

Socialist Equality Party (UK) holds meeting in Bradford against war in Gaza

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) held an emergency public meeting in Bradford, West Yorkshire on August 4, to oppose the bombardment of Gaza.

An attentive audience of workers and youth, many of them new to the SEP, listened to the speakers and took part in discussion.

The introductory remarks were made by Richard Tyler, member of the SEP National Committee. He began by saying, “This meeting is timely in two respects, firstly it is the 30th day of Israeli military operations against Gaza, which has seen the most brutal and deadly attack on Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces [IDF].

“Health officials in Gaza say 1,800 Palestinians, most of them civilians, have been killed and more than 9,000 injured since the conflict began nearly four weeks ago ... In total 1.8 million people are affected by a halt or reduction of the water supply, 141 schools and 26 health facilities have been damaged, 945 homes, affecting some 10,690 families, have been totally destroyed or severely damaged ... The destruction of basic infrastructure makes the spread of serious diseases inevitable.”

Tyler then noted that the meeting was also timely in that it was “taking place almost 100 years to the day since the outbreak of the First World War. Within four years, of the 65 million men under arms, 8.5 million were dead, 21 million were wounded, 7.7 million were missing or were POWs, representing 57 percent of those mobilised. And these were just the military casualties.

“But the ‘war to end all wars’ did not settle the matter, and some 20 years later, a new World War brought about even greater destruction.”

He went on, “wars do not happen by accident. As the military strategist Carl von Clausewitz said, ‘war is the

continuation of politics by other means.’”

“Our meeting will investigate the roots and causes of war in the capitalist system, and will outline a socialist strategy against war based on the unification of the international working class.”

The main report was given by Simon Whelan, a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site* and a leading member of the Socialist Equality Party in Yorkshire.

Whelan explained that the SEP and the International Committee of the Fourth International condemned the barbaric war crimes being committed against the people of Gaza by the Israeli military. He stressed that amidst the attempts by the media to minimise the extent of the Israeli military rampage it was necessary to call things by their proper name. “Gaza is the world’s largest open prison, life for the people of Gaza is one long nightmare and the Zionist authority is guilty of war crimes in the first degree.”

Whelan pointed out that the ruling elites in Washington and all the European capitals, who were attempting to equate the crude missiles being used by Hamas with the onslaught by the IDF on land, sea and air upon a defenceless urban area, were complicit in these war crimes.

Whelan told the audience that Israel’s Netanyahu administration was an expression of the political and moral disintegration of the entire Zionist project and that of all bourgeois nationalist movements. Its attempts to export Israel’s own social tensions by means of waging violence upon the Palestinians was a project doomed to failure.

While there was massive outrage and anger amongst working people internationally against events in Gaza, this was not enough to effect a change, he said. The fundamental issue facing the world working class was the crisis of political perspective and leadership.

“This was underscored by the recent experience of the multi-million-strong workers and oppressed masses of Egypt who had overturned the decades-old and widely hated [Hosni] Mubarak regime. But without the presence of a Marxist leadership steeped in the lessons of the class struggle, their fight had given way not to their emancipation, but first to a government formed by the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood, and then the coup by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who was playing a lead role in helping Israel suppress the Palestinians.”



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