

# Ed Miliband

Leader of the Labour Party

Speech to the Party conference

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It's great to be in Brighton.

And I want to start by thanking somebody from the bottom of my heart for the kindest of words.

Not Justine ...oh, I would like to thank her, a round of applause for Justine please, ladies and gentlemen.

Not my mum ... but a woman called Ella Philips.

It was local election day, Ella rode past me on her bike, she fell off ...it's not funny!

I helped her up and afterwards she called me something I had never been called before: she said I was an "action hero".

Why are you laughing?

She said I was an action hero "who mysteriously appeared out of nowhere".

And she said, "What added to all the confusion was that Ed was actually attractive and not geeky at all".

I promise you, she did say that.

She said, "Even the way he appeared was suave".

I don't know why you find this so funny, friends. "He was dressed casually, but he had style".

Sounds quite me, doesn't it?

Now I was pretty pleased with this, as you can tell, until something dawned on me: Ella was concussed.

She was badly concussed.

In fact, she herself said, "I was seeing things because I was still in quite a daze".

Well, Ella, you are not kidding.

But let me say, Ella, if you are watching today, thank you, you have made my year.

I want to start today with the simplest of thoughts. An idea that has inspired change for generations.

The belief that helped drive us out of the Second World War and into that great reforming government of 1945.

An ambition that is more important now than it has been for decades.

An emotion that is felt across our country at kitchen tables every night.

A feeling that is so threatening to those who want to keep things as they are.

Words that are so basic and yet so powerful, so modest and yet so hard to believe.

Six simple words that say: Britain can do better than this.

Britain can do better than this; we are Britain, we are better than this.

Are you satisfied with a country where people are working for longer for less, year after year?

Are you satisfied with a country divided losing touch with the things we value the most?

Are you satisfied with a country that shuts out the voices of millions of ordinary people and listens only to the powerful?

Are you satisfied with a country standing apart as two nations?

Well I am not satisfied.

We are Britain, we are better than this.

And we have to rebuild anew One Nation.

An economy built on your success, a society based on your values, a politics that hears your voice – rich and poor alike – accepting their responsibilities top each other.

One Nation, we are going to make it happen, and today I am going to tell you how.

I want to start with leadership.

Leadership is about risks and difficult decisions.

It is about those lonely moments when you have to peer deep into your soul.

I ran for the leadership of this party, it was really hard for my family, but I believed that Labour needed to turn the page and I was the best person to do it.

I when I became leader I faced a decision about whether we should stand up to Rupert Murdoch.

It wasn't the way things had been done in the past, but it was the right thing to do so I did it.

And together we faced them down.

And then the other week I faced an even bigger decision about whether the country should go to war.

The biggest decision any leader faces, the biggest decision any Parliament faces, the biggest decision any party faces.

All of us were horrified by the appalling chemical weapons attacks in Syria, but when I stood on the stage three years ago, when I became your leader, I said we would learn the lessons of Iraq.

It would have been a rush to war, it wasn't the right thing for our country.

So I said no.

It was the right thing to do.

You see, the real test of leadership is not whether you stand up to the weak, that's easy; it's whether you stand up to the strong and know who to fight for.

And you know I am reminded of a story back when I was starting out, standing to be an MP in Doncaster, with a woman called Molly Roberts.

Molly was in her seventies, and there I was candidly trying to get her vote, sitting in her front from sipping a mug of tea.

And she said to me, "How can you, who weren't brought up in this area, possibly understand the lives of people here, their hopes and their struggles?"

It was the right question, and here is the answer.

For me it lies in the values I was brought up with.

You see in my house it was my mum that taught me these values.

About the importance of reaching out and listening to people, of understanding their hopes and their struggles.

She is the most patient, generous person I have met in my whole life.

And she taught me never to be contemptuous of others, never to be dismissive of their struggle.

Now she was teaching me a lesson of life.

And some people will say, ah yeah but you have to leave decency behind when it comes to politics.

Well I say they are wrong, because only if you reach out and listen can you do the most important thing a leader can do, the most important qualification in my view for being Prime Minister.

Only then will you have the ability to walk in the shoes of others and know who to fight for, whoever your opponent, however powerful they are, guided by the only thing that matters: your sense of what is right.

This is what I believe, this is where I stand, this is the leadership Britain needs.

And when I think about who we need to fight for I think about all the people I have met over the last year.

I think of the people Britain and their enormous and extraordinary spirit.

I think of our troops, serving so bravely all around the world. Let us pay tribute to them today.

You know I have seen in Afghanistan those young men and women, young men and women who are young enough to be my son or daughter serving our country, and it is a truly humbling experience.

And the events of the last few days in Kenya remind us of the importance of being ever-vigilant against terrorism at home and around the world.

I think of the brave men and women of our police force, who serve with so little credit each and every day for our country.

Let us thank them for what they do.

And then I think of all the people I have met over the last year.

During the local election campaign I did something unusual. I went to town centres, market squares and high streets and I stood on a pallet – not a soapbox, but a pallet.

And I talked to people about their lives.

I remember this town meeting I had in Cleverly.

It was just coming to the end of the meeting and this bloke wandered up. He was incredibly angry.

It's a family show so I won't exactly repeat what he said.

He was so angry he wouldn't give me his name, but he did tell me his story about how he spent the last ten years looking after his disabled wife, and then another four years looking for a job and not finding one.

He was angry about immigration and some people in the crowd booed him.

But actually he wasn't prejudiced, he just felt the economy didn't work for him.

And then I think about the two market traders I met in Chesterfield, standing by their stalls, out in all weathers, working all hours, and they said look this country just doesn't seem to be rewarding our hard work and effort.

There seem to be some people getting something for nothing.

This society is losing touch with our values.

And then I think about this beautiful sunny spring day I spent in Lincoln.

And the face in the crowd, this young woman who said she was an ambulance controller.

So proud to be working for our National Health Service.

And so proud too of her young son.

Because she was a single parent, nineteen years old, and what she said to me was, "Why does everybody portray me as a burden on the system?"

"I am not a burden on the system, I am going out, I am doing the right thing for the country, why doesn't anyone listen to my voice?"

And then I think about this scaffolder I met just around the corner from where I live.

I was just coming back from a local café I'd been at.

He stopped in me the street, he said to me, "Where's your bodyguard?" I said I don't have one, but that's another story.

He told me his story.

And what he said to me was "look, I go out, I do the work, I go all around the country, again out in all weathers, I earn a decent wage, but I still can't make ends meet".

And he said to me, "Is anyone ever going to do anything about those gas and electric bills that just go up and up, faster than I can earn a living?"

He wanted someone to fight for him.

Now if you listen to these stories – four of millions of the stories of our country – and you have your own, and your friends and family, what do you learn?

All of these people love Britain, they embody its great spirit, but they all believe that Britain can do better than this.

Today I say to them and millions of others you're right, Britain can do better than this, Britain must do better than this, Britain will do better than this with a government that fights for you.

But for Britain to do better than this we've got to understand why we got here, why things are so tough at the moment even while they tell you there is a recovery and why unless we put things right it will only be a recovery for the few.

Now what I'm about to tell you is the most important thing I'm going to say today about what needs to change about our country.

For generations in Britain when the economy grew the majority got better off. And then somewhere along the way that vital link between the growing wealth of the country and your family finances was broken.

This is, this goes beyond one party or one government.

It is more important to you than which party is in power, even more important than that.

You see, when I was growing up in the 1980s, I saw the benefits of growing prosperity, people able to buy a house, a car, even a second car, go on a foreign holiday their grandparents would never have dreamed of.

Not spend all their hours at work, able to spend time with kids, not working all the hours that god sends, have a secure pension in retirement and also believe that their kids would have a better life than them.

That feels a long way away from where Britain is today doesn't it and that is because it is.

You see, somewhere along the way that link got broken.

They used to say a rising tide lifts all boats, now the rising tide just seems to lift the yachts.

Now I say this to the people of Britain.

If I were you I wouldn't even take a second look at a political party unless they make this their central defining purpose because your future depends on it.

Your children's future depends on it.

Britain's future depends on it. I say we are Britain we can do better than this.

Now I have got a question for you ladies and gentlemen, do the Tories get it?

[Audience: No]

Oh come on, I didn't hear you, do the Tories get it?

[Audience: No]

Ok that is better.

They don't get it do they.

I want to say this.

I understand why three and a half years ago some people might have thought that David Cameron did get it and that is why people voted for him at the last general election.

But they voted for change and I don't believe they got the change that they were voting for.

Let me just explain it this way: next week we are going to see David Cameron resuming his lap of honour for how brilliantly he's done as Prime Minister.

Claiming credit for his enormous achievements, how he has saved the economy as they put it.

No doubt he'll even be taking off his shirt and flinging it into the crowd expecting adoration from the British people like he did recently on holiday and maybe I should make this promise while I'm about it, if I become Prime Minister I won't take my shirt off in public, I mean it is just not necessary is it.

I'll try and keep the promise.

Anyway, back to David Cameron, so he is going on this lap of honour, everything is brilliant, he's saved the economy, George Osborne, he deserves the garlands as well, you know, aren't they brilliant.

Come on.

The slowest recovery in one hundred years.

One million young people looking for work.

More people on record working part-time who want full time work.

More people than for a generation out of work for longer. The longest fall in living standards since 1870.

That is not worthy of a lap of honour.

That is worthy of a lap of shame and that is the record of this government.

He does have one record though but I don't think it credits a lap of honour.

He has been Prime Minister for 39 months and in 38 of those months wages have risen more slowly than prices.

That means your living standards falling year, after year, after year.

So in 2015 you'll be asking am I better off now than I was five years ago? And we already know the answer for millions of families will be no.

You've made the sacrifices, but you haven't got the rewards.

You were the first into the recession but you are the last one out.

Now of course it would have taken time to recover from the global financial crisis whoever was in power.

But when these Tories tell you that the pain will be worth the gain, don't believe them.

They can't solve the cost of living crisis and here is why.

The cost of living crisis isn't an accident of David Cameron's economic policy it is in his economic policy.

Let me explain why.

You see he believes in this thing called the global race, but what he doesn't tell you is that he thinks for Britain to win the global race you have to lose, lower wages, worse terms and conditions, fewer rights at work.

But Britain can't win a race for the lowest wages against countries where wages rates are pennies an hour and the more we try the worse things will get for you.

Britain can't win a race for the fewest rights at work against the sweat shops of the world and the more we try the worse things will get for you.

And Britain can't win a race for the lowest skilled jobs against countries where kids leave school at the age of 11.

And the more we try the worse things will get for you.

It is a race to the bottom. Britain cannot and should not win that race.

You see it is not the low achievements of these Tories that really gets me.

That is bad enough.

It is their low aspirations; it is their low aspirations for you.

It is their low aspirations for Britain but their high hopes for those at the top.

The City bonuses are back.

Up 82% in April alone thanks to the millionaire's tax cut.

So when they tell you the economy is healing, that everything is fixed, just remember, they are not talking about your life, they are talking about their friends at the top.

That is who they are talking about; it is high hopes for them.

And every so often you know the mask slips doesn't it.

The other day a man they call Lord Howell, he was I think their advisor on fracking at one point... There is nothing funny about that.

He said it was wrong to frack in some areas but it was ok in others, it was ok in the North East of England because he said, and I quote 'it was full of desolate and uninhabited areas.'

In one casual aside dismissing one whole region of the country.

Let's tell these Tories about the North East of England and every other part of Britain.

People go out to work.

They love their kids.

They bring up their families.

They care for their neighbours.

They look out for each other.

They are proud of their communities.

They hope for the future.

The Tories call them inhabitants of desolate areas.

We call them our friends, our neighbours, the heroes of our country.

They are fed up of a government that doesn't understand their lives and a Prime Minister who cannot walk in their shoes.

We are Britain, we are better than this.

Now, to make Britain better we have got to win a race to the top, not a race to the bottom.

A race to the top which means that other countries will buy our goods the companies will come and invest here and that will create the wealth and jobs we need for the future but we are not going to be able to do it easily.

It is going to be tough and let me just say this friends.

You think opposition is tough, you should try government. It is going to be tough; it is not going to be easy.

And I'm not going to stand here today and pretend to you it is.

We are going to have to stick to strict spending limits to get the deficit down.

We are not going to be able to spend money we don't have and frankly if I told you we were going to you wouldn't believe me, the country wouldn't believe me and they would be right not to believe me.

But we can make a difference.

We can win the race to the top and let me tell you how.

It is about the jobs we create, it is about the businesses we support, it is about the talents we nurture, it is about the wages we earn and it is about the vested interests that we take on.

Let me start with the jobs of the future.

The environment is a passion of mine because when I think about my two kids who are 2 and 4 at the moment and not talking that much about the environment, more interested in The Octonauts.

There's a plug.

In 20 years' time they'll say to me 'were you the last generation not to get climate change or the first generation to get it?'

That is the question they'll be asking.

But it is not just about environmental care. It is also about the jobs we create in the future.

You see some people say, including George Osborne, that we can't afford to have environmental at a time like this.

He is dead wrong.

We can't afford not to have an environmental commitment at a time like this.

That is why Labour will have a world leading commitment in government to take all of the carbon out of our energy by 2030.

A route map to one million new green jobs in our country.

That is how we win the race to the top.

And to win that race to the top we have also got to do something else, we've got to support the businesses of the future.

Now many of the new jobs in the future will come from a large number of small businesses not a small number of large businesses.

And this is really important.

If you think 15 years ahead, the rate of change and dynamism is so great that most of the new jobs that will be being done will be by companies that don't yet exist.

Now that changes the priorities for government.

When this government came to office, since they came to office they cut taxes for large business by £6bn but raised taxes on small businesses.

Now I don't think that is the right priority.

Yes we need a competitive tax regime for large businesses but frankly they've short-changed small business and I'm going to put it right.

If Labour wins power in 2015 we will use the money that this government would use to cut taxes for 80,000 large businesses to cut business rates for 1.5 million businesses across our country.

That is the way we win the race to the top. One Nation Labour.

The party of small business.

Cutting small business rates when we come to office in 2015 and freezing them the next year benefitting businesses by at least £450 a year.

That is how we win the race for the top friends, and to win that race to the top we've also got to nurture the talents of the next generation.

The skills of people.

There are so many brilliant businesses in our country who provide amazing training for the workforce, but look, we have got to face facts, leading businesses say this to me too which is there aren't enough of them and we have got to work to change that so we will say if you want a major government contract you must provide apprenticeships for the next generation.

And we'll also say to companies doing the right thing, training their workforce that they will have the power to call time on free-riding by competitors who refuse to do the same.

That's how we win the race to the top friends.

It's not just business that has to accept responsibility though, it's young people. We have a tragedy in this country.

Hundreds of thousands of young people who leave school and end up on the dole.

We've got this word for it haven't we? NEET: Not in education employment or training.

Behind that short word is a tragedy of hundreds of thousands of wasted lives.

If the school system fails our young people they shouldn't be ending up on benefits.

They should be ending up in education or training so they can get back on the road to a proper career.

That requires them to accept responsibility but it requires government too to accept our responsibilities for the next generation in Britain, and that's what we'll do.

But to win the race to the top we've also got to take advantage of the talents of Britain's 12 million parents.

Justine and I had one of the great privileges in any parent's life this year, which was taking our son Daniel to his first day at school.

He was nervous at first, but actually pretty soon he started having fun; it's a bit like being leader of the Labour Party really.

Well it's not exactly like being leader of the Labour Party. But look, for so many parents in this country the demands of the daily school run, combined with their job are like their very own daily assault course and we've got to understand that.

Because we can't win the race to the top with stressed out parents and family life under strain – we've got to change that.

In the last century, schools stayed open till mid-afternoon and that was okay back then because one parent usually stayed at home.

But it's not okay now: that's why we want every primary school in Britain to have the breakfast clubs and after school care that parents need and that's what the next Labour government will do.

To win the race to the top we've also got to deal with the issue of low pay.

The National Minimum Wage, one of the last Labour government's proudest achievements, friends.

But we have to face facts: there are millions of people in this country going out to work, coming home at night, unable to afford to bring up their families.

I just think that's wrong in one of the richest countries in the world.

The next Labour government must write the next chapter in dealing with the scourge of low pay in this country.

And to do that though, we've got to learn lessons from the way the minimum wage came in, because it was about business and working people, business and unions working together in the right way so we set the minimum wage at the right level and we've got to do the same again.

The minimum wage has been falling in value and we've got to do something about it.

There are some sectors, and I don't often say anything nice about the banks but I will today, there are some sectors which actually can afford to pay higher wages, and some of them are - a living wage in some of the banks.

So we've got to look at whether there are some sectors where we can afford a higher minimum but we've got to do it on the right basis – business and working people working together.

That's what we will do: the next Labour government will strengthen the minimum wage to make work pay for millions in our country.

That's how we win the race to the top.

And to win that race to the top we've got to call a halt to the race to the bottom, between workers already here and workers coming here. I'm the son of two immigrant parents.

I'm proud of the welcome Britain gave me and my family, and we've always welcomed people who work, contribute and are part of our community.

Let me say this, if people want a party that will cut itself off from the rest of the world, then let me say squarely: Labour is not your party.

But if people want a party that will set the right rules for working people then Labour is your party, the only party that will do it.

Employers not paying the minimum wage and government turning a blind eye - it's a race to the bottom; not under my government.

Recruitment agencies hiring only from overseas – it's a race to the bottom; not under my government.

Shady gang masters exploiting people in industries from constructing to food processing - it's a race to the bottom; not under my government.

Rogue landlords, putting 15 people in tied housing - it's a race to the bottom; not under my government.

And our country, sending out a message to the world that if you need to engage in shady employment practices, then Britain is open for businesses?

It's a race to the bottom; not under my government.

And in case anyone asks whether this is pandering to prejudice, let's tell them, it isn't.

It's where Labour has always stood – countering exploitation, whoever it affects, wherever they come from.

We've never believed in a race to the bottom, we've always believed in a race to the top, that is our party.

And to win the race to the top we've also got to take on the vested interests that hold our economy back.

In the 1990s we committed to a dynamic market economy.

Think of those words: 'dynamic', 'market', 'economy'.

And then think about this, what happens when competition fails?

What happens when it just fails again and again and again?

Then government has to act.

Train companies that put the daily commute out of reach.

Payday lenders who force people into unpayable debt.

Gas and electric companies that put prices up and up and up.

It's not good for an economy.

It's not a dynamic market economy when one section of society does so well at the expense of others. It's bad for families, it's bad for business and it's bad for Britain too.

Now some people will just blame the companies but actually I don't think that's where the blame lies.

I think it lies with government.

I think it lies with government for not having had the strength to take this on.

Not having stood up to the powerful interests.

Not having the strength to stand up to the strong.

Take the gas and electricity companies.

We need successful energy companies, in Britain.

We need them to invest for the future.

But you need to get a fair deal and frankly, there will never be public consent for that investment unless you do get a fair deal. And the system is broken and we are going to fix it.

If we win the election 2015 the next Labour government will freeze gas and electricity prices until the start of 2017.

Your bills will not rise.

It will benefit millions of families and millions of businesses.

That's what I mean by a government that fights for you.

That's what I mean when I say Britain can do better than this.

Now the companies aren't going to like this because it will cost them more but they have been overcharging people for too long because of a market that doesn't work.

It's time to reset the market.

So we will pass legislation in our first year in office to do that, and have a regulator that will genuinely be on the customers' side but also enable the investment we need.

That's how Britain will do better than this.

So, making Britain better than this starts with our economy – your economic success as a foundation for Britain's economic success.

But it doesn't just stop there it goes to our society as well.

I told you earlier on about those market traders in Chesterfield and how they felt that society had lost touch with their values.

I think what they were really saying was this: that they put in huge hard work and effort, they bring up their kids in the right way and they just feel that their kids are going to have a worse life than them.

And nowhere is that more true than when it comes to renting or buying a home.

There are 9 million people in this country renting a home, many of whom who would want to buy.

9 million people - we don't just have a cost of living crisis, we have a housing crisis too.

In 2010 when we left office there was a problem.

There were one million too few homes in Britain.

If we carry on as we are, by 2020 there will be two million too few homes in Britain.

That is the equivalent of two cities the size of Birmingham.

We have got to do something about it and the next Labour government will.

So we'll say to private developers, you can't just sit on land and refuse to build.

We will give them a very clear message - either use the land or lose the land, that is what the next Labour government will do.

We'll say to local authorities that they have a right to grow, and neighbouring authorities can't just stop them.

We'll identify new towns and garden cities and we'll have a clear aim that by the end of the parliament Britain will be building 200,000 homes a year, more than at any time in a generation.

That's how we make Britain better than this.

And nowhere do we need to put the values of the British people back at the heart of our country more than in our National Health Service, the greatest institution of our country.

You know I had a letter a couple of months back from a 17 year old girl.

She was suffering from depression and anxiety and she told me a heart-breaking story about how she had ended up in hospital for 10 weeks.

Mental health is a truly one nation problem.

It covers rich and poor, North and South, young and old alike and let's be frank friends, in the privacy of this room; we've swept it under the carpet for too long.

It's a bit of a British thing isn't it; we don't like to talk about it.

If you've got a bad back or if you're suffering from cancer you can talk about it but if you've got depression or anxiety you don't want to talk about it because somehow it doesn't seem right – we've got to change that. It's an afterthought in our National Health Service.

And here's a really interesting thing – so you might say, it's going to be really tough times Ed, you told us that before.

You said there would be really difficult decisions in government, and that's true, so how are you going to make it work?

Well here's the thing, the 17-year-old said in that letter, look if someone had actually identified the problem when it started three years earlier I wouldn't have ended up in hospital.

I wouldn't have ended up costing the state thousands of pounds and the anguish that I had.

So it's about that early identification and talking about this issue.

And if it's true of mental health, it's true in an even bigger way about care for the elderly.

There's so much more our country could be doing for our grandmas and granddads, mum and dads, nuncle and aunts.

And it's the same story.

Just putting a £50 grab rail in the home stops somebody falling over, prevents them ending up in hospital with the needless agony, and all of the money that it costs.

The 1945 Labour government, in really tough times, raised its sights and created the National Health Service.

I want the next Labour government to do the same, even in tough times, to raise our sights about what the health service can achieve, bringing together physical health, mental health, and the care needs of the elderly: a true integrated National Health Service.

That's the business of the future.

But we don't just need to improve the health service, friends; we've got to rescue it from these Tories.

And the Liberals too.

Now look, before the election, I remember the speeches by David Cameron.

I remember one where he said the three most important letters to him were NHS.

Well he has got a funny way of showing it, hasn't he?

And when they came to office, they were still saying how brilliant was in the health service, how the health service was doing great things and the doctors and nurses and so on.

Now have you noticed they have changed their tune recently?

Suddenly they are saying how bad everything is in the NHS.

Now the vast majority of doctors and nurses do a fantastic job.

Sometimes things go wrong.

And when they do, we should be the first people to say so.

But hear me on this.

The reason David Cameron is running down the NHS is not because the doctors and nurses aren't doing as good a job as they were before.

It is because they have come to a realisation that the health service is getting worse on their watch and they are desperately thrashing around trying to find someone else to blame.

Blame the doctors, blame the nurses, blame the last Labour government.

That is what they are doing.

Well let me tell you about the record of the last Labour government.

When we came to office there were waiting time targets of 18 months that were not being met, when we left office there were waiting time targets of 18 weeks that were being met.

When we came to office there was an annual winter A&E crisis, when we left office the people had A&E services they could rely on.

When we came to office there were fewer doctors and nurses, we when left office more doctors and nurses than ever before.

And when we came to office people said well the health service, it was a good idea in previous generations but I don't really believe it will be there in the next, and we left office with the highest public satisfaction in the history of the health services.

Yes friends, we did rescue the National Health Service.

So when you hear David Cameron casting around for someone to blame for what is happening in the NHS just remember it is not complicated, it's simple, it's as simple as ABC: when it comes to blame, it is

Anyone But Cameron.

We know who is responsible, the top-down reorganisation that nobody voted for and nobody wanted, the abolition of NHS Direct, the cuts to social care, the fragmentation of services.

We know who is responsible for thousands of fewer nurses, we know who is responsible not just for an annual A&E crisis, but an A&E crisis for all seasons.

It is this Prime Minister who is responsible.

So friends it is the same old story, we rescue the NHS, they wreck the NHS and we have to rescue it all over again. And that is what the next Labour government will do.

Right, I have explained to you how we can make Britain better by changing our economy and changing our society, and now I want to talk about how we change our politics.

And here is the bit you have all been looking forward to: party reform.

Now look let me say to you, change is difficult, change is uncomfortable.

And I understand why people are uncomfortable about some of the changes, but I just want to explain to you why I think it is so important.

With all of the forces ranged against us, we can't just be a party of 200,000 people.

We have got to be a party of 500,000, 600,000, or many more.

And I am optimistic enough – some might say idealistic enough – to believe that is possible.

And the reason it is possible in our party is the unique link we have with the trade unions.

The unique link. I don't want to end that link, I want to mend that link.

And I want to hear the voices of individual working people in our party, louder than before.

Because you see, think about our history.

It is many of you who have been telling us that actually we haven't been rooted enough in the workplaces of our country.

And that is what I want to change. And that is the point of my reforms.

See my reforms are about hearing the voices of people from call centre workers to construction workers, from people with small businesses to people working in supermarkets at the heart of our party.

Because you see it is about my view of politics. Leaders matter, of course they do, leadership matters, but in the end political change happens because people make it happen. And you can't be a party that properly fights for working people unless you have working people at the core of your party, up and down this country.

That is the point of my reforms.

And I want to work with you to make them happen so that we can make ourselves a mass-membership party.

Friends, let's make ourselves truly the people's party once again.

But to change our politics we have got to a lot more than that.

We have got to hear the voices of people that haven't been heard for a long time.

I think about our young people, their talent, their energy, their voices.

The voices of young people demanding a job, the voices of young people who demand that we shoulder and don't shirk our responsibilities to the environment.

The voices of gay and lesbian young people who led the fight and won the battle for equal marriage in Britain.

And the voices of young people, particularly young women, who say in 2013 the battle for equality is not won.

You see they are not satisfied that 33% of Labour MPs are women, they want it to be 50% and they are right.

They are not satisfied that 40 years after the Equal Pay Act, we still do not have equal pay for work of equal value in this country.

They are not satisfied and they are right.

And they are not satisfied that in Britain in 2013, women are still subject to violence, harassment, and everyday sexism.

They are not satisfied and they are right. Friends, let's give a voice to these young people in our party.

And let's give a voice to these young people in our democracy, let's give the vote to 16 and 17 year olds and make them part of our democracy.

But you know we have got to win the battle for perhaps the most important institution of all, our United Kingdom.

Friends, devolution works.

Carwyn Jones, our brilliant First Minister of Wales, he is showing devolution works.

And let's praise the leadership of our Scottish Joanne Lamont for the brilliant job she is doing against Alex Salmond.

Now that referendum on September the 18th 2014, it is going to be conducted on the basis of fact and figures and arguments and counterarguments, but I have a story I want to tell you which I think says even more.

It's the story of Cathy Murphy.

Cathy Murphy lives in Glasgow, she worked in the local supermarket.

In 2010, Cathy was diagnosed with a serious heart problem, but she came to Labour conference nonetheless in 2011 as a delegate.

She fell seriously ill.

Her family were called down from Glasgow.

The doctors said to her that to save her life they'd have to give her a very long and very risky operation. S

he had that operation a few weeks later at the world-leading Liverpool Broadgreen hospital.

Cathy pulled through.

She went back to Glasgow some weeks later.

She comes back down to Liverpool every six months for her check-up.

Now she said to me the nurses and doctors don't ask whether she is English or Scottish, the hospital doesn't care where she lives.

They care about her because she is Scottish and British, a citizen of our United Kingdom. Friends, Cathy is with us today, back as a delegate.

Where is she?

Cathy's here.

Friends, I don't want Cathy to become a foreigner.

Let's win the battle for the United Kingdom.

So I have talked to you today about policy and what a Labour government would do, how it would make Britain better and win a race to the top in our economy, put our society back in touch with people's values and change our politics so it lets new voices in.

But the next election isn't just going to be about policy.

It is going to be about how we lead and the character we show.

I have got a message for the Tories today: if they want to have a debate about leadership and character, be my guest.

And if you want to know the difference between me and David Cameron, here's an easy way to remember it.

When it was Murdoch versus the McCanns, he took the side of Murdoch.

When it was the tobacco lobby versus the cancer charities, he took the side of the tobacco lobby.

When it was the millionaires who wanted a tax cut versus people paying the bedroom tax, he took the side of the millionaires.

Come to think of it, here is an even easier way to remember it: David Cameron was the Prime Minister who introduced the bedroom tax, I'll be the Prime Minister who repeals the bedroom tax.

You see here is the thing about David Cameron.

He may be strong at standing up to the weak, but he is always weak when it comes to standing up against the strong.

That is the difference between me and David Cameron, so let's have that debate about leadership and character, and I relish that debate.

And we know what we are going to see from these Tories between now and the general election, it is the lowest form of politics, it is divide and rule.

People on benefits versus those in work.

People in unions against those outside union.

People in the private sector versus those in the public sector.

People in the north against those in the south.

It is the worst form of politics.

Like sending vans into areas of Britain where people's mums and granddads have lived for years, generations, and telling people to go home.

I say we are Britain, we are better than this. Telling anyone who's looking for a job that they are a scrounger.

However hard they are looking, even if the work is not available.

I say we are Britain we are better than this.

So come on. So David Cameron I have got a message for you.

You can tell your Lynton Crosby, it might work elsewhere, it won't work here.

We're Britain, we're better than this.

Friends, the easy path for politics is to divide, that's the easy part.

You need to know this about me, I believe in seeing the best in people, not the worst.

That's what I am about.

That's how we create One Nation.

That's how we make Britain better than this.

That's how we have a government that fights for you.

Now, it is going to be a big fight between now and the general election.

Prepare yourself for that fight.

But when you think about that fight, don't think about our party, think about our country.

I don't want to win this fight for Labour; I want to win it for Britain.

And just remember this, throughout our history, when the voices of hope have been ranged against the voices of fear, the voices of hope have won through.

Those who said at the dawn of the industrial revolution that working people needed the vote and they wouldn't wait - they knew Britain could be better than this, and we were.

Those that said, at the birth of a new century, those who said at the birth of a new century that working people needed a party to fight for them and the old order wouldn't do – they knew Britain could be better than this, and we were.

Those who said at our darkest hour in the Second World War that Britain needed to rebuild after the war and said 'never again', they knew Britain could be better than this, and we did.

Those who said, as the 20th Century grew old, that the battle for equality was still young; they knew Britain could do better than this, and we did.

And so now it falls to us, to build One Nation, a country for all, a Britain we rebuild together.

Britain's best days lie ahead.

Britain can do better than this.

We're Britain, we're better than this.

I'll lead a government that fights for you.