

Hands around the wall

# Impressive peace demo in Jerusalem

**I**F numbers are decisive, the "1990: Time For Peace" demonstrations in the occupied Jerusalem on Friday and Saturday turned out far more than the organisers anticipated, but far less than might be considered likely to change Israeli policies.

As many as 30,000 demonstrators, most identifying with the Israeli Peace Now Organisation, crowned around the old city walls on Saturday holding hands and singing peace slogans. It was in fact an impressive event. In some ways, including the music played from loudspeakers, it was reminiscent of the early anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in the US back in the late 1960s.

And on Friday a coalition of Israeli Womens' Organisations lead by a group called Women in Black attracted as many as 6,000 women to a march from occupied west to east Jerusalem following their weekly Friday vigil at a major square in west Jerusalem. The march followed a morning meeting at which a few thousand women gathered at the Knesset Towers Hotel to speak about their experience and the urgency of negotiations between Israel and the PLO.

Of course, in the end, the large contingents of Israeli police and army ruled the streets and violent confrontations took place both days including arrests, beatings, and shootings of a few dozen of the more than a thousand

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foreigners who have come for this week-long event.

Most of the foreigners are from Italy, but others have come from other European countries and about a hundred are here in the occupied Jerusalem from the US.

After speaking with the person who on Saturday headed the Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini's security it has been authoritatively learned that at least 40 persons, possibly as many as 100, were injured in the past few hours by rubber bullets and tear-gas the same afternoon during the "Hands Around the wall" demonstration that ended about 3:00 pm.

Many of the injured were foreigners who were taken to Makassed Hospital in occupied east Jerusalem. Others have been taken to Israeli hospitals.

At least 50 persons have also been arrested, nearly all of these Palestinians residing in the occupied Jerusalem. Though the army closed off the territories and would not allow Palestinians to come to occupied Jerusalem to join

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the large demonstration on Saturday, some Palestinians from Bethlehem and Ramallah at least were able to come.

At the end of Saturday's demonstration, as riot police on horseback and large contingents of battle-dressed army began threatening the demonstrators, Faisal Husseini was rushed away for fear he might be harmed. After first stopping at a number of hotels he found his way to the National Palace Hotel, headquarters for the Italian delegation and the Palestinian organisers.

Shortly after Husseini arrived at the hotel chanting of nationalist slogans and peace slogans began. Soon army troops arrived and to stop the chanting they used both rubber bullets and tear gas inside the hotel. At that time it appeared there were four injuries. Two ambulances came to get the injured and late in the afternoon tear gas still forced most of the hotel residents onto the roof or outside onto the street.

Meanwhile, the army did use rubber bullets at both the

Damascus and Jaffa Gate areas on Saturday causing most of the injuries to both Palestinians and foreign delegates. Water cannons were also used to disperse the Palestinian crowds that began singing nationalist songs and marching up and down the sidewalk that goes down the hill to the Damascus Gate.

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At the end of Friday's totally peaceful march through occupied Jerusalem the demonstrators congregated outside the Arab Cultural Centre where the opening session for "1990: Time For Peace" took place on Thursday.

About 2:25 pm on Friday the police and special army raided the Centre and arrested 17 persons while beating others. Among those arrested were four Italians as well as a French and Dutch national along with 11 Palestinians. Israeli soldiers beat on the vans that took the arrested away singing nationalist Israeli songs.

Many persons were taken to hospitals because of tear gas inhalation. And around 7 pm on Friday evening four cars of Italians went to the prison where their fellow delegates were being held for protesting.