



WE CAN RULE THEM ALL

With the forthcoming by-elections in his sights, *James Twigger* looks at how the Union is run, and how YOU can get involved

By James Twigger
Union Secretary

You might not think it but governing in the Students' Union can be as tough as governing in Westminster.

In Cardiff it operates on several layers. The first of these is the student population, all 22,000 of them. They are represented by the executive team who are elected annually in the March elections. Made up of sabbatical and non-sabbatical officers, the executive is responsible for the day-to-day running of Union affairs.

If you don't like something about the Union, come and tell us

There are currently three non-sabbatical positions vacant, which will be filled in the upcoming by-elections. These vacancies are Ethical & Environmental Officer, Mature Students Officer and Students with Disabilities Officer. Nominations opened on Thursday 29th October and will be open for seven days.

The executive team are held to

account by the 'Student Council'. The Council is the governing body of Cardiff University Students' Union, and all students are invited and encouraged to take up seats as councillors.

It's a chance to represent your fellow students and contribute to the continual process of ensuring that the union is working in the interests and

wishes of the student body.

The Council is comprised of all the Union executive alongside many more councillors drawn from the student body.

The prime responsibility of the Council is to create, monitor and scrutinise Union policy, in short it is essential in order to maintain the Union as a

genuinely democratic organisation.

Joining Council is an ideal first step to becoming more involved in the behind the scenes workings of the Students' Union and is a rare opportunity to represent your peers in issues that really matter.

As a Cardiff University student you are one of the shareholders of this

Union. You DO have a say in everything that goes on here, and as a result you should take part in making sure that it functions in the best way possible.

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If you don't like something about the Union, then come and tell us.

If you're interested in signing up come to the office on the third floor of the Students' Union, or come along to the meet and greet on the tenth of October in the Aneurin Bevan meeting room on the 4th floor of the Union.

The sovereign body, and most powerful decision making body within the organisation is the Students' Union Annual General Meeting (AGM). The issues that arise at AGM are very important, and often involve constitutional changes as well as motions to change Union policy.

It is also your opportunity to hold the executive team to account. In this respect, the balance of power lies with you as a student in Cardiff.



STUDENT COUNCIL: Not like this

A little bit of history repeating

By Andrew Rennison
Political Correspondent

Lower your voice, hush the room and place an ear to the ground. Yep, just faintly you can hear what usually only dogs and other mammals have to put up with: Ian Paisley's voice.

Once again old Paisley's raging against whatever is within sight and/or smell, his fiery tirades so loud that they're just about audible throughout most of Western Europe.

Luckily for those of us who don't really care about his slight tiff with the IRA, the threat from across the Irish Sea seems almost dead and buried regardless; there's some way to go yet, but perhaps one day all Ian will be roaring about will be holes in his slippers and the size of his pension.

Furthermore, with decommissioning now apparently showing some results many will say that Republicans with guns neither are, nor were, anything compared to the almighty menace of Al-Qaeda – a terrorist threat for the 21st century.

Certainly since the 7/7 bombings and the attempt of a fortnight later, past dangers from the IRA appear almost as small fry in the eyes of the British public.

This, however, is an extremely blurry notion.

Possibly the biggest misconception in Britain right now is that Islamic extremism poses the greatest terrorist threat our country has ever seen. The sense of a grand occasion in history is drummed up in every direction, with phrases such as 'threatening our way of life' and 'enemies of freedom' becoming simply bywords for our society as a whole.

Of course this latest foe is a danger,

and nobody could undermine the tragedy of those killed in July. But at the same time, if we allow ourselves to be wound up by this notion of a monumental danger then we achieve the terrorists' aims for them; we lose.

This menace is indeed uncharted waters. We've never faced radical Islam in this way. We've never faced suicide bombers of this nature before. But something being new doesn't nec-

essarily raise the bar.

In 1974/75, the IRA launched a major offensive on mainland Britain, which effectively started just down the road from my hometown with the Guildford pub bombing.

Over 14 months, London suffered 40 bombings, as well as further attacks on pubs in Birmingham, Surrey, and drive-by shootings of restaurants and other public places. Led by a team of

no more than half a dozen IRA combatants, the campaign vaguely targeted political or military figures but became increasingly indiscriminate.

Some who spoke out against the men involved, like the public figure Ross McWhirter, were shot at in their homes by those they opposed. In London, shop windows paraded only sandbags, police were manning nearly every street corner, and almost every week brought yet another fresh attack.

Is that London today? Yet the way the perceived menace hangs in the air like a Bin Laden-shaped cloud, you'd be forgiven for thinking it was.

I'm not saying that in 30 years Osama too will be ranting about his slippers and pension. The use that the IRA has as a point of reference is not in working out how to solve the current danger, but in gaining some consoling perspective.

If we let our surroundings convince us that this is a threat far greater than it truly is, we may in fear succumb to every hard line and every tough measure that our government is more than happy to take.

History is littered with this scenario time and again; yet the result may not be some return to a utopia that never even existed. Instead, the more afraid and controlled we become, the more extremism will live for.



7/7: Blast from the past.