

22 May 2024

Conference fringe hears why Palestinian freedom is a union issue

Why it is vital for trade unionists to support Palestine was set out at an emotional conference fringe.

The fringe at lunchtime today (22) heard that PCS was the first British trade union to condemn both the Hamas attacks and hostage-taking and the Israeli government's attacks on the people of Gaza.

We have stood at the forefront of the movement in the campaign for a ceasefire in Gaza since the war began over six months ago.

Louise Regan from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign told delegates that "right now the Palestinian people are in darkness but we know that they will rise again."

Looking to the future she said PSC and its supporters wanted to "put all our energy working towards a day when Palestine will finally be free."

Lyndsey German of the Stop The War Coalition underlined that showing solidarity with Palestine was a trade union issue for 2 reasons: "It is an international issue which affects us all. In this country there is no distinction between foreign and domestic policy. Secondly, remember that if you don't stand with someone when the boot is on their neck the people who put the boot on your neck will try to put it on yours next."

Marwan Yaghi, diplomat political officer, UK Palestinian Mission, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, said that the people of Palestine were grateful for the support of trade unions.

PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote said PCS members should be proud of supporting the Palestinian people. "For as long as it takes this union will continue to the marching, protesting and boycotting," she said.

Fran read a poem by Ghassan Kanafani to end the meeting:

"I wish children didn't die.

I wish they would be temporarily elevated to the skies until the war ends.

Then they would return home safe,

And when their parents ask them:

'Where were you?'

They'd say: 'We were playing with the clouds.'"

Find out more about PCS conference on our [dedicated web page](#) and follow the latest updates on our website and on social media with the hashtag **#PCSADC**