

Australian workers and youth speak out: “The people of Palestine are a symbol for workers everywhere”

Our reporters

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Mass opposition to Israel’s criminal bombardment of Gaza is growing in Australia as part of a wave of global opposition among workers and youth.

Protests over the weekend were trice as large as those a week before. At the same time, the Australian political and media establishment, headed by the federal Labor government, continues to give unconditional support to the unfolding genocide in Gaza.

The Socialist Equality Party is holding a public meeting to discuss how to take forward the fight to stop the genocide and end war, above all through the mobilisation of the working class.

The meeting will be on Sunday, November 5 at 4 p.m. (AEDT) in Community Room 1, Bryan Brown Theatre, 80 Rickard Rd, Bankstown, New South Wales (NSW). For those unable to attend in person, the event will also be livestreamed via Zoom. Reserve your seat now!

At protests in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, the WSWS spoke to numbers of demonstrators.

In Sydney, **Adrian**, a lawyer, said that he had been reading the WSWS for a number of years. “I have a strong stance against oppression and US imperialism. What’s happening in Gaza right now is a complete atrocity and a violation of all human rights. We’re witnessing genocide play out before our eyes.”

Adrian said all the capitalist governments are lining up behind this war because “they have their own geopolitical interests in the area. They’re invested in maintaining their presence in the Middle East and Israel is a proxy state for the US. Their capitalist interests align with the genocide of Palestinians. It’s an expansion of US imperialism.

“It’s double standards. They talk about Israelis’ right to defend themselves, when they’re in fact the oppressor in the situation. Yet if you draw parallels to the Ukrainian and Russian situation, they completely change their tune.

“There are capitalist interests fuelling this world conflict. The US has created a front in the Ukraine and Russia that they’ve been building for decades now, and they need to bolster that war effort.

“It’s completely reckless. We’re witnessing proxy wars that are playing out. World leaders have been talking about potentially using nuclear weapons in the Ukraine and Russian fighting that could obviously instigate World War 3. That’s part of the reason why I’m here today as well. The real solution is to have an

independent movement of the working class because we need the working class to unite against this.”

Adinda, a 21-year-old worker also at the Sydney rally, said: “I am here because we’re not just fighting for Palestine, we’re fighting for human rights, humanity, the lives of young children.”

Asked why she thought all the capitalist governments line up behind Israel, she said: “Because they are all scared. They’re scared of community banding together and realising that in order to remove systematic oppression we need to dismantle the whole system itself, and they are scared of that change. But it will happen, you can hear it. You can hear it coming from the underground, from all areas.”

The WSWS spoke to **Djemil** in Melbourne, who explained: “I have relatives in Palestine—they can’t marry from the same city, they can’t travel. When their kids go to school they get stopped at the checkpoints, the settlers spray faeces on their houses every day, many things like that you most probably have never heard of. All this for over 50 years. If it’s not racist or genocidal, what is it? Gaza is not even an open-air prison camp, it’s a concentration camp.”

He added: “Everyone can work to stop war, that’s why we are here. Every person can do it, everybody is marching, all over the world. Peace for everyone, everybody wants to live in peace, regardless of race and religion.”

Mohamed said: “I’m here to support Palestine because of what is going on, the genocide. I’m against killing, the targeting of civilians. There must be a lot of reasons that the US government supports Israel, including ensuring strategic control of the Middle East. The rest of the countries that support this are aligned with the US. This has been going on for 75 years.”

In Brisbane **Maya** and **Alannah**, originally from Gaza, declared their support for freedom for Julian Assange for exposing the war crimes of the US and its allies in the last US-led onslaught on Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Free Julian Assange!” Alannah declared. “Freedom for the truth. Freedom for liberation and freedom for justice! And human rights, true human rights, not propaganda and the false narrative that is being pushed against us and shoved down our throats. Rather, freedom for the people who speak the truth and the whistle-blowers out there who really are standing up for the people in need and the people who deserve to have their voices heard.”

Maya added: “All human lives matter. If a life matters for one nationality, it should matter for all nationalities. All religions, all faiths stand together for humanity. The state of Israel is not the state of Israel, it’s the state of Zionism.”

Alannah commented again, “Julian Assange spoke up against the false perspectives and showed the truth with evidence and hard-core facts, and wasn’t afraid to stand up to the tyranny, the oligarchy, the forced oppression, the occupation that is occurring in multiple countries around the world.”

Maya added that the university building from where her mother had graduated with a nursing degree was now in rubble as the result of an Israeli bombing, along with the bodies of the next generation of female students.

Seta, a teacher, originally from the Pacific, said: “I’ve come today because the human rights of everyday people are being violated in Gaza by Israel. We have got to show restraint and humanity. There must be a line drawn somewhere, where we say to ourselves, as a collective, that we are not going to stand by and watch this happen.

“I think it’s complicated because several actors and groups are complicit in this. It’s about dialogue and talking with each other, instead of putting capitalist interests first. Capitalist interests serve the elite, they do not serve the average person on the ground who’s being denied, at this moment, water, fuel, electricity and so on, and basic humanitarian rights.

“If Joe Biden has got \$100 billion that he can put toward war, surely, he’s got that much money he can put toward aid, toward a peace process, toward a treaty-making process to make an agreement and so on. Why not channel that money into diplomacy? Why into weapons and military support? I don’t understand.”

Charlotte, a young worker, said she had studied the history of the conflict. She said it went back to World War I when the imperialist powers of Britain and France drew the arbitrary borders of all the states in the Middle East.

“They came in and carved it up as suited their needs. They established the state of Israel later as a proxy for the West in the Middle East. Joe Biden even said so himself in a speech in the 1980s when he stated that it was cheaper to send \$3 billion to Israel as an investment rather than for the US to go and set up its own country.

“It’s an open-air prison. The same people who are calling the Palestinians terrorists for fighting for their freedom are the same people who would have called Nelson Mandela a terrorist. Every single anti-colonial struggle has been labelled as terrorist.”

Charlotte said the Albanese government’s unconditional support for the Israeli bombardment was “not what many people voted for.” But it was on a par with what the Labor Party had done for many years.

“That’s classic Labor. All these parties stand for capitalism and for imperialism and they always have. They’ve shown that in their actions for many years. So, there’s no surprises. I’m not disappointed because I didn’t have any expectations to begin with.

“It suits the Western needs to have a military base and an ally smack bang in the middle of all the oil countries of the world. It’s about capitalism and it’s about hegemony.”

Asked about the global struggle of the working class, Charlotte commented, “The struggle for Palestine is ultimately a struggle of people, of workers. The people of Palestine are the symbol for workers, even in Western countries and Arab countries, everywhere.

“What is freedom if you can’t eat? We like to have these words of freedom and international laws ... but they don’t represent most people because most people are struggling. Colonialism hasn’t ended as far as I’m concerned. There is continued oppression.”

In the working-class city of Newcastle in regional New South Wales there was a vigil last Thursday. Adam, who is training to be a civil engineer, told the WWS: “I’m here today to let the Palestinian people know they’re not alone and someday you will be free. People are more aware about this now—in the Middle East, even places like Australia and the US.

“Growing up, I was six years old for my first demonstration. Going out from school, we were calling for Muhammad al-Durrah—a very young Palestinian kid who was killed by the Israelis. I remember myself and my school friends joining adults in a march, it was very inspiring. From that day, you can imagine how the Palestinian cause is instilled in my heart.

“I think most governments follow the US because their interests are aligned with the US and the US interests are aligned with Israel. Israel serves a purpose for them. Like Biden said, if Israel didn’t exist, we would have to create it.

“Israel has been doing this for almost 80 years—killing women and children—it’s an apartheid system. But nothing happens. Even when US citizens are killed in Palestine, nothing happened. When the activist and journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a US citizen, was killed the news said the same lies—it was done by the Palestinians. But then the video analysis showed that it was Israel, they had to admit it!

“The Israeli officials called Palestinian people animals— they said, ‘we’re fighting human animals,’ on TV. That is the same sort of thing Hitler would have said.”



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