

Gaza strike expands to two more University of California campuses, as UAW bureaucracy promotes dead-end divestment strategy

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On Tuesday at 7 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Pacific, the WSW and International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) are holding an online public meeting, “From Wayne State to University of California—industrial workers must oppose protest crackdowns.” Register for the meeting [here](#).

The Gaza strike by academic workers at the University of California expanded Monday to UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara, adding thousands more to the strike which is now in its third week. UC Irvine is scheduled to join the strike Wednesday.

The strike now encompasses six out of ten campuses in the UC system. Only two remaining campuses in session are not on strike—UC Riverside and UC San Francisco, the latter solely a graduate medical campus.

The strike has spread in defiance of attempts by the UAW bureaucracy to limit it to one campus. Rank-and-file anger was such that it became clear that these campuses were prepared to walk without the official sanction of the UAW. In similar fashion, the UAW used a limited “stand-up” strike last year to force through a sellout in the auto industry, paving the way for mass layoffs.

An undergraduate student at UCLA told the WSW:

The union leadership is obviously beholden to politics. You know, they donate millions to each political party every year. ... But the rank-and-file are the ones that really have the voice. They have the vote, they organize, and I'm sure that if the rank-and-file realize that the union leadership isn't representing them, then they can supersede them, go above and beyond.

Once UC Irvine begins striking on Wednesday, more than 30,000 workers across the state will have joined a political strike against the genocide in Gaza and the brutal police crackdowns on campuses. This significant development underscores the need for the working class, especially industrial workers, to become the basic and most powerful force against the war.

The working class must mobilize to intervene with the methods of the class struggle, preparing industrial action to force an end to the police assaults and to the genocide.

This also requires a rebellion against the union bureaucracy, which is totally integrated with the war plans of the administration of “Genocide Joe” Biden, whom the UAW has endorsed.

A Ford worker at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn, Michigan said:

I'd tell the UC students, the stand-up strike is BS and we need to do a real strike. After the stand-up strike, they told us we won a record contract—but workers were fired and laid off. My friend at Stellantis said thousands of temporary workers were fired after they were promised full-time jobs. The arrests of students are unfair and all protesters have the right to freedom of speech. The UAW hasn't said anything about the UC strike here, they haven't put out any bulletins around the plant, so we didn't know anything about it.

The situation is urgent. The Israeli genocide of Gaza

has now expanded into an all-out assault on Rafah, the last remaining urban area in the enclave which was previously declared to be a safe zone for refugees. And over the weekend, the White House approved the use of long-range missiles to strike targets deep within Russia, raising the danger of nuclear war.

A postdoc researcher at UC Los Angeles spoke to the political and financial interests which dominate the universities:

I think it's very important that the workers are standing up against their employer if they don't support the way the employer is acting. And yes, who's our employer? The state. But to me it's very strange to be here in this so-called public university that's funded seven percent by the state. And there are a lot of interests coming from private people ... And why should you be surprised [the administration cracks down on protests] if our public university is funded by some few percent from public money and the rest is the interests of private people, influential people? Because if you are the chancellor and you have to think about how you finance 90 percent of the university.

I think there is a high difference between rich and poor, it's the land of the free but the freedom is only for the rich. And there are powerful interests to keep it exactly like this.

I'm a scientific researcher and I feel very privileged to be paid for doing that. But if I strike, it's not that production is shut down ... it's different from shutting down production or shutting down the railroad system and that creates huge losses.

If people who work in factories connect with academic workers who are in a similar situation as the workers of these companies and there is a communication among organizations, then it's different.

The UAW bureaucracy, having been forced to call out the majority of its members in the UC system, is working to isolate them from the working class as a whole. On Monday, UAW officials attempted to keep

picketers from speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site*, which has been the only publication informing autoworkers of the UC strike, and urging them to take industrial action against the genocide.

The UAW bureaucracy is also promoting the illusion that academic workers and students can settle accounts with the American war machine through divestment deals with individual university administrations.

A recent deal at UC Riverside between student protesters and school administrators is an indication of the type of maneuver which the UAW is seeking in exchange for shutting down the strike.

The school announced it will disclose its investments online and convene a task force to "explore" the removal from UCR's endowment of arms manufacturing companies. This will result in a report to the UCR Board of Trustees by the end of Winter Quarter 2025 as well as an "ongoing review" of Israeli-based food brand Sabra hummus.

This commits the University to nothing. But more fundamentally, this limited focus on the campuses detracts attention from the real criminals in the White House, whom the UAW supports.

The support for genocide, as well as the reckless decision to risk nuclear war in Ukraine, is not simply a mistaken policy that capitalist politicians can be turned away from through mass pressure. As with the eruption of the first two world wars, it is the inevitable consequence of an historic crisis of the capitalist system and of world imperialism.

The struggle against war and in defense of democratic rights requires a revolutionary struggle, based in the working class, against capitalism and for the socialist reconstruction of the planet.

These are the questions we will be discussing at today's meeting. We encourage the widest attendance from workers across industries, particularly among autoworkers and UC academic workers. Register here to get the link to join.



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