

Join Melbourne school strikes against Gaza genocide! Oppose threats and intimidation from politicians

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) supports school students in Australia planning to strike in opposition to Israel's genocide against Gaza.

School children are preparing to walk out of classrooms in Melbourne—Australia's second largest city—next week. This significant and positive action must be supported and expanded by students, young people and workers across the country. Only the mobilisation of a mass movement can end the Zionist state's imperialist-backed bombardment.

The school strike organised by Free Palestine Melbourne on Thursday, November 23 comes amid a mass movement internationally of millions of workers and youth against Israel's onslaught. Thousands of school children in the United States, Canada, Britain and elsewhere have walked out of classrooms in support of Palestinian freedom in recent weeks.

The IYSSE opposes all attempts to intimidate and silence the protests by politicians and the mainstream media who parrot the Australian ruling elite's support for the Zionist state.

Youth are turning to social networks to overcome the corporate and state-owned media blackout of Israel's war crimes and the global response of ordinary people to the bombardment. Young people around the world are horrified by what they are witnessing.

The collapse of health services in Gaza means officials in the occupied territory cannot keep track of the number of dead. The death toll has likely passed 12,000—about half of which are children.

Israel is conducting a war on hospitals in Gaza as part of a systematic campaign of genocide. In what can only be described as war crimes, it is deliberately targeting civilian populations, including children and healthworkers. These attacks are being carried out under the framework of public declarations of genocidal intent.

The interior minister of Israel proposed the expulsion of the Palestinian people from the occupied territory. Israel's

agriculture minister proclaimed "Nakba 2023," in reference to the 1948 Nakba—"catastrophe" in Arabic—which saw the ethnic cleansing of about 700,000 Palestinian Arabs during the Arab-Israeli war and the establishment of the Zionist state. The defence minister in October compared Palestinians to animals and ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, blocking Palestinian access to electricity, food, fuel, medical supplies and water.

During the holocaust, the greatest imperialist crime of the twentieth century, the Nazis carried out genocide against the Jewish population without the world being aware of what was taking place. Today, however, the Israeli state's genocide of the Palestinian people is being witnessed by workers and youth around the world in real time through social media. And they are being moved to act against it.

Israel is not acting alone. It is carrying out the program of world imperialism and would not be able to do so without the assistance of the imperialist powers including the US and Australia.

The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the Middle East is part of broader imperialist carve up of the world which threatens a catastrophic nuclear third world war.

The US and European powers are already engaged in a proxy war against nuclear-armed Russia in Ukraine. This is one prong of preparations for war against China—the main threat to US hegemonic rule.

US President Joe Biden and Washington's allies in the Asia-Pacific are drawing up plans for nuclear war with China. Australia is the southern anchor in these preparations, both because of its military alliance with the US, and to further the interests of the Australian ruling elite in the southern Pacific.

The threat of nuclear catastrophe highlights the need for the broad opposition to the Israeli genocide against Gaza to be developed into a mass international anti-war movement.

Israel's genocide against Gaza and the full support given to it by the imperialist powers is intended to send a message

to the global working class: colonialism is back. And the ruling elite will use any means it deems necessary, including war crimes, to advance its geo-strategic interests.

The future for today's youth under capitalism is one of war, climate catastrophe and mass illness, as seen amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In every country, the ruling elite have shown their complete disregard for the lives of ordinary people in their pursuit of profit.

Australia's involvement in US-led war plans reveals the reason behind the frenetic attempts by the media and political establishment to silence planned student walk outs. This has included calls for students who walk out to be "punished."

The Victorian state Labor government of Premier Jacinta Allan, her education minister Ben Carroll and the Liberal-National Coalition have all joined hands to insist that students go to school on November 23.

Allan stopped short of calling for the school strike to be banned, but her government has said it is up to the discretion of schools whether students who skip class to attend the rally will be punished.

Governments in Australia are actively supporting genocide while denouncing those who dare to speak out against it.

Opposition to Israel's bombardment has been repeatedly branded "antisemitic" in the corporate media and political establishment. The aim is to intimidate and silence the mass anger that has resulted in the largest anti-war demonstrations since the 2003 protests against the illegal US-led invasion of Iraq.

An education department spokesperson warned against "any language likely to incite any form of racism, anti-Semitism or violence" during the school strikes.

The IYSSE opposes the false equivalence of hostility to Israeli occupation and genocide in Gaza with antisemitism. This fallacy relies on equating the garrison state of Israel which is actively engaged in war crimes with all Jewish people.

Protests of young people against the Zionist regime's bombardment must be defended!

The IYSSE calls on the mobilisation of the broadest layers of students to these walkouts. Young people in other cities and regional centres across the country should develop actions against the genocide in Gaza.

Teachers must also take a stand against the calls to punish striking students. Do not submit to the threats and intimidations—defend the democratic rights of young people to protest the assault on Gaza! Join the fight against genocide!

The protests raise the fundamental political question: on what basis must this fight be taken forward?

We insist that protest alone is not enough.

The experience of the 2003 protests against the Iraq war is proof of this. Millions of people took to the streets internationally against the US-led war of aggression which was based on lies. But the political leadership of that movement funnelled that anger back behind safe channels within the capitalist system.

In Australia, that leadership—consisting of the capitalist Greens party and the fake left tendencies, such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance—promoted the illusion that the Australian government could be pressured into not joining Washington's imperialist project in the Middle East. Above all, they advocated for the "lesser evil" of the then Labor opposition to be elevated into government.

Not only did the illegal imperialist wars in Iraq and throughout the Middle East proceed, causing devastation to entire societies, but Labor remains a central plank in US-led war aims in the region.

Today, the federal Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese fully backs the US-sponsored Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the ruling elite here and in every country are overseeing social devastation. Billions are poured into the military while working-class families are increasingly finding it impossible to survive under conditions of the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

Students cannot leave their futures in the hands of the capitalist warmongers!

What is required is a political perspective to end the system that leads to colonialism and imperialist war: the capitalist nation-state system.

The struggle against Israel's occupation must be linked up with the broader struggle of workers internationally against capitalist barbarism and attacks on the living standards of the entire working class. The IYSSE calls for the unity of workers and youth internationally—across ethnic, religious and national lines—in a common struggle against capitalism.

For this, a socialist revolutionary leadership based on the lessons of history must be built. Join the IYSSE today to take up this struggle.



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