

Deep roots of the YCL are a source of pride

OWAIN HOLLAND on the organisation that brings Britain's young communists together

YEARS ago, when I joined the Young Communist League (YCL), I never thought I'd be addressing a packed meeting of communists from all around the world on the edge of the Black Sea in Russia.

On October 18 2017 on behalf of the League I addressed a meeting of international communist youth organisations representing nearly 40 nations from across the globe. At

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REPREHENSIBLE 'REWARD' FOR PRIVATE HOUSEBUILDER

the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS) we came together to celebrate the achievements of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

The YCL brought revolutionary greetings from Britain for the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution and we invited the audience to look back with us to that time during the revolution when British dockers refused to load arms onto the Jolly George, which was to supply them to Russia's White Guard when the British government attempted to, in the words of Winston Churchill, strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle.

The revolution was a monumental event that opened the road to so many achievements not just for the Soviet peoples, who heroically overthrew the bourgeoisie in tsarist Russia, but internationally as the revolution led to the defeat of Nazi Germany, gave crucial support to the fledgling socialist Cuba, countless liberation struggles and the war against apartheid and so much more.

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Being a member of the YCL not only lets you carry part of the legacy of 1917 but it lets you use the lessons and experiences the international communist movement gained from the events of 1917 and subsequently.

It gives you a voice on a global stage via our membership of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and gives members fantastic opportunities to participate in global anti-imperialist events such as the recent World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia.

The most recent festivals have been held in Ecuador, South Africa and Cuba. These events allow you to share experiences and build friendships with like-minded comrades all over the world, from Havana to Johannesburg to Kerala.

It gives you an insight into how big and vibrant the global communist movement is across the world — something we can lose sight of whilst trying to organise in relatively difficult conditions here in Britain.

There is also the chance to directly express solidarity with extremely oppressed comrades, such as our comrades in the Komsomol of Ukraine, their grit and determination to carry the flame of communism in dire circumstances gives us courage to work harder to stand in absolute solidarity with our struggling comrades across the world.

At the festival we saw just how far the nations of the former Soviet Union have fallen. In Ukraine we see the rise and prominence of fascist organisations and anti-communism.

In the Russian Federation the organising authorities attempted to include some of the most unsavoury elements in the festival.

Apartheid may have been defeated in one region of the globe, but it still exists in Israel, the Palestinians struggle for freedom. Cuba still suffers from the embargo.

Western imperialism still meddles in the Middle East. The global refugee crisis continues and is set to get worse with further climate change and imperialist wars. Communists are still being murdered in Latin America. From this list it is evident just how much work the communist youth of the world has to do.

Undoubtedly, there is a long way to go but we have the lessons and inspirations of the Great October Revolution to draw on. Join the YCL and help us create future revolutions and the movement that we will grow and take on the road to socialism!

Owain Holland is general secretary of the Young Communist League.

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