

SOME NOTES ON THE LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS1. The Origin of the Latin American Youth Congress

A) In September of 1959, at the meeting of the Organisations of American States (OAS), which was held in Santiago, Chile, Mr. Raoul Castro, Minister of Defence for Cuba, attended a meeting of Latin American youth organisations which had gathered in Chile. This meeting of Latin American youth leaders was initiated by the Youth Section of the Chilean trade union Central (CUTCH). Representatives from Argentina may also have been present. At this meeting Raoul Castro formally launched an appeal to all Latin American political youth, trade union and national union of student organisations to convene a Latin American youth congress. Castro proposed Havana as the site of the meeting.

B) The CUTCH Youth Section apparently took up the initiative of Castro and began preparations for the Latin American Youth Congress pre-convention, which was scheduled for November 1959. It has been noted that the idea for a Latin American youth congress was originally put forth by Bruno Bernini, President of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, at the Kiev Congress. It was raised by the Argentine National Union of Students (FUA) at the 8th International Students Conference held in Lima, and subsequently pressed for by some communist leaders at the COSEC seminar held in Sucre thereafter.

2. The Pre-Convention and other Preparatory Meetings

The Pre-Convention for the Latin American Youth Congress was held in Santiago de Chile from 27 - 29 November 1959. The inviting body was the Youth Section of CUTCH. There were 145 delegates in all; who were given full speaking and voting rights at the outset of the congress, and 68 organisations were in attendance, representing Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Cuba, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. Ecuador was represented during the closing days of this meeting. Of the 68 organisations, 25 were from Argentina, 13 of them being trade union organisations.

The political orientation of the groups present ranged from communist, Peronista, socialist, Christian democrat and Reformista. At least one communist youth organisation was present from each of the above mentioned countries. It is worth while to note the following organisations which had an influential role at the meetings:-

Chile	: Communist Youth CUTCH Socialist Youth
Argentina	: Union Civica Radical Intransigente FUA
Venezuela	: Accion Democratica COPEI
Peru	: APRA Federacion Estudiantil del Peru
Cuba	: 26th July Movement.

Some of the key results of this meeting were :-

- a) Under increased pressure the Peronista youth and trade union organisations from Argentina withdrew from the meeting. As a result of the same pressure the Conservative Youth Organisation, the Youth Section of the Congress of Cultural Freedom and the Liberal Youth, of Chile, were denied credentials to attend the meeting. They subsequently attacked the Pre-Convention as communist controlled.
- b) The failure of communist pressure to favour the Congress primarily composed of all Popular-Front organisations in the Argentine. The opinion of the Marxist nationalist and Christian Democratic tendencies to invite only national trade union, political youth and student organisations, prevailed.
- c) Largely under the pressure of COPRI, the Christian Democratic Youth Section decided to assist at the meeting and to take an active role in this event.
- d) The International Preparatory Committee was elected and was made up of the following organisations :-
 1. 26th July Movement, Cuba
 2. Accion Democratica, Venezuela
 3. COPEI, Venezuela
 4. FUA, Argentina
 5. Socialist Youth, Chile
 6. Communist Youth, Chile
 7. The Youth Section of CUTCH, Chile.

Meetings of the International Preparatory Committee

A meeting of the Preparatory Committee was scheduled for the end of March, 1960, in Havana. It is not quite certain whether this meeting took place. The 'El Imparcial', a daily newspaper of San Juan, Porto Rico, carried an article on the 10th May, reporting the meeting of the International Preparatory Committee at that time in Havana.

3. The Congress

Site : Havana

Date : There has been some discussion about the date of the meeting. Some opinions state that it would be held beginning the 26th July, others indicating that it would be postponed until August.

It is reported that the meeting will take place in the National Congress and that the Cuban Government is favourably disposed to

facilitating the travel of the delegates and lodging them in hotels in Havana which have been intervened by the Revolutionary Government.

Agenda : The agenda is divided into six main topics, primarily fixing upon the political, economic, social and cultural problems of Latin America; problems particular to students, peasant and working youth; youth and Latin American solidarity; Latin American youth in the contemporary world; cooperation and exchange between the youth of Latin America.

4. Invitees

According to the rules of procedure already adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the Congress, only national organisations of students, political youth and trade union organisations will be given voting status.

The following is an incomplete list of some of the organisations which will attend the Congress :-

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| Argentina | : | FUA
UCRI |
| Peru | : | FBP <i>FBP</i>
Communist Youth
APRA ... |
| Chile | : | Christian Democratic Youth
Socialist Youth
Communist Youth
CUTCH
FECH <i>FECH</i> |
| Venezuela | : | Accion Democratica <i>Accion</i>
COPEI
Federacion de Centros Universitarios <i>com-uni</i>
Communist Youth
URD
<i>Unión de Rerum (univ)</i> |
| Puerto Rico | : | Council for Peace <i>com</i>
Federacion Universitaria Pro Independencia
Partido Nacionalista Puerto Riqueña ... |
| Cuba | : | CTC
FEU
26th July Movement
Partido Journalista Popular (communist)
Various Catholic organisations. |

Note : International participation : It is still uncertain whether invitations will be extended to international youth organisations.