



Left Alliance for National Democracy and Socialism

Submission to Youth Commission at the Anti-Imperialist Meeting

November 2, 2019

Comrades,

The Jamaican people have been in solidarity with Cuba for decades. Even when the USA tried to bully our government, we stood by Cuba to defend its sovereignty and to support its internationalist campaigns in Angola and other countries.

In addition to Cuba, our organisation is in solidarity with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. We will never be able to repay the people and government of Venezuela for the things that they have done for us; we unreservedly condemn the current government of Jamaica for collaborating with the US against Venezuela.

We don't want our people's solidarity to be limited to Venezuela and Cuba, therefore we need to ensure that Jamaicans have a reason to take an interest in the international movement. Multiple delegates from Caribbean countries attend these solidarity events in Latin America, and we say these are for "Latin America and the Caribbean" but our own struggles are often invisible. We demand that meetings like this will give more attention to the problems that we face in the smaller Caribbean islands, whose delegates already stand in solidarity with struggles in Latin America.

Europeans and Americans have been allowed to speak, and so should we.

I will use this letter to elaborate on 4 topics, as well as my recommendations for the final resolution.

The first topic is Neoliberalism. Both political parties in Jamaica have implemented careless free trade policies and rigid austerity measures that have been recommended by the IMF. The IMF had put limits on how much money our government was able to pay to doctors, teachers, nurses, firemen, and other critical government workers. These policies have contributed to demoralisation of the workers, who sometimes flee to rich countries in hopes that they will get better salaries. As I attend this meeting, a labour dispute in Jamaica has resulted in teachers being on strike at the University of Technology, one of Jamaica's main universities, leaving students without education.

We are also aware of how the IMF has attempted to implement dangerous policies in Haiti, Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, and other countries.

My first recommendation is that we condemn the IMF and the neoliberal austerity measures which have resulted in the sabotage of public services, especially healthcare and education which affect the youth of multiple countries.

The second topic is reparations. Descendants of slavery in the Americas (including the Caribbean) have not been compensated for generations of enslavement which enriched Europe while leaving our people impoverished. This has led to persistent poverty in countries where the majority of people are Black. In the US, where Black people are a national minority, there are still cities where Black people are a significant portion of the population; in these cities, poverty is persistent.

My second recommendation is that we support the movements in different countries that have demanded reparations. Caribbean countries demand reparations from the United Kingdom and France, while Black people in the US demand reparations from the US government.

The third topic is the environment. I was glad to hear the perspective of the British Comrade from the RCG. We cannot have a climate solution that does not change the relationship between rich countries and poor countries. Some rich countries are proposing a “Green New Deal” which replaces fossil fuels with ‘green’ forms of energy which still require dirty mining to be done. There is already difficulty in supplying the market with the materials needed to build more electric cars. The imperialist countries will gladly rob the Third World of our resources and exploit our labour so that their green policies can be as cheap as possible for their own societies, without any regard for the labour and environmental protections that we would want to ideally implement in our countries. We Jamaicans are concerned with the environment for 2 main reasons: firstly, we are at risk of losing our land because of rising sea levels, and the second issue is that entire communities in our country have been displaced because of mining done by foreign-owned companies. The mining has posed health hazards to our people. The countries that face the most damage from climate change, and the ones who have to pay the most to fix the problem, are not the ones who have contributed the most to climate change or who will benefit from some climate proposals. The same imperialists, who want to invade Venezuela and Syria for oil today, will try to invade Bolivia and the DR Congo for Lithium tomorrow.

My third recommendation is that we demand that our Comrades in imperialist countries make a commitment to support climate plans that will benefit the world rather than just the minority who live in Europe and North America. Emphasis must be put on combating consumerist Capitalism, not redirecting the environmental burden.

The fourth topic is militarisation. The government of Jamaica is increasingly deploying the military in the streets and in poor communities because of their failure to prevent crime. It is possible that a lot of crime is due to the harsh economic conditions that people live in, and these conditions are exacerbated by neoliberal economic policy.

We have noticed this connection between neoliberalism and militarisation in Haiti, Honduras, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, and other countries. This is also an issue in the USA, where the communities that receive the least social services are most heavily policed; more effort is put into incarcerating Black people in the US than effort is put into providing them with critical social services. This affects youth in particular because they need access to education, there is an increased sense of competition for jobs, and they face the most risk of being recruited by gangs.

My fourth recommendation is that we condemn the combination of neoliberal economic policies, which deny our people access to important social services and fascist political policies, that aim to criminalise poor people and use state violence against them.

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Chairman of Jamaica LANDS