

Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the 105 Executive Committee of The Socialist Party of Great Britain held on the 1st March 2008

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

Present: A. Buick, J.Carter, P.Deutz, B.Johnson, P.McEwan, H.Roberts, G.Thomas, N.White, S.Wigley.

(Comrade McEwan, because of transport problems, arrived about half an hour after the meeting commenced. Comrade Thomas was also slightly late)

Apologies from T.Miller absent due to sickness.

1 S.Wigley had previously been elected chair for this meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous EC meeting.

One amendment. The Form F for Keohane, (deceased) had already been accepted at the October 2007 meeting of the EC.

MOTION 1 (Johnson and Deutz) that the Minutes be adopted. Agreed

3 Matters arising from the previous minutes

(i) Report of the AD Hoc Committee on Comrade Phil Lancaster.

Comrade White after reading the Member's Questionnaire submitted by Comrade Lancaster questioned if the Committee were agreed that Comrade Lancaster knew the Party case, as he may have been coached in his answers. Comrade Deutz speaking for the committee, assured him that we were. We had gone through the questionnaire and discussed the various points at issue with him. In view of this and of his apology the Committee recommended that the matter be considered closed.

MOTION 2 (Johnson and Roberts) "That the report be adopted." Carried 6-0 1 abstention.

Division. For: S.Wigley, B.Johnson, P.Deutz, A.Buick, H.Roberts, J.Carter.

Abstention: N.White

(ii) Images in the Socialist Standard. Deferred.

(iii) Roof Hatch Report. Deferred.

(iv) Video Camera. Comrade D.Chesham made an verbal report in addition to his letter. In view of the fact that we have a number of recordings in Mini DV format he suggests that we replace the stolen item with a recorder with a similar format and recommends the JVC D826EK which comes with 60 minute tapes and a carrying bag, at a cost of £199.99. It can be used with our present tripod.

MOTION 3 (Buick and Roberts) The EC accepts the recommendations of the Committee. Agreed

(v) Speakers Classes.

a). Comrade L.Higgins has accepted the post of Education Organiser, and has made a start on the needs of the post. He offers to update the Speakers Handbook. Also, "An A-Z of Socialism" which he wrote some years ago and which was published in sections by our Irish Comrades in their journal Socialist View, needs substantial updating, which he is willing to do if the EC agrees to its publications. he wonders if the post has any

terms of reference.

MOTION 4 (Johnson and White) “The EC accepts the suggestions” Agreed

b) Letter from Comrade F. Allen, saying that his interest is in the help it would give in putting the Party case and he and Comrade Stair would like to attend, that Head Office would be a central base but can we get someone to take the class? The EC suggests that different Comrades have different needs, such as e.g. where to find information, how to deal with hecklers, projection of the voice, and would like Comrade Allen’s input in this.

(vi) Model Branch Standing Orders. No report. Deferred

(vii) Email voting. No report. Deferred.

(viii) GLA Election Manifesto. The EC. considered the manifesto, which was originally approved for the Scottish elections. It was suggested that it should be more of an introduction leaflet, and that there was no mention of class or how to make the change in society. That it should be more about us. Comrade Buick said there is a need for speed as the election is in May. Suggested that we defer until after tea break, whilst we consider other election leaflets which were provided

MOTION 5 (Thomas and Deutz) “Moved deferment”. Agreed

ix) Nomination from West London Branch for Comrade B. Johnson as Central Branch Secretary.

MOTION 6 (Deutz and Roberts) “That Comrade Johnson be accepted as Central Branch Secretary”. Agreed

(x) Situation in Kabale. Two pictures downloaded which show a meeting sent to the Party and another almost identical picture of the same meeting but with a World to Win Party posters on the wall. Emails all come from the same computer. World to Win party is a mixture of Trotskyists, Ecologists, Anarchists. EC members expressed the desire to encourage any genuine people not to close the door on them though we can’t send money. We do at present send 10 Socialists Standards and lots of pamphlets.

MOTION 7 (Johnson and Wigley) “Considering that there has been no reply to the correspondence by the Central Branch secretary to Comrade Mwebaze in reference to the situation in Uganda the General Secretary confer with CB. Secretary in sending a further letter to Comrade. Mwebaze”. Carried 8-0 1 abstention

The EC. is clear that we must have replies in hard copies not emails and suggests we enclose an International Reply Coupon.

4 Urgency

The order of business was changed to accommodate the need to discuss the start time of the EC to aid members travelling in from a distance.

MOTION 8 (McEwan and Roberts) “To change EC. Start time to 12.30pm”. Agreed 8-0 1 abs.

It was also suggested that at the start of the meeting, items could be sorted and some brought forward, as the meeting decided.

5 Notices of Business

(i) (T. Miller) Access to the Party’s Database. Deferred

(ii) (T. Miller) Access to the Party’s Email Account Deferred.

(iii) (A. Buick) SP Dialogue and Amendments of the Party’s Forum’s Charter.

It was the view of some EC members that the Forums are causing too much

trouble and the Party should close them down.

MOTION 9 (Buick and Thomas) “That this EC regards the 1980 Conference Resolution below as still valid and instructs the Internet Dept. to firmly apply it, e.g. That any offending message be immediately deleted”. Carried 7-1 1 abstention

“That this Conference views with displeasure the abusing of members by other members that has been a feature of the Party in the last three years. It considers that letters, circulars and other statements naming members as liars and rogues, denying their right to be members, disparaging and interfering with Party activity, have caused and still cause grave harm in the Party. While the Conference accepts that what has been done cannot be undone, and instructs the EC to take firm action over any instances in the future”.(Resolution carried at 1980 Conference).
(iv) (G.Thomas) New Edition of the Party’s Rule Book.

MOTION 10 (Thomas and Roberts) “That Standing Orders Committee arrange for an updated Rule Book to be produced following the voting at this years Annual Conference as outlined in Rule 1”. Carried unanimously
(v) (G.Thomas) Binding of EC Minutes and Socialist Standards.

MOTION 11 (Thomas and McEwan) “That the loose Minutes of the EC minutes be permanently bound from January 1995 up to December 2007”. Carried unanimously

MOTION 12 (Buick and Thomas) “That 15 copies of the Socialist Standard of 2005-7 be bound at a cost of £25 per volume”. Carried unanimously

(vi) (B.Johnson) Terms of Reference of all Departments and Committees.

MOTION 13 (Johnson and Thomas) “That EC members indicate which Terms of Reference they are intending to amend, and that they bring these amendments to the next EC meeting”. 8-0 1 abs.

White Lib.; Wigley Adv., Print and Election; Johnson Ballot and Campaigns; Roberts Archives.

6 Forms A and F

Forms A for Maureen Turyasingura, Kabale and Wilber Habomugisha, Kabale Uganda.

MOTION 15 (Buick and White) “That the forms A from Uganda be deferred pending a reply from the General Secretary’s letter to Comrade Mwebaze. Carried 8-0, 1 abstention.

Form A for Fraser Anderson (Edinburgh branch).

MOTION 16 (Thomas and Johnson) “That the form A be accepted”. Carried 7-0, 2 abstentions.

Form A for J.Bissett.

MOTION 17 (Thomas and Roberts) “That the form A be accepted”. Carried 8-1 Division. For:Buick,Carter.

Deutz,Johnson,McEwan,Roberts,Thomas,Wigley.
Against; White.

Forms F for Phil and Pat Bentley. The Comrades have clarified the matter of their dues, with Manchester Branch and have applied to transfer to that branch.

MOTION 18 (Deutz and Carter) “That the Forms F be rescinded and the transfer agreed”.Cd. 8-0

Form F for Fatou Ceesay rejected as the Comrade who travels frequently has re-established contact with the Party.

Form F for Silas Murimbechi. The Comrade has replied to Comrade Johnson’s letter.

MOTION 19 (Buick and Thomas) “That the Form F for Comrade Murembechi be rescinded”.

Carried unanimously.

7 Accounts

The accounts are still not finalised but the proposed move to the small office would greatly facilitate the Treasurer’s work. He is considering a change from the unsatisfactory British Gas to EON. It was suggested that TalkTalk might compare better than BT. The Treasurer is not convinced of the need for swapping, in any case this would be for the Premises Committee to consider.

8 Reports from Party Officers, Committees and Departments.

(i) Remaining reports to Conference

Library misreport. On line four of the report after the word cabinets the wording should have continued “which are being built and fitted by Comrade John Helps, are of a high quality”.

MOTION 20 (Thomas and Deutz) “That the Reports sections be accepted in entirety”Carried 9-0

(ii) HOO reports.(2) Comrade Johnson is on holiday for a week from the 14/4/08. During his tenure of office he will undertake to sort the Literature room and re-box the Standards. Comrade Roberts for Archives will provide guidance on the storing of Party material. The EC. debated whether or how much to pay any buskers who might take up the invitation to provide entertainment at the social. Comrade Johnson would appreciate help with Conference arrangements, e.g. the tables, photocopying catering.

(iii) Campaigns. Comrade Johnson provided pictures of the proposed table skirt and two free standing side banners.

MOTION 21 (McEwan and Thomas) “That the decision on the wording of the banner be deferred until 6 weeks after conference”. Lost 4-5

Division. For; G.Thomas, N.White,J.Carter, P.McEwan. Against A.Buick, H.Roberts, B.Johnson, S.Wigley, P.Deutz.

MOTION 22 (Buick and Johnson) “The purchase of the table skirt and two free standing side banners be approved with the Party’s name as ‘The Socialist Party’”. Carried 6-1, 2 abstentions

(iv)After the tea-break the EC. returned to the discussion of the GLA manifesto.

MOTION 23 (McEwan and Wigley) “That the draft election leaflet be accepted with the deletion of the 1st paragraph under ‘If you agree’”. Carried 3-2, 4 abstentions.

MOTION 24 (McEwan and Wigley) “That 20.000 elections leaflets, A4 folded in 2, black and one other colour, on silk art paper, at a cost of £758 be ordered”. Carried 7-0, 2 abstentions

(v) The EC. then returned to the Campaigns Dept. Report.
MOTION 25 (Johnson and Deutz) “That the EC. accepts the arrangements by the Campaigns Dept., regarding the 5th of April half-day school and authorises the expenditure of costed advertising”. Carried unanimously

MOTION 26 (McEwan and Roberts) “That the Campaigns Dept proceed with their proposals for public debates”. Carried 8-0, 1 abstention.

9 Correspondence.

(i) Manchester Branch resolution. (This resolution should have gone to the Feb. EC but was overlooked by the Gen. Sec.) “That the EC be informed that there may be a problem with the list of Central Branch members. This matter came to Manchester Branch’s attention recently, when we learned that the Central Branch secretary had attempted to lapse two apparent members of Central Branch for non-payment of dues. The two members concerned are members of Manchester Branch and have been paying dues to us. We do not know if this was a one-off incident, or whether it is symptomatic of a wider problem with the Central Branch list. Manchester Branch believe that the EC need to be aware of the problem because they may inadvertently ratify Form Fs from Central Branch whether members concerned belong to other branches and are paying their dues”. Noted.

(ii) Brecker Grossmith Chartered Surveyors. Offers to buy 52 Clapham High Street. The Gen. Sec to reply that we are not interested.

(iii) Minutes of the WSPNZ January 2008 meeting. Noted

(iv) Standing Orders (2)

MOTION 27 (Buick and Johnson) “That the report be noted and that all branches be informed”. Agreed unanimously.

(v) Central London (2) 29/2/08. “Be it resolved that the EC be asked to elaborate on items 7e and 7f i.e. The nature of Cde. Mwebaze’s e-mails and the action of the Assistant Secretary which the EC endorsed” (Agreed) and “Be it resolved that Central London Branch feels that the planned move referred to in 5b of the January 2008 EC minutes is unnecessary and totally without justification (Carried 4-1-2) 7 members present.”

MOTION 28 (Thomas and Johnson) “That copies of Comrade Balikudembe’s offer be circulated to branch’s”. Carried 6-0 3 abstentions

MOTION 29 (Thomas and Wigley) “That copies of Comrade Mwebaze’s emails be sent to Central London and that the EC minutes record that other branches may apply for copies should they so wish”. Not carried 3-3, 3 abstentions.

Comrades Buick and Roberts moved next business. Carried 7-2.

The chair for the next meeting: A.Buick Agreed
Date of the next meeting 29/3/08 Already agreed
Meeting adjourned 5.24.