

The Beaver

The newspaper of the London School of Economics Students' Union since 1949 • 22 January 2008 • Issue 678



Part B

www.thebeaveronline.co.uk

Congolese protestors disrupt lecture

» EU Commissioner Louis Michel accused of being complicit in assassination

MICHAEL DEAS
NEWS EDITOR

An LSE lecture on European-African relations ended in a brawl last week. Louis Michel, currently the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, was heckled and verbally abused by Congolese protestors who accused him of being complicit in the assassination of former President Laurent-Désiré Kabila and corruption present in the current government of DR Congo.

The Commissioner's speech on the importance on fostering greater trade links with African nations in light of China's growing importance on the continent passed without event. But at the beginning of the question and answer session the protestors began shouting and accusing Michel of being a "Murderer...you have blood on your hands..."

"You know Congo...you have its money in your pockets," the protestors continued.

An audience member, believed to be a journalist from Congo, stood up to defend Michel and claimed, "Louis Michel is a true Congolese." The protestors then lunged at the journalist and LSE officials had to get between him and the protestors to prevent a full fight from breaking out.

The journalist was then escorted from the premises for his own security. He left his laptop and bag, which were later stolen.

Louis Michel was heavily involved in Congolese politics during his role as Belgian Foreign Minister. As well as being implicated in the assassination of Laurent Kabila, Congolese citizens have accused him of using Kabila's son, current President Joseph Kabila Kanambe, as 'a puppet'. The protestors appeared to be accusing him of siphoning off aid money intended for the government of Congo.

A steward at the event, who wanted to remain anonymous, said, "It seemed that the protestors had organised themselves so as some were down-

stairs and the others were in the balcony.

"From comments that I heard from people as they left, most of the audience were frustrated by not being able to ask their questions. I think the protestors got their message, but at the expense of other audience members own right of free speech as the lecture had to be terminated early," they added.

An LSE statement declared, "This was an unfortunate incident but was dealt with very calmly and professionally by security staff and the Chair, Professor Corbridge, with the result that the event concluded on schedule."

The School spokesperson went on to explain that the protestors were told they would not be allowed to enter with banners and were informed there would be a chance to ask questions at the end of the lecture. Commissioner Michel was informed of the possibility of disruption.

Thibault Léonard, President of the Benelux Society who organised the event, told *The Beaver*, "I think that although they may have had valid points, there are better ways to highlight wrongdoing than hijacking a lecture. Also, because they took to shouting abuse, they didn't present their arguments clearly and you were left unsure what points they were trying to make."

Thomas Debrouwer, Benelux Events Officer, added, "LSE is a great home of free speech. There is no doubt that people should be able to raise concerns during public lectures, but you run the risk that people behave in this way."

Louis Michel began his political career as Chairman of Young Liberals in the Belgian district of Nivelles. He served within the leadership of the Parti Réformateur Libéral (PRL) Belgian political party from 1977 to 1999. He was foreign minister and Vice Prime Minister from 1999 to 2004. He has previously served as European Commissioner for Science and Research. Michel has been Mayor of the Jodoigne region since 1983.

Photograph: Govind Sankar



A Timeless display

RUCHIKA TULSHYAN

LSE's largest cultural show, "Timeless", raised close to £12000 for charity.

Organisers initially expected the event to raise around £3000, but tickets sold out after huge demand from students and 1100 people attended the performance at Her Majesty's Theatre last Sunday

The money raised by the event, which was a joint production by six LSE Students' Union (LSESU) societies, will be donated to the Care Education Trust and the Prince's Trust charities. Both charities support children and young adults around the world.

Over 200 performers spent six months in rehearsal for the show, which was an amalgamation of song, dance and drama with performances showcasing South Asian, Chinese, Latin and Afro-Caribbean cultures. Audience members remarked that the final result was "breathtaking...it was

so professional".

Backstage, performers were excited about the grand scale of the show. "It was a magical experience," commented Kirti Tiwari, a dancer in the 'Bollywood fusion' dance. The producers of the show emphasised their aim to represent the cultural diversity of the School's 70 per cent international student body. "Timeless is a true celebration of the unique cultures that make up LSE," Ashwin Sharma, a performer in the show's Fashion catwalk piece, told *The Beaver*. "It was a roller coaster ride during rehearsals, but I enjoyed every minute of it," added another performer in the show.

While the LSESU has never hosted a charity show on the scale of Timeless, organisers Seeta Haria and Mikhesh Vora used the opportunity to announce how this would not be the last grand charity event at the LSE. "Every penny will go to charity and we hope this sets the precedent for the future", said Vora, after adding that he wanted LSE director Howard Davies to see how much talent there was on campus.

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The case for Peter Sutherland



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Hangin' with The Hives

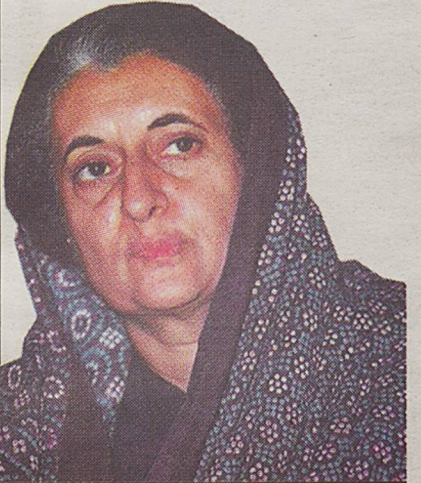


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LSE smash King's



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» Keeping it in the family: South Asia's political dynasties

Higher Education News

EducationGuardian.co.uk

Students ditch pot noodles and embrace the jet set

STUDENTS are enjoying increasingly sophisticated lifestyles.

A survey showed that students spend on average £221 a month on fashion, food and partying, with many spending their free time travelling. Thai green curry is considered a favourite meal.

BBC NEWS

Parents "buy essays" for students

PARENTS are paying for essays written by third party companies.

UKessays.com claimed that parents buy model essays as inspiration for work rather than for plagiarism.

THE

Lecturers advised to play to students' emotions

LECTURERS at the University of Leicester were told that playing on students' feelings could improve teaching.

They were invited to create a trustful and challenged but not pressured environment. Primrose Freestone, lecturer in clinical microbiology, said that this would match the fact that students "expect value for money".

OXFORDSTUDENT Police criticised for

Union protest

POLICE arrangements during last term's Oxford Student's Union debate were deemed inadequate by participants, SU members and MPs.

Evan Harris MP said that the police "failed to provide for the safety for the event" or consider stopping it from going ahead.

Luke Tryl, the then Oxford University Students' Union (OUSU) President, later retracted his criticism, claiming that the OUSU "worked well with the police".

cherwell24

Union Re-Poll in Turmoil

NO valid nomination was received for the Oxford Union re-poll due to take place in the end of week 2. The lack of existing rule for such a situation forced the Returning Officer Alex Priest to make a new ruling. Charlotte Fisher and Claire Hennessey, only students eligible to run both withdrew before the end of week 1. The current Librarian Ed Waldegrave was expected to be acting President for the Trinity Term. However, Priest decided to relax the eligibility criteria to ensure a democratic poll in week 3.

the Beaver Archive



May 1953

Beaver is Back

Mascot retrieved through diplomatic negotiations

BEAVER, the wooden-carved, gold-painted mascot of LSE Students' Union, missing from the School since it was removed by two unknown girls last November, has been retrieved as a result of negotiations carried out by Union President Gideon Ben-Israel during the Lent Term, and now back at LSE.

In an interview with a *Beaver* reporter, Mr. Ben-Israel gave these details of how the mascot was returned to Houghton Street:

"Three years ago LSE made a raid on the College of Estate Management and captured their Union mascot, a stuffed owl named Oswald. At the time of that rag the French President, M. Auriol, was on a state visit to London and the LSE Rag Committee appropriately decided to present Oswald to him as a token of Anglo-French friendship. M. Auriol accepted the gift with delight, and on his return to France, presented the owl to the Sorbonne University, where, as far as we know, it has remained on exhibition ever since.

LSESU RAG RAISING & GIVING

Total raised so far:

£10,054

Including:

£806,95

for

interact worldwide

Interact Worldwide works in collaborative partnerships with local and national organisations and governments, to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights, including maternal health care, family planning and HIV/AIDS services, of some of the poorest and most marginalised people in the world.

£273

St Mungo's

Opening doors for London's homeless

St Mungo's exists to help single homeless people in London who have been or are in danger of sleeping rough.

RAG is looking for volunteers and societies to participate in RAG Week.

It's the perfect opportunity to promote your society as well as raise loads for charity! Please get in contact at Su.Rag@lse.ac.uk

Find out more at:

www.lsesurag.com

Speaker's Corner

Unsubscribe from human rights abuse in the 'war on terror'.

WE are all opposed to terrorism. It destroys lives and erases basic principles of human dignity and justice. But so do torture, renditions, control orders, secret detention and the violation of legal processes.

Governments should protect their citizens from terrorism wherever possible, and all those involved in terror must be brought to justice. But some governments are using the fight against terror to erode the very freedoms they claim to be fighting for. They have detained people unlawfully for long periods of time in harsh conditions, often subjecting them to torture in order to extract 'confessions'. In Guantánamo Bay, hundreds of men have been detained for years at a time, without any of them yet being convicted of any offence. There have

been multiple and consistent reports of torture; and this is in the most public of the hundreds of detention facilities around the world.

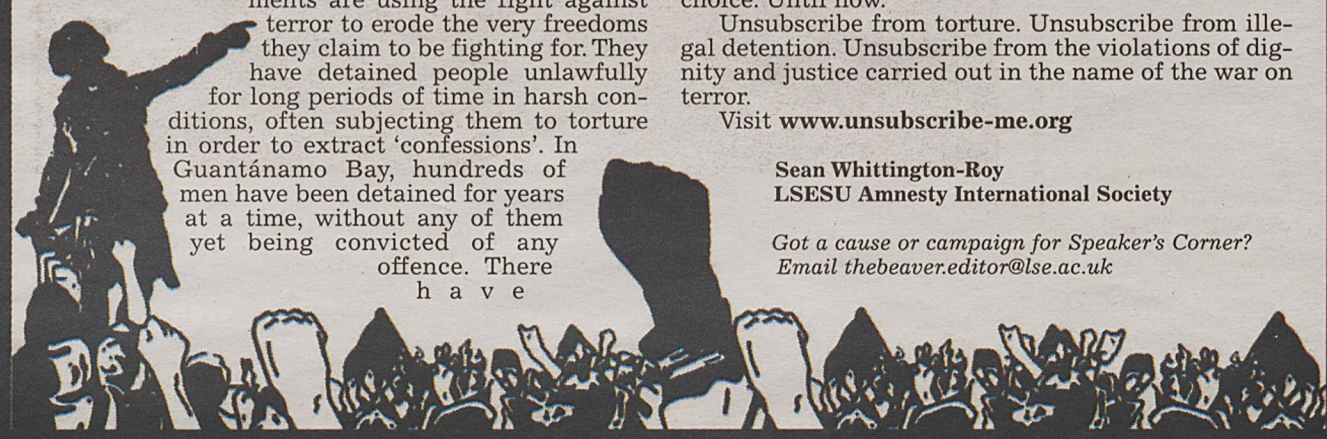
Governments assume you support them in these actions. They use your understandable fear to place restrictions on liberty that would be unacceptable in any other situation. You have never been given a choice. Until now.

Unsubscribe from torture. Unsubscribe from illegal detention. Unsubscribe from the violations of dignity and justice carried out in the name of the war on terror.

Visit www.unsubscribe-me.org

Sean Whittington-Roy
LSESU Amnesty International Society

Got a cause or campaign for Speaker's Corner?
Email thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk



Ken accused of breaking rules to win '04 election

A Channel 4 documentary has accused Ken Livingstone of breaking election rules during his 2004 campaign. The program claimed that City Hall employees helped out in fundraising and campaign running. It also claims that such a breach should be the object of disciplinary action. Livingstone has dismissed the allegations as belonging to a "smear campaign".

Home Secretary scared of walking London alone

HOME Secretary Jacqui Smith acknowledged that she would feel unsafe walking alone in London at night. She recognised that she would be as uneasy in Chelsea or Kensington as she would be in Hackney. The Liberal Democrats considered it a recognition that "after 10 years of Labour government, our capital is a no-go area for women at night."

London Mayoral candidates unite against Heathrow expansion

ALL four candidates for London Mayor oppose a third runway at Heathrow. Ken Livingston, Boris Johnson, Brian Paddick and Sian Berry posed for an advert to appear in the *Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Evening Standard*. It aims to show how determined all the mayoral candidates are to limit Heathrow's expansion.

Metal scanners linked to fall in Tube and Rail robberies

BRITISH Transport Police statistics show that the number of robberies on London's Tube and rail network dropped by almost half in the first full year since metal detectors were introduced at some stations.

There were 785 muggings on the Tube, overground trains and DLR last year compared with 1,433 such offences in 2006. In 2005 there were more than 1,500 robberies.

In the past year, police have used both scanners and plainclothes officers, and their effectiveness is shown by the fact that 342 weapons were seized nationwide since the trial period began.

However, there are concerns that permanent scanners would slow down the tube system during busy periods.

Thatcher death play to hit London stage

A play on the impact of the death of Margaret Thatcher would have in Britain is to be staged in London next month. Tom Green, the writer, got his inspiration from the former Premier's invitation to Downing Street this autumn, despite her unpopularity within the Labour Party. Green claims that the British feel strongly about her because of her "iconic status".

ULU to become just a "glorified leisure centre"

MICHAEL DEAS
NEWS EDITOR

University of London (UoL) has confirmed its intention to drastically reduce its funding of the University of London Union

Key findings ULU review:

- Sabbs cut from four to two
- No more funding for welfare or educational support
- No more funding for campaigns
- *London Student* budget cut in half - may not be able to fund editor

(ULU). A report released on Monday revealed that UoL will axe funding of ULU campaigns, reduce the number of paid sabbatical officers from four to two and will halve the budget of the *London Student* newspaper - potentially



destroying the essential role of a paid editor.

The report also confirmed that ULU will no longer be able to provide welfare and support services such as advice and representation.

The ULU swimming pool will remain open and sports leagues and representational sport will continue but expensive societies such as the Sailing Club will be closed.

The Heads of Colleges Committee, which conducted the review, was set up in response to ULU's financial difficulties and a growing amount of duplication of services between ULU and individual colleges' Students' Unions.

However, the report has been met with anger by those who feel that the principal purpose of a union is to campaign and provide welfare services. It is felt this has been significantly undermined by the funding cuts.

ULU President Jennifer Huseman told *The Beaver*, "I am very unhappy with the way in which this report has assumed campaigning is an unimportant part of what we do, especially given that all the Unions we work with want us to continue to be a focal point for campaigning. I'm not saying improvements don't have to be made, but this report aims to turn ULU into a glorified

leisure centre."

Aled Fisher, LSE Students' Union Environment and Ethics officer, added, "ULU's London-wide networks have the potential to be a force for liberation, social justice and peace - therefore the attacks against them are also attacks on these progressive principles."

The report is also a huge blow for ULU's newspaper, *London Student*. The paper provides a vital link between UoL's disparate campuses and serves as the only student newspaper for smaller colleges. Monday's report aims to cut the paper's budget by 50 percent and may force the removal of the role of a paid editor.

Current Editor, Elinor Zuke, said, "Logistically, *London Student* is a mammoth effort to pull together. To ensure proper distribution and coverage of all the colleges takes a serious amount of time, including working over exam time and holidays.

"It would be unfair on everyone involved for this position to be held by a full-time student, and past precedent has shown that the paper would collapse without it."

London Student has also lost control of the sale of advertising space within the paper after ULU Vice President Joe Martin signed an advertising contract with marketing firm BAM.

Zuke explained, "ULU's Finance Committee last year agreed that the deal with BAM wasn't working for *London Student* and shouldn't be signed again. Joe gave me public assurances that it wouldn't be without *London Student's* consultation - and then signed it until 2014 while I was on holiday."

The review of ULU backed the continuation of *London Student* and the cap on its funding was designed to encourage greater efforts to maximize income from advertising, and not necessarily remove the role of paid editor.

Zuke is fighting to regain control of advertising sales and also disputes the extent to which the BAM contract prevents the paper from retaining such control.



Union Jack

Jack flung the doors open. The putrid air in the Convention gushed past him; the austere aura of the arena sending chills down his spine. His time out of the job has left him a tad ring-rusty, but Jack is made of stern stuff. A good swig of gin restored some sense of perspective.

Summoning all of his Dutch courage, Jack strode purposefully into the Convention. Slow, but not hesitant. Deliberate, with caution. His hands played lightly on the pearl handgrips of his trusty six-shooters. The cold stare that he wore cast scorn and derision upon the few bystanders who dared meet his eyes.

Silence. Overbearing silence. Jack stood before the Union, his lean silhouette cut an imposing figure as he scoured the swathes of blue seats that were, once upon a time, filled with raucous characters and riotous hordes. Not any more. The glory days of quick-draw duels and rapid-fire death matches were all but distant memories. Tsch. Salty dog Jack gritted his teeth. His Colt .45s sat pretty in his holsters; there shall be no blood shed today.

Jack eased himself into his chair. The Union, the paltry few who were present anyway, shifted uncomfortably in their seats. The media vultures circled their corner with deadly intent. The air was still. The calm was ominous.

Almost bashfully, the new Union Commissar Midway ignored the elephant in the theatre to end the uneasy silence. While the Union leadership filed onstage, Jack stole a quick look-see around him. The venerable Danton was nowhere to be found. Still enjoying his afternoon tea and crumpets with his significant other, Righteous O'Rourke, perhaps?

With only one motion tabled for discussion, the rug-gers in their loft above wasted no time dishing out tough love for Union Fuehrer Baker Maker. The focus of their fury - a ill-advised piece of correspondence to *The Guardian*. Or was it *The Garduain*? Jack's clouded memory couldn't piece together the name of that lovely paper to save his life.

Regardless, Baker Maker and his dainty muppet Superu were soon snowed under with a hailstorm of abuse. Their naïve expression of unrequited love for London despot Red Ken did not go down well with the Union Girondins and certainly won them no friends with the flaccid fascists.

Yet forgiveness was a hallowed virtue that still lived on in the otherwise decrepit Union. The rug-gers threw down a lifeline for the bungling Fuehrer which the 'holier-than-thou' Girondins couldn't bring themselves to cast. It was an offer Baker Maker simply could not refuse; a mandate for invitations to all London dictatorial candidates for slugfest of verbosity. Jack licked his lips at the mouth-watering prospect. The blistering Red Ken taking on a pompous BoJo in a Union deathmatch. A high-noon shootout for Baker Maker's last chance saloon. What more could he ask?

Facebook vetting - not at LSE

DAVID WOODBRIDGE

LSE Admissions have denied suggestions that its staff use Facebook as a means of vetting applicants to the School. Concerns were raised in light of the recent comments by Dr. Richard Barnes, an admissions tutor at Cambridge University, that he joined Facebook "...to see what I was missing and also to check up (discreetly) on applicants for a college position."

Barnes' comments were dismissed by a Cambridge University spokesperson as a "throwaway line", and insisted that "you know perfectly well how our admissions procedures work." Nevertheless, concerns that top universities such as the LSE are using an individual's social-networking profiles as yet another factor in the increasingly competitive scrum for places, even if on an unofficial level, have surfaced in the wake of the report.

A 2007 study by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) has already revealed that students are becoming wary of attempts by university staff to engage with them through social-networking sites. It is therefore unlikely that students would welcome

LSE Student Top 3s (according to Facebook):

- Favourite book:**
1. 1984
 2. *Pride and Prejudice*
 3. *Harry Potter*

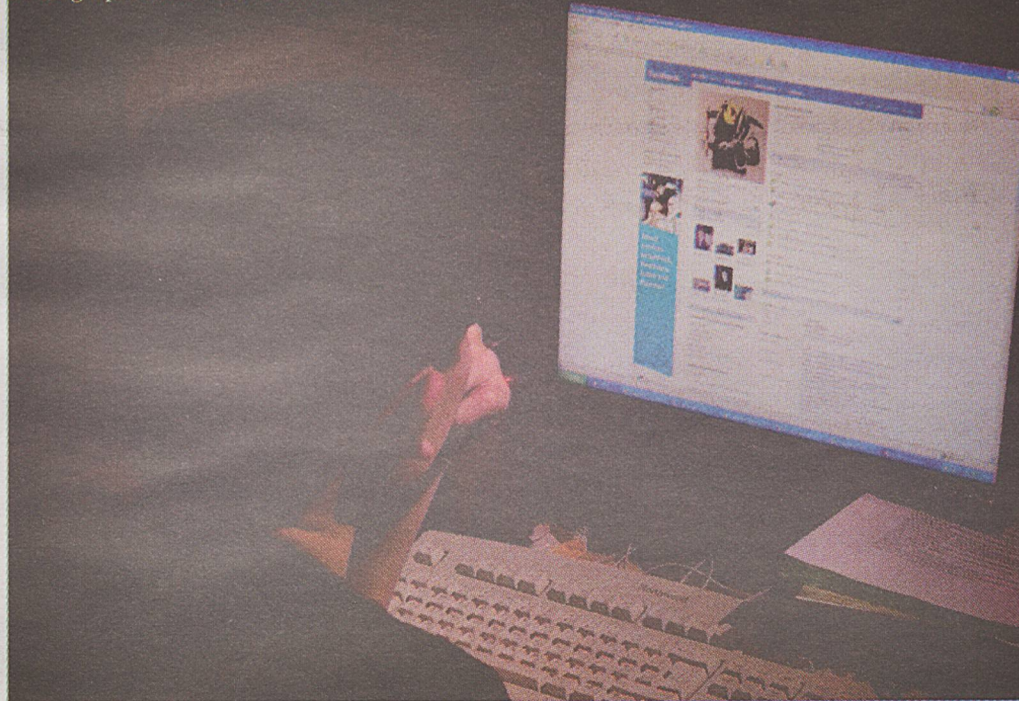
- Favourite band:**
1. Radiohead
 2. Coldplay
 3. The Killers

- Favourite movie:**
1. *Pulp Fiction*
 2. *Amelie*
 3. *Fight Club*

- Favourite TV show:**
1. *Friends*
 2. 24
 3. *Family Guy*

- Political Inclination:**
1. None listed
 2. Liberal
 3. Moderate

Photograph: The Beaver Archive



and reprimand rule-breaking students.

With institutions already making use of social-networking websites to spy on their current students, it is unlikely that they would necessarily have any qualms about using them to also check up on potential students. As any information posted by mem-

bers to Facebook is within the public domain, there appears to be very little that applicants can do to avoid being scouted in this way beyond redefining their profile's privacy settings.

However, Johnny Turner, a seventeen-year-old university applicant, stated that he was "okay" with the prospect of admissions tutors potentially

scouring his Facebook account and didn't "particularly care" if they did so.

A spokesperson for the LSE categorically denied that admissions staff had ever made any use of, or harbour any plans to make use of, Facebook as a method of screening applicants to the School.

Pressure on LSE security as locker thefts continue

ERICA GORNALL
SENIOR REPORTER

Further locker break-ins have put pressure on the LSE officials currently looking into plans to introduce better locker facilities for students.

Despite an initial lapse in thefts this term, LSE security has discovered that lockers in the basement of the Old Building had been broken into. Lockers had been wrenched, with reports of textbooks being stolen. It is thought that stolen textbooks are then put on internet auctions sites such as Ebay.

As yet there have been no laptops stolen in the latest incident. Security chief Paul Thornbury thinks that students are taking on board advice issued last term to stop storing laptop and other attractive belongings.

"In general, students have stopped using the basement lockers in Old Building and St Clements to store high value electronic equipment."

"Hence we have no reports of laptops stolen from lockers this term," Thornbury added.

One victim of the latest locker break-ins says that he would now never put expensive possessions in his lockers, "I wouldn't put something like money or lockers that I may have considered doing beforehand."

The LSE continues to advise students not to place



Photograph: Aditi Nangia
A series of lockers broken into in the basement of the Old Building

valuable items in the lockers.

However, Harry Robinson, a third year student, has had her locker broken into twice this academic year. She feels that lockers that are not sturdy enough to be broken into should not be in use.

"This is the second time I have had a locker broken into at LSE which leads me to think that locker crime is not a rare occurrence," Robinson said. "I have taken note of the advice and do not keep valuables in my locker. However having anything stolen, even if it is not expensive still incurs cost and is frustrating."

"I do not understand why the LSE provides lockers if they do not function properly," she adds.

She feels that the LSE and

the security staff create a false sense of security, rating their responses as "unsatisfactory".

Paul Thornbury, insists that there are plans to introduce sturdier lockers and even 'laptop lockers'. The plans currently being assessed by the Finance and Estates departments within the school's administration.

"All concerned are working hard to ensure that an effective and sustainable solution to this problem is implemented," said Thornbury.

The LSE Press Office released a statement reassuring students that "a proposal to improve the security of lockers and storage facilities in the School is being considered as a matter of priority."

Teaching Taskforce "on track" says Chair

RAJAN PATEL
SENIOR REPORTER

The LSE's taskforce on teaching is "on target to present its recommendations before the end of this academic year", according to the School's pro director for teaching and learning, Professor Janet Hartley.

The taskforce, which was established early in Michaelmas Term, hopes to identify the root causes of problems with teaching at the LSE and find long term solutions addressing student and staff concerns.

Professor Hartley, who chairs the taskforce, intends to give a progress report to the Academic Board – the LSE's principal academic body – in February. The Academic Board will meet on 28 May to discuss the report's conclusions.

The taskforce's decisions will be informed by consultation with student fora, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and departmental staff student liaison committees. Ruhana Ali, the LSESU Education and Welfare Officer, is also a member of the task force.

After consulting with students in Michaelmas Term, Ali submitted a report to the task force outlining key student concerns with teaching in December.

The report contained suggestions for improving students' relationship with their

personal tutors, making classes more structured and addressing problems with some teachers' command of English.

Her report concluded that "the key issue... was the inconsistency that students felt in their courses throughout their degree. This was particularly the case for undergraduate students who were able to compare courses they had taken in different years of study and across different departments".

The quality and nature of feedback students receive was also identified as a problem. Ali's report quotes a second year Anthropology and Law student, whose class was told by their teacher that "we [students] are all in this

Anthropology and Law course because we are 'Law rejects' (though none of us actually applied for straight Law)".

However, students who discussed teaching quality with Ali at consultation meetings last term also emphasised the need to prepare for classes. Ali noted that "students did recognise the importance of fellow students pulling their weight".

Micheal O'Keeffe, a student representative on the Academic Board, described Ali's report as "very comprehensive", adding: "I think it reflects well the views expressed at meetings and throughout the college. I think her point about inconsistency across departments was very valid."

O'Keeffe was impressed by the readiness of LSE staff to consult with student representatives on the Academic Board.

"The Lecturers, Professors and Chair always take our view on board- it's recorded in the minutes, and are often interested in our view. I have found lecturers come talking to you looking for your opinion on an issue, or further discussion after a meeting."

The Academic Board meeting of 28 May will deal exclusively with the findings of the teaching taskforce. O'Keeffe said, "Students and staff both seemed enthusiastic about it and if a whole meeting is being devoted to it I absolutely think decisive recommendations will be reached with regard to the Teaching Task Force."



Ruhana Ali, top, and Professor Janet Hartley, bottom.

Amnesty International society hosts filmmaker Chris Atkins

SEAN WHITTINGTON-ROY

Director Chris Atkins came to the LSE last week for a screening of his civil rights film Taking Liberties. This was followed by a Q&A hosted by the LSESU Amnesty International Society.

The documentary deals with the New Labour government's controversial record on civil liberties, tackling broad topics such as restrictions on freedom of speech, the right to protest and the introduction of ID cards. The film also covers the stories of individuals who have found their civil liberties curtailed.

These include Maya Evans, who was charged under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCPA) for reading out the names of civilian and military casualties in Iraq near Downing Street without first filling out a necessary form. The film notes that two days later Tony Blair also remembered the war dead at the same spot without filling out a form – "but thankfully wasn't arrested."

Atkins cited "middle class" complacency over the curtailment of civil liberties as his inspiration for making the film. He said that they didn't seem to mind if "shouty protestors or

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

TAKING LIBERTIES

SINCE 1997



Chris Atkins' film on New Labour's controversial human rights record, which was screened at the LSE last week

Muslims" had their rights curtailed like Mouloud Sihali, who was involved in the alleged 'ricin plot' that formed part of Colin Powell's famous

PowerPoint at the UN Security Council before the Iraq invasion. Mouloud was in fact cleared of all charges in court (and no ricin was ever found),

but nevertheless received a control order restricting his movements to just a few square meters for most of the day.

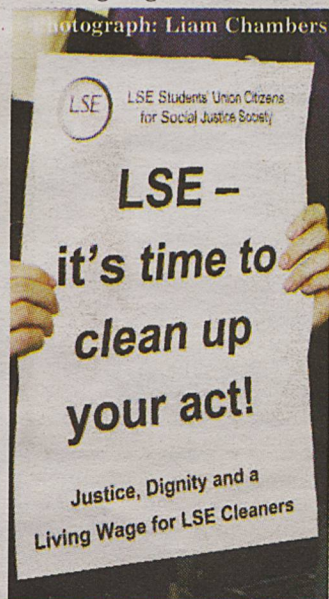
It was the revelation that this sort of thing could happen to anyone that motivated Atkins to make the film. He was friends with David Birmingham, one of the NatWest 3 who was extradited to the US without any prima facie evidence being presented to the UK first. Birmingham comments in the film that the treaty which allowed this to happen 'has made us, in matters of criminal justice, the 51st state of America'. Atkins noted in the Q&A that 'if they can get him they can get anyone – he had the lawyers that got Pinochet off'.

The screening came just days before the close of a government consultation on SOCPA. Critics of this consultation have pointed out that while it was supposed to deal with the restrictions on protest around Parliament, it in fact included some much more important questions over the definition of a 'demonstration' versus a 'march', and whether the police should have the power to remove banners and placards from protestors in case of causing 'public disorder'.

Living Wage for Aldwych Employers: the Campaign begins

HENRY LODGE

The LSE Citizens For Social Justice society have announced the start of the Living Wage Aldwych campaign, which aims to get employers on Aldwych, the Strand and Kingsway to pay the living wage.



The successful Living Wage Campaign for LSE workers

At £7.05 an hour, it is £1.60 above the minimum wage and guarantees employees full sick leave and holiday leave. Calculated by the Mayor's Office, it is designed to take into account the higher cost of living in London.

Last year, Citizens for Social Justice and the London Citizens' Workers Association successfully campaigned for cleaners on LSE campus and residences to receive the living wage. A protest at a banking recruitment fair at the beginning of the Michaelmas term won the living wage for cleaners employed by Citigroup and Barclays. The Tate Modern has also been brought to the negotiating table.

Sam Causton, chair of Citizens for Social Justice here at the LSE told The Beaver: "The Living Wage Campaign at LSE is entering a new phase and we want as many as possible to play a part."

A meeting has been scheduled at 2pm this Wednesday in S300 to decide how to take the campaign forward. Says Sam, "Everyone with a concern about inequality and poverty in the capital should come and see how we're making a real difference and what they can do to help us do more."

Davies dismisses accusations of supporting 'Israeli apartheid'

**MICHAEL DEAS
NEWS EDITOR**

LSE Director Howard Davies has dismissed criticism over his membership of an organisation which fosters academic links between British and Israeli academic institutions.

A press statement released by the LSE Students' Union (LSESU) Palestine Society has condemned Davies' membership of the National Council of the Academic Study Group of the Friends of Israel Education Foundation.

The statement claimed that his simultaneous membership of the council and refusal to endorse informal links established between LSE academics and Birzeit University in Palestine amounts to "unacceptable bias tantamount to support for Israel's Apartheid in the occupied territories."

However, Davies told *The Beaver* that the council is a virtual body, does not meet and plays "no active role."

"The Director of the Group wrote to me in June 2003 and explained that all LSE Directors had been nominal members of the Council since Lord Dahrendorf. The heads of many other British universities are also members...on that basis, I agreed to take up this ex-officio position," he explained.

Davies added that he had received no communication from the Council since agreeing to take up the position until he recently received a bulletin explaining the Academic Study



The Wohl Centre in Ramat-Gan is part of Bar-Ilan University

Group's recent progress on workshops, study tours and travel bursaries.

Students stormed a meeting of the LSE Council last October to demand that the School recognises the Palestinian Right to Education campaign. The students later met with Davies and school officials to discuss the School's refusal to make a statement supporting the Palestinian Right to Education campaign, despite its previous statement condemning debate over a proposed academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

At the time, Davies said that the School had "no corporate position" on the plight of the Palestinian people but some students have argued that his comments about a possible academic boycott and failure to

issue similar political statements in support of Palestinian institutions amount to taking such a position.

As highlighted by Ziyaad Lunat, LSESU Palestinian Society Chair, the actions of Israeli institutions have been condemned by a range of human rights organisations. The Arab Association for Human Rights has strongly criticised The Hebrew University of Jerusalem for refusing entry to Palestinian students and for building on Palestinian owned land in the village of Lifta. The Ariel College of Judea and Samaria, a part of the Bar Ilan University, is built on the illegal Israeli settlement of Ariel.

The Academic Study Group (ASG) has itself been attacked by campaign group The Case

for Academic Boycott against Israel for being "part and parcel of Israel's colonial system of oppression against the Palestinians."

James Caspell, a former Student Governor and Member of LSE Council, said Davies' membership of the ASG was unacceptable, "The ASG has historically supported the Israeli colonisation of Palestine which has caused immense suffering to both Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. I hope Howard Davies will recognise that such systematic bias cannot continue and will resign his membership of the ASG with immediate effect."

"Davies' attempt to water down his involvement with an organisation that uncritically sides with an Israeli university system known to discriminate

against Palestinians is unhelpful and proves that his claims of impartiality are bogus. In this light, I invite Howard Davies to support the activities of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) that tirelessly work to support Palestinian academic freedom suppressed for so long by Israel," Lunat added.

Daniel Jason, LSESU Jewish Society political officer, said "It is high time Lunat stopped attempting to strong-arm the director into accepting his own extreme political views. Lunat must accept that an educational facility such as the LSE should remain a campus of tolerance, not choosing sides on complicated issues Lunat himself wishes to simplify in his favour. It is madness to say there are human rights violations on only one side of the conflict, as Lunat believes he can fool people into thinking. For these reasons, Davies should be congratulated on maintaining an apolitical stance where the LSE is concerned."

Davies promised to investigate the possibility of increasing bursary and scholarship assistance for Palestinian students during last year's meeting with students. However, Davies failed to explain to *The Beaver* what progress, if any, had been made on the implementation of such schemes.

The Palestinian Society's statement also criticises Davies for backtracking by "by refusing to publish a statement acknowledging the Palestinian Right to Education".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Golden Ass Triumphs

THE LSE SU Drama Society staged last week two representations of Peter Oswald's *Golden Ass*. Both representations were played in front of a nearly full Old Theatre, selling allegedly a record number of tickets in the Drama Society history. The three parts play is adapted from the only Latin novel which has survived in its entirety. It was directed by Erin O'Halloran with Valentine Odiase in the main role.

India Week 2008

THIS week is India Week 2008, organised by the LSESU Society for the Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos (SPICE) will work in conjunction with the Hindu, Jain, Photography, Development, Indian and International Societies. The Week will feature, amongst other events, an Inter-Faith Dialogue, a cricket tournament and the first ever LSE "India Idol". Themed workshops for 'Bollywood Dance' and spiritual workshops with the Art of Living Foundation will take place and Indian food will be served in the Quad and Brunch Bowl throughout the week. LSE students can also look forward to ending the Week at Crush, now renamed "Bollywood Crush" on Friday, 25th January 2008. SPICE explains that "India Week aims not only to celebrate Indian culture, but the commonalities that unite various countries in the region, as well as the long legacy of religious and multi-cultural solidarity that typifies India: characteristics of which the world is in short supply today."

Women's week 2008

WOMEN'S week 2008 started yesterday in an effort to raise issues of gender equality and awareness. It continues today with a talk entitled 'Women in Prison' which centres around the experiences of women in the justice system at 2pm in G108. Other events include a discussion on a woman's right to choose, a lecture organised with the LSESU French Society on the Islamic headscarf and a talk highlighting the issues surrounding the decriminalisation of prostitution. Turn to page 17 for further details.

24 hour library campaign update

THE 24 hour library campaign petition has gathered almost 1,000 signatures altogether so far. *The Beaver's* recent opinion poll suggest 80% of students are in favour of 24 hour opening. Sign the petition at <http://www.lsesu.com/library24campaign>.

School wastefulness on display

» But Environment and Ethics week fails to draw mass participation

**ESTEE FRESCO
SENIOR REPORTER**

Environment and Ethics week attracted prominent speakers but was mired by low attendance with those attending complaining of a lack of diversity regarding the issues covered.

Petra Sarapatkova, an environmental studies student, was disappointed, saying that the events were not varied enough. "The same themes come up," she said. "There's little innovation." Sarapatkova left a lecture on sustainable energy half way through.

Justus Rollin, a member of the Environmental and Ethics Committee, was more enthusiastic about the events, responding to a lecture by Satish Kumar about the relationship between ecology and the environment, saying: "I felt really encouraged by the talk."

Public lectures focused mainly on the subjects of ethical investment and alternative energy sources. There was also a discussion held on academic boycott of Israel. Aled Dilwyn Fisher, the Student Union's Environment and Ethics Officer, told *The Beaver* that, turnout for events during the week have been the lowest of



The rubbish created in a single day at LSE was displayed on Houghton Street

all five awareness weeks he has organised. Despite such low attendance, Aled claimed that "the quality of the events was high."

In previous awareness weeks the average number of attendants has been forty, but the highest turnout for Ethics

and Environment Week was only thirty, at a lecture by Paul Mobbs, author of *Peak Oil*. Attendance dipped to eight on a lecture on ethical investment earlier in the week. Despite the fact that there was a lower turnout than usual, Aled called Ethics and Environment Week

"a success."

Aled said he judges the success of an event by how effectively it motivates people, arguing that the ultimate goal of the week should be to ensure that people leave an event having learned something. He told *The Beaver* that he felt certain that

this goal had been met, especially at the event on peak oil.

A talk entitled 'Ethical Investment: Divesting from Arms, Sudan and Burma' examined the way in which financial pressure can create social change. Victoria Pearce from the Darfur Divestment Campaign said that the campaign to stop the fighting in Darfur turned to divestment when international diplomatic pressure failed. After the start of the divestment campaign, three companies, including Rolls Royce, pulled out of Sudan citing increasing concerns about the situation in Darfur.

On the other hand, the lecture on the relationship between ecology and economy had a decisively different tone, with Satish Kumar, the speaker, appealing to the audience's emotional and moral sensibilities. Kumar argued that the earth is our home and its inhabitants are our family members. He maintained that economy and ecology go together, likening their interdependency to "walking on two legs...you cannot dance on one leg." Aled took this statement a step further. "Capitalism is a cancer in both of those legs," he said.

LSE SU General Secretary must support Johnson for Mayor

PATRICK CULLEN
NEWS EDITOR

At the Union General Meeting (UGM) last week, the Students' Union (SU) mandated Fadhil Baker-Markar, SU General Secretary, to write to *The Guardian* in support of Boris Johnson's campaign for London Mayor.

Johnson, the Mayoral candidate of the Conservative Party, has been described by Tony McNulty, Home Office minister, as "essentially a very clever man, but ultimately a clown" and, by Sir Menzies Campbell, Liberal Democrat MP, as "the blondest suicide note in history". Johnson describes himself on his website, Back Boris.com, as a "one-man melting pot" in reference to his mixed ancestry.

The emergency motion was proposed following a plea for ideas to make the UGM more attractive to students, in an attempt to counter falling, and consistently low, turnout. Just 150 students are required to be in attendance at a UGM, yet, according to Andy Hallett, chair of the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S), the UGM has been following a "trend towards extremely low attendance ... and ... if anyone had asked C&S for a quoracy count I would think several UGMs (including both Lent

UGM Election Results
10 January 2008

UGM Motions

- ✓ Support London Student
- Write letter in support of
- ✓ Mayoral candidates and invite them to speak at
- UGM

weeks 1 and 2) would have been found to be in quorate."

After a short debate on how to increase attendance, which included suggestions such as "a weekly motion criticising Israel" and "bribery", the emergency motion was debated. The motion originally proposed that Baker-Markar should, following his signing of a letter supporting Ken Livingstone write to *The Guardian* - where the previous letter was published - supporting Livingstone's main rival, Boris

Johnson.

Further debate saw the insertion of an amendment, mandating Baker-Markar to invite, on behalf of the LSE SU, the Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat candidates for Mayor to speak at a future UGM. This amendment was successfully added, and was followed by another amendment proposed by Environment & Ethics Officer Aled Dilwyn Fisher which mandated Baker-Markar to invite, in addition to

Livingstone, Johnson and Paddick, Sian Berry of the Green Party, and the peace protester Brian Haw, who is running as an Independent.

Thus amended, the motion was passed with a resounding majority. Hallett told *The Beaver* that he allowed the Emergency Motion to be voted on because "motions such as this are sorely lacking in UGM these days and their presence could quite possibly boost attendance. It also seems particularly suitable given the clear anger most of UGM felt towards Fadhil and Ruhana signing the letter to *The Guardian*, an act of borderline unconstitutional behaviour in my opinion."

In addition to the Emergency Motion, there were a series of questions to Baker-Markar about his apparent support for Livingstone. During the questioning, which mainly dealt with whether or not signing the letter was constitutional, Baker-Markar maintained that he and Ruhana Ali had signed in their personal capacities and, as such, that they had not acted unconstitutionally.

Joe Meadway, Chair of the UGM, commenting on the Emergency Motion, said that he had "no opinion. The motion passed. Procedure won out again."

First minister for students quits after just two months

RAJAN PATEL

Lord Triesman of Tottenham has abandoned the cause of UK students and returned to his first love - football.

Triesman, the first Minister for Students, is set to resign his ministerial position to become chairman of the Football Association (FA).

A former Tottenham Hotspur youth team player and a season ticket holder at White Hart Lane, Triesman will take up his new position within the next two months. Initial priorities must include a stern assessment of Wembley stadium's accounts and devising a clear strategy for FA governance reform.

The government has yet to announce Triesman's successor as minister for students, a position it created just two months ago with the aim of giving students a voice within government.

At the time, the move gained the backing of the National Union of Students (NUS).

Gemma Tumelty, the NUS president, said, "We're delighted that the government is willing to listen to the voice of the learner in its approach to education."

Triesman used his time in office to embark on a national programme of campus visits, intending to canvass student opinion on issues such as tuition fees and widening participation.



Lord Triesman (middle) left his role as Minister for Students to become the Chairman of the English Football Association

Finance Department welcomes Deutsche Bank CEO

POOJA KESAVAN

Photo: Pooja Kesavan

The newly created Department of Finance at LSE were in full attendance at Visiting Professor and Deutsche Bank CEO Dr. Josef Ackerman's talk on 'Lessons from the Credit and Liquidity Crisis'. Howard Davies, due to give a talk on the credit crisis in Oxford the next day, chaired the meeting and joked that he hoped he needn't re-write his talk.

Billed as the final lecture in the Financial Risk Management postgraduate course, long queues were expected. The flyer for the lecture urged people to 'arrive early to avoid disappointment', but as both the Old Theatre and New Theatre (which provided a live telecast) were filled to capacity, many were turned away. Speaking on January 14, while gold prices were hitting a historic high and the day before Citigroup announced its biggest loss in its 196-year history, the corporate CEO



Dr Josef Ackerman (right) is the newly appointed Visiting Professor of the Finance Department

"Even though it is difficult in bullish times, Banks should learn to say no..."

Dr Josef Ackerman
CEO of Deutsche Bank

seemed comfortable in the academic environment. Taking the audience through the crisis, he claimed that it had been caused by "violations of the basic prudent lending rules" and the "five 'C's of credit - Capacity, Capital, Collateral, Conditions and Character".

In line with other academ-

ics and practitioners, Dr Ackermann drew similarities with the 1998 Long-Term Capital Management Hedge Fund Collapse crash and called for "wise men to say we are overdoing it now". His catchphrase, 'Transparency and Proper Valuation' summed up the lessons to be learnt in

an almost paternal tone: "Even though it is difficult in bullish times, Banks should learn to say no..." Sir Howard Davies concluded the lecture saying it should have been titled, "All you wanted to know about the Credit Crisis but didn't know who to ask".

LSE degrees not getting easier

PHILIP
PACANOWSKI

The LSE dismissed claims that it has 'dumbed down' its degrees following an article in *The Daily Telegraph* reporting almost two-thirds of UK university students as earning firsts and 2:1s last year. This contrasts with the average results of 1996, in which 48 per cent of students had earned the highest degrees.

The Telegraph quoted the shadow universities Secretary, David Willetts MP: "[Universities] need to make sure they are not letting down students by weakening confidence in the quality of their degrees." He said that the increase in the number of students achieving firsts and 2:1s "needs to be addressed" in order to avoid the level of "grade inflation" that he believes is occurring in UK secondary and high schools. A recent survey by Sussex University argued that undergraduates studying law could achieve a first or 2:1 by working just over 20 hours per week, whereas at Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham and Bristol, undergraduates would have to work 30-40 hours a week.

The LSE informed *The Beaver* that 903 undergraduates last year earned either a first or a 2:1 for their degrees. 75 percent of undergraduates had achieved higher-quality degrees. However, the School added: "LSE sets the highest academic standards and we should celebrate rather than question the achievements of students who are awarded higher-quality degrees." It said that it maintains the quality of its degrees through external examiners and "the comparison of results across courses and programmes".

The School's statement was similar to that made by Bill Rammell, the Minister of Higher Education. He said that standards are being "rigorously enforced", and that "the UK is renowned throughout the world for the quality of its higher education system."

Various members of staff at the LSE have dismissed the validity of these claims made by the media and the Tory frontbench. One source from the International History department told *The Beaver* that she found the "grade inflation" debate to be "spurious". She said that the accusations of 'dumbing down' have merely been put forward "in order to frighten middle class parents".

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Case for resignation



Alex Teytelboym

This week *The Beaver* has kindly pointed out that Fadhil Bakeer Markar, our already disgraced General Secretary, and Ruhana Ali, the hitherto low-profile Education and Welfare officer, signed a letter to *The Guardian* newspaper supporting the mayoral re-election of Ken Livingstone (can be found on the Guardian Unlimited website).

Livingstone is not a particularly pleasant character. Dubbed 'Red Ken' for his notoriously left-wing views and support for Venezuelan rogue socialist regime, he was nevertheless popular among Londoners. The signatories of the letter claim that Livingstone has "championed a policy of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect of communities." That policy famously expired when Livingstone was suspended from office for four weeks in March 2006 for intentionally calling a *Jewish Evening Standard* reporter a 'concentration camp guard'. According to his lawyers he was not acting in official capacity. Of course he was not. Nor was Mel Gibson.

The signing of the letter in The Guardian supporting the re-election of Ken Livingstone by two SU representatives is illegal and unconstitutional

Livingstone's nasty character is entirely beside the point. The point is that the letter was signed thus: "Ruhana Ali, Fadhil Bakeer-Markar, LSE students union". From a point of view of a casual Guardian reader, it may seem as if the LSE SU, a charity, supports a political candidate. But the Charity Commission states very clearly on their website: "Following the principles, it is acceptable for a charity to advocate support for a particular policy, even if that policy solution is advocated by a political party or candidate, providing the policy is in furtherance of the charity's purposes. However a charity must not support a political party or candidate". No mention of clear policies in the letter, by the way.

At last week's UGM, Bakeer Markar was very angry with me for pointing out that he potentially broke the law. He claimed that he and Ali signed the letter "in a personal capacity". If Tony Blair signed a letter to Vladimir Putin saying "You suck!" and signed it "Tony Blair, Prime Minister of Her Majesty's Government of

the United Kingdom, in personal capacity", what do you think the repercussions for the Anglo-Russian relationship would be? How do you think it would be reported to Vladimir?



Bakeer Markar and Ali abused their positions as elected sabbatical officers and trustees of this Union and betrayed its members

And would Vladimir ever bother to read a letter from any old Tony?

The same logic applies

here. Bakeer Markar and Ali abused their positions as elected sabbatical officers and trustees of this Union and betrayed its members. Last year our students voted for them in the confidence that they would use their positions for the betterment of the Union. These two sabbaticals have used our trust to advance their own political goals. As Daniel Finkelstein pointed out on the Comment pages of the *Times* in October: "Charities are allowed to engage in limited political activity but only to support their genuinely charitable, non-political objectives and only if they are careful not to allow these activities to dominate their work, becoming the main way of achieving their objectives." Politics has dominated the agenda of Bakeer Markar and Ali since before their re-election, although their precise associations remain unclear. It is no secret that they received ardent support from murky, fraternity-like NUS organisations, such as the Student Broad Left and former sabbaticals.

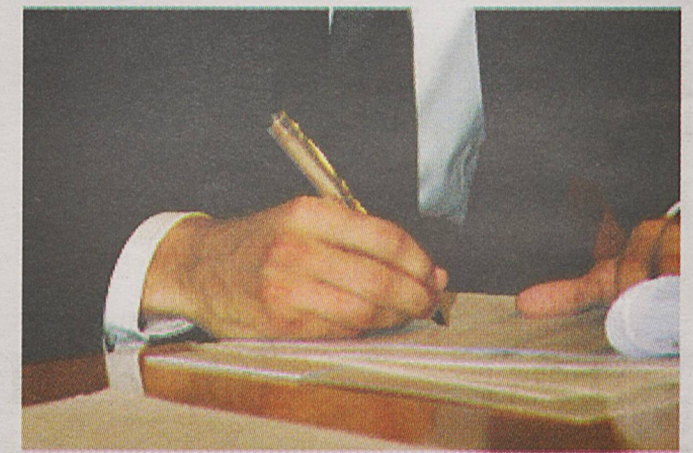
Bakeer Markar and Ali must reveal who approached them to sign the letter. On 3 January a letter appeared in the Guardian Comment Is Free section. It was signed by 63

prominent individuals and charities, of which about a third are closely linked to fundamentalist Muslim organisations according to the Centre for Social Cohesion. Lord Falkner challenged *The Guardian* to publish a list of Muslims supporting the other candidates. Instead, two days later the letter, signed by our sabbaticals, appeared in the newspaper. Bakeer Markar refused to answer questions from *The Beaver* reporters about the letter and reveal who approached them to sign the letter. Ali invented a new deadline for quotes and went to consult him. This conspiratorial behaviour suggests that Bakeer Markar and Ali may have some embarrassing political associations and influences, including the signatories of the first letter.

It is in my opinion, that Bakeer Markar and Ali signed the letter under instructions from someone, who is closely

connected to the mayoral office. It shows no signs of independent thinking, rather a following of orders. Both of them appeared at a party recently thrown by the mayoral office for London students' unions' sabbaticals. I wonder how much of this article has been censored. Last time a key quote from my new investigation on Bakeer Markar mysteriously disappeared. He then pressured *The Beaver* to install "in my opinion" in front of almost every controversial statement on these pages. *The Beaver* executive editor bravely defended my article.

Bakeer Markar has something in common with Livingstone. They both refuse to apologise and admit their mistakes. In the denial of wrongdoing, they both look pathetic. As Livingstone should have two years ago, Bakeer Markar and Ali should resign today.



Acknowledging mistakes



James Pugh

While the signing of the letter appearing in *The Guardian* on 5 January supporting the re-election of Ken Livingstone the by SU General Secretary Fadhil Bakeer and Education and Welfare officer Ruhana Ali has been questioned for its legality and compliance with the LSE Students' Union constitution, the broader social implications of the letter in question and the context in which it was signed need to be examined.

Firstly, with reference to context, the letter signed by

While the now infamous Guardian letter may be unconstitutional and illegal, its content has broader social impacts on today's society

the two mentioned SU sabbaticals, had been preceded two days previously on 3 January, with a *Guardian* letter signed by 63 individuals representing various Muslim organisations also calling for the re-election of Ken Livingstone. It is highly probable that this first letter stimulated the writing of the second letter. The close time relationship between these two letters means that whatever the intention, there is an implied connection between the two and will therefore be seen as complementary to one another.

Secondly, with reference to content, both letters made strong communal justifications for the re-election of Ken Livingstone; in this case the needs and grievances of the so-called "Muslim community". The context and content of these letters exacerbate two very regressive discourses in the already heated and emotional debate regarding Muslims in Britain.

Firstly, the implied appeal for Muslims to vote for a specific candidate polarises an already highly politicised population, and undermines the secular nature that politics is supposed to be based on. For the population to be divided along lines of religion, and then encouraged to vote in blocks, brings a severe barrier to cohesion and integration. It also encourages political parties to devise their political manifesto to appeal to voters along religious-based values of divided communities, rather than the humanity-based values of us all. Even a superficial look at history demonstrates the regressive and caustic impact that such sectarian politics based on religion

brings on society; the long history of sectarianism in India, the bloody ethnic wars in Yugoslavia, and the present chaos in Iraq are just some to name a few. While in no way implying that these letters in isolation are going to result in a repetition of such tragic events, these letters play just one part in the attempted



the implied appeal for Muslims to vote for a specific candidate polarises an already highly politicised population

politicisation of Muslims along religious identity lines by groups and individuals with a fundamentally sectarian agenda. Giving legitimacy to such groups and individuals is obviously counter-productive.

Secondly, is the implica-

tions of the second letter using (with reference to the first letter), the sentence "We welcome the initiative taken by the Muslim community to support the re-election of Ken Livingstone". Firstly, the vast majority of the signatories in the first letter were leaders of organisations with little or no element of democratic principles in their running or election of leaders, with none being directly accountable to the Muslim population. To translate these signatories into the views of "the Muslim community" is wholly inaccurate and misleading. Secondly, the vast majority of the signatories represented religious and socially conservative organisations. While these organisations may indeed represent the views of some Muslims, they by no means represent them all, nor even the majority. And this brings forth the last and in some ways most pressing issue at hand; using such words as "the Muslim community" in this context undermines the concerted and progressive efforts by those who try to dispel the stereotype that Muslims are a homogenous community. Muslims are a highly diverse group of individuals on all levels; religious, social, and political. While the macho posturing of having the

backing of an implied unified community (in this case "the Muslim community") may add a degree of magnitude to the political statement, the benefits are primarily for the short term career politicians and journalists. The added confusion caused by such statements to the already confused general public about the actual nature of Muslims in society is undoubtedly detrimental for all in the long term.

However, I believe all human beings, politicians included, make mistakes, and acknowledging and reflecting on those mistakes allows the individual to learn from the experience. If we expect the resignation of politicians each time they make a mistake, then we will continue to have a continuous flow through of politicians, with few ever being able to gain experience that could allow future mistakes to be avoided. Therefore, while I myself do not subscribe to the call for the resignation of the two SU representatives per se, I do believe a full explanation of the events and circumstances needs to be disclosed, and an acknowledgement that the statement in the letter and the way in which it was signed were indeed irresponsible and in many ways detrimental to the building of a cohesive society. However, given previous events have shown limited willingness on behalf of the General Secretary to acknowledge mistakes, I am less inclined to feel that such a person is willing or able to learn from his mistakes.



Ken Livingstone; whom "the Muslim community" supports

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

c&a@thebeaveronline.co.uk

A dire need for solidarity



Javier Sethness

The time has come for the LSE to struggle toward the elimination of Israeli apartheid against Palestinian society. Indeed, the time for this seems to have long existed, given the ethnic cleansing of Palestine with which the state of Israel in 1948 was created and the rather indefinite perpetuation of Zionist policy against Palestinian society which has followed. It does not seem to me that the imperatives which gave rise to the creation of a refugee population that now stands at 4 million - and, as such, comprises the largest in the world - are terribly different than those which have informed the expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank or the construction of a

As Israel continues to maintain apartheid-like policies, we need to continue our struggle to overcome such injustices to build a better world

"security fence" and erection of 500 checkpoints and road-blocks that do little more than contribute to the further unmaking of Palestinian society. It does seem clear, nonetheless, that this reality must be resisted.

In this regard, we shall not find much to be hopeful for in the governments of the dominant countries of the affluent North. Most major political parties in such countries, parroting a rather prevalently held view of Arabs as somehow unquestionably "other" and responding to dominant interests that would see the sole "democracy" in the Middle East shielded from criticism, have little to say about the tragedies of the ongoing occupation of Palestine. For the

most part, such governments instead provide Israel with both ideological and material support that have the effect of perpetuating this project.

The effort of undoing Israeli apartheid seems then to



Perhaps then, it is time for the LSE.....to break from the power and profit is so centrally valorises

be a task for civil society; non-governmental organisations, concerned citizens, universities. The LSE could well have a role to play in this regard. We could begin by discussing these matters - while in cafés, dormitories, elevators, or the UGM. Perhaps we could even

come to affect university policy in this regard and re-direct LSE's administration toward the struggle against Israeli apartheid, much as it divested funds from companies investing in South Africa in the 1980s. Such a campaign at LSE clearly would not by itself end Israeli apartheid. Perhaps the success of such efforts at the LSE could inspire their realisation elsewhere and so bring about a more general international effort toward this end. It is to be hoped, furthermore, that a movement such as this might not simply forget Palestine once Israeli apartheid policies have been dismantled - assuming they will be - as it seems many did with South Africa after 1994. Though formal apartheid ended in South Africa that year, systemic poverty and marginalisation live on, contributing to a reality which for many is little different than that which existed before 1994.

None of this, of course, is meant to suggest that Israeli apartheid is the sole concern for those who would work towards a better world; there clearly are an innumerable number of situations and structures in this world with which we should take issue. It is to say, however, that a cam-

paigned which, in the spirit of many previous efforts to realise justice, both denounces and works towards ending the apartheid policies that a so-called democracy imposes on its colonial subjects might engender similar struggles against injustice elsewhere in our world.

Perhaps then, it is time for the LSE - its administrators, faculty, and student body - to break from the power and profit it so centrally valorises in favour of struggling with the multitude against oppressive realities toward the hope of ushering in a more fair and just world.



Two bad faces



Elsie Wangai

After having read countless articles regarding Kenya's President Mwai Kibaki in the international media, and most recently David Woodbridge's article in *The Beaver* last week, I felt the need to clarify some points that are being made about the current chaos in Kenya. It seems that while opposition leader Raila Odinga is being portrayed as the guardian of Kenya's democracy, Kibaki is demonised as a power hungry autocrat; the reality is not so black and white.

First of all, the irregularities that were discovered in the election were conveniently mentioned by the EU after the announcement of Kibaki as winner on Sunday 30th of

While the media portrays the current election chaos in Kenya as good guys and bad guys, the reality on the ground is far more complex

December. The EU observers actually initially commended Kenya for the manner in which the elections were conducted on Saturday the 29th of December, highlighting that the observers should have been aware of these anomalies even before the winner of the presidency was announced. It therefore seems inconsistent for the EU observers to attack Kibaki after the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) swore him in. The EU observers had at least 30 hours, between Saturday and Sunday to mention their analysis of the results, which would have essentially put pressure on the ECK not to announce the results before full agreement had been

reached by all parties. Whilst not blaming the EU and international observers for the violence, they could have announced the results of their analysis in a more consistent and appropriate manner and thus dampened tensions.



it can be fair to conclude that both sides played a part in the election anomalies

Secondly, the abnormally high voter turnouts were recorded in both the opposition and the president's strongholds, so it can be fair to conclude that both sides played a part in the election anomalies. As for the returning officer who reported that there was widespread rigging in various constituencies, he could not possibly have known every single constituency that had been rigged without actually having played a part in the

entire national tallying process. The fact of the matter is that his mandate was the responsibility of one polling station in one constituency, and thus direct observations of other constituencies would not be feasible within his capacity. It is clearly evident that even in Nairobi, which is considered to always have a split vote, there were serious errors reported in constituencies, with agents of both parties resorting to fist fights claiming rigging by the other.

Thirdly, with regard to the wider corruption scandals that have rocked Kibaki's presidency, it is very convenient that they received more press attention than previous scandals such as the Goldenberg scandal in the 1990s, which implicated a great number of the current politicians visible in both the opposition and the government's side today. Former British High Commissioner to Kenya, Edward Clay, made a valid point regarding the coalition government's role in corruption, but touched a raw nerve with Kenyans, as it is known only too well that British-Kenyan trade relations were not as rosy as they used to be since British companies lost their monopoly and privileges to competitors in the Far East. As a diplomat, Edward Clay behaved very undiplomatically in his approach to exposing corruption, resulting in him appearing as a messenger with a hidden agenda.

Finally, President Kufuor of Ghana's mediation attempt failed because the document that the opposition drafted 'in consultation' with the World Bank and the current government had not been seen by the

president. Kufuor's role is also being described as paving the way for Kofi Annan as a mediator, so the reality of the story is unclear.

The tragedy in the situation is not that Kibaki is being vilified or that the opposition has lost their rightful place, but the manner in which both sides have conducted themselves since the announcements of the winners in the elections. Kenyan politicians on all sides initially refused to urge their supporters to calm down, stop killing innocent people and destroying property, instead focusing on their conquests of power and access to vast state resources.

The current feud between Kibaki and Odinga is not new, having started soon after ousting former President Moi in 2002. One thing is clear, Kibaki has made errors; but he has also made successes, and it is a mistake to pin all the violence on him when in hindsight ethnic tensions have been brewing in Kenya for 15 years. The problem is that Kenyan politicians want to make demands, but will refuse to compromise. It is only after many other Kenyans preached for peace that the leaders decided to preach peace too, which was a long overdue action that should have made as soon as post election tension became violent. However, brandishing Kibaki as a tyrant or terrorist is merely deviating the spotlight from the rest of the guilty parties. The aim should not be to blame one person or the other, as all Kenyan leaders are to blame in this political deadlock and have the power to soothe the wounds of discontent in Kenya today.



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Published since 1949.

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If you have written three or more articles for *The Beaver* and your name does not appear in the Collective, please email: thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk and you will be added to the list in next week's paper.

The Beaver is available in
alternative formats.

The views and opinions expressed in *The Beaver* are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors or the LSE Students' Union.

the Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 678

Letters to the Editor



The Beaver offers all readers the right to reply to anything that appears in the paper. Letters should be sent to thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk and should be no longer than 250 words. All letters must be received by 3pm on the Sunday prior to publication. The Beaver reserves the right to edit letters prior to publication.

Time for a restraining order...

...for the Facebook stalker?

The denial this week by LSE admissions that Facebook is used as a screening method for potential new students is hardly surprising. Admissions teams have enough paperwork and data to siphon through, without surreptitiously adding lists of favourite movies and drunken photos to your UCAS forms. Furthermore, everyone knows that you only get a Facebook account after you start university anyway – people at high school are all still on Myspace, aren't they?

What is more likely, and of more relevance to current students, is the likelihood that potential employers are using the internet to check up on you, and all the other applicants. It's not all Facebook's fault however – even Google can turn up a surprising amount of information on you with the insertion of just a few key items of information, easily harvested from your CV.

The more devious of Beaver readers will already have spotted the fact that this leaves the door wide open for all sorts of Machiavellian plotting. With true authorship notoriously difficult to establish on the internet it is all too easy for the nefarious candidate in the dog-eat-dog business world to litter the internet with false information about his rivals.

On the other hand, perhaps we're being too negative here. Just because employers can find out more about you doesn't necessarily mean they'll think less of you. Maybe they'll be impressed by your economics-based blog or intrigued by your high-brow wall messages from far-flung acquaintances. And hey, who wouldn't want to hire the person who built the world's tallest beer can pyramid (and tagged each can individually afterwards)

Election fever...

...is highly contagious

The tussle between Obama and Clinton is enthralling, but in just three weeks time the real electoral drama begins. The moment we've all been waiting for – on 11th February, at the stroke of 10am, nominations will open for the LSESU's multitude of elected offices. This will be your opportunity to thrust yourself into the limelight and run for an Executive position, a C&S (Constitution & Steering) position, an F&S (Finance & Services) position or even one of the four coveted Sabbatical positions.

£23,000 per annum and the chance to govern your erstwhile peers are up for grabs if you decide that the role of General Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer or Education and Welfare Officer is for you. The only catch is the gruelling program of canvassing required to tip the balance in your favour.

By the time polls close at 6.30pm on 28 February, each of the candidates will have secured the backing of friends, relatives, societies and people they've harassed in the street – but that reality is the only qualification – how many votes you can secure on the day. So don't be put off running, and don't let the elections be dominated by the same old faces. The Union needs fresh blood, could it be yours?

Whether or not you decide to enter the political arena and to take on the big beasts of the SU jungle, rest assured that *The Beaver* will be there to guide you through the undergrowth on the road to power.

"misleading impression"

Dear Sir,

We are writing to express our dismay at the General Secretary and the Education and Welfare Officer signing a letter to *The Guardian*, apparently on behalf of the LSE Students' Union, endorsing Ken Livingstone for re-election as Mayor of London and condemning Boris Johnson. This letter created the unfortunate and misleading impression that the LSESU as a body endorses a particular mayoral candidate and is engaged in negative campaigning against another, which is not the case. Fadhil Bakeer-Markar and Ruhana Ali have no mandate to endorse political candidates and make partisan gestures of this kind in the name of the Union. If the letter was signed in a personal capacity, then their positions in the LSE Students' Union should not have been mentioned when it was signed. We believe that this action was an abuse of position on the part of these officers and a breach of the trust put in them by LSE students, and that an immediate and full apology should be made to the student body for this breach of mandate.

Yours Faithfully,

Peter John Cannon
Ranil Jayawardena
Roger Lewis
Douglas Oliver

"core duties"

Dear Sir,

Fadhil Bakeer Markar and Ruhana Ali claim that they signed the letter to *The Guardian*, supporting Livingstone's campaign, in 'a personal capacity'. This is misleading. Without the platform, which students' unions have given to the signatories, *The Guardian* would not see any point in publishing their letter. All student signatories are executive or sabbatical members of their students' unions and they used their position to add weight to their letter, by implying that the support for Livingstone has been expressed by the students' union.

We must also add that the Charity Commission states on its website: "Following the principles, it is acceptable for a charity to advocate support for a particular policy, even if that policy solution is advocated by a political party or candidate, providing the policy is in furtherance of the charity's purposes. However a charity must not support a political party or candidate." The signatories of the letter, however, expressly support the

candidate, stating, "we join the call for Ken Livingstone to be re-elected mayor of London on May 1." Their letter undermines the independent position of the LSESU as a charity and threatens its charity status.

Bakeer Markar and Ali also refuse to reveal who approached them to sign this letter. We believe that our students' union deserves to know this.

Bakeer Markar and Ali are choking this students' union with their hypocrisy. The sabbaticals once again abused their status and furthered their interests at the expense of other students. They believe that it is reasonable to support one minority, of which they are part, and antagonise another, which is as desperate for their support.

We therefore believe that Bakeer Markar and Ali have failed at their core duty to represent all students of this union.

Andy Hallett
Chairperson, Constitution and Steering Committee
Carys Morgan
former member, Constitution and Steering Committee
Helen Roberts
former Chairperson, Constitution and Steering Committee
Doug Oliver
former Returning Officer
Dan Jason
Political Officer, Jewish Society
Marilyn Carsley
President, Israel Society
Rhys Meggy
Secretary, Athletics Union
Michael Deas
News Editor, The Beaver
Ben Epstein
former Treasurer, Finance Society
Alex Teytelboym
former Managing Editor, The Beaver; former Secretary, Business Society
Caroline Krey-Jacobsen
Sam Cohen
Alex Hershman

(all in personal capacities)

"few minutes?"

Dear Sir,

I was shocked to read your latest editorial piece regarding the UGM. Actually, for weeks I have been shocked with *The Beaver's* lack of support for the UGM.

UGM iniquity is everyone's responsibility and you argued that "we have let it fall into disrepute". One would presume the word "we" refers to all students at LSE. Or perhaps the "we" you were referring is *The Beaver*?

How can the Executive Editor of our Students' Union newspaper write about the

quoracy problems of the UGM when he himself does not attend every week? You have one of the strongest positions, alongside other media group heads, society presidents and AU captains to turn around the attendance figures of the UGM.

Why did I only see you at the last UGM for barely a few minutes? Where are *The Beaver* collective that used to attend the UGM in such high numbers that there was a health and safety risk since fire exits were blocked? However, my most concerning question is, how on earth can we trust the news reporters to write factually correct articles regarding the union when they don't even turn up to the UGM where we hold our executive officers to account?!

Like yourself, I am concerned about the dropping attendance figures at the UGM. But our difference lies in the fact that I still attend the UGM each week, and urge my friends to do so. As Executive Editor, you hold one of the largest positions of responsibility in our Students' Union. I do hope that, for your remaining time in this position at least, you lead by example and actually attend the UGM and also urge the rest of your newspaper team to join you.

It would be refreshing to see *The Beaver* take their part in helping the UGM to become again "the most important, busy and liveliest event of the week". Rather than just accusing, I hope that if you, or other writers, choose to write further pieces regarding the UGM, you offer solutions (based on experience of attending the UGM) rather than just plain giving up.

Anonymous

"loud conversations"

Dear Sir

In response to Annette Pacey's letter last week, we are fully aware of the problem with noise levels in some parts of the Library. Library rules state that mobile phones must be switched to silent when entering the Library. Mobile phone 'zones' are available for those wishing to make an outgoing call. We are disappointed at the minority of students who flout these rules and adversely affect the study environment for the majority.

In recent years we have increased the quantity and size of Library signage reminding users about the rules. The system of warnings and sanctions is still very much in place, and endorsed by the Students' Union - this term alone, hundreds of users have been stopped and warned. Security staff do regular daily patrols,

and are assisted by Library staff when time allows. However in a building of 16,000 sq m, spread over five floors, staff cannot be everywhere at once. Therefore these patrols can only have a limited impact on student behaviour. Despite all the measures we take, we are still reliant to a certain extent on self-regulation by fellow students and Library users. If students would rather not approach another user themselves, they can report the matter to the Security Desk or Service Counter and staff will take action straight away.

As the busy pre-examination period approaches, the Library will be looking at new ways of tackling this problem. We will also be asking the Students' Union to help us by encouraging students to abide by Library rules. In the meantime we would encourage students to respect the Library environment and think about the impact on others of loud conversations and mobile phone usage.

Maureen Wade
Head of Library Services

"welcome freedom"

Dear Sir,

The LSE SU Islamic society would like to express its disappointment in a recent film produced by Dutch right-wing politician, Geert Wilders. While we welcome freedom of speech and intellectual debate with regards to religious, political, and sociological issues, this film clearly aims only to incite religious hatred and violence in an already volatile country. Mr. Wilders' film, which features images of people desecrating the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an, is provocative, indulgently offensive, and unnecessary.

While Mr. Wilders is within his right to speak freely, he must accept that such rights only come with a great degree of responsibility. We believe it is inappropriate and irresponsible for an elected politician to viciously attack and demonise his own citizens. Furthermore, we express our disappointment in the Dutch government for not taking further steps to reprimand Mr. Wilders for attempting to incite hatred.

Islam is a religion of peace, justice and respect. We would like to warmly welcome our fellow students to our upcoming events, particularly in 'Discover Islam Week' (Week 5), where we hope to initiate the kind of productive dialogue and debate that Mr. Wilders seems somewhat incapable of.

LSE SU Islamic Society

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

c&a@thebeaveronline.co.uk

The other side



Micheal O'Keefe

This article has been written in response to the partisan, largely incomplete and sometimes inaccurate reporting in *The Beaver* on Peter Sutherland. As all your readers must be aware, Peter Sutherland was elected as a member of the LSE Court of Governors and was invited to be Chairman of the Council and Court starting 1 January.

Firstly, certain misconceptions written in Issue 676 regarding "criticism for his role in outlawing abortion in Ireland" need to be clarified. The office of the Attorney General in Ireland is described in Article 30 of the Constitution of Ireland as "the adviser of the Government in matters of law and legal opinion". This neither was, nor ever will, represent the personal persuasion of the Attorney General on any issue. While he attends the cabinet, which makes decisions on matters of policy and legislation he has no executive function. In fact under the constitution, the Attorney General is specifically precluded from being a member of government. Therefore, frankly whether Peter Sutherland is 'Pro-Choice' or

The current mainstream debate in The Beaver regarding Peter Sutherland as Chairman of the Council has been totally one-sided and biased

'Pro-Life' is a personal matter for him, and should not be called into question. Furthermore, abortion has been illegal in Ireland since 1861. Article Eight of the Constitution was amended twenty-five years ago in 1983. This did not, as was also reported in this paper, "introduce the ban on abortion". As recently as 2002, the Irish people by popular consent defeated by referendum, a regressive bill threatening the protection of human life in pregnancy, maintaining the status quo since 1861.

Secondly, with reference to BP, about which much of the protests are directed. He is to step down as Chairman of BP once new chief executive, Tony Hayward, has settled in. Suggestions that the board that he chaired, was in any way accountable for safety procedures have been completely rejected. Furthermore, the Baker report did not make any suggestion of legal failure on part of the board. As was reported in your editorial two weeks ago (an opposing view which somehow seems to miss the many front-page articles you publish on the subject), "Mr. Sutherland's

chairmanship of BP, while demanding scrutiny, does not extend to daily command and responsibility for that firm's well known environmental and human rights shortcomings".

To focus the multitude of articles written solely on these aspects of his career is com-



His achievements far exceed those of most prominent statesmen or leaders worldwide

pletely unbalanced, partial and prejudiced. This misplaced reporting is leading to a completely inaccurate perception of him on campus. This needs to be rectified and put into perspective. He has a huge spectrum of achievements in a

whole range of activities in the political, legal, economic, business, academic and multinational worlds, and he has reached the top in every field. These achievements deserve due credit and perspective in light of recent articles, and more than the blasé reference to "impressive CV" reported by previous articles, which clearly does not convey the full picture. I feel it is important to highlight certain achievements on which he should be judged.

A graduate from University College Dublin in Civil Law, he has been admitted to the Irish Bar (King's Inns), the English Bar (Middle Temple) and the New York Bar, and was also admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States of America. After this brilliant career at the bar, he was appointed Attorney General by the Irish Taoiseach (PM), Garret Fitzgerald; the youngest person to become AG in the history of the state.

Between 1985-1989 he was EC Commissioner responsible for Competition Policy. During this period, his other Commission dossiers were Social Affairs, Education and Relations with the European Parliament. He was strongly favoured to become the President of the European Commission, but political shenanigans in Ireland meant he did not receive the Irish nomination; despite British and broad international support. From 1991-96 he was Chairman of the Board of Governors of the European Institute of Public Administration. Having served as Director Gen-

eral of the GATT, he was instrumental in bringing the seemingly endless Uruguay round of trade negotiations (considered the most successful trade round) to a successful conclusion, and then served as First Director General of the newly created WTO. Later at the UN, he was a Commissioner of the UN International Commission on Human Security and later UN Special Envoy Representative on Migration. He has been appointed as an expert adviser on Vatican finances by Pope Benedict XVI and has been awarded an honorary KCMG by Her Majesty The Queen, in recognition of his services to British trade and international business.

On the business front, Mr Sutherland has been Chairman and Managing Director of Goldman Sachs International, Chairman of Allied Irish Banks and Chairman of BP plc. He has also served on the Board of Directors of Investor AB, Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson and The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc.

During his academic life he has received fourteen honorary doctorates from universities in Europe and America and an honorary fellowship of the London Business School in recognition of his contribution to business and trade. In 1989, he was the Heffernan Visiting Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. His current academic posts include Visiting Professor at University College, Dublin, and Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Centre for

European Policy Studies, Brussels.

And finally, his awards include the Gold Medal of the European Parliament (1988), the First European Law Prize (Paris 1988), The David Rockefeller Prize, the Grand Cross of Civil Merit (Spain 1989), the Grand Cross of King Leopold II (Belgium 1989), the New Zealand Commemorative Medal (1990), Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (France 1993), Commandeur du Wissam (Morocco 1994), the Order of Rio Branco (Brazil 1996), and the Grand Cross of the Order of Infante Dom Henrique (Portugal 1998). He is the honorary Consul for Uruguay in Ireland. He was also presented with the Robert Schuman Medal for his work for European Integration. Furthermore, he received the European Person of the Year Award (1988), the Irish People of the Year Award (1989), the Consumer for World Trade Annual Award (1994) for distinguished service, and the Dean's Medal (1996) from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

To suggest as Aled Fisher, LSE Students Union Environment and Ethics Officer, did, that Peter Sutherland will use his new position to "advance his career, not the interests of LSE students" is utterly ludicrous! His achievements far exceed those of most prominent statesmen or leaders worldwide. Students and others in LSE should be honoured to have him sit as Chair of the school.

Islam and our Environment



Nada Mansy

As part of a follow-up to *Environment and Ethics week*, *The Beaver* is running a series of articles discussing different frameworks for environmentalism. We kick start this week with a discussion how Islam could be such a framework

Contrary to popular belief, environmentalism isn't a recent phenomenon. And no, I don't mean it went as far back as the generation of the Doobie-Smoking, Anti-Vietnam, and Bob Dylan-Loving Hippies. I'm talking 1400 years ago. Islam, it would seem, is not

Many may perceive environmentalism to be the domain of modern activism, but a tradition of environmentalism can be seen from Islam

just about praying and fasting; it's about saving our planet.

So what does Islam have to say about environmentalism? Quite a lot, actually. Islam teaches that God created humans as trustees of the earth. Francesca De Chatel, Anthropologist of Islamic Culture, describes how Muhammad, the Prophet, saw the "fundamental link and interdependency between all natural elements" and how he based his teachings and actions "on the premise that if man abuses or exhausts one element, the natural world as a whole will suffer direct

consequences". Careful study of both the Quran and Muhammad's teachings provide a clear outline of Islam's holistic environmental philosophy.

The Quran recognises the rights of the Earth - it should not be overexploited or abused. Yet it seems today our consumer culture thrives on exploitation and waste. Advertisements have long been seeping into our subconscious, convincing us that we need more. Yet in a world of limited resources, we cannot afford to constantly buy, consume, and waste. Islam advises us to live moderately, even with basic resources like water! Muhammad once said - "Excess in the use of water is forbidden, even if you have the resources of a whole river". What would he say about our use of fossil fuels? Or deforestation, perhaps?

He encouraged the sustainable use of fertile lands, by creating inviolable zones that were left untouched. In today's Green dictionary, these would be considered protection zones - designated areas of land where grazing and woodcutting are restricted, or where certain animal species are protected. He encouraged making unused land productive: planting a tree, sowing a seed that people then eat from or irrigat-

ing dry land are considered charitable deeds in the Islamic faith. He once said "There is a reward in doing good to every living thing."

And what about the animal world? The Quran says "There is not an animal in the earth, nor a creature flying on two wings, but they are nations like you." (6:38). Muhammad himself had great respect and love towards animals, and believed they should be treated with dignity, being part of God's creation. He said "If anyone wrongfully kills even a sparrow, let alone anything greater, he will face God's interrogation". Even slaughter of animals in Islam has strict conditions and requirements, so as to ensure that the animal's death is as quick and painless as possible. Recreational hunting is forbidden; something that should please the supporters of the foxhunting ban!

It is sad that the harmonious principles which Islam promotes between man and his environment - principles that are similar to those of many other men and women wanting to better the environment - have too often been forgotten or ignored, even by Muslims. The latent apathy of many can cause despair to the few.

And it's somehow miraculous these days that politicians who once regarded climate change as a fanatical leftie-obsession now bring environmen-

talist rhetoric to the fore of their manifesto's. Yet we still get the same old line from the pessimists "You can't change anything", or "It's out of your

not happen?"

However, in Islam, one cannot lose hope. Even at the peak of bleakness, Muslims believe that we must continue to try. Muhammad said "When doomsday comes, if someone has a palm shoot in his hand, he should plant it," suggesting that even when all hope is lost for mankind, one should carry on sustaining nature - as nature remains a good in itself, even if man does not benefit from it.

The discourse of "environmentalism", "ecology", "sustainability" and "carbon footprint" can be seen as modern-day terms, more often used in the face of growing global concerns, like climate change. Yet the teachings I cite in this article came long before it became fashionable, politically correct or ethical to be all for green issues, animal rights or environmentalism. Islam as a green theology and the ethical life of the Muhammad is not just a message to Muslims; it's a message to all of humanity. Islam is not just a religion; it's a way of life. Perhaps everyone, whether Muslim or not, can take a green leaf out of Muhammad's book.

Next week, writer permitting, we hope to have an article discussing how environmentalism can be left to the market



Careful study of both the Quran and Muhammad's teachings provide a clear outline of Islam's holistic environmental philosophy

hands". Yes, it is out of my hand to change the world. Yes, as individuals we have little control over international politics and policies. But it's not out of our hands. Every change in society comes collectively. If everyone were to give up on their own efforts, then nothing would ever change, but if people work together, and if everyone did their bit, then how can change

dance of
the bumble **B**



hear from the honchos here

interview honcho -----> pages 4 and 5
gregorilm

The man has been working away with the frenzy of a speed addict in a pharmacy. This week his endeavours have resulted in a fine interview with The Hives. He is now enjoying a little R&R before returning to the front line.

editorial assistant -----> pages 6 and 7
ravimistry--

Grandmistry Flash is keepin' it real this week bringing you a step by step guide of the soulja boy dance in an effort to have you gangsta's popping to some down and dirty crunk. Word.

travel honcho -----> page 8
willjoce

His face hurts because his tongue has been placed firmly in his cheek this week. Or else he is somewhat nasty but we don't really want to know because we have to work next to him and he may snap. The Beaver office has never been so tense.

music honchos -----> page 9
adamjohn & rahimrahemtulla

This week, music spills over from its page 8 cage and infiltrates the main body of partB, as two big name bands get a grilling. Having both started in similar circumstances, one has had major commercial success, whilst the other, though arguably more creative, hasn't risen to the same heady heights. Kind of like the chicken and the egg. Can you guess which is which?

film honcho -----> page 10
bernardkeenan

This week we toyed with the idea of including a free video installation with each paper, a knackered and flickering television set bearing the grizzled torso of Daniel B Yates, writhing, undulating and projected onto the plastic canvas of a barbie doll. Unfortunately this idea was scotched by the losers at accounts, and in the grim light of reality all we have is a review.

identity honcho -----> page 11
hollieastman

For some reason unknown to man when human beings hear a beat they need to shake their booties. For the majority of earth's inhabitants this strange phenomenon named 'dancing' is held with disdain and they refrain from shaking their stuff for fear of society's judgement. There are however a minute gaggle of humans who (thank the lord) throw shapes that nobody else can ever catch - go forth and boogie my pretties.

theatre honcho -----> page 11
ThomasWhittaker

Silent protests in Picadilly Circus, Jonathon Pryce heckling the stage and Ian McKellen storming the Police barricades. The theatrical revolution has begun....

visual art honcho -----> page 12
fionamackay

The Photographer's Gallery gets checked out. Expect the supernatural and nudity.

food and drinking honcho -----> page 12
danielbyates

The Gluttons Club would entertain their jaded aristocratic palates with rare entrees such as Bittern, Panda and Mongoose Gall Bladder Blinis. Unfortunately that sort of thing is all a bit illegal, so we make do with Tapas. Vomitus and joy abound in roughly equal metric measure.

photography honcho
utsamukherjee

I am stuck in partB and this is my only line of communication. Please send for help. I am terribly afraid of the vile Mr. Warren. Will document the habits of this foul beast and his awful colleague Heller.



editiorials from the editors - we know everything

tom warren

The kids of today are dancing furiously. They flow from club to club looking for the finest beats and the heaviest bass. Languidly propping up the bar is no longer the done thing: there is no space for the louche here. Instead the bright young things of our generation sway wildly to all manner of beats, sweat dropping from their brows. It is a return to our finest and most primal instincts and is affecting all manner of people. Skinny jeans or baggy jeans, hoodies or leather jackets, all are getting lost in the depths of all night clubs and raves. This suits me fine. These kids with their glazed eyes start no fights and only pause to offer cigarettes or hugs to complete strangers. The upswing of dance is a fine thing.

josh heller

i don't expect to be treated like a fool no more coz i'm accustomed to a smooth ride. so we're dancing dancing. I got glow sticks and i want to go mmmmtssmmmtssmmmtss and shake my arms and legs to the rhythm of the saints. we bring colour with us as we dance and it never stops if you keep the dance moving. so feel the rythm feel the ride, come on down its dancing time. with rainbow lettering, red trousers and trails of flourescence, nu rave is making a comeback. the colours are more brilliant than they've ever been. it's like jazz fusion only with glow-sticks and stimulants.



LSE in LOVE
Email: thebeaver.parr@lso.co.uk

am your uncle sweetheart. If you tell your mummy I'm gonna be looking at a long stretch in the sex-offenders wing. Please have mercy.

used to be perfect. Then you stole my innocence and molested Nanna. She will be scarred for the rest of her life, which the doctors assure us won't be long.

have such respect for you, you filthy beast. Your rank odour titillates me like no other and I am continually surprised by your wanton acts of violence. Let me be the Rose to your Fred.

MR. WLEFT'S TOP RECIPE

Greetings my cholos. I have had a filthy week here and things aren't looking up. I have been drinking myself stupid and dropping acid into the clam chowder. The kids in the restaurant went loco, and one of them tried to peel himself like an apple. It was proper boomshank, but I'm now looking the dole in the face and Mrs. Wlefty tore up my favourite shirts, but I still got me cheffin' knives so I soon put her in her place. Peace and love motherfuckers. Peace and love.



instruction for seduction

rochelleburgess gives us three dance steps

When I think of dancing it recalls images of pseudo sexual harassment merely categorized as 'dancing'. In tribute to this old 'loving' feeling, I'd like to take the opportunity to educate well-meaning chaps on the etiquette of approaching a female on the dance floor. There is a right way and an immensely wrong way to do this. I am hoping this will save countless others from the feeling of a sweaty stranger pressed against you without warning. To ensure this, I will even bold important aspects to help streamline this article as no one should be punished for a lack of attention span. Ready? Let's get started.

Step 1: When you see a girl that tickles your fancy, please survey the situation carefully. If she is dancing intensely, knows all the words to the songs, and does not notice you, keep moving. Some women do go out **only** to dance, and don't want to be harassed by the likes of your drunken ass. That being said, here's tip 1: girls who want to be danced with will play to the subpar skills of our male counterparts by 'slowing our roll': meaning we try to make it easy for you by pretending we can't dance either. So, if 'your' girl suddenly lacks rhythm, proceed to step two. If not, return to the bar and wait for someone who does, or her to take a break.

Step 2: Begin the wall dance. For

those who have no idea what I'm referring to, it's when men stand against the wall nodding to the beat because it masks levels of over intoxication, or conceals a total lack of dancing ability. If it's the latter, stop reading immediately, and reserve all pick up attempts for girls who are also doing the wall dance, or standing in near proximity to you (tip 2: they are doing this to make it easy for you, yet again). Men who can't dance are only mildly endearing, and I use the term 'mildly' quite loosely. If it's the former, continue reading while practicing the signature head nod.

Step 3: At an appropriate time, approach your girl from the *front*. This is *key*. No one thinks that it is sexy when a stranger grabs them from behind. It actually freaks us out. If you can't get in front of her because her friends are doing that protective circle thingy, dance beside her. Do not attempt to slide behind her at ANY time. Smile. Make a joke. After a couple of laughs, etc., your girl will probably allow you to dance with or behind her. Congratulations!!! There you have it, three simple steps to prevent comparisons to grimy scumbags. I'm actually rather excited to go dancing now in the hopes that this theory becomes widely distributed in clubs or pubs all over London... not likely I know, but a girl can dream.

Rhythm - that elusive element of dance that forms the undercurrent of movement. As our bodies respond to the music, synchronising with the beat - it is rhythm that leads the way, invading our mobile life vessels to translate the glorious sounds we hear into a physical

the rhythm method

manifestation of the groove, baby. But what is this mysterious force? Like the concept of a 'soul', the concept of 'rhythm' is abstract and beautiful but only contextually meaningful - thus causing some to question its existence. In the world of dancing, is there this intangible, inalienable gift of rhythm which some have, and some have not?

When one has 'rhythm', one may pull endless shapes on the dance floor, flailing limbs in a nonsensical fashion, with eyes shut and teeth bared in a silly grin. This combination of irrational movement may go on for as long as the music continues playing, with dancers occasionally pausing to high-five the D.J. or re-hydrate. Throughout this frantic display, not a single 'cool point' is lost. If anything, such flamboyant ruffling of the feathers will likely earn the dancer credibility amongst his club-going peers and the attention of future sex partners. Yet the same display of physical responses to the aural experience by

one who is rhythmically-impaired will most likely result in repulsion of future sex partners, disapproval from club-going peers, dance-related injuries, and a lawsuit from the woman whom they violently elbowed

in the face whilst attempting "The Robot". The discrepancies in dancefloor success suggests rhythm does indeed exist, but how does one acquire it? Are you born with it? Can you learn it? Like love, it certainly

cannot be bought - otherwise everyone in the world would moonwalk down sidewalks a la Michael Jackson, or swing umbrellas in tap-dancing unison whilst singin' in the rain. If only life were so simple. Rhythm must be donned upon us by a force beyond our control like God, or luck. Who is the Giver of Rhythm? According to what criteria does she base her discretion? Some comedians suggest rhythm is distributed along the racial divide - black guys have it, white guys don't. However, the talents of Justin Timberlake have called this theory into question. Perhaps rhythm is like inner peace - inside of us all, patiently waiting to be tapped into and exposed. So go on, I urge ye - close your eyes, turn up the volume and listen to the beat. Rhythm is waiting to take control.



FRANT

Encyclopedika:

A fine compendium of worthless ephemera.

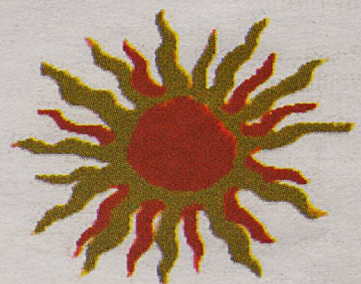
name Sagartha for the mountain in an attempt to unify their state.

The conquest of the mountain had long been in man's imagination long before Hillary and Tenzing's successful ascent. As soon as the summit was realised to be the most elevated, it became the Holy Grail of mountaineering. However, it was not simply the height of the mountain that fascinated climbers, but also its mass. John Krakauer, the journalist and chronicler of the '96 Everest disaster, records his shock at the very presence of the mountain. The mountain is in fact of such a scale that it has its own gravitational field: a pendulum held at the base of the mountain will veer towards the mountain itself. It was in 1921 that the assault on Everest began, and it was not until another twenty two years had elapsed that the mountain was conquered. During this time there were many notable attempts, not least by Mallory and Irvine, who disappeared on the mountain in 1924. They were the first expedition to use bottled oxygen on the mountain and whether they summited or not has been an unanswered question since: they were last seen a few hundred feet from the summit by observers before being obscured by cloud cover. Mallory's body was recovered some half century later, though Irvine's was not. He was simply added to the tally of climbers that have never returned from the mountain.

This tally is large, and current statistics suggest that one of every ten climbers who attempt Everest have perished. The risks on Everest are numerous and range from sudden blizzards and falls of thousands of metres to blocks of ice, known as ceraacs, that fall down the mountain. Some of these are the size of houses or even office blocks and offer slight chance of survival for the mountaineers who have the misfortune to lie in their path. Many of the climbers who meet their end on the mountain are never seen again, whilst others remain preserved on the mountain for years to come. Tales are told of mountaineers turning corners on the mountain to come face to face with a corpse. Hidden caves on the mountain contain the bodies of climbers who have sought shelter in them, and in a more macabre twist the Rongbuk Glacier at the foot of the mountain often deposits corpses from its midsts during its movements. One climber fell from the mountain and his corpse was left hanging from a rope over a precipice for over a month until cut down.

The mountain has now become arguably even more dangerous as a result of more climbers attempting the summit. This, amongst other factors, led to the '96 Everest disaster in which fifteen climbers died on the mountain, including some of the most experienced Himalayan mountaineers. The disaster

was recorded by Jon Krakauer in his fine book *Into Thin Air*. As a result of overcrowding on the summit bottlenecks slowed the passage of climbers up the mountain and many became trapped on the summit and perished from exposure. One climber, Beck Weathers, was twice left for dead yet managed both times to drag himself down the mountain. He suffered some of the worst recorded frostbite that cost him his hands, nose and much of the tissue from his face and feet. The fact that Weathers was left for dead was not unusual in Himalayan mountaineering. At altitudes of over 8000m people are ill-equipped to look after themselves let alone the needs of others. Ten years after the '96 disaster the climber David Sharp was passed on the mountain and left to die by climbers on their summit attempt. Other climbers have complained that their safety has been compromised by people stealing from their supply caches. Controversy reigns about the commercialisation of Everest and the troubles that that entails, from litter being left on the mountain to neglectful and inexperienced climbers paying their guides to take them to the summit. Nevertheless, the allure of Everest remains as fresh as it was when it was realised to be the most extreme altitude on earth. The mountain can now be climbed alone without bottled oxygen and descended by ski, snowboard and paraglider. The Himalayan peaks are as exposed as they have always been and climbers are beyond help from either doctors or helicopter rescue. However, climbers are still willing to risk it all for the ultimate prize of the Everest Summit.



This week marked the death of Edmund Hillary and this gives me an opportunity to share with you some fascinating information about this behemoth of a mountain that is Everest and the explorers that have sought to conquer it. I have been fascinated with exploration literature since I read Scott's posthumously published account of his exploration to the South Pole, and the literature on Everest is equally gripping. The true scale of the mountain was not ascertained until 1852 when an Indian mathematician by the name of Radanhath Sikdar who was working for the colonial administration in Darjeeling calculated its height and realised it to be the highest point on Earth. The beaureacrat to whom Sikdar reported then named the mountain Everest in a sycophantic tribute to his former boss, Colonel Sir George Everest. The nomenclature of Everest is in and of itself also of interest to the ardent fan of ephemera. As the mountain lies across the borders of Nepal and Tibet it also has names relevant to both of these states. The Tibetan name for the mountain is Chomolungma, and the name has stood since time immemorial, used by both the Tibetan and Sherpa people, who accord the mountain a mystical significance. The Nepalese, realising that they had no name for the mountain, and loathe to use the Sherpa name (as there are both Tibetan and Nepalese Sherpas), set upon the

inside The Hives mind

gregor ulm risks angering the swarm as he puts pressure on **Chris Dangerous**

When I walked towards the stage door of the Hammersmith Apollo, I could hear **The Hives** practicing "T.H.E.H.I.V.E.S.", one of their new songs. Apparently things did not go as planned, so their manager advised me to try my luck a little later. One hour later, the situation was pretty much the same, but I was advised to wait in the dressing room. Fifteen minutes later, they were finally done. In a way this is relatively redundant information. In another way it is not, because the chorus of the song they were having trouble with goes as follows: "We rule the world / This is our world". As I should learn from the interview, this was not meant to be an ironic statement. Admittedly, when listening to their latest release *The Black and White Album* for the first time, I suspected a hint of self-mockery, but the drummer of the band, **Chris Dangerous**, suggested another interpretation. During the conversation I had with him, we touched on the subject of "inflated egos", and I learnt a lot about the past, present, and future of this charismatic band that struggles to live up to great expectations.

Great expectations were indeed what Universal Music were entertaining when they signed The Hives on a contract reportedly worth \$12 million in 2002. During that time, garage rock was all the rage. Bands were not exactly in short supply either, just think of **The Vines** or **The Strokes**. There were also a few dozen other 'The' bands out there that by now no one can remember. Touted by some

as "the new grunge", it was hoped that garage rock would gain widespread commercial success. As its then most visible exponent, The Hives had a lot to prove to the world. However, as history now shows, Universal had dragged high hopes out of thin air. Personally, I think this is a rather tragic history that is well worth discussing. Yet, it is certainly not advisable to start an interview on such a gloomy note, so I began by asking Chris Dangerous for the motivation behind their latest record, *The Black and White Album*.

Sometimes, one can draw interesting conclusions from the most basic of facts. For example, the first three studio albums and also their 'best of' record *Your New Favourite*

Band all run for less than thirty minutes. Before the advent of garage rock, such a length would qualify a record to be released as an EP - if at all. And, in my opinion, *The Black and White Album* would easily have made an excellent EP. As a long player, on the other hand, it does not really work. Even though it contains close to fifty minutes of music, the really convincing tracks, taken together, once again only scratch on the thirty minutes mark. The rest is made up not of edgy and fast-paced music but of more experimental tracks. The rationale behind this was, simply, that The Hives wanted to do something new. Chris elaborated, in typical rock star braggadocio, that they initially wanted to only release three short, fast, and really good punk rock records and quit afterwards. However they then "figured there is no new band that is better than us, so we had to continue". It is always refreshing meeting someone not spoiled by success.

Still, it was interesting to hear him talk about the "pretty weird songs" that did not make it onto their records in previous years. They abandoned this approach because they wanted to record every track they thought to have some potential and to not dismiss demo versions prematurely without giving them a chance to develop. The Hives really tried to let creativity reign and aimed to

make a different record, for the reason that they could "make straight rock and roll Hives records forward and backward in our sleep". This is true, judging from the more

typical tracks on their record, that could easily have fitted on *Tyrannosaurus Hives*, a far cry from one of the more unusual songs, for example, which was recorded on a dictaphone. However, a greater surprise, at least for first time listeners of *The Black and White Album*, was that **Pharell Williams** left some creative fingerprints as well. It was interesting to learn that the initial contact between him and the band was made back in 2004, when they met backstage at the Summer Sonic festival in Japan, where Pharell himself "brought up the idea that it would be fun to work together some day." In the end, three years later, he produced two tracks, namely *T.H.E.H.I.V.E.S.*, and *Well, Alright!*.

Interestingly enough, upon listening to these it is everything but obvious that an influential hip-hop producer was responsible for them. More striking is the fact that the rap-influenced, and truly odd, *Giddy Up* was produced by The Hives themselves. The motivation behind it was that they "wanted to have something like a 'vintage Timbaland' track" on their record.

Still, I am still not convinced that all this makes for a well-balanced record. I concluded my review of *The Black and White Album* by stating that the record is uneven as a whole and therefore unsatisfying. Chris responded that "the plan was to make something like a greatest hits record of a band that never existed. So we tried to have everything from the sixties onward." This explanation makes sense of their latest work. Moreover, the experiments of The Hives won't end with their latest record. Chris mentioned that they are going to do a duet "with a past female super star", whose name he unfortunately could not reveal. Also, they would like to work with Daft Punk, David Bowie, and Prince. He further recalled that they had plans to collaborate with Dr Dre, "but this is not going to happen because he does not work with rock bands. We have asked him, and he turned us down".

Apparently, The Hives entertain a lot of ambitions. Yet I have reservations about their long-term potential, as it seems they are running out of steam already. I carefully probed Chris in what position he sees the band, and whether they are thinking in terms of years or decades when thinking about their future. The following is the key part of the interview, and is hence given as a transcription:

Chris: I have a hard time seeing us quit. I mean, what else should we do? We have had this band since we were thirteen, and this is pretty much everything we know. We've made a fourth record, and right now we would even have enough songs to make a fifth record straight away. But we are not going to do this. We are going to have a tour for this record, and then we will see where we are. Yeah, I can see us as some future **Rolling Stones**, going strong

until we are fifty-five or sixty years old. And that's probably what is going to happen.

PartB: You repeatedly said that you are very fond of *The Black and White Album*. However, your fans don't seem to share your enthusiasm. Speaking in terms of record sales, they apparently didn't embrace it.

Chris: We should not just speak in terms of sales. I mean, who sells records these days?

"Yeah, I can see us as some future Rolling Stones, going strong until we are fifty-five or sixty years old. And that's probably what is going to happen."

No one. Maybe **Nickelback** do, but I would not want to be them. Truth being told, no one really sells a lot of records these days. I mean, we were number two at Piratebay for a long time. Our fans are still out there, they just don't buy

that many records any more.

PartB: So, you see **The Hives** more as a live band nowadays?

Chris: I don't see us as a live band. On the other hand, people usually do. They say that we are "such a great live band". I love our records. We have put our soul into it. True, you can't have one without the other. You have to make records if you want to play live, so you can't take them out of the equation. Still, I think *The Black and White Album* is the best record we have made so far.

At this point I decided that I had pressed him hard enough, even though I wanted to push him a little further. Hence, I tactfully chose to switch to a lighter subject matter. At first, I was on the brink of asking him whether his stage name is an allusion to the classic computer game "Rick Dangerous" but I did not want to stroke his ego too much. I was looking for a more conventional topic. Putting their CDs next to each other gives you a pretty good clue what they might be interested in talking about. Duly Chris' eyes were almost glowing when I asked him to elaborate on the reason behind their hallmark outfit, their suits: "Actually, we have changed our suits for every record. In 1996 when we did not have any money we went to thrift stores and basically bought anything black and white that we could find. But as soon as we had money, we bought suits". He told me that they design their suits themselves nowadays, but

a tailor eventually puts their ideas into practice.

Then we talked for a while about their busy tour schedule. Chris mentioned that The Hives have done five successful American tours already, and that he is looking forward to touring Japan again, before playing in Australia and New Zealand. After some relatively light talk I thought it was time for some more challenging questions, so I asked him whether the relatively lukewarm reception of their recent record and the fact that their popularity peaked some years ago, arguably somewhere between 2002 and 2004, had some consequences for their approach to making music. Chris retorted the following, which is a good description of how the band perceives themselves:

"It did not change our approach to making music at all. I think as a live band we are better now than we ever were before. We have so many songs now that it is hard to pick the ones to play. If you look at the concerts, we are certainly doing well. You also have to know that the UK is very special compared to other regions. A lot of bands only enjoy their "fifteen minutes of fame" in this country. They are on every magazine cover and then --- it is all over for them. We, on the other hand, still play the Hammersmith Apollo, which we also did when we were touring for our last record. Before that, we played at the Brixton Academy. Looking at the ticket sales, it certainly does not look like it is going downhill for us."

I was not fully convinced by this answer, mainly because it is undeniable that they receive far less media coverage than they used to. Record sales tell the same story. Even if it may be true that bands generally sell less records nowadays, it is nonetheless a fact that music chart positions, which can still serve as a measure of relative popularity, must leave a lot to be desired for them. On the other hand, it is certainly true that The Hives are an amazing live band that is in the comfortable position of

having a respectable backlog to select songs from.

As a matter of fact, I greatly enjoyed their concert later that night -- they played some of their biggest hits, alongside new material from their new record, but none of their "pretty weird songs". In the end, my position that their new material does not quite reach the same heights as, for example, "Two-Timing Touch and Broken Bones" was confirmed. Still, they are an interesting band that has a lot going for them. Again, that being said, I seriously doubt that they have the potential to successfully stay in the music business for a few more decades. For the time being, however, this does not really matter.



-7

SOULJA BOY INSTRUCTION



Salutations boy and girls! It's me Betty, making my esteemed storm! Me and the ladies have been getting crunk up to this you this dance right thurr with this delightful step by step gu yooooouuu will supermaning that h



1

Step one crank back and cross yo' legs homes.

2

Then put yo' hands in the air and stick the right hand to the left foot.

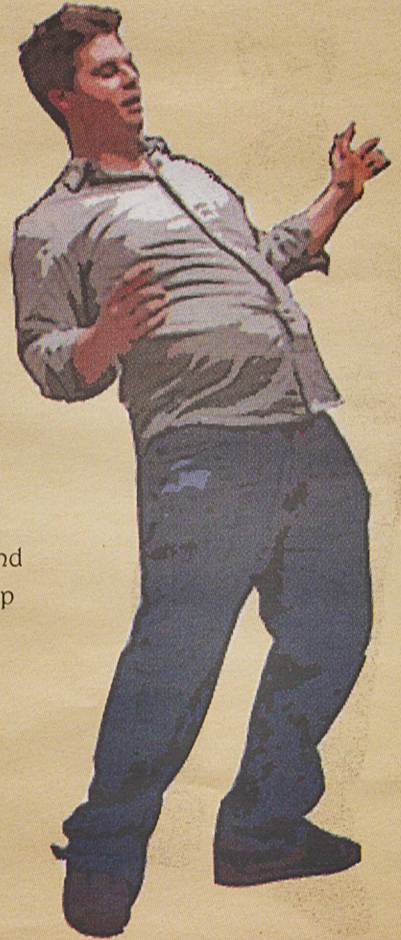


3

Crank back again and take care not to drop your glock.

4

Lift the left pump make sure to show labels to the ho's



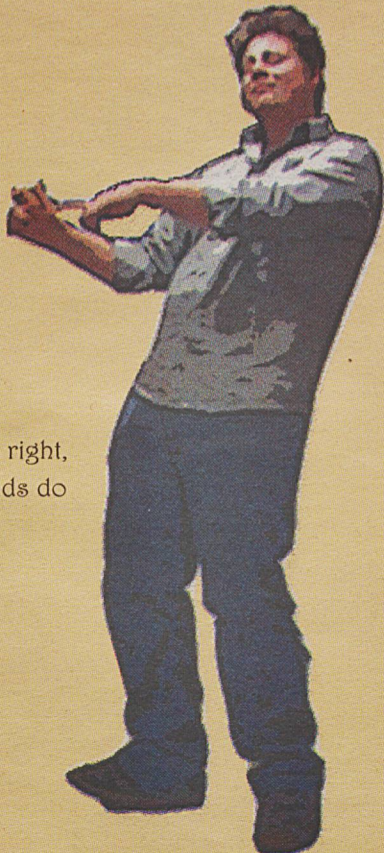
7

Stretch those arms and guah to da right.



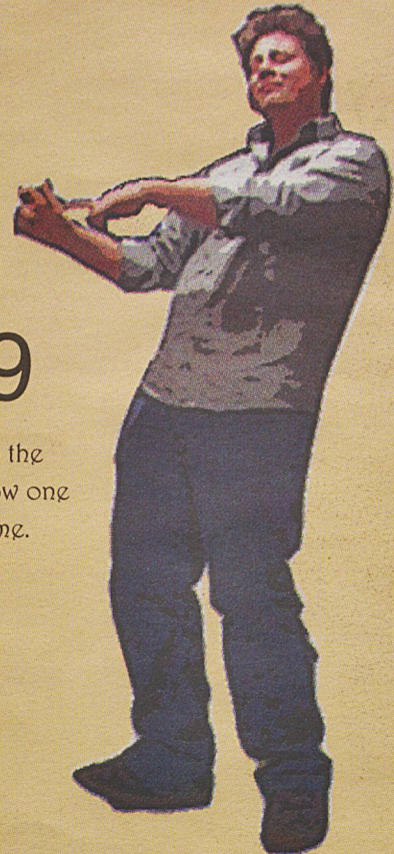
8

Step it to da right, let your hands do the work.



9

Guah to the right now one more time.

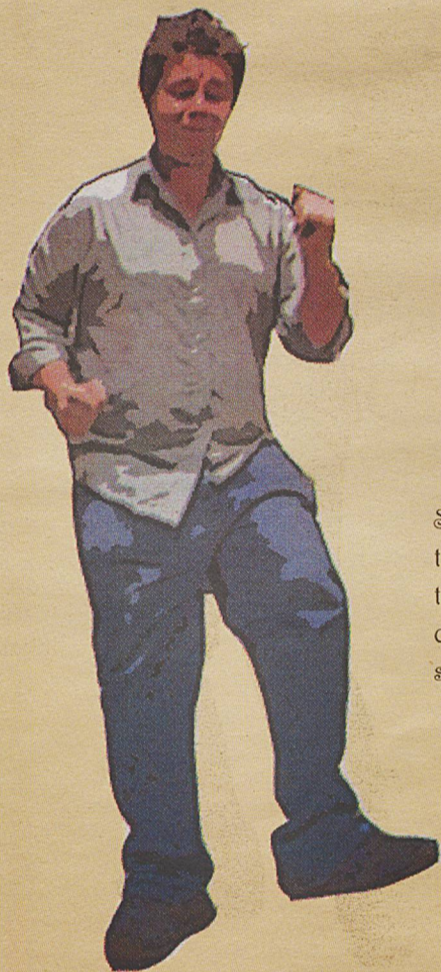


10

Now guah to t

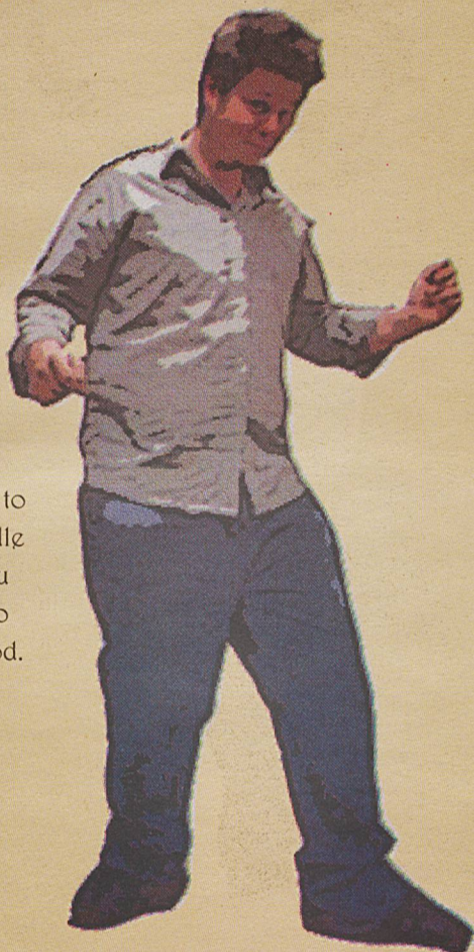
Y DANCE: AN ONAL MANUAL!

ed return bringng you the latest jive that's been taking the country club by
is snap music thang poppin our backs to it yeeeeeahh! So allow me to show
uide demonstrated by young Tom Warren. So pay attention now children and
no' in no time! Peace out, A-town darlings x



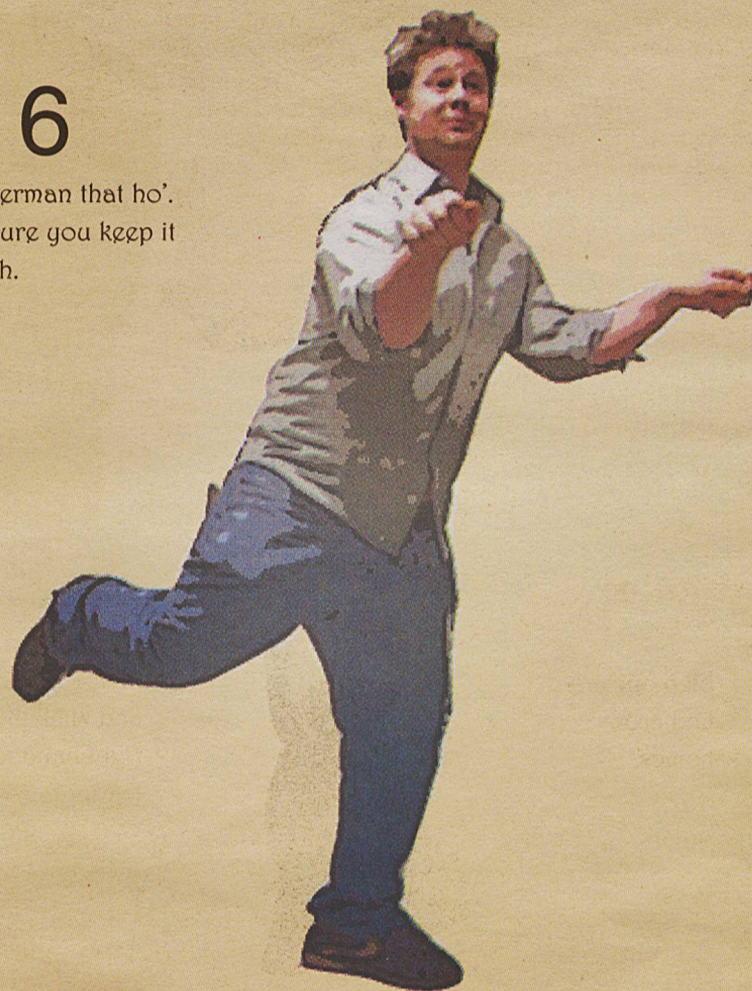
5

Stamp the sneaker to the left, to the middle to the right like you dusting a pimp who strays into go' hood.



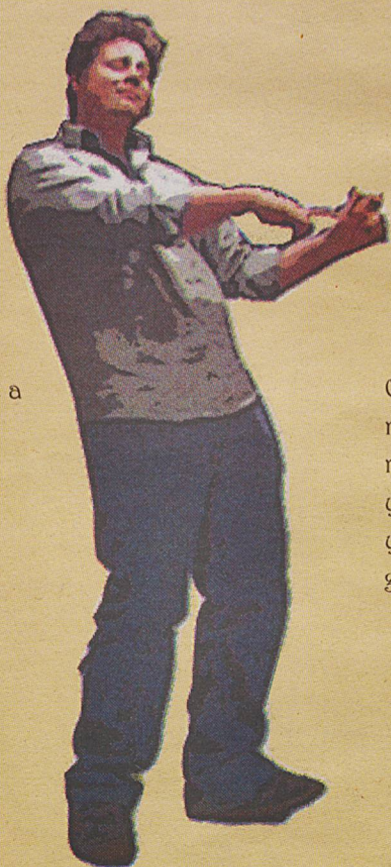
6

Superman that ho'. Ensure you keep it fresh.



11

Now keep shuffling like a two bit crackhead.



12

One final pop. You now a stong cold mother fucker and you can bask in your own blinged up glory.



should you be a tourist to the poorest?

hollieastman holidays near misery

The relationship between poverty and tourism has been deemed contentious for some time. There is a struggle because many third world countries are home to the most beautiful scenery and untouched landscape in the world, thus the naturally inquisitive westerner wants to jump aboard, the issue then arises as to how to do this without damaging, corrupting and generally exploiting the local environment and the native people.

We live in a hectic, concrete world, therefore it is quite understandable for us to seek exciting and new places when we travel. When I travel I admit that I embrace the snobbish aura of a "traveller". I am no tourist. The whole point of travelling to a new place for me is to get out there and explore, but do it like a local, fair enough this does mostly involve sitting around various squares/shacks/beaches drinking coffee/chai/coconuts. But this whole 'do it like a local' thing is where our problem arises.

Over winter break I was fortunate/foolish enough to blow my student loan on a plane ticket to Brazil, heading from Sao Paulo, to Rio de Janeiro, to wherever a bus would take me. Upon arrival in Rio I had the offer of a Favela tour thrust upon me. A Favela is a shanty town for those readers who are not aware, there are around seventy of them scattered around the mountainside which surround Rio de Janeiro and house 20% of the population. Favela tours in Rio, I was assured are not to be missed. They are advertised as getting a real taste of Brazil. The idea is that you go in the back of a jeep and drive around a slum, with some 'local' with a gun within his reach just for protection's sake. So that you can encounter - at a safe distance of course, real

Brazilian culture - being people living in absolute poverty, living in houses made literally out of rubbish, living in a makeshift village on what resembles a traffic island.

The tours apparently came to life to challenge the perception that Favela's are no go drug rampant areas- but that is what they are. The tour guides gain permission and protection come from one source in the that controls all in these areas, the drug dealers. Favela's operate almost outside the governance of the city. Inside these neighbourhoods, the dealers fill the roles of legislature, executive and judiciary. They make the rules, enforce them and, when they are broken, issue punishment - by the tours getting permission from the drug dealers to be there they just makes the lawless problems worse.

The notion of poverty tourism is by no means a new or revolutionary idea. In the 19th-century there were slumming parties, in which Manhattan elites hired police officers to lead them through the Five Points neighbourhood to ogle the other half. What an amazing way to make yourself feel better than

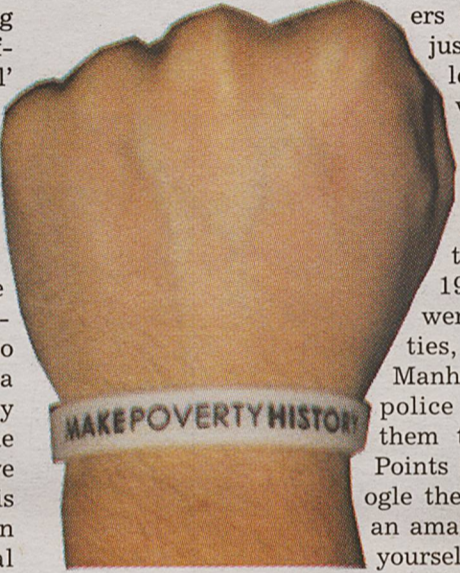
to wallow in the misery of someone else's tragic life.

The justification is that by going on the tour you will be enlightened, shocked by their plight you shall gasp "Ohh look at those poor, poor people" and then you shall be spurred into action. Is it enlightening? Will you genuinely be moved to make a difference in these peoples lives? Are you going to change your behaviour, put you hand in your pocket or actually get your hands dirty and make an actual effort to improve the lives of these people? Or are you going to feel a little bit sorry for them for the evening, then hit the hotel bar fill your face on Mojitos and forget that they ever existed? For some reason I suspect the latter.

There is a line between getting a real experience and being just plain inappropriate.

Is this really the route one needs to take in order to experience real local culture? Fat American and rampant Japanese tourists getting picked up from their luxury five star hotel where they have just had their fill of all you can eat breakfast in an air conditioned minivan before being whisked away to stare from a safe distance at some 'locals'.

This is no Disney land - there may be rodents here but there is no Mickey Mouse to have your picture taken with, there are only poor kids, gangs of young boys driven into drugs and violence and lots of hungry people - no log flume here, no running water - just bad sanitation. These are real people with real problems, not caged animals to be entertained by. The whole concept just chimes of a condescending western attitude, western tourists gaining entertainment from the plight of others. We all understand car crash mentality - but this is taking it too far. It is sick.



willjoce keeps well away

Poverty is in many ways like death. The bright lights and fast times of your life fade into grey memory, no one talks to you anymore and you move out of your house and into a hole in the ground. Poverty, like death, also has a morbid fascination for those on its periphery. As you pass the twisted and mangled remains of a crashed car on the motorway you crane your neck not just to see gore and crimson hued splashes but to see if someone's death was met while at the wheel of a Honda. Poverty holds a dark, but powerful, attraction for the mind that combines feelings of relief that it isn't you, sympathy for the one afflicted and sheer curiosity as to what the concept is all about.

We have death in this country, but we do not have poverty. We have relative poverty, some people in Manchester have to smoke B+H and occasionally a smack-head in Glasgow will have to indulge in only two hits per day. But everyone can afford to eat, starving pot bellied children do not camp in shanty towns out beyond zone four and no-one has to trek for miles each day with large jugs balanced precariously on their head to reach fresh, clean water. So we travel to see poverty, even if we do not recognise that this is what we are doing.

Package

tourists in some parts of Europe or North Africa will pay the extra charges to be taken around 'peasant villages' and will tell themselves that they are only soaking up a foreign culture. What they are actually doing is feeling relief that they do not have to live without satellite TV or share a mud hut with several goats. But this is fair enough, package tourists tend to be brainless so you can expect nothing more.

Others tend to be of the more self-deceiving type and their extreme-poverty chasing usually comes with a euphemism attached containing the words 'gap-year.' These people will regale you for hours about the time they spent living in some god-forsaken hole in the third-world. These fall into two broad sub-categories. The first ones have ridiculous sounding names such as Chardonny, Brick or Tarquin and come out with sentences such as, 'yah, Daddy said I learnt so much on that trip that I gave him great return for his investment.'

The second group are the seriously deranged dogooders who will just hold eye contact for a disturbingly long time

while telling you just how much good work they have done in the course of one sanctimonious, self-righteous lifetime. Thankfully you can usually spot these freaks coming from quite far off. They will bring with them a strange smell that has collected while they have not been showering to highlight the plight of Tibet. They'll be wearing a multitude of 'cause' based accessories and will have clothes woven from strands of human hair and whatever hemp they 'just happened to have lying around the house.'

In my opinion there is nothing wrong with using middle-class social guilt as a smoke screen for your curiosity about the poor wretches of other parts of the world but don't expect me to bow down before you when you try to convince me that since your visit the people of arsehole-nowhere land are living lives of blissful contentedness because they are not. You indulged yourself and feel better for it. Recognise that or don't but please, oh please, shut the hell up.



back to the futureheads

julianboys and the resurgent post-punks talk label drama, the joys of D.I.Y. and the importance of gypsy blood

Whatever happened to the Futureheads? Well the fact is that they disappeared off the face of the Earth for two years, in a musical sense at least. Having released a second album (*News and Tributes*) with only two proper singles in it and sounding more like a child weeping than their witty and angular self titled debut, they were promptly dropped by their record label. They haven't let this bring them down though, and when I met Barry Hyde, the closest thing the Futureheads have to a front man in a band where all four members sing, he seemed positively relieved. "When we split from Warner's, that was probably the best day of our lives. When we released the second album we realised they weren't really behind us. The problem is that Major labels have interests other than music, like business and investing money in nuclear weapons! They've got fingers in pies, and music is just one of their concerns."

With a true punk DIY ethic, Futureheads turned the potentially disastrous sacking to their advantage and are successfully running their own label, Nul Records, getting several songs playlisted on Xfm and Radio 1 far in advance of any release. "We're in a great position now, we own the copyright as a band to all our music. We can say goodbye to the last two albums though, they're in the clutches of the tormentors!"

Talking about major labels with the Futureheads is like waving a red flag in front of a deranged bull whilst shouting abusive comments about its mother. "I want to see them all burn basically! Yeah, I've just got a big problem with the major label mentality, and how it's essentially raped music over the years. They've blurred the boundary between art and business, so people don't know what music is anymore. The music business are like black flies around naïve but passionate musicians, they worm their way into where all the art is, then they bury it under a pile of bricks and set it on fire. Then they see if they can make some money out of the rubble!"

After throwing a bucket of water over Barry and waiting for him to stop foaming at the mouth, we injected him with 400 milligrams of barbiturates and moved onto lighter topics. The new Futureheads album, called *'This Is Not The World'*, is to be released in May and will represent a return to the high energy form of their earlier work. "We recorded it in Spain, next to the only desert in Europe and I think if you're an honest musician you

have to let your surroundings influence your music. Our last album was recorded in the cold environment of the hills near Scarborough, and as a result it came out a bit slower, more melancholic. The third album is very fast and furious, more so than the first I think."

Whereas the first album took a year to make, and the second six weeks, *'This Is Not The World'* was recorded in only 16 days, reflecting their move to a punkier approach. The impetus behind such a quick recording process was producer Martin Glover (from early industrial post-punk band Killing Joke). "He tapped into the essence of the songs and put us into this amazing mindset where we were working so quickly and intensely that it was almost like being in a trance."

A famously tight live band, who rehearsed for two years solid in a shed in Sunderland before their breakthrough, the band consider touring to be one of the best aspects of being a Futurehead. "I love the travelling most. Me and Dave [Barry's brother and the Futureheads' drummer] have got gypsy blood, I've been reading about



my ancestors, the Newson family. They were circus folk: my great great-great-great grandfather was a lion tamer, travelling the world, doing his shit. I think its in our blood to travel and perform."

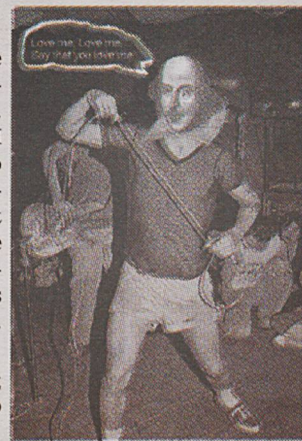
As the Futureheads took to the stage later that evening, the feeling of joy emanating from the band at being back in their element would have probably cheered up even the McCann family. A storming version of *'Decent Days and Nights'* kicked off proceedings, with the offbeat vocal harmonies charming the audience. Several new songs were aired, with *'Broke Up The Time'* receiving the best reaction. A frantically paced stonker of a track, the song demonstrated their ability to write uplifting snippets of quirky pop. Their forthcoming single *'Beginning of the Twist'*, with its soaring harmonies backed by driving power chords, was introduced as a song about mental illness, continuing the Futureheads' tradition of untraditional lyrics. The Brunel University crowd wanted hits though, and rip-roaring versions of *'Hounds of Love'* and *'Skip to the End'* went down like a bucket of cake at an obesity convention. The liberated Futureheads are enjoying their newfound freedom, and for a band who got sacked for being too depressing they're going about it with infectious enthusiasm.

nu-genre of the week:

BARDCORE

Pronunciation: \bārd-kōr\

Punk bands influenced by Shakespeare (both voluntarily and as a result of having to read him in 9th grade English). Lyrics tend to include such phrases as 'I clutched thee to my bosom' and 'to be or not to be, that is the fucking question.' Iambic pentameter is generally the preferred format but there is an emerging crop of bands who are opposing the status quo by showing a penchant for the rhyming couplet. Electric lutes are frequently employed to devastating effect.



Trademark Bands: Shall I Compare Thee; MacBooty; Merchant of Peckam; Much Ado About Snorting; LuteFury; The Cardigans.

by adamjohns and rahimrahemtulla

Though the notion of bringing opera or classical music to the masses might seem an inaccessible goal (with good seats costing more than £60), The Royal Opera House offers performances which can still be seen for as little as nothing.

Every Monday from 1 to 2 pm the major performing arts venue, situated in the London district of Covent Garden, hosts Monday lunchtime concerts. Members of the world-renowned orchestra of the Royal Opera House and ROH Music staff perform for free in the Crush Room while the audience eats lunch.

Next Monday, the 28th of January, baritone Nigel Cliffe and concert director Renato Balsadonna perform songs from Schubert's *Winterreise*. All recitals are limited to 160 tickets so early collection is recommended. Tickets can be ordered online (www.royalopera.org).

In addition to the lunchtime concerts, the ROH offers attractive students tickets of only £15 for each opera performance. A current stunning production is Olivia Fuchs' *Midsummer Nights Dream*. Forget about old fashioned, fusty, sleep-inducing performances. With text fragments being projected on the walls, a stage design totally done in neon blue and black, the conventional stylistic devices of a Shakespearean play are interpreted in a new way. Olivia Fuchs invites us to be part of the play, triggering our imagination with video projections and slow motion images. Although some of the singer's voices were criticised on pronunciation and articulation, the production is a must see, especially because of the excellent performance of the City of London Sinfonia orchestra.

For those who are interested but could use some further introduction into the topic, the RHO will be hosting a pre-performance talk, 30 minutes before the curtains on Thursday, the 31st of January. The director, conductor and several cast members will discuss the venue's music, story and stage background. *Midsummer Nights Dream* is showing from the 28th of January until the 11th of February, with a running time of 3 hours and 20 minutes.

opera don't stop - era
annamareski on experiencing the London Opera Scene

R E V I E W S

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - Dig, Lazarus, Dig
Released: 07.01.08 by gregorulm

I probably should not be reviewing anything from Nick Cave, for the simple reason that I absolutely adore his work. I consider him one of the most respectable musicians out there, and one of the very few who demonstrated that they are able to produce work of consistent high, if not superb quality. In this respect, *'Dig, Lazarus, Dig!!!'* is no exception. Think about it, how often do you come across records whose lyrics are worth contemplating over? In this track, which will be the opener of his upcoming fourteenth studio album, Nick Cave sets the scene for what promises to be a rather bizarre theme: he takes the biblical story of Lazarus, and puts it into contemporary New York City, while also adding a psychological twist to it: "Larry grew increasingly neurotic and obscene / I mean, he never asked to be raised up from the tomb". To me, this single is nothing less than a stroke of genius. (My next reviews will be more objective, I promise!)

Talk - Reset, Start Again
Released: 28.01.08 by gregorulm

Déjà vu might be an intriguing thing, but if you have one after another while listening to a record it might be more than you are willing to handle. Talk's third record *'Reset, Start Again'* takes so many elements from Radiohead's *'Kid A'*, *'Amnesiac'*, and *'Hail to the Thief'*—Muse's *'Origins of Symmetry'* is another big influence—that it is only a matter of roughly a quarter of an hour until you start to question their integrity. Admittedly, there are scattered attempts of originality, but these are overshadowed by the fact that at times whole themes seem to be lifted from Radiohead's records, and then slightly modified. Striking examples are *'Victor'*, that takes more than just a slight cue from Radiohead's *'Pyramid Song'*, and *'Reverberation'* that could trick inattentive listeners into believing it is an early demo version of *'The Gloaming'*, a track from *'Hail to the Thief'*. I was anything but impressed.

Cut Off Your Hands - Oh Girl
Released: 21.01.08 by adamjohns

I grabbed this one out of the old review bin on the strength of some nice cover art. Turns out *Cut Off Your Hands* have released not too many songs, are from New Zealand, and play concerts with Foals a lot. They don't seem to have been written about very much, which is fascinating considering that this single is great. *'Oh Girl's'* instrumentation sticks close to the standard 00's postpunk template, with rhythmic guitars and little-to-no distortion. The lyrics are simplistic and innocent to the point where they're Buddy Holly-esque—there is a girl, the singer wants her to come over to his house to hold hands. What stands out about this song are the hooks. It has more hooks than an Alaskan fisherman. It's melodic and poppy, maybe a little bit glorious in an early Beach Boys sort of way. Is it OK to "champion a band" on the strength of one single (and a B side that sounds a little bit Smiths-ey)? If it is, then I do.

BETAJACK FORMAT

The video shop is dead, long live netflix; Daniel B Yates is not impressed by Michel Gondry's putative homage to the (recently deceased) community video store

Ever since sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies boldly diagnosed a split in Western social history, between traditional *Gemeinschaft* communities of old and their spanky new modernised *Gesellschaft* successors - the myth of the neighbourhood as Eden, the self-contained community, the network of supporting locale pitched against the lonely atomisation of modernity, has been a favourite subject for art. Yet it is perhaps ironic that Film, a medium that brought us 'home-entertainment' on the back of its post-cinema technologies, and in the process helped to condemn our leisure time to the slack-eyed solitudinous grunt it has become, should feel able to explore that particular tension without displaying bundles of due remorse.

Be Kind Rewind is a film by Michel Gondry, a director who has a string of revolutionary music videos and the modern classic *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* to his name. It stars Jack Black and Mos Def (Mostly Definite to his mates) as a pair of post-Clerks video shop employees in a run-down neighbourhood, working for an old dude called Semen. Unfortunately, due to Jack Black's body becoming all magnetised after a failed break-in to an electricity plant, they accidentally wipe every VHS tape in their shop using nothing but his aura. In order to fix matters they decide to shoot their own no-budget versions of the erased films, with mildly amusing results. When this proves astonishingly popular with their clientele, the neighbourhood all get involved and gaggingly saccharine things ensue.

In its treatment of local community and the role that cinema might play in it, there are strong echoes of *Cinema Paradiso*, a delicate and warming film which was intent on examining the sense of community with the ramshackle village cinema as the centrepiece. But where *Paradiso* played cleverly with tradition and modernisation in a realistically portrayed community, *Be Kind Rewind* is content with lying down in the road of its Disney-fied burb and spewing out a ton of sentimental mulch onto the pavement.

It staggers through the 'neighbourhood' like a sad old urine-stained drunk, dribbling half-remembered Hollywood clichés from its pissy lips. The streets are lined with the kindly chuckling uncle-types, happily domesticated house-wives, smiling urchinlike children, all the facile line-drawn cast that populate the U.S. imaginary. This raddled tramp of a motion picture tries to wave to these cardboard people but unfortunately collapses under the weight of its own saccharine absurdity. Later it returns, with a renewed sense of purpose and sat astride a mechanical muck-spreader makes its way down the street spewing strings of grubby sentiment, rancid jets of feel-good, all over the smiling laughing clean-toothed inhabitants. And because these people are the fictitious creations of the Hollywood nightmare, they continue to smile, they smile through it all, they smile as the vomit forces its way through the gaps in their whitened teeth, they smile because they're all 'neighbours tm' and a 'com-moonitee' this is fucking Hollywood, so Fuck You cynics.

The film is at least quite funny in parts, and for a decent chunk of it we get what it says on the tin - a delicately-shot gag-fest as Gondry works over Jack Black. There is an amount of comic chemistry between Mos Def and Black, and their good moments, though all-too-sparsely distributed, are watchable. Def turns in a strange brand of slightly twisted deadpan, affected and self-conscious. For some reason he inexplicably insists on mimicking the stroke-affected inarticulacy of Sly



Stallone at crucial emotional moments but that's his problem not mine. Black is slightly toned-down from his usual technicolour idiocy, less like the boy who ate too many sweets and bounced up and down until he crapped himself, more like the boy who's learned that's not the way to behave in public, and fortunately for our collective sanity he chooses to confine himself to moderate buffoonery and PG-rated gurning.

Black's physical comedy is augmented by Gondry's trademark digital effects, throwing the comic rocker's chunky frame around at improbable speeds one moment, collapsing it the next. In one particularly memorable image Black's magnetic glowing urine runs down the gutter, pulling in parts of cars, bikes and assorted metal debris as it flows its attractive golden course - a digital gross-out scene that is surprisingly moving. And indeed the CGI fulfils that post-modern intrusive role that Gondry is justly famous for. When a magnetised Jack Black comes close to the screen, the whole frame zaps and lurches. A clever montage of spinning tableaux visually segueing into one another is pure Gondry, a lift from his days of directing White Stripe and Chemical Brothers pop promos. But these flourishes do seem a little tacked on, and given the moves he made to incorporate the special effects into the very core of his characters' experiences in *Eternal Sunshine*, a return to more skiamorphic adornment seems, if not a step backward, then certainly a hesitation of foot-fall.

The film is ultimately ruined by the cosy *Gemeinschaftlich* nonsense that becomes so acute by the end of the film that anyone with a cynical bone in their body is forced to squirm in their seat, as that bone is exercised to the point of exhaustion. I cannot convey the hideous emptiness of the last 15 minutes of this film using words. It needs guttural inhuman sounds of anguish, sounds so horrific and unearthly as to render anyone in earshot mute for life.

It really is a mystery to me how any script writer writing today could think they might be able to inject real feeling into a film using the worn codes of 80s and 90s Hollywood, famed as they are for their artifice and starry-eyed lack of interesting human description. As the facsimiles of characters laughed and twinkled on the screen, the only misty-eye I was getting was from these damn cataracts. These damn cataracts.

Maybe there is some truth in the idea that film is a medium by which neighbourhoods can interact and cohere. Barring natural disaster, what more likely an event to bring neighbours out onto the street than when its being used a set for a film or television production? The noise of the television set itself will often bring the homely intrusion of disgruntled thumping upon the walls or ceilings that separate us from our comrades-in-locale. In fact I have personal experience of this interaction: I was in my street and carving a logo into a friend's puke with a stick, then trying to film it for use as an ident for an abortive tv-station. We got a bit excited, all puking and laughing, and this was when I first saw Old Mrs Harding enraged and in a negligee. It was intimate, quite funny and totally sickening, all at the same time.

Be Kind Rewind is just about an okay movie, as long as you remember to be kind to yourselves and liberally hit the fast forward.

Be Kind Rewind is out this week

IN SEARCH OF LAST TIMES

Bernard Keenan gets all flustered about the Wim Wenders season showing at the BFI

This month and next the BFI are running a season of films by Wim Wenders. Who? A German film maker. He's been at it for years. Why do we care? Because he is responsible for some of the most beautiful cinema yet made.

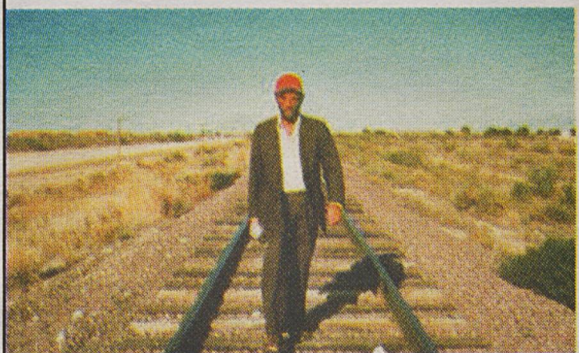
Take *In The Course of Time (Kings of the Road)*, Wender's 1976 masterpiece. Rüdiger Vogler and Hanns Zischler follow the roads to nowhere along the old East-West German border, stopping in the old small town cinemas, which have either fallen into disrepair or taken to showing cheap porn to stay in business. "My story," they will say, "is my history," and so we will come to understand that this is Wender's story too, the history of cinema, and now of Europe.

Tracing the outlines of their past, the two end up in an abandoned American guardhouse on the border: "The Americans," says Zischler, "have colonised our sub-conscious."

If there is one theme that recurs throughout Wender's work, this is it. At its beginnings, America lured Europe's cinematic pioneers: Wenders took it back. A vision of America in the heart of old Europe.



And then he reversed it. Moving to America, he brought the sensibility of European film to the real new West of the United States. In *Paris, Texas* (1984), essentially *The Searchers* re-imagined for the 80s, Harry Dean Stanton plays a man who emerges from the desert not knowing who he is. Slowly, he begins to put together the pieces of the life and family he walked out on four years before. Then, just as abruptly as he arrived, he vanishes back into the dust. Nastassja Kinski and Dean Stockwell complete the cast. Ry Cooder's score is worth the admission alone.



The season continues next month with Wenders returning to Berlin in 1989: *Crime and the City Solution* are on the stage, Nick Cave on the soundtrack, Bruno Ganz is the angel who renounces immortality and falls in love with a trapeze artist (Solveig Dommartin, who died last year); while she at least has the rope to hold on to, he has nothing to live for but his love - an obsession shared by Wenders.

Buena Vista Social Club, *The End of Violence*, and *Lisbon Story* are just some of the other highlights.

www.bfi.org.uk

FILM

EXPRESS YOURSELF

kerrythompson throws shapes nobody else can catch

Up until I came to university in London, I thought everybody danced like I did. It was not until one day, when my American flatmate in Halls quite aptly said to me: "Kerry, I like the way you dance. For most people, dancing is about looking sexy. For you... [pause whilst choosing words carefully] it's just about self-expression." And deep down I knew she was right - all those other people at Crush were decidedly not dancing like a lunatic, arms flapping and legs kicking. Other people looked, well, cool.

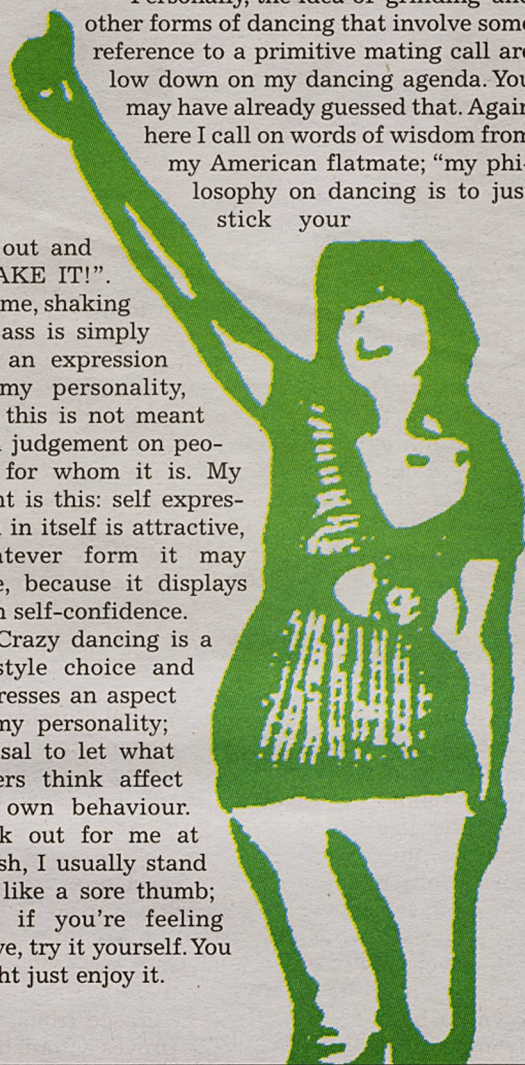
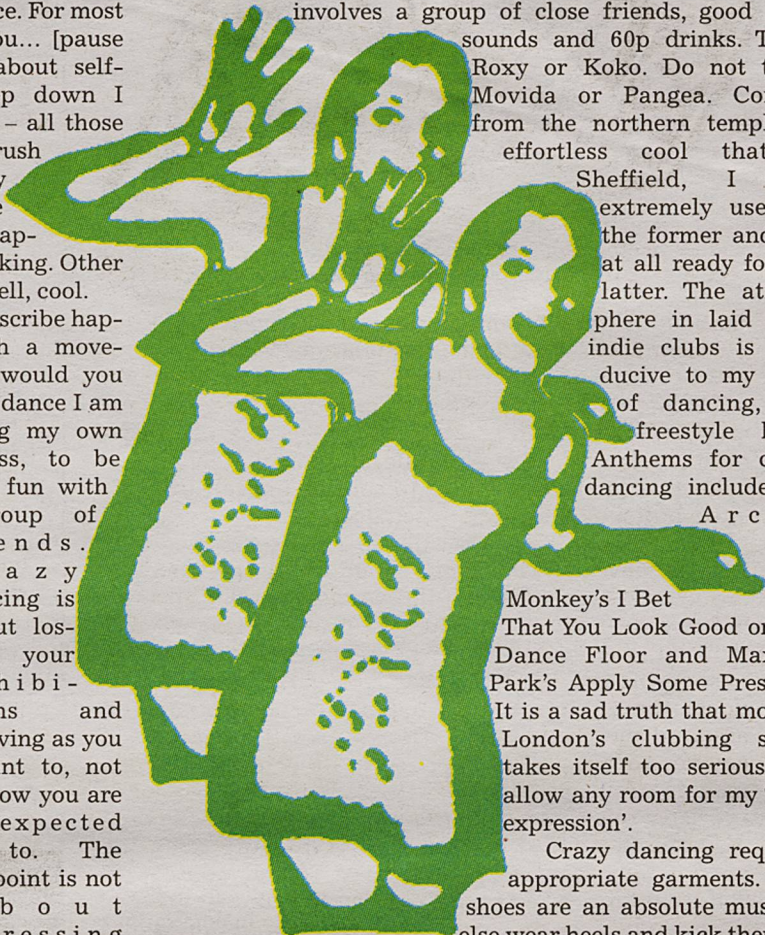
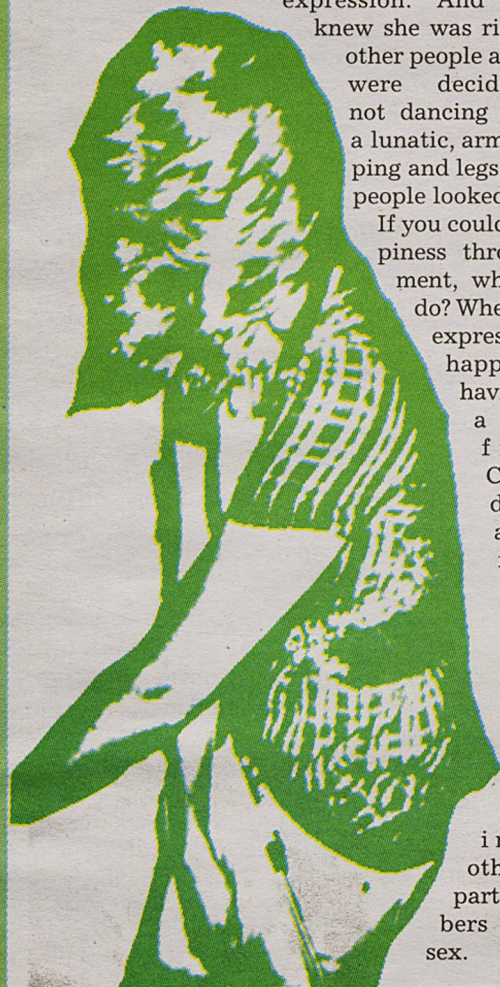
My behaviour on the dance floor would probably not be deemed socially acceptable by many people, particularly in London. In my defence, my idea of a night out dancing involves a group of close friends, good indie sounds and 60p drinks. Think Roxy or Koko. Do not think Movida or Pangea. Coming from the northern temple of effortless cool that is Sheffield, I was extremely used to the former and not at all ready for the latter. The atmosphere in laid back indie clubs is conducive to my kind of dancing, the freestyle kind. Anthems for crazy dancing include the Arctic

fish-little-fish-cardboard-box. Opt for a shoulder-strap bag or just use your pockets; freedom to move is the absolute priority.

Personally, the idea of 'grinding' and other forms of dancing that involve some reference to a primitive mating call are low down on my dancing agenda. You may have already guessed that. Again here I call on words of wisdom from my American flatmate; "my philosophy on dancing is to just stick your

ass out and SHAKE IT!". For me, shaking my ass is simply not an expression of my personality, but this is not meant as a judgement on people for whom it is. My point is this: self expression in itself is attractive, whatever form it may take, because it displays such self-confidence.

Crazy dancing is a lifestyle choice and expresses an aspect of my personality; refusal to let what others think affect my own behaviour. Look out for me at Crush, I usually stand out like a sore thumb; and if you're feeling brave, try it yourself. You might just enjoy it.



If you could describe happiness through a movement, what would you do? When I dance I am expressing my own happiness, to be having fun with a group of friends. Crazy dancing is about losing your inhibitions and moving as you want to, not how you are expected to. The point is not about impressing other people, particularly members of the other sex.

Arctic Monkey's I Bet That You Look Good on the Dance Floor and Maximo Park's Apply Some Pressure. It is a sad truth that most of London's clubbing scene takes itself too seriously to allow any room for my 'self-expression'. Crazy dancing requires appropriate garments. Flat shoes are an absolute must, or else wear heels and kick them off after 10 minutes. They can join the pile of handbags in the middle of your crazy dancing circle. A clutch handbag must be demoted to this pile; your hands need to be free to make regular jazz-hand waiving movements or the occasional big-

ass out and SHAKE IT!". For me, shaking my ass is simply not an expression of my personality, but this is not meant as a judgement on people for whom it is. My point is this: self expression in itself is attractive, whatever form it may take, because it displays such self-confidence.

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IDENTITY

The Actors Attack

thomaswhittaker joins the rebellion

It would, and probably has been, many new performers' worst nightmare. You are on the stage in the Young Vic and catcalls fly at you from the audience. You look up distraught only to find it is full of some of the most reputable names in British theatre today. Ian McKellen is there- his normally twinkling eyes sadly dulled by your utter ineptitude. And over there is Kevin Spacey- his arms crossed upon his chest giving you the kind of look normally only reserved for ten year olds who say a naughty word while the grandparents are listening.

Also present are Jonathon Pryce and Richard Briers- now slightly reminiscent of the two old men who used to occupy the box seat in the Muppets hurling abuse through curled lips. I am not a strong willed man and people have suggested I can be a touch sensitive so even one foul look from Mr Spacey would make me cry- but a whole room of them? That would just be nasty.

But this is just the kind of reception Peter Hewitt, the arts council chief executive, received earlier this month from Equity during a grueling two-hour attack that culminated in the union casting a vote of no confidence in the council. It seems the actors have turned and they are hungry for justice. But what started all of this? What turned these normally kind and enthusiastic old souls into the aggressor?

Shortly before Christmas the council sent out letters to all of the 990 regularly funded arts organizations to inform them that 194 of their number would have their funding cut or eliminated. Not only this but

those facing cuts would have only 5 weeks in which to mount an appeal to reverse the council's decision. Hewitt tried to defend the cuts, claiming that 75% of organizations would see funding increases and 200 would get above inflation rises, even going as far as to suggest that many of the cuts would eventually be reversed.

But for many in the audience this obviously missed the point. As Sam West (the son of Prunella Scales and Timothy West a notable actor and director himself) so accurately put it 'If you cut funding to our smaller theatres then you will eventually starve our larger theatres.' A good point I think which is worthy of consideration.

Take the Bush Theatre for instance- whose artistic director, Josie Rourke, spoke at the meeting. As one of the most celebrated new writing theatres in the world, with an open script submission policy, they read over 1,000 scripts each year. However, they are currently facing a 40% cut back on their spending from the Arts Council.

Unfortunately, the benefit of places such as this cannot be calculated by pedantic seat counting and cynical

bureaucracy but in a much wider avenue of the benefits such environments bring to the theatrical world. A statement on Bush Theatres petition protesting the cuts, signed by such names as Peter Ackroyd states 'Playwrights need a small properly-funded playhouse in which to take risks. They need The

Bush. It costs money to discover and develop talent and launch writers' careers.'

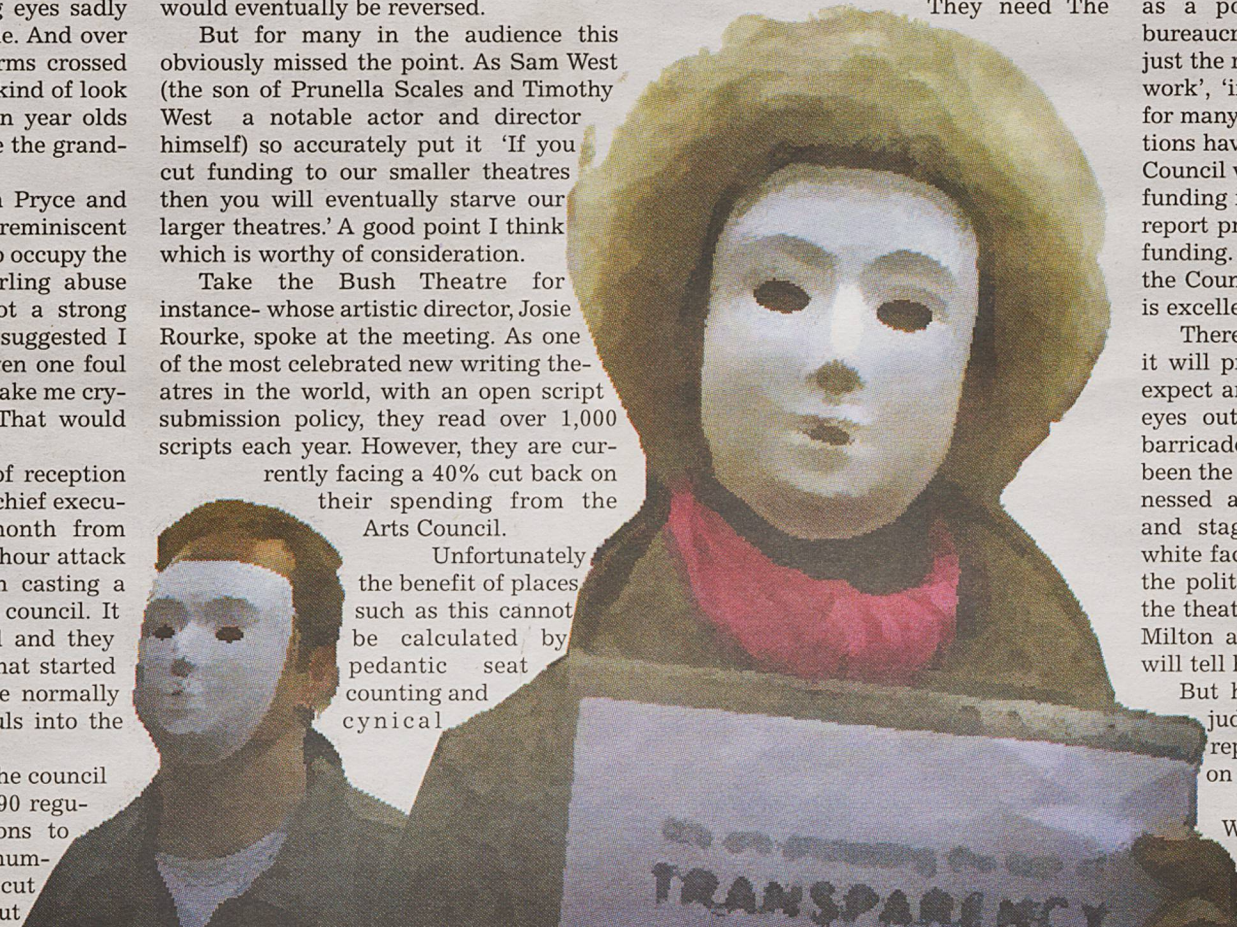
The McMasters review on assessing excellence in art, which was released on January 10th (the following day after the Equity meeting) was certainly welcomed as a positive move away from such bureaucratic examination and teems with just the right positive messages of 'diverse work', 'innovation' and 'risk-taking' but for many, this has come too late and questions have been asked about why the Arts Council was allowed to go ahead with this funding round in advance of a major new report proposing a new rationale for arts funding. Others have simply implied that the Council itself is not fit to judge what is excellent.

There's a lot of bad blood going on and it will probably get nastier (I would not expect any rioting just yet but keep your eyes out for McKellen storming police barricades in the future). There has even been the odd protest. Picadilly Circus witnessed a 'flashmob' of actors, directors and stage professionals decked out in white face masks protesting the cuts, and the politicians have certainly jumped on the theatrical bandwagon including Anne Milton and Jeremy Hunt. But only time will tell how things will end up.

But here's hoping the next round of judgements will take the McMasters report to heart and that I never get on the wrong side of Kevin Spacey.

Want to find out more?

Go to www.equity.org.uk



THEATRE

In the eye of the beholder



Whether intentional or not, the two exhibitions currently on at the Photographer's Gallery, *Seeing is Believing* (international artists) and *Insomnia* (Antoine d'Agata), complement each other beautifully.

Seeing is Believing is a selection of works from seven artists with a common theme of the supernatural. The photographs challenge the boundaries of reality and imagination and question the validity of our eyes as a reliable guide to reality. The artworks on display include: Clare Strand's entrancing black-and white depictions of young women enveloped by ghostly mists, Florencia Durante's playful blurring of light to create surprising illusions, Tim Maul's documentation of places where psychic activities had been detected, and works by Ben Judd, whose use of stereoscope explores the relationship between seeing and believing: his photographs ask how space, as manifested through the lens, is actually seen in objective reality. There are images from Harry Price (pictured), Britain's most famous historical ghost hunter, and more intriguing still is Fred Ressler's unmanipulated photographs in which ghost-like faces seem to peer out of the shadows due to the trickeries of light. Do you see it? Did you see it only after reading the captions? Is it only imagined? Is imagination a valid way of seeing? Could it be that you are only seeing what you want to see?

With those questions still echoing in your mind, move on quickly to the next exhibition, *Insomnia*, by Antoine d'Agata, where you just might find some answers: in a video interview with the artist, which is showing at the entrance, d'Agata remarks that the viewer is responsible for what they see and retain. Similarly, in the introductory text to the exhibition is a line from the poet Fernando Pessoa: "What we see is not made up of what we are seeing but rather from what we are". With these philosophical musings in mind, you are ready to view the photographs.

The main part of d'Agata's exhibition is a myriad of images that covers the entire wall of the exhibition hall.

do my eyes deceive me? J Shen wants you to blink.. And look again...

Whereas the previous exhibition was systematic and almost scientific in the way it portrays the supernatural, d'Agata's work is one where the common and everyday is depicted in a surreal and chaotic manner. If the previous exhibition makes you think, this one makes you feel.

Insomnia consists mostly of highly saturated, monochromatic shots. The subject matter is often out of focus; the shots appear impromptu and almost amateurish, taken in poorly lit settings. The result is surprisingly unsettling, like a series of images extracted out of delirious dreams. In Tim Maul's pictures in the previous exhibition, the "supernatural presence" remains resolutely invisible, the space between what is seen and what is real, a wide chasm. By contrast, in d'Agata's montage, the photographs create for the viewer such a visceral experience that one is transported to the very spot that the photograph was taken - the gap between seeing and believing is apparently eliminated.

D'Agata is distinguished from traditional documentary photography in that he pays more attention to capturing and rendering a sense of experience than he does to techniques and aesthetics. This is evident from his photographs, where the subjects, in contrast to the artificial airbrushed images popular today, appear before you bleak, unpretentious, without poses or pouts, oblivious to the lenses before them and internalised in a world of their own. There are some with smudged makeup, some with bared sagging breasts, and others with unfashionably large bellies. According to d'Agata, photography is not a tool to describe the world, but an instrument to help him deal with his personal relationship with the world. His subject matter is people and places he has met in chance encounters while on the road. "I have a hunger for the unknown", he has said. And it is this hunger for the unknown that has allowed him to describe so intimately a world that is known only in the eyes of the beholder.

Both exhibitions are on until this Sunday, 27th January, at The Photographers Gallery. www.photonet.org.uk

LA TASCA IN COVENT GARDEN : RESTAURANT REVIEW

one meal from two perspectives, [danielb.yates](#) has lost it and basically furious, and [loisjeary](#) is very late indeed

6.40 pm. Arriving injudiciously early for dinner at La Tasca I found myself forced to kill time. Fortunately the restaurant houses a vestibular bar, a narrow terracotta corridor crammed with bijou ornaments of a faintly Iberian ilk, so I wedged myself into a bar stool, ordered a beer from the bare-armed barman and after checking my phone and finding it dead, I waited.

7 pm. A North American man talked loudly over my shoulder, volubly mispronouncing tapas as 'tape-ass'. I stared at my beer and thought of the scene in Terry Zwigoff's *Crumb* where the brother of the famed cartoonist happily demonstrates his ritual of passing a spool of audio tape through his digestive system in a chirpier manner than one might expect from a person pulling endless reams of cassette component out of their arse. I try to remember whether it was actually linen tape he was using in the film and my memory had just updated it for the media age, but decided that it was basically immaterial.

7.02pm I wonder if he just uses old tapes he's got hanging around, or specifically uses albums or storybooks that he really likes and wouldn't mind having deep inside him. I consider the feasibility of using the discarded tape 'post-facto' for audio purposes in some kind of rubbish conceptual art piece. I wonder about the mechanics of creating a tape machine out of a human. Time passes slowly.

7.37 pm. Flicking a single olive from one side of a bowl to the other is a decidedly limited form of entertainment. There are no meaningful goals and purpose is elusive. I can pronounce on this matter with confidence because aimlessly prodding the amuse bouche has been my main preoccupation for the last quarter of an hour. I order another beer. Where is she? Man, am I going to have words. That is if I'm not too drunk by the time she gets here to actually speak those words.

7.something pm. Surrounded by all this Spanish kitsch and wondering whether I was being stood-up as some hilarious practical joke, I begin to feel a little like Don Quixote. I am considering mounting a straw donkey, arming myself with a cocktail stick and waddling out into Covent Garden to find myself a windmill - if for no other reason than to cover an inglorious exit from the restaurant as some poor fucker who's just been stood up. But thankfully at that precise moment my prodigal companion hoves into view, a flustered bundle of apology, and we are led off into the vast caverns of La Tasca.

The most notable thing about the restaurant is its architectural centre-piece. The entire complex is built around a monumental wrought-iron spiral staircase - a thrusting helix of rough ballustrade and hammered risers penetrating the entire four floors of the building. Patrolled by a steady stream of staff winding their way up and down its determinedly un-ornamental course, it reminded me of a Tatlin's tower for the pre-media age, all gawky and overscaled iron. Indeed, so large was the staircase in comparison to the rooms through which it bored, that it had the effect of making the diners perched around its edges look a little like bats, clustered into the eaves of a cave, the vast central space dwarfing their tiny clinking presences.

With a bewildering array of dishes, most of which seemed to entail some overly-specific treatment of a dead pig, we chose not to choose and opted for set meal number 2, an option which sold itself quite unequivocally as 'meat'. It was fulsome and myriad, dish after dish being crammed onto our pin-headed table by our brusque and efficient waitress. I ate, drank and was decidedly too merry to remember the food with any degree of accuracy. However when a restaurant is all about the staircase, it probably speaks more eloquently than I could about the dining experience as a whole.

7pm. I am lucky enough to have been blessed with a remarkable sense of direction. Loved-ones gasp in admiration as I navigate my way around foreign cities or aisles of Topshop, finding my way to anywhere I please with a smug look on my face. So I don't look at maps or directions when I go somewhere new - 'I'll find it', I tell myself, in all my arrogant glory.

7.15pm Unfortunately, it appears now that my special powers have deserted me and Covent Garden is proving to be a bitch when you're late and lost. Tourists creep along the pavement and meet any plea for directions with a bemused look and thoroughly useless response delivered in a provincial accent.

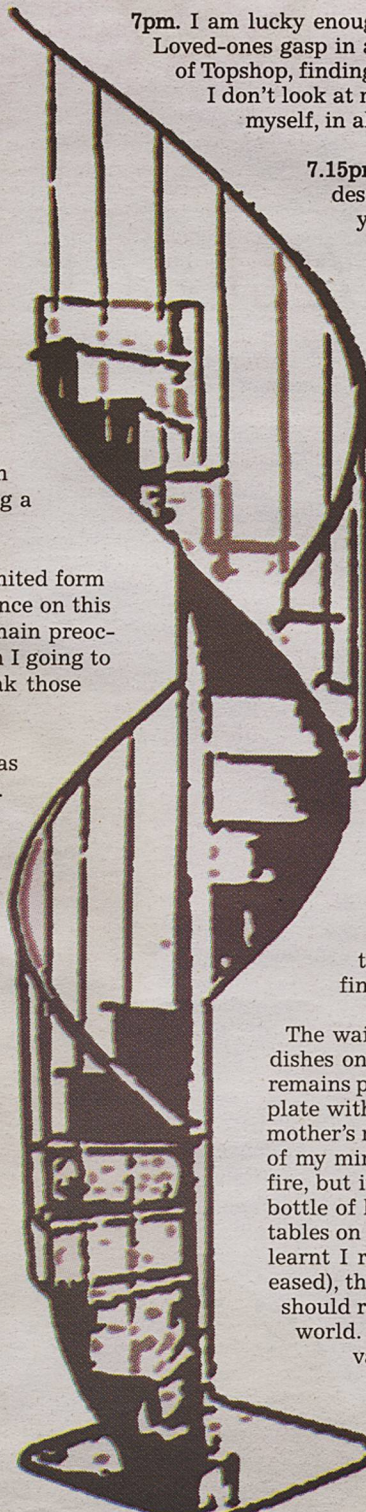
7.25pm All the roads look the same, jutting off in odd directions and never joining up where you think they should, and yes, I get that awful realisation that I have been walking in a circle for five precious minutes and have ended up exactly where I started from. The elderly man in the Transport Museum seems to point into the sky when I ask him for directions and things are not looking good. My potential dining companion (and that's he can be at the moment, a possibility) has his phone switched off.

So, when I finally arrive at La Tasca, more through luck than judgment, I am harassed and hungry, the loud flamenco music and colourful, busy décor does nothing to calm me down, I apologise profusely to my dining companion, who frankly looks too drunk to care, and we are seated by our gracious and efficient waitress.

For the indecisive (and greedy) tapas is like manna from heaven. I have spent hours stressing over menus, trying to choose and driving dining companions mad. For the poor student who doesn't eat out very often, picking the right meal is a matter of life and death. Think of the disappointment if your food comes and you realise you actually wanted something else! It does not bear thinking about. Luckily, with tapas you can have a little bit of everything and my fantasy of ordering half the menu without getting strange looks is finally fulfilled.

The waitress skilfully arranges and rearranges the infinite number of dishes on the small table, yet is defeated by the plate of chorizo, which remains precariously perched on the edge of the table. I repeatedly fill my plate with only paella, omelette, potatoes and bread, pushing my grandmother's mantra 'a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips' to the back of my mind. The food is simple, safe and will not set anyone's world on fire, but it is done well, tastes perfectly pleasant and with a serviceable bottle of house red and some drunken company, succeeds in turning the tables on an initially inauspicious evening. By the end of the night I have learnt I really don't like chorizo (which is tough, spicy and looks diseased), that playing with the drippy wax on candles will hurt and that I should really start looking at maps before heading off into the big wide world. La Tasca has the honour of serving up food that is at least a vaguely accurate reflection of what real Spanish tapas looks and tastes like. Given the English's skilled abuse of most foreign cuisines, this is a rare treat.

La Tasca is on Essex road and costs about £15 each with wine.



Features

Security in South Asia

Red isn't Dead

Pakistan's people are forging their own revolution

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica



With every sign that the world will enter economic recession - and no sign of real change heralded by the forthcoming elections in the US - it looks like the torch of civilisation is being carried by the downtrodden of the earth. Indeed, the aftermath of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto appears to have sparked a movement with the potential to bring true freedom and justice across Asia.

Not long before the assassination, President Pervez Musharraf had declared emergency rule, delayed Pakistani elections and enforced virtual censorship on all TV and radio stations. George Bush proudly announced that "some believe that the only solution for government in parts of the world is for there to be tyranny or despotism. I don't believe that. The Pakistan people have proven that those cynics are wrong. And where President Musharraf can help in world peace is to help remind people what is possible."

Indeed, the American Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, stated that his greatest concern about Pakistani politics was that the instability of emergency rule would distract the army from the fight against 'extremist forces.' We're in the war on terror, people, so don't you forget it! Never mind that this is the very same Robert Gates who, as Director of the CIA, pumped billions into the Afghan resistance movement a USSR forces occupying their country from 1979 - helping the Taliban to gain power.

In fact, people on the streets of Pakistan didn't blame religious extremists for Bhutto's murder, but President Musharraf's regime. Whatever the exact details of the assassination, the conspiracy against democracy without doubt reaches high up into the structures of the Pakistani army and state. Pakistan from its very birth was part and parcel of imperialist divide and rule policies in the subcontinent. Immediately after its formation in 1947 the US recognised it as a useful Cold War client state and encouraged economic growth through the military. By 1950, the army was the largest employer in Pakistan, quickly tightening its grasp over all forms of Pakistani politics. No single democratically elected leader has served out their term since then. Today, after years of intermittent military rule, thirty five percent of the population live in poverty. This is the same proportion as in 1970.

But not all is doom and gloom. The mass movements of the late 1960s in Pakistan led by students, peasants and workers climaxed in March 1969 after a student was shot dead protesting the hike in sugar prices. What followed was one of the largest industrial strikes in the region's history, paralysing Karachi and toppling the repressive regime of Ayub Khan. Benazir Bhutto's father - Zulfikar Ali Bhutto - was propelled to power on a wave of popular support under the slogan 'bread, clothing and shelter'. Within a few years of his election, though, Bhutto had abandoned his slogans and talk of socialism, and immediately launched a savage attack on the largest workers' movement in the history of the country. Having destroyed his own mass base and that of his Pakistan People's Party, Bhutto opened the way for the military coup of Zia ul-Haq in 1977.

The same danger lay in the return of the person Tariq Ali has called 'the daughter of the West'. As he points out, Bhutto "had returned the favour [when the West arranged for talks between the general and herself] in advance by expressing sympathy for the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, lunching with the Israeli ambassador to the UN (a litmus test) and pledging to "wipe out terrorism" in her own country." If the betrayal of the Pakistani people by Benazir Bhutto's father is anything to go by, the wealthy elites are not interested in serious concessions on behalf of the Pakistan's poor.

Now, the PPP is at a crossroads. The coming elections are unlikely to be free or fair - nor can they reflect the mood of anger on the streets. The entire ruling class is full of fear and mistrust. Meanwhile, there are deep stirrings at the bottom of Pakistani society, with lawyers, students, workers and peasants all striking and protesting in the last couple of years. According to Lenin, when those at the top are no longer able to rule as before, and those at the bottom are no longer prepared to accept the return of the old regime, the conditions are ripe for revolution.

Blue is True

Why Gordon Brown is right not to harp on China's human rights

Annette Pacey



Prime Minister Gordon Brown can't seem to get anything right lately: still dithering over whether or not to nationalise the stricken Northern Rock bank, he somehow managed to call one of his ministers incompetent without apparently seeing any need to sack him.

So it came as something of a relief to hear his comments on Britain's economic relationship with China, which he described as crucial. At a joint press conference with Chinese premier Wen Jiabao Mr Brown announced new targets to increase trade between the two nations. He is convinced more trade will bring jobs to Britain as British brands become popular with increasingly affluent Chinese consumers. Perhaps sensing an opportunity created by some hostility to Chinese investment in the US and Europe, Mr Brown declared that he wants Britain to be the "number one destination of choice for Chinese business as it invests in the rest of the world."

But it is China's investments elsewhere in the world which cause discomfort in some quarters. Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg called on Mr Brown to raise the issue of Darfur and China's ties to the Sudanese government, while Kate Allen of Amnesty International said that Mr Brown must make it clear that Britain does not approve of China's record on human rights. Although there was a brief statement on Darfur at the press conference, China seems unwilling to pay much more than lip service to human rights issues. Should Mr Brown allow human rights to take priority over Britain's economic interests?

Few could argue that China's human rights record is anything to be proud of: a photo published in the Economist recently of Chinese prisoners being lined up to be executed was a particularly grim illustration of the situation at home. But what really causes concern in Europe and America is China's refusal to attach human rights conditions to its aid and investments in the developing world. This is particularly evident in Africa, where China has found business partners in countries where European governments fear to tread. In Sudan, which has been accused of committing genocide in Darfur, China is heavily involved in oil production. Similarly, China seems relaxed about investing even when there is reason to suspect corruption. In 2006 the state-run oil firm CNOOC bought a large stake in a Nigerian oil field from a former Defence Minister who had been "awarded" it during military rule. China seems content to leave the moral questions to the West as it goes about securing its supply of energy and raw materials from Africa. At a recent LSE lecture from by Huang Rengang, a Chinese WTO delegate, a student asked about China's sense of moral responsibility when doing business with suspect regimes in Africa. The response was clear and unapologetic. China suffered in the past from conditionality attached to loans and aid, and it has no intention of imposing the same burden on its developing country business partners today.

The superior moral tone that Britain and Europe have sometimes adopted when lecturing others about human rights not only sits a little uncomfortably with the legacy of European colonialism in Africa and elsewhere; more importantly, it may well have serious economic repercussions. Last September German Chancellor Angela Merkel, one European leader who has made a point of challenging China's human rights record, upset the Chinese government by inviting the Dalai Lama for an official reception. In protest the Chinese cancelled an official visit by German Finance Minister Peer Steinbrück, causing worries in the German business community. The incident had the effect of souring important business relations - while achieving precisely nothing for human rights. It is a lesson Mr Brown appears to have taken on board.

Since China appears utterly indifferent to Western liberal opinion on human rights and corruption, it is entirely futile and certainly rather reckless to put these issues before Britain's economic interests. Perhaps closer ties will allow Britain to bring its influence to bear on China's attitude to human rights over time, but for now Mr Brown's priorities are correct. Nice to see he can get it right for a change.

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Notes on Nothing

The Greening of Houghton Street

Much done, much still to do - the School should tell us more about its environmental plans.

Do EcoCampus, BREEAM and ISO 14001 mean anything to you? They are certainly going to. This alphabet soup forms the tranche of environmental standards the London School of Economics intends to meet as it pursues sustainability and efficiency both on its existing campus and in the buildings that will form the new wave of its expansion beyond Houghton Street's confines.

The School - and Student Union - should do more to tell students about these long-term plans for improving environmental governance, not least because they are largely a tale of good things being done and progress being made. The current drive for EcoCampus certification will be a long process, but the School's management is already deeply committed to seeing it through. The New Academic Building nearing completion on 24 Kingsway is expected to achieve the equivalent of an A++ rating in meeting current environmental standards, including 'very good' or 'excellent' on the well-established BREEAM measure. The next generation of the Student Union's government - whoever wins this term's elections - will also likely make the environment the core of its agenda. We even have waterless urinals installed across campus.

For all that, however, this is still not enough. The School is a premier academic institution with immense political clout. Where it leads, other universities, and other vast chunks of civil society, will surely follow. We must therefore take a giant leap into the future of green architecture now, when this period of expansion gives us the chance. That future will in any case catch up with us sooner than we think, as the Government introduces ever tougher environmental regulations, and as the scale of the world's impending ecological black hole becomes more apparent. 'Very good' or 'excellent' as it is likely to be, it is hard not to feel the New Academic Building was an opportunity missed. Plans for the new (and in its detail, so far mostly hypothetical) Student Union building must raise the School's environmental ambitions to new heights. The crumbling, inefficient Towers hulking above Houghton Street, earmarked for demolition just forty years into their life span, are a cautionary tale about making false economies in the School's architectural expansion.

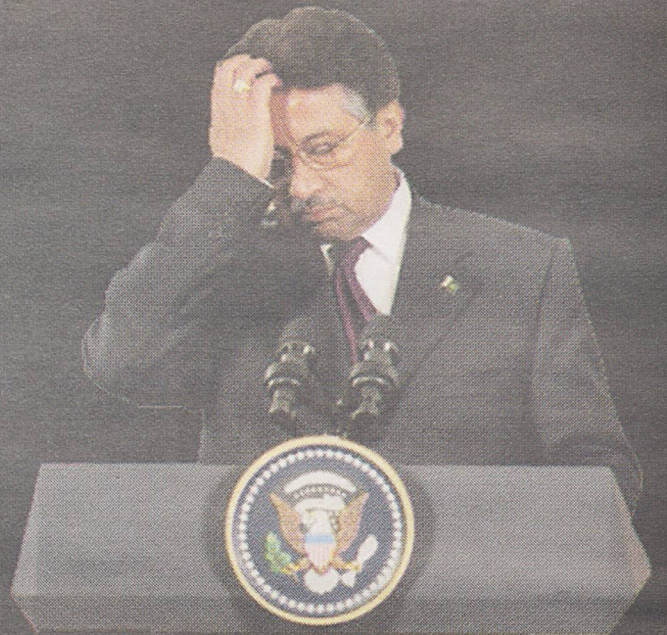
The School should also make clear that the greening of Houghton Street - and beyond - will be done in as rigorous a fashion as possible. LSE academics will carry out the audit of School waste management and efficiency programmes that is required for EcoCampus certification. Concerns over a conflict of interests are likely to prove misplaced - especially given the expertise being brought to bear by home talent in the Centre for Environmental Policy and Governance. Nevertheless, the School must do more to draft in external expertise.

It can do very little, though, if students do not take steps to reduce their own environmental footprint at the same time. LSE cleaners have to sift through the School's recycling bins in their own time for items we carelessly throw in which are only good for landfill. Some of the rules on recycling seem finicky - plastic bottles can be put in the bins, their plastic lids cannot - but, like the School, we are going to have to change our behaviour sooner or later. And it is better, and prudent, that we all did it sooner.

Joseph Cotterill
Features Editor



Crisis, after crisis, after crisis: clockwise from left: Lawyers protest the Chief Justice's dismissal; Benazir Bhutto; soldiers patrol in Rawalpindi; supporters of Nawaz Sharif protest the state of emergency



PAKISTAN'S BLACK HOLE

A recent cover of the Economist magazine labelled Pakistan as the most dangerous country in the world. In the aftermath of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, both domestically and internationally an already prevalent sense of pessimism has been magnified. Whether or not Bhutto could return Pakistan to democracy, whether she was responsible for corruption or whether her previous governments were incompetent as the presidents of the time claimed will continue to be debated. However, what is certain is that Bhutto's return to Pakistan, due to US pressure on President Pervez Musharraf, was a step towards the creation of a viable moderate coalition, with the nation's largest political faction, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), forming a government headed by Bhutto. It was hoped that such an arrangement (with the Presidency remaining in the hands of Mr Musharraf) would help to strengthen the country's democratic credentials, while also harnessing popular support to forward policies in support of the War on Terror.

With her assassination the largest political force in the nation has lost its charismatic leader, creating a leadership void that cannot be filled. It is perhaps the dearth of choice that has already existed at the ballot that has been highlighted by Bhutto's assassination. The PPP is still likely to perform very well in the upcoming elections; however, it will struggle to gain votes in the Punjab, Baluchistan and most of the Northwest Frontier. At best it is likely to become the largest holder of seats in parliament – but without enough to form a government. The ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q), which has remained allied to President Musharraf, is likely to gain other large chunks of the vote. It has, however, faced a recent decline in popularity due to recent

socio-economic stresses. While the PML-Q over the past four years or so has been the King Maker party because of its ties to Mr Musharraf, it has also during this period presided over one of the fastest periods of economic growth. While the equity of this growth is debatable, recent events have overshadowed the



The now routine deployment of paramilitary troops in tense urban centres has only helped to create fear and uncertainty

achievements of the past. The sacking of the Chief Justice, the siege at the Red Mosque and a spate of sustained suicide attacks have helped to unravel the economic confidence that had been developing both among the consumers of Pakistan itself, and in foreign investors abroad. Importantly, the state's defence apparatus has been

involved in military operations within its borders with ever greater frequency. Insurgency in Baluchistan, Taliban-sheltering tribes in the border regions with Afghanistan, militancy in Swat (a tourist hotspot) and the now routine deployment of paramilitary troops in tense urban powder kegs like Karachi and Islamabad have only helped to create fear and uncertainty. The state's ability to protect its citizens has effectively been compromised.

While critical of the government, opposition parties have failed in developing national scale movements, as they have no alternative policy prescriptions to offer. Mrs Bhutto, had she got into government, was likely to have intensified military action which may have created further complications, while the PML-Q is likely to continue with the current set of policies. Leaders such as Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan, though vocal, face challenges in their own right. Mr Sharif is not eligible to stand for election, while Mr Khan and his party have only been able to secure one seat in two previous general elections. Until recently, the most potent of the opposition parties was an alliance of religious groups, the Mutihaida Majlis Amal (MMA). However, infighting and a lack of consensus amongst the various party leaders has led to the dissolution of the alliance. Fragmented into individual parties, they are unlikely to perform any better as the religious conservative vote becomes split amongst each faction.

Major power outages and shortages in the availability of grain, as well as rising inflation, have become more immediate concerns to the electorate rather than the War on Terror. Once again, none of the opposition groups in their manifestos have articulated any solution to this string of problems. Pakistan is entering another

dangerous stage of its history, where an election is essentially being run on whether Mr Musharraf should stay or go. In terms of policies towards the War on Terror and the economy, nothing is likely to change.

The most intense glimmer of hope of the last few months has been the movement to restore the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, dismissed by the President after the Court struck down his declaration of a state of emergency and suspension of the constitution. Having brought together the entire legal community, the movement also mobilised large segments of civil society in support. Furthermore, members of the middle and upper middle classes also participated in the movement, and, perhaps most important of all, student involvement was primary in the effort. Unfortunately, though the Chief Justice was initially reappointed, he was in the end forcibly removed from his post. While Western powers criticised the imposition of emergency rule in November, very little pressure was brought down on Mr Musharraf to restore the judiciary that had declared his actions illegal in the first place. Most of them have now been sacked.

With an impotent judiciary, a non-functional legislature and a rubber stamp executive, President Musharraf remains in firm control. Benazir Bhutto's assassination has, at the very least, quenched any hope of political stability in the country. Terrorist groups have effectively won the War on Terror on the Pakistani front, having eliminated any hope of a moderate grand coalition, destroyed fledgeling confidence in Pakistan's emerging economy, and engaged the military in a protracted war. All the while, Mr Musharraf continues to face international pressure to do more to fight back. Expect things to get worse before they get better. ■

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL CAN PAKISTAN STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK?

The Pakistani army is fleeing fort after fort in the face of heavy fighting in its frontier insurgencies. Police are on alert for terrorist attacks during President Musharraf's visit to Europe this week. Still - look on the bright side:

India hasn't so far taken advantage of its old enemy's domestic turmoil, for example to force a settlement on Kashmir in its favour. This disputed territory has brought the two countries to war several times in their history, most recently in the 1999 Kargil War.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal remains quite secure. Scattered in sites far from the ructious Afghan border, it can only be activated through an elaborate system of command. Rumoured US contingency plans to remove the weapons in the event of civil war will likely not be needed.

The Islamist groups who would like to get their hands on them are, and are likely to remain, a minority force in Pakistani society, being unable to break out of their Northwestern power bases.

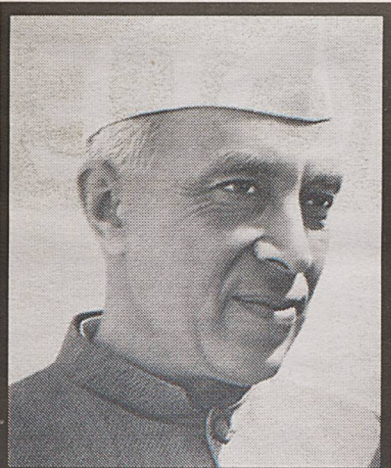


DEJA VU DEMOCRACY

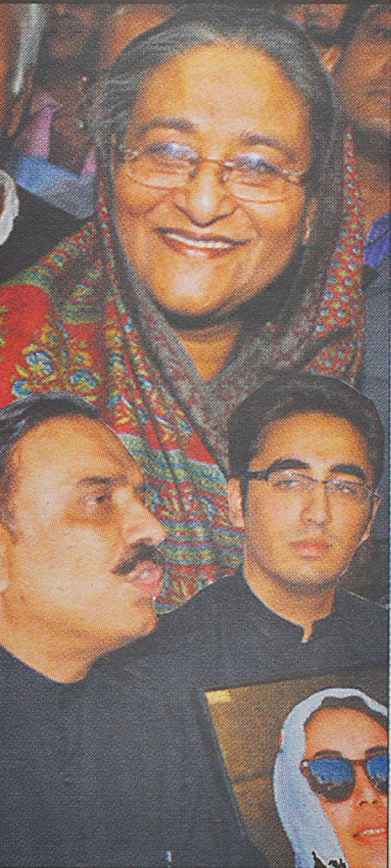
Sonya Misquitta explores the dynastic tradition in South Asian politics



Gandhi, Gandhi, Gandhi: (l-r) Indira, Rajiv, Sonia



Democratic dynasts; top to bottom: Jawarhalal Nehru; Sheikh Hasina; Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari



My mother always said democracy is the best revenge," announced Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, three days after his mother Benazir was assassinated. Bhutto, a nineteen-year old student at Oxford, was speaking at a press conference where he and his father Asif Ali Zardari proclaimed themselves as the political heirs to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)—a party which was founded by Bilawal's grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967. In doing so, the father-son duo is trying to cash in on the Bhutto family name at the Pakistani elections next month. Benazir Bhutto, two-time Prime Minister of Pakistan, styled herself as a "champion of democracy" and a viable alternative to President Musharraf. The succession move is widely seen as opportunistic, and exposes the farcical nature of these elections. Indeed what is the alternative to a dictator when the chairman of one of Pakistan's largest political parties is a nineteen year old, with a father who has spent eleven years of his life in prison on corruption charges, running matters from the background?

Dynastic politics is peculiar to the subcontinent. Apart from the Bhuttos, the history of the Congress Party in India has very much been the history of the Nehru-Gandhi family. For thirty-seven of the sixty years since independence, one family has essentially ruled India. In Bangladesh, the political culture recently became based on the personal rivalry between Sheikh Hasina Wajeb and Khalida Zia. With a military backed civilian government in power, the situation there bears a striking resemblance to Pakistan. In Sri Lanka for many years the political space was dominated by Senanayakes and the Bandaranaiques.

Dr. Ben Hopkins, Tutorial Fellow in the International History department at the LSE, attributes South Asia's dynastic politics to "an outgrowth of the 'big man' patronage politics which developed and entrenched itself during the colonial period." Voters, the majority of whom are uneducated, pledge an almost feudal devotion to their local leaders. These leaders then peddle their vote

bank to national parties, promising votes in return for greater clout in the next administration. However, loyalties can change over time. Traditional voter ties to family, region, caste and religion still remain, but increasingly the voter demands and comes to expect more from their politicians. Populism works up to a point, as does a romanticised notion of history; but dynasty, like recycled wine, becomes vinegar after a while.

Nowhere are these changes as evident as in India. Nehru once publicly declared that "the concept of dynastic succession is altogether foreign to a parliamentary democracy like ours, besides being repugnant to my own mind." Ironically it was his own daughter, Indira Gandhi, who strove to build the Gandhi dynasty, ruthlessly and unabashedly. She groomed her son Sanjay for the top job until his sudden death in an air crash. Today, it is Rajiv's family that is carrying on the Gandhi legacy. The family's dominance of the Congress has had the effect of creating smaller regional parties, representing a multitude of interests, each determined to overthrow Congress rule. The power the Gandhi family once exerted on the national political scene is now considerably diminished by coalition politics. However, dynastic succession at the national level has had an effect on certain regional parties as well, which strive to keep political power within the family to protect political fiefdoms—perpetuating dynastic rule to an extent.

Ayesha Jalal, a prominent historian of Pakistan, says that "the stop-and-go nature of Pakistani democracy, constantly interrupted by successive military dictators, gives little chance for grass-roots politics to take root". Neither has it given dynastic succession a chance to take root, largely because of the predominance of the military in politics. Musharraf is one of four generals who have held near-absolute power for just over half of Pakistan's existence. Politics in the subcontinent's garrison states is in such a state of flux that dynasty finds itself struggling to survive and remain relevant. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is the military which is the centre of

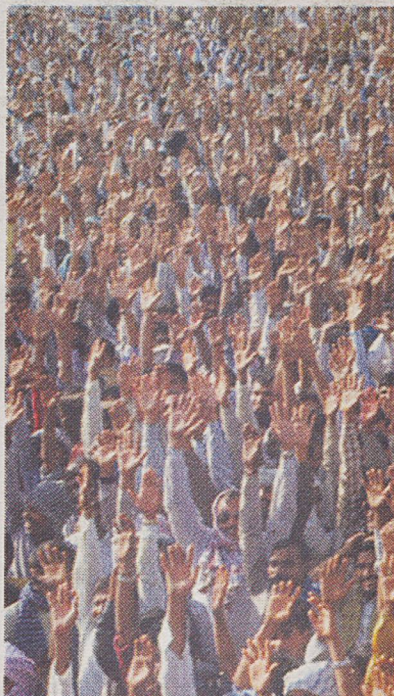
power, leaving the voter marginalised.

For Bangladesh, it is hard not to be reminded of Pakistan. It is afflicted by many of the same ills: Islamism is a rising threat; corruption has eroded the political system; democracy appears a luxury too dear for the present; and the military, as the foremost professional institution, is the most trustworthy partner against the

widow of General Ziaur Rahman, who took charge of the country after Sheik Mujibur and many members of his family were assassinated just four years after independence, were grossly incompetent and corrupt. The current military backed government there is headed by a technocrat former central bank governor, Fakhruddin Ahmed. Thus far, the government has declined to fix a date for the postponed election. Instead, it has unveiled an ambitious package of political and other reforms that beg the question of just how long it intends to stay in power. Widespread approval for this stems from the grim calculation that the alternative could be far worse: a rigged election followed by a bloodbath.

Sri Lanka too has had two political dynasties: the Senanayake family (Don Stephen and son Dudley) and the Bandaranaike family, starting with Solomon Dias, whose widow Sirimavo in 1959 became the world's first female prime minister. Their daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga, who was president from 1994 to 2005 had her mother, as her prime minister. Although the country has a new president, it is doubtful whether dynasty has run its course in Sri Lanka.

For now, however, the world's focus remains on the post-dynastic politics of Pakistan. Political choice in Pakistan consists of a military dictator, a feudal aristocrat, a family desperate to hold on to power and a coalition of religious parties. It is hoped that Pakistan can make the transition to democracy, for its own stability and for the stability of the sub-continent. With Benazir gone, and the State in disarray, it is extremely difficult to predict what might happen. There is talk of an anti-Musharraf alliance coming together. Musharraf has predictably kept his cards close to his chest but the outcome of this election could well be determined by the military. As Dr Hopkins ominously puts it: "Pakistan equals the military equals Pakistan". It is difficult to see how this equation will change without massive change, which will likely come at the cost of significant violence." ■



South Asian voters increasingly demand more of their politicians. Populism works up to a point, as does a romanticised notion of history; but dynasty, like recycled wine, becomes vinegar after a while

rise of Islamism. The two political dynasties, one headed by Hasina Wajed, the daughter of the country's founding father, Sheik Mujibur Rahman; the second by Khaleda Zia,

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The politics of famine
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The Elephant and the Dragon tango for Asian supremacy

Hunger is still looming large over Asia. Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan have recently declared severe food shortages, while North Korea, South Korean researchers say, may face a famine after devastating floods destroyed crops in August 2007. Afghanistan has already appealed for foreign help, while Bangladesh has turned to India to discuss the possibility of wheat imports. The problem is not new. History shows how fragile is the breaking point between "normality" and hunger in several Asian countries. Natural causes, such as droughts, floods and bad weather, have repeatedly triggered crop failures and subsequent famines in the past. Afghanistan experienced severe food crises in 1997, while Bangladesh did the same in 2003 and 2004. A bad drought in Pakistan caused hunger in the southern provinces of Baluchistan and Singh in 2000; only foreign aid prevented the harsh consequences. North Korea's famine record is even more depressing. "All families will know someone who has died of malnutrition," claims Hazel Smith, Professor of International Relations at Warwick University, who has visited the country with UNICEF. Having lost two million people to famine in the Nineties, North Korea has only managed to avoid disaster since with aid from international relief organisations, the United States and South Korea.

This time around, soaring prices on the global market and rising political instability are causing Asia's current food crisis. However, underlying causes of famine hide deeper. Famines do not in fact occur because there is a general shortage of food in a country, according to the Nobel Prize-winning Indian economist, Amartya Sen. It is distribution mechanisms that fail. At the same time, inflated prices make food unaffordable for large chunks of the population. The recent crisis in Pakistan seems to support this claim. With last season's wheat yield of more than 23 million tonnes, above the necessary annual average, the country should not be experiencing a shortage. However, burdened by the social unrest that has surrounded the murder of Benazir Bhutto, the government has been unable to "manage the available stock of flour", says Farooq Ahmed Khan of the Food Committee, as he is quoted in the Pakistani Daily Times. Moreover, the Utility Store Corporation, which has been selling flour almost 6 times lower than the inflated market price, does not have enough outlets to serve the whole population.

Compare Pakistan's plight with India. Why is this country not affected as much by rising food prices or natural disasters? Although poverty and malnutrition levels are still high, the government has in fact managed to avoid famine since the Seventies. What is the recipe for such an achievement? Mr Sen thinks that it is democracy, stupid. He is convinced that "no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with relatively free press," and that the Indian experience supports this statement. Part of the success has been attributed to a "Green Revolution" in agricultural productivity. After thousands of people were left to starve by famines in 1966, "mutant" Mexican wheat was introduced and successfully cultivated by Indian farmers. By 1974, production had grown to such an extent that India was self-sufficient in food production.

Government policies were even more significant. Through employment schemes, the Indian government gave purchasing power to the poor; this made them capable of buying food even when it became expensive. Moreover, food distribution was radically expedited. The government accumulated grain reserves next to rural roads, and learned how to spot distress and move grain quickly around the country. Indian democracy was crucial to the success. Both the press and opposition parties acted in identifying famine threats, pressurising

Democracy, Dictatorship, and Asia's Third Horseman

With the continent in the grip of a food shortage, **Natalia Telepneva** dissects the politics of famine



ing the government to deal effectively with the problem. Now compare India with the current governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan or North Korea, and part of the explanation for those countries' constant food shortages may become clearer.

It is not to say that if a country happens to be an autocracy, the population is bound to starve. "What really matters is the quality of governance, a point that the World Bank now accepts even if it is determined to define good governance in terms of 'democratisation' or even 'participation,'" writes LSE Professor Stuart Corbridge in 'Development as Freedom: the Spaces of Amartya Sen'. The most disputed example is that of China. Having lived through a devastating famine in 1958-1960 that claimed thirty million lives, the government puts food security at the top of its priorities. China's authoritarian regime has long since managed to achieve self-sufficiency in grain production, and it is only now that dwindling water supplies and a high pace of industrialisation have forced it to import food from abroad. Chinese farmers are obliged to meet the country's grain demand; speculation is punished, and GM technology has been adopted widely. For example, in 1997-99, the Economist reports, China gave "twenty-six commercial approvals for GM crops, including transgenic peppers, tomatoes, rice and cotton". With production costs down by fourtenth per cent, introduction of genetically-modified "Bt" cotton in particular has been most successful.

This could only be possible because China is a dictatorship and opposition voices can be easily silenced. By contrast, introduction of Bt cotton has not been possible in India due to pressure from NGOs. My critics applaud the success of the Chinese economic model and point out to the finding of the World Bank that in China, the number of people surviving on less than \$1 a day has fallen by around four hundred million, while the figure has dropped by only seventy million in India. Chinese policies however come at a cost of political freedoms and persistent rural poverty. Chinese peasants may no longer starve, but their living standards are not exactly skyrocketing, either. In the words of Mr Sen, "India has much to learn from China's experiences in healthcare and basic education... and from its intelligent and undogmatic economic policies. But there is little for India to learn on the alleged virtues of China's authoritarian politics." While disagreement over the relative merits of authoritarian and democratic models in Asia continues, the argument that Asian democracies have done better in feeding their own people remains strong.

Famines do not in fact occur because there is a general shortage of food. Distribution has failed. According to economist Amartya Sen, it is democracy, stupid



GLOBALISATION'S RUMBLING STOMACH HOW BAD IS THE CURRENT WORLD FOOD SHORTAGE GOING TO GET?

Fully one third of the world's people - including the populations of China, Russia and India - lives under government-imposed food price controls.

The global food supply's flagging ability to keep up with demand is in part due to China's emergence as the world's top consumer. The Chinese ate 64m tons of meat in 2004, compared to 38m for the United States.

While per capita consumption in China remains low, it is bearing down fast on developed world levels, with the middle class adopting Western dairy-rich diets en masse.

However, the end of cheap food is not just a story of surging demand. According to the Economist, about half of 2007's shortfall in world wheat production was due to fields

being turned over to the production of ethanol, an ecofriendly biofuel subsidised by governments from Brazil to the United States.

A third driver behind the rise in price of food is the increasing cost of its transportation. With oil due to surpass a landmark \$100 per barrel this year (and perhaps doubling in price again by the end of the next decade), it is difficult to see cheap food returning any time soon - barring an immense shift in policy by governments.



Last Tango in Beijing?

Preeya Sud assesses perhaps the most important diplomatic relationship of this century - between the Elephant and the Dragon

Last week saw further evidence of an emerging "Chindia," as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese premier Wen Jiabao signed a joint declaration pledging to expand trade and military ties. But is Chindia a credible scenario - just how well can the elephant and dragon tango?

Trade between the two emerging markets rose to over \$30 billion in 2007, and both sides have pledged to expand it to \$60 billion by 2010. In theory, the two countries are strong compliments to each other. Wen Jiabao likened India and China to "two pagoda's - one hardware and one software" which will be the economic powers of the twenty-first century. According to CLSA, an international research firm, a cooperative India and China would comprise a \$16 trillion economy by 2020. The size of the markets under its belt would dwarf other regions. The trade in mobile handsets would be worth \$100 billion alone, while an integrated market one and a half times as large as the US at present. Chindia would be an economic force to be reckoned with.

However, there are several forces disrupting the dance. In fact, Chindia may turn out to be more of a competition - China versus India, rather than China plus India. It is unlikely that either country will be happy to remain in their allotted "pagodas." Rivalry for markets, natural resources and strategic partners may easily explode, as China tries to expand services beyond its industrial "hardware," and India strives for a larger manufacturing base in its own right.

If growth depends on demographics and agricultural productivity, then India has the advantage, with a larger, younger workforce than China can muster. India is also a democracy - but this is both a blessing and a curse in the development race.

China's rapid development can be partly attributed to its autocratic rule. Unpopular but practical policies can be pushed through quickly. However, there is growing inequality and tension between the rich urban coast and restive rural populations deep in China's interior. Infant mortality rates are almost four times as high in these western provinces. Ensuing political instability would have massive ramifications for the

Chinese and South Asian economy, if not globally.

This is not a problem for India, whose democratic system ensures periodic changes of government and a vent for anguished populations. Despite the various factions and extremist groups that make up its political scene, India is stable compared to its South Asian neighbours, with no civil wars to date. Combined with its ties to the Commonwealth, this improves India's position in the eyes of investors. The downside to democracy, however, is a lengthy policy process, hindering infrastructure growth and investment.

Of course, how developed a country is depends on which measures constitute success: China's egalitarian ideology has lifted many out of poverty where India's elitism has failed. Yet this ideology also promotes an inefficient financial system, with the state promoting inefficient state businesses. This compares negatively to India, where firms have been forced to become super efficient users of capital. Thus, India has greater private international competitiveness, another plus for development.

Aside from this economic rivalry, the question of whether two such politically different countries can sustain a friendly cooperation also lingers. Historically, China has supported Delhi's old enemy Pakistan, while India harbours the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government. Border disputes led to a short war between the two nations in 1962. While all this is professed to be water under the bridge, these issues may merely be dormant rather than dead.

Even the steps towards Chindia's integrated economy are riddled with potential political pitfalls, since the trade between the two countries is also likely to be skewed in China's favour. In order to continue rapid development, India must expand its woefully lagging infrastructure - the capital and resources for which would be Chinese-supplied, and for which prices have risen markedly.

Other forces outside South Asia are also at play which could threaten the emerging Chindia. The United States, recognising the threat of a powerful developed China, has already sought ties with a litany of countries in and around Asia. These include Australia, Japan, South Korea

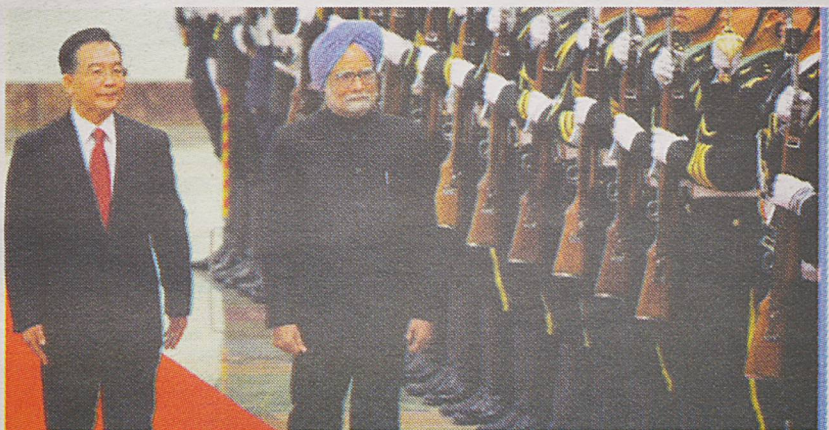
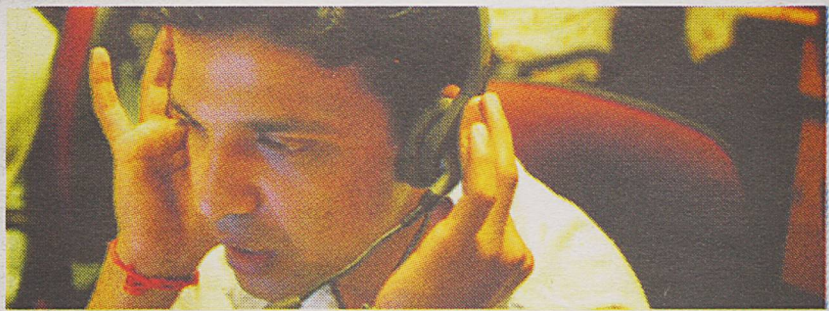
and, more recently, India. The March 2007 deal granting India American assistance in its civilian nuclear power project - which, incidentally, will make more fissile material available for its nuclear weapons programme - is evidence of this change in US foreign policy.

Nevertheless, India is wary of jumping on this particular anti-China bandwagon. The risk of the US losing interest and leaving an undeveloped India to face a hostile China is not one worth taking, when the gains of cooperation with Beijing are potentially huge.

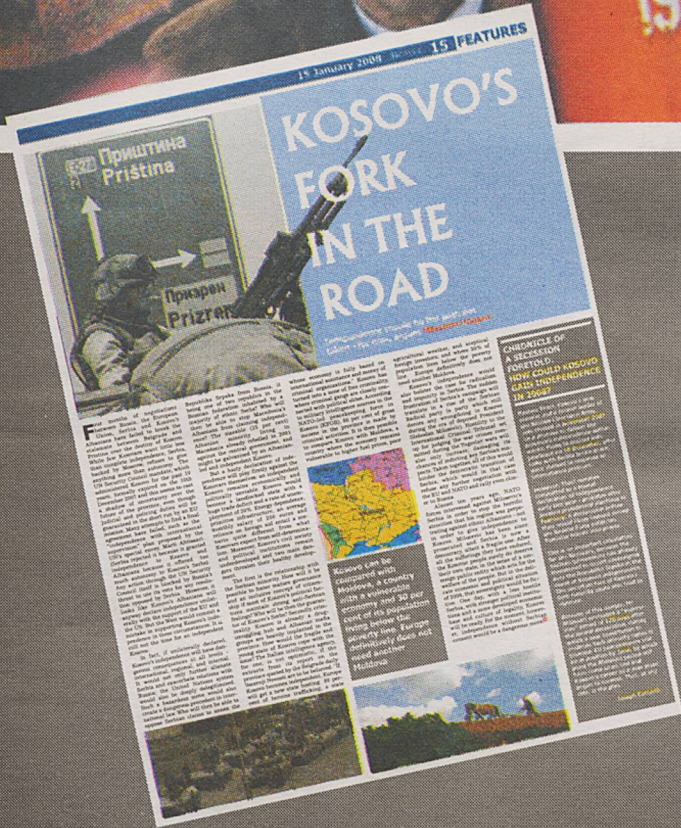
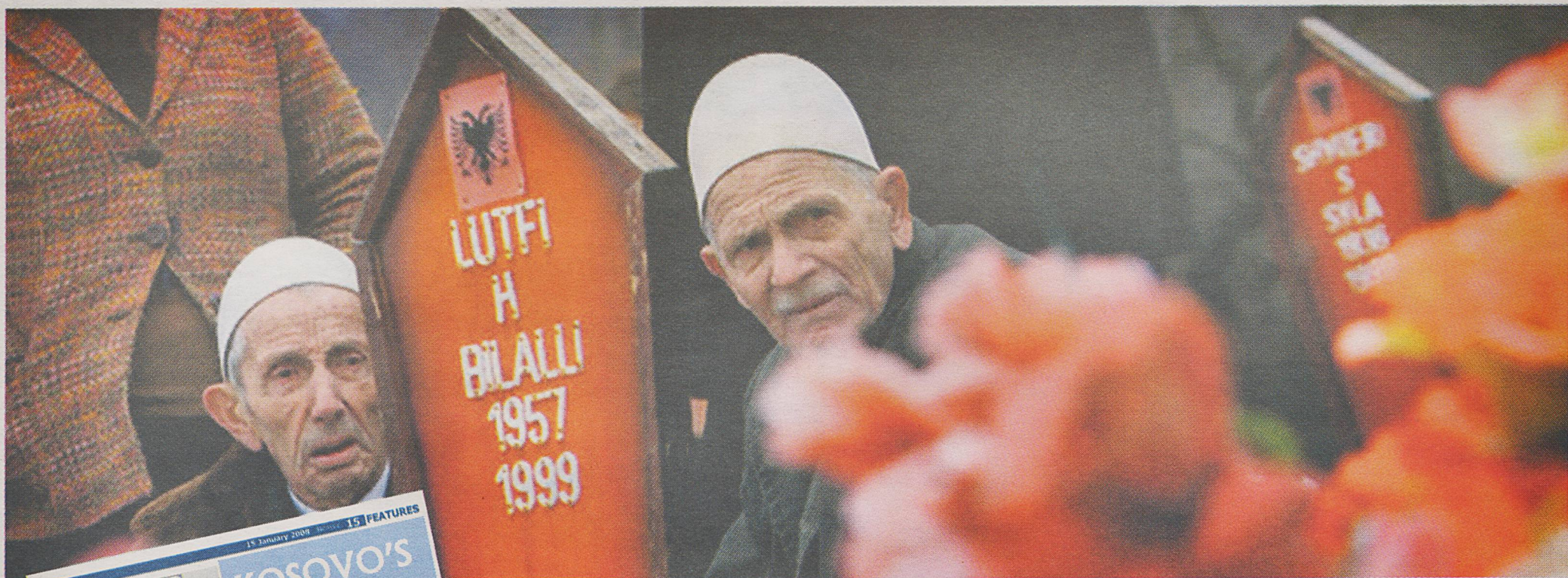
The key word, of course, is potential. China seems to be doing the equivalent of an international tap dance to thwart an anti-China alliance, one which may coax Delhi into Beijing's arms at long last. China signed a financial cooperation pledge with Japan and South Korea in May 2007, while general cooperation agreements were struck with Russia and Japan late last year. With so many pledges, it is hard to tell who China considers its real friends, and how fruitful these promises will be. If it is all smokescreen and trick mirrors then there is little chance India will be seduced, and hence little chance for Chindia.

But what about the other countries in South Asia? Will they matter in Chindia's world? The region is still a long way from Chindia - and there are other countries in South Asia which are far ahead in the game. Statistics from the World Bank show that the average time to start up a business in India is seventy-one days, next to forty-eight days in China. Compare both to Singapore, where a mere six days are needed to get a business rolling. Still, if Chindia does become the new economic superpower then proximity should boost other South Asian countries, giving them more clout than they may have today.

Though the realisation of Chindia would be a good thing for South Asia, and would definitely pose a new economic powerhouse, there are so many challenges to be overcome that Chindia is at best a long way off. The elephant and dragon are dancing a mean tango, but there may yet be murder on the dance floor. ■



Chindia may turn out to be a competition - China versus India, rather than China plus India. Rivalry for markets, natural resources and strategic partnerships may easily explode



Once again on Kosovo

Taking issue with the case made by Massimo Ungaro in last week's Features against a sovereign Kosovo in 2008, **Eno Trimcev** makes the argument in favour of independence

Massimo Ungaro's article 'Kosovo's Fork in the Road: Independence should be the path not taken' in the last issue of the *Beaver* is a nice example of getting (some of) the facts right and the interpretation wrong. It is true that Russia is trying to block American and European efforts to recognise the independence of Kosovo. It is also true that there have been many attempts at a solution. But almost everything else—that is, everything of importance—in the article is wrong.

Mr Ungaro declares that a unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo's representative institutions will have dangerous consequences at international, regional, and internal levels. Internationally, he claims, such a declaration would "further alienate" Serbia and Russia and delegitimise the United Nations. Mr Ungaro presumably thinks that decisions on the political futures of smaller people should be made with Moscow (or Beijing, or Washington) in mind. Feelings of inadequacy by the leaders in Kremlin should stand in the way of the self-determination of people half a world away. That may be so, but if it is, Mr Ungaro does not make the argument. He merely takes it for granted. But, thankfully, the rest of the world does not set its compass according to the wishes of the Kremlin.

On the issue of Serbia's "further alienation" at least Mr Ungaro is a little more expansive. He claims that should Kosovo's independence be recognised, nothing could prevent Serbia from annexing the Republika Srpska from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without getting into the legal niceties of the problem, there is one thing that goes against this claim: Serbia has not made a claim to Republika Srpska. Not only does Serbia not want

Republika Srpska, but Republika Srpska does not want Serbia either. So, there's another dead end.

As for the United Nations, that claim also needs some backing by Mr Ungaro, as it is not self-evident. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo—the international Raj that has governed the place so far—cannot wait to get out of there. Its boss, Mr Ruecker, keeps asking whoever is listening for the determination of the final status of Kosovo right now, so he can pack his bags and go home. It is a pity Mr Ungaro has not listened so far. Kosovo's independence process has the full backing of the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, who has repeatedly recognised the need for a final status to be determined right away. In other words, he is backing the West Europeans and Washington.

Mr Ungaro also claims that, regionally, Kosovo's independence would complicate things because it would bolster Serbian radicals. No mention is made by the full support that all other regional states—Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania and, less vocally, Bosnia-Herzegovina—have given to the process. Many of these countries are no friends of the Kosovars. But they know that only Kosovo's independence can hope to stabilise the Balkans and help the people of the region to move on. That is because they live right next door to the mess, and do not engage in global geopolitical games like the ex-KGB nomenklaturists in Kremlin. As for Serbia, it is high time that the international community stopped pampering Serbia as if it was a naughty teenager. Serbia gambled and lost. It had one hundred years to show that it could govern Kosovo with a minimum of decency, but at no point did it show such an inclination. In the end, it tried to

cleanse Kosovo of its own people, as Mr. Ungaro almost recognises. The free nations of the world stopped it. Now it is time to move on. As a final gesture of courtesy, the Kosovars will nevertheless wait until the Serbian elections at the end of this month and the beginning of February before they declare independence. After then, it will be so long, Serbia.

But it is when he builds the argu-

It is high time that the international community stopped pampering Serbia as if it was a naughty teenager. Serbia gambled on the control of Kosovo and lost

ment for the domestic consequences of independence that Mr. Ungaro gets the picture all wrong. He makes some serious claims: a weak economy, underdeveloped political institutions and a region in the grip of organised crime. These are all non-starters. Kosovo just came out of parliamentary, local and presidential elections on 17 January. Barely anyone noticed in the press—and that is why Mr. Ungaro may be forgiven—because the elections went without a hitch. Moreover, throughout the long process

of final status negotiations, all the main political actors in Kosovo put up a common front and took all decisions by consensus. It's as if Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg came together for a period of time of two years in order to better serve the national interest. Not bad for a young democracy.

On the issue of reconciliation with its Serb minority in particular, Kosovo's prime ministers have made a habit of addressing parliament in both Serbian and Albanian. Serbs have their posts in government and guaranteed seats in parliament that ensure their overrepresentation. Mr Ahtisaari's plan, which grants them perhaps more rights than any other minority in Europe, enjoys the support of all Kosovar parties and it has been ratified by Parliament. A great deal of money and resources in the Kosovar budget is going to ensure that Serbs can be integrated in Kosovar life. Again, this is not bad for an ethnic majority that faced physical extermination less than a decade ago.

As for Kosovo's poverty and its organised crime, the former is a non sequitur and the latter is plain wrong. The justice of recognising new states has never relied on economic arguments. It can be denied on political and legal grounds. But no people can be denied their political future because of GDP per capita.

Finally, the claims that Mr. Ungaro makes on organised crime are simply not true. He cites the dubious assertions of an Italian intelligence agency from a Belgrade daily—hardly a careful choice of sources!—to back his point. In fact, Kosovo's crime levels are quite low, as prestigious think tanks such as the European Stability Initiative have found out. The Kosovo Police Service is among the most popular institutions in

Kosovo, as it has built a remarkable record of professionalism, political impartiality and effectiveness. Pristina is safer than London late at night. It would be no surprise if the report of the Italian intelligence agency—if it does exist—was written by officials anxious to protect their offices as guardians against the criminal waves that threaten to wash over the heart of European civilisation. Such reports—and the Balkans are awash with the seemingly endless stream of nonsense coming out of organisations, consultants and other incarnations of the strange world of international development—should not be taken at face value.

There are many, many arguments in favour of Kosovo's independence, but I will touch only on one which has been overlooked or drowned out by the non-arguments on economics and crime. For a person, or group, to exist properly as a responsible agent with free will it must engage, or be able to engage if it so chooses, in politics. For the Albanians of Kosovo, such an engagement was impossible in the past. They were not just chased out of their homes or prevented from being educated in their own language. That is the kind of evil that is easy to identify and fight against. More insidiously, they were chased out of the public sphere. A Kosovar could even be wealthy, if he cooperated with the Serbs. But he could never be a political animal free to determine his own future. It is no wonder, then, that confined to the walls of their political prison, Albanians have constantly struggled to demolish the order that forced them into such a pre-political condition. All Albanian history of the twentieth century in Kosovo can be understood in this light. Let us not end up saying the same thing about the twenty first century. ■

Listings

www.lsesu.com

TUESDAY, 22th JANUARY		THURSDAY, 24th JANUARY	
12:00	Knitting Knitting Society, Quad	13:00	Union General Meeting LSE SU, Old Theatre
17:00	Lecture: JP Morgan Investment Society	16:00	Accenture Business Case Study Skills Session CSSA, S421
18:30	Lecture: United Nations Relief and Work Agency Palestine Society, D202	19:00	Life Drawing Visual Arts
19:30	India Week Inter-Faith Dialogue New Theatre		Hip Hop (Beginner) Dance Society, Parish Hall
WEDNESDAY, 23rd JANUARY		FRIDAY, 25th JANUARY	
13:15	Mass Chaplaincy	21:00	Crush! LSE SU, Underground Bar, Quad, Tuns
16:00	T&K: Is China as strong as it seems? China Development Society, U8		
17:15	Seva Novgorodtsev Dance Russian Society, H103		
18:00	Image and Reality of the Israel- Palestine conflict Palestine/Isoc, U8		
18:00	Indian Idol Final and Antakshari Underground		

Women's Week 2008

TUESDAY 22nd

Women in Prison
G108 2pm

A discussion of the current debates around the experiences of women in the justice system and the potential of alternatives to prison-based punitive measures

WEDNESDAY 23rd

Women's right to choose
D302 1pm

A discussion on the current issues around a Woman's Right to choose, with Abortion Rights UK and Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion and Abortion Rights UK. All views welcome.

THURSDAY 24th

Women Against Rape
Graham Wallas Room
12pm

French gender equality and the Islamic headscarf

New Theatre 6.30pm
Professor Joan Scott
In her lecture Professor Scott takes a critical look at one aspect of the ban on Islamic headscarves enacted in 2005 in France. She will examine 'a clash of gender systems' as a way of trying to understand some of the force of the reaction to Islam there.

FRIDAY 25th

Women, Not Sex
Objects
Graham Wallas Room
12pm

A discussion of the objectification of Women in the Media

Prostitution: the case for decriminalisation
D1 2pm

with the Safety First Coalition
With the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill (CJIB) currently passing through Parliament, the criminalisation of the clients of prostitutes is being increasingly discussed.

This discussion will focus on New Zealand's decriminalisation of prostitution and the Swedish model in relation to the effects on women's health and safety. With the Safety First Coalition and Catherine Healy, the founding member and national co-coordinator of the New Zealand Prostitute's Collective and a member of the New Zealand Prostitution Law review Committee.

Is China as Strong as it Seems?

When: January 23rd,
4pm

Who: Mr. Rob Gifford
Where: U8

Rob Gifford read Chinese at Durham, Harvard and the People's University of China. He first went to China as a 20 year old language student in 1987, and has since then travelled there many times as a journalist. A former BBC producer, he was from 1999 to 2005 the Beijing Bureau Chief of National Public Radio (the US equivalent of BBC Radio 4). Before leaving Beijing to become NPR's London Bureau Chief he took a two month journey along Route 312, the Chinese Route 66, which stretches the length of the country from Shanghai to the Kazakh border. Gifford, who is a fluent Mandarin speaker,

documents the journey in his recent book CHINA ROAD: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power. His talk at LSE - illustrated with photos - will, like his book, take the road as a prism through which to see modern China, and the human drama taking place in the lives of ordinary Chinese people. It will look at the country's many successes but also at the faultlines that are emerging across the country, often unseen in the major cities most visited by westerners. Gifford will ask whether China really can be the superpower that everyone is predicting.

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23:59:59?

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STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE AND COUNSELLING CENTRE

LEGAL AND WELFARE ADVICE

Our professional advisers can help with a range of issues including housing, immigration, visa extension, employment problems, welfare benefits, finance, fees status and disability rights.

FINANCIAL HELP

The Centre offers advice concerning debts, grants, loans, council tax and can provide other channels to help students cope who are under financial duress. Also available to students are several Students' Union targeted funds intended for the following hardship areas: medical, housing and childcare costs etc.

CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

Do you feel upset, stressed, distressed?

Students can experience emotional, personal or family problems that they find hard to cope with by themselves. Sheila Gill is a trained counsellor experienced in dealing with a range of emotional and personal problems. She is available on Fridays at the Advice Centre (10:00 - 3:00) For more information on the Counselling Service please see the SU website.

OPENING HOURS

Drop-in sessions for students:

Monday & Friday 10:30-16:00, Tuesday-Thursday-10:30-13:00.

Outside of these hours, students can see advisers by appoint-

THE ADVICE AND COUNSELLING STAFF

Shanna Hyder (Manager, Legal and Welfare Adviser)
Ali Weyli (Legal and Welfare Adviser)
Sheila Gill (Counsellor) Fridays only

All Services are FREE and advice and counselling are provided in strict confidence in line with our confidentiality policy (available on request). The Centre is accessible to students with disabilities via lift, but telephone appointments can be arranged if preferred.

**LSE SU Advice and Counselling Centre, Room E297
East Building**

Tel: 020 7955 7145 Email: SU.Advice-Centre@lse.ac.uk

India Week 2008

TUESDAY 22nd

Interfaith Event
7-9:30pm
Organizer: International Society
Room: New Theatre

WEDNESDAY 23rd

Neasden Mandir Trip
2-4:30pm
Organizer: Hindu Soc.
Meet outside Old Building

Indian Idol final and Antakshari
6pm-9pm
Organizer: SPICE Society
Underground

THURSDAY 24th

Art of Living Workshop
7-9:30pm
Room: D602

FRIDAY 25th

Chat Stall
1pm-2pm
Organizer: India Week Taskforce
Houghton St

Bollywood Dance Workshop
4-5:30 pm
Organizer: Indian Society
Parish Hall

Movie Night
6-9pm
Organizer: Jain Society

India Week Crush
Organizer: India Week Taskforce



Price Crash on drinks from 8 - 10pm!

We've got a whole load of surprises lined up for you this term... from naked and wild RAG CRUSH! to a bit of Bollywood and Bhangra! Not to mention a Latin Invasion! Expect plenty of giveaways, amazing drinks deals, some of the best new DJ talent! AND of course, Students from all over the world as well as the odd alumni too! So if ur looking to get out, have a hassle free night out and come to Crush!

What: Crush
Where: Underground Bar, Tuns, Quad
When: Every Friday

AU Card Holders get in for £3 all night long if it's you Bday in the week, email

su.ents@lse.ac.uk before 7.30pm on Friday and you will get in for free.

SU EXECUTIVE OFFICE HOURS

General Secretary,
Fadhil Bakeer Markar
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Treasurer,
Libby Meyer
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Communications Officer, Kayt Berry
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Education and Welfare, Ruhana Ali
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Women's Officer,
Daisy Mitchell-Forster
Thursdays 12PM, Quad

Environment and Ethics,
Aled Dilwyn Fisher
Thursdays 12PM, Quad

LGBT Officer,
Dominic Rampat
Wednesdays 10AM, N3
Societies Officer,
Carys Morgan
Thursdays 2PM, Quad

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23:59:59 ?

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Cricket

India Not Singhing Any More...



Tom Patterson

ing prowess died long ago – and more a battle of supremacy between the rising nations of the ‘new world’. Amongst them: Australia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, South Africa and Bangladesh. Australian dominance is the order of the day though as the 2007 Cricket World Cup went to show, cricket remains for many nations the defining sporting expression of national pride. And as such, it contains some of the more distasteful aspects of life.

All sports have an element of baiting involved. Zinedine Zidane’s famous head-butt in the 2006 World Cup on Marco Materazzi was said to have been prompted by Materazzi’s verbal insults about Zidane’s sister. Sport is not detached from the playground mentalities that are part of life. The recent test between Australia and India was plunged into disarray after the Indian batsman Harbhajan Singh was accused by Australian captain Ricky Ponting of calling fellow Aussie Andrew Symonds a ‘monkey’. In the absence of audio evidence the match ref-

eree Mike Procter seemingly accepted the testimony of the Australians and not the Indians, which fuelled Indian incredulity, already stoked earlier by the woeful umpiring of Mark Benson and Steve Bucknor. India threatened to walk out of the tour.

India is cricket’s financial hub, providing 70% of the game’s global income. Its population of over a billion people are the lifeblood of the international game. India’s poor performance in the recent World Cup was disastrous for the sport’s balance books. When the news broke that umpire Steve Bucknor had been axed, some pointed to India’s unrivalled influence within the game as unfairly influencing the decisions of the ICC. In short, Indian intransigence would have devastating consequences for the sport.

Though Indian pressure may well have been the catalyst for Bucknor’s expulsion, it did not prevent a three-test ban being imposed on Harbhajan Singh. It stands to reason that if Singh did indeed make racist comments to

Andrew Symonds then the punishment imposed on him is entirely justified. In the absence of proof however, we are dependent on the testimonies of the individuals involved and those who are in the position to pass judgement. It may be added that the Australians for their part were also guilty of bringing the game into disrepute. Australia’s unsportsmanlike behaviour was criticised by many, most notably Australians themselves and Ricky Ponting in particular has become the victim of international outrage overnight.

The ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed was not being ironic then when he warned that the most recent cricket controversy between India and Australia could have turned from ‘an international incident into an international crisis’. Angry mobs burning effigies in Jammu, players’ families being targeted for abuse in Tasmania: such are the stakes in arguably one of the most politically sensitive sports in the world (see also, India vs. Pakistan – the largest fran-

chise in world cricket). Former Test match referees such as Clive Lloyd may well ‘keep telling people it’s still a game, it’s not life or death’, yet crick-

et will always represent more than just a ball, a bat and three stumps. This is why it can be so enthralling, and equally, why it can be so ugly.



Football

Tendeter, Always Keeping Sam Entertained



Tempest and Tendeter

Beaver Sports’ answer to Hansen and Lawrenson discuss FC political science once more.

STK: Firstly I’d just like to clear up a common misnomer, Tempest is in fact my middle name, I’m actually of pagan descent. Good evening Josh, while we all know what you are about on the pitch, a fierce tackling, ever running goal scoring colossus, I’d like to give our readers an insight into the man behind the player. What would your ideal weekend consist of?

JT: Hi Sam, my ideal weekend would have to consist of three key parts; Football, Banter and Lash. In fact my ideal weekend is pretty much the same as any other part of the week. In an ideal world, my weekend would begin early doors on a Friday in a cheap alcohol-serving venue with a banter sandwich and the company of Al O’Brien. The great thing with my skipper Al, is that the basis of his life is in fact the very thing I want from a weekend. As Rob Low serves us up some Incredible Hulks we will discuss football and embark upon high levels of FC banter. Al’s brother Henry is also a must for the perfect Friday night. He is a firm believer in the Taps school of thought, a philosophy I too hold to heart. On a Saturday, football takes center stage, the ideal Saturday would result in the destruction of Holloway and enough goals to overtake Sir Guest in the goal-scoring stakes...Sunday is, as my hero God once slyly noted, the day of rest.

STK: It must be difficult to find time for yourself given you have the responsibility of editing the most prestigious section of the Beaver whilst also fuelling the Filthies championship campaign and at the same time studying for a degree in Ambulance chasing. How do you overcome having a life more stacked than little G Crow?

JT: Its interesting that you mention George Crow, as another responsibility I am burdened with is actually that of Mentor to this vertically challenged youngster. Some members of the De-Ste-Croix family feel that I go beyond the role of mentor, into realms of life destruction. It is hard to find time, especially as I also have the privilege of leading Bankside FC in the inter-halls championship and hold the key position of FC Club Secretary. I think the most successful way of balancing all these duties seems to be to neglect the least important. Thus, the Law degree takes a back seat. In fact the seat is so far back that it is now out of sight.

STK: And finally who is your ideal woman (or man)?

JT: There was this girl I once saw whilst strolling through the Garden of Eden – she was a naturist, easily manipulated, very kinky and enjoyed eating fruit; all values I feel are essential in my ideal woman.

STK: Well on to the subject at hand, it has been well known for some time that certain parts of the media believe the fifths to be a one man team. What are your views on similar accusations being leveled against the fourth team?

Especially the comparisons between yourself and Dave Hardy?

JT: Well first and foremost I’d like to add my voice to those who suggest that Hardy is the 5th team. The rest of you really are shit. With regard to me being likened to Dave, I just take it as a huge compliment. I don’t however feel the 4th team are a one-man team. Of the 29 goals we have scored so far this season, myself and Vik Nayar have scored 21 of them. So at the very least we are a two man team. The leadership of Al O’Brien has taught the value of teamwork, grinding out results based on hard work, defensive unity and the attacking flair of Tottenham fans up top.

STK: Shit, interesting choice of word, yet you have only managed to beat us twice in three years, that may be more of a comment on the bottling capabilities of the fourth team rather than quality of ourselves, however there is no doubt in my mind that the fifth team is on a par with the most hallowed of collectives, the Brazilian 1970 World cup side, Bristol City 07/08 and the Waffens SS. In recent years the fifths have become somewhat of a feeder club for your own team. If you were able to get your grubby mits on one fifth team player who would it be?

JT: While it is clear that Dave Hardy is by far your best player, he is not someone who would fit into the 4th team structure. O’Brien does not tolerate laziness. Last season, we had short term loan deals for yourself and Anand Date, neither of whom impressed the management. The rest of your team is pretty much made up of poor players who we reject-

ed at trials, not forgetting the only two people Greenall could find in Rosebery carrying more weight than himself. The only one I would contemplate signing would be Luke Thompson who would fit in perfectly in the problem left-back position left vacant by the departure of Ben Tutt. Club Captain Chris Naylor has tried his hardest to make the position his own, however his dyslexia is quite disruptive to team morale.

STK: I return to my earlier point that results speak louder than poorly crafted insults. One can understand the rejection of Daataay but in my one game as a judas I pretty much took you all three points, in fact I have the audacity to boast that I have never conceded a goal outside of the fifth team, an incommensurable record in the modern game. If you could have your pick from the entire FC?

JT: Rupert Guest. Unquestionable loyalty as well as being the complete player. It is no coincidence that the current FC top scorer Kouppas is in the same side as Guest. He really does pull the strings, creating chances aplenty through his vision, incredible passing range and electrifying pace...he also scores a few himself. Class.

STK: Also a talented orator as last weeks UGM confirmed, congratulations Sir Guest for forcing the SU or Fadhil as it is now known in some quarters to apologise to one of my heroes Boris Johnson. Much like myself Josh, you’ve been asked to fill in for other teams when certain players have failed to show Nick Quinn levels of commitment. Who would you rate as the best captain you have played under?

JT: Indeed, since signing for the FC back in 2005 I have played under 6 captains; Al O’Brien, Adam Aziz, Chris Naylor, Al Lerner, Louis De-Ste-Croix and Rich Morrow. Of the 4th team leaders, Al O’Brien is by far the most inspirational; however my tentative choice would be that of Rich Morrow. Playing for him twice last season was a dream come true on my return from injury. He motivated the team as a whole but also on an individual level was a class act. He saw my strengths and changed the formation to accommodate me, resulting in the scoring of 3 goals in those 2 games. He gave me confidence in my own ability at a time when I’d lost all hope.

STK: I had the absolute pleasure of playing with Rich for the first time this weekend and have to validate all you have professed, no surprise he is also from the West Country. Despite the Clausewitzesq organisational skills of Greenall and the extensive use of the phrase ‘fanning around’ by Thompson, I’m going to throw it out there and put Ed Frew top of my list, the man plays without a Spleen for God’s sake and has some divine moves on the dance floor. Who do you think is top of the current crop of officers in the FC?

JT: Of the current crop, I have played for O’Brien, De-Ste-Croix and Lerner; two good, one bad. I played alongside Frew last year and couldn’t argue with his commitment to the cause. He commands respect from all quarters. Some factions of the media even feel that his lack of spleen has made him into the inspirational leader that he undoubt-

edly is. But realistically, I’d have to go with the man who has transformed last year’s rabble of a 4th team into a highly professional unit who have lost just one game all season. A man who released the deadwood – the likes of mid-field liability Neil Yoganather. A man who signed players that others wouldn’t touch with a bargepole, like Andy Rogers (still waiting to touch someone with his) Its Banter himself, Alexander Phillip Holden O’Brien.

STK: Al is without doubt the most remarkable human being I have ever met. In the other direction, how would you rate Fourth team stalwart Christopher Naylor’s performance as Club Captain?

JT: Following the farcical reign of Aarish Pandya – Naylor found himself in a no-lose situation. In spite of this, I feel he has excelled himself. He truly is the king of admin.

STK: Has he missed any games due to congenital commitments e.g. dealing with any bouts of incontinence?

JT: He went to Milan with his wife, illustrating high levels of one kind of commitment and low levels of another. However, thus far he has avoided any undesired excretions. I don’t however want to speak too soon.

STK: So finally, for anyone studying the Law or even looking to, how would you respond to conjectures made by Pete Greenall that it is an academic subject devoid of originality and creativity perfect for the archetypal LSE student?

JT: Spot on.



International Cricket

19
Patterson



ReAUnion Party
30th January 2008



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Beaver **sports**

Beat Strand Poly? Do It Again!



Sophie De-la-Hunt

LSE Kings 12 0

Another cold windy day, another breakfast at Waterloo, another chat about Calella on the train to Berrylands and another experience of mouldy boots- it all seemed like an average women's rugby day out. But this time, we had a score to settle...

Strand poly, as our neighbours are affectionately known, were our first match of the year back in October. They won, 20-0, and we were not impressed. However, with 11 players who had never played rugby before, at the end of the game we sweetly shook hands like the charming young ladies we are, silently plotting revenge. The week before Christmas, on a high from beating UCL 24-0, we realised our potential, showing them that not only were we were a 'uni not a poly,' but we were also better at rugby, winning 44-5. This meant one all, (well...those doing a maths degree can see we were actually up by 3 tries) and we were ready to kick some more Kings arse.

We arrived at the fortress, feeling impressed with ourselves at managing to be awake and warmed up ready for the impolite time of kick off- 12:30. You have to wonder what people do with their



Saturday night to want to schedule early morning matches. We were pleased to welcome back Megan and Higgins, helping to fill the places of those who have picked up injuries- love to Naz, Ally and Kerstin. As we bravely pulled on last games' socks, ('oh, they're a little bit crunchy'), Miss Bagerman decided to inform us that she would not be playing, as she had managed to fracture a few ribs during our previous game. This was very bad news for us, who had previously been under the illusion that Katy was invincible, but very good news for Kings, who I think could have been more discrete in concealing their joy that our captain

was out of action.

So the first whistle goes... they run, we stop them, they maul, we get involved...our scrum. The scrum was a little improvised... they only managed to bring 11 players, probably scared by our latest rugby prowess, so the scrum was made up of a mere five players. Rachel took a step forward to join Kim and Jess, with Nina and Hannah R putting their heads between our front rows legs. For the next 30 minutes the ball barely moved, we were endlessly defending in our 25, determined to hold them back. They were never quite good enough, they made mistakes, got tries held up, knocked the ball on and could never find

any space that either Hannah had not got covered.

Half time came with some relief, with the score held at 0-0, we knew we could win, we just needed to take control of the game. So that is what we did, helped by some encouragement from Laura, who suddenly seemed to realise that she had been uncharacteristically quiet in the first half so would now increase the volume, while working with Pui to take down any opposition advances down the wing. The forwards worked tirelessly, with Andrea and Megan moving into the scrum, supported by Alison and Sarah who controlled the centre. We were now dominating...just how we like

it.

Eventually the first try came, and the style was a personal favourite of mine... the Jess classic. Bosh, there goes one kings girl to her right, bosh, there goes another to her left, and with a trail of destruction in her wake the ball is put down, five points. Get in! Missing our usual kicker, Higgins returned to centre stage, to attempt a well needed conversion. As the ball sailed through the posts, we all watched in awe, a little surprised. Sadly, the magic was soon broken. I think if I had scored that conversion I would have turned round and nonchalantly strolled back to our half. But no, she runs back,

arms in the air screaming 'that's the first conversion I have ever scored.' She was our kicker all last year....we liked our scores always being in multiples of 5.

We didn't think 7-0 was enough, and Jess clearly didn't see one try as an acceptable days work, so we went about repeating our earlier performance. There were several really notable sets of play in making the score 12-0, some good and as always some just entertaining. Firstly, we usually avoid mauling, tending to believe we do better in rucks, but training has clearly paid off, today Kim, Rachel, Jess and Alison set up a beautiful maul, and gave Kings no hope, gaining at least 30m of valuable ground. Well done ladies! It's a shame that we are more likely to remember how the maul started, from Sarah pelting the ball into an unsuspecting Kings girl's pelvis. We send her our best wishes and apologise if the force has jeopardised her fertility.

So there it was 12-0. We had won again, a moral victory some might say. It sounds like a clique, but this really was a fantastic team effort, showing that regular commitment, to rugby as well as Wednesday nights, really pays off. I expect to see some quality bruising from what was a gruelling forwards game.

So all that was now left was a journey back from Berrylands... and of course a further discussion about Wednesday night liaisons, Calella, and the ever closer return of Ivy LeBurno.



"the Jess classic. BOSH"