



The Following 3 Motions Were Passed During the UGM On:

21st May 2021

*All motions have been updated to include any **amendments** passed*

Motion 1

Title	Introduce a 'Welfare Officer' as a mandatory role in SOAS SU society and club committees
Proposer	Hasan Zakria
This Union Notes	
<p>1.1 University can be a site of struggle, hardship, and intense pressure for some students</p> <p>1.2 Not every student may be aware of support that is available to them via SOAS and the SU</p> <p>1.3 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>1.3 SOAS Student's Union is beholden to the contents of its Safer Space Policy (SSP)</p> <p>1.4 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>1.5 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>1.6 Not every student may be aware of the SSP, and it may not be enforced in SOAS SU society/club spaces</p> <p>1.7 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>	
This Union Believes	
<p>2.1 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>2.2 There needs to be greater visibility of welfare issues, including mental health</p>	



concerns, harassment and bullying, loneliness and homesickness, loss of confidence, low self-esteem (This is not an exhaustive list)

2.3 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

2.4 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

2.5 Every student belonging to a society or club should feel reassured that the society/clubs 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 2

Title	To reaffirm commitment to BDS and pressure SOAS to divest from and boycott Israeli Apartheid
Proposer	Yara Derbas
<p style="text-align: center;">This Union Notes</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>1.3 That SOAS has previously outsourced cleaning staff to International Service System (ISS) which operate in the occupied territories.</p> <p>1.4 That SOAS has affiliations with academic institutions in Israel, notably a five yearcontract with Haifa University that began this academic year 2020/21.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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'</p> <p>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.”</p> <p>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.</p> <p>1.7 That SOAS currently invests over £4.7 million in companies complicit in Israeli Apartheid.</p> <p>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:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">£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</p>	



£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.

Motion 3

Title	Sabbatical Role for Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Students of the diaspora
Proposer	Patrick Serrugo
<p>*Black does not refer to today's term of 'politically Black', which seeks to include all non-white students as one homogenous group. Instead, Black refers to students of Black African origin whose ancestry is rooted in Africa. This includes Black African students, Black Caribbean students and Black Students of the diaspora.</p> <p>*Anti-Black racism refers to the direct and indirect, systemic and systematic forms of discrimination that directly impact the lives of Black folks adversely; producing psychological, social, economic, spiritual, emotional, physical and internal degradation, suppression and erasure of Black folk.</p>	
This Union Notes	
<p>1.1 No one at a full-time level has placed Black students' issues as a top priority in the SU without it causing friction.</p> <p>1.2 Black students constantly face anti-Black racism on campus (direct discrimination).</p> <p>1.3 Black students still face micro-aggressions and structural anti-Black racism (indirect discrimination).</p> <p>1.4 Black students are not adequately represented across the school's curriculum and reading lists. A curriculum that addresses Black cultures, experiences and politics are still predominantly taught through the medium of white epistemologies delivered by non-Black lecturers; hence demands are being made from campaigns such as My Reading List is Black. Furthermore, Black students even face backlash when incorporating Black scholars into their work.</p> <p>1.5 Black students are negated, erased and spoken over and spoken for at SOAS and not listened to.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.6 Black students are not accorded justice when racially abused.</p>	



1.7 The institutional responses to the lack of representation of Black students and the school's pervasive anti-Blackness have failed. The Decolonising SOAS Working group has not managed to achieve any fruitful results. All the meetings regarding the issue have failed to produce any action points to tackle structural anti-Black racism.

1.8 The removal of the Africa Section has resulted in the deterioration of the Black student experience at SOAS. Many Black students joined the university based on its marketing as a leading institution for African Studies. The university has not compensated students for the adverse academic effects caused by reductions of module options and staff capacities in Africa related courses caused by this restructuring.

1.9 The lack of representation and the pervasive anti-Blackness forces Black students to advocate for their rights which distracts them from focusing on their academic work and feeds into the cycle of low attainment.

1.10 We have countless personal accounts, eye witness testimonies, qualitative data (emails/essay feedback etc.), and quantitative data of the challenges and anti-Blackness Black students face.

This Union Believes

2.1 All students deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and many are. However, Black students continue to face the same issues that many of their previous alumni have faced at SOAS, at least since the days of Walter Rodney (PhD History 1966), Paul Robeson (Swahili and phonetics 1934) and Ivan Van Certima (1969).

2.2 Although there are other marginalised groups, the marginalisation of Black students at SOAS and Black people globally is unique. There is a lack of respect for the Black person as a being to this day. The disrespect Black students face is often caused by the fact that the perpetrators of anti-Blackness are rarely penalised for their acts as the institution ignores the complaints of Black students by not taking credible action.

2.3 Having such a role will make other SU Sabbatical Roles more productive for the rest of the student body for two reasons: a. They can focus on the issues that pertain to their office, which do not exclusively focus on Black students. b. This allows for more excellent representation of the body as a whole and provides time and resources to be redirected to the other responsibilities they are elected for.

2.4 The attainment gap is racist: The lack of success associated with Black students is an external issue and not an inadequacy or deficiency of intellect. It reveals the institution's determinist approach, which perpetuates anti-Black racism, fueling hostility in a learning environment.

2.5 The SOAS Student's Union has been insufficient in addressing racial abuse towards Black students, and complaints have not been adequately dealt with, as attested to by the Black students. The latter still suffer from anti-Black racism in their classes without recourse. Some of these Black students have recently graduated with the racialised



trauma incurred at SOAS.

2.6 The Black student body shouldered the work on anti-Black racism and its injuries and spending inordinate amounts of time gathering limited resources to assist Black students injured by racism and not focus on their studies.

2.7 The executive board has failed, the academic committee has failed, widening participation has failed, decolonising SOAS has failed. If all parts of the institution have failed, what will the welfare of Black students at SOAS continue to look like?

This Union Resolves

3.1 The Student's Union (SU) should create a new Sabbatical Role role as soon as possible due to the current events of the director, Adam Habib's racist attack on a student on 11th March 2021.

3.2 This role should be full-time and paid akin to the other Sabbatical Role roles. The goal is to allow SOAS students to pick a Black Sabbatical Role based on the Black individual's merits and ability to support and represent the SOAS Black student body.

3.3 This Sabbatical Role role will be focused on issues affecting Black and Minority Ethnic Students' intersecting struggles such as race, class and gender, attainment gap, and countering all forms of racism, particularly Anti-Blackness inside and outside the SU.

3.4 This Sabbatical Role should represent Black students by making the institution accountable for their promises. See 'decolonising SOAS vision.'

3.5 The selected individual must be a person of Black African Descent.

3.6 This Sabbatical Role must go through diversity training specific to Blackness & higher education.

3.7 The person in this role must be a current student or a final year student.

3.8 The Sabbatical Role must go through a termly review by Black students peers, together with the Anti-Racism officer, making sure that the needs of Black students are met in bettering their experience.

3.9 This Sabbatical Role will be the main point of contact for Black students to make confidential complaints about their learning environment, modules, lecturers and convenors

3.10 The SU should lobby the University for this role to be able to take measures and penalise anti-Black racist behaviour exhibited by any staff members and students regardless of seniority in accordance with the SOAS Dignity and Respect Policy and SOAS Students Union constitution.

3.11 The role will work with the Black Student Support Coordinator and have the same access to resources within the SU to ensure and safeguard the Black Student Body.



3.12 To lobby the university and allow the Black Student Body to make democratic amendments through a termly peer-reviewed of both roles to ensure Anti-Black racism is dealt with and the safety of Black Students upheld.