



Minutes of the Meeting of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers Executive Committee

Date: 22 July 2020

Location: Via Zoom

Present

Pt Satish K Sharma (Chair), Swami Ambikananda (Secretary), Ms W Brown (Treasurer)

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers Executive Committee taking place on 16 June 2020 were approved, and signed by the Chair.

Chair's Report

The Chair updated the members with regard to the recent communications with the UFWB Executive and meetings with legal representatives. Members expressed disappointment that even in the 21st century, there were still white Christians who rushed to adopt the supremacist "white saviour" role.

The Chair stated that at the recent meeting of the Unite Faith Workers' Branch Executive Committee on 16 July 2020, the legal guidance issued to the Branch Executive by Neil Gillam and Siobhan Endean in their letter dated 15 May 2020, had been rejected by the Acting Chair, Ruth Oates and the Treasurer, Peter Hobson, with the support of what can only be described as accomplices, on that Executive.

The Chair advised that the letter from the Unite Legal Department stated clearly:

"15. We have seen and considered the applications from members of the Faith Workers' Branch to create Muslim and Hindu faith workers work place groupings and consider them to be eligible for approval by the Branch as distinct sub-groupings in line with the current practice of the Branch. There are obvious operational concerns about numbers, particularly in relation to the latter however in line with recently proposed decisions of the branch at its meeting in January to survey members and increase membership in these areas it is believed that the creation of such groups could be utilised as an effective recruitment tool for those engaged within those institutions.

16. We would therefore recommend that at the next available opportunity the Branch Executive Committee approve the two new sub groups with a review of activity and membership numbers to take place at the next AGM".

The Chair further advised that this rejection was despite the conclusions of the agenda-setting teleconference on 16 June 2020 at 10:00 between Neil Gillam, Siobhan Endean, Ruth Oates, David Isiorho and Muhammad Al-Hussaini, where Neil Gillam had given the clear assurance on questioning from Muhammad that the FWB Executive on 16 July 2020 would vote on a resolution to immediately "approve the two new sub groups" as given in the letter and



categorically confirmed that this would be full approval and not partial or embryonic approval for the Association of Hindu Faith Workers and the Muslim Faith Workers.

The Chair advised that it had been drawn to his attention that at the actual Executive Committee on 16 July 2020, Peter Hobson applied pressure to change the wording of the resolution stating that he would only support an “embryonic” partial approval of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers and the Muslim Workplace Grouping “as part of a process”. We understand that Muhammad protested this attempt to subvert the agreed resolution that was on the table, but that Ruth Oates pushed through Peter Hobson’s subverting of the resolution to only recognising the constitutions of the two Workplace Groupings, and this was done in the face of Muhammad’s protest on behalf of our two minority faiths.

The Chair advised that in the event, the resolutions for recognition of the constitution of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers and the Muslim Workplace Grouping which had already been approved by the Unite Legal Department, were rejected by the Unite Faith Workers’ Branch.

The Chair advised that at the end of that meeting, a further resolution was proposed by Peter Hobson with the support of Ruth Oates, which sought to appropriate for the Unite **Faith Workers’ Branch Executive** Committee, the authority to establish Workplace Groupings for Hindus and Muslims and to survey the Membership of the Unite Faith Workers’ Branch in order to do so. This deeply racist, sectarian and colonialist resolution and its motivation and agenda can be seen by the actions of this Executive Committee before its adopting the resolution. Having rejected our own perfectly valid efforts, approved by Unite Legal personnel, the following entirely colonialist resolution was presented and passed. The resolution reads:

"The Branch Executive supports the development of Hindu and Muslim faithworkerwork place groupings and agrees that the Branch Executive consult members in order to develop these work place groupings within the branch"

Peter Hobson had previously submitted a draft questionnaire to Members of the Unite Faith Workers’ Branch which asked questions to Hindu Members about the establishment of an Association of Hindu FaithWorkers’ without any reference to the existing Association of Hindu Faith Workers and its Executive Committee, and the supremacist and colonialist agenda can be seen in Hobson’s actions throughout.

The Chair advised that the resolution for co-option of himself as a Member of the Faith Workers’ Branch Executive Committee alongside the existing Anglican, Methodist and Unitarian representatives of Workplace Groupings was considered at the same meeting, and proposed by David and seconded by Muhammad.

Apparently, it was recorded clearly that Peter Hobson made derogatory suggestions that he had been observing the Chair of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers’ since he joined the FWB at the end of last year and did not consider him a suitable person to join the FWB Executive. Further unpleasant remarks about my co-option were made by a Methodist Executive Committee Member and another Exec Member also said that the fact that the Chair may be involved in legal action against the Unite Faith Workers’ Branch (which legal action



happens to be under the Equality Act 2010) should be taken into consideration in deciding whether to co-opt him to the Executive. Muhammad drew attention to the fact that I had done “protected acts” under Section 27 of the Equality Act in his speaking and publishing about alleged racial and religious discrimination.

The Chair advised that the UFWB Executive Committee rejected the resolution for his co-option to the Executive Committee.

The Chair advised that further developments had taken place after this meeting at which the predominantly white Christian UFWB Executive rejected Unite’s own legal advice, possibly with some repercussions for Ruth Oates, Peter Hobson and the Executive. The Chair advised that he had been made aware of an email dated 20th July 2020, by Ruth Oates to the FWB Executive entitled, “URGENT ACTION TO PROGRESS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW FAITH GROUPS” which essentially tried to reverse some of the embarrassingly racist and sectarian decisions, but introduced further lies and fabrications by Ruth Oates.

Ruth Oates has apparently now suggested the following:

- (i) The Constitutions for the two groupings [which were before the Branch on Thursday] are approved immediately by return email by the members of the Executive Committee;*
- (ii) Said Constitutions and any necessary amendment to our Standing Orders to accommodate them are sent for approval to the Executive Council as required;*
- (iii) Before the next Executive Committee of the Branch both Groupings are asked to hold their first formal meeting and procure minutes of same;*
- (iv) Such minutes shall record the election of those appointed as Chairs and a request that as such they be recognised as representatives on the branch executive committee for the Muslim Faith Workers and the Association of Hindu Faith Workers respectively*
- (v) Following the actioning of (i) – (iv) above, at the next Branch Executive meeting currently scheduled for 21/22 September 2020 the following will be confirmed:*
 - (a) the two new Groups have been approved by the Unite EC, have met for the first time and have each elected a representative; and*
 - (b) those representatives can now sit as co-opted member(s) on the Executive Committee of the Branch representing their groups.*

I am of the view that the legitimate concerns of the Branch as regards any formal democratic deficit are addressed by this proposal but at the same time the proposal also displays an element of good faith towards those seeking recognition of these groups and to Mr Al Hussaini and Mr Sharma as the anticipated elected representatives of those groups, given that they have been the drivers and organisers of the same and are widely expected to fill these positions.

The meeting noted that as Hindus in Britain we were all aware of the manner in which the white supremacists attack , and then having failed, seek to whitewash their racist choices, in the flowery language of reconciliation and good faith.



The Chair advised that on 20 July 2020, he had written to Paresh Patel, copying in Unite Officers, to file a formal complaint under the Unite Lay Members Complaints Procedure about the racist, sectarian and colonialist resolution which has been proposed by Peter Hobson and passed by the FWB Executive, as well as to record the violation by the Executive of Unite's own legal advice. Of course it could be purely coincidental but It wouldn't be surprising if the "sugar coated" but still offensive email from Ruth Oates were connected to the Chairs' email of the same date.

Resolution of Condemnation of the Resolution of the FWB Executive Committee

The resolution was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Secretary:

"Association of Hindu Faith Workers condemns in the strongest terms the resolution proposed by Peter Hobson with the support of Ruth Oates, which was passed by the Unite Faith Workers' Branch Executive Committee on 16 July 2020:

"The Branch Executive supports the development of Hindu and Muslim faithworkerwork place groupings and agrees that the Branch Executive consult members in order to develop these work place groupings within the branch"

This resolution violates the fundamental principles of workers self-organising in their own workplaces, and usurps for the Unite Faith Workers' Branch the authority to establish workplace groupings for Hindu faith workers and accordingly, *"consult members in order to develop these work place groupings within the branch"*.

The Association of Hindu Faith Workers will gladly and in good faith work co-operatively with all people of goodwill, including Unite officials, Unite Faith Workers' Branch Officers and Members of all faiths in building up collaboratively the good work of minority Workplace Groupings, but we will not tolerate colonialist supremacist interference by persons of the Church of England or CECA in our self-organisation as Hindus by those who have from the outset, sought to obstruct and undermine our taking our rightful and equal place in the Unite Faith Workers' Branch, which declares itself to be a multi-faith organisation for people of all religions and beliefs".

This resolution was passed unanimously by the AHFW Executive.

Resolution Condemning the Actions of Peter Hobson, Ruth Oates in the meeting of the Unite Faith Workers' Branch Executive Committee

The resolution was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Secretary:

"The Executive Committee of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers deplores the actions of Peter Hobson with the support of Ruth Oates in violating Unite the Union's own legal advice and agreed resolution to immediately recognise the Association of Hindu Faith Workers at the meeting of the Unite Faith Workers' Branch Executive on 16 July 2020. These actions are to be seen in the context of Ruth Oates's and Peter Hobson's prior actions of blocking any vote taking place on the recognition of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers at the Branch Meeting on 28 January 2020, as well as Peter Hobson's and Ruth Oates's clear intentions to



usurp for the Unite Faith Workers' Branch control over the establishment by Hindus of their own Workplace Grouping.

Furthermore, we reject Ruth Oates's misleading presumption in her email of 20 July 2020 where she suggests that the Association of Hindu Faith Workers should meet "for the first time" and should "elect representatives", when the AHFW has been meeting for months and has managed somehow to elect a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, noting that these names had already been communicated to the FWB Branch Secretary.

We condemn the continuing "bad faith" actions of the Acting Chair and Treasurer of the FWB and attempts to delay, obstruct and undermine the existing operations of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers, and have noted this faithless pattern of manipulation and misrepresentation, an approach which is already the subject of formal complaint and legal action."

The Chair was authorised to present these minutes to the UFWB Executive.

Engagement with Unite the Union in Mediation Process

The Chair reported back on developments with the mediation process and the meeting supported wholeheartedly the partnership of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers with our Christian and Muslim friends and comrades in shared engagement with Unite officials to find a way forward.

Resolution for Award to Reverend David Isiorho

The Association of Hindu Faith Workers proposed and agreed to write to national Hindu institutions to recommend the Reverend Dr David Isiorho for the highest award of the Hindu communities for his tireless work in challenging institutionalised white supremacy and religious discrimination in the UK, and further undertook to organise an opportunity for him to present his work to the Hindu community and to promote his book about his experiences of racism within the Church of England.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Association of Hindu Faith Workers will take place on 15th August.