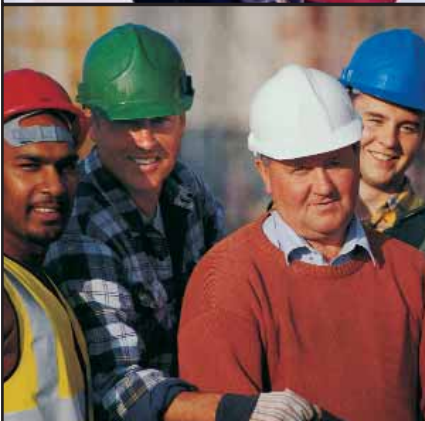


CHOOSE CHANGE

jon cruddas for deputy leader



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Jon Cruddas

Jon Cruddas has been working for Labour since 1989 – first behind the scenes, and then as an MP. After the election victory of 1997, Jon worked in Downing Street as Deputy Political Secretary, where he was centrally involved in pioneering legislation like the National Minimum Wage and the Employment Rights Act.

Since 2001, Jon has represented Dagenham in Parliament. He has focused on campaigning locally – most notably against the BNP – and working on the issues that matter to local people. In the commons, he has campaigned against top-up fees for students, voted against renewing Trident and been an ardent campaigner for equal treatment for agency workers.

He is standing for Deputy Leader for one reason above all others: to focus on rebuilding Labour across the country, so the party responds to the needs of the communities it serves and wins a fourth election victory.

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CHOOSE

If we are going to win the next general election, we face a real challenge. We need new ideas and policies, not just a new leadership team. Crucially, if our political hopes are to be realised, we have to rebuild the Labour Party.

I am standing for Deputy Leader because I know Britain needs Labour to be strong. It was Labour that rebuilt the country after the Second World War. It led national modernisation in the 1960s and challenged the 'me first' culture of Thatcherism in the 1980s. Over the last ten years, with the minimum wage, tax credits and Sure Start we have helped millions of people share in the rising prosperity of the nation. With devolution, improved rights at work and the Human Rights Act we have democratised our country. We have reduced unemployment and made the economy flourish. We have put public services at the heart of policy.

In an increasingly insecure society and an uncertain world, Britain needs Labour more than ever. But the party has lost its way. Membership has halved. Our grassroots organisation has been weakened and vital links with unions loosened. Our councillor base is the lowest for thirty years. Without a strong and more democratic party, we cannot serve the people who depend on us most.

I am running for Deputy Leader, but I am not seeking to be Deputy Prime Minister or to run a big department too. Instead, I want to focus totally on rebuilding Labour across the country, ensuring that those in the Cabinet listen to the people who put them there. I am the only candidate making this promise. I will be your voice. To avoid divisive mistakes – like those on tuition fees – and make sure Labour has the right solutions to the 21st century's problems, the voices of party members must be heard.

The same forces which created Britain's economic success have downsides that affect all of us. Britain's 'flexible' economy has allowed some to adapt to the demands of globalisation, but there is a danger that too many people will fall to the bottom without the means to climb back up. In

CHANGE

spite of social progress for some, many have been excluded from the prosperity which the fortunate take for granted.

It is sobering to reflect that some key social divisions – like those of life expectancy – have become wider while Labour has been in power; and that if you are born into poverty today, you are more likely to stay poor than you were a decade ago.

However, insecurity does not only affect those on society's margins. The huge amounts of money that pour through our financial markets have created a new divide, between a super-rich elite and the rest of us. People from every walk of life seem to feel increasingly insecure – they work hard, play by the rules, and still feel that their lives are missing a solid foundation. We work the longest hours in Europe. Our sons and daughters leave university with five-figure debts, and worry about ever getting on to the housing ladder. The pressures of consumerism now affect even our youngest children. When pension schemes are being scaled back and even jobs are outsourced, few of us feel confident about the future.

The big issues of our time only compound this insecurity. High levels of migration mean that our communities are changing fast, but the media and too many politicians use the language of fear and division, feeding the poisonous activities of the BNP. Climate change threatens our planet, but we are told that the market forces that caused many of our environmental problems can somehow provide the solution. Terrorism and war afflict the world as never before, but particularly in the wake of the invasion of Iraq, our international institutions have been severely weakened.

Globalisation is a fact, but the form it takes is for us to decide. We can make it work for us or we can become its victims. Moreover, offering an alternative to unrestrained markets and providing people with a solid foundation for life – the essence of Labour's mission since the party was founded – are not a matter of simply saying 'No'. They involve embracing bold, forward-looking ideas

and ensuring our values are always placed in a modern setting.

This personal manifesto sets out the key policy areas I believe Labour must focus on if we are to renew the party and win the next election. I want you to know what sort of Deputy Leader I will be – based on what I believe in and will fight for.

In crucial areas such as housing, the public services, education and the environment, this manifesto is intended to set out fresh and innovative policies, ideas and proposals. It is built on the values that I, like millions of Labour people, hold dear: equality, solidarity and democracy.

People who talk about the possibility of politics without the involvement of party members and trade unionists are simply wrong. Labour has to be revived from the grassroots, and the party needs to become more open and democratic. We can't rewind to the past. But we must find new ways of putting the talents and commitment of members of the party at the heart of everything we do. We will know we are winning the battle of ideas when the Labour Party starts growing again. That will be the litmus test of my role as Deputy Leader.

Too much of Labour's current thinking is fixed in the past. Over ten years after its arrival, the problem with New Labour isn't just that it's not Labour enough – it's not new enough either. The 1997 coalition that swept us to power is in danger of crumbling. We need a new Labour coalition for the 21st century built on principles and policies that will win popular support.

You have stuck with us through thick and thin. Like me, you joined the party because you believe a more equal society is not just desirable but possible. We have made progress but the task of creating that better society still lies ahead. We cannot let the Tories stop us. At the next General Election we need to win – with a greater sense of purpose.

Labour is at a crucial point in its century-long history. I ask you not to simply choose me, but to **CHOOSE CHANGE.**

Rebuilding our party



Labour has fewer elected representatives than at any time in the last 30 years. The recent elections handed Labour its worst ever result in Wales. In Scotland, the last time Labour fared as badly was in 1957.

In the last decade, we've lost 200,000 members – roughly half our membership. Though the party is still a vibrant force in many parts of the UK, too many constituency and branch parties are barely surviving. My worry is that if we cannot enthuse the people who have either left us or ceased to be active – the kind of Labour members and trade unionists who should form the bedrock of our party and movement – what hope do we have with the wider electorate?

Our failure to engage with our own members has seriously limited our ability to campaign effectively or to represent people at the grassroots. With David Cameron making the Tories more effective

force than they've been for years, that's an urgent problem. In many areas of the country – like the part of East London which I serve as an MP – there are additional concerns about an on-the-ground political vacuum that has left space for extremist organisations such as the BNP.

The last ten years have shown that sophisticated marketing techniques can take us only so far – and that it is the activists on the ground who work week in week out for the party who make the real difference.

I am standing as Deputy Leader because I believe that a change of leader is not enough. We need to change, and we would do well to start with our own party.

Talk about “renewal” is a sign that people at the top of the party are starting to understand Labour's

problems, but we need action as well as words. I want to focus on the urgent need to rebuild Labour and use the party's structures to listen to members. When that happens, we will be able to develop a new policy agenda. In turn, that will enable us to build a broad base of support on which to fight and win the next election.


If elected, I would be a full-time Deputy Leader and dedicate myself to being the voice of the membership in government. I will not accept any other Cabinet job – or be the Deputy Prime Minister – because I believe the problems the party faces demand 100% commitment and attention.

This isn't about rewinding to the past. It's about a new modernisation of our party, and bringing the way we work into line with our fundamental belief in democracy. Our party must become a campaigning presence in people's everyday lives, focusing on the issues that people really care about.

At the grassroots, electioneering has to be complemented by activity focused on local,

national and international issues – from a living wage and the need for new affordable housing, to climate change and trade justice for the developing world. The party also needs to connect with trade union campaigns at the local, regional and national level.

Our party is at a critical point. Rebuilding it won't happen by accident and it won't happen if we assume "more of the same" will work out in the end. We have to change the way we operate.

- We need to overhaul the policy making and democratic structures of the Party. I want to see a revival of the National Policy Forum, based on opening up the election of its constituency section to a vote by the entire membership and ensuring that its procedures are made much more transparent to members and affiliates.
- Campaigning against the BNP in my home constituency and beyond, I have worked with a coalition including the anti-fascist organisation Searchlight, trade unions such as Amicus, the T&G, Unison and the GMB, and a wide range 



“We do need to concentrate on the party”

☞ of faith groups, residents’ associations and even sports clubs. I’ve seen a new kind of politics emerge from all this, which is open and engaged – and it’s essential that at both the national and local level, Labour learns from it.

- Conference has become a dead affair. I want to see it enlivened. It should be opened up, with a blurring of its formal and fringe aspects, an increased role for outside voices and organisations and a modernising of the resolution process.
- I want to see a cut in Labour Party bureaucracy, a reinvention of the role of Party Chair based on election by the membership and a rebalance in our federal and local structures, including the link with trade unions and affiliated societies.
- We need a review of the broken-down state of Young Labour, our youth organisation, which holds the key to making sure the party is renewed across the generations.
- Funding should be ring-fenced for local parties so they can decide how to spend their money. We also need to introduce a network of full and part-time local organisers to enable us to reinvigorate the party’s local campaigning role, and make sure that local parties are there to respond to the needs and opinions of the communities they serve.
- We need to realign the Labour Supporters Network, and make sure it is administered and controlled by local parties. The LSN is a valuable way of bringing people into contact with the party, but we should firmly reject proposals for US-style primaries to select candidates. In everything we do, Labour needs to emphasise the importance of party membership, and its place in our democratic society.

With these changes and the political will, we can become the fighting, campaigning organisation we once were, rooted in activist and member participation and embedded in communities. But to do this, we have to choose and embrace change.

Charity worker Antonia Bance joined the party seven years ago when she was 20. “I was involved as a student in a number of issues from women’s rights to the rights of asylum seekers and I found that the people who were most committed to these causes were members of the Labour Party,” she says.

She believes that Labour needs to cherish such activism, drawing people back into the party and attracting new members.



Antonia, who stood as a parliamentary candidate in Oxford West at the last general election, agrees with Jon’s decision to seek a role which gives him time to rebuild Labour support at grassroots level, rather than going for the post of Deputy Prime Minister.

“We do need to concentrate on the party,” she says. “When we are in government it’s particularly important. We need to rebuild a party of mass membership and mass activism.”

In one constituency she visited before the May elections, she met a family in a tower block who had not seen a member of the Labour Party for four years. “Between elections we’ve got to get out and talk to people,” she says.

“I was very impressed with Jon when he came to our constituency. He is just about the only candidate who would know what to say on the doorstep, whether it be to a white working class voter concerned about immigration, a black African voter who wants to know how their child is going to be educated or a Pakistani or Bangladeshi who needs somewhere to live.”

More democracy

I am a democratic socialist. I believe in a more equal society but I know that democracy is the means by which we achieve social justice. Labour has done much to end the democratic deficit built up during the Tories' 18 year in power. We have new democratic bodies in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. The hereditary peers no longer make laws for the country. Freedom of Information has given citizens new access to the corridors of power.

Despite these advances, our democracy is in crisis. Trust in politicians is at an all time low. Only 20% think they tell the truth. Turnout at elections has plummeted.

We need to find a new way of doing politics. Democracy has to be renewed – in terms of both national and local government. If we want people to trust us as a party and a government then we must show again that we trust them to take more of the important decisions that affect their daily lives.

People have been turning away from formal party politics but they haven't stopped caring or taking part. Millions marched against the war in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands campaign against global poverty and the destruction of the planet. We need their energy and commitment. We can and must persuade them that Labour and parliamentary power can help their causes.

But Labour, old and new, has too often regarded democracy as just a means to an end so that social justice can be engineered from the top. In today's world, winning elections is a necessary but insufficient step to building a new Britain. We live in less deferential and more complex times. People have to be convinced and given a say in making change happen. And besides our party, there are other competing centres of power – in trade unions and progressive pressure groups and campaigns, and in the media and the business world. We must recognise and celebrate this pluralism and create a modern democracy capable of dealing with different interests. Pluralism is about respect for and tolerance of difference.

Our response must be based on the belief that the democratic society is the good society. But to create



that democratic society will require a new set of reforms that redistributes power throughout the country:

- There needs to be a new settlement between the executive and the legislature, putting royal prerogative powers under the rule of law and formally giving the Commons greater powers of scrutiny, initiation and control over its own timetable.
- We should honour the overwhelming Commons vote for a fully elected second chamber.
- Real and substantial powers should be devolved to local authorities, and councils should be required to involve citizens and communities in their decision making.
- A new relationship can be struck between citizens and the state by giving people extra electoral rights to initiate proposals and contest the actions of government, officials and private companies in policy and service delivery.
- And we must look to new ways of strengthening the accountability of global institutions such as the WTO and World Bank.

Our working lives

Attitudes to work in Britain have changed in the last ten years. Mass unemployment has gone. No longer do people face being sacked on the spot for being a union member. Today's Britain has more high-wage and high-skill jobs than at any time in history.

However, an increasing number are concentrated in parts of the economy where low skills, low wages and poor conditions are an everyday fact of life. Moreover, via the growing use of temporary and agency workers, these practices seem to be spreading into other parts of the economy. It is becoming impossible to move from the bottom to the top of the labour market.

With increasing competition from such rising economies as China, India and Brazil, this is not sustainable. As proved by the erosion of our manufacturing base, what the UK does today, these countries will do tomorrow – so we constantly have to upgrade our skills, and ensure Britain is at the global cutting-edge of new jobs.

At the moment, we rely too much on the low end of the economy and do not invest enough in training, education and R&D. Seven million British adults lack basic skills in literacy, numeracy and the use of communication technology.

More than one in three people have been offered no training of any kind by their employer in the past year. As a percentage of GDP, our investment in R&D places us well below countries as varied as

Sweden, the USA, Germany and Japan. The technological challenges presented by climate change make these problems even more pressing.

Over the last ten years, Labour has done a lot to address such issues, not only via increased spending on education, but initiatives aimed at encouraging employers to invest in training. Policies such as the minimum wage and tax credits have helped people who make a vital contribution to our economy, but many still find themselves on society's margins. More needs to be done, particularly when it comes to the division between those who work in low-skilled, low-paid jobs, and people higher up the economic ladder.

In addition, there are big issues surrounding our working culture, in both public and private sectors. Britain has the longest working hours in Europe. Rather than making the UK more competitive, this may actually have the opposite effect. A TUC poll conducted in 2005 showed that almost one in three people said that long hours or stress had stopped them taking up some training or education opportunities. We also need to be aware that long hours deepen the gender divide, by pushing women out of the workplace.

Work takes up a huge share of our lives. Decent wages are important – but today's work should be creative and rewarding, and people should have a voice in their workplace and the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

These issues are among the most pressing Britain faces. They highlight the fact that many potential benefits of our EU membership have been obscured by the blocking of key elements of the Social Europe agenda. Among the policies Labour should be embracing are:

- The complete implementation of the EU's working time directive, setting a limit on the working week of 48 hours. 22 years after the passing of the Equal Pay Act, there also has to be more action on the gender pay gap. At 17%, the gap between men and women's earnings puts Britain at the bottom of EU rankings. Given figures that suggest that as many as 30,000 women a year lose their jobs simply because they



“We ended up with a two-tier workforce”

Peter Russell is an Amicus Rep at a West Midlands manufacturing business which supplies key parts for such cars as Land Rovers and Jaguars. “In 2004,” he says, “the company said it needed to recruit new people, and they came in from various agencies. We started with about seven – but the figure got as high as well over a hundred.”

“The people from the agencies were paid far less than us,” he continues. “We were on £11 an hour, and they’d usually be on about £7. They also had to put in more hours than the rest of us: some of them would work 12 hour days, seven days a week. And inevitably, we ended up with a two-tier workforce, which made things very difficult. A lot of the agency people were from overseas – Cameroon, the Congo, Senegal, Poland – and you’d see BNP graffiti on the walls.”

Many of the agency workers did not come from a manufacturing background; Peter recalls many being sacked after a matter of hours. Very quickly, the core part of the workforce was becoming outnumbered. By mid-2005, for every one core employee, there were two agency workers. “Because of a lack of skills,” says Peter, “the level of scrap started to creep up. And the agency people were reluctant to join a union, for fear of rocking the boat. So we said to the company, ‘Look – you’ve got to structure this properly, so people have the same rights and

opportunities.’ We called what we wanted a Dignity Policy.”

Eventually, a deal was brokered. If agency workers have been with the company for 13 weeks, the company will now consider offering them a contract. At nine months, it becomes mandatory, and after a month’s trial period, they become part of the core workforce. There’s also a cap on the numbers of agency workers: a maximum of forty, out of a workforce of 400-plus.

“Since the agreement came in, the mood at work is one hundred percent better,” says Peter. “We can see the benefits of what’s happened, and so can the company’s management.”



are pregnant, we also need to decisively strengthen maternity rights.

- Legislation that will ensure protection for temporary and agency workers. In the 2004 Warwick Agreement, the government agreed that if the EU failed to reach agreement on this, domestic legislation would be introduced. That pledge should be honoured.
- Measures that will not only encourage employers to invest in training and research, but that will strengthen the rights of employees to develop

their skills. It is also time for Britain to learn from some of Europe’s most successful countries, and introduce a coherent and universal system of vocational education.

- Government should take a lead with putting Living Wage Agreements in place, which can be enforced through terms in public contracts. The ability to do this was proved through the increase to the pay of cleaners in the Houses of Parliament, after significant pressure from the unions involved.

Where we live

There is no clearer indicator of Britain's new insecurity than our housing crisis. Decent, affordable housing is increasingly beyond the means of millions of people. 1.5 million households are on waiting lists for social housing. 116,000 homeless children live in temporary accommodation, and close to a million are growing up in overcrowded conditions.

Skyrocketing property prices are impacting on our society as never before. One in four parents have adult children who still live at home. The average age of first-time buyers is now over 34. By 2011, the average house price is forecast to rise to nearly £300,000, completely beyond the reach of people on low and even moderate incomes. Right now, key workers in our public services can no longer even afford a modest home in seven out of ten British towns.

Yet housing, along with the NHS, has been one of Labour's proudest historical boasts. After the Second World War, the provision of housing was one of Labour's greatest achievements. Since 1997, the government has improved one million houses in Britain and made some advances on new social housing, but we still have a long, long way to go.

This year, only 25,000 social housing units will be built, satisfying a tiny fraction of demand. The shortage of supply contributes to soaring prices, and thereby creates a vicious circle. The housing crisis creates tensions and pressure in every community, and feeds the growing sense that politics isn't working.

Britain needs a radical new housing agenda. More private housing is part of the answer, but private developers have a tendency to create land-banks and build new developments far too slowly. We need a major programme of investment and reform, based on a partnership between public and non-profit bodies, to build the houses that the UK so urgently needs. Among other policies, this would involve:

- A change of the government's stance on the so-called "fourth option", so that local authorities can borrow and invest in housing on the same terms as housing associations and private companies. Successive votes at Labour conference have called for exactly this measure.
- A decisive move away from decades of planning which has left disadvantaged communities cut off, hardened social divisions, and fed problems such as anti-social behaviour, violent crime and educational underachievement. Britain's new housing developments should be built on a plural model, so that tenants and owner-occupiers live side by side, and our schools in particular draw on a much wider social mix.
- The growth of a new intermediate sector, providing a realistic and attractive choice for people between tenancy and debt-financed ownership. There are currently around 60,000 shared-ownership properties throughout in the UK. The Government must look at how we can, over time, move to having ten times that number.
- New building regulations that would minimise energy use and greenhouse emissions via such techniques as improved insulation, low-energy lighting, the use of solar panels, and such cutting-edge technologies as combined heat and power.



“We need to build more social housing.”

Housing is one of the most important issues for voters, according to Eleanor Tunnicliffe, a trainee solicitor.

Eleanor, who has been a Labour Party member since 2001, says the issue was continually mentioned when she was canvassing in the local elections.

“It doesn’t matter where you go, whether it’s a council estate or a leafy suburb, the subject comes up everywhere,” she says.

Eleanor, who lives in the Putney constituency, has heard most of the candidates for the Deputy Leadership, but says that Jon is the only one who understands that housing is a critical issue.

“It’s not something the others flag up. I get the impression they are not particularly interested, but it is very much a grassroots issue.”

Eleanor says many of her friends have had problems finding affordable accommodation, particularly in London.

“Everything costs so much. You often find that a one bedroomed flat – the kind of place you’d get first – is disproportionately expensive. It can be nearly as expensive as a three bedroomed flat, but you can’t afford the extra £20,000 to £30,000. It makes it quite difficult when you are starting out. Not only are you spending an awful lot of money, but you’re not getting a huge amount for it.

“About nine months ago, in common with a lot of other people, my mum helped me out. I don’t know how other people manage.

“I’m lucky I’m a graduate and a lawyer and mortgage companies are happy to lend to people like me. It’s not so easy for teachers and social workers. A couple of my friends are in the police force, I don’t know how they’re going to do it.”

Like Jon she believes that the sale of council houses has had a damaging impact. “You go out canvassing and people feel gutted because a council house a few doors away had been sold to the tenant, but the tenant has then sold it to a landlord. The landlord has then divided the property up and has three families living there. Council housing is not there to give private landlords a nice profit, it’s supposed to be social housing for everyone.”

“We need to build more social housing. We need to put more money into it.

“This is an issue that affects everybody, including professional and middle class families. It cuts across the whole of society.”



Our public services

Our public services, and the NHS in particular, are Labour's values brought to life. Alarming, however, the Conservatives are ahead in the polls on who is better placed to run the NHS. We cannot allow them to get away with it.

People gave us that huge mandate in 1997 because we were trusted on this issue, and they feared a Tory agenda of under-investment and eventual privatisation. Compared to ten years ago, there are 32,000 more doctors and 85,000 more nurses. Waiting times for operations are now shorter than ever. The NHS is the monument to Labour's strength, and the symbol of what the party can achieve.

But what of the future? Our public services are at a crossroads. One way, there lies fragmentation, privatisation and a market-based approach that would reach its logical conclusion if the Tories were returned to power. In the other direction, there are new progressive ideas about empowering the users of public services, and involving voluntary organisations and social enterprises – but also ensuring that one thing is always protected. The public service ethos is what powers one of the most crucial elements of our society. The people on whom we all depend – nurses, teachers, doctors, police officers, support staff – are part of something very different from the market. In state schools and NHS hospitals we are treated not on the basis of our wealth but as equal citizens.

That said, we need to ensure that the quality of services and levels of personalisation are continually

improved. That's where co-production comes in. It's a simple idea; that services are better if they are designed by the people who use them and produce them at the sharp end. Instead of remote managers setting targets or private companies making profits, service users and front-line staff are equipped and resourced to shape how their hospitals, GP surgeries and schools are run – because they know best what they want from them and what works. It means the services are improved and people feel that they are genuinely public.

- There should be a moratorium on the role of private companies in the direct provision of public services. Of late, plans to outsource the probation service, ongoing debates about private prisons and plans to hugely expand private involvement in clinical care have shown that we may well be reaching the outer limits of supposed partnership between public and private sectors. In the NHS, for example, the volume of work being handed to private treatment centres is beginning to threaten core services.
- The private companies we do use to support the public sector must be required to maintain the latter's employment standards, so that outsourcing is not used as a means of getting labour on the cheap. The same should apply to those voluntary organisations and social enterprises involved in public-service delivery. Though we can and should work actively in partnership with the "third sector", we should never advocate the same approach as David Cameron's Tories – using it to completely replace public provision.
- Across all our public services, we need to encourage the idea that reform can be steered by the input and involvement of not just of public-service users, but the frontline staff who see to delivery.



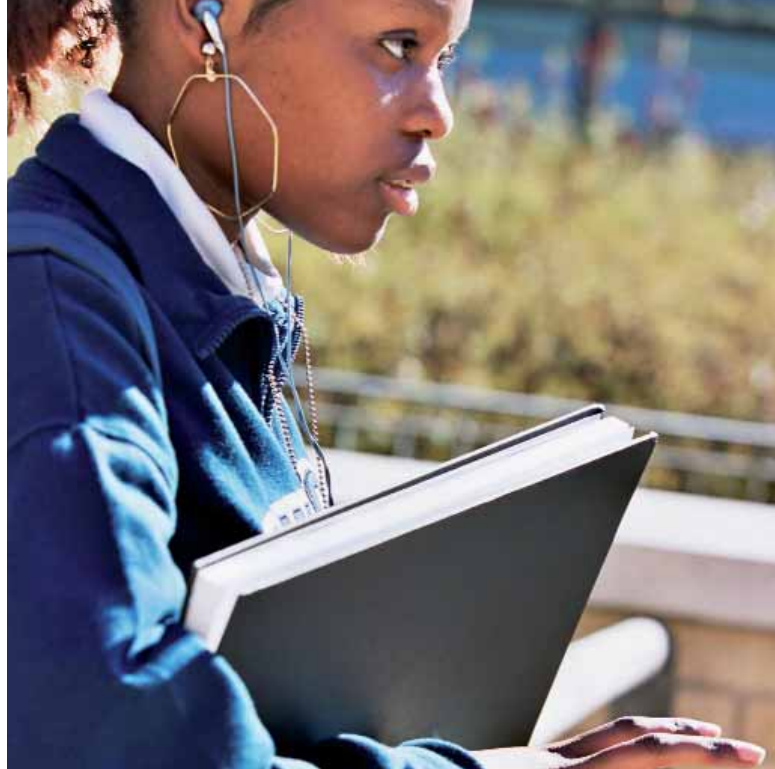
Learning for life

Labour's programme of investment in our schools has raised levels of achievement, and hugely increased resources. The introduction of SureStart has marked a watershed moment for pre-school education. Our universities are no longer the preserve of a small minority.

When coming up with solutions to the new insecurity, education should be at the centre of our plans. But the way we educate our children and young people is important for even more fundamental reasons. Education is about much more than servicing our economy; it is through learning that we realise our potential as human beings.

However, rather than building on our success in the first term, education policy has taken a wrong turn. Issues surrounding the expansion of academies and trust schools urgently need to be addressed – particularly the fact that they are being effectively imposed on communities by threats to withhold funding if LEAs do not accept them. As part of that process, we need to re-emphasise the importance of community-based schools, and move away from the current obsession with structures and competition. As was the case when our education policy was moving in the right direction, standards are what matter.

The way we teach our children has become far too test-based, not least at the primary level. Instead of education being a process focused on children's development, excessive testing creates a danger of teaching being reduced to learning by rote. We have



also underestimated the importance of play, a vital part of learning.

On higher education, I believe that we chose the wrong solution to the very real problem of funding our universities. I voted against the government's legislation on top-up fees because I believed the fear of debt would deter working-class young people from aspiring to a University education. Now that the scheme has been introduced, it is contributing to a debt crisis that threatens to define the experience of a whole generation. In addition, the system of loans surrounding tuition and top-up fees is regressive – given the gender pay gap, for example, women are charged proportionally more for higher education than men.

- Decisions on schools should be devolved to those who understand local circumstances and needs, something which forms the very essence of accountability. On academies and trust schools, we need to pause for thought, and commence a long-overdue debate on issues like local accountability, meaningful parent involvement, and whether placing a premium on "choice" will actually lead to its opposite: a minority of oversubscribed schools carefully choosing their pupils with an eye on league tables, and thereby deepening social divisions.
- There is much we can learn from Labour's education policy in Wales, where compulsory tests for seven-year-olds have been scrapped, and tests for 11 and 14-year-olds will also be phased out by 2007-2008. There, education policy emphasises regular assessment by teachers, and early and pre-schooling have been brought together to create a new Foundation stage for 3 to 7 year-olds.
- We should reform the current regressive system of student loans and replace it with a new progressive graduate tax, which would securely link graduates' contributions to higher education to their earnings. This would separate the issues of education and debt. It would also send a signal that gaining a degree is about much more than financial benefit.

The Good Society

Since 1997 Labour has achieved a lot by getting basics right. We have put in place policies which have created unprecedented economic stability – and, for millions of people who previously knew Tory boom and bust, a new sense of prosperity and comfort.

Increasingly, however, the negative aspects of the UK's recent social development are becoming clear. Our society is still too unequal and divided. Too many are working long hours either to make ends meet or to buy the ever-changing trappings of success. Alongside economic insecurity, a new set of social problems has emerged. For example, our prison population is at an all-time high. Key crime statistics, like those for burglary and car crime, are at record-breaking lows, yet many of our communities are blighted by violence.

Underneath all this lies one key problem. We have let the thinking of the market, the drive for economic success and the pressures of consumerism define too much of our lives. We need to help people find time for friends and family. Particularly for our children, we have to create and protect spaces that keep the market at arm's length. If we do well, we have to be aware that success will feel empty if we fail to address others' problems. We have to seek not just instant gratification, but to make long-term plans – for ourselves, in such areas as pensions and savings; and for the whole of the planet, when it comes to the crucial issue of climate change and poverty in the developing world.

We need a vision of the Good Society, where family, friends and the sustainability of the planet come first.



- The fundamental test for any Labour government is whether it makes society more or less equal. The recent increase in child poverty suggests that we have to be more vigilant than ever. We also need to move beyond the idea that talking about inequality will be unpopular. It is an issue that affects all of us. For example, the fact that the average FTSE executive is paid 113 times more than the average British worker is a crucial factor in our out-of-control housing market.
- We need to look long and hard at our failing system of crime and punishment. We lock up more a bigger share of our population than any other country in Western Europe. 65% of our prisoners are illiterate. 70% have two or more mental health problems. Re-offending rates currently run at 67%, which only underlines the need for a new approach.
- The increasingly damaging impact of the market on our children is a cause for real concern. While almost 70% of three year-olds recognise the McDonald's symbol, less than half know their own surname. The government's outlawing of adverts for sweets and fast food during children's TV is a welcome step forward, but we need to do more.
- If we are to avoid a future crisis, we need to address the fact that our society is not encouraging people to plan for the future. For 20 years, we have seen a rise in the proportion of households with no savings, and yet people now expect to live well into their 70s and 80s. More work needs to be done to ensure that women get an adequate state pension. The adoption of the earnings link must not be postponed beyond 2012, and we must sure that future pensions levels are high enough to allow people to lead dignified lives.

Our world

I voted for the war in Iraq. I was wrong, and I deeply regret voting the way I did. At the time, I was convinced that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and that a more democratic Iraq could come from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. But there were no WMD and Iraq faces a civil war.

It is time to move beyond military occupation, and aim at a lasting solution that will inevitably involve a leading role for key countries in the Middle East. We need to give Iraqis complete control over their country and its resources. At home, we urgently need to deal with a loss of trust and sense of political betrayal. And there are bigger issues at stake. September 11 2001 could have marked a point at which the world came together, and used our international institutions to address the issues that feed the scourge of terrorism.

Iraq has been a costly mistake – financially and morally. But this mistake should not obscure the strong internationalist record that Labour has built up since 1997. International aid is up, our engagement in international bodies on issues of the environment, animal rights, and human rights has been sustained and meaningful. In the insecure and uncertain world of globalisation, international



co-operation is essential to Britain's future.

Our Labour values hold the key to partnerships that we have recently neglected – with progressive Democrats in the USA, and our sister social-democratic parties in Europe and beyond. Recent EU agreements on combating climate change show that when we and our allies are agreed on a course of action, we can take positive decisions whose impact is felt across the planet. Moreover, the policies pursued by Labour on international development – and Africa in particular – have shown that the UK can still set standards for other countries to follow.

- We need to revisit Robin Cook's notion of an ethical dimension to our foreign policy and develop what this means in practice. We particularly need to be much clearer about when it is appropriate to intervene in the affairs of other countries, and how central international institutions are to any such actions.
- In the same way that social justice and economic success can go together at home, acting more ethically on the world stage will have benefits for Britain's economic interests – and particularly our relationships with fast-rising democracies such as India and Brazil.
- Parliament needs to be much more involved in foreign policy decisions. For example, at the outset last year's crisis in the Lebanon, I supported calls for a ceasefire, the recall of the Commons, and a much-needed debate on the government's stance.
- Our relationship with the USA is crucial to our interests. If a Democrat president is elected in 2008, some the tensions surrounding this issue will be reduced. But we still need to rethink our relations with the US. As we have seen, if our side of the "special relationship" becomes too unquestioning, there are costs to our relationships with other foreign-policy partners, and to our freedom to act in a principled way.
- The world is currently in danger of moving along a route that will lead to nuclear proliferation. A rushed decision to replace Britain's Trident weapons system – which I recently voted against – would send entirely the wrong signal. Such nuclear weapons belong to a different era, and the huge resources they demand could be far better invested in the resources our overstretched armed forces need more than ever.

Strangers into citizens

Behind Britain's recent economic success, there lies one particularly remarkable fact. There are at least 500,000 migrants living and working here who are currently outside protection and regulation. They make a vital contribution to our economy and public services. Many of them have lived here long enough to raise a family. Yet they are the most insecure of all us: badly paid, poorly treated, exploited, and regularly demonised.

These people are at the heart of huge change in our towns and cities. Most of them make their home in the UK communities that are the least-equipped to deal with new arrivals, and yet they have been deservedly accepted by most of the people they live alongside. But growing insecurity – in such areas as housing, education, public services and low pay – means that they are often the focus of the kind of hostility that has been successfully whipped up by the racist British National Party.

My work as an MP brings me into contact with these problems all the time. In my constituency, exploitation of migrant labour means that wage rates in some parts of construction have come down by as much as £2 an hour. An ongoing scramble for decent accommodation means that if a migrant family are given a home, they may well be victimised by people whose resentment is understandable, but completely misplaced. Often, the extent to which these people are used and abused is mind-boggling: I recently came across two Lithuanian workers, eating a lunch of cold baked beans and stale bread, who were being paid £15 a day. Amazingly, they were on a public contract.

Many of the long-term solutions to these problems lie in areas already dealt with, particularly housing and fairer treatment of temporary and agency workers. But thousands of people are also backing the Strangers Into Citizens campaign, which advocates a fundamental step forward that would benefit not just thousands of people who have come here from overseas, but the whole of our society.

- We need to create an earned pathway for immigrants who have been in the UK for more than four years. First, they should be granted a two-year work permit, after which – subject to an English test and with a positive reference from an employer or person of standing in the community – they would be granted indefinite leave to remain.
- According to a recent estimate by respected thinktank the Institute for Public Policy Research, if these people were awarded citizenship and allowed to move out of the illicit economy, the boost to tax revenues would be around £1 billion per year. One recent opinion poll suggested that such a move would be supported by around two thirds of the public.
- For this change to happen, there has to be a concerted effort, which will take political will, and courage. The media and some of our politicians have to move away from inflammatory language and acknowledge a simple fact: these half a million people aren't going away, and it would be a disaster for our economy if they did. They deserve a much better deal.
- Underlying all this is a need to defend and celebrate multiculturalism. People come to live and work in the UK not just for economic reasons, but because we have a tradition of allowing people to be equal but different, in keeping with the essential British values of tolerance and fair play. We should not forget that.



“My dream is to have a proper job, pay taxes and become a citizen.”

Alexander is Russian. He lives and works in Liverpool.

“I came to the UK in 2003. Like many other Russians, I dared to denounce the corruption in my country involving the police, the Mafia, the judges and the authorities. I had invested all my time, efforts and savings to start a retail business, and as the business grew successful so did the Mafia protection payments. When the situation became so unbearable that I could not make a living, I decided to make a proper complaint to the local authorities. That’s when my real problems began: I was taken to jail for no legal reason, beaten many times and then continually persecuted until I lost everything I had.

“I was 50 years old when I fled. I was well aware that I would lose my job, my friends, my family, my language and culture. For people in my position, our only priority is to save our lives. We don’t think about benefits, or living at other peoples’ expense. We move because we are sick with fear. We feel helpless.

“I came to the UK as a Russian representative to an academic convention and I seized the opportunity to ask for asylum. At first, I was confident because my application seemed to run smoothly. I expected the evidence presented in my case would allow me to get Indefinite Leave to Remain. But the Home Office turned my application down.

“Life for a failed asylum seeker is a constant nightmare – fearing for your life once again, because you may be returned to your country at any time. In this desperate situation, you begin to appreciate those employers that occasionally give you a job – working for, say, £2 per hour, doing nights, weekends and bank holidays. I occasionally work as a Security Guard and it can be very

dangerous because I am like a police officer, risking my physical safety to protect the goods I have been left to look after.



“I have completed a course to get my badge as a Security Guard, but I can’t get a job because I have no Work Permit. Even though many employers in the area know me, and that I am a reliable and hard worker, nobody dares to give me a job because of the huge fine they could get. I share a room in a flat with 17 others in similar circumstances. We rely on the charity of our friends. I can’t afford proper dental treatment, and right now I am in a lot of pain. I am attending English classes but I can’t afford to buy my text books. I need to save money to buy bus tickets.

But I feel settled in Liverpool. I have a PhD in Physics, and I do voluntary work in the Physics Department at Liverpool University. I also work as a volunteer for many charities. Even though my present situation is difficult, I am happy in England because I am free and I feel that I have a lot to contribute. My dream is to get a Work Permit, have a proper job, pay taxes and become a citizen.”

The climate crisis

Tackling climate change is an issue that – quite rightly – is currently being addressed by politicians of both left and right. However, I believe that the causes and consequences of global warming not only demand progressive answers, but also highlight such fundamental issues of insecurity and social justice that only our side of politics can successfully address them.

That's why Labour has taken the environment seriously since 1997. If Labour hadn't been elected ten years ago we would have had no Climate Change Levy or serious work on the EU's carbon trading scheme.

Developing countries, although largely innocent of the causes of climate change, will be the hardest hit. As our planet becomes hotter, there will be

increases in the intensity of natural disasters, and an increased danger of conflict over scarce resources. As the 21st century unfolds, the term 'climate refugee' will become more and more common. We could see 200 million people become refugees as their homes are hit by drought and flood. More than a fifth of Bangladesh could be underwater by the end of this century.

In the UK, the impacts we are most likely to face are higher temperatures, increasing sea levels, storms and flooding. Once again, it is the poor and vulnerable that are least likely to be able to adapt. They are more likely to live on flood plains, because property there is cheaper. Rising energy and food costs will hit them the hardest. As we saw during the heatwave of 2003, the poor and the elderly are more likely to suffer in extreme temperatures.



Tackling climate change and delivering social justice can go hand in hand. Although building more housing is often presented as a bad thing for our environment, we have an opportunity to build a new generation of sustainable homes: better and cheap for people to live in, and ecologically beneficial. Improved home insulation can cut energy bills by as much as 60%. We need more schemes like this, that benefit the poor, benefit the environment, and over the long term benefit everyone. The same applies to long-overdue improvements in public transport.

Internationally, I believe that Labour can build on recent advances, and make Britain a case-study in how to change economies and societies to slow global warming.



- The challenge of climate change brings with it opportunities for new industries to develop, but we cannot rise to them without scientists, engineers and designers. A recent study by the Department of Trade and Industry calculated that to meet our target of meeting 20 percent of electricity needs from renewables by 2020, we will have to create up to 35,000 new jobs. That will require a huge expansion in education and training.
- Labour needs to build on such advances as Ken Livingstone's successful introduction of London's congestion charge, and finally make progress on an integrated transport policy. Using road-pricing, we will only credibly encourage people to reduce their dependence on the car if we have a rail and bus network that we can be proud of. As things stand, skyrocketing ticket prices, unreliable services and little integration between road and rail are pushing people away from the solutions we need. In the last decade, bus fares have increased by 52.9%, and the cost of rail travel by 46.2%. If travelling from, say, London to Manchester on a plane is cheaper than taking the train, policy is in the wrong place. As far as trains are concerned, there may well be a case for extending the non-profit model now used for Network Rail (formerly Railtrack) to the running of services.
- In last year's Companies Act, the government set out plans for Business Reviews, which require firms to publicly report on their environmental impacts. But that only applies to publicly listed firms, not private firms – so though Tesco now has to report on its green record, Asda does not. This loophole needs to be closed. We are not talking about onerous new laws and red tape – just openness.
- In all areas of environmental policy, companies and individuals need the direction and support of government. One thing should never be far from our thoughts: the future of our planet is too crucial to be left to the same unrestrained markets that played a large role in creating the problems we now face.

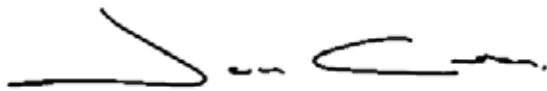
A last word from Jon

I have travelled across the country and met thousands of people since I announced my intention to stand. The vitality of the party is still there – and there is a desire to rebuild Labour as a democratic, organised party ready to take on our political opponents in every area of the country.

The status quo is no longer an option; it's time for an approach that reconnects us with all the communities that brought us into office in 1997.

We can rebuild the party and win the next election, but it requires a new agenda with a fresh face. With your help, I can bring that change about.

Now is the time to choose change.



www.joncruddas.org.uk



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