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# Walkout shuts down Baltimore restaurant over Palestine pin firing

written by Jace Carter and Andrew Matatag  
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Workers assembled in front of Bunny's. SLL photo

Over the weekend of Aug. 16, the owner of Bunny's Buckets & Bubbles, a Baltimore restaurant in the downtown neighborhood of Fells Point, fired an employee for wearing a Palestine pin.

Supposedly, a customer left a review about the employee, stating "that they felt

uncomfortable and unsafe” and that it “disrupted their dining experience.” The owner doubled down on the complaint when notifying the employee of their termination, saying that the Palestine flag was “anti-gay.”

This stems from decades-old Zionist propaganda that presents “Israel” as a bastion of democracy and progressivism in West Asia, sometimes referred to as “pinkwashing.”

Saja, a Palestinian activist, learned about the wrongful termination through a work group chat where the fired worker had requested extra hours. She immediately called a protest.

“They had relayed to me the situation — that the owner was drinking on the job when he had initially fired the first person, that the dress policy stated that they were not allowed to wear any vulgar or offensive imagery, and that the person who was fired was given an ultimatum: either take off the pin or leave the establishment and not to come back,” said Saja.

On Aug. 17, a crowd consisting mostly of Bunny’s workers gathered in front of the restaurant. Members of the People’s Power Assembly joined to support.

In between chants like “Don’t support Bunny’s, the owner supports genocide,” and “From Baltimore to Palestine, solidarity is not a crime,” as well as mini marches to Fells Point’s main street, workers spoke out in front of the restaurant about working at Bunny’s.

“Matt Akman is the owner of Bunny’s, but that’s all he does,” said one worker. “He doesn’t cook, he doesn’t serve. He comes to flex on his friends that he owns a restaurant. Sometimes he comes just to eat and drink for free — and then he leaves sh\*tty tips!”

“The owner has claimed that we make more than he does,” said another worker.

“Meanwhile, he’s got the only in-ground pool in Fells Point.”

Two “private security” guards stood guard at the entrance to Bunny’s for the duration of the protest and at one point threatened to, in their own words, “put the lead organizer in handcuffs” for “standing too close” to Akman’s private property that they were shamelessly covering.

“They asked me to move across the street and when I respectfully declined, they got more hostile,” said Saja. “They then continued to call me the R word and threatened to put me in jail.” This baseless attempt quickly proved unsuccessful, and the demo carried on.

A lone heckler was drowned out by the overwhelming support of passersby, as well as the loud, passionate chanting from the workers. At the end of the demo, one passerby even offered to lend her services as an employment lawyer. Another identified himself as a former member of Plumbers Local 1 in New York City. He said, “I’m with you guys, and I’m with Palestine.”

For the duration of the protest, several Bunny’s workers walked off the job and joined. When the crowd learned that Bunny’s would be shutting down early for the evening, they cheered on this small but well-deserved victory against the racist, Zionist owner.

The following day, local news reported that Bunny’s fired six more workers for their participation in the protest.

“This issue is bigger than whether or not people are allowed to wear Palestine pins,” said Saja. “Palestinians deserve a right to exist and if the existence of another human being makes you feel unsafe then you should think about how messed up that sounds. The fired workers were brave enough to speak up about the challenges they were facing. Children are starving and dying. A whole population is going through a

genocide.”

Saja [organized a GoFundMe](#) for the fired workers.

