

# The Labour Party

**Ed Miliband MP, Leader of the Labour Party, in a speech at the Lowry Centre at Salford Quays, said:**

Thank you Amina and thank you Narveshwar, Claire, Amman, Adrian and Sarah for those amazing stories.

The five people we have just heard from are why we are here today to launch our campaign for the general election.

Each of them remind us that we're here not just to fly the flag of our Party, because in 2015, a victory for our Party is not nearly enough.

We're fighting for something much bigger.

We're fighting for a Britain where every day working people are properly rewarded once again.

We're fighting for a Britain where every young person, whatever their background, can begin their working lives with a future that promises to be better, not worse, than their parents'.

We're fighting for a Britain where everyone plays by fair rules, including the most powerful like energy companies and the banks.

We're fighting for a Britain that deals with its debts responsibly, without shredding our NHS and vital public services.

We're fighting for a true recovery and real, enduring

# The Labour Party

prosperity that extends to the kitchen tables of all working families across Britain.

We're fighting to be the kind of country that we all know we have it in ourselves to be.

More just, more equal and more prosperous.

And we're going to fight that fight in the right way.

We will offer hope, not falsehoods.

We know the depths of our values matter more than the depth of our opponents' pockets.

We will win this election, not by buying up thousands of poster sites, but by having millions of conversations.

I am going to be leading those conversations in village halls, community centres, workplaces right across the country, starting this very week and every week from now until the election.

I want you to be doing the same.

This year we will be making our case, explaining our vision, house by house, street by street, town by town.

Our campaign is setting the goal of holding four million conversations with people in just four months about how we change our country.

# The Labour Party

That is almost twice the number we've ever done before.

It is more than any British political party has ever done before.

And in every single one of those conversations, we will be talking directly with people on their doorstep.

And we will be reminding people what is at stake:

In this election there is a choice not just between parties but between two competing visions of how our country can succeed.

A Tory plan that believes we can succeed with just a few at the top doing well.

Or a plan – Labour's plan for Britain's future - that puts working people first.

## **1. The Tory Failure**

For five years, the Tories have shown us their idea.

If we just strip the Government to its bare bones, give in to the powerful interests and give huge tax cuts to the very wealthiest, then all of Britain will somehow benefit.

And judging from what David Cameron said last week, they really think it has been a great success.

# The Labour Party

But that tells you all you need to know about what they think success looks like.

Because think about what has actually happened.

Millionaires have reaped huge benefits from the Tory plan.

There is no doubt about that.

But working people in our country are worse off.

Much worse off.

For the first time since the 1920s, working people will be worse off at the end of a government than they were at the beginning.

Zero hour contracts have exploded, driving wages down across our country, and have allowed some firms to play havoc with people's lives.

The energy companies have doubled the profit they make from each family and the average bill has gone up £300 a year.

And most inexcusable is the shortchanging of the greatest hope for our future, our children, who this Government is failing to prepare for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

At a time when education and training are critical to

# The Labour Party

the chances of earning a decent wage—and to the long-term success of our country-- tuition fees have trebled and apprenticeships for young people are actually falling.

And they call all of that a success.

We're a country of food banks and bank bonuses.

A country where social mobility goes backwards and privilege is rewarded.

Where millionaires have had their taxes cut and millions pay more.

And they call that a success.

Well, I don't.

And the British people don't either.

And think what has happened to our NHS.

Longer to wait to see your GP.

Longer to wait in A&E.

Longer to wait for an operation.

An NHS without time to care.

The Tories have damaged the NHS in these five years.

# The Labour Party

Give them five more and the NHS as we know it just won't be there.

Well, we won't let that happen.

They've even failed on the one thing they claim to care about most.

The deficit.

David Cameron promised to eliminate the deficit by 2015.

Well, 2015 is now here.

And so is the deficit.

And the deficit is still here for a very simple reason: because it turns out if you depress wages and lack any real economic plan other than tax cuts for the wealthy, it doesn't just fail working people, it fails to balance the books.

So this Tory experiment has been tried.

And the verdict is in.

By the measures of household budgets, prospects for our children, preserving the most vital public services and dealing with our nation's debts, the Tory experiment has failed.

# The Labour Party

Theirs is not a record to run on.

Theirs is a record to run from.

And what is their plan for the next five years?

We learnt that on Friday.

More of the same.

Keep driving along the road to nowhere.

But press down on the accelerator.

Imagine what another five years would mean for you and your family.

The Tories telling you about the good economic news.

But you and your family not having enough to pay the bills at the end of each month.

The Tories telling you that there has never been more opportunity for young people.

But your son or daughter can't afford to go to university and the only other option is a zero hours job.

The Tories telling you there is a housing boom.

But you not being able to afford a home of your own.

The Tories telling you that the NHS has been protected.

But you not being able to get your operation in time, and the only choice on offer is to go private.

And it's not just short-term calamities that their policies will wreak.

It's the long-term impact on our country, as well.

As sure as night follows day, an economy built on the success of a few will never prosper for long.

Britain can do better than this.

Britain must do better than this.

And Britain will do better than this.

## **2. Labour's Plan for Britain's Future**

And we will show in the coming months that it doesn't need to be this way.

Our plan is based on one simple truth - a truth so different from the Tories' idea - that when your family succeeds, Britain succeeds too.

That's why it is a plan that puts working people first.

It is a plan that makes real those principles that I



# The Labour Party

talked about at the start.

The principles we're fighting for.

It is a plan that says that all those who go out to work are as important and valuable to our country as those who get the six figure bonuses.

That means raising the minimum wage to over £8 an hour and dealing with the scandal of zero hour contracts.

It means supporting the wealth creating businesses of the future, in Green industries, that create those good jobs that reward hard work.

In an era of hard choices, it means putting cuts in business rates for small firms that will create most of the jobs of the future, ahead of further tax cuts for large corporations.

Ours is a plan also that says there is nothing more important for our country than opportunities for the young.

We are told by this Government that they are pro-business.

Yet we know that our country is hundreds of thousands short of the number of engineers businesses demand.

And we see this problem throughout our economy:

# The Labour Party

well paid jobs, gone wanting, for people who have the necessary education and training to fill them.

So we will have a revolution in vocational education, so that as many young people leave school to do an apprenticeship as currently go to university.

This, and not slashing wages, is how you win the jobs of the future.

Britain won't succeed with a Tory race to the bottom.

We need to run a race to the top.

And under a Labour government Britain will win that race.

Our plan is a plan that says that everyone should play by fair rules, and the most powerful interests in our country should be held to account.

Businesses large and small are the lifeblood of our economy.

But the banks and the energy companies have had things their way for too long and need to serve Britain properly.

We will require these businesses to operate in a competitive way, and Britain—all of Britain—will be the better for it.

No more broken markets that work for a few but

undermine our economy.

And ours is a plan that will preserve our most vital public services.

Knowing that our NHS is our nation's greatest treasure, to be protected and nurtured for generations to come.

A guaranteed GP appointment within 48 hours.

A one-week wait for cancer tests.

And a £2.5 billion Time To Care fund to support more midwives, care workers, doctors and nurses.

Yes, assuring decent, timely health care has a cost.

And that's why we have proposed a Mansion Tax for the very richest to protect and improve the NHS for our entire country.

Something the Tories would never do.

Because we believe that those with the broadest shoulders should bear the greatest burden.

And that is just one example of our plan making different choices than this Government.

And it is by making different choices that we will deal with the deficit responsibly and still meet the obligations to our country's future.

# The Labour Party

Ours is a plan to cut the deficit every year and balance the books as soon as possible in the next parliament.

And until that happens it does mean, outside protected areas, spending will be falling, not rising, department by department.

With no proposals in our manifesto funded by additional borrowing.

Not a single one.

Those of us who believe that government has a positive role to play in our nation's future, know we have a special obligation:

To challenge government to do its work and deliver its services in innovative and more cost-effective ways.

Showing we can do more with less, just like great Labour councils are doing across the country.

Making better decisions, making sure that every pound really counts.

And giving power back to local people.

Ending a century of centralization in our country.

And our plan will also confront other hard truths.

# The Labour Party

Three million British jobs rest on commerce and trade within the European Union.

Exiting the EU would damage British jobs, British families, British businesses.

I understand the politics that has led the Prime Minister to play risky irresponsible games on the European Union, allowing his party to drift towards exit.

But I won't.

If you want to know what chaos and a threat to prosperity looks like, just imagine a Tory government riven apart after the next election on Europe.

We must demand reform from Europe—a European Union that works better for Britain.

But make no mistake: exit from the EU would be a dramatic mistake for our country and our economy.

So, whatever the politics, I will not join those who cynically offer exit as a realistic plan for our future or the future of Britain's working families.

And confronting hard truths extends to the challenge of immigration.

I am the son of immigrants, who came here with

# The Labour Party

nothing.

They benefitted from the opportunities that Britain had to offer and built a life for our family.

And their story is not unique.

For generations, hard-working immigrants, eager to make their way, have helped build our country.

But this party will never again dismiss people's concerns about immigration.

Britain should not—cannot—close ourselves off from those who can contribute to our economy and our country.

But people want to know that there are fair rules.

Fair rules so that benefits should be earned, so people must contribute before they claim.

And fair rules to prevent businesses from recruiting at slave wages, exploiting migrant labour to undercut pay and conditions.

So this is our plan:

Rewarding hard work and tackling the cost of living crisis.

Providing education and opportunity for all our young people, upon whom Britain's future relies.

# The Labour Party

Fair rules for everyone in our country, from top to bottom.

Protecting our NHS.

All built on solid economic foundations.

A plan that puts working people first.

And this plan is not simply about a fairer society.

It is also about a more prosperous one.

Because only by putting working people first can we use the talents of all and succeed as a country.

The Tories think we succeed with a few at the top doing well.

We know we prosper together.

## **3. The Choice and the Campaign**

In the next four months, there will be the usual sound and fury.

But it will all actually come down to something rather simple.

Who we are.

How we want to live together.

And how we succeed as a nation.

# The Labour Party

This is nothing less than a once in a generation fight about who our country works for.

It is a choice between a Tory plan where only a few at the top can succeed and our public services are threatened.

Or a Labour plan that puts working people first, deals with the deficit and protects our NHS.

We have a Government that will say: stick to their plan.

They really think this is as good as it gets.

That's because they're the pessimists about what is achievable for Britain and the British people.

And between now and the election, they will find all kinds of ways to tell you that change isn't possible.

Just as the pessimists have always done down the years.

That change that puts working people first can't be done.

But I don't believe them.

And I don't think you should believe them either.

We've done it before as a country in the face of even greater challenges and we can do it again.



# The Labour Party

It is seventy years this year since Britain won the Second World War and went on to win the peace.

Think about what they were facing.

That generation didn't sit back and put up with what it had seen before.

With the dark days of the depression.

The negativity that said there was no other way.

Instead, they started to rebuild.

Rebuild with an economy that works for all working people.

Rebuild by honouring everyone who works hard.

Rebuild by standing up to the powerful forces, those who need to be held to account.

Rebuild by dealing with our debts responsibly for the good of the next generation.

Rebuild by protecting our vital public services, including our NHS.

That's what our plan for Britain's future will do.

That will be our task again.

# The Labour Party

Let's go out and fight for the chance to make it happen.

**Ends**