

In the face of fascist goons summoned by the Anti-Defamation League, Holocaust survivor denounces Gaza genocide

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Despite facing targeted threats from fascist militia groups and vicious slanders from the Anti-Defamation League, on Sunday, Holocaust survivor Rene Lichtman and other opponents of the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza held a successful protest outside the Zekelman Holocaust Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

In choosing to host the protest outside the museum, Lichtman, 86, previously told the WSWs:

Museums like this are part of the right-wing, pro-Zionist structure. They indoctrinate the public that shows up, especially the students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who come through each day, busloads of students. They tell the story of the Holocaust and the Jewish victims and at the end they say the war was over and the survivors created this wonderful state of Israel, with beautiful trees and so on. And that's the ending! The lesson is tolerance, and we should love each other and so on. But they never mention Palestinians or the Nakba.

We are demanding that the museum change the ending, that they include the Nakba. And, that they demand a ceasefire in Gaza, now.

At the rally Sunday, Lichtman planned to deliver a letter from the Coalition Against Genocide to the head of the museum. In the letter, addressed to Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, the coalition wrote that they are “a group comprised of members of the Jewish community, Holocaust survivors and their descendants, patrons of the Zekelman Holocaust Museum, and many others.”

The group implored the museum to make a statement in support of a permanent and immediate ceasefire in Gaza and to update the museum's curriculum and “its narratives and displays about the Nakba to incorporate history that is well documented by highly esteemed Jewish sources, such as Ilan Pappé, Norman Finkelstein, and others...”

Lichtman was unable to deliver the letter, however, due to the presence of roughly 200 Zionist thugs who were summoned to counter-protest the rally by large Zionist accounts on social media, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

After the peaceful protest was announced, the ADL, perhaps the most well-known Zionist quasi-state intelligence agency operating in

the US and several right-wing accounts on X/Twitter falsely denounced the rally and Lichtman as “antisemitic.”

On July 8, the Michigan chapter of ADL issued a statement on X/Twitter with a photograph featuring Lichtman and other protesters. The ADL claimed that holding the protest outside the museum—where Lichtman worked for over a decade until he was drummed out for his opposition to genocide—was “antisemitism” full stop.

“We are working with the Zekelman Holocaust Museum and local authorities to address safety and community concerns,” ADL Michigan added threateningly.

On July 9, the main ADL account on X/Twitter retweeted the July 8 post from ADL Michigan to its over 357,000 followers. The ADL claimed that holding an anti-genocide protest in front of the museum, “minimizes the horrors of the Shoah and dishonors the memory of the victims.”

Responding to this obscene slander, Joseph Kishore, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president wrote on July 9, “The ADL is attacking protests led by Holocaust survivor Rene Lichtman against the genocide in Gaza. It is entirely appropriate to protest the genocide in front of a Holocaust museum. NEVER AGAIN!”

Encouraged by the ADL, on Sunday, roughly 200 counter-protesters showed up to the museum to denounce Lichtman and all human beings of conscience. Protected by police, they waved flags representing the Israeli Air Force, the Israel Defense Forces, the Zionist state and its imperialist paymaster, the United States.

As peaceful protesters read statements calling for a ceasefire and the unity of all people, the Zionists blared obnoxious music, sang nationalist songs, and denounced Lichtman—who had many family members murdered by Nazis—as a “kapo” and “terrorist sympathizer” along with a litany of expletives.

At one point, several anti-genocide protesters began chanting “Bring them home, ceasefire now!” The Zionists responded by chanting, “No ceasefire.”

Over a dozen police were on the scene, nearly all of them focused on Lichtman and the roughly 40 anti-genocide protesters. As Lichtman and others delivered speeches denouncing the genocide, and the role of the Israeli lobby in propagating lies, police allowed the Zionists to slowly drive by the protest multiple times, impeding traffic in the process.

In his remarks, Lichtman explained that this “particular location” was chosen because,

An institution like this pretends that they’re very objective and scholarly and academic. ... And we’re saying no, no, no, no. What you’re doing, you’re part of that system. You’re part of the whole Israel lobby that indoctrinates people day after day that come here, busloads of students that come here day after day from as far as two or three hours by bus. And I know that because I’ve been working at this Holocaust Museum for 10-15 years and I’m one of the speakers.

“So they impart a lot of information which is incorrect,” Lichtman noted, calling for the museum to “talk about the Nakba in a very serious manner.”

Speaking on IDF’s onslaught in Gaza since October 7, Lichtman said,

What I’ve witnessed in the last eight months has been shocking to me. It’s really, really hard to keep the news on and especially to watch these photographs of these amputated kids. You know, we haven’t seen in the world so much amputation as we’re going to be seeing ... And so in my opinion, what’s going on now is actually equal or worse than what happened during the Second World War. It’s a genocide, it’s ethnic cleansing. ... the Nakba continues.

After his remarks, Lichtman turned the microphone over to Larry Porter, assistant national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), who delivered remarks on behalf of Joseph Kishore, SEP candidate for US president.

Turning to Lichtman, Porter said,

We spoke of the Nakba. I know Jewish friends whose parents lost their homes in Berlin along similar lines. They never got them back. These are crimes. These are crimes against the masses of people who were being oppressed. Jews were being oppressed. And it’s so important that you’re taking this stand today and saying “Not in our name, not again.”

Porter thanked Lichtman, “for your tireless effort to oppose and expose the genocide in Gaza and for your courage in the face of slanders and lies.”

Turning to the situation in Gaza, Porter observed that, “One hundred eighty-six thousand people. That is the estimated death toll of the genocide in Gaza, according to an analysis in the medical journal *The Lancet*.”

Porter noted that this figure represented “8 percent of Gaza’s pre-war population ... 8 percent of the American population would equate to 26 million people.”

Porter said that “millions of people,” including “many Jewish people have taken to the streets outraged at the criminal actions of the Netanyahu government. ... And how do the defenders of Israel respond? The charge of ‘antisemitism.’”

Porter denounced the fact that this “foul slander” is used by defenders of Israel to justify any and all war crimes. He noted that 10 days from Sunday, on July 24,

Netanyahu will be in Washington to give his progress report on the genocide in Gaza to the US Congress. The assembled senators, representatives, Democrats and Republicans will rise to their feet and applaud. There is not a single bomb that could be dropped on Gaza, not a single building destroyed or a child murdered without the financial, political, and military support of American imperialism and both its parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. They back the genocide because they see it as part of a global war waged in the interest of the capitalist ruling class.

Porter said, “This is a war that extends from the Middle East to the conflict in Russia over Ukraine, to the developing conflict with China and in the Indo-Pacific.” He ended his remarks by calling on those in attendance to go to Washington D.C. on July 24 for a rally and meeting that will be held by the Socialist Equality Party.

“We insist that it is not a matter of appealing to the war criminals to change their course, nor is it a matter of hoping that a present figure within the state and its two parties will come forward,” he said.

“It is the Democratic and Republican parties, the two parties of the capitalist ruling elite. We insist that there is a social force that can stop the war and the genocide, and that is the working class. The fact is that the war abroad is also a war at home.”

Porter ended his comments noting that “Rene has endorsed that demonstration in Washington, D.C. Take a stand.”



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