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AAW

# War on Gaza Met with Dissent from the get-go. Dissent Met with Repression

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### **A policeman arresting a demonstrator at the Tel Aviv university. 29/12/2008**

A policeman arresting a demonstrator at the Tel Aviv university. 29/12/2008

Israel's harshest assault on Gaza since 1967 - codenamed "Operation Cast Lead" - which began on Saturday morning and left over 250 Palestinians dead on its first day alone, was met with widespread condemnation around the world, including dissent within Israel itself.

Protest actions began already the day before Israel's "Shock and Awe" aerial offensive, when activists demonstrated in the heart of Tel-Aviv, warning against the looming escalation and calling for peace talks with Gaza's democratically elected officials. This demonstration, organized by the Coalition against the Siege on Gaza, was virtually ignored by the mainstream media.

Demonstration in Jaffa. 27/12/2008. Pictures by ActiveStills  
Demonstration in Jaffa. 27/12/2008. Pictures by ActiveStills

On Saturday, as we learnt of the carnage and devastation Israeli warplanes inflicted that morning on Gaza's already suffering, besieged population, AATW activists joined over a hundred angry protesters on a virtually-spontaneous demonstration in the city of Jaffa (many local residents have relatives in the Gaza strip, since a large part of Jaffa's population were forced to flee to Gaza in 1948).

Police clashing with protesters in front of the Ministry of Defense. 27/12/2008  
Police clashing with protesters in front of the Ministry of Defense. 27/12/2008

At the same time demonstrations broke out in dozens of cities and villages across the West Bank, as well as East Jerusalem, many resulting in clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli troops. Later that evening, AATW took part in a thousand-strong, Arab-Jewish protest march through the streets of Tel Aviv, along members of other organizations. The protesters led an emotionally-charged, energetic march from the Cinemateque Square to the Ministry of Defense (video), chanting "the occupation is terrorism" and carrying signs such as "Israel's ministers are war criminals". On the way, demonstrators were attacked without provocation by Israeli Special Patrol Unit backed by aggressive mounted policemen. Further clashes took place on the Ministry of Defense's lawn, when anarchists knocked down security fences and attempted to block traffic on Kaplan Street. Six demonstrators were arrested, all of which were released by a judge the next day.

The body of Arafat Khawaja in Ni'ilin. 28/12/2008  
The body of Arafat Khawaja in Ni'ilin. 28/12/2008

On Sunday, as the number of dead in Gaza climbed closer to 300 on the second day of Israel's attack, AATW activists joined a demonstration in the village of Ni'ilin against Israel's war crimes in Gaza. Israeli forces opened fire on stone-throwing youth, killing one protester and leaving another in critical condition. Arafat Rateb Khawaja, 22 years old, was shot in the back with live ammunition, and died at 14:45 in Ramallah Hospital. Mohammed Kasim Khawaja, 20 years old, was shot in the forehead with live ammunition from close range, and remains in a condition of clinical death in Ramallah hospital.

Demonstration in Tel Aviv. 28/12/2008  
Demonstration in Tel Aviv. 28/12/2008

Sunday evening saw AATW take part in yet another charged demonstration in central Tel Aviv, with dozens of people calling for an end to the current military operation in Gaza and to the occupation in general. Protesters held placards

saying "International intervention now!" and "Israelis & Palestinians oppose war".

The funeral of Arafat Khawaja. 29/12/2008The funeral of Arafat Khawaja. 29/12/2008

Monday saw an extremely charged funeral in Ni'ilin, followed by a day of clashes with the army, as well as hundreds of students voice their opposition throughout the campuses of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem's universities - all of which involved clashes with police and/or fascist counterdemonstrators, as well as violent arrests.

A policeman arresting a demonstrator at the Tel Aviv university. 29/12/2008A policeman arresting a demonstrator at the Tel Aviv university. 29/12/2008

Later that day demonstrators gathered in front of the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv, protesting Egyptian silence and collaboration with the Israeli offensive. The protestors were met by an extremely large contingent of border and riot police, which, when prodded by an inflamed crowd of passer-bys, used extreme violence to disperse the demonstration. Six were arrested, all of them Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Border policemen violently arresting a demonstrator in front of the Egyptian Embassy. 29/12/2008Border policemen violently arresting a demonstrator in front of the Egyptian Embassy. 29/12/2008

Later that afternoon, AATW members joined an Arab-Israeli protest against the atrocities in Gaza that took place in the city of Jaffa. Several hundred people raised Palestinian flags and shouted slogans of solidarity with Gaza's population and support for the Intifada. The event culminated in a loud and disorderly march through the streets of Jaffa - at times blocking traffic - which was eventually dispersed without violence after being confronted with a large number of riot and border police reinforcements.

A veiled demonstrator in Jaffa. 29/12/2008A veiled demonstrator in Jaffa. 29/12/2008

Tuesday saw another rushly organized and enraged demonstration of about 200 people at the center of Tel Aviv. Despite the large presence of police, eggs and empty bottles were thrown at the protesters.