

# minutes

meeting of: National Executive Council (eleventh meeting)

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place: British Medical Association

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date and time: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011

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**Present:**

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|------------------|---|
| Members:         | Name  |
| President        | Aaron Porter (President)  |
| Zones            | Shane Chowen (Further Education)<br>Usman Ali (Higher Education)<br>Susan Nash & Aakash Naik (Society & Citizenship)<br>Paddie Stearn (Union Development)   |
| Liberation       | Ben Whittaker & Pete Woodward (Welfare)<br>Kanja Sesay & Anil Sachdeo (Black Students)<br>Rupy Kaur (Disabled Students)<br>Vicki Baars & Alan Bailey (LGBT);<br>Olivia Bailey & Estelle Hart (Women's); |
| Student Sections | Rebecca Sawbridge (Mature & Part Time Students);<br>Dante Micheaux and Paul Tobin (Postgraduate Students);<br>Christina Yan Zhang & Joy Elliott (International Students);                               |
| Nations          | Liam Burns (NUS Scotland)<br>Luke Young (NUS Wales)<br>Ciarnan Helferty & Adrienne Peltz (NUS-USI)  |
| Block            | Mark Bergfeld, Thomas Graham, Dannie Grufferty, Sophia James, Fatima Junaid, Joshua McKenzie, Pete Mercer, Liam Preston, Javed Anjum Sheikh, Ryan Wain, Rachel Wenstone                                 |
| In attendance:   |   |
| Staff            | Jim Dickinson (Director Campaigns & Strategy); Nick Smith, Vic Langer   |
| Observer         | Jack Matthews, Elena Cresci, Zahid Raja   |
| Apologies:       |   |
| Zones            | Ed Marsh, Toni Pearce, Stevie Wise  |
| Liberation       | Ana Da Silva  |
| Nations          | Katie Dalton  |
| Sections         | Sean Rillo-Raczka   |
| Block            | Thea Graham, James Lee Pickin, John Peart   |
| Staff            | Matt Hyde, Emma Cox   |

# minutes

## 1. Introductory & Administration

- 1.1 Aaron Porter (AP) opened the meeting and outlined the voting process for section 3.3 – Amendments and Ordinary Motions to National Conference
- 1.2 Apologies were noted
- 1.3 Susan Nash (SN) noted her election to Chair of Young Labour and received congratulations from the Council
- 1.4 and 1.5 The minutes were approved for accuracy and there were no matters arising not dealt with in the meeting.
- 1.6 There were no presidential appointments.

## 2. Reports and accountability

- 2.1 AP presented his report and asked for any questions or comments. He added that the HE white paper was likely delayed to mid-May.

The report was *approved*.

- 2.2 The Zone Convenors presented their reports there were the following questions and issues arising.

**Further Education** – NEC congratulated the work of Bradford College on their transport campaign. Work was taking place with the Union Development Zone on a National Conference for Apprentices.

**Higher Education** – Usman Ali (UA) said that his priority was work around widening participation.

**Society and Citizenship** – Susan Nash (SN) was concentrating work on voter registration and work around cuts to youth services. Answering a question from Paul Tobin (TB) she replied that she was working with Amnesty International on Arms Trade partnerships in education.

**Union Development** – Ed Marsh was absent and so questions could be emailed to him.

**Welfare** – Ben Whittaker (BW) presented his report. 18 councils were being targeted for their policies on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and he was also prioritising work on hate speech.

All Zone reports were approved.

- 2.3 The Liberation Officers presented their reports to note.
- 2.4 The International Students and Postgraduate students presented their reports to note.
- 2.5 The Nations presented their reports to note.
- 2.6 Rachel Wenstone (RW) updated the NEC on the work of the Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascism campaign on working with Hope not Hate and the Holocaust Education Trust.
- 2.7 The Block of 15 members reported on issues in constituent members. They encouraged work with local Trade Unions.

# minutes

After lunch the NEC discussed widening participation in an open forum.

## **3. Motions and Proposals**

3.1 AP presented the update on the Priority campaign. The report was *approved*.

3.2 The NEC received the final estimates for National Conference, including the clarity that the priority campaign budget included support for local action and projects.

The Estimates were *passed*

3.3 The NEC approved 5 motions to National Conference. The fifth took the motions over their total length and so was not sent to National Conference, but instead referred to the Society & Citizenship zone.

3.4 Liam Burns spoke for the motion "Defend the Right to Protest" which was passed.

DRAFT

# resolutions

## **Defend the Right to Protest - Defend Bryan Simpson Campaign**

### **NEC believes:**

1. The Guardian newspaper reported that 52,000 people joined the NUS/UCU organised protest on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 against the cuts.
2. 100's of arrests have been made following this demonstration. 22-year-old Bryan Simpson from Strathclyde University was arrested at his home in Glasgow in a dawn raid by police officers at 6am on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010.
3. This was prior to a fresh set of planned demonstrations on the 24<sup>th</sup> November which saw 130,000 college, university and school students take to the streets throughout the UK, including in Glasgow.
4. Bryan was questioned on suspicion of violent disorder, which could lead to a 5 year term of imprisonment. He did not harm or injure anyone. He did not threaten anyone, nor did he commit any criminal damage. He denies any accusations of violent disorder.
5. The UCU Scottish Executive have passed a motion of support for the Defend the Right to Protest - Defend Bryan Simpson Campaign
6. The NUS Scotland President, Liam Burns, Strathclyde Students' Association President Phil Whyte and many other NUS activists have signed the statement of support for the Defend the Right to Protest - Defend Bryan Simpson Campaign
7. Signatures to said statement from Katy Clark MP, John McDonnell MP, former Labour Minister Tony Benn, and the General-Secretaries of Unite and CWU unions
8. Our national Union has the obligation to protect and care for its members who are being witch-hunted and demonised by the right-wing press.
9. Whilst the government and media remain silent on acts of violence committed by the police, and instead seek solely to criminalise protesters, it is our responsibility to defend our members who have stood up for the right to stop the dismantling of our education system by the Coalition Government.
10. We should always speak out when it is clear that police response to student protest is disproportionate and victimises individuals who are expressing their democratic right to protest in the name of defending education.
11. The recent wave of student protests has shown the mass dissatisfaction over the Tory-Liberal Democrat plans to scrap the Education Maintenance Allowance for school pupils and increase tuition fees to up to £9,000 per year for university students.
12. The proposed changes to university funding are grossly unfair and regressive. They will lead to an eventual marketization of the education system with only the rich being able to afford quality higher education and deter poorer students from even applying in the first place from fear of being saddled with massive and unaffordable debts.

### **NEC resolves:**

1. To counter attempts by the media to demonise students who participate in legitimate protest.
2. To call on any charges against Bryan Simpson and charges against all those students where police response is clearly disproportionate, to be dropped.
3. To support students' unions, where requested by students' unions, to stop universities using disciplinary procedures to punish legitimate protest.

To support the Defend the Right to Protest - Defend Bryan Simpson Campaign