

Against the US-Israeli War on Lebanon

Monday 31 July 2006

1. Israel's war in Lebanon is the latest stage in the imperialist offensive mounted by the United States and its allies since 11 September 2001. The conquest of Iraq was intended to unleash a process of "regime change" that would remove the obstacles to US domination of the Middle East. Instead, thanks to the resistance in Iraq, the Pentagon finds itself bogged down in a guerrilla war that it cannot win.

The Bush administration has therefore set itself the goal of removing the Islamic Republican regime in Iran, whose influence in Iraq has grown since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. This would reverse the blow to US interests in the Middle East struck by the Iranian Revolution of 1978-9. Israel's offensive against Hizbollah therefore offers Washington an opportunity to eliminate a powerful anti-imperialist force that has close links with Iran. The complicity of George W Bush and his closest accomplice, Tony Blair, in this war of aggression is shown by the role that the US and Britain have played in blocking the call by the overwhelming majority in the United Nations for an immediate ceasefire.

2. International diplomacy has centred on this call and on the introduction into Lebanon of a multinational "peacekeeping" force to separate the two sides. The latter proposal is very dangerous. Bush and Olmert initially hoped that a multinational force would consolidate Israel's defeat of Hizbollah. But the stubborn and effective resistance mounted by Hizbollah has made outright military victory for Israel a distant prospect indeed.

In these circumstances, the US and Israel are pressing for a multinational force, perhaps organized by Nato or the European Union, to continue the war against Hizbollah that they are failing to win. Such a force would not be "peacekeepers" but another Western army of occupation alongside those in Iraq and Afghanistan. It must be one of the most urgent tasks of the international radical left to oppose this multinational force. This is especially important in Europe, where several governments, especially the centre-left coalition in Italy, are already negotiating over the basis of such a force.

3. We oppose Israel's war against Lebanon, out of solidarity with the Lebanese people but also because we are against Bush's planned attack on Iran. Some on the left combine a similar position with condemnation of Hizbollah for having attacked and captured Israeli soldiers. We strongly disagree with this stance.

As revolutionary socialists we have many ideological differences with Hizbollah, which is an Islamist party. But Hizbollah developed into a national liberation movement with deep roots in the poorest and most oppressed sections of Lebanese society thanks to the successful guerrilla campaign it mounted against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon during the 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, Hizbollah initiated its latest action partly to help relieve the Palestinians of Gaza, who have been suffering a particularly brutal Israeli siege. Therefore we are happy to join the Arab masses in expressing our solidarity with the fighters of Hizbollah and our hope is that they succeed in defeating the Israeli assault on Lebanon.

4. As socialists and internationalists we see our main responsibility as rallying mass opposition in our own countries to this war. Around the world there have already been a substantial number of protest actions against Israel's battering of Lebanon. More and bigger mobilizations will be needed in coming weeks if the bombardment continues. We pledge ourselves to building the widest possible movement against this war.

The basis of this movement must be the unity of all those who oppose the Israeli offensive, irrespective of the many political disagreements that may exist among them about the Middle East

and about other issues. This movement must be closely linked to the continuing international campaign against the "war on terrorism" and in particular against the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, a campaign whose capacity for mass mobilization has demonstrated the importance of working on the basis of the broadest possible unity.

5. Israel's bombardment of Lebanon starkly illustrates the brutality of imperialism and the suffering it daily inflicts on the world. But, like the occupation of Iraq, it also shows that the US and its allies and clients are not omnipotent - they can be defeated. The Lebanese war can advance Washington's offensive in the region, but it can equally mark a victory for the forces resisting imperialist domination of the Middle East. The internationalist and radical left must throw their weight into the balance to help secure a defeat for imperialism that can weaken the global tyranny of capital.

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Socialist Workers Party (Britain)

Workers Democracy (Cyprus)

Internationale Socialister (Denmark)

Linksruck (Germany)

Sosialistiko Ergatiko Komma (Greece)

Socialist Workers Party (Ireland)

Internationale Socialisten (Netherlands)

Socialist Worker (New Zealand)

International Socialists (Pakistan)

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