

# UGM AGENDA

<b>Time:</b>	17:00
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>Location:</b>	JCR
<p><b>Agenda</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Welcome</li> <li>2) Minutes &amp; Matters Arising</li> <li>3) Report from Sabbatical Officers</li> <li>4) Report from executive officers</li> <li>5) Rebuild Kobane</li> <li>6) SOAS Students' Union Stands with Pakistani Universities</li> <li>7) Abolish £150 administration fee on payments of tuition fees by instalment</li> <li>8) Create a Palestine Education Fund</li> <li>9) Trans*form SOAS</li> <li>10) End Austerity Now! Supporting the People's Assembly National Demo</li> <li>11) Support NUS Trans Officer</li> <li>12) Essay Double Whammy</li> <li>13) Emergency Motions</li> <li>14) Any Other Business/Announcements</li> </ol>	



# UGM MOTIONS – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015

## Rebuild Kobane

Proposer: David Suber

Seconder: Remy Geoffroy

### **Title: Rebuild Kobani**

### **This Union Notes:**

1.0: That between September 2014 and March 2015, the city of Kobani, in West Kurdistan, referred to as Rojava in Kurdish, attacked by the Islamic State.

1.1: As part of ISIS' wider campaign of ethnic and religious cleansing throughout the region, 60 Kurdish villages surrounding Kobani were captured by the Islamic State, and as a result around 400,000 residents of Kobani and the surrounding area fled through the Turkish border.

1.2: As a result of the siege, 80% of Kobani has been destroyed, with basic infrastructure practically non-existent.

1.3: From 2012, the people of Rojava have developed a system of autonomy. Within this, collective systems of governance have been developed.

1.4: Attempts at delivering humanitarian aid have been hindered by the actions of neighbouring states, notably Turkey denying the passage of aid shipments.

### **This Union Believes:**

2.0: That citizens of Kobani, assisted by others from Rojava, and other parts of Kurdistan, resisted the attack by ISIS militias.

2.1 That the citizens of Kobani and the surrounding area were left devastated by the siege of Kobani.

2.2: That Kobani is in desperate need of rebuilding.

2.3: That while anti-ISIS coalition forces supported Kobani through air strikes, there has been little attempt, as is common, to actually help the redevelopment of the city.

2.4: That the development of a humanitarian corridor from Turkey is key to opening up aid to Kobani.

2.5: That despite the destruction of Kobani, it has become a rallying point for a variety of different issues, ranging from politics to arts and culture, and a symbol in the Kurdish struggle for liberation.

**This Union Resolves:**

3.0: To show solidarity with the people of Kobani by supporting the 'Rebuild Kobani' initiative set up by the local administration.

3.1: To hold fundraising initiatives at SOAS, in which the profits would go towards funding the reconstruction of the town. The decision on what area of funding to prioritise will be made at the conference in Diyarbakir that Kurdish politicians and activists are attending next week. It could go from anything to building a new school, sewage system or cultural/ musical institution.

3.2: To support a variety of different initiatives in relation to solidarity with the Kurdish struggle, including the proposed 'SOAS goes to Kobani for Newroz' initiative in March 2016.

3.4: To pressure the international community to make Turkey open up the humanitarian corridor to Kobani and other affected areas.

3.5: To pressure the international community to delist Kurdish groups instrumental in Kobani's liberation as terrorist organisations.

## SOAS Students' Union Stands With Pakistani Universities

**Proposer:** Bilal Zenab Ahmed, 614912

**Seconded:** Shahrukh Aslam, 615747

### **The Union Notes:**

- 1.1 The province of Balochistan has been historically marginalized since the formation of the state of Pakistan.
- 1.2 Baloch Pakistanis have experienced a wide range of discriminatory treatment, from resource scarcity, to limited representation in state institutions. They have also been subjected to Islamabad building selective ties with local elites to prevent secessionism, exerting strict control over the media, and likely having a role in targeted assassinations and killings in the province.
- 1.3 The Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) organized a panel discussion called "Unsilencing Balochistan" as part of a series called "Remapping Justice: On Human Rights in Pakistan" in order to better explore the issue. One speaker was activist Mama Qadeer Baloch, who has been working on "disappeared" Baloch activists.
- 1.4 One day before the talk, Islamabad, acting through intelligence agencies (Inter-Services Intelligence in particular) had the talk cancelled. There has also been coordinated social media backlash against LUMS for "supporting terrorists."

### **The Union Believes:**

- 2.1 The forced cancellation of the talk clearly violates rights to academic freedom and free speech in Pakistan.
- 2.2 The ISI's open censorship of a private university sets a terrible precedent in Pakistan.
- 2.3 This example of censorship, if anything, more clearly illustrates the need to organize against Islamabad's continued belligerence, and outright acts of aggression, in Balochistan.

### **The Union Resolves:**

- 3.1 That the SOAS Student Union stands alongside the people of Balochistan.
- 3.2 That the SOAS Student Union stands alongside the Lahore University of Management Sciences.
- 3.3 That the SOAS Student Union supports Pakistani universities having the full ability to discuss this extremely important issue.

## **Abolish £150 administration fee on payments of tuition fees by instalment**

**Proposer** Rosie Rawle 618896

**Seconder** Lauge Rasmussen 616702

### **The Union Notes:**

- 1.1. Fees for Home/EU students are capped at £3070 (rising with inflation year on year), whilst fees for international students are completely uncapped by government.
- 1.2. Most recent figures from the NUS show that that students are facing an estimated average funding shortfall of £7,654 for those living inside London and £7,693 for those outside London, whilst student loans available for fees and maintenance have not kept pace with rising living costs.
- 1.3. Fee payment in two equal installments is available to self-funding students at SOAS undertaking on-campus degree programmes, if the total annual tuition fee is more than £1500
- 1.4. 50% of the fees plus £150 administration charge is due before or at enrolment, whilst the remaining 50% of the fees are due by the end of January, the following calendar year.
- 1.5. The £150 administration charge must be paid each year if students are studying part time

### **The Union Believes:**

1. Education should be seen as a good in its self
  2. The marketization of education inherently reinforces a system of inequality whereby those who are financially vulnerable become more marginalized
  3. Students who pay by installments are more likely to be those who cannot afford to pay all at once
  4. Part-time students are more likely to have to work alongside their studies to fund their education
  5. The £150 administration fee to pay tuition fees at SOAS in installments is excessive, penalizing students who are least fortunate, and acts against the university's aim to widen participation

### **The Union Resolves:**

1. To lobby the university to abolish the £150 administration fee for students paying by installments on taught degrees on campus
2. To investigate other hidden course costs and their impact on the cost of student living

## Create a Palestine education fund

**Proposer** Mohammad Tahboub

**Seconder** Tom King

### **The Union Notes:**

- 1 That Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza are struggling to make ends meet due to the economic repression caused by the Israeli occupation.
- 2 That a university education is often too expensive for Palestinians to afford.
- 3 That employment is scarce in Palestine.
- 4 That education is a human right.
- 5 That SOAS voted to boycott Israeli academic institutions.
- 6 That university education in Palestinian costs about 650 to 1000 pounds per student (Birzeit university figures)

### **The Union Believes:**

1. That a university education is a means of resistance.
2. That Palestinians deserve the right of a university education as much as their Israeli counterparts.
3. That to complement the BDS efforts, the SOAS SU should fund a number of Palestinian students' university education.

### **The Union Resolves:**

1. To create a Palestine education fund provide university scholarships to Palestinian students in need to study in West Bank and Gaza university.
2. That the SU contribute two thousand pounds a year to this fund from its 300 thousand pounds reserve it currently holds.
3. To create a Palestine education fund working group headed by an SU exec to manage the fund and to coordinate communications with Palestinian universities and students.
4. To throw a Palestine party once a year to raise additional money for the fund.

## Trans\*form SOAS

**Proposer:** Airlie Aird Ogilvie 572653

**Seconder:** Imrane Lawrence 597180

### The Union Notes:

1. That SOAS has a significant demographic of trans\* and gender non-conforming students.
2. That trans\* and gender non-conforming students and the issues they face are continually underrepresented in LGBT+ spaces and throughout SOAS.
3. That the SOAS trans\* and gender non-conforming students witnessed themselves on a wider national level a unanimous vote at NUS Trans Conference, at NUS LGBT+ Conference and at NUS Women's Conference which was in favour of a full-time paid trans\* officer.

### The Union Believes

1. That the desire for more specific representation of trans\* and gender-non-conforming students is required not only on a nationwide level but on a domestic level here at SOAS.
2. That SOAS should be the forerunner of the fight for equality and representation of struggling minorities.

### The Union Resolves:

1. To create a Trans\* and Gender Identity Officer to represent and speak for the specific needs and views of the trans\* and gender non-conforming students of our institution to sit on the SOAS Student Union Executive Committee.
2. For the election of the created Trans\* and Gender Identity Officer to be held upon the first term of academic year 2015-2016.

## End Austerity Now! Supporting The People's Assembly National Demo

**Proposer** Rosie Rawle 618896

**Seconder** Georgie Robertson

### **The Union Notes:**

1. 5 years of austerity by this coalition government has led to the biggest fall in living standards for the majority since records began in 1856
2. Osborne declared in his Autumn Statement there are still 60% of cuts to come
3. The deficit is growing and now stands at close to £100 billion
4. The richest 1000 people in the UK have doubled their wealth since the recession hit in 2008
5. All major Westminster parties remain committed to a programme of austerity
6. On the 20th June 2015, six weeks after the election, The People's Assembly will be holding a major national demonstration and festival in London to tell the new government to "End Austerity Now!"
7. The End Austerity Now demonstration will begin at The Bank of England and end at a live music festival in Tower Hamlets

### **The Union Believes**

1. Austerity has failed, except for the rich and powerful, and, unless living standards for the majority improve drastically, the economy will be forced back into recession
2. No solution to the crisis will come from any form of racism, islamophobia or on scapegoating immigrants
3. Whatever the result of the election austerity looks likely to continue, therefore a broad, united and national movement that can challenge this will still be necessary
4. That student unions and the student movement must remain central the campaign and event
5. The march will prove to the new government that the movement against austerity will continue as long as austerity does

### **The Union Resolves:**

1. To encourage members to come to the demonstration, and help publicise the event on social media and through all other appropriate communications channels

## Support NUS Trans Officer

**Proposer** Airlie Aird 572653

**Seconder** Tom King 349872

### The Union Notes:

- 1 - That universities across the country including SOAS have a significant minority of trans students
- 2 - that trans people and the issues they face are continually underrepresented in LGBT+ spaces
- 3 - that currently NUS LGBT+ has only a voluntary unpaid trans position
- 4 - that NUS LGBT+ recently voted to create a trans conference, but that this lacks the full autonomy it needs
- 6 - that trans students have voted unanimously on a number of occasions at NUS trans conference and caucuses in favour of a full-time paid trans officer but these votes have not been binding
- 7 - that a motion at NUS National Conference failed to achieve the  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority necessary to introduce a new full-time paid trans officer
- 8 - that NUS is projected to make a £79,000 surplus in the next academic year
- 9 - that SOAS Students' Union has repeatedly passed motions supporting trans students and wider trans liberation

### The Union Believes

- 1- That trans students need and deserve a national representative and that this representative should be paid
- 2 - that SOAS delegates to NUS conferences should insofar as is possible reflect the policy of this union in supporting a trans representative

### The Union Resolves:

1. To support the creation of a full-time paid trans officer post within the NUS
2. To mandate delegates to any NUS conference to vote in favour of the creation of a trans officer
3. To mandate delegates to any NUS conference to vote in favour of a trans conference which cannot be overruled by LGBT+ conference
4. That SOAS submit motions to NUS LGBT+ conference and National Conference reflecting the above

## Essay double whammy

Proposer: Pamela Mounter 622345

Seconder: Andy Spracklen 616657

### **The Union Notes:**

Once an essay has been submitted after the deadline it is not possible to recall it via Turnitin.

### **The Union Believes**

It would reduce student stress if we could recall essays from Turnitin and resubmit them via Turnitin after the deadline. This facility is available before the deadline, and it does not seem logical to close this avenue after the deadline.

### **The Union Resolves:**

To facilitate the recall and resubmission of essays after the deadline via Turnitin because any other process requires the stressed student to remember alternative methods.