

”People all over the world, they have the right to live in dignity”

Dearborn, Michigan: Hundreds attend rally in defense of Palestinians and residents of Gaza

Shannon Jones
11 October 2023

On Tuesday evening, hundreds of supporters of the Palestinian people filled to overflowing the Community Arts Auditorium in the largely Arab-American Detroit suburb of Dearborn to show their opposition to the Israeli onslaught against Gaza, which has been given the full backing of the US government and imperialist governments around the world.

The event took place following the televised speech by President Joe Biden earlier on Tuesday giving 100 percent backing to the murderous Israeli attacks on Gaza. In the first few days of the Israeli war on the tiny enclave, among the most densely populated areas in the world and described by United Nations officials as an “open air prison,” the fascistic regime of Benjamin Netanyahu has cut off supplies of food, water and electricity. Israeli missiles have leveled apartment buildings as well as schools, mosques and hospitals, killing over a thousand people and wounding at least 5,000 more, mostly women and children.

Speakers and attendees opposed Biden’s characterization of the Palestinian incursion into Israel on Saturday and Palestinian resistance in general as “pure evil,” as well as the administration’s blank check for Israel’s genocidal response. Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and other Democratic officials also came under strong criticism for announcing full support for Israel’s reprisals against Gaza.

At a “Rally for Israel” in the Detroit suburb of Southfield on Monday night, Whitmer, along with other Michigan Democrats, including state Attorney General Dana Nessel, Detroit Congresswoman Haley Stevens and US Senator Gary Peters, gave full support to Israel’s “right to defend itself.” They said nothing about the long

history of Israeli massacres of Palestinians by means of which the Zionist state was established on land stolen from the native inhabitants, nor did they mention Israel’s occupation of additional Palestinian territories by means of war, or its suppression of popular resistance through police-state violence. They made no mention of the deliberate bombing of Gazan civilians currently underway.

The opening speaker at the Dearborn rally, Amer Zahr, president of New Generation for Palestine, a local community group that helped sponsor the event, denounced “racism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing” by Israel.

“When Joe Biden says Israel has a right to defend itself,” he said, “he means Israel has a right to murder Palestinian children. Today it has been reported Biden did not urge Prime Minister Netanyahu to exercise restraint... he gave a green light for genocide.”

Other speakers detailed the horrific repression that is a fact of daily life for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Attending the event were Palestinians and others with family roots in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and other Middle Eastern countries. A show of hands revealed there were also a significant number of Jewish supporters of the Palestinian cause in attendance.

A few lower-level Democratic Party officials in attendance distanced themselves from the statements of the Biden administration, while failing to acknowledge that support for the Israeli onslaught was nearly unanimous among Democratic officeholders and officials, the corporate media, and the US political establishment as a whole.

A *World Socialist Web Site* campaign team distributed

hundreds of copies of the statement issued by the International Committee of the Fourth International titled, "Down with Netanyahu's government! Stop the imperialist-backed Zionist onslaught against Gaza!"

Many workers and young people stopped to express their agreement with the call to mobilize working people in Palestine, Israel and all over the world in defense of the people of Gaza. The WSWS campaign team explained that Palestinians should look not to the capitalist governments of the world, including the Arab bourgeois regimes, but to the international working class for support.

A Lebanese-American woman attending the rally told the WSWS she supported the struggle of the Gazans. "As for Joe Biden and all the congressmen and women, for leaders all over the world, you have to stand up for what is right or you don't know the meaning of dignity, of humanity.

"Palestinian people, Lebanese people, Gazans, Syrian people, Iraqi people, people all over the world, they have the right to live in dignity and live free and live safely."

In response to Netanyahu's denunciation of Palestinians as "animals," she said, "They are the terrorists. They should be out of their positions. They are ruining the world. Go find cures for sickness, don't kill people. Don't make enemies between this country and other countries. Don't ruin countries that were built by the hard work of the employees.

"Don't spend billions to kill people. Spend money to find jobs for the people, build houses for the homeless."

A young Lebanese-American woman told of her family's experiences after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. "I am not voting for Biden. I am proud to support Palestine," she said.

"I was little. They took my mom in front of our eyes. They accused her of things she didn't do. This is not right. Israel was taking our lands in Lebanon.

"I saw the other day they (Israelis) searched a girl who was going to school. After she turned around they shot her in the back. Do you think that is right? They were searching her for no reason. She said she was going to school."

Cameron, a restaurant worker, said he was drawn to the rally because he has always been interested in the Palestinian issue. He said, "I don't understand how the US government takes the policy that it does on Israel and Palestine. I didn't expect what happened in Gaza. I'm horrified."

He connected the eruption of violence on the part of the

government of Israel with other recent explosions of imperialist militarism and violence. 'Israel supplies the Azerbaijani military with most of their weapons,' he said. "The only reason Azerbaijan was able to blockade Nagorno-Karabakh was with those weapons. Even with Israel receiving 40 percent of its oil from Azerbaijan, it doesn't justify ethnic cleansing. It's not surprising that such a state, such an ally of Azerbaijan, would engage in ethnic cleansing as well.

"And look at General Dynamics. It's stock went up a dramatic percentage in the last few days. That can be directly tied to the supply of arms to Israel."

He also connected the impact of nationalism with these atrocities. "I would definitely argue that nationalism is used more to subjugate people instead of uniting them," he said. "Seldom do I see a country where nationalism is used in the context of freeing peoples."

Another young worker, Alia, said, "The Palestinian movement runs very deep in my family. I have family members who were murdered in their homes after they refused to leave when Israel told them to evacuate.

"Two years ago, during the protests for Palestine, my mom detailed what it was like growing up during the occupation. She was really young, my Dad was much older.

"I learned that when Israel occupied Beirut, he was part of the freedom fighters who were trying to liberate the city. My mother told of hearing missiles pass overhead.

"After years of tensions caused by Israel, he got so tired of it all he told her, 'We are not going to leave, we are not going to evacuate. If we are going to die, we are going to die here.'

"Watching home family videos, I learned about my grandmother's side of the family as well, who experienced having to evacuate their village."



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact