

Thousands of students at over 100 US and Canadian universities protest against Gaza genocide

Our reporters, Jacob Crosse
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In the face of threats from university administration officials, fascists, Zionists and future employers, thousands of students at over 100 universities across the United States and Canada protested Wednesday against the ongoing US-backed Israeli genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. Students at the protests demanded their universities divest from any weapons manufacturers, such as Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and Boeing providing military arms to Israel.

The protests are part of an international movement of workers and students that opposes the imperialist-backed slaughter. Some 7,000 Palestinians have been killed in over two weeks of relentless terror bombing by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), backed by the two US aircraft carrier strike groups. Over 2,300 children have been killed since October 7, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, with another 870 children feared trapped under the rubble from Israeli bombardment.

The Biden administration's unwavering political and military support for the mass slaughter has provoked mass outrage among workers and youth around the world. Nearly daily protests calling for an end to the bombing of Gaza and for a ceasefire have been held in many countries for over two weeks.

Despite the massive numbers and peaceful character of the protests, they have hardly been reported on by the Western capitalist press. If major newspapers or television networks deign to report on them, they are inevitably falsely characterized as "antisemitic" or provoking "tension" within the community.

At Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, hundreds of students walked out of class on Tuesday and held a sit-in at the Hall building. Video taken by a journalism student at the university showed hundreds of students clapping for Palestine.

At the University of Illinois-Chicago, hundreds of students participated in the walkout. Several students who walked out later came to the public meeting "Stop Israel's Genocide against Gaza!" featuring Joseph Kishore, National Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States.

Hundreds of students at Howard University, which was recently awarded a \$90 million contract by the Pentagon to conduct military research, protested on Tuesday. Students denounced the university's relationship with weapons contractors and called for a "Free Palestine."

Roughly 1,000 students protested at the University of California, Berkeley on Tuesday. Students carried homemade signs denouncing US support for "ethnic cleansing" and to "end the occupation."

At the University of Michigan, hundreds of students from 25 different student organizations participated in a protest demanding the university divest from Israel and all military contractors.

At antiwar protests held at the City University of New York (CUNY) and New York University (NYU) on Tuesday, hundreds of students peacefully demonstrated against the war. Reporters for the *World Socialist Web Site* distributed hundreds of leaflets and interviewed several students. In response to the rally, cab and bus drivers honked their horns loudly in support as they passed by.

Anna, a student at The New School who attended the NYU rally, said, “I am against the US- and Israeli-backed genocide. ... Our country has been run by the bourgeoisie, has been run by the top 1 percent, and they are ... lobbying for Israel to commit genocide against the Palestinians, and they use the excuse, that it’s ‘antisemitic’ when you don’t support Israel. But that’s just completely false.

“We need to look past the media and see the truth, and the truth is human rights are being violated.

“Our tax money, billions of dollars Joe Biden is giving Israel is totally connected, we are being exploited. The US is backing Ukraine, and the US is backing Israel. ... our energy is being used to fuel a genocide and that needs to stop. We can’t be complicit in this any longer.

“The youth are a huge part of the working class,” she added. “The youth need to rise up against these old-fashioned policies, these neo-liberal policies, that keep capitalism in the grips so that we don’t have a voice. We need to organize together, we need to come together and overthrow the bourgeoisie.”

Spencer, who also attended the NYU rally, said, “I don’t think there’s any way of spinning genocide to make it look like a good thing.

“People are choosing to either support a genocide by approving the continued funding of Israel or standing on the side of humanity which is against this funding,” he added.

Isabel said she attended the rally “because I’ve wanted to do something [about the treatment of the Palestinians] for a while now, but I never really knew what to do. I thought coming here today would be a really good opportunity [to show my support]. I’m not completely sure of where the NYU administration stands as far as support for the funding of Israel; but if they are, I want them to know that we don’t stand for that, and that young people in general don’t stand for oppression of any sort.”

She explained, “I grew up Jewish, but Israel was never part of my identity. [Support for the Palestinians] is something close to my heart. [It is upsetting to] see the

conflict between students over Israel and Palestine.”

Isabel and another friend who attended the rally both agreed that the Biden administration’s support for the slaughter was “bullsh**” and that the administration was guilty of “committing genocide.”

Ella, a student at CUNY studying international studies and human rights, agreed, “What is going on in Gaza is a violation of human rights. ... Our US tax dollars are funding a genocide.”

Joey said he attended the rally because “it needs to be brought to people’s attention what’s going on.” Both Joey and Ella condemned the Biden administration’s support for the IDF and agreed with the Palestinian trade unions’ call for a general strike to stop weapons shipments to Israel.



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