

Minutes of the 13th Meeting of the 104th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party

3 November 2007

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

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

Apologies: Browne

Visitors: G Thomas, S Parker, N Deutz, B Johnson, J Shodeke (non-member), L Stevens (non-member)

The meeting was called to order at 13:09.

1. Election of Chair

Motion 1 (*White & Chesham*) That Stair be chair.

Agreed

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 6 October 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 2 (*Chesham & Miller*) That in Motion 23 of the 6 October 2007 minutes, "in which is" be replaced with "which has".

Agreed

Motion 3 (*Chesham & Miller*) That in §3(a) of the 6 October 2007 minutes, "havy" be replaced with "have any".

Agreed

Motion 4 (*Helps & Deutz*) That in §6(e) of the 6 October 2007 minutes, "several" be replaced with "two (Helps and Stair)".

Agreed

(b) Adoption of the 6 October 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 5 (*Deutz & Helps*) That the minutes of 6 October 2007 as amended be adopted.

Agreed

Easton arrived at this point.

(c) Amendment of the 20 October 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 6 (*Deutz & Miller*) That the wording of the Birmingham resolution and voting figures be inserted at the beginning of §3 of the 20 October 2007 minutes:

That Birmingham Branch support the poll requisition from West London Branch (8 August): "That a poll of the Party be called in accordance with Rule 26 to revoke Resolution 9 of the meeting of the EC of 4 August charging Comrade Martin [confirmation of Resolution 24 of the 7 July EC meeting] and to refer the matter to West London Branch." (7-0)

Agreed

Motion 7 (*Miller & Chesham*) That in Motion 2 of the 20 October 2007 minutes, the word "elected" be deleted.

Agreed

(d) Adoption of the 20 October 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 8 (*Chesham & Helps*) That the minutes of 20 October 2007 as amended be adopted.

Agreed

(e) Matters arising from the 2 June 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 16 (Conference resolution implementation)

A. Letter from the Treasurer (29 September) asking for further volunteers to operate the new bank account.

Motion 9 (*Chesham & Helps*) That the report of the Treasurer be approved and that Cdes Stair, White, and Deutz be appointed as cosignatories to operate the HSBC bank account.

Carried 8-0

(f) 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*)

Agreed to defer pending a further report from the Assistant Secretary.

ii. Re Motion 33 (Campaigns Department posters): See §6a

(g) Matters arising from the 4 August 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 19 (Library Department nominations)

A. Letter from West London Branch and S Wigley (29 September)

Motion 10 (*Deutz & Easton*) That Wigley be appointed to the Library Department.

For: Deutz. Against: White, Stair, Chesham. Abstaining: Carter, Miller, Easton, Helps.

Failed 1-3-4

(h) Matters arising from the 1 September 2007 meeting

i. Re Motion 13 (solicitation of support from members not present at Branch meetings)

A. E-mail from Central Organiser with attachments (30 September) arguing that in refusing to accept the first Birmingham Branch poll requisition, the EC was misinterpreting Party practice and opinion.

Motion 11 (*Miller & White*) That Cde Easton be asked to furnish a reply to the Central Organiser in accordance with the facts.

Carried 5-0-3

B. Letter from Central London Branch (29 October) containing the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Central London Branch urges the EC to draft a set of uniform standing orders for online Branch meetings and that they present same to Conference for adoption. (3-1-1)

Motion 12 (*Carter & Easton*) That this EC thanks the three members, Buick, McEwan, and Miller, for their present involvement into the investigation of Standing Orders for online Branch activities and requests that they submit their conclusions to the January 2008 EC meeting.

Carried 7-0-1

- ii. Re Motion 16 (Form A for C. W.): Letter from David Porter, Membership Department (25 September) indicating that B Malcolm wished to be a member of the Department this year, and giving further details regarding the applications from C. W. and A. S.

Motion 13 (*White & Miller*) That the EC write to the Membership Department referring to recent applications and stressing the importance of properly scrutinising candidates' understanding and acceptance of the Party case.

Carried 6-0-2

Motion 14 (*Carter & Helps*) That the EC appoint Ben Malcolm to the Membership Department.

Carried 4-1-3

- iii. Re Motion 27 (roof hatch security)

Stair (Premises Committee) said that in the interests of fire safety Head Office needs a roof hatch which is easy to open and hold open, and in the interests of security which automatically locks when closed. He presented the meeting with a quote for £2995 for a new hatch and ladder.

As many EC members expressed the view that it was not necessary to replace the existing ladder, it was agreed that the Premises Committee would accept further recommendations from knowledgeable comrades.

- (i) Matters arising from the 6 October 2007 meeting

- i. Re §2.d.i (payment to John Briggs for services re the Pooley Estate)

A. Letter from Treasurer (24 October) requesting a clarification of the 6 October 2007 EC minutes.

Motion 15 (*Miller & Chesham*) That it be noted that the statement of Stair in the 6 October 2007 minutes, "Stair said that the Ad-hoc Committee and/or Treasurer had been advised not to contact Briggs to offer to pay," was his personal interpretation of events and not necessarily the view of the EC as a whole.

Carried 8-0

- ii. Re §2.f.i.A and §2.h.i.B (East Anglian Regional Branch resolutions regarding the charge against M Martin and the poll requisition from West London Branch)

A. Letter from Central London Branch (29 October) containing the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Central London Branch supports the East Anglian Regional Branch resolutions of 22 September. (4-0-1)

Motion 16 (*Deutz & Helps*) That Central London Branch's resolution be noted.

Agreed

- (j) Matters arising from the 20 October 2007 meeting

- i. Re Motion 2 (Party poll): dates for mailout and return of ballot papers

Motion 17 (*Deutz & Chesham*) That the Ballot Committee proceed today, 3 November 2007, with the Party poll as per Rule 26, the returning date to be 1 December 2007.

Carried 7-1

(k) Notices of Motion and Business

- None received.

3. Forms A and F

(a) Form A for John Shade

Motion 18 (*Deutz & Miller*) That the Form A for John Shade be accepted.

Agreed

(b) Forms F for Pat and Phil Bentley (Central Branch, lapsed)

Motion 19 (*Chesham & Deutz*) That the Forms F be accepted with reluctance.

Carried 7-1

4. Written report of the General Purposes Committee

- Committee vacant.

5. Accounts

(a) Accounts for April–June 2007

Motion 20 (*Deutz & Easton*) That the accounts be noted.

Agreed

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

(a) Reports from the Campaigns Department (August, September, October 2007)

Motion 21 (*Miller & Helps*) That the reports be noted.

Carried 7-0

It was agreed that the Campaigns Department would submit a detailed proposal and budget for various promotional items.

Motion 22 (*Easton & Miller*) That the EC approves the speakers Deutz, and Pitts or Johnson, for the upcoming debates.

Carried 8-0

(b) Report from the Assistant Secretary

The report summarised the events surrounding the Party poll, noted that Birmingham Branch had renamed itself West Midland Regional Branch, and confirmed that the Head Office electronic display had been repaired for £45. The Head Office burglary cases had been closed by the police due to lack of evidence. Finally, several antique disused computers from Head Office were being refurbished.

It was agreed that anyone interested in taking the computers should contact Head Office.

(c) Discussion of campaigns

(d) Report from the *Socialist Standard* Department

The report recommending that as of January 2008, the subscription rates for the *Socialist Standard* be increased from £12 (normal), £7 (unwaged), £15 (Europe), and £22 (rest of world) to £15, £10, £20, and £25, respectively. The report indicated that the Department could investigate the possibility of increasing the Branch discount so that Branches could continue to sell the journal for £1.

Motion 23 (*Miller & Deutz*) That the *Socialist Standard* prices be increased as per the Department's report.

Carried 8–0

Motion 24 (*Miller & Deutz*) That the *Socialist Standard* Department be asked to report to the December 2007 EC meeting on the question of increasing the Branch discount.

Carried 8–0

(e) Discussion of the *Socialist Standard*

7. Correspondence

(a) Matters of urgency

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

i. Letter from Central Branch Secretary (2 July)

A. Overseas Contacts Committee and Overseas Group Secretary

Motion 25 (*Helps & Deutz*) That B Johnson be appointed to the Overseas Contacts Committee.

Carried 8–0

Motion 26 (*Helps & Deutz*) That B Johnson be appointed Overseas Group Secretary.

Carried 8–0

B. Correspondence with Zambia group and associated correspondence from P Newell on the subject of the Party's attitude towards religion (23 July and 4 September)

Motion 27 (*Carter & Chesham*) That Cde Johnson be asked to write to Cde Mulenga for clarification on his use of "MHSRIP" at the end of his letter.

Agreed

8–0

Motion 28 (*White & Miller*) That Cde Johnson also contact the other six members of Central Branch who, according to him, "need clarification of the Party case".

Carried 6–0–2

ii. E-mail from Central Branch Secretary regarding Central Branch Standing Orders (5 September)

Motion 29 (*Miller & Easton*) That the Central Branch Secretary be encouraged to draft a set of standing orders for Central Branch and to present same to the January 2008 EC meeting.

Carried 7–0–1

iii. Letter from Central Organiser regarding the formation of the South West Regional Branch (19 September)

Motion 30 (*Miller & Chesham*) That South West Regional Branch be constituted under the terms of Rule 7.

Carried 8–0

iv. E-mail from West London Branch (29 September 21:18):

All members present at our 18 September branch meeting asked me to raise with you the question of suitable facilities for smokers, or the lack of them, at Head Office. So far as we are aware, there is presently no sheltered, insulated and heated area at the rear of the premises of a kind mushrooming around the country since New Labour's benevolent apartheid legislation. We assume that the Premises Committee has a construction in mind and that this will take priority over any non-essential work on their list of desiderata, given the approach of winter. Such

a facility need not require a great deal of work by members, since there are plenty of purpose-built structures that comply with government guidelines. We believe it would be politic if any final decision on suitability took into account the views of some of “the unclean”, rather than being made exclusively by the unpolluted.

Motion 31 (*Miller & Deutz*) That West London Branch be referred to Motion 14 of the September EC minutes [“Be it resolved that this EC affirms that the Party’s infrastructure is for the propagation of socialism and the administration of the Party.”] and be asked to justify the expense of erecting a facility at Head Office for the purely recreational use of a minority of members.

Carried 8–0

- v. E-mail from West London Branch (28 October) containing the following resolution:

We understand that someone has intercepted and circulated unpublished material sent by West London Branch to the Standing Orders Committee on at least one occasion. If this is so, it is outside the remit of the person concerned and out of order, and the EC must ensure that it does not happen in future. (7–0–1)

Motion 32 (*Miller & Easton*) That West London Branch be informed that, except for the membership database, the Party has no secret documents, and especially not those of which Branches had specifically requested publication.

Carried 7–1

- vi. Letter from P Lancaster (7 October) asking for confirmation that Miller’s visit would continue to be periodically reviewed.

The Assistant Secretary reported that he had responded in the affirmative on 29 October.

Motion 33 (*Carter & ?*) That the action of the Assistant Secretary in relation to this matter be endorsed.

Agreed

- vii. Form C from Birmingham Branch

Agreed to note.

- (c) Correspondence from Companion Parties and Groups

It was agreed to note the following correspondence:

- WSPNZ minutes for June 2007
- WSPNZ minutes for July 2007
- WSPNZ minutes for August 2007
- WSPNZ minutes for September 2007
- SPC newsletter for July 2007
- SPC newsletter for August 2007
- SPC newsletter for September 2007
- SPC newsletter for October 2007
- WSG(I) minutes for July 2007

- (d) All other correspondence

- i. E-mail from J Bissett giving advice on and volunteering to help with Party videos (30 August) and retraction of offer (3 November)

Agreed to note.

8. Any other business

(a) Insurance on Head Office contents

Motion 34 (*Helps & White*) That the EC instruct the Trustees to look into the question of contents insurance for Head Office, given the recent spate of burglaries.

Carried 8–0

(b) Ecology pamphlet

The Publications Department reported that they hoped to place a new draft of the pamphlet before the next EC meeting.

(c) Conference 2007 proceedings

It was asked whether or when the full proceedings of the 2007 Conference would be available. The Assistant Secretary replied that only the General Secretary had taken any notes, but that he had since resigned.

(d) Easton gave apologies for absence next month.

(e) World of Free Access scam

Miller reported that John Bissett had alerted the Party to a scammer soliciting funds in the name of the World of Free Access in Gambia. The scammer had no connection to the WFA but was using the Internet to solicit funds ostensibly on their behalf; his messages used religious and reformist language.

It was agreed to warn the WFA and others about the scam.

(f) Call for nominations for EC and Party Officers, and call for and Conference items

It was agreed to issue a call for nominations for the Executive Committee and for elected Party Officers, to be received before the next EC meeting on 1 December 2007. It was agreed to issue a first call for submissions to the 2008 Conference, to be received before the January EC meeting on 5 January 2007.

9. Nomination of Chair for the next meeting

It was agreed that Helps would be Chair.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 19:13.