

Mobilize workers against the French police state's ban on opposition to the Gaza genocide!

Alex Lantier
24 April 2024

The *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* (PES) unequivocally condemns the French state's attempt to criminalize expressions of solidarity defending Gaza against genocide by the Israeli state. Those speaking out against the genocide are being systematically threatened with prison terms, bans on public activity, and far-right violence.

General Confederation of Labor (CGT) union official Jean-Paul Delescaut was condemned to one year in prison suspended sentence. Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the France Unbowed (LFI) party saw his meetings in defense of Delescaut banned and was jostled by far-right thugs when he held a meeting at Sciences-Po university. Rima Hassan, an LFI candidate in the European elections, and Anasse Kazib of the Morenoite *Révolution permanente* (RP) group, are both summoned for police interviews on suspicion of "apologetics for terrorism."

This is a vicious, systematic campaign of repression and slander, aimed ultimately at the working class. It seeks to silence any expression of the mass opposition among workers and youth, in France and internationally, to the systematic murder of tens of thousands of defenseless civilians in hospitals, refugee camps, and distributions of food to Gaza's starving people.

The PES has irreconcilable political differences with the CGT's Stalinist bureaucracy, the populism of LFI, and the pseudo-left RP group. However, it defends on principle their democratic rights and freedom of expression against the French police state. To oppose the genocide committed in Gaza with the support of the French government and its NATO allies, and to defend its own democratic rights, the working class must be alerted and mobilized against this political repression.

Delescaut's conviction was based on his distribution of a statement, three days after the October 7 Gaza uprising. Pointing to repeated United Nations rulings that Israel's

16-year occupation and blockade of Gaza is illegal under international law, this statement said: "The horrors of illegal occupation piled up. Since Saturday [October 7], they are receiving the response they provoked."

The courts ruled that this statement could "lessen moral condemnation" of the Gaza uprising and encourage anti-Semitism in France, which it claimed is principally caused by "the displacement of this conflict onto the territory" of France.

What must be the target of condemnation, however, is the genocide that is underway in Gaza, with the support of the NATO imperialist powers who are arming the Israeli state.

As for the claim that the principal cause of anti-Semitism in France is opposition to the oppression of the Palestinians and the genocide in Gaza, this is a political and historical lie. Its main source is the official promotion of far-right forces like Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) or Eric Zemmour's Reconquest party. While Zemmour has openly defended the Vichy French regime's deportation of Jews during World War II, the RN was founded by Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who trivialized the Holocaust as a "detail" of history.

The political establishment has integrated these forces into official politics and legitimizes the heritage of fascism. As he ordered riot police to assault mass "yellow vest" protests against social inequality in 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron hailed Vichy dictator Marshal Philippe Pétain as a "great soldier." He is now discussing sending troops to Ukraine, where the NATO powers have armed far-right units like the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion to the teeth to fight Russia.

To the extent that the Israeli genocide in Gaza encourages hatred of Jews in France, this can only be fought through a struggle to unify workers of all origins,

including Jewish and Muslim workers, in opposition to the genocide and the French state's complicity in it. The struggle against anti-Semitism cannot be left to the French police state machine, whose political sympathies go largely to the far right and which is trying to strangle opposition to the genocide in Gaza.

Those now targeted for police repression are not far-right politicians appealing to anti-Semitism, but forces who received millions of votes from left-wing voters hostile to genocide and racial hatreds.

In the 2022 presidential elections, Mélenchon received 8 million votes, largely concentrated in working class districts of France's major cities, where voters sought to express opposition to both Macron and Le Pen. After two of his meetings in solidarity with Delescaut were banned in Lille, Mélenchon held a meeting at the Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po) in Paris. On his way into the meeting, students of the far-right Inter-University Union and Némésis groups grabbed his clothing and screamed that he was "complicit with Hamas."

At Sciences-Po, Mélenchon criticized the bans on his meetings, denouncing "the vast chain of cowardice of those who give up before even fighting," and who "capitulate to pressure [and] fall on their knees."

Police will interview Rima Hassan, a lawyer of Palestinian heritage running as LFI European candidate, on suspicion of apologetics for terrorism, because she tweeted statements like: "For the river to the sea, we want to liberate ALL Palestinians." She also retweeted a picture sent by Israeli troops of her name written on a bomb about to be dropped on Gaza, adding that Israel has "the world's most immoral" army.

Anasse Kazib, a rail union official and former presidential candidate of the Morenoite RP organization, underwent a hostile police interview on suspicion of support for terrorism last week. He reported: "I read a statement recalling my support for Palestine and decided to remain silent during the interrogation, they had 7 pages of questions... They asked about my life, the groups of which I am a member. The procedure is highly politicized, they said dozens of people were already interviewed or will be interviewed in the coming weeks."

The charges against Delescaut and allegations against Kazib were brought by the French Jewish Youth (JFJ), a far right youth group that re-tweets material from Eric Zemmour and Donald Trump. After Kazib was released from the interview, the JFJ threatened him in a tweet, stating: "This is just the beginning, @AnasseKazib. We always keep our promises."

Such organizations have no broader support in France or across Europe, where there is overwhelming opposition to the Gaza genocide. They can pursue this policy of political intimidation in alliance with the police state only because this opposition is not being actively mobilized in struggle. This is why it is critical to speak out, and to fight to mobilize the working class in strikes and protests against genocide in Gaza and to defat all state efforts to suppress opposition to the crimes of the Zionist regime and its imperialist backers.

Workers cannot wait for LFI or the CGT bureaucracy to initiate such a movement, which they will not do. Indeed, they acquiesced to the shut-down by the union bureaucracies of a mass strike movement last year against Macron's pension cuts, which he imposed without any parliamentary vote in the face of overwhelming popular opposition. Having cut workers living standards, Macron is now supporting a genocide, again with contempt for the will of the people.

Strikes, protests and meetings opposing the genocide must be organized, and linked to the growing international movement of opposition to the genocide. This includes Google workers who have been fired and students at US universities threatened with police repression after speaking out against the genocide.

Above all, this requires building an international, revolutionary Marxist leadership in the working class opposed to genocide and imperialist war. The International Committee of the Fourth International will be holding its International May Day Online Rally on this subject this year. The PES calls on readers to register at wsws.org/mayday and widely promote the rally.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact