

NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN ACTION GROUP (NSCAG) ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2005

In 2005 all NSCAG work focused on work with trade unions, here and in Nicaragua. Highlights are given below. We would like to thank all those who contributed to this work, whether a trade union individual, branch, region or national office.

Speaker Tour by Domingo Perez, General Secretary of the Public and Municipal Workers Union (UNE)

Domingo visited the UK and Spain in June 2005. He spoke at the Trades Council Congress, the CWU and PCS conferences and at the CWU training college. In addition he met with several UNISON branches and regions, with Billy Hayes, General Secretary of CWU, RMT members and PSC young members. He visited Oxford, Bristol, Wokingham, Manchester and Liverpool: events included a Cuba solidarity meeting and a visit to a recycling plant and council offices.

As a result of the tour we worked on getting support for UNE's work on political organising, education and training and health and safety work, and investigated the possibility of building closer links between UNE and UNISON in Bristol, Wokingham and London.

Other Solidarity Work and Actions

NSCAG activities included:

- * participation in an international campaign focussing on workers' rights in the Nicotex factory which supplies the Gildan Activewear company. The case was resolved in February 2005.
- * solidarity messages to the Association of Nicaraguan Teachers (ANDEN), along with the NUT, to those involved in a national teachers' strike calling for a increase in the education budget and improvements to the pay and conditions for teachers.
- * raising £2,000 from UNISON branches, regions and the International Committee to support UNE's 9th National Congress
- * £200 was raised for council employees in San Rafael who mounted a legal case after being dismissed following a change of political leadership in the town hall.
- * Worked to develop links, with the view to possible twinning links between UNE and UNISON branches in Bristol and Wokingham.
- * Worked to assist UNE to submit a successful application to the UNISON International Trade Union Development Fund to support young worker organising.
- * Sent messages of solidarity to the health workers union, FETSALUD, during a national strike in November 2005.

Trade Union Events, Articles and Contacts

We had stalls at several trade union events and were invited to speak about our work at the TGWU London branch meeting and UNISON's International Committee meeting. Articles were written by TU delegation members for their union websites and magazines. We had preliminary contact with the NUT about working on an education campaign.

Publications and Materials

Information from the 2004 TU delegation to Nicaragua and Sam Maher's (NSCAG worker), visit to Nicaragua was compiled into a briefing on the Nicaraguan trade union movement. This was distributed to our affiliated and donor trade union branches and regions, and handed out at several trade union conferences. The report is available on

the NSCAG website or as a hard copy from the NSC office. A short article on the teachers' strike and on the delegation was also published in the Central America Report.

Affiliations

11 rather than 12 national unions were affiliated at the end of 2005 (GPMU is now part of AMICUS). They were AMICUS, BECTU, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, NUT, PCS, RMT, TGWU, UNISON & USDAW.

The total number of branch and region affiliated at the year end (2005) was 91. Others were not affiliated but donate when requested.

	April 2003	Dec 2003	Dec 2004	Dec 2005
AMICUS / MSF	37	48	34	24
CWU	8	14	12	12
FBU	3	2	0	1
GPMU	2	3	(now in AMICUS)	
NUM	1	1	0	0
NUT	1	9	11	8
PCS	1	1	2	2
T & G	10	21	14	13
UNISON	29	39	29	29
USDAW	1	1	1	1
RMT(only affiliated nationally)		0	0	0
TOTALS	93	125	104	91

In 2005 only 9 new branches and regions affiliated: UNISON 3, CWU 2, PCS 2, NUT 1, FBU 1. The number from UNISON is very low considering their level of support for Nicaragua and how closely linked NSC, UNISON & UNE are. There were no new affiliations from AMICUS branches and regions, partly due to national office rule changes.

As a comparison it is important to note that in 2003 when a new trade union affiliation leaflet was distributed (though not through FBU, PCS or USDAW) by the end of that year we had 57 new branches and regions. It is vital that we launch another TU affiliation drive if we are to continue effective solidarity with Nicaraguan trade unions.

" Today, more than ever, there is a need to develop and increase solidarity...For many years now neo-liberal governments, driven by the economic interests of the North, have been destroying our trade unions, violating human rights and, as a result, dominating our people.....We thank you for all your support."

Domingo Pérez, General Secretary, Public Services Union (UNE).