

A chairde, tá an-athas orm ar mbeidh anseo ag labhairt le sibh inniu.

I've opened by addressing you in the Irish language because it is a language which was destroyed by expansionist settler colonialism in Ireland. I see the same thing happening now to the Palestinian people who suffer under the expansionist policies of the Israeli state.

I'm also an activist for Sinn Féin, the party of Irish anticolonialism, and we have long been staunch friends of Palestine and supporters of Israeli citizens who resist the orders of their government to engage in violence against Palestinians.

I'm standing to speak in favour of this motion which was developed in consultation with Jewish members of our council - as it should have been. And let me be very clear from the start: we are denouncing Israeli policy here, not any ethnic or cultural identity.

Comrades, the motion today hinges on the question of the value of our union. On Friday, councillors from Queensland - before they took us on rather a strange analogy about wine cellaring yesterday - reminded us that there is value in a union which cannot be reduced to mere monetary figures: there is power in a union.

On a smaller scale, yes, we develop that value when we agitate against class traitors in upper management, and it sometimes seems as though our ultimate enemies are Vice Chancellors. But what is our power for - what is our union - if not workers collectively resisting the forces of neoliberal capital which threaten to reduce us all to commodities? And are we not opposed to the colonial state which keeps capital on life support? Certainly we oppose the violence of the colonial state here in Australia.

I put it to you that anyone who seeks to shore up the grip of neoliberal capital and its progenitor, the colonial state apparatus, is actively working against this union, brings it into disrepute, and deserves no sympathy or protection from anyone gathered here.

The Israeli government policy of expansion into Palestinian land (which is what is being denounced here: not all Israeli citizens, not Jewish people more broadly - even the existence of the Israeli state is not the issue in this motion) expansionist Israeli government policy is a steadfast protector of colonial capital.

Right now we are asked to consider whether we will stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people or whether we will defend the Israeli state's policies through inaction. Here alone our answer should be clear.

But we're doing something bigger here as well. What we're doing here is stating our defence of our Palestinian comrades, and we're protecting the value of our union.

Comrades, when we police our language to avoid denouncing Israeli expansion too strongly, as the Israeli state would have us do in this case, we do the work of capital because Israeli expansionist policy seeks to shore up the power of neoliberal capital and its progenitor, the colonial state apparatus.

Because of this, defenders of this Israeli state policy are scabs. Plain and simple. And I will not have them weaken and devalue our mighty union movement by encouraging inaction.

Anything but the strongest possible denouncement of expansionist Israeli state policy would actively devalue this union and bring it into disrepute, and defenders of that policy deserve no sympathy or protection from anyone gathered here.

For this reason I commend the motion to the council.

Go raibh maith agaibh agus tiocfaidh ár lá.