

May Day 2025

Ending the Gaza genocide requires the fight for socialism

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This speech was given by Socialist Equality Party (UK) National Committee member Jean Shaoul at the International May Day 2025 Online Rally, held Saturday, May 3.

Workers and youth all over the world have watched in horror, and mounting anger, the greatest crime of the 21st century—Israel’s slaughter of the defenceless Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel has dropped 70,000 tonnes of explosives, equivalent to six Hiroshimas, killing at least 51,000 people. 70 percent of verified deaths have been women and children.

This figure excludes the tens of thousands buried under the rubble or who never made it to hospital. For every direct death, researchers estimate there may be between 3 and 15 indirect deaths due to illness, disease, and lack of medical treatment, drugs, food and clean water. All told, the real figure is likely to be more than 200,000.

More than 1.9 million people, or 90 percent of the population, have been internally displaced. Public and social infrastructure lie in ruins.

This mass slaughter is deliberate policy. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invoked the biblical story of the destruction of the Amalekites. Former Defence Minister Gallant referred to the Palestinians as “human animals.” Defence Minister Katz imposed a “complete blockade on Gaza,” promising to deliver only “destruction.” Israel has set up a government agency for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, with Trump’s plan as its blueprint.

Netanyahu has the backing of all the imperialist powers. The United States, first under Biden and now under Trump, has taken the lead, as part of their plans

to secure control of the resource-rich Middle East, plans which now threaten all-out war with Iran. They will tolerate no opposition to their crimes. Lying charges of “antisemitism” are used to brutally suppress protests against genocide and silence dissenting voices.

Israel’s Zionist regime is not imperialism’s only ally in the Middle East. The Arab states have not lifted a finger to help the Palestinians as they work with Washington to police their own populations, extend trade with Israel and, in the case of Egypt and Jordan, act as its border police.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas spoke for them all when he blamed Hamas for the slaughter, denouncing them as “sons of bitches” for not capitulating to the demands of Trump and Netanyahu.

Israel’s government of racists and fascists, committed to an expansionist Israel and apartheid rule, is not an aberration, as Netanyahu’s “democratic” critics within Israel declare. These critics too backed the assault on Gaza. It is the culmination of Israel’s decades-long suppression of the Palestinians and repeated wars against its neighbours.

Gaza stands as a searing indictment of the entire Zionist project. The foundation of the state of Israel was portrayed as the answer to the Nazi persecution of the Jews that ended in the Holocaust. It would supposedly provide them with a safe haven. But it was realised in the form of a capitalist state that dispossessed another people and was maintained through war and repression.

Israel developed into a society torn by deep social inequality and divisions, dominated by far-right settlers and religious fundamentalists, with Arabs as second-class citizens. The Jewish people, long associated with

progressive movements, above all the international socialist movement, are now implicated in the brutal oppression of an entire people.

The Israeli state does not represent the interests of the Jewish working class, let alone world Jewry. It is the political instrument of a corrupt clique of billionaire gangsters, who rule a military garrison policing the region on Washington's behalf.

Millions have marched and rallied in defence of the Palestinians. But this cannot succeed through moral appeals to any imperialist power or capitalist government. There must be a turn to the working class and to the methods and politics of class struggle.

These past weeks, Moroccan dockworkers have boycotted ships supplying Israel, in the latest example of such class-based action. Dockers and airport ground crew in Greece, Belgium, Spain and India have mounted similar boycotts.

In Israel, Tel Aviv has seen protests of thousands holding up pictures of hostages and murdered Gazan children--echoing the call heard on Holocaust Memorial Day, “Never again means never again for anyone!”

The conditions exist to end national divisions between workers and develop a mass socialist movement against genocide and war.

But this means breaking with the rotten social democratic, Stalinist and nationalist parties. It means ending the trade union bureaucracies' stranglehold over the working class. But above all, it means building a new leadership that takes as its own rallying call Karl Marx's famous dictum: “Workers of the world, unite!”



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