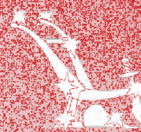




***CÚIS NA nÓG,  
CÚIS NA hÉIREANN***



***THE CAUSE OF YOUTH,  
THE CAUSE OF IRELAND***



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cym.ie**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Who are the CYM?

1. The Connolly Youth Movement is a 32-county Marxist-Leninist and Socialist-Republican youth organisation. We follow in the footsteps of such socialist revolutionaries as Karl Marx, James Connolly, and Vladimir Lenin.

2. The working-class youth of Ireland have, for their entire lives, borne the brunt of ruthless austerity policies imposed by a vindictive capitalist class. This manifests in all avenues of their lives, in housing, education, in the culture they consume and engage in. Enforcing and underpinning this is an advanced and all-encompassing security apparatus, which doles out violence and repression to maintain the capitalist and imperialist conditions prevailing on this island.

3. The CYM believes that the only ideology that adequately represents the interests of the working-class youth and offers the solutions necessary for the overcoming of capitalism is Marxism-Leninism. In the Irish context, this has manifested itself as Socialism-Republicanism. As the only Marxist-Leninist youth organisation on the island of Ireland, we are the only effective and committed representatives of its working-class youth.

4. In the pages below, we will lay out the guiding principles of our organisation, as well as our stances and strategies on the most pressing issue facing Irish youth today.



## **1.2 What is Marxism-Leninism?**

1. The CYM recognises Marxism-Leninism as the teachings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin. Marxism-Leninism is a universally applicable method of analysis and organisational principles. Marx provided the framework to develop a scientific analysis of the capitalist mode of production and presented the conditions needed to change it. This framework is dialectical materialism.

2. Marx and Engels developed a scientific analysis of not only capitalism, but the history of class society generally by synthesising dialectics and materialism. Materialism allowed them to analyse conditions concretely, positing that matter was principle and thought emerged from matter. This reflected the world accurately, and stood in opposition to metaphysical trends in philosophy whose idealist nature only existed to defend religion.

3. Dialectics was capable of showing development in a clear and accurate way. It stated that the development of all things was a result of the combination of opposing forces within that thing. By applying this dialectic to human history through historical materialism, Marx came to understand that the most important factor in the development of any society is the mode of production.

4. Marx discovered the reasons for the development of primitive communal societies to slavery, and how these in turn gave way to feudalism and then capitalism. The basis for each class was found to be their relationship to the means of production. These different relationships lead to class division. The class of the proletariat is the most advanced and holds the revolutionary potential in a capitalist society.

5. Marx's writings on political economy, philosophy, and socialism were the most advanced of his time. His most ground-breaking contribution is the theory of surplus value, which may be summed up as the value which the worker creates but does not get compensated for. The conclusion is that workers are entitled to all that they create.

6. Finally, Marx understood that the forces of capitalist reaction would try to crush a proletarian revolution, and for that reason conceived the dictatorship of the proletariat. This would be a time during socialist transition when the newly empowered proletariat would suppress the capitalist class in order to prevent them instigating a counter revolution.

7. Capitalism continued to develop after the time of Marx and at the turn of the 20th century we saw the dawn of the highest stage of capitalism – imperialism. Vladimir Lenin is responsible for using the scientific framework that Marx had created to analyse this new stage in capitalist development and lead the proletariat to revolution. Imperialism is monopoly capitalism - capitalism which has gone beyond the reach of national borders and now seeks to extract surplus value all over the globe.

8. Monopoly capitalism combines industrial capital with that of banks to create finance capital. Having extracted all it can within its own country, it seeks to capture raw materials, markets, labour, new investment, and spheres of influence elsewhere. Imperialism has reached such a stage that finance capital has reached all corners of the world and quarrels between various imperialists have begun. Starting wars for the redivision of the worlds, particularly for the possession of colonies and neo-colonies.

9. As part of the process of further concentrating capital into fewer hands, the imperialist countries have linked themselves and all oppressed nations together into a single world economy. This global

system experiences a greater degree of crisis than before, as the contradictions between workers and capitalists intensify in both the imperial core and the periphery.

The stark divide that imperialism created between the periphery and the imperial core leaves dependent nations little choice but to wage wars for national liberation if they want to free themselves from imperialist oppression.

10. Imperialism takes the contradictions found within capitalism to a higher stage. These three contradictions are:

1. The contradiction between labour and capital in the imperial core countries.
2. The contradiction between various imperialist cartels which leads to inter-imperialist warfare to redivide the spoils.
3. The contradiction between the imperial core and the periphery.

11. The heightening of these contradictions led Lenin to the conclusion that imperialism develops on the eve of socialist revolution. In Russia, the proletariat were prepared to take power as these contradictions were at their strongest. This allowed workers to seize political power and break with the global imperialist system. This led us into the era of proletarian revolution and created the final contradiction, between socialism and imperialism.

12. Lenin also recognised the importance of connecting the struggles of those in the imperial core with that of oppressed nations. It was Lenin who expanded the narrow scope of the national question to include oppressed peoples all around the world. Lenin followed Marx's line on the Irish revolution, warning English workers that "no nation can be free

as long as it enslaves another nation." He urged English workers to co-operate with Irish workers to overthrow the English rulers in Ireland.

### **1.3 Who are the Ruling Class in Ireland?**

1. Before exploring in more depth who the CYM are as an organisation, it is first important to comprehend who our opponents are. Who are the ruling class in Ireland, and what apparatuses are at their disposal to enforce capitalism?

2. Central to the enforcement of any class' rule is the state.

Fundamentally, the state is made up of the legislative bodies (Leinster House and Stormont in the Irish case), with other bodies such as the judiciary and police forces serving as enforcers. However, there are a slew of other bodies and institutions that help the state in an indirect capacity in the upholding of class rule. For example, educational institutions, especially those in receipt of state funding, primarily serve the purpose of inculcating the youth with the ideology of the ruling class. The media also serve this role, with television, radio and newspapers (online and print), and social media generally taking a pro-government line. Finally, religious and cultural institutions primarily push a pro-ruling class line, to maintain a status quo that they benefit from, or even simply for the fact that much of their funding comes directly from the state.

3. When we say that those indirect bodies propagate the ideology of the ruling class, do we mean that the state is explicitly pressuring them to do so? No, and for the simple reason that that is not necessary. Through a system of cultural hegemony (first theorised by Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci), the moral and value systems of the ruling class become those of society as a whole. Through growing up and being



exposed to all the above institutions for an entire lifetime, the nation's population finds itself at the disposal of the state, promoting the interests of the ruling class, even to the population's own detriment.

4. That is the state and the ruling class in general sense however. Who are they in the Irish context? Before going into any detail, it is important to recognise that there are two different jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. In the North, direct British colonial rule still exists in 6 counties, while in the south, while there is a nominal independence, the situation can be most accurately defined as neo-colonial.

5. In the occupied 6 counties in the North of Ireland, there are, to a certain extent, two categories of ruling classes operating in parallel. Firstly, there is a colonial bourgeoisie, descended primarily from Protestant settlers who arrived during the Ulster Plantation. For the majority of the period following partition, they were the only ones to wield political power, enforced through institutions such as the Royal Ulster Constabulary, judiciary and Orange Order, on top of an armed and organised paramilitary system. In the same fashion as colonial forces in other parts of the world, any form of resistance, no matter how lukewarm, was met with extreme violence. While they do enrich themselves at the expense of the working classes within the 6 counties, much of the extracted wealth makes its way back to mainland Britain.

6. However, following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the opportunity arose for the emergence of a genuine bourgeoisie among the nationalist community. This group acted as the bourgeois generally do following formal independence from a colonial power: they slipped into the niche left by the colonisers and continued to maintain capitalism, enriching themselves at the expense of the working classes that did the real work in the liberation struggle.

7. These two forms of ruling class operate in tandem in the 6 counties, with the division enforced by the Good Friday Agreement. Ultimately, this relationship only serves to benefit the colonial power that keeps it in place, in this case Britain, both to enrich itself with a colonial holding, but also to maintain its strategic pressure on the other jurisdiction on the island, in the 26 counties.

8. South of the border, a third system prevails, but it does so alone. The ruling class in the south is a neo-colonial one. While they are nominally independent and enforce capitalism to enrich themselves, they have maintained a system of economic reliance on imperial powers, namely the US, EU and Britain. From the foundation of the state, where Cumann na nGaedheal and successive governments made no efforts to alter the 26 counties' position as purely a source of labour and raw materials for Britain, to the present economic strategy of dependence on foreign direct investment, which has resulted in only a superficial industrial sector, which imports its raw materials and exports its finished products, and has bolstered tangential and unstable sectors such as construction. The wealth of the 26 county state continues to be extracted, only to the benefit of the local comprador bourgeoisie and international imperialism. In the case of the EU, membership has meant a relinquishing of sovereignty over currency, making us beholden to the whims of a market totally outside of our control. As a peripheral state of the union, when the markets inevitably crash, it is ourselves, along with other peripheral states such as Greece and Portugal, that bear the brunt of the austerity and subsequent capital concentration to prepare for the next cycle.

9. Fundamentally, the organs of state, when controlled by the bourgeoisie, are used to maintain capitalism. We would like to see

these apparatuses in the hands of the working class, to build and maintain socialism.

## **1.4 Principles of the CYM**

### **1.4.1 Revolutionary Principles**

1. The CYM is a revolutionary organisation. This means that we do not believe that simple reforms are enough to address the fundamental exploitation inherent to capitalism. The use of the bourgeois state-apparatus will never bring about this overthrow, and so we look to other avenues.

2. While we do (and have in the past) advocate for certain reforms to better the lot of the working class (wage increases, evictions bans, repealing the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment), we understand that they are not an end in themselves. Rather, they serve the purpose of mitigating the worst excesses of capitalism in the short-term, and defending the rights of working-class people insofar as is possible under the present system.

3. Our members integrate themselves into community-led organisations, such as trade and tenant unions with the goal of directing them in a more radical direction, by raising class-consciousness among the membership. We seek to lead these movements and constructively engage with them, rather than tailing behind them, or opportunistically taking advantage of their successes.

### **1.4.2 Counter-Culture**

1. Culture under capitalism is one that is inherently commodified. Cultural hegemony extends into our recreational spaces, ensuring that at no point are we offered legitimate alternatives to the constant drive

of the profit motive. Capitalist culture reinforces the values of the system: individualism, consumerism, chauvinism, exploitation, and objectification. However, young people wishing to unwind in their free-time are left with little alternative but to engage in this system.

2. There is a chronic lack of sober spaces in working-class neighbourhoods, the primary meeting places being pubs, clubs, or other venues for the abuse of drugs and alcohol. If one is to stay at home and try and find sanctuary online, all that exists to consume is a steady stream of American-influenced social media content, an attention economy that only serves to further enforce the idea that the individual is the zenith of society.

3. Even communities online are generally commodified, usually coalescing around a particular commercial product, like a television programme, or a video game. They are therefore inherently pay-walled, the ability to become a member and reap the benefits of community being beholden on your ability to pay for any updates to your chosen product. With the inherently imported nature of all these issues, comes a total disregard for an Irish identity.

4. The Irish language is almost totally absent from these spaces, existing only in designated spaces that are consistently being encroached upon.

5. Capitalism reinforces itself through its culture. In film, online spaces, and television, the logic of capitalism, the cult of the individual, is enforced, systemised, and propagated among the youth. Therefore, it is vital that any revolutionary organisation commits itself to a cultural revolution, to developing a culture that celebrates and reinforces communist principles. As James Connolly said in his *Revolutionary Songs*:

“No revolutionary movement is complete without its poetical expression [...] until the movement is marked by the joyous, defiant, singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the most distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement. It is the dogma of a few, and not the faith of the multitude”.

6. 1 How does the CYM aim to develop such a counter-culture within our organisation and communities? We are a collectivist organisation, in that our motive is to improve the lot of each other, rather than personal enrichment. We promote functional fitness and self-defence, through actions such as hikes, and martial arts classes, and strive to develop sober social activities and spaces. We discourage substance abuse, and advocate for a health-based approach towards addiction, rather than a punitive one. Through education, we look to politicise the youth, who have, through the state school system up to this point, gone through a rigorous programme of depoliticisation. We also promote the learning and use of the Irish language among our members, with the goal of it becoming the organisation's first language.

### **1.4.3 Internationalism & Anti-Imperialism**

1. As internationalists we understand that capitalism is a global system, and that the struggles against it are similarly global. The CYM therefore commits itself wholeheartedly to a policy of solidarity and relationship-building through fraternal organisations, utilising our membership of and engagement with the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY).

2. Republicanism has a long and proud history of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles the world over, such as Palestine and South Africa. These links have served only to strengthen each movement, and the anti-imperialist cause more generally. In many cases, one colonial

theatre has been used as a testing ground for another. The Black and Tans for instance, so infamous in Irish history and culture, found themselves shipped to Palestine directly after their Irish outing, to secure British rule there against Arab intransigence. Similarly, counter-insurgency tactics developed in Malaya in the 1950s, and refined in Kenya in the 1960s, were finally put into place in the 6 counties by British security forces during the conflict there.

3. Today, the CYM stands in solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles around the world, such as Palestine, Cuba, and Western Sahara. We fully support a single, united Palestinian state, and reject a two-state solution. We offer critical support to those countries engaged in socialist construction, and oppose all forms of imperialist expansion and militarism, such as the increased involvement of NATO in the affairs of Ireland and the cooperation of the Irish bourgeois government with EU militarisation. We support all peripheral nations in their struggle against imperialism and we reject the indiscriminate utilisation of sanctions, predatory investment, and "colour revolution" by imperialist powers. We oppose any attempts at the balkanisation of the People's Republic of China, the instigation of colour revolutions, or the destabilisation of countries by imperial powers

## **1.5 Strategy of the CYM**

### **1.5.1 What kind of organisation is the CYM?**

1. As a communist organisation following the Bolshevik model, the smallest unit upon which the CYM is based is the cadre. A cadre is a comrade that embodies what Lenin described as the "professional revolutionary". They are devoted to the cause of the working-class,



engaging constantly in independent study so as to develop their theoretical foundation to the highest level. They are embedded and active within their communities, workplaces, and universities. Being the most theoretically and ideologically advanced in these theatres, they are willing and confident in taking up the mantle of leadership in working class organisations such as trade, tenant, and student unions

2. Outside of these organisations, cadres are expected to be engaged within their communities, as in formal organisations, as communists. While many in our organisation are involved in charitable activities such as food banks, the CYM does not view charitable work as forming the basis of our activity. While it does serve the purpose of alleviating some of the worst suffering experienced by the working-class, it is ultimately only beneficial in highlighting the failures of capitalism. We look instead to empower working-class communities to overcome their own issues.

### **1.5.2 Industrial Strategy**

1. Trade unions on the island of Ireland are the largest collective bodies of workers at present, but they have been crippled by restrictive legislation, social partnership, and opportunism amongst union officials.

2. The largest obstacle to building a militant trade union movement on the island of Ireland capable of seizing power is the legislation governing these bodies in both jurisdictions. These are the 1990 Industrial Relations Act in the south, and the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995 in the north.

3. The current trend among unions is towards an overfocus on bureaucratisation and casework, with no effort being put into collectivising the grievances of their membership and instead behaving as cheap solicitors for individual workers.

4. A large part of the issues are caused by the relationship between union and state being one of social partnership: rather than unions fighting to get their members the best deal possible, they instead must come to an agreement that takes into account the interests and desires of both the government and IBEC (the Irish Business and Employers Confederation). The CYM recognises that trade unions are not inherently revolutionary vehicles, but they are the largest collective body of workers, and where the workers are found, so too will we. In the face of restrictive legislation both north and south it is vital that unions and any other workers' organisations come together to explore crucial diversification of tactics.

5. CYM members are mandated to be a member of their relevant trade union. To increase union density and agitate within for more radical action CYM members should:

- engage with your fellow workers,
- meet as a collective,
- petition the union and workplace together rather than alone.

6. We encourage workers to politicise their struggles, and to teach others that politics and workers' emancipation are not separate entities but one and the same.

7. The CYM should make efforts to reach all workers, devoting the most time and attention to unorganised sections of the working class. Particular attention ought to be paid to the industrial proletariat, made up of many immigrant workers. Young and precarious workers also need specific strategies devised by the union to reach, collectivise, and organise them.

8. We reject the economism present within the mainstream trade union movement which centres exclusively around economic issues in the short term in the workplace instead of fully integrating political issues that face workers into their strategies.'

### **1.5.3 Tenant's Unions**

1. Outside of the workplace, tenant's unions are where the CYM directs the bulk of its energy. We see these organisations as crucial vehicles to shifting the balance of power between tenants and landlords. Within tenant's unions, our members work to build and strengthen their communities, by both developing community solidarity and challenging landlords whenever necessary, for instance by resisting evictions and infractions, as well as highlighting the role they play in the housing crisis. Similarly to unions, we also look to push them in a radical direction, adopting tactics such as occupations, and more pro-actively challenging landlords. On a broader, strategic level, tenant's unions teach valuable lessons around organising, allowing communities to build and develop their power with which to challenge and beat their oppressors.

### **1.5.4 Universities & Student's Unions**

1. Today, universities play a greater role in the lives of the youth of Ireland than ever before. With an ever growing desire on the part of employers for their workforce to have a third-level qualification, the proportion of the student body made up of the working-class is at its highest point. However, as with all other profit-making institutions, the university is sustained through exploitation. Exploitation of the labour of staff and students to maintain its national and international standing,

and so to draw funding, and exploitation of the service staff that keep it operating day to day.

2. Therefore, the CYM believes that the building of solidarity between students and staff is integral to our movement. Our members are engaged in student and staff unions to expose the exploitation inherent in how the university operates, so as to encourage this solidarity and drive both groups to work together to collectively improve their conditions.

3. On top of this, we also operate the Connolly Youth Societies. These are the way the CYM engages most directly on university campuses, functioning as our mass student organisations, and being the most direct way for students to engage with the CYM.

#### **1.5.5 Electoralism**

1. The CYM recognises that there can be no parliamentary road to socialism, and as such do not believe that engaging in elections can be a strategy by itself.

2. However, we recognise the tactical potential that participating in such elections may have in highlighting the shortcomings of these institutions so long as working people still have faith in them. Any such activity would simply be an extension to wider revolutionary activity rather than the focus of the movement. We have seen organisations which commit to a purely parliamentary path become wedded to the institutions they once sought to overthrow.

3. However, the CYM recognises that as a youth organisation its capacity for electoral activity is largely limited to a local level

### **1.5.6 The Party**

1. Collectively, the issues touched on above represent the most pressing issues and strategies for the working-class in Ireland today. History demonstrates that the only legitimate representative of the working-class in any revolutionary struggle is a Communist party. Any such party would draw together all the elements of the working-class in a united front against capitalism. In the Irish context, we believe that any such party would be Marxist-Leninist, socialist-republican, internationalist and democratic-centralist.

2. However, at present we do not believe that any party in Ireland adequately represents these aims and values. As such, one of the most pressing issues facing Irish communists is the foundation of a party following these principles. Until such a party arises, the CYM will continue to work with other socialists, left republicans and communists to further the aims and strategies outlined in this programme.

## **2. Resolutions of the CYM**

### **2.1 The National Question**

Having introduced the organisation, it is now time to discuss where we stand on the specific issues facing young people in Ireland today. From housing to education, capitalism encroaches on nearly every facet of our lives, imposing misery and division where it goes. Of all the issues facing Irish youth, the national question is the most all-encompassing. Any solutions to the day-to-day problems that will be discussed in subsequent sections are seriously hampered by the fact that there exists a border dividing our country in two. The existence of these two jurisdictions precludes any attempt at all-Ireland solutions, rendering them nowhere near as effective as they need to be. As a socialist-republican organisation, the CYM recognises that it will be impossible to establish a socialist republic in Ireland while 6 counties exist under direct imperial occupation.

#### **2.1.1 Partition**

1. Partition of North and South exists as an artificial division of British design to protect their strategic interests. Through the use of state forces such as the PSNI, and non-state actors such as the Orange Order and Loyalist paramilitaries, a sectarian statelet is maintained. This, combined with a political establishment in the south committed to upholding partition has resulted in the island of Ireland being split in two for over 100 years. A key aspect of maintaining and entrenching this partition is the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), the treaty that ostensibly ended the recent conflict, signed in 1998.

#### **2.1.2 Good Friday Agreement**

1. The GFA, far from being a document that ensures a more liberal and less sectarian 6 counties, has in fact solidified sectarianism as a guiding



principle within the region. From a purely mechanical standpoint, the GFA requires that candidates for Assembly elections declare themselves as being Unionist or Nationalist representing either or community. While this is sold as being necessary to ensure that the interests of both communities are adequately represented in Stormont, but functionally it means that any party which attempts to build a cross-community base, across class lines for instance, is inherently disadvantaged by having their vote share count for less.

The voting process itself behind the GFA left much to be desired. Fundamentally, those voting in the 6 counties were doing so under a combination of duress and false promises. The so-called “peace dividends”, whereby the cessation of hostility would allow the 6 counties to build itself up economically, especially by becoming an attractive destination for foreign direct investment from the United States and Europe, failed to materialise. The 6 counties, especially Catholic communities, consistently rank among the highest in the UK in terms of poverty and unemployment.

2. Paramilitaries, especially from Protestant communities, also had a significant impact on the agreement’s ratification. In the lead-up to the referendum on the GFA in the 6 counties, loyalist paramilitaries ramped up their indiscriminate terror campaign, consisting of sectarian bombings and shootings, resulting in the deaths of many Catholic civilians. These attacks, coupled with the above-mentioned economic promises, led to a heavily tarnished vote.

### **2.1.3 Normalisation**

1. On an everyday level, a key feature of the GFA which has ensured sectarianism and continued British rule in the 6 counties has been the process of normalisation: whereby institutions designed to uphold British

rule in Ireland are not considered as part of an ongoing colonial project as such, but are rather deemed to be normal aspects of life.

2. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), are a key example of this. Fundamentally, their role has not changed since they replaced their predecessors, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. We can see this first and foremost in their name: the Police Service of Northern Ireland (incorporating the Royal Ulster Constabulary), highlighting the fact that the colonial order was assimilated and continued, rather than being replaced. If we compare the PSNI to their equivalents in the 26 counties An Garda Síochána or police services in the rest of the United Kingdom, their differences are laid bare. They are significantly more militarised, with constables armed while on duty, and being permitted to carry firearms while off duty, something unheard of south of the border. The size of the force also demonstrates the over-policed nature of the 6 counties: the PSNI are the third largest police force in the UK, after the London Metropolitan force and Police Scotland, though they are responsible for a population  $\frac{1}{8}$  the size of the former, and an area less than  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the latter.

3. The British Army presence is also consistently understated. Between 1969 and 2007, approximately 300,000 British soldiers participated in Operation Banner, with 21,000 troops being stationed in the region at one time at the height of the conflict. While this operation was wound up following the GFA, a subsequent operation, Operation Helvetic has continued to operate in the region, with over 1,500 troops currently stationed in the 6 counties.

4. On a civilian level, the GFA's assertion of legitimacy to both the desire for a united Ireland and for the 6 counties to remain in the United Kingdom ignores the colonial nature of the northern statelet and

unionism, and hamstrings efforts to develop cross-community solidarity by entrenching sectarianism in law. In an attempt to paint the causes of the conflict as purely ethnic and sectarian, lacking any colonial or anti-imperial elements, the GFA normalises colonialism and its supporting ideology. It also ultimately removes the mechanisms for achieving united Ireland from the hands of the Irish population. While the GFA does state that if a majority of the population north and south of the border demonstrate their desire to see a united Ireland, the governments in both London and Dublin are under a “binding obligation” to bring it about, it offers no time-frame. While Britain has a strategic interest in maintaining a direct presence on the island of Ireland, there will be no impetus for it to implement such a decision.

#### **2.1.4 The Triple-Lock of Imperialism**

Ireland's relationship with imperialism can best be described as a triple-lock: our sovereignty being divided between Britain, the EU, and the United States. Britain has been discussed extensively in the preceding paragraphs, and so all that is left is to discuss those further afield.

##### **2.1.4.1 The European Union**

1. The EU, regardless of its liberal rhetoric, is a direct continuation of the European imperial project. Formed in the aftermath of the Second World War as a direct counter-balance to the socialist bloc, it has consistently served the interests of the capitalist class. The European Union's is in fact the only constitution which specifically enshrines capitalism (through the common market and competition policies) and prohibits socialism. Power resides, in the same model as the empires that preceded it, with the imperial nations at the core (France, Germany), while the peripheral states, such as Ireland and Greece are repeatedly stripped of their resources and exploited as sources of cheap labour. Principles such as freedom of movement, while

advertised as being for the benefit of those seeking to work abroad, are almost exclusively used to transport cheap migrant labour into the imperial core, most recently from the newest additions in Eastern Europe. These ex-socialist states have also suffered internally, with fascist movements being promoted to ensure no resurgence of socialism, for instance in Poland and Hungary. Further afield, the EU has continued the European project of neo-colonialism in Africa, with France alone having over 5,000 troops stationed in the Sahel.

2. Economically, the eurozone has been utilised as a means of stripping member states of their currency sovereignty, to their ultimate detriment as was seen during the 2008 financial crash. By tying peripheral states to the European Central Bank (which is ultimately at the beck and call of the core members), they can be more easily exploited, and, in the case of an inevitable market crash, made to take the blame and shoulder the debt.

3. In Ireland specifically, the EU has had major negative impacts on domestic industries, such as farming and fisheries, by greatly favouring large capitalistic enterprises over smaller independent ones. The 26 counties' membership of the eurozone ensured that it was crippled following the 2008 crash, with the neoliberal Fianna Fáil government (and their Fine Gael successors) only too happy to enforce the EU's mandate on austerity. This is because the relationship between the 26 counties and the EU is a neo-colonial one, with our dependence on Britain being replaced to a degree with a dependence on the EU. As an organisation, the CYM is engaged in educating both our members and our peers on the reality of the EU's role in Ireland. This culminates in our agitation for a referendum on the 26 counties' membership of the bloc. While we recognise that this will not bring about a socialist

republic, it is a prerequisite, as no such formation can exist while our membership is maintained.

#### **2.1.4.2 The United States**

1. Finally, the United States, as in much of the world, exerts considerable pressure over Ireland in the political, economic, and cultural spheres.
2. The most direct manifestation of US political dominance is in the use of Shannon Airport by the US military as a stopover and refuelling centre for their personnel being sent to overseas bases, primarily in the Middle East. Shannon has played a vital role in the US and NATO's "War on Terror", and has had the effect of undermining the "neutrality" the 26 counties touts to the globe. As long as the US military has a presence in Ireland, it can never be considered an independent nation.
3. Economically, multinational corporations fill the role of neo-colonialism in Ireland also occupied by Britain and the EU. These companies extract value from Ireland, but leave nothing in return. Internationally, the south is notorious as a tax haven, with corporations such as Apple and Google racking up massive bills. On a local level, they are totally un beholden to communities who they exploit, or to the local areas that they ravage. Internally, a system of labour aristocracy is implemented to impede organisation and solidarity amongst workers: for instance, software developers are treated significantly better, with much better pay, than manufacturers. With these multinationals being some of the primary employers in urban centres, this has the effect of hamstringing the development of labour movements more broadly. As the primary realm of industry these companies come from is tech, a reindustrialisation of the country to revive local industry is necessary to break their hold.

4. Culturally, the US's grip on Irish society is the most pervasive. Through film, music, television, and celebrity culture, Irish people are exposed to a flood of content that only serves to repress their own culture. These cultural products ultimately serve the goals of US cultural hegemony: an enforcement of capitalism as being the only viable economic system, fanatical adherence to individualism over any collective action, and a propagation of the idea of the US being leaders of a "Free World", usually in opposition to a communist enemy. The CYM, in response to this, is committed to the development of a counter-culture that celebrates collective action, and Irish culture, so as to decolonise the minds of our youth.

### **2.1.5 Gaeilge**

1. Gaeilge is a vital aspect of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. The suppression by British administrations, as well as the neglect by southern ones, has led to the language being decimated in everyday use.

2. The CYM dedicates itself to the promotion of the language both within and without the organisation. Within the organisation we look to organise language-classes for members to improve their level, as well as encouraging the use of it generally as the first language of the organisation. In Ireland more broadly, we agitate for an Irish language act in the 6 counties, as well as working in coordination and solidarity with Irish-language activists and organisations island-wide. In the 26 counties, we wish to see the protection and consolidation of na Gaeltachtaí, with a mind toward their re-structuring and eventual expansion.



## 2.2 Housing

1. The housing crisis in Ireland is one that affects young people not just in their pursuit of a roof over their heads, but also in employment, mental health, and working-class power.
2. Housing in the south is run almost exclusively on a privatised level, with private landlords hoarding properties so as to produce an artificial scarcity and vulture funds exploiting particularly unstable housing situations. Young people are therefore faced with an ever-increasing cost and decreasing supply. The state has effectively washed its hands of this issue, leaving the situation to develop in a not only exploitative, but also anarchic direction, with little to no planning in the building of new housing. Urban centres are therefore more likely to see new developments that benefit the ruling class, such as office blocks to draw in more FDI.
3. In the six counties, while social housing accounts for the majority of renters, scarcity is exacerbated by segregation. The threat of Loyalist paramilitaries driving any Catholics placed in social housing in Protestant areas, leaves Catholic areas struggling with both higher demand and serious scarcity. Dereliction by landlords gone rogue and failures on behalf of local councils to seize properties or take them over after a death further contribute to the scarcity.
4. The current housing crisis is fundamentally by design. By maintaining insecurity in tenants, the building of working-class power becomes all the more difficult, and landlords' power can therefore go unchallenged. Reforms like rent caps or eviction bans may be things we would support to curtail the worst excesses, but ultimately they are scraps thrown to our class to placate them.

5. We reject calls for a referendum in the south to enshrine the right to housing in the constitution. Some argue that it will place a mandate on governments to provide housing, but this is not true. Many mandates upon the government are not fulfilled, and as Nadezhda Krupskaya puts it: “No, workers cannot expect anything from god or the tsar. It is also a waste of time to expect the capitalists to change their minds and stop exploiting them, just as it would be to wait for wolves to stop eating sheep or for birds to give up catching insects”

## **2.3 Education**

1. As Marxists-Leninists, we view education as one of the most critical aspects in the development of effective cadres. However, much of the education provided to the youth comes in the form of state-run or state-supported schools. Education in Ireland follows the pattern laid out by Padraig Pearse in his essay *The Murder Machine*: “Education should foster; this education is meant to repress. Education should inspire; this education is meant to tame. Education should harden; this

education is meant to enervate". What he said of the English administration at the time, is true of our capitalist class now: "[They] are too wise a people to attempt to educate the Irish in any worthy sense. As well expect them to arm us". The education systems in the 6 and 26 counties primarily serve one purpose: the enforcement and entrenchment of capitalist hegemony in the youth, and the eradication from them of any form of working-class consciousness.

2. The root of many of the issues, especially in the 26 counties, is the overwhelming control that the Catholic Church has had, and continues to have on the education system. The vast majority of state primary and secondary schools are still owned by the Church through a system of religious orders, and many of those that are not will proudly proclaim a "Catholic ethos".

3. The method in which subjects are taught also serves to enforce a neo-liberal ideology. The firm division of subjects into different camps; sciences, humanities, etc. seriously undermine the development of class consciousness, especially in STEM subjects. A strict "disciplinary" mindset leads to the so-called "hard sciences", and especially their implementation, being considered above or outside their social contexts. Even in the social sciences, material simply enforces capitalist ideology. History, for example, serves the purpose of myth-building for the state. Our namesake, James Connolly, is depicted as a leader of the 1916 Rising, but no attention is paid to his socialist politics and organising that was the bulk of his life. This division extends into universities, with graduates who are trained simply to enter the workplace lacking an understanding of the material implications of their work. For instance, an engineer, who may be brilliant in their field, but who goes to work for a British arms manufacturer, and is either oblivious, or uncaring of the oppression their work brings to bear.

4. Working conditions of both staff and students also leave much to be desired. Long hours and poor salaries for staff have the inevitable outcome of negatively affecting student learning outcomes. For students, the development of the grinds industry has essentially established a second, near-compulsory schooling system in the 26 counties, with the demands of the Leaving Certificate necessitating the taking of grinds, especially in subjects such as Maths and Gaeilge. Gaelscoileanna in much of the country are restricted to the middle-class, with many working-class communities never given the option to engage in their education through the language. In universities, staff and students are very deliberately kept separate by university management, in an effort to restrict any development of solidarity between the two. However, as the university and its profits are built on the exploitation of both staff and students, it is integral that these groups develop solidarity together.

5. There are myriad solutions to the problems facing education on our island, but below are listed a few. To make education more egalitarian and accessible to the entirety of the population, it is crucial that it be state-funded through all levels. From primary to tertiary. Adding to this, fee-paying institutions must be abolished, to remove the automatic advantage they hand to the bourgeoisie. In the 6 counties, it is also vital that schools become integrated, removing a significant barrier to cross-community interaction and solidarity present from childhood. In the south, the intensive curriculum forced on students (7 subjects at Leaving Certificate, compared to 3 at A-Levels in the 6 counties) must be changed, so as to make grinds and their surrounding industry unnecessary. Finally, gaelscoileanna in the south can no longer be permitted to be the domain of the wealthy. Rather, provisions must be made for them to be accessible to all, with the eventual aim of their being the standard, in line with a parallel expansion of na gaeltachtaí.

6. The CYM is actively engaged on university campuses in a numerous ways. Our members actively engage in, and run for positions in student's unions across the island, and push a platform that develops solidarity not just between students, but with staff as well. Our most direct manifestation on campuses is through the Connolly Youth societies, which serve as the mass student organisations of the CYM.

## **2.4 Healthcare**

1. Healthcare was once assumed to be part of living in an advanced capitalist country. When the contradictions of imperialism began to sharpen, imperialists began to seek to export capital not only to the oppressed nations of the third world but also to go after public services in their own countries. These takeovers are marked by the stamp of neoliberalism, taking public money and investing it into private companies. The competition between capitalist (insurers, pharmaceuticals, hospitals), for-profit healthcare providers created a large stratum of people who could not afford to fall ill. This created another contradiction for imperialists: How do you extract profit from customers who are too poor to pay?

2. This question was answered by the 2007 "Global Lean Healthcare Summit" which introduced the principle of Lean Management to the healthcare system. This summit was attended by many imperialist countries including the UK and Ireland. Practices which were introduced include: renting of medicine equipment from private companies in order to avoid paying for storage, ensuring waiting rooms were always full so no beds were empty at any given time and cuts in staffing to reduce labour cost. These practices were adopted by many imperialist countries and represent a shift from public service to industry

and temporarily resolving the contradiction they had created in the process.

3. Both The NHS and HSE have publicly endorsed the lean management system. Claiming that it's an effective way to "reduce waste". The truth is obvious: its purpose is to reduce the cost of production – especially labour cost – in order to make business more profitable, risking lives in the process. The similarities between the systems north and south is not a coincidence - it is a purposeful effort by many imperial core countries to make healthcare a profitable industry by treating hospitals like factories.

4. We reject the idea that in the era of imperialism any healthcare system can provide for the whole of society. The welfare state has collapsed with diminishing returns from dependent countries. Capitalists now seek profits from investing capital into formerly public services leading to the gutting of public infrastructure. The imperialist re-organizing of healthcare has led to an incalculable loss of life over the past decades.

5. The mental health crisis which is gripping our country is only one example. Its reduction in cost has also led to a reduction in capacity. Hospitals aren't equipped to deal with a high volume of patients. COVID-19 threw the healthcare system into the lion's den and exposed many working people to its flaws. We reject the commodification of essential services such as healthcare and seek to use it as a point of agitation for revolution. Proletarian revolution is a necessary prerequisite for a healthcare system which is able to treat everyone.

6. The CYM also recognises the necessity to expand the definition of healthcare, to treat substance abuse as a health issue, rather than as a criminal one. The working class is disproportionately affected by the criminalisation of substance use and abuse, and frequently dismissed



due to their association with it. As it currently stands, the ruling class has weaponized the criminalisation of substance abuse as a tool to demonise working class people who turn to illicit substances as a form of escapism from their dire conditions. This can be seen in the overrepresentation of working class individuals imprisoned and fined for such behaviour, which occurs in all strata of society. The CYM supports the decriminalisation of the possession of drugs for personal use, and advocates for the admission to rehabilitation and other healthcare facilities for people in sober as well as intoxicated state. This is in order for people to more easily be able to access the help and support they need.'

7. The CYM strives to instigate the revolutionary change necessary for the proletariat to administer a healthcare system run in the interests of the people. In which healthcare professionals from doctors, nurses, aides and more will be committed to serving the people, teaching them to understand their bodies and attempting to prevent illness at the earliest possible stage.

## **2.5 Worker's Rights**

1. In capitalist society there exists an unresolvable contradiction between the bourgeois and working classes. While productivity has risen over the last two decades, this has not been paralleled by a rise in wages, which have stagnated, failing to keep up with rising living costs. Within the workplace, precarity has increased exponentially, with fixed pay and terms, once staples of employment in the previous century, now being unattainable for the vast majority of workers. The brunt of these new working conditions has fallen on young people, who find themselves facing serious challenges brought on by casual and precarious employment. They find themselves fundamentally alienated,

from themselves, their co-workers, and even their work itself, unable to effectively experience or build solidarity within their workplace. This is compounded further by their being cut-off from effective trade union representation. The rights of workers are constantly under attack, the last point on the agenda for politicians either on the island of Ireland, or in the EU, who's responsibilities and interests are only to enhance the profits of the ruling class by exploiting Irish labour.

2. The situation in which labour currently finds itself can be traced to the current dominant ideology of capitalism: neoliberalism. With the 1991 dissolution of the USSR, western capitalism found it no longer had a viable threat on the world stage, and so abandoned any pretence of acknowledging the interests of workers. What followed was a forward march to privatisation in every sector, from healthcare, to housing, to education. The attacks on unions that had been gaining ground since the 1980s, now came to a head with the rise of social partnership, with the state, employers, and unions all ostensibly working together, which in reality meant the complete defanging of unions in the interests of capital.

3. This new philosophy has led trade unions to become disconnected from the working class. They have become top-heavy with bureaucracy, populated almost entirely with career officials, who see a stable (and therefore lucrative) relationship with both the government and employers as more important than fighting for the rights of the working class. The focus has shifted from attempting to organise in new areas and attract new members, to maintaining their old membership lists to keep a steady income from dues. Where unions would once be consistently representing their members in the workplace in the event of disputes, this role has now been filled by Human Resource departments working on behalf of the company. Workers now find

themselves totally at the mercy of their employers, with any mediation being conducted entirely on their terms.

4. The root cause of all the above issues is capitalism's inherent nature. In order to propagate their wealth, capitalists must expropriate the wealth created by workers, and inflict poverty wages and precarious work, while undermining any attempts at working-class organisation. While the capitalist system continues to exist, these contradictions will never be overcome. With that in mind however, there are several short-term measures that must be implemented to improve the conditions of the working-class.

5. The minimum wage as it stands is incapable of providing a decent standard of living for workers, who consistently struggle to afford basic necessities such as rent, education, or a healthy diet. A damning aspect of the minimum wage is that it is distinct (and considerably lower) from the living wage (the amount recognised as being the minimum necessary to maintain a decent standard of living). This discrepancy must be done away with, the minimum wage being brought up to, and maintained at the living wage level. This must be extended across the board, including the bringing in line of apprenticeship wages, and the scrapping of the lower minimum wage for under-18s.

6. Outside of payment in the workplace, existing provisions surrounding parental leave, sick pay, and holiday pay must be expanded, as they currently create a scenario whereby workers continue to work despite being heavily pregnant, in desperate need of childcare, or are suffering from sickness or injury.

7. Employment contracts, which dictate the rights of workers and responsibilities of employers, are also heavily weighted towards the latter. While zero-hour contracts, for instance, are illegal in the 26

counties, it is very easy for employers to circumvent this, for instance by contracting an employee for 3 or 4 hours a week. The restriction on such contracts must be expanded upon and rigorously enforced. In the 6 counties, a ban must be implemented, as zero-hour contracts are still legal in the statelet. Provisions of probation within contracts, that restrict an employee's rights for a certain period of time after their start date, must also be banned, with full rights granted to employees regardless of their tenure.

8. Many of the above-mentioned solutions require legislative action, but as an organisation, the CYM are engaged in several actions to advance the agenda of the working-class. Broadly, as a Marxist-Leninist organisation it is our responsibility to raise the consciousness of our class, highlighting the contradictions between the interests of ourselves and our exploiters, the bourgeoisie. In our workplaces, we engage in a concerted effort to agitate and educate on the importance of trade unions to young people, in an attempt to make it easier and more accessible for them to join and engage with them. We have discussed previously the issues with present trade unions, and it is only through the mass participation of young people that they can be steered in the direction of becoming a strong representative of the working-class.

## **2.6 Women's Emancipation**

1. The CYM is a Marxist-Feminist organisation, understanding Marxist-Feminism as an integral part of Marxism-Leninism. Patriarchy is an invention of class society and has been an integral aspect of the system necessary for its development.

2. There are now objective grounds for developing women's leadership in all fronts. Realising this, the CYM has created a women's department

under the leadership of the National Women's Officer. The function of this department is to feed into and oversee internal policies and changes to develop women's potentialities to higher levels so that more and more women can reach policy making bodies in all the fronts needed for proletarian revolution.

3. Women's historic roles in revolution means the question of developing revolutionary women leaders in communist movements must be given prominence. It is worth remembering Engels, who said that "the overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The men took command in the house also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."

4. The prevailing division of labour, according to which men undertook mental work, while women were relegated to physical work, led to a cumulative experience of men in the field of analysis of the world, while women were lost in the hidden world of household activities.

5. The prevailing superstructure, such as the social, cultural, educational, and political system, are all geared to support this exploitation. On the practical front, women's issues are addressed but not implemented because one leaves it to circumstances, leading to gradualism. This also results in their being impatient with women's mistakes and general lack of skill in fields from which women have been excluded. Often they relegate women's issues to women as if it does not concern them. This is manifested in not reading literature on women's issues, and not taking part in implementing programmes given by the women's mass front.

6. All these have a cumulative effect on the struggle for developing women's leadership in political parties. It is interesting to observe that revolutionary communist women have always been on the offensive

when they are fighting against the revisionists. The concept of continuous revolution until one reaches communism has strategic relevance for women, because it is only then that private property is abolished, unleashing the creativity of women.

7. That is why revolutionary parties of the world must make conscious efforts to create a conducive environment for developing revolutionary women communist leaders so that they can play a role as catalyst agents in arriving at communism. They need to be consciously nurtured, cultivated, and safeguarded. Just as communist women know that for every gain in the proletarian people's power there is a relative gain in women's power, similarly communist men should know that the revolution and the gains of revolution can only be preserved and furthered when more and more women join and lead the revolution.

## **2.7 LGBTQ+ Emancipation**

1. Oppression of the LGBTQ+ community has been a staple of capitalism since its inception. As with other groups, they face capitalism as members of the working-class, with an added layer of discrimination on account of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

2. While same-sex relationships have been given legal recognition on par with any other relationships, they are still considered abnormal from a societal standpoint. This manifests in several ways. For instance, LGBTQ+ face a public stigma surrounding their sexual relationships. This stigma further arises in the daily occurrences of street harassment experienced by LGBTQ+ people, as well as in regular instances of hate crimes.

3. There is a dearth of LGBTQ+ specific services and supports, for example in the case of transition healthcare, of which there is only one service in Ireland, which insists on an invasive psychiatric model of care. This has led to the LGBTQ+ community experiencing disproportionately high levels drug and alcohol abuse, as well as mental health issues and suicide. This coupled with a propagation of a false and imported culture within the media, focused on hyper-sexualisation and stereotypes, has left the community in a dire situation.

4. Patriarchy, and capitalism's rapid uptake of it, are once again at the centre of blame. The LGBTQ+ community does not conform to the family structure promoted by capitalism, and so present a challenge to its hegemony. This is alongside the impact and influence of religious institutions on government and society, established before capitalism, and working together with it since.

5. What is to be done to alleviate the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community? At the core are access to both education and healthcare which respects their identity. However, simple access is not enough; rather, any efforts should result in education that is led by the LGBTQ+ community, for the LGBTQ+ community.

6. From a legal standpoint, while relationships between same-sex couples have been recognised, and recognition of a transgender identity is permitted within the binary framework of male/female, no such recognition exists for non-binary people. On a community level, the lack of sober and non-commercial community spaces for socialising is a serious detriment to the health and well-being of the community and must be rectified.

7. As an organisation, the CYM is committed to combatting queerphobic attitudes and beliefs, as well as reprimanding such behaviour among its members. Education is conducted regularly on

LGBTQ+ issues both internally, and with guest speakers. Our demonstration ethos towards Pride is to remove it from corporate influence, and build spaces not designed for profit

## **2.8 Disability**

1. Ireland's disabled community oft-times find themselves totally forgotten by social movements but face a slew of issues and barriers unique to themselves.

2. On a day-to-day basis they face a lack of services and accessibility aids that can make carrying out tasks with independence and dignity incredibly difficult, if not impossible. When disabled people do need to avail of the state for support, the process they must go through is invasive, extensive, and in many cases humiliating. If these supports are made available, the workers that provide the care are in most cases overworked and underpaid.

3. While conditions for disabled people in Ireland were already poor, the austerity policies following the 2008 financial crash worsened them exponentially. Disabled people were not viewed as productive members of society, and so cuts to their supports were viewed as acceptable.

4. The CYM subscribes to the social model: that a disability arises because of interactions between the disabled person and their environment. If the proper supports and accessibility aids are in place such that the person can engage as independently as possible in their daily life, they are no longer considered disabled. It is obvious as to why this model has never been adopted under capitalism; to do so would acknowledge the responsibility of the state to its citizens, and that a



disabled person is as valuable as an abled one. In practice this approach would lead to an easier access to supports, more accessibility in public and social settings, and a greater sense of solidarity between disabled and abled people.

5. As an organisation, the CYM mobilises against austerity measures, such as cuts to supports, and campaigns for meaningful improvements in line with the social model. We work constantly to make the organisation more accessible for those living with a disability.'

## **2.9 Racism**

1. As a capitalist society, racism is pervasive in Ireland. Minorities are regularly the victims of assaults and harassment. Police profiling and harassment are all too common, and the issues that face other minorities with regards to improper access to healthcare and education, and disproportionate levels of substance abuse abound. Ireland does, however, have certain aspects to its racism that make it different to other countries.

2. The first among these is that the bulk of "societally accepted" racism is directed at Mincéirí (commonly referred to as Travelers, or the travelling community), a group indigenous to the island. A traditionally nomadic group, Mincéirí face systemic racism in almost every aspect of their lives. Halting sites, areas where caravans are parked and Mincéirí are designated to live, are almost always located on the worst ground available, many being devoid of basic services such as running water. Life expectancy for Mincéirí sits at an average of 60 for men, and 70 for women, 15 years less than the settled population. On top of this, constant surveillance by Gardaí is common leading to an exceedingly high incarceration and profiling rate among the

community. In terms of education, their nomadic lifestyle leads to Mincéirí being unable to access consistent education, which leads to disadvantages further on in life in terms of employment and housing. On a day-to-day level, they find themselves barred from many avenues of public life, with many pubs and restaurants operating unofficial “No Traveller” policies.

3. Ireland’s membership of the EU has left many economic migrants at the mercy of the union’s freedom of movement. Many migrants, especially from Eastern Europe, are brought to Ireland with the promise of a better life, and are instead met with low wages, poor living conditions, and systemic discrimination. The extreme example awaits those from outside the EU: Direct Provision is a legal requirement for those seeking asylum in the 26 counties, in which asylum seekers must await the results of their case in various centres around the state, often in cramped conditions lacking adequate food or cooking facilities (due to the majority of centres being repurposed hotels) without the right to work, and with poor prospects for their children. There is no constitutional guarantee that a child born in the 26 counties will be granted citizenship, and many of these children are left in legal limbo for much of their lives.

4. The nominal independence of the 26 county Free State led to a desire among the new bourgeoisie to ingratiate themselves into the European capitalist order. Being a young capitalist state emulating more established ones, it strove to adopt policies and practices from the continent. And what is more European than racism?

5. Racism in the Irish context is, fundamentally, an import. Ireland never had colonies of its own that necessitated the development of a racial hierarchy as a means to assert dominance. There was no historic power

imbalance between ethnicities in the way that it exists in Britain or France. As the Free State developed more and more in a neo-colonial direction during its consolidation following the civil war, so more and more did its racial politics come to reflect this. Mincéirí were the first to experience this racism, with the state ruthlessly enforcing the criminalisation of nomadism codified under British rule. Due to the fact that Mincéirí are a white population, assimilation was pursued wholesale in an attempt to wipe out any culture that may differentiate them from the settled population. In this respect, the state's actions resemble most those carried out in the United States and Canada towards American Indian, First Nation, and Inuit populations.

6. How can this be rectified? Through the integration of minority groups into local communities and Irish society by removing the barriers to their inclusion. It must be recognised that the vast majority of minority groups are members of the working-class, and as such it is vital that solidarity be developed across ethnic lines.

7. The CYM is committed to a policy of integration within the organisation, not assimilation. We are working towards developing solidarity among our comrades, rather than promoting liberal concepts such as “allyship”. Tokenism on the part of government initiatives must be rejected, as must the same overtures from capitalism attempting to rebrand itself as inclusive. On a practical level, this means engagement with groups committed to the development of these solidarity links, in the migrant and Mincéir communities.

## **2.10 Sectarianism**

1. Sectarianism is an issue pervasive throughout Northern society, enforced through both official and unofficial channels. State institutions

such as Stormont and the PSNI enforce this in a variety of ways. Catholics are subject to vastly more stop-and-searches than their Protestant counterparts, and are victims of profiling more generally. Catholic areas suffer from a serious housing crisis as a result of both state inaction on public housing, as well as Loyalist paramilitary intimidation making Protestant areas uninhabitable for Catholics. This paramilitary intimidation and violence is ubiquitous, and in some instances goes as far as the ethnic cleansing of areas. Education too is segregated. While integrated schools do exist, the vast majority of schools are segregated.

2. More violent and verbose displays of sectarianism manifest in the form of rioting and explicit Loyalist celebrations. Frequently, rioting is used and encouraged by the Unionist establishment to direct the anger and resentment of Protestant communities, especially among the youth, away from the source of the problems (capitalism and Unionism) and towards a convenient scapegoat (Catholics). The bonfires and parades of the 11th and 12th of July are further manifestations. While many participants would not consider themselves sectarian, these events have an explicitly sectarian character, often involving the burning of Catholic regalia, such as tricolours, as well as effigies of Catholic politicians. The marching on the 12th is a clear-cut case of triumphalism, celebrating a victory over the Catholic enemy, while subsequently asserting dominance over Catholic communities by directing their marches through their streets.

3. The British presence in the 6 counties is the direct cause of sectarianism in the region. Through a policy of divide and rule, Britain established a loyal sub-section of the working-class who, as a result of their position as a labour aristocracy, came to identify with the Protestant hierarchy, rather than with Catholic workers. This had the effect of undercutting radical movements who were forced to rely on

one community or the other, rather than being able to organise across both. For instance, republican movements in the last century drew almost exclusively from the Catholic community, while communist groups were generally Protestant, seriously hamstringing the effectiveness of both.

4. Integration is the key to overcoming sectarianism in the 6 counties. Theatres such as education and housing must become cross-community endeavours. Loyalist ideology must be challenged, through the organisation of alternative cultural events celebrating the history of cross-community movements such as the United Irishmen. The workplace is currently where most cross-community engagement happens, and as such trade unions are the most immediate vehicle for overcoming sectarian divides.

5. The CYM is engaged in multiple anti-sectarian efforts in the 6 counties. Our members engage in de-escalation efforts at interfaces during periods of violence. We are a cross-community organisation, with both Catholic and Protestant members. We also maintain active links with Trademark, the anti-sectarian unit of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

## **2.11 Anti-Fascism**

1. A core tenet of the CYM's organisational philosophy is anti-fascism. When the contradictions of imperialism reach a critical point there are two options: socialism, or fascism. Capitalist democracy is the hidden dictatorship of the monopolists and the bankers. This method of class dictatorship is the safest, most stable form the bourgeois state takes, and in ordinary times this is sufficient.

2. In extraordinary times of capitalist/imperialist crisis – eg. the eve of proletarian revolution – the politicians and rulers are so discredited that they are unable to rule by traditional means. The state can and will assume great powers and unless the working class is ready to seize power. These fascist groups, taking the form of “armed bodies of men”, rise above the classes, and are rolled out to save capitalism.

3. Fascism, historically, is the ideology of thugs and gangsters, drawing on the support of all sections of society from the monopolists to the most backward dregs of society. It poses as a revolutionary force with supposed solutions to the contradictions of imperialism, but will always serve the interests of capital. Fascism destroys all revolutionary forces, breaking down the workers movement through vicious terrorism.

4. The new fascist regime's power is propped up by the instability following its victory, often taking advantage of the need for law and order at such tumultuous times. This allows for the swift establishment of a vicious dictatorship.

5. Fascism demonstrates the weakness of the working class movement. It must also be regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie. It is a symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is already unable to rule by the old methods of parliamentarianism and bourgeois democracy and, consequently, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of administration.

6. Members of the Connolly Youth movement are mandated to be involved in anti-fascist organising, or to establish this organ where it is not already present. This organ should include all progressive forces opposed to fascism.'

## 2.12 The Mass Line

1. As a communist organisation, the CYM must be actively engaged with and among the masses.
2. The strategy of a mass line offers a strategy to not only understand the concerns and aspirations of the masses, but also on how best to build our organisation's practise, sharpen our analytical skills through practise, and connect our organisation to the working people.
3. Knowledge develops from experience according to dialectical materialism, and the masses surely are the greatest source of experience that there could be. Therefore, to know working people and to allow them the ability to liberate themselves, we must know and analyse their collective experience.
4. The working class of Ireland have plenty of experiences of the irrationality and cruelty of imperialism and capitalism, particularly young workers and students. Capitalist states and their governments, parties, and institutions such as the Leinster House or Stormont ignore the masses in practise and therefore cannot solve the issues facing working people today.
5. Mass line operates on a "from the masses to the masses" principle. This means that cadres of the CYM should go out to the people and talk with them, ask them questions on the issues they're facing, what they think the challenges are and what solutions they would like to see. The cadres then take this back to the organisation and analyse the collected experiences together with a Marxist framework, to concentrate the disparate, unconnected experience of the masses into cohesive and principled knowledge.

6. Finally, the organisation develops new slogans, campaigns, lines, and propaganda based upon this knowledge and brings these to the masses and repeats the process. Through this process, the CYM overcomes and avoids many issues that befall other organisations such as lagging behind or rushing ahead of the working people, engaging in adventurist pursuits and distancing ourselves from the masses, or resigning ourselves to stagnation and reformism. This also enriches the knowledge of the working people as a class, and ensures our organisation never abandons them.'

## **2.13 The Sex Trade**

1. The sex trade is an industry that is rapidly expanding across Ireland. It continues to prey on vulnerable groups, exacerbated by increased austerity. However, it is a nebulous industry to analyse and, subsequently, providing support to its participants can be difficult. Established methods of organising such as unionisation may not be effective as there is very rarely an accountable employer to organise against *en masse*.

2. It is precarious work both in terms of job security, as well as via threats to the physical and emotional well-being of its participants. It is an industry whose participants are overwhelmingly women, and increasingly come from particularly socially vulnerable backgrounds, such as asylum seekers, or single mothers. Many women find themselves unable to access secular and non-judgemental services to care for their well-being, whether they are remaining within the industry or wish to exit. Neither jurisdiction on this island has succeeded in providing comprehensive, fit-for-purpose legislation that places the stigma and blame where it belongs: on the buyer, and the state. Participation in the industry carries with it risks of pregnancy, sexually-



transmitted illnesses, sexual/physical violence, and isolation from the wider community due to the shame of the trade being incorrectly placed upon the seller.

3. The sex industry must also be examined from a class perspective. Primarily it is rich buying poor, oppressor buying oppressed. This intensifies the power imbalance even further, denying those in the trade due autonomy, respect, and choice. Beyond individual harms, there is a wider reach. The sex trade further dehumanises women and other vulnerable populations in the eyes of men and negates the possibility of class solidarity on a cross-sex basis. Effectively, it further divides the working-class by sex, teaching them to see each other as adversaries, objects, and commodities, rather than as natural allies.

4. Work within the traditional labour market has become particularly inhospitable to young people, especially those who are socially vulnerable or may not be able to balance a suitable employment while in pursuit of higher education. It is no coincidence that when austerity is further imposed upon our class, more people are pushed into the sex trade through necessity and must engage in sex work in order to manage the rising costs of living. There are many reasons that women in particular are pushed into the trade in Ireland, such as rising childcare costs rendering them unable to hold traditional non-flexible employment, lack of mental healthcare and addiction services, as well as the degradation of relations between men and women leading many men to see women, first and foremost, as sex objects.

5. While the sex trade is an international, and well-funded industry, it is not insurmountable. It is vital that those that sell sex are enabled to organise into suitable trade unions or advocacy groups of their choice, that can campaign, from an informed perspective, to pass representative, comprehensive, and effective legislation. Membership of these organisations must not be open to pimps or buyers.

Comprehensive, secular services must be provided, specifically equipped to work with those involved in the sex trade, including services both for those who wish to remain, and those that wish to leave. The latter must be supported through the funding of fit for purpose and community informed right to exit services. Legislation is also vital to protect those selling sex or other services, and must be drawn up in consultation with the community. Finally, preventative measures are vital, such as increased funding to childcare, healthcare, and community development, to mitigate and eventually remove the risk of women being pushed into the sex trade. The Connolly Youth Movement does not support the criminalisation of the selling of sex, and believes it should always be legal in order to facilitate full engagement with available services and organisations for those in the sex trade to increase their agency and autonomy. However this does not mean that we view the relationship between buyers and sellers as being an equal one devoid of a massive power imbalance and exploitation, and we unreservedly condemn the buying of sex.

6. The CYM is engaged at every level at its disposal in opposing the sex trade. Internally, it is committed to educating its members on the realities and complexities of the trade, to spur a cultural shift that encourages men and women to view each other as natural allies, rather than adversaries and objects. We advocate for the aforementioned right to exit services, as well as services of the same suitability for those who cannot, or do not wish to exit the trade (either immediately, or at any point). This includes care for sexual, physical, and emotional health, safety planning services, and a method of reporting violence and abuse that does not require the involvement of law enforcement. The involvement of police services invariably acts as a deterrent to participants seeking justice and a method of recourse. More broadly, our members are involved in the organisation of

precarious workers in the traditional labour market, which will in turn prevent them from being pushed into the sex trade against their will.

## **2.14 The Environment**

1. Climate breakdown is the most immediately pressing issue facing the working class, and the world at large, today. As temperatures rise globally, ecosystems are faced with total collapse, threatening the extinction of countless species, and the planet as we know it. This destabilisation of the climate will exacerbate already frequent climate disasters and the humanitarian crises that result. As sea level rise, desertification, and as extreme weather events continue and intensify, mass displacement of human populations will result, leading to greater and greater strain on Earth's finite resources.

2. Capitalism will, however, continue at its present pace, over-exploiting these resources in the ceaseless drive for increasing profits. This will further damage the natural world, worsening the situation for all. Conflict is, then, the most likely outcome. The capitalist nations will seek to secure what little resources remain for themselves, resulting in wars that will do nothing but further enrich capitalists, and cause an unforgivable loss of life. The massive amount of resources needed to pursue these wars, and indeed wars in the present (the US military for example is the world's greatest polluter), will only deepen the crisis.

3. As capitalism is a for-profit system, it requires constant exploitation of natural resources, purely to produce profits for the capitalist class. The primary culprits behind the climate crisis, for example fossil fuel industries, are also the most highly profitable, generating billions annually. With so much to lose, it is unlikely that capitalism will be willing to abandon its most lucrative sources of revenue.

4. Historically, the exploitation of natural resources has gone hand in hand with global imperialism. Empires expanded into the global south for the purposes of stripping the raw materials and transporting them back to the metropole for the purposes of generating capital, and with this expansion came extreme repression and brutalisation of indigenous populations. While the old empires may have fallen, their mantle has been taken up by modern multinationals, who carry out the same mission through globalisation and neo-colonialism.

5. With the destruction of the planet being such a lucrative enterprise, it is little wonder that the political will to address it does not, and indeed cannot, exist under capitalism. Where do we go from here? The short amount of time available to address the climate crisis necessitates that any solution be radical and revolutionary. Anything less is a wasted effort.

6. In the short-term, an increased transition to renewable energy is vital, conducted in a manner that respects employment while placing the burden on capitalists, rather than the working class. Land must be reclaimed for public use, and put towards the development of community spaces. Public transport and infrastructure must be developed to replace the current over-reliance on personal vehicles, especially in rural areas which have suffered from the lack of these services to a crippling degree. While renewables are being developed, nuclear energy must also be explored as a potential solution.

7. However, we recognise that the climate crisis is an international issue: ecological and environmental boundaries do not follow political borders. In this global tackling of climate change, multinationals must no longer be considered sovereign entities, granted the same rights as

individuals, but must rather be dealt with for what they are: the destroyers of our planet.

8. We also understand that there is no purely technological solution to the current crisis. While a transition away from the most destructive extractive practises to more sustainable ones is vital, any such action which does not also recognise the systemic problems of capitalism which have caused the present crisis will only perpetuate a “green imperialism”: the oppression and exploitation of the global south for the resources necessary to make the just transition in the global north. As stated by Brazilian socialist and ecologist Chico Mendes: “Ecology without class struggle is just gardening”. We therefore see national liberation as a vital component of the solution, as a means of countering this “green imperialism” of the capitalist system. The climate crisis will only be solved through a concerted global effort of socialist construction, wherein the extraction of resources and production of energy is based solely on the needs of the people and society.

9. The CYM will agitate for the realisation of the above proposals, participating in environmental campaigns with the goal of shifting the objectives from liberal reforms to revolutionary political change. We will participate in actions within our communities through the reclaiming of green spaces, and the construction of community gardens to promote environmental consciousness among the youth of the working class.

## Conclusion

1. In the pages above, we have outlined the problems that capitalism brings to bear on our class. At first glance, by its sheer breadth, they may seem insurmountable. They are present, as we have stated, in every aspect of our lives, from the food we consume when we get up, to our education and workplaces, our leisure time, and even in our dreams.

2. However, despite all this, there is nothing more powerful, nothing more indomitable or indefatigable than the working-class united and acting as one. This programme takes the first step in this development of unity and class consciousness. Its purpose is to educate our class on who its class enemies are, and what the realities are of the capitalist system they propagate. It serves as the blueprint so we can go forward to agitate in our workplaces, communities, and universities, and organise our comrades for the overthrow of capitalism, and the beginning of the organisation of a socialist society.

3. While the task ahead may seem daunting, we can always take comfort in the words of our namesake: "Our demands most moderate are, we only want the earth".

**Ard Fheis 2023**  
**Béal Feirste**

