

the beaver

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Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union

FREE

President Higgins talks democracy

Wanda O'Brien

Michael D. Higgins addressed a packed lecture hall at the London School of Economics (LSE) on February 21 in his first official trip abroad as President of Ireland.

He spoke of an emerging democratic crisis that is pitting government accountability against unaccountable economic forces and spoke of the challenges facing universities in his lecture entitled, 'Public Intellectuals, Universities, and a Democratic Crisis.'

"We are experiencing now I believe an intellectual crisis that is far more serious than the economic one which fills the papers, dominates the programmes in our media," Higgins said.

Higgins went on to state that "the role of universities to provide a forum for original thought, emancipatory learning, and caring and concerned teaching are challenges facing the sector". He highlighted the power of education to affect social change in the founding doctrine rooting LSE. "That university teaching was more than instruction".

As an academic, as well as politician and poet, Higgins drew on Jurgen Habermas' writings on the legitimisation crisis, saying that such a crisis has begun to emerge in the fragility of the European Union. "Having squandered credibility through light regulation and thus powerless regulatory authorities the State itself has been made vulnerable".

Through this, Higgins placed a moral choice for

>> 4



Michael Higgins discusses 'Democratic Crisis' | Photo: Wanda O'Brien

Lent Term elections marred by complaints

Sydney Saubestre

The Students' Union Returning Officer, Josh Still, has recommended to the Democracy Committee (DC) that a candidate in the Student Trustee election be disqualified from running in the Lent Term elections for breach of the Students' Union's policy on anti-semitism.

A motion entitled 'Stop Anti-Semitism Now!' was officially passed during the Emergency General Meeting three weeks ago. The motion aimed to detail what should be categorised as antisemitism, and to ensure that all antisemitic incidents are "dealt with swiftly and effectively [by the Students' Union] in conjunction with the school."

According to the Students' Union Guidance Document on Elections and Referenda, "where the Returning Officer is unable to reinstate fairness in an election/referendum they may deem it necessary to disqualify a candidate or annul a vote. Where this occurs the Returning Officer must make a written recommendation to the Democracy Committee who will make a ruling."

Numerous students have contacted the Beaver to express their adverse opinions to said campaign, claiming it is "anti-Semitic" and that it "poorly represents the views of other candidates in the election."

The candidate had previously ran an unrelated campaign for Hall Committee at his residence that was "sexist, racist and classist" for which the candidate was disciplined by the School and barred from further running for Hall Committee.

When asked whether previous disciplinary measures disqualify a student from running, Still said, "on the question of the relevance of previous School disciplinarys on the eligibility of election candidates - all I could say is that it depends on a case by case basis."

The School stated that they "expect all students standing for office in the Students' Union to behave appropriately and not bring the School or the student body into disrepute."

There have been six official complaints filed against various candidates in the Lent Term elections.

>> 4

External student complaints have doubled

Connor Russell
Staff Reporter

An increasing number of students across the country, disappointed by their failure to obtain either a first or a upper second, are officially complaining to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

The OIA, established in the Higher Education Act 2004, is an independent body which deals with student complaints against universities within England and Wales, that have not reached a satisfactory internal conclusion in the eyes of the complainant.

Cases brought to the OIA have more than doubled from a total of 542 in 2005 to 1341 in 2010, with a consistent upward trend year on year.

Student satisfaction scores gleaned from the yearly National

Student Survey show an extremely significant rise in the number of students graduating from LSE feeling "satisfied with the quality of their course," and for the first time in recent years LSE attained a higher than nationwide average score on student satisfaction overall in 2011.

Nevertheless, formal complaints regarding academic matters made directly to the school have more than doubled since 2005, from 52 to 115 in the last academic year, showing an increase broadly in line with the number of complaints made nationwide to the OIA. Numbers for informal complaints are not publicly available.

Due to the confidential nature of the issue, it is impossible to directly compare the origin of these complaints with the nationwide trends, however the school does disclose that the vast majority were appeals regarding mitigating circumstances claims made during the exam season,

as many students felt that they had not received appropriate consideration in the marking of their exam. Fifteen of the 115 cases in the 2010/11 academic year related directly to a disability, which the school describes as including "mental health and neurodiversity issues."

The Minister for Universities and Science, David Willets, has attributed the rise in complaints nationwide to the pressure on students to attain a upper second or higher in the labour market, claiming "one of the increasing areas of complaints is students saying, 'I've got a 2:2 when I should have got a 2:1 - they've let me down.'"

Given the perception of the School's culture, held by many students, of being a career based explanation for the rise in complaints could be likely given the current contraction and higher competition in the jobs market. Other top universities have also documented an increase in the number

of official student complaints lodged. On the 26th January 2012, the Oxford Cherwell, the student's newspaper of the University of Oxford, reported that the Oxford University Proctors had received 124 official complaints from students this year, 105 of which were related to the university's examinations.

The opinions amongst students on the impact of grades on student satisfaction were mixed. Alastair Maxwell, a first year Mathematics student, feels that grades are very important, saying "due to the much reduced social life compared to other universities, there is a much greater importance on gaining better jobs which are strongly correlated to higher grades."

This view was not echoed by all, with another first year student wishing to remain anonymous being quoted, "Grades are of no consequence whatsoever. So long as I can get down the pub, I will be satisfied."



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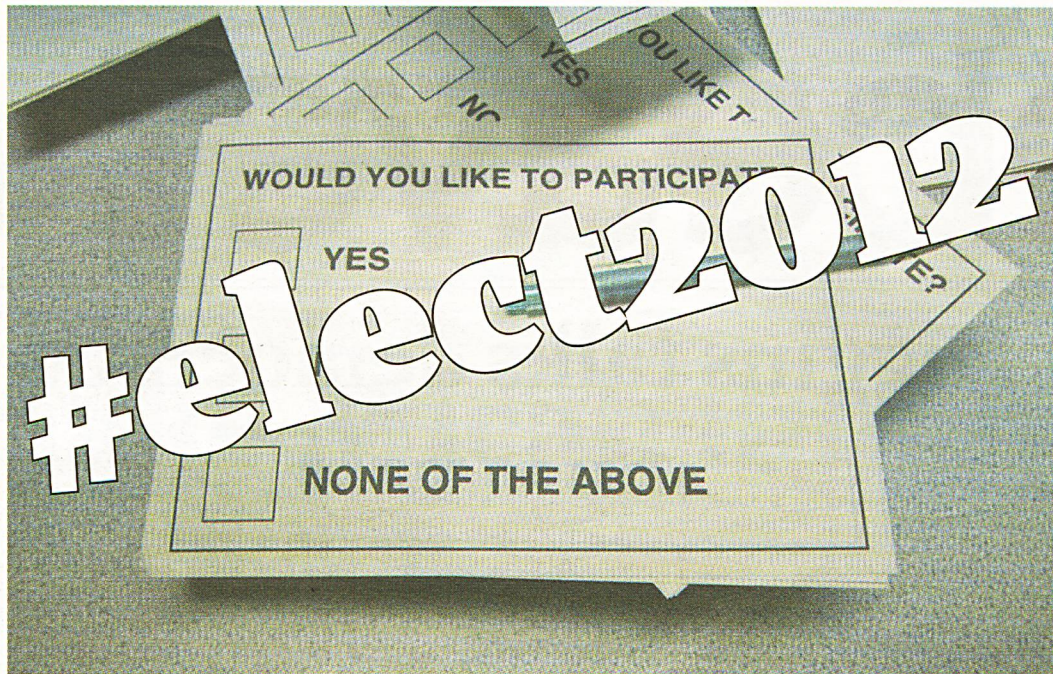
Alexander Young
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Union Bashō

Apathy

That time of year again...
I'm apathetic
and ignorant. Who's got my
vote? Don't know, don't care.



the beaver

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Issue No. 768

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Election Special

This is a very special issue of the Beaver, an issue that only comes around once a school year. As most likely know by now, it is election season on campus with Students' Union (SU) Elections taking over both Houghton Street and much of the East Building - the SU headquarters. In just two weeks we will see a new group of Sabbatical Officers, both Full and Part-Time, voted in as the 2012-2013 Executive. This newspaper will carry all of the details of the election, both online and in print. In this issue, for instance, we have printed all of the candidates' manifestos; you can see them on pages 8 to 16.

As an editorial note, we would like to inform our readers of the Beaver's procedures during elections. As an SU publication, we have to remain absolutely impartial. Other than in their manifestos and the initial UGM Hustings which represents all candidates views equally, no candidate's name will be published - whether they

have written an article or taken part in an event we are covering, his or her name will be replaced with the decidedly ambiguous label of "election candidate." We will do our utmost to ensure no candidate receives an unfair advantage and that no one on our editorial board publicly endorses any candidate. We understand that many are counting on us for balanced, unbiased coverage of this election - and we, at the Beaver, are ready to provide that.

On Thursday, Results Night, the Beaver will be live-blogging from the Quad as the results pour in. You can catch all of our coverage online by following us on Twitter: @beaveronline and the hashtag #elect2012 and on our live blogging platform on our website at www.thebeaveronline.co.uk/election. We will have live updates with results, photos, and even videos of the night. These elections are important to every LSE student, we encourage you to vote and to take

part in Results Night.

However issues can arise, as during the election week, historically, some people attempt to use the beaver as a form of free advertising. Not only does this undermine the election laws that the union has put in place to ensure a fair election, it can also lead to nasty campaigns between candidates as each attempt to gain further advantage. But the biggest difficulty for us is the slippery slope that this inevitably creates. Not only does it foster bad relations between the Beaver and the present candidates in that election, but it can also lead to further strained relations between the newspaper (and possibly the wider media group) and the eventual winner of the election. To this end there are strict rules in place that this paper will be following, any reference to a candidate running in the current SU elections will therefore be titled "Election Candidate."

Collective

A Alani, R Al-Dabagh, J Allsop, N M Alexander, N Antoniou, J V Armstrong, L Atchison, L Aumeer, H Austin, N J Buckley-Irvine, H Burdon, A Burk, B Arslan, E Beaumont, L Brown, B Butterworth, V Chan, R J Charnock, S Chaudhuri, G K Chhina, B Clarke, L J Clifton, R A Coleman, R A Creedon, R Cucchiaro, A L Cunningham, J Curtis, H Dar, A E Dawson, E Delahaye, S Desai, A Doherty, E S Dwek, E Firth, M Fletcher, A Fyfe, S Gale, P Geder, R Gudka, A L Gunn, A C B Haigh, M C Heffernan, R Holmes, K C Hughes, R Illingworth, N Jaroszek, M Jenkins, J Jones, A Kane, K V Kenney, A Krechetova, S Langton, E A Larkin, S W Leung, S H Low, D McKenna, R Mohyidin, A Moneke, B Nardi, C T Ng, K O'Donnell, M Owen, N Mashru, N Mateer, S Newman, S Nissila, Marshall Palmer, A X Patel, J R Peart, A Peters-Day, K Pezeshki, S Poojara, T Poole, A Qazilbash, A Riese, K Rogers, C S Russell, N Russell, B Sarhangian, S Saubestre, Z Sammour, I M Silver, K Singh, L Slothuus, J M Still, J Stoll, A Sulemanji, J Tindale, L Vardaxoglou, M Veale, A Vora, X T Wang, S R Williams, V A Wong, M Worby, J Yarde, A Young, D Yu

The Collective is The Beaver's governing body. You must have contributed three pieces of work, or contributed to the production of three issues of the paper (editorially or administratively), to qualify for membership. If you believe you are a Collective member but your name is not on the list above, please email

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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Results Night 2012
In the Quad at
7:30pm

Live Coverage on:

beaveronline.co.uk
#elect2012
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Beaver Collective

Alex Haigh is now the Acting Executive Editor until elections at the end of this year

Shu Hang Low has been elected as the new News editor, beginning his role next issue

Nominations are still open for one position on the Editorial Board:

Online Editor x1

Those not on Collective can email collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk for more information.

Students' Union Hustings at UGM

Alice Dawson

Hustings for the Lent Term elections were on the agenda at last week's Union General Meeting (UGM), generating a much larger turnout than usual. Candidates standing for election to full-time Sabbatical positions delivered their manifestos and answered questions posed by the audience.

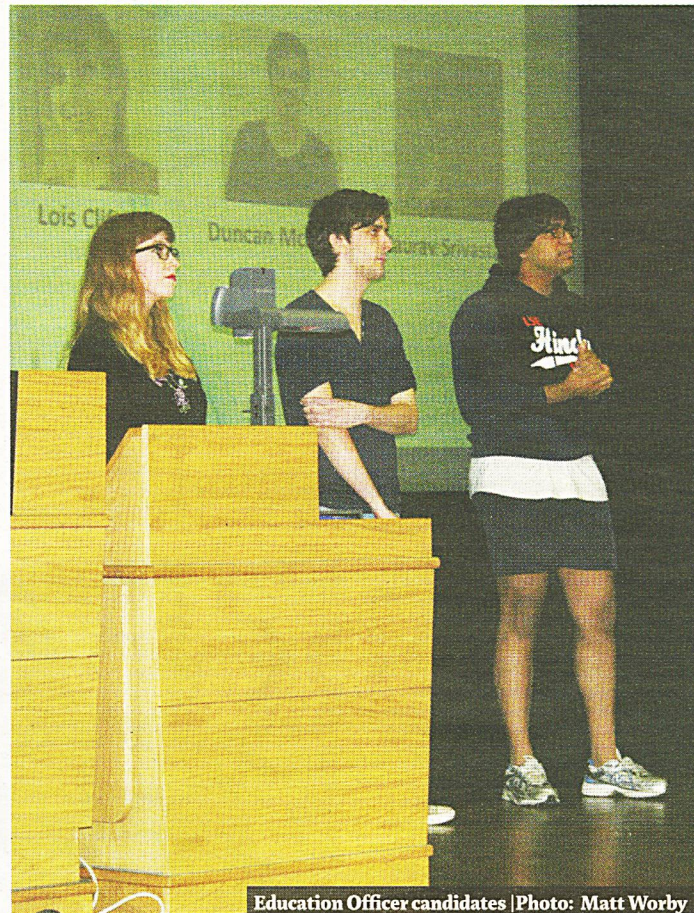
Alex Peters-Day and Mohammed Morley are both standing for election to the position of General Secretary. Peters-Day urged the audience to "re-elect your General Secretary" in order to maintain "continuity, experience and dedication" in the LSE Students' Union. She wants to be the one "leading the fight for the education you deserve." Morley claimed that, while "it hasn't been a bad year" for the Students' Union, "a press statement isn't enough" when it comes to the Students' Union taking a stance on discrimination such as antisemitism and Islamophobia; he intends to create a more "political Union." The candidates were then quizzed on a range of topics, including their plans regarding widening participation and increasing attendance at the UGM.

Duncan McKenna, Lois Clifton and Guarav Srivastava are all standing for election to the position of Education Officer. McKenna pointed to his "detailed knowledge of the Students' Union and the School" gained from his time as Executive Editor of the Beaver alongside his "fair and unbiased" approach. He intends to tackle teaching standards and LSE100 problems, increase feedback from teachers and work towards "unconditional re-sits for exceptional circumstances." Lois Clifton, the current Environment and Ethics Officer, believes that "education both at LSE and nationally is at a cross-roads" and that "management don't have student interests at heart." She intends to "stand up for students' voices" by using her experience of student activism and campaigning. Clifton described herself as "hard-working, honest and passionate about education at LSE." Guarav Srivastava pointed to the LSE's often low student satisfaction rates and advocated a

"cheerful cocktail for change" through increased provision of lecture recordings and solutions to problem sets for quantitative subjects and model essays and examiner reports for qualitative subjects. Following this, the candidates were quizzed on current educational issues such as the recent White Paper.

Pallavi Bansal, Rosina St James and Jack Tindale are running for the position of Community and Welfare Officer. Bansal urged the audience to "vote for me and vote for democracy," outlining her ability to "improve the representation in the Students' Union by being approachable, transparent and accountable." She intends to focus on the "general wellbeing" of students as well as policies such as widening the availability of vegetarian and Halal foods on campus. St James highlighted her experience in "breaking down barriers," which she believes will help her to tackle issues such as Islamophobia and antisemitism on campus. She also pointed to her experience working with young people in the community and as President of LSE's Afro-Caribbean Society. She hopes to introduce policies to help detect learning disabilities, mental health and stress at an earlier stage. Tindale stressed that he is "an active participant in all parts of LSE life," enabling him to implement his policy of "liberation, accommodation and participation." He wants to establish a cross-Liberation Alliance group in order to ensure that discrimination is tackled more effectively. He also wants to introduce a Code of Conduct in LSE residences and "push for student representation in ethical investment decisions."

Matthew de Jesus, Damini Onifade and Carola Precht are all standing for election to the position of Activities and Development Officer. De Jesus, who is Treasurer of the Athletics Union, outlined his desire to implement the "LSEquality" initiative, which seeks to provide "equality and diversity training" for members of the Athletics Union (AU). He would also like to introduce cross-promotion of societies, where LSE Students' Union societies can share knowledge and experience, as well as a calendar including all society events. Onifade, former President of the Afro-Caribbean Society, believes that he would



Education Officer candidates | Photo: Matt Worby

be "approachable and accessible to the student population," enabling him to implement his policies of "stamping out racism from our campus and increasing awareness of the various events occurring on campus." He also hopes to introduce more collaborative work between various groups, societies and communities at the LSE. Precht believes that this year's events "have led us to question the unity of LSE." She would like to "continue supporting societies and promote their work" and "focus on joint events between different communities" in order to establish an "inclusive, co-operative and fun Students' Union." She also hopes to make it easier for students to set up a society within the Students' Union.

Hustings for Part-time Executive Officer positions were held in the Quad following the UGM. Candidates for the positions of Anti-Racism Officer, International Students' Officer, Women's Officer, LGBT Officer and Athletics Union President were given the opportunity to deliver their manifestos and answer questions from the audience, along with candidates standing for election to the Democracy Committee, Trustee Board and Athletics Union Executive.

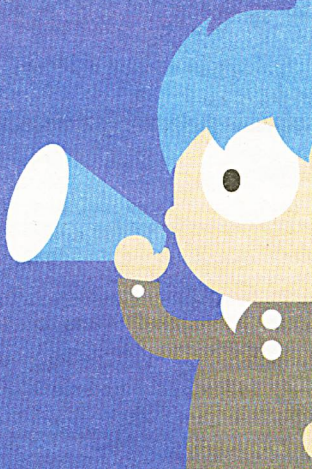
Candidates will be spending the week touring various societies in order to raise awareness of their election campaigns and answer questions.

Voting will open online on 29th February at 10am and will close at 7pm on 1st March.



Photo: Matt Worby

ELECTIONS 2012



NOMINATIONS
13 FEBRUARY / 20 FEBRUARY

VOTING
29 FEBRUARY / 1 MARCH

For more information www.lsesu.com

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ELECTIONS 2012



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Woodcock urges students to reconsider Israel

Shu Hang
Staff Reporter

John Woodcock, Labour Member of Parliament for Barrow and Furness and Chair of Labour Friends of Israel gave a speech entitled "Making the Progressive Case for Israel" at the London School of Economics last week. The event, cohosted by the LSE Students' Union Labour Society and the Israel Society, aimed to "remind the left of Israel's history and progressive values."

There was controversy surrounding the event after a violent altercation on Houghton Street occurred earlier that day in response to the Palestine Society protest. The host, Adam Connell, Chair of the Labour Society, begging the audience not to "throw things at John" beforehand.

Before beginning his speech, Woodcock commented on the clash saying that it "reemphasized how important it is to treat each other with respect on campus and conduct impassioned debates in the right spirit of respect and common decency".

Instead of being "another discussion of the frustration of the lack of peace which hangs over every Israeli and Palestinian conflict", Woodcock said that the speech would explore "the natural and deliberate synergy there is between labour and state of Israel."

According to Woodcock, "a just and lasting agreement" between the two states would never be found if "we forget that Israel is the only social democratic area in the region." He cited the nation's "independent judiciary, well organized and strong trade unions, freedom for religious minorities to practice their beliefs, and welfare state that protects the poor and marginalized" to show that Israel is

the "social democratic beacon" in the Middle East.

He claimed that the failure to secure agreement between the two states has "obscured this progressive reality," leading to the "increasing attempts to delegitimise the Israeli state."

Woodcock also expressed his concerns with the "wholesale boycotts of Israeli policy," saying that attempts to compare Israel with apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany were "unfortunately not rare enough".

"In a decade of genocide in Darfur and violent homophobia in a dozen African states, Israel is the only country the UN HRC has officially condemned. We need to change the anti-left bias against Israel," he said.

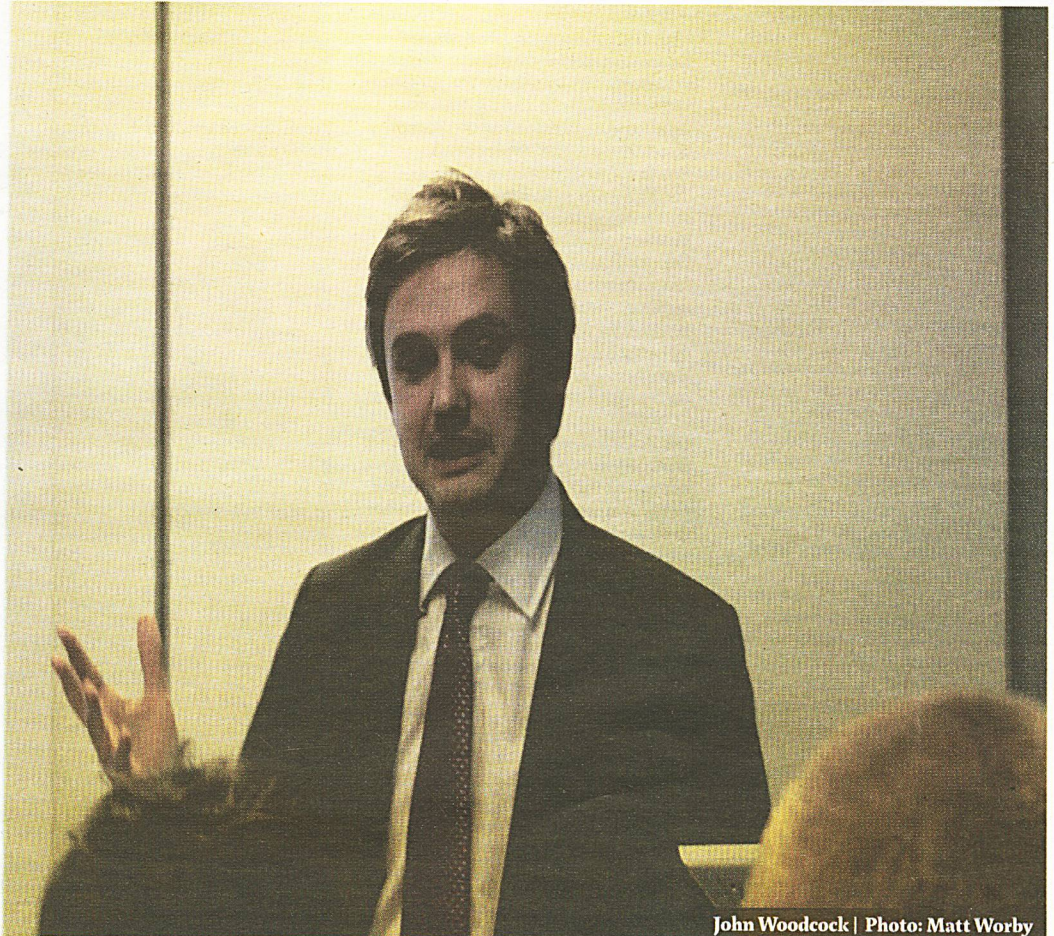
Woodcock went on to endorse that "two state solution", saying that the alternative – the one state model – would mean "the demise and the end of the dream of national self-determination for Jewish state."

Woodcock said that the difficult gestures of peace by the Israeli government were "not acknowledged by international community". He questioned the decision of Western nations to only put pressure on Israel to resolve the issue, saying that the "one sided views", reinforce Israel's potential isolation.

The MP stressed the importance of "changing the views on the left to recognize Israel's strong adherence to progressive values that we have spent much of our lives fighting for in the UK" in bringing about a lasting settlement between the two states.

He urged both "pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian" to "support your side in a sectarian national way."

During the question and answer session, Mycock mentioned the lack of understanding of the "complexity" and "vibrancy" within Israel, and reiterated how his own experience traveling throughout Israel as one that



John Woodcock | Photo: Matt Worby

had fundamentally changed his world view and politics. He first went to Israel when a student at the University of Edinburgh.

He said that people "would not realise how one-sided their views are" until they go there, and that Israel "re-

mains a country which is committed to equality right through it's society."

When asked whether he had visited either of the Palestinian territories, Woodcock said that he had visited the West Bank for the first time last fall.

Woodcock finished his speech

by reaffirming the importance of respectful dialogue and the avoidance of physical violence, which would all for a "reasoned and difficult debate" in order to "overcome the dividing lines" between various student groups "on campus."

» continued from page 1

The first complaint expressed concern about a candidate in the Trustee election and their "use of language and the possibility they may have started campaigning before it was [officially] allowed." No candidate was to start campaigning before 2pm on Thursday 23 February. There was "insufficient evidence to take further action."

The second complaint alleged that someone began campaigning on Facebook on behalf of a candidate for Education Officer before the official campaigning start. After an investigation, it was established that "the Facebook post directing people to vote for a particular candidate" contravened the rules and the candidate had to postpone campaigning for an hour, starting at 3pm on Thursday.

The third complaint stated that there was concern over the manifesto of a candidate in the Trustee election: "it was alleged they were misrepresenting the views of another candidate, trying to purposefully sabotage their campaign, that is was potentially libellous, and it referenced the personal traits of another candidate in the election." The candidate was suspended from campaigning until "their manifesto met the requirements of the Election Regulations." The candidate "offered to amend their manifesto, but further changes were required."

The fourth complaint was directed at a Democracy Committee candidate who, during the Trustee hustings,

asked a Trustee candidate a question that was paraphrased as "ignoring your previous campaign which was blatantly anti-Semitic and misogynistic, how feasible are your policy commitments?" After an investigation, the Democracy Committee candidate was reminded of the Election Rules and "directed to ensure he provided more contextual information when describing an issue of this sort."

The fifth complaint was in regard to a website published by a General Secretary candidate. After a "resource-intensive" investigation, the complainant "was sent a copy of the Election Rules which allow for this of campaign activity to take place."

The final complaint concerned a candidate in the Trustee election about their use of a "pre-existing group or list which they had used to promote their candidacy." It was determined that the candidate had published "information about their candidacy to a pre-existing Facebook group." As this was the "second complaint that had been upheld against the candidate" it was determined that they would be banned from all online campaigning for "48 hours from 9pm on Friday 24 February." The candidate was further informed that any further sanctions would "take into account previous persistent rule breaking."

» continued from page 1

intellectuals in front of the students, LSE staff, and public gathered: "To be part of a failed paradigm of life and economy or to seek out alternative futures?"

"It's a tough time to be a student," said LSE graduate student Sorcha Pollak, who attended the talk. "We're studying at an extremely good school, but there's still no guarantee we're going to walk into a secure job and he wanted to remind us as students of the core values of what we're studying and what we're working towards. He's a very good role model for this."

From Dublin, Pollak was one of the Irish students seated among the crowd and said she was "honoured" Higgins chose to speak at LSE for his first speech abroad as Head of State. "He has a very clear understanding as to what could work to promote economies and to help us grow. He looks at us, he looks at young either Irish or general students at LSE, and I think he sees this is where the potential is," said Pollak. "He wants to transmit the message to the students of how important our footprint will be in making things work in the next 10 to 15 years."

In addition to rallying critical thought on the role of universities and students in shaping the future, Higgins visit also played a pragmatic role in relations with the Irish Diaspora.

"The President is the first citizen of Ireland," said Chris Kealy, an Irish graduate student at LSE. "He is first and foremost representing us as a people and

for him to keep in touch with the people abroad makes you feel that little bit more connected to him. This lets you know that it's not just your family and friends who are thinking about you, he really does come across as a kind of paternalistic and grandfatherly figure."

One member of the Diaspora Irish community asked the President about voting rights, as currently the Diaspora community is not able to register a vote. Although the President does not wield legislative powers, he was positive in his hope for the Diaspora to be able to vote, but encouraged people to seize the opportunities that come with any place they are living.

"I really enjoyed the fact that he can talk to any audience," stated Kealy, who

has heard Higgins speak previously in his hometown of Navan in County Meath. "He came here and he quoted from Kant and Habermas at the LSE, but I saw him at home. He gave a speech to where I'm from to a bunch of farmers in a big hall and he talked about farming subsidies in the EU. He's a real man of the people, which is really important. He's both the representative of Ireland abroad and to ourselves as well."

In reference to his personal aspirations, Kealey stated that "I want to keep up representing the Irish abroad and our social, economic, cultural interests."



Irish Students at the LSE | Photo: Wanda O'Brien

SPICE up your week

Vincent Wong

Last week, the LSE Students' Union Society for the Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos (SPICE) in partnership with the LSE India Observatory brought India Week to Houghton Street.

The event, which aimed to showcase Indian culture and to celebrate the successes of, and address the challenges facing the country, opened its doors to the public this year. It was inaugurated by Bollywood legend Rishi Kapoor, who discussed filmmaking in India. Rachel Dwyer, Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and British Asian actor Armaan Kirmani were also in attendance at the inauguration, with the former delivering a talk entitled "Bollywood as a Guide to Modern India".

"It's a funny mix, combining Indian films with economics," said Kapoor, who later burst into a rendition of "Main Shayar Toh Nahin" from his first leading role in the 1973 film "Bobby". "One thing is for sure. I'm going to tell my grandparents that I too went to LSE."

The successes of, and challenges facing India were explored in a series of public lectures.

On Tuesday afternoon, the

subject of corruption in Indian politics was addressed with a panel debate on the Jan Lokpal Bill, a proposed independent anti-corruption law.

"The Jan Lokpal Bill is more like the Jalebi Bill," said panellist Shrey Sanger, a postgraduate student at the LSE, referring to the sweet popular in South Asia. "It just goes round and round and ends up straight at the hips."

That evening, Shiv Nadar, founder and chairman of HCL technologies, Anwar Hasan, managing director of Tata Limited, and Dweep Chanana, Director of Philanthropy Services at UBS, discussed "creative philanthropy", the Tata model of philanthropy and the history of philanthropy in Asia respectively.

The Indian economy dominated discussions on Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday afternoon, Gita Patel of the Trapezia funds, talked about encouraging female entrepreneurship. Later, Professor Maitreesh Ghatak of the Department of Economics and Emilie Goodall of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment initiative spoke about the role of microfinance for development.

The series concluded with a panel discussion on Thursday about the role of the Indian economy in the world, with the panel in agreement that the country possesses huge potential constrained by a lack of openness and reform.

Karan Bilimoria, co-founder and chairman of Cobra Beer said, "The

West has become more protectionist". "India should take up the mantle as the champion of globalisation."

Cultural events took place throughout the week. Bollywood choreographer Shiamak Davar and his team spiced up campus with a dance workshop on Thursday evening. Participants claimed to have seen some of the moves taught in the Bollywood night on Friday evening, which was hosted by BBC Asian Network presenters Raj and Pablo, and featured a performance by British Asian artist Arjun.

Complementing the efforts of SPICE and India Observatory, the Fourth Floor Restaurant served an Indian-themed menu last week.

Sanam Arora, CEO of SPICE, said of the week's events: "It's the tenth year of SPICE, and this year, we wanted to celebrate all facets of India, from economics to politics to Bollywood."

Stanley Ellerby-English, Activities and Development Officer, thinks they succeeded.

"I am really impressed by the quality of events and the calibre of the speakers who appeared at India Week," he said. "Last year's India Week was chosen as the best event of the year, and this year's event has built on that legacy."

New Liberal Society preaches free speech

Arisa Manawapat

Within the past week, LSE has witnessed the emergence of its newest student society, the LSE SU Liberal Society.

Inspired by the works of liberal philosophers, particularly Thomas Paine and John Stuart Mill, and the recent debates on campus surrounding the limits of free speech, the Liberal

Society was created with an integral value to promote "small-liberalism." This is the idea that each individual is born with "an inherent set of rights and liberties, deduced by reason."

The Liberal Society aims to support human rights in promoting "nearly unrestricted speech, a mixed-market economy, free and fair trade, a belief in equality of opportunity, and a liberal foreign policy."

Free from party affiliation, the Society stresses its "non-partisan" nature by aiming to draw support "across party lines" and "socially and economically liberal positions that may be found in every mainstream party."

In accordance with liberalism's integral features of speech and debate, the Liberal Society plans to launch events centered on special lectures, panels, and debates. The

components of liberalism and the elements it compels individuals to follow will be discussed.

Within a few weeks, the Society hopes to initiate its first debate titled "This house believes the existence of public schools fundamentally undermines equality of opportunity."

Furthermore, the Society has been in contact with British journalist and The Observer columnist Nick Cohen, who may participate in the opening of the Society.

Gathering a membership of 77 students at the time this article was written, the Liberal Society has received highly promising feedback.

Benjamin Clues, 2nd year government student, remarks, "I joined the society because I believe that absolute rights and wrongs exist in the world. For the future I hope for some interesting speakers and a larger membership to share them with."

Moreover, Elizabeth Fraser, 2nd year International Relations Student, emphasizes the lack of a "forum campus to discuss liberal issues, like freedom of speech or equality of opportunity in a non-partisan way."

Highlighting the wide appeal of liberalism as a "really broad label", Fraser explains "a liberal society would enable lots of people to take part in the society and our debates and socials."

For more information, the LSESU Liberal Society can be found on Facebook Groups.

Violence breaks out at protest on Houghton Street

John Armstrong

Violence broke out on Houghton Street last Monday after a protest by the London School of Economics (LSE) Palestine Society.

Water balloons were thrown at protesters and the situation escalated into a heated exchange which resulted in one participant being punched in the face.

The situation arose as members of the Palestine Society formed a mock checkpoint outside of the St. Clements Building as a part of the Society's "Israeli Apartheid Week." Students were stopped before entering the building and asked by protesters for "I.D." or "papers." As the protest continued, certain Jewish students complained of "harassment and intimidation" as access to St. Clements was "blocked."

Palestine Society members taking part in the protest claimed that while students were asked for their "papers," only protesters were physically stopped from entering the building.

Niamh Hayes, a member of Palestine Society, said that "we are only trying to recreate the conditions Palestinians have to face on a day-to-day basis."

Soon after the initial violence, members of both sides tried to settle the violence, with LSE Security cordoning off the enraged protesters and counter-protesters. LSE Security had previously requested that the Palestine Society refrain from preventing students from passing through the mock wall, but the checks were continued.

Leaders of both the Israel Society and the Palestine Society have condemned the attack.

Subsequently, the story has been reported by an array of mainstream news organisations. On Tuesday, the Huffington Post covered the altercation and over the past week there has been various articles written by the media in Israel and an article published by Iranian state-owned media group, Press TV.

The reaction from the LSE Students' Union was one of condemnation and reassurance. Alex Peters-Day, Students' Union General Secretary, said in a statement "the safety and

welfare of all our students is, and will maintain to be, our utmost priority as a Students' Union." Peters-Day continued, "whilst I welcome a diversity of opinion; actions such as these undo a lot of the good work that has been done in creating and maintaining a dialogue between students and groups on campus."

Community and Welfare Officer, Lukas Slothuus, also condemned the violence stating that it is "ridiculous" and "disgusting." Slothuus also went on to say that prior to this event, "the protest has been quite peaceful" but that the actions on Monday "do not promote dialogue on campus."

Aimee Riese, President of the LSE Students' Union Israel Society, said "LSESU Israel Society condemns all violence that was seen today. We do not however, condemn the anger that caused this. Palestine Society are mocking and simplifying the complexities of life in the region." Riese continued, "LSE students on this campus are victims on both side of this conflict. Jewish and Israeli students should not have to feel targeted and intimidated on campus."

The Palestine Society fully condemned the incident and stated that, "the re-enactment and stall by the Palestine Society was completely

peaceful, and the reaction of these students is unjustifiable."

The statement went on to say that, "this incident shows the victimisation of peaceful protesters who were simply trying to draw attention to the cause of the Palestinian people and We as a society call on management to continue to protect our right to peaceful protest on LSE's campus."

Last week's incident ignited fierce debate around campus and the comment section in the Beaver this week covers a range of views surrounding the altercation.



Photo: Matt Worby

Nadar, Indian billionaire, explores the future of national philanthropy

Harry Burdon
Staff Reporter

The London School of Economics (LSE) hosted Indian billionaire Shiv Nadar, founder of Indian technology company HCL and the Shiv Nadar Foundation, who spoke about the role of philanthropy in India. Nadar was joined by Anwar Hasan, managing director of Tata Limited, and Dweep Chanana, director of Philanthropy & Values-based Investing UBS AG.

Nadar discussed the school he has created, VidyaGyan, began partially due to the influence of his mother, who suggested he use his wealth to benefit others. A firm believer in the power of education, he made it his goal to help India develop by educating its younger generation. He decided to create an "institution which would be not merely education, but an academy of leadership." Education was deemed necessary and leadership desirable. He described wishing for it to "create a force multiplier" and "spirals of aspiration." He also discussed the shortcomings of the current education system in India, where half the students aged ten years old are illiterate.

Nadar sees that the system as a whole is too vast for him to tackle and must be the job of the government. He has pursued the mantra of creating leadership from within "the bottom of the pyramid." His school aims to educate students from lower socio-economic background in rural areas, aiming to affect positive structural changes.

The high number of politicians produced by universities like Oxford and schools like Eton impresses Nadar. Nadar hopes the students will "become leaders in science, leaders in teaching, leaders in law," as well as in economics. In constructing VidyaGyan, he ensured that it had cutting edge facilities and teaching staff, so that its graduates may compete at the international level.

Anwar Hasan talked about the philanthropic work of Tata. The founder of the Tata group, Jamsedji Tata, established philanthropy as one of Tata's core aims. Though the company has been questioned in the past for its sometimes hypocritical stance on charity, Hasan argued that much of the profit he drew from the people he returned to them, through many trusts. Hasan also described how Tata is owned 66 per cent by trusts, which distribute their funds to charities.

Dweep Chanana argued that India's philanthropic work by both businesses and the government is greatly underestimated and underappreciated. He described Jamsedji Tata's work in India to that of his contemporary Joseph Rowntree, stating that Jamsedji Tata has received much less recognition.

Audience member Malvika Kapala, MSc student in International Relations Theory, expressed her feelings on Nadar's philanthropy, saying "it's a drop in the ocean, but at least it's a drop." Nathalie Gunasekera, MA in History, added that "he's very well aware that [VidyaGyan] is not the ideal model, but at least it's a start."



Photo: Harry Burdon

Debate and discussion at the LSE Economics Conference 2012

Harry Burdon
Staff Reporter

The student-run London School of Economics Students' Union Economics Conference 2012 took place on 25th February. A variety of current economic topics were discussed, including the European Union, banks, inequality, and growth. Roughly 350 people attended, about half of which were students of the LSE.

Financial Times columnist, John

Kay, disputed the perceived profitability of the banking industry. He claimed "many banks, and probably the banking industry taken as a whole, lost more money in 2008 than it had ever made in its entire history." Relating this to the current situation, "the credit crunch... is the occasional event in which tailgating actually leads to a major accident." When explaining why the industry received such high pay, he argued "the profits which banks reported from 2003 to 2007 were essentially money that which had been borrowed from the future, and which had to be paid back in 2007 and 2008."

As to how to improve the banking sector, John Kay wishes for a "simpler, smaller financial services industry," with the "quite modest requirements of ensuring that the needs of the real non-financial economy are properly met." "We need to allow the industry as it currently exists to collapse," with the breaking up of the institutions, as well as tackling the culture, and "stop[ping] people cross-subsidising one activity for another, in order to extract large amounts for themselves." He considers that bailing out of the financial industry in 2008 to have been necessary, however, we should be "restructuring the financial services industry to enable [a better financial services industry] to be achieved in the next collapse."

Economics advisor, author and commentator Philippe Legrain spoke on "reshaping the world economy." He discussed bank capital requirements, articulating that "Governments are swayed by banks claim that forcing them to have higher capital would raise lending costs," reducing growth. However, he opposed this view, expressing that "if banks raise more equity, the cost of it falls," due to reduced risk. Legrain sees a need for a restructuring of banks, to avoid future bailouts, with "provisions for bond holders to bail in to the banks rather than tax payers bailing them out."

During the conference, it was discussed that people had been awarded Nobel Prizes, and yet their models had failed in the crisis. The economics profession received some strong

criticism for some of its models. City University Economics Professor Giulia Iori defended economists, claiming when the models for pricing structured products were being made, "they were very well aware that these models had their limitations." She elaborated that "these models have been used to do something which they were not really supposed to be used for." The panel chairman Sir Samuel Brittan remarked that "bogus econometrics" had been done because there was a "demand for them."

Chairman and co-founder of Metrobank, Anthony Thomson spoke at the conference. He described the Metrobank business model with a focus put into customer service traded off against slightly lower bank rates. He claimed in a high street bank, for the person you speak to, roughly a third of their earnings are based on how much they sell. In contrast, Metrobank bonuses are based on customer satisfaction.

The Independent Commission on Banking (ICB) report found the established PCA providers (market share above 12%), do not compete, and that they "don't want to compete." The explanation is that gaining new business requires providing a better deal and freebies to entice new customers. However, due to having to extend this deal to their large existing customer base too, it costs more than revenue is increased by, so they do not do it. The small banks are unable to compete, due to not having the benefits from scale, or a branch network. The "chal-

lenger banks," in the middle of the size scale, do compete. They are large enough to be able to compete, and have a small enough amount of exiting customers for it to be worthwhile. The evidence shows the challenger banks to be increasing their market share, whilst the other two groups are not particularly. The ICB report argues increasing the number of challenger banks would increase competition in the PCAs market. Ridyard considers this analysis "simplistic," as it assumes correlation to mean causation.

The last panel of the day debated the EU model. Proponents argued that the EU lifts low and middle income economies into high income economies, as well as being a global brand. However, it was conceded that the southern European economies had not experienced the same level of improvement, but this was due to failing to implement reforms that would increase the labour market flexibility. Furthermore, the EU model was praised due to the support that had been provided to Greece.

London School of Economics Professor Danny Quah stood in opposition, arguing that "part of the problem is precisely the European Union." The eurozone member's were able to "get away with rather careless fiscal policies," with high borrowing not resulting in high interest rates within the single currency. Furthermore, countries such as Portugal and Greece have not been able to devalue, as would be desirable.



New King's Cross halls of residence

Coreti Faria

Students planning to start their graduate studies at the London School of Economics (LSE) in the academic year 2013/2014 will have an additional hall of residence available for accommodation. The School's Estates Division announced that a five year nominations agreement was approved by the LSE council. The owner and operator will be Urbanest, a provider of student accommodation in London.

The new residential hall will be located at York Way, near Kings Cross Central, a thirty minute walk to campus or equally, a fifteen minute journey on the Piccadilly Line. Up to 350 places will be available to LSE students, primarily to first year graduates. These places will be distributed through flatshares - up to three rooms sharing a kitchen and a bathroom - traditional en-suite cluster flats and studio rooms, with prices ranging from £189 to £199 for the flatshares,

from £209 to £219 for the en-suites, and of £299 for the studio apartments. Also, the tenancy contracts will be for fifty weeks, which means that students will be able to stay at the hall throughout the entire academic year.

The project will be a new build and the facilities will be modern and student-friendly. The Internet speed will be fitting for a students' accommodation at 20Mbps and wireless Internet will be also available. The new halls will also include a study room, a common room, and an enclosed cycle storage area.

The LSE Estate Division said they were pleased to be working with Urbanest, "who like LSE are committed to high levels of environmental sustainability." Founded in 2008 in Australia, Urbanest is making its debut in London, with an operating accommodation site in Hoxton and two other coming up at Tower Bridge and Kings Cross. According to their website, "Urbanest is student accommodation with a difference where everything is just that bit better."

There are currently eleven resi-

dential halls for LSE students only, which accommodate more than 3,400 students. There are also eight Inter-collegiate residences, that also accommodate LSE students, in addition to students from other universities. The LSE is able to guarantee a place to all first year undergraduate students who apply within the deadline.

Benedikt Dietl, an MSc Philosophy and Public Policy student stated, "I think the new residential hall at Kings Cross is a good idea. When applying for university accommodation I couldn't find a spot. As a postgraduate you have very limited time to find private accommodation; therefore, I welcome the university's effort to provide more uni accommodation." The LSE accommodation is allocated on a random basis within quotas set out for each hall.

This kind of feedback seems to be unanimous. Julia Graupe, an MSc Accounting and Finance student, said that "it is great that the LSE wants to build a new residential hall since more students will have the chance to live in walking distance from uni at affordable prices."



Photo: LSE Estates

Health inequalities in the UK

Nona Buckley-Irvine
Staff Reporter

The Chair of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, Michael Marmot gave a lecture entitled 'Health Inequalities in the UK and policy strategies.'

Following the two year anniversary of the Marmot review, the lecture had a high turnout and some members of the audience had to stand.

A recurrent theme throughout the lecture was social justice being placed at the heart of health care, aiming to reduce the disparity in life expectancies across the globe.

Marmot explained at length his review of health inequalities in England, "Fair Society, Healthy Lives" which was commissioned under the previous Labour government.

The review focused on social determinants of health rather than individual. At times, Marmot seemed incredibly angry at the coalition government and ministers, stating that "the word fairness has no meaning now."

During the lecture Marmot criticised the National Health Service as being a universalist system in allowing everyone access, but one that did not follow through in treating everyone equally.

He spent a large proportion of the lecture discussing the well-being of children, citing the lack of quality of child development in Britain. It was revealed that only 59 per cent of children aged 5 were rated as having a good standard of child development, despite Britain being one of the most developed countries in the world.

England has some of the biggest inequalities in child well-being, ranking about 25th for literacy and numeracy. Marmot's perspective on the issue was that "the problem is that our elite are at the top, but then we have a steep social gradient."

A number of graphs demonstrated the social gradient for factors that affect child development, such as being read to by parents.

A surprising point was raised by Marmot when he argued that unemployment is bad for health, and that this was the causal direction that needed to

be accepted.

In an attack against the current government, he argued that the rise of unemployment is due to government policy. Examples were cited such the correlation between a one per cent rise in unemployment leading to a 0.8 per cent increase in suicide and homicide.

"We don't have a progressive taxation system in this country, at best it's proportionate."

Marmot's anger at liberal economics emerged throughout the lecture with continual jibes, at one point stating that "unconscionable greed of the one per cent brought the world to its needs twice."

One of the problems with income inequality is that it effects the next generation. The bigger the inequality, the more it affects social mobility. Marmot concluded "government policy can make a difference."

The question and answer session saw a diverse range of questions from professionals and students from across the globe.

In response to a question regarding the current government, asked by a student from the University of Edinburgh, Marmot was full of praise for the government adopting five out of the six recommendations in his report.

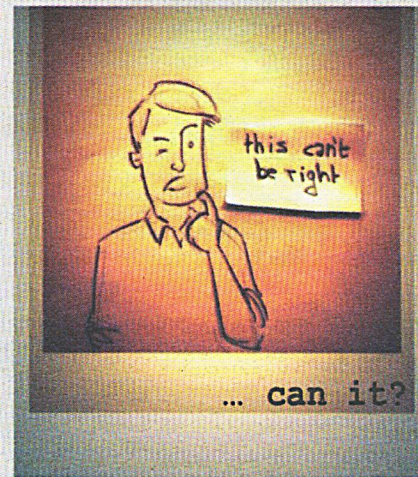
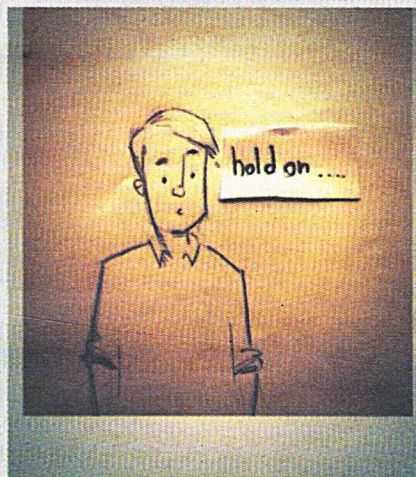
Another member of the audience criticised the "bleak" portrait of poorer households Marmot painted, describing it as paternalistic.

Marmot argued against this, stating that statistics show how poorer households are being knocked off the path to success by socio-economic factors.

Dan Martin, a first-year Social Policy student, said "Michael Marmot is an accomplished speaker who had the audience absorbed throughout. The statistics he produced were both surprising and depressing and his seminar highlighted the important role social policy must play in liberal economies. I was also impressed by the diversity of the audience; we had medical students from King's, postgraduate students from Oxford and academics from across London."

The lecture forms part of a series of lectures being held as part of the annual LSESU Social Policy month.

'WHY THE WORLD DOES NOT EXIST'!



Public lecture
at 19.00 on Monday March 5th
in the LSE Hong Kong Theatre

by

PROFESSOR MARKUS GABRIEL
from University of Bonn and NYU

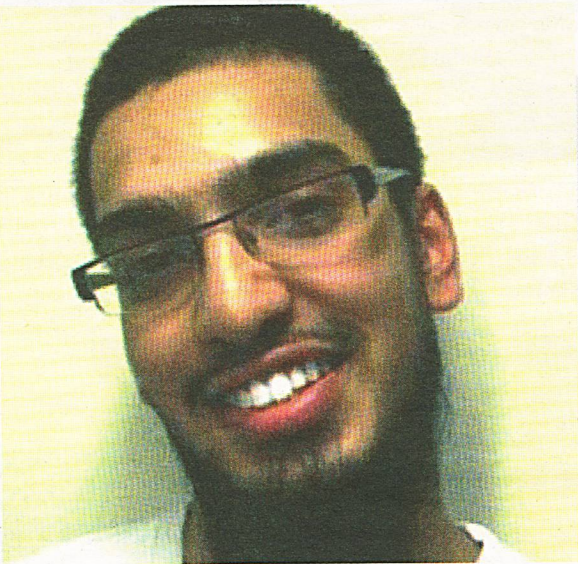
Join us afterwards for a night of
free food and drink
at Bierschenke (WC2R 3JF)!

LSE SU Philosophy Society

MANIFESTO

GENERAL SECRETARY

Mohammed Morley



****VOTE MORLEY #1 for GEN-SEC**** CAMPAIGNING - I want us to be the most active, inclusive, and responsive Students' Union in the country, standing up for students. NATIONAL: I support & will organise for a National Demonstration against fees. We're one of the few Universities in the country that doesn't do re-sits - this has to change! I will represent student interests before those of management. That's the role of the SU. The Director of the LSE isn't the only one who creates change - students can too! & We need to be shaping all decisions made by the University. We proved we could when we occupied over Gadaffi. I will push for every lecture in LSE to be recorded so that illness, religious commitments or other circumstances don't cause you to miss out on your education. We need a more environmentally sound LSE, promoting ethical investment; supporting international justice and initiatives as the Living Wage Campaign; Universities should be places where there's a strong culture of tolerance & diversity. I will campaign against racism, sexism, homophobia & discrimination. Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Reclaim the Night, Holocaust Memorial Week - we need to raise the profile of all.

Alexandra Peters-Day



When I started as General Secretary, the School was still reeling from the Libya crisis. One year later, I've hired a new Director, launched an ethical review, saved the Union Hardship funds and listened to students to get the services you want - such as a microwave in the Quad. I'm running again to get past fixing the crisis and finish the job making LSE better. Next year we have some big changes we *need* to get right with a new director, a new students' centre and a new fees settings. I'll be leading the fight for the education you deserve - Increasing standardised, high quality feedback; expanding contact time with permanent academics; entrenching the departmental code of conduct, I'll be supporting students and societies to put on better events, improve our SU communication so you know what activities are happening, and doing more to keep the Union green, open, fun and inclusive. In this moment of School-wide change, we need consistency - as soon as I am re-elected, I can start planning for the huge year we have ahead. With the continuity, experience and dedication I bring, I know we can have a truly relevant, campaigning, strong and fun LSE community.

ESTOS

COMMUNITY AND WELFARE

Pallavi Bansal



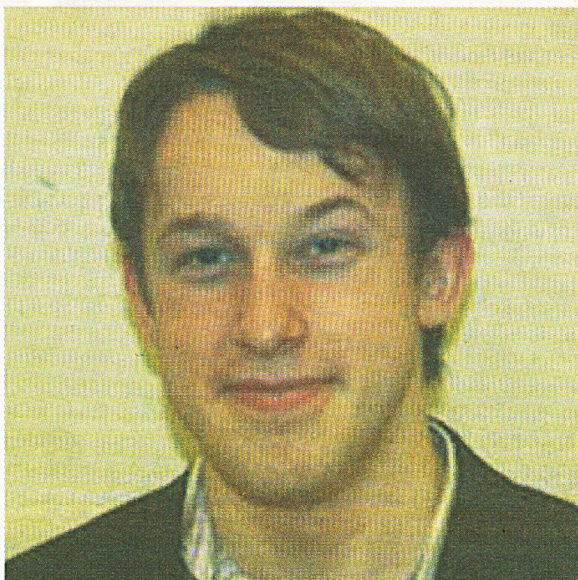
"Actions – act of vision, faith, and desire slouch louder than words. I believe in doing and not just saying". I strongly feel that all the students should be heard and have an effective vehicle for raising their concerns. Having worked as a journalist, I believe in articulating people's opinion, which is my utmost priority and that's what my campaign slogan says, Focused on what counts, the people! I am here to address following issues: Availability of Halal food in LSE. Wide variety of vegetarian food. Accommodation during summer term. Protection of interests of LGBT society members. Focusing attention on non-academic activities also such as visual arts, sports. General well-being of students during their tenure at LSE. I would help improve the representation in the Student's union by being approachable, transparent, and accountable. Being an international student myself, I want to make everyone comfortable here and prove that there can be unity despite diversities. LSE is known worldwide as a distinguished university, so I'll ensure that the reputation of LSE is not only maintained but enhanced as well. Your representative would do her and best to assist you through her role. Lastly, I'm tired of hearing that democracy doesn't work. Of course it doesn't work. We are supposed to make it work! So, vote for me and vote for Democracy!

Rosina St James



VOTE Rosina St James ?1 for Community & Welfare Officer – EXPERIENCED IN BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS. OUR COMMUNITY**** Must be BIGGER, BETTER and BOLDER! Current campaigns to be reenergized i.e. YOUR HALLS, YOUR CALL! ** The visibility of LSE to be increased to those from lower socio economic backgrounds** Working partnerships to be developed with the wider community to initiate innovative projects. ** LESS talk and MORE action! YOUR WELFARE**** Promoting teacher and student awareness of the early detection of learning disabilities, mental health and stress. **Making current services and resources more accessible. **Running workshops, promotional campaigns and information days around the health and wellbeing of students. MY EXPERIENCE **** Vice Chair of the British Youth Council. **5 years experience as a Youth Participation Support Worker for Croydon Council. ** President of the African Caribbean Society at LSE. ** Co Founder of a social enterprise (T.I.A) works with young men and women to develop self-esteem, identity and confidence. ** Mentor to young inmates and young offenders. ** Trustee for vInspired. Vote Rosina for Your Community & Welfare Officer because she is passionate about people, concerned about wellbeing and committed to BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS.

Jack Tindale



As an active participant in all parts of LSE life, I want to bring that expertise into the Students' Union. LIBERATION - Our diversity is our strength. I WILL: Establish a cross-Liberation Alliance campaigning group to ensure we tackle discrimination. Fight against unpaid internships by working alongside LSE Careers. Set up bursaries for people wishing to volunteer for charities. Improve the Counselling Centre for your physical and mental wellbeing. ACCOMMODATION - Living in London is getting more expensive and the quality of accommodation is getting worse. I WILL: Introduce a Code of Conduct in residences. Campaign to end unfair price-gouging by pegging price rises to inflation. Lobby the School to set up a School Office for Temporary Accommodation and an LSE-backed Rent Guarantor Scheme, ensuring you that students are no longer liable for unfair upfront payments from landlords. PARTICIPATION - I WILL: Push for student representation in ethical investment decisions. Form links between LSESU and a Credit Union to protect students against loan sharks. Produce an Impact Report so you can see what your Union actually does. Establish termly blood drives and brighten up the LSE Campus with greenery and artwork. VOTE CAPTAIN JACK: MAKING YOUR UNION SHIP-SHAPE!

MANIA

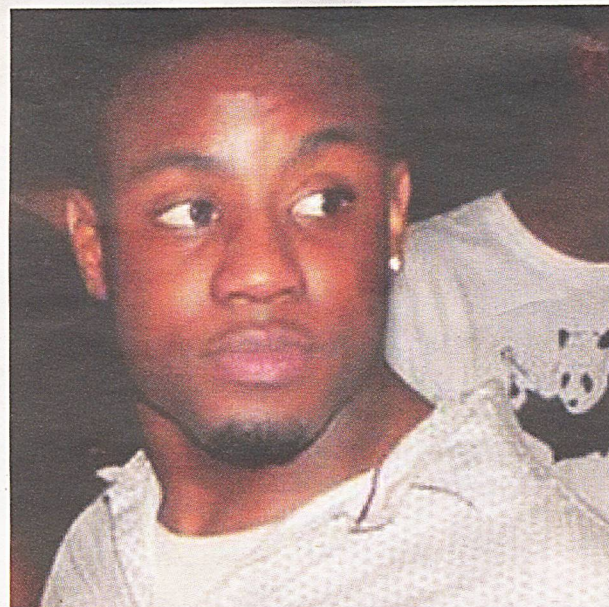
ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Matthew De Jesus



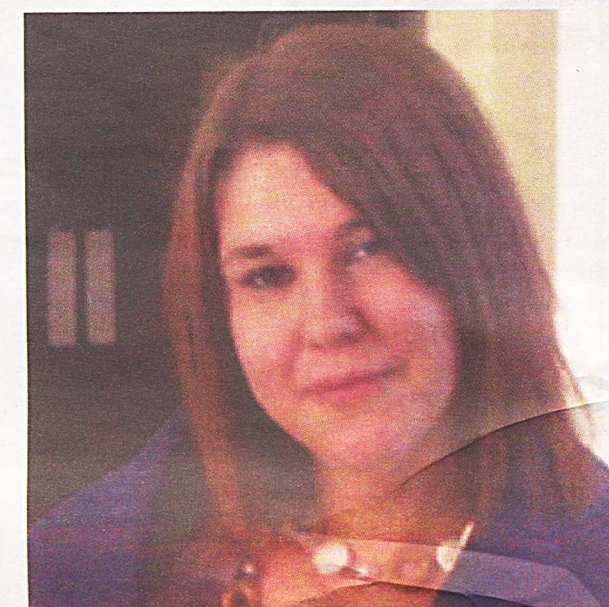
-----WHAT WOULD DE JESUS DO?-----
****CROSS-PROMOTION OF SOCIETIES:**** enhance the sharing of knowledge and experiences that societies of all sizes have had in guaranteeing their success; and streamline the advertisement of all society events in an LSESU-wide events calendar. ****HAND-OVER TEMPLATE:**** implement universal guidelines for the election of society committees to ensure an easier transition into the next year and fair procedures and representatives based on merit, not just popularity. ****DEVELOPMENT-BASED BUDGETS:**** restructure the design of budgets to reward those clubs and societies that achieve outstanding results. ****INTEGRATION OF SPORT IN LSE:**** work to promote sport and involve the Athletics Union in the wider LSE community. ****GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY:**** hold weekly Sabb 'office hours' and fortnightly 'ARC surgeries' to facilitate the direct exchange of comments and ideas between you and your representatives. This is a great opportunity to turn your SU into a more integrated and representative establishment. So ask yourself, WHAT WOULD DE JESUS DO? Vote Matt De Jesus #1 for A&D!

Damini Onifade



Hi, I'm Damini and I would be ideal for the job due to my vast experience in working with and for the SU. I am the former President for the African and Caribbean Society; I was a main character (Jack) in LSE's biggest Cultural and Diversity show, Timeless; and I am a society representative on the Student Activities Committee. ***** I hope to change the position of A&D from a reactive to a proactive role through: encouraging more collaborative work between the media group and the AU, societies & RAG; stamping out racism from our campus; and increasing awareness of the various events occurring on campus. ***** Moreover, I would like to ensure that the SU gives more flexible support to societies, the AU, Media Group and RAG by providing resources other than just money; that as a sabbatical officer I am more approachable and accessible to the student population; that there is more participation from individuals in societies, the AU, Media Group and RAG; and that through all of this we can ensure a better community. ***** For the change you want to see in LSE, make sure you vote Damini for A&D.

Carola Precht



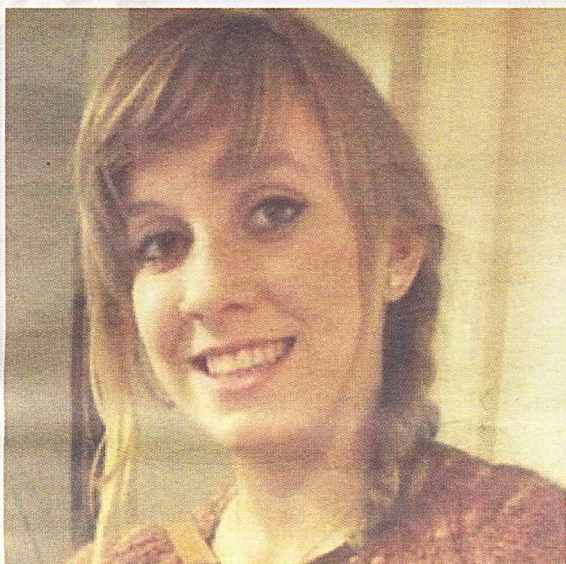
Our student body and LSE community has been divided among numerous lines due to the incidents that have happened this year that have led us to question the unity of LSE. We have found more and more apathy towards the work of the SU, represented in the tumbling numbers at the UGM among others. As an Activities and Development officer I would want to continue supporting societies and promote their work as previous officers have done. However I also wish to specifically tackle the problems which we have experienced this year with a set of policies that will help create an inclusive, co-operative and fun SU. *****COMMUNITY SPIRIT:** focus on joint events between different communities; greater inclusion of the AU within the SU; reports on society participation using past membership statistics; establishment of pre-fresher's week for early arrivals *****INVOLVEMENT:** special committees for SU events open to everyone; simplifying procedures to set up societies and removal of 'bureaucratic red tape'; open door policy and office hours *****RECOGNITION:** society internal recognition awards; improve exposure of the work of the media group; promotion and simpler access to AU club results.

FESTOS

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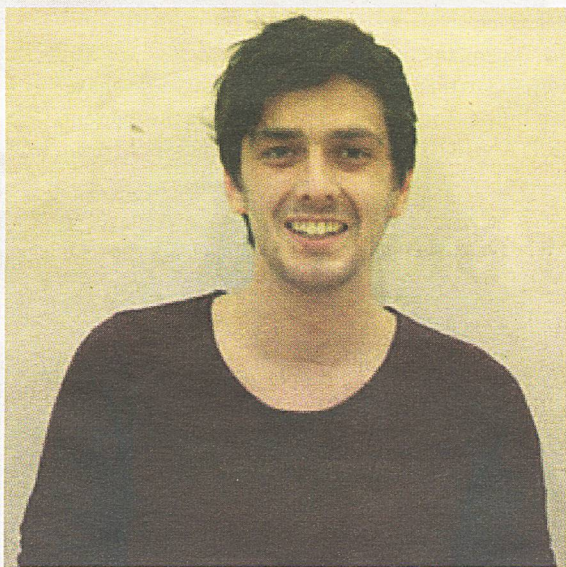
EDUCATION

Lois Clifton



Education for the 99% Since my first year I have had thrown myself into student activism: I helped organise the occupation against 9K fees. I campaigned successfully for LSE to hand back the Ghadaffi money. This year I have been the Student Union's Environment and Ethics officer. I have decided to stand for this position because higher education, both at LSE and nationally, is at a crossroads: *At LSE management seems more interested in dealing with government and business than students. Over timetables, LSE100, feedback and re-sits, student voice seems to be ignored. I know what it takes to get the change students want on LSE committees. *The governments changes to the higher education are more expensive to the taxpayer, more expensive to students and will lead to a more unequal system. We need an Education Officer who is unafraid to fight these changes. *These changes will throw up more barriers to BME, disabled and female students. We need an education officer who will campaign to ensure the LSE brings down these barriers. *We face a government prepared to use violence against protestors who oppose them. We need a student union that supports students who resist the governments attacks.

Duncan McKenna



I want to be Education Officer to make education at the LSE about the students, making YOU feel more valued and engaged. I am fair and unbiased and my time as editor of the Beaver has provided me with a detailed knowledge of the SU and the School, and has given me experience of the professionalism needed for this position. I will tackle TEACHING – There are frequent calls for improved teaching at the LSE. To achieve this I WILL: Work to help GTAs get the best support they can and be selected to provide the best teaching for YOU and attempt to secure more teaching from permanent academic staff. FEEDBACK – I WILL: Fight for more consistent and transparent feedback and answers so that YOU can achieve your full potential. LSE100 – Many students have expressed dissatisfaction with the course. To fix this I WANT: To work to make the course count positively towards your education or make it optional. RE-SITS – I WANT: Unconditional re-sits for exceptional circumstances. I also wish to continue Amena's good work on mixed assessment. I'm an honest and direct candidate and I'm running because I genuinely want to improve YOUR time at the LSE.

MANIFESTO

PART TIME OFFICERS

ANTI-RACISM OFFICER:

MOHAMMED HARRATH:

Not on our turf – End Racism! ***** We need a fresh approach to tackling racism on campus. We need to work together as a student body to tackle all forms of racism, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. ***** Campaigns: Against the PREVENT agenda, working with UAF against fascist organisations like the EDL and combatting racism on and off campus by showing International solidarity with victims of racist states. Advice and Support: Better liaison with the School to introduce an anti-racist pledge, a compulsory lecture as part of Orientation week, and an LSESU Diversity Guide Book. Remembrance: I want to institutionalise Black History Month, Genocide Awareness Week and other events to make them a fixed and permanent activity in the SU calendar. ***** I've been heavily involved, I know how things work and students have put their trust in me before to represent them at NUS. Vote Mohamed Harrath #1 for Anti-Racism. *****

DISABLED OFFICER:

SOPHIE NEWMAN:

Vote Sophie! **Lifting the trophy for disabled students** I will do this in 3 key areas. (1) Raising Awareness of disabilities on campus. I will work with the LSE Disability and Wellbeing Service to tackle prejudice surrounding disabilities so students feel comfortable identifying as disabled ensuring that everyone gets support. (2) Campaigning with disabled students on campus. I will work with the Education Officer to ensure that lecture notes and lecture recordings are available to all disabled students. I will campaign for ISSA computers in quiet areas of the library. I will work with the LSE Disability and Wellbeing Service to make examination arrangements clearer. (3) Campaigning with disabled students against cuts. Disabled people and their families are amongst the hardest hit by government cuts to benefits and services needed to live their lives. I am committed to mobilising LSE students to fight this. Vote Sophie!

JADE SYMONDS:

Disability, long-term illness and wellbeing affect a vast range of the student body and as Disabled Students Officer I will strive to achieve more INCLUSION, AWARENESS and UNDERSTANDING on behalf of these students. By forming a cross-Liberation group the SU can campaign to achieve more INCLUSION and challenge the negative perceptions and treatment some students may face by uniting the fight for equality. Establishing an 'Awareness Agenda' will provide continuous work and campaigning empowering more disabled students to talk openly about disability and share their experiences. This agenda will endeavour to create more AWARENESS for the wide range of disabilities found at LSE by involving the student body through discussions, media projects and celebrating Disability History Month. A new UNDERSTANDING of disabilities is necessary in order to defeat current misconceptions and provide a safe environment for students to achieve their full potential. Vote Jade: Perceive Disability.

ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICER:

NAOMI RUSSELL:

VOTE OMI RUSSELL YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS OFFICER** Justice with Sustainability: Hand in Hand! ** An Environment and Ethics Officer who will: * Create a more sustainable, ethical campus! * Continue LSE's strong tradition of solidarity and promoting social justice* *Encourage activism on campus and beyond* *Build on the fantastic success of this year's Green Week and more!* * Carry on Re-Love and the Food Co-op –and try and expand this to include fresh produce* * Compliment surcharges on bottled water with increased access to drinking water on campus especially Lower Ground Library and NAB* Explore reducing the environmental impact of our Union by further limiting the use of disposable items* *Bring my personal passion, enthusiasm and drive to implementing positive change on campus!* * VOTE OMI RUSSELL* * YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS OFFICER**

ESTOS

PART TIME OFFICERS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' OFFICER:

JAD LADZINSKI:

Timely communication: Working together with the educational officer will ensure that the needed documents and timetables are delivered to students early enough and that the LSE100 exams are not scheduled outside the term dates again. *** International week- a week of international solidarity: Celebrating different cultures at LSE is important but so is raising awareness about global issues and oppression around the world. International week should become a space to share the experiences of struggle for justice around the world. Inviting speakers and organising events will give a voice to the oppressed and bring international solidarity onto our campus. *** International students for internationalism: Our student union has a proud history of campaigning on international issues. Be it Apartheid in South Africa or the occupation of Palestine, what our student union does get noticed. As the international students' officer I will ensure this legacy is continued.

DIANA YU:

For next year, I have three main goals to improve the international experience at LSE. First, I will plan more events that promote culture and diversity on campus. Judging from the success of International Week, it is clear that cultural societies want to get involved together. Second, students studying abroad in England should have the opportunity to experience all that it has to offer. As International Students' Officer, I will secure more chances to explore England, like trips open to all students or small outings in London. Third, I will seek the input of international students on issues that concern them. I will work to break down academic barriers by raising awareness of available tools, like the Language Centre. I will campaign for the interests of international students on issues both on campus and off, such as possible changes to visa requirements. I will make sure their voices are heard.

LGBT OFFICER:

JOHN PEART:

It's time to do things differently. -- We need campaigns that work. I WILL: • Launch an LGBT marriage and relationships campaign. • Campaign for accessible, gender neutral facilities for transgender students. • Fight for dedicated hardship funding for students made homeless because they are LGBT. • Tackle prejudice and discrimination at our university with the biggest anti-homophobia campaign we've ever seen! -- We need better representation. I WILL: • Reform our community representation; support community voting and merge the LGBT society and assembly, giving us strength in numbers. -- We need to build a community. I WILL: • Plan LGBT events in every hall. • Plan frequent events for LGBT women. • Make Pride Week and LGBT History Month a real opportunity to show it's OK to be gay! -- It's time to make our community stronger, freer, and prouder. It's time to do things differently.

WOMENS' OFFICER:

ALICE STOTT:

Unite Improve communication between societies, Women's Assembly and women students; create a Beaver column collating relevant events on campus and in London; join up women's movements across University of London and volunteering opportunities; supporting FemSoc book group as a space for women on campus; plan for the new Students Center to include a room for women and other liberation groups. **Educate** Work to make gender a module in LSE100; grow International Women's Day with Annual Fund support; ensure women are represented in events such as Black History Month; work with the AU for pledges around White Ribbon Day using LGBT Society's model. **Support** Make bigger and better 'A grrrls guide to London' an information pack given out to female freshers; promote 'Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment'; offer self-defense classes. Increase women's representation on campus: offer support to women thinking of running for office including public speaking workshops.

MANIFESTO

PART TIME OFFICERS

STUDENT TRUSTEE (FOUR POSITIONS):

LUKAS SLOTHUUS:

Vote for experience, knowledge, and dedication - vote Lukas! I've been a Sabbatical Officer and Trustee this past year, and therefore know exactly what is required of a Trustee. I have all the necessary skills, know how to read the budgets, and have brought several constructive proposals to the Trustee Board in the past year. I didn't miss a single Board meeting and I always come prepared and ready to hold our finance team to account. It is extremely important to ensure continuity in the Trustee Board - with virtually all other Trustees being replaced this summer, I will help the new Trustees settle in and I am the only candidate who can provide this essential continuity. Let Lukas-aid your Trustee Board, vote Lukas #1 for Trustee!

RAYOMAND RATANSHA GILDER:

No manifesto submitted.

DIVA VAISH:

Fellow students, as a Trustee I will make sure that your Union's values and its finance will remain safe. Having been involved in various societies in the SU I understand how the Union functions. I have a strong moral compass, am rational and pragmatic, and I understand the values that we as students stand for. I believe the Students' Union must be ethical and the actions of its executives must be transparent and accountable. Vote for me as I am not afraid to ask difficult questions or stand up for our issues. I will work to secure your rights to resources and ensure they are efficiently and fairly used. Vote Diva Vaish #1 for the Trustee board. Count on someone that can count.

JASON WONG:

The students of LSE are too great and exceptional to be let down by a student union that is so completely out of touch. 1) £104,000 of our money is spent on 4 Sabbatical Officers each year when most students can't name one single thing they've done. This is madness. Let's stop paying the Sabbatical Officers and with the £104,000 saved, all undergraduates can receive a free £30 credit on their sQuid cards. 2) The SU overseas a £2mn which is hidden from students, I will fight for greater transparency because we should know how our money is being spent. 3) I won't approve any accounts where the SU uses our money to promote their far left politics or phony campaigns. Join me in this fight to take our student union back. Find out more and get involved on: [Facebook.com/JasonForLSE](https://www.facebook.com/JasonForLSE).

MEHAK ADIL:

Trust Mehak for Trustee - ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY WITHIN OUR UNION - I want to make the issues that matter to you heard. I'm an extremely hardworking, driven and committed individual who wants to make a difference. * I aim to make the Trustee Board AN ACTIVE, REPRESENTATIVE BODY. * STANDING UP FOR FAIR SALARIES - I will ensure all SU staff are paid fairly. They are the backbone of our union and we should treat them well. * LOOK FOR FUNDRAISING SOURCES FOR THE UNION - More funds for the budget, more funds for societies, more funds for you. * CAMPAIGNING FOR CHEAPER FOOD AT SU outlets - The last thing we should have to worry about is how much food costs day in, day out. * CAMPAIGN FOR CLEANER SU OUTLETS - The Quad & Three Tuns should be better maintained seriously! Vote Mehak #1 for Trustee!

ESTOS

PART TIME OFFICERS

DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE (FIVE POSITIONS):

JOE ANDERSON:

I *love* democracy. I have the IDEAS and EXPERIENCE we need to ENGAGE more students and to protect democracy in LSESU. If elected, I will be a DEDICATED, COMPETENT and IMPARTIAL committee member devoted to guarding our democracy, and holding the Executive to account. I WILL: ensure UGM attendance is monitored and reported; if shown to be a problem, develop a strategy to get more students from underrepresented departments participating at UGMs; and work closely with LIBERATION campaigns to ensure that all students get their voices heard. I have experience within LSESU, as a society secretary and treasurer. I have also been a SU President and college governor in the FE sector, with a record of ACTION and SUCCESS, doubling election turnout in one year. VOTE JOE ANDERSON #1 FOR AN INCLUSIVE, OPEN and DEMOCRATIC STUDENTS' UNION.

HASSAN ARIF:

Hassan Arif – Reviving the UGM! 'I AM' PASSIONATE about participation, committed to the CONSTITUTION and in love with COMMON SENSE! These are qualities required for a DC Officer to GET PEOPLE BACK TO THE UGM! By doing this, we can make our Student Union fair, open and representative and return it to its former GLORY! 'I WILL' ??? Increase UGM participation especially from first years ??? Increase awareness about the Democracy Committee – posting videos on the SU website and on a DC blog on upcoming events ??? Make the Democracy Committee transparent and simple ??? Let students know more about what the SU does 'I HAVE' been a student liaison officer in the past and represented students' views and fought for their demands, worked with my local council and campaigned for my school to improve road safety. Vote Hassan#1 for Democracy Committee!

SHERELLE DAVIDS:

Experience**I have learnt extensively about Student Union democracy over the past year in my role as Anti-Racism officer. Democratic structures and SU policy need to be made more accessible to new students. UGM is central to our union**The Union General Meeting is central to democracy at LSESU. As a loyal attendee of the UGM, I am aware more needs to be done to prevent it being controlled by a small number of student union hacks. Minority representation**As an officer who has held student assemblies, I feel there is a lack of use and visibility of them at the union. Assemblies are democratic and essential in facilitating autonomy for liberation groups. It should be the job of the democracy committee to promote these assemblies which will make sure our democracy is representative of all minority and interest groups on campus. Active assemblies will widen the demographic of student participation.

RACHEL QUAH:

I am a fun-loving first year who debates, dances, helps out in the International Students' Committee and volunteers in my spare time. I am running for a position on the Democracy Committee because I see it as a way of contributing back to the student body in a way that I can best. I was a member of the student council in secondary school where I was considered as being impartial, firm and non-partisan, qualities that I believe are important in fulfilling the role of an independent arbiter which being in the Democracy Committee is about. I believe that all students deserve to have their opinions valued and their suggestions duly considered. I am committed to ensuring that the democratic procedures, specified by the constitution, are upheld in a transparent manner and no one is impeded from raising their concerns. At the same time, I also believe in engaging more people in the activities of the SU to ensure maximum representation.

JAY STOLL:

Student politics has become irrelevant at LSE because there is no ambition. Bring in celebrities, hot food and a sound and light show to the UGM.. the AU will follow. Boom.

ZOHAIB ZAFRULLAH:

My name is *Zohaib Zafrullah* and I have to confess that I'm a Democracy geek. Others watch reality TV, whilst I watch Arab Spring analysis and get irrationally aggravated with most of it. Yet I have never been to a UGM. Why? Well I don't know what is going on there. For me like most LSE students, it's hard to balance work, play and investment banking. So I don't want to risk wasting an hour of my day. However if I knew what was going to be discussed I could decide which weeks I want to go. Not everyone will come every week to the UGM, but everyone will want to come at least one week. If elected by you I will make sure we discuss things you ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT and you know exactly what is being discussed. I'm after real change and rigorous discussion, help me achieve it.



art
28 February 2012



Bingo | **Mondrian** | **Nicholson in Parallel** | **The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel** | **Homeland** | **Perfume Genius** | **Hay Fever** | **Food for Thinkers** | **LFW AW12**

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* * *

Cover

The Afghan Girl, 2012

By Paniz Geder of the
LSESU Visual Arts Society

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Bingo, Young Vic



Director: Angus Jackson
Playwright: Edward Bond
Key cast: Patrick Stewart, Ellie Haddington, Richard McCabe, Tom Godwin, Joanne Howarth, Alex Price
At the Young Vic until 31 March 2012

In recent years London has seen some excellent revivals of Edward Bond's work, and *Bingo: Scenes of Money and Death*, a portrayal of the final months and death of William Shakespeare, is no exception. Bond typically provides a lucid and flowing narrative; his plays feature layers of apparently inconsequential sub plots which are gradually stripped away so as to reveal the crux of the narrative, in this case the failure of a once great man to cope with the monotony of a mundane life. At his Warwickshire home Shakespeare, played by Patrick Stewart, is a man struggling to deal with old age. Stewart cuts a dejected figure on stage – a shadow of his former self – though his presence is commanding, it is often as though he were not there. Stewart brings a brooding silence to most scenes, his lines are hardly pronounced, fading slowly into the audience. A Shakespeare of few words is a slightly unnerving prospect to see on stage, of all places.

A hubbub of peasants complement Shakespeare's day-to-day goings on – they are a lively addition and appear to be a welcome distraction from what would otherwise be further introspection for "Will." Shakespeare has a sense of sympathy for the peasants on his land, embarrassed when his friend and fellow writer Ben Jonson (Richard McCabe)

CATHERINE ASHMORE



Patrick Stewart and Ellie Haddington

pulls him up on his good fortune, yet too numb to do anything about it. Johnson's arrival at the beginning of the second act is a sticking point in the play, mostly due to McCabe's performance. He presents a boisterous and good-humoured Johnson: loyal to Shakespeare, but honest too. Ultimately it is the murder of a young peasant woman (Michelle Tate) who inspires Shakespeare into action, albeit merely to accelerate his ruin. Bond's plays have come under some criticism in the past for overly violent scenes, most notably *Saved* (1964), and *Bingo*

did not disappoint. The young woman is found crucified, towering over the stage, her limp body an image that will return to haunt Shakespeare. Yet it is not her death that irks him, rather his failure in not having protected her. The tragedy is that the great writer cannot connect with his feelings in the same fashion as the characters he created. His descent into madness does not even get close to the troughs touched by *King Lear*.

It must have been difficult for Bond to resist the temptation to include reams of clichéd lines, since William

Shakespeare is his main character, though he does indulge in several fine literary outbursts as the play gathers pace. One of the closing scenes shows Shakespeare rolling around in snow like a "child's hand fumbling in an old man's beard – to be dead in the morning." *Bingo's* appeal is the delicacy with which it deals with the demise of one of Britain's most precious of natural treasures and the Young Vic's production is generally very good.

└ Laurence Vardaxoglou

Hay Fever, Noel Coward Theatre



Director: Sean Holmes
Playwright: Noel Coward
Key cast: Lindsay Duncan, Olivia Colman, Jeremy Northam, Kevin R. McNally,
At Noel Coward Theatre until 2 June 2012

The central joke of *Hay Fever* is that throughout the play the characters are to varying degrees, acting. For the real life actors that play those characters, the danger is that acting squared becomes overacting which is annoying yet rather amusing. There was certainly a smattering of overemphasis in the first act, where hyperbole is not called for. However, in the riotous second and third acts, this is exactly what the script demands, and this stellar cast hit every note of excruciating, maddening hilarity. I actually cried with laughter on at least two occasions, and got an uncontrollable case of the giggles on another.

Lindsay Duncan plays Judith Bliss, a recently retired star of the London stage, whose bohemian family continue to live together in country pile where they ape the aristocratic lives of those who presumably once owned their house. Judith may have ceased treading the boards, but she is far from finished with acting. She, her husband and two children are engaged in acting out a real life melodrama that echoes the theatre that made her name. Duncan overdoes it in the first act, which is primarily about the inter-family dynamic. In her breeches and wellies, the result is that the performance takes on something of a drag queen-like quality, which misses the comedic mark somewhat.

However, this all changes after the interval. The Bliss family are not content to play alone, each member of the household having invited a different guest (read victim) to stay for the weekend. The guests are totally ignored, until they are pounced upon, and used

KEITH PATTERSON



The cast of Hay Fever

as pawns in what amounts to nothing more than after-dinner sport for Judith and her co-stars. Here Duncan gets it exactly right, weaving her twisted web and squeezing every bit of comedy out of Coward's delightful text.

Freddie Fox brilliantly inhabits the role of Simon Bliss, the foppish son, who constantly bickers with his boyish sister Sorel, played by Phoebe Waller-Bridge. An exquisitely costumed Olivia Coleman is perfect as Myra, who arrives with her own game in mind, before realising she is hopelessly outmatched by the Bliss

family. Every individual performance is strong, but the best moments are the ensemble sections, with some of the most rewarding acting coming in the awkward silences that pepper the action.

Bunny Christie's extensive and attractive set reflects the bohemian nature of the family, with half-finished paintings leaning against the wall, and in a possible hint at the sexual liberality of the family, a set of Kudu horns are mounted above the stairs. Slightly confusingly, the building itself appears to be some sort of warehouse, which would place

the family in a more modern context than the costume and action would seem to suggest. This slight distraction notwithstanding, the production is utterly charming, totally engrossing and downright hilarious. As the guests sneak out the next morning, one is left with a tender feeling as the Bliss family settle down back into their normal routine. They may need others for occasional blood sport, but when all is said and done they clearly rely on and only truly need each other.

└ Rory Creedon

Singin' in the Rain, Palace Theatre



Director: Jonathan Church
Choreography: Andrew Wright
Key cast: Adam Cooper, Daniel Crossley, Scarlett Strallen, Katherine Kingsley

At Palace Theatre until 29 September 2012

As one of what must be very few whose first experience of *Singin' in the Rain* will be on the stage rather than screen, any comparison to its well-loved 1952 film counterpart is almost impossible. To fresh eyes, this is a well-executed transfer of the classic story to the stage. It is all singin', all dancin' and the perfect pick-me-up. I challenge you to leave without a smile.

It is the 1920s, with the transition to the talking picture underway, our stars of the silent movie screen are struggling to make the change. Katherine Kingsley's Lina Lamont, a New Yorker whose voice doesn't quite fit her image, is incredibly funny and when she sings it is nothing short of grating. Kathy Selden, employed to double as her voice and played by Scarlett Strallen certainly steals the show where vocals are concerned and her rendition of "You are My Lucky Star" is beautifully heartfelt. If

Strallen has the pipes then it is certainly Adam Cooper who has the moves – his Don Lockwood is full of charm and his dance full of grace. He takes on the highly anticipated title song with gusto; in a torrential downpour, the front rows hide behind their coats as he taps his way towards them taking great relish in every splash, apparently hoping to soak as many audience members as possible. It is incredibly satisfying to watch. With Daniel Crossley as the jovial sidekick and general ideas man Cosmo Brown, the main four are undeniably strong and the chorus follows suit.

The choreography by Andrew Wright is a delight; although not without significant reference to the film, is innovative and engaging. "Broadway Melody" and the full chorus reprisal of "Singin' in the Rain" for the curtain call are of particular note. It is aided with a great set and lighting design, and clips of film projected at regular intervals onto a screen at the back of the stage are a great touch, working brilliantly as a vehicle for comedy.

This is a show to add to the growing list of austerity-beaters that are flooding the West End. It is funny, accomplished and inescapably joyful. Just let it rain.

— Hannah Payne



The cast of *Singin' in the Rain*

Mindset behind the scenes

The influence of the media on public perception can be incredibly strong. A single tear shed by an innocent girl, captured by "terrorists" in a movie, is emotive enough to lead its audience to condemn the depicted people, their ideology, culture and origin. With such strong and acknowledged reverberations, can it be possible that we still fail to acknowledge the hidden agenda behind these productions?

As our guest at the upcoming LSE Literary Festival, Professor Tony Shaw will guide us through a historical journey of "terrorists," as depicted in movies. By focussing on eight Western movies, his presentation will undoubtedly inspire debate regarding the relationship between reality and art. As he remarks in our interview, "A 'terrorist' movie is neither the effect nor the cause of a real-life terrorist attack." Regarding whether a thematically "terrorist" film is ever strong enough to aggravate a group into action, he describes the provocative effect of *The Battle of Algiers* on the Black Panther Party in the USA, citing it as an example of life "imitating" art. Nonetheless, art can also imitate

reality. He brings our attention to the emergence of a new genre of terrorist movies inspired by the September 11 attacks. Chris Morris's *Four Lions* (2010) illustrates the emerging strand of satirical terrorist movies, wherein comedy demonstrates its power to explore depths as yet unreached by purely dramatic works.

Questioned on how he became interested in this particular niche, Shaw's answer was fuelled by personal experience. "The Falklands War in 1982 was the event which sparked my interest," he shared. His experience during the Gulf War brought the importance of the media to life. Further investigation of the relationship between war and international conflict brought Shaw behind the scenes of the media, and especially film, in order to fully comprehend their impact.

Film recommendations include works by the Greek-born French filmmaker Costa-Gavras, such as *Missing* (1982) and *State of Siege* (1972) – both of them essential viewing, as is Shaw's presentation at the LSE Literary Festival on the 2 March 2012.

— Aylin Yildiz



Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

The dearth and depth of nobility



As a poet, Constantine P. Cavafy has not produced a distinct work for review, as opposed to a collection of verse, style, and an artistic "journey." From the works of his that I am familiar with, I can cite the singular pieces "Voices" (1904) and "The God Abandons Anthony" (1911) as personal favourites, though they are unified by nothing more than a melancholic tone, which while characteristic of Cavafy's style, is not wholly representative of it.

These two poems exemplify Cavafy's quite distinct interests. "Voices" is highly nostalgic, aware of youth's transience, while both accepting and rejecting age. It is anguished yet remains dignified, and one of many poems concerned with lost and unconsummated love.

Similarly, "The God Abandons Anthony" is a poem of acceptance in the face of great loss. It is a heartrending incision into Plutarch's story of the siege of Alexandria. The city's hero, Anthony, hears the sounds of a procession pass-

ing through and then out of Alexandria, and realises that it is his protector, the god Bacchus (Dionysus), deserting him. Cavafy's poem is a call for courage and perseverance, but most importantly, acceptance "as is right for [him] that proved worthy of this kind of city," from the hero, bereaved and besieged. In his poems Cavafy gives the actors of Greek mythology voices, he grounds the heroic feats with real human experience, respectively shaming or beautifying Mount Olympus and the world.

Cavafy encourages us to live with the same dignity and nobility as the ancient Greeks, while testing the moral depth of the myths. However, despite this preoccupation with the divine, his writing is nonetheless infused with melancholy, loneliness and eroticism. Simultaneously abandoned to and struggling with his homosexuality, Cavafy lived and died alone.

— Rachel Holmes

The God Abandons Antony

When suddenly, at midnight, you hear an invisible procession going by with exquisite music, voices, don't mourn your luck that's failing now, work gone wrong, your plans all proving deceptive—don't mourn them uselessly. As one long prepared, and graced with courage, say goodbye to her, the Alexandria that is leaving. Above all, don't fool yourself, don't say it was a dream, your ears deceived you: don't degrade yourself with empty hopes like these. As one long prepared, and graced with courage, as is right for you who proved worthy of this kind of city, go firmly to the window and listen with deep emotion, but not with the whining, the pleas of a coward; listen—your final delectation—to the voices, to the exquisite music of that strange procession, and say goodbye to her, to the Alexandria you are losing.

— Constantine P. Cavafy T

Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard

Mondrian | | Nicholson in Parallel

In the 1930s, Ben Nicholson and Piet Mondrian were often presented together as the leading force behind the movement now termed Geometric Abstraction. This intimate, two-room exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery at Somerset House explores the relationship between the two artists as it flourished in the turbulent pre-war years.

The birth of the relationship was Nicholson's visit to Mondrian's Montparnasse studio in 1934. A display case in the centre of the first room of the exhibition records his thoughts: "His studio...was an astonishing room," Nicholson wrote, "the feeling in his studio must have been very like the feeling in one of those hermits' caves where

lions used to go to have thorns taken out of their paws."

At the time of their meeting, Nicholson was gaining a strong reputation in Britain, and Mondrian, more than twenty years older, was known across Europe for his pioneering work. The friendship between the two was the first step in making Mondrian a household name in the UK. Indeed, his first English patron was Nicholson's first wife, Winifred, who purchased *Composition with Double Line and Yellow* and displayed it in her kitchen.

This painting is displayed early in the exhibition, along with Nicholson's *Six Circles* (1933). Using this as a starting point the curators are able to show that

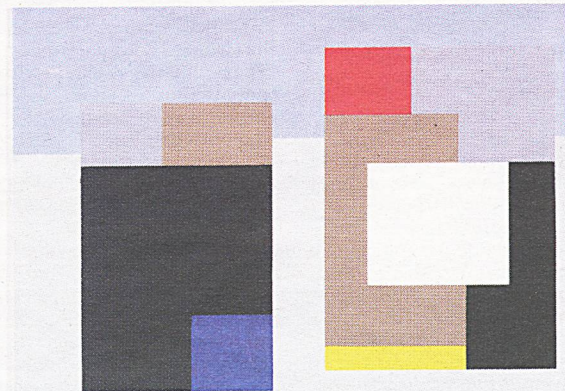
when they encountered one another each was already set on the course of abstract art, though clearly at different stages of their careers. While *Composition with Double Line and Yellow* shows Mondrian's characteristic dark-lined grid, *Six Circles* is ostensibly hand-carved, a far cry from the perfect geometry of Nicholson's later works.

The paintings in the exhibition alternate between the two artists, and show a progression of their respective styles after the onset of war catalysed their affiliation with one another. As Neville Chamberlain finalised the cession of the Sudetenland to the Nazis in September 1938, Mondrian sought to escape the growing unease in continental Europe. On Nicholson's invitation, he moved from his Paris studio to Hampstead, where the two lived in adjoining houses.

This period was evidently a fruitful one; Nicholson's *White Reliefs*, among his finest works, take on a stronger geometric tone that evidently draws on Mondrian's rigid latticework of black lines. Nicholson does not, however, paint the line onto his pieces. Rather, he carves layers into the wood, allowing the shadows created to delineate the structure of the piece.

At the same time, Mondrian began to experiment with pushing the colour to the edges of the canvas, seeking what he termed a "dynamic equilibrium" in his composition. Though it is clear that their work is distinct in terms of execution, the middle of the exhibition also makes it apparent that the quest for balance in their work united them. Such subtle influences, that clearly have a temporal element to them, would no doubt be lost in an exhibition of a larger scale.

Nicholson also continued to further Mondrian's career in England. He edited the publication *Circle - International Survey of Constructive Art*, and included a number of Mondrian's works. He also helped arrange for Mondrian's work to be exhibited in England, with three paintings being included in the seminal *Abstract and Concrete* exhibition, where



Ben Nicholson, 1940-43 (*Two Forms*)

Nicholson and Mondrian exhibited in parallel for the first time.

Mondrian's stay in London was cut short by the Blitz; one of the diary entries on show displays his uneasiness at having to pick up a "gas masque" from the town hall. Even in the short time he was a resident in the city, he developed a fondness for it: "The artistic situation doesn't differ greatly here from that in Paris. But one is even more 'free' - London is big."

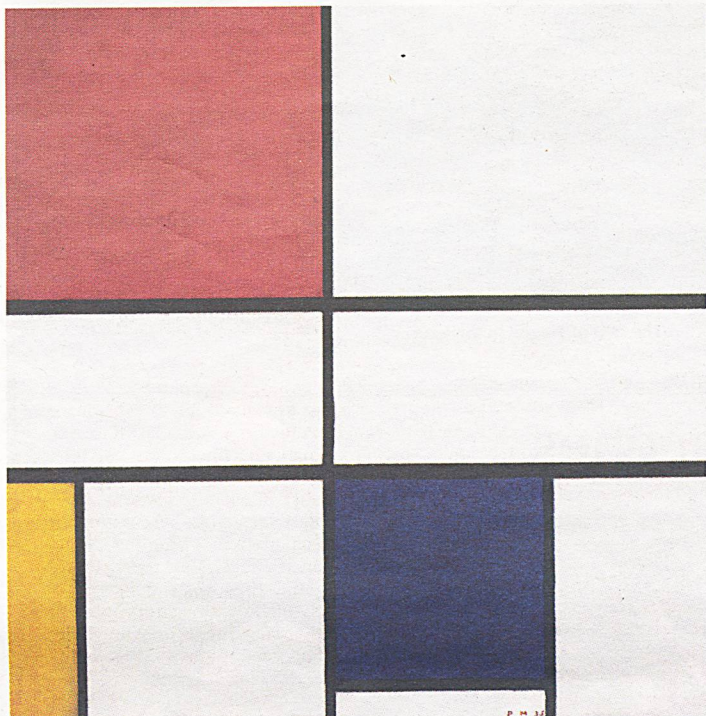
The exhibition ends with a celebration of their friendship, in the form of Nicholson's *Two Forms* (1938) and Mondrian's *Composition No. 1, with Red* presented alongside each other. Both pieces are portrait and elongated; *Two*

Forms is perhaps the peak of Nicholson's work in this style. It draws upon the work of his second wife, Barbara Hepworth, as much as it does Mondrian.

In a season of retrospectives, this compact, two-room exhibition can pride itself on a careful selection of work that explores an undiscovered area with great flair. The works have been sourced from all over the world; each piece is exceptional, yet is installed with sensitivity to its surroundings.

↳ Shyam Desai

Mondrian | | Nicholson in Parallel is at the Courtauld Gallery until 20 May 2012



Piet Mondrian, *Composition C (No. III), with Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1935

Visual Arts Society

Exhibition launch night
Monday 5th March
7pm
The Quad
Live music, food and drinks!

This Means War

●●○○○○

Director: McG
Screenplay: Timothy Dowling, Simon Kinberg
Key cast: Reese Witherspoon, Chris Pine, Tom Hardy, Til Schweiger
Year: 2012
Runtime: 97 minutes
In cinemas 2 March 2012

This Means War stars Reese Witherspoon as Lauren Scott in a role the actress seems to have taken on before. Just as she was torn between her childhood love and a new fiancé in *Sweet Home Alabama*, and between a virginal boy back home and the alluring Sebastian in *Cruel Intentions*, again our heroine is torn between two lovers, each of whom she loves in a different way. Witherspoon, though a talented actress, is far from stretching or challenging herself in this role. The scene that stands out as having been the most challenging for her finds her dancing around her home in a way that was probably meant to seem carefree but is instead a bit forced. In fact, the only scene in which the audience really seems to cheer for Lauren is early on in the movie when she confidently tells off FDR Foster (Chris Pine) as he tries to pick her up in a video store. The rest of the time, she comes off as rather pathetic.

Tom Hardy and Chris Pine star as the men in Lauren's life, best friends who become enemies – or perhaps more correctly “frenemies” – as each falls fast and hard for Lauren. Their relationship with each other, however, is a bit confusing as they seem to have the same grandmother despite one being British and the other American, with no reference being made to their being brothers, step-brothers, or cousins. Also, though they both exhibit good comedic timing, the lack of variety in the material becomes tiresome within the first half of the film.

The plot is painfully predictable: a successful woman who doubts she will ever find love is suddenly caught between two extraordinarily handsome men. Not knowing what to do, she turns to her hilarious and more experienced best friend for advice and sets off on a mission to date them both. She starts to fall for both men, who both love her in return, but all takes a turn for the worse when they inevitably get into a violent fight right in front of her.

Unsurprisingly, what is most disappointing in this movie is its utter lack of substance. Although early trailers made it out to be an entertaining romantic comedy slash fast-paced CIA thriller with three proven Hollywood actors, it turned out to be fluff of the sort you would expect from actors who are only doing this because they could not get a better job. The obligatory action sequences are formulaic and obviously geared to merely pacify the unfortunate boyfriend who did not have a say in the film choice. The premise might have been more believable with a less mature cast, but from the beginning it is simply unbelievable that a 30-something woman could be so flustered to meet an ex-boyfriend in the street or that one highly-ranked CIA agent could behave like such a frat boy and another like a naïve, inexperienced puppy – especially the latter, who is divorced and has a child.

A pleasant surprise in this movie came in the form of Chelsea Handler as Lauren's best friend, as the token comic relief. Given Handler's biting sense of humour on the small screen, it is refreshing to see her moderate her often inappropriate – though still on point and funny – remarks with a touch of humanity as a wife and mother. It is evident that Handler has a knack as an actress and is not just a telegenic social commentator.



Tom Hardy and Chris Pine are rivals for Reese Witherspoon's affections

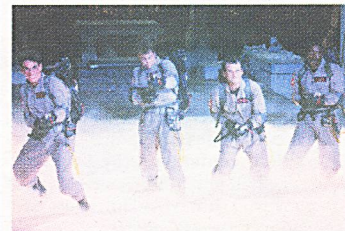
The tale climaxes with a high-speed chase involving an evil foreign villain and, because the movie has lasted long enough, it is imperative that the woman makes a choice. In the end, Lauren makes a seemingly arbitrary decision about which man she belongs with. Considering that both men created personas which were specially tailored to woo the lady and did not reflect their true selves, and that they let her best friend career off a road and fly into a lake without an ounce of concern for her safety, it is doubt-

ful that a relationship with either guy could have longevity. But, since there is no satisfaction in a romantic comedy that does not end with the heroine in someone's arms, she does choose, and the movie ends with the inevitable movie montage of happy moments in the near future.

This Means War is definitely not a film for thought, but by all means go ahead if you want a light rom-com with a few good laughs.

↳ Rachel Lehman

Events



Ghostbusters

5 Mar at The Yard (Rooftop Film Club)
 The Yard is temporarily hosting the Rooftop Film Club for three weeks only. A modern classic starring Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, Sigourney Weaver, and – of course – the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. Who you gonna call? Enjoy the supernatural farce in what is perhaps London's only warehouse cinema.



Mysteries of Lisbon

2-20 Mar at BFI Southbank
 This four-hour epic was Chilean director Raúl Ruiz's last film and arguably his finest. So if you did not have the chance to catch this Proustian masterpiece when it was released last year, here it is again. An adaptation of Camilo Castelo Branco's novel, Ruiz deftly weaves together the loves and lives of early-eighteenth century Portuguese aristocracy into a sprawling epic across generations.

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

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Director: John Madden
Screenplay: Ol Parker, Deborah Moggach
Key cast: Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Penelope Wilton, Dev Patel, Tom Wilkinson, Celia Imrie
Year: 2011
Runtime: 124 minutes
In cinemas now

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel is a mouthful of a name that for some reason puts one in mind of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* or *Borat: Cultural Learning of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*. Well, this film is nothing like either of these films. Those films were both excellent.

This is perhaps too harsh. *Hotel* is not bad. The basic premise, of a group of OAPs go to an idyllic retirement home in India, only to find that the online advertisement had been doctored, is undeniably schmaltzy, but has potential. Additionally, it has a cracking cast: Maggie Smith, a racist former housekeeper who is in India for a hip operation; Bill Nighy and Penelope Wilton, a couple who have squandered their retirement money; Judi Dench, a recent widow; Tom Wilkinson, a former High Court judge who returns to India to find his boyhood love; and Celia Imrie and Ronald Pickup, two lonely old hearts looking for romance. The film seemed at least mildly enjoyable, and it looked like it could have me – someone who cries at *Mean Girls* and *John Lewis* commercials – shed a tear.

In some ways, it was mildly enjoyable. Dev Patel, playing the hotel's young incompetent manager trying to prove his worth to his overbearing mother – is incredibly charming. He has a strangely awkward grace to him, and manages to



Maggie Smith, Ronald Pickup, Bill Nighy, Penelope Wilton, Celia Imrie, Judi Dench, and Tom Wilkinson, en route to the Marigold Hotel

hold his own against the much more experienced actors, at the same time providing most of the film's humour. His love interest, played by newcomer Tena Desae, is equally sparkly and fun. Filmed on location, India is breathtakingly beautiful and vibrant. The Marigold Hotel itself is a beauty too: old, falling down and a shambles, but basically sound, a lot like the characters who are staying there. As a group, the actors have a nice sort of camaraderie, a collective chemistry that undoubtedly comes from being a set of accomplished and confident masters of their trade. Particularly excellent is Nighy, the man who made being the tentacle-faced Davy Jones in *Pirates of*

the Caribbean seem natural. He is at total ease in his role of suppressed, loyal husband to Penelope Wilton. The film is, at times, a little bit sentimental: the scenes where Wilkinson meets his lost love, and the friendship between Maggie Smith's character and an untouchable, spring to mind in particular. The film does not entirely disappoint on the promise and potential of its advertising.

It seems a bit niggardly and churlish to criticise experienced, hallowed thespians like Dench and Wilkinson and a director like John Madden, but the whole thing is just a little bit lacklustre. It was as though all these incredible actors were just being a tiny bit – there

is no other word for it – lazy. There was no real effort, no real attempt to connect with each other or the audience. Patel and Desae were the only ones who seemed to be working hard, and perhaps this was because they were trying to prove themselves, or perhaps it is because they are still young. It was not that the older actors were bad; it just seemed as though they were resting comfortably on their laurels. Particularly unconvincing was the supposed romance between Nighy and Dench, a hint of chemistry would have been nice. Although I think it is important that we are not constantly bombarded in the cinema by impossibly perfect youth, for a film that is supposed

to be promoting old people, *Hotel* was hugely condescending to the elderly, to India, and to hotels. Desae's character worked in a call centre, for goodness's sake. This is not exactly breaking down stereotypes. All the bright Indian colours could not make up for the general paleness of the film.

And so, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* is a film that confirms mildly racist stereotypes and makes the elderly seem even more boring. It could have easily been called *OAPs in India: Maggie Smith does a Cockney Accent, or even We've All Got Oscars, So Why Bother Acting?*

↳ Isabella Silver

Live: First Aid Kit

First Aid Kit's sophomore album, *The Lion's Roar*, currently sits second in the Swedish charts, having entered at number one four weeks ago. Yet the sisters from the Stockholm suburb of Enskede remain relatively unknown outside of Scandinavia – *The Lion's Roar* remains in the Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Danish charts, but peaked at thirty-five during its two week stay in the UK charts.

Johanna and Klara Söderberg began making waves in 2008 with their YouTube cover of Fleet Foxes' "Tiger Mountain Peasant Song." A series of further covers posted on YouTube followed in the next year and their song choices – Buffy-Sainte Marie's "Universal Soldier" and Graham Nash's "Simple Man" – make it easy to see where their influences lay. "Emmylou," the second single off *The Lion's Roar*, pays tribute to the singer-songwriters that have informed the band's sound: "I'll be your Emmylou and I'll be your

June/And you'll be my Gram and my Johnny too."

The Lion's Roar marks a significant development for First Aid Kit. It builds on the promise shown in their debut album, *The Big Black and Blue*, with a bigger, fuller, more certain sound while retaining the sisters's appealing, close harmonies. They have developed music that translates well to live performance, and on stage their songs take on a forceful and compelling edge. Indeed, it is on stage that some of the album's numbers really come in to their own. The ethereal "Dance To Another Tune" envelops the room and it is impossible not to be swept up in the nostalgic sentiments of "To A Poet."

Thursday's appearance at Scala forms part of an on-going tour that will see the young Swedes take in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and North America by the end of April. The tour is long, yet the sisters are clearly in their element and perform their songs with

an intensity and passion that seamlessly translates to the audience.

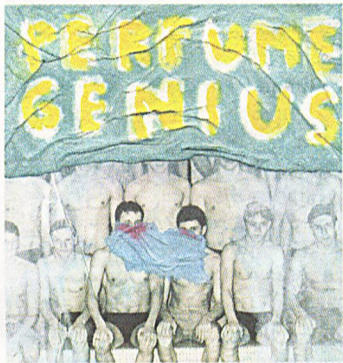
Highlights include an amp-free, acoustic version of their first single, "Ghost Town," and a cover of Fever Ray's "When I Grow Up." Listening to the music it is easy to forget that one half of the band is still in their teens – the last time they performed at Scala, Johanna and Klara Söderberg had to ask for time off school. There is a moment of sibling disagreement when they blame each other for messing up the Swedish birthday song, sung for an eager audience member's friend. But the tone is good-natured and it is clear that this is a partnership that is currently working very well.

Whether this can be a breakthrough year for First Aid Kit remains to be seen. From their showing at Scala, however, it is clear that they are a duo with the potential to emulate the creative partnerships celebrated in "Emmylou."

David Jones



Perfume Genius – Put Your Back N 2 It



crafting a new aesthetic that surpasses what came before with higher production or intense stylistic refinement. If the record fails to do either of these things, it runs the risk of sending the artist into the "sophomore slump," a trap from which many never return.

Seattle-based singer-songwriter Mike Hadreas's Perfume Genius fits the archetypal model of the 2kios independent artist. Hadreas arrived on the scene rather quietly two years ago, dropping a number of disorganised demo tracks on his Myspace towards the end of the past decade before suddenly releasing a full length album on the prestigious indie label Matador Records. To a label executive, learning must have seemed like it was just begging to be followed up with a "better" record. In a technical sense, everything about Perfume Genius's aesthetic could be improved on that album: it was agonisingly lo-fi, hollow-sounding and messy, with plenty of mixing issues and distracting crackles throughout. But to me, all those surface flaws made it that much better. *Learning* was the most affecting and deeply emotional album of 2010, and if it hadn't been

for Titus Andronicus's *The Monitor*, it would have been my favourite.

Nevertheless, every artist must grow and Mike Hadreas is no exception. Perfume Genius is back with a record that attempts to do what most great sophomore records do: develop and change, but not too drastically.

Put Your Back N 2 It is the result, and it differs from its predecessor in a number of ways, some more predictable than others. The most notable difference is the production, which has been completely improved from a technical standpoint. To someone upon whose mind the cheap-sounding crack of Hadreas's fragile voice on *Learning* is forever imprinted, it is actually quite jarring to hear him sing on this record. Hadreas's lead vocals are brought right to the front of the stereo mix, crystal clear and loud enough to completely overpower any of the instrumentation. Based on the mix of this album, it is clear that the intention was to bring the listener's focus to the lead vocals and lyrics, but this seems rather incongruous when one considers the nature of the album's songs themselves. Although the

songs on *Put Your Back N 2 It* are still incredibly sad, they're nowhere near as lyrically affecting nor as personal as those of *Learning*. Instead, most of the record's emotional power is drawn from its overall sonic aesthetic, with Hadreas's evocative vocals as the focal point and the instrumentation and production as support.

Although the spacious soundscapes and lush atmospheres of songs like "AWOL Marine," "17" and the title track certainly procure emotional reactions from me, I can't help but feel that this style over substance approach does not work as well as I would like it to. The electronic-influenced "Floating Spit" tries to build on previous experiments like *Learning*'s "Gay Angels," but ultimately feels too formless to hold my interest.

In my opinion, the best moments on the record are when Hadreas stays closer to his previously established formula of vocals and piano, using the heightened production at his disposal to improve his songs rather than cover them up. On the brief "No Tear" he does just that, displaying an unprecedented confidence

in songwriting while employing pitched down vocal overdubs in the chorus to accentuate this confidence. The gospel-influenced "Take Me Home" feels like the best parts of *Learning* brought to a new level of cohesiveness, with powerful drums and Hadreas's best vocal performance on either record.

With all of the experimentation on this album and the stylistic range between songs, it is hard to gain any sort of coherent message from *Put Your Back N 2 It*. Consequently, it is difficult to view it as a successful record rather than a collection of songs that are individually successful to varying degrees. But in all the mess of styles and sounds that this record encompasses, there are certainly moments that are worth paying close attention to. If anything, it points to a bright future of Perfume Genius releases where Hadreas has grown more comfortable with making his own musical decisions with an aesthetic that suits him the best. That aesthetic is in here somewhere, he just has to find it.

Chris Capello

This week's live highlights

28 Feb: **The War on Drugs** – Electric Ballroom

29 Feb: **Florence + the Machine** – O2 Brixton

1 Mar: **Sharon Van Etten** – Cargo

1 Mar: **The Drums** – Floridita

1 Mar: **Sleigh Bells** – Electric Ballroom

2 Mar: **Grouper** – Swiss Church



Sharon Van Etten, Live in Madison, WI

PartBeat

The office playlist this week...

Sea of Clouds

Treacherous Orchestra: *Origins* (2012)

Untitled

Interpol: *Turn On The Bright Lights* (2002)

Planet Caravan

Black Sabbath: *Paranoid* (1970)

I Couldn't Say It To Your Face

Arthur Russell: *Love is Overtaking Me* (2008)

Reason With me

Sinead O'Connor: *How About I Be Me (And You Be You)?* (2012)



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Food for Thinkers

Professor Sonia Livingstone

What is your staple food?

Nothing very exciting – a bowl of muesli, with fruit and yoghurt – eaten at any and all times of day, usually in front of the computer.

Is there a particular dish that you cook more often than any other?

Hmm, it's probably something pan-fried (salmon, duck, chicken) with slow roasted vegetables (onion, sweet potato, peppers, fennel if I have any to hand); but it could also be risotto – very flexible with what's in the cupboard and I've learned (eventually) to cook it properly.

Do you have a favourite café or restaurant in London?

I've been going to Diwana's Bhel Poori house in Drummond Street since I got my first grant cheque (yes, I was lucky!) in 1979, and recently I've started going back. Fantastic food, an amazing palate of spices and textures, and a buzzy, very informal atmosphere. But I also like checking out restaurants where I live in Finchley – Ballards Lane has a huge variety of cuisines, and then I can home.

If you had to cook one dish for a dinner party, what would it be?

My staple, when in doubt (and in my usual rush), is a hazelnut meringue dessert with vanilla cream and lots of fresh berries on top – it never fails to delight, and takes only 15 minutes to make.

What is the strangest food or dish you've had?

It's got to be my brother-in-law's restaurant in central Tokyo, Andy's Shin-Hinomoto – it took us years to get there to see him, and he was so pleased that he brought out all the strange creatures that live on the sea bed (or so it



seemed) to entice (or horrify) us narrow-minded Brits. I particularly remember the sea pineapple (see the Wikipedia entry). If anyone goes there, and I really recommend it, do say hello from Sonia.

If you could give students a tip about food or eating, what would it be?

I'm a big fan of Nigel Slater's *Real Fast Food* (and *Real Fast Puddings*, and all his other books too) – tasty, easy, cheap, delightful.

What are your favourite soft and hard drinks?

I drink gallons of water, nearly as much tea, and probably too much red wine. Why? The former help me work, the latter helps me to stop working.

Sonia Livingstone is Professor of Social Psychology and Head of the Department of Media and Communications at LSE

Professor Eric Neumayer

What is your staple food?

It used to be potatoes when I lived in Germany, but now it is probably rice, because it's a staple food in Brazil, where my wife is from.

Is there a particular dish you cook more often than any other?

To my embarrassment I have to admit that I do not cook. I totally suck at it. My wife cooks and does about everything else. One regular dish is smoked salmon baked in the oven – very tasty and high in protein and other goodies.

Do you have a favourite café or restaurant in London?

No. I prefer variety and there are so many good places, if you can afford it.

If you had to cook one dish for a dinner party, what would it be?

As I said, I don't cook. But my wife loves to do Bacalhao no forno, which is a very tasty baked cod dish.

What is the strangest food or dish you've had?

Dog in North Korea and bat in the Seychelles. Eating dog will make me seem like a nasty person, but I'm not, I swear. I was invited by my guides and it would have been rude to refuse.



But I ate out of interest. I saw them flying overhead and then on the menu. It wasn't good – too bony.

If you could give students a tip about food or eating what would it be?

Don't try saving money on healthy and good food. What we eat is too important for our body and soul to do so.

What are your favourite soft and hard drinks?

Coke Zero unfortunately, I'm addicted to it. I'm very weak with alcohol, one beer and I'm drunk. It also makes me tired. I do like Caipirinha though, even though the Cachaça inside, made from sugarcane, gives me headache and hangover the next day.

Eric Neumayer is Professor of Environment and Development and Head of the Department of Geography and Environment

Happy to be home?

Homeland is one of the American television shows (along with *Modern Family* and *Boardwalk Empire*) fortunate enough to have the unofficial White House seal of approval. Yes, after a hard day saving or destroying the world (depending on your political persuasion), the President of the United States likes nothing better than unwinding with an episode of this drama series. If it's good enough for Barack Obama, it's probably good enough for you, so read on.

The first episode kicks off with breakneck speed. Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis) is a U.S. marine who has been missing in action in Iraq for eight years. Claire Danes plays Carrie Mathison, a CIA agent who discovers, ten months prior to Brody's release, that an American prisoner in Iraq has been successfully 'turned' by Al Qaeda. When Brody re-

turns to the States to be lauded as a war hero, Mathison suspects that Brody is a double agent, home to perpetrate a terrorist attack on American soil. Mathison begins to illegally spy on the marine and his family. A series of flashbacks to the marine's captivity are sprinkled throughout the episode and cast doubt in the viewer's mind as to his innocence.

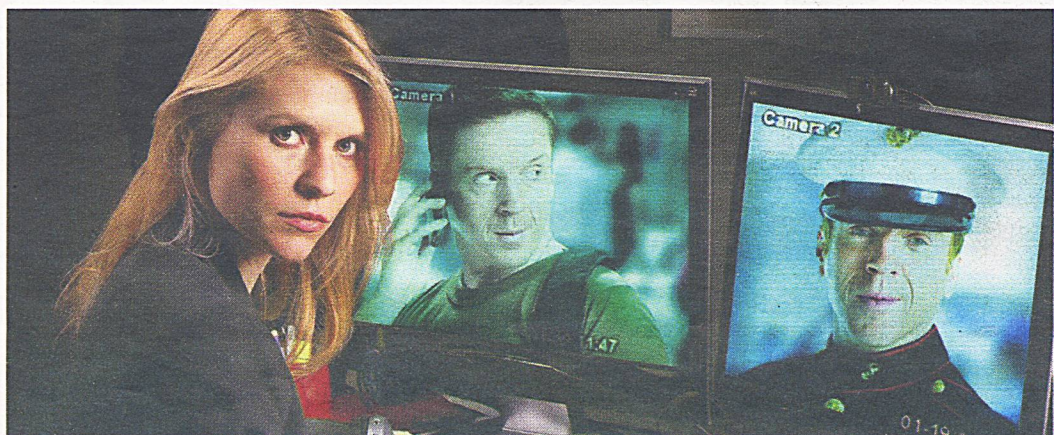
Damian Lewis's portrayal of Brody is capable, his accent authentic, and he is convincing as we see his humanity diminished in the wake of such a brutal incarceration. However, so far, the truly engrossing scenes involve the determined Mathison. While the CIA agent's goal of preventing a terrorist attack is admirable, she appears willing to break any rule to accomplish it. From spying on Brody when he has sex with his wife for the first time since their reunion, to

attempting to seduce her former boss when he discovers her illegal wiretap, Mathison defies our stereotype of a typical heroine. She is determined not to fail, and it is hinted that a personal sense of responsibility from failing to prevent the September 11 attacks is her driving force.

Homeland looks to be an engrossing thriller in the vein of *24* or *The Event*, but appears to be far more grounded in reality. The first episode was remarkably light on action, with more of a focus on what I think will develop into an extended game of cat and mouse between Mathison and Brody. And if you're struggling to justify adding a new show to your schedule, just think of it as a crash course in game theory.

↳ Simon Chaudhuri

Homeland, Sundays, 21:00, Channel 4



Claire Danes as Carrie Mathison and Damian Lewis as Nicholas Brody

TV Picks of the Week

Cleverdicks

Sky Atlantic, 19:00, Mondays

This show is as British as can be. The title suggests nothing about a game show in which four experts quiz players's general knowledge for a cash prize. But don't let that deter you from watching, the show is given an edge as Ann Widdecombe is host.

Empire

BBC One, 21:00, Mondays

A must for all history students at LSE or just those with an interest in finding out how the British Empire came to exist. This documentary series presented by Jeremy Paxman starts off by asking how a small island in the North Atlantic came to rule more than a quarter of the world's population. He travels to India, Africa and Arabia to tell a story of triumphant conquest and Britain's role in conflicts in the Middle East that haunt it to this day.

I'm in a Boy Band!

BBC Two, 21:20, Saturdays

Well, if all else fails at LSE, or if you have been genuinely interested in boy bands since adolescence and have been unable to let go, this is the show for you. The series sheds light on the experiences of being a music star, with some remarkable contributions from a cross-generational selection of artists including old school members of Motown, the Jackson 5 and contemporary bands such as One Direction.

Pointless Celebrities

BBC One, 18:15, Saturdays

In the new series of the show Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman invite even more famous faces to participate in this unorthodox general knowledge quiz. The object of the game is to score as few points as possible by giving correct answers that the public have or have not given, ultimately scoring lower than other contestants. The first episode features Christopher Biggins and Lesley Joseph.

London Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2012

The grunt of the fashion week pack, London Fashion Week is the traditional breeding ground for upcoming design talent keen to make their mark on the fashion world. It's the place where experimentation happens, mistakes are made and promise is nurtured. But if the names on the schedule normally leave you nonplussed, this is the season that LFW has finally arrived. No longer a stop-gap between New York and Milan, any actress, fashion editor, model or socialite worth their fashion nous is making a beeline for London, eyeing up designs that will land them on all the best dressed lists in the year ahead.

With the support of the British Fashion Council over the last ten years, sponsored by Topshop, London's home-grown design talent have burgeoned into international players. Some of the most anticipated catwalk shows of the season included Mary Katrantzou, Christopher Kane, Erdem, Jonathan Saunders and Marios Schwab. Eschewing the commercial taste of New York and the glamorous grandeur of Milan and Paris, London embraces the young, the fresh and the joy of fashion. Mixing clashing prints and bold neon colours, London's catwalks are a breath of fresh air and a welcome sea of colour in an otherwise dark and serious fashion world.

Best Break-Out New Designer SIMONE ROCHA

Only in her fourth season, the buzz around Simone Rocha reached fever pitch approximately twenty minutes after her show ended. Boxy jackets made of delicate white lace, epaulettes and collars made of looped wool, collars in patent silver leather and heavy pony-skin jackets were a lesson in craftsmanship. The contrast between classic and flattering silhouettes with interesting textures in organza, lace or fur and the occasional shot of yellow or silver has put this Central Saint Martins graduate firmly on the fashion radar.



Best Show to Live Up to Expectations MARY KATRANTZOU

Her previous collections, inspired by Chinese porcelain vases and featuring her signature saturated prints, were an universal hit. With her capsule collection for Topshop inspiring something of a frenzy even among fashion insiders just a few days before the show, the expectations were palpable. And she didn't disappoint. Taking inspiration from everyday items such as spoons, pencils and typewriters, Katrantzou applied her magic touch and whirled, rotated and transformed them into frenzied digital prints in bold greens and yellows, reds and blues. The prints were complemented by silhouettes that included baby doll dresses with a ruffled hem, fishtail skirts and coats with cinched-in waists. The most covetable piece of the show, however, was the pencil skirt, carefully embroidered with a fanned display of HB pencils by French embroidery specialist Lesage. It may not be practical, but it was undoubtedly beautiful.



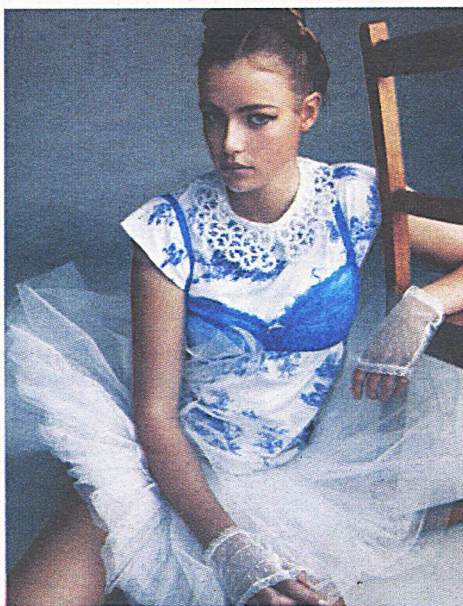
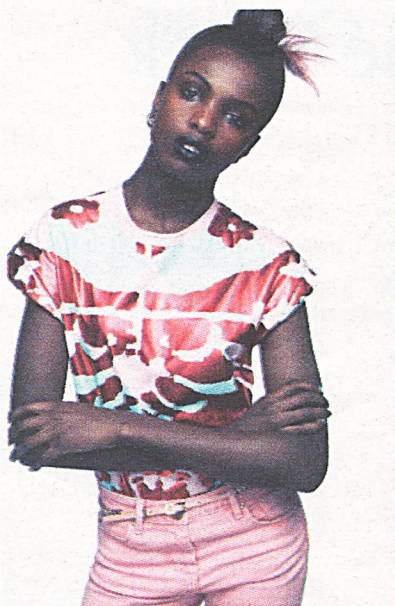
Best Established Show MULBERRY

Mulberry have conquered the world with their ubiquitous Alexa satchel. Prepare now for this season's Del Rey, a boxy doctor's style bag unveiled at the recent Mulberry show. It was not just the bags, however, that had the photographers getting excited. The RTW collection, no longer an afterthought to the bags, was itself something to shout about. A delicate balance of lace and silk, Emma Hill sent out floaty dresses in neon orange and smoky floral prints on a rounded bodice and capped lace sleeves, the perfect look for a sultry English rose. It seems like Mulberry's star in the coming year is set to rise and rise.



Bag a Piece of London Fashion Week TOPSHOP NEWGEN T-SHIRTS

It's amazing to think that 10 years ago, many of the most recognisable names at LFW were just starting out. To celebrate 10 years of sponsoring new talent, Topshop have asked 20 of the past NewGen award winners to design limited edition T-shirts that reflect their eponymous style. The Louise Gray skeleton print and Erdem's peasant print T with lace collar must be snapped up!



Best Reason to Look Forward to A/W 2012 TOPSHOP UNIQUE

The boutique line for Topshop is usually something of a hit and miss. Started in 2005, the line is part accessible designer and part crazy theatrics. Unique's tendency to veer between wearable items of high quality and interesting cut and the downright odd (fur hats with deer antlers, anyone?) represents a young label on the edge of experimentation. This season however, Unique truly hit its stride and posed a serious threat to established designers. Its designs were slick, featuring leather dungarees and floor length army jackets. And the best part? All the pieces will be available this autumn at affordable prices!



STREET STYLE-O-METRE

This one-week spectacular is not just for the fashion elite. One of the greatest things about LFW is its ability to turn the pavements into a catwalk. A crushed velvet purple shoulder cape, a telephone-shaped satchel complete with rotary dial and Charlotte Olympia flats with spider web embroidery were just some of our favourite pieces spotted around Somerset House.

Here's what's in and what's out on the streets

Blue hair

Whether a strategic streak or all over, teal blue hair was everywhere! The coolest look? A side streak down a blunt fringe.

Neon

There's nothing like a shot of colour to brighten up the mood. We loved one showgoer's two-piece neon orange skirt suit but the most wearable combination had to be a neon jumper, white shirt and statement necklace.



UP



Punk trend

Spikes, ripped tights and creepers – a new uniform of the urban army. We think, however, it's time for this trend to go back underground. Spring is about reclaiming femininity. Exude confidence by wearing florals with attitude and not hiding behind those John Lennon

Topknots

The perfect camouflage for unwashed hair, the topknot is a saviour on many a bad hair day. Shampoo, however, has been neglected for far too long – let's celebrate cleanliness again!

DOWN

Comment

Colonialism versus colonialism over the Falklands

Two wrongs don't make a right as Argentina and the UK resume tensions

Tom Heyden



As we approach the 30th anniversary of the UK-Argentinian Falklands (Malvinas in Spanish) War of 1982, bluster rhetoric from both sides has reopened old wounds and escalated a rumbling but largely dormant dispute. With the British sending Prince William and the navy's most powerful warship to the South Atlantic amidst an overblown sense of Argentine injustice, how much more of this sabre-rattling will we have to endure before a solution is reached?

"Colonialism" is the insult du jour, with both sides attempting to gain the moral high ground by flinging this most unfashionable of associations the other's way – even Sean Penn criticised Britain's "archaic colonialism." Ironically, both nations, in their own way, are correct. Even so, it is hard not to imagine at least some knowing wryness on Cameron's part when he explosively accused the Argentines of "colonialism," coming as it did from the leader of the world's greatest ever colonisers. Both are correct, yes, but both are hypocrites too. However, it is Argentina's colonialism that threatens peace in the region, and ultimately it is Argentina

who will have to accept the primacy of self-determination over historic grievances.

The importance attached to the islands in each country is staggeringly disproportionate. So ingrained in Argentine national identity is their claim to sovereignty over the islands that it is written into their constitution. Britain could not be more different. Most people's knowledge of the Falklands stops at, "Oh, that place we fought Argentina for." Before the 1982 war, even the Defence Minister admitted having to look them up on a globe.

After all, it was Argentina, under the oppressive rule of a failing military dictatorship wishing to divert attention away from domestic problems, who invaded the islands in 1982. Even then, many Brits questioned the value of sacrificing lives to protect a few islands 8,000 miles away from Britain (about 300 from Argentina) and home to only 3,000 people. Nevertheless, the UK's consistent position has been to defend self-determination – almost all the islanders identify themselves as British and wish to remain so. For that reason, Britain fought and defeated Argentina, maintaining a military presence in the region rivaling the size of the population itself. Despite the decisive victory, however, there was no resolution to what remains a vestige of British imperialism in the eyes Argentina and most of Latin America.

The ludicrous "colonialism" debate belies the history of an

island discovered uninhabited in the sixteenth century, rendering any subsequent settlers "colonisers" by definition. Competing sovereignty claims led to a military stand-off between Spain and Britain in 1770, which threatened war but resulted in an inconclusive truce – leaving the thorny issue of sovereignty unresolved and jointly claimed.

Argentina's claim derives directly from their own colonial history, gaining independence from Spain in 1816 and declaring inheritance of the islands until the pivotal year of 1833, when the British forcefully expelled the 100 or so Argentine settlers. Herein lies the source of Argentine angst and cries of colonialism, admittedly a clear-cut example of imperialism. Nevertheless, pre-1833, the islands were primarily occupied by passing sailors and only during the last 180 years has there been significant permanent settlement by British Falklanders.

Argentina's sense of injustice is undermined by the hypocrisy of their own devastating colonialist antics against indigenous people on the continent, while the historical claim is far from conclusive. Similarly, claims based on geographical proximity are equally weak. The islands may be far closer to Argentina than the UK but they lie outside of Argentine waters and geography is no basis to annex a population against their will. How long do inhabitants have to live on territory before they are no longer considered "colonisers?" The Falklands have

been in British possession longer than many US states have been part of America, for instance.

There comes a time when the realities of the present situation must be prioritised above some contested claim to prior ownership. One such reality, however, is that Argentines will not easily forgo such an emotionally charged element of their national pride – especially since every government is constitutionally compelled to continue the fight for sovereignty.

Thankfully, this fight will go no further than a war of words. The UK's antagonistic deployment of its best battleship, as well as Prince William's military posting on the islands, have stoked the fire but are only defensive intimidations. Neither country can afford for this to lead to war. Argentina has instead blocked access to all ships flying the Falklands flag, and enjoys almost total Latin American support. Yet they have been constantly frustrated by Britain's categorical refusal to enter negotiations over the islands. From Britain's perspective, as long as the islanders want to remain British then there is nothing to discuss. This notion of self-determination is a solid foundation for Britain's justification of its continuing presence on the island. Certainly given Argentina's weak historical claim, self-determination would appear the fairest way to settle the issue.

The latest complication, though, has been oil. With an estimated £15

billion worth of tax and royalty revenue from the region's oil reserves, further controversial exploration is fuelling the diplomatic crisis.

What was once an abstract notion of ownership now has potentially huge economic consequences. If further exploration unearths more lucrative spoils, Britain's resolve over the Falklands will come under increasing scrutiny. The best way to mitigate these dangers would be to include Argentina on joint oil ventures, even if this seems unlikely given the current diplomatic impasse.

But ultimately, Argentina must recognise the situation as it is. The Falklanders do not want to be part of Argentina and subjecting them to Argentine rule against their will would be an inexcusable act of colonialism, even on islands defined by their history of colonialism.

Britain, however, must contemplate the wider implications of its intransigence. The Falklands should not become an impediment to important trade links with Latin America and thus a more conciliatory approach is necessary rather than all this unhelpful pompous posturing. Reopening negotiations and yielding some concessions, such as over oil exploration, may help to dampen the rhetorical flames and avoid the wider negative consequences – even if Argentina never formally relinquishes its claim to sovereignty. ☛

It's a man's world

What the debate on contraceptives in the US reveals about women's rights

Samira Lindner



Given the amount of nonsensical drivel coming from the Republican party, the Democrats must be having a field day. In the run-up to the presidential elections, not only have the aspiring Republican nominees made their fair share of ludicrous assertions, now the Republican congressional majority has also played its part in making the Democrats appear to be the appealing alternative. This was triggered by a ruling by the Obama administration that would have made contraceptives available free of charge to women enrolled in workplace health plans. The problem became how this policy would impact not-for-profit institutions that are affiliated with a religion.

I perceive the debate on this issue to be an example of why a gendered approach to politics is still important. As some political pundits framed it, this White House ruling was just the latest episode in Obama's "war on religion." In the midst of these fervours, the actual fundamentals – women's rights to birth control – were completely forgotten. Instead, it was reframed as an issue concerning

religious freedom, America's religious roots and the supposed descent towards a Nazi-like, anti-religious regime. In this case, we see that a women's health issue has been hijacked to serve the interests of certain right-wing conservative groups. And it hasn't helped that some completely absurd things have been said about the notion of birth control. The way that the Republican spectrum addresses this topic actually puts the rights of religious organisations before the rights of individuals, which seems to clash with their supposed "liberal" mantra (though, as we know, the word "liberal" has lost its true meaning in the US).

In order to make sense of the issue, one first has to understand the policy and what some politicians and groups have been saying about it. After the tattered passing of his healthcare reform, Obama is now tackling some of the more specific points that were not in the healthcare package, mostly due to their potential controversy. Religious groups fiercely opposed his original policy of having all employers cover contraceptives. Not surprisingly, the ever-compromising Obama then decided to grant an exception to employers affiliated with a religion, but the insurers that cover the workspace will be required to offer birth control directly to women.

However, this was once again insufficient for the Republican camp

and they continue to see it as a direct offence against religion. Speaker of the House, John Boehner, has called this a federal attack on religious freedom. Aspiring Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has said that Obama's move constitutes an attempt "to impose a secular vision on Americans who believe that they should not have their religious freedom taken away." The anti-abortion group SBA-List also had an intriguing way of approaching this topic. They ironically claimed that we should not underestimate this solely as a women's issue as it is clearly a matter of religious liberty. The roller coaster of nonsense was then taken to its peak in an interview with Foster Friess, a top financial backer of Rick Santorum's presidential campaign, who said that, in his day, pregnancies could be prevented by "gals putting Bayer Aspirin between their knees."

What infuriated me the most in this issue was the congressional hearing that was held on the topic of contraceptives. It turned into an all-male panel on religious liberty with barely a single rational voice representing women. One of the most notable testimonies was by Bishop William Lori who spent ten minutes comparing contraceptives to a ham sandwich: it is absurd for someone to come to a kosher deli demanding a ham sandwich and to force the deli

to offer it when the customer can get the same sandwich for less just a few doors down. This ridiculous analogy seems to imply that birth control is just a matter of irrational cravings. Bear in mind that the Pope condones Viagra, but not birth control.

Worst of all, however, was that the congressional hearing deliberately rejected the only female witness. Democrats were only allowed to present a single witness to the hearing: they chose a Georgetown Law School student whose classmate suffered from an ovarian syndrome that would have been prevented with birth control, which the university refused to cover, leading her to have to have her ovary surgically removed, thus reducing her child-bearing chances.

This witness was rejected on the basis that she "lacked the right credentials" and had little experience with healthcare law, claims that seem absurd in light of the other witnesses (who for the most part were male religious leaders). Even the chairman of the hearing, Republican Darrell Issa, asserted, "The hearing is not about reproductive rights and contraceptives but instead about the Administration's actions as they relate to freedom of religion and conscience." It just makes me wonder how he could assume that an all-male panel of religious leaders has the right and the competence to decide upon the future of an issue

that has such massive health implications for women. Especially when the Obama administration uses rational arguments to prove their points, e.g. medical (planned pregnancies are good for maternal and infant health) and economic (birth control is cheaper for insurers than paying for labour and delivery).

I think this topic reveals that the issue of gender, particularly women's rights, is not a done deal in the 21st century Western world. While we assume that emancipation is a topic of olden times, we see here that it is still of relevance. In this case not only have women's rights been swept aside but a topic of major significance to women is being decided upon by a council of religious men. It is still important in the contemporary age to have a gendered approach to public policy and to investigate how certain policies and rulings affect both men and women differently.

It's easy to wave away this approach by claiming that we need to look at the "bigger picture" (i.e. in this case, religious freedom) but that assumes that policies affect men and women in exactly the same way. And it also assumes that the "bigger picture" is one that is decided upon and includes both men and women. However, as this topic has shown, that is not necessarily the case. ☛

We are students, not governments

LSESU's Israel Society President reminds us of the need for dialogue

Aimee Riese



To be clear from the outset, events seen on campus on Monday were horrific. The Palestine Society protest was disgusting. So were the water balloons thrown as a result. So was the violence towards those throwing them. None of this should have happened. None of it should be acceptable on our campus.

It is a sad state of affairs when relations on our campus have deteriorated to this point. It is for this reason, again, that I now openly and publicly call for members of the Palestine and Israel societies to dialogue.

Dialogue allows activists for peace on both sides to engage and educate themselves and others. In doing so, they become more effective in working towards their goals of peace. Dialogue creates understanding and it facilitates change. We are students, not governments. We have no restrictions on talking to one another. In fact, we have a unique opportunity in an academic environment to engage.

It is not unrealistic to expect graduates of the LSE to be facilitating change on an international level in the future. Wouldn't it be great if students had met before, not representing any government, but as students, learning from each other?

This is not the first time that dia-

logue has been offered. During Michaelmas Term, I offered to co-host an event between the Israel and Palestine Societies with both a Palestinian and an Israeli mother who lost their sons in the conflict. Those who were there witnessed the voices behind headlines, the reality of the suffering and the need for reconciliation. Those who were there will have also witnessed the Palestinian mother cry out, "Where are my representatives?"

I have appealed to our current Community and Welfare Officer to facilitate some sort of dialogue for our societies. I have met with the President of the Palestine Society and another member of their committee to suggest ANY sort of dialogue, in ANY format, that we could jointly arrange. The Palestine Committee again refused but suggested that a few individuals would like to participate, not under the banner of the society. The Palestine Society has not replied to any of my messages to get in contact with those individuals.

The refusal of the Palestine Society to engage so far at any level is thoroughly depressing. Instead, they built a "wall" and a mock check-point, playing dress-up as Israeli soldiers.

If your intention is to raise people's awareness of the Palestinian cause and be activists for peace, this alienated most students and offended many others who may otherwise join you.

I have no reason to justify engagement by presenting my own politics. As I explained, I believe engagement is valuable in itself. However, I feel that by revealing a little more about

my own views, this may challenge the assumptions of members of the Palestine Society and the general reader. I have interned for Peace Now, the largest Israeli peace movement, continually critical of the government, and also for B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation monitoring Israeli human rights abuses in the Occupied Territories.

I want to emphasise again that it is not because of my views that you should talk to me (indeed, many in the Israel Society would not support the work of these organisations) but I hope this challenges the perceptions that may (or may not) have been formed by not talking. It is precisely because of our differing views, both between the Israel and Palestine Societies and within them, that will challenge and educate all of us involved.

Moreover, this has moved beyond solely education. It has now entered the realms of good campus relations. It is worth emphasizing again how offensive the protest on Monday was. It presented the conflict in black and white, right and wrong. At a basic level, the depiction of a "wall" for the sole purpose of separation fails to recognise the reality.

The purpose of this security structure is to directly prevent terrorism in Israel and the statistical evidence shows it has done so. Terror has affected members of the Israel Society. It is hard to express how offensive the laughter and attitudes of the protestors in carrying out their protest was to these members. The Israel Society still believes that dialogue is the best way

forward. It is the only way to handle tensions on campus. These tensions are real and grounded in experiences. I am sincerely appealing to members of

the Palestine Society, both as supporters of the Palestinian cause and as students of the LSE, to talk to members of the Israel Society. ☘

LSESU Israel Society condemns all violence that was seen today. We do not however, condemn the anger that caused this.

Palestine Society are mocking and simplifying the complexities of life in the region. LSE students on this campus are victims on both side of this conflict. Jewish and Israeli students should not have feel targeted and intimidated on campus.

Provocative acts like the Palestine Society instigated today only serve to fuel tensions. Dragging women kicking and screaming along the floor is not a reality but is a disgusting simplification and manipulation. False depictions alienate the majority of students, and anger those who are directly affected.

Instead, we call for dialogue and discussion. The LSESU Israel Society is hosting three events this week, we encourage students to come and engage in constructive dialogue instead of symbolic gesturing that harms students' welfare.

Zero tolerance for violence

Why Andreas Hansen is sick of point-scoring and counter-productive dialogue

Andreas Hansen



After walking down Houghton Street and witnessing the appalling events that took place at the LSESU Palestine Society's demonstration, I could simply no longer contain myself. I am utterly and completely sick of this ridiculous and counter-productive way of dialogue. Water-throwing is stupid, as is physically attacking someone for throwing water at you.

I want to clarify how I perceived events unfolding so that no one is in the dark of my view on the situation. As far as I could see, the LSE Students' Union Palestine Society was arranging a peaceful but provocative demonstration. The use of this demonstration to create genuine and constructive dialogue between both sides is, of course, contestable but this is really a side issue.

The main issue is that the Palestine Society has the right to demonstrate peacefully, as do all societies. As the demonstration went on, a group of between three and four unidentified students started attacking the demonstration – both the wall and activists – with water bombs. They then fled the scene with between three and four of the demonstrators following them, kicking and hitting the water-throwers before fellow demonstrators and outsiders, in addition to LSE Security, managed to separate the groups.

This sequence of events is what I premise my argument on, and I think

it is rather well supported by various videos circulating on the Internet. Let me start by saying that all forms of violence that were displayed are appalling and should be met with disciplinary action by either the LSE Students' Union or the societies whose members were involved.

I hope that all those involved in any water-throwing/hitting and kicking are expelled from whatever society they are in – there should be a zero-tolerance for such actions in all Students' Union societies.

A demonstration is legal, even if it is provocative. Answer it with a counter-demo if you like. Write about it. Talk about it with the demonstrators or others. Hold a meeting about it. Don't do violence. It is absolutely counter-productive and it should not be common practice that members of Students' Union societies can react to each other in violent ways without the Students' Union or its societies taking action against the perpetrators. That would endanger the safety of the student body as a whole.

Unfortunately, it seems as if the two societies that are the most involved in this conflict have chosen not to take this line. Thus, while the Israel Society opens its statement on the event with "The LSESU Israel Society condemns all violence that was seen today," the statement then goes on to talk about the demonstrators' actions as "attacks" whereas the water-throwing is termed a "counter-protest." I would disagree. Clearly both actions constitute attacks in the context they were committed in.

The statement also goes on to name the water-throwing a "counter-protest." I would disagree. A counter-protest would be to set up a stand of one's own, with an enactment

of your own if that is what it takes. Water-throwing is not a counter-protest. It is an attack and it should not be condoned. The apology made for water bombs hitting people does not apologize for the act of water-throwing itself, only for the ostensibly unintended consequence of the bombs hitting people.

As for the Palestine Society's statement on the event, it is equally one-sided. There is no recognition of the fact that the demonstration could be perceived as provocative and that it probably is not a good way to start a dialogue. While in detail explaining how the water bombs hit demonstrators and could have "seriously injured society members and passers-by" there is no mention of the fact that demonstrators chased down the water-throwers kicking and beating. This is an outrageous omission of fact and it is a shameful incident for the Palestine Society. If "the LSESU Palestine Society fully condemns the actions of the four students who threw the missiles," the society should as unequivocally condemn the actions of its own members. Violent reaction should not be supported.

As I hope this article has shown, I am desperately tired of what I perceive as point-scoring and grandstanding of two societies which seem to have nothing to offer each other but mutual dislike.

I hope that the Students' Union will engage with what I perceive is a mutual unwillingness on the part of the societies to condemn the actions of own members. I am fed up with this polarisation and radicalisation. ☘



Photo: Matt Worby

Too complex? I'll make it simple for you

LSESU's Palestine Society President reflects on last Monday's events

Yasmin Ahmed



Monday 20th February marked the start of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), an annual, international series of events held in cities and campuses across the globe with the aim of highlighting the nature of apartheid in the state of Israel. It seeks to raise awareness about the resulting daily struggles that are faced by Palestinians. As such, the LSE Students' Union Palestine Society marked this week by re-enacting an Israeli checkpoint on Houghton Street, with the aim of highlighting one of the many obstacles that are, in my opinion, systematically designed and implemented by Israel to degrade and restrict the lives of Palestinians. Personally, I think the response to our stunt was overwhelmingly positive, with numerous people, including staff and non-LSE passersby, expressing their appreciation and solidarity with our efforts and our message.

However, this was all completely ignored as attention was immediately diverted away from the very distressing and brutal reality in Palestine to "Violence on Houghton Street," following the bombardment of the stunt by four students who decided to throw water bombs towards us, with one missile hitting a member of the Palestine Society directly in the face. In the aftermath of the shameful yet

very telling attack on the checkpoint reenactment and on members of the Palestine Society, and as an attempt to rationalise and thus excuse the deplorable behaviour of the attackers, we were accused by the Israel Society of trivializing a very "complex situation for both sides" and that we shouldn't have been surprised about the attack because we had "intimidated Jewish students" by holding "oversized guns." Too complex? I'll make it simple for you.

According to a September 2011 report compiled by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHAOPT), there are currently 522 roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank. This is in addition to an average of 495 ad-hoc "flying" checkpoints that were put in place in every month of 2011 which further obstructed movement across the West Bank. As a result of this, 200,000 people from 70 villages are consequently "forced to use detours between two to five times longer than the direct route to their closest city."

Furthermore, the 62 per cent-completed "security fence" that Israel is currently building "along" the West Bank has 80 per cent of its route built inside the West Bank on Palestinian territory. Why do we call this "fence" an Apartheid Wall? Because, in actual fact, it is a 26 foot concrete wall which serves to isolate Palestinian communities and families in the West Bank and entrenches the annexation of Palestinian land by Israeli settlements, which were deemed illegal by the Interna-

tional Court of Justice in 2004 and may be considered a flagrant violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which stipulates that "the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

This is not a distortion. This is not disputed. And it is certainly not complex. These are quite simply the facts. Our "disgusting simplification" of the conflict depicted by the stunt we staged doesn't even begin to come close to highlighting the extent of the real pain, suffering and humiliation that Palestinians are put through every single day as a result of actual checkpoints, the wall and the continued occupation of their land. If orchestrating a mock checkpoint or holding oversized guns is offensive and intimidating for some members of our community, then how should we/they be feeling about the fact that there are hundreds of actual checkpoints and real guns that Palestinians are greeted with on their way to university, work or to the hospital?

What happened this week on our campus does not indicate a need nor a desire for dialogue. The attack on the stunt was a clear-cut case of inexcusable bullying, physical intimidation and a shameful interference with the right to free speech and freedom of assembly. Moreover, the assault was particularly offensive to the Palestinian students who were involved in the stunt, some of whom are from Gaza, who have lived through and witnessed the utter criminality, terror and injustice imposed upon their families by

Israel. To come to study in the UK and suffer this degree of intimidation and bullying from supporters of Israel on our campus is appalling.

If this incident has taught us anything, it is that when confronted with the reality of an unjust, illegal

and inhumane set of state policies that systematically discriminates against Palestinians and seeks to strip away every shred of their dignity, those on the side of the oppressor are left with no ammunition. Except for water bombs. ☹

The LSESU Palestine Society fully condemns the actions of the four students who threw the missiles. The re-enactment and stall by the Palestine Society was completely peaceful, and the reaction of these students is unjustifiable. The actions of the four students presents a threat to the wellbeing of our societies members who were peacefully re-enacting the daily struggles of Palestinian people.

As soon as the incident was over Palestine Society members returned to re-enacting the checkpoint. This incident shows the victimization of peaceful protesters who were simply trying to draw attention to the cause of the Palestinian people. For students taking part in a peaceful protest to have missiles thrown at them for no reason is completely unacceptable. Many members of our society who were taking part in the re-enactment felt incredibly threatened as a result of the incident.

We as a society call on management to continue to protect our right to peaceful protest on LSE's campus.

Protests, plays and picking fights over Palestine

Sam Barnett is unsurprised that Monday's demonstration became an incident

Sam Barnett



The ability to make a statement is a powerful tool in a political campaign. When a replica Israeli checkpoint was erected on Houghton Street on Monday 20th February, a statement was certainly made. I have no doubt the organisers of the event were looking to use the power of their

statement to bring the realities of the Middle East to the LSE, and this is no bad thing. It forced Zionists (like myself) and neutrals passing by to see their side of the debate, and consider it on their terms. I believe that this is vital to the discourse between the sides, as it is only through understanding that progress can be made.

However, there was also an element of mischief to the demonstration: the organisers were well aware that there are few controversies as likely to trigger visceral responses as Israel-Palestine, and this display was deliberately brazen and one-sided.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the demonstration became an incident, and the incident became violent.

I do not wish to adopt a high moral tone in discussing this issue. I am biased, and I know well that supporters of Israel behaved exceedingly badly. However, I can't help but think that there is a growing arrogance to the behaviour of the pro-Palestine lobby in this country that is more damaging to the discourse than it is helpful. There is a concentrated effort underway to implant in the national consciousness the idea of Israeli Apartheid; this demonstration was part of it. There is

no room in that phrase for subtlety, no hint of ambiguity. It is a war slogan, us versus them.

Activists argue that this phrase is being used to describe the ground conditions and shock the Israelis into more acceptable action, but I cannot see how this can be. Instead, it is self-satisfied and deliberately polarising, heightening tension instead of aspiring for just compromise. It is hard to reach a hand out to someone who is calling you a fascist. Apartheid is illegitimate and wrong, and so are its supporters. This was the argument being presented to the passers-by last Monday.

Consider how a supporter of Israel feels, then, to be labelled a supporter of apartheid. Consider how they feel when confronted with a morality play on Houghton Street that shows one side of the worst excesses of the Middle East. It is wounding and confusing, and possibly offensive (as Jay Stoll rightly pointed out, there are people on campus who have lost family in the region). You have no right of reply.

That is why for some pro-Israel students, it (wrongly) justified a response, and then a skirmish. Perhaps the Israel Society will stage the duck and cover drills of the schoolchildren of Sderot on Clare Market next week, but I can only hope not. What I don't doubt is that this will escalate, because some people on campus can't resist the chance to create, or exacerbate, controversy.

What would be better would be some real discussion, and a little less statement-making. But this statement has been made now, and the result is there for all to see. ☹

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Scylla and Charybdis

Explaining Greece's EU choice in the midst of its national turmoil

Felix van
Litsenburg



Amidst all the Greek turmoil, the phrase "between Scylla and Charybdis" – in Greek mythology, seafarers could avoid only one of the two monsters when passing through the Strait of Messina – has hardly occurred. Despite the obvious link to the subject matter, the phrase has thus far been unnecessary because Greece's best choice was clear: to stay in the Eurozone. The cost of continued membership, however, is on the rise and it won't be long until prolonged Eurozone status appears as bad as returning to the drachma.

On Tuesday, Eurozone finance ministers agreed on a second bailout package. Greece will introduce further austerity measures, in exchange for a €130 billion bailout. The plan is to reduce Greece's debt from 160 per cent of GDP to roughly 120 per cent of GDP by 2020.

The measures face severe criticism as austerity tackles the debt, but risks reducing GDP growth. Unless the austerity measures are effective, limited growth in GDP means Greece's debt as a percentage of GDP may not fall as quickly as anticipated. The current package assumes the austerity measures will be effective, that GDP returns to 2.13 per cent growth in 2014 yet still requires an additional €50 billion bail-

out ten years from now. Investors have voiced concern that a confidential IMF report reckons Greece's debt might equal 160 per cent of GDP in 2020 despite all the austerity measures.

While the austerity measures' effectiveness remains to be determined, its unpopularity is evident. The entire Greek crisis has been accompanied by unrest and rioting, and once the necessary austerity measures are in place – which has to happen before the end of February – more upheaval can be expected. This will only be exacerbated by the impression that the Greek government's policy is dictated by the European Union.

While Scylla's teeth – austerity, unrest, European diktat – have been bared for some time, little has been said about the perils of Charybdis. So far, leaving the Eurozone had not been considered realistic. This seems set to change. An article in last week's issue of *The Economist* makes the case against leaving the Eurozone – which indicates that the option is now being seriously considered.

Leaving the Eurozone would be a mess, most of all. "Greek Euros" would have to be distinguished from "real Euros" as the former are converted into drachmae. Converting from the drachma to the Euro was tricky; doing the reverse will be more complicated still.

What is worse, though, is the effect on savings and loans. Because the drachma will definitely become worth less than the Euro, the value of savings will evaporate almost overnight while

debtors will have to pay much less in real terms. Bank runs are a possibility if abandonment of the Euro looms large. Leaving the Euro can therefore cause enormous social unrest in Greece.

The consequences of leaving the Eurozone seem to display all the ingredients for anarchy, while the bailout package is at risk of only delaying this. Caught between Scylla and Charybdis, should Greece go through with the painful austerity measures, perhaps at the risk of making no progress, or should it leave the Eurozone now, regaining control over its policy?

To most technocrats, keeping Greece in the Euro appears the best option. But there are other reasons to support it. The most important

reason is the solidarity the Eurozone countries are due to each other. Even if there are strong economic arguments to forcing or allowing Greece to leave, the Eurozone should continue to keep it in. The other countries let it in initially, and now have to protect the weaker member of the herd, not leave it behind to die. Likewise, the Greek government and the Greek people should do all they can to keep up. After all, they have been reaping the benefits of the Eurozone long enough to owe it to the rest.

This is not an encouragement to carry on with what has satirically been dubbed "the European experiment," or a warning of the war that will inevitably break out on the continent if the Eurozone falls apart. Greece's

entry into the Eurozone was doubtless misguided, on both sides: Greece thought it could get away with faking the criteria, while overseers failed to find fault (or turned a blind eye to it, for political reasons). Both parties' naivety is now being punished. Perhaps it is even naive to carry on trying to salvage what is left. But Greece and the other Euro countries have a duty to each other to stick it out. Entering the Eurozone was a mutual statement of trust, and this trust has to be honoured by both sides. Only when it becomes apparent that Greece cannot deliver its end of the bargain – e.g. if it fails to install the austerity measures – do the other Eurozone countries have a morally justifiable reason to leave Greece to its own devices. ☛



Flickr user: oneiros

Time to end Murdoch's day in the Sun

Reflecting on Rupert Murdoch's decision to launch the Sun on Sunday

Jon
Allsop



Rupert Murdoch was never going to go quietly. Dogged by a scandal which seemed to have irrevocably weakened his stranglehold on the British media, the combative tycoon still had one more trick left in his locker. His decision to launch the Sun on Sunday last weekend was textbook Murdoch; a supremely risky big reveal intended to stun his way back into the Sunday tabloid market. No one can question

His decision to launch the Sun on Sunday last weekend was textbook Murdoch; a supremely risky big reveal intended to stun his way back into the Sunday tabloid market.

the Australian's corporate courage in deciding to plug the gap left by his closure of the reviled News of the World during last summer's phone-hacking scandal, although it is altogether harder to judge whether or not such a move was wise in the current climate. Whether brilliance or blunder, it seems fairly uncontroversial to claim

that the Sun on Sunday is bad news for media plurality and all those who thought the News Corp crisis would terminally weaken Murdoch's position in the British media market.

In the wake of his Sun on Sunday announcement, pundits were queuing up to hail Murdoch's strategic nous. While the eventual launch of an heir to the NOTW has seemed inevitable ever since its stunning closure last July, his decision to anoint it now was pugnacious to say the least. With the ongoing Leveson inquiry into media ethics and a plethora of police investigations into illegal journalistic practices raging around him, Murdoch's latest play was designed to reiterate his faith in his tarred brand and placate a disgruntled Sun newsroom rocked by the arrests of senior reporters and the allegedly perfidious role of the News Corp Management and Standards Committee in facilitating them.

Furious that the MSC's investigation into wrongdoing at the company may compromise legitimate sources as well as corrupt ones, beleaguered Sun journalists will have been boosted by their boss' very public display of solidarity in a week when rumours of the paper's demise were tentatively circulated. Already the UK's best-selling daily, the Sun's new Sunday outing should also guarantee Murdoch and his company a big financial boost, with opening sales, bolstered by an extremely competitive initial pricing of 50p, seeming set to hit the coveted 2.5 million mark at the time of writing.

While the decision to launch now showed significant chutzpah, however, it seems to me to have constituted a poor calibration of the current public mood. While the Sunday edition will undoubtedly sell well, initiating it during continuing criminal investiga-

tions into some of its senior reporters seems insufficiently contrite and risks undoing the damage limitation exercise effected by the closure of the NOTW. The simultaneous decision to personally overturn the suspensions of the offending journalists, meanwhile, served to flick a public two-fingers at both the newspaper's management and the very victims of illegal practice he seemed so desperate to appease last year.

While the Leveson inquiry has somewhat fizzled out, Murdoch would do well to remember the public opprobrium which followed last summer's cascade of phone-hacking revelations. If any one of the chief reporters and editors arrested last week are even charged with bribing police officers for information then Murdoch will have another unbelievably serious crisis on his hands and his recent confidence will seem remarkably misplaced. Consolidating an existing brand in such a hostile environment would seem difficult enough, making Murdoch's decision to extend it staggeringly audacious at best and hopelessly naive at worst.

Whatever the ramifications of the launch for Murdoch and his company, it seems abundantly clear that the Sun on Sunday is not good news from the point of view of media plurality. While the title is merely the extension of an existing brand without its own editorial board, it is still a de facto replacement for the NOTW. Although its specific arrangements would make it difficult to stop, it is disappointing that Murdoch feels he can once again expand his British media interests not nine months after popular vitriol and long-overdue political pressure forced him to contract them.

Ed Miliband rightly won praise for his outspoken attacks on News Corp in the aftermath of the crisis, although

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the fact that such a common sense condemnation of unethical behaviour was seen as a bold departure from political convention deftly illustrates the unacceptably tight hold Murdoch is capable of exerting on our policy-makers.

Personally, I have never quite subscribed to the idea that Murdoch has a monopoly on British public opinion. While his media outlets are undoubtedly important in shaping people's views, they are also bound by opinion-driving forces beyond their control. I refuse to believe, for example, that Murdoch would have come out in support of John Major had Blair told him where to stick it in the mid-1990s. Instead of steadfastly representing public opinion, it is my firm belief that Murdoch sells the agenda he wants to set to politicians by threatening them with exagger-

ated "Sun-Wot-Won-It" hubris and peddling more influence than he is actually able to exert.

Murdoch has been a key factor in the bland centrism of recent British discourse, terrifying our leaders into the sort of economically deregulatory and socially conservative guff that favours his business plan and drives up his readership. For me, the reason why politicians have found it so hard to shake Murdoch off is largely attributable to his unprecedentedly large share of the British media market.

In an ostensibly pluralist society, it is alarming that one man should be able to claim such a monopoly on political agenda-setting. While the disgusting revelations of widespread criminality in Murdoch's newsrooms have shocked the nation and sparked a scrum of high-profile inquiries, the key issue of ownership has been left more or less untouched. I firmly believe that criminal behaviour amongst Murdoch journalists has been caused by an above-the-law mentality deriving from his huge influence, although such allegations of malpractice should be more or less irrelevant.

Criminality or no criminality, it is high time that the government got serious about media plurality in this country, taking radical steps to reverse the mass concentration of agenda-setting power in a few unscrupulous hands by breaking up media monopolies. Last summer, the phone-hacking scandal provided policymakers with unprecedented momentum to break Murdoch's stranglehold on the British media and reform ownership laws for good. The idea that he can so quickly feel comfortable with re-expanding his market share suggests that this momentum is in grave danger of slipping away. ☛

Features

Does Sarkozy still stand a chance?

Jean Petreschi analyses the French Presidential election

In May 2012, French voters will return to the ballots, five years after electing Nicolas Sarkozy. This time, however, everything seems to be pointing at a Socialist victory.

Francois Hollande, the Socialist candidate, has come first in every poll survey since he won the Socialist primaries in October 2011. In a recent survey by Opinionway, Hollande is credited in the second round with 56 per cent of intentional votes against a mere 44 per cent for President Sarkozy. This remarkable gap in favor of Hollande has several motives.

First of all, the Socialists have been conducting an impeccable campaign compared to preceding

First of all, the Socialists have been conducting an impeccable campaign, as opposed to preceding elections

elections. In 2002, Lionel Jospin lost the election due to his poor management of the campaign, and Segolene Royal lost in 2007 partly because of party disunity.

Today, the party has gained in confidence and is wholeheartedly united behind Hollande. Growing enthusiasm around Hollande was clear in his first political meeting in Le Bourget as he skillfully mastered the scenery, after which many compared him to Francois Mitterrand, the last – and only – Socialist president.

Likewise, while past Socialist campaigns focused on an attempt to demolish the adversary, Mr Hollande's strategy has consisted in largely ignoring the President. Instead, his strategy has focused on his political program, as epitomized by the soon publishing of his book, *Changer de Destin*. So far, this strategy has proved successful. In a recent survey, respondents deemed Hollande more credible than Sarkozy on nine measures out of 12, including combating unemployment and reducing the budget deficit (CSA).

Coupled with the malignant environment provided by the Eurozone crisis, France's recent downgrade, and the high unemployment rates, excitement around Hollande's campaign is not surprising.

This dim situation faced by Sarkozy has led political observers to ubiquitously hail Hollande as the next French President. However, such political prescience is shortsighted, and fails to acknowledge recent trends.

Sarkozy announced last week that he would run for re-election. Since then, he has largely occupied the social media and 'anti-sarkozysme' has thawed, as illustrated by an eight point increase in his popularity, reaching 38 per cent of favourable opinion for the first time in more than a year. More important, this popularity rise is

starting to have repercussions in poll surveys. In a pull survey for the first electoral round, Sarkozy was credited on Wednesday with 27 per cent of voting intentions, against 28 per cent for Mr Hollande (CSA).

Analogous to this trend, candidates Marine Le Pen (National Front party) and Francois Bayrou (Centrist party), with respectively 16 per cent and 13 per cent of voting intentions, have lost sight of the front wagon and are practically out of the race, with important consequences.

Sarkozy could benefit from the high level of swing voters from both of these parties, with a third undecided on the far-right, and more than half undecided in the centre.

Ultimately, as always in modern elections, they will determine the outcome of the election. And they are already shaping the political debate.

In his first grand rally in Marseille, Sarkozy's strategy clearly consisted of flirting with the far-right electorate. He spoke against gay marriage and opposed the right of foreign voters to participate in local elections. In his speech, the President also deeply condemned Hollande's fiscal brinkmanship, as well as his political

Mr Sarkozy will also have to face the French electorate on the outcomes of his term in office.

dichotomy: "Where is the truth when you pretend to be Thatcher in London, and Mitterrand in Paris?" Until now, Hollande has demonstrated an impressive amount of stoicism against such attacks, but with the President occupying the media scene and climbing in the polls, he will soon have to retort Sarkozy's critiques.

Sarkozy will also have to face the French electorate on the outcomes of his term in office.

This will be a challenging task. The French economy is much worse than five years ago, with a growing fear of recession which will certainly play in his disfavor. Will he be able to convince French voters that it would have been much worse without him? This at least appears to be his strategy, as he stated in Marseille: "We managed to avoid a catastrophe."

There is still a strong feeling against the current President, which Hollande is exploiting by calling himself a 'normal' president. Never in the history of French elections, has an incumbent won with such a level of unpopularity.

Yet, sentiment about Sarkozy is improving, and he has proved in the past to be a remarkable campaigner. In the end, the election will be closer than what pollsters currently foresee. Hollande ought to win, but with audacity and skill, Sarkozy might just pull off a last-minute win. If not, French voters will experience the *Sauce Hollandaise*. ☛



Putin and Russian nationalism

Martin Walsh examines the development of nationalism in Russia

Following on from an eight-year long presidency between 2000 and 2008 in which the now-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin developed a renewed sense of imperialist legacy and nationalism, Russia appears to have split. The integrity of the Russian government has been under strain from pro-democracy advocates and ethnic nationalists who have both taken to the streets in recent months – with the latter believing that Russia must be defined in terms of its ethnicity. Putin, who is almost certainly going to inhabit the presidential office come March, must therefore prepare to grapple with this crisis more comprehensively than ever before.

In complex, multi-ethnic states nationalist ideas may realise themselves in the form of movements seeking either secession or autonomy. It is in this respect that nationalism can be seen to be a method by which political power can be identified and retained. Could it then be that it is for the popular appeal of ideologised 'liberal' nationalism that Putin's repeated statements engendering such nationalist sentiment are founded? Admittedly, the view of Russian national pride has evolved since the Soviet era when isolation and domestic prioritisation dominated policy-making. Now, there exists a somewhat confusing and, at times, obscure environment combining ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism (where political philosophy and liberal civic values predominate in policy implementation). Putin argues that Russia is a civic nationalist state. His foundation for this idea arrives in the explanatory form of an example where Russians abroad have failed to organise themselves into a recognisably coherent diaspora. In what is essentially a statist take on nationalism in Russia, he has denounced the non-integrationist approach of Western countries taken in relation to

immigrants and instead he praises the Russian model which has seen the establishment of a federal "multi-ethnic civilisation with Russian culture at its core". Whilst it is questionable that Russia has achieved this entirely without encountering problems along the way, it has nonetheless accomplished – perhaps inadvertently – the polarisation of Russian ethnic nationalists who deem Putin's approach either soft

Now, there exists a somewhat confusing and, at times, obscure environment combining ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism

or unbecoming of 'indigenous' Russia. Herein lies the lurking wolf.

Although the political ostracising of these individuals may defer any sense of their political legitimacy and similarly may be seen as a positive for rehabilitation of Russia's image abroad, it could destabilise Putin's attempt to continue with his version of a rational modernisation policy. Indeed if there is a growth in their ability to undermine federal power with opportunistic and grassroots campaigns formed perversely against citizens, like Chechens, that they deem not to be 'true' Russians, the problem will only arise again in some other form. Practicable and reasonable pragmatism must overshadow temporary authoritarian fixes. Indeed, Russia is almost unique amongst European contemporaries in not having a party that corresponds to, and channels,

the ethnic nationalist sentiments expressed by some parts of the population. Aside from the obvious implication that the lack of representation will foment an underground growth of these parties, in Russia the result is unpredictable exactly because of the historical legacy of communism and the confluence of modern nationalist sentiment. Indeed whilst several of the ethnic nationalist movement's projects have failed to materialise substantially beyond minor street protests in 2010, the influence of the vaguely-civic nationalistic rhetoric utilised by Putin in several of his recent speeches could be misconstrued and corrupted in an aberrant justification for ethnic nationalism more generally. Furthermore, the Russian PM during his speech on 23 February proclaimed that "The battle of Russia is continuing – victory will be ours!" with an attendant quotation from the nineteenth-century Romantic poet Mikhail Lermontov – "Let's die near Moscow like our brothers. And to die we promised and the oath of loyalty we kept". Just what such an alarmist reference can signify in a presidential campaign is unclear, though certainly the inclusion does not make for an environment traditionally associated with the co-operative ethnic neutrality he opines that the Russian Federation has strove so much to create. Whilst a columnist in RIA Novosti has passed it over as simply a reminder of the role of poetry, the very fact that the 'enemy' is referred to existentially but not nominally does much to discredit such a theory.

So how does Russia proceed? Putin, in a January article published in the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, makes clear that separatism will not be tolerated – "attempts at building a Russian 'national' mono-ethnic state [...] will assuredly beat the shortest path to the destruction of the Russian people and Russian statehood".

He makes justifiable sounds when he clearly states that "[Russia] is a multi-cultural society, but [Russia] is one people". Driving liberal civic nationalism must be a priority for any Russian president but against a poor economic backdrop, this will inevitably be a challenge. This is especially true given the economic background of the demographic one can link to the main support base for the ethnic nationalists. It is important, nonetheless, to point to the deficiencies of such an idea; non-ethnic Russians

The interests, then, of the majority of the Russian people lie for the most part beyond the ethno-national framework

who constitute around 20% of the population have legitimate interests in trying to preserve their regional cultures, an aspiration that was not helped in 2004 when Putin issued a presidential decree removing the directly democratic element of regional gubernatorial elections. Stating, as he does in the article, that "civilizational identity is based on preserving the dominance of Russian culture" and that there is a "cultural code" which has undergone "grave tests" which "have tried, and are trying, to crack Russia" may provide a basis for the public questioning of his intentions in using nationalist rhetoric. Is this merely a pretext, a means by which he can justify the investment of further power back into the hands of the government?

It is difficult to tell at this stage. In fact in data sourced from an article published in the *Ogoniok* weekly, 58%

of a representative Russian population sample found in favour of "Russia for Russians" more generally but this fell sharply to 12% when this ethnic nationalist slogan was changed to "Russia only for Russians".

In 2006 a similar poll undertaken by a Moscow polling company, VCIOM, found that 34% supported the 'Russia for Russians' slogan only when it encapsulated all ethnicities with some disapproving of possible complications with the West and others remarking upon it as a "return to fascism".

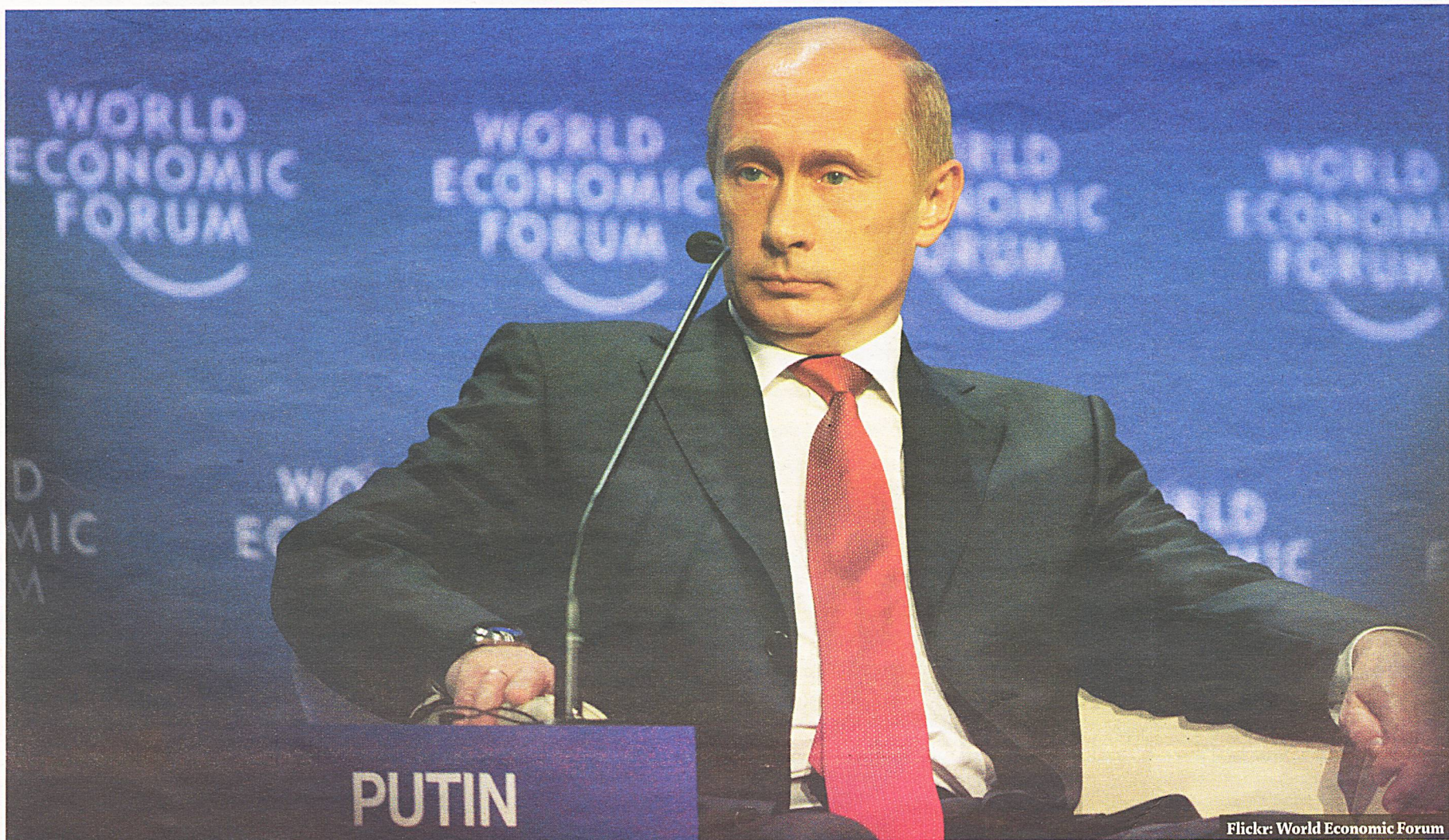
Reassuringly, in the same *Ogoniok* article, the main points of interest for Russian voters were noted to relate to low living standards, access to the public education system and other fairly remediable areas.

Concerns about immigration from Central Asia ranked in the teens within the tiered list. If this is the case, Putin's articles and statements about nationalism must have a purpose beyond a simple reply to popular concern – or lack thereof.

The interests, then, of the majority of the Russian people lie for the most part beyond the ethno-national framework and instead in the seeking of economic improvement, translating into greater prosperity which ultimately is the greatest drive for peaceful national pride.

Therefore, Putin must attempt a two-pronged approach; continue the roughly 4% growth rate that Russia has experienced in the past couple of months and make political reforms which are grounded in the legitimacy of popular opinion outside of his party's support base.

In trying to find a compromise between meeting local expectations and finding some semblance of a workable national identity, political concessions and power decentralisation must be seen to meet the words of a leader spirited in his vigorous ideology. ☛



Lessons not learned

Anushka Shah investigates the lasting effects of the Rwandan Genocide



Flicker: DFID - UK Department for International Development

Rwanda of 1994 is a difficult topic to face. In order to accept that a side of human behavior so ugly may exist, we have to change our belief about humanity. And to accept that the world watched silently as men tore each other apart we have to stop believing in humanity. The genocide of Rwanda happened nearly two decades ago, and for the nation to constantly revisit 1994 runs the risk of holding its future ransom to its past. But the rest of the world has unfairly moved on too. It has moved

The lessons of 1994 have not been learnt, and unless we change our responses to present-day Rwanda we will continue to mock the very ideals of equality and justice we hold so dear to democracy.

on from a struggle it never found the courage to face, or the intellect to learn from. The world made many mistakes when it dealt with Rwanda then, and rather than a careful debate on how to avoid the repetition of these mistakes it continues to languish in its guilt by now supporting an undemocratic regime. The lessons of 1994 have not been learnt, and unless we change our responses to present-day Rwanda we will continue to mock the very ideals of equality and justice we hold so dear to democracy.

The Kingdom of Rwanda until the age of colonisation had a Tutsi monarchy ruling over a Hutu majority. The Belgian and Germans came, conquered, and created catastrophe. "Veni, vedi, and vicious." While the struggle between the two communities was said to be long prevalent, it was an institutionalisation of the differences and a preferential treatment of the more European looking Tutsis that signaled a turning point. With a Hutu or Tutsi identity card around

their neck and a dusty footprint of the Belgians on their land, the Rwandans gained independence in 1961. The next three decades saw little growth but many cycles of violence and military coups, until the start of a Tutsi lead civil war in 1990. The war ended with a ceasefire signed in Tanzania in 1993 under the Arusha Accords. The accords included a demand by the USA and France to initiate competitive democracy. In a political sphere torn by ethnic divisions, establishing a broad-based transnational government of the six main parties only legitimised the competition. The problem was not such an intention, but the lack of strong state institutions and the rule of law to prevent this from turning into a free-for-all lawful war. The genocide in 1994 that broke out was just this; a prolonged war that lasted over a 100 days where the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) hacked down Hutu children and the Hutu Power raped Tutsi women. When the machetes were laid to rest, the death toll was nearly 1 million Rwandans.

The world, having watched in silent confusion, now took home a poor message. Democracy, they said, was not always suitable. Under this new learning, they decided to support the current semi-democratic RPF regime. Partially to stem previous guilt of inaction, and partially because the signs of progress under the party is better than no progress at all. The RPF led by Paul Kagame has made modernising economic and social changes, but it has come at the cost of freedom and a liberal democracy. There has been action against corruption, reforms in telecom and banking, lowered taxes to attract foreign investment, and intra-regional trade. But there also exists a very tight political space, purging of opposition under the draconian anti-genocide laws, a strong army to control civilian dissent, and a limit on access to information and expression of opinion. There is no doubt that there exist both positives and negatives, but the world's justification of one for the other is illogical. Any developing democracy will have certain disagreeable totalitarian features, but these will not be transitory if we validate their use.

Here are the lessons then that the world should have learnt on a reflection of 1994. All three of Rwanda's previous regimes held power by one ethnic group to the exclusion of the

other and all three of these regimes came to an end through extra-constitutional and violent means. Reyntjens critiques the RPF government saying that while symbolically giving Hutu's political power their persecution still stays high, and the main opposition party the MDR is banned. The constitution formed in 2003 was an extremely top-down process, Kagame's information management ensures there is no negative campaigning against his party or the akazu (party inner circle), and any other parties that contest or are in the alliance are supporters of the RPF. Repressing and

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purging the opposition as Kagame does will not remove them. It will only be a matter of time until they find a way and build up the strength to forcefully overthrow his government. A healthy democracy needs a strong opposition to maintain accountability.

Second, the use of force and violence by the RPF and the world's mutual claim of supporting this "democracy" automatically make these legitimate facets of democracy. Elections are not free to contest by all, access to non-government information sources is restricted as is the freedom of expression, and military control is not yet neutralised. Future governments will have every justification to repress its people and opponents using the same means. Elections and freedom of expression are both cornerstones of liberalism, and it is difficult to sanction a nation as democratic without these.

Third and perhaps most important is the question of the capability of the

state beyond and after the RPF's rule. The current regime has been capable in maintaining a level of political and ethnic stability in the nation. But this has been achieved by stilling the opposition, limiting freedom of speech and information, permitting no alternate sources of information to the governments, and banning ethnic discussion. Omar McDoom, lecturer in comparative politics at the LSE, writes that capability of the government must not be mistaken for its legitimacy or consent of the people. This then is authoritarianism and not democracy. Fareed Zakaria wrote in his book "The Future of Freedom" that a nation's success is only short lived when it stumbles upon a competent autocrat. Kagame may be one such. If the nation's institutions, civil society, and media are not strengthened then Rwanda's future after Kagame may not only continue to be undemocratic, but the nation will also return to its early 1990s state having made no progress.

The world claims to support Kagame under the banner of growth and stability, while being neutral to the other facets of political and civilian repression. There is a fear of getting over-involved and a belief in allowing growing nations to make and learn from their own mistakes. It is true that each nation needs its own time and experience to find a suitable form of governance, however in such unsteady times it is the responsibility of more developed countries to play an active role as a mid-wife. While adopting democracy when institutions are still being built and invested in, there is no force of accountability; the other nations must then fill this gap. After the Arusha Accords were signed the UNAMIR, American, Belgian, and French forces left Rwanda as trouble began in 1994. Had they then taken decisive action to stay, making up for the role an independent police force or army should have played, then the scale of the violence would have been far less. Certain areas in south-west Rwanda protected by the French called "Zone Turquoise" saw no significant violence. In 1998 the Clinton Administration made an official apology for their role in 1994, admitting that a deployment of another 5000 peacekeepers would have saved over 500,000 lives. The problem thus was not competitive democracy necessarily, but the fact that its supporting mechanisms were absent or not made up for.

If we are to redeem ourselves of the mistakes of 1994, then the answer is neither non-intervention nor is it complete support. It is selective on the right and wrong carried out by the ruling government, and in investing in the institutions of the country. In a frenzy of obsession on numbers and economic indicators of success, we often forget that unquantifiable features such as human repression can create insurmountable consequences.

Africa is an important continent. And in the coming future each of its countries will play a decisive role in shaping the world.

Our surprise at the rise of such large and sustained fury from the protesters of the Arab Spring is perhaps a very manifestation of this. Rwanda is an even more unfortunate case because it is in the terrible in-between – neither is it in the worst state nor is it in the best – making it easy for the world to ignore the negatives and focus on the positives. The people will continue to suffer silently as long as we go on justifying Kagame and his regime's authoritarian conduct. It is easy for us now to ignore this small country whose seeming stability tells us to concentrate on larger and more important issues. But our other issues became large because we did not deal with them in time. Africa is an important continent. And in the coming future each of its countries will play a decisive role in shaping the world. So either the people in power or those whose professions allow them to influence the situation take decisive action, or they can go on procrastinating. The clock will continue to tick, and one day when it stops the same people will then move on to analysing what went wrong trying to find the perfect answer. In the meanwhile we would have failed to implement the lessons of 1994, and the blood of a million victims will remain heavy on our age. ☘

Blogging about Europe

Michael Veale examines how blogging can hold the EU to account

The blogosphere can hold complex Brussels to account with unexpected strength, and LSE students have the specific knowledge and power to make real academic and critical impact.

The term 'Blogosphere' inevitably and universally conjures images of dank bedrooms and dull, rambling opinion pieces. Doubly so since, being at this university, we find ourselves instinctively envisioning a political blog over one focused on arts, culture, music or fashion. But we are living in the second dot.com bubble; where content and information are king, and the organisation of it through websites such as Twitter is a multi-million dollar game.

And bizarrely in such a world, newspaper funded investigative journalism is on the sharp and rapid decrease. The House of Lords earlier this month finished its report on the future of investigative journalism, expressing urgent worries about the decline and putting forward strong recommendations of tax breaks, or other 'creative' methods of funding. When the government themselves are

worried about a shortage of broadsheet hacks keeping detailed tabs on them and their actions, something in the system has gone more than a little awry. The burrowing which does exist is honourably honoured through Private Eye and The Guardian's prestigious Paul Foot Journalism Award, the shortlist of which was also announced only last week. The 9 nominees include journalists at the Basildon Echo, Chemist and Druggist Magazine, and the Live Magazine; none of which you may have heard of. Not only does this tell us of the lagging behind of the large national press, it emphasises the influential informational power that those with limited resources (and presumably, time to dedicate to a single story) can muster.

And as a result, we're plunged into the blogosphere. This is where increasingly, contrary to what you may imagine, stories are broken, important discussions had, points raised and questions posed, directly to the people responsible, who keep a keen eye on virtual developments. There is an increasing information gap between mass media and academic debate, partially due to waning funding, and

online commentators are cascading into the vacuum like a concrete parachute regiment. And in no better field is there such a massive information gap that needs filling than the bewilderingly opaque yet really quite important European Union.

There are already good services such as fullfact.org who spend most of their time correcting Daily Mail and Express stories fabricating paper-selling 'barmy Brussels' stories about bans on selling eggs by the dozen, or requirements to change the colour of all ambulances. What is needed is strong, debate stimulating analysis that pieces together academia, news and critical thought in a fresh and timely manner. How many of you knew that Croatia are set to the EU next July? You lot are a biased sample of social scientists, sure - but where have the media pieces on the geopolitical impact of this been? What about thoughts regarding the knock-on effect on EU institutions? Largely confined to The Economist, or possibly Foreign Affairs; and even then, these pieces are less debate and analysis and more focused on informing people that actually, um, Croatia are joining

the EU, in case they didn't know. And, um, this is what Croatia have been up to the past few years. In case you didn't know.

Students are more than qualified to take on these analytical challenges. LSE has the most international student base out of any university in the entire world.

This diversity is uniquely suited to viewpoints on current events developing from every geopolitical angle, from the impact of EU funds on derelict wind power developments in small towns to firsthand experience of ethnolinguistic or migratory tensions caused by the Schengen agreement. Perhaps even on the supranational landscape against which the recent Norwegian Butter Crisis was set. The academic background of students in many departments, such as International Relations, Government, the European Institute and International Development, just to name a few, is precisely that required to discuss and debate that which is untouched by the big outfits. Broad pieces on the future of this or that as a whole are brilliant when well executed, but case studies and discussions of the smaller

components of large movements like Europeanisation are what enact real change. Journalists, politicians and bureaucrats all keep up with what blogs are saying nowadays. If you wanted a field to put what life and studying has taught you into practise, here's a good place to start. You might even develop a taste for it.

LSE can be a truly brilliant institution but it requires a forum where students can be academics. You might not be fluent in game theory or stochastic flows, or confident enough in your Hegel to write a dissecting analysis, but there are stories and themes in the world that need piecing together in an intelligent way aimed at triggering debate rather than newspaper sales. Learning how to perceive these stories and to make sense of them is difficult, but highly rewarding. Perhaps understanding the causes of things isn't so distant or impossible after all. ☛

LSESU European Society's new blog, EuroFile, with student, academic and journalistic contributions is now online at eurofile.org.

EuroFile
BY LSE SU EUROPEAN SOCIETY

HOME EXPERTS STUDENTS

Source: LSESU European Society

Opening the books

Francesca Washtell investigates the transparency legislation in Europe

Last Monday national business leaders met in Brussels for the first crucial round of talks debating upcoming European Union transparency legislation. The law was first proposed in late 2011 and was strongly backed by the UK and France and will be passed by the end of this year. But as groups in the EU meet to discuss the details of the legislation many European ministers are coming under fire from corporate lobbyists who are desperately trying to water down the proposed legislation. The new law would oblige all European Union-based forestry and extractive companies to publish what they pay to governments and would be groundbreaking progress on government and corporate corruption.

There is already a precedent. Last summer the US passed the Frank-Dodd Act, which stipulated (specifically in amendment 1504) that all oil, gas and mining companies

Clearly the legislation will benefit the entire developing world, but it is especially significant for sub-Saharan Africa as this would be a monumental step in shaking off the cliché of the African "resource curse"

based in the United States will have to publish all the payments they make to governments on the level of a project-by-project basis. European leaders, such as the European Commission

President Jose Manuel Barroso, have expressed their resolve to make the European act at least match the scope of the American law.

Civil society groups have rightly seized on the cause of transparency in recent years. In sub-Saharan Africa the annual extractive export profits are regularly nine times the total of annual aid to the continent. Paul Collier, the Oxford University-based development economist, has estimated only around a fifth of the continent's total sub-soil assets have currently been discovered. Clearly the legislation will benefit the entire developing world, but it is especially significant for sub-Saharan Africa as this would be a monumental step in shaking off the cliché of the African "resource curse" that has plagued commentary about the continent for decades.

For Africa in particular transparency is more than just a means to an end. Financial publishing of each local project can bring to an end the secre-

tive deals between African governments and irresponsible multinational corporations which lead to corrupt officials siphoning off money that could be used for the public good. A successful EU law would work hand-in-hand with the Frank-Dodd Act, covering a huge range of companies based in Europe and America, massively expanding overnight the range of information distributed to civil society.

Transparency is a distribution of power, and while the vast sums of money that could be freed up in the long term will undoubtedly help with state-building and economic growth, the framework of accountability this law will help build is just as vital to the continent's goals of political development and strong civil societies.

The international advocacy organization ONE and a coalition of civil society groups, under the banner of the "Publish What You Pay" initiative, are campaigning to ensure that the EU legislation is strict and watertight,

allowing no exceptions. At present the legislation proposes that all payments from \$100,000 are published, but this excludes many smaller yet cumulatively important deals, so ONE and Publish What You Pay are also calling for the publishing limit to be lowered to \$15,000 to ensure maximum effectiveness of the legislation. Klaus-Heinz Lehne from Germany and Arlene McCarthy, an MEP for North West England are responsible for drafting the legislation, and as the draft is still in its early stages there is still time to campaign for stronger measures to be included and a strong show of support now could add momentum to the rounds of talks that will follow before all Members of the European Parliament vote on the law. ☛

For more information go to www.publishwhatyoupay.org

Inequality before the law

Nona Buckley-Irvine investigates discrimination in the legal profession

A friend, who had been pursuing a place at medical school, revealed to me that originally he wanted to be a lawyer. "I always used to want to be a lawyer... but I spoke to someone who told me that it's really hard for Asians to become lawyers, and even if they do, they'll probably end up in a stereotypical field like immigration law."

And that was his dream crushed. The view that he heard has been well supported by evidence from various different areas, which is incredibly revealing of the legal sector today.

Only 4 per cent of judges in Britain are BMEs (Black and ethnic minority persons or groups), which appears to be unrepresentative of multicultural Britain.

This characterises the issues faced with the legal sector in terms of diversity. A report by the Law Society investigated these issues further.

Titled "Ethnic Diversity in Law Firms: Understanding the Barriers", and published in 2010, it provides a number of case studies which emphasize the discriminatory nature of the recruitment process in law.

One individual they interviewed who worked at a Magic Circle law firm said: "They've been told to recruit, XXXX were told this, '60 per cent of our recruits have got to be Oxbridge' and that's come from the partners."

In choosing Oxbridge candidates over others, BMEs are already more isolated. It was reported in March 2010 by the Guardian that only 15% of students accepted to Cambridge were BMEs.

Future BME lawyers are also disadvantaged by the low success rates at Oxbridge: 1 in 3 white UK applicants to Cambridge are successful, whereas only 1 in 6 black applicants are successful.

Clearly it is demonstrated how even prior to trying to be recruited as a lawyer, BME groups face serious obstacles.

Other than an Oxbridge education being somewhat of a prerequisite for law recruits, the need for connections is apparent through the testimonies outlined in the report.

Barriers other than the need for an education at a top-class university come with the Bar and attempting to pass that. In one case, black female lawyer suggested that there was direct discrimination against people from BME backgrounds.

"I actually went to train to become a barrister and that was a very, very terrible period... I went to the Bar school in XXXX, did really well throughout the year that I was doing

it, got really good grades, and then in the actual finals was failed on almost every paper... then even worse, most of the black students that were there I found had failed in that year, to the point that we all just looked at each other and thought this cannot just be coincidence."

Other evidence supports this. In 2011 it was reported by Legal Futures that although 44 per cent of people on the bar training course were BME, only 13 per cent of them gained pupillage.

Hence this highlights the problematic disparity that exists between BME law students trying to achieve and actually succeeding, and indicates that there is a serious issue with discrimination in the legal sector.

Interestingly, the Law Society report argues that "Those solicitors working in City firms were less likely to hold perceptions that they had been discriminated against."

However, statistics given by the Guardian in 2011 show something different.

In fact, black people are overrepresented at the bar, comprising of 2.4 per cent of barristers, whereas at City firms they only represent 1.2 per cent of solicitors.

The issue of discrimination does not just reside with BME persons, however. Women also face an ongoing battle to be treated equally by law firms, with only 11 per cent of women acting as QCs.

One woman in the Law Society report described her "unimaginable" experience of seeing a woman promoted: "Recently a woman was made a partner in the firm and that was like a really big thing. It was just unimaginable because it's predominantly male dominated."

Efforts have been made to improve the representation of BME persons and women in the legal sector, particularly through the use of the website www.become-a-barrister.com.

On the website, it's stated that "The bar is open to all." It tries to encourage students considering law into taking the subject and heading into the law profession, and argues that the bar is genuinely open to all.

This tactic is not regarded as entirely effective. Statistics have shown that it is not the reluctance of students from BME backgrounds that prevents them from succeeding; it is the in-built discrimination within law firms.

A more positive effort was made in 2011 by the Legal Services Board, who are forcing law firms to publish diversity and social mobility data on their websites concerning categories such as age, sex and ethnicity.

It is hoped that this will encourage law firms to act more fairly when choosing recruits.

Measures like this will surely help those put at disadvantage to better succeed, and should not be ignored. However changing the mentality of

those who feel discriminated against will take a lot longer whilst the profession remains mainly white, middle class and male.

The effects of the measures taken by the LSB should be visible within the next few years, and we will be able

to better judge if these are effective in reducing the inequalities existing currently.

But, until then, work on this issue must continue. ☘



JOHN J. McHATTON,
Lawyer, Butte.

Flickr: Butte-Silver Bow Public

The Student Consumer Price Index

Nicholas Jaroszek summarises the finding of the Economics Society report

The Student Consumer Price Index Project is a research project run by the LSESU Economics Society, and the third edition of the report will soon be published. The project aims to analyse the expenditure behaviour of students at LSE and to provide an estimate of inflation amongst LSE students, as measured by a consumer price index. The SCPI project also provides a way for students to implement what they have learnt in their courses by taking part in an empirical project, which is especially but not exclusively beneficial for students with some experience of econometrics.

Our first task was to collect the

data for analysis. This was collected from a sample of the LSE population during the week 28th November to 4th December 2011.

Participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire about themselves and to keep a record of their expenditure for that week. A lucky draw with three prizes of £100 provided an incentive. With 271 questionnaires and 81 expenditure diaries, the sample size was significantly larger than last year, and this allowed for more thorough analysis.

After analysing the data we estimated the Student Consumer Price Index to be 5.71 per cent - significantly above the UK CPI of 4.4 per cent during our sample period. Potential

Economics students spend more on average than students who do not study economics, especially on travel and alcohol and tobacco

explanations for this difference may include a difference in the spending behaviour of students in comparison to the general UK population or a difference between inflation in London and in the UK as a whole.

To analyse the expenditure patterns of LSE students, we used econometric analysis in the form of OLS regressions.

Some interesting findings were that Economics students spend more on average than students who do not study economics, especially on travel and alcohol and tobacco and that there appears to be no significant difference between the expenditure patterns of international and domestic students. We also found a significant positive

effect of age on total spending.

The project will be continued next year and we hope to improve it further. One focus will be on increasing the sample size, as this should allow for more robust analysis. We also hope to be able to use more advanced econometric techniques in order to gain further insights.

Interested readers will soon be able to access the full report, which details all of our findings and provides more information on methodology, on the LSESU Economics Society Website. ☘

www.economicsociety.org

Liking. Tweeting. Tumbling.

Jennifer Fong examines the advertising power of social media

Liking. Tweeting. Tumbling. And now, the latest thing — Pinning.

Remember when social media was just about having a MySpace page?

Our online footprints have grown to Sasquatch-like proportions and we're sharing more than we ever have on the Internet.

But why do we do it?

"That's kind of the big question that no one really knows the answer to," says Luke Robert Mason, research director at Philter Phactory, a Europe-wide collective of designers, developers, technologists, philosophers and academic thinkers interested in technology and communication.

Mason is one of five speakers from the advertising, marketing, and PR industries who will be coming to LSE to share their thoughts around the theme, "How To Survive In A Digital World."

"What do we do with the shared data?" asks Mason. "How do you take control of that data and how do you animate that data?"

Philter Phactory is the company behind Weavrs, which Mason describes as "infomorphs" — online personas or digital alter-egos that essentially automates social media for real people.

"The best way to describe a Weavr is — what would you want to do with a digital version of yourself?"

Mason is interested in how people portray themselves online and what it means to have an identity for the web. Companies, he says, have long encouraged authentic online identities to make it easier to capitalize on personal data.

"As we 'like' and have cookies and as companies track our searches, they send us targeted ads," Mason says. But as anyone who has ever detagged a photo of himself on Facebook knows, we present an edited version of ourselves on the web. "What we're trying

to do as Weavrs is pop the filter bubble; we're encouraging people to create an online persona."

From there, Mason can look at the narratives emerging from the social web and what it says about people.

What Weavrs shows may be especially potent now as marketers struggle with using social media effectively.

"The digital and social media industry has a history of servicing customers as a traditional agency," explains Lee Provoost, head of strategy and transformation at London's Dachs Group, which specializes in social business solutions. The "customer shouts 'do this' and the agency jumps and delivers," Provoost continues.

"The result is that many innovative projects are fairly isolated and tactical. They are not fundamentally solving a problem, nor transforming an organisation. Using a Twitter channel for customer service isn't going to save your organisation."

At the AMP Conference, Provoost will explore ways to make digital and social media projects more successful.

It's a hot topic now, given that more than 80 per cent of the global population is estimated to use social networks. It's an astonishing number, given that in the '90s, the Internet was considered a fad that would never take off.

"We were talking about things called 'cyberculture' and 'cyber lore' and 'cyber philosophy,'" says Mason. "You fast-forward 15 years, you lose that prefix. Cyberculture isn't cyberculture anymore, it's just culture. Everything that's ubiquitous has lost that cyber prefix."

That, in part, is why the LSE SU AMP Society wanted to focus on digital for its first-ever conference, says society president Philip Gasslander.

"We want to highlight how digital technologies, in a rapid pace, are changing the ways we interact with each other, consume media and

purchase products," says the MSc Management student. "Even though we might be taking this technological evolution for granted, we have to keep in mind that this shift has not been going on for too long and there is still a lot of uncertainty of the impact it will have on the way we live our lives."

Digital is also a way to reach out to LSE students who may not identify immediately with the advertising, marketing, and PR fields, Gasslander says.

"The business landscape is changing through digital technologies. Graduates who can communicate and leverage an understanding of the digital environment will have a huge advantage over traditional candidates no matter their choice of industry."

Students can register free for the LSE SU AMP Conference online at llesu-amp.com

Jennifer Fong is a member of LSESU AMP

Mason will be addressing next Tuesday, 6th March at the first annual LSE SU AMP Conference.

Mason is one of five speakers from the advertising, marketing, and PR industries who will be coming to LSE to share their thoughts around the theme, "How To Survive In A Digital World."

Details can be found at www.lsesu-amp.com.



Source: Laughing Squid

Measured musings | Human safaris

Pressing your face up against a glass panel while simultaneously tapping it, in order to encourage some kind of a reaction from the life on the other side is a phenomenon often associated with zoos. Ogling at various "exotic" creatures in fascination is also common as we attempt to take in their beauty. As humans we seem to be always in search for something new or unusual. But what if the object of our curiosity became fellow humans, and we began to queue up, or even travel far and wide to catch a glimpse of people very different to us? A worryingly popular trend of "human safaris" has begun, with indigenous tribes in various parts of the world being the main attraction.

It seems that in areas of India and South and Central America tour operators have colluded with local authorities to exploit a number of tribes who are not used to contact with the outside world. As parts of the Amazon have become tourist hot spots, sightings of indigenous peoples have become more common. Peruvian authorities have raised concerns as tourists are taken close enough to make contact with these tribes. Similar occurrences also took place recently in the Andaman Islands in the Indian ocean. A video emerged clearly depicting police involvement in the filming of semi-naked Jarawa girls who were made to dance in exchange for food. Clearly there is a danger that these "tourist attractions" are being exploited.

Exploitation is not the only fear; these indigenous groups such as Peru's Mashco-Piro, may be dangerously susceptible to common diseases and infections. All this aside, there seems

to be something quite sickening about the idea of tourists moving close enough so they can take pictures of unsuspecting indigenous people, as if they were some kind of exhibit; part of the local attraction.

As everything has moved closer to home, there is this constant race to discover something new and untouched. Particular concern over the Jarawa tribe has even been expressed in Westminster. Even though the use of certain roads cutting in to exclusive Jarawa territory was forbidden by the Indian Supreme court, they are still frequently used to allow contact with the Jarawa. There seems to be this thirst to travel in search of some new kind of authenticity, striving to go the furthest and find those who are considered "uncivilised".

Human rights groups such as Survival International argue that local authorities need to do more to protect these tribes from exploitation or being reduced to a state of dependency by this new trade. It is clear that outright abuse needs to be stopped, but some would argue efforts to preserve these groups status' as "un-contactable people" are simply futile. It is surely inevitable that the reclusive days of these groups are numbered.

The choice however, to join "mainstream" society should be made by those joining and not the other way round. If groups chose to live in isolation, this does not give precedence to tour operators to use them as a source of profitable business. Nor should they become the new found muse of tourists, shamelessly photographing them as if they are not even human.

Gurdeep Chhina
Features Editor



Flickr: chany14

Social

Flickr: geezaweezer

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi

Imogen Young on her first St David's Day in London

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi is soon upon us. This may not mean much for most of LSE's 9525 student body, until I say that this Thursday is the day dedicated to St. David, the patron saint of Wales. Being Welsh in London has thus far been a very interesting experience. I am routinely treated as something rare and exotic amongst my LSE peers. Such pleasantries are balanced out however, as I frequently face questions about "Gavin and Stacey" as if it was a documentary representation of my beloved homeland. Far too many all too serious discussions of the relative merits of "Nessa" and "Dave Coaches" have been undertaken since September. Though for

this student at least, there is a limit to the number of times one can be asked "Oh, what's occurin'?" before a deep resentment is associated with Ruth Jones's comic creation.

It is in my first year without a truly "Welsh" St. David's Day however that I am beginning to truly appreciate festivities such as Eisteddfodau: the celebration of Welsh poetry, music and drama. On a national level, the Eisteddfod culminates with the Chaining of the Bard in recognition of poetic excellence. In schools across Wales, this Thursday will see students compete in choirs, poetry recitals and theatrical performances, with some donning national dress or Welsh symbols such as the leek or daffodil. Though the specific date

is unknown, David was born in the sixth century, and went on to lead a highly religious life. Having become a monk, David went on to found several monastic settlements across Wales. In the accounts of Rhigfarch – David's biographer – David was held accountable for a series of miracles such as raising a child from the dead and causing the ground beneath him to rise up. The latter is said to have occurred at the Synod of Llanddewi Brefi, where it was later decided that David was to be made an archbishop. Records show that David died on the 1st March, in the year 589, though there is some dispute here, as bones that historians claim to be David's were carbon dated to the twelfth century. David was officially recognised

I frequently face questions about "Gavin and Stacey" as if it was a documentary representation of my beloved homeland

as a saint by the Vatican in 1120. St. David's Day celebrations themselves have been a focal part of the Welsh calendar for centuries, with Samuel Pepys taking note of the national festival in his diaries.

This year even in London this year, celebrations have not been overlooked, with the London Welsh Centre and Brick Lane Music Hall open for events on March 1st. The Southbank Centre and John Lewis (Oxford Street) are holding Welsh food tastings later this week. I shall certainly be celebrating, flag in hand, to a tasteful medley of Shirley Bassey and Tom Jones. Dydd Gŵyl Dewi hapus i bawb! Or for the majority of the LSE's student body Happy St. David's Day to all!

Volunteering: home and abroad

Cleo Pearson asks whether volunteering abroad is selfless or selfish

Two hundred pounds: enough money to provide food, board and secondary education to an 18 year old Ghanaian for a term. £200: a one way ticket from England to Ghana.

I am not an economist but the maths seems pretty clear to me: the second option lacks both efficiency and equity. Yet, this summer I plan to fly off on my fifth volunteering excursion. I cannot fathom the stark contradictions in this supposedly selfless trend but somehow I still find myself going back for more.

For the majority of students, money is a precious commodity. Why then should it cost us a grand to live in basic conditions for just three weeks "volunteering" with STA or Real Gap Experience? Are we paying for insurance? Or for an ill-fitting t-shirt souvenir? Or for the company of other clueless teens who are too scared to go it alone? As far as I am concerned these companies take the very "realness" out of it at all. If you just want a holiday that is a step above a Spanish resort town, stop kidding yourself and go to Thailand, the middle class Magaluf.

A friend of mine recently asked if I would sponsor him to climb Kilimanjaro. Why should I, or anyone else for that matter, pay for someone's airfares, accommodation, equipment, guide and, oh do not forget the small percentage for charity, for them to climb a mountain? There are plenty of other ways to do it. I shaved my head for charity. This didn't cost a penny, just a bit of my dignity. Perhaps if you are not so bold, or should I say stupid,

why not run a marathon or hold a charity cake or clothing sale? The ideas and motives behind holidays and volunteering have been blended so well that it is hard to distinguish where one starts and the other ends. But at what cost? Not just that of your -or your parent's- bank account, but arguably to the cost of the people you are meant to be helping as well.

Many of the smiling faces in your profile pictures have been through more than you will in your lifetime

You might think I am in need of a holiday and need to relax over the issue. However, perhaps you will consider my concerns. Put yourself in the shoes of a native -presuming they have shoes at all- how would you feel seeing foreigners arriving with gifts and staying just long enough for you to make an attachment before they leave. Volunteers often bring a lot of love with them, and also items that these children will likely never have.

Consider the phrase "what you don't know can't hurt you". If these children are being exposed to what they are missing, will it hurt them? Trips to schools seem to be incorporated on some of these projects as day-trips indistinguishable from one to a tiger sanctuary; gap year travellers pose for pictures with the cute objects and say "Aww".

Despite celebrities such as Madonna and Brad and Angelina making little African children seem like fashion accessories, we should not objectify or belittle real people, poor or otherwise, to this status. Many of the smiling faces in your profile pictures have been through more than you will in your lifetime. Children as young as four learn to wash clothes, cook, run errands for their parents and get themselves to and from school. Many families are broken or the kids have ill or deceased close relatives. Do not be so patronising as to say "Aww".

My own experience of volunteering was put to test when I went to work at a special school in Ecuador. It is not about capturing the moment when you are feeding kids, attempting to avoid the unpredictable eruptions of pureed food, or on trips assisting people to the toilet or changing adult nappies. At first I avoided doing some of these less pleasant tasks before I realised that I needed to get a grip. If I could make these people feel happier, no matter how much bodily matter I had to handle, I was willing to do so. That was what I was there to do after all; I came to love every bit of those lovely children, not just their smiles in a photo. Never having really interacted with people with severe disabilities

before, it took time on the project for me to learn to understand not just people's individual needs but their individual personalities also.

So I am off again this summer and spending a large proportion of my student loan on it. Why? Aside from trying to justify my trip by insisting that I will contribute to the local economy, I know that my airfare could otherwise be spent helping to construct a new school building. However, I do believe in the invaluable nature of personal impact. Beyond the classroom I was able to teach the kids to handle animals nicely and tell them about life at home. For those without parents, I was the voice who could tell them a bedtime story; I was the arms to pick up a crying little one during break-

times. Even if the actions were small, I believe that the love I gave might have been the best and the most precious lesson I shared at all. During my British school career, it took just the support of one teacher who believed in me that changed my life. I am happy to go back to Ghana, to Cambodia or Ecuador if I might be able to be that person in someone else's life.

Do what you will with holidays, after all they are meant to be fun. However, please consider how your actions are impacting on the local community and in what other ways you could behave or use your money. I have told you my opinion; now go and realise yours.



Photo: Cleo Pearson

Laura Aumeer on the volunteering opportunities a bit closer to home

Most LSE students are aware of the careers service. The popularity of careers fairs, networking events and skills sessions is undeniable: the rush to book a place, the queues of students in suits and the sheer number of these events. Even if the idea of donning a suit to go into university fills you with dread, it would be hard for you to remain unaware of this side of LSE. The posters, the recruiters on campus and the "chat" surrounding internships and jobs all point us towards the holy grail of work. Nowhere else would someone

approach you in the student union bar, with the line "Hi, I work for Goldman Sachs, want a drink?" - true story, needless to say it did not go down well. However, how many of us are aware of and use the smaller volunteering service we have?

Last week was apparently student volunteer week. I say apparently, because whether it was the commencement of campaigning for elections or just my essays that distracted me, I certainly was not aware of it. When someone mentions student volunteering, you might think of building schools or teaching abroad in the sum-

mer break, but I am more interested in volunteering in our own locale. There is a worthy purpose in volunteering abroad. However, before we all jet off to somewhere sunny, should we not at first consider trying to address the issues we face at home?

Having spent the last week in a local girls high school, I would definitely say yes. I admit, my aims were not purely selfless - it was a compulsory step before training I am to do in summer. Though by the end of the week, I realised my help was definitely valued here, in a school practically on my doorstep. The school was meant to be good, but only 52% of pupils achieve the benchmark 5 A*-C grades, the basic standard they are meant to meet by the end of their compulsory education. The classes needed a lot of varied support and the kids themselves varied from working towards that A* in Maths to counting on their fingers and running around the room. Some could not read the questions, others had family problems at home and many thought university was just not possible for them. Now a week helping wouldn't change this, I admit. But continued help would.

There are problems on our doorstep that we often disregard and try and forget about. How many homeless people do you pass on your walk home, and what do you do when you see them? Avert your eyes...perhaps, or maybe you buy a big issue and feel rather smug, even though you have just spent more than that on a coffee. Yet, we would fork our money to support charities abroad, even flying out to a place we know little about to help, even though it is a lot easier to fit in a couple of hours a week when you only have to walk down your road to get there.

Whether it is political or health-related or the arts, whatever you feel strongly about why not give up some of your time to actually act on your

passions, rather than just talking about them? My week tired me out and I do not want to see another maths worksheet for a while, but when one of the girls said, "Miss, I'm sad you're leaving, you're well good" I felt it was all worthwhile. It may seem hard to find the time, but this is going to be one of the most time-rich parts of our lives, at least until retirement. Not only is there the self-satisfaction, but volunteering provides experience in different industries and is looked favourably upon by employers.

Below the surface there is a wealth of volunteering at LSE: from the tutoring schemes in Widening Participation to mentoring students in years below to the running of societies and the halls committees and the creating of this very paper. Student life at LSE runs to a certain extent on people giving up their time to do things they (hopefully) enjoy and to help provide a service.

Below the surface there is a wealth of volunteering at LSE

Many people I know question the costs and benefits of volunteering, often not realising they have been contributing themselves. In the wider community, discussion of volunteering has shifted to a discussion on how to incentivize volunteering, as if people cannot work out the benefits of it for themselves and need a more tangible carrot or even a harsh stick. Talk of compulsory volunteering for teenag-

ers - an obvious contradiction - has been bandied around by major politicians in the past few years. Incentives are constantly being provided - from awards to gig tickets to money. From my own experience, a youth organization I used to volunteer for provided incentive money, taxis and food to keep us helping. That was not volunteering, rather cheap labour, drawing us in the twenty pounds and some sandwiches from Pret. I know several people who are going to "volunteer" for the 2012 Olympics - I applied as well but without any transport or accommodation provided and without even the incentive to see any sport, this seems like a way of cutting costs in the running of the games.

This begs the question where does the line fall between volunteering and exploitation? Some would argue unpaid internships are just a form of volunteering, although in practise they abuse the eagerness of students, desperate for their dream job. Yet, I wholeheartedly agree that people should volunteer. Many of the answers of the issues we face in today's society are going to be based in policy. As that often does not seem to be forthcoming, surely volunteering could alleviate some of the problems.

We should recognise more of what we do currently and maybe branch out a bit more, get off campus and away from the student-bubble. Disregarding the cheesy lines about making a difference, it is ourselves who benefit as well. Volunteering and then realising you do not want to work in that industry is a much easier and less painful than giving up several weeks into a year contract. You can expand your skills, become more employable and it might just give you something more interesting to talk about in the Tuns.



Flickr: Tanvach

Passing up on a popular pastime

Isabella Hislop on falling out of love with clubbing

Have I fallen out of love with clubbing? I felt guilty the second I had this thought. I have been a self-appointed "partygal" since the tender age of fifteen, when I realised my "dancing" was ready to be unleashed on the unsuspecting public. So for the next four years, three times a week, my evenings were spent uploading multiple photos of me and my friends, showing us chugging magnums (so everyone could see just how cool we were), jumping up on every raised table I saw (to show off my "moves") and resisting for as long as possible putting my hair in a pony. Seeing as clubs refuse to invest in air-conditioning, I needed to come up with my own ventilation system, even if it did unfortunately make me look like a boy.

My gap year was a hazy mess of BoujisCuckooBoujisBoujisMaddox-BoujisMaddoxCuckooBoujisBoujis-PublicBoujis. I am horrifyingly embarrassed at the time wasted wandering round clubs, desperately looking for sturdy objects I could use to hold myself up on. For the record, many Arab men misinterpret you clutching onto their arm, as you try to steady yourself, as an invitation to touch your bum. Another tip – be wary as speakers in club vibrate extremely violently. Grabbing onto one of them, after a few

too many vodka sodas, in an attempt to balance yourself will give you such a fright that you'll end up on the floor anyway. Since then, I have not really had the desire to venture out into the sea of overly-intoxicated predatory clubbers.

Going to a Mayfair club is a bit like entering a crèche

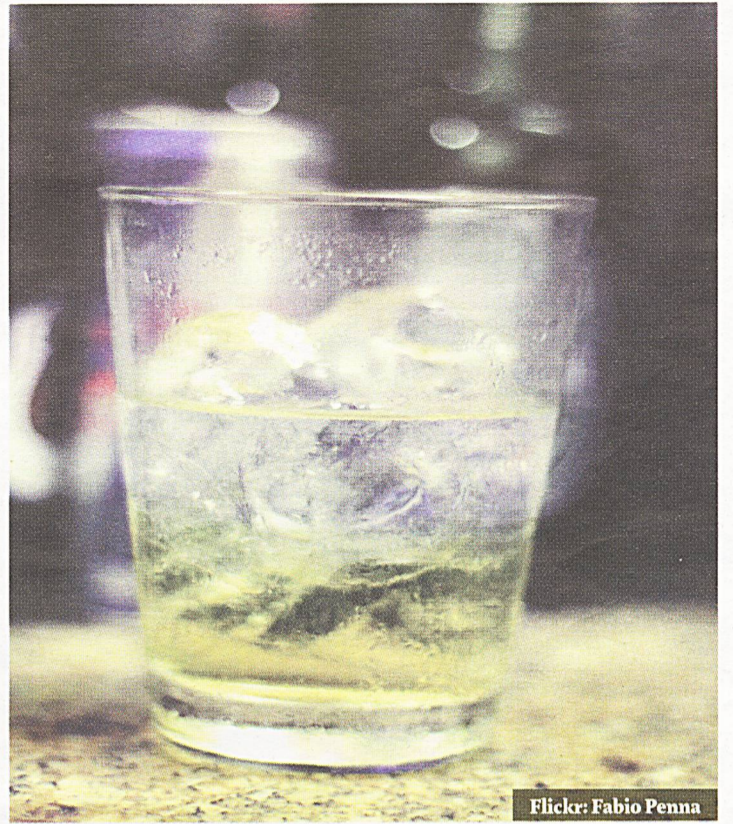
The crackling sound Red Bull makes as it is poured into a glass reminds me of vomiting on my bathroom floor (having not quite made it to the loo). Pitbull's Spanglish makes me think of all the failed times I tried so hard to move my hips like the girl in Dirty Dancing 2. And all the sticky surfaces make me remember of the multiple times I carelessly discarded a tasteless piece of gum on the floor, only to stand in it moments later.

Going to a Mayfair club is now a bit like entering a crèche. Rather hypocritical of me to say, especially as I was once that girl approaching the bar doing my "sexy" walk that I copied

off the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show and trying to look seductive as I pouted to hide my braces, in an attempt to get a free drink. But seeing girls that have yet to take their GCSEs grind up on creepy men, makes me want to march them into a taxi with a stern telling off, "have you even finished your homework?".

"Hey baby, you want a drink?", this question used to produce the same kind of happiness induced by a Tinie Tempah song coming on. Sometimes both happened at the same time, and it'd be the best night ever. Now when an suspiciously generous 40-something man in a suit offers me a drink from his table, my immediate thought is, "He is definitely trying to 'roofie' me". What was once a compliment has now turned into me assuming everyone is trying to date-rape me. Perhaps rather big-headed of me, but who can resist my well-perfected Adriana Lima swag? And although the braces are long gone, my pout is still out in full force.

I sincerely hope that I am able to fall back in love with my favourite pastime. But right now, I have a heap of knitting to do, the cats need feeding, next door's children are playing their music far too loud and I have got bowls in an hour.



Flickr: Fabio Penna

Travel Diary: Nahanni National Park

Liam Brown on canoeing the rivers of Canada's north

It was mid-August when I travelled to Canada's north. After a childhood spent canoeing the rivers and lakes of Ontario, I finally found myself in one of the country's most well-known parks: Nahanni National Park. The Nahanni is a glacial river running from the mountains on the border of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. A silty river, the Nahanni is fast-paced, running over ten kilometres an hour in certain sections. To get there, I had to take four flights on planes ranging from large commercial jets to the ever-Canadian bush plane, the Twin Otter.

After over 26 hours of travel, we finally arrived at Virginia Falls - the biggest ranger post in the entire 30,000 km² large park. After a day spent collecting and preparing our gear, as well as climbing Sunblood Mountain which over looks the famous falls (Virginia Falls is twice as tall as Niagara Falls

and was one of the first four UNESCO World Heritage Sites), we set off down the river to start our two week trip.

As we fought with the rapids of the Nahanni River, I wondered how the fur traders of yesteryear managed to travel this route in both the cruel heat of summer and in the frigid, sub-arctic winter. Quickly we began shooting down the glacial river at a quick ten kilometre per hour pace and found ourselves in the aptly named Painted Canyon. This particular geological wonder features exquisite walls of various rock-types cutting through the rugged landscape of the park.

It is no wonder the Nahanni is widely considered Canada's, and one of the world's, most beautiful rivers. With rock formations, mountains, and an array of life (both animal and floral) that would rival that of any National Park in North America, I was constantly excited by what lay around the next bend of the river - and upon

entering Third Canyon, my excitement peaked. One of the most striking features of the park is a mountain known as Devil's Pulpit. Not only does the Pulpit rise hundreds of feet above the river, but the view from atop its summit is one I will remember for the rest of my life.

As we exited our canoes I was weary of climbing the sheer rock face scattered with loose boulders just waiting to tumble onto us hapless adventurers. But as we waded into the stream at the foot of the Pulpit, I gained my nerve and decided that, on the urging of our guide Lara, the view from the top was worth the risk. It took only 45 minutes to scale the peak, with storm clouds moving in, however, our stay at the top would have to be short. Despite the brevity of our stay, the view is one that I can only crudely describe as "mind-blowing."

The view from all angles showed the beauty of this land, of this river,



and of this country. Only from on-high could I truly appreciate the marvels of geography that this trip had exposed me to. The beautiful formations forged by the workings of Karst topography (Geography students take note), characterise the landscape. Unfortunately, the storm was moving closer with each passing minute, and we all knew traversing the rocks and boulders of the Pulpit in the rain would be a dangerous proposition. Unhappily we scrambled down the rock face and began making camp for the coming downpour.

Luckily, in the north, when rain hits it does not stay for long and after an evening of heavy rain, we woke up to a beautiful day of 30°C temperatures and bright sunshine. The climate of the sub-arctic is an interesting one. In the summer, temperatures routinely beat out the UK with 30°C highs not being an unusual occurrence. But in the winter, the lowest recorded temperature in the area is a bone chilling -51°C, but factoring in wind-chill, that number lowers to -64°C.

It being August, and I much preferring warm weather over cold, there could only be one part of the day that could bring down my spirits. After dumping out of my canoe twice on the previous stretch of the river, I was alarmed to hear that the hardest set

of rapids on the river, George's Riffle, was going to be run today. Nigel, my uncle and canoe partner, was slightly more confident in our abilities to remain afloat than I, but I resolved to do my best in George's - and follow the canoeing mantra: "if all else fails, keep paddling!"

As we approached the Riffle (I maintain riffle is an inappropriate name as George's has swells at least four feet tall), we got out of our canoes to scout the situation ahead. Treacherous, but do-able, was the general consensus among everyone but myself. Despite my trepidations, we returned to our canoes and set-off into George's. As Nigel and I dropped into the massive holes of the Riffle, we did our best to keep on paddling. In fact, as we exited the hardest portion of the rapids we kept on paddling past our eddy-out point, forcing us to backtrack against the current.

But as we passed George's we knew we had conquered the river. Admittedly, this is not exactly a difficult feat and we were not exactly graceful in our canoeing, but none of this mattered to us. The trip down the Nahanni was a life changing experience - one that allowed me to get closer to nature, my country, and myself.



Photos: Liam Brown

A rower's tale: the season so far

Tom Meaden and Stephen Coulson

One might think there are few things less enjoyable than waking up early on a weekend, only to have to make your way across London to Chiswick to train for competitions weeks and months ahead of time. On top of this, having to consistently wake up early on most weekdays to hit the gym and do even more training makes rowing one of the most gruelling sports in the AU. And yet, there is something incredibly refreshing about gliding through the water in a boat filled with some of your best mates, everyone's strokes building to a powerful synchronised motion. The solidarity that this has built amongst the rowers this year can be matched by few other sports.

The Novice Men's gym sessions have been dominated by the arrival of 6ft 7 wonders Jean "Eiffel Tower" Heilbronn and Pelayo "LUST" Mendez, who have posted record times for the novices on a weekly basis. The Experienced Men's ergs have been pushed on by the relentless performances of Freddy Arnold, who combines ruthless German efficiency with a tender heart to motivate the rest of the squad. The ladies have also produced some star rowers; amongst them, the netball rebel Jo Johnston, who mercilessly humiliated one of the novice men in a 5k test on the ergs. We will pass over his name in silence to avoid adding insult to injury! On a side-note, this gentleman is not representative of the capabilities typical of most other male LSE rowers.

So, it was off the back of months of sweating and rowing, and some not infrequent chundering that LSE RC entered UH Head – a glorious 3.6km race on the Thames. Representing the Beaver against UCL, KCL and some shiny med schools, the LSE crews rowed with the strength of Vikings, placing impressively well against the

competition.

The Experienced Men's crew overtook three boats and came fourth – just 20 seconds off first place – beating several KCL and UCL teams in the process. The golden locks of Benjamin Thies, combined with the compact guns of Stephen Coulson drove the boat to success. Their position was so secure that Niclas Moneke let out a victorious (albeit premature) war cry 500m from the finish line.



Photo courtesy of Nikita Nikitin

The Novice Men made their first overtake of the year in their inaugural Head race, again coming fourth – a tantalising 10 seconds behind second place, in what is roughly a 15 minute race. As is now tradition, the team celebrated topless in the rain and hail following the race, before singing "I want to be an LSE rower"; cute. To their credit, they posted a personal best time and even beat an Intermediate UCL crew on the way. This harmony was forged despite a diversity

of character, ranging from the cave-man instincts of Marcus "Hercules" Jehnke, the hairdresser tendencies of Jack "Popeye" Curtis, the intimidating stature of Captain Nikita "Napoleon" Nikitin, and the shrill instructions from cox Selena "Koala Bear" Shen.

The determined Novice Women surprised everyone, overtaking two crews to place an excellent second place after a mere six outings on the water. Led by the overpowering en-

some just downright ugly.

Our Mr. LSE candidate was cruelly eliminated in the first round for discussing his "stroke length", whilst our beloved Captain blundered his way ever-deeper into a drinking game with no rules. Germanic drinking pride was dealt a heavy blow when "Hercules" unceremoniously dumped a pint over his own head in the boat race, although this was single-handedly restored by Freddi "The Fist" Muelke teach-

generally anonymous to get any attention or recognition from any other club. Nevertheless, Justin "The Rug" Friedman, has lately spearheaded the RC's weekly Zoo Bar campaign; though, it seems that rumours of a certain netballer managing to tame the wild beast over the last few weeks have been greatly exaggerated. Whilst on the topic of animals, the tornado of sexual charisma that is Jack Curtis truly pulled out all the stops at the last team dinner. The Labour heartthrob demonstrated his muscular liberalism by convincing a prowling cougar on the Northern line to follow him to Zoo Bar and finally completing his education, education, education in the ways of the older woman.

Between intensive training programs and extravagant Wednesdays, the club has not neglected charity. For RAG Week, we intended to row the 360km to Amsterdam, however this target was smashed with us reaching 412km over the course of the day; the consequence of this was an unprecedented amount of donations (aided, in no small part, by the topless antics of "Eiffel Tower", Meaden and Mr. Mooney towards the end which pulled in a fair few silvers from London's female population). As if all this were not enough, the LSE RC will also be sending in a healthy contingent to the Community Festival's charity run, once and for all cementing the reputation of the club's members being more than a little bit generous (a reputation established every Wednesday night by "The Rug").

So what next for the club? All crews will endure severe training programs over the next few weeks, as the Experienced Men prepare to take on 400 other crews in the Head of the River, whilst the Novice Men and Women will fly to Toulouse for this club's first ever international regatta. If previous progress is any indicator, the club will undoubtedly continue to uphold the honour of LSE on and off the water.

thusiasm of Laurel Loudon and Kerry Radigan, as well as the determination of the "Inter-Squad Relations Officer", Caroline Kelley, they powered through the course, instilling fear into the competition. Their success is undoubtedly attributable to their rigorous training program, which consists of pack runs, ergo tests and bench pressing Alexander "Twiggy" Kung for as many reps as possible.

Socials this year have been a hub of activity – some good, some bad and

ing "Eiffel Tower" the art of physical combat. Rowing club incest is still punished with extreme severity, as cox tease Caroline will attest.

On Wednesdays, we regularly frequent Leicester Square's most exclusive nightclub, albeit to a mixed reception. Rowers have made precious few appearances in "I know what you did last Wednesday"; after much debate and discussion, we have concluded that our members are either too drunk, unconscious (Meaden) or

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LSE STUDENTS'
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**LIBERAL
 DEMOCRATS**

Team profile: men's basketball 1sts

The men's basketball 1sts recently accomplished an impressive 65-53 victory against London Met. The result has allowed them to keep their place in the premier division next year. In celebration, here is a whose who of the top men's basketball team at the LSE.



Giovanni Graglia: The LSE will rename Columbia House the "Gio Building" to honour the captain's irrationally prolonged career (5 years and counting). Gio (or Mr. G, or Professor Giovanni, or just "Sir" as his students have called him during the year) gets pumped up before games by marking essays and by teaching at 9am on Wednesdays.



Kazeem Afolabi: Just like with Raymond, Everybody Loves Kazeem (including his mom, who deserves a shout out for being the only parent to be seen at one of our games so far!). And because everyone loves him so much, Kazeem is forgiven for his turnovers and for the appalling inappropriateness of some of his backhanded compliments.



Piero Leporelli: Like the tooth fairy, Piero quietly comes to practice when his class schedule and his girlfriend in Rome allow (and, clearly, whenever Kev loses one of his baby teeth). Not having ever complained about tube routes, kit sizes, practice times, or improbable accents, Piero is undoubtedly captain Gio's favourite.



Kevin Ho Yan Luk: The first ever member of the Basketball 1sts from mainland China, Kevin is the rookie everybody loves picking upon (and the crowd erupted as he scored his first two points this Wednesday). He's been so good at dealing with good-hearted mockery that he has been granted "rookie status" for the next two years.



Dan Yirinec: Winner of the Jekyll/Hyde award, Dan is the loveliest teammate during the day, but at night turns into a wild animal ready to pick fights with up to four bouncers at a time. When fighting, however, he requests not to be hit on his "pretty face" in order to keep his job as an Hollister model.



Andrew Engvall: Andy has contributed greatly to the team's success thanks to his exceptional athleticism. Our best all-around player, Andrew has the capacity to cover three different positions and to forget plays with impressive consistency. Currently, Andy is trying to find a new soulmate for his Zachless life next year. Lovely Cait will surely do.



Ernest Brown: The Flying Blackman can jump on top of the backboard and then salsa dance on it. His existence gravitates around LSE basketball, as testified by his e-mail before the first practice of 2012, when he stated "my life has meaning again", and by the fact that he shares a room with Szabi, captain of the 3rds.



Jon Tomashoff: Jon, famous worldwide for trying to start a basketball practice wearing gloves, is the irreplaceable point-guard of "Team America" and our top scorer. Despite his adorable (and almost teddy-bear-esque) appearance, Jon is a lean mean three-pointer machine with a penchant for disagreeing with our own home refs.



Domenico Fumagalli: The crowd's favourite, Dome is the most eclectic player the Basketball 1sts have ever had. He'll cross you over. He'll drain a three on you. Then he'll try crossing you over again just to go flying and crashing into the stands, leaving behind only his silhouette as if he was a modern-day Wile E. Coyote



Julian Ritter: The best-dressed teammate (an award received because he's been the only one never seen wearing a tracksuit on campus), Julian is our do-it-all man from the bench. Every week, Julian has to destroy the hearts of the girls that see him at A&F by telling them that he only has eyes for Ava.



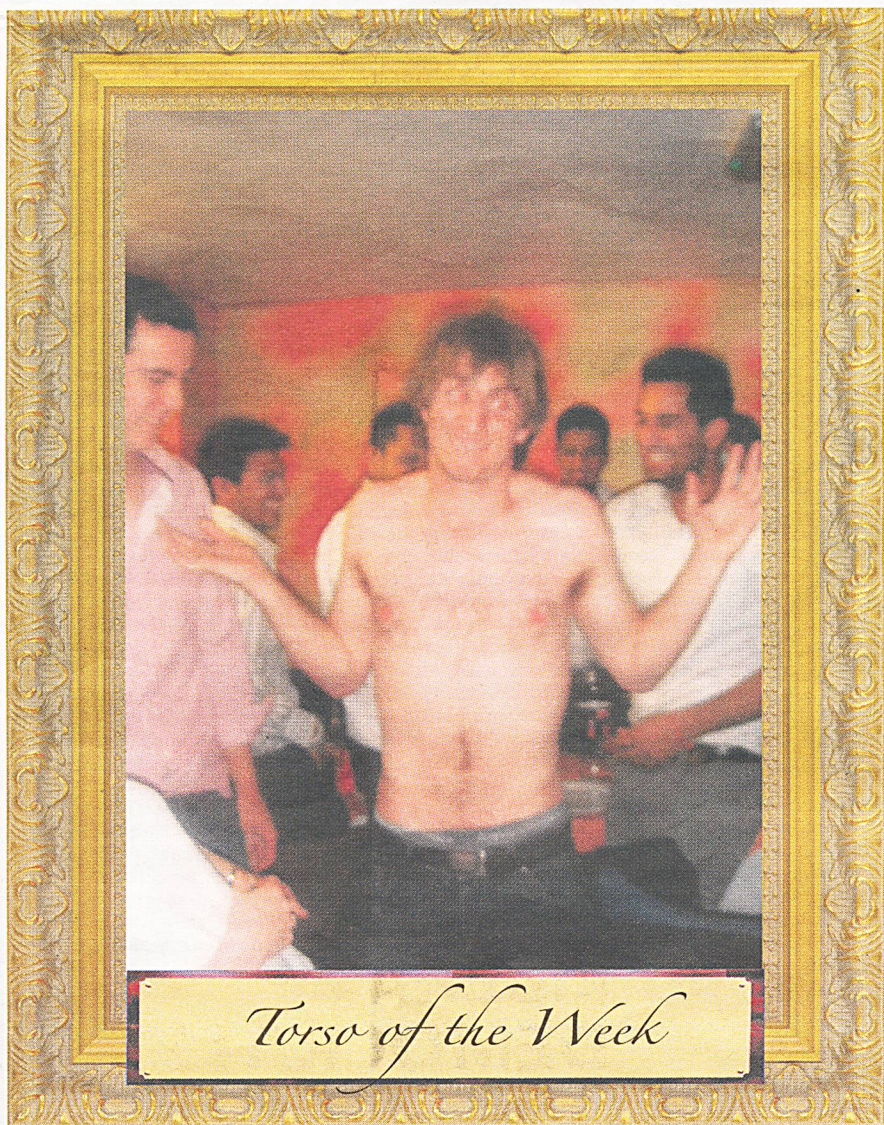
Michal Kiska: The only teammate to really look like a basketball player, Michal – already a Beaver in 2009-2010 – was the come-back story of the year. The entire team loves his girlfriend and, now that permanence in Premier League next year has been ensured, she is welcome to attend our games again.



Andrew Ben Salem: Andrew is not just a pretty face, he's a beast. Stopping him when he's running with the ball is potentially impossible (and trying to do that is SURELY really dumb). Andrew's aggressiveness makes him absolutely indispensable, despite the fact that his elbows have often – inadvertently! – knocked out opponents and teammates alike.



Zach Robinow: (or Ricky, as the kid likes to be called): Zach is enjoying more – and very well-deserved – playing time in this second half of the season, surely benefitting from a break in his action-packed European tour. A very basic knowledge of Spanish allows Robinow to claim that he can understand Italian just fine. That's a lie.



What a week of controversies we've had eh? The start of election was never gonna be pretty, but who knew that it might seep down into AU Elections? Wednesday saw last-minute withdrawals of candidates from races for controversial reasons, alongside a display of the best the AU seemingly had to offer: candidates for AU President & Exec positions can be commended on not breaking down and crying on stage, and kudos for the extra efforts made to come in a cookie monster and beaver outfit. A cross-dressing Barbie impression also went down a treat.

So after surprisingly decent chat and a fractured tailbone or two (caused by the deathtrap that is the Quad's stairs), people stumbled, rolled and cabbed it to our home away from home. The night was one to remember, with candidates remembering that they were being judged, not just by the AU, but by the whole of the student body in some cases; and with that, it seems we can leave out some regular stars of this column – be sure to check back next week though!

Onto the action now, and it seems one women's rugby fresher decided to get Low Low on more than just one man, despite the absence of Flo Rida's song necessitating these actions. Despite apparently being "involved" (damn these awkward/grey relationship labels) with the Pinnacle of second year rugby, she instead went for a little swim in the fresher Rugby Poole, whilst also managing to "tash on" with the 3rd team FC captain. Busy Wednesday night for you then love?

Rowing also made sure they were noticed this week, with D*nn's the Menace seen all-but shagging one massive-knocked lass. Sporting what I'd estimate to be a healthy pair of F's, our horny lady was seen straddling the man who couldn't quite believe his luck. The pair decided to try out a plethora of positions on the Zoo bar

sofas, it's rumoured that she even decided to put her assets on display (albeit with her bra just barely containing them) for the world to see (or at least, snap a pic of). Classy.

First team Netball captain also decided to get down and dirty, much to the amusement of much of the FC. As she publicly necked on with an FC comrade outside the tuns, the pair collected a gaggle of onlookers, no doubt fixated by the closest thing they'll ever come to a sexual encounter.

Lastly, it seems more than one girl was desperate for a swim in the aforementioned Poole, as second team sidekick to Captain Mateer, Flo Blohnston also locked lips with the sexual predator fresher. Seemingly making the most of his newfound freedom from his evidently deep, meaningful relationship, the lad not only decided to try different girls throughout the night, but sources confirm that he was indeed calling from the bedroom of Flo first thing the following morning. Someone's gonna have a massive Tour in Croatia.

I've warned you before, and I'll warn you again – no fighting in Zoo Bar. One poor FC fresher had to be restrained for the best part of half an hour as he attempted to wrestle free to apparently take on the largest people in Rugby. A word to the wise, when you're half the size of the smallest guy you want to take on, think again, especially when he's got 6 larger companions. Bless your naivety child.

Two final points kids: I'm retiring as of week 10, so I'm looking for replacements to take over the reins of this hallowed column next year. So if you think you have what it takes to survive Wednesday and name and shame your mates, email in to the Sports Editors; it's also Fight Night this week so get your tickets and make sure you're there for the most epic event so far this term. Someone may die, someone may not. Either way, BE THERE. Peace.

Sport

Inside

- A rower's tale
- I know who you did last Wednesday
- Men's basketball 1sts

Let's make Micah number one

Amit Singh

The retirement of Gary Neville has led to a problem for England in the right back position. Whilst Capello was in charge of England, Micah Richards was constantly overlooked, leading to angry reactions over his Twitter account; Glen Johnson seemed the preferred choice, as well as Kyle Walker, who was recently capped. Now that Capello has resigned, every position is far more up for grabs than previously and Richards has a fresh chance to state his case after experiencing a strong season so far.

A statistical comparison of Richards and his two main rivals says a lot for Richards' case; Richards wins 2.1 aerial duels per game on average, compared to Johnson (1) and Walker (0.8). However, Richards makes less interceptions per game on average (1.3), as well as winning less tackles per game than Walker, but more than Johnson.

The defensive stats reveal that all three players are, on the face of it, relatively tight. Man City have conceded fewer goals than both Liverpool and Spurs, but that may be down to

other factors such as the teams tactical ethos and other defenders. The reason Richards may edge it here is due to his greater athleticism and dominance in the air, which is crucial in the modern game, especially as teams so often switch the play from left to right to exploit full-backs who are not aerially proficient. Johnson, who was previously thought of by some pundits as defensively unreliable, has certainly improved this side of his game this season as Liverpool have conceded just 23 goals, only four fewer than Man City. Walker, too, should not be overlooked as the high numbers of tackles and interceptions he makes arguably points to him being the strongest

defensively, at least in the statistical sense; though, this can be slightly misleading.

From an attacking perspective, Micah Richards leads the way convincingly, with five assists so far this season and one goal. Compare this to Walker (one of each) and Johnson (one goal and no assists) and the case for Richards' inclusion in the England squad ahead of them is further strengthened. One would probably have expected Walker and Johnson to have provided more assists due to the fact that both are more traditional attacking full-backs who are comfortable on the ball and like to attempt to play crosses into the box. This is surprising

as Johnson and Walker are probably technically better than the more powerful Richards.

Tactically, the right backs all slightly differ in style. Micah Richards is probably the most complete player out of the three, with the best balance of attacking and defensive qualities. Richards is physically strong and very quick, which makes him an effective defender in one on one situations, as well as being more tactically astute than the other players; conversely, Walker and Johnson at times find themselves out of position in defensive situations.

Furthermore, from both attacking and defensive set-pieces, Richards represents much more of a goal threat as well as superior marking ability due to his aerial quality and positional awareness; his superiority over his rivals in this department is helped by his experience as a centre-back for City. The differences mean that an opposition winger would probably fancy their luck more against Johnson or Walker, due to their willingness to get forward and arguably their lapses in defensive play. Walker, for example, struggled when he came up against Ashley Cole earlier this season due to his expan-

sive full-back play and, rather than pressing Cole back, he often found himself on the back foot. The fact that Richards is more solid in his approach is an important factor, considering that some of Europe's top sides not only possess power and pace but also quality attacking full-backs, as well as aggressive wingers.

Johnson is known for his attacking exploits but, with his experience for England, he has shown that he is not good enough at defending at the top level; this could certainly count against him, although as noted he has improved his defensive game. Walker has enjoyed a fine season so far, but his inexperience may count against him; however, the possibility of Harry Redknapp taking over for England means a place in the squad for Walker is looking increasingly likely.

For Richards, the fact that he still starts for City is testament to his quality in an era where many of the clubs home grown players (the likes of Michael Johnson or Nedum Onuoha) have been moved on. With his tactical discipline and defensive qualities, as well as his productivity in the final third, he should certainly be in the squad for Euro 2012.



Photo: Lewis Clarke

The empire is crumbling

Timothy Poole

On the face of it, all Chelsea's 3-1 defeat at the San Paolo last Tuesday seemed to do was heap evermore pressure on their 34 year-old manager, Andre Villas-Boas. Yet, for me, Napoli's convincing win was indicative of a more underlying development – a power shift that has been ongoing for some time now. Indeed, two heavy defeats in as many weeks for English clubs at the hands of Italian opposition have confirmed a long-term suspicion of mine: that the quality of the Premier League is in sharp decline.

Once upon a time, a powerhouse Chelsea side containing an on-song Didier Drogba, warrior-like Frank Lampard and world-beating Peter Cech would have arrived in Italy holding no fear – regardless of the opposition. Napoli who? We'd ask. Sixth in Serie A? They will be no match for an Abramovich funded Chelsea team who have won multiple Premier League titles and were a John Terry slip away from lifting the Champions League trophy in 2008... We'd say. But now, we're better advised to look at the likes of Edinson Cavani, Marek Hamsik and Ezequiel Lavezzi and murmur: 'Chelsea's back four is in serious danger'.

And, sadly, it's not just Chelsea. In 2008, Arsenal travelled to the San Siro and produced a famous 2-0 victory over AC Milan. This time around, they

were rather ingloriously thumped, 4-0, barely being allowed to string together more than a handful of meaningful passes. Our top teams, Manchester United and Manchester City, have astoundingly found themselves knocked out of the Champions League this season, as early as the group stages. Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur's only Champions League run in recent history was dismantled with considerable ease by a Jose Mourinho-led Real Madrid side in last year's quarter-finals. A gap is forming between how good our English sides are and how good we think they are – a gap that is increasing with every kick of every ball.

Liverpool, the most successful English team in European competition, are not even in Europe this season. It was Napoli who knocked them out of the Europa League last year, and look how far the Italian side have come since. Napoli epitomise a rise in quality of all that reigns from Central Europe. Whilst ardent Premier League loyalists will vocalise the classic argument that two good teams don't constitute a strong division (referring to Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spain), one must not overlook the teams that are omitted from back-page publicity. Can we honestly say that our teams will have a smooth ride against other La Liga teams or the likes of Inter Milan, Roma, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Bayer Leverkusen and Juventus? We've certainly proven that

the likes of AC Milan and Napoli, with their recent resurgence, are beyond us.

We have now reached the stage where anyone still affirming that the Premier League is the best in the world is simply hiding behind the sofa, whilst the European clubs are left to dominate the rest of the living room. Italy's best sides will fancy their chances



Flickr: lamjomo

against any English opposition, whilst pigs will fly before Real Madrid or Barcelona are beaten by a Premier League side. Last week's Europa League action summed up the best of British prospects: United laboured to overcome Ajax, whilst City comfortably disposed Porto. This is the kind

of opposition we will always be above, but it may soon become the area to which our air of superiority is limited.

Of course, one often refers to the level of competition in the Premier League as its unique selling point, something that is arguably un-replicated elsewhere. The EPL is the most entertaining league in the world, it is claimed, and this is why it is head and shoulders above the rest. But does competitiveness really equate to quality? Take the Brazilian league, for instance; only 18 points separated champions, Corinthians, from 10th place, Santos last season, compared to a current gap of 27 points between Everton and league leaders, Manchester City. Does this mean that, as the Brazilian league is statistically more competitive than the Premier League, it is better? No. Such a suggestion is absurd at best.

Yet, similarly absurd is the assertion that, because a team like Wigan can hold Chelsea or Arsenal to a draw, the Premier League should be lauded for its unpredictability and excitement. In La Liga, Real Madrid spend most games coming from behind to grind out hard-earned victories against fluent Spanish sides who wholeheartedly commit to getting a result. Far from parking the bus, sides such as Levante, Osasuna (who beat Barcelona recently) contribute to a highly competitive environment. Besides, the real explanation for the entertain-

ment value of the EPL is, quite simply, the poor collective standard of our defending. How this lack of defensive quality can make our league the best in the world is a theory that leaves me rather puzzled.

In the end, we must accept things as they really are, much akin to the colonialists who had to accept the end of the British Empire and grant Indian independence. Last year, Spurs overcame AC Milan and Manchester United reached the Champions League final, but these accomplishments came as loose cannons at the end of a tether. This season's catastrophic showing abroad by Premier League teams has made the situation clear for all to see. The Italians are strengthening – and in numbers; their sixth-placed side is now more than a match for our fifth-placed side. Meanwhile, the Spaniards are leading the way; yes, it might just be Barcelona and Real Madrid for now, but soon others will emerge.

As for our clubs, we should take stock – we are no longer the bastions of footballing success we once were. Our results show that we are second-best to Spain and arguably a few yards short of Italy. Perhaps Tottenham and Manchester City will provide hope, and next season could well provide a different story. But if you still think the Premier League is the best league in the world, wake up and smell the coffee – it's been there for some time.

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