

# Hundreds converge on Capitol in Lansing, Michigan to oppose the genocide in Gaza

Our reporters

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Some 400 demonstrators marched and rallied Saturday at the steps of the Michigan state Capitol in Lansing to demand a halt to the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and call for justice for the Palestinian people.

Facing the Capitol steps lined with dummies wrapped in winding sheets soaked in fake blood, the crowd angrily chanted the now-familiar, “Biden, Biden you can’t hide. We charge you with genocide,” and “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.”

The latter chant has been attacked by politicians in both capitalist parties—Democrats as well as Republicans—as implying the eradication of Israeli Jews, but speakers explained, with the demonstrators’ support, that what is envisioned in the chant is an end to the apartheid conditions that now prevail, with freedom and equality for the Palestinians.

The crowd exemplified the shock and horror of workers, students and young people of all races and nationalities expressed at anti-genocide demonstrations that have mobilized millions of people all over the world, as the Zionist regime of the gangster Benjamin Netanyahu, with the full support of the US and imperialist governments internationally, bombs densely populated neighborhoods, destroys hospitals, and withholds water, fuel, food and electricity in a calculated campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing. This is being done in broad daylight before the entire world, shattering the claims of Washington and its European allies to be waging war against Russia in Ukraine and threatening war against China in defense of “democracy” and “human rights”—not to mention the wars of the previous 30-plus years against Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Mali.

Speakers included representatives of Students for

Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace and a number of unaffiliated individuals. The crowd, and for the most part the speakers, were distinctly unimpressed by the attempts of Biden and his fake-left supporters such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to pass off the operational pause in Israel’s military rampage as a “humanitarian” move in the direction peace.

Members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality passed out hundreds of copies of a statement published by the *World Socialist Web Site* titled, “Hostage/prisoner exchange used to prepare next stage of Israel’s Gaza genocide.”

One demonstrator, Alejandra, said she had joined the rally “to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine and all of humanity.” Asked why she thought the US was supporting the genocide in Gaza, she responded: “That is a very good question, and from what I have read and learned, and also just from being a Mexican American... it’s money and oil. There’s a lot more to this story than people are really looking at... Sadly the history of occupied lands is that people want resources.”

Anees, whose family is Palestinian, said, “There’s a saying—the United States has no feelings, it has interests. I think the Palestinian is just an inconvenience for the broader policy in the Middle East.”

Another protester, Dana, told *World Socialist Web Site* reporters that an immediate ceasefire and an end to Israeli occupation “is the bare minimum,” adding, “I’m going to be here as long as there’s no free Palestine.”

Asked about the temporary “pause” in the killing, Sonya, one of the organizers of the demonstration, said, “You pause a song. You pause a video game. You

pause Super Mario Brothers. You don't pause a genocide. You end a genocide."

She went on to say, "Never again' means never again to everybody, not just a certain class of people. They say that the old will die and the children will forget. That's not the case."

Asked what she thought about the call by Palestinian unions for workers in every country to stop arms production and shipments to Israel, Sonya said she supported it and added, "I would do more. The thought that my money and everything I buy is going to the federal government to fund this? Our independence is coming, and we will defund the federal government if they don't defund Israel."

She disagreed with the accusation by governments and the media that those who oppose the genocide are antisemites. "They are not," she said. "This where ignorance comes in, and at this point it's willful ignorance."

Speaking from the Capitol steps, Barry Grey, national editor of the *World Socialist Web Site*, received a warm response from the crowd when he gave remarks expressing the support of the Socialist Equality Party in the US and the world Trotskyist movement for the mass global protests against the genocide in Gaza. He called for the movement against imperialist war to root itself in the expanding global movement of the working class, which, he explained, was objectively a movement against capitalism, and which had to be consciously waged on the basis of an international socialist strategy.

Grey's denunciation of Netanyahu, Biden and all of the government leaders supporting Israel's genocide, and his call for them to be tried as war criminals, evoked cheers from the crowd. He declared, "The Palestinian people will not be defeated. They will not end their resistance." He went on to condemn attempts to equate violence used by the oppressed in resisting their oppressors with the violence of the ruling classes against those they exploit and subjugate.

Especially moving was the presence of a 94-year-old woman named Fatima, a survivor of the 1948 *Nakba* ("catastrophe" in Arabic). Fatima and her family were dispossessed of their home in northern Palestine and allowed to keep only what they could carry. Announcing to the hushed crowd, "This is all she has left of her home," Sonya held up the small rock Fatima had brought to the demonstration.

Saturday's demonstration ended with a "funeral procession" of cars past the governor's mansion.



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