

Bradford meeting: “What Israel is doing in Gaza is genocide—there is no other word for it”

Our reporters
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A number of those attending the Socialist Equality Party meeting in Bradford, West Yorkshire on the Israeli attack on Gaza spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Ruby Ghani explained why she had attended the meeting. “I was born and brought up in Bradford. I class myself as British first and then a Muslim. I have nothing against Jewish people. We were taught about the Holocaust at school, about Anne Frank, and that we need to learn from the past.

“Things don’t just happen, they are orchestrated. What Israel is doing in Gaza is genocide—there is no other word for it. It is not a combat between equals. In Gaza people are being torn limb from limb by the bombing. In the Holocaust they died in the gas chambers. We were supposed to learn from that.

“I have known about what is happening in Palestine for years, but I think that what has drawn me in now is that I’m on Facebook. The latest pictures of what is going on in Gaza have been coming out on social media. It is showing us the reality of what is happening—not what the media, the BBC, ITV choose to show us, or rather *not* show us.

“I find it heartbreaking that our government and the American government are allowing this to happen. Other Arab, Muslim countries are allowing this to happen. Not one government is turning around and saying this is totally wrong.”

Ruby said she thought it was correct to identify the capitalist profit system as the root of war.

“I totally agree. You look at Syria, at Israel and Gaza now. What if people start standing up and say I am not going to put up with this. There is only so much—especially the younger generation—are going to take.

There is a demonstration on Gaza next week and they have asked people from every town to turn up. How can that be ignored, how can the government stay silent?

“I would say to people stand up and be heard, it is not happening in our country but it does matter ... if it is happening in Gaza it can easily happen here. They might not be your children, but they are somebody’s children, somebody’s family, they are humans. I have always said it’s not what religion you are, what race you are, but you are part of humanity.”

A WSWWS reporter spoke to Linda who said she came to the meeting because she wanted to do something. “I wanted to be with people who felt the same way that I did, with the same level of outrage.

“Every night on TV we see images of women and children suffering in Gaza, the terrible destruction, the bombing of hospitals and places of safety. My daughter keeps pointing out things she has seen on the Internet, like [Channel 4 news presenter] Jon Snow’s interview, which was so very powerful.

“I am completely shocked by the complete lack of any international response by the powers that be. If it were anywhere else the press would be screaming about Assad [in Syria], or Mugabe [in Zimbabwe], or any number of other leaders, even Vladimir Putin. And the press is full of the events in the Ukraine, but nothing, nothing about Israel’s crimes in Gaza.

“When it became obvious that there had to be an official response, because the opposition amongst ordinary people was increasing, it was just ridiculous. It was almost as if they were comparing the two sides on equal terms—the rockets from Gaza and the might of the Israeli army.

“I just thought it was preposterous. How can you compare the scale of destruction? It is just ridiculous.

“It was a full four weeks before the United Nations made any statement. Then politicians like [Labour leader Ed] Miliband felt they had to say something and just made the mildest of criticisms of Israel. In the face of this barbaric onslaught the silence and inaction speak volumes. [US President Barack] Obama has uttered a few words and done nothing. [British Prime Minister David] Cameron is exactly the same.

“It is great to see the support for the Palestinians from ordinary working class people. At the Leeds demo a week ago there were not just Muslims or certain political groups, but the support came from right across the community. It reminded me of the demos against the Iraq war. It had the same feel about it.”

We also spoke to Joe, a student who is interested in history and has been following the WSWS for some time. He said, “Israel’s actions against the people of Gaza and against the protests in Israel itself demonstrate that the Israeli government is one of the most reactionary in the Middle East. It also proves that they are staunchly opposed to the interests or demands of ordinary Israeli workers and offer no solution to the immense social problems that the country faces.

“Therefore, the Israeli government’s claim that they act in the interests of ordinary Jews is an insult to the immense revulsion felt throughout the world at Israeli war crimes. It also implies that the Jewish faith itself believes in Zionism, which is completely untrue. Netanyahu represents the interests of a bloodstained social elite that believe in Zionism and the elimination of the Gaza strip. He, along with his aides and military chiefs, should face trial at the Hague for crimes against humanity and using war as a means to further their own interests.”

Joe agreed with the speakers on the connection between events in Gaza and Ukraine.

“There is a definite link. Here we see two ruling classes using war and criminal acts of violence by slaughtering civilians to further their own imperialist ambitions. Putin and Hamas are being vilified by the media as aggressors. In fact, it is the West and Israel who are the real warmongers. While I would offer no political support to either Putin or Hamas, I feel that Hamas’ actions in trying to defend itself against the Israeli war machine are heroic when they clearly have

no chance of success against a vastly superior military.

“Regarding Putin, the smear campaign against him is designed to prepare the population for war against Russia. His own capitalist interests are in fact not so dissimilar to that of the European ruling class who seek to expand their influence by any means they see fit.”

Peter told us, “What is happening in Gaza is the true definition of the word crime, yet there are no legislators that will punish the criminals for this outrage. The world stands by idle whilst women and children are mercilessly slaughtered by the high-tech machinery of modern-day barbarism.”



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