

# UGM AGENDA

Time:	17:00
Date:	24th January 2018
Location:	JCR
Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome</li> <li>2. Minutes &amp; Matters Arising</li> <li>3. SOAS Students' Union to call on Keir Starmer MP to support the Divest Parliament campaign</li> <li>4. Increase Disposable Hot Drinks Cup Charge to 50p</li> <li>5. Boycott the NSS 2018 - Stop TEF!</li> <li>6. Emergency Motions</li> </ol>	

## UGM MOTIONS – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Title:	SOAS Students' Union to call on Keir Starmer MP to support the Divest Parliament campaign
Proposer:	Kate Dyer - 640613
Seconded:	Alison Ratliff - 645263
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Emissions from fossil fuels are one of the major contributors to human-caused climate change</li> <li>1.2 The U.K. ratified the Paris Climate Treaty in 2015, and is working to deliver carbon emissions reductions in order to limit global warming to 2 degrees</li> <li>1.3 The U.K. Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (which MPs all get signed up to when they are elected) is worth £612 million, which includes £5.6 million in BP and £4.9 million in Shell, among other fossil fuel investments</li> <li>1.4 The Divest Parliament campaign is run by 350.org, and is calling on MPs to sign a pledge saying they want their pension fund divested out of fossil fuels - so far just over 100 cross-party MPs have signed the pledge</li> <li>1.5 Keir Starmer is the local (labour) MP for Holborn &amp; St. Pancras - he has yet to sign the Divest Parliament pledge</li> </ol>	
This Union Believes:	

- 2.1 The continued investment in fossil fuel-related companies perpetuates the problem & gives them a social license to continue business as usual
- 2.2. It is inconsistent for the U.K. government to commit to take action on climate change while also propping up the industry that is causing it through pension investments
- 2.3 MPs have a crucial role to play in challenging the political power of an industry that continues to profit from the climate chaos it creates
- 2.4 SOAS committed to divesting its own endowment out of fossil fuels in 2015 (being the second UK institution to do so), and should call on others to follow suit

This Union Resolves:

- 3.1 To be the signatory of an open letter written by the SOAS Divest Parliament society to Keir Starmer MP calling on him to support the divest parliament campaign & sign the pledge

Title:	Increase Disposable Hot Drinks Cup Charge to 50p
Proposer:	Lizzie Frost - 635821@soas.ac.uk
Secunder:	Anna Gretton - 635820@soas.ac.uk

This Union Notes:

1. At the SOAS S.U. shop, buying a hot drink with a disposable cup currently costs 25p more than buying a drink with your own cup. This 25p is reabsorbed by the shop.
2. Despite this charge, the SOAS S.U. shop still goes through up to 5,000 disposable hot drinks cups a week - amounting to over 200,000 cups per year.
3. The SOAS S.U. shop sells reusable cups (e.g. KeepCups etc.) at around £5-6 - this amounts to the same cost as paying the charge for 20 drinks in disposable hot drinks cups.
4. Although the disposable hot drinks cups say 'compostable' or 'recyclable', they are neither composted nor recycled at SOAS, as we do not have the specialist waste streams for this (and they are prohibitively difficult to introduce).
5. Thus all 200,000 disposable hot drinks cups sold in SOAS S.U. shop go straight to landfill, and are most likely incinerated or end up in the ocean.
6. Just 0.25% of all disposable hot drinks cups are recycled across the UK every year as there are only 2 recycling plants with the capacity to process them. This process is also energy intensive and requires a special wastestream exclusively for these cups.
7. Pret a manger has recently announced a 50p reduction in the cost of hot drinks for those who bring their own reusable cup.
8. Plastics and single-use items are clogging up our oceans and waterways, and a special report into plastics by the World Economic Forum has predicted that by 2048

more plastic than fish will swim in our oceans.

9. Charges on single-use items have shown great success in the past. For example, a 5p charge on single-use plastic carrier bags is credited with driving down usage by 85%

**This Union Believes:**

1. SOAS S.U. is well placed to make progressive environmental policies
2. Disposable cups have become widespread, like plastic bags, however both are wasteful, unsustainable, and ultimately unnecessary, as viable alternatives exist
3. The environmental cost needs to be included in the cost of the cup to discourage people from using them and seeing them as an easily accessible option
4. We need to move towards a campus where disposable waste is reduced to the greatest extent possible - starting with the easy changes staff and students can make in their everyday lives, as well as the way in which the Union & University operate

**This Union Resolves:**

1. To raise the charge per disposable takeaway cup to 50p
2. The extra 25p should go towards subsidising reusable cups being sold in the shop so that they are cheaper for students (~£3)
3. There should always be reusable cups available for sale in the shop
4. This shift should be coupled with lots of promotional posters to inform people about the reasoning behind this
5. Moves should be made to contact other coffee vendors at SOAS (Elior and Kape & Pan) to introduce similar measures until all catering is brought in-house and follows the same standards
6. There should be discussions with the shop manager & Union officers to discuss how to implement this policy effectively in the shop & across SOAS

Title:	Boycott the NSS 2018 - Stop TEF!
Proposer:	Hamish Anderson, 625365@soas.ac.uk
Seconder:	Nisha Phillipps, np40@soas.ac.uk
<b>This Union Notes:</b>	
<p>In 2016/17 SOAS SU conducted a successful boycott of the NSS that lead to SOAS being omitted from the published results.</p> <p>SOAS was joined by 12 other universities in having a successful boycott, including Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and Sheffield.</p> <p>SOAS management remains committed to SOAS being published in the 2018 NSS</p>	

results.

Although the NSS results and fees have been decoupled until 2021 there has been no guarantee that the idea of coupling NSS results with fees has been ruled out.

This Union Believes:

That SOAS does not set to benefit from the TEF. TEF Does not work to improve teaching. Instead, since TEF began in 2018, SOAS has become increasingly focused on projects often explicitly centered on improving SOAS's TEF ranking.

SOAS will not succeed within a higher education market-place. The university is small and specialist by nature. Many of the area and cultural studies programmes offered here do not attract large numbers of students, however remain integral to countering Eurocentric and hegemonic schools of thought and philosophers.

The government's 2016 'white paper' made clear that there will be no bailouts for failing institutions, whose exit the market would be welcomed as a way of freeing up room in the market for more entrepreneurial and innovative new entrants. This is concerning for SOAS, which is currently facing financial difficulty and a savings plan in place focused primarily on voluntary redundancy packages for staff.

SOAS Students' Union is committed to improving the school teaching and curriculum by encouraging students to have active an engagement with lectures, seminars and tutorials and the teachers. The Decolonising SOAS campaign and work towards alternative assessment techniques also set out to make a positive change to SOAS pedagogy and course content. We do not need the TEF metric to rate our university when the students and staff are able at making the internal change needed.

This Union Resolves:

To implement an NSS Boycott for all third year students. For the boycott to be successful no more than 50% of third year students can fill out the survey.

To continue work on broader community and national campaigns for free education, against the marketisation of higher education and for the constant improvement of teaching and content at SOAS.