

Australian PM Albanese backs Zionist witch hunt against anti-genocide protesters

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Australian Labor Party Prime Minister Anthony Albanese held a much-publicised meeting with rabbis and Zionist leaders last Friday at which he met their demands for his government to do everything it can to create the political conditions to shut down protests on Australian university campuses and more broadly against the genocidal Israeli onslaught on Gaza.

Albanese used the 90-minute meeting at Sydney's Central Synagogue to vow to do more to fight alleged "antisemitism." He thus aligned himself with a vitriolic campaign by Zionist organisations and the right-wing corporate media to slander the campus protests and the widespread public opposition to the genocide as anti-Jewish, even though many Jewish people are actively involved.

Murdoch media outlets and the Liberal-National Coalition are openly demanding a police crackdown similar to the violent attacks on campus protests across the United States. They have voiced fury that a national council meeting of university chancellors last Thursday did not call for such police operations.

An editorial in the Murdoch media's *Australian* last Friday accused the chancellors and vice chancellors of giving "free passes for anti-Semitic enemies of Israel at universities." On the same day, the *Daily Telegraph*, a Murdoch tabloid, posted a venomous editorial comment claiming that anti-genocide protests in Australia and internationally amounted to "undisguised Jew hatred" and equating them to the Nazi holocaust.

"Yet anti-Jewish and pro-Palestinian protests and camps at our universities are being tolerated, even supported, despite their hateful message," it declared. "Why haven't the universities, particularly Melbourne and Sydney, called in the police?"

The Coalition is demanding legislation to financially penalise universities that fail to break up encampments

protesting the Gaza invasion. Without any substantiated evidence, false claims are being propagated that Jewish students feel unsafe because of the encampments, currently at six Australian universities.

This is being accompanied by witch hunting lies of "antisemitism" and support for "terrorism." In reality, it is the Zionist state that is conducting terrorism against the Palestinians, as it has since the establishment of Israel in 1948, and many Jews, both within Israel and internationally, have joined the demonstrations against Netanyahu's fascistic regime.

According to a statement released by the Rabbinical Councils after the meeting, Albanese pledged to help create the political climate to shut down the campus protests. Albanese "listened attentively" to the concerns raised by the "Jewish community" and "assured the meeting" that "he would increase his efforts and those of his government to address the concerns expressed."

Under photos of the meeting, Albanese then posted on the social media platform X/Twitter: "Antisemitism has no place in Australia... Students must feel safe at university classes. Families must feel safe in their own neighbourhoods."

The rabbinical statement indicated that Albanese denounced the ongoing anti-genocide demonstrations more broadly, not just on the campuses. He "expressed his deep regret for the breakdown in civil discourse" and for the "social strife" in Australia they allegedly produced.

The Central Synagogue's Rabbi Levi Wolff told the *Australian*: "He's also obviously very disappointed in how things are unfolding. He's being hounded himself wherever he goes by people who are absolutely crazy, and they're making his life miserable."

Albanese's complaint speaks volumes about Labor's

hostility to the demonstrations across Australia, in which thousands of people have joined, week after week, for nearly seven months. It is also a threat to the basic democratic right to protest, not just against the genocide but also the broader US-led turn to war in the Middle East and against Russia and China.

Albanese's pledge to the Zionist leaders is already being put into effect. On Sunday, Education Minister Jason Clare said he had told university vice-chancellors there is "nothing more important than the safety of students" who "shouldn't be afraid to go to university."

Clare told reporters he had asked them to "make sure that they implement their codes of conduct." That could provide the pretext for removing encampments on the grounds of obstructing activities or causing offense.

Asked about the widely-used protest chant of "from the river to the sea" and references to "intifada"—which call for the freedom for Palestinians from the decades of Zionist oppression—Clare told reporters: "Any words that stoke fear are intolerable. Any words that stoke fear in our community or make people not want to go to university are intolerable here."

At the same time, Clare declined to back the Coalition's demands for an immediate police crackdown, instead urging political, community and religious leaders to "work together to bring the country together, not let it get torn apart."

That evidently reflects concerns in the government and among university authorities that violent police attacks on anti-genocide protests at this point could trigger intense and potentially explosive opposition, including among students, academics and in the working class.

At the rabbinical meeting, Albanese reinforced his government's Zionist commitment, even as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to complete the Gaza mass killings and devastation in the southern enclave of Rafah—where up to 1.5 million people are trapped in appalling conditions—regardless of any talks about a temporary ceasefire.

"The Prime Minister also reiterated his support for the Jewish people's historic connection to the land of Israel and Israel's right to exist in peace and security, and its right to defend itself," the rabbinical statement said.

Albanese's stand further exposes the illusions,

promoted by many protest leaders, that protests can force the Labor government to change its course. Albanese followed US President Joe Biden, who last week declared that the anti-genocide protests would not change his government's policies.

Fully aware of the intense opposition in the working class to Israel's barbaric onslaught on Gaza, Albanese has clearly aligned his government with an increasingly rabid campaign to shut down anti-genocide protests as soon as possible.

Definite political conclusions must be drawn from this commitment. The Labor government, together with all the imperialist powers, with the US in the lead, endorses the Gaza genocide because it is a key step to a region-wide war targeting Iran. This is part of Labor's intensifying partnership with US militarism in the Indo-Pacific and globally.

American imperialism is seeking unchallenged dominance over the energy-rich Middle East, as part of its plunge into what would be a catastrophic world war against Russia and China to seize their resources and redivide the globe in its corporate profit-driven interests.

The struggle against the genocide and lurch toward a third world war cannot be answered by students alone. It requires a turn to the working class—to the factories, warehouses and docks—as part of the necessary fight to develop a unified struggle of the international working class against all the governments responsible, including Albanese's, and the entire capitalist order itself.



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