

# Socialist Societies Executive

Monday 20 July 2009, 6.30pm

## Minutes

### 1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies received from: Sheila Doré, Martin Doré, Huw Davies, Fred Grindrod, Martin Rathfelder, Janet Seymour-Kirk, Emma Burnell, Andy Flannaghan, Marianne Hood, Richard Lane, Melanie Smallman, Gareth Davies.

Present: Jacky Peacock, Katie Hanson, Nicholas Russell, David Caplin, John Unsworth, Simon Wright, Dianne Hayter, Giles Wright, Neil Nerva, Carlie Newman, Maria Eagle MP, Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Ayesha Hazarika (SpAD to Harriet Harman).

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting

Simon to send out membership list. The Treasurer now has the bank accounted sorted and is waiting for some statements.

### 3. NEC Report: Dianne Hayter

Review of the European elections results; generally hard work and keeping focus on BNP threat was effective. Tories did not do as well as they should have done, and proposing odd policies such as FSA abolition. Cabinet resignations and expenses rows did not help.

Was there an anti-European/anti-movement of labour vote as well? Anti-social democrat vote across Europe.

NEC handling difficult hearings which has led to one by-election, and also makes All-Women Shortlists difficult. Difficult to handle high-profile miscreants.

Party has filed accounts and is not bankrupt.

### 4. Guests: Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP and Maria Eagle MP, The Equality Bill.

Bill through Commons stage. Complicated as consolidating existing legislation and extending laws. Public duty has only previously applied to limited areas. Levelling up to make simpler. Gender pay gap is persistent despite legislation but transparency will help. Support for action to correct lack of diversity in employees. Get rid of salary secrecy clauses in contracts. Duty to reduce gap between rich and poor. Public sector procurement powers to promote equality and diversity.

New strands extending protection in use of goods and services to age. Trans protection for the first time. Tories voted against bill at second reading. Labour has delivered all equalities. Tories apologise for Section 28 but vote against incitement to hatred in Lords.

Harriet added that Equality Bill has exposed the "modern" Tory party. Affiliates are vital for this fight. Tories have no answers to Labour's agenda-setting.

Questions on exemption of curriculum from public sector duty. Will public duty cover all duties.

Maria Eagle: no levelling down from current position esp. on disability. Disability already has much that will be extended to other duties. Too many fears about the curriculum and dispute growing between LGBT groups and religious groups. The exemption is employment is narrowly drawn and does not include teachers. Maria said that this cannot be perfect but encouraged amendments. Vera Baird and Mike Foster leading on the bill.

On age discrimination, Age Concern challenging the default age which employers can still use to discriminate. Maria said that policy is out for review and might change. Getting rid of default age in civil service pensions.

Might allow a political party to have all-BAME shortlists, in theory.

## **5. National Policy Forum/Joint Policy Committee report**

Meeting of the Joint Policy Committee, argued about the next meeting. Need a weekend meeting, not one-day but lots of resistance to this. Maybe consider what pledges to offer at election, and what reasons we have for wanting a fourth term.

## **6. Labour Conference 2009 - arrangements**

Agreed that we buy vertical display stands for each Society, max. one person per Society at the stand, no table. Fabians can carry material but it may need to be collected from their fringe venue. Socialist Societies delegates will have better seats.

LHG interested in a joint fringe on equalities with another Society. 27 Sept - 1 October. Simon to also collect email addresses.

## **7. Migration to Yahoogroup**

List will be moving to a yahoogroup as the current webspace will become inaccessible.

## **8. Any other business**

Dianne nominated unopposed to NEC and therefore elected.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

21 September 2009

Thursday 12 November 2009

Monday 25 January 2010

Monday 22 March 2010

Monday 17 May 2010

Monday 19 July 2010  
Monday 20 September 2010