

Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the 105th Executive Committee of The Socialist Party of Great Britain held at 52 Clapham High Street, London, on the 2nd August 2008

(These minutes are not official until ratified by the EC.)

Present: Buick, Carter, Deutz (Chair) Johnson, Miller (present from 12.50pm), Roberts, Thomas, White. Wigley (present from 12.45pm).
Apologies for absence. McEwan.

The meeting started at 12.40pm.

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

Correction to item 5.1.

Motion 1 (Johnson/Thomas) "Delete in item 5.1 'Campaigns Department' and insert 'Circular from Brian Johnson'. Agreed

Motion 2 (Buick/Roberts) "That the minutes be accepted". Agreed

2 Matters Arising

a Internet Department Terms of Reference.

1 To be composed of at least three members appointed annually by the EC from nominations made by branches.

2 To secure the Party's electronic presence, including the maintenance of appropriate domain names.

3 To maintain and moderate the Party's websites, blogsites and forums.

4 To deal with enquiries received via the Internet.

5 To arrange electronic dissemination of Party material, including the Socialist Standard.

6 To report to the EC annually in January on the results of work done and money spent in the previous calendar year.

7 To report to the EC annually in July on future plans and financial requirements for the coming calendar year.

8 To keep the EC regularly informed of its activities.

Motion 3 (Wigley/Roberts) "That the proposed Terms of Reference be adopted". Agreed

b Reply from Maureen Turyasingura 23/7/08

Motion 4 (Johnson/Wigley) "Move to note". Lost 4-4 1 abstention

Motion 5 (Miller/Thomas) "BIRT the EC considers Ms. Turyasingura'

s
explanation contained in her letter of 23 July unsatisfactory and therefore declines to accept her application for membership at this time." Carried 9-0

c Publications Department re. the new Ecology Pamphlet.

Brian Johnson reports that an associate of Nigel McCullough has said delay has been through the printers and the pamphlet will be at Head Office by next Friday. (500 copies).

d Premises Committee (Verbal report from Comrade Howard Comber)

A letter from Stair will be arriving on the 4/8/08. D.Chesham has nearly finished the roof hatch work. The Conference room floor has been re-polished by Roy Beat. Hand rails to the staircases have been fitted by John Helps, who is also proceeding with the Library shelving. Howard Comber and Jacqueline Schodoeke have cleared some refuse sacks which contained old pine block flooring. The old library shelving will need to be disposed of and old books need sorting and clarifying. The frontage of the building is still on the Premises Department's agenda.

Motion 6 (Miller/) "The EC directs the Premises Committee to determine what planning permission is required from the local authority to improve the Head Head Office shop front, and to provide to the EC next month quotes from one or more building or architectural firms." Carried 7-1 1 abstention

e Report from G.Thomas on the Fire Risk Assessment

The assessor who has to be independent of the insurers has listed several areas in which we have to make changes to comply with the Fire Insurance. Three exit doors and the back gate have to have exit

bars fitted, combustibles to be removed from the basement and top stairwell, no-one is allowed to sleep in the building outside of normal hours, a Fire Alarm to be fitted which can be heard throughout the building.

Motion 7 (Buick/Miller) "That the Fire Insurance be cancelled". Lost 2-6-1 abstention

Motion 8 (Johnson/Thomas) "That the matter regarding the fire insurance assessment be referred to the Premises Committee. And for them to report to the next EC." Lost 4-5

Motion 9 (Buick/White) "That the Treasurer be authorised to deal with the recommendations of the Fire Risk Assessment". Carried 6-1-1
1 absent

f Departments and Committees Terms of Reference
Agreed to publish on SPINTCOM

g Head Office Organiser Terms of Reference
Deferred until later in the meeting.

3 Forms A and F
Form F for Comrade Ron Cook Agreed. Form F for Comrade Les Cox Agreed.
Form A for Judith Stephenson from Lancaster Branch Agreed. Form A for Jim Lawrie from Central London Branch mislaid, dealt with later in the meeting (see 6g).

4 Accounts
None

5 Reports of Party Officers, Departments and Committees

a Campaigns August Update 27/7/08 (As posted on Spintcom).
The Ecology Pamphlet launch is now likely to be September. Each weekend every July is now fully booked, with the EC on the first, the Durham Miners Gala on the second, Tolpuddle on the third, so Comrade Johnson will be contacting members in the West Midlands to try to settle the Summer School permanently for the fourth weekend.
Motion 10 (Buick/Johnson) "That the forum with Ian Bone be approved and Comrade Moss be appointed the Party representative." Carried 9-0.

b Campaigns Department letter addressing Motions 34 and 35 in the June EC Mins.

The Department is concerned at the EC restriction on their attempts at innovation and experiment to encourage members of the working class to our meetings.

Motion 11 (Miller/White) "In response to the Campaigns Department letter of the 29th June 2008 this EC reaffirms the Party's longstanding policy derived from our hostility clause that outside speakers are not permitted to use the Party platform unless the Party arranges for a member to speak in opposition. As such, guest speakers endorsing Party activities and literature, and interview or Q&A style instructions rather than forums or debates, are not permitted."

At this point there was disruption from members and a supporter in the audience. The Chair warned that they would be asked to leave the room if the disruption continued. The disruption continued.

Motion 12 (Miller/Thomas) "That the disrupters in the audience leave the meeting". Carried 4-3-2 abstentions

The disrupters left the meeting for a short while.

The meeting returned to the discussion of Motion 11 and moved to a vote. Carried 4-3-2 abstentions

Division: For, Miller, White, Carter and Deutz. Against, Buick, Johnson and Thomas, Abstaining, Roberts and Wigley.

c Campaigns draft proposals for Film Nights.

Discussion and questions on Performing and Copy rights or the lack of them which may cause us to be in breach of the law and liable to heavy fines, if a licence needed we should secure it, though it was thought that some films could be shown immediately and others could be acquired through the Web site. Some distributors specialise in small film clubs, this could be investigated. It was feared that if

we seek permission the time-table would have to be put back.
Motion 13 (Miller/Thomas) "The Campaigns Department be instructed to secure rights for any films shown at Head Office." Carried 8-0 1 abstention

On the advertising the EC. were not generally in favour of attaching leaflets to Socialist Standards for free distribution, did not think that South London branch was viable enough to give support and thought that had they all been approached earlier a team might have been got together

d Central Organisers report re. North East branch
Comrade Buick reported on his visit to the North East where he had met 3 members and an ex-member. Agreed to note.

e Socialist Standard Production Committee
The suggested revised print-run and the quotation for it were discussed.
Motion 14 (Wigley/White) "That an Ad Hoc Committee of three Comrades be established to promote Socialist Standard sales, and that calls be made to staff this committee, to be received by the October EC. meeting." Carried 8-0 1 abstention
Motion 15 (Wigley/Thomas) "That the Socialist Standard print run be provisionally reduced from 1500 to 1200." Carried unanimously

f Socialist Standard Editorial Committee report to ADM
Agreed to adopt the Editorial Committee report

g Election Department (i)letter to the London Branches Re. London Constituency in the European Elections (copied to the EC. for information). (ii) Resolutions from Central London Branch to the Election Department (copied to the EC. for information)
Motion 16 (Miller/Roberts) "Note the Election Department letter and the associated Central London Branch related resolutions." Carried unanimously

h Election Department Penalty Notice
The Party incurred a fine of £500 for a one day late submission of our accounts to the Electoral Commission. A difficulty is that the Commission want branch accounts within four months of the ending of our financial year. So it may be that we should fit in with their timing.
Motion 17 (Miller/Wigley) "The Election Department be directed to contest the penalty fee on the basis of the very short delay, and if they are not successful, to pay the fine". Carried 9-0

i Head Office Organiser report to ADM.
Some EC. members were not happy with the suggestion that space at HO is at a premium so old or damaged stock should be given away freely. It was suggested that it should only go to serious enquirers.
Motion 18 (Buick/Miller) "That the first sentence of the HOO report to the EC. for ADM be deleted."
Amendment to Motion 17 (Miller/Thomas) "To delete the word 'sentence' and insert 'paragraph'." Vote on the amendment. Carried 4-1 4 abstaining
As an amended resolution. Carried 6-1 2 abstentions
Motion 19 (Miller/Thomas) "Moved to adopt HOO report to ADM. as amended." Agreed

j Enquiries Department report to ADM
Motion 20 (Wigley/Thomas) "Moved adoption." Agreed
k Campaigns Department report to ADM
Motion 21 (Wigley/Buick) "Moved adoption." Agreed
l Election Department report to ADM
Motion 22 (Wigley/Roberts) "Moved adoption." Agreed
m Video Department report to ADM
Motion 23 (Miller/Thomas) "Moved adoption." Agreed

n A-Z of Socialism from Education Department (for reference only)
Motion 24 (Wigley/Buick) "That the 'A-Z of Socialism' be advertised

to members and the matter be referred to the Internet Department to make available electronically." Agreed

o Resignation of Comrade Nick White from the Library Committee due to ill-health. The EC accepted the resignation with regret and thanked Comrade White for his work on the Library Committee." Agreed

p Archives Department

Comrade Roberts presented the EC with a working copy of a Guide to the Archives prepared by Comrade Keith Scholey.

Motion 25 (Wigley/White) "That Comrades Roberts and Scholey be thanked for the Guide and the copy be placed in the Archives." Agreed

Comrade Johnson left the meeting at 4.50pm. and Comrade Roberts left at 4.55pm.

6 Correspondence

a. Manchester Branch 15/7/08

"This Branch recommends that the proceedings of Conference and ADM be taped in order to make it easier for the report of proceedings to be more accurate."

(Carried 6-0 7 present)

Motion 26 (Buick/Wigley) "Moved to note." Carried 5-1 1 abstention

b. Glasgow Branch.

The Branch Secretary regretted the late publishing of the EC minutes which meant that the branch which has altered its meeting to accommodate their arrival was unable to discuss them and may have to change their meeting date to the last Wednesday in the month, should the lateness continue. Agreed to note.

(The Gen. Sec. apologises for the lateness, which was caused by a whole series of family happenings. The minutes are put onto Spintcom as soon as they are finished, which may be before anyone gets to HO. to do the postal work

c. South West Regional Branch

"This Branch believes that individual members who use their initiative and own finances to promote the party should not be deprecated." 4-0 4 present

To which event this was referring, was understood differently by different EC members, discussion lead to the oft quoted Weidberg affair which placed a wealthier member at an advantage.

Motion 27 (Miller/Thomas) "That SWRB be asked to clarify its motion of 12 July in particular whether it refers to or arises from a particular incident where they feel members actions have been deprecated." Carried 7-0

d. Socialist Party of Canada July Newsletter

Noted Agreed

f. Southern Gas Networks 9/7/2008

This letter informs of delay in the implementation of their projected disruption to the area. Noted

g. The Form A for Jim Lawrie having been located was now dealt with.

Motion 28 (Thomas/Buick) "Moved acceptance." Carried 4-0 2 abstentions

7 Any Other Business

a. Letter from Mrs Anna Green (nee Sheppard) 20/7/08. Mrs Green informed us of the death of her father Patrick Sheppard of Coventry. Noted with regret. Patrick Sheppard though not a member now, had been in the past and was much liked and respected. The Gen. Sec. has written with sympathy.

b. Audio Visual Department

Motion 29 (Miller/Wigley) "The Audio Visual Department be instructed to remove or overdub any music on the Arctic Voice DVD. to which we do not have reproduction and distribution rights." Carried 7-0

c. Apologies: Comrade Miller will not be at the next EC. Meeting

8 Chair for the next meeting H.Roberts 9. Date 6/9/08 10. Adjourned
5.20pm

"Items for Discussion and Reports for ADM. are requested to be in by Friday the 5th of September, please."

A call to Branches is made for nominations for the Ad Hoc committee to "Promote Socialist Standard sales."

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