**The 16th Longford Lecture**

**Wednesday 29 November 2017**

**Ken Loach**

**Award-winning film and television director**

**“Charity or Justice?”**

Thanks very much, I can’t live up to that billing but there you go.

Thank you and hello, and hello to those people who are listening on their radios, and I will hope to have a few things to say that may feel relevant or that you may think are worth considering. But I should say at the outset that there are people in this audience with far more direct experience of these matters than I have, and there will be people listening on the radio who obviously know from first-hand experience what life is like. I can only refer to people I have spoken to, or things I have read. So I approach this with some great humility because of that.

And I am immensely surprised to be speaking under the name of Lord Longford because back in the Sixties we found ourselves on opposite sides, when Lord Longford became an ally of Mary Whitehouse and the “Clean-Up TV” brigade, and we were seen as part of the Permissive Society and doing the very things that they were saying were outrageous. In Lord Longford’s case, I think that his involvement was an aberration. That’s what people have said since, and I am pleased to hear that.

But for Mary Whitehouse, she actually masked her attacks on what she thought was morally outrageous. Behind them she hid a very right-wing politics. Jon referred to *Cathy Come Home* in his introduction. Mary Whitehouse attacked *Cathy Come Home* because she said she couldn’t tell whether it was true or not!

May I call him Frank Longford because I have problems with aristocratic ‘Lords’ and ‘Ladies’, and I feel much more comradely if we can refer to Frank Longford? I hope he won’t mind. It’s no disrespect. Actually it’s a way of saying we are part of the same team. And, of course, I have heard of his concerns for prisoners and prison reform and went a few days ago to the New Horizon Centre with Jon and met the young homeless people there, and realised it was founded [by Frank Longford] in 1968, which is only two years after *Cathy Come Home*. So we were both concerned with similar issues at the same time.

And then, while I was wondering how I could structure these few things I have to say, I realised that Frank Longford stood for Labour in 1945 as a parliamentary candidate. He didn’t get in, but he stood, and he would have signed up to that manifesto which people involved thought would change our country for the better, forever. It established the National Health Service with no private providers, no Virgin Care. The NHS was for everyone, paid for by people when they are well, used by people when they are sick. It built council housing for the housing crisis. It established social security, full employment, public ownership. We owned the trains, we owned the transport, we owned the gas, we owned the electricity, we owned the water, we owned the mines, we later owned the steel industry. The commanding heights of the economy - the strategic industries - were ours. Labour in 1945 did that, and Frank Longford was part of the party that fought for and got it.

And it struck me that what might be worth thinking about is, having been handed that inheritance, is what have we done with it? Having been handed that inheritance by people who embodied a spirit after the Second World War (which people had won together, they had won it as good neighbours, they had won it, and particularly those soldiers had won it and all the others who fought by being their brother’s keeper and their sister’s keeper, as one community. And the sense of unity and the sense of being good neighbours, of caring for each other, from the cradle to the grave - it was said, you would be taken care of. After the depression of the Thirties, after the Means Test and that hated Poor Law attitude, they would build a new world. They thought they had.

So what has happened to it? I thought I would go through a number of the issues, mainly centring around the ones that have concerned the Longford Trust and the work that has been done, and the people who have won the Longford Prizes, and concerned with your work, and see what has happened to them.

Well, we know the outcome, don’t we? But look, let’s put some meat on the bones>

**Housing and Homelessness**

Talking about housing and homelessness, the top-line figure that we could get today is that there are 300,000 homeless people. 300,000, one in 200. So in this audience, if you are typical, there are three or four of you without a home. Look around, three or four of you here, if this is a cross-section, will have nowhere to live tonight. A sobering thought, isn’t it?

One story to put a human face to it. We live in what is thought of as a very prosperous town called Bath in the west of England but, of course, it has its problems like all cities. A few weeks ago I heard the story of a young couple. She is a hairdresser, he is a trainee carpenter: they are working; they have just had a baby; the baby was four months old; they were staying with their parents but the pressure got too much; they were on the sofa or the parents were on the sofa; there were teenage children; they couldn’t cope; her milk dried up; the domestic pressure was too great; they moved to friends; they were sofa surfing; they moved from friends to friends; they tried to look after someone’s house.

The young man had to go away for a few days for work. She declared herself homeless. She was offered a hostel place the other side of Bristol, which is probably 25-30 miles away - provided the husband didn’t go! That was Cathy’s story 50 years ago. We haven’t moved on much, have we?

So, sofa surfing, overcrowding, living in sheds. Have you seen Sadiq Khan’s headline in tonight’s *Evening Standard*? ‘Build in your back garden’, stick a shed up, get someone to live there. That is the crisis that has been allowed to develop over decades.

Why has it? Because they depended on the market. And it’s the market that has given us tower blocks of luxury flats with no lights on at night. You will see them from here when you go out. No lights on at night because people buy them as investments. They are commodities, stick your money in there, the value will go up, while hundreds of thousands of people have nowhere to live.

The market. If there is a need and no one can make a profit, the need will go unanswered. The market triumphs if you have got a lot of money. It is a desperate failure for the vast majority of people.

They talk of ‘political correctness’, and they usually mean somebody being over-sympathetic to a vulnerable group. You know, people who have had a hard time. ‘Don’t be unkind about them’. And people say, ‘oh, it’s political correctness gone mad. You can’t even say this. You can’t even say that’. I will tell you the real political correctness: challenge the market, challenge business’s right to make a profit. They say – I mean interviewers, not Jon of course - interviewers will say, ‘you don’t support business, how can you possibly be a government?’

Too damn right we shouldn’t support business, when markets make homes that no one lives in, and turn thousands on the street. Too damn right we don’t support markets.

**Employment**

Jobs: what has happened to jobs? Job security was a key thing for the 1945 government. Job security, a job you could depend on, a skill that would pay you for a lifetime’s work. You could plan your life, you could plan a family, you could have a home. What now, what is job security now?

Well, I guess we know. There is no job security below a certain level. There is no secure income. You are unable to plan a life. You are unable to get a house. You can’t plan a family. You will be on zero hours. You will be on agency work, where you might get rung up the night before, or you might ring them and say, “have I got a shift tomorrow?” And they’ll say, “no”. Or they’ll say, “yes, be there at 5 o’clock in the morning”. And then you may not get work for the next two or three days. You are entirely dependent on an agency who can turn you on and off like a tap.

That applies to care workers and it applies to university lecturers. A few weeks ago we met university lecturers who earn less than £10,000 or whatever it takes to pay taxes. These are people teaching in universities. Zero hours contracts. I won’t tell you what vice chancellors get. You have been reading it in the papers. Pretty squalid, eh?

Philip Hammond said there is no unemployment when he was giving his interviews after the Budget. Well, there are actually 1.4 million unemployed, but he probably didn’t notice. 1.4 million unemployed. But more precisely there are seven million employed working poor, seven million people working and still below the poverty line, still dependent from time to time on food banks.

But work has a value, of course, in bringing home a secure income, but it also has a value of identity, of who you are. Most of the people in this audience will have lived their life and they know who they are is partly defined by their work. “Well, I have done that, and I have been there, so I have been that”. You have a sense of self-respect. You have a sense of self worth and you have a sense of your place in society.

When you are now, as so many millions of people are, turned on and off like a tap, where is the sense of self worth, where is the sense of being valued in that? And we all need that, we need to feel valued, we need to feel that we are a contributing member of this society, we give it something and that gives us our dignity. When you are plainly so unvalued and you plainly can be discarded, it is very difficult to feel that sense of self worth.

**The NHS**

I don’t want to say too much about the National Health Service. Everybody knows. I mean, the greatest achievement being dismembered, being privatised, being sold off, so many campaigns that everyone here will know about, Save our NHS, Keep our National Health Service Public. And with social care, again people doing the social care work are unvalued.

When they do a 20-minute session, they get paid 20 minutes of the hourly minimum wage. Then they might not get another appointment for several hours, so they’ve got to hang about, waiting for buses for another few quid. They might be out 12 hours from home and get six hours work. Absolutely valueless in society’s eyes, valueless.

But everyone here knows the true value of people who go to old people in their homes. They may be incontinent, they may be totally disabled, they have to be fed, they have to be changed, they have to be spoken to, they should be spoken to, they should be treated with dignity. The people who do it: absolutely disregarded. Why do we allow this to happen? Why do we allow it to happen? You do look around and wonder, don’t you?

**Youth and Probation Services**

Two areas that I know connect to Frank Longford’s concerns and to your work, Jon, and to youth work and probation services. It is work of which I don’t have a huge experience, but it is done in our name, and I think we all have an obligation, because it is done in our name, to know about it, to listen to those who do it, to read about it, because it seems it is falling apart.

So we have got some figures together: 2010 to 2016, £387 million cut from youth services. Youth services perform a vital role. Like a number of these different areas in this chain, they are the ones which, when kids are feeling disconnected, give them hope, maybe return them to education, show them a positive part they can play in the community. They can help them find work, help them develop, play a positive part, prevent many of the problems from arising later on. But they have been cut.

Things like the Education Maintenance Allowance, which isn’t strictly youth work but a key element for kids who are maybe struggling about staying on at school. Education Maintenance Allowance: cut. People, poor, needing to work, needing to bring in an income, should they stay on at school? They would have done before, they won’t now.

I will just quote an MP, I don’t know her, Vicky Foxcroft, an MP from Lewisham. She said this: “Children Social Care – cut. Family Support Services – cut. Sure Start Centres – cut. Child Protection Services – cut. Damaging young people’s life chances, worsening mental health, and increasing the possibility of them getting into trouble and becoming involved in serious youth violence”. That is what that £387 million that has been saved is contributing to - all those problems. And centres like New Horizon pick up the pieces. They pick up the pieces of wanton damage done to young people.

Again the figures: a third of people are at risk of poverty. A third! I couldn’t believe that when I read it. A third of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. And over ten per cent are experiencing material deprivation. One in ten. What would those who believed in support from the cradle-to-the-grave have made of that, I wonder?

A youth worker said: “These young people will have nowhere to turn, there will be no one who is qualified or trained to support them. It will lead to more anti -social behaviour, gangs, depression and poor mental health in young people, and increased work for the police forces that have already been cut”.

Of course, this is the absurdity, isn’t it? You cut the work that is being done to keep people going, and of course you pass that burden at a later date when the problems are huge to people where it is going to cost much more, but you have already cut them. Maybe there is a logic there, but I don’t see it.

**Youth Jails**

Youth jails. Now one thing you would think if you were a parent and your child was involved in bad things that got him or her into trouble with the police and got them into the courts and they got a custodial sentence, one thing you might think, “well, that is bad, I am really distressed but at least they will be safe. At least they will be protected from the things that got them into trouble in the first place”.

How wrong can you be? A support worker at the New Horizon Youth Centre told me a story of a young prisoner that she was seeing. She said the last time she saw him he was terrified. There had been a fight in the prison and the officers had locked themselves away in their office because they couldn’t deal with it. Cuts, eh? Sounds good.

Last week a report by prison inspectors reported in the *Guardian* - so it must be true – said: “Surging levels of violence at an unsafe G4S-run youth jail and there was no evidence that staff can adequately care and control this volume of young people”. The Chief Inspector of Prisons said – this is the Chief Inspector of Prisons talking about jails for young people, this is our responsibility, okay, this is what our taxes go on so we should know. This is what he said: “Not one single institution is safe for young prisoners, not one”. Who is the Minister in charge of that? Why are they still in post? That is the Chief Inspector of Prisons, that isn’t some bleeding heart liberal. That will be a guy who is tough. Not one single institution is safe for young prisoners. You know about this more than me. What are we going to do?

**The Probation Service**

The Probation Service. Now here is a surprising story! In 2014 we had a probation service. In 2014 it was split, half was the National Probation Service, and half was the Community Rehabilitation Service. In 2015, big surprise, you know what’s coming: the Community Rehabilitation Service was privatised, that is why it was split. That is what they do, they divide services up, they divide industries up and then they sell them off. That is what they have done with the Community Rehabilitation Service.

Many companies own or provide services for this. Most are owned by one company now. Venture capital companies are involved. Why are venture capital companies involved in probation? Has anyone got a clue why that should be? I cannot imagine.

Well, the person who did it obviously can. So what are people saying? We found some comments by people working in the probation service and in the Community Rehabilitation Service. These are the people on the front line, beginning again with the Inspectorate of Constabulary. This is what it says about probation: “Most service users have not received a service that meets their needs or is likely to stop them reoffending”. That is HM Inspector of Constabulary.

UNISON, the union, did a survey of the people who work there, (and one moral is, join a union. I hope you all are members of a union,) This is what UNISON found amongst the people who work in the Probation Service. This is what one said: “The service is target-driven and form-filling. They have no regard for their staff or the offenders with whom we work”. That’s one.

Another says: “It doesn’t seem to be about the service users, it’s all about hitting targets”. That’s the publicly-owned bit.

The privately run piece, Community Rehabilitation, this is what people who work in it said. One said: “Many cases have not been contacted for months. One case today he had not heard from anyone at Probation for 16 months in a 24-month suspended sentence. It’s not good enough”, they say with massive understatement.

Next one: “I have never seen morale so low”.

Next one: “There is an emphasis on cutting costs to make a profit”.

Well, there’s a surprise. That’s the point of it, pal, that’s the point of it, make a profit.

Next one: “Total confusion. What is important? Certainly not protecting the public. How can an organisation profit from crime?”

Well, the people who invested obviously can profit from crime. That is why they did it, and that is why the government gave them the chance. Profit from crime, at the expense of the people we need to help.

Last quote: “We no longer deliver anything of meaning, just pass our service users on to partnership agencies who are at best poor and at worst do literally nothing”.

Why do we allow this to happen? Why do we allow it to happen?

**Prisons**

Again, there will be people listening who could write this far better than I can. But again, we just try to listen and hear what is happening. From 2010/11 to now, the budget has been reduced by nearly a quarter. Fewer staff looking after more prisoners. Frontline staff has fallen by over a quarter in the last seven years. Well, if you cut the money, of course you cut the staff. An ex-prisoner I spoke to today said he has never known prison as dangerous and chaotic as now.

Everyone tells me mental health is the biggest problem. Thousands are in prison who should be cared for in a mental hospital and if they are dangerous to themselves they should be in a secure mental hospital. And let’s just remember, many of those mental hospitals, the old ones were not good and they had to be changed or closed or something, but just shut down and people turned out for care in the community which, as we know, is now non-existent virtually? So it is a huge problem and the people in prisons are having to deal with it. And drugs, ever more available, appalling drugs that people go off their heads with, and then create massive problems. And one man said to me: “I wouldn’t share a cell now because I would be fearful of the person I would be sharing with”. Not because he didn’t get on with other prisoners, but because the danger was too intense.

2015-16. Last year there were six apparent homicides in prisons, the previous year there were four. That’s a total of ten, and that is more than the previous eight years put together. So this is danger for the people who are listening to us now. That’s really intense. In 2016, there were a record number of suicides in prison in England and Wales, 119: 107 men, 12 women. Violence is at record levels with assaults. Self-harm - over 41,000 in the same period, still rising.

And one statistic just absolutely hit me: for women there are twice as many cases of self-harm than there are women prisoners. So some poor women are cutting themselves and cutting themselves and cutting themselves as we speak. And we allow it to happen. People listening will know this far better than I do, but I think we have to know it because it is done in our name, and we have to break the crime of silence so that none of us can say: “Well, we didn’t know about this, it’s a surprise”. We do know, we do know. We have to demand that those who are responsible are accountable.

And the people who are responsible are not the people carrying it out. It is the people who demand that it should be carried out, the people who make the policy.

**Poverty**

We live in a very unequal society, as we know. Again just the numbers that come out. Child poverty affects one in four children in the UK. One in four. A report this week says in five years’ time there will be 5.2 million children in poverty in this country. That’s the figure they put on it.

The poorest and most vulnerable: how do we treat them? Well, assessments were something we had to look into when we did the film that Jon was kind enough to mention, *I Daniel Blake*. The poorest and most vulnerable are the ones who depend on what are now called benefits, and we used to call Social Security. When people are having a tough time, we support them. You know, you do it for a neighbour, you do it for a member of the family, you do it collectively, for each other. Two instances that exemplify this are when people need benefits. If they are sick, or they are ill, or they are disabled, the doctor would write them a note and that’s it. You know, you trust your doctor, you trust your consultant, you go along and they make you better if you are lucky.

Not for the State. The State won’t accept the word of your doctor. They get a private American company to come and do a separate assessment, and they ask you serious questions like, “can you put a hat on your head?” Or, “Have you got a pet?” Or, “Can you walk across the room?” And if you have got a pet and can put a hat on your head and you can walk across the room, the odds are your doctor’s advice will be ignored and you will be told you have got to go to work. Of course, it sounds a joke, but sadly it isn’t. Many people have died, and many people have been put through stress and terrible pain and indignation because of it.

Here are two or three cases. A man called Paul Turner had heart disease. His doctor said he couldn’t work, but he was told he was fit for work, so he was denied benefits and he died weeks later. In the assessment, despite his medical notes being there, his heart wasn’t tested. You’d think it was a basic thing, isn’t it? A person reads the note, “ah, this man has got a heart condition, I had better check that”. No, he can put a hat on his head, get him out.

Another man had a heart problem and he had a heart attack during the assessment and he couldn’t continue, so he was sanctioned because he couldn’t continue the interview. He was sanctioned because he had to leave the interview.

And another terribly tragic case of a man called Michael O’Sullivan, who had serious medical problems including mental health problems, big mental health problems. His GP said he couldn’t work, but his benefits were removed and - this is the tragic part - he found work, he found a job, and he was determined to go, but on the day he was to go, he was in such despair that he hanged himself before he could start. Now the Coroner, a senior coroner, said the Department for Work and Pensions’ stress contributed significantly to his death. That is: the DWP helped to kill him. The coroner said it, no one else.

His daughter Anne-Marie O’Sullivan, who is a very brave woman, has been trying since for years to make the DWP accountable, to make them acknowledge their guilt. She is still trying. They are very quick to speak, aren’t they, sometimes, but not quick to speak to acknowledge their guilt.

The other figures are that between December 2011 to February 2014, 2,380 people died within 14 days of losing their benefits because they were found fit to work when the doctors said the opposite. And the irony is, if you have the strength to appeal, you will probably win. Most people who appeal win. So that reveals the ultimate wickedness of this system because the politicians who put it in place know that most people are wrongly told they are fit for work because they win the appeal. But they still keep it in place for punishment. That is the wickedness of it.

Those were the assessments, these are sanctions, and this again is a system designed to catch people, so if you go along to the Job Centre and you have done one little bureaucratic thing wrong, you get sanctioned, your money gets stopped, and it might be for a month, it might be for three years. Your money is stopped for simple things like missing an appointment. A man took his pregnant wife to hospital because she was in premature labour. He was sanctioned, he missed an appointment. A man was attending his father’s funeral. He told the Job Centre he had got his father’s funeral to go to. He was sanctioned.

We met one man, John McArthur, a very dignified man in Scotland, and he refused to work for a firm that he had worked for in a fairly high-paid job and a well-established job, for some time, and he was told he had to go and work for them for free to get his benefits. He said, “I’ve got too much dignity, I will not work for free. My labour is worth more than that”. So they sanctioned him and his sanction went on and on. He was sanctioned for three years, and when we met him he was so dignified and we said, “Look, please John, you are doing us a favour, let’s buy you a meal, for Christ’s sake”. “No”, he said, “I will have a cup of tea with you, that’s all”. That’s a man with more dignity in his little finger than Iain Duncan Smith in his whole body.

Another story: a man was terminally ill. He fell over in his flat and he injured himself. He wounded himself deeply. His neighbours called the ambulance and, when the ambulance came, he said, “Might I be kept in overnight?” They said, “Well, you might be, it’s a deep cut”. So he said ,“Well, I am not getting in, I’ve got a Job Centre appointment in the morning. I am not going to hospital.” That’s the fear that has been engendered by this policy.

Here is a delicious conversation in the Job Centre. This is a doctor phoning up the Job Centre.

“I’m a doctor and I don’t think Miss X is well enough to come to your appointment”.

“It’s a term of her benefits that she has to come”.

“I know but I don’t think she is well enough, can you rearrange it?”

“So she came to your appointment?”

“Yes but ….”

“Then she can come to ours”.

“But she is not well and I am her doctor”.

“And she wants benefits? So she has to come here”.

“So you are saying that she has to either jeopardise her health by coming to your meeting or not receive any money?”

“If you are trying to make me feel guilty, you are speaking to the wrong person”.

True story.

**Food Banks**

Okay, so what do they do? They know when they are cutting benefits they are driving people to food banks. They know they are driving them to starvation. The Trussel Trust, one organisation of food banks, just one, last year handed out 1,182,954 emergency parcels. Over 400,000 of these were to children. In 2009/2010 there were just 40,000. That is a huge increase. It matches the people sanctioned and the delayed benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit. Big subject, not time to go into.

Now the ministers who are doing this know this. They know they are imposing hunger on people. If they don‘t know it, they are too incompetent to be in their job. If they do know it, they are too morally corrupt to be in their job. And you have to ask them, “What crime have people committed for which hunger is the punishment?” Not even people listening in prisons maybe face hunger, but when you are five minutes late for a Job Centre appointment, and have no savings, hunger is your punishment.

And people have choices to make, they have to choose – a support worker told me the other day - they choose between rent or food or electricity and gas. So here is a question for us all, which would we cut? Rent, food, or electricity and gas, because you have got to cut one. Steal something from a supermarket and you will be in court.

Here is a quotation. I will tell you who it is from when I have read it. This is what the man said. He said, “Hunger will tame the fiercest animals. It will teach decency and civility, obedience and subjugation. It is only hunger that can spur and goad the poor on to labour”.

No, it wasn’t Iain Duncan Smith! It actually was an 18th century vicar. So that view of the ruling class, that people will only work when they are driven to it through hunger or desperation has a long history, and the present incumbents are just carrying on the tradition of their aristocratic forefathers.

So we have a split country. We have the very rich and we have read of the tax havens in the Paradise Papers - their great wealth, running corporations bigger than nation states, and the Tories serve them by producing a vulnerable workforce that can be turned on and off like a tap. They say “make work pay”. No, what they mean is “make poverty unendurable”. Make poverty unendurable and then people will be forced to work, however exploited they are. And poverty becomes the fault of the poor, and if you are unemployed, it’s your fault you haven’t got a job.

And yet we know that if everybody filled their forms with every dot and comma correct, every appointment met to the second, there would still be the same number of unemployed. There would still be the same number of cheap agency jobs. There would still be the same number of zero hours contracts. It wouldn’t create one job and they know it. And that is why it is so wicked.

A divided society, super rich versus people who are exploited, struggling, angry and alienated, and we have to ask why and this is why I want to get to the important bit, finally. There is a conflict at the heart of our society that is irrevocable. It will never resolve itself unless we change it, and the conflict is this. It is the conflict of interests between employers and those who own and control capital and benefit from it, and the interests of those who do the work which is most people.

And the interests of the employers are these: it is: maximise their profit. I believe it is actually a legal requirement to maximise profit. So what do they need for that? They need cheap labour, they need cheap raw materials, they need market share, weak trade unions. But primarily they need cheap labour that they have no obligations to.

The interests of workers are the opposite: a secure job, secure wages, health, housing and education, pensions, a social wage.

Those interests are in conflict. They have to be in conflict. Employers have to reduce the cost of labour because of their need to be competitive, they don’t have a choice. Workers have to fight for security of work and security of income. How can they survive else? This is a fundamental conflict and, until we acknowledge that, this struggle will continue.

And going back to 1945 this was the problem because they had great ideals, great aims, but to quote the Bard from the Scottish play, they had “scotch’d the snake, not killed it”. And if there is one lesson that we have to learn from the mess of the divided angry world we live in, to me that is the lesson. Now what do we do?

And finally, in the last couple of minutes, Jon, I am going to break the rules if I can, if I haven’t already, because, you know, when you get old – you said I am old and I am, too old - when you get old, you lose patience. When you get old, there isn’t time to generalise and say, “Well, you know, if we didn’t do it this year, we’ll do it next”. You have to come clean and just say “Look, what do we do?” Well, I will tell you what I think we should do.

I think we have a great opportunity, the first time in my political life we have had this opportunity. Due to the arrogance of the Labour right wing MPs, they allowed a left winger to stand. They thought ‘nobody will vote for him, nobody will vote for him, he’s a funny old bugger, he won’t have a chance really, nobody will vote for him’. But of course, they did vote for Jeremy Corbyn in their thousands, overwhelmingly, and he is now the leader with John McDonnell, and they stand for social justice.

They will change the priorities. They believe in common ownership. They will challenge big business, not be big business’s pal like Tony Blair and do everything they ask. They will change it. It is not a question of fan worship, but we have comrades and they are good comrades, and I trust them and I think they would change things. They would reassert human values, they will build houses through local authorities, they will keep the private companies out of the NHS.

They will have a foreign policy based on international law. That would be a change, wouldn’t it? Foreign policy based on international law - and the Geneva Convention, that would be a change. They will create jobs, proper jobs, and re-establish trade union rights. They will take back ownership of our transport and key industries. And these policies are popular. They took on the press, the establishment, the BBC and every interviewer (bar present company!), and these policies are popular and we can get there. But there will be huge dangers.

If they are elected, the opposition from international capital will be remorseless, from the World Bank, from all those who defend the interests of corporate power, including the EU leadership, and the USA. Think what they did to Allende, think what they did to Cuba, think what they did to Nicaragua. The moment a government acts in the interest of its people as opposed to big business, then they are under threat. Now the threat might not be assassination but there might be other things, there might be other destabilising things.

We need a party in power that is united behind that agenda, behind that manifesto. And look at what we actually have? We have MPs who would stab Jeremy Corbyn in the back. We have got MPs, Labour MPs, who say they won’t serve. We have got Labour MPs who pass motions of no confidence, and now we have got MPs who are just keeping quiet.

Keeping quiet won’t be good enough to put a great manifesto – it needs to be better but it has great possibilities - into effect. Being quiet won’t be good enough. We need to have a party in Parliament that actually believes in it, and then we can make these changes. We need new MPs and we need to transform the party.

I have to come clean. I left Labour in the Nineties when Blair was in his pomp. I withstood Kinnock and Hattersley’s watching the miners failing to defend their communities and keep their jobs. Kinnock and Hattersley turned their backs disgracefully, and then kicked the left out of the party. But now I think there is hope and there is optimism, and 600,000 people agree. Labour is the biggest party in Western Europe.

Now I know this is contentious, I know we are meant to speak in generalisations, but it is too desperate. People are suffering, people in prison are suffering, even in danger. And we have an obligation, we have an absolute obligation, to fight for human values, the poorest people, the people in prison, the young people and so on.

And I want to end on this. Frank Longford would have joined the party, and I don’t know if it was on his membership card, but he would have signed up to this, and it is worth fighting for. I have my old Labour party card that has these words on: we will “secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible from the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service”.

That is worth fighting for.

Thanks.