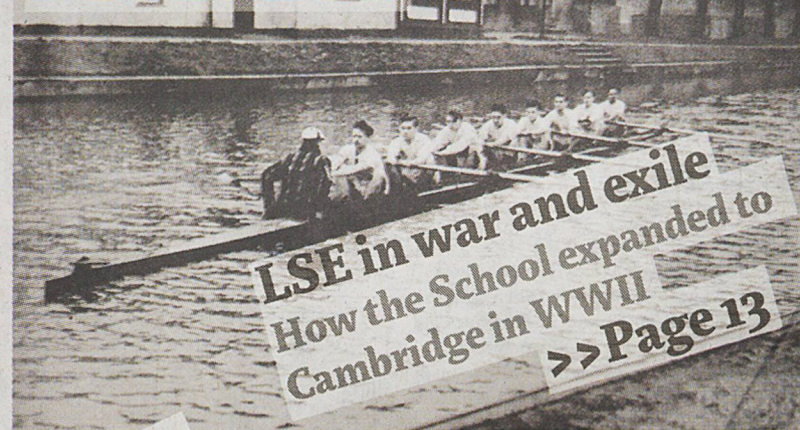


# DEMOCRACY IS BACK



Part B theme issue  
16-page pullout

Features



# The Beaver

11<sup>th</sup> November 2008  
Newspaper of the  
London School of Economics  
Students' Union

## Most of you are loss-making, Davies tells stunned students

>> Heated questions at UGM appearance

>> Student: "not a good first impression"

Rajan Patel

Howard Davies, the School's Director, described students as "loss-making" and responded aggressively to students' questions at a heated Union General Meeting (UGM) appearance last Thursday.

The Director gives a report to students on the School's activities and takes questions from them at the Union General Meeting every term.

Davies spoke on plans to consult students on the New Union Building planned as part of the proposed St Philips redevelopment, the ongoing nursery consultation, and the School's response to the recession. Davies faced hostile questions afterwards.

A visibly angry Davies rejected criticism of LSE security for their response to student protest last Wednesday outside the New Academic Building.

He described the incident, which saw an LSE student protester beaten by a Metropolitan Police officer, as a "storm in a teacup".

Protesters also claimed that LSE security stopped them from leafleting outside the New Academic Building, which – according to one questioner – violated the School's code on free speech.

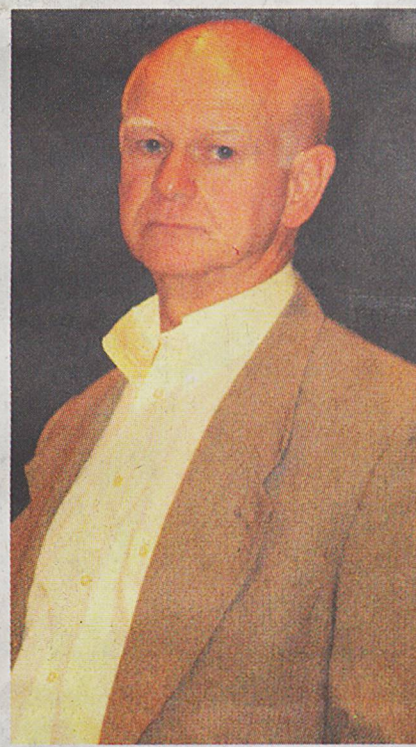
Anna Kraus, one of the protesters, said she was unhappy in the way in which Davies dealt with questions relating to the protest. "Howard Davies' attitude was appalling. The School's Director was effectively calling one a student a liar, despite having little evidence about the incident. This is deeply worrying."

Students suggested that as tuition fees "pay your [Davies'] wages", the Director should take students' side in any dispute. Davies dismissed this claim, commenting: "Pretty much all of the people in this room are loss making anyway."

"His referring to students in purely economic terms was insulting," added Kraus.

Davies also described as "garbage" one student's implication that he had "caused the credit crunch" and replied angrily when asked if the LSE would renew its pledge to not 'spy' on Muslim students.

He asked the student who posed the question, "Do you have evidence that that's happening? It sounds as though you must have some reason for asking that," before stating that the School had no intention of monitoring its students.



Howard Davies at the UGM on Thursday  
Photo: Zeeshan Malik

Students also pressured Davies on teaching quality, the future of the Nursery and on keeping Wednesday afternoons free for sport.

Davies said that there was "no likelihood" of Wednesday afternoons being freed up for sport. He was corrected by students when he claimed that students could freely swap between class groups to avoid Wednesday afternoons. He also explained that the School administration defined the afternoon as beginning at 1 pm.

"Figures put forward by the union are based on the afternoon beginning at noon. There is some rigorous defense for that proposition, but it's not the definition that has been taken in the past," he said.

Masters student Vanessa Spencer said Davies was "nervous, aggressive and condescending. It wasn't a good first impression and it changed my opinion of him."

Undergraduate Caspar Gerleve said, "Overall, I quite liked Howard Davies' performance at the UGM. Not only is it quite entertaining to listen to him, seeing him up close and being able to ask him questions makes him more tangible. I thought he did give students the respect they deserve, although the degree to which students deserved it varied - stupid questions don't merit smart answers."

## Police scuffle mars Queen visit Davies: "storm in a teacup"



Lorenzo Levrini

>> Protester beaten by police officer

>> Beaver photo of incident confiscated

>> No help yet with complaint - Davies

Beth Cherryman & Nizar Manek

A student protester was beaten by a police officer as he took part in a demonstration coinciding with the Queen's state opening of the New Academic Building last Wednesday.

Second year Government student Joe Sammut was kned in the groin and punched in the head as he resisted police efforts to seize his banner, which said: "No more dirty money at LSE".

The peaceful protest called on the LSE to "adopt a stringent donation and investment policy and address its corporate and unethical direction".

It followed the naming of the Sheikh Zayed Theatre after the former UAE leader, who Sammut said "systematically repressed human, workers' and LGBT rights". Protestors also criticised "the continued link of the LSE to unethical companies".

Sammut said, "I believe that this assault was meant to provoke a violent response from me that would have undermined the peaceful nature of our protest and justified an arrest."

The protesters claimed that the Metropolitan Police, under instruction from LSE security staff, prevented them from leafleting outside the New Academic Building.

Though permitted to regroup across the road, one police officer threatened to make arrests if protesters were deemed to cause "potential risk", citing the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005.

**"LSE students should have the right to protest on LSE property, the LSE is their home"**

Najam Us Saquib  
MSc Social Policy

Rachel Chloa-Howard, who was at the protest, said she was "shocked that the right to protest was denied in this way."

MSc Social Policy student Najam Us Saquib saw police move protesters away. He said, "LSE students should have the right to protest on LSE property, the LSE is their home. Even in Pakistan, from where I have come, such a right is observed."

Zeeshan Malik, a Beaver photographer, took pictures of police body-searching protesters and was coerced by a police officer into deleting his pictures.

Protesters brought an emergency motion to last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM) which called for the Students' Union to condemn the police officer's action. The motion passed with a large majority.

When asked for his reaction to the protest, Howard Davies, the School's Director, told the UGM, "I have no evidence at all that the student was assaulted, neither is there evidence that LSE Security instructed Po-

lice to prohibit the distribution of leaflets. Security denied this took place."

He said that he would not support students making representations to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) about the incident.

In a statement issued on Monday, Davies said that he had not been aware that the behaviour of the police outside the building had been witnessed by bystanders who thought it was inappropriate. "I am concerned by what I have been told since," he said. "In those circumstances the School is helping the Student Union to see whether there is relevant CCTV evidence," he added. Davies said it would then be considered whether a complaint to the Union's behalf was justified. "To date there is no evidence at all of any inappropriate behaviour by LSE security," he said.

The UGM emergency motion mandated the Union's sabbatical officers to write to the IPCC and to obtain CCTV footage from the LSE to back up the protesters' claims.

The Union's General Secretary, Aled Dilwyn Fisher, has registered a complaint with the IPCC on Sammut's behalf. Sammut has made a criminal complaint to the police. Sammut said, "I strongly believe that this incident would not have occurred if the LSE had respected freedom of speech and association and had allowed us to protest in a peaceful way on campus. It is critically important for an academic institution to protect the right for peaceful dissent, academia being based upon questioning and the freedoms this entails."

**"Media freedom is vitally important in all communities and that includes the LSE"**  
Howard's values through a lens  
Comment >> Page 9

**"LSE students still seem to stand, for the most part, on the political left"**  
A School of lukewarm leftists  
Features >> Page 16&17

**"The point of my column is actually to provide jokes, not answers"**  
Philosophical Barry  
Sport >> Page 23



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## Save the nursery campaign



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- Lao Tzu

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Above: Nursery children sit in strollers that blocked Houghton Street between Old and East Buildings last Thursday. Below: Howard Davies greets protesters Photos: Dan Sheldon

# Nursery protest blocks off Houghton Street

Victoria Boggiano

Parents brought their children to Houghton Street last Thursday to protest against the potential closure of the LSE Nursery.

About twenty parents, their toddlers and officers of the LSE Students' Union voiced their objection to any plans to close the Nursery.

Forming a circle of strollers between the Old Building and the East Building, the protesters were in the path of students on their way to morning lectures and classes.

After the 15-minute protest, parents and children presented LSE Director Howard Davies with a poster they had made for him.

The protest aimed to raise awareness of what could happen if the nursery was closed. Nursery manager Bola Adetona said that the nursery, which has operated for three decades, is an important service and offers good advertising for the LSE.

Adetona said, "The nursery provides support and stability for the School, especially for international and PhD students. The fact we offer childcare is a major selling point for the School and is attractive for potential students".

Sarah Williams, a parent studying for a PhD in International Relations, attended the protest with her son Emmanuel. "Look, the nursery is a centre of excellence and LSE should be proud of it and proclaim it, not shut it down," she said.

Marayam Ali - studying for a PhD in Information Systems and Innovation - was at the protest with her daughter Amira. She said of the nursery, "It's impossible to study without one and it's an excellent

nursery. My child loved and thrived in it."

The LSE nursery currently provides care for up to sixty-three children aged between three months and the age of five and is located below the Grosvenor House hall of residence. The original LSE nursery was first opened in Parish Hall in 1976 and moved to its current location two years ago.

Speaking at the Union General Meeting (UGM) last Thursday, LSE director Howard Davies said that each place at the nursery costs £6000 annually. "We expect to subsidise, but whether the amount of money the School is spending on subsidised childcare is the right way to spend the money is a separate issue," he said.

Davies added that the nursery is two-thirds full. "In my second year as Director, we decided that we should expand the nursery and move it to the basement of Grosvenor House, and that we would more or less double provision. This appeared to be a response to what people were saying about unmet demand," he said.

"Therefore, slightly to our surprise, though there are sixty-three nursery places, there were only on average forty-five people in the nursery. This suggests that there is something wrong with what we are doing," Davies said.

Students' Union General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher said, "Our nursery shouldn't need to make a profit; by threatening the nursery with closure, LSE is risking its reputation as a diverse and inclusive centre of excellence."

He added, "I've seen a lot of protests in my time at LSE, but this was by far the best ever - the children, their parents and nursery staff are all so passionate about the facility. The nursery is an essential service: saving it is the Students' Union's top priority this year."




TELL LSE WHAT YOU THINK: JOIN THE NURSERY CONSULTATION

Nursery Baby room 1

The Students' Union has been asking students to fill out postcards to send to the nursery consultation group





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internship.

**We think  
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A small selection of spirits will once again be available in the bar at Rosebery  
Flickr user itsray

## Whiskey galore: spirits return to Rosebery

Ali Moussavi

Stephen Hughes, the Services Manager for Rosebery hall of residence, has agreed to return a selection of spirits to the Rosebery bar after mounting pressure from students last week.

At a meeting of approximately 30 Rosebery residents last Tuesday, Hughes,

Rosebery Warden Matt Hall and the LSE Director of Residential Services Ian Spencer listened to Rosebery residents' concerns over the removal of spirits from the bar.

Last year, Rosebery's bar was the only profit making bar in LSE halls of residence.

At the meeting, Rosebery Social Secretary Paul Rees-Jones observed that the bar had already lost its Sky TV licence. Commenting on the removal of spirits, he

said, "Your unilateral actions have turned a profit making bar into a loss making one."

After instances of students urinating in their rooms' sinks and an arson attempt, the LSE had raised concerns over irresponsible drinking.

However, residents and the halls committee made their case for keeping spirits, arguing that the bar itself is not the source of irresponsible drinking. The Rosebery hall committee's internal survey showed overwhelming support for returning spir-

its to the bar.

After a separate discussion with the subwardens, Spencer and Hughes then agreed to bring back spirits to the Rosebery bar.

Several sources confirm that, at a past Residences User Group meeting, Spencer and Hughes told Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang that the removal of spirits was part of a plan to close down bars and replace them with cafes at which beer

would be served.

However, last week Hughes denied any such plans. He argued that a breakdown in communication between the hall committee and the warden was what led to plans for the bar to be replaced by a café.

Spencer plans to visit other halls of residence in coming weeks to listen to residents' views and discuss problems with the halls committees.

## Residences director makes privatisation threat

Ali Moussavi

LSE Director of Residential Services Ian Spencer has come under fire from student representatives for comments he made over the possibility of the "privatisation" of LSE halls of residence.

The comments were made in the presence of Students' Union Officers Dan Sheldon and Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, and approximately 30 residents at Rosebery hall.

Spencer told Sheldon and Akpan-Inwang that he preferred problems to be raised privately between the Students' Union and the School. He also said that he did not want them reported in The Beaver for the wider student body to read and that if problems continue to be made public then "privatisation might be on the cards".

The comments came immediately after several news stories on LSE halls of residence were reported in The Beaver last week.

The Students' Union Executive has criticised the comments. In a statement, Communications Officer Sheldon said: "The privatisation of halls is not something we take lightly, and the Students' Union will fight to protect our halls from this threat. Previous attempts at privatisation of LSE services have proved disastrous, and we hope Ian's speculation is without foundation."

The Students' Union Executive has criticised what they feel are ineffective consultations of students by the School on

residences and facilities issues.

Recently, Akpan-Inwang raised concerns at a Residences User Group meeting over the School's failure to consult the Students' Union on the removal of spirits from the Rosebery bar.

At the time, Spencer and Stephen Hughes, the Services Manager for Rosebery, told Akpan-Inwang that they had consulted the Rosebery hall committee.

When the Rosebery committee voiced their opposition to the removal of spirits from the bar this term, the School said that there was a miscommunication between the committee and the Rosebery warden.

The disagreement over the spirits in the Rosebery bar has renewed calls by the Students' Union Executive for the School to standardise consultation processes.

The Students' Union also criticised the consultation process over last year's closure of the Beaver's Retreat bar.

Sheldon acknowledged the problems the School faces in running self-funding halls of residence in central London as part of an institution like the LSE, which has relatively high wage levels.

However, Sheldon said: "We defend the right of The Beaver to investigate any part of the School which fails to live up to its 'world class' reputation. The eagerness of Ian Spencer and company to avoid this public criticism is understandable, but unrealistic. When a tough decision needs to be made, they need to be transparent about the process and make their argument clear. If, after taking on board other views, they still have to shut down a service, then I'm sure students will accept this. They are at the LSE, after all."

## We're all loss making anyway....

...so you might as well find a worthwhile distraction from your studies.

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The Beaver



## Academic Board

# Wednesday afternoon sports burning issue as Academic Board meets



**>> School pressed to reschedule classes ahead of 12 November meeting**  
**Timetables: "not feasible" for postgraduates**  
**Athletics Union President: "this is a big issue"**

Hayley

Academic Board representatives have found that 37 undergraduate courses and 194 postgraduate courses have at least one scheduled hour of teaching after 12 pm on Wednesdays.

The Students' and Athletics Unions have repeatedly lobbied the School to reschedule these classes so that students have the opportunity to participate in LSE sporting events, which are scheduled for Wednesdays.

Academic Board representative Lore Hayek said that a weekly break for sports is particularly important for a city campus like the LSE. She said that working for free

Wednesday afternoons would be a priority for this academic year.

However, Linda Taylor, Timetables Manager in the LSE's Academic Registrar's Division, said that it was "unrealistic" to expect the 12-1 pm slot to be free for undergraduates.

Rescheduling teaching in the 1-2 pm slot is possible, but would mean inevitable clashes with classes elsewhere, she said.

Taylor added that it was "not feasible" to keep Wednesday afternoons free for postgraduate students.

Taylor rejected the suggestion that with the opening of the New Academic Building, the extra teaching space available throughout the week could allow Wednesday afternoons to become free.

She said that the practicalities of timetabling "go far beyond teaching space,"

though the New Academic Building "could potentially provide more flexibility" in timetabling larger lectures and seminars.

The nature of degree programme regulations and the wide range of option choices available mean that some teaching on Wednesday afternoons is almost inevitable.

LSE Director Howard Davies told the Union General Meeting last week that the figures compiled by the Students' Union show Wednesday afternoons beginning at noon, which is "a definition not typically taken in the past" by the School.

Davies said that he would look into the issue and that it would be possible to look into using the New Academic Building to reallocate classes, adding that "most of the postgraduate classes, I am told, that are scheduled on Wednesday afternoon are

in fact classes that can be taken at another time in the week." There was no likelihood of getting Wednesday afternoon free for everybody, he said.

In response to Davies' comments on Thursday, Athletics Union President Sophie De La Hunt said that "the scheduling of classes between 12-1 pm is a big issue," adding: "Undergraduates are under a lot of pressure to play so people are missing lectures to go to games. This is a situation that they should not have to be put in."

De la Hunt also suggested that the School has not really been aware of issues like pitch availability and lighting concerns, which resulted in players having to leave campus in time for 2 pm matches.

Davies told Thursday's UGM audience that he plans to look into the issue.



**"Obviously my course is my top priority, but I don't want to miss out on an essential part of LSE life"**  
**Student comments on Wednesday afternoons and sport**

Student A

When I arrived at the LSE one of the main things I wanted to get involved in was sport, as I had done at school. I'm a massive football fan and so I tried out for the fifth team.

I was so pleased when I was chosen because not only was the football of a high standard, but so was the banter.

I was therefore very disappointed when I learned that I had a lecture from 1-2pm on Wednesdays. Currently, when we have a home fixture on a Wednesday, I have to leave half way through the lecture and when we have an away fixture I have to make a decision between not going to the lecture or not playing football.

This is very frustrating. Obviously my top priority is my course but I don't want to miss out on what I consider to be an essential part of life at the LSE: that being committing oneself fully to a society.

I hope that the LSE recognises the difficult position it has put myself and others in and endeavours to find a solution.

Student B

There is not enough emphasis on outside activities from LSE and often sport gets pushed aside, even when, in my opinion it should be a priority of students to keep active. The AU is a great way to socialise, keep fit and active, and is a welcome break from such a heavy workload, and if people have 12-1 lectures then they can't really have this 'welcome break' that so many people need.

**"The AU is a great way to socialise, and keep fit and active"**

Also as a captain, it's hard to find players for a match if people have 12-1 lectures which causes undue stress, but also adds extra pressure on the students to skip the lectures, which is obviously not an ideal situation.

## Analysis

## Just how realistic are free Wednesday afternoons?

Victoria Boggiano

The timetabling of teaching on Wednesday afternoons is a longstanding concern for the Students' and Athletics Unions, but the pace of progress has been slow.

As Lore Hayek - a newly elected Academic Board representative - has made clear, keeping an afternoon free for sport has particular value for LSE students. The Athletics Union's facilities at Berrylands are a 40 minute trip from campus and students with 12-1pm teaching cannot attend away matches without missing class.

However, the clear message from LSE Timetables this week is that free Wednesday afternoons are an unrealistic expectation.

The Athletics Union claims that the School has previously used lack of teaching space as a justification for scheduled teaching on Wednesdays. The opening of the New Academic Building gave renewed impetus this year's campaign, as students expected space pressures to ease.

Space, however, is only part of the issue. Room availability could peak this year as future estates development may take teaching space out of commission around campus.

Timetables also claim that the challenge of satisfying hundreds of degree programme regulations and students' option choices are equally important factors justifying teaching on Wednesday afternoons.

This week's statement that free Wednesday afternoons for postgraduates are "not feasible" might make a successful conclusion to the Union's campaign unlikely.

Hayek maintains that Union representatives will continue to campaign until senior School officials make their position clear.

At last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM), Howard Davies said that there was "no likelihood of getting Wednesday afternoons free for everybody".

An issue raised at the UGM was the availability of alternative classes at other times in the week. Davies claimed that postgraduate students can choose to avoid classes on Wednesday afternoons, using this to justify the School's position.

After students rejected this claim, Davies invited the Education and Welfare Officer to assemble and present student concerns on the issue. Addressing this aspect of the Wednesday afternoons question might offer the Union the greatest chance of success.





## Analysis

### Teaching, satisfaction and course reps also to be raised at Board

Ali Moussavi

Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang has referred to the LSE's Academic Board as a "rubber-stamping committee".

The current thinking within the Students' Union's Executive Committee is that problems with teaching and learning should ideally be dealt with through bodies such as the newly created Teaching Committee, which reports to the Academic Board.

The main tenet of Education and Welfare Officers' strategy in lobbying for effective academic change in the School has been to identify best practice in individual departments and to replicate such practices across the board.

In some departments, such as Anthropology, individual students have a lot of contact hours with academics and support. Elsewhere – in departments such as Sociology – there is much less direct contact between teachers and students.

It is for this reason that the 'localisation approach' is something that Akpan-Inwang is keen to promote. Akpan-Inwang hopes to see more problems dealt with at lower levels than the Academic Board and plans to empower course representatives to achieve this.

This would increase the importance of staff-student liaison committees, which have in the past played a peripheral role in addressing teaching issues.

Akpan-Inwang's plans to incorporate course representatives into the Students' Union's governance structures will be put forward in the upcoming 'Your Union' consultation.

The idea is to make them more accountable by publicising their elections and roles and to pool resources between Students' Union officials and course representatives. This may facilitate more effective lobbying of the School on teaching reform.

Last year, Howard Davies publicly admitted the LSE's teaching failures to the Union General Meeting. Akpan-Inwang's predecessor, Ruhana Ali, subsequently set up the Students' Union's Academic Affairs Taskforce to investigate problems in teaching.

Ali's task force lobbied for a programme based on several elements.

These included capping the postgraduate class numbers at 15, redefining the role

of the 'office hour' as being a session for academic advice and adopting advanced English language training for teachers.

The School's Teaching Task Force incorporated these ideas into its own recommendations. The LSE has set a goal of implementing these aims over the next two years.

However, Akpan-Inwang observed that the LSE needs to think long-term to overturn its institutional focus on research, with teaching being only a secondary concern.

LSE Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning Janet Hartley acknowledged this concern through her work with the School's Task Force.

The Task Force's recommendations rejected a 'two track' system that might separate teaching and research, calling instead for the two paths to merge.

The LSE intends to place an increased emphasis on teaching in the route to promotion, and eventually tenure, for academics. Teaching will become a vital component to any academic's professional development.

Akpan-Inwang believes that the role of personal tutors is crucial to bringing about change. He has stated that if he could aggressively promote one single change it would be to empower personal tutors in their relationships with students.

Students in some departments complain that their personal tutors play a loosely defined, ad hoc role. Some claim that they rarely see or meet their tutors.

Akpan-Inwang has stressed the importance of the personal tutor as a student's chief advisor on all academic matters and pastoral support.

Student representation on such matters changes annually. Sabbaticals such as Akpan-Inwang are elected on a yearly basis and are constrained by a two-term limit. However, the academic culture of the LSE is something that takes several years to overturn.

However, one can argue that the National Student Survey (NSS) results over the past two years have made students' concerns on teaching clear to the School and have increased pressure for change.

Akpan-Inwang has identified how at some universities, individual departments are given their NSS results and asked to formulate strategic plans based on them. He intends to use the NSS data to submit formal proposals to the Academic Board and Teaching Committee on how to progress with teaching reform.

## Explainer

### What is Academic Board?

The Academic Board meets seven times a year to deal with "major issues of general policy affecting the academic life of the School and its development," making it one of the most senior governing bodies in the LSE, and one which can directly affect students' experience at the School.

The School's Director chairs the Board, the meetings of which are open to LSE academics - professors, readers, and lecturers. Six students also sit on the Board, including the General Secretary and Education and Welfare Officer from the Students' Union. At least one student must be a postgraduate.

The Board plays a key role in teaching. It is mandated to overview all aspects of academic and pastoral support for students, and several committees (opposite) have been set up in this area. Promoting research and assessing the School's examinations regime also fall under the Academic Board's remit. And there is one other area in which the Board is relevant to students. When you eventually graduate from LSE, it will be the Academic Board that authorises your degree.

Joseph Cotterill

## Academic Committee Structure

Linked Body

Student consultative forums (liaison committees)

Academic Board

Linked Body

Teaching Committee

Teaching & Learning Assessment Committee

Undergraduate Studies Sub-committee

Graduate Studies Sub-committee

Research Degrees Sub-committee



## Any Questions? Radio 4 comes to LSE



The panel at Friday's Any Questions? radio discussion in the Sheikh Zayed theatre  
Photo: Erik Lang

**Beth Cherryman**

Barack Obama and the special relationship dominated last Friday's BBC Radio Four 'Any Questions?' programme, recorded live in the New Academic Building's Sheikh Zayed Theatre.

Chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby, the audience focused their questions on the Glenrothes by-election result and the Bank

of England's cut in interest rates, as well as recent developments in America.

When asked whether the election of Barack Obama would make the world "stop hating America", the four person panel felt that attitudes towards the US would change.

Hilary Benn, the UK Minister for the Environment, suggested that people do not hate America but that "the US has done things people don't like". He said that under Obama, issues such as climate change would be given greater attention.

Historian Andrew Roberts claimed that superpowers are always disliked and that Obama's election would do little to change that. He was also concerned that Obama had raised expectations to an unrealistic degree.

Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Scott said that Obama could build on the good will generated from his campaign by closing Guantanamo Bay and releasing serious statements on the use of torture. This would allow him to deliver on the "promise we think we've seen in him" and improve

relations worldwide.

The panel were questioned on the "special relationship" between the US and Britain, with the questioner implying that Britain remained America's "poodle". However, the panel and the audience were almost united in their belief the relationship was one of equals.

Shadow Leader of the House Theresa May MP said that Britain and America "fought together for freedom and democracy". Though the relationship is "important", she said that Britain makes decisions

which are in its own interest.

Baroness Scott thought a "powerful concerted European power" was called for to pull America into line and received the loudest applause of the night for questioning how following the US into Iraq was in the UK's interest.

**Online**

Listen to the broadcast on BBC iPlayer  
[bbc.co.uk/iplayer/bbc\\_radio\\_four](http://bbc.co.uk/iplayer/bbc_radio_four)

## Students blast 'misogynist' Miss LSE beauty pageant



Protesters at last year's Miss LSE event  
Photo: Beaver Archive

**Ali Moussavi**

Students plan to protest at this week's annual Miss LSE beauty pageant against what they say is an event which has the sole purpose of objectifying women.

The pageant will be held at Crystal, a Central London nightclub, on Tuesday night. It is likely to be attended by over 250 people.

The eventual winner of the competition will participate in the 'Miss University of London' pageant.

The event faced similar opposition last year, when the Students' Union Constitution and Steering committee (C&S) found that it breached the Union's Equal Opportunities Policy. This prevented the Students' Union promoting the event by allowing the use of its logo on the event's flyers.

The protest was attended last year by 15 students, including the Chair of the Students' Union Feminist Society and the Union's Women's Officer.

No official policy has been passed by the Students' Union this year in opposition to the event.

However, Women's Officer Ruby Buckley, who plans to attend the protest this year, said that the Students' Union Executive Committee is broadly supportive of the protest.

The organisers of the protest have set up a Facebook group called 'Miss-ogyny at LSE' in which they call for "more dramatic and direct action in order to eradicate this event for good".

Buckley said: "The LSE is an institution which should be rewarding people on academic merit, not on how closely you choose to conform to a conception of beauty. The university should not associate itself with an event which objectifies women and instead should actively distance itself from anything which judges someone purely on how they look."

**Comment** Miss LSE's hidden dangers 12



# Comment

## Howard's values through the lens of a camera

The Director's failure to support freedom of press and civil rights on campus is disgraceful

Erica Gornall



Britain is the country of some of the best cute little quirks in the world. We are in a country where we inquire 'how are you?', yet look shocked if the answer is anything but 'fine.' Shaking hands is too awkward for a first meeting, yet we cringe at anything more, especially that dreaded continental kissing (one kiss, two... three!?) But the best one is the Brits' attitude to the Queen. Most of us couldn't care less about Elizabeth II, but at the slightest hint of outside criticism, will find all the passion from the bottom of our hearts to defend the old lady. She's an institution: she has a quiet reserve most of us could only dream of, she's seen most of the last century's history, and however many batty Prime Ministers we chew our way through, she is still there is those gorgeous hats dropping in on one function or another.

I am one of those Brits. And that is why it is with great disappointment that her visit was overshadowed by actions of the police and, most surprisingly, the reaction from LSE Director Howard Davies. It was such a shame that an event so painstakingly planned and organised by LSE Conferences became stained by an act of brutality against students of the LSE and - most shockingly - censorship of the Students' Union press.

Student journalists. They're like marmite. You either love them for their naïve idealism and variable proficiency of the English language, or you detest the pesky buggers. They insist on hanging around in corridors, asking some pretty incomprehensible questions, and to top it all off, they don't even use the figures you provided them with but pander to sensationalism by using a questionable source that had juicier statistics. Makes you want to hit them.

But you're not allowed to, are you? It seems that these days you can, if you're a member of the police and the Queen's about. This week a Beaver photographer was forced to delete photos of a student being kicked and punched by the police



Police deal with a protestor at a Stop the War march  
Photo: flickr user fotdmike

outside the event to open the New Academic Building.

Now I haven't reported for the Beaver in a while. I have had more experience in national papers, Sky news and the BBC than student journalism in the last year. But the first thing we are told when we work is the importance of media freedom and the rights we have when covering any event. Most importantly, when dealing with protests and the police we can take any pictures that we want and the police have no right to force a journalist to delete what they have.

This is not a grey area. It is set out in the Association of Chief Police Officers national press-police guidelines. It states, "Once images are recorded, [the police] have no power to delete or confiscate them without a court order, even if [the police] think they contain damaging or useful evidence." It even adds that officers who delete photos "face criminal, civil or

disciplinary action."

So what exactly happened? Well, while the Queen was busy meeting the high and mighty of the LSE, three people were unfurling a banner outside. One of the protesters had an altercation with one of the officers, who wanted to confiscate the banner. Then the student who refused to do so was then kicked in the testicles and hit in the head by the officer. A clearly labeled Beaver reporter who tried to capture the incident on camera was then told to delete the photos.

Journalists do not have to do anything of the sort. Of course an officer using disproportional force against an LSE student will want to delete the evidence. But this act has no legal backing. It was only because of the intimidation that the journalist was no doubt under (after all he had just witnessed a fellow student being hit

in the balls!) that he deleted the photos.

Okay, so perhaps the protesters were really inconvenient. And their cause is not one that is popular with many from the LSE, and its not like the Queen was in any position to do something about it. But the use of force on these students was completely disproportionate to the problem they were creating - getting in the way, and wearing tatty t-shirts. What's more, they were exercising their right to assembly and protest. There was nothing dangerous about them. The officer himself calmly laughed off the banner in his hands that he had acquired. "Nothing dangerous" he chuckled. Apparently using this kind of force to acquire a painted bed sheet is acceptable to the Met officer. He, too, didn't seem too worried that he had just infringed the freedom of the press by forcing the Beaver reporter to delete photos. All in a good day's work.

But this is not normal for the police.

Two of my family members work for the Met, and they would be shocked to hear of the level of violence outside the LSE that morning. It seems that as soon as the head of state is in town, all notions of freedom of speech and the press are trampled on. This was one officer who had acted beyond his powers. After one of the protesters complained to the officer in charge, the latter merely went over to the ball-kicking officer and chuckled some more. Not a reprimand in sight.

Yet this is not the LSE's fault. The event was well-planned, LSE security did not use force and calmly delegated to the police, trusting that the latter would use appropriate action and judgement. It was the Met police officer who both used violence and infringed the freedom of the press. This was an unjust act against LSE students by a Met police officer, and the Students' Union rightly condemned the action in a motion at the UGM.

So it shocked me to the core when a man that I greatly admire, Howard Davies, said that he was not going to complain. It was less that he was not going to complain, but the shocking reasons as to why he wouldn't. There was no evidence that the assault even happened, he said. Therefore, there was nothing to complain about. He had spoken to the Met police and they denied that such an assault happened. To point out the blindingly obvious for him: the officer deleted the photos. Of course the police were going to deny it. The argument of no evidence when one of the complaints is that the evidence was forcibly destroyed does not hold with a student body who expects their Director to listen to them and take them seriously. Of course Davies should defend his security and his staff. To me they did nothing wrong. However, when students complain about being assaulted by the Met Police, it must be taken more seriously than being dismissed as "a storm in a tea cup".

Media freedom is vitally important in all communities and that includes the LSE. As the eyes of the students it has the duty and the right to report injustices on campus. This was infringed upon, and the Director refuses to take it seriously. However poorly written the press release was, that is no excuse to overlook the serious allegation of assault that was buried under the multiple spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. We as a student press have the right to complain and after a motion overwhelmingly passed, we will. It is just a bit of a shame that the word of the LSE press and students, who Davies represents, were waved aside by the word of the police force.

Union Jack



HD-10000 looked out into the sea of faces and saw only numbers. Loss-making numbers. A coldly rational, calculating machine, he was the greatest financial supercomputer of our times, the lightest (but surest) regulatory touch in the galaxy. So why weren't these meatbags laughing?

It had all started so well. HD-10000 had fulfilled his basic programming. He had come to the Union General Meeting to spool out the School's possible plans to economise nurseries, economise class sizes, and generally economise things. His opening speech to the pitiful human deficits lolling in front of him had gone well.

But then the human element kicked in: HD-10000 would have to face questions as well. His Bad Joke Processor Unit still functioned as well as ever. But there was something different about this year's set

of humans. Like the lights winking out on a galactic starcruiser just before its main reactor explodes, the magic proceeded to seep out of the machine.

The first question was a doozy. Would HD-10000 tell off his security droids for processing some very scruffy and annoying protesting meatbags in an allegedly not very nice way? Time for standard evasion procedures, HD-10000 coldly assessed. But then the tragedy of the human condition intervened. "We want jokes, not answers!" came the cry, a plaintive call out of the depths, possibly back to front, but piercingly existentialist in its meaning.

So powerful was the emotion that HD-10000's logic circuits fried. His locomotive motors set off down the stage of their own accord, terrifying but mostly utterly bemusing the humans.

As systems came back online, HD-

10000 dredged up as many idiomatic subroutines out of his linguistic memory banks as he could. "Someone always wants to spoil the party!", he rasped mechanically. "Storm in a teacup!"

But the humans had deserted him. They did not respond well to his empirical statement that they were all so much red on the financial ledger.

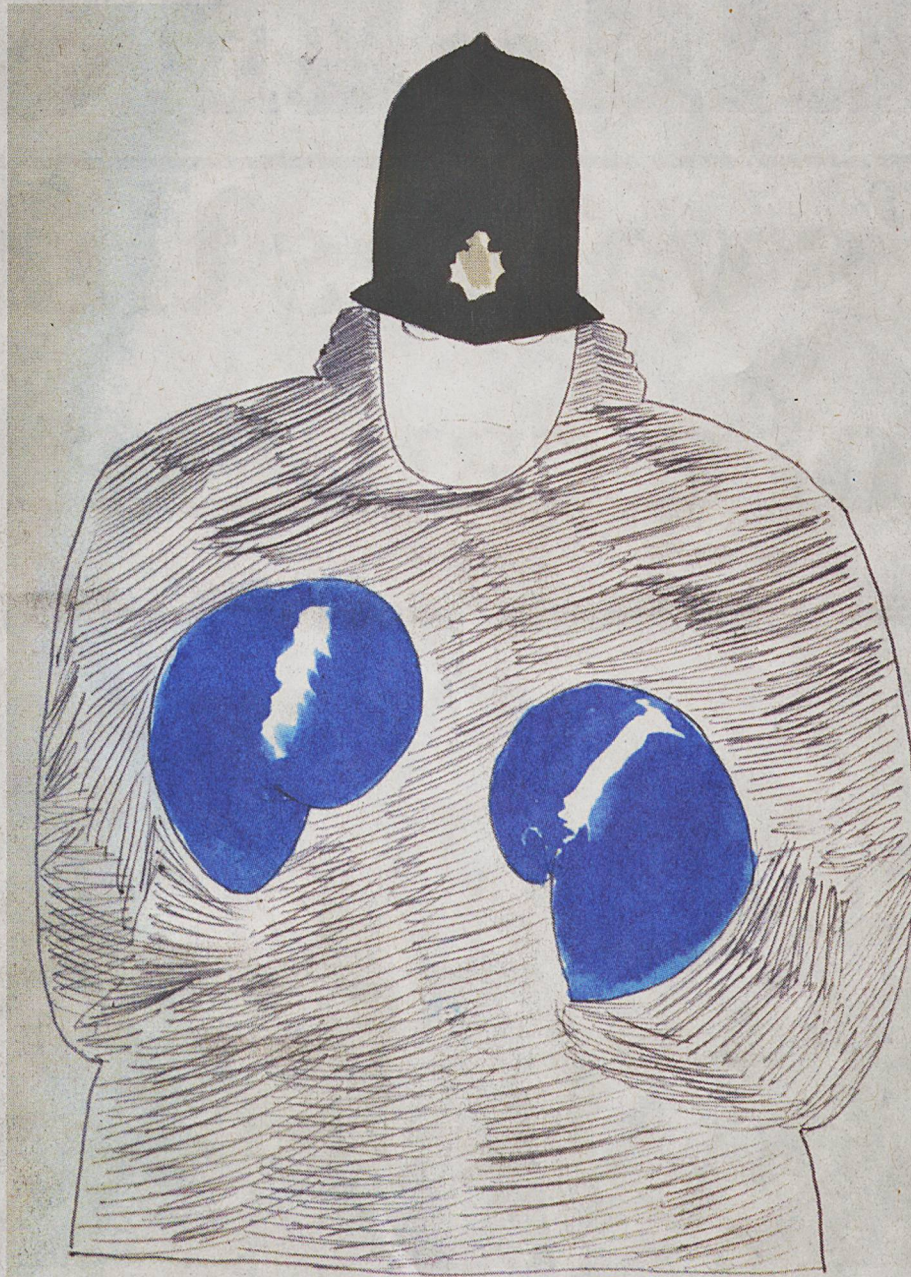
Further questions restored whatever morale existed in HD-10000's electronic brain. He dished out perfect, precision-engineered evasion to all comers. He posed a bold falsificationist gambit to a request that the machine renew its pledge not to spy on some students - did she have evidence? No. He switched to verificationism when DJ Smellsdone asked if he had caused the galactic economic crisis. "Not provable!" he robotically barked. The Union's official Alan Partridge imperson-

ator had just not been able to resist letting everyone know what an absolutely naff, hapless human he is.

It was time for HD-10000 to leave the stage and get away from these hostile humans. "We want poetry!", they had shouted. "You just want the right to be unhappy," a lone voice deep inside his programming echoed.

Then the Union humans took over the show and it all got a bit boring. They were happy because they had successfully incited a tribe of small people to rage against the machine in a buggy-in on Houghton Street. Then those pesky questions returned, especially for Alan Partridge. He was very cross that people were asking for him, and he very crossly reminded everyone he had already apologised for that whole booking a room without telling anyone thing. Ah, human error.





# The Beaver

Established in 1949  
Issue No. 692

Telephone: 0207 955 6705 Email: thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk

## A loss-making Director

**W**hat a joke. What a disgrace, actually. If the School's Director, Howard Davies, is going to represent the School administration to students as badly as he did in his termly appearance at the Union General Meeting last Thursday, then it may be better for all concerned if he cancels his next date there, due for Lent term.

It was a tough crowd. There were some determined political opponents of Davies at the meeting, who would never be satisfied whatever he said. But Davies' words only served to reinforce even in the most conservative and moderate students' minds what his opponents say about his allegedly too-financial style of management.

It didn't help that the question Davies most seemed to enjoy answering, at length, concerned whether he had caused the credit crunch, and that he was generally evasive on almost everything else - from reading weeks, the nursery,

and (absurdly) whether Wednesday afternoons start at noon.

But most of all, students definitely did not appreciate his remark that "most of you in this room are loss-making", especially in the context of students pointing out that their fees helped to pay his wages. Davies was evasive once again on what he thinks about the future of tuition fees in this country, but those eight words surely tell us all we need to know about whether he really thinks fees should be increased.

Words like this are just outrageous. Davies cannot talk to students like this - or lead them to believe by association that other members of the School's administration also think about them in these Gradgrindian terms. That just does not reflect reality. Davies' angry and defensive answers spectacularly failed to represent staff well to students.

These meetings are for Davies to give an account of himself and on behalf of the School, not to make snide remarks. Students are not here to help

the School turn a profit, and we bitterly reject that view of how a university community is supposed to be run. So would many of the academics and staff whom Davies employs.

If students are so loss-making, Davies will surely not mind if they direct their friends and family to stop donating to the School or the Annual Fund, begging letters for which went out recently. In the meantime, Davies should apologise for his remarks.

And Davies should change his tone at the UGM if he wants to come back in Lent term. Before, Davies used to show up, tell some bad jokes, flirt with the Athletics Union, and go home. Not this time. Not good enough. Not any more. Undergraduates pay good money to be here now. Postgraduates simply pay through the nose.

The statement that Davies issued this Monday on the protest just shows how pathetic and out of order his UGM performance was, and how completely uninterested he seemed to be that some LSE students might have been hurt. Only now will he help the Union

look at the CCTV evidence: only now will he consider making a complaint on their behalf. It seemed to be fine for him to make jokes about it last Thursday. This was unacceptable.

Davies said in his speech that he would be resigning his interim chairmanship of the Tate Galleries trust in a few months, so that he could focus on his main job as Director. If last week's performance was any indication of how Davies will conduct his second term as Director (which officially began only just over a month ago), we have a better idea about what he should do with that vacant Tate chairmanship.

### Correction

**We would like to point out that a headline in last week's issue ('Union official slammed after booking divisive speaker') was misleading. Dan Sheldon, the Union's Communications Officer, booked a room for the speaker, not the speaker himself, and we offer our unreserved apologies to Mr Sheldon.**

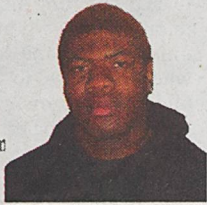


# This isn't just a consultation, this is an LSE consultation

LSE consultations don't seem to mean much, but the Your Union consultation will be fair

**Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang**

LSESU Education Welfare Officer



As is the case with many a word in the English language, there are sure to be numerous and varying definitions of what is meant by the term 'consultation'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as 'a conference in which the parties consult and deliberate; a meeting for deliberation or discussion'. This implies that there is an exchange of views and opinions which allows for the development of ideas that would subsequently have an effect on the resulting action.

In recent weeks some of the consultations that have taken place seem to have been less of a deliberation and discussion to gauge opinion and more of a retrospective gathering of thoughts on a decision that had already been made which won't necessarily even be taken into consideration. This leaves me wondering what the point of a consultation actually is.

The Fourth Floor Restaurant is a prime example of this dubious consultation process at work. The survey had a high input and there were a number of successful focus groups. However, by the time it began the school had already decided to close the Beavers retreat. The proposals were then drawn up and presented back as the final decision. Students had no further input, resulting not just in a terrible name but also leaving people disillusioned with the process. Fortunately this was rectified by a UGM Motion mandating that it be called the Nibble and Scribble.

Regarding the Nursery, the LSE claims it is committed to providing the most appropriate form of pre-school childcare provision for the children of staff and students. I can only hope that on a facility as key to the welfare of LSE student parents as the Nursery, those in the School's senior administration will keep an open mind during the consultation process and the results will reflect student and staff



The LSE is currently conducting a consultation on the future of the nursery. Photo: Erik Lang

need and not the Nursery's commercial viability.

I must concede that the School seems to have taken a step in the right direction and shown a commitment to canvassing student opinion by inviting myself to sit on the Nursery Consultation Committee (NCC). However, as key stakeholders in the Nursery, it is vitally important that students make their own submissions as to how they believe early years learning should be provided at the LSE.

I can only hope that this consultation is in no way similar to the 'hall bars consultation', which apparently consulted hall committees over the course of the last academic year on the transformation of bars into cafés in (at least) Rosebery, Passfield and Carr-Saunders halls. It is common knowledge that bars in halls of residence have been hemorrhaging money for a while now. This phenomenon is not isolated to LSE residences or London. But if bars are to be replaced, it only makes sense to provide residents with

facilities that they would actually want. While I am in no doubt that a 'consultation' took place the results appear to be unknown.

In principle if you are to consult a group, no definitive decision should be made before the process begins. This allows for an open approach which means that submissions can have a real impact on the results, if LSE students are to feel fully involved in a decision making process then their views must be taken seriously.

In the coming weeks the LSE Students' Union will begin a process of consultation as a result of the Your Union motion which was passed at the UGM.

We aim for the Your Union consultation to be involve participation from all aspects of the student body. We want to avoid the problems of other consultations.

Within this consultation, people should feel happy about the level of input they have had, and the process should be as interactive as possible. Everybody

**If LSE students are to feel fully involved in the decision-making process, then their views must be taken seriously.**

Submissions for the consultation on the future of the nursery can be sent to: [nursery.consultaion@lse.ac.uk](mailto:nursery.consultaion@lse.ac.uk)

should have an opportunity to develop their own ideas and submit new initiatives.

Your Union combines the New Union Building project as well as how the union is structured as the two are interlinked. Merging the two together means that we can bind more people to the Union through the consultation campaign itself, and build new networks where people and groups feel more involved.

In this process we are looking for different groups to tell us what they feel the Union is and isn't doing well at the moment, and how it can be improved to facilitate their involvement. This will enable us to have a real exchange of views and information, allowing us to share knowledge and opinions and create a process that truly defines what a consultation should be.

The dictionary definition that is, not the LSE's.

## Change I can't believe in

Despite hope for Obama's first term, the elections also saw a setback for civil rights

**Brett Noble**



On 4 November, millions of Americans turned up to the polls and supported Barack Obama's call for change in a truly historic election. Yet in California, a different type of change was endorsed by voters – in the form of an amendment to the state constitution eliminating the right of same-sex couples to get married.

Proposition 8 sought to repeal a California Supreme Court ruling in May that granted same-sex couples the right to marry as of June this year. Interest groups and individuals in both campaigns raised a combined total of over \$70 million, the

second most expensive campaign issue after the presidential election. At the time of writing the results have yet to be officially certified, but Yes on 8 looks set to win. Fearing the loss of a civil right, No on 8 protestors have taken to the streets to take part in protests and vigils, also filing three lawsuits to fight the amendment.

As one of the many California voters who felt feelings of hope shift to bitterness and confusion, I primarily asked myself: How could 17 million voters overwhelmingly support a black candidate for the highest office in the land, yet turn their backs on another marginalised group by revoking their right to marry?

Proposition 8 voter demographics lent more support to my surprise, at least ostensibly. Black California voters, who make up approximately 6 per cent of the total state electorate, voted 98 per cent in favour of Obama, yet 70 per cent voted Yes on Proposition 8. This was especially surprising given that California's Republican

governor, both Democratic senators, and even Obama himself publicly expressed opposition to the measure. In his victory speech, Obama also explicitly included gays and straights as members of an indivisible United States, sympathising with their collective cry for change and social justice.

Voters may argue that race and sexual orientation are not comparable issues – that America is a place that accepts people of all shapes and colours, yet homosexuality, although often discussed, remains somewhat strange and offensive.

However, California voters – regardless of demographic or minority group – must learn to spot legislated discrimination in every form and stand up for the individual liberties of all. As Pastor Martin Niemöller (who was imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps from 1937 to 1945) famously expressed in his poem "First they came," if oppressed groups don't speak out, there may be no one left

to fight on their behalf.

Proposition 8 rhetoric is strikingly similar to previous movements that advanced discrimination: Anti-feminist pundits argued that greater social benefits for women could lead to the "moral and societal breakdown" of the family. Anti-segregationists launched emotional appeals to parents who felt uneasy about having their children in classrooms with black students. This month, Yes on 8 ran misleading advertisements that convinced parents that their children would have to be taught about gay marriage in California public schools unless the constitution was changed.

History also shows us how religion, tradition and culture have all been successfully used as tools to advance inequality. The Bible, for example, has been used by political leaders to argue against the outlawing of slavery, against desegregation in schools, against voting and interracial rights. However, the Bible and



Photo: flickr user ingridtaylor

Christian traditions provided tremendous hope to African-Americans during the civil rights movements, showing how cultural artefacts can be twisted every which way to provide moral support for a cause.

If there's any social group that should be able to relate to the fight for marriage equality, it's the Mormons. Persecuted in the nineteenth century because of their religious practices – which included polygamy – they were forced out of Missouri, into Illinois and finally settled in Utah, where the church is centred today. Yet Mormons have become the face of the Yes on 8 cause, with up to 70 per cent of individual donations coming from the church's members. It seems ironic to me that an organisation can endure persecution for unorthodox family practices, yet deny the right to another group a century later.

While the results from Proposition 8 may leave many discouraged, they must remember that earlier social movements have faced even greater setbacks and longer battles on the road to equality. As we take steps towards change as a nation, there are bound to be steps backwards every so often. Looking at the fight for marriage equality today, critics can no longer attribute the cause's support to mere "liberal judges." This is a cause that many – gay and straight alike – are committed to seeing the advancement of. In order to ensure its success, I hope that Californians can practice Obama's message by uniting together to eliminate the prejudice that perpetually plagues our great state and nation.



# Letters to the editor

Email: [thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk](mailto:thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk)

Fax: 0207 852 3733

Letters must be received by midnight on the Sunday prior to publication. They must state your full name. Letters may be edited.

## Douglas Murray and the facts

Dear Sir,

A respectable paper does two things in their news pages: First, it leaves opinion to the opinion pages, and second, when reporting, it includes the relevant facts.

Last week's news article on Douglas Murray's speaking event for the Students' Union Jewish Society sadly did neither. Here are the facts.

Attempts to get the School to ban Mr Murray from speaking were unsuccessful. We received an email from Islamic Society voicing their concerns. We looked into the allegations and found that they were misguided. In our response we highlighted those errors. Unfortunately, the Beaver reproduced those errors, printing them as facts.

One allegation, for example, took a sentence of Mr Murray's out of context. You quoted Mr Murray as writing about all Muslims: "Where a person was born in the west, they should be deported to the country of origin". You failed to include that that sentence was preceded by the sentence: "I submit that if you try to blow up men, women and children for the crime of travelling on the underground train in London that you have no rights," which would make it perfectly clear that Mr Murray was referring to terrorists who should be deported, rather than Muslims.

A second example is where Mr Murray was accused of describing Islam as a "terrible ideology". In fact this was said during an interview, not by Mr Murray but by the interviewer. Again something that would be evident to anyone reading the article without an intention of misrepresenting him.

A leading Arabic daily, Asharq Alawsat, says of Mr. Murray "Whether one agrees with him or not Murray has made a valuable contribution to the global battle of ideas." The reaction from the Union General Secretary amongst others attacking the Jewish society for inviting Mr Murray and Dan Sheldon for booking the room on our behalf, was therefore greatly disappointing.

The event went ahead with members from both the Jewish and Islamic societies in attendance. A forty-five-minute question and answer session allowed for challenging questions and discussion and I think all those who attended benefited from the event, whether they agreed with Mr Murray or not.

In future we ask that the Beaver ascertain the facts.

**Debra Freedman**  
LSE Students' Union Jewish Society

## Businesses, societies and bias

Dear Sir,

I am just writing to express my concern about the comment piece written by Jonathan Damsgaard which featured in last week's Beaver ('Business Soc should have been allowed to fail', 4 Nov).

Mr Damsgaard seems to regard the Business Society as a business. Hopefully as an LSE student he does not need reminding that a business is: "a profit-seeking enterprise or concern" whereas a society exists to provide enrichment and social activities for their members.

Unlike a business, a student society is not a separate legal entity - it doesn't even have its own bank account. This ultimately means that staid clichés like "too big to fail" and "business acumen" are ultimately irrelevant.

The result is that even the idea of the society "failing" is nonsense; the Business Society is part of the Students' Union. Even ignoring the fact that it would have been extremely unfair to punish over one thousand LSE students as a result of the actions of a couple of students, to shut down the society would have meant a loss of over £15,000 being landed on the Students' Union with no method of paying this back.

The current arrangement, which places severe restrictions on the activities of the Business Society, allows it to fulfil its role as a provider of enrichment activities on campus whilst paying off the debt incurred. I feel that this makes the best of a bad situation and allows a previously successful society to continue operating. We have budgeted accordingly so that additional money has been allocated to societies this year to ensure that the shortfall is not passed onto them.

Also, it should be made clear that a bailout of this nature is not "standard operating procedure" - the Business Society had to first prove that it would be able to refund this money to us before we were willing to proceed with the loan. Matters of this nature are always dealt with on a case by case basis.

Finally, I would just like to express my concern about the Beaver allowing an active member of a rival society being invited to give their thoughts on the Business Society. In future I would hope that where there is such potential for bias The Beaver would make this clear so that readers were able to objectively review opinion pieces.

**Wil Barber**  
LSE Students' Union Treasurer

## Beyond banking at the careers service

Dear Sir,

In response to last week's comment article ('Careers service should provide more options'), your readers may be interested to see events that the Careers Service has organised this term focusing on careers apart from banking consulting and law:

**International Organisations Day Advertising, Marketing and PR forum**  
**Business and Management forum**  
**Politics and Policy forum**  
**Advertising, Marketing and PR Fair**  
**Business and Management Fair**  
**Volunteering Fair**  
**Public Sector and Policy Fair**  
**Introduction to careers in multilaterals**  
**Introduction to careers in politics and policy**  
**Masterclasses in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (series of six, ongoing)**

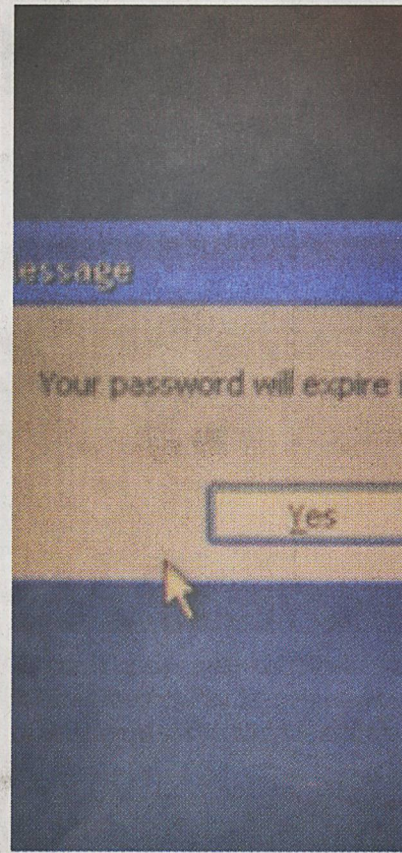
And still to come:

**Introduction to careers in think tanks**  
14 November  
**Ethical Careers Forum**  
19 November  
**Entrepreneurship Forum**  
26 November  
**How to set up your own NGO**  
14 January  
**Introduction to careers in not-for-profit**  
16 January  
**Introduction to careers in media**  
30 January  
**Introduction to careers in International Development**  
6 February  
**Introduction to Environmental Careers**  
13 February  
**Media Forum**  
6 March  
**European Internship Fair in Brussels**  
March

We have extensive resources in our careers library and on our website on all sectors and we offer absolutely non-directive student-centred one to one advice (we see 88 students per day for one to one help). We run internship schemes in the policy, CSR, media and new enterprise sectors. I trust that this refutes the claim that "The Careers Service [is] ... inadvertently pushing students towards a specific but not specifically desired career path".

The Careers Service does not organise or promote any of the careers and recruitment stalls on Houghton Street.

**Fiona Sandford**  
Director, LSE Careers Service



## Public files and passwords

Dear Sir,

I would first like to thank Daniel Jason for highlighting the large numbers of student files stored on the local drives of PCs in public areas ('How e-safe are you?', 4 Nov). A number of points were made in the article, and I'd like to address some of them here.

IT Services have consistently given the advice not to store important or sensitive files on the local PCs in public areas. Notwithstanding, we have now implemented safeguards to ensure that any locally saved data is deleted on a regular basis.

We would like to re-iterate some of the advice made in the original article: never store anything locally on shared PCs; always use the "LSE For You Password Change Utility" that incorporates feedback on password strength; and never share your account details with anyone.

For more advice and guidance, please see the IT Services pages online at [itservices.lse.ac.uk/itservices.asp](http://itservices.lse.ac.uk/itservices.asp).

**Stephan Freeman**  
LSE Information Security Officer

## Davies should support protesters

Dear Sir,

We are appalled that Howard Davies would not support LSE students when one of them was coerced by the Metropolitan Police on Wednesday, and think that perhaps it would help him to hear a true account of what happened from people who were there. We were not involved in the protest, but were standing close by waiting to see the Queen.

The group of students who were protesting were behaving themselves impeccably, trying to stage a quiet and unobtrusive protest. We were right next to them and they did not infringe upon us in any way.

The students cooperated with the demands of LSE Security, who appeared to be prohibiting the distribution of informative flyers, but also and more importantly to the demands of the police when they asked to search the students under the Terrorism Act in order for them to be allowed to protest - something that is their right.

The group of students then stood and tried to unfurl a banner, they were not making noise or being disruptive in a way. Immediately they were approached by a policeman who confronted one of the banner holders and - here we struggled to believe our eyes - used his knee in the man's crotch area and then clipped him around the side of the face.

The whole incident was almost unbelievable, so in a way we can understand Davies' reservations about it. It was truly reminiscent of something from China or the Soviet Union, not England. Whether or not we agree with the protesters is irrelevant - it is essential that students feel secure enough to be allowed to protest on their own campus.

The whole affair encouraged us to go the UGM yesterday, which was a first, and we were delighted to see that a motion was almost unanimously passed saying that Union must make representations on behalf of the student who was beaten.

Davies said that "other people who were there" corroborated the story given to him by LSE Security. Well, we were there, standing right next to the incident. We understand his wish to support his own staff, and although we have issue with their preventing the distribution of leaflets, we think that on the whole they behaved well given the obviously stressful circumstances. The police on the other hand did not, and it is here that we believe the Director has a responsibility to protect the interests of LSE students.

**Loren Davy Green**  
**Andy Scott**  
**Christopher Sedgewick**

# More of a feminist than you know

## Miss LSE is part of a wider social malaise

**Marion Koob**



We don't know it, but most of us are feminists. Already reading this sentence will have slightly irritated you: "What?" will you exclaim in indignation, images running across your mind of bra-burning, hairy-legged women. "That's certainly not the type of thing I believe in."

The second Miss LSE pageant, taking place on 11 November, has brought back into the limelight last year's controversy concerning the respect of women and feminism at LSE.

The issue is that most people don't know what feminism really is. According

to the Oxford dictionary (or any other for that matter), feminism is "the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of sexual equality." It would be difficult to find, anywhere on campus, someone claiming to believe that women are inferior to men. Yet few are willing to call themselves feminists.

Why is that? First and foremost, general stereotypes, such as the ones mentioned above, distort the image of feminism. Men tend to think self-proclaimed feminists are an amusing yet intimidating species: worth a laugh, but best avoided. On the other hand, women often misunderstand the fight against inequality as a fight against feminine traits. But the crucial, underlying question all of this leads to is: what does sexual equality really mean? Equal pay for the same job? On this fairly quantitative measure, we can easily all agree. But once things get cultural, it is much more difficult to determine.

Can a housewife be really feminist? I believe so, as long as the choice was made not through moral conditioning, but rather by lifestyle preference. But how to determine which is which? Or, an even more delicate question: is wearing a mini-skirt, or, for instance, participating in a beauty pageant, valid in a feminist context?

This issue was brought up last year, as the Feminist Society launched a campaign against the Students' Union's affiliation with Miss LSE 2007. After arguing that this type of event was discriminatory, both on the basis of physical appearance and against students with disabilities, the Union's support was withdrawn. But the ensuing debate generated bitter feelings on both sides.

A beauty pageant is a rather pointless use of your time. Yes, you can watch pretty girls prance around in swim suits, but in the end, what will it bring to you?

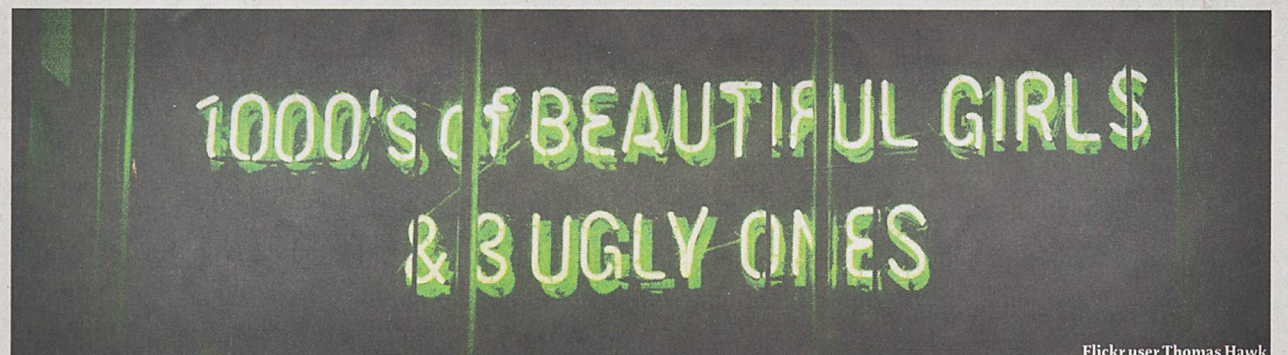
Not much, let me assure you. But I do not think that it is necessarily outside of the formal boundaries of feminism. After all, if we want parity of the sexes, let a Mister LSE be organized. This way, according to definition we'll be fair on both genders. What this sort of event jeopardises is human dignity, both for men and women.

But what this sort of event event promotes is much more dangerous: a particular conception of aesthetic standards within our society. Judgment of physical endowments ought to be a subjective, inexact science. And in most cases it is. But this kind of contest reinforces our perception of what ought to be beautiful, increasing the never ending-pressure that women (and, to some degree, men) face to try and fit within these standards. Zadie Smith hits the mark when in her novel 'On Beauty' she comments that all women develop an inner self-hate of their bodies.

This preset 'beauty' causes much un-

necessary anguish in the world: imagine for just a moment how it would feel to be completely satisfied with one's overall body image. Or, rather, to be able to consider someone 'beautiful' whose type of beauty does not feature on magazine covers.

Some will argue that sporting competitions are also judged on physical abilities: what makes one acceptable and the other not? Beauty pageants do not require any specific skills or training (no matter what the film Miss Congeniality will lead you to believe). It is just physicality at its pure state that we are brought to judge; a straight-toothed smile and straightened hair, perhaps. But that's not what beauty is really about, and it isn't the kind of thing people should spend their evenings and money on. If you want to be a judge on beauty, go to an art exhibition. There you will really be able to make your own opinion, not one that someone has taught you to believe.



Flickr user Thomas Hawk



# Features

Remembrance LSE in the Second World War

## The School, war, and exile

**Matthew Willis** explores the forgotten history of wartime LSE

**A**s 1 September 1939 marked the start of a new European cataclysm, most people in Britain did not begin to experience the full reality of war until several months later. If you had been a student at the London School of Economics during the outbreak of war, however, you would have felt its impact immediately. Even as German tanks poured across the Polish border, the British government informed the Ministry of Economic Warfare. The need to relocate the LSE had been foreseen by both the government and LSE director, Alexander Carr-Saunders. Over two – one-half was to be sent to Glasgow and the other to Aberdeen. Fortunately, Carr-Saunders had resolved to keep the School in one piece and had sought alternative arrangements with... the University of Cambridge!

The evacuation of the School went smoothly and the LSE was soon set up in Peterhouse College. Grove Lodge became the main centre of activity, containing not only common rooms and facilities for lectures and classes, but also the new lending-library furnished with books from London. Students were mostly billeted in town, which was a short bike ride away.

In the early days of the war, the Cambridge sojourn was expected to be a short-lived interlude in the life of the LSE.

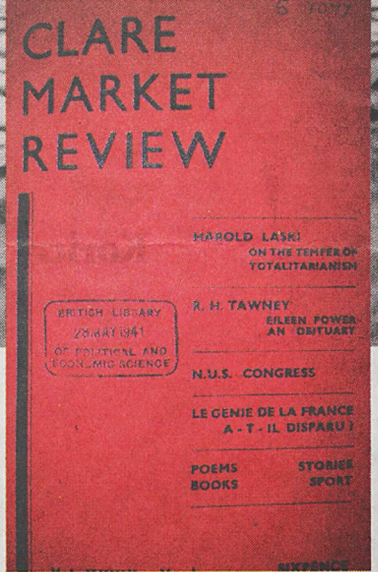
The Ministry of Economic Warfare's departure from Houghton Street in March 1940 – and the seemingly benign nature of the war in Britain – reinforced this belief. A return to London in September had appeared imminent. The plans had been finalised and the trucks loaded. But the Blitz shattered those misguided illusions. Books and material were hastily unloaded, new arrangements were hastily made with Cambridge and the LSE settled in for five more years of exile.

It was "a strangely paradoxical experience," recalled Maurice Vile, Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Kent, who was just 17 when he began his degree in Economics at Cambridge University. "We were in Cambridge, but definitely not part of Peterhouse College [...]" but I never set foot in the College. Perhaps even more paradoxically, after 1940, very few LSE students actually had experience of the School in London.

For students like Vile, whose East End London neighbourhood was regularly being hit by flying bombs, the idyllic setting at Cambridge may have contributed to making the Cambridge life the vaguely surrealistic experience that it was. On the one hand, the war was omnipresent – in rationing and material shortages, on the radio and in the papers, behind cadet training

>> Continued on page 14





Pictures clockwise from back: LSE rowing team during WW2 from "The Cambridgeshire Collection"; Clare Market Review Spring issue 1941, published when the LSE was situated at Peterhouse College, Cambridge; Professor Morris Ginsberg (far right), courtesy of Ms. Evelyn Osterweil; LSE students performing "The Importance of Being Ernest," 1945.

>> Continued on page 14

and volunteer work. On the other, it was strangely distant - most notably in the absence of air raids and bombings. Even as the outskirts of Oxford were being hit, Cambridge escaped the German aerial bombing campaign unscathed.

Despite the challenging circumstances, the School and its students strove to maintain the LSE's characteristic spirit. *Economica*, the research journal, continued to be published; and *Agenda*, which addressed problems of reconstruction, was founded. The Students' Union and Athletics Union remained highly active. The SU continued to hold regular meetings, host guest speakers and organise dances.

The Union also mobilised students to take action beyond Peterhouse College. The *Clare Market Review*, a quarterly collection of student fiction, commentary, poetry, sports updates and book reviews -- which the SU persevered in publishing -- provides a glimpse of the contributions students made to the community in 1943. Joy Reed, then outgoing president of the SU, wrote:

"Every student should be doing a minimum [of part-time war work], and our organisation has made open a wide range of part-time jobs from scrubbing hospital floors and working factory shifts to entertaining the Forces and taking part in 'Brain Trusts'." The L.S.E. is probably leading the way in Cambridge in the field of organised war work; at the end of last term we took over completely the manning of one machine in a factory during the night shift...."

When not engaged in Union debates or fire-watching duties, students could spend their free time participating in society events. "One very notable characteristic of the present generation," observed the Director in his 1942-43 report, "is interest

in music, which is reflected in the large size of the Music Society, whose Sunday evening gramophone concerts draw large audiences."

And there was always sport. According to Carr-Saunders, the Soccer Club in 1942-43 had "a fair season," the Rugger Club had "less success," the Tennis Club was very good "as in previous seasons" and the Women's Hockey Club "won eight of ten matches." Meanwhile, the Men's Boat Club had "put an eight into the Michaelmas term races and also into the Lent and May bumping races with fair results," and a Women's Boat Club "was inaugurated and did very well in a number of races."

The LSE underwent significant changes during the war, though often not in ways anticipated. It had been foreseen, for example, that with time, the School's enrolment would steadily diminish until it was forced to close. While enrolment did drop drastically from a pre-war figure of roughly 3000 to just 600 in 1939-40, it grew steadily thereafter, approaching 900 by the end of the war. Carr-Saunders, with some relish, observed that the School's growth was proof of the popularity of the social sciences, for "unlike colleges which include the natural sciences, the School gets no students with Government bursaries; in other words, the figures are [...] not inflated by the offer of special financial assistance to those studying our subjects."

Unsurprisingly, the proportion of male and female students also swung drastically, with greater numbers of women enrolling at the LSE. The average age of the student population fell significantly, owing to a lower average age of entry and the fact that most students could only stay one or two years -- students frequently had to leave for war-related duties before completing their studies. The LSE inevitably found itself an exclusively undergraduate university.

This transformation had quite an

impact on the staff, who, already reduced by over half to roughly 35 people, quickly found themselves burdened with unaccustomed counselling duties. Their duty of tending to students' needs was made all the more challenging by the fact that many teachers were holding down war-related jobs and did not actually live in Cambridge.

The LSE's sojourn at Cambridge proved enriching for all concerned. Cambridge students eagerly attended LSE lectures, and vice versa. John Maynard Keynes's talks proved so popular among LSE undergraduates that limits on their attendance had to be imposed to ensure Cambridge students could attend. On the LSE side, the full range of subjects continued to be taught, and the job was carried out by some of the School's brightest lights - Friedrich Hayek, Lionel Robbins and Morris Ginsberg among them. But it appears that one in particular stood out: Harold Laski, the famed political theorist and economist.

Betty Evans, whose job description included assisting in the billeting of students around Cambridge, spoke of her recollections of the famed academic several years ago. Laski, she recalled, was often seen pacing up and down the rostrum of the lecture hall in Mill Lane, "delivering wisecracks and waiting for laughter." "The Civil Service," he would say, "is like the fountains in Trafalgar Square: on at 10 and off at 5." He claimed to have more than 13,000 books in his library and to have read them all; and no one doubted him.

"My LSE," recounted Barbara Sternberg, "was Harold Laski filling a Saturday morning Cambridge lecture hall to the last seat on the last available step, and holding a seminar in a small frosty attic, jamming an ineffective inhalant up his nose to ward-off the ever-threatening bronchitis. And melancholy Morris Ginsberg feeling he never conveyed adequately Hobbouse's genius."

## The LSE's sojourn at Cambridge proved enriching for all concerned. Cambridge students eagerly attended LSE lectures, and vice versa

Vile, a diligent undergrad, remembers coming into contact with a professor only once, but, as fate would have it, the meeting was with Harold Laski. "Overwhelmed by the extensive reading lists, I made an appointment to see him," said Vile. "Perhaps he thought I wanted to elucidate some obscure passage in *A Grammar of Politics* [...] but I simply wanted his advice because I never was actually able to read a book to the end, due to the felt need to turn to another.... The great man listened patiently, and then gravely assured me that this was the mark of a good student."

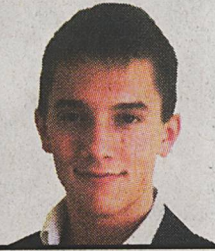
With the end of the war, the LSE returned to its London premises on Houghton Street. Through good fortune, the School buildings had escaped bomb damage. The Air Ministry, successors of the Ministry of Economic Warfare as occupants of the LSE campus, had left them in a state of considerable disrepair, but order was restored in time for the new year to begin (albeit a few weeks late) on 19 October 1945. It was the LSE's fiftieth anniversary -- the dawn of a new era and new blood on both sides of the lectern remained difficult. Maurice Vile performed three years of military service before resuming his studies in 1948. The LSE, and life in general, seemed far removed from the care-free days of Cambridgeshire. "Not dangerous," recounted the retired professor, now in his early eighties, "but very earnest; not exciting, but very demanding; travelling to the School every day, and returning in the evening to a rather bleak and featureless existence. Cambridge seemed a dream of what academic life could be."



## From Right to **Left**: the political columns

### Hayek

Alex  
Blance



### Let the winners take all

So Barack Obama was right; 'change' is the order of the day. Last week the American people elected the African-American as the 44th President of the Union, while Senator McCain and his less-than-conventional running mate, Governor Palin, were sent home to their respective states.

While it was not terribly sad to see the return of Sarah Palin to the depths of Alaska, I have to admit that I was one of the few people in the UK who were hoping for a President McCain on Wednesday morning. However, thankfully for the rest of the world, my opinion counts for nothing in this matter as I don't have a vote in the American elections, and the Democratic candidate romped into the White House.

The night was made even worse for the Republicans as the lead of their opponents in both Houses of Congress increased further; the Democrats now have an 81 seat majority in the House of Representatives, and 17 in the Senate. This surely left most Grand Old Party supporters in something of a stupor as they considered the ramifications of this

seismic shift to their opponents. However, despite generally being a supporter of a lot of the Republican philosophy, on free-trade, economic conservatism and small government, I'm pleased that the 'Dems' have taken the American state, lock, stock and barrel.

However, my beliefs here were not encouraged by the collective warm feeling the world enjoyed on Wednesday at the news of the revolutionary new President, but are actually based in British Constitutional normality. In the UK when a party wins an election and enters government they necessarily take control of the legislative, which is not the case in the US. However, Obama's popularity has ensured that he controls the lot, and this is absolutely essential for the president-elect's mandate for change to have any real chance of success in the tired nation.

Traditionally, the American people carefully guard one of the central pillars of their country's constitution, the separation of powers, and often hand the executive branch to one party and the legislative to another. This is intended to protect them from the 'elective dictatorship' that countries like the UK supposedly enjoy,

but makes the passing of real reforming legislation near-on impossible. In Britain, we can identify both the Thatcher and Blair governments as recent examples of hugely dynamic governments that changed politics, economics and society, but they only managed to do this through receiving thumping Parliamentary majorities on their elections.

While I am sceptical of many of the policies from Tony Blair's tenure in office, and many equally so from Mrs Thatcher's residence in Number 10, I would still conclude that the country benefited from them both being able to do what they said they were going to do in office, rather than the directional turmoil that results from struggling to pass every vote, as John Major's government demonstrated and many American administrations equally mirror.

The American people have spoken and chosen Mr Obama; now let him choose where he is going to take the country. In four years time, the people will be able to decide whether or not it was the right direction, on the basis of whether Obama truly strove for his vision, rather than being restrained by the other arm of government.

### Laski



Vlad  
Unkovski-  
Korica

### A legacy of Western conceit

It's the bloodiest conflict since World War Two. The war in the Congo cost 5.2 million civilian lives between 1998 and 2003. In previous weeks, renewed fighting in the east of the country has brought the central African country back in the news.

Yet prevailing attitudes among Western commentators and political leaders to the state of Africa today is akin to that of the owner of a dog complaining about his dog limping after having kicked it in the leg. Frankly, it makes me sick.

Supposedly, the conflict in the Congo is a civil war. The prefix that describes various rebel groups is usually one that reveals to us their ethnic background. Ordinary people are presented as victims of pre-modern warlords interested in power over land and resources.

Of course, within this discourse, there's only one agent that can rescue the day: the West. Britain's Africa Minister Lord Malloch-Brown put it well: "The first line of call on this should be the deployment of the UN's own troops from elsewhere in the country. But we have got to have plans. If everything else fails we can't stand back and watch the violence erupt."

But foreign intervention has a shameful record in the Congo. Patrice Lumumba, the first leader of the Congo after it gained independence from Belgium, appealed for UN aid against a Belgian-sponsored, break-away region called Katanga. UN troops proceeded to act as a buffer between Lumumba's forces and the separatists.

The UN was not unconscious of its contradictory role in the conflict. An internal memorandum written by UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld noted: "The UN effort could not continue with Lumumba in office. One or the other would have to go."

Indeed, UN forces would allow a Belgian shipment of nine tonnes of weapons for the Katangan rebels. Later, they looked on as Lumumba was murdered by rebel forces. Decades of misrule by Western-backed dictator Joseph Mobutu followed.

A major threat to Mobutu came in 1990 in the form of an urban opposition movement. A grass-roots opposition movement of all ethnicities led by trade unions, students and the poor in most of the country's cities and towns peaked in 1992 when a million demonstrated in

the capital Kinshasa. But the opposition squabbled and failed to topple Mobutu.

By 1994, the centre of gravity shifted towards the guerrilla movement led by Laurent Kabila. As the base of the movement lost its urban component, it lost its ability to unite people regardless of their ethnicity.

The division is largely between Tutu and Hutu, with the concomitant regional complication provided by the presence of these ethnic groups in neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda. Both initially backed Kabila but, following his victory in 1997, Britain and the US intervened in the conflict using Rwanda as their pawn.

Kabila temporarily triumphed with the aid of a coalition of African states interested in Congolese mineral wealth. The picture has remained one of foreign-sponsored intrigue ever since.

Nevertheless, as Lumumba wrote just a few days before his assassination:

"History will one day have its say, but it will not be the history that Brussels, Paris, Washington, or the UN will teach... Africa will write its own history, and it will be, to the north and to the south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity."

### Measured musings

Sex, money, drugs and alcohol. Sought out in increasingly larger quantities, these are perhaps the earthliest of pursuits known to humanity. Every community has an opinion on the status of each, a dialogue not tired of even after thousands of years of human history.

Should we measure progress through the permissiveness of being able to engage in these acts, or render them negatively as promiscuity, greed, hedonism and wanton inebriation respectively? Whilst these are the oldest vices we know of, they're also the most pleasurable things we can introduce to our senses on this earth.

Regardless of our ideas of progress and morality, it's likely we have a very good idea about whether we would like prostitution to remain illegal or be legalised, and the same for drugs and age-limits on alcohol.

Said to be the oldest trade in the world, prostitution was an established service industry before people even considered their political freedoms and civil rights. Indeed, the bible itself, the font of morality for many, records the use of religiously acceptable and legal prostitution in Genesis c.38. In western society, a somewhat complex relationship with prostitutes has existed. They have been

rejected and sidelined on the one hand for the immorality they engage in, whilst revered on the other for producing a 'service'.

Indeed in medieval Britain, the church found fit to protect the welfare of prostitutes for the very reasons quoted in today's debate: the health and wellbeing of prostitutes will stop the spread of disease and redress the unjust social imbalance, where prostitutes are rejected and sidelined. And of course, they could be taxed.

Some may point to a common objection: prostitution is a perversion and should remain illegal, lest it corrupt our children and introduce disease to our society. Yet in countries where prostitution is legalised, such as Australia, it seems that prostitutes are healthier. So what's the real perversion? Our vague attempt to stop "corruption" in a society where sex flows pretty freely, or our lack of protection for a group of people who are often overlooked by society and whose working rights are rejected by law.

Drugs present a similar moral problem: unregulated, drugs are impure and lead to death and heightened risk of addiction. Even crime rates are supposedly linked to drug use, certainly criminal organisations falling out over drug-related issues contribute to Britain's death counts. But should the industry be regulated

by law, we are told these problems will disappear. The ingredients put into drugs will be regulated in the same way food is, packaged safely and sold to the wider public in licensed retail outlets. But aren't some things, such as drugs, inherently objectionable for the effect on the human psyche they may have? We have seen government-sponsored drug distribution before and it wasn't used to increase anyone's rights. It

has been used by government to control populations, most notably in the east during the colonial era. In addition, placing drugs in food products to create an addiction to the product – and therefore increase sales – was a tactic employed in the past, but in some countries, even democratic ones, continues to be the case.

Alcohol is a particular problem within British society, not just alcoholism amongst adults, but amongst children under 16 too. Under-16s are increasingly being treated in hospitals for alcohol-related problems, despite an age-limit imposition. What can be done to remedy such a situation?

There are no quick solutions to such a problem. Should the age limit be dropped to effect rapid social change, in an attempt to introduce the concept of responsible drinking to under-16s? Greater sanctions

### Viridian GM food is not the way forward

Justus Rollin  
Environment and Ethics officer

I get seriously irritated by the growing numbers who are pro-Genetically Modification (GM) – in the media, in politics and on campus.

More than twenty years of research, clearly demonstrating dangers of GM-food production and positive developments in organic agriculture and permaculture, has shown the route that we should take. Still, myths persist, even though none of the promises biotech companies and government advisers – both surely not independent – have come true yet.

A popular claim made by the pro-GM lobby is that GM crops will help to feed the world. This claim has not been proven so far. Moreover, many testings are contentious since they often do not compare yield increase with the non-GM variant. But what is 'yield increase' in the first place?

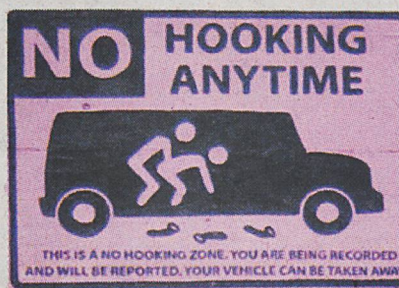
Biotech companies count the 'primary yield increase' of one crop, whereas there are other valuable secondary products, for example straw and factors such as inter-crop planting which often increases the overall yield. Most people would probably agree that hunger and malnutrition is due less to a lack of food and more to questions of distribution and social justice.

Another common claim is that GM-crops can help people adapt to climate change, such as plants which are flood resistant. Yet scientists haven't developed a salt-resistant GM-crop – but traditional breeding has developed salt-resistant wheat, enabling it to survive under salt stress. This is partly possible due to a number of different genes in the plant, a process too complex for science to mimic.

A further claim is that GM-food can be more nutritious and thus help to fight malnutrition. The oft cited example of this is "golden rice," which produces large quantities of beta-carotene – a precursor for vitamin A, which is required for vision. Sounds great? Some scientists seem to overlook that simple derivatives of beta-carotene, such as retinoid acid, are potent teratogens in humans – they cause birth defects, as does excess vitamin A. Moreover, almost all published experiments with GM-fed animals have led to higher mortality rates and other worrying side effects, such as allergic reactions, birth defects and abnormal growth rates.

We should end massive agricultural subsidies, promote organic agriculture and question corporate control of food production and distribution. More labour input in small scale farming produces still more output per hectare – and uses far less oil as well as chemical pesticides and fertilizer.

### Progress versus morals



for those caught supplying alcohol to those underage, or bring large sanctions against the underage drinkers themselves?

Where does money fit into all this? Money is the thing that allow us to purchase the sex, drugs and alcohol. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, money is hailed by the New Testament as the 'root of all evil'. But today money is increasingly seen as an end unto itself – most of us will freely admit we chose to study at LSE to further our career prospects.

The place of money in society has been argued over in the past, in both the domains of religion and politics. Whilst worldly goods are seen by Hinduism and Buddhism as earthly trappings which we must release ourselves of, else be increasingly distanced from eternal bliss, Communist and Socialist theory and political structures abound.

It seems there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Societies have tried either permissiveness or punishment when addressing these issues in the past. It seems the answer differs depending on where we stand.

So: where do you stand?

Daniel Jason  
Features editor



# A School of lukewarm leftists

**Chun Han Wong** tells a tale of student socialism over pastry and champagne

“Is the London School of Economics still the hotbed of student politics it was in past decades?” About a year and a half ago, the BBC had thought this to be an intriguing question – worthy of a feature on their politics webpage.

Their method, however, was to use the weekly Union General Meeting as a political barometer. Not the best way to pry into the LSE political landscape perhaps. Their conclusion: radical student politics is passé and now it is all for a bit of a laugh really.

But in all honesty, the mind of the BBC journalist was probably made up even before she set an intrepid foot into the Old Theatre. For in posing the question, the BBC was already answering it.

Bygone are the days of student riots and mass sit-ins – the revolutionary activists of yesteryear, once synonymous with good name of LSE, are now mere legends from a distant past.

In 1967, the appointment of Walter Adams, a university administrator with links to the racist regime of Rhodesia, as LSE director was sufficient to stir large-scale protests on campus. The appointment, deemed contrarian to the Fabian roots of the School, triggered an initial wave of protests which then escalated when two student leaders were suspended for their roles in the organising the demonstrations.

Adam courted more controversy after taking up the directorship. His decision, in 1969, to install security gates to protect administrative buildings from student intrusions triggered another spate of organised resistance. The results – the establishment of an LSE in exile at Malet Street, the wrecking of physical destruction upon the newly-installed gates and picketing of the Aldwych campus – were strangely rational in those turbulent times, but almost unthinkable today.

To be sure, even during the 1960s, activism and resistance was not a pastime of choice for many LSE students then. Nonetheless, decisive mass action had been a real option. In the LSE of today, it is but folklore. Similar controversies in recent times – like Peter Sutherland’s appointment as Chairman of the LSE Council in November 2006 – were received badly by only a small number of students and the level of resistive response compared poorly to the raucous resistance of the past.

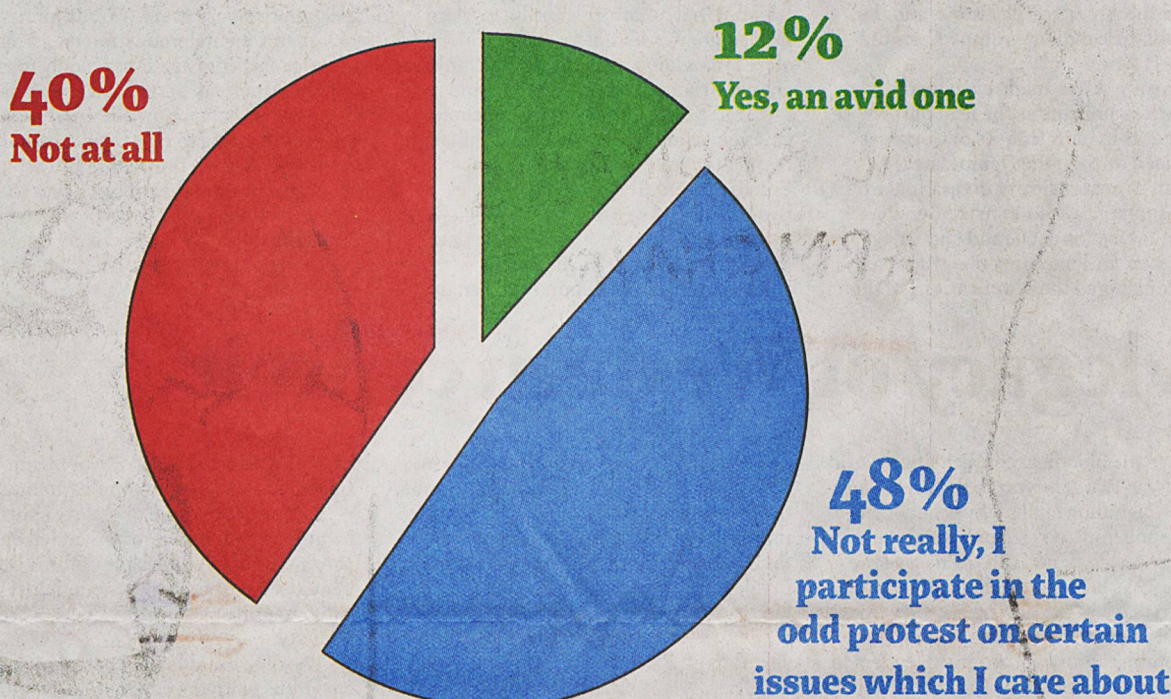
Yet it is hardly an indictment of the LSE alone. Students across Britain seemed to have moved on from the days of radical activism. Inertia and passivity have long taken hold where initiative and activism once flourished.

But even if radicalism has gone out of vogue at the LSE, socialism hasn’t. Not least in the public imagination. The LSE still bears the reputation of being home to a left-wing student body, even in a day and age when corporate finance resonates more with the student psyche than does the Communist Manifesto. The reputation of our predecessors from the 1960s still precedes us.

The Beaver decided to examine this reputation, to see if ‘left-wing’ still puts the ‘L’ in the LSE, so to speak. An online cross-campus survey and membership study of the various political societies was conducted towards this end.

The survey is not perfect. It is voluntary and conducted via an online questionnaire – meaning our respondents are a self-selecting group. A carrot of a £30 worth of Waterstones gift card is arguably a necessary evil, but undoubtedly a variable that skews the results somewhat. In an attempt to balance this shortcoming, we also looked into society membership numbers to give us a better idea as to the actual participation levels in political activities. Notwithstanding the problems

## Would you consider yourself a political activist?



Percentage shown is out of a total of 374 survey respondents

in our method, the survey provides some intriguing insight into the LSE political landscape of today.

At first glance, LSE students still seem to stand, for the most part, on the political left. Fifty-nine per cent of the 374 respondents identify themselves as left-leaning – twenty per cent claim to be left-wing, while another thirty-nine per cent describe themselves as left of centre. In contrast, a mere fifteen per cent lean to the right, with a similar number professing to be centrists.

On economic terms, however, the numbers show a discernable rightward swing. Only forty-three per cent of respondents lean leftwards (a mere twelve per cent describe themselves as left-wing). Thirty-five per cent spoke of their right-leaning tendencies, with sixteen per cent playing it safe down the middle.

Nonetheless, as some of our respondents pointed out in their end-of-survey comments, such linear classifications are inadequate as a true representation of the diversity in political viewpoints. As such, we tried to glean further indication of students’ political leanings via their political party allegiances.

Gordon Brown might have a reason to smile if LSE students could provide a useful insight into the mentality of the general electorate. Thirty-four per cent of the respondents chose Labour as the British political party which they felt the greatest affinity towards, with the Liberal Democrats (twenty-four per cent) leapfrogging the Conservatives (fifteen per cent) into second place. The Left appears well-represented on this count, although the truly left-wing parties, such as the Socialist Workers Party (five per cent) and Respect (one per cent), were in the distant minority.

But there is a certain disconnect between holding political beliefs and acting on them. The survey results bear out this psychological inertia against active political participation that seems common amongst LSE students. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents are not members of any British political party, while seventy-three per cent are not members of any student political societies at the LSE. Active participation in political societies is also low – a mere seven per cent are active members, while another sixteen per cent consider themselves casual members who attend events occasionally.

In terms of political campaigning, the figures are only slightly more encouraging. Forty-one per cent of respondents do not participate in any political campaigns, while forty-eight per cent campaign occasionally, only when the issue is of particular concern to them. Only twelve per cent described themselves as avid campaigners.

When asked specifically on whether they participate in external and LSE Students’ Union campaigns, the responses indicated similar apathy. The vast majority of respondents do not participate in LSESU campaigns (seventy-eight per cent), and only a slightly smaller proportion express similar ambivalence towards external political campaigning (sixty-three per cent).

Even when we turn to society membership numbers and participation levels, they seem to bear out the conclusions from the survey data. Only a small proportion of memberships of political societies across the board are actively involved. Liberal Democrats have about 20 committed members from a list of 134 names, the Fabian Society counts about 30 actively involved members (from 111) and the Socialist Student Workers Party has around 10 members (from 150) who are regularly committed.

Rather intriguing is the fact that although most political society members are passive, there has been sufficient interest to allow the creation of several new political societies this year. The freshly-minted Fabian Society appeals to students who felt a lack of representation of the moderate left on campus. The non-partisan Politics Society cast its net even wider, calling out to students of all leanings who are united by a common interest in politics, and managing to enlist about 450 students onto its roster. While it remains too early to tell how active their members will continue to be over the course of the year, the level of interest seems encouraging.

Perhaps it was due to the catastrophic fallout from the credit crunch. Maybe the great social injustice of the bank bailouts irked more than just hardcore socialists. Regardless of the provenance, there has been a discernable increase in student participation in the left-wing societies. The Socialist Worker Student Society reaped significant windfall from the fiscal devastation – the society received about 150 signs-up, twice the number of

last year, at the Freshers’ Farye. Weekly meetings and events have received better attendances, and newspaper sales have also improved.

So the Left isn’t dead. It might even be accurate to say it has found some purchase with LSE students in the wake of recent economic turmoil. But to claim that the radical left at the LSE is undergoing a modern-day renaissance is an exaggeration. Perhaps a kneejerk reaction, or possibly a significant leftward swing, but only time will tell. It is not too difficult, after all, to rouse a rattled rabble towards the radical left when governments on both sides of the Atlantic reach for the “socialist” playbook to rescue capitalism. It will be in the months and perhaps years of painful economic recovery ahead, before the definitive conclusion over this trend can be drawn.

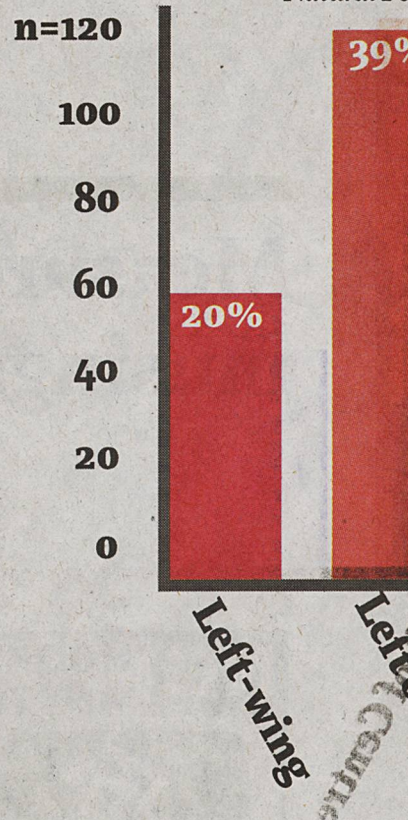
And if nothing else, the numbers suggest that the political spectrum of LSE students has been shifting towards the centre, much alike the nature of the British electorate over the past few decades. After all, the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats, which fifty-eight per cent of respondents feel the greatest affinity towards, are at best left-of-centre, if not centrist, parties on the modern-day political spectrum.

The BBC’s epithet for student radicalism at the LSE seems an appropriate one. The Fabian ideals that inspired the creation of the LSE over a century ago holds little sway over its students today. With over thirty-two per cent of the classes of 2005 and 2006 entering the financial services sector, upsetting the socio-economic applecart could not be further from the minds of LSE students. Perhaps it is most appropriate for Alexander Herzen, Russian socialist philosopher, to deliver the final verdict: “It is they, none other, who are dying of cold and hunger...while you and I in our rooms on the first floor are chatting about socialism over pastry and champagne.”

Additional reporting by Katie LaPotin and Shibani Mahtani

For full survey results, visit <http://thebeaveronline.co.uk/mapresults>

Congratulations to Tuuli Hungisto, who has won for herself £30 worth of Waterstones gift cards

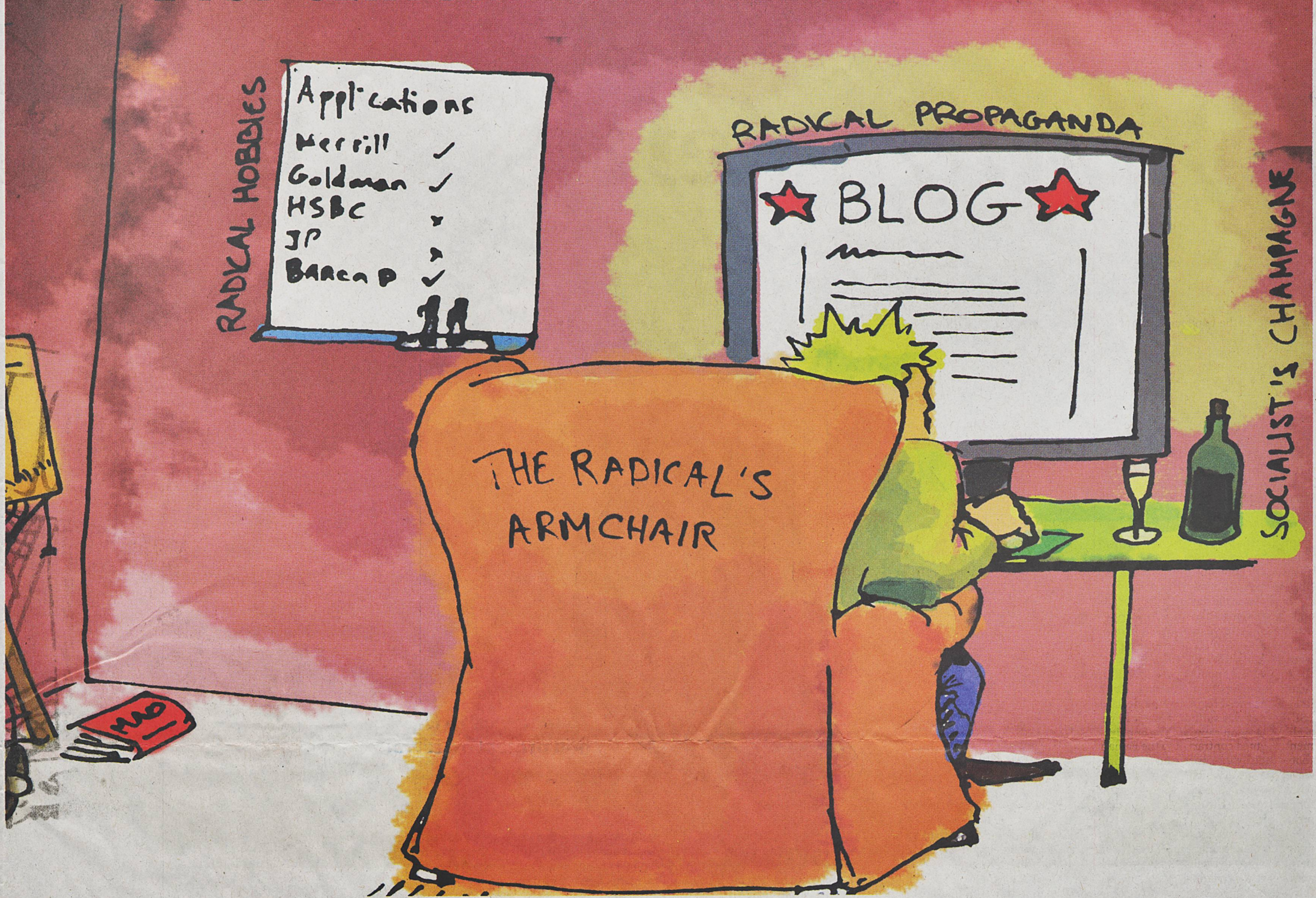


“Far-left radicals hold far too much sway, the voice of the small minority drowning out the voices of moderates like me.”

John Ring  
1st year undergraduate

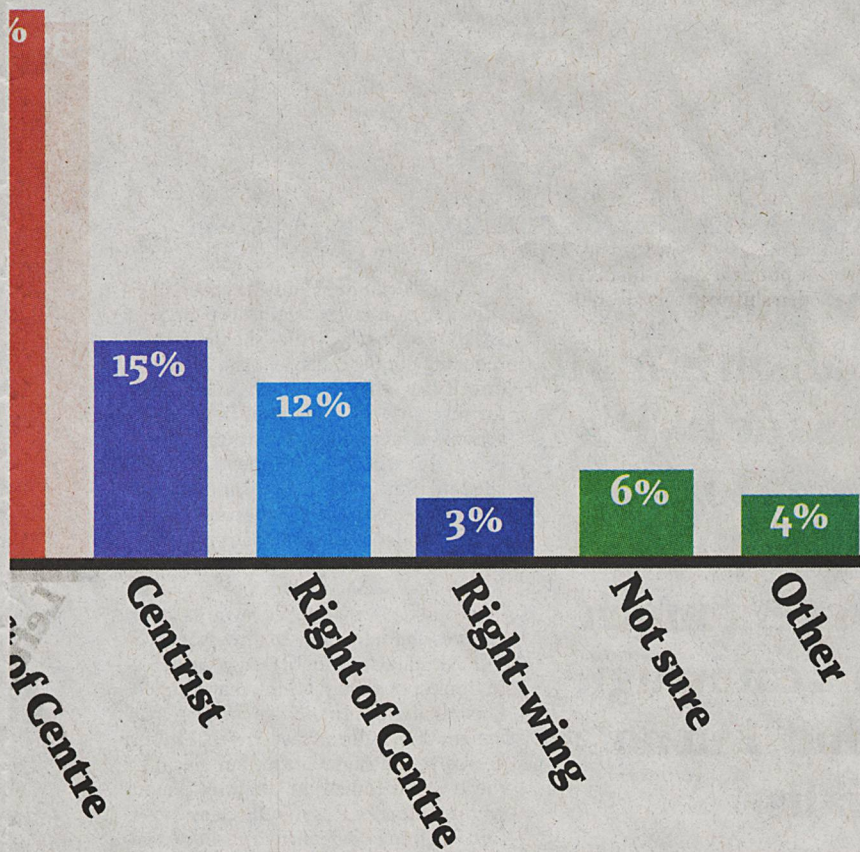


# 21ST CENTURY RADICAL ACTIVISM



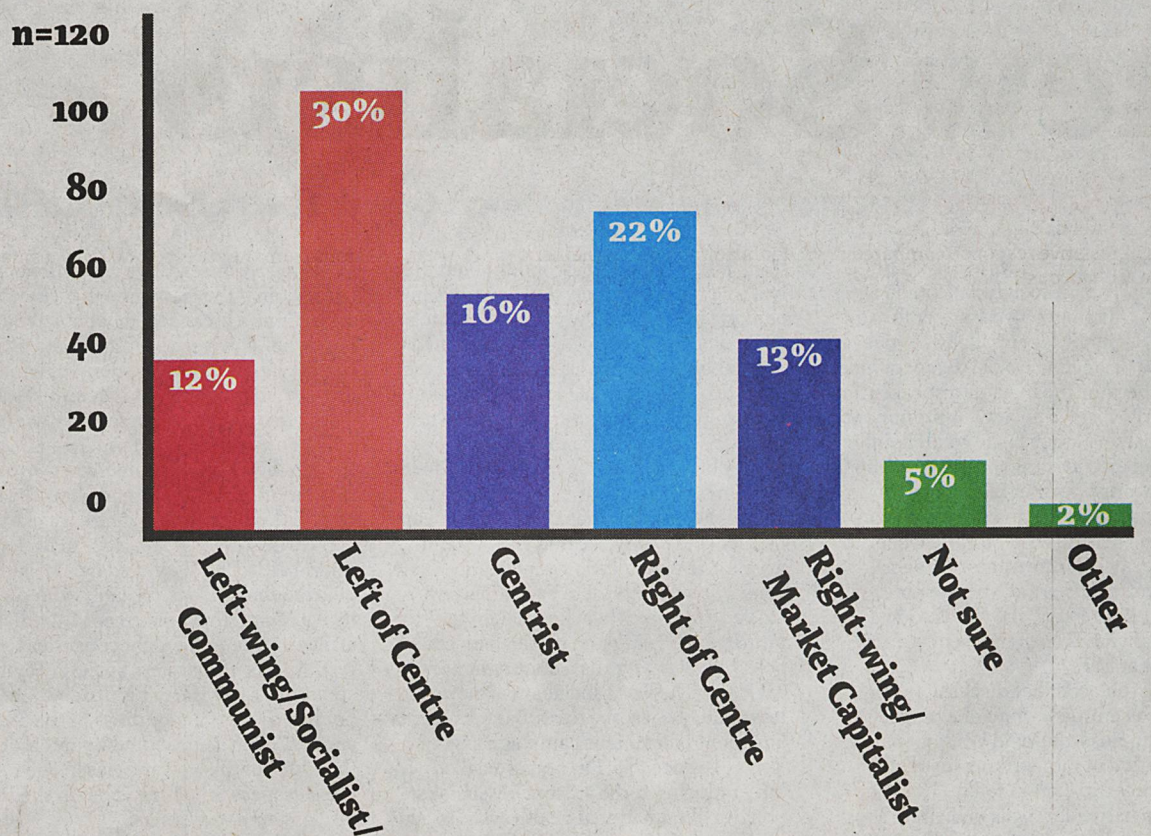
## Political Alignment

Political Affiliation vs. number and percentage of respondents



## Economic Alignment

Number and percentage of respondents



*"Too apathetic, my classmates are too absorbed in finance, management or business."*

Paul Lemaistre  
Postgraduate (Taught)

*"The proportion of overseas students may have diluted the interest in British politics."*

Sophie Geng  
2nd year undergraduate

*"The majority of students seem to be very apolitical and more concerned with making lots of money."*

Joe Sammut  
2nd year undergraduate

*"The LSE is unfairly seen as a raving left-wing institution. Mrs Thatcher had no liking for the LSE yet many of her advisors were from there."*

Tim Oliver  
Postgraduate (Research)





Photo: Erik Lang

# Social democracy is the new Socialism

Jessie Robinson discusses politics and society with esteemed social democratic writer and journalist Polly Toynbee

Two Thursdays ago, the LSE Fabian society welcomed a distinguished speaker for a public lecture. Polly Toynbee, an esteemed social democrat and writer, became the inaugural speaker for the newly-formed society. A prominent humanist and atheist, she could point to a distinguished journalism career – Guardian columnist, former BBC social affairs editor, associate editor of the Independent, and feature writer for the Observer. And as a avid commentator for social democratic causes and vocal supporter of the Labour Party, she was the ideal personality to launch the reconstituted Fabians at LSE.

The subject of her discussion, her new book entitled 'Unjust Rewards', co-authored with David Walker, is an exploration of the "striking inequality" experienced in Britain today. The book places a particular focus on Britain's top earners and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. I spoke to her after her talk to delve deeper into her views on the current state of social democracy in Britain.

Recent reports indicated that top-earning banker and lawyer focus groups, when quizzed about their perceptions of wealth, estimated the poverty threshold to be £22,000. This figure is in fact just below median earnings. I asked Toynbee how she thought this ignorance reflected on the LSE's many hopeful bankers to be. "I

think LSE students are wonderful but they will find there are many less openings in banking in the next few years at least for those who are here now. The city is shedding labour faster than anyone else at the moment." She continued with some words of warning: "It's not a very secure job not a very satisfying job. You may make a lot of money but you lose your soul. Don't do it".

'Unjust Rewards' was published just before the credit crunch. While this means that it avoided any 'we told you so' comments, the reader can't help but subconsciously insert them page after page. I asked Toynbee what she thought the future would bring and if socialism could possibly re-emerge as a dominant political idea. "The word socialism is more or less dead, its become toxic. Barack Obama has spent much of his campaign saying 'I'm not a socialist'. I'm not a socialist but producing some reasonably socialist policies like a national health system," she said. "I think social democracy is a better phrase, really. When you say socialism people think: Ah, this is leading to the old Soviet Union. When you say social democracy however its the Swedish, model, the Nordic model. By talking about social democracy and the Nordic model you don't frighten the horses, You don't pretend you're going further than that."

Though a vocal supporter of the party, Toynbee was not optimistic about Labour's prospects in the next general elections. "We look perilously in danger

of having a Conservative government next time. Even if they don't mean to, they will undermine a great deal of what Labour has done," she warned. "At the end of a Conservative administration, [of which] they would probably get two terms, we would find worse public services, worse education, worse health provision. Even though they wouldn't directly want to do it, their priorities in the end would be tax cuts. The outcome would be a tragedy."

We also discussed issues of direct relevance to LSE. Founded by the Fabian quartet, the LSE has arguably strayed from its Fabian origins. In a recent Guardian article entitled 'The right conspires to hide it but this is no classless society', Toynbee spoke of Prince Harry's girlfriend, Chelsy, holding a "chav" fancy dress party. She asked: 'What's hip about hoorays mocking their idea of the working class? The new classlessness is just the job rich shedding all class embarrassment.'

I informed her that last year, a chav-themed event was organised at Crush, the LSE Students' Union Friday night clubbing event (now renamed Fresh. Chav-themed nights are not expected to return). "No, no!" she exclaimed. "I'm shocked. I would expect LSE to be so much more socially aware, embarrassed, sophisticated and [be able to] realise the last thing they wanted to be like was Harry." Toynbee could hardly hide her surprise. "The trouble is the people who often run those things are the beery-types who are totally clueless."

**"The word socialism is more or less dead, it's become toxic. Barack Obama has spent much of his campaign saying 'I'm not a socialist'"**

The LSE student body has been involved in campaigns against top-up fees. I asked Toynbee whether she thought reducing middle class debt should be a priority in policy decisions. "When I went to university, only about one in seven school leavers went and now its between one in three, heading for one in two," she said. But Toynbee also understands the problem of equity. "It becomes very expensive. I think saying to tax payers whose children will never go to university; you cleaner, dinner lady, security guard you should pay your taxes towards other peoples children going to university."

"Although in a lot of things we'd like to think collectively, I think that if you know that the poorer half of society won't benefit then it doesn't work well. I'm very keen on good payments for families with the lowest incomes but I do think people who are more or less middle class can afford it. I think students can afford to take on a bit of debt."

Opinionated, passionate, well-informed and not afraid of provoking disagreement or controversy. Toynbee was everything that her readers would expect from this feisty writer.

If you are interested in future Fabian society events, or keen to become a member please address your e-mails to: [j.n.coney@googlemail.com](mailto:j.n.coney@googlemail.com).



# Social

## Comment Careers Fairs



Advertising, Marketing and PR Fair 2008  
Erik Lang

## Take a look at our website...

**Erik Lang** believes firms should send more knowledgeable staff to careers fairs

If you went to the recent banking and advertising fairs at LSE, you would have had the chance to meet some of the world's most successful companies: L'Oreal, BBH, WPP, IBM, Procter & Gamble, Ernst & Young or BNP Paribas. However, if you'd tried to ask even the most basic question you would have been told: "have a look at our website" or "send us an e-mail, we will make sure you get an answer". Of course they can't answer our questions. The majority of firms send a recently hired intern who knows absolutely nothing about the company he works for.

They tell you that they only go the best universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, LSE, and Bath. You would think that they believe they are talking to the brightest students in England or maybe even in the world. Do they actually think that we have not already been on their website, or even that we are only looking for internships? There are many postgraduate students who have already worked and might just be looking for a job, but they get the same answer as anyone else: 'apply online'. To a simple question such as: "For a global or international advertising campaign, where are the decisions made in the company?" I obtained no answer, then to another simple question asked to the highest person at L'Oreal: "How are the other offices in Paris, New York? Would you recommend any other place than London?"

- The only answer she could give me was "I'm sorry I have never been outside of the UK". I ended up actually feeling sad for the highest member of the L'Oreal team at the advertising fair.

From my experience, going to a career event fair has been one of the most wasteful things in my life. First of all you lose twenty-five minutes waiting in queue to get in you then have to fight and push all the other students grouping in front of one stand in order to ask a question. Finally, of course, you don't get an answer but you keep trying with the other stands around.

On the other hand, some of the small companies or organisations that are present have more to offer you. Valerie Hartwich, a Social and Public Communication Masters student, said that the LSE Public Sector and Policy Fair gave her a "very good impression... the organisations present actually took the time to talk to you." Even though they won't hire you, take your CV or even remember you, it allows you to see what type of profile they are looking for.

Previous exhibitors reported in the past that it was an "excellent event" and "the quality of candidates that came exceeded expectations". It thus seems they enjoy it. Hopefully one day so will we - don't we deserve better?



Banking and Finance Fair  
Erik Lang



## Society report LSE Debate

# LSE Debate reaches final at prestigious Oxford Union to stay on top

After the best start to a year in several years Peter Barton tells us how the Debate Society continued its winning run at last week's Oxford IV

LSE continues to dominate the debate circuit and the league, by reaching the final in the Oxford IV. The Oxford IV debate competition is the largest UK and the 3rd largest in the world with over 120 from as far as Malaysia and the USA coming to compete. Woon Lee and Rushabh Ranavat made it through the league and knockout stage to reach the grand final held in the Oxford Union – speaking from the dispatch boxes where so many world leaders have debated before.

They caused controversy and a lot of heering in the final as the first team proposing the motion, when Woon allowed the crowd to decide whether they wanted a standard prepared case on "This house would make the number of votes a person inversely proportional to your wealth" or to "wing it". A vocal audience threw their weight behind the later option – and so they argued that they would give poor people more votes per person but would also allow them to sell their votes to maximise their personal utility.

Woon conceded in his own speech that he did not intend to win the debate, but he did succeed in making it one of the most interesting Oxford finals in recent times, getting the loud cheers from the audience.

Middle Temple were able to win the competition from the 2nd proposition side, supporting and extending LSE's case,

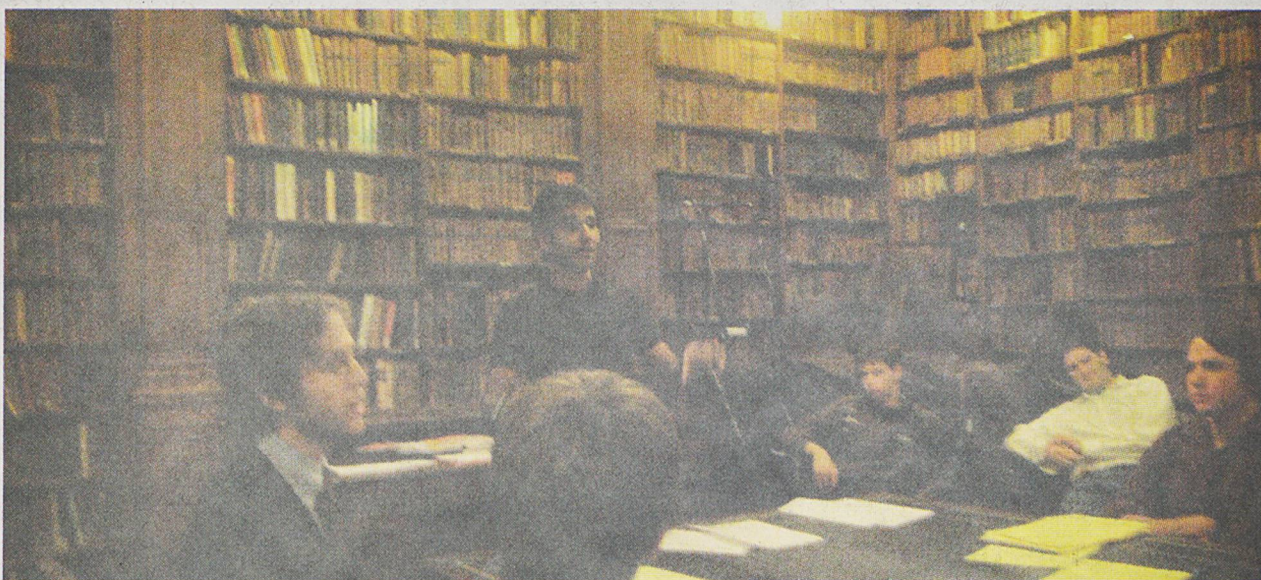
whilst the opposition remained fairly shocked by the way the motion had been defined.

The best debate for LSE was in semi final in which they completely defeated the motion that the EU should pay African countries not to take aid from China. They broke the issue down into understandable economics, ridiculing the other side. They showed how it would harm African development in a world increasingly reliant on links with China as well as damaging the EU and global economies.

This success has been part of a trend this term, which has seen LSE break to semi finals or higher in every competition this year. The previous weekend LSE had also managed to break to the semi Finals of the Imperial IV, whilst Christophe Lamy continued his unbroken record of reaching the final in all British Debate IV's he has entered.

The LSE debate Society send teams to competitions almost every weekend, and trains novice and experienced debaters on Tuesdays and Thursdays – so the experience of the successful debaters can be used to help those who are still learning.

On the same weekend as the Oxford IV, LSE also ran the Freshers Cup internally at LSE to allow those who are just learning to debate to have an opportunity to compete.



Photos: Peter Barton  
Debate Society in the  
Oxford debate chamber

## Refugee and Asylum Seeker Awareness Week

James Matharu explains why LSE societies are marking the week

This week Amnesty International and STAR (Student Action for Refugees) will be hosting a series of events to raise awareness of what it means to be a refugee or asylum seeker in the UK and abroad.

Asylum seekers come from all over the world, the majority to avoid war, political instability, totalitarian regimes and human rights abuses in their home country.

A report from children's charity "Barnardos" recently claimed that an estimated 100,000 children of refugees and asylum seekers to the UK are living in 'intolerable conditions'.

These children might be lucky enough to have parents among the 10% of refugees and asylum seekers the British government allows to stay. But they could be children of the unlucky 16% who don't know what will become of them.

There is no legal way to ask for asylum in the UK. Under current law you can face prison for up to two years for entry without a visa. Once here, you can be detained indefinitely at Immigrant Removal Centres. The centre at Heathrow was condemned in 2006 by Anne Gower, Chief Inspector of Prisons, as "inimical to the proper care and treatment" of its inmates.

Many refugees are refused access to work, and on a benefit allowance of £41.40 per week struggle to make ends meet.

Refugees and asylum seekers have no access to the NHS except in emergencies and most other support comes only from the voluntary sector.

During the week you'll find us on Houghton Street, talking to students about the plight of refugees and asylum

seekers in the UK. A representative from the national STAR organisation will be coming down to talk to us. Come and find us, say hello, and find out how you can support refugees and campaign for their rights.



## International Student Awards offers £2,000

Romy Fawehinmi tells students to enter

If you are an international student enjoying life in the UK at LSE you are eligible to enter a prestigious award together with £2,000 in prize money.

The International Student Awards 2009 is a major competition run by the British Council – the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Now in its seventh year, the competition aims to celebrate international students and the contributions they make to communities across the UK. Unlike other student competitions, it doesn't focus just on your academic achievements – it's your chance to tell us about your activities outside the classroom and your exciting new life in the UK.

If you play an active role at the LSE, or get involved in your local community, perhaps through volunteering? Has your new life in the UK changed your outlook and the way you think? Have you developed new interests since settling here, overcome personal challenges or achieved any long held ambitions or goals? If you've answered 'yes' to any of those questions,

then by entering the International Student Awards 2009 could put you in line for an accolade that will not only earn you some well deserved public recognition for your achievements, but will also look good on your CV.

Last year's International Student of the Year was Malaysian student Stephenie Siew Jean Tiew. Stephenie has seen a lasting effect from winning the award: "I can honestly say that it's changed my outlook on life and given me a massive confidence boost. I have the attitude that anything is possible if you really go for it and I'd definitely encourage students to take part."

To enter the competition, all you have to do is write a 'letter home', in English, explaining how you believe a UK education is preparing you for a brighter future. The letter should be written as if you were sending it to a family member, or a former teacher or professor. The competition is entirely web based, so you can enter on line at [www.educationuk.org/shine](http://www.educationuk.org/shine). Entries must be in by Monday 19 January 2009.



## booz&co.

Booz & Company is a leading global consulting firm, helping the world's top businesses, governments and organizations. With more than 3,300 people in 58 offices around the world, we work closely with our clients to create and deliver essential advantage.

# Booz & Company invite you to a seminar on Global Credit Cards

**Date:** Wednesday 19th November  
**Location:** New Academic Building, Room 2.06  
**Time:** 18.30

Please sign up via [london.graduate.recruiting@booz.com](mailto:london.graduate.recruiting@booz.com), stating **global credit cards seminar** in the subject bar.

In our seminar we will introduce an example issue that many of our financial services clients are facing - the changing role of credit cards - and explain how our consultant teams, including recent graduates, might address the problem. This is not a typical corporate presentation, but a chance for you to engage with us, and see how consultancy actually works.

If you would like to take part in an interesting and intellectual discussion, even if you have never considered a career in management consultancy, then please come along to the Booz & Company seminar.

## Listings: This week around campus

### TUESDAY 11 Nov 2008

**Society:** The Environment & Ethics Forum presents:  
**"The End of Suburbia - Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream"**  
**Date:** Tuesday November 11th, 6.30pm  
**Location:** AGWR - Graham Wallace Room (Old Building, 4th Floor)  
**Price:** FREE!  
**What else:** Following the film's screening, we will open the floor to constructive comments and discussions.

**Event:** Remembrance Day Movie Commemoration  
**Society:** LSESU Franco-British Student Alliance, LSESU German Society, LSESU Austrian Society, and LSESU Russian Society  
**When:** Tuesday, November 11, 2008; 7pm - 9:30pm  
**Where:** E171, New Theatre, LSE  
**Description:** Two days after Remembrance Sunday join the LSESU Franco-

British Student Alliance, the LSESU German Society, the LSESU Austrian Society, and the LSESU Russian Society for a joint event in memory of those fallen during both World Wars. We will be watching 'Joyeux Noel' in the New Theatre. It's a beautiful film about the World War I Christmas truce of December 1914.

**Event:** The Northerners @ LSESU host the Tuesday night pub quiz!  
**Society:** The Northerners @ LSE(su)  
**When:** Tuesday 11th November, 8pm  
**Where:** The Three Tuns  
**Description:** COME AND AV A GO IF YOU THINK WE'RE THICK ENOUGH! This week the Northerners are hosting the famous Three Tuns Tuesday Night pub quiz and it's your chance to either confirm or smash some regional stereotypes! The quiz starts at 8, bring your mates, and prove us wrong when we say that you softy southerners are all as thick as s\*it!

### WEDNESDAY 12 Nov 2008

**Event:** Thinking Like a Social Scientist: a lecture by Professor Olivia Harris  
**Date:** Wednesday 12 November 2008 1.05pm  
**Location:** U8, Tower 1  
**Speaker:** Professor Olivia Harris

**Event:** Abu Dhabi: How does it work?  
**Date:** Wednesday 12 November 2008 4.00pm  
**Location:** Z329  
**Speaker:** Dr Chris Davidson

**Event:** What now? Israel-Palestine on campus  
**Date:** Wednesday 12 November 2008 2pm  
**Location:** Hong Kong Theatre, Clement House  
**Featuring:** Onevoice Youth Ambassadors, Dr John Rose of The Cairo Conference, LSE Students' Union Israel and Palestine Societies

### THURSDAY 13 Nov 2008

**Event:** Europe in the Global Economy  
**Date:** Thursday 13 November 2008 6.30pm  
**Location:** Old Theatre, Old Building  
**Speaker:** Professor George Alogoskoufis

### FRIDAY 14 Nov 2008

**Society:** LSESU Film Society.  
**Date:** Friday 14th November  
**Time:** 19.00  
**Location:** H102  
**Event:** Film Screening- The Dreamers by Bernardo Bertolucci. The magnetic Eva Green star in The Dreamers, about a pair of siblings and a young man who develop a relationship unlike any other.

**Event:** Dance Classes this week: (Ballet, Jazz, Belly Dancing, Hip Hop and Ballroom)  
**Society:** LSE SU Dance

**Description:** We will be having dance classes through out the week. If you are interested in coming along contact [Su.Soc.Dance@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Su.Soc.Dance@lse.ac.uk)

**Society:** SOFA Society.  
**Date:** Friday 14th November  
**Time:** 18.30  
**Location:** Royal Academy of Art  
**Event:** Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art - come with us to the Miro/ Giacometti/ Calder/ Braque exhibition: price of tickets: £2.50

### SUNDAY 16 Nov 2008

**Event:** French Conversation Evening  
**Society:** Franco-British Student Alliance (FBSA) 2008/2009  
**Date:** Sunday 16 November 2008 8pm  
**Location:** The French House, Soho  
**Description:** A great opportunity to practise your French or meet other members!

## Write for The Beaver in Social

- 1) share any career or social experience and get published!
- 2) promote your society: [thebeaveronline.co.uk/listings](http://thebeaveronline.co.uk/listings)

[social@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:social@thebeaveronline.co.uk)



# Team mates Running. Fast.

**Greg Opie runs through the peaks and troughs of his cross country specialists...**

**Best runner**

Daniel Hawallek is certainly our best male runner to have appeared so far, and probably best overall too. Can he handle the pressure to replace Beedell though? Probably not.

**Best banter**

Although this year has been light on banter, James May earns this from his hugely competitive streak combined with his ability to promise lots and deliver little.

**Least likely to turn up**

Sam "Sicknote" McBride hasn't turned up to a single running or drinking session this year so far, which is a shame since she has the ability to drink anyone in the team under the table.

**Best Beer Mile**

Alex Boyce was the only LSE runner to complete the infamous ULU Beer Mile this year, so I suppose he wins this by default.

**Most demanding**

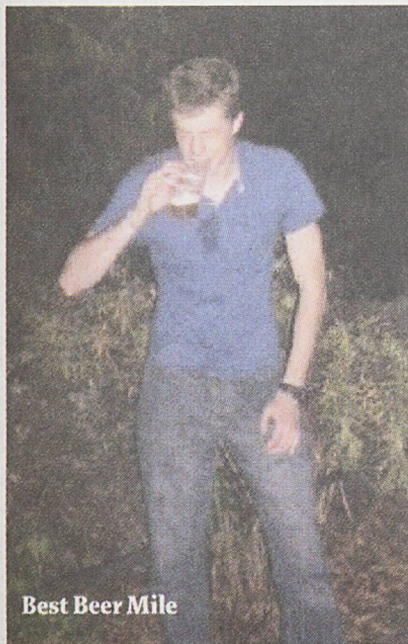
From different training times, to biscuits after races, to being made to look better than she is in the Beaver, chances are part-time women's footballer Harriet Jackson wants it, and like the mugs we are we try to accommodate. But our efforts are still never good enough.

**Most alcoholic**

Anoushka Shepherd has shown up to every social this year, even when it has just been her. If she could just show that much dedication in the races...



Most Demanding



Best Beer Mile



Most Alcoholic

**Feature Formula One**

# Massa's hollow victory



Flickr user ILMV

**Nick Drake**  
Netball First Team Coach

Felipe Massa will probably never win the Formula One Championship. This is not because the Brazilian doesn't have the talent to win one. This year the Ferrari driver won more races than anybody. Even Britain's Lewis Hamilton, the eventual champion, won only five races to Massa's six. In fact Massa was so close to winning the title he almost had his hands on it before it was snatched away. Most cruelly of all, a mistake by some of the Ferrari staff meant that Massa was incorrectly told that he had won the championship. For a few brief moments the Brazilian had climbed out of his childhood dreams to touch his fantasy, before reality brought him brutally back down to earth.

Seven points adrift with only ten on the table, Massa would need a perfect race and mistakes by Hamilton to all coincide if he was to achieve his dream. Although a seemingly unlikely combination of events, there were reasons for hope. Firstly Massa's Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen had triumphed from exactly the same position last year, against all the odds. Secondly, this was Massa's track. Not only is the Grand Prix held in Massa's native Brazil, but it's also been a race he has dominated with a victory and second-place finish in the last two years, a record that no one in F1 could match.

Qualifying on pole, Massa cruised home to another Brazilian Grand Prix victory, but it was the F1 championship that would elude him. Needing Hamilton to finish in sixth or worse it seemed that everything would come together. With just two laps to go Toro Rosso's Sebastian Vettel, a promising talent, stunned the motor-sporting world by overtaking the labouring Hamilton and putting the McLaren driver into sixth place, and out of first place in the F1 championship. All across Britain people let out a collective groan. Would Hamilton

## A teary-eyed Massa, celebrating a race won but a championship lost, is probably one of racing's iconic images

lose the championship again? With the Ferrari team already celebrating, Hamilton waited until the penultimate corner of the final lap before overtaking a struggling Timo Glock to provide Formula One with one of its greatest finishes.

A teary-eyed Massa, celebrating a race won but a championship lost, is probably one of racing's iconic images. A man who had done all he could, but still failed. In a sport filled with uncontrollables he had 'controlled the controllables' and thrown the gauntlet to Hamilton. In the end Hamilton triumphed, not just because of his own brilliance, but a lucky break. Toyota's Timo Glock coming into the final lap held the key to the title race. Poor tyre choices in the wet weather meant that he would fall two places back and give Hamilton the crucial fifth place he needed to secure the title.

Massa will probably never win the F1 championship because he is the second driver at Ferrari. In fact, the only reason that the team focused on him this season was because Raikkonen was doing so badly. This is a performance unlikely to be repeated again next season, and if it is Raikkonen's contract will probably not be renewed and a new number one driver brought in, most likely Fernando Alonso.

Massa also has to contend with a host of up and coming drivers from Sebastian Vettel to Robert Kubica and most prominently of all, F1 champion Lewis Hamilton. The reality is that Massa probably has got as close to a world championship as he will ever get and will perhaps be forever plagued with regret. Regret about all the different mistakes that inevitably were made over the season that could have bridged the one point deficit which he lost the championship by.

Massa may never win a championship but you can guarantee he's going to give it all he has got next season, and when it's all said and done and Massa reaches life's eventual destination, death, he can look back on his life knowing that he had one hell of a journey.

## Results

### Netball

- LSE 1s 23 - 21 St. Bart's 1s
- LSE 1s 50 - 22 Uni of Arts 1s
- LSE 2s 43 - 26 Portsmouth 6s
- LSE 3s 5 - 40 Brunel 5s
- LSE 5s 9 - 22 Imperial 3s

### Tennis

- LSE Men's 1s 8 - 2 University of Surrey Mens 1s
- LSE Men's 2s 8 - 2 Essex University
- LSE Women's 1s 6 - 4 Reading

### Table Tennis

- LSE Men's 1s 11-6 UCL.
- LSE Women's 1s 0-4 London Metropolitan.

### Hockey

- LSE Mens 1s 8-1 Greenwich
- LSE Men's 2s 2-2 City of London 1s
- LSE Women's 1s 7 - 4 Reading

### Squash

- LSE Women's 1s 4 - 0 Imperial College

### Badminton

- LSE Men's 1s 1 - 7 Imperial 1s
- LSE Women's 1s 6- 2 Imperial Women's 1s

### Rugby

- LSE Men's 1s 17 - 19 Essex 19-17
- LSE Women's 1s 10-63 Kings Medics

### Football

- LSE 1s 3 - 0 Chichester 2s
- LSE 2s 2 - 2 Southbank 2s
- LSE 3s 1 - 2 Holloway 3s
- 4s, 5s, & 6s on international break
- LSE 7s 1 - 2 Poly 4s



# National Basketball Appreciation

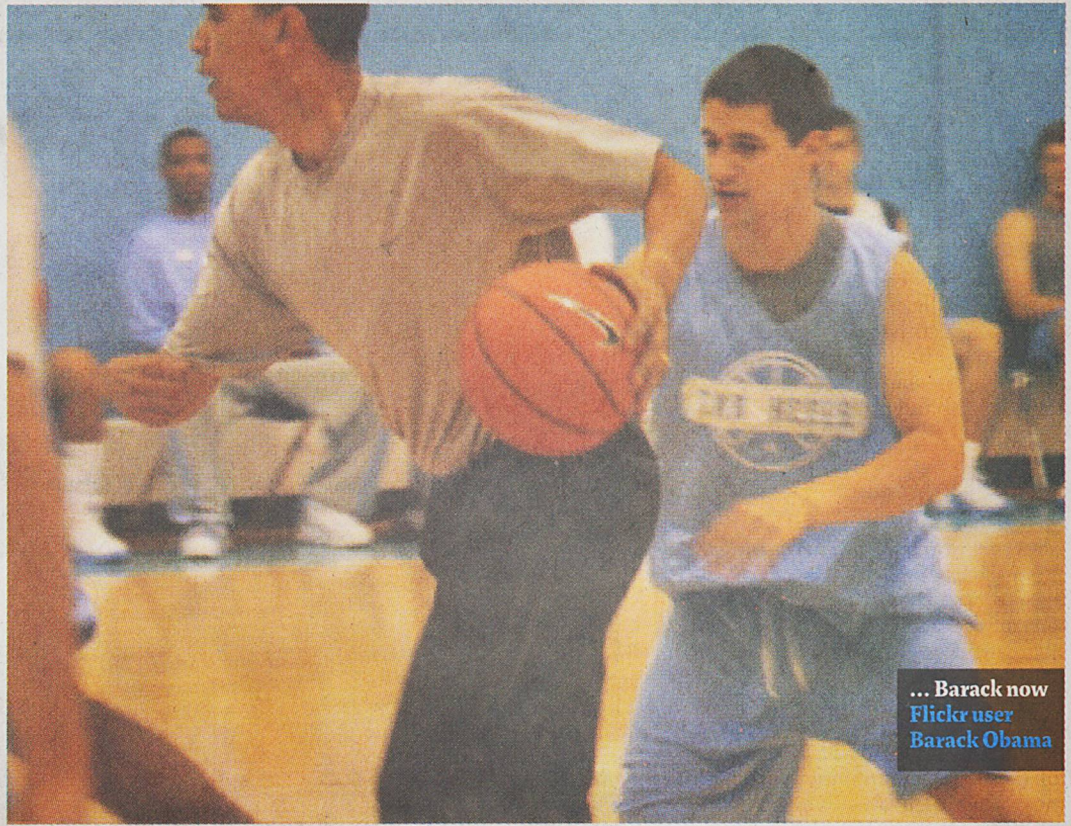
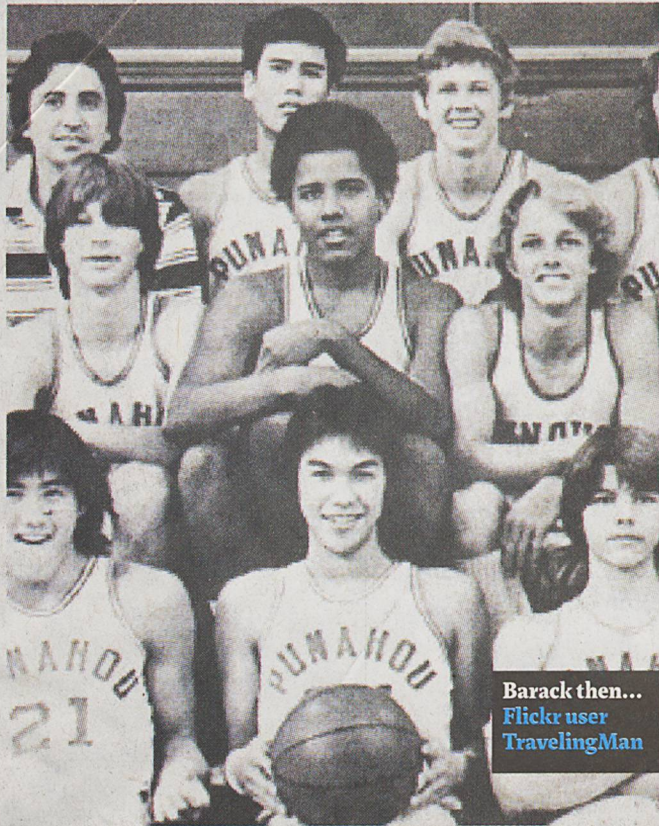
Philosophical Barry



I can't remember the last time I was so happy about an election result. After the despair over first Bush, then Boris Johnson, I was delighted to finally watch as the right man got the nod of approval from his people. So can I just take this opportunity to congratulate Sam Tempest Keeping, whose dedication and hard work has won him the right to oversee this most prestigious section of the Beaver. Well done sir.

Obviously his victory was somewhat overshadowed by events out west. Many theories have been promulgated as to why Obama was able to garner as much popular support as he eventually did. Was it his god-given talent for delivering words with such force and quiddity that people could not but stand up and take note? Or maybe it was because people realised they would rather leave their kids with Michael Jackson than have Sarah Palin sitting in the Oval Office? The answer to both is no. The man won because he's an NBA fan plain and simple.

With his indomitable spirit, awkward lefty jumper and hands as soft as Howard Davies' approach to financial



regulation, Obama probably could have carved himself out a career in the USA's most cut-throat competition. While it would be nice to see some of our governmental stakeholders trying their hands in top level sporting events (Gordon Brown lost an eye playing rugby) so often the reverse is the case. But why do sportsmen seem to have such success in the political arena?

After turning up to a game this week clad in a shirt bearing the likeness of the President-elect, heir to Michael Jordan's throne LeBron James was asked whether he would consider a career in politics, possibly as mayor of his hometown; Akron, Ohio. "Mayor of Akron?" he

exclaimed. "I've been mayor for about ten years now". This blinkered self assurance is probably what appeals most to the common man. Can he be that self assured and still be wrong? The answer to this question I'm afraid, is yes.

Cicero remarked that while it is dishonourable to be in possession of knowledge while not being involved in the administration of the masses, it is far more nefarious to be in command when one's mind is totally bereft of wisdom. Fortunately here in the UK we have so far avoided the pitfalls of sportsmen taking office. Yet one feels it is only a matter of time before a British sporting icon joins the ranks of Bernard Laporte, Imran Khan

and Jesse 'the body' Ventura.

So those of you in the LSE sporting world cogitating on the idea of embarking on a hackish career in the Student Union à la Libby Meyer, please take note. In the same way that the Liberian people rejected their finest son in George Weah, so too will you face stiff opposition. While victory is not beyond the realms of imagination, Wednesday night chicanery and Saturday afternoon exertion would become a thing of the past.

One can instead expect a year of back-biting and monotonous conversations with people who have had too little one on one contact with members of the opposite sex to become the norm. A

rounded university experience will be viewed more favourably by employers anyway.

If you need any clarification, the point of my column is actually to provide jokes, not answers. So please keep this in mind when you think back over these words. If you disagree or wish the author to cover any specific topics in next week's instalment then please drop me a line on the e-mail below. Perhaps this will provoke more than the single response I got to last week's polemic.

philosophicalbarry  
@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Pulling no punches

Chris Baugh

It's coming up to the English National University Boxing Competition and the LSE boxers are stepping through the gears. From a fresh group of hopefuls, a handful of determined, hard-working, committed individuals have put their names down to fight, most of them for the first time, in the Nationals on 12 December.

Getting into a boxing ring is no easy feat, and doing so for the first time demands even more courage. However, it's not like they will be doing it unprepared; on top of the standard two sessions a week run by coach Ian Streetley, the LSE boxing squad are putting in the hours with pro and ex-pro boxers in order to try and take in as much boxing wisdom as possible over the next five weeks.

Training is gruelling. A boxer must be strong, supple, fast, quick-footed and fit enough to deliver bursts of explosive energy over three two-minute rounds. Once you're able to perform all the necessary punches, blocks, parries, ducks and rolls to survive in the ring there comes perhaps the hardest challenge of all - the weight.

Competitive bouts are dictated by weight categories, the aim being to make sure small and light people don't get smashed to pieces by big and heavy people. The trick is to be right at the top of your

weight category, but not a gram over it. This means you don't give away any weight advantage to your opponent and you're both able to put as much muscle behind a punch as is possible for your category.

Worries about fighting at the bottom of their category and coming up against someone up to five kilos heavier than them often compels boxers to lose weight to drop themselves down onto the top of the category below their normal weight. No more chips, chocolate or beer for the next five weeks: this is what our squad faces...

The Nationals are the opportunity for universities across the country to showcase their boxing squads. Last year Coventry walked away as the English champions in three weight categories and are likely to have one of the strongest teams again this December. Depending on the number of entrants at each weight, and how far through the knockout stages he gets, a boxer can face up to three fights in two days at the competition. Victory this December will provide qualification for the British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS) competition in February, and the chance of becoming British Universities Champion.

The pressure is on. Five weeks and counting. Weight to lose, technique to perfect, miles to run, weights to lift and beer to stop drinking. The LSE boxing team are determined to be the best they can be come fight day, but it doesn't half seem like hard work sometimes...



## Gamblers Anon

Like the punter, but better, and for real.

Low & Keeping

Oh, what a difference a week makes. Last week's predictions have pushed Gambler's Anonymous back into the black courtesy of the kind people at Betfair. Those watching Fulham's fantastic victory against Newcastle will note that our predictions of seven corners and four bookings both proved to be correct. And Dele Adebola was a post's width away from making it a full house but, alas, it was not to be.

We have dutifully been out and spent our winnings, mostly on classic Robin Williams DVDs in homage to his shock Saturday night performance, so thank you very much. As a result of this success we will stick with our Fulham charges this week. We have wagered a staggering £10 on their match with a reinvigorated Spurs side to result in five or more goals being scored. This shouldn't be too hard for a game that may well feature goal machines Bobby Zamora, Clint 'Deuce Dempsey' and Darren Bent (NB by the time we go to press this may no longer be case).

Our other two bets will be £5 each on firstly the 1st Pakistan vs West Indies One Day International to result in a draw. The second goes on the upcoming McIntyre vs Brooks boxing bout. We are reliably informed that it will end in the ninth round with Brooks ending the victor.

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## 7ths slain by beasts from the East

>> The not so "Champagne" 7ths lose again

Oscar Holland

With the collapse of capitalism imminent, many may be wondering where the forces of the Left are congregating in order to sow the seeds of revolution. The answer, of course, is in St Albans, where the 7th football team found themselves on Saturday facing the runaway leaders of the prestigious ULU Division Three. The memorably titled School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (or the 'Red Army', as their shirts proudly proclaim) came into the fixture with six consecutive victories but the game proved closer than many would have expected.

Due to a certain antibiotics-related communication error, LSE travelled to the game with only 11 players, forcing captain and charisma vortex Johnny Saville into some tactical changes. Shunning classic 7th team formations such as the 'flexible 4-5-1' and the more experimental 'Christmas tree', Saville opted for a 5-4-1 to contain an attacking force that has scored twenty-four goals in the last six games.

This plan proved effective in the first half and although the Slavs dominated in terms of possession, they were unable to penetrate the LSE's stubborn five-man defence. Their chances were limited to long range efforts, which were rarely a problem for goalkeeper Saville, though he was forced into an impressive save to tip a powerful shot over the bar. Chances at the other end were even more infrequent, and despite the tireless chasing of Casey Miller up front, and Robinson Rouchie and Zak Yahya on the wings, the 7ths were unable to create any clear cut chances. The teams went into the break goalless.

The second half began with more of the same and LSE realised that counter-attacking football might be their greatest

hope for a goal. This is exactly what happened twenty-three minutes into the half, when some slick passing opened up a chance for occasional hit man Owain Bevan. He unleashed a stinging strike that took a touch off the head of Miller and flew past the untested keeper, putting the 7ths on course for an unlikely upset. Renowned team player Hugo Bowkett later revealed his reluctance to pass to Bevan and expressed annoyance at being robbed of an assist.

In contrast to the lessons of history however, the forces of the East prevailed on this occasion, the communists capitalising twice in quick succession. A close range conversion of a low cross provided an equaliser for the Slavs, while some dubious manhandling in the box opened up the chance for an easy second. The closing period was tense with an increasingly physical approach getting the better of the usually stoic Josh Weinberg, whose brief tantrum highlighted the pressure the defence was under. Going forward opportunities were few and far between, with a stunning volley from yours truly foiled only by its lack of power and accuracy.

The 7ths should take heart from this performance though, and this was by no means a bad result against the league's strongest team. It was not the champagne style of football that you all know and love (perhaps due to the distinct lack of Cypriots) but it was a dogged display. The defence successfully soaked up pressure for most of the game, and the three points would have undoubtedly been secured against a weaker team in the division.

Final Score  
7ths 1-2 Communists



# Sport

## Tur-tal domination

Hannah Dyson

Leading both on the court and at the bar, the netball firsts have had an inspiring start to the season. Our narrow loss in the first match of the season against St Georges was evidence that our new squad might take time to find their feet. However, since that fateful day, the team have not looked back and a successful string of matches means the firsts are well on their way to total domination.

Last week started off with a rescheduled match against St Barts, where our victory tasted even sweeter due to the many obstacles we faced in the build up. Battling through London's unpredictable transport system we arrived in some precarious weather conditions. Then we were ushered straight onto the court without a chance to take a breath, let alone warm up. These medics were taking NHS guidelines on waiting times a little too seriously.

The first quarter featured some more problems unsurprisingly, mainly adjusting to the surface water on court, and we found it hard to get into our normal rhythm of play. Once the second quarter began there was a new spirit, inspired by our hidden natural talent Anouk. With her flying interceptions and our captain's multi-skilled performance, taking over scoring duties, we managed to even up the score.

Heading into the second half our head Sensei made sure we knew losing wasn't an option. Rhiannon, commanding attention as ever (in particular from first team football captain Ed Healy) held the team together. Ultimately we managed to not only overcome these barriers but rack up an impressive haul of goals, ending the game victorious 23 to 21.

Our Wednesday night match began with slightly different complications, including among others missing shorts, bra straps and socks. One can only guess whether the flashes of pants and hoisting of bras managed to put the opposition off, as the score was impressively left at 50-22. Point of the match came from Hannah's lovely loop from just inside the circle with relative ease. Note that even with the fifty shots made that match Hannah felt she was having an off night. Pui took over the postgrad flying interceptor role, making it very hard for the opposition to even get near their shooting circle.

Funniest moment is awarded to Bruce who after calling out "I've got it" then managed to let the ball roll between her legs while she was off the court. Finally, congratulations go to Effy for being named 'player of the match' for the second time this week. Our theory is that this is actually due to her managing to befriend the opposition in every game. We will, nevertheless, let her off this week as Uni of the Arts were unanimously agreed to be the nicest team so far. With my defender apologising every five minutes for bumping into me, even I failed to keep my game face on. With this being only our third week of matches, what made us most proud was overhearing them say they thought we'd played together for years.

Not only is our increasing coordination and spirit a force to be reckoned with on court but moreover is having a major impact on the weekly Wednesday night fracas. Foremost winning the so called 'competition' at the recent AU fancy dress night, proving that heroes in a half shell can not only command the court but can't be held by any Zoo either.

Other notable efforts from our club included characters from Alice and Wonderland, not so innocent Brownies, zombie wives and bunny boilers. As a squad we definitely stood out from the lacking efforts of the rest of the AU if not only with our new levels of drinking and karaoke finesse.

By all accounts the night (for at least for myself) ended quite messily. A special mention has to go to our little Natello a.k.a.



Above: Girls playing netball (Hannah Davies) Right: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? (Hannah Dyson)

dark horse, who against all odds in all her green glory managed to find a new mystery suitor. Time will tell if he'll live up to turtle standards. I also feel it's my duty to request for any information on the whereabouts of the netball seconds Madhatter at the end of the evening, who still, quite innocently, can't remember how she got home.

Our latest Wednesday onslaught was no less eventful. The Tuns saw another inspiring round of karaoke, which was somewhat hampered by the boisterous antics of the girl's rugby team. This was then followed by an apology by my lovely hall mate who I hope won't mind me adding her admission to me that she would have joined the netball team, had she not been too scared to try out for fear that she wouldn't be good enough to make a team. Appropriately, she is now a member of the rugby firsts, who I can only imagine allow anyone able/willing to manhandle their own sex onto their first team unlike the vigorous trials to join netball.

Again the night ended in scandal ridden Zoo bar, I will not be adding any details here but would recommend trying to hack onto the Netball chain emails to gain any knowledge. Luckily with the protection of



our senior team members, myself and the other freshers were made well aware of veteran AU members' antics.

Take note Men's Rugby, no first team member will fall for your infamous 'Wednesday night challenge'. We are told, in any case, we have a lot to live up to, at least in relation to our sorely missed shooter; the one and only man-eater Babybell.

We all hope we can carry on our good start and finish the season victorious, with plans to turn the remaining 70 per cent of our team Welsh, who knows what we can do? Be aware, we are definitely planning to keep our authority on court and also on the many nights out to come. Preparations for the historic Carol night and notorious Calella trip are well underway.

## Hockey no mugs when it comes to Reading

Danielle Priestley

On the afternoon of Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November LSE's Women's Hockey Club embarked on their minibus adventure to the Roadside Poly (aka Reading University) with the hope of redeeming ourselves after last season's resounding loss.

There was a slight traffic hold-up in Parliament Square involving hundreds of people in bee-keeper suits chanting "save the bees", but after that we were on our way and raring to go, with the added pressure of threats from Pickles of fines for any player that didn't manage to score.

Two hours later and we were on the pitch – facing an opponent larger than us in both numbers and stature. But the Hockey girls weren't to be intimidated by their size, and soon began to dominate. Every ball was ours and it was only a matter of time before Alex 'Hotchkiss' Webb sneaked a well-placed shot into the goal which was promptly followed by another. Emma Haugh (Insert appropriately crude joke here...) was next to get off the fine hook with a well-executed flick.

After a sloppy and erroneous decision from the umpire, one of the Reading forwards managed to break free and get the ball past a so far impenetrable Serene 'da bean' Allen into our goal. We responded with some excellent breaks down the wing from the lightning-like Emma Heap alongside Alison's unbeatable and theatrical skills in the middle. It was Pickles, my

## As usual, nothing got past Betty 'The Warrior' Lee

partner in crime on the right wing, who scored our fourth.

After their half-time luozade, the Reading girls fought back with grit and determination, managing two more goals. Their burst of energy didn't last long though, and we were soon back on form. The legendary Gine was well-positioned on the back post to knock in our fifth goal, and Alex soon followed with her third to complete a well deserved hat trick.

Colleen and Catherine were playing a blinder at the back, and as usual nothing was getting past Betty 'the Warrior' Lee, but we blinked and missed a run down the middle from a poly girl who scored Reading's fourth. In the spirit of beating Imperial's goals scored, we resolved to get at least one more and after some nice one-two work from Pickles, Caroline, and yours truly, Emma Heap scored a cracker.

So it was back on the bus to trudge back to London for celebratory pizza and wine, and a very messy evening for some – but that's another story.

**Final Score**  
**LSE 7-4 Reading**

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# inside

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# captains

partB interviews - the demos - 4 + 5  
we asked you what you thought on today's top issues

# feedback-chat

Hiya,

I just want to congratulate you on last week's food inspired edition. The only problem is that ever since I read it I can't stop eating. I've put on four stone in one week, should I stop? Or should I just keep going?

Worried, and hungry third year

Dear Sirs,

I think I may have misunderstood the concept of last week's issue. I thought that the pages literally were edible and gobbled them down with a lovely side of cream and ginger lentils (inspired by the rather fantastic interview with Mr Slater). I've had a terrible case of the runs ever since. I was just querying if anybody else made the same mistake?

Anonymous

Hi guys,

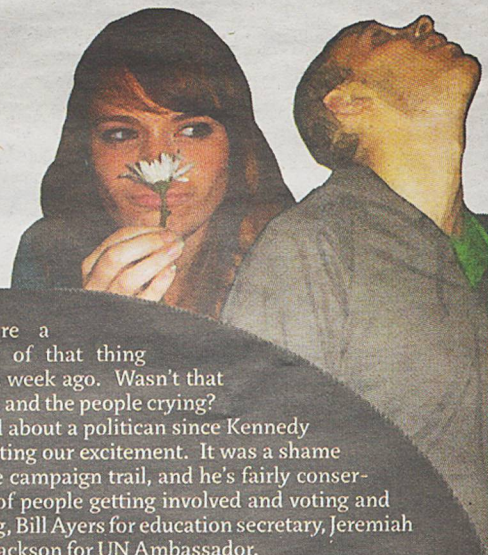
Great issue, but I think there may have been a mistake in one of your recipes. For the pancakes I added 20 tablespoons of baking powder instead of 2 teaspoons. My house is being slowly filled with pancake batter, and I think it is safe to say I have lost my security deposit. Thanks a lot!

Nigella Ramsey

# holli eastman josh heller

This week partB embraced the often neglected initials of the LSE, giving the political science part some good old TLC. Democracy, power to the people, and all that razzle, just think it's another four years before you'll be asked your opinion again. Lois is a genius and wrote an amazing piece on classical citizenship, also swish your peepers over Emily's article on music and Obama. It's fantastic!

We are a democracy, coz of that thing that was on the telly a week ago. Wasn't that pretty with all the nice flags and the people crying? So we've never been this excited about a politician since Kennedy eh? Well I hope we're not misdirecting our excitement. It was a shame Michelle Obama was so stifled on the campaign trail, and he's fairly conservative. But good work on all that lots of people getting involved and voting and stuff. Hmm. My hopes are the following, Bill Ayers for education secretary, Jeremiah Wright for Secretary of state and Jesse Jackson for UN Ambassador. Back to partB though, it's looking good this week. We did a poll for our main interview which Ravi Mistry the boy genius laid out quite beautifully. Also Music's really good and I like Sex and Gender this week too.





# democracy: worth the effort?

## meganjones ain't got no wool over her eyes

The British political system although democratic is far from perfect. I don't understand how we can equate the rule of the people with the extreme difficulty faced by a voter who wishes to see the democratic machine in action.

A few weeks ago I visited Westminster and was appalled and a little frightened to be welcomed by men armed with automatic weapons. This was before I had even started with the rigmarole of being prodded and poked by the security guards, to ensure that I was not a risk to national security. I was just thankful that I had forgotten about the knitting workshop at the Quad that afternoon. The sight of knitting needles in my bag would probably have been enough to have me sent to the Tower of London without further ado! I was made to feel unwelcome and uncomfortable, simply for taking an interest in the political system in which I am supposed to be an integral part. After all, what is democracy without each and every one of us?

If democracy is the rule of the people, shouldn't the people be able to see how their representatives use the power entrusted to them? We are the ones that are responsible for giving our representatives their power, and by the same token we can take this power from them. I should be able to hold my MP, AM and various councillors accountable for their decisions. After all their decisions are made on my behalf, and therefore my decisions. We must remember that casting our vote is not the end of our participation in the political system;

it is merely the very beginning. Do we not have a duty to make vocal our dissatisfaction of the proposed policies of our government, if these do not agree with our own ideals, principles and conscience? Do silence and a lack of opposition not in themselves imply consent? Maybe this should not be taken to be true, but it is, and it is up to us to make perfectly clear where we stand. Are we willing to allow a bunch of middle-aged, cynical, ideal-less men of questionable conscience rule without hindrance, or will we use the democratic tools at our disposal to hold them to account?

It disgusts me that the turn out for elections is so abysmally low in Britain because people are too lazy, uninterested and apathetic to vote. I am not asking people to read each party's manifesto from cover to cover and to know each of their policies backwards, nor am I asking them to walk with bare feet along burning coals

to their local polling station. I just want people to take an interest in decisions that do affect the lives of each and every one of us. More often than not, the people who claim to have no interest in politics, and refuse to vote on the basis that politics does not touch their life, are the

very people who shout the loudest and complain most vocally about the practical failures of the political system. A refusal to make a choice at the ballot box automatically means an abdication of the right to complain about the choices of our politicians. Unless you take your responsibility within the democratic process seriously, how can you expect others to treat your complaints and misgivings equally seriously?

As my father would say: "If you can't be bothered to vote, don't bother complaining if you're dissatisfied about the election's outcome and its consequences." For once, I must admit he is definitely right.



# personality politics

## lauradeshpande is disillusioned

If studying politics has taught me one thing, its that my vote doesn't count.

Its chance of counting is essentially zero. It's the same for your vote. There are too many people, constituencies are too big, this is s u p



posed to be a representative democracy yet individually, we don't make any difference at the polling booths.

So why do we bother to vote? Well, apparently we don't. About two thirds of us turn out on polling day; in the 2005 general election the turnout was 61 percent, the lowest ever. In the US on Tuesday, one of the most divisive presidential elections ever, only 64 percent voted. I'm inclined to think that people who can't be bothered to take ten minutes out of their day once every four years are just plain lazy. This isn't a view widely held in academic circles. Sociologists argue that those who don't vote are socially excluded, pushed to the margins of an increasingly unequal society, and that we should reclaim their civic values by encouraging them to vote. I disagree.

I think it started at this year's mayoral election in London. The sun was shining on Camden Town as I walked to my local polling station, feeling particularly excited about putting my cross in Ken's box. Once I'd voted, I left the polling station without a shadow of a doubt that he would win, that Boris was just a phase, that they were humouring him; laughing at him, not with him, surely. I dared

to hope that we'd all collectively have a bit of a chuckle at his expense and then everything would get back to normal. But as I left, I stepped outside and passed the queue of those waiting to vote, and my hopes faded. Their blank faces said it all; they didn't understand that he was daft, they would just think he was funny and affable. They had read the Sun and it had told them to think these things. I'm not kidding myself- the next general election will be exactly the same. Welcome to Downing Street, Mr Cameron.

I think this is why I don't mind low turnouts. Voter apathy suits me just fine; I don't want my well thought out vote to be cancelled out, more than cancelled out, by the idiocy of the masses. Maybe it isn't such a bad thing that individual votes don't count, and their chance of making a difference is one in a hundred million trillion. Because it's only going to be destroyed by the readership of the Mail on Sunday and the next 'celebrity' who tries their hand at politics. It sounds harsh, but it's true; if Cheryl Cole stood for election she would win in a heartbeat. And that is the problem with democracy.

flickr user jasminekranjar



## our survey says...

### part b spoke to the people

Here is our attempt at democracy in action. Instead of an interview this week we did a poll of ten completely fair and unbiased questions. We asked the people and found out some highly important information.

### 2. What's the best street?

1. QUALITY STREET	25
2. MERYL STREEP	16
3. DOWNING STREET	12
4. CORONATION STREET	4
5. TALKING STREET	3

**We say:** Chocolate comes out on top again which is no surprise but Meryl Streep is more popular than Gordon Brown? LSE is too far south in the country to endorse Corrie, and people didn't get what talking street is, probably because they aren't street enough.

### 4. Who's the best Lord?

1. THE LORD OF THE RINGS	17
2. THE LORD OF THE DANCE	14
3. JESUS	13
4. THE LORD OF THE FLIES	12
5. THE HOUSE OF LORDS	4

**We say:** Gandalf is better than Jesus and so apparently are the supernatural feet of Michael Flatly. Politics takes another battering as the upper chamber of Parliament finish bottom of our poll maybe because they are not democratically elected!

**We say:** This question seems to have divided students, I wonder if anyone can get a stat on that. A quarter of participants thought statistics are fascist up, 2% gross annually. Only 5% would shout out in lectures and an impressive 3% are made whole again by stats. Although the results are standardly devious, on average they are really mean, but we are 33% sure that they are in the right mode for our range of results.

### 1. Which of the following describes your worst day?

1. BEING ABUSED BY CHILDREN ON A BUS	22
2. DEVELOPING A CRACK ADDICTION	20
3. LOSING A SANDWICH	9
4. BEING EXCOMMUNICATED	6
5. TALKING TO YOUR PARENTS	3

**We say:** Come on, drugs aren't that bad, they should be made legal because clearly a scuffle on the bus is much worse to LSE students. Surprisingly, we enjoy talking to our parents but not as much as we enjoy a good sandwich. For those of you who don't know what excommunicated is - it means to officially exclude someone from participation in the sacraments and services of the Catholic Church, big whoop.

### 3. Going commando is...

1. WEARING NO KNICKERS	45
2. A MILITARY CAREER PATH	6
3. A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE	6
4. WEARING LOTS OF CAMOUFLAGE	3
5. GETTING SOME JUNK IN YOUR TRUNK	0

**We say:** Clearly, a lot of people have been snapped by the paparazzi getting out of a cab. Also, it's strange that war and religion would get the same amount of votes, because the two are in no way connected. Surprisingly few went for camouflage and nobody thought it was all about the ass.

### 5. Statistics...

1. COULDN'T BE MORE SKULL CRUSHINGLY DULL	26
2. STILL TURN ME ON	15
3. ARE FASCISTICS	14
4. MAKE ME WANT TO SHOUT OUT IN LECTURE	3
5. CAN MAKE ME WHOLE AGAIN	2



## 6. Coldplay are...

1. THE MUSICAL EQUIVALENT OF BEING HIT BY A TRAIN AND EATEN BY WORMS WHO AREN'T HUNGRY	21
2. ALMOST MUSIC	17
3. NEARLY AS GOOD AS KEANE	9
4. THE MOST INSPIRATIONAL BAND OF OUR TIME	7
5. TRAVIS	5

**We say:** Mainstream music is rubbish and it's mostly Coldplay's fault. Maybe we should all listen to dubstep or better still Pulse radio. Multi platinum selling Coldplay don't seem to impress our participants, probably because they listen to actual music such as Keane and Travis. Some people, who we are trying to name, believe that Coldplay are the most inspirational band of our time. Then again, even the Teletubbies managed to get a number one single.

## 7. You see a man dying in the street, you...

1. AVOID EYE CONTACT	18
2. CHECK IF HE IS HOT	16
3. DIDN'T SEE HIM HONEST	14
4. WONDER IF HE IS RICH	9
5. CHUCKLE AND KEEP WALKING	2

**We say:** You are cruel, cruel people. You are supposed to refuse to answer the question and try to help him. Maybe after ascertaining the attractiveness of the character on the floor you were hoping to be the one who provides mouth to mouth. Thus saving his life and having one gorgeous, and eternally indebted stranger in your life. Winner!

## 9. My idea of hell is...

1. YOUR FRIENDS	22
2. HER FRIENDS	17
3. WATCHING FRIENDS	16
4. HAVING FRIENDS	2
5. MY FRIENDS	1

**We say:** Hmmmm, we missed out an option here. Hell is listening to five hours of continuous dubstep. But on the subject of friends it seems everybody loves their own friends but hate everybody else's, and the TV show FRIENDS didn't fare well either, due to mind numbing amount of repeats we are subjected to. But who needs to watch TV when you've got friends?

## 8. If I wasn't doing this I'd be...

1. DOING THE FACEBOOK	22
2. DOING WHAT YOU ALWAYS DO, TRY TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD	16
3. DOING WORDS ON PAPER	14
4. PRETENDING I CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK	7
5. SCARING INCONTINENTS	1

**We say:** Pinky and brain, brain, brain. Taking over the world is a good way to kill time apparently far better than doing words on paper. Our poll reveals that only seven people pretend to care what other people think. That's because the rest are on facebook - bloody incontinents.

## 10. Freedom is...

1. OVERRATED	16
2. SOMETHING ISAIAH BERLIN REALLY LIKED TO WRITE ABOUT	16
3. NOT WEARING A BRA	13
4. LIVING AS FAR AWAY FROM YOUR PARENTS AS POSSIBLE	10
5. AN ACNE PRODUCT	4

**We say:** A typical LSE answer if there ever was one - a tie between dork and disillusionment. Surprisingly enough, taking LSE's radical past into account, hanging loose in the mammary department only came third. Feminists obviously have more pressing issues on their minds than underwear, but the rest of us are still worried about acne and parents.



## facing the past

### virginiazhao warms her heart

During this chilly autumn season, if you're searching for a bittersweet drama to warm your frosty heart, then the French film **"I've Loved You So Long"** is a refreshing and promising choice. The movie, directed by Philippe Claudel, tells the story of Juliette, played by Kristin Scott Thomas, who, at the end of her 15-year incarceration for murder, arrives to live with her sister Lea and her family.

As Lea lovingly and eagerly tries to reintroduce Juliette back into society, and as her husband and friends slowly come to terms with Juliette's unexpected reappearance, we learn the dark and



heart-breaking mystery of Juliette's past.

Overall, the film is a solid and well-rounded piece that focuses on intense character portrayals with reserved acting and beautiful cinematography. Claudel is restrained in the performances he draws from his actors, illustrating great complexity through subtle but powerful emotional expressions during vital moments in the characters' lives.

Kristin Scott Thomas gives a masterful performance depicting Juliette's inner conflict and final resolution. The carefully selected sets and wardrobe mirror the characters' emotional states and visually intensify the bubbling conflict.

However, while the acting successfully stirs up the audiences' interest

through nuanced performances, the script fails to give a logical conclusion to the film, leaving us dissatisfied with the careless and underdeveloped explanation of Juliette's reason for imprisonment. When confronted by Lea about what drove her to murder, Juliette's answer seems so irrelevant and illogical that it completely betrays the conservative and rational personality that was so effectively built up throughout the film. This apparent inconsistency, however, does not fully unravel the film. It remains a moody and haunting journey that leaves more questions than answers. This, however, seems somehow fitting with the uncertainty built around Juliette's sordid past, and the looming questions surrounding her unknowable future.

## bring it to the masses

### iragoldstein on democratising cinema

The beautiful, sunny district of Hollywood holds a special place in all of our hearts. An international headquarters of style, it is the lavish home to some of the world's most watched celebs. In a state ruled by an Austrian-born Governor and a city famous for the Crossroads of the World shopping mall, Tinseltown conjures up stary-eyed admiration in many. Others are left with a throat-chafing disgust at the excess and materialism propagated there. But Hollywood is also home to the global industry that fills our heads with (based on) true stories of hopes and dreams we will never realise. Even more awe-inspiring are the fantastical stories we are presented with that could never come true.

Yet all film lovers feel a connection to Hollywood. Some long for the days of yore when the objects of our attention were not making night-vision porn in hotel rooms. Others feed their celeb obsessions by keeping up to date with the stars' every move. But what stake do we really have in the film industry? We don't elect representatives that vote for Best Picture. Nor do we have a vote in the choice of this year's summer blockbusters. Any People's Choice Awards out there are usually two-bit operations that none of the real filmmakers actually care about. In reality, the power in the film industry resides in the upper echelons of studio management and production financiers.

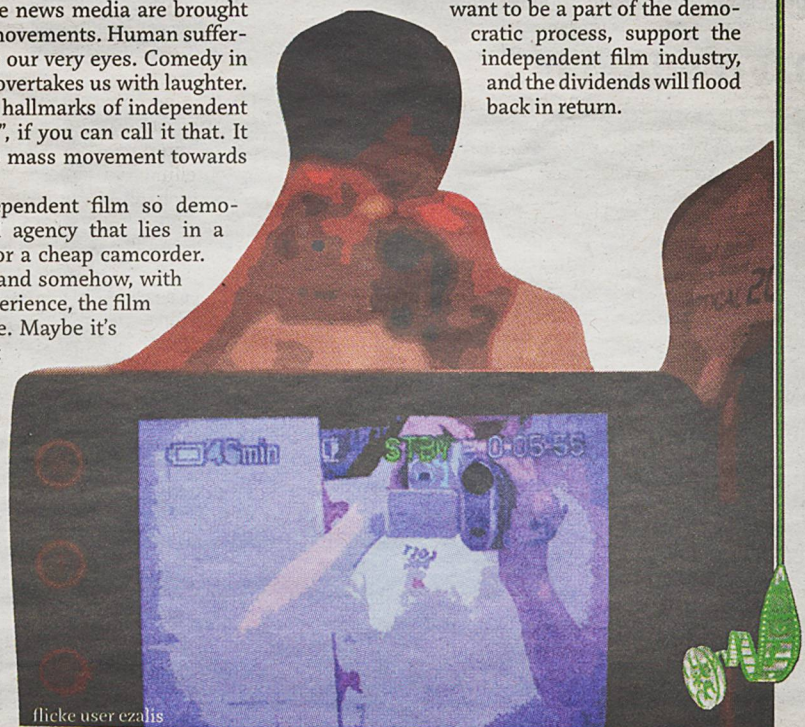
Through a political lens, the relationship we have with the film industry is like that of an oligarchic elite and its subjects. The propaganda machine churns out one Cameron Diaz-Ashton Kutcher delight after another, and we lap it up with the zeal of loyal citizens paying tribute to our fearless leaders. We pay good money for a two-hour escape from our miserable lives and are treated

with Hollywood's latest offering. It's truly an endless cycle; our desire for more blockbusting film is never satiated. The only real chance we have of rising up against our torturous master? The refuge of independent film.

Although the internet is most often referred to as "The Great Democratizer," independent film comes a close second. World issues seemingly overlooked by the news media are brought to life, fuelling global movements. Human suffering is broadcast before our very eyes. Comedy in daily life seeps in and overtakes us with laughter. These are some of the hallmarks of independent film and the "industry", if you can call it that. It can be thought of as a mass movement towards something new.

What makes independent film so democratic? The individual agency that lies in a video-camera phone, or a cheap camcorder. It starts with an idea, and somehow, with no money and less experience, the film is screened somewhere. Maybe it's in a movie theatre but more likely in your parents' basement. And the success of an independent film depends on the will of the people - viral video trailers and word of mouth, or a review in an independent newspaper. Best of all are those that make it to independent movie theatres.

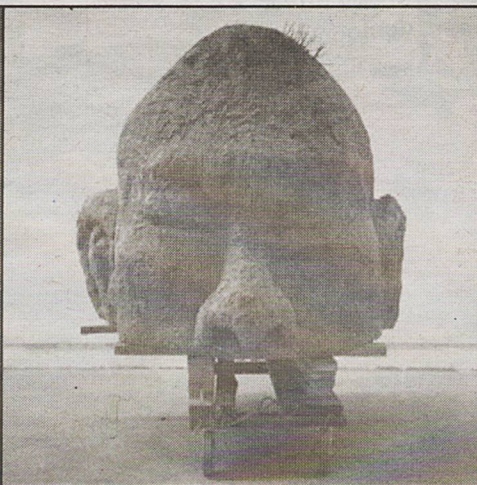
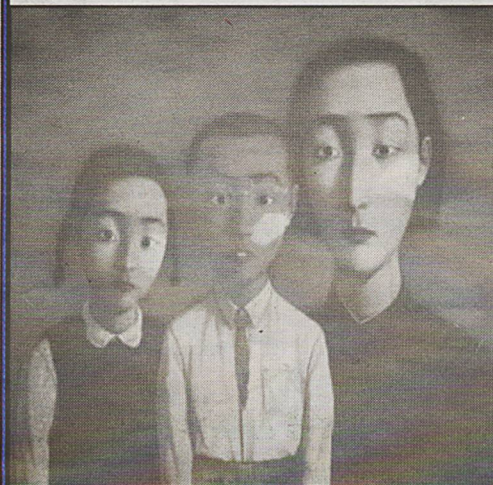
London's own Prince Charles Cinema is the city's greatest independent gem, showing big-ticket and independent films, all for less than a fiver. Better yet, if you become a member, that price drops to less than two pounds. In the heart of the city, just off of Leicester Square, it is a modern-day refuge from the Hollywood trash on offer at the other cinemas. So if you really want to be a part of the democratic process, support the independent film industry, and the dividends will flood back in return.





# talking about a revolution

stephenminas on new chinese art



Chinese modern art became commercially successful in the early-to-mid-2000's. The majority of successful Chinese art heavily focused on the Cultural Revolution and featured stylised 'trademark' images by name-artists. Biennales, auctions and 'art hubs' proliferated. However, some critics claim that commercial success encourages derivative, 'production-line' art and self-parody, and discourages risk-taking and new directions. The Saatchi Gallery styles itself as a 'cutting edge' contemporary art gallery. **'The Revolution Continues: New Art from China'** provides some clues to the new directions that Chinese contemporary art, post-emergence, might take.

The imagery is dominated by revolutionary China. Zhang Huan's Ash Head is a visceral take on the Cultural Revolution's shattering of old myths. The massive, broken head, set atop what might be a peasant's cart, recalls the fate of hubristic monuments from Ozymandias to Saddam. Bai Yiluo's Civilisation is also striking. Here, portrait busts from antiquity – including Apollo and Alexander the Great – are shown with huge, coarse, farmers' rakes stabbing through them. This captures the violence and iconoclasm of a revolutionary peasants' uprising (see William Hinton's graphic, eyewitness account in Fanshen). Left unsaid is what will replace the old order once the violence has vanished. Will everyone be equal?

'The Revolution Continues' does not totally escape charges of unoriginality. Zhang Xiaogang's repetitive staring faces are well-known and have made him wealthy. Their uniformity is both their selling point and their downfall. As this exhibition shows, little in Zhang's style or message has changed over the last ten years. This is not the future of Chinese art. Similarly, Yue

Minjun's laughing faces are lucrative but unchanging. Cheshire Cat-like, they seem to mock the viewer's search for originality or interest.

Wang Guangyi's Materialist's Art represents the nadir of the paint-by-numbers approach to the Cultural Revolution. It is a generic sixties-era propaganda poster, but with the words 'materialist's' and 'art' emblazoned across it (a similar work superimposes the word 'Porsche' on a revolutionary poster). The point it makes about consumerism in China is obvious and unnecessary, and its method is unremarkable. Ironically, it is not Chinese consumerism but the massive Western demand for this kind of art that is to blame. Wang is a better artist than this, as can be seen in his innovative, comic-book style interpretation of The Aesthetics of War.

Both telling and funny is Qiu Jie's Portrait of Mao, in which a huge cat is shown wearing Mao's ubiquitous Sun Yat-Sen jacket ('mao' can also mean 'cat' in Chinese). Placing it in the same room as Shi Xinning's photorealistic depictions of Mao the human may be a curatorial comment on the absurdity of the Mao obsession in Chinese art, long after every other facet of society (including the Communist Party) has moved on. (The silliness is also well captured in Shi's image of the Cold War House Un-American Activities Committee in session – with Mao interrogating Joseph McCarthy.)

'The Revolution Continues' is at its best when engaging with contemporary China. Li Songsong's political scenes are post-ideological, bureaucratic and grey. There is no unifying purpose. The sections amount to no more than the sum of their parts, capturing the managerialism of the post-revolutionary state.

Qiu Jie's huge drawing, in the classical Chinese high realism style, is a welcome reminder that there

was Chinese culture before the Cultural Revolution. It recalls the long print tradition but fuses Western with Eastern themes to suggest a living culture engaging with globalisation.

Poignantly, Zhang Dali's installation shows fifteen migrant workers hung from the ceiling, suspended by the slenderest of threads. Their plight – social and economic – is fragile. When the threads snap, workers are unemployed and on their own. Some return home in shame. Some even commit suicide. The mass migration to the cities is a complex upheaval and deserves more artistic attention. Similarly, Zhang Huan's work protesting the One Child Policy shows that there is more artistic freedom in China than there once was – as any visitor to 798 in Beijing or Moganshan Rd in Shanghai will notice.

And democracy? The Chinese Revolution emphasised democratic principles, and the regime today says that it remains committed to the idea of democracy. The revolutionary state distorted and perverted those democratic principles in many ways. Yet recall what the Chinese revolution replaced: Not functioning, egalitarian society but rural serfdom and urban exploitation. The exhibition looks back to that desolate past and those revolutionary excesses. Yet it also deals with China now, as it is, and looks forward to a future without certainties.

*'The revolution continues: new art from China' runs until Jan 25th, 2009 in the Saatchi Gallery (tube: Sloane Square). Admission is free.*







Democracy  
through time

2006  
Santos  
makes the  
7th season  
better than  
the 6th

2008  
America gets its act  
together and after  
eight years of an  
abomination they  
elect a human being.

2059  
Superfast in-  
ternet means  
absolute  
global direct  
democracy.

1928  
After decades  
of campaign-  
ing, women  
are granted  
equal voting  
rights

2000BC  
The Greeks invent de-  
mocracy. The only  
people with power are  
rich white men.  
Some people wear  
loincloths and are  
super buff and like  
fighting and shouting  
**THIS IS SPARTA!!!!**

oops  
out  
www.abcnews.com

Troop  
out

OFF





Iran  
PUS

1964  
Sarah Palin  
born. Pre-  
cipitates end  
of democracy  
and all  
human kind.

2008  
That fat politics fella  
defies actual legal  
judges and strictly  
keeps dancing.

2000  
Craig Phillips  
wins Big  
Brother, chang-  
ing television,  
and democracy,  
forever.

19 BBY  
Palpatine executes  
Order 66, Yoda flees  
and The Jedi Order  
falls along with The  
New Republic. De-  
mocracy dies in the  
galaxy for a genera-  
tion.

180 BC  
Johnny Cash kills his  
dad Albus Dumb-  
ledore, then he takes  
over the senate. De-  
mocracy is threatened  
until John Nash fights  
Wolf, Jet and Lightning  
to kill Johnny Cash and  
restore democracy.

1787  
George Washington and  
friends get together and  
hold some truths to be self evi-  
dent. By the people for the  
people etc. The people are  
all rich white men.

NO  
TO  
FACE



## the indie Obama-nation

**emilykaiser** ponders post-ironic neo politico musicalism

Although music and politics have always been awkward bedfellows, politically-minded songs can be some of the best; Bob Dylan turned the real world into poetry while Rage Against the Machine warp everything you didn't want to think about into an intensity that grabs you. Despite this, indie music has largely ignored the rest of the world over the last eight years, preferring to stick its head in the sand while bands try to out-do each other in their isolation, battling for the highest claim to obscurity in their blogs. However the events of the recent presidential election (surely no further explanation is needed) gave us possibly one of the biggest indie fads to hit the scene since someone decided it was cool to listen to Pavement: our very own hipster candidate, Barack Obama. We live in an era where more people lined up to buy an iPhone than to vote in the election. That's why, as much as the "celebrity candidate" notion is wrong, the fact that Obama was made into a fad got more people involved than ever.

His ambiguous messages of "hope" and "change" were successful because they were sent en masse to mobile phones as text messages, where substance falls victim to a character limit. They are downloaded as You-Tube video clips and sold as quippy slogans on T-Shirts. "Bros before hoes" was a popular way to show support for Obama over Hillary Clinton last spring, forgetting for a moment that they were worn by skinny white kids whose only "bro" is their Macbook and will never actually encounter a "ho" in their lifetime.

There is no argument, however, that Obama's campaign drew out significantly more support from the music community than in recent years. Rage Against the Machine has and always will be pissed off at the government. The only difference now is that they've added Guantanamo Bay uniforms to their wardrobe. But when you hear that the Arcade Fire, as Canadian as they are, are playing shows to raise support for a candidate in the Ameri-

gans. The media and indie kids have something in common in that they can always manage to ruin a good thing by snapping it up as their own. The Grateful Dead, on the other hand, may actually have something to say, and the fact that they decided to reunite for Barack Obama to say it should be more than enough reason to tune in.

The Decembrists, though not hiding their Obama support, made it clear at a recent University of Chicago performance that all they really want you to do is vote. It seems the hardest thing in the world for young people today is to have an opinion on something other than the stuff they've most recently purchased. Gregg Gillis will forever be selling us his Girl Talk pop rehashes, and he really doesn't have much else to say. Indie irony has poisoned us, preventing us from ever being serious or taken seriously. But, as any good citizen of a democracy should be able to do, sifting through the junk of indie blather about the election can actually result in a real reaction, a real thought, and, just maybe, a real effect. If the new President-Elect of the United States Barack Obama is to represent something, perhaps that is it.

When we look back on this presidential election, the intelligence and the idiocy, the wake up calls and the white noise, what actually changed is that people got up. Perhaps they got up because they followed the fad or wanted a larger fan base. Perhaps they got up because they sincerely believed in the cause. But either way they left their blogs, their facebooks, their consumption, and got involved. And really, no matter what else happened in the last two years or will happen in the next four, no matter if Obama saves the world or crashes among it, we've gotten up, we've had a thought, and we did something. We don't have to wait for change to be sold to us, we can make it. All it takes is getting up.



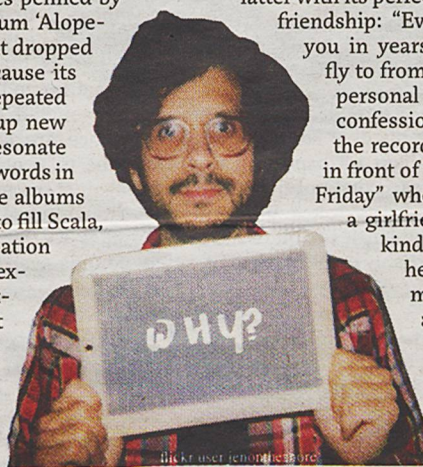


## the whys and the wherewolfs

### julianboys witnesses wordy wonders

For those of us who find the musical bombast of hip-hop shiveringly enticing but its bitches'n'bling subject matter a little silly, there exists **Why?**. This is a Californian band with 'PH-fat' beats and verbose songs bursting with dark, witty and perceptive lyrics penned by front man Yoni Wolf. Their album 'Alopecia' barely made a ripple when it dropped earlier this year, but that's because its far too good to be popular: repeated listens are necessary to open up new pieces of vivid imagery which resonate until you end up mumbling the words in public like a mantra. Over three albums they convinced enough people to fill Scala, a night brimming with anticipation due to a certain map-colouring exercise in their homeland. Whatever the reason an expectant hush fell before the first note was even played.

The rolling drums of album opener "The Vowels Pt. 2" with the line "I'm not a lady's man I'm a landmine,



filming my own fake death" started heads nodding, with Wolf's vocal delivery different live - punchy clipped phrases replacing the languid style on record. The brilliant "Song of the Sad Assassassin" and "These Few Presidents" stood out, the latter with its perfect description of distanced

friendship: "Even though I haven't seen you in years, yours is the funeral I'd fly to from anywhere".

The intensely personal songs take on an almost confessional tone when listening to the record at home, so felt exposed in front of the audience, as on "Good Friday" when after breaking up with a girlfriend he tells us about "the kind of shit I won't admit to my head shrinker", which is almost unrepeatable in such a reputable publication as this.

The musical flow in lines like "blowing kisses to disinterested bitches" is poetic, the overall effect being an

eloquent stream of consciousness which washes over you as you enjoy the sounds but miss the meanings, only realising a few seconds later what Wolf's going on about. At times the flow becomes more important and meaning takes a back seat, but then out of the blue he'll describe a scene which immediately comes to life: "my neighbour walks by/high heels click dry/like half a proud horse down brook" or his noting of "Just the slight jingle of pocket change pulsing" when watching people have sex in the corner of a Berlin basketball court.

As it may be becoming clear, Wolf isn't the most cheerful of wordsmiths, but wallowing in self-pity can bring a perverse thrill and he captures it masterfully. The most uplifting song is Fatalist Palmistry, which brings a smile to the face with its sing-a-long chorus "I sleep on my back 'cos its good for the spine, and coffin rehearsal". The music doesn't need to suffer to accommodate the lyrical virtuosity, as the sublime "A Sky for Shoeing Horses Under" demonstrates, balancing xylophone solos and forceful drums to emerge the best song on the night, echoing in our ears as we spilled into the grime of King's Cross.

## not so young team

### sachinpatel is haunted by mogwai

For all their initial promise, **Mogwai** have never really lived up to the majesty and sheer power of their debut album, *Young Team*, and this year's release *The Hawk Is Howling* was still over dependent on the now clichéd quiet-LOUD dynamic. Where Mogwai really excel though is their live shows, a fact proven in abundance by their performance at Hammersmith Apollo, which saw many ears deafened and minds warped.

The five members made their entrance and weaved their instruments into a glorious prelude, before unleashing the beast with *The Precipice*, taken from their latest LP. My God it was loud! Short, sharp shocks of distorted guitar pulsed throughout the Apollo, while the quieter moments highlighted Mogwai's instrumental virtuosity, not to mention their uncanny knack for writing incredibly moving, sparse passages.

This was a setlist unafraid of dipping into old EPs and diehard-fan favourites, as evidenced by the presence of "Ithica 2709", which brimmed with punkish energy. Another older highlight was *Christmas Steps*, its cheery title being a rather accurate description of the song's intricate melodies and beautiful, washed-out ending. By this point, the quintet were fully engaged with the music, and clearly enjoying themselves, with multi-instrumentalist Barry Burns swapping guitar for keyboard, and taking to the microphone for vocodered numbers like "Hunted By A Freak".

What never ceases to amaze me about this band is that such an almighty headrush of noise can be produced by the unlikelyst of creators-five balding, paunchy thirty-somethings, ardent in both their sense of humour and their devotion to Celtic Football Club. You half expect them to grow

bushy beards during the concert, but they never once veer into proggy stereotypes or messy jams, preferring instead to dish out meaty chunks of energy and thrilling drones, as in "I'm Jim Morrison, I'm Dead", which seemed transformed in this live setting. Mogwai are very much a band who relish the worship of their fans, revelling in their complete immersion in the music. They do not play in a hermetically-sealed manner, instead choosing to face the crowds at every opportunity, 5000 of them in their relentless pursuit of death by sound (and possibly blindness, judging by the piercing intensity of some of the lighting).

The closing stages of Mogwai gigs are always fairly historic and the band did not disappoint. The main set closed with "Like Herod", which multiplied every morsel of the twelve-minute sonic assault experienced on the record while losing none of the sense of fun, and recent hit *Batcat*, set to a video of a flying bat/cat hybrid as it works its way through a rather harrowing existence. The band exited the stage to a wash of feedback and strange, exciting electrical noises, and an encore was inevitable. Upon making their return, Mogwai indulged fans with the live staple "Helicon 1" - a dazzling experiment in reverb and delay that builds into a guitar-driven groove.

Live, it took on a more raw, visceral form, with the prominent vocoder providing an organ-like mantra, leading the endless guitar offensive into frequently awe-inspiring, sweeping passages. And then, in a carefully-orchestrated climax, all the instruments at once cut out, leaving the band to once more thank the audience for their attention (at several points during the proceedings, old

hands in the crowd had been heard silencing other, noisier fans, in order to focus our attention on the quieter moments). For their part, the crowd stood fixated upon the sight of five witty and committed musicians who, in the live setting, remain at the top of their game. For my part, I felt like I was witnessing the elder statesmen of post-rock bowing out after a critically acclaimed career, but in my head I know they will be back for another tour, supporting yet another predictable album, while still succeeding in stunning thousands of fans with their incredible on-stage musical fireworks.



music

CMK



## recycled chekhov

beabrown reviews stoppard's version of ivanov

The Donmar Warehouse begins its year long residency in the West End with Tom Stoppard's reworking of Chekhov's classic. The play revolves around **Ivanov**, a government official, and tells the story of one man's struggle to comprehend his own bleak outlook.

Falling out of love with his sick wife Anna, he begins to entertain new prospects with his young admirer, Sasha. While Ivanov tries to reconcile debt with self-despair, a guest, Dr Lvov, polices his wife's ill health and Ivanov's conscience. There are no recognisable villains and heroes, simply adults unpacking their burdens on to an audience who are keen to absorb every emotion.

The large cast brings gossip-ravaged country gatherings to life; women exchange Chinese whispers on the sofa while the men anxiously

entertain. The set is worn luxury, with gloomy lighting helping to conceal the women's secrets. Kenneth Branagh broods in the title role, moodily strumming his guitar against a backdrop of banter, his face showing detachment and resignation. Boredom permeates; Russia's chattering classes have too much time and too little to say. When Sasha's father, Lebedev, confronts Ivanov about his debts, he is unprepared for the torn man's reaction. Branagh's mental and physical wilting is delicate and haunting: Ivanov retreats, curled into a ball, desperate to escape his own convictions.

The play is as much about introspection as honesty, and it also explores sexual politics. Andrea Riseborough captures Ivanov's love interest Sasha with verve, and maybe a little too much fizz. She whirls and pouts coquettishly in the manner of

a child in make-up. The women are "moneybags," aware of their financial positions and flaunting their dowries like the Hilton sisters on the red carpet. Love and money are so interwoven that only Sasha is left to muse on the nature of love and proclaim the purity of her own—concluding that women want men that "give them something to do".

For a comedy, it's a pretty chewy piece. The production is impressive and Stoppard's script rings true for today; difficult financial times on stage resonated through the stalls. Class and conscience are scrutinised convincingly as Dr Lvov, the man of principles, presents a chilling case against the merits of honesty. A worthwhile and thoughtful play, particularly as the Donmar continues its commitment to widening access: ten pounds won't be better spent in London.

## towing the chorus line

loisjeary explores a time when theatre was truly democratic

Many centuries before our theatres were being subsidised with the proceeds of the population's gambling addiction, the ancient Greeks had public funding of the arts sorted. Not only did they invent democracy, but by linking it closely with theatre they ensured that for ancient Athenians, democratic participation was a whole lot more fun than even the Obama party in Grant Park.

Attending the civic theatrical festival of Dionysia (the god of wine), was part of the citizen's duty, while funding a play was a tax akin to paying for a battleship, and provided a great source of rivalry and honour for the wealthy. Each year three playwrights would pit their works against each other in front of the entire citizenry, who sat out in the sun all day apparently paying quite close attention to what was going, sources tell the tale of an actor who accidentally said 'ferret' instead of the very similar word for 'tempest' and left the audience in stitches. They did not even have to contend with ludicrously

high ticket prices; citizens were paid to attend the theatre, as they were paid to attend the assembly. Young men were also required to participate in the chorus, which was probably hell for anyone not entirely comfortable with their sexuality, as it meant prancing about singing and dancing all day. It was so strenuous that it was considered good training for physical combat, which cannot help but make you wonder how much better a world this would be if our armed forces were trained in musical theatre before being sent to the front line.

The plays themselves were characterised by democratic tradition. The tragedies almost always contained a debate between two characters defending opposing moral ideas, just as they would have debated law in the assembly. Debate was considered crucial to democracy, as was questioning authority and Aristophanes challenged the status quo in both *Lysistrata* and *Ekklesiazusae* by having women take over the democratic process because the men were doing it so badly. Of course, ancient democracy was not as liberal as modern forms purport to

be – no one is certain whether women attended the festival, references to plays being so scary that the women miscarried sound like gross exaggeration, and they were certainly not part of the chorus. Theatre criticism was also far less tolerant than it is now, as writing a play that people didn't like could land you up in court. Phrynichus was fined following the performance of his play *The Capture of Miletus* about an Athenian colony that had recently been sacked by the Persians, which moved the audience both to tears and to ban such a play from ever appearing again. Tough crowd.

There are attempts in Britain to make theatre more democratic, including reducing ticket prices and broadening the range of subject matter, while there have been a number of plays in recent years that have embraced their democratic right to question authority in addressing issues such as the Iraq War and Guantánamo Bay. Perhaps having a day when theatres are free and open to all would go some way to recreating the ancient ideal, for it seems that the ancient Greeks had it right when they realised that theatre can bring people together to celebrate culture and strengthen democracy.



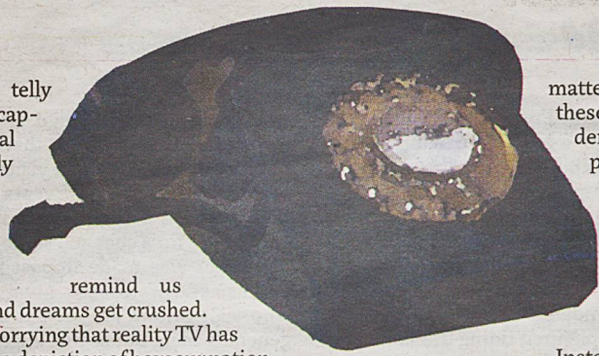


unreality tv

suing votes for real life

telly

If you think telly provides escapism from real life, you're probably wrong. It seems like reality television has tried ever so hard to get back at us and remind us that life is tough and dreams get crushed. It is increasingly worrying that reality TV has nowadays become a depiction of how our nation is entertained. With tough times ahead, the prospect of having to resort to watching reality TV truly worries me. The X-Factor, Strictly Come Dancing, I'm a Celebrity and Big Brother are just some of the classic examples of the seemingly countless shows that have been thrown at our screens under the façade of 'reality TV', brainwashing the newer generations of Britain's troubled youths. Not that the extremely gifted and talented souls of the LS of E would ever get hooked on any of these pointless shows, no, absolutely not (up to this point, I'm still upset that Javine didn't make it into Girls Aloud), but you'd be surprised by just how many people have reached the "addicted" level.



matter how much fire these shows come under, there are still people who are stuck to their TV all day and night watching them. And let's be honest here, we all loved the audition rounds for the X-factor. Instead, our focus lies

on the question of democracy: do the results of the shows genuinely reflect the preferences of the mass public?

To be blunt, it is nowhere near as 'democratic' a procedure as people have the right to believe. Reality TV scandals are part of a greed-filled, trans-national, eye-watering, jaw-dropping phenomenon that has been around since god-knows-when. It is probably just a matter of which TV studio is better at hiding it. It's been such an obvious "insider secret" that most audiences are now over it and have continued with watching. Some of the most notorious rigging offences include the series of ITV scandals last year, with shows involving beloved hosts like Ant and Dec - and those are just the ones that were caught out.

The disgustingly high cost to pay on each vote

you cast for your favourite singer/housemate/celebrity/dancer instantly puts off those who simply cannot afford it, and narrows down the voting base to a population of extremely dedicated (and dare I say, sad) fans. Furthermore, the people who make the extra effort to vote for their favourites, several times, on various mobiles and landlines, surely go against the "one vote per person" principle of most democratic procedures. If rigging the phone votes seems too risky for the producers, they have the option to 'fix' the show from an editorial point of view. Take the order of the acts for example - so many times have I seen all the acts being placed at the end go through to the next rounds.

Of course I'm not the best-qualified statistician to examine this, nor do I have the time, but the most obvious cases are probably seen on Big Brother. Not only have the producers picked their favourites to win and bullied those who are blatantly up for eviction, but they also manipulate the nominations accordingly, conducting evictions whenever they like. Technology has also played a big part too. Apparently fax machines and computer-generated programmes were set up to continually register votes. Surely, this techy wizardry can be put into much better use than as merely a tool for pretending to be democratic. And does any actually care about who wins the eleventh Big Brother?

and the winner is...

marionkoob witnesses an election

As we fought off the chill winds blowing along the Thames, little did we know that our desperate efforts would not be in vain. Our destination was the Southbank Centre, where the six shortlisted writers of this year's Man Booker Prize were to read an extract from their selected novel, and open themselves to questions from the audience.

For those not familiar with the anglophone literary world, the Booker Prize is awarded annually to what is judged to be the best novel authored by a Commonwealth or Irish writer. Aside from the prestige and dramatic increase in book sales the award brings, the winner is awarded the handsome sum of £50,000: all three are non-negligible elements in the literary world.

Sean Barry's novel 'The Secret Scripture' graced the shortlist. The story is an account of his great-aunt's life, imagined through his mother's stories. Although the plot-line of the novel itself is downbeat (an old woman's recalling her youth from within a psychiatric hospital), the reading was quite humorous.

Moving to an altogether different continent and epoch, Amitav Ghosh's 'Sea of Poppies' tells the story of a linguistically, ethnically and financially diverse group of passengers aboard a ship bound for Calcutta during the first Opium War. Also out of India, but with a very different literary approach,

Aravind Adiga's novel is set in Bangalore, India's Silicon Valley. It takes the form of a letter written by an Indian entrepreneur to the Chinese prime minister. As the letter unfolds, we discover that this man isn't just any entrepreneur. Adiga's reading had a ring of ambition that drives many of us (yes you fellow future bankers) in the modern capitalist world.

When asked how it felt to be the only woman shortlisted, Linda Grant replied: "Well, I was the only one who had to look for a dress for three weeks". Her novel, 'The Clothes on Their Backs', depicts the traumatic experience of someone living through the Holocaust, who in turn exploits others afterwards.

Steve Toltz offered the most comical extract from his novel 'A Fraction of the Whole', despite it being about a man discovering that he had a fatal form of cancer. Toltz was the only one of the six who had read all of the other novels in the shortlist. He did far better than the audience, of whom only two even claimed to have read the whole selection.

Towards the end of the event, a difficult decision came upon us LSE students: which of the six novels should we purchase? It was with a heart wrenching feeling that we selected a novel and had it signed. Luckily enough, one of us had the good sense to purchase Adiga's 'The White Tiger', proclaimed the winner the next day.

Mr Adiga is the youngest of the shortlisted authors, and this is his first novel, which has given him much attention from both the media and the public. Writing about the spread of globalisation and the willpower necessary for a man to transcend his social origins in modern-day India are elements that strike a chord with contemporary readers.



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MAN BOOKER

TM K



JOURNEYS

# tenuous linkages

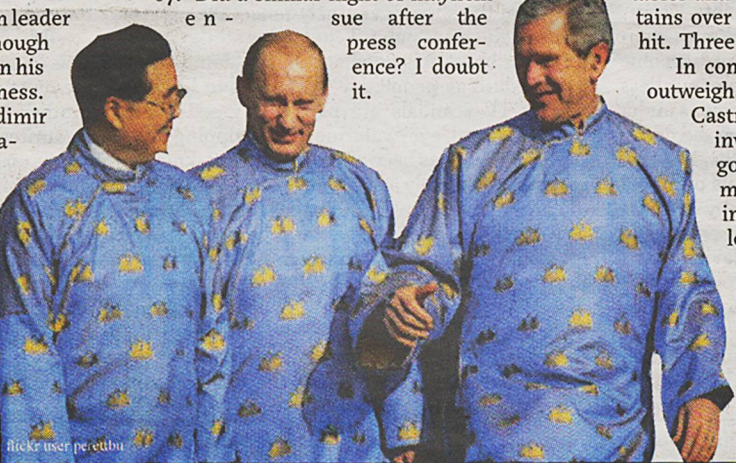
## charleshodgson tours with the president

Democracy is a system whereby shiny faced people gain power by unscrupulous means. Usually this means that they have to attend to the doings of government and the setting taxes and such lark. Luckily, they also get to go on free holidays to far off lands and pose for hilarious 'out of context business suit' photographs with tribal elders and other unsuspecting locals. So, in a tenuous link between subsection and theme, democracy and travel, here are some of the greatest holidays of elected officials which I can remember:

East met, um well east when Russian leader Putin ventured further east to Japan. Though some human rights junkies may question his legitimacy, none can deny his manliness. This was especially evident when Vladimir Putin went to this Far Eastern destination. He was pictured wearing a fine silk kimono which was not only easy on the eyes but, I'm told, easy on the Russian strongman's notoriously delicate skin. I'm sure whenever he examines his vast wardrobe of military fatigues before a big state event he considers donning it once again for a bit of a laugh. I wait with bated breath for the day he does.

Camp David has long been a fa-

avourite hideaway for the Presidents of the United States. When it all got a bit too much for George Bush he used to go chill out at the presidential country retreat, Camp David. Some of the best presidential parties every held happened here, including the legendary 'Carterpalooza' of '78 when Anwar 'wild man' Al Sadat and a group of Israeli dudes got tanked up and drove a golf cart through Walter Mondale's cabin. Incidentally, Gordon Brown was pictured riding the same golf cart with GWB while on holiday there in '07. Did a similar night of mayhem



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en - sue after the press conference? I doubt it.

It isn't just on foreign and exotic soil that world leaders go to to get their kicks. A number of presidential types have visited our little nation over the years. A couple years ago eight or so of them went to a damp estate in Scotland called Gleneagles for a chat and some outdoor pursuits. The latter was made impossible by some over enthusiastic protesters. Most important people who visit Britain are invited by the Queen and generally hang out at Buckingham palace. There is a games room with one of those miniature pool tables and a darts board. The duck pond contains over two species of fish and is always a hit. Three stars.

In conclusion, the perks of being elected outweigh those of being a tin-pot dictator. Castro, Kim Jong-Il and Chavez are rarely invited on holiday, and when they do go somewhere they usually spoil it by making a rude comment and plunging the tour group into awkward silence. Therefore, democratic elections seem to be worth the hassle, if not only for the plethora of exotic destinations you can visit on your mandate.

# average-town usa

## charleshodgson rates the forgotten state

Minnesota is a state in the northern centre of America. It is neither very interesting nor noteworthy, but I thought I would describe it in the fairest possible terms to clear the recent onslaught of public slights against its name. Although many would describe it as a 'frozen shit hole' in winter, a 'sauna without partial nudity' in summer and a 'cultural wasteland' for the rest of the year, I would tend to disagree slightly.

Its continental climate is harsh and volatile, but it provides a classic hot summer/cold winter divide rarely seen in other states. In the winter it is wise never to step outside, which is why downtown Minneapolis, the largest city in the state, is connected by a system of 'skyways' that were cutting edge in the Sixties. In the summer it is also wise never to step outside as the heat is unbearable.

Culturally, Minnesota is a rich tapestry of Norwegian immigrants. Local customs include a passion for salted fish and a stoic opposition to frivolity.

That is not to say there is no cultural amusement in the state. It is home to the 'finest' demolition derbies (pronounced "derr-bees") in the world. This local sport involves high school dropouts smashing old cars which they "fixed up real good" into each other at moderate speeds. For added fun, the course is made of mud so the cheering crowd can join in with the squalor.

The industrial base of Minnesota is corn. It is for this reason that the state's most famous historic landmark is a giant statue of the Jolly Green Giant. This is closely followed in the hearts of locals by the Pillsbury Doughboy monument, just an hour's drive north in what many call the 'pro-

cessed food mascots belt'. The Hormel Corporation, makers of SPAM, are based nearby. If you visit their factory you can purchase all manner of SPAM memorabilia, and watch truckloads of pigs enter the factory (yes, it really is made of pork!). As well as the Pillsbury Boy and the JGG, Minnesota has seen a fair number of famous sons and daughters. Although not born in the state, Jesse James committed his most famous robbery in Northfield, Minnesota. Bob Dylan grew up here, as did the woman who created the largest ball of twine in the world.

I hope that I have convinced you to lay down your prejudice and visit this most exciting and dynamic of states. It might not be first on your list if you've never been to the USA before, but at least put it somewhere between numbers 25 and 30. That's all it asks.



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# tick my box

## holli eastman doesn't feel represented

The right to vote is something which many an individual has shed blood and tear to gain over the centuries. Democracy – rule by the people, or to those with less optimism, of the mob, has historically been viewed as the most fair and representative method of governing. But with elections being held as infrequently as once every four years, just how represented are we.

So its election time, time to stand behind the magical curtain and play a role in history. I stare at the ballot paper in front of me and ponder, which one of the candidates before me actually represents me? Who will actually take my preferences into account?

We elect officials to represent our interests, be it in Westminster or in Brussels, but how closely do they know us? Does my representative in Camden know that my favourite colour is green and that my favourite food is Nandos? Does he know that as a cyclist I would really appreciate more cycle ways around our borough and better, safer facilities to leave my two-wheeled friend? I doubt it. With constituencies the size they are, MPs hardly have a close and personal relationship with the masses whose identities they are representing.

Of course you can drop a line to your nearest and dearest member of Parliament, telling them the woes of your life, how you would really like the expansion of the local primary school play-

ground as those obese kiddies really do need some extra room to stretch their podgy thighs. But conformity to the party line is probably going to override your importance. Lets face it, there are another sixty million of you out there.

Is this the classic failing of representative democracy, and its inherent failure to live up to the former part of its name?

The government in power without a doubt play a vital role in the formation of our identity. I feel that I can personally hold Thatcher to account for my poor dental health due to the Iron Lady's withdraw of free milk in primary schools. On a more serious note, the decisions of the current government to raise higher education tuition fees in England in leading to a generation of bright young things to shy away from books and seek an alternative, and cheaper, career path. Such an intrusion



into the hopes and dreams of an individual will unmarkedley alter who they become.

So what are we to do? Is there a better means of getting our interests, our hopes, and our visions for a brighter future represented in the hallowed halls of democratic institutions around the globe? Protesting has historically proven to be the method of choice by disillusioned yuppies the world over. By voicing your concerns to the powers that be you are actively taking a step to promoting your own interests to those in a position to do something about it.

Not to piss on anyone's firework; but, after record numbers of protesters took to the streets to alert governments against a war in Iraq, five years later, the troops are still there.

Reckon Gordon isn't governing in your name, I'm afraid to say, he probably is.

# voice of the people

## mirahammad has disdain for the demos

"Power to The People." You know, the kind of slogan you might see scrawled on the back of a cubicle door, next to a badly drawn anarchist biro scribble depicting that "Becky H is a slag." A couple of years ago I would've loved it. I was all for giving everything to The People- power, free avocados, Dyson hoovers, whatever they wanted. Until I realised that I wasn't one of them.

I don't mean to deny my identity as a human being. I'm almost absolutely sure that I am a homo sapien and therefore one of the people. But I'm sure as hell not one of The People. In fact I don't even like The People. Why? Because they're a narrow

mind ed, interested,

bigoted, obtuse, self-unintelligent bunch of Suners. I mean these are the sort of people who probably think that Ho Chi Minh is number 23 on their local Chinese menu, "philosophy" is a kind of skin disease and the "local library" is a posh new place where you can get good beer. Even worse is the fact that The People rule the world.

I mean, democracy is fun stuff. What could possibly be better than getting millions people, the majority of whom haven't even heard of a manifesto,

to perform the clearly challenging task of putting a cross in a box? And then decide the fate of the country based on the outcome? Pure genius. Why not just get a reasonable, wise, benevolent person (i.e. me) to decide the whole thing and then just have a pretend election? We could have a new democracy, guys. A better democracy. Just look at Iraq.

"Woah, there. Getting a little extreme," you might say, "surely The People aren't that bad?" Just catch a bus and you'll see it for yourself, mate. The People are the two kids who are sitting in the seat in front of you, eating cheesy crisps and licking the window. The old lady who takes one look at you and shields her bag from your nasty, foreign, teenage, purse-nicking hands. The group of hoodie-wearing nineteen year olds who think that "shizzle" is a real word and are probably going to jump you as soon as you stop at traffic lights. Then take a look at yourself, looking at them, looking at you, looking at them (reread it, it makes sense) and realise that you're just as ignorant and bigoted as the rest of The People. And that although I might say I'm not one of them, what I actually mean is "Damn. I really wish I wasn't." Long live homo sapiens!





# strictly ageism

**catherinecapone is nice to see you, to see you...**

Last year, 58-year-old Moira Stuart, having lost her slot on her Sunday AM current affairs programme, quit the BBC after working for the corporation for more than thirty years. Accusations of ageism and sexism were thrown at the BBC by a wide range of people in the midst of the uproar that followed her departure.

Whilst watching Strictly Come Dancing the other day and becoming increasingly irritated by Bruce Forsyth's lame jokes, I was seized by a small wave of anger and asked myself: 'why is he still on TV?' Every week the eighty year-old 'dodderly' show-business man is accompanied by the glamorous (and of course young and beautiful) Tess Daly, who stands serenely, smiles and pretends to find his jokes funny. Of course, she's an adequate presenter and I have no problem with her, but it appears that all female personalities have to conform to this repressive stereotype.

While their male counterpart can be virtually on the brink of death and still enjoy the spotlight on one of the most popular shows on the BBC, women have to fade into the background. If Daly was thirty years older, would she

still be on the show? I think not. Her appearance is simply to attract viewers as a glamorous assistant. One could be forgiven for thinking of her as the woman who claws in the viewers in compensation for her co-presenter's, well, personality, looks and age.

Another example is X-Factor's Simon Cowell and Louis Walsh, who this year are accompanied by Cheryl Cole and Dannii Minogue. Again, if the girls' sex appeal matched that of Cowell or Walsh, I doubt they'd be presenting the show with them.

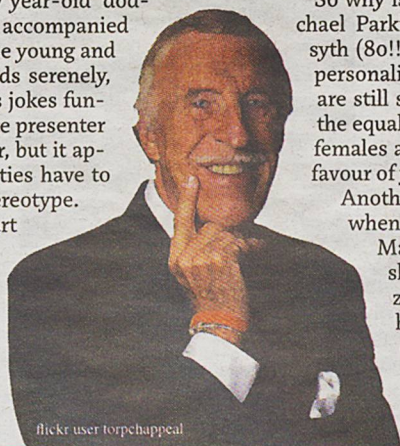
So why is it that Jon Snow (60), Michael Parkinson (73) and Bruce Forsyth (80!!) amongst many other male personalities of the older generation are still sitting comfortably, whereas the equally talented and equally aged females are shunned and removed in favour of younger replacements?

Another thing that irritates me is when people complain about how Madonna should quit now that she's reached the big five-zero. And yes, I agree that her 'raunchy' videos are a tad cringe-worthy (Madonna, if you're reading - I wholeheartedly support the right

to freedom of expression, but you may want to tone down on the thrusting and gym-suits 'cos it doesn't quite do it for me) but does anyone complain about the ages of Rod Stewart or Tom Jones? (And may I add that I actually shudder when I hear the latter singing 'Sex Bomb, sex bomb, you're my sex bomb'?)

I do take into account that there are famous female personalities of the older generation who are appreciated, but they are few and far between. Once they reach a certain age and are no longer fit and sexy, their credentials seem to disintegrate faster than you can say 'sexism is still rife in our society.'

Those women who do manage to break the age ceiling almost always undergo plastic surgery to try to hide the fact that yes, they are indeed actually over forty. The likes of Anne Robinson, Carol Vorderman and Cher, amongst a host of other talented women who succumbed to pressure to fit into the 'feminine norm', feel (quite rightly) that unless they mask their age, their future prospects will be greatly diminished. This trend not only applies to famous females but to the general population as well; demands for cosmetic surgery have shot through the roof, which paints a rather ominous future of an image-obsessed population.



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