

More Australian demonstrations against Gaza genocide: “Protesting is not working, I believe we need a complete revolution”

Our reporters
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Mass rallies were held across Australia on Sunday, as they have been every weekend since Israel began its genocide of Palestinians in Gaza last October. Several thousand turned out to each of the demonstrations in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, while smaller events were held in several regional centres.

The attendance was slightly down, but the week before as many as 100,000 had marched in Melbourne in an “invasion day” rally. Countering the nationalist January 26 “Australia Day,” this year’s protests denounced the Gaza genocide, as well as raising the dispossession and continuing oppression of indigenous Australians.

Sunday’s protests occurred as the Labor government is escalating Australia’s role in Israel’s onslaught and the broader eruption of imperialist militarism. Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has explicitly endorsed the recent US strikes on Syria, Iraq and Yemen, all of which are aimed at provoking a broader region-wide conflagration directed against Iran.

At the same time, Labor joined the US in cutting off funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. That decision was taken on the basis of an Israeli campaign alleging that a handful of the UN agency’s staff had participated in the October 7 outbreak from Gaza.

The timing of that campaign showed that it was actually a response to the finding earlier this month by the International Court of Justice that Israel has a plausible case to answer that it is guilty of genocide in Gaza.

Despite the ever greater exposure of Labor, pseudo-left groups and others involved in organising the protests are stepping up their attempts to direct

opposition back behind the government.

Greens leader Adam Bandt was the featured speaker at the Melbourne protest. The Greens, while bemoaning the genocide, continue to collaborate with the Labor government that is backing it on a daily basis. Bandt’s remarks consisted of a bankrupt appeal to Labor to change course, a line aimed at sowing hopeless illusions among the participants.

In opposition to these positions, Socialist Equality Party campaigners insisted that the Gaza genocide is a crime of capitalism and a warning of what it has in store for the entire world. They drew attention to the US strikes in the Middle East, connecting them to American imperialism’s broader war drive against Russia and China.

All of this, they explained, showed that the only way to fight the genocide was by fighting capitalism and all of its defenders. What was posed was the necessity for an international anti-war movement of the working class, based on a socialist perspective.

WSWS reporters spoke to several participants.

In Sydney, **GF** requested to use a pseudonym, for fear of workplace victimisation. He explained that he feels a connection to the Palestinian struggle, having been born and raised in neighbouring Syria. “I am here as a show of solidarity. It’s critical to do that for oppressed people in Palestine who are suffering so much. I have not been to Palestine yet, but I have always lived near there, in Syria and Lebanon, so I have experienced bilaterally the pain of the Palestinian experience.

“Imperialistic interests in that part of the world have never disappeared since the days of Sykes-Picot and after World War II as well. It has always been an area

of interest for British and American imperialists. From my perspective, Israel just represents their interests in that region. Increasingly there are regional players, like the Saudis and the Emiratis, but they are all within that framework.

“The American stance has always been very aggressive towards Iran since the 1979 revolution. I say that not because I support the Iranian government. I come from a very liberal background and an Islamic administration is counter to that, but the US is pursuing imperialist interests, there are no good intentions here. For the US, “freedom” is a term that has never been used appropriately in the Middle East, the same in places like Vietnam.”

Asked about the Syrian civil war and the role of the US and its allies in fomenting a regime-change operation against the Russian-aligned Syrian regime, GF explained: “When the civil war started, I was among the early people who wanted to get out there and influence change. The Assad government has been in power in Syria for decades and it has always been a dictatorship.

“Seeing what has transpired in the past 12-13 years, with the attempted US regime-change and the rise of ISIS, there are no clear winners in all of this. It is just complete chaos. I have family in Syria so I can definitely understand the impact of the cost to lives, to the economy, to society.”

GF spoke about the reactionary character of all the regimes in the region which are tied to, and subservient to, imperialism and the native capitalist classes. “All of these Middle Eastern governments, including the ones that claim to be part of the ‘resistance,’ have not helped the Palestinians. The Egyptian government closed the border to refugees to prevent people fleeing Gaza. The Syrian government has not assisted, Turkey as well. There are a lot of loud voices from some of these governments about the plight of the Palestinians, but loud voices they remain and nothing more.”

GF pointed to the longer-term origins of the current situation. He said: “A lot of people don’t realise the history. They reference the Nakhba, the Palestinian catastrophe in 1948, but it goes back even earlier than that. You had the first Zionist World Congress in 1897 in Basel, then the British began to support them and you had the imposition of the current national borders by the British after World War I. The aim was to assert

imperialistic interests by sowing divisions.

He expressed agreement with the perspective of uniting workers across national boundaries against all the governments and the capitalist system. “With social media, the possibilities for people to communicate, share opinions and join together are greater than ever,” GF said.



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