

EX-3246

14 Nov. 1968

SUBJECT: HAVANA CULTURAL CONGRESS
aka: INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CONGRESS.

1. The Havana Cultural Congress was held at the Havana Libre Hotel, in Havana, Cuba from 4 to 11 January 1968. The following countries were some of those represented: Argentina, Bulgaria, Ceylon, France, Germany, Italy, Martinique, Mexico, North Vietnam, Rumania, Spain, and the United States.

According to an article in the New York Times dated 14 January 1968, 500 writers, scientists, performers, artists, journalists, and educators from 70 countries came to the Congress. The conviction held by most of the delegates to the Congress was that the war in Vietnam and other conflicts ruled out peaceful co-existence as an approach to international relations. The message of ideological radicalism that came out of the Congress could be summed up in the slogan: "Intellectuals of the world unite--against the United States". The final declaration of the Congress, which was closed by Premier Fidel CASTRO Ruz with a speech violently attacking the United States, stated that "armed struggle" was the only road open to the underdeveloped countries of the world seeking economic development. The declaration further stated that "North American imperialism is today the blood-stained representative of oppression, misery, economic back-

wardness and cultural genocide."

"In the present situation in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the declaration went on, "colonial and neo-colonial dependences must be broken. This revolutionary change to expel the dominating forces can only be achieved through armed struggle and revolutionary violence."

In the underdeveloped countries, the Congress further asserted, revolution must be carried out not only against United States economic interests but against all domestic capitalist forces.

During CASTRO's speech he referred to the intellectuals gathered as the "authentic vanguard of revolution", and attacked political organizations and parties in Europe that had failed to accept Cuba's insurrectional line. He said that a group of Roman Catholic priests, whom he did not identify, had participated in the Congress. He read a resolution, attributed to them, condemning the United States involvement in Vietnam and pledging their participation "despite such divergencies between Christianity and Marxism", in the "anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle, whatever the consequences." At the same time CASTRO offered to exchange 100 political prisoners for the return, to Cuba, of the remains of Ernesto 'Che' GUEVARA.

2. According to FBIS Daily Report on Latin America dated 5 January 1968, the agenda of the Congress included the discussion of the role of the intellectual, culture, in-

dependence, revolutionary development of the individual, intellectual responsibilities in relation to the problems of underdevelopment, and the problems of artistic creation and scientific work, as well as the development of national culture.

One of the more notable groups attending from the United States were the representatives of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC leaders contended that the Havana Cultural Congress would be important for the development of the Negro movement in the United States. The group was headed by Ralph FEATHERSTONE and included Willie RICKS, Carver NEBLETT, Jennifer LAWSON, and Robert FLETCHER.

"As representatives of an oppressed people we will enter into relations with representatives of other peoples in a revolutionary milieu," FEATHERSTONE said. He added that "culture is the guide, the basis for the peoples' taking stock in order to effect the revolution; it is the impetus for beginning the struggle and continuing it."

FEATHERSTONE further said that culture must be in keeping with the revolution and represent the role of leadership in the struggle to destroy capitalism and imperialism. He said that the main work in his country is that of explaining the causes and the nature of the problems that afflict US Negroes so the people will understand the reasons for the struggle and prepare for it.

Robert FLETCHER explained that "we aspire to have our message reach every community so our brothers will know why we are oppressed and will prepare to resist."

The SNCC delegates were quoted as saying, "We feel we are in the only free area in this hemisphere. For us Cuba provides a lookout for the world. It is fantastic that this country can exist and carry out its revolution 90 miles from hell, from the international oppressor, from capitalism and imperialism."

3. The files of this Agency contain no further information on The Havana Cultural Congress.