

France: Thousands demonstrate against war in Lebanon and Gaza

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Some 5,000 people marched through Paris Saturday to protest the destruction being wrought on the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples by Israel with the full backing of the United States.

The demonstration was organised by nationalist groups such as AFPS (the France Palestine Solidarity Association), the MSRPP (Movement in Support of the Resistance of the People of Palestine), the Collective of Muslims of France, and several Franco-Lebanese associations.

The march, whose participants were mostly of Middle Eastern origin, was headed by the MRAP banner “Long Live the Lebanese Resistance.”

Also participating were Act Against the War, formed in opposition to the Iraq war, Americans Against War, the French anti-racist organisation MRAP (Movement against Racism and for Friendship Between the Peoples), and Jews and Arabs United.

The Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR) and the Parti des travailleurs (PT) had contingents, as did the Communist Party of France and the Greens.

Both the Communist Party and the Greens participated in the Plural Left government (1997-2002) of Socialist Party Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. The Socialist Party leader earned the hatred of Arab resistance movements. On a visit to Bir-Zeit University in the West Bank in 2002, he was hit by a stone after having branded Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation.

No banners criticised the cynical role of the Gaullist government of President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, which, in 2004, joined with the United States to push through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, which ordered the evacuation of Syrian troops from Lebanon and demanded that Lebanese militias—meaning Hezbollah—be disarmed.

This resolution set the stage for the current US-Israeli aggression.

The Communist Party leaflet distributed on the demonstration attempted to portray European and French imperialism and the United Nations as willing and capable of intervening in favour of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. It stated: “The challenge posed for the International Community is considerable. France and its European partners must rise to the situation and show initiative. An international conference, in the framework of the UN, must be called....”

The Stalinists’ leaflet statement also declared: “An international force under the aegis of the UN should be charged with imposing a ceasefire and making the area secure.” This echoes the line of the French government and can only mean the disarming of Hezbollah in the interests of French and American imperialism and Israel.

World Socialist Web Site supporters gave out thousands of copies of the WSWWS editorial board statement on the Rome conference on Lebanon, entitled “Appeasement 2006: Europe capitulates to American-Israeli aggression.”

It was received with interest by demonstrators and was the only leaflet placing the war in its world context and putting forward a socialist and internationalist perspective.

WSWS supporters spoke with demonstrators. One said, “The state of Israel should be destroyed. At the same time, I am not against Jewish people.” He agreed that the United States was behind this war and was seeking to dominate the entire region.

Another demonstrator said, “Our brothers are dying there. We want to help them, but it is impossible. That is why we came here to protest against this war crime.”



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