

London Rep's Report from Young Labour National Committee

19th October 2009

NEC Report

Steph Peacock reported on the most recent NEC meeting:

- Gordon Brown reported on his recent visit to the USA and said that this year's conference would be a "fightback" conference.
- Harriet Harman talked about the anti-BNP taskforce. No platform was also discussed following the BBC's decision to have Nick Griffin on the Question Time panel. A wide range of views were expressed.
- Steph has raised various issues affecting young people including free school meals and the recent CBI statement calling for the cap on student fees to be lifted.
- Pat McFadden presented a report from the National Policy Forum
- MP's expenses were discussed.

Chair's Report

Sam Tarry outlined the work he'd been doing recently, including:

- Attending the launch of Mansfield Young Labour - a group of about 20 young, energetic activists of whom many are women.
- Attending a UEA debate against the Green Party on environmental issues.
- Visiting the TUC young member's forum, who have agreed to help with our campaign on the National Minimum Wage.
- Writing to Ray Collins to request that regional reps be given membership lists of the young members in their region.
- Planning regional workshops on policy and campaigns.
- Meeting with David Prescott to discuss getting Young Labour involved in Go Fourth.
- Helping to organise the campaign for One Member One Vote for the National Policy Forum at Conference.

Sam was, in my view, unfairly criticised by some members of the committee who claimed he had taken certain actions without consultation. In particular they criticised him for approaching the TUC young member's forum. I found this criticism ludicrous and somewhat concerning, although I unfortunately did not have a chance to articulate this in the meeting. Sam was elected democratically on a strong mandate and I'm pleased he's working hard and taking a lead on important issues.

The discussion then turned to the issue of Women's Representation on the London Young Labour Exec, which very poor. Liv Bailey (Vice-Chair, Policy) recommended that the YLNC write to the LYL Exec recommending that action be taken to rectify this through quotas. I told the committee that my view LYL's problem was not getting women *elected* but getting women to *stand* in the first place. The evidence from the last AGM was that nearly every woman who stood was elected, but not many women put themselves forward in the first place. This differs from CLPs where in many cases women lose out in elections because of sexist discrimination in meetings. My view is that quotas are effective at tackling the problem within CLPs but will be ineffective in tackling the problem within LYL. I pointed to the work that myself and in particular Tulip Siddiq (LYL Women's Officer) have been doing to encourage women to stand for election, including a number of events and consultations. I am confident that after the next AGM we will see far greater women's representation on the LYL Exec. If after the efforts we have made we do not see a significant improvement in women's representation at the AGM in November then I will support some form of quota system being put in place next year.

I was in favour of Liv's proposal that a letter be sent to the LYL Exec, as were the rest of the YLNC, which passed the proposal unanimously.

Campaigning

We were joined by Deputy General Secretary, Alicia Kennedy, who came to discuss the General Election campaign with us.

As useful discussion was had in which the draft Young Labour strategy for the General Election was set out by Campaigns Officer, Jamie McMahon.

National Minimum Wage campaign

Sam Tarry presented a discussion paper for comments. This will be debated in full at the next YLNC meeting.

Election of Assistant Secretary

An election was held for the position of Assistant Secretary. The result was:

Helen Gibson (Labour Students):	12 votes	ELECTED
Thomas Gardiner (Trade Unions):	9 votes	

I voted for fellow London Young Labour Exec member, Thomas Gardiner.

Conference Debrief

Our fringe event at Conference was unfortunately poorly attended. It was held just prior to the Leader's speech, which probably explains the low turnout.

Several members of the committee expressed concern about Gordon Brown's proposals for secure units for pregnant teenagers. A short debate was had, and I think we were generally in agreement that the devil would be in the detail. I don't think any of us wanted to see a situation where young mothers were forced into these units, but we also welcomed the fact that support would be offered.

Postal worker's strike / CWU

A debate on this issue was on the agenda but unfortunately we ran out of time. I was very disappointed that we did not have this discussion, and hope we can return to it at the next meeting.

This report is a personal account and should not be regarded as an official record of the meeting. Any questions or comments should be emailed to tom_copley@hotmail.com