

Appendix 3: University of Edinburgh and the Question of Palestine: Balfour's Imperial Legacy and its Afterlife¹

Part I:

Historical Overview of the University of Edinburgh and the Question of Palestine

1. Race, Settler Colonialism and the Question of Palestine
2. UoE and the Question of Palestine: Underpinning Archival Research
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Part II:

Balfour's Legacy and Imperial Afterlife: Past as Present

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2. 'Balfour's University': Encampment and the Student Hunger Strike
3. (Not) Voting on Divestment

¹ Note that Appendix 3 should be read in conjunction with the main report, entitled 'Decolonised Transformations: Confronting the University of Edinburgh's History and Legacies of Enslavement and Colonialism' (2025).

Part I

1. Race, Settler Colonialism and The Question of Palestine²

The Balfour Declaration, produced and signed in 1917 by Arthur James Balfour, inaugurated a century long racial project of imperialism and settler colonialism inside of Palestine. As such, it has come to be recognised as a constitutive moment of settler colonialism and race-making in the region. As scholars of Palestine and Israel have insisted, we might understand this legacy of race-making beginning not with what is said but what is absented, which operates at the level of both *form* and *content*. At the level of form, there is a scant official documentation regarding the precise origins of the declaration. While there are many competing theories behind its production and rationale, Sahar Huneidi has argued that there is a lack of records on the “history of the negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration” (Huneidi, 33). In fact, when Balfour himself was asked for further details around its process, by leading members of the Middle East Department of Britain’s Colonial Office (1921-1923), Balfour admitted to “bad memory” and expressed regret that Sir Mark Sykes had died as he “had the whole thing at his finger ends.” (cited in Huneidi, 1998, 33). Given the meticulous and obsessive nature of record keeping under the British empire, the dearth of record around the production and process of the declaration seems a remarkable omission. The casualness upon which the fate of a people and the dispossession of a nation are signed off in a sixty-seven-word memorandum indeed reveals how little Palestine’s history and future mattered to British empire and Zionist leaders alike. As put in the clearest of racial terms by Edward Said himself, “[h]istorically, we have been regarded as a population that is essentially disposable.” (Said 1986, 130).

With respect to content, as a number of historians of Palestine Studies have astutely theorised, the most rudimentary denial of Palestinian personhood does not begin with the inception of the Israeli state but in the signing of this so-called promise. As Sherene Seikaly (2016) has theorised, Palestinian political rights became possible through the signing of the declaration, which came to define Palestinians “by who they were not,” while rendering an incoming Jewish settler society a “national home” with rights as an “ethno-national category in Palestine” (Seikaly 5-6, 2016). It’s of noteworthy interest that, in an earlier draft of this declaration, Balfour goes as far as to declare

² Parts of this section appear in Vadasaria, Shaira. 2025. “The Racial Question of Palestine and the Question of Anti-Racism in Palestine.” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, April, 1–23. doi:10.1080/0377919X.2025.2488782.

Jewish people a Jewish race.³ It was not uncommon for the language of race to feature in colonial doctrine. By this time, 19th century racial science had already come to solidify taxonomies of racial difference. Ideas about race at this moment were not predicated on biology alone but on assumptions about cultural and religious difference – which came to determine the calculus upon which political rights and in particular, rights to sovereignty could be declared and the capacity for ‘modern progress’ determined. This kind of race-thinking and racial discourse becomes evidenced further in response to more institutional efforts by Arab delegations to reverse the declaration. Britain’s own Colonial Office (in particular, the Middle East Department set up in 1921 under the new appointment of colonial secretary, Sir Winston Churchill) thought of Palestinians in such derogatory ways that they outright rejected the first Arab delegation to discuss the Balfour Declaration, which was set to take place at the Cairo Conference in March 1921.

In a memorandum published by Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh, one of the heads of the Middle East Department, any reconsideration of the Balfour Declaration is dismissed outright, declaring it already a *chose jugée*. As Sahar Hunedi insists, this critical period during the years leading up to the inception of British Mandate might have allowed for the reversibility of the declaration had it not been further entrenched by the Middle East Department. In unambiguously racialised terms, Shuckburgh responds to the Arab delegation as those that were “a hopeless body to deal with...very slow of understanding” and “Orientals” who-“will understand an order” (cited in Huneidi, 1998). Not unlike the treatment of Palestinians under the US empire today, this racially infantilising but quintessential imperial discourse highlights just how little intellectual capacity the British saw in Palestinians at the time to determine sovereign control of their own nation. This formative iteration of race-thinking became the legal blueprint of what would later become the partition plan and settler colonial structure of Israel today, demarcated under UN resolution 181. Indeed, 1917 marks a moment whereby the aspirations of Jewish colonisation in Palestine is recognised as a viable, lucrative and desired outcome for the British empire and Europe’s internal ‘other’, the Ashkenazim, despite the detriment it would have on an existing Palestinian society (Muslim, Christian and Jewish alike). This juridical framework of erasure (Erakat 2019) predicated on ideas about racial difference consequently set in motion a settler colonial process for the partitioning of a land based upon these moral, social, and religious categories, which took fuller effect thirty years later through the proposed partition plan of the UN Resolution 181. It is noteworthy that this resolution was rejected by Palestinian leadership at the time and only partially accepted by Zionist leadership who sought further parts of the land, which they took by military force resulting in; what is often referred to in Palestinian lexicon as the *Nakba* (“catastrophe”): the process by which in 1947-1948, 531 Palestinian villages were destroyed, 11 urban neighbourhoods were emptied, and 122 Palestinian localities were expelled

³ The earlier draft of the Balfour Declaration is cited in Samuel Landman’s “Origins of the Balfour Declaration: Dr. Hertz’s Contributions.” London: E. Goldston, 1944. Retrieved from the Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

at gun point. In total, approximately 750 000 Palestinians were forced to leave their homes and villages through methods of massacre and forced displacement (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007, Abdo and Masalha 2018). 1917 initiates the beginning of a new racial order in Palestine, predicated first and fore on the attempted erasure of Palestinian personhood, their recognition of the land rights and rights to self-determination as an Indigenous society. In short, we might read this moment as a key moment in the racial formation of settler colonialism in Palestine that sets up a century long imperial-settler colonial project in the region, which has caused immeasurable death and destruction.

In what follows, we present a set of research materials on Balfour and his racial and imperial legacy, collected from the University of Edinburgh Library, Archive and Manuscript Collections; the National Library of Scotland; National Records of Scotland; Balfour in Palestine: Pictures and Videos; Contemporary UoE community mobilisation events; and a reconstruction of the Divestment Movement.

2. UoE and the Question of Palestine: Underpinning Archival Research

2a) University of Edinburgh Library, Archive and Manuscript Collections

Allenby, Edmund
Balfour, Arthur James
Geddes, Patrick
History of the UoE
Newspapers
Universities of the British Empire
University Court, Senate and Accounts

2b) National Library of Scotland

Selection on Arthur James Balfour and Edinburgh Imperial University during his
Chancellorship

2c) National Records of Scotland

Arthur James Balfour, Zionism, Palestine, Middle East
Arthur James Balfour and Eugenics
Arthur James Balfour and Scottish Colonisation Scheme
Arthur James Balfour and Scottish Universities

2d) Balfour in Palestine: Pictures and Videos

Arthur James Balfour in Palestine, 1925 (Library of the Congress, selection)
Arthur James Balfour in Palestine, 1925 (videos)

2e) A Palestinian Address to Balfour: In honour of truth, memory, and justice – Dr Salman Abu Sitta's Address to Balfour at the University of Edinburgh on the Centenary of British Mandate – November 2022

2f) Balfour's archive of gestures: *Balfour Reparations 2023-2043*

2a. UoE Library, Archive and Manuscript Collections⁴

Allenby, Edmund

Letter declining to stand as University Rector. Identifier: [Coll-1158](#).

Programme for the Rectorial Address of Lord Allenby, 1936. [CA2/281/20](#).

Programme for the Rectorial Address of Lord Allenby, 1936. [EUA CA2/212/3](#).

He went to France in 1914, and there continued his glorious record; 1915 saw him in command of the 5th Army Corps.

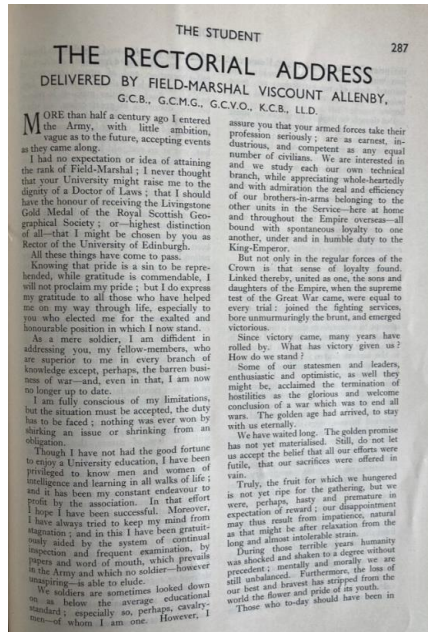
In June 1917 he received notification that he had been selected to take over the Egyptian Command. His name, transcribed by the natives as Alla Nebi, or "Prophet of God," was not a little applicable. This proved to be a turning-point of the war and beginning of that campaign which brought about the ultimate fall of the Ottoman rule in Palestine.

His entry into Jerusalem has become legendary. He took the Holy City, not as an arrogant conqueror but as one respecting the place which was the Cradle of Judaism and Christianity, and a shrine of Islam.

Rectorial Elections and Correspondence, Vol I (Field Marshall Allenby, Stanley Baldwin, Earl Beatty, Winston Churchill, Lord Cunningham, Alexander Fleming), 1919-1954. Identifier: [EUA IN1/ADS/SEC/A/7/197](#).



⁴ We would like to thank Daryl Green (Associate Director, Heritage Collections, Centre for Research Collections), Rachel Hosker (University Archivist and Research Collections Manager), and all the staff at CRC for the incredible support to the archival research. We would also like to thank the School of Social and Political Science and the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences for their constant support to the research.



The Student, Edinburgh University Magazine. [EUA IN20/PUB](#).
 Vol XXXII, no. 2, Oct 1935, (Rectorial appointment)
 Vol XXXII, no. 10, May 1936 (Rectorial address)

Wintersgill, Donald, *The Rectors of the University of Edinburgh 1859-2000* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2005)

Balfour, Arthur James

The Balfour collection included an anonymous portrait taken down at the beginning of 2024.



Balfour, Arthur James, 1st Earl of Balfour, 1848-1930 (politician and statesman).

<https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/agents/people/289>

Border Leicester Ewe, 1870s-1930s. Coll-1434/1739.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/25665

Letter to James Cossar Ewart from Frederick Sydney Parry, 29 June 1899. Coll-14/9/5/28.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/19296

Letter to Arthur James Balfour from Professor Alexander Crum Brown, 04 July 1904. Coll-

14/9/9/70. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/19571

Letters from Arthur Balfour, 1906-1907. Coll-11/E1.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/201699

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 02 May 1907. Coll-411/1/1/L711.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22169

Letter to James Cossar Ewart from Arthur James Balfour, 12 June 1912. Identifier: Coll-

14/9/18/42. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/20118

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 20 February 1918. Coll-

411/1/1/L712. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22170

Letter to James Cossar Ewart from Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour, 02 January 1920. Identifier: Coll-14/9/26/1.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/20327

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 12 January 1927. Coll-

411/1/1/L713. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22171

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 14 January 1927. Coll-

411/1/1/L714. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22172

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from A. Balfour, 26 October 1927. Coll-411/1/1/L716.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22174

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 16 February 1929. Coll-

411/1/1/L715. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22173

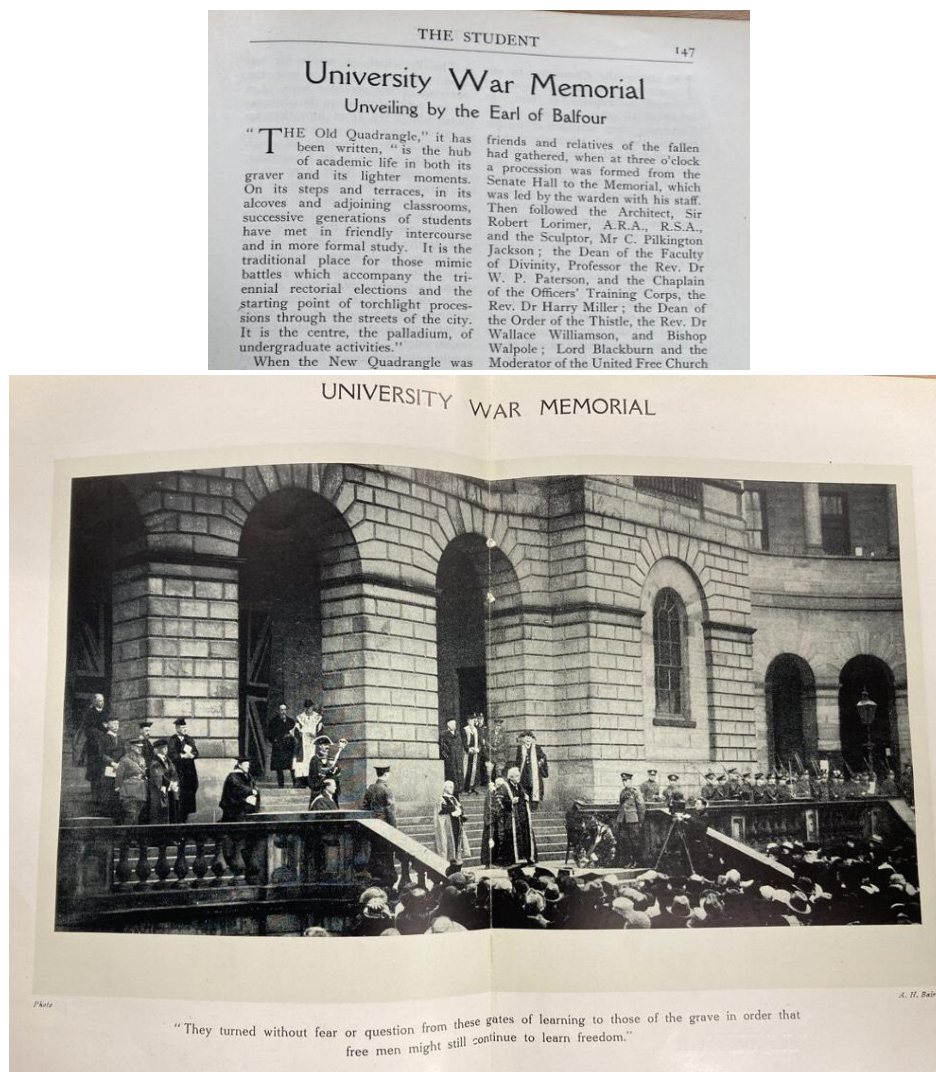
Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Betty Balfour, 01 April 1930. Coll-411/1/1/L723.

https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22181

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Betty Balfour, 14 June 1931. Coll-411/1/1/L724.
https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22182

Letter to Sir Donald Francis Tovey from Arthur James Balfour, 02 February 1935. Coll-411/1/1/L717. https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/22175

The Student, Edinburgh University Magazine. [EUA IN20/PUB](#). Vol XIX, no. 7, 1 March 1923 (War memorial)



The Student, Edinburgh University Magazine. [EUA IN20/PUB](#). April 1930 (editor obituary for Balfour, celebrating the "Palestinian Note")

The Passing of Arthur

By THE EDITOR

ARTHUR JAMES, First Earl of Balfour, is dead. He had sat in Parliament under the leadership of Disraeli, and he had led in turn the House of Commons and the Opposition, with Mr Gladstone facing him on the other side of the table. He had lived to be Prime Minister of Britain, and in what were among the most critical years of our national history he played a great and distinguished part in British counsels. He it was upon whom rested the responsibility for the drafting of the Palestinian Note. It was he who led the British delegation at the Washington Naval Conference. It was to him that his colleagues turned for advice in the drafting of that communique on the subject of the War Debt which has since become famous as the Balfour Note, and which is still the basis for settlement of the inter-Ally Debts. It was Lord Balfour who, as recently as 1926, drew up the memorandum on the constitution of the Empire which embodied in its clauses recognition of the complete autonomy of the Dominions. For more than half a century of public life he rendered distinguished services to this country and to the Empire. His death has removed from our midst the most illustrious figure in the public life of the British Empire, if not of the world.

and a patriotism which had faith as well as love in its compound, and which was resolved to leave, as it has in fact left, a Britain greater and nobler than it found. The King, writing of the national sorrow, has said, "I shall treasure his memory as a lifelong friend, a great and charming personality, a wise and trusted counsellor." From all sides have come golden tributes to the universal esteem and veneration in which he, the greatest of our post-war Elder Statesmen, was held. His wisdom, his courage, his personal charm, his great intellectual gifts have given him such a place of affection and reverence in the mind of the country at large as is not held by any of our public men to-day. One of Britain's most eminent publicists has written, "When all else is left out of account, there remains the inspiring memory of the greatest gentleman we shall ever know — of a courage inflexible, of a heart incorruptible, of a character without blemish, of a life without reproach."

* * *

How it may well be asked, did a man, seemingly

History of UoE

Logan Turner, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 1883-1933 (Edinburgh, 1933)

University of Edinburgh Journal. EUA.P.5.

Geddes, Patrick

Official UoE page. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/people/plaques/geddes>

Patrick Geddes Collection. [Coll-1167](#).

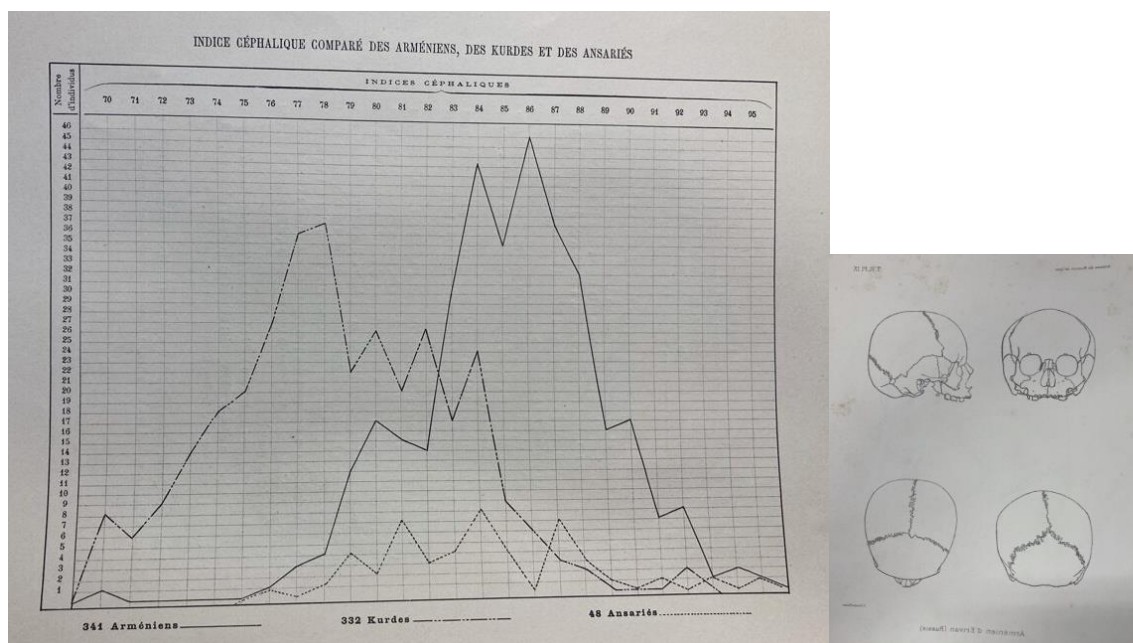
The Cities and Town Planning Exhibitions, 1831 – 1917. [Coll-1167/A](#)

Patrick Geddes in India, 1869-1924. [Coll-1167/G](#).

Patrick Geddes in Palestine (including planning of Hebrew University and colonies), 1910-1925. [Coll-1167/H](#).



Patrick Geddes in the Middle East (including skull measurements), c. 1877 – 1919. [Coll-1167/I](#).



Geddes Related Material, 1870-1990. [Coll-1167/K](#).

Newspapers (Arthur James Balfour, Patrick Geddes, Edmund Allenby, UoE and empire, racial thinking)

[The Scotsman](#), 1891-1936

[Manchester Guardian](#), 1891-1936

INTERNATIONAL EUGENICS CONGRESS: MR BALFOUR ON
The Scotsman (1860-1920); Jul 25, 1912; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Scotsman
pg. 8

INTERNATIONAL EUGENICS CONGRESS.

MR BALFOUR ON HEREDITY AND FITNESS.

AN inaugural banquet was held at the Hotel Cecil last night in connection with the first International Eugenics Congress which is being held in London this week. Major Leonard Darwin (president) occupied the chair, and there was an influential gathering, numbering nearly 500 guests, including Mr A. J. Balfour, the Bishop of Birmingham, the Norwegian and Greek Ministers, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, the Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Winterton, Lord and Lady Aberconway, Sir William Ramsay, Mrs Alec Tweedie, and a large number of British and foreign delegates.

JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY: EDINBURGH ARCHITECTS APPOINTED
The Scotsman (1921-1950); Apr 16, 1925; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Scotsman
pg. 7

JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY

EDINBURGH ARCHITECTS APPOINTED.

A TELEGRAM from Jerusalem was received in Edinburgh yesterday stating that Prof. Patrick Geddes and Mr Frank C. Mears have been appointed consulting superintendent architects for the Balfour-Einstein Institute of Mathematics and Physics and for the Wolffsohn building to house the Jewish National Library. Both buildings form part of the new University of Jerusalem.

LORD BALFOUR LEAVES FOR PALESTINE: THE ARAB THREAT
The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); Mar 16, 1925;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer
pg. 9

LORD BALFOUR LEAVES FOR PALESTINE.

THE ARAB THREAT.

The Earl of Balfour left Victoria Station, London, yesterday morning for Jerusalem, where he will open the new Jewish University on April 1. He declined to make any statement on the reported Arab threat to "strike" when he arrived in Palestine. "It is so early in the morning," he added, smiling.

LORD BALFOUR IN JERUSALEM: ARAB "MOURNING"
The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); Mar 26, 1925;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer
pg. 9

LORD BALFOUR IN JERUSALEM.

ARAB "MOURNING" IN PROTEST.

JERUSALEM, WEDNESDAY.
Lord Balfour arrived here to-day, having motored from Ludd to Government House, where he is the guest of Sir Herbert Samuel.

In the old city in the mixed districts the Jewish shops remained closed, while in the Jewish quarter shops were half-closed. Some Arabs are wearing black ribbons. The headquarters of the Arab Committee is draped in mourning. Everything is quiet.

Arabs, both Mohammedan and Christian, closed their shops and ceased work as a protest against the Balfour declaration.—Reuter.

Universities of the British Empire

The Empire Review. London. Official Report of the Allied Colonial Universities. vol VI, 1904.

OFFICIAL REPORT
OF THE
ALLIED COLONIAL UNIVERSITIES DINNER.

On the evening of July 10, the Allied Colonial Universities dinner took place at the Hotel Cecil. The Prime Minister presided, and the guests included, in addition to the university delegates, many heads of colleges, and men prominent in educational and scientific work. The more important of the learned societies sent their presidents, and the different departments of State their chief permanent officials. Every profession was represented, and among the company were bishops, judges, eminent physicians and surgeons, leading lawyers, Royal Academicians, men in the front rank of literature and journalism, as well as several members of both Houses of Parliament, and many graduates and undergraduates of Colonial universities. In all over 400 guests were present. The thanks of the Committee are due to those great-minded men whose generosity made possible so unique an Imperial gathering.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH.

After the customary loyal toasts had been duly honoured, the Chairman rose to propose the toast of the evening, "The Universities of the King's Over-Sea Dominions." He said :—

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

We here are, if I may venture to say so, a gathering remarkable in the individual capacity of the members who compose it. But I think we are still more remarkable taken in connection with the central idea which has brought us together. It is not merely, or simply, or chiefly that there are in this room representatives of scholarship, of science, of all the great spheres of activity in which modern thought is indulging itself. It is that we are here representing what will turn out to be, I believe, a great alliance of the greatest educational instruments in the Empire—an alliance of all the universities that, in an increasing measure, are feeling their responsibilities, not merely for training the youth which is destined to carry on the traditions of the British Empire, but also to further those great interests of knowledge, scientific research, and culture without which no Empire, however materially magnificent, can really say that it is doing its share in the

Universities Bureau of the British Empire., and Universities Bureau of the British Empire.
"Second Congress of the Universities of the Empire, 1921. : Report of Proceedings." London: G. Bell and Sons, 1921

Universities Bureau of the British Empire, "Third Congress of the Universities of the Empire, 1926: Report of Proceedings" London: G. Bell, 1926.

Universities Bureau of the British Empire, "Fourth Congress of the Universities of the Empire, 1931: Report of Proceedings." London: Pub. for the Universities Bureau of the British Empire by G. Bell and Sons, 1931

Universities Bureau of the British Empire, "Fifth Quinquennial Congress of the Universities of the Empire, 1931: Report of Proceedings." London: Pub. for the Universities Bureau of the British Empire by G. Bell and Sons, 1936

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SECOND CONGRESS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF THE EMPIRE

British Commonwealth

1921

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

EDITED BY
ALEX HILL, O.B.E., M.A., M.D.

AND PUBLISHED FOR THE UNIVERSITIES BUREAU
OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

LONDON
G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.
1921

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University Court and Senate

UoE, Minutes of the University Court, 1885-1935. [EUA IN1/GOV/CRT/MIN](#)

<p>read and were approved.</p> <p>The Principal referred to the recent Honours which had been conferred by His Majesty the King on the Chancellor of the University, the Right Hon. the Earl of Balfour, K.G., and the Court resolved to offer him their most cordial congratulations.</p> <p>It was reported that the Chancellor had nominated the Hon. Lord Blackburn as his Assessor on the Court, in succession to the late Hon. Lord Dundas.</p>	<p>Honours conferred on the Chancellor.</p> <p>Appointment of Chancellor's Assessor.</p>
<p>Finance Committee Reports:— (1) Univ. Bureau of the British Empire.—Grant towards expenses.</p>	<p>In connection with the communication of 2nd March last from the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, requesting that the matter of an annual subsidy towards the expenses of the Bureau be considered by the University Court at an early date (remitted to the Finance Committee on 20th April last—Minutes, pages 383 and 384), the Committee reported that a letter of 28th May had been received from the Bureau giving further particulars relative to the functions of the Bureau. The letter stated that it has not hitherto been considered necessary or appropriate to frame a draft Constitution, seeing that until the Congress meets in 1917 there will be no authority to whom such a draft could be submitted for adoption. The letter also stated that</p>

UoE, Senatus Academicus, 1885-1935. [EUA IN1/GOV/SEN](#).

Chancellor to represent the University at the Eugenics Conference.

The Principal stated that he had received a letter from the Chancellor of the University in which the Chancellor said that he had been asked to represent the University at the Eugenics Conference in London next July, and that he, the Principal, had replied that the University would be honoured if the Chancellor would act as their Representative on that occasion.

The Senate approved.

The following letter was read from Mr Philip:

as a mark of their educational theory and practice to a higher level.

The University had hoped to pay homage to the leader of the latest and most thrilling of the Crusades when he was fresh from the capture of Jerusalem out of infidel hands and the shattering blows that smashed the Turk, but

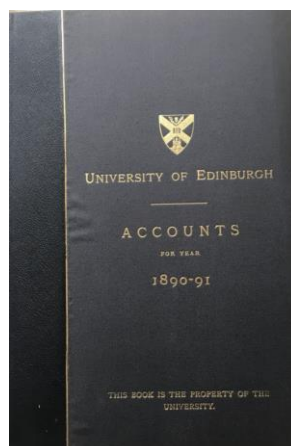
Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

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Lord Allenby's six hard years in Egypt have denied us that pleasure until to-day. Time has but deepened the impression of his inestimable services to the Empire and increased the enthusiasm of our welcome; it has brought into clear relief the vital issues that turned upon his victorious campaign, and it has revealed our greatest cavalrman as equally master of the wild homes of politics. The soldierly figure of the Field-Marshal speedily restored British prestige throughout the East where personality counts for more than policy, and his courage, patience, and resourcefulness safely weathered a most stormy and difficult period in the Anglo-Egyptian connexion. His administration, inspired by a deep sense of justice and fair play, made a notable contribution to the appeasement and betterment of the native population, and history will assuredly rank him with the great Proconsuls of Egypt—Lords Cromer and Kitchener. Allenby is a name of happy augury, signifying by interpretation "the Prophet of God"; we are proud of the opportunity to associate with it our more mundane title of "Doctor of Laws."

20th July 1928.

UoE, University Accounts, 1885-1935, [EUA IN1](#).



2b. National Library of Scotland

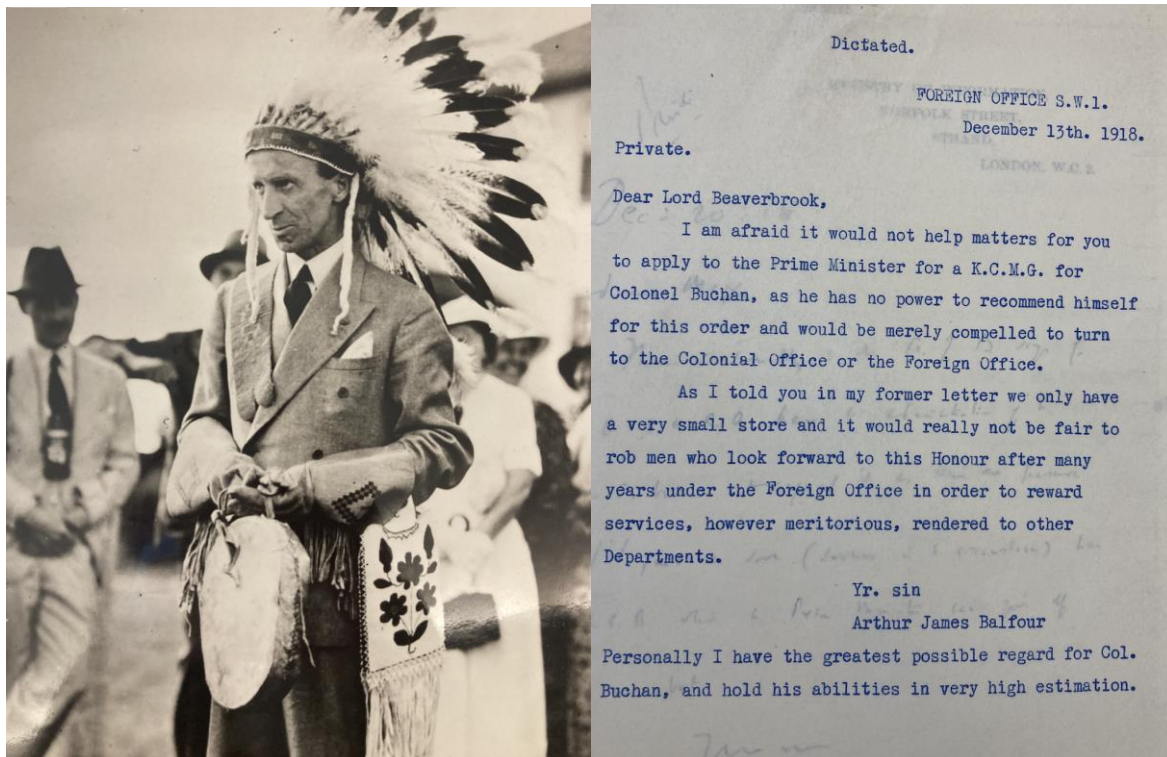
Selection on Arthur James Balfour and Edinburgh Imperial University during his Chancellorship

Balfour, Arthur James. Correspondence and papers concerning the National Demonstration in Scotland, in honour of Arthur James Balfour. [Acc.6033/1-3](#)

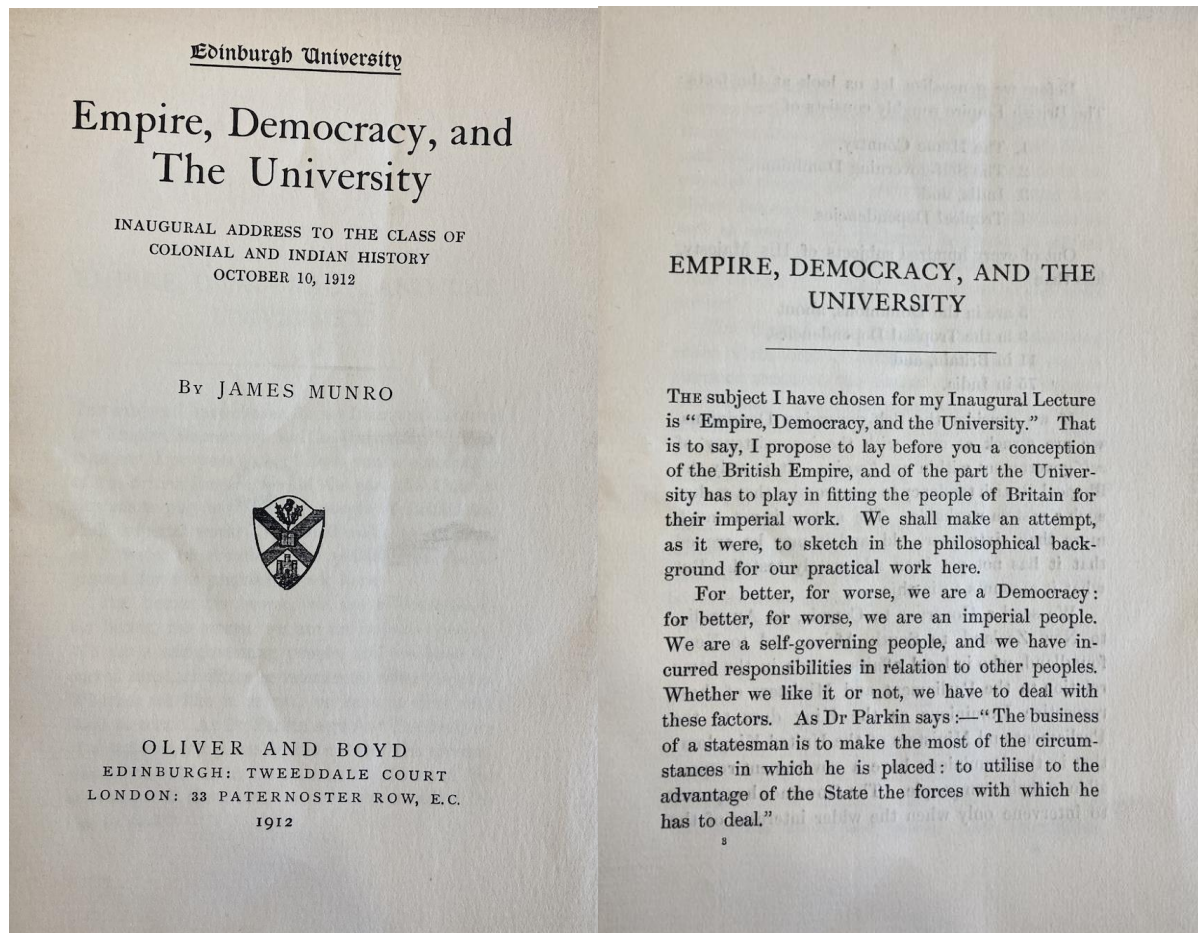
Balfour, Arthur James. Letter to William Blackwood., 1886. [MS.30051, folios 236-237](#)

Balfour, Arthur James. *Manuscript Notes on Envelopes for Gifford Lectures, 1914*. Glasgow ; University of Glasgow, 1914. Print. Gifford Lectures; 1914.

Balfour, Arthur James and John Buchan. 31 letters of John Buchan to Lord Beaverbrook. [Acc.7006](#) (with letter, 1918, of A J Balfour to Beaverbrook, concerning Buchan, former imperial administrator in South Africa, then imperial governor of Canada and Chancellor at the University of Edinburgh in 1936).



Munro, James, and University of Edinburgh. *Empire, Democracy and the University: Inaugural Address to the Class of Colonial and Indian History, 10 October 1912*. Edinburgh; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1912. Print.



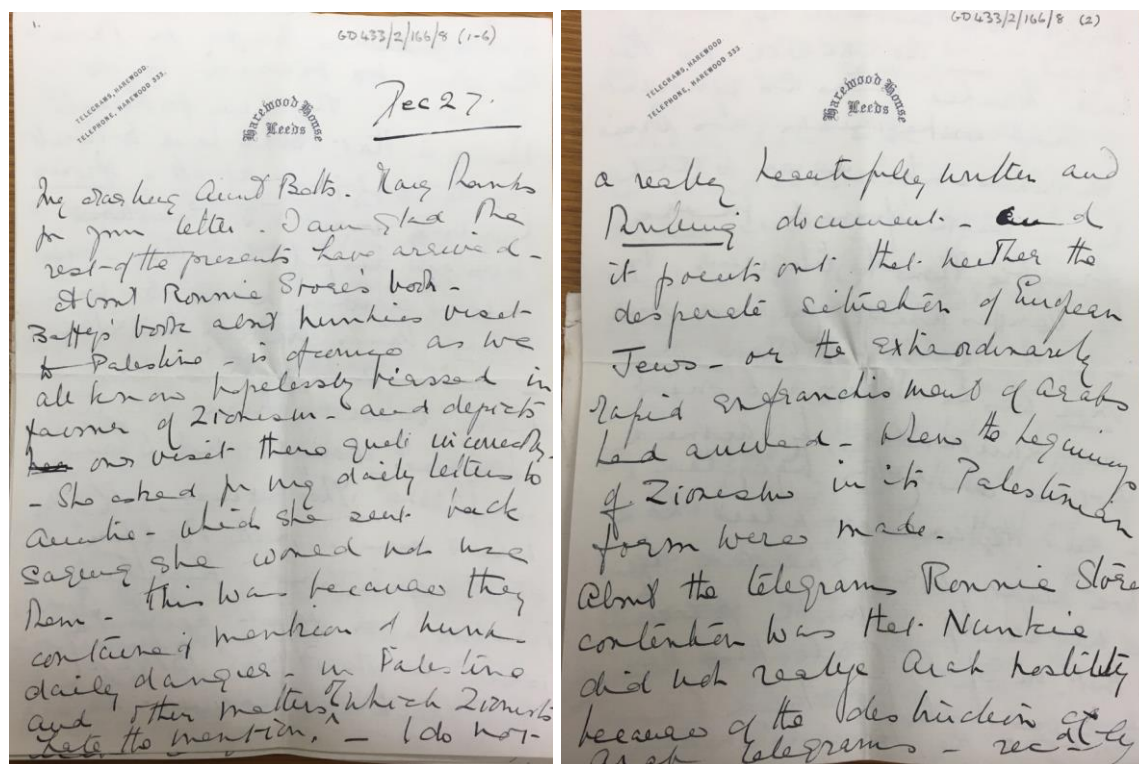
2c. National Records of Scotland

Arthur James Balfour, Zionism, Palestine, Middle East (selection)

Bound volume of copy letters made by Lady Betty Balfour, interspersed with some originals (1925). Balfouria. GD433/2/373

Bound volume of copy letters made by Lady Betty Balfour, interspersed with some originals (1917). GD433/2/360.

Correspondence on Zionism; mandate for Palestine and question of frontiers (1919-1922). GD433/2/5/27-69.



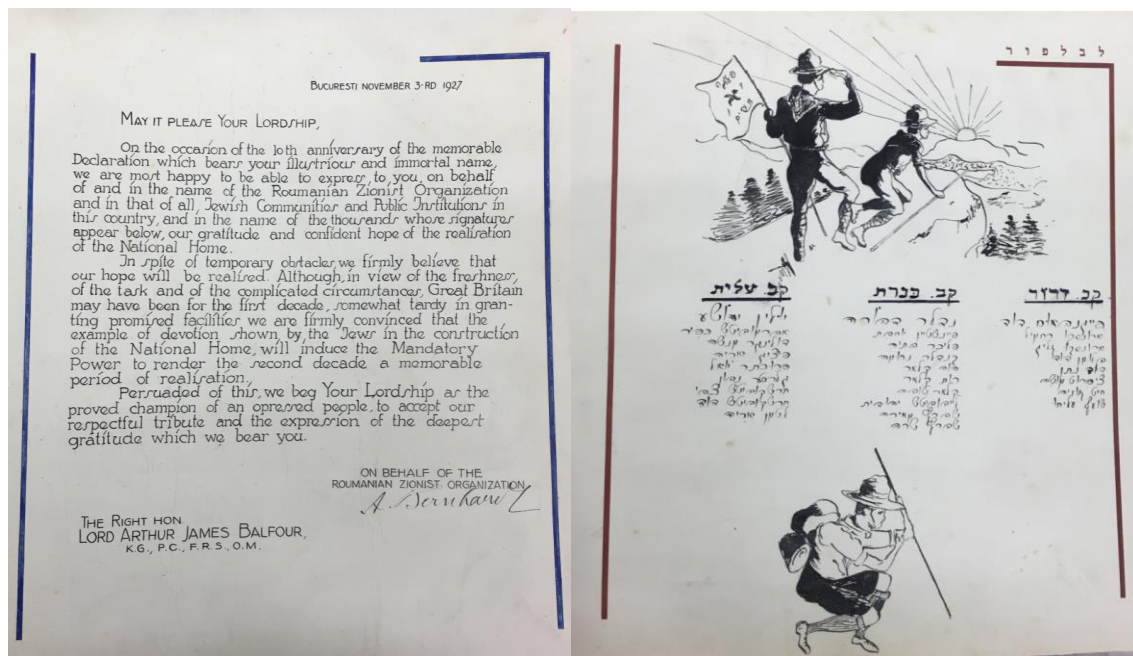
Letter from Lloyd George to Kerr commenting on and asking Kerr to see the Foreign Secretary. GD40/17/1164.

Middle East (1917-1929). GD40/17/41. GD40/17/38. GD40/17/39. GD40/17/40. GD40/17/41. GD433/2/2.

Miscellaneous letters to A J Balfour. With some copy replies (1920-1925). Jerusalem. GD433/2/25.

Miscellaneous letters mainly to A J Balfour on Zionism (1919-1929). GD433/2/9.

Papers relating to proposal to assist Zionist policy in Palestine by a loan negotiated through the League of Nations or otherwise (1928). GD433/2/5/70-83.



Photograph of AJB with many others in Palestine (including visit to the colonies and Balfouria). GD433/2/475.





Press cuttings and photographs of A J Balfour on his visit to Palestine where he opened the new Hebrew University in Jerusalem. GD433/2/222/1.

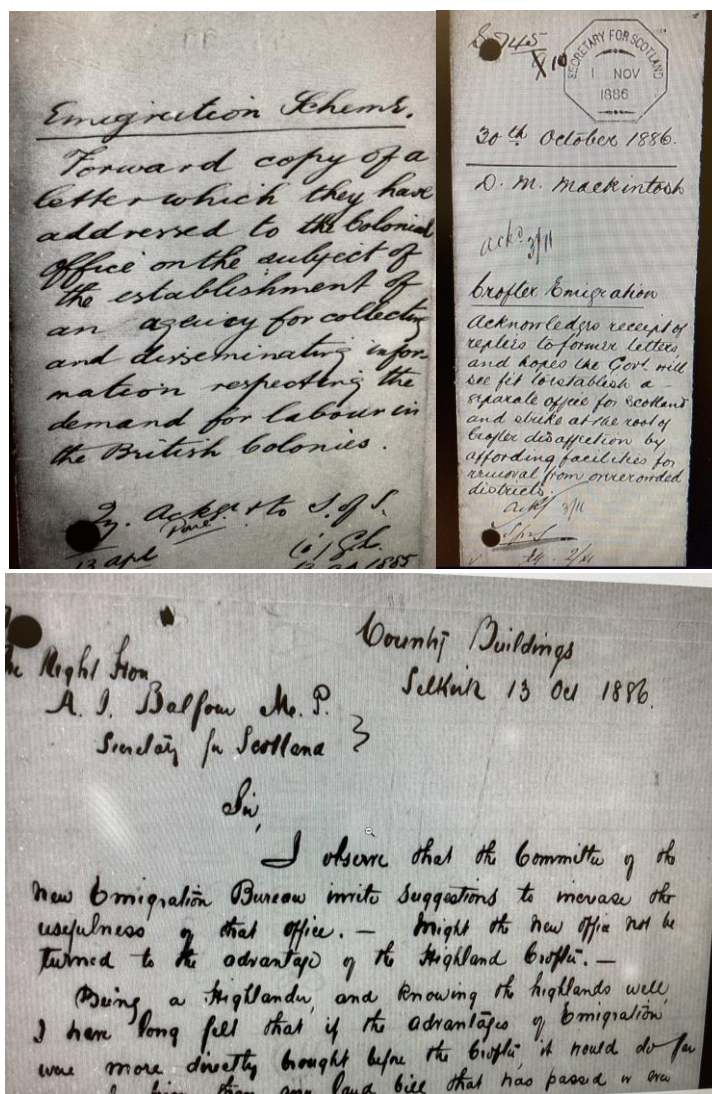


Arthur James Balfour and Eugenics

Miscellaneous letters to A J Balfour. With some copy replies. GD433/2/25.

Arthur James Balfour and Scottish Colonisation

Emigration files. Colonisation Scheme established under the auspices of Lord Balfour (1885). AF51.



Arthur James Balfour and Scottish Universities (selection)

Bound volume of copy letters made by Lady Betty Balfour, interspersed with some originals (University of Edinburgh). GD433/2/333.

Letters (1923-1929). GD433/2/293.

Letters and papers of A J Balfour (1892). GD433/2/68.

Letters from government departments, MPs and members of the House of Lords to A J Balfour (1919-1928). GD433/2/24.

Letters to A J Balfour (University of Edinburgh, 1873-1893). GD433/2/35.

Miscellaneous correspondence addressed to A J Balfour (University of Edinburgh, 1887-1893). GD433/2/34/1.

Photocopies of papers mainly concerning the establishment of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. GD1/1217/1.

2d. Pictures and Videos

Arthur James Balfour in Palestine, 1925 (Library of the Congress, selection)

Balfour at Jewish colonies a. [LC-M32- 13876](#).

Balfour at Jewish colonies b. [LC-M32- 13880](#).

Balfour at Jewish colonies c. [LC-M32- 13878](#).

Balfour at Jewish colonies d. [LC-M32- 13883](#).



Balfour visit a. [LC-M32- 52445](#).

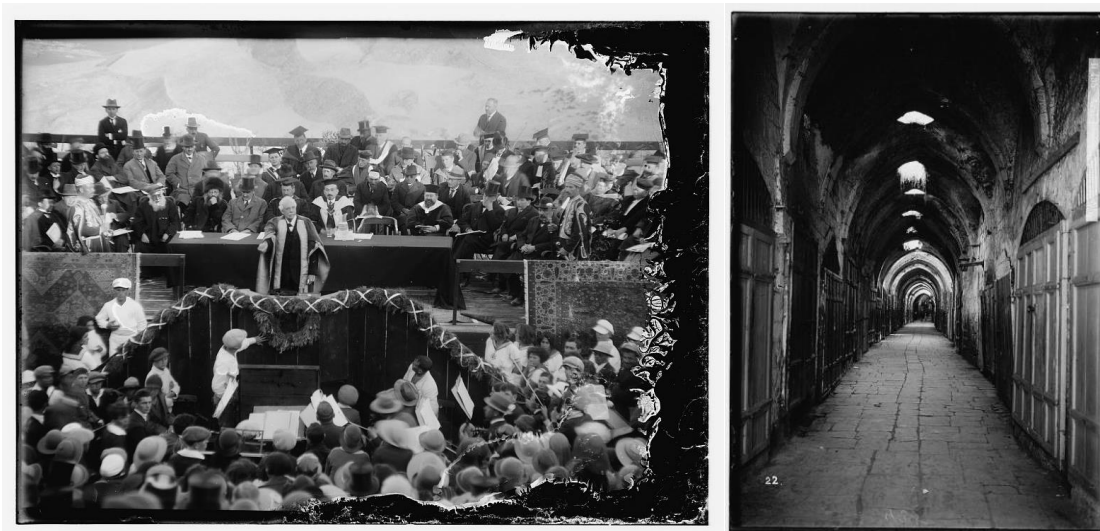
Balfour visit b. [LC-M32- 52457-x](#).

Copy of front page of Arab newspaper on Lord Balfour's arrival. [LC-M32- 52446-x](#).

Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Arab protest; shops closed. [LC-M32- B-435](#).

Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Arab protest; black flags displayed. [LC-M32- B-436](#).

Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Laying foundation stone of Hebrew University. [LC-M31- B-427](#).



Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Lord Balfour declaring University open. [LC-M32- 52457-x](#).

Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Lord Allenby, Lord Balfour and Sir Herbert Samuel. [LC-M32- B-430](#).

Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's visit. Opening of the Hebrew University. [LC-M32- B-431](#).

Lord Balfour in Jerusalem. [LC-M36- 890](#).



Arthur James Balfour in Palestine, 1925 (videos)

Earl Balfour leaves for Jerusalem (1925, Reuters, British Pathé)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI4vy6NgEGQ>

Earl Balfour Jerusalem (1925, British Pathé) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJGI-IaPYik>

Earl Balfour attends ceremonies in Jerusalem (1925, Reuters, British Pathé)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWqcoijbj6k>



3. Community Events

**3a. A Palestinian Address to Balfour: In honour of truth, memory, and justice
– Dr Salman Abu Sitta’s Address to Balfour at the University of Edinburgh
on the Centenary of British Mandate – November 2022**

Salman Abu Sitta is the founder and president of the [Palestine Land Society](#), London, dedicated to the documentation of Palestine's land and People. He is the author of six books on Palestine including the compendium "Atlas of Palestine 1917-1966," English and Arabic editions, the "Atlas of the Return Journey" and over 300 papers and articles on the Palestinian refugees, the Right of Return, and the history of al Nakba and human rights. He is credited with extensive documentation and mapping of Palestine's land and people over 40 years. His widely acclaimed memoir "Mapping my Return" describes his life in Palestine and his long struggle as a refugee to return home.

Full Recording Published by the Council for British Research in the Levant and Cross-Published by Palestine Land Society: <https://youtu.be/YRVMHNTeb58>

The following [speech](#) was given on 8 November 2022 at the University of Edinburgh. The event was co-organised by RACE.ED – a cross-University network concerned with race, racialisation and decolonial studies at the University of Edinburgh and the Kenyon Institute, CBRL – Jerusalem. It was sponsored by Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH), Centre for Research Collection (CRC), History, Sociology, Politics and International Relations Middle East Research Group (PIR-MERG), and Islamic and Middle East Studies (IMES).



3b. Balfour's afterlife: *Balfour Reparations 2023-2043*

On 14 December 2023, Dr. Farah Saleh, Palestinian artist in postdoctoral residence at UoE IASH and Lecturer in Global Majority Performance at the University of Glasgow, delivered '[Balfour Reparations \(2023–2043\)](#)', a lecture performance in collaboration with Dr. Nicola Perugini to

reflect on Balfour's role in the colonisation of Palestine and historical denial of Palestinian political rights.⁵



Framing statement by Dr. Farah Saleh

In September 2023, I started a four-month post-doctoral fellowship at Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh on the topic of Decolonial Embodied Practices at The University. In October 2023, the genocide in Gaza started and I found

⁵ Farah Saleh, 'Balfour Reparations (2023–2043)', 14 December 2023, <https://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/event/dr-farah-saleh-balfour-reparations-2023-2043>

myself working at a University that publicly embraces the decolonial agenda, while in reality supports the Israeli colonial regime in Palestine in many different ways. For example, with its neutral public statements on the genocide, restrictions on free speech and most importantly investments in companies that profit from the military Israeli occupation. As a response to that I started developing Balfour Reparations (2023-2043) performance lecture.

The performance investigates ways of confronting Edinburgh University's colonial legacy, particularly the role of Arthur James Balfour, the University Chancellor (1891-1930), in the colonisation of Palestine and historical denial of Palestinian political rights. I do that through utilizing elements of Speculative Choreography and Afrofuturism that combine history, fiction and fantasy, while engaging with and being inspired by archival material, such as videos, photos, and documents in part retrieved from the Centre for Research Collections at the University. The performance lecture takes place in 2043 to reflect on the fictive apology letter (see figure 1) that the University of Edinburgh will have issued in 2023 to the Palestinian people promising them reparations. The audience become members of the reparations' evaluation committee created on the 20th anniversary of the apology and are invited to participate in the performance. The research and performance are in collaboration with filmmaker Lucas Chih-Peng Kao, dancers Nadia Khattab and Jamal Bajali, and Dr Nicola Perugini (Politics and International Relations, University of Edinburgh).



The performance was presented on 14 December 2023 at Inspace Gallery to a small public, including IASH staff and fellows. After the performance, an audience member posted the letter on twitter and it became viral, with people around the world thinking it was real, they praised the University of Edinburgh for its bravery and asked other institutions to follow the lead. Later, the

letter was later fact-checked by Reuters and other press agencies, the University, IASH and myself issued statements clarifying it was part of a performance and not real.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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14 December 2023

Public apology

As a university that formally and publicly embraces the decolonial agenda, The University of Edinburgh feels the obligation to apologise to the Palestinian people for the Balfour declaration of 1917.

The declaration was written by Arthur James Balfour, the University's longest serving chancellor (1891-1930), in which he granted Palestine as a national home for the Jewish people, while denying the indigenous Palestinian people self-determination and freedom in their own homeland.

With this apology the University aims at confronting its colonial legacy and starting a decolonial process of reparations for the Palestinian people through five concrete actions:

First, the University will acknowledge publicly Balfour's colonial legacy in Palestine and his role in the creation of a larger repressive and racialized global order, for example in Ireland and South Africa, stemming from his belief that "men are not born equal". The University will also offer a foundational course to all its students on its colonial legacy.

Second, the University will remove restrictions to free speech on the topic of Israel/Palestine by suspending the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism, which draws false equivalences between critique of Israel's state policies and antisemitism.

Third, the University will review, publicly disclose, and divest from all investments in companies that directly or indirectly profit from the illegal military occupation and colonisation of Palestine, as well as from research with weapons companies that provide arms to Israel.

Fourth, the University will allocate resources for scholarships to Palestinian students to come and study at The University of Edinburgh and for university students and staff to engage with knowledge exchange projects at Palestinian universities.

Fifth, the University will endorse a one state solution, which would allow for the creation of a new one state in Palestine/Israel for all its citizens, on the political basis of one person one vote, compensation and right of return to the Palestinian refugees.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336

After I finished my post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Edinburgh and continued witnessing the involvement of the UK government in the genocide in Gaza, I decided to develop the performance further, now entitled Balfour Reparations (2024-2044), with the support of Common Ground Festival and Culture &. In the new version, I aim at confronting the United Kingdom's colonial legacy in Palestine and tackle Balfour's both political and academic roles in the historical denial of Palestinian political rights and self-determination in their homeland.

Balfour was the United Kingdom's Prime Minister (1902-1905), Foreign Secretary (1916-1919), and Chancellor and Rector of many UK prominent universities (1886-1930), including Glasgow University, where I am now a lecturer in Global Majority Performance. This time the performance lecture takes place in 2044 and reflects on the fictive apology letter (see figure 2) that the United Kingdom will have issued in 2024 to the Palestinian people promising them reparations. Also in this version, the audience become members of the reparations' evaluation committee created on the 20th anniversary of the apology and is invited to participate in the performance. In the new version, other than the previous collaborators, I also worked with Luke Pell on rehearsal support, Michaela Pointon on Graphic design and Kim Moore on music composition.



THE PRIME MINISTER

22 June 2024

As a country committed to confronting its colonial legacy, The United Kingdom recognises its obligation to apologise to the Palestinian people for the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

The declaration was written by Arthur James Balfour, the country's Prime Minister (1902-1905), Foreign Secretary (1916-1919), Chancellor and Rector of many UK prominent universities (1886-1930). In the declaration Balfour granted Palestine as a national home for the Jewish people, while denying the indigenous Palestinian people self-determination and freedom in their own homeland.

With this apology the United Kingdom aims to acknowledge its part in the creation of the current Israeli Apartheid regime and its responsibility to start a decolonial process of reparations for the Palestinian people through seven concrete actions:

First, the United Kingdom will acknowledge publicly Balfour's colonial legacy in Palestine and his role in the creation of a larger repressive and racialised global order, for example in Ireland and South Africa, stemming from his belief that "men are not born equal".

Second, The United Kingdom will stop arming Israel to prevent further war crimes against the Palestinian people. It will also prevent all UK businesses from trading arms with Israel, providing investment or financial services to companies profiting from the illegal settlements and arm companies connected to the Israeli occupation.

Third, The United Kingdom will require all UK universities to review, publicly disclose, and divest from companies that directly or indirectly profit from the illegal military occupation and colonisation of Palestine, as well as from research with weapons companies that provide arms to Israel.

Fourth, the United Kingdom will remove restrictions to free speech on the topic of Israel/Palestine by retracting the adoption of the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism, which draws false equivalences between critique of Israel's state policies and antisemitism.

Fifth, The United Kingdom will teach the history of its colonisation of Palestine in all UK schools and universities, as part of its Decolonising the Curriculum Strategy, which aims at creating collective processes of decolonisation for students, staff and governance alike.

Sixth, the United Kingdom will allocate resources to rebuild universities in Gaza, provide scholarships to Palestinian students to study in the UK and for British students and staff to engage with knowledge exchange projects at Palestinian universities.

Seventh, the United Kingdom will endorse a one state solution, which would allow for the creation of a new single state in Palestine/Israel for all its citizens, on the political basis of one person one vote, with compensation and right of return to all Palestinian refugees.

4. Edinburgh University Accounts 1890-1930: Colonial and Imperial Investments during Balfour's Chancellorship⁶

Edinburgh is the third wealthiest University in Britain, after Oxford and Cambridge, and the wealthiest University in Scotland. A hundred years ago, it was one of the richest universities in the British empire. Though it is perhaps unsurprising, it is not widely known that from 1918, a fifth of this wealth was invested in colonial government bonds. This, in turn, meant that interest payments funded by colonial taxation were a key income stream for the institution, financing salaries, research, student stipends and the day to day running of the University. The following account is based on a thorough survey of the University accounts between 1890 and 1931 conducted at the University of Edinburgh Centre of Research Collections, complemented with the minutes of the University finance committee and the University Court.

Between 1890 and 1930, the finances of Edinburgh University were managed by two University factors, a father-and-son duo, Henry Cook and John Cook.⁷ Based in the University factor's office at 61 Castle Street, they received their mandate to manage investments from the finance committee (a subsidiary of the University Court).⁸ On occasion, investment decisions were "remitted to Sir W[illiam] Turner [the principal] to consult further with factors, and report to Court".⁹ On the whole, however, the Cooks appear to have enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in terms of where and how they invested the University's money. With narrow terms of reference, focused on maximising the money of a wealthy institution, the factors were mandated to invest money where it would achieve the highest rate of return. In 1891, for example, Henry Cook was instructed to invest the £1,100 John Baxter Fund in any "first class stock", as long as it yielded more than 3.5%.¹⁰

As shown in Figure 1, Edinburgh University's assets in 1891 – totalling £466,397 – were almost exclusively invested in Scottish railways (orange) and local land owned by the Scottish aristocracy (dark blue).¹¹ Scottish aristocrats consistently benefitted from substantial back-hander loans. In 1891, for example, Arthur J Balfour (a future chancellor of Edinburgh University whose family fortune rested on the Fife coalfields) repaid a £12,000 loan (roughly £1.5m in today's money), which was then reinvested in another aristocratic estate at Strathendry, Fife.¹² In the mid-1890s, these assets were complemented by £98,846 invested in the newly-expanded Leith docks (light blue).¹³ The salaries of the principal and other prominent professors were

⁶ Prepared by Henry Dee, University of Glasgow.

⁷ 'University Factor', https://ourhistory.is.ed.ac.uk/index.php?title=University_Factor (accessed 06/06/2022); University Court Records, Vol XIV, minutes of meeting on 12/03/1928, comments on the death of Henry Cook.

⁸ Post Office Edinburgh & Leith Directory: 1897-1898 (Edinburgh, 1897), p.397.

⁹ University Court Finance Committee Agenda Book. Minutes of meeting on 14/10/1891

¹⁰ University Court Finance Committee Agenda Book. Minutes of meeting on 10/04/1891.

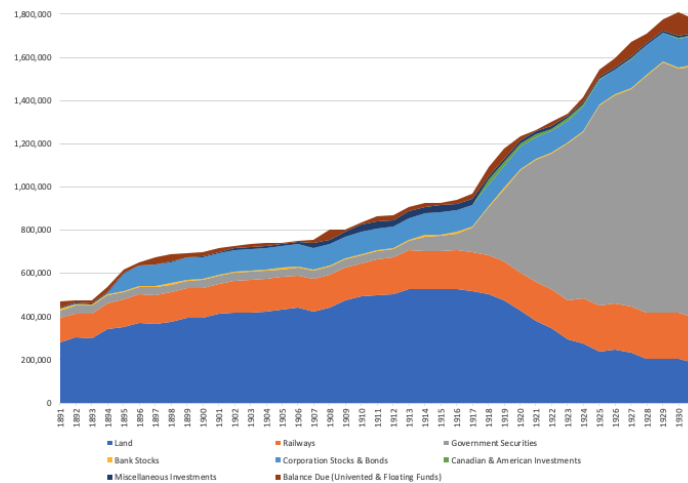
¹¹ University of Edinburgh Accounts, 1890-1891

¹² University Court Finance Committee Agenda Book. Minutes of meeting on 09/07/1891. I have not been able to find any record of when this loan was issued.

¹³ University of Edinburgh Accounts, 1896-1897

covered by the resultant interest payments from the Leith Harbour Annuity Fund.¹⁴ From at least the 1780s, the University benefitted from the donations of alumni and Scottish associates based in colonial possessions, with the construction of Old College partly funded by Scots connected to the Caribbean slave plantation economy.¹⁵ This in-flow of colonial money continued between 1890 and 1910, but was relatively insignificant. In 1890, for example, alumni in India donated £112 to University.¹⁶ Only a small proportion of the University's money was re-invested in colonial enterprises. In 1893, the University purchased a £1,000 debenture on the Scottish and New Zealand Investment Company.¹⁷ By 1900, £7,147 was invested in New Zealand government bonds, £15,983 in Australian government bonds, and £5,098 in Canadian government bonds (which all offered a 4% return). Interests on these colonial government bonds generated £1,129 each year.¹⁸ Other investments were made in the Northern Investment Company of New Zealand.¹⁹ In 1901, the University leadership championed how Edinburgh had advanced from being a “municipal dependency” to an “autonomous corporation”, with students “not only from all parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but also from our colonies and our Indian empire.”²⁰ Over the next decade, hundreds of students enrolled from South Asia, Southern Africa and Australasia.²¹ Nevertheless, in financial terms, the University's assets between 1890 and 1910 were still overwhelmingly concentrated in Scotland and remained steady (increasing nominally in line with the rate of inflation, but remaining consistent in real terms).

Figure 1: University of Edinburgh total investments, 1891-1931



¹⁴ University of Edinburgh: Accounts for Year 1891-1892, p.17.

¹⁵ These donors included Lieutenant General Melville, John Pringle, Alexander Crichton, William Tytler, William Balderston, William Ballie, John Sinclair, James Stirling. Thanks to Summer Perritt and Diana Paton for leadership on this research.

¹⁶ University Court Finance Committee Agenda Book No 1. Minutes of meeting on 06/03/1890.

¹⁷ University Court Finance Committee Agenda Book No 2. Minutes of meeting on 25/10/1893.

¹⁸ University of Edinburgh Accounts, 1899-1900

¹⁹ University Court Records, Vol VII, minutes of meeting on 22/10/1900.

²⁰ University Court Records, Vol VII, letter to King Edward, 18/03/1901.

²¹ Ian Wotherspoon, ‘The Most Cosmopolitan University in the World—Overseas Students at the University a Century Ago’, *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 41/1 (2003).

This situation changed dramatically in the wake of the First World War, however, as the University rapidly expanded in terms of students, staff and financial heft. Benefitting from increased British government funding and student fees, Edinburgh University invested heavily in bonds issued by governments across the British empire (grey section of figure 1), and divested from its holdings in Scottish aristocratic land (dark blue section of figure 1). These changes were driven by stark differences in the rates of interest paid out. While the Australian government offered bonds with interest rates up to 5%, returns on Scottish land holdings dramatically fell as agricultural prices collapsed. Mandated to invest the University's money where it would achieve the highest rate of return, Henry and John Cook focused on high-interest investments. By 1931, this had resulted in a historic restructuring of the University's financial portfolio, breaking with Scottish aristocratic land-holding to invest heavily in state-issued bonds equal to £1,165,278 (65% of the University's total £1,775,173 assets).²²

Most of the University's bonds were acquired from the British government (red), but Figure 2 clearly shows that a significant proportion of the securities acquired by the University were issued by colonial governments (pink). In particular, the notable increase in investment in colonial government bonds from 1925 meant that by 1928, 20% of the University's total assets were invested in colonial governments and colonial enterprises.²³ The rise in colonial investments after 1925 was driven, above all, by heavy investment in Australian government bonds, totalling £288,266 by 1930. This preference, above all, is explained by the unrivalled 3.5-5% interest rates offered by Australian governments at both a state and federal level. Nevertheless by 1930, these were complemented by relatively substantial investments in the colonial governments of New Zealand (£13,120 at 3.5-4%), India (£7,042 at 3-3.5%), Canada (£7,940 at 3-5%), South Africa (£2,416 at 3.5%) and South-east Asia (£1,520 at 3.5%).²⁴ Later University accounts indicate that subsequent investments were made in the colonial governments of Nigeria (£5,000 at 5% in 1933-1934) and Sri Lanka (£2,160 at 4% the same year).²⁵

²² University of Edinburgh: Accounts for Year 1931-1932. The Bank of England's inflation calculator equates this to c.£84,000,000 in today's money: <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator> (accessed 06/06/2022).

²³ University of Edinburgh: Accounts for Year 1927-1928

²⁴ University of Edinburgh: Accounts for Year 1929-1930

²⁵ University of Edinburgh: Accounts for Year 1933-1934, p.127.

5. Edinburgh University Divestment from Apartheid South Africa, 1970-1973²⁶



1970 anti-apartheid protest in Edinburgh, possibly confronting vice-chancellor Michael Swann (from SCRAN)

On 19 January 1970, students picketed outside the University of Edinburgh's Appointments Board in Old College – protesting a recruitment event by Barclays Bank, a key investor in apartheid South Africa. To prevent the bank interviewing prospective recruits, protestors turned the picket into an occupation, declaring: “The University should not offer facilities to firms supporting apartheid. The University should declare any investments in such firms. Join the occupation now - and act against collaborators in Apartheid.” The occupation lasted a week. Occupiers were subsequently hauled before the University Court in March 1970, and disciplined with hefty fines, contested by further mass meetings and the occupation of what was then called

²⁶ Prepared by Henry Dee, University of Glasgow.

the David Hume Tower.²⁷ In October 1970, vice-chancellor Michael Swann and the University Court continued to insist that “the University does not have directly or so far as it is aware, indirectly, any interests in companies known to be active in the support of apartheid.”²⁸

In December 1970, however, research conducted by the *Student* newspaper revealed that the University of Edinburgh did in fact have extensive investments in apartheid South Africa, totalling over £522,850 (roughly £7.4m in today’s money). These investments amounted to 7.6% of the University’s investment portfolio, a sum that was illegal at the time, well above the 7% legal limit set by British parliament for charities investing in South Africa. South African mining investments offered unrivalled returns of 10-15%, but came at an appalling, and well-known, human cost. As recently as September 1970, the University had acquired a further £26,000 shares in De Beers Consolidated Mines, adding to £400,000 already invested in South African mining companies. The *Student* denounced the proven lies and “wall of silence” from University management.²⁹

Numerous academic staff were “at a loss to understand the decision of the Edinburgh University Court” to not divest, and highly critical of the vice-chancellor, Professor Michael Swann, a supposed supporter of the anti-apartheid movement.³⁰ The Edinburgh Anti-Apartheid Society asked students: “Will you allow this vicious exploitation to continue in your name?”³¹ After a meeting of Ken Cargill, student president, and other executive members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), 700 students marched round Old Quad on 10 December calling for Swann to resign, denouncing his lies about University investments.³² Further mass meetings were attended by 1,500 students.³³ In an attempt to fudge over tensions, the University offered the South African author Alan Paton an honorary degree.³⁴

²⁷ Tom Wooley, ‘Edinburgh Students on Rampage’, *Solidarity: Central Scotland* (Solidarity: Clydeside, 1 June 1970). Thanks to Roger Jeffery for this reference.

²⁸ ‘S. Africa Investment Sensation’, *Student*, 9 December 1970; ‘SRC Seeks Resignation of Principal over Investments’, *Scotsman*, 10 December 1970; ‘Student Marchers Present Petition to Principal’, *Scotsman*, 11 December 1970. Any references to the *Student* newspaper are from the collective research of the UncoverED project. The UncoverED team were Esme Allman, Daisy Chamberlain, Firyaa Chowtee, Tom Cunningham, Devika, Maryam Helmi, Laurence Jarlett, Ara Kim, Hannah McGurk, Vidhipssa Mohan, Cristina Moreno Lozano, Uttara Rangarajan, Tanuj Raut, Natasha Ruwona, Fatima Seck, Sarah Shemery, Lea Ventre, Sanjna Yechareddy and Dingjian Xie.

²⁹ ‘S. Africa Investment Sensation’, *Student*, 9 December 1970; Alice Murray & Des Loughney, ‘Why Bother?’, *Student*, 9 December 1970.

³⁰ ‘Lecturer’s Plea to Sell Shares’, *Student*, 9 December 1970; Ian Ross, ‘Investments in S. Africa’, *Scotsman*, 19 December 1970.

³¹ Alice Murray & Des Loughney, ‘Why Bother?’, *Student*, 9 December 1970.

³² ‘S. Africa Investment Sensation’, *Student*, 9 December 1970; ‘SRC Seeks Resignation of Principal over Investments’, *Scotsman*, 10 December 1970; ‘Student Marchers Present Petition to Principal’, *Scotsman*, 11 December 1970.

³³ D. Loughney, ‘Investment in S. Africa’, *Scotsman*, 1 February 1971.

³⁴ ‘Now – An Investment in a Degree of Tolerance’, *Daily Record*, 29 December 1970.



Clipping from the *Scotsman*, 11 December 1970

The SRC demanded that the University's South African investments were "liquidated immediately", garnering signatures from 2,500 students, 21 members of parliament, and numerous other SRC presidents from across Britain by the end of January 1971.³⁵ They denounced the University Court for mishandling investments, lacking credibility and being unrepresentative.³⁶ Swann later claimed these calls were made by "immature" SRC leaders, who were "dominated by activists".³⁷

After the furore created by the SRC campaigns and *Student* investigations, on 26 January 1971, Professor David Talbot Rice announced that the University was selling all of its £522,850 investments in South African companies – a significant victory for students and campaigners.³⁸ The chairman of Edinburgh University Anti-Apartheid Society, Des Loughney, pointed out that Court was simply trying to "save face", impelled by "the logical and moral imperatives of the SRC's arguments".³⁹ An impressive campaign combining student occupations, mass protests, investigative journalism, and national-level petitions caught the University management in an impossible bind, forcing a dramatic change in the institution's investment strategy.

The issue of investments in apartheid South Africa, nevertheless, remained a thorny issue. Rumours circulated that the University still held some shares in companies operating in South Africa, and the University Court again discussed the question of apartheid investments on 25 October 1971. The University secretary, Charles Stewart, continued to insist that it was impossible to determine whether all investments had financial connections to South Africa.⁴⁰ The University had £47,915 invested in Barclay's Bank, for example, which had branches in South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique.⁴¹ When he retired in October 1972, the University's first ever student rector, Jonathan Wills, accused the University Court of being "more interested in money than morals." Although the University had ostensibly sold its shares in South African companies, it retained its investments in 52 companies that had subsidiaries operating in South

³⁵ 'South African Shares', *Student*, c.January 1971; D. Loughnay, 'Investment in S. Africa', *Scotsman*, 1 February 1971.

³⁶ 'SRC Throws Investments Onus back to Court', *Scotsman*, 17 December 1970.

³⁷ 'Professor Swann is the New Governor General of the BBC', *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 14 December 1972.

³⁸ 'Edinburgh University to Sell S. African Shares', *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, 27 January 1971.

³⁹ D. Loughnay, 'Investment in S. Africa', *Scotsman*, 1 February 1971.

⁴⁰ 'South Africa Shares: Again?', *Student*, 7 October 1971

⁴¹ 'Betrayal', *Student*, 9 December 1970.

Africa. In June 1972, the University Court had voted 8:5 (with one abstention) against reviewing these investments.⁴²

Anti-apartheid campaigns in Edinburgh continued over subsequent months and years. Rev Basil Manning, a Black South African from Johannesburg was appointed as International Chaplain at Edinburgh in October 1970, taught about Third World politics and the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Walter Rodney, and supported the Edinburgh University Anti-Apartheid Society with space in the International Centre at 22 Buccleuch Place run by the Edinburgh Christian Council for Overseas Students (ECCOS).⁴³ Tensions came to a head again when the University of Edinburgh was put forward to host a conference of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in August 1973. Alongside the SRC, AJ Zvogbo of the Edinburgh Zimbabwe Students Movement and Yomi Ferriera of the Nigerian Union in Edinburgh both protested vehemently against South Africa and Rhodesia universities participating. At a global level, they reiterated the United Nation's calls to isolate these "racist and oppressive" regimes "economically, educationally and otherwise from the world's community."⁴⁴ But Yomi Ferriera, in particular, also highlighted that more locally the University of Edinburgh itself had "a long history of scandals and involvement in support, mostly covertly, but sometimes overtly of apartheid; good enough that on a number of occasions the world mass media of new dissemination has been able to expose the University." For Yomi Ferriera, it was

thus not much of a surprise that over the new controversy of the Commonwealth Universities Conference, Sir Michael Swann, Edinburgh's Vice-Chancellor has come out to describe the Rhodesian and South African institutions as 'liberal universities'. The separatist structure and functions of these universities are well known to those who are aware of the role the institutions perform in buttressing the apartheid structure of the two states; only people like Michael Swann can afford to fail to know.⁴⁵

Michael Swann continued to insist that the involvement of South African and Rhodesian universities was an ACU decision, and Rev Basil Manning, in response, resigned as international chaplain in July 1973.⁴⁶ Ultimately, South Africa and Rhodesia were not present at the conference. Ted Edwards, the vice-chancellor of Bradford University, put forward a motion that ACU should no longer "render services" or invite delegates from South African and Rhodesian universities, but this was not adopted due to "complexity" and "diversity of opinion".⁴⁷

It is not clear from initial research whether subsidiary investments were ever sold off.

⁴² 'Edinburgh University Accused of 'Slavery Investments'', *Scotsman*, 31 October 1972.

⁴³ National Library of Scotland (NLS) Acc 11199 Edinburgh Christian Council for Overseas Students (ECCOS) Papers, File 4 Part 2, Kay Dickson to Committee, 1 October 1970; Basil Manning, Secretary and Chaplain's Report, June 1971; Basil Manning, 'The future role for the Council/its appointees', 27 September 1973.

⁴⁴ NLS Acc 11199 ECCOS Papers, File 4 Part 2, AJ Zvogbo to Editor of Scotsman, 23 May 1973; Yomi Ferriera to Commonwealth Universities in Africa, March 1973.

⁴⁵ NLS Acc 11199 ECCOS Papers, File 4 Part 2, Yomi Ferriera to Commonwealth Universities in Africa, March 1973.

⁴⁶ NLS Acc 11199 ECCOS Papers, File 4 Part 2, Executive Committee report, 19 July 1973.

⁴⁷ T. Craig, *Commonwealth Universities and Society: Report of Proceedings of the Congress of the Universities of the Commonwealth, Edinburgh, August 1973* (Edinburgh: R&R Clarke, 1974), p.431.

SOUTH AFRICAN SHARES

We the undersigned wish to register our full support for the SRC's demand that the University's investments in the twenty-seven South African firms be liquidated immediately:

JOHN P. MACKINTOSH, M.P.	ALEXANDER EADIE, M.P.
TOM OSWALD, M.P.	JOHN SMITH, M.P.
MISS JOAN LESTER, M.P.	JAMES SILLARS, M.P.
GAVIN STRANG, M.P.	PETER DOIG, M.P.
JOHN ROBERTSON, M.P.	NORMAN BUCHAN, M.P.
TOM McMILLAN, M.P.	GEORGE LAWSON, M.P.
HUGH McCARTNEY, M.P.	DICK DOUGLAS, M.P.
ALEX WILSON, M.P.	ADAM HUNTER, M.P.
GREGOR MacKENZIE, M.P.	RONALD KING MURRAY, M.P.
MALCOLM MacPHERSON, M.P.	DAVID STEEL, M.P.
NEIL G. CARMICHAEL, M.P.	

COUNCILLOR JACK KANE
(Leader Labour Group
Edinburgh City Council)

A. S. NEILL
HUGH McDIARMID

MARTIN O'NEILL
(President, S.U.S.)

KEN CARGILL
(President, E.U. S.R.C.)

DOUGLAS J. HENDERSON
TED BAYLISS
JOHN ARNOLD
Miss MARGOT MIDDLETON
TOM SNEDDON
GEORGE D. MANN
Miss SHEILA MARCO
C. PAUL HAGAN
GRAHAM WATSON
JOHN HOPWOOD
RICHARD T. COTTER
MARGARET R. E. HART
PHILIP MAWER
RICHARD SIMPSON
SOCIETIES COUNCIL EXECUTIVE, 1970-71

President, Heriot-Watt Students Association
President, Dundee University Students Association
President, St. Andrews University S.R.C.
President, Heriot-Watt Students Association
Deputy President, S.U.S.
President, Moray House College of Education S.R.C.
President, Jordanhill College of Education S.R.C.
President, Notre Dame College S.R.C.
President, Dundee College of Technology S.R.C.
President, Paisley College of Technology S.R.C.
President, Edinburgh College of Commerce S.R.C.
President, Aberdeen College of Education S.R.C.
E.U. S.R.C. President, 1969-70.
Past President, E.U. S.R.C., S.U.S.

Plus 2,100 students as of midday Monday, January 18

January 1971 protest letter in the *Student*

Part II

Balfour’s Legacy and Imperial Afterlife: Past as Present⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ Prepared by Hajar Ibrahim, in collaboration with Dr. Shaira Vadasaria and Dr. Nicola Perugini. As with the main Report, this section discusses a variety of possible contemporary or ongoing legal obligations which the participants consider relevant to the project and incumbent upon the University. While the research contributions to the Report are advisory in their nature, the REWG recognises that the legal research contributions to the Report do not constitute legal advice solicited by or provided to the University; and the conclusions expressed therein may well be contrary to the views of some members of the University’s views, the views of its own legal advisers, or indeed to the University’s position at law, including under any regional, domestic or international obligations. The task for the REWG is not to determine or adjudicate upon these issues. Instead, the REWG seeks to allow the University to hear and understand how its and wider communities feel about the historical role the University has played and about its ongoing racial legacies today, in order to help design and improve its future.

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1. Mobilisation on Campus: Past to Present

In the academic year 2023-24, UoE grounds once again became an active site of political struggle around the University's imperial legacy and colonial present. At the heart of this struggle was a multiracial and multiethnic wide-based student and staff coalition standing in opposition to UoE's on-going investments in Israeli genocide and other war crimes in Palestine. This manifested further through interactions between different student and staff actors and groups which participated in the community campaign for divestment from Israel's occupation and violations of human rights, international law and the Genocide Convention; and on the other hand, the UoE Senior Leadership and governance bodies responses to the community. Despite the 'conflict agnostic' approach that some members of Senior Leadership adopted as a frame of reference for reviewing the investment policy, this movement drew direct attention to how UoE investments in the dispossession of the Palestinian people are connected to our historical legacy of the dispossession of Palestine and Palestinians, as co-signed by our former chancellor, Arthur James Balfour. Understood in this context, the movement challenged the rhetoric of 'conflict agnosticism' seeing it as one that further disavows what the student groups, staff members and networks involved in the mobilisation, including through the Student Council and Senatus Academicus on investments, consider as the University's on-going complicity in the consolidation of settler colonialism in Palestine. As long as there is a refusal to acknowledge the institution's historical imperial legacy to Palestine and divest, this legacy of dispossession and systematic erasure will remain an organising principal that shapes the past and present institutional character of the University.

A real decolonial transformation then requires recontextualizing the actions of the University and its impact by illustrating the concrete context of its legacy and complicity in detailed terms. In this appendix, the specific context of Palestine and the University must be reiterated in its particularity to understand the concrete harms, name the violence, and enact policy changes accordingly. This is a necessary approach which counteracts the culture of denial and responsibility that stands as an impetus to reparative justice. Denying harm or responsibility for harm prevents actual considerations for reparative justice and their implementation. This means that the University must take responsibility for the harm it has perpetrated either against its own faculty and students, be it through racialised processes of securitisation, a lack of transparency, the denial of Palestinians right to memorialise and grieve, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism (IHRA), its direct investments or a failure to attend to their duty of care towards students; and the harm against colonised Palestinians in which, as this report argues, it has been complicit though all of the examples cited above.

This following materials analyse the actors, events, and communications on campus that characterised the broad community mobilisation – one of the most participated in the history of the UoE since the campaign against the UoE investments in South African apartheid at the beginning of the 1970s – to the UoE's ongoing direct and indirect complicity in the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, the settler-colonial structure of Israel and the epistemic conditions at our institution which sustain Palestine's erasure.

1.1 UoE and the History of Activism for Justice in Palestine

Before narrating this past year's mobilisation, it is pertinent to note that the demands presented by staff and students to the University administrators and committees did not begin with the current response to Israel's war of annihilation in Gaza. Solidarity with the Palestinian cause against Israeli settler-colonial erasure of native Palestinians, and mobilisation at UoE against ongoing entanglements with the colonial structure is not new. In [December 1987, EUSA](#) (Edinburgh University Students' Association) passed a general motion presented by students calling for boycott and academic freedom in Palestine in response to the killing of Palestinian students and closure of universities by Israel during the First Intifada⁴⁹. As seen in Figure 2, the motion also called on EUSA to twin with the Bir Zeit University in Palestine.

A year later, in [February 1988](#), another EUSA motion, Figure 3 passed "condemning the Israeli army's handling of the Palestinian uprising and calling for EUSA support for an international conference was carried iniquorately 211-17"⁵⁰.



Figure 3: [The Student Newspaper](#), "Admissions? News Focus: Rage", 18 February 1988, p. 4



Figure 1: [The Student Newspaper](#), "Admissions?" February 11, 1988, p.1,



Figure 2: [The Student Newspaper](#)

⁴⁹ Edinburgh University Students' Newspaper, "The Centenary Issue: Palestinian Passion", The Student, Dec 3 1987, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Edinburgh University Students' Newspaper, "Sabbaticals Saved: Palestinian Motion", The Student, Feb 18 1988, p.1

In 1999, [EUSA set the 'unethical investment policy'](#) through a general meeting that established a mandate to lobby the Court to adopt an ethical investment policy and inform the student body on the University's unethical investments in weapons manufacturers sold to repressive regimes⁵¹. Unless overturned, EUSA policy via general meeting does not lapse or expire⁵².

This EUSA 'unethical investment policy' was revisited again [in 2002, as UoE still held shares in weapons manufacturers, such as BAE systems \(101,437 shares\)](#)⁵³. The Association resolved to lobby and pressure the University's Senior Leadership and Finance Committee to be transparent in the exact details of its investment portfolio to the student body. Importantly, it also urged the University to outline a specific policy that sets ethical guidelines for its investments.

Three years later, in 2005, EUSA set a policy on the ['Right to Education/Birzeit Twinning'](#)⁵⁴. Citing the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which the UK is a signatory, the radical curtailment of the Palestinian's right to an education as a result of Israeli military occupation, EUSA announces that the collective responsibility to defend and actualise the demand for a universal right to education "falls all-the more acutely upon institutions of higher education." Building on the student motion passed in 1987 for academic freedom on Palestine, the Association resolves, among other things, to "affiliate at no cost to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University as a public show of solidarity and support to all Palestinian students who are struggling to live, work and study under occupation"; "commit to hosting Birzeit students exhibition"; "to raise awareness within this union and beyond about the issues facing Palestinian education under military occupation (including to help facilitate, where feasible, Friends of Birzeit Universities fundraising and political lobbying)" and "to lobby the University of Edinburgh to adopt a formal, active and robust twinning arrangement with the Birzeit University"⁵⁵. This policy has not been overturned, and so EUSA is obliged to uphold their commitments to these resolutions, until debated and changed otherwise. As of right now, under the current leadership, they have dishonoured these motions, collectively fought and won⁵⁶.

The conversation on a specific component of the UoE investments targeted in the 2023-2024 campaign, namely the Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and their use in Palestine, and the worrying research collaborations with arms companies like Leonardo and AnyVision and investments of this University, did not begin with the ongoing genocide in Gaza. In 2021, the Amnesty International Society and the Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society passed

⁵¹ Edinburgh University Students' Association, 1999, "The University's Unethical Investment Policy", *EUSA*, March 1999

<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/about/policy/ethicalenvironmental/unethicalinvestment>

⁵² Edinburgh University Students' Association Regulations: Student Democracy, p.38, https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Regulations.pdf.

⁵³ Edinburgh University Students' Association, 2002, "Ethical Investment", *EUSA*, February 2002, <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/about/policy/ethicalenvironmental/ethicalinvestment>

⁵⁴ Edinburgh University Students' Association, 2005, "Right to education/Birzeit twinning", *EUSA*, November 2005, <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/about/policy/external/righttoeducation>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Edinburgh University Students' Association Regulations, Student Democracy, p.38, https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Regulations.pdf.

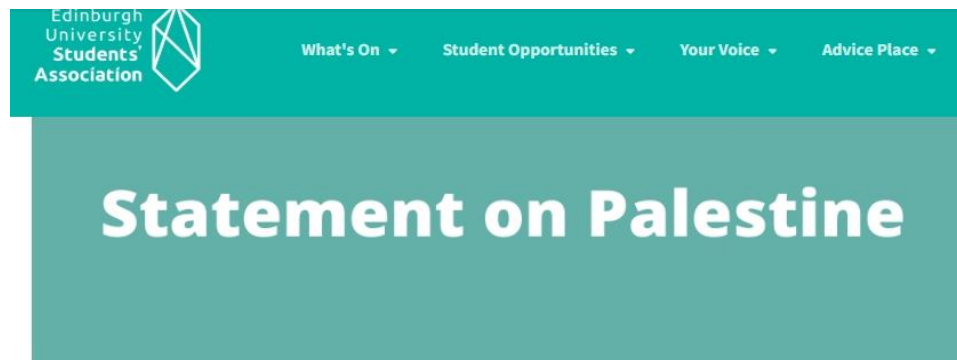
a EUSA [student council motion](#) which remains in effect for four years. [The "Motion to campaign to stop Lethal Autonomous Weapons \(LAWs\)" references](#) the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute which rates UoE within the top ten global research institutes in artificial intelligence⁵⁷. It also outlines UoE's partnership with the UK Government Communications Headquarters whereby this research is used by the Ministry of Defence to boost military capabilities, defence intelligence and information systems⁵⁸. The motion argued that the University is not upholding its duty to only participate in ethical academic research, urging the Association to lobby the University to include implementation measures for this policy⁵⁹. After this motion passed by the student council, it was set as a policy that remains in effect to date. Accompanying this policy's ratification, to campaign against LAWs and UoE's research towards LAWs, EUSA released a statement on 16 June 2021 wherein demands for divestment from complicit companies in Israel are explicitly made by the Association: "we want to echo the Justice for Palestine Society's call for the University to fully divest from companies which are complicit in the Israeli occupation, in line with their own Responsible Investment Policy"⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Edinburgh University Students' Association. 2021. *Campaign to Stop Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs)*. University of Edinburgh: EUSA. <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/about/policy/policyonyourUniversity%20%20> [and] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KUU4t4quTj47_XXBVVdmxdQFKuqL01uu/view?usp=drive_link

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Edinburgh University Students' Association. 2021. "Statement on Palestine". University of Edinburgh: EUSA. Published June 16, 2021. <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/news/article/palestine> (Accessed via the 'Internet Archive: Wayback Machine')



In order to

Figure 4: EUSA "[Statement on Palestine](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/news/article/palestine)" publically supporting the EUJPS demands for full divestment, citing the Association's history of solidarity with Palestine. It is no longer publically available on the EUSA website and was accessed through the 'Internet Archive: Wayback Machine' archival of web-pages over time, available at: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/news/article/palestine>

The past month has seen violence in Palestine escalate, and we have been devastated to witness the lives lost as a result of unacceptable violence by the Israeli state. This violence has primarily impacted innocent civilians, including children, many of whom were attacked during the festival of Ramadan, which should have been a time for reflection and celebration.

However, it is also important to note that the recent escalation follows decades of occupation which have left thousands dead, and many more without homes, access to healthcare or education, and unable to leave for safety.

We know that this issue affects many of our members who live or have loved ones in the region, and we appreciate students from our [Justice for Palestine Society](#) for holding us accountable and requesting we make a public statement addressing recent events.

The Students' Association has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people, including our democratically mandated affiliations to the [Right to Education Campaign](#) and [Friends of Birzeit University](#), and we are proud to continue that legacy with our statement today.

As part of this statement, we want to echo on the Justice for Palestine Society's call for the University to fully divest from companies which are complicit in the Israeli occupation, in-line with their own [Responsible Investment Policy](#).

Our opposition to the occupation of the Palestinian Territories aligns with our broader commitment to social justice, and we want to be clear that we are opposed to oppression in all its forms, including islamophobia and antisemitism, both of which are on the rise in the UK.

recount the University's financial investments, and specifically their direct investments in AI weapons systems, in the context of their complicity in war crimes perpetrated by the Israeli military against Palestinians, it is necessary to elaborate further on UoE's vested interest, and thus entanglement, in these AI weapons systems. Through the narration that follows in the later sections, it becomes clearer that UoE has a dual-interest in their investments in AI technologies used as weapons systems, that is they are globally leading the development of these technologies in academic spaces, and their investment in these expanding markets has great financial returns. Despite the motion which passed under EUSA targeting UoE's research collaboration with the UK Ministry of Defence, the programme continues. This research programme is titled the '[University Defence Research Collaboration in Signal Processing](#) (UDRC)', and its overarching telos: "from academic research to military capabilities"⁶¹. Since 2021, the dual interest in profiting off techno-advanced military markets and the innovative research which seeks to expand the market for these technologies informs mobilisation, and formal motions lobbying against this colonial complicity. [AnyVision is an example of one of these technologies](#) employed by Israel to surveil Palestinians at military checkpoints, perpetuating Israeli apartheid and oppression⁶². [This technology is in part developed here at UoE \(see section 4.5 for details on](#)

⁶¹ University of Edinburgh, "UDRC Data and Software Area". *University Defence Research Collaboration in Signal Processing*, <https://udrc.eng.ed.ac.uk/data-centre>

⁶² Palestinian academics and scientific organisations. 2020. "Palestinian Academic and Scientific Organisations Call to Cut Ties With AnyVision-Sponsored Workshop". *BDS Movement*. Published 24 July 2020.

[AnyVision](#))⁶³. Through this same UDRC scheme, UoE's other research collaborators include the arms manufacturers Leonardo, who supply Israeli fighter jet parts, which is no less consequential in terms of complicity in committing war crimes, facilitating the ongoing and unabated Israeli onslaught of Gaza for over 15 months⁶⁴.



Figure 5: Published by UoE, this figure is part of a document summarizing UoE's work in the UDRC programme and its structure. [Full document](#).

With regards to student direct action for Palestine, the University campus has been fertile ground for laying claim to unheard demands. [In 2009, a group of students occupied the Gordon Aikman Lecture theatre for Gaza, demanding boycott, divestment, scholarships, aid and educational forums](#)⁶⁵. This action was done in response to the Israeli bombing of the Islamic University of Gaza and the financial complicity of the University. Students occupied the lecture theatre for five days [and secured the following achievements](#):⁶⁶ boycott of Israeli bottled water on campus, an opportunity to bring their case for divestment directly to the University Court, scholarships for five Palestinian students, a collaboration between the University management, student body and an NGO to collect materials for shipping to Gaza, and a debate and lecture series on Israel/Palestine with staff and guest speakers. [The 2009 student occupiers wrote](#), “We feel that this is only the beginning of the movement to end the University’s role in the occupation and oppression of Palestine [...] The student occupation should be understood not simply as a tactic or a bargaining chip in getting our demands [...] It provided a space for a process far more democratic than what conventional University structures are able to achieve.”⁶⁷

<https://bdsmovement.net/news/palestinian-academic-and-scientific-organisations-call-cut-ties-with-anyvision-sponsored>

⁶³ University of Edinburgh, “UDRC Research”. *University Defence Research Collaboration in Signal Processing*, <https://udrc.eng.ed.ac.uk/research>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Student Occupiers Online Webpage. 2009. Edinburgh University Occupation for Gaza. <https://edinburghunioccupation.wordpress.com/>

⁶⁶ Student Occupiers Online Webpage. 2009. “Press Releases”. Published 16 February 2009. Edinburgh University Occupation for Gaza. <https://edinburghunioccupation.wordpress.com/about/>

⁶⁷ Ibid.



Figure 5: 2009 [Reclaimed Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre](#), sourced from the student occupiers webpage.

In [March 2022](#), during Israeli Apartheid Week, a group of students representing three different groups occupied the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre for one week, the aim being to create an alternate educational space wherein ‘Decolonise the Curriculum’ is understood as an imperative where political education is achieved through action, not metaphor⁶⁸. Another reclamation of Gordon Aikman followed in [October 2022](#), “holding the space to run a week of education for liberation” in collaboration with SOAS University of London⁶⁹. As with the other reclamations and their conceptualisation of a space not in terms of its bargaining power, this action too, held events such as teach outs on topics that centre Indigenous knowledge, such as online events with Indigenous activists developing radical education spaces, to learn more from local and



Figure 6: Drawing of GA, by student occupiers, March 2022

⁶⁸ Pettitt, Talia. 2022. “In conversation with activists at the forefront of the Gordon Aikman Takeover”. The Student Newspaper, 15 April 2022. <https://thestudentnews.co.uk/2022/04/15/in-conversation-with-activists-at-the-forefront-of-the-gordon-aikman-takeover/>

⁶⁹ Staff-Student Solidarity Network (@sssn_edu), “Reclaiming Our Space (Part 2): Gordon Aikman – A week of education for liberation alongside the launch of Planet Repairs Action Learning Education Revolution (PRALER) at SOAS University of London.” Instagram, 9 October 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/CjfbV-HoGuI/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D%E2%80%99Cholding

international struggles, bringing together various forms of organisation and collaboration with other groups beyond UoE.

One month after this reclamation, on the 8 November 2022, [RACE.ED](#) and the Kenyon Institute (Council for British Research in the Levant), alongside seven other academic co-sponsors invited Palestinian historian and cartographer, Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, the author of the Atlas of Palestine and Mapping my Return, dedicated to documenting Palestine's land and people with a practical plan for the Right of Return⁷⁰. The event titled "[On the Centenary of the British Mandate Era in Palestine \(1922-1948\): Dr. Salman Abu Sitta's Address to Balfour](#)" stirred public controversy on campus and in the media⁷¹. It was no coincidence that an event addressing Balfour's imperial legacy, through the Declaration's colonial erasure (discursively, juridically and then physically) of Palestinians, catapulted the University campus into a hostile site of colonial silencing. The globally renowned scholar was doxed and delivery of his content from former speaking engagements were tampered with by opposing groups as falsified evidence to accuse Dr. Abu Sitta of antisemitism. After review of the tampered contents by staff members of UoE, these claims of antisemitism were disputed and negated as false charges and the public lecture did take place. No apology was offered by the groups that tampered the evidence before submitting to Senior Leadership. In fact, after it was discovered that the evidence was tampered with, opponents of the lecture were still given special privilege to attend the lecture in the name of 'inclusivity' despite the seats already being sold out. An ultimatum was given to the organisers that if they did not find a way to open up the sold out seats, they would have to move the event off campus, the former of which could only be done by denying seats to those who already had tickets booked in advance. This coercive measure placed unreasonable distress on the organisers in the final days leading up to the event, putting them in a difficult and last minute bind. To date, no apology was ever offered to Dr Abu Sitta or the organisers for these malicious attacks by opponents and UoE's own senior staff member's exercise of coercive pressure. Despite the event going ahead, the negation of Palestinian life and lived experience was repeated, demonstrating that Balfour's imperial legacy not only imprints prejudices today, but casts light onto a continuing organisational principle of uninterrupted coloniality.

1.2. The Academic Year of 2023 to 2024 through The Gaza Genocide

We call upon our colleagues in the homeland and internationally to support our steadfast attempts to defend and preserve our universities for the sake of the future of our people and our ability to remain on our Palestinian land in Gaza. We built these universities from tents. And from tents, with support of our friends, we will rebuild them once again.

- [Open letter by Gaza academics and University administrators to the world.](#)

⁷⁰ "On the Centenary of the British Mandate Era in Palestine (1922-1948): Dr Salman Abu Sitta's Address to Balfour at The University of Edinburgh" [RACE.ED](#), <https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/events>

⁷¹ Abu Sitta, Salman. "Dr Salman Abu Sitta's Address to Balfour at the University of Edinburgh". *Council for British Research in the Levant Lecture*, University of Edinburgh, filmed

The University of Edinburgh's lack of acknowledgement or naming of the genocidal violence which Palestinians have been subjected by Israel since the 7 October 2023 puts a spotlight on Balfour's legacy of harm and how it shapes UoE's present. As argued here, UoE remains complicit in this legacy of harm with respect to the crimes it finances through its direct and indirect investments, which further advances UoE's involvement as a perpetrator of Palestinian erasure.

On the [29 December 2023](#), the Republic of South Africa filed a case against the State of Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), arguing that Israel violated the UN Genocide Convention in Gaza⁷². As a result of the present stages of the ICJ proceedings on this case, on the [26 January 2024](#), the Court, concluding that, "the Palestinians appear to constitute a distinct 'national, ethnical, racial or religious group', and hence a protected group within the meaning of Article II of the Genocide Convention" (para. 45) and that "Palestinians in the Gaza Strip form a substantial part of the protected group" (para. 45) ordered provisional measures to preserve the "right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts" (para. 59)⁷³. These "provisional measures will be exercised [...] in the sense that there is a real and imminent risk that irreparable prejudice will be caused to the rights claimed before the Court gives its final decision" (para. 61)⁷⁴. The provisional measures issued called for "immediate and effective measures" to protect Palestinians in Gaza under the Genocide Convention⁷⁵. Among them, Israel was ordered to take "all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide," to prevent starvation by allowing humanitarian assistance into Gaza, and "prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts" within the scope of the Genocide Convention⁷⁶. Israel ignored the measures and intensified the conducts scrutinised by South Africa throughout 2024. In 365 days, Israel dropped an estimated 75,000 tonnes of explosives on Gaza, and killed at least 41,909 Palestinians, "that is one out of every 55 people in Gaza" and of them "69% of the victims were children and women"⁷⁷. As this appendix is being written, Israel has killed at least 45,000 people⁷⁸, including 17,492 children, and injured more than 105,250 people⁷⁹. More than 11,000 Palestinians are missing under the rubble and prominent public health studies estimate that dozens of thousands of Palestinians have died indirectly as a result of

⁷² United Nations Regional Information Centre. 2024. "South Africa vs Israel: 14 other countries intend to join the ICJ case", *United Nations*, 30 October 2024. <https://unric.org/en/south-africa-vs-israel-14-other-countries-intend-to-join-the-icj-case/>

⁷³ *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, (Order: Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures) [2024] ICJ No.192

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Chughtai, Alia and Muhammet Okur. 2024. "One Year of Israel's War on Gaza," Aljazeera, 8 October 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/10/8/one-year-of-israels-war-on-gaza-by-the-numbers>

⁷⁸ United Nations Palestine. 2024. "Gaza death toll passes 45,000 as UN school suffers new deadly strike" *United Nations*, 17 December 2024. <https://palestine.un.org/en/286000-gaza-death-toll-passes-45000-un-school-suffers-new-deadly-strike>

⁷⁹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2024. *UNRWA Situation Report #151 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 12 December 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-151-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

the conditions of life—including the complete eradication of healthcare and the use of starvation as a weapon of war—imposed by Israel on the Gaza population⁸⁰.

The Lancet journal report titled “counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential” harrowingly notes, “collecting data is becoming increasingly difficult for the Gaza Health Ministry due to the destruction of much of the infrastructure”⁸¹. Published on the 19 June 2024, when at least 37,396 Palestinians in Gaza had been killed by Israel, medical researchers in counting the Palestinian’s killed in terms of both mortality and morbidity, “apply a **conservative** estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death to the 37 396 deaths reported” to the extent that “it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza”⁸². In Gaza, a strip only 41 kilometres long, there are now 29 *unmarked, mass graves* that Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor was able to map, and there are over 120 newly established, unregulated mass graves in the Gaza Strip, the majority of which remain undocumented as they are distributed across residential neighbourhoods, Courtyards of homes, yards of hospitals, schools, streets, sports fields, mosques etc⁸³.

As of 12 December 2024, 1,900,000 Palestinians have been displaced in Gaza (that is 90 percent of the population)⁸⁴, with many having “been displaced repeatedly, some 10 times or more” due to Israel’s “successive evacuation orders”⁸⁵. In Gaza’s town, Al-Mawasi, as of August there were 30,000 to 34,000 people per square kilometre⁸⁶. Whereas 500 trucks entered Gaza before this war, on a daily basis, which ‘kept the population on the brink of starvation’ during this Israeli onslaught only 76 humanitarian trucks enter the Strip to sustain a population of 2.3 million⁸⁷. In the North of Gaza, since 6 October 2024, Israel escalated what was already a brutal and annihilatory violence, and where starvation is used as a weapon of war, and “cooking gas had not entered for more than 13 months forcing Palestinians to resort to burning waste for cooking purposes”⁸⁸. As of the 2 December 2024, nearly “70,000 Palestinians trapped in northern Gaza face starvation, extermination in one of the largest genocidal campaigns in

⁸⁰ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2024. *UNRWA Situation Report #151 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 12 December 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-151-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

⁸¹ Khatib, Rasha, Martin McKee, and Salim Yusuf. 2024. “Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential.” *The Lancet*, vol. 404 (2024): 237. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(24\)01169-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(24)01169-3)

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Unmarked mass graves in the Gaza Strip,” *Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor*, 18 September 2024, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6469/Unmarked-mass-graves-in-Gaza-during-Israel%27s-genocide-%28October-2023---September-2024%29>

⁸⁴ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2024. *UNRWA Situation Report #151 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 12 December 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-151-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

⁸⁵ “How a year of war has devastated Gaza’s civilian infrastructure,” *Doctors without Borders*, 11 November 2024, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/how-year-war-has-devastated-gazas-civilian-infrastructure>

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2024. *UNRWA Situation Report #151 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 12 December 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-151-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

modern history”⁸⁹. Besieged by Israel in the north, Gazans “are experiencing severe famine, as they have run out of all types of food and lack access to clean water” and “some parts of the North Gaza governorate have been under a tightened siege for over 60 days”⁹⁰. Access remains extremely challenging and attempts to deliver aid into these besieged areas is prevented, leaving between 65,000 and 75,000 people without access to food, water, electricity or reliable healthcare, as mass casualty incidents continue and “hospitals are barely functioning amid severe supply shortages and ongoing hostilities”⁹¹. Doctors have been “forced to amputate limbs without anaesthesia, treat mass crush and burn injuries with extremely limited supplies, and try to work as Israeli forces have repeatedly besieged hospitals like Nasser and Al-Shifa”⁹². Mass graves were uncovered at the Nasser Hospital in April 2024, where more than 300 bodies were found, and more bodies were found at Al-Shifa Hospital (Gaza’s largest health facility) after a two-week Israeli siege on the hospital⁹³. Hospitals become a key target in Israel’s war, and are “turned from a place of healing into a massive grave yard” as bodies were “found with their hands tied and stripped of their clothes”⁹⁴.

Hesitation to take decisive action against Israel’s ongoing wholesale destruction of Gaza and campaign of genocide – the refusal to take action – serves as a tacit approval of Israel’s plausible crimes of genocide against Palestinians, also facilitating and escalating the onslaught to continue unabated into its 15th month, and demonstrates a reprehensible disregard for the lives and dignity of Palestinians. As argued here, our University’s financial investment—both direct and indirect—in Israel’s military infrastructure makes it entangled with war crimes perpetrated by the State of Israel against the colonised Palestinian population. These include (but are not limited to): the targeting of civilians in designated humanitarian zones; the targeted killing of journalists; the targeted killing of medical staff; the targeted killing of academics and scholars, the use of indiscriminate weapons; data collection on civilians; the destruction of schools and universities; the destruction of medical institutions and the targeting of healthcare staff; the mass arrests of civilians, including children; and the use of sexual violence, rape, and torture in Israeli prisons.

The University’s ties include (but are not limited to) direct investments in Amazon and Alphabet Inc (parent holding company of Google). Both companies are partners of Project Nimbus, a \$1.2 billion cloud partnership with Israel—both government and military, including

⁸⁹ “70 thousand Palestinians trapped in northern Gaza face starvation, extermination in one of the largest genocidal campaigns in modern history,” *Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor*, 2 December 2024, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6558/70-thousand-Palestinians-trapped-in-northern-Gaza-face-starvation,-extermination-in-one-of-the-largest-genocidal-campaigns-in-modern-history>

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2024. *UNRWA Situation Report #151 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 12 December 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-151-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

⁹² “How a year of war has devastated Gaza’s civilian infrastructure,” *Doctors without Borders*, 11 November 2024, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/how-year-war-has-devastated-gazas-civilian-infrastructure>

⁹³ “Uncovering of mass grave at Gaza’s Nasser Hospital: What you need to know,” *Aljazeera*, 24 April 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/24/uncovering-of-mass-grave-at-gazas-nasser-hospital-what-you-need-to-know>

⁹⁴ Ibid.

for technologies used in the occupied Palestinian Territories—which implicate the two companies in egregious human rights and international law violations. With all universities in Gaza destroyed and thousands of students and staff killed, students and staff at UoE have repeatedly raised these issues of complicit investments with the UoE administration and the Edinburgh University Student Association (EUSA), urging UoE to cease all investments and partnerships in Israeli war crimes, in line with both basic human rights and international law UN standards, and due diligence procedure to UoE’s 'Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policy'⁹⁵.

1.3 The UoE’s entanglement in Palestinian Genocide through its Investments: The preliminary research of October 2023

The staff-student community investigated UoE’s financial ties throughout the whole 2023-2024 academic years. UoE might dispute these figures and list of companies (although it did not do so when interviewed by the media about investments). Figures and companies were updated based on UoE’s disclosure of investments. This section of the appendix presents the data emerging from the first research carried out by students and staff. The next sections will add the details and analysis which emerged throughout the academic year, carried out by students and staff as part of the community mobilisation.

In late October 2023, EUJPS published its research on the University’s complicit investments “[To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid](#)” alongside a petition for divestment that amassed over 2300 signatures⁹⁶. The report, based on the [January 2023 Investment Portfolio](#), outlined the over £39 million invested by UoE in companies which support the infrastructure of Israeli regime of colonisation, apartheid and human rights violations in Palestine⁹⁷. These investments fall broadly into two (related) categories: investments supporting Israeli settler infrastructure and investments supporting Israeli military infrastructure.

⁹⁵ See Part III for the discussion on, and review of, the ‘Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policy’ between students, staff and the administration.

⁹⁶ EUJPS, 2023. To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid. October 2023: 1-18, https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mexJa_NeQV47SDoCqyGQ5oOacpsgaYU/view?usp=sharing

⁹⁷ Finance: University of Edinburgh, 2023. *University of Edinburgh Endowment and Investment Fund: List of Investments – January 2023*. (University of Edinburgh: 31 January 2023), <https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/List%20of%20Investments%20-%20January%202023.pdf>

The [research outlines the impact of investments](#) under the first category, contravening the ICC Statute, committing crimes against humanity (Article 7) and war crimes (Article 8). These crimes are applied but not limited to the enforcement of [apartheid in all territories under military rule of Israel](#) (West Bank, Gaza, and Palestinians in Israeli territories) exacerbated by settlement expansion, pogroms, the murder of Palestinians in the West Bank by the IDF and settlers, large-scale devastation of historical Palestinian lands, the administrative detention under military Court, torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinian political prisoners⁹⁸. EUJPS' research and report, "[To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli](#)

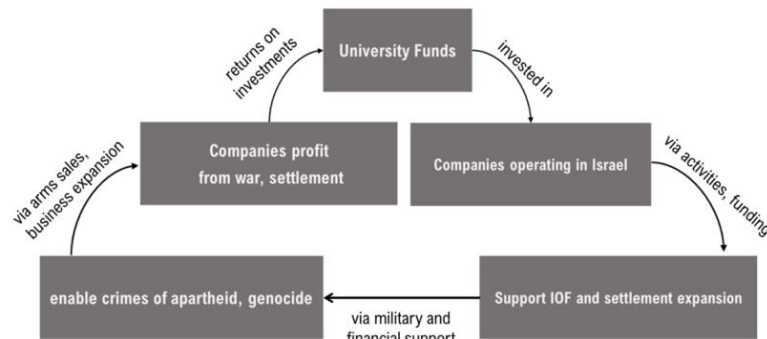


Figure 7: Mind Map illustrating the entanglement of UoE funds in companies which facilitate and profit off Israeli settler-colonialism, from EUJPS "A Call to Divest", page 4.

[Apartheid](#)⁹⁹ was completed within the first 20 days of Israel's war on Gaza. They note:

"For these students, it is clear that the various declarations of the Israeli government on the recent events demonstrate genocidal intent, and that the list of martyrs published on the 26 October 2023 is clear proof of genocidal policy. In 20 days officially 7,028 Palestinians have been murdered, including 2,913 children (41.4 % of the martyrs). This number does not include unconfirmed deaths under the civil registry, especially the Palestinians dead under the rubble, estimated 10 days ago to include a further 1,000 lives"¹⁰⁰.

1.3.1 Indirect Investments

Blackrock¹⁰¹: The University (based on research up to 26/10/2023) holds shares of approximately 30 million pounds in BlackRock, through which it finances the daily massacres carried out by the Israeli Air Force in Gaza. As a shareholder, the University contributes to BlackRock's investments in Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, both of which are arms companies supplying the Israeli military with advanced weapons systems. BlackRock's holdings in Lockheed Martin total to over 7 billion pounds; this corresponds to 17, 834, 881 shares at a

⁹⁸ "Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity," *Amnesty International*, 1 February 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/israels-apartheid-against-palestinians-a-cruel-system-of-domination-and-a-crime-against-humanity/>

⁹⁹ EUJPS, 2023. To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid. October 2023: 1-18, https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mexJa_NeQV47SDoCqyGQ5oOacpsgaYU/view?usp=sharing

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 8-9

value of \$ 445.97 per share. Lockheed Martin openly boasts about its substantial military and financial contributions to the IOF and associated industries. These contributions include: The provision of 50 advanced F-35 Lightning II fighters, named 'Adir' in Israel. These advanced jets are used daily to indiscriminately massacre civilians in Gaza. The provision of advanced Multiple Rocket Launch Systems, with accompanying guidance systems, used by the Israeli artillery in shelling of Gaza. Collaboration work with the Israeli military industry, totalling over 4 billion pounds in value. These collaborations include the manufacture of parts for fighter jets, and industrial cooperation with Israeli arms companies such as Elbit systems.

BlackRock holdings in Northrop Grumman are similarly immense, at over 4 billion pounds; this corresponds to 9, 687, 911 shares at a current value of 477.78 \$ per share (as of 26/10/2023). A manufacturer of multiple weapons and mass-surveillance systems used by Israel to enforce apartheid, Northrop Grumman is also one of the greatest profiteers from war. Indeed, damning evidence of both Lockheed Martin's and Northrop Grumman's war-profiteering can be gleaned from a glance at share prices in the companies over the last month.

On the first trading day following 7 October, both Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman stocks were up 10% and 16% respectively. As these inflows make their way from war to University funds, they deepen the University's already profound financial complicity in war crimes being committed in Gaza.

1.3.2 Direct Investments:

Amazon¹⁰²: The University of Edinburgh holds over 3.6 million pounds in Amazon, which is used to support Amazon's investments in Israel. In 2021, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Google finalised Project Nimbus with the Israeli Government. This deal is a 1.2 billion dollar contract to provide cloud services for the Israeli public sector, mainly benefiting the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)¹⁰³.

Amazon's significant investments in Israel have been powering what a recent Amnesty International report dubbed "automated apartheid" [citation] while also pledging a \$7.2 billion investment in Israel until 2037, along with an extension of its web services. Of particular concern is Amazon Web Services (AWS) which empowers Israeli forces with tools like their "Wolf Pack" program that uses facial recognition and AI technologies to allow them to monitor and collect data on Palestinians.

Amazon's deepening connections with Israel have also resulted in the supply of aircraft to Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI),⁶¹ which now implements autonomous "robo-snipers" and drones in

¹⁰² EUJPS, 2023. To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid. October 2023: 9, https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mexJa_NeQV47SDoCqyGQ5oOacpsgaYU/view?usp=sharing

¹⁰³ The Project Nimbus contract (Amazon and Alphabet Inc.) with Israel, which UoE directly invests in, is further elaborated on in Section 4.5 of this chapter (Part I).

Gaza and the occupied West Bank. It should be noted that Amnesty's report states that "the UK (should) regulate companies domiciled in their jurisdiction to ensure they do not provide any surveillance technology that can be used by Israel to maintain its apartheid system over the Palestinians... including the maintenance of illegal settlements in occupied territory"¹⁰⁴. This highlights the University's duty to divest from companies complicit in apartheid infrastructure, including technological infrastructure.

Booking.com: The official record of investments published by the University lists holdings in Booking.com valued at £2,623,711. According to the [UN OCHA, Booking.com operates in illegal settlements in the West Bank](#). These operations include the advertisement of properties in settlements for tourism and for sale. This constitutes a meaningful contribution to both the economy and the legitimacy of these settlements, in contravention of international law. By easing, encouraging, and benefiting from access to settlements, Booking.com is perpetrating settlement expansion. By holding stocks in Booking.com, the University is both funding and profiting from settler-colonialism. In 2022, Booking.com even included warnings on some of the listing of illegal settlements in the West Bank of Occupied Palestinian. The warnings included phrases such as "high risk to safety and to human rights" along with the term "occupied".

Despite the UN blacklist, as of Oct 2023 Booking.com UoE continued to invest in it (see next section for updates, the University divested at a later stage after student and staff pressure) . A University withdrawal from Booking.com would have been compatible with the University's own [Responsible Investment Policy](#)¹⁰⁵. Indeed the policy requires that the University makes: "A significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world" and also stipulates that "Court has endorsed the identification of controversial armaments as an area in which the University should not invest"¹⁰⁶. It further goes on to describe responsible investment as, "an investment approach that explicitly acknowledges the relevance of environmental, social and governance factors... It recognises that the generation of long-term sustainable returns is dependent on stable, well-functioning and well governed social, environmental and economic systems"¹⁰⁷

EUJPS' research document and call to action concluded by casting doubt on the [Responsible Investment Policy](#)¹⁰⁸ because of their ambiguous terms of reference. As questioned by EUJPS:

¹⁰⁴ EUJPS, 2023. To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid. October 2023: 9, https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mexJa_NeQV47SDoCqyGQ5oOacpsgaYU/view?usp=sharing

¹⁰⁵ University of Edinburgh: Sustainability, *Responsible Investment Policy*, (University of Edinburgh, 2016), 1-5, <https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/Responsible%20Investment%20Policy%20Statement%20%282016%29.pdf> [EASE login required] also available as pdf without [EASE login]: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YbBdYnDX5QMv1IrKVb4JNeNu0Mn-6Qnw/view?usp=sharing>

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

“We ask the University: what is “sustainable and socially responsible” in your contribution (via investment) in companies operating in West Bank illegal settlements?”

“We ask the University: do you not consider the F-16 and F-35 fighter jets financed by Black-Rock and provided to the IOF by Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman to be controversial armaments?”

“We ask the University: do you consider apartheid regimes to be well-governed systems?”¹⁰⁹

On 5 November, EUJPS launched its ‘Divestment Campaign Awareness Week’. “Did you know your tuition fees fund genocide?” [“These are investments in war and weaponry”: The EUJPS divestment campaign, explained](#) to the Student Newspaper¹¹⁰. During this week members of EUJPS and other concerned students would arrive early to the lecture and take the podium to briefly educate their classmates and spread the word about the divestment petition.

Ten days later, EUJPS’ first official communications with Senior Leadership was attempted. The document and petition for divestment was sent to Vice-Chancellor and Principal Mathieson highlighting the University’s colonial history and Balfour’s legacy in the present.

1.4 Community Mobilisation on Campus: Divestment in Action

On 11 October 2023, JPS held its first protest of the academic year, attended by students, staff, and community members. Two days later, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, addressed the University community [“Israel and Gaza: a message to everyone in our University community”](#) reminding all students and staff of UoE’s support for the [11 October UUK statement](#) which warns of any opinion or belief that signals support for Hamas as a criminal offence under the Terrorism Act (2000)¹¹¹. In a context in which every sign of support to Palestinian self-determination was equated with being “pro Hamas,” this threat added to the already intimidating environment created by the University’s [adoption of the IHRA](#) Working Definition of Antisemitism. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism—which has been criticised by the most prominent scholars and scholarly organisations in Jewish, Holocaust and Palestine studies—includes examples that instrumentally conflate Israel’s state

¹⁰⁹ EUJPS, 2023. To the University of Edinburgh: a Call to Divest from Israeli Apartheid. October 2023: 11, https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mexJa_NeQV47SDoCqyGQ5oOacpsgaYU/view?usp=sharing

¹¹⁰ Holden, Jude. 2023. ““These are investments in war and weaponry”: The EUJPS divestment campaign, explained”, *The Student Newspaper*, University of Edinburgh, <https://thestudentnews.co.uk/2024/02/17/these-are-investments-in-war-and-weaponry-the-eujps-divestment-campaign-explained/>

¹¹¹ UoE Principal and Vice-Chancellor. 2023. “Israel and Gaza: a message to everyone in our University community. To: All students and staff”, *University of Edinburgh*, 13 October 2023, <https://mailings.ed.ac.uk/t/27JU-1Z784-729011E72225D1E5ZIK0ZJ471E80379DB0D9C7/cr.aspx>

policies of racial discrimination against the Palestinian population with “antisemitism.”¹¹² It was adopted in 2020 without consultation with relevant staff and student groups. It translates an essentialised understanding of Jewish identity to the Israeli state. The definition has been adopted by UoE as foundational document to handle instances of staff and student antisemitism on campus.¹¹³ The intent of the IHRA, which functions as a “quasi-normative disciplining framework” is to “silence, intimidate and harm those who speak up against Zionist settler-colonial logic” (Sheehi 421, 2024).¹¹⁴ But UoE Senior Leadership ignored the concerns raised by students and [staff about the definition and their requests for its un-adoption](#).¹¹⁵

After the Oct 11th rally, protests on campus continued weekly, sometimes several times per week, with growing police presence. JPS alongside other student-led groups and community-wide solidarity groups began to also lead these protests, which then developed into walkouts and sit-ins. On 17 November a library sit-in took place with over 300 protestors calling for a ceasefire¹¹⁶.

¹¹²European Legal Support Centre British Society for Middle Eastern Studies. “Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in UK Higher Education: The Adverse Impact of IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.” <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/files/documents/Freedom%20of%20Speech%20and%20Academic%20Freedom%20in%20UK%20Higher%20Education-BRISMES-ELSC.pdf>

¹¹³ “Handling Allegations of Antisemitism – Statement”, *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Respect at Edinburgh*, University of Edinburgh, 6 March 2024, <https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/respect/antisemitism>

¹¹⁴ Sheehi, Lara. 2024. “Intent to Harm: Settler Colonial Outposts in Psychoanalysis.” *Middle East Critique*, 33(3): 419-434. doi:10.1080/19436149.2024.2348373.

¹¹⁵ The National. “Edinburgh University row over definition of antisemitism adopted by institution.” 20 January 2022. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/19860297.edinburgh-University-row-definition-antisemitism-adopted-institution/>

¹¹⁶ EUJPS, 2024. *I Call Upon You* (Glasgow Zine Library Collection), <https://gzlarchive.omeka.net/items/show/32045>

Another email sent by the Vice Principal Students and Deputy Secretary Students is addressed to all students [Israel and Palestine: a safe and respectful campus](#) following the sit-in¹¹⁷. The two senior leaders framed the multi-racial and multi-religious pro-peace sit-in as something that might make the UoE community “threatened and scared”. This was followed by a mass-email campaign responding to the administration. An excerpt from [JPS response](#) reads:

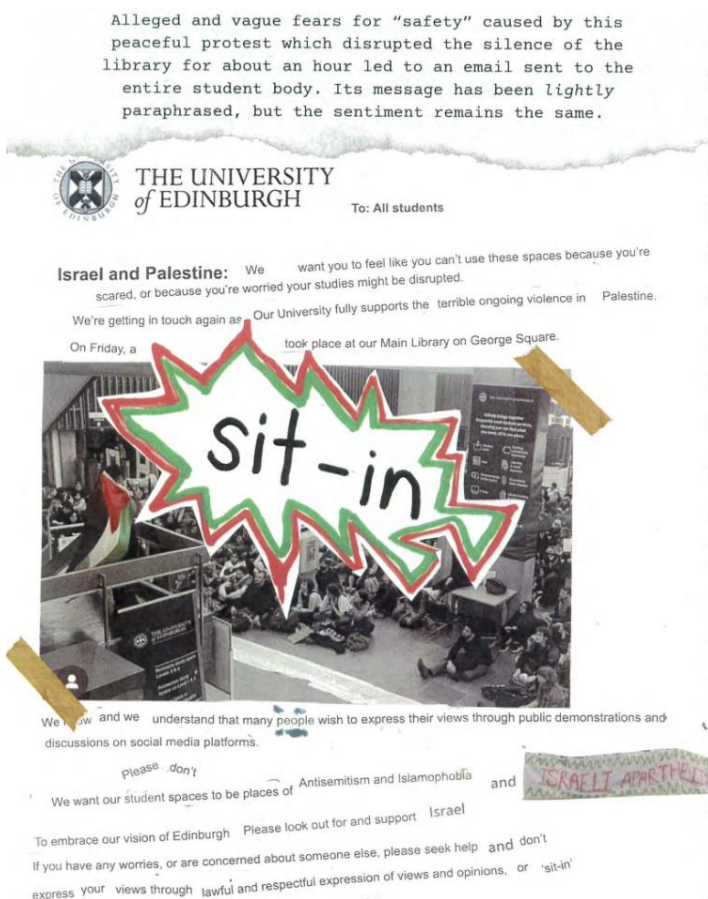


Figure 8: Photos and collage of Main Library sit in as reconstructed by EUJPS in their Zine, ["I Call Upon You"](#).

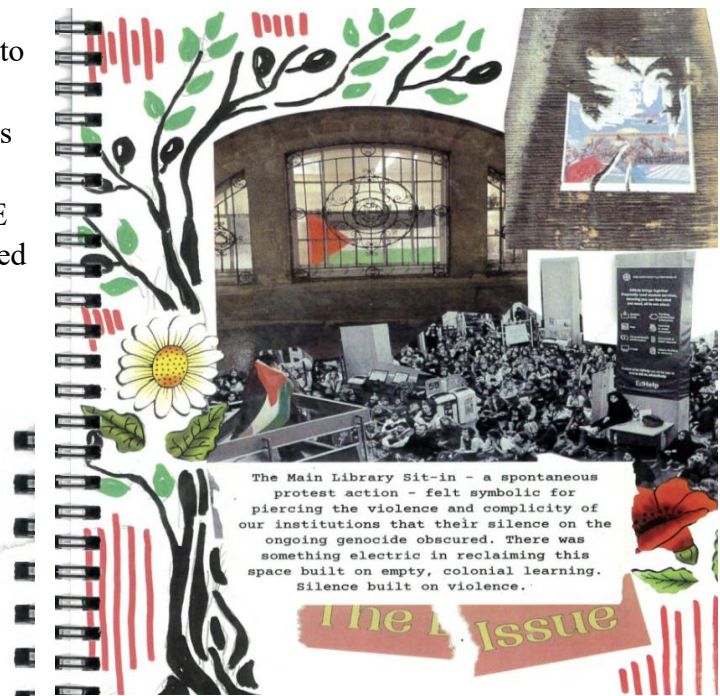


Figure 9: UoE's response to it administrations email from sit-in, as reconstructed by EUJPS in their Zine, ["I Call Upon You"](#).

“Framing Palestinian protests as threatening not only distracts from the core issue - our University’s complicity in grave human rights violations - but also misrepresents the peaceful nature of the protest [...] While we acknowledge discomfort may arise from discussions on critical issues, we firmly assert that such discomfort should not justify suppressing discussions. Allowing privileged discomfort to dictate the boundaries of expression perpetuates injustice and impedes the ability to address systemic problems”¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ UoE Vice-Principal Students and Deputy Secretary. 2023. “Israel and Palestine: a safe and respectful campus. To: All students”, *University of Edinburgh*, 21 November 2023, <https://mailings.ed.ac.uk/t/27JU-1ZFBD-729011E72225D1E5ZIK0ZJ471E80379DB0D9C7/cr.aspx>

¹¹⁸ EUJPS (@eu_jps), “Our Protests are Not Threatening! Response to the University’s accusational email” Instagram, 23 November 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/C0AC9t9IR9R/?img_index=3&igsh=MWtocGVjdXNweXlndQ%3D%3D

The Anti-Zionist Jewish student group [Kehillah, that also participated in the protest, commented](#):

“We wish to denounce the hypocrisy of the University, which through its vague and sophist rhetoric, speaks in our name. When you say ‘certain parts of our community’, your refusal to explicitly state the people you are weaponizing is cowardly at best, devastating at worst. This establishment is once again suffocating the voices of diverse Jewish people – specifically those who do not associate with the state of Israel and its ongoing violence, and rejects critics of this violence as antisemitism. [...]

When you claim that ‘this demonstration and others like it makes part of our community feel threatened and scared’, you are making a statement that is not in our name. Whilst it is true that this is a time where antisemitism hate crimes and violence is rising, this is a fear we refuse to monopolise: it is a very real emotion we share with Muslims and Arabs.

We object to being instrumentalised in the silencing of peaceful protests advocating for Palestinian liberation and argue that the amalgamation of Israel’s Zionism as being a cause that all Jews fervently defend is not only antisemitism but furthers acts of antisemitism [...].

We believe that we look out and support each other already.

Sincerely,
The Jewish voices on campus you silence”¹¹⁹.

Following this exchange, a first meeting was established with JPS, Kehillah and the Vice Principal Students and Deputy Secretary Students.

1.4.1 Reclamation of Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre

On the 26 February, a coalition of student groups, including the Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society (EUJPS), the Staff-Student Solidarity Network (SSSN), Edinburgh University Kehillah, Youth in Resistance, and Vegans for Animal Liberation and Ethical Revolution in Edinburgh (VALERIE) reclaimed the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre.

25 student-groups and local groups signed a petition in support of the reclamations demands (see demands on next page)¹²⁰.

¹¹⁹ Edinburgh University Kehillah (@eu_kehillah) , “Edinburgh Kehillah Response to the University’s Email”, Instagram, 28 November 2023,

https://www.instagram.com/p/C0L_PLQIjn4/?img_index=2&igsh=MXc0ZGNqZTNmcGVu

¹²⁰ EUJPS (@eu_jps), “Thanks to the groups and organisations that have signed in support of our demands”, Instagram, 4 March 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C4GLwreoMND/?img_index=1



Figure 10: List of EUSA societies that signed onto demands of reclamation, from @eu_jps, https://www.instagram.com/p/C4GLwreoMND/?img_index=1

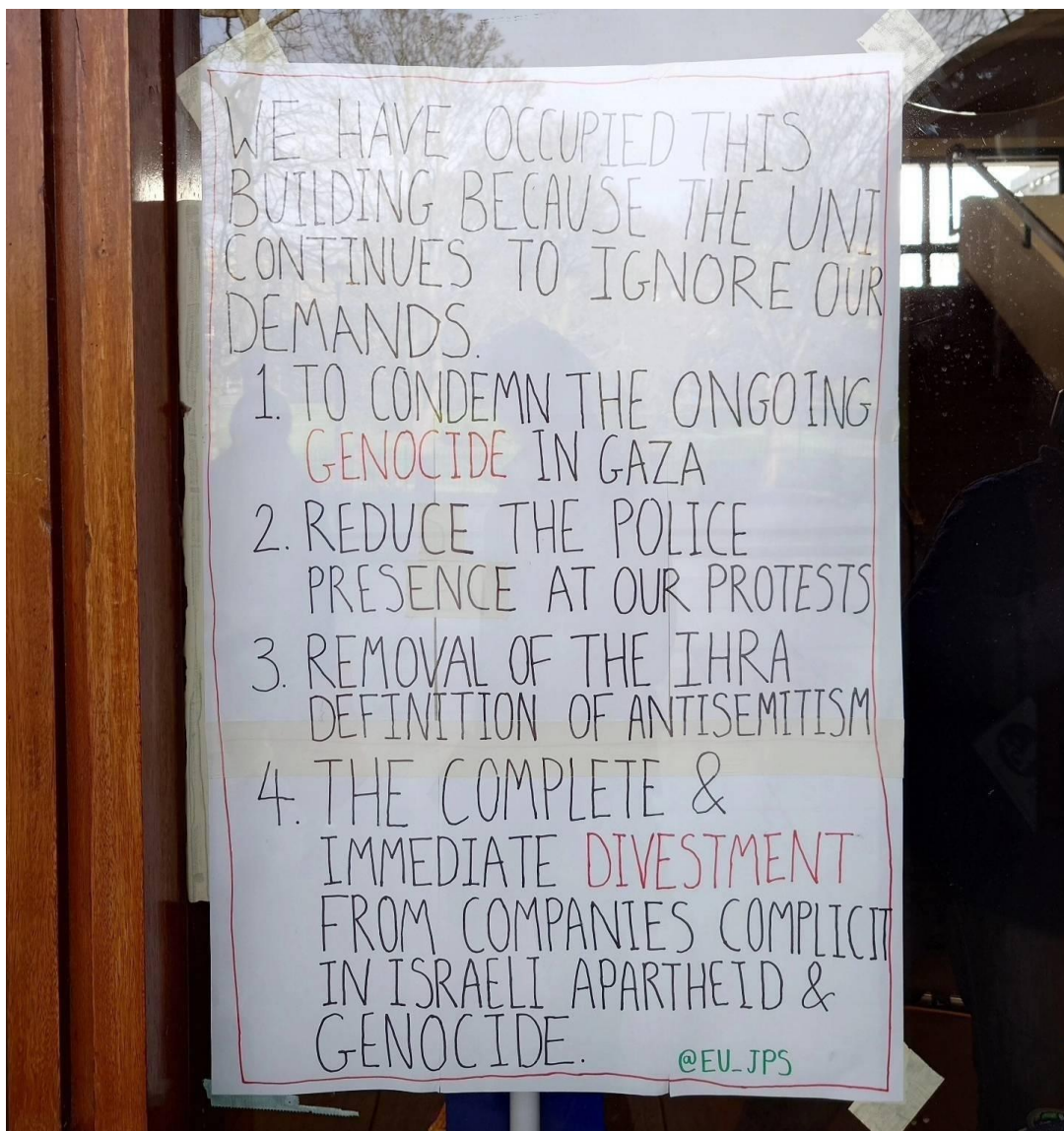


Figure 11: Poster at entrance of reclaimed Gordon Aikman Lecture Theater listing the demands which UoE 'continues to ignore'.

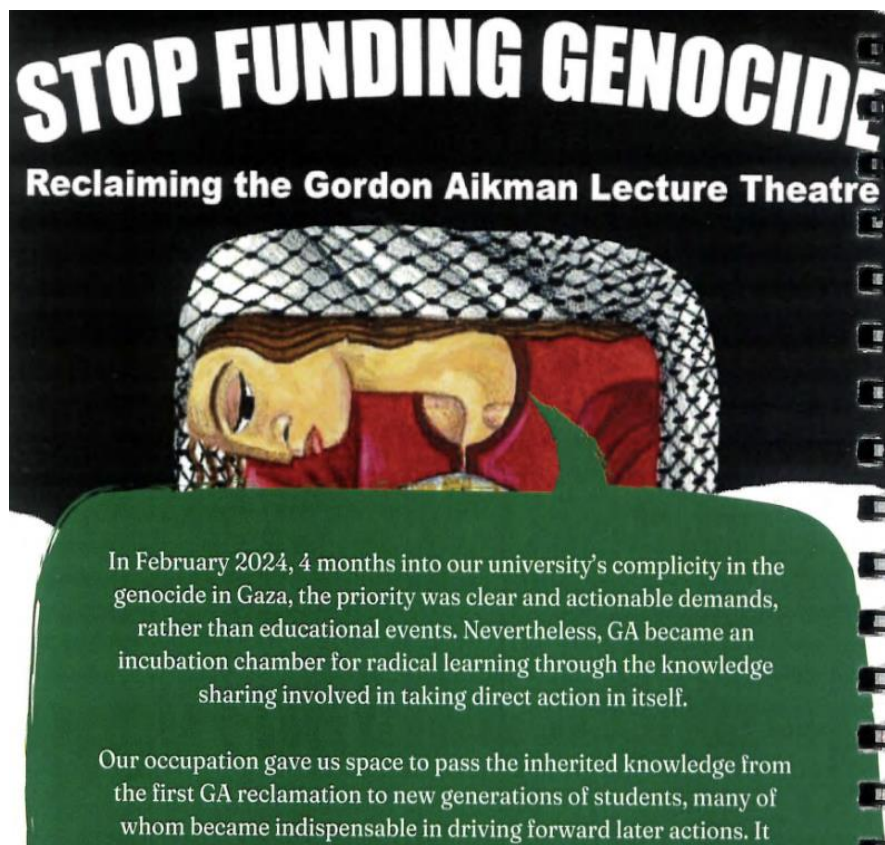


Figure 12: Page from EUJPS Zine, "[I Call Upon You](https://gzlarchive.omeka.net/items/show/32045)", reflecting on the reclamation as a site of radical learning through direct action that prioritises the demands, available to read online at: <https://gzlarchive.omeka.net/items/show/32045>

Quite unusually, the University's Investment portfolio that is meant to be released every January and July, was not released in January 2024, most probably due to the community mobilisation and the pressure on investments which make UoE directly complicit in the occupation and the violence in Gaza, as well as the ICJ proceedings.

The student occupiers received letters from the Vice-Principal Students, to which EUJPS responded:

"First and foremost, you have failed to provide an adequate response to our fundamental question: *how has the University of Edinburgh made any real tangible effort to support Palestinian students in an ongoing genocide?* We have attempted to engage in meaningful, honest, political discussions with this University about the genocide of Palestinians, which MUST be a staple of academic freedom and anti-racism, but these matters have clearly never been a priority for the University of Edinburgh. As students of the University of Edinburgh, we stand against this lack of action and have decided that further measurements need to be taken in order to fulfil our demands [...].

There has been a deplorable absence of any acknowledgement about the fact that every single University in Gaza has been destroyed (as referred to by BRISMES), with Israel most recently demolishing the last University, Israa University. The University's mission statement aims to achieve benefit for individuals, communities, societies, and our world.

Yet, instead of condemning the large-scale destruction of educational, religious and cultural sites in Gaza, we have merely received a response in which you acknowledge our ‘concern for the educational infrastructure in Gaza’.

Following our meeting with [the Deputy Secretary] and yourself, we agreed to a) maintain communications on divestment, b) to update the website in regards to support for Ukraine and ensure that equal support is given to Palestinian students and victims of this ongoing genocide, c) to host joint academic events with the University’s support, and support students.

There has been a complete lack of transparency in relation to what was previously promised, and the fact that we have received no response prior to this escalation on the links of the University and its investments, points to the fact that student support has not been prioritised by you [...].

Palestinian students have faced increasing harassment on campus, have experienced a complete lack of support in their studies while grappling with insurmountable grief, and have received concrete proof, time and time again, that the University of Edinburgh is demonstrating a blatant disregard towards Palestinian identity. These students are facing increasing criminalisation at the hands of staff and other students and are being policed and suppressed for grieving the loss of almost 30,000 lives. Edinburgh being the “first University of Sanctuary in Scotland” provides no comfort to these students, when they can see an open condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine, with support for them being limited to sympathy. This is a blatant example of the hierarchy of lives that Edinburgh University clearly aligns with. No email has been sent aside from the one on 10 October that only makes reference to the loss of Israeli lives. We specifically request a) recognition of, and a explicit condemnation of Israel’s continuing acts of genocide, b) reduction of police presence on campus surrounding our demonstrations in order to make our community feel more safe, c) the removal of the IHRA definition and the possible introduction of a more efficient concept that ensures the protection of Palestinian students and staff, and most importantly, d) **the complete and immediate divestment from those companies previously mentioned in this, and the previous emails.”**

The Reclamation led to two meetings with the Senior Leadership Team (Director of Finance, Provost, and University Secretary). Attendants also included members of Kehillah and EUJPS, the President of EUSA, as well as a member from the newly formed Student & Staff Assembly. It was communicated that the University still holds a minimal investment in Booking.com—so the bulk of this £2,623,711 investment was ceased, in a victory for the divestment community mobilisation—alongside the rest of the complicit investments. Faculty, students and the Association represented one voice calling for divestment. The Senior Leadership Team recognised shortcomings in the Responsible Investment Policy. Concerns regarding research collaborations with Israel, including the AI service, AnyVision were not responded to.

JPS published a statement online, making their communications with the administration transparent and accessible to the broader student-staff community¹²¹. The [Bureacratic Flow Chart](#) illustrated the cyclical, redundant nature in their interactions with the administration¹²². As seen in Figure 13, EUJPS summarise and map out their interaction through meetings with UoE administration, which reveal “dead ends” in UoE’s cooperation and consultation with EUJPS’ demands. The aforementioned JPS statement also elaborates on the contents of those meetings, writing that the “current systems of bureaucracy are not fit to address the urgency of divestment from companies complicit in genocide and settler-colonialism”. The statement continues, elaborating on the response by the Senior Leadership Team during their meeting with EUJPS on the Responsible Investment Policy, that “currently, the social responsibility and sustainability policy considers ‘ethics’ to be too subjective of a category in relation to divesting from Israeli companies. This policy is not fit to address revision of the University’s investments”. In other words, investing in Israeli military occupation, war and plausible genocide, was not deemed unethical by the Senior Leadership team¹²³.

Student Council Motion Calling for Divestment

After these meetings with the Senior Leadership Team, EUJPS passed a EUSA [Student Council Motion](#) in March 2024, calling for divestment with an overwhelming 97% vote in favor by the student body¹²⁴. Resolves included severing of research collaboration with Leonardo’s and AnyVision; the University must initiate a review of its Investment Policy and its application,

¹²¹ EUJPS (@eu_jps), “An update on the ongoing discussions with senior management on our demands”, Instagram, 30 March 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C5JEnC3ovH5/?igsh=MTFrM3l0MXZlOWoyMw%3D%3D&img_index=1

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Edinburgh University Students’ Association, 2024. *Supporting student groups calling for divestment*, University of Edinburgh: EUSA, March 2024, <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/about/policy/policyonyourUniversity> [

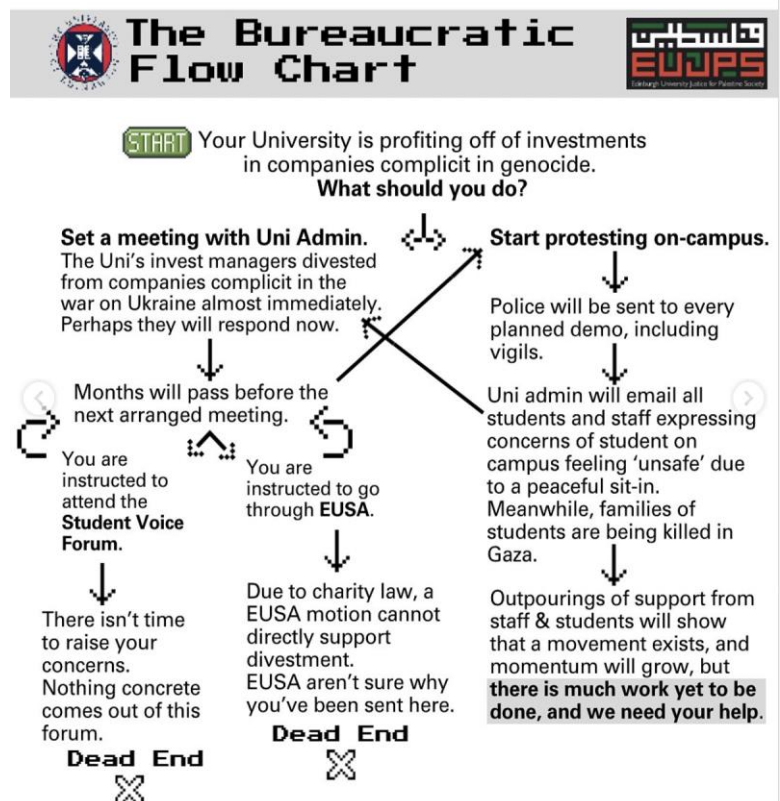


Figure 13: EUJPS ‘Bureacratic Flow Chart’, a graphic summarizing communication with UoE administration, shared online at: https://www.instagram.com/p/C5JEnC3ovH5/?igsh=MTFrM3l0MXZlOWoyMw%3D%3D&img_index=1

with a commitment to not invest in companies that would implicate it by breach of international law; EUSA to facilitate monthly meetings between JPS and Senior Leadership Team; to address student concerns on investments with due diligence; EUSA to issue a public statement condemning University's concurrent failure to engage to appropriately engage with JPS, and for EUSA to communicate that senior management *must* engage with JPS directly without EUSA as a mediator.

1.4.2 Hind Rajab Tower

One month later, a group of autonomous members of the University community reclaimed the 40 George Square (40GS) tower, and renamed it the 'Hind Rajab Tower'. EUJPS released a statement in [Solidarity with the Occupiers of 40GS](#):

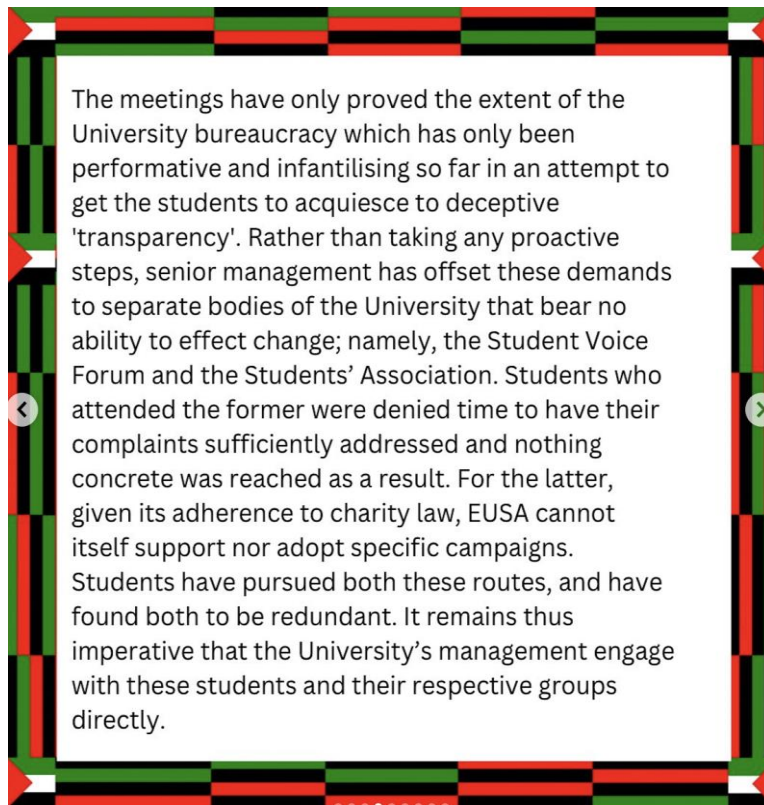


Figure 14: Part of the statement uploaded by EUJPS on their Instagram in solidarity with occupiers of 40GS, https://www.instagram.com/p/C5OfR2Yo7nr/?img_index=2&igsh=ZTVhbDRlZWxlYTUx

“We have yet to see any tangible effort made by senior management to engage with the clear and concrete demands of divestment [...] “let it be clear simply arranging a meeting does not suffice as engagement”¹²⁵.

¹²⁵ EUJPS (@eu_jps), “Solidarity with the occupiers of 40 GS”, Instagram, 1 April 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C5OfR2Yo7nr/?img_index=2&igsh=ZTVhbDRlZWxlYTUx

Frustrations with the Senior Leadership Team's attitude in redirecting divestment concerns towards channels and forums that cannot enact these changes, meant that students felt they had been put in a 'deadlock'. Students did engage with the Student Forum and EUSA which only further formalised the consensus among students and the Association. The consensus did not lead to the re-opening of a channel of communication with the administration which can allow for any concrete action to take place.

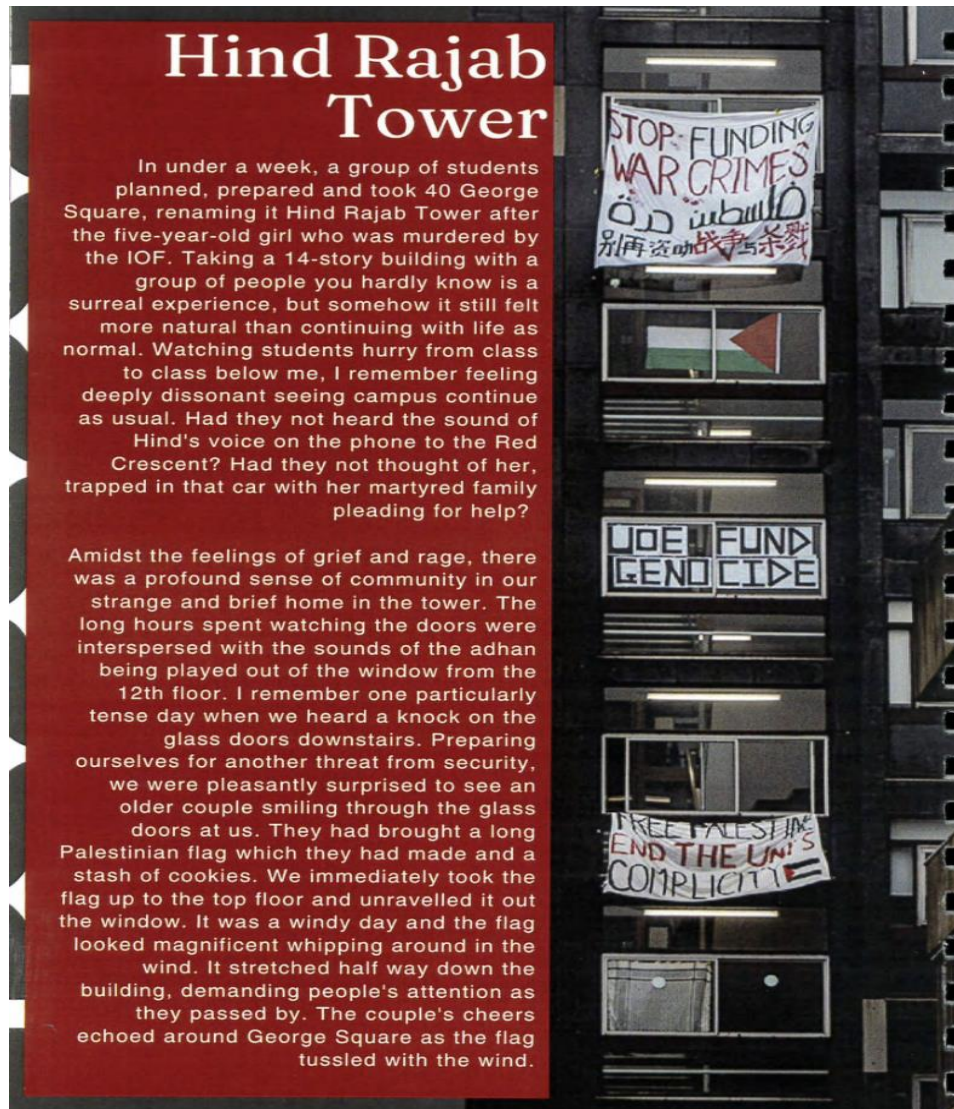


Figure 15: Page from EUJPS Zine, “I Call Upon You” of student testimonies and reflections from their time in Hind Rajab Tower, available to read online at: <https://gzlarchive.omeka.net/items/show/32045>

The students reclaimed 40 GS as Hind Rajab Tower, in memory of the six-year-old Palestinian girl who was [shot 335 times](#) by the Israeli forces¹²⁶. Hind Rajab was in the car with her family, when the Israeli army opened fire and killed her family. Hind was the sole survivor for three hours. She made a harrowing call to paramedics (also killed on the way to rescue Hind), etching her final screams as she was brutally murdered into the global conscience. Student action was not simply

¹²⁶ Forensic Architecture Team, Earshot, Fault Lines and Extended Team, 2024. “The Killing of Hind Rajab”, Forensic Architecture Investigations, June 21, 2024, <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-hind-rajab>

a tactic, it was necessary, they felt to communicate, mark and memorialise the violence UoE is complicit in and in forcing apathy to colonial atrocity to be reckoned with.

The mandatory release of this year's investments as of January was released, after a four month delay, in the first week of May. The [January 2024 Investments](#) revealed [an increase in their complicit investments by 18 million](#) since the beginning of the Gaza Genocide¹²⁷. This research by EUJPS found that the University's investments in Blackrock now stand at 50 Million, and Amazon at 4.9 Million¹²⁸. JPS called not only for divestment, but [also a "reparation fund for Gaza equal to the profit made off bloodmoney"](#)¹²⁹.

It was also revealed that we no longer invest in Booking.com—no doubt a victory for the divestment movement. However, it demonstrated a lack of transparency as information was withheld from the student body and FOI requests ignored.

A large-coalition effort was launched in collaboration with the Postgraduate Business School faculty, the Student & Staff Assembly and student groups to further the research on complicit investments of UoE.

1.4.3 Detailed Investigation of UoE's Complicit Investments by the Postgraduate Business School

The Postgraduate Business School published a [detailed investigation of complicit investments](#)¹³⁰. Complicit companies are grouped according to direct/indirect investments, and research covers the GBP of investments by the University since January 2024, and then updated again in July 2024, the document delineates 'how is it involved in genocide?', whether it is also involved in military contracting, the source of the information and the 'type of complicity'.

“We would like to emphasise that the University Ethical obligations equally apply to all their direct and indirect investments. The University has a right and obligation to ask all its subcontractors to apply its ethical principles across all their indirect investments, including public equity/debt, not listed equity/debt (private) and real estate investments. We demand full transparency and timely & regular disclosure about the funds in which we are investing and all their

¹²⁷ Finance: University of Edinburgh, 2024. *University of Edinburgh Endowment and Investment Fund: List of Investments – January 2024*. (University of Edinburgh: 24 January 2023), <https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/List%20of%20investments%20-%20January%202024.pdf>

¹²⁸ EUJPS (@eu_jps), 2024. “The University has invested another 18 million in targeted companies since Gaza Genocide”, Instagram, 3 May 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C6g3KNbISr0/?img_index=2&igsh=ZnMyZXR4cGo4cmNq

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Business School, 2024. “Statement on the University of Edinburgh's investments complicit in genocide”, p.1-19, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lRyeAM4hmy52hmuso3kEKDe2b6_1zINk/view

holdings. In addition we demand transparency about how the University is holding all its investment managers accountable to ensure its ethical obligations are upheld by them”¹³¹

Table 1. Direct Investments in complicit companies

Company	GBP (investment by the University Endowment January 2024)	GBP (investment by the University Endowment July 2024)	How is it involved in genocide? (rationale)	Also involved in Military Contracting	Source	Type of complicity
Alphabet Inc Class C	2,775,982	3,360,683	One of the world's largest IT companies. Its subsidiary Google provides software and cloud services to US immigration authorities as well as the Israeli government and military and discriminates against Palestinians.	Involved	American Friends Service Committee Pitchbook	1. Companies engaged and involved in genocide and or providing services enabling genocide (those providing military contracting)
Amazon.com	4,903,586	5,857,091	The world's largest online retailer and cloud storage provider. It's the largest provider of cloud computing for US immigration authorities as well as the Israeli government and military, and also supports prison and police surveillance. 1. Direct investments in Amazon (£4.9 m) and Alphabet (£2.775 m), Google's parent		American Friends Service Committee	1. Companies engaged and involved in genocide and or providing services enabling genocide (those providing military contracting)

¹³¹ Ibid., p2.

			company. Google and Amazon are partners in Project Nimbus, the \$1.2 bn project providing AI and cloud services to Israel including its military. Project Nimbus prohibits both companies from having any oversight into how their tech is used nor withdrawing from the contract in the case of rights violations. Google has also been exposed for entering into a more than \$1 m direct consultancy with Israel's military, with the contract dated March 2024 – in the midst of a known and ongoing genocide.		Pitchbook	
Atlas Copco B	1,658,837	1,885,802	A Swedish multinational manufacturer of industrial tools and equipment. Some of its products were used in the construction of the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem railway, which cuts through the occupied West Bank. 2. The university invests in Atlas Copco (£1.65 m) the Swedish manufacturer that is known to provide products for the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem railway, a project that is complicit both in the military occupation of Palestinian lands and territorial expansion through settlement normalization. The project has been criticized for clear violations of international law.	Involved	American Friends Service Committee	1.Companies engaged and involved in genocide and or providing services enabling genocide (those providing military contracting)
Meta Platforms Inc	4,789,704	5,093,762	The parent company of Facebook, which discriminates against Palestinians in its content moderation policies.3.The university invests in Meta (£4.789 m), which has long been known and criticized for discriminating against Palestinians across its social media platforms. More recently, the revelation that Israel's new AI system 'Lavender' – being trailed during this genocide and designed to maximize the murder		American Friends Service Committee	1.Companies engaged and involved in genocide and or providing services enabling genocide (those providing military contracting)

Figure 16 and 17: Research on UoE's direct investments, their involvement in genocide, and type of complicity from the Postgraduate Business School research, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IRyeAM4hmy52hmuso3kEKDe2b6_1zINk/view

1.4.4 On Artificial Intelligence used in Genocide by Israel: Collective Knowledge produced by Student & Staff Assembly:

This section cites the specific complicity to set additional and necessary context for the short-term demands towards two complicit companies: Amazon and Alphabet Inc. (Google) which are elaborated on in Part II.

As part of the Project Nimbus contract, Google and Amazon are contractually barred from both having any oversight into how its technology is being deployed, even in the case of suspected human rights abuses, and also preventing specific arms of the Israeli state using the technology¹³². The contract was signed the same week the Israeli military attacked Palestinians in the Gaza Strip killing nearly 250 people, including more than 60 children, and displacing 72,000 Palestinians from their homes¹³³. This was described by Israel as “the worlds first AI war”¹³⁴. The dual-use technology provided under the Nimbus contract serves all ministries of Israel, this includes the military and the government¹³⁵. Thus, both Google (Alphabet Inc Class

¹³² Haskins, Caroline. “The hidden ties between Google and Amazon’s project Nimbus and Israel’s military.” *WIRED Middle East*. Published 16 July 2023. <https://wired.me/business/what-hides-behind-google-and-amazons-project-nimbus/>

¹³³ Center for Preventative Action, 2024. “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, *Global Conflict Tracker*, 6 October 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

¹³⁴ Goodfriend, Sophia. “How AI is intensifying Israel’s bombardment of Gaza.” +972mag. Published 6 June 2023. <https://www.972mag.com/israel-gaza-drones-ai/>

¹³⁵ Anonymous Google and Amazon Workers. “We are Google and Amazon workers. We condemn Project Nimbus.” *The Guardian*. Published 12 October 2021.

C) and Amazon “make the systematic discrimination and displacement carried out” in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, “even crueller and deadlier for Palestinians” allowing “further surveillance of and unlawful data collection on Palestinians, and facilitate expansion of Israel’s illegal settlements on Palestinian land”¹³⁶.

Since October 2023, from the beginning of Israel’s current onslaught on Gaza, there has been a “dramatic increase in the purchase of services from Google cloud, Amazon AWS” by the Israeli army “with most purchases happening through the Nimbus contract”¹³⁷. In February 2024, five months into Israel’s annihilatory onslaught on Gaza - and less than one month after the ICJ ordered provisional measures to protect Palestinians in Gaza under the Genocide Convention – the head of Israel’s Cyber Directorate was quoted saying: “phenomenal things are happening in battle because of the Nimbus public cloud, things that are impactful for victory”¹³⁸. On 10 July 2024, at a conference titled “IT for IDF”, the commander of the Israeli army’s Center of Computing and Information Systems unit (which provides data processing for the whole military) confirmed publicly that the Israeli army is using cloud storage and AI services provided by civilian tech giants (her lecture slides included reference to both Amazon and Google Cloud [Alphabet Inc.]) in their ongoing onslaught of th Gaza Strip¹³⁹. She described these cloud services as a “weapons platform” which includes applications for marking targets for bombings, a portal for viewing live footage from UAVs over Gaza’s skies, as well as fire, command, and control systems¹⁴⁰. Separately, Israeli officials are also reported to have stated that without Project Nimbus, they could simply not have the data storage and computing power they deemed militarily necessary. Another Israeli military source confirmed that Google and Amazon are providing Israel with “the most advanced services” available, which were used in the current Gaza war¹⁴¹.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange made clear that Israel’s AI weapons systems that are, to a large extent, enabling an intensity of bombardment the likes of which the world has never before seen, absolutely depend on the ability to store and process mass surveillance data, and this requires extensive cloud computing infrastructure¹⁴². Project Nimbus has facilitated Israel’s wholesale destruction of Gaza, merging surveillance, assassination and warfare, by generating

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/12/google-amazon-workers-condemn-project-nimbus-israeli-military-contract>

¹³⁶ Anonymous Google and Amazon Workers. “We are Google and Amazon workers. We condemn Project Nimbus.” *The Guardian*. Published 12 October 2021.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/12/google-amazon-workers-condemn-project-nimbus-israeli-military-contract>

¹³⁷ Abraham, Yuval. “‘Order from Amazon’”: How tech giants are storing mass data for Israel’s war”. +972mag. Published 4 August 2024. <https://www.972mag.com/cloud-israeli-army-gaza-amazon-google-microsoft/>

¹³⁸ Haskins, Caroline. “The hidden ties between Google and Amazon’s project Nimbus and Israel’s military.” *WIRED Middle East*. Published 16 July 2023. <https://wired.me/business/what-hides-behind-google-and-amazons-project-nimbus/>

¹³⁹ Abraham, Yuval. “‘Order from Amazon’”: How tech giants are storing mass data for Israel’s war”. +972mag. Published 4 August 2024. <https://www.972mag.com/cloud-israeli-army-gaza-amazon-google-microsoft/>

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Assange, Julian. 2024. “‘Artificial Intelligence Used for Mass Assassinations’ in Gaza.” *Palestine Chronicle*. Published 4 October 2024. <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/artificial-intelligence-used-for-mass-assassinations-in-gaza-julian-assange/>

targets, or kill lists, at far greater speed than ever before¹⁴³. Under the Nimbus contract, Israel can pay for additional storage in the extensive cloud computing infrastructure exponentially, without oversight, thereby making the additional benefit of that data more inaccessible in the case that international Courts wish to acquire it¹⁴⁴. This technology has been described by a former intelligence officer, as a “mass assassination factory”¹⁴⁵.

These AI-informed weapons systems, or Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, used by Israel to generate ‘targets’ is calculated and known in advance to the army’s intelligence units, who know before carrying out an attack how many Palestinians will be killed “as collateral damage”, and relax the settings for categories of targets to include “hundreds of civilian deaths”¹⁴⁶. The investigation by +972 and Local Call, cites another source who stated that “nothing happens by accident [...]. When a 3-year-old girl is killed in a home in Gaza, it’s because someone in the army decided it wasn’t a big deal for her to be killed — that it was a price worth paying”¹⁴⁷. Additionally, the Israeli military’s widespread use of a system called “Habsora” (“The Gospel”), creates AI-generated kill-lists “automatically at a rate that far exceeds what was previously possible”¹⁴⁸. “The Gospel” is just one automated kill system the Israeli military is known to use, others are called “Lavendar” and “Where’s Daddy?” , a vile sadistic title that reflects much of what we have seen in terms of Israeli soldiers self-reporting sadistic acts online from Gaza¹⁴⁹.

The Economic Activism Program’s project ‘Investigate’ also outlines, that Project Nimbus is also used to “directly administer Israel’s policies of apartheid and persecution include the Israeli Security Agency (Shabak/“Shin Bet”), Police, Prison Service, and land and water authorities”¹⁵⁰. Also, “Israel’s two large state-owned weapons manufacturers, Israel Aerospace Industries and Rafael, are also Nimbus users” and so are the “Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organisation, works to expand Israel’s illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and Golan Heights. Israeli cities and local governments also have access to the Nimbus platform, meaning that it could directly serve Israel’s illegal settlements”¹⁵¹.

Finally, Project Nimbus, because it services all ministries of the Israeli state, including police, will undoubtedly be involved in storing and processing data related to Israel’s more longstanding surveillance and cyber surveillance projects, such as Blue Wolf and Red Wolf,

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Haskins, Caroline. 2023. “The hidden ties between Google and Amazon’s project Nimbus and Israel’s military.” WIRED Middle East. Published 16 July 2023. <https://wired.me/business/what-hides-behind-google-and-amazons-project-nimbus/>

¹⁴⁵ Assange, Julian. 2024. “‘Artificial Intelligence Used for Mass Assassinations’ in Gaza.” Palestine Chronicle. Published 4 October 2024. <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/artificial-intelligence-used-for-mass-assassinations-in-gaza-julian-assange/>

¹⁴⁶ Abraham, Yuval. 2023. “‘Bottom of Form A mass assassination factory’: Inside Israel’s calculated bombing of Gaza.” Balfour Project. Published 30 November 2023. <https://balfourproject.org/a-mass-assassination-factory-inside-israels-calculated-bombing-of-gaza/>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Abraham, Yuval. 2024. “‘Lavender’: The AI machine directing Israel’s bombing spree in Gaza”. +972mag. Published 3 April 2024. <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

¹⁵⁰ Investigate, “Alphabet Inc”, A Project of the American Friends Service Committee, <https://investigate.info/company/alphabet>

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

which use facial recognition technology, including tech like AnyVision which is known to be at least in part developed here as part of University of Edinburgh's 'University Defence Research Collaboration in Signal Processing' (as mentioned earlier in section 1). AnyVision, an Israeli AI firm responsible for operating the racial-profiling checkpoints Palestinians are subject to by the Israeli military in the West Bank, as well as other mass surveillance technologies on behalf of the Israeli occupation is one of UoE's direct research ties¹⁵². UoE has collaborated with AnyVision on "deep learning face recognition for security" over the last six years which is directly applicable to the racial profiling mass surveillance infrastructure in West Bank that significantly elaborated, worsened, and automated the rigid Apartheid conditions imposed by Israeli occupying authorities¹⁵³.

The following section, Part II, will discuss the development of the student and staff demands along the short-term, urgent and evidence-based demand for divestment from the two directly complicit companies. Part II elaborates on the discussions that took place in response to the student-staff demands, detailing specifics of UoE's adjudication on LAWs and its definitions. With the next section's focus on UoE's direct investments, Part I of this Appendix concludes with evidence of both Amazon and Alphabet Inc. complicity in Israeli war crimes, with specific details and examples which demonstrate that a context-specific application of LAWs in apartheid, crimes against humanity, and crimes of genocide, in line with international humanitarian law and the ICJ's provisional measures ordered against Israel. The administrative response of potential ethical concern of the general deployment of LAWs narrated in Part II should be understood within this context provided in Part I, as a diluting of the precise demands made calling for 'immediate and effective measures' to be taken. Part I establishes there is no ambiguity in the irresponsible, unethical and plausibly genocidal deployment of these two companies.

¹⁵² Dwoskin, Elizabeth. 2021. "Israel escalates surveillance of Palestinians with facial recognition program in West Bank". *The Washington Post*. Published 8 November 2021.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/israel-palestinians-surveillance-facial-recognition/2021/11/05/3787bf42-26b2-11ec-8739-5cb6aba30a30_story.html

¹⁵³ University of Edinburgh, "UDRC Research". University Defence Research Collaboration in Signal Processing. <https://udrc.eng.ed.ac.uk/research>

2. 'Balfour's University': Encampment and the Student Hunger Strike

2.1: The 'Balfour Takeover'

[The University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp](#)¹⁵⁴ began on 5 May 2024, reclaiming the old college quad. The [JPS announcement of the beginning of the encampment](#)¹⁵⁵ quotes Balfour's speech from the first Allied Colonial University Dinner in 1903;

“it is that we are here representing what will turn out to believe, a great alliance of the greatest educational instruments in the Empire... not merely to train the youth which is destined to carry on the traditions of the British Empire, but also to further those great interests... without which no Empire, however materially magnificent, can really say that it is doing to share in the progress of the world”¹⁵⁶.

EUJPS commented to this quote: “now, we demand an end to this legacy”. This is a legacy that is marked not only by historical colonial entanglements, a legacy that has yet to be publicly acknowledged by UoE, but also ongoing colonial continuities that are further elaborated in this Part II.



Figure 2: Graphic by EUJPS from the beginning of the encampment when UoE was renamed 'Balfour's University' by its students. Available at:

https://www.instagram.com/p/C6lcH7VoFxX/?img_index=3&igsh=ang3cWVucm95OHkx

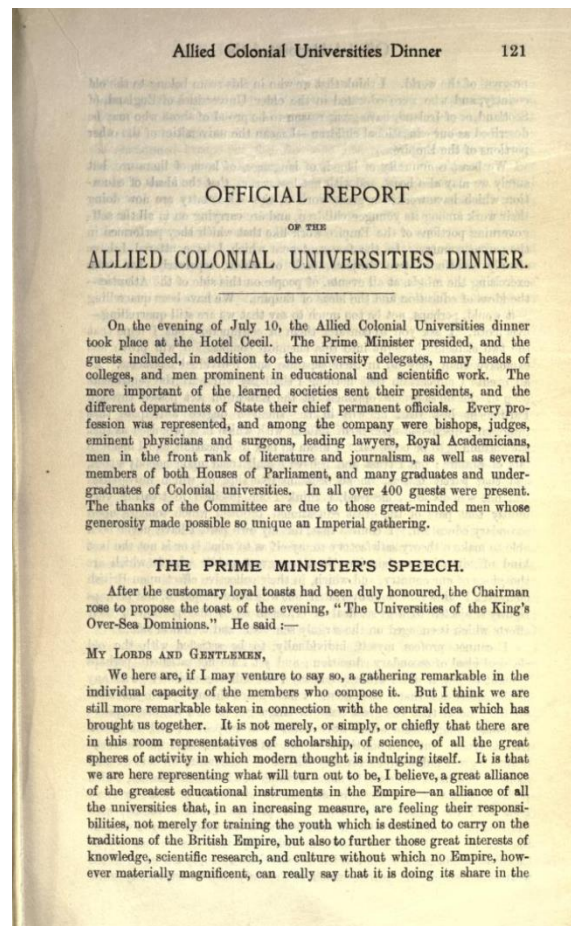


Figure 1: Balfour, Arthur J. 1904. “Official Report of the Allied Colonial Universities Dinner: The Prime Minister’s Speech.” *The Commonwealth and Empire Review*, edited by C. Kinloch Cooke, Vol. 6: 121

¹⁵⁴ UoE Students. 2024. “The University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp.” *The University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp*. Published 5 May 2024. <https://uoegazasolidaritycamp.carrd.co/>

¹⁵⁵ EUJPS (@eu_jps). 2024. “Students take Lord Balfour’s University.” *Instagram*, 5 May 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C6lcH7VoFxX/?img_index=3&igsh=ang3cWVucm95OHkx

¹⁵⁶ Balfour, Arthur J. 1904. “Official Report of the Allied Colonial Universities Dinner: The Prime Minister’s Speech.” *The Commonwealth and Empire Review*, edited by C. Kinloch Cooke, Vol. 6: 121-123.

Below is the full statement released by EUJPS (Figure 3) from the [University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp Website](https://uoegazasolidaritycamp.carrd.co/)¹⁵⁷:

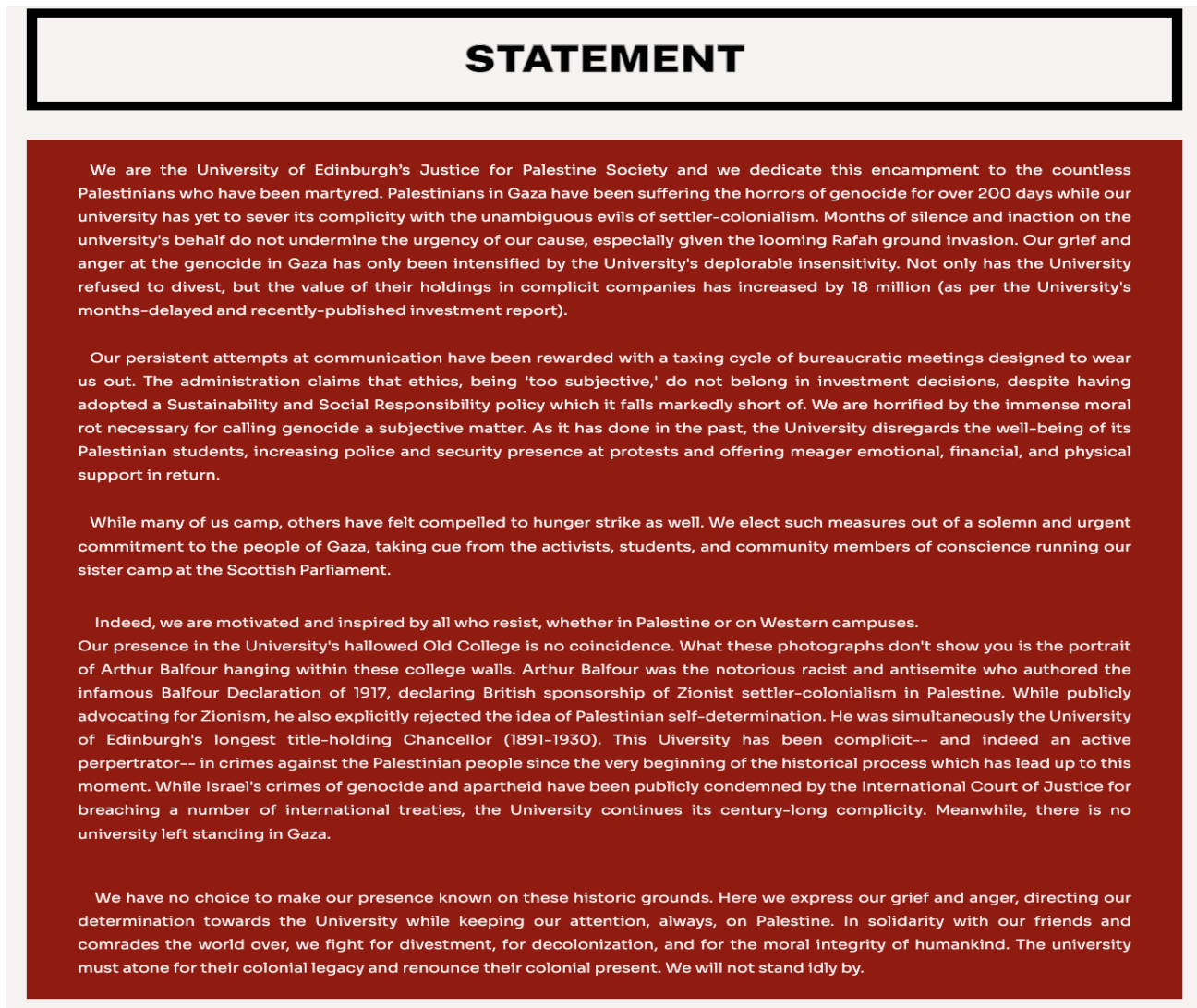


Figure 3: EUJPS statement of the encampment, <https://uoegazasolidaritycamp.carrd.co/>

On the same day that the Old College Quad was reclaimed by students, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, released the first [response to the encampment to the encampment](#)¹⁵⁸. Countering the Principal's narration of the encampment to the student body, EUJPS published a [response to the language used in the statement](#)¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁷ UoEStudents. 2024. "The University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp." *The University of Edinburgh Gaza Solidarity Camp*, 5 May 2024. <https://uoegazasolidaritycamp.carrd.co/>

¹⁵⁸ University of Edinburgh, Principal. 2024. "" *The University of Edinburgh*. 21 May 2024. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2024/old-college-quad-protest>

¹⁵⁹ EUJPS (@eu_jps). 2024. "Edited University Statement." *Instagram*. 8 May 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6toi3fosYn/>

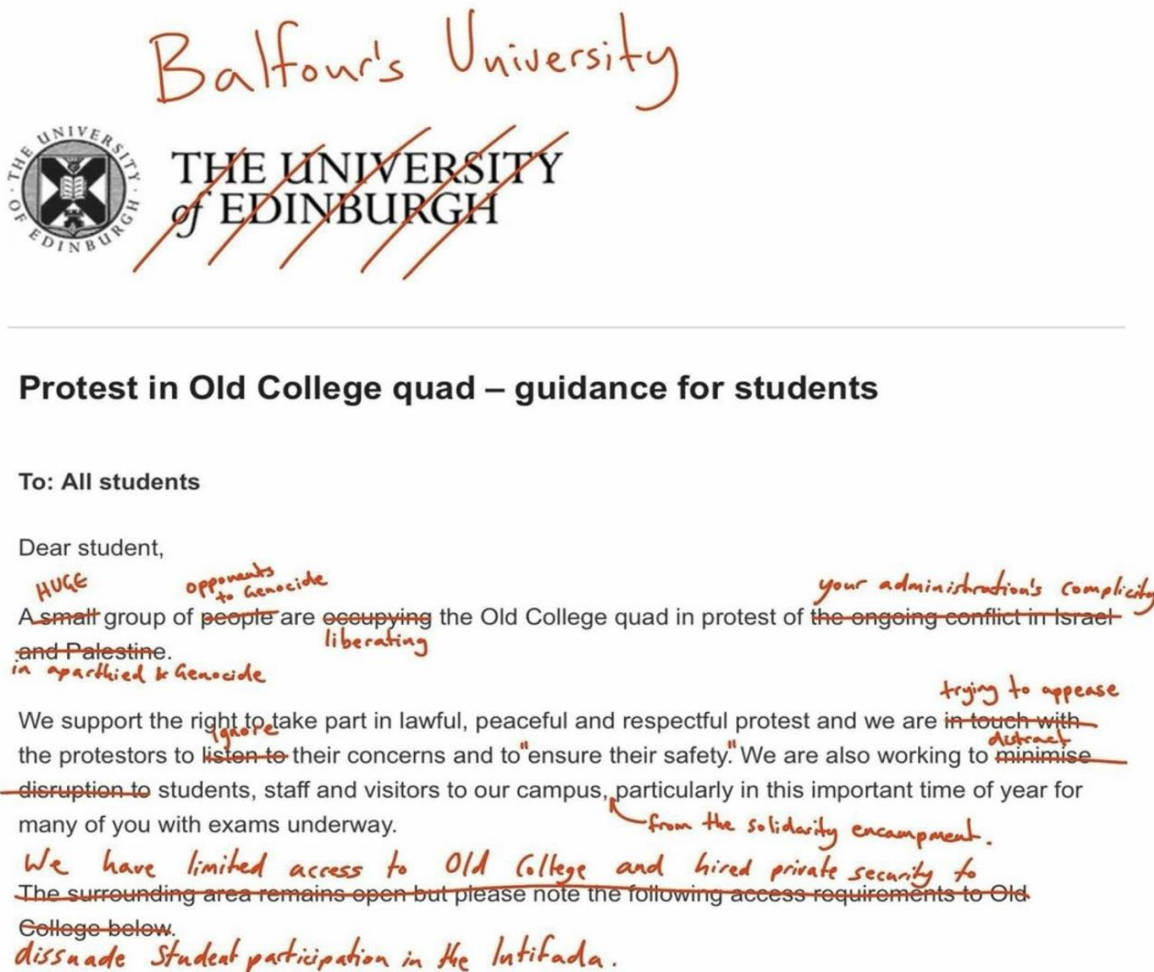


Figure 4: EUJPS' adjusting the Principal's language in the statement, visually representing the counter-narrative and counter-memory to the encampment space described by the Principal. Available at, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6toi3fosYn/>

On 9 May in response to the encampments initial ten demands, the Principal released [this letter that effectively dismisses or denies relevant concerns of colonial complicity, and thus many of the demands, on the premise that the University conducts 'due diligence procedures'](#)¹⁶⁰. Below is a recount of responses to the specific demands:

1. UoE to divest entirely from companies tied to Israel

- We accept that some of the companies in which our investment managers or their agents have made minor investments can be shown to have indirect links to Israel but these do not include directly funding weaponry or the armed forces. It is likely that indirect links to many countries of the world could be demonstrated, and some of those countries may

¹⁶⁰ The University of Edinburgh, Principal. 2024." Response to EUJPS demands." *The University of Edinburgh*. Published 9 May 2024. https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/response_to_eujps_9-may-24.pdf

have governments with which we do not agree. We do not agree that the University's investments make us "complicit in genocide"/

2. UoE to sever all research collaborations affiliated with Israel's genocidal project (Leonardo's, AnyVision, BAE, Ben Gurion University)

- All of our research partnerships undergo rigorous due diligence procedures to assess potential risks, to align with best practice, and to comply with our commitment to responsible research. UKRI bodies provide further due diligence and are not engaging in boycotts of this work. Any work produced in collaboration with defence companies is tightly defined and dependent on ethical review. If appropriate, research outputs are also subject to UK-wide export control and dual-use regulation.

3. UoE to reduce and prevent policing on campus which severely impacts minorities

- The police have a responsibility for safety and the law in all parts of the city and this includes the University campus. If there is criminal behaviour anywhere on our campus, we would expect the police to respond in the same way that they would in any other part of the city.

4. UoE to issue a statement acknowledging Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people

- We deplore conflict and the loss of innocent lives anywhere in the world, and see with great upset the loss of life in Palestine. When deciding whether to issue a statement on a particular issue, we primarily focus on our own community rather than seeking to comment on world events.

5. UoE to openly denounce its historic role in the settler colonisation of Palestine and its imperialist ties

- Our comprehensive, academically-led review of Race and History is examining these issues as part of its work.

6. UoE to remove the painting of Arthur Balfour in Playfair Library Hall

- As stated before, the portrait of Arthur Balfour is not currently on display.

7. UoE to combat antisemitism through removal of IHRA definition and re-engage discussions of alternative frameworks to tackle anti-semitism

- Our University's approach to Antisemitism is actively under review including at executive meetings this week and next, with alternative approaches to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition being actively considered in discussion with our Jewish staff and students and wider communities.

8. UoE to pay reparations to rebuild Gaza equal to the profit of its investments in Israel

- Our investment managers seek to achieve as effective a return on our investments as possible and this makes a major contribution to the success of our University and our ability to invest in the staff and students of the future. Separating out items within those investment returns is complex and problematic, so this is not something that is under consideration.

9. UoE to provide scholarships to Palestinian students from Gaza

- We have a long history as a University of sanctuary and have increased our support for students and academics displaced by conflict around the world. This includes a new scholarship programme for postgraduate programmes and, in partnership with the Councils for At-Risk Academics, a fellowship programme for academics and their families.

Once mass-support for the encampment was consolidated, the growing coalition between staff, students, associations and networks, focused these demands in terms of their relevant urgency - divestment being an immediate and urgent precautionary measure which UoE cannot continue to ignore, nor disagree with.

2.2: UoE Staff: Mass Support for the Encampment

Just five days after the encampment began, on 10 May 2024, [a staff letter in support of the encampment](#) was issued, expressing mass-support of over 600 staff members across all colleges of the University, as well as multiple staff networks)¹⁶¹. The letter endorsed the demands of the encampment for urgent divestment, expressing a powerful solidarity with the students. and showed solidarity with the students.

“We urge our leadership to take immediate emergency measures and stop any use of University funds for un-ethical investments which violate international law, human rights and the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (in Palestine and elsewhere)”¹⁶².

This rapid mobilisation of the staff illuminated both the urgency and wide-spread concern across UoE’s community of the institutions complicit investments, demonstrating that the administrations responses and inaction in regards to the student protests over the past academic year was in direct opposition to the views of a majority of the faculty. As expressed by one of the staff members who co-wrote the letter, “the University has not seen such widespread support for a single cause before, demonstrative of the strength of feeling of staff”¹⁶³.

The staff letter, narrates a solidarity with the student activists, and against UoE’s silence in the face of Gaza’s wholesale destruction by Israel, including but not limited to the destruction of all universities in Gaza:

“University staff and students in Gaza have paid a terrifying price. Every one of Gaza's universities has been destroyed or damaged; three University presidents, at least 100

¹⁶¹ Jackson, Lucy. 2024. “Hundreds of staff demand Edinburgh University sever ties with Israel”, *The National, Scotland*, 10 May 2024, <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24311552.hundreds-staff-demand-edinburgh-university-sever-ties-israel/>

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

academics and thousands of students have been killed, many targeted for assassination with their entire families.

This is an unprecedented intensification of a long pattern of scholasticide enacted by Israel over decades through systematic attacks against Palestinian [education](#).

As staff of an institution which has a direct historical legacy of colonial dispossession in Palestine—through the role that our former chancellor Arthur James Balfour played in 1917 with his declaration on Palestine, which institutionalised the denial of the right to national self-determination for Palestinians thus enabling their ongoing displacement, dispossession and colonial subjugation—we urge our leadership not to repeat the mistakes of our past chancellor and other institutional figures which have entangled our University to a legacy of colonial and imperial dispossession and slavery.

We thus stand with our students who today urge our leadership to stop all investments in companies complicit with Israel’s regime of apartheid and plausible genocide, abiding by the principles of due diligence and the key reparative justice principle of cessation of harm/non-repetition”¹⁶⁴.

[Full staff letter in support of divestment and signatories available on this link \(RACE.ED\)](#)¹⁶⁵.

2.3: Rallies at the Old College Encampment

Figure 5: Hundreds attend rally on 11 May 2024 in Old College demanding divestment.



¹⁶⁴ Jackson, Lucy. 2024. “Hundreds of staff demand Edinburgh University sever ties with Israel”, *The National, Scotland*, 10 May 2024, <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24311552.hundreds-staff-demand-edinburgh-university-sever-ties-israel/>

¹⁶⁵ UoE Staff in Support of Divestment, “Statement in support of Divestment”, *RACE.ED*, 10 May 2023, <https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/UoE%20Staff%20Statement%20in%20Support%20of%20Divestment.pdf>



Figure 6: Background is guest speaker, Cornel West, American philosopher and political activist, at the Old College Encampment Rally. Foreground is an incomplete list of names of Palestinians killed in Gaza since the 7 October 2023, handwritten by students throughout the past academic year (2023-24).



Figure 7: Another rally held at the encampment with hundreds in attendance demanding divestment.

2.4: 33 Days of Student Hunger Strike for Divestment



Figure 8: Students carry

Arch-Moroney, 2024.

On the same day that the encampment was set up, students [launched the hunger strike for divestment](#), stating they:

“Refuse to uncritically benefit from education given to us by a University that has historically so directly contributed to the colonisation of Palestine through its close ties with Lord Arthur Balfour, and we refuse to be made complicit by our silence in the economic and academic support that our University gives to the illegitimate and genocidal state of Israel”¹⁶⁶.

The [EUJPS 'Hunger Strike Press Release' from 3 June 2024](#) iterates the demand of the hunger strike which focuses on divestment¹⁶⁷:

“Students at the University of Edinburgh continue their hunger strike campaign at the encampment in the historic Old College Quad. The campaign started 30 days ago and has seen 20 students begin their strike. More are set to join as the University has failed to meet their demands. The hunger strikers call for the University to divest immediately from their shares in companies ‘complicit in Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza and

¹⁶⁶ EUJPS (@eu_jps), 2024. “We have decided to go on hunger strike”, Instagram, 6 May 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C6oyIH0o6Sl/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

¹⁶⁷ EUJPS, 2024. “Hunger Strike Press Release”, 3 June 2024, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/17C7GhRaDTb2xBd9TS61O-9y7pZeE0tmT/view?usp=sharing>

occupation of Palestine'. These investments are Alphabet Inc. (£2.7 million), Amazon (£4.9 million)

The students are pushing themselves to the brink of their physical health; several have had to end their hunger strike due to serious health concerns such as blacking out, vomiting, and severe nausea. JPS has said that despite these physical setbacks, the hunger strikes will continue until the University meets their demands as more students continue to join the strike.

These students are the first and only in the UK to undertake hunger strike in protest of their University following the wave of Gaza solidarity encampments across the country, of which there are now over 30”¹⁶⁸.



Figure 9: Meher Vapari. *British Vogue*, June 2024. <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/pro-palestine-student-camps-uk-protests>

Below are some quotes and testimonies from some of the students on hunger strike:

“It is insane. It is not normal and should not be normalised that any student feels the need to go on hunger strike in order to get the University to not invest in genocide or military occupation, or apartheid. It is absolute insanity that this has continued for nearly a month.

¹⁶⁸ EUJPS, 2024. “Hunger Strike Press Release”, 3 June 2024, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/17C7GhRaDTb2xBd9TS61O-9y7pZeE0tmT/view?usp=sharing>

That tells about how the University has responded: nothing. Nothing but empty responses – ‘we’re sorry you feel this way. We understand’. Not even the urgency. Just ‘we understand’ – ‘if there’s anything we can do without meeting the demands.’ They’ve been completely negligent in their duty of care as a University towards the student body.”

“You have run out of ways to be ambiguous and unclear about the actual politics behind the reason why you’re not divesting. There is no evidence or expertise lacking in any of the cases we’ve built for divestment.”

“It’s ultimately inhumane. No matter what way they decide to frame it, being against divestment is a pro-genocide move.”

“I’m Jewish, and my ancestors were killed in the holocaust. My grandpa was a surviving member and the genocide now obviously mimics a fair amount of the experiences they went through. I felt able to embody that strength and experience in my own way to use it for the current Palestine solidarity actions, for the hunger strike.”

“I decided to go on hunger strike as a form of protest that I had hoped would finally make the administration respond to us after 7 months of continuous negotiations on divestment. I feel like hunger strike is the only form of protest that can actually address the urgency of what is happening, the urgency of a genocide and the need for divestment here. It’s both a protest which requires immediate response and a protest which in its whole symbolises a political struggle.”

For press coverage on the student hunger strike:

- [Students’ hunger strike is ‘last resort’ to get University to listen on Gaza | The Independent](#)¹⁶⁹
- [Edinburgh students on hunger strike demand University divestment over Gaza | Middle East Eye](#)¹⁷⁰
- [‘I’m very weak, very cold, very tired’: Edinburgh University hunger strikers escalate action as ‘extreme’ protest grows](#)¹⁷¹
- [Edinburgh student hunger strikers demand University divests over Gaza ‘complicity’ | Financial Times](#)¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Forbes, Nick. 2024. “Students’ hunger strike is ‘last resort’ to get University to listen on Gaza.” *The Independent*. Published 9 May 2024. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/gaza-edinburgh-University-people-justice-nevis-b2541765.html>

¹⁷⁰ “Edinburgh students on hunger strike demand University divestment over Gaza.” *Middle East Eye*. Published 21 May 2024. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/edinburgh-students-hunger-strike-demand-University-divestment-over-gaza>

¹⁷¹ Ross, Calum. 2024. “‘I’m very weak, very cold, very tired’: Edinburgh University hunger strikers escalate action as ‘extreme’ protest grows.” *The Scotsman*. Published 10 May 2024. <https://www.scotsman.com/education/im-very-weak-very-cold-very-tired-edinburgh-University-hunger-strikers-escalate-action-as-extreme-protest-grows-4622799>

¹⁷² Simeon, Kerr. 2024. “Edinburgh student hunger strikers demand University divests over Gaza ‘complicity’”, *Financial Times*, 16 May 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/e5ddee87-be2b-4283-8a1f-ecddb95c368>

- [Edinburgh University student encampment one month on | The Herald](#)¹⁷³
- [Israel divestment calls are also a demand for shared decision-making | Times Higher Education](#)¹⁷⁴

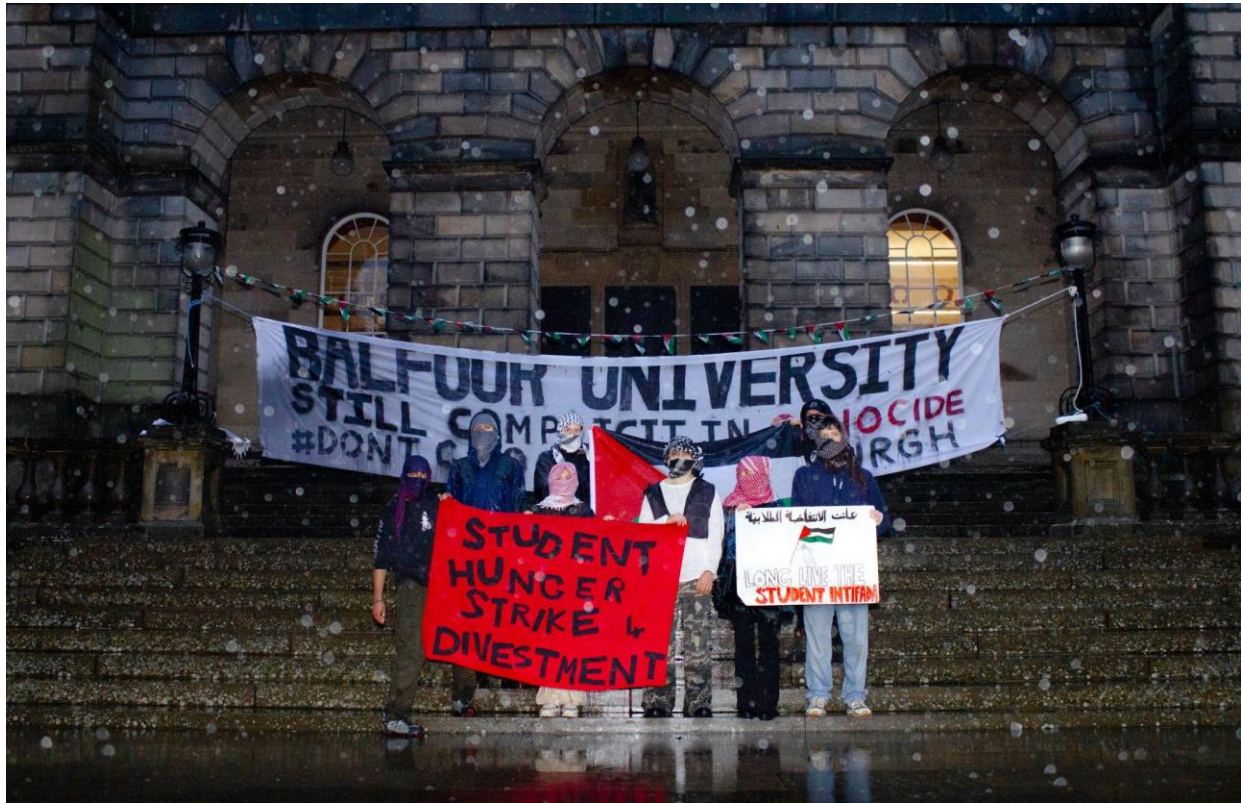


Figure 10: Meher Vapari. British Vogue, June 2024. <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/pro-palestine-student-camps-uk-protests>

2.5 Staff-Student Proposal: Emergency Measures for Adoption by the Executive Committee

On Monday 13 May 2024, several staff members, representing 640 signatories by the faculty supported by the encampment, submitted to University Executives a short-term proposal demanding for the immediate suspension of investments in Amazon, and Alphabet Inc. (Google), as well as the termination of the University's contract with Blackrock at the end of its term. Students on hunger strike, the encampment and staff have expressed this short-term demand as primary and urgent, stating that agreeing to this demand would put a stop to the ongoing student hunger strike

¹⁷³ McKay, Gabriel. 2024. "Edinburgh University student encampment one month on." *The Herald*. Published 9 June 2024. https://www.heraldsotland.com/life_style/24369864.edinburgh-university-student-encampment-one-month/

¹⁷⁴ Donovan, Kevin. 2024. "Israel divestment calls are also a demand for shared decision-making." *Times Higher Education*. Published 17 May 2024. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/israel-divestment-calls-are-also-demand-shared-decision-making>

The University is invited to adopt the following emergency measures in response to the ongoing situation with the Gaza Solidarity Encampment, the students on hunger strike, the large vote in favour of divestment at the Student Council, and the letter in support of the Encampment and its request for divestment signed by more than 600 members of staff as of today:

1. **Short term:** *In light of the acknowledged need for urgent action in response to the current emergency situation, immediately divest from companies investing in Israeli military activities resulting into violations of the Geneva Conventions, international human rights law, and plausible breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention in Gaza; namely 2 companies, Alphabet Inc Class C, Amazon.com, and in addition stop all commercial dealings and contracts with Blackrock. Disclose the ethical terms governing contracts with all asset managers for all asset classes.*
2. **Medium term:** *Within the shortest possible time frame: Establish an ad-hoc Review Committee comprising members of high standing with all required legal and ethical expertise to carry out a review of the remaining investments in Israel's occupation across all direct and indirect portfolios and with the mandate to recommend divestment where in breach of the University's responsibilities under international law and international human rights law. The composition of the committee will be agreed between the University and the representatives of concerned staff who attended the meeting with the Principal on 13 May 2024, and also representatives of the multi-faith, multi-racial Gaza Solidarity Encampment.*
3. **Long term:** *Set up an investment policy to ensure that no future investments will be carried out in companies complicit with the military occupation of Palestine and the dispossession of Palestinians, violations of the Geneva Conventions, international human rights law, and plausible breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention. Any investment policy must: disclose in a timely manner the contractual terms and content of all direct and indirect investments; and in addition, the policy must provide for making public and accessible the frameworks, processes and mechanisms established by the University to ensure that those investments are consistent with the University's investment policy and its responsibilities under national law, international law and international human rights law.*

2.6 Executive Committee's Initial Response to the Proposal

The [Executive Committee Meeting \(14 May 2024\) minutes](#) discussed the staff proposal and the possible adoption of the emergency measures iterated in the short-term demand¹⁷⁵. These

¹⁷⁵ Executive Committee Meeting, 2024. *University Executive 14 May 2024 Minute Extract*, University of Edinburgh, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n6Usov37JFpBWYbT9MbHV4cS2CxGMo_j/view?usp=sharing

minutes were shared with the Committee's consent to members of staff and students mobilizing for divestment upon the President of EUSA raising their request. An excerpt from the minutes reads:

“The Executive was reminded of the current investment position: the University invests through counterparties and has stringent tests to ensure compliance with ethical investment standards as set out in the Court approved Responsible Investment Policy. There was discussion in which the following points were raised: the importance of due process and clear governance oversight, especially on sensitive topics, reflecting the previous cautious approach on adopting a revised definition of antisemitism; the need to consider the broader implications of the points raised, including the legal basis and any potential precedent; the necessity to consider a broad range of investment impacts, including human rights and environmental sustainability; and the importance of a structured and considered approach to decision making. These concerns needed to be balanced against the concerns raised over the University's responsiveness; and the importance of ensuring a transparently responsible approach to investment. The role of investment advisors like Mercer and involving them in refining investment definitions and choices was noted, recognising that investment managers are directed by parameters set by the University.

It was also agreed that:

- a small, short-life group would be formed to rapidly review the definition of controversial armaments in the Responsible Investment Policy; and
- a separate Working Group, drawing on expertise in the University, would consider issues raised around the international context”¹⁷⁶.

With regards to the Executive Meeting discussion on the staff proposal, the students and staff had expected either a vote in favor or against of divestment from direct investments in the Gaza war of annihilation, given the potential legal and reputational repercussion for the institution, as opposed to a delay and further adjudication. This is because abundant evidence submitted and presented by leading scholars and experts at UoE had been made available to the administration over a period of eight months. Additionally, taking precautionary measures to suspend direct investments immediately, at least until their review, is both a common economic practice for reasonably suspicious stocks and the conservative approach to enforcing the ‘immediate and effective’ measures of the ICJ provisional ruling. With direct investments, stocks can be suspended almost instantly – and especially so, considering the short-term demand for Amazon and Alphabet Inc. only involves a small fraction of the investment portfolio. The Executive

¹⁷⁶ Executive Committee Meeting, 2024. *University Executive 14 May 2024 Minute Extract*, University of Edinburgh, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n6Usov37JFpBWYbT9MbHV4cS2CxGMo_j/view?usp=sharing

Committee's lack of a decision, and thus, inaction may have fuelled mistrust in the process of cohering the short-term, medium-term and long-term demands through dialogue with the administration, especially given a majority pro-divestment University community.

Despite this, the Executive fell short of providing a clarifying answer on whether they would suspend their direct investments immediately. The creation of a Short-Life Working Group (the SLWG) at this stage, with no offer for participation by staff or student representatives who had been at the fore-front of discussions on investments, counteracted commitments the University made to dialogue and due diligence, as well as the principles outlined in its investment policies. There was no clarification as to the scope of the SLWG, its mandate, and its remit with regards to its review of the companies under demand of suspension, Alphabet and Amazon. Without providing a company level assessment, the report would not be actionable. This also ran the risk of further delay and harm to the students on hunger strike.

The students and staff involved in the encampment argued that preventative action should have been taken at this stage to fulfil the duty of care the University has towards its students, especially those on hunger strike. It would have also signalled a commitment by the Executive to a longer-term process of review and responsible investments. This became part of a longer cycle of adjudication that had the effect of diluting the demands and their urgency.

On the same day, 14 May 2024, after the Executive Meeting's conclusion, the Principal shared another [statement on the University's investments](#)¹⁷⁷, which made no mention of Palestine and/or Israeli war crimes in Gaza. The importance of this omission is that the specific mobilisation for Palestine within the ongoing genocide and in particular the University's funding thereof, which premised the entire conversation and action on campus, was obscured. This meant that commitments to review definitions or investments faced great impetus, as the grounds through which these claims were established were left out, or made ambiguous. In terms of the dialogical process between students and staff for divestment and the University administration, the failure to outline the terms of reference to the rest of the University body represented a lack of transparency.

On the 17 May 2024, the Principal released another statement, the [response to student protesters and staff group](#)¹⁷⁸. The Principal wrote,

“We have considered your suggestions and remain of the view that the outcomes agreed by University Executive are the appropriate way to consider our approach to investments,

¹⁷⁷ Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh. 2024. "Update on the University's investments." *The University of Edinburgh*. Published 14 May 2024. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/update-on-University-investments>

¹⁷⁸ Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh. 2024. "Response to student protesters and staff group." *The University of Edinburgh*. Published 17 May 2024. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2024/old-college-protest-a-statement-from-the-principal/response-to-student-protesters-and-staff-group>

providing the relevant work to further inform our current consultation around the Responsible Investment Policy”¹⁷⁹.

The statement also outlined “we are actively exploring with our investment advisers the potential for restrictions on new unit purchases of either company”.

This proposal which “actively explores” potential “restrictions” was a registration of the serious concern on campus of investments in Amazon and Alphabet. Nonetheless, the proposal remained vague as to the timeline of such action, and the legitimate expectation for divestment given there is justifiable concern and suspicion regarding these stocks. The staff and students communicated further asking for clarification on the SLWG’s:

- a. Actual Membership and decision-making process.
- b. Scope of investments to be actively considered and in what order of priority and urgency.
- c. Actual time frame, including whether action in respect of specific investments can be taken as soon as a decision is reached in relation that holding.
- d. Mandate, including whether it can authorise divestment. For example, will it consider how international humanitarian law and international criminal law reasonably shape the meaning of what counts as a “controversial weapon” or what is understood as an “armament” in the context of an unlawful belligerent occupation, a siege, the use of starvation of a means and method warfare, and the ongoing system of apartheid as defined in international law?

For example, will it

- e. Sources of information it might take into account.
- f. Openness to input in relation to its deliberations, in particular from Encampment representatives and concerned staff.
- g. Staff have discussed and agreed that the encampment hold **two** nominated faculty representatives to serve on this review committee. The inclusion of represented faculty endorsed by the encampment is a baseline requirement to ensure that the encampment is not sidelined from this final stage of review undertaken by the SLWG. Further, such inclusion would ensure that we are following the community standard guidelines adopted by REWG around principles of transparency and accountability.”

The lack of answers to these questions undermined the real potential that the SLWG *could* hold as a means to resolve this situation. On 22 May 2024, EUJPS alerted the Principal that the hunger strike has continued for 26 days:

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

“One month has passed and the University administration has not even demonstrated the slightest good-will gesture that they are committed to transparency and a duty of care towards the students risking their lives to raise the same demands that have been continuously disregarded by the Administration.

Considering that the same demand has been raised for over 7 months now, the creation of a short-life working group by the Executive is not considered a concession nor even a legitimate proposal for addressing the demands for divestment. Allocating two-to-three weeks for a Working Group - which we have little to no information about - to decide on investments which have been thoroughly researched by experts and staff and negotiated with you in several meetings only serves to delay the decision-making process. There is not enough information on how this working group can commit to dialogue and transparency if those who comprise it are not from the community of campaigners themselves?

It is necessary to demonstrate a commitment to a transparent process by this external Working Group body that is congruent with the internal University body: staff, students and relevant associations.”

2.7 The University’s Academic Senate Vote in Favour of Divestment

The encampment sent a letter to the Academic Senate urging them to take action in support of immediate divestment, an excerpt is quoted:

“The Executive has fallen short of addressing this proposal of our short-term demands. Other University administrations across the UK, i.e. Goldsmiths, Trinity College Cambridge, and York University have divested without students having to escalate to extreme level of protest. Had the Executive responded to us earlier through our negotiations in February, March and April, students would not have to risk their lives. Instead, the Executive and the Administration this past week has attempted to communicate that concessions of a working group entails they are working at a faster pace than usual. We feel as if this acknowledgement is not only anachronistic but utterly disrespectful, blatantly denying the temporal urgency of the impact the University’s financial holding has on Palestinian livelihoods, and our efforts of bureaucratic communication and goodwill to reach an agreement. Rather, their responses this past week are simply a manifestation of an incompetence to adequately understand the demands of their student body, a body that earlier in the semester passed on a motion for divestment through EUSA with 97% approval”¹⁸⁰.

¹⁸⁰ Senatus Academicus, 2024. “22 May 2024 – Agenda and Papers” Senatus Academicus, University of Edinburgh, Kings Buildings, p.44, <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/22%20May%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20papers.pdf>

Senate members presented the following motion: [Senatus Academicus Wednesday 22 May 2024, Agenda and Papers](#)¹⁸¹

Action requested / Recommendation

2. Senate is asked to discuss and approve the following motions:
 - a. Senate calls on the University Executive to engage meaningfully with the student protesters so as to bring the hunger strike to an immediate end.
 - b. Senate affirms the Principal's statements respecting students' right to protest and opposes any disciplinary measures which would chill these expressions or interfere with ongoing teaching and learning.
 - c. Senate recommends that Court enacts the immediate sale of shares directly held in technology companies (namely Alphabet Inc Class C, Amazon.com) providing artificial intelligence and cloud computing to military operations that are subject to provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice on 26 January 2024 and at stake in 20 May 2024's application for arrest warrants from the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.²
 - d. Senate requests the formal involvement of academic staff research expertise beyond the consultation on Responsible Investment Policy beginning 31 May 2024, including inclusion in University investment policy setting bodies, including but not limited to the Investment Committee.

Figure 10: Action Requested / Recommendation of Senatus Academicus, from Agenda and Papers, May 22nd 2024, page 45, <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/22%20May%202024%20%20Agenda%20and%20papers.pdf>

The Senate motion stresses the urgency of taking action as students are directly putting their lives at risk as a last resort to be heard by the University¹⁸². These investments, whilst violating the ICJ and multiple international treaties and conventions, furthermore, renders the University's students and staff complicit in the genocide of Palestinians committed by Israel.

The motion was passed with an overwhelming majority at the Senate.

2.8 Consensus for Divestment on Campus

“Over the past month, it has grown into a movement that has galvanised support from across the University community. This includes endorsement of divestment by over 600 staff and 13 networks, the overwhelming majority of the student council (with 97% voting in favour of divestment from companies complicit in genocide), the University's Academic Senate, UCU Edinburgh, the Research and Engagement Working Group (REWG) on Edinburgh's Historical Links to African Enslavement and Colonialism, and the Jewish University Staff in Scotland. Additionally, EUJPS's petition for divestment has over 3000 signatures of people from the University community and in the City of Edinburgh, reflecting support for divestment from

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.1-157.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 45-48.

University's stakeholders in and around the University.” - [Divestment at the University of Edinburgh: Breaking from Balfour's colonial legacy – Mondoweiss](#)¹⁸³

[Uoe Staff Statement in Support of Divestment \(Race.ED\): UoE Staff Statement in Support of Divestment We, members of staff of the University of Edinburg, express our support for the Gaza solidarity encampment established by our students in the Old College Quad](#)¹⁸⁴

“In particular, we support their demand that our University immediately divests from any company directly involved and complicit with the dispossession of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation; as well as from what the International Court of Justice, the highest United Nations judicial body, has acknowledged as prima facie plausible acts of genocide perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians as a national group.”

“We thus call on University leadership to immediately abide by the highest United Nations judicial body (ICJ) and its orders and terminate all investments that are complicit with acts of dispossession and destruction of Palestinians as a national group. And we call on University leadership to re-invest any profits that were made from our investments in or through complicit companies to support the reconstruction of the destroyed higher educational sector in Gaza and support Palestinian students.”

Signed by 618 staff members, and 13 networks:

1. Research and Engagement Working Group (REWG) for the Decolonised Transformations Project
2. Edinburgh Centre for Medical Anthropology (EdCMA)
3. Edinburgh Race Equality Network (EREN)
4. Committee Fair Justice System for Scotland Group (FJSS Group)
5. RACE.ED Steering Committee
6. Researchers of Colour Solidarity Space (ROCSS)
7. SPS Palestine Solidarity Network
8. Staff BAME Network
9. Staff Pride Network Committee
10. Student and Staff Assembly
11. Students Federation of India - United Kingdom
12. Womxn of Colour Collective
13. International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)

¹⁸³ UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH STUDENT AND STAFF DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT. 2024. ” Divestment at the University of Edinburgh: Breaking from Balfour's colonial legacy.” *Mondoweiss*. Published 16 June 2024. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/06/divestment-at-the-University-of-edinburgh-breaking-from-balfours-colonial-legacy/>

¹⁸⁴ UoE Staff in Support of Divestment. 2024. ”Statement in Support of Divestment.” *RACE.ED*, 10 May 2024, <https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/UoE%20Staff%20Statement%20in%20Support%20of%20Divestment.pdf>

See also: [Hundreds of staff demand Edinburgh University sever ties with Israel | The National](#)¹⁸⁵

The University and College Union statements in support of divestment demands:

[Open letter to Peter Mathieson in support of divestment demands — 8 May 2024](#)¹⁸⁶

The Statement urges the Principal to:

1. Clarify the position of the University vis-à-vis the order issued by the ICJ, and make clear whether the UoE is evaluating the repercussions of its investments in companies holding shares in arms manufacturers which supply Israel in its annihilation campaign in Gaza;
2. Immediately de-risk and suspend all investments in companies that hold shares in these arms manufacturers;
3. Use any income from investments in the above companies generated since the beginning of the Israeli assault on Gaza to create a special fund for the support of academics and students from Gaza (whose universities have been completely destroyed).

Jewish University Staff Statement in support of encampment and demand for divestment: [We Jewish University staff stand with our students | The Herald](#)

EUSA statement of support and amplification of demand for divestment: [How we're supporting student groups campaigning on divestment](#)

2.9 Suspension of Investments: Dialogue and Initial Agreements regarding the Short-Life Working Group

Consensus across the University Body became overwhelmingly clear to the Senior Leadership Team. The principal called for the University Court to meet due to the special circumstances that the Academic Senate motion highlighted of the ongoing student hunger strike, as well as in response to the consensus for divestment on campus. University students and staff of the divestment movement felt that divestment was now a real possibility at the Exceptions Committee (part of the University Court). On the 30 May, the Principal published the [University's approach to responsible investment](#) statement communicating that the decision of the Exceptions Committee: the "Exception Committee also endorsed a decision to instruct our

¹⁸⁵ Jackson, Lucy. 2024. "Hundreds of staff demand Edinburgh University sever ties with Israel." *The National*. Published 10 May 2024. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24311552.hundreds-staff-demand-edinburgh-university-sever-ties-israel/>

¹⁸⁶ University and College Union Edinburgh. 2024. "Open letter to Peter Mathieson in support of divestment demands." *UCU Edinburgh*. Published 8 May 2024. <https://www.ucuedinburgh.org.uk/blog/open-letter-divestment>

fund manager to make no new purchase in Alphabet and Amazon stock for a period of at least three months i.e. while the Responsible Investment Policy Consultation is running”¹⁸⁷.

Another meeting was held with the Principal, a representative from the encampment, staff members and experts who presented the initial proposal for short-term goal of divestment to the Executive, and the president of EUSA. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify the statement from the 30 May, elaborate on the mandate and remit of the SLWG to reach a common understanding that would enable participation, and infer that the suspension of any new purchases in Alphabet and Amazon is an acknowledgment of the risky nature of those investments.

A mediator was in attendance, and dialogue between the students and staff mobilizing for divestment and Principal was reestablished.

Agreement was reached during this meeting on the scope of the SLWG and it being sufficiently wide to include recommendations about the application of existing policy as well as revisions to that policy. With this agreed understanding, in recognising their expertise, and in their different capacities, the two staff experts elected by the coalition in support of divestment, were allowed to participate in the SLWG and provide important credibility to the deliberations of the SLWG.

It was understood that their expertise shared with the SLWG would have informed the recommendations made to the University Court.

The encampment adjusted their hunger strike demands, in demonstrating their receptivity to dialogue with the Principal, in order to reach a common understanding on the points mentioned above. Initially, the demand of the hunger-strike was for the selling of all shares in Alphabet and Amazon, in line with the Responsible Investment Policy, and in accordance with the short-term demand communicated in the staff proposal to the Executive Committee on 14 May. This demand was adjusted to reach agreement that the scope of the SWLG will focus on Alphabet and Amazon, as applied through the RIP, and definitions of armaments and controversial weapons, and if the findings concur that these companies fall outside those definitions then divestment will be communicated to the Court, and a possible outcome of the vote. The hunger strike thus ended after 33 days.

This was agreed on by the Principal who communicated the key agreements of the meeting to the staff and student representatives. The key points agreed upon were, that (i) divestment from the specific companies in question is a possibility, (ii) the SLWG will consider the definitions of

¹⁸⁷ The University of Edinburgh, Principal.” The University’s approach to responsible investment.” *The University of Edinburgh*. Published 30 May 2024. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/the-university-s-approach-to-responsible-investmen>

armaments and controversial weapons, as applied through the Responsible Investment Policy, and if companies fall outwith those definitions then recommendations for divestment will be made, and lastly, (iii) the outcomes of the SLWG will go to the Executive Committee and then to the University Court for a vote to ratify SLWG recommendations.

2.9.1 The Short-Life Working Group, continued:

(See Part III for the details of the report and its recommendations sent by SLWG to Court)

The Mondoweiss article, [Mondoweiss article, published by UoE staff and students for divestment](#)¹⁸⁸, importantly notes,

“The report excluded essential comments by the staff representatives about why and how immediate divestment based on the expanded definition of controversial weapons is feasible with minimum operational & financial risks for the University Endowment and instead included language that inflated the technical and financial difficulties of divestment, resulting in misleading speculations.”

“In addition, the report excluded the application of the new definition of controversial armaments to two companies which clearly fall under the extended definition of controversial weapons (which includes AI directed lethal targeting) – namely Amazon and Alphabet. This is particularly puzzling because the University Court’s Exceptions Committee already applied a freezing of new purchases of shares on these two companies for the next 3 months. This was a welcomed precautionary measure taken due to the plausible use of the artificial intelligence technology they sell which lacks human rights’ due diligence.”

The recommendations of the only member of staff with expertise in responsible investment and representing the encampment being omitted led to important technical inaccuracies in the report, considering that he was the only member of the SLWG with relevant expertise in Responsible Investments.

2.10 Old College Protest

Following the disbanding of the Old College encampment, and the hunger strike - which followed a justified belief that the SLWG recommendations would adhere to the formal and

¹⁸⁸ UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH STUDENT AND STAFF DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT. 2024. ” Divestment at the University of Edinburgh: Breaking from Balfour’s colonial legacy.” *Mondoweiss*. Published 16 June 2024. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/06/divestment-at-the-university-of-edinburgh-breaking-from-balfours-colonial-legacy/>

written agreements reached between the students, staff, EUSA, and the Principal - the SLWG omitted recommendations made by relevant staff experts. In a final push, “students and staff mobilised this week to ensure excluded expertise was brought back into the hands of University Court members by way of an addendum” (Mondoweiss, 2024).

The [Mondoweiss article](#)¹⁸⁹, highlights also that “a petition of over 2100 students and staff was signed and delivered to senior members of UoE including an e-mail with the following directive:

The Court has all the necessary information before it, including a clear definition of LAWS and AI-driven lethal targeting of human subjects, as formulated by the SLWG. This definition can be adopted and applied immediately to the 2 companies in respect of which our holdings have already been frozen at the instigation of the exceptions committee.

Prudence AND Principle requires this action be taken now. It is prudent because the University is truly on notice through documented publicly available information that its direct holdings in Amazon and Alphabet are implicated in the production of controversial weapons in a context where there is a real and emerging risk of crimes against humanity, grave war crimes and genocide. It would be wilfully blind to pretend that such risks are not emerging and that the University through its direct holdings is not also potentially implicated in such activities. Wilful blindness is a failure of prudence because it is a form of recklessness. The Court should not be reckless. It should divest.

The 17 June 2024 is the day of decision after months of contestation. The path of prudence and principle has been shown to you and all Court members. You need to take that path as the leaders and fiduciaries of this University, and, we suggest, as fiduciaries and votaries of a community of research which purports to uphold the fundamental principles of responsible investment, responsible research and responsible global citizenship.”

This JPS action '[we have closed Old College](#)'¹⁹⁰, was “in response to the University reneging on the previous agreement for the short-life working group to directly address divestment from the companies Amazon and Alphabet, as well as censoring recommendations made. [...] Although we welcome the recommendation by the working group that an expansion of the definition of controversial armaments to include AI is necessary, it cannot be detached from its relevant context, as is the case in the report's current iteration. The Court must understand this report as it

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ EUJPS (@eu_jps). 2024. “we have closed Old College.” *Instagram*. Published 14 June 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C8L0h3zIAwT/?img_index=1

applies to its investments in Amazon (£4.9 million) and Alphabet (£2.7 million). Alphabet and Amazon hold the Project Nimbus contract with the state of Israel.” (JPS Press Release)

Following the picket and protest of Old College, UoE Senior Leadership accepted that the addendum document will be submitted for the attention of Court members in relation to the SLWG report to be discussed on 17 June 2024. However, the demand to have the staff expert present these recommendations was rejected.

2.11 Addendum to Short Life Working Group¹⁹¹

The full [addendum](#) to the SLWG for consideration by the University Court

“This document is submitted for the attention of Court members in relation to the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) report to be discussed in the Court session on 17 June 2024.

This document has been prepared and submitted by Professor Afshin Mehrpouya, Chair in Accounting, Sustainability and Governance on behalf of the divestment movement. Professor Mehrpouya was brought into the SLWG as the expert and in-house academic who specialises in the domain of responsible investment and AI governance. Besides his research in this area, he has taught Responsible Investments for thirteen years and worked as a responsible investment professional for several years before turning to academia. His trade and academic expertise in this area was rightly noted by Principal Mathieson and his invitation to join the SLWG was a welcomed step in ensuring that there was some inclusion of expert knowledge on issues related to the University of Edinburgh’s responsible investment approach. We find it necessary to include this document because pertinent comments related to full scope of the recommendations made by Professor Afshin Mehrpouya were not incorporated at the last moment before finalizing and submitting the report to the executive and subsequently to the Court. This omission was doubly problematic because it both dismisses his expertise on the subject, and the mandate of Professor Mehrpouya given he was the only member of the SLWG supported by the 600 plus staff signatories as well as the Palestinian Solidarity Encampment students demanding divestment from companies complicit in the ongoing war on Gaza ruled as “plausible risk of genocide” by the International Court of Justice.

To ensure full transparency on written (not just verbal) record, the points highlighted below provide technical clarifications, adjustments, and corrections pertaining to certain views expressed in the report that I find to be unfounded or imprecise. Additionally, I include (below, and in an attachment) research conducted by a staff and students about the two companies, Amazon and Alphabet, that would be useful for Court deliberations on the Senate paper submitted and discussed at the Court Exceptions Committee proposing divestment from the

¹⁹¹ Professor Afshin Mehrpouya, 2024, “Addendum to Short Life Working Group: Document for Court”, 17 June 2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i9hNlgYfk97qlZsLgjdXsOEYepofyw2L/view?usp=sharing>

mentioned two companies. The related Appendix was also unilaterally excluded from the SLWG Report:

1. Technical and financial implications of extending the definition of controversial weapons to include Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and Artificial Intelligence-directed Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects:

Under Disadvantages of Option 2 and Option 3 in the report, several challenges are highlighted citing operational complexity, cost, financial implications, but also risk to our relations with our asset managers if we apply this extended definition of controversial weapons. As we highlighted in our comments on the report that were redacted (instead referred to briefly under Caveats), we believe these concerns are misinformed and overstated. In this regard, we would want to emphasise the below points:

- A. Adoption of custom divestment policies and specific divestment lists is common practice among large institutional investors. We do not see how such a demand can affect our relations to asset managers or their willingness to work with us (as claimed in the report).
- B. For such custom divestment, internal due diligence is normally conducted to establish the list of companies to be divested from. Such a list is then communicated to in-house teams (in our case, the investment committee) for application to direct holdings for immediate divestment, and to asset managers for application to indirect holdings. The latter (indirect holdings) will normally involve delays depending on the specific terms of asset management contracts and the types of funds invested in.
- C. Applying the extended definition of controversial weapons would require analysing the companies in our portfolio that already provide AI technology and/or services to governments and the military (based on our analysis, there are only eight such companies among our direct investments). Such analysis would aim to establish which companies could be plausibly implicated in LAWS and/or AI-Directed Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects (point 3 details a straightforward divestment process). Conducting due diligence on eight companies would require very little effort. Considering that our indirect holdings are unfortunately as of now opaque, we cannot provide precise information about the extent of such efforts for our indirect holdings. Yet given the narrow scope of this analysis, we do not believe such due diligence would be overtly time-consuming or costly for our indirect holdings. The required analysis can be readily conducted by an advisory committee directly engaged by the Court, and relying on abundant internal expertise at the University.
- D. In the report, there are concerns raised about the financial return implications of such a divestment for our endowment. Normally, concerns about effects on returns are voiced when there is blanket screening of a large industry from the investment portfolio. However, in this case, only a small subset of the IT/technology sector will be implicated. As a result, companies divested can be easily replaced by companies with a similar risk-

return profile. This is common practice. We do not see any technical grounds for claiming that returns can be affected if we conduct such a divestment.

2. Lack of definition for LAWS and AI-directed Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects:

The report raises concerns about lack of an established definition for nLAWS and AI-directed lethal Targeting of Human Subjects and as a result, the difficulty of application. A world-renowned expert, Professor Nehal Bhuta, has provided context and detailed information in Appendix E of the report about why clear definitions are available pending the treaty process, drawn from authoritative sources such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. These definitions can be easily used and the reviewed after the ratification of a UN treaty text . These clear definitions are set out in Appendix E.

3. Divestment process:

The process for such divestment can be streamlined easily. We have included such a process at the end of Appendix E, which is also reproduced below. “Based on the above, the simplified procedure for divestment from companies involved in LAWS and Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects under options 2 and 3 will be:

- a. Are delivery of core elements of LAWS and/or Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects part of the company’s main business activities? If yes: Divest.
- b. Has the company been reported to deliver/sell core elements of LAWS and/or Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting Systems of Human Subjects? If yes: Divest
- c. Has the company delivered dual-purpose AI solutions to governments? If Yes, Does the company have rigorous and publicly disclosed human rights due diligence (aligned with UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)? If No - Divest.

Based on this process, without significant time and effort, due diligence can be conducted and decisions can be made about a small part of our portfolio that falls under the extended definition of controversial weapons.

4. Why Amazon and Alphabet’s activities in AI fall under the extended definition of controversial weapons - under Option 2 and 3 in the report:

Based on the Court's decision, the University has already signaled to its asset managers to stop purchasing new stocks in these two companies. This is a strong signal that the University direction has concerns about the risks associated with investing in these companies.

We had included an appendix in the SLWG report that was excluded. This appendix provided grounds for why the companies Amazon and Alphabet's provision of AI technologies and services to the government of Israel fall under our extended definition of controversial weapons (Options 2 and 3). We have produced an adapted version of this appendix and provide it as an attachment. What this attachment shows is that both of these companies have been selling dual-use (civil and military) AI technology as part of Project Nimbus to the government of Israel,

Israeli military, and Israeli state-owned weapons companies, knowing that their technology is used for military purposes. The attachment also highlights that neither company has a publicly accessible human rights due diligence process, which is mandated by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The attached document shows that investor coalitions have filed shareholder resolutions at the Annual General Meeting of both companies to raise similar concerns about military application of technology, human rights abuses (including specific mention of Project Nimbus), and lack of human rights due diligence.

Based on the above divestment procedure (point 3), considering that these two companies are selling dual-use technology (facial recognition and natural language processing technologies - among others) to the government of Israel - knowing that it would be used by the military - without prerequisite human rights due diligence, they should be divested. Immediate divestment is both the conservative and precautionary approach suitable for a well-reputed University such as ours to avoid plausible complicity in the indiscriminate killing of Palestinian citizens, killing that we know is aided by AI-directed lethal targeting (projects 'Lavender', 'Gospel' and 'Where is My Daddy' of the Israeli military - detailed in the attachment), and to address moral and legal concerns raised by our community for several months in relation to the ongoing plausible risk of genocide in Gaza as identified by the International Court of Justice and several arrest warrants requested by the ICC for crimes against humanity.

As a result, we believe that based on abundant evidence and the urgency of the situation, we should adopt the precautionary approach to divest from Alphabet and Amazon now, and in parallel, start a process to conduct due diligence across all our direct and indirect holdings to apply our extended definition of controversial weapons.

We believe for the future, such an internal due diligence body should be made permanent (consistent with best practices among well-reputed asset owners) to make sure we are better positioned to ensure pre-emptively that our investments are in line with the University's legal

and moral obligations. This will help us significantly improve on our current reactive, risky and potentially scandal-ridden approach.

2.12 Encampment's Legal Team¹⁹²

During the encampment, and as part of the ever-growing coalition mobilizing for divestment on campus, law students, law professors, and other staff, students and volunteers worked together in researching, analysing and providing evidence for what they considered to be the regional and domestic legal obligation to divest from armaments. Alongside the case law, and Acts presented by the encampment's legal team, their research developed in synergy with the encampment's negotiations with Senior Leadership, presenting the necessary jurisprudence that justly frames the conversation on 'controversial weapons' and LAWs in facts of law, and clarifying the ambiguous terms and principles used by the UoE. The encampment's legal team finalised their research, and shared their document: "A Comprehensive Analysis of the University of Edinburgh's Legal Obligations towards Divestment from Financial and Educational Activities involved in Human Rights Violations in Palestine and elsewhere"¹⁹⁵ with the University Court during their 17 June 2024 meeting.

This document sets out the legal obligations of the University in relation to its financial investments, research collaborations and suppliers, and was created by Law students and staff members autonomously from the UoE and in collaboration with the encampment. In this document, the encampment's legal team highlights what the team considers to be breaches of international law, regional law and domestic law. It also seeks to identify any legal obligations towards divestment and argues that the University is in breach of public law under the Human Rights Act 1998 and charity law under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 through its ties with companies and other bodies violating human rights in Palestine and elsewhere.

The document produced by the encampment's legal team demands immediate remedy in relation to the following ties:

- *Investments:*
 - Alphabet Inc Class C
 - Amazon
 - Atlas Copco B
 - Blackrock iShares MSCI World Value Factor ESG UCITS ETF
 - Meta Platforms Inc
 - Microsoft
- *Research collaborations:*
 - University Defence Research Collaboration

¹⁹² Note that the encampment's legal team was not commissioned or instructed by the University and its views and opinions (including those linked to and incorporated in this Appendix) do not constitute legal advice to the University; nor do they necessarily represent the University's views or its position at law.

- Exchange program with Ben-Gurion University
- *Suppliers:*
 - Hewlett Packard (HP)
 - Hitachi High-Tech Europe GmbH and Hitachi High-Tech Analytical Science Limited
 - Vodafone Limited
 - DHL International

Section B below delineates “in full, such investments are contrary to the University’s legal obligations as a hybrid or “functional” public authority. The company portfolios set out in the latter part of this section provide a detailed breakdown of the University’s financial complicity in the matter at hand. These companies, funded and endorsed in part by the University of Edinburgh, are in breach of various international, regional (e.g., ECHR), and domestic duties.”

With regards to the definition of armaments, they find the investments fall within the definition, which was in review by the SLWG. The document states:

“in line with the encampment’s interpretation that the term ‘armaments’ comprises any methods and means of warfare, these investments either directly or indirectly contribute to Israel’s unlawful conduct in Gaza. We note that it would be absurd for the University’s working team to find that these means and methods of warfare do not fall within even the existing definition of armaments (‘controversial weapons’) when the same means and methods have also constituted the “reasonable grounds” upon which arrest warrants have been issued for Israel’s Prime Minister and Defence Minister. They should therefore fall within the scope of the term ‘armaments’ and should be reviewed by the working group established by the University Executive.”

Regional (and Domestic) Law

The document produced by the encampment’s legal teams summarises four types of ties that the team considers that the University maintains in breach of various protected rights under the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) incorporated into national legislation through the Human Rights Act 1998. With regard to investments in Blackrock, Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and research collaboration with Anyvision, they consider there to be breaches of Article 8, Article 10, Article 11, Article 14, in addition to protected rights under the ECHR and the Human Rights Act, Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)..

Domestic Law

The document establishes the University’s public law duties, bound by the Human Rights Act 1998, section 6(1), and section 6(3)(b) which provides the definitions of ‘public authority’ and the two types of public authorities in case law.

Charity Law Duties - “the University of Edinburgh falls within the definition of a charity pursuant to s7(1) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (CATI(S) Act). Its stated charitable purposes are the ‘advancement of education’ and ‘any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes.’”

Additionally, relevant to CATI(S) the University holds additional reporting requirements which include “detailed explanations of how trustees have enacted the University’s investment policy statement” given it “holds assets exceeding £500,000”. They argue that a “breach of the duties imposed upon the University by the CATI(S) Act 2005 will be considered ‘misconduct in the administration of the charity’” highlighted in section A of the document. This includes the University’s investment portfolio which is opaque and irregular, as outlined by the encampment’s legal team, and earlier by the postgraduate business faculty research, the EUJPS, and the staff members in dialogue with the SLWG and University administration.

Controversial Armaments Legal Discourse

With regards to the ‘controversial weapons’ discourse, the encampment’s legal team first identifies that the University “does not have a definition of armaments or weapons, but only a definition of ‘controversial’ ones. Second, they comment:

“The commitment to review and confirm fails to remedy the violations of the University’s public law obligations. The review process must be fair, and align with legal obligations. In that sense, since it is ‘impossible to dissociate the lawfulness or unlawfulness of weapons from the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the way they are used’ the University must consider the human rights violations connected to their investments in weaponry and military technology, which have been pointed out earlier and evaluate the risk towards human rights when considering investments to ensure their protection.

The University must immediately broaden the definition of controversial weapons to all goods and services breaching human rights in Palestine and elsewhere”

The ‘controversial weapons’ definition in the [Responsible Investment Policy Statement](https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/responsible_investment_policy_statement_1_url_update.pdf)¹⁹³ as noted by the encampment’s legal team, “fails to cover military contractors and regular weapons, which constitutes a breach of the University’s obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, and a breach of the University’s own policies”. It is also contrary to the claim that the University Executive is committed to not investing in armaments, a statement made by the Principal on 14

¹⁹³ The University of Edinburgh. 2016. ” Responsible Investment Policy Statement” Published February 2016. *University of Edinburgh; Sustainability.*
https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/responsible_investment_policy_statement_1_url_update.pdf

May 2024, [update on the University's investments](#)¹⁹⁴: the “University Executive reaffirmed its commitment to not investing in armaments, currently defined in our policy as ‘controversial weapons’. A short life working group will work at fast pace to review and confirm the wording of the definition of armaments as part of our investment approach.”

Lastly, the document produced by the encampment’s legal ~~team~~ reaffirms the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, to which the University is a signatory. This requires the University to also “ensure independent assessment of its investments, research collaborations and suppliers” in order to “ensure transparency, produce sustainability reports, and ensure compliance with its legal obligations”. collaborations and suppliers” in order to “ensure transparency, produce sustainability reports, and ensure compliance with its legal obligations”.

3. (Not) Voting on Divestment

3.1 The University Court Meeting: 17 June 2024

Based on available email communication, and according to the agreement between the encampment and UoE’s Senior Leadership Team, the University Court was to be presented with enough information to deliberate on future holdings in Alphabet Inc Class C and Amazon using expert legal, ethical and financial advice provided to them through the SLWG as well as directly from the Law School itself (both of which recommended and urged divestment). As mentioned in Part II, section 2.9.1, a key understanding reached between the Senior Leadership Team, the staff and the encampment was that the Court – as the highest organ of the University – holds the power to debate and decide on unethical investments which violate human rights and international law, and that the recommendations of the SLWG could be upheld by the Court vote. Such a decision on divestment being made at Court level would not have constituted an anomaly, since the Court had previously played a prominent role in UoE’s decision to divest from systems of racial domination and human rights violations linked to apartheid in South Africa.

On the 14 June, an [open letter from staff, students and alumni](#) by the Student-Staff Assembly with 1907 signatories was sent to the University Court¹⁹⁵:

“The Court has power over ‘the administration and management of the whole revenue

¹⁹⁴ The University of Edinburgh, Principal. 2024. ” Update on the University’s investments.” *The University of Edinburgh*. Published 14 May 2024. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/update-on-University-investment>

¹⁹⁵ Student-Staff Assembly, 2024, “Open Letter to Edinburgh University Court in Solidarity with the Divestment Movement at UoE”, 14 June 2024, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tAzja6lMSQESV_5OYVAVw-RZvcZlDvUcb/view

and property of the University’, a large enough responsibility. But such responsibility becomes paramount when the revenue and property of the University includes revenue from and property in shares of two companies whose products are very plausibly currently being used in Gaza in forms of killing which constitute [*prima facie* genocide](#) according to the International Court of Justice, the highest UN judicial body¹⁹⁶; and ‘extermination,’ according to the International Criminal Court Prosecutor. This Monday, as members of the Court, you will have to decide whether to continue implicating our University in the risk of being complicit with such crimes through its investments, or whether to put a stop to this. We are calling on you to hear the clamorous, sustained voice of staff, students and alumni who are asking you to honour the historical responsibility of the University.”

The discussion on the “Report from the Short Life Working Group on Definition of Armaments for Investments” in the [Court meeting](#)¹⁹⁷, was summarised in [a brief statement](#) released on the University’s website the day after:

“The meeting of Court yesterday (Monday 17 June 2024) considered in detail our ongoing review of the definition of armaments and controversial weapons, as applied to the University’s investments [...].

Court members expressed openness to expanding the definition of controversial armaments including the ways in which AI targeting and other technological or digital developments might be incorporated. Court noted challenges identified by the Short-Life Working Group, specifically that there is not currently a universally agreed definition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and that further work would need to be done to understand how expanding our definition could be implemented in our investment portfolio. Court therefore requested further information on the deliverability of such a change plus an analysis of the consequences. This work was expected to be completed before the next meeting scheduled on 7 October 2024 so that a fully informed discussion could take place. By that time, the inputs into the wider consultation on the University’s Responsible Investment Policy, which was open until 31 August 2024, will also be available.

Court agreed that while further work is ongoing, the previously agreed pause in certain new direct stock investments is continued.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), (Order: Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures) [2024] ICJ No.192, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ “Court Meeting: 17 June 2024”, *University of Edinburgh*, 4 July 2024, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/Court-meeting-17-june-2024>

¹⁹⁸ “A statement from the University Court”, *University of Edinburgh*, 18 June 2024, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/a-statement-from-the-University-Court>

The full minutes of the Court meeting are available here: [Court 17 June 2024, Minutes](#)¹⁹⁹.

As the minutes show, this and preceding meetings gave rise to wide diversity of opinion and extended discussion, with the Court being advised that “the issues under discussion were complex and that decisions made at this point could have longer-term consequences.” At this meeting, the Court did not vote on divestment from Alphabet and Amazon, with the minutes noting that a discussion was held about whether or not the “Court was in a position to make an informed decision at this stage or required more information, including on the impacts of different decisions and the practicalities involved.” In its public statement, neither of the two holdings are mentioned by name.²⁰⁰ The lack of a vote and the failure to address these two holdings specifically could be considered to directly contradict the aforementioned commitments made by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team in their meeting with the encampment. The commitments made by the Principal, and the subsequent adjustment of demands by the students, especially the ending of the hunger strike, included the following: that divestment from the specific companies, Alphabet and Amazon, would be the focus of the SLWG and Court meeting; that there would be a clear identification of who would recommend divestment if these two companies fell outside the definitions of armaments and controversial weapons, as applied through the Responsible Investment Policy; and that the outcomes of the SLWG would go to the University Court for a *vote to ratify SLWG recommendations*. Thus, the agreements were upheld by the encampment and by the staff (to join the SLWG), but felt to have been abrogated by the Senior Leadership. The Court did not provide any public acknowledgement of the role that these two companies play in enabling Israeli apartheid and genocide against Palestinians; the Court Exceptions Committee did not spell out the reasons behind the suspension of further investments in Amazon and Alphabet; and the University did not name the two companies in its official communications. This might be viewed as a way of decontextualising the problematic nature of their investments and, as such, of shirking their responsibilities in upholding their ethical, financial and legal obligations.

Given that the Court did not vote on suspending holdings in the two companies in spite of the knowledge made available with staff and students, UoE now knowingly hold investments in companies complicit in what according to the ICJ constitutes as *prima facie* genocide. The Court now risks implicating UoE in knowingly enabling genocide as it continues to delay divestment. Given that the Exceptions Committee had taken a decision, prior to the Court meeting, to stop any new purchases of stocks in those two companies, it follows that the Court should have directly required divestment, as an exercise of its plenary power, by a vote. Instead, it can be argued that the Court avoided holding a vote on companies which enable genocide, and the killing of Palestinians at “a rate that far exceeds what was made previously possible”²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁹ University Court, 2024, “Minutes”, *University of Edinburgh*, 17 June 2024, p.1-14, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/a-statement-from-the-University-Court>

²⁰⁰ ²⁰⁰ “A statement from the University Court”, *University of Edinburgh*, 18 June 2024, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/a-statement-from-the-University-Court>

²⁰¹ Abraham, Yuval. 2023. “Bottom of Form

The Court had all the necessary information before it, including a clear definition of LAWS and AI-driven lethal targeting of humans, as formulated by the SLWG and clear in its addendum, in which a full suspension of investments was the only possible recommendation given the available research and information on Alphabet and Amazon. This definition of controversial armaments for investments should have been adopted and applied immediately to the two companies. Despite this, the statement claims that “further work would need to be done to understand how expanding our definition would be implemented in our investment portfolio”.

The three options presented to the Court by the SLWG, available in the [summary of the report from SLWG on definition of armaments for investments](#), lists recommendations for the current definition of controversial weapons and their application to the investment portfolio:

- “1) remain with the University’s current approach, and the armaments currently included under the listing
- 2) expand the list of controversial weapons to include Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and AI-directed Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects
- 3) expand our approach to controversial weapons to non-controversial weapons. (i.e., divest from all armaments).”²⁰²

The SLWG (referred to as WG-A in the quotes) concluded:

- “a) that there was value in considering other areas to be included under our heading of Controversial Weapons, and consequently that Option 1 was not supported.
- b) some members supported Option 2. There was general agreement around inclusion of LAWS, but some debate about extension to AI-targeting. The potential unintended consequences of adopting too wide a definition of AI assisted targeting were considered, including the potential challenge of defining what would be included or not in this category.
- c) some members of WG-A supported Option 3, although this received overall less support than Option 2. WG-A felt that significant further work would be required to

A mass assassination factory’: Inside Israel’s calculated bombing of Gaza.” Balfour Project. Published 30 November 2023. <https://balfourproject.org/a-mass-assassination-factory-inside-israels-calculated-bombing-of-gaza/>

²⁰² Short Life Working Group, 2024, “Summary of the Report from Short Life Working Group on Definition of Armaments for Investments”, *University of Edinburgh*, p. 1
https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/summary_report_from_the_short-life_working_group_on_definition_of_armaments_for_investments.pdf

understand the implications for the investment portfolio and related due diligence processes if Option 3 was implemented.”²⁰³

The SLWG, which received expert input on “alternative approaches to consideration of controversial weapons in investments; the international human rights law context for weapons and controversial weapons; and the principles behind the Sustainalytics approach,” clearly rejected ‘Option 1’ (to remain with the University’s current approach and to not divest) as a recommendation. Although this working group was created by the Senior Leadership Team in response to urgent legal and ethical demands, and formal agreement was reached that the Court would vote on the expertise that the SLWG presents, the Court’s non-vote in agreement of these recommendations for the aforementioned two companies elaborated on in the Addendum was a “gross negligence leading to the failure of democratic process.”²⁰⁴

The [open letter from staff, students and alumni](#) relevantly noted that:

“The possibility to immediately apply the definition of new armaments to two of the most controversial investments in the portfolio (to which the University Exceptions Committee has already applied precautionary measures due to the potential involvement of the two companies in the massacres in Gaza), was arbitrarily excluded from the SLWG [...] in violation of the agreement [...]. At worst, it is censorship and an active stifling of the democratic process. And so, there is a reasonable concern that the **senior management of the University are acting in bad faith**”²⁰⁵.

With regards to option 2 and 3, the SLWG notes “there was disagreement amongst the WG-A [SLWG] as to the assessment of implementation and risks” of these options. They present the following recommendations:

- a) WG-A recommended that consideration be given to Option 2 or 3, with a preference for Option 2. Further work would be required to understand and refine definitions of LAWS and AI-targeting that could be applied with clarity.
- b) WG-A recommended that information around UN Blacklist, UN-Backed Principles for Responsible Investment, information from the staff representative and WG-A advisor and the principle of precaution be considered by the second Working Group.

²⁰³ Short Life Working Group, 2024, “Summary of the Report from Short Life Working Group on Definition of Armaments for Investments”, *University of Edinburgh*, p. 2, https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/summary_report_from_the_short-life_working_group_on_definition_of_armaments_for_investments.pdf

²⁰⁴ Student-Staff Assembly, 2024, “Open Letter to Edinburgh University Court in Solidarity with the Divestment Movement at UoE”, 14 June 2024, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tAzja6lMSQESV_5OYVAw-RZvcZlDvUcb/view

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

c) WG-A recommended that the University explore means of obtaining advice in areas of concern over means and methods of warfare, human rights violations and developments and broader issues of socially responsible investment.

d) WG-A recommended its report be provided to the Investment Committee, to provide a view of potential implications for our investment portfolio. WG-A recognised that changes to pooled funds may be particularly complex and more challenging to implement. WG-A's recommendation was to focus initially on direct funds."

Despite the SLWG's recommendations for Option 2 and 3 and their consideration of the implementation and the risks, some of the recommendations given by the coalition's staff expert at the SLWG were omitted. These recommendations sent to the Court as an addendum to the SLWG's report, presented in Part II, section 2.11, articulated the full scope of these recommendations, and provided corrections to them, as the SLWG stressed the challenges of implementing the divestment procedure, as opposed to the urgency and obligation for implementing divestment. The [Addendum](#) noted that there must be "technical clarifications, adjustments, and corrections pertaining to certain views expressed in the report that I find to be unfounded or imprecise." These views, the addendum adds, are "misinformed and overstated."²⁰⁶

The addendum responds to these views and, in regards to 'recommendation a)' of the SLWG, which suggests that definitions of LAWS and AI-targeting are unclear, it set out the following:

"A world-renowned expert, [Professor at UoE], has provided context and detailed information in Appendix E of the report about why clear definitions are available pending the treaty process, drawn from authoritative sources such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. These definitions can be easily used and then reviewed after the ratification of a UN treaty text."²⁰⁷

Furthermore,

"applying the extended definition of controversial weapons would require analyzing the companies in our portfolio that already provide AI technology and/or services to governments and the military (based on our analysis, there are only eight such companies among our direct investments). [...] Conducting due diligence on eight companies would require very little effort."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Professor Afshin Mehropouya, 2024, "Addendum to Short Life Working Group: Document for Court", 17 June 2024, p.2, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i9hNlgYfk97qlZsLgjdXsOEYepofyw2L/view?usp=sharing>

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.3

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.2

With regards to ‘recommendations b) and c),’ the addendum’s attached document provides evidence on Amazon and Alphabet’s activities in AI that fall under extended definition of controversial weapons directly contravening UN principles. Importantly,

“that neither company has a publicly accessible human rights due diligence process, which is mandated by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The attached document shows that investor coalitions have filed shareholder resolutions at the Annual General Meeting of both companies to raise similar concerns about military application of technology, human rights abuses (including specific mention of Project Nimbus), and lack of human rights due Diligence.”²⁰⁹

With regards to the ‘particularly complex’ nature of implementing Options 2 and 3 stated in ‘recommendation d),’ Appendix E of the SLWG report to Court, sets out the process of divestment to the Court. This process was communicated clearly and can be streamlined easily. This means voting to divest, based on the provided expertise, evidence, urgency and legal obligations, which outweigh the ‘potential implications to our investment portfolio’. The addendum, in providing the procedure for such decision making, reiterates:

“Based on the above, the simplified procedure for divestment from companies involved in LAWS and Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects under options 2 and 3 will be:

- a. Are delivery of core elements of LAWS and/or Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting of Human Subjects part of the company’s main business activities? If yes: Divest.
- b. Has the company been reported to deliver/sell core elements of LAWS and/or Artificial Intelligence-Driven Lethal Targeting Systems of Human Subjects? If yes: Divest
- c. Has the company delivered dual-purpose AI solutions to governments? If Yes, does the company have rigorous and publicly disclosed human rights due diligence (aligned with UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)? If No: Divest.”²¹⁰

The Court’s responsibility was not to extend or redefine the concept of controversial weapons in the context of LAWS and AI; that task fell within the purview of the SLWG. The meeting was

²⁰⁹ Professor Afshin Mehropouya, 2024, “Addendum to Short Life Working Group: Document for Court”, 17 June 2024, p.4, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i9hNlgYfk97qlZsLgjdXsOEYepofyw2L/view?usp=sharing>

²¹⁰ Ibis., p.3.

not convened to reconsider or refine definitions of AI or its applications. Its function was to apply these definitions—shaped by expert understanding—directly to the relevant cases. This should have been accomplished through the lens of international human rights law, the Genocide Convention, and order for provisional measures from the International Court of Justice. These legal instruments collectively point to the conclusion that suspending investments in the context of the two holdings was not only appropriate but legally required.

The [open letter with 1907 signatories](#) outlined to the Court that their failure to immediately apply the definition to the two holdings constitutes:

1. A violation of the principle of due diligence which regulates our ethical investments.
2. A violation of agreements made between the divestment movement as a result of the student council and academic senate vote, and our Senior Leadership;
3. A breach of trust with the University community.
4. Making the ‘Precautionary Measure’ adopted by the University Exceptions Committee appear to be a hollow and pointless exercise aimed at quieting the democratic voice of the community rather than committing to act on divestment.
5. Most importantly, a failure to end our University’s complicity with violence against Palestinians through means of military occupation, settler colonisation, apartheid, and as the International Court of Justice has acknowledged in its orders, *prima facie* plausible acts of genocide perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza²¹¹.

The Court’s failure to vote on divestment (which the movement believed could be a possible outcome of the 17 June 2024 meeting, based on the South African precedent), and the delay in deciding in favour of more adjudication, represents a larger issue: a genocide-agnostic framework becoming institutionally normalised at UoE resulting in further entanglement of colonial complicity, past and present. First, precautionary measures to divest from companies, without prerequisite human rights due diligence, is common procedure. This is the conservative approach suitable to avoid plausible complicity in the ongoing genocide, as well as violations of the Geneva Conventions, international human rights law, the protection of Palestinians as a national group under the Genocide Convention and the order of the ICJ for provisional measures for plausible breaches of the Genocide Convention in Gaza, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

²¹¹ Student-Staff Assembly, 2024, “Open Letter to Edinburgh University Court in Solidarity with the Divestment Movement at UoE”, 14 June 2024, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tAzja6lMSQESV_5OYVAw-RZvcZlDvUcb/view

Second, given the urgency of the situation and the moral and legal concerns raised by many of the University's internal constituencies to divest from these two companies, the lack of a decision by the Court raises serious concerns within the University community about Court's willingness to represent these views in their decision-making processes (especially given the South African precedent during which the Court, as a governance institution, listened to the University community). This inaction effectively silences and dismisses the voices of thousands of staff and students, calling into question whether there is any commitment by the University to participatory governance. As argued here, this further distances UoE's actions from the core values of participatory governance and ultimately creates double standards for situations of settler apartheid (divestment from South Africa but not from Israel).

The University and College Union (UCU) Edinburgh branch released a [statement on the University Court's failure to take action on divestment from controversial weapons](#), that "such delaying tactics are unconscionable":

We are deeply frustrated by the numerous delays and obfuscatory processes that have led to such inaction thus far [...].

The University of Edinburgh should not avoid its responsibility to address its plausible complicity with genocide through its investments in weapons-related companies. This is particularly important given the University's association with Balfour. Senior leadership, including the Principal, have excluded key information from the Court's decision-making, reneging on their commitment to the staff and student members of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) on Definitions of Armaments for Investments.

UCUE is encouraging all members of the University community to respond to the consultation on the UoE Responsible Investment Policy.²¹²

3.2 Legal consequences: Urgency for divestment from Israel

Despite international law provisions and orders, and the plentiful evidence by supranational and humanitarian organisations, which already define the legal and moral obligation to divest, there have been additional special procedures set out by UN expert's and the ICJ Advisory Opinion which emphasise again our obligation to divest. Since the Court delayed their decision on their investments in companies which enable genocide until their second meeting (on 7 October), there have been additional tools for legal interpretation which were published *before* the second University Court meeting which, again, stress the urgency of divestment.

²¹² University and College Union (UCU) Edinburgh, 2024, "Statement on the University Court's failure to take action on divestment from controversial weapons", University and College Union, 11 July 2024, <https://www.ucuedinburgh.org.uk/blog/Courts-failure-to-take-action-on-divestment#:~:text=Staff%20and%20student%20members%20of,to%20such%20inaction%20thus%20far>

On 20 June 2024, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UN OHCHR) reiterated in a press release, “[States and companies must end arms transfers to Israel immediately or risk responsibility for human rights violations: UN experts](#).” The press release stressed this urgency, extending also to “the involved business and investors on these issues.”²¹³

On 19 July 2024, the International Court of Justice’s Advisory Opinion found an obligation on the part of all states to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the Palestinian Territories.²¹⁴ It also found a global obligation, “not to [proceed] in maintaining the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.” The ICJ has also found Israel to have continued to maintain control and exercise key degrees of authority over the Gaza Strip as part of the OPT, even after its withdrawal of settlements in 2005, and even more so since 7 October 2023; a legal finding which applies to armaments used in connection with the Gaza Strip and both directly and indirectly affiliated with the University’s financial investments. As argued here, the findings above clearly implicate the University of Edinburgh, as a public University in the UK, to have aided, assisted and formed trade or investment relations, projects or partnership agreements that have assisted in maintaining illegal occupation.²¹⁵

On the 18 September 2024, the OHCHR again warned of the “[international order on a knife’s edge](#)”, urging compliance with the ICJ Advisory opinion. UN experts called to “**cancel or suspend economic relationships, trade agreements, and academic relations with Israel** that may contribute to its unlawful presence and apartheid regime in the occupied Palestinian territory.”²¹⁶ This statement also streamlined compliance with the historic ICJ Advisory Opinion, mentioned above, declaring Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory unlawful, and provided “unequivocal directions concerning the responsibilities [...] with regard to Israel’s unlawful occupation.” The statement comments that, despite these adamant directions, there remains a paralysis “in the face of a seismic shift represented by the Court’s ruling and appear unwilling or unable to take the necessary steps to meet their obligations.” Of the several action points stressed in the statement, they reiterate the need for:

1. “Immediate review [of] all diplomatic political and economic relations with Israel;
2. take all measures to ensure that the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory can fully exercise and realise their right to self-determination;

²¹³ UN OHCHR, 2024, “States and companies must end arms transfers to Israel or immediately or risk responsibility for human rights violations: UN experts”, United Nations, 20 June 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/states-and-companies-must-end-arms-transfers-israel-immediately-or-risk>

²¹⁴ LEGAL CONSEQUENCES ARISING FROM THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF ISRAEL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, ICJ Advisory Opinion, [2024], A/78/968, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/218/00/pdf/n2421800.pdf>

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ UN OHCHR, 2024, “UN experts warn international order on a knife’s edge, urge States to comply with ICJ Advisory Opinion”, United Nations, 18 September 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/09/un-experts-warn-international-order-knifes-edge-urge-states-comply-icj-advisory>

3. Impose a full arms embargo on Israel [...] including dual-use items that could be used against the Palestinian population;
4. Cancel or suspend economic relationships, trade agreements and academic relations with Israel;
5. Impose sanctions, on [...] entities including businesses, corporations and financial institutions, involved in the unlawful occupation and apartheid regime as well as on any foreign or domestic entities and individuals subject to their jurisdiction that supply goods and services that may aid, assist or enable occupation and apartheid;
6. Rescind legislation and policies that criminalise and penalise advocacy in support of Palestinian rights to self-determination and non-violent opposition to Israel's occupation and apartheid, including support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.”²¹⁷

Therefore, if the University abides by the UN's PRIs, then it must include within its application of these PRIs the “unequivocal directions” mandated through the highest judicial body of the UN, the ICJ, in its understanding of Responsible Investment Policy. To have a responsible investment policy which does not align with UN standards, principles and rulings in full, could arguably not only be unlawful, but also an imprudent application of the University's own policy.

3.3 A Second University Court Meeting: 7 October 2024²¹⁸

The [University Court Statement on Responsible Investment](#) following the Court's meeting, noted that:

“As recommended by the second short life working group, Court agreed to the establishment of a new group to carry out ethical review and due diligence of the University's investments and to advise on the application of definitions relating to exclusions. The formal remit for this group and its composition will be developed with care, include relevant expertise and will be brought to Court for approval to ensure it will make a coherent and effective contribution to the University's decision-making and oversight structures. The purpose of the group is to further enhance the University's existing policies and practices relating to responsible investment and the University will continue to avoid new purchases of *certain direct stock investments* while the new group is being formed [emphasis added].

In the meantime, the University will continue the review of the Responsible Investment Policy in order to further update and enhance its approach and to benefit from the rich

²¹⁷ UN OHCHR, 2024, “UN experts warn international order on a knife's edge, urge States to comply with ICJ Advisory Opinion”, United Nations, 18 September 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/09/un-experts-warn-international-order-knives-edge-urge-states-comply-icj-advisory>

²¹⁸ Court agenda and minutes from the 7 October 2024 meeting have not been made publicly available yet, pending their release upon the next Court meeting date.

input received from staff and student communities. The work of the two Short Life Working Groups and further input from the University's Investment Committee was of great value. The members of the Court thank all of those involved.”²¹⁹

In a manner consistent with the initial Court meeting and the subsequent statement issued, there is no explicit reference to the two companies in question; instead, they are ambiguously described as “certain stocks.”

With regards to the second Working Group (WG-RII), which also began its work in May 2024 and focused on the Responsible Investment Policy, the WG-RII's [summary of the report](#) on investment approaches in the international context noted that:

“the governance structures and approaches used to operationalise the University's RI Policy are not well understood by the University community, and are not seen to address concerns of staff and students around ethical investment aligned to human rights, including the ability to consider proactively emergent investment concerns. Unlike some other Russell Group universities, the University does not have a formalised process by which representations can be made by committees, staff and student bodies concerning responsible investment issues.”²²⁰

This summarises the general concern among staff and students. Through the lack of transparency, evasive language and extensive delays, there is a shared and widespread belief that Senior Leadership acts in bad-faith. This has been experienced by a number of student and staff with the administration and the greater networks mobilizing for divestment and an ethical review of the RI Policy.

Of the key issues considered by the WG-RII was the:

WG-RII discussed the various frameworks, principles and guidance that currently exist, including whether those would be valuable to consider as part of our approach to implementation of the RI Policy. This included a proposal that the University should explicitly pay greater attention to Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law and War Crimes, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity in its approach to investment, and if it were to do that, ways in which that might be implemented. The benefits and risks of this more expansive approach were also considered in relation to operationalising a more extensive RI Policy framework where proactive assessment of human rights

²¹⁹ “University Court Statement on Responsible Investment”, *University of Edinburgh*, 10 October 2024, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2024/Court-statement-on-responsible-inve>

²²⁰ “Summary of the Report from the Short-Life Working Group on Investment Approaches in the International Context”, *University of Edinburgh*, https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/summary_report_from_the_short-life_working_group_investment_approaches_in_the_international_context.pdf

violations would require enhanced due diligence and active ownership of investment decisions.²²¹

And,

WG-RII received expert input about the four areas of international law designed to regulate violence and geopolitical conflict in an international context: International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law and War Crimes, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity. An advantage of these frameworks is that they are conflict agnostic and can help inform implementation of a more responsive and future-proofed RI Policy. It was noted that investment fund managers are increasingly operationalising human rights and international crimes exclusions, alongside exclusions for controversial weapons, fossil fuels and tobacco.²²²

The WG-RII requested that the Court agree to these recommendations and action them with a degree of urgency. The three recommendations in sum, requested the Court to agree that:

1. The revised RI Policy should include a clearer, actionable commitment to respecting human rights, in alignment with the focus on human rights within the University's Social and Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan. This should include a commitment to the University being a stronger, more active signatory to the UN-PRI. Further consideration should be given to extending the University's commitment to human rights via the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (the UN-GPs), and to addressing other areas of international harm.
2. A new ethical review and due diligence group or committee should be formed with the remit to build on discussions started by WG-RII around embedding ethical, human rights and international law considerations in our investments. This new group or committee should also identify a transparent process, with clear bilateral communications and reporting, to consider concerns from members of the University community in an agile and proactive way.
3. The new ethical review and due diligence group or committee should be asked to build on the discussions and findings of WG-RII to determine whether to adopt or apply potential resources such as UN 'Blacklists', frameworks and principles of international law, as considered by the WG-RII²²³.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ "Summary of the Report from the Short-Life Working Group on Investment Approaches in the International Context", *University of Edinburgh*, https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/summary_report_from_the_short-life_working_group_investment_approaches_in_the_international_context.pdf

Had the Court believed there was insufficient evidence regarding the complicity of the two holdings in Israeli genocide, military occupation and apartheid, that would have presented a different outcome – a vote against divestment – and a different course of action. Instead, the Court engaged in debates, in both the first and second meeting, that served to undermine and nullify the substantive conclusions reached by the experts, reopening matters that had already been thoroughly discussed and resolved. As argued here, this indecision, incriminating as it evades the ICJ ruling, contradicts UoE’s own Responsible Investment Policy which claims to uphold the UN PRI ([Principles for Responsible Investment](#)).²²⁴

It is necessary to note that there is widespread concern relating to the vague application of the RI policy. Yet, even without this review and reform being implemented instantly, divestment from the two holdings is not only obligatory, but is also a good-will gesture that can impact the University body’s stance on the inaction of the Court and the willingness of the administration to implement these duties – not simply adjudicate on them. Importantly, divestment from Alphabet Inc. and Amazon can also be applied instantly through the fair and just application of the University’s current RI policy. This means non-discrimination in the interpretation of the RI Policy, whether an investment falls outwith the policy guidelines because of genocidal and human rights abuses by Israel, or whether it is fossil fuels, or Russia or elsewhere.

[Responsible investment](#) as summarised on the University website,

integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into investment analysis and decisions. It recognises that environmental and social factors can have an impact on the financial value of an investment and also that investments have an impact on the world around us. Responsible investment acknowledges that long-term prosperity requires a move away from short-term profit as the only definition of value.²²⁵

The acknowledgement that ESG factors must prioritise “long term prosperity” over “short-term profit” makes the Court’s considerations of financial returns and risks of implementing suspension on investments complicit in the use of armaments which evidence human rights abuses, genocide and military occupation as a reason for inaction, with no clear vote, contradictory to the very values the University purportedly upholds. ESG factors in investments cannot be used to [greenwash crimes](#) against humanity.²²⁶

²²⁴ University of Edinburgh, “Responsible Investment”, <https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/operations/responsible-investment>

²²⁵ University of Edinburgh, “Responsible Investment”, <https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/operations/responsible-investment>

²²⁶ Causevic, Amar, (2022), “*Quo vadis* sustainable finance: Why defensive weapons should never be classified as an ESG investment”, Taylor & Francis Online, 19 October 2022, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20430795.2022.2135965#abstract>

Furthermore, the continued breaches of international law cannot be excused on the basis that “[our investment in ESG funds complies with the Responsible Investment Policy](#)”²²⁷. The RI policy requires urgent review in applying a human rights framework which upholds international humanitarian law and international conventions, to ensure that both the policy and the investments are appropriately subject to due diligence, legally and socially responsible. Here, due diligence cannot be a means to delay action on the consensus of investments in two holdings found to be suspicious (i.e. Exceptions Committee vote). Rather, due diligence is practiced when definitions, policies and obligations are applied to their fullest extent – not in their most limited interpretation.

The [Responsible Investment Policy statement](#)²²⁸ outlines that the University “will critically engage and contribute towards SDGs and promote, protect and respect human rights.” Among other points, the policy states that they will “take action to ensure our impacts are positive and where necessary mitigate any negative impacts on the environment or society (avoid, prevent, minimise, restore, offset).”

This is in addition to the University’s [Investment Committee governance](#)²²⁹:

²²⁷ Principal and Vice-Chancellor, 2024, “Old college protest: a statement from the Principal”, University of Edinburgh, 21 May 2024, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2024/old-college-protest-a-statement-from-the-principal>

²²⁸ University of Edinburgh: Sustainability, *Responsible Investment Policy*, (University of Edinburgh, 2016), 1-5, <https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/Responsible%20Investment%20Policy%20Statement%20%282016%29.pdf> [EASE login required] also available as pdf without [EASE login]: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YbBdYnDX5QMV1IrKVb4JNcNu0Mn-6Qnw/view?usp=sharing>

²²⁹ Finance: University of Edinburgh, 2024, “Governance” University of Edinburgh, 1 July 2024, <https://uoefinance.ed.ac.uk/about/sections/financial-information-reporting-strategy-team/investments-and-endowments/investment-committee/governance>

1. Purpose	To consider the corporate governance, University reputation and other related implications of the University's investments, in particular to consider strategic formulation and risk containment and to review and monitor both long and short-term investments.
Objectives	<p>To manage the investment portfolio asset allocations to deliver the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A financial return for the portfolio that exceeds CPI + 4%, net of fees, over the medium term (3-5 years), with dividend yield targeting budgets agreed with the University; 2. Implement restrictions that reflects University policies (e.g. tobacco, arms, fossil fuels, anti-slavery, conflict minerals); 3. Make a positive contribution to environmental and social impact through wherever possible investing in ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) compliant funds and considering investment in other assets that deliver financial and non-financial benefits.

Figure 1: Purpose and objectives of the University's Investment Committee and the governance of its finances, <https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/about/sections/financial-information-reporting-strategy-team/investments-and-endowments/investment-committee/governance>

quickly if required.

The committee's stated purpose and objectives enable it to effectively address the request for divestment from companies directly implicated in complicity. Consequently, the Court's argument that additional expertise and consideration are necessary for due diligence appears questionable. This is especially so given that one of the committee's objectives is to ensure that "funds invested can be realised quickly if required"—a condition that aligns precisely with the arguments put forth by the addendum and the broader coalition demanding divestment. However, despite this, the Court has evidently disregarded the urgency of "realizing quickly" and the necessity to act, thereby neglecting the very objectives the committee is meant to uphold.

In response to the University Court's inaction for the second time, [JPS commented](#) that, "as a consequence, Edinburgh's blatant hypocrisy, double standards, and contempt for Palestinian voices and lives is laid bare for all to see. Despite the ongoing attempts of suppression and targeting against our movement, we will not be silent." The statement communicated to students online that:

“The outcome of the Court was to create a third working group to further clarify definitions at some vague point in the future. Since July, you have repeatedly stalled divestment by creating working groups with the aim of defining armaments and controversial weapons. The working group farce is over. You know that you are in violation of UN and humanitarian law. Why else would you have frozen future investments in Amazon and Alphabet Inc.? You know that your investments aid Project Nimbus, a 1.2\$ billion deal supplying data and cloud services to Israel for military purposes. The clock is ticking, the death toll is rising.

The Court meeting occurred on the same day that marked one year of genocide in Gaza. [...] Our University community mourned the loss of over 42,000 Palestinians and called urgently for divestment. The support for the Palestinian cause and divestment campaign grows stronger. [...] The Court has made a complete mockery of the immense loss of life and suffering caused by the Zionist entity. Once again, the University of Edinburgh proves that it prioritises profit over Palestinian life.

Does international law not apply to the University of Edinburgh? [Do] internationally recognised violations of the Genocide Convention not compel them to divest from complicit companies?”