

Jeremy Corbyn speaking at Labour Party Conference

Brighton, 26 September 2018

Thank you for that welcome. I want to start by thanking the workers, the fantastic staff at the Conference Centre and hotels, the Labour Party staff who make this possible, and the people of Liverpool who have made us feel so welcome this week.

And I want to thank my family, but in particular my wife Laura. Tu eres mi fuerza y mi apoyo. Gracias Laurita.

And congratulations conference, to all of you on what's been a great conference. A conference of a Labour Party that's ready to take charge and start the work of rebuilding our divided country.

This year we mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, which saw eight million women getting the vote for the first time, along with five and a half million working class men.

We now have more women members of the Labour Party than the entire membership, male and female, of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties put together.

And we mark that centenary with Jennie Formby as our new General Secretary.

I have known Jennie for many years. Her integrity and her determination are real assets for our Party.

Since Jennie took over, we have registered significant electoral successes. In May, we saw the only bit of blue in Greater Manchester turn red as Labour won back control of Trafford Council.

And just for balance – as I know the Liverpool-Manchester rivalry can be a bit of a thing – there is not a single Conservative council on Merseyside either, and not a single Tory councillor in the city of Liverpool.

Across the country we built on the gains Labour made in the general election. In the South West we won back Plymouth, in the north, Kirklees, and we had our best council results in London since 1971.

In Scotland too, Labour is once again offering a message of hope and real change.

The choice is now clear: investment and a fairer society under Labour, or austerity under the Tories, timidly accepted by the SNP.

We have also been raising more money for our party. But not a penny of our funds came from a dodgy donor or a shady businessmen's club.

Our money comes from hundreds of thousands of people across our country who believe in what we stand for.

So I don't have to play tennis with an oligarch to keep our party organisation running. Labour trades in hope for the many, not favours for the few.

Our mass membership is not just a source of funds of course.

That membership and our millions of affiliated trade union members are the voice of their workplaces and communities, and with our new community organisers we will anchor everything we do in people's day to day experiences.

That is our strength. And together, we are going to change Britain.

You may have noticed that not everyone is entirely happy about all this.

It turns out that the billionaires who own the bulk of the British press don't like us one little bit.

Now it could be because we're going to clamp down on tax dodging. Or it may be because we don't fawn over them at white tie dinners and cocktail parties.

Or it could even be because Tom Watson has been campaigning for the second part of the Leveson media inquiry to be set up – something the last Prime Minister promised, but failed to deliver.

We must, and we will, protect the freedom of the press to challenge unaccountable power.

Journalists from Turkey to Myanmar and Colombia are being imprisoned, harassed or sometimes killed by authoritarian governments and powerful corporate interests just for doing their job.

But here, a free press has far too often meant the freedom to spread lies and half-truths, and to smear the powerless, not take on the powerful.

You challenge their propaganda of privilege by using the mass media of the 21st century: social media.

And we'll do it in traditional ways too. On the doorsteps and in the town centres so that people know there is a Labour Party that will stand up for them and is ready to rebuild and transform Britain.

Next year marks the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo massacre when 15 peaceful demonstrators were killed and hundreds injured on the streets of Manchester by troops sent in by the Tories to suppress the struggle for democratic rights.

The great English poet Percy Shelley wrote a poem about the massacre. That was the origin of our slogan: "for the many not the few".

Among those killed at Peterloo was a man named John Ashworth and a woman named Sarah Jones.

In the next Labour government, our very own Jon Ashworth, as Health Secretary, and Sarah Jones, as Housing Minister, will be carrying forward the struggle to protect and extend democratic rights. Hopefully without becoming martyrs in the process.

And we will honour the heroes of Peterloo by being true to their cause, with a Labour Party fighting for democracy and social justice against poverty, inequality and discrimination.

If we are to get the chance to put those values into practice in government we are going to need unity to do it.

Our movement has achieved nothing when divided. The only winners have been the rich and the party of the rich: the Conservatives.

Real unity is based on the freedom to disagree and debate and then come together around democratic decisions, as we have done this week.

So we need to foster a much greater culture of tolerance. An end to abuse, online and in person.

We must learn to listen a bit more, and shout a lot less.

To focus on what unites us.

To accept losing a vote, while maintaining the right to pick up the debate again.

We are on a journey together and can only complete it together.

Our Party must speak for the overwhelming majority in our country. Labour is a broad church and can be broader still.

I lead in that spirit. After all, I appointed John McDonnell despite him being Liverpool fan, and even Andrew Gwynne, who supports Man City.

Conference, we are winning the public debate. We have defined the new common sense, and that's where our Party can stand united.

Conference, this summer was tough.

Ours is the Party of equality for all. The Party that has pioneered every progressive initiative to root out racism from our society.

But conference, being anti-racist means we must listen to those communities suffering discrimination and abuse.

I believe we are all stronger from listening and learning from each other.

The Jewish people have suffered a long and terrible history of persecution and genocide. I was humbled to see a memorial to that suffering two years ago, when I visited the former Nazi concentration camp at Terezin.

The row over antisemitism has caused immense hurt and anxiety in the Jewish community and great dismay in the Labour Party. But I hope we can work together to draw a line under it.

I say this to all in the Jewish community:

This party, this movement, will always be implacable campaigners against antisemitism and racism in all its forms.

We are your ally.

And the next Labour government will guarantee whatever support necessary to ensure the security of Jewish community centres and places of worship, as we will for any other community experiencing hateful behaviour and physical attacks.

We will work with Jewish communities to eradicate antisemitism, both from our party and wider society.

And with your help I will fight for that with every breath I possess.

Anti-racism is integral to our very being. It's part of who you all are, and it's part of who I am.

So conference, we won't accept it when we're attacked by Tory hypocrites who accuse us of antisemitism one day, then endorse Viktor Orban's hard right government the next. Or when they say we are racist, while they work to create a hostile environment for all migrant communities.

We can never become complacent about the scourge of racism. Race hate is a growing threat that has to be confronted. Not just here in Britain, but across Europe and the United States. The far right is on the rise, blaming minorities, Jews, Muslims and migrants, for the failures of a broken economic system.

Its victims include the Windrush generation who helped rebuild Britain after the war and were thrown under the bus by a Government that reckoned there were votes to be had by pandering to prejudice. The 'hostile environment' policies – shameful brainchild of the present Prime Minister – led to the scandal of British citizens being deported, detained and left destitute. That is nasty, cynical politics that demeans our country.

And the Tories still haven't learned. This week they received a letter from the antisemitic and Islamophobic Hungarian government, thanking them for their solidarity, just as the rest of Europe united against it.

Our Party will never stay silent in the face of growing Islamophobia, whether from the far right on the streets, or the former Foreign Secretary's disgraceful dog-whistle jibes at Muslim women. Labour will work to bring communities together. It is only through the unity of all our people that we can deliver social justice for anyone.

Conference, change in our country is long overdue. Every month this Government remains in power, the worse things get. Evidence of the failure of privatisation and outsourcing is piling up day after day. What has long been a scam is now a crisis.

Just look at the last few months: The Birmingham prison run by G4S had to be brought back into public ownership after the Chief Inspector of Prisons described it as the worst he had ever visited. The privatised probation service is on the brink of meltdown. Richard Burgon, the next Secretary of State for Justice, will end this scandal.

On the railways, the East Coast franchise has collapsed for the third time in a decade, bailed out by taxpayers yet again. You get on a train at Kings Cross and you never know who will be running it by the time you get to Edinburgh. Andy McDonald, our Transport Secretary, will end this shambles.

And the giant privateer Carillion has gone bankrupt, sunk in a sea of reckless greed, leaving hospitals half-built, workers dumped on the dole and pensions in peril, while Carillion directors continued to stuff their pockets with bonuses and dividends, and small businesses in the supply chain took heavy losses or went bust.

And speaking of bankruptcy, the Tories are now extending it into their own backyard. A Conservative Government and Conservative local councillors have combined to push Northamptonshire over the edge, putting vital services and those who rely on them at risk.

Eight years of destructive austerity and obsessive outsourcing have left other councils teetering on the precipice too, and this Government must be held to account for their social vandalism. It is Labour councils and only Labour councils that are taking every step to protect people and services and we must thank them for it.

Privatisation and outsourcing are now a national disaster zone. And Labour is ready to call time on this racket.

We will rebuild the public realm and create a genuinely mixed economy for the 21st century. And after a decade of austerity, the next Labour government will confront the challenge of rebuilding our public services.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the NHS Labour's proudest creation and it stands as a beacon for those still fighting for universal healthcare free at the point of need. Its founder, Nye Bevan, inspired by the collective health provision in his home town of Tredegar, described a free health service as "pure socialism". And so it is. We all contribute through our taxes so that it's there for all whenever we need it.

But this Conservative Government has pushed our NHS into crisis, with more people waiting longer in A&E and to see a GP and over four million people on hospital waiting lists.

And there is a mental health crisis too, causing real pain and anguish. A woman named Angela wrote to me recently, and she said: "My mentally ill daughter was told she would have to wait 12 months to get an appointment with an appropriate therapist. As a mother, I am at my wits end to know how to help her any more. I would hate her to become another suicide statistic."

This has to stop and under Labour it will. We will deliver real parity of esteem for mental health services to protect people like Angela's daughter.

And then there's the scandal of the Tories' £6 billion cuts to social care, leaving 400,000 fewer older people receiving care. Too many of our older people condemned to live alone and isolated, often ending up at A&E through neglect, then unable to leave hospital because it's not safe for them.

Austerity is putting other strains on the NHS too, one in five homes in England are now unfit for human habitation and 120,000 children are living in temporary accommodation.

So as John Healey has pledged, we will put a levy on those with second homes. Think of it as a solidarity fund for those with two homes to help those without any home at all.

And Labour will embark on the biggest home building programme in half a century. Meanwhile, for too many people, social security has become a system of institutionalised bullying and degradation.

The Tories have created a 'hostile environment' for disabled people. Hundreds of people write to me about it every week, people like Richard who says: "My wife was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis 20 years ago. A few months ago we were told that she needed to reapply for Personal Independence Payments. She had an assessment by someone who wasn't medically trained, we have now been told that all her benefit will be stopped."

Richard adds: "I have tried to be her rock but the stress and suffering I can see my wife going through is so very cruel and I have had to be put on anti-depressants."

These are the human consequences of a Tory Government that puts tax cuts for the wealthy ahead of care for disabled people.

But Labour is ready to put fairness and humanity back at the heart of our public services. And as Diane Abbott told us yesterday, you can't keep people safe on the cheap. That's reflected in the fears of people like Ruth, who told me:

"We've had an increase in our council tax to pay for more police but we have no police station. The only increase we have had is in the crime rate I worry about my elderly parents' safety in their own home."

Ruth's fears are not unfounded. Violent crime is rising while police numbers have fallen to their lowest level for 30 years. The Chief Constable of Bedfordshire says: "We do not have the resources to keep residents safe and no-one seems to be listening."

Well Labour is listening. We'll put another 10,000 police officers back on our streets, playing a vital role in tackling crime and making people safer.

But if we want to reduce crime, more police are only part of the solution. Every study tells us that investing in young people and communities is key and crime thrives amid economic failure. So under Labour there will be no more left-behind areas and no more forgotten communities.

We know the earliest years are a crucial time to open up children's life chances. Yesterday I visited the Greenhouse nursery in Liverpool and heard their experiences. But across the country, nurseries can't make ends meet and youth clubs and nurseries are closing.

Decent early years education is now at risk of becoming a privilege. Families most in need are not even entitled to it and many who are struggle to claim it, because the system's fragmented and underfunded.

This Government's limited childcare pledge has turned out to be free in name only. So today I can announce that Labour will make 30 hours a week of free childcare available to all two, three and four year olds.

And we will provide additional subsidised hours of childcare on top of the free 30-hour allowance, free for those on the lowest incomes and capped at £4 an hour for the rest.

Labour will invest in the people who care for and educate our children. We will raise the standards of childcare across the board with a 10-year plan to shift to a graduate-led workforce and improve the pay and skills of childcare staff with a new national pay scale for all early years workers starting

at £10 an hour. This is an investment and a pay rise for a workforce, 98% of whom are women and 85% of whom earn around the minimum wage.

Patchy support for childcare is holding back too many parents and families. Universal free high quality childcare will benefit parents, families and children across our country. Driving up standards of childcare will make that vital difference for millions of our children.

Labour is offering a long overdue change that will transform people's lives and meet the needs of a 21st century Britain for all. We are talking about rebuilding Britain this week But I also want to make an appeal to the older generation who built modern Britain. It was you who rebuilt our country after the war, kick-started our economy, built our NHS and created our social security system.

It was your generation that built the council housing, won our rights at work and made our country a better place for all. It was your work and taxes that paid for a better retirement for those who went before you.

So we owe it you, the older generation, to rebuild Britain so you too have peace of mind and dignity. And we will fulfil that obligation with the triple lock on pensions protected along with the winter fuel allowance, a free bus pass and a national health and care service that can look after you and your families with respect. That is solidarity between the generations.

Conference, to rebuild our public services and our communities we are going to have to rebuild and transform our economy for the 21st century. We can no longer tolerate a set-up where the real economy, in which millions work, is just a sort of sideshow for the City of London and for banks fixated on piling up profits around the world.

The change we need requires new ideas and new thinking, as well as learning from those that have worked in the past and in other countries. We need to explore new forms of ownership and public enterprise, and learn from creative local initiatives such as those taken by Labour councils like Preston. And let's take up the call from TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady to use new technologies and automation as an opportunity rather than a threat, a chance to raise living standards and give people more control of their own lives.

Inequality is not just a matter of incomes. It's about having a real say too. That's why we are not only determined to rebuild our economy, communities and public services, but also to democratise them, and change the way our economic system is run in the interests of the majority.

John McDonnell's proposals for Inclusive Ownership Funds will mean workers sharing more fairly in the rewards of successful businesses. And I listened carefully to the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and read the excellent Commission on Economic Justice report he was involved in, which rightly argued: "economic justice needs to be hard-wired into the way the economy works".

The 19th century Chartist leader and poet Ernest Jones wrote:

And what we get, and what we give,
We know, and we know our share;
We're not too low the cloth to weave,
But too low the cloth to wear.

He was making the point that workers know the reality and injustice of their position. Labour believes a worker's position is on the board. That's why we're proposing to give the workforce of all large UK businesses the right to elect a third of the seats on the board, giving employees a genuine voice and a stake, shifting the balance at work in favour of the wealth creators, improving both decision-making and productivity in the process.

Decisions taken in boardrooms affect people's pay, their jobs and their pensions. Workers deserve a real say in those decisions. That's nothing for businesses to be afraid of. They should welcome the expertise and understanding that workers will bring to the company board.

We will rebalance power in the workplace, but I say to businesses large and small: Labour will also deliver what you need to succeed and to expand and modernise our economy. More investment in our transport, housing and digital infrastructure. More investment in education and skills, so workers are more productive. Action to save the High Street, as Rebecca Long Bailey set out yesterday. And action to deal with rip-off bills that hit us all. But most of all, commitment to a Brexit that protects job, the economy and trade, and determined opposition to one that does not.

Ten years ago this month, the whole edifice of greed-is-good deregulated financial capitalism, lauded for a generation as the only way to run a modern economy, came crashing to earth with devastating consequences. But instead of making essential changes to a broken economic system, the political and corporate establishment strained every sinew to bail out and prop up the system that led to the crash in the first place.

The price of that has not just been stagnation, wages falling for the longest period in recorded history, and almost a decade of deeply damaging cuts to public services. It's also fuelled the growth of racism and xenophobia and has led to a crisis of democracy at home and abroad.

People in this country know that the old way of running things isn't working any more. And unless we offer radical solutions, others will fill the gap with the politics of blame and division.

That's why Labour speaks for the new majority, why last year we won the biggest increase in the Labour vote since 1945, and why Labour's ideas have caught "the mood of our time". And conference, it isn't me saying that – it's a former Conservative Treasury minister, Lord O'Neill. I've never sought to capture the mood of a Tory minister before, but let me say to his Lordship: you're welcome, come and join us in the new political mainstream.

That failed economic free-for-all, which led to the crash of a decade ago, has also fuelled the global environmental crisis and hamstrung international efforts to tackle it.

There is no bigger threat facing humanity than climate change, and 21 years ago, Labour's then Deputy Leader John Prescott played a prominent role in helping to secure the Kyoto Protocol. That united the world's major economies behind an agreement to cut carbon emissions and obliged them to give poorer countries access to low-carbon technology. It was about solidarity, recognising that the air we breathe does not respect national boundaries and we all have an interest in every nation reducing emissions.

The contrast with the America First posturing of Donald Trump and his decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Accords could not be sharper. We only have one planet, so we must re-engage with countries seeking to walk away from Paris. But we must also lead by example. Yesterday Rebecca Long Bailey set out our plans for energy, developed with our Environment Secretary Sue Hayman,

plans that are ambitious, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and will make Britain the only developed country outside Scandinavia to be on track to meet our climate change obligations.

That will mean working with unions to ensure jobs and skills are protected as we move towards a low-carbon economy. And working with industry to change the way we build to train the workforce that will retrofit homes and work in the new energy industries too.

And I can announce today that our programme of investment and transformation to achieve a 60% reduction in emissions by 2030 will create over 400,000 skilled jobs. Good jobs based here and on union rates bringing skills and security to communities held back for too long.

And we will go further, with plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by the middle of the century.

I know that sounds ambitious. It is ambitious and will be delivered with the most far-reaching programme of investment and transformation in decades.

Labour will kick-start a Green Jobs Revolution that will help tackle climate change, provide sustainable energy for the future and create skilled jobs in every nation and region of the UK.

But it's not just the economic system that is unsustainable. Britain's relationship with the rest of the world, our foreign policy is no longer sustainable either.

We are entering a new fast-changing and more dangerous world including the reckless attacks in Salisbury which the evidence painstakingly assembled by the police now points clearly to the Russian state.

When President Trump takes the US out of the Paris accords, tries to scrap the Iran nuclear deal, moves the US embassy to Jerusalem and pursues aggressive nationalism and trade wars – he is turning his back on international cooperation and even international law.

We need a British government that can not only keep the country safe, but can also speak out for democratic values and human rights.

Today's Conservative government continues to collude with the disastrous Saudi-led war in Yemen, turning a blind eye to evidence of war crimes and the devastating suffering of millions of civilians.

That's why I was honoured to attend the vigil this week held by Liverpool's Yemeni community, in protest against what is taking place.

Labour's foreign policy will be driven by progressive values and international solidarity, led by Emily Thornberry, Kate Osamor and Nia Griffith.

That means no more reckless wars of intervention, like Iraq or Libya.

It means putting negotiations before confrontation, diplomacy before tub-thumping threats. It means championing human rights and democracy everywhere and not just where it is commercially convenient.

And working to resolve the world's injustices, not standing idly by, or worse, fuelling them in the first place.

Conference, sometimes our hopes can be betrayed. Many of us campaigned for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, imprisoned by the Myanmar military for fighting for democracy. Today, the Myanmar military government which Aung San Suu Kyi nominally leads stands accused of grave atrocities against the Rohingya people.

Nearly one million people have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh and women and girls in particular face appalling violence.

We demand that the Myanmar government end its horrific ethnic cleansing and allows the Rohingya to rebuild their communities and their lives.

And let me next say a few words about the ongoing denial of justice and rights to the Palestinian people. Our Party is united in condemning the shooting of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators in Gaza by Israeli forces and the passing of Israel's discriminatory Nation-State Law.

The continuing occupation, the expansion of illegal settlements and the imprisonment of Palestinian children are an outrage. We support a two-state solution to the conflict with a secure Israel and a viable and secure Palestinian state.

But a quarter of a century on from the Oslo Accords we are no closer to justice or peace and the Palestinian tragedy continues, while the outside world stands by.

As my great Israeli friend Uri Avnery who died this year put it: "What is the alternative to peace? A catastrophe for both peoples".

And in order to help make that two-state settlement a reality we will recognise a Palestinian state as soon as we take office.

We will also make a far more determined effort to help bring the terrible war in Syria to an end, a war that has led to millions of refugees, some of whom I met in Jordan this summer and whose plight Alf Dubs described so powerfully yesterday.

The Syrian conflict has been fuelled by the military intervention of multiple powers. And it will need those same powers to deliver a negotiated peace settlement to end the killing and allow the return of the refugees.

But Labour's plans to rebuild and transform our country and its relationship with the rest of the world are having to be made against the backdrop of huge uncertainty about Brexit.

Labour respects the decision of the British people in the referendum. But no one can respect the conduct of the government since that vote took place.

We all hoped that the people's decision would be followed by effective and responsible negotiations that would protect living standards and jobs.

Instead, the main negotiations have taken place between different factions of the Tory party and the only job this government is fighting for is the Prime Minister's.

Theresa May used to say that 'no deal is better than a bad deal'. Yet now, after two years of botched negotiations she is threatening the country with just that choice: a bad deal or no deal. That is a

threat to our whole economy, especially our manufacturing industry and to tens of thousands of skilled jobs here in Britain.

Now time is running out. Companies are losing patience. In the absence of any clarity from government they are planning to relocate abroad, taking jobs and investment with them. Some have already started and I fear more will follow.

The Tories are well aware of this but some see Brexit as their opportunity to impose a free market shock doctrine in Britain.

The Prime Minister is in New York today promising that a post-Brexit Britain will offer the lowest corporation tax of all the G20 nations. Handouts to the few, paid for by the many and an already tried-and-failed strategy for boosting investment.

Sajid Javid has set out his plan for more tax giveaways and to rip up people's pension rights.

Liam Fox is itching to scrap workers' rights and privatise the NHS with a side order of chlorinated chicken.

And then there's Jacob Rees-Mogg who has expressed his personal faith in a Brexit Britain by deciding to base his new investment fund in the Eurozone.

The Tory Brexiteers unite the politics of the 1950s with the economics of the 19th century, daydreaming about a Britannia that both rules the waves and waives the rules.

Labour's job is now to win support for a deal that meets the needs of the country, combined with our plan to rebuild and transform Britain with investment in our people and economy.

Our priority is clear – we aim to get the best Brexit deal for jobs and living standards to underpin our plans to upgrade the economy and invest in every community and region.

That can bring people together and meet the concerns of both those who voted leave and those who voted remain.

Conference, the way ahead is clear. We will vote against any reduction in rights, standards or protections and oppose a deregulatory race-to-the-bottom.

So let me say to the country. As it stands, Labour will vote against the Chequers plan or whatever is left of it and oppose leaving the EU with no deal.

And it is inconceivable that we should crash out of Europe with no deal – that would be a national disaster.

That is why if Parliament votes down a Tory deal or the government fails to reach any deal at all we would press for a General Election. Failing that, all options are on the table.

So let me thank Keir Starmer, the man who would lead our Brexit negotiations in government. Keir, having got agreement yesterday in this conference hall, getting one in Brussels should be a piece of cake.

But let me also reach out to the Prime Minister, who is currently doing the negotiating.

Brexit is about the future of our country and our vital interests. It is not about leadership squabbles or parliamentary posturing. If you deliver a deal that includes a customs union and no hard border in Ireland, if you protect jobs, people's rights at work and environmental and consumer standards – then we will support that sensible deal. A deal that would be backed by most of the business world and trade unions too.

But if you can't negotiate that deal then you need to make way for a party that can.

Conference.

Labour is offering a real alternative to the people of Britain. A radical plan to rebuild and transform our country.

An alternative to the politics of austerity, of social division and of international conflict.

Where the Tories have divided and ruled, we will unite and govern.

We represent the new common sense of our time. And we are ready to deliver on it.

We must speak for the people to whom Theresa May promised so much but has delivered so little.

And we must take our message to every town, city and village. United and ready to win, ready to govern as we were in 1945, 1964 and 1997.

So that when we meet this time next year let it be as a Labour government. Investing in Britain after years of austerity and neglect and bringing our country together after a decade of division.

Conference. Let every constituency, every community know Labour is ready. Confident in our ideas, clear in our plans, committed to rebuild Britain.

We don't want to live in a society where our fellow citizens sleep rough. A strong society is one that gives all our young people the chance to realise their potential and in which all of us know if our parents need care they will get it.

Our task is to build that Britain and together we can.

Thank you.