

The Beaver

14 January, 1991

Newspaper of the London School of Economics Student Union

Issue 331

Disaffiliation and prosecution may follow if Labour leave national student body

Labour Club splits over NOLS

by Adam Livingstone

The LSE Labour Club is to take a vote on whether to disaffiliate from the National Organization of Labour Students (NOLS) following disillusionment at the national student conferences.

The Club will vote on whether it should send letters to NOLS and to the National Union of Students, in protest at the behaviour of their Executive at the national conferences of the two bodies. If the vote is passed, the Club intends to approach other university Labour Clubs and will attempt to set up an alternative body to NOLS. If such a step is taken without the endorsement of the Labour Party it could mean the severance of all official links between the LSE Labour Club and the National Labour Party.

Senior Treasurer, Mel Taylor said the rift was not directly connected with political differences between the national party and the Club. She claimed it had arisen because members of the Club felt that the NOLS Executive had constantly abused procedure to achieve their own political objectives.

Criticisms included the closure of the 1987 NOLS conference, allegedly because the Executive was losing a significant proportion of the vote. It is alleged that the body refused to nominate candidates not approved by NOLS for NUS elections because the approval procedure would have selected left wing candidates. Furthermore, students claim NOLS has refused and NOLS' refusal to admit left wing student delegates to the conference because of small technical omissions in their applications, but their apparent reluctance to apply the same criteria to more right wing delegates.

It is also alleged that on one occasion application forms were lost in a suspiciously selective way.

NOLS has a great deal of influence in the NUS, which for the past seven years has been Labour dominated, and Taylor believes that the 'corruption' has now spread to the NUS conference.

In the December conference, which was held in Blackpool, minor procedural issues were decided by the use of the collegiate block vote, known as the card vote, a system which favors the larger, NOLS dominated colleges. It is also claimed that a note was found, written by the NUS president and NOLS member, Steven Twigg, giving instructions to the Chair as to whom should be selected for the 'free' speeches which are used to second motions and which are supposed to be taken randomly from the floor. If true, this incident would be a breach of the NUS constitution. However, a vote of no confidence in the chair was defeated at the conference.

Despite the aggressive language that many members of the Labour Club use about NOLS, Taylor acknowledges that it is too early to say whether the Club will be disaffiliating. However she said, 'Rather than sit back and let this happen, we want to get our hands dirty and try to change things.'

The hope is that if no compromise is found, enough support can be found at other universities for the creation of a new left wing student organisation, to force the National Labour Party either to acknowledge the proposed new organisation or to face the loss of its grassroots student support.

The fear is that since NOLS

appears to be pursuing the policies of the national leadership, there would be no such acknowledgement. If this happens, it would be difficult for the LSE Labour Club to continue its name.

One Labour Club and NOLS member, Nick Cox, said, 'They are hoodwinking people if they call themselves the Labour Club and claim connection with the Labour Party but then disaffiliate from the body which is the official student wing of the Labour Party. They have partisan reasons for doing it because they don't agree with NOLS policy.'

NOLS spokesman, Etien de Burg, called the allegations 'absolute nonsense' and said he was very surprised to hear of the protest, since these complaints had been raised before and shown to be unsubstantiated.

If members of the Club decide to disaffiliate and an alternative Labour Club which did affiliate to NOLS was set up at the LSE, the current club could conceivably face legal action to prevent them using the Labour Red Rose symbol. Without such official status, it is feared the Club would face recruitment problems.

The Senior Treasurer was very keen to play down any such possibility, pointing out that when a similar split took place in the Conservative student body between the Conservative Collegiate Forum and the FLF, the Conservative Central Office successfully reconciled the two.

However, since the issue raised here is one of corruption and abuse of power rather than direct political differences, the national Labour Party may be hard pushed to ignore it.



Steven Twigg - NOLS National Union of Students president

Photo: Alex McDowell

Access fund restricted

New directives prevent EC students from receiving Access support

by Swaha Pattanaik

The majority of full time LSE students will be ineligible to apply for the School's Access Funds if the Department of Education and Science's new guidelines are followed.

In the DES' original directions, educational institutions were given considerable latitude in defining the conditions of eligibility for the Fund. However, more restrictive instructions set-

ting out the requirements for eligibility were set out in a directive sent to colleges last week.

In this document the DES states that only Home students and European Community migrant workers are eligible to apply for the Fund, which was originally believed by the School and Students Union to be open to all Home and EC students. The new regulations prevent even those EC students, in-

cluding Irish nationals, who previously received Housing Benefits from applying to the Fund.

The policy has been seen by some as violating EC law by discriminating against EC students. However, a spokesman for the DES said that they had been advised they were not contravening EC law since the amendment had been issued by the Secretary of State, who is empowered to make such

changes. The spokesman continued that by issuing the new regulations the Government had removed all legal ambiguities and ensured institutions were not open to challenges in court.

Access Funds were introduced last year to 'provide financial help to students where access to higher education might be inhibited by financial considerations, or where students, for whatever reasons face financial

difficulties'. The DES has denied that the Fund was set up to compensate students for the loss of Housing Benefits. However the loss of benefits and the introduction of the poll tax, which has to be paid by EC students has meant that many students who are now classified as ineligible would have applied to the Fund.

General Secretary, Rob Middleton said he was 'surprised and baffled' at the

Government's decision. He felt it was 'wrong and neither required nor desirable to discriminate against EC students in this way'. Middleton added that he felt the new regulations would cause increased hardship for a significant proportion of LSE students and leave them with no financial safety net.

Union debates Gulf

by Beaver Staff

The first Union General Meeting of the term began last Thursday with the usual Sabbaticals' reports. However, with the possibility of war in the Middle East looming in the horizon, the LSE Student Union quickly moved on to pass an emergency resolution calling for all members of the LSE community to attend an anti-war demonstration and march on Saturday 12th January. The resolution, which was proposed by the SU Executive and seconded by Rick Livingstone, also mandated the Executive to organize a picket to demonstrate outside Downing Street and the American Embassy if war broke out.

Livingstone was the first speaker for the motion. He expressed his concern over the current situation in the Gulf and the apparent inevitability of war.

He said, 'Regardless of what the newspapers say the war will be a long one with many student casualties.'

Senior Treasurer, Mel Taylor, spoke for the Executive and voiced her disgust at what she termed, 'British hypocrisy in the Middle East'. Taylor warned that the conflict would not only involve 'guns but also chemical weapons and potentially nuclear weapons too'. She added that the only way to avoid this possible holocaust was for people to express their views to the government through mass demonstration.

Support for the resolution was also voiced by other students, including Salvy Casaluci and George Binnette. A consistent theme in these speeches was the imperialist nature of Western intervention, which sought to protect its own geopolitical and oil interests in the area.



General Secretary Rob Middleton speaking at last week's UGM

Photo: Alex McDowell

Alex Jan agreed that oil may have been an important motive for the Allies' decision to go to war if necessary. However, he claimed that the question of oil was important since control over such resources would increase Saddam Hussein's economic and political power and would mean that he was more likely to 'hold

the developing and developed countries to ransom'.

Chairman of the LSE Conservative Club, Dominic Bourke, attempted to amend the resolution by calling for SU support of a Free Kuwait rally. The action was resoundingly defeated on the heels of a speech by George Binnette, who said the rally was

backed by the Free Kuwait Committee whose main goal was the reinstatement of the old regime.

The proceedings took a lighter turn with the proposal of an anonymous amendment which called for Mel Taylor to be sent to the Gulf to negotiate with Saddam Hussein. Amid much

laughter this amendment was also defeated.

Debate over the Gulf resolution dominated the majority of the Union meeting's proceedings. However, the first business motion on the order paper, concerning Education Funding cuts was briefly raised before the meeting was closed.

School states need

by Chris Forman

The LSE is initiating a massive fundraising campaign in preparation for the college's centenary in 1995. It is hoped this campaign will raise £80 million which is intended to be used for improvements to the School and for maintenance.

The campaign was started in July 1989 when the School's Standing Committee commis-

sioned the firm, Chapter One: Ketchum, to design a creative fundraising program. For the last four months the firm has been interviewing civic and business leaders, as well as members of the LSE community, in an attempt to determine the most effective method in which to collect the funds. The firm's report has recently been presented to the School, but has not as yet been made public.

In the meantime, the administration has released a 'Statement of Need' which highlights some of the areas which are considered to be most deserving of financial aid. The majority of these priorities are related to improving the quality of research facilities and of staff. In particular, the School would like to see the establishment of a Research Centre, to increase the research facilities already available to its

staff and students. It also hopes to create a number of visiting professorships and permanently endowed chairs. In addition, the School has called for more scholarships, new student housing, and improvements to the library.

However, even though there is already great excitement about the campaign, the effects of the money will not be felt until 1992 at the earliest.

Rag-time at LSE

Independant rag ball planned

by Sonia Lambert

The organisers of this year's Rag Week are adopting a new approach in an attempt to escape the traditional image of Rag and to steer clear of the financial difficulties experienced by last year's Rag Committee.

Central to this is the decision to 'contract out' the running of the traditional Rag Ball to two LSE students. Last year the ball was widely considered a disaster and last year's Rag Chair, Rick Aston, warned the current committee to 'stay well away from it'. He added that the event had made a loss of about £2,000 last year. In addition last year's ball had been disrupted when the then General Secretary, Tom Bulman, stormed out in protest at the rowdy behavior of guests during a speech.

According to this year's Rag Chair, Dave Jones, the original intention of the present Rag Committee had been not to hold a Rag Ball at all, since 'it goes against our principles of equal opportunity and loses money'. However, they have given the two students a loan of £1,000 and allowed them to go ahead independently with the ball. One of the students said that the remainder of the initial costs would be covered by

'outside sources'. He also claimed that the last ball 'was not organised at all well' and felt he could avoid last year's difficulties by beginning to sell tickets earlier. He added that 'selling 350 tickets to 5,000 students shouldn't be so difficult'. Aston disagreed, saying, 'he'll have to sell his BMW.'

The tickets cost £32.50 each and proceeds will go not to the official Rag charities but to two other charities, Action Aid and Shelter.

Jones offered the ball his support, but wanted to avoid the image of Rag as 'a big piss-up and really right wing.' He believed that there was 'no need to be loud and offensive' and emphasised he was working for a Rag Week 'that everyone can be involved in'.

For instance, Jones intended to produce an inoffensive Ragmag. He claimed, 'Half of the jokes which are racist or sexist can be changed to take the piss out of something else, like accountants.' However, in view of the lack of a close-knit LSE social life, and because of the hostility or indifference of many students towards Rag, Jones felt their aim was 'not just to be successful this year, but also to set up a better basis for next year's Rag Week'.

NUS disarray

by Madeline Gwyn

Only three out of the eight delegates elected to represent the LSE at the National Union of Students winter conference in Blackpool attended the meeting due to bad weather conditions. Those who attended the conference returned disappointed with the progress that was made during the weekend of discussion.

The conference, which was to have taken place between the 8th and 10th of December, had to be shortened by one day when snow storms and blizzards led to delays of the political agenda.

Three out of the eight delegates from the LSE Students Union did not even attempt the journey. Senior Treasurer, Mel Taylor, felt these delegates had betrayed those students who had elected them and had wasted the registration fee paid by the

Union. In the first Union meeting of the term she proposed that in the future, delegates who could not attend conferences would have to reimburse the Union for the full registration fee if they did not give a week's notice. Of the remaining five delegates only three successfully reached Blackpool.

Although the Delegation Leader for the LSESU, Rick Livingstone, was heartened by the discussion of motions on anti-racism and disabled access, he felt that the 'majority of the time was wasted by the National Union of Labour Students and Left Unity who were trying to hack one another out'. He claimed that at least one day of the conference was wasted by such political backbiting and that delegates would have to adopt a more constructive attitude if greater progress was to be made in future conferences.

Taylor said she was 'completely disillusioned after the utterly ineffective conference'. She felt that the deeply entrenched bureaucratic structure in which motions were debated hindered the proceedings.

The Senior Treasurer was also disappointed by the small number of motions proposed for discussion. She said that the Irish abortion campaign, which was an issue she particularly wanted to discuss had 'received good feedback in spite of the way the conference was run as opposed to because of it'.

Taylor was disappointed by the inclusion of the debate on NUS reform, which has now been passed, since it was the seventh consecutive year it was being discussed. She also felt it was wrong for the NUS National Executive to chair the conference, claiming, 'It would be like me chairing an LSE union meet-

ing'.

However, NUS London Convener, Hossein Zahir, believed that the structure of the NUS worked well and that the weather was the only factor which could be blamed. Zahir accepted criticisms that the conference had become factionalized and that the anti-racism motion had been delayed by 'bureaucratic irrelevance'. However, he strongly maintained that the NUS was more democratic than most Unions and that it had a significant amount of effective representation throughout the country.

A spokesperson for NUS National strongly denied that the bureaucracy of the NUS made it inefficient. Instead, she voiced her approval at the way the conference had been organised and said she was 'delighted by the fact that so much policy had been passed'.

The Lent Term experience

The first week of the Lent term is a unique non-event in the LSE calendar. Christmas and New Year have long since departed, Easter is still months away, and there really are no more excuses for delaying work on that essay set by your tutor (some time in late October). At some stage during the week, the student engages upon a mission of good intention - he or she draws up a work plan detailing their attack on the new academic term. Unfortunately these only seem to work in theory, for it is a well known fact that such work plans almost invariably include a sub-clause declaring that this 'work binge' will commence the following week! And so it is that week one becomes a complete void. How then does your average student spend his or her time during this all important period of creative non-achievement?

The most popular post-Christmas pastime must be the 'spot the difference' competition engaged upon by all students as they steadily return to the LSE campus. The competition entails picking up on all those subtle changes that have occurred over the Christmas vacation. These can be manifold:

The most obvious difference centres on material accumulation amongst your friends (the 'look what I got for Christmas' category). Without exception one of your mates, at some point during the week, will parade his brand new M&S jumper before your very eyes. You know the one: the special 'Christmas' design with lots of obscure colours and indefinable patterns guaranteed to give you a migraine. Such articles of clothing are commonplace in week one, but it is interesting to observe their steady decline in the ensuing

weeks. This is all due to 'sod's law', because you can bet your grant that someone else's aunty had exactly the same idea as your's when it came to choosing you that unique Christmas gift.

Other items in this category include those rather useless objects that could only be sold at Christmas time. Pointless though they are, your flatmate is bound to have acquired one during the festive season. A few notables include a drying up cloth (whatever that is), a Ronco "suck-away" for hoovering your skirting board (useful or what?), and a Remington "fuzz-away" for shaving your new M&S pullover.

Another, in the spot the difference categories, is the personal tidiness one, or the 'oh look my tutor has decided to smarten himself up' category. The bi-annual hair cut is common place but, sadly for your tutor, a dead giveaway. Spotting the new socks is a little more difficult and certainly not as easy to spot as the ubiquitous M&S jumper. Incidentally, a popular choice amongst the older generation of male tutor is the colourful diamond design - the sort of thing



"Three East German Shotputters"

Jimmy Tarbuck would be seen dead in whilst out on the golf course.

The next most familiar is the 'what have they done to the walls?' category. In many cases such differences are easily discernable, others are slightly more subtle. The recently painted print room is a good example of the latter, as was the tasteful(?) recoat of the Three Tuns a few terms back, (how long did it take you to realise that something was amiss?) In the case of the Cafe, Brunch Bowl and Old Building, however, the transformation is only too apparent. Stripped of their society posters, it suddenly becomes obvious that, contrary to popular thought, the walls really do look better caked in a sea of posters announcing just how big the bar subsidy will amount to at the annual Carr Saunders 'get to know all about you and your A-levels' disco.

Every now and then, however, a little gem appears, and this term's gem is no exception. I am, of course, referring to the masterpiece adorning the far wall of the Cafe. A cross between the styles of Renoir and Warhol, "Three East German Shotputters" is truly a work of art and one which complements beautifully the surrealist effort enshrined on the walls of the Women's Room. Spot the difference...and what a difference! A painting like that and somehow the desire to work comes flooding back.

Michael Chappell

Rag Week-back on the ball

Contrary to expectation, due to the timely intervention of resident essayist Daphne Dare (see Beavers passim), Rag Week this year will feature the traditional Rag Ball. This is being held at the usual venue (Waldorf Hotel) on Saturday the 2nd February 1991. Entertainment this year will include, among others, a disco hosted by the 'incomparable' Jo Breeze of Gigolo's fame; The Occentrics Jazz Band will be playing in the Palm Court; and for those who can, there will be some karaoke bouts. This, of course, will all follow a four course meal which includes half a bottle of wine.

Tickets for this momentous event will be available outside the Old Theatre between 1-2pm everyday this week. Make sure you book up early.

The Rag Committee.



SAM

ANNOUNCEMENT

In order to make this years Rag Mag a success...

WE NEED YOU!

We require jokes, cartoons, crosswords etc, to be used in the Mag.

Send any contributions to: 'Rag Mag Exec.', Pigeon hole E297, or see Sharon Gregory, Rhiannon Hordley, or Emma Hopwood.

10 things you always meant to do in the first week of lent term...

AND DIDN'T.

- 1 Collect your grant.
- 2 Find out where the library is situated.
- 3 Purchase some writing material and something to write with.
- 4 The essay set by your tutor in the first week of the Michelmas term.
- 5 Greet the Brunch Bowl staff with a warm smile.
- 6 Stay off the booze (as you promised yourself you would forever do on New Years Day).
- 7 Fix the toilet seat (another casualty of New Year celebrations).
- 8 Pluck up the courage to exchange that unwanted 'Sonia' album at your local HMV store.
- 9 Shoot the relative who bought it for you in the first place.
- 10 And there was something else...

diary

The Scene: Suburbia, somewhere.

TERRY: Hello June, I'm home.

JUNE: Hello Terry, have you been hard at it?

TERRY: (Protesting) How dare you June, I'm a married man.

JUNE: No no Terry, I didn't mean IT, I meant it?

TERRY: (Understanding) Oh it. Yes it has been hard today.

JUNE: Terry! I've warned you before about rubbing too hard.

TERRY: I know, but you don't get quite the same finish with a soft one.

JUNE: Well just you take care.

The doorbell rings.

TERRY: What was that June?

JUNE: I think it was the door bell Terry. (Opening door) I'll take a look. Oh it's George and Mildred.

GEORGE: Hello June, sorry to interrupt your clean and harmless suburban banter. Mildred and I just popped round to ask if you and Terry would like to come to a **pub quiz in the Three Tuns on Monday**.

MILDRED: We need to make up a team of four.

GEORGE: And we also need some one to fork out the four quid entry fee.

MILDRED: Shut up hen-pecked husband.

GEORGE: Sorry dear.

JUNE: We'd love to join you.

They go in for a cup of tea. Door bell rings again. Terry answers.

TERRY: Hello Margot and Jerry.

MARGOT: Hello Tom...I mean Terry. Jerry and I are going to see a **film called 'Bird' on Tuesday at the Old Theatre**. It starts at six. You and June will be coming I trust?

TERRY: Well...

MARGOT: Good, then we'll see you at-

JERRY: Hold on Margot, they may not want to come.

MARGOT: Yes thank you Jerry, but I'll handle this.

They go in for a cup of tea. Door bell rings. June answers.

JUNE: Hello Howard and Hilda, how are you?

HOWARD and HILDA: (Together) Very well, thank you for asking June.

JUNE: What can I do for you both?

HOWARD: Hilda and I are going to a life drawing class on Wednesday (he laughs). We hear it is lots of fun.

JUNE: IT is, but what about the art class?

HILDA: Tell her Howard.

HOWARD: Yes Hilda, I will. It **starts at six** and finishes at eight.

JUNE: Well I think we'll have some of that...(aside)and perhaps a bit of the other as well.

They go in for a cup of tea. Door bell rings. Terry answers.

GOLD BLEND WOMAN: Hello, sorry to trouble you but I've run out of coffee.

TERRY: Sorry, all I can offer you is a quick SHAG.

WOMAN: SHAG? Never heard of them.

TERRY: No, they weren't a very popular society. She goes in for a shag. Door bell rings. Terry answers.

GAZZA: (Tearfully) What yer doin' with yer trousers down?

TERRY: Making tea. What do you want?

GAZZA: Did you know that **the jazz library is open to members on Mondays and Thursdays between 1.30-3pm?**

TERRY: Yes thank you. Goodbye.

Gazza exits tearfully. Door bell rings. June answers.

ONE ARMED IRISH WAITER: Could I borrow some of your crockery?

JUNE: Certainly. Come on in and have some tea.

Door bell rings. Terry answers.

SALMAN RUSHDIE: (Barging in) Help I've been recognised. That's what happens when you go to **Amnesty meetings on Wednesdays at 2pm**.

Door bell rings. June answers.

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Can I borrow some grapeseed oil?

JUNE: No, not until you get your tanks out of my garden.

Door bell rings. Terry answers.

JEREMY BEADLE: I'd just like to thank you sir for being...(removes false beard) game for a laugh.

Terry shoots him.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Post HASTE

Letters to E205 by hand or internal mail for 3pm on Thursday

Black Caucus criticised

Dear Beaver,
How pleased I was to learn the Labour Club Black Caucus found my 'racism' letter 'pathetic'. Yes, I also felt it was a somewhat moving piece of literature.

The Black Caucus only strengthens my assertion that it has trouble defining words. Its members are still content to confuse racism with prejudice.

They assert that "racism in society is an issue that is important to all students". Again they are incorrect. Racism is not an issue: groups like the Labour Club Black Caucus make it an issue (and indeed contribute to it) rather than assert a positive black image.

Let me say that my stance is as inexhaustible as the Black Caucus' ignorance.

Robert James Wilson.

Racism negligible

Dear Beaver,
I neither know nor care who R.J. Wilson is, but I feel I must protest at the reply to, what was termed, his "rather pathetic letter" by the Labour Club Black Caucus (LCBC) concerning the relative merits of 'Racism Awareness Week' and the broader issue of positive discrimination. Both these instruments are used to fight racism, but neither succeed. At best they are futile, at worst counterproductive.

Raising the profile of racism at LSE is highly unlikely to have

any impact on student's views on this matter. In relation to other universities, and the UK in general, racism is conspicuously negligible at the LSE, as to be expected within an intelligent and cosmopolitan community. The posting of National Front stickers could be undertaken by one person alone, not even necessarily a student at the school. As far as I am aware, there is no organized NF cell at LSE, nor in my experience, a single student who seriously holds views to the right of Norman Tebbit. Appeal to spurious Beaver surveys, with no comparative perspective is equally unconvincing. The "fact" that racism exists to a worrying degree at LSE is nothing more than a not remarkably cleverly constructed artefact.

Of course the relatively high degree of racial tolerance at LSE does not justify the abandonment of any anti-racist campaigns, if it is the case that such actions will impinge in any way on the views of the remaining reactionaries. But most LSE students are intelligent enough to understand the folly of bigotry. For those who are not, raising the profile of racism is unlikely to have any impact, for it is these very students who will take least notice of what they see as self-righteous patronisation. If people wish to be involved in Racism Awareness activities at the LSE, then that is their decision but I think these people should be aware that within the LSE such events will be fairly futile.

This is not to say that raising the profile of racism in society as a whole may not be worthwhile, as LCBC correctly point out. If they do have a genuine concern to combat racial discrimination then perhaps their time would be better spent in Tower Hamlets (or Cheltenham). Just don't expect the rest of us to show too

much interest.

Positive discrimination on the other hand is worse than futile, it is counterproductive because it is divisive. There can be no greater form of injustice than to allocate a job on the basis of race. The way to fight discrimination is not by further discrimination. It only serves to antagonise those against whom it operates, and demeans the position of those it seeks to favour. Positive discrimination is a classic example of the shortsightedness of priggish liberalism - as usual good intentions rarely imply correspondingly favourable outcomes.

The LCBC hit the nail on the head by concluding "If Wilson thinks positive discrimination is a greater problem than racism, then anti-racism would be a waste of time since racists are not welcome to participate". This is the very point. Integration not segregation is the key to eliminating racism.

Michael Ellam

Finance reply

Dear Beaver,

We are writing with reference to the Editorial of 3 December 1990, which commented on the manner in which the SU budget is presented. We feel that this failed to give an accurate explanation of the way in which the societies budget is determined.

Firstly each society must submit a registration pack which includes a budget claim for the year and other relevant details such as membership numbers. Each society is then interviewed by a member of the Finance Committee so that we may make an assessment of their budget claim. This process is necessary so that we can make fair allocations to each society. The Finance Committee then meets to decide the budget for each society.

This is inevitably a long process, since we must wait until the majority of societies have returned their packs before we can begin interviewing. Although the deadline this year was 26 October, the majority of forms were not returned until the fourth or fifth week of term. Since there are usually at least 80 societies formed at the beginning of term the interviewing process takes at least 2 weeks, and then a further week must be

The Beaver

P R E S E N T S



THE DEBATE



This house has every confidence in the government's higher education policies

In the red corner :

**GARETH ROBERTS
STEVEN TWIGG**

(President of NUS)

In the blue corner :

**CHRIS PINCHER
ALAN HOWARTH M.P.**

Tuesday 15th

Room A86

6 P.M.

allowed to allocate budgets.

It was the allocation of society budgets which caused many of the delays in the production of the budget this year. The Finance Committee recognises that this is in part due to a problem of communication with many individual societies, and in the light of this years difficulties we are taking steps to remedy the situation. It is hoped that the appointment of a new societies officer will assist in this process.

With reference to the difficulties of students deciding upon

the budget in a single Union Meeting, we hope that wider publicity of financial matters will assist students in this process. Last year posters advertising the budget meeting were posted well in advance. Next year we hope to supplement this with coverage of the budget in The Beaver at least one week in advance of its presentation to the Union.

Such publicity would increase interest in the financial matters of the SU, not merely with respect to the actual allocation of existing funds but also on the important issue of SU funding.

We feel that the high profile given to finance in The Beaver this year contributed to the higher than average at the last budget meeting.

The Finance Committee

Sad Man

Dear Beaver,
I do not think you are very good. I think you are very left wing too.

An unhappy Conservative

The Beaver

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First Hand

Sonia Lambert tells of her gulfbound classmate Joe and explains how this first hand experience made war real to her

Joe is going to the Gulf. One of 400,000 Americans out there has a name to me now. He really is called Joe and he sat next to me in class last term.

Joe was one of the many Americans studying in Europe, seeing the sights in his spare time. A day in every capital city, maybe even a few hours, with the energy of one who has crossed an ocean and to whom the kilometers maybe don't matter so much. I expect you know someone like him, or perhaps you even are someone like him. But back home Joe is also a member of the Reserve Army. "I signed something wrong, now I long for yesterday...", he adapts the Beatles over a farewell beer or three.

Europeans are often hard on Americans, it is, perhaps unfairly, one of the few socially acceptable prejudices left. But Joe was alright, although we disagreed on everything - from hunting as a sport to the right to carry fir arms. The main thing is that he came across as rather intelligent, not at all your stereotypical gung-ho redneck, if that's what you're imagining. Joe was the guy who asked questions in class and opened doors for other people in a rather quaint way.

So then there was this Gulf crisis. It's all about oil, I said, repeating the criticisms that I'd heard. To my surprise he agreed

with me. Was he prepared to fight for cheap oil then? Well, no, but that tied in with other things he did believe in, like the principle that strong states shouldn't be allowed to invade their weaker neighbors. They do though, Joe, the United States included. The question is if a war is really the solution. I got the feeling that we might as well have been arguing in different languages.

Then it was for real. Joe had to go away, and I wouldn't have wanted to deprive him of his principles even if I could. It was the kind of occasion where no one knows what to say. "Well, at least you'll be missing the final examinations", we said feebly. "I'm just thrilled about that", he retorted dryly. Everyone said goodbye and planned reunions. After three months in Europe, Joe would have a day with his family in Indiana before he had to leave again. The few days before he left I was struck by his bravery - not something glamorous, but the ability to repress a rising tide of sick confusion, or the ability to stop your hand from shaking when everyone is looking at you.

All this really shocked me. Despite the many 'lost innocence' Vietnam movies over the past decade, despite the posters saying "Why?" and the many other pacifist platitudes, I never fully realised that war

could happen to real people my own age. The Gulf crisis was just another news item to me, safe behind a TV screen or within the pages of a newspaper. To Joe it is now an inescapable reality. I wonder if he will still open doors for people when he gets home. I wonder if he will get home.

Because there is no draft yet, as there was during the Vietnam war, no real opposition movement has developed among American college students. In England too the anti-war movement is unimpressive - a bewildering array of initials masking organisations containing the same familiar faces. On both sides of the Atlantic the debate seems to have an air of complacency about it, as if we believe that we can keep the reality safely outside the walls of our institutions. But if there is a war then it will be our war. The issues sound deceptively familiar, but this time they apply to us.

I expect you can guess my conclusion. Why haven't sanctions been given more time to work? Who could gain anything from the massive human and ecological devastation that a gulf war would bring? If you've heard the arguments against this potential nightmare, and if they convince you, please make your voice heard.

United we stand

As all heads turn towards the gulf, the peacekeeping role of the United Nations is in the spotlight. **Helena Nygren** looks at this remarkable institution

The United Nations was established in 1945 by a world shaken and horrified by the second international military conflict in the first half of this century. Distrust and bitterness among nations after the Second World War made the need for an international unitary body imminent. The possibility of another Hitler invading foreign territory had to be prevented through effective international machinery. The purpose of maintaining peace and security was reflected in the preamble of the UN Charter which states, "We the people of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, and the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

Although maintaining peace and security is one of the UN's main functions, and from a historical viewpoint a very important one, 80% of the budget and personnel is devoted to economic and social development, particularly in the less developed countries. It is therefore unfortunate that so much attention is focused upon the UN's role in peacekeeping/making which is the most controversial and political role the UN has to play.

Membership of the UN is open to all peace-loving nations which accept the obligations of the UN Charter and, which the organisation believes, are able and willing to carry out these obligations. Last year Lichtenstein became a full member, bringing the total membership to 160.

The Charter established six principal organs of the UN. The General Assembly is the main deliberative body, consisting of representatives of all member states who are given one vote. The Security Council has primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 members each of which has one vote. China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom are permanent members. Ten others are elected by the General Assembly for two year terms. Since the beginning of this month the ten non-permanent members are Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, India, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Romania, Yemen and Zaire.

Although each member has one vote, decisions on substantive matters require nine votes, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. This so called 'veto power' has been fiercely criticised as a cause of inefficiency. However, since the Cold War has ended, the US and the Soviet Union have achieved, along with the other member states, great success. The ceasefire between Iran and Iraq is one example.

Another example is the swift and immediate action taken in relation to the Gulf Crisis. The united disapproval of Iraq's actions has resulted in a resolution being passed authorising the use of "all necessary means" if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait by 15th January. This is only the second time in history that the UN has taken such an active fighting role.

In the Korean War, which began in 1950, the UN sent troops, under the command of the US, to protect South Korea against invasion from North Korea. The war was long and bloody and is still not officially resolved. This has made the UN think twice before getting actively involved in these kind of matters again. The third principal organ is the Economic and Social Council which coordinates the economic and social work of the UN and the specialised

agencies and institutions (known as the 'UN family' of organisations). Finally there is the Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice.

The UN's budget is generally composed of contributions from member states - assessed according to their ability to pay. Last year the budget was \$1,790 million (about £932 million). America is supposed to pay the largest amount (a quarter of the total budget), but has withheld its payment for two years arguing that the UN is inefficient and anti-American. Ironically, many people argue that the UN is too biased towards America.

The fundamental reason for the UN's existence is peace, not war and the task of promoting "higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development" is expressly stated in the Charter. The UN family operate a range of programmes for technical cooperation, trade and development, food aid, population growth management, disaster relief and special economic assistance, to name but a few. A new international economic order has been adopted. This recognises that in an interdependent world economy, problems facing the developing countries must be solved and that the accelerated development of poorer nations is essential for the steady growth of the world economy, and for world peace and stability. Perhaps one of the most well-known aspects of the UN is the work of the World Health Organisation. It is just one example of a huge body of intergovernmental agencies. These are related to the UN by special agreements and work with the UN and each other through the Economic and

Social Council. Sixteen of these are so called "specialised agencies" - to which the World Health Organisation is attached. Its objective is the attainment of the highest possible level of health by all peoples of the world. The eradication of smallpox from the world and the control of tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid and malaria are all examples of achievements towards this goal.

Human Rights is another important field with which the UN is firmly identified in the public mind. On 10 December, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly. It was intended as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples". Since then over fifty human rights instruments dealing with matters such as genocide, racial discrimination and apartheid, discrimination of women, torture and the rights of the child, have been negotiated. Recently the General Assembly called on the Commission to begin examining the human rights violations in occupied Kuwait, under a resolution adopted by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 1 against (Iraq), with no abstentions.

Now that the UN is in the spotlight of the international arena it is important to take this opportunity and increase peoples' knowledge and insight of the organisation. Last year an opinion poll commissioned by the UN Department of Public Information revealed that 93% of the British population were aware of the UN. Unfortunately, only 20% could name a UN body. Hopefully the UN, with its diverse range of activities all united in the continuous struggle to make this world a better place to live in, will one day receive the recognition it deserves.



Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru is the United Nations Secretary-General since 1982



The UN has peacekeeping forces all over the world. The peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was created in 1964 to prevent conflict between the Greek and Turkish communities

Fruity frolics

Three oranges from the ENO

The E.N.O. chose to revive Prokofiev's "The Love For Three Oranges" at an apt time of year. Its raucous frolicking across the stage at the coliseum fits in well with the season of pantomime.

The plot, like the costumes and set, is highly complicated. The opera begins with the dramatic appearance of the large chorus, crammed into the royal boxes, singing and gesturing to each other from either side. They are arguing whether tragedy, comedy, romance or farce should be performed. A group called the eccentrics win, selecting, "The Love For Three Oranges".

It is a story about a Prince who is a hyperchondriac. Alan Woodrow is the Prince with the richest and most powerfully articulated voice of the evening. The King of this imaginary kingdom hopes that if only his son will laugh, he will recover. However, Leander, the Prime Minister is plotting with his lover the Princess Clarisa to seize the throne. The treasonous pair are sung by baritone Donald Maxwell, who is a cross between Alf Garnet and a skinhead in black velvet, and mezzo soprano Anne Collins, a gestapo-like hag. They are helped by Smeraldina (Fiona Kimm) a minor witch who wouldn't look out of place on a St. Trilians set. She tells them that the Prince is protected by the sorcerer Chelio. But, Fata Morgana the other sorcerer can

stop Chelio.

Ironically though, and rather unfortunately for Fata's modesty, it is the sight of her knickers when she falls over which makes the Prince laugh. Highly insulted, she curses him to fall in love with three oranges. A demon blows the Prince and Truffaldino, the jester, to the kitchen of another sorcerer. Here lie the oranges but unfortunately they are guarded by a giant cook, who is played in drag by bass Richard Angas. Fortunately, Chelio has given them a magic ribbon which charms the giant while they escape with the oranges. Unfortunately, they are now in the desert and the oranges have grown enormous. While the Prince rests Truffaldino (on this particular evening played superbly by understudy Paul Harry) decides to open an orange for refreshment. He has been warned by Chelio to only open them near water and now it is clear why. In the two oranges that he opens beautiful princesses step out but they promptly die through lack of water. Tragic.

The prince wakes up, bestrewn with dead princesses and an orange which he opens. Fortunately, this Princess, hauntingly beautiful soprano Rosa Mannion is saved by the intervention of the eccentrics with a bucket of water. The course of true love is halted by



the Princess being turned into a rat, by Fata. Smeraldina takes her place, but, the eccentrics intervene to lock up Fata so Chelio can rush off to the palace to transform the Princess back from a giant rat to her sexy self. The plotters are exposed, Fata spirits them away before they can be punished and everyone lives happily ever after.

A fairy tale of innovative slapstick humour and satire. Tim Hopkins has revived Richard Jones' production of an opera which is outstanding for its visual trickery and inventive costumes. These are wonderfully over the top, splendid in their colour and opulence. The manic tomfoolery of the production is exemplified by Hopkins himself,

the unannounced master of ceremonies. It is his job to instruct the audience how to use their scratch and sniff cards at opportune moments during the scenes. Such modernism and special effect gimmicks are also represented by the eccentrics. Their omniscient intervention in the course of events is symptomatic of the light hearted anarchy

which the opera embodies. Prokofiev portrays art as a whimsical plaything, most obviously revealed by the discontinuous structure of the music. At the London Coliseum, performances remaining are January 18th, 21st and 24th.

Sarah Eglin

Gorbi and the Dragon

Previously banned in the USSR

"Gorbi and the Dragon" assumes the form of a mirror reflecting the political scenario in Russia. The political statements are rendered subtle by being carefully entrenched in a fairy tale story. The original play "The Dragon", written by Yvgeny Schwartz (the Russian Hans Christian Anderson), is a tale of dark knights, beautiful maidens, lovable sidekicks and ultimately the dragon which represents the evil desire that Stalin and Ceausescu wallowed in and encouraged. Unfortunately, it was not subtle enough to prevent Stalin from banning it and only the advent of Glasnost was to see its revival and its establishment as one of the country's best loved classics.

TNT (The New Theatre) have reworked the original

play in order to reflect modern changes that are in effect in Eastern Europe. The play passes through three stages, Stalinism-Materialism-Nationalistic Mysticism and the delivery by the international cast is powerful and provocative. The most enthralling thing about this production is the cast's persistent desire for audience participation. This is probably the only occasion you will have to smother Russian government officials with custard pies.

The subject matter is inspiring, the acting commendable and what the play lacks in visual impact, it gains in symbolism. At first sight one is astounded by the bareness of the stage but with insight one can look beyond these stark essentials. The play contains the obligatory



cliche's like "I cannot be a hero without a horse" and "We will no longer be seduced by the opium of the box-office" and for some reason the lines oscillate between Russian, English and French. The justification for the use of French I presume, is that it makes a better vehicle for propaganda as exemplified by the Chef's cake recipe contains 'De la sauce vanille avec Das Kapital' and needs 'Du sucre, des raisins.....des Dollars, des DeutschMark, un peu de Bush, un peu de Kohl'. The

lines tell their own story. As they say, you can't have your cake and eat it. Or maybe you can. Go and see "Gorbi and the Dragon" and maybe you can help the people rise above a nihilistic or at least appreciate the bravery of one man at odds with a three-headed dragon.

"Gorbi and the Dragon" is on at the Battersea Arts Centre until 13th January 1991 and at Watermans on 29th January-2nd February 1991

Sahr Johnny

Not so Private lives

A review of the December production

For the first ten minutes of "Anniversary Waltz" I had the distinct impression that I was in the wrong theatre. The blurb on the press release had said something about "a journey through ten years of a relationship". It had failed to mention that the relationship being journeyed through was the real-life lesbian one between the performers Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver.

However, once I had got over the culture shock, I found myself quite enjoying the production. The theatre was small and the props basic, but the talent shone through. Sketches giving a snapshot history of their relationship and early lives were interspersed with sequences lip-synching to dated love songs such as "It's impossible" by Perry Como (who?).

The tone of the show ranged across the emotional spectrum as different aspects of their lives and relationships came under scrutiny. For the most part, however, they managed to put a comic slant on even the most serious aspects.

Discussing their early lives, Peggy Shaw related how she had always thought she was Spencer Tracy - a dream which came true when she married a man who thought he was Katherine

Hepburn. Then she fell in love with a woman at work. Everything went fine until Peggy found out that the other woman also wanted to be Spencer Tracy. For her part, Lois Weaver (the feminine component of the duo) related how she had been remarkably unaware of her sexuality until she met Peggy. Peggy had shouted at her, across a crowded restaurant table, to stop evading the truth and come to terms with the fact that she was a lesbian - which Lois shortly did.

A highlight of the evening was the question and answer session for the audience. Once Lois had confessed that she was not monogamous, a member of the audience asked her out. "Well, honey", replied Lois, "if you'd like to leave your name and number at the bar, I'll get back to you ..."

Shakespeare it definitely was not, but I came away having enjoyed myself.

I also came away with my perceptions (strongly held, but not always well informed) challenged for the better.

Split Britches performed "Anniversary Waltz" at the Drill Hall Arts Centre, this week they will be showing "Belle Reprieve"

John Pannu

The art of Angst

Egon Schiele and his contemporaries

In the aftermath of Monet fever, the Royal Academy is now exhibiting a dynamic collection of work by early nineteenth century avant-garde artists from Austria. The exhibition taken from the Leopold private collection contains work by Austria's finest painters of the stature of Gustav Klimt, Oscar Kokoschka and most prominently Egon Schiele.

At the turn of the century, Gustav Klimt was the darling of the Vienne Art World. His highly erotic paintings of women woven into a decorative tapestry won him international acclaim. Klimt's modernist style influenced many budding young artists working in Vienna at that time, most notably Egon Schiele.

Schiele trained at the Vienna Academy of Art from 1906-1909 where he fell under the spell of Klimt who became his mentor and close friend. Although there are points of contact with Klimt in Schiele's earlier work, he developed a distinct independent style of his own.

Drawing on similar themes as Klimt - death and life and

eroticism - Schiele transformed them with extreme expressions of foreboding doom. Aware of his own mortality, Schiele confronted the mystery of death frequently in his figurative landscapes. "Death and Man" 1911, "Dead Mother" 1910, and "Dead Town 111" 1911. While Klimt celebrated sexuality Schiele seemed to be perturbed by it. In "Act of Love" 1915 the embracing figures are withdrawn and alienated.

The human figure and portraits are the principal subjects of Schiele's work. With the precision of a draughtsman, Schiele traces the contours of the human body with no mercy. The stark outlines of his drawings convey tortured emaciated skeletal figures, leaving no room for aesthetics. There are no frills or trimmings, the human body speaks for itself, isolated against a bare background.

Frequently, Schiele depicted himself in his own work leading critics to judge him as self-obsessed. However, this is not true for Schiele was on a perennial

journey of self discovery. With a paintbrush or pencil as his guide Schiele searches with clinical observation for his true identity. His angst ridden contorted poses are charged with the force of his personality. Indeed, Schiele does achieve self truth to the extent that his self portraits are almost caricatures of himself.

Sadly, Schiele's career was shortlived. He died at the age of twenty eight from influenza. Only months before his death Schiele received public acclaim. A generation was to pass before his stature was recognised. During his ten year span as an active painter Schiele produced expressionist art of compelling intensity and imagery. The fifty two paintings by Schiele are outstanding in their range and quality. The exhibition at the Royal Academy will be the first time these works have been shown in Britain.

At the Royal Academy, Piccadilly until February 17th.

Maya Pastakia



Sheltering Sky

Bertolucci's adaptation of Paul Bowles' novel

Undoubtedly Bertolucci is one of the masters of his art. His films are always highly cinematic, using every inch of the large screen to paint huge panoramic stories.

His latest film, "The Sheltering Sky" is an adaptation of the Paul Bowles novel of the same name. The film has been produced with Bowles' cooperation, indeed he plays a small but vital role, and one feels that Bertolucci has successfully caught the flavour of the undoubtedly complex novel.

The film tells the story of three American travellers and is set around 1930. A married couple (played by John Malkovich and Debra Winger) plan to travel across Africa, exploring the land and its culture, and living a life of shambolic French colonialism, and are accompanied by a bachelor friend for some of their journey.

Bertolucci makes the most of the exotic setting, alternately stunning us with huge and beautiful panoramas of deserts and African landscapes, contrasted by intimate shots of the rough hewn lives which the inhabitants of the land have made for themselves. Even the title of the film reminds us of the awesome power of nature in relation to man.

The three drift across Africa, watching time pass them by until they become caught up in a

typhoid epidemic and time at last becomes of the essence. Time is one of the film's dominant themes - the idea of time as a constant, something which is always passing regardless of humanity, is countered by the human experience of time. The characters do not seem to notice the time until it is too late, and at no stage in the film are we certain of how quickly the clock is ticking.

Underlying the theme of time are the ideas of our destiny and our own mortality. Early on in the film we are told that one of the characters has dreamt that he is on a train heading for disaster. He realises he can save himself by screaming, but cannot bring himself to until it is too late. In Africa one can survive only through adapting, and all three adapt to their circumstances differently. Bertolucci uses the visual power of his medium to emphasise these transfigurations to us.

"The Sheltering Sky" is a highly erotic film - the beauty of the landscape adding to the sexuality of the characters. It is also a very human and romantic tale - it tells of people struggling together despite the inevitability of their destinies.

Currently playing at the Odeon, Marble Arch and across London.

Leo Griffin



Coming up roses

Jarman's garden

Derek Jarman's film 'The Garden' is personal both in its setting (Jarman's own garden in Dungeness) and in its tackling of the issues of AIDS and Clause 28; along with the treatment of homosexuality by the Church.

But far from being a diatribe against contemporary society, it is a visually stunning and evocative allegory worked around the passion of Christ's life story. At times Christ is a solitary figure, seen suffering in his contemplation of society's failures. At others he is represented by two men, lovers who are persecuted and beaten to death by the police. It is this that represents the central theme of the persecution suffered by gay men under the reactionary Clause 28 and its subsequent backlash.

Jarman himself plays a major role in the film, neatly categorising it as a "trance

film" so that it can be grouped with his 1987 film 'The Last of England'; only this one goes one step beyond. Jarman dreams the film into being and through him the central themes are explored. He is the hermit, the good time boy, the contentious critic and the victim. It could all be very self-indulgent but the melancholy is equally matched by the humour and sense of earthiness.

Some of the most memorable sequences concentrate on the seasons and the elements at play on Kent's coast, always under the threatening shadow of Dungeness power station. This is ingenious piece of art which succeeds through being sensitive but will leave one feeling heady and optimistic.

On release now in London
Bronwen Grey and Juanita Shepherd

British views of India

The Raj exhibition

Perhaps "The British and India" would be a more suitable description of this exhibition which looks at the British in India from 1740 to 1947.

It is the largest exhibition ever staged at the National Portrait Gallery and the cramped viewing conditions certainly testify to this; exhibits are shown in corridors easily blocked by visitors. The exhibition has described itself as a new evaluation of the life and culture of the Raj.

Unfortunately, expectations of a balanced exhibition of life in India at that time, were to be disappointed. It was dominated by the romantic, picturesque paintings of heroic figures such as Robert Clive and Lord Curzon. A few Indian princes were painted by contemporary English painters and these were remarkably incongruous: Indians, often with slightly caucasian bone structure standing on the steps of what usually looked like the portico of an English stately home with oaks and clouds in the background.

After spending some time in India myself, during which I saw a great deal of its cultural heritage, I thought the exhibition gave a poor idea of what life in India during the Raj would have been like. If more material had been shown depicting contem-

pory life through Indian eyes, the British romantic art could have been set in context. Scenes of Indian courtly life are abundant in India, though everyday life is poorly covered. The exhibitors do have access to Indian art; they have a warehouse in Battersea full of material they have bought or borrowed. So changing the balance of the exhibition would not present too much of a problem.

The exhibition does give a very good chronological expose of the Raj through British eyes, though towards the end (1930-1947) it becomes more of a photographic exhibition which is not scintillating as it lacks coverage of the significant movements of the drive to Independence.

A portrayal of the general atmosphere in India is lacking, depriving the visitor of an impression of what life must have been like during the Raj. One does not really envisage the climate, people and landscape; as it stands it could all have taken place in Norfolk.

So the description, "a new evaluation" is a bit ambitious. The exhibition provides a portrait of colonialism from the contemporary romantic viewpoint.

National Portrait Gallery until March

Joss Fisher

Houghton Street Harry

As the White Circus yanked up the tent poles for 1990 everyone was agreed. In 1991, a World Cup and World Championship year for ski racing, things could only get better.

The 1990 report made depressing reading. Not enough snow. Too many big stars falling over and hurting themselves. Equipment manufacturers in serious financial trouble. Americans and Europeans squabbling, Mother Nature pulling the plug, sending TV directors, schedulers and sometimes viewers crazy. Fifteen of the 33 women's World Cup races rescheduled. Of nine men's downhills only Val Gardenaran as planned. The last women's downhill never raced.

Ski racing, though, is a sport founded on bad weather. It does not stay depressed very long. Mountains may look misty and miserable but mists vanish as quickly as they appear. Maybe it has snowed in the night. Maybe the clouds will part on slopes swathed in shining silver...

Racers live in such hopes. So, it seems, does the huge public which follows them on a pair of skis or a TV screen. The World Cup sets out in 1990-1 with a new sponsor (the Italian sportswear firm Sergio Tacchini) and radical experiments in the pipeline. Two of the men's and three of the women's downhill programmes will have elimination races this season. After two training runs for a broad field, a Friday eliminator will pitch the top 30 into a Saturday final which will have two-minute start intervals for a better TV spectacle. The top 15 from the Friday eliminator will be able to choose their start times for that final in descending priority. So if the Austrian World Cup titleholder Helmut Hoeflehner is fastest on Friday he will back his training experience and course knowledge against the weather forecast and choose, say, number six or seven when he judges the slope will be at its best. Problems will arise if heavy overnight snow or hard frost seriously change the course. Canadian ex-racer Kenny Read, who helped dream up the idea, believes that it is a better deal than a casino-type draw among the top 15.

Up to 100 racers, including the top qualifiers from the second division Europa or North American Cups, will be allowed to compete in the eliminator. For up-and-coming racers this has the double virtue of better competition and track conditions, and a front door entry into the big time.

For the weekend televiewer, the two minute intervals instead of the current one-and-a-half minute maximum, sometimes reduced to a mere one minute, will enable television companies to show much of, if not the whole, course.

This was an innovation voted through by the amateur-controlled International Ski Federation (FIS) at its biennial congress at Montreux, Switzerland, in May last year. Gian-Franco Kasper, the Swiss Secretary-General, says racers will be encouraged to take off their helmets so the world's TV public can get to know them better. Of the new system he comments: "Some nations will not be participating in the top 30. Maybe they will lose interest. That is the risk we take. But if it is successful we can extend the idea to all the other World Cup races, the World Championships and the Winter Olympics.

Montreux also saw one of the last skiing conventions swept away. Ski racing is no longer an 'amateur' sport. It is now formally semi-professional. American pressure has succeeded in forcing the acceptance of cash prizes. At present race winners, in the Alpine, Nordic or Freestyle categories, pocket convertible gold coins worth up to £2500.

For the US Ski Association, which believes that North Americans understand bucks but not points, this was a triumph. Chief executive Howard Peterson gushed: "Cash prizes are what we have campaigned for. It's the American dream - you can put money in the bank and buy your parents a house. We won on a principle when there was big opposition. Next year the prizes will be higher."

Everyone knows that income under and over the counter from equipment contracts and individual sponsors dwarfs prize money. Norway's slalom star Ole-Christian Furuseth signed for Atomic, the Austrian ski firm, for £400,000 in the close season when Elan, his Yugoslav ski maker, was in financial trouble. Part of this goes into the national pool, which helps racers at every level, and which is the reason the FIS hangs on to control the national associations.

Americans are more business orientated. Peterson is conducting a hard hitting campaign for a more professional FIS management together with better visibility and return for sponsors. He walked out of one meeting in October swearing the US would stage no FIS races in 1992 unless the American proposals were taken more seriously. The FIS replied that they were. Just give them time.

Major wager

Sarah Ebner forsee's Prime Ministerial resignations, champions' relegations and English humiliation

1) Cricket:

England will win the Ashes (Whoops, bang goes number one.) Mike Gatting will lead a good-will tour to Iraq. John Major will pack in his day job, being unable to resist the offer of opening the batting for England. They still can't win anything, even though the new umpire, a Mrs Thatcher, seasonally adjusts the figures.

2) Football:

Liverpool, Manchester United and Arsenal will all be all relegated, while Spurs will win the treble (Well, I can wish, can't I?) Blackburn and Oldham will fail to be promoted...again. Gazza will win the Toughest-and-Most-in-Control-of-his-Emotions award. Steve McMahon will be found sobbing disconsolately at the award ceremony, in disappointment at coming last. Bobby Robson will return to England from the Netherlands (having surprisingly not won anything at PSV Eindhoven.) He will then be offered a job by Spurs who want to keep up their record of hiring expensive managers who never actually win any-

thing. Terry Venables will join Manchester United.

Brixton Prisoners Football team will be relegated despite their new Christmas signing of Arsenal Captain Tony "The Donkey" Adams.

3) Tennis:

Andre Agassi will win the best dressed tennis player of the year award. Bjorn Borg's comeback will go really well until he comes up against a new 11 year old superstar in the US Open final. The 11 year old will win. No British player will go beyond the first round at Wimbledon, and everyone will blame it on lack of government funding rather than the fact that no British player is good enough. (Well, I have to inject a note of realism at some point.)

5) Sailing:

Tracey Edwards will win yet another award for being in the true British tradition of Nigel Mansell, popular for almost winning something important. She will then actually win the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race for 1991, and lose her OBE for being un-British.

6) Boxing:

Frank Bruno will retire from boxing due to the lure of the greasepaint and spotlight. That is, to continue starring in pantomime, and, along with Harry, telling us why he is like a popular brand of toilet paper (he looks good, but is actually only useful for a couple of seconds.)

7) Rugby:

England will win the Rugby World Cup. (ONLY KIDDING - We'll come last as usual.)

8) Snooker:

Stephen Hendry will retire from snooker to advertise spot lotion.

Steve Davies will win personality of the year, and Alex Higgins will announce that he is going to behave himself. The next day he will be disqualified from the world championships for lying.

9) Darts:

Eric Bristow and Jockey Wilson, depressed at not having won anything for the last few years, will win Bully's special prize on "Bullseye". (As Jim Bowen would say, "Lovely, smashing, super".)

10) Oxford and Cambridge boat race:

Who cares?

The Beaver Sports page(s) feature a new double act. Anyone with any sporting inclinations—from the conventional to the obscure—is invited to contribute.

Write on!

Please contact Hassan or Suhul between 3-4 on Mondays in E205 or come to the Beaver meetings on Mondays at 6p.m. on the top floor of the Cafe.

Wing - king

LSE 1st XV.....12
BRUNEL 1st XV.....9

A lightening try within the first five minutes by Ben Wales set up by a quick ruck and attacking running by Paul Manson secured the LSE an early advantage.

Scrummaging problems were ironed out when Rick Stringer was brought on but Brunel forward pressure brought about a converted try. This setback was remedied by Gareth Roberts' speed down the wing.

In the second half the score was narrowed to 9-8 as the opponents struck back with another try. Some desperate defending by the LSE backs prevented further Brunel tries and Rich Grayson distinguished himself with a thumping tackle on the rival full back. Gradually the LSE began to impose itself onto the match as Stringer and Dave Richards inspired the pack and the LSE started driving forward in the scrums.

Two minutes from the end a back move involving Grayson and Wales led to Iwan Jones breaking down the wing. Despite a last-ditch tackle five yards from the line the move was concretised by Ben Wales who dived over the line to give LSE a hard earned 12-9 win.

Well done

Last term, the AU raised £330 from its Open Day, of which £250 was donated to the LSE nursery. The remaining £80 was donated to the NSPCC. The money was handed over by M. Handford, General-Secretary of the AU.

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