

More workers speak out against Gaza genocide at mass Australian protests

Our reporters

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Socialist Equality Party members campaigned on Sunday at the mass demonstrations against Israel's bombardment of Gaza in Sydney and Melbourne, advancing the need to build an international anti-war movement of the working class directed against the resurgence of imperialist barbarism.

The media blacked out the protests entirely, or downplayed them, despite more than 100,000 people turning out across the country. Unlike the corporate media, which is aligned with the Israeli onslaught, the WSWs spoke to participants, to give voice to why they had taken to the streets.

In Sydney, **Wissam**, who has worked as a lawyer, said: "The Israeli government is a disgrace. They've supposedly killed a handful of Hamas people, and then 10,000 others, and the line is that the civilian deaths are just 'an accident. It's fine, what do you expect, they have a right to defend themselves.' It's BS. They've been targeting Palestinian hospitals and civilian infrastructure for years.

"What does Prime Minister Albanese think of it? He used to be head of the 'friends of Palestine' parliamentary group and he can't even condemn Israel's massive violence. It's shameful."

Wissam noted the attempts by New South Wales Labor Premier Chris Minns, with the support of Albanese, to block and even ban pro-Palestinian protests. "We're here, because they said 'don't.' That's why we're all here."

He spoke about Labor's failed Voice referendum, which was to enshrine an advisory indigenous Voice to parliament in the Constitution.

"Albanese was the guy who was supposedly trying to change the trajectory of indigenous reconciliation in Australia, so he understands the horrors and realities of colonialism. And then in the same weekend as the

referendum, he pledged his support for Israel as it was bombing Gaza." He agreed the Voice would have resolved nothing for ordinary Aboriginal people. Working people "didn't trust the man [i.e., Albanese]. There's a trust deficit, and what will this support for Israel do for that?"

Peter, an IT worker, said: "There's too much brutality, too many innocent lives being lost. There is a genocide being committed, innocent people are dying and this is not a defensive measure. This is purely aimed at annihilation, extermination, expulsion, and control. It is the strongest military power in the region against innocent civilians, on the pretext that they're going for Hamas. Bombing hospitals, refugee camps, ambulances, whatever—it's just ludicrous—you've got to be blind to not see it."

On the role of the federal Labor government, he explained: "It's disgusting, but it is to be expected, simply because we're in lockstep with the US. It's almost like it's unconditional support of anything that the US does. Washington has vested interests. Israel is perfectly positioned in the Middle East, strategically positioned, and is about the only nation in the region sympathetic to the US. And here, no matter who is in power, whether it is Labor, Liberals or whoever, publicly we unconditionally support whatever the US does, sadly."

Uzair, a public service worker originally from Pakistan, said: "In Australia we now have a really big housing crisis, we cannot afford mortgages, interest rates keep going up and up, but rather than the government focusing on issues that are here, again they are spending money on wars. The government has given money to Ukraine, it has spent a lot of money on the military, including money for submarines. Considering how many people need social housing,

with growing homelessness, the government is spending money on these political alignments around the world and promoting policies that have nothing to do with human rights.

“I think the time is coming where a normal person cannot pay for a down payment for a house and then a monthly payment is about \$3,000 to \$4,000. How can someone afford a house in this economy? Who gives the government the right to invest in wars, when the people don’t actually support them at all?”

Uzair spoke of the role of the corporate and state media in Australia. “The mainstream media here don’t report anything. Even now there are tens of thousands of people marching in the city, and they won’t even show anything. Institutions like the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] are also responsible—a few weeks ago, a journalist died in Gaza and the ABC didn’t provide any statement on that. So what sort of society are we living in, where one part of society that supports an end to war are deemed terrorists? It’s the government, they are trying to alienate the fabric of society, dividing society in the longer term. It’s just the same imperialist approach to divide people and keep them under the regime.”

Hamna, is an architecture student at Monash University. She explained that she had not attended some recent Palestine solidarity demonstrations because of study pressures, but: “I felt like I have to go this week, after seeing the incident of the arson of the Palestinian-owned business here in Melbourne. I felt like I had to show my support for the Palestinian people.”

On the role of Israel’s international allies, Hamna said: “I don’t know what to expect any more from America, to be honest. The war in Iraq didn’t make sense—why did that happen?—and it’s just like history is repeating itself. I hope our voice does something, but it is scary to know that so many powerful world leaders will support genocide.”

She added: “I think that the global demonstrations are being unfairly conflated with antisemitism—it’s really not that. There are Christian Palestinians, there are Jewish people opposed to what is happening. So religion or race is not the issue—the issue is about people being displaced and being killed. And we should be able to exercise our right to voice opposition to that.”

Bonnie, an employee with a not-for-profit organisation, said: “I’m here to support the pro-Palestinian and peace movement. I think it is very important to note that this isn’t a hate rally, this isn’t an antisemitic thing. There are many people in the Jewish community also calling for peace, calling for a ceasefire at the very least. The Zionist movement was always built on a flawed basis—it has nothing to do with the progress of the Jewish people. I think it is very important to acknowledge that we cannot all be free until Palestine is free.”

She added: “The global demonstrations against the Israeli government shows that people everywhere can see the injustice. That is plain and clear. I think people everywhere are always on the side of peace rather than violence—we are on the right side of history. It is astounding that this stands in such stark contrast to what our government and many other governments around the world are doing.”



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