

Stephen

Many thanks  
for letting me see this.

fm 2/10

MR. MOUNT

Peter Cropper has sent me the attached  
for my private information.

[These minutes are being circulated only  
to members of the Committee. Sir Geoffrey  
wants to be sure that the Prime Minister  
is not involved earlier than she need be.  
However, Peter agrees that I should see  
these minutes and I certainly think that  
you should too.]

Could you please return them to me in  
due course.



Stephen Sherbourne

21st October 1983



EUROPEAN ELECTIONS PUBLICATIONS' COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN WESTMINSTER

ON 4 OCTOBER 1983

PRESENT:

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP (Chair)

Rt Hon John Biffen MP

Michael Spicer MP

Adam Ridley

Peter Cropper

John Houston

Andrew Tyrrie

Sir Henry Plumb MEP

Christopher Prout MEP

Dr Robert Ramsay

Timothy Bainbridge

Apologies Malcolm Rifkind MP

1. Terms of Reference: The Foreign Secretary outlined the arrangements. The Prime Minister had appointed the Group to co-ordinate policy matters, especially in relation to publications. A Campaign Committee under the Party Chairman would deal with organisational matters. A third Committee, the Joint Information Campaign Committee, was dealing with the expenditure of the funds voted by the European Parliament.
2. Information Campaign: There was a discussion of potential problems which might arise. Sir Henry Plumb and Dr Ramsay explained the approach envisaged. Two-thirds of the Campaign money had been allocated on the basis of seats currently held in the EP; the remainder would be allocated after the election on the basis of the votes cast. The Alliance, however, were getting some advance funds through other groups currently represented. Mr Kellett-Bowman was in touch with the Court of Auditors, and Mr Garner was examining any implications of British electoral law. The



rules provided for funds to be committed by 40 days before election, and paid within 40 days after the election. The Foreign Secretary said that the legal and accounting position must be clear (Whitehall officials were being asked to comment), and that political aspects would require further consideration (including a look at precedents, eg the "Short Finance"). The Group would then recommend to the Prime Minister how these funds should be used.

3. Campaign Guide: Mr Cropper outlined the approach discussed between CRD and EDG Secretariat. The text should be ready before Christmas; it would be looked at by members of the Group over the Christmas period; it would be approved early in January, and published early in February. Its approach would be more of a background brief than a policy outline. The major part of the input would come from EDG Secretariat. This was agreed.

4. Additional Policy Document: The Foreign Secretary said that the idea of a "Right Approach to Europe" type of policy outline had been raised. He was not yet convinced of the necessity. Mr Cropper said that the idea had arisen out of

(a) the probable absence of policy guidance from the Campaign Guide, and

(b) the need to have some early guidance for workers and candidates well before the manifesto was published eg in February.

It could however come out without the full Party imprimatur, as TRA had done. The Foreign Secretary stressed the risks of trying to produce too many things. Sir Henry Plumb said he would like to consult colleagues, but the EDG could be responsible for drafting and producing such a document.

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5. There was discussion of the importance of an agreed document. Mr Biffen, Mr Spicer and Mr Ridley thought such a document could be useful, but must be agreed between EDG and Government. Sir Henry Plumb expressed agreement. Mr Prout said that early in the New Year could be a bad time to commit oneself on policy. It was agreed that Sir Henry Plumb would consider the matter further and make recommendations.
6. Catherwood Committee: Sir Henry Plumb mentioned this committee, which was looking at Alliance policies on the Community. It would be able to make a helpful input into the work of the Committee.
7. Drafting and Research for Manifesto. It was agreed that John Houston and Timothy Bainbridge, guided by Adam Ridley when available, would gather the relevant documents and prepare a skeleton. The focus should be "What Conservatives Want in Europe" (in the widest sense).
8. Submissions from colleagues: The Foreign Secretary proposed that he should write to Cabinet colleagues and jointly with Sir Henry Plumb to EDG Spokesmen, and to Sir Fred Catherwood as Chairman of Spokesmen's Group, asking for policy submissions before the end of the year. This was agreed. It was also suggested that a letter might be sent to the European Affairs Backbench Committee. [The Foreign Secretary added after the meeting that he would consult with the Backbench Committee Officers].
9. Sub Group: It was agreed that an ad hoc sub-group would be set up to supervise and advise on drafting and preparatory work and to prepare for the next full meeting of the Group. Membership as follows:

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Sir Geoffrey Howe/Mr Rifkind (alternating in the Chair)  
Sir Henry Plumb/Mr Prout  
Mr Cropper  
Mr Bainbridge  
Mr Houston  
Mr Ridley

10. Future Meetings: The full Group would need one meeting before Christmas. The Foreign Secretary and Mr Rifkind would alternate in the Chair of the full Group when necessary.
11. Documents: All papers would be classified Personal and Confidential. Masters would be filed under Mr Houston's supervision.
12. Other Business: The Foreign Secretary suggested that during his meeting with the EDG on 20 October he should talk about arrangements for the election. Sir Henry Plumb stressed the importance of unity throughout the Campaign, and the potential significance of the election for the Party as a whole. It was agreed that, though no publicity was envisaged, a guidance note for dealing with enquiries should be prepared.



PJC  
10.10.83