THE VOICE OF ICHI-ROU-GANAIM, which is the name of our ICAR newsletter, should be seen as one of the ways by which the Rastafari community in Barbados can be kept in the know with current affairs of interest to Rastafari, previous history and achievements of ICAR, ongoing events and activities of Rastafari regionally and internationally. Over the years as well members of the public have often expressed that they would like to find out some more about the Rastafari way of life (Livity). This newsletter will therefore be one medium through which this form of sharing knowledge and enlightenment can take place. The newsletter will be published each month.

**ORIGINS AND HISTORY PART 2**

Giving thanks again Rastafari family for the wisemind, knowledge and overstanding inspired through I & I by H.I.M. Haile Selassie 1st and Empress Menen.

As we mentioned in earlier writings, the non-governmental organization I.C.A.R. was originally known as the Barbados Rastafari Working Committee and heeded the call to ‘Organise and Centralise‘ the Rastafari community in this island in our quest for Repatriation with Reparations.

One of our first missions was to attend a United Nations preparatory conference in Quito, Ecuador during March 2001 which set the ground work for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, Aug-Sept 2001.

With the assistance of some Pan- Africanists from Trinidad and Nicaragua in our initial draft paper, we were able to introduce the word ‘Rastafari’ into the language of the U.N. so that our concerns and recommendations could be specifically identified and documented.

Eventually, ICAR was invited to present a position paper on religious intolerance which would speak to the profiling, discrimination and other unsavory practices meted out to the Rastafari community in Barbados. There was also a call in that document for the legalization/decriminalization of the ‘Hola Herb’, Cannabis Sativa/ Indica.

It was therefore as a result of our combined African/African American/Caribbean lobbying and advocacy at that UN/WCAR that the U.N. formed a sector named the African & African Descendants Committee. The militant and collective approach of the Caribbean delegates at the conference spurred on by Rastafari brethren and sistren present was a major reason for the issue of Reparations to be vigorously debated and included in the final Declaration and Plan of Action of the conference. Even though the word ‘Repatriation’ was not used, the phrase ‘Right of Return’, was recognized as implying and embracing the same action. The returning of ‘stolen artefacts’ and the importance of ‘food security’ were also mentioned in the document.

It is now common knowledge that ten years after in 2011, that year was designated as the year for ‘People of African Descent’ by the UN and currently from 2014-2025 we are recognizing that period as the ‘Decade for People of African Descent’.

On our return to the Caribbean and Barbados in particular, ICAR was invited by the Commission for Pan-African Affairs to be part of a working team that would assist in organizing a follow-up African Descendants Convention the following year 2002 in Barbados which brought together black-conscious brothers and sisters from as far as Australia and Rastafari from across the region as well as Chicago, U.S.A. (Ras Sekou Tafari). His call and shout for ‘We want MONEEY’, when he took the podium to give a brief statement with respect to Reparations, still rings out in our ears with glee.

We can therefore conclude this segment of ICAR’s beginnings by observing the organisation’s willingness to work along with other African Descendant organisations while voicing the concerns and opinions of Rastafari at home and abroad. Selah.

**EDITORIAL: CANNABIS - THE LEGALISATION DEBATE PART 1**

Meetings, more meetings, panel discussions, more panel discussions…..

This is the present state of affairs in Barbados as far as the cries for decriminalisation/legalisation become louder, including from quarters other than Rastafari, who have been making the call for decades.

ICAR is well aware of the need for education about cannabis and supports this, since there have been decades of misinformation and plain lies about the plant.

However, it is ICAR’s position that the time has now come for Rastafari to be involved at the highest levels as plans are formulated for the inevitable changes in legislation.

All around us, our neighbours are making presentations to Cabinets, making changes to allow personal use while Bajans labour under oppressive and outdated laws. When is Government going to act?

The current Government painted itself into a corner by stating in its manifesto that there would be a referendum on decriminalisation/legalisation of cannabis. That was unfortunate, as the people gave them victory at the polls with an unprecedented 30-0 mandate, the power to do the right things.

We have recently witnessed two regional leaders express their disappointment with the negative result of a referendum to determine membership of the CCJ. ICAR does not support putting an issue which involves basic human and spiritual rights before a public weaned for decades on propaganda rooted in racial and cultural bias.

As a representative of the polling organisation CADRES queried recently, what is the need for a referendum when it has been established by CADRES in a local poll that 52 per cent of Bajans are in favour of at least decriminalisation?

Governments must lead and, in this case where the benefits of exploration of the cannabis plant have already been stated by members of Government, this administration must lead positively now!

It is not as though we are all living in a bubble while wheels are turning. Every day the youth of our country are getting their records tarnished and their futures compromised by criminal records incurred for cannabis offences. What are we doing to their future and the country’s future, especially given that we are an ageing society? This needs to stop now!

ICAR calls on Government to institute immediate meaningful talks with the real cannabis experts, Rastafari, on the development of cannabis industries. Talk with Rastafari before you talk with Canada, the United States and China! They have not suffered discrimination, brutality, incarceration and even death for this plant as have InI.

They are just smelling around now they see money can be made. Rastafari has borne the brunt of sufferation for the cannabis plant and will not accept the roles of labourers on yet another plantation.

Poor people including Rastafari will not be slaves on modern day cannabis plantations. InI ancestors have paid that price already.

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**REGIONAL RASTAFARI GATHERING/CONFERENCE, ANTIGUA, DECEMBER 6-10, 2018**

Greetings to our Rastafari family in the name of H.I.M. Haile Selassie 1st & Her Majesty Empress Menen. On behalf of the Ichirouganaim Council for the Advancement of Rastafari (ICAR) in Barbados and the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation (CRO), we welcome the decision made by the Ras Freeman Foundation for the Unification of Rastafari to host this timely gathering /conference in Antigua under the aegis of the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation.

Many changes and developments have occurred and transpired since last we met in Nevis 2009 and when C.R.O. presented a Reparations paper at the CARICOM meeting in Antigua 2014. Currently the topical issue is directly related to the rapidly changing global environment of legal cannabis from the perspective of medicinal, recreational, sacramental and other uses of this ‘plant of renown’. We therefore look forward to the upcoming discussions and way forward as our Rastafari Community focuses on the above topic as well as the other important agenda items with respect to reparatory justice, health and wellness, education and youth development etc.

We look forward to this coming together of our Rastafari Kings and Queens as we renew friendships/working relationships at this crucial juncture in world events and Caribbean civilization in particular. Blessings, family.

**CURRENT ICAR ACTIVITIES**

The writing of this article in the ICAR newsletter #2 coincides with the acknowledgement and celebration of the 88th year since the majestic coronation of H.I.M. Haile Selassie 1st and Empress Menen. I & I give thanks and Ises for this unprecedented event where a King/Monarch and his Queen were crowned at the same time and place, the ultimate manifestation of the King Alpha and Queen Omega in this time/dispensation.

With respect to and considering the importance of Rastafari gatherings and unification at this time, ICAR brethren/sistren embarked on a fund-raising drive in the form of ital-veg food sales at the Rastafari Health, Trade & Culture Circle on Tweedside Rd., St. Michael, in order to acquire funds to cover travelling expenses for our brethren Ras (Steve/Asher Reid) to attend the 2nd annual All African Rastafari Gathering, November 1-11,2018, Shashamane, Ethiopia.

Since last year Brother Steve had been invited there to participate in one of the discussions centered around the proposal for a Rastafari Global Secretariat. He attended the event in Shashamane and will surely be able to share his experiences and thoughts when he returns. Jah Bless