

”Our future shouldn’t be determined by a few rich people”

Students at London demonstration speak

Our reporters

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A reporting team from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to some of those participating in Wednesday’s student protest in London.

Morgana attended with her friend Lianne. Both are second year students at the University of the Arts. “We have come here because we have both got siblings and family who work in the public sector and we care,” Morgana said. “‘Unfair’ doesn’t describe how seriously the cuts are going to affect everyone. I was reading in the paper this morning about a couple driven to suicide because their benefits were cut so drastically. He was a war veteran and it’s just horrific this could happen.

“For us personally we don’t have to pay these new fees, but we both have younger siblings. We are standing right outside RADA [the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art] and my sister is a really great actress. The fact that she might be denied an opportunity to grow and contribute is what we are most angry about.”

Asked about the police presence on the march, she said, “It’s bullying. They don’t want this. They don’t want us to voice our opinion because there are so many people here. Last autumn a ridiculous number of people showed up and they were ignored and they are not going away. They would love to brush us under the carpet but that is not going to happen.

Helen, who lives in London, said, “I’ve just graduated so I’m feeling it quite keenly. I am also here just for solidarity. I know it’s also broader than just being against student fees, as there are also the austerity cuts.”

Helen said she had followed the news during the

week about the Metropolitan Police’s extraordinary plans to crack down on the protest. She said, “I think it has added to the culture of fear. I think it could be a deterrent for others. Kettling is always a deterrent and I don’t want to get kettled. I have also heard these are not just containment strategies, but are also strategies to incite violent action during kettling so as to give the police a reason to shut it down. That is incredibly manipulative. They are very deliberate strategies that are being used, moving to criminalise young people and particularly protesters.”

Speaking about the global “Occupy” movement Helen added, “There is a broader movement here and today is a part of it. This is a return to a broader collective kind of politics against what people see as being oppression. I feel all of this is part of some greater movement and mobilisation”

Nefeli is a student from Edinburgh, studying philosophy and Math who is originally from Greece. She said, “I have come today because I think the problems we have are global. They are not only in Greece, nor in the UK. It’s everywhere. We have to fight as much as we can and the fight is in the streets, not in the parliament. This is the only way we can show we disagree with what is going on. Our future shouldn’t be determined by a few rich people.”

Speaking about the events in Greece, Nefeli said, “The future is so unstable and I have never been so scared in my life over what is going to happen. The universities are closing down because they are not funding education. They are putting money into the banks not universities and schools. We don’t have money for schoolbooks because we spend so much on teargas.

“My parents don’t know what is going to happen with their retirement benefits. My father had to leave Athens to keep his job and he goes back to Athens each weekend. Loads of my friends and their parents have left Athens or even left Greece because it’s impossible to find a job.

“The laws keep changing. My mum is a teacher and she doesn’t know when she will get retirement benefits. I’ve never felt so much pressure. I have to finish my degree and get a job because I don’t know what is going to happen in the future.

“Neither the people or the politicians have a say in what is going to happen in Greece because the European Union and the International Monetary Fund are just telling Greece what to do. And if Greece is kicked out of the euro, we will get kicked out of the European Union as well.

“The rich are going to get richer, as they have money to educate their children. It’s a vicious circle. What they are doing in Greece will be devastating for more than half of the population. I think the “Occupy” movement that started in Wall Street and the revolutions we have seen in the Middle East are all connected to what is going on here and all over the world.”



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