



TRADE UNIONS FOR CUBA



Miami Five Freedom Tour: Your support needed

A victory for international solidarity – now let's celebrate their freedom together



The British trade union movement was at the forefront of the huge international campaign for the release of the Miami Five which finally was achieved in

December 2014. Trade union solidarity helped host their families for many campaigning meetings over the 16 years whilst the Five were imprisoned.

Now, following an historic court victory in November 2015 to overturn the British government's decisions to twice deny René González an entry visa, the doors are open for the Five to finally come to Britain. The visit comes at a pivotal time in Cuba's history and the Five will bring the message that solidarity with Cuba is just as important as ever while the US blockade remains in place.

We need your support to help make the tour happen. We are very grateful for all the trade union donations that we have received so far. Many thanks to contributions from: **ASLEF, Calderdale Trades Council, CWU Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester, Danish-Cuban Association, GMB Scotland, RMT National, SERTUC, Unison Housing and Care Scotland, Unite the Union (National), Unite London and Eastern Region, Unite Wales Region, Unite South West Region, Unite branches: Rolls Royce Coventry, Manchester Manufacturing, Hartlepool Construction, Bamber Bridge and Leyland, Typhoo Tea 553, Fylde Coast, Hull NE/GEO/25, Bebbington, Preston and South**

Ribble, Bolton and District, SE/6241 Weybridge, Scottish Professional Executive Staffs, Tyneside Electrical, Engineering & Electronic Sectoral, WM6050 Coventry & Warwickshire Local Tom Mann, Birtley NE/GEO/8 and W/M6030 Birmingham South (as of early April 2016).

All donations large and small will be acknowledged in writing and on the Miami Five Freedom Tour web page at <http://bit.ly/M5FreedomTour>

Take Action!

1. Donate. We need to raise £30,000 to pay for international flights, UK travel, accommodation and living expenses for the Five and their families (up to 12 people) to come to Britain. Anything you can contribute will help us to cover these costs.

2. Support. The core programme is in place but we welcome ideas for activities to help welcome the Five which we can try to incorporate into their visit.

3. Build. We need individuals and organisations to publicise the Freedom Tour and help ensure the largest and best possible celebrations to show the Five the breadth of solidarity with Cuba.

Please contact Ollie Hopkins on campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk if you can help support the Miami Five Freedom Tour.



National Union of Teachers (NUT) General Secretary, Christine Blower spoke at a packed CSC fringe meeting in Brighton over the Easter Weekend; "Despite all the difficulties that come with the blockade, Cuba is an inspiration and still manages to export its health and education around the world", she said.



Jorge Luis Garcia, Dodie Wepler-Grogan, Phillipa Harvey & Christine Blower at the NUT fringe meeting

Jorge Luis Garcia, Cuban Embassy Political Counsellor, welcomed Barack Obama's recent visit to Cuba. "It is good that President Obama recognised Cuba's achievements in education and in health" he said. "However, the blockade remains in place, and this remains the biggest obstacle for my country's development". He stressed the importance of international solidarity with Cuba and urged it to continue. "The United States is still trying to defeat the Cuban government, but with new methods. Please keep up the international solidarity.

Phillipa Harvey, Past President of the NUT chaired the fringe meeting, and noted how the world's attention had been on Cuba that week, following Barack Obama's historic visit. "Whilst we must celebrate and welcome the positive

developments between the US and Cuba, this is just the start of a long process. It is crucial to stress that relations are still a very long way from being normalised; the blockade remains in place; Guantanamo Bay is still occupied; and the US continues to intervene in Cuba."

**NUT October Half Term Cuba Delegation
Saturday 22 - Saturday 29 October 2016**



CSC is delighted to be organising an **NUT** delegation to Cuba entitled: '**Achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals: What can we learn from Cuba and how can international solidarity help?**'

The delegation is an amazing opportunity to experience Cuba first-hand, where, despite being under an illegal US blockade for over half a century, it has developed a world-class education system where primary, secondary, university and adult education is all free, universal and inclusive. The island spends the highest proportion of GDP on education in the world (13 per cent).

The half-term delegation includes a broad range of education and workplace visits where British teachers can meet Cuban teachers and students; meetings with Cuban teachers trade unions, the CTC (Cuban TUC) and Cuban mass organisations and a variety of cultural visits.

Take Action!

- If you are an NUT member and would like to attend the delegation, please get in touch with Samidha Garg on S.Garg@nut.org.uk

End the blockade now! New CSC model motion

The campaign to end the US blockade of Cuba once and for all continues. A new model motion is available for trade union CSC affiliates that calls for the end of the over five-decades long US blockade of Cuba. Whilst CSC welcomes the opening of embassies in Washington and Havana and the recent visit to Cuba by President Obama, this does not equate to an end to the illegal blockade of Cuba, nor US intervention in Cuban affairs.

CSC, its members and affiliated trade unions and organisations continue to play a crucial role in raising awareness that relations between the US and Cuba are not 'normalised'. Normal relations cannot occur until the blockade is ended; the illegally occupied territory of Guantánamo Bay is returned to Cuba and the US stops interfering in Cuban affairs.



Obama's Visit: Welcome progress, but the blockade remains

In summary, the motion:

- Calls on the US government to completely end the blockade of Cuba and cease its occupation of Guantánamo Bay
- Supports the Miami Five Freedom Tour, the visit of the Miami Five and their families to Britain in July 2016, organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign
- Calls on the UK Government to move forward to develop strong diplomatic, trade, scientific and cultural relations between our two countries based on mutual respect and understanding and oppose all US extraterritorial threats against UK-based companies
- Urges branches and individuals who are not already affiliates/members, to join the Cuba Solidarity Campaign to help bring an end to the blockade once and for all

Take Action!

- Please get in touch with Ollie Hopkins, CSC Campaigns Officer, campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk for a copy of the model motion which can be adapted for use at trade union branch, regional and national levels. An electronic version is available online <http://bit.ly/2016Motion>
- If you are not affiliated to Cuba Solidarity Campaign please get in touch for a model motion to affiliate
- CSC received many requests from international media outlets to comment on Barack Obama's historic visit to Cuba and carried out interviews with several television and radio stations in Britain, Turkey, Russia and South Africa. Watch a selection of the interviews here <http://bit.ly/CSCObama>

Trade Union News Round Up

31 Young Trade Unionists from across the trade union movement including **Unite, Unison, GMB, RMT** and **CWU** will be participating in the Young Trade Unionists' Brigade to Cuba this May Day. Delegates on the 9th annual young trade unionists' brigade will stay on an international camp near Havana for a full programme of political and cultural activities and visits. The delegation will attend the huge May Day Rally in Havana and the International Solidarity Meeting with Cuba on 2 May at the Conventions Palace in Havana, in addition to meetings with Federation of Cuban Workers (CTC), Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and a variety of workplace visits including schools and polyclinics.

CSC has been busy attending local group, union and labour party branch meetings in response to requests for updates on the latest news on Cuba-US relations. CSC has been reminding people that the blockade is still very much in place at meetings across the country including in recent weeks, **Unison Milton Keynes Local Government AGM, Reading Co-operative Party, and North Hampshire Constituency Labour Party.**

CSC has ran stalls at a range of trade union events since the new year including **UNISON Black Members Conference** in Llandudno, **UNISON Women's Conference** in Brighton, **TUC Women's Conference** in London, **Unison North West Conference** in Manchester and **NASUWT Conference** in Birmingham.

In the coming period, CSC will be having campaigning materials, stalls and fringe meetings at a range of conferences in the trade union and labour movement including, **TUC Black Workers Conference** in London, **CWU** in Bournemouth, **Unison Health Care Conference** in Brighton, **ASLEF** in Cairngorms, **UCATT** in Scarborough, **PCS**

in Brighton, **UCU, GMB** in Bournemouth, **Unison Local Government** and **UNISON National Delegate Conference** in Brighton, **Durham Miners' Gala, Unite Policy Conference** in Brighton and **Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival** in Dorset.

Welcome on board to our new affiliates! We are appealing for new trade union affiliations to join us in the campaign to end the US blockade once and for all. Recent new affiliates include: **GMB Bolton 23 branch, Chesterfield Trades Union Council, North Sussex Trades Union Council, RMT Scarborough, Waveney Trade Union Council.**

Take Action!

- Affiliate your branch to Cuba Solidarity Campaign today! You can affiliate online here <http://bit.ly/JoinAffiliateCSC> or get in touch with Ollie Hopkins, Campaigns Officer, for an affiliation form campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk.
- If your organisation is affiliated to CSC and would like a guest speaker please get in touch with Ollie Hopkins campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Dates for you diary

- Monday 16 May, 5.30pm: CSC Fringe meeting **UCATT** Conference, Scarborough
- Tuesday 7 June, 1pm : CSC fringe meeting, **GMB** Congress, Bournemouth
- Saturday 11 June, 10.30am. Cuba Solidarity Campaign AGM Mabledon Place, London
- Wednesday 15 June, 7pm **RMT** Cuba Garden Party Maritime House, London
- Tuesday 21 June, 5.15pm CSC fringe meeting **UNISON** NDC, Brighton

With thanks to our affiliates:

