

Socialist Equality Party addresses Palestine Solidarity Committee rally outside RAF Lossiemouth

Our reporters
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A protest against Israel's war on Gaza and the UK's complicit role was held outside the Royal Air Force's Lossiemouth base in the north-east of Scotland last Saturday. A P8 Poseidon reconnaissance plane was dispatched from the airfield to the Eastern Mediterranean as part of the UK's package of "practical support" for Israel.

Demonstrators, including students, workers and their families, carried placards calling for a ceasefire, peace and freedom for Palestine, denouncing Israeli apartheid and reading "Not in our name", "Israel is a terrorist state", "Sunak and Starmer: stop supporting Gaza war crimes" and "Stop killing innocent children".

The event was organised by the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Committee, who invited members of the Socialist Equality Party to participate and speak. SEP member Darren delivered a well-received speech and others distributed leaflets advertising the party's November 11 meeting in Inverness, "Stop Israel's Genocidal War on Gaza!"

Darren told the crowd that the movement in defence of the Palestinians must identify "the real forces we confront—not just Israel but the imperialist powers in the US-NATO axis. The US, Britain, France, Germany, all have proclaimed that Israel has both the "right" and the "duty" to defend itself, giving a blank cheque for the ethnic cleansing and mass murder in Gaza and its rapid extension to the West Bank and Israel's own Arab citizens.

"This is backed by all the major parties, with Keir Starmer's Labour Party acting as the chief apologist for mass murder."

Darren continued, "It is essential that we discuss what is necessary now to defend the Palestinians and oppose the rapid moves towards the regional war the Biden

administration is clearly planning with Netanyahu—targeting Iran and its allies, Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

"That is why the US has assembled a massive military force, including two nuclear aircraft carrier strike groups with more than 8,000 personnel—to tell Tehran, 'Stand in our way and there will be nuclear bombs headed your way.'

"Britain has sent two Royal Navy ships, three Merlin helicopters and a company of Royal Marines to the Middle East 'to deliver practical support to Israel and partners in the region.' *The Sun* also revealed that the assassins of the SAS [Special Air Service] will take part in Israel's Gaza offensive and the US has named them for a leading role in the military occupation of Gaza going forward."

Darren argued, "The only force that can defeat and halt this offensive is the working class, by making it impossible to wage it. Working class action can stop the shipment of any items to Israel that could have any conceivable military use. They can paralyse the economy and bring down governments.

"The Palestinians know this. On October 16, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions Gaza (PGFTU) issued an appeal to their counterparts around the world, To halt the Israeli military assault—To refuse to build weapons destined for Israel, To refuse to transport weapons to Israel, To take action against complicit companies involved in implementing Israel's war.

"So far only five Belgian trade unions in the airline industry have acted and called for a boycott on arms distribution, after their members at airports reported the movement of military equipment. Everywhere else, as everyone here knows, the trade union bureaucracy acts as a dead hand in preventing action, just as it sold out the

summer strike wave that could have brought down the Tories and called instead for everyone to place their trust in the warmongering, pro-business Labour Party.

“Action to stop the war must not be subordinated to any section of the political establishment, including Labour and must proceed against the active sabotage of the trade union leaders.”

During the rally, the SEP spoke with trainee teacher **Robbie**. He denounced the government-media campaign to brand anti-Zionism antisemitism. “Jews who speak up for Palestine have their Jewishness erased... Disturbingly, we all saw the footage of what happened at the airport in Dagestan where a mob searched for Jews. This mob conflated the actions of Israelis with the actions of Jews, but this conflation is invited by Israel and its sycophants... Zionism does nothing but imperil the safety and security of Jews everywhere.

“Just yesterday I saw footage of a Jewish woman in London, whose family was killed in the Holocaust, get arrested for calling Zionists Nazis. This arrest was done under the guise of hate speech laws. Which are really ‘no speech laws’ because almost anything controversial could be interpreted as hateful. And without controversial speech and dissident speech we might as well have no speech.”

Speaking about the persecution of principled journalists like Julian Assange and Craig Murray, Robbie replied that their silencing was “about intimidating all journalists into silence... Much of what we know about Palestine is thanks to WikiLeaks. We cannot forget about Julian Assange’s contribution to the struggle for Palestinian dignity.”

Robbie explained that British and US imperialism were “trying to resuscitate the war on terror. The elites are exhuming old post 9/11 narratives about suicide bombers, terrorists, and evil Muslims.” But he added, “This attempt to rekindle the war on terror also doesn’t work so well after western media spent two years salivating over Ukrainian ‘resistance groups’ as they assassinated journalists like Daria Dugina and killed civilians by blowing up bridges in Crimea.”

Robbie called on workers to “Organise, strike and resist,” adding that “the first step is to challenge the cowardly trade union leadership”.

He went on, “A general strike is essential. Even if we are successful in stopping the genocide, we must understand that until we rise up and destroy this system war will continue to plague our society.”

Responding to the SEP’s appeal to Israeli workers, Robbie said, “I fully support this. I think it’s important to

remember that many Israelis support peace and many young people languish in prison cells in Israel for refusing to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. We cannot forget these brave heroes, especially as Israel becomes more dangerous for dissident voices.”

Also at the protest was Chair of the Moray Branch of Palestine Solidarity Campaign, **Rayne**. She said, “The media coverage of events since Al Aqsa Flood was launched on October 7 has gone far beyond being biased, it is acting as a Weapon of Mass Deception.” She continued, “Laws to redefine anti-Zionism as antisemitism are an attempt to manipulate sensitivities surrounding the Holocaust in order to preclude any constructive criticism of the apartheid state by intimidating people who speak out against ethnic cleansing.”

Asked about Murray and Assange, she replied that their “horrific treatment... should be a chilling warning to us all.”

Rayne explained, “The UK and US aiding and abetting of the current genocide in Gaza is part of a wider problem: the US’s war drive in the Middle East.” She added, “Perhaps a good question to ask ourselves at this point is what is a proportionate response to a government that colludes with genocide against the will of the people?”

Urging “working people and indeed everybody of sound conscience who wants to stand with Palestinians” to “join protests and call for a ceasefire now, a lifting of the suffocating siege of Gaza and an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine,” Rayne said, “I support strikes in every country complicit in genocide, and for causes such as antiwar movements and better living conditions.

“I absolutely support the *World Socialist Web Site*’s call for Israeli workers, socialist movements and all people of good conscience to stand with the indigenous people of Palestine. We have to stand and be counted.”



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