

Protest in Dearborn, Michigan denounces Israeli attack on Gaza

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On Tuesday, a protest against the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip attracted approximately 5,000 people to Dearborn, Michigan, near Detroit. Another protest in New York City attracted several hundred.

The size of the Dearborn demonstration far exceeded organizers' expectations. Even before its scheduled start time, the protest stretched eight city blocks, completely filling the sidewalk.

The demonstration expressed a spontaneous outpouring of anger against the Israeli onslaught. Organizers faced difficulties in containing the crowd, which despite cold temperatures did not disperse after the event's scheduled end. Protesters carried signs opposing the military incursion and waved Palestinian flags, while passing motorists maintained a chorus of honking during the hour-long event.

The crowd included many young workers, as well as college and high school students. In addition there were workers of all ages and families with small children.

Many of those in attendance were US citizens of Middle Eastern background. The Detroit area has the largest and most concentrated Arab American population in the country, with as many as 350,000 residents in Southeast Michigan of Arab ancestry.

The protest was called by the Congress of Arab American Organizations, a coalition of secular and

religious Arab American organizations in Southeast Michigan.

A team of *World Socialist Web Site* reporters covered the demonstration, speaking to workers and youth in attendance, and distributing statements from the WSWS (See "The Gaza crisis and the perspective of permanent revolution," and "Washington bears guilt for Gaza war crimes").

Protesters expressed outrage toward Israel's criminal attack on the residents of Gaza. They argued that Israel had provoked the war of aggression through its blockade of the impoverished area.

Massemoude, a college student, expressed disgust with the Egyptian regime. "They are puppets of Israel and the US. Israel told Mubarak to shut the gates to Gaza, and he did as he was told. This invasion has all been planned for months."

MK, a young worker of Palestinian ancestry who has relatives in the West Bank, told the WSWS that people are dying every day. "It is a holocaust," he said.

"Big A," a Hip-Hop artist who was born in South Lebanon, said that he was not protesting just because the attack was against Arabs. "My main point is that the invasion is wrong, it's inhumane. Everyone should fight against it whether it happened to Arabs or anywhere else in the world."

Abe, a student at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, said he did not agree with the Islamist perspective of Hamas. "Israel only wants to destroy Hamas, along with the Palestinians, because they stand in their way," he said. Abe called the Arab states "puppet regimes." He expressed interest in Trotsky's

theory of permanent revolution, which explains that even the most basic democratic demands of the masses cannot be carried forward by bourgeois or nationalist movements.

When asked if he thought that President-elect Barack Obama would come to the aid of the Palestinians once in office, Abe was emphatic in his response. "No, absolutely not," he said. "Obama is controlled by the same factions that controlled Bush." A group of high school students echoed these sentiments. "American foreign policy never changes," one said.

However, many of those the WSWS spoke with expressed hope that Obama would address the plight of the Palestinians. These hopes will be shattered. In fact, Obama has been indefatigable in his advocacy of Israel's predatory aims in the Middle East. His silence in the face of the current bombardment implies more than assent. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that Obama was informed well in advance that the current invasion would take place, and that his top military and diplomatic advisers likely participated in planning it.



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