

Victorian Students Leave School in Support of Palestine

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Hundreds of students skipped class last Thursday in protest of the ongoing war in Gaza.

The protest, organised by RMIT University students, saw a big turnout, with students from different universities and high schools attending.

The rally took place around lunchtime outside the State Library of Victoria, which students marked with chants, banners, and speeches in solidarity of Palestine.

Despite disrupting normal school routines, the students marched along Swanston Street. They then rallied in Melbourne Central.

Bethany Prior, an RMIT University student who attended the rally, said, "It's more powerful to protest during school hours; it's our way of expressing disapproval of the government by walking out of class."

While the decision to leave class raised eyebrows from teachers, many students remained unfazed.

"I think the protests have taught me a lot, and I've learned more about the world than if I were in class," Bethany said.

The protest came as a challenge for school authorities, who managed the mass absence and adjusted their schedules accordingly.

Despite the frustration from school authorities, some teachers also attended the event in support of Palestine and their students.

A teacher and speaker at the event said, "as a teacher, I think there is no where you could be learning more than here on the streets."

"On the streets you learn who your friends are, who your comrades are. You also learn who your enemies are," he said.

The teacher, speaking to students across Victoria, said they “must stand together whatever the cause” and believes the government to be using students “as their own playthings” or “pawns” in the schooling environment.”

The organisation, RMIT Students for Palestine, which is run on Instagram, urged students to attend the event.

They said, “we will not sit in class while bombs are dropping. We will not sit in class while Gazans starve.”

“We will get out in the streets and fight until Palestine is free,” they said.

When asked if they are concerned about student’s education, the organisers said, “they don’t want to sit in class while their universities have partnerships with weapons manufactures, destroying the lives of people in Palestine.”

While the State Library was filled with protesters, some locals were displeased with the interruption from the students.

Musician, Yahweh Djehuty, who was busking in the area before the protest began was unhappy with the interruption.

“How can we help another country if we can’t even help ourselves,” he said.

He said students should be focusing on the “corruption of the education system” opposed to the conflict in Gaza.

“Let’s focus on the problems in our country and then worry about international conflict,” he said.

The rally lasted until the early evening, becoming one of the 342 protests since the war between Israel and Palestine started in October last year.

The RMIT student organisers announced another school walk-out taking place next Wednesday on the University campus.

SOURCES:

RMIT Student/ protester: Bethany Prior, e: S4027386@student.rmit.edu.au

Organizers: Students for Palestine, ig: @rmit_students_for_palestine

Musician: Yahweh Djehuty, ig: @thetoryofjoshua