

# Solidarity

Issue No. 183 / May 2024

\$3/\$5

## RAGE AGAINST RAFAH MASSACRE MURDER MADE IN THE WEST



### WOMEN

Fighting domestic violence  
means fighting capitalism

### DIRECT ACTION

Is it enough to  
disrupt the system?

### FRANTZ FANON

Anti-colonial movements  
and violence

# 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. 183

May 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](http://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

**We must obliterate Rafah, Deir al-Balah, and Nuseirat. The memory of the Amalekites must be erased. No partial destruction will suffice; only absolute and complete devastation.**  
Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich in April, still calling for genocide in Gaza

**He's being hounded himself wherever he goes by people who are absolutely crazy, and they're making his life miserable.**  
Rabbi Levi Wolf relaying Anthony Albanese's comments on pro-Palestine protesters

**These encampments are a nuisance, a disfigurement of campus grounds.**  
Alex Ryvchin, co-CEO, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

**I have always taken the view that one of the best things that's ever happened to this country is that it was settled by the British.**  
Former Liberal Prime Minister John Howard

**No president has stood stronger with Israel than Joe Biden.**  
US national security advisor Jake Sullivan, deny any rift after the administration paused the delivery of some bombs to Israel

**We must make America pray again.**  
Donald Trump is his video promoting sales of his "God Bless the USA Bible", just US\$59.99 plus postage

**This is a dark day for the media. This is a dark day for democracy.**  
Foreign Press Association after Israel shut down Al-Jazeera locally

# CONTENTS

## ISSUE 183 MAY 2024

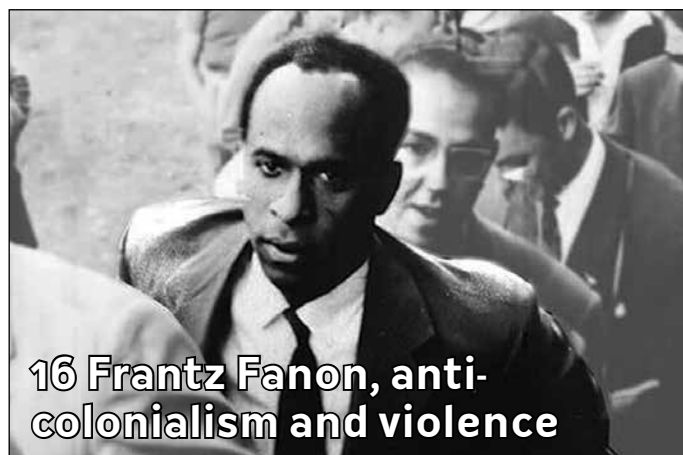


### Rising up for Palestine

- 5 Albanese aids Israel amid Rafah horror
- 6 Sydney Uni staff back boycott of Israeli universities
- 7 Gaza encampments sweep unis
- 8 Union May 1 rally backs Palestine



### 14 Direct action and mass protest: how do we fight for Palestine?



### 16 Frantz Fanon, anti-colonialism and violence

### Australia

- 8 Defence strategy means more money for weapons and war
- 9 Budget cost of living push fails on big issues
- 10 Labor's gas strategy is a betrayal of the climate
- 11 Systemic reasons for violence against women



### International

- 12 US feeds in more arms as Ukraine falters



### Features and reviews

- 13 The Zone of Interest
- 18 Blood for oil: Why the West backs Israel



## More weapons exports to Israel

THE ALBANESE government has repeatedly claimed that there have been to weapons exports to Israel from Australia for at least five years. Yet new data from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade shows that Australia directly exported \$1.5 million worth of “arms and ammunition” to Israel in February this year.

This figure includes only direct exports of items like bullets, missiles, guns or fighting vehicles.

The bulk of Australian arms exports are supplied to Israel indirectly. This includes parts for the F-35 fighter jets that are assembled in the US for final delivery to Israel, engines for Israeli Bluebird drones, and military grade steel from Bisalloy Steels that is used in Israeli company Rafael’s armoured fighting vehicles.

Weapons parts are not included in the Australian government’s register of weapons exports.

## Gaza war surgeon refused entry to France and Germany



RESPECTED BRITISH-PALESTINIAN surgeon Ghassan Abu-Sitta has been banned from entering both France and Germany in recent weeks, preventing him from speaking on Israel’s attacks on Gaza’s healthcare system.

The plastic and reconstructive surgeon has a world-wide reputation for his work over decades as a war surgeon in areas including Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Gaza. He volunteered to work in Gaza once the current war started, spending 43 days operating across several hospitals. He only left when he decided proper surgery was no longer possible following Israel’s continual targeting of hospitals.

On his return to Britain Abu-Sitta was elected Rector of the University of Glasgow.

In April the German government refused him entry to the country to speak at the Palestine Congress in Berlin. “When I arrived at Berlin airport, I was stopped. I was taken down for questioning for three and a half hours. I was then told that I would not be allowed to enter German soil for the remainder of April,” he explained. He was even told that speaking virtually would be a crime under German law.

Then in May he was prevented from entering France where he was due to address an event at the French Senate. French authorities said that Germany had imposed a year-long ban on his entry to all European countries part of the Schengen zone.

His lawyers say the ban has now been overturned in the courts. But it shows not just the silencing of Palestinian voices, but the suspension of basic democratic rights in an effort to support Israel’s genocidal war.

## More moves in Queensland to lock up Indigenous kids

QUEENSLAND’S LABOR government is dialling up its law and order race to the bottom with the Liberal National Party, backflipping to scrap the principle of “detention as a last resort” for children.

For years it has rightly argued that putting more children in jail would only make crime worse and further traumatise children.

Now it is amending its own Youth Justice Act, with Premier Steven Miles saying this was about “changing the law” to make sure, “If a young person needs to be detained to keep the community safe, then they must be detained”.

The measure has also been a key pledge of the LNP Opposition in the lead up to the state election, in the face of a panic about “youth crime”.

Queensland already locks up more children than any other state, imprisoning 66 per cent of the children in youth detention nationally. Two-thirds of them are Indigenous, although Indigenous kids make up 7 per cent of the children in the state.

In March a report into child deaths highlighted the cases of two Indigenous children who spent a combined 600 days in youth detention, where they faced bullying and physical abuse, as well as up to three days in a row confined to their cells. This treatment was held to be a major factor in their deaths from suicide and drug overdose soon after.

## More US upgrades at Manus naval base

THE US has announced further upgrades costing \$25 million to the Lobrum naval base on Manus Island, PNG. It plans a jetty renovation, maritime training centre and a small boat facility for use by the PNG Defence Force and the US in joint exercises.

This follows work the Australian government began there in 2018 on a medical facility, security fencing, communications equipment, power supply and accommodation designed to allow a doubling of the military personnel based there.

All of this is part of an effort to limit China’s influence in the Pacific. In the Second World War the US stationed tens of thousands of troops on Manus Island.

Use of the Lobrum naval base, “will allow the US and Australia to keep a close eye on Chinese naval movements... in the Bismarck, Coral and Solomon seas and the wider Southwest Pacific”, as the US military’s *Stars and Stripes* website put it.

The US signed a new defence cooperation agreement with PNG last year following visits by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin.

## Inequality in Australia surges

SOARING PROPERTY prices have produced massive wealth inequality in Australia, with the richest 10 per cent now holding 44 per cent of all wealth.

Their average wealth has grown 84 per cent in the last 20 years to an average of \$5.2 million. They hold 66 per cent of all investment properties and 64 per cent of shares and other financial assets. The poorest 20 per cent by contrast have average wealth of just \$41,000.

While older people tend to be wealthier there is also a massive wealth gap between younger people, with the top 10 per cent holding \$2 million in wealth each compared to just \$80,000 for the bottom 60 per cent.

The findings come from the report *Inequality in Australia 2024* by the Australian Council of Social Service and UNSW.

## Fossil fuel companies hide emissions

IN RESPONSE to appeals to cut global methane emissions, mining companies have instead installed new methods to hide them.

Regulators have been using satellites to track flaring of methane gases on mining projects, where companies drilling oil burn gases that they can’t make a profit from selling. This releases carbon dioxide, fuelling global heating.

The World Bank and other bodies sponsored a call to reduce flaring at the Paris climate summit in 2015.

Since then companies that promised to end flaring have begun using “enclosed combusters” to keep flaring the gas but hide the flame from satellites.

# EDITORIAL

## Albanese aids Israel and smears protests as horror unfolds in Rafah

ISRAEL HAS begun its long-threatened assault on Rafah. Hundreds have already been killed, thousands more will likely die as Israel's savagery continues.

Even after Hamas agreed to ceasefire terms, Israel rejected any truce and began the attack.

But the movement for Palestine is still growing, with encampments in solidarity with Gaza spreading to over 100 US universities, as well as campuses across Australia and worldwide.

Having herded 1.4 million Palestinians into Rafah, Israel is now intensifying its bombing and sending in troops.

Hundreds of thousands are fleeing. But after months of deliberate starvation, "There are children and elderly that are so starved that they can barely walk. These people cannot just relocate to another area... It is not possible," Alexandra Saieh, head of humanitarian policy at Save the Children said.

Northern Gaza is already experiencing "full blown famine", the head of the UN World Food Program has declared. And Israel has now seized the major Rafah crossing, closing it completely to any further aid.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong voiced "objections", noting the impact on civilians "would be devastating".

The Australian government also supported a UN General Assembly resolution on Palestinian statehood, but made sure to point out it wasn't actually recognising a Palestinian state.

Yet the government refuses to ban the arms trade with Israel or impose economic sanctions.

It won't even call for a genuine ceasefire, still backing just a short "humanitarian ceasefire" allowing Israel to continue the killing.

Joe Biden has withheld a transfer of some types of bombs to Israel. But this is just an empty gesture. Days later he announced plans to send another \$1 billion in weapons.

The US's enthusiastic shipments of arms to Israel has facilitated the genocide in Gaza and means Israel, "has armaments for the missions it plans, and we also have what we need for the missions in Rafah," according to Daniel Hagari, a spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces.

"For war tomorrow in Gaza or war tomorrow in Lebanon, [any US restriction on arms] will not make any difference," Hagari added.

In typical sickening hypocrisy, a



US state department report says it is "reasonable to assess" that weapons provided to Israel have been used in ways that are "inconsistent" with international human rights law, but that there is not enough concrete evidence to warrant cutting the supply of arms.

### Attacking protests

The pressure on Labor is growing—with Labor Senator Fatima Payman breaking ranks, to "call this out for what it is. This is a genocide".

Albanese told a private meeting at a synagogue in Bondi Junction he was being hounded by supporters of Palestine who were "making his life miserable". Good.

But Albanese has sided with the Council of Australian Jewry and the right-wing media declaring that chanting "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", is "very violent" and unacceptable.

In reality it's a call for a single, secular, democratic state across historic Palestine, where Jews and Arabs would have equal rights—instead of systematic occupation, apartheid and ethnic supremacy.

The efforts to smear the student camps as antisemitic and somehow a threat to the safety of Jewish students is just a disgraceful, transparent attempt by governments, uni bosses and Israel supporters to stifle a movement that challenges Western imperialism.

On 13 May Deakin became the

**Above: Israeli bombing in residential neighbourhoods in Rafah**

first university in Australia to call for the "immediate dismantling and removal of the current encampment". But that's not likely to happen without a fight.

The movement to free Palestine is still spreading. Sydney University NTEU branch has carried an historic motion to commit the branch to an institutional boycott of Israeli universities, a move that will surely spread nationally.

Although still weak in many respects, the ACTU peak union body has issued a statement calling for an end to all military trade with Israel. The union movement is now on record opposing companies in Australia doing work on the F-35 fighter jets being used in Gaza.

But to turn that call into action that will actually ban work and cut ties is going to require more organisation in more universities and workplaces. University encampments need to become bases to challenge business as usual in the ivory towers.

Union bans can stop trade with Israel—but to do that they will have to challenge anti-strike and secondary boycott laws.

The rallies at the ports in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne on 25 May can be a step towards that wider action. But we need more socialists in every university and workplace to help build the movement that can challenge Australia's and the West's support for Israel and to free Palestine.

**The movement to free Palestine is still spreading**

# Sydney Uni NTEU backs academic boycott of Israeli universities

By Sophie Cotton

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY staff have passed an unprecedented motion that will push forward the movement in Australia for the boycott, divestment and sanction of Israel, through the campus branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

An overwhelming 93 per cent of members at the 9 May meeting voted to call on the university to, “cut ties with all organisations that enable the current Gaza violence” including, “all Israeli universities” as well as “with the weapons industry and militaries in general”.

Almost 350 members attended, in the largest union meeting since June last year.

The branch now expects and encourages its members to implement the institutional boycott of Israeli universities, and has called for the university community, other union branches and the NTEU as a whole to do the same.

This is an enormous step for the Sydney University NTEU. The academic boycott has been hotly contested, with the then-NTEU General Secretary previously flown in to shut down the discussion in 2014.

It is also significant for the academic boycott movement internationally. The NTEU Sydney Uni branch joins the Teachers Union of Ireland and two graduate student worker unions in the US, as well as a host of academic associations, in officially adopting it.

As Maya Wind’s new book *Towers of ivory and steel* shows, Israeli universities are deeply complicit with the Israeli state and military. They train Israeli Defense Forces soldiers, develop weapons, produce state propaganda, and grant benefits, scholarships and course credits to returning Israeli soldiers.

There is still plenty to be done at Sydney University to turn our demands into reality, such as cutting ties to the Zelman Cowen Academic Initiative, cancelling the “Experience Israel” (OLES2155) course, and cutting ties with the weapons manufacturer Thales.

Taking a stand against genocide is core union business. Some members feared that the discussion would distract the union and drive members away. Far from being a liability, it produced the largest meeting since our



strike campaign ended in June last year.

Union activists ran a highly visible campaign to build the meeting including leafleting university gates, banner drops and contacting members.

Although a very small number have left the union in protest nationally in the last eight months, at least

15 have joined at Sydney University in two days around the vote, and many more since 7 October! Several members told the meeting they joined precisely because of our stance on social issues such as Israel’s genocide.

This will be a boost for unionists everywhere seeking to boycott Israeli apartheid and end the genocide.

## ANU threatens to discipline students and disperse Gaza solidarity camp

ANU MANAGEMENT is demanding a number of students leave their encampment in solidarity with Gaza, threatening them with disciplinary action if they refuse.

Seven students identified by management as organisers were summoned to a meeting and issued with the threat, told to remove all their belongings from the camp.

Students were rallying in defence of the camp as *Solidarity* went to press, with support from the ACT branch of the university staff union the NTEU as well as the teachers’ union and the CFMEU construction union.

The CFMEU’s Zach Smith also “condemned in the strongest terms” ANU management’s actions, blasting the university’s actions at a rally outside Parliament House.

The university has justified its actions by claiming it wants to ensure protests on campus will, “be safe and not cause unnecessary harm or damage to our campus or community”. But its actions are simply an attack on freedom of speech and the right to protest.

Student activist Beatrice Tucker is also facing university disciplinary

action after she was interviewed on ABC Canberra Radio about the ANU encampment.

She has been banned from the campus pending the outcome of the process, which could result in suspension or expulsion.

Asked to condemn Hamas, Tucker responded by affirming their solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for national liberation and the right to resist occupation, saying, “Hamas deserves our unconditional support ... Not because I agree with their strategy, [I’m in] complete disagreement with that”.

This has led to a right-wing media attack, distorting her comments to accuse her of support for terrorism.

Students on the campus are circulating a statement of support, arguing, “The right of Palestinians to resist Israel’s occupation is recognised under international law... No one should be persecuted for standing in solidarity with Palestinian resistance”.

Over 370 students, staff and other supporters have signed the statement so far.

# Student encampments draw surge of support for Gaza

GAZA SOLIDARITY encampments have spread to university campuses nationwide, inspired by the movement in the US and the events at Columbia University.

At Sydney University students are demanding the university cut ties with weapons manufacturers and with Israeli universities.

As the encampment began its second week, the Sydney Uni Muslim Students Association joined in and set up more tents across the lawns.

Sydney Uni has partnerships with weapons companies including Safran, Thales and Lockheed Martin, which all produce weapons Israel is using in its genocide in Gaza.

It also maintains exchange partnerships with the Israeli University of Technology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University, which all have deep links with the Israeli Defense Forces and Israeli weapons companies.

At ANU in Canberra, “We recently found out that the ANU invests around \$500,000 in three weapons companies, BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, that all provide parts to the F-35 fighter jets that are used to bomb Gaza,” activist Finnian Colwell told *Solidarity*.

At University of Queensland the camp began with a protest against Boeing’s research institute on campus, which works on weapons technologies including hypersonic missiles.

Some university managements have begun threatening to break up the encampments or ban students from participating, including at Deakin Uni, ANU and Monash Uni.

Student activists need to use the encampments as a base to go out and build opposition to the ties with Israel among wider layers of students.

“It’s a really good way to gain support for Palestine and to make sure that more people are involved in it in an active way”, Angus said from the Sydney Uni camp.

“We try to ask students if they have classes that we can make announcements in to build support in the broader student body.

“Connecting what students are doing here with the broader campaign, and making sure there is a much wider layer of student support will be essential for ensuring that we come out of it with a bigger movement for Palestine.”



**Above: Students at Melbourne Uni occupy the Arts West building** Photo: Matt Hrkac

## Melb Uni students occupy to cut ties with Israel

STUDENTS AT Melbourne Uni have occupied the Arts West building three weeks after they began their encampment for Gaza.

“The central demand is to get Melbourne Uni to divest and cut its ties with the weapons manufacturers that are complicit in Israel’s genocide—including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems and Rosebank Engineering”, one of the occupiers, Cooper Forsyth, told *Solidarity*.

The occupiers have renamed the building “Mahmoud’s Hall” after a Palestinian who hoped to study at the university but was killed in Gaza.

Around 200 students began the occupation after a rally on Nakba Day, setting up banners and tents inside the building. More students joined in as the day went on.

“After we occupied, the Deputy Vice Chancellor came down to say they would call the police on us at 2.30pm,” Cooper said.

“Staff formed a picketline outside, and students prepared for them to arrive. The police came and then left. We held the building overnight despite the threat to send the police in again.”

“At Melbourne University the encampment has grown massively since it was set up. The first couple of nights, there were 15 tents. There’s now over 100 tents all across one side of the South Lawn.

“A number of us in Uni Melb For Palestine have been trying to establish an orientation to getting more students involved.

“That hasn’t necessarily been the

dominant approach. But the encampment has been a major factor in shifting that because of the amount of enthusiasm and interest in it.

“It’s created a very strong sense of community and collective culture around the campaign, which has made it easier to mobilise people.

“The level of support has produced increasing pressure on the uni, contributing to Vice Chancellor Duncan Maskell’s resignation.

“From what we understand he had no intention of stepping down so soon. But management is very divided over what to do about the encampment. The Vice Chancellor sent out an email saying we have a right to protest, and as long as students don’t engage in hate speech, they’re allowed to camp.

“It seems that his resignation may be related to the fact that there was a desire for much stronger action against the protest from others in management.

“The rallies in support of the camp have had an electric atmosphere and have mobilised significant numbers of people, often at extremely short notice. The largest had up to 500 people. We’ve had really strong union support. One recent rally was called by the NTEU and supported by the students.

“Even though there’s been a lot of enthusiasm, we still need to translate that into systematic building work to capitalise on the level of interest. The next step is going from hundreds of people involved to thousands of students alongside staff.”

.....  
**Around 200 students began the occupation after a rally on Nakba Day**

# Labor backs more money for weapons in \$330 billion plan

By Luke Ottavi

IN THE run-up to the budget, Labor unveiled its new National Defence Strategy, announcing over \$330 billion in spending on new weapons and military hardware over the next decade as it gears up for war on China.

China is now being named explicitly as the adversary the Australian ruling class is preparing for war against, with the government's Defence Strategic Review declaring that Australia must resist China's attempts to "change the current regional balance in its favour."

An extra \$50 billion will be spent on defence over the next decade, with \$72.8 billion in planned spending being "re-prioritised" for undersea warfare and big investments in space and cyber security.

The eye-watering spending total includes \$63 billion over the first decade of the toxic AUKUS nuclear submarine program. There are billions more for new warships, Ghost Shark undersea drones and attack drones, missiles, combat vehicles, tanks, and fighter jet upgrades.

Labor will raise Australia's defence spending to 2.4 per cent of GDP within ten years, continuing the trend of countries expanding their military build-ups.

Labor's main priority is to be prepared to militarily confront China within the next ten years, and that means spending billions on weapons of war—like nuclear powered submarines—that can project power far from Australia's borders.

The Australian ruling class' anxieties about securing international trade routes were on full display during Defence Minister Richard Marles' Nation Press Club Address, as he said, "We are literally dependent on this sea line of communication ... The rules of the road at sea [are] everything for us".

But the response from defence commentators was to demand even more spending, saying many of the new weapons would not arrive quickly enough.

Former Defence Department official Marcus Hellyer told the *Financial Review*, "In the short term, we're not seeing the kind of increases that are consistent with the government's narrative that these are the worst strategic circumstances since World War II".

They are demanding Australia prepares to fight a war with China immediately—with some US officials



**Above: Defence Minister Richard Marles inspects new fighting vehicles**  
Photo: Richard Marles/Meta

predicting war as early as 2027.

A war against China would be catastrophic for ordinary people in both Australia and China and would only serve only ruling class interests.

We must oppose the drive to war with China and demand our government spends money on social services, the cost of living and climate change, not weapons for war.

## Unions support Palestine at Sydney 1 May rally

THOUSANDS OF workers downed tools to march through Sydney on 1 May, with construction and maritime unions making May Day an annual stop work rally.

This year there was also a Unionists for Palestine contingent and a Palestinian speaker who addressed thousands of workers on the situation in Gaza.

For construction workers, the focus was on the implementation of industrial manslaughter laws. Darren Greenfield from the CFMEU said, "the unions have got them to agree to bring industrial manslaughter into NSW. It is the only state in the country that doesn't have it."

Mel Gatfield from UWU also informed the crowd that about 100 workers had, that morning, walked off a logistics site in Eastern Creek, where, "Our members are trying to support their families on wages that have gone backwards."

Gatfield also recognised cleaning workers fighting "to stop the casualisation of jobs and to end the two tier workforce policies", arguing "The Labor government can make 7000 good jobs in every corner of the state by bringing those cleaners back in house."

Jana Fayyad of the Palestine Justice Movement told the crowd, "I've seen incredible union support

over the last six and a half months, in particular from the MUA. You hold the power, and you can say no to apartheid Israel. You can say no to any kind of work that is complicit in the genocide and occupation of Palestinians."

Paul Keating from MUA also criticised the NSW government by calling on Chris Minns to "get rid of those anti-protest laws", as well as demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, sanctions on Israel and arms embargoes until there is justice for Palestine.

Jana also mentioned the recent ACTU statement calling for an end to military trade with Israel and expressing concern "at evidence that Australian companies supply parts" for "F-35 fighter jets to drop bombs on Gaza".

The CFMEU was also key to pushing for the statement on the ACTU Executive, following organising against ZIM shipping for sanctions on Israeli companies.

Trade unionists and other Palestine supporters will rally at ports around the country on 25 May to demand an arms embargo and trade sanctions on Israel, and to call for the dropping of charges against MUA members and other activists arrested during the March picket of ZIM shipping.

**Niko Chlopicki**

.....  
**An extra \$50 billion will be spent on defence over the next decade**



# Budget cost of living band-aids leave big problems ignored

By James Supple

LABOR'S BUDGET is about making it look like the government is acting on the cost of living, in the hope of dampening the anger workers feel about it in time for an election in the next year.

The budget includes some short-term cost of living measures, with the biggest the \$300 power bill rebate for every household. But it does nothing to fix the big problems driving inequality such as house prices and poverty-level JobSeeker payments for the one million people relying on income support.

The continual failure to raise the rate of JobSeeker is particularly shameful, after the government's own advisory committee appealed for it to be a "first priority" in this year budget, saying it needs a \$120 a week increase.

The government is also increasing rent assistance, although by just \$9 a week for a single person, and freezing the cost of prescriptions for concession card holders.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers has been at pains to say that his cost of living measures are designed to reduce inflation, calculating they will see it drop to 2.75 per cent by December.

More spending would simply make inflation worse, he claims.

But Labor is still passing down the amended Stage Three tax cuts.

While low income earners get more than originally planned, the rich will still benefit the most, with \$4500 a year handed to anyone earning \$200,000.

This is money that could be going into raising JobSeeker, or funding hospitals, housing or education.

There is not a single effort to tax the rich in this budget—despite the ballooning cost of negative gearing for property investors, at around \$100 billion in the next four years, and superannuation tax concessions for the wealthy.

And there are still billions being wasted on military spending and new weapons, with \$55.6 billion going on defence in the next year alone. An appalling \$13.6 billion will go towards the effort to acquire nuclear submarines in the next four years, 50 per cent more than all the new cost of living measures rolled together.

Despite its boasts about the Future



**Above: The rising cost of living continues to hit workers**

Made in Australia package as a way to drive the clean energy transition, the level of spending involved is modest. Over the next four years it averages just \$662 million a year.

Even over the next decade the \$22.7 billion planned is less than half the \$50.3 billion increase going to the military.

Nor is this designed to respond to the climate emergency through investing in installing renewable energy to rapidly slash emissions now.

The funding is mostly designed to help establish industries based on newly-emerging technology, such as renewable hydrogen, green metals, as well as mining critical minerals used in high-tech products like mobile phones, computers and electric vehicles.

## Jobs and wages

The peak union body the ACTU has celebrated the prospect of higher pay rises, which the budget says will increase at above the rate of inflation by 0.5 per cent every year for the next three years.

Some of this will be a result of the plans to fund wage increases for low-paid workers in childcare and aged care, although how much they will get is up to the Fair Work Commission.

But for most workers the figures are just a prediction that may never eventuate.

The budget reveals a weak overall

economy, expected to grow this year by an anaemic 1.75 per cent and just 2 per cent next year. Unemployment is tipped to rise to 4.5 per cent by June next year.

Aside from the \$5000 payments for women leaving violence and a small increase in funding for emergency housing already announced of \$1.4 billion over five years, there was nothing for services to deal with the causes of family violence.

The changes to HECS indexation, halving last year's 7.1 per cent increase to debts and limiting increases in the future, have been confirmed. This will help young workers paying off HECS debts, but still leaves them with hefty repayments.

But Labor has refused to reverse the Job Ready Graduates changes that have pushed the cost of a three year Arts degree to \$50,000.

Refugees have been left behind again, with the promised increase in the total refugee intake again delayed. Around \$20 million less was spent on financial support for asylum seekers in the last year despite increasing need, continuing the Coalition's cruel cuts. But another \$604 million has been allocated to detain the existing 100 people on Nauru over the next year.

This isn't a budget for workers. It's another failure to tax the rich to fund the housing, health, cost of living and climate measures that are urgently needed.

**Billions are being wasted on weapons, with \$55.6 billion going on defence in the next year**

## Labor locks in gas expansion in new crime against the climate

By James Supple

LABOR'S NEW gas strategy pledges its support for a massive fossil fuel expansion, going all out to back mining industry profits.

This flies in the face of the urgent need to stop burning fossil fuels and has led to widespread anger.

This extended into the ranks of the ALP, with the Labor Environment Action Network (LEAN) issuing a statement describing the “biggest outpouring of anger from LEAN members over a Labor policy since 2013”. Five inner-city Labor MPs also put out statements distancing themselves from the policy.

Climate scientists are increasingly panicking about the climate emergency. The last 12 months broke another climate record, reaching 1.61 degrees above average, after the hottest April on record.

*The Guardian* recently surveyed 350 top climate scientists, with 77 per cent believing global heating will reach a devastating level of at least 2.5 degrees. “I am scared mightily—I don’t see how we are able to get out of this mess,” one said.

The “future gas strategy” commits to greater government support for opening huge new gas fields like the Pilliga/Narrabri in NSW and Scarborough in WA.

Labor is essentially adopting Scott Morrison’s “gas-fired recovery” policies that Labor itself rubbished while in opposition.

It will hand more subsidies to the gas industry through government funding of \$556 million to map the country’s soil and seafloor to speed up mining exploration, and \$100 million to help fast-track environmental approvals.

Resources Minister Madeleine King said the focus on new fossil fuel projects was designed to keep extraction going “out to 2050 and beyond”.

The government has tried to justify this by saying that NSW and Victoria will face domestic gas shortages as existing fields deplete by 2028.

But this is the result of policies that have allowed gas companies to export massive amounts of gas so they can make bigger profits.

Tim Buckley from Climate Energy Finance has pointed out that, “East Australia produces five times as much gas as we use domestically, most of it exported”.

King is also parroting the lines



**Above: Climate activists protest against new coal and gas projects outside Anthony Albanese’s residence at Kirribilli**

used by Scott Morrison and then Energy Minister Angus Taylor that gas is a “transition fuel” that is needed to reduce carbon emissions.

But Labor’s only answers to how it can reduce emissions while supporting more fossil fuels are offsets and the myth of carbon capture and storage. It is devoting \$12 million to provide regulatory and administrative support for offshore carbon capture, despite its continued failure over decades.

The government has refused to

consider efforts to reduce the use of gas. Household use of gas for heating and cooking could be eliminated altogether by switching to electric appliances—reducing total gas use by almost 20 per cent. There are also immediate alternatives for power generation through using batteries and other storage methods alongside renewable energy.

Labor’s backing for more fossil fuels is a criminal act that means disaster for the climate.

### Approval laws delayed for coal and gas giants

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL protection laws promised before the last election have been put indefinitely on hold, in another effort by the Albanese government to serve the coal and gas industry.

Labor had planned to release a newly revised Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, under which developments projects seek federal government approval.

A review of the existing law in 2020 found it was “ineffective” and needed major reform, with Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek in 2022 describing the system as “broken”.

The law has been failing in its basic aim of preventing the extinction of endangered species and ecosystems.

But the Minerals Council complained of “significant concerns” about Labor’s proposed changes after private consultation with the government, a briefing paper obtained by *The Nightly revealed*.

There was also pressure to halt the changes from the WA Labor government, itself in the pocket of mining companies and the gas industry. Environmental groups and The

Greens have been pushing for changes that force consideration of the climate change impact of new projects, something currently completely missing from the approval process.

The inclusion of a such a “climate trigger” would allow the Environment Minister to reject projects based on their climate change impact—although the decision would still be entirely up to the Minister, with limited rights to challenge them in court.

The government committed, as part of its Safeguard Mechanism package, to at least require new projects to report their expected carbon emissions when seeking approval. This would include new coal and gas projects. Even this requirement won’t come into force until new EPBC legislation is passed.

The delay also means that “more than 30 coal and gas projects are likely to be approved”, as they will be assessed under the current weak EPBC Act, according to Lock the Gate’s Carmel Flint.

Reform of the EPBC Act is now almost certain to be postponed until after the next election.

Resources Minister Madeleine King said new fossil fuel projects would keep going “out to 2050 and beyond”

## Tackle systemic pressure inside family to end violence against women

By Lucy Honan

THE ALBANESE government has tried to douse the fury over endemic rates of domestic violence with a small bucket of funding for “leaving violence payments”—an extra \$1 billion for crisis accommodation. Albanese topped up these meagre offerings with vague exhortations, “We need to change the culture. We need to change attitudes. We need to change the legal system.”

His commitment to the violent status quo is obvious to all those campaigning to halt escalating domestic violence rates. Even before the pressure of the cost of living crisis, it was clear that women need vastly more economic security, not just crisis support, to escape violence.

According to a 2021 report, 7690 women were returning to perpetrators each year because they had nowhere to live. And in 2016, more than 20,000 women who wanted to leave a violent partner said they were unable to because of a lack of money or financial support. But no serious commitment to major public housing builds or drastically raising Centrelink rates is on the table.

The calls for general cultural and attitudinal change are resoundingly hollow. The persistent rates of family, domestic and sexual violence make a mockery of the investment in gendered violence awareness campaigns since the 1990s.

### What produces violence?

Author Jess Hill and criminologist Michael Salter have pointed to data showing there was no significant improvement between 2017 and 2021 in attitudes towards violence against women overall, despite the #MeToo campaign, Respectful Relationships school programs, awareness campaigns and national attention on sexism in federal parliament.

Part of the problem, they argue, is that the target of those campaigns is wrong. Correctly, they point out that the premise that gendered violence is equally the responsibility of all men, including little boys, distorts reality, creates the space for backlash, and lets “powerful systems and industries” off the hook.

Waleed Ali, Chanel Contos and other commentators have supported Salter’s call to shift the focus of prevention programs to, “Alcohol, pornography and gambling [which] are



**Above: Marches against violence against women have been held across the country**

clear accelerants to men’s violence”, asking, “Why is it the responsibility of a 13-year-old boy to change the culture around sexual violence, when it’s not the responsibility of an adult man earning millions of dollars a year promoting violent pornography to that teenage boy?”

Salter is right to gesture toward vulturous corporate interests, feeding on and exacerbating alienation and despair. But most of the mooted reforms, including making alcohol more expensive and age-verification for porn, are not concerned to prevent corporate exploitation but only with attempting to more strictly regulate the behaviour of individual, often poorer, boys and men—a strategy that’s already failed.

Top-down efforts to limit access to porn alcohol and gambling singularly fail to address society’s sexism or the underlying reasons for gambling and alcohol use. Such measures all too often collapse back into repression of the already poor and disenfranchised. Bans on alcohol and pornography, along with welfare quarantining, in Indigenous communities under the Northern Territory Intervention increased racism and further undermined Indigenous self-determination, with no overall impact on rates of domestic violence.

Apolitical public health frameworks like Hill and Salter’s cast domestic violence as an aberration to the system rather than a consequence of the fundamental social organisation of capitalism.

The nuclear family requires the subjugation of women, not to the interests of an individual man or par-

ticular set of corporate interests, but to the interests of the entire ruling class, who extract years of free child-rearing and other acts of social reproduction from women through the ideological and social pressure of the family.

Men come under explosive pressure when forces of capitalism, like unemployment or other forms of marginalisation, make it impossible to fulfil their role as family provider.

This systemic dynamic helps explain some “paradoxes” like rates of domestic violence in same-sex relationships equalling those of heterosexual relationships, or the increase in rates of domestic violence when women earn more than their partners.

The problem is not straightforwardly men’s power over women but the unbearable pressure on everybody to perform socially recognisable gender roles in a nuclear family.

Identifying capitalism and the nuclear family as the cause of domestic violence is no reason for delays in the fight for justice for victims and survivors. This analysis provides an insight into the kinds of demands that would materially push back against the ruling class’s pressure on the family.

A fight that unites working class people of all genders, for public housing, jobs, free childcare, wage increases, increases to the single parent payments and all Centrelink payments would, if successful, provide immediate relief for thousands of women stuck in violent relationships.

Most importantly, it would build the kind of class power that could challenge the capitalist system at the heart of violence against women.

**We need a fight for demands that would materially push back against the pressure within the family**

# Ukraine faltering as US finally agrees to send more weapons

By Maeve Larkins

AFTER MONTHS of delays, the US Congress has approved a further \$90 billion of aid as Ukraine faces growing pressure from fresh Russian advances.

This brings US funding to Ukraine since the start of the war to a colossal \$260 billion. But even this will be nowhere near enough to force a Russian defeat.

The new round of funding will only be enough to last until early next year. If Donald Trump wins the US presidential election in November, he will likely end further aid.

Ukraine is totally reliant on US and NATO weapons and funding to continue fighting what is clearly a proxy war against Russia.

This poses the danger of the war escalating and spreading beyond Ukraine's borders.

French President Emmanuel Macron has again stated that he is "not ruling out" deploying French troops to Ukraine if Russia were to make further advances.

The UK similarly gave a green light for Ukraine to use British weapons to strike inside Russia. In response, Russia announced further nuclear weapons drills.

Even with the US and EU ramping up their production of artillery, Ukraine hopes merely to match Russia's supplies.

The next two months are likely to see further Russian offensives, as it tries to take advantage before supplies of US weapons and artillery arrive, Ukrainian General Oleksandr Pavliuk told *The Economist*.

At times, the Russians have been able to out-shell the Ukrainians 17 to 1. Ukrainian soldiers have had to ration their supplies, substituting flash-bangs and hand-grenades for artillery.

Russian forces have been making steady gains on the front-lines.

This is in large part due to Ukrainian ammunition and personnel shortages.

While the West can provide more weapons to continue the slaughter, Ukraine still has to find soldiers willing to fight. The appalling casualties mean continual demand for more troops.

Ukraine has about one million soldiers, many them serving continuously for two years since the Russian invasion.



Above: An army recruitment poster in Ukraine

To combat the shortage of soldiers, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has set a target of mobilising an additional 500,000 Ukrainians into the military. But this is becoming increasingly difficult, with falling enthusiasm for the war among Ukrainians meaning fewer volunteers.

## Conscription

In response, Zelensky last month lowered the draft age from 27 to 25 and implemented an electronic draft register which will require all men over the age of 17 to register within 60 days or be considered draft dodgers.

The penalty for draft dodging has also been increased to \$330. This is almost half the average monthly wage in Ukraine.

This is in addition to the existing requirement under martial law for all men between 18 and 60 to remain in the country. A previous three-year maximum term of service for soldiers has also been scrapped.

Forced conscription is common in urban areas and many men of eligible age avoid public transport or visiting conscription offices in case they are forcefully bundled off into training and deployment. Some Ukrainians have even created apps which provide live updates of the locations of draft squads.

More than 20,000 Ukrainians have been arrested trying to flee the country since the war began.

For many, "the war is increasingly seen as a 'war fought by the poor'," those who are unable to afford immigration or the bribes

necessary to avoid conscription, write academics Stefan Wolff and Tetyana Malyarenko.

The previous paper-based system of draft registration was rife with corruption, with conscription officers amassing million of dollars in bribes.

While Zelensky was elected on the promise he would crack down on widespread corruption, he has now presided over two years of martial law. In this time, the life expectancy of Ukrainian men has dropped from 65 to 57.

According to recent polls, the percentage of Ukrainians who "do not trust" Zelensky's party has leapt from 34 per cent in late 2022 to 61 per cent at the start of this year.

This can be chalked up to the increasing authoritarianism of Zelensky's government.

The US is happy to keep the war waging to tie Russia into a costly and protracted conflict, shoring up their military ties with their NATO allies.

Meanwhile, more Ukrainians and Russians will be sent to the meat-grinder on the front-lines.

The war in Ukraine is being maintained and fought for US imperialism, as a proxy war between the US and Russia, and as part of a strategy of weakening one of China's major allies.

We need to oppose any further weapons shipments and demand an immediate ceasefire and negotiated peace.

Otherwise hundreds of thousands of Ukraine's and Russia's poorest will be buried in the trenches.

**The appalling casualties mean continual demand for more troops**

# Haunting Holocaust film that resonates amid Gaza genocide

**The Zone of Interest**  
Directed by Jonathan Glazer  
In cinemas now

**DIRECTOR JONATHAN** Glazer's speech after winning Best Picture at this year's Academy Awards punctured the banality of the ceremony. Glazer joined a growing movement of Jewish people rejecting the way Jewishness and the Holocaust are being used to justify the genocide in Gaza.

His message is poignantly connected to a key message of the film—don't let the horror of genocide become a background to our "normal" lives around the world.

*The Zone of Interest* portrays the real-life Nazi commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, and his wife, Hedwig, who built an "idyllic" home and life for their family next to the Auschwitz camp.

In his autobiography, Höss wrote, "Every wish that my wife or children expressed was granted to them. My wife's garden was a paradise of flowers." Höss' five children played with tortoises, cats and lizards at their villa near the Polish city of Krakow; in the summer, the siblings frolicked in a pool in their yard or swam in a nearby river.

Höss was the Nazi officer in charge of Auschwitz, the concentration and extermination camp where the Nazis killed an estimated 1.1 million people—most of them European Jews. Höss was directly responsible for these killings, which he oversaw as the camp's longest-serving commandant.

The film intentionally creates a sense of "big brother", making you feel present in the house with



the concentration camp over the wall. This has a haunting resonance with our world now, and the genocide taking place in Gaza.

It was paramount to get rid of anything that would place their story, and that of the Holocaust, safely in the past, "where it feels like a museum piece," says Glazer, "and we can say: 'Oh, it's just a movie.'"

The film was shot to look as modern as possible, in colour on digital cameras with high-tech lenses. "We wanted to see every pixel," notes cinematographer Lukasz Zal.

*Zone of Interest* is a welcome change to the slew of Holocaust films that only explain genocide through the pure evil of individual fascists or depict horror for the sake of entertainment.

The focus on the ordinary elements of the life of the Höss family sends a powerful message—that there is horror and brutality in the day-to-day existence of our system that we must not ignore.

While the brutal-

**Above: The commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, as depicted in his garden in *The Zone of Interest***

ity of Auschwitz is not directly depicted, there is a constant background noise from the camps, of an eerie bellow, punctuated by screams of horror and pain.

"The axiom of the whole project was 'make it present,'" said Glazer. "We are looking at the perpetrator square in the eye. We can't dismiss it as a film. We can't say, 'I'm safely watching a film.'"

I could not help but think of the Israeli walls built to control Palestinians, where genocide is happening across the checkpoints and border, and Israelis live "normal"

lives despite what their government is inflicting beyond the wall. There are hundreds of checkpoints across the occupied West Bank and Israeli settlers expelling Palestinian people from their homes there as the genocide occurs in Gaza.

The film ends at the present-day Auschwitz Museum to remind us that this was real living horror that occurred.

## Resistance

Glazer dedicated his Academy Award to Alexandria Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk, a woman who fought the Nazis as a member of the Polish resistance. He briefly portrays her resistance to the Holocaust and Auschwitz, a story which is rarely portrayed in popular films.

Between 1940 and 1941, the Germans displaced about 17,000 Poles and Jews from Oświęcim (the Polish name for the town of Auschwitz) and nearby villages to build the concentration camp complex. The entire Jewish population of Oświęcim, a total of

about 7000, was deported to ghettos. Eight Polish villages were destroyed, and more than a hundred buildings located in the town were demolished.

Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk joined the Polish resistance movement Związek Walki Zbrojnej while still a teenager, alongside thousands of Poles in the area surrounding Auschwitz. If caught, they knew they would be imprisoned and sent to the camps, where death was almost certain.

Nazi guards did not pay as much attention to young Polish girls going in and out of the camps, allowing Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk, who chose the code name "Olena," and her sister to act as liaisons between the prisoners and the outside world.

Under the guise of working in the mine, they smuggled in food, medicine and warm winter clothes and smuggled out messages. She worked mainly at night, hiding supplies inside the camps where prisoners could find them. The scenes in the film showing her hiding apples in the mud come from her first-person accounts.

Glazer calls Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk the "only light" in the film. The support for the Palestinians from protesters across the border in Egypt to the student encampments in the US demonstrate that this light of resistance is also still present and powerful.

The story of Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk and the growing movement for Palestine is a reminder that even within the darkest of times there is the possibility of resistance and solidarity, across race and borders, against the terrifying normalcy of genocide enforced by the rulers of our system.

**Feiyi Zhang**

# DIRECT ACTION, MASS PROTESTS AND THE FIGHT FOR PALESTINE

Direct action protests that disrupt business as usual should not be seen as an end in themselves but as part of a broader strategy of mass action, writes **Adam Adelpour**

THE HORROR of Israel’s onslaught in Gaza has provoked millions around the world to take to the streets and protest.

Albanese’s government remains appallingly complicit.

Albanese has continued trade with Israel, including military trade, and has handed a huge \$917 million contract to Israeli arms company Elbit Systems. Over 70 Australian companies make parts for the F-35 fighter jets used by Israel to bombard Gaza.

It is clear that if he was going to be convinced to act by the moral criminality of Israel’s actions he would have done it by now.

Faced with this reality growing numbers of people have seen the need to escalate beyond the weekend street marches. There is a sense that if our voices aren’t being listened to by politicians we have to take actions that can’t be ignored.

## Direct action

This has led to a growing desire to engage in direct action.

While there is not a single definition of direct action, in general it refers to actions of small groups of protesters taking more or less disruptive action to attract attention, such as blocking roads, occupying buildings, activists locking themselves to industrial equipment, cranes or factory gates.

A wide variety of recent actions in Australia have been referred to as direct action.

These include a small group of protesters locking themselves onto machinery at Wollongong’s Bissalloy steel plant, which has contracts with the IDF, mass pickets of hundreds blocking ports when Israeli shipping line Zim has ships in port and graffiti on ABC buildings in response to their biased pro-Israel coverage of the

genocide in Gaza.

It is absolutely right that we have to find ways to disrupt business as usual in the face of Israel’s genocide and the Albanese government’s complicity.

But the direct action of small groups, who are often fascinated with planning secretive, small disruptive activities while understandable can, in the longer run, be self-defeating.

Such actions focus on heroic individuals or small groups taking the action—something that does not have the same power as mass direct action involving hundreds or thousands of people.

This problem was well described by the late revolutionary socialist John Molyneux, who wrote that supporters of direct action insisted on the tactic:

“to the exclusion of other forms of action, and to disparage other forms of protest. With this goes a tendency to exalt the excitement, danger, courage, and attention grabbing qualities of direct-action ABOVE the need to involve and mobilise the masses.”

But direct action protests can only disrupt a company temporarily, holding up work for a few hours until police arrive. They do not have the ability to permanently stop production of weapons or trade with Israeli companies.

This means direct action protests cannot be judged purely in terms of the amount of disruption they cause. They can play a powerful role as a statement of intent about the movement’s determination to sanction Israeli companies or stop the arms trade.

But they have to be aimed at creating a political crisis through drawing attention to the role of Australian companies in aiding Israel’s genocide as well as Albanese’s support for

---

**Direct action protests can only disrupt a company temporarily, holding up work for a few hours**

---

them, and drawing larger numbers of people into action as part of the movement as a whole.

This is only possible if direct action involves large numbers of people—rather than individuals or small groups who can be far more easily ignored—and is directly connected with a working class orientation to mobilise the workers, and the unions, in the armament factories, to take action themselves.

## Lessons from Vietnam

The history of the movement against Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War shows both the radicalising role of mass direct action and why it is most effective when it is connected to a wider movement—and aimed at building the wider movement’s support.

The first protests against conscription and Australia’s involvement in Vietnam from 1965 were on the fringes of society. Only hundreds mobilised, alongside actions by a handful of left-wing trade unions.

Direct actions punctuated the development of the movement, helping radicalise it and shift it to the left.

Students began engaging in sit-ins on roads and at government offices to oppose Australia’s involvement in Vietnam and conscription.

The fact that these actions involved hundreds of people meant the experience of repression by police and the authorities radicalised large numbers, with many students abandoning their initial pacifism in the face of state violence.

By 1967 Monash uni students were raising funds for the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and in 1968 thousands of students waged pitched battles with police at the US consulate.

The repression of those resisting conscription had a similar effect, pulling wider layers into the movement

and shifting it to the left. Radicalism wasn't a barrier to building a bigger movement, it was essential to it.

As a result by 1970 the Vietnam Moratorium marches saw much larger numbers on the streets—and mass workers strike action to “Stop work to stop the war”—with 100,000 marching in Melbourne and 25,000 joining the action in Sydney.

By 1971 the conservative government was forced to announce the withdrawal of Australian troops under the combined pressure of the Vietnamese resistance and the protest movement at home.

At the same time, direct actions were only able to have such an effect because they were combined with mass organising on a huge scale.

Unions and the Labor Left joining the movement gave it legitimacy and meant it reached wider sections of the working class.

Direct action was an important part of the movement overall, but it was also only one part.

### What kind of direct action?

The actions against Zim shipping around the country have highlighted the need for a strategy that goes beyond simply celebrating direct action.

The mass community pickets at the port have effectively highlighted the economic ties between Australia and Israel, provided an avenue for escalation beyond street marches and opened the door to union participation in actions at the ports.

But they have also faced fierce police repression with community pickets being dispersed by police. Around 40 people have been charged under draconian anti-protest laws in NSW as a result.

The involvement of hundreds of people has delivered a significant impact both in raising the pressure on the government for sanctions on Israel and in radicalising many people taking disruptive action for the first time.

But the most effective action against Zim shipping would be workers banning work on Zim ships. This kind of action by port workers helped isolate apartheid South Africa.

Workers' bans are far more effective than the temporary disruption of community pickets. If port workers refused to handle certain goods it would permanently stop them coming into the country.

Workers have often refused to work on particular contracts or projects in the past, from bans on uranium mining to bans on Indonesian companies during the crisis over East



**Above: Mass direct action at ZIM shipping has helped put the call for sanctions against Israel on the agenda**

Timor in 1999.

Workers' bans are also harder to deal with using force alone. Police can use violence to move a community picket off the road, but they can't load ships themselves.

With this in mind, it is strategically essential to combine community pickets with efforts to build support inside the container terminals amongst workers, to build wider political support for actions and to work alongside the Maritime Union of Australia to maximise the involvement of unions and workers.

On 25 May there will be national mass marches on the ports calling to end all trade with Israel.

Through a purely direct action lens such actions are a step backward from disruptive mass pickets. But if the goal is to work towards bans by workers then marches on the ports are important.

They can help unite more unions, workers and other organisations behind our demands, build more confidence to defy anti-protest and anti-strike laws and raise workers' awareness about why they should oppose trade with Israel.

All this is a precondition of workers' industrial action against Israel—the most effective form of direct action.

There are other recent examples of the limits of minority direct action in disrupting business as usual, and the way that mass action and workers' power are necessary to actually win demands.

In April small groups of Google workers were involved in courageous sit-ins at Google offices in New York and Sunnyvale, California, protesting the company's cloud-computing contract with the Israeli government.

Their strident actions put the spotlight on Google's complicity and made a splash in the media around the world.

But Google responded by sacking 50 workers, including those who actually participated in sit-ins as well as some supportive bystanders. Because a small minority can easily be sacked, much wider involvement in action by Google workers is the only way to defend against reprisals and force Google to cut its ties with Israel.

This requires patient work by the activist minority to win the majority of the workforce to take action against their bosses.

A successful strike or union ban requires wide enough support that a firm majority joins the action—as even a significant minority of workers setting out the break the strike through scabbing can undermine the action.

As the situation in Rafah worsens there will be many looking for what can be done.

Understanding the experience of the movement since 7 October and the history of the movement against the Vietnam War, we can see that direct action can play an important role.

But it has to be mass direct action which is actively, dynamically connected to the wider movement to break ties with the Israeli terror state.

# FRANTZ FANON— DECOLONISATION AND VIOLENCE

Frantz Fanon’s writings on racism and the difference between colonial violence and violent resistance to it remain valuable today, writes **Miro Sandev**

FRANTZ FANON was an extraordinary anti-colonial and anti-capitalist fighter.

He put his life on the line to fight French colonialism. As Israel’s genocidal war rolls on, Fanon’s uncompromising vision of resistance to racism and colonialism holds key lessons.

Fanon was born on the Caribbean island of Martinique in 1925. The French had colonised it and ran coffee plantations with Black slave labour. Fanon studied medicine in France and later specialised in psychiatry.

As a Black man, his direct experience of racism in France and the hypocrisy of the French liberal ideals shaped his thinking.

Fanon asserted the right of colonised peoples to resist their oppression by any means necessary—the same stance we should apply to Palestinian resistance against Israeli genocide. Brutality is a necessity of colonial domination, therefore anti-colonial violence is an inevitable response.

Fanon argued that we can never equate the violence of the oppressor with the violence of the oppressed—the violence of oppressed peoples is righteous and usually much more limited. He also wrote about the transformative effect that revolutionary violence can have on colonised peoples, helping them see the potential for victory and to overcome deep feelings of inferiority.

Occasionally Fanon did elevate armed resistance to the status of the sole “real struggle” that would “radically mutate” the oppressed. This tendency was influenced by the twists and turns of the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria.

## Algerian struggle

French occupation of Algeria led to the genocidal extermination of almost three million Algerians (half of the

population) through massacres, disease and poverty.

The National Front for Liberation (FLN) started in 1954 as a small minority in the national movement that was committed to armed resistance against the French. It established a militant agenda, calling for a “social” republic after independence, with serious social and economic reforms.

Fanon moved to Algeria and threw himself into the anti-colonial movement. He helped write and edit the FLN paper and was a spokesperson for the organisation.

A year after he got involved, the Battle of Algiers broke out in 1956. The FLN employed both workers’ strikes and terror attacks against French settlers in the capital, where many Algerians lived.

An eight-day strike paralysed the city in January 1957, but was broken by repression.

The French managed to put down the FLN’s insurgency in Algiers in 1957 and its leaders were hunted down, murdered or forced into exile. But the brutality of the French repression won new support for the rebels. The revolution pulled in and radicalised wider layers of society.

Fanon’s book about the Algerian struggle *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* has as its theme the Marxist idea that people’s consciousness changes in struggle. Marx wrote that people join movements with a variety of contradictory ideas; it is during collective struggle that people become confident and open to new possibilities.

The years 1956 to 1960 showed all the signs of this. The struggle that had been launched in 1954 by a small group had become a mass movement that pulled in urban and rural areas, men and women, in the armed struggles and city demonstrations, riots and strikes.

---

## Fanon moved to Algeria and threw himself into the anti-colonial movement

---

Men and women were forced to re-examine their relationships. The post-independence government estimated that 11,000 women had actively participated in the fight for liberation, with about 3 per cent of these fighting in combat.

However, after the Battle of Algiers the FLN strategy shifted to focus solely on military confrontation. The “revolution” became controlled from above. Radical urban trade unionists and students were encouraged to leave their places of work to fight in the countryside. Partly this was driven by the fact that the European settlers were concentrated in the cities.

This shift by the FLN had a profound effect on Fanon’s thinking, and he increasingly looked to the peasants as the agent of revolution. The other influence on him was the failure of the Stalinised French Communist Party (the PCF) to support the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria.

## Working class

The PCF did not support independence until 1959, as it was trying to form governing coalitions with right-wing parties in France that strongly opposed independence.

The Communist Party of Algeria was initially not much better. When the FLN began armed attacks, it put out a statement condemning violence “on both sides”, as many on the left today have done in relation to the violence of Israel and Hamas.

Fanon was disappointed and angered that most of the French left had either fudged the question of fighting for Algerian liberation or outright opposed it. This fanned Fanon’s disillusionment with working class politics as a whole.

Fanon became influenced by Maoist interpretations of socialism, which emphasised the central role of



the peasantry in revolutionary struggle while holding a deep suspicion towards the working class (the proletariat).

He wrote, “The proletariat is the nucleus of the colonised population which has been most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic proletariat of the towns is in a comparatively privileged position.”

Fanon accepted the widespread argument that the organised working class had been effectively “bought off” with the profits of imperialist exploitation, and that revolutionary action against the new African ruling classes would only come from the poorest rural masses and the unemployed and poor in urban areas.

But the actual history of decolonisation in Africa reveals a powerful working class, often leading the struggle for national liberation. Workers were able to paralyse the colonial machine by their position at the heart of the system’s profit-making in factories, mines and docks.

There was a wave of working class militancy after 1945 in Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

In Algeria, the working class demonstrations in the cities and towns across Algeria in December 1960 forced the French to accept that they would have to leave—this was a movement that was not controlled or organised by the FLN.

In 1964 in Nigeria thousands of workers joined a general strike for a pay rise after MPs awarded themselves a big increase. After 12 days of struggle, the parliamentarians gave in. Nigerian workers were to use the tactic repeatedly, with oil and dock workers soon on the front lines of the struggle.

The example of Nigeria was followed by Black workers in apartheid South Africa. Waves of mass strikes there shook the system so greatly that eventually, it was forced to seek peace with its opponents, and apartheid was dismantled.

But there were also important weaknesses. There was an absence of any working class party within these strikes and protests that could provide the leadership of the national liberation movements. What was needed was an urban and worker-led movement that could fuse the national and socialist revolution into a single and ongoing process linked to the countryside.

### Limits of national liberation

By 1961 Fanon had been made ambassador of the Algerian provisional



**Above: A mural of Frantz Fanon in Paris by artist Jean-Baptiste Colin**

government to Ghana, where he met leaders of the national liberation movements from Africa.

He was still giving his all to the FLN, but was critical of some of the decisions the leadership was making and starting to grasp the limitations of national liberation struggles that do not challenge the capitalist system.

In his final book *The Wretched of the Earth* he highlighted the way upper classes of the colonised people began to manoeuvre to gain advantage after independence and to impose a new system of exploitation—not a colonialist one but still a capitalist one.

He brought a much-needed class analysis to the struggle for power following national liberation. Post-colonial power was caught between a weak national capitalist class and the limitations of global capitalism imposed on any newly developing nation.

In this context it was inevitable that these new Global South capitalists would act to suppress their own people when their demands could not be met within the existing capitalist system.

Fanon detailed much of this suppression. He saw how the Algerian FLN itself was developing in a similar way to other nationalist parties. His book was an attempt to pull back the FLN and prevent the development of this “caste of profiteers”.

Unfortunately, for much of Africa the nationalist revolution hardened into one-party states dedicated to protecting the property of the new ruling class.

This was also true of post-inde-

pendence Algeria. The FLN banned the Communist Party of Algeria and made itself the only legal party in 1963. Two years later the dictator Houari Boumediene took over in a military coup.

Fanon didn’t live to see an independent Algeria, but he would have been scathing of the FLN’s policies and of Boumediene.

Fanon correctly diagnosed the trap of national liberation within a capitalist global system but he could not provide a solution.

His focus on the peasantry meant he could not advocate for working class tactics like the mass strike and workers councils that are necessary for an anti-colonial revolution to grow over into a socialist one.

But despite these shortcomings, his contribution was enormous. He understood that liberation could not come simply through kicking the colonisers out, but needed a total social revolution.

Fanon wrote that a, “rapid step must be taken from national consciousness towards political and social consciousness”.

The mass protests that ousted the Algerian dictator Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2019 were a reminder that this social revolution is not yet finished. Recent strikes in the Egyptian textiles factories hark back to the Arab Spring revolts and point to the continued power of the working class as a force for fundamental change.

In a time of revolt in the region and of brutal, imperialist war on Palestine, Fanon’s work is more important than ever to us.

# MORE BLOOD FOR OIL— WHY THE WEST ARMS ISRAEL

Control of the Middle East has been a key focus for the world’s big powers due to its immense reserves of oil, and Israel remains vital to preserving it, writes **James Supple**

THERE IS an overwhelming reason behind the US’s dedication to arming Israel, and the importance of the wider Middle East—oil.

For the last century, the world’s imperialist powers have scrambled to control it.

As the US emerged as a superpower following 1945 the State Department described Middle East oil as, “a stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest material prizes in world history”. And the US set out to ensure it had control—using brutal violence whenever necessary.

Even today the Middle East produces just over 30 per cent of the world’s oil, and sits on half of proven reserves.

Oil is the lifeblood of every advanced economy and is central to modern capitalism.

It powers both road and air transport, and is also key to modern manufacturing.

Plastics derived from oil are found in everything from computers to packaging, pens, car tyres, toothbrushes and mobile phones. Oil and gas are also used to produce fertilisers and pesticides, clothing, detergents, cosmetics and paints.

Oil also powers the fleets of fighter jets, tanks and shipping that the world’s most powerful states use to project military force.

It was the First World War that showed decisively the role of oil for the military machines of the great powers.

“The Allies were carried to victory on a flood of oil”, Britain’s Lord Curzon noted in the aftermath. The efforts to cut off Germany’s oil supplies had hindered production of aircraft and trucks, contributing to its defeat.

Much of this oil came from the US, the first country where it was

drilled on a large scale.

Britain, lacking oil supplies of its own, struck the secret Sykes-Picot agreement to divide the Middle East with France, to help to get its hands on sufficient reserves.

At first the West took control of the Middle East’s oil directly.

A handful of US and European companies known as the “Seven Sisters” controlled 85 per cent of world oil production until the 1970s.

They worked together to exploit the oil fields of Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The seven companies later merged into four: BP (British Petroleum), Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon-Mobil and Chevron.

All of them remain enormously profitable. The world’s five largest listed oil companies, including one more major European firm, TotalEnergies, have made over \$400 billion between them since Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022.

Their dominance in the Middle East ended when the oil producing countries established the OPEC consortium and took control of oil for themselves in 1973.

Today state-owned oil companies including Saudi Aramco, PetroChina, and Brazil’s Petrobras are some of the world’s biggest producers.

Despite the beginnings of a shift globally to renewable energy in the face of the climate crisis, the world’s ruling classes are not contemplating the end of oil any time soon. The International Energy Agency predicts a peak in oil demand by 2030, but says global consumption will remain above 50 million barrels a year by 2050.

A UN report in November showed oil producing countries are on track to increase production, with plans to pump out 29 per cent more oil and 83 per cent more gas by 2030.

## US efforts to dominate the Middle East have produced a string of invasions and interventions

This would “throw humanity’s future into question”, producing 70 per cent more carbon pollution than needed to push global heating past two degrees.

But while there are still profits to be made oil companies are not going to stop cooking the planet.

### US control

US efforts to dominate the Middle East have produced a string of invasions and interventions, including the coup in Iran in 1953, the dispatch of 14,000 troops and the US Sixth Fleet to Lebanon in 1958, backing Iraq with arms and support during its war against Iran in the 1980s, then invading Iraq twice, in 1991 and 2003.

Support for Israel has also been one of the pillars of US control, with Israel proving its worth as a military power able to keep the Arab states in line and protect Western interests.

As the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* put it in 1951, “Strengthening Israel helps Western powers maintain stability in the Middle East. Israel is to become the watchdog.”

Israel proved its worth to the US decisively in the 1967 war, when it defeated Egypt, Jordan and Syria simultaneously, checking the rise of Arab nationalist regimes that had threatened the assets of Western companies.

Since then the US has given Israel enormous sums of military aid, designed to ensure its has a “qualitative military edge” in terms of arms and technology over all the other states around it.

Israel’s interests do not always coincide exactly with those of the US. Its actions are often so aggressive and extreme they go beyond even what the US thinks is wise. The scale of the current genocide in Gaza is just one example.

Even as he declares his “de-

votion” to support for Israel, US President Joe Biden has sought to restrain it from plans to send troops into Rafah, threatening a massacre among the 1.4 million Palestinians crowded in there, and to prevent a wider Israeli war against Lebanon, Syria and Iran.

The US has also opposed plans floated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to expel Palestinians from Gaza into the Egyptian desert, in another wave of ethnic cleansing that would destabilise the regime in Egypt.

Israel is a settler-colonial state and a highly militarised society that is hell-bent on domination over both the Palestinians and its near neighbours.

The US, on the other hand, also wants to ensure the alliance and support of nearby Arab governments.

The autocratic regimes in Jordan and Egypt receive billions in US economic aid to help them police their own populations and hold onto power.

But the US will always ultimately back Israel as its most dependable ally in the region.

Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy with the largest oil reserves in the whole region, has also been a key US ally since 1945.

The discovery of huge oil reserves there from 1938 led US President Franklin Roosevelt to meet King Abdul Aziz directly in 1945, with the US declaring the protection of Saudi Arabia as of vital interest to the US.

## US wars

The US war on Iraq in 1991 was fought partly to show the US’s willingness to guarantee Saudi security. Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait and fired missiles at Saudi Arabia, which borders the country.

The broader aim was to ensure the “free, uninterrupted flow of oil from the Gulf”, as US state department official Robert Kimmitt put it at the time. The US wanted to prevent a single hostile state from controlling too much of the valuable commodity.

Or as Lawrence Koth, a former US assistant defence secretary, put it, “If Kuwait grew carrots, we wouldn’t give a damn”.

But the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq after 2001 proved disastrous. The US was unable to establish the stable client regime it had hoped for in Iraq, and eventually withdrew with its tail between its legs.

In Iraq it left over one million



**Above: US air force jets fly over burning oil fields in Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf War**

dead, unleashed vicious sectarianism, and reduced the whole country to ruin.

The main beneficiaries of the wars was Iran, the state most hostile to the US in the region.

The Iranian regime now has significant influence in Iraq’s government, and sympathetic militia groups across the country.

Nor are the US’s ties with Saudi Arabia as firm as in the past. The US remains important to the Saudis’ military security but its rulers are increasingly economically tied to China.

The biggest importers of Middle Eastern oil are China, India, Japan and South Korea.

Japan gets 90 per cent of its oil from the Middle East, South Korea 59 per cent, India around half, and China a third.

The sheer size of the Chinese economy however means that it dominates these flows.

As political economist Adam Hanieh has noted, “By 2019, around 45 per cent of all the world’s oil exports were flowing to Asia—with more than half of these destined for China alone.”

Nonetheless the US is still determined to exert influence through the use of its enormous military power. There remain around 30,000 US troops stationed in bases across the region.

The US itself does not need Middle Eastern oil.

It produces enough oil to meet its

own needs domestically, and can also rely on supplies from Canada and Latin America.

But its military power means it can guarantee oil supplies to its allies, and potentially cut them off to adversaries in the event of war.

This is exactly the way the US responded to the challenge of Japan in the lead up to the Second World War. Japan faced a crippling US embargo on oil and other imports that threatened to paralyse its economy and its capacity to wage war.

Japan’s response was to seize oil supplies in Indonesia and to bomb Pearl Harbour.

Its decline in power and influence makes the US even more reliant on Israel than in the past.

In the face of military defeats in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its declining economic leverage, it needs to ensure its other major asset in the Middle East—Israel’s military might—remains secure.

That means Joe Biden continues to arm Israel so it can carry out its massacres in Gaza, even as he mumbles criticism of its efforts to deliberately starve the population.

US imperialism wants to focus on China as the major threat to its power. But it is still determined to hold onto its influence in the Middle East.

The oil, and Israel’s role in protecting it, could also prove to be a weapon against China.

The US support for genocide in Gaza is part of preserving its global power.

# ENCAMPMENTS SHOW SPREAD OF SOLIDARITY WITH GAZA



**Above: The student encampment at Columbia University that sparked the movement**

By David Glanz

THE SPREAD of student encampments for Palestine around the world has been an inspiration for all those fighting to end Israel’s genocidal slaughter in Gaza.

Starting at Columbia University in New York, the camps have spread like wildfire—more than 120 in the US, 25 in the UK, with others in France, Spain, Canada, Turkey, Tunisia, Mexico, Holland, Ireland, Bangladesh, India, Cuba, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Egypt and Switzerland.

In Australia, the first camp was launched at the University of Sydney, followed by the University of Melbourne. Others have sprung up at La Trobe, Monash, RMIT, Deakin, ANU, the University of Adelaide, the University of Queensland, Curtin, Newcastle and elsewhere.

Students are demanding that their administrations reveal their links with Israel and end them. At Sydney Uni the main target has been the weapons company Thales; at Melbourne Uni it is the weapons company Lockheed Martin.

The movement has rattled the ruling class, already on the back foot because of the horror in Gaza and the growth of the global solidarity movement.

They have responded with a wave of slurs—that the camps are violent, that they make Jewish students unsafe and that the protests are part of a wave of antisemitism.

President Joe Biden warned of a “ferocious surge of antisemitism in

America”. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says the antisemitism is the worst he has seen.

This is a desperate attempt to imply standing with Palestine is racist towards Jews. Yet many anti-Zionist Jews have been involved in running encampments or speaking at teach-ins and rallies.

## Violence

Meanwhile it has been supporters of Israel, members of the far right and the police who have been responsible for violent incidents.

In the US, state authorities have used force to intimidate or break up camps. At Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, police used tasers and tear gas on protesters. At Indiana University, students spotted a police sniper on a roof overlooking their protest area.

In Los Angeles, campus police stood back as a mob of Trump supporters, including members of the far right Proud Boys, attacked the camp at UCLA. The next day police used stun grenades against the students.

In response, university staff have responded heroically. About 200 academics at UCLA walked out of classes in solidarity with student protesters.

In New York, some 200 Columbia and Barnard University staff members staged a walkout in protest at police brutality.

In Britain, more than 500 staff at Oxford University have signed a statement supporting a student encampment demanding, “that the university divest from Israel’s geno-

cide in Gaza, as well as from Israel’s ongoing apartheid regime against Palestinians and its settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem”.

In Melbourne, Israel supporters have harassed encampments, especially at Monash University. Administrations have demanded an end to the camps at Deakin and ANU. Victorian top cop Shane Patton urged universities to act against the camps.

The best way to defend the encampments is to involve more students and to use the camps as bases for escalating the movement, including where possible occupations of university buildings.

Students also need to win solidarity from workers. In Sydney, the weekly rally for Palestine marched to join the encampment at Sydney Uni. At Melbourne Uni, a call-out by the university workers’ union, the NTEU, saw 500 rally at the encampment. Speakers included the Victorian divisional secretary.

The encampments are an exciting and important initiative and have given hope to Palestinians and their supporters around the world. But they cannot be an end in themselves.

As Students Against War in Sydney put it, “Our fight doesn’t stop at the uni gates. Student protest must connect up with workers’ action.

“We would need to see mass strikes, mass disruption and industrial bans by unions to make Israel a pariah state and make it impossible for Albanese to continue supporting genocide.”

Student direct action has lit a spark—now activists need to spread the fire into our workplaces and unions.

.....  
**It has been supporters of Israel and the police who have been responsible for violent incidents**

# Solidarity