

Message of the Manitoba Regional Committee to Ghadarite Festival, Toronto, September 27, 2009

Comrades,

It is a great pleasure for the Manitoba Regional Committee to send our deepest revolutionary greetings to this festival and to all the participants. The struggle against imperialism and colonialism is an integral part of the struggle of the working class for emancipation and the struggle of the oppressed peoples everywhere for sovereignty, human rights and democracy and it is of the utmost importance for progressive and revolutionary people to support each other in this common struggle.

The Ghadarite Movement is deeply rooted in the struggle of the Indian people against British colonialism during the Nineteenth Century and the newly-emerged British Imperialism of the early Twentieth Century. The economic hardships created for the Indian people by colonialism and the political persecution of progressive and revolutionary Indians created Indian émigré communities in many countries

of the world, including Canada and the United States, particularly during the first decades of the Twentieth Century. As was the case with previous and subsequent waves of immigration, the recent immigrants to Canada and the United States were subjected to systematic racism in their adopted countries. The purpose of this racism was two-fold, first to suppress the anti-colonial struggle amongst the immigrants and to prevent them from organizing support for their people back home, and secondly to divide the working class on the basis of race in order to split and weaken the anti-capitalist struggles of the people.

The Ghadarite Movement was established to counteract this two-fold pressure from the capitalist states in North America. It organized the struggle of the Indian people here against the racism of the Canadian and American states and worked tirelessly in

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News Analysis

On the Situation in Iran

Iran held presidential elections on June 12, with incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad running against three other candidates, including Mir-Hossein Mousavi, the former prime minister. Opinion polls conducted by an American polling agency three weeks prior to the election predicted that Ahmadinejad would win with a two-thirds majority. The day after the elections the Iranian electoral board announced that Mr. Ahmadinejad had won the election with 63 percent of the votes cast. Mr. Mousavi contested the results, claiming widespread fraud. His claims were echoed by the European Union, Britain and a number of other governments, as well as by most western news agencies.

Almost immediately after the vote was announced, pro-Mousavi protests broke out in Tehran and other

major Iranian cities and continued for several weeks. Many of the protests were violently attacked by the police and between 30 and 70 people were killed. Many opposition politicians have been arrested and charged with instigating the protests. Most western governments have condemned the suppression of the protesters by the Iranian state, while the most reactionary circles in the U.S. and Israel have used the violence as an excuse to renew calls for the bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities. The Iranian government accuses the U.S. and other western governments of interference in Iranian affairs and of complicity in organizing the protests.

The progressive forces are divided on the issue of whether to support the protests or not. Some cite the

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support of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian people in the homeland. That support included raising funds, as well as sending fighters back home to participate actively in the struggle. Both activities today would be deemed by the Canadian and American states to constitute illegal support for “terrorism”. However, this is not a new phenomenon and the Canadian and American states have actively persecuted the members of the Ghadarite Movement from its inception.

The decline of the British Empire following the First and Second World Wars created a situation in which Britain could no longer hold onto its colonial possessions and India achieved formal independence in 1947. However, this did not put an end to the struggle of the Indian people for sovereignty, human rights and democracy. It merely changed the nature of that struggle and resulted in added complexity. The enemy was no longer just the British colonialists and their Indian collaborators, but also against that strata of the Indian population that made its livelihood from the exploitation and oppression of the Indian working class and peasantry. The anti-feudal, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles merged with the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

As was the case in the final decades of the anti-colonial struggle, the struggle within the new situation was led by the communist movement, which enjoyed enormous support amongst the Indian people. However, a combination of internal weaknesses and external attacks reduced the effectiveness of the communist movement, not only in India, but in many other countries, as well. In India, as in other countries, a section of the communist movement reduced itself to an appendage of the so-called “democratic” bourgeoisie, in India represented by the Congress Party. The split in the International Communist Movement that took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s was reflected within the Indian Communist Movement and a period of extreme disunity of the communist movement emerged. The emergence of the Naxalite Movement during the mid-1960s created two alternatives for the Indian Communist Movement – the path of revolutionary struggle as opposed to the peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism. A section of the communist movement actually sided with the reactionary Indian state in the suppression of the Naxalite Movement.

Within Canada a section of the communist movement, which the Manitoba Regional Committee is proud to have been a part of for the past 40 years,

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immediately supported the Naxalite Movement in India and worked within the Indian immigrant community in Canada and elsewhere to rebuild the Ghadarite Movement as a mechanism of support for the Indian revolution. Since its inception the Manitoba Regional Committee has considered support for the Indian revolution as its sacred internationalist duty and support for the East Indian community in Canada in its struggles against racism and other forms of attacks to be part and parcel of the struggle of the working class for revolution and socialism in Canada.

Comrades, today the struggle of the progressive and revolutionary peoples around the world is extremely complex and difficult. On the one hand, the capitalist system is wracked with crisis and conditions are crying out for revolution and socialism everywhere in the world. On the other hand, the revolutionary forces are divided, isolated and marginalized and, therefore, incapable of responding effectively within this new situation. However, based on its profound confidence in the working class and the lessons of history, the Manitoba Regional Committee remains optimistic that the progressive and revolutionary forces will overcome these temporary difficulties and will succeed in forging a new revolutionary movement of the peoples that will prevail in the struggle against capitalism, imperialism and all forms of reaction. Conferences such as this are part and parcel of the work to rebuild the revolutionary movement.

It is from this perspective that the Manitoba Regional Committee hails the Ghadarite Movement and salutes this conference. The Ghadarite Movement and similar movements within other national minority communities are important contributions to the struggles of the working class and peoples everywhere for sovereignty, human rights and democracy. They weaken our common enemy and provide a sense of pride and dignity not only within the minority communities that give rise to them, but also within the entire working class. Furthermore, by their very nature such movements embody the principle of proletarian internationalism which is the guiding star of the working class movement.

The Manitoba Regional Committee congratulates all of the organizers and participants in this important event and pledges its ongoing support in this common struggle against common enemies.

Workers of all countries, unite!

Inquilab Zindabad!

Manitoba Regional Committee

September 27, 2009

October 5, 2009

Harper Government's Tacit Support for Israel's Racist Visitation Policies

Israel has now created a two-tier visitors' visa process. International visitors with family or businesses in the occupied territories are facing increased restrictions not imposed on any other visitors to Israel.

Canadians of Palestinian ancestry report that Israeli officials have recently begun issuing new and onerous visas to them. The new visas restrict travel to Palestinian areas only and limit those visitors to only one month, while other international visitors are eligible for visas of up to three months.

While the U.S. State Department has condemned the practice, with a spokesperson calling it "unacceptable" and stating that "U.S. citizens should be treated equally regardless of their national origin", the Canadian government has remained silent on the issue. Dozens of Canadian citizens with family or businesses in the Occupied Territories have reported

the new policies are causing them undue hardship.

In a news release issued earlier this month (Sept), the group Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) called on the Harper government to defend the rights of all Canadians. "We cannot allow foreign states to discriminate between our citizens based on their place of birth, ethnic origin, where their family resides or where they choose to conduct their ... business," said CJPME President Tom Woodley.

Given that the U.S. and a number of other western countries have protested the new visa requirements, the Harper government's silence on the issue can only be interpreted as tacit support. Overall, the Harper Conservatives have emerged as the most pro-Israeli government in the West, moving away from a decades-old Canadian policy of at least stated neutrality on this issue.

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anti-U.S. positions of the Iranian government and prior U.S. and European involvement in so-called "colour" revolutions as reasons to oppose the protests and support the Iranian state. Others claim that the protests represent the desire of the Iranian people for democracy and deserve support regardless of the fact that the U.S. and others are trying to use the situation to destabilize Iran and install a regime more favourable to the West.

Of course, any person of conscience must condemn the deadly violence used by the Iranian state against its people. However, the situation is much more complex than the way it is presented by those demanding that everyone should line up behind one side or the other. First, while the government of Iran since the revolution of 1979 has taken consistent stands against the interference of U.S. imperialism in its internal affairs, it cannot be said that it has taken consistent anti-imperialist stands. For example, it supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq. It would be more accurate to describe the stands taken by Iran as nationalistic stands connected with its own desire to establish itself as a regional power within the imperialist system of states. This does not mean that Iran's defence of its own national sovereignty is worthless or reactionary, only that it must be assessed

within the proper context; it does not automatically make Iran a force for human progress.

By the same token, the claims by the opposition leaders and their supporters at home and abroad that they stand for democracy must also be viewed with a skeptical eye. Of course the people of Iran, like people everywhere, aspire for democracy. However, the opposition leaders are all members of the ruling clerical elite. In fact, all candidates for the presidency had to be approved by the Guardian Council and numerous candidates were disqualified from running because they did not meet that body's criteria. So, whatever contradictions exist between Ahmadinejad and the opposition leaders are contradictions within the ruling elite and both sides are trying to mobilize sections of the Iranian people behind themselves. Those contradictions include what attitude to take towards relations with the West, as well as what attitude to take towards the Iranian people. Some of those opposition leaders, including former president Hashemi Rafsanjani, are extremely wealthy and have an interest in increasing trade with the West. They also oppose the populist politics of Ahmadinejad who has increased his popular support by distributing some of Iran's oil wealth amongst the lower economic strata of Iranian society. Some point to this to suggest that

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Ahmadinejad is some kind of closet socialist and compare him to Hugo Chavez. Yet he continues to enjoy the unwavering support of the most powerful of Iran's mullahs, so clearly his "socialist" tendencies serve the long-term interests of the Iranian ruling class and not the interests of the working class and people.

There is a problem with the kind of thinking that says that anyone who opposes U.S. imperialism is progressive and deserves support, just as there is a problem with the kind of thinking that says that anyone who opposes the interests of the U.S. is anti-democratic and pro-terrorist. This kind of black-and-white thinking is a holdover of the Cold War mentality "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". It is this kind of thinking that has put the progressive forces in its current dilemma regarding what stand to take towards Iran and the Iranian elections. On the one hand there is the "anti-imperialist" and "pro-worker" Ahmadinejad whose state is clubbing and killing protestors. On the other hand are the "pro-democracy" opposition leaders who are calling for fair elections and "human rights", but aligning themselves with the West and opposing Ahmadinejad's "share the wealth" domestic policies. Furthermore, in the past, they too used the Iranian state to brutalize and kill those who disagreed with the policies of the regime.

Apart from those involved in the conflict in Iran, the main pressure to take sides in this dispute comes from various Western governments and the Western news media, which have an ongoing campaign to weaken and destabilize Iran. The pressure does not come from the Iranian working class and people whose struggles alone can bring democracy and progress to Iran. Unfortunately, due to a number of factors, not the least of which was the devastating Iran-Iraq war unleashed on the people of Iran and Iraq by the imperialists and their agents, the Iranian working class is temporarily weakened and unable to lead the struggle for democracy. Some organizations claiming to speak on behalf of the Iranian working class have used this weakness as an excuse to call for foreign (i.e. U.S.) military intervention to overthrow the current regime, effectively putting them on the same side as the U.S. and Israel.

One Iranian organization pointed out that both Ahmadinejad and the opposition leaders represented

the interests of the ruling elite and called on the Iranian people to oppose both sides. From the point of view of the working class, this is undoubtedly a correct position to take within the country, however, the progressive forces outside Iran cannot simply condemn everything done by both sides without effectively allying with one or another imperialist power in the process. The issue for us is to support those stands of the Iranian government which tend to strengthen the international struggle against imperialism and oppose those stands which tend to weaken that struggle. There is also an issue that progressive people everywhere should support countries, such as Iran, against big power bullying, regardless of whether or not we agree with the ideology or internal policies of those countries. But it is neither necessary nor wise to take sides in a domestic dispute that reflects contradictions within the ruling class, particularly when the working class stands to gain nothing from the victory of either side. Our support is for the working class and people of Iran against the machinations of the U.S. and other imperialist powers, as well as against the reactionary and anti-democratic rule of the Iranian ruling class. In 1979 the Iranian working class and people overthrew one of the most powerful U.S.-backed dictatorships in the world. We are quite confident that, when the conditions are right, they will repeat that feat and establish a genuine democracy in Iran through their own struggles.

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