



7th Week Council Trinity 2006

Minutes passed with some amendments. ? marks on page 3 are Richard Saynor Mansfield.

Appointments ratified nem con.

Elections in Council:

Humanities Divisional Board Rep
No hust wanted

University Council Rep:
Husts wanted.

Political affiliations
Benny Spooner: Amnesty International
Helen Bagshaw: No affiliations

HB: Am VP Ac Af
BS: Will annoy University Council; scrutinise business

Mans: What were your views on admissions reform
BS: More centralisation
HB: in line with what we passed

What would you do if you really disagreed with Council policy
HB: Clearly have to follow it
BS: Ditto

Questions to Executive:
BS: Will President accept my thanks for her good attitude and my best wishes for the future;
RR: Any campaign successes?
Emma Norris: Student Contract has gone really well. Minimum guarantees of accommodation, welfare and teaching. SRI has been a success.

Emergency motions:
Accounts
Procedural motion to table passing accounts.
Alice Wilby: This gives people a chance to look at accounts over the summer and pass them in first week.
Chris Allan: This isn't a budget, this is me telling you what the auditors have said about the status of our finances.
Motion to table accounts clearly passes.

Procedural motion to postpone censuring of Gordon Brown to end of agenda
Iain Simpson: Think we should discuss this at the very end and do other stuff first, then those who want to hang around discussing it can.
Motion clearly passes.

Procedural motion to move Palestinian motion to front of agenda.
?: Most important motion, should discuss it now.

Iain Simpson: We have a prioritised agenda for a reason, let's deal with this at the end.
Procedural motion clearly passes.

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Josh (St Hughes): This is an attempt at a non-controversial, on the fence approach to the motion. I agree that there is not free access to education. But students on both sides of the conflict are affected by it. We want to show affiliation and solidarity to students so should do it with those on both sides.

SFQ's

? Somerville: Why not Bir Zeit?

POI: The election statistics for the relevant universities. (Can't hear)

Josh: In the last 10 years at least 4 suicide bombers have come out of Bir Zeit but not the other one

Why is the word 'occupation' in inverted commas?

It's a very loose term. In international law it means a whole bunch of things. I believe in a 2-state solution. No "" would be controversial.

Move to debate proposed and withdrawn.

CA Some) What does it mean to affiliate to an SU

No factual answer

Omar Schweiki (SPC); Is it the case that Hebrew University is built on occupied land

Josh: No, founded before Palestinian nationalism. Part of this land has been annexed and it is so disputed by Int Law that its not our place to get into it now

EC: Clarify Council notes 2

Kat: Point 3 of the original motion was about all the bad stuff that had happened that hindered access to education

Isn't it true that the Hebrew University is politically affiliated to Likud?

?: No not true.

How was Palestinian motion of 5th week offensive?

Is clear people found it offensive.

Tom Dale, Corpus: Who runs the Student Union Council at Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Josh: there are no links to terrorist groups.

Kat Segal, POI: wall has cut off a campus from Al Qudz.

Josh: but we're showing solidarity with them.

MTD (Aidan) – opinions are being offered.

Rob robinson: we need the facts.

MTD: fails.

Sara SAC: does Hebrew have an anti occupation policy.

Josh: no it doesn't, but many societies there do, and they demonstrate and protest to this end in a non violent way.

? Have Palestinians opted to boycott their council at Hebrew University?

Josh: I have no idea.

? Yes they have – they are boycotting Hebrew Council because of its discriminatory policies.

MTD (Iain Simpson) – we are drifting to debate, and there is an amendment that will sort all of this out.

Rob Rob: We need facts, and there are many people new to council here.

MTD: 41 for, 21 against.

SFQs over.

Opp: Kat Segal, Somerville.

Ti twin with universities in both groups suggests parity of experience, which isn't the case. In Birzeit students can't get into University on a daily basis because of road blocks. Higher death rate – nobody is suggesting that it is equal. Israeli students are not living under occupation, and do not suffer as Palestinians do. We are showing solidarity with the students, not with their political groupings. Freedom of education is a right which we should defend.

AMENDMENT: strike Believes 2, 3, 4 and 5; strike Resolves 1 and replace with "to overturn the 'Palestinian Students' policy passed by council in 5th week, TT06"; strike resolves 2 and 3.

Iain – we are now beginning to see the minefield when we come up with fair policy to both sides for the Middle East.

Amendment accepted as friendly by the proposer.

POI: Why are all clauses relating to the rights of Palestinians removed?

Iain: also for Israelis; can still be inferred that we support Palestinians, Israelis, Somalis and everyone around the world who doesn't have access to education

Sarah Higs, Balliol: why doesn't this acknowledge the power disparity between Israel and Palestine.

Iain: because it isn't about that, it's about education. Let's not try and redraft the roadmap and talk about ideological purity of Universties

Ben Jasper Wadham: Are we affiliated to a University in Australia?

Iain: that's non-contentious, if you disagree then bring a motion of your own.

Navid: Why is it important for the motion to be impartial?

Iain: room has 60 people, University has 18,000. We should have a referendum to say out policy on Israel and Palestine and its ins and outs.

SH: It's about access of education, but how can this be separated from the power to attain this freedom?

Chair: that's not a question.

DT Wadham: did OUSU have policy on apartheid?

Iain: I don't know. We shouldn't go into similarities and differences because there is no consensus there.

Because there are such strong views on each side we shouldn't have a strong policy statement for either side.

MTV: people oppose the motion rather than the amendment, let's pass the amendment and discuss the motion.

Rob Rob: Not true, but we should have a debate.

MTV fails.

Back in debate:

DT: Side missed by Iain: left point 2 in notes.

Iain on POI – but they do not make policy.

DT: we should take a stance if Amnesty and so many human rights organizations do.

Andrea Miller Linacre: we made a mistake last week when we supported those who vote for terrorists. We have to repeal that. This is not controversial and does not support either side. This was a mistake that was snook in as an emergency motion.

Hannah Roe Balliol: we passed last week unanimously.

? POI But many people didn't have the full facts of this situation.

Hannah Roe: I would like to know whether any colleges have mandates. Motion has been on the website for quite some time; if colleges don't have mandates that implies that it's up to council to do this.

MTV on amendment fails.

Mansfield MCR: amendment is one of the most profoundly sensible proposal to come before OUSU; what happened last week doesn't affect OUSU and we should correct that.

Omar Pembroke: People are saying don't take a stand, it's divisive and we shouldn't do anything. We should take a stand; if people take a stand there is a right and a wrong. Injustice exists.

Andrea New: Motion isn't controversial, we're conflating opinions on the conflict and what the actual motion said about education. We know whose rights to education are being infringed.

lain: procedural motion to suspend section B of the standing orders.

Chair: this makes everything at Cahir's discretion.

lain: Rich needs more power to make sure that interruptions and repetitions don't happen. Rich can chair the remaining bit of this better.

Dan Simpson Balliol: Section B requires the Chair to make sure that debate is relevant and proper, and gives a structure. No structure is rubbish, we should stay within the rules.

Procedural motion withdrawn.

Tom Dale CCC: Even if there is opposition to Birzeit affiliation we should reject amendment, there are uncontroversial things that are being struck out. It goes beyond correcting a mistake, and says that we should never take a substantive stand on anything.

Samina Bhatia Hertford: Last motion supposedly supportive of students accessing their education. However, its approach leant us toward the Palestinian side which isn't bad. Amendment is general – too general – but is better than what we have. We need a general assertion in favour of access to education without allying ourselves to one part of a conflict.

lain: tom Dale said the weirdest thing he's ever said: that it's non controversial. If it wasn't we wouldn't discuss it. What this does is reduce this to the first principles without introducing stands on a conflict. We don't know about these Universities, and we can't make informed decisions with specifics about either side involved. We should take a stance, but only where it's sensible and relevant.

Gabriel Doctor New: In favour of amendment. Cancels last council, doesn't support either side. Last week's motion was passed without opposition because there wasn't information. We now support terrorist organizations without our consent. We walked into this error. We should support the amendment.

?: Idea that Hamas controls Birzeit controls council is as silly as Labour controlling OUSU.

Gabriel Doctor – they run on tickets.

?: We are actually affiliating to a democratic body, not its current political composition.

James Lamming Merton: I didn't have a mandate last time. Without a mandate I wouldn't have vote, but we didn't have information. We should vote according to those whom we represent, and we should have a motion that we can all rally around. I have to think about Merton JCR not myself: they believe in education for all.

MTV – Lewis Jones st Catz – I need the summer to find information to vote on an unamended motion. Let's vote.

? Wadham: we haven't exhausted debate on the amendment. If there wasn't enough information last time, we should have enough now.

MTV fails.

Nasha Wadham: We're all talking about controversy. Taking away the rights to education is controversial. We should be able to bring ourselves to express solidarity for rights violations.

Sara St Anthony's: Means that we don't support a University under occupation, were students cannot get to their education. There is no moral equivalence. There are lots of Universities, but at this one students cannot attend University. We can't restrict human rights on whether or not we agree with people.

? Ch Ch: A lot of people have an agenda. We are here to vote on a motion that represents Oxford; we're not in a position to talk about a conflict. We can talk about human rights, and that they are for Israelis and Palestinians.

MTV: 33 – 22, I abstain.. Chair casting vote in favour of the status quo – back in debate on the amendment.

Request for recount (Ollie Russell) – 10 in favour.

33 – 20, I abstain. Back in debate on the amendment.

Kat Segal: One of the ideas here is that we can't get into debate on things that are far away. Debates are vital in forums outside of Parliament, and we are one of those. WE should use the power that we have. Palestinians are suffering and that's not controversial. We can't abstract suffering from those who are suffering. They have asked for a small show of solidarity, and we should do what little that we can.

5 Minute Recess.

Council Recalled.

Chair: ruling to close the speakers' list. Speeches limited to one minute.

Tara Worcester: Spent 3 months at Birzeit, travelled all around. Student said that students from Gaza were kidnapped for going to Birzeit. Was a student of Arabic there and couldn't get there because of roadblocks. Obligation for human beings to show solidarity.

Ellie Cumbo Linacre: We all agree that we have a right to education, and therefore to free speech – let's not be rude. I am willing to take stands on things and have a track record on this. But we do not have a referendum on this, and we have no mandates for most of us – therefore we can do more than express general sentiments. Bring things about Palestine separately on their merits.

MTV – 30 for, 25 against. Fails.

?: A lot has been said about controversies. Object to comments about terrorists at Birzeit, that's an awful thing to say about students who live in terrible situations. Birzeit University has been known to support Christians.

Omar Sharif SPC: Controversy is hollow. Facts speak for themselves. 39 years of illegal occupation is recognized by the world. Checkpoints, roadblocks, restrictions, removals of Palestinians. Students cannot move around to study. 700 children killed by the Israelis. Controversy is meaningless in this context.

?, St Cross: Council is seeking to not be political, but going back on last week will be seen as such.

Dan Simpson: tension between 2 ideals: fundamental right to education, and commitment to Birzeit. Amendment divorces these two, which is correct. Have to ask whether a student council dominated by terrorists is incompatible with the right to access of education for Jews and other people.

Tom Dale: 4 arguments for the amendment, which are false. First: Birzeit is run by terrorists. Matter not altered by the amendment, and is condemned in motion as it stands. 2: establishes right to education for all – but motion unaltered says that. 3: give this, unnecessary to have a position on a specific instance. But what then if we get requests for solidarity from others? 4: this is too particular and controversial. But there are injustices.

Vote on the amendment: 36 for, 22 against. 2 abstain. Amendment passes.

MTV on motion as amended: 33 in favour, 24 against. Fails.

Chair: list will be closed at ten.

Iain: Lot of debate on amendment, which we will go over again. Motion now says that we are in favour of education for all, and repeals motion from last time that was ill conceived, and that we didn't have information or mandates. Not about not having political motions, but that we cannot make a fully informed opinion on the Middle East conflict. Revoking last time's policy stops our links to terrorist institutions.

?: We agree that there is an inalienable human right to access to education. Last time passed without information or debate. Not the remit of OUSU to pass on unrepresentative views as if people in Oxford agree. Wrong to remain in the old position.

Nadia Wadham: Isn't only not affiliating, stopping affiliation after we've already agreed. Actively withdrawing support. We now do not support these students, which is harmful. By expressing solidarity doesn't mean a one sided stance.

Wadham, Abdul tikriti: Shocked by speeches against Birzeit when we're withdrawing support. Bad to do things to people under occupations. Talking about Hamas without knowing what this means, or what it is to Birzeit. In this impoverished debate we are missing out on the fact that we need to show solidarity, like Desmond tutu did. Solidarity is about actions which expose the injustice and oppose the removal of the road to Birzeit and the killing of students. We are talking about human impact.

Aidan: contentious issue that alienates students unless we make this a general statement about rights to education. We should not take alienating stances. When people ask about our policy we should say that right to education is defended irrespective of any other influences.

Omar SPC: Dr from Birzeit said that solidarity has an impact on students and teachers, knowing that they are not alone. Last time we said that it means a lot to them – and it did. Suffering against international law or any other moral arguments we have heard today. They say that Oxford, as a prestigious University, means a lot to them when it expresses its support. Birzeit students need to be able to feel that they are not being abandoned.

Lewis Jones St catz – I appreciate the views of everyone today. I look forward to voting for 2 reasons. I have no mandate, and do not study politics or history, so am not really equipped to vote on the issue: but expression of general support for educational equality and access is something we can all say and agree on.

? Worcester: Hebrew University is boycotted by its students.

Claire Addison: Not voting on twinning with any University: it's about whether we support education for all. This applies to everywhere, even in this country. We shouldn't confuse this with Israel and Palestine. Bring another motion about that if we want to discuss it. The motion as it stands is about education for all.

Motion to vote secretly

Benny Spooner Pembroke: this shouldn't be intimidating for anyone, nobody has any mandates, this is a matter of conscience. Worried me that irresponsible reporting of this will be bad.

Iain: look forward to the day that people care how we vote in council. Secret ballot will take up time, and we speak on behalf of students – this should be in the open. Representatives should be held to account for how they vote.

Fails.

Final Speech in favour:

Dan Simpson, Balliol: when I walked in I thought everyone would agree with universal right to education. We should feel proud to vote for that – didn't think anyone would vote against. Vote for to express that. Israel and Palestine: we bounced this through last time, after more research we now have reservations.

Mark Somerville: Crux of opposition has been about Hamas in Birzeit. Flow of argument about rights for education rights – but it's either inalienable or not. We shouldn't withdraw support for an SU just because of who is on its council.

Vote: 34 for, 24 against. 4 abstain.

Policy Lapse.