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**Communist Party
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(Marxist-Leninist)**



**Cuban
patriots and
communists;**

**Free the
Miami Five!**

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On 6 October 1976, CIA agents of Cuban and Venezuelan origin blew up a Cubana Airways jet in mid-flight, with 73 people on board. Among the passengers – all of whom were killed – were the Cuban youth fencing team, a group of Guyanese students setting out for Cuba to begin studying medicine and five North Korean citizens who were on a friendship tour of Latin America.

Of the many US-sponsored terrorist acts against socialist Cuba, this remains the most famous and the single most bloody in terms of its outcome.

Ever since the victory of the Cuban revolution on New Year's Day, 1959, US imperialism has had its sights set on re-establishing its stranglehold on the rebel island. To this effect, it committed some 200 acts of terrorism against the Cuban people between 1961 and 1980 alone, including numerous attempts on the life of former president Fidel Castro and other members of the leadership.

Against this backdrop, it should surprise nobody that the Cuban revolution took steps to defend itself. It was more than a decade ago, in June 1998, that the revolutionary government handed over to the US political police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a huge amount of material related to anti-Cuban terrorist activities conducted from US territory.

This included 230 pages of documents, five videos of material openly broadcast on US television about illegal acts of violence aimed against Cuba, and nearly three hours' worth of audio cassettes detailing the links between jailed central American counter-revolutionaries and their contacts outside among the Miami *gusanos* – literally 'worms', the epithet justifiably used by loyal Cubans to describe their treasonous expatriates.

The predictable response of the FBI was to completely ignore the evidence of state-sponsored terrorism originating from its own territory. Instead, in a series of dawn raids, five patriotic Cubans were arrested as "agents of a foreign power", the same charge that was levelled against the top leaders of the Communist Party USA during the McCarthyite witchhunts of the 1950s.

These five men, Cuban intelligence agents who had been monitoring the preparation of terrorist acts among the Miami *gusanos*, have since come to be known as the Miami Five: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labaniño, Rene González, Fernando González and Antonio Guerrero.

But relatively few people outside of progressive political circles will ever have heard of them. There has been very little coverage of their case in the western corporate media.

All five were given the maximum prison terms allowed for their supposed 'crimes'. Gerardo Hernández was given two life sentences plus 15 years. Another two, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labaniño, were also handed down life sentences, and Fernando González and Rene González were respectively condemned to 19 and 15 years' imprisonment.

From the moment they were arrested, the Miami Five were subjected to the kind of extremely harsh treatment that the US im-

perialist regime has become infamous for – from its treatment of political prisoners at home to its torture camps in Iraq and Afghanistan and its infamous concentration camp at Guantánamo – ironically, and illegally, located in Cuba.

After a fortnight in the Miami Federal Detention Center, the five men were transferred to the Special House, also known ominously as 'the hole', and placed in isolation cells measuring a mere 15 x 7ft.

These cells are usually used to house ordinary criminals, particularly those accused of murder, and the US prison service's own rules state that a prisoner can only be kept there for a maximum of 60 days. Two of the Miami Five, comrades Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labaniño, ended up remaining there for nearly a year and a half.

What exactly are these Cuban patriots, loyal to their people and to their country's socialist system, actually accused of?

There are a number of minor charges, including – as we have seen – acting as agents of a foreign government without registering with the US authorities. This is an accusation to which the Five readily and proudly admit. But the two main charges for which two of them have been condemned to life sentences relate to spying and 'murder'.

In fact, the prosecution could present absolutely no evidence of espionage, admitting that they had "seized 20,000 pages of documents [from the men's computers] but cannot present one single page of classified information". The charge of *conspiracy* to spy had to suffice – but with a sentence suggesting that actual espionage had taken place!

As to the murder charge of which Gerardo Hernández was found guilty, this relates to the downing of two private Cessna planes by Cuban MiG fighters just off the coast of Havana in February 1996. These Cessnas, flown by members of the Miami-based counter-revolutionary group *Hermanos al Rescate* (Brothers to the Rescue), were known about by socialist Cuba's intelligence services – via information provided by the Miami Five. It had been established that both planes were about to be armed, with the connivance of US imperialism, for further violations of Cuban airspace.

Comrade Hernández's murder conviction is clearly an act of revenge by the US state against Cuba for foiling one particular plan to commit further crimes against the Cuban people.

The Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) joins the call for the liberation of the Miami Five, whose only 'crime' was to seek to protect their socialist homeland from the terrorism of US imperialism and its treasonous puppets in Miami.

We salute these five men as courageous patriots, and we are proud to uphold with them the banner of socialism and communism.

Free our comrades, the Miami Five!

Long live socialist Cuba!

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