

Workers and young people protesting Israeli assault on Gaza speak from demonstrations across Britain

Our reporters
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Reporting teams from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with people protesting Israel's war on Gaza at demonstrations this weekend in Leeds, Bristol and London. These were among dozens of protests in Britain mobilising thousands.

Leeds

Around 500 people protested in Leeds.

Said told WSWS reporters he attended the rally as “This seems like the only place where you can reject the idea that what is going on in Gaza is ok. The basis for conversation has been shut down. This is the last remaining avenue to publicly express that what is going on is wrong. They are killing people out in the open, trying to force them out of their homes.

“In the media, the reaction is complete indifference or that it is necessary, its acceptable, its collateral, there was an attack on October 7 so Israel can do what it wants.

“It's an excuse and opportunity for ethnic cleansing, especially by a lot of the hardliners. I think the hard right in Israel are the ones driving this.

“I think there has been a closing of the ranks of the Western-aligned powers, they have said ‘we allow this’. The West in general and specifically the US are seeking to maintain influence everywhere globally. Maintaining a strong Israel helps specifically the US but generally the West maintain military supremacy in every arena. The sending of aircraft carriers is to try to prevent any non-American-aligned power from

asserting itself military in the area to challenge the US.”

Asked about the way forward, Said replied, “In the long-term marching round the streets is not enough, short term we just need a ceasefire. I know they have just finished a ‘pause’. It's an insulting term for them to use because it's saying, ‘we still want to go back to killing you’. They don't want to call it a ceasefire because there would be more pressure to continue it. Marching in the streets is one of the few options open to us collectively.

“Longer-term they [the imperialist powers] are not going to abide by their own rules. It's open brutality, open murder. They are saying ‘we have the better weapons, we have the more effective militaries’ and that's the whole argument. ‘You just need to accept what you are being told or we will kill you.’”

Adam said, “Israel knew something about Hamas wanting to attack Israel. Israel has the most secure military in the world because it is funded by America, so how could they not have known?

“Israel funded Hamas to separate them from the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organisation], to divide the PLO, the Palestinian resistance movement in the 1970s and 80s. Israel also funded terrorists to go into Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. It has used Hamas to further expand into Palestine and to hurt the Palestinian people and displace them.

“There are plans to make Palestine a tourist place and get the Palestinian people out and put them in the Sinai near the border with Egypt. How can you justify that?

“The media are only showing what is happening through the lens of Israeli propaganda, but many people online are now exposing the lies.”

Asked why he thought of NATO and the western powers supporting the genocide in Gaza, Adam responded, “Israel supports the interests of the western powers in the Middle East. Israel acts to divide the Middle East and the Maghreb countries in northern Africa. [Libyan leader] Muammar Gaddafi tried to unify the Middle East, he nationalised gold and oil. He was assassinated by the US. Hilary Clinton in Obama’s presidency planned it.

“Now that America is failing, they are going to do everything they can to divide the Middle East and any power that could threaten them such as China or Russia.”

Speaking on the campaign to equate opposition to Zionism with antisemitism, Adam responded, “There is a separation between antisemitism and anti-Zionism; to try and put them together is disgusting. Anti-Zionism is opposing a state while anti-Semitism is opposing a religion.

On what should happen next Adam said, “We should continue boycotting McDonalds, Coca Cola and Pepsi, Starbucks as well, places are shutting down. We should boycott the Labour Party; they are supporting this. There are alternatives, at one council in London, Hackney I think, independents won and won by a landslide.”

Bristol

In Bristol, the demonstration marched past the BBC’s headquarters in the city, with protesters chanting against the broadcaster’s biased coverage backing Israel’s lies about its genocide.

Medical researcher **Sana** spoke of her concern that the weaponization of disease, which is part of the Israeli war strategy, poses a wider threat to society.

She said, “The diseases that we have been able to eradicate from the developed world and are on the verge of eradicating from the developing world will come back.

“In Gaza, where the sanitation health infrastructure is broken down, all infectious diseases are coming back. It’s a hub for infectious diseases.

“If you think that, living in the developed world, you

will be safe from it, that you’re far from it; you’re really going to be very close. It’s going to come to you very soon. So, we all have to act really soon against this war.”

London

Over a thousand people attended a rally in East London.

Ashkar said of the Conservative and Labour parties, “there’s no difference between the two as far as Palestine is concerned, they’re the same thing. So the people who actually care about human rights in that part of the world don’t have a political voice today in the UK.

“Genocide was their plan all along. They wanted to ethnically cleanse those people and they are using the excuse of October 7 to do it.”

Zainab said, “I’m here to stand with the Palestinian people in the face of great oppression, injustice, genocide, slaughter.

“Who gave the government the right to vote against a ceasefire. What business have you got saying no to a humanitarian movement?” The government, she said, “don’t represent us. They don’t represent the people that live here. They don’t represent the people who want a ceasefire.”

Zainab continued, “We’re at the end of a four-day ceasefire that actually wasn’t a ceasefire. That was nonsense. I’ve studied international law and I can’t even comprehend how this is being allowed to continue like this. And why the United Nations and all these other bodies, that can step in, why is nothing being done? Why are there no consequences? There is international law, but Israel has always been allowed to break it.”



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