

Demonstrators in Liverpool speak with WSWs: “Keir Starmer is a war criminal”

Our reporters
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Reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* interviewed participants at Saturday’s national Gaza protest in Liverpool that marched from Liverpool Lime Street Station to the Labour Party’s Annual Conference venue.

Shajhait from Bradford said, “I’ve been on many of the marches over Gaza. What Labour has done [limiting some export licenses of UK arms to Israel] is just for show. It does not change anything in terms of the slaughter Palestinians are facing. It is a political gimmick. The only victory would be for this genocide to be stopped and Palestinians and Jews to come together.

“It really upsets me how the Gaza protests have been portrayed as anti-Semitic. Jewish people have been protesting as well. If I had been alive when Hitler was around, I would have marched for the protection of the Jewish people as well.

“Israel is trying to cause as much trouble as possible with its neighbours like Lebanon. I think a lot of this motivated by the US and other powers wanting to control the oil and gas and other resources in the Middle East.”

Shabir told our reporter, “Working class people need to come together in the interest of working class people.”

Daniel, a freelance teacher who travelled from Warwick in the west Midlands to demonstrate, said: “I thought it was important to send a message to the Labour Party and particularly its leader.

“Even with the change of government, which wasn’t entirely unexpected, it seems that nothing has changed for Palestine. In fact, the issue is just sort of wiped away somewhat. I think there was more coverage under the previous government. I don’t know if that’s a coincidence or a deliberate thing.

“I don’t think this government is doing anywhere near enough. They can’t even utter two words of condemnation without covering themselves afterwards. I think they’ve cut ten percent of arm deals with Israel. But it’s nowhere near enough. I think it’s a symbolic thing to try to win people back on side. It’s worthless.”

Condemning the wave of assassinations and bombings by Israel in Lebanon this past week, Daniel said: “It’s another aggressive act from Israel, spreading the ‘conflict’ further into the region. Israel said it was a slightly targeted attack, why then did thousands of civilians get injured?”

Commenting on the NATO war in Ukraine, Daniel said: “I think the situation in Ukraine needs to be resolved as quickly as possible. The west has not been helping matters in their attitude towards Russia in past decades.”

Reflecting on the absence of trade unions at the demonstration, Daniel said, “Showing solidarity with oppressed peoples should be a basic trade union issue. The only way to defeat the oppressive class is to unite working class people together in solidarity.”

Jonathon, 25, a performing artist, said, “War is going on in mainland Europe, and nothing’s being said [about this at the Gaza protests]. The war in Ukraine should take more of a main stage.

“The US and UK are sending them bombs—we are involved, which is scary. They have given Ukraine permission to fire into Russia. Russia has got a lot of essential minerals. God help us if nuclear missiles come over here.

“Iran, North Korea, China, they have been supporting Russia—what will they think? As for the Labour party, I’ve always hated Labour. I believe Starmer is a Tory in wolf’s clothes. That’s why so many young people didn’t vote in the election.”

Larry explained, “We’ve got trade unionists here that will fight for Gaza, but the bureaucracy of our union is holding us back.”

Tori, a university graduate, said she was at the demonstration “for solidarity for Palestine—we have to be here! If we don’t come and fight fascism, nothing will change.

“You would think that Labour wouldn’t support the genocide, but they’ve been moving in that direction for years. Whenever I think of Keir Starmer, I think of Stalin. We call him Kid Starver on the demonstrations.

“I used to feel a lot of guilt being British--we have so many wars, in South America, North Africa. The war in Ukraine is fought because of its geographical location.

“I want to learn about politics. I have spoken to a lot of older people and appreciate what they are saying about the threat of world war. Older people have the knowledge, we [the youth] have never been through a world war.”

Emily, an administration worker from Leeds, has attended weekly Gaza demonstrations. She also runs an online activist streaming service.

“What’s happening in Gaza is absolutely disgusting. I believe that Israel is a terror state. Keir Starmer and his entire government are allowing this to happen. I believe they’ve got the absolute power to stop it. But they won’t as long as they get what they want.

“Keir Starmer is going to have to pay for what he’s done in the future. He is a war criminal. All we can do now is fight to stop the genocide in Gaza.”

Josh, a young worker, said, “I live just down the road, and I saw the demonstration. I was interested to know what it was all about.

“I have only seen minor bits of the situation on social media, from friends who have told me about Palestine and Israel and the genocide that is going on. I came down to learn more about what is happening.”

WSWS reporters explained Labour’s role in backing the genocide, including Starmer’s vocal support for Israel’s collective punishment of Palestinian civilians. Josh responded, “Funding genocide is wrong, I had heard of companies funding what is going on and I try to avoid them, but I had not heard of Starmer arguing for the withholding of basic needs such as water. That can never be acceptable.

“From my understanding, Israel is trying to take Palestinian land, so I don’t see how Israel has the right

to defend itself. Israel caused the beginning of the conflict. It is not acceptable for any of it to be happening.”

After speaking with WSWS reporters, Josh bought literature and left his contact details.



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