



TRADE UNIONS FOR CUBA



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WikiLeaks show CSC and trade union campaign against Hilton Hotels hit home



Recently released U.S. diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks reveal the success of the CSC and trade union campaign against the Hilton Group's ban on Cuban nationals staying in their hotels in 2007.

Leaked cables report on the U.S. hotel chain's response to a boycott of its hotels by the GMB and Unison trade unions. In correspondence to Hilton Hotels International, the GMB made it quite clear that:

"...discriminating on legal grounds, which includes nationalities, in the provision of

goods, facilities or services is unlawful under the 1976 Race Relations Act"

Both the GMB and Unison made it apparent that they could not do business with "any company which pursued racist policies".

Following intense pressure from CSC and the two unions, Hilton International concluded:

"that their critics' legal argument was valid. Hilton International has instructed its staff to obey all local law, including the Race Relations

Act, even if doing so violates U.S. Cuba sanctions... Hilton has asked the U.S. hotel industry trade association to begin a dialogue with the U.S. government on this issue on behalf of all U.S. hotels operating abroad"

Although referring only to the hospitality industry, the hotel giants stressed that "Hilton would like to see a reform of the U.S. Sanctions".

A subsequent cable reports on a meeting between the Hilton, CSC and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cuba which reveals that the highly effective boycott of Hilton in 2007 led to concerns regarding the conflict between U.S. sanctions on Cuba and U.K. law banning discrimination. Members of the Parliamentary Group vowed to "protest the U.S. sanctions with the relevant minister".

According to comments by the U.S. Embassy in London in the same cable, "we have briefed Members of Parliament and the Trade Union

Congress that the U.S. does not impose its sanctions obligations extraterritorially on non-US persons".

Despite these claims, Barclays was last year fined nearly £200m by U.S. authorities for contravening blockade legislation whilst Lloyds was compelled to halt business with companies and individuals trading with Cuba.

As the experiences of Barclays and Lloyds testify, British companies continue to be subjugated to American blockade legislation.

The WikiLeaks revelations demonstrate the effective lobbying carried out by CSC and the British trade union movement and illustrate the potential for the British government to overrule U.S. law.

The continuing extraterritorial implementation of the U.S. blockade represents not just an affront to Cuban sovereignty, but also that of the British government and the British people themselves.

Cuba Fact File

Over 50 years of social achievement

- Best country in Latin America to be a mother and woman according to a 2011 Save the Children report
- Record low infant mortality rate of 4.5 per 1,000 (lower than U.S. and Canada)
- Highest social spending as a proportion of GDP in Latin America
- On track to meet all Millennium Development Goals by 2015
- Best literacy rates in Latin America

Over 50 years of international solidarity

- 38,000 doctors providing free healthcare and medical training in 72 developing countries – more than the WHO
- More than four million people taught to read in 30 countries through the *Yo, Si Puedo* literacy method
- Two million free sight-saving operations performed since 2004 as part of Operation Miracle
- 30,000 students from developing countries on free medical scholarships
- 250,000 lives saved in Haiti since 1998

British unions lead fight for Miami 5 in U.S.



Mike Garcia, Cristina Vazquez, Ernesto Medrano and Tony Woodley

Tony Woodley, former General Secretary of Unite, took part in an historic meeting in solidarity with the Miami 5 in Los Angeles in August.

It was the first time that an American trade union has organised an event solely to inform their rank and file about the ongoing injustice being committed against the Miami 5. The aim of the event was to expand exposure of the case to the U.S labour movement and ask

them to join the struggle.

Over 200 activists joined together at the United Service Workers (SEIU) West Hall on the same day that Rene Gonzalez – imprisoned for fighting terrorism – spent another birthday in prison.

“Make no mistake, this is an historic event,” Tony told the crowd. “The Miami 5 enjoy a great deal of support on the international level but that is not the case inside the United States. Solidarity is absolutely crucial in this case and the political struggle will be decisive for the return of the Five to Cuba.”

Tony shared an emotional meeting he had with the families of the Five on his last visit to Cuba, “the Five

and their families are all people with great pride and nothing will break their spirit”.

A number of local unions were represented at the meeting including service workers, transportation workers, teachers, musicians, healthcare workers and electricians. Mike Garcia, President of SEUI, reminded the audience that “the struggle for the freedom of the Cuban 5 should be part of the struggle of U.S workers because it is part of the same fight”.

Those attending were able to see the travelling exhibition of Gerardo Hernandez’s political cartoons whilst many of those present – because of the ongoing media silence in the U.S – were hearing about the case for the first time.

Tony Woodley and CSC Communications Manager Natasha Hickman were awarded with commemorative plaques in recognition of their work for the Miami 5.

The presentation to Tony symbolises the hard work of the British trade union movement in its fight for justice.

CSC and British trade unions have led the struggle in support of the Miami 5 and, hopefully, by continuing this struggle with the U.S unions, it won’t be long before all Americas are aware of this tragic injustice.

“The May Day Brigade was one of the best experiences of my life! It was heart-moving, liberating, educational and most of all life-changing. I can’t wait to go back to the UK and spread the word. Viva Cuba!”

Vikki Garratty, Unison

“The May Day Brigade was amazing. It was moving to see so many people coming together to celebrate their country”

Lisa Scott, Unison

Young trade unionists show support for Cuba

Since returning from this year’s Young Trade Unionists’ May Day Brigade to Cuba, Unison members Geri Cowell, Vikki Garratty and Lisa Scott have raised over £200 for CSC.

The trio, along with 25 young activists from across the trade union movement, visited Cuba to enjoy the May celebrations and offer their support and solidarity to the Cuban people. Delegates from five trade unions – Unison, Unite, TSSA, GMB and UCATT – met with Cuban peers to learn about their struggle living under the effects of an illegal blockade, visited workplaces and heard about Cuba’s economic reforms.

As privileged guests of the Cuban equivalent of the TUC – the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba* – the brigade gained valuable insight into Cuban trade unionism and their crucial role in the government and eco-

nomics management of the country.

Delegates met family members of the Miami Five – who remain unjustly incarcerated within American prisons for fighting terrorism – and the Unison triumvirate were so inspired by their experience that they have since organised a raffle at Unison Young Members’ Weekend in Cardiff and a Havana Club Rum auction at a meeting in Leeds organised by Thompsons Solicitors. At the meeting – held on the 26th July to commemorate Moncada Day in Cuba – Vikki and Lisa shared their Cuban experiences with trade unionists and activists from across the region and emphasised the ongoing need for international solidarity.



Geri Cowell, Vikki Garratty and Lisa Scott show off a t-shirt signed by all the members of CSC’s 2011 Young Trade Unionists’ May Day Brigade to Cuba.

If you’re interested in going on our Young Trade Unionists’ May Day Brigade next year, please contact CSC Campaigns Officer, Dan Smith, using the contact details on Page 4.

Time to get closer to Cuba



CSC welcomes the recent Co-operation Agreement signed by the British and Cuban governments but maintains that it needs to be substantiated by concrete action.

The agreement follows intense lobbying by CSC and the trade union movement to normalise relations with Cuba. The declaration champions “closer dialogue and economic, scientific, technical, educational, cultural and sporting links between the two countries” and highlights key areas for collaboration including environ-

mental issues, biotechnology, trade and investment, regional security, child protection and disaster preparedness.

Despite the UK being the 6th largest economy in the world, the level of trade between Britain and Cuba is derisory. Exports to Cuba totalled an abysmal £8.9m in 2009 whilst imports came to a pathetic £9.8m.

Compare this to September 1958 when the UK government exported 25 fighter jets to General Batista’s dictatorship. The equivalent value

today – at around £40m a plane – would equate to an annual UK export to Cuba of around one billion pounds.

The UK should be applauded for repeatedly voting against the US blockade at the United Nations, but further action is required to develop real, discernible trade and co-operation between our countries.

It is now crucial that we harness political will within the UK to turn this ‘paper’ agreement into something more concrete.

CSC at trade union conferences

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign has been travelling the length and breadth of the country organising stands, meetings and socials at a variety of trade union conferences.

We have organised fringe meetings at the NUT, PCS, CWU, UCU, GMB and Unison to explore various contemporary and historical issues in Cuba.

We have held socials at PCS and Unite Rules conferences and have had a presence at CSP, USDAW,

NASUWT, FBU and BFAWU.

We have welcomed a fine selection of British speakers and hosted a number of special guests from Cuba.

Dr Isora Enriquez O’Farrill told NUT delegates about Cuba’s innovative literacy method *Yo, Si Puedo* which has been developed in over 30 countries whilst Manuel Montero, European Officer for the Cuban equivalent of the TUC, was welcomed to Unison conference and contextualised Cuba’s economic

within the ongoing blockade of the island and the global economic crisis.

We would like to thank all those supporters who attended our events, joined CSC and got their branches affiliated.

We would also like to thank Thompsons Solicitors for all the support they offer us throughout conference season.



Cuban Ambassador, Esther Armenteros, addresses a fringe at GMB conference

Upcoming Events!

- **Cuba and Latin America Reception at TUC Congress, Monday 12 September 2011, 5:30 – 7pm Bloomsbury Hotel, Great Russell Street, WC1B 3LS (next to Congress House)**
With speakers on Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Colombia plus British trade union leaders. All trade unionists welcome!
- **Havana Club Rum Reception at Labour Party Conference, Tuesday 27 September 2011, 5:30-6:30pm Novotel Hotel, Liverpool**
Speakers include the Cuba Ambassador, Esther Armenteros, Cathy Jamieson MP, Colin Burgon, Diana Holland (Unite AGS), Steve Cavalier (Thompsons Solicitors) and the Venezuelan Ambassador.
- **Latin America Conference 2011, Saturday 3 December 2011, 9:30am – 5pm Congress House, Great Russell Street, WC1B 3LS**
This annual conference provides fantastic insight into the reality of the region and effective ways for people in the UK to support these struggles and movements. This year speakers from Cuba include Magali Llort, Mirta de la Santissima Trinidad, Irma Teodora Sehwerert – mothers of the Miami Five – and Alberto Juantorena, Olympic Gold medal winner and former Vice Minister for Sport. Tickets are £10/6 and are available from CSC.



Viva Cuba Libre!



HANDS OFF CUBA!

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign works in the UK against the illegal US blockade of Cuba, to defend the Cuban peoples' right to self-determination and for freedom for the Miami Five

Cuba Solidarity Campaign

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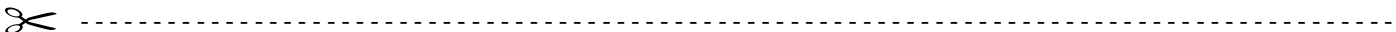
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For fifty years, Cuba has been the victim of an illegal and inhumane blockade initiated by the United States. This blockade disproportionately affects the most vulnerable people in Cuban society and causes severe shortages in schools and hospitals. It has been condemned by Amnesty International and – for 19 consecutive years – the UN General Assembly has voted to overturn the blockade.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) campaigns for the removal of the blockade and champions the Cuban peoples' right to self-determination and sovereignty. We lobby the UK Parliament and European Union for the normalisation of relations with Cuba and seek to counter misinformed propaganda surrounding the island. We campaign for the release of the Miami Five and to raise awareness of Cuba's achievements in healthcare, education, arts, sport, energy efficiency and internationalism.

Twenty-three national trades unions and over 400 branches and regions are currently affiliated to CSC. This represents symbolic victory over a vicious and illegal blockade which seeks to isolate Cuba. The ongoing support of the British trade union movement is invaluable to the Cuban people and CSC would like to thank you for your continuing solidarity.

If you would like to know more about the Campaign or Cuba, please contact Dan Smith, CSC Campaigns Officer, using the contact details to the left.



Affiliate your region/branch to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Affiliating to CSC is the best way to help campaign against the illegal U.S blockade, support Cuba's right to self-determination and champion the social achievements of the Cuban people. All affiliates receive our quarterly magazine CubaSí, the right to vote at our AGM, and news on Cuba, campaigning actions, study tours plus much more. Please complete and return the form below or sign-up [online](#). Affiliation is **£40 for a branch** and **£50 for a region**.

Trade Union: _____

Name of Branch/Region: _____

Name of contact: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Affiliation Fee: _____ Donation: _____ Total: _____

Cheques should be made payable to 'Cuba Solidarity Campaign' and returned to the address above

SPECIAL THANKS TO

