

Declaration of the Caribbean Conference

Roxbury Community College

May 1st and 2nd 1986

Boston, Massachusetts

WE who gathered and participated in the historic conference at Roxbury Community College on May 1, 1986, a day which symbolizes the unity of the working people of the world, declare that we see the Caribbean peoples as one people with a common history of struggle and resistance against slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and cultural imperialism.

Not only do we see the Caribbean as one region, one people and one nation, we also support the deeply held aspiration of this people for the entire Caribbean to be declared a Zone of Peace. This means a region free from military maneuvers, foreign military bases, direct military intervention by the United States, which has repeatedly invaded Caribbean territories, openly trampling Caribbean sovereignty underfoot.

We deplore in the strongest terms the "Ocean Venture 86" military maneuvers presently being conducted by the U.S. in the Caribbean. Coming in the wake of the invasion of Grenada and previous maneuvers called Ocean Ventures '81 and '82, Exotic Palm and Upward Key, the current military exercises prove that the U.S. is bent on containing social changed movements in the Caribbean through U.S.-organized and financed military force.

The crisis in the Caribbean is economic and therefore political. The solution requires new economic and political structures organized by and for Caribbean workers, farmers, women and youth. By contract, U.S. military maneuvers are designed to back with force the current unworkable economic and political systems in the Caribbean, which has produced levels of 15-50% unemployment, and high levels of poverty, disease, and illiteracy.

We condemn the unjustified denial of a visa to Rickey Singh, a prominent Caribbean journalist and former editor of Caribbean Contact, the organ of the Caribbean Conference of Churches. This constitutes a denial of the free flow of ideas and information between peoples and attacks the long cherished American principle of intellectual freedom. We affirm the fundamental right of the Caribbean community of the U.S. to invite and receive as their guests whomever they select, without arbitrary interference.

We support the right of all countries to self-determination and independence and vehemently deplore the colonial status imposed on Puerto Rico by the United States. Simultaneously, we support those struggling against British, French, U.S. and Dutch colonialism in our

region.

We declare our solidarity with the heroic people of Haiti who have laid to rest one of the most brutal U.S. supported dictatorships anywhere, and who are once again moving to abolish neo-colonial slavery and to create, in its place, mass democracy which gives a new lease on life to the entire region.

We note that a threat now comes from the Reagan administration to use other Caribbean governments in a possible invasion of Haiti, allegedly to "install democracy", in fact to reassert U.S. hegemony in Haiti. The administration should realize that if this threat is carried out, the Haitian people will resist and resist successfully.

We denounce the ongoing economic, political and military destabilization of Nicaragua by the U.S. This destabilization, including an economic embargo and the U.S.-funded contra war, is in gross violation of international law and all standards of human decency. We are proud that the Nicaraguan people not only overcame the Somoza dictatorship but are transforming their country through land reform, literacy and mass health programs; and we call on the people of the U.S. to persuade the Reagan administration to end its interference in Nicaragua.

We, the descendants of Marcus Garvey, Padmore, Fanon and C.L.R. James proudly declare that the struggle of Caribbean people for unity in Independence is imperishable. We are deeply moved by the widespread support for this struggle on the part of the American people, especially working people, people of color, students and others. Finally, we draw the attention of the world to the immortal words of our great Caribbean poet:

"NO RACE POSSESSES THE MONOPOLY OF BEAUTY, OF INTELLIGENCE, OF FORCE, AND THERE IS A PLACE FOR ALL AT THE RENDEZVOUS OF VICTORY"

Beverly Manley (Mrs. Michael Manley), Jamaica
Tim Hector, Caribbean Liberation Movement, Antigua
Evans Paul (Kompe Plim), Haiti
Luis Prado (Boston), Puerto Rico
Esmeralda Brown (United Nations Methodist Mission, New York), Panama
Roderick Thurton (Queens College, New York), Trinidad
Ben DuPuy (Haiti Progres, New York), Haiti
Jean Claude Martineau (Boston), Haiti
Michael Thelwell (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Jamaica
Decima Williams (American University, Washington, D.C.), Grenada
Josie Fanon (Mrs. Frantz Fanon)

(and others)

This declaration was put to a vote of the whole Conference, May 2, 1986. Over 1,100 persons participated in the Conference.