



[Louis Radforth](#)

14 May 2024

Young trade unionists supporting Cuba

Louis writes about his experiences travelling to Cuba as part of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign's May Day Brigade - and invites you to join the Fringe event at conference to hear more.

Cuba is a country that, [since the revolution in the 1950s](#), has been at the forefront of fights against injustice, from anticolonial struggles in Angola to supporting disaster relief the world over.

Despite the military and economic attacks from America, Cuba has continued to be a force for good in the world, refusing to be isolationist and has even offered humanitarian aid to the people of America during natural disasters like hurricane Katrina. But because of its socialist characteristics Cuba is seen as a threat that America cannot tolerate, people cannot be seen to come before profit and therefore Cuba suffers a severe [economic blockade](#) by the world's only hyperpower and its closest neighbour.

It's therefore on us workers to stand with Cuba. As a trade union PCS is affiliated to the [Cuba Solidarity Campaign \(CSC\)](#) which is an organisation that raises awareness of the impact the US blockade has on the Cuban people being able to access some basic medical supplies and other goods.

Through PCS's affiliation to the CSC I was lucky enough to be selected as one of the young trade unionists to be part of the [May Day Brigade](#). I was proud that my branch, along with a number of others, had contributed money to purchase medical aid for me to take, so with a suitcase full of syringes and catheters I was going to Cuba.

I was told that the trip wasn't a holiday and would involve a lot of hard work. It was only when I got blisters on my hands from the shovel I was using in the 36 degree heat after clearing a field for planting that I realised I'd probably underestimated how hard. But the experience was incredible, witnessing how hard the Cuban people work to improve their food security, seeing the pride the doctors have in their achievements despite the lack of supplies, and celebrating the revolution with the local communities.

The trip showed me that Cuba is a place that does struggle and does face severe hardship but that doesn't deter its people from striving forward and actively trying to improve their lives; nor from standing with other nations under attack. I don't think for the entire time I was there that I heard anyone speak of the struggles they faced in Cuba without a recognition of the plight of the Palestinian people, something which I found incredibly moving.

The whole experience reinforced for me how vital it is that trade unions and trade unionists show their support for Cuba. As a national union we are affiliated to the CSC but that should not stop us from affiliating at a branch level too or even joining as an individual. I know that I'll be showing support for the CSC at every opportunity I get. At national conference this year's the [young members' Fringe at lunchtime on 21 May](#) will be joined by guest speakers from the CSC. Make sure you come along if you can or feel free to reach out if you'd like to have a conversation about Cuba and what you can do to show support.