

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 106th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Great Britain

7 February 2009

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

Present: Deutz, Browne, Wigley, Miller, Buick, Allen, Johnson (arrived late), Chesham (arrived late), Thomas (arrived late)

Apologies: Carter

Visitors: D Chesham, Lawrie, Shodeke, N Deutz

The meeting was called to order at 13:10.

1. Election of Chair

Agreed at previous meeting: Browne

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 January 2009 meeting minutes

Motion 1 (*Deutz & Allen*) That "(Acceptance of nomination received from Stair but nomination not yet received from branch though Comrades Allen and Deutz conformed [*sic*] that this had happened.)" be deleted from §5(b).

Agreed

Motion 2 (*Wigley & Buick*) That the minutes for the January 2009 meeting as amended be adopted.

Carried 5-0-1

(b) Matters arising from the November 2008 meeting

i. Re Motion 5 ("That the Premises Committee be instructed to contact shop fitters regarding the front of Head Office with a view of obtaining estimates and plans.")

Deutz said she thought Cde D Lambert was looking into this.

Motion 3 (*Wigley & Deutz*) That the 2009 Premises Committee be reminded of Motion 5 of the November 2008 EC meeting and asked to report to the March 2009 EC meeting.

Carried 6-0

Chesham arrived at this point.

(c) Matters arising from the December 2008 meeting

- i. Re Motion 2 (“That a call for nominations for members of Departments, Subcommittees and Head Office Organiser be made with a closing date of the 16 January 2009”) and renewed call on 17 January

The following nominations were received:

Nominator	Nominee	Department/Committee	Accepted
EARB	Darren Poynton	Audio-Visual Department	
EARB	Lorna Stevens	Ballot Committee	Yes
EARB	Lorna Stevens	Publications Department	Yes
EARB	Nigel McCullough	Publications Department	Yes
EARB	Stair	Publications Department	Yes
Edinburgh	Fraser Anderson	Campaigns Department	Yes
Lancaster	Keith Scholey	Ballot Committee	Yes
Lancaster	Mike Browne	Ballot Committee	Yes
Lancaster	Mike Browne	Standing Orders Committee	Yes
Lancaster	Paddy Shannon	<i>Socialist Standard</i> Department	Yes
West London	Lew Higgins	Education Department	Yes
West London	Nigel McCullough	Publications Department	Yes
West London	Stair	Audio-Visual Department	Yes
Manchester	Keith Scholey	Education Department	Yes
Manchester	Keith Scholey	Archives Department	Yes
Manchester	Keith Scholey	Ballot Committee	Yes

Motion 4 (*Wigley & Allen*) That Cde Poynton be appointed to the Audio-Visual Department.

Agreed

Thomas arrived at this point.

Motion 5 (*Deutz & Buick*) That Cde Scholey be appointed to the Ballot Committee.

Carried 8-0

Motion 6 (*Wigley & Thomas*) That Cdes McCullough, Stevens, and Stair be appointed to the Publications Department.

Carried 8-0

Motion 7 (*Deutz & Wigley*) That Cde Anderson be appointed to the Campaigns Department.

Agreed

Motion 8 (*Allen & Wigley*) That Cde Shannon be appointed to the *Socialist Standard* Department.

Agreed

Motion 9 (*Buick & Browne*) That Cdes Higgins and Scholey be appointed to the Education Department

Agreed

Motion 10 (*Thomas & Miller*) That Cde Stair be appointed to the Audio-Visual Department.

Agreed

It was agreed to put out a new call for nominations for vacant posts.

- (d) Matters arising from the January 2009 meeting

- i. Re §3 (EC Standing Orders): Assistant Secretary has corrected some minor spelling, counting, and grammar issues in the Standing Orders, and distributed the latest version to EC members.

It was agreed that the deadline for submissions to the next meeting be 1 March instead of 2 March.

Johnson arrived at this point.

- ii. Re Motion 7 (“That the Treasurer: (1) Seek further quotes for the work as a matter of urgency. (2) Seek an extension of the current insurance, stressing that work is continuing. (3) If the insurers will not wait, be authorised to arrange for the work to be carried out with the most appropriate quote.”)

The meeting considered a letter from the Treasurer indicating that our insurers have agreed to renew coverage for Head Office and that the premium of £3 004 has been paid (up from £2 856 last year). Quotes were sourced from two fire alarm contractors, for £4 993 and £5 245 including VAT; the lower quote did not include provision of a spur required to power the system.

Motion 11 (*Wigley & Browne*) That the EC choose Firetechnics as our provider and arrange for the work to be done as soon as possible with the quote in hand plus a sum for the 240 V 5 A unswitched spur.

Carried 9–0

- iii. Re §10.i (progress report from Cde McCullough on rulebooks)

Motion 12 (*Thomas & Browne*) That the matter be deferred until after the Conference voting results are in.

Agreed

(e) Notices of Motion and Business

- None.

3. Forms A and F

- (a) Form F for Ray Carr, SWRB (disagreement)

Motion 13 (*Wigley & Thomas*) That the Form F for Cde Carr be accepted.

Agreed

- (b) Form F for Terry Lawlor, Central Branch (deceased)

Motion 14 (*Deutz & Wigley*) That the Form F for Cde Lawlor be accepted.

Agreed

- (c) Forms F for Eric Hamilton and Eddie O’Neil, Glasgow Branch (lapsed)

Motion 15 (*Wigley & Thomas*) That the Forms F for Cdes Hamilton and O’Neil be accepted.

Agreed

- (d) Form A for Robert Williams (via Membership Applications Department)

Motion 16 (*Wigley & Allen*) That the Form A for Robert Williams be accepted.

Agreed

It was agreed that the Central Organiser would allocate Cde Williams to a Branch.

4. Accounts

(a) August–December 2008

The Treasurer's report apologized for not yet having prepared the accounts for August through December 2008, indicated that a binder of bank statements had been mislaid, and gave notice that, due to health reasons, this would be the last year he could serve as Treasurer.

In light of this it was agreed to make an urgent renewed call for nominations for Assistant Treasurer.

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

(a) Treasurer's oral report

The Treasurer reported that he attempted to locate past gas bills and noticed some discrepancies which suggest we do not owe as much as was claimed. He is investigating the matter further.

(b) Campaigns Department report

According to the report:

- The Department set up a stall and distributed leaflets at the London STWC Gaza demonstration on 24 January.
- The recent *Zeitgeist: Addendum* film showing at Head Office drew an audience of 32, of which 18 were non-members. Further films will be shown on 28 February, 14 March, and 28 March.
- Arrangements are in place and advertising has been taken out for a debate with the UK Independence Party on the topic "Is the Pound worth saving?".
- John Meadowcroft has agreed to debate the Party on the topic "Should capitalism have a future?" at 19:30 on 23 April at Conway Hall, and Cde Headicar has been asked to represent the Party.
- The Party received an invitation to participate at a debate at University College Dublin on the motion "That this house believes that the end of capitalism is night"; unfortunately, the Department could not find a Party speaker for the event.
- A professor from a Jackson, Mississippi college has asked the Party to assist a study abroad class in London in July on the topic "Capitalism, Socialism, Communism: Have we made the right choice?"; the Department is investigating the matter.
- Future activities under consideration include the May Day School, "Capitalism in Crisis"; an autumn programme of films and meetings; and leafleting possible upcoming demonstrations and strikes against foreign labour.

Chesham reported that Cde Headicar has since agreed to participate in the debate. Lawrie reported that further details on the May Day School and a June Open Day would be presented to the next EC meeting.

Motion 17 (*Johnson & Wigley*) That Cde Headicar be appointed to the debate with Meadowcroft.

Agreed

Motion 18 (*Wigley & Deutz*) That the EC accept and approve the Campaigns Department's report.

Agreed

(c) Letter from Treasurer, 4 February 2009

The letter strongly recommended against implementing the 12 January Manchester Branch resolution urging the Party to open a deposit account with the Cooperative Bank and transfer £150 000 therein, because (a) the transfer would leave insufficient funds in our Alliance and Leicester account to pay standing orders, (b) the Party already holds three deposit and trust accounts with four different banks and building societies, (c) there is no branch of the Cooperative Bank near Head Office, and (b) it is not clear what the Party wants to do about the Report of the Committee on Investigating Party Funds.

Motion 19 (*Wigley & Deutz*) That this EC endorses the Treasurer's letter, declines Manchester Branch's urging, and instructs the Assistant Secretary to reply to Manchester Branch enclosing a copy of the letter.

Carried 9–0

Motion 20 (*Buick & Browne*) That a copy of the Treasurer's letter concerning the Manchester Branch resolution be sent to all Branches.

Agreed

(d) Standing Orders Committee report and letter (5 February)

The report indicated that two Conference submissions from East Anglia Regional Branch had been ruled out of order as they seek to amend or replaces Party Rules, but are not worded in the form of Amendments to Rule.

The letter indicated that Conference submissions from Lancaster Branch were not included on the Preliminary Agenda as they were misfiled and thus did not reach the Standing Orders Committee on time.

The Assistant Secretary explained that such misfilings can be prevented if correspondents would limit their e-mails and letters to one topic and recipient at a time, rather than sending one large e-mail containing several items each to be acted upon by different Officers or Departments.

Motion 21 (*Wigley & Miller*) That the misfiled Lancaster Branch motions be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee for inclusion in the Conference agenda, subject to normal guidelines.

Agreed

(e) Library Department oral report

Wigley reported that there is a conflict between the Library and Archive Departments concerning who is responsible for keeping books by or concerning Party members. He gave notice that he would therefore be putting three budget requests to the next EC meeting: a general £300 budget for books, a sum for the replacement of the overdue library books, and a sum to procure duplicate copies of Party member-specific books held by the Archive Department.

6. Correspondence

(a) Matters of urgency

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

i. Overdue library books

Allen reported that he had sent final notices to three members requesting the return of long-overdue library books (in some cases up to thirteen years). Two members have not responded, and one complained about the notice. As the matter of reclaiming overdue books had been ongoing for years, and had already been brought up at Conference, discussion focused on whether and how to replace the missing books, and whether the delinquent borrowers should be held financially responsible. Buick and

Thomas said they had extra copies of some of the overdue books and could donate them to the library.

Motion 22 (*Buick & Wigley*) That the Library Department seek to replace books overdue longer than 2002.

Carried 8–0–1

Motion 23 (*Miller & Thomas*) That the Library Department provide to the April 2009 EC a full accounting of the costs of the replacement books so that members holding the overdue copies can be billed therefor.

For: Miller, Deutz, Thomas, Allen, Chesham. Against: Browne, Johnson, Buick, Wigley. Abstaining: none.

Carried 5–4

- ii. Forms C for East Anglia Regional Branch, Glasgow Branch, South West Regional Branch, and West Midlands Branch

Motion 24 (*Miller & Deutz*) That the EC note all four Forms C and remind the remaining Branches to submit theirs.

Agreed

Motion 25 (*Johnson & Browne*) That the EC recess for tea.

Failed 2–4–2

- iii. E-mails from Cde Layton (30 January and 6 February) re EARB resolutions

The e-mails appealed decisions by the East Anglia Regional Branch removing him as Chair because he consistently abstained from voting.

Deutz and Allen clarified that, at least initially, Cde Layton had claimed that the chair was not permitted to vote, possibly except in certain circumstances, citing Citrine's rules.

Motion 26 (*Miller & Johnson*) That this EC finds that nothing in the Branch Standing Orders prevents a chair from voting on motions put to the Branch, and also that nothing in the Branch Standing Orders compels any member to vote on motions put to the Branch. Apart from this factual clarification, the EC considers the issue raised by Cde Layton to be an internal Branch matter.

Carried 7–0–2

Motion 27 (*Wigley & Browne*) That Branches are brought to order in accordance with Branch Standing Orders, not Citrine or any other guide. Those Branch Standing Orders make no provision for the chairs voting differently to other Branch members.

Carried 9–0

- (c) Correspondence from Companion Parties and Groups

- i. WSPUS December 2008 NAC minutes

Agreed to note.

- (d) All other correspondence

- None received.

- 7. Any other business

- (a) Standing Order 28: Renewal of our registration as a political party

It was agreed to refer this matter to the Election Department.

(b) Kitchen health and safety

Johnson said that in his opinion the kitchen did not meet health and safety standards; in particular, tiling was required around the cooker and sinks, and the table needed replacing. He also said the chairs are too heavy and need replacing.

Motion 28 (*Wigley & Johnson*) That the matter be referred to the Premises Committee, and that they submit a response to the April 2009 EC meeting.

Carried 6-1-1

(c) Bus adverts

Johnson said that pursuant to a Campaigns Department report from last autumn, he had investigated bus adverts, and found that it would cost over £10 000 for four buses for four weeks.

Motion 29 (*Johnson & Chesham*) That the Advertising Department look further into possibility of bus adverts.

Carried 4-3-2

(d) Conference 2009

It was agreed to make a call for all Departments, Committees, and Appointees to submit their reports to Conference to the EC by 1 March. Also, Party Officers are reminded to submit their reports to Conference to the Standing Orders Committee by 1 March.

8. Nomination of Chair for the next meeting

Motion 30 (*Browne & Chesham*) That Deutz chair the March 2009 EC meeting.

Agreed

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 15:17.