

Australian anti-Zionist Jews protest government complicity in Gaza genocide

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Jewish-Australians organised demonstrations yesterday and Wednesday to oppose both Israeli war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank and the federal Labor government's complicity in the accelerating genocide.

On Wednesday, protestors occupied the Geelong office of deputy prime minister and defence minister Richard Marles. More than 30 people occupied the office for around four hours, with several chaining themselves with bicycle locks. Demonstrators with the Wage Peace Disrupt War group sung Jewish antiwar songs and displayed banners that read, "Not In Our Name", "Disarm Israel," "Stop The Genocide," and "ALP [Australian Labor Party] Supports Ethnic Cleansing."

Police dragged out the protestors, arresting five people on trespass charges.

Richard Marles is currently in Washington D.C., where he is meeting with Biden administration officials to discuss the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal that is aimed at preparing for a war of aggression against China. From the US, he issued a sanctimonious statement on the demonstration, declaring that any peaceful protest had to be "done safely and appropriately" and adding that the "abuse and destruction of property or goods is not acceptable." No such "abuse" or "destruction" in fact occurred.

Jews Against Fascism and Loud Jews Collective organised another demonstration yesterday evening in central Melbourne, adjacent to the state parliament. Around 200 people rallied, mostly Jewish-Australians but also Palestinians and others outraged over the genocidal siege of Gaza.

One of the speakers, Keryn, is an Israeli-born anti-Zionist Australian artist. She explained: "What does one say in the middle of an apocalypse? What do we

say after 80 years of abuse—abuse on a national scale and international? This is what we feared the most—a complete loss of restraint, and a deprivation of Palestinian rights in Gaza and elsewhere."

She continued: "Don't believe them when they say that you're an anti-semitic Jew. It is out of respect for my family members who were killed by bloodthirsty racist soldiers—I'm talking about Nazi soldiers—that I feel I could never condone the actions of Israeli military occupation. It is my duty as a person, with these links to the Holocaust, touted as the worst crime against humanity, to never stand by as these things happen again, and again, and again. Not ever in my name, not as any kind of human, Jewish or otherwise. It is not innate for Jews or Israelis to support what's going on—actually, it takes a lot of work, a lot of institutional work, to subjugate anyone into the racist model that Zionism offers us for living in Palestine. Fighting Zionism is necessary to decolonise, not just Palestine, but also the crippling nationalism that has taken over Jewish life there."

Several participants spoke with *World Socialist Web Site* reporters.

Shahar is an Israeli-Australian, and has spent time living in both countries. She said: "I strongly oppose what's going on in Israel and Palestine at the moment—and not just at the moment—I oppose the occupation and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. I think as Jewish and Israeli people, we have the obligation to stand up for the Palestinians. I think our voices in a way matter, in a different way, to the world. Maybe if the world sees that Israelis and Jewish people oppose what's going on there, they might see the situation in a different light."

On Gaza, she explained: "I definitely see this as genocide, as ethnic cleansing. I think it's what Israel

always wanted and this is their chance to do it in a more systematic way.”

Shahar added: “This is my sign saying, ‘Not in my name.’ My grief over the Jewish and Israeli people who have been killed shouldn’t be used as a weapon to kill Palestinians—their lives don’t matter any less than Jewish and Israeli people. It’s not just the Netanyahu government exploiting collective grief, it’s all Israeli governments before that as well. They have used the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, but these cannot be a weapon to use against other people. They say ‘never again,’ but ‘never again,’ should be for all, not just for the Jewish people.”

Ella, a 25-year-old tech sector worker, said: “There are many of us across the world who don’t believe in Zionism, and are heartbroken to see what’s occurring on the other side of the world. I keep seeing this phrase ‘not in my name’ and it really embodies the sentiment of myself and many others in the Australian Jewish community. How dare they weaponise our families’ histories and the Holocaust in this way—I’m disgusted.”

Asked why she thought the Australian government supports Israel, Ella said, “There’s so much economic, political, military gain from an alliance, a partnership with Israel. Australia has made it clear where it stands. Words can’t begin to describe how disappointed I am.”

Marc, a 19-year-old retail worker, said: “I’m here to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine and show my support for a ceasefire, and my opposition to the atrocities and crimes that the Israeli government is perpetrating against the people of Palestine. I’m not Jewish myself, but I thought it was important that I show up, because I could.”

He raised the importance of the global demonstrations: “I think it says a lot about the gap between our politicians and the actual public, and also gives me hope that people can support their values in opposition to their governments.”

Veronica, an Israeli-Australian, told the WSWs: “What’s happening is horrific. I am Israeli myself and I have served in the IDF [Israeli Defence Forces], so I very much have one foot in that world. I am horrified at what happened on October 7, I have a friend whose son was kidnapped, and he’s still kidnapped. So it’s something that lies deep within me—but watching Israel’s response, well there’s no justification for it.

It’s just horrific seeing so many civilians impacted, being killed and removed from their homes. They’re paying a price for something they have not chosen, so it’s an absolute nightmare.”

She explained: “I don’t believe that Zionism and Judaism necessarily go hand in hand, but that’s how the media latches onto it. That’s why I came along today, I felt like it was important to attend and that’s why I wrote what I did on my banner—to really highlight that there are Israelis who are opposed to this, and that there are Israelis and Jews who are not Zionists.

“I think if anyone should be speaking out, it’s the Jewish people, because it’s so recent in our history and when we say ‘never again,’ we should mean never again for everyone, not just us. I don’t believe we have a monopoly on grief, on trauma and suffering, and I feel like if anybody should step in to protect the oppressed or the minority or the weaker, it’s us.”



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