Conference Report

What a difference a few years can make and thank you comrades for giving me the opportunity to represent Oxford West and Abingdon as a delegate at this year’s party conference. What a privilege and honour it was. A wonderfully uplifting experience which has left me energised and hungry to capitalise on ensuring that Labour’s voice is heard and recognised within my own branch of Botley and District.

I witnessed over the few days that I was at conference, a party that was United, a party that was focused and a party that was set on winning the next General Election; no matter when that maybe.

This will have been the third conference I have attended since Jeremy has been leader but the first as a delegate and it struck me this year how far we have come in those three years. Gone are the days of the suited and booted delegates instead we have a truly representative party where there is synergy between what happens in the conference hall and the fringe meetings. There is clarity on direction and an opportunity to discuss, debate and challenge which epitomises the all inclusive party we have become.

in my view the fine leadership that Jeremy Corbyn has demonstrated has led to a party which is incredibly inclusive as evidenced by the delegate speeches which resonated so seamlessly in the conference hall. It was hard not to feel invigorated and rejuvenated and ready to pound the streets of Botley with a Labour Party message of hope of rebuilding Britain.

A shadow cabinet in waiting took centre stage delivering speech after speech of how we can rebuild Britain with interludes of well constructed video clips of real people with real issues being listened to and more importantly heard. Key messages and addresses flowed freely with fine speeches from all of the key players. No subject was left unturned, no need to hide behind the pretence that the party has gone through some very touch and anxious times.

I was able to witness first hand a transformed Labour Party and a new kind of politics. There was no **Dancing Queen** at this conference but a mighty rendition of **The Red Flag** and when after the powerfully engaging Leader’s speech we sang together:

**‘Then raise the scarlet standard high**

**Beneath it’s shade we’ll live or die**

**Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer**

**We’ll keep the red flag flying here.’**

I momentarily glanced around the conference hall and mused on just how far we have come to become the largest and most significant Socialist Party in Europe. A leader who has had to endure three hard and difficult years has emerged with such dignity. I have nothing but respect for what he has achieved.

Our Party, the Labour Party has emerged as a credible opposition, a force to be reckoned with. When our leader said in his speech: ‘Labour is ready to govern!’ I found myself muttering under my breath: ‘Bring it on!’

Erica Davis Delegate for Oxford West and Abingdon