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# HOW TO ORGANISE

Branch Organisation  
and Work

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# BRANCH ORGANISATION AND WORK

"Branch organisation and work" is first of a series of guides to Party organisation and method of work.

Its object is to assist members to better understand the basic organisational method of our Party and to ensure improved organisation and functioning of Party Branches.

Contents of this booklet should be studied and applied by Branch members, particularly Branch Executives and Officers.

## WHAT IS A PARTY MEMBER?

The Communist Party is the party of the working class. Into its ranks are drawn the most advanced, active and class-conscious workers. A member of the Communist Party is "one who accepts the Party programme, attends the regular meetings of the Party Branch of which he or she is a member, who pays dues regularly and engages in some form of Party activity." (Constitution C.P. of A.).

Every Communist, guided by the decisions of the Party, conducts himself in an organised way in relation to other sections of the working class and people, constantly arousing them to progressive thought and united action. Organisation is strength.

The basic unit of the organisation of the Communist Party is the Party Branch.

## WHAT IS THE PARTY BRANCH?

The Party Branch is the Communist Party in the factory and locality.

It is "the organisation which links the party with the people." (Constitution C.P. of A.).

Branches are organised along two main lines:

(1) The factory or workplace branch, which is the most important, and

(2) The locality branch.

**"A workshop branch consists of those Party members who are employed in the particular workshop. Workshop branches shall be organised in every factory, shop, mine, ship, dock, office, etc., where sufficient Party members are employed. A local branch consists of members of the Party living in the same locality. Local branches shall be organised on the basis of one or more suburbs in the cities and in country towns, taking into account municipal and electorate boundaries." (Constitution C.P. of A.).**

## WHAT ARE THE TASKS OF THE PARTY BRANCH?

The main task of the branch is to win the confidence and leadership of the people in the factory or locality in which it is working.

To do this it is of the utmost importance that the branch executive and members acquaint themselves with their surroundings, with their factory or locality. They must know the composition of the workers and people they are seeking to lead; their wants and their various organisations (trade unions, sporting bodies, women and youth organisations, etc.), and other useful facts.

Having that information, the branch can more confidently decide on a plan of mass work and the application of Party policy.

The Branch plan of work should embrace:—

(1) The carrying through in the workshop or locality of the

general Party campaigns and directions from higher Party committees.

- (2) The conduct of factory and local campaigns for improved conditions and other demands.
- (3) The proper development of work in mass organisations (trade unions, etc.).
- (4) The organisation of oral propaganda and the widest distribution and sale of literature.
- (5) The education of all members in party theory and the promotion of cadres.
- (6) The checking up on carrying out of tasks by members.
- (7) The payment of dues, collection of finance, etc.

## THE BRANCH MEETING.

The Party Branch, if it is to do a good job of work, must itself be a well-organised and efficient body.

It should meet at least once a fortnight. Meetings should begin and

finish on time, as decided upon by the branch.

Lack of punctuality undermines the discipline of the branch.

Our meetings must be lively, interesting and full of business, combining good political discussion of problems with practical proposals for their solution.

Dull meetings rob the branch of interest and result in absenteeism and loss of members.

For the branch to function smoothly everything depends upon the proper conduct of its meetings, **on the making of decisions and checking up on the carrying out of decisions.**

Collection of dues and other finance, or distribution of literature, should be arranged before or after the branch meeting, but not while it is in progress. The ideal method is for the comrades responsible to station themselves at the entrance to the meeting room and conduct their business as members are entering or leaving.

## THE BRANCH AGENDA.

A considered agenda is of the utmost importance for the efficient functioning of the branch. The following order of business for the branch meeting can serve as a general guide to the agenda:

- (1) After opening meeting punctually, the chairman proceeds to admit new members and suitably welcome them.
- (2) Submits agenda prepared by Branch Executive and asks for any additional items or alternatives.
- (3) Minutes of previous meeting read and endorsed.
- (4) Special political discussion. (This means on a selected political subject or campaign, and does not imply that other agenda items are not discussed politically).
- (5) Correspondence (together with Executive's recommendations).

- (6) Reports covering various aspects of mass work, campaigns, finance, membership drive, education, etc.

- (7) General business.

## THE BRANCH EXECUTIVE.

Party Branches should elect an executive consisting of the Secretary, Chairman and one other. In big branches more than three executive members may be necessary.

**On the efficiency of the Executive depends the efficiency and good working of the Branch.**

The Executive's job is as follows:

- (1) To prepare the agenda and proposals for the Branch meeting.
- (2) To check up on the fulfillment of decisions of the last branch meeting and attend to any administrative tasks arising therefrom.
- (3) To go through the correspondence dealing directly with rou-

tine matters that need not be submitted to the branch. Correspondence to come before the branch, unless merely informative, should be accompanied by definite proposals worked out by the Executive. For instance, when a letter is received from a higher party committee, urging a campaign on some important matter, it can be dealt with in two ways. It can be read as it stands to the Branch, or it can be read together with the Executive's proposals on what should be done by the branch, such as resolutions to be moved in other mass organisations, the holding of job or public meetings, the publication of material in the local party bulletin and local press, issuance of leaflets and posters as well as other measures that suggest themselves. This latter method is best. It will lead to good discussion by the branch members and result in more concrete decisions and

better work. Branch members will more clearly understand **what is to be done, who will do it, and how they must go about the job.**

- (4) To carefully analyse the progress of general and local campaigns, utilising not only correspondence from higher party committees, but also the "Tribune," "Review," and other such publications, and knowledge of factory or local conditions and the people's desires and needs.
- (5) To consider the content of the Branch Bulletin, prepare proposals on finance, discuss new members and their development, inquire into the position of members who fail to attend branch meetings, and arrange to contact them and help solve their difficulties and differences, decide on subject for educational discussion and reporter, and attend to other branch and executive matters.

In most cases it will be found that, provided the Executive functions well, fortnightly meetings of the Branch are sufficient. The alternate week can be given over to a study class of the branch members and supporters, if such a class cannot be held weekly.

Executive meetings should be weekly. In cases of urgency the Executive can act, without reference to the branch, provided such action is in line with party policy and tactics. This calls for initiative and also tact.

### THE BRANCH SECRETARY.

Upon the Secretary rests special responsibilities. He must ensure that the Branch Executive meets and carries out its functions. That the Branch does likewise. He receives the correspondence and prepares suggestions for the Executive on how it should be dealt with. He must see that branch decisions are carried out, that comrades with particular tasks (finance, literature, education, etc.), do their jobs, that new members are being well looked after, etc. In short, the Secretary is the comrade whose

main job it is to see that all parts of the branch apparatus function smoothly and efficiently.

### BRANCH TREASURER.

The Branch Treasurer is responsible for all financial activities of the branch, collects dues, initiation fees, and international levies, ensures that all members are financial, all literature paid for, and organises and supervises the Party financial campaigns. He also pays the percentage of dues, etc., to the higher committee, together with an exact statement of what payments such dues, etc., represent. The Treasurer must regularly report on the financial position of members to the branch.

### THE BRANCH CHAIRMAN.

A great responsibility for the success of the Branch meetings rests upon the Branch Chairman. A good Chairman makes a meeting, a bad one breaks it. The Chairman must know the Party Constitution and Rules, and something of the recog-

nised rules of debate. He must insist upon punctuality, and discipline during the branch meeting. He must see that definite decisions are arrived at on questions before the branch, and that responsibility is established for carrying out the decisions.

The Chairman must be firm, but also understanding and flexible. His or her job is to see that the meeting is conducted in an efficient, business-like and comradely way. He calls upon those responsible for introducing each agenda item.

Members should be allowed to speak **only once** to each subject unless the **member is putting forward a concrete proposal for inclusion in the branch decisions or has an explanation to make.** The object here is to eliminate time-wasting, wearying and unnecessary discussion. No time limits for discussion should be set, but the Chairman should see that members speak briefly and to the point, and that all items are dealt with expeditiously but sufficiently, and that the whole agenda is finalised at the time set for adjournment.