



The Dissolution of the Universities: or how do revolutionary teachers teach, after Gaza?*

Richard Hall | @hallymk1 | rhall1@dmu.ac.uk | richard-hall.org

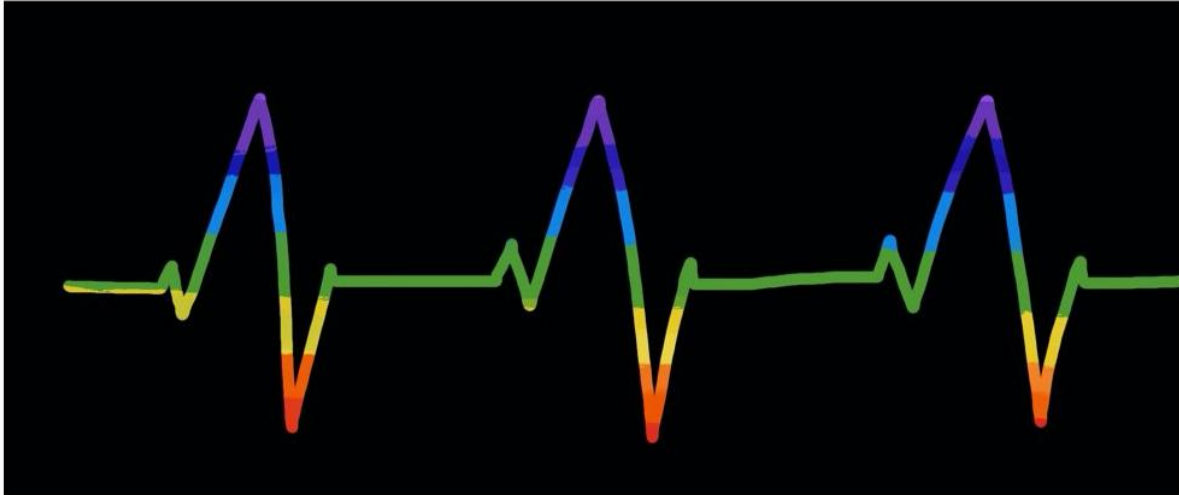
*of course, we are not living after Gaza. We are being asked to
live and work after its revelation



i. Some guiding principles for our time together

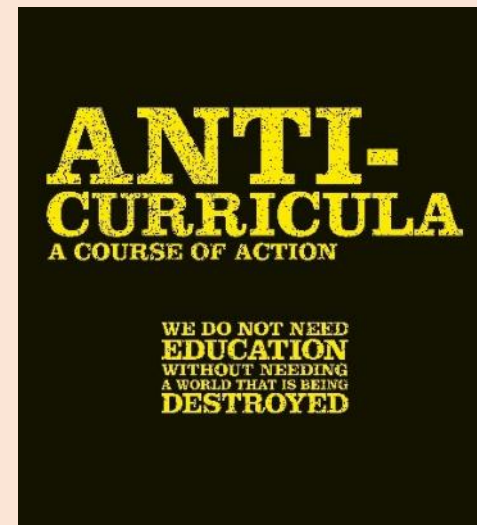
GESTURING TOWARDS DECOLONIAL FUTURES

Home Our collective ▾ Experiments ▾ Publications ▾ GTDF Decks of Cards CIARS

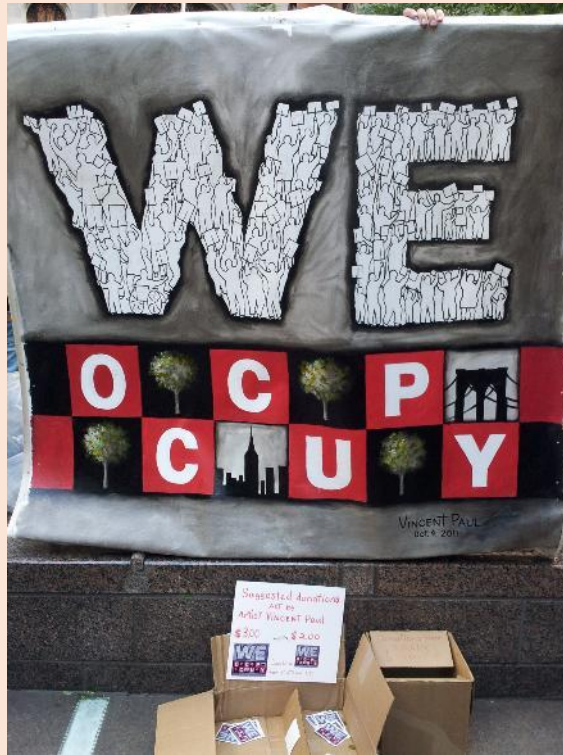


7 STEPS BACK/FORWARD/ASIDE

Trying to bring people together to address local and global challenges, such as climate destabilization or systemic inequalities in times of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity is an enormous challenge in itself. Part of this challenge is that what has worked before in bringing people together is no longer working for many different reasons: reality is much more complex and more materially precarious for most; change is happening fast and differently from before, increasing dissonance between generations; there are more people involved and more diversity at the table, where many different ideas of “forward” compete for a platform (even between and within groups that have historically and systemically been marginalized) and stable authorities and enduring consensus are no longer possible. Another part of the challenge is that what is optimal for the process of learning and unlearning for one group of people (e.g. non-Indigenous, Black and People of Colour/IBPOC people) is often

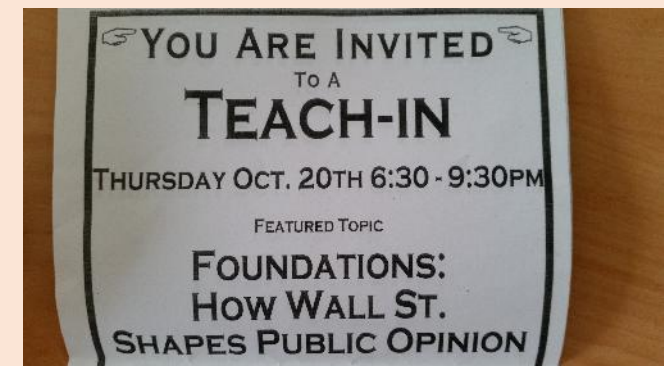


ii. Some historical orientation



This was the promise of transformation through concrete, material action at the level of society, predicated on the general assembly as a participative site of contestation and dialogue.

It was messy, open to interpretation, risking counter-revolution and co-option, but it was also a site of potential and possibility.





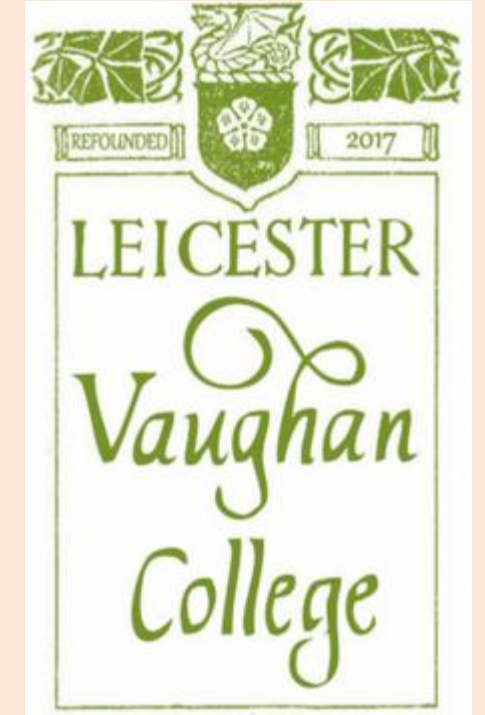
The Social Science Centre, Lincoln

Free Co-operative Higher Education

Organisational documents



The Social Science Centre is a non-hierarchical, unincorporated higher education co-operative. Here are some key documents pertaining to our organisational work.







HomePastPresentFutureMediaEvents

Present

In the UK today, of the 18,000 professors, just 85 are racialised as black, and only 17 of those are racialised and gendered as black women. Despite the links between racialisation and intelligence being disproven, and the pursuit and promotion of equality being a legal obligation for academic institutions, unjust racialised hierarchy persists.

This inequality is also reflected in the curriculum, with White Dominating, Anglocentric assumptions and perspectives often taken for granted in the scholarly texts canonised by the academy.

There are two key campaigns which seek to challenge this.

[Why Isn't My Professor Black?](#)

[Why Is My Curriculum White?](#)

“Assume the Position . . . You Fit the Description”: Psychosocial Experiences and Racial Battle Fatigue Among African American Male College Students

William A. Smith, Walter R. Allen, Lynette L. Danley

First Published December 1, 2007 | Research Article

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207307742>

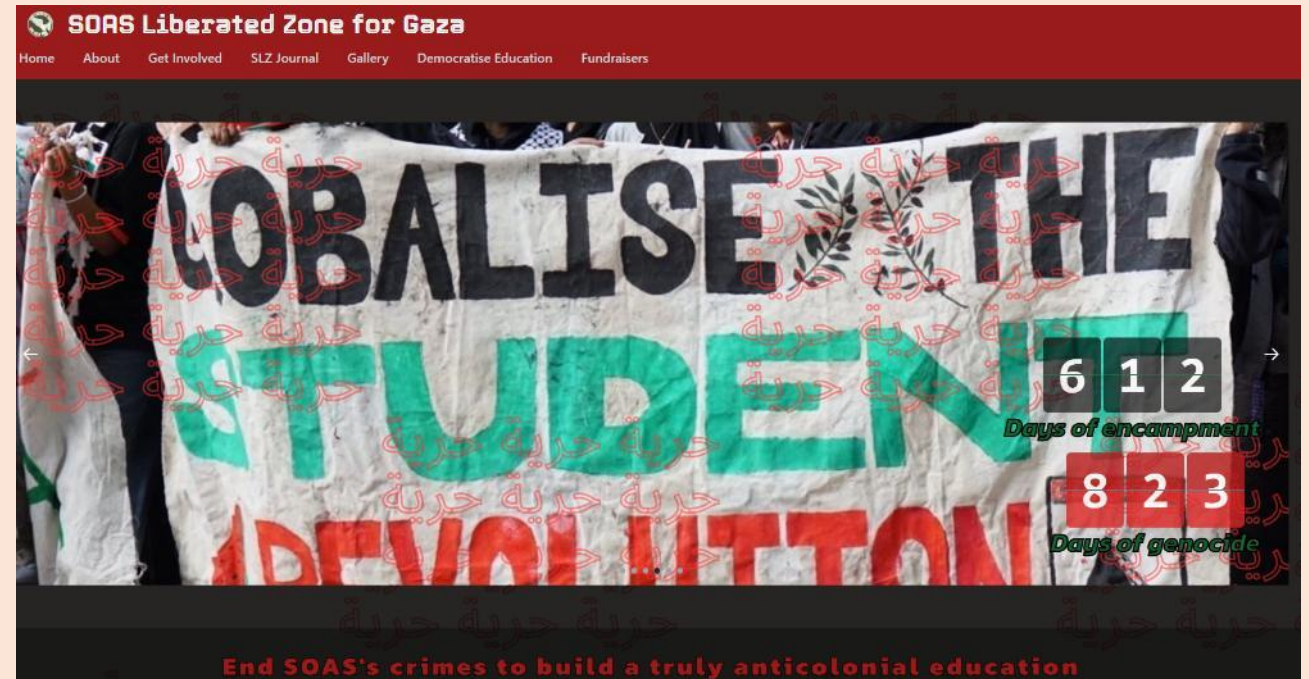
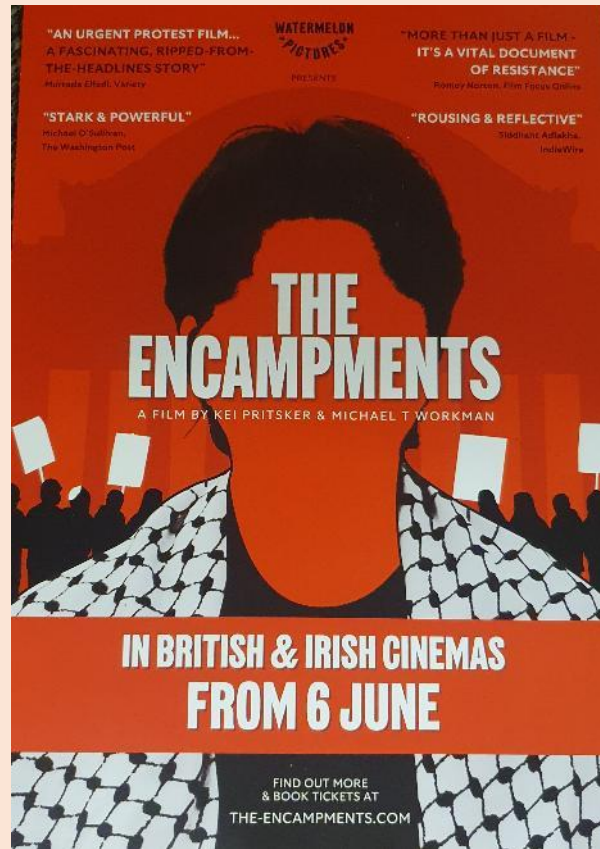


A tale of dissolution: ideological and financial

I think in this movement of national conservatism, what we need more than inspiration, is we need wisdom, and there is a wisdom in what Richard Nixon said approximately 40, 50 years ago. He said, and I quote, 'the professors are the enemy.' (Vance, quoted in Hett 2025)

[t]he Trump administration's approach to the policing of pro-Palestine dissent is ruthless, but not much more than that of universities like Columbia. (Shatz 2025)

University operating models may also need to evolve to become more effective and efficient... it also means hard choices about what universities should stop doing. (UUK 2024)



iii. Sharing our understandings of struggles against the University



'I must begin // Begin what? // The only thing in the world that is worth beginning: // The End of the World, no less.' (Aimé Césaire 1956/1969)

'Our struggle is not *for* the University; it is *against* what the University has become.' (Mike Neary 2011)

- How do you feel about the University?
- What stories do you tell yourself about the University, and why?

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY

COMMON SENSE, MASS INTELLECTUALITY AND THE GENERAL INTELLECT

COMMON SENSE As intellectual workers we prefer to share our work with others inside and outside of the university. As intellectual workers we refuse the fetishised labels of academics and students and engage in teaching, learning and research only in so far as we are able to operate in and against the university. We offer our work as an act of solidarity with those who wish to engage with our ideas. In offering our work as a free gift we recognise the limitations of giving. Reduced from **being** to **having** we are now reduced to **giving**: alienated acts of generosity (i.e. Charity) based on a recognition of the needs of others and an assumption of their incapacity to fulfil those needs (i.e. Anomie). No. Our concept of sharing requires further elaboration. Not **having**, or **giving**, but **doing**. In other words our concept of sharing is based on a recognition of what we all have in common, the basis of which is our ability to **do**. In the Worker-State (i.e. Capitalism), in which all activity is regulated by wage work, doing is reduced to acquiring what has been done by others through the exchange of money (i.e. Poverty). We refer to this understanding of Crisis (i.e. the Violence of Abstraction) as common sense. Common sense is not a network or a matrix, it is not physical or virtual, but a pedagogy or way of knowing, that is elaborated in the lessons learned from the history of class struggle. Common sense is the basis of our intellectual not-working (i.e. Doing).

MASS INTELLECTUALITY As intellectual workers we prefer to share our work with others inside and outside of the university. As intellectual workers we refuse the fetishised concept of widening participation, and engage with teaching, learning and research only so far as we are able to dissolve the institutional boundaries of the university. Not mass education or education for the masses but mass intellectuality. Mass education is based on the assumption that people are stupid and must be made not-stupid (i.e. Educated). Mass intellectuality recognises that education maintains the population in a condition of stupidity (i.e. Intelligence Quotient) regulated through examinations and other forms of humiliations (i.e. Grades and Assessments). Mass intellectuality is based on our common ability to do, based on our needs and capacities and what needs to be done. What needs to be done raises doing from the level of the individual to the level of society. In the society of doing, based on what needs to be done, my own needs are subsumed with the needs of others and I become invisible (i.e. Free).

GENERAL INTELLECT As intellectual workers we prefer to share our work with others inside and outside of the university. As intellectual workers we refuse the fetishised concept of the knowledge society and engage in teaching, learning and research only in so far as we can re-appropriate the knowledge that has been stolen from the workers that have produced this way of knowing (i.e. Abundance). In the society of abundance the university as an institutional form is dissolved, and becomes a social form or knowledge at the level of society (i.e. The General Intellect). It is only on this basis that we can knowingly address the global emergencies with which we are all confronted.

The University of Utopia
No time and no place



OUR EMPHASIS IS ON EDUCATION:

within the reality of our social relations, confined by the struggle of daily life, against the hierarchical relations between institutions, academics and students.

WE HAVE BEEN OBJECTIFIED:

as Teachers and Learners. These are illusory concepts. Sharing is to resist the commodification of our lives and escape the measures of Capital, its controls of 'quality' and its life-support machine of 'efficiency'.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF SHARING

is the absorption of sharing into the alienating processes of the institution. As a flight for freedom, it is in vain. The Crisis remains.

SHARING OUR WORK

in this way is an act of communal production. There is no exchange, no gift, simply a flow of contributions to the commons. Every factory, every street, every village, every school is a potential commune, a site of communal production, seeking to dissolve the question of needs.

THE DESIRE FOR COMMUNISM

is a productive desire that finds nothing lacking. We express this desire by sharing, understood as a social force, or a curricula of action against a world that is being destroyed.

WE SHARE OUR WORK

in education so that one day we might become free through education. It can feel like a hopeless act of hope yet as a conscious act of anti-alienation, sharing can be emancipatory.

SHARING BRINGS CURRICULA TO LIFE

as a flow of ideas, an unstoppable, irrepressible mass intellectuality that recognises no disciplines and responds to every act of discipline.

THE LOCUS OF STRUGGLE

is not exchange but production. In the sphere of production, sharing as a revolutionary act becomes a recognition of what is common. There is nothing revolutionary about acts of exchange.

EXISTING BORDERS ARE IRRELEVANT

when we recall the humanity in sharing, the joy of giving and receiving, the immaterial wealth of knowledge that already exists, and the pleasure of creating social relations that resist the organising principle of private property and wage labour.

TO SHARE IS TO CRITIQUE

the present state of things. The conditions of this critique result from the premises now in existence. Sharing is the negation of our negation.

iv. Analysing the potential
for alternatives



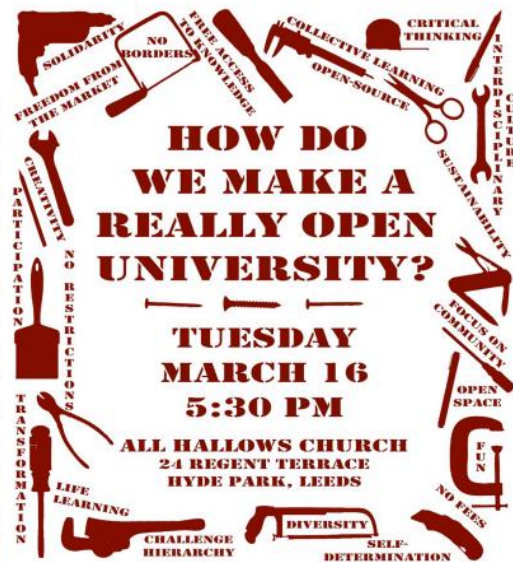
reallyopenuniversity.org

THE SAUSAGE FACTORY

ROU Launch

The public launch of ROU took place on March 2nd, when over fifty students, staff and members of the larger community came together to discuss, 'What is a Really Open University?' This group was brought together by a recognition of the need for alternatives to the current educational system which puts everything - teaching, learning, our daily lives - up for sale, and makes efficiency drives such as the current budget cuts seem inevitable. Through a collective and participatory process, this group developed several vision statements about what education without restraints would look like. While not completely polished, these statements provide a point of departure for the creation of a ROU:

- The ROU is a process of challenging education and society as we know it. We imagine a world in



- We believe that it should be free environments should be mobile, and and open. As such, it should be knowledge should not be bound by without borders between ourselves any walls of the classroom. Spatial and the wider world. Not fixed to a accessibility extends to other scales – particular location (geographical or knowledge should be accessible ideological), but committed to allow virtually and education should use critical thought for the purposes of collaborative and open media forms.

On March 2nd a group of students, staff and members of the larger community came together to envision what a really open university would look like.

At the next meeting on March 15th, we will discuss the implementation of the really open university and start building alternatives.

Please join us.

enrol@reallyopenuniversity.org

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The Abolition of the University

Towards a University of the Common: Reimagining the University in Order to Abolish It with the Really Open University



Constitution of
The Social Science Centre, Lincoln
Adopted on 3rd May 2011

General

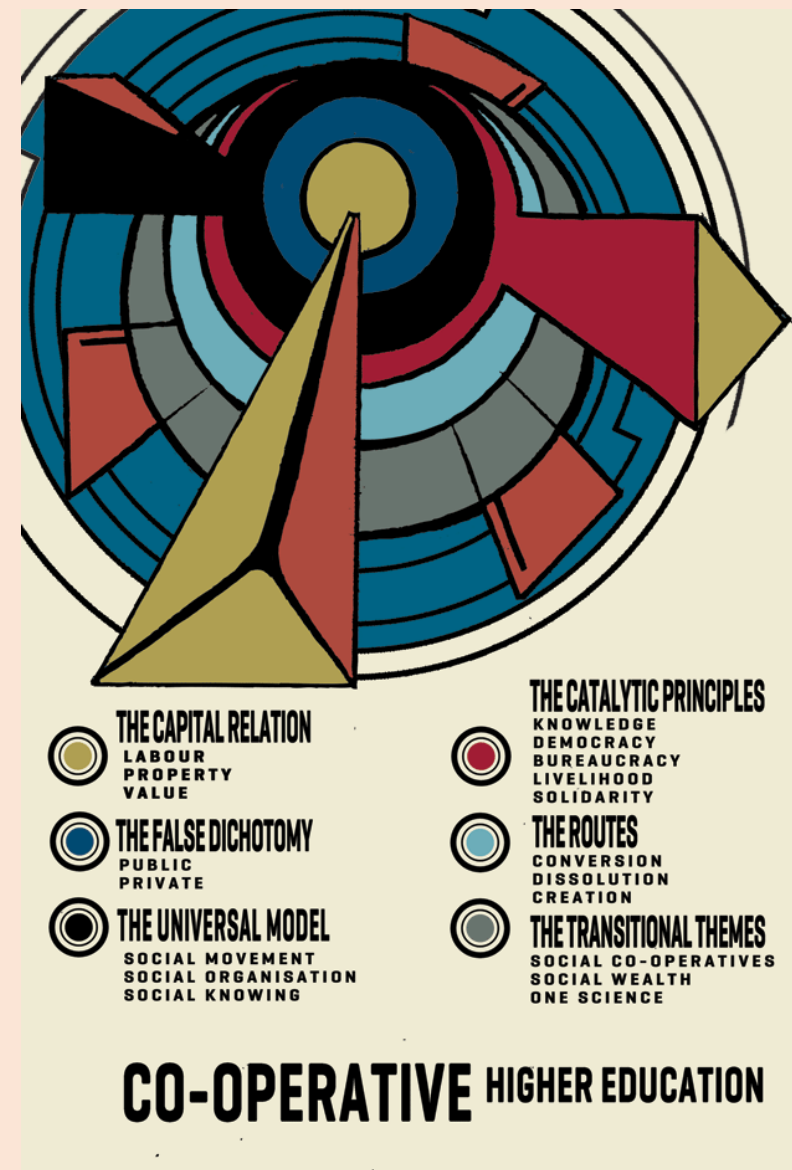
1. The name of the Co-operative shall be The Social Science Centre, Lincoln

Purpose

2. The purpose of the Co-operative is to pursue its objects as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to realise their common needs and aspirations for higher education through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Objects

3. The objects of the Co-operative shall be
 - (a) To make available higher education in the social sciences.
 - (b) To facilitate the participation of its members in higher education through mutually beneficial activities





The SOAS Liberated Zone (SLZ) is a student led site of anti colonial struggle against SOAS university's complicity in the ongoing colonisation of the Palestinian people. We work to end SOAS's living colonial legacy and build solidarity organising in service of people's liberation and a truly decolonial education.

- ▼ **Disclose** the details of all University investments, funding streams and research partnerships, and commit to doing so on an annual basis.
- ▼ **Divest** from companies complicit in Israel's occupation and denial of Palestinian rights, including Accenture, Albemarle, Alphabet, Barclays, Microsoft, Newton Investment Management, RELX, and Sony, and commit to not reinvesting.
- ▼ **Terminate** SOAS' banking and lending arrangement with Barclays.
- ▼ **Cut ties** with the University of Haifa and commit to boycotting all Israeli academic institutions.
- ▼ **Commit** to supporting Palestinian education and the rebuilding of Gaza's higher education institutions. Following the priorities of The Emergency Committee for Universities in Gaza. Read more at gazauniversities.org
- ▼ **Guarantee** the rights of students and staff to free expression and end the targeted repression of Palestine solidarity activism on campus. Revoke the protest 'guidelines for students'.
- ▼ **Publicly call** for the UK government to implement an immediate arms embargo and sanctions on Israel, based on the recognition that it is a genocidal settler colony.



v. Founding principles for an alternative, beyond the university

Are these possibilities or experiments enriched by the Gestures offered by the [Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures](#) collective?

What new questions about the future of the University might emerge?

What key questions do you wish to focus upon, perhaps which articulate a single, key starting point for your own praxis?



Students in occupation in 2010 and encampments in 2024 drew our attention to this. They asked us to remember, bear witness, belong, tell stories, honour, in ways that are very different from those articulated by the professional and managerial class that dominates the institution (or the networks that they are embedded within).

We do not have to be dulled and distracted by a meagre existence, or to collude in numbing ourselves to a pathetic existence within a limited and limiting horizon.



The University is in crisis because it *is* the crisis.

Our desires must shift towards dissolution or sublation as a materialised, negative critique of the wrongness that we face; this is never simply destruction, rather a dissolving of bonds between things, such that they might be resolved through a new appreciation, or a new metabolic function.

