

# Minutes of the 7th (Special) Meeting of the 104th Executive Committee of the of the Socialist Party

24 June 2007

Note: This is a brief version of the minutes which omits discussion. A full version of the minutes will be sent by post to all Branches and members who normally received the minutes. The full version is also available on request.

**Present:** J Bissett, J Carter, D Chesham, P Deutz, S Easton, J Helps, T Miller, Stair, N White

**Apologies:** M Browne

**Visitors:** F Allen, A Buick, M Chesham, N Deutz, A Gordillo, J Lawrie, J Lee, G Thomas, J Shodeke (non-member)

The meeting was called to order at 17:08.

## 1. Election of Chair

**Motion 1** (*Miller & White*) BIRT Miller be secretary.

*Agreed*

**Motion 2** (*Carter & White*) BIRT Deutz be chair.

*Agreed*

## 2. Amendment and adoption of agenda

**Motion 3** (*Carter & Bissett*) BIRT the items “correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by M Martin” and “correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by any other members” be deleted from the agenda on the grounds that only written statements can be considered from non-EC members.

*Failed 3–5–1*

A letter from Bissett, Buick, Miller, Thomas, and White dated 24 June was read.

**Motion 4** (*White & Easton*) BIRT this EC affirms that except for the Executive Committee, no member was obliged to attend or report to this special meeting.

BIFRT this EC believes that in general, any complaint or disciplinary matter which can be handled at the Branch level should be handled at the Branch level.

BIFRT this EC believes that the effect of Party discipline should be corrective and preventative rather than punitive.

BIFRT this EC believes that expulsion, as the ultimate disciplinary measure, should be reserved for cases where there is no reasonable prospect of implementing a corrective or preventative remedy.

BIFRT this EC reaffirms that Party Officers and Appointees, and the Executive Committee and its subcommittees, are responsible for maintaining the administrative apparatus of the Party, including Head Office.

BIFRT this EC reaffirms the resolution carried by the 1980 Annual Conference, *viz.*

That this Conference views with displeasure the abusing of members by other members that has been a feature of the Party in the last three years. It considers that letters, circulars and other statements naming members as liars and rogues, denying their right to be members, disparaging and interfering with Party activity, have caused and still cause grave harm in the Party. While the Conference accepts that what has been done cannot be undone, it is determined that this tendency shall not continue and instructs the EC to take firm action over any instances in future.

BIFRT this EC reaffirms the resolution carried by the 1973 Annual Conference, *viz.*

This Conference reaffirms that nothing in the Party Rules should be so understood as to prevent any member or members from expressing criticism of the Party verbally or in writing.

*Carried 5–0–4*

### 3. Matters of urgency

- (a) Request from Internet Department for new equipment.

**Motion 5** (*White & Chesham*) BIRT the Internet Department's request be deferred until the next meeting.

*Carried 7–0–1*

### 4. Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses, and matters arising therefrom

- (a) Correspondence on and discussion of the general problem

The chair read an e-mail from the Assistant Secretary of 8 June, an e-mail response from Thomas of 8 June, and a letter from Miller of 21 June.

- (b) Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses on Party mailing lists

**Motion 6** (*Chesham & White*) BIRT the issue of abuses of the Party's mailing lists be deferred.

*Carried 6–0–2*

- (c) Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by J Lawrie

The following correspondence was read out over the course of the following discussion:

- i. E-mail from P Lancaster (8 June)
- ii. Letters from A B Smith (12 June, 13 June, 19 June)
- iii. Letter from B Johnson (18 June) with appendices
- iv. Letter from Central London Branch (21 June)

The letter contained the following resolutions carried at its 13 June meeting:

Be it resolved that Central London Branch deplores in the strongest possible terms the actions of Lawrie against Smith on 6 June and reaffirms that threats and intimidation are not the socialist approach to solving problems. Be it further resolved that the Branch recognises Lawrie's strong socialist convictions and expresses its approval and gratitude for his many months of hard work for the Party. Be it further resolved that the Branch calls upon Lawrie to affirm that his behaviour to Smith was a lapse in judgment aggravated by the consumption of alcohol, to apologise to the Branch and the entire Party, and to endeavour that such incidents will not recur. (Carried 4–0–1)

Be it resolved that Central London Branch calls upon members who witnessed or were involved in the 6 June incident at Head Office to relate their recollection of events if questioned by the special EC meeting. (Agreed, 5 members present)

Be it resolved that Central London Branch write to Lancaster correcting the error about multiple members being abused, expressing doubt at his suspicion that Lawrie would damage the office, and asking where he received this information since he was not present at the incident. (Carried 4–0–1)

**Motion 7** (*White & Easton*) BIRT the EC welcomes the action of Central London Branch in regard to the incident on 6 June and accepts Cde Lawrie’s apology to the Branch and to the Party.

**Amendment** (*Helps & Stair*) Add “and lets Party members know that such behaviour will not be tolerated.” Carried 4–0–5

Vote on motion as amended:

*Carried 8–0–1*

**Motion 8** (*Miller & Bissett*) BIRT this EC affirms to Cde Smith that as long as he is a member in good standing, he has the right to visit and use the facilities in Head Office for Party business.

**Motion 9** (*Chesham & Easton*) BIRT the question be put.

*Failed 2–4–3*

**Amendment** (*Chesham & Stair*) Replace everything after “visit” with “Head Office”. Carried 5–2–1

Vote on motion as amended:

*Carried 9–0*

(d) Correspondence on and discussion of alleged personal abuses by A B Smith

The following correspondence was read out in parts over the course of the following discussion.

i. Letter from Central London Branch (21 June)

The Central London Branch letter contained the following resolution passed 5–0 at its 13 June meeting:

Be it resolved that Central London Branch asks the special EC meeting to consider the alleged actions of Smith which triggered the incident with Lawrie, namely

- A. personal attacks against the EC and other comrades,
- B. making false expense claims,
- C. assertion of his “right” to live at Head Office in contravention of an EC decision,
- D. unwelcome advances to females,
- E. improper use of Head Office equipment, and
- F. nationalist political sympathies.

Be it further resolved that the Branch calls upon any member with evidence of these activities to submit them to the special EC meeting for consideration.

ii. Letter from R Headicar via Assistant Secretary (18 June)

iii. Letter from B Johnson (18 June) with appendices

iv. Letter from C Aries (19 June)

v. Letter from V Clanchy (19 June)

vi. Letter from L Stevens (21 June)

vii. Letter from G Thomas (Treasurer) (21 June)

**Motion 10** (*Helps & Bissett*) BIRT the EC consider next business.

*Failed 3–3–3*

**Motion 11** (*White & Chesham*) BIRT this EC asserts that, contrary to verbal claims made, Alan Brady Smith is not owed any money by the Party.

*Carried 9–0*

**Motion 12** (*Miller & Bissett*) BIRT for the section of Stevens’s letter entitled “Involving advances towards women”, the Executive Committee disregard all items but items 3 and 5.

*Carried 5–2–2*

**Motion 13** (*Miller & Easton*) BIRT the Executive Committee ask West London Branch to question Cde Smith on the support for a reformist party he allegedly uttered to Cde Chesham.

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

*Carried 7–2*

## 5. Adjournment

**Motion 14** (*Chesham & Bissett*) BIRT the meeting be adjourned and the outstanding matters be revisited at the next Executive Committee meeting.

*Carried 7–0–1*

It was agreed that the minutes would be published once all the business had been discussed and once the EC had had a chance to review them.

The meeting was adjourned at 22:00.