

A Debate about Iran and the Left

August 27, 2009

The Campaign for Peace and Democracy's "Q&A on Iran" has elicited an extremely critical response from Edward Herman and David Peterson, posted on MRzine. To summarize, Herman and Peterson accuse the Campaign of aiding and abetting (unwittingly, they allow) U.S. imperialism and its aggressive designs on Iran. They reject, for the most part, allegations of election fraud by the Ahmadinejad regime and dismiss the idea of solidarity with the Iranian pro-democracy movement. Their position appears to be that the U.S. left should extend active solidarity only to oppositional currents in countries within the U.S. sphere of influence. The authors of the Q&A — Stephen Shalom, Thomas Harrison, Joanne Landy and Jesse Lemisch — have answered their charges point by point, reasserted our opposition to any kind of intervention, including sanctions, against Iran by the U.S. and Israel, and argued for the critical importance of defending, strenuously, all genuinely democratic, independent people's movements wherever they arise, regardless of whether the governments they oppose are targets of U.S. destabilization. And we insist that the post-election protests in Iran are just such a movement — spontaneous, autonomous, progressive and in no way a tool of Washington. Our answer to Herman and Peterson's initial attack provoked a second response from them, and a second reply from us, on the Campaign's website. Under the heading, "Iran: The Election and Beyond," click on "Related Materials, Announcements and Links". Our response is the first item on the list. Within that document is a link to our first reply to Herman and Peterson, which was posted on Znet.