

1921-2021

50TH YCL CONGRESS

OUR CONGRESS, OUR STRUGGLE, OUR FUTURE

Political Resolution

Endorsed by the 50th Congress, 21 – 22 August 2021

“The sovereign body of the League shall be the Congress.”
Constitution of the YCL.





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Introduction

1. In Britain and across the planet, Capitalism continues to be fundamentally gripped by generalised crisis. This crisis manifests itself in every sphere of human society: economically, socially, culturally, politically and environmentally. While the negative and damaging effects of this crisis are plethora, the essential cause is class exploitation, the insoluble contradiction between the social character of economic production and the private character of economic ownership and control.
2. While the capitalist system strives to present itself as stable, immutable and inescapable, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that it is a corrupt, chaotic and obsolete system, incapable of protecting the lives and livelihoods of working people, and the interests of society generally. Throughout the pandemic, Britain's ruling class and their political representatives have prioritised private profits and the value of shares in the City of London. Public health precautions were continually disregarded in favour of keeping the economy open for as long as possible, resulting in hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths, whilst also failing to protect the central pillars of our economy and society.
3. The underlying aim of the government's pandemic response was to hand billions of pounds worth of lucrative state contracts to private firms without scrutiny, in order to guarantee super-profits. At the same time, the 'British' vaccine was only able to be researched and produced with state funding, support and guarantees, yet the intellectual property, production and distribution remains privately owned and controlled. The episode has typified the truly parasitic nature of state-monopoly Capitalism in Britain.
4. Even more dangerously for humanity, global warming continues to accelerate at an alarming rate. According to current scientific projections, the planet will be engulfed by a climate catastrophe within our lifetimes, unless radical and systemic change is made. Such a catastrophe has the potential to render vast swathes of the planet uninhabitable, killing and displacing billions, and ultimately threatening the continued existence of humankind.
5. Capitalism has presented the youth of Britain and the world with two options: to accept life without dignity, crisis, war and environmental collapse or to fight back and live life with a purpose. Britain's young communists are clear on our choice. Wherever working people are prepared to struggle, there is always hope and the youth have always led from the front.



6. History and the ongoing general crisis of capitalism have demonstrated that the revolutionary advance to Socialism - a new, superior form of society, free from the exploitation of human by human – is urgent and essential for the future of humankind.
7. The task of this 50th Congress of the Young Communist League of Britain, held in our centenary year, is nothing less than addressing the strategic and organisational questions of building a revolutionary youth organisation, the youth of the Communist Party, capable of playing our historically essential role in this struggle in Britain.
8. Congress endorses the strategy set out in the programme of the Communist Party, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, based on the creative application of the science of Marxism Leninism to conditions in Britain, by which the power of the capitalist monopoly corporations and their state can be replaced by state power in the hands of the working class and its allies. It is for Young Communists, our allies and the millions of young people in Britain yet to meet us and join us in the struggle, to take up this guide to action and to fight with discipline and the courage of youth.
9. To struggle is to live. In our epoch, to struggle is to fight for a future for the planet and humanity. Communism is the youth of the world!



The general crisis of capitalism

10. The general crisis of Capitalism affects all aspects of life in Britain. This crisis is dictated by the sharpening of contradictions, the use of state monopoly power to regulate demand and ensure monopoly profits and the most favourable conditions for the exploitation of the working class in employment and in all other spheres.
11. Economically this has manifested itself in advanced capitalist states such as Britain through the continued domination and growth of monopolies. The ruling class has, in order to defend and advance the position of monopolies, through the British State and European Union, enforced neoliberal economic policies of austerity, resulting in deindustrialisation, unemployment, precarity and privatisation. In recent years this has manifested itself through the intensifying exploitation of workers generally and especially young workers, including many forced to immigrate to Britain in search of work.
12. The 2008 Financial Crisis, one of the deepest economic crises in the history of Capitalism, as well as proving to a new generation that the system has not and cannot advance beyond cyclical crises, also provided conditions which both facilitated and necessitated these neoliberal economic tendencies in the interest of monopolies and finance capital. There has been no significant recovery in the developed capitalist economies including Britain, the European Union and the United States and no tangible economic improvement for working people. Instead, income for working people and the youth has continued to decline sharply in real terms and the share of wages as a proportion of GDP in Britain and across the capitalist world continues decades of decline.
13. In addition to protecting and increasing the rate of profit for monopoly capital in the years since the last economic and financial crisis, the other chief aim of Britain's ruling class and their political representatives has been to ensure that the burden of reducing the public budget deficit, following the bailouts paid to major banks, must be made to fall on working people in terms of cuts to public services and jobs as well as an all-out assault on those receiving state benefits of any form. By their nature, these cuts and attacks on claimants have disproportionately affected women, ethnic minorities, the disabled and the youth.
14. At the same time, through increasing privatisation, this programme of austerity has also been a means of securing new markets and profit-making possibilities for monopoly capital in the public sector in terms of health and the NHS, education at all levels,



social housing and wherever else possible, even the prison system has been thrown open to private capital through outright privatisation and similar policies.

Young workers

15. The primary economic basis for the class struggle is between the monopoly capitalists and their state striving to maximise profit on the one hand, and the whole working class striving to maximise wages and improve living standards on the other. The capitalist class and their political representatives, particularly the Conservative Party who have now held power for over a decade, have sought to utilise the crisis, and the decade since, to deepen and broaden attacks on wages and conditions of employment. This has affected the youth in particular in a number of ways.
16. Across the whole economy the youth are paid significantly less for the same work, for example, through low-wage apprenticeships as part of the post-secondary education system. Age discrimination in pay is enshrined in law in Britain and has been legitimised by the institutions of the bourgeois state to the extent that it is accepted as reasonable by large sections of the youth and the labour movement, and not viewed as a realistic or high priority area for contest or struggle even by sections who otherwise oppose it.
17. Chronic and steadily rising levels of youth unemployment have been a powerful tool for the capitalist class. They have used it as an opportunity, mainly through government schemes attached to unemployment benefits and apprenticeship schemes, to compel or entice young workers into providing free labour or at a heavily discounted rate, often heavily or entirely subsidised directly or indirectly by the state, without job security, guarantee of progression or qualifications of genuine value.
18. The rise and growing prevalence of precarious work throughout new and expanding sectors of the whole economy, including zero hours contracts and the so-called 'Gig Economy', has affected the youth disproportionately in that young people make up the largest proportion by far of workers enduring these exploitative arrangements. The aim of employers forcing workers into precarious employment is to guarantee profits by cutting costs including hard fought trade union rights such as the minimum wage and holiday and sick pay. At the same time these workforces, with high rates of attrition and constant flux, are a notoriously difficult setting in which to organise collective and trade union resistance. One of the major obstacles is convincing young workers to fight for these jobs and believe in the ability to win change because of the deep alienation experienced in the workplace and society generally.



19. We can see the priorities of the ruling class in relation to the youth. Through the payment of lower wages for the same or similar work, young workers, especially young women and migrants, are the source of an increased rate of profit or even super-profits. High rates of youth unemployment and underemployment allow the youth to be used as one of the most malleable sections of the 'reserve army of labour'. Their employment provides the political pretext for extensive access to state funding and other concessions. All of this further allows bosses to undermine the conditions of workers across the board and their ability to organise to resist by lowering pay and standards generally and guaranteeing access to highly precarious or state subsidised or 'discounted' labour.
20. These trends have developed against the backdrop of a historically weakened trade union movement, experiencing consistent decades of decline and loss of influence and shackled by some of the most restrictive anti-trade union laws in Europe. In part causing this and in part caused by this, trade union membership among young workers is disproportionately low. Although the general decline in trade union membership has slowed and there has been modest growth in recent years, this has been more limited in the private sector and among young workers in particular.
21. Class collaborationist models of trade union 'partnership' working have gained significant ideological and structural traction across the trade union movement. This disempowers and demobilises working people by tying the hands of workers on the shopfloor and peddles the political narrative that the interests of worker and bosses can be accommodated together happily.
22. Forced in part by the nature of the anti-trade union laws and employment law in Britain, many trade unions have pursued local and individual struggles and high profile national disputes through the bourgeois court system. While the results of these court and tribunal decisions, when finding in favour of trade union backed cases, may deliver a small advance or roll back a government attack, there is the danger of a trend of 'judicialisation' of the struggle, replacing collective action with court action and tribunal cases. Ideologically this judicialisation also fosters the myth of the neutrality of the court system in Britain which, as key arm of the bourgeois state, remains firmly on the side of the bosses. Any concession won in a bourgeois court can just as easily be revoked. Legal action offers little scope to develop and grow trade unions as a force with the capacity to demand and obtain significant concessions and challenge the power of monopoly capitalism itself.



23. Major trade unions have failed to significantly tackle many of the fundamental issues that face young workers specifically in a concerted way. While many pay lip-service to the demand for equal pay for young workers and an end to legal age discrimination in pay, this has never been fought for as a fundamental issue, placed as a high priority in local or national disputes or in the political arena. Trade union density in precarious employment, particularly among young people, is drastically lower, in part because the nature of this work poses difficulties for organising but also because far more time, energy and resources have been dedicated to building density among more stable, higher paid, semi-professional and professional older workers.
24. The intervention of Young Communists in this context must be deep, disciplined and broad ranging. As the YCL and Communist Party continue to grow in terms of membership and breadth of activity, this must be translated into increasing involvement and influence in the broad, non-sectarian fight to revitalise and grow the trade union movement, particularly among young workers. The energy and enthusiasm of the youth should be harnessed to find new and innovative ways to reach currently unorganised young and precarious workers. The presence and activity of Young Communists in increasing numbers of workplaces and trade union branches must be a basis on which to inject class based and Communist politics into the labour movement at every level. The strengthening of the fight for class conscious, struggle orientated trade unionism over class collaborationist partnership goes hand in hand with the fight to galvanise and rebuild the labour movement in Britain.

Students

25. The Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted all aspects of our society, but in particular it has wrought havoc on our education system, from primary school to university. The UK Government, and the devolved administrations have made a litany of errors throughout the last year, and while no-one could have predicted a worldwide pandemic, it is clear that more could have, and should have, been done to protect education and wellbeing amongst children and young people during the pandemic.
26. Instead, the UK Government chose to make minimal alternative arrangements, leaving most of the responsibility to educational institutions already suffering from over a decade of cuts. In the case of universities, the negligent treatment of students, many of whom have continued to pay extortionate rent and tuition, has resulted in deaths and has only heightened the worsening mental health crisis at universities throughout Britain. Meanwhile, the UK Government, and the devolved administrations alike, have sought to reopen schools time and time again, despite clear evidence of the spread of



COVID-19 between young people. They know they have not invested in the digital infrastructure to support the poorest children and young people and remain unwilling to make these crucial changes. Both the closure of schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and the isolation periods associated with the testing programmes operated since schooling has recommenced, have been characterised by an unsatisfactory quality of learning for working class children. The resulting disparity in skills and learning will serve to further subjugate the working class, especially as government recovery policy is inadequate and fails to address the class nature of the learning loss at hand. This ill-conceived and negligent strategy has resulted in nothing but further damage to the future prospects of young people, especially in the context of the economic crisis during and after COVID-19.

27. The Conservative Government asserts that 'austerity has ended'. It is true that Boris Johnson's Government has spent readily throughout the Pandemic, in an attempt to shore up the investments and profits of the ruling class. However, there has been little attention given to the long-lasting impact of austerity across our society, from education, to local councils, to health and social care. Schools have been forced to adapt massively throughout the pandemic. With budgets already constrained thanks to years of austerity, those without ready access to the internet have been excluded from teaching for much of the last year. All too often it has been left to individual teachers to paper over the cracks left by disinvestment. Thousands of working class young people have slipped through the cracks already and the attainment gap has grown exponentially. The underfunding of the arts, sport and culture in schools and colleges restricts the ability of working-class youth to enjoy leisure and our full heritage and to express themselves artistically, to live a full life.
28. The creeping privatisation of schools in England continues apace through the creation of academies and free schools. Young Communists are clear that education is a basic right and should be funded through taxation. We are fighting to scrap academies and free schools, to integrate all religious, trust, academy and private schools back into a unified and secular education system, bringing an end to privilege in education. Quality education should not have a price tag attached.
29. Similarly, at university level, the Government has attempted to take a 'hands-off' approach, letting individual universities make rules which suit their own board members and chancellors. Instead of building a lasting education system that is accessible to all, the Government have instead enabled further decline as universities and colleges implement cuts to teaching and ancillary staff using the pandemic as a smokescreen for further redistribution of cash to top level salaries.



30. The current system of admissions to colleges and universities drives an unhealthy fixation on league tables and symbols of status. The market in admissions is inefficient, and it encourages educational institutions to rely on wasteful marketing efforts. Students are increasingly seen as little more than a source of profit by university boards, landlords and the owners of student halls and the other parasitic companies seeking to make profit from education and the student population.
31. At the League's last Congress in 2018, we were in the midst of a raft of strikes at universities and colleges across the country. Marketisation, poor terms & conditions, poor pay and massive levels of inequality across the field have plagued the sector, and since 2018, these issues have only intensified. Young academics are being cut in all fields and have little chance of achieving permanent contracts. The pandemic has heightened this, but the issues stem from marketisation and the ever-growing demands for increased profit. As a result, student experience has dipped, and staff are being pushed to brink, with many having already left their profession.
32. Meanwhile, the sector as a whole remains utterly unequipped to deal with the looming employment crisis that we face in the aftermath of the Pandemic. We need an education that responds to the needs of communities and society as a whole and is capable of training a new generation of young workers. Yet still, the college sector, where the majority of students are working class, is cut heavily, year on year. Apprenticeships have also been suspended, and students with placement requirements have seen them delayed and cancelled continually. Despite all this, the Government remains unwilling to intervene and ensure that this generation of students does not become a forgotten generation, with little to no hope of meaningful employment.
33. Many so-called leaders of the student movement do not know how to build a progressive alternative and remain in bed with management across colleges and universities. In many cases, they are totally unwilling to challenge the status quo. This comes as no surprise since many of these people see 'student politics' as a gateway to their own future employment. In many universities and colleges, student unions are devoid of meaningful political work and function as social clubs with a minimal ability to mobilise students around important issues. Out of those who do engage in political struggle, some of them appear to be more concerned with engaging in a divisive culture war instead of tackling concrete issues such as soaring rents, unaffordable tuition and library fees, inaccessible online learning tools or lack of graduate employment options. Our aim is to ensure that student unions and other student



organisations focus on and build popular united struggle around the ideas that broadly appeal to young people and will inspire them to get involved in political work.

34. In the last year, the student movement has become stronger outside of the contemporary models of both the mainstream student movement, so closely linked to the interests of management it has been rendered inept, and postmodern leftist currents, which are so far removed from young people that they have no chance of achieving mass support. Young Communists have played an integral and influential part in this building of the student movement, uniting working class students and staff alike in a broad non-sectarian manner. Through rent strikes, occupations and mass campaigning, Young Communists have sought to rebuild a proud legacy of a militant and well organised student movement that can challenge the rank exploitation of students and workforce and marketisation of further and higher education, education that ought to be a human right
35. However, this is only the beginning. Students are in desperate need of class orientated politics on campus that is relevant to their own struggles. Constantly, we hear that students are apathetic but we know this is untrue. Mainstream politics offer young students nothing, yet attempts to demand respect in return. A decade on from the student riots of 2011 which galvanised a generation of young students against the Conservative Government, we are again seeing students across the country standing up and saying enough is enough. We demand more, and students are fed up of paying exorbitant tuition fees whilst receiving little in return.

Housing struggles

36. Access to housing is an important and sharpening area of class struggle in Britain between working people on the one hand, and monopoly capital, directly and indirectly, and also significant elements of the petty bourgeoisie, on the other. The clear and easily identifiable nature of the exploitation and its already rampant and accelerating levels have seen an increasingly class conscious understanding of this issue among working people not seen for a generation. as well as increasing militancy and organisation. Just as the youth are specifically and disproportionately affected by exploitation in housing, so to have increasing numbers thrown themselves, with militancy and organisation, into this critical struggle.
37. For decades, housing has been more and more thoroughly and intensively exploited solely for the purposes of private profit. In particular the recent period has seen a sharp and accelerating expansion of the private rented sector along with diminishing



alternatives, especially for young people.

38. The vast majority of the youth are unable to access council or social housing (independent of their family) despite the fact that this would be their preference. The majority of councils and housing associations are not even in a position to allocate accommodation to those with priority status, as a result of cuts and lack of stock through privatisation and the legacy of the right to buy. Almost half of all council homes sold under the right to buy are now in the hands of private landlords. Therefore, most young people are forced into the private rented sector, which has expanded massively since the 2008 Financial Crisis.
39. Private rents have continued to increase sharply over the period since, significantly above the rate of inflation every year. The massive demand for housing, the artificially scarce supply and the determination of landlords of all sizes to reap inflated profits has led to housing being utilised solely as a lucrative investment, with no reference to social need. Moreover, private renters are forced to fight, tooth and nail for repairs and deposits. While legal protections cannot be an absolute solution, it is clear that current legislation offers little to no meaningful protection for private renters.
40. Homelessness in Britain has been rising sharply in recent years. The economic repercussions of COVID-19 are likely to persist long after the pandemic has subsided, and further increase the risk of working-class people being made homeless. Furthermore, draconian legislation such as Section 21 of the Housing Act 1998 further entrenches the power of landlords over tenants and increases the precarity of housing.
41. Capitalist exploitation via the housing market complements capitalist exploitation in the workplace, with high rents and low wages squeezing workers from both sides. This age-old unity between landlord and boss has further compounded the crisis of social reproduction, expressed in the growth of the tenants movement in the last decade. This continuing fight marks one of the most overt examples of the class struggle today.
42. For most young people, home ownership is an increasingly unattainable aspiration. The proportion of young people who own their homes and the number of first time buyers have begun to decrease sharply in recent years. Unable to accumulate a deposit to purchase a home, the sad irony is that those compelled to remain in the private rented sector permanently pay a significantly higher proportion of income to their landlord that they ever would in mortgage payments.



43. The result is that millions of young people are being denied their independence. High rents and house prices mean that substantial and increasing numbers of the youth are forced continue living with their parents. Those who are able to leave home – or are obliged to, like many university students – are often forced to live in substandard accommodation. As a result, young workers and students are forced to pay an even greater proportion of their income on rent, limiting their ability to engage with cultural or leisure activities. From all sides, young people in Britain are being squeezed while capitalism offers them nothing in return.
44. The rise and increasing grassroots militancy of tenants unions across Britain has been has been inspiring and energising. The substantial growth and high profile of these organisations highlights the potential for broad based community organising. This was a central pillar of the Communist Party’s success in the last century. Young Communists must work to lead a new generation of militants to the fore. Crucially, we must play a leading and non-sectarian role in these organisations, contributing energy and resources where possible, engaging in the broad struggle.
45. Young Communists are fighting for a new system of housing, based on public and municipally owned housing, focused on providing housing for public need, not private profit. This system should be initiated with a new programme of council house building and a substantial and immediate reduction to all private sector rents. A statutory guarantee of council house placement should be put in place for all young people as well as a right to affordable university and college accommodation for students on full time courses. A new points based system of private sector rent control must be put in place with crucial support for the collective bargaining rights of tenants through their tenants union.

Cultural decay

46. Culturally and ‘morally’, capitalist society in Britain has continued to decline and is increasingly defined by negative and rampant individualism, egoism, callousness, xenophobia and an obsession with material accumulation which has been placed out of the reach of working people, the vast majority of society. All these trends have been fostered by the monopoly owned media which serves to lower the general level of political and intellectual discourse. Education and the arts are increasingly marketised or marginalised and starved of funding, only pursued narrowly where profit can be derived directly or indirectly. Austerity, cuts in education and increasing poverty have had a fundamental effect in limiting the access of the youth to culture in all its forms



and our opportunity to take up the cultural pursuits which are our right and a fundamental part of what it is to be human.

47. As a key force in the shaping of ideology in human society, culture is therefore a battleground between capitalist and socialist ideologies. Culture is one of the main mediums through which imperialism, and the related chauvinistic and prejudicial ideologies, is justified to the people and its agenda perpetuated, with a special focus on young people in regards to music, television, film, video games and social media.
48. The corrupting and degrading effect of the domination of monopoly capital is pervasively seen in all aspects of culture. Capitalism increasingly produces 'culture' as it does other commodities – for sale at a profit and for ideological reasons – regardless of social need or the social good. 'Popular culture' can thereby be turned into a commercial, conservative force that promotes ideas of selfishness, greed and individualism. The dominance of international capital in culture and the arts, as in all markets, has resulted in a debasing and homogenising effect. Television, film, music and video games, and to a lesser extent literature, are produced primarily with reference to the cultural norms and political ideology of ruling class of the USA, and then aggressively marketed in almost every corner of the planet. This rapacious need to consolidate every market and secure monopoly control everywhere significantly undermines the opportunity to maintain, develop and enrich the cultural heritage of individual peoples and nations.
49. There is little in capitalist mass-produced 'culture' that reflects the real experience, collectiveness and creativity of working-class life in Britain, past or present. Capitalist ownership and control continually undermine the social, unifying and liberating potential of the arts and other cultural activities for working class people, both as producers and as consumers. This has been seen in countless settings across Britain, not just historically, but in recent years as community venues and institutions vanish or are replaced with sterile and generic elements of ruling class popular culture. Local and regional culture and traditions are lost as communities fracture under economic depression and displacement, unless of course they can be marketised.
50. The experience of football teams this year have typified the negative influence and effect of finance capital on all major sporting leagues and events under capitalism. This influence has been widely recognised in recent years, but there has never been a more explicit demonstration of it, until the attempts to form a so-called European Super League, led by English Clubs, took place earlier this year, demonstrating the complete lack of care for ordinary working class supporters. However, the story of the



European Super League also demonstrates the power of working class people to defend the institutions of their local communities. Football clubs cannot become the plaything of capitalists, turned into a profit making venture or warped on the whim of billionaire owners, completely alienated from the fans that made the club, who would happily drop the club overnight in order to turn a profit or leave them to fall into liquidation.

51. Young Communists must lead the fight to emphasise the importance of working-class culture and for cultural activities which are affordable, accessible and help bring out our common humanity and unite our class. The League shall continue to combat and win a greater understanding among the youth of the dominant role of the monopoly forces corrupting culture and the deliberate attempts by the ruling class to manipulate culture and youth culture in order to advance the interests of big business and imperialism. Through our own work we shall preserve, celebrate and seek to advance working class culture in our communities and in Britain as a whole, both within the League and as a fundamental component in the fight for Socialism. Where possible we shall also volunteer and support in external community organisations with mutual aims to support and champion working class culture.. The limitless potential of working people is seen most clearly in the culture we have built and maintained in the face of Capitalism and crisis. Only Socialism can truly unleash this potential and allow every individual, every community and all peoples to realise their creative aspirations.

Social crisis

52. From any perspective, the outlook for Britain's youth under capitalism is grim, not even taking into account the unfolding climate crisis that will engulf the world during their lifetimes.
53. The lives of young people are characterised by poverty and insecurity, regardless of the path they choose or, more accurately, are forced into. The options for many of those in work are poverty-pay apprenticeships, complete uncertainty in the 'gig economy' or low-paid unfulfilling work with little chance of progression. Many of those attending college or university are forced to place additional financial pressure on their already strained families, and jeopardise their studies working long hours to support themselves, and all for an ultimately dubious financial gain, which is what education has largely been reduced to under Capitalism. A life without comfort or dignity.
54. The economic, political and cultural manifestations of the general crisis of Capitalism in Britain have intensified the social crisis facing working people and the youth. Society is



increasingly atomised. Established communities have been broken down by economic dislocation. Through the monopoly owned media and state education, working class youth are encouraged and taught to be ruthlessly individualistic and conform to an exploitative social dynamic, as well as to pursue a life whose value is based solely on material accumulation for its own sake. Through the media, arts, and education system, young people are constantly presented with an idealised lifestyle which has been placed out of their reach.

55. Among young people this social crisis is resulting in a widespread mental health epidemic. Suicide is now the biggest single cause of death for the youth in Britain. A criminal indictment in one of the richest countries on the planet. The young working-class need solutions based on long-term treatment and support plans instead of simply lining the pockets of big pharmaceutical companies. Medicating people for their mental health without changing material conditions simply fixes the manifestation of poverty and not the issue of capitalism itself.
56. Over the same period, we have seen spiralling levels of youth crime and anti-social behaviour. In the deprived inner cities and in London in particular, youth involvement in epidemic level violent crime has received significant media coverage. Gangs involved in drug dealing and other forms of crime draw in those with no prospects and little chance of a future. Even younger school-aged children are initiated through participation in violent acts or running drugs.
57. These damaging trends have accelerated as precariousness and unemployment has increased and as austerity has stripped to the bone every social and state support the youth had previously been offered. Young people are increasingly relying on alcohol, drugs and other means of “escapism” and fantasy in order to redirect discontent with the oppressive capitalist system.
58. Where Capitalism, in order to protect its own system of exploitation, compels and deceives the youth to internalise their problems, blame themselves and engage in self-destructive behaviour, it is for Young Communists to offer clarity and a vision of hope. Capitalism relies on apathy and alienation, but the youth are not powerless victim to forces beyond our control or understanding. The source of the crisis is Capitalism, the ruling class and monopoly domination of society.



Drugs and the youth

59. The social crisis is most overtly seen in the rampant increase of drug use throughout communities in Britain. Britain has always had an unhealthy relationship with alcohol, and throughout the last fifty years, drug use, particularly heroin and cocaine, has soared on top of this. In the last decade however, this crisis of Capitalism has been compounded further by the arrival of benzodiazepines, such as Valium. Dirt cheap drugs have flooded our communities and destroyed countless lives. So bereft of hope, many working class people throughout Britain feel the need to turn to drug use to escape from the misery of day to day life under capitalism. Those on the right often seek to portray Marx as being outdated, but the Marxist understanding of worker alienation is more and more proven to be true in our time.
60. The so-called 'War on Drugs' has failed. The criminalisation of drug users has only sought to further ostracise those most disadvantaged by the raw end of the drug trade. Even worse, it has utterly failed to deal with endemic levels of problem drug abuse wreaking havoc across communities throughout the country. This is most acutely seen in Scotland where drug deaths have soared in recent years. The country tops the poll of nearly every drug related statistic globally, yet political leadership seems almost unscathed by any criticism regarding the tragedy that these deaths represent. We desperately need a new strategy to tackle this epidemic.
61. Instead of treating those with addiction issues like human beings, the current system seeks to criminalise drug users, often reinforcing and erecting further barriers to change. All the while, failing to acknowledge the effects of capitalism in promoting feelings of alienation and isolation. Our current system for policing drug use is unfit for purpose and evidence has shown, time and time again, that the system exacerbates inequalities in our society along the lines of both race and class. Meanwhile, the criminal gangs, dealers and pimps enabling hyper-exploitation through trafficking, murder, corruption and slavery, remain able to operate on a widespread basis.
62. So-called County Lines continue to operate across much of England, operating out of major cities such as Manchester and Birmingham, distributing illicit drugs across counties via runners. Vulnerable young people are often drafted in by gangs to transport drugs and cash all over the country. These young people are being ruthlessly exploited all the while those at criminal gangs remain detached from distribution networks allowing them to remain largely undetected. The fact that these vulnerable young people are allowed to operate without suspicion highlights the degree to which these at-risk young people are failed by the care, education and social service sectors.



They easily and readily disregarded by society, offered nothing by capitalism and taken advantage of by those seeking to exploit them.

63. Decriminalising drug use and treating addiction issues as a health issue is the only clear way that we will be able to tackle this endemic problem with a focus on the communities most affected by the illicit drug trade. Such a model has already been proven hugely successful in countries such as Portugal where principles of harm reduction already influence decision making. Meanwhile in Britain we have seen activists criminalised for trying to introduce safe consumption rooms and crucial testing facilities to enable safe drug use. We need a system of safe consumption centres, and realistic, safe, scientific education about both the individual and societal impact of drug use, allowing young people to make informed choices, as well as rehabilitation centres that are properly funded through mainstream health services. This shift is hugely important, but offers no solutions to those currently imprisoned, or laden with criminal records for small possession charges. Therefore, we acknowledge the need to ensure justice is brought to those with small charges for individual possession and demand those in prison are released and the relevant convictions expunged from their records.

Political degeneration

64. The generalised decline of society in Britain has been accompanied and facilitated by a progressing political crisis in the advanced capitalist 'democracies' generally. The professed abandoning of 'left and right ideology' by mainstream political parties is a thin mask for dogmatic neoliberal consensus, especially in Britain. Local and national democratic institutions have been eroded. Britain's political class is increasingly detached and characterised by careerism, demagoguery and corruption. Young people in Britain are increasingly disillusioned with bourgeois democracy.
65. Britain's political system is corrupted to its very core, from the 'preferential treatment' given to political donors to the 'tap on the shoulder' appointments in the civil service, not to mention the billions handed to profiteering private sector firms during the pandemic. Ruling class politicians and political parties always and everywhere serve the interests of big business first and foremost. Political promises last only as long as election campaigns and even individual soundbites.
66. The privately owned monopoly media and state outlets play a fundamental role in keeping the whole pantomime running. Narrowing the scope of political debate to the always right-wing 'centre ground', lowering the general political and intellectual level of



public discussion and distracting and dividing working people by promoting racist and xenophobic views. This was demonstrated especially clearly in response to Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party in the run up to the last General Election and the vicious smear campaign led by the monopoly media against left and democratic forces.

67. What little local democracy that once existed in this country that allowed councils to make progressive changes for working people in their areas has been viciously stripped away. The Conservative Party and the Scottish National Party have centralised government in Britain and shackled local authorities to ensure that EU diktats on 'free competition', public procurement and state aid – which all favour big monopolies – are adhered to.
68. Since the 2008 Financial Crisis the youth have seen the so-called democratic institutions of Britain implement crippling austerity and an anti-working class and anti-youth agenda. The same institutions have time and again failed to take the serious action which is needed to prevent the climate crisis. It is no surprise then that the youth have little faith left in Britain's ruling class' parliamentary system – in fact it would be worrying if they did.
69. Capitalism is a decaying and ideologically bankrupted system and increasing numbers of young people across Britain and the world are coming to that realisation. It is for Young Communists to prevent their fall into apathy and despair or the drift to the anti-democratic ideologies of the right. Communists must work to expose the corrupt nature of the ruling class parliamentary system in Britain and to lead the fight for defending and extending democratic rights in the present context according to the strategy and priorities set out in *Britain's Road to Socialism* – while winning the argument for a revolutionary and democratic transformation of society.

The climate crisis

70. Capitalism has proven itself unable and unwilling to address the unfolding climate crisis which threatens the continued existence and future of humanity. Systemic change is needed to harness humanity's scientific and technological potential to address this crisis while continuing to raise living standards in the developed and developing world. The socialist camp has proven itself as an example to follow in terms of sustainable development and bold steps to address the climate crisis.
71. Congress celebrates the youth climate movement built up around the school strikes. This movement has been a great source of enthusiasm and hope for the younger



generation, introducing them to political activity in large numbers. The YCL is committed to supporting youth climate action in support of the movement. Meanwhile, the League adopts a Marxist approach to the environment, taking into account the metabolic relationship between nature and society which is fundamentally incompatible with the accumulation of capital. Class politics set the League apart from liberal approaches prevalent among the institutional environmental groups. Congress rejects the unproductive diversion of attention into individualist and consumerist solutions, and to this end uphold the slogan: Socialism or Extinction!

72. Young people demand a liveable earth, cities of clean air and natural spaces which improve our physical and mental health, as well as preserving biodiversity. This includes planning neighbourhoods for people with measures such as pedestrian streets, cycling infrastructure, low-traffic measures. This should be accompanied by cheap and accessible public transport run democratically by users in consultation with the transport unions. Congress welcomes reforestation and rewilding efforts across Britain, while noting that these deserve a greater focus on structures of land ownership, and a critical outlook on agro-environmental subsidies which disproportionately reward the largest landowners. Additionally, congress demands that scientific funding be directed to human needs, not just commercial benefit. Universities should not have to fit research to the requirements of polluting industries.
73. Congress denounces imperialism as the bulldozer of the world's ecosystems. British multinationals are at the forefront of destructive activities in their ravenous search for natural resources. Increasingly this process includes the extraction of materials to produce ostensibly 'green' technologies that can be hoarded by the wealthy. All the while local populations are left exposed to the most acute effects of climate change or are otherwise bullied and displaced. A successful, anti-imperial response to the climate emergency requires international cooperation and the free, equitable exchange of knowledge and resources.
74. The socialist countries lead the way on environmental measures. China's 14th Five Year Plan includes an immediate goal of bringing down carbon emissions by 18% proportional to GDP growth by 2025. Substantial progress is already underway in the form of the world's longest high-speed rail network, the world's largest wind farm generating capacity, and a vast forest planting programme. Cuba consistently ranks among the top ten countries for sustainable development, and the new Cuban constitution specifically mentions the need to protect the environment. In Bolivia, the left-wing MAS government passed a 'Mother Earth law', which successfully laid down a path for extensive nature conservation alongside improvement in living standards.



Where the advanced capitalist states dawdle and delay, the socialist orientated countries light the way for fighting climate change.

The Labour Party

75. The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in September 2015 and the movement around it energised millions of people in Britain who wanted a progressive and left-wing alternative to the ruling class agenda, chiefly that of austerity, neoliberalism and imperialist foreign policy that has also characterised the Labour Party.
76. This Congress resolves that the experience of the left-wing leadership of the Labour Party, its successes, limitations and failures were nonetheless valuable to the working class and progressive movement. This experience has provided many important lessons, developed our body of cadres and brought new members into the League. Many young people were brought into political struggle for the first time and have developed many skills as well as a significant political education.
77. This Congress acknowledges and salutes the hard work of our comrades and allies in the Labour Party as well as in the entire labour and progressive movement while arguing that the movement around Jeremy Corbyn's election has not gone far enough. As the Communist Party and the YCL have always argued, long-term strategic outlook and the development of our movement at the base are essential ingredients for success. Thousands upon thousands of young people joined the Labour Party, but were not inducted into political struggle and trained as activists in their own right. Much of the movement around Jeremy Corbyn focused on electoral success and Labour Party internal political work rather than on building a broad mass movement with as much democratic input as possible. Congress resolves that the League, as Britain's unique revolutionary youth movement, shall strive to rectify this situation with its special appeal to young people who wish to take up the struggle.
78. The ruling class and media onslaught against the left-led Labour Party was also ferocious, demonstrating the lengths to which big business and its political representatives in Britain, as well as their allies abroad, will go in order to ensure that the power and profits of the monopolies are not threatened. The ruling class had no intention of allowing a progressive and left-wing agenda into government. Bearing in mind Britain's role as a foremost imperialist power, allied with the USA and the EU, the election of a Prime Minister with an anti-imperialist track record was completely



unacceptable to the ruling class and its interests in the armaments industry, Israel and Palestine, Latin America and so on.

79. The experiences of the Labour Party are a clear demonstration of the shortcomings of bourgeois politics, its opposition to mass democratic input and political education, and social democratic politics as inadequate for drawing young people into progressive political struggle with meaning in the long term. Britain's Young Communist League shall be the home for revolutionary young people everywhere.
80. Congress resolves to fight for genuine political representation and participation for the youth, within institutions and at the grassroots level and in organisations such as the Youth Councils and Youth Parliament in order to raise the demands of young workers and students.

Brexit

81. The vote to leave the European Union in 2016 was the largest democratic expression through a referendum in the history of Britain. Despite the complexities in the referendum – which in its reflected a division in Britain's ruling class, one section favouring closer alignment with US capital, the other continued affiliation with the EU bloc – destabilised the established political order in Britain and the legitimacy of the ruling class. Disregarding immense state and monopoly media propaganda that any break with the EU would result in calamity, the majority of working people voted to break with the neoliberal bloc. Working people recognised to differing degrees the anti-democratic and fundamentally neoliberal character of the bloc, designed to shackle national parliaments and local democratic institutions, and its role in deindustrialisation, privatisation and economic and social stagnation.
82. Those that argue that the majority of those who voted for Brexit were racist, xenophobic or otherwise ignorant are not only factually incorrect but also perpetuate the same anti-working class bourgeois propaganda that was a feature of the referendum itself. The left and trade union movement should have and must seize the opportunity to develop and champion principles of the popular vote, national sovereignty and democracy and further popularise these ideas among working people. Indeed, it was a failure to fight for a people's Brexit and efforts by the right wing of the Labour Party to undermine the vote and campaign for a second referendum which were the chief reason for Labour's defeat in the 2019 General Election.



83. Although the Brexit agreement concocted by the Conservative government and the EU bureaucracy resulted in the formal legal exit of Britain from the bloc, the fight for a genuine and complete break with the EU – a people’s Brexit – is an incomplete and ongoing fight. In general terms the agreement with the EU has simply pasted many of the EU’s pro-big business rules into British law. Crucially the deal continues to fundamentally limit the power of central and devolved government and local authorities to intervene in the economy as surely as the EU did before. Lifeline funding for threatened industry or state investment of new publicly owned industry would still be subject to veto. Comprehensive public ownership of key public services is still effectively banned.
84. Young Communists along with the Communist Party must lead within the left, labour and student movements against anti-democratic and anti-working class trends which seek to legitimise the Conservative Party’s fake Brexit or which seek to divert working people on false paths and dead ends such as re-entering the EU or seeking closer ties. We must continue to articulate clearly the fact that the EU is anti-democratic, neoliberal, racist and fundamentally unreformable. It is for Communists to win working people to the fight for a genuine people’s Brexit, a complete break with the EU which removes barriers to real nationalisation, state aid and which would allow a future left government to intervene decisively in the economy to create jobs and new productive industry. This struggle goes hand in hand with the broader fight for democracy and federalism as we demand economic and other powers returned from Brussels are devolved to regional assemblies and the national parliaments across Britain.

The national question

85. The National Question in Britain has become an increasingly divisive force among left and progressive forces. In Scotland the neoliberal Scottish National Party have waged a successful separatist campaign by capitalising on legitimate anger and frustration with the betrayal of the Labour Party and failure of social democracy on the one hand and the anti-democratic austerity agenda of the Tories on the other. The growth of nationalist forces in Wales has been less marked, in part due to the determination of the devolved Labour administration to pursue progressive policies. The Conservative Government in Westminster has sought to consolidate their political ascendancy by capitalising on right wing English nationalism and British jingoism.
86. Nationalist and separatist forces offer nothing but dead ends and false paths for working people and the youth in the struggle against capitalism. The deliberate purpose of these ideologies and forces are to promote class collaboration and obscure class



exploitation as the fundamental contradiction in society. In Scotland in particular, we have seen this forming in the political programme of the nationalist forces in power. The SNP have pursued a right wing economic and social programme, implementing the same austerity agenda as the Tories in Westminster and an economic model based on privatisation. The SNP's model of independence, far from advancing the national sovereignty of the Scottish people, is predicated on surrendering more power than ever before to external forces including the EU and removing any scope for democratic control over the forces of finance capital in the City of London.

87. For Young Communists our fundamental starting point is our clear and unequivocal commitment to the right to self-determination for all the peoples of Britain. At the same time, Communists maintain the other principle of judging the exercise of that right in terms of the class interests of working people in each constituent nation, Britain as a whole and internationally. Congress endorses the programme of the Communist Party and the YCL, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, and its policy of *Progressive Federalism* as the best way of developing working class cohesion across the nations of Britain against the state power of big business concentrated at a British level and representing, above all, the interests of the City of London, and to advance the struggle for socialist change.
88. Congress considers that a new progressive federal structure, as set out in the Programme of the Party and the League, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, is the most effective way of advancing the democratic powers of the peoples of Britain while also achieving a radical redistribution of wealth to the regions and nations of the country. The League calls for strengthening the powers of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh assembly to allow them to intervene decisively in the economy. The House of Commons should reconstitute itself as an English Parliament where English-only measures are considered. Directly-elected regional government in England should proceed where there is clear demand. The distinctive cultural and social characteristics of Cornwall should be expressed through a directly elected Cornish Assembly. Congress reiterates our condemnation of the imperialist occupation of the six counties in Ireland and reiterates the League's longstanding demand for the reunification of the North of Ireland with the Republic of Ireland.
89. Nationalist ideologies obscure the class nature of society. Communists recognise the fundamental division in our society exists between a working class and Britain's ruling class. It is a dangerous ideological tool in the hands of the ruling class that working people share any values or common interests with elements of Britain's ruling class



generally or in each of the nations. Working people in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff have no material interests in common with City bankers or Highland landowners.

90. As Lenin identified, every nation has the basic elements of a democratic and socialist culture but every nation also possesses a ruling class culture which under capitalism is the dominant culture. It is for communists, socialists and trade unionists to identify, develop and build in each nation's culture, and also in the collective legacy of shared struggles between working people in those nations, only the democratic and socialist elements. We cannot abandon the national question and national identity to the right wing and separatist forces. The fight for democracy and national sovereignty go hand in hand with the struggle for Socialism. We must celebrate the progressive history embodied in each of our constituent nations. We must fight to make socialist patriotism central to national identity.

The fight for women's liberation

89. Britain's ruling class, their political representatives, the monopoly media and academia are eager to present the fight for women's liberation as essentially complete. The Communist Youth fundamentally reject this notion.
90. The oppression of women has always been a feature of class society, it remains a foundational element of capitalist society. Capitalism relies on the double exploitation of women both in the home and in the workplace. Society as a whole, the mass of working people and the reproduction of the next generation of workers are ultimately upheld and depend on women and unpaid domestic labour, predominantly carried out by women. Without this unpaid labour and social reproduction, capitalism would cease to function.
91. Women are also a source of super exploitation and profits for monopoly capital. Women and young women tend to be forced into the lowest paid and most precarious work. Even when performing the same work as their male counterparts, women are paid significantly less across the economy. Capitalism in Britain and internationally is fundamentally reliant on this super-exploitation. Not only is this a source of super-profits but also a tool for capitalists to drive down the wages and conditions of all workers.
92. Working women face systemic exploitation and injustice in all facets of their lives. The vast majority of the spending cuts in the last decade of austerity have fallen on women. Women are more reliant on public services and are more likely to be employed in



public sector organisations, both of which have been viciously cut. In politics, women and women's issues are dealt with in a tokenistic way – never addressing the actual issues of exploitation, violence and injustice. Women continue to be under represented across politics and by parties with no genuine commitment to women's liberation. This reflects the demands of Britain's ruling class imposed and maintained by laws and media propaganda. This culture preserves and reinforces the economic exploitation of women.

93. What are the key components of the anti-women culture propagated by Britain's ruling class? Firstly, women are presented as less able and less intelligent than men. This is used to force women into low skilled and low paid work and as a justification to pay women less generally. Secondly, a woman's place is in the home or raising children. The purpose of this myth is to keep women in the home, while engaging in low paid and part time work, raising a family, the next generation of workers, sustaining the basis of capitalism. Thirdly, women are sexual objects to be evaluated, first and foremost, on how appealing they are to men, according to standards dictated by the monopoly media. This is essential in keeping women in a subservient role and is also the basis for billion pound industries in retail and advertising.
94. The endemic objectification and sexualisation of women is also a key factor in the persistent rates of sexual violence and abuse that are widespread in British society. The mass media and advertising present women as a means for the gratification of men. In Britain and globally, epidemic levels of violence against women and girls remain a stain on our society which capitalism is incapable or unwilling to eradicate. The overwhelming majority of women experience sexual harassment in their daily lives. Sexual and domestic violence, coercive control and femicide are at epidemic levels across society. There have been massive funding cuts by central and local government to services for specialist violence and abuse services and to organisations which support women fleeing domestic abuse. Since the 2008 Financial Crisis, Britain has lost around a quarter of specialist domestic violence refuges. Among young people, sex and personal education in our schools is completely inadequate and is contributing to the problem. Increasing numbers of children and young people are exposed to graphic hardcore pornography before learning about consent and what a healthy relationship is.
95. Additionally, women continue to be exploited through prostitution. The exchange of women's bodies for money is not genuine consent, nor compatible with the fight for Socialism or women's liberation. The YCL should fight for the criminalisation of the purchase, as opposed to the selling, of sex. Simultaneously, social services and



programmes must be offered to provide education and vocational training for women to help them exit the sex trade. Socialist policies will lift women out of poverty and remove the desperation that drives them to enter the sex industry.

96. The commodification of women's bodies has increased to include online user-generated platforms in recent years, appealing to a far greater audience of young women for whom capitalism paints this market as 'empowering'. Young communists should continue to fight against the exploitation of women through the sex industry, as well as combatting the cultural ideas surrounding prostitution, which usually stem from the ruling class and middle class ideas of liberation, and do not speak for the vast majority of women trafficked, pressured and exploited by the industry.
97. The struggle for women's liberation is far from over. We are experiencing an anti-women 'counter offensive', attacking the modest gains and limited demands of 'liberal feminism'. This has directly accompanied the spike in harassment of and violence against women in Britain. Traditional right wing forces and the so called Alt-Right, fed by developments online, social media and in the USA, have been at the forefront of this attack. Most worryingly, it is amongst the youth, disillusioned with capitalism but without a class understanding of society, that this trend is most prevalent. These forces offer easy answers to life's problems, enabling politics based on division, whilst ignoring and disregarding the fundamental role of class.
98. Young Communists fight for feminist politics as an integral part of the class struggle and the fight for Socialism. Even under capitalism, gains can be made, better rights and a more dignified life can be won for women in Britain. However, this can only be achieved where the struggle for women's rights goes hand in hand with trade union struggles, the struggle for better housing, the struggle for free education and the other battles the working class are engaged in. However, although these gains can be won, history and especially recent history, have shown that, under capitalism, they remain precarious and subject to attack.
99. Young Communists recognise that violence against women and girls is not an inevitable or naturally occurring reality or feature of human society. The oppression of women is both a function and product of capitalism. Violence against women is directly linked to our marginalised role in society, our exploitation and oppressive ideologies which serve to maintain class rule by dividing working people.
100. Only under a socialist society, a society free from the exploitation of human beings, which is committed to smashing oppression based on gender and race, can women's



liberation be won. And this is not speculation or wishful thinking. The history of the 20th Century has proven this.

- I01. The old myths of the ‘inferior gender’ were smashed by leading women in the construction of Socialism in the USSR and by the frontline duties they performed in the struggle against fascism. Across the world female revolutionaries have led the struggle for peace and Socialism.
- I02. Today the countries of the socialist camp such as Cuba, China and Vietnam have made stunning gains in advancing the rights of women. Women are guaranteed full equality and are entitled and enabled to play a full role in the country’s political, cultural and social life. While each still struggles with the oppressive and sexist vestiges of capitalist society and face a long road before full women’s liberation is achieved, each is firmly on that road.
- I03. Social reproduction under capitalism is based on exploitation, it has a fundamental and systemic interest in maintaining and perpetuating the oppression of women deliberately and through ideological means. Socialism is based on the democratic and planned use of resources for the benefit of all. Under socialist society there is no economic imperative to subjugate women – indeed Socialism relies on unleashing the creative potential of all, regardless of race or gender.
- I04. Britain’s Young Communists call on young women across Britain to adopt a class perspective in the fight for women’s liberation and join the struggle. We can only defeat oppression and exploitation by smashing the system which relies on it and perpetuates. Only a socialist society, free from the exploitation of one person by another, can deliver genuine equality and women’s liberation.

The fight for social and racial equality

- I05. The struggle for full democratic and social rights is an essential part of the struggle for working people’s interests and Socialism. The oppression of women, Black and South Asian people, LGBT+ people and other social minorities is inherent to the successful functioning of the capitalist system. Discrimination and prejudice are tools of the ruling class to divide and distract working people. Oppression and discrimination against women, Black and South Asian people, LGBT+ people and other social groups are linked to capitalism’s endless and merciless drive towards exploitation and the history of capitalist development such as colonialism.



106. In contrast to the token “human rights” under the capitalist system, which are freely curtailed when it suits the agenda of the ruling class, and nevertheless are subject to the dictatorship of the capitalist system in every aspect of our lives, this Congress resolves that Britain’s Young Communist League shall fight for real human rights for all people that include rights to a dignified life, equality of opportunity, education, work, leisure and sports, knowledge of arts and sciences, essential services and genuine participation in the social and economic system. This struggle shall be closely linked to the struggle against oppression and discrimination.
107. Working people of minority social groups in Britain continue to face official and unofficial forms of discrimination in their social and economic life.
108. British Black and British South Asian groups make up 3.4% and 6.8% of the population of the United Kingdom – 2.2 and 4.4 million people respectively. In 2011 London had a combined population of over 25% Black and South Asian people. Despite the British capitalist state’s hollow condemnations of racism and declarations of “equality of opportunity”, the youth of these groups continue to face racism and localised issues such as police violence and murder.
109. On average, Black people and other minorities have less employment and educational opportunities and constitute more of the prison population. Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, followed by Black African and Black Caribbean communities, are the most likely to be in persistent poverty.
110. Substandard housing, homelessness, unemployment and low wages all disproportionately affect these groups. These communities tend to face discrimination at every juncture of their social and economic lives. The capitalist state and media often criminalise or trivialise the experiences of social minorities.
111. The religious spaces of British Muslims, Jews and other religious groups have been attacked. Eastern European, non-white and other immigrants face xenophobic propaganda and racist border controls. Refugees face arbitrary and inhumane treatment, including internment.
112. The Home Office has been escalating its aggressive, anti-immigrant, anti-refugee policy. The state is determined to exclude all immigrants except the ‘desirable’, monied, upper and landowning-classes. More campaign support on the League’s part should be extended to support refugees, for instance, by engaging in volunteering and



donation campaigns for refugees and those held in detention camps.

- I 13. The way of life of Gypsies and Travellers continues to be criminalised. As of 2020, the Government had proposed to criminalise their encampments, or increase evictions, even though 65% of police consulted said that the lack of sites was the real problem.
- I 14. As well as institutional and legal forms of oppression and discrimination, the far right (racist and fascist oriented organisations) increasingly attempts to organise and persecute these social groups, pushing the propaganda of divide and conquer on behalf of the capitalist system.
- I 15. Congress notes that discrimination, racism and oppression are closely linked to capitalist exploitation and the highest stage of capitalism, imperialism, in which highly developed monopoly capitalism in nations such as Britain has expanded beyond its borders and dominated other nations. Pseudo-scientific and other racist propaganda justified the most barbaric exploitation of human beings during the periods of the British Empire and neo-colonialism in South Africa. Pseudo-humanitarian and other propaganda (in the end, seeking to rule over these nations) has justified neo-colonialism and imperialist interventions today, in Africa and the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere.

National rights

- I 16. These struggles must be linked to the Marxist understandings of “race”, “ethnicity” and nation, which have been developed by the world Communist movement.
- I 17. The struggle for the liberation of the working classes of different and oppressed nations must also be linked up with the struggles for democratic and national rights.
- I 18. Nation is defined as “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture”. As such, England, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall are nations, while Britain is also a nation.
- I 19. When it comes to national rights, the foremost struggle is for equal rights for all nations and the prohibition of all kinds of privileges or restrictions on different nations. In addition, Communists consider that nations tend to include national and social minorities and their development never stands still, meaning that it is illogical to



narrowly define national groups.

- I20. For this reason, Communists struggle to build Socialism within a geographical nation that might include many different national or social groups, with democratic rights and equality for all within it. This theoretical perspective therefore informs our struggles for the social rights of different minorities in Britain who speak different languages, adhere to different religions and so on within our respective “multi-ethnic” nations.
- I21. In the struggle against the growth of fascism, the ideological component of this struggle must develop positions on the national psychology, opposing the way in which fascists attempt to falsify it, chauvinism being their “main instrument of ideological influence upon the masses”.
- I22. Young Communists must link our current struggles with the correct conception of our nations and cultures, its working class, its progressive and revolutionary traditions, not forgetting to connect this with the international context of working class struggle and the more recent “multi-ethnic” development of our nation.
- I23. Working class internationalism and anti-imperialist solidarity with all people abroad go hand in hand with organising to defeat racism and fascism at home.
- I24. The overthrowal of the capitalist system and the building of Socialism means the liberation of all Britain’s working people and the saving of their cultures and ways of life from the increasingly transnational and destructive forces of monopoly capitalism, already demonstrated in the effects of “neoliberalism” on our communities.
- I25. The League must work to develop our theory and campaigning work, materials and propaganda around the issues of progressive federalism and popular sovereignty or “progressive patriotism”. To this end, Congress instructs the incoming Executive Committee to convene a commission or advisory group that specialises in coordinating and developing the theory and practice around this campaign work, working with the Communist Party.

The fight for equality for LGBT+ youth

- I26. The YCL has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the entire LGBT+ community. Our, now legendary, former General Secretary Mark Ashton and the struggles of the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners group are but one chapter in this



story. We are proud to be an organisation that is led and strengthened by comrades from the LGBT+ community across Britain and at every level.

- I27. In Socialist countries such as Cuba, great advances have been made in the struggle for LGBT+ rights and research has shown that positive education about sex and gender issues improves the livelihoods of all working people.
- I28. The YCL unequivocally opposes LGBTphobia and discrimination in all its forms. LGBTphobia is another form of discrimination faced by people under the capitalist system. We are clear in our condemnation and activism against LGBTphobia and for the promotion of LGBT+ rights and the right to sexual diversity.
- I29. LGBT+ people are more likely to suffer from mental illnesses and discrimination at work and in society, especially in the capitalist media. LGBT+ people are at greater risk of suicide, experiencing hate crimes and have lower qualities of life than heterosexual people. LGBTphobia is also apparent within the LGBT+ community and the labour and progressive movements themselves.
- I30. Different forms of LGBTphobia and discrimination should be struggled against within the framework of fighting for real human rights, arguing that LGBTphobia and different forms of oppression under the capitalist system are inter-related and part of capitalist exploitation.
- I31. They are especially relevant to the conditions of women and women's oppression, for example, homophobia and transphobia to negative masculinity, patriarchal family structures, violence against women, girls and LGBT+ people, sexual exploitation and porn culture. These are also the results of the capitalist system's oppressive hegemony over culture.
- I32. LGBTphobia cannot be eliminated without eliminating other forms of discrimination, oppression and exploitation in society, and neither can those be eliminated without the eradication of LGBTphobia.
- I33. As such, the struggles for LGBT+ rights and the right to sexual diversity are part and parcel of the struggle for Socialism and a society with real human rights and human liberation.
- I34. The right to sexual diversity refers to LGBT+ and other experiences of sexuality and gender, and links to each individual's right to express and develop themselves, free from



oppression or discrimination. This right links to the inalienable right of human beings to experience complete dignity and equality in their social and economic lives.

135. Young Communists must continue our work in organising and developing consciousness around the issues that affect working class LGBT+ youth and deepen our struggle against LGBTphobia and related prejudicial ideologies.

Advancing the struggle of disabled young people

136. The underlying economic laws and imperatives of Capitalism determine dominant ideology and attitudes towards minority groups including disabled people. For the ruling class minority groups must either be a source of super-exploitation, a tool by which to divide the whole mass of working people, or both. The position of disabled people and disabled youth has meant that historically, and in the current period, they are subjected to systemic discrimination and barriers to accessing education, employment, housing and healthcare. With private profit being the chief virtue and measure of individual value in capitalist society, the fact that disabled people are barred from and not enabled to participate in employment leads to them being marginalised, ignored and stigmatised as parasitic in bourgeois ideology and culture.
137. Disabled people face the lowest rates of employment of any minority group in Britain. The rates of poverty among disabled people and youth are disproportionately high. The access to healthcare, housing and education of disabled youth, already inadequate and underfunded, have dramatically reduced in the decade of cuts since the 2008 Financial Crisis. Funding and support for accessible schooling has been cut to the bone, meaning fewer and fewer opportunities for disabled youth to receive a full and meaningful education. Government attacks and privatisation of specialist disability employment services has meant efforts to reduced disability employment have stalled. The Equality Act 2010 has put in place a formalistic regime which purports to protect disabled people from discrimination in the work place and enable them to seek reasonable adjustments. However, evidence and lived experiences of disabled people shows this is not externally enforced and relies on disabled people pursuing costly legal claims. Meaningful equality cannot be won in bourgeois courts.
138. Capitalism as a socio-economic system is not motivated to, and is unable to, provide a full and meaningful life for disabled people. The judging of an individual's worth or ability to contribute to society only by their ability to be exploited through certain forms of wage labour is a toxic ideology which has led to centuries of discrimination and ostracisation for disabled people. As well as leading the fight to sweep away the



corrupting economic system which gives rise to, and perpetuates these ideologies, Young Communists must also formulate and fight for policies to advance the social, economic and politics rights of young people with disabilities in the current context.

I39. Fighting for the reversal of decades of cuts to services for disabled people as part of the broad movement must be a key priority. Campaigning for a reformed and properly funded public education system which enables the disabled youth to access and succeed in education on an equal footing are now essential to prevent millions of futures being squandered. The fight for full employment, new government backed apprenticeships and a statutory right to work for young people must go hand in hand with the right and empowerment for disabled youth to access employment on an equal footing rather than as conditional charity. The fight for a society in which “*the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all*” is a long one which is already underway – and it is a fight which requires all sections of working people and youth.

YCL100 – celebrating 100 years of the YCL

I40. The Young Communist League was founded at a special Unity Conference held from 20 to 26 August 1921 in Birmingham, uniting branches of the Young Workers’ League and the International Communist School Movement.

I41. Since then, like our mother Communist Party, we have been at the forefront of the struggles of working people in Britain. We organised young workers in the factories and at educational institutions, as well as cultural and sports activities for the youth in organisations like the British Workers’ Sports Federation, in football teams and at our own holiday camps.

I42. YCLers led thousands of people on mass trespasses of the English countryside, fighting for the right of British workers to be able to enjoy the countryside, leading to the “right to roam” today. We played an instrumental role in the struggles against fascist groups, racism and discrimination and for freedom for the British colonies.

I43. In the 1980s, our former General Secretary Mark Ashton helped to found the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, commemorated in the 2014 film *Pride*.

I44. Our contributions to the cause of working class international solidarity have been second to none, mobilising to defeat fascism at home and abroad, on Cable Street and in the Spanish Republic in the 1930s.



145. In the 1960s, we fought for peace in organisations like CND and solidarity with the Vietnamese people against the U.S. invaders. We donated blood, medical aid and hundreds of bicycles that were collected by the Vietnamese delegates to the World Youth Festival in Bulgaria.
146. In the 1970s, many members of the Young Communist League volunteered to help in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, risking life and limb.
147. We resolve that our centenary year celebrations shall be a focal point for Britain's young workers and students at this corner in history, a chance to encourage, motivate and remotivate, and train young people in the construction of a mass movement capable of achieving real social and economic change and a better, Socialist future in Britain.
148. We shall celebrate our past in order to inspire new struggles in the present moment and in the future. We shall build our organisation, develop new generations of young Communist leaders and reach out and talk to far more young people than ever before.
149. After the bleak experiences and into the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent capitalist crisis, YCL100 shall be a time to renew our revolutionary spirit, tempered by hard work, sacrifice and unity, as well as recapture our enthusiasm for our struggle to build a better and happier future.
150. We resolve that our 100 year celebrations shall be a time to celebrate and fight for the dreams of young people in Britain.

The international situation

151. Congress affirms the analysis of imperialism carried out by Lenin, that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. Furthermore, congress understands that imperialism is a pyramid; the most powerful capitalist countries sit at the peak, and below them a range of countries which act as both subjective and objective agents. This allows for an understanding of rivalry, submission, and alliance between capitalist countries, in a system of global exploitation primarily characterised by uneven development. The central antagonists within this system remain the most advanced capitalist states.
152. The forces of imperialism, spearheaded by the United States, NATO and the European Union have grown increasingly reckless in recent years in their efforts to



advance monopoly interests, compete with imperialist Russia and attempt to encircle, undermine and attack China. This has resulted in destabilisation and bloody conflicts across the Middle East and North Africa as well as increasing militarisation of Central Asia and the South China Sea.

153. This turbulence is not only manifested in political and military conflicts between human beings on the world scale, but also in the general depression of living conditions and barbaric attitudes of the ruling class towards human happiness, health and security.
154. On the international scale, the conditions of struggle between the working class and the capitalist class have heightened due to the prolonged and systemic suffering due to neoliberal policies such as privatisation and the mass transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich, as well as the pandemic and its clear class character.
155. As such, there have been a number of recent advances, setbacks and rebalances for the international Communist youth and the causes of progress and Socialism.
156. Congress states that in the coming period the League shall significantly deepen its work for peace, solidarity and proletarian internationalism as part of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the international Communist youth movement. This shall complement the outstanding work of the Communist Party and involve League members in it.
157. The League shall build upon successful campaigns involving Latin America, the Middle East and Europe and create new ones that are relevant to young people. We shall deepen our involvement in broad international solidarity organisations and the international work of trade unions. In addition, we shall explore sustained work around the issues of Cyprus, Western Sahara, the Chagos Islands, China and Hong Kong, Palestine and British foreign policy. We shall explore more domestic issues as part of our international work, whilst also seeking to develop further relationships with domiciled Communist and workers' organisations,
158. Since our last Congress in 2018, there have been a number of key developments such as the conclusion of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and the election of Joe Biden, replacing Donald Trump as President of the United States, the world's foremost imperialist power for which the British Government has always been a top ally. President Biden has maintained the general imperialist agenda but has made various declarations about his Government's intentions to treat China and Russia as its major rivals. He intends to justify the USA's imperialist agenda to allies as well as its



own citizens through more deliberate involvement in conflict, soft power and coalition-building initiatives throughout the world, with a particular focus on isolating China and the so-called New Cold War.

- I 59. The Pivot to Asia, the maintenance of overseas military bases and other installations throughout the world on occupied territories, involvement in training and equipping repressive forces, and other interference in the sovereign affairs of other nations remain basic facts of the imperialist agenda of the United States and its allies, whether those are blocs such as NATO and the EU or individual countries like Germany, France and Britain. Military intervention has been focused in the Middle East and Africa, in particular, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia.
- I 60. Some nations are being turned into the bloody battlegrounds of inter-imperialist rivalries. In some places such as Latin America, irregular troops and so-called hybrid warfare are being used to undermine legitimate governments in pursuit of imperialist geopolitical aims and conquest of markets. Sanctions and other unilateral measures are routinely applied by imperialists such as the USA, Britain and the EU, despite the devastation and economic ruin that they have brought to the ordinary people of countries such as Venezuela and Iran. Above all else, the criminal economic and social blockade perpetrated by the United States against Cuba remains a blight that must be rectified by uniting more global forces in solidarity with the Cuban people.
- I 61. In general, the British Government's foreign policy aims have been characterised by support for the United States and its adventures in pursuit of maximised profits for big business in each available market. Britain has largely followed the lead of the United States and enthusiastically joined the New Cold War initiative against China, banning the use of Chinese Huawei equipment in our mobile network and repeating the false narrative about a genocide of Uyghur people in China. More and more, the foreign policy of Britain and the United States follow a pattern of "liberal interventionism", motivated by dishonest moral interests.
- I 62. Congress draws hope and inspiration from our friends in the international communist movement. Across Latin America, the popular forces of the left are on the advance; in Chile and Peru, Communists and their allies are poised to make electoral breakthroughs. In Bolivia, a right-wing coup was overturned and a government of the left democratically returned to power. In Venezuela, imperialist provocations and internal problems have failed to halt the Bolivarian Revolutionary process led by labour and progressive forces. Political changes are ongoing in Nepal under the leadership of the left, and with the mass support of the people.



163. In Cuba, China, Vietnam and Laos, the working class have built for themselves the material basis for a happy life, showing by example the future all working people may enjoy. In the former socialist countries, a new generation arises, the youth carrying history in their hands, yearning to push beyond the dead end of capitalist rule. In Europe, our closest allies remain embedded in the communities, their organisations bearing all the respect and recognition of decades of work in service of the people.
164. Solidarity and exchange of information with the socialist countries, including Cuba, China, DPRK, Vietnam and Laos, takes on a new urgency in this context in terms of defending the material base of the socialist camp, resisting imperialism, developing a better understanding of these countries among working people in Britain – and winning more people to the Communist movement in the process.
165. This solidarity should also be extended to socialist orientated countries where not only is imperialism a threat, but also Communist and other labour and progressive forces are under threat, such as Venezuela, and other places where Communists and working people are building a socialist form of society, such as Kerala in India.
166. Inspiration and guidance should be drawn from our deep roots with the international Communist youth movement, the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the struggles against colonialism and imperialism, in particular, our shared history with the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent, Ireland and South Africa.
167. Building a broad struggle for peace and fraternity between young people and against imperialism, war and capitalist exploitation is fundamental to international solidarity.

The role of the YCL

1. In all of these struggles and in the fight for Socialism, the YCL and the Communist Party have a unique and historically essentially role. The League was created 100 years ago as a youth organisation of a new type, founded in the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Young Communists are not fighting to mend Capitalism, but to end it. We reject the class collaboration and pro-imperialism of social democracy. We recognise the class character of capitalist society, the exploitation of labour, the role of the state, the development of imperialism and the need for a revolutionary party and youth to enable the working class and its allies take political power and use it to overthrow Capitalism and its state. This is what we mean by revolution.



168. The YCL must be rooted among young workers and students and the youth in general. The League has a vital role to play in the battle of ideas. Over the recent period there has been a general and sustained increase in interest in socialist and communist ideas among the youth, millions of young people are being exposed to revolutionary politics for the first time. Our task is to reach those questioning the oppression and poverty of 21st century Capitalism. The YCL must be a pole for youth to coalesce, educate themselves in revolutionary theory and dedicate themselves to the struggle for Socialism.
169. Young Communists must play a leading role in the thousands of struggles taking place each and every day in our communities, campuses and workplaces. Communists must play a militant and non-sectarian role in the local and national movements, identifying the fundamental issues affecting the youth, students and working people, proposing radical solutions and methods of campaigning which relate local issues to the national and the international, questions of democracy, exploitation and oppression – and the broader struggle for Socialism. It is by playing such a role that the League shall recruit on a mass basis and win mass support among the youth for the strategy set out in *Britain's Road to Socialism*.
170. Congress recognises the importance of the YCL's *Youth Charter* as a means to build a broad base of support around the immediate policies and priorities of the YCL to combat the crisis facing Britain's youth. These policies also form a basis for branches, districts and nations of the YCL to intervene decisively in the local and national struggles with communist politics.
171. While not primarily electoral organisations, Congress recognises the importance of the increasing activity of the Communist Party, backed by the YCL, in recent elections. This year saw the largest and most widespread electoral campaign ran by the Party and YCL across Britain for a generation. Millions of people encountered the YCL and the Party and the political intervention of the Communists, many for the first time. Hundreds of thousands had the opportunity to vote Communist, most for the first time in their lives. While avoiding bourgeois electoralism and the restriction of the struggle to parliamentary methods, elections offer a significant opportunity to reach the masses of working people at a time of heightened political awareness. The Communist Party, with the support of the YCL, maintains the longer term ambition of rebuilding an independent electoral base as part of the wider effort to build itself as a revolutionary force.



- I72. History has shown us that a strong, militant and disciplined communist movement is essential in building a mass left and labour movement capable of winning revolutionary change in Britain. The continued growth of the YCL and Communist Party shall provide an increasing backbone of disciplined cadres capable of waging the local and national struggles in the labour, tenants and students movements. The increasing activity and intervention of the Communists at every level shall be key in ensuring the general raising of class consciousness, with class and revolutionary politics at the fore.
- I73. The growing size, discipline and organisation of the Young Communists shall be a beacon to youth and working people across Britain, to have confidence in the struggle and serve as a bedrock in the fight for peace, democracy and Socialism in our lifetimes.

Socialism or Extinction

- I74. Capitalism is a decaying and ideologically bankrupted system. A system of contradiction, crisis, exploitation and oppression. A system with nothing to offer the youth.
- I75. The COVID-19 Pandemic has simply exacerbated the general crisis of Capitalism which already gripped society in Britain and across the planet. It is a system which has proven itself only to be capable of prioritising private profits and the interests of monopoly capital.
- I76. A new economic crisis looms in the wake of the pandemic. The objective of the ruling class will be to pass the cost of the crisis on to working people through further austerity measures and renewed attacks on wages and living standards.
- I77. The planet stands on the precipice of a climate and ecological crisis which threatens to engulf humanity within our lifetimes. Capitalism, the source of this crisis, has proven itself unwilling and unable to take the radical action now needed to save the earth. The story of the human race might end, almost as soon as it started, here on a planet which has been made uninhabitable by greed.
- I78. None of this is natural or inevitable. The pandemic has demonstrated that it is working people who save working people. In the same way, history has shown us that it is working people who are the authors of our own liberation — of history itself.



Where there is struggle, there is hope

179. Wherever working people are prepared to resist, there is always hope. The youth have always been at the forefront of the struggle. The need for a genuinely mass, revolutionary youth organisation in Britain has never been more essential or more urgent.
180. To the youth of Britain, we say now is the time to join us in this struggle. We have a world to win – we have a world to save and a better future to build.
181. Nothing decent has ever been easy to acquire. A decent life is something for which we have to fight. Together we have the power to take it.
182. The choice for the youth and humanity now is not just Socialism or barbarism, but Socialism or extinction!
183. **For Peace, Jobs and Socialism in our Lifetime!**
184. **Join the Young Communist League and Conquer Your Future!**