

Editorial

On the Importance of the Communist Press

On August 26, 1970 the first issue of *People's Canada Daily News*, the daily newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), came off the presses. Since then CPC(M-L) has marked the last week of August as Party Press week.

People's Canada Daily News began a tradition of communist journalism in Canada which was based both on proletarian partisanship and on the needs of the Canadian revolution. Its proletarian internationalism did not base itself on abstract 'solidarity' with peoples fighting in other parts of the world. Rather, it took up the task of providing concrete assistance to all of those struggles through organizing the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and imperialism on Canadian soil.

There are many who dismiss the importance of the communist and revolutionary press because of its small circulation and limited influence. Others seek to denigrate the communist press by reducing it to the role of a clearing house for the views of others, including many who are sworn enemies of the working class and proletarian revolution. Of course, there is a necessity for a mass communist media, a mass media which fights for the interests of the working class and people. However, such a media will never be created by either bemoaning its weaknesses nor by eliminating its proletarian partisanship or burying that proletarian partisanship under a mountain of bourgeois propaganda.

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B'nai Brith Steps Up Its Campaign Against Civil Rights

On August 15, B'nai Brith Canada issued its second statement calling on the Canadian state to crack down on demonstrations opposing the Israeli invasion of and aggression against Lebanon. Once again, the group is trying to argue that the tens of thousands of Canadians who took part in these rallies, including three held in Winnipeg, were somehow promoting terrorism. B'nai Brith based this conclusion on reports that at a demonstration of several thousand people in Montreal in early August, three or four people were spotted holding pictures of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

In this second statement, B'nai Brith goes a step further in its attempts to criminalize dissent, hinting that the burning of an Israeli flag at a peace rally in Toronto somehow constitutes a violation of

Canadian law. According to B'nai Brith, 'virulently anti-Israel manifestations such as [the] burning of an Israeli flag by cheering crowds at a supposedly pro-peace rally held in Toronto, should be taken as a precursor of future extremist activity if left unchecked.' The statement then quotes the group's Executive Vice President, Frank Dimant: 'We have noticed an alarming trend whereby elements within Canadian society are openly challenging Canadian law to express support for terrorist groups like Hezbollah that are banned in this country.'

Flag burning has been an accepted form of social protest, especially in the peace and anti-imperialist movements, for over 40 years. Repeated attempts to criminalize flag burning by the most backward,

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Venezuela Seeking UN Security Council Seat

In October, elections will take place in the United Nations General Assembly for five non-permanent seats on the Security Council for a two-year term starting January 1, 2007. Venezuela and Guatemala are contesting the one seat which is reserved for Latin America and the Caribbean. This seat is currently held by Argentina. Guatemala was the first to announce its candidacy. It is considered the unofficial candidate of the United States. Venezuela joined the race later. Venezuela wants the seat in order to oppose U.S. hegemony in the region and to oppose the neo-liberal policies of the imperialists in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The United States is saying that the presence of Venezuela on the Security Council would be disruptive and non-consensus seeking. In spite of its veto power on the Security Council, the United States does not want any opposition to its policies within the Council. It is particularly concerned that Venezuela's presence at this time would get in the way of U.S. plans for sanctions against Iran. Venezuela voted against the IAEA resolution drafted by the big five powers which referred Iran to the Security Council in February 2006.

The United States is threatening reprisals against Latin America and Caribbean countries that vote for Venezuela. For example, Washington has agreed to sell F-16 fighter jets to Chile, but is warning that Chilean pilots will not be trained to fly them if the Chilean government supports Venezuela's Security Council bid. One of Chile's largest daily newspapers, *La Tercera*, reported that during a visit by Chilean Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley to the U.S. State Department on April 21, 2006, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that Venezuela's candidacy aims at the heart of U.S. interests and that the United States will not understand a vote by Chile in favour of Venezuela. Rice told the Chilean minister that Chile could fall into a group of losers, against the feelings of the United States, Mexico, part of Central America and almost all of Europe. At the same meeting U.S. Under Secretary of State Robert

Zoellick told Foxley that bilateral relations would be decisively damaged and the costs to Chile in terms of commercial trade would be extremely high.

Hugo Chavez, president of Venezuela, is actively lobbying to win the Security Council seat. In July he took his campaign abroad and visited Iran, Russia, Belarus, Mali, Benin, Qatar and Vietnam. He also met with representatives of the Arab League and African Union. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Cuba, and the fifteen countries that make up the Economic Community of the Caribbean (Caricom) are publicly supporting Venezuela, while Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Colombia are publicly supporting Guatemala. Even though all commentators admit that Venezuela has more support in the General Assembly than Guatemala, it is not certain that Venezuela has secured the 128 votes needed to win the Security Council seat.

For Your Information

Background to 2006 UN Security Council Election

In mid-October the UN General Assembly will hold elections for five seats on the Security Council. The 2006 election has attracted an unusual level of interest because of high profile contested campaigns for the seats within two of the five regional groups. In the Asian Group, Indonesia, Republic of Korea and Nepal are vying for the one available seat. In the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Guatemala and Venezuela are in a hot contest, also for one seat. The elections from the African Group (one seat) and the Western European and Others Group (two seats) are uncontested. As a result, South Africa, Belgium and Italy are assured of election. There is no election for the seat from the Eastern European Group until next year.

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Each year the UN General Assembly elects five new non-permanent members to the Security Council for a two-year term. For terms starting in odd years, in this case 2007-2008, one member from Africa, one from Asia, one from Latin America, and two members from Western Europe and Others Group are elected. For even years, the elected members are two from Africa, one from Asia, one from Latin America, and the one Eastern European member. The remaining five seats are permanent, belonging to the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China.

Nominations are not required to stand for election to the Council. Countries can simply declare their intention to run, sometimes many years ahead, either by circular note to all members of the United Nations or to the Chair of their regional grouping, or both. Since the UN Charter establishes a geographic distribution for the ten elected seats on the Council, candidacies are generally managed through processes developed by each of the regional groups. The groups and seat distribution are as follows: Asian Group (2 seats), African Group (3 seats), Latin American and Caribbean Group (2 seats), Western European and Others Group (2 seats), and Eastern Europe Group (1 seat). Australia, Canada and New Zealand are part of the Western European and Others Group.

The groups have a rotating monthly chairmanship. Each group meets at least once a month to share information. This presents an opportunity to review all of the candidacies and can serve to facilitate agreements between members where there are more candidacies than seats available to the group in a particular election. This is the process which often enables the group to eventually reach a "clean slate". The regional grouping's endorsement of a "clean slate" will normally assure candidates of election in the General Assembly. However, even if there is a "clean slate", a ballot is still required. Within the regional groupings there are different established practices. In the Western European group, the Nordic subgroup (made up of Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden and soon to include Iceland)

members have an agreement among themselves to field an agreed Nordic candidate every four years, a practice which has resulted in a regular Nordic presence in the Security Council. The CANZ subgroup (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) have a similar coordination process.

Elections to the Security Council are held by secret ballot. A successful candidate requires a two-thirds majority vote. The required majority in 2006 will be 128. The rules for voting state that if no candidate obtains the required two-thirds majority in the first ballot, a second ballot is held between the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. In the three-way race for the Asian seat, if there is no clear winner in the first ballot, the lowest polling candidate drops out and the contest then continues to a second ballot between the top two candidates. Voting simply continues until one candidate prevails, either by securing the required majority, or the other withdraws. If neither candidate receives the required majority in the second and third ballots, the rules state that votes may be cast for another eligible member. This allows new candidates to come into the process. The emergence of new candidates is rare but not unprecedented. In 1955, before the expansion of the Security Council and new geographic distribution, Poland was competing with the Philippines, but as a result of a stalemate in voting, Yugoslavia came into the race.

The UN Charter contains a provision that ensures that no member can become a *de facto* permanent member by being elected to continuously serve in the Security Council. This provision is reinforced by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly which state that a retiring member of the Security Council is not eligible for immediate re-election. In practice a number of countries have been elected a significant number of times. Brazil and Japan have served 18 years each; Argentina 16 years; India, Canada, Colombia and Pakistan 12 years each; Italy 10 years; Egypt, Poland and Netherlands 9 years each; Australia, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Panama, Spain, and Venezuela 8 years each. By contrast, 43 percent of the members of the United Nations (83 countries) have never served on the Council.

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The significance of the communist media is two-fold. First, it provides the working class with a voice to express its aspirations and to defend its historic mission as the gravedigger of capitalism, a voice which is denied it in the bourgeois media. The fact that this voice has a limited audience at this time is a reflection of the current marginalization and isolation of the entire working class movement, including the communist movement. Second, if the communists create their own journalism, rather than just promote the views of others, they are forced to actually look at

the real world, analyze current developments and trends and predict where various social forces are headed. In other words, it forces the communists to think for themselves and hone their grasp of political science, to become actual leaders of society and not mere spectators and cheerleaders or critics of the activities of others. This is what it means to be a tribune of the working class and it is this tradition of revolutionary communist journalism that *Modern Communism* has strived to uphold for the past six and a half years.

BíNai Brith...from page 1

reactionary elements in the U.S. have not been successful simply because even the majority of American lawmakers recognize that so doing would represent an unwarranted attack on civil and political liberties.

Not content with merely wanting to criminalize flag burning, BíNai Brithís statement goes on to challenge the right of all Canadians to free speech. Dimant describes as ìopen defiance of Canadaís lawsî comments made by Ali Mallah, Vice President of the Canadian Arab Federation - Ontario Region questioning whether or not Canada should reconsider its classification of Hezbollah as a terrorist group. (BíNai Brith issued two more statements on this issue after three MPs on a fact-finding mission to Lebanon raised the same question). According to this logic, it would be criminal for parliamentarians from the majority of the worldís countries, including most of the western nations (Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and the Netherlands being the only exceptions) to answer questions on Canadian soil as to why they have not listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in their countries.

The statement closes with Dimant noting BíNai Brith is setting up meetings with government officials, including the Attorney General of Ontario and the Toronto Chief of Police, to discuss these issues. ìWe are recommending that loopholes in the existing anti-terrorism legislation be closed to prohibit the kind of

glorification of terrorism that we are currently seeing. Such pro-terror sympathies must be addressed immediately, lest Canadaís multicultural values of tolerance and respect be eroded.î

It is quite clear from BíNai Brithís statement that the groupís main aim is twofold: the eradication of any criticism of Israel and the suspension of the most fundamental civil liberties ñ freedom of speech and freedom of association ñ in service of this aim. It appears that BíNai Brithís definition of ìtoleranceî and ìrespectî begins and ends with tolerance and respect for its positions and that it is attempting to use the current hysteria about terrorism to label anyone who opposes Israeli aggression as a terrorist or terrorist sympathizer.

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