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August 21, 1972

TO ALL ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE WORKING
TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF THE CARIBBEAN
SOCIAL REVOLUTION:

Enclosed are proposals for the holding of the First Caribbean International Congress to be the founding convention of a Caribbean Revolutionary International Movement of the Dutch, Spanish, French and English speaking peoples of the Caribbean. In other words, the congress is intended to embrace all linguistic areas of the Caribbean from British Honduras in central America to Surinam in the South-east of the region.

The idea is neither new nor unique. However, as far as the initiators know, it is the first systematic effort, not only to organise such a congress, but to organise a political convention of revolutionary organisations throughout the entire Caribbean with the specific goal of linking Caribbean revolutionary organisations in a Caribbean Revolutionary International.

The history of this present concrete effort dates back to 1965 when the First West Indian Conference was held in Montreal, Canada. Then, a few West Indians, mostly students, decided to organise a West Indian Conference to begin the process of clarifying and defining new perspectives for Caribbean Nationhood. To many the task seemed an impossible one. But the few West Indians pressed on with a firm conviction and dedication. It was thought that the effort would end in a great disaster. With under two months of organisational work, the conference proved to be such a startling success that it was decided by resolution of the whole conference to make it an annual affair and to hold the next conference on West Indian soil.

From 1965 a series of annual conferences was held in Montreal culminating in the staging of a Congress of Black Writers in 1968 that acted as the spark that ignited the Black Mass Movement in Canada within recent times. In 1966 a meeting was held with the prime Minister of Guyana, Forbes Burnham, in an attempt to hold the 1968 Conference together with the staging of a Caribbean Festival of Arts in Guyana. However, that attempt did not succeed.

By 1967, however, fundamental political conflicts had emerged within the conference committee that split the committee into two parts -- a revolutionary group (the original organisers) and an educated petit-bourgeois group that demanded representation on the committee after the 1965 conference on the basis of their territorial

Associations' membership. Henceforth, the revolutionary group began to develop its ideological direction and concrete perspectives, and founded a loose political organisation -- Caribbean International Service Bureau (C.I.S.B.). Certain members of C.I.S.B. have since returned to the Caribbean and have been at the very centre of the emergence of the revolutionary movement in the various territories of the English-speaking Caribbean. It is not at all surprising that almost all the original organisers of the West Indian Conference in 1965 are today involved in initiating the organisation of the First Caribbean International Congress.

The immediate origin of this present effort to organise a Caribbean International Congress lies with the C.I.S.B. and the New Beginning Movement of Trinidad and Tobago. The joining of their past and present efforts has resulted in this beginning of the concretization of the idea of a Caribbean Revolutionary International as the immediate objective of a Caribbean International Congress.

Convinced of the necessity to involve as many revolutionary organisations as is possible from the very beginning in the organisation of the congress, a meeting of Caribbean and Caribbean-oriented organisations in North America was called for July 22nd and 23rd to discuss the content, structure and organisation of the congress; the enclosed proposals are the direct result of that meeting.

Within the next three months one of the initiators will be visiting your organisation to hold discussions on plans for the congress. In the meantime we will like you to send comments, criticisms, suggestions etc. on the enclosed proposals. Also, we would like you to send suggestions on panelists and for speakers for the topics under open sessions; on individuals who can prepare background papers and themes in co-operation with others.

We look forward to receiving correspondence from you in the near future.

Together in Caribbean Revolutionary
struggle,

On behalf of Caribbean International
Congress Bureau (C.I.C.B.).

All correspondence to C.I.C.B. should be addressed to:

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PROPOSALS FOR
A CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

INTRODUCTION

The essential and basic objective of this first ever Caribbean International Congress is the founding of a Caribbean Revolutionary International Movement to mobilize and unify the Caribbean Mass Movement --- Dutch, French, Spanish and English ---- into an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist movement for Caribbean revolution; a revolution within the larger context of the revolution of Black and other oppressed peoples of the world.

Today a Caribbean Revolutionary International is neither a dream nor a desire. It is in fact a reality and a necessity.

Since 1935 the Caribbean masses have been demonstrating in practice the ideal of Caribbean Nationhood from the bottom up. Between 1935 and 1938, and, more particular, in 1937-38, a series of mass revolts exploded on the Caribbean political scene from British Honduras to Surinam with few exceptions. Not only was that the case, but loose ties began to develop among the territorial mass movements. The loose links that were established in the 1930s were predated in the 1920s by a loosely linked anti-colonial campaign in many parts of the Caribbean by the then progressive groups and organisations,

The tendency to build and unify the spontaneous Caribbean mass movement into an anti-colonial and regional social force continued through the 1940s and 50s culminating in an attempt to form a West Indian Federation of the English-speaking Caribbean watched and followed by the peoples of the other Caribbean states. The federation failed miserably even before it started because by 1960 the anti-colonial leadership had itself turned colonial. By then it became clear that the struggle in the eyes of the leadership was not against colonialism but for creole colonial power.

In the last five years the spontaneous Caribbean mass movement has again emerged with tremendous force and regional impact. Witness Antigua and Jamaica in 1968; Surinam, Curacao and Anguilla in 1969; Trinidad and Tobago in 1970; Guadeloupe in 1971; the Dominican Republic; Puerto Rico; Bermuda; the Bahamas. Side by side with the social explosions that are taking place throughout the entire Caribbean there has emerged a new conscious move on the part of radical and revolutionary groups in the many Caribbean states to form a Caribbean-wide movement, both ideologically and concretely. Within the last two years regional meetings of representatives of political groups have been held in St. Lucia and Martinique. In metropolitan centres Caribbean revolutionary groups have been emerging at least since 1965, and many metropolitan-based groups of Caribbean students and immigrants have been focusing their attention on the Caribbean situation and contributing both morally and materially to the Caribbean revolutionary struggle.

The tendency towards the building, strengthening and unification of a Caribbean mass movement did not come as a bolt out of the sky. It is a logical tendency emerging from the historic development of class conflicts in the Caribbean society. The politics, economics and strategy of the imperialist powers have been always regional. This is more so today than ever before. More important, the creole colonial regimes are co-ordinating their repressive forces in the entire region. Most important, both foreign imperialists and creole colonial regimes are in collusion to smash the mass revolutionary movement and to maintain capitalist domination and creole colonial power. The U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic; the launching of the Anguilla invasion in 1969 by British troops from Trinidad and Tobago; the request by the Williams regime for U.S. troops from Puerto Rico to crush the 1970 mass rebellion in Trinidad and Tobago; the occupation of Martinique and Guadeloupe by French police and troops, and a similar occupation of Surinam and Curacao by Dutch troops are just a few cases of the collusion of creole colonial regimes and foreign imperialists to smash the Caribbean mass revolutionary movement. Consequently, any particular territorial mass movement faces the combined onslaught of regional and international repressive forces.

The Caribbean masses today are no longer seething below the social surface. The conflicts inherent in Caribbean colonial society have bursted out into the open. The colonial economic and political structure impede any further development, both material and human, of the peoples of the Caribbean. Neither the governmental machinery nor the economic organisation can any longer provide even the bare material needs of the Caribbean masses.

The political reality of the Caribbean situation today is this. The emancipation of the Caribbean peoples cannot be achieved within the existing colonial structure of politics and economics. The fundamental prerequisite for the achievement of our emancipation is the total abolition of the ruling regimes throughout the Caribbean with the sole exception of Cuba at the present time. Our task is to build a new Caribbean social order based on ALL POWER IN THE HANDS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS TO THE LAST INDIVIDUAL. That today is neither dream nor utopia. It is the starked reality of mass revolutionary politics that has emerged in the last five years. To mobilize and organise the Caribbean workers and farmers for that, their historic task, a Caribbean Revolutionary International with a clear revolutionary ideology and a concrete organisational linkage has become an urgent necessity. Towards that objective this proposed Congress should be organised.

ELEMENTS OF CONGRESS PROGRAMME

1. BASIC METHOD

The Congress proposed is not a conference in the usual or traditional sense. It is essentially a founding political convention. Other aspects of the congress are secondary to the convention. It is therefore necessary that the congress be prepared, organised and structured as the founding political convention of a Caribbean Revolutionary International Movement.

The method of approach to be adopted is based on the principle that participating organisations -- Dutch, English, Spanish and French -- must themselves be directly involved in the work of preparing the Congress and finally deciding the structure and content of the congress and the conventional procedure.

2. LOCATION AND TIMING

(a) Proposed location of congress: Montreal or Toronto, Canada,

(b) Proposed date of congress: Late March - Early April, 1973.

(c) Length of congress sessions: 10 days.

3. CONGRESS SESSIONS

(a) Open Sessions -- The open sessions should take the form of addresses by speakers or panel discussions on specific subjects after which discussion is thrown open to the floor. The congress body should be allowed if it so desires to break-up into workshops to discuss the subjects in greater depth. It is proposed that there should be about six open sessions.

(b) Convention -- The convention is the Founding convention of a Caribbean Revolutionary International Movement. Consequently, only specific organisational delegates and selected individuals should participate in the convention.

4. OTHER SESSIONS

(a) Black Community Discussions -- These discussions are intended to be between delegates to the convention and Black organisations. Also, meetings in Black communities at which delegates would speak should be organised.

(b) Discussion with white radical organisations -- Delegates should be given the opportunity to hold discussions with

white radical organisations to discuss basis of co-operation and assistance.

- (c) Lecture Tours -- Lecture tours of Universities, schools and other institutions should be arranged for delegates. These lecture tours can be both a medium of propaganda and a source of finances.

STRUCTURE OF CONVENTION

1. CONVENTIONAL PREPARATION

- (a) Background Papers -- Background papers on the political, economic and cultural development of the different areas of the Caribbean should be prepared and circulated to all participating organisations well in advance of the convention so that all participating organisations and delegates can become well acquainted with the historic development of the entire Caribbean.
- (b) Convention Themes -- The themes to be debated at the convention sessions must be researched and prepared, and circulated prior to the convention so that participating organisations can discuss those themes before the convention. Organisational delegates will therefore be coming to the convention with basic position statements on specific themes. Also, preparation and prior discussion of themes would allow the conventional body to get down to working sessions from the very beginning.
- (c) How? -- The conventional themes should be prepared as follows. Each theme should be prepared by an individual or group of individuals -- Theme preparation groups -- and submitted to the Caribbean International Congress Bureau (organising committee). The Bureau should send out theme guidelines and request briefs from theme preparation groups. The prepared themes should then be circulated to all participating organisations. Further, theme committees should be appointed that would study, criticise and elaborate on the prepared themes. These theme committees will then present their studies on the prepared themes to the conventional sessions before the conventional sessions break-up into workshop or working sessions.

2. CONVENTIONAL PROCEDURE

- (a) Opening Session -- The opening session of the convention should be a kind of preliminary session. The opening session should consist of:
1. A welcoming address related to the preparation, organisation, perspectives and concrete tasks of the convention;

2. A feature address by a revolutionary on the experiences of regional and international movements of the kind we seek to form;
 3. Statements by organisational delegations;
 4. Clarification and resolution of conflicts relating to conventional procedure and organisation.
- (b) Conventional Sessions -- The conventional sessions should take the form of:
1. Presentation of theme committees;
 2. Reply by theme preparation group;
 3. Short break;
 4. Small working-sessions or workshops;
 5. Report of workshops to general convention;
 6. Conventional debate and agreement.
- (c) Conventional Declaration -- the conventional declaration is intended to be a public statement by the whole convention on Caribbean Revolutionary perspectives, broad programme and immediate tasks. A special conventional declaration committee should prepare this declaration after studying the prepared themes submitted by the theme preparation groups. The declaration should be circulated during the convention and debated at the last session of the convention. The declaration committee should revise the declaration as deemed necessary after conventional debate on the various themes. The declaration should be presented to an open congress as the product of the entire congress.

PROPOSED TOPICS AND THEMES

The topics and themes proposed below are intended for discussion at the congress. They are proposed here so that a final list, no doubt shorter than that given below, can be made after discussions with organisations,

1. CONVENTIONAL THEMES

- (1) Decolonization and Independence of non-independent states in the Caribbean.
- (2) Race, class and revolution.
- (3) Political-economy of Caribbean society from slavery to socialism.

- (4) The development, political direction and concrete tasks of the Caribbean immigrant Mass Movement in Metropolitan countries.
- (5) What the Caribbean Revolutionary Movement can learn from the revolutionary experiences of Santo-Domingo, Cuba and Tanzania.
- (6) The Caribbean Revolutionary Movement and Pan-Africanism.
- (7) The Caribbean and World Revolution with specific emphasis on liberation movements in Vietnam and the Third World.
- (8) The emancipation of Caribbean Women and the revolutionary struggle to transform Caribbean Society.
- (9) Revolutionary art and culture, and the responsibility of artists and writers in the Caribbean.
- (10) The task of the peasantry and the working class in the revolutionary transformation of Caribbean society.
- (11) State, party and class -- The Caribbean Experiences.
- (12) Perspectives for Caribbean Revolution.
- (13) A Caribbean Revolutionary International -- broad ideological perspective, strategy, tasks and organisation.

2. TOPICS FOR OPEN CONGRESS SESSIONS

- (1) Historic development of the four linguistic areas in the Caribbean and the effect of international colonial institutions on that development (e.g. British Commonwealth, Francophone, Dutch Commonwealth and the O.A.S.)
- (2) Decolonisation and Independence.
- (3) Race, class and revolution.
- (4) The Caribbean Mass Movement and Pan-Africanism.
- (5) The Caribbean Revolutionary struggle and World Revolution with specific emphasis on Liberation struggles in the Third World.
- (6) The emancipation of women and the revolutionary struggle to transform modern society.
- (7) The responsibility of artists and writers in the Caribbean and the Third World.
- (8) The historical experiences and tasks of the Black Mass Movement in advanced capitalist countries.

- (9) The emergence and present role of Trade Unions in the Caribbean, and the revolutionary tasks of the working class.
- (10) Education for and in a New Caribbean society.
- (11) Christianity from slavery to Caribbean Revolution ---- the role of the church in Caribbean social development.
- (12) Imperislm and the revolutionary struggle for social emancipation.

PREPARATORY ORGANISATIONAL WORK FOR CONGRESS

1. Participants

Participants at the convention should consist of delegates representing revolutionary organisations from all stages of the Caribbean region from British Honduras to Surinam including the French, Dutch, Spanish and English-speaking Caribbean. In addition, organisations of Caribbean and Black peoples in Metropolitan countries that are linked to Caribbean revolutionary organisations should have delegates at the convention. Revolutionary organisations in various parts of the world should be invited to send delegates to the convention, but these delegates, though allowed to participate in conventional discussions, would not be a voting delegation, Cuba, as a Caribbean state and with a revolutionary government, should and must be represented at the convention by a delegation with full rights as any other revolutionary Caribbean delegation.

The task of determining which territorial organisations should be at the convention is not an easy one. However, the following broad criteria are suggested:

- (a) Participating organisations should be waging an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist struggle in their own country or preparing themselves to do so as an integral part of the total struggle.
- (b) Participating organisations must be for the revolutionising of the state and the transformation of the economy from colonial institutions to popular-based institutions.
- (c) Participating organisations must be for all power in the hands of the workers and farmers in their country.
- (d) Participating organisations must be for the founding of a Caribbean Revolutionary International NOW: an International Movement that would establish close links with Black revolutionary organisations in Metropolitan countries,

Liberation movements in the Third World and in general revolutionary organisations in various parts of the world.

It is not intended that once organisations say YES to the criteria proposed above that they are revolutionary and therefore should become involved in the convention. Organisations should be judged on the basis of what they have said and what they have done and are doing.

2. The Concrete Beginning

- (a) Draft proposals on Caribbean International Congress and Caribbean Revolutionary International Movement to be sent to intended participating organisations.
- (b) Initiating organisers to travel in the Caribbean, North America and Europe meeting organisations and discussing proposals.
- (c) Maintaining communication links with intended participating organisations.
- (d) Preparation and publication of detailed congress programme after discussions with organisations.

3. Continuing Work of Congress Preparation

- (a) Preparation of background papers.
- (b) Selecting theme preparation groups to begin preparation of themes. Preparation of guidelines for themes.
- (c) Selecting theme committees to study prepared themes.
- (d) Publication of a Monthly Bulletin in four languages as a regular medium of information on progress of congress organisation and as a medium of discussion and debate for participants on conventional content, structure, procedure, etc.
- (e) Publication of booklets, pamphlets, etc.
- (f) Other detailed day-to-day work.

FINANCES

It is estimated that the congress will cost between \$25,00.00 (Canadian) to \$30,000.00 (Canadian) of which \$10,000.00 is estimated for preparatory organisational work. This estimate assumes

That all delegates coming from North America and Europe will stand the full cost of their transport. Delegates coming from the Caribbean are expected to raise their own airfares. In cases where delegates from the Caribbean are unable through their organisational efforts to raise the full fare, the P.C.I.C.B. will raise funds to pay part of their transportation cost.

The finances required will be raised from various sources --- Black organisations and institutions; white organisations; individuals; University departments and cultural activities. Already discussions have been held with organisations, institutions and individuals, and funds from these sources are likely to be forthcoming once the preparatory work begins.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CONGRESS

All participating organisations must play an integral and important role in the organising of the congress and more particularly, the convention. By means of the Monthly Bulletin and regular correspondence, organisations can be involved in the decision making process.

It is proposed that there should be a co-ordinating body called the Caribbean International Congress Bureau where the congress will be held. For example, if the congress is held in Canada, the co-ordinating body (P.C.I.C.B.) will consist of representatives, say, from Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Washington and other parts of North America. The function of the P.C.I.C.B. will be to co-ordinate the overall congress, particularly the convention. Also, there should be regional representations of the P.C.I.C.B. to co-ordinate the organisational work in a particular region. The specific regions are best chosen after discussions with organisations.

To effectively and efficiently carry out the work to be done, three full-time people are required where the congress will be held.

PRACTICAL PROPOSALS FOR
A CARIBBEAN REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL

OBJECTIVES

1. To strengthen and unify the Caribbean Mass Movement into a movement against colonialism and imperialism, and for a Caribbean Socialist society.
2. To develop and clarify the revolutionary ideology of the Caribbean Mass Movement.
3. To link the revolutionary organisations in the Caribbean into a co-ordinated movement, both ideologically and organisationally.
4. To establish close relations with liberation movements in the Third World, Black movements in the advanced capitalist countries and the international mass movement of workers, students and women.
5. To make a reality the ideal of Caribbean socialist society within the larger context of a world socialist order.

TASKS

1. The revitalization and Caribbeanization of Marxism as the theoretical basis of Caribbean Revolutionary struggle.
2. The mobilization of human and material resources to wage the Caribbean Revolutionary struggle.
3. The carrying-out of revolutionary studies on Caribbean and international questions to furnish the Movement with facts and scientific analysis for its own political education and for the development of revolutionary perspectives and actions.
4. Publication of
 - (a) Monthly Caribbean paper in four languages.
 - (b) Quarterly ideological journal in four languages.
 - (c) Booklets, pamphlets, bulletins etc.
 - (d) Important and necessary works in book form.
5. Waging of a regional and international campaign for the decolonization and independence of the non-independent Caribbean states.
6. The building of a library collection, particularly of the works of Caribbean revolutionaries.

7. The making and distribution of films for political education and propaganda purposes.
8. The organisation of activities for the financial sustenance of the Caribbean Revolutionary International.
9. Devising ways and means including the learning of languages spoken in the Caribbean region to break-down the barrier of communication in region - a legacy of our colonial experiences.
10. Other tasks that can assist the further development and strengthening of the Caribbean Mass Movement.

ORGANISATION

1. Representatives of member organisations to constitute the General Council of C.R.I. Representatives changeable at any time by member organisations.
2. General Council to be governing body of C.R.I.
3. Election of Bureau - C.R.I.B. - by General Council to carry out the tasks of C.R.I.
4. C.R.I.B. to comprise full-time political personnel and other elected members of C.R.I.