



# TRADE UNIONS FOR CUBA



## Huge turnout for solidarity with Cuba at CSC Labour Party Conference fringe meeting

Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) ran a successful stall at the Labour Party Conference, recruiting over 50 new members and increasing its affiliated trade union branches to the campaign. Many Labour MPs including Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, John McDonnell, Shadow Chancellor, Ian Lavery, Shadow Minister for Trade Unions and Civil Society and Lillian Greenwood MP visited the stall.



*Jeremy Corbyn at the CSC stall. Photo: Gus Campbell*

The CSC fringe meeting was one of the best attended at recent Labour Party conferences, with many delegates, trade unionists and local activists in attendance. "Next year you'll need a bigger room!" a delegate said at the fringe, with the crowds overflowing into the corridor to hear from speakers including Teresita Vicente, Cuban Ambassador, Baroness Angela Smith and Tony Burke, **Unite** AGS. They spoke of the how the US blockade of Cuba continues and international solidarity with Cuba must continue.

Teresita Vicente urged solidarity at this crucial time for Cuba. "Don't be fooled by the change in tactics - the goals are still the same. Let's show the imperialists that we stand together, in solidarity, against the US blockade and occupation of Guantanamo Bay", she said. "We will continue with our internationalism, sending doctors all around the world, despite the difficulties of the blockade - demonstrating that another world really is possible".

Baroness Smith celebrated the summer's Miami Five Freedom Tour and paid tribute to the crucial role of parliamentarians in inviting the Miami Five to Britain which led to the successful visa victory against the then Home Secretary, Theresa May. "The visa victory and the Freedom Tour shows how campaigning works", she said.

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Cuba member gave an update on the blockade, where fines are continuing against companies and banks that carry out business with Cuba. "This impacts us too in Britain, including the closure of CSC's Co-operative Bank account, due to US blockade policies", she said.

Catherine West MP, Shadow Foreign Minister, was in the audience at the fringe meeting and wrote on Twitter following the meeting; "so much progress but need final lifting of blockade."

# British trade unions in solidarity with Cuba

Over 80 delegates packed into a standing-room only Cuba Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting at the 2016 TUC Congress in Brighton. The fringe meeting was one of the best attended at the Congress, demonstrating the excellent international solidarity with Cuba from across the British trade union movement at this crucial time.



*Christine Blower, NUT International Officer, Mick Whelan, ASLEF General Secretary, Roger McKenzie, UNISON AGS and Steve Turner, Unite AGS*

Delegates heard from a range of speakers on how, despite the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba, the US blockade remains in place.

Christine Blower, **NUT** International Secretary, spoke of Cuba's "incredible achievements for humanity, despite the blockade. One can only imagine how much more Cuba could achieve without the huge obstacle of the blockade in place".

She gave examples of how Cuba is a world-leader on education, including spending the highest percentage of GDP in the world on education, at 13 percent, compared to the 6 percent in Britain.

Mick Whelan, **ASLEF** General Secretary, spoke of how the present situation of improving relations between the United States and Cuba is a victory for international solidarity.

"The blockade was supposed to isolate Cuba - but solidarity meant the US became isolated", he said. The **ASLEF** General Secretary spoke of US threats beyond the blockade, including Obama's intention to fund and support breakaway unions

on the island. "Solidarity is needed with Cuban unions in light of this threat", he stated.

Steve Turner, **Unite** Assistant General Secretary, highlighted the recent anniversary of the US-backed coup in Allende's Chile in 1973 and drew recent parallels with US intervention in Latin America and its continuing regime change activities.

He paid tribute to the role of **Unite** and Tony Woodley in the struggle to free the Miami Five and spoke of his pride of attending May Day in Cuba. "It's impossible to not be moved by the spectacle of a million Cubans marching in unity, it makes you so proud to be there in solidarity", he said.

The **Unite** AGS gave examples of how the extraterritorial blockade impacts British trade and interests, including the \$140,000 fine of the WATG Holdings for designing a Cuban hotel and the Co-operative Bank closing the accounts of CSC due to blockade legislation.

Jorge Luis Garcia, Cuban Embassy Political Counsellor, sent Her Excellency Teresita Vicente's greetings to the TUC Congress. "Relations are a long way from being normalised", he said. "The blockade is still in place and Guantanamo Bay is still being illegally occupied. We need your continued solidarity", Garcia stressed.

Roger McKenzie, **UNISON** AGS, chaired the meeting. "I'm an organiser so after these meetings I always think, 'How can we organise to build solidarity with Cuba?' I can tell you how; go into your workplace, your communities, spread the word of Cuba's achievements despite the ongoing blockade, and affiliate your branches to CSC to help end the US blockade once and for all", he said.

## 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](mailto:campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk).

# Latin America Adelante! 2016 Conference



Latin America Adelante! Conference is the largest international solidarity with Latin America event of the year, taking place on Saturday 26 November, at Congress House London.

This year's Conference comes just days after the US presidential elections and there will be key discussions exploring how the new administration may impact Cuba, the Latin America region and its progressives and trade unionists.

The conference is the most important event on solidarity with Latin America in the Britain's

## Cuban Art and Artists in Britain for ¡PRESENTE!

This month (6-29 October 2016) the ¡PRESENTE! Contemporary Art from Cuba exhibition will bring a stunning showcase of contemporary Cuban art to the GX Gallery, London SE5 8RS and a speaking tour with events in London, Northampton, Hull and Norwich.

The show is coordinated by the Music Fund for Cuba and is supported by CSC and a range of organisations including the **NUT** and working with the the Cuban Ministry of Culture and the GX Gallery. Two exciting Cuban artists, Adislen Reyes Pino and Luis E Camejo, are visiting Britain for the exhibition and the speaking tour. Art sales at the exhibition will raise vital funds for art materials for Cuba that are difficult to assess due to the ongoing US blockade, which impacts all aspects of Cuban society, including art and culture.

political calendar. Adelante! will feature guests from Latin America who will address the conference in plenary sessions, seminars, and discussion panels. They will provide detailed information and analysis of what is really going on in their nations and how international solidarity can help. Guests this year include Iván Márquez, Lead negotiator in Colombian peace talks (Video link), Francisco Torrealba, Venezuelan Member of Parliament, HE Teresita Vicente, Ambassador of Cuba, HE Robert Calzadilla, Bolivian Ambassador and HE Guisell Morales-Echaverry, Nicaraguan Ambassador.

### Take Action!

If your trade union would like to get involved with the Latin America Conference, by sending delegates, co-organising and co-running seminars, or contributing to the conference, please get in touch with Ollie Hopkins, Campaign Officer, [campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk)

For more information and a full list of speakers and seminars, please visit <https://latinamericainconference.wordpress.com/>

For more information and full details of the exhibition please visit [www.presentecubanart.org](http://www.presentecubanart.org) or contact Trish Meehan [office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk](mailto:office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk)





# Trade Union News Round Up

CSC ran successful stalls and fringe meetings over the conference season including **UCATT** Conference in Scarborough, **PCS** in Brighton, **GMB** Congress in Bournemouth, **UNISON National Delegate Conference** in Brighton, **Unite Policy Conference** in Brighton, **Green Party** Conference in Birmingham, **TUC Congress** in Brighton and the **Labour Party** Conference in Liverpool.

The long awaited Miami Five Freedom Tour took place this July, with Cuban heroes René González and Gerardo Hernández speaking at a range of meetings, conferences, festivals and events across Britain, including **Durham Miners' Gala**, **Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival**, **Unite Policy Conference**, a trade union reception hosted by the **RMT**, a parliamentary reception, and rallies in Glasgow, Manchester, Cardiff and London. A full report was in the summer's *CubaSi* edition.

An **NUT** delegation to Cuba is taking place this October half term (22-29 October), with Kiri Tunks, NUT Junior Vice-President, leading the 24 strong delegation, where the NUT delegates will visit Cuban schools, workplaces and meet with Cuban teachers and trade unionists.

A special thanks to all of our trade union affiliates who helped make the Miami Five Freedom Tour happen! Thank you to the following trade union affiliates for the supporting and sponsoring the Miami Five Freedom Tour:

**ASLEF National, BFAWU National, CWU Birmingham, Black Country & Worcester CWU Scotland No 2 Branch, FBU National, FBU Region 1 Scotland, GMB Scotland, NUT National, RMT National, Trades Councils: Bristol, Calderdale, Leicester and District TUC, Norwich & District, TSSA National, TUC Southern & Eastern Region, UCATT Crawley Branch, UCATT**

**London & SE Region, Unison National, Unison branches & regions: Cardiff County, City of Edinburgh, Dorchester, East Lancs Health, Gateshead Health, Hammersmith & Fulham, Housing & Care Scotland, Knowsley, Manchester, Natural Resources Wales, Newcastle City, Pembrokeshire, South Lanarkshire, Southend Borough, Wolverhampton General, Wrexham County; Unite National, Unite branches & regions: Bebington 0096, Birtley NE/GEO/8, Bolton & District, Bristol Finance & Legal, East Midlands Region, Fylde Coast, Glasgow Construction SC/164/404, Greater Manchester Retired Members N/W102999, Greater Manchester Social Action NW/389, Hartlepool NE/404/19 Construction, Hinkley Point B Branch SW/8015, Hull NE/GEO/25, LE 10, Leeds NE/GEO/12, London & Eastern Region, Luton Retired Members LE/RM009, Manchester G E M S Sector 0904, NE/GEO/1 Sheffield East, North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region, Northern Powergrid 204/5, NW0056 Bamber Bridge & Leyland, NW/0611 Manchester Manufacturing, NW/64 BAE Systems Warton & Samlesbury Manufacturing, NW/0783, NW/677, NW0056 Bamber Bridge & Leyland, Oxford General & Publishing SE-0938M, Preston & South Ribble, Rolls Royce Coventry, Scottish Professional Executive Staffs, Scunthorpe Steelworks NE/205/3, South East Region, SE/6241 Weybridge, SE/6246 Brighton, South West Region, Tyneside Electrical, Engineering & Electronic Sectoral, Typhoo Tea 553, Wales Region, West Midlands Region, Wigan, WM/6030 Birmingham South Local, WM6050 Coventry & Warwickshire Local Tom Mann, WM7686 Land Rover**

## Take Action!

Affiliate your branch to Cuba Solidarity Campaign today! Get in touch with Ollie Hopkins, Campaigns Officer, for an affiliation form [campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk).

With thanks to Cuba Solidarity Campaign's nationally affiliated trade unions:

