

John McDonnell's speech to May Day rally at Trafalgar Square

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow chancellor, speaking at the May Day rally in Trafalgar Square today, will say:

****CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY****

I want to
thank you all for letting me speak here today.

There are
those in the Tory press who will wish to paint this gathering in a negative
light, but this rally on a day like today is really about the positive
contribution many hardworking people in our country make.

And how
we can protect them, for the future of our country depends upon it.

Our
country is divided following the Brexit vote last year. And the Tories seek
to
divide it further.

Today's
deeply worrying revelations on the reckless handling of the EU
negotiations only act as further proof for why we need a Labour Government
leading the negotiations with our European allies to ensure jobs and
living standards are protected.

Not a
Tory Party prepared to take our country over a cliff-edge.

This
Government is not just in another galaxy when it comes to Brexit but also
when
it comes to solving the problems the silent majority of working families face
in our country.

Therefore,
it falls once again to our movement to come together and unite our country,
and
stand up for the many suffering under a Tory Government that only
rewards a rich few.

That is
why it is vital this remains a peaceful protest, so as not to give our
enemies

in the Tory press the ammunition they need to misrepresent our peaceful intentions and goals to the public.

Today's

May Day rally must be remembered for its purpose – to focus all our minds on removing a Tory Government.

And it

falls on each and every one of us to be upbeat and take that peaceful positive vision of a Britain reborn on the 9th of June to each and every doorstep over the next few weeks.

But it is

not protest alone that changes these things. Changing government policy is the ultimate aim.

And

changing this Government in its entirety is our ultimate goal right now.

Yesterday,

I announced Labour's 20 point plan to transform our workplaces from the shop-floor right up to the boardroom.

Today,

Jeremy Corbyn announced Labour's plans to reform the housing market, to give renters the protections they desperately need.

But we

can only achieve those goals if all of us here today take this passion out into the communities in our country, win the arguments on the doorsteps, and in our family and friendship groups, to get a Labour Government elected next month.

Today may

be the 1st May, but let's make June 8th the last day of Theresa May and her Tory Government.

And it is

vital we do this.

As this

is a Tory Government that has presided over a country in which our nurses have to rely on foodbanks, yes that's right. Nurses, the heroes of our NHS. Abandoned by this Government.

And all

this Tory Prime Minister can say about it is there are "complex" reasons.

It just

shows how out of touch and how little she and her party really care about the problems facing hardworking people in our country.

The reasons why people use foodbanks are not complex – they use them because they are hungry and cannot afford to feed themselves.

And many of them are in that position because of seven wasted years of Tory economic failure.

That's why we need a Labour Government that will stand up for the many, and not the few.

We are all here today to speak up for the silent majority of working people that have never met an opinion pollster, but have experienced seven years of Tory austerity, and are now more than ever feeling the pinch of those policies.

The nurses using foodbanks.

The teachers holding raffles to afford books for their pupils.

The people sleeping rough on our streets, homeless without somewhere to sleep tonight.

The parents who are worried about paying the bills as their wages can't keep up with the prices in the shops, and worry about keeping a roof over their children's heads.

Or those people who just want to get on the property ladder and get on in life, but cannot afford a mortgage. Their aspirations are risked by a reckless Tory Brexit and what it means for our economy.

This is what we mean by the Tories' rigged economy. And why we must end it.

Because those families struggling to get by – something this Prime Minister will never understand – need a Labour Government to put fairness at the heart of our economy again.

That is why we are here, united to stand up for the silent majority of working people

in our country.

But it
cannot remain silent and will not remain silent for very long.

That is
why all of us here today need to make sure that our voices are heard, and
that
when we leave, we persuade as many people as we can to get out and vote next
month.

As
nothing is a certainty.

We can
change this country.

Right
now, there are six million people earning less than the living wage in our
country, and four million children set to grow up in poverty.

But they
do not have to be in this position.

We can
change this, and we will.

And all
we have to do is change the Government by getting as many people as possible
to
vote Labour on the 8th of June.

This will
be the biggest political battle we have ever known.

But
remember we are fighting for the future of our country.

The
choice is a Tory future in which nurses use foodbanks, and millions live in
poverty and low pay.

Or a
Labour future for the many, with a high wage, high skill, fair economy of the
future.

Put
simply, it is a choice between a Labour Government that stands up for the
interests of the many in our country, not a Tory Government that only stands
up
for a rich few.

So let's

go out there, and let's win this fight.

Solidarity.

Theresa May's rigid and complacent approach to Brexit negotiations risks leading Britain over a cliff edge – Starmer

Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, commenting on today's reports about Theresa May's meeting with Jean-Claude Juncker last Wednesday, said:

"Whatever the purpose of these leaks, this is a deeply worrying account and further evidence that Theresa May's rigid and complacent approach to Brexit negotiations risks leading Britain over a cliff edge. It is clearer by the day that an extreme Tory Brexit poses a severe risk to the British economy and to people's jobs and living standards.

"Theresa May talks about strengthening her hand, but in reality she has misjudged her hand at every turn, weakening Britain's position. By refusing to acknowledge the complexity and magnitude of the task ahead the Prime Minister increases the risk that there will be no deal, which is the worst of all possible outcomes.

"In pursuing a rigid and complacent approach, the Prime Minister now finds herself marginalised and isolated across the continent. Since day one, she has been driven not by the national interest, but by the interests of the Tory party.

"We urgently need a new approach. Labour will seek a new collaborative partnership with our European allies. We will guarantee the rights of EU nationals, immediately setting a different and more positive tone.

And we will rebuild relations with the EU and make sure that jobs, the economy and rights come first."

Labour pledges 'consumer rights revolution' for renters as it reveals £800 million a month in rent going to bad landlords

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Labour's

Shadow Secretary of State for Housing John Healey has today pledged that under

a Labour government there would be a 'consumer rights revolution' for renters, starting by introducing tougher legal minimum standards for all private rented homes.

Mr

Healey will say Labour's new minimum standards will empower renters to "call time on bad landlords" letting out dangerous or sub-standard homes and who are being let down by Conservative Ministers who have weakened key legislation.

Labour

analysis released alongside the pledge shows for the first time the cost of England's 1.3 million sub-standard private rented properties, now home to 400,000 families with children. Tenants are spending £800 million every month (£9.6 billion a year) on homes which the government classes as 'non-decent'. Around a quarter of this— some £2.3bn a year – is paid by housing benefit.

At

present, there are effectively no minimum standard for private renters, and tenants are reliant on over-stretched council environmental health teams to weed out dangerous homes rather than being able to take matters into their own hands.

Mr

Healey will point out that in practice people have "fewer rights renting a family home than you do buying a fridge-freezer". Consumer rights legislation is limited in housing so while consumers will normally get protections requiring that goods and services are 'satisfactory quality', and 'fit for purpose' with clear redress and 'repair or replace' provisions, there are no equivalent protections for renters.

A

Labour government would consult with landlords and relevant professionals on new legal minimum standards to ensure properties are 'fit for human habitation'

on specified criteria, for example:

- safe wiring and appliances
- freedom from serious damp and vermin infestation
- appropriate water and sewage facilities
- appropriate facilities for the preparation and cooking of food
- general good repair.

Research

by Shelter in 2014 found that six in ten renters (61%) have experienced at least one of the following problems over the last 12 months: damp, mould, leaking roofs or windows, electrical hazards, animal infestations and gas leaks.

As part of Labour's five point plan on standards announced today Mr Healey will also pledge new powers for councils to license landlords and tough fines for those who flout the rules.

John Healey MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, said:

"Our homes are at the centre of our lives but at the moment renters too often don't have basic consumer rights that we take for granted in other areas. In practice you have fewer rights renting a family home than you do buying a fridge-freezer. As a result, too many are forced to put up with unacceptable, unfit and downright dangerous housing.

"The number of families renting from a private landlord has soared since 2010 but decisions made by Conservative Ministers have made it easier for a minority of bad landlords to game the system. Most landlords provide decent homes that tenants are happy with, but these rogue landlords are ripping off both renters and the taxpayer by making billions from rent and housing benefit letting out sub-standard homes.

“After

seven years of failure the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis. The next Labour government would call time on bad landlords. We’d introduce proper minimum standards to put renters back in control, and give councils the powers they need to tackle the worst offenders.”

[The message of 1997 is as relevant today as it was then: we need people to vote for change, to vote for Labour – Gwynne](#)

Andrew Gwynne MP, Labour’s National Campaigns and Elections Chair, on the 20th anniversary of Labour’s 1997 election victory, said:

“Twenty years on from 1997, the lesson of that election is that it takes a Labour government to bring about transformative change for the many not just the few.

“In 1997, after 18 years of the Tories running down the country, Britain needed a Labour government to change working people’s lives for the better. That’s exactly what the Labour government did between 1997 and 2010.

“The achievements of that government were many. From □the New Deal which helped millions in to work, to □the National Minimum Wage which made that work pay. From peace in Northern Ireland to Sure Start which made a difference to millions of children and their families. In education, school spending per pupil was doubled, thousands of schools rebuilt and 42,000 more teachers helped deliver some of the best ever school results. And for the NHS a Labour government was transformative, with □the largest hospital building programme in history and 44,000 more doctors and 89,000 more nurses driving up standards and driving down waiting times.

“Now, □in 2017, we again need a Labour government to rebuild and transform a country that is suffering from Tory neglect and deepening inequality. □The message of 1997 is as relevant today as it was then: we need people to vote for change, to vote

for Labour and for a country for the many not the few.”

Jeremy Corbyn speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party,

speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference:

Thank you for inviting me here today to your annual conference in the year of your union's 120th anniversary.

I want to pay tribute to Russell Hobby, your General Secretary: a great advocate for head teachers who has overseen you joining the TUC, working with other teachers' and education unions.

I also want to pay tribute to the next Education Secretary, Angela Rayner, who is a tireless campaigner and passionate advocate for your profession and for children.

It is a great honour to address you, leaders of one of the most important professions in our society, those who look after the education, the wellbeing, and the future of our children.

That is why Labour is making our children's education one of the cornerstones of our General Election campaign.

The choice in this election could not be clearer – and it's not the re-run of the EU referendum that the Prime Minister wants it to be.

Britain needs a government for the many not the few – one that's ready to invest in our economy and public services. But the Conservatives have demonstrated that cannot be them, preferring to give the richest and largest corporations tax hand-outs worth tens of billions.

The NHS and social care have been pushed into a state of emergency. Housebuilding has fallen to its lowest peacetime rate since the 1920s. Schools across the country face real terms cuts in funding per pupil, and class sizes are rising – while those young people who want to go to university face huge debts.

There is no greater responsibility than ensuring our children get the education that they deserve. I know this, you know this, parents up and down this country know this. But it is clear that this Conservative Government has its focus elsewhere.

The NAHT has correctly pointed out that this election is make or break time for our children's education system.

As all of you will know, the National Audit Office confirms that schools are facing a cut of three billion pounds in real terms by 2020, the first real terms cut in education budgets in a generation.

This is an absolutely staggering figure and shows the need for a complete change of direction in how the government of this country treats our schools.

And we have to ask ourselves: is this how we want to treat the education system of our children? Is this how Britain's children deserve to be treated?

Do our children deserve to be held back by a chronic shortage of teachers?

Do our children deserve to be crammed into schools like sardines?

Do our children deserve to be taught by teachers whose morale is at an all-time low?

Not by any fault of the teachers, they are the people who also bear the burden of government cuts, but the fault of governments who fail to recognise the importance of investing in the lives of children, and those who teach and support them, up and down this country.

That is why we must value teachers, because if we don't we lose them. And you know better than anyone there is a recruitment crisis and that crisis will be made even worse if we don't secure the rights of EU nationals.

Last year 5,000 teachers from EU countries qualified to teach here and there are thousands more working to

teach

our children. So that's why, as Keir Starmer set out this week, a Labour government will guarantee the rights of EU nationals living here.

And if we lose teachers, we lose

subjects, we narrow the horizons of young people. So that's why I passionately

believe in an Arts Pupil Premium so that every primary school child will benefit from a £160 million cash boost to help pupils learn to play instruments, learn drama and dance and have "regular access" to theatres, galleries or museums in their local areas.

And yet, while all this is

happening, while funding to our children's education is cut, multinational corporations have received multi-billion pound tax giveaways

How can it be right that money is

being siphoned straight out of our children's schools and directly into the pockets of the super-rich?

We have to be clear, once and for

all, that enough is enough.

Throughout this General Election

campaign, we will be making absolutely clear our commitment to build a country

for the many, and not just the few.

A vital part of that will be

creating an education system that provides for every child regardless of their

background, or their parents' income.

Labour will introduce

a National Education Service, ensuring excellent learning opportunities for all

from early years to adult education.

What we need now – and what you as

teaching professionals need now – are concrete answers and concrete solutions to the problems that our education system is facing.

That is why Labour has set out a

plan to help give every young person the best start in life possible, by introducing universal free school meals for pupils at primary schools. It's a policy that is fully costed, and will be paid for by introducing VAT on private

school fees.

There are clear educational

benefits to providing universal free school meals. It boosts the attainment and

level of education of our children. We know that these early formative years are the most important in a child's education and we have a duty to provide for our children the best we possibly can throughout that period.

It's a policy that demonstrates how a Labour government would care for the many, and not just the few.

We will ensure that every single child receives a healthy and nutritious meal which will not only boost children's productivity in the classroom but also helps to ensure their personal wellbeing, no matter what their background.

Children eating together is a great start in life.

So not only will the policy help children throughout their time in education, it will also help teachers who will see the benefits of improved concentration and improved attainment in the classroom.

And it will help parents who will not only save money but will have the peace of mind in knowing that their child is getting a healthy school meal during the day

Investing in the health of our nation's children, is investing in our nation's future.

If we are to truly place value on our children's education, we must also place value on the teachers, head teachers and other school staff who deliver that education.

We must put an end to the continual attacks on the teaching profession, end the downward pressure on pay and conditions, the constant undermining of morale and the erosion of standards that means we have more unqualified teachers than ever in our classrooms.

That's why, as part of the comprehensive programme Labour has set out today to strengthen rights at work and end the race to the bottom in the jobs market, we have confirmed a Labour government will lift the cap on public sector pay.

It cannot be right that those who provide our vital public services have their pay squeezed year after year. Britain's public service employees deserve a pay rise.

And we must give the teaching profession the recognition it deserves, not only in terms of pay, but also in terms of status in our society.

We need to listen to you, the teaching professionals, on how you believe schools can be improved and respect the huge wealth of talent and knowledge that lies in the teaching profession as a whole.

I have always believed that the people who know how to do a job best are those who do it day in day out. We must start listening to parents, teachers and head teachers: you are the people who know how schools should be run and you are the people who best understand the needs of our children.

That is why Labour has taken our lead from the NAHT – and from the other teachers' unions – when we set out in no uncertain terms our opposition to the expansion of grammar schools in this country.

Not only does the mass introduction of segregation in our education system not help the overwhelming majority of this country's children, it also returns us to what are frankly Victorian notions of education based on a narrow curriculum.

The task is clear: we must build an education system that suits the needs of our children and the opportunities they will have in the jobs market of tomorrow.

And if we are to build an economy worthy of the 21st century, we need a schools system that looks forwards, and not backwards to the failed models of the past.

We must recognise that every single child in this country has talents and every single child deserves the chance to flourish and thrive to their maximum potential in whichever field suits them best.

But our children's schools do not exist in a vacuum. I am always in awe of the local head teachers I work with. Like thousands of children, I have learned so much from them.

And what I admire most is their commitment – not just to managing their schools and to educating our children – but the multi-faceted demands of the children in their community: their housing issues, immigration problems, their mental health. You are the heart of your communities.

You are part of a wider care system and you need the other parts of that system to work effectively

alongside you, youth services, the NHS and social care.

Support for schools by these services is essential to promote pupil wellbeing. The duty to directly address pupils' mental health needs ultimately rests with the social and care services.

No school should be asked to fund health and social care services from the school budget. That is why Labour has pledged to address the chronic underfunding for social care and the NHS.

As you all know schools are most effective as places of learning when they work together with high quality social care and health services to meet the needs of all students but especially those who are most vulnerable.

One in ten children and young people in this country suffer from a mental health condition and 75 percent of adult mental health problems are found to begin before the age of 18.

We must prioritise the mental wellbeing of our children. This is the least they deserve.

It is vital that we enable early intervention and provide support when problems first emerge but to do this we must build an education system that integrates social and health care.

Improving the way our society deals with mental health is a particular concern of mine because I am passionate to see opportunities for all.

That's why I have been so impressed by the work so many of you do for children with special needs and how good special needs co-ordinators can liberate children from what has sometimes been a lifetime of exclusion.

That focus on the individual child is what drives our determination to reduce class sizes. We know that half a million children have been landed in super-size classes of 31 pupils or more.

This government is failing on education on its own terms. The Prime Minister herself has said that super-sized classes are proof of a school system in crisis. So then why is it allowed to continue?

Why are our children's schools, not getting the funding that they deserve? This is a choice. And it is the wrong choice. The cut to schools funding is also a breach of their manifesto

the Conservatives' pledge to protect schools funding.

Labour will ensure schools have the resources they need.

I'm afraid I can't give you a sneak preview of the full Labour manifesto today but be assured if it's a choice between a tax giveaway to the largest corporations paying the lowest rates of tax in the developed world or funding for our schools. Labour will make very different choices from the Conservatives.

We have already started to set some of that out not just our free schools meals policy.

And our commitment to reintroduce the Educational Maintenance Allowance for college students from lower incomes.

We are also committed to restoring maintenance grants for university students so that no one is held back from realising their ambitions and so that every schoolchild knows that the options of further and higher Education are available to them.

We must not be ashamed to value education, for education's own sake.

Schools should exist to get the very best from our children, to give them the best start in life, to enable them to succeed in whichever walk of life they chose.

Whereas Theresa May's government has repeatedly cut resources and staffing we will invest in our children's futures because they deserve nothing less.

The excuses from the government come thick and fast. They've blamed teachers for not working hard enough, they've diverted funds to their vanity projects. £138.5 million wasted on schools that have closed, partially closed or never opened in the first place.

We will not bring back a system that blamed children and parents for not passing the eleven plus and getting into a grammar school.

They blame everybody else, to divert attention from their own damaging failures. They need head teachers to tell them, own up, take responsibility and say sorry.

Labour will give schools the funding that our children deserve, the funding that teachers and headteachers deserve and the investment that our country and our economy deserves.

This election can be the chance
for a fresh start, with a Labour government that will invest to create shared
prosperity, protect our public services and build a fairer Britain.

A Labour government will work with
you, we will give schools the funding the need and we will ensure you and
your
staff get the respect and resources you need.

We have a duty to our children and
we will meet it.

Thank you.