

Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the 104th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party

7 July 2007

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

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

Apologies: Browne,* Stair

Visitors: A Buick, M Chesham, N Deutz, P Hart, J Lawrie, S Parker, G Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 13:04.

1. Election of Chair

(a) Agreed at previous meeting: Chesham

Motion 1 (*Miller & Easton*) BIRT all late correspondence be added to the agenda.

Carried 7-0-1

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 2 June 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 2 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT in §6.a of the 2 June 2007 minutes, "Received comments from" be deleted.

Agreed

Motion 3 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT in §7.b.ix of the 2 June 2007 minutes, "It was agreed that the Assistant Secretary should write to the Marchmont Community Centre to complain about the upcoming meeting there." be inserted.

Agreed

(b) Adoption of the 2 June 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 4 (*Deutz & Chesham*) BIRT the minutes for 2 June 2007 as amended be adopted.

Agreed

(c) Matters arising from the 2 June 2007 meeting

i. Motion 8 (GPC/assistant). No report received from HOO or Treasurer.

Motion 5 (*Deutz & Helps*) BIRT the matter of an assistant to the Treasurer be deferred, and that the Treasurer and Head Office Organiser be reminded to respond to the EC's query.

*A telephone message from Browne left before the meeting was received only after the meeting.

Agreed

- ii. Motion 18 (speakers' classes). No report received from CO.

Motion 6 (*Deutz & Helps*) BIRT the matter of speakers' classes be deferred, and that the Central Organiser be reminded to respond to the EC's query.

Agreed

- iii. Motion 16 (Conference resolution implementation). No reports received other than that of the *Socialist Standard* Department.

Motion 7 (*Deutz & Bissett*) BIRT the matter of the outstanding requests for reports on Conference resolution implementation be deferred.

Agreed

- iv. Motion 31 (Forms F for Pat and Phil Bentley)

The meeting considered a letter from the Central Branch Secretary of 2 July submitting or resubmitting Forms F for Cdes Partington, Mwape, Critchfield, and Pat and Phil Bentley. The EC also received a letter from the Head Office Organiser indicating that the Bentleys wished to remain members and would pay by standing order.

Motion 8 (*Deutz & Easton*) BIRT the EC accept the Forms F for Cdes Partington, Mwape, and Critchfield.

Agreed

Motion 9 (*Miller & Easton*) BIRT the Forms F for the Bentleys be rejected and the Central Branch Secretary be apprised of the Head Office Organiser's letter.

Agreed

- (d) Amendment of the 24 June 2007 meeting minutes

The EC read a letter from Buick urging caution with the posting of the minutes of the 24 June meeting.

Motion 10 (*Easton & Bissett*) BIRT the full minutes of of the 24 June special meeting be circulated to Branches and members who normally received them by post, that discussion be omitted from the minutes posted online, and that a notice be inserted in those minutes indicating that the full minutes are available on request.

Carried 7–0–1

Motion 11 (*Miller & Chesham*) BIRT the 24 June minutes be amended by adding Gordillo & Lee to the visitors list.

Agreed

Motion 12 (*Miller & Helps*) BIRT in §4.d.viii of the 24 June minutes, "Smith presented the Branch with" be replaced with "Smith presented him and two other members with", and "The Branch advised him not to submit the letter, and advised him" with "They advised him not to submit the letter, and the Branch advised him".

Agreed

Motion 13 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT in §4.c.iii ¶2 of the 24 June minutes, the first instance of "Lawrie" be replaced with "Johnson".

Agreed

Motion 14 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT the 24 June minutes include voting figures for all Branch motions.

Agreed

Motion 15 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT §4.d.viii ¶3 of the 24 June minutes be replaced with “Clanchy wrote that Smith felt the need to get things off his chest, and that she considered this to be the end of the matter.”

Agreed

Motion 16 (*Deutz & Miller*) BIRT in §4.c.ix of the 24 June minutes “filed no written expense claim” be replaced with “submitted no expense claims to him”.

Agreed

Motion 17 (*Deutz & Carter*) BIRT the comments of Cdes Thomas and Johnson in answer to Central London Branch’s Item 4 be referred to in the minutes.

Failed 3–3–2

Motion 18 (*Deutz & Easton*) BIRT in §4.d.xi of the 24 June minutes, “that it threw mud on Smith” be replaced with “that it was like throwing a handful of mud and hoping some would stick.”

Agreed

Motion 19 (*Helps & Chesham*) BIRT in §4.d.viii of the 24 June minutes, “Aries had complained” be replaced with with “Aries had mentioned”.

Agreed

(e) Adoption of the 24 June 2007 meeting minutes

Motion 20 (*Bissett & White*) BIRT the minutes for 24 June as amended be adopted.

Agreed

(f) Matters arising from the 24 June 2007 meeting

Chesham said that with respect to §4.d.xiii of the 24 June minutes, he had mentioned the matter to the HOO, who confirmed he was also aware of the situation. The HOO raised the matter at the 31 March EC meeting, so the EC itself was aware of this issue, but chose to do nothing about it.

i. Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses on Party mailing lists

The Internet Department reported that they had instituted a moderation policy for the mailing lists which prohibited personal attacks, but that they did not have the resources to enforce it.

Motion 21 (*Easton & Miller*) BIRT a call for further nominations to the Internet Department be made.

Agreed

Motion 22 (*Deutz & Helps*) BIRT the Internet Department’s report be noted.

Agreed

ii. Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by A B Smith

Motion 23 (*Deutz & Easton*) BIRT Cde Smith be referred to the 1980 Conference resolution referred to in Motion 4 of the 24 June minutes.

Carried 8–0

iii. Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by M Martin

It was agreed to consider under this heading all correspondence the meeting had received concerning Cde Martin.

Miller stated that Martin had repeatedly made abusive telephone calls to Head Office. Bissett explained that one of these calls was made to attack him for not removing one of

her abusive postings to spint.com. Easton noted that Martin doesn't stand by her remarks, but that her being prone to such behaviour causes problems. Deutz said that Martin was also on the receiving end of abuse or misrepresentation of her actions.

The EC read correspondence from Lawrie, Chesham, and Miller which gave quotes of Martin repeatedly expressing support for nationalist, reformist, and theist views and organisations on the Internet over the last year. The EC read correspondence from Buick about Martin's health and state of mind, and stating it would be cruel for the EC to charge her and force her to respond now. The EC heard a letter from Bissett stating that her nationalism was not sincere but was expressed only to gain the admiration of people she had met on the Internet. Bissett's letter gave many quotes from Martin where she properly and enthusiastically argued the Party case.

Easton, Bissett, Deutz, White, and Carter argued for handling the situation sympathetically and sensitively, and for referring the matter to the Branch, at least in the first instance. Miller and Chesham argued that this course of action was not permitted under Rule 31; the information had been brought to the EC, not the Branch, so the EC was obliged to act on it. Miller argued that there is no prospect for corrective or preventative discipline in this case, since Martin had been acting in contravention of the Principles and to the detriment of the Party for over a year, and had already admitted that she knew this was wrong but was determined to do it anyway. Helps said that we must show sympathy, but also must treat her like any other member.

Bissett moved that the matter be referred to West London Branch. The Chair ruled this motion out of order on the grounds that it was not permitted by the Party Rules. The Chair invited the meeting to hold a vote of direction or vote him out of the Chair if they felt otherwise. Carter said that the Party Rules were antiquated.

Motion 24 (*White & Helps*) BIRT the EC charge Cde Martin under Rule 31.

Bissett asked whether Martin had been notified that she would be charged at this meeting. Miller said that he asked Buick to inform her that her actions would be discussed at this meeting and that she could be charged. Buick said she had spoken with Martin, who said she would resign in a month. Chesham said it would be inappropriate to have a member of the Campaigns Department expressing nationalist views, even for one month.

For: Chesham, Easton, Helps, Miller, White. Against: Bissett, Carter, Deutz. Abstaining: none.

Carried 5-3

iv. Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by any other members

Bissett asked whether Cde Comber was to be discussed under this item.

Miller said he heard that Comber was in poor health, possibly because of recent events in the Party.

Bissett said that it was obvious Central London Branch was targetting any comrade who had upset Chesham, and that he would not proceed with the charade. Bissett then left the meeting.

Motion 25 (*Miller & White*) BIRT the EC contact Cde Comber to wish him good health.

Carried 4-0-3

Notice of Motion 1 (*White & Chesham*) BIRT in view of the fact that the Head Office computer has been used to access and view websites of a pornographic nature, this EC affirms that the Party's infrastructure is for the propagation of socialism and the administration of the party.

Notice of Motion 2 (*Chesham & Carter*) BIRT the practice of self-nomination to subcommittees be discontinued.

(g) Notices of Motion and Business

- i. Notice of Business 1 (Miller) from 2 June: The EC shall discuss copyright licences for images used in *The Socialist Standard*.

The EC read a letter from the Assistant Secretary of 2 July warning that the failure to obtain and comply with copyright licences for images used in *The Socialist Standard* exposes the Party to civil and criminal liability. The EC read a portion of the Report of the *Socialist Standard* Department which indicated that the Department was addressing the issue.

Motion 26 (*Miller & Easton*) BIRT the *Socialist Standard* Department be instructed to credit all images in the manner specified by their licences.

Carried 6-0-1

- ii. Notice of Business 2 (Stair) from 2 June: The EC shall discuss the purchase of a hearing induction loop.

Motion 27 (*Helps & Carter*) BIRT the matter of the purchase of a hearing induction loop be deferred until the next meeting.

Agreed

- iii. Notice of Motion 1 (Miller & Browne) from 2 June regarding an amendment to the EC's Standing Orders.

Carter argued that there was no need to amend the Standing Orders since they had always served the EC well.

Motion 28 (*Miller & Browne*) BIRT the Executive Committee's Normal Order of Business be amended as follows:

- Replace "(c) Forms A" with "(c) Forms A and F".
- Replace "(f) Reports of subcommittees and departments" with "(f) Reports of party officers, party appointees, subcommittees, and departments".
- Insert after (g) "(h) Any other business".
- Replace "(h) That the Chair for the next meeting be nominated at the previous meeting" with "(i) Nomination of Chair for the next meeting".

Carried 4-0-3

- iv. Notice of Motion 2 (Stair & Helps) from 2 June regarding meeting times

Motion 29 (*Stair & Helps*) BIRT the regular meeting of the EC shall be on the first Saturday of the month at 13:00, and that the EC's Standing Orders be so amended.

Agreed

3. Forms A

(a) Charlie Wolf

Motion 30 (*Miller & Helps*) BIRT Wolf's Form A be deferred and that the Membership Department be advised to consult with him on his answers to #5 and #10 of the membership questionnaire.

Carried 6-1-0

4. Written report of the General Purposes Committee

- None received.

5. Accounts

(a) Accounts for March 2007

Easton left at this point to attend a prior engagement he had announced at the beginning of the meeting.

Motion 31 (*Deutz & Helps*) BIRT the accounts for March 2007 be noted.

Agreed

6. Reports of Subcommittees and Departments; discussion of campaigns and *The Socialist Standard*

(a) Report from the Video Production Department

Motion 32 (*Miller & Carter*) BIRT the Report from the Video Production Department be deferred.

Agreed

(b) Report from the Campaigns Department

Motion 33 (*Miller & White*) BIRT the EC thank the Campaigns Department for their report and ask that the Department furnish the poster designs and a detailed budget before their grant is considered.

Carried 5-0-1

Motion 34 (*White & Helps*) BIRT the EC call for a further two nominations to the Campaigns Department.

Carried 6-0

Motion 35 (*White & Miller*) BIRT the Campaigns Department be asked to contact general debating societies in addition to the university debating societies.

Carried 6-0

(c) Discussion of campaigns

No discussion.

(d) Report from the *Socialist Standard* Department

Motion 36 (*White & Carter*) BIRT the *Socialist Standard* Department's report be noted with thanks.

Carried 5-0

(e) Discussion of *The Socialist Standard*

No discussion.

7. Correspondence

(a) Matters of urgency

i. Request from Internet Department for new equipment

Cde Culbert, the webmaster for the SPGB website, reported that his computer is irreparably damaged and needs to be replaced.

Motion 37 (*Helps & White*) BIRT the EC grant the Internet Department up to £500 for a computer for Cde Culbert.

Carried 6-0

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

i. Letter from Swansea Branch (12 June) regarding Trustee nomination for H Moss

Motion 38 (*Deutz & Helps*) BIRT Moss be appointed Trustee.

Carried 6–0

ii. E-mail from Edinburgh Branch (14 June)

The e-mail contained the following two resolutions:

- A. That Edinburgh branch urges the EC, as a matter of priority, to purchase for the Party audio and video equipment to record Party activity – *e. g.*, business meetings and special events. (3–0–0)
- B. Edinburgh Branch recommends that the EC investigate the practicalities of providing integrated mobile phones that have full capabilities – *e. g.*, video, camera, dictaphone, e-mail, and Internet – for the use of Party Officers. (3–0–0)

Motion 39 (*Miller & White*) BIRT the EC requests a rationale from Edinburgh Branch for their second motion.

Carried 6–0

Motion 40 (*Deutz & Chesham*) BIRT the General Secretary reply to Edinburgh Branch's first motion in accordance with the facts.

Carried 6–0

iii. Treasurer's recommendation on written expense claims (21 June)

Motion 41 (*Deutz & White*) BIRT all expense claims be supported by claim forms and recorded by the Department authorising them as well as by the Treasurer.

Carried 6–0

iv. Report to the July 2007 EC on Actions Taken Pursuant to the 1995 Conference Resolution Concerning the Protection of the Party's Identity and Funds

The report gave the following news: The *New Statesman* suggested we refer our complaint about spurious ads to the Advertising Standards Authority, an industry self-regulatory agency whose decision they would abide by. The iPetitions website had promptly and satisfactorily dealt with our complaint. The Assistant Secretary had written to the manager of Hyde Park and to the Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association regarding spurious meetings, and was still awaiting responses.

Motion 42 (*White & Chesham*) BIRT the Assistant Secretary file a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority about deceptive advertisements by the *Socialist Studies* group.

Carried 5–0–1

The meeting read a letter from South London Branch containing the following resolution:

That the Branch Secretary write to the EC informing them that South London Branch urge that the EC publish a statement in *The Socialist Standard* disassociating the Party from the organisation of impostors masquerading as the SPGB and currently speaking in Hyde Park and holding meetings in Central London as the SPGB (3–0–1)

Motion 43 (*White & Miller*) BIRT the EC write back to South London Branch asking them to reconsider their motion in light of the publicity it would bring to the impostors.

Carried 6–0

It was agreed to defer the matter of a leaflet on Harry Baldwin another month.

v. Letter from South London Branch (26 June) seeking approval for a debate at Head Office.

Motion 44 (*Deutz & White*) BIRT the arrangements for the debate be approved.

Carried 6–0

vi. Letter from Head Office Organiser (29 June) giving apologies for his absence.

Agreed to note.

vii. Request from North East Branch for £50 for a reunion event

Motion 45 (*Miller & Deutz*) BIRT North East Branch be granted £50 as requested.

Carried 6–0

viii. Correspondence concerning the World Socialist Party (India)

Miller reported that Binay Sarkar of the WSP(I) had approached the Central Organiser with a view to rapprochement.

Motion 46 (*Helps & White*) BIRT the General Secretary and Central Organiser liaise in response to Binay Sarkar's letter, that they contact both groups in India, and that they furnish the next EC meeting with a recommendation.

Carried 6–0

ix. Form F for E T Critchfield from West London Branch:

The meeting noted that Critchfield was a member of Central Branch, not West London Branch, and agreed that the General Secretary would respond in accordance with the facts.

x. Letter from Brian Johnson (2 July)

Johnson self-nominated to the Overseas Contacts Committee and Overseas Group Secretary. It was agreed to defer consideration of these nominations.

Johnson's letter included correspondence between him and Cde Mulenga of the Zambia group. Concerns were raised about religious language in Mulenga's letter. It was agreed to defer the matter.

(c) Correspondence from Companion Parties and Groups

The EC agreed to note the following correspondence:

i. WSPUS minutes for 11 March 2007

ii. WSPNZ minutes for May 2007

iii. SPC newsletter for June 2007

(d) All other correspondence

None received.

8. Chair for next meeting

None nominated.

The meeting was adjourned around 19:00.