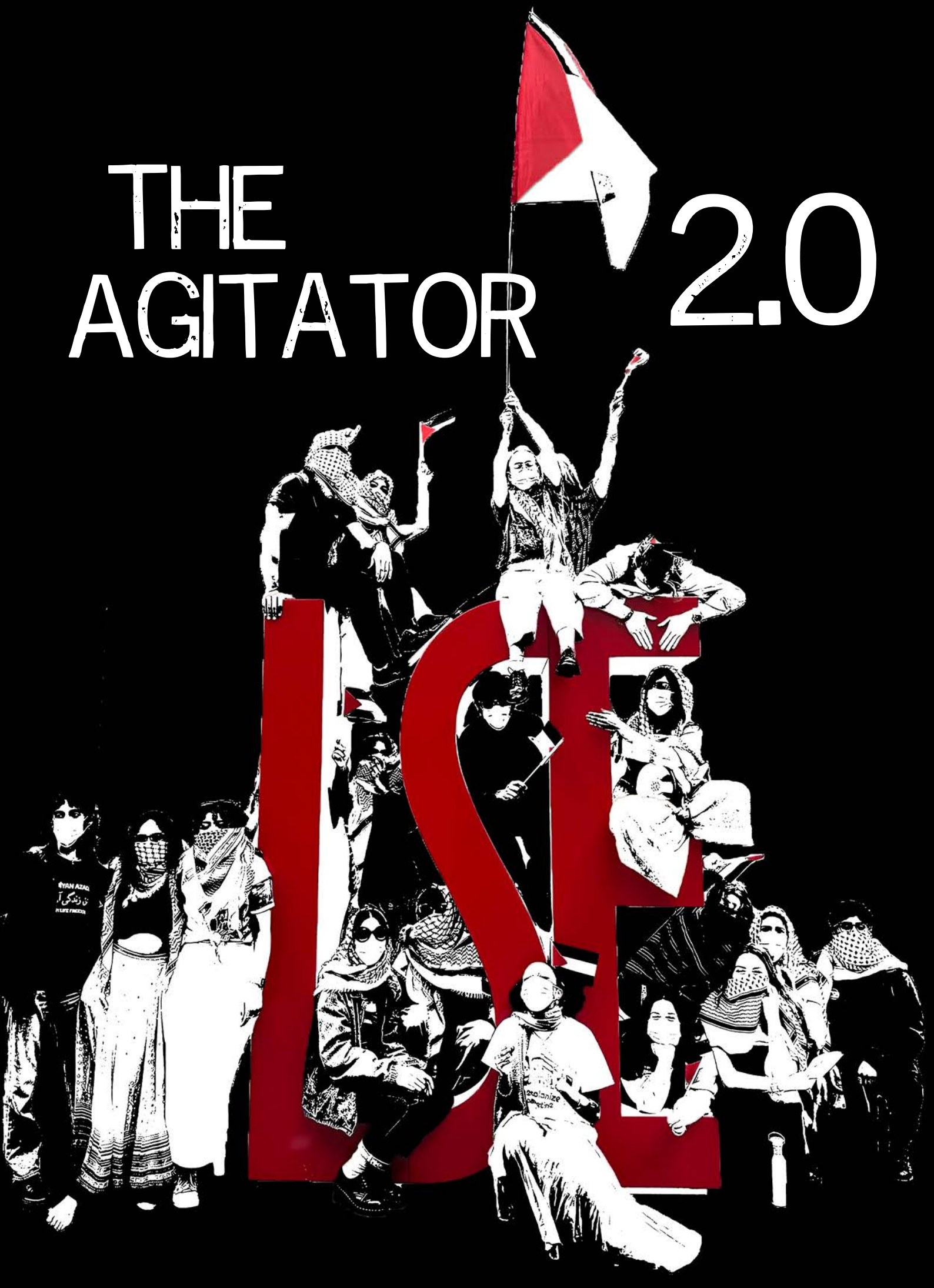
THE AGITATOR 2.0



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THE AGITATOR 2.0
EDITORIAL MANIFESTO

3rd of October 2025

"We invite all new students and those already here to join us" reads the editorial note of the Agitator of October 1969. 56 years later, our message has not changed!

The Agitator 2.0 is a resurrection of the Agitator, the revolutionary pamphlet created by the LSE Socialist Society in the 1960s, to call out the university's complicity in overseas colonial regimes and its repression of student movements on campus. In various editions, students highlighted that complicity and repression through the lens of the issues of their time – South-Africa's apartheid state; British colonial rule in Zimbabwe; American imperialism in the Vietnam War. As part of LSE Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP — formerly known as the LSE Palestine Society), we are deeply inspired by this legacy and understand ourselves as the contemporary embodiment of the radical student movement behind the first iteration of this publication.

Since October 2023 — more than 60 years after the creation of the first Agitator — the eighty-year violent Zionist campaign of dispossession and occupation of Palestine has escalated into a two-year genocide of Palestinian men, women and children in Gaza. This genocide is enfolding in front of our very eyes, live-streamed through our phones. Unsurprisingly, LSE is once again heavily complicit: by investing 72 million pounds in egregious companies and financial institutions involved in crimes against the Palestinian people, LSE is actively upholding the Zionist occupation of Palestine and funding its genocide. Hence, the struggle for Palestinian liberation and life demands our commitment to long-term movement-building.

Hence, in the spirit of its predecessor, the Agitator 2.0 is an intellectual and collaborative platform that politicizes – through its creation and dissemination, we aim to create agitators out of our contributors and readers. However, we must not limit ourselves to mere and temporary agitation – the Agitator 2.0 serves as a political tool to build a mass movement for the Palestinian struggle on LSE's campus.

The Agitator 2.0 provides students and staff, who may already have an intellectual interest in Palestine, with an incredible opportunity to become directly involved in collective organising for Palestinian liberation on campus, as led by SJP. This contributes to fostering an academic environment which informs our anticolonial struggle, instead of perpetuating the structures we are trying to dismantle. Therefore, the pieces housed within this publication allow authors, editors and now readers to engage with and reflect on the practical applications of organizing for Palestine on our campus and beyond. Furthermore, the collaborative writing process of the Agitator 2.0 brings forth strategic discussions around SJP's larger strategy of creating and supporting student and staff power and resistance across LSE networks, building coalitions and establishing solidarity.

Our primary lens is Palestine — both as a reference point for the radical political student movement and a vantage point through which we engage with broader struggles for anticolonial justice. While contributions do not focus exclusively on Palestine, we encourage contributors to reflect on how other struggles intersect with, relate to, or shed light on the Palestinian cause. Likewise, while much of SJP's organising takes place within the context of LSE, and we value grounded, situated activism, we also understand LSE as part of wider and global systems of oppression. We therefore seek out critical engagement with the university directly — whether through its policies, partnerships or campus — but also welcome those that speak to issues beyond LSE, so long as their pieces remain in conversation with our aim of politicising academia and strategically engaging the student movement through academia, art and literature of resistance.

This is Agitator 2.0's first edition of many and we very much appreciate you taking the time to read it. We believe that through this collaboratively-produced publication, we are able to produce knowledge that raises our consciousness and facilitates our commitment to the cause; it is embedded within SJP's wider strategy of multi-tactical movement-building and is just one means through which we hope to keep struggling tirelessly for Palestinian liberation. In order to maintain this momentum and keep publishing the Agitator 2.0 in upcoming years, we need new and enthusiastic student and staff comrades to join our efforts. If this speaks to you, we wholeheartedly welcome you to get involved in SJP and the Agitator 2.0.

Viva Palestina!

The Editorial Team
Of the Agitator 2.0's First Edition (September 2025)

LSE's Reply to the Agitator 2.0

...and some feedback from us...

"Freedom of speech and expression are of the utmost importance to LSE and underpin everything we do. Our free speech policy is designed to protect and promote lawful freedom of expression on campus, including the right to protest. LSE will only take measures against protestors if a protest crosses the line into illegality, is threatening to individuals, or significantly disrupts the community.

This claim is wheeled out selectively - invoked when convenient, discarded when used to repress student protest.

By framing student protest as a threat to people rather than profits, LSE preemptively legitimises repression. This grants the institution leeway to pursue disciplinary proceedings on insubstantial grounds, suppressing legitimate protest that exposes its complicity in genocide.

"The action against the students who took part in the demonstration on 7 July 2024 was initiated after we received multiple complaints from staff— who observed first-hand and heard from students seeking to register — that the protesters, with covered faces, physically obstructed their work and efforts; used loud megaphones in an enclosed inside space; shouted in people's faces; and behaved in a manner that intimidated and frightened people. We could not responsibly ignore these complaints and allegations, which required us to initiate an investigation and disciplinary proceedings, even if some who were present may not have been upset or may have a different perspective.

Vague & misleading. LSE reached out to staff to request remarks following the protest. A few remarks drew inexcusable Islamophobic parallels between the student protesters and terrorism. The exact comments are conveniently not mentioned in this reply.

Rather, LSE used this moment as a warning shot, punishing 7 students in an attempt to demobilize our movement.

"We believe the process behind the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy review was robust. The Review Group was comprised of experts from across the School to oversee the review process and make recommendations to Council. To further facilitate the work of the Review Group, a separate Consultative Group was created, consisting of nine members of the LSE community (both staff and students) to provide insight and feedback across the year.

If by "robust," they mean creating two degrees of separation between students and decision-makers to protect the policy from meaningful changes - then yes, it was robust.

Hmm... do you care about the beliefs of an institution investing in genocide?

The Consultative Group mentioned here had no decision making power in the ESG review. The responsible investment policy and human rights framework they drafted for LSE were entirely ignored by Council. This was not a mechanism of accountability, it was a sham.

"The review itself included a thorough assessment of the policy and addressed questions raised by LSE students and staff related to the School's investments.

Meanwhile LSE dodges the real question raised by students and staff: When will you stop funding genocide?

"We can also clarify that LSE does not channel student fee income into our investments. Student fee income is exclusively used to provide teaching, student financial support and some of the running costs of the School.

The Agitator 2.0 does not claim that LSE tuition fees make up LSE's investments. We do our research - read our recent report 'Stakes in Settler Colonialism.'

"Finally, we can categorically state that LSE does not use CCTV to record audio, nor do we make use of AI-supported surveillance technology or facial recognition technology."

They don't deny their Hikvision cameras come equipped with these technologies. LSE has quietly revised its CCTV policy in the past. While before its purpose was preventing crime, footage can now be used for the vague "purposes of security and public safety." The limits to surveillance are as restrictive as LSE chooses to make them, and clearly can be rewritten at any time.

The university depends on our money, labor, and time for its own legitimacy, and thus its endowment. And TRUST that we will be the ones the university reaches out to once we graduate for donations they can invest.

Question everything the university tells you. Enjoy the Agitator 2.0 and fight for liberation.

Taken at LSE Marshall Bloom Building in May 2024, during the encampment

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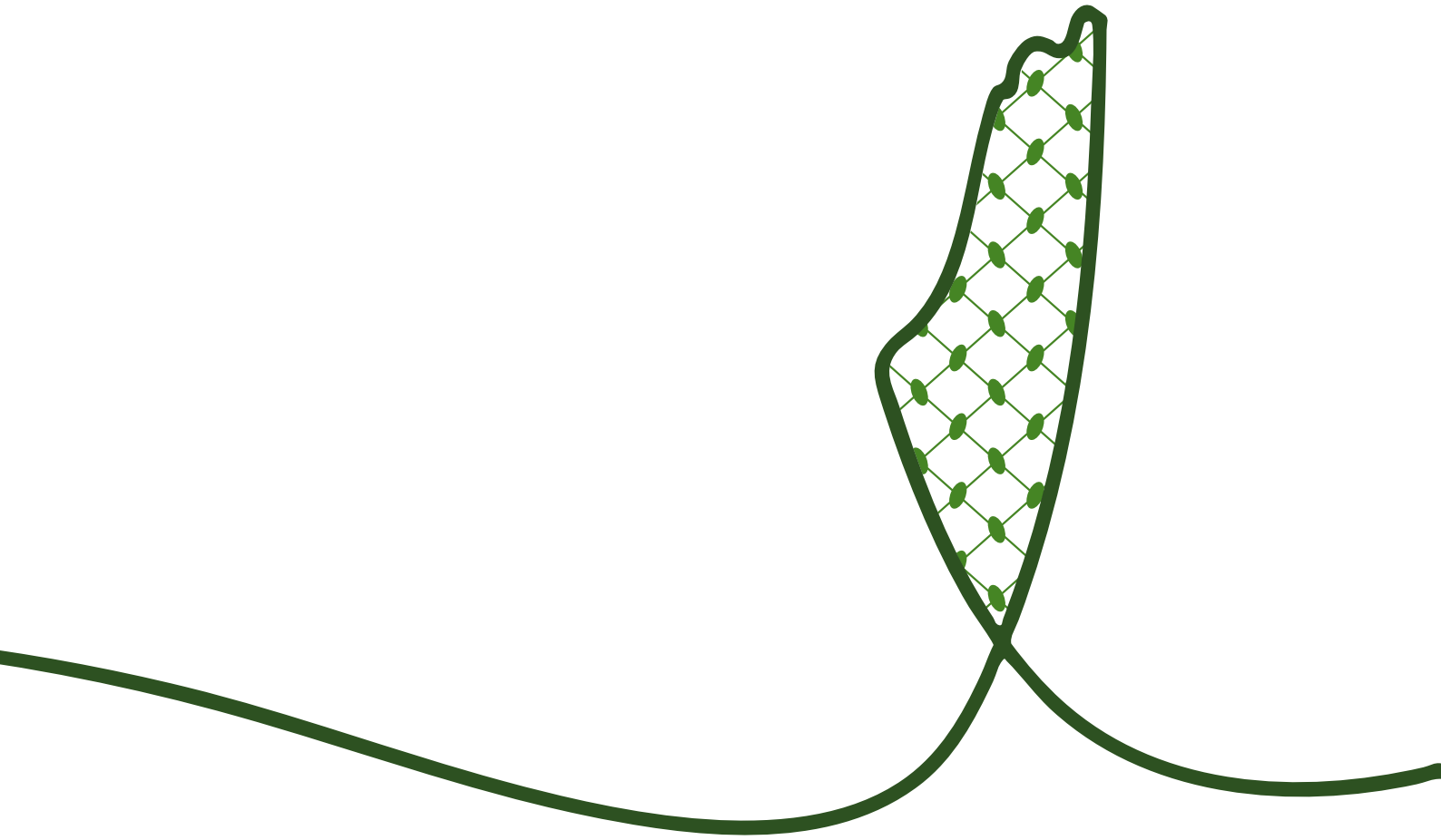
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PART 1



DISORIENTATION



TIMELINE OF ACTIVISM FOR PALESTINE AT THE LSE (FROM OCTOBER 2023)

October - November - December 2023:

No statement from LSE concerning the situation in Gaza where Palestinians are subject to increasingly violent attacks by the Israeli entity. In the meantime, in December, South Africa accuses Israel of genocide in an ongoing case at the International Court of Justice. LSESU Palestine Society continuously organises protests, investigates LSEs investments, and prepares for future actions.

January 2024:

30th: LSESU Palestine Society questions LSE on their investments. PalSoc meets with LSE school administration and raises concerns over LSE's investments and its lack of action on Palestine."A member of the LSE's investment committee asks the question "What even is ethics?" and warns that investing in arms companies is necessary as "Britain might be next." Following this meeting, the LSE administration refuses to meet again with the LSESU Palestine Society.

February 2024:

Still, no statement from LSE.

March 2024

4th: LSE Law Department hosts a talk by Benny Morris, organised by David Kershaw. Students disrupt the event, reading aloud to Morris his own past racist statements. Caught on video, Morris replied to this action by claiming that he "would rather be a racist than a bore..

April 2024:

Still no statement from LSE.

May 2024:

14th: Launch of LSESU Palestine Society's Assets in Apartheid Report. Students publish a research report exposing that LSE holds at least £89 million of investments in 117 holdings in 137 companies involved in egregious activities (crimes against the Palestinian people; fossil fuel extraction and/or distribution; arms manufacture and/or distribution; financing fossil fuel companies and/or nuclear weapons producer).

14th: Creation of the LSE Liberated Zone. Following the report launch rally, LSE students encamp in the Marshall "Bloom" Building, renamed by students after LSE anti-imperial activist Marshall Bloom. Students had 10 demands for the LSE Senior Management, including to **Divest** and **Disaffiliate** from egregious activities, and to **Drop** the silence in regards to the Zionist actions against the Palestinian people in Gaza. LSE agrees to meet with students around these demands.

20th: Hundreds of LSE staff members sign a petition asking LSE to Divest from Genocide of Palestinian people, Arms Trade and Climate Breakdown.

21st: Jeremy Corbyn and Rahma Zein speak at LSE encampment

29th: LSE Staff Town Hall. Hundreds of staff members question LSE's complicity in the ongoing genocide, citing the Assets in Apartheid report. The School Management Committee's claim that "not all weapons are bad" is met with overarching disapproval from staff.

June 2024:

4th: LSESU holds a Referendum on whether they should seek meaningful dialogue with LSE senior leadership to press for full and meaningful divestment from fossil fuel and weapons, including indirect investments. The proposal was approved with 89% of the votes.

13th: LSE takes its students to court instead of listening to their demands regarding Israeli occupation, apartheid, and genocide against Palestinians. LSE thus takes legal action against the encampment.

17th: LSE becomes the first British university to evict their Encampment in support of Palestinian liberation. LSE Liberated Zone holds a decampment rally at the Marshall 'Bloom' Building.

18th: LSE ends negotiations a day after eviction, breaking its promise to negotiate with students around their demands for divestment and meaningful action.

25th: LSESU Islamic Society publishes their Exposing Institutional Islamophobia Report, illustrating the relationship between Islamophobia and the Suppression of Palestinian Rights Advocacy at LSE.

July 2024:

7th: During the LSE Summer School Registration, students peacefully protest against LSE's egregious investments and failure to divest. Later, LSE will shamefully draw parallels between the student protest and the 7/7 bombings in London (in 2005). One week later, LSE launches disciplinary proceedings against 7 participating students, dubbed the LSE 7, banning them from campus.

21st: Undergraduates disrupt their own graduation ceremonies. Their banners state: '180,000 dead, LSE Evicts its students instead', 'LSE is an islamophobic institution', 'to know the causes of things: £ in arms → Genocide'.

August 2024:

Still, no statement from LSE.

September 2024:

1st: Following LSE's council decision to not divest from companies involved in egregious activities, LSESU Palestine Society publishes an open letter with a divestment proposal. Students urge their university to consider their findings in future Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy review.

October 2024:

2nd: Gina Romero, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, publishes a report detailing the stigmatisation of pro-Palestinian solidarity protests in campuses across the world.

7th: Gina Romero publicly urges LSE to reconsider the disciplinary actions against the LSE 7.

16th: LSE Liberated Zone sends to the LSE Executive Office the petition LSE 7: Drop the Investigation and Protect LSE students' Right to Protest with 1,269 signatures.

November 2024:

11th: As part of LSESU Palestine Society's Palestine in Conversation Speaker Series, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, gives a talk at the LSE on International Law and Palestine. Students organize to defend her and oppose external fascist and zionist groups who came into LSE to protest the event.

26th to 29th: LSE United Against Scholasticide Week of Action. Various activities were organised by students, including vigils, resistance through art workshops, a student and staff assembly, a rally against scholasticide, a schoolwide walkout, an Inter-Uni protest, and Assets in Apartheid Report teach-in.

29th: Gina Romero UN Special Rapporteur tweets concerns over LSE, stating that the university "has no clear interest to review the pertinence of their regulations to ensure that they are updated with the international standards".

30th: Francesca Albanese UN Special Rapporteur publically calls out LSE for being "one among many universities that have taken a dubious stance on Palestine". She asks: "Does the university realize the gravity of the crimes committed there? Why not ensure greater protection of its student body standing against Apartheid Israel? And why does it still maintain its ties with an Apartheid state?"

December 2024:

6th: LSE drops the LSE 7 disciplinaries, after 5 months of continued pressure and collective organising by students. One student's case was dropped entirely and the 6 others have received a warning from the university.

16th to 19th: Postgraduate students disrupt their graduation ceremonies with banners, flags, chanting, and walking out. Their message: there is no graduating class of 2024 in Gaza.

January - February 2025:

No statement from LSE.

March 2025:

10th: LSE Middle East Centre launches their book Understanding Hamas and Why it Matters. Over 300 students gather to oppose the external zionist and fascist presence on campus, which came to protest the book launch. Fascism off our campus.

April 2025:

6th: Legal workshop organised by LSESU Palestine Society for the students in order to face and resist increasing repression on campus. The session is hosted by Liberty.

10th: In an international effort with students at LSE, students at Sciences Po Paris call out Larry Kramer at the Summit of Higher Education and ask him if he plans to "usher in a similar wave of repression" as in the United States.

May 2025:

6th: LSE holds its final public investment review for the democratisation of their ESG Policy review. LSE executives arrive at the conclusion that divesting from human rights violations is "too expensive", a "political stance", and an "abstract moral commitment". Students disrupt this investment review, refusing an undemocratic ESG process that ignores its complicity in the ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

25th: first Agitator 2.0 Workshop.

June 2025:

12th: Launch of LSESU Palestine Society's Stakes in Settler Colonialism Report. Students found that LSE invests £131 million in crime against the Palestinian people, climate breakdown, and the global arms trade. Specifically, £72,9 million in companies complicit in crimes against the Palestinian people.

24th: Reunion of the 19 LSE council members. Students protest all day, pushing for divestment.

July 2025:

11th: LSESU's officers sign a letter in support of the Not my NUS campaign along with other SUs leaders around the UK. The campaign releases a 3-page letter condemning the silence of the National Union of Student (NUS) on Gaza, accusing it of abandoning its anti-racist, anti-apartheid legacy and of standing complicit in genocide.

22nd: LSESU's referendum on whether it should recognise the ongoing genocide in Palestine. The proposal was approved with an 88.6% majority.

24th: LSESU sends an email to all LSE societies that signed the NotmyNUS letter. LSESU states that the sabbatical officers that had previously signed, are now removing their names. In their email they encourage other societies' officers to do the same.

28th: LSESU Palestine Society and LSE Antizionist Jewish Society release statements against the LSESU's decision to retract their support for the campaign Not my NUS.

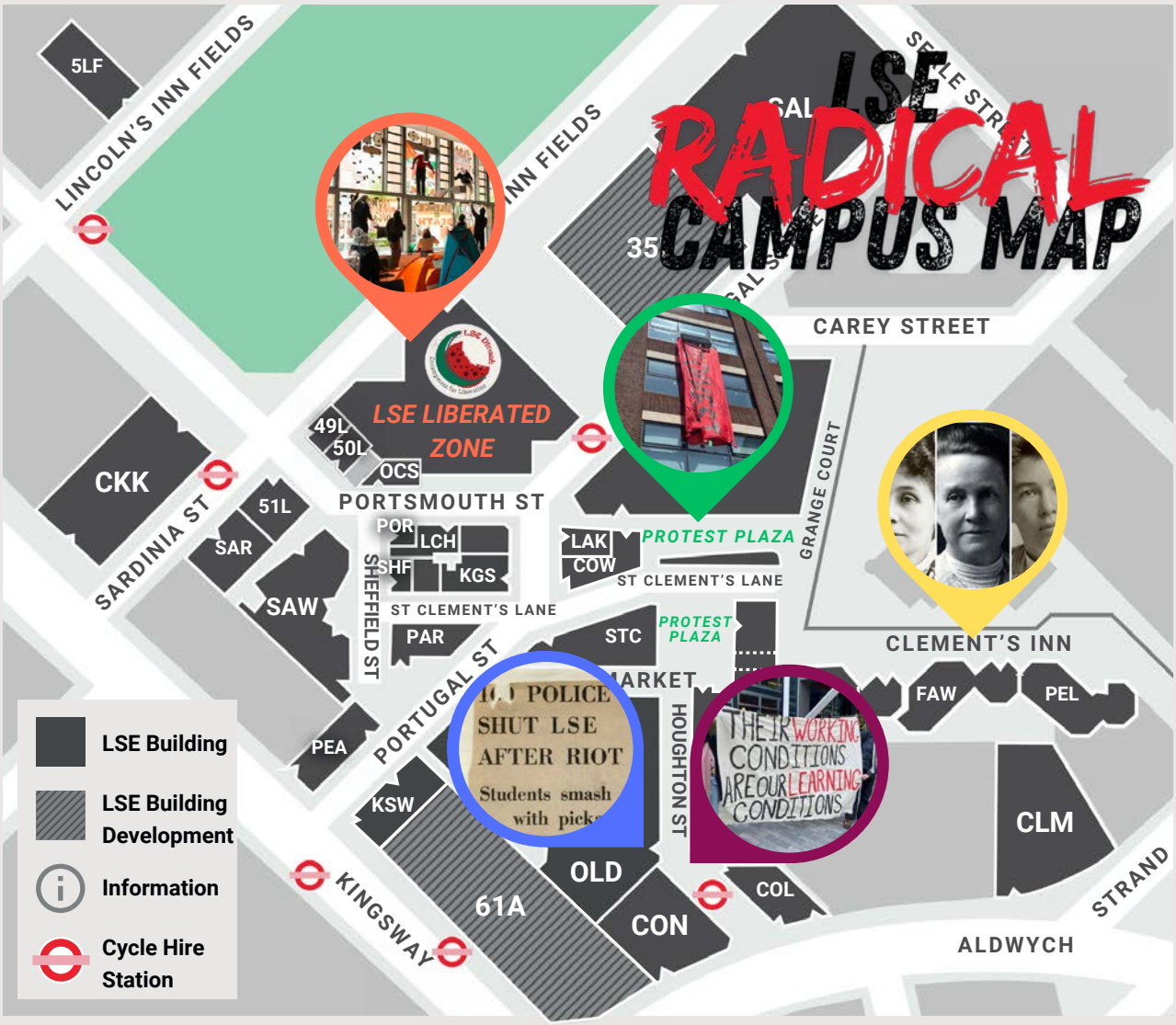
August 2025

5th: A national campaign is launched under the hashtag #Gaza40 to demand safe passage for 40 Palestinian students accepted into UK universities but trapped in Gaza.

14th: The LSESU releases a statement demanding the LSE to do everything in their power to press the UK government and ensure the safe arrival of three Palestinian students from Gaza, who are due to begin their studies in September.

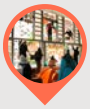
September 2025:

LSESU Palestine Society changes name in LSE Students for Justice in Palestine



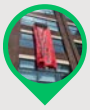
This map is inspired by the "Radical Tour of LSE 2022" map made in the context of the UCU strikes in 2022

KEY TO RADICAL MAP



LSE Liberated Zone

In 2024, LSE students occupied and encamped the Marshall Building for one month in order to protest LSE's complicity in the Israeli occupation and genocide of the Palestinian people. It was renamed the "Marshall Bloom Building" after a LSE student activist from the 1960s. From its occupation, the "LSE Liberated Zone" was born.



Protest Plaza

PalSoc protests take place on this plaza. The image shows a banner reading "LSE Divest" dropped from the LSE Library building during a PalSoc divestment rally in 2025. On this plaza, LSE staff of the University and College Union (UCU) also organised protests during the staff strikes of 2022 demanding better teaching conditions, fairer wages and workload and the end of the gender pay gap at LSE.



Clement's Inn and the Suffragette movement

In the early 1900s, Clement's Inn housed the headquarters of the Women's Social and Political Union, fundamental to the Suffragette movement at the time. In 2018, the three LSE buildings on this street were renamed after suffragette campaigners Emmeline Pankhurst, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence.



LSE protests against its complicity in colonial regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa

In 1969, LSE students broke down the fences constructed around the Old Building by LSE to avoid previously held student protests/sit-ins. These protests opposed the ties of the then director of LSE to the Western colonial and racist regimes in Zimbabwe and South-Africa at the time. 30 students were arrested and LSE was closed for 25 days.



UCU strike picket lines and student solidarity

Between 2018 and 2023, the previously mentioned UCU strikes formed picket lines primarily in front of the Old Building. As the image reflects, students joined these strikes in solidarity.

Hey LSE student,

Agitator Team here and we have the biggest news ever. One of our many sources sends us this: "Spotted in front of the Old Building, LSE ID in hand: the newest cohort of LSE students".

Wondering who that is? It's you! You are the chosen one! LSE, the Times University of the year 2025, chose you. This means that you are the smartest of the smartest, la crème de la crème. You should feel grateful to be #PartofLSE. But **do you *really* know the university that you are encouraged to praise?**

We're here to help you with that, as we will be giving you an introduction from the inside on the juiciest secrets of our "top" university. We'll be your one and only source of the scandalous life of LSE as an institution.

Did you know that LSE prides itself on its commitment to environmental sustainability and tackling the climate crisis[1]? It says it will be reaching net-zero carbon emission on all the activities no later than 2050[2]. In the meantime, it shows off its presence at the London Climate Action week[3] and proudly announces that sustainability is a key part of their investment decisions[4]. But we have the juiciest secret ever: we know the truth on where LSE's money goes and we're going to spill it to you. They don't want you to know this, but their ESG Policy leaves significant room for investment discretion, basing criteria off of companies' **alleged climate change** targets rather than their actual operations. This allows LSE to invest **over £2,000,000** in British Petroleum (BP), **over £1,500,000** in Total and **over £1,000,000** in Shell, all companies focusing on oil and gas production which have been found to **greenwash, lobby, and use misleading branding**[5]. So, while LSE considers itself a "sustainable institution", it invests in fossil fuels and companies which contribute to climate breakdown. Ironic, isn't it?

Fossil fuels are tied specifically to **Israel's settler colonial regime** and ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. The call for an **Energy Embargo** by Palestinian activist groups seeks to reveal the role of energy flows and financing in Israel's settler colonialism and genocide.

But LSE doesn't stop at indirectly supporting the Israeli colonial occupation. Oh no, LSE either goes big or goes home; and going big here means getting its hands even more bloody. LSE Students for Justice in Palestine (LSE SJP)'s Divestment group has found that the LSE invests **£72.9 million** in companies **complicit in crimes against the Palestinian people**[6].

These companies are:

- Profiting from the genocide
- Operating in occupied Palestinian territory
- On UN list for illegal settlement activities
- Providing military technology to Israel
- Supplying Israeli military/police
- Funding occupation

Our university holds lessons on peace and on tackling inequalities while simultaneously investing in death, genocide, and occupation. Sounds a little incoherent, doesn't it?

Unfortunately, it does not stop here. Knowing LSE's outrageous investments, we've been demanding divestments from crimes against the Palestinian people[6], the climate breakdown and global arms trade, which, taken together, this year reach up to **£131 millions invested**[7] (even more than the £89 millions of egregious investments of 2024[8]).

But LSE doesn't like it when you try to expose their dirty secrets, and we know it well.

With the primary goal of divestment, on the 15th of May 2024, symbolically on Nakba day, we launched the **LSE encampment**, occupying the Marshall Building. This building was renamed the "Marshall Bloom Building" after Marshall Bloom, an LSE student activist who was suspended from LSE for leading the first student occupation against LSE's complicity in Rhodesian Apartheid in 1967. Through the occupation of the Marshall Bloom Building, the **LSE Liberated Zone** was born, a zone where students lived together, ate together, prayed together, and organized artistic and educational activities embracing Palestinian culture. Through the creation of the LSE Liberated Zone, we joined the thousands of students and staff encamped in campuses across the globe to protest the university's complicity in the genocide in Gaza, apartheid and settler-colonial occupation in Palestine. Our encampment was part of the global solidarity movement for Palestine, and it was met with support from staff, with some professors coming in solidarity and even holding office hours at the Liberated Zone.

Such a peaceful, communal space demanding divestment threatened the LSE, who responded to it by becoming the first university to evict its students[9] from an encampment, controversially[10] taking us to court, threatening students and staff in the Liberated Zone with an Interim Possession Order (IPO), and thus violating rule 55.21(2) of the Civil Procedure Rules 1998. Additionally, less than 24 hours after the eviction of the encampment, LSE's leadership unilaterally ended ongoing negotiations with our student representatives –

violating previous assurances that negotiations would continue regardless of the physical presence of the encampment.

But **LSE's repression** of Palestinian activism does not stop there: this was just the start.

LSE doesn't like when you reveal their dirty laundry, especially if you do it during the moments that provide them with the most money and visibility, like the LSE Summer School. On the 7th July 2024, a group of us from LSE SJP (previously called PalSoc) held a protest exposing LSE's bloody investments and demanding divestment. The LSE responded by **banning 7 students**, our comrades, from campus, with 'precautionary measures' imposed on them that severely restricted the students' access to LSE buildings for almost 5 months. In doing so, the LSE prevented them access to campus services including medical care, mental health services, and any student facilities needed to complete their exams and dissertation submissions. This forced many of them to defer their studies, which had severe implications, especially for those – the majority – who were international students on a student visa. Moreover, the 7 students were kept in the dark about the investigation, allegations, and evidence held against them.

Over 1200 people signed a petition against LSE's treatment of the 7 students which was sent to the university in October 2024, but in response, instead of dropping the charges, LSE sent a personal email to each petition signatory refuting the claims made, restating the baseless accusations in the witness statements, and restating the university's so called "dedication to defending and preserving the freedom of speech and the right to protest" – **except for Palestine**, that is.

While LSE has publicly rejected the claim that the school drew parallels between the student protest and the 7/7 London bombings, a terrorist attack in 2005 which resulted in the killing of 52 people, LSE mentioned the anniversary of the 7/7 as a contributing factor, saying that it was disciplining the 7 students because people supposedly feared a second attack was taking place given that the student protest occurred on July 7th, the anniversary of the terror attack[11].
The whole case was riddledwith Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian rhetoric including members of the school describing students wearing keffiyehs as being "dressed as terrorists"[12]).
In an attempt to stifle protest around LSE's complicity in crimes against the Palestinian people the school was equating its students to terrorists.

The outrageous treatment of the 7 students was **condemned** even **by Gina Romero**[13], the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association**. But being called out by a UN Special Rapporteur was not enough for LSE to drop the charges immediately. Instead, the LSE 7 had to **wait another 2 months** before **all charges against them** were finally **dropped** in December 2024. This was a massive loss for LSE and it was possible only by us fighting together, because our voices are stronger together!

Now that you've heard (some of) the tea on LSE's crimes, what can YOU do?

Come join us!

If you are a student, join **LSESU Students for Justice in Palestine (LSE SJP)** to demand the end of LSE's material, financial, and reputational ties to Zionist settler-colonialism and genocide. From our instagram (@lsesusjp) you can join our Whatsapp Groupchat, from which you can then join our working groups:

- Divestment: researches LSE's investments and campaigns against ties to Israel and other egregious activities
- Student Power: supports students taking action through political education, narrative building, and material support against repression. Student Power is also responsible for internal outreach and building collective power to sustain divestment and other movement work.
- Mobilisation: organises campus mobilisations including rallies, flyering, and tabling, and manages external outreach.

Through LSE SJP, you can also join the Agitator 2.0 Team by writing articles, editing and peer reviewing or supporting the following editions of this magazine through graphics. We need your help to keep this publication going!

If you are a member of staff, you can join **LSE Staff for Justice**, a collective made up of staff who are involved in various campus-based struggles around equality, divestment, justice and pedagogy. LSE Staff for Justice came together in May 2024 around calls for divestment and support for the student encampment. To join, send an email including your name and role at LSE from your **personal email** to lsestaffforjustice@gmail.com.

Dear LSE student/staff, we wanted to end this piece by reminding you that **divestment IS possible**. The legacy of

LSE students like Marshall Bloom and his comrades, who kept protesting against LSE's complicity in apartheid despite repression that they faced, worked! In 1988 LSE became the first university in Britain to fully divest from Apartheid South Africa. **We did it once, we can do it again. LSE Divest!**

But our struggle does not stop here, it goes beyond divestment, and it goes beyond our campus. We are guided by the courage and resilience of the people of Palestine, and we believe ***we* aren't truly free until *Palestine* is free**. The penultimate goal is not divestment but liberation.

Dear reader,
The time to act is now. Our voices are louder together, and freedom remains a constant struggle.

XOXO,
Agitator Team

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LSG
GRATITUDE PILLS
> USE WHEN POLITICAL CLARITY THREATENS YOUR CAREER PROSPECTS!
SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE: SELECTIVE BLINDNESS, AUTOMATIC 'BUT ITS COMPLICATED' RESPONSE TO GENOCIDE, CHRONIC 'BOTH SIDES' SYNDROME



LSE CULTIVATES A PACIFYING CULTURE OF GRATITUDE AMONGST STUDENTS

Mark Wilson

In the first week of the previous academic year, the LSE student body was inundated with celebrations of success, the institution keen to remind us at every opportunity that it was the Times' number-1-ranked UK university[1]. This sense of status was, and is, reinforced throughout the academic year, with **LSE's marketing emphasising the 'prestige' of the institution** – its Nobel Prize-dominating alumni, its outsized global influence, its cultural impact. If you are a new student here, you would already be familiar with this sense of prestige: the application process highlights both the academic rigour expected of students as well as the low acceptance rate, instilling in prospective students a sense of scarcity regarding their degrees. But *you* are part of the select group that has successfully made it through this competitive process! **As soon as you accept that offer, scarcity turns into opportunity** – doors unlocked, pathways to success and greatness being laid in front of you.

All of this messaging creates and perpetuates within the student body **a culture of gratitude towards LSE itself.** The sense that, yes, by being accepted by this institution, you *are* special. LSE *recognises* you. Being recognised as worthy by an institution with such an outstanding reputation is incredibly humbling and a cause for gratitude.

This is a deliberate strategy. The cultivation of gratitude is a by-product of universities projecting themselves not as educational institutions, but as 'luxury brands'. As Haochen Sun argues, "Elite universities treat low acceptance rates as a means of enhancing prestige. They have an incentive to reject more applicants because lowering acceptance rates could improve their university ranking performance, which in turn encourages more students to apply… Given their exclusivity, elite universities confer prestige on their students and graduates through their admissions and educational programs."[2] This prestige creates a 'halo effect' around the university, which has been observed to distort students' perceptions of their university, rating it more highly in relation to the university's external rankings rather than their actual learning experiences.[3] This is precisely the mechanism through which a culture of gratitude towards the institution emerges.

Tangentially, here is a quote from LSE President, Larry Kramer: "One of the best things about LSE… is how diverse our community is: intellectually, culturally, globally… Here you'll meet people from all over the world and from all walks of life, which means you'll meet people whose viewpoints, experiences and philosophies differ from yours. Embrace that. Look for it. Go out of your way to encounter it."[4]
Yes, this diversity is something that we must protect within the university setting. But what this passage says about the university itself is that it is a place for these differences to meet, and implicitly, for this meeting to produce knowledge. Nothing more, nothing less. LSE is a neutral space, taking no side over the other in whatever differences emerge. **This claim to 'neutrality' is the lie that LSE wants us to believe.** In Desmond Tutu's famous words: "Neutrality in the face of injustice is not neutrality, but complicity with the oppressors". And we see that, when challenged on this supposed 'neutrality', **the institution reveals its true colours: criticism of the LSE by students is not tolerated, critics will be punished, and the status quo will be upheld.**

This story will be featured throughout this edition, but it bears emphasis here. According to the LSESU Palestinian Society's 'Stakes in Settler Colonialism' report[5], LSE has just over £539 million of investments in 315 holdings. Of these investments, £73 million are in companies involved in crimes against the Palestinian people. Likewise, £71 million are in companies responsible for weapons production and distribution; £86.6 million are in companies responsible for producing and distributing fossil fuels.

In July 2024, despite overwhelming student support to divest from these industries, the administrative LSE Council announced that these investments would continue, citing

'fiduciary duty' above human rights considerations and the interests of students and staff. On 7 July 2024, a group of students protested this decision in the Old Building. Seven of these students – the so-called LSE 7 – were banned from campus and given restrictions on access to academic activities, with LSE initiating disciplinary proceedings against them. According to the law firm representing the students, Leigh Day, **Larry Kramer labelled the protest in internal emails as a "temper tantrum by children"** and that it was simply an "excuse for acting out", "nothing to do with the Israel-Gaza situation"[6].

The cultivation of gratitude has the effect of blinding the student body to thinking about the ways in which LSE as an institution itself is contributing to oppression. I myself have experienced this. I have been aware of the LSE 7 and the encampments in the Marshall Bloom Building since arriving on campus, and yet the reminder of LSE's investments in settler colonial genocide in May 2025 still came as a surprise. **I had allowed myself to get swept up in the name and the image of this place**, transplanting the 'halo effect' onto the belief that the education I received here would enable me to work against these systems of oppression, and being grateful for the opportunity. Well LSE *might* provide us with new skills, insights, opportunities which *maybe* weren't available before. But the cost for engaging with that is complicity in genocide, and reinforcing an inherently unjust system.

The October 1969 edition of the Agitator opens with an editorial piece discussing the 1968 student uprising, which states:

> Student militancy grew partly out of the disillusionment with the Labour Party, partly out of the mass agitation over the Vietnam war and most of all out of the changing nature of the universities as they have become geared to the needs of industry.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Here we are as a society in 2025, with a Labour Government refusing to stop exporting arms to Israel as it commits genocide in Palestine. Meanwhile, it criminalises Palestine Action under national anti-terrorism legislation over an act of protest that damages property, with no intention of injury or death: acts which, according to counter-terrorism experts at the UN, are "not sufficiently serious to qualify as terrorism."[7] Here we are, students at LSE in 2025, in this supposed 'bastion of critical thinking', which encourages us to find solutions to the world's problems but cannot bring itself to *act* on these solutions by divesting from its holdings in weapons and fossil fuel production. Worse – it punishes those who call this out for the injustice that it is! LSE's philosophy is grounded in critical thought and expression, until the moment this thought and expression exposes and protests LSE's own complicity in financing settler-colonial genocide in Palestine, for 'fiduciary duty' – **the 'needs of industry' over the lives of people**.

And yet, in spite of this, the feeling of gratitude remains. I, my friends, colleagues, those of us organising in solidarity with Palestine, **none of us are able to shake that feeling of gratitude that comes from being here.** In fact, I don't think we should. This world is sick and sad enough as it is without it eradicating our ability to feel optimism and hope. Gratitude enables us to feel these things, which enables us to act in spite of what we see in the world.

But why, given everything above, would you risk speaking out?

And *here* is the trap laid by gratitude: pacification, fear of calling out injustice, and losing your position at LSE.

Yet this trap only works if *you* allow it to work – by placing your gratitude in the institution itself. Rather, we should draw gratitude from the academic *community* which we find ourselves in. **Be *in* this place, not *of* it.** LSE wants us to believe that the institution is a neutral space for free speech and the contest of ideas. So, we should be looking back at that space with the same 'neutrality' it claims to bestow onto us, not with gratitude – and when the institution of LSE fails to live up to this standard, we definitely should not be grateful to it! Instead, I *am* grateful to be learning from and engaging with outstanding professors, student colleagues, the countless

alumni who used to grace these halls and whose ideas shape our criticism[8]. **I am grateful to be in this community.** If the institution wants to claim this community as its own, then it must take it both ways and accept the criticisms from this community that address LSE's complicity.

We – *you* – must be aware that the university is deliberately cultivating its elite image, and that as fee-paying members of this institution, this confers onto us – onto *you* – authority and credibility, *not* gratitude. This is precisely what is so damaging to the LSE 7's persecution by the LSE: the loss of this credibility, over nothing more or less than the most credible of actions, challenging the institution on its complicity in genocide. Right now, **the only ones losing their credibility are the ones insistent on enabling Israel in the face of this genocide.**

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4 Larry Kramer, "Student Welcome 2024," YouTube video, September 30, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0fsBKEN6k0.

5 LSESU Palestine Society, *Stakes in Settler Colonialism* (2025), https://lsepalestine.github.io/documents/LSESUPALESTINE-Stakes-in-Settler-Colonialism-2025-Web.pdf.

6 "Students Double Down on Legal Action Against LSE over Protest Clampdown," Leigh Day, March 27, 2025, https://www.leighday.co.uk/news/news/2025-news/students-double-down-on-legal-action-against-lse-over-protest-clampdown/.

7 "UN Experts Urge United Kingdom Not to Misuse Terrorism Laws Against Protest Group Palestine Action," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, July 1, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-urge-united-kingdom-not-misuse-terrorism-laws-against-protest.

8 Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.

BEING PALESTINIAN AT THE LSE DURING A GENOCIDE: A CRITIQUE OF THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

A staff member reflects on a conversation with a student

This reflective piece is the outcome of a conversation I, as an academic, had with a Palestinian student about what it meant to study at the LSE. To protect the identity of the student, we both remain anonymous. From our wide-ranging conversation, I gathered four themes that agitated the student and myself as both an educator and an individual.

I begin with identity, because of a comment the student made, namely, that "it is not safe to be a Palestinian today." In order to make life bearable, the student was advised by their family to take on a Jordanian identity if asked, a camouflage that I also observed when conversing with Palestinians in Jordan more than a decade ago. I can understand the need to disguise one's identity, having experienced it myself, so as to avoid being labelled – in this case, as a Hamas sympathiser. "Being Palestinian," the student said, "...can be weaponized against you." The disguising of the self involves an alertness and an engagement with 'code-switching', a term first coined in the 1950s by sociolinguist Einar Haugen and then developed as racialized double-consciousness by W.E.B Dubois in The Souls of Black Folk. The daily act of remembering when it is alright to be oneself (in trusting contexts), and when not to do so (in contexts of uncertainty or distrust) is fatiguing – a form of oppression through implicit coercion.

The second theme is that of voice. Although the student shared that they ultimately did not have to hide their identity from either their fellow students or their professors, and were able to speak about Palestine, this public identity came with its own burdens. For example, in speaking of the Zionist policies of the Israeli state, they were on constant alert to potential accusations of antisemitism. The resulting panopticon was akin to going through 'checkpoints', the student said - a term emanating from the realities of the apartheid experience in Palestine. Second, remaining the only person to speak on Palestine in their classes and seminars placed an emotional burden upon them. There is always the doubt as to how others will receive such references to Palestine when the voice is a lone one. While this is not dissimilar to the marginalising experience of many students from the Global South in Anglocentric educational settings, the representative burden of being a Palestinian during an ongoing and livestreamed genocide is of a different magnitude altogether. Although the student found that a handful of their classmates were eager to learn about Palestine, they were disheartened by the fact that their teachers did not initiate discussions relating to the Palestinian cause. This experience was made all the more jarring by the stark contrast between candid discussions of historical settler-colonialism and the conspicuous absence of any mention of Palestine. Such a contradiction lends credence to Omar El Akkad's words:[1] "One day, when it's safe, when there's no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it's too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have always been against this."

Third, there is a question of how programme-wide public silences on Palestine are dealt with, given that while teachers have expressed concerns in private one-to-one conversations with the student, they continued to avoid me This privately expressed support juxtaposed with public silence was difficult to reconcile, and led the student to a logical conclusion – it seemed to them that it must be 'department policy' not to speak about Palestine in an official capacity. While this may or may not be the case, such silences are indicative of the "complicity of academic institutions in the ongoing Palestinian genocide [which] actively sustains settler colonialism, erases Palestinian narratives, and inflicts psychological harm" argues Aneeza Pervez (2025: 1).[2] Silence in the classroom serves the wider institutional narrative of political neutrality. Teaching (and learning) is inherently political – silence in these contexts lends support to the oppressor. It allows for institutional and state apparatuses to exercise 'bio-power', following Foucault, over students in Anglo-European educational settings, where student organizers have been repressed by universities through court action and threats of withholding degrees, and by law-enforcement in the form of arrests, detentions, visa revocations, and deportations. The U.S. is the starkest example of the latter, while in the UK, the right to protest (students are often the prime activists) has been heavily curtailed, and in Germany, protests have met with extreme police violence.
A fourth theme that emerged from our conversation relates to the real purpose of an Anglocentric education delivered

> *Silence in the classroom serves the wider institutional narrative of political neutrality.*

by the neoliberalized university. Is it to feed the appetite of the capitalist machine or is it to produce knowledge that matters now, that can then be disseminated to wider and diverse publics, to articulate and theorize a more human and equitable world, to enact the 'public sociology' of the late Michael Burawoy (University of California, Berkeley, USA) and Michela Benson (Professor of Public Sociology, University of Lancaster, UK)? Public sociology advocates for the academic disciplines to presently engage theoretically and empirically with issues of immediate public concern. The Palestinian student, however, not unlike the experiences of many students from the Global South, struggled to find the relevance of Ango-Eurocentric theory that made up of the bulk of their education to the current moment, especially in relation to navigating settler-colonialism, apartheid and genocide in Palestine. The neoliberal university is generally reluctant to engage in radical theory from below that can truly explain and problematize present colonial regimes. It instead obfuscates this lacuna by arguing that it provides critical thinking tools and ample spaces to exercise critical thinking. While this is true to a certain extent, it appears to only welcome the deployment of critical thinking insofar as it maintains the order, status, and financial interests of the institution itself. As Noam Chomsky remarked in the Common Good (1988, p. 143), "[t]he smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum — even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate."[3] In the context of Palestine, it is important to observe that the 'spectrum of acceptable opinion' that Chomsky refers to has been massively shrunk by Zionist and pro-Zionist forces. Students, however, are forced to continue to reside in these institutional spaces – student consent for the northern neoliberal higher educational offering is manufactured through elite status and employability rankings. The exorbitant cost of higher education makes it absolutely necessary for many students to find gainful employment as soon as possible so as to mitigate student debt. In this way, the neoliberal educational system reproduces itself.

The fifth and final theme that struck me was agency. The Palestinian student was quite aware of such drip-fed Anglo-Eurocentric narratives – their education did not dilute or undermine their agency due to their steadfast belief that "everything that one does … ends up being about Palestine in one way or another." The student said they were the product of their experience, that their experience defined who they are and how they think. Such a positionality is often mistakenly construed as resilience. No – it is resistance. This clarity emanates from primordial ties to the land and culture of Palestine, and counteracts the assimilative force of an educational system that seeks to fracture it.

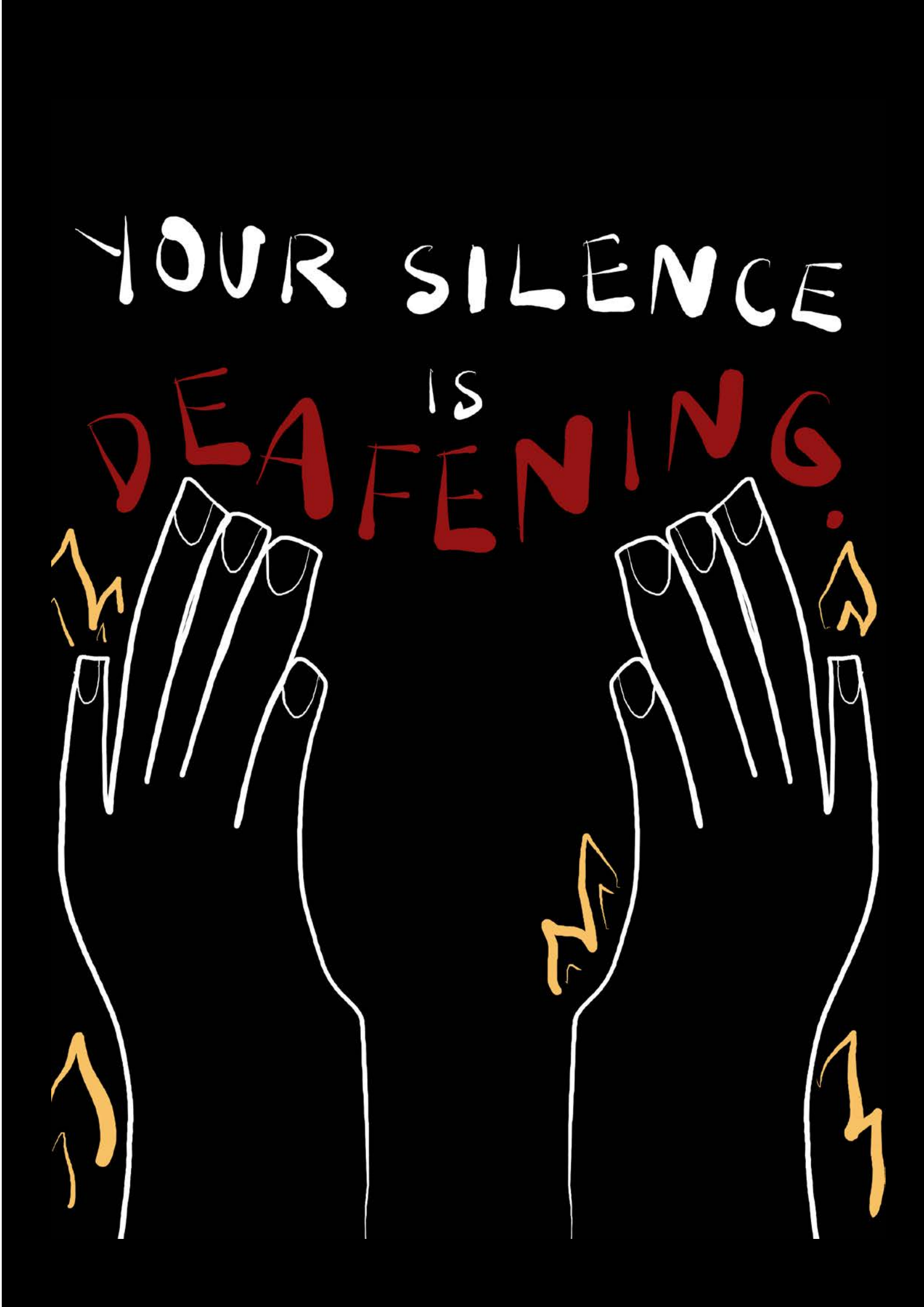
The tensions and contradictions that emerged through our conversation agitated the student and myself–and they ought to agitate all of us who work, study, and teach at LSE.

1 Omar El Akkad, *One Day Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* (New York: Knopf, 2025).

2 Aneeza Pervez, "Witnessing Silence: The Palestinian Genocide, Institutional Complicity, and the Politics of Knowledge," *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 2025, 1–18.

3 Noam Chomsky, *Excerpts from The Common Good*, http://chomsky.info/commongood01/ (accessed July 18, 2025).

The neoliberal university is generally reluctant to engage in radical theory from below that can truly explain and problematize present colonial regimes.


YOUR SILENCE
IS
DEAFENING.

WE SEE THE CAMERAS TOO: TRACING SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY FROM THE WEST BANK TO LSE

On May 14th, 2024, hundreds of students flooded into the Marshall building. Amidst the protesters' elated chanting, dozens of people began setting-up tents or turning chairs and tables into make-shift barricades. Meanwhile, others set about covering security cameras with any materials they could get their hands on – duct tape, foil, camping gear instructions.

A few days later, students made the shocking discovery that these cameras were equipped with advanced technology made by the Chinese firm Hikvision.

Hikvision developed its surveillance technology as part of China's policing of dissent amongst the state's Uyghur minority. This technology is also used by states across the world underpinning a global trend of authoritarian management of populations and suppression of dissent. Israeli authorities in the Palestinian West Bank use Hikvision's cameras, AI data collection, microphones and facial recognition technology to suppress protests and target potential 'threats[1']'[1]. The encampment's discovery of the very same cameras on LSE's campus opens a wider discussion about increasingly securitised universities overspending on dystopian surveillance capabilities rather than investing in overworked staff or students.

Initially in the encampment, we were not aware of the deeper links between LSE's CCTV and Hikvision's colonial surveillance networks. Besides the initial covering of more accessible cameras, many cameras were harder to reach and remained uncovered. Over the coming days, protesters would become more inventive in their efforts to cover as many of these cameras as possible. Still, the continued presence of security who controlled entry and exit to the building (for the most part) as well as other cameras outside the camps' boundaries contributed to a heightened sense of surveillance. Unlike occupations which manage to take complete physical control of a building or section of a building, the ground-floor was a constantly contested space where the spectre of surveillance loomed more conspicuously.

Active patrols by LSE security and the echoing acoustics of the building's brutalist cathedral-esque architecture raised concerns among protesters that more sensitive discussions like strategy meetings might be over-heard. This context of constant surveillance existed in tension with the encampment's role as a public democratic forum providing a consistent space on campus for political discussion and organising, alongside other social relations. On any given day, you might have walked into the space to find friends milling around the communal kettle, a group meeting to discuss media strategy, students working on dissertations, and another group making posters for the camp, all at the same time.

Protesters' concerns with this lack of privacy informed a decision to hold potentially sensitive meetings around security, strategy and planning for more disruptive actions outside of the Marshall building. It was this awareness of surveillance by the university that led to the discovery of the Hikvision cameras and their capabilities, including audio recording. Whilst the encampment movement managed to maintain a strong sense of unity and solidarity internally, this hypersurveillance created tensions and made it harder to connect sensitive issues to quotidian camp activities like daily general meetings.

Beyond this coordination dilemma, LSE's use of Hikvision's advanced cameras raises some deeply concerning issues. Firstly, it reveals LSE's complicity with a technology company implicated in deeply authoritarian state practices in China, the West Bank and across the world. Secondly, it reflects an investment by LSE into the kinds of high-end surveillance technology which are used to meticulously track populations, identify individuals as potential threats and collate information about them in order to discipline and punish them when they are deemed to be sufficiently threatening. Whether LSE is employing all of these cameras' capabilities or not, it is deeply disturbing to know they have invested in the potential to unleash this degree of surveillance on students and staff.

To address this first question of complicity it is worth knowing more about Hikvision. The firm has received significant media coverage, including a piece by Sinophone Palestine solidarity group *Palestine Solidarity Action Network (PASN)*, which details Hikvision's role in the intersection between authoritarian surveillance in China and Israeli settler colonialism. Hikvision's supply of surveillance technology to Israel exists within a context of broader technological and economic ties between Israel and China. PASN notes how Hikvision's surveillance technology was developed in the context of intense policing of Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in China. Specifically,the Chinese state initially developed its 'counterinsurgency' strategy by drawing inspiration from US and Israeli strategies

and technologies. Hikvision's technology is a vital part of systems where AI-supported surveillance flags even the most minor of 'suspicious' acts for the scrutiny of police both in China and in the occupied West Bank[1].

LSE's deployment of the same technology on campus provides a shocking example of Aimé Césaire's theorisation of the "colonial boomerang" which argues that imperial/colonial techniques of repression eventually return to domestic contexts in the global North (pp. 36).[2] This can help us to deepen our understanding of solidarity, enabling us to build political coalitions around the recognition that these global structures of imperialism are harmful to all of us. Undoubtedly, the kinds of repression we face at LSE are incomparable to the violence visited upon Palestinians by Israel, but it is politically useful to recognise how our struggles are inseparable from Palestinian liberation and driven by the same global economic and imperialist structures.

LSE would likely claim that surveillance is part of efforts to 'keep students safe'. Indeed, during the encampment, the university requested that all cameras be uncovered to ensure the safety of students, a request we promptly ignored. A few weeks later, during various protests against executive education programmes, students repeatedly found themselves confronted by LSE security who issued warnings related to the potential identification of students through CCTV. LSE's portrayal of *surveillance as safety* reflects broader political narratives telling us that constant policing and surveillance is necessary for our wellbeing. Instead, this securitisation of life is used to undermine the possibility for genuine liberation, for people to come together and build political networks which can address issues like the complicity in genocide which continues to be ignored by dominant institutions.

Once we position LSE's cameras in the context of the encampment it is hard to unsee the realities of campus securitisation. From ever-present CCTV, to constantly tapping your ID card at digital barriers, or even the likelihood of your logins to campus Wi-Fi being tracked, it is hard not to feel surveilled. A dangerous effect of this can be a feeling of intimidation leading to paranoia or self-censorship. To counter-act this it is vital that we collectively develop an understanding of such surveillance but also of collective resistance to it.LSE's surveillance technology being so explicitly connected to Israeli apartheid and global authoritarianism might present a political opening for de-legitimising campus securitisation.

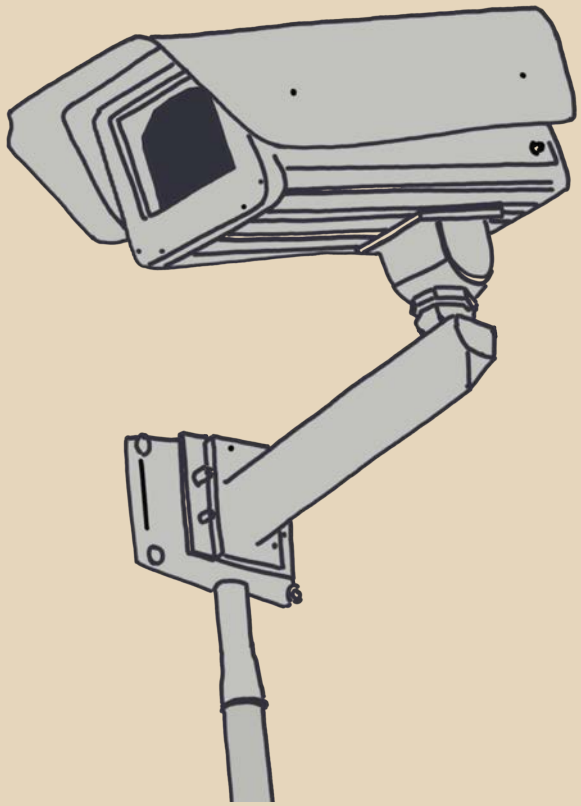
In the encampment, following the discovery of the cameras' capabilities, illustrated posters were put up next to cameras to remind people of the microphones. During meetings,music was played near the cameras to muffle the voices of the participants. There was also a kind of camaraderie about the camera's constant audio surveillance. It was common for protesters to joke about increasingly outlandish political actions next to the cameras and to stop each other mid-sentence to avoid someone saying something best left unsaid in the cameras' presence.

A few weeks into the encampment, LSE's senior management seemed determined to stall negotiations and students became increasingly exasperated by repeated removal of posters from the main window of the Marshall building. A decision was made to expand the camp. The expansion felt like a replay of the elated victory of the camp's initial founding. With Palestinian music blaring from large speakers, protesters quickly moved the barricades to take up most of the ground floor. They began covering the window space and nearby cameras. In the following days security would often try to uncover these cameras, leading to an on-going back and forth. The more humorous or absurd nature of such resistance to the cameras reminds us that an awareness of surveillance needs to be accompanied by a collective capacity for creative resistance and camaraderie.

We can only keep each other safe through collective resistance, both more generally and against such surveillance. At the height of the encampment, despite LSE's surveillance capabilities and management's frustration with what they saw as unacceptable disruptions, the university was forced to commit to avoiding the use of disciplinary measures - reflecting the strength of the student movement. While we should be conscious and proactive against surveillance, the most decisive factor for resisting it is the collective political strength of our movements. Future activism will need to carry forward this awareness of LSE's surveillance capabilities, especially given the controversial nature of their shocking ties to genocide and authoritarianism. Noticing the cameras fundamentally changes our relationship to campus – yet this should be met with a spirit of creative and collective resistance.

1 Palestine Solidarity Action Network (PASN), "Between Chinese Surveillance and Israeli Settler Colonialism," *Anti-Capitalist Resistance*, August 10, 2024, https://anticapitalistresistance.org/between-chinese-surveillance-and-israeli-settler-colonialism/

2 Aimé Césaire, *Discourses on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001).



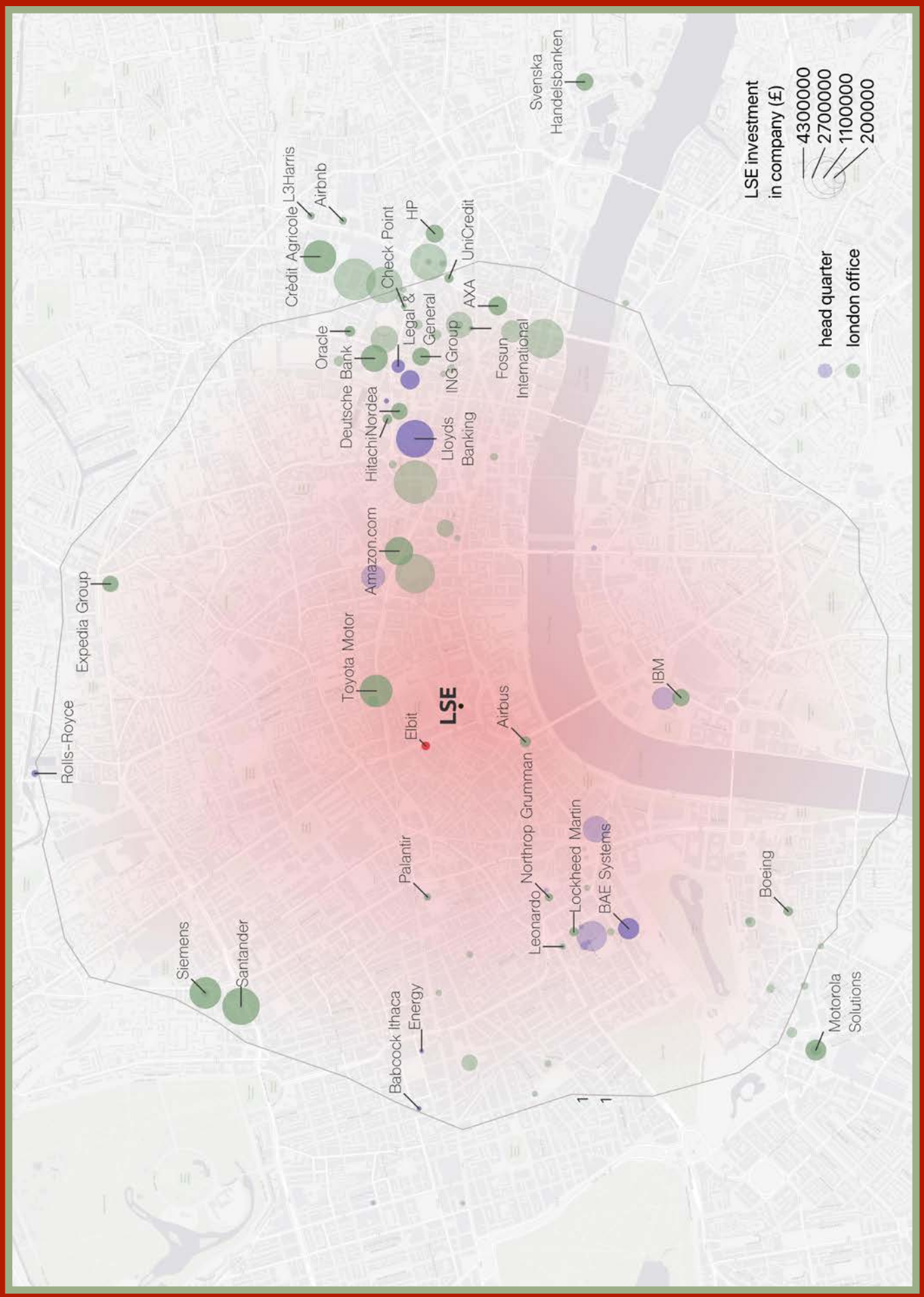
FROM LONDON TO PALESTINE: THE CHAIN OF COMPLICITY RUNS THROUGH LSE.

by Jules

Thinking about space is key to tackling Zionism and our role in it. Israeli settler colonialism relies on a plethora of practices of grabbing and commanding space: bulldozing homes, sectioning cities into (un)safe zones, militarising the sky, digging up subterranean resources, building segregated roads, erecting borders, and destroying proofs of address. These practices are facilitated and sustained by a network of transnational corporations like BAE Systems, BP, and Barclays, which profit neatly from supplying the Zionist project with the material, financial, and technological support it needs to survive. The resulting geography of corporate complicity, as extensively studied in works on global capitalism (Harvey, 2003; Sassen, 2006), is intentionally opaque and complex, allowing companies to easily evade and obscure their responsibilities to people and planet. The transnational flow of capital that supports projects of imperialism, including Zionism, is thus constituted by complex chains of responsibility.

To effectively disrupt these chains and cause them to tear, lag, and collapse, we need to figure out where we, in this case as students at LSE, are situated in relation to them. That is, what chains are we proximate to, and what linkages do we sit at? What dentures and cuts are we well situated to cause to the system? An a-where-ness of the particular opportunities that arise from our position(s) within broader assemblages of imperialism and exploitation is absolutely crucial for us to recognise opportunities for resistance.
LSE is situated at the very heart of British capital and political power: Parliament is around the corner, Elbit UK is down the road, and the Shell HQ is just over the river. Looking out from LSE, corporations headquartered around the world can be seen operating offices east of campus in 'the City' and Canary Wharf, or to the west around Westminster. A short stroll from campus reveals layers of imperial legacies and memorabilia in LSE's immediate surrounds, from Nelson's Column at Trafalgar Square, Africa House, the British Museum, to the Sir Sloane Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields. LSE has cultivated an institutional identity around its embeddedness within metropolitan London - a 'global city' tied to many elsewhere. Indeed, by leveraging its location, the university positions itself as a conduit to the world's financial elite, promising to impart to students exclusive financial and business knowledge that opens doors to careers in transnational corporations. This image of the university is deliberately marketed to potential fee-paying students and parents worldwide through global rankings such as QS World or The Times. By presenting itself in this way, LSE participates in what Said (1978) describes as the construction of imagined geographies, creating certain ideas about its role and importance in the world. These representations help build LSE's reputation as a prestigious, world-leading institution, while simultaneously drawing attention away from how the university is implicated in wider systems of global injustice.

But what kind of place is LSE really? What sorts of relations is it made up of? And, crucially, what responsibilities do we have as members of this place? The conceptual frameworks of Geographer Doreen Massey are really useful for addressing these questions. Massey (1994; 2005) has long advocated for thinking about space relationally, arguing that places can be understood as the "coming together" or convergence of diverse spatial flows. In these terms, LSE is not a static institution but a dynamic product of the students and staff it brings together. Just over 10,000 students study at LSE every year - more than half are postgraduates and approximately 70% hold international status. Meanwhile, thousands of staff members are employed to teach, clean up, secure, promote, manage, and cook at the university. However, it is not only people and identities that traverse the university. Substantial financial flows, including student tuition, donations, and government funding - each with its own global histories - move through LSE's infrastructure. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been invested and reinvested in transnational corporations by LSE, and then transposed back onto the university's landscape. Investigating LSE's investment practices over the past two years, Palestine Society has foregrounded the university's financial entanglement with various corporations implicated in the global arms trade, environmental degradation, and egregious violations of Palestinian rights (Assets in Apartheid, 2024; Stakes in Settler Colonialism, 2025). The reports reveal that LSE invests millions of pounds in companies whose activities contribute directly to militarisation, climate breakdown, and the perpetuation of settler colonial violence. The revelation that flows of capital funding genocide run through our uni has helped foster an understanding on campus that supposedly 'far away' places like Palestine are indeed not-so-distant from us. It has also exposed the hypocrisy that LSE's investments actively undermine the futures of Palestinian students, even as it proclaims to foster opportunities for us as students here.
So, how is LSE's financial complicity maintained? Massey's (2005) concept of "geometries of power" is helpful in making sense of these dynamics. She argues that flows of capital,



LSE'S INVESTMENTS IN ZIONISM ARE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

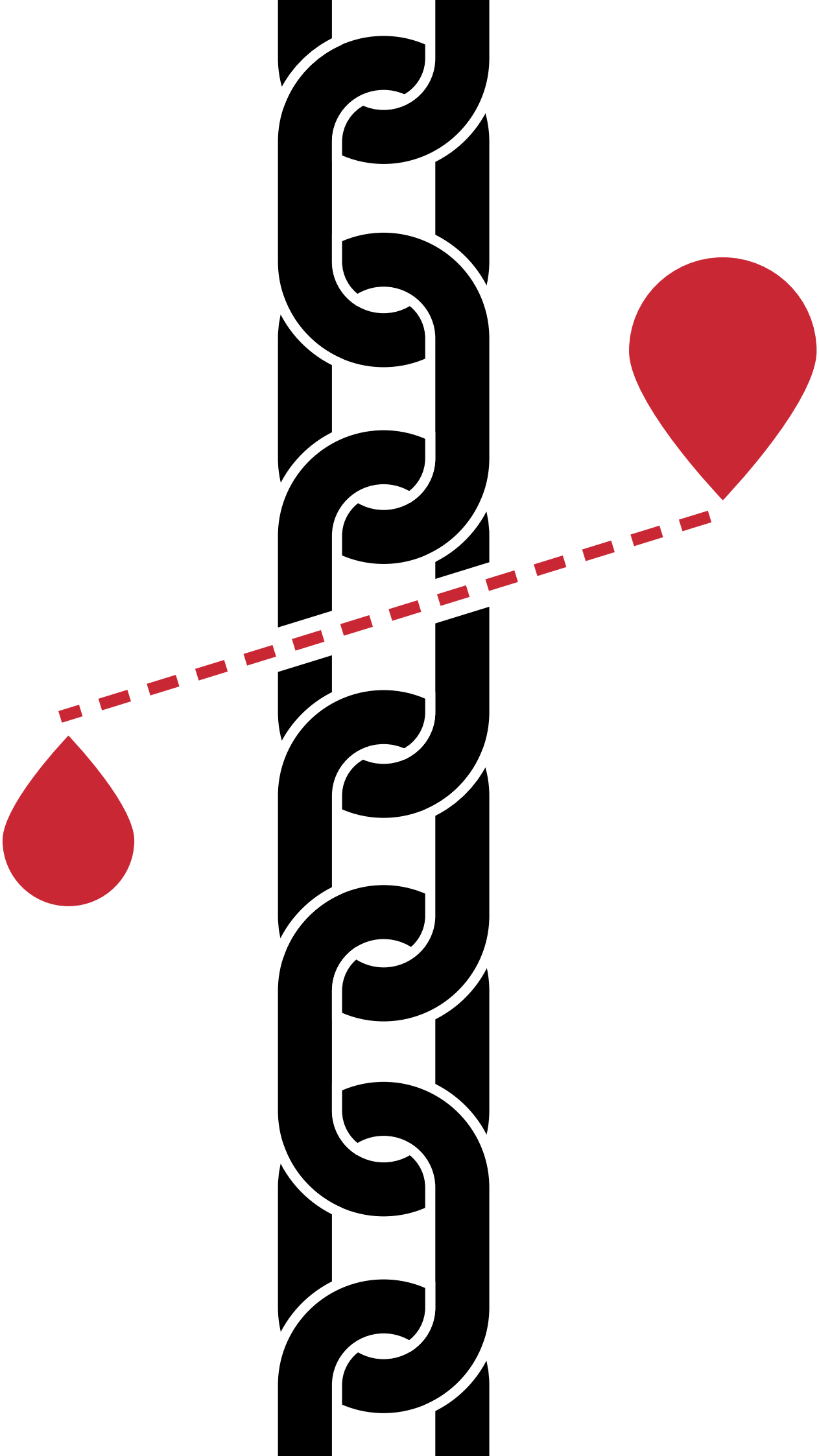
like investments at LSE, are embedded in unequal spatial relations—some people are positioned to make decisions and benefit from them, while others are excluded or even imprisoned by them. At LSE, this is evident both globally, where financial decisions made from here in London enable violence and dispossession in places like Gaza, and internally, as power over (dis)investments is ultimately concentrated in the hands of just 20 people. Although students make up the majority of the university community and 89% support divestment, only two student representatives sit on the LSE Council, which otherwise consists mainly of external members with strong financial and ideological ties to the Zionist entity and western capitalism. This stark power imbalance reveals a major democratic deficit in who gets to shape the university's priorities and whose interests are ultimately served.

However, if we follow Massey's relational understanding of space, LSE is not a static entity but a place continually shaped by ongoing relationships and struggles. The campaign for divestment has highlighted how the university's financial flows do not simply persist on their own—they require constant justification and active defending by those with decision-making power. Therefore, what makes LSE a complicit place is the constant reproduction of this complicity, both through overt acts but also through more subtle forms of status quo maintenance. As seen with the court-ordered eviction of the LSE liberated zone in 2024 and the suspension of seven students after Council's refusal to divest, student protests are met with repression, procedural delays, and, in some cases, outright punishment. But complicity is also sustained through quieter mechanisms, such as the 2024/2025 ESG review process, which served to distance students from investment decision makers or the Council's argument that divestment would undermine 'political neutrality' which masks the reality that investment decisions are not passive or neutral choices, but the product of active decisions which have long prioritised financial interests over addressing the school's ties to global harms.

So, where does all this leave us? First, we are all, to varying degrees, implicated in the ongoing displacement, violence, and oppression that constitute Israel's protracted Nakba and the settler colonial ambitions it serves. Second, this embeddedness confers upon us a responsibility to act in solidarity with Palestinians from our own institutional and local positions. Third, there is an urgent imperative to challenge and disrupt the flows of profit that sustain and normalise Palestinian dispossession and genocide. The process of liberating LSE from these entanglements is necessarily active and collective; just as complicity is reproduced through (in)action, our resistance must be persistent and strategic. LSE students have already demonstrated that divestment campaigns—such as those against South African apartheid—are both possible and effective when grounded in sustained, collective mobilisation.

To that end, I want to leave you with the map on page X: it visualises all egregious companies identified by the Stakes in Settler Colonialism report that are within a 30-minute walk of the university and explicitly names those involved in crimes against Palestinians. While approximately 30% of these companies are headquartered in the USA and only 11% in the UK, 17%—57 out of 332—have at least an office within a 30-minute walk of LSE. This concentration of complicit corporations with whom LSE is financially entangled and our close proximity to them makes our embeddedness within networks of global harm tangible and unavoidable. So, as you go to campus this year, I urge you to get organised, get involved, and to take action. It is incumbent upon each of us to leverage our positions, privileges, and networks to enact meaningful forms of solidarity, recognising that our actions here hold real significance in the ongoing struggle for Palestinian liberation.

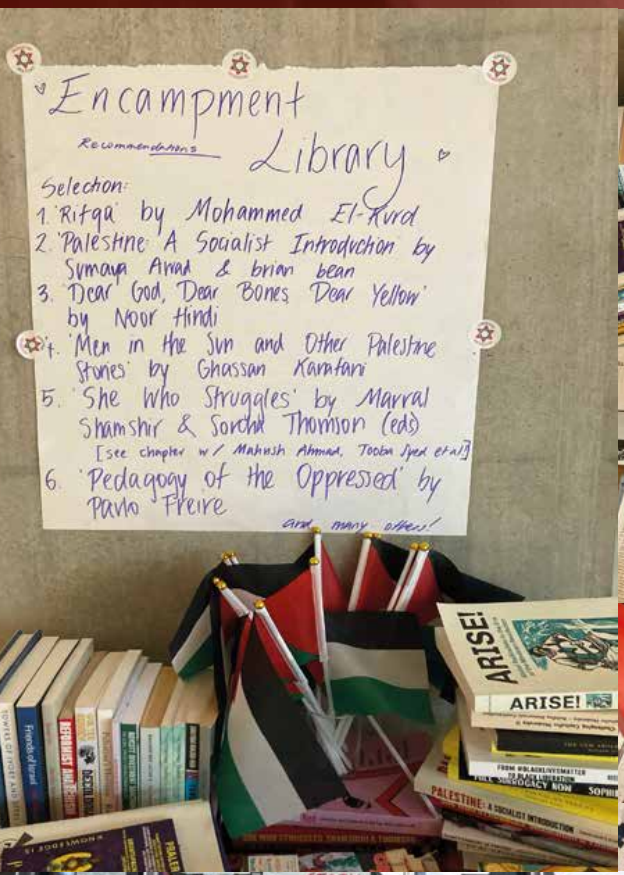
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LSE ENCAMPMENT 24
FREE PALESTINE!


LSE OCCU
AGAINST


FREE PALESTINE


Encampment Library
Recommendations
Selection:
1. Rifqa by Mohammed El-Kurd
2. Palestine: A Socialist Introduction by Sumaya Awad & brian bean
3. Dear God, Dear Bones, Dear Yellow by Noor Hindi
4. Men in the Sun and Other Palestine Stories by Ghassan Kanafani
5. She Who Struggles by Marral Shamshir & Sorchal Thomson (eds)
[see chapter w/ Mahvish Ahmad, Tooba Syed et al.]
6. Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire
and many others!


ARISE!
MURDEROUS MINOUCHE
ISRAEL
JESUS
YOU CANT H

ARISE!
ARISE!


FOR EDUCATION
NOT EXPLOITATION


LSE DISCLOSE
$DIVEST$


STORY
HISTORY WILL LOOK BACK ON YOU IN SHAME
NOT IN OUR NAME
L$E
DIVEST NOW
SILENCE = DEATH


DIVE$T NOW
UNIVERSITIES IN GAZA
NO MORE UNIVERSITIES IN GAZA



























MOMENTS FROM THE ENCAMPMENT

Curated by Malvina Tessitore and Jules.
Photos by @picturing.liberation (IG),
Scorpio and others

FROM THE OILFIELDS TO THE CLASSROOM

by Dan Brown

Libya to Palestine: LSE and BP's Entanglement

In 2011, LSE was engulfed in a national scandal over its links to the Gaddafi regime in Libya. This tends to be remembered for a £1.5 million donation from the Gaddafi foundation to LSE, and a much-criticised award of a PhD to Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi[1]. What is often forgotten however, is the centrality of LSE's long-standing and controversial ties to BP, the infamous fossil fuel company, to the scandal. The then chair of LSE Council, Peter Sutherland, had also been the Chair of BP from 1997-2009 and was a key figure in the British state's negotiations with Gaddafi to secure BP's access rights to Libyan oilfields[2]. His proposed appointment to the LSE Council in 2006 was condemned by LSESU and met with sit-ins and protests due to BP's long record of human rights abuses and environmental destruction[3]. The Libya connection is just one episode in LSE's complicity with BP, but it hints at the depth of this relationship and its potential to act as a political flashpoint for student struggles on campus.

Indeed, through its on-going campaign for divestment from complicity in Israeli occupation and genocide, LSE PalSoc has identified continued investment in BP by the university; the *Assets in Apartheid*[4] and *Stakes in Settler Colonialism*[5] reports reveal that LSE has over £2 million invested in BP. By highlighting BP's complicity in Israel's genocide, we can see the deeper links between settler colonialism and a global extractive economy. This enables us to confront the role universities play in justifying, financing and reproducing an extractive and colonial capitalist world-system. In revealing these deep networks of complicity, we also see key opportunities for the student movement to disrupt and unveil them. A focus on a specific target like BP might allow students to draw out a richer analysis of LSE's complicity in the genocide and build broader coalitions to resist this.

BP's Oil Empire and the Genocide in Gaza

Given the centrality of fossil fuels to the global economy, it is unsurprising that BP is not only implicated in climate breakdown, but also in fuelling Israel's genocide in Gaza. BP's Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is an essential source of oil for Israel's multi-front imperialist onslaught. Energy Embargo for Palestine (EEFP) and various journalists have highlighted the deep connections between the pipeline, Israel, US-UK imperialism, and complicit regional powers like Turkey. Understanding BP's complicity in Israeli apartheid helps us to see the interconnectedness of ecological and anti-imperial struggles.

An extensive 2024 exposé by EEFP and Heedayah Lockman noted how: "BP is embedded in every step of the crude oil supply chain to the Zionist genocide, from extraction in the Caspian Sea, to transportation across transnational territories"[6]. Increased attention to BP's role in the genocide helped spark global protests and deepen environmentalists' understanding that the fight for ecological justice must include Palestinian liberation. Turkey's role, especially in exporting the pipeline's oil from the port of Ceyhan to Israel, was a key factor in a broader backlash against the economic ties between Erdoğan's government and Israel[7]. Whilst we have only scratched the surface of BP's role here, we can start to see the kinds of networks of regional authoritarian power, geopolitics and extractive economics which undergird Western corporate complicity in Israel's genocide.

The Architecture of Institutional Complicity

Analysis of LSE's ties to a company like BP demonstrates the true extent of the university's complicity in genocide and ecological destruction. Meanwhile, senior management's narratives often try to distance LSE from the effects of its ties to corporate power. For example, senior management often point to the 'indirect' nature of investments – arguing that LSE only invests in investment funds which then invest in companies based on apolitical financial concerns. Any attempt to paint such investments as apolitical must be resisted, as must management's continued insistence that democratic decision-making about such issues is impossible. A deeper understanding of complicity in say, BP, however, helps us to cut through such mystification more effectively. When we focus on a specific company and how their activities cause ecological destruction and violence; we see that any attempt to paint corporate power as a purely economic matter beyond the concern of democracy or even politics at large involves morally bankrupt apologia for the industrial production of misery and death on a global scale.

LSE also runs the BP Centennial Professorship scheme, funding a visiting professor each year whose duties include providing internal education for BP. The scheme is funded by a large donation to the school from BP in 1990.

It implicates LSE's educational mission in the reproduction and justification of ecological violence and genocide. Here, we see the role of the 'elite' university as the producer of an ideological successor to the old colonial civilising mission – to give companies like BP the licence and know-how to speak a language of development, sustainability and progress. The goal of such work is the production of the ideological tools which allow BP to present itself as a reasonable partner in the development of the global South belying its historic and continued role in the extraction of resources and degradation of its populations. LSE's function here then is to sustain and protect the progress of this war machine. It is these kinds of partnerships with corporate power that show us what senior management's vision of progress or social change is. If we do not build the political power necessary to contest these partnerships, this nightmarish vision of progress will continue to dominate LSE's operations. Instead, we want a university that reflects students' long-standing struggle to end complicity in the unspeakable acts of genocide committed by an Israeli military force with a critical reliance on BP's fuel supply.

A Strategic Focus on BP in the Struggle for Divestment

In light of calls from Palestinian organisations to disrupt the energy flow to Israel, groups like EEFP have focused on BP as a key target. The focus on BP by groups external to LSE could also bolster a targeted divestment campaign against BP at LSE, by providing opportunities to complement and draw from existing struggles. Historically, BP's role in fuelling Rhodesian apartheid became a major issue for student organisers at LSE in 1967, especially given the many LSE directors at the time who had connections to the company[8]. BP, along with Shell, were major distributors of oil in Rhodesia through their joint ownership of South Africa's largest oil refinery. Their supply to the Rhodesian regime enabled circumvention of UN-imposed sanctions to pressure the regime to end apartheid[8]. LSE's sordid history of association with BP and the company's global record presents a key opportunity to build a powerful narrative about LSE's complicity which cuts against the university's progressive PR branding – as well as creating opportunities for collaboration with other groups concerned with BP's crimes globally.

LSE's complicity in BP is an exploitable weakness; the company sits at the intersection between the genocidal violence of imperialism and unfolding global ecological catastrophe. The depth of LSE's complicity here from historical links to Rhodesian apartheid to the on-going centennial professorship scheme provides ample ammunition for the kinds of narratives that could form part of a targeted divestment campaign.

Such a targeted campaign need not be seen as a narrowing of the goal of complete divestment from complicity in Israeli occupation and genocide. Instead, any such campaign should be understood through the concept of non-reformist reforms as theorised by many abolitionist and socialist thinkers like André Gorz[9/10]. The goal of focusing on BP for example, would not be to water down a strategy of demanding complete divestment. Instead, it could provide a strategic goal which helps us to clarify our understanding of LSE's entanglement with corporate power, deepen levels of consciousness regarding corporate complicity in imperialist genocide, and build a stronger movement for Palestinian liberation on campus.In this sense, a targeted campaign focused on BP could provide an effective next step in a broader strategy aiming for total divestment.

From sordid links to British imperial interests in Rhodesia and Libya, to providing education for the oil executives who are fuelling Israel's genocide, LSE's entanglement with BP reveals the university's continued and historic role as an institution for empire and capital. Alongside this however, we have also seen an alternative tradition of insurgent student resistance which has insisted on the university as a site for solidarity. The struggle between these two aspects of LSE, alongside BP's notoriety, provides fertile ground for continued resistance. BP is at the heart of LSE's complicity in genocide and global ecological devastation, and this is precisely why it makes the ideal target for a more focused divestment campaign. In the end, the hard-fought struggle for divestment from South Africa and Rhodesia forced LSE to capitulate, and student resistance to LSE's BP-Libya connections was pivotal in forcing management to backtrack including the resignation of the university's Vice-Chancellor in 2011. A focus on BP may provide an effective next step in ensuring that current struggles against institutional complicity in Israel's genocide and occupation can follow the same path towards victory.

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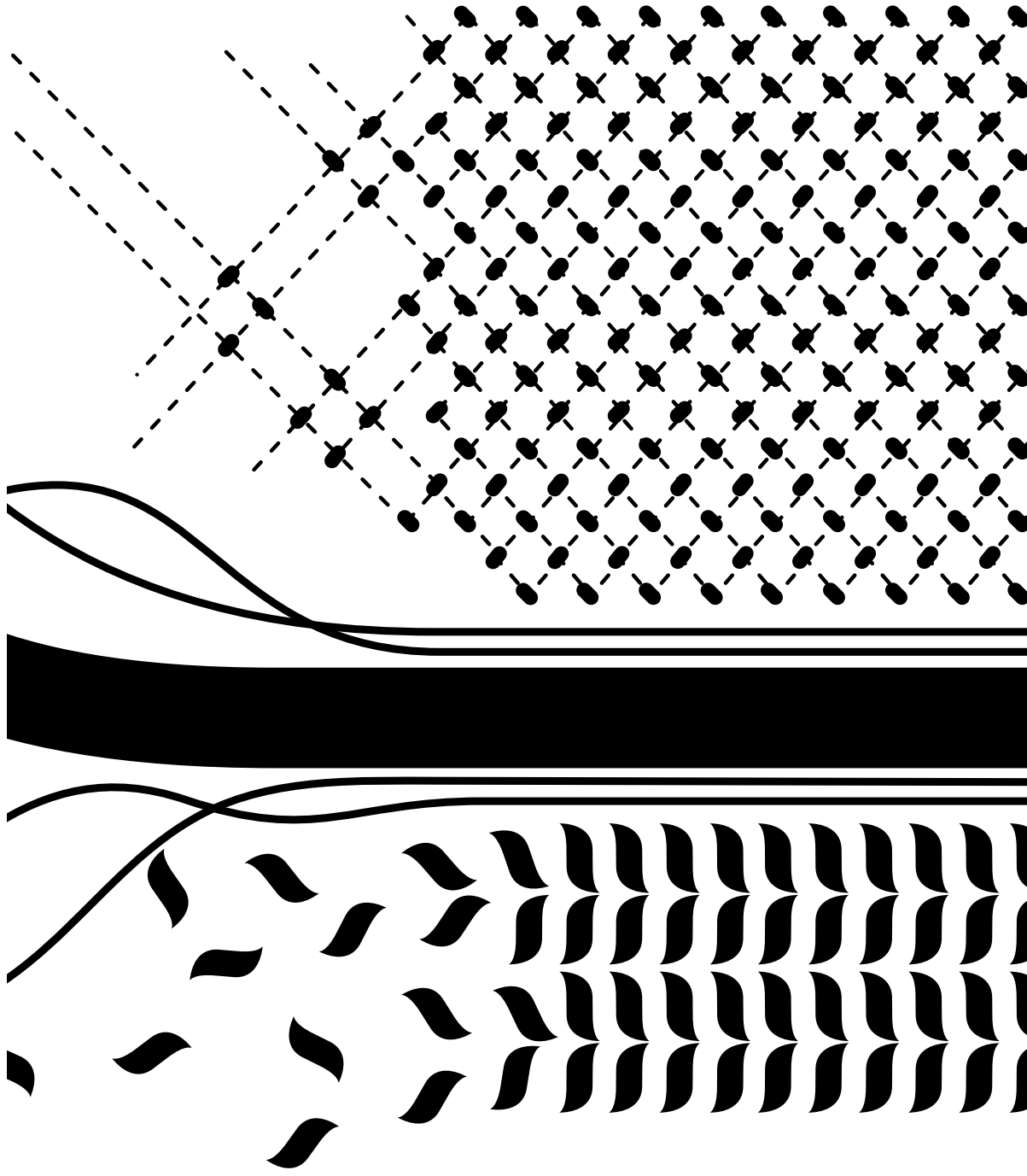
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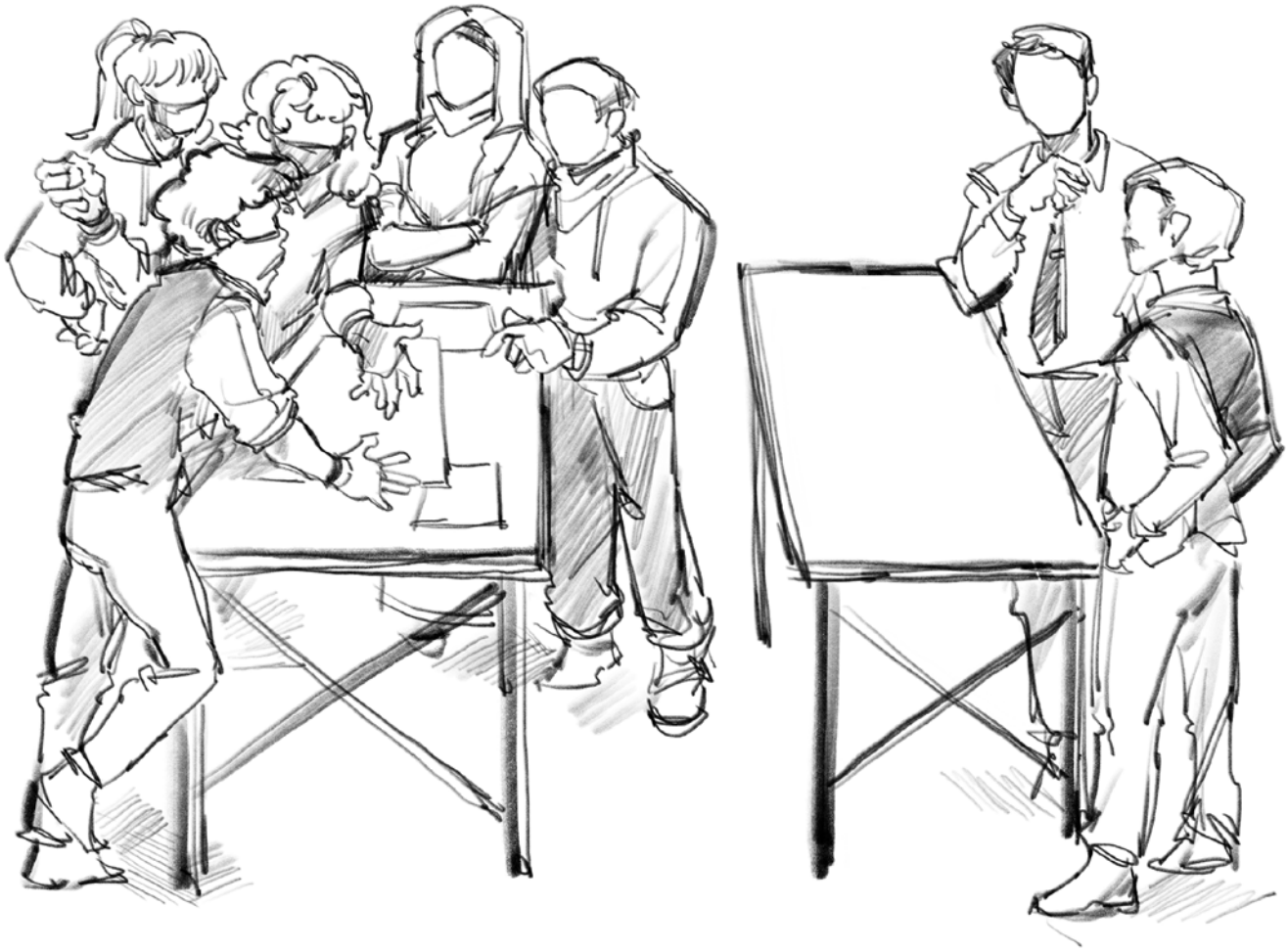
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PART 2



REORIENTATION



"THEORY SAVES LIVES,"
YET PALESTINIANS ARE STILL
GETTING KILLED, AND LSE
KEEPS PROFITING FROM IT.

WHERE IS FEMINIST PRAXIS?

This piece was written collaboratively by a group of Gender Students from the 2024/2025 cohort.

"Theory Saves Lives" - a bold declaration printed on pins distributed to you, as incoming students at the introduction of the LSE Gender Department. A declaration which encompasses, you're told, the department's commitment to decolonial feminist pedagogy and the necessary marriage of theory and practice. Similarly, 'praxis' is a word which you will frequently encounter in our classrooms; and one that will become a rather ironic spectre lingering in the halls of the department given the apparent absence of any meaningful commitment to Palestinian liberation in the face of military occupation, forced disposession, settler colonialism, and genocide.

In the department, a large emphasis is placed on the pedagogical imperative of feminist concepts such as intersectionality, reflexivity and positionality. Importantly, the department comprises faculty and students who not only self-identify as feminists, but many if not most, as intersectional and decolonial feminists. Therefore, we must be conscious of the protection, power and privilege accompanying our location within the ivory gates of an elitist academy in the British imperial core. This begs a set of questions: how do we, as feminists, as academics, as critical scholars, bear witness to, and oppose, modes of colonial violence in which we are implicated ourselves? How do feminist academics use the tools at their disposal, their influence within classrooms, their 'critical consciousness', and to what end? If we recognise the age-old feminist adage 'the personal is political,' then doesn't succumbing to institutional norms that advance censorship, coloniality, and genocide, under the guise of 'safety', amount to complicity?

If the personal is political, the classroom is too.

Throughout your time at the Gender Department, you will often be asked, or spontaneously indulge, in what Cynthia Enloe describes as 'feminist curiosity': the practice of posing questions, investigating, taking seriously aspects of our social lives and their transnational and political implications. This mode of thought will likely guide you towards questions that disrupt the normalization of systems of violence in the everyday. Be wary, while not particularly incentivised internally in LSE, this is an urgently needed practice within its institutional spaces. In two reports, 'Assets in Apartheid' and 'Stakes in Settler Colonialism', the LSESU Palestine Society outlined the activities in which LSE invests hundreds of millions of pounds. This research uncovered that tens of millions of pounds are fuelling the global arms trade, climate breakdown and countless human rights violations. Most notably, LSE holds £72. 000. 000 in companies actively engaged in crimes against the Palestinian people.

When we speak of Palestine in the department, we do so only within the insulated walls of our seminars, where critique can be safely expressed, and without substantial confrontation with LSE's complicity. While, in May 2021, the Department added its name to the "Gender Studies Departments in Solidarity with the Palestinian Feminist Collective" statement, and a few faculty members signed the LSE Palestine Solidarity Letter calling on the institution to divest from violence, solidarity with Palestine cannot be reduced to mere signatures when the political situation demands an oceanic storm of outrage.

Since the escalation of violence on October 7th, and amidst a genocide unfolding in real time, the department has offered little beyond a single event organised by the Centre for Women, Peace and Security on advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Palestine. When there is so much to be said, reflected upon, talked about, how is it that no open discussion on Palestine or by Palestinian academics was organized by the department? More recently, when students called on the Gender Department to issue a statement in solidarity, the faculty cited LSE's regulations, stating that their hands were tied. While some faculty members expressed support personally and individually, the absence of collective action and institutional accountability is undeniable – as is the absence of faculty at student-led protests, teach-ins, or vigils.

For instance, as Gender students, we organized a faculty-student inclusive workshop in May 2025 which has ultimately resulted in the collaborative writing of this piece. In this workshop we attempted to reflect on how, as feminists, we can understand the investments of the university and related systems of violence. We asked each other: where is gender in these egregious activities? How is LSE fuelling major gendered harms and insecurities globally? Can we even imagine a feminist investment portfolio? The underlying questions being: what can feminist interventions bring to the table in the divestment campaign, particularly in our university, at a time

where the institutions we are part of have showed their content in being invested in genocide? Will "seeing women" in the harms produced through these investments change anything for the decision-makers at LSE? While only a few faculty members showed up, their engagement was limited to their physical presence at an isolated table.

Contrarily, the students were actively participating in the conversation, and have shared thoughts and existing knowledge on how practices of genocide and settler colonialism in Palestine rely on deeply gendered forms of violence. The targeting and dehumanization of Palestinian men being mass murdered in Gaza, the sexualized forms of violence experienced in "Israeli" prisons, the technologies adopted at checkpoints across the West Bank that are developed to recognize gendered and racialized characteristics, the targeting of reproductive capabilities of Palestinian men and women in particularly gendered ways, are just some of the activities that LSE profits from and is invested in. Workshop participants noted that these implications should render LSE's divestment from these activities as particularly urgent for feminists at LSE. We have also traced the gendered consequences of fossil fuels projects by BP and Shell – both companies LSE is invested in – particularly on indigenous communities and the countless gendered implications of climate breakdown in terms of community dispossession, migration, and natural catastrophes. Additionally, the conversation on the global arms trade raised endless concerns about the ways in which these technologies are necessary not only for wars but for carceral regimes, organized violence and other forms of harm that feminists have historically been deeply concerned with. The fact that LSE is directly implicated, materially and ideologically, in these systems of violence, and the lack of outrage in the department despite it, is completely at odds with our everyday life as students in classes with "decolonial" and "feminist" course handbooks.

So, up until now we have mobilised, without those lecturing us on feminist resistance, on the ethics of decoloniality, on the radical potential of academia. Such a lack of engagement takes the form of silence operating closer to the sonic frequency of a scream: praxis losing all meaning, reduced to the very thing it was created to counter.

The Department's silence does more than fail us: it actively participates in the marginalisation of Palestinian struggle within feminist academic discourse. This is not a matter of mere oversight. It is symptomatic of a broader culture within Western academia where universities brandish radical vocabularies while investing in arms companies, partnering with settler colonial institutions, and stripping feminist critique of its political charge in the name of 'neutrality'.

Yet, in this piece we propose that it is our collective responsibility, and an available option, to seriously question the effects that the institution in which we work and study has on the world. If you look a little deeper, you will find that the rooms we use, the offices we work from and the funds we receive, come from money soaked in Palestinian blood as well as the dispossession of and violence against countless women, men, and children around the world.

As students of the Gender Department, we are beyond disillusioned by this disjuncture between what is taught and what is lived, and by the department's pale imitation of the feminist praxis we came here to learn. We hope that in this new academic year, feminist commitment to the liberation of the Palestinian people will not be dependent on respectability, palatability and institutional convenience. Instead, we hope that you, incoming feminists and gender students and faculty at LSE, will move beyond the charity and convenience of mere signatures on statements. We hope that the conversations you will have, the events that will be organized, the politics that will be practiced will start from an acknowledgment of the underlying issues within the academy – a culture marked by performative ethics and superficial engagements with decoloniality – and move beyond it. We cannot settle for this theatre of virtuousness, and neither will the next generation of incoming students. We demand a politics of consistency, of courage, of organizing – a feminism that does not flinch in the face of power – but names it, resists it, refuses it.

Anything less is a betrayal.

WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY FOR?

This is a conversation between Mai Taha and Sara Salem on student-staff solidarity at LSE.

Sara Salem:
Let's start the conversation by talking about what I think was one of the bigger moments of staff student solidarity at LSE, the UCU strikes[1] that took place between 2018 and 2023.

Mai Taha:
Yes, I think that's obviously a very important moment in the history of campus life. Having sustained strike action for that many years does something to the university. As a teacher, I think one of the most central sites is the picket line. It is that liminal space of learning and refusal. We are told all the time that our research must fit into a corporatised system of "impact," yet when we talk about impact in the sense of the relationship between theory and practice, where both continue to shape and reshape one another, we are told it is unimportant or too disruptive. So, for example when I teach students about labour rights in the classroom as part of my course it means something very different after having been on a picket line and after collectively reading poems, songs and texts on strikes and internationalist solidarity. Understanding the labour question starts to have different meanings.

The other important dimension is not only the question of the relationship of staff-student solidarity and what is forged on the picket line, but also that it signifies a moment of mobilisation with other staff members on campus. There is a manufactured isolation between staff in the neoliberal university where we are almost prevented from finding a space to actually think together or refuse together the conditions that are imposed on us. I'd like to think that the university has to remain a site of critical inquiry of reading and acting against the grain, and of seeing what is intentionally made invisible. The strikes did so much even if we didn't win everything we wanted; they helped us imagine what a university is for beyond the corporatised system of the neoliberal university.

SS:
I totally agree. Whereas classrooms are laid out to reproduce the hierarchies that we have in the university, the picket line instead disrupts them by its very nature. For example, the strikes were always in the winter, so it was always freezing; this was very uncomfortable, but in an interesting way being outside reminded me of the conditions that we work in…sometimes inside of a classroom you really feel like you're in a vacuum that's almost outside of time and space. The picket line felt like you were part of the world again. Being outside also made visible how securitised our campus is; for example, people would point out security cameras that they hadn't seen before.

The other thing that I thought was important about the picket line was how it was made up of so many different types of interventions: you had teach-outs where people spoke about their research, but you also had poetry, you had music, you had dancing—in all kinds of languages. It really opened up a very creative space in the university that is part of what learning can be. When I look back, I remember those moments of pleasure and joy which are really part of political action.

MT:
Speaking of the picket line as a creative space, we had former students who started creative archival projects archiving their experience on the picket line. You're a scholar of archives and archiving—what does it mean to archive these kinds of moments?

SS:
Oh those were so fascinating. What really struck me from the beginning with the strikes was how often students connected them to the political mobilisations around the UK government raising tuition fees a decade earlier. To me, this impulse to always try and create connections with the past was really interesting and important, and you saw it again with the encampment for Palestine. For me the creative archival experiments were really about reclaiming a very different history of the university. It might seem strange to think about somewhere like LSE as a radical space but of course it has this really interesting history; it was home to one of the first student occupations in the UK and it has also often been at the forefront of internationalist solidarity struggles.

One piece on this, for example, is by our amazing former students Avani Ashtekar and Kimia Talebi, "Decolonizing LSE[2]". The form of the picket line or the encampment makes possible ways of writing or thinking or talking that give people permission to think about history or archives more creatively and speculatively, and that allow for tensions, disagreements, discomfort and contradictions to become part of the final piece.

I wanted to ask you about your thoughts on the encampment. Like you said earlier it's sometimes hard to not think of these moments—like the strikes or the encampments—as having failed because their goals weren't fully achieved, but there is also something hugely important about the fact that they took place, and the work they produced[3] around LSE's complicity in the genocide against Palestinians.

MT:
I think the encampment really breathed life into the campus. LSE is always proud of its vibrant campus history, including the student occupation, but this pride is obviously in tension with the constant disciplining and repression that students faced

The university has to remain a site of critical inquiry of reading and acting against the grain, and of seeing what is intentionally made invisible.

during the encampment and beyond. LSE until today refuses to divest from arms manufacturing and companies that contribute to climate breakdown, instead constantly inviting us to join committees and subcommittees that we know are not going anywhere.

The encampment still did something, including to recall past moments of mobilisation, and this is very significant because otherwise the university becomes nothing more than the degree you buy. If we only understand the university as a degree-giving institution, then we have already lost. The encampment was not only a space of refusal against Israel's brutal genocide on the Palestinian people that is supported and sustained by an ongoing settler colonial project and an apartheid regime, but it was also a very radical break in the normality of campus life. It reminded us that the university is not just in the classroom.

One thing we wanted to touch on is the material conditions of staff. LSE is one of the worst employers when it comes to its reliance on precarious staff; despite this, it was often precarious colleagues who participated in the strikes and supported the encampment. We see far fewer full professors, who are the most secure staff members, showing up in solidarity with students and other causes.

SS:
Yes. Some staff don't see the university as a site of politics, or don't want to be involved in what they see as 'activism'; here there is a fundamental disagreement around what the university is. But also, the more neoliberal universities become, the less time and energy people have to resist these changes, because you're inundated with endless work. Especially with everyday political work—in unions, classrooms, in staff-student solidarity actions—people dip in and out depending on capacity, which is always shrinking in the conditions we work in.

To me this is the fundamental connection between the strikes and things like the encampment. For us, as staff, to be able to engage in these important political moments of solidarity with students, our own working conditions have to change as well. This is also why it's so important to think about the university as part of other movements and events in the world. With the encampment, it was really a moment in which there was an internationalism that was able to capture the fact that so many people around the world were outraged at what Israel is doing in Palestine, and I think similarly when we think about our own working conditions, it's important for us to connect it to what's happening in England and around the world more broadly. This also opens up some kind of space in which these types of solidarities become even more important.

MT:
And this attack on the working classes in the UK, as you mentioned, is also happening in parallel with attacks on any form of Palestine solidarity. The most recent proscription of Palestine Action as a terrorist group is a case where non-violent forms of protests are now considered terrorism in the eyes of the state, which in and of itself demonises any form of Palestine solidarity that is meaningful, or that protests the sending of arms to an active genocide during a moment of mass starvation supported by the entire Western world. If the university doesn't understand this as a central issue of our time, then it has failed. If the university is unable to provide the space for resistance and refusal, then we have failed, I think; and the only way to move on is to insist on the university as not simply what we do in the classroom but also as a space of refusal to the current state of the world.

ENDNOTES

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STUDENT INTIFADA

عاشت الانتفاضة الطلابية

PALESTINE WILL BE FREE

THE LIMITS OF IDENTITY-BASED STUDENT ACTIVISM AND THE EROSION OF COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

Nihal Yaldir

The subjectivities of students, conceived as the national economy's future human capital, have become a central site of neoliberal governance. Within this framework, homo oeconomicus has displaced homo politicus, reserving self-sacrifice for economic growth rather than the attainment of public good[1]. The intensification of economic precarity and the accompanying burden of individual responsibility in the neoliberal economy, where students are obliged to make 'free' choices and interpret their lives entirely as the outcome of those choices[2], has led to political stagnation among students. This does not mean that student activism has vanished, as evidenced by the widespread pro-Palestinian organizing calling for an end to universities' material, financial, and reputational ties to Zionist settler-colonialism and genocide. Yet, the broader campus climate suggests that political subjectivities of students are increasingly embodied in representative roles within student governments and identity-based activism, often focused narrowly on cultural politics. I view this trend as an outcome of a neoliberal strategy of co-option. I conceptualize neoliberalism as a diffuse rationality—one that infiltrates the very figure it displaces and, in doing so, manufactures the form of dissent it can accommodate within its system. Accordingly, I ask whether students today, who remain committed to justice, might themselves become entangled in neoliberal rationality through the forms through which they assert their commitments.

Neoliberalism diluted the very conception of justice to align with capitalist structures, where cultural claims for recognition are decoupled from claims for redistribution, with the former dominating the latter[3]. This dilution enabled the proceduralization of militant and complex leftist struggles within the bureaucratic systems of NGOs and human rights organizations, in turn allowing moral language to infiltrate corporate capitalism through compliance frameworks4. In short, contemporary identity politics allowed for corporations to maintain control over claims for justice while projecting a progressive image. Such control is mobilized by what Liu[5] terms the professional managerial class (PMC), a morally self-assured group operating in identitarian NGOs, human rights organizations, and 'ethical' corporations. In effect, they coordinate with the wealthy by insulating them from the redistributive demands of the working class. Student activism constitutes a natural terrain for the influence of these professions, as humanities and social sciences students who make up the majority of student activists[6] can be situated as the future PMC. With the proceduralization, industrialization, and professionalization of the pursuit of public good, humanities and social sciences students began gaming their education according to the moral expectations associated with the PMC.

The ideal candidate specifications of the PMC are incompatible with student activism that confronts the structures of maldistribution underpinning the academic-industrial complex. Pro-Palestinian student organizing, in particular, exemplifies this tension. With its redistributive and anti-imperialist core resisting co-option into formal channels, the academic-industrial complex increasingly represses it via disciplinary measures, surveillance, campus policing, deportation, and state protocols such as the Prevent duty. These mechanisms endanger these students' prospects, exacerbating their existing economic precarity. Viewed as the sole responsible for their 'fate', they constitute the 'deviant student activist' that other students are discouraged from aligning their selfhood with.

On the contrary, representation roles within student governments offer an alternative mode of 'moral' engagement for humanities and social sciences students, whose subjectivities are suspended between the opposing fates of homo oeconomicus and homo politicus. In effect, these roles capitalize on students' need for a moral self-understanding that can reconcile the alienation emerging from the dissonance between the radical ideas encountered in their coursework and the increasing political immobility imposed by the academic-industrial complex. The figure of the ideal student representative, who showcases 'moral' engagement in a professional and CV-friendly manner to identitarian professions, emerges as the incentivized figure. With neoliberal rationality monopolizing the idea of sacrifice[7], the notion that the pursuit of justice should come at no personal cost emerges as its logical complement. Consequently, individual safety and well-being take precedence, and activism is deemed acceptable only when it is marketable, predictable, and peaceful.

Yet, it is necessary to ask what idealized dissent can achieve

in today's universities, where professionalized student governments are primarily positioned to provide services to students as close collaborators of university managements in delivering the "student experience agenda"[8]. Indeed, the prominence of identitarian industry language and the designation of international students as a primary revenue stream have made this agenda appear more diverse and inclusive. Consequently, student representatives from marginalized identities are strategically included in decision-making rooms to voice their lived experiences. However, considering that the administrators who "pass the mic"[9] ultimately determine the limits within which the room operates, these students' speech remains constrained by the room's entanglements with capitalist and colonial systems. Within these limits, what remains possible is the institutional recognition of select identities that momentarily serve the university's financial and reputational aims, enhancing their social well-being only to the extent that such recognition is convertible into student satisfaction metrics and marketing exercises. This is particularly evident in discussions around divestment, where university managements frequently dilute the discourse around the well-being of Jewish students, as if Zionism is synonymous with Jewishness. Weaponizing identitarian language against pro-Palestinian organizing, such tactics demonstrate how identitarian language is bound to favour power-aligned groups. If concerns of non-power-aligned groups are addressed at all, they are addressed only insofar as marginalized identities are part of the university, ultimately discarding the violent material consequences of university policies beyond its walls.

Therefore, it is essential to recognize that lobbying and negotiation alone cannot bring social change and can only be tactical when leverage is gained via a united and coordinated movement on campus that strategically disrupts business as usual across reputational, financial, political, and cultural fronts. However, perhaps because identity-based concessions have become more realistically attainable, or because identitarian thinking has become second nature, identity politics has begun to infiltrate grassroots organizing on campus. This helps explain why student activism, which "historically tended to support idealistic causes rather than focus on student matters,"[10] has increasingly been motivated by identity-driven and individualistic concerns aimed at securing belonging and social well-being on campus[11].

I argue that we should not "sacrifice principle on the altar of realism"[12], as such a strategy liberates certain identities at the expense of collective liberation[13]. When political imagination becomes limited to securing the social well-being of a particular marginalized identity on campus, ensuring the same in organizing can become a primary concern. Regarding individuals from marginalized identities as holding an exclusive moral insight presumed to be inaccessible to outsiders[14] designates them as the sole legitimate voices able to articulate their oppression, as if "demographic categories are... coherent, homogeneous 'communities' or 'cultures' which can be represented by individuals"[15]. In turn, allyship comes to require checking or denouncing one's privileges, reducing supremacy to a "psychological attitude, instead of a structural position of dominance" underpinned through a complex matrix of oppressive systems[16]. Consequently, the struggle can shift from challenging structural dynamics to managing interpersonal relationships[17], where morality gets validated by the positionality of the marginalized student and embodied by allies for self-regulation, and becomes conferred through this performative process alone. As if "vague alterations in consciousness will somehow remake oppressive structures"[18], this practice resembles a shortcut to liberation.

However, liberation necessitates utopian imaginaries in which a just life can be achieved for all. Situated at a horizon that is unreachable by any single individual, a utopian conception of liberation reminds individuals that oppression and struggle persist beyond their existence, compelling them to act against oppression, rather than reducing oppression to occasions for an "inward turn to moral preening." Instead, it shifts the emphasis from the individual to the issue itself, demanding action irrespective of one's self-conception[19].

The identitarian turn in student activism is susceptible to abandoning a utopian conception of liberation, diminishing the prospects for coalition-building on campus and beyond. Individuals are situated along "axes of subordination" that are

neither neatly isolated[20] nor, as I argue, simply intersecting. Instead, they are amalgamated in complex ways, experienced differently by each individual, and constitutive of varied identities and interests. Given that "no demographic category of people could possibly share an identical set of political beliefs"[21], confronting the complex matrix of oppression requires building coalitions within and beyond campus that cross identity-based divisions and pursue a shared goal of dismantling systems of oppression. This process is inherently conflictual, and expecting otherwise reflects an individualism that reduces the political community to the individual rather than elevating the individual in service of it.

Striving for a moral self-understanding ultimately replaces and displaces responsibility. It outsources the risky labour of dismantling the university's progressive façade to those repressed behind it—those whose identities we claim to organize under on our campuses. Ultimately, it fractures the coalitions where our radical, situated organizing could leverage the university's role within a broader matrix of oppression. Considering that "transformative strategies are highly vulnerable to collective actions"[22], rather than increasing this vulnerability by distancing ourselves from the repressed at the altar of realism, we must help alleviate it by uniting within our movements and joining coalitions based on our politics, not our identities, that can effectively withstand repression. After all, for many, "The choice is not between danger and safety, but between the uncertain dangers of revolt and the certainty of continued violence"[23].

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14 Bhatt, *Revolutionary Road to Me*, 35.

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16 Ibid., 18.

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18 "Who Is Oakland?," 2.

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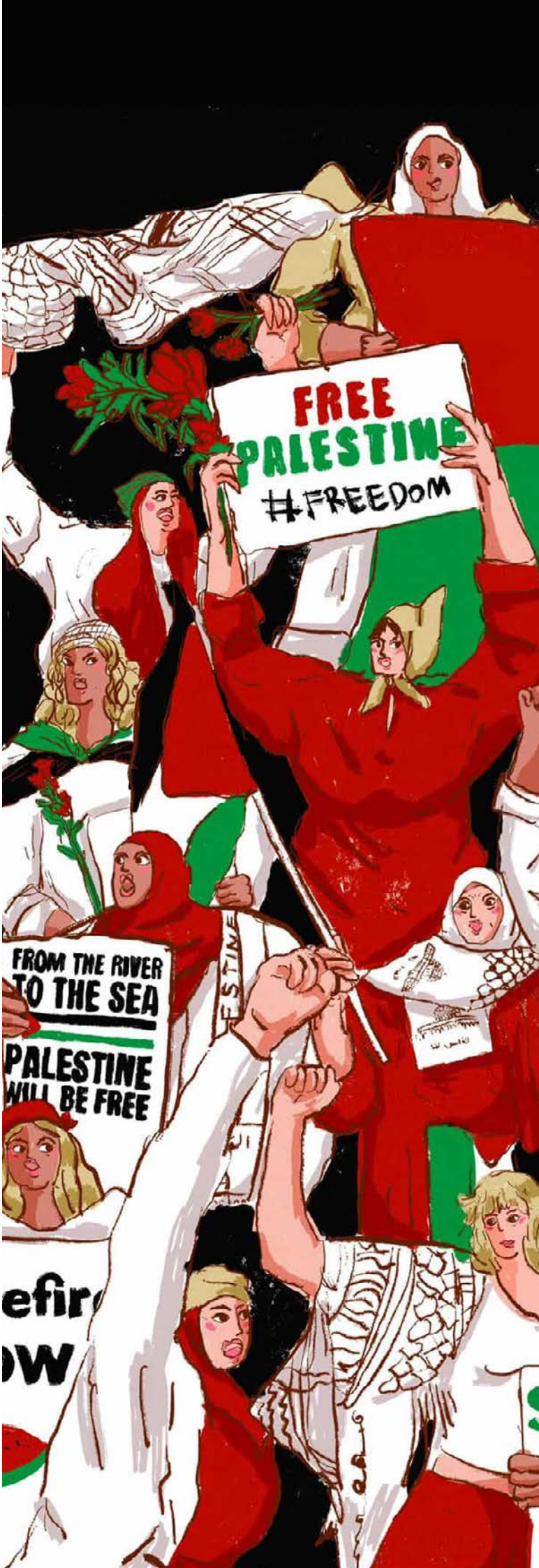
23 Ibid.

FROM THE LSE TROUBLES TO THE LSE 7: RECLAIMING THE POLITICAL ROLE OF MEDIA WITHIN STUDENT UNIONS

Between 1966 and 1969, protests organised by students brought teaching to a halt for months at a time in a period that came to be known as the LSE Troubles. The catalyst for this sustained era of radical campaigning was the appointment of Walter Adams as LSE Director, who had close ties to the colonial and white minority regime in what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Students responded with bold, coordinated action: mass meetings, sit-ins, and walkouts. At the centre of this activism was LSE's Student Union (LSESU), which mobilised over 800 students in January 1967 for an eight-day sit-in, standing firm even as its president, David Adelstein, faced disciplinary action. Student media, particularly LSE's news journal The Beaver, was key in documenting and publicising this struggle.

That period of protest helped to define LSE's legacy as a hub for radical intellectualism and student action. In the decades since, student activists have strategically organized around a wide range of issues: the Vietnam War, apartheid in South Africa, the rise in tuition fees, and the closure of essential student services. There is a consistent thread of political consciousness running through the London School of Economics and 'Apolitical' Science's student body. Today, we look back on the LSE troubles with nostalgia–not as a stagnant longing for the past, but as a catalyst for action.

Partly inspired by the legacy of the late 60s, students campaigning for divestment established the LSE Liberated Zone in May 2024, renaming the Marshall Building the Bloom Building after Marshall Bloom, a former LSE Student who was president of the Graduate Students' Association, leading the anti-apartheid campaign during the LSE



Troubles. The encampment demanded that LSE divest from the egregious investments it holds in companies complicit in crimes against the Palestinian people, the arms industry, and climate breakdown, as was detailed in the thoroughly researched and meticulously crafted 'Assets in Apartheid' report. As students revived a longstanding legacy of activism on campus, LSE also upheld its own history of resistance - not to injustice, but to those speaking out against it. In May 2024, students channelled the spirit of 1967. The university, in turn, demonstrated its own consistency, becoming the first British university to evict a student encampment in support of Palestine.

In the context of present-day student activism, especially the 2024 encampment, it is clear that something has changed. The political consciousness and active engagement of LSE students have endured, but the institutional frameworks that facilitated student resistance have shifted around it—more specifically, student unions have become severely depoliticized. However, as The Beaver's work on campus this year has shown, there is still room to push back, as long as we understand the campus landscape and work strategically within it.

From Leadership to Limitation

Since the 1960s, student unions across the UK have shifted away from their earlier role as engines of political mobilisation. During the LSE Troubles, the LSESU actively supported, organised, and led political campaigns, giving structure and institutional backing to student demands. David Adelstein and Marshall Bloom, presidents of the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association, respectively, were suspended for leading protests against Walter Adams' appointment as Director. Today, student unions operate in a very different political landscape, a shift largely shaped by Margaret Thatcher's neoliberalising reforms that have led to the increased marketisation of higher education. Thatcher's government sought to curb the very political power demonstrated by student mobilisation during the 1960s, starting with the Education Act of 1986 which introduced formal duties on universities to protect free speech while tightening oversight of political activity. The Education Act of 1994 required universities to allow students to opt out of union membership and imposed stricter regulations on how SUs could spend funds, reframing them as service providers rather than political bodies. This act also made student unions charities, meaning their spending and activities must align with their charitable objectives, which is often narrowly defined as 'supporting students as students.' As a result, for example, a political campaign regarding student housing is acceptable within these parameters, while making statements condemning occupation and genocide is seen as less justifiable.

At LSE, the impact of this shift is significant. During the 2024 encampment, LSESU did not take a formal position. Unlike in 1967, when the SU called mass meetings and coordinated direct action, today's union often remains 'politically neutral'. This detachment creates real frustration among students who see the union as no longer functioning as a coordinated political body - one that could hold great potential for building sustained student power to create change, as it so powerfully did during the LSE Troubles. Given the constantly fluctuating student population, many of whom are one-year masters students and international students who disperse across the globe after graduating, efforts to build community and solidarity could really benefit from the anchor of a central, coordinated structure like a politicized LSESU.

Student unions can make statements of solidarity if they are clearly linked to their mission of representing students, and the Palestinian struggle is deeply relevant to this. Every university in Gaza has been destroyed. Thousands of university students, professors, and faculty members have been killed by Israel. Gaza has not had a graduating class for at least three years, as education has been paralysed by destruction and genocide. There are Palestinian students who have been offered places at LSE and other UK universities, but are trapped, unable to leave or receive their visas. In a recent vote, 89% of participating LSE students endorsed divestment and urged LSESU to acknowledge the ongoing genocide in Palestine, giving the union a clear democratic foundation to act.

So why is there still hesitation and neutrality visible in LSESU's actions? After LSESU Sabbatical Officers signed the NotMyNUS open letter – a letter calling on the NUS (National Union of Students) to reject the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism and to investigate links between NUS officials and pro-Israel lobbying groups – the NUS threated potential investigations by the Charity Commission. In response, the LSESU pressured LSE societies to reconsider their support for the letter – this instance provided insight into what exactly holds the LSESU back from backing its students: potential media scrutiny, the risk of investigations by the Charity Commission, and cuts to funding from universities lead student unions to adopt a cautious, service-focused role.

Despite its attempts at working independently of the institution, the student union still relies heavily on LSE for its legitimacy and funding. A large proportion of LSESU's funding comes from a subvention grant from LSE, which is over a million pounds. It therefore appears that the student union finds it risky, both legally and financially, to express explicit support of pro-Palestine, anti-genocide student activism such as in the case of the LSE 7, a group of seven students who were suspended by LSE for a peaceful anti-genocide demonstration on campus in July 2024. On this issue and all issues concerning Palestine, LSESU's position has become one of neutrality, failing to recognise that neutrality itself is a political stance.

Student Media as Resistance

The Beaver operates under LSESU – not LSE – and can therefore document and publicise political movements on campus, even within LSESU's constrained structures. The Beaver team has worked hard to document activism on campus throughout the year, including the encampment and broader campaigns for divestment. However, publishing stories critical of LSE or supportive of Palestine is a process that is far from straightforward.

The publishing of the feature article regarding the suspension of the LSE 7, a detailed investigation into the alleged

suppression of pro-Palestinian activism by LSE management – and the university's subsequent harsh response – demonstrated the extent to which LSE views student voices as a threat. Demanding the publishing of a rebuttal letter in full, LSE sought to discredit The Beaver's reporting by questioning their journalistic integrity. Student media clearly holds the potential to keep the institution accountable, and the SU has a crucial role to play in bolstering this potential.

The possibilities of working with the SU

Some believe that working with the SU for political campaigns is not possible, as their caution and tendency towards neutrality can undermine the radical power students are attempting to build. Others believe there is still hope, and that harnessing the mobilising power of LSESU could be powerful for the movement. There is no straightforward answer to whether LSESU can be a reliable ally. What is clear however, is that, in their dealings with the Beaver, LSESU has demonstrated a real commitment to protecting free speech. They have supported The Beaver's right to document and publicise. When LSE attempted to escalate its complaints, the SU gave the team attention and procedural support. Students can use this aspect of LSESU support powerfully. If students keep writing articles exposing LSE's egregious investments, suppression of activism, and highlighting criticism of the institution from such public figures as MP Zarah Sultana and UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, they can maintain pressure on the university to act. In this way, the SU's role in facilitating and safeguarding freedom of speech becomes a vital tool for student organising.

A Practical Guide to Repoliticising Student Media

How can we reclaim the political power of student media and unions, even within the current bureaucratic constraints? We need to work strategically both inside and outside the existing system. A few lessons stand out:

1. Engage, don't disengage: Even when the SU seems neutral or slow-moving, it is worth engaging, even if only to protect your free speech. Build relationships with its staff and officers. Explain the political stakes of your work. The SU may be legally restricted, but the people within it often care deeply about student rights and freedom of expression.

2. Know your rights and know the structures: Understanding how your SU works internally is crucial. Who sits in meetings with LSE management regarding student free speech and divestment? How can you get in touch with them? Who are your Sabbatical Officers and how can they advocate for you? Knowledge is power.

3. Use student media strategically: Media remains one of the most powerful tools at students' disposal. Notice something worth highlighting on LSE's campus? Investigate it. Gather evidence, talk to people, and publish well-researched, meticulous and bold articles. The Beaver has published several articles throughout this year that have highlighted issues that then received national attention. Student voices have the power to shift campus discourse and put pressure on institutions.

4. Do good journalism and have confidence in it: LSE has a history of trying to discredit or intimidate student activists. Report thoroughly, hold yourself to high standards, and stand your ground. Challenging institutional narratives is exactly what student journalism is for.

Reclaiming the Union

Student activism is alive and well. The courage, imagination, and political clarity of students in 2024 echo the radicalism of our predecessors of 1967 – but the structures that once amplified that energy have been hollowed out.

Many feel that after seeing LSESU repeatedly fall short, we should stop waiting for the SU to rediscover its radicalism. Others remain faithful that there will be change. In the meantime, student journalism and grassroots organising remain amongst the most reliable tools we have. Real change comes from students who organise and who refuse to be silenced. Repoliticising students' unions means reclaiming their purpose. It means making the case that 'supporting students as students' also means defending their right to speak, organise, and challenge power. This starts with keeping student media alive, independent, and brave.





PALESTINE AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Justin Thomas

"When justice does not exist, God is not known; he is absent."[1] (pp. 195)

Christianity is a major world religion with significant historical impact. From slavery to colonialism, Christianity has had a major influence in 'legitimising' the subjugation of the Other, i.e., the non-whites[2]. However, this legitimisation is arguably reflective of not all of Christianity, but rather a specific Western form which played a major role in constructing a concept of 'the Other' under the name of Christ. Notably, however, Christianity was already present in many parts of the world even before it became a dominant religion in the West. Christianity was already present in Egypt, Ethiopia, India, etc. (see Cannon, 2008; Frykenberg, 2025)[2/3]. Most importantly, it has existed - and still exists - in its birthplace: Palestine. To many, this may seem obvious - so why emphasise it? This is primarily because Christianity is predominantly seen as a 'Western' religion, and it is Westernised Christianity which is often used to maintain distance and difference from 'the Orient,' and thus the Arab world. As argued by Said, a distorted image of the Orient has been used to "define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[4] (pp. 9-10). Within this distorted construction, the Arab world is constructed as the Muslim-barbaric world, while the West in contrast is constructed as the Christian-civilised world.

Such distortions have had not only geopolitical implications, but significant sociocultural ones. It is because of such distortions from the West that Christianity is not often seen to *be present.* For the West, if the Christian exists in the Arab world, the Christian seems to exist – as someone subject to oppression, persecution, etc. I make a distinction between *being present* and *to exist*— where in the former, the actor or the group is present towards making change and participating in day-to-day lives. To exist, however, seems to portray that the actor or the group has no agency and makes no active contribution. To exist means to be subjected to something or by someone. From the Western perspective, there's either no such concept of an Arab Christian, or if there is, the Arab Christian exists with no say on their indigenous land. Palestinian Christians face this predicament – as an "unsolicited anomaly, mere bystanders within the unravelling struggle over land and legitimacy[5]. Palestinian Christians thus experience "liminality" (or "in-betweenness") as stateless persons, as members of a transnational community, and as citizens with allegiance to both an earthly and a heavenly kingdom"[5]. Palestinian Christians in my opinion thus represent a form of Christianity which is in direct opposition to 'Western' Christianity. Perhaps, we can overturn the orientalist framework and argue that if Western Christianity represents oppression, marginalisation and violence, then Palestinian Christianity represents resistance, liberation and inclusion.

One major point of contention is the understanding of 'Israel'. For Evangelicals, who represent the mainstream western Christian faction, the biblical 'Israel' literally refers to the modern nation-state settler-colonial regime. This is because Evangelical Christians interpret the Bible *literally*. Biblical literalism is a "stringent position on biblical interpretation, suggesting that the text is to be taken without any qualification whatever."[6] (pp. 308). Even if we accept such a theological standpoint, the Evangelical-Zionist literalism contradicts itself on most things – especially on 'Israel'. Evangelicals have often used verses from the Bible such as Ezekiel 36:24 to justify their support for the Israeli settler-colonial regime. First let's look at what the verse says:

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."

At first glance, one might be able to make an argument for the settler-colonial Israel. On closer look however, even if we are to take the literalism standpoint,it must be historically contextualised . Ezekiel, the Hebrew prophet, wrote the book at the time of Babylonian exile[7]. Thus, the prophecy by Ezekiel is in the context of providing hope to the Israelites who lived during the Babylonian exile. The prophecy was thus fulfilled when Israelites indeed came back to Palestine under Cyprus the Great in 538 BC[8].

Who, then, are the 'Israelites'? According to the Bible, 'Israel' is another name of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, given to him by the divine being (usually interpreted as God himself) he wrestled with[9]. Thus, Israel merely refers to the descendants of Jacob. Biblical Israel has no connection with the current settler-colonial regime. In response, the evangelicals would argue-

descendants of Israel are Jews. Although this can be seen as a valid interpretation, the Christian understanding of Israel later expanded to incorporate gentiles, i.e., non-Jewish people. As told by St. Paul in Romans 1:16:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Evangelicals often cite this to justify Zionism. Although Paul writes "to the Jew first", he does not mean to give an exclusive privilege to one community. According to Paul, although Jesus revealed himself to the Jews first, His grace and mercy extends to people across the world–which is also why he says "…and also to the Greek." Over time, 'Israel' came to represent the Kingdom of God, not just Jacob's descendants. However, it is also important to examine what the 'Kingdom of God' means here, since for the Christian Zionist, it refers to the settler-colonial regime of Israel. However, Christ himself, rejects a worldly kingdom as he says in John 18:36. The Kingdom is something that is eternal and transcends the nation-state.

What does this mean for Palestinian Christians? For them, "the colonisation of Palestine through the Bible represents both an existential threat and a profound spiritual assault."[10] (pp. 1). As mentioned previously, Palestinian Christians are seen to only *exist* – without any agency. An interpretation is imposed onto them by the West. They are not seen as capable of interpreting the Bible rooted within their regional and cultural context. If at all Palestinian Christians become part of the western Christian imagination, they are seen as a community that needs to be saved from the 'barbaric' civilisation that surrounds them. They are not seen as a community that exists side-by-side with the Muslim community. This fallacy gets imprinted as a reality within western Christian thought. Palestinian Christians, however, are not merely static objects, but active agents within Palestinian society – a community that contributes, that suffers as much as their Muslim brethren in Palestine. It is within this context that we see the emergence of Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT). PLT emerges in opposition to Christian Zionism. In that sense, PLT can be argued to be anti-colonial as it interprets the Bible within the Palestinian context, "decolonially and construct an alternative decolonial theology from the standpoint of the colonised."[10] (pp. 2). The Bible is thus seen as a tool for Palestinian liberation. This is also why Kairos Palestine, the Christian Palestinian liberation movement inspired by the Kairos theological document written in the context of anti-apartheid movement in South Africa[11], also looks at Palestinian resistance as just and important because it sees the Israeli occupation as explicitly evil, "a sin against God and humanity"[5] (pp. 456). PLT engages in the process of "de-Zionization of the Bible" where one reads the Bible "as a story about a loving, just, inclusive God of all people rather than as a story of one particular nation or ethnic group"[12] (pp. 55).

PLT thus provides an alternative biblical interpretation which challenges the dominant western interpretation of the Bible and the Holy land, i.e., Palestine. PLT shows that the Holy Land is not a barren land that needs to be conquered and needs to be bloomed with flowers, affirming that Palestinians are rooted in their land. It shows how Palestinian Christians are active agents in Palestine and how occupation also affects them. PLT thus offers a theological hope to Palestinian Christians – a hope for liberation not just from the ongoing genocide, but also from the occupation forever. PLT in many ways shows that Palestinian Christians are *present* rather than merely *existing*.

What does this mean for Christian students on campus? First, we must recognise what is happpening in Palestine as a genocide, as the status quo denies this. However, many of us as followers of Christ also need to deconstruct ourselves; unfortunately, many of us do look at Christianity from a Euro-centric perspective. There is a need for us to decolonise ourselves – and look at Christianity where it is rooted, in Palestine. It is also important to reject the western imagination of the Orient. And that means to see the land as a complex region that cannot be simply described in binaries of 'barbaric-civilised.' It is a land where people from all faiths live, share a history, a culture – a history and culture of plurality and co-existence. Christian ethics calls for speaking up for the oppressed. Christ is an unconventional king in that sense— someone who was born in a manger, rather than a grand palace. Thus, Christ is out there among the Palestinians, suffering with them, rather than having tea with the Zionists. He suffers with the people. And that is why our Christian ethics tells us to speak up for the oppressed, to be in solidarity with the oppressed. It is time we act on our Christian ethics and speak up for Palestinians and oppose those who support this genocide!

1 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, 1st ed. (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1974; original work published 1971).

2 Karen G. Cannon, "Christian Imperialism and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24, no. 1 (2008): 127–134, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20487919.

3 Robert E. Frykenberg, “Thomas Christians | History & Tradition,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Thomas-Christians.

4 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

5 Nicholas Patierno, “Palestinian Liberation Theology: Creative Resistance to Occupation,” *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 26, no. 4 (2015): 443–464, https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2015.1080896.

6 Thomas G. Jelen, Clyde Wilcox, and Carol E. Smidt, “Biblical Literalism and Inerrancy: A Methodological Investigation,” *Sociological Analysis* 51, no. 3 (1990): 307, https://doi.org/10.2307/3711181.

7 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Ezekiel | Hebrew Prophet,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ezekiel-Hebrew-prophet.

8 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Babylonian Captivity | Definition, History, & Significance,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/event/Babylonian-Captivity.

9 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Jacob | Hebrew Patriarch,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacob-Hebrew-patriarch.

10 Elias Badarin, “Decolonising Faith: Palestinian Liberation Theology in the Context of Settler-Colonialism,” *Third World Quarterly* 46, no. 7 (2025): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2025.2511863.

11 “The Kairos Document,” 1985, published by South African theologians against apartheid.

12 Munib Sabbah, *Faithful Witness: On Reconciliation and Peace in the Holy Land* (New York: New City Press, 2009).



LSE STUDENT PROTESTOR CARRIED OUT BY THE POLICE DURING THE LSE TROUBLES IN THE 1960S.

REVIEWS

THE LONG NOW OF REVOLUTION: A REVIEW OF GABRIELE UBOLDI AND SAMUEL REES'S 'LESSONS ON REVOLUTION'

Isabel

Gabriele Uboldi and Samuel Rees's' *Lessons on Revolution*' is part short play, part history lesson (complete with overhead projector), part political manifesto, and asks its audience a powerful question: what does it mean when a revolution fails? Focussing on the LSE anti-colonial student movement in the 60s, the play weaves a narrative connection between different moments in time, highlighting the throughline between past and current struggle. Each moment of resistance leaves behind lessons - this play teaches us how to find them.

As the title suggests, the play serves as an educational exploration: what can we learn from the revolution that never was? In 1968, student protests erupted across Europe, posing a serious challenge to existing regimes and revealing a real potential for political upheaval. During the "LSE Troubles," in the spirit of the '68 student and worker strikes, students occupied the university to oppose the deep ties that LSE president Walter Adams held to the apartheid regime in Rhodesia (today: Zimbabwe). However, while the LSE student occupations garnered attention, they did not make the university cut ties with Rhodesia or its profiteers, failed to spread beyond a handful of universities, and the moment never crystallised into the mass movement it appeared to promise. The university punished the students involved and kept Adams and other controversial high-ups in their positions. Marshall Bloom, one of the leaders of the '68 protests and a central figure in the play, died by suicide years later. Throughout the play, the two playwright-cum-actors speak openly on their struggle to weave the traces of history they find in the LSE archives into a cohesive story. Their failure to do so mirrors the failure of the moment. If the movement, the revolution, the '68 LSE occupations failed - what are the 'lessons on revolution' we must attend to?

The play fails to inform the audience that LSE became the first university to divest from apartheid South Africa in 1988, as a direct result of student pressure. At the same time, this omission helps make the point: divestment is not a linear process. The absence of linearity is a throughline throughout the play, which suggests a conception of history that challenges the one we are used to–rather than viewing



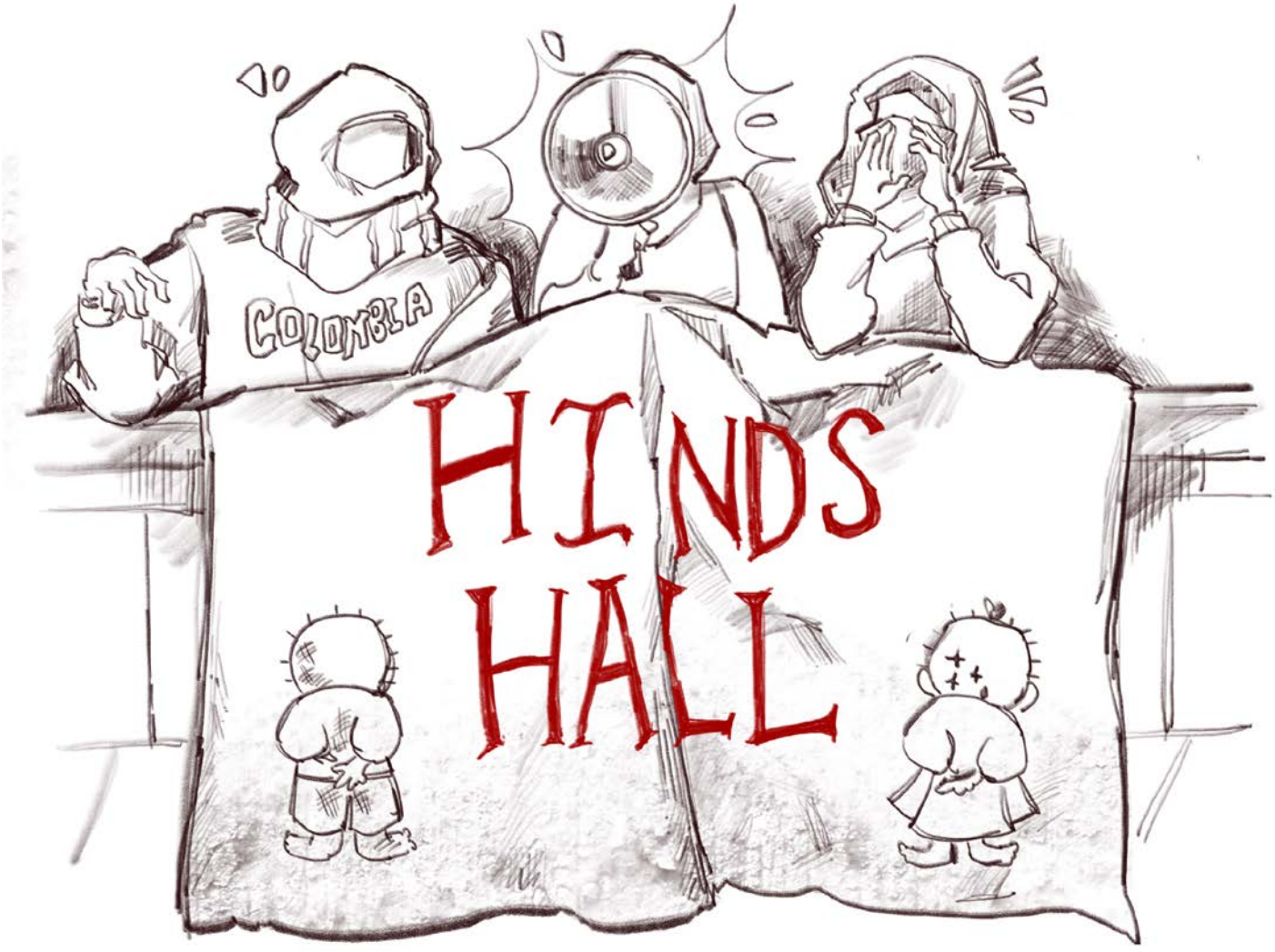
Gabriele Uboldi and Samuel Rees in Lessons on Revolution, a production from Undone Theatre and Carmen Collective. Photograph by Ella Dale.

history as a series of events, to be counted one after the other like beads on a rosary, *Lessons on Revolution* looks to history as an incomplete and circuitous process, not necessarily towards 'progress', but one where nothing in history is ever truly lost to time. For student organizers, history becomes a repository from which we can grasp particular lessons in strategy, solidarity, and resolve. This gives us an ever growing collection of knowledge, skills; we see what worked, what didn't, and why. The student occupations in '68 were a failure until, twenty years later, they weren't. The students of '88 were continuing the process that began in the '60s. In *Lessons on Revolution*, lightbulbs flicker above the actors' heads, forming a network of stars that shine unevenly, underscoring the historical nebulae that confront the two writers. However, the play loses at certain points the power of connecting these dots in the revolutionary glamour of '68; overstating the importance of *moments* that seem revolutionary rather than taking care to embed them in the larger anti-apartheid movement, which has had critical successes.

The contemporary anti-colonial struggle at LSE is looking at its own series of failures. The genocide in Palestine is ongoing. The 2024 encampment did not bring what we hoped would happen, what must happen – divestment. The university's ESG process has proved to be a farce meant to distract the student body, rather than help us achieve change. These statements, although true, form an incomplete picture. Taking a leap into the past, we can envision ourselves in parallel to the students of '68. They lived and fought at the beginning of a protracted struggle, sowing seeds of resistance reaped by students in '88. Like them, we accumulate knowledge; over time, we study our enemy in ever increasing detail. The 2024 student encampments were themselves a lesson on revolution. The renaming of the Marshall Bloom building during the encampment captures the power of remembering, of linking present-day struggles to those of the past.

Lessons on Revolution does more than tell history; it enacts a way of knowing history from below. Its lessons speak not only to the struggle for divestment at LSE, but the movement for anti-colonial liberation at large, across the world. A failure, the play suggests, is never fixed – it is a lesson, a suspended possibility. What we call a revolutionary moment is never just a moment. It is, rather, a constellation of events, stretching backward into the past and forward into the future. The play reminds our student movement that it does not and will not culminate in a deceptive ESG process, a cleared encampment, or a false ceasefire – it continues on and through, sharpened by the lessons revolution has always demanded.

SEE LESSONS ON REVOLUTION AT THE BARBICAN THIS AUTUMN, WEDNESDAY 22 – SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER 2025.


COLOMBIA
HINDS
HALL

"THE ENCAMPMENTS": A TESTAMENT TO STUDENT POWER AND PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

By Eva Verdugo-Raab

What can you do when your university tuition contributes to the genocide of a people, a genocide you can watch livestreamed on your phone? How do you contest such complicity and dismantle the system that sustains it? In April of 2024, after months of protests, students at Columbia University decided to escalate their efforts. They built an encampment on campus to pressure the administration to cut its ties with Israel. The documentary "The Encampments" archives the wave of student protests across the United States, with a particular focus on the Columbia encampment.

Directed by Kei Pritsker and Michael T. Workman, the film is told through the eyes of the students. It follows central figures, most prominently Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian student, who was abducted and detained in an ICE facility for over three months due to his involvement in the protests. The students demanded financial transparency, an academic boycott of Israel, and above all, divestment from companies complicit in the Israeli occupation and genocide of Palestinians.

The film juxtaposes media-driven narratives with footage from inside the encampment. In one sequence, news clips describe the protests as violent. The next shows students chanting and strategising peacefully, driven by joy, grief, and firm moral conviction. One scene shows former Columbia President Minouche Shafik testifying before Congress about antisemitism on campus. Another shows students in all their religious, racial, and ethnic diversity, united in their refusal to have their money invested in the Israeli apartheid state. Only when it becomes clear that a new level of pressure is needed do the students escalate by occupying Hamilton Hall, renaming it Hind's Hall in honour of six-year-old Hind Rajab, killed alongside her family by Israeli forces. The hall itself holds historical significance for the student movement: during the 1985 anti-apartheid protests on campus, students also occupied it and renamed it Mandela Hall. The juxtapositions powerfully expose the distortions that homogenise the students as antisemitic or violent and underline the students' true intention of divestment. That intention becomes even clearer when the documentary takes us, again and again, to Gaza – to burning cities and Palestinians forced to flee bombardment. Against this backdrop, media depictions of students as self-interested, criminal, antisemitic mobs seem not just wrong but simply absurd.

The documentary's most compelling intervention is its narration of continuities in time and space. Travelling back to 1968, it situates the Palestine solidarity encampment within Columbia's protest history. That year, students occupied Hamilton Hall to demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam and the resignation of faculty affiliated with the Jason Division of the Institute for Defence Analyses, which served the Department of Defence. The documentary reminds us that these movements are part of a shared struggle – one against capitalist-driven imperialism and its violent consequences, and for the possibility of dignified lives for all peoples. In doing so, it places today's protests within a longer lineage of revolutionary movements that neither began nor will end with the current students. There is hope in that realisation. To continue a struggle one inherits is to know one does not and will not carry it alone. History shows that student pressure can bring about change. At Columbia, it has previously led to divestment from companies linked to apartheid South Africa, as well as from private prisons and fossil fuels.

At the same time, the documentary foregrounds another continuity: the encampment's place within a global network of protests in solidarity with Palestine. Through interviews and footage of encampments across the United States and demonstrations around the world, the film reveals the movement's internationalist character and the people power that sustains it.

The documentary also portrays the encampments as spaces of collective strategising, solidarity and mutual aid. As a viewer, one becomes immersed in the small details that shaped the Columbia encampment. Every night, the students gathered to hear the latest news from Gaza. Some added music to the encampments' atmosphere, others ran teaching sessions on global liberation struggles or staffed the communal food tent. Mahmoud and another leading student, Sueda, bore the burden of daily negotiations with Columbia's administration. Food and water were always available, thanks to restaurants and shops across New York City donating supplies, weaving themselves into the network of solidarity. Protests outside the campus gates extended the encampment beyond the university's borders. By showing these nuances, the documentary becomes more than just a chronicle of student protest. It reveals the radical imagination underpinning the encampment. Spaces where liberation was not only demanded but lived. Even if only briefly, new ways of being and relating to one another were practised, and the ceiling was raised on what it means to stand up for one another in this world.

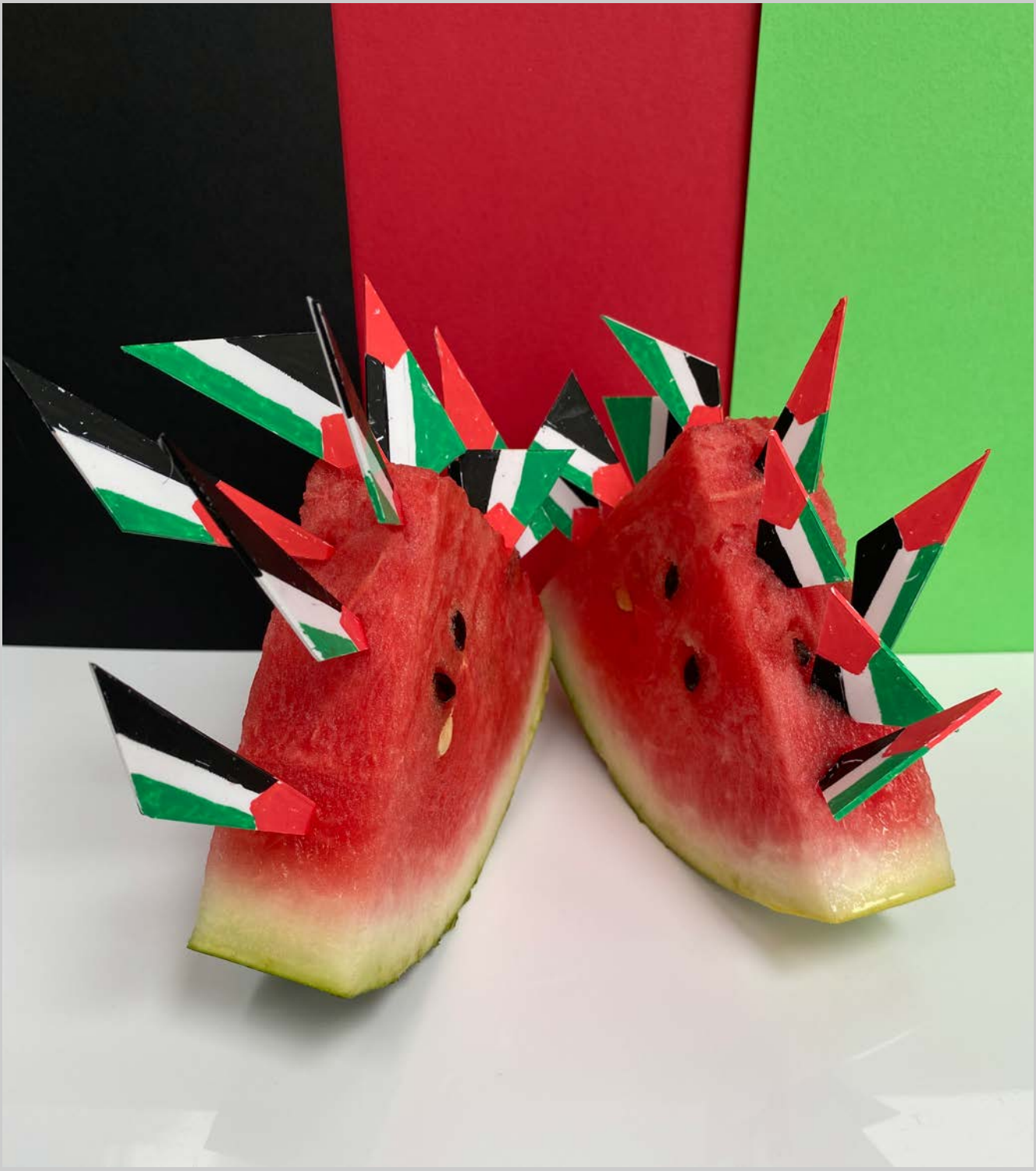
The space the students created stands in stark contrast to their university, which, as the documentary shows, first tried to erase Palestinians by removing any mention of "Palestine" and "Palestinian" from statements after the October 7 attacks, allowing only the word "Hamas." The university still refuses to meet the demands for divestment. It prevented water from reaching the encampment and ultimately called in the NYPD to dismantle it by force. Yet, Columbia can try to erase Palestine all it wants - whether by manufacturing consent through the careful control of language, or by forcefully silencing its students. The reality is that the encampment created a living refusal of such erasure. Through the spatial occupation of the campus and the imaginaries of liberation the students brought into being, Columbia became a symbol of Palestine solidarity and inspired a global student movement. In this sense, "The Encampments" is a renewed wake-up call. Hopelessness and isolation cannot win. Student power is real. What is needed now is more of it.

TRUE COLOURS

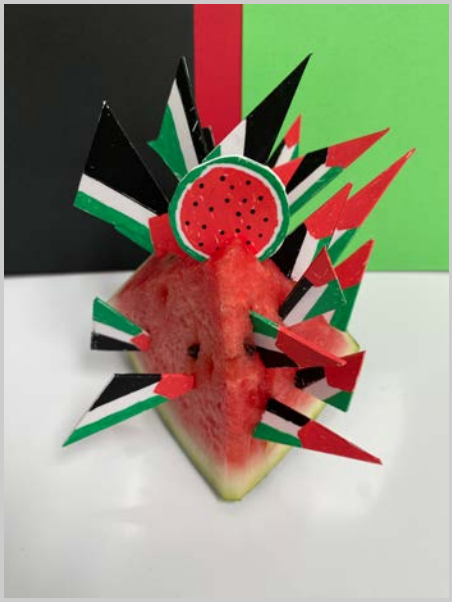


This artwork was sewn in 2011. At that time, I observed women in Jordan hiding their Palestinian origin. This piece has two titles. The first, an English one, True Colors. The second is an Arabic one whose literal translation is the “right to air is preserved”, but actually it means “copyright protected”, حقوق النشر محفوظة. True Colors is a call for those Palestinians who conceal their identity to reveal what is often hidden, what stays under the surface, to openly and clearly say: ‘Yes, we are Palestinians living in Jordan. While we are grateful to be in Jordan, that does not dilute our origin which is under all forms of attack and erasure to serve local and regional neoliberal projects.’ To this effect, the Arabic title asserts that the Palestinian identity is preserved and copyrighted, as the wordنشر means to publish and to hang dry on a line. Wherever we are as diaspora, we remain Palestinian women in exile, airing our identities after cycles of violence, healing, rinsing and repeating.

Noor Abu-Hijeh, MSc Social Policy and Development,
London School of Economics and Political Science (2013).

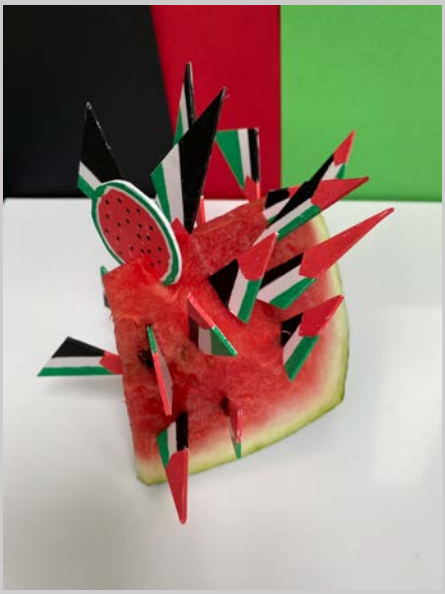


Sunil Kumar
Insurgent Decolonial Educator in Social Policy and Development at LSE



Art forms part of the assessment for Urbanisation and Social Policy in the Global Souths, a Social Policy elective that I offer for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the LSE. They are invited to illustrate their essay with a piece of artwork, a non-textual communication of their visualisation of its subject matter. I often join them in using art to communicate my own sense of injustices and resistance.

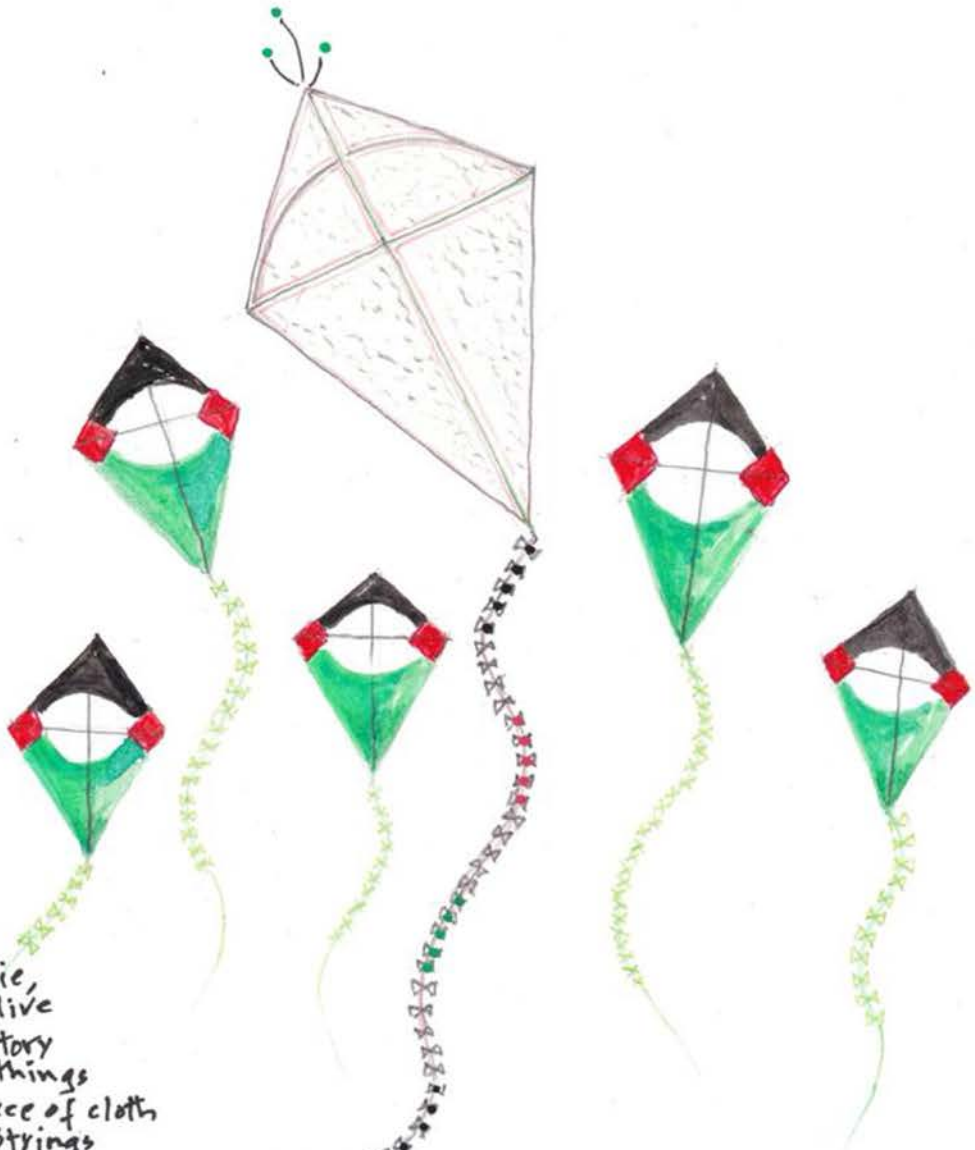
This artwork speaks to the current moment in Gaza, Palestine. Amongst the tons of rubble, there are shards of glass, represented here by assorted white acrylic shaped triangles. The juxtaposition of the white shards of glass with a watermelon, against a background containing the colours of the Palestinian flag, is intended to convey resistance. This idea emanates from my experience of growing up in India where glass shards are often inserted into cement on the top of walls to deter intruders.



The sculptures, entitled, "*Everyday Resistance*", speaks to the current moment in Gaza, Palestine. Amongst the tons of rubble, lie shards of glass, represented here by different sized acrylic triangles - mimicking the property of shattered glass - that bear the colours of the Palestinian flag. The juxtaposition of shards of glass with a watermelon, and set against a background of Palestinian colours, is intended to convey everyday forms of resistance. The idea emanates from my experience of growing up in India where shards of glass are often inserted into cement on the top of walls to deter intruders. Glass is an every day object and in this sculpture, its sharpness also represents resistance, among others, in everyday wit, art, poetry, and song that refers to the more than three-quarters of a century of Palestinian anti-colonial struggle and resistance..

This sculpture also reflects my educational pedagogy and praxis. Undergraduate and postgraduate students taking my elective '*Urbanisation and Social Policy in the Global Souths* in the Department of Social Policy, illustrate their essay with a piece of artwork, a non-textual communication to convery their compassion with the subject matter. In true decolonial fashion, I often join them in the production of such art, these sculpture being an illustration..





If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze -
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself -
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above,
and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love.
If I must die
let it bring hope,
let it be a story

Refaat Alareer (1979 - 2023)
December 2023

"If I must die"
sunil kumar
11 August 2025

RETURN TO PALESTINE: A REFLECTION ON RESISTANCE ARTS

by Darío Karim Pomar Azar

Adapted from a piece originally entitled 'Articulating the unsaid: a review of PalArt Festival 2025', published in Shado Mag

And for all the Palestinians in exile, whether scattered around the world or trapped in besieged refugee camps, what could be more invigorating than keeping the inevitable *return* to a liberated Palestine as our North Star? Indeed, the "right of return" is one of the Palestinian *Thawabit*[1], a set of inalienable rights and core political principles that direct the Palestinian struggle. This allows the struggle to determinedly trudge along towards its goals, despite defeats, death and destruction along the way.

The spatiotemporality of return is intrinsically non-linear and multiple, a cyclicality long represented in Palestinian resistance literature and film. Going back in time is impossible, although there is much to learn from our past, the repository of our mistakes and wins, but most importantly, of accumulated dreams. But return in a material sense is possible. We saw this enacted by the people of Gaza during the short-lived ceasefire, when hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians marched back north to their homes[2], in a display of ferocious steadfastness. These scenes were heartening and emboldening; not only must we hold on to them dearly, we must work towards reenacting them on a mass scale.

But what does this look like? How do we imagine what has been rendered unimaginable by decades of imperial violence? How can we imagine a free, contiguous Palestine when Palestine has been so deformed by settler-colonial occupation? And what can resistance arts do to help us imagine?

At the theatre, I sit down for *Return to Palestine*, an ingeniously choreographed piece of "playback theatre" originally conceived during the Freedom Theatre's annual Freedom Ride[3] (also known as the Freedom Bus).

As the Freedom Theatre troupe made their way around villages, towns and refugee camps in occupied Palestine, they gathered stories of displacement and hardship (as well as of steadfastness and resistance) from these communities and then spent three years shaping and adapting them into what was to become *Return to Palestine*.

The stage is stark and empty, with no props and no costumes. This decision is partially intended to reflect the restrictions placed on the Freedom Theatre itself, which was founded in 2006 within Jenin Refugee Camp, the site of decades of extreme Zionist destruction, siege and displacement. This violence came to a head earlier in 2025, when the IOF stormed and occupied Jenin (as well as other key locales in the occupied West Bank), launching a deadly military offensive[4] that has destroyed Palestinian infrastructure and displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians to date[5]. This latest invasion saw the Freedom Theatre occupied by IOF forces; it is still inaccessible[6]. Even as I write this article, we receive news of more demolished homes in Jenin[7].

A striking feature of *Return to Palestine* is its physicality. Throughout, the seven actors are limited to a small rectangular strip of the stage, evocative of Palestine's "compressed reality". But this small stage allows the actors to command each scene and turn it into a "playful space". Here, the imagination roams free and the actors, nudging the audience along with them, "free [themselves] from [themselves]". The actors' seven bodies turn into one well-oiled machine, in intimate communion with one another as they recreate stories from the Freedom Ride using only their limbs.

I ask Gráinnemir Abualrob and Osama Al Azza about this tactility, and they explain that they view it as an expression of steadfastness, in that they "can keep going when sticking together and holding each other." Having grown up together, this coordination and trust comes as second nature. In other words, it is an act of resistance against spatial restrictions and

attendant attitudes of despair (or "psychological occupation" as Abualrob and Al Azza termed it) widespread across the West Bank. It is the reclamation of a fraught existence, the embodiment of a refugee camp's "own special chaos" and an assertion of Palestinian oneness and unity in the face of hegemonic forces that seek to divide and conquer, both geographically and psychosocially.

This objective is reflected in the play's very title and its plotline. The main character is the child of exiled Palestinian refugees. He returns to Palestine for the first time, and once there, discovers a community that embraces him but also comes face-to-face with the pain and violence that is borne out of occupation.

I ask Abualrob and Al Azza how they interpret return, especially considering how these dynamics were present in their own upbringings. Abualrob is from Jenin, where the Freedom Theatre provided them with valuable tools to navigate queerness in a socially-conservative society and resist Zionist occupation and violence through liberatory forms of cultural expression and community engagement. Al Azza grew up in 'Azza Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, right next to the Apartheid Wall, later moving to Jenin to join the Freedom Theatre. They both now live in exile themselves, in Dublin and London respectively. Indeed, Al Azza emphasises to me the importance of using the term "exile" rather than "diaspora" in reference to all Palestinians unable to return to a free Palestine, explaining that "we should call it as we see it, not how it's imposed on us."

For Abualrob and Al Azza, the right of return now applies to them as well and not only to the refugees of 1948 or 1967. They tell me that, in order to secure this right and act upon it, we must organise our communities with long-term vision; yes, we must stop the genocide by all means necessary, but we must also work towards Palestine's liberation.

Right after *Return to Palestine*, the audience was invited to stay and attend an online talk with Zakaria Zubeidi and Mustafa Sheta, two key figures in the Freedom Theatre's history. We were told that both Zubeidi and Sheta had just recently been released from Zionist occupation prisons as part of the ceasefire deal which saw hundreds of Palestinian prisoners return to their families and communities.

It was only halfway through the talk that I realised that Zubeidi, besides being one of the Theatre's founders, was also one of the famed Palestinian heroes from the Gilboa Prison Break, in which he and five other Palestinian prisoners used a spoon to dig a tunnel and escape[8] Zionist imprisonment. The man-hunt that pursued was keenly followed by all Palestinians, who saw in the prisoners' struggle an undying fervour for achieving freedom and liberation. This fervour is illuminating for the rest of the movement, as we falter and risk giving in to despair.

Both Zubeidi and Sheta expressed how, during their time in prison, all they thought about was the Freedom Theatre: how to portray the prisoners' struggle on stage, how to call for Palestinian unity at home (and beyond) through theatre, how to galvanise Palestinian polity into strategic action.

In a particularly poignant moment, they referenced Walid Daqqa, the famed Palestinian revolutionary[9], who was martyred in prison[10] after being denied medical treatment for his terminal illness and whose body remains in captivity, an example of Zionist necro-carcerality in which a prisoner must complete their sentence even in death. Amongst his many influential political writings from prison, Daqqa had considered how "the imaginative mind creates another reality that bypasses the prison walls"[11]. He notes however: "this should not imply that my writing is a dissociation from my reality inside the prison. On the contrary, as much as it is a creation of textual reality, writing is a methodological tool to deconstruct and make sense of my reality as a prisoner."

Zubeidi put it similarly: "if you cannot free your body, you must free your mind." For him, without access to the Freedom Theatre, he realised he had to "create a theatre within [himself]", a decision that the prison guards confused for psychosis, sending Zubeidi to the medic's office.

Yet, in light of all the odds stacked against us, believing in the ascendance of our struggle and the inevitability of Palestine's

liberation does require a form of psychosis, one we should embrace wholeheartedly. When genocide persists and repression in the imperial core intensifies, it is revolutionary optimism that delivers us from depression and dejection.

Our struggle should not be aestheticised or reduced to a *consumable* artistic project. Instead, we should identify the role that art (like theatre) can play in stitching back together our isolated and fragmented communities and unifying them around a shared vision, a shared strategy, a shared imagination. Art helps us articulate our hopes and then enact them, even if only for a little while, on a stage where we are the masters of our own destinies.

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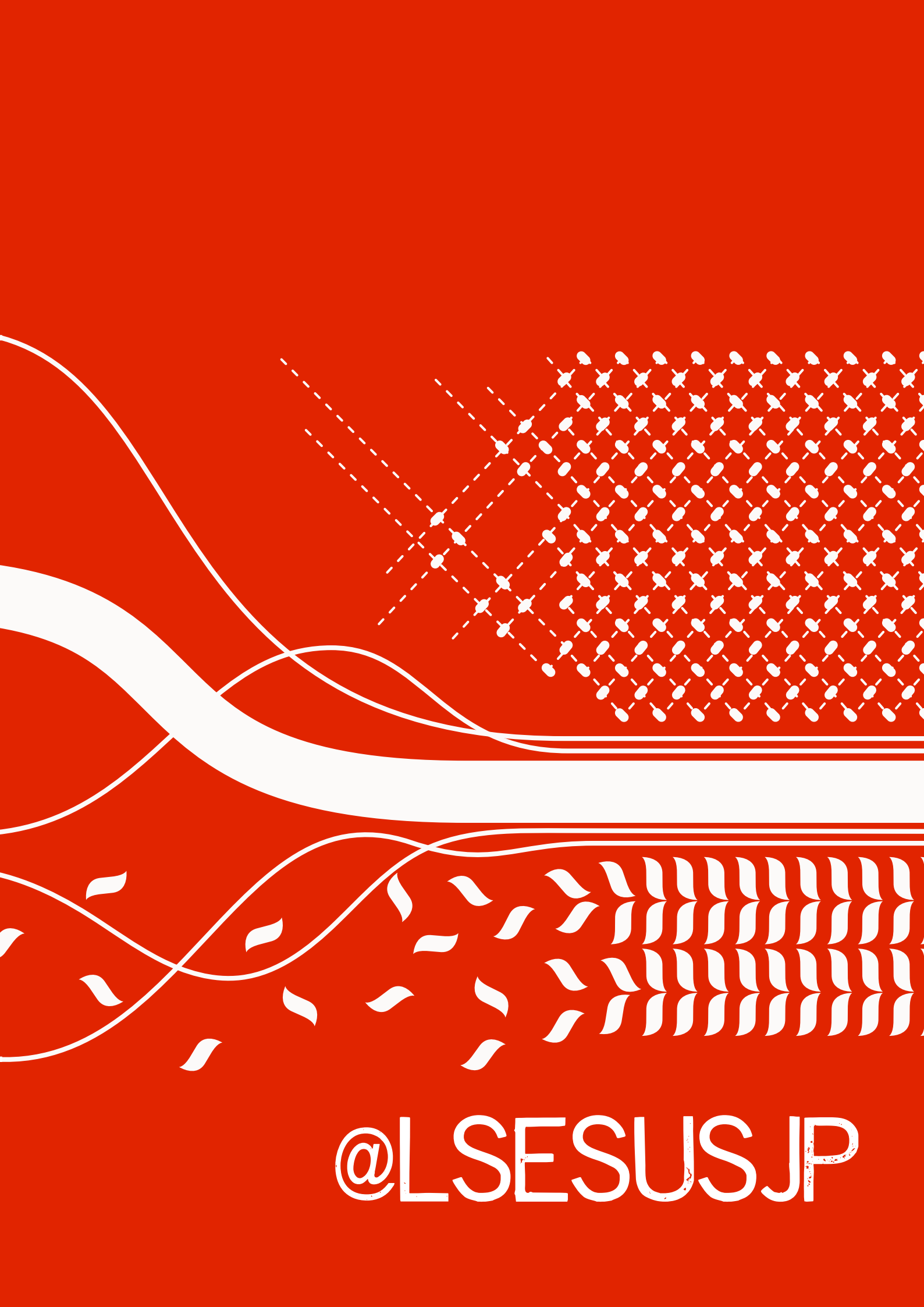
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