

## Occupation Demands to the Warwick Students' Union - #WarwickOccupy

The actions of the University and Students' Union in the last week have led to us occupying two rooms in the Students' Union HQ, as documented by our earlier 'Occupation Statement.' Both the University and the Students' Union have demonstrated serious neglect for the welfare and rights of vulnerable students - namely Palestinians, Muslims and other Black and Brown students. Through our occupation we seek to reclaim our SU, so that it may start fulfilling its basic duties and obligations to represent us as ethnic minority students as we call for our University to fulfill its duty of care. We ask for the SU to work with us, rather than against us, to further put pressure on the wider University in the protection of our well-being and rights. This has led to us drawing up a list of the following demands, some of which are addressed to the Students' Union, and some of which to University management. These are our demands addressed to the SU; however, they should be read in conjunction with our demands to the University, as we seek institutional transformation. **We shall call off the occupation when both the SU and University Management demonstrate a clear commitment to all of the demands of our movement, as presented below.**

### **Our Demands:**

#### **1. We demand rights for the occupiers:**

- We demand that the Students' Union cease to surveil and/or collect information about those involved with the occupation or associated actions. Any current information held on student protestors and occupiers must be deleted entirely after being disclosed to the students in question.
- We demand a guarantee of the rights of students and staff involved in the occupation, laid out in our Code of Conduct.

#### **2. We demand that the SU release new statement on the events:**

We demand that Warwick SU release a new statement that includes the following:

- Solidarity with Palestinian students who felt unsafe as a result of the presence of the IDF Colonel and as a result of the SU's and University's response to protestors.
  - Venue managers and campus security accounts
- The unequivocal condemnation of Islamophobia by the co-host and sponsor of the IDF Colonel event 'StandWithUs'.
  - How long can we expect you to take to research this?
- Clarification that we acted within our rights as student protestors, remaining non-aggressive even in the face of deliberate provocation.
- A public apology to all minority students who felt disregarded, threatened and unsafe by the event. Additionally, the apology should address the events of the evening of 19th November 2019, where SU Venue Managers subjected some occupiers to potentially illegal physical intimidation, harassment and invasion of privacy.

**3. We demand an investigation regarding the invitation of Col. Dror onto campus:**

- We demand a full investigation into the event in question, which accounts for any potential conflict of interest.
  - Why was the speaker request granted despite the speaker's affiliation with StandWithUs, an Islamophobic organisation? Why was no thorough check into the background and affiliations of the speaker and the sponsors of the event conducted?
  - Why did the SU not adequately respond to the statement that was signed by hundreds of signatories, comprised of students, academics, as well as heads and executive members of societies?

**4. We demand an investigation into the conduct of the Venue Managers:**

- We demand an investigation into the potentially illegal actions of Venue Managers on the evening of the 19th November, where students were subjected to intimidation, harassment and invasion of privacy.
- We demand a fit for purpose complaints system for students when such situations arise - one accessible to all students, considering student representatives' contributions and one that ensures full accountability.
- We demand a compulsory anti-discrimination training programme to be implemented for all SU staff which not only combats 'unconscious bias', but also has a broader focus on systems of oppression.

**5. We demand a review into External Speaker Policy:**

*"Student safety and welfare is at the heart of WSU policies and practices. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities."* - **External Speakers Review Policy**

- We demand a review of the way the External Speaker Policy is implemented in recognising that the 'welfare' of students is not apolitical, but is tied to wider systems of oppression. This must be taken into account when approving speakers.
- We demand a ban on spokespeople from all militaries, as the Students' Union should be setting a precedent towards global peace, rather than militarism.
- We demand a ban on spokespeople from all arms manufacturers, such as BAE Systems.

**6. We demand an investigation into wider institutional racism in the Students' Union:**

- We demand the Students' Union admit that they are currently institutionally racist, and have contributed to creating an unsafe environment for their students and staff.
- We demand that the SU carry out a thorough investigation into structures of institutional racism present at every level of the institution:

- Rather than only appointing 'independent consultants,' all investigations must include serious consultation with members of Liberation Societies, marginalised students, as well as sabbatical officers and SU staff. All investigations carried out must be transparent, accessible, and determine who is accountable wherever possible.
- The SU must employ a diverse team with expertise in racial inequality in this investigation, in which different ethnic minorities are represented and given voice.
- We demand a progress report regarding the investigation into the UNISON letter published this year, which described the institutional racism that SU staff experience.
- The demographic of SU Management is not representative of its members - we demand they address this inequality by hiring more ethnic minority staff, who understand the complexities of the lived experiences of marginalised students.
- We demand a compulsory anti-discrimination training programme to be implemented for all SU staff, which not only combats 'unconscious bias', but also has a broader focus on systems of oppression.
- We demand that the Students' Union specifically address how its policies have created an unsafe environment for Palestinian students in the investigation:
  - The Students' Union's racism against Palestinian students, many of whom have lived under the reality of the IDF's military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, must be addressed. What structures led to the Students' Union ignoring the concerns of Palestinian students and allowing an official of the IDF to speak on campus? This demonstrates a complete disregard of Palestinian students' humanity and basic sense of safety.
  - We demand that the SU organise an event to raise awareness for the struggles of Palestinian students and staff, in which Palestinian speakers must be given precedence.

**7. We demand an investigation into, and the undoing of, colonial legacies on campus:**

- We demand further implementation and expansion of the Decolonise Project in a sustainable manner, with increased, ring-fenced funding for at least the next 5 years. The Decolonise Project must remain managed by a person of colour.

**8. We demand a stop to the targeting of Palestinian, Arab and Muslim Groups:**

- We demand that the SU make *proactive* efforts not to silence pro-Palestinian activists from protesting on campus. This must include protecting the right of Arab and Palestinian students and staff to not be filmed or surveilled, as this could directly endanger said students due to organisations such as Canary Mission with links to the Israeli state.

**9. We demand protection for Sabbatical Officers:**

- We demand that any statement issued by the SU should be signed by the individual Sabbatical Officers who agree to it as they are each elected on individual mandates.

**10. We demand changes to the democratic and anti-oppression structures within the SU:**

- In line with the Democracy Review the Students' Union is currently undertaking, we demand the following be implemented:
  - We demand that the current Democracy Review actively include the voices of Liberation Societies and minority students on campus.
  - We demand the creation of a new 'Liberation and Access Officer' sabbatical position.
  - We demand the creation of a collection of students' Liberation Networks to support and promote the interests of various minority groups.
- We demand the creation and publication of an accessible document entitled 'Rights of Assembly' which details protest information and protest powers, created with the University and in consultation with students, so that students are fully informed of their democratic rights.
- We ask to sit down in open dialogue with the Sabbatical Officers: Milly Last, Ben Newsham, Luke Mephram and Charlotte Lloyd to discuss what has been done thus far to combat racial inequality within their respective areas and what they can do further.

**11. We demand the Students' Union lobby the University:**

- We demand the Students' Union act in the interest of anti-racism by lobbying the University to meet the demands set out in our List of Demands to the University.
- We demand the Students' Union support our collective in future occupations of Warwick University spaces.

**We expect a detailed response to each of these demands, and each bullet point within them. To repeat, we shall only call off the occupation when we these demands are met by the SU and University Management.**

**From #WarwickOccupy**