

On Saturday May 17th, some were settling down to watch the Cup Final and the Eurovision Song Contest (groan), but London was host to more pressing and important matters. A huge number of people gathered in the capital to commemorate the passage of 77 years since the Nakba of 1948 and to express their support for the Palestinians. It was encouraging to see such a diverse group of people taking part in the march: a wide range of ethnicities, families with young children, students, health workers, representatives of trade unions, and just ordinary folk. There was certainly a deep mood of anger among the marchers, but also palpable were the solidarity and friendship among the people walking together side by side.



The placards and chants appealed for an end to the atrocities and called for the UK government to stop arming Israel. Highlighted on banners were the words and phrases that have become chillingly familiar: Genocide, Starvation, Lack of humanitarian aid, Arms supplies to Israel, while proclaiming No more Nakba, and Free Palestine. It was sad to think that even as the march was taking place children were starving in Gaza, humanitarian aid was not getting through, and water was running out. But there was also a sense of joy

and optimism that this kind of event could be held at such a crucial time and with such an impressive number of participants.



I talked to a few people during the demo and their opinions were as one: anger and disgust at everything that was happening in Gaza and at the ineffectiveness and reluctance of those in power to do something meaningful to stop the genocide. At the same time they expressed hope that speaking out against the horrors being perpetrated would add to the pressure on governments to act.

I spoke to one marcher, from the north of England, who gave me a quote from poet Federico Garcia Lorca, which I hurriedly wrote down:

*I will always be on the side of those
who have nothing
and who are not even allowed to
enjoy the nothing they have in peace.*

Kudos to all who took part in this dignified protest. It was an uplifting experience to take part in a demonstration of this scale and always heartening to see so many people who care coming together, doing at least something to help their fellow human beings.

