

# Letter from Shropshire

by

**William Shepherd**



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**September 2015**

**Labour is on the verge of something big. Heaven forbid by Mark Steele**

*first published in The Independent on Friday 14 August 2015*

It's easy to see why those in charge of the Labour Party are so depressed. They must sit in their office crying: "Hundreds of thousands of people want to join us. It's a disaster. And loads of them are young, and full of energy, and they're really enthusiastic. Oh my God, why has it all gone so miserably wrong?"

Every organisation would be the same. If a local brass band is down to its last five members, unsure whether it can ever put on another performance, the last thing it needs is young excited people arriving with trombones to boost numbers and raise money and attract large audiences. The sensible response is to tell them they're idiots, and announce to the press that they are infiltrators from the Workers' Revolutionary Party.

The Labour Party in recent years has insisted that it's a party that understands business. But if it were running Apple, it would employ a novel approach. A report could come in that a new product was so successful that customers were queuing up to see it, and the sales staff were having to stand on fire engines to address the crowds eager to buy it. So Labour would say: "We'll scrap that for a start. Let's promote our other models that have initiated no interest from anyone whatsoever, such as a digital table mat. That's how to make money."

The fervour around Jeremy Corbyn is extraordinary, but it wouldn't be fair to suggest he's the only Labour politician who can bring large crowds on to the streets to greet him. Tony Blair is just as capable. In his case the crowds are there to scream that he should be arrested for war crimes and to throw things at him, but that's being pernickety; he can certainly draw an audience.

Blair made another contribution to the leadership debate this week, and his prose is worth quoting. It goes: "The party is walking eyes shut, arms outstretched, over the cliff's edge to the jagged rocks below. This is not a moment to refrain from disturbing the serenity of the walk on the basis it causes 'disunity'. It is a moment for a rugby tackle if that were possible."

It's fitting this was published on the day that A-level results were announced, as it's hard to imagine how any examiner would have marked this. It's possible he didn't even write it himself, and he's stolen it from the lyrics of an obscure prog rock band from 1975. Maybe there's another verse: "As we float across Narnia in a bubble of tadpoles, an iguana with a beard threatens to make us anti-business by renationalising the railways, and we cry in a golden canoe that no one will vote for us in Nuneaton."

Or he was simply trying to convey the scale of apocalypse that will result from Labour electing a leader who stands for something. Tomorrow he'll add: "Our great party is literally climbing into the mouth of a lion, as it stands unaware of an American dentist poised behind, dozing as it climbs into a ride at Alton Towers that hasn't been checked since 2008, placing our economy in a shopping mall in America just before a teenager goes berserk with a machine gun. Is THAT what you WANT?"

His accomplice of old, Alastair Campbell, has been just as coherent, insisting Jeremy Corbyn would lead the party to disaster beyond imagination. Maybe there's still time for Alastair to prove his point by compiling a dossier explaining in detail exactly how Jeremy Corbyn would cause this disaster, showing beyond doubt that the disaster would be caused within 45 minutes, so that the only rational response is to invade Jeremy Corbyn.

This week, I was lucky enough to enjoy at first hand this calm approach of Labour's leaders, when my application to register as a supporter was turned down on the grounds that: "We have reason to believe that you do not support the aims and values of the Labour Party." I suppose it's encouraging that they're being so thorough, although it could be argued that leading your country into a disastrous invasion, having justified it with a set of premises it turns out you made up, is also slightly at odds with the aims and values of the Labour Party. So, presumably, Blair and Campbell and their supporters will have received the same email as me?

Or there's Simon Danczuk, the MP who has pledged to do all he can to overthrow Jeremy Corbyn from day one of his leadership. I wonder if publicly committing yourself to bringing down the democratically elected leader of the Labour Party could give someone a reason to believe you didn't support the aims and values of the Labour Party?

If not, this could lead to a whole new way of running organisations. When someone joins the Scouts they should have to pledge to bring down the Scouts from day one, otherwise they're not allowed to join. If a new member applies to join a bowls club, they should be asked if they're prepared to abide by the rules of the elected committee, and if they are, they should be told to sod off and never come back.

Then there's John McTernan, the former adviser to Jim Murphy, who insists that Corbyn will be a catastrophe, and that the party should continue with the strategy he devised in Scotland, which took the party's MPs from 41 to a much more manageable one, making it far easier to deal with admin.

These are the types you want to make a party successful, not crowds of young enthusiastic people eager to change society. Isn't it obvious?

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### **Labour Grandees Round on Corbyn by Ben Riley-Smith**

*first published in the Daily Telegraph on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015*

*Jeremy Corbyn has 53 percent of support more than double that of any other candidate according to a poll*

Jeremy Corbyn was accused of being an anti-Semite by one of Labour's most senior politicians last night as a number of party grandees rounded on the hard-Left leadership candidate. Ivan Lewis, the shadow Northern Ireland secretary, attacked Mr Corbyn's "anti-Semitic rhetoric" and said the party must have "zero tolerance" for such views. Mr Lewis said he was "saddened" that people on the Left of the party had failed to take a "no ifs, no buts" approach to anti-Semitism.



Liz Kendall and Yvette Cooper, also leadership contenders, called on their supporters to pick anyone but Mr Corbyn as second and third preferences in the contest. Lord Hattersley, the former Labour deputy leader, told *The Daily Telegraph* that Mr Corbyn would have no right to "impose" his views on the party as he called on MPs to rebel against his policies should he win. Meanwhile Gordon Brown, the former prime minister, announced that he would be making his first intervention in the race tomorrow in a speech expected to be heavily critical of Mr Corbyn.

Writing on the Left-leaning website Labour List, Mr Lewis said: "Some of his stated political views are a cause for serious concern. At the very least he has shown very poor judgement in expressing support for and failing to speak out against people who have engaged not in legitimate criticism of

Israeli governments but in anti-Semitic rhetoric." He added: "It saddens me to have to say to some on the Left of British politics that anti-racism means zero tolerance of anti-Semitism, no ifs, and no buts. I have said the same about Islamophobia and other forms of racism to a minority of my constituents who make unacceptable statements."

It comes after *The Jewish Chronicle* raised concerns about Mr Corbyn's pro-Palestinian views as they demanded he urgently answer questions about his links to controversial Middle Eastern figures. Mr Corbyn has faced a growing backlash this week since a *YouGov* poll put him on 53 percent - more than double the support of any other candidate.

While Mr Corbyn spent another day in Scotland justifying why he could win back dozens of seats lost to the *Scottish Nationalist Party* there were signs that the *Labour Party* machine was moving against him. Whispered briefings from his rival campaigns saw Andy Burnham urged to be stronger in his attacks on Mr Corbyn in an attempt to ensure no moderate voter names him as a second or third preference. There is a growing belief that the only way Mr Corbyn can be stopped is if he wins less than 45 percent of first preferences - leaving another candidate to win overall once second and third preferences are distributed through the alternative vote system.

Lord Hattersley told *The Daily Telegraph* that Mr Corbyn had no right to "impose" his ideology on MPs if he won and urged moderates to continue opposing him if he becomes leader. The Labour peer urged MPs to fight Mr Corbyn's proposals to take Britain out of NATO, nationalise the railways and energy companies and scrap the country's nuclear weapons. "MPs have to follow their consciences and if the consciences are different to Corbyn's, that is what they have to follow," Lord Hattersley said.

Meanwhile, in an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, Mr Burnham warned that the party is in danger of splitting even if Mr Corbyn does not become leader. He pointed to private polling suggesting many voters' second and third preferences will go to him to prove that he is the only moderate candidate that can defeat Mr Corbyn.

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### **Jeremy Corbyn's Rivals Think He's a Dinosaur - they couldn't be more wrong by Mary Riddle**

*first published in the Daily Telegraph on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015*

Turn the clock back to 1983. A loaf of bread cost 38p, the first music CDs went on sale, and a divided Labour Party saw its vote shrivel to 28 per cent in the general election. That Britain is the supposed destination of time travellers boarding the Jeremy Corbyn charabanc on a one-way ticket to perdition.

As it happens, Labour doom-mongers predicting such a fate would rather regress even further back in history. This week marks the 70th anniversary of the accession of Clement Attlee, who beat Winston Churchill to give Labour its first majority government. In a speech to mark that triumph, the leadership contender Andy Burnham warned that his party had squandered the spirit of 1945.

Whether or not he wins the leadership, Mr Corbyn is no dinosaur. For good or ill, he is a beacon of modernity in the Jurassic world of a Labour Party lost in time.

Though postwar glory and the travails of the Eighties are both long gone, Labour remains enslaved by the past. Successive leaders have proclaimed themselves “modernisers” or “progressives” while staring studiously backwards. Where the Tories have become a sleek and efficient fighting force, Labour clanks into every battle like the political equivalent of a Plantagenet Re-enactment Society.

Tony Blair, who refused to attend the Durham Miners’ Gala, proved unique in his ruthless excision of folk memories. Ed Miliband promised to do likewise, declaring after his election that “the past is another country”. But long before Mr Miliband draped himself in the borrowed “One Nation” mantle of Disraeli, Labour had reclaimed its status as the nostalgia party.

That obsession with history and heritage has led to the mess in which the party is now embroiled. The real battle within Labour is not between Left and Right but between ancient and modern. But blinded by their own nostalgia, Jeremy Corbyn’s critics have failed to see that he is anything but a relic of the past. Mr Corbyn is in fact a figure of sparkling modernity and thus more dangerous than his adversaries can yet imagine.

While the Corbynator looks less like a 21st century cyberwarrior than a superannuated geography teacher, superficial images should fool no one. Mr Corbyn’s anti-austerity prospectus not only places him alongside the Spanish indignados (the outraged) and other populist movements spreading grassroots power. It may also enable him to harness the fury that will surely erupt in Britain when the Chancellor implements spending reductions of 40 per cent in unprotected departments, with the aim of saving £20 billion in this Parliament.

If bins go unemptied and the elderly unfed, then Mr Corbyn will seem vindicated. Meanwhile, the young voters backing him do not regard his anti-Trident stance as a reminder of Labour’s unilateralist madness. They think, rightly, that £60 billion is a lot of money for the antiquated and unusable Cold War deterrent to which the other candidates cleave.

Even Mr Corbyn’s old-fashioned views, on issues such as renationalisation, have a vogueish ring, while his lifestyle choices of cycling and not drinking strike a chord with a frugal generation. Attuned to the politics of identity, he senses voters’ yearnings and the beat of his party’s Eurosceptic heart.

That is what made him so potentially dangerous to David Cameron and to Britain. Having refused to rule out campaigning for a No vote, Mr Corbyn yesterday appeared to soften his stance, saying he would work with European allies. Germany’s brutal handling of the Greek crisis has allowed nationalism to flourish and put 70 years of European peace at risk.

Any Labour leader should therefore proclaim it is vital to keep Britain in the EU in order to rebuild a fraying European unity. It is still not clear that Mr Corbyn would do so. Yet far from tackling him on the burning issues of the future, such as the EU, Labour critics portray him as a museum artefact.

In a different context, the West mistook Islamic State as a medieval throwback, realising too late that Islamist extremism was a thoroughly modern phenomenon. If a seventh century caliphate can be incubated on Twitter and YouTube, then so can a democratic movement. Of course, there is nothing to connect a pathological death cult with the mild-mannered and likeable Mr Corbyn. The inability of their respective foes to locate them on a political timeline, however, is fatal.

Mr Burnham tried, very sensibly, to remedy his party’s mistake. Warning that negative attacks on Mr Corbyn proved that Labour was misreading the mood of the moment, he attempted to harness nostalgia by proposing a Beveridge-style commission to refashion the welfare state. The other candidates are also belatedly starting to grasp that the only way to win is to stop fixating on what Mr Corbyn’s presence says about yesterday and to start articulating what, if anything, they have to say about tomorrow.

Liz Kendall, the least associated with the past, is developing the theme of giving power to the people. Yvette Cooper, who wrote a thoughtful essay on power-sharing for the Smith Institute in 2004, has found a stronger voice by lambasting

Labour's macho record. Even so, Mr Corbyn, with a sizeable lead in some opinion polls, remains a possible if not a likely victor.

His modestly-run campaign has been boosted by hysterical attacks on him and his nominators and by unsubstantiated laments that the contest has been hijacked by Tories and Trotskyists. As for claims that Labour would never win an election under Corbyn, voters may take the view that his rivals are just as unelectable.

"It's like looking at a paint colour chart," says one senior Labour adviser. "People might not be sure if they could live with Corbyn red, but they think it's preferable to three shades of magnolia." If Labour is to survive, the candidates must adopt more vivid hues. But first, Labour's centrists must realise that they, not Mr Corbyn, are the antediluvian wing of a party whose core vote has evaporated, whose ability to reforge social democracy is slight and whose vision is unremittingly myopic.

Having failed to foresee every future trend, from the rise of Ukip to the loss of Scotland, Labour has been blindsided by the Corbyn ascendancy. Whether or not he wins the leadership, Mr Corbyn is no dinosaur. For good or ill, he is a beacon of modernity in the Jurassic world of a *Labour Party* lost in time.

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### **The Only Way Labour Can Win the Next Election is to Elect Corbyn Now by Dan Hodges**

*first published in the Daily Telegraph on Tuesday 28th July 2015*

Earlier this week, I rejoined the Labour Party. It was a surprisingly easy decision. I didn't need to pretend to be someone I'm not – adopt a disguise, or a funny accent. I didn't even need to put on a northern accent. I simply logged onto the website, clicked on the video of a small child attempting to eat a Vote Labour badge, and hey presto. I put in my details, paid my £3, and I was in.

Everyone's doing it, apparently. According to the Sunday papers, up to 140,000 people will have joined the Labour Party by the time the leadership election ends, almost all of them for the purpose of getting Jeremy Corbyn to the top of the ballot. Obviously "up to 140,000" is quite a broad figure. It could be 140,000. It could be one man and his dog – though given that this is the radical Left, that would mean one white man with dreadlocks, and a dog on a string. No one really knows for sure.

But the fact this once stout party is seeing a wave of support on behalf of a pseudo-Marxist grammar-school boy is indisputable. I know, because I've signed up again precisely so I can be part of that wave of support for Jeremy Corbyn myself.

It's 23 months since I left Labour because it opposed the bombing of Syria. Now I've rejoined so I can vote for a man who helps lead *the Stop The War* coalition. Which I suppose indicates I've been on a bit of a journey.

And I have. As recently as last week, I thought this bout of *Corbynmania* was merely a silly-season construct. That despite all the hype, there wasn't a cat in hell's chance of Corbyn being elected leader. Correctly, because at the moment there isn't. If an army of 140,000 Marxists sign up to the *Labour Party* by September, I'll eat Comrade Corbyn's little black Breton cap.

My assessment was that we'd have a bout of *Corbynmania*, he'd get soundly beaten, either by Yvette Cooper or Andy Burnham, after which we'd have a (very) brief period of Cooper or Burnham mania, and then Labour would calm down and slowly start to pull itself together.

But that assessment, I now realise, was based on three erroneous assumptions. The first was that a Corbyn win would be catastrophic for the *Labour Party*. The second was that a Corbyn defeat would represent a setback for the Left. And the third – which was very much the product of my first two erroneous assumptions – was that Corbyn and the Left did actually want Corbyn to win.





And now I see they don't. I first recognised it when I saw a clip on the *BBC* last week in which Ken Livingstone was arguing that Corbyn could win a general election because he'd reach out beyond the Westminster bubble and connect with real people. Now, there are a lot of ways of framing Corbyn and his offer, but the man most likely to carry seats like Chingford for Labour in 2020 isn't one of them. Even for the *Labour Left* it's off-the-charts bonkers. And Livingstone isn't off-the-charts bonkers, he's actually a canny political operator.

Then I caught a photo of Corbyn that was taken just after the *YouGov* poll came out showing him ahead. He was looking at the camera side on, with this mischievous little smile on his face, and a twinkle in his eye. The guy's having a laugh. He's running to see how much trouble he can stir up before it all comes to an end. But he knows it will come to an end, because he has to ensure it comes to an end.

The common perception is a Corbyn win would be a triumph for the Left. And in conventional political terms it would. But the Left doesn't deal in conventional politics. Which is why it knows a Corbyn win would actually be a disaster for it.

Since May Corbyn and his colleagues have done a brilliant job of redefining Labour's defeat. Ed Miliband, whose leadership up until that point had been the recipient of two grudging cheers, has been repackaged as a Blairite in sheep's clothing. The bravery he supposedly showed through confrontations with the Murdoch press, the bankers, and other vested interests, has been recast as crippling timidity. But the political consequences that would flow from a Corbyn victory could not be recast. Corbyn's shadow cabinet would contain no Blairites.

The battle between *Labour's* modernising and traditionalist factions can only be resolved once there is a clear victor. The Left would have its party back. And as it guided it serenely off a cliff - as it inevitably would - there would be no one else around to take the blame.

One reason why the *Labour Left* is so good at rewriting history is it knows its history. And it knows full well the start of its decline can be dated - precisely. Not, as is popularly perceived, to the morning of May 2 1997, and the new dawn of Blairism, but the morning of June 10 1983, when Michael Foot carried the Left's bold, radical prospectus to the most crushing electoral defeat since the war.

"Never forget how you felt," Neil Kinnock used to remind his party. Sadly, the *Labour Party* in general has forgotten. But the Left hasn't. And they don't want to replace the longest suicide note in history with the longest and most suicidal leadership election in history. Which is why I've rejoined Labour to vote for Corbyn. The battle between Labour's modernising and traditionalist factions can only be resolved once there is a clear victor. And at present the modernisers are too weak.

Say Andy Burnham or Yvette Cooper do win. They will make some incremental moves back to the centre (how dare they do more after the Corbyn insurgency?). And when those moves prove electorally ineffective, up the Left will jump with a cry of: "See, we told you!"

So victory must be handed to the traditionalists. It's time to call the Left's bluff. If the 7/5 Truthers genuinely think people voted for David Cameron because Ed Miliband's *Labour Party* was too harsh on welfare, or too tough on public spending, or too interventionist on foreign affairs, fine. Let's put it to the test. Let's put the Left to the test. The Left says Jeremy Corbyn is what the British people are looking for. OK. Let's elect him Labour leader and see.

Blairites for Corbyn. Join me brothers.

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**The last thing Labour needs is a leader like Jeremy Corbyn who people want to vote for by Mark Steele**  
first published in *The Independent* on Thursday 23 July 2015

As Jeremy Corbyn nears a possible surprise victory in the Labour leadership race, the Islington North MP spoke to *The Independent* about his impressive campaign and what the future could hold for himself and the Labour party.

A new poll this week gave Mr Corbyn a 22-point lead in the Labour leadership race and he is now the bookies' favourite to win.

Yet despite Mr Corbyn's popularity among Labour members - especially a growing number of young people joining the party - critics still claim he is far too left wing to be a serious contender for 10 Downing Street come 2020. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair warned Labour members not to vote for Mr Corbyn, arguing that the party could lose another two general elections if it drifts further to the left. Mr Blair even told Labour supporters who backed Mr Corbyn to get a heart transplant.

Luckily, Corbyn's opponents are making a persuasive case for their own bids. Andy Burnham is especially clear that he's opposed to the Tory's Welfare Bill, as it will "Hit working families" and "hit children particularly badly". Indeed he's so opposed to it that he was determined not to vote against it. The most effective way to oppose it, he insisted, was to abstain rather than vote against it, because that way he can unite the party against it.

It's so rare that a politician speaks clearly like that, in a language we can all understand. Presumably he'll be telling all his supporters not to vote for him in the leadership election, but to abstain as that way he can win by even more.

Burnham is known as an Everton fan, so when he's at their games he must try and persuade the Everton supporters to sing "Spurs and Everton, Spurs and Everton, we'll abstain on this one evermore, we'll abstain on this one ever-more", rather than fall into the trap of supporting the team he supports by supporting them.

Maybe his plan is to make Labour electable again by supporting all the different policies. If he becomes leader, Labour will support the cuts and oppose them, and oppose fox-hunting but support it as well, and that way the party can win votes from everyone.

It could be that the reason three of the candidates are struggling to make an impact is they don't seem capable of expressing what they stand for.

Whenever they're asked what they believe in they make grand replies such as "I want a Britain not of down but of up, for the always and not the never, that reaches out to all of us, not only people on the 133 bus, a Britain not just of the liver but also the kidney, a Britain that can care, can share, be debonair, fair, abstain on the austere, and say a prayer like Tony Blair."

Liz Kendall makes some effort to stand for something definite, which is to be like Blair but more so, and next week she'll probably criticise Blair for only invading Iraq once when he should have done it twice.

There are reports that Kendall has asked Yvette Cooper to drop out, as Liz stands the best chance of beating Corbyn. As every survey shows Kendall is by some distance last, that's impressive and I might try this myself. I'll suggest to Mo Farah that he drops out of the 5,000m in next year's Olympics, as my time of two hours is the only one that stands a chance of beating the Kenyans.

All three are now squabbling, not about ideas or policies or even their favourite type of biscuit, but over which one has the best chance to beat Corbyn. And they must beat him, because by being capable of expressing his ideas clearly and simply, for example by voting against welfare cuts, he makes himself unelectable.

If you look at Corbyn's record it's clear he just can't win elections. In his constituency of Islington North he inherited a majority of 4,456, which is now 21,194. He's one of the few Labour MPs whose vote increased between 2005 and 2010, when he added 5,685 to his majority. This is typical of the man, defying the official Labour policy of losing votes and getting more of them instead, just to be a rebel.

So let's hope one of the others triumphs, and at least wins back the votes Labour lost in Scotland, where so many people at the last election said "I canna vote Labour, they don't abstain enough for me, the wee morons."

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### **James Robertson on Corbynomics**

*first published in the James Robertson newsletter on 23rd July 2015*

Yesterday, Labour leadership candidate Jeremy Corbyn MP, outlined his vision for a more productive and fairer economy for all at a policy seminar. He addressed 'the Conservative myth' that wealth creation is solely due to the dynamic risk-taking of private equity funds, entrepreneurs or billionaires bringing their investment to UK shores.

If believed, it is logical to cut taxes for the rich and big business, not to bother to invest in the workforce, and be intensely relaxed about the running down of public services as is happening. He affirmed: "Where there are tough choices, we will always protect public services and support for the most vulnerable".

Corbyn's alternative, laid out in *The Economy in 2020* and accessed via the campaign website, is to build a rebalanced, prosperity-focused economy, based on growth and high quality jobs. His leadership campaign has no big private donors. He wants Labour to become a democratic social movement again, dedicated to real change:

"Cuts are not the way to prosperity; Britain needs a publicly-led expansion and reconstruction of the economy, with a big rise in investment levels. We must ensure that our national housing, transport, digital and energy networks are among the best in the world. This requires the establishment of an National Investment Bank to promote infrastructure

upgrades and support for innovation. Labour 2020 will make large reductions in the £93 billion of corporate tax relief and subsidies. These funds can be used to establish the National Investment Bank to head a multi-billion pound programme of infrastructure upgrades and support for high-tech and innovative industries” (*Jeremy Corbyn*).

On taxation and tax justice, Jeremy argued: “Paying tax is not a burden. It is the subscription we pay to live in a civilised society. A collective payment we all make for the collective goods we all benefit from: schools, hospitals, libraries, street lights, pensions, the list is endless. Under these plans outlined today Labour 2020 will make the tax system more progressive, and follow a five-point plan to tackle tax avoidance and evasion:

- Stronger anti-avoidance rules brought into UK tax law.
- The aim of country-by-country reporting for multinational corporations.
- Reform of small business taxation to tackle avoidance and evasion.
- Enforce proper regulation of companies in the UK to ensure that they pay what they owe.
- A reversal of the cuts to staff in HMRC and at Companies House, taking on more staff at both, to ensure that HMRC can collect the taxes the country so badly needs.

“The UK has shifted from taxing income and wealth to taxing consumption; and from taxing corporations to taxing individuals. We must ensure that those with the most, pay the most, not just in monetary terms but proportionally too. What responsible government committed to closing the deficit would give a tax break to the richest 4% of households?”

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### Further Reading

#### A Very British Coup by Chris Mullin

Against the odds, steel worker Harry Perkins leads the *Labour Party* to a stunning victory. His manifesto includes the removal of American bases, public control of finance and the dismantling of media empires. Chris Mullin’s classic political thriller was described as ‘the political novel of the decade’ when first published in 1982, and was later a huge success as a *Channel Four* television series (available on DVD).

#### What if Michael Foot had been Prime Minister?

A contrafactual account of a Michael Foot government by the right-wing historian Andrew Roberts published by the *Daily Mail* on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2010 with an unpublished *Letter to the Daily Mail* in response by William Shepherd at <http://cesc.net/dispatchweb/letters/shepherd/17.%20letterfromebbwvale.pdf> .

#### Jeremy Corbyn: an honest politician who cares for the 99%

In “Admirable politician” at <https://politicalcleanup.wordpress.com/2015/07/05/jeremy-corbyn-an-honest-politician-who-cares-for-the-99/> .

#### Jeremy Corbyn: the best bet for Britain and a more peaceful world

In “Admirable politician” at <https://politicalcleanup.wordpress.com/2015/07/10/jeremy-corbyn-the-best-bet-for-britain-and-a-more-peaceful-world/> .

#### Support Jeremy Corbyn, honest & honourable, & reject the “frog's chorus of swivel eyed Tories & Blairites”

In “Corporate political nexus” at <https://politicalcleanup.wordpress.com/2015/06/17/support-jeremy-corbyn-honest-and-honourable-and-reject-the-frogs-chorus-of-swivel-eyed-tories-and-blairites/> .

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#### The Best Thing since Clement Attlee by Damien McBride

*first published in the Mail on Sunday on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015*

To understand Jeremy Corbyn, you need to understand Holloway, the stretch of the A1 from Highgate to Highbury that he has represented in Parliament for three decades. Forget the name of his constituency...Islington North...and forget every stereotype about poetry recitals and posh restaurants that you associate with that London borough. Holloway is an entirely different beast.

From the massive Andover Estate, described as a ‘dump’ by Ann Widdecombe, to the huge Wetherspoon pub serving pints from 8am, this is not the gentrified Islington made famous by Tony and Cherie Blair. Corbyn’s is the smallest constituency in Britain, but one of the most densely packed. More than 100,000 people live in an area the size of 1,000 football pitches, the best of which is managed by Arsenal Football Club, the new Labour’s leader’s most high-profile constituent.



Despite their similar populations, you could fit Corbyn's Islington North inside David Cameron's rural Witney seat 100 times over. In Witney, 93 percent of the population define themselves as White British. In Islington North, fewer than half do. Just one in 250 of David Cameron's constituents is black; for Corbyn it is one in seven. The two constituents are also at different ends of the spectrum when it comes to unemployment and poverty. Of the 632 constituencies in Great Britain, Corbyn's seat is among the 50 most deprived; Cameron's is the 18<sup>th</sup> least deprived.

The Prime Minister talks a good game on immigration, crime and welfare but he does so from a comfortable distance. By contrast, for 32 years, Corbyn has seen the changing face of Britain on his streets, as large groups of Irish, Caribbean and Asian immigrants in the community were joined by Turks, Somalis and Poles. He has also wrestled with the impact on his constituency of gangs, drugs and violent crime, and he has represented hundreds of residents at risk of becoming homeless because of cuts in housing benefit.

Corbyn was a radical socialist before he set foot in Holloway in his early 20s, but nothing he has seen in his years as its MP has softened his views. When opposing the Iraq War, he only had to look at the impact it was having on levels of alienation and extremism among the 10 percent of his constituents who follow Islam, many at the notorious Finsbury Park Mosque. He believes in the redistribution of wealth and increased investment in schools, transport, healthcare and housing because these are the needs he sees every day.

Before the General Election, many of my fellow Holloway residents were scathing about Ed Miliband and fearful of him taking office, but ask them how they would vote, and the answer was unanimous: 'Labour'. Why? 'It's Jeremy. He's proper Labour'. Proper Labour: the party established to represent the workers against the vested interests at the top.

Corbyn's critics scorn the idea that Labour lost the Election because it was not Left-wing enough. But most ordinary voters had no idea what Miliband stood for. They did not see a socialist firebrand; they saw a chocolate soldier, who prevaricated over everything from his television image to his stance on the deficit.





By contrast, Corbyn's undoubted appeal comes from the fact that he is principled, honest and authentic: he knows what and who he stands for, and says it loud and proud. When Ed Miliband said after his 2010 election: 'We can't be imprisoned by the focus groups - politics has to be about leadership or it's about nothing', no one believed he meant it. If Corbyn said the same, you can bet they would.

But he faces a rocky ride. Dozens of MPs are already disgracefully ignoring the democratic process are lining up to destabilise their new leader. The only way that Corbyn can succeed is by maintaining his genuine voice and hoping that the majority of the British people see the country more like the residents of Holloway than the residents of Witney: a country with deep social and economic problems, and massive challenges for public services, which cannot be fixed by more of the same.

The last Labour leader to represent an inner London seat, indeed the last leader of any major party to do so, was in his 60s by the time he became Prime Minister. He was unfashionable, disdainful of the media and he stood on a platform that promoted peace and investment in public services and housing, even with the country facing massive debts.

Clement Attlee went on to be Labour's greatest Prime Minister. And while few may believe that Jeremy Corbyn can follow in his footsteps as he slips into the leader's shoes today, one thing is for sure: He comes from the right place.

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<a href="#"><u>Jeremy Corbyn</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Andy Burnham</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Yvette Cooper</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Liz Kendall</u></a>
251,417	80,462	71,928	18,857
59.5%	19.0%	17.0%	4.5%
Labour Party Leadership Election Results on the First Ballot			

## HOW TO SPEAK CORBYN: A HEADLINE-WRITER'S GUIDE

**HOW** to deal with a politician who gives woolly, measured answers instead of soundbites? Simple! Just do the job for him...

**What Corbyn says:** [asked if Tony Blair should face trial] "If he's committed a war crime, yes. Everyone who's committed a war crime should be... Is he going to be tried for it, I don't know. Could he be tried for it? Possibly."

**What the headline says:** "Tony Blair must face trial for war crimes, says Jeremy Corbyn." – *Express*, 5 August

**What Corbyn says:** "I want there to be a Labour majority government, but if there isn't a Labour majority but a minority and we've got to work with other parties – probably on the basis of a day-to-day arrangement or an a supply arrangement – then do that, but obviously you'd have to work with other parties to get things through."

**What the headline says:** "Corbyn: I'd do deal with SNP to get into power" – *Daily Mail*, 6 August

**What Corbyn says:** "I think we should talk about what the objectives of the party are, whether that's restoring the Clause Four as it was originally written or it's a different one, but I think we shouldn't shy away from public participation, public investment in industry and public control of the railways. I'm interested in the idea that we have a more inclusive, clearer set of objectives. I would want us to have a set of objectives which does include public ownership of some necessary things such as rail."

**What the headline says:** "Corbyn: 'I'll bring back Clause Four'." – *Independent on Sunday*, 9 August

**What Corbyn says:** "What is security? Is security the ability to bomb, maim, kill, destroy, or is security the ability to get on with other people and have some kind of respectful existence with them?"

**What the headline says:** "Corbyn hints at Russia ties." – *Telegraph*, 11 August

**What Corbyn doesn't say:** "When the *Telegraph* asked Mr Corbyn ahead of a BBC interview in central London if he would join the Privy Council this week he declined to answer."

**What the headline says:** "Jeremy Corbyn

'to refuse position on Queen's Privy Council if he wins Labour leadership'." – *Telegraph*, 21 August

**What Corbyn says:** "One option would be for the Bank of England to be given a new mandate to upgrade our economy to invest in new large-scale housing, energy, transport and digital projects: Quantitative easing for people instead of banks."

**What the headline says:** "Corbyn's bid to turn Britain into Zimbabwe." – *Telegraph*, 21 August

**What Corbyn says:** "I do think the salary levels and the bonus levels again have to be looked at. Some of it is ludicrous and so I am looking at the gap in every organisation between highest and lowest levels of pay."

**What the headline says:** "Watch out! Corbyn targets 'EVERY' organisation in Britain as he vows to cut 'ludicrous' salaries paid to company bosses." – *Mail Online*, 24 August

**What Corbyn says:** "If anyone wants to express an opinion that's absolutely fine. But I would hope that people who have served in government and many other places would actually discuss policies and not involve themselves in demolishing somebody else's character or questioning their abilities. I just think that is a pathetic way of doing things and they should be stronger on the policy issues."

**What the headline says:** "Corbyn lashes out at 'pathetic' Tony Blair" – *Mail Online*, 26 August

**What Corbyn says:** "My intention would be to make public transport safer for everyone from the train platform, to the bus stop to the mode of transport itself. However, I would consult with women and open it up to hear their views on whether women-only carriages would be welcome – and also if piloting this at times and modes of transport where harassment is reported most frequently would be of interest."

**What the headline says:** "Women-only trains? Twitter slams Jeremy Corbyn's 'crazy idea'." – *Daily Star*, 26 August

### New Labour Leader's First Major Speech

Jeremy Corbyn's address to the Trade Union Conference in Brighton on Tuesday 15th September 2015

[extracted from a transcript prepared by Peter Etherden, GMB Membership No. 230843J, Plymouth and District Branch]

[1] I am delighted to be here today because I am, and always will be, an active trade unionist. That is in my body. I have been a trade union member all my life. I was an organizer for the national Union of Public Employees before I became a Member of Parliament. I realize this is deeply controversial because they are now part of Unison but you can only be in one union at a time; you know the problem.



[2] But Labour must become more inclusive and open and I have had the very interesting task in the last few days of a number of events and a number of challenges. The first thing I did on being elected was to go and speak at a rally in saying refugees are welcome here because they are victims of human rights abuses and other abuses. Later the next day, I wanted also to give a message about how we intend to do things and the kind of society we want.

[3] But all those people coming forward to take part in this process came forward, yes, because they were interested, yes, because they were hopeful but, yes, because they wanted to be part of a democratic process where we make policy together. We live in a digital age, we live in an age where communications are much easier and we live in an age where we can put our views to each other in a much quicker and in a much more understandable form. So we don't need to have policymaking that is top down from an all-seeing, all-knowing leader who decides things.

[4] When politicians get out of touch with reality, they sometimes forget where skill sets really lie. Can I give you an example? When I was a union organizer, we used to get involved in negotiations about work-study arrangements, the time it took to drive a van from place A to place B and how long it took to load and I would always go to the branch meeting beforehand and say, "Who's the best at betting?" One particular hand would be pointed to, and I would say, "Can you come along to the negotiations? "Why?" Because that member had brilliant skills at mental arithmetic - this was pre computer days - and he would work out very quickly, and he would say sot to vice to me, "They are lying to you, Jerry. Don't accept it", or whatever. Let's do things differently, let's do things together."

[5] Had we had a different approach, would we now have the millstone of private finance initiatives around the necks of so many hospitals and so many schools in this country, or would we, instead, have a more sensible form of public sector borrowing to fund for investment and fund for the future, which is exactly what this Government would like us to do. Be confident, be strong. We have lots of knowledge and power.

[6] But there are other issues that we have to remind ourselves about what is going on at the present time. The Welfare Reform Bill is anything but welfare reform. It is all about building on the cuts they have already made, making the lives of the most vulnerable and poorest people in our society even worse. I simply ask the question: what kind of a society are we living in where we deliberately put regulations through knowing what the effects are going to be on very poor and very vulnerable people who end up committing suicide? And we say it is all part of a normal process. No, it is not!

[7] The reduction in the benefit cap has the effect of socially cleansing many parts of our cities. Owen Smith and I had discussions last night about amendments that we are going to put down to the Welfare Reform Bill. As gas as I am concerned, the amendments we are putting forward are to remove the whole idea of the benefit cap altogether. Surely, we can do things differently and better if we really want to? We will bring down the welfare bill in Britain by controlling rents and boosting wages, not by impoverishing families and the most vulnerable people.

[8] We are actually quite a rich country. We are actually a country that is deeply unequal. Surely, the whole vision of those who founded our unions and founded our political parties was abs out doing things differently and we build on that in the way that we inspire people to come together for a better, more decent, more equal, fairer and more just society. These things are not dreams. These things are practical realities that we, together, intend to achieve. Thank you very much.



**Labour's Shadow Cabinet**

14 September 2015

**Shadow chancellor - John McDonnell**

The veteran Labour left-winger is best friends with Mr Corbyn and co-ordinated his election campaign. It is thought he was promised the top job some time ago. The MP for Hayes and Harlington previously stood for Labour leader in 2007 and 2010. A prominent rebel, he recently declared he would vote against benefit cuts and faced criticism for telling a union event that he would “like to go back to the 1980s and assassinate Thatcher”. He sparked outrage in 2003 by saying IRA terrorists should be “honoured” for taking part in their “armed struggle”, while attending a gathering to commemorate the IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands.

*Policy focus:* Mr McDonnell has said a Corbyn government would clear the budget deficit, “but not by hitting the poor”. Instead Labour would balance the books “by halting the tax cuts to the very rich and to corporations, by making sure they pay their taxes, and by investing in the housing and infrastructure a modern country needs to get people back to work in good jobs”, he says.

**Shadow home secretary - Andy Burnham**

Defeated leadership contender Andy Burnham served as chief secretary to the Treasury, culture secretary and health secretary in Gordon Brown's government. The MP for Leigh - who came fourth out of five contenders in the 2010 battle and came second to Jeremy Corbyn in 2015 - was also previously shadow health secretary. In April 2009, having been booed at the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, he began a campaign that eventually led to the second Hillsborough inquiry. Having lost out to Mr Corbyn in the leadership contest, he said the priority was to “unite and to take on the Tories”.

**Shadow foreign secretary - Hilary Benn**

Hilary Benn, the son on Mr Corbyn's mentor Tony Benn, is to remain as shadow foreign secretary. He is sceptical of the need for military action in Syria and is widely thought in the party to have impressed at the dispatch box since taking over the brief in May. Mr Benn served as a minister in both the Blair and Brown governments, and was shadow secretary of state for communities and local government in Ed Miliband's shadow cabinet.



*Policy focus:* Mr Corbyn has promised to apologise on behalf of the Labour Party for the invasion of Iraq. Mr Benn has said he does not regret voting for the war in 2003 but has described it as one of the “hardest decisions I've ever had to make”. Foreign policy is an area where Labour's approach will be heavily scrutinised, with Mr Corbyn opposed to any military

intervention in Syria.

**Deputy leader - Tom Watson**

A former trade union official who once shared a flat with Unite leader Len McCluskey, Mr Watson entered Parliament in 2001 as MP for West Bromwich. He was a government whip and defence minister under Tony Blair, but resigned in 2006, calling for the then prime minister to quit in the interests of the Labour Party and the country. An ally of Gordon Brown, he was a Cabinet Office minister and deputy party chairman under his government. Mr Watson is known for campaigning on issues including phone hacking, surveillance laws and historical child abuse.

**Shadow business secretary - Angela Eagle**

Angela Eagle was also announced as shadow first secretary of state and will deputise for Mr Corbyn at Prime Minister's Questions when David Cameron is away. The MP for Wallasey stood in the deputy leadership contest and was also a cabinet minister under Gordon Brown.

*Policy focus:* Ms Eagle will be attempting to win the backing of businesses for Mr Corbyn's Labour, after they gave his election a mixed reaction. There was support for increased infrastructure investment, but concern about renationalising the railways and raising business taxes.

**Shadow health secretary - Heidi Alexander**

A former party whip under Ed Miliband's leadership, the MP for Lewisham East has previously campaigned against the closure of Lewisham Hospital's A&E department.

*Policy focus:* Speaking after her appointment Ms Alexander told the BBC a “very very limited role” for the private sector in the NHS could be a good thing. Mr Corbyn has pledged to eradicate PFI deals from the NHS by using government money to buy them out.

**Shadow justice secretary - Lord Falconer**

Lord Falconer is to continue as shadow justice secretary, having initially been appointed by acting leader Harriet Harman. A former flatmate and close ally of former prime minister Tony Blair, he served as Lord Chancellor under the Blair government.

**Shadow Commons leader - Chris Bryant**

The MP for the Rhondda moves from the job of shadow culture secretary. Mr Bryant, who backed Yvette Cooper in the leadership contest, has also been the shadow work and pensions, and Home Office, minister.

**Shadow international development - Diane Abbott**

MP for the east London seat of Hackney North and Stoke Newington, who stood in the Labour leadership contest in 2010 - losing to Ed Miliband - and was defeated in this year's London mayoral candidate election. A prominent rebel against the Blair and Brown governments, she voted against the party line on issues including a third runway for Heathrow, renewing the UK's Trident nuclear submarine system, tuition fees and the war in Iraq.

**Shadow chief secretary to the Treasury - Seema Malhotra**

Seema Malhotra became MP for the London seat of Feltham and Heston in 2011 in a by-election following the death of Alan Keen. In August 2014, she was given the newly-created role of shadow minister for preventing violence against women by the then Labour leader Ed Miliband. She will be Mr McDonnell's number two in the shadow Treasury team.

**Shadow education secretary - Lucy Powell**

The Manchester Central MP, elected in 2012, is close to Ed Miliband and was vice-chair of Labour's general election campaign. After being appointed, she said education was a subject she was “passionate” about.

*Policy focus:* A National Education Service, following the NHS model, is one of Mr Corbyn's flagship policies. Under his plans, state-funded academies and free schools would be forced to

return to local authority control and tuition fees would be scrapped.

**Shadow Northern Ireland secretary - Vernon Coaker**

The MP for Gedling returns to the position he filled in Ed Miliband's shadow cabinet from 2010-13. He later became defence secretary. Mr Coaker - who chaired Yvette Cooper's Labour leadership campaign - was also minister for schools under Gordon Brown.

**Shadow secretary of state for Scotland - Ian Murray**

The MP for Edinburgh South is the only current Labour MP in Scotland. He continues as shadow Scotland secretary, having initially been given the role by acting leader Harriet Harman in May.

*Policy focus:* Supporters of the new Labour leader say his left-wing approach will win back votes lost to the SNP at the general election. Labour under Mr Corbyn could also co-operate in Commons votes with the SNP, whose leader Nicola Sturgeon has called for a “progressive alliance”.

**Chief whip - Rosie Winterton**

A former government minister for transport, work and pensions and local government at different times under Gordon Brown, she retains the crucial job of shadow chief whip. Ms Winterton, a former aide to John Prescott, filled the same role throughout Ed Miliband's leadership.

**Shadow defence secretary - Maria Eagle**

The Garston and Halewood MP has previously been shadow transport secretary and shadow environment secretary. She has previously voted in favour of renewing the UK's Trident nuclear missile system. Identical twin sister to Angela Eagle, the party's new business spokeswoman,

*Policy focus:* During the Labour leadership campaign Mr Corbyn set out his "moral" opposition to renewing the UK's nuclear weapons system. The previous Labour leadership was in favour of renewal, and Ms Eagle has voted this way in the Commons. Mr Corbyn has also called for a "serious debate about the powers of Nato" but admits there isn't "an appetite as a whole for people to leave".

**Shadow work and pensions secretary - Owen Smith**

The former shadow Welsh secretary said it was a "great honour" to be appointed to the work and pensions brief. Before entering politics, he spent 10 years working as a BBC journalist.

*Policy focus:* Mr Smith will be expected to set Labour firmly against the government's planned welfare cuts, which Mr Corbyn said in his victory speech were responsible for the "social cleansing" of parts of London.

**Shadow energy secretary - Lisa Nandy**

The Wigan MP, seen as being on the left of the party, has previously been a shadow Cabinet Office and education minister. Left wing journalist Owen Jones says he considered starting a campaign to make her leader after Ed Miliband.

*Policy focus:* Mr Corbyn has said he would be "much happier" with a "regulated, publicly run service delivering energy supplies". There would be a moratorium on fracking, which Mr Corbyn has called "dangerous to the environment".

**Shadow environment secretary - Kerry McCarthy**

The Bristol East MP, first elected in 2005, has previously shadowed positions in the Foreign Office, Treasury and Department for Work and Pensions. She is also a vegan and campaigns on food issues.

*Policy focus:* Ms McCarthy is likely to use her new position to pressure the government on the badger cull, of which she has been a fierce critic. She will be liaising with the farming sector for the Labour Party, and has spoken out against the environmental impact of meat production as well as saying the meat, dairy and egg industries "cause immense suffering to more than a billion animals every year in the UK alone".

**Shadow communities secretary - Jon Trickett**

Mr Trickett, the MP for Hemsworth, was one of Jeremy Corbyn's most senior backers in the Parliamentary Labour Party. He was shadow minister without portfolio and deputy chairman under Ed Miliband's leadership. He has dismissed claims Labour lost the general election because it was too left wing, saying there was a "gulf between the population and political class".

*Policy focus:* Jeremy Corbyn is likely to set his stall firmly against cuts to local government budgets, which he regularly attacked during his election campaign.

**Shadow culture secretary - Michael Dugher**

The Barnsley East MP was a close ally of previous Labour leader Ed Miliband, and was a shadow Cabinet Office minister as well as shadow transport secretary and deputy chairman. He has blamed Labour's election defeat on the party having "too many pointy-heads and too few street fighters".



**Shadow secretary of state for transport - Lilian Greenwood**

The Nottingham South MP has represented the seat since 2010. She has been promoted from shadow rail minister under Ed Miliband's leadership.

*Policy focus:* Ms Greenwood has been a strong critic of the government's rail policy, and now has a more prominent platform from which to push for reform. During the leadership campaign, Mr Corbyn said he would consider women-only rail carriages to help stem a rise in assaults on public transport. He also wants to renationalise Britain's railway network and is opposed to the HS2 scheme

linking London with the north of England.

**Shadow secretary of state for Wales - Nia Griffith**

The MP for Llanelli since 2005. She was shadow minister for Wales under the last leadership and also served as a shadow business minister. Ms Griffith said she was "very honoured" to be appointed to the shadow cabinet.

**Shadow minister for young people and voter registration - Gloria De Piero**

The former GMTV reporter has represented Ashfield since the 2010 general election. She served as a shadow culture minister and shadow Home Office minister under Ed Miliband, before being appointed as a shadow minister for women and equalities in 2013.

*Policy focus:* Jeremy Corbyn supports lowering the voting age to 16.

**Shadow minister for mental health - Lucia Berger**

The Liverpool Wavertree MP backed Andy Burnham in the leadership election. She was a shadow health minister under Ed Miliband.

**Shadow leader of the House of Lords - Baroness Smith of Basildon**

The Labour MP for Basildon until 2010, Baroness Smith served as a Cabinet Office minister under Gordon Brown's government. She keeps the position she has held since May.

*Policy focus:* Jeremy Corbyn has called for a thorough and comprehensive review of the House of Lords, saying: "In the interim under our proposals, the Labour party will certainly not nominate new peers for the Lords which risks undermining its legitimacy."

**Lords chief whip - Lord Bassam of Brighton**

Former leader of Brighton City Council, who has held the chief whip position since May 2010.

**Shadow attorney general - Catherine McKinnell**

The former solicitor is the MP for Newcastle upon Tyne North. She was made Shadow Solicitor General by Ed Miliband in his first front bench team, and went on to hold the roles of shadow children's and shadow Treasury minister.

**Shadow minister without portfolio - Jonathan Ashworth**

The Leicester South MP was a shadow Cabinet Office minister under Ed Miliband. He backed Yvette Cooper in the leadership election over his Leicester neighbour Liz Kendall, telling the Leicester Mercury he had agonised over the decision.

**Shadow minister for housing and planning - John Healey**

Mr Healey is shadowing a portfolio he held under Gordon Brown. The Wentworth and Dearne MP held a range of post during the Labour government, including financial secretary to the Treasury and local government minister.

*Policy focus:* Housing is likely to be a key policy area for the Corbyn administration. The new leader wants 240,000 new homes built each year. He has also called for rent controls in some areas. By 2025, he is promising "decent homes for all in public and private sectors".

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*first meeting of the Shadow Cabinet*

**The Orthodoxy has Failed: Europe needs a new economic settlement by Jeremy Corbyn**

*first published in the Financial Times on Friday 18 September 2015*

*The writer is the leader of the British Labour Party*

David Cameron is traversing Europe, apparently without much idea of what he wants to achieve in his much-feted renegotiation ahead of a referendum in 2016 or 2017. If the prime minister thinks he can weaken workers' rights and expect goodwill towards Europe to keep us in the EU, he is making a great mistake.

Mr Cameron's support for a bill that would weaken the trade unions, and the cutting of tax credits this week, show that employment rights are under attack. One can imagine that the many rights we derive from European legislation, which underpins paid holidays, working time protection and improved maternity and paternity leave, are under threat too.

There is a widely shared feeling that Europe is something of an exclusive club, rather than a democratic forum for social progress. Tearing up our rights at work would strengthen that view. Labour will oppose any attempt by the Conservative government to undermine rights at work - whether in domestic or European legislation.

Our shadow cabinet is also clear that the answer to any damaging changes that Mr Cameron brings back from his renegotiation is not to leave the EU but to pledge to reverse those changes with a Labour government elected in 2020.

Workplace protections are vital to protect both migrant workers from being exploited and British workers from being undercut. Stronger employment rights also help good employers, who would otherwise face unfair competition from less scrupulous businesses. We will be in Europe to negotiate better protection for people and businesses, not to negotiate them away.

If Cameron thinks he can weaken workers' rights and expect goodwill to keep us in the EU, he is wrong. Too much of the referendum debate has been monopolised by xenophobes and the interests of corporate boardrooms. Left out of this debate are millions of ordinary British people who want a proper debate about our relationship with the EU.

We cannot continue down this road of free-market deregulation, which seeks to privatise public services and dilute Europe's social gains. Draft railway regulations that are now before the European Parliament could enforce the fragmented, privatised model that has so failed railways in the UK.

The proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership that is being negotiated behind closed doors between the EU and the US, against which I have campaigned, is another example of this damaging approach. There is no future for Europe if we engage in a race to the bottom. We need to invest in our future and harness the skills of Europe's people.

The treatment of Greece has appalled many who consider themselves pro-European internationalists. The Greek debt is simply not repayable, the terms are unsustainable and the insistence that the unpayable be paid extends the humanitarian crisis in Greece and the risks to all of Europe. The current orthodoxy has failed. We need a new economic settlement.

We should be grateful to Gordon Brown who as chancellor kept the UK out of the single currency, when other cabinet members were arguing that we should join. From our position outside the eurozone, we can and must influence EU economic reform. We must work with the 11 EU nations that are co-operating to bring in a financial transactions tax. Unlike the current chancellor, who wasted taxpayers' money in a failed legal case to block the tax, we would participate in negotiations to discuss how we can better regulate the financial sector and raise revenues.

Labour is clear that we should remain in the EU. But we too want to see reform. Last week farmers from across the continent protested in Brussels. The common agricultural policy needs reform so that it does less to subsidise landowners and more to help farmers and rural economies. Europe is the only forum in which we can address key challenges for our country, like climate change, terrorism, tax havens and, most recently, the mass movement of refugees from the violence in Syria seeking sanctuary and hope in Europe. We will not win friends and influence in Europe if we refuse to pull our weight.

Labour wants to see change in Europe that delivers for Europe's people. We want to be better partners, and put our demands to make Europe better. We will make the case through Labour MEPs in the European Parliament, and our relationships with sister social democratic parties, trade unions and other social movements across Europe.

If Mr Cameron fails to deliver a good package or one that reduces the social gains we have previously won in Europe, he needs to understand that Labour will renegotiate to restore our rights and promote a socially progressive Europe.



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