



A community of public scholars demanding and embodying liberation

Newsletter April 2025

Dear friends,

**“Relentlessness”** is a concept that **seems to define the nature of recent times**, and one that we’ve increasingly lived and felt. The non-stop of it all, never a moment to catch breath and catch up as **we experience personal traumas and witness global horrors that somehow don’t stop**.

Now more than ever we are aware of **the necessity of building community**, creating systems that allow for those who need it to take a moment (moments) to draw breath, to rest, to stop, knowing there will be many others continuing the struggle until they can return.

With this we are also **called to explore what it actually means to be in community**, and understand that, as well as **strengthening the connections** we already have, this may also mean **building links and working with or alongside those with whom we may not fully agree**, in small or significant ways.

It is essential, though, that this **does not translate to setting aside our principles or beliefs in the name of “compromise”**, nor to watering down our ideals to reach some “acceptable” or “realistic” common view or course of action. We can and must **hold on to what is fundamental to our particular worldviews even as we find ways to organise together towards liberation**, despite the discomfort attempting to reach such a balance can bring about. There is **strength in our differences**, and so we continue to work towards finding this balance as **we keep striving to exist as our full selves, loudly and uncompromisingly, in a world that would rather we didn’t exist at all**.

With love and solidarity, GEM Collective

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Links to find us on social media:

[@gemcollective on Bluesky](#)

[@gemresearchcollective on Instagram](#)

[@gem\\_collective on Twitter](#)

[@gemcollective on Youtube](#)

# In community, in collaboration

## Stuart Hall Archive Project: Conjunctures, Dialogues, Readings



Stuart Hall. Photo by Clinton Hurton.  
Courtesy of Annie Paul.

“The **Stuart Hall Archive Project** is a major **multi-disciplinary research project** that will expand public understanding and engagement with the **work of** the celebrated cultural theorist, **Professor Stuart Hall.**”

Friends of GEM, **Professor Pat Noxolo and Dr Rita Gayle** will be **leading** on **Conjunctures**, a **programme** engaging with “the ‘extended Caribbean’, cultural and social diasporas, and minoritized communities, that **platforms new questions, knowledges, practices, and pedagogies.**” and GEM looks forward to participating.

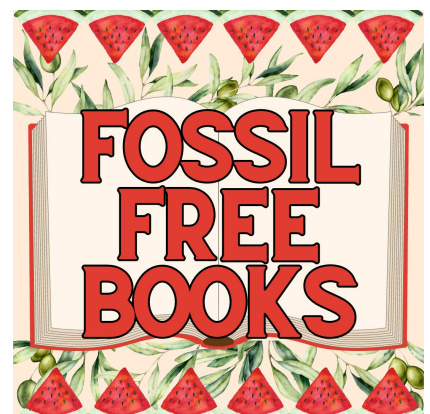
Read more at [the project's webpage](#) and for queries about the project or to join the mailing list, **contact** [sharchiveproject@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:sharchiveproject@contacts.bham.ac.uk).

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## Fossil Free Books

GEM has been engaging with Fossil Free Books, a group “organising as **workers for a genocide free, fossil free books industry.**”

“We are workers across all areas of the books and publishing industry, organising against complicity with Israel's crimes, as well as fossil fuel and fossil fuel finance.



**We demand an industry that values life over profit!** As writers, editors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, and more, we have power as workers to withdraw our labour and shape this industry. **Join us!**”

**Contact** Fossil Free Books on [fossilfreebooksuk@gmail.com](mailto:fossilfreebooksuk@gmail.com) or via [their website](#)

# Things that have struck us

## People's Tribunal on Police Killings

The **first session** of the **People's Tribunal on Police Killings in the UK** took place on April 6th and 7th. An initiative of the [United Families & Friends Campaign \(UFFC\)](#), [Migrant Media](#) and [4WardEverUK](#), the work is also supported by [Black Lives Matter UK](#).

The Tribunal is **concerned with** the **impunity** with which **police and other state killings** continue in the UK, and determined to **radically challenge** this **status quo**. It has been "established to unify the struggles taking place, create a platform for justice and take direct action".

**Testimonies** from families and loved ones of those killed by the state included those of **Marcia Rigg**, **Ajibola Lewis** and **Myrna Simpson**.

You can **watch the** [tribunal recordings on Youtube](#).

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## We Bear Witness – Nejma Collective report

The **Nejma Collective**, founded in 2022, is "a **volunteer group of Muslims working in solidarity with people in prison**...motivated by Islam's holistic approach to justice, that contextualises harm rather than defining people solely by their actions. This approach also seeks accountability and reparation rather than simply caging people and making them more vulnerable."

At the **end of 2024**, they released their **first report** which reflects on the work they have been doing with Muslims in prison since their inception. "This report is **a testament** to those who continue to **struggle, learn and fight the horrors of the carceral world-order** of colonialism and capitalism."

The report can be **downloaded, read and shared** [from the Nejma Collective website](#), and for those who wish to **support** the **Collective's essential work**, you can make one-off or recurring **donations** via [their donation page](#).

# Dates in our diaries

## **Soundtrack To A Coup D'Etat – Film screening with panel discussion**

“When people are suffering around the world, what exhausts me is hearing people say ‘I stand with you, I’m here for you, how can I help you?’, because **we are giving you opportunities** to help, to support, **to stand with us and you are not showing up**”

– Priscilla Toko

On **Sunday 27 April**, **ActOne Cinema** will be holding a **screening** of **Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat**, with **proceeds supporting** ongoing efforts in the **DRC**.

**Johan Grimonprez’s documentary** follows **Congo’s** declaration of independence and the country’s **post-colonial era**, fusing this with a “soundtrack of bebop, rumba, and jazz” which was itself an element of the CIA’s role in the **assassination of Patrice Lumumba**.

The screening will be **followed by a panel discussion by Congolese Action Youth Platform (CAYP)**, touching on critical issues like genocide, imperialism, extractive capitalism, ecocide, and femicide.

Find out more and buy tickets on [the Eventbrite page](#).

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## **In Search of Common Ground – Stuart Hall Foundation 10th Anniversary Programme**

This year marks the **10th anniversary of the Stuart Hall Foundation**, and we are looking forward to the **series of discussions they will be offering** over the summer, with the **theme** titled **In Search of Common Ground**. The programme **starts** in **May** with the 8th Annual Stuart Hall Public Conversation, featuring a **keynote by Prof. Françoise Vergès**.

“In Vergès’ keynote, ‘*There Will Be No Future Without Seizing the Present*’, she will consider **how we might think across difference to construct a life-affirming politics in times of poly-crisis**, with a presentation organised around possibilities for reappropriating the present”.

We are **excited** for this **programme’s focus on Stuart Hall’s ideas around identity** which “dare[s] us to build a collective politics that is flexible enough to hold – even if momentarily – the sum of our individual concerns.” Further **details** can be found on [the Stuart Hall Foundation’s website](#).



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## **Urban Nostalgia: Part 1 – A series curated by Edward Adonteng**



"Can I enjoy the nostalgia reserved for the rural for the urban?"

Reflecting on the stanza from the poem "And What Will My Descendants Say about their ancestral home, the Council Estate", this **series of seminars will engage with the question of Urban Nostalgia.**

What is nostalgia? How does it make you feel? Do we ignore the negative aspects of our longing for a glorious past?"

Happening on **Tuesday 29 April at The Garden Museum**, an evening of reflecting on **what forms memory for us** based on our surroundings growing up.

The **panel** will be made up of Senior Lecturer in Sociology and History at Goldsmiths, **Dr Alex Rhys-Taylor**, Writer, Curator and Archivist **Naz Hamdi** (NazFromNewham) and **Edward Adonteng**, an Essayist, Poet, Artist, Gardener and Academic from South London.

Get your **tickets** here: [For Urban Nostalgia](#)

# GEM Members' updates

## **New ways of relating**

We are **sad to be saying goodbye to Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye**, who has left GEM after over 2 years of sharing her incredible wisdom, vitality and beauty. We will miss her, but know that **we will continue to be in touch in different ways**, and look forward to getting to witness all that comes next for her, and all that she shares with us and the world.

**Below** is a **contemplation** that **Ogoegbunam created** which we shared in an earlier newsletter, followed by an **excerpt and image** from the piece.

### **Grafting Flowers, Ancestors & Dreams by Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye**

As part of last summer's gathering, **Ogoegbunam created [this contemplative, vulnerable and ultimately powerful sharing](#)** where she responded "to the poem written by Azeezat Johnson, Francesca Sobande and Katucha Bento and to Azeezat's scholarly and personal legacy by shaping an experimental practice-process".

"As we find each other, we make something different,  
elsewhere. With each flower, stem, petal, bit of soil, I was  
helping make another space where we might gather together,  
a more affirming place for our full Black beings."

