

**Policies about to expire
A note by the President**

The below policies are due to expire.

Decision required:

- 1) **To re pass the policies.**

Free Babar Ahmad Policy

Passed by Union Council 14th December 2004

This union notes:

- That Imperial College is a leading university with a high level of research in the information technology sector.
- That Imperial College (IC) has an ethnically, internationally and politically diverse makeup of students.
- That due to the high level of sensitive research and technical capabilities of undergraduates and postgraduates, IC students may be at risk from the governments "Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security act 2001" because of their political beliefs or affiliations and this is exemplified in the Babar Ahmad case.
- That Babar Ahmad, a Muslim and an ex-student of Imperial College was arrested under the "Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security act 2001" at Imperial on 2 December 2003, whilst working as a member of IT staff in the Mechanical Engineering department. He was released without charge after a week of interrogation, due to lack of evidence
- That there is medical evidence Babar Ahmed was beaten in connection with his arrest, (source – the Guardian http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1302018,00.html), and that he has been rearrested facing extradition on the same evidence that apparently would not stand up in a British Court.
- That photos taken whilst he was in custody (and available at www.freebabarahmad.co.uk) show that he sustained a number of serious injuries during or after his arrest
- That Babar was rearrested on 5 August 2004, under the new Extradition Act
- That there is still no evidence to try Babar in the UK, which is why he is facing extradition to the United States. Under the above act people can be extradited to the US purely on the basis of allegations without any evidence and without the right to challenge the allegations brought against them.
- The strength of feeling amongst Imperial students, in support of Babar's cause, that was shown last week on Thursday 2 December, when 160+ people attended a meeting to launch the Imperial College 'Free Babar Ahmad' campaign, that had been publicised for less than a week beforehand. Amongst others, Babar's father and campaigning journalist Yvonne Ridley spoke at this meeting, and Babar's family were particularly pleased with the event and turnout at their son's former workplace

This union believes:

- That there is the possibility that another student at Imperial experiences the same kind of victimisation as Babar Ahmad did. The sooner, and more effectively, we handle with Babar's case, the better the union will be able to deal with any such future attacks on its employees or students
- Students are at an risk of victimisation due to the attack on civil liberties (including measures such as the proposed introduction of ID cards and other things mentioned by the President in his "State of the Union" article in the 2 December 2004 edition of *Felix*).
- These attacks on civil liberties affect us all, although the issue is obviously particularly relevant for us at Imperial, and if Babar is extradited it will not only mean he suffers more unjust punishment, but it will also set a very dangerous precedent for future employees and students of IC (Babar is the first person to face extradition under the new act)
- That support from his old college would mean a lot to Babar (he has recently expressed his gratitude at all letters he has received from his many supporters)

This union resolves:

- To actively support the 'Free Babar Ahmad' campaign, both inside and outside the college to stop his extradition. Thus stopping a dangerous precedent being set that may affect any IC student. Such support will include, but not be limited to, letter writing, demonstrating, etc. which will be coordinated as soon as possible through channels such as the student media and the union's weekly email
- To ensure that any form of discrimination experienced by Imperial College students, both on and off campus, is dealt with thoroughly
- To campaign for a full investigation into the alleged assault on Babar by the police officers who arrested him.

- To campaign for his human rights to be respected in court proceedings and that he should be given a fair trial here in the UK
- To mandate the President to co-ordinate and implement the policy through the Executive.

Make Poverty History

Passed by Union Council 12th May 2005

Imperial College Union notes:

1. That every day, 30,000 children across the world die as a result of extreme poverty.
2. That there are currently 38,000,000 people around the world living with HIV.
3. That the global gap between rich and poor is wider than it has ever been, and is increasing daily.
4. That all the above is true despite now living in a world that potentially has the resources to lift every single person out of poverty and end these global injustices.
5. That the cause of these injustices lies in the agendas and self-interest of the governments of the major global powers, a glaringly unjust global trade system, and the huge burden of third-world debt compared to the pitiful aid donations. For example, total UK defence spending in 2004/2005 was £29.7 billion (source: MoD), in contrast to the UK Department for International Development Budget in 2004/2005 of £5 billion (source: HM Treasury).
6. An example of how these global injustices are perpetrated is symbolised by our rector, Richard Sykes. As chair of Glaxo Wellcome (now GlaxoSmithKline), in 1999 he earned, in a combination of salary and bonuses, over £3,500,000. At the same time, he was in the courts trying to pass laws to stop people in the third world receiving cheaper AIDS drugs, in what Oxfam described as "an undeclared war against the world's poorest countries".
7. That this year the G8, the meeting of the world's eight richest and most powerful leaders is coming to the United Kingdom, at Gleneagles, Scotland, and also in the second half of the year, Britain will take the EU presidency.
8. The 'Make Poverty History' (MPH) (www.makepovertyhistory.org) campaign that was launched this year, to call for abolition of third world debt, trade justice, and more and better aid.
9. The breadth of support for MPH nationally which consists of over 400 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities, and was launched with over 40,000 people turning up to listen to Nelson Mandela and Bob Geldof in Trafalgar Square.
10. The focus of the MPH campaign is going to be the weekend on 2 and 3 July. On Sunday 3 July, there will be a huge counter-conference; a large-scale educational event, open to all, organised as an alternative to the G8 conference itself. This will be preceded on Saturday 2 July by a massive and widely backed demonstration in Edinburgh on Saturday 2 July, to ensure that pressure is put on the G8 leaders over, and awareness is raised about, the above issues on a large scale.
11. That students at Imperial, even more so than at other universities, already have a large financial burden from living costs around the college in one of the most expensive areas of the country, in addition to having to pay college fees.
12. The following excerpt from 'The Union Mission Statement': "The Imperial College Union advances education by... seeking to... further their interests both inside and outside the college".
13. The wide layer of support for MPH within Imperial from individuals and a diverse range of ICU clubs and societies, including, but not limited to: Islamic Society, Pugwash, Imperial Against Imperialism, Labour Society, Socialist Worker Student Society, Unicef, Environmental Society, MedSIN (and with support of the Chaplain of Imperial College), partially reflected by the unprecedented number of people seconding this motion.
14. That a key element in the fight against global poverty is the appropriate use of local and sustainable technology and that as one of the world's leading Science, Medicine and Technology colleges we have a special responsibility to this campaign.

Imperial College Union believes:

1. That ICU should fully support the MPH campaign and its demands.
2. That the wide layer of people and clubs and societies who are, and potentially will become, interested in the campaign means it is an issue we are obliged to take a stance on to advance the education of all those involved by seeking to further their interests both inside and outside college on this matter.
3. That the international make up of Imperial College students, many of who come from countries directly experiencing the effects of the aforementioned global inequality, makes this issue even more important for ICU.

Imperial College Union resolves:

1. To actively campaign on the MPH issue, through on campus events coordinated by the Welfare Campaigns Officer and fund-raising organised by the RAG chair, and any other ordinary student or officer of the union who wishes to get involved.
2. To publicise both external and internal MPH events to the fullest extent possible.
3. To, in-line with MPH's focus of the weekend of 2 and 3 July which includes the educational conference on Sunday 3 July and the demonstration on Saturday 2 July, investigate and execute the payment, or at least subsidising of transport for all students who wish to attend the events being held over this weekend.
4. To sell the white 'Make Poverty History' wristbands, that are the symbol of the campaign as well as a way to raise the money, in the students' union.
5. To put a 'white band' on the union website front page, by adding the following HTML code just under the <body> tag:

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<script type="text/javascript" src="http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/whiteband_small_right.js">
</script><noscript><a href="http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/">
http://www.makepovertyhistory.org</a></noscript>
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6. To provide postcards to send to Tony Blair available from <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/getinvolved.html>, and to implement and encourage as many of the other ways of taking action listed at that site, as possible.

To begin the implementation of the above as soon as possible

Policy to oppose the College dress code

Passed by Union Council 24th November 2005

This Students' Union Notes:

- 1) A dress code has been introduced in College "in the light of security concerns raised by the terrorist incidents which had occurred over the summer".
- 2) Students and staff are required to wear their identity cards at all times.
- 3) The dress code states that "Clothing that obscures an individual's face" such as veils, hooded tops or scarves are not allowed.
- 4) Anyone who refuses to identify themselves to Security Staff "may be removed from the College's premises".
- 5) Wearing clothing considered "offensive" is now a "disciplinary offence".

This Students' Union Believes:

- 1) The dress code does not help increase security.
- 2) Will increase religious discrimination, as a veil or half veil can be worn for religious purposes.
- 3) While the Union believes offensive (for example, obscene, racist or sexist) slogans are unacceptable, it is not the College's prerogative and has no authority to decide what can be considered "offensive". The current legislation leaves these questions open to arbitrary interpretation by the College and its security staff, which may lead to cases of victimization.
- 4) The new regulation is against social and especially academic freedoms that in a University are essential.
- 5) Free thinking and expression of ideas should be encouraged, and not opposed to in any way, like in this case through a dress code.

This Students' Union Resolves:

- 1) The discriminatory or inconsistent aspects of the policy indicated above should be opposed by students and the student Union.
- 2) An emergency consultation should take place with College, where the issue will be discussed with student representation in the form of the President of the union.
- 3) A day of action will be run by the union which will be coordinated by the Welfare Campaigns Officer.
- 4) If College is unwilling to make changes to the proposed dress code then better provision should be created for the introduction of visitors onto campus. This will involve the unconditional right to invite people for any academic or social reason.
- 5) That life members of the Union (i.e. alumni) should be issued with cards in order to facilitate their continued use of the Union facilities.