

Aims and Constitution

Communist Party of Britain

Amended by the 51st Congress,
October 2010

1 Name

The name of the Party shall be the Communist Party of Britain.

2 Aims

The aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a socialist Britain in which the means of production, distribution and exchange will be socially owned and utilised in a planned way for the benefit of all. This necessitates a revolutionary trans-formation of society, ending the existing capitalist system of exploitation and replacing it with a socialist society in which each will contribute according to ability and receive according to work done.

Socialist society creates the conditions for the advance to a fully communist form of society in which each will receive according to need.

Only a socialist Britain co-operating with all other peoples of the world in close, friendly, free and equal association will be able to develop and plan the use of all Britain's material, productive and scientific resources, that every citizen will be guaranteed security, the right to work and leisure, a steadily rising standard of living, full democratic rights, and equal opportunity to enjoy a full and happy life.

The Communist Party is guided by the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism and its members are united in working for the achievement of socialism. Believing that socialism can be attained only by the will and action of the majority of the people, led by the working class, the Party shall:

- (a) work to strengthen the organisation, political understanding and united action of the workers by hand and brain for the advancement of their standards and conditions in the struggle against capitalism, for the realisation of world peace and for the achievement of socialism;
- (b) work to maintain, defend and extend all democratic rights of organisation, demonstration, strike, public speech, press, assembly, secret ballot, representation in parliaments and local authorities and by developing the mass struggle on all the issues that concern the people and constantly spreading socialist ideas, work to achieve the unity of the working class and a democratic anti-monopoly alliance around the working class, so that such a united struggle is expressed in a parliamentary majority of Socialists and Communists pledged to a genuine socialist programme. Such a majority, based on the strength of working people, and on continuing struggles inside and outside parliament, can end the economic and political power of the capitalist class, establish the rule of working people and begin to build socialism;
- (c) work for the removal of all discrimination based on race, colour, sex or religion, sexual orientation, age and disability;
- (d) support the national liberation struggles of all neo-colonial people and recognise our special responsibility towards the liberation struggle of all peoples within the sphere of British imperialism;
- (e) co-operate with the peoples of all countries for the defence of peace, for national independence, for the advance of democratic rights and the improvement of social and economic conditions.

The Communist Party bases its international outlook on the common interests and aspirations of the working class in all countries, on international working class solidarity, and has fraternal relations with the Communist and Workers' Parties of other countries for the victory of the common aims of the working class.

The achievement of these aims is not possible without a strong Communist Party and Young

Communist League, conducting continuous activity and education, working closely with the people, knowing their views and needs, and able to express Communist policy and aims.

3 Democratic Centralism

To conduct organised activity, and to give leadership in all circumstances of the class struggle, the Communist Party bases itself on the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism and must be able to act as a single unified force. Therefore the Communist Party bases its organisation upon democratic centralism, which combines the democratic participation of the membership in Party life with an elected centralised leadership capable of directing the entire Party.

Democratic centralism means that:

- (a) All leading committees shall be elected regularly and shall report regularly to the Party organisations which have elected them.
- (b) Elected higher committees shall have the right to take decisions binding on lower committees and organisations, and shall explain these decisions to them. Such decisions shall not be in conflict with the decisions of the National Congress or Executive Committee.
- (c) Elected higher committees shall encourage lower committees and organisations to express their views on questions of Party policy and on the carrying out of such policy.
- (d) Lower committees and organisations shall carry out the decisions of higher elected committees and shall have the right to express their views, raise problems, make suggestions to these committees.
- (e) Decisions shall be made by majority vote, and minorities shall accept the decision of the majority.

4 Conditions of Membership

Membership shall be open to persons of 16 years and upwards who accept the aims, constitution and policy of the Party, pay their dues regularly and work in a Party organisation.

All Party members aged between 16 and 28 (inclusive) will at the time of joining also become members of the Young Communist League, save that any such member shall have the right to opt then or subsequently to hold party membership only.

5. Membership Dues and Contributions

- (a) Membership dues shall be payable on the basis of self-assessed pre-tax personal income in accordance with scales and rates set by the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall seek to match the level of income generated by membership dues to basic Party operating expenditure, including Party Centre and executive functions. It shall also maintain a separate Election Fund, allocating an appropriate portion of dues income towards this, to which additional individual contributions may be made.
- (c) Additional planned voluntary contributions, along with monies raised during special appeals that may be decided upon by the EC from time to time, shall be combined and held in a National Organising Fund (the 'Fund'), which shall be utilised for Party and YCL development activity.
 - i. All Party members are urged to make planned voluntary contributions where possible, preferably by direct debit.
 - ii. Party organisations will make planned approaches to members and supporters to make regular or one-off voluntary contributions to the Fund.
 - iii. It is the responsibility of all Party organisations to encourage additional planned voluntary contributions to the Fund and the Executive Committee and its appropriate sub-committees will make a high priority of attending to this task.
 - iv. The Fund account shall be separate from the general account and managed by the Executive Committee and its designated officers.
 - v. Every functioning Party branch will be guaranteed a grant from the Fund, made annually from the beginning of the first full year of its operation. The total of Branch Organising Fund Grants dispersed shall not normally exceed between 30 and 40 per cent of the Fund's income

during the preceding year.

- vi. Party organisations may also make costed bids to the Executive Committee for development projects in their area of responsibility to be assisted by the Fund

6 The Structure of the Party

- (a) The supreme authority of the Party shall be the National Congress.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall in England constitute Districts of the Party and shall ensure that in each District a District Congress is convened every two years. This District Congress shall elect a District Committee.
- (c) The District Committee shall constitute Party Branches based on a place of work or a locality or an industry or a party collective, and shall ensure that each Party Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting which shall elect a Branch Committee.
- (d) District Committees may, with the agreement of the Executive Committee, constitute Area Committees, and shall define their functions and powers in accordance with the Rules of the Party.
- (e) In Scotland and Wales the Executive Committee shall ensure that in each country a Congress is convened every two years. These Congresses shall elect a Scottish and Welsh Committee respectively.
- (f) The powers and responsibilities of the above Congresses and of the Scottish and Welsh Committees shall be as defined in Rule 12.

7 The National Congress

- (a) The National Congress shall be the supreme authority of the Party and shall be responsible for the adoption of the policy of the Party.
- (b) The National Congress shall be convened by the Executive Committee every two years, and shall be composed of:

Delegates from Party Branches, elected in accordance with their numerical strength (defined as the number of dues-paying members reported no more than four months before Congress), on a basis to be determined by the EC.

Delegates from District Committees.

Members of the retiring Executive Committee and Appeals Committee, who shall have full right to participate in the work of the Congress, including the right to participate in the work of Congress Committees when elected by Congress as Executive Committee representatives to such Committees, but shall not have the right to vote in full Congress unless elected as full delegates from a Branch or a District Committee.
- (c) The Executive Committee will seek the views of districts and branches by issuing to the Party 8 months before Congress a short statement setting out its first views on the main questions which should be the centre of debate at Congress. The agenda, draft resolutions and preliminary materials for the Congress shall be issued to Party organisations 3 months before the date fixed for the Congress. Resolutions for the Congress agenda and amendments to draft resolutions issued by the Executive Committee may be sent in by Party Branches and District Committees up to 6 weeks before the date of Congress.
- (d) Procedure for the conduct of pre-Congress discussion shall be according to the provisions of Rule 17(a) and 17(d).
- (e) The National Congress shall elect, from nominations made by Branches and District Committees, an Executive Committee, an Appeals Committee, and two Auditors. Members of the Appeals Committee and the Auditors shall not be members of the Executive Committee.
- (f) The Executive Committee shall have the power to convene a special National Congress, composed in the same way and with the same powers, as the National Congress. The Executive Committee must convene such a special National Congress on the request of not less than one-fifth of the Branches or one-third of the District Committees.

8 The Executive Committee

- (a) The Executive Committee shall have full responsibility for the direction and control of the work of the Party and for the formulation of current policy, in accordance with the decisions of National Congress. It shall guide and direct the work of all Party organisations, assist the work of Party members elected to Parliament, direct and control the Party press, publications and other Party enterprises, and manage the central funds of the Party.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall also have power to decide on new policy, where events make this necessary.
- (c) Whenever possible, the Executive Committee shall when taking decisions on new policy between Congresses consult Party organisations and initiate discussion throughout the Party.
- (d) At its first meeting after its election the Executive Committee shall decide upon its regular meeting date - the minutes of such meetings shall be made available to Districts and Branches on request, and shall show the votes recorded - ie, for and against when a vote is taken, on any issue before the Executive Committee - and shall elect the General Secretary, Chairperson, Treasurer and relevant officers of the Party and a Political Committee.
- (e) The Political Committee shall have the responsibility for giving prompt and effective leadership in between meetings of the Executive Committee. The work of the Political Committee shall be subject to control by the Executive Committee.
- (f) In the course of carrying out their Executive Committee responsibilities, Executive Committee members may issue membership cards but must report this as soon as practicable.

9 The Party District

Districts shall be constituted by the Executive Committee to include all Party organisations and members living or working within a defined area.

10 The District Congress

- (a) In each District a District Congress shall be convened every two years. This Congress shall be composed of:
 - Delegates from Party branches in the District, in accordance with their numerical strength, on a basis to be determined by the District Committee in consultation with the Executive Committee.
 - Delegates from those Area Committees where District Committees, in consultation with the Executive Committee so decide.
 - Members of retiring District Committees shall have similar rights at Congress to those of the Executive Committee at National Congress: see Rule 7(b).
- (b) The District Congress shall discuss and take decisions on the implementation of national policy in the District.
- (c) The District Congress shall elect from nominations made by branches, and from any Area Committees given full delegate rights as defined in (a), a District Committee and District Auditors, and the Auditors shall not be members of the District Committee.

11 The District Committee

- (a) The District Committee shall, on the basis of national policy and the decisions of the District Congress, guide the work of the Party organisations in the District, assist Party members elected to local government and other public bodies, direct and control District Party enterprises, and manage the District funds of the Party.
- (b) The District Committee, at its first meeting after election, shall elect a District Secretary, Chairperson, Treasurer and relevant officers and a District Secretariat, and shall decide upon its regular meeting date.
- (c) The District Secretariat shall have the responsibility for giving prompt and effective leadership in

between meetings of the District Committee. The work of the District Secretariat shall be subject to control by the District Committee.

I2 Scotland and Wales

- (a) The Scottish and Welsh Congresses and the Scottish and Welsh Committees shall be deemed to have all the powers and responsibilities allocated throughout these Rules to District Congresses and District Committees in England.
- (b) The Scottish and Welsh Congresses in addition shall discuss, take decisions and formulate policies for Scotland and Wales in accordance with the general lines of policy decided at the National Congress.

I3 The Branch

- (a) The basic unit of the Party is the Branch. Such basic units shall be organised, on the authority of the District Committee, based upon a place of work or study, that is a workplace Branch; upon a given industry within the District, that is an industrial Branch; upon a locality, that is a local Branch; or upon a Party collective which may be either in a workplace, industry or locality.
- (b) A workplace Branch shall comprise all Party members employed in a particular factory, pit or other place of work.
- (c) An industrial Branch shall comprise Party members employed in a particular industry within the District.
- (d) A local Branch shall comprise members living, or in some cases employed, in a defined area, with the exception of those members organised in a workplace or industrial Branch.
- (e) A local Branch may authorise members within a locality or workplace to function as a Party collective, meeting formally or informally, to plan and conduct their activities. A collective shall report back to the branch.
- (f) Every Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting which shall discuss a report of branch work in the previous year, receive a financial statement, discuss the lines of branch activity for the coming year and elect a Branch Committee.
A Branch shall have no less than three members.

I4 The Branch Committee

- (a) Each Branch Committee shall meet regularly and shall elect a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers as required.
- (b) Each Branch Committee shall be responsible for calling regular branch meetings of which every member is informed; shall be expected to follow up membership applications and enquiries promptly; shall report committee decisions and proposals, and shall guide and develop all branch activities in accordance with Party policy and branch decisions, including the sale of the Morning Star and Communist literature, public and electoral work, and the winning of new members.
- (c) Decisions of the Branch Committee may be overruled by a majority vote of the Branch meeting provided that decisions of bodies higher than the Branch Committee are not thereby violated.
- (d) Each Branch Committee shall be responsible for appointing membership stewards to ensure efficient collection of dues and political contact with every member, shall manage branch funds, and shall assist all members to carry out their Party activity and to study Marxism-Leninism.
- (e) A workplace Branch Committee shall maintain contact and co-operation with the local Branch in the area in which the workplace is situated and shall encourage members of the workplace Branch to help the Party in the areas where they live.
- (f) A local Branch Committee shall encourage and help its members to build the Party where they work, and shall assist all efforts to build new workplace Branches and strengthen existing ones in the area.

I5 The Duties of Members

Party members shall have the duty, with the assistance of the Party:

- (a) To take part in the life and activities of their Party Branch and to attend its meetings whenever possible.
- (b) To read the Morning Star and to help in every way the circulation of the paper.
- (c) To improve their political knowledge and their understanding of Marxism-Leninism, to take part in the discussion and formation of Party policy, to win support for the aims and policy of the Party, and to win new members to its ranks.
- (d) To equip themselves to take an active part in the working class movement, to belong to and assist in the work of their appropriate trade union or professional organisation, and their co-operative society.
- (e) To fight for the decisions of the Party, to observe Party discipline and to fight against everything detrimental to the interest of the working class and the Party.
- (f) To produce their Party cards for inspection whenever required to do so by a Party organisation or membership steward.

16 The Rights of Members

Party members shall have the right:

- (a) To take part in their Party Branch in the discussion and formation of Party policy and the carrying out of such policy in accordance with the procedure in Rule 17.
- (b) To elect and be elected to all those leading Party Committees defined in Rule 6.
- (c) To address any question or statement to such leading Party Committees up to and including the Executive Committee.
- (d) To reserve their opinion in the event of disagreement with a decision, while at the same time carrying out that decision.

17 Procedure for Discussion

Exercise of the right and duty to take part in the discussion and formation of Party policy shall be in accordance with the following procedure:

- (a) During the period of pre-Congress discussion members shall have the right to express their views on any aspect of Party policy in their Branch meeting, or at any other meeting convened for that purpose on the authority of the District and Executive Committees; and the Executive Committee shall ensure the maximum possible discussion and provide the maximum possible space in the Party press for the printing of contributions from Party organisations and members.
- (b) In between Congresses, decisions of the last National Congress and the Executive Committee are binding on all members and Party organisations. Members who consider that new circumstances have developed which make it necessary to change such decisions or to take new ones may raise the matter in their Branch unless they are members of higher committees. If the Executive Committee considers that it is necessary to hold an inner Party discussion on some aspect before the next period of pre-Congress discussion is due it shall give guidance on procedure for such discussion to all Party organisations.
- (c) If the member obtains the support of the Branch then the latter may submit a resolution for the attention of the District Committee or the Executive Committee. Whatever the decision of the Branch, the member may still exercise the right under Rule 16(c) to communicate with the District Committee on the matter. During the time the matter is under discussion it is the duty of all members of the Branch to carry out to the full the policy of the Party until the final decision is taken.
- (d) Members of elected leading committees who are in disagreement with any decision taken by the committee in question or with any other aspect of Party policy shall have the right to express such disagreement first in that committee and then to a higher committee. During the period of pre-Congress discussion such disagreements may be expressed first in the committee in question

and then in the appropriate Party branch or in communications to pre-Congress discussion in the Party press.

18 The Admission of Members

The following procedure shall be adopted in the admission of new members:

- (a) Applicants shall immediately be interviewed by a representative of the Branch or other leading committee concerned, who shall report back so that the committee may discuss and decide upon the application. Immediately on acceptance the committee shall take steps to ensure that a Party card is issued, with a copy of the Party Rules, information provided of Branch activity, and a welcome given to the new member at the next Branch meeting. Upon the issue of a Party card the record form shall be filled in and returned to the committee concerned.
- (b) If the applicant is refused admission by a Branch Committee, it shall be the responsibility of the latter committee to inform the District Committee of the reasons for its action. A decision of the Executive Committee on an application for admission shall be final.

19 Applications from Former Members

The following procedure shall be adopted in the case of applicants from former members to rejoin the Party:

- (a) Where the applicant was expelled from the Party then no decision shall be taken without the consent of the Executive Committee.
- (b) Where the application is to rejoin the former branch and the applicant is known to the present members of the Branch Committee, then the application shall be considered by the Branch Committee and their decisions shall require the endorsement of the District Committee.
- (c) Where the applicant is not known to members of the Branch Committee concerned then the latter shall consult the District Committee before considering the application. The District Committee shall provide the Executive Committee with a record of decisions taken on such applications.

20 The Transfer of Members

- (a) Members transferring from the area of one Party Branch to another shall be responsible for informing their Branch Secretary of their intention.
- (b) The Branch Secretary shall immediately send the District Secretary the new address of any member transferring out of the Branch.
- (c) A Branch Secretary shall obtain from the District Secretary confirmation of the Membership position of any transferred member before accepting the transfer. Where the transfer is within the District, the District Secretary shall inform the new Branch secretary of the name and address. Otherwise the District Secretary shall inform the Executive Committee.

21 Lapsing Members

The decision to lapse a member of the Party for non-payment of Party dues is a serious step which shall be taken only after the most careful consideration by the Party Branch Committee, and the following procedure shall be operated:

- (a) Members who are more than 13 weeks in arrears shall be considered for lapsing by the Branch Committee if it is established that regular visits over a period have failed to produce any result, and that no special circumstances or difficulties prevent such members from carrying out their financial responsibilities to the Party.
- (b) Any such decision to lapse shall be reported by the Branch Committee to the higher Party committee for endorsement before it is operated, and the latter shall satisfy itself that the procedure in (a) above has been observed, following which the decision shall be communicated to the member in writing.

22 Breaches of Party Discipline by Party Organisations

The Executive Committee shall have the right to apply disciplinary measures to any Party organisation which fails to carry out Party decision. Such disciplinary measures may include partial reorganisation of its Party Committee and the appointment of a Provisional Committee, or dissolution of the entire Party organisation and re-registration of its membership.

23 Breaches of Party Discipline by Individual Members

Action against any member guilty of breaches of Party Rules or any other conduct detrimental to the Party shall be carried out according to the following procedure:

- (a) The Party Branch shall have the power to remove from office, to suspend from membership for a period not exceeding 3 months, or to recommend to the District Committee expulsion, on the decision of a majority of the members attending a Branch meeting, of which all members have had written notice at least 7 days in advance of the issue to be discussed, and where the member concerned has been given the opportunity of attending and stating his/her case.
- (b) The Executive Committee or District Committee shall have the power to remove or suspend from office, suspend from membership for an initial period not exceeding 3 months, or expel, and shall explain the reason for this action at a meeting of the Party organisation concerned.
- (c) In the case of suspension from membership the member's card shall immediately be handed to the suspending organisation, and it shall be the responsibility of the Party organisation to have discussions with the comrade concerned before the period of suspension is at an end.
- (d) All disciplinary actions shall be notified in writing through the District Committee to the Executive Committee.

24 Procedure for Appeal

- (a) Party members shall have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against them by their Party Branch to their District Committee. Members shall have the right of appeal against a decision of the District Committee to the Appeals Committee.
- (b) The Appeals Committee shall consider all such appeals, taking into account relevant information from the Executive Committee. A decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final, save that a member may appeal to the subsequent National Congress.
- (c) In the case of action taken by the Executive Committee under Rule 23(b), the decision taken by the Executive Committee shall be final save that a member may appeal to the subsequent National Congress.
- (d) All appeals shall be made in writing to the committee concerned, within 14 days of the member's being notified in writing of the decision appealed against.

25 Interpretation of Rules

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

26 Alteration of Rules

The Rules may be amended by the vote of a majority of delegates at a National Congress, provided that the following procedure be carried out:

- (a) Proposed alterations to rule shall be submitted by Party Branches and District Committees to the Executive Committee.
- (b) All such proposed alterations to rule for consideration by Congress must be received by the Executive Committee 6 months before the date of that Congress.
- (c) All such proposed alterations shall be considered by the Executive Committee and circulated to Branches with its comments.

(d) Alterations to rule may also be proposed by the Executive Committee. Such proposed alterations shall be circulated to Branches as part of the material for the National Congress.