



CONFIDENTIAL

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STEERING COMMITTEE

36TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Monday 3rd November, 1975 in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 35th Meeting - attached.
2. Foreign Affairs.
3. Racial Discrimination - paper by Mr. Ian Gilmour,  
LSC (75) 33, attached.
4. Any other business.

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 35th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Monday 3rd November 1975 in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)  
  
Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Hailsham,  
Mr. Gilmour, Lord Carrington,  
Mr. Prior, Mr. Peyton, Lord Thorneycroft  
  
Mr. Atkins  
  
In attendance: Mr. Forman, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson  
  
Apologies: Mr. Whitelaw, Mr. Maudling,  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Maude

1. Racial Discrimination

Mr. Gilmour introduced his paper (LSC (75) 38) discussing the Government's proposals in their White Paper on Racial Discrimination. The proposal to combine the functions of the existing Race Relations Board and Community Relations Commission was sensible. However, there were two main weaknesses in the White Paper: first, the proposal to bring clubs within the scope of the legislation, and secondly, the proposal to withdraw the need under the 1965 Act to prove "wrongful intent" in proceedings against those who published or distributed written matter or who used words "likely to stir up hatred ... on grounds of colour (or) race". Mr. Gilmour recommended that we should not vote against the Second Reading of the Bill but should make appropriate criticisms during the Second Reading debate and follow these up with amendments during Committee and Report Stages.

The following points were made in discussion:

(a) We might argue that the proposal to outlaw discrimination in clubs would harm rather than improve race relations. It would almost certainly involve the Labour Party in great difficulties with their supporters.

(b) A section of the Conservative Party, which already held reservations about the existing legislation, would probably object to the proposed extension of the legislation, especially the proposal on "unintentional discrimination" which, they might argue, seemed to increase invasion of privacy and bring into question the assumption that people were innocent until proved guilty.

It was agreed that it would be right not to vote against the Second Reading, but concentrate on moving amendments to the Bill, subject to closer examination of the Bill when it was produced. One particular point which might be examined was how far the powers of the new Race Relations Commission exceeded the powers of the existing two bodies.

...../ 2. Other Business

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