

Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the 104th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party

1 December 2007

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

Present: Carter, White, Chesham, Helps, Deutz, Stair, Miller

Apologies: Browne, Easton

Visitors: L Stevens, M Chesham, J Shodeke (non-member), P Smith (non-member), B Johnson, A Gordillo

The meeting was called to order at 13:19. Deutz and Carter gave notice that they had to leave at 18:00.

1. Election of Chair

Agreed at previous meeting: Helps

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 of the 3 November 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 1 (*Miller & Chesham*) That in Motion 27 of the 3 November 2007 minutes, "Agreed 8-0" be replaced with "8-0"

Agreed

Motion 2 (*Chesham & Miller*) That in §8(f) of the 3 November 2007 minutes, "January 2007" be replaced with "January 2008".

Agreed

(b) Adoption of the 3 November 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 3 (*Deutz & Chesham*) That the minutes of the 3 November 2007 meeting as amended be adopted.

Carried 7-0

(c) Matters arising from the 3 December 2005 meeting minutes

i. Re Motion 2.2.iii (review of Miller's visit)

Motion 4 (*Deutz & Chesham*) That the EC appreciates the work being done by Cde Miller and approves his continuing stay at Head Office, but will review the matter again in two months.

Carried 6-0-1

The meeting considered an e-mail from P Lancaster (22 November) objecting to the presence of Miller's ferret at Head Office, along with a report from the Trustees (26 November) on same.

Motion 5 (*White & Chesham*) That the EC note Cde Lancaster's message, but that he be sent a copy of the Trustees' letter for his information.

Failed 2-2-3

Motion 6 (*White & Carter*) That in light of the advice from the Trustees, the EC note Cde Lancaster's message.

Amendment (*Chesham & Stair*) Insert "health and safety" in front of "advice".

Carried 6-0-1

Vote on motion as amended:

Carried 6-0-1

(d) Matters arising from the 7 July 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 26 of 7 July and Motion 10 of 1 September (image credits in the *Standard*)

The Assistant Secretary reported that he had arranged to meet with the layout team of the *Socialist Standard* Department but that they had since agreed that this might no longer be necessary because the Department now seemed to be complying with image licensing requirements. The Assistant Secretary reported that the Department was considering subscribing to a stock or newswire photo service and would therefore need the expense authorised. It was agreed to defer the matter until the next EC meeting, by which time the Assistant Secretary and Department would have investigated the costs.

At this point the meeting agreed to suspend the normal order of business in order to consider §3 (*q. v.*).

(e) Matters arising from the 6 October 2007 meeting

i. Re §2(d) (Pooley Estate) and Motion 14 (Lambert's observations on the Pooley Estate)

A. Letter from D Lambert (7 November) setting out his recollection of the events (specifically, that Briggs's first consultation was to be free, and that subsequent work would incur charges) and indicating that confusion regarding payment to Briggs had arisen because his original report had never been minuted.

Stair said his recollection differed from Lambert's. Miller, White, and Carter, who had dealt with the matter on the 2006 EC, said they could not recall what had been reported at the time. Stair, Miller, and White said that this problem would not have arisen had the minutes been more detailed.

Motion 7 (*Deutz & Helps*) That the EC thank Cde Lambert for his report and note the information.

Carried 5-0-1

B. Resolution from South London Branch (30 November):

Regarding the J Briggs offer to review the file on the outstanding money from the Pooley estate without charge, that the EC take up the offer. (6-0)

Motion 8 (*Deutz & Miller*) That South London Branch's resolution be noted.

Carried 7-0

(f) Matters arising from the 20 October 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 2 (Party poll on the proposition "to revoke Motion 9 of the meeting of August 4th EC meeting charging Comrade Martin [confirmation of Motion 24 of the July 7th EC meeting] and to refer the matter to West London Branch")

The Ballot Committee reported of the 339 voting papers issued, 144 were returned. Of these, 101 were for the proposition, 43 were against the proposition, and 1 was not

counted as it lacked a validation paper. The proposition is therefore carried. The returns by Branch are as follows:

| Branch | Returns |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Central | 39 |
| Central London | 7 |
| East Anglian Regional | 10 |
| Edinburgh | 3 |
| Enfield & Haringey | 3 |
| Glasgow | 9 |
| Lancaster | 7 |
| Manchester | 13 |
| North East | 5 |
| South London | 10 |
| South West Regional | 5 |
| Swansea | 12 |
| West London | 15 |
| West Midland Regional | 6 |

Motion 9 (*Miller & Stair*) That the result of the poll be noted, that the EC acknowledge that the resolution in question has been rescinded, and that the EC refer the matter of the charge against M Martin to West London Branch.

For: Miller, Helps, Stair, White, Carter, Deutz. Against: None. Abstaining: Chesham.

Carried 6–0–1

Motion 10 (*Miller & Stair*) That West London Branch be asked to keep the EC apprised on their handling of the matter of Cde M Martin.

Carried 7–0

(g) Matters arising from the 3 November 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 11 (Library Department nomination for S Wigley)

The meeting read an e-mail from P Lancaster via the Central Branch Secretary (26 November) asking why Wigley had not been appointed to the Library Department.

Motion 11 (*Miller & White*) That Cde Lancaster be informed that the EC's decisions to appoint members to Committees is always made in consideration of several factors, including the candidate's ability to work with existing members of the committee, their plans for work, their ability or intention to turn up for work, and their past experience and performance on Committees.

Carried 6–0–1

ii. Re Motion 24 (increasing the Branch discount for the *Standard*)

The meeting read an e-mail from the *Socialist Standard* Department (26 November) indicating that they had no particular view on increasing the Branch discount for the *Standard*.

Motion 12 (*Stair & White*) That from January 2008 the *Socialist Standard* Department give branches a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % discount with no postage costs.

Carried 7–0

iii. Re §8(f) (nominations for Party Officers and Executive Committee)

The Ballot Committee reported that the following nominations had been received and accepted by the nominees:

General Secretary Janet Carter

Assistant Secretary Tristan Miller

Treasurer Gwynn Thomas

Trustees (2 positions) Howard Moss, Sid Wilcox

Central Organiser Adam Buick, David Chesham

Executive Committee (10 positions) Adam Buick, Janet Carter, David Chesham, Marie Chesham, Pat Deutz, John Helps, Brian Johnson, Paula McEwan, Tristan Miller, Helen Roberts, Stair, Lorna Stevens, Gwynn Thomas, Nick White, Simon Wigley

The Committee acknowledged the 1971 Conference resolution prohibiting candidates from participating on the Ballot Committee and confirmed that Johnson would therefore be recusing himself from the Ballot Committee for the duration of the election.

Concerns were raised about the security of the ballots, with some EC members pointing out that between the time they were posted by the voter and the time they were placed in the locked ballot box, they were susceptible to interception and replacement with forged copies.

Motion 13 (*Miller & Helps*) That the Ballot Committee be instructed to purchase a single stamp with a unique image and that they stamp all ballot papers to help mark them as genuine.

Carried 5–0–2

It was acknowledged that it was too late for this resolution to be applied to the current EC/Party Officer ballot.

iv. Re Motion 32 (access to Party documents)

The Assistant Secretary drew the EC's attention to a 1965 Conference Resolution expressing much the same view as Motion 32 of the 3 November EC meeting:

This Conference reaffirms that, in keeping with our democratic principles, members of the public have free access to our Constitution, Rules, and records (with the exception of membership lists) as they have to all our meetings, and instructs the EC to act accordingly in future.

(h) Notices of Motion and Business

- None received.

3. Forms A and F

(a) Form A for Lorna Stevens (East Anglia)

Motion 14 (*Chesham & White*) That the Form A for Lorna Stevens be accepted.

Carried 7–0

4. Written report of the General Purposes Committee

- Committee vacant.

5. Accounts

- None received.

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

(a) 2007 Autumn Delegate Meeting: Proceedings and Summary of Discussion

The meeting noted that the delegates had adopted the reports of the EC and its subcommittees, and that no other resolutions had been passed which required the EC's attention.

(b) Report from the Campaigns Department and discussion of campaigns

The Campaigns Department reported that the Mental Health day school was successful, with 20 visitors and 14 members in attendance; that the Department would attend an 8 December demonstration on climate change; that a new day school on climate change is planned for after Conference; that the Department is considering getting an artist to produce a mosaic for Head Office; that Deutz participated in a debate; that the Department would make a greater effort to confirm debate formats in advance; that the Department had prepared an approved speakers list of 23 members, 15 of whom are available to speak; and that the Department had investigated costs (£1300) for promotional items such as pens, mugs, and clothing. Deutz reported on her debate and on the problems with its format, and said that £10 in literature was sold.

Motion 15 (*Miller & Stair*) That the EC congratulate the Campaigns Department and all those involved on the very successful and well-attended Mental Health half-day school and social.

Carried 7–0

The EC was generally sceptical of or opposed to the purchase of promotional items. It was agreed that the Department would present the next EC meeting with designs and written prices for a wraparound banner and stands.

(c) Discussion of the *Socialist Standard*

(d) Oral report from Publications Department

The Department reported on proposed revisions to *An Inconvenient Question* and that a sympathiser would likely print it for free, and that it had designed a colour leaflet template which would be used for topical leaflets provided by Steve Szalai of the Socialist Party of Canada. The EC was apprised of a letter from Peter Newell about his book on the history of the Socialist Party of Canada and his attempts to find a publisher. Miller said that he had contacted Newell in July recommending some publishers but had not received a response; it was agreed to defer the matter until Miller had attempted to contact Newell again.

Motion 16 (*White & Chesham*) That the Publications Department be instructed to proceed with publication of *An Inconvenient Question*, with the print run to be 1000 and retail price to be £2.

For: Carter, Deutz, Chesham, Helps, White. Against: None. Abstaining: Stair, Miller.

Carried 5–0–2

7. Correspondence

(a) Matters of urgency

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

- i. Letter from South West Regional Branch (15 November) on the formation of their Branch and expressing disappointment that ratification of same had been delayed by the EC.

Motion 17 (*Miller & White*) That the EC write to South West Regional Branch explaining and apologising for the delay in authorising their Branch.

Carried 6–0

ii. Illegal discrimination complaint from P Lancaster

The meeting considered an e-mail from P Lancaster (12 November) warning that any attempt to charge him under Rules 29 or 31 may constitute illegal discrimination. The e-mail had been referred to the Trustees, whose report on same (17 November) was considered. Also considered was correspondence on the matter from the Assistant Secretary (12 and 14 November); the spopen moderator Alan Johnstone (13 November); Easton

(13 November); and Paula McEwan (28 November), who was among those specifically named in Lancaster's warning.

There arose a discussion on moderation of the mailing lists, and whether to publish Lancaster's e-mail, in which various conflicting views were presented.

Motion 18 (*Stair & Carter*) Next business.

Carried 5-1-1

iii. spintcom post from Melvin Tenner re Eddie Grant (30 November)

Tenner reported that Eddie Grant of West London Branch died on 29 November at the age of 74; that he will be cremated at Golders Green Crematorium, Hoop Lane, London NW11 on Thursday, 6 December at 14:00; and that members who knew him are welcome to attend. It was agreed to note these details in the minutes.

(c) Correspondence from Companion Parties and Groups

The following correspondence was considered:

- WSPNZ minutes for October 2007
- SPC newsletter for November 2007
- WSPUS 2007 Annual Conference Report

Discussion focussed on the WSPUS's stance on religion with regards to membership requirements, as described in §3 of their Conference Report.

Motion 19 (*Deutz & Miller*) That the EC note the correspondence from the Companion Parties.

Carried 6-0

(d) All other correspondence

i. Report of the Proceeding of the Autumn School & Membership Meeting of the World Socialist Party (India), 25-27 October 2007

The EC noted with interest the WSP(I)'s call for our Party to reconcile with the *Socialist Studies* Group, and the WSP(I)'s official resolution to work towards unification with the WSG(I) and to reintegrate itself into the World Socialist Movement.

It was suggested that the WSP(I) be asked to provide a rebuttal of its diatribe against us before we could consider re-establishing comradely relations with them. It was agreed to ask the Central Organiser for an update on the situation to be submitted to the next EC meeting.

8. Any other business

(a) Call for nominations for Departments, Committees, and Appointees

It was agreed to issue the call for nominations with the deadline to be the next EC meeting.

Deutz and Carter left at this point.

(b) Head Office front

Chesham asked if there was any progress on the renovations to the Head Office shop front. It was noted that the electronic display had caused a slight influx of visitors, but that simply leaving the window unobstructed had resulted in an even greater influx. Stair reported that renovation plans are underway, and that it would help matters if the relevant committees (the Premises Committee and the Public Access Committees) had more active members. It was agreed to revisit the matter at the next EC meeting.

(c) Party website

Motion 20 (*Chesham & Helps*) That the EC notes with alarm that on 24 November the Party's webmaster added to the Party's website a link to class-warfare.blogspot.com, the blog of a disgruntled ex-member which attacks the Party and brings it into disrepute. The EC therefore instructs the Internet Department to remove the link forthwith.

Carried 5-0

9. Nomination of Chair for the next meeting

It was agreed not to make a nomination since the membership of the 2008 EC could not be predicted.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 18:37.