

Workers and students in Leeds, Manchester and Glasgow speak against Gaza genocide

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Our reporters
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As 200,000 took part in a national demonstration against the Gaza genocide in London on Saturday, thousands more participated in local protests around the country. Socialist Equality Party members distributed a call to attend the May Day Rally organised by the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Leeds

The protest in Leeds assembled at Leeds Art Gallery and marched through the city centre, returning to the Gallery where a rally was held.

Stella, a music student, said, “In order to free Gaza we have to dismantle the systems that colonised it in the first place. Then, in turn, free the countries that are under imperialist rule like Sudan and the Congo. When Gaza isn’t free none of us are free!”

“We have to make sure that the conversation doesn’t move on and that people are aware of what is happening and keep talking about it, even if it makes people feel uncomfortable. The people in Gaza being killed: it’s not exactly comfortable for them either.

“With reference to the planned assault on Rafah, she said, “Israel is carrying out ethnic cleansing and when that happens it’s like, now is the time you can’t be looking away from it any more.

“We need to be upping the action. We need to pressure the upper classes but trust and work with the working class—they are the ones that will make the change.

“I definitely agree we have to get rid of the upper

classes. We can’t solve the issues, not just in Gaza and but the whole world, under the capitalist system. We need a different system for it entirely otherwise it’s just going to be a constant repeat and a cycle over and over.”

Molly said of the situation in Gaza, “I just think it’s disgusting and it’s raising a generation of people who have no hope in their government, because there’s not an ounce of sympathy from anyone in power.

“Some people posting on social media think that that is enough. But collective action is the thing that really makes a difference, so I hope more people start coming to the protests.

“It’s obviously ethnic cleansing. In school, when you are taught about World War II, you think, ‘Wow! If I were in Germany then I would have helped people and done what I could. If that was me, I’d step up and help.’ And we’ve got this exact self-same situation happening again. And it’s quite scary. It feels quite dystopian.”

Marman explained, “It’s awful what is going on; it’s unbelievable the amount of cruelty, the audacity with which these crimes are being committed. You have never seen in history perpetrators talk about it so openly. It is being broadcast 24/7 it is not being hidden. They are proudly saying what they are doing.”

Asked about the imperialist backing for Israel’s actions in Gaza, Marman said, “For the imperialists and colonizing forces in the world, this is their ambition; it is their dream to see a proper apartheid system working there. All the countries that have the colonizing DNA cheer this and support this; they would like to see it across the whole world.”

On the danger of a third world war, Marman stated, “The forces of capital are still the same—the system itself lends itself to this type of subjugation and exploitation. As

long as this capitalist system exists this will continue to happen.”

Asked how he thought opposition to capitalism would develop, he explained, “I think if we look around the world now you can see that young people are moving, coming out to shout and protest. They realise that those politicians don’t represent us: they represent the interests of the capitalist system. Hopefully this will be a waking-up movement across the whole world.”

Asked about the slander of antisemitism used to attack protests against Israel, Marman commented, “Regarding antisemitism, today [at this protest] you have multitudes of Jewish people proudly holding signs saying ‘Not in my name’.”

Manchester

Around 500 people joined a demonstration in Manchester which assembled at Piccadilly and marched to St Peters Square, where a rally was held.

Welfare rights worker and law student **Malaak** said of the arrest of over 1,000 protesters on campuses in the US, “I think that’s one of the most significant things that’s happened in the last six months. It’s got a lot of people worried. If Benjamin Netanyahu came out himself and tried to claim that the protesters are antisemitic, it shows that they’re worried. A lot of professors at universities are involved as well.

“One thing I’ve found interesting is the state and the brutality of the police; that’s not going to do anything for the Zionist cause when people, Americans, see those images of peaceful protesters getting beat up and getting arrested. It’s going to make people angrier. One thing I saw was the guy who was already in handcuffs, and he was getting tasered by the police.”

“It’s just a dangerous direction that the world is heading in”, she said, in reference to the \$95 billion passed by the US Congress for arms shipments to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

“We are heading more and more in the wrong direction, because of incompetent leaders; it just makes no sense. I think the average person is more interested in housing and health care, education, and what they [governments] are doing is trying to distract us from all that by getting involved in a global war. It’s like gang wars: these guys in Ukraine are ours, we should all mobilise against the

enemy, against Russia, China.

“When they do that, they’re actually exposing themselves, we can see that they’re no different from the states that they criticise. They’re all as bad as each other, they’re all authoritarian. The US state is no better than Russia, China or Iraq.

“Castro said ‘capitalism means extinction, socialism means survival.’ It’s more important now than ever to get together and do something about it. [Labour opposition leader] Starmer—I can’t stand the guy. I’ve never liked the Tories. And now Labour is just another face of the Tory party. I don’t believe there’s a significant difference between the parties.”

When an SEP member explained that the leader of the US teachers’ union had condemned students and academics opposing the Gaza genocide, Malaak asked about the unions in the UK. She was shocked to hear that Unite leader Sharon Graham had lined up with the government and was urging her members who manufacture arms to continue supplying Israel with the means to slaughter Palestinians—on the nationalist basis of defending their jobs.

“Shocking,” said Malaak, “I didn’t realise it was that bad. Like you said, capitalism is heading for self-destruction. It’s all interlinked, colonialism, imperialism, it’s political.”

Glasgow

Over 200 people attended a protest in Glasgow’s George Square. Workers and students who spoke with the SEP described how the last six months had politicised them, expressed support for international strikes against the war and opposition to the trade union leadership’s suppression of action. There was broad interest in the ICFI’s May Day Rally.



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