

Solidarity

Issue No. 188 / October 2024

\$3/\$5

HORROR IN GAZA, LEBANON

SMASH THE

ISRAELI

TERROR STATE



CFMEU

Administration sees
bosses looking to attack

US ELECTIONS

Kamala Harris—candidate
of billionaires and the CIA

GAZA

Resisting genocide
one year on

Solidarity **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

Capitalism is a system of competition, crisis, and war based on exploitation of workers, producing for profit not human needs. Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over production or distribution. Through environmental degradation and climate change capitalism has become a threat to humanity's future and life on earth.

Workers power and socialism

The working class has the power to challenge the existing system and create a better world. We stand for socialism, a society based on democratically elected workers councils which would control and plan the economy to produce for human need. The authoritarian states like Russia and China are not socialist but forms of state capitalism where workers have no power.

What about elections and parliament?

Parliament, the army, the police and the courts are institutions of the capitalist state that maintain the dominance of the ruling class over the rest of society. The capitalist state cannot be taken over and used by the working class, it must be smashed. Workers need to create their own state based on workers councils.

While parliament can be a platform for socialists, real change doesn't come through parliament. It is won by mass action in strikes, protests and demonstrations.

We are internationalists

The struggle for socialism has no national boundaries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from another; we campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose borders and immigration controls, and welcome migrants and refugees.

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

Australia is an imperialist power established through genocide on stolen Indigenous land. We support the continuing struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for land, justice and self-determination.

Oppression and liberation

We oppose sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia. We fight against all forms of discrimination and the oppression of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. We oppose discrimination against Muslims and people from the Middle East.

Linking up the struggles

We are active building movements for environmental and social change and economic equality. We are active in our unions and work to build the organisation and self-confidence of the rank and file. We work to bring activists together to strengthen each movement and build a common struggle against capitalism.

Educate, agitate, organise

Socialism cannot be introduced from above, by parliament or parties. The emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself.

Solidarity is an organisation of activists, anti-capitalists and revolutionary socialists committed to socialism from below. We are part of the International Socialist Tendency.

A democratic revolutionary party is necessary to deepen resistance to capitalism and to build a movement to overthrow the system. Solidarity members are beginning to build such a party out of today's struggles against the system.

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday
Brown St Hall, 8-10 Brown St
Newtown
For more information contact:
Adam on 0400 351 694
sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday
Kathleen Syme library and community
centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton
For more information contact:
Jason on 0456 624 661
melbourne@solidarity.net.au

Brisbane

Contact Mark on 0439 561 196 or
brisbane@solidarity.net.au

Perth

Contact perth@solidarity.net.au

Canberra

Contact canberra@solidarity.net.au

Adelaide

Contact Robert on 0447 362 417 or
adelaide@solidarity.net.au

Or check fb.com/soliaus/events

CONTACT US

Magazine office

Phone 02 8964 7116
Fax 02 9012 0814

Email

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Website

www.solidarity.net.au

Facebook

Search for "Solidarity Magazine" or
go to fb.com/soliaus

Twitter

@soli_au
twitter.com/soli_au

Solidarity No. 188

October 2024

ISSN 1835-6834

Responsibility for election
comment is taken by James
Supple, 410 Elizabeth St, Surry
Hills NSW 2010.

Printed by El Faro, Newtown
NSW.

SUBSCRIBE TO SOLIDARITY MAGAZINE

Solidarity is published monthly. Make sure you don't miss an issue—pay by credit card online at www.solidarity.net.au/subscribe or send in this form with a cheque or money order and we will mail you *Solidarity* each month.

5 issues—\$15 One year (12 issues)—\$36 Two years (24 issues)—\$65

Name Phone

E-mail Address

Cheques payable to ISO Publishing. Send to PO Box 375 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

Things they say

I see it as a national mission to support this sector.

Resources Minister Madeleine King defends Labor's support for the mining industry bosses

There is no difference between Hezbollah and Lebanon. Lebanon will be annihilated. It will cease to exist.

Israel's Minister of Education Yoav Kisch, a member of Netanyahu's Likud Party

If there wasn't negative gearing, I wouldn't be in property.

Saul Eslake, economist and member of the Australian Parliamentary Budget Office panel of expert advisers

He is unconvinced and we are unconvinced

Treasurer Jim Chalmers on Albanese and Labor's unwillingness to change negative gearing for property investors

They're not terribly clever questions. Albanese gets testy when asked whether he supports changes to negative gearing on ABC Breakfast

I need to practise being in multiple places at multiple times, so it's a great opportunity for us to be here in the Northern Territory.

Col Brandon Pope, one of the commanding officers of US Marine Rotational Force, Darwin

I get much bigger crowds than him but nobody ever says I'm a great speaker.

Donald Trump compares his crowds to those of Winston Churchill, who was said to be a good speaker

CONTENTS

ISSUE 188 OCTOBER 2024



From Gaza to Lebanon— Israel's genocide one year on

- 8 Melb Uni rallies to cut ties
- 8 UNSW Student General Meeting
- 14 Are we any closer to a free Palestine?
- 20 Blood on Albanese's hands over Lebanon



CFMEU fights to strike out administration

- 6 Etex workers locked out
- 6 Support for CFMEU grows
- 7 Fighting to defend EBAs and end administration

Australia

- 9 Labor weakens environment approval
- 9 Kurri Kurri plant to run on diesel
- 10 Labor ramps up missile production
- 11 Refugee encampments demand visa justice



International

- 12 Fascists win German state election
- 13 Kanak movement still facing vicious French repression



Features

- 16 Backing Kamala Harris no answer to Trump
- 18 Why is Albanese's Labor so useless and right-wing?

Sexism and harassment still rife in ADF

WOMEN TRAINING for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) continue to face appalling rates of harassment, a survey it tried to keep secret has revealed.

More than half of women said they had been subject to harassment, bullying and violence at its training facilities, which include the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and the Royal Australian Naval College. Only one of its seven training facilities managed to reduce the rate of harassment during 2023.

The extent of sexual harassment also remains high, with 13 per cent of women at ADFA saying they experienced it. This is actually a reduction since 2021 from the previous rate of 36 per cent of women facing sexual harassment in that year.

The findings, from a 2023 Workplace Behaviours Survey, come a decade after the federal government asked the Human Rights Commission to investigate the treatment of women in the ADF.

New WA gas policy boosts export profits

MINING COMPANIES in WA will be allowed to export gas produced onshore for the first time, following changes to the state's gas reservation policy.

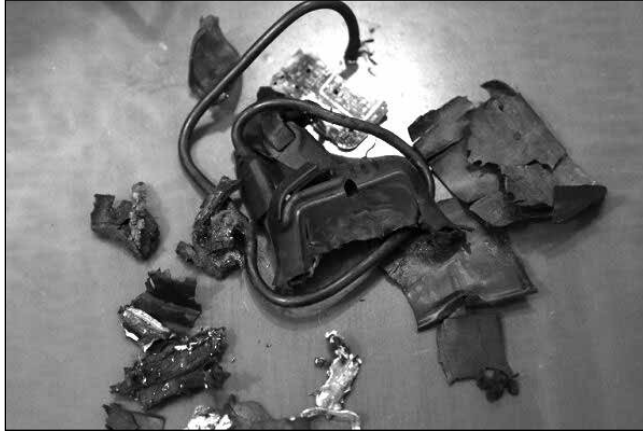
Consumers in WA have avoided the high gas prices paid on the east coast because of state policy that forces the reservation of 15 per cent of offshore gas production alongside all gas produced onshore for the domestic market.

But gas companies have long pushed to be allowed to export more gas and sell it overseas, where they can get a higher price for it.

The state government will now allow 20 per cent of onshore gas to be exported. "This benefits Woodside, which is desperate to take more gas for its North West Shelf Extension export facility," which needs more supply to meet its capacity, according to the Australia Institute's Rod Campbell.

Consumers will be the losers, with more pressure for the price of gas to increase.

Israel's pager attacks were terrorism



ISRAEL'S DETONATION of Hezbollah communication devices in Lebanon was a mass terror attack. It killed 42 people over two days, including at least 12 civilians, and left thousands injured.

Israel planted explosives in the devices and then set them off by remote signal. In the first wave of attacks, it exploded 4000 Hezbollah pagers in the space of an hour. The next day it blew up Hezbollah walkie-talkies.

But there was no guarantee of who was holding them at the time of the attack. At least two children were killed on the first day.

The pagers were also used by civilians working at Hezbollah-linked health services and other institutions. At least two health workers were killed.

Others suffered life-changing injuries, with 300 people losing both eyes and hundreds losing their hands.

Sickeningly, the attacks were widely celebrated in the Australian media, with Rodger Shanahan writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the attack was, "Audacious in its conception and brilliant in its execution" and Peta Credlin responding "Bravo".

"Weaponising an object used by civilians is strictly prohibited" under international law, Mary Ellen O'Connell, a professor of law and international peace studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, said. This was yet another horrific Israeli war crime.

Israel carried out 82 per cent of Lebanon cross-border strikes

Israel and Hezbollah began trading rocket and drone attacks immediately after Israel started unleashing genocide on Gaza.

But the number of attacks shows Israel's efforts to escalate the conflict. Israel was responsible for 82 per cent of the attacks up to 6 September. In that time it bombed Lebanon 7845 times, compared to 1768 Hezbollah strikes on Israel.

In that time there were 32 Israeli deaths, including 10 civilians, compared to 646 Lebanese killed, including at least 137 civilians. Then Israel killed 558 people in one day on 23 September, the most killed in one day since Lebanon's civil war in the 1980s.

Israeli Minister wants ethnic cleansing of Lebanon

AN ISRAELI government minister has revealed the agenda of Israel's right-wing parties, calling for ethnic cleansing to create a buffer zone in southern Lebanon and to remove the "Shia enemy population".

Minister of Diaspora Affairs Amichai Chikli posted photos questioning the border with Lebanon and Syria. Israel's political right has long dreamed of a "Greater Israel" including the south of Lebanon up to the Litani River. He is a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party.

Chikli called for Israel to occupy southern Lebanon, saying it would be justified in "taking over" the area.

He also claimed that "even though it has a flag and even though it has political institutions", Lebanon "does not meet the definition of a country" and argued that, "A renewed buffer zone, free of enemy population is the order of the hour."

Israel occupied southern Lebanon from 1982 until 2000, when resistance from Hezbollah and other groups drove it out of the country.

Albanese didn't oppose award to war criminal

THE ALBANESE government did not object to a request from King Charles to award a coronation medal to war criminal Ben Roberts-Smith, documents seen by Crikey have revealed.

Buckingham Palace sought approval from the Albanian government as well as "administrative support for its enacting".

Roberts-Smith was awarded the medal, given to all living Victoria Cross recipients, at a ceremony held at Government House in Perth in June.

Last September, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, Patrick Gorman, signed off on a reply to Buckingham Palace to "agree that the Australian government has no objection" to the award.

Roberts-Smith was found to be responsible for the murder of at least four unarmed Afghans in a defamation trial last year. Judge Besanko branded him a "criminal" who "broke the moral and legal rules of military engagement".

EDITORIAL

Now's the time for a fightback against Albanese's right-wing rule

ALBANESE'S RIGHT-WING agenda is bringing Labor unstuck. There is a widespread sense that he is running a useless government that is failing working class people.

Labor's failure to act on the cost of living crisis has generated massive frustration.

Despite falling inflation, hopes of an interest rate cut have been dashed, with Reserve Bank chief Michele Bullock declaring there was no relief coming in the "near term".

There is even dismay with the government from mainstream Labor figures. Former ACTU Secretary Bill Kely has accused the government of being "mired in mediocrity" while Gareth Evans questioned "what exactly is this Labor government for?"

Labor is also facing defeat in the Queensland state election on 26 October, with the likelihood of a right-wing LNP government committed to a crackdown on youth offenders and the unions.

Albanese has taken a conservative course ever since his election, avoiding any serious change and serving the interests of big business and the rich.

His union busting attack on the CFMEU—aimed at weakening militant unionism—is the most recent example.

While the government talks about climate action it has also just approved another three coal mines.

Even as Israel expands its war into Lebanon, it still refuses to take any action. The export of parts for the F-35 fighter jets that Israel is using to bomb residential areas in Beirut continues.

It has also dug in to defend the \$368 billion AUKUS nuclear subs, with Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles dismissing opposition to declare, "it is happening".

Perth recently hosted the country's first maintenance visit by a US nuclear submarine.

And Labor is still competing with Peter Dutton to cut immigration, feeding the racist scapegoating of migrants for the rising cost of living. Labor is trumpeting its reduction in the number of international students coming here and boasting about its rejection of 70 per cent of the Palestinians from Gaza who have applied to come here since October.

Albanese's housing plans are another set of timid policies that will do nothing to bring down prices. His "Help to Buy" scheme would help only 10,000 people, and would help push up prices for everyone else. The "Build



Above: CFMEU members alongside other construction workers take to the streets for the second time in Melbourne in September Photo: ETU Victoria

the Rent" policy would give tax breaks to investors to encourage them to build houses to rent. But only 10 per cent would be affordable housing.

If the government was serious about housing affordability it would simply invest in building homes to massively boost the supply of public housing.

There have been reports that the government is finally considering changes to negative gearing for property investors, which has driven up housing prices beyond what most people can afford.

This is a policy Labor took to the 2019 election and then dumped. Change is desperately needed, but anything Labor backs is likely to fall short of what's needed to make housing affordable.

Building resistance

Labor is likely to lose seats at the election due by May next year. But we shouldn't put our hopes in minority government involving independent MPs or The Greens.

We need resistance now. If the government gets away with weakening the CFMEU, other unions will be less willing to stage disruptive strike action or defy the law—making industrial action less effective and handing more power to the bosses.

The movement for Palestine will also be weaker, with fewer unions willing to support the protests or back community pickets and political stopwork action.

The two days of stopwork action staged by construction unions have sent a message that the CFMEU is still willing to fight.

Opposition to the attack on the CFMEU is growing within the union movement, with more unions coming out against the administration.

The national Communications Electrical and Plumbers Union (CEPU) is even withholding Labor Party affiliation fees and has disaffiliated from the ACTU.

But too many union leaders have supported the ACTU and gone along with Labor's attack. Every unionist needs to build support for the CFMEU in their workplace or union branch.

Israel's escalation in Lebanon also puts renewed focus on Albanese's support for Israel.

Over the last year the movement has built a much larger base of support for Palestine—as the hundreds of students that continue to flock to Student General Meetings show. But there is still a long way to go to win over the majority to side with Palestine, and to turn the sentiment into a movement that can break ties with Israel.

We need a bigger layer of activists working to deepen the support for Palestine and counter the pro-Israel media bias.

It's organising and resistance on the streets and in the workplaces that can increase the pressure on Albanese, defend union rights and break Australia from support for Israel and US imperialism.

.....
Stopwork action by construction unions has sent a message that the CFMEU is still willing to fight

CFMEU members locked out by emboldened bosses at Etex

By Jayden Rivers

AROUND 40 CFMEU and ETU members at the multinational building materials manufacturer Etex in Matraville, Sydney have been locked out for over seven weeks.

Etex workers at the plasterboard manufacturing facility demanded a 6 per cent pay rise for each of three years, but the company locked them out after offering only 4.5 per cent. Etex made \$460 million net profit in 2023.

As *Solidarity* went to press workers were in negotiations over a first year pay increase of 5 or 5.5 per cent.

The workers have maintained a picket at the gates since the lockout began on 12 August after one day of strike action. Although a few workers have returned to work, the big majority are standing united after over 50 days.

As one CFMEU delegate told *Solidarity*, “We need to get better working conditions and a pay increase to cope with cost of living increases.”

Solidarity from CFMEU members at other workplaces, and members of other unions such as the NTEU and MUA, has been crucial. CFMEU delegates have collected money for the Etex strike fund at their branch meetings and worksites.

Etex has struggled to restart production at Matraville but with a small number of scabs, trucks have got the existing stock out of the plant.

Mark Irving KC, the administrator appointed by the Albanese government, wrote in an email to CFMEU members that the, “most important thing for you to know is that the union will continue to operate as normal.”

But the draconian administration regime imposed on the CFMEU has emboldened Etex bosses to pursue the prolonged lockout.

After the administrator was appointed, management told the workers’ bargaining team that they would just deal with the administrator from now on.

In week three of the lockout the administrator froze the strike funds that would normally be available to support the workers. This has left the Etex workers more vulnerable to being starved back to work.

The Etex dispute is both a fight for a decent pay rise and improved conditions, and a warning of the disaster construction workers will face if the administration regime is not fought.



Above: Workers on the picket line during at Etex alongside MUA members and others
Photo: Solidarity

The draconian administration regime imposed on the CFMEU has emboldened Etex bosses to pursue the prolonged lockout

Support grows for CFMEU across union movement

SUPPORT FOR the CFMEU has grown in the weeks since Labor imposed administration.

Initially only three unions opposed it: the Electrical Trades Union and the plumbers’ union, both part of the national Communications Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU), and the Maritime Union of Australia.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus claimed she could count on one hand the number of votes against it from union leaders on the ACTU Executive.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) in Victoria, part of the Building Industry Group of unions, opposed administration and has supported the construction industry rallies in Melbourne.

In Sydney the AMWU’s acting NSW Secretary Brad Pidgeon also spoke at the second rally on 18 September, saying the union was, “here to support the CFMEU Executive, Committee of Management, delegates and importantly the members”.

He attacked Labor’s legislation imposing administration, saying, “Every union should take note of this legislation because at the end of the day, no one is off limits.”

Rail Tram and Bus Union National Secretary Alex Claassens has also voiced dissent, saying, “A weakened CFMEU ... would inevitably compromise safety and workplace standards in the construction and infrastructure sectors.

“It would empower and embolden employers in those sectors and compromise the ability of unions

such as the RTBU to represent their own members.”

The CEPU has disaffiliated from the ACTU and suspended its Labor Party affiliation.

It has announced that it is calling a summit of blue-collar unions to set up an alternative to the ACTU. The summit can provide a welcome opportunity to discuss the way forward for the union movement and the strategy needed to break the shackles of the Fair Work Act and win back the right to strike.

Opposition to administration is not confined to blue-collar unions.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) NSW Division Council passed a motion opposing administration and calling on the union’s national executive to oppose Labor’s legislation.

The Queensland Teachers Union adopted a motion of support at its State Council, moved by rank-and-file members, that noted the “democratic right of all workers to be represented by a union, rather than by appointed administrators”.

Teachers have also launched an open letter to the Australian Education Union Federal Executive calling on them to oppose administration.

The RPA branch of the nurses and midwives union in Sydney has also carried a resolution backing the CFMEU.

Motions like these are needed across the union movement to reverse the backing many union leaders have offered to the attack on the CFMEU.

Threat to CFMEU EBAs shows need to keep fighting administration

By Ian Rintoul

FOR THE second time in a month, tens of thousands of CFMEU members across the country took strike action on 17 and 18 September to oppose the Labor-imposed administration of the union.

That's the kind of industrial power that can beat back Labor's attack and defeat administration.

Aarin Moon, MUA Victorian assistant secretary, struck a chord when he called on unions to join the fight to defend the CFMEU and told the protest in Melbourne, "Next time we shut down the ports, and shut down the economy too."

Another date for national strike action needs to be set.

More industrial action has been flagged in Victoria with the threat of a 72-hour strike in support of its "Line in the Sand" EBA campaign.

It's crucial that the strike action goes ahead and that it is coordinated with strike action in every state—to defend EBAs, and to keep up the pressure to scrap administration altogether.

It is only a matter of time until one of the companies decides to have a go at attacking conditions.

Administration has got nothing to do with criminality or corruption in the union and everything to do with weakening the union to the bosses' advantage.

In Victoria several employers, including most labour hire companies, have stopped paying the pay rise that kicked in from 1 July because the EBA has not been approved by the normal Fair Work rubber stamp yet.

The Master Builders Association (MBA) also wants bosses to group RDOs together at Easter and Christmas—more productivity for them, more stress during the year for construction workers.

Building unions in Victoria are preparing for a fight over whether the EBA voted up by a huge mass meeting of CFMEU members in June is going to stand.

A delegates meeting in September launched a "Target 1000" campaign to audit building sites and sign up another 1000 companies to the CFMEU's template EBA.

ETU Victorian Secretary Troy Gray said the 72-hour strike would go ahead, "If there's an orchestrated,



Above: Melbourne's construction industry rally on 18 September saw 20,000 walk off work again to protest
Photo: ETU Victoria

continued attack on the working conditions and the living standards of Victorian construction workers" and companies try to undermine the EBA.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is running an investigation asking companies whether they were "coerced" into agreeing to CFMEU EBAs, with a view to cancelling or modifying them.

MBA boss Denita Wawn told *The Australian* that it held "concerns about restrictive clauses" that included "provisions to funnel money to union funds, restrict the free choice of workers, dictate that workers' information is handed to unions, and give unions powers to call snap meetings at any time".

There should be no illusions that any branch can just sit tight, survive administration and emerge unscathed in 12 months' time. It is a mistake to think that collaboration with administration will see an early end to its shackles.

.....
Building unions in Victoria are preparing for a fight over whether the EBA is going to stand

Administration's impact

The effect of administration can already be seen at the Etext lock-out in Matraville, Sydney.

CFMEU and ETU members have been locked out for seven weeks after the boss told workers that they would wait to deal with the administrator, not the union.

And while the boss tries to starve

the workers back to work, the administrator controls union funds.

In Brisbane, workers on the Cross River Rail project have marked ten weeks on strike for a CFMEU agreement that includes a heat policy, job security, decent wages and a clause ensuring subcontractors are union and pay the same rates for the same job.

But since administration, organisers and delegates are looking over their shoulders, fearful that they could be sacked if they defy the law to organise the picketing or industrial action needed to win disputes against arrogant bosses.

It is also a mistake to put any hopes in the High Court challenge. A hearing is scheduled for 10 and 11 December and Queensland officials are saying there could be a decision by February, five months away.

The High Court challenge is unlikely to succeed and even if it did, Albanese would just work with the Liberals to change the law to get around any positive decision.

The ETU, AMWU and plumbers' union altogether have already set aside \$1.2 million to fund the case, comfortably above the estimated cost. That money would be better put into a strike fund.

It is industrial action that is going to beat administration and defend safety and EBAs from the bosses' attacks.

Melb Uni students rally to cut ties with Israeli university

By Owen McNamara

EIGHTY STUDENTS joined a Students Against War rally at Unimelb on 10 September demanding the university cut its ties with Israel.

The rally called on Melbourne University to scrap its PhD exchange program with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an institution illegally established on Palestinian land, with an IDF base on its campus.

NTEU delegates spoke alongside student organisers and highlighted the importance of building working class power through unions and solidarity between students and staff.

The rally was called in the wake of high levels of organising activity on campus at Unimelb in the first six months of this year, culminating in an impressively attended student encampment and the ten-day occupation of a university building, renamed Mahmoud's Hall.

This resulted in the University bowing to student and staff pressure by promising to disclose its links to weapons manufacturers. But the University has still refused to cut its ties with any of the weapons manufacturers and Israeli institutions that support the genocidal regime.

The key to winning divestment is pressure exerted by a mass movement of staff and students.

The presence of so many new faces at SAW's rally on 10 September demonstrates that there is a layer of students who want to fight the University to cut ties with Israel.

The rally was mentioned by the lecturer responsible for overseeing the exchange program, Professor Steven Praver, in the Senate Inquiry into antisemitism on Australian Universities.

He tried to brand the rally as antisemitic in an attempt at deflecting criticism from his complicity in Israel's actions.

SAW have called another rally for 16 October, and will present a petition signed by students and community around Unimelb to the University Council to demonstrate the broad support that exists for the University cutting ties with Israel.

It will take sustained campaigning to engage the wider student body to force the university to divest from Hebrew University.



Above: Students at the protest to cut ties with Israel at Melbourne Uni on 10 September Photo: Students Against War

.....

The key to winning divestment is pressure exerted by a mass movement of staff and students

SGM for Palestine draws 500 at UNSW

MORE THAN 500 students showed up to join a Student General Meeting (SGM) for Palestine at UNSW on 25 September.

Students overwhelmingly endorsed three motions put forward by Students for Palestine—that UNSW disclose and divest from its \$2.9 million in financial investments in weapons companies, cut its research partnerships with weapons companies, and that students “stand for a Free Palestine”.

This follows large SGMs supporting Palestine on a number of campuses, including an 800-strong meeting held at Sydney Uni in August.

Organisers had to move the meeting outside to the International lawn to accommodate the unprecedented number of attendees.

The mood was electric and inspiring, as chants demanding divestment and cutting ties echoed throughout lower campus.

There were speakers both for and against the motions, with a number of pro-Israel speakers including the Vice-President of the Australian Union of Jewish Students addressing the crowd.

But their arguments made little impact, with speakers against the

motions facing roars of boos ringing throughout the crowd.

This political marginalisation of supporters of Israel is significant at a university campus that has historically been a stronghold for Zionist students.

The official count for the motions was 501 for and just 17 against. The students then marched toward Anzac Parade in a show of solidarity and strength.

The SGM has no binding effect under either the Arc's (UNSW's student services organisation) constitution, nor the Student Representative Council Charter.

Student election ticket 365forSRC is attempting to organise a separate Arc General Meeting for Arc to divest from weapons companies and end any association with companies on the BDS list.

But the SGM remains a powerful statement of the growing student opposition to Israel's crimes in Gaza and support for Palestine, as the largest student political meeting on campus in many years.

The challenge is to turn this into student mobilisation through a robust campaign to force the university to cut ties with Israel.

Midhat Jafti

Labor weakens environment law to please mining companies

By Angus Dermody

THE ALBANESE government has continued to prioritise profit over the environment, signalling their intention to make a deal with the Liberals to water down the powers of their proposed environment regulator, Environment Protection Australia (EPA).

The announcement, made in Western Australia in a gesture of support to the mining industry, confirmed that Albanese was considering making the new EPA “compliance-only”. In other words, Albanese would water down its powers so that instead of being able to review and stop mining and development projects, it would just enforce compliance with existing environment laws.

Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek has defended the concessions, claiming that, “There is something in this for everyone—the whole idea is to have a system that is both better for nature and for business.” This is a fantasy.

When Labor introduced the legislation for the EPA, they talked it up as a “tough cop on the beat” which would have strong powers and, “make environmental assessments, decide project approvals and the conditions attached to them”.

The Greens have demanded that Labor introduce a “climate trigger” as part of the changes, meaning that climate impacts would be considered when approving new projects. Although Albanese himself supported the idea in 2005, he has now ruled it out.

The legislation needed to introduce the EPA is currently held up in parliament, with The Greens and the Liberals both refusing to pass it.

Greens leader Adam Bandt has rightly called the current version a, “dirty deal with the Liberals to further weaken our already-weak environment and climate laws.” But the Liberals have also refused to help pass the legislation despite Labor’s concessions aimed at winning their support.

The fact that Labor would reject the idea of a climate trigger proves just how seriously they are committed to running business as usual in the face of the climate crisis.

At the end of September, Tanya Plibersek also approved three coal mine expansions in NSW with a total of 1.3 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.



Above: Climate activists protest Labor Minister Tanya Plibersek’s approval of three more coal mines
Photo: Aman Kapur

At the same time, the climate crisis is escalating. In recent months millions have been displaced or severely impacted by flooding and typhoons in South and Southeast Asia. Tens of thousands of fires are raging across Brazil as it faces one of its

most severe droughts in history.

“I won’t be putting my head in the sand” was the promise from Plibersek in 2022, but that is exactly what she has done as she continues to delay climate action at a time when it is so urgently needed.

‘Green’ Kurri Kurri plant to run on diesel

ALMOST THREE years after Anthony Albanese promised to build a new hydrogen-powered generator in Kurri Kurri in NSW using public funds, the plant is now likely to run entirely on diesel fuel for its first year.

This means the plant will produce about 80 per cent more greenhouse gas emissions, according to Snowy Hydro, the public company responsible for building it.

The request by Snowy Hydro to use six times the originally approved level of diesel will also mean at least double the number of trucks needed to transport the fuel and twice as much wastewater produced by the plant.

The Kurri Kurri project was initiated by former Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who insisted it was necessary to replace NSW’s aging coal-fired power stations, and was originally intended to run on gas, a polluting fossil fuel.

Before his election in 2022, Anthony Albanese committed to building the plant, promising an extra \$700 million for the project on the condition

that it was built “hydrogen ready”.

After Albanese’s election, however, it was revealed that the generator would initially run entirely on gas, as there is not enough green hydrogen being produced to service the plant.

Energy experts warned from the beginning that the Kurri Kurri plant would be an expensive and inefficient means of energy production.

Meanwhile, the cost of building the plant has increased to almost \$1 billion and is estimated to grow to \$1.5 billion, largely due to the extra 21 kilometres of pipeline needed to supply hydrogen to the generator.

This absurd waste of money and resources, alongside Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek’s approval of another three coal mines this month, reveals the hollowness of Labor government’s commitment to climate action. The billions of dollars of public money being wasted on the Kurri Kurri project should be spent on publicly-owned energy that comes from truly renewable sources.
Caitlin Doyle

.....
The Greens have demanded that Labor introduce a ‘climate trigger’ as part of the changes

Labor ramps up missile production as part of US war plans

By Luke Ottavi

THE RECENT brutal suppression of protests against the Land Forces Expo in Melbourne shows Albanese’s Labor government is deadly serious about preparing for war on China and ramping up arms manufacturing in Australia.

Land Forces saw weapons companies like US-based Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman as well as Israeli firms Elbit, Rafael and IAI (Israel Aerospace Industries), all responsible for making the killing machines used in Gaza, spruik their products to governments—including our own.

The Australian Army was a key supporter of Land Forces and representatives from every state and territory government were present.

A report in June from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (APSI), a thinktank funded by the Department of Defence, tells Albanese that, “if you want peace, prepare for war”.

Preparing for war on China

Labor is raising defence spending by an average of 6.6 per cent a year over the next decade, reaching \$100 billion annually by 2033-34.

Projected defence spending between now and 2035 will total an astronomical figure of \$764 billion, with more than \$58 billion being spent on the initial cost of acquiring nuclear submarines over the next ten years.

Ramping up the production of missiles locally is another one of the government’s targets.

As *The Sydney Morning Herald* explains, this is part of the government’s grandly titled Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise (GWOE), spending around \$21 billion over the next decade “to develop a sovereign ability to produce, maintain, repair and overhaul high-priority weapons”.

Labor also hopes to make money exporting them, selling weapons to murderous regimes from Israel to Indonesia, and from Saudi Arabia to the United States.

Albanese has pledged \$850 million to start making long range strike missiles at a factory near Newcastle within three years, in a partnership with Norwegian defence giant Kongsberg.

These naval strike missiles and joint strike missiles have a range of over 275 kilometres and will be the first of their kind built outside of



Above: Test firing of a National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System at Woomera last year Photo: Defence Department

Labor’s plans for missile production rely heavily on US information sharing and technical assistance

Norway. The government is spending another \$142 million to buy joint strike missiles produced overseas to arrive next year.

Genocide profiteers Lockheed Martin are also partnering with Albanese’s government to start making guided multiple launch rocket systems (GMLRS) in Australia from next year.

GMLRS are missile systems often mounted on trucks that can fire rockets in quick succession against targets 70 kilometres or more away. Ukraine has used them strike targets accurately within metres.

Lockheed Martin Australia and Thales Australia have also signed an agreement that could lead to collaborating on manufacturing solid rocket motors for the Australian market, which are essential for GMLRS missile systems and other missiles.

The government has committed \$22 million for rocket motor manufacturing and is seeking an industry partner.

However, Labor’s plans for missile production rely heavily on US information sharing and technical assistance, and access to global supply chains.

Anxious war-hawks based at Sydney University’s US Studies Centre writing for *The Strategist* argue that “both Australia and the United States need this partnership to deliver.

“US officials have described efforts with Australia to build collective defence production capacity as a blueprint for similar initiatives with other partners.”

The war in Ukraine and Israel’s

genocide in Gaza—and now its assault on Lebanon—have depleted US missile stocks and put a strain on production, sounding alarm bells among US policymakers.

Moreover, *The Strategist* reports that war games modelled by US think tank CSIS predicts that the US would “exhaust stocks of key long-range missiles less than one week into a war to defend Taiwan”.

Defence Minister Richard Marles also wants to maintain and repair more US equipment in Australia and celebrated that “last year, Sikorsky Australia in Nowra conducted the first-ever deep maintenance activity on a US Navy MH-60R Seahawk ‘Romeo’ helicopter”.

The US ruling class is willing to unite with Australia to increase both countries’ military capacity for war on China, and to ensure that key allies like Israel have enough missiles to set the Middle East afire.

Labor is fully committing to the drive to war on China and is anxious to develop the arms industry needed for the task.

By deepening collaboration and interoperability with the US, the Australian ruling class is seeking to show that it can be relied upon to produce enough munitions not just for Australia, but to supplement the US too.

We need to oppose Australia’s growing arms industry and the drive to war on China, and to stop weapons and weapons parts being sent to Israel as it continues to commit genocide in Gaza and provoke regional war.

Refugee encampments push Labor for visa justice

By Ian Rintoul

DESPITE PERSISTENT harassment from local councils and police, after more than 80 days the refugee encampments demanding permanent visas are still standing strong in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

And while there are noises that Home Affairs Minister, Tony Burke, was in discussion with his department about “a solution”, there is nothing definite yet regarding the central demand of the protests—a pathway that will guarantee permanent visas for the victims of the fast track process.

But after 12 years, and longer, on six-month temporary visas (or no visa at all), refugees are not about to go quiet.

In Brisbane, the police went to court to try to stop the 24/7 protest outside Jim Chalmers’ electorate office but the court ruled that the protest could be held there between 10am and 10pm.

To make the point, the refugee protesters held a celebration protest outside Chalmers’ office the next day.

But in any case, another 24/7 protest was already in place at Labor MP Anika Wells’ Nundah office before the court decision was known.

In Sydney, the local council made a transparent attempt to weaken the protest at Tony Burke’s office, demanding that the protest’s gazebo and shade structure be dismantled, because apparently after more than 50 days, it was now obstructing the footpath. But protesters are still allowed to sit in the same spot with umbrellas!

The council move followed the second rally on 22 September, when more than 300 fast track victims and their supporters marched through Punchbowl, rallying outside Burke’s office.

Refugees still abandoned

Refugees are in for the long haul. With less than a year to go to the next federal election, it is clear that refugees are not a priority for Labor.

The refugees are not just victims of the fast track system introduced by the Liberals in 2014; they are also victims of Labor’s general policy timidity. And Labor has a particular timidity over refugee policy where it does everything it can to out-do Dutton from the right.

Labor has also done nothing about



Above: The second march on Tony Burke’s office in Punchbowl Sydney, as part of the 24/7 protest outside his office Photo: Solidarity

the 1000 refugees (so called “transitory persons”) brought from offshore detention in PNG and Nauru to Australia, who are also being denied the right to settle in Australia.

Labor has been increasing the pressure on the refugees (including those with Australian citizen partners or citizen children) to sign up to go to New Zealand for resettlement, but time is running out.

The deal with New Zealand ends in December this year.

Labor’s cowardice will again be exposed by there being hundreds of refugees left in Australia (and in PNG) for whom there is nowhere but Australia to call home.

In the last week of September, Danish immigration minister Kaare Dybvad Bek toured Nauru and met with Burke, claiming he had gained “valuable insights into the pros and cons of the cooperation between Australia and Nauru”.

What insights could he have possibly obtained?

Burke is presently detaining about 100 refugees on Nauru, some half of them still in closed detention.

He is also dealing with 1000 transitory persons transferred to Australia from offshore when they became too physically and mentally unwell and children attempted suicide, denying them the protection they need in Australia.

Denmark (like Britain) was considering Rwanda as an offshore detention place but now like other EU countries is looking (again) at Albania. Europe is already using detention hell-holes in Libya for asylum seekers captured at sea.

Out-doing Dutton

Meanwhile, Liberal leader Peter Dutton continues to stoke anti-refugee racism, labelling international students making refugee applications “the modern version of the boat arrivals”, trying at once to summon the racism directed at boat arrivals and to turn it onto international students.

Labor’s response is to out-do Dutton from the right.

Burke boasts of Labor rejecting more student visas than the Liberals while Education Minister Jason Clare pushes the racist barrow, saying that too many international students are competing on the rental market in the inner city.

Labor has become the willing apologist for Operation Sovereign Borders and all that goes with “border protection”—the detention, the injustice, the scapegoating, the racism, the human rights violations, the deportations, the boat turn-backs.

The fight for permanent visas for the fast track victims is one pressing element of the fight for justice for refugees—a fight that we have to win.

Warning from Europe—fascists top poll in state election in Germany

By Maeve Larkins

THE FAR-RIGHT Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has made major gains in Germany's recent state elections—even as it moves in a more openly fascist direction.

In Thuringia on 1 September it won 32.8 per cent, the most votes of any party. In Saxony the same day and Brandenburg on 22 September it came a close second to the mainstream parties with around 30 per cent of the vote.

Then in Austria the fascist Freedom Party came first in parliamentary elections at the end of September on 28.9 per cent of the vote. Far right and fascist parties are gaining momentum across Europe, such as Georgia Meloni in Italy and Marine Le Pen in France.

In June the AfD won the second largest share of votes in Germany's EU election, behind only the conservative CDU. These results show the AfD has gained a worryingly rapid traction. In Thuringia they gained a huge 9.4 per cent boost on their previous share of votes.

The AfD bases itself around extreme anti-migrant racism, Islamophobia, climate change denial, and euro-scepticism.

Behind this far-right populism is an almost blatant neo-Nazism. AfD members of the Bundestag, Germany's parliament, have described themselves as “the friendly face of National Socialism”, and leading AfD politicians such as Bjorn Hocke have used banned Nazi slogans in their election rallies.

The party was initially set up as “a mixture of fascists, right wing conservatives and neoliberals”, according to German anti-fascist and socialist Gabi Engelhardt. Now “the open fascists are determining its policy and are setting the tone.”

Earlier this year, leading members of the AfD attended secret meetings with neo-Nazis to discuss the mass deportation of migrants, including any German citizens with immigrant parents who have not “successfully integrated”. This policy, named “remigration”, was featured on their election campaign posters in Thuringia.

Its leader demanded a “stop to immigration, admission and naturalisation for at least five years”.

The AfD uses racism to scapegoat migrants and refugees for Germany's cost of living crisis.



Above: Protesting the AfD conference in Essen in June
Photo: Nicolai Kary

Energy and food prices have skyrocketed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, propelling inflation to its highest in 50 years. Wages haven't kept up, and many are struggling to afford necessities like housing.

The ruling coalition of the Social Democratic Party, Greens and the Free Democratic Party has refused to provide relief. Instead, Chancellor Scholz has pledged \$160 billion to expand the German military, and has committed to sweeping cuts to social services in order to fund it.

The AfD has exploited widespread disillusionment in order to build support.

Their largest supporter base, for example, is in the East of Germany, where workers are on average poorer and more vulnerable to the cost of living crisis, and among the most disenfranchised from the ruling parties.

Legitimising racism

The response from the political establishment has been to warn against the extremism of the AfD. But the mainstream parties are also pumping out racism, legitimising what's coming from the AfD.

Scholz last year declared that, “We have to deport people more often and faster.” Just before the elections in Thuringia, Scholz deported 28 refugees to Afghanistan, some for as little as a drug possession conviction.

The “left alternative” parties in Germany have offered little resistance. Die Linke, previously the largest party in Thuringia, has been silent on the state's repression of pro-Palestine activism, and even voted

with the government to ban a Palestine solidarity conference. They have dutifully lined up behind Scholz's government in supporting the huge expansion of Germany's military and the arms shipments to Ukraine.

A section of Die Linke around Sahra Wagenknecht has also splintered off to form an “anti-migrant, pro-worker” party designed to appeal to those who accept the racism of the AfD.

But when the left and the centre cedes ground to racism and Islamophobia, it only makes the far right seem more acceptable.

There have been promising protests against the rise of the AfD across Germany. To fight the far right, we need to mobilise against this racism head on.

This also requires pointing the finger clearly at the policies of the German government as responsible for the economic crisis that workers are suffering, instead of the refugees who are its most brutalised victims.

This includes demanding an end to the arms shipments and militarisation which is fuelling the devastation of Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon, at the cost of spending on public services. The anti-racist movement must be connected to support for Palestine—a particular issue in Germany where there has been hostility to pro-Palestine contingents on the large marches against the AfD.

This requires building a genuine left that can take up the fight against racism and fascism, as well as the economic misery and imperialism that breeds it.

Behind its far-right populism is an almost blatant neo-Nazism

'Black Thursday for the Kanak people' as French repression continues

By Jacob Starling

FOUR MONTHS after protests first broke out in Kanaky-New Caledonia, the French state continues to repress the Indigenous Kanak people.

On 19 September, police shot and killed Johan Kaidine, 29, and Samuel Moeikia, 30, at the village of Saint Louis, during an early morning raid. The police were hoping to arrest a dozen Kanak activists accused of violent crimes and car-jackings during the May riots.

In the wake of the killings, French officials accused Kanak activists of firing first and claimed that the police were acting in self-defence.

The lethal police raid comes in the context of the ongoing siege of Saint-Louis, long a stronghold of the Kanak independence movement, by the French police and military.

For weeks, police have blocked traffic to and from Saint-Louis, forcing residents to enter and exit on foot, after showing their ID at one of the police checkpoints. A temporary barricade of sandbags and barbed wire set up the military is currently being replaced with a full-scale concrete wall.

The siege is periodically punctuated by night-time police operations to arrest leaders of the resistance movement. The killings of Kaidine and Moeikia was preceded by the murder on 10 July of Victorin Rock Wamytan, shot by a French sniper. In this case too, French officials claimed that the police were acting in self-defence.

The Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) has accused the French state of waging a war against Saint-Louis, calling 19 September a "black Thursday for the Kanak people".

Kanaky, which lies only 1300 kilometres off the east coast of Australia, was annexed by France in 1853, leading to a genocidal frontier war against the Indigenous Kanak people.

Since the annexation, the Kanak people have courageously and consistently resisted French colonisation. Major Kanak uprisings were brutally crushed in 1871 and 1917, killing thousands.

The survivors were forced into reserves and restricted from leaving them without permission until after the Second World War. Massive inequality and discrimination persists today. Although the Kanak people



Above: A rally for independence in the village of Poindimié on the "day of mourning" 24 September that marks the date France annexed Kanaky Photo: Suport Internacional Kanaky

make up 40 per cent of the population, they comprise 90 per cent of the prison population.

Uprising and repression

The current unrest in Kanaky was sparked in May when French President Emmanuel Macron passed a new electoral law that would add 25,000 French settlers to the electoral roll, eroding the representation of the Kanak with implications for any future vote on independence.

On 13 May rioting and protests broke out in Noumea, prompting France to deploy 3000 paramilitary police to crush the movement. On 22 May, Macron announced that the electoral reform law would be suspended until 30 June.

Since the dissolution of parliament on 10 June, the law has been suspended indefinitely.

In the meantime, France has continued to rely on brutal repression to prevent further riots. On 19 June, seven Kanak activists were arrested and transferred to detention in France, prompting another round of protests.

There has been a curfew in place since mid-May and it was extended in September to ban travel and gatherings between 6pm and 6am. French authorities also flew another 700 police into Kanaky, reinforcing the 5000 already deployed.

Meanwhile, loyalist settlers have maintained roadblocks around the more affluent suburbs of Noumea, subjecting any Kanak who passes through to humiliating interrogation.

On 24 September, the Kanak people commemorated the 171st anniversary of colonisation with non-violent rallies, while the council of great customary chiefs gathered on Maré Island to declare the sovereignty of the chiefdoms over Kanaky.

While the declaration of sovereignty highlights the illegitimacy of French occupation it is largely symbolic. But it has ruffled the feathers of the Customary Senate, an advisory body set up by the French state in 1998 as part of an Accords process with the independence movement.

France is determined to maintain its colonial domination of Kanaky for both economic and strategic reasons. Kanaky contains 10 per cent of the world's nickel reserves, and the nickel industry is dominated by the French mining company Eramet. The French ruling class will not easily relinquish the right to exploit Kanak workers.

Additionally, Kanaky forms a vital part of France's Pacific territories and hosts a French military and maritime base. Alongside its control of the islands of French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and Clipperton, holding the territory gives France a stake in Pacific affairs.

In the midst of growing rivalry between the West and China over the South Pacific, Western powers, including the Australian state, want to keep French imperialism in the Pacific.

We should support the Kanak struggle for independence and decolonisation and the end of French occupation and colonial control.

.....
French authorities flew another 700 police into Kanaky, reinforcing the 5000 already deployed

ONE YEAR RESISTING GAZA GENOCIDE: IS FREEDOM FOR PALESTINE ANY CLOSER?

David Glanz looks at what the movement for Palestine has achieved in the last year and how it can move forward

WITHIN HOURS of Israel launching its murderous assault on Gaza, thousands began taking to the streets for Palestine. In Sydney, the first snap rally was on 9 October, with Melbourne on the streets the following day.

Then on 15 October came the first of more than 50 weekly Sunday rallies. From the beginning they were the largest protests for Palestine ever seen—and for the first few months they just got bigger.

With protests spreading to every capital and many regional centres, at least a quarter of a million people across Australia have marched for Palestine. In Sydney, protest numbers were so large that police abandoned their effort to ban rallies.

The mass movement put down roots in communities, workplaces and campuses.

In Melbourne, hundreds of Palestine supporters rallied outside local councils to encourage support for Palestine. Seven councils voted to show solidarity and fly the Palestinian flag.

People around the country protested outside the offices of federal Labor MPs, with an encampment outside Anthony Albanese's electorate office in the Sydney suburb of Marrickville running for months.

There were protests and pickets outside factories manufacturing parts for the F-35 jet fighter, one of Israel's main weapons in Gaza.

Picket lines

Importantly, workers organised in their workplaces and unions, despite their officials often being slow or reluctant to respond.

Rank-and-file groups were launched in most unions and, under pressure from their members and the movement, some officials began to authorise contingents at the Sunday rallies.

Israeli-owned ZIM ships were disrupted on the Sydney, Fremantle and Melbourne waterfronts as members

of the Maritime Union of Australia respected community picket lines.

In Melbourne, members of the Australian Services Union took unprotected industrial action in February in solidarity with Palestine, with workers at community legal centres and social and community service workplaces walking off the job.

The CFMEU was among the first unions to take a clear stand for Palestine, calling for the Albanese government to ban military trade with Israel, including dual-use devices.

The ACTU held back because of its loyalty to Labor but under pressure from the movement and some affiliated unions made three statements: in October 2023 calling for a ceasefire and end to the occupation of Palestine; in February calling for the recognition of Palestine; and most importantly, in April demanding an end to all military trade with Israel and sanctions on selected Israeli officials.

Months of patient arguing by teacher and school staff activists in Victoria paid off with the Australian Education Union conference in July voting for an unprecedented pro-Palestine position.

Delegates demanded an end to the occupation and illegal settlements and supported an AEU contingent at a Sunday rally each month.

The sacking of Antoinette Lattouf at the ABC and other high-profile attempts to repress workers have generated outrage and opportunities for collective resistance.

In NSW, teachers have successfully forced a departmental "review" into directives effectively banning Palestine solidarity symbols.

Encampments

Inspired by the solidarity encampments that students had set up on campuses across the US, students at most capital city universities moved into action.

Students beat back attempts at many universities to discipline or even expel them

Encampments were established at universities including ANU, RMIT, Deakin, Monash, La Trobe, Sydney Uni, Queensland Uni, Adelaide Uni and Curtin. At one point, when the ANU encampment came under management attack, members of the CFMEU working on campus walked off the job in solidarity.

At the University of Melbourne, the encampment ran for four weeks, culminating in a weeklong occupation of a building dubbed Mahmoud's Hall in honour of a Palestinian student killed in Gaza.

When university management threatened the students, the National Tertiary Education Union branch called on members to support the occupation.

University management cracked and agreed to the first of the students' demands—to disclose the university's links with weapons manufacturers.

Students at Curtin, ANU and the University of Sydney were among those who won similar partial concessions. Students now face the task of holding universities to their word.

Importantly, students beat back attempts at many universities to discipline or even expel them. With hundreds rallying in defiance, managements either dismissed the charges or imposed no penalties.

Weapons exports

The Albanese government has tried to cover its unwavering material and political support for Israel several times over the past year.

It broke with its ally in Washington and voted in the United Nations in December for a ceasefire. Last month, it abstained on another UN resolution, one the US opposed.

But hiding in plain sight are the defence MoUs, the trade offices in Tel Aviv, the government funding for Israeli weapons companies and Australia's fervent support as a key player in the US alliance. The movement

needs to demand more forcefully that Australia cut all diplomatic, trade and military relations with Israel.

It cannot be left to the committed minority in the movement to understand the depth of our rulers' support for genocide. And many in the movement are still not clear about the kind of mass social power we need to mobilise to cut these ties.

As we move into the second year of genocide, the Palestine solidarity movement is building from an unprecedented base of support.

But some of the momentum generated in the first few months is in danger of dissipating. The movement needs to put far more focus on campaigning to widen its support.

The weekly rallies are now substantially smaller. Partly that's a result of exhaustion—but it also reflects a lack of strategy, which means the rallies are not seen as opportunities to give the movement direction and help launch campaigning initiatives.

The movement has also sustained damage because some Palestine supporters have seen attacking supportive union officials or Labor members as the way forward.

In Melbourne, for example, some activists maintained an aggressive picket on the waterfront after MUA members were forced to return to work after four days of respecting a community picket line. The result was a breakdown between the MUA and the pro-Palestine movement.

Other activists invaded the Victorian state Labor conference, denouncing all Labor members as complicit in the genocide—an action that precipitated a terminal crisis in Unionists for Palestine.

Rebuild

As Israel launches fresh horrors on Lebanon while refusing a ceasefire in Gaza, the movement for Palestinian liberation will continue.

One priority now is to rebuild the city rallies—holding them less frequently but promoting them by reaching out to workplaces, campuses and communities with mass leafletting, union meetings and Palestinian speakers.

Another is to use the official backing of the ACTU and individual unions to build deeper support for Palestine among workers as a first step towards eventually stopping work to stop the war.

Israel's horrors are not stopping. Neither can we.



Above: Marching for Gaza in Sydney
Photo: Sydpalpics

Mass revolt the key to freeing Palestine

AFTER A year of slaughter, Israel's genocidal war in Gaza shows no sign of stopping. Instead Israel is now unleashing hell on Lebanon too.

Israel has deliberately targeted Gaza's civilian population in one of the most horrific crimes worldwide in decades.

Yet it has failed in its declared aim of wiping out Hamas. While Hamas's forces are degraded they continue to function and the group retains control of 100 hostages. Israel's efforts to kill its leader Yahya Sinwar have failed.

In northern Gaza and Khan Younis, Hamas fighters re-emerged to assert control as soon as Israeli soldiers left. Israel is still bombing areas it claimed to have cleared months ago. However, Hamas has been left isolated.

Israel's existence as a settler-colonial state alongside 6.5 million Palestinians within the Occupied Territories and its own borders means it can never completely end Palestinian resistance.

Since 1948 it has used overwhelming force to subdue both the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states.

Some hope that Israel's genocide will lead to the collapse of the state. But it can continue as long as the West is prepared to back and arm Israel as a watchdog for their interests.

The last year has shown that Western rulers are prepared to tolerate almost any Israeli atrocity.

Israel is reliant on imports of fighter jets, bombs and missiles

to continue fighting. The US has dispatched more than 50,000 tons of military equipment since last October, in over 500 airlifts and 100 shipments by sea.

Five months ago, Biden paused a single shipment of 500 pound and 2000 pound bombs, warning Israel not to invade Rafah. When Israel went ahead anyway, the US shrugged and kept pouring in weapons.

But the last year has meant ordinary people more and more see Israel as a pariah state. In countries like Australia and the US, we have to keep organising to break our government's support for Israel.

The Arab ruling classes have also confirmed their collaboration with Israel and US imperialism. The Egyptian government has done nothing as Israel defies previous agreements by seizing control of the border with Gaza.

Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates all aided Israel's efforts to shoot down Iran's missile and drone attack in April.

The hope for change lies in mass movements of workers and ordinary people. Heavy repression of protests and the defeat of the 2011 Arab revolutions have held back expressions of solidarity in the Arab world.

Yet these uprisings also showed that the Arab working class can bring down the corrupt regimes that collaborate with Israel. Workers have the power through strikes, boycotts and blockades to impose the kind of pressure that could strangle the Zionist state.

James Supple

DEMOCRATS AND THE US ELECTION FALLING BEHIND KAMALA HARRIS NO ANSWER TO TRUMP

Fear of another Trump presidency means much of the left in the US is swinging behind Harris, weakening the movements that are needed to win real change, writes **Matilda Fay**

KAMALA HARRIS'S rise in the polls after taking over as the Democrat's Presidential candidate has generated a wave of enthusiasm from many of those fearful of another Trump presidency.

Donald Trump's racist dog-whistle about Haitian migrants "eating the pets" in their presidential debate sent alarm bells ringing for anti-racists everywhere. Black and Haitian communities in Ohio have reported facing an upswing in racist harassment in the aftermath of his comments.

The threat Trump poses is real: the scars inflicted by the vicious border policies of his time as President run deep and he is promising to ramp up deportations if he takes office again.

But Kamala Harris presents no counter to Trump's racism beyond the empty politics of "representation", and she stands at the helm of a Democratic party machine that has crushed radical movements time and time again.

Border racism and imperialism

Far from standing against the current frenzy of anti-migrant racism, Harris is feeding into it.

In July she bragged of prosecuting "gangs, drug cartels and human traffickers that came into our country illegally" during her time as California's attorney-general.

At times she has attempted to outflank Trump on the right, promising to "bring back the border security bill that Donald Trump killed", put forward by the Democrats but rejected by Republicans in Congress, which she calls the strongest border security legislation in decades.

Under Democratic President Joe Biden, the US's regime of ICE raids, deportations and detaining children has hardly changed since the Trump years.

Biden is deporting migrants at rates that match the Trump administration, and millions of migrants have faced expulsion at the border while

trying to enter the US.

Combining deportations and expulsions, Biden has sent back more than 4.4 million people, which is more than any US President in a single term since George W. Bush.

Perhaps the bloodiest demonstration of the true politics of the Democratic Party has been their collaboration with Israel's genocide on Gaza.

The Biden administration has kept providing weapons as Israel has indiscriminately bombed Gaza, killing more than 40,000 Palestinians, and while the death toll now climbs in Lebanon. The US has thrown its weight around in the UN Security Council, repeatedly using its veto power to protect Israel.

Biden gave Netanyahu a small slap on the wrist in May when the US delayed a shipment of 500-pound and 2000-pound bombs, in an effort to pull Israel back on its leash. But shipments of 500-pound bombs were quickly resumed in July despite Israel's atrocities in Rafah and the US remains steadfast in its willingness to provide funds and weapons.

In August, the US approved a further \$20 billion in weapons sales to Israel.

Harris has been careful to emphasise her continuity with the Biden administration on this issue. She met with Netanyahu just days after Biden endorsed her as the Democratic Party nominee and accused protesters who demonstrated outside Netanyahu's July address to the US Congress of "despicable acts".

In the presidential debate, Harris made a point of regurgitating Israel's propaganda about 7 October and declared that she had spent her "entire life defending Israel".

The Democrats are positioning themselves as the party of the imperialist establishment. Behind their critique of Trump's "America first" policy lies a shameless declaration to the US ruling class: Harris wants it

Both the Democrats and the Republicans represent sections of US capitalism

known that a Democrat government will be an enthusiastic champion of US military intervention overseas.

Whether it be in Ukraine, Palestine or Lebanon, a Democratic White House promises not to shy away from sending weapons and providing funds to influence wars around the world in the interests of US capitalism.

Following the money

The decision in the Democratic establishment to oust Biden in favour of Harris triggered a mood lift for big business.

In just a week after the decision, Harris's campaign brought in over \$200 million in donations. Yale management professor Jeff Sonnenfeld said that CEOs "are exhilarated over this choice". The bulk of the ruling class see Trump as dangerous and unpredictable. Harris promises a steady hand that will protect their interests.

As a result corporate money has flooded into her campaign, which has already raised more than \$1 trillion, giving the Democrats a big fundraising lead over Trump who has raised only \$642 million so far.

Both the Democrats and the Republicans represent sections of US capitalism and a political system that is owned and controlled by big business.

Among Harris's supporters are Wall Street financiers, billionaire "philanthropists", tech executives and venture capitalists. Trump's corporate backers are of a similar breed but tend to favour economic protectionism and social conservatism.

Both campaigns are funded primarily by large contributions of more than \$200,000—making up 59 per cent of Harris's campaign funding and 68 per cent of Trump's. Neither party is on the side of working class people.

At various points in Biden's term, the Democrats tried to position themselves as the "friend of the worker", with Biden shaking hands for photo-

ops at an auto workers picket line late last year. But 12 months before that, he intervened to halt a national rail strike, brokering a deal on pay that saw workers' wages go backwards amid climbing inflation, and threatening to have Congress outlaw the action.

Biden's economic program speaks louder than his union photo-ops. The US has plunged ever deeper into economic disparity, as consumers pay for high inflation while corporate profits climb.

Despite all this, many left-wing people in the US will fall behind the Democrats as a "lesser evil" to Trump.

The Democratic Socialists who rose to prominence as part of the opposition to both Trump and the corporate Democratic Party establishment are now working to corral the left behind Harris. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez endorsed Harris at the Democratic National Convention, while Bernie Sanders has backed her as a "progressive" who is "doing what she thinks is right in order to win the election".

But it's a disaster for working class struggles and social movements to fall in behind the Democratic campaign. This means weakening the only force that can turn back the rise of the far right and will fight the racism, wars and attacks on workers that both parties champion.

To cede power on the streets to a campaign for the status quo would only produce more despondency. And despondency is the fuel of Trump and the far right.

The Democratic dead end

The history of radical movements in the US is littered with examples of struggles that were funnelled into Democratic election campaigns and soon quashed or betrayed.

Through the 1960s the civil rights movement pushed up against the Democrats' racism and their actions in the Vietnam war. Leaders of these movements were pressured to dial down their militancy with promises of a seat at the table—promises that were inevitably broken.

In recent years the MeToo movement suffered a similar fate. What started as a watershed moment in 2017, in which millions of women took to the streets against Trump as part of the Women's March during his Inauguration and spoke out over sexist harassment and abuse, became a vehicle for placing women's hopes in installing a Democrat to oust Trump



from the White House.

Leading figures in MeToo chose a path of campaigning in the media to wage an ideological war, rather than building their forces on the streets. A movement that had seen half a million people take to the streets of DC, and five million people march on one day globally, was quickly curtailed.

By the time the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, robbing women in many conservative states of the right to abortion, MeToo campaigners directed the ensuing anger into a call to support the Democrats in midterm elections.

But having a Democrat in office for the last four years has done nothing to protect abortion rights.

In fact, the Democrats have had ample opportunity since the *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973 to codify the constitutional protection for abortion but did not.

In 2007 Obama promised Planned Parenthood that passing legislation to protect abortion would be "the first thing I'd do as president". But in 2009 once in office he described it as "not the highest legislative priority".

Biden promised in 2020 to make *Roe v. Wade* "the law of the land" and could have done so in 2021 and 2022 but did not. And yet Harris has the nerve to campaign on abortion rights today.

The US in recent months has seen the same horror and outrage as its

Above: Kamala Harris touring the border area with Mexico alongside Border Patrol agents, as part of an effort to show her willingness to keep out migrants

Photo: Kamala Harris/Facebook

leaders back a genocide in Gaza, and political ferment as the cost of living bites, as elsewhere.

The US student encampments that began in May sparked a surge in the Palestine movement globally. Researchers have tracked more than 3700 days of protest activity at campuses across the US since 7 October, representing more than 500 colleges, universities, schools and school district offices across 317 cities and towns.

There is bubbling resentment at the tried and true Democratic Party politics that demands radicals be satisfied with "a seat at the table".

In a speech to students in April, Princeton African American studies Professor Ruha Benjamin condemned a Black woman US ambassador to the UN voting against a ceasefire in Gaza, stating that "Black faces in high places are not going to save us".

Some speculate that anger over Palestine will see Harris punished in key states with high Arab populations such as Michigan.

But the most important metric for socialists is to what extent this mood spills over into continued defiance on the streets, in the university campuses and in workplaces.

This is where we can build the power to turn the system around in our own favour and beat back the war-mongers, be they Democrat or Republican.

WHY IS LABOR SO USELESS AND RIGHT-WING?

Anthony Albanese’s Labor government has disappointed many who voted for it, and betrayed others like the CFMEU. **James Supple** looks at why Labor has sunk so low

ANTHONY ALBANESE’S government came to power with no ambition for substantial change or any intention of rocking the establishment’s boat. But recent months have seen it move even further to the right, unwilling to challenge the rich and powerful or map out any serious agenda.

The most shocking example is its union busting attack on the CFMEU. The union has faced years of government-orchestrated attacks, usually launched by the Liberals, in response to construction bosses’ demands.

Now Labor has joined the bosses to attack the union militancy that has delivered wage rises and safety on sites for workers.

A Labor government is imposing the biggest attack the union has faced in decades, justified by unproven corruption allegations in the media.

In the process the Labor Party is undermining its own support and facing a serious backlash.

It is denying itself millions in election funding, with the CFMEU banned from donating money while under administration.

The union was its single largest donor before the last election, contributing \$3 million. The ETU has also pledged to withhold \$1 million.

And it has alienated hundreds of thousands of blue collar workers, including union members who have been among its strongest supporters.

It’s sickening to see Albanese stoop so low. But there is a long history of Labor backing business and the rich against its own union and working class supporters—even at the cost of electoral self-destruction.

This is built into the makeup of Labor as a reformist party that is committed to using parliament to manage the system.

Albanese took the reins as Labor leader following the party’s shock defeat in the 2019 election. He immediately dumped the modest efforts to tax the rich the party had proposed.

Blaming Labor’s targeting of wealthy housing investors and share-

holders for the defeat, Albanese set out to move the party to the right. He adopted a “small target” strategy that promised little, relying on anger at Scott Morrison to carry Labor to power.

Albanese made it into office—but only just. Labor’s primary vote actually fell to its lowest since 1934.

His government has faced problems requiring dramatic solutions—from a housing crisis that has pushed prices out of reach for large sections of the working class, to a cost of living crisis, services in childcare, aged care and education that are under huge strain, and the growing climate emergency.

Yet Albanese has not been willing to take the action required to fix any of these problems.

This would require taking on wealthy and powerful corporate interests, and a willingness to increase taxes on the rich, target property investors, and challenge mining company profits and media bosses.

Instead he has sought to establish Labor as the reliable servant of business and the ruling class, in an effort to become the dominant centrist party in Australian politics and leave Peter Dutton and the Liberals marginalised.

Labor’s hope was that Dutton’s hard right politics and loss of the teal electorates would consign the Liberals to irrelevancy.

Instead Labor’s inaction in the face of the cost of living crisis, and its lack of any serious agenda to tackle the environmental crisis and climate change, has produced widespread anger and disillusionment.

Labor has enthusiastically boosted Australian militarism and embraced the AUKUS deal with UK and US imperialism. It is also expanding US bases in northern Australia, turning it into a key launchpad for war on China. And, it has also tried to outdo Dutton on his racism against migrants and refugees.

This has seen Albanese drag Labor to the right, backing Israel as

.....
Albanese has sought to establish Labor as the reliable servant of business and the ruling class

it unleashes genocide on Gaza and running its own racist scare campaign against refugees released from detention following a series of High Court decisions.

As Albanese’s support has dropped he has become even more spineless and conservative, in fear at Dutton’s response to any new announcement.

Albanese’s decision to drop questions from the census on sexuality and gender identity showed how hopeless he has become. The government said it wanted to avoid a “divisive” debate, obviously fearing another attack from Dutton over “woke” politics, before the outcry from the LGBTIQ community and others forced it to back down.

Serving big business

Albanese has worked hard to show big business that he can be relied on.

His 2023 diary, released under FoI laws to former Senator Rex Patrick, showed “a downright throng of CEOs and other big-end-of-town heavyweights getting through the door”, *Sydney Morning Herald* journalists wrote, with Albanese meeting everyone from mining CEOs and Business Council reps to investment bankers. This compared to a “mere handful of meetings” with union leaders.

Labor’s attack on the CFMEU is one result of its desire to serve the bosses.

Albanese did not want to be seen as siding with a militant union in the face of the clamour from the mainstream media and the construction bosses for action.

Another example of his backing for the rich and powerful is the \$368 billion Labor is spending on nuclear subs while refusing to spend more to relieve the cost of living, increase JobSeeker or maintain the NDIS.

Despite its talk of action on climate change, Labor has strongly backed the mining industry and its expansion of coal and gas projects.

Resources Minister Madeleine King recently declared that, “No government in recent memory has put

the resources industry at the centre of its policy-making in the way that the Albanese government has.”

At first glance, Labor’s enthusiasm for the rich and powerful might seem puzzling.

After all, Labor was founded with the aim of representing the working class in parliament, and using control of government and the state in workers’ interests.

Labor in government is concerned to be seen to deliver something to the union leaders, who continue to dominate the Labor Party. But that is subordinated to running the system.

So Albanese supported an increase in the minimum wage and has introduced modest industrial relations changes around multi-employer bargaining and casual work.

The business lobby resents this. But it has not led to any increase in industrial action, with just one multi-employer deal finalised to date and most of those being discussed either funded by government or negotiated with employer support. Strike days have actually fallen since Labor took office.

Labor governments have always been committed to working within capitalism and accepting the system’s rules.

From the beginning, the party was controlled not by rank-and-file workers but by the trade union leaders, a social layer committed to working within capitalism to negotiate with bosses over wages and conditions, rather than challenging the system itself.

Once in government, Labor MPs had responsibility for maintaining Australian capitalism, and ensuring that the company profits that drive it, remained healthy. Otherwise they risked employers withholding investment and sacking thousands of workers.

With the bulk of companies and jobs controlled by the private sector, any government that supports capitalism, especially a Labor government that is not the preferred option of the rich and powerful, has to keep big business onside.

When the economy is expanding it has sometimes delivered real reforms, from the introduction of the aged pension and Medicare to the expansion of public services. But regardless of whether the economy is in boom or slump, Labor has always worked to ensure corporate profits.

This result is that every Labor government has ended up attacking its



Above: Anthony Albanese speaking to big business, who he has worked hard to serve Photo: Anthony Albanese/ Facebook

own working class supporters—the people who put it into parliament in the first place. Albanese’s attack on the CFMEU is just the latest example.

Betrayals

Prime Minister Ben Chifley is lauded as a Labor hero. But he determinedly opposed the 40 hour week and sent in troops to break a coal miners’ strike in 1949.

In times of recession, when economic crisis threatens bosses’ profits, Labor governments have launched even more savage attacks.

James Scullin, elected as the Great Depression hit, abandoned any attempt to protect workers from the crisis and pledged to repay the country’s debts to the banks. This meant driving through massive cuts to government spending that slashed pensions, unemployment payments and public sector wages.

Gough Whitlam’s government is seen as Labor’s golden age of radical reform. But when recession hit, his government also handed down a horror budget in 1975 that cut back social programs and spending.

When Labor came back to power in 1983 under Bob Hawke, it was fully committed to a program of wage cutting through the Accords with the union movement. This drastically weakened trade unions and saw a dramatic shift in the share of GDP going to corporate profits.

Often, in the process, Labor has destroyed its own electoral support.

Scullin’s Labor government

was elected in a landslide in 1929, but suffered an electoral calamity after one term in office, losing government and more than half its seats.

The Hawke and Keating governments came to be loathed for the wage cuts, deregulation and privatisation they forced through.

By 1996, when Keating lost to Howard, rage with Labor’s neoliberal agenda was white hot, with one Labor MP commenting that the mention of words like “productivity” and “efficiency” around workers, was, “a good way to end your life”.

The result is that fewer and fewer workers trust Labor, with its primary vote shrinking over time. Before 1990 it had only dropped below 40 per cent of the vote twice in half a century. Now it rarely gets close, falling to 32.6 per cent at the last election.

Many now look to independents or The Greens as alternative electoral options. But these replicate the same basic strategy that has dragged Labor to the right—relying on more seats and influence in parliament to deliver change.

What’s needed is a party that looks to struggle outside parliament as the key to change, through building mass movements on the streets and encouraging trade union and workers’ strike action in the workplaces.

This is the way to fight for real wages rises to tackle the cost of living, taxing the rich to fund services, and an end to support for Israel and US imperialism.

We need to build a socialist party that is not afraid to challenge capitalism and the power of the rich.

BLOOD ON ALBANESE'S HANDS OVER LEBANON

By James Supple

ISRAEL HAS murdered Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and is now on the brink of all out war in Lebanon. A year after it began its genocide in Gaza it is threatening to ignite a regional war.

This is a rogue state unleashing terror in an effort to crush all resistance.

It has dramatically escalated its bombing through intense strikes in Lebanon night after night. The “new phase” of the war saw it kill 558 people on the first day, including 35 children.

Israel is entirely to blame for the escalation. For the last year Hezbollah and Israel have exchanged fire across the border, after Hezbollah began limited rocket attacks in response to Israel’s genocidal violence in Gaza.

Israel has continually upped the stakes, assassinating Hezbollah commanders and then staging a terror attack through exploding pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah, killing 42 people including 12 civilians, and leaving hundreds of others with horrifying injuries.

Once again Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has brushed aside calls for a ceasefire, saying Israel would “continue fighting with full force”.

Israel’s Defence Minister said it would, “continue until our goal is achieved—the safe return of the residents of the north to their homes”. Around 60,000 Israeli settlers have been evacuated from the border. More than that it wants to make up for the failure in its 2006 war and break Hezbollah.

Above: Smoke rises from Israel’s bombing of Beirut
Photo: DPA picture alliance / Alamy

Hezbollah has said that a ceasefire in Gaza could end the conflict—but Israel has refused to end the genocide.

For months Netanyahu has threatened to turn Beirut and southern Lebanon into Gaza. Israel is again demonstrating its contempt for civilian lives as it bombards residential areas. It is also preparing troops for the possibility of an invasion.

Albanese’s complicity

The US and Australian governments are again complicit.

US President Joe Biden says he wants the situation to “de-escalate” through a “diplomatic solution”.

But the US has given the green light to Israel, continually defending Israel’s “right” to target Hezbollah. For months it has mouthed opposition to Israel’s actions in Gaza and said it wants a ceasefire, while continuing to facilitate Israel’s massacres through keeping up a steady flow of weapons. As a result Israel knows it can continue to kill with impunity.

Anthony Albanese is also complicit. While he calls for de-escalation and says Netanyahu “needs to listen to the international community” he refuses to take any action pressuring Israel to do so.

The Labor government is still allowing the export of parts for the F-35 fighter jets Israel is using to bomb Gaza and Lebanon, as well as continuing to buy weapons from Israeli arms companies.

The calls for sanctions against Israel are growing louder. In September, the UN General Assembly backed a resolution urging member states to sanction all goods from illegal Israeli settlements as well as weapons that

might be used in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

But the Australian government is still dismissing the idea.

Israel has invaded Lebanon repeatedly since 1978. It was the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon from 1982 that led to the emergence of Hezbollah as an armed resistance movement that eventually drove Israel out of the country.

The Australian government hypocritically calls Hezbollah a terrorist organisation. But it is Israel unleashing terror and death on a gigantic scale in both Gaza and Lebanon.

Israel invaded Lebanon again in 2006. It ruthlessly targeted civilians as well as basic infrastructure including Beirut airport, factories and almost every bridge in the country.

However it was forced to withdraw after being humiliated at the hands of Hezbollah fighters. Their victory was celebrated across the whole Arab world.

In 2012, Hezbollah began to lose some credibility as an organisation that will stand consistently with the oppressed. It sent fighters into Syria to defend the dictatorship of Bashar Al-Assad against a popular uprising. It has supported austerity and anti-union measures, and even helped facilitate a gas exploration deal between Lebanon and Israel.

But now, as Lebanese socialist Simon Assaf reports, Israel’s assaults have “reinvigorated” it. “The rallying behind Hezbollah right now is more significant, and bigger, than during Israel’s 2006 war on Lebanon.” Israel’s ruthless expansion is another call to action for the entire Arab working class.

The calls for sanctions against Israel are growing louder

Solidarity