

# building the party

**CPGB-ML MEMBER KIT #2**



# **#2**

# **building the party**

Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)  
PO Box 110, Castleford, WF6 1XZ  
[www.cpgb-ml.org](http://www.cpgb-ml.org)

# Introduction

## **Welcome to the CPGB-ML!**

The Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) is a *revolutionary* party, which has set itself the goal of building an organisation capable of leading the masses in overthrowing imperialism and building socialism in Britain. It's a party with a big job to do, but we're not daunted by the task that's in front of us. Instead, we're serious about setting to work on it.

Our branches and local organisations are at different stages of development and maturity. That means there is no easy solution to how we set about building our forces and conducting our political work. But while each situation is unique, there

are lessons that we can learn collectively that will help us grow as quickly and effectively as possible.

The aim of these booklets is to provide a basic understanding of communist organisational principles. We hope that they will help every party member, including those who are at present relatively isolated, to set to work on building or expanding a local party group.

If we want to succeed as a party and play an effective role in building a revolutionary movement, each CPGB-ML and Red Youth member must grow into a focused and dedicated party cadre. We need to be ready to leave behind old, unhelpful habits, and we need to train ourselves instead to think and work like communists.

As Comrade Stalin told the All-Union Congress of Soviets following the death of the great Lenin:

Comrades, we communists are people of a special mould. We are made of a special stuff. We are those who form the army of the great proletarian strategist, the army of Comrade Lenin. There is nothing higher than the honour of belonging to this army. There is nothing higher than the title of member of the party whose founder and leader was Comrade Lenin. It is not given to everyone to be a member of

such a party. It is not given to everyone to withstand the stresses and storms that accompany membership in such a party. It is the sons of the working class, the sons of want and struggle, the sons of incredible privation and heroic effort who before all should be members of such a party. That is why the party of the Leninists, the party of the communists, is also called the party of the working class.\*

Of course, it's a lot easier if you are based in a city where we have a good presence already, but all these larger groups had to start somewhere. They have grown and strengthened themselves from small beginnings over the last few years. Some began with only one member not so long ago – proving that consistent, patient and well-organised activity, combined with a clear Marxist analysis, breeds success.

Our task is big, but we are not the first communists to have faced it. Whenever we feel overwhelmed by what needs to be done, we can take strength from these words of Chairman Mao, who was speaking about the challenges that faced China's communists back in 1945:

---

\* 'On the death of Lenin', speech delivered by JV Stalin to the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets, 26 January 1924.

There is an ancient Chinese fable called The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains. It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination.

Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, 'How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up those two huge mountains.' The Foolish Old Man replied, 'When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?'

Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs.

Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on

the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese communist party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?\*

Just like the communists in China, Russia and elsewhere, the CPGB-ML has made up its mind to dig up and uproot capitalist imperialism and its servant in the British working-class movement, social democracy, which together are strangling our garden like a weed. If we do our work well, we too can inspire the masses to join us in demolishing this outdated and barbaric system.

In its place the British people will be free to cultivate a society free from exploitation and inequality. Technologically and morally advanced, we'll play our part in freeing the world from the poverty, ignorance, disease, war, racism, sexism and colonial subjugation that have for so long been imposed

---

\* From Concluding speech at the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China by Mao Zedong, 11 June 1945.

on the oppressed by the parasitic and bloodthirsty capitalist ruling class.

Our party's central committee established a Cadre Development Committee (CDC) in 2010. The CDC's job is to help to develop our members into active cadres so we can become the type of revolutionary party that Britain so badly needs. We have been given the task of helping members to get active, of encouraging the formation and growth of branches, and of ensuring that political training takes place.

These pamphlets are a part of our efforts to fulfill that role and we hope that you will find them both useful and inspiring. Please do read them regularly – alone and collectively – and use each one as a practical guide to action.

## CDC

May 2014



### **EDUCATE yourself and others**

*Each one teach one*



### **AGITATE among the workers**

*Raise the understanding of the people*



### **ORGANISE the party and the class**

*Harness the power of the masses*



### **OVERTHROW the capitalist system**

*Break our chains and build socialism*



### **FIGHT for communism**

*The future that works*

*"Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose; so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past; so live, that dying he can say: 'All my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world – the liberation of mankind.'"*\*

---

\* Nikolai Ostrovsky, *How the Steel Was Tempered*, 1936

## Building the party

The basic form of organisation within our party is the branch. Sometimes people may refer to branches as cells, groups or circles, but essentially these are the same thing. At the moment, the party's branches are all based around where our members live, but we can expect to start establishing branches at workplaces as we grow larger.

It's important that branches don't get so big that some comrades end up without any specific party work or responsibilities. We don't want to create a situation where perfectly able people are sitting on the sidelines or twiddling their thumbs. Generally, groups of between 3-8 seem to function best, if all those involved are active participants.

Of course, not all members are able to engage in every type of activity or to give equal amounts of time to party work. Health, work and family considerations make everybody's situation unique. The key to building a stable branch is for every member to be clear about what they can give and to be consistent and reliable within those parameters. That way, their comrades will know what to expect and be able to plan their work accordingly.

As our branches get larger, they will naturally start to break up, so that each one can focus on a smaller geographical area. Once this starts to happen, we will need to form regional committees to coordinate their work.

There is no rush to do this, however. Our main priority at the moment is to establish and expand branches wherever we have fit and healthy members who are able to get out and do party work in their communities, and to strengthen and consolidate the branches we have already founded.

Members who cannot be active on the streets are asked to find other ways of helping to spread awareness of our party's analysis – whether by supporting others, by hosting meetings or by being active online. Everyone has a part to play in the struggle!

## Basic branch work – getting started

The key to building an effective party branch is *regular work*. All too many 'left' groups think that it is enough to meet for a chat once a month, which might be fine for those who see political activity as a hobby, a social club or a debating society, but is not much use for those of us who want to build a real revolutionary organisation.

So, even if there are just two of you to start with, it is vital that you get into the habit of holding a *regular weekly meeting*.

## PRINCIPLE TASKS FOR BRANCHES

- To coordinate *regular political education*. Whether it's reading articles from the party's publications, or working through our education programme, the important thing is that you read, discuss and develop your understanding through collective study.
- To keep an eye on the political life of the area and to coordinate *regular practical activities*. Focus on whatever you think will be most useful in building the party and spreading our analysis. Use the particular strengths and interests of your members to help you connect with local people and campaigns. You might focus on leafletting at jobcentres or factories, holding paper sales in your town, putting up posters, engaging in solidarity, anti-cuts, anti-war or community-based work, or any combination of the above.
- To *collect members' subs*. Without funds, the party cannot function, either locally or national-

ly. We need money to produce leaflets, papers, banners, flags, merchandise and study materials. We need to pay for comrades' travel, to send delegates abroad, and to run our centres and events. Every member should take their responsibility towards the party's finances as seriously as they do all their other work.

- To *distribute the party's papers and leaflets*. This means taking materials from the centre and making sure that every member has the supplies they need to do their work. It means making sure papers are sold and leaflets given out at meetings and on the streets, and it means making sure that the funds raised are accounted for and the correct share is sent back to the party centre.

Make somebody responsible for coordinating each of these areas of work. A diary of the branch's activities should be kept to form the basis of reports to the CC. Financial records and money collected should be passed on to the party's finance officer.

## ORGANISATIONAL TIPS

### Spreading the word

- Try to integrate regular selling and leafleting into your weekly routine. Keep a bag of change with you – and always have a paper or two to hand!
- Try leafleting while walking to and from work or school.
- Order our party books from your local library and ask to leave papers there. If they refuse permission, ask why. If there is a policy against displaying communist literature, ask whose policy it is and who you need to contact to change the policy.
- Ask bookshops and newsagents to carry our papers and books.
- Keep old papers on you and leave them in places where people might pick them up: eg, on trains (early in the day) or in waiting rooms. Give them away to people you talk to who are interested to

know more but short of funds.

- Try to be consistent and regular in your activities. Each time you go out to sell you will get a different response, but after a while you will find that people expect to see you in a certain place at a certain time and will look out for you.
- Have short phrases to say to people who are walking past: eg, 'Can I interest you in a communist paper?', 'Buy *Proletarian*, the communist paper', or something more specific that relates to the slogan or content of what you are holding.
- A few tried-and-tested sales patter suggestions:
  - Can't afford it?***  
"Proletarian is cheaper than a McDonald's coffee!"
  - Already bought papers from other sellers?***  
"Throw them away; you deserve the best!"
  - No change?***  
"Don't worry, I do!"
- Make a habit of thinking about which papers or leaflets you're taking out with you to an event and why. Make sure what you're taking is suitable for the audience you're expecting to meet.

- Prepare for meetings and stalls by thinking of points you might like to make or topics you would like to discuss.
- If you have internet access, make a point of dedicating regular time to sharing the party's articles and leaflets via social media websites and comment pages. Target your links to special-interest groups, newspaper articles and discussion forums that are relevant to the article you are promoting.
- Forward the party's email updates to friends and colleagues – you never know who might be interested!
- Use social media to spread awareness of the party's activities: publicise our meetings on Facebook event pages, Indymedia calendars (local and national), Eventbrite pages etc.

### **Work in the wider movement**

- Join your trade union and go to branch meetings. Volunteer to be on the branch committee where possible. This will put you in touch with

members and activists and give you opportunities to spread a communist understanding.

- Participate in trades councils, community forums and tenants' organisations in the same way. Take every opportunity to connect with other workers and to raise awareness of our party and of the need for anti-capitalist organisation to solve workers' problems.
- Join local campaigning and solidarity groups and raise awareness of the communist analysis of whatever issue is being discussed. Explain our party's position whenever the opportunity arises.
- Share and discuss your experiences in all these movements with other party comrades and help to refine and improve the effectiveness of your own and others' work.

### **Fundraising**

- Do not be afraid to ask friends and supporters to give money to the party: we cannot serve the working class without resources and we have no

multinational sponsors!

- Hold a fundraising quiz night with educational questions and commentary.
- Sell tickets to party socials and put on sponsored events.
- Run, walk, swim or cycle to raise money for specific campaigns or delegations. Set up online fundraising pages in order to maximise the effectiveness of your efforts (the CDC can help you with this).
- Discuss ways to raise money with your comrades and share anything that works with the rest of the party: we need to get creative in this neglected area of our work!

### **Recruiting**

- Holding regular study classes and events is the key to bringing in people who are coming closer to the party. Ideally, you want to be able to invite interested newcomers along to a meeting that's being held within a week of your conver-

sation with them.

- Make your own petition for use on stalls: eg, "*If you are opposed to imperialist war abroad and the dismantlement of public services at home, sign here.*" Collect details that the party can use to stay in touch with those who are supportive: Name, Mobile, Email and Postcode.
- Have a contact sheet with you at all times and don't forget to ask people to leave their details whenever you've had an interesting discussion with them. Ask them whether they would like to be kept informed about local events, added to the party's main email list, or both.
- Send all contact details gathered to your local coordinator and to the CDC. Keep in touch with those who live locally and invite them to public meetings or study sessions as appropriate.
- Remember that every stall and paper sale you hold, every meeting you speak at, and every person you talk to is sowing a tiny seed for the revolution. It is very rare to make a party recruit on the spot, but you never know what fruit will

## CPGB-ML MEMBER KIT

grow from the work you do today over the next two months, two years ... or even 20 years.

Be proud to promote our party – in carrying out this vital work you are making yourself an agent of progress; an agent of revolutionary change.

It may not be obvious to all of them today, but workers desperately *need* the weapons you have to offer them. By establishing a national network of branches and starting to reshape your local political scene, you are bringing Marxist understanding and Leninist organisation to the British working class.

*Without* these two essentials, the workers are defenceless, but *with* them, our class can and will become an invincible force!

## Get connected

### Red Youth and CPGB-ML on the web

[redyouth.org](http://redyouth.org)

[cpgb-ml.org](http://cpgb-ml.org)

[twitter.com/cpgbml](https://twitter.com/cpgbml)

[youtube.com/ProletarianCPGBML](https://youtube.com/ProletarianCPGBML)

Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) [public] and Cadre Dev [private] groups and Red Youth News Service on Facebook

### Get in touch

[info@redyouth.org](mailto:info@redyouth.org)

[info@cpgb-ml.org](mailto:info@cpgb-ml.org)

**Useful contacts**

For newspapers, leaflets, party pamphlets and educational materials contact [sales@cpgb-ml.org](mailto:sales@cpgb-ml.org).

To contact the Cadre Development Committee (CDC) write to [paul@cpgb-ml.org](mailto:paul@cpgb-ml.org) or send letters, payments and donations to our Birmingham office:

CPGB-ML or CDC  
274 Moseley Rd  
Birmingham  
B12 9BL

**Editors**

To contact *Proletarian* email [editors@cpgb-ml.org](mailto:editors@cpgb-ml.org)

**Central Committee**

Contact the General Secretary (Zane):  
[info@cpgb-ml.org](mailto:info@cpgb-ml.org)  
01924 218737

**Membership subs and donations**

An essential criterion for membership of the communist party is that members should support the party financially.

Minimum subs for our party are 25p per week for the unwaged and £1 per week for those with jobs. This minimum is kept very low in order to make sure that subs are not a bar to membership for anyone.

However, the party needs money in order to do its work and produce its literature, so we do ask all our members to consider making regular or occasional donations *above* the minimum level, according to what they can afford.

Donations and subs should be paid to:

CPGB-ML  
HSBC Bank, Ealing Broadway Branch  
44 The Broadway  
London W5 5JR

Sort Code: 40-02-26  
Account Number: 01855352



Contact the CPGB-ML for further copies and a list of publications.  
PO Box 110, Castleford, WF6 1XZ



[cpgb-ml.org](http://cpgb-ml.org)

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