

### A-Level Politics Conference in London

It was an early start for the Princethorpe politics students as we arrived at school at 7.30am to avoid the heavy traffic on our way down to London. We arrived a couple of hours later with everyone raring to go! The conference was hosted at The Methodist Central Hall in Westminster, and there were another 2000 politics students in attendance. It was great, and really encouraging, to see so many other students like us travel from across the country to hear the voices of those who have shaped our political landscape over the past 20 years.

We had the privilege of listening to Jess Phillips MP of the Labour party who held a shadow cabinet post until she recently resigned over her party's stance on the Israel/Palestine conflict which is currently occurring in the Middle East. She discussed the conflict and talked about Keir Starmer's reluctance to call for a ceasefire. She told us how he "wants a ceasefire" but also emphasised the fact that due to his position it's "not easy for him to be able to say that".

Jeremy Corbyn MP, who is perhaps one of the more controversial party leaders in the last decades, explained to us how he differed from other Labour MPs throughout his time in the party claiming that he warned them to be "careful with what you wish for when going into Iraq".

Sir Jacob Rees Mogg MP, a stalwart of the Brexit-wing of the Conservative Party, talked to us about the importance of free speech, and how it is pivotal in upholding democracy.

We heard such diverse viewpoints and opinions from these influential people. Other speakers included Steven Flynn the leader of the Scottish Nationalist Party, discussing inequality between Scotland and England, David Davis the past Brexit Minister discussing how he believes our "national health service has failed" and its time has passed, Sajid Javid the former conservative Chancellor and Ed Davey the leader of the Liberal Democrats.

Ed Davey told us how it is more important than ever to be voting for the Liberal Democrats as in many constituencies it is them who are close to toppling the current Conservative rule. Locally, this may be relevant in Stratford-Upon-Avon where the Liberal Democrats won a majority in the recent Local Elections. He said, "The Tory's love to pretend they know their way around the economy... they don't, and it shows".

It was interesting that the two politicians that represent the more radical sides of the political spectrum (Jeremy Corbyn and Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg) were the ones that were seen to have received the most vocal and visceral response from our fellow peers. Perhaps this reflects the idea that we have become more polarised in our views and intolerant to other people's views that we might disagree with? The conference has certainly left me wondering what role the press and social media has helped to play in aiding this political polarisation.

After we had heard people speak, we began to regroup and head out back to our minibus. After a quick group photo and some discussions amongst ourselves about what we had heard we got on the bus and returned to the college enlightened by what was nothing short of an incredibly informative and entertaining trip to Westminster.

The London congestion unfortunately caught us, prolonging the journey home, which many of us took as an opportunity for a quick nap after a very interesting, yet exhausting day. Overall, it was a fantastic experience for everyone who attended, and it really made us think about where we stand on these current political issues. Truly a day to remember for the rest of our lives!

By Finley Shields – Lower Sixth A-level Politics Student













