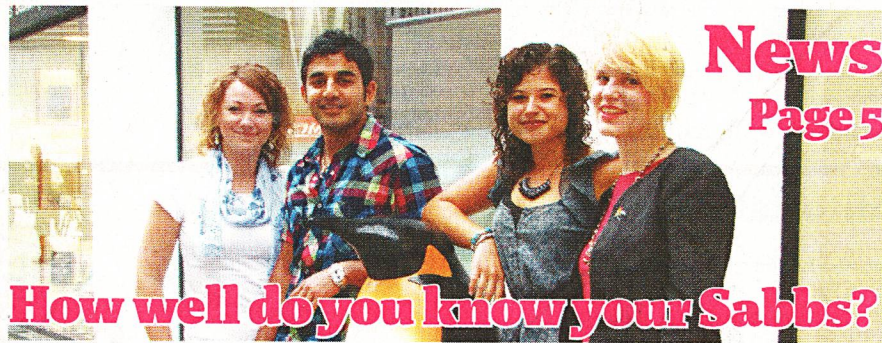


Nobel Laureate Ronald Coase gets us industrially organised



How well do you know your Sabbs?

The Beaver

15 March 2011
Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union
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"Thank you Howard" say 1,200 students

Lauren Fedor

Nearly 1,500 students voted on a motion to thank Howard Davies last week.

The motion, proposed by International Students' Officer Michael Lok and seconded by third-year econometrics and mathematical economics undergraduate Sayan Palchowdhury, called upon the Students' Union to issue a public statement "recognising and thanking Howard Davies for his service to the School".

The Beaver reported last week that, in a statement released on Thursday, 3rd March—the night Davies submitted his letter of resignation—the Students' Union said, "Many students are fond of Howard Davies, and recognised his contributions to the LSE community", but added the Director's "links with the Gaddafi regime were roundly condemned by the student body and we recognise that his resignation is the first step in restoring our faith in the integrity of our university".

The motion, which passed on Friday with a majority of over 1,000, proposed removing the sentence "we recognise that his resignation is the first step in restoring our faith in the integrity of our university" from the statement.

The statement also said the issue was "not resolved", welcoming Lord Woolf's independent inquiry and urging the School to instate transparent and democratic procedures relating to ethical financial practise with "student representation at every level".

The statement has since been removed from the Students' Union website.

More controversially, the motion "mandate[d] Sabbatical Officers and urge part-time Executive Officers to vote in favour to elect Davies as honorary member of the Students' Union [and] nominate Davies as Honorary Fellow of the LSE following his departure." This clause, and another which mandated the Sabbatical Officers to thank Davies, "in person, for his service to the School", was labelled

"just an attack on the Sabbatical Officers" by one student in the audience at the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) which debated the motion.

Voting took place between 3PM on Thursday and 5PM on Friday. Results were posted on the Students' Union website on Friday evening. With 1462 students voting, 1236 approved the motion, 212 voted against it, and fourteen students were undecided.

"This is incredible turnout," General Secretary Charlotte Gerada wrote in a statement published on Friday evening on the Students' Union website, adding the vote was a "testament to the strong feeling amongst the student body about Howard leaving the School".

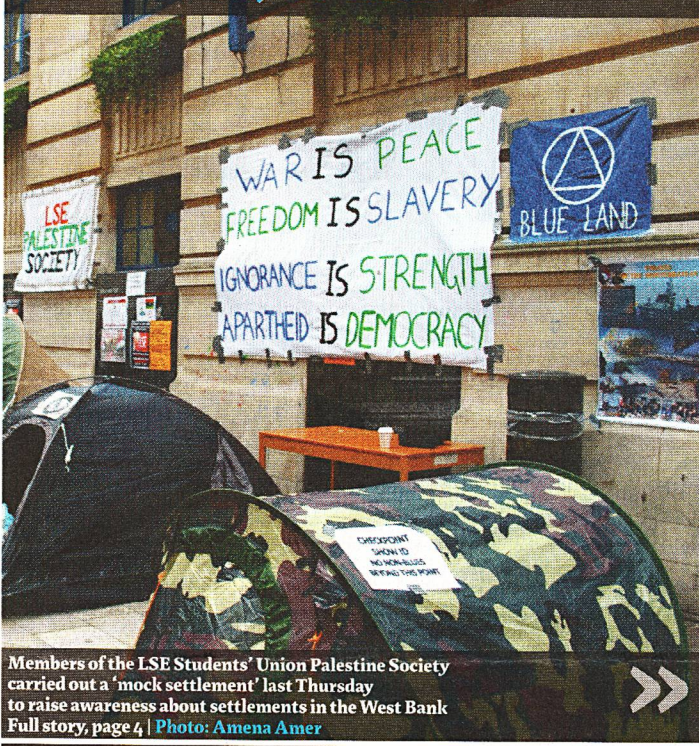
The turnout for Friday's vote was the highest for any motion this academic year. In December 2010, 755 students voted on a proposal to occupy part of the LSE, with 464 of those votes in favour of the motion. And last month, just under 400 students voted on a motion encouraging the LSE Students' Union to back a strike in solidarity with the University and College Union (UCU).

Gerada wrote the Union already delivered many of the resolves outlined in the motion. Students were invited to sign a card thanking Davies on Houghton Street, from 11AM to 3PM on Friday, she said. The Sabbatical Officers also sent Davies an email on Monday, thanking him for his "contributions to the LSE community".

"Your involvement with a wide variety of societies and social activities has been greatly appreciated by the student body", the Sabbatical Officers wrote, adding, "Although we've had some disagreements at times, we recognise that you've gone beyond your official remit to engage with students in a personal and friendly manner".

"This is the opportunity for real discussion and debate about how LSE can further involve students within key governance decisions, to ensure transparency is something the LSE always strives for", Gerada wrote. "Even when discuss-

Blue Land, WC2A



Members of the LSE Students' Union Palestine Society carried out a 'mock settlement' last Thursday to raise awareness about settlements in the West Bank
Full story, page 4 | Photo: Amena Amer

ing Howard's resignation at Council last week, I was very conscious of the impact it would have on the student body, and I will always make sure the Union listens to students".

The EGM to debate the motion was held in the Old Theatre last Thursday, 10th March, following the Annual General Meeting. The meeting was marked by fierce debate and loud reactions from the audience, with the meeting's chair Jack Tindale repeatedly asking the more than 300 attendees to be quiet and respect those speaking.

Lok introduced the motion, calling for students to recognise Davies and criticise the actions of the Sabbatical Officers.

"There is a line between calling some-

one to account for them for their mistakes and accusing and personally attacking someone who has contributed so much to this university for the last eight years", Lok said.

Lok said he was confident students would support the motion.

"The voices of the students", he said, "are telling us that this is the right thing to do."

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page 4
Comment
page 8

Government reveals new Widening Participation requirements

Oliver Wiseman

If senior management at the LSE choose to raise fees to £9,000 for students matriculating in 2012, then the School will have to spend £900 on recruiting disadvantaged students, the Office For Fair Access (OFFA), the non-departmental public body tasked with safeguarding equitable entry to higher education, said last week.

The OFFA guidelines propose a sliding scale of 15 to 30 per cent of fee income that Higher Education institutions must spend on outreach projects.

Outgoing LSE Director Howard Davies told students at a Union General Meeting (UGM) earlier this term that charging £9,000 "would not necessarily be the right thing to do". Davies went on to say OFFA's stipulations would influence the LSE's fee-setting policy.

LSE Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada told the Beaver the requirements were a "weak replacement" for now scrapped government funded schemes to encourage wider participation in higher education.

"With Aim Higher (a government programme aimed at raising aspirations among challenged communities) being completely cut, further pressure is being applied to universities to deliver what is essentially being cut from the purse", Gerada said.

The procedure calls on universities to write annual access agreements, proposals submitted to OFFA outlining how money will be spent on widening participation. OFFA may deem the access agreement inadequate and are licenced to deny an institution the right to charge fees in excess of £6,000.

Sir Martin Harris, director of OFFA defended the system, said he wanted institutions to be outcome-focused when it came to fair access.

"We will have the highest expectations of intuitions who have the furthest to go in achieving a representative student body and who want to charge fees toward the top end", Harris said.

Gerada was more sceptical. "OFFA has a history of inaction with regard to sanctions, and the self-regulating approach being suggested might mean that institutions don't challenge themselves enough, because they simply aren't forced to", she said.

For this levy to have a measurable and meaningful impact, OFFA will need to strengthen their sanctioning and have a stronger approach to ensure that this dramatic increase in fees will not have a detrimental effect on access."

The School has until Tuesday, 19th April, to submit its access agreement to OFFA.

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR
ELECTION
17TH MARCH, 8:30PM
OLD THEATRE**

Rosebery set to splash out over bathroom debacle

Alex Haigh
Senior Reporter

On Friday 11th March, residents of the Rosebery wing of Rosebery Hall were offered a formal apology and promise of compensation for overrunning works on bathrooms.

Problems related to the refurbishment were previously reported on in the Beaver.

On Thursday 10th March, Rafie Faruq, president of Rosebery's student committee, told residents, "This is the final straw".

He said he had sent an ultimatum to Rosebery management following "over three weeks" without a "formal apology or a figure for compensation". If the apology and compensation were not received by Friday 11th March, students were set to proceed with a Summer Term rent strike.

Richard Anderson, service manager of Rosebery Hall, sent a letter to residents last week, outlining a formal apology, citing the problems associated with the renovation. Anderson's letter also contained explanations about improvements to be made to construction methods, based on students' feedback, and the promise of compensation.

After Anderson sent the letter, Faruq

posted, "Finally won the battle for our bathroom problems, well done everyone involved. £150 each. Now pub. X" on his Facebook profile.

Many students have since expressed concerns about Anderson's letter.

The letter states, "To recognise the negative impact... on the residents whose rooms are located immediately adjacent to the works, a one-off ex-gratia payment of £150 will be applied to your Summer Term 2011 rent payment".

The ambiguity of the statement led many students to believe they would not be compensated.

"Does this mean that the payment will only be to those adjacent, or that it will be to everyone?" Katherine Taunton, a resident, told the Beaver.

On Saturday, Faruq said it was unlikely compensation would only be given to students living adjacent to the bathrooms. If that were the case, though, he said a rent strike would go ahead.

Head of Residential Life at the LSE Rachael Elliot has said compensation will be given to all residents.

The letter says bathroom refurbishments will be finished by the start of April 2011—almost three months after the original date of completion.

2010 Accounts reveal increasing disparity in pay

Sachin Patel

The number of staff members at the LSE earning more than £100,000 per annum jumped from eighty-six to 115 for the 2009-10 academic year, according to figures released this month in the School's Annual Accounts.

One-eighteenth, or 0.06 per cent, of staff at the LSE together took home one-seventh of the total wage bill in the last academic year, while the number of staff earning more than £150,000 doubled.

In 2005-06, total pay for "Higher Paid Employees"—those on salaries of over £100,000—accounted for just 5.3 per cent of the total wage bill.

The LSE Branch Secretary of the University and Colleges Union (UCU), Mike Cushman said the School should not "plead poverty", but should use an academic pay structure that better reflected "fair distribution". Cushman, who is also a Research Fellow in the Department of Management, also acknowledged the government's "refusal to fund higher education properly" as being "the main cause of our problems".

In February, the School's Director

Howard Davies wrote to all staff members, announcing a pay rise of 0.4 per cent which would be backdated to 1st August 2010. This settlement was not accepted by the UCU, despite Davies saying the increase was "the maximum affordable by the sector".

At present, fifteen academic departments at the LSE are not represented on the LSE UCU Committee; those not represented include economics, law, and accounting and finance.

Total staff costs have seen a 9.5 per cent increase in the last year, from £107.7m to £117.9m. Of this sum, £98.6m makes up the wage bill for the School's 2,129 staff members.

Over the last four years, average pay at the School has increased by 2.9 per cent, with an average annual increase of 0.7 per cent. But average pay for higher paid employees has increased by 6.7 per cent in the same period. In 2005-6, the estimated mean pay for the School's twenty-eight higher paid employees stood at £117,500;

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page 3

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

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The Beaver

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Issue No. 748

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

Get innocuous!

Never in recent memory has there been such intense media scrutiny of goings-on at the School as we have observed in the last two weeks. But now that the sheen of the television camera has worn off, and the dust has settled on Howard Davies's desk, now is the time to leave Lord Woolf to his inquiry and the School to its search for what amounts to two replacement Directors.

This newspaper has devoted sufficient column inches to the former, and awaits further speculation as to the latter. Let it suffice to say that the Beaver recognises the manifold contributions Sir Howard made to life at the School, and the engagement with a somewhat petty EGM motion, from all quarters of the student body, suggests most students recognise this too. No matter, the substantive of the debate—arguably, what happens in the Old Theatre stays in the Old Theatre—what really matters is that, for the first time this year, the AU have been coaxed out of their post-Wednesday-night torpor and into the heart of student debate. This newspaper hopes next year brings further engagement, through the UGM, of all types of students, ideally without having to pander to so-called 'silly' motions.

It is evident that LSE students are still most engaged with the Students' Union seemingly accidentally. The strong work of societies this year has brought tournament successes (see page 5) and eagerly anticipated events (see page 4), with participants hardly noticing the superstructure. You don't need a student politician to

go on Newsnight and talk about effective room-booking policy, after all. Nonetheless, better recognition of the Sabbatical Officers would be on the agenda for next year, given the risible findings of our "Do you know your Sabb?" survey (see page 5), and this newspaper would encourage the officers-elect to break out of the Kingsley Rooms more often, and take their approachable selves out onto Houghton Street. Less Cameron Direct, more NHS Direct.

If next year's Sabbatical Officers make it as far as Houghton Street, it will be an achievement. But for some LSE alumni, more distant shores prove to be the answer. Ronald Coase, who graduated from the School in 1932, is a Nobel Laureate who found his bread-and-butter, industrial organisation, while on a quasi-pilgrimage of small businesses in the United States, which had been trodden on by the Great Depression. We were lucky enough to speak with him for this issue (see page 13).

On a more sombre note, we were also contacted by an alumnus currently teaching in Tokyo (see page 10), who was able to share his experiences of the recent earthquake, the effects of which are still resonating through Japan. This newspaper believes the country to be in a difficult place at this moment (see page 14), both geologically and economically, and our thoughts go out to any member of the LSE community who has been affected by this latest tragedy.

Finally, a word on our Executive Editor Election, which takes place this Thursday

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Collective

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Luke Smolinski
Collective Chair

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Bernard Levin Award
Deadline 25th March
llesu.com/BLA



Union Bashō

The good old days

Raucous chants, heckling;
copies of the Beaver thrown.
Well that's more like it!

Bashō misses the times people used to shout "Freeze the fees!" at him in the alleyway. He'd pass by them and feel like a big cheese for the rest of the day.

Discover Israel Week



Sign up to our Two
State Solution
Campaign on
Tuesday &
Thursday

The Quest for Security, Democracy and
Peace in the Middle East: An Insider's
Look By Gill Hoffman
14th March 18:00 – 19:00
ST421



The Peace Process: What Next For Israel?
By Ran Gidor
15 March · 18:30 - 20:00
D402
Student ID required



Israeli Shuk
Free Israeli Wine and Israeli Breakfast, Falafel,
Save a Child's Heart, Nargillah



Surprise guests on
Houghton Street on
Thursday at 4pm

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR
ELECTION**
17TH MARCH, 8:30PM
OLD THEATRE

Gerada: "It's been a majorly intense year"

Vincent Wong
Senior Reporter

To the tune of an Athletics Union drinking song, LSE Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada downed a pint at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held last Thursday, 10th March.

Gerada's drinking concluded the AGM, in which she presented a report on behalf of the Student Trustees, and was done in accordance with an unofficial tradition.

"It's been a majorly intense year," Gerada said in her report, citing "external pressures", such as the scale of cuts to the education budget.

"But the Union has been peaking in it", she said.

In her report, Gerada outlined what she thought were success stories.

She said collaboration with the Students' Union of the University of Arts London—now in its second year—had been mutually beneficial, resulting in efficiency gains in terms of staff use, and student involvement and support.

She also said efficiency gains in the School's commercial services had been made by decreasing the number of payment points.

Other things she said had worked well included the postgraduate and environment and ethics assemblies.

Adding that while the Democracy Committee had also worked well, Gerada said its activities needed to be more transparent.

She went on to praise Postgraduate Officer Daniel Kroop for "making real inroads" in increasing postgraduate involvement in the Union.

"It's great to have another Sabbatical to put pressure on the School," she added.

On the role of the Sabbatical Officers, Gerada said that by deferring casework to the Students' Union's Advice and Support Service, the Sabbatical Officers had been better able to serve students.

Gerada also talked about the Union's campaigns. She said Freeze the Fees had been the Union's widest-reaching campaign ever, and praised those who had been involved with rallies and the National Demonstration in November.

Gerada also announced the Students' Union would bring its financial processes in-house, and would soon appoint a Director of Finance.

She ended her report by outlining ideas for the future.

She said it was important for the Union to protect the rights of students

against the rhetoric of marketisation, and that expectations towards the quality of higher education would rise with fees.

She also said the Union needed to continue support for the Defending Global Education Campaign and Beat the January Blues, and to devote more resources to sport.

Gerada then took questions that had been previously submitted, before the AGM.

One question raised concerns about "inconsistency" in the amount of time devoted by the Part-Time Officers, to which she responded that the workload of each Officer depended on the circumstances they were faced with.

She was also asked about the Union's relationship with the School.

Gerada said the Union and the School had worked well together on academic and immigration issues. She said that although there were disagreements regarding fees, it was still possible to take a "two-pronged approach" to dealing with issues concerning students.

Another question concerned re-sits. Gerada said re-sit campaigns had in the past "fallen on deaf ears" due to the autonomy of academic departments and that this year, a different approach, focused on why students fail, had been taken.

Asked what she thought had gone badly for the Union, Gerada said "external pressures" had prevented the Sabbatical Officers from addressing issues they had raised in their election campaigns. She added that despite this, the Union had done a "really great job".

AGM Chair Jack Tindale then invited questions from the floor.

Phyllis Lui, a third-year LLB student, asked why interim accounts of the Union had not yet been released, and why a request for details of costs for the Freeze the Fees campaign had been refused.

Gerada said campaigning costs for the campaign had reached the budgetary allocation of £3,000, or 0.1 per cent of the Union's overall budget.

"That's quite a small amount for an organisation of our size," she added.

She also said she would look into releasing the interim accounts on the Union's website.

Sachin Patel, a philosophy and economics finalist, asked Gerada what impact the Students' Union had had on the School's decision on fees.

"We're the only Russell Group university not to go straight to £9,000," Gerada said, adding she predicted the School's tuition level set would be around £7,500.

"If we can stay there, that would be pretty phenomenal".

Palestine Society settles on Houghton Street

Heather Wang
Senior Reporter

The LSE Students' Union Palestine Society carried out a twenty-four-hour 'Mock Settlement' on Houghton Street last Thursday and Friday, in order to raise awareness of problems caused by settlements in the West Bank.

Zac Sammour, President of the Palestine Society, told the Beaver, "We believe that engaging in proactive and inventive activity like the settlement provides us with the widest possible audience and thus allows us to engage in discussion and debate with a diverse and large number of students."

The settlement is a visual protest, adopted by universities and other organisations, to metaphorically imitate the colonial enterprise of settlement building at the expense of the indigenous inhabitants, Sammour said.

"Our aim was to provide a very physical and visual representation of the reality of illegal settlement building faced by many Palestinians every day," Sammour said, "And thus to raise awareness of the problems caused by settlements."

This event comes in Israel Apartheid

week, an international week of solidarity with the Palestinian people. Many other universities in London were involved, including SOAS, UCL, KCL, Queen Mary, Goldsmiths and Imperial College.

Other events such as showing documentary films, Palestinian cuisine tasting and Palestinian culture exhibition were organised during the twenty-four-hour span of the protest.

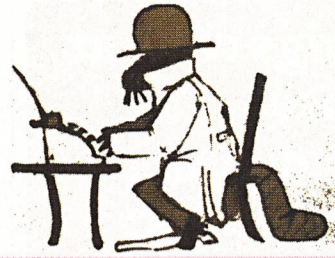
According to Sammour, most of the people who had come up to the stall and talked to the people who were engaged in the settlement were receptive. Sammour commented that the Palestine Society found that many students believed it to be an interesting tool to spark debate and raise awareness.

Emma Clever, a second-year sociology undergraduate told the Beaver, "They are positive proactive actions which people can engage in".

Sammour said that the Palestine Society were pleased with how the event had gone and concluded that it was "successful".

Gabi Kobrin, President of the Students' Union Israel Society, told the Beaver, "The Palestine Society presented a very complex situation in a very simplistic way".

Union Jack



After Sir Howard resigned last week, Jack decided to celebrate by reliving the best bits of the Director's disreputable career on YouTube. The funniest clip I found was a recording of the Colonel Gaddafi lecture, where some barmy professor—who should surely have lost her job by now—greeted the tyrannical fruitcake as "Brother Leader" and proceeded to introduce him in the same manner Kate Garraway introduces her GMTV guests.

She continued, helpfully reading out a message Sir Howard had left in his absence. "You are most welcome here Colonel Gaddafi", went the message, "We wish you had been able to deliver some Libyan weather at the same time!" [A fine joke, might I add.] "We are pleased to be asked to train Libya officials, and we hope the relationship will continue."

You almost wish he left kisses, too.

At the end of the lecture, the professor offered her Brother Leader the gift of a baseball cap, emblazoned with the blood-red LSE logo. (Of course, Sir Howard must have been completely unaware of this. I'm sure it was an improvised act of charity). We can only hope the Colonel doesn't wear this in the near future.

Before he (eventually) turns to the EGM, Jack would like readers to consider three points: first, imagine this chumminess was employed not to Colonel Gaddafi, but to the child-killing Myra Hindley—an unpunished Myra Hindley, of course. Second, bear in mind that Gaddafi has allegedly killed hundreds more than Myra: 270 in the state-sponsored Lockerbie bombing alone. Third, note that this fact was true, even before 2011.

Jack states this for your moral consideration. It is true Sir Howard visited Colonel Gaddafi behind closed doors. We can only speculate whether he joked about the British weather to him or engaged in similar fawning acts for dosh. What is clear is that, as Sir Howard has admitted, what he did was shameful.

It seems bizarre, then, that a motion to bestow the man with an Honorary Fellowship (or some such nonsense) was debated today. Jack was similarly flabbergasted to find an odd cult gathered to conduct a candle-lit vigil for Sir Howard the week before. Jack stopped to ask one member of this odd sect why she was here. She replied, "We feel so sorry for Howard Davies because the Students' Union are being so horrible to him."

"Right," Jack said, "Nothing to do with this whole Libya thing?"

Jack never got a response. He wondered if she felt the UN was being horrible to Gaddafi too, but decided not to ask her that. Jack was convinced that most LSE-goers didn't know the half of it.

So Union Jack was even more unsettled that some thought this was the right time bestow the man with martyrdom. The assertion was that links with Libya were "a mere judgemental error". Demands were made to withdraw Ashok Kumar's insistence that "the issue is damaging the reputation of the School" from the Students' Union's official statement.

Michael unLOking Barriers, the proposer of the motion, gave a salutary defence of democratic representation, commanding the Students' Union to reflect the opinion of the whole of the School, not just the radicals. His rhetoric soared and the Athletics Union roared with approval.

This was AU versus SU.

True to form, the AU booed Robin "Aaron-Porter-where-are-t'glow-sticks?" Burrett as he came on stage. Strangely, Burrett's speech was lacking something. He made it sound as if there was some sort of conspiracy between the MI6 spies, BP, Tony Blair and Sir Howard. He needed to rouse the spirits of the whole of the Old Theatre. Instead, he got caught up in party politics, and roused just the student activists.

On the whole, the proposers made better speeches. While the opponents were fiddling with microphones and looking at their phones, the proposers stirred the passions of even the bitterest grouch. They were helped by the vocal support of the AU at the back (who were oddly silent when it came to asking questions). It got to a point where deadLOK could have said almost anything and get applauded. He could have said, "I love kumquats!" and they would have erupted.

Indeed childLOK did say almost anything. He said that before the Woolf inquiry, "no-one had a right to judge Howard Davies". Jack thought padLOK must have downed a pint of Foster's before coming on stage. In truth, Jack thought many in the Old Theatre were sozzled on Foster's. Sir Howard had gone in one week from Gaddafi's best mate to Jesus of Nazareth—all because he resigned.

Readers, take note: you can commit any shameful deed, no matter how repugnant, and as long as you resign for it, you will be made a martyr. Saint Howard of Davies is living proof.

£6,600.

In a letter to the Beaver published last week, Ms. James said the hourly rate for GTAs is effectively lower than that paid for invigilating examinations, which is slightly over £10. Ms. James told the Beaver, "Last year I was paid more for standing in a room for an hour ensuring students do not cheat and taking students to the toilet, than for critically engaging students with readings, analyzing writing and speaking skills, and synthesizing information into a clear discussion for a classroom of students."

She added the School expects teachers to spend no longer than twenty minutes on reading, marking and commenting on an essay—in sharp contrast to the forty-five minutes Ms. James said she and her colleagues typically spent.

Other notable changes published in the 2010 Annual Accounts include a £1.6m increase in the School's surplus, a £15.2m increase in the School's endowment, and a 4 per cent decrease in turnover for LSE Enterprise, which has recently been criticised for having organised executive education programmes for Libyan civil servants.

» continued from page 1

in 2009-10, the equivalent estimated figure was £125,351.

Davies, who is the School's highest paid employee, took a 4.3 per cent pay-cut last year, accepting a salary of £247,000, compared to £258,000 in 2008-9.

While heads of departments receive an additional £12,000 per annum for holding their positions, an analysis of the pay structure for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) reveals a different picture. The typical annual salary for a first-year GTA is £26,430; however, according to a GTA in the Department of International History, this figure is a "gross misrepresentation", since it assumes the concurrent teaching of eight different classes.

According to Leslie James, who currently teaches the HY113 module "From Empire to Independence", first-year GTAs are typically assigned "no more than two courses to teach". Consequently, the maximum actual salary is just greater than

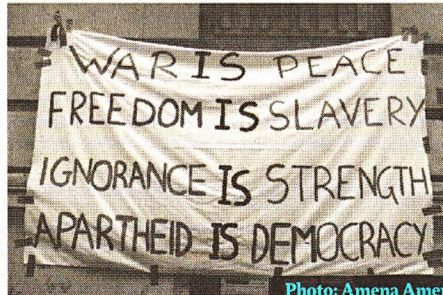


Photo: Amena Amer

News in brief

REVOLUTIONARY ROW

Anyone on the QueerlyOut email list would have been invited to a "Gaddafi themed party" at the LSE. The possibly tasteless email sparked criticism, and was quickly corrected by the managers of the event, who said, "QueerlyOut apologises for any upset that may have been caused". The theme of the event was changed from 'Gaddafi' to "revolution themed" which, the managers said, was "in honour of the people of Libya". QueerlyOut said they would be raising money for the Red Cross Appeal.

DIRECTORSHIP, THE THREEQUEL

Prudential Plc, the UK's biggest insurer in terms of market value has appointed Howard Davies, outgoing Director of the LSE, and Paul Manduca as non-executive directors. Prudential also replaced Thibaut Le Maire, its chief risk officer, and communications director, Stephen Whitehead. These changes come after the company lost £248 million in fees after the Financial Services Authority halted its bid for the Association of International Accountants last year.

GREEN FINGERS

Last Tuesday Lord Nicholas Stern, Chair of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment at LSE, received the 2011 Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontier of Economic Thought through his work on the economics of climate change. In accepting the prize, which was given out by the Tufts Global Development and Environment (GDAE) Institute, Stern emphasised the importance of coordinating environmental and economic strategies. Martin Weitzman of Harvard University also received the award.

LSE IN BAD COMPANY

The University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and King's College London (KCL) both have links with Libya. Last year SOAS announced a £188,024 collaboration with the AlFateh University in Tripoli and in 2006 the institution privately tutored Muammar Gaddafi, another of Muammar Gaddafi's sons. KCL had developed links to a Libyan government department aimed at overhauling Libya's prisons. The Gaddafi Foundation, which donated £1.5m to LSE Global Governance, played a key role in this deal, although the centre's funding was provided by the Foreign Office.

ACADEMIC FUEL

Professor John Hills, of the Department of Sociology, has been announced as the government's "fuel poverty tsar". Professor Hills is being called in by the government to help convince energy companies to protect consumers who are vulnerable to the rising prices of gas and electricity. Hills's proposal has been launched as part of the Green Deal which, as of next year, will initiate an "energy company obligation" to encourage energy saving methods that will help the poorest clients.



IN NEXT WEEK'S BEAVER...

Look out for the return of your favourite end-of-year feature, **Sabb Report Cards!**

GOT A SCOOP?

Got a story that you think we should be printing? Send us an e-mail: news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Economics bigwigs wow at society conference



The LSE Students' Union Economics Society in conjunction with the LSE Students' Union Finance Society hosted the Economics Conference on Saturday of last week. The sell-out conference saw students from universities across London, as well as LSE alumni, academics and professionals, come together to listen to speakers including the Chairman of the FSA, representatives from Morgan Stanley, the IEA and the Financial Times. Maria Zhivitskaya, Director of Special Projects for the Economics Society, said, "A number of great talks given by very impressive speakers about different current issues in the business world and in financial regulation complemented each other nicely to create a wonderful learning experience!"
Photos: LSE Students' Union Economics Society

» continued from page 1

Robin Burrett, a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology, spoke in opposition of the motion.

"If you are the captain of the ship," Burrett said of Davies, "It's not how polite he is to the staff, or how well-liked he is by the passengers, it's the direction that ship is going."

The motion asked the Students' Union to "acknowledge, subject to the findings of Lord Woolf's forthcoming report, that Davies's link with Libya was a 'mere judgemental error'".

Sayan Palchowdhury, who seconded the motion, acknowledged Davies had made an "error of judgement", adding students should "expect and respect his resignation".

But Palchowdhury also said Sabbatical Officers are "supposed to represent the views of the students".

Master's student Ryan Hickey, seconding the opposition, argued the motion was "verbally attacking and setting aside certain Sabbatical Officers" in saying "they don't represent the whole of the student body."

A controversial quote from Education Officer Ashok Kumar had already been removed from the Students' Union website, he said, and replaced with an email of thanks.

"That renders half of this motion impotent, and it's completely redundant", said Hickey, who is reading for an MSc in Political Theory.

Tindale then welcomed questions from the audience.

Questioning the proposition, Kimia Pezeshki, an undergraduate studying

philosophy and economics, said she felt the motion was "not to thank Howard Davies but just an attack on the Sabbatical Officers".

"If you have an issue with the Sabbatical Officers, the way to do it isn't to get in the way of their personal lives and their personal relationships with Howard Davies and make them go and shake his hand," Pezeshki said.

"It's so stupid", she said of the motion. "It's such a stupid way to go about it, to get back at Sabbatical Officers."

Palchowdhury responded to Pezeshki, saying the motion asked Sabbatical Officers to "change what they say about Howard Davies on the public sphere", which he said was "supposed to be representative of [students'] views."

Another student said the Students' Union was "not the right domain to propose this motion".

Lok replied, saying while the proposers were "not 100 per cent sure about the majority view at this point", such uncertainty was the exact reason for the motion.

"That's why we've put it through here," Lok said. "That's why we've called for a vote."

Palchowdhury said the Sabbatical Officers had responded to "intense media pressure" and "acted according to their conscience".

Tindale then invited questions for the opposition, and more general questions and statements.

Burrett said the investigation needed to be complete before the Union could make Davies an honorary member.

"Think long and hard about what the investigation is going to unravel about the LSE," Burrett said of the Woolf inquiry. "Think how history will judge this vote."

Another student asked proposers why they were "trying to bring further shame" to the LSE.

"Howard Davies prostituted this School's good name for a handful of dollars", he said, adding the motion would "have to be revoked when the Woolf report comes out, anyway."

Sachin Patel, a third-year philosophy and economics undergraduate called for a point of order, to clarify that only LSE students were permitted to be at the meeting. It subsequently emerged that the ULU President Clare Solomon had been present in the Old Theatre, handing out leaflets detailing LSE's links with Libya.

"Statements have been made on behalf of students that we feel do not represent the views of this student body," Lok said.

Gerada then took the microphone, saying students should "respect" Davies's decision and that she supported the initiative to thank Davies for his service to the School.

Gerada then said she was "pretty disappointed" with Lok's behaviour.

"If you had a problem with our statement," Gerada said, "all you needed to do is come and talk to us."

"You didn't tell us of your thoughts, and you really didn't give us a chance," she said.

Lok responded, saying he was "ashamed" to be part of a Students' Union Executive that "doesn't properly represent the views of the student body."

"It's time that the Students' Union extends beyond the Kingsley Rooms," Lok said, in reference to the office the Sabbatical Officers occupy off the Quad.

First-year government and economics undergraduate John Peart then called for a procedural motion to postpone voting on the motion until after the results of the Woolf inquiry had been released.

LGBT Students' Officer Reagan Persaud spoke against Peart's proposal, and after an indicative vote rejected it, Tindale declared the vote would not be delayed.

Students 'Pitch It' in front of CEOs

Chris Rogers
Senior Reporter

Milena Bottero and Avi Patchava have won the campus wide competition 'Pitch It', a contest that aims to fund the ideas of budding entrepreneurs. Bottero and Patchava beat hundreds of other LSE students, as well as LSE alumni, with their ideas of 'The Settlement' and 'Kliqed'.

Over the past month, the Venture@LSE Careers, in conjunction with LSE Students' Union Entrepreneurs Society, has invited young entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges in the hope of winning prizes including office space, prestige and cash start-up funds to turn their ideas into reality.

Applicants were given the choice to apply for two different categories: social enterprise and general enterprise.

The pitching process took place in three stages. There were two rounds of preliminary judging and the six finalists—three for each category—were given coaching from business mentors to help hone their ideas and deliver their pitches. In the final round, the competitors had to deliver their product ideas to a live audience as well as facing a panel of experts.

Benjamin Wigoder, President of the

Entrepreneurs Society said, "The final round was a phenomenal success...the quality of the ideas was the best we've ever had."

"There were several strong contenders for each slot and I was really delighted with the professionalism of the teams, and the impact of their pitches," Wigoder said.

The competition was inspired by the popular TV show Dragon's Den, in which competitors pitch their ideas to a panel of judges who put up the cash to back their venture. The LSE equivalent was attended by friends, family, supporters and several venture capitalists who spoke privately to many of the competitors after the event.

Milena Bottero won the Social Enterprise category pitching 'The Settlement'. Bottero said her idea was "an immediate and adapted response to a social need: the injustice of unpaid internships." She said it was an injustice because, "in my eyes working unpaid for three to six months, up to five days a week, prevents young graduates from realising their full potential".

The aim was to create a hub for unpaid interns that would provide cheap food and accommodation for fifteen to twenty interns working in London.

The General Enterprise category was won by a team led by Avi Patchava who pitched 'Kliqed'—a calendar management

application that makes social and event planning "easier, less awkward and even automatic".

The pitch was aimed at people who have large networks of friends they want to see on a regular basis, but often lose

touch with because they don't get around to scheduling, a problem Kliqed attempts to solve.

Runners up included ideas such as RoboPitch and Sociomatics in the General Enterprise category, and London Business

English and Starry Night Art in the Social Enterprise category.

Wigoder said, "The quality of the submissions and finalists this year was much better than last year, and credit goes to all the students who took part in the event."



Representatives from the winning teams give presentations at the Pitch It final
Photos: Chris Rogers

Balls in the air for societies

Shrina Poojara
Senior Reporter

The month of March plays host to several LSE Students' Union society balls – but not everyone involved is having a 'ball of a time'.

Over the next few weeks LSE students will have the opportunity to attend over six balls hosted by various societies. But the organisation of the events has posed problems for even the largest societies.

This year's Law Ball, which will be held at the Underglobe in Southwark this Friday, saw all 160 tickets sell out within two days of going on sale. This generated criticism that the Students' Union Law Society had booked too small a venue to satisfy demand.

There is now a waiting list for tickets,

and the society has administered a 'no re-sell' policy for those who already hold tickets. According to the Facebook page for the event, "If you have purchased a ticket, but can no longer attend the Ball, or no longer wish to attend, tickets must be returned to the Law Society for a full refund".

The funding for the event is generated from both ticket revenue and sponsorship to ensure that the society breaks even.

Alexander Wicks, third-year LLB student and President of the Law Society, told the Beaver, "A massive risk is that you overestimate how many tickets you can sell, and then fail to sell them and risk not being able to fund the event as you lack the ticket revenue." Last year the society struggled to sell 150 tickets for the Law Ball. Wicks was concerned that the society would not sell all the tickets this year, "and then have a huge shortfall in funding

which would have to be borne by future societies, compromising their ability to host a Law Ball in the future."

Meanwhile, members of the LSE Students' Union Hindu Society have confirmed that, at time of going to press, one quarter of the 400 tickets remain unsold. The event, which has been scheduled for the evening of Tuesday 16th March, is set to feature an exclusive performance by renowned Bhangra act H-Dhami, and has attracted sponsorship from Hallmark Healthcare and Tilda Basmati Rice.

One second-year student on the event's organising committee confirmed that on ticket revenue alone, the event was likely to make a loss. The student accredited this to the fact that the societies involved were too ambitious in terms of how many tickets they had aimed to sell.

Several societies and students have also complained about the Students'

Union's online ticket sales service. Dina Fahmy, a second-year LLB student and President of the LSE Students' Union Arabic Society, said, "We've had difficulties with arranging ways to sell tickets as the Students' Union's online ticket sale service is problematic. We are, therefore, having to manually sell tickets on Houghton Street, and by meeting those who are interested around campus."

Alexander Wicks echoed this view. "Ticket selling was a bit of a nightmare; we initially planned to sell them online via the Students' Union website," he said, "but after four weeks of back and forth with them [the Student's Union], we realised it wasn't going to work."

Palom Patel, a second-year Economics student who purchased tickets to the AU Ball on the Student's Union website, said of her experience, "It wasn't easy setting up an account. It took me a couple

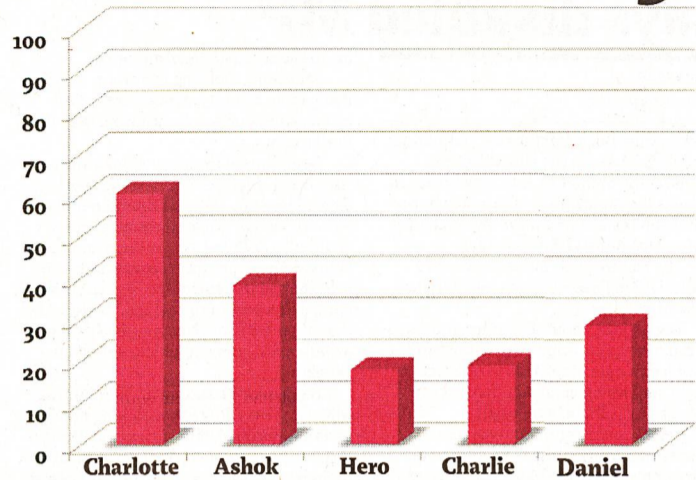
of attempts and once I had managed to, the website didn't make it very clear where the AU Ball tickets could be purchased."

Many societies agreed that holding events in the final weeks of Lent Term meant clashes were inevitable. The Grimshaw Club and UN Society's "Le Gala 2011 Ball" will take place on 18th March, the same night as the Law Ball.

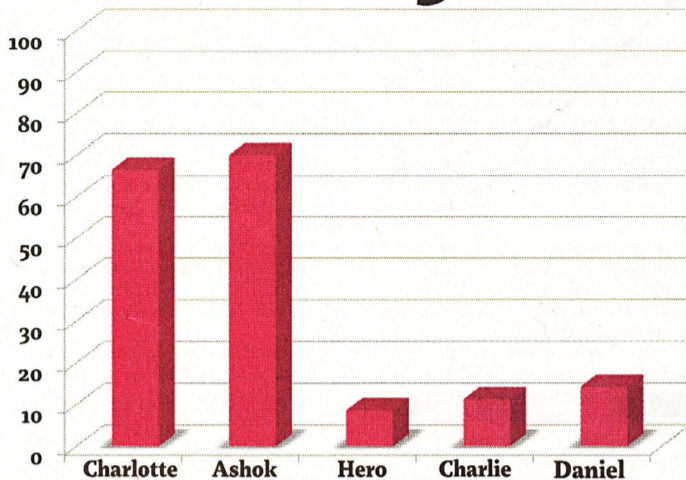
Wicks said, "We didn't have much choice with the venue as to what date we wanted, as they are normally booked up well in advance. It is more a case of what dates they have available rather than when we want to host our ball."

The clash followed the Law Society's decision to host an exclusive law ball instead of co-ordinating with the two societies responsible for the Le Gala ball. However, the clash has not noticeably affected either event's ticket sales.

How well do you know your Sabbs?



Percentage of students interviewed who were able to correctly identify each Sabbatical Officer when shown a picture of them



Percentage of students interviewed who were able to correctly identify each Sabbatical Officer's role within the Students' Union

Analysis

Words: Alex Haigh, Beth Clarke, Heather Wang

An investigation carried out by the Beaver has found that over 40 per cent of students do not think they are a member of the LSE Students' Union, an organisation to which all students at LSE belong.

Fewer than half of the students interviewed were unable to recognise all four Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union.

General Secretary of the Students' Union Charlotte Gerada claimed the disappointing results were a consequence of "poor communication".

She said much of the confusion is due to many students believing societies are affiliated to the School, and not the Students' Union. "There is confusion about whether it is the Union or the university providing services," said Gerada.

A survey about the Students' Union was conducted by the Beaver last Thursday and Friday. 197 students were surveyed on Houghton Street, in the Library, the Quad, the Three Tuns, the Garrick, and LSE halls of residence.

Of the students interviewed, 60 per cent were able to correctly name Charlotte Gerada when shown her photo.

This was the highest recognition of all the Sabbatical Officers. 67 per cent were able to correctly identify that she was the General Secretary.

Ashok Kumar was also well known about campus. While only 38 per cent of students surveyed knew his name, 70 per cent of them were able to correctly identify him as Education Officer.

Kumar's high profile around campus meant that 37 per cent of the people surveyed incorrectly believed that he was General Secretary.

Gerada said, "It doesn't come as a surprise that myself and Ashok are recognised by more students on campus," given that they both "engage in a variety of student-facing activities".

Charlie Glyn and Hero Austin fared less well, with only 19 per cent and 18 per cent of students being able to name them respectively.

Even fewer students could correctly identify their positions within the Students' Union. 11 per cent of the students surveyed were able to name Glyn as Activities and Development Officer, and a mere 9 per cent were able to identify Austin as the Community and Welfare Officer. Gerada said this was likely because Austin and Glyn work primarily with students elected as society presidents, or on halls com-

mittees. Daniel Kroop was correctly named by 28 per cent of the surveyed students, though only 14 per cent could identify him as Postgraduate Officer.

Gerada speculated that the high student recognition of Kroop could be explained by the fact he works with a specific constituent group and his standing in three elections campaigns in a single year. Kroop said, "Though I'm glad to see people notice my visibility on campus, it's really more important they experience the impact I've worked hard with my Assembly to make".

Gerada acknowledged the Students' Union had not communicated its role well enough to students.

She said, "through advice and support, or societies and sport" the Students' Union does not give enough information to students about its function. She says she and the other Sabbatical Officers have and will "strive to improve", but "there is always confusion about the separation of students' unions and universities".

195 out of the 197 people interviewed (99 per cent) knew the Beaver was run independently from the Sabbatical Officers—which suggests communication is rather better at this newspaper.



37% of students interviewed thought Ashok did Charlotte's job



41% of students interviewed believed they were not members of the Students' Union



42% of students interviewed incorrectly thought the current Sabbaticals were involved in the resits campaign



96% of students interviewed correctly identified Freeze the Fees as an existing campaign



13% of students interviewed correctly identified I am International as an existing campaign



42% of students interviewed correctly identified Widening Participation as an existing campaign

Second-year lawyers argue their way to mooting victory

Nicola Alexander

Last Thursday saw the LSE triumph at the final round of the London Universities Mooting Shield (LUMS) competition. The team representing the School, comprised of second year LLB students Ahmed Alani, Ingram Cheug, Lee Shi Min and Yik Boh Ting, defeated Queen Mary, University of London, in the final round of the ten-round competition.

A first-round loss resulted in the LSE starting the competition at the bottom of the ten-team league table. By the fourth round, the team had climbed its way to first place, a position it retained throughout the duration of the competition. After defeating Birkbeck College in the penultimate round, which took place at the Supreme Court, the LSE team progressed to the final, along with the second-place team representing Queen Mary. However, the eighteen points separating the two teams were discounted in the final, with the ultimate decision based on the team that was better on the night.

The case supplied to the teams centred around public international law, and the teams were judged by a panel of senior representatives from the competition's sponsors. With the legal decision

being split, and both the appellants and respondents each winning two grounds of appeal, the tension in the room grew as the judges delivered the verdict, deciding who was to be crowned the champion of the LUMS 2010-11 competition.

The members of the LSE team were the "clear winners", as decided by lead judge Andrew Onslow, QC of 3 Verulam Buildings.

For the first time in a competition that has been manifestly dominated by UCL—they were the reigning champions since the inception of LUMS in 2007—the LSE walked away with the Shield and stripped UCL of its title, having already defeated them, in the seventh round, with a score of 16-5.

Alani told the Beaver, "I'm absolutely ecstatic. I'm so proud of the entire team, and of all the work that we've put in throughout the competition."

"Although the competition was quite overwhelming, with a round every fortnight, it's been absolutely worth it. A victory like this should increase the profile of mooting and show the LSE that they need to pay a lot more attention to the activity", Alani continued. "People really underestimate the benefit you get from all the public speaking you have to do in the competition."

Elder Miliband shares thoughts on European Left

Nathan Briant
Senior Reporter

David Miliband spoke about the challenges facing European centre-left parties during a lecture at the LSE last Tuesday, 8th March.

Miliband's lecture, entitled "Why is the European Left Losing Elections?", was jointly hosted by The Political Quarterly, a UK political journal, and British Government @ LSE, a research programme within the School's Department of Government.

Miliband's appearance at the LSE was one stop in a week of media appearances for the Labour MP for South Shields, who appeared on the Andrew Marr Show on BBC One on Sunday, 6th March, and penned an opinion piece in the Times newspaper two days later.

Miliband, who served as Foreign Secretary from 2007 to 2010, has also worked as Secretary of State for the Environment and Minister for Schools. In September 2010, he lost the leadership election of the Labour Party to his younger brother, Ed Miliband.

On Tuesday, the elder Miliband told the audience at the LSE it is "not a glad, confident morning in European social democracy today." Rather, Miliband said, it is "quite the opposite", arguing recent election defeats for social democratic parties in Britain, Sweden, Germany, France, Holland and Italy show that these parties—though not all uniformly—have to change.

Miliband said Europe has not witnessed such circumstances since the start of the democratic suffrage in 1918.

He pointed to areas where social



Photo: Nigel Stead/LSE Press Office

democrats are quickly losing ground, such as in the Swedish capital of Stockholm, where 13 per cent of voters and half of trade unionists recently voted for the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

Miliband said in order to improve centre-left parties' fortunes, social democrats have to look at three areas: economics, politics, and ideas.

"Politics across Europe is not determined by economics, but it is shaped by it", Miliband told the audience, adding, "And in the face of severe global competition, the crunch on growth and the distribution of its rewards has consequences."

"Politics has taken on a harsher hue—on welfare and wages, on tax and spending, on immigration—to the benefit of the right," Miliband said.

Miliband said conservative and Christian democratic parties of the centre-right, which were in a similar position a decade ago, when thirteen of fifteen European governments were centre-left,

were able to regroup. Miliband pointed to United States President George W. Bush, who had "kind of...won", he said, "not by necessarily getting any more votes" but by being a "compassionate conservative".

In Europe, the centre-left must now follow their opponents' "electoral detoxification" strategy, Miliband said.

"Notwithstanding all the current debates and discussion and inquiries", Miliband said, "Don't neglect what's happened to the LSE over the last fifteen years."

"It's been turned into a global institution of high-calibre intellectual thought, it's really worth saying that," he said.

Tony Wright, a former Labour MP for Cannock Chase and alumnus of the LSE, chaired the event.

Wright paid a warm tribute to Miliband's father, the Marxist thinker Ralph Miliband, who taught him at the School in the late 1960s. Wright also recalled the Old Theatre as the epicentre of the "great uprising" during his time at the LSE. During the major student uprisings of the time, he said, students had daubed "anarchy" on the room's walls—although this had been misspelt.

"I suspect they would have had had more trouble with Gaddafi", Wright said, adding jokingly, "I was not supposed to mention him, but I think I got away with it".

Wright also said though Miliband was apparently seen as too left-wing for Tony Blair when Miliband was working for him before the 2001 general election, and then perceived as not left-wing enough by the Labour Party's electoral college last year, Miliband was "the outstanding social democrat in office and out of office".

Outgoing BBC Chairman looks at Auntie's future

Nathan Briant
Senior Reporter

Sir Michael Lyons, the outgoing chairman of the BBC Trust, reflected on his time at the national broadcaster in a public lecture entitled "Public Service Broadcasting and Public Value: the remaining challenges for the BBC" last Wednesday, 9th March, at the LSE.

Lyons will be replaced by former Conservative MP Chris Patten, who previously served as the last Governor of Hong Kong and is currently Chancellor of Oxford University, in May 2011.

The event was hosted by POLIS, the School's media policy think tank, and was chaired by POLIS Director Charlie Beckett.

In the lecture, Lyons said the BBC must "act as a counterweight" and as the "digital equivalent of Victorian country parks, open to all, enriching the lives of every citizen".

Lyons mentioned YouView, the Internet-connected television platform which has been beset by a number of problems since it was mooted in 2008 and will not now launch until next year, as a crucial asset to this vision.

Lyons was keen to point out that during his time as Chair of the BBC Trust, the BBC has become "markedly more respon-

sive" than before, adding "When history comes to be written, these years will be good ones" for the broadcaster.

Lyons also said the BBC was the "greatest cultural institution that Britain has ever produced".

Lyons said confidence in the BBC is higher than it was in the past, adding that even with possible problems such as the digital switchover—which he said has so far been conducted "smoothly"—the BBC has still achieved notable successes. Talking about the iPlayer on-demand service, Lyons said it is "the best [of its kind] in the world".

Elsewhere in the lecture, Lyons was keen to point out, though, that Harold Macmillan's adage of "Events, dear boy, events" had often seemed relevant during his time steering the BBC.

With either the recession or the general election, Lyons said, the BBC would have been heading towards "choppy waters" last year; with both, he said, circumstances became far more complicated. Lyons told Wednesday's audience the BBC had dealt with the pressures that came from such events relatively well, but noted that providers, such as British Sky Broadcasting Group (BSkyB), were able to invest more in their operations.

Lyons pointed to the so-called "Rossbrand" episode—in which comedians Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand phoned

Fawty Towers actor Andrew Sachs to tell him Brand had slept with Sachs's granddaughter in late 2008—as one of the incidents which had caused his term to be at times "turbulent". Lyons said he wondered whether scriptwriters would have been able to make up the "uniquely toxic brand of profanity, misogyny, bullying and black humour" of the affair. The episode, Lyons said, "exposed an unforgivably cavalier" attitude in some parts of the BBC, and suggested to some that the BBC "might have lost its moral compass". Lyons said such problems have "now been addressed".

Other salient issues, such as reducing the pay of senior managers and "top talent" at the BBC were being dealt with, but needed to be handled sensitively, Lyons said.

In regards to the output of the BBC, Lyons named the BBC Three programme "Women, Weddings, War and Me", which aired last year but has been repeated several times subsequently, as an example of good programming. Lyons described the programme, where a British-Afghan woman travelled to Afghanistan, "fresh, vivid, eye-opening, brave, ambitious, moving". He said the programme had received "almost off-the-scale" critical support, showing "what can be done" at the corporation.

"Positive discrimination crucial for democracy" says disabled MP

Alex Sen
Senior Reporter

Dame Anne Begg MP, the first permanent wheelchair user in the House of Commons, came to the LSE last Wednesday to discuss the importance of minority representation in Parliament for the Students' Union Disability Officer Lecture.

The lecture was chaired by the Students' Union Disabled Students' Officer Polly McKinlay.

Begg spoke about the under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people in the House of Commons, and reflected on her own experiences as a disabled female MP.

Begg's main argument was that positive discrimination is necessary for democracy to work. She argued that positive discrimination is needed for two key reasons: to ensure Parliament is representative of the UK population at large; and to get the best, most capable people elected to office.

Begg became an MP herself through New Labour's all-woman shortlists, which allowed only women to stand in particular constituencies. She said, "the House of Commons today looks different to any I've seen. There are more women; sometimes it's all women in the chamber. And that's good for democracy. If you're going to take decisions that affect the lives of different groups in society, then you need that representation of experience."

Critics of positive discrimination argue it can result in preferential treatment when the point should be ensuring the most capable people, whatever their background, succeed.

In response to this view Begg told the audience positive discrimination is crucial for ensuring the best candidates apply. She said, "If under-represented groups are not encouraged to apply, you cannot get the best person for the job. Women, for example, are less likely to put themselves forward as MPs."

She added that individuals from under-represented groups may be more likely to have developed the informal qualities necessary for politics, such as interpersonal skills and determination, through experiences of overcoming barriers.

ers, prejudice and discrimination.

McKinlay, chairing the event, asked Begg about her own experiences of discrimination and overcoming barriers in Parliament.

Begg shared the story of how she got "the silent treatment" when she was first elected in 1997. "When I first joined Parliament I wasn't treated equally, I wasn't shouted at. When I spoke, the whole House would turn quite. It was only after a year that people started to heckle me and I really felt a part of the House." Begg added that other female colleagues had different experiences, some of which were quite shocking.

Begg told the audience that being an MP is a demanding job with long hours, and that disabled MPs are able to manage the strains of their work in Parliament and in their constituency using different strategies. In Parliament Begg uses an electric chair and has a lounge chair in her office. She also has a facilitator to help her with certain physical tasks.

But she was keen to emphasise that finding solutions to the challenges of working as an MP was not unique to disabled MPs. "Part of the point is showing that we're not 'weak' or 'victims'," she said, "we can be in there fighting our corner." She added that in the case of the Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, the Paralympic gold medalist appointed to the House of Lords in February 2010, "I get exhausted just following her on Twitter."

Nicola Martin, Head of the School's Disability and Well-being Service, was in the audience. She said, "Anne Begg explained the notion of disability being something which is constructed by society in which disabled leaders are rare. People with impairments face attitudinal as well as physical barriers to full participation and Anne Begg welcomes broad representation in parliament."

McKinlay said, "I found the talk really enjoyable. I certainly learnt things I didn't know about before." McKinlay, who has been re-elected in her Students' Union for next year, said, "One of my challenges for next year is getting more people involved in future disability-related Students' Union events." Martin said, "Polly is doing a really good job raising the profile of disabled people in a positive way."

Former Irish President calls for "climate justice"

Alex Haigh
Senior Reporter

Mary Robinson, a former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, spoke last Thursday, 10th March, at the LSE, about the need for a respect of human rights in the climate change debate.

Robinson was President of Ireland from 1990 to 1997 and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002. She has held leadership roles in various charities and NGOs.

Connor Gearty, a professor of human rights in the LSE's Department of Law and former director of the School's Centre for the Study of Human Rights, chaired the event.

Robinson began the lecture by speaking about the need for a legally binding agreement on emissions to protect the poorest countries which contributed the least to anthropogenic climate change.

Developed countries' impacts on climate change, Robinson said, are an infringement on human rights.

Mohamed Nasheed, President of the Maldives, brought the issue of climate change to the UN Human Rights Council in 2008. Nasheed successfully inserted human rights language—"parties should, in all climate change related actions, fully respect human rights"—into the Copenhagen agreements, Robinson said, adding this was an acknowledgement by developed countries of the link between climate change and human rights.

Robinson said she first began to realise climate changes' effects on the

world's poorest countries after attending a conference on climate change development, adaptation and human rights in Rwanda. She said African nations had a negligible contribution on greenhouse gas emissions, but were feeling the devastating impacts of climate change, such as flooding in the slums.

A legally binding agreement would need to prevent greenhouse gas emissions, while also giving money to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation, Robinson said.

But as political horizons are short, and preventing climate change is not a priority for most politicians, it will be difficult to create a lasting deal, Robinson said. Even so, she said, it is important that a deal is made quickly.

She stressed a legally binding agreement is necessary to keep countries to account. A pledge system that had no penalties for non-compliance, is not enough, she said.

The Kyoto Protocol, due to expire on 31st December 2012, is the only legally binding climate change agreement. She said if a successor to the protocol is not found, it would mean a gap between it and any new agreement. This may take the entire process off-track.

Robinson said that agreements made in Cancún provide a useful framework for change. However, they are unlikely to be very effective as they are not legally binding.

Robinson also said a wider set of options might be necessary.

She said present emissions-trading schemes were "reaping some dividends for Africa and other developing countries".

Such schemes, including those of the European Union—which is responsible for over 11,000 power stations and factories—could eventually be combined to create a global system. She said that in order for such schemes to be successful in the developing world, developing countries would have to receive support.

Schemes bypassing national governments could also be implemented to effectively reduce emissions, Robinson said. A code of conduct for polluting companies would encourage firms to hold each other accountable. This is useful, she said, as some firms' emissions exceed that of entire developing countries.

In the final part of her lecture, Robinson spoke about the advantages of adopting a green economy. She said investing just 2 per cent of gross domestic product in ten key sectors could set the global economy on a course to sustainability. She said cutting carbon should be seen "not as an impediment for growth but a boost".

In her final statements, Robinson warned "time is running out" and an agreement must be found soon to avoid dangerous warming that could have dire consequences for developing countries.

During a question-and-answer session following the lecture, Robinson stressed low carbon energy was imperative for protecting the poorest people in the world. She said 1.4 billion people live without electricity, many in areas that receive the most sun. If energy was created from renewable sources, these people would be able to improve their standard of living substantially, she said.

Let's rehumanise the Arab-Israeli conflict – Haartz journalist

Aimee Riese
Senior Reporter

Gideon Levy, a columnist at Haartz, an Israeli newspaper, spoke about Israeli society and the occupation of the West Bank in a public lecture at the LSE last Monday, 7th March. The lecture was hosted by the School's Middle East Centre.

Levy writes a weekly column for Haartz, focusing on the Israeli occupation. A recipient of various journalism awards, most recently the Euro-Med Journalist Prize, Levy also published a new book, *The Punishment of Gaza*, this year.

At the LSE, Levy said his "modest mission" as a journalist was to "re-humanise the Palestinians" in Israeli society. Addressing an audience of approximately 100 people, Levy spoke of the lack of public discussion in Israel about the occupation, saying the dehumanisation of the conflict is the main problem in Israeli society.

Levy emphasised the deeply moral aspects of Israelis as "people with values". He contrasted this with what he said was the dehumanisation of the current conflict and the "self censorship" of Israeli media. He claimed Israeli media tailors itself to "please our readers" and that this contributes to the "coma" in Israeli society.

Levy warned Israel must understand that the Arab world and the international community are watching the occupation and "cannot remain indifferent". As a self-described "patriotic Israeli", he said anyone who wants to be a friend of Israel must "raise his voice against the occupation". He said he did not expect any change to come from within Israeli society, claiming the left wing in Israel is a small minority. Instead, Levy said, the United States needs to play a more assertive role in the country.

In a question-and-answer session following his lecture, Levy was questioned about the current Boycott, Divestment

and Sanctions (BDS) movement. He said while he understands the "motivation for wanting to punish Israelis", he does not think BDS will be effective because it will make Israeli society more nationalistic. An academic boycott, he said, would be directed in the wrong place. He also said within Israel, BDS is perceived as another method of attempting to delegitimise the state and has not been effective.

When asked if he supported a "one state" solution, Levy said he would like to live side-by-side with Palestinians in one state, if it were to be equal and democratic. He said he was sceptical as to whether this would be the case, and therefore said he supported a two state solution.

Levy was generally well-received by the audience. Jay Stoll, a first-year history and international relations student, told the Beaver Levy was "typical of the overly pessimistic left wing in Israel, but spoke straight from the heart".

Handbook on Gender and Poverty inducted at LSE

Marion Koob
Senior Reporter

Professors Maxine Molyneux, Nancy Folbre, and Diane Elson discussed the implications of gender economic inequality at a lecture launching the International Handbook of Gender and Poverty last Friday, 11th March, at the LSE.

The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty, a collection of more than a hundred essays by leading academics in the field, was edited by Sylvia Chant, a professor in the Gender Institute. Chant also chaired the event.

On Friday, each panellist gave a brief presentation of their recent research. Most relevant to the current British economic climate, Diane Elson noted in her talk that current austerity measures disproportionately affect women. Elson said the difference widened as income levels decreased.

"Overall, the impact of these measures has a regressive redistribution", Elson said. "Thus far, only Iceland and the region of Andalusia have taken the Gender dimension of budgeting into account."

Elson also does research for the UK Women's Budget Group, an organisation seeking to promote gender equality through economic policy.

"Unfortunately, we have no dialogue with the current government at the moment," Elson said. "There is not indication that the coalition is using Gender Responsive Budgeting in any way."

Elson advised the government to cut "differently, less and later, in addition to increases in taxation for the financial sector and higher-income individuals."

Through an economic theoretical approach, Folbre offered an explanation of why care-work is undervalued in the modern capitalist economy.

"Care-givers are held hostage by emotional attachment to their investment,"

Folbre said. "In addition, children are like public goods—it's difficult to enforce a contractual attachment of some form."

Folbre added family policy has become a "neoliberal dilemma." "Capitalism wants families but would rather not to pay for them," she concluded.

The effect of economic policies on gender within developed countries was also discussed. Molyneux exposed the successes and disappointments of Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America, where, she argued, they have affected 20 per cent of the population. These programs had corresponded to a marked decline in poverty, yet Molyneux added many critics doubted the sustainability of this policy model.

"Cash transfers should be seen as the first step in relieving poverty, but these should be complemented with other policies in order to make a lasting impact," she said.

Molyneux further argued giving transfers directly to mothers had contributed to the success of the policy. Yet, she argued that in a number of these countries, few measures other than cash-transfers programs tackle women's issues.

The lecture concluded with a reception.

Sarah Dobie, a third-year geography undergraduate told the Beaver the lecture was a "celebration of some of the most influential women in development" and a "rather apt way to reflect on International Woman's Day".

"The growing importance of feminism in the face of global economic crises was reflected by all the speakers, reflecting the current optimism surrounding the movement and its role in tackling inequalities", Dobie added. "Overall, a truly inspirational evening and an exciting presentation of the significance of gender."

Comment

Sam Vimes?

MULTICULTURALISM Economic burden or societal necessity?



LANGTON

One thing most people can agree on is that immigration can be a fantastic thing. It has made cities like London become one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in the world. People come from all corners of the globe to work in the UK, boosting our economy and becoming the backbone of much of our most loved institutions, such as the NHS.

This nation's appreciation for this fact has been shown most overtly through its loathing of the British National Party (BNP) and associated groups, with protests against them displaying how much people are aware of immigration's wonders. The trashing that the BNP and English Defence League get in the media is fully deserved. Most sane people among us will continue to rally round and defend what immigration has given this country through thick and thin, and for good reason.

Despite this, immigration is something that often isn't talked about in the right way. Far too many among us are either unwilling to even discuss immigration, or resign to sitting on the fence, all because people are terrified of being seen as racist. The fact is, immigration does have drawbacks. To admit these drawbacks does not make you racist, xenophobic or anything else negative, it is just common sense. Those who continue to pretend that immigration is flawless and not becoming an issue are almost as deduced as the racists they claim to despise so much.

The question that I think is most key to this issue is whether the UK should

'pick and choose' people to enter the country depending on how skilled and useful they could be, or whether the UK has the responsibility to aid immigrants, regardless of its potential burdens. At the moment, it seems we are more in favour of the latter option. No one can deny that despite the vast numbers of highly skilled workers coming into the UK, there are also many that have little on-demand skills for potential employment, and people from all over the political spectrum are beginning to question that.

Especially in the times we are currently in, more and more people are beginning to query why immigrants who have remained unemployed are still receiving welfare from the state. Short term, everyone deserves aid from the government. But, when thousands are losing jobs and receiving massive cuts in pay, can we really continue to justify supporting those who come to the UK and consistently fail to get work?

The UK is massively overpopulated, and has gone from 'barely supporting itself' - like those old women you see in the Co-op - to 'completely failing to support itself', and becoming a desiccated land reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's wasteland. I'm so dreadful at Economics I couldn't possibly explain why this has happened (apart from apparently that bankers are wankers - who knew?) but I do know that the last thing we need is to invite unskilled people in who are going to prolong this crisis of unemployment and increasingly depressing newspaper headlines. To continue doing so would be like inviting someone into your house only to let them shit all over the floor, which you then enthusiastically clear up, only for them to continue to shit on your floor for years on end.

And no, that isn't racist, it's just a poorly formulated joke about anyone, regardless of where they're from, exploiting the selflessness of others, and that's exactly what happens with so many unemployed immigrants.

Immigration is wonderful but riddled with defects: do not let fear allow the flaws in something so brilliant to remain undeclared. ☘

The last thing we need is to invite unskilled people in who are going to prolong this crisis

Multiculturalism has failed as a means of reconciling immigrants with their new surroundings

Multiculturalism is something that we know a lot about here at the LSE. The idea of culture is central to many important fields of research in the social sciences. In fact, there are strong arguments that social sciences cannot be scientific at all, since the effects of culture on social life are so far-reaching that they render the notion of deterministic social laws unintelligible. Culture provides the subject for social science and, in many cases, defines it limits.

But even if we could escape it within our classrooms, we can't escape it without. There is a legend that at one time the LSE represented more nationalities than did the United Nations. I suspect that this is no longer true, yet the scale of national and cultural diversity on campus remains something marvellous. It is so oft-repeated that it has become a banality, but the LSE truly is home to an expansive constellation of cultures. Houghton Street rivals any thoroughfare in the world for its sheer cosmopolitanism.

So when Cameron recently stated that multiculturalism in this country has failed, it struck me as odd that he evaded the vicious vilification that he may have come to expect from some of the noisier quarters on campus. Perhaps they didn't hear him properly. But more likely, I think, is that they did hear and agreed.

When we talk about multiculturalism, it is important that we make clear the distinction between it and immigration. When we criticise multiculturalism, we are not, by default, levelling our sights at immigration. This isn't to say that someone (like Cameron) who raises questions about it will successfully avoid the accusation of being a 'racist'; there are people who will read racism into any Conservative position, however tenuous and contrived the link is.

But multiculturalism is, strictly, a separate issue to immigration. The 'multicultural project' (as it been disparagingly referred to) was pursued as a means of accommodating immigrants of different cultures in the UK whilst keeping their cultural identities intact. The driving idea behind multiculturalism is that a policy of



WILLIAMS

'benevolent neglect', wherein a government supports voluntary segregation of cultures by refraining from imposing forceful mechanisms for cultural integration, is the optimal way of achieving a stable and culturally diverse society.

But, as Cameron has pointed out, this idea has no clothes. When we look at real examples in Britain, its failure is clear enough. The supine reluctance of successive governments over the last two decades to make any positive attempts to foster a common culture of 'Britishness', or to preserve the historic civic customs and traditions of this land, has been blamed for the radicalisation of young people in sub-cultures that have, supposedly, been the main beneficiaries of the 'multicultural project'.

But even if we approach the question with the more abstract gaze of the political philosopher, we can see how the idea of multifarious cultures, each with unique and often incompatible values and practices, living closely in a definite geographical area, is doomed to failure. Multiculturalism has failed as a means of reconciling immigrants with their new surroundings because it has refused to do precisely that. Liberal freedoms are all very well, but their beauty wanes when they are seen as the cause of festering civil tension.

A plethora of cultures has benefited all of us at the LSE. It is an aspect of the School about which we are all passionate and proud. But multiple cultures and multiculturalism are not the same thing. The former is good while, sadly, the latter seems not to be. David Cameron was right to bring this to our attention ☘



Photo: flickr user: Chesil

Big tent politics

The real questions about our links to Libya haven't even been asked yet

Robin
Burrett

The question is not whether Howard Davies made a 'mere error of judgement', but why our University became embroiled in the PR operation for a dodgy regime and a dodgy foreign policy on his watch. This has damaged the academic reputation of our university. Oh to be there when Blair met Gaddafi in the desert outside Tripoli. Picture the scene: the blue sky, the blazing sun, the hot yellow sand, the Colonel's tent flapping in the breeze. Inside the tent we know that Gaddafi commented on our PM's youthful good looks, and Blair talked of 'moving beyond the past'. Perhaps this is what is meant by 'big tent' politics. Aside from the pleasantries, hard business was on agenda. Present in the tent was Peter Sutherland, then Chair of British Petroleum (BP). BP would later benefit from a \$900 million exploration contract. Soon after this meeting Peter Sutherland became Chairman of the LSE's board of governors; the man who was to receive Howard Davies's resignation.

The meeting was set up by Mark Allen, the then-head of MI6's North Africa desk. This is a name to remember. Since knighted, Sir Mark Allen now sits on the board of LSE Ideas, a curious institution which seeks to use our university's "intellectual resources to study international affairs".

Sir Mark sits alongside other such luminaries of New Labour foreign policy as former Washington ambassador Sir David Manning, now working with weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin; Jonathan Powell, who was Blair's chief-of-staff; and Baroness Symons, a former foreign office minister. She only stepped down from Libya's National Economic Development Board two weeks ago—just twenty-four hours after she spoke about Gaddafi's "sound ideology".

It is the role ex-spy Sir Mark Allen played, that should be of particular interest to LSE students. After leaving MI6, he became a special advisor for BP, and became a senior advisor to the Monitor Group, a management consulting firm. The Monitor Group took on the task of "enhancing the profile of Libya and

Muammar Gaddafi". To this end it introduced the regime to "opinion formers" and to encourage positive views in influential news media. Perhaps a consequence of this was the cringeworthy eulogy to Gaddafi given by our former Director, and New Labour theoretical doyen, Antony Giddens in 2007.

Crucially, the Monitor Group carried out forty of the interviews with senior officials necessary for the completion of Saif Gaddafi's for PhD. It is this PhD that is central in damaging the reputation of the LSE, not anything the Students' Union has done. I have heard it said by many in Howard's defence that other universities have accepted donations from dodgy sources. This may be true. Allowing our university, whose aim is 'to understand the cause of things', to become central to the PR operation for a dodgy dictator and a dodgy foreign policy, leading to a potentially dodgy PhD, goes beyond this: it directly tarnishes the academic reputation of the institution that awards our degrees. The links between this PhD and the various economic ties with Libya invite the most cynical of speculation. These links include LSE Enterprise, which is the only academic body to sit on the Libyan-British Business council, the donations from Saif Gaddafi's foundation, Howard Davies's work for the Libyan sovereign wealth fund and the deal to train Libyan civil servants. It is some of these links that Howard gave as the reason for his resignation. Students need to be vigilant that any independent investigation that seeks to 'understand the causes' of this mess will go deeper than just these triggers. A question students would like answered is whether these donations were the symptom of a much deeper political collusion in the LSE between ex-spies, School management and New Labour foreign policy.

It has been a hectic few weeks at the LSE: occupations, resignations, elections, stormy meetings. A motion to make Howard Davies an honorary member of the Students' Union will go through by a very heavy majority. As people who opposed the motion we will say this: Howard Davies went to more society events and knew more students by first name than any other university boss. This will be reflected in the turnout and vote.

Once the dust settles there remains a more serious set of questions the student body needs to attend to. We owe it the people now fighting the 'democratic' Saif Gaddafi to get some serious answers. ☛

Letters to the Editor

Sir – Just a note to congratulate you on your excellent editorial of 8 March and was particularly pleased to read of your campaign for an ethical investment fund. As someone who was part of the occupations in the late 80s which succeeded in persuading the school to divest from South Africa I have had a 'plus ça change' sense about recent events at the School.

As the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre suggests, adherence to an ethical code always requires us to live 'with and against' the realities of power, and the establishment of an institution designed to do this, such as that you propose, would at the very least enable occasions when the School should stand against the realities of power to be identified earlier.

Your generation may be able to succeed in this better than mine,

Yours,

Dr. Ron Beadle
Chair, LSE Students' Union 1989
Reader in Organisation and Business Ethics, Newcastle Business School

Sir – Can I suggest that David Miliband ought to be the new Director of the LSE?

Mr. Miliband is young, intelligent, experienced, high-profile and has close links to the LSE (his father was a Lecturer, his brother did an MSc and he is associated with the Miliband Lectures). I certainly think he would be in a position to clean up the LSE's image following the Libya debacle.

Kind regards,

John Paget
BSc Economics 1986
Founder, AllAboutUni.com

Not settling

Why concerned students won't accept the status quo in Palestine

Lukas
Slothuus

The Students' Union Palestine Society's 'Blue Land Settlement' taking place Thursday to Friday last week was a much-needed change in atmosphere on Houghton Street after a Lent Term that has seen a range of controversial events unfold at the LSE.

There are surely many different opinions about Thilo Sarrazin, the German anti-immigration speaker, Abdel Bari Atwan, the critic of the US Zionist lobby, Roberto Maroni, the Italian minister from the fascist party Lega Nord who was due to speak this week, the blood and oil-money received from Gaddafi and an endless list of other controversial issues. But the real litmus test of a politically engaging student society is whether it is able to draw in new people to support its cause, build connections with other groups in London and abroad, and engage with academics at the LSE to further the aims of the society.

Here, the Palestine Society is doing all of that, most recently exemplified by the 'Blue Land Settlement' where committed students set up a makeshift tent camp on Houghton Street symbolising a West Bank settlement. With educational settlement walls, a stall with information and sign-up sheets for the society's mentoring scheme and divestment campaign, it pursued what the Society and broader society should call for: Justice for Palestinians and a long-lasting peace solution in the Middle East. It is hardly possible to find a more timely situation for a peaceful 24-hour demonstration against the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. People are dying on both sides of the settlement boundaries as you read this sentence. It is in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians for indiscriminate killings to end. But as the occupying force, it is the responsibility of Israel to do what the US government and essentially all other governments around the world as well as the UN and the EU have called for: an end to the illegal settlements. It is not the fault of Jewish settlers that their government is unable to negotiate a sustainable solution to the unrest. And it is definitely not the fault of

Palestinian families who are driven away from their homes because an extremist Prime Minister in the neighbouring country uses a scripture to justify the forced removal of civilians.

The Blue Land Settlement was an educational and social tool to highlight the conditions under which millions of people are living due to inept governments, corrupt pseudo-religious politicians abusing Holy Scriptures, a brutal military force, billions of US aid, racism, and so forth. Just like the black resistance in South Africa was labelled a terrorist movement by Western governments due to its strategy of violent resistance and racial liberation, the Palestinian resistance is also labelled religiously extremist or terrorist. Peace dealings with "impartial" negotiators have become a euphemism for business as

The Blue Land Settlement was an educational and social tool to highlight the conditions under which millions of people are living

usual. But the outrageous consequence of this is a lose-lose scenario which nobody ought to accept. Jews and Muslims believe in the same God and a great deal of the Torah and the Qur'an deal with the same characters, stories, and messages. It is thus, outrageous to say that these people are fundamentally opposed to peace. And if there is one thing Jews and Muslims should be able to co-identify with it is the state of intense persecution, from the Alhambra Decree that expelled Jews from Spain to the current scape-goating of Muslims in Europe. This must mean a commitment to peace from civil society. As students in the UK, little can be done about the suffering of innocent civilians in a land far away. But it is our duty as students, the group of people who have led all liberation, resistance and justice movements in the last two centuries to do the small things we can do. And that is what the Blue Land Settlement sought to do ☛

'Racism'-the uses and abuses of the word

Ask questions before you decide someone is prejudiced and ignorant

Chris
Moos

Yesterday, I was discussing influential women who are physically attractive with some friends. Superficial as I am, you should note my emphasis on physical attraction and my ludicrous disregard for personal qualities. So my friend, let's call her Anne, asked: "Would you sleep with Sarah Palin?" Even if my sex life was in a much better shape than it actually is, my answer was and would still be: "I think she is hot. Of course I would have sex with Sarah Palin".

I should not have said that. Apparently, unknown to me, Sarah Palin is a "racist". At least according to Anne, who began lecturing me in a disgusted tone about the former Governor of Alaska. When I asked what exactly makes Sarah Palin a racist, I received some rather incredulous looks. Unfortunately, nobody could tell me what exactly was racist about Sarah Palin, but it started to become very clear that some of my friends think that spending a night with her would somehow be an act of evil.

Now, I have heard Sarah Palin saying a lot of stupid things that would even

disqualify her from running for public office in Berlusconi's Italy. But unless one considers deeply Christian-conservative right-wing rhetoric as racist, she has never said anything that can be remotely related to racism. As we all know, this kind of rhetoric is unpopular for very good reasons. But does that make a person a racist, just because her views are in stark contrast to my beliefs? Suddenly, I started to understand that having a point of view that differs from the prevailing (pseudo-) intellectual mainstream can automatically qualify anyone as a racist, whether or not he or she has said anything to deserve it. In this moment, I remembered that recently, I actually had heard the word "racist" and its little brothers "anti-Semitic", "xenophobic" and "fascist" quite a lot on campus.

For instance I was accused of being a "troll", "racist" and "the dumbest person I've ever come across" when I stumbled into the "Protest against xenophobic speaker Thilo Sarrazin at LSE" Facebook group. What had happened? Well, similarly to the discussion about Sarah Palin, I had dared to ask what exactly makes former Bundesbank director Thilo Sarrazin who participated in a panel discussion organised by the Students' Union German Society, a "xenophobic" and "a racist", as the protestors were so diligently divulging. Of course, it does not matter what Sarrazin, just like Palin, actually says. But by common knowledge, once accusations

of racism are made, they are out there to stay.

Now, I think it would be easy to judge people like my friend Anne for her intellectual sloppiness. But are they really to blame, besides their use of extreme and abusive language? People like Anne are not the problem. The problem began a

People have taken a word that rightly decries discrimination on racial grounds, and deformed it for their own purposes

long time ago. It was the time when so-called "emancipatory research" on minorities, post-colonial guilt, moral relativism and critique of Western capitalism met and mixed into an exquisite concoction. Suddenly, all problems of western capitalist societies, particularly in reference to identity, religion and minorities could be

explained with one word: "racism".

This explanation having become mainstream in many intellectual circles, you can find yourself in a very odd position when you choose not to conform to it. You think that capitalism, despite all of its grave failures, is still a better system than any other socio-economic alternative? You should know that capitalism and "racism" are just two sides of the same coin. You call yourself a conservative? You should remember that for some being conservative is as acceptable as being a pedophile, because that is nothing else but "disguised racism".

So actually, it is very easy. In the world of some people, there exists the "good" and the "evil". And if you do not want to be called a "racist", you should know which side you want to be on. In a nutshell, that means that you better not show any sympathy for capitalism, say that you are right-wing or conservative, and that you better not criticise any religious or cultural community on the grounds that some of their practices clearly violate human rights. Again, unless the community is white and Christian, or even better, American.

So, because the concept of "racism" is so easy to understand and ready-to-use for everyone, we have seen in the last decades how some people have taken a word that rightly decries discrimination on racial grounds, and deformed it for their own purposes: to outcast anyone

from public discussion who disagrees with them. The rules of the game are easy: whoever screams "racist" or some of its related terms first and loudest wins. And of course, if the one addressed cannot be proven to be "racist", no matter. Anyone who has been around is sure to know that the "racist" person is from now on a persona non grata in public life. Importantly, you should also be aware that agreeing with any of the statements of this "racist" person can also make you a "racist". Luckily, in a democracy, no one can take away your right to speak your mind. But sadly they can take away the right of people to listen to others in an unbiased, unprejudiced way. And they can expose you to social pressure when you beg to differ. After all, as we remember, it can very well happen that someone who only dares to defend the right of controversial persons to speak publicly can easily be marginalised himself as a "racist".

Maybe we should all remember that "racism" as a word is a weapon that fights the idea that genetic factors are the single determinants of difference between human beings. We should not devalue that weapon by making it a meaningless term that is used to outcast everyone who dares to disagree with our views. ☛

Inspired and invigorated by Islam

How the religion has been a driving force behind the revolutions in Libya and Egypt

Mirza Ahmed

The recent revolutions in the Middle East give a lot of food for thought and obliterate many stereotypes of Muslims. It shows the commonality in values of Muslims with the Western world in themes such as freedom of expression, the value of life, human rights, democracy and so on.

In case someone says that the revolution was not inspired by Islam and that it was just the youth with their vigour trying to oust a dictatorship, I would point to the facts on the ground that have been under-represented in the mainstream media. One such fact is that many of the protesters in Tahrir square were Muslim scholars from Azhar university and many of the protests occurred and were supported at Mosques. Furthermore the postings by the Azhar-based American scholar Suhaib Webb online show the fatwas (judicial opinions) of Muslim scholars supporting peaceful protests, giving grounding in the principles of justice in Islam (such as the Prophetic saying that the greatest struggle (jihad) is a truthful word in front of a tyrant) and strongly warning against violence and the destruction of property. The Muslim intellectual at Oxford university Tariq Ramadan gave a particularly interesting view on the protests in Al Jazeera whilst Refaa al-Tahtawy, the spokesman for Azhar university (the largest religious institution in the Sunni Muslim world) resigned from his post in protest and joined the demonstrators in Tahrir Square, saying that all forms of injustice are forbidden in Islam.

The Libyan revolution included the gathering of Muslim religious scholars

who appealed for an end to the massacre and supported the protesters as they said on 19th February "The Libyan regime has been firing live ammunition at peaceful demonstrators who have been simply asking for their divinely endowed, and internationally recognized, human rights", as reported by Al Jazeera. However I do not argue that there have not been other factors such as economic and social factors, but Islam has been a major driving force and shows the influence of religion in good causes.

At the same time we should recognise that the Muslim scholars condemned the destruction of property and killing in the protests since they violate the 5 principles upon which Islamic law is based (the right to life, preservation of religion, honour and intellect and the protection of property). In regards to the one who claims that the Muslim scholars did not speak out before the revolutions, I would say that they did and many were jailed or killed because of that, especially in Syria. Many also weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of speaking out and tried to indirectly criticise the government.

One other example of peaceful resistance is the case of Ahmadu Bamba, a Muslim scholar of Senegalese origin who was severely tortured and pursued by the French colonialists in the early 20th century. After numerous failed attempts by the French to suppress him and to assassinate him (such as putting him in front of wild lions and leaving him on an Island), the French were finally convinced that his resistance was not violent and then exiled him and let him be in Mauritania, where he is still revered and some of his students still live. Dr Timothy Winters of Cambridge University said that Ahmadu Bamba in fact received his "spiritual opening" when he engaged in his resistance against injustice i.e. the French colonialism and many intriguing incidents are attributed to him in different historical sources as a result of it.



Religion and Revolution
Photo: flickr user orb9220

This all shows the peaceful resistance is not new in the Islamic realm. I expect further developments in other Muslim countries but unless the social and economic

problems in most of the Arab countries are seriously improved, a new way of government is also unlikely to work.

Quick COMMENT

How pointless is week 11?

Week 11 is as pointless as an inflatable dart board
-Beth Clarke, 1st year, BSc International Relations

To be honest, it's quite good for me. With the extra time, it sets me up nicely for my own revision
- Alex Haig, 1st year, BSc Environmental Policy and Economics

Well, I still have all my classes and lectures. So its about as useful as week 10
-Chris Rogers, 1st year, BSc Politics and Philosophy

I think its useful as many of my lectures have fallen behind schedule.
-Sam Barclay, 2nd year, BSc Economics

Week 11 is every revision procrastinator's dream
- Chu Ting Ng, 2nd year, LLB Laws

Pointless enough to not merit a quick comment
-Lauren Lee, 2nd year, BSc International Relations

Not pointless as it gives me an extra week to do coursework
- Adam Connell, 2nd year, BSc Social Policy

Why not? We're paying for it anyway.
-Alexander Young, Features Editor, The Beaver



NEXT WEEK...

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If you're not religious, for God's sake say so

The 2011 Census will shape society for years to come- don't just mindlessly tick a box

Catherine Capone

This week the 2011 census forms were sent out to every person in the country. The forms still contain the same misleading question as last time: "What is your religion?" Despite strong protests against the presumptuous nature of the question, the Office of National Statistics has insisted on keeping it unchanged. The controversy stems from the fact that the question implies the respondent adheres to a specific creed. In the 2001 census 72 per cent of the population stated that they were Christian and only 15 per cent that they had no religion. But in other surveys in which the question was changed to "Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?", the number of people who answered "no religion" was significantly higher. For example, the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey conducted the same year revealed that only 51 per cent of the population called themselves Christian, a fifth fewer than the census figures. In 2009, another BSA Survey revealed that over 50 per cent of the population had no religion.

This disparity arises from a large number of "cultural Christians", i.e. people who merely have a loose affiliation with Christianity. They may have been baptised, attended a religious school, have Christian parents, or simply consider themselves Christian because they celebrate Christmas and eat chocolate eggs at Easter. These people would be more likely to tick "no religion" if asked a less leading question. There is a gulf between what people actually believe and the religion they affiliate themselves with. It is unclear what the census is actually measuring with its question "What is your religion", and this leads people to tick the wrong box.

Does it matter? Is it a problem that people tick the religion box when they are not in fact religious? The government's census website states that the data collected is "used to help plan and fund services for your community - services like transport, education and health." True, but the census findings are also used to implement far more dubious elements into our society. The 2001 census statistics on religion were invoked to increase the number of faith schools in Britain (even though 42 per cent of the population are against any form of faith school according to the latest BSA Survey), to allocate more funding to religious groups than to secular groups, to retain religious privilege in equality laws and - most infuriating - to

justify the continued presence of twenty-six unelected bishops in the House of Lords. These unelected bishops have a say

The census findings are also used to implement far more dubious elements into our society

in making or dismantling our laws and have consistently tried to block laws on abortion and gay rights. They have also successfully blocked legislation on euthanasia against the will of 81 per cent of the population. The only other country in the world with unelected religious clerics who

exert a direct influence on legislation is Iran. Why do we allow this to continue? Because 72 per cent of our population are putatively Christians, and it is therefore implicitly assumed that they support theocracy in this form.

Censuses are significant because the findings are often used - or misused - to implement and justify government policy. Jil Matheson, a national statistician, stated last year that "statistics form the backbone of democratic debate ... Every day in the UK decisions are made and money invested based on official statistics." This year may be the last census that ever takes place, as the government has threatened to axe it in favour of a more cost-effective method of measuring social trends. It is therefore essential that we get it right this time.

In response to this urgent situation the British Humanist Association launched its census campaign this week. Their posters will appear on buses and in public spaces across the country. Their slogan that originally stated "If you're not religious, for God's sake say so" was deemed offensive to religious people and has therefore been changed to a more benign: "Not religious? In this year's census say so." It is hoped that the campaign will make people think before they tick the Christian box out of habit and to assess what religious beliefs they truly hold. The BHA is also urging people not to write

"Jedi" in protest against the religion question, which over 390,000 did in the 2001 census. Although these people would still be placed into the "no religion" category, it will be possible for religious organisations to disaggregate the results for their own purposes and only refer to those who explicitly stated "no religion." This means that a sizeable portion of the population could be ignored, thereby skewing the statistics. Though it may be dull to write Jedi, it is important to reveal one's real religious views. The self-styled Jediists won't find it so funny when their child is turned away from the top schools in their area because they do not hold the schools' religious beliefs.

The religious statistics collected this month will shape our government's policies for years to come and could potentially be used to justify unjust social practices. Let's make sure that they are as accurate as possible so that future policies reflect British society as it actually exists and not a distorted view of it.

Features

Shaken in Tokyo

LSE alumnus **Peter White** witnesses the earthquake in Japan

After graduating from the LSE in 2009, I successfully applied to Teach First but decided to teach English abroad in order to gain experience in teaching and to have a taste of living abroad. After having so many international friends at university, I felt quite one dimensional in being simply English and having only lived in England. The LSE was quite a large part of my desire to go and live in Japan.

I've been living on Tokyo Bay for almost a year now and my time here is coming to a close. The end of the Japanese academic year is upon us, and it was graduation day this Friday at my Junior High School. The graduation ceremony went ahead as planned. The students sang songs to each other and thanked each other for their friendship over the last three years: it was a very emotional morning for many and many tears were shed.

After everything was packed up from the graduation ceremony, I waved goodbye to the students for the last time and for the first time: since I've been here, the students went home early at lunchtime. Japan has a huge culture of gift giving, and so many students gave small *omiyage* gifts of food to all the staff. After the last student had left I returned to a small feast of treats in the staffroom and was asked to give a farewell speech.

Earthquakes are fairly common in my region. We get them about once a month but recently there had been a few slightly stronger ones occurring up north. So when the school nurse turned said something about an earthquake, my reply was 'When?'. Her prompt reply was 'now!', at which point I noticed the—then gentle—rocking of the room. At first no one was particularly worried. We opened the doors, as is usual practice and several of the teachers began to grab hold of objects that had the potential to topple over, such as the giant new Mitsubishi flat screen TV. At this point, I looked above my head to assess if there was anything that could

potentially fall on me and was disturbed to see a huge wobbling air-conditioning unit above my head. I decided I'd better move to the centre of the room. The staff room is boarded by large metal filing cabinets and cupboards, some stacked on top of each other; these were increasingly beginning to rattle and rock and, so a few more teachers came to join me in the centre of the room. Many of my colleagues began to cry "*sugoi*", which would be best translated as 'awesome', in that it can be used in a light hearted fashion to mean 'cool' or in a more serious nature to mean 'formidable'. This time it was definitely being used to mean the latter.

For maybe thirty seconds, myself and about seven teachers stood around getting increasingly shaken about by the quake.

It was a bit like being on a pirate ship at a theme park that starts with a gentle swaying but gradually gets bigger and bigger

It was a bit like being on a pirate ship at a theme park that starts with a gentle swaying but gradually gets bigger and bigger. I could feel the fear levels in the room bringing to rise and the persistent calls of "*sugoi*" were being coupled with "*abunai*"—'dangerous'. At a certain point, we realised that it definitely was getting bigger and definitely wasn't going to stop anytime soon. One of the teachers decided it was time to evacuate and I followed suit. Unfortunately the staff room is on the first floor, so we not only had to run the gauntlet of the corridors but also had to get down the stairs, which was a bit of a struggle at the peak of a magnitude 8.9. Thankfully there was a bannister, which I held onto more than I've ever needed to clutch at anything. On exiting the school we found that the small pond at the front of the school was swashing around like a stormy ocean. Waves from the earthquake were displacing large amounts of water all over. It was a really strange sight. As we walked outside it felt like being on the deck of a boat or being a little drunk: with the nervous excitement and the shaking I began to feel a little seasick. Many of us were finding it difficult to stand and so we all sat or crouched in the centre of the car park, well away from the buildings. All the cars in the car park were rocking back and forth, the flag poles were swaying and the whole earth was rattling. It was pretty hairy stuff but I was glad to be in one of the most open places I know in Japan. The headteacher stayed in the school with a couple of other members of staff. It was as if he was the captain of the Titanic and he had to go down with the school. For minute after minute the ground continued to sway (and has continued to do so intermittently since) but eventually it lessened and lessened and finally it was safe to go back in the school.

On the way back in to the building we noticed that the waves had displaced some tadpoles from the pond, which the science teacher attempted to save. Then we all went in and crowded round the

TV, which immediately began issuing tsunami warnings. I was fairly unaware of the magnitude of the quake: Japan gets so many quakes that many don't make the local news, let alone the national or international. However, I soon found out that it was the largest earthquake that most of the staff had experienced so I decided I better contact my family to say that I was okay and that as far as I knew, my friends were okay too. I tried to get on the Japanese Meteorological Agency website, which gives the most up-to-date information on earthquakes, but it was so busy that it was inaccessible.

About five minutes after we returned to the staff room, the first aftershock struck. This time I grabbed my camera, as we evacuated and I managed to film the pond swashing around the second time and the rocking of the cars. After the quake died down we once again returned to the staff room and gawped at the images that were beginning to appear on the TV screens. The true magnitude and horror of the earthquake was began to sink in. What we felt as a magnitude 6 quake actually occurred almost 300 miles away and was an 8.9. The worst was yet to come: there was a colossal tsunami fast approaching the east coast and about to hit the prefecture I live in, Chiba.

I was told that I was free to go but to take care crossing the river, as the tsunami might flow in and engulf the bridge. So I said my final goodbye to the staff and made my way homeward on my bike. As soon as I got out of the school grounds, I could see large black plumes of smoke rising on the horizon. I later learned that this was an oil refinery ablaze in Ichihara, two towns away, and seemed to be the biggest fire of the quake. I didn't have any trouble at the river and actually managed to cycle through a magnitude 5 aftershock, without noticing, on my speedy return home.

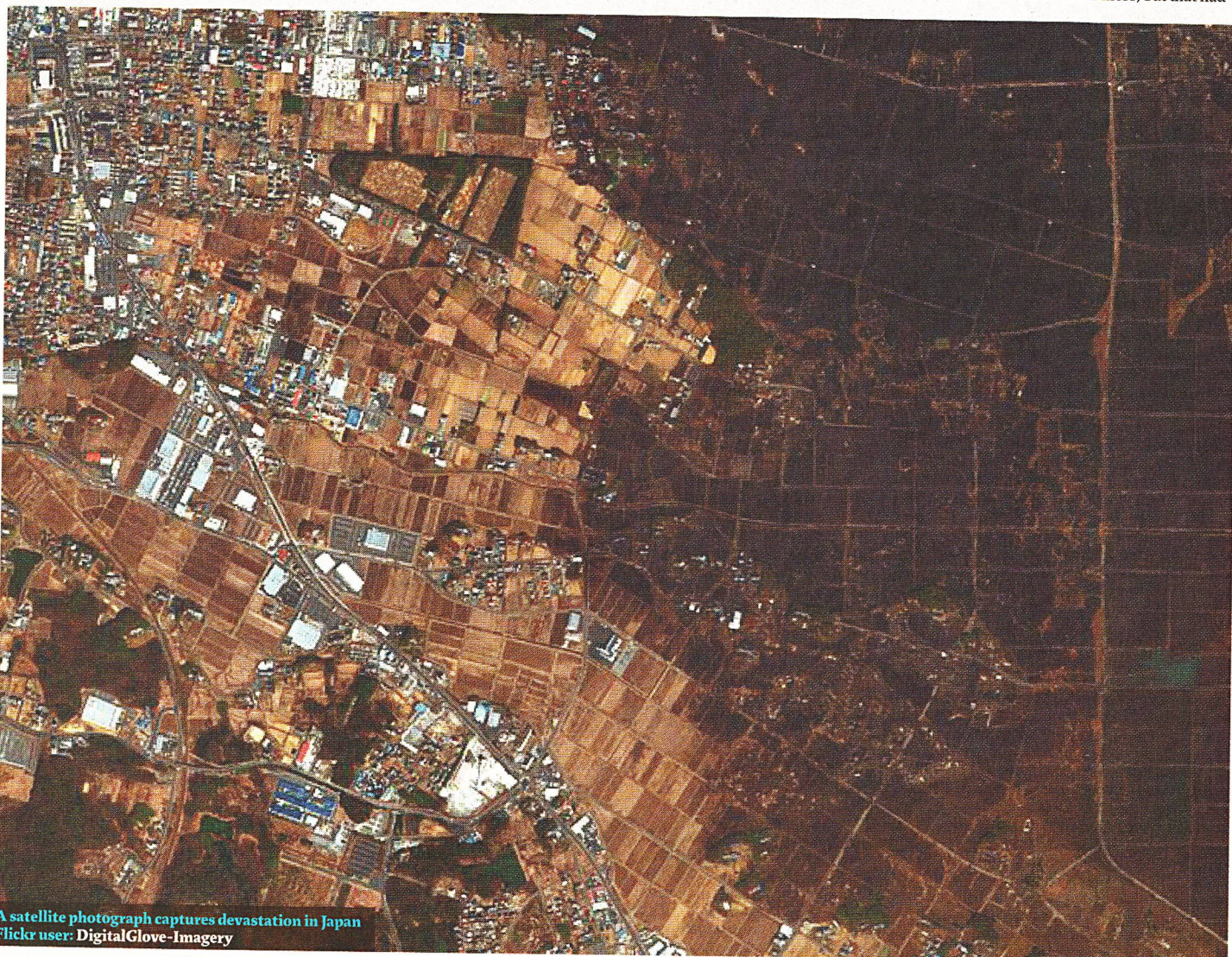
When I got back to my flat I found several possessions had found their way to the floor but nothing had broken. My bedroom was an utter mess, but that had

far more to do with me leaving it in a complete state. After replying to a substantial number of concerned messages, more and more details of the scale of the quake and tsunami emerged. I didn't ever imagine it would have been the largest recorded in Japanese history, or that it would have shifted the earth's axis.

Details began to emerge about some of my friends' ordeals, which made me feel quite lucky. One of my close friends lives in Ichihara, very near the oil refinery that blew up. He rode out the quake alone, in his rickety old apartment, and was then thrown off his bike from the explosion at the oil refinery. After being told to evacuate his apartment, he found all the evacuation centres full and had to return home alone. I'm also worried about another friend in Ibaraki prefecture, where the quake and the tsunami were not only stronger but there are also potential problems with radiation.

It's Sunday morning now and things are beginning to get back to normal, except for the fact that the ground hasn't stopped shaking. What used to be the biggest earthquake in three months now happens about every hour and smaller tremors are intermittent between them. After a long boat ride one sometimes feels the strange illusion of the ground moving like a ship, when you return to dry land. I regularly get feelings similar to that, when I'm not sure if I'm imagining small tremors or not. The earthquake alarm on my phone has been going off about every three hours and is not conducive to sleep but the nervous excitement has somewhat spoiled my appetite for sleep anyhow.

The eventuality of an earthquake has always been in the back of my mind while I've been in Japan, but I would never have dreamed of being in the largest earthquake ever recorded in Japan. I was lucky to be somewhere rural, with company and somewhere unaffected by tsunamis. My thoughts and prayers go out to those up North who were not so fortunate. ☹



A satellite photograph captures devastation in Japan
Flickr user: DigitalGlove-Imagery

LSE Japan Society and LSE Japanese students will be on Houghton Street seeking donations and will hold and awareness-raising event on Thursday, 17th March from 7pm in D502. You are also welcomed to leave messages of uncouragement for those affected by the earthquake on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/We-are-with-Japan/132055120199735>

And Twitter via the hashtag:

#WeAreWithJapan

To donate, please visit the British Red Cross website:

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/Donate-Now/Make-a-single-donation/Japan-Tsunami-Appeal>

Prosecuting human traffickers

Andreas Kuersten analyses efforts towards legal action

On 7th March, 2011 Dr. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, came to the LSE and delivered a lunchtime lecture moderated by Professor Christine Chinkin. During this talk, many of the legal aspects, both hurdles and accomplishments, of criminally prosecuting the perpetrators of human trafficking were addressed.

Of the estimated 2.4 million instances of human trafficking occurring every year only 5,000 criminal proceedings are undertaken. This fact, however, should not be seen in any way as a deterrent to continuing to strive for progress.

Dr. Giammarinaro has been a judge at the Criminal Court of Rome since 1991, was the Head of the Legislative Office and Advisor to the Minister for Equal Opportunities from 1996 to 2001, and served in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom, and Security from 2006 to 2009 before taking up her current position within the OSCE. Throughout her career she has consistently worked to combat human trafficking, the sexual exploitation of children and organised crime.

As mentioned by Dr. Giammarinaro in her lecture at the LSE, the main legal accomplishment in the global fight against human trafficking is the United Nations' Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol) drafted in 2000. This document served to create common definitions of the terms and problems involved. Article 3 of the Protocol provides, among others, the key definition of the phrase "Trafficking in persons", thus giving a potentially universal way to identify and progress with the criminal prosecutions. Article 5 goes on to order signatories to modify their legal systems to make the offence

criminal under this definition. Articles 6-8 then generally address the rights of the victims of such crimes and how they should be treated by the signatory states in which they find themselves. The Protocol continues and concludes by generally outlining preventative and coordination measures that must be taken and the signing and ratification process.

It is true that this document provides something significant; it gives organisations combating human trafficking and lawyers representing victims definitions to apply to situations they find themselves in and a tool with which to pressure states which sign and ratify the document to change their legal systems. Yet, the Trafficking Protocol suffers three linked problems which tend to affect many broad legal documents.

First of all, there is the problem of interpretation. The Protocol does something great in providing clear definitions of terms and aspects of human trafficking, but these definitions contain within them many powerful terms which can be interpreted differently by varying legal agents and states. This can be seen in the beginning of Article 3, Paragraph a:

"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."

Each of these loaded terms (recruitment, harbouring, deception) must be unpacked on a case-by-case basis. What is considered harbouring? What is considered deceptive?

This leads to the second problem, astutely brought up by Dr. Kirsten Ainley of the Department of International Relations, that of knowing complicity. If a

trafficker claims they were not aware of the trafficked persons in the back of their van or the storeroom of their ship, are they liable for being involved in the transportation and/or transfer of trafficked persons? Will a hostel or hotel which is regularly used by human traffickers as a stop-point in transporting trafficked human beings be liable for harbouring criminals and victims if they claim they knew nothing of it and did nothing to investigate the situation? Can actors simply claim ignorance in order to avoid criminal repercussions?

These related definitional problems lead to a broader problem of interstate coordination. An LSE student based in the Centre for the Study of Human Rights brought up the fact that a key hindrance for the Trafficking Protocol is the fact that states may vary in their definitions and reactions to what it contains. With so many strong and sweeping terms this almost seems to be a given. In addition, with over 110 states having signed onto it, there is also the fact that this multitude of states have very different legal systems which have or will most likely integrate the mandates of the Trafficking Protocol differently.

As stated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Protocol outlines numerous legal and security "requirements" that signatory states must align with. But these changes are ultimately within the hands of these states and the Protocol has no real enforcement abilities to see these through other than the wills and peer pressure of the states involved.

Aside from the Trafficking Protocol and its successes and difficulties, Dr. Giammarinaro elaborated that a key problem still often inhibiting the criminal prosecution of trafficking offenders is the overlap these crimes often have with states' criminal, immigration, and labour laws. At times, due to the interpretive issues mentioned above, the actions of transgressors cannot be proven to be

criminal so the offences are addressed in terms of labour and immigration regulations.

When addressed through labour laws, victims are able to recover earned wages and perhaps costs due to suffering, but often the perpetrator can go relatively unpunished and remain free to continue to engage in the same practices. This is much better than nothing though. As explained by Jenny Moss, a Community Advocate for the NGO Kalayaan which works with migrant domestic workers in the UK, poverty is the main reason why individuals put themselves in risky situations where they are easily exploited. Thus recovering monetarily from a case can help to lessen their vulnerability and help them to provide for themselves and their families.

When human trafficking situations are addressed through immigration laws, however, the results tend to not be as positive. This is because these laws often target the victims and their legal status, which is often very weak, within the state they have been trafficked to. In these situations state law can serve to punish the victims of human trafficking more severely than those who actually took advantage of these individuals.

There is also a fundamental problem in criminally prosecuting trafficking which involves the victims themselves. Often they are too scared to bring charges or testify against those who took advantage of them. This can sometimes be because of explicit threats made by traffickers against victims or against the victims' families back in their home countries. It can also be because a pseudo-'Stockholm Syndrome' develops between the two parties.

In addition, the perpetrators of these crimes are usually not singular actors or bodies. Dr. Giammarinaro put forth that human trafficking often involves networks of interconnected criminal organisations. One group may handle recruit-

ment, another transportation, another the intimidation of victims and security and so on. Therefore identifying and bringing down only one of the cogs of this machine will not end its actions because the other pieces are still operating and can simply find a replacement for the lost link in the chain.

What may possibly aid in the criminal prosecution of human traffickers would be the establishment of a legal body within the UN which keeps track of trafficking cases within all states which have officially adopted the Trafficking Protocol. This body could collect data on what arguments and types of evidence are most effective broadly or in certain countries in applying to the criminal definitions set out in the Protocol. Such information would be open to the public, and human rights attorneys and training programs could also be offered to legal professionals.

Efforts and the resource available to protect victims and their families must also be stepped up. Without these actors feeling safe and confident enough to become involved in criminal legal proceedings these cases will be infinitely more difficult.

Even though it is seldom cut-and-dry and contains its fair share of obstacles, the criminal prosecution of human traffickers is an issue where real progress is being made and where there is massive potential for more. There are two key prerogatives here. The first is pressuring signatories to the Trafficking Protocol to align their state criminal laws as closely as possible to it. The second is finding and disseminating effective ways for victims, NGOs, and legal professionals to link their cases to the criminal definitions of these heinous practices outlined in the Protocol. Efforts in these directions will go a long way to gaining more successful and more frequent criminal prosecutions in cases of human trafficking. ☛

The dark side of globalisation

Sini Ramo dissects the issues surrounding modern slavery

Slavery assumes multiple forms of subjugation and abuse in the twenty-first century. Crucially, the trafficking of migrant domestic workers constitutes a grave yet unacknowledged and neglected form of exploitation. "Trafficking for the purposes of domestic servitude is one of the worst forms of trafficking occurring in the context of a highly under-regulated sector," says Dr Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Trafficking in human beings involves transferring people for the purposes of exploitation through the use of force, coercion or deception, and is estimated to have an annual turnover of \$32 billion. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that around 2.4 million people worldwide are trapped in forced labour as a result of human trafficking – this figure includes forced prostitution, begging, organ removal, forced marriage, and labour in fields such as agriculture, the garment industry and domestic work.

Trafficking in human beings in general, and the exploitation of domestic servants in particular, is a deeply gendered phenomenon. Sex trafficking accounts for 79 per cent of all trafficking, whereas trafficking for forced labour accounts for 18 per cent. Within these categories women make up the majority of victims: according to Anti-Slavery International, 98 per cent of those trafficked for sexual exploitation are women, and women also make up the majority within forced labour with approximately 56 per cent. The majority of domestic servants are also women due to the "feminine" nature of care work and cleaning.

While trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most well-known form of trafficking, trafficking for the purposes of domestic

servitude is increasing and extending its reach globally. Trafficking in domestic workers seems to constitute a hidden form of exploitation that stands outside of public scrutiny due to its containment within the private realm of the household.

Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude, an OSCE report launched on 7th March in London, highlights the gravity of this hidden form of slavery performed mainly by migrant workers, *au pairs* and children. "People trapped in domestic servitude are sleep and food-deprived, often have to work seven days a week and be at the disposal of their employer at all times. They are often not allowed any outside social contact and suffer from severe trauma. There are also many reported suicides following from these conditions," says Giammarinaro.

Domestic servants are also often not paid at all, or paid randomly and not enough. Domestic servants assisted by Kalayaan, a London-based migrant domestic workers' rights organisation, are generally paid around 50 pence an hour. Jenny Moss, Community Advocate at Kalayaan, emphasises that trafficking for domestic servitude constitutes a serious problem in the UK: "Domestic servitude is damaging and traumatising. Women and men suffer a loss of personal dignity and often also sexual abuse."

A case study included in the OSCE report sheds further light on the slave-like and dehumanizing conditions endured by domestic servants. During her seven-year ordeal, "Ms. J," an Eastern European *au pair* working in Switzerland, was severely beaten and raped by the family members. She was also forced to clean all night, consume food that had gone bad and eat anything she threw up. To date, she has not received any compensation and the perpetrators were never found guilty. Her trafficker was an "acquaintance", as is often the case; how-

ever, workers are frequently lured in through private "employment agencies" charging huge fees for organisation and transport.

A major problem with the exploitation of domestic servants exists within diplomatic households. Domestic workers travelling with diplomatic staff are extremely vulnerable and do not enjoy the same rights as those on a domestic worker visa. "One-third of all of the cases Kalayaan referred to the UK government support system for trafficked people in 2009 came from diplomatic households," Moss says, "the already-existing huge power imbalance between the domestic servants and diplomatic staff is exacerbated with diplomatic immunities and the employer's elevated status."

Domestic workers accompanying diplomats to the UK do not currently have the right to change their employer without losing their immigration status. "Unscrupulous diplomats use the 'tying' of the visa as a way of extracting compliance from the domestic worker," Moss notes. In order to give victims of exploitation a viable escape route, immigration rules must be altered to allow workers to change to another employer outside the diplomatic mission. Although the survivors would likely not receive any compensation due to the employer's immunity, they could find new work in order to support their families at home and reduce the chances of being re-trafficked. "It is unthinkable that the UK Government has not yet acted to provide the bare minimum of protection for these very vulnerable workers. It is simply not acceptable to stand by and allow what is effectively bonded labour," Moss says.

Migrant domestic workers are often not in a position to seek justice or escape exploitation due to their immigration status, and employers are generally very skilled in taking advantage of their fears and vulnerability. Exploitation is also facilitated through states' immigration policies. "As

opposed to opening up options and giving people opportunities, states do the opposite and seriously increase the likelihood that those exploited will not come forward for fears of deportation," says Bridget Anderson from Oxford University's Centre for Migration, Policy and Society. Trafficking is often not conceived of as a grave human rights violation but as an immigration issue: "People looking at the issue through a 'migration lens' often end up blaming the victim for illegally entering the country," Giammarinaro notes.

In her research on migrant domestic workers in London, Anderson has encountered blatantly racist and demeaning attitudes towards domestic staff. As an example, Anderson cites a British housewife who uses strong racial stereotyping in describing her servants: "The Nepalese are so quiet and discreet. Filipinos are brasher. They're more social and they like to chat and gossip. They are quite pushy. Some people would say they were greedy."

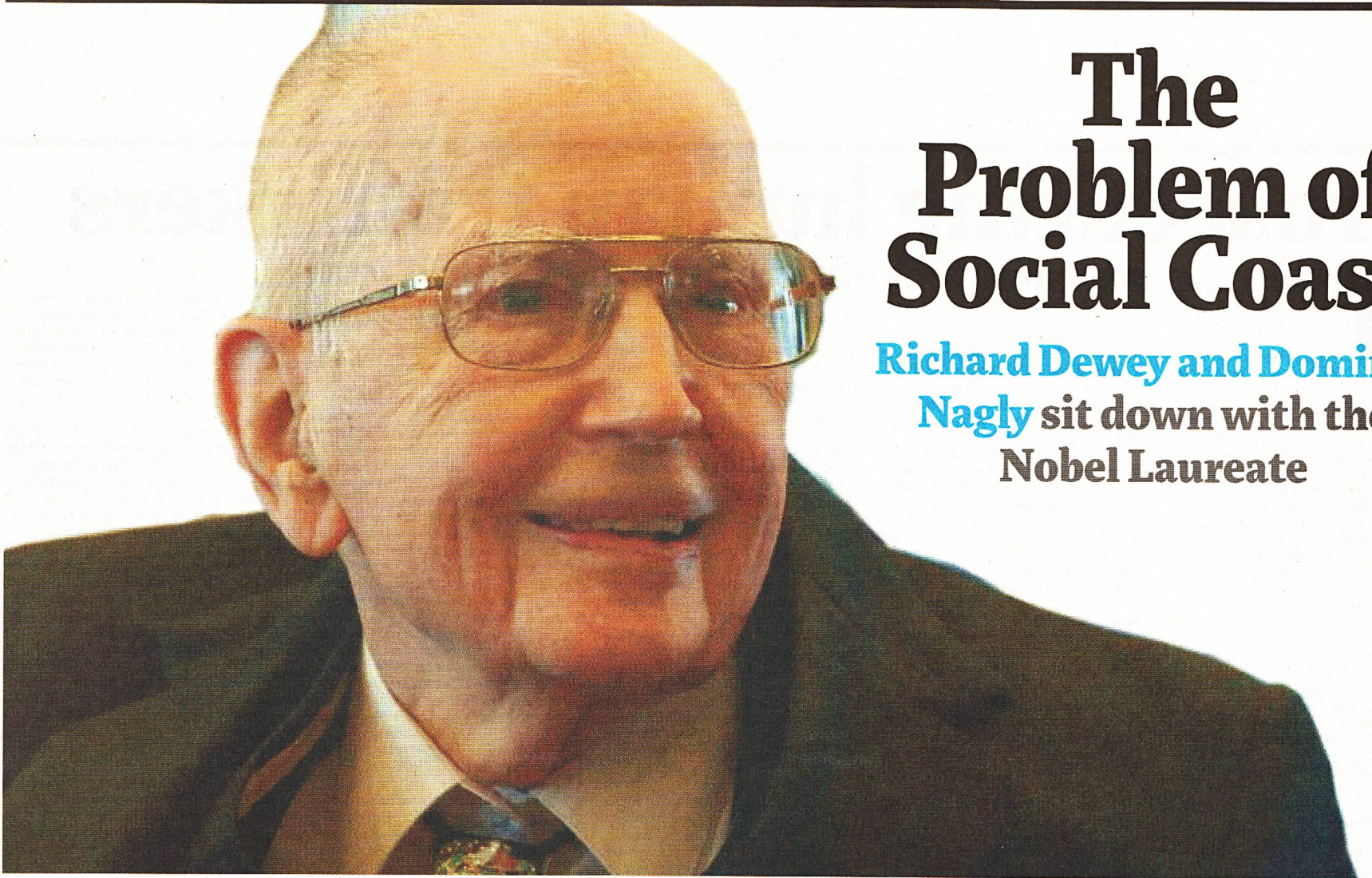
Domestic servitude is therefore a highly racialised form of work. Anderson highlights that it is the personhood of the worker, and not the labour power as such, that the employer is attempting to buy. Often middle-class employers exploiting domestic servants are not even wholly aware that their conduct is illegal or that they are involved in human trafficking. Another British employer interviewed by Anderson emphasises the benefits of servants' vulnerability: "They're foreign and they're illegal and they're scared and timid so they are not going to take up space. They're going to be very, very small, and that is generally easier to live with than someone who feels that this is their home. They're in really bad situations... They're terrified."

Domestic workers are frequently subjected to sexual abuse, a fact that works to blur the distinction between sex traffic and traffic for domestic servitude. According to

a 2009 report by Eaves, another London-based organisation providing support for vulnerable women, around 10 per cent of trafficked domestic servants have also experienced gender-based violence in the form of sexual harassment and rape. However, since sexual violence is highly underreported, real figures are likely to be much higher. "In some cases a sexually exploitative component is introduced in the labour situation, for example being forced to clean the house naked, and in some cases re-trafficking into other sexually exploitative situations such as prostitution," Eaves states.

The UK has been reluctant to opt into an EU directive that seeks to create common standards for combating human trafficking in the region. The directive imposes harsher penalties against human traffickers and requires states to provide victims with witness protection as well as legal and medical assistance. "The UK has to ensure that it's at the forefront of adopting this legislation, and by not opting in it is essentially undermining the efforts of other EU states to ensure prosecution for traffickers and protection for victims," says Paul Donohoe from Anti-Slavery International. "It is obvious that when we have cross-border problems we need cross-border solutions."

It is of paramount importance that the UK opts into the new directive while also ensuring that domestic workers accompanying diplomatic corps reclaim their rights. As Donohoe puts it, "we need to transform human trafficking from a high-profit crime with low risks to a low-profit crime with high risks." There are more slaves today than ever before in human history – until a tremendous change in public attitudes and government policies takes place, the silent exploitation practiced behind closed doors will continue and is only likely to intensify. ☛



The Problem of Social Coase

Richard Dewey and Dominik Nagly sit down with the Nobel Laureate

Ronald H. Coase's 1937 paper *The Nature of the Firm* was to establish the field of transaction cost economics. The Problem of Social Cost, published in 1961, sets out what is now known as the Coase Theorem and a new field in economic research, 'law and economics'. Coase was awarded the Alfred Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1991. In 2003, Coase was the winner of the Economist Innovation Award in the category of 'No Boundaries'. Dr. Coase earned a BComm in Economics from the London School of Economics in 1932. He joined the faculty of the LSE in 1935.

What initially attracted you to the LSE? How did you end up there?

I started off wanting to take a degree in history at University College London. But then I found, probably incorrectly, that to do this I had to know Latin. Having gone to the school for physical defectives run by the local council, I had arrived at secondary school one year later than other students. Those who wanted to learn Latin had already started for a year: it was too late for me to learn Latin. So I could not take a degree in history. My second choice was to take a degree in chemistry: in the examinations which I took at sixteen, I had been awarded distinction in history and chemistry. However, to take a science degree in chemistry, I had to do mathematics. After taking mathematics for some time at school, I found it not to my taste. I think the main reason was that as we were taught in school, we were only shown how one set of equations was transformed into another set, without understanding what was really going on. If mathematics had been taught differently, I would have continued my plans to study in chemistry. As it was, I had no alternative but to take a degree in commerce. And this I did: the LSE was the only place that I could go to to continue my commerce degree.

I took a series of classes in accounting, commercial law, business organisation, really a hotchpotch of courses. I did most of them while still at the secondary school. Then I went to the LSE to continue my work on a commerce degree. What is interesting was that for the commerce degree, courses we took at the LSE did not include economics.

Can you talk a little about the atmosphere and what the LSE was like when you were a student?

The LSE was a small institution at the time and I got to know students working in other fields, including economics.

Students at that time talked to each other. For example, I never took any course in economics, but I talked to students in economics and was aware of what was going on in economics. The LSE had a very enjoyable atmosphere.

Was there a particular professor or class that you especially enjoyed at the LSE?

The particular professor that influenced me most was Arnold Plant, who came to the School from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. He explained how the price system worked, and how competition worked to determine what the economic system did. Then, I was a socialist. What Plant taught us was a completely new subject that I had not known. It was all done in a few weeks. It was very important. It got me into thinking about how the economic system worked.

With my father being a socialist and Ernest Bevin, the secretary of the biggest trade union in Britain as a family friend, I was brought up as a socialist. I did not really think in terms of anything else. Plant introduced me to the idea of a competitive economic system and how it worked. I managed to combine the two contradictory views, the socialist and competitive view of the economy, without any difficulty. I think we all carry within ourselves contradictory views. Abba Lerner, for example, was a socialist, but a socialist who wanted to reproduce the outcome of a competitive system.

What did you do after the LSE? What was your first job?

After I finished two years of study at the LSE, I obtained a Cassel travelling scholarship. This enabled me to travel somewhere for a year. I chose to go to the United States because the literature on industrial organisation was largely an American subject. While in the US, I visited some universities. But largely what I did was to go to business and industrial firms, discussing with businessmen. I was able to do this because Ernest Bevin helped me to obtain a very good introduction letter from Bruce Gardner of the Bank of England. So I started off with good introductions and I went to see many business people to discuss various problems that interested me.

While I was still in the US, going from one plant to another, discussing problems with businessmen, I got an offer from the Dundee School of Economics and Commerce. The School was set up one year before with funding from a businessman and it was run by the local council. Duncan Black, the economist, and I joined Dundee at the same time, and we became good friends.

When did you first become interested in the organisation and impact firms have on the economy? And what got you thinking about the problem?

I became interested in industrial organisation before I went to America. It was natural for me to get interested in firms and vertical integration. What else would you be interested in if you wanted to know how the economy worked?

When I travelled in the United States and interviewed businesspeople, I did not have a set of questions. I just wanted to learn how they operated their business, so I talked to them. Our conversation was not structured in any sense. I was helped by the fact that as the Great Depression started, many businessmen had little business to look after and they had a lot of time to talk to me. I remember visiting a firm in Cleveland: the man there was involved in some business negotiation with some other firm. I was in his office while he was having a long conversation with other businessman over the phone. This was actually far more interesting and educational than the talk I had with him later. This was the sort of thing that I did. Gradually, I was led to the argument that was developed in *The Nature of the Firm*.

After I was appointed at Dundee, I was asked to give three lectures a week. I was constantly preparing lectures, three a week, one week after another, on subjects about which I knew very little. But I very much enjoyed doing it. I prepared them during the day before the lecture. I remembered one occasion on which I took a question and prepared my lecture, then on the bus to school I realised the whole problem could be treated rather simply. I was somewhat cowardly: I first gave the lecture based on what I had prepared. Then, I told the students the whole problem could be dealt with from another simple perspective. Otherwise, I would have given the lecture in only ten minutes and have nothing else to say to fill up the time.

While at Dundee, I had long talks with Duncan Black without much intervention or association with other economists. I also worked closely with another commerce degree student, Ronald Fowler, in London.

What do you think the main challenges are for economics as a social science and how should teaching of the subject evolve in your view?

The real world economy is in constant flux. In the past, people essentially did the same things that their fathers did; in my case, my ancestors were carpenters. That was true with my grandfather, great grandfather, and probably my great great grandfather. One would do what one's

father did. My grandfather was a very good carpenter judging by a toolbox he made, which I still have in my office. But today, people of different generations have different occupations. People also change their jobs frequently: new jobs are created every day; new firms are founded every day. Changes in the economy are constant and everywhere.

How do people react in response to changes in the economy? People certainly change what they do, where they work, what work they do as a result of changes in prices. But most decisions regarding what people do are not made through the work of a pricing system, but as a result of what their boss told them what to do. What people do in the business is largely a result of administrative decision. It is thus critically important to understand how firms operate, how they make decisions, how they conduct business with each other, how they interact with the government, and so on. We have done so little work on these questions. As a result, we are very ignorant about how the economic system operates.

At the moment, economics is taught as a set of tools. It does not have a subject matter. Last summer, Ning Wang of Arizona State University and I held a workshop at the University of Chicago Law School. We urged economists to study what we called "the industrial structure of production". Teaching of economics should be based on the how the economic system operates. But economists have so little interest in how the system works. They have a highly theoretical system, which they teach to students. The students never have to consider how the system actually works. We should develop economic theory by examining how the economy actually works.

What are your views on the overall economy of China and how will Asia shape economics in the twenty-first century?

Well, if we concentrate on the last thirty years, what we see in China is an extraordinary change, a transformation from a socialist system to a market system. This is extraordinary because it couldn't be forecast, and certainly was not forecast. As Ning Wang and I have shown in our forthcoming book, *How China Became Capitalist*, the Chinese market transformation was largely an unintended consequence of human action, despite the critical role played by Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese leaders. I am quite optimistic about the future of the Chinese economy because there is still so much the Chinese people can do. They just recently started to appreciate their own cultural traditions. They still have not yet had an active market for ideas, the lack of which

has become a severe constraint.

The Chinese market transformation and the rise of India have greatly changed the views held there on how the economic system works. Economists there will continue to study how the economy in China and Asia evolves. If they adopt the right approach, they have great potential to improve economics in the years to come. Some Chinese economists just recently founded the Coase China Society. They will study how the Chinese market economy operates, how it evolves over time, how the market system works differently in different locations. Their work will greatly enrich economics.

Which areas of current economics research offer greatest promise?

This is a sort of question which cannot be answered. We do not know. How things will develop in the next thirty, fifty or 100 years is something unknown. We did not anticipate what happened in the past thirty years. I don't think we can now succeed in predicting the future. Whatever happens in the future will surprise us. But I believe that 100, 200 years from now economists will work on different kinds of questions.

What would your advice be for students of economics who intend to choose a research career in the field?

That's a very difficult question. It depends on them. They have to find some questions that interest them and work on those questions. I cannot decide for them which questions to work on. No matter what kind of questions they decide to investigate, I hope they will help us understand better how the real world economy works. In this way, their investigation will keep improving economics.

Students have to realise that economic research is an open-ended process, and the outcome cannot be known in advance. Just think in terms of China. We did not expect what happened there in the past several decades, nor its speed or its scope. We still do not know what will happen. We can develop theories which may help us know what to look for in subsequent empirical studies. But this is a process that you cannot specify in detail in advance. The future will always surprise us, I hope, in agreeable ways. ☐

Grammatical leanings

Nathan Briant and Alexander Young speak to Andy Burnham MP

It was only after a bloke that looked like a cross between Graham Coxon – the hairdo and heavily-rimmed glasses – and William Shakespeare – he had an earring like the one you see now and again in that portrait in bad pubs and bad art galleries – had left, after a mammoth conversation about Labour politics with Andy Burnham, that we got to speak to the Shadow Education Secretary. At some events at the LSE, the audience sometimes can't get out of the room fast enough – indeed, sometimes it's the speaker that wants out: in the Old Theatre last Tuesday David Miliband curtailed his speech from an typical eight o' clock finish to a quarter to eight to coincide with the kick-off at the Nou Camp as Barcelona outclassed poor Arsenal. But at last week's LSE Students' Union Social Policy and Labour societies' event, people weren't so much hangers-on, but rather, quite understandably, liked him and wanted a natter. The Beaver, as is nearly always the case, was at the back of the queue. The organiser of the event and Burnham's personal assistants were keen to get Burnham out of Clement House before 9pm. We talked to him for about ten minutes, and during that time ran over the (at it turns out very) loose deadline: very loose since once we'd left Burnham, he kept speaking to another crowd that had filed to take our place. Regardless, it was nice of him to let us speak to him: wine was available so we probably weren't as sharp as we might have been – and hopefully he enjoyed it. Here's what we think now, ten days later:

Nathan Briant

My first and lasting impression of Andy Burnham is still that he'd be a nice man to go down the pub with to talk to him about football, that sort of thing: he's clearly a good bloke and his speech showed that. He's committed to as much equality as is feasibly possible, as normative as that sounds. That said, I'm not sure he'd be as decisive as I would want him to be if he got back into office and wouldn't be the architect of too many gaffes, both on policy and spinning matters. Burnham seems inoffensive, unsure how to draw the line on what, if he was Education Secretary tomorrow, he would do except generally do his utmost to 'make schools better' in general terms.

I was desperate to ask him about the picture released during his unsuccessful Labour leadership campaign – he finished fourth in the race he was realistically never going to wrestle from either Ed Balls' or the Miliband brothers' hands last year – in which he was pictured next to a van with "Extend Our NHS" emblazoned upon it, which he sat in and waved from it while a gofer drove it around northern towns. Fine up to this point – but in the picture, Burnham had stood in front of the first three letters, conveying a hilariously contrary message to standard Labour Party policy. Unfortunately, I wasn't brave enough in the end: I didn't want to insult him and wanted him to move onto the next group of people waiting, so I kept silent on that.

Why can't the Labour Party look to be radical and fresh-thinking on education?

First, I asked him about grammar schools. I tried to throw in my opinion unsuccessfully, but Burnham still was not that damning of them and I felt his answer a bit wishy-washy and disappointingly New Labour-moderate and not Old Labour on grammar schools. This is not a man, should he become Education Secretary in four years time, who will shout from the rooftops of grammar schools' inherent unfairness. If he does rally against them, I get the feeling that he'll campaign against them but not at full throttle and that he'd never be as effective as he might well be with a little more conviction. I throw (not much of) a spanner into the works on the grammar schools issue because although I generally agree with his point, I still want convincing by him. I know that Burnham likes music: the email advertising the meeting showed him with

a Fender Stratocaster à la Tony Blair in about 1994/5 in New Labour New Leader mode – and I ask him whether because the Stone Roses' (the seminal British indie band of the late 1980s and 1990s) heart in guitarist John Squire and lead singer Ian Brown had attended Altrincham Grammar School for Boys in Manchester, this was evidence that grammar schools were successful at increasingly social mobility.

He 'umm'ed and 'ahh'ed a bit: both on the Stone Roses and the grammar schools issue. He said he didn't think Ian Brown went to a grammar school; I told him again that he had, with Squire: I'd read it on Wikipedia. He said that he'd seen the band in Blackpool at a seminal concert. I commented that that was nice. On grammar schools, he still didn't know what either Alex or I felt, so I think he was still trying to be inoffensive. Eventually he said, of course grammar schools are good for the people they serve but not if you want to make it "fair for everyone" – a reasonable answer but political diplomacy wins again there, unfortunately. I was hoping he was going to give grammar schools a good old northern kickin', while simultaneously giving them a little pat on the head.

That said, he gave a decent enough defence of comprehensive education: "The net effect is we're all better off because we have a less divided, more cohesive society and research from books like *The Spirit Level* [the 2009 book by academics Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett which argues that more equal societies are consistently better than more unequal ones, which Burnham mentions several times to the extent that it gets tiresome, like it's the only book he can refer to off-hand], but he later goes onto say that he doesn't want 'to tell people, you can't do this, you can't do this' in education. I find his answer, when Labour have four years of certain opposition, disappointing: why can't the Labour Party, like Michael Gove was (even if it was in the most toxic way possible), look to be radical and fresh-thinking on education?"

Burnham is Catholic, went to a Catholic comprehensive and sends his children to Catholic schools so perhaps it wasn't too surprising that he was pro faith schools. Again, I asked for a clear demarcation for why such schools were important, vital parts to the country's education system but yet again a robust defence never really came, more a "they're OK" vibe. Perhaps I don't look very religious or driven by morality so he had to steer away from arguing that children need religious values in their lives for fear that I might again feel offended, I'm not sure. Yet I don't really understand why he seemed to take my questions as if I was asking them in a negative tone, because I wasn't. He replied to my question, "in an ideal world, you'd separate religion from education," but because of religious tradition in Britain that's difficult, although he emphasises that religious teachings in religious schools must be "open to everyone". It's unfortunate that I still, nearly ten days after we spoke, I still don't know how that is possible.

Then I asked about onto football: I knew Burnham would want to speak about it because it seems that at every opportunity I've seen him on TV or heard him on the radio he always mentions Everton Football Club, to the extent that during his leadership campaign the I'm-a-football-fan message went very stale for me. He wasn't as happy to talk on the record about football – perhaps ironically, he was much more animated about this – but he said that the national game needs a radical overhaul, from top-to-bottom. I mentioned that I feel UEFA and FIFA are useless, particularly the world body, but he didn't agree with my criticism of UEFA. I talked of inflated ticket prices of over £100 for the Champions League final in May but he said that UEFA weren't doing a bad job and that the imminent criteria introduced to compete in continental competitions prove that. I suppose, as a politician, he's got to know that incremental steps are better ones than radical jumps. I'd got that by now, after the schools questions.

I grabbed another beaker of wine and was moved along. It was a decent, comprehensive and obviously – unfortunately – rushed chat although as I write now I feel Burnham would be suited to being Labour's conversationalist for the next few years, meeting old people in their care homes and people on their high

"I don't think that you can tell kids at age eleven and fourteen that 'you're second class, you're going to a second class institution'"

streets outside WH Smith and Poundland rather than a leader on particular tenets of policy. Saying that, I don't think it was any coincidence that the day after we'd spoken to Burnham, he was up in Barnsley helping out the newly-elected MP for the party wave to a small crowd in (what looked on TV) a leisure centre.

Alexander Young

Andy Burnham seems unable to come across as anything but a 'good bloke': as Nathan has already said, it would not be unfeasible for anyone to see themselves in a pub with him. Whether this boon in style is backed up by anything more substantive, however, may well be up for debate.

I must admit, before any real critique of Burnham's talk to us is gotten into, that my experience of him was coloured by an answer to one of my questions: in a probably wine-induced lapse in judgement, I asked where Burnham thought I was from based upon my accent. Being a man born outside of the M25, I assumed that the would have been around a bit and heard my dreadful accent somewhere between WS1 and WS15, given his prior admission that he had been to Bescot Stadium to see the excellent display that is lower-league football. The Right Honourable Gentleman, however, completely missed the mark: I was told that I was from 'the East'. I've heard some odd things for where people think that I am from before, from Cambridge to North London, but I simply resent the implication that I sound like I could be from Norfolk or Suffolk. Credence must be given to him, however, for lamenting the necessity of taking an edge off one's accent (if one is from certain parts of the country) to facilitate social mobility.

Nathan's question about the implications of grammar schools on social mobility faced an incredible wall of reticence from Burnham; my question as to the tangible difference between the "streaming" of students in comprehensive schools by ability and the separation of students by ability practiced by grammar schools was met with the same reaction. He started by completely avoiding the question by stating that he felt that "school is about more than exam results." Here, I cannot disagree with him: part of the role of school is that of socialising the next generation of people. Indeed, this is what he went on to say, with him saying that "[education] works better if you're all taught together in the mix that you will find in the workplace and life in general." This, as an argument for comprehensive education, seems a little flat to me: it appears to be premised on the assumption

that grammar school students are a homogeneous grouping of factory-produced automatons: something that my own experience of going to a grammar school leads me to somewhat doubt. Indeed, the grammar school I attended was probably more ethnically diverse than the comprehensive I would have attended: if anything, it gave me a better impression of the 'real world' than I otherwise would have had. The socioeconomic diversity of the school was probably lesser, I will concede, but that is probably attributable to the catchment area of the school being eight miles around Sutton Coldfield, one of the most middle-class enclaves of Birmingham. Further to this, people in comprehensive schools that stream students aren't all taught together: whether this is wilful ignorance or otherwise from Burnham, it's a poor demonstration of his capacity to fulfil his job if the coalition were to dissolve tomorrow and Labour somehow end up in power.

Of course, personal experience clouds my judgement on this, but his musings on grammar schools and their relationship with social mobility also seemed to be a little incoherent. He acceded to the fact that grammar schools had a positive impact on social mobility, yet wanted to say that comprehensives have a greater effect. He did not, however, until Nathan presented him with an incredibly leading statement to the tune of "well, it's a utilitarian argument, isn't it? More people benefit under comprehensive education than under a stratified system." It seemed to me that Burnham only managed to speak with real conviction when somebody around him was aping his views: perhaps typical politicking, or perhaps just more evidence for him being a really 'nice guy'.

Perhaps due to his father's fortunes, having failed his 11+, Burnham laboured the point of the unfairness of the selective school system: "I don't think that you can tell kids at age eleven and fourteen that 'you're second class, you're going to a second class institution'" being the most aggressive rhetoric employed by him throughout the entirety of his conversation with us. There is no way that I can disagree with him on this, and in the UK's tripartite system there was no real way to shift between strata of schools. He seems, however, to implicitly deny the possibility of a system like that of Germany, whereby

one can move from a *Realschule* to a *Gymnasium*, given high academic achievement. Such a process may serve to allay his fears of a lack of recognition of the fact that children develop intellectually at different rates and that thus the "separation [of children] before [full intellectual development] is completely arbitrary." "Putting people on tramlines to a less advantageous place" may not occur through selective schooling if there is always scope for the movement of students from one strata of school to another based upon merit.

Another bone of contention to be had between myself and Burnham was to be found in his belief that education would be separate from religion "in an ideal world" but that this was not really feasible given "the social role played by the Church in the past". Given the increasing irrelevance of the Church to the lives of most within the UK, why the Church should continue to play a role in education is unfathomable to me: I didn't perceive this as diplomacy from him, either. This was genuine conviction. As he was himself educated in a Catholic school, maybe he is blind to the moral issues concerning the imbuement of traditional Christian values in education; or maybe he is just attempting to put across a *laissez-faire* approach to government involvement so currently in vogue. Either way, this faith in religious education is unsatisfactory to me.

In what may have been yet another wine-centred decision, we asked after Burnham's favourite Liberal Democrats and Conservatives. Burnham cited Norman Lamb as this Liberal Democrat de jour, with their relationship being cemented by the work they did together on social care. With this friendship in mind, it's interesting to watch the debate on the increase in numbers of managers within the NHS between Burnham, Lamb and Andrew Lansley: there is a certain look of intense animosity when Burnham glances over at Lamb, roughly parallel to that which a Westminster Councillor would give to a homeless person. For his Conservative pick, Burnham opted for Simon Burns: a man, apparently, 'not without his imperfections and foibles'. One can only project one's own imperfections onto a stranger to try and work out what on Earth was being hinted at there.

To say that talking to Andy Burnham was not enjoyable would be to completely misrepresent the truth: he is a fine conversationalist and more than willing to take time with student journalists – something which definitely puts him in my favour. Whether he was telling the truth from the Party, from himself as a man, from himself as a politician or whether he was just talking and trying not to offend still remains up for debate: I can only hope that he begins to assert himself more in order to challenge the destructive education policies currently being followed by the Conservatives. ☞



Simply the West?

Cees Heere reviews Niall Ferguson's 'Civilization, the West and the Rest'

On 14th February 2011, the BBC reported that China had overtaken Japan as the world's second-largest economy. Barring a sudden burst of the Chinese economy, it is reasonable to assume that it will achieve parity with the United States within fifteen years. The world is rapidly re-balancing itself with Asia, where after all, the majority of the world's population lives, reasserting itself as the global economic axis. Yet if the rise of Asia forces all of us to consider the future, it also makes us look to the past. After all, India and China are, in a matter of decades, paving over centuries in which Western Europe and its American offspring dominated the globe.

How did we in the first place get to a situation where, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a peninsula on the West end of Eurasia controlled 58 per cent of the world's land surface, 57 per cent of its population, and a staggering 79 per cent of its economic output? It's a baffling question, and it is not surprising that histories of this 'Great Divergence' are becoming increasingly popular. Already we have had Christopher Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World* (2004), to which in recent years have been added Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* (2005), John Darwin's *After Tamerlane* (2007) and most recently *Why the West Rules, For Now* (2010) by Stanford polymath Ian Morris.

The latest historian to try his hand at explaining the Great Divergence is none other than Professor Niall Ferguson, who currently holds the Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs. His new book *Civilization, the West and the Rest*, has been launched simultaneously with a Channel 4 series entitled, simply, *Civilization*. Since the start of Lent Term, he has performed the on-stage version to a packed New Theatre every Friday.

The book is a self-acclaimed history of 'Western civilization', a concept which itself is never satisfactorily defined in the book. Ferguson is a hard-nosed historian, with a liking for tangible, measurable facts, preferably—if not always—of an economic nature. It is slightly puzzling that he now devotes himself to writing the history of such an unspecified concept as 'the West'. Is Latin America, for example,

part of this 'Western civilization'? Are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky part of 'Western' literature?

Ferguson himself seems not too preoccupied with definitions. He marches on to the premise that 'the West' developed six key advantages over 'the Rest': competition, science, property rights, medicine, the consumer society, and a thrifty work ethic. Each of these 'killer applications' forms the title of a chapter in which Ferguson contrasts a 'Western' society with a 'Restern' one, and explains where one got it right, and the other got it wrong. The result is a zig-zag through human history: we are treated to comparisons between the Ottoman Empire and Frederick the Great's Prussia, between the English and Spanish colonies in the Americas, and to French and German imperial practice in Africa.

This six-way division seems a bit awkward. Apart from being internally inconsistent—what makes medicine as different from science as to warrant a separate chapter?—Ferguson does not follow it very rigidly himself: the two World Wars are swept under 'Medicine', and the Taiping Rebellion under 'Work'. Also, it seems a remarkably reductionist way of approaching what he himself calls a "highly complex human organization". It's probably best to leave Ferguson's 'Apps' for what they obviously are: a snazzy marketing ploy to make the book more easily digestible to iPhone-sporting youngsters. I would not take issue with this snappy approach to history, were it not for Ferguson's own protestations against teaching the discipline through "isolated modules". The same is true of the many Fergusonisms that litter the book: "iGod" (referring to the commercialisation of religion in America), "the protestant word ethic", and the "Spice Race" (the space race of the fifteenth century) are just a few examples out of many. Here is nothing new. After all, Ferguson is the historian who already gave us "The Third World's War", "Chimerica" (an allegory of China and America to describe the economic linkage between the two) and "a nation of shoplifters" (Australia).

The book is in fact part history, part social commentary, part economic analysis, but all polemic. Ferguson

lashes out against Karl Marx ("an odious individual"), Friedrich Engels ("for whom socialism was an evening hobby, along with fox-hunting and womanizing"), and the youth protest movement of the 1960s ("the revolution's true aim... was the unlimited male access to the female dormitories"). Rousseau's *The Social Contract* "was among the most dangerous books Western civilization ever produced", while Marx's *Capital* is "scarcely readable". At best, such jibes are amusing if a bit puerile: one merely wonders whether a self-acclaimed promoter of "Western civilization", could not get the same message across with common civility. At worst, they border on the absurd. The controversy over wearing headscarves in Turkish universities is portrayed as an "Islamist" ploy, and "part of a wider agenda to limit women's rights by introducing sharia law in Turkey, achieving gradually what was achieved much more suddenly in Iran after the 1979 Revolution."

And here is exactly my problem with this book. To his discredit, Ferguson subverts the historical record to a political agenda. He is never factually wrong, but uses emotional argumentation, misleading comparisons, and the occasional ad hominem. Of course, it is never truly possible to write an 'objective' history of anything. Yet this is more than a politicised history in the old Marxist tradition: this is a political manifesto, backed up by historical arguments. It is in the preface and the conclusion that his real argument is made explicit. The book is written not as a description or a history of 'Western Civilization', but to warn against its decline in the face of radical Islamism and the rise of China. Yet the real bile is reserved for those who do not display the same faith—some would call it arrogance—in Western civilization as Ferguson does himself. As he states on the last page on the book: "Maybe real threat is posed not by the rise of China, Islam or CO₂ emissions, but by our own loss of faith in the civilization we inherited from our ancestors". Linking in with this is an endorsement of the burqa ban in France, praise for Britain's public austerity programme, and strong support and admiration for Israel, as a besieged outpost of the West: "the modern equivalent of Vienna in 1683

[the year of the second Ottoman siege]". All the same, he does not do himself any favours by claiming in a later chapter that "The Jewish role in Western intellectual life in the twentieth century... was indeed disproportionate, suggesting a genetic as much as a cultural advantage."

With this book, Niall Ferguson seems to cement his transition into the house-historian of the Right. It is a tradition I regret, not for political reasons—although I freely admit to be one of the cultural relativists on which he pours his scorn—but because I consider it a great loss to the historical profession. Since I picked up *Empire* from Waterstone's three years ago, I have read most of Professor Ferguson's books. I have come to respect and admire him as an outstanding writer and an extraordinarily gifted historian. His books sparkle with all kinds of insights, presented with all the power and richness that the English language has to offer. In this last respect, at least, *Civilization* is no exception. Who knew, for instance, that the Japanese word for suit, seibiro, descends from Savile Row, London's port of call for quality tailor-made suits?

Similarly delightful to read are his accounts of how Levi's blue jeans helped bring down the Berlin Wall, how Frederick the Great composed flute sonatas, and the horrible experiences of the Senegalese soldiers in the French colonial army, slaughtered in the trenches of Flanders. In the style of any good TV-presenter, Ferguson moves effortlessly from the specific to the general, using moving examples to illustrate wider points. The book certainly contains its fair share of insights. The comparison between the revolutions in North and South America—why was Simon Bolivar not George Washington?—is astute, as is his take on the political economy of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and on the difference between French and German colonial practice in Africa. Only when his writing becomes explicitly political, his arguments falter, or at least become subjected to his polemical rhetoric. It is unfortunate that he has not chosen to apply his literary talents, analytical sharpness, and considerable thrift—eight books in ten years is no mean feat—once more to the pursuit of history for its own sake. ☞

WHAT IF...

...the Dreyfus affair went the other way?

Jack Tindale

The coronation of King Philippe III on 4th February 1898 marked the final political victory of the anti-Dreyfusards for control of the French political system. The reformation of the Kingdom of France for the second time, now clustered around the Orléanist scion of the old ruling dynasty, was greeted with shock across Europe from Cork to Constantinople. The constitutional coup by the newly founded monarchist organisation, the Action Française, followed a narrow victory at the general election of the previous October for the anti-Republican parties within the National Assembly, the appointment of the ardent anti-Semite Edouard Drumont as Prime Minister is now viewed by many historians as the end of the brief period of dull and unpopular liberalism which had dominated France during the latter half of the 19th Century.

The assassination of Émile Zola in September 1897 by a penniless junior army officer Philippe Pétain shocked the already unstable Third Republic and a wave of crackdowns on public meetings soon followed, eroding the limited public support for the government of President Félix Faure. His rather unsavoury end, having died of "trop sacrifié à Vénus" as one newspaper referred to it, prompted mass protests led by supporters of the young political theorist and new leader of the Action Française Charles Maurras. The firebrand philosopher pledged to return virtue and energy to the corrupted French state. Whilst Maurras traditionally refused to give a name to his ideology, "Vitalism" was soon coined by the reactionary press and the movement continues to have supporters around the world, especially within the Chinese Federation and Latin America.

With a swathe of pro-Catholic anti-liberalism emerging as the dominant voice within France, the following months saw a mass emigration of the intelligentsia from Paris. One of the few to remain was the founder of the "Revanchist" movement and extreme anti-Semite Paul Déroulède, who soon became a leading figure in promoting a strongly nationalist foreign policy from Paris. The brief military stand-off with Britain in the winter of 1899-1900 over colonial possessions in Sudan produced little for either side, although Anglo-French relations would be permanently frosty as London moved towards an axis with Berlin.

The execution of Alfred Dreyfus for treason in March 1902 cemented the power of the Action Française over the French political system. Charles Maurras, disdainful of the parliamentary system, consistently refused to serve in the pre-war governments, although he did serve as Foreign Minister for a brief period in 1912 during the height of the Bosnia Crisis and would later be appointed Marshal of France in the final months of the totalitarian administration of Raoul Salan.

Maurras, the youthful theorist of the newly revisionist French state, promoted closer ties with the Russian Empire, which he admired for its institutionalised religion and policy of Official Nationalism, something which the Kingdom of France began to emulate from its foundation. The militarisation of the border with Germany and establishment of a huge garrison at Calais were both interpreted by Joseph Chamberlain in London and Botho zu Eulenburg in Berlin, both of whom perceived the growing spectre of an anti-Protestant and anti-Saxon France as a genuine threat to the tenuous balance of power in Europe. ☞



Flickr user: Beowulf Sheehan/PEN American Centre

Measured musings

On Friday, Japan was hit by a magnitude 8.9 earthquake followed by a tsunami around ten metres high. These caused the nuclear reactor facility in Fukushima to explode, and now the country is also under nuclear alert. The earthquake was followed by several seismic aftershocks, but the strongest force to shake Japan to its core might be an economic one.

Japan is the world's most forward country in terms of earthquake prevention, and the constructions of the island are planned taking into account the common occurrence of seismic movements. The intensity of Friday's earthquake, however, was unprecedented, so the preventive infrastructure was unable to cope. Online videos show the waves of water and mud sweeping down cars and houses, and thousands of people are still missing. The international community has already demonstrated its solidarity in providing imminent aid, especially from the United States, Italy and Britain.

The Japanese government is prepared

for significant damage, and citizens are currently being rescued from buildings and ports by the army. The official number of deaths is still unknown, but the impact the earthquake will have on Asian economy is already clear.

Japan had recently lost the position of second largest world economy to China, and the country was facing debts and public deficit. Capital Economics analysts wrote that "the greater the social and economic damage, the larger the threat to the government's ability and willingness to war off a fiscal crisis". After the Kobe earthquake in 1995, Japan spent 3 per cent of its GDP in placing the country in the

same situation as before the quake. This weekend's events in Japan are a chaotic nightmare that could not have come at a worse time.

Factories have been closed, and the disaster increased drastically the expense for the insurance sector, which will be highly affected. The earthquake has already affected oil prices as the demand for the commodity has decreased, as Japan is the world's third largest oil consumer. With a backdrop of volatile international events—including civil war in Libya and unrest in the Middle East—oil prices are going through an uncertain period. Not all is terrible—it is argued also that the

catastrophe will force Japan to spend a lot of money rebuilding the country, and that this will help stimulate other economies as well. However, the earthquake struck thirty-minutes before the close of stock trading in Tokyo, and sent its already declining market down lower. The effects are yet to be entirely noticeable, but the future looks grim. ☞

Bianca Nardi
Features Editor

PART B

Satire – Luke Smolinski | Sex and Gender – Alexander Young | Theatre – Chris Finnigan | TV – Simon Chaudhuri

Editor's Picks of the Week

Fa Temperley London Sample Sale
17th - 18th March
20th Century Theatre

Fi Submarine
From 18th March
General Release

Th The Red Shoes
Until 9th April
BAC Lavender Hill

Lykke Li
14th March
Shepherd's Bush Empire

Evolving English
Until 3rd April
British Library

Watteau: The Drawings
Until 5th June
Royal Academy of Arts

Fashion.

PANTONE 20.1112

Alice Leah Fyfe sings a rainbow

Spring is upon us, through a cloud-mottled sky and dodging the raindrops, the sunshine is out and determined to brighten our pending deadlines and revision worries. And what better way to celebrate this beautiful season than by carrying bright colours with you all day long. Black is classic and chic and never fails, but nothing about it is fresh or changing. Every year, a brand new colour scheme seeps down through the catwalk and into Topshops and Primarks the world over. It shocked me to learn a few years ago that there is a global authority on colour. An official Dulux colour chart, if you will. Pantone is this authority. Established in 1963, Pantone is a UK based company which now has official recognition in colour creation and communication in over 100 countries. Each year, Pantone forecast and set the colour trends for two years' time. I learnt this in the summer of 2009, when I was lucky enough to visit a fashion forecasting consultancy. Their walls were lined with portfolios of swatches; fabrics, threads, textures and colours. An aesthetic sweetshop, they said the colours they were working on were orange and teal. Watch this space.

I know it seems ridiculous to think that absolutely everything that is for sale right now, from stationery to shirts, all through the fashion, interior design and marketing industries, has had its colour dictated. Now that production is automatically a global enterprise, it is even more crucial that dyes and colour schemes are synchronised. What we don't realise as consumers is the number of processes a garment has been through, the number of borders it has crossed and really the only way to realise any sort of cohesion is to set the rules at the start. Did you think that when Giorgio wants oyster he will get it? That Donatella demands a gold and lime and it appears out of thin air? Fabrics have to be made and dyes mixed in global quantities. It sets a different light on things, doesn't it? That our 'new' colour choices are subconsciously dictated to us by a lengthy and calculated process. I have to say, I found it enlightening and now entertaining to see obvious colour

combinations in the shops and on the streets.

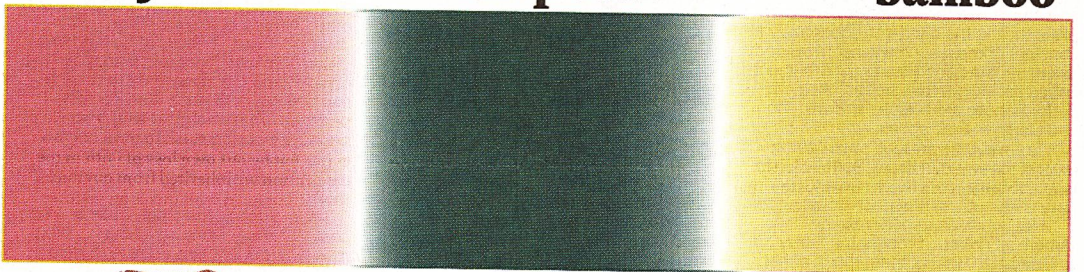
So, is there a colour of the year? Of course! Last year it was turquoise which, to be honest was only in my periphery, seeing as it doesn't particularly suit me. The colour of 2011 is honeysuckle. A bright and happy shade of pink. I am not an avid fan of pink I have to say, but this shade is warming to me gradually. Other shades include deep teal and bamboo, which completes the primary trio. Generally lighter shades of these hues dominate the palette in spring and deeper, richer shades in the autumn. Of course there are other colours in the world! I'm not saying to build your outfits solely from these colours, but they are the main influence for this season's palette.

Block colour trends this spring and summer are a perfect way to express your favourite colour combinations; be as adventurous as you like; it's not so much what 'matches', more what catches the eye and translates your personal taste. Have a look at www.pantone.co.uk if you're interested; it has a lot of information on this year's palette and the process of selection in general.

honeysuckle

deep teal

bamboo



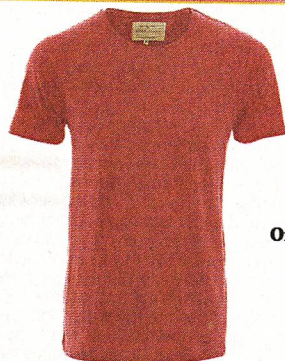
Topshop sleeveless shirt £18



Models Own nail varnish £4.99



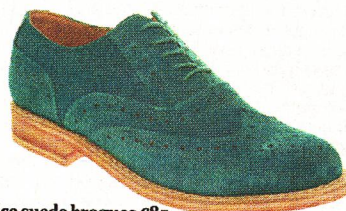
Vans £35



River Island crew neck T £6.99



Miss Selfridge blouse £32



Office suede brogues £85



Teal trousers Topman £44



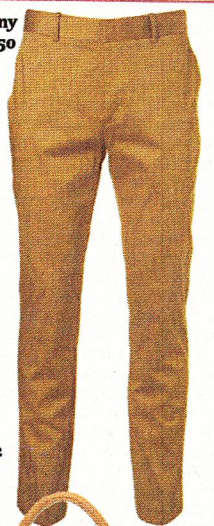
Models Own nail varnish £4.99 (I'm plugging this brand, but they have great colours!)



Topshop tunic £32



ASOS handbag £65



TMD skinny trousers £50



Jonathon Aston £8; River Island £12; River Island £12; Pamela Mann £10; H&M £10; Topshop £8

Yan Giet's Bright Tights

Feeling the mid-term melancholy? Well here is something to banish away those blues – for this spring will see the humble hosiery get a vibrant revamp! Gone are the days where tights serve as nothing but a functional burden for the well-behaved schoolgirls; in fact, these daring S/S '11 tights could not be further from this typecast. Bold, heroic and unapologetic; this new generation of tights seeping through the high street stores are more dangerous than safe and should probably come with a health & safety tag. This season sees tights take the forefront centrepiece of your outfit, from eclectic to electric – almost

anything goes. And it's not just prints that are causing a stir on the tights scene – texture can be just as fun to experiment with. Transport yourself back to 90's grunge nostalgia with pink neon fishnet tights made to shock. Alternatively, discover your inner hippie with new-age psychedelic colours - or make a statement with a pattern that resembles a rainbow smashed across your tights. Is the sunshine making you feel a spring in your step? Well why not take it one step further and map the nature and sublime onto tights with a digital print of the flawless skyline. Likewise, capture the sun for eternity by boldly displaying it on your pins. If we can't change the weather, you can't blame us for trying to change our tights.

The Tales of a Skygazer

Lead singer of NYC favourites **Asobi Seksu** talks to Masaya Tanikawa about her dreams, baked cookies and wolves



Ten years ago, **Yuki Chikudate** thought she would never be 'cool enough' to front a dreamy indie-pop band. Two line-up changes, five studio albums and thousands of fuzzy guitar layers later, she finds herself at the brink of embarking on a world-wide tour with several dates lined up in the UK. After a rocky start and much personal sacrifice, **Asobi Seksu** has garnered a well-deserved fanbase (that brings gifts of baked cookies, earrings and love letters) with consistently sold-out concerts. Resenting the media pigeonholing the band into shoegaze with constant comparisons against **My Bloody Valentine**, the band likes to think of themselves as 'skygazers'. Indeed, their live performances are eclectic and wild; no one stares at their shoes.

Is Chikudate anxious about going around the world? Hardly. Born in Tokyo with ancestral roots in Okinawa, Chikudate is something of a post-global citizen.

Her father, enamoured by the 'American dream', brought the family out to California. Having spent much of her childhood in the streets of Los Angeles before moving on to New York at sixteen, her international identity is reflected in **Asobi Seksu's** pop-flavoured songwriting: vague Japanese murmurs mingle with English whispered nothings against a delicate tapestry of crushed guitars and ethereal textures, showcasing Chikudate's life-long penchant for all things musical.

"Becoming a musician wasn't really a dream per se—it was just something I had to do. As far back as I can remember I always had this need to make sounds. I kept thinking 'I have to sing, I have to play an instrument!'" chirps Chikudate about her early days, "so I started off like that, then took up piano lessons. Classical music was my first love. I also remember being really inspired as a kindergartner by a high school performance that my parents took me to. I think I was five, I was thinking things like 'Oh I've gotta do that, there's older kids playing on-stage together! That's what I wanna do too!' I mean, I was just so stirred and moved by the collective sounds they made. I think that's when the seed was planted to make music with other people."

After countless afternoons spent listening to American radio oldies, Chikudate moved on to New York to attend a Conservatory. She would soon meet the 'other half' of **Asobi Seksu**, James Hanna. "Having been drawn to piano at a young age, it was such a solitary instrument—so when I went to NY, I saw the potential for playing music with other

people for the first time. Meeting musicians like James was a real eye-opener," she says. "He was a classical guitar major and came into it very differently from me. He had all the cool points—he was a punk rock kid who'd been into garage bands forever. I think his first concert was Mötley

"No, we never shoegaze! We look up and project outwards... we're skygazers"

Crüe in third grade.

"We started talking about which bands we liked. I think there was a really natural, mutual respect between us. Eventually some of his friends from Long Island asked me to contribute to a band and play keys. I was really sheepish because I'd never been in a band before, I kept saying no I can't do this, I'm not cool enough!" laughs Chikudate. "This was before the days of **Asobi Seksu**—I wasn't even singing at that point. We agreed to just see what happens, so we called ourselves Sportfuck. We thought it would be funny for someone like me, who looks so petite and unassuming, to be in a band like that. It was meant to make people go 'what?!'"

Sportfuck was a short-lived project that disbanded soon after, re-emerging with yet another risqué name as **Asobi Seksu**. "It pretty much means 'play sex' or 'playful sex' in Japanese. James and I are the primary songwriters—he comes up with stuff or I might, sometimes we combine things. Other times we just have songwriting sessions where we'd get together and see what happens. Then we'd bring these ideas to the rest of the band and they'd help us flesh it out."

Collaborations can end in creative success or frustrating disaster—for Hanna and Chikudate, they can think of few better ways to write music. "When we were younger in our early twenties, sure we used to argue a lot, but now I think the dynamic of this band as a four-piece has really grown into a great place. I think the most exciting part of all this is seeing growth within the band, I mean the other guys Bill and Larry are really excited for the future and what we're doing right

now. I think more than ever before, James and I are open to incorporating the other members and utilising their ideas and strengths. They're all talented in their own rights. We're lucky to have an incredible drummer."

Drums form the literal backbone of a band—they keep bodies rocking, rhythms rolling and the air shaking. "He used to be in a hardcore Long Island band called Glassjaw. We've always had, even from the inception of the band, a really hardcore drummer. We wanted to combine all these pretty dream-pop elements—and other things too, like American guitar-driven stuff—with heavy-hitting hardcore drums that were tight and loud. We couldn't find that for a while until Larry came along, and since then it's been perfect. He's also a great singer so we've been harmonising live. Billy, the bassist, is great too—he's an engineer with a great ear so he always brings fresh ideas to the table.

"He didn't actually play bass at first, so it was really funny watching his progress over the last two years. We were just laughing the other day about his first tour with us," recalls Chikudate. "It was a brutal seven weeks, and I was like wow, you got broken-in, you got totally hazed! It was so hilarious, he was really nervous and saying things like 'oh god my stomach'. You become a completely different person after experiences like that."

Chikudate would know that well—after all, her first performance was just as challenging. "Oh my god, I was a nervous wreck. I had a lot of compassion for him, but I knew there was nothing I could do to help him but tell him not to worry about it and to try to have fun. But I know those words just go in one ear and out the other. You just have to move through it, get on-stage, do the best you can," she says. "That was what I kept telling myself, because I was pretty much being thrown out to the wolves. I wasn't a singer, I'd never sung before except in the shower, which doesn't really count. When I was up there I had a mic in my hand, my lips were moving, but it didn't feel like I was making any sound. Our band is loud, so I kind of got to hide behind the noise. I needed that shield a bit before I got comfortable. I've just kind of awkwardly grown into it."

While many musicians look forward to the thrills of life on the road, others find the entire ordeal a nerve-wracking nightmare. "Touring does come with its stresses, in its own natural ways. You sort of become a wayward family that's forced together to travel all around the world, in the most confined spaces. You're always

hungry or cranky—there's so much stuff, so many variables that can add to the stress," says Chikudate.

As a young band churning out their own brand of dreamy shoegaze-influenced pop, they pushed themselves to the limit in touring and promoting their 2006 album 'Citrus'. It was an ill-fated tour that broke the old band apart.

"We were really ambitious in our early 20s. We had a lot of goals and were willing to do anything. Keep it going, keep it going, was sort of our motto back then. We've always been the kind of band that would go, 'ah fuck it, we need to tour, we'll do what we can, we'll sacrifice and put everything into the band," she says. "I guess that's why that old line-up fell apart. I mean, how long can you keep that kind of willpower up? Over the years we've learned to let go and relax, to try not to force things too much. We've given each other space, and in hindsight that's

"Being the only female can be really annoying. At a certain point it's like oh god... I need another woman"

helped a lot.

"The band we're with now has really gotten along well. I think the most important thing is that we're all professional. We all understand why we're out here."

Ten years of gigs around the world, and everything still feels fresh. Chikudate says being the only woman in an otherwise all-male band keeps things interesting. "It's a male-dominated industry. I think I've learned a lot about what it means to be a strong woman. It's been really cool for me to grow in that way, but being in an all-male band can be really annoying. Seriously," she says, bursting with laughter.

"I can hang with guys. I'm not a prude. I can take any joke, any dirty comment. Hell, I love dirty jokes. I do! But I'm also a woman—at a certain point it's like, oh god, I need another woman, I need more female energy. But I just look at it as part of the job. All I can do is let the guys know what my boundaries are."

Echoing post-feminist sentiments, Chikudate has her own views on the increasing sexualisation of female artists in the music industry. "Everyone's welcome to do whatever they want. If exploiting their sexuality works for them, that's great. I don't want to be the moral police and be like oh my, that's so wrong, they wouldn't have to do that if they had real confidence, or anything like that. I think that women should be able to do whatever they want," she says. "If a man did those sorts of things no one would say anything, so there's definitely inequality there. I think it's disappointing in this day and age that people want to knock females in whatever way they can. I don't think the problem lies with women but with how they're judged."

"We're told from a young age that our self-worth is determined by what you're able to give to a man—it's all about having to prove yourself, basically."

Validation is a contentious concept for artists—some need it, others don't. What about **Asobi Seksu**? Do they scan the web for what the blogs and reviews are saying? "Oh fuck no. We never Google ourselves and check for things like that. Dave Chapelle said if the internet was a real place, it'd be a fucking horrifying place—I totally agree with that. If I'm looking to be built up or dragged down I might, but I don't really usually feel that need to be validated or invalidated by someone else's word."

For Chikudate, her musical journey was never about riches and fame. "For me, success means asking myself if I'm happy with what I'm doing. Do I go to bed at night smiling? If my life was measured by the things I have or by my status, or where I stand in terms of what's cool and what's not, and what the blogs say about me or don't say, and what I'm included in and not, I'd have to kill myself," she says. "It can be hard to put yourself out there, to say you care about something. If you claim something means a lot to you, and you say that in a public way, it can lead to a lot of heartbreak. So I can't really measure success—it's just too painful. In some circles we might be—when we played a record at Mercury, for some reason Fergie and her husband said we were awesome. I admit that was cool."

Catch Yuki Chikudate and friends live at any of their six London dates, starting 15th April at Electric Ballroom.

Tickets available at myspace.com/asobiseksu

Janelle Monáe : Roundhouse 01.03.2011 Caitlin Gulliford waxes lyrical over the Kansas-born chanteuse

I have learned something profound: there are certain artists that embody everything amazing about music, and **Janelle Monáe** is one of them.

She reminds you why it even exists in the first place. From start to finish, she delivered a show that went beyond the generic pop and indie-hipster bands that have become the standard concert-going faire. Not that there's anything wrong with these sorts of shows; it's just that Monáe delivers only musical excellence.

Her show opened with "Chase Suite II" and its accompanying video, documenting her story as an android on the run (honestly, who doesn't love a good cyborg narrative?). She incorporated video throughout, setting a passionate, smart and classy vibe depicted by images ranging from American activists fighting for civil rights to people dancing jives.

The proclamation of "Dance or Die—

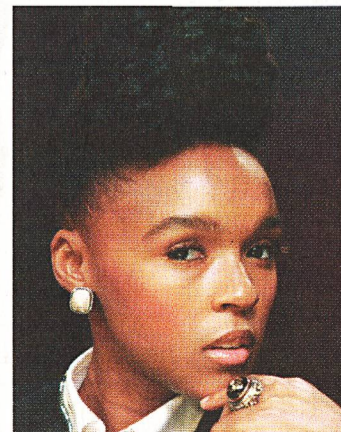
before she revealed herself from under a black robe—set the tone for the rest of the show. Conveniently, it was also the first song that put our bodies in motion. We never stopped dancing after that.

Some of the highlights included well-known songs such as "Sincerely, Jane" and "Cold War". They all showcased her ability to dance with a fervour that evokes thoughts of James Brown or Muddy Waters—best exemplified during the times she would just drop the mic and start dancing uncontrollably.

The show utilised a dance element that saw her back-up dancers launching themselves into the crowd (always masked and mysterious) as well as handing out blow horns and showering us in confetti. During "Tightrope", black and white balloons were released from the rafters. An all-out dance party broke loose like I'd never seen at a concert.

And yet, her vocal performances on "Smile", as well as "Mushrooms & Roses" (where she even painted a picture on stage), proves that her music comes from something greater than a talent that is found and moulded. It was granted to her by some sort of divine musical awesomeness. This was proven time and time again, especially during her encore, which was the most passionate and energetic I've experienced to date.

Whereas many times encores seem so staged, her performance of "Come Alive" released the energy and intensity of all of us at the show—at one point we were all lying on the floor 'resting' before jumping up to dance, sing, and play our hearts out. This was probably the best show I have ever been to. Take my advice: the next time Janelle Monáe is in your town, don't miss the opportunity!



Spotify Spotting

What **Michelle Fan**, post-graduate student in Global Media, is listening to this week:

Carla Morrison
Compartir

Mos Def
Life in Marvelous Times

Carolina Chocolate Drops
Hit Em Up Style

She and Him
Fools Rush In

Puckoon, Leicester Square Theatre

Luke Smolinski reflects on a poor adaptation of the work of the comic great Spike Milligan

“All I ask is the chance to prove that money can't make me happy!” So said Spike Milligan, comic, poet, writer. This was the writer who penned *The Goon Show* and *On the Ning Nang Nong*. This was the poet who, before reciting his work to audiences, would say, “I thought I'd begin by reading a poem by Shakespeare, but then I thought, why should I? He never reads any of mine.” This was the comic who has on his epitaph, “I told you I was ill!”

With wit like that, you'd expect *Puckoon*—a play based on a novel of his—to be funny. It pains me to say that it was not. I largely blame the cast and, to some extent, the writers who adapted the book to stage. From time of time, you found a pure Milligan gag, uncon-

taminated by the adapters, untouched by the actors. Moments like this were rare however. Throughout the performance, I laughed just as much as I would in an advert break.

“It felt like a sixth-formers' improvisation night”

Milligan is not at fault. The premise of the play—and the book—is quite a funny one. In 1922, after weeks of arguing how to divide Ireland in two, the members of the Irish “Boundary Commission”

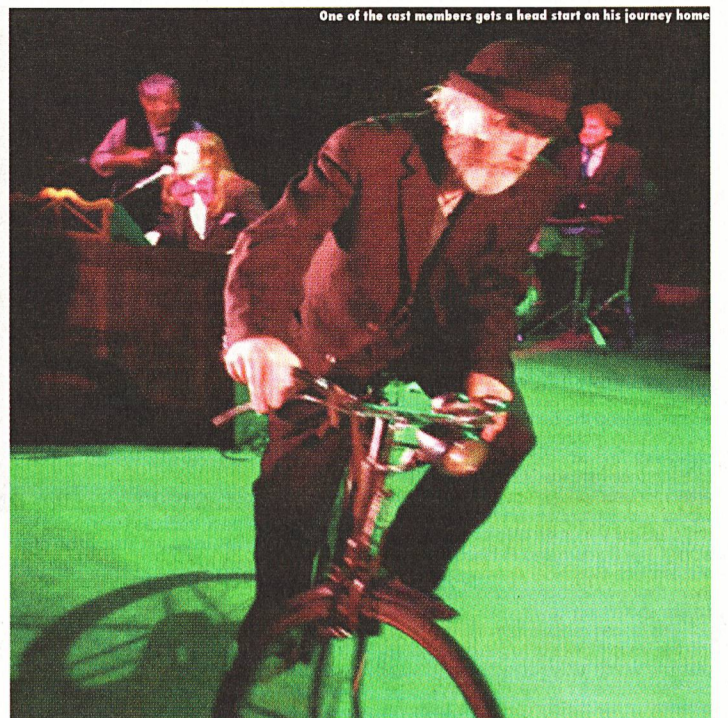
settled on closing their eyes, grasping a giant pencil and drawing a random line wherever the pencil took them. The line ends up splitting the village of Puckoon in two. The church is on a different side of the boundary from its graveyard, which means that in order to bury the dead, the bodies have to get passports before they can cross the line.

Crazed, farcical scheming ensues. A cast of six performs as reverends and revolutionaries, corporals and coppers. The characters are from another age of silliness: blokes play Pythonesque dames; all adopt thick Irish accents, barring the English colonel, who is evidently inspired by the no-nonsense chaps Milligan had to live with during his time in the Army. The play reeks of an older Britain, able to laugh itself silly over how stupid the Irish are. There is quite a brilliant allusion to Bloody Sunday in the play, which might have made us howl in the 1970s.

“The jokes were stale, the timing was bad and the play was confusing and weird”

In the tradition of the *Goon Show*, the fourth wall is broken recurrently. There is a narrator (Paul Boyd), whom the characters chastise for providing bad weather. As the play unravels and the plot gets more and more unhinged, the narrator starts to stutter through the script, growing seemingly embarrassed that he has written it all. The more chaotic things get, the more things go intentionally wrong, the more the narrator curses under his breath. In one scene, because the other actors are all busy getting changed, the narrator is forced to play two parts at once, to the point where he is on stage alone, enacting the dialogue between them.

The adapters' attempts to mimic a Milligan-style inanity fall flat, however. One comes out of the play feeling more confused and disorientated than anything. One may be forgiven for thinking the performers were cocking their parts up by accident. There are moments of brilliance—mid-scene, a policeman's sticky-tape-



One of the cast members gets a head start on his journey home

moustache falls off, so he cunningly takes some black sticky-tape from behind his helmet a sticks it above his lip—but these moments are few and far between.

“Attempts to mimic a Milligan-style inanity fall flat... one comes out feeling confused and disorientated”

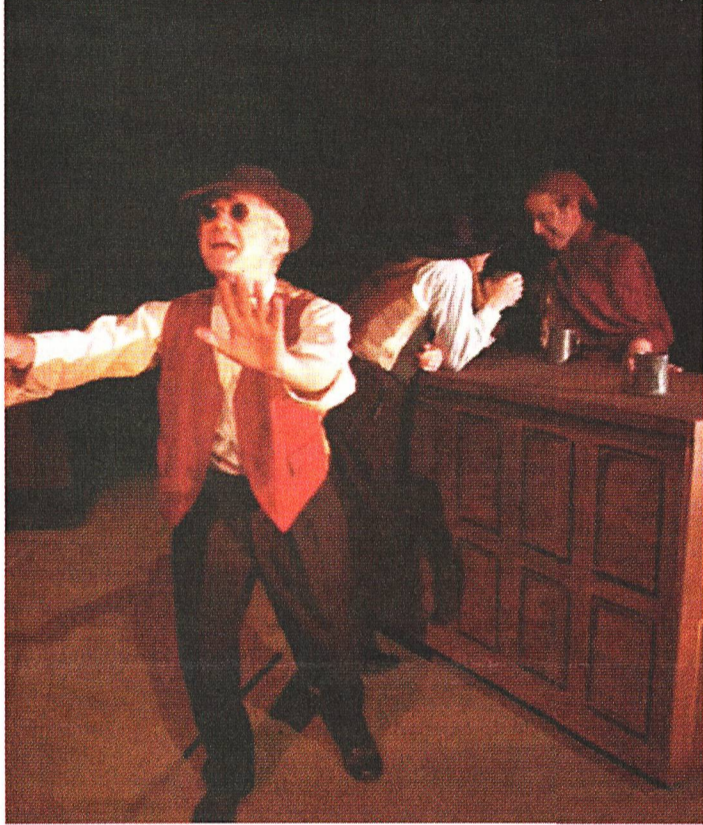
The main trouble is that there are only two funny actors: Bryan Quinn and Russell Morton. You almost feel sorry for

them, because between them, they do a stellar job. They perform as screeching old women, Irish dimwits, cops, drunks and fools, transforming their faces, voices and stance to play them. Much humour comes from the fact that four actors play a dozen or so parts. The best moment of the show is when there is meant to be a large crowd scene in the pub. In reality, there are only four actors, but the actors change parts so often and so knowingly in the scene that it is hysterically funny.

That was the only part in the evening when all the audience laughed. The rest of the play was marked by long periods of silence. The reason for this was that the jokes were stale, the timing was bad and the play was confusing and weird. Overall, it felt like a sixth-formers' improvisation night. On which they would have failed the module. If you want to go to a comedy show where you come out feeling an overriding sense of pity, go see *Puckoon*.

Puckoon is showing at the Leicester Square Theatre until 27th March.

The new boundary meant one corner of the pub that was thirty per cent cheaper



Dreamboats and Petticoats, Playhouse Theatre

Ashma Kunde gets shakin' all over the happy-go-lucky sixties musical

Anyone with a penchant for polka dots, full skirts and rock and roll dancing wouldn't be able to walk past the cosy Playhouse, home to *Dreamboats and Petticoats*, without a well-measured glance. I've had the glossy leaflet pinned to my notice board since last October, and finally went to see it after an age of longing to. It was definitely a Thursday evening well spent.

The frothy storyline went something like this: stargazing schoolboy Bobby wants to be the next big thing in the pop

“Slightly different to the otherwise run-of-the-mill adolescent love story”

industry, saving up for an electric guitar instead of taking girls out on dates. Not that he doesn't want to, being madly in love with sex-pot Sue and all. But naturally she's only interested in 'men', in this case Norman, the cocky singer who only loves himself. And then there's Laura, geeky girl-next-door and songwriter extraordinaire, who's madly in love with clueless Bobby. Sound familiar yet? Add the St. Mungo's Youth Club setting, a song writing contest and a trip to Southend (“saaff-end”), and maybe you get something slightly different to the otherwise run-of-the-mill adolescent love story.

This musical is novel in that its inspiration lies in a hit namesake CD compilation, which brings together the best of the sixties. Although ‘inspiration’ may be the wrong word here—character and plot development was feeble which clearly took a backseat to the inclusion of as many

jukebox successes as possible. The end result was a play chock-a-block with tune after tune, with some comical dialogues and innuendos providing much required breaths of fresh air.

The multi-talented cast and the live music were brilliant, particularly Daisy Wood-Davis as Laura and Scott Bruton as Bobby. I loved his guitar-strumming and soulful rendition of “You Won't Catch Me Crying”—the stage, splashed with deep red lighting, created a beautiful atmosphere. There was a plethora of songs highlighting every teenage dream, spirit and angst, including unrequited love, the power of (pocket) money and the fickleness of a young heart. The cast's relentless energy had me taken aback, as they sang and danced like no tomorrow. The dancing was a treat to watch, including Sue's shimmying to “Shakin' all over”, and we all ended up joining in to the classic “Let's Twist Again”.

Discount tickets are easily available; ours even got upgraded to the dress circle (which had plenty of empty seats), proving that this musical doesn't do

“It barely matches some of the spectacular shows that the West End is home to”

much to bring in the punters. That being said, there was still a fair number of eager viewers, of whom the majority sported greyed hair and a desire to relive their youth. I'm guessing it played to bigger audiences during the summer—because it was new to London then and played at the Savoy, and also because it does

exude a certain holiday languidness.

Dreamboats and Petticoats certainly isn't the shiniest apple in the basket and

“It certainly isn't the shiniest apple in the basket”

Let's Twist Again: the cast of *Dreamboats and Petticoats*



definitely not one to see for the ultimate theatre experience. It barely matches some of the spectacular shows that the West End is home to, and lacked the glittery retro pizzazz that *Hairspray* showcased. But then again *Dreamboats* doesn't promote itself as being in that league, resting instead on its laurels of plain old good music and nostalgia.

The way I see it, only two kinds of people would truly enjoy this all-singing, all-dancing foray into the 60s—those who

were part of that era, and those who wish they were. It may not send quivers down your backbone, but it'll make you “Dream Baby Dream”, sending you back to a time when excitement came in the forms of necking in the “Tunnel of Love” and a real American milkshake from Wimpy.

Dreamboats and Petticoats is showing at the Playhouse Theatre until next year.

Reinvention or the great pretenders?

Caroline O'Leary examines the benefits of reworking the classics

Great works of art have always been iconic, but now they seem to be everywhere we look. Images of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling on album covers and countless poster prints of Van Goughs on bedroom walls have brought these pivotal works into the mainstream and embedded them in modern pop culture. These works represent the progress of art and of civilisation, yet we have almost reached the point of becoming so over-familiar with them that we no longer see their beauty or significance. Could the answer to this problem really be through technology?

The **Remastered** exhibition, which took place last week at One Marylebone, strove to fuse art and technology to present a new perspective of these classic works. Microprocessor giant Intel commissioned the thirteen pieces and provided the technological knowhow and designers who worked with the artists to bring their reimaginings to life. The artists focused on a range of inspirational works from throughout art history, from the classical Venus de Milo to the expressionist *The Scream* and Picasso's cubist masterpiece *Guernica*, drawing from them their own concepts and ideas to create something new.

The pieces ranged from literal use of the inspirational works to the downright puzzling which left us scrambling through our catalogues for more information. The diversity of the thirteen pieces is both the merit and the issue of the show; those works which succeeded in their fusion of art, concept and technology not only overshadowed those that don't, but also further highlighted the latter's faults in greater relief. Often the simplest transfer



Bompas & Parr's response to Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*

of ideas was best, such as Robert Corish's work which used the inspiration of a busy, abstract Kandinsky painting to create a projected light installation that reacted to sound and at one point used a DJ to combine music and sound into one installation.

Designs featured everything from fibrotic shooting stars to an old school 3D film complete with the retro red and blue glasses. However, the success of these again ranged dramatically throughout. A short film of a ballet dancer in shadows was beautifully made but there didn't seem to be any particular reason to show it on four huge staggered screens other than to simply show off the technology.

In comparison the "Painting Machine" by Daniel Swan, which used a marker making dots in an obviously specially designed and much more homemade construction, was simple but far more enjoyable.

"The diversity of the pieces is both the merit and the issue of the show"

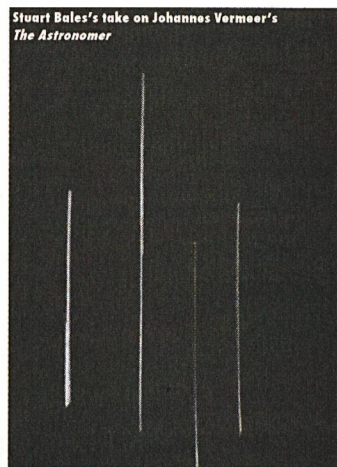
The scrumptious neo-classical venue of former church One Marylebone seems wrong for such a modern exhibition, with the gilded mirrors dotted at random a particular distraction. However it also provided the perfect background for probably the most striking work, Stuart Bailes's *Recovery*. The simple concept consisted of three diagonal rows of black rectangles in varying sizes and minimally decorated with white lines situated in the half-moon, shaped former altar. Flanked by the beautiful stained-glass windows and the glare of strong spotlights that followed the diagonal, the simple shapes become something dark and mysterious, calling to mind the idea of ancient standing stones

while the atmosphere changed at every viewing as the natural light through the windows disappeared. Quite what it had to do with Vermeer's *The Astronomer* is open to much interpretation but the end result, so simple and effective, was one of the highlights of the show.

"Does a cube of screens featuring images of computer screens and code really embody the intensity of *Guernica*?"

However, those that didn't work really didn't work, such as *Lung* by Chris Harris which saw a half wall structure in neon colours, covered with what can only be described as a number of plastic turds.

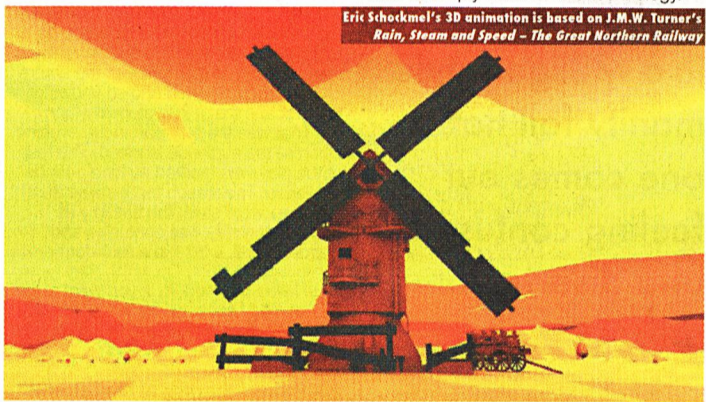
The exhibition does bring to mind the accursed question: "is this art?" All the pieces here are based on existing masterpieces of art history, pieces which have changed the world and often altered how we perceive things from then on. Does a cube of screens featuring images of computer screens and code really



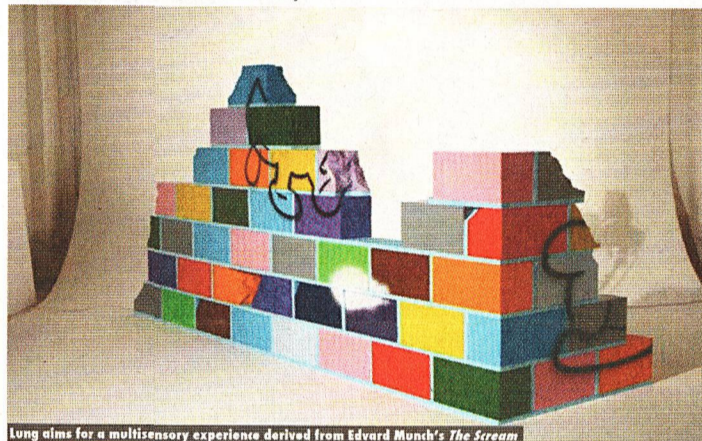
Stuart Bailes's take on Johannes Vermeer's *The Astronomer*

embody the intensity, shock and power of Picasso's *Guernica*? And if not, what is the point?

Well the point seems to be that this exhibition is as much about the technology as the works themselves and maybe this should be the main focus of the viewer's attention. Though inspiration is taken from a classic and combined with the modern, those who managed to walk the narrow line between the two managed to produce interesting and exciting works that might just succeed in causing us to look at them as well as their inspirational works in a new light.



Eric Shockmel's 3D animation is based on J.M.W. Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed - The Great Northern Railway*



Lung aims for a multisensory experience derived from Edvard Munch's *The Scream*

Glee Series Blog

Shrina Poojara previews 'The Sue Sylvester Shuffle'

Extravagant musical numbers, over the top Cheerio routines, zombies and the most entertaining game of American football I've ever seen... That's right folks: next week's "The Sue Sylvester Shuffle" is *Glee*'s Super Bowl episode.

Considering that the episode was originally aired following the biggest annual sporting event in the US, it's no surprise that the writers tried to take advantage of the fact that their male audience was a lot more numerous than usual: the opening scene features a Cheerios routine set to Katy Perry's "California Gurls", complete with BMX riders and sparklers coming out of conical boobies... In one word: awesome. Sue's bored response suggests that she disagrees, which prompts the McKinley coach to step things up in the most show-stopping and dangerous way she can think of: shooting Brittany out of a cannon. Brittany's response? "I don't want to die yet... At least not until One Tree Hill gets cancelled!"

Meanwhile, in the lead-up to the championship game, the tension between McKinley's football team and glee club heightens following Kurt's move to Dalton and Artie getting slusheed, which is pretty complicated considering half of the football team is also in glee club. Coach Beiste turns to her new kissing buddy, Will Schue, for advice and the pair come up with a plan to make the football team join the glee club for a week. Oh boy...

When Figgins hears about Sue's plans to endanger Brittany's life, he immediately tries to put a halt to her plan. Little are him or Mr Schue prepared for what comes next: Sue goes apeshit and proceeds on a furious rampage throughout school. The Sueclear weapon halts her charge for just long enough to inform Will and Beiste that she has moved the Cheerios' Regionals competition to the same night as the championship football game, which means no cheerleaders at halftime!

Of course, Will sees this as an opportunity to showcase his glee club as they are given the opportunity to perform at the game. This, however, puts Brittany,

Santana and Quinn in a rather awkward position as they are forced to choose between the Cheerios and glee club. Which will they choose? And how will the football team, including gay homophobe Dave Karofsky, react to having to sing and dance at their own halftime show?

"We see the outcome of Schue and Beiste's plan, a cameo by Katie Couric and a shocking old flame rekindled"

As far as performances go, "The Sue Sylvester Shuffle" provides a couple of real doozies, the highlight being the mashup of "Thriller" and "Heads Will Roll", complete with zombie makeup and awesome choreography. The writers also made sure Kurt did not miss out on the huge audience of the Super Bowl episode but his contribution to the show felt pretty limited, as did his part in the Warblers. On the plus side, a performance of "Bills, Bills, Bills" by the all-guy, acoustic group really shouldn't have worked but Blaine's vocals really made it one of my favourites of the show.

Final verdict? Appealing to a male audience hasn't reduced the entertainment factor at all. If anything, the writers really stepped it up. Tune in to see the outcome of Schue and Beiste's plan, the cannon's handwritten card to Brittany (funny how the cannon and Sue seem to have very similar handwriting), a cameo by Katie Couric and a shocking old flame rekindled. Trust me. It really is super.



Treading the Boardwalk

Simon Chaudhuri on *Boardwalk Empire*, HBO's latest creation

Boardwalk Empire takes that staple of American film and television, the world of organised crime, and refreshes it with a slightly different spin. Boardwalk kicks off at the start of the US's Prohibition era in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and follows Enoch 'Nucky' Johnson's (Steve Buscemi) profiteering as Treasurer of the corrupt and rotten Atlantic City.

While the roots of the American Mafia can be traced back to the latter part of the nineteenth century, the majority of literature and productions focus on the mafia at the height of its power in the 1930s. Boardwalk is interesting because it examines the mafia at a pivotal time in its development - during a period of massive growth and expansion that was facilitated by the Prohibition in the 1920s.

The latest in HBO's long line of big, expensive and successful television series, Boardwalk is as well-known for the heft of its creative team as it is for the heft of its huge budget. The pilot was directed by none other than Martin Scorsese and reportedly cost \$20 million. The set alone, with its faithful representation of the era's arcades and boardwalk, cost a massive \$5 million. To say that HBO is bringing out the big guns to counter AMC's success with *Mad Men* would therefore be a gross

understatement. Despite all the money thrown at the project, I cannot help but feel that Boardwalk is somewhat of a disappointment. Truthfully, it fails to provide any new insight into the world of the Cosa Nostra,

"Take the Godfather's style, the Sopranos' gore and Mad Men's fastidious attention to period detail"

and seems rather like an amalgamation of everything we have seen before. Take a healthy scoop of the Godfather's style, a sprinkling of the Sopranos' violence and a glug of *Mad Men*'s fastidious attention to period detail and the result would be

rather akin to Boardwalk Empire.

If Boardwalk fails to deliver something fresh, perhaps the cast are its redeeming feature? The star of the show is undeniably Steve Buscemi as Nucky. Buscemi is at times let down by his supporting actors, who tend to blend in with Boardwalk's amazing scenery. A couple of Brits are present and accounted for, with only one truly standing out: Stephen Graham as perhaps the world's most infamous gangster, Al Capone. Graham convincingly plays the unhinged Capone, and his scenes are perhaps the most exciting, positively bristling with anticipation as to what Capone will do next.

Boardwalk is good, no doubt, and will likely satisfy many fans until the next season of *Mad Men* appears. However, Boardwalk fails to truly draw the viewer in the same way as the Sopranos and the Wire (and with diminutive budgets in comparison). Although the series has been very well received by critics, the American public has not shared their enthusiasm. In the middle of the season American audience figures dropped to about half of the pilot's initial draw - which is the acid test. HBO needs to up its game and find the next big hitter, because Boardwalk Empire might just be a net loss for the company.

Birds Eye View film festival 2011

We attend the showcasing of a century of wonderful women filmmakers

Birds Eye View was founded as a short film event and registered as a charity two years later, in 2004. The Birds Eye View film festival was launched in 2005 and takes place during International Women's Week each March. It is the UK's only major film festival dedicated to showcasing and celebrating the work of female filmmakers. This year saw the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day and the festival celebrates a century of women in filmmaking.

Even today, only 6 per cent of directors and 12 per cent of screenwriters are women. As people who appreciate film, we find this saddening. Excluding a large part of the many perspectives to be found in half of the human population, purely from a storytelling perspective, is

most unwelcome. The festival's superb programme underlines this loss every year. It also seems that this inequality is briefly highlighted on a larger scale during the awards season each year and is then forgotten. It should not be so. We are proud to support the valuable work that the Birds Eye View film festival does for us, as filmgoers. We will be covering a selection of films from the festival over the next fortnight.

The Birds Eye View film festival takes place between 8th and 17th March at the BFI Southbank, ICA and Southbank Centre.

More information and the programme for this year's festival can be found at www.birds-eye-view.co.uk



CELEBRATING WOMEN FILMMAKERS



Director: Susanne Bier **Screenplay:** Anders Thomas Jensen **Cast:** Mikael Persbrandt, Trine Dyrholm, Ulrich Thomsen **Runtime:** 119 minutes **Year:** 2010

If Susanne Bier wanted to come up with another title for her Academy Award-winning film, *In a Better World*, she might as well have gone for something like 'Adults Get Bullied Too!' or something else with the same emphasis and lack of subtlety. That's not to say it is a bad film by any means – many parts of it are very good indeed – but when it goes bad it has the tendency to do so with all the subtlety of Kyle Broflovski 'learning' something at the end of a South Park episode.

In *In a Better World* focuses on both the friendship of Elias (Markus Rygaard) and Christian (William Johnk Nielsen), as well as the relationships that their parents have with bullying. New to the local school, Christian quickly goes about attacking the school bully with a bike pump for picking on Elias. A further confrontation involving Elias' doctor father, Anton (Mikael Persbrandt), being bullied by a garage attendant sets in motion a chain of events that brings the kids closer together while also threatens to tear them apart.

In another sub-plot, Anton's work in

a Sudanese refugee camp also tries to link the thematic problems of bullying to a wider context, with a local gang leader cutting up pregnant women's stomachs to see if their children will be male or female, all in the name of gambling. When he comes to the camp seeking help for an infected leg, Anton has to make a choice what to do.

If the second sub-plot sounds overly moralistic, it's because it is. Not to sound too negative on an otherwise well-written, well-acted film, but that it often feels a need to keep coming back to the Sudan story suggests it has little confidence in the primary story involving the children.

The lack of confidence is unwarranted, however: it's really quite good. Instead of attacking the central issue – bullying – with a blunderbuss, the film tackles it sensitively, with great acting on the parts of Rygaard and Nielsen, taut direction by Bier and a good script from Anders Thomas Jensen.

At times compelling, at other times contemplative, *In a Better World* will not go down as a complete embarrassment for the Academy in awarding its Foreign Language Film prize, even if this reviewer would have preferred a more subversive work, like Greece's *Dogtooth*, to taking the top prize.

Jonathan Storey

In a Better World



Director: Suha Arraf **Country:** Israel/Germany **Runtime:** 116 minutes **Year:** 2011

Women of Hamas is the story of three influential women who besides supporting the movement are also actively involved in its ideological reconstruction. The documentary is directed in a way that gives the audience double feelings: an uncomfortable feeling of insecurity when these women openly support the concept of martyrdom, and a sad sympathy when they cry while watching their last recorded conversations with their deceased sons in their farewell before setting off to an operation. Although the film blatantly sides with the Israeli perspective, the topic is so dramatic that it is nonetheless possible to watch the whole film from the point of view of both parties.

Whether you watch this or a documentary about the Holocaust or a movie about genocide in Rwanda, or if you are reading about systematic rape in the Balkans or looking at photos of torture in Abu Ghraib, there is a question that does not leave you alone: how could they do this? The violence is so beyond imagination that you can feel that these actions are already outside the criteria of being human. But at the same time, when a documentary maker gets one step closer to the lives of the people, the human aspect of the story starts to emerge.

Bringing up the human talk is not to argue for holding no responsibility for war crimes but it is useful to watch a film like *Women of Hamas* alongside the recent

Waltz with Bashir. When we are talking of occupation, war and violence, there is a power balance in place. At the same moment that the Israeli soldier closes his eyes to the genocide in an Arab village, an Arab mother takes a farewell picture of her son with gun in hand. The moment that an Israeli mother mourns for her young son, an Arab mother is wiping her tears while smelling her martyred son's Cologne.

If you ask "how can they do this?" then you should also ask "under what circumstances do they do this?" War is not a state of exception – if the global power imbalance, injustice and imperialism are an everyday practice, it will also continue in the war context. The camera can then turn back and ask the audience how their passivity and reluctance has left people in a position without choice, where the body itself has to become the final weapon. Or how it has left them with such feelings of isolation that they are led to join the army, to protect their people from another holocaust.

Women of Hamas is not a brilliant technical piece, but the stories it narrates are important enough to make it valuable viewing. The documentary does not deeply analyse the lives of these women outside the usual cliché of the Arab woman and it stops at the surface, but even this brief encounter leaves behind deep feelings and even trauma. In taking sides, the documentary also forgets to build on this motherly grief and anxiety in demands for peace; pointing at groups like the solidarity group founded between Arab and Israeli mothers to stop the war and fear – because both know very well that "parting is difficult".

Azadeh Akbari Kharazi

Women of Hamas



New Release

Director: Jonathan Liebesman **Screenplay:** Christopher Bertolini **Cast:** Aaron Eckhart, Michelle Rodriguez, Bridget Moynahan **Runtime:** 116 minutes **Year:** 2011

The premise of *Battle: LA* is simple: aliens invade planet earth and begin to destroy the human race. However, it is not aliens but clichés which infest the film. The first ten minutes introduce us to the protagonists, a group of marines – except we've already met them before. There is Staff Sergeant Nantz (Aaron Eckhart), the grisly veteran who has just handed in his retirement papers. Then

there is the young, fresh-faced Lieutenant (Ramon Rodriguez) going off to fight with a pregnant wife back home, the token ass-kicking female (Michelle Rodriguez), the one still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Even R&B singer Ne-Yo is cast as a marine, giving a distinctly Tropic Thunder-esque feel.

Having sat through the horrifically predictable opening sequence (inappropriately accompanied by 2Pac's "California Love"), I anticipated the beginning of gritty street battles with authentic marine dialogue. It does not come. Our heroes are tasked with evacuating civilians from a police station in Santa Monica before the whole area is flattened by US bombs. Unfortunately, as they wander through the streets, occasionally being ambushed by an alien or drone, dialogue consists

of little more than 'goddamnits', 'sonofabitches' and 'ooh-rah' grunts. There are no signs of the three-week authentic marine boot camp the actors had completed before filming.

By this stage an alien is captured and examined for weaknesses. A huge laugh erupted in the room as one of the civilians said, completely deadpan, "Maybe I can help, I'm a veterinarian". What I failed to understand was that this remark would lead to more cringeworthy dialogue later, such as "You should see a doctor", "I thought you were a doctor", "No, I only deal with aliens and animals". The plot drags but for fans of tedium there are plenty of explosions and mindless shooting to keep you going. Occasionally another human is lost, but it is hard to empathise at all with any of the charac-

ters.

Finally, with Los Angeles seemingly overcome, our handful of marines decide that they should try and destroy the alien command centre. I won't spoil the ending, but there really isn't much to spoil. Overall, I felt sorry for Aaron Eckhart, having enjoyed some of the other roles he's played, as he churned out more drivel such as "I need you to be my little marine" to a little boy who had just lost his father. Furthermore, I couldn't tell if his wistful pensive gazes were meant to reflect his regret at the loss of life, or his regret at taking on Nantz's role. He raises one more bout of mirth, when after listing the names of all the men he has lost under his leadership, he turns round and shouts "none of that matters right now". *Battle: LA* suffers badly from a com-

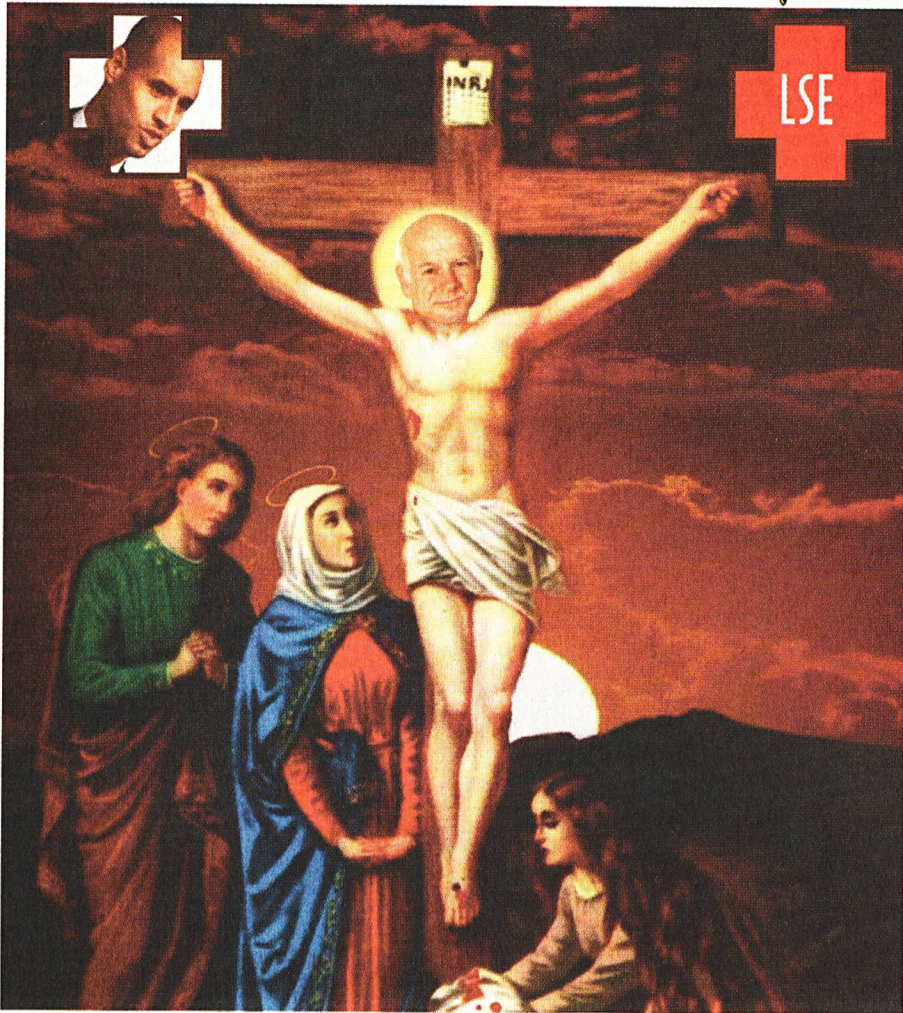
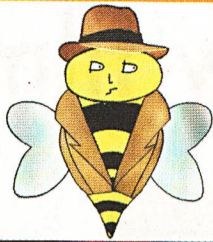
mon problem: attempting to create a cross-genre film. It tries to be an action and a sci-fi film and fails at both. One of the claims made in its marketing is that we will see action from the point of view of the soldier on the ground. If that's what you want (and I did), there are better alternatives. Likewise as a sci-fi outing, it falls short of the similar *Independence Day*. *Battle: LA* lacks the charisma of Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum and the visual effects are not far advanced on the 1996 film either. In fact it does nothing to draw emotionally or stun visually. The only major difference is the extensive use of handheld cameras by director Jonathan Liebesman, one of the few positive aspects of the film.

Battle: LA is in cinemas now.

Matt Toms

Battle: LA

PRIVATE B



What have you given up this Lent?

Fashun.

Yun Git

Wazakazoooo! That's right – as you suspected! – Yun Git is back, back, back, back, back, back, back! Back!

Back like Toy Story 2! Back like Babe: Pig in the City! Back like Honey I Shrunk the Kids – AGAIN! Back to check out Houghton Street's finest fashun gurus – for one last time!

That's right! Y to the U to the N to the G to the I to the T! I'll have a GIT and Tonic on the rocks, s'il ver plait! (On second thoughts, better not! The ol' sauvignon's already gone to me head, fashionistas. And as Yun always says, wine before spirit, Git does prohibit! (Though spirit then wine is MIGHTY FINE!))

Now, as regular readers of this column will know, Yun likes a bit of

a pinko. And Yun particularly likes a man who can have a passionate argument about the privatisation of higher education. So I was in for a treat today!

Today I spoke to resident Red boy, Ashok Kumar. And when I say Red, I mean Red HOT! Yowch! I think I'm sizzling! Quick, someone get me a fire extinguisher cos I fink I'm on fire! (Don't chuck it from the top of a building, mind, cos that's a CRIME!)

Oh yeah. He could've kicked my phonebox in any day of the week! He could have occupied my Vera Anstey Suite any time he likes! He could have smashed MY Millbanks if he wanted to! I'd redefine violence for him any time he wants! (If you catch my drifts.)

Ashok Kumar is wearing some clothes. Wazakazoo, folks!



LSE Students mistake real news for satire!

Several students have complained to the Beaver, saying that it is unclear which bit is the real news and which is the silly news.

One student, Nigel Mydick, said, "Last week, I read this hilarious story about LSE being handed bucket-loads of dosh to 'train Libya's future leaders'! I couldn't stop laughing."

I didn't know it was real news." Barnaby Butterpants said, "I laughed my socks off when I saw David Miliband come to give a lecture on How to Win an Election. I thought, that's great Private B!"

Saif Gaddafi made Honorary Member at EGM!

In a motion not aimed to piss off the Sabbs [cont. p97]

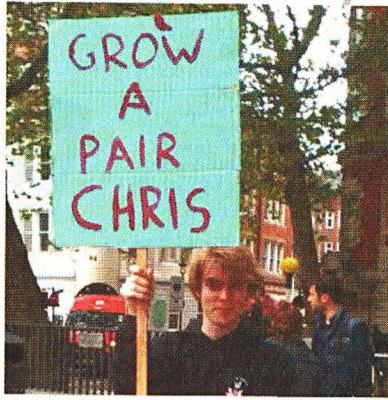
Private B Exclusive!

THAT INTERVIEW WITH SIR HOWARD DUVETS IN FULL! WRITTEN BEFORE IT'S EVEN HAPPENED!

Sucha Petal: The £2.2m to "train Libya's future leaders", the £1.5m donated after LSE gives Saif a dodgy degree... It doesn't look good, does it?
Sir Howard: I have explained, though, though I have resigned, I do not feel ashamed of any particular -
Petal: But enough about Libya. Sir Howard, where did you get that scarf?
Sir Howard: Topman.
Petal: It looks so fetching! And the boots?
Sir Howard: River Island.
Petal: Ah, I have a similar pair. My my! Is that cologne you're wearing?
Sir Howard: Paco Rabanne.
Petal: It goes really well with your designer stubble. Stop me if I'm getting too close, Howie.
Sir Howard: You're never too close, Petal.
 [Apologies, ed. The transcript stops here.]

Non-Required Reading

Part B interviews members of the LSE community about the books they are reading in the off-hours

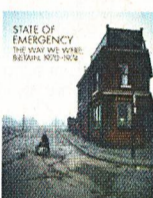
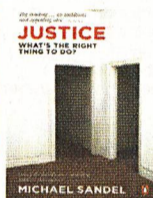
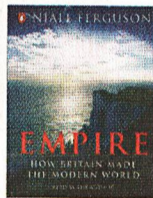


Name: Luke Smolinski
 Programme: BSc Philosophy and Economics

Favourite non-required books:
 Niall Ferguson's *Empire*, Michael Sandel's *Justice*, Stephen Fry's *An Ode Less Travelled*, John O'Farrell's *Utterly Impartial History of Britain (or 2000 years of Upper-Class Idiots in Charge)*.

Currently reading:
 Dominic Sandbrook's *State of Emergency— A History of Britain 1970-74*. At 600 pages, it's a hefty tome (bizarrely twice the size a book I just read on the 500-year-long history of Western civilisation). But if you want to know why 1970s-era economics were so disastrous, if you want to know what the Tories were like before Thatcher (far from the morally-outraged, xenophobic law-and-order zealots they became), if you want a great discussion of the EEC, Northern Ireland and miners' strikes, all punctuated by references to Doctor Who and Fawty Towers, I definitely recommend it.

If I were a fictional character I would be:
 Josef K.



Name: Svenja Ziegert
 Programme: MSc Politics and Communication

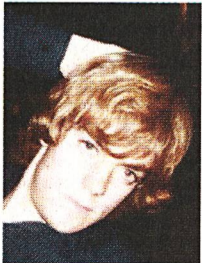
Favourite non-required books:
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini, *After You'd Gone* by Maggie O'Farrell, *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen... and yes, I admit: *Harry Potter*.

Currently reading:
Ich werde ein Berliner: How to Be a Really Hip German by Wash Echte. Read it! It's a hilarious parody of the "hip" inhabitants of big cities— but watch out, you might recognise yourself in one of the clichés...



If you could be one fictional character, who would it be?:
 Scarlett O'Hara. At least for a day.

Chair vs no Chair vs no Chair vs no Chair



QUESTION:
 Yes or no?



QUESTION:
 Yes or no?



QUESTION:
 Yes or no?



COLLECTIVE
 Yes!

UGM
 Righty-ho, righty-no!

PHILLIPE ROMAN
 I have a book out.

CHAIR
 I'm just a chair.

Social

The nourishment of London

Marion Koob takes a somewhat less sugar-coated look at student cuisine

Undoubtedly, nourishment is one of the most socialite of activities. Food consumption is always a great excuse to gather, and it seems as a society, we ever-increasingly have focused towards an never-ending quest for quality. We'll go miles to reach a good restaurant, eat 'authentic cuisine', or chomp away free nibbles in a farmer's market. As students we discuss the perfections of pizza, homeliness of hamburgers, and fulfillment of fried fish. And naturally, as individuals living collectively on a budget, we'll share pretty much anything.

At the LSE, we even have the chance, given its diversity, to try other cuisines through the talents of our friends. All this combined makes for an unlimited supply (or nearly) of happily replenished stomachs.

Coming from a French family for which the preparation and consumption of food is a near-religion, London became an amazing terrain in which to explore and bring new ideas back home. While M&S mince pies failed to convince over Christmas dinner, my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins alike were all (somewhat complacently) curious to know how I managed to cope with the ever-

feared English food. London is surely not quite representative of the rest of the UK in this respect

“
London became an amazing terrain in which to explore and bring new ideas
”

(and many others, for that matter), but it is rather easy, thinking really about it, to

avoid eating local altogether. In fact, most people do, perhaps with not much consciousness that they are depriving themselves of cultural immersion. For, despite all of the attacks it is subject to (from all continental Europe), there is something to be said for scones, generous breakfasts, and putting milk in tea. (All things, which I consider—perhaps wrongly—as things quintessentially British.)

My efforts at culinary adaptation, however, took a turn for the worse when I was told, half-way through my first year, that eating sugar, non-wholemeal cereals and a flurry of other things was health-wise going to be a bad idea.

Finding something to eat without having to make it became insanely frustrating. I began to spend an inordinate amount of time in supermarket aisles, reading labels. And not buying much. When it comes down to it, pretty much everything pre-made contain some of the substance. Being an unmotivated cook, I had to resolve to eating a much narrower range of things—which overall was fine, given that these ingredients were healthiest than anything I used to eat on a regular basis beforehand.

More interesting, however, were the social implications. As trivial as these

things sounds, some, friends and strangers alike, felt like they had to apologise at each bite of cake they ate in my presence. The less sensitive made it clear that they thought I was making the whole thing up—though I thought it was an issue that scarcely deserved such vehement denial. Eating out in groups became irritating, both for me and those I went with. Would I impose myself and demand to go somewhere convenient for me—or rather abstain and eat later with the comfort of my stocked fridge? In the end, I settled for eating beforehand—and thus the definition of what I meant by 'meeting up for lunch' considerably widened. Watching others eat, however, gave me room to observe each's relation with their own mets. For men, I noticed, eating unhealthily (and in large quantities) worked as a mark of masculinity. I scarcely saw male friends order salads, or even comment on the health of their meal, regardless of body shape or of cultural origin. Whereas voicing these concerns are all too common among (the ever guilt-ridden) women.

With habit, sugar becomes surprisingly easy to ward off. Yet, the emotional and social importance we give to what we dine on is at times startling.

JACKIE O'S UGANDAN PROSE

Jackline O. Amaguru reflects on a refugee childhood and Japan

I recently read an article about a white European man from a country which does not pass citizenship to children through their fathers (maybe England?). He and his Chinese wife had a baby in a country where citizenship is not given by birth. As a Chinese woman, she could not pass her Chinese citizenship to their baby either. Effectively, their baby was stateless. The man was outraged and was quoted to have said something like, "I can't believe this can happen to people like us, I thought this only happens to third world migrants!"

Well, welcome to the world where anything can happen to anybody, so don't be too quick to overlook and undertook people because you never know what could happen to you.

I remember a UNHCR document saying 'anyone can be a refugee' and there is a movie where Mexico closed her boarder with the US to keep out thousands of unwanted US migrants who were fleeing a natural disaster. Other UNHCR posters I have seen show famous people like Alek Wek and Albert Einstein saying, 'I was a refugee'.

I know a little bit about what being a refugee is like, because I once worked in a refugee camp and, as a child, I myself was a refugee twice—once in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and then in Kenya. Recently, Uganda hosted Kenyan refugees, and it still hosts Congolese refugees. Table's turned. Who knew that in 2011, there would be a massive refugee crisis in north Africa, since Sub-Saharan Africa is usually the 'problematic area'.

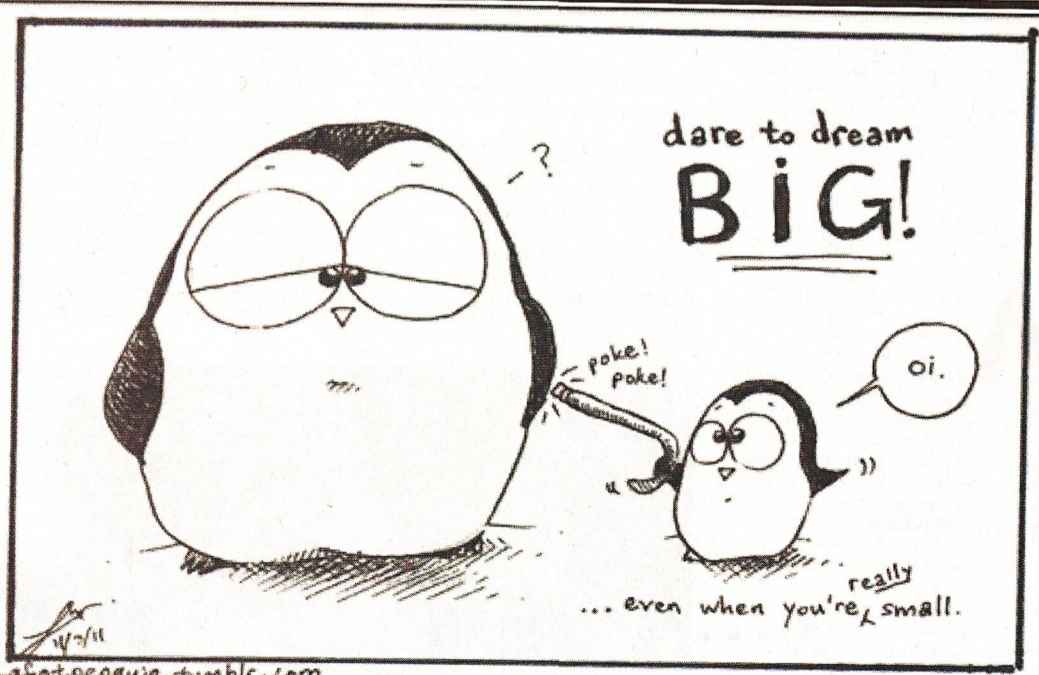
Just last week, the world witnessed with shock and horror, the apocalyptic scenes from the gigantic earthquake that triggered a huge tsunami in Japan. Japan, despite her prosperity and years of investment in designing earthquake-proof buildings, (and effectively being the most earthquake-ready nation in the world), was not immune! Now, areas in Japan, the world's third largest economy have been wiped out.

This reminds me of the recent floods in Australia. When I first saw aerial pictures of the devastation in Australia, no offence meant, but I thought it was Mozambique or Bangladesh. Why? Simply because I had seen such pictures of floods in those countries over the years and I had, like others, come to associate such scenes with 'developing countries'.

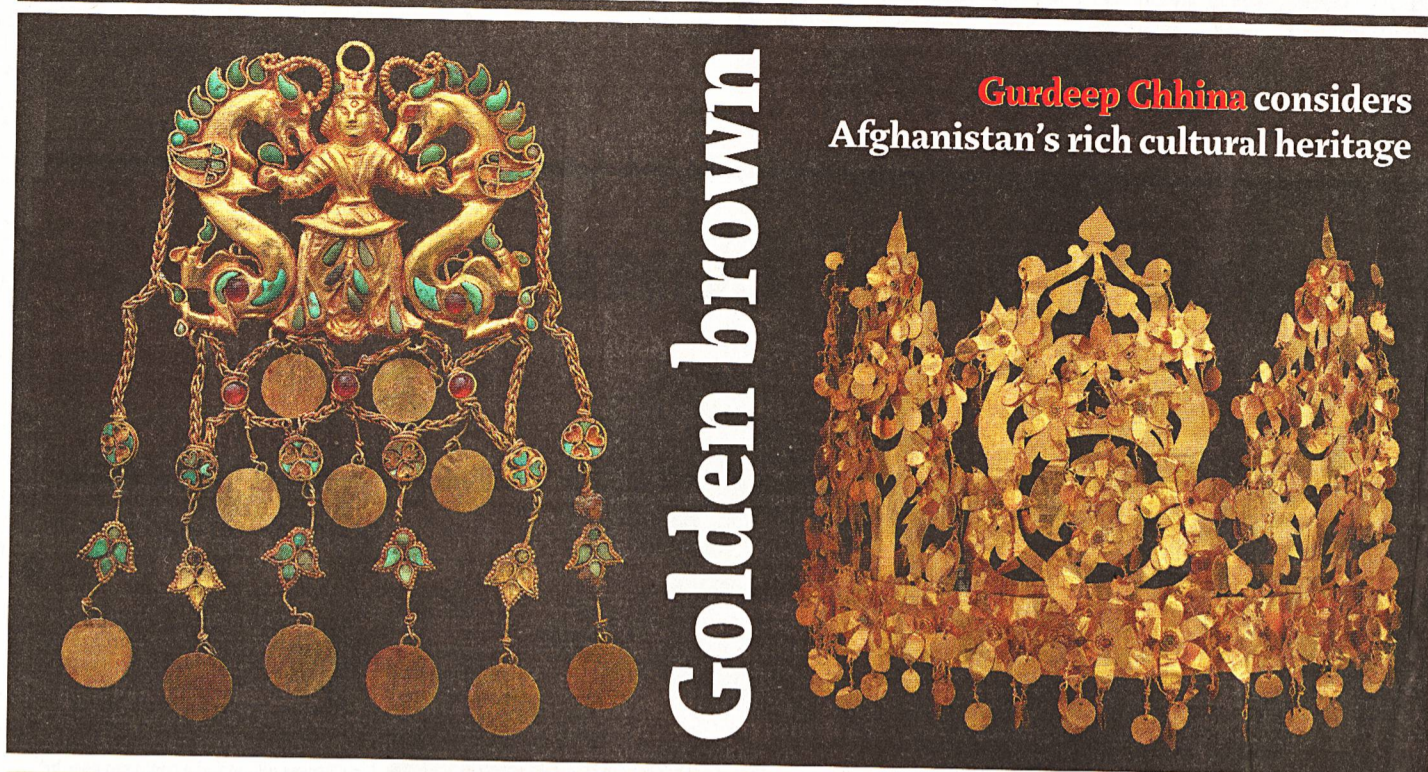
However, when I was stopped on LSE's Houghton Street by a student who asked me to spare some change for flood victims in Australia, I was in shock because the tables had turned globally. On Houghton Street, they're usually collecting money for a trip to go "build" something somewhere in Asia or Africa.

Over Christmas, when heavy snowfall meant that thousands of travellers were stranded in Heathrow airport, one Evening Standard headline said people stuck at Heathrow were living in refugee camp-like conditions. Others were outraged how this could happen in Britain, insinuating that it would be more acceptable if it happened somewhere else.

The situation in Japan—movie-like scenes of destruction—and Australia are sad scenes that go a long way to show and remind us that we are all vulnerable and help can come from those you overlook or least expect. A final point: after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake, a great deal of relief money was raised from Sub-Saharan Africa.



Fat Penguin
Lee Zhi Wei
BSc Accounting and Finance 2012



Golden brown

Gurdeep Chhina considers Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage

Picture riches of an ancient palace; intricately carved Indian ivory, Grecian design and Roman build, then compare this with images of a war-torn Afghanistan. The two starkly contrasting concepts may not seem linked, but they are. In a country marred by violence and turmoil the sense of cultural identity and national heritage may have become fractured and lost amongst the carnage and debris of war destruction. A new exhibition at the British Museum displays artefacts whose history, like that of the Afghan people, has become intertwined and marked with conflict. These war-torn treasures represent the survival of reminders of Afghanistan's mysterious and eclectic history. Is it naïve to suggest this is a triumph for, and a show of the persistence of culture over war?

President Karzai opened the British Museum's new exhibition "Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World", last Tuesday. The exhibition maps the rich cultural heritage of a country that has only made the headlines in the past few years for its political instability and Taliban insurgency. Historically, Afghanistan has had massive geographical significance as a bridge between East and West, North and South. The Begram hoard; a treasure trove of ancient ivory luxuries represents just some of the riches that would pass on the renowned 'Silk Road' trade route that Afghanistan was a major part of. In a way telling of the nation's past, the artefacts on display are battered and show signs of

vandalism. The exquisite pieces of gold which only hint at the richness of the country's ancient Kushan civilization, are in fragments where they have been melted for their value on the black market. Signs of Afghanistan's deep history are war torn and damaged. The variety of artefacts is not what makes this exhibition significant, it is the way in which it represents the survival of a cultural identity through numerous periods of conflict and war.

Starting from the Afghan civil war right before the Soviet departure from the country, to the present day conflict, the existence of this rich heritage has been threatened. Every time the capital changed hands and was captured by Mujahideen militants in a bid to gain influence, the museum of Kabul was looted. The mid 1990s saw 70 per cent of artefacts looted or destroyed; many were moved on to the international black market. Piece by piece it seemed that Afghanistan's heritage was being destroyed or lost as the capital's museum was bombed, destroying priceless fourth century art. The concept of cultural identity was being erased, leaving warfare to take over the country's history.

Among the exhibited artefacts is the legendary 'Bactrian Gold', surviving from the 1st century BCE, it was discovered from the tombs of mystifying central Asian Nomads. It is only appropriate then that such pieces have a tale behind their survival that seems to have come straight from an ancient myth, but still conveys the serious determination of some individuals to preserve a nation's history. In the

years following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a vault deep beneath the Presidential palace provided a safe haven for numerous historical treasures

In a country marred by violence and turmoil, the sense of cultural identity may have become lost amongst the carnage and debris of war destruction

that were actually feared lost following the civil war. This vault was only able to be opened by one of the five key holders; this number included Mr Massoudi, the director of the Kabul Museum. In true mythical style these keepers were sworn to secrecy. Although the preservation was done in a way not out of place in a children's story book, the danger to these keepers was startlingly real.

With the rise of the Taliban, yet new dangers came to threaten what was left of Afghanistan's precious heritage. The Taliban came to power vowing to ban non-Islamic art; starting with the destruction of giant Buddhist statues in Bamiyan

in 2001. The Taliban were quick to use threats of force and violence, demanding the location of items at gun point, but the doggedness of these key keepers was not just for the sake of the preservation of the artefacts, but was in fact a sign of determination to hold on to a cultural identity vital to a nation under threat.

Is it justified to conclude that this marks the triumph of national identity and heritage over war? Or is this just an over idealised account of a sense of identity that most Afghans do not relate to? It is true that this exhibition is set to return to its rightful home in the museum of Kabul, which has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment. It cannot also be denied that in the country's current state the existence of these artefacts is a fact that merits surprise and perhaps provides a sense of hope for its future. Culture and identity can often be regarded as vague and ill-defined concepts. These artefacts may be unknown to or completely irrelevant to many Afghans, but in a nation which has been shaken by war for as long as the memory stretches, this fragile commodity is something to be clung on to.



AGONY UNCLE Wax on, wax off

Not going to lie, it's a bit of a hairy situation. I am of Mediterranean origin and have inherited all the gifts and curses of someone from that area. Yes, I can cook like a Greek god and many a woman (besides my mother) has commented on my chiselled behind. However, owing to obviously high testosterone levels, I am hairy. Everywhere. EVERY LAST INCH OF ME IS COVERED WITH BLACK, CURLY, THICK, STUBBORN, ASS-HOLIC HAIR.

I suppose, given the choice, I prefer this obvious expression of my manliness + to being "smooth" but at present it is a problem, especially for my narrow-minded girlfriend. She can't stop complaining about my bushy mono-brow, forest of a pit and the fact that she "can't find it!". Essentially, it's a dilemma of both principle and method.

I am, after all, a man. My hairy-tage is important to my identity. I was born with a penis and if God intended it to be bathed in a halo of the blackest fur then so be it. I have blond friends and though I love them, I can't help but be envious of their bald bodies. That being said, when it's summertime, I enjoy the natural protection of my coat. Why should I give that up? For

SPF-60? I DON'T THINK SO. It's not that I'm not a prude, I'm just not a pruner.

Girlfriends come and go but the trauma of having every single strand of hair being ripped out from its very roots can stay on for longer than a lifetime. I have heard many a tale of a man that has ventured to the beautician (read: 'hell-incarnate') and has returned with a bruise for a back, a voice hoarse from screaming and a fragile, bitter psyche beyond repair. And even if you do decide to mow that lawn, how the hell do you do it?

Threading? Laser? Plucking? DIY shearing? Or the dreaded, most masochistic of them all, WAXING? (By the way, what is the difference between waxing and the common torture method of tarring and feathering?) And even when you answer this most foul of multiple choice questions, WHERE does the blade stop?

"Oh Sergio, your eyebrows - there should be two!" Before you know it it'll be, "You can't tap that until you do your Back, Sack and Crack!"

What makes this worse is that there is a LOT of hair. You could put me on a waxing table for three days to reveal three inches, and I'd still have a 5 o'clock shadow. Tackling the face alone is an ordeal, reminiscent of the 100 Year War. Rapunzel

herself would be hairy-fied at the sheer length of my nasal braid. The black tufts peaking from my ears could easily cover the head of an average sized seven-year old. In any case, it will be difficult to find a hair-sadist sick enough to take on the challenge that is the velvet pretending to be my skin.

So my question to you is, how? Who? Why must I be a slave to my girlfriend's eye?

A This is a fascinating issue. I've never been asked about this before, you know. It's hairy for both of us (I feel a little awkward discussing it).

What I would say, first of all, is that it's good you consider yourself a 'Greek god' - I encourage high self-esteem. It's also reassuring your mother hasn't expressed sexual interest in you. We've had persons in this here column previously worried about inter-family attractions, and it isn't very desirable. So hands off mom.

What I would say is that hair is a very personal issue. Some people like a little forestry, others don't. I suspect most people don't, however. You're right in saying it's related to 'hairy-tage', as you put it, or heritage, as others might say. The

amount of hair you have tends to be much like the amount of hair you parent's have. So your father - or possibly mother - will also be very hairy. Assuming you're not adopted.

Cutting all this hair back, though, can be a big decision. You shouldn't do it just because of peer pressure. If you're happy with who you are, and happy with the level of hair you currently have, then don't feel an overwhelming pressure to axe it off. On the other hand, there is a cleanliness issue. Having a lot down there can harbour all sorts of grimey things. The greater the forest, the greater the forest

bugs. And as for the face - that's just a bit scary. The street hobo look isn't very 'in' at the moment.

So all in all - this is a tough choice. Hair, in my opinion, is kinda gross. Looking like a forest isn't so cool, and as for 'downstairs', you should really have known naturally to clear that up. Most people learn that as a teenager. I mean, the hair on your head for example, would you ever go a decade without cutting that? No, you'd look like a pillock. I feel - to summarise my advice - you should apply that principal to the rest of your body. ☹



OVERHEARD AT LSE

Mark Malik: In Carr-Saunders, "The chicken wants to go to Harvard" Also: "A human being is NOT a chicken!"

Nick Paddock: On Houghton Street, on the SU elections, "I took my laptop into the toilet, and voted while I took a shit. I'm sure this isn't what the Ancient Athenians had in mind"

Coren Lass: "LSE is the best. Anyone who says otherwise probably didn't get in"

All good things must come to an end...



This Wednesday had a most melancholic feel to it, as it was the last ever traditional Wednesday night combination of The Tuns followed by Zoo Bar for many a mature 3rd year student in the AU. Yet GG will be around for some time folks, so do not fear, as he's currently sitting MA100 and Econ B for the 9th and 11th times, respectively, this summer. Who says you only need to do four years for an AU degree?

TUNS + ZOO = FUN

But I digress. The matter at hand is this: the hard core of the AU that is the 3rd Years, The Captains and the people in their 4th year will finally be graduating. It brings a tear to GG's eye even just thinking of the prospect of such people leaving the glorious institution that is the AU. After all, with these people gone, so is the majority of the gossip!

DE-GRADUATE

But fear not gossipers, this week these esteemed third years showed this week why they will forever be remembered (or for a few months or so at least) when they're done with the LSE and off making money in Big City London. Or on the dole. One of the two.

NO GAYS?

If there's one thing that the Rugby Club love its nudity. Copious amounts of unadulterated, slightly homoerotic nudity. Not the stuff you get on Channel 5 ten minute freeviews. Not the stuff you download as a 'free sample' from a website. The real deal. And with apparently nothing to lose this Wednesday (apart from dignity,

self-respect and any delusions of grandeur), the entirety of the AU and anyone else unlucky enough to be in the Tuns trying to watch someone kick a ball into a net got the full screening.

X-FACTOR

Never has GG witnessed such copious amounts of warbling on a dodgy karaoke system owned by someone on a register. Leading the charge was none other than President-elect Mycock, whose cabaret performance alongside his backing singers 'The Netballers' set the bar for the rest of the evening. And raised questions about his sexual identity.

REMEMBER

Yet as GG knows from experience, when one good karaoke turn finishes, the act from hell follows. In this case, the act from hell came lanky first team footballer Que Farrar. Now the song 'Remember You're a Womble' is a difficult enough tune to sing for even the most experienced of artists, such as Cheryl Cole or Rik Waller. But Farrar was clearly out of his depth here, and GG noticed him struggling even with the easy part, where all one has to do is repeat the word 'remember'. A valiant effort nonetheless, but John's installation of auto-tuning technology can't come soon enough to help such monotone performers.

BORIS

On the way to Zoo Bar, some smug see-you-next-tuesdays, one an overweight Welshman, the other an out of work porn actor, decided they could beat everyone else there with the help of Boris Johnson and his 4-tonne hire bicycles. Away they cycled, shouting profanities at the 'peasants' who couldn't afford the one pound hire charge, only to be stopped 50 metres later and fined £30 each for cycling on the pavement. All GG can say is: now look at you.

AMERICA - FUCK YEAH

Things kicked off very quickly in Zoo bar, and GG had a lot to observe as he sipped his non-alcoholic mocktail on the minge

bed. Speaking of someone who is a lot to observe, none other than Alexander Smedwise was seen to be face-raping a disheartened Californian, her having been rejected by all the 21 members of the Rugby first team. Spotting his chance at last, Smedwise swooped in with the smooth opening gambit of licking California on the face. And then licking the inside of her mouth. Thankfully, someone tipped off California as to the unlicensed nature of Smedwise and pointed her in the direction of her prebooked pull, the Russian. However, GG's sources tell him that Smedwise seems to have gotten a taste of The American Dream and was seen to be working his charms on some rather athletic looking postgraduates at a later date.

DAFFODIL

Some seriously incestuous Welsh-on-Welsh action was also spied by GG's sources, as the biggest man in Wales and the only man to play basketball instead of rugby assured Ski President Hoover that they definitely weren't related. It seemed to do the trick as GG heard the big basketballer was able to swoop in for a 3 pointer.

FREE PHOTOS

Last but certainly not least, perhaps the most curious pull of the evening occurred between one AU stalwart and - shock horror - someone from outside of LSE. That's right, Ms Campbell Soup and an employee of the photography company who fleeced you £10 quid each two weeks ago hooked up in Zoo bar after a very successful dinner date. GG heard that their subsequent date at 228 Camden Road was even more successful...

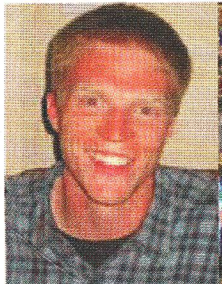
THAT'S MY WINE

Alas, there is still time for one last hurrah this Wednesday at the AU Ball and if the after party at Sway is anything like this Wednesday, GG cannot wait.

You know I'm watching xoxox
BEN ROBBO URINATED ON A SOFA

Tarifa 2011
10 days kitesurfing in Spain
5 April - 15 April
£330

<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kit Accommodation Tuition Transport in Spain Parties Unlimited Free Sangria 	<p>Also available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trips to Morocco Sun Bathing Yoga on the sand dunes Wake-boarding Dune surfing Clubbing Beach barbecues 	<p>Booking:</p> <p>E-mail us: au.club.kitesurf@lse.ac.uk</p> <p>£200 deposit required by booking deadline 7 March</p> <p>www.LSEKitesurfing.co.uk</p>
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Jeff Lyle: Wants to send out an appeal for the safe return of his kit. 2 VIP tickets to a Men's Bball game for any info which leads to it being found.



Shane 'shutdown' Payne: Despite his phenomenal ability on court and innocent appearance; he is often found lurking around the depths of Zoo.

Men's Basketball: The AU's one and only Premier Division team



'Frank' Rinaldi: You'd better like his pasta, or a wrath of aggression will come your way. With his help we are now fluent in Italian insults.



Jerry Kraus: The most talented pint chugger on the team. When Jerry comes out to drink, you know you're in for a rough Thursday to follow!



Biggy 'Iggy' DeFerrari: His Wednesdays consist of PhD teaching in the morning, 20+ point games in the afternoon, and flirting with the ceiling at Zoo bar in the evenings.



Rob Dagger: 'Alright?' This lefty 'f'rom Kent' has had a hugely successful season on and off the court. Managed to make quite a name for himself this year...



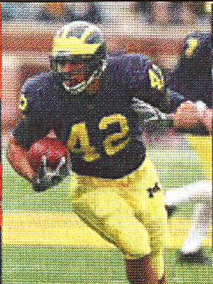
Mike Hall: Post-'Jersey Shore' his life revolves around GTL. Modelling himself on "The Situation" he impresses girls by showing off his biceps.



Vitalij 'the tank' Kole-snik: The style icon from the East of Europe. Vitalij Vincenzo enjoys listening to a compilation of Lady Gaga beats before causing havoc on the court.



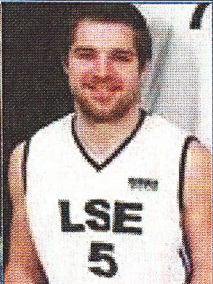
'Dr.' Andreas: Our very own Swedish Indian, never to be seen without a smile on his face. However this smooth talker is often conveniently unwell when it comes to practice on Saturday morning



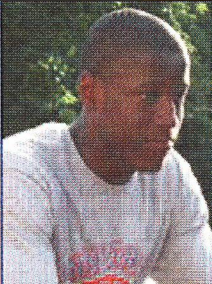
Chris McLaurin: Despite not knowing a single play this season!! Chris's athleticism has shone through, enabling him to contribute hugely to the team's success.



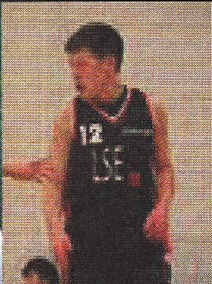
Shawn Tucker: This year's winner of the 'Big Easy' all u can eat chicken and ribs. Contributing to the annihilation of 4 chicken legs and 4 slabs of ribs.



'Sloppy' Gio Graglia: As next year's captain, the team to be is sure to enjoy a thoroughly entertaining season with this witty but humble individual. Pure entertainment.



Andrew Ben Salem: Ruthless in defence, Andrew is sure to contribute to LSE basketball's success next season, as one of the only few to be staying on!



Richard 'Richie' Harrison: The sharp shooter from beyond the arc, often there to save the day for us flirting with the perimeter.

Letters to the Sport Editors

Hi.

My name is Sergio Allas, and I would like to amend the brilliant article written on my behalf (???) by a not-so-unknown ghost-writer (they are very popular, this period!), and featuring in the Beaver the 1st March, last page, about Gaelic football.

The article was very fun, well written, you could not do any better, no doubt, also for my crap English. It was very ironic, but this is the point, maybe too ironic if it had been written by me. The jokes included in this article imply a certain degree of familiarity with the person you're joking with, and familiarity is something I totally lack with most AU members outside my gaelic football team (I joined the Wednesday night only two nights, and the last one has been very boring for me, with the candidates for elections presenting themselves. And something you say to a stranger, although joking, can be perceived as offensive. To be clearer, if you say, for example, "pussyfooters" (?), to a friend or to a stranger, the reaction can only be different. I don't know most of these "pussyfooters", nor I will know them later, since at the end of my master I'll leave LSE, but not London, I hope so, I don't regret to lack this familiarity, I don't care, but it's a matter of fairness of me to explain I had no reason to joke them that way in the article. First of all, I find "offending" others very disturbing. It makes angry if someone do it with me, and I don't do it. Second, what about?? Competition for girls ?? Really, I don't need to offend alleged competitors; I'm self-confident and aware enough about my popularity with girls. Moreover, with 2 presences on Wednesday nights, I did not compete at all!

Second, much more important, I should have been too arrogant to come here to plunder any girls as well as too disrespectful to label girls I lack confidence with (in this case, I regret this lack of familiarity!) as something to be plundered, as I think it is usually girls who choose, and I don't complain about this, I have been chosen many times before. And I should have been even less respectful because of my alleged "sweetheart" in Sardinia, disrespectful with her, with girls here, and with woman as whole category. By the way, I didn't know to have a girlfriend there before reading this article, I'm still checking but nothing. This has been unfair competition! But as far as I'm concerned, I'm completely single, available, on the market, although I don't need to have any girlfriend non only not to stay alone. I can afford to choose. It's the last of my problems, and London and LSE are plenty of stunning SINGLE girls to choose from, someone is worth staying with. Also in the AU group there are some very beautiful girls, who, let me joke now, are worth being "plundered", but I never steal anything, I always focus on single girls only, it's my ethics (I'm Italian, but I'm not Berlusconi!). And many of them are really stunning. It's life, someone is pleased to play in any case, even for crap teams, someone else want only top teams, otherwise it's better not to play.

Finally, I would like also promote the cause of my GAA mates, who are wrongly "discriminated" against from girls. Give them a chance! What to say for them? Popular wisdom where I come from says that Islanders do it better, so let's try! Good luck to everyone for the end of the term, for holidays and for the exams! And if you come across around LSE a very attractive, stylish guy, with brown hair and eyes, no doubt, it's me!

Best Greetings
Sergio Allas (The ONE)

Sport



GG is back this week with a bumper column of gossip!

Womens' rugby put a long year behind them and get ready to have a ball

Lizzie Bacon

As the LSE's Womens' Football Rugby Club (LSEWRFC) gets ready for another night of carnage at the AU ball (freshers really don't have a clue what a night they're in for), it seems appropriate to reminisce on what a year it has been, and indeed, what an amazing three years it has been for a large chunk of the team who will say their own special goodbye to LSE on Wednesday night.

The Ball traditionally signals the end of the year, one of the last chances to make a complete and utter tit out of yourself before everyone forgets their manners and gets all tribal about a library study space. Make the most of it; my plain advice to you is to get as battered as possible, and try and forget the impending doom of exams. Start early and finish as late as your liver and stomach will allow. Last year I followed this formula very carefully, but unfortunately it ended up prematurely in Subway, after I embarrassed myself in front of everyone, and ate half my teammate's cheesecake, claiming it "came like that". If this year's is as great as 2010's offering, then everyone should be in for a treat.

The start of the year also tends to be almost as eventful for LSEWRFC, this year being no exception. The new intake, confused as to what they'd been roped into, got dragged onto a field to play that game of "rugby" we're all now so enthusiastic about. The skill of the team both on and off the field became very apparent; on the pitch tries were scored by newcomers Tara and Julie, whilst veterans Becky and Judith had their fix of the white line, and off the pitch general course student Ashley managed to make a name for herself by drunkenly falling on top of a set of cream-

clad rugby boys during initiations.

Our first victory came at the expense of Imperial, taking back what they stole from us in the dying seconds of the game last year. This victory came as a surprise, as our main focus was on beating Strand Poly. Our fixtures list for Michaelmas Term meant that winning a game before Christmas would be a challenge, but the underdogs always seem to come through smelling of roses. Condemning Imperial to the arse-end of the league is definitely satisfying in its own special way.

Moving on from that emphatic victory, LSEWRFC was suddenly faced with Lent Term and its corresponding challenges, such as UCL and the dreaded Poly. It would only be fair to define the outcomes of these games as "unlucky": on occasion we were robbed, and at other times we'd quite simply lost some of our players to sudden illness, and even mysterious disappearance. If there is anything to take

from these games, aside from keeping your players locked up in a cage between matches, that it's more fun to lose as a team than be on the winning side with one person running in all of the points.

So there we are, another end to another season. We didn't win the league, but that'll happen next year regardless. All that matters is the taking part, and I can honestly say every member of Women's Rugby has contributed massively to such a fun year, in every way possible, from coming to matches, to joining in the massive drinking sessions and debauchery that seems to follow us everywhere we go. If you're considering playing a sport next year, make it Women's Rugby, and I can guarantee you won't regret your choice, or the regular hangovers thanks to copious amounts of zoo bar vodka. See you at the Ball!



What's that coming over the hill?

World Famous Karateka comes to the LSE

Sam Mir

After its great success at the KUGB Southern Regions championship last month, the LSE Karate club continues to be in the spotlight of the sports life at the LSE. Two big events in the last few weeks marked another bright episode of the club's magnificent performance this year. On 15th of February the club added another successful grading to its record and only two weeks after that, on the 1st of March, it organised a seminar with Jonathan Mottram, current England's National Team Kata coach.

The grading that took place in the middle of last month was an event organised exclusively for the LSEKC junior members. These include all colour belts, from the absolute beginners of a white belt to the intermediate and slightly more experienced brown belts. The grading is an opportunity for all people who have trained hard throughout the year to demonstrate their skills and ability and it takes place only once a year. The LSEKC was represented by six of its members - Ardivan Ghazi, Jana Paratz, Alice Prudhomme, David Mahony, Emil Markov, and Alexandre Putt. All of them had to show what they have learned in each of the three karate elements - kihon (basic techniques), kata (set forms) and kumite (fighting). They all gave an excellent performance and were awarded higher belts by the EKF qualified examiners Sensei Dario Ghazi and Sensei Farzad Youshanlou.

This year's highlight, however, was the special seminar at the LSE led by Jonathan Mottram, one of the most successful British competitors and kata coach for the England karate team. You may have not heard much of Jonathan, but his impressive record speaks for itself. With

over 30 international titles he is England's most successful kata competitor. He is a ten-time British champion in his discipline and has three Commonwealth gold medals. He has competed in over 400 competitions and has a bronze medal from the 2008 European Championship, the only Englishman in 43 years to win a kata medal at Senior European Championships! Jonathan came at the special invitation of the LSEKC and gave a performance that everyone will remember. Being a specialist in kata, his seminar focused on the explosiveness and body strength required for the sharp moves in the set forms. He devoted most of the time to teaching some of the most technically difficult and demanding katas. The seminar was attended by almost all of the club's senior belts for whom this was a precious opportunity to excel.

Despite these two great events, the LSE karate club is not slowing down. It has another impressive seminar on its agenda, this time with England's national team member and kumite specialist Alton Brown. Alton is a legendary England's national team fighter with several World and European championships medals. The seminar will take place on 15th of March in the Old Gym at the LSE. It will be exclusive preparation for the BUCS championships which will held place in Sheffield later that week. Look out for more news from the LSEKC!



TRI LONDON CHAMPIONSHIPS

After years of battle on the playing fields, it's time to finally settle the score - who REALLY is the best ??

UCL, King's or LSE?

The Tri-London Championships! A varsity event between the three universities shall be taking place on:

19th March

Berrylands KT3 5HB

Starting 10.15am - Finals from 2pm

Six Nations GrandSlam decider at 5pm
BIG SCREEN

Smedley's Corner

Stuart Smedley

Since taking office almost a year ago, David Cameron has been prone to opening his mouth and inserting foot.

Whether it be bigging up democratic reforms in the Middle East while continuing to peddle guns to autocrats or declaring multiculturalism a failure on the same day as an EDL march, the Prime Minister has developed a penchant for failing to engage his brain before speaking.

That streak continued last week in comments made to the Jewish News. In another perverse example of the Tory PM playing to a crowd, he announced that Iranian athletes would not be missed should its government carry through with its recently made threat to boycott the 2012 Olympics set to be held in this dear city.

This follows from the Iranian authorities announcing they considered the Olympics' logo to be offensive as it resembled the word 'Zion'. It's not the first time the logo has been compared to something awkward. But then again, saying it appears to spell out a word considered by many to be racist does not quite provoke the same amount of laughs as arguing the logo resembles a picture of Lisa Simpson on her knees giving a blow job, however outlandish the suggestion.

Through his choice of words Cameron made a huge mistake as he has basically tarred all those who would represent Iran at the Summer Games as being, like their madman leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, anti-Israeli zealots. Spitting them for their unelected leaders' outburst was simply not the way to handle this issue.

Instead, he should have rolled out the welcome mat to Iran's sporting superstars, many of whom no doubt despise the dictatorship that exists in their home land. And if some are willing to demonstrate the same level of bravery shown by members of their country's national football team, they can use the London

games as an opportunity to demonstrate their opposition.

In their final qualifying match for the 2010 World Cup against South Korea, seven members of the Iran team wore green wristbands to show support for the Green Movement led by the reform minded Mir-Hossein Mousavi. As a result, reports emerged that those taking part in the stunt had been forcibly retired from appearing for their nation. Although false, two of the most high profile players who took part in the action, including captain Mehdi Mahdavia, have not represented their country since.

The impact of their actions was not lost though, receiving huge media coverage around the world.

Although autocracy persists in Iran, the demonstration was another action that proves sport can be an excellent vehicle through which to protest politically.

And the latter half of the twentieth century is littered with examples of where sporting protest has had an impact.

The sporting boycott of Apartheid South Africa has long been argued as one of the key factors that brought down the racist regime. Following hostile reaction to England's selection of coloured cricketer Basil D'Oliveira for a test series in 1968, the ICC banned all future tours to South Africa. While rebel trips did go ahead, these brought shame on their participants - Mike Gatting being the most notable example, and helped further undermine the Apartheid government due to the protests they engendered.

By far the most famous political gesture associated with sport occurred at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. After winning gold and bronze in the 200m final, US sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos performed the black power salute on the winners' podium while the American national anthem played. The pair were then expelled from the Games. But the legacy of their salute was huge, coming as it did at the peak of the Civil Rights struggle and a mere matter of months after the assassination of Martin Luther King.

Had Cameron read history, he'd have been less hasty in delivering his remarks - even if they did endear him to the audience they were made to.

Sadly, not only has he encouraged the Iranian authorities to deny its sporting stars the chance to compete on the greatest stage in the world, but he has also encouraged denying these athletes, who continue to live under an oppressive regime, the oxygen to air their grievances.

The outbursts in the past week from both Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger demonstrated the childish megalomania possessed by all but a few managers in football.

The former imposed a media ban following two consecutive defeats, before announcing in his first appearance since its lifting that he felt sympathy for himself after a tough week. The latter meanwhile railed at all and sundry after his Arsenal side were knocked out of the Champions League by Barcelona.

It's sad - and pathetic - that two of the most successful men in the sport's history struggle to accept defeat, whatever the circumstances, with some grace and humility.

