

Protecting education from Wales to Palestine: genocide and financial complicity

a panel discussion

October 15th 2025



Tentative plan for today

14:05, now	intro, where are we?
14:10, Leah Owen	material complicity of the UK
14:25, Andreas Buerki	academia during a genocide
14:40, Athanasios Hassoulas	linking with Palestinian universities
14:55, Nafisah Abdulrazaq	student activism
15:10 – 15:55	panel discussion
15:55, outro	(then pub on the pond?)

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Background question

How can we organize locally as university staff and students?

Context: genocide in Palestine and Swansea University

(what I am aware of)

There is a genocide going on

torture, bombing, ethnic cleansing, kidnapping, murder, siege, famine, expulsions, theft, apartheid

- settler-colonialism, started in the 20th century
- since October 7th 2023, in Gaza alone:
 - > 68000 *confirmed direct* kills (Gaza Health Ministry)
 - + similar number of confirmed deaths by starvation
 - actual estimates: hundreds of thousands

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Gaza universities all bombed

The UK is currently complicit

Arguably #2 ally of Israel, with an historic responsibility

Aspects of complicity in the UK today:

- political
 - diplomacy
 - repression of activism
- media coverage
- military
 - intel sharing
 - exporting of arms to Israel

How can a UK university be complicit?

- Investments: at least £456M invested by UK universities (PSC)
- Collaboration with the “defence” industry
 - advertisement
 - research grants, contracts
- Collaboration with Israeli universities and industry
 - Joint degrees, specific grants . . .

Also a UK university could be supportive of Palestinian liberation

- BDS, scholarships, . . .
- UCU support at the national level



From Goi Ashmore (Chair of Council, 02/10/2025):

- Extra cash managed by RLAM, **no further details**
- RLAM acting on SU's *Ethical Investment and Banking Policy*
(last reviewed in 11/2023, but current)
- Allows to invest in companies deriving less than 10% of their profit from arms sales
 - Student's Union motion (01/2025): asks to bring that to 0%

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Other relevant points

- There is a staff rep on the Finance committee
- The student's union president also on that committee
- Divestment from Barclays after student encampment (06/2024)

Answer to a recent FOI request from dED
(not yet public afaik):

- £8,086,274 in current defence-related grants
- + £499,469 going to defence-related studentship
- **no details on the specific partners/projects disclosed**
- ▶ (inclusion criteria??)

Swansea University: defence research partnerships

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- ▶ not all projects accounted for? ↗

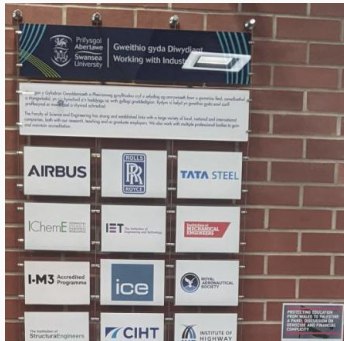


Figure 1: ENCIRCLE project, £950k for SU, collaboration with Thales

Swansea Univ.: advertising companies involved in “defence”

Career fair featuring (right now on Bay!):

- the British Army and the Royal Air Force
- GE Aerospace, Rolls Royce, SEA



← taken in Engineering Central

None that I'm aware of at uni level.

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Although my canvas todo list smh asked me if I wanted to apply:

- for a grant with Israeli startups
- for a “chief NATO scientist” position

OK now for the actual talks :)

Outro: what do we do?

Some calls to actions for individuals

(Non-exhaustive and specific to Swansea and/or HE)

- Sign the petition from dED to demilitarize education

<https://ded1.co/>



- Local activists (non-uni):
 - Swansea Palestine community link on facebook
 - Banner drop on the footbridge out front, Thu 5pm
 - PSC has a Cardiff group (with mailing list)
- Fundraiser for two Palestinian students in Cardiff



But collectively? (as staff)

Vague ideas before this meeting

- Support student action
- Push for financial transparency
- Complicity report?

Hope

Some things to organize around have emerged!

For now:

- We are few/not structured!
- Signal group, list of emails (→)
 - Ask us for the signal group

