



## Jeremy Corbyn: Gaza, Nuclear War & Why Movements Must Rise Now

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**Abby Martin (AM):** So Bernie Sanders was very close to the presidency. You, of course – we know what happened – you were very close being prime minister. It does seem like there are limitations within the confines of the Democratic Party, obviously the Labour Party. It's amazing that you left and that you started your own Left party. We see what the Democratic party is doing to Mamdani in New York. What is your message to people outside of electoralism? Of course, it's important, but clearly not the only path.

**Jeremy Corbyn (JC):** Politics comes from lots of things, but basically it comes from the power of community and the power of organisation of workers in their own communities. And what I was trying to do as leader of the Labour Party was to turn the Labour Party into a community organising machine. And I appointed community organisers and started down that road. It was the greatest opposition I got to anything within the labour party hierarchy was community organising because they felt threatened by it. The other greatest opposition I got from the establishment was essentially my world and global view because what they did not want was somebody like me on the UN Security Council expressing my view that the occupation of Palestine has to end, for example, that nuclear weapons are an abomination of the highest possible order and if we want to live in a peaceful world we should stop spending two and a half trillion dollars a year on arms and start converting over to a different process.

Through our peace and justice project which I set up after the last election we've produced a book called *The Monstrous Anger of the Guns* and that comes from the Wilfred Owen poem of the First World War: What passing-bells for these who die as cattle? — Only the monstrous anger of the guns. And it's from *Anthem for a Doomed Youth*, describing how soldiers were just mowed down in the First World War. That's now happening in Gaza, it's happening in Russia and Ukraine, it's happening in Sudan, DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and so on. We've got to move to a more peaceful world, and that won't be achieved while we allow global arms trade corporations to have such influence over government. I mean in the USA the influence over the federal government is enormous, the influence over

the British government is enormous and I'll give an example of where I got opposition. I banned all arms manufacturing companies from attending the Labour Party conference, they used to have promotional stalls there, I've banned them all. Wow – the opposition I got and the abuse I got was phenomenal for that. And that was just over them not allowing them to come and push their wares. So you have to be able to stand up.

But political change does not come around just within the parliamentary system; I mean that in its widest sense. Be it national parliaments, federal parliaments, mayoralities or anything else. It comes from mass movements on the ground. It's not on either or – it's both. And if you don't have the mass movement on the ground, you will achieve nothing in the halls of power, if you like. If you do have that mass movement, things can change. And what's so exciting at the moment, in all the horrors of what the Palestinian people are suffering, in all the horrors they're suffering, is a global movement in their support. We're here tonight in Bogota, packed hall here, very interesting, very interested audience. 20 years ago in Colombia, that would have been impossible. I was here on delegations 20 years ago in solidarity with trade unions who were facing the most appalling oppression. They would not have been able to organise anything on Palestine. They've won big political changes in Colombia. We now have a government that supports Palestine. That's never happened before. And that's come because of the bravery of the people that were here tonight. And that is repeated all over.

**AM:** You must feel vindicated now that you see this global uprising using Palestine as the cornerstone, as the crux of humanity's collective liberation for all of the decades of your pro-Palestine advocacy and being relentlessly smeared by the establishment.

**JC:** Well, yeah, but I've got a house to live in. I get breakfast every morning. I can live a normal life in that sense. Somebody like me, my age, you or your age, in Gaza – nothing.

**AM:** They don't have that luxury...

**JC:** They don't have the luxury of even water. It's about others and it's our duty, a duty, because we're in a relatively privileged position to use that position to support those people that aren't. That's what it's about.

**AM:** And how do you think Trump is dealing with this situation? What is your message to Trump? And if accountability happens tomorrow, what officials from both of our governments would you like to see on trial?

**JC:** I find Trump fascinating. Because at one level, it's chaotic, at one level it's utterly chaotic. Nobody ever knows what he's going to say or do next. And he enjoys having this chaos around him because that gives him more power because of the unpredictability of it. Yet the bottom line, as far as I can see with Trump, has always been 100% support for Israel. Even at the height of Netanyahu being arraigned before the ICC and the whole country being done under the ICJ, Trump invites Netanyahu to the White House and you see them sitting down having dinner together. What does that say other than complete support for Israel, as

what like would assume to be a military ally of the US?! But in reality US policy on Israel is incredibly dangerous because it actually creates more conflict across the whole region. The US could end the occupation tomorrow. The US could end the bombardment of Gaza tomorrow. Israel could not militarily operate without US support.

**AM:** And lastly, I mean, can you speak to this kind of subservience and collaboration with the UK under the boot of the US empire? I mean these countries collaborating together basically provides such a blanket of impunity and prevents any country from acting because there's a nuclear gun to the head of the world. And ironically, I mean, these are the countries that created these institutions that are just being made a mockery of.

**JC:** The US presence in Britain came briefly during the First World War, then again in the Second World War. At the end of the Second World War the US troops all left. By 1946 they'd all gone, all of them. NATO was formed in 1948 and they came back two years later and US bases were established in Britain. They then discovered it wasn't legal. So they put a law through parliament in 1952 called the Visiting Forces Act. So the visiting forces are allowed to act under their own military law in the UK. And the myth of British independent nuclear weapons was completely broken when the POLARIS system was bought from the US. That was during Kennedy and McMillan's time. And essentially, the whole nuclear weapons systems are American run.

I'm going to Japan next month as a speaker at the 80th commemoration of the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Well, it was appalling and everyone knows how bad it was. Everybody knows how many people were killed immediately. The weapons that were used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were just fireworks compared to what is in one nuclear warhead that we have now. We're in an incredibly dangerous situation. And so I've spent my life opposing nuclear weapons and asking countries that signed, and all of them did, including the USA, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, stand by it, which means no proliferation of nuclear weapons or technology, and that the five declared nuclear weapons states, Britain, France, China, Russia, United States, should all take steps towards disarmament. None of them have done that. Briefly in the 90s there was a reduction in warheads, which was good. Now they're all re-arming.

So a nuclear war, even a limited nuclear war if such a thing is possible, would create a nuclear winter, global famine and global destruction. Just one weapon being fired off would set off a chain of events that is truly terrifying. I said, as leader of the opposition, when pressed very heavily on the media about this, they said, what kind of man are you if you're not prepared to use nuclear weapons? I said, because I'm just somebody that likes people to live. Simple, I just want people to live and I'm not going to start a nuclear war or use a nuclear weapon against a civilian population. And I think we just need to change the language and start thinking about peace. I'll just finish on this: What's security? What's real security? Because if you ask some people, they say, well security, that means we've got to have guns, we've got to have knives, we've got to have tanks, we've got to have rockets, planes, bombs, everything. Okay... For most people around the world, real security would be knowing they've still got a home, the kids have got a school, there's a hospital, a doctor, and

there's clean water. That's security. That's security. I want to bring up my children knowing that that's what security is really about.

**AM:** Thank you so much for all of your tireless work and advocacy, really appreciate it. You are a hero of mine.

**END**

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