

Executive Summary of the Statement from the LSE Liberated Zone, 04 June 2024

- It is day 241 of the ongoing genocide in Gaza.
- On Monday, 03 June, the third meeting between the School Management Committee (SMC) and negotiators on behalf of the LSE Liberated Zone occurred. The members of the SMC present were Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Planning and Resources), **Eric Neumayer**, Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), **Emma McCoy**, and Deputy Chief Operating Officer, **Joanne Hay**.
- SMC members do not wish to engage with us in a democratic and fair manner, and rejected our proposal to **set out a clear schedule** for upcoming negotiation meetings.
- Our key demand, **Divestment** was brought up by negotiators, to which **Eric Neumayer** responded, "I'm not sure there's anything we can deliver on that [divestment]... Council will never agree [to divestment]."
- **We reject the premise of these claims: there are steps that the SMC and the Council must take towards divestment and we find their stance unconscionable and cowardly.** SMC is avoiding the responsibility and authority it has to shape the university's investments; but LSE's complicity in Israel's genocide and war crimes has potential legal consequences.
- We appreciate the support of **Emma McCoy** for our fourth demand, **Designate**, to look into allocating funding specifically for Palestinian scholars and students, and urge the university to do more. We have raised concerns about **the Scholars at Risk programme which prevents participants from applying for asylum.**
- SMC members did not have knowledge of how their own processes profile and target Muslim students through the LSE Risk Spotters initiative, which has hindered LSESU Islamic Society's ability to operate and hold events free of surveillance. **Joanne Hay** claims that she will "look into" the Islamophobic risk assessment required by Prevent.
- Per demand eight, **Denounce**, **Eric Neumayer** stated that in regards to the event facilitated by LSE Law with Benny Morris, "**an apology will not be forthcoming**" and also stated that **he does "not think David Kershaw would agree that Benny Morris is Islamophobic."**
- We demand the recommendations from the Investments Sub-Committee, which will inform the agenda for the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC).

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On Monday, 03 June, negotiators on behalf of the LSE Liberated Zone met with three members of the School Management Committee (SMC), **Eric Neumayer**, **Emma McCoy**, and **Joanne Hay**. This meeting was the third between the LSE Liberated Zone and the SMC, and the second meeting where the Ten Demands of the Liberated Zone were discussed.

We want to first and foremost note that we are now 241 days into the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The death count has reached 36,550, while thousands more are under the rubble. **Every day without action is a crime; every day without divestment and a call for ceasefire is unconscionable.**

Our demands are clear. The LSE Liberated Zone will leave the Bloom Building* once our demands are met.

A major obstacle to our negotiations with SMC has concerned procedural matters. Unfortunately SMC members do not wish to engage with us in a democratic and fair manner and have rejected our repeated requests to set a clear agenda for meetings, and to jointly approve the minutes of meetings. Instead, their notes of the meetings forms the record, and our "feedback" is simply supplementary. In yesterday's negotiation meeting, this was brought up again, in particular given that SMC's previous minutes have dishonestly omitted key information that was discussed. SMC simply refuse to have a mutually agreed record of the meetings, so we have reluctantly accepted this in order to move forward. In this meeting we tried to **set out a clear schedule** for the next few weeks of negotiations to ensure that a clear plan is in place for the effectiveness of meetings, given that SMC members repeatedly inform us that they are not the appropriate decision-makers in these negotiation meetings. However, members of **SMC wriggled out of the suggestion to plan what will be discussed in upcoming meetings**, and simply reverted to an operational commitment of meeting twice a week. **We don't find this type of engagement to be in good faith.**

This is the second meeting in which **Divestment** has been brought up by negotiators, and correspondingly been shut down by members of SMC. Specifically, **Eric Neumayer** stated, "**I'm not sure there's anything we can deliver on that [divestment].**" Additionally, **Neumayer** elaborated that the "**Council will never agree [to divestment]**, they think they have already given you the concession of letting you present the report." We find these remarks incredibly concerning considering the urgency and importance our of Divestment demand. Due to the research compiled in the *Assets in Apartheid* report, we know that **£89 million** (18.4% of the portfolio value) of LSE investments are used in (1) crimes against the Palestinian people, (2) extraction of fossil fuels, (3) proliferation of arms, and (4) financing of fossil fuels. The SMC—and the entire LSE governing structure—is more than complicit in the crimes outlined above; the SMC and Council have been aware of the findings of the report since January. **The blood of Palestinians is, on no uncertain terms, on LSE's hands.**

We appreciate the support of **Emma McCoy** for our fourth demand, **Designate**. The SMC has decided to add an additional £250,000 to the Scholars at Risk (SAR) programme. However, SMC has not specified that these funds would go to Palestinian scholars. We noted in yesterday's meeting that the **SAR programme warns participants that if they apply for asylum** during their residency at a host institution, they will be liable to repay the costs of the programme. **Emma McCoy** has agreed to raise this incredibly concerning issue through the appropriate channels. **McCoy** also expressed support for editing the language of the SAR programme to "strongly encourage applicants" from Palestine, which we don't feel is enough. When asked for a commitment from LSE for specific scholarships for Palestinian students because there are no universities left in Gaza, **Eric Neumayer** replied "there are universities in the West Bank". Negotiators reminded him that some universities have specific scholarships for Palestinian students that LSE could consider. SMC has agreed to bring **Charles Stafford**, the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor, to the next meeting to discuss the SAR matter. We support this initiative but question why it has taken 20 days for the relevant decision-makers to be invited into the negotiation meetings with us.

In regards to demand six, **Disengage**, we raised the point that Muslim students and societies have faced extensive profiling through LSE's Risk Spotters group which highlights and surveills events with "controversial" speakers. The **disproportionate and Islamophobic nature of how the Risk Spotters group currently operates** - hindering LSESU Islamic Society's ability to operate and hold events free of surveillance - was shared and SMC did not

have knowledge of their own processes. **Joanne Hay** stated her dismay at any bias and expressed that she will look into addressing the issues of profiling in the process of risk assessment that is required by Prevent. We note that the SMC has agreed to facilitate a cultural awareness training to combat Prevent, and that there could be external contributions to this training. But, our demand is that a "Preventing Prevent" training be put in place in collaboration with the LSESU Palestine Society, LSESU Islamic Society, and/or all authors of the *Assets in Apartheid* report.

Finally, per demand eight, **Denounce, Eric Neumayer** stated that in regards to the event facilitated by LSE Law with Benny Morris, "**an apology will not be forthcoming**" and also state that **he does "not think David Kershaw would agree that Benny Morris is Islamophobic."** We want to be clear: **the arbiter on deciding who is Islamophobic is not David Kershaw, a white man.** LSE Law hosted racism on campus by giving Benny Morris, an Islamophobe and racist, a platform at our university. David Kershaw must be held accountable for his actions. We should also add that SMC has received numerous incidents from the encampment regarding Islamophobia and student safety concerns. SMC has ignored all of these emails.

Demands two, **Disaffiliate**, and seven, **Disavow**, have yet to be discussed in meetings. There has also been no movement on demand five, **Dedicate**, nor demand three, **Drop the Silence**, which were brought up in negotiations on 28 May.

We acknowledge the allowance of three representatives of the *Assets of Apartheid* report at the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC) on 11 June. We also acknowledge that the FEC has stated that their recommendations based on this meeting will be brought to Council on the 25th of June. **We also know this is not enough. The discussions at the Investments Sub-Committee meeting from 28 May inform the agenda of the FEC meeting; thus, we are demanding to receive the recommendations from the Investments Sub-Committee prior to the FEC meeting. The SMC has also agreed to arrange additional meetings with Tim Frost**, the Chair of the Investments Sub-Committee and sits on the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC) and **Mike Ferguson**, the Finance Director, as relevant individuals to our specific demands. We will be following up on these meetings in due time.

You can read about how we have addressed fire safety concerns in yesterday's email to SMC in a separate upcoming post.

*Renamed in memorium after Marshall Bloom, an American anti-apartheid and anti-war student activist who was suspended from LSE for leading the first student occupation in the UK here in 1967 against LSE's complicity in Rhodesian apartheid. Bloom subsequently committed suicide following his draft call into the Vietnam War. The building is formally (and now formerly) known as the Marshall Building, but the students condemn any official association of LSE with Sir Paul Marshall, the major owner of GB News and exposed racist, for whom it is named.