

Minutes of the 12th Meeting of the 106th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Great Britain

5 December 2009

Note: These minutes are not official until amendment and adoption by the EC.

Present: Carter, Deutz, Browne, Miller, Buick, Allen, Johnson, M Chesham, Thomas

Apologies: Wigley

Visitors: J Shodeke, S Parker, D Chesham, H Comber, D Lambert, N Deutz

The meeting was called to order at 13:02.

1. Election of Chair

Agreed at previous meeting: Carter

2. Minutes of the previous meeting, business arising therefrom and the General Secretary's rising of Notices of Motion and Business from previous meetings

(a) Amendment and adoption of the November 2009 meeting minutes

- i. Re §4 (accounts), it was agreed that the Summer School deposit amount should read £1040.00, not £1000.40.
- ii. Re §3(a) (shop front estimate), it was agreed that the estimate amount should read £10 527, not £10 427.

Motion 1 (*Thomas & Browne*) That the minutes for November 2009 be adopted as amended.

Agreed

(b) Matters arising from the November 2009 meeting minutes

- i. Re §2(b) (membership cards), the meeting read correspondence from Cde McCullough suggesting that the cards be printed at Head Office.

Motion 2 (*Buick & Browne*) That 400 copies of the new membership cards with a red cardstock cover be printed at head office.

Agreed

- ii. Re §3(b) (fire doors), the meeting read the following motion from the 11 November meeting of Central London Branch: "The EC be informed that this branch takes the view that it is the responsibility of key-holders to ensure the security of the building." (Carried 5–1)

Motion 3 (*Buick & Allen*) That the resolution from Central London Branch be noted.

Carried 7–0–2

- iii. Re §6(d) (speaker for Robert Tressell event), no reply received from Campaigns Department yet
- iv. Re §6(e) (draft General Election manifestos), none received yet
- v. Re §7(b) (31 October book sale), Johnson noted that sales were only £25, compared to £230 taken in by the book sale of two years ago, and suggested that this was due to the total lack of advertising. He suggested that future book sales should be advertised at the Anarchist Bookfair, on the London Booksellers website, in bookshops, and the on left-wing Internet sites. Allen said another reason for poor sales was poor weather which prevented us from having a stall outside. Buick clarified that the book sale was indeed advertised, namely by leaflets, on the Head Office monitor, and in the *Standard*.

(c) Notices of Motion and Business

3. Forms A and F

- (a) Forms A for A Stone (via Membership Department) and T Rogers (Manchester)

Motion 4 (*Buick & Allen*) That the Form A for A Stone be accepted.

Agreed

Motion 5 (*Buick & Johnson*) That the Form A for T Rogers accepted.

Agreed

4. Accounts

None received.

5. Reports of Party Officers, Party Appointees, Subcommittees, and Departments; discussion of campaigns and *The Socialist Standard*

- (a) Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Investigate the Costs, Procedures and Duties Incurred by the Party of Establishing an Employed Post

The report discussed two employee contract types (casual and fixed-term) and discounted the former as infeasible. It indicated that the Party would need to decide the exact terms of employment; how the employee's work would be set, monitored, and assessed; and what disciplinary measures to set, who would apply them, and how they would be applied. The report discussed the various legal duties involved in hiring an employee, such as registration with HM Customs & Revenue; setting up a PAYE scheme for the deduction and remission of income tax and National Insurance contributions; having someone operate the scheme and calculate payroll procedures including Statutory Sick Pay; providing a legally safe and healthy work environment; ensuring that the Party does not breach any of the employee's statutory rights *vis-à-vis* sick pay, disciplinary procedures, annual leave, *etc.*; and ensuring that the employee is free to work in the UK. The report estimated the cost of employing someone at minimum wage to be between £1039 and £2094 per month (£12 468 to £25 123 per year) plus possible one-time fees for professional legal or other advice.

Allen was totally opposed to employing someone for what he said could be a voluntary position. Johnson said that an employee would also need a line manager, as you can't have a committee employing an individual. Miller noted that the Conference resolution doesn't actually bind the EC to employ anyone, but only to investigate the idea. Browne said that putting the Party on the list of employers will almost certainly result in increased attention by Inland Revenue.

Motion 6 (*Buick & Miller*) That the Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Investigate the Costs, Procedures and Duties Incurred by the Party of Establishing an Employed Post be adopted and circulated to Branches.

Carried 9–0

Motion 7 (*Buick & Allen*) That in the opinion of the EC, the Party is not in a position to employ anybody, and certainly not from January 2010.

Carried 9–0

- (b) Reports of the Publications Committee (8 November and 4 December) and associated correspondence from Nigel McCullough (4 December)

The 8 November report recommended that the Parliament pamphlet be printed professionally, that it have a cover price of £2, and that it be published at the start of the new year. Included was a draft of the cover which parodied and featured artwork from the board game *Monopoly*.

The 4 December report further discussed possible professional printing options and noted a possible copyright licensing issue with the proposed cover.

The correspondence from Cde McCullough clarified what he thought to be inaccuracies in the Publications Committee's reports, and opined that relations on the Committee had irretrievably broken down.

Thomas opined that the *Socialist Standard* Department's possible past breach of copyright should not encourage the Publications Committee to do the same, and that the suggested cover price of £2 was too high. Buick noted that the EC had previously agreed the price to be £1, and that in the absence of any other resolution this decision would hold. Miller said that the Publications Committee should be informed that non-commercial or educational use is not a defence to copyright infringement, and also noted a semantic error in the pamphlet's subtitle, "The case for and against the revolutionary use of parliament". Deutz disliked the cover for being too distracting and not relevant to the content of the pamphlet.

Motion 8 (*Miller & Thomas*) That the Publications Committee be instructed that the cover for the pamphlet shall not contain any artwork for which we do not hold the appropriate copyright licence.

Carried 9–0

Motion 9 (*Miller & Buick*) That subtitle be "The cases for and against the revolutionary use of parliament".

Amendment (*Deutz & Carter*) Replace "The cases for and against" with "The case for"
Failed 0–9

Vote on unamended motion:

Carried 8–1

Motion 10 (*Buick & Allen*) That the entire Parliament pamphlet be printed at Head Office.

Carried 9–0

- (c) Reports of the Campaigns Department (22 and 30 November)

The Department reported that Brian Morris had agreed to participate in another forum at Head Office on Saturday, 27 March 2010 at 16:00, entitled, "The Road to Socialism: Kropotkin, Morris, and Marx", and that Buick would represent the Party.

Motion 11 (*Miller & Browne*) That the Reports of the Campaigns Department be adopted.

Agreed

M Chesham reported that the Department hadn't received any notification of the November EC meeting's suggestion regarding the Robert Tressel event. It was agreed that the Assistant Secretary would send them the information.

(d) Report of the *Socialist Standard* Department (29 November)

The Department reported that the going into administration of Borders had affected our sales, and that our distributor for them now wants 20 rather than 85 copies.

Motion 12 (*Miller & Johnson*) That the *Socialist Standard* Department be authorised to reduce the *Socialist Standard* print run from 1300 to 1250.

Agreed

(e) Report of the Ballot Committee on the 2010 Party Officer and Executive Committee election

The report indicated that it had received the following accepted nominations for the 2010 ballot, the returning date for which is Friday, 8 January at 12:00:

Auditor B Martin

Central Organiser Adam Buick

General Secretary T Miller

Executive Committee F Allen, L Byrne, M Browne, A Buick, J Carter, D Chesham, M Chesham, P Deutz, J Shodeke, G Thomas

Trustees S Wilcox, A Edgar, H Moss (three nominations for two posts)

No nominations were received for Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and the second Auditor.

The Committee also reported that it had received a query concerning a joint nomination to the EC, with the proposal that the two nominees would "job share". The opinion of the Committee was that it can accept nominations for individuals standing alone but not for joint nominations for a single post, as there is no provision for joint nomination in Rule 12.

Motion 13 (*Miller & Allen*) That the query be referred to the Ballot Committee for a response in accordance with Party rules.

Carried 7-0-2

Motion 14 (*Allen & Carter*) That the Report of the Ballot Committee be adopted.

Agreed

Notice of Business 1 (*Johnson*) That the EC seriously consider the reinstatement of the General Purposes Committee, given that there have been no nominations received for Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.

Johnson left the meeting at this point.

6. Correspondence

(a) Matters of urgency

(b) Correspondence from or concerning Branches, the Party in general, and members

- i. Resolution from South London Branch: "That the EC be asked whether in the event of no nominations for Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer (2010) being made they can advise if any emergency procedure is being considered to deal with the Party's finances." (Carried 6-0-1)

Miller noted that the Rules permit the EC to appoint a Treasurer in the event that the post is vacant. D Chesham reported that S Wicks had been nominated to the

position of Assistant Treasurer by Central London Branch, but that it was possible the nomination was intercepted; he said he would investigate the matter.

Motion 15 (*Buick & Browne*) That the resolution from South London Branch be referred to the next EC.

Carried 8–0

(c) Correspondence from Companion Parties and Groups

i. WSPNZ EC Minutes for October 2009

Noted.

(d) All other correspondence

7. Any other business

(a) *Socialist Standard* digital archive

Miller reported that he was in contact with Sue Donnelly of the LSE Library, who informed him that the scanning and proofreading is now complete, and that she would be burning and sending a set of DVDs to the Party soon.

(b) Fire alarm

Thomas reported that Firetechnics has undertaken to send a commissioning certificate and a simple guide to sound testing. He recommended that, in order to maintain building safety and our insurance cover, the Head Office Organiser or Premises Committee perform sound testing weekly, and that someone test the entire system twice yearly.

Shodeke noted that we had not received a promised manual from Firetechnics.

Motion 16 (*Browne & Allen*) That the General Secretary write to Firetechnics asking them for the commissioning certificate and the operating manual for the alarm as a matter of urgency.

Carried 8–0

Motion 17 (*Miller & Allen*) That the appointment of the alarm testers be deferred to the January 2009 EC meeting, by which time we hope to have received the testing instructions.

Carried 8–0

(c) Shop front

D Chesham reported that the Premises Committee hopes to get final approval by 31 December.

8. Nomination of Chair for the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Saturday 9 January 2010 at 13:00.

Advance apologies from Miller (presumptive General Secretary).

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 15:20.