

# THE BEAVER

Newspaper of the London School of Economics Students' Union

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# Students win on Divestment

## LSE First out of South Africa but will Secrecy Spoil Success?

by ANDREW CORNWELL

The Student Union's 11 year campaign to force the LSE to divest has finally ended in success. On July 9th the Court of Governors voted 12-10 to sell shares in 16 companies with South African operations, review holdings with a view to sale in a further 9, and accept independent monitoring from EIRIS, the ethical investment research group.

Anti-apartheid campaigners hailed the decision as a triumph and a vindication of the occupation of Connaught House in March of this year. Student Governor Avinash Persaud described it as "a truly historic decision. The LSE can once more proudly wear the mantle of Britain's most progressive institution."

The LSE is the first British university to completely break links with the apartheid regime. According to Persaud, Durham, York, Cambridge and others who claim to have "divested" have in fact only sold shares in South African companies and not in multinationals.

Student Union leaders were however more sceptical. This was particularly in view of the School's



LSE Students during the 1987 divestment campaign

unexplained refusal to publicly name companies and to state whether shares had actually been sold yet.

Labour's Nick Randall, General Secretary, cautiously welcomed the move. 'Although it is a significant victory for the Student Union', he said, "it is still unclear whether the school will keep their promises. There has been a great

shift in attitudes, as the agreement to use EIRIS shows. They've moved the goalposts. But money is involved. And where money's involved they can always be devious.'

Randall's words were borne out by the publicity-shyness of the School encountered by The Beaver. Officially the companies in-

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# Home is where the Money is Housing

by BEAVER STAFF

Rent increases in London over the past few years have, as everyone knows, been astronomical. There is now very little accommodation for less than £40 a week that is within reasonable travelling distance from the centre of London. As a result, students are being pushed further and further out. As for property prices, they are continuing to rise by 20 or 25% every year and there is no sign that this trend is abating.

At the LSE, the situation is arguably even worse than at other colleges; the school only provides accommodation for about 20% of students. Things will improve slightly in a few years with the construction of the Butler's Wharf hall of residence. However, it must be pointed out that the lease on Carr-Saunders is up for renewal. Will the LSE afford to keep it?

To darken the picture even further, the Housing benefit system will change. The government has decided to place students in a higher income bracket, as well as trying to cut subsidies to local authorities for students. This diminishes even more the chances for students without college accom-

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## Companies considered for Divestment

### Companies to be sold:

Shell, B.P., B.T.R., Grand Metropolitan, G.E.C., Glaxo, Tarmac, Hanson Trust, Rowntree Macintosh.

### Companies under review, with view to sale:

Midland Bank, Pearson, Legal and General, Redland.

### Companies with sale detail unknown:

B.A.T Industries, Beecham Group, Fisons, Burmah Oil, Allied Celloids Group, General Accident, Glynwed International, Sun Alliance, I.C.I., Prudential

### Total on Divestment List: 25 companies

# The LSE, the concrete never sets

by STAVROS MAKRIS

The LSE has a long tradition of improving its facilities in order to offer a better environment in which for students and academics to work. Usually work is expected to finish by the beginning of the Michaelmas Term. However, this year, for a variety of reasons, work will have to continue well into the term.

This summer's planned construction included the Pizzaburger, one of the Old Building lifts, Central Heating and the alteration of A45 and A40. To date, only the Pizzaburger and A40 have been completed.

Last year the School started the upgrading of some of its catering facilities by refurbishing the Brunch Bowl. The result was a larger and more functional dining area, though its purpose-built design raised some disapproving comments from some members of the School. It seems that the same philosophy has led to the re-designing, refurbishing and essential upgrading of the Pizzaburger. The new fast food restaurant is bigger, brighter, and feels very '80s, if not a little too plasticky and sterilised. The presentation has changed, for the better, and hopefully it will help to attract a wider clientele. As for the food, only time will show (how bad it will be?).

In the Old Building the smaller

of the two lifts, the rebuilding of which was supposed to be ready by Christmas, will not be ready until Spring Term. The Contractors and the School claim that work is progressing steadily and that it is "on target". The shaft has been completed and all that remains is the installation of the lift. The replacement of the lift has been long overdue, considering the need for a larger one. One has only to stand around the Ground Floor for a short time in order to appreciate the high usage of the remaining lift. It is interesting to note that once upon a time, the small lift was for the sole use of academics. This has not been so, however, for a few years.

A four year plan to improve the central heating system in the Old Building has slowed down in the beginning of the first of the three phases needed to replace radiators and pipes. This is due to the unexpected discovery of asbestos lining the Graham Wallace room. Urgent work had to be undertaken in order to deal with this hazard; this work will not be completed until 25th October. Work undertaken for this first phase of upgrading the central heating is expected not to disrupt lectures, though small parts of the building at times will be without heating. Temporary heating arrangements should be made.

The main headache though re-

mains the work undertaken in order to convert rooms A45 and A40 into much needed classrooms. This site is rebuilt as a suite of classrooms which could in addition be used, at a charge and during vacations, by outside organisations. A40 has been completed though long hold-ups in A45 have led to a four week delay. This, according to the Contractors, Listers, is due to the need for a new floor being built over an old foundation. Test holes drilled at the beginning of the term were not representative and this had led to essential redesigning. It is now expected that A45 will not be ready until 26th October, four weeks behind schedule. The School is currently involved in discussion with the Contractors and some overtime has been arranged, though not enough to bring completion forward.

Aside from its plans for redeveloping parts of its own site, the School had undertaken to build a Concert Hall at the Quadrangle in the East Building, the Student's Union Site. The School thus would be able to free A40, A45 and A86 from Students' Union use for concerts and events, reclaim the space for redeveloping into more functional space, while at the same time providing the LSE SU with its own independent entertainments facilities adjacent to the

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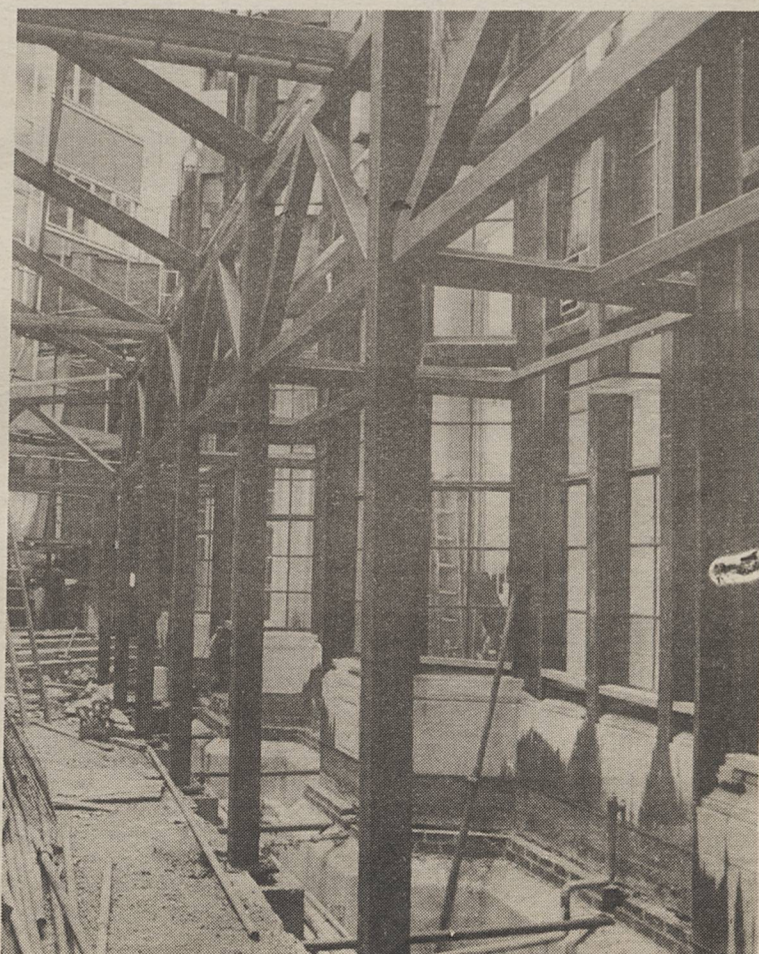


Photo: Gavin Allan-Wood

Archaeological digs at the LSE ?



# THE BEAVER

## Go tell it on the Mountain

At the start of a new academic year, The Beaver would like to express its appreciation at the decision by the Court of Governors to divest School funds from South Africa. But, with justified caution.

Too many wars have been lost by celebrating the individual battles, and not the final outcome of the conflict. Romanticised, maybe, but this may well be the position that the LSE Students Union finds itself in if it ignores the discrepancies in the School's divestment policy.

When the Student Union considers its stance this year on the famed and much vaunted occupation, it must not pat itself on the back too soon. The occupation has appeared to have been a success, but victory may never be realised if the Union ignores the present level of secrecy which is surrounding its actions. The School's decision to divest has been followed by an unprecedented reluctance to say anything more about the matter. The issue, forced so effectively by the students in the eleven year divestment campaign, culminating in the occupation of Connaught House in February, has now been shrouded in secrecy. Not only do the students not know of any decisions made, but the Court of Governors has been left in the

dark too.

The body which appears to know all about everything is the Code of Conduct Committee, set up for the express purpose of overseeing the divestment of LSE from companies with interests in South Africa. They know when and what, but will not tell anyone else. Having democratically agreed to abandon any financial links with South Africa, the Court of Governors then hand over all responsibility to a covert group, some of whose members, such as Dr Ray Richardson, vocally disagree with the fundamental principle.

The decision-making has been taken out of the Governors' hands, and they have now been denied all access to the decisions which its committee is taking.

**The Student Union must struggle to ensure that the secrets are unveiled for examination by all and sundry. Eleven years of effort have gone into an effective campaign, the aims of which, due to the reluctance of the Code of Conduct Committee to release details on whether the LSE has actually divested funds, may never be realised. Don't forget the battle, but if needs be, the conflict must be continued.**

## The Mysteries behind The Beaver

The Beaver is, as everybody probably knows by now, the Newspaper of the LSE Students' Union. However, what is less known is the organisation that makes the weekly publication of the newspaper possible.

The Beaver is run as a collective. That means that all decisions are taken by the students that actively participate in the production of the newspaper. They elect an editorial board that coordinates the work that goes on. This also means that the contents appear under collective responsibility. The collective is open to all students who want to try their hand

at the different aspects of journalism, express their own views or merely put forward their own ego.

The Beaver follows the broad guidelines of the LSESU on racism and sexual equality but we interpret these guidelines as broad because we only in the most extreme of cases would we consider censoring an opinion.

To pre-empt the inevitable accusations of "conspiracies", the only people who hi-jack *The Beaver* are those who work for it. If you come by the Beaver office in E205, you will soon discover how fun a hi-jack is.

## Housing

FROM PAGE 1

modation to find a cheap and decent place to live.

As students in general are not able to pay London "market prices", where virtually nothing can be found under £50, they must compromise, on prices or on quality of lodgings. And, as a recent report by Dr. IG Patel states: "The inadequacies of much private accommodation occupied by students, together with the high cost of living in London, are widely felt to have an adverse effect upon academic performance, health and the level of student indebtedness. The need for solutions to this problem is growing more acute all the time. The Students' Union has been looking into ways of helping students for several years. One of these was the creation of a Housing Association.

The Housing Association, set up by Richard Snell (then Labour Senior Treasurer) in July 1986, probably offers the only way for the Students' Union to alleviate this problem. When it was set up, its future looked bright; offers of support from other housing associations were forthcoming and the Union hoped to purchase its first property in the Summer of 1986. However because of lack of coordination and sense of purpose within the Union for most of last year, very little was achieved.

London property is a sound investment, . . . for those who can afford it. If prices continue to rise, before long the Union will not be able to afford any purchase of property. Houses do not come cheap, and only a major campaign by the Union could raise enough money for a purchase.

At the first Union General Meeting, on Thursday 8th October, a motion will be proposed asking the Union to back a set of initiatives designed to enable the first property purchases to be made within the next 6 to 12 months. These initiatives will propose that a 2% Housing Association surcharge be put on all SU services. This would raise in the region of £10,000 per year. The motion will also include a demand that the School help the Students' Union Housing Association by sponsoring £500 per student per place.

How the School will react to this remains to be seen. They announced in the aforementioned report that: "The School takes great care to ensure the welfare of its students and has been particularly concerned that they should live in reasonable accommodation." The months to come will show whether this is a genuine sentiment, or just a glossy publicity exercise.

## AT THE UNION

After their successful refurbishment of the Three Tuns, the victory (in principle) on divestment and the Housing Association scheme which is attracting universal praise, new sabbaticals Randall, Russell and Ford are facing the future with confidence. Even L.S.E. Tories have been converted by the new Labour administration. The edition of "Blueprint" prepared for Freshers Fair speaks of "competent" and "promising" sabbaticals - a far cry from the usual red-baiting tactics of the right. Indeed the team's achievements are listed with more respect than those of the Government. At a tense executive meeting the Tories voted narrowly to adopt a new conciliatory stance. Old style ranting and abuse of UGM procedure as practiced by maverick Nigel Kilby are definitely not part of this year's repertoire, although this may have something to do with restoring Conservative membership figures. Kilby himself has decided to infiltrate the Labour Party nationally.

So has peace broken out in LSE politics? Well, not quite. The Tories are hoping for a so-called "free speech" issue such as Ray Honeyford's visit to re-occur. This time they will have a tough new Education Act on their side as well as the likelihood of more determination from the Director Dr. Patel. With rumours growing that his 5-year contract will not be renewed, he will aim to deflect criticism of weak handling of the Honeyford and divestment issues, by a tough stance in any future confrontation with the Student Union. The guidelines on public

meetings issued last week make it clear that the power behind the throne, School Secretary Christine Challis will not stomach dissent or disruption. Sources within the administration point to the fact that during the occupation the Emergency Standing Committee voted by only 14-12 not to smash the Union *a la* Sussex University.

How the new model Labour Club will respond to impending authoritarianism is unclear. It seems unlikely that the designer Gouldites who now populate the East Building will feel like a fight. But certainly that they will try and amend the Union constitution to turn Student Governors from representatives to delegates. The near-disastrous division between Avinash Persaud and the majority of the divestment campaigners, coupled with Tory Steve Bantoft's vote against divestment have infuriated hacks such as Nick Randall, George Binette and Phil Evans.

As we await the first Union Meeting, entertained meanwhile by the return of old hacks such as O'Driscoll, the translation of the Left's summer triumph into U.G.M. votes is far from certain. Anyone who believes their 9-4 executive majority is permanent should begin to count the striped shirts and public school accents among the Freshers. The LSE's resistance to Thatcherite yuppie-dom is crumbling fast. Once upon a time (it was 1979) students went on hunger strike for disinvestment. Now they just buy B.P. shares and wonder what all the fuss was about . . .

## Our Ken in the Standard

The editorial page of the October 30th issue of the London Standard, a newspaper less well-known for its high falutin academic debate than for massive populist headlines and the latest share prices, reveals a new recruit for the newspaper.

Kenneth Minogue, professor of Government at the LSE, and who is of the view that "resisting the banalities of the student mind is the most important task of the eighties", presents us and the world at large with an interesting discussion of merits of a

libertarian approach to higher education. Nothing new... in fact, Ken is so far to the right of Maggie that he lays heavily into the radical Baker education policies. Perhaps he is rehearsing for another T.V. series on the merits of Fundamentalism, free markets in Chile and State-subsidised academics indoctrinating the youth into Communism. Talking of which, would the average tax-payer, if consulted, cough up for Professor Minogue's salary?

## Introduction to the Connaught House Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic balls-up of the week is proudly claimed by the suits from Connaught House. Dozens of students who have paid for the "Intro-Conference" were issued with the following from the L.S.E. administration: "Conferece for New Students 1987. Voucher for Supper on 29th September at 5.45pm. Value £1.65."

Not only is the value of the meal and the spelling questionable, but the ticket forgot to mention that the said restaurant has been closing before 5.00pm in the run-up to the term's start.

More delights: a single list for Hall accommodation that left newcomers to London running between Passfield, Carr-Saunders and Rosebery in search of their allocated bed. Failure to

provide promised coffee during the Intro Conference. And, more seriously, the case of a Malay student who flew to London in the expectation of a study place only to find it was not confirmed. The reason? The bureaucrats didn't seem to be bothered to send rejection by air mail.

The General Secretary of the Union intends to complain. At The Beaver, we don't believe in pissing in the wind, but we wish him luck anyway.

**the Beaver collective meetings, in E205. Mondays at 5 PM.**

## STUDENTS' UNION HARSHIP FUND

If you are a self-financing and in need of money, you can apply to this fund. It provides small amounts of money (maximum of £150 per term). You can apply each term, whether or not you have been helped previously. Application forms are available from the Student Welfare Office (Room E294). The closing date for application is Friday 23 October.

# THE BEAVER

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## New Faces in New Bar

by STAVROS MAKRIS

The upgrading of LSE Students' Union facilities is nearly completed. Noel Eagen, the builder mainly responsible for the demolition of the old Three Tuns Bar and its reconstruction, officially opened the new Three Tuns Club on Wednesday, 23rd September 1987.

All that remains now is for the School to deliver its undertaking to provide the Students' Union with its own Concert Hall, a commitment undertaken in order to achieve the removal of Student Union events, in particular Ents events, from lecture rooms A45, A40 and A86, which in turn would allow them to go ahead with the redevelopment of A45 and A40 into urgently needed classrooms.

But the Quadrangle's conversion into a compact Concert Hall is already six weeks behind schedule. This has led to the upset of plans for the Freshers' Week, the Freshers' Fair and a number of events organised by the Social Secretary.

The re-opening of the Three Tuns Bar, which incidentally coincided with Richard Ford's, the LSE SU Social Secretary, 21st birthday, was celebrated during a small informal "do" for the select few from the Students' Union, the School Administration and the Porters; the powerholders of the LSE. The Director, Dr. I. G. Patel, was also present for just over five minutes. Afterwards the Bar was opened till late to the general public. Many an old face was spotted in the crowd, eponymous and anonymous, accountants and market makers in the making, advertising executives and would-be politicians in role playing. Still more encouraging was to

see the faces of newly-arrived students from overseas.

Old regulars will be faced not only with a newly redeveloped Bar but also with a new management and upgraded service, following the dismissal of the old management. The new Bar Manager, Jim Fagan, is a newcomer to the LSE. He brings with him lengthy experience from a variety of bars, and a new "customer-friendly philosophy". This is reflected in his expectation that his staff's attitude to the patrons will be friendly and helpful. The new Assistant Bar Manager, Mark Rodda, is by no means a newcomer to the LSE. He has been employed by the SU for just under two years as a Printer. His communicative skills, friendly manner and dependability are well known. As an old member of staff with wide experience of dealing with

different Societies and their Executives, he is obviously a priceless asset to the new management of the Bar. Students interested in working in the Bar should address all their enquiries to the Assistant Bar Manager, who will be conducting interviews.

The Three Tuns Bar is now stocked with a wider selection of Real Ales, numerous wines and a new Food Bar. Food is to be served in the form of bar snacks, pasties, pies and rolls all competitively priced and not necessarily vegetarian. Prices overall are expected to remain competitive as ever, with special promotions every so often. The Bar will still be able to cater for parties and functions of societies and its ability to hold bigger events will eventually be supplemented by the use of the Quadrangle Hall.



Photo: Stavros Makris

## NEWS Page 1

### Construction

FROM PAGE 1

Three Tuns Bar. The new hall is expected to be slightly smaller than A45, though its capacity is supposedly to remain the same, approximately six hundred people.

Elsewhere, the redecoration of St. Clements has almost finished, while the old Graduate Common Room has been moved into A344 following the utilization of the old Graduate Common Room for small classrooms and offices. However, due to shortage of space, resulting from the delays in A45, the new Graduate Common Room will for a while be used as a classroom.

The School's intention to upgrade facilities is to be expected and congratulated. However, it is worth considering whether the School has not bitten off more than it can chew this year. No one is going to argue that all the above changes were needless if not long overdue, yet the effect that the unavoidable delays is going to have on the School life is bound to be negative. Confusion, inconvenience and aggravation are to be expected. Some overseas students might even wonder what do they really get for their money. With such a large overseas population, the School can ill afford to make the same mistake in years to come.

This summer's construction was meant to make life easier for the School's population. By all accounts it has achieved the opposite. Undoubtedly all will persevere and even at times make the odd joke about it. The inconvenience, we are told, should be only temporary and it is well worth the price we have to pay, till next summer. What next?

### Divestment

FROM PAGE 1

volved are not to be named. No press release has been issued announcing the School's action. Nor are the full Court of Governors themselves entitled to know the consequences of their own decision! Section 9(b) of the report of the "Code of Conduct Committee" (set up to implement divestment) states:

'The report from the Code of Conduct Committee to the Court should not publicly identify which companies are involved in the Committee's recommendations.'



This defeats much of the object of the divestment campaign, which is to publicly put pressure on companies to leave South Africa. However the list of companies has been leaked to The Beaver, which we publish alongside this article.

Nor is secrecy the only problem for anti-apartheid campaigners in ensuring divestment is actually carried out. The Court of Governors' vote for divestment was extremely narrow thanks to the abstention of "liberal" Rory O'Driscoll and the opposition of Tory Steve Bantoft. They thus completely failed to represent student opinion as expressed in repeated Union General Meeting votes. Pressure is now growing for democratic reform: in particular a constitutional amendment to allow Student Governors to be mandated on key issues.

Shortly before The Beaver went to press LSE press officers revealed that one company's shares have to date been sold. But the wall of secrecy surrounding the affair meant it too could not be named.

# ULU travel

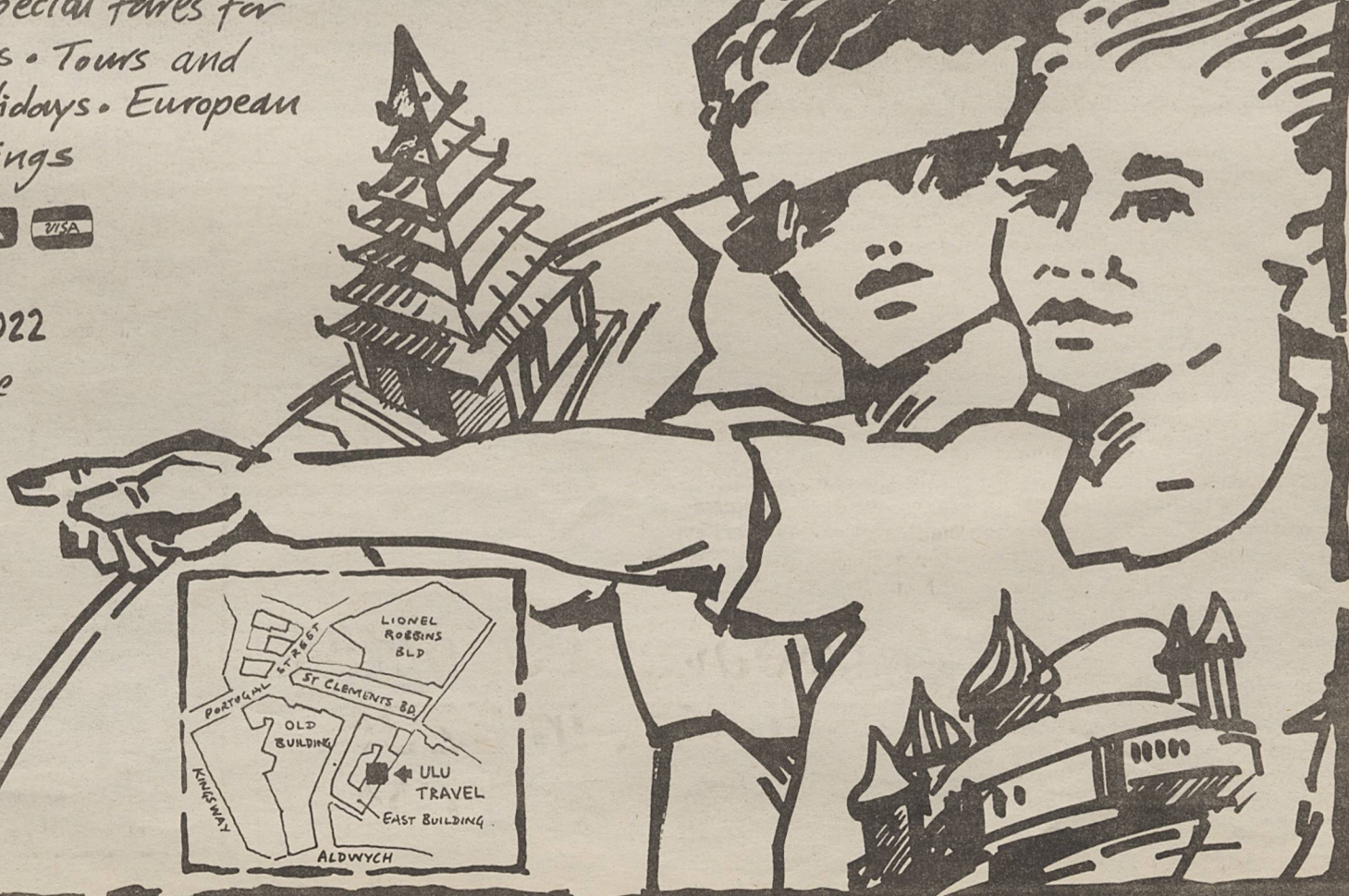
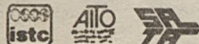
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## Some Tips for Americans at The LSE

*This article by Matthew Price was written last year in an effort to preempt American isolation and to ease anti-American feelings at the L.S.E.*

There is probably something you all should know as you will find out sooner or later: American students on the whole are not particularly popular at the L.S.E. Much of this is due to extraneous circumstances, such as the unpopularity of the Reagan Administration and the existence of a European rather than Western sense of identity.

There is a particular friction arising within the L.S.E. itself. Some of this is due to ill-mannered American students who have done little apart from complain about the weather, the food, the facilities and the country in general. These students have their British equivalents in American universities. But much of the blame must also lie at the door of British students, from the culturally elitist Right as well as the British Left (which is often more British than Left), both distinguishing themselves by their island mentality and narrow mindedness.

There are many different complaints about American students: 'They think L.S.E. stands for Lets See Europe'

'They are in the library until it closes every night and they read every book on the reading list.'

'They always stick together and don't mix.'

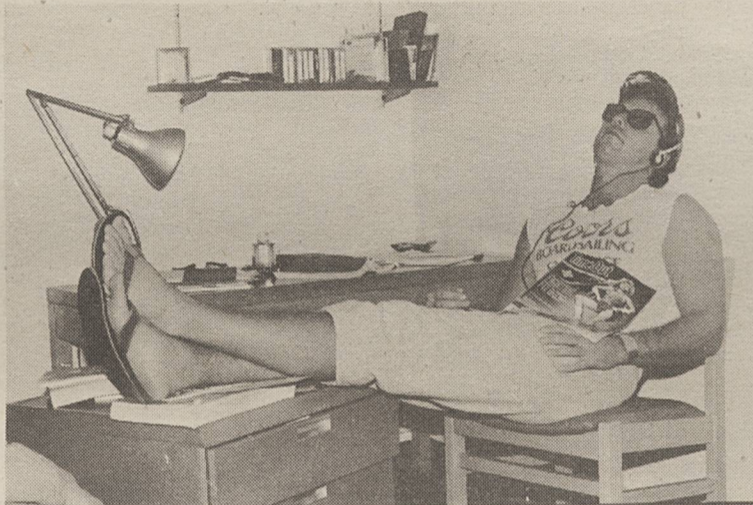
English middle-class social life is a complex game with many subtle nuances and unwritten rules. Unfortunately, Americans who suffer a few early defeats frequently will not make the effort to become good players, retreating instead into a loud assertion of their own cultural identity. This in turn alienates British and European students who are increasingly sensitive to what they see as an invasion of the American way of life into their own cultures. So before you know it, there are bad Anglo-American relations.

One thing should be borne in mind: just as you don't understand the British, they do not understand you. Unfortunately, through cultural stereotyping, many of them believe they do. Firstly, most British students have little idea of what it is like to live over 3000 miles from their own country. In such a situation, the first thing that most people feel like doing is asserting their national identity and looking around for other people sharing their experience. Having criticised Americans so much for this at the L.S.E., I thought I would be different when I came to the USA; not surprisingly, I wasn't.

It is hard to stress enough the importance of overcoming these initial urges. Otherwise you will end up as part of the great American ghetto at the L.S.E. After all, what is the point of crossing the Atlantic merely to mix with other Americans? If that is all you intend to do, you might as well stay at home. So go out and integrate!

Nobody is saying that integrating is easy; I have never felt so British as when I first arrived in America. What's more, Americans get the rough end of the trans-Atlantic exchange. Everyone

Photo: Jennifer Clapp



"Born in the USA"

loved my accent and complemented me on my clothing style. In Britain, 'Americanism' is seen as crass unsophistication. That is not your fault, but from the experience of other American students, your stay will be infinitely more rewarding if you integrate. Here are a few cautiously made suggestions based on these successes:

1) Go 'native' in dress. Leave baseball caps, sweat pants, college shirts and turtle necks in the closet for the weekends. Try buying a secondhand overcoat from Camden Market or a jacket that will have known better days. Look healthy, but not athletic - this is a jockless college.

2) For a brief period, give up the Herald Tribune or USA Today, and read an English newspaper thoroughly each day; you will get a sense of the mood of the nation.

3) For three weeks, go along to the meetings of some of the L.S.E.'s political societies. As you will quickly discover, the sense of community at the L.S.E. largely revolves around politics.

4) By the time you go home at Christmas, there should be at least one British person you can call a friend, and that means more than a passing acquaintance. It is amazing how many Americans cannot even boast this at the end of the year.

A major complaint of British students is that their American counterparts talk too much in classes. Partly, it is a cultural difference, but differences in behaviour are also produced by differing educational systems.

British students in America, my experience has shown me, have to learn the art of 'impression management' because they have come from a system where the anonymity of the examinations means there is little academic value in a professor's perception of the student. Americans, on the contrary, as they are used to getting personal assessments and having their name written on the top of their examination papers, come to the L.S.E. and automatically give full contributions to their classes, attempting to demonstrate both their knowledge of the readings and of the subject in general.

To British students, this looks

like brown-nosing. Why? The answer lies in the fact that, at L.S.E., there is an unwritten academic code:

a) However able you are, you tell the world that the gods will have smiled on you if you manage to get above a D grade.

b) However much work you have done, you will always claim that you have hardly cast your eyes over an academic book since you arrived at the place.

c) You never try to impress your professors.

d) You never admit you like your work or show any enthusiasm for it.

e) In seminars, it is always the person next to you whose turn it is to talk.

This code of behaviour frequently leads to classes full of mutes. This is often frustrating, but before attempting to fill those empty spaces of embarrassing silence, it is worth playing the first few classes by ear. Most importantly, keep both presentations and general contributions succinct, perceptive and to the point.

Anti-Americanism is not all your fault. But being the guests, it is up to you to adapt. And guests that mention to the residents such obvious things as the shaky foundations of the house they are living in and the paint peeling off the walls, while boasting about their own home, are unwelcome anywhere.

Of course you don't have to take any notice of this. You could spend your year standing around with other Americans, complaining about how different it is here and chanting 'U.S.A. is O.K.', in which case I suggest you take the next flight home; in fact, you should go and book it right now, as you are wasting your time and money at the L.S.E. But if you are prepared to be slightly adventurous, open-minded and a little courageous, then this year could be one of the most rewarding of your life.

*The author is an L.S.E. alumnus who went to do graduate work at Princeton University in the USA.*

## SOCIETIES CORNER

by STAVROS MAKRIS

Welcome to the LSE.

Some of you were here last year, or even the year before. You have seen it all before. You have seen it all, you know it all, or at least that is what you say to the first years. They are impressionable, but you are not. You run the LSE, you told them, they believed you (you hoped). Only long after you go they shall be here, they shall run the LSE and they will say so to the younger ones. A vicious circle.

You, the new ones, first years, general course and newly arrived postgrads, treat the whole affair with respect, but do not take it seriously. This is only a station in life not the final destination, though the way some go about it, you would be forgiven for thinking that there is no tomorrow.

There are two sides to this School, the academic one and the non-academic one. A balance is desirable though many get lost in one or the other.

The Societies make up the greatest part of the non-academic life at LSE. They cater for all tastes, for all political convictions, for all whims! By being involved, there is fun to be had, a name to be made, not to mention the all important C.V. filler. Every year old members go to great extremes to attract new members and convince old ones to rejoin. Traditionally, this bazaar known as Freshers Fair used to take place in A45 and A86. However, this year, following The School's adventurous redevelopment of the A45 site the Fair had to be staged in A86 and the surrounding corridors, while the Athletic Union, usually to be found in A86 was banished to the basement of the Old Building.

If you have been looking for the AU and never found it, it is possible to join at any time during the year. This also holds true for all other societies. It is also possible to start your own new society at any time of the year. All it takes is at least twenty willing full-time students. For more details contact Justin Russell, the SU Senior Treasurer in E204.

This year's unorganized chaos, as opposed to last year's organized chaos, was dominated by the Tequila Society who having arrived earlier than anybody else managed to secure an outstanding spot. This and their colourful recruitment campaign achieved an all-time high membership of 350 on the first day alone. It is now possible to wear an official Tequila Soc. T-Shirt and baseball cap. No self-respecting Tequila Piss-head should be seen without one in the

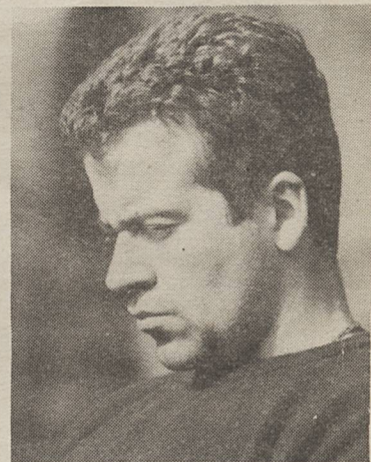


Photo: Ann Henry

eminent Tequila dos. A Slammers' return is threatened...

In contrast, their rivals, the

Guinness Appreciation Society due to ineffective planning did not do as well as expected, though they managed to sell a larger number of T-shirts than memberships. Piss-Head T-shirts are in this year. GAS have got the edge with their Hanes Quality T-shirts and imaginative print, though they have forgotten the all important word, 'LSE'. Yet TS's T-shirts will be more easily spotted; for their colour if not for the sheer number of TSPs...

On other fronts, the political game continued with the LSE Conservatives claiming an 85 strong membership on the first day alone - above last year's overall membership. These new Tories are mostly committed first-year students. The party is expecting a membership of 130 which could for the first time in recent years rival the Labour membership which rose slowly but steadily on the first day. The Labour Club's membership was only slightly up on last year's figure for this stage.

The Cypriot Society was out in force but the Hellenic Society was nowhere to be seen. Some new Greek students ended up becoming honorary Cypriots in their frustration, due to the neglect of the Hellenic Society's executive under H. Lambropoulos.

The Robert Cripps Society, sorry Wine Society appealed to the same old lot, though Bert did try to chat up a couple of first-years. Their plans for this year are to out-do their hectic calendar of the previous year.

Finally it is rumoured that Andy Blakeman has been asked to join the I Want My Name in the Beaver Every Week Society.

As for the rest of you, go forth and... Join.



Photo: Jennifer Clapp



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THE BEAVER, 5th October 1987

## The One before the Dark

Offstage Downstairs, Chalk Farm

Rupert Brooke was an English poet whose brilliant career was tragically cut short when he died during World War I while still in his twenties. After excelling at Rugby, he went to Cambridge, where he was soon taken up by the glittering set of bright young things, and where he became involved with the Fabians. He spent some time in Europe and in Tahiti and produced some of his best poems during these travels.

This play by Kate Parker gives a straightforward account of his life and loves, moving between all the major episodes and locations of his

John Michie as Brooke is perfect at conveying these two sides of the character – the passionate talent and creativity on the one hand, with the demanding, arrogant, egotism of the other. He invests his sexual encounters with men and women with equal conviction, showing Brooke as a man who mostly wanted pleasure and gratification – of whatever kind.

The shifting relationship of Brooke and his lover Ka Cox creates the main dramatic thrust of the play, and they come closer to each other and are then separated by his nervous collapse. This nebu-

they are both with other lovers. The beautiful lighting design of the production evokes playing fields, parlours and beaches very effectively and the use of music helps to create the atmosphere of the last romantic age.

Kvir Yefet

["The One before the Dark" is on at the "OFFSTAGE DOWNSTAIRS", 37 Chalk Farm Road, N.W.1, Chalk Farm or Camden Town tube, Tuesdays to Sundays until October 25th.]



short life, and taking in most of those which significantly influenced it. Shrewdly, Parker lets Brooke speak for himself by reciting his own poems at various points during the play. These reveal more than anything the tenderness and beauty within this rather selfish man.

lous interaction between the lovers is beautifully handled by director Valerie Doulton, from the scene of their first meeting when Cox is seen in profile talking to an unseen group, and Brooke stares straight past her at another girl, to their final heartbreaking farewell when

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## 5,000 OVER EXCITED The Housemartins at the Brixton Academy

A surprisingly mature (age-wise) audience flocked to see pop idols The Housemartins celebrate their latest successful season amidst the decaying grandeur of the Brixton Academy. There was a lot to celebrate, although general wear and tear threatened to take its toll early on, before those mid-season blues were dispatched with the boy's consummate skill. In Housemartin parlance, it was like being two-nil down at home, at half-time, to Wimbledon (good God!), before rattling in six in the second half.

The set covered most of the thoroughly genial new album, from the the direct title track, "The people who grinned themselves to death" ("Smiled so much they failed to take a breath, and even when their kids were starving, they all thought the queen was charming.") to the somewhat more obscure "Johannesburg" and "Build". Meanwhile, it was the earlier material particularly anxious, and the rousing "Get Up Off Our Knees", that really got the crowd going. However, with a messy, flat version of "Sheep", and only a limited dip into the rest of the back catalogue, it looked for much of the main set as if our team could be in for a sticky night.

Indeed, with Stan having just regained his voice, various other aches, P.d.'s occasionally dubious sense of humour ("not bad for Brighton" was how he responded to the fine voice and high spirits of the crowd), and early apologies for "an almost embarrassingly short set" things were looking dodgy. However, these boys are well drilled professionals who know the opposition – Curiosity Killed the Cat (who?), Les McKeown (ex-Bay City Rollers), and Rupert Murdoch get a celebrated verbal lashing – and play to the fans. The teamwork of "So Glad" and step "Outside" showed flashes of what could be done. Some quick inter-passing and victory was soon in the bag. By the time they were calling for hecklers ("What's the worst word you know then?" . . . "Thatcher!"), it was settled.

However, it was as the minutes ticked in into injury time that the fluidity and harmony of their "total football" (cf the Dutch team of the early seventies), with wave after-wave of exhilarating attacking play, that saw the crowd go wild, and the doubters silenced. With the minor classic, majorly overlooked, "Five Get Over Excited" the pattern that was no pattern was set. Here, we also got a brief glimpse of life in the lower divisions; a view of some of this year's new Houghton St. intake: "I am Guy from Camden Town, My hair is curly but I gel it down. My clothes are black but my bread is brown, I'm really into early Motown."

The day was won and the celebrations began. The final move saw the Housemartins (a.k.a The Fish City Rockers) all change positions, and demonstrate their versatility with a heartfelt rendition of "Garageland", for all of us, who, like Norman, used to come down here to see The Clash. Half the audience were uncomprehending; we older fans were left singing our hearts out and replaying that last goal in our heads long after the final whistle.

James Robertson

## The Night is Young

After repeatedly beating myself over the head with the blunt instrument that is contemporary Anglo-Saxon cinema, it was perhaps inevitable that the shock of a French film which mainlines to your heart . . . and to your brain, would be considerable. With *The Night is young*, Carax, 27, has made a film of great perception, deploying knowledge in the pursuit of understanding.

This is art.

As has been frequently pointed out, the plot, after Godard, (sallow youth involved with rival gangs chasing after a new antidote for an Aids type disease) is very much secondary to the style; the style is very mixed and precociously derivative. However, both plot and style are uniquely accessible to a young audience, of a generation with instant access to information – about sex, violence, disease – but, like its predecessors, has to wait, impatiently, for experience to come with time; eroded by fear, deceit, faithlessness.

We are made acutely aware of the cinematic traditions on which Carax draws. Watching the film is like coming of age, being let into an adult world which is being forced to address "our issues; issues of which we are all intimately aware, but unfrequently able to face. It is our world, a world of the future, where people cannot take on board each other's experience, where sex can be safe but love is the key to the disease which kills all those who make love without being in love.

The film effortlessly fills two hours, based on its patchwork style, delicious humour, and uplifting performances. It has to be seen.

James Robertson



Juliette Binoche in "the Night is young"



THE BEAVER, 5th October 1987

# The Best Vietnam Movie

A new crop:

Lethal Weapon,  
Full Metal Jacket,  
Hamburger Hill

by STAVROS MAKRIS

A short look at Hollywood's newly found prosperous sub-industry, and personal reflections upon what some make fortunes out of, many watch for entertainment, while others try to forget, only they cannot for it will always be with them.

Lethal Weapon is yet another Vietnam movie, though initially this is not obvious. It follows on the wake of Platoon, Hamburger Hill and Full Metal Jacket, the new wave of Hollywood's conscience. A conscience which has brought the re-release of such Vietnam oldies as Go fell the Spartans and The Boys in Company C. And if Hollywood is in a sense the conscience and mirror of America, it is worthwhile considering what has brought about this spasm of confession.

The Vets came back and nobody wanted to know. The Vets had countless stories to recount, and nobody wanted to listen. The Vets had wounds deep in their flesh, deep in their souls, and nobody wanted to heal them. Ten years too late a monument of black granite was erected in the middle of a white marble city. And they came by the hundreds to look at it, to search in it, to touch the names of the lost. And they came, the old comrades and the left-overs of the families, and they saw and they found and they touched. And they went away back to where they came from, back to what they all call the heartland of America. Only America did not see them come searching, finding, crying. And America was lost again in the dream. A dream propagated more by Hollywood than anything else. But in every dream there is a nightmare. This one was an upstart old soldier who would just not go away. He was not even a Marine, but he hung on. And he told his story and now they all want to tell "their stories". Poetic license is exercised to no end, of course. This is a true story they tell us, but is it real?

In any case for good or bad Oliver Stone gave us his story, we gave him our money and the Film Academy gave him an Oscar. This should have been enough of a sacrificial victim to the conscience of a sleeping country. But more little nightmares strike our screens, we have become the confessors for a long ago committed sin, only we do not offer Hail Marys, we offer our applause and our money as an absolution. A pity

that this absolution reaches the wrong souls.

If Mel Gibson's character, in Lethal Weapon, existed for real he would deserve our absolution. But it seems there is no justice even in the never-never movieland. Magical Mel is a man tormented. Ghosts of the past beckon him to join them, and he tries to oblige either by putting his 925 Beretta in his mouth in the middle of an endless, lonely night or by challenging anything that moves to shoot him back. And they try and they fail and they die.

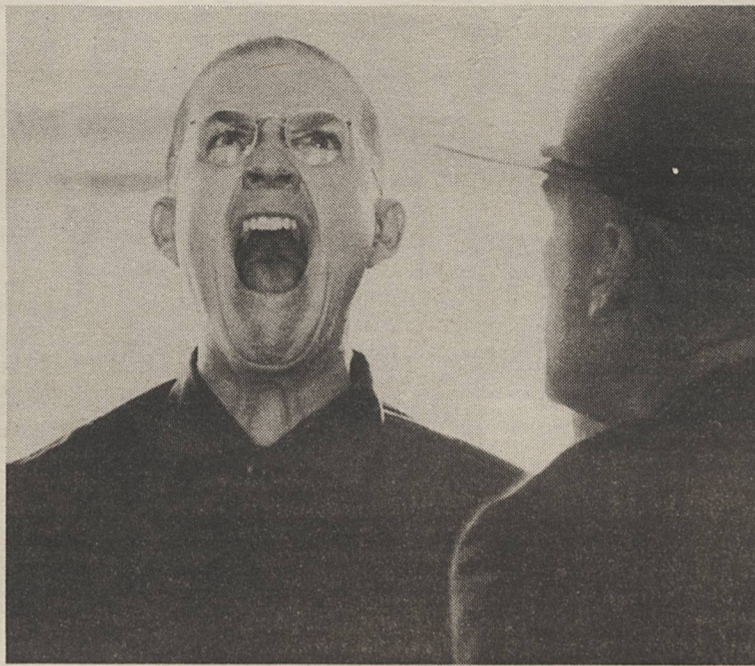
Mad Mel is a lethal weapon, registered as such with the LAPD. He is partnered with an old timer, Dennis Glover, and they get lost in a plot looking for the murderer of a lonely young girl only to discover, what else, but bad Vets from Nam. These dudes are not just bad, they are mean, they are the "Shadow Platoon". As shadows go, they are pretty frightening, not to mention deadly. But can anything stand against Max, sorry wrong movie, let that be Mel?

I bet you know it even as you pay your £3.00 cheap Monday night ticket that there is no way Invincible Mel is not going to come tops against all odds. So why do you go? I am told there is something about Gibson people find irresistible. But if you want escapism, rent The Road Warrior at least Max is dressed in black leather.

Lethal Weapon purports to investigate the shadows left over inside for a long time after the return of the soldiers. What it finds is profile shots of Marvellous Mel and his steel eyes and panning shots of his lethal body sweating a marathon at a speed Ben Johnson would envy.

Rumour has it Stanley Kubrick started on "his Vietnam Movie" well before Oliver Stone. Only Ollie, just like another namesake, beat him to it, breaking the Box Office and running away with Oscar. Still, this does not change the fact that Full Metal Jacket is Kubrick's first feature for a long time. It surfaces in the middle of an ongoing debate; "Which is the best Vietnam movie? Which is the most realistic?"

Platoon gave us the realism of confusion while in the final scenes the U.S. Army camp was overrun by the enemy; Hamburger Hill gave us the stunning sight of man being blown apart in the middle of



hopeless fighting; "Full Metal Jacket" gave us the surrealistic battlefield of would-be Vietnam, only we all know that around the smoke edges lay the Isle of Dogs. Irrelevant.

The whole argument is pointless, how can anyone transmit his personal horror of the war to another; if this were possible, the big screen is not the means. The horror of burning flesh, the panic of the confused mind, the fear of the individual soldier is not transferable. Such feelings cannot be shared. Sitting in the chair in the auditorium you cannot smell the burning flesh, you cannot feel the panic, you cannot understand the fear, simply because you know at the end the lights will come on and you shall carry on with your life, while the characters of the big screen will remain imprisoned in the celluloid reliving their terror at every performance.

Consequently, arguments about realistic war movies should cease. The money paid for the ticket allows an under two hour entertainment and that is it. Needless to look for something deeper. If you are moved by laughter or fear fair enough, but keep it to yourself.

"Full Metal Jacket" is a thoroughly moving picture. The shock of the would-be Marines is our shock. From the moment the screen comes alive and you see their hair falling and you see the fear in their eyes, to the end when they have learned to live with the fear and sometimes ignore it.

The formula is not new, follow the soldier from his early days in camp to his baptism of fire. What is new is Kubrick's vision. Bland reality with colourful surrealism. Steadily he follows the recruits' progress through vulgar oral abuse by the Drill Sergeant, through the mindless, repetitive, physically exhausting tasks to the loss of individuality. The young Marines are encouraged to adopt female names for their rifles and express towards them their sexuality by hugging them while feeling their manhoods. They are no longer men, just a stupid nickname dreamt up at the spur of the moment by the ageing Mars, their Drill Instructor.

The first part of the movie is brutally realistic and raises the question whether the psychosis of the soldier is created before he reaches the battlefield.

The second part as an account of the war is stunning, though bears no relevance to Vietnam in particular. Such statements as "We are fighting for their democracy and they do not care", by baffled soldiers supposed to reflect their confusion fall short of the target. When at last Kubrick chooses to move into battle, it is a battle of confusion, hide and seek and loss of authority. It is a battle where hot-tempered rednecks prevail in a heroic manner. Technically speaking, it is flawless but for a single shot, but this is a personal perception.

Hamburger Hill is the nickname of Hill 976 for which the 101st Airborne Rangers fought for ten days in April 1969. In essence this is a simple film, it depicts the day to day life of Rangers on the front line leading on to the major onslaught and slaughter.

"Rangers do not start fights, they finish them", they have been sent to 976 to finish it, but it takes them too long and while the outside world wonders if they can ever do it, they die. The frustration of the unattainable goal drives them to internal fights, but when in the face of death, they stand together.

"Hamburger Hill" could easily be criticised, more than other films, for not opting to investigate the personalities of the soldiers to a greater depth, for only choosing to show the enemy as shadowy figures coming out of the earth and fighting to the end mindlessly, without purpose. But soldiers are not afforded the luxury of personal relations, Armies are impersonal, Armies destroy individuality. Yet it is the Sergeant in "Hamburger Hill" who orders his squad to respect the other side and call them Mr. Victor Nathan.

The complaint has been raised, again and again, from different quarters that all these Nam Movies do not show the Vietnamese side's story. But how could they? Directors choose a side and are thus limited in having to see things the way the soldier on that side would perceive them. Soldiers on one side hardly ever come face to face with soldiers on the other side and when they do it is too late. The other side exists only as a shadow lurking at the edge of the death-field. Gone are the days of glorious face to face, body to body warfare. This is the impersonal war where the

other side is bombed out of existence from the sky.

"Hamburger Hill" may fail on many points but where it succeeds is in communicating the futility of it all. The 101st Airborne Rangers fought for ten days for a hill. Every day they went up and every day they returned cut down in numbers. But when the next morning came, up they went again. It all starts as a normal operation, it evolves into a stubborn battle and climaxes as an ode to the human spirit for fighting knowingly against all odds, a futile, needless race to the top. It could be anywhere, it could be any human endeavour, not even a war.

They are assaulted with fire and rain yet they persevere. Why? Because it is expected of them, because the impersonal war suddenly becomes very personal. Needless to say if the director had chosen to depict the hopeless resistance of the Viet Minh side, he would have been faced with acts of parallel futile heroism, pictures of soldiers clinging desperately to the last muddy bunker, defending stubbornly their last post. Only he has opted for the American side. The efforts of one side are matched by the efforts of the other side, but only one side can win.

When the Rangers take the top of Hill 976 on 20th April 1969, there is no elation, no celebration, only the chance afforded by the end of the violence to look back down at the muddy side of the hill burned by napalm and torn with broken bodies. This is "a war at its worst, fought by young men at their best", on both sides.

It should not be surprising if Hollywood continues to produce Nam Movies for the years to come: Hollywood producers know a good thing when they see it and Nam Movies are big bucks right now. Whether they will remain stuck to tried and proven formulae or whether they will try to break new ground, this remains to be seen. Who knows, one day they may even choose to highlight the cause of the other side, if only they can be convinced that even bigger bucks lie behind it. Until then the public will have to be contented with the likes of Sly and Chuck Norris at its worst or limited personalised accounts at its best. Only time can tell.

Hollywood has taken the war away from the Vets and has turned it into a multi-dollar industry, supported by a para-industry of advertising, publicity and media. What Hollywood though can never take away from the young men of both sides is that moment when all lost relevance, when the generals at the back and the enemy at the front ceased to exist and all that remained was the terrified young man facing death. The moment of terror, the moment of truth. Those who have survived it will forever carry it with them. Regardless of what we, who have not been touched by it, say when from a safe timely distance argue about the merit of one movie against another. "Which is the best Vietnam movie?" We can afford to argue about it forever.

The survivors are not allowed such luxury, they have the knowledge engraved in their soul; their best moment.



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