

Australian workers and youth oppose US-Israeli attacks on Iran and ongoing genocide

Our reporters
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On Sunday, more than 1,000 workers and youth protested in Melbourne against Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and the US launch of a criminal war of aggression against Iran. Following a rally at the State Library, the protesters marched more than 4 kilometres through Australia's second-largest city to the US Consulate.

Many of the demonstrators have regularly attended pro-Palestine rallies over the past 20 months, while others were taking part for the first time, motivated by the opposition to the bombing of Iran by Israel and the US and the growing threat of world war.

As at previous demonstrations, speakers denounced Israel, the US and the complicit Labor government. They criticised the fraudulent premise that the unprovoked attack on Iran was a necessary "pre-emptive strike" to stop the imminent development of nuclear weapons, drawing a parallel with the "weapons of mass destruction" lie used by the Bush administration in 2003 to justify the invasion of Iraq.

But, having identified the persistent lies and hypocrisy of the imperialist powers over decades, the rally organisers promoted the illusion that war and genocide can be stopped through appeals to the same governments that are perpetrating them. This was starkly illustrated by the culmination of the protest march outside the US consulate.

Reporters for the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with workers and young people at the rally and raised the necessity of building a socialist anti-war movement of the working class, directed against the eruption of imperialist militarism and its source, the capitalist system itself.

Luke, a performer, said he came to the rally because "something has to be done. I've been hearing in the

news about the dropping of bombs in Iran and the continuation of genocide."

The US-Israeli war against Iran, he said, "is a grab for power, a way to control scores of people in the Middle East and to keep the genocide going.

"Trump is trying to control the power, control the oil. If you can have people under control through fear, you control the world's economy. We've seen the eroding of democracy before our eyes and all of these things are connected to it.

"It reminds me of the [2003] war in Iraq that was incited by the US and all the lies that were told to say they need to do this. Lots of people don't believe [the lies] and more people need to speak up, join rallies, make their voices heard. It's power in numbers."

Luke agreed that protest alone was not sufficient, as has been demonstrated with the continued support of imperialist governments worldwide for Israel's genocidal onslaught in Gaza, despite almost two years of mass demonstrations, involving millions of people. He said: "There's no consequence. It's just voices of the masses. They can choose to ignore it and keep going."

He said a general strike "needs to happen. Halting production and halting labour means you mess with the money."

In reference to dockworkers in Morocco, France, Italy, Greece and elsewhere, who had refused to load military cargo bound for Israel, Luke said, "That shows how small groups of people, who normally don't have any power, can actually effect change."

David, a musician, said of the war with Iran, "It's all very predictable. The American [government] and their friends aim to control energy resources, and they love war. Obviously the cause of these wars is the capitalist system."

David commented on the changed role of the unions in propping up the Labor government's participation in war: "The unions used to fight for human rights, they used to fight against war, now they just acquiesce and keep the supply chain going. It's one of the reasons hardly anyone joins the unions anymore, they don't represent the people. They're entrenched [in] power themselves. A lot of the union leaders end up working for mining companies and whatever."

On the Labor Party, currently in government and supporting both the Gaza genocide and the attack on Iran, he said, "There's all these people in the Labor Party saying they're against war, and yet they stay in the Labor Party. They all say this and that, but the government doesn't change!" When asked if the working class should build new organisations for itself, David responded, "Absolutely. The people have to rise up."

An **Iranian programmer** working in Australia, said, "I think Iran wasn't going to reach a nuclear bomb anytime soon, even if they pursued it."

"How can [Israel] be the aggressor and still [claim they] want to defend themselves? I think it's just another excuse."

He said, "I think it's very hard for [the US] to be able to topple the regime governing Iran. Iran is not like Syria or Lebanon, it's just much bigger with more population... But that's certainly the possibility: they want the resources."

He said the war would mean "Iran will be much weaker than it is. So much more poverty than we already have."

Stan, a film and TV worker, said: "I'm here because of the human situation in Gaza. It's an extermination. This Israeli regime wants Gaza, wants the West Bank, wants the Palestinians out of these territories. This is a human tragedy, it goes beyond religions and nations and things."

Phillip, a retired teacher, said this was the first rally against the genocide in Gaza he had attended. It was the attack on Iran that spurred him to come. He said, "I'm appalled at the way the Australian government is backing Israel in what is clearly a genocide and I want to not be complicit in our governments' war-like effort to destroy humanity."

"Israel is trying to take over the whole of the Middle East and I think they are doing that on behalf of the

United States."

Phillip was concerned by the direct military involvement of the US, and the prospect of a broader war: "It could be curtains for everybody with World War Three, nuclear war, and I'm trying to stop that. I'm terrified, horrified, especially so because I have children and grandchildren."

Al, a retail worker, said, "I just think it's terrible, and I think it's an expression of colonial-imperial interests in the Middle East that have been going on for a long time that breaches the rights of the civilians who live there."

Asked about the support by the imperialist governments of the US, Europe and Australia for war against Iran, Al said, "I think it's awful, it's entirely self-interested. It's motivated in having someone representing their political interests in the Middle East. They feel they need to destabilise other countries for oil. They're interested in keeping their status as a superpower and not being challenged, and keeping certain resources cheap for themselves."



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