

Paris police ban protests on Algeria as it presents UN resolution vs. Gaza genocide

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Sunday, as Algeria prepared to present a UN resolution against the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, the Paris police prefecture banned all protests related to Algeria. That day, a group of organizations including the Franco-Algerian Friendship Association had planned a march celebrating the martyrs of the 1954–1962 Algerian war for independence from France, as well as the “hirak,” the 2019 mass protests against Algeria's military regime.

The Paris prefecture announced: “Due to the threat of grave dangers to public order, the police prefect is banning all protests planned for Sunday, February 18, commemorating the ‘Chahid’ [martyrs] on the one hand, or the ‘hirak’ on the other.”

This ban is a fundamental attack on democratic rights by the French police state. The struggle of Algeria's workers and oppressed masses against French imperialism, which waged a war that cost a half-million lives and sent 2.5 million people to detention camps, was one of the great revolutionary experiences of the 20th century. Opposition to Algeria's military regime, with its deep ties to imperialism, is a necessary continuation of this struggle.

Above all, however, the police attack on the constitutionally protected right to protest aims to strangle working class opposition to the genocide in Gaza, as well as to imperialist war on Russia and capitalist dictatorship in Algeria and France. It takes place as mass protests against the Gaza genocide unfold in the United States, Europe and around the world.

The police prefecture's statement that the demonstration threatened public order was a provocative lie. The protest organizers proclaimed their intention to hold a peaceful protest, and then immediately agreed to the police ban. But more broadly, the ban amounts to an admission by the ruling class that it sees working class opposition to genocide and war as a revolutionary threat.

WSWS journalists went to the site of the banned demonstration. They interviewed protest organizers, who were there to ask anyone who had come for the protest without seeing the ban, which was only announced at 12:15 a.m., to quietly go home.

Amine Dib of the Franco-Algerian Friendship Association told the WSWS:

We wanted to mobilize for the memory of martyrs of the Algerian revolution, which was above all a struggle against imperialism and colonialism. And among those struggles, there was Lieutenant [and Algerian Communist Party member Henri] Maillot, who was called a traitor for giving weapons to the National Liberation Front (FLN). He replied before his execution with a very beautiful letter saying, “I never betrayed France. My only homeland is Algeria and the working class.”

Dib denounced the ban on protests against Gaza genocide:

In France, there is an iron grip, a total ban. Judaism is a great tradition, and the Holocaust took place. But having suffered does not give one the right to massacre others ... I want it to be clear, for us, being anti-Zionist means being anti-nationalist and anti-fascist. Just as I am against Arab nationalism, I am against Zionism, very simply.

The French ruling class, Dib said, wants to tell the French people that “insulting Arabs and Muslims will improve your life. But we are the ones who get up and empty their trash cans every day.”

Nevertheless, Dib said his association was “responsible” and would obey the police ban on protests.

He criticized the contrast between French police bans on peaceful protests and French support for Islamist militias in wars for regime-change in Libya, Syria and beyond:

I will never understand why the French state supports Islamist terrorists ... But we, as Algerian citizens, we come from everywhere to protest. But we were banned from protesting.

Dib stressed Algerian workers' opposition to NATO wars in the Middle East and against Russia in Ukraine:

For some time, they have been trying to trap Algeria to drag it into absurd wars like in Libya and Iraq. ... France signs various petitions and insults Algeria every day. But I am against war with Russia, no weapons should go to either Russia or Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the interview with Dib sharply revealed the political problems raised by the struggle against genocide and imperialist war. This struggle requires the unification and revolutionary mobilization of the international working class, the only force capable of opposing capitalist police states. However, Dib opposed this position of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the leadership of the Trotskyist movement.

Dib said he opposed "Trotskyites." He called for patriotic opposition to imperialism, based on an attempt to reconcile his reading of Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party in the October Revolution, and the bourgeois existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger. He proposed no strategy to oppose the French police state's ban on protests in defense of Gaza.

The necessary political foundation of a struggle against genocide and imperialism is the Trotskyist movement's struggle against Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism. The October 1917 Revolution was founded on the theory of Permanent Revolution formulated by Leon Trotsky. The struggle against imperialism and for democratic rights requires a revolutionary struggle of the working class to take power and to build a socialist society on a world scale.

The coming to power of Algeria's current bourgeois nationalist regime in 1962 reflected the decades-long impact of the betrayals of this conception by the Stalinist bureaucracy and its theory of "socialism in one country." The "Popular Front" Stalinism formed with the liberal bourgeoisie in France implied a rejection of revolutionary struggle against capitalism and French colonialism. The Popular Front's support for colonial rule starting in 1934 discredited Stalinism and created an opening for the bourgeois-nationalist ancestors of today's Algerian regime.

The ICFI and its French section, the Parti de l'égalité socialiste (PES), defends the continuity of Trotskyism against Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism. The ICFI was founded in 1953 in opposition to forces led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel, who argued that Stalinists and bourgeois nationalists would provide the workers with revolutionary leadership. This argument was utterly exposed only three years later, in 1956. The Stalinist French Communist Party voted credits for the French war on Algeria's bourgeois-nationalist National

Liberation Front (FLN), which built Algeria's current regime.

Today, the PES opposes the Pabloite New Anticapitalist Party and all those who broke with the ICFI and Trotskyism, like the Lambertiste Workers Party (PT), to ally with Stalinist or social-democratic bureaucracies. It is irreconcilably hostile to their defense of various imperialist wars waged by France and its NATO imperialist allies—a policy these parties base on petty-bourgeois identity politics of race and gender.

To justify his opposition to Trotskyism, Dib concisely summarized his bitter experiences with Pabloite middle class forces in the union bureaucracies. He said:

Today the trade unions, whatever their colors, are no longer interested in the workers. They have become bourgeois bureaucracies. They cry about how hard it is to be bourgeois and Arab, bourgeois and black, bourgeois and lesbian or bourgeois and gay. Today the working class is being plunged into misery ... For them, it just means they can write theses at the University of Paris or the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS).

But this false identification of Trotskyism and Marxism with Pabloism must be rejected. The indubitable betrayals and crimes of the bureaucracies and the petty-bourgeois parties do not justify rejecting a Marxist perspective for the unification of the international working class in struggle against genocide and war. Those who argue otherwise try to write out of history the ICFI's struggle for Trotskyism against Pabloism.

The PES insists that the necessarily international working class struggle against war and genocide cannot proceed on a "patriotic" basis. "The workingmen have no country," Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained in the *Communist Manifesto* 176 years ago. This remains the foundation of the necessary unification of workers around the world to take power out of the hands of the capitalist ruling elites who are plunging the world into genocide and war.



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