Final (Voting) Agenda
for 90th Annual Conference 1 & 2 April 1994
at Conway Hall Red Lion Sq. London (tube Holborn)

Hours: Friday 1st April, 10.15 to 5.15pm
Saturday 2nd April, 10.15 to 5.15pm

Order of Business:

1- Election of Chair, Deputy Chair and Tellers.
2- Permission for Delegates to Sit.
4- Camden’s Order of Business Resolution: "Most of this conference should be devoted to plans for the European Elections and the practical follow up to this."
5- Arrangements by delegates of the order of taking the Items of Business.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1- The 1993 Party Officer and EC Report to Conference.
2- Amendments to Rule.
3- Motions for Resolution.
4- Items submitted for Discussion.
5- Any other Business.

The voting part of the agenda is listed apart from the other items this year for convenience.

The suggestion is made that the votes could be taken as a block this year, and that delegates could, if they wish, get this out of the way and speed through the agenda. Members are reminded that this year, Conference lasts two days.

All Branches are requested to provide a signed voting paper to Standing Orders along with their credentials. This will help to save time on the day.

Nominations are requested for Chair, deputy Chair and tellers.

Standing Orders Committee 22 February 1994
VOTES:
Amendments to Rule:

Rule 17, add at end: "Subject to the Executive Committee being authorised to appoint members directly to these subcommittees if no nominations are received."

West London

Amendment 1: "After the word members, insert: 'from any Central Branch volunteers'."

S E London

Amendment 2: "Insert between appoint and members: 'temporary' add at end 'provided that further calls be made'."

Enfield & Haringay

VOTE 1, on amendment 1: For 6 Against 0
VOTE 2, on amendment 2: For 5 Against 2
VOTE 3, as Sub-Res:
   (a) if amendment 1 carried: For 6 Against 0
   (b) if amendment 2 carried: For 6 Against 0
   (c) if amendments 1 and 2 carried: For 6 Against 0
   (d) if amendment unamended: For 6 Against 0

Result Vote at Conference 0 36 61

Resolutions:

1 -- "That Annual Conference be of three days duration."

SE London

VOTE 4,

For 7 Against 0

2 -- "That this conference is of the opinion the use of recycled paper for election leaflets, handbills, internal party use and for the Socialist Standard, be phased in, as soon and as far as is reasonably and economically practicable."

Islington

Amendment, "Delete 'is of the opinion' and insert 'instructs the EC'."

Enfield & Haringay

VOTE 5, on the amendment: For 7 Against 0
VOTE 6, as Sub-Res;
   (a) if amendment carried: For 5 Against 1
   (b) if resolution unamended: For 7 Against 0

29

3 -- "That the 1974 conference resolution 'that membership of Women's Liberation organisations is incompatible with membership of the Party' be rescinded."

Lancaster and Islington

VOTE 7,

For 4 Against 4
1- General Secretary’s Report.
2- Treasurer’s Report and financial statement.
3- Central Organiser’s Report.
4- Head Office Organiser’s Report.
5- Item for discussion: "Democracy and accountability in the Party."
   Enfield & Haringay
6- Item for discussion: "Should EC members be obliged to attend Annual
   Conference and Autumn Delegate Meeting to answer delegates’
   questions as responsibility for the actions of departments and
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   and distribution of a tabloid-style bi-weekly newspaper? The study
   to include considerations of cost, general content, production and
   distribution problems as well as the effect on the Socialist
   Standard."
   Belfast
12- Reports from Departments: Elections.
13- Item for Discussion: "How can we make Branch meetings
   'User-friendly' to visitors?"
   West London
14- Reports from Departments: Campaigns.
15- Item for Discussion: "The Role and Nature of Targeting."
   Glasgow
16- Item for Discussion: "Democracy and accountability in Britain"
   Enfield & Haringay
17- Reports from Departments: Media.
18- Reports from Departments: Advertising.
19- Item for Discussion: "That in line with other members of the World
   Socialist Movement, the party should change its name to the World
   Socialist Party."
   Lancaster.
20- Reports from Departments: Publications.
21- Reports from Departments: Tapes.
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S E London Branch submitted a resolution for conference as follows:

"That conference resolution V51, 2.18, be amended as follows; Delete all after (A) Legal Documents. Delete all after The Socialist Party and replace with ‘to be used in all other cases’.

The above refers to a resolution carried by Annual Conference 88 (Vote 51 as amended) which was the subject of a Party Poll in 91, (Party Poll 1-91). (2.18 refers to the 16th resolution in the second section of a list of Conference resolutions carried between 1973 and 1988.)

However, Rule 26, last sentence, states that the result of a Party Poll shall overrule all other decisions (i.e. EC, Conference or previous Party Poll decisions). The logic of Rule 26 is that only a Party Poll can overrule a previous Party Poll.

As this motion seeks to amend a decision confirmed by a Party Poll, it appears to conflict with Rule 26, Therefore I am obliged to rule this motion out of order, as it is a resolution for conference, not a call for a Party Poll, and I am referring this matter to the EC for their decision at their next meeting.

Mike Browne    Standing Orders Committee. 18 January 1994

SE London sent in the following resolution to the EC:

"That the EC place S.E.London Branch resolution (conference preliminary agenda 18-01-94) on the conference agenda, taking regard of the fact that the resolution is aimed at amending a conference decision (V51, 2.18) and not the party poll decision, (7th meeting 88th EC, 5th March 1991, item 6), which dealt with a discipline matter, and that the EC deal with this as a matter of urgency."

The EC replied as follows:

"That the EC uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and advise SE London Branch that they can move a floor resolution calling for a Party Poll on their resolution, which if carried would be binding." (See first clause of Rule 26).

Standing Orders Committee 22-02-94
Object: The establishment of a system of society based on the common ownership and
democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by
and in the interest of the whole community.

The Socialist Party's
Preliminary Agenda
for 1 & 2 April 1994
Conway Hall London
Annual Conference.

Amendments to Rule:
1- Rule 17, add at end:
"subject to the Executive Committee being authorised to appoint members
directly to these subcommittees if no nominations are received."
West London.

Party Administration:
2- Resolution; That Annual Conference be of three days duration.
S E London.

Policy:
3- Resolution; That this conference is of the opinion that the use of recycled
paper for election leaflets, handbills, internal party use and for the
Socialist Standard, be phased in, as soon as is reasonably and
economically practicable.
Islington.

4- Resolution: That the 1974 conference resolution 'that membership of Women's
Liberation organisations is incompatible with membership of the Party'
be rescinded.

Islington.

5- Camden Branch have submitted the following as a 'order of business' resolution
for Conference: "Most of this conference should be devoted to plans for the European
Elections and the practical follow up to this."

Branches are invited to submit amendments that are in order to the above and
Items for discussion at Annual Conference to Standing Orders committee at head office

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Enfield & Haringay

VOTE 1, on amendment 1: For__________ Against__________

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Result Vote at Conference

Resolutions:

1 -- "That Annual Conference be of three days duration."

SE London

VOTE 4, For__________ Against__________

2 -- "That this conference is of the opinion the use of recycled paper for election leaflets, handbills, internal party use and for the Socialist Standard, be phased in, as soon and as far as is reasonably and economically practicable."

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Lancaster and Islington

VOTE 7, For__________ Against__________
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5- Item for discussion: "Democracy and accountability in the Party Enfield & Haringay

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Standing Orders Committee 22-02-94
Women’s Liberation: Why the 1974 Resolution should be rescinded.

‘Women’s Liberation’ covers a very wide field – some of it is pure reformism, some of it is positively anti-socialist – but some of it is at least as respectable as trade union activity, from the point of view of a Socialist.

One argument that has been used against this is that whilst the trade unions, by taking strike action, have a real power to oppose capitalists, the Women’s Liberation movement merely makes appeals to the powers that be, without having any real power.

To counter this argument, I would like to explain one example of women’s liberation activity – the refuge movement.

For many women, their place of work is the home. Prior to the sixties, the expectation was for a woman, after marriage, to remain at home and ‘make her marriage work’. She was in a position of employee in relation to her husband. Her source of income was her husband’s wage-packet, and she was expected to carry out certain tasks as part of an unwritten contract – to undertake the domestic work, care for their children and be sexually available to the man.

There was often a lot of love which could over-ride this employer/employee relationship, but nonetheless, that is what it was and often still is – with the man expected to be the boss and seen to be failing in his role if he is not.

In this case, the terms and conditions of employment are entirely dependant upon the reasonableness and good nature of the husband, and for a woman with young children and an unreasonable husband, they can be appalling.
Prior to the refuge movement, a battered wife had no power to change her position, unless protected by family and friends - an unreliable back-up service, since she would often be blamed, and would blame herself, for her 'failed marriage'. Psychologically and physically her condition would deteriorate, making her inadequate to the task of caring for her children - especially if her husband was depriving her of money - such a life could be an endless terrifying nightmare.

Women are now taking the equivalent of strike action against intolerable living and working conditions by walking out of situations, in which, 30 years ago, they would have been obliged to remain.

All this activity, of course, leaves capitalism intact, but then so does Trade Unionism - which is likewise an insistence on better living and working conditions within capitalism.

This is an appeal to all members to vote to rescind the 1974 resolution because:

(a) It is an insult to women members, implying they are unable to decide for themselves which organizations are appropriate for support.

(b) It suggests that the Socialist Party does not support Women's Liberation, which according to clause 4 of our declaration of principles, we do.

(c) Women's Liberation covers a wide field of activity - some of which is neither reformist nor anti-Socialist - much of which is entirely compatible with the overthrow of capitalism.

(d) Many women who are potential Socialists will be put off the party for the above reasons.

Nicky Snell
Lancaster Branch
February 1994
Conference 1994
Glasgow Branch
Item for discussion: The role and nature of targeting

Targeting is really nothing new. In a sense the party has always had a target, i.e., to get a socialist majority, but what is usually meant by the term is setting objectives which in some way fall short of that. Targeting implicitly recognises we can only progress gradually and can't do everything all in one go. It reduces our task from that of pursuing a distant aspiration to a controllable process in which progress can be measured and specifiable means of achieving specifiable targets can be evaluated on a regular basis, and our scarce resources can be used in the most effective way. From that point of view targeting offers a means of placing our work on a more rational footing, and making us a more effective organisation.

What targeting also proposes, however, is that we substitute, in practice, our ultimate objective for a series of targets. There is always a great danger in this that we lose sight of the ultimate objective. Targets must not be determined in an arbitrary way. They should derive logically from the party's Object, and be seen to do so, so that every party member understands that the pursuit of a particular target is at the same time the pursuit of that Object. The following proposals are intended to help ensure that this is done.

1. Targets must be set for the party as such, before they are established for individual Departments etc. Since these main targets must be set for the party as a whole, they must also be set by the party as a whole. A formal party wide procedure should be adopted for the setting of such targets over a time scale of, say, between 6-12 months.

2. These main targets should always be specific with respect to (a) the particular sections of the population to be targeted (b) the message to be communicated to each target group, and (c) the deadline.

The idea is that, instead of dissipating resources by trying to put over an entire case to a whole population in an indiscriminate way, we single out and concentrate on communicating particular aspects of the case to clearly defined target groups. For each target group we would try to communicate or gain support for perhaps as little as a single fact or idea. It could be as basic as making those people aware we exist. In this way we would attempt to win each target group step by step to a full socialist position. This would preserve an explicit logical link between targets and our Object.

It should also be a more efficient method of propaganda, since we could focus on issues where there is the best chance of making progress, and not waste effort in preaching either to the converted, on any particular issue, or to the unconvertible. It would be more manageable, and results would be easier to measure.

Comrades are invited to give their views on the above proposals.
Re Preliminary Agenda, Item 4 (Islington and Lancaster branches) on membership of Women’s Liberation Organisations. This branch thought branches and members would be interested to see the view held by this branch, circulated in 1973 and which is still our position:

"1. That this branch is of the opinion that active participation in discussion groups or journals other than those initiated by established political groups is not necessarily incompatible with membership of the Party.
   2. That the terms of the above resolution apply only so long as no political activity contrary to the Object and Declaration of Principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is undertaken.
   3. That this branch is of the opinion that membership of ‘Womens Liberation’ groups which advocate or campaign for reforms or which are controlled by or are associated with non-socialist political parties and groups is incompatible with membership of the Socialist Party.
   4. That this branch re-affirms that the Socialist position on womens liberation is that Socialists oppose discrimination against women, but that women’s liberation can only be achieved by the establishment of Socialism."

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Standing Orders Committee 22 February 1994
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The very first sentence of the circular gives support to maintaining the 1974 resolution rather than rescinding it. The explanation given as an example of Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) activity, with emphasis on the relationship between wife and husband being similar to that of employer and employee, is ludicrous. The concept is historically inaccurate; the nature of women’s involvement in paid employment has altered within capitalism but is determined by the economic conditions, not domestic requirements.

The ‘Sixties’ is too nebulous a concept to be a valid watershed. The argument by analogy does not have validity, and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the nature of the employer/employee relationship. With regard to the position in marriage between women and men — this is about social relationships. The argument needs to be based on an examination of economic circumstances, and, regardless of the passion felt, it should utilise facts and not generalisations. The interaction of humankind with the material conditions of a given society leads to different kinds of learnt, social behaviour.

For Socialists to attend groups similar to the WLM which hold reformist views with a lack of understanding of the nature of capitalist society and its effects on the working-class; to enter into debate for the purpose of giving the Socialist view, is acceptable. To join such groups and therefore identify oneself, and the Party, with such activity, is really action detrimental to the interest of the Socialist Party.

A. Atkinson M. Hopwood

Central Branch