



Friday 21st May 2021

## UGM Agenda

<b>Time</b>	11am - 12:30pm
<b>Date</b>	Friday 21st May 2021
<b>Location</b>	Zoom
<b>Chair</b>	Sara Bafo (Goldsmiths SU)
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction &amp; Ground Rules</li><li>2. <b>Motion 1:</b> Introduce an 'Inclusion Officer' as a mandatory role in SOAS SU society and club committees</li><li>3. <b>Motion 2:</b> Introduce a 'Welfare Officer' as a mandatory role in SOAS SU society and club committees</li><li>4. <b>Motion 3:</b> To reaffirm commitment to BDS and pressure SOAS to divest from and boycott Israeli Apartheid</li><li>5. Executive Committee Reports</li><li>6. Ratifying the Minutes of the Previous UGM</li><li>7. AOB</li></ol>



## UGM Motions

### Motion 1

<b>Title</b>	Introduce an 'Inclusion Officer' as a mandatory role in SOAS SU society and club committees
<b>Proposer</b>	Hasan Zakria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> Some groups of students are more likely to face barriers to getting involved in society and club activities, including: students with low confidence, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, disabled students, lgbtqia+ students, mature students, and BAME students. (This is not an exhaustive list)</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Examples of barriers include: A lack of alcohol-free spaces, events concentrated in the evening, non-inclusive language, no accessibility considerations, e.g. venue accessibility, lack of diversity in current committee. (This is not have an exhaustive list)</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Other Students Union's have implemented a mandatory 'Inclusion Officer' role in societies and clubs, to tackle barriers experienced by student groups, including those listed in point 1.1. Examples of which include those listed in point 1.2. These Students Union's include Sheffield SU, and University of West England SU. The latter named 'Participation and Equality Officer'</p> <p><b>1.4</b> SOAS SU does not at present have a mandatory 'Inclusion Officer ' committee role for societies and clubs</p> <p><b>1.5</b> SOAS Student's Union is beholden to the contents of its Equality and Diversity Policy (EDP)</p> <p><b>1.6</b> Point 1.1 of the EDP states the following: "The Union strives to create a culture in which diversity and equality of opportunity are promoted actively"</p> <p><b>1.7</b> Point 3.1 of the EDP states the following: "The Co-President Activities and Events will be responsible for making sure that sport, societies and events are run in line with this policy and are as open and inclusive as possible."</p> <p><b>1.8</b> SOAS Student's Union is beholden to the contents of its Safer Space Policy (SSP)</p> <p><b>1.9</b> The SSP states that it is "intended to help SOAS be a supportive, non-threatening and inclusive environment for all who participate"</p> <p><b>2.0</b> Points 1.5 to 1.9 of this motion demonstrate that SOAS SU has a duty towards inclusion, and this is extended to all SOAS students, including SU society and club members</p>	



### **This Union Believes**

- 2.1** Introducing a mandatory society and club committee role of 'Inclusion Officer', would fulfil the obligations set out in point 1.7 of this motion, pertaining to the responsibilities of the Co-President of Activities & Events
- 2.2** The introduction of an 'Inclusion Officer' is in line with points 1.6 and 1.9 of this motion, and would evidence SOAS SU's commitment to enforcing their own Equality and Diversity Policy, and Safer Space Policy
- 2.3** The introduction of an 'Inclusion Officer' would help remove barriers for student groups, such as those listed in point 1.2
- 2.4** The impact of point 2.3 may be evidenced by the following actions: ensuring all digital material is in an accessible format (For the benefit of some disabled students), hosting non-alcohol events (For the benefit of some students of faith), ensuring events are not concentrated in the evening (For the benefit of some students with caring/family responsibilities), hosting events for Liberation History Months (For the benefit of some Black/LGBTQIA+/Women/Disabled students) This is not an exhaustive list.
- 2.5** The introduction of an 'Inclusion Officer' would provide a direct contact for students who might face barriers to getting involved in a SU society/club
- 2.6** The introduction of an 'Inclusion Officer' does not mean other committee members can forgo responsibilities towards inclusion as outlined in the SOAS SU Equality and Diversity Policy, and Safer Space Policy

### **This Union Resolves**

- 3.1** To add 'Inclusion Officer' to the list of mandatory committee roles, for SOAS SU societies and clubs
- 3.2** To finalise a description of this role, including its duties and responsibilities upon the passing of this motion
- 3.3** To distribute the role description to societies and clubs upon the completion of points 3.1 and 3.2
- 3.4** To support societies and clubs to elect an Inclusion Officer before the start of each academic year
- 3.5** To devise mandatory training for all Inclusion Officers, ready to be delivered by Term 1 of each academic year
- 3.6** To ensure that if a society/club does not elect an Inclusion Officer, another committee member must take up the duties and responsibilities of the Inclusion Officer



## Motion 2

<b>Title</b>	Introduce a 'Welfare Officer' as a mandatory role in SOAS SU society and club committees
<b>Proposer</b>	Hasan Zakria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> University can be a site of struggle, hardship, and intense pressure for some students</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Not every student may be aware of support that is available to them via SOAS and the SU</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>1.3</b> Welfare-related issues may arise within societies/clubs, including bullying and harassment cases, mental health concerns and very serious personal circumstances affecting students' abilities to participate. (This is not an exhaustive list)</p> <p><b>1.3</b> SOAS Student's Union is beholden to the contents of its Safer Space Policy (SSP)</p> <p><b>1.4</b> The intention of the SSP as written in the policy, is to "help SOAS be a supportive, non-threatening and inclusive environment for all who participate"</p> <p><b>1.5</b> The SSP states "By entering and/or using SOAS Students' Union spaces (both digital and physical) and/or participating in SOAS SU events and activities" you agree to abide by the SSP</p> <p><b>1.6</b> Not every student may be aware of the SSP, and it may not be enforced in SOAS SU society/club spaces</p> <p><b>1.7</b> Other Student Union's have introduced a mandatory 'Welfare Officer' role in societies and clubs, including UCL to tackle issues raised in points 1.1 to 1.3 and 1.6</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> Introducing a mandatory society and club committee role of 'Welfare Officer', would help fulfil the aims listed in points 2.2 to 2.6 of this motion</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>2.2</b> There needs to be greater visibility of welfare issues, including mental health concerns, harassment and bullying, loneliness and homesickness, loss of confidence, low self-esteem (This is not an exhaustive list)</p> <p><b>2.3</b> There needs to be a direct point of contact between the Co-President of Welfare and Campaigns, and societies/clubs- in order to disseminate important messages related to welfare. Such as those examples mentioned in point 2.2</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>2.4</b> Every student belonging to a society or club should know someone, within said society/club, who they can go to if they want to access information regarding the SU's and University's support and welfare services</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Every student belonging to a society or club should feel reassured that the society/club</p>	



is actively raising awareness of, and enforcing, the SU Safer Space Policy and Equality & Diversity Policy

**2.6** A society/club committee needs to be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to promote and enforce the SU Safer Space Policy and Equality & Diversity Policy

**This Union Resolves**

**3.1** To add 'Welfare Officer' to the list of mandatory committee roles, for SOAS SU societies and clubs

**3.2** To finalise a description of this role, including its duties and responsibilities upon the passing of this motion

**3.3** To distribute the role description to societies and clubs upon the completion of points 3.1 and 3.2

**3.4** To support societies and clubs to elect a Welfare Officer before the start of each academic year

**3.5** To devise mandatory training for all Welfare Officers, ready to be delivered by Term 1 of each academic year

**3.6** To ensure that if a society/club does not elect a Welfare Officer, another committee member must take up the duties and responsibilities of the Welfare Officer

**Motion 3**

<b>Title</b>	To reaffirm commitment to BDS and pressure SOAS to divest from and boycott Israeli Apartheid
<b>Proposer</b>	Yara Derbas

**This Union Notes**

**1.1** That in 2005 Palestinian Civil Society called for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions of Israel's economic, cultural and academic institutions, until the Israeli government agrees to comply with International Law and the Universal Principles of Human Rights.

**1.2** That SOAS Students' Union was one of the first unions in the country to publicly endorse the call for BDS, and has campaigned on the issue ever since, and has boycotted Israeli goods in our Shop and Bar.

**1.3** That SOAS has previously outsourced cleaning staff to International Service System (ISS) which operate in the occupied territories.

**1.4** That SOAS has affiliations with academic institutions in Israel, notably a five year



contract with Haifa University that began this academic year 2020/21.

**1.5** That Haifa University is built on colonised Palestinian Mount Carmel which in 1948 saw its Palestinian population reduced from 61,000 to 4,000 as a direct consequence of the Nakba (catastrophe).

**1.5.1** That Haifa University also secured a tender to organise higher education courses for the Israeli Army and provide specific programmes designed for military officers so as not to disrupt their 'duties in relation to the occupation'

**1.5.2** That Haifa University Manages three military colleges—the National Defense College, the Command and Staff College, and the Tactical Command College—creating a “direct responsibility for the university over the training and education of the Israeli officer corps.”

**1.6** That SOAS prior to the contract with Haifa University had a contract with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which is built on occupied territory in East Jerusalem in violation of international law and has deep ties to the Israeli military.

**1.7** That SOAS currently invests over £4.7 million in companies complicit in Israeli Apartheid.

**1.7.1** That the £4.7 million are broken down into the following investments, all of which are complicit in supporting Israeli apartheid either directly or indirectly through subsidiaries, or have locations in Israel or in illegal settlements:

£1,290,302 in Microsoft Corp

£329,186 in Albermarle Corp

£477,586 in Samsung Electronics Co Ltd.

£870,876 in Samsung SDI Co Ltd.

£878,081 in Applied Materials Inc.

£565,006 in Sony Corp

£279,184 in Barclays PLC.

**1.8** That there has been unprecedented attack on Palestinian academic freedom and free speech, which over 60 SOAS societies have signed a letter condemning in December 2020.

#### **This Union Believes**

**2.1** That SOAS should not have contracted companies which operate in the occupied territories and thus promote Israeli apartheid and should not do so going forward.

**2.2** That as an academic institution, we should work on the academic boycott component of the BDS campaign.

**2.3** That, while an academic boycott is seen as the most controversial side of the BDS movement, Israeli Universities have been complicit in whitewashing Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian rights and have actively supported Israeli war crimes such as in the 2014 operation 'Protective Edge', which killed over 2,127 Palestinians.

**2.4** That as an academic institution that markets itself as decolonial, we should not partner



with Israeli universities that have historically plundered Palestinian archives and restricted their access only to Israeli academics.

**2.5** That, however, there are Israeli individuals both amongst students and staff, who resist on a daily basis the complicity of these institutions with the Israeli state.

**2.6** That, this academic boycott should target Israeli institutions rather than individuals.

**2.7** That as an academic institution that markets itself as decolonial, we should work on divesting from companies complicit in Israeli Apartheid and colonialism.

### **This Union Resolves**

**3.1** To continue to practice BDS as a Union, by not buying Israeli goods.

**3.2** To renew and work on the SOAS Students' Union School wide referendum to implement BDS and an academic boycott (along the lines of the policy voted on at the UGM) and break ties with any institution that upholds Israel's violations of International Law and basic human rights, which passed with a landslide vote of 73% of students and workers voting Yes for BDS in 2015.

**3.3** To support student led campaigning for SOAS to fulfil the commitment to BDS, the entire school community made in 2015, by boycotting Haifa University and all Israeli Universities.

**3.4** To support student led campaigning for SOAS to fulfil the commitment to BDS by divesting from all companies complicit in Israeli Apartheid.

**3.5** To support student led campaigning by sharing resources, skills and advocating for BDS campaign demands in SOAS governance structures and committees.

**3.5.1** This support includes lobbying SOAS to put in place an ethical investment policy that deems complicity in Israeli Apartheid unethical and abide by it.