Preventing Prevent

I’m standing for the Welfare & Rights PTE to take forward the work of the Preventing Prevent campaign, a broad-based coalition of students and academics organising to ensure the the government’s counter-terror strategy stops encroaching on our civil liberties and human rights. Over the past year, since the university used Prevent duty to remove an academic from a PalSoc panel, we have worked to change the way university authorities approach the Prevent. This began with protest and has made significant progress, resulting in a public apology from management and then public opposition to the counter-terror legislation that underlies Prevent from the Vice Chancellor and other senior figures. Prevent has seen University lecturers, administrators and counsellors trained to police the political speech and expression of students, and taught that mainstream opposition to British foreign policy is potentially “extreme”, needing to be “monitored and risk assessed”. This commonly slips into Islamophobic racial profiling, with students racialised as Muslims subjected to surveillance and cross-interrogation when trying to book rooms or hand out leaflets in their colleges. It is crucial for students and staff to organise to protect our human rights—freedom of speech and expression and freedom from discrimination among them—from Prevent. Preventing Prevent will work with CUSU and the University to lobby and campaign to ensure that this happens.