

Oppose Starmer's plans for war against Iran!

Socialist Equality Party (UK)

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The Socialist Equality Party calls for the broadest industrial and political mobilisation of the working class to stop Keir Starmer's Labour government dragging Britain into war with Iran.

Starmer has made clear there are advanced preparations for the UK to intervene militarily alongside Israel and the United States in an unprovoked, illegal imperialist war with consequences that could dwarf NATO's ongoing proxy war in Ukraine and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The 2003 Gulf War led to one million deaths in Iraq. Today, the heirs of Tony Blair, who dragged the UK into war using the lie that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction", are coordinating a military build-up in the Middle East with the Trump administration. They are supporting Israel's criminal and escalatory bombing of Iranian energy infrastructure, the national broadcaster, hospitals and residential areas, nuclear facilities, missile defences and command structures.

The potential for global escalation, with China, Russia and even regional powers such as Pakistan becoming involved, is immense.

The US-Israeli war on Iran is an act of brazen criminality. Trump has asserted "complete and total control of the skies over Iran", has issued a direct threat to murder Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and demanded Tehran's "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER."

The scale of US operations was indicated by Trump's chilling declaration on Truth Social that "IRAN CAN NOT HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON ... Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran!" Footage is circulating of massive queues of traffic along motorways as people attempt to flee.

After meeting with Starmer and other G7 leaders in Canada, the US President departed early to meet with US national security staff in the White House Situation Room. The USS Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group is en

route to the Middle East, carrying more than 60 aircraft and over 5,000 personnel, to join the USS Carl Vinson.

All claims that Starmer is seeking "restraint, calm and a return to diplomacy" are a contemptible fraud.

A direct participant in Israel's genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza, Starmer's government has supplied four times as many weapons to Israel in its first three months in office than the Conservatives did in four years, including parts for the strategically vital F35 fighter jets bombing Gaza. RAF surveillance flights are helping to organise mass murder and ethnic cleansing, while Britain has joined the US in bombing the Houthis in Yemen for attacking shipping bound for Israel.

The imperialist apologists and accomplices of genocide have cited ad nauseum the lie that Israel has acted in "self-defence". Now Israel's "right to defend itself" is being employed to sanction an unprovoked war against Iran, with claims that UK "assets" must be protected by a massive military buildup in the Middle East.

Speaking on his way to the G7 summit Saturday, Starmer said, "We are moving assets to the region, including jets... We do have long-standing concerns about the nuclear program that Iran has, and we do recognize Israel's right to self-defence." His Chancellor Rachel Reeves told Sky TV, "We have, in the past, supported Israel when there have been missiles coming in."

Additional Typhoon planes are being deployed to the RAF's Akrotiri base on Cyprus, as well as refuelling aircraft. Troops from Royal Artillery units specialising in air defence are also being readied for deployment, military sources told the *Daily Mail*, which added, "Any incoming Iranian or Hezbollah ordnance could be eliminated using Sky Sabre, a surface-to-air defensive weapon system." The *Mail* explicitly described RAF jets being used as "part of Israel's panoply of defensive assets."

Starmer has no mandate for war on Iran. The military

build-up in the Middle East is proceeding over the heads of the British people, who are being denied any say on decisions that threaten to set the Middle East ablaze.

Hated even before he came to power for his support for the Gaza genocide, and taking office with the lowest ever vote for an incoming government, Starmer's support has plummeted still further as he imposes savage austerity to pay for ramped-up military spending.

He has seized on war to deflect explosive social tensions outwards. He came to power seeking to place the UK at the centre of NATO's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, with his proposals for a new "coalition of the willing" and "boots on the ground and planes in the air." Now he wants to launch war against Iran without even the formality of a parliamentary debate.

Starmer and his cabinet of Blairite warmongers can only act because of the complicity of Labour's "left", reduced to a couple of dozen loyal "critics" who have done nothing and will do nothing to oppose Starmer's agenda. This leaves former party leader Jeremy Corbyn and the Stop the War Coalition (STWC), who have driven millions of workers and youth opposed to genocide and war into a political dead end.

For almost two years, mass demonstrations have been told that the Gaza genocide can be ended by placing pressure on Labour and other imperialist governments to end support for Israel. Only weeks ago, the STWC was claiming success, citing the pro-forma criticisms of Starmer, French President Macron and Canada's Mark Carney of the stepped-up ethnic cleansing in Gaza as proof the government was distancing itself from Israel!

Despite being expelled from the Labour Party, Corbyn continues to channel mass opposition behind this pro-imperialist party, promoting illusions of a Damascene conversion by the Blairites, declaring that "our government" ending "its complicity in Israeli war crimes... is how we bring about urgent de-escalation, end the genocide and stop the world from being dragged into a catastrophic, nuclear war," and sermonising that "We are all human beings on one planet. Surely that is enough to try and bring about a world of peace."

Starmer and Trump are dragging humanity towards a potentially catastrophic war, yet Corbyn still offers nothing but moral appeals to war criminals. Even when he led the Labour Party, backed by millions of workers and young people, he refused any challenge to the Blairites, allowing a free vote on bombing Syria, backing NATO membership and the Trident nuclear weapons system. From his enforced position outside the party, he only

speaks vaguely of cobbling together some new reformist electoral vehicle in time for the next general election.

Genocide and war can only be defeated through the independent political mobilisation of the working class in a global anti-war movement on socialist foundations. It is the international working class, the most powerful social force on earth, and not Tehran, Moscow or Beijing, that must defeat the drive of the imperialist powers to redivide the world between them.

That the conditions exist for such a global counteroffensive was powerfully confirmed by last weekend's eruption of mass popular opposition to Trump's assault on migrants, his warmongering and efforts to establish a presidential dictatorship. Millions took to the streets across the United States, defying threats of violent repression.

The SEP supports all mass opposition to genocide and war, including Saturday's national protest in London. But we call on those taking part to pursue their fight based on the methods of class struggle. Return to your workplaces and universities to argue for and organise strikes and the blocking all movements of military personnel!

The best way for the British working class to come to the defence of their Iranian and Palestinian brothers and sisters is to mount a systematic industrial and political offensive against the Starmer government and its co-conspirators in the trade union bureaucracy sabotaging their struggles as they back rearmament and war.

The demands must be raised: Hands off Iran! End the Gaza genocide! Arrest the war criminals in Tel Aviv, London, Washington, Paris and Berlin! Withdraw British military forces from the Middle East and use the billions wasted on military spending to provide humanitarian relief for the Palestinian people and to meet the vital needs of the working class for health and social care, public education and welfare.

The enemy of British workers is not the Iranian people but the billionaire oligarchy plundering society's wealth.



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