

Amigo Month event at Congress House Monday 18 September 2017

A report by Isaac Bigio

On Monday 18 September 100+ people born in more than 35 countries attended an event organised by the Amigo Month and SERTUC (the Southern & Eastern Region of the TUC) at Congress House.

More than a dozen speakers told about the importance of the Amigo Month or the events that they do during this period. The event started with the speech by Megan Dobney, the Trade Union Congress' Regional secretary for London and South and East England, who welcome the leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities and read a letter from the Portuguese Union (CGTP).

Veibena Armada spoke of the Angolan hero, Antonio Agostinho Neto (celebrated every 17 September) not only to remember Angolans struggle for independence but also the tens of thousands of Cuban and Latin Americans that fought in Angola against racism and apartheid. Armada told that the fight for independence amongst Iberian colonies started in the Andes in 1809 and after 16 decades it finished when all the 5 Luso-African countries (PALOP) and East Timor become republics.



Then Isaac Bigio (left) as an historian linked the independences from Latin America to Luso-African. In the last day we celebrated the independence of Central America (15 September), Mexico (16) and Chile (18). He mentioned that on 18 September we also remember when in the year 53 AD was born the first Hispanic ruler of Britain and one of the builders of London, a city that was created from scratch by Latins and the Hispanic Legion.

The Amigo Month celebrates all the Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities, which constitute London's largest ethno-linguistic minority.

There were three artistic shows: an Angolan



music performance from Joao Mendoca de Carvalho and Cota Amandeu (above), an Aztec Mexican dancer Adam (next page), and a Dominican poetic recitation. Then spoke Sian Berry, who was twice the Green candidate for Mayor of London (third place during the last elections) and the leader of that party at the London Assembly. She told about the importance of the Spanish and Portuguese speaking community and the need to defend their spaces in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters.

Guilherme Rosa, the first and only Angolan, Portuguese and Ibero-American Deputy Mayor in London (Labour party), spoke about the necessity of keeping together the Spanish and Portuguese speaking community.



Other speakers included Councillor María Linford (from Ecuador and the Lib Dem Party in Southwark), Nancy Liscano (Colombian, Teléfono de la Esperanza), Carlos Burgos (Central American, Wards Corner Coalition, celebrating 10 years of defending UK's largest Latin market), Pepe Anderson (Dominicans in UK), Martha Hinestroza (Colombian, Pueblito Paisa), Nuno Vinhas (Portuguese from the Anglo-Paraguayan Society and the Anglo Latin American Foundation), Pedro Dias (Angolan, Weltwichia centre), Candy (Angolan trade unionist from Momentum, Labour), Osvaldo Gomes (Capeverdians in UK, the former leader of the Iberian/Latin American community block at the Olympics and now the leader of the UK's Luso-Africans) ((Poner más si me olvidé)). At the end Councillor Chopra, the former Mayor of Southwark, invited everybody to a join multicultural celebration this Friday.

In the meeting people were invited to attend the next events during the Amigo Month like the CASA Latin American Theatre Festival, the beginning of the Echoes Iberian and Latin American classic music festival, the Spanish Film Festival, the Native Spirit Festival, the Latin Carnival this weekend, the Chilean national day party on Saturday at the Welsh centre and the Sunday's party at the Pueblito Paisa.

The community was quite happy with the TUC and specially with its Regional Secretary for all her work.