

Resolution Date: 14th November 2017

Resolution Title: Argentina Solidarity Campaign

Proposal: To fund Co-Founder of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (Argentina), Nora Morales de Cortiñas and Beverly Keene (Jubileo Sur-Dialogo 2000) visit for a series of talks in the autumn of 2017.

Summary:

Nora Cortiñas is co-Founder of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and latterly President of its Founding Line. Her son, a Peronist activist Carlos Gustavo was disappeared by the military Junta in Argentina on 15th April 1977. She has since dedicated her life to campaigning for human rights causes, most notably to bring the perpetrators of the kidnappings, torture and disappearances of 30,000 Argentinians to justice. She teaches at the Social Science Faculty of the University of Buenos Aires and holds three Honorary Doctorates.

Beverly Keene is the Director of Jubileo Sur-Dialogo 2000, an NGO that campaigns to against illegitimate external debts in less powerful countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. She and Nora both campaign on illegitimate debt, trade, economic justice and improvements in human and labour rights both in Argentina and across Latin America.

This proposal seeks to pay for part of the costs of bringing Nora and Beverly to London to present a talk to the trade unions, human rights activists, academics and students, NGOs and social movements during October/November 2017. The subject matter would cover human and labour rights, debt and trade in Latin America, however global issues will also be covered, especially with eyes on the fact that Buenos Aires will host a WTO leaders' summit in December 2017 and the G20 Summit next year. Nora would also incorporate her own experiences of campaigning for justice for "the Disappeared" since 1977 and offer her reflections on the human and labour rights scenario in Argentina and Latin America today in light of the return of conservative governments. Nora and Beverly are happy to either speak on their own or alongside other academic experts or NGO and social movement representatives.

So far we have only managed to obtain part of the funding for the proposed visit (see below).

Latin America at a crossroads:

For the last two decades the election of a wave of left-wing governments across Latin America achieved enormous social progress in terms of reducing poverty and unemployment, creating equality, increasing wages and consolidating labour rights. However 'soft-coups' in recent years in Honduras, Paraguay and most notably, Brazil threaten to roll back these changes and return the region to the dark days of 1990s neoliberalism which caused misery, poverty and unemployment for millions. Argentina represents the front line in the ideological battle, following the election of Mauricio Macri to the Presidency in December 2015 This is the first time that the 'new right' and its neoliberal agenda has won via the ballot box and represents a test case for supporters of progressive politics and labour rights. In his first year in office his government has decimated the economy, creating 200,000 redundancies, huge pay cuts, 1.5m rise in poverty, 300% increase in utility bills, soaring inflation and national debt. Enormous payoffs were made to US vulture funds that were extorting the country. Human rights activists like Milagro Sala have been imprisoned despite condemnation from the UN and Amnesty.

A timely visit:

Many of the Mothers are now in their 80s and 90s years of age and in ill-health so unable to travel from Argentina to deliver such talks. Nora is healthy and active at age 87. However the reality is that this may be the last opportunity to receive one of the Mothers in the UK. It is important, for labour rights campaigners, the trade unions and activists in London and around the country who are interested in human rights in Latin America and the southern cone dictatorships and who haven't had the opportunity to hear a Mother speak live, to do so.

Argentina will also host the WTO leaders' summit in December 2017 and the G20 Summit next year so in the run up to these events for which unions, social movements, NGOs and grassroots organisations across the globe will be mobilising for, it is important that students and other academics who specialise in Latin America hear from experienced and internationally renowned campaigner voices from that country.

A globally respected figure:

Nora is widely revered among the global human rights community. Her faction of The Mothers, the "Linea Fundadora" has remained politically independent which has allowed her to maintain neutrality and she is highly respected across the political spectrum.

Publicity:

We will help to ensure strong attendance for the proposed talks by publicising directly through these organisations that we coordinate ourselves or have members involved in:

Argentina Research Network, Argentina Solidarity Campaign, Argentinos en Inglaterra, Jubilee Debt Campaign, UCU, UNITE, ITF and other unions, Labour Friends of Progressive Latin America, Momentum Latino, Green Party, Radical Americas, Alborada, Movimientos, Argentinos Para La Victoria (UK) and other academic and

human rights organisations and NGOs like Amnesty.

Budget:

Return Flight 2 x flights Buenos Aires to London (£1,200 each) £2,400 inc taxes

Hotel 2 x 4 nights stay at a Hotel (£200/per night for two) £800

Expenses 2x Food and travel for 4 days (£50/day/person) £400

Total £3,600

We have already received donations from University of London, Jubilee Debt Campaign and 3 UNITE branches towards the total budget. We are actively fundraising but need your support.

The Unite Housing Workers Branch is asked to contribute £100 - *Agreed*