

Protests in US against Israeli atrocities

A correspondent
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Thousands of opponents of Israel's current military campaign against the Palestinians rallied on April 13 in several US cities. In New York City a crowd estimated at several thousand assembled in Manhattan's Times Square to oppose the Sharon government's assault on the West Bank. The protesters waved Palestinian flags, chanted slogans and held signs charging the Israeli prime minister with murder.

In San Francisco hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators rallied in front of the Israeli consulate. Demonstrations were also held in Chicago and two cities in Michigan.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan more than 1,200 people marched from the federal building to City Hall to protest the continuing attack on the Palestinians. The demonstration, consisting largely of Muslims and Arab-Americans, also included Jewish-Americans opposed to the atrocities, as well as students, professors and local residents. It was loud and spirited, expressing a rising tide of outrage.

Taurus Colvin, a leader of the march, told the WSWs that the situation in Palestine and the occupied territories had gotten out of hand. "People's lives have been taken, homes have been demolished. People's blood is being spilled. Kids, six-year-old girls are being murdered, shot in the head."

"Jenin," he said, "is just one of a long series of attacks on the Palestinian people. It is the worst of the attacks so far. We want to show our solidarity with the rest of the world."

Mahya, a student at the University of Michigan, also spoke to the WSWs. "I am an Israeli Jew," she said, "and I am out here to support my cousins." Mahya also made a plea to Jewish Americans: "We must oppose this and find out what is really happening. Most of the hundreds of dead are innocent. If we say it is not right to kill innocent civilians and then we go in and kill a whole bunch of innocent civilians, it is hypocritical.

We have to open our eyes, speak out against this and support our cousins."

One student spoke of her family's plight, caused by the Israeli occupation. Alma, a sixth-year student at the University of Michigan, has family in Ramallah and lives with her husband and mother-in-law. "During the occupation, my aunt's mother-in-law was confined to her home without being able to leave," Alma said. "She had no access to a phone or electricity and it was difficult to get her food. She is 90 years old and was unable to leave her home for 10 days."

Khalid, an Arab-American, said, "The situation for the Palestinians in Jenin and the camps is devastating. The situation there has reached the boiling point."

"The military position of Sharon is creating a situation where there will be more of a crisis in the region," Khalid stated. "What he is doing is creating more violence in the region. Israel needs to establish good relations with its neighboring countries rather than rely on the US to give it more military aid."

About 50 students, professors and others protested at Georgetown University in Washington DC. They waved signs, chanted, "Free, free Palestine!" and denounced US government support for Israeli aggression. Protesters posing as Israeli soldiers "attacked" students representing Palestinians. Some 40 students joined the Muslim Spiritual Support Network at the University of Cincinnati to protest lethal force being used by Israelis against Palestinians.

On April 11, 20 people, including Harvard University professor Cornel West and Rabbi Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine, were arrested outside the State Department in Washington after they blocked the road in protest over US support for the policies of Sharon. West and Lerner had earlier participated in a larger rally across the street.

In San Francisco, police made arrests on April 10 outside the Israeli consulate when protesters locked

arms and blocked the street, denouncing the Israeli military occupation of West Bank cities and towns. The protest was sponsored by the Jewish Voice for Peace, a group opposed to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.



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