

French workers, students denounce Israeli genocide in Gaza

Our reporters

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On Saturday, as millions around the world protested against the genocide in Gaza, including 800,000 people rallying in London, pro-Palestinian demonstrations took place across France. Thousands mobilized in Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Nantes, Lille, and other major cities. Tens of thousands marched in Paris.

This global movement, mobilizing millions of workers and youth in cities from Jakarta in Indonesia to Washington D.C., fights against the support for Israel of all capitalist governments, especially the imperialist governments of NATO. As calls for strikes across Europe to stop military deliveries to Israel circulate, these mobilizations express an increasingly open anti-fascist and anti-capitalist conflict of the international working class against the ruling elites.

Protesters interviewed by the WSWS in Paris on Saturday and the previous week denounced Macron's support for Israel, affirming their support for the working-class struggles against the genocide in Gaza.

Ahmed Berrahal, a transportation worker, said, "We are asking for a ceasefire. Gaza is being bombed... day and night. It's a genocide. We have a government that pretends it's calling for a ceasefire, but then tells Israel 'you can defend yourselves.' But 10,000 dead in a month, and most are women and children, that's not a war. They simply want to exterminate all Palestinians and Gazans."

He condemned the bloody wars of NATO countries in the Middle East since the Stalinist dissolution of the USSR and the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991. He pointed out the hypocrisy of France, which attacked Libya in 2011 allegedly to save its people, but now stands by as Israel massacres defenseless civilians in Gaza.

He said, "When (Libyan leader Muammar) Gaddafi said he was going to attack his people, France bizarrely

went to Libya and smashed the country. We smashed Iraq, we smashed Syria. But today, when Gaza is attacked day and night, all the Europeans watch and do not speak. ... France has its hands very red with blood today!"

"If we say that we must help the Palestinians, we are treated as terrorists," he continued. "Today we see that the terrorists are on the Israeli side. They are the ones bombing day and night, they are even bombing hospitals. ... They cut off [the Palestinians'] electricity, water, they are dying of hunger, of cold. For me, it's genocide, but for the French government, it's not a genocide."

Ahmed denounced Macron's trip to Israel to applaud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: "If Netanyahu is his buddy, we can say that he is a terrorist too. He validates that we can kill children day and night, so in my opinion, they are all in the same clique."

Ahmed linked Macron's support for Israel to his violent suppression of mass strikes against his pension reform, which he imposed without a vote despite overwhelming popular opposition. Ahmed said, "I participated in the movement against the pension reforms, I was on strike for two months and I saw what happened. We were beaten, some were sent to court. This government is twisted."

Asked by the WSWS about international calls for struggles and strikes to block military resupply to Israel, Ahmed said: "No weapons should be delivered to Israel. Israel is already over-armed against people fighting with stones. ... Israel, it's the camp of people who colonize countries, who kill people day and night. Of course, the workers are on the side of Gaza. This is normal."

Manon, a young student, said, "There are few ways I can help stop the massacre of the Palestinians, and

coming here is one way to show that it's absolutely awful, it's a crime against humanity. Half of the population in Gaza are children or minors, and the fact that they are being massacred with bombs, it makes no human sense. If a nation can do this with total impunity, it's something monstrous."

Manon also denounced Macron's threats to ban pro-Palestinian demonstrations: "It's against freedom of thought and opinion, it shows that the French government is in favor of the massacre of Palestinians."

She also applauded international calls for strikes to stop arms shipments to Israel: "France has taken the side of the Israelis because it benefits more than helping the Palestinian people. There must be demonstrations everywhere. We must stop the weapons to stop the massacre."

Azura, a healthcare worker, said, "We are in the digital age in 2023, and we have realized that we can witness, literally, in 2023, a genocide, a war crime against a defenseless, starving, thirsty, besieged population, undergoing bombardment night and day. It's crazy, we can witness this from our couch. We just have to turn off Netflix... there are atrocities against women, children, entire families. We have reached a stage where we wonder where humanity is."

Expressing her horror as Palestinian doctors don't even have painkillers for their patients, she voiced her anger against the French government: "There will be consequences, history will remember what happened. There will be convictions."

Jean-Guy Greilsamer, a member of the French Jewish Union for Peace, condemned the "appalling" action of the Israeli government which has "the will to make a people disappear from its territory."

He continued, "The situation is extremely serious for three reasons, first the survival of the Palestinian people. Then, regarding Jewish populations, the Israeli regime claims to represent all Jewish populations, as if all Jews supported the settlers and this regime whose ministers have openly displayed their genocidal intentions. This gives an image of Jews that, inevitably, promotes anti-Semitism. The third reason is the international situation... the worst is not excluded, the war is internationalizing."

He also attacked the government's threats, which led to the arrest of a UJFP member in Strasbourg: "The government wants to go after the anti-Zionists. We are

a Jewish anti-Zionist association. Israel's supporters sometimes tell us, when we distribute leaflets in the street, 'You are the worst. You are traitors, you hate yourselves'."

He highlighted the enthusiasm that the international movement against the genocide in Gaza is provoking: "What interests us a lot is that in the United States, there is a very significant portion of the American Jewish population that is rebelling, even invading Congress and the central station in New York. In this Jewish population, many young people refuse the Israeli regime."

Greilsamer applauded calls to block the delivery of arms to Israel: "French unions should do the same. It should progress, up to blocking arms deliveries. The workers' struggles and the Palestinian people are both dealing with imperialist, colonialist regimes of domination, segregation, that oppose populations against each other. On one side there are dominant authorities practicing policies of segregation towards workers, colonized people, and on the other, a resistance develops."



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