

Israeli protests reminiscent of U.S. in the '60s

By Tim Richard
staff writer

JERUSALEM — Burt Levy put down his notebook for a moment and nodded toward the Women in Black protesters a few feet away:

"In no Arab country could you see women demonstrate like that," said Levy, a one-time Farmington Hills resident who has spent most of the 10 years since his retirement in Israel.

The Women in Black literally wear black outfits with hand-shaped black signs that say "Stop the occupation." Each Friday for an hour, they gather around a tiny garden park in downtown Jerusalem to protest.

They oppose Israel's military occupation, since the six-day war of 1967, of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and their government's treatment of Palestinian refugees. Levy was interviewing several for a free lance article.

A FEW FEET away was a counter-demonstration, mostly of men, mostly white-haired. They branded the Women in Black demonstration "treason." They said the occupied territories should be cleared of all Arabs.

"There is no such thing as 'occu-

pied territories.' It's all part of Israel," said Stanley Goldfoot. A native of South Africa, Goldfoot said he has served in "all the wars, starting with World War II," and was part of the Zionist underground prior to the creation of Israel in 1948.

The rival demonstrations remind an American of the 1960s debate in the United States over Vietnam — young people and women saying we should get out, much to the horror of middle-aged Veterans of Foreign Wars members.

LEVY IS RIGHT that only Israel would allow an anti-government demonstration. On a recent nine-day study mission with community college officials, this newsmen heard a monolithic line from Palestinian spokesmen.

"This is our land, for thousands of years. We never invited you (Israel) to take over," said Mohammed Saker, former president of the University of Gaza, which Israeli defense forces closed two years ago. He is now a professor of economics at the University of Jordan.

He and other Palestinians say Yasser Arafat's PLO represents their 1.7 million people, that the uprising called "intifada" will continue until Israel abandons the occupied territories, and that they should be

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allowed to set up a new, independent, democratic, peace-loving Palestinian state.

They display, personally and in pictures, the wounds of rock-throwing children, hoping their story will be carried by television into the homes of Americans. They want U.S. citizens to overcome the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) pressure Congress by cutting Israel's \$3 billion in aid until a Palestinian nation is set up.

Added Jordan's foreign minister, Marwan Al Qasem, who studied history at Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan:

"The billions of the Arab world (oil money) wouldn't buy the prime time of the Intifada."

Al Qasem, whose government license plate bears the number 3, quipped, "Israel managed for

decades to project itself as David versus Goliath. In reality, it's the other way around. Arafat says 'I'm David.'"

It is dangerous to deviate from the Palestinian line. Daily The Jerusalem Post and Jordan Times carry reports about casualties in the uprising. Almost as many Palestinians are killed by fellow Palestinians for "collaborating" with Israel as are killed by Israeli troops.

"We have a Peace Now movement," said Israel Gat, a top Israeli Labor Party official. "The Palestinians don't."

"I'M OPPOSED to (Israeli) government policy — opposed but not ashamed," said Levy, who was a professor of political science at Wayne State University from 1969 to 1972. After losing a 1969 race for the

Farmington Board of Education and a 1970 race for the Farmington City Council, Levy moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., to work in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "If I'd won, maybe I'd have stayed in Farmington," he said.

After two serious surgeries, Levy retired to Israel. He speaks fondly of daughter Elizabeth, her Israeli husband and his two small grandchildren.

He does free-lance writing for newspapers and academic publications.

Levy wants Israel to negotiate with the Palestinians but added, "Bashing Israel in America is not going to change government policy."

Palestinians, he wrote in one magazine article, deserve their own place, "but it cannot be at the expense of the sovereignty and defense of the Jewish state." He said 50 percent of Israeli support that position.

He called Israeli's swift 1967 victory "the sweet prize of unifying Jerusalem and the bitter pill of the West Bank and Gaza."

AT TEL AVIV University, Joseph Alpher, a department head in the

Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, made the picture even more complicated. Alpher said there aren't just two options for Israel but six:

- The status quo — continuation of the IDF's 22-year occupation of the territories.
- A pullout — IDF could simply walk away and let the Palestinians run "unless they mess up."
- Annexation — make the territories part of Israel and grant the Palestinians citizenship. (Many, however, fear the dilution of the Jewish majority by the rapidly-reproducing Palestinians.)

- Annexation/expulsion — annex the territories and kick out enough Palestinians to maintain a hefty Jewish majority.

- "The Jordanian option" — a confederation of the Palestinians with Jordan.

Alpher's department analyzed every option from the points of view of Israelis, Palestinians, the U.S. government, American Jews and the IDF.

Conclusion: "None is both feasible and desirable. We are stuck with the status quo."

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