



cpgb-ml party
programme
and rules

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Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
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CPGB-ML Programme and Rules

Revised 2018

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The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.

– Karl Marx, Introduction to *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy Of Right*, 1844

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the 'lower depths' of utter destitution, savagery, and degeneration, the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class.

– VI Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, 1904

Introduction

Our party comrades continue to be inspired by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik), which proved to be a model for other working-class militants to follow, owing to its courageous, creative and energetic prosecution of successful revolutionary struggle.

At their historic tenth congress in 1921, the Bolsheviks adopted the following resolution on party affairs:

The party of revolutionary Marxism utterly rejects the quest for an absolutely correct form of party organisation, and methods of work suited to all stages of the revolutionary process. On the contrary, the form of organisation and methods of work must be

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entirely determined by the specific features of the given concrete historical situation and by the tasks directly arising from this situation.

On the eve of the outbreak of World War 2, at the eighteenth congress of the CPSU(B) in 1939, Comrade Andrei Zhdanov elaborated further:

The party of revolutionary Marxism determines the organisational forms of methods of its work in conformity with the concrete conditions. On these grounds, the Bolshevik party has never converted the established forms of party structure into a dogma, into a lifeless stereotype.

As in the development of Marxist theory, so in the organisational forms laid down in its rules, our party bases itself on creative Marxism and enriches these organisational forms with new experience as the conditions of the class struggle develop and new political tasks arise.

This latest version of our party's Programme and Rules, refined and adopted by our eighth congress in 2018, is an attempt to adapt our organisational forms to conform with our experiences since 2004.

Smashing the prejudices of most workers towards

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that which is considered 'left-wing' can only be accomplished by an organisation that is unafraid to be abused as 'right', 'fascist' etc by those of our class enemies who have ensconced themselves inside the hallowed British 'labour movement' – a movement that is dominated by the labour aristocracy; by class-collaborationists, careerists, zionists and other apologists for British imperialism.

The fantasy of a left-Labour prime minister legislating for socialism is one that continues to be attractive to large numbers of workers, as well as to all those 'socialists' who have been unable to make sense of the global retreat of socialism in the wake of the 20th congress of the CPSU and the collapse of the socialist bloc nearly thirty years ago.

Whilst the blind remnants of the revisionist and Trotskyite movement of the 20th century continue to tie their fortunes ever more closely to 'left' social democracy, the conditions for the seeding of a true Marxist-Leninist party present themselves in abundance in Britain.

On Brexit, on imperialist war, on the causes of terrorism, on the question of immigration, and on the basic question of how the working class can only wage effective economic resistance if unshackled

from the disastrous influence of social democracy, ours is the only political party in the country to have answers to the most pressing issues facing British workers.

A basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as *abstract* truth; truth is always concrete. Forms of organisation alongside forms of political work must be suited to concrete reality. We harbour no illusions about our influence, our small size, our financial limitations or the social and political climate in the country, but recognising our weaknesses is a sign of our maturity and seriousness; a sign of our determination to grow and to build our links with the masses.

Making a critique of our activity and assessing our capacity for new forms of work is a difficult task for a small party of volunteers with limited physical and financial resources. Nevertheless, we must constantly reassess the viability of our methods of work, reflect on our political activities and gauge their usefulness in the concrete historical context.

As the party grows, new opportunities for work will continue to present themselves; work which previously would have seemed an impossibility. We therefore aim at building an organisation founded

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on Marxist-Leninist political study, which nevertheless builds broad contacts amongst as wide a section of the working class as is possible.

Our Programme and Rules aim to aid us by creating a political situation in which there coexist both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness in the pursuit of our aims.

Central Committee

December 2018

Programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)*

1. Realising:

a) that the capitalist system of production is but a transitory system – a definite stage – in the long march of humanity from primitive communism to the higher phase of communism;

b) that, notwithstanding the recent setbacks and defeats suffered by socialism (thanks to the treachery of modern Khrushchevite revisionism, which

* Adopted at the party's founding congress in July 2004.

triumphed at the 20th party congress of the CPSU), and the triumphal assertions of the imperialist bourgeoisie concerning the alleged unworkability and failure of socialism, humanity has no other future than that of communism;

c) that communism, which represents the bright future of humanity, cannot, and will not, establish itself automatically in the fashion of ripe fruit falling from a tree, and that it has to be worked and prepared for;

d) that the only class which can be the instrument for bringing into existence communism is the proletariat, for the proletariat alone is the most consistently revolutionary class, for it alone has an interest in the elimination of, not just one system of exploitation of one human being by another, but of all exploitation;

e) that the proletariat cannot even begin to take the very first steps in the direction of this, its historical mission, namely, that of the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of socialism (the lower stage of communism), and marching towards the

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higher stage of communism, unless it is armed with a revolutionary theory, for

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement . . . The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory;*

f) that, in addition to the most advanced revolutionary theory, the proletariat must possess, must create, a revolutionary organisation – a vanguard, a class-conscious and organised detachment, which is the embodiment of the connection of the vanguard with the working-class millions, which represents ‘the highest of all forms of organisation’ of the working class, and whose mission it is to guide all other organisations of the working class, for

In its struggle for power, the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the ‘lower depths’ of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably will become, an invinci-

* VI Lenin, *What is To Be Done?*, 1901.

ble force only when its ideological unification by the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class.*

– an army which will sweep away the historically outmoded rule of the senile monopoly-capitalist class;

g) that such a vanguard organisation, as is fully confirmed by history, can only be a Marxist-Leninist party guided by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism;

h) that without such a party, as described in (f) above, the British proletariat has no general staff of its own to represent and fight even for its immediate interests, let alone to lead it in accomplishing its historical mission of establishing socialism through the overthrow of capitalism.

2. Recognising the aforementioned, the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) is guided by the following principles:

* VI Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, 1904.

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i) The party, in its world outlook as well as in its day-to-day activities, is guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

ii) In the sphere of organisation, the party follows the principles of democratic centralism.

iii) While participating in the parliamentary sphere, it is the bounden duty of the party, and every party member, to expose bourgeois parliamentarism, which, although a great advance over medieval institutions, is decidedly reactionary as compared with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents, for the first time in history, a class rule of the majority over a tiny minority of the former exploiting classes, for

Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

iv) Recognising the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, fully confirmed by history, the party is duty bound to inculcate that

* VI Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917.

The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes,*

and that it is the task of the proletarian revolution not

to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it†

and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

v) Recognising the earth-shaking historical significance of the Great Proletarian October Socialist Revolution in the struggle of the international proletariat and oppressed people against all exploitation and oppression; the successful building of socialism in the USSR, serving as an inspiration to the working class and oppressed everywhere; and the signal contribution of the socialist USSR to the smashing of the Nazi war machine, the party shall defend the gains of October and refute all slanders against the

* K Marx and F Engels, Preface to the German edition of *The Communist Manifesto*, 1872.

† Letter to Kugelmann by K Marx, 12 April 1871.

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undisputed correct leadership of the CPSU during the period of socialist construction.

vi) Recognising that social democracy (the Labour party in Britain) has, since the first world war, been a vehicle for not only purveying the influence of the bourgeoisie into the working-class movement, but also an instrument of the imperialist bourgeoisie for suppression of the working class at home and the national-liberation and proletarian movements abroad, the party will wage a relentless and uncompromising struggle against social democracy and its variants – namely, revisionism and Trotskyism.

vii) Recognising that, under the conditions of capitalism, in the struggle for its social emancipation, it is impossible for the working class to confine itself at all times to legal forms of activity, the party, while taking part in as ramified a network of legal societies as possible, will not forego illegal work and will resist all attempts at liquidationism.

viii) Steadfastly adhering to the principles of proletarian internationalism in its struggle for the establishment of such a state of the proletariat, the party

shall expose and oppose all imperialist exploitation and oppression and subjugation of peoples of the oppressed countries, rendering all possible political, moral and material support to national-liberation movements everywhere, including the struggle of the Irish people for national self-determination, for the expulsion of imperialist occupation and for the reunification of Ireland, for

The revolutionary movement in the advanced countries would in fact be nothing but a sheer fraud if, in their struggle against capital, the workers of Europe and America were not closely and completely united with the hundreds upon hundreds of millions of 'colonial' slaves, who are oppressed by that capital.*

ix) Steadfastly adhering to the principle of equality of working people – men and women – of all national, racial and religious backgrounds, the party will resolutely fight against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, religion or national origin.

x) However, while being totally opposed to discrimination on grounds of race, sex or sexual pro-

* VI Lenin, *Kommunistia*, No 3-4, August 1920.

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clivity, this congress declares that obsession with identity politics, including sexual politics, is anti-Marxian. Being reactionary and anti-working class, and a harmful distraction and diversion from the class struggle of the proletariat for its social emancipation, propagation of identity politics, including LGBT ideology, is incompatible with membership of the party.*

xi) The party firmly believes that immigration is not the cause of the ills of the working class in Britain, which are solely the result of the failings of the capitalist system. Immigration and asylum legislation and controls under capitalism have only one real goal: the division of the working class along racial lines, thus fatally weakening that class's ability to organise itself and to wage a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of imperialism. These controls have the further effect of creating an army of 'illegal' immigrant workers, prey to superexploitation and living in dire conditions as an underclass, outside the system, afraid to organise and exercising a downward pull on the wages and conditions of all

* Clause inserted following debate at the eighth party congress in September 2018.

workers. The scourge of racism, along with all other ills of capitalism, will only be finally abolished after the successful overthrow of imperialism. But since immigration can no more be abolished under capitalism than can wage slavery, the party calls not for the further control and scapegoating of immigrants, but for the abolition of all border controls, as part of the wider fight to uproot racism from the working-class movement and build unity among workers in Britain, so strengthening the fight for communism.*

* Clause inserted following debate at the fourth party congress in July 2008.

Party rules*

1. The name of the Party

The name of the Party shall be the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

2. The aims of the Party

The aims of the Party are set out in the Party Programme and in the political resolutions adopted by Party Congress.

3. Decision making

The Party shall at all times adhere to the principles of democratic centralism in its decision-making

* Adopted at the eighth party congress, September 2018

processes. Upon that basis the Central Committee is responsible for the affairs of the Party between Congresses.

4. Membership

Membership is open to all workers and revolutionary elements of other classes living and working in Great Britain and northern Ireland, regardless of national origin.

5. Admission of members

Admission of members and candidates for membership proceeds through such local organisations as the Central Committee may decide.

The conferring of full membership status is organised through the Central Committee.

6. Members' obligations

Every member of the Party shall place his time and strength, in so far as he is able, at the disposal of the Party.

A member shall adhere to the principles of democratic centralism and shall regularly pay the established fees, which are set by the Central Committee.

7. Full membership

A Full member is one who accepts the Party Programme and who supports the Party both financially and by personally participating in one of the Party organisations.

Full members have the right to vote in meetings of Party organisations.

8. Candidate members

Candidate members accept the Party Programme and support the Party both financially and by personally participating in one of the Party organisations.

Candidate members must pass through a period of probation lasting no less than six months, during which time they have no vote and will undergo training by the Party organisation accepting them. After a period of no less than six months they may apply to become full members; they will be assessed on political reliability and style of work by the Party organisation accepting them.

9. Supporters of the Party

Supporters pay a fee set by the Central Committee to support the Party publications and Party work

financially. They may participate in the public activities of a Party organisation.

Supporters are not Candidate members, and they do not have to accept the Party Programme in full.

10. Expulsion and suspension of members

It is essential to create a political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness.

The grounds for expulsion or suspension are:

(1) refusal to abide by the Party Programme and Party decisions;

(2) failure to pay dues;

(3) non-participation in Party work;

(4) refusal to carry out the instructions of the authorised Party leadership;

(5) public statements concerning private party business;

(6) action hostile to the Party.

In all but the gravest cases expulsion should be preceded by a warning, suspension or minor sanction, to be determined by the local organisation and ratified by the Central Committee.

If a serious disciplinary breach has occurred the

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Central Committee may refer the matter to a disciplinary committee set up ad hoc, which is to be entrusted to investigate the complaint thoroughly and listen to such representations that the disciplined member wishes to make, as well as those complaining against him or her.

If the breach is capable of being corrected (eg, non-payment of dues) and is corrected, no further action should be taken. If the breach is minor, the disciplinary committee may consider a warning or suspension rather than expulsion.

In any event, the disciplinary committee shall recommend an appropriate sanction to the Central Committee, which may include expulsion in extreme cases.

The decision to expel a member or candidate shall be exclusively the decision of the Central Committee and there shall be no appeal from that decision except to the following Party Congress, in which case the sanction will remain in force until such time (if any) as the Congress shall overturn it.

11. Organisation

The basis of the local Party organisation is established by the Central Committee and determined by

the available forces in any given geographical or industrial area. The local organisation must form local study groups to perform theoretical and practical work.

Study groups should aim to be held weekly. Study groups are formed with the approval of the higher party bodies and once constituted form the basis of the Party's work.

Full members and Candidates should invite Supporters and members of the public to participate in the theoretical and practical work of the study group, but not internal party affairs. Internal party business must only be discussed and conducted in the presence of Full and Candidate members.

Once multiple study groups operate in an area the Central Committee may form City or Regional Committees to coordinate the practical work of the groups. The area of the Region is fixed according to industrial, transport and political conditions, and is determined by the Central Committee.

Regions may be broken up and new Regions formed whenever required for more effective and uniform direction.

12. Party Congress

The Party Congress is the supreme authority of the Party. The Party Congress meets at least once every four years.

The Central Committee gives notice summoning a Congress at least 8 weeks before the date of the Congress and issues the Agenda to the local organisations at least 4 weeks before the date of the Congress.

Questions affecting the Programme and Statutes and issues of principle regarding policy and tactics are decided by the Party Congress.

All resolutions are passed by a simple majority of those voting, except resolutions to change the Programme or the Rules, which require a three-quarters majority.

13. Representation at Congress

At any time that the Party has 500 Full members or fewer, all Full members shall have the right to attend and vote at the Party Congress.

At any time that the Party has between 501 and 5,000 Full members, representation at the Party Congress will be based on one representative for each 10 Full members.

At any time that the Party has 5,001 Full members or more, representation at the Party Congress will be based on one representative for each 25 Full members.

For the purposes of representation at the Congress, local Party areas may be grouped together, where a common aggregate meeting of members in the combined area can be held for the purpose of electing the common representative(s). Such combinations of areas for election must be sanctioned by the Central Committee.

The right to participate in the Congress in a consultative capacity is held by members of the Central Committee; the editor(s) of the Party Organ, members summoned by the Central Committee to report on given questions of Party policy for the Congress, and invited guests.

14. Business of Congress

The Congress elects the Auditor and 3 members to form the Congress Arrangements Committee to oversee the Standing Orders of Congress.

The Congress receives the political and business report of the Central Committee, the Treasurer, and the Auditor.

15. The Central Committee

The Central Committee consists of the Chair and two Vice-Chairs, and other members numbering 15 or such higher number as the Central Committee may propose (subject to ratification by Congress) and all are elected from nominations made to the Congress from the whole (Full) membership of the Party.

The election of the Central Committee takes place by ballot. If the number of candidates is more than the number of vacancies, the persons securing the highest numbers of votes shall be deemed elected.

Between Congresses the Central Committee is the highest body of the Party.

16. Party officers

The Party officers shall be the Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen and will be elected by the Congress.

The post of Honorary President or Patron may be appointed by the Congress of the Party.

17. Powers of the Central Committee

The Central Committee shall have full responsibility for the direction and control of the work of the Party and for the formulation of current policy in ac-

cordance with the decisions of the Congress. It shall guide and direct the work of all Party organisations, direct and control the Party press, publications and other Party enterprises, and manage the central funds of the Party.

The Central Committee arranges its affairs as it sees fit following its election by Congress so as to enable it to carry out the work of the Party. For this purpose, it may form various subcommittees and appoint members to positions of specific responsibility.

The Central Committee has the power to co-opt persons to attend its meetings not having voting rights.

The Central Committee shall have authority to interpret these Rules and to lay down procedure in all matters not specifically covered by them.

18. The Party press

Proletarian is issued under the direction of the Central Committee, and the Editor(s) attend the Central Committee in a consultative capacity (unless he or she is an elected member of the Central Committee).

19. Answerability

All organisations of the Party shall furnish regular reports to the authority directing their activity.

20. Right to be heard

Every organisation of the Party, as well as every Full or Candidate member, shall have the right of communicating directly with the Central Committee of the Party via written or emailed correspondence.

Books by Harpal Brar

Perestroika: The Complete Collapse of Revisionism (1992)

Trotskyism or Leninism? (1993)

Social Democracy: The Enemy Within (1995)

Imperialism: Decadent, Parasitic, Moribund Capitalism (1997)

Bourgeois Nationalism or Proletarian Internationalism? (1998)

Chimurenga! The Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe (Ed, 2004)

Imperialism: The Eve of the Social Revolution
of the Proletariat (2007)

Imperialism and War (2008)

Inquilab Zindabad: India's Liberation Struggle (2014)

Books by Harpal Brar and Ella Rule

Imperialism in the Middle East (2002)

Imperialism and the Worst-Ever Crisis of Overproduction (2013)

Books by Ella Rule

Marxism and the Emancipation of Women (Ed, 2000)

CPGB-ML pamphlets

H Brar, Nato's Predatory War Against Yugoslavia (2009)

H Brar, Capitalism and Immigration (2009)

H Brar, The 1926 British General Strike (2009)

H Brar, Revisionism and the Demise of the USSR (2011)

Various, World War One: An Interimperialist
War to Redivide the World (2015)

H Brar, The Soviet Victory Over Fascism (2nd edition, 2016)

E Rule, Claudia Jones, Communist (2017)

J Brar, The Drive to War Against Russia and China (2017)

E Rule, A Class Analysis of British Society at
the Start of the 21st Century (2017)

H Brar, Zionism: A Racist, Antisemitic and
Reactionary Tool of Imperialism (2017)

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