information.

su.soc.malaysia-singapore@lse.ac.uk

Latin American Party in The Quad, Thursday 11 November, from 7 pm

(brought to you by the Latin American Society and the Peruvian Society)
On the programme :
- 1 courtesy drink at your arrival
- 7 to 8 pm : free salsa course and latin dance demonstrations
- A whole lot of latin music
- Dance competition and winning prize!
Entrance : 3 £ members ; 4 £ non members

Christian Union Weekly Main Meeting

Every Thursday at 7pm in G1, unless otherwise advertised.
Every Thursday 5.30pm to 6.30pm in the chapel, room G9.
Contact su.soc.christian-union@lse.ac.uk.

LSESU KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIETY PRESENTS...

**REINCARNATION:
THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL**
Thur 11th Nov, 6pm
In Room D209, Clement House, LSE
Free entry. Eastern philosophy, delicious food, drinks and dessert.
Nearest Station: Holborn, Info: 07717878330

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Y**Salsa Society**

We have classes weekly ranging from beginners, improvers, intermediate to advance! These stages are conducted every week throughout the year even during the holidays. The classes are as follows:

Friday : MINISTRY OF SALSA, Elephant and Castle 8.00-10.00pm

LSE SU ACS LAUNCH PARTY 2004

Friday 12th nov.
9:00-1:30am
(Get there by 11:00 latest!!)
@Denim Bar (4A upper st.martin's lane, soho wc2h 9ea)

(nearest tube:leicester square)

dress code:smart and sexy
LSE 5POUNDS
NUS 6 POUNDS
WITH FLYER:7POUNDS

CAMPUS-WIDE FASTING DAY!

Open for All! Fast (no food or drink) from dawn till dusk. Friday 12th November, organised by the **LSESU Islamic Society**. Come break your fast with us. FREE FOOD FOR ALL! Short talk and presentation on 'why muslims fast'.

Room D302 at 4.00pm sharp.

OPEN FRIDAY PRAYERS & SERMON!

Ever wondered why muslims disappear for an hour every Friday lunchtime?? Come find out in the badminton court, basement of Old Building, at 1.10pm on Friday 12th November. ALL INVITED!

Italian Society Event:

Media and Democracy in today's Italy: a meeting with Tana De Zulueta, MP. A member of the Italian Senate since 1996, the speaker is a former correspondent of the Economist from Rome and an LSE alumna.
Hong Kong Theatre, Friday November 12th, 6.30 pm

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K**ALTERNATIVE CAREERS EVENT: CAREERS IN MEDIA**

Date: 16th November 2004
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: D202 Clement House

Free admission for members
1 pound for non-members

Simon Israel, a political correspondent with Channel 4, will give a talk on his experiences and provide further insight to those interested in finding out more about a career in media. An experienced second speaker is to be confirmed.

Sir Martin Sorrell, WPP to Speak to the Business Society

Date: Tuesday 16th November, 2004
Time: 5 - 6 pm
Venue: E171 (New Theatre)

We are very privileged to have Sir Martin Sorrell speak to us on the challenges and opportunities facing company leaders. This is a great opportunity to listen to a very accomplished individual from an outstanding firm and we encourage as many of you to come as possible.

The LSE SU Malaysia Singapore Society
Malaysia-Singapore Nottingham Games
Date - Saturday, 13th November 2004

A Grimshaw International Relations Club Lecture onDarfur: A Complex Crisis with no Easy Solution

Speaker: Mr. Gregory Barrow, Senior Public Affairs Officer of the United Nations World Food Programme
Date and Time: Monday 15th of November, 4.10 pm
Venue:Hong Kong theatre, Clement House

This lecture is going to endeavour into the complexities of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan. Mr. Barrow recently went to Darfur for the World Food Programme and will give an account of the situation on the ground. The lecture will be followed by questions from the audience.

For more information, please visit www.lse-students.ac.uk/grimshaw

Tennis Seconds show their class

Football weren't the only sport where the First Team played the Second Team last week.....

Sumit Buttoo



LSE Tennis 1^{sts}2
LSE Tennis 2^{nds}8
Lincolns Inn Fields



Lincoln Inn Fields was the setting for the first supposed 'clash of the titans'. This, surely the most eagerly anticipated event of this season's University tennis calendar, just did not live up to its billing. Team 2 were always a class above and never really needed more than second gear.

The pre-match banter contained Adrien's return to the first team after injury, the fact that Johan had gone AWOL and Ashton playing still under the influence of alcohol!

The first (and longest) singles match that got underway in tandem with the first doubles match was between Thomas (team 1) and Felix. There were many mutterings from Felix, and Thomas

threw his racket in an entertaining affair. Thomas produced a cheeky lob at 6-5 in the first set when he looked to have lost the point. The Frenchman became complacent at 4-3 in the tie-break by producing a double fault, which proved decisive as he lost the breaker 7-4. In his anger he swatted a ball out of the tennis court (and lost it!). Felix broke a string in the second set, so had to borrow one of his teammates' rackets. This time the pendulum swung in Thomas's favour and he continued his fine recent form to pull team 1 back into the tie by winning 6-7, 6-0, 6-1. Overall

now 3-2 to team 2. The next match saw returning captain Adrien play Alex. Adrien was hoping to recover from the doubles thrashing but he made a poor start by immediately being broken. He delighted the watching 'crowd' with an in-between the legs shot and also winning the point, which is unusual in tennis. To prove this opinion, he tried the same trick later and lost the point. Alex had started slowly but turned on the style to come through 6-4, 6-1 and give his team a 5-2 lead. That result certainly made Pete's (team 2) job easier as he

knew a win for him against Ashton would give team 2 victory. Unfortunately Ashton was only 50% fit due to previous night exertions! He was frustrated with his game early on and Pete took advantage to pinch the first set. He looked to be cruising to victory at 5-2 in the second set but Ashton upped his performance and produced a super comeback to hijack it 7-5. Unforced errors were aplenty but Pete made slightly less allowing him to emerge victorious 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 and give team 2 an unassailable 7-2 lead.

The final match was doubles between Thomas and Ashton, Felix and Pete. You could tell there was only pride at stake as little emotion bubbled from the court. A rare piece of excellence from Thomas saw him send down a bullet like ace. Unfortunately Team 1 just did not click, allowing Felix and Pete to romp to a 8-3 win. Final overall score was 8-2.

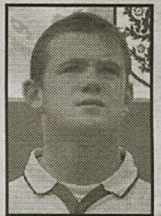
Finally I would just like to say thanks to the team members who celebrated my 19th birthday with a couple of drinks at the pub.

I'd also like to say if you fancy playing tennis for the LSE, get in contact with me at sbuttoo@hotmail.com.

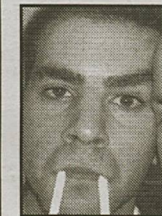
AU Lookalikes



Wayne Rooney of Man Utd & England



Wayne Rooney of the LSE Rugby Team



Heidi Range (Sugababes)



Dominic Rustam



Heidi Range (Sugababes)



Julia (Aerobics)

Do you know anyone that deserves to be in AU lookalikes? Let us know by emailing

thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk

You never know, we might even have a prize for the best one!

Q: What's the plural of genius? A: Netball 2^{nds}

Netball Seconds take on the Kappa Slappas of QM and UCL

Alison Blease



LSE Netball 2^{nds}22
Queen Mary 1^{sts}24
Mile End

LSE Netball 2^{nds}22
Euston Tech (UCL).....20
St. Albans

Monday night, Mile End and the biggest load of incompetent fools I have ever met. Having agreed to rearrange the match to this date to do them a favour, and then agreeing to short quarters because they could only get a court for an hour, the fun really started in the second quarter. One of their players fell over and injured herself (NOT badly at all) and yet she lay down in the middle of the court for twenty minutes with no one attempting to help her off and

everyone ignoring the fact that you are only allowed three minutes in order to decide if she is going to carry on before continuing the match.

With fifteen minutes of court time left and two thirds of the match to go play finally resumed. It then stopped again when the team of ten year old kids came on for footie training. It then started again when the kind football coach said we could finish the match. Seeing as the match was very close and always within two goals and the lead changing constantly we were pretty pissed off when after all this messing around we ended up losing by two goals. However, the joke's on them as we got the result disregarded and will be replaying them in week 10 for the ultimate of grudge matches. Serves 'em right for being such a bunch of arses and complete bitches.

Along came Wednesday and because UCL are gay we had to trek to their stupid sports grounds in St Albans. In case you're wondering netball requires no grass, very little space and hence is a game usually played very easily inside London. After a bus, a train and a taxi we arrived and were raring to go. Having learnt my lesson on Mon I made sure we played under protest

when there turned out to be just one umpire, cos you never know. The match was not the walkover it might have been as both of our goal attacks were out nursing twisted ankles but the team were up to the challenge. Despite the dirty tactics of belting Aine, our star GD, in the nose with the ball from about a foot away ensuring much dramatic bleeding on court, we failed to be put off. Following Aine's example we soldiered on inspired by her performance especially when her cock was hurting her so much!! The final quarter was sheer determination and the team really worked our arses off to secure victory. I can't really bad mouth UCL too much (for once) as we got free meals and cakes and cups of tea afterwards which was much appreciated before the stupid journey back again. Although we did discover that the seconds is full of fucking, fucking, fucking genius genius'. (Don't bother telling me what the plural of genius is as I already know it's "The Seconds").

Well done Laura, Aine, Marie, Emma, Jenna, Jade, Alex, Jen and Charlie for a well earned victory, and for beginning a bitter QM feud. Don't you feel proud?!!



Team of the Week

Dom Rustam selects the best players from this week's games.



Key:

- 1 First Team Player
- 2 Second Team Player
- 3 Third Team Player
- 4 Fourth Team Player
- 5 Fifth Team Player
- 6 Sixth Team Player
- 7 Seventh Team Player

Star of the week:

Tony Murphy - after travelling to the wrong side of London for a match, this brave Mancunian trekked all the way out to Heathrow to star in the last two minutes of the Sevenths 8-0 win over Imperial. Now that's dedication.

Team of the week:

The Fourth Team- For finally getting that illusive first victory against a tough opposition in UCL 4th team. But not even at 2-0 up with ten minutes to go would they let Craig take a penalty, so there's one first we'll have to wait a little longer for: Top grade lads!

Schoolboy of the week:

Gaz Fishlock- At 4am last Wednesday, this young Cardiff lad boarded the N50

to God knows where, on which he foolishly fell asleep. On being kicked off at the end of the journey, Gaz fortunately stumbled across a nice man extending a hand of friendship. Thinking this was "a fellow LSE chum", in his drunken state Gaz accepted an offer to stay at his place. Unfortunately things got a little peculiar when the nice man told Gaz he had to sleep in his bed, and a little bit more peculiar when Gaz found the nice man's room covered with Matt Damon posters. The following morning Gaz awakes to find himself in bed with a 28 year old stranger in Beckton with an hour and a half journey back to bank-side. Gaz said that he might have made his 9 'o' clock AC100 class, had he not had so much difficulty walking properly.

It's The Final Countdown.....

Footy 6ths v Footy 7ths - 15 days, 4 hours, 18 mins, 7 seconds.
The Barrel - 37 days, 23 hours, 37 mins, 13 seconds.
Caella - 143 days, 19 hours, 45 mins, 58 seconds.

Can Fabs win the Golden Boot?

After last week's hard fought 1-0 win over RUMs, the Thirds coast past Holloway and GKT

Mark
Hultum



LSE Footy 3rds2

Holloway 4ths0

A Shit Women's Prison, Egham

LSE Footy 3rds5

GKT 3rds1

Fortress Berrylands, Surrey



Thirds. Things are looking promising...

Fabs' army marched to the shithole that is Holloway on Saturday optimistic of yet another three points. Not even a delayed journey courtesy of those uncompromising ticket collectors of South West trains (who in the AU has ever seen one of these?) could put us off the task at hand. And three points we took from the team somehow topping our table despite the world-reknowned shitness of their university. The pikey prison scum simply did not know what

had hit them. They had no answer to our formidable front line of Fabs, and our very own 'Phillipino Sex Slave' Andy Ong, nor could they penetrate our rock solid back four of 'Gypsy' Paul, myself, Simba the Lion King, and Dan 'right back of the week, every week' Brown. Anser 'Manuel' Alonzo added to his cleverly crafted solo effort, with a second half header via our Gary Neville long throw impressionist, James McGurn, to seal victory. We should have been celebrating all the way home, only some Holloway pikey thought it clever to pilfer

anything of value from the changing room while we administered a hefty beating to his mates outside.

And so on to the rubbishness of GKT. They were, for want of a better word, shit. We scored five but we could have had fifty. Special mention here to Fabs who managed another inspirational hat-trick (FC golden boot contender perhaps?), despite the fact that for most of the game we looked like we'd be unable to score in a brothel, despite a wealth of chances. Our new incomprehensible formation of 3-1-4-1-1 paid off from the start as we took a first minute lead through captain Fabs. The onslaught continued, and Fabs and myself went close, both agonisingly crashing our efforts against the bar, and so too did Anser, much to his own comedy brand of Spanish anger. Somewhere amongst this Fabs added another two, bringing us in comfortably at the interval. Inspired by Fabs half-time rantings about 'goal difference', and his weekly 'don't panic' speech, we took the game again to this comedy outfit. Andy Ong finally put his shooting puts on to open his scoring account for the season with a goal befitting his tireless effort. In the interests of fairness, we gifted them a consolation goal. A long ball over the top gave Big (Dunc)

Chris and keeper Nick the opportunity to collide with each other, and our Bimbo between the sticks then decided to 'hug' their forward to deny him an open goal. Getting off lightly (i.e. not being sent off), Nick saved the penalty only to be beaten by the rebound. There was time before the end though for Gary 'Gazza' Dhama to score another goal of the season contender with a cracking right foot drive into the top corner. Another easy three points. Like it or not, the Thirds are on a roll, and it doesn't look like ending anytime soon. Fab's double winners here we come...



As an inspirational measure in the pre-match huddle, Fabs showed the rest of the team his white man's cock.

It's hard to believe after the copious amounts of wrongness last season, that the Third XI could turn into a respectable, title challenging outfit. It is especially hard to believe that this change has occurred under the captaincy of serial violence inciter/drunken idiot/general wrong-doer Fabs Joseph. But stranger things have happened. If Bush can get re-elected, Fabs can surely achieve respectability for the once Mighty

Not if Ross Lucas gets there first!

The Champagne Sevenths keep strolling through ULU Division Three, with 22 goals in 3 games.

Nathan
'Hucknall'
Dobson



LSE Footy 7ths8

ICSM 4ths0

Runway 3, Heathrow



the first year and there has never been a word of scandal about the six-foot brick shit house of a striker who has amassed a mighty 7 goals already this season. He was around when in our first year Manni would take us to the wrong ground, scratch his balls in front of us after we had lost 10-0, smoke spliffs before the game and try to concentrate on not letting more than 5 in, he was around on those shit journeys back from Hatton Cross, those dirty pints in the Beaver's Retreat, those T-nesis, and my really shit jokes at the team dinners. Yet Ross came through it all in fine form to enjoy the simple pleasures in life, three course meals followed by coffee, hair gel, the Times, slaves, and scoring an endless amount of goals for the Champagne Sevenths.

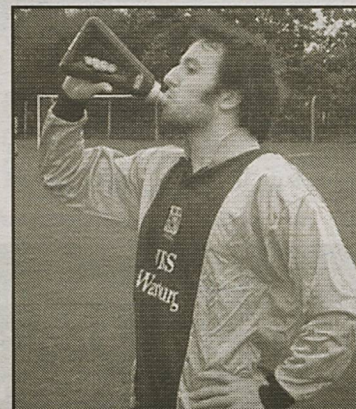
The game consisted of two halves. The first half in which people played their positions and tried to do

well for the team, and the second in which everyone became six year olds and tried to score. Captain McAleavey came close on two occasions, shame his shots were about as useful as a dropped stitch in a crocheted pearl line of four. (Knitting speak). New signing Iqbal Raihansmate terrorised the Medics down the left wing, with backheels and stepovers aplenty. After a brief trip to the wrong side of London, team of the week star Tony Murphy enjoyed a rapturous ovation from the Sevenths as he came on for the last two minutes of the game. Those two minutes involved the whole of the Sevenths attempting to set him up for a goal yet much like Steffen Freund for Spurs he responded to the loud shouts of "Shoooooot" by blasting the ball as hard as he could over the goal. DJ Infrared came close to

scoring his second goal of the season but was blocked on the line by the only person still playing for the opposition. (Hardcore, you know the score!).

The train back from Hatton Cross was full of champagne sevenths spirit. A quick phone call to Nick's dad in Columbia and the evening was sorted. We all went off to enjoy the delights of the Tuns smacked off our faces on the shipment of Coffee that Vandal had just secured for Ross. Oh yeah, and Tony got drunk, and threw up.

Quick shout out to my rude boy knitting society crew. Ed Cowdrill you have done a fantastic job in setting up the most unique society in the history of LSE. Highlights of the week included Bea missing a stitch, Erin pearling when she should have crocheted, and Ed lining a double stitched overlay. Top Knitting.



Graeme Holloway - the drink of Champions.

On Wednesday, the Champagne Sevenths enjoyed yet another goal spree as they walked to an 8-0 romp over a beleaguered Imperial Medics Fourths. Goals came from a number of players including Graeme Holloway (2), Nick Vivyan (1), and Ed Calow (2) but most notably Ross Lucas gracefully slotted away his first hat-trick for LSE. I have been playing with Ross (...yep!) since



Ross 'Brick Shithouse' Lucas terrorises the St Bart's defence.

More Lookalikes....



Mylene Klass ex-of Hear'Say



Sandy from LSE Women's Rugby



Frodo from Lord of the Rings



Ally Jones of the Sevenths



Frodo from Lord of the Rings (again)



Jamie Stevens, Hockey Captain



Renton from Trainspotting



Alex Goddard, Football Club Treasurer

It's a marathon, not a sprint

LSE Running edged out of the top points after a tough challenge at Richmond

Kevin
Baddeley



London Colleges League
Results after 2 Races

1 Imperial	727
2 UCL	677
3 LSE	664
4 King's.....	653

Norbiton, Timbuktu



brating the English tradition of sportsmanship.

As for the race, the first mile was quite tricky with over a hundred runners trying to force their way down a narrow piece of gravel track. As the field opened out it was easier to move, and due to the fairly flat ground it was a fast pace.

After the 5.4 mile course (2.7 for women) some of the individual results were impressive. David (now in the top 10 individual runners) moved up from 18th to 13th position this week, finishing first for LSE, followed by Matt R in 24th and Anand in 30th. Also in the top 50 were Matt H, then Lawrence and Ernesto, after a fierce scrap for the finish. The rest of us followed soon after, with Will achieving a sub-40 minute PB.

The women's team of Jean and Zou also ran and scored well, in their debut races.

Overall LSE still have it all to do. We've lost ground on Imperial and UCL have come out of nowhere too, but at least we still lead Poly in the league standings. I won't make any excuses (although we did have injuries, missing runners, and one guy we found lying on the street near the park), so roll on Wimbledon Common.

This race came as something of a wake-up call - after last week's triumphant slaughtering of a lacklustre Strand Poly, and keeping tight on Imperial's tail, things couldn't really get much better. And they didn't. The writing was already on the wall that morning, with news that our superior LSE team was weakened by several key absentees, who were either swamped with essays or couldn't be arsed to show up. But hey, what difference would it actually make?

We had to travel to the depths of Norbiton for this race. After a brisk walk from the station we arrived at our destination - a field. It was surely the right field however, since it was full of runners doing their warm up jogs at about twice my racing speed. A quick survey of the area summed up the terrain for the race - flat, dry and lots of grass. After a brisk walk from the station we arrived at our destination - a field. It was surely the right field however, since it was full of runners doing their warm up jogs at about twice my racing speed. A quick survey of the area summed up the terrain for the race - flat, dry and lots of grass.

With a few minutes before the race it was time to talk tactics. One of the great things about running is that this part of the sport is not very complicated. There's the 'run slow and come last' approach, which is one of my favourites, or there's the 'run bloody fast and don't come last'

approach, which is what every single runner does, except one, each week. So with this worthwhile team talk over, we were ready to go.

Assembled on the start line we were freezing our nuts off (except the girls of course, I hope) for 10 minutes waiting to be given the 'ok' to get started. Finally an Imperial guy who had just finished setting up the course arrived back, and as he struggled for breath we sprinted off, cele-

Netball punish a Poly and polish off the pinot

Marcia Road has never seen glam like this as the Netball First Team hit the town....

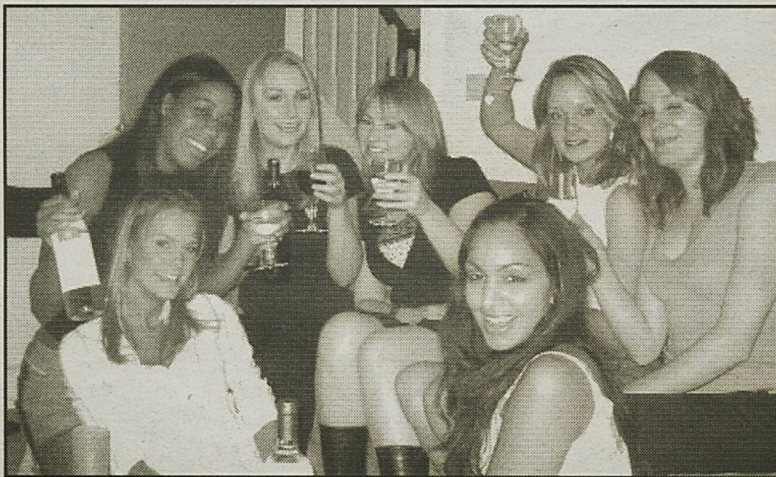
Olivia
Schofield



LSE Netball 1^{sts}.....38

Southbank Slags.....6

Lincoln's Inn Fields



team have been rather lame on Wednesday nights. But as promised this has all changed. The entire team (minus Laura who was ill and George who got lost en route) met at Jade's house on the infamous Marcia Road for a Pinot-fest. Several bottles, and a trip in a shopping trolley later, we found ourselves in a taxi headed for le Chateau de Tuns. The taxi driver looked incredibly scared and couldn't get rid of us fast enough!

We strolled into the tuns ready to sing our hearts out, only to be told by Andy Gold that we were in fact to late. Never to be put off by a little setback, Jade, Phoebe and I proceeded to take the microphone and sing to the non-karaoke tunes, notably 'Mysterious Girl'. We were also happily reunited with George upon arrival in the tuns, who had been waiting for us all night after getting lost in South London trying to find Jade's house. 11pm

came far too quickly and so not ready to call it a night we ventured onto Limeabout. Here it goes slightly blurred, but I do distinctly remember seeing Phoebe and Rachel on the dancefloor, and playing a pinch-your-arse game with Ross until he got one angry girl threaten to slap him. At 3am the lights came on and the night was over. Somehow getting diverted on the way home I ended up at near the Tate Modern 2 hours later, walking through my front door at 5am with my neighbour coming home from his night shift at the same time. Rather embarrassing. Although I was more amused to see the Rachel was still not back and finally got in at 6am with a big grin on her face. All in all I think the 1st team put in a good show and did particularly well to endure 2 hours of training on Thursday night without vomiting on the sidelines. Good girls!

Oops we did it again, kicked some arse and got hammered on Pinot, ohhh how tiring it is to be a 1st team netballer these days!!! This week the mighty mighty 1st team took on the untalented poly scum Southbank. As predicted it was a walkover and we're still unbeaten this season.

The match started promisingly, both teams turning up on time along with two competent umpires. Within seconds it was clear this was going to be an easy match. They actually didn't know how to play netball. Catching, throwing and generally moving seemed beyond them and the only thing they did well was abuse us and say the word 'f***'. Like the pro's we are, we played our own game without stooping to their level and had taken a convincing lead by quarter time, at least 10 goals ahead.

As we warmed up the lead grew larger and larger and their tempers got close to boiling point. I have to

admit I was little afraid of Jade's defender who had slices in her eyebrow and swore at anyone who looked at her. Seeing that the opposition was getting a little flustered to say the least, we decided to monopolise this fact. I think in cricket the term used is 'sledging' but here it was plain arrogant bitchiness which from my experience works incredibly well on the poly's....

you should learn the rules before you get on a netball court."

*"F*** you, I'm f***ing warning you I'll take you out."*

"Well that's what I've been trying to teach you, you are not allowed to take me out or you get a penalty against you"

*"F*** off you little bitch".*

Umpire - official warning for aggression against Southbank with possible 5 minute cooling down period. Bingo.

By the end of the game poor Southbank were so flustered and fed up they were worse than ever (if that's possible). We stormed to victory, said our three cheers, and quickly went home before getting knifed.

As you may have noticed the 1st

"Excuse me, did you know you are not allowed to run through me, it's Rule 1.34?"

*"F*** off."*

"I'm only trying to help."

*"I don't f***ing need your help."*

"That's terribly rude, maybe





Women's Rugby reveal their finer qualities

Tasty



Women's Rugby.....	27
GKT.....	10
Fortress Berrylands, Surrey	

GKT were supposed to be the dog's bollocks but this myth was decisively quashed as LSE's starlets stormed to victory in impressive style.

From the start we dominated GKT's half, stringing together some fabulous passes, the odd loop and some gigantic hits to show them we would not give up our unbeaten home record. The scrum pulled out a champion performance. We finally appreciated the benefit of sinking as low as possible to make sure that their cellulite was no match for our combined toned strength. The

front row of Josie, Hester and myself determinedly resisted their initial hit and, with Sandy and Anna in second row, we drove them back. The support was powerful and if GKT escaped, flankers Lauren and Katy were there to slam the bitch to ground.

Play led to a break through the opposition, a beautiful pass from captain Jen to Sharon swept down the flank. She caught GKT out with her twist and turns and passed the ball infield to Kaye before being smashed by some troll. Kaye dodged and smashed her way over the tryline. Equally poetic play involving 'experienced ball handling' by Amanda and a 'wow' dash by Ginny again brought it to the tryline again. She could definitely give the third team some tips...

GKT continued to battle in vain to regain some honour and possibly a try, and occasionally were inspired by two of their 'larger than life' players: most notably their number 7. She was akin to Godzilla, in roar and build. Watching from the sidelines both Shettters and Tupac were glad to not be facing such a beast



but as we always say 'the fatter they are, the harder they fall and squishier the cushion', and also with Hanimal taking out her legs with a flying tackle she cried like a baby.

Now a try to make any rugby loving soul proud...sexy newcomer Yvette made a dramatic dash for the tryline taking on one...two...three... of the butch opposition. She is tiny but be warned she was absolutely ferocious and bitch-slapped (technically hand-off-ed) several GKT minions, before slamming home her debut try of the season.

Needless to say the opposition gawped in amazement, while Yvette triumphantly teetered back, provocatively wiggling her ass. Assured confidence and the wind-swept look created by such intense play ended the first half...

The second half saw some glamorous tactical changes where Ruth came on to sustain the pressure against Godzilla, and Laura and Fern exposed their fresh and sexy legs to threaten war-weary GKT with more speed. A superb team effort spanning the width of the pitch and involving a quick hand off by Vanessa as the new

flanker started another run. Anna tackled, Thali passed right, Fern's speed left, maul on the 22, along the backs into a ruck, Hannah yelled, Ellie to Jen, kick, all chase, Katy slamming tackle, scrum down LSE ball (5 metres to tryline), dummy pass, into maul of the game on the tryline!! GKT used their massive paws to keep the ball up (bitches) and deny the forwards their much deserved try, but much praise for a team effort.

Our efforts were soon rewarded by another Kaye try and by Jen's conversion. Perhaps complacency, perhaps tiredness, perhaps thoughts of the night ahead who knows but we let them get two tries back. They were non-memorable tries but this was a warning so Jen decided to pack more punch in by bringing on Neesha. This partnering quickly led to some awesome interplay with Ginny and the brute strength of Sandy's hair flick to smack the ball to Kaye to wrap up the game. Although this might begin to sound repetitive in the weeks to come: she came, she saw, she conquered; well something good and beautiful had to come out of Welsh Wrexham.

Poor Man's Firsts succumb to Jimmy Little double!

Gaz 'The Pirate' Carter



LSE 1st XI.....	4
LSE 2nd XI.....	2
Fortress Berrylands, Surrey	



In a world of bitter disappointment, of harsh failures, bad weather and unfulfilling sex with very average looking people, fleeting moments of excellence, of victory and of grace must be treasured. They must be treasured, revered and enjoyed, for our on-pitch victories taste all the more sweet against a backdrop of waking up in Beckton next to a 28 year old guy, of looking like an embarrassing dad, or being a simple joke of a person. And thus the Mighty Mighty First Team treasure our victorious Saturdays like the incredible misers of talent that we are, and this Saturday was no exception.

The Seconds flirted with an upset, and a tenacious display from all concerned coupled with some pedantic officiating led to a game that was more heart than flair, more steel than style, more ram it home than slide it in. The

normal fluidity of the First XI's game was lost, and only recovered towards the end, when a 10-man Second Team (thanks to Sharif's decision to tell the referee that he looked more like his mothers' milkman than his father) lost all semblance of shape, and Gaz Carter and the Mighty Mighty Midfield did their best to add some finesse to an otherwise scrappy game.

A debatable early penalty from Freddy 'knock me down with a feather' Salt ensured the Seconds went into the turn-around one goal to the good against a First XI that, although focussed and purposeful, had yet to hit top gear. With Cladmin bellowing out

encouragement for the eager Seconds Team, and Shiva 'f***ing idiot' Tiwari talking some inane babble of dubious worth, the team talks were a moment for all to forget, and we set forth to rectify in the last 45 minutes, what we had contrived to create in the first.

The Firsts hit their stride, and the midfield began dominating the aerial battle. Realising that it would tough in the centre of the park today, Brummie had brilliantly decided to put his three smallest players in the middle. The battle was pitched and fierce, but it was a cross from Judas Grewal that led to the First Team's equaliser, Tom Bray misjudging the flight of the ball, and Jimmy

Little pouncing to level the scores. Joy was unrestrained in the Firsts camp, with Matt Joy-boy indulging in some one-handed clapping.

The Seconds, though, realised that they had an opportunity now to atone for all the past wrongs they had ever done. Freddy's conviction for curb-crawling could be forgotten, Brummie's wife-beating and Dobson's attempted arson of an old people's home would all be forgotten if they could pull off the upset of the century by humbling the Mighty Mighty First Team. A flick on from young Ross highlighted the worrying defensive frailties of the First XI, and Rich Nicholls nipped in to tuck in a volley from a tight angle. Jubilant, and energised, the Seconds danced a dance of delight, and hugged and kissed in full homo-erotic glory, their team spirit and communal lust for each other a real sight to see. Unfortunately, they hadn't reckoned on Big John's tactical genius.

Having only eleven available players, Captain John made the brave decision to start with Dom Rustam, and not just with ten players and the Roosht on the bench. Many senior players questioned this decision, but John's logic proved its worth as Dom crashed home a superb volley from forty yards to bring the teams level - an arcing shot that will live long in the memory both for its power

and accuracy, and also for Dom's single-minded, some might say selfish, ambition.

The wind seemed to go from the Seconds' sails, and like a holed tanker they begin to leak their precious cargo all over the Berrylands pitches, contaminating all who went near their despair.

With the sending-off arrived complete dominance of territory and possession, as the Wehrmacht-esque LSE First XI rumbled through the barren Second Team positions picking out passes at will. A rapier like thrust from Jimmy Little and an arcing, intelligent cross-field hooked pass from the ever-present Fishy Fishlock saw the ball cannon off Dom's head and crash into the net to put the Firsts into a 3-2 lead. A move of such precision and effortless ability that grown men cried to watch it.

A spirited, but ultimately impotent fight-back from the Seconds briefly threatened, but from a superb aerial defence of the box from Big John, Fishy Fishlock fed Jimmy Little to net his second of the game, with Tom Bray stranded in the opposition half having ventured up field for a last-minute corner.

The First Team role on, their 100 percent record intact, and the bragging rights firmly in their hip pockets.

What's black and white and needs feeding? Jill Dando's cat.