

Dear comrades and friends, fellow members of our socialist family.

Thank you for welcoming me to London, and for inviting me to speak here this morning. And thank you [Jeremy] for that warm introduction.

It is always a pleasure to come to London.

And we are gathered to debate the defining political issue of the day, probably one of the most important issues in British political history — the future of your relationship with the European Union and the world, and how Labour can help to shape that.

This is a huge challenge for all of us, and I look forward to the debates.

But first I want to bring you a message from your neighbours – the leaders of progressive socialist parties around Europe.

In fact, we are more than just neighbours. As I said, we are family — a political family of socialists and democrats across Europe.

And I think the difference between neighbours and families is really important.

Good neighbours are polite and keep out of each other's way. But good families are open and honest. They talk openly about their shared perspectives, and they tell the truth to each other.

So this is the message I want to bring to you from the other members of our family – a message about truth.

The British political debate has had a strange relationship with the truth lately. I think most people in this room will agree with that.

And the debate about Europe is a classic example, of course.

That famous red bus, the three hundred and fifty million pounds a week for the NHS... these were so brazen that they have already become the textbook example of political lies.

We all remember the speed with which Leave campaigners abandoned that particular lie the morning after the vote – once they had already done their job, and fooled enough people into voting against Europe.

But there are other big lies that have not been so dramatically exposed. I want to mention just two.

First: British people were told that a vote to leave the EU did not mean a vote to leave the single market.

This line was repeated again and again by Leave campaigners before the vote. They said, and I quote, "Nobody, absolutely nobody, is talking about leaving the single market".

The suggestion was clear: somehow, Britain can walk out of the European Union without losing any of its huge economic benefits.

Of course this is nonsense. We always knew it was. And today, the anti-Europeans have changed their tune. They now say that Britain must leave the single market, and they claim that the vote gives them the right to do that. Here, they are rewriting history, to pretend they never lied.

Make no mistake about it. The British people were conned. They were sold "Brexit at no cost": the softest of soft Brexits. But what they have ended up with is "Brexit at any cost": the hardest of hard Brexits!

The second lie is about migration. There can be no doubt that British people are concerned about migration. But the lie they were told was this: that leaving the EU would address their concerns.

People's concerns about migration were deflected onto EU free movement. People were told that the reason the UK could not control its borders was because of EU rules.

In fact, the vast majority of migrants in the UK are from outside Europe. Leaving EU will make no difference at all to this.

So it was a very clever move by a campaign that was desperate to win. It covered up the Conservatives' failure to meet their own migration targets, and it turned people against the European Union. But make no mistake about it, it was a lie.

So here is my message about truth and lies. It's clear that British people were lied to. They were cheated. It is already clear, and it becomes clearer every week.

We remember, and we appreciate, that Labour campaigned for a Remain vote. Thank you. We are grateful for that, and we will not forget it.

But we hope that you do not forget it either. Because it is very clear to us, your neighbours and your family, that Britain desperately needs Labour's calm and sane voice right now.

Trust me – the Conservatives are heading for complete disaster in negotiations with the other 27 EU governments. I know this, because I speak to other European leaders all the time.

Theresa May thinks she can walk into the restaurant, order everything on the menu and make the EU pay. This is a delusion.

Her approach to negotiating is reminiscent of the old strategy: 'divide and rule'. But this is guaranteed to fail. The days of the British Empire are long gone.

**Britain needs Labour to stand up and tell the truth about the government's disastrous approach.**

48 per cent of the country voted to stay in the European Union. Those voters were not taken in by the lies on the NHS, on trade, on migration.

**Those people need Labour to stand up for them against the anti-European right.**

Two thirds of Labour's own supporters voted Remain. They know that the European Union is one of the world's most successful forces for peace, prosperity and social progress – and they do not want to walk away from it.

**So Labour's own voters need their party to stand up for them and expose the lies of the Leave campaign.**

Britain desperately needs an honest voice to hold the liars to account, to be the guardian of the 48%, and to be the advocate of the people who were lied to.

As the Brexit negotiations get underway, we are hoping that this can be you.

## Conclusion

To finish – I have already said that we are family. This means that, as we all know, “we have far more in common than that which divides us”.

Please remember this fact.

In the weeks and months and probably years to come, when the Brexit negotiations get underway, you’ll hear a lot of talk of ‘us and them’. Not just from the right-wing, anti-European media, but from the Conservative government too — as unhelpful as that will surely be.

I know you’re used to it, because it’s been that way in Britain for years. It is always Britain versus Europe, Westminster versus Brussels... ‘us versus them’.

But in the days to come, whenever you hear that kind of talk, I want you also to remember this.

We know that the bonds that unite the European Union are strong. But the family ties among socialists and democrats are strong too.

The next few years will be tough. But when all is said and done, the UK’s relationship with Europe and the world will once again settle down. And when that happens, our shared political battles will continue — for fairness, equality and justice — the principles that Labour has always stood for.

We are socialists; this means we are all part of something bigger.

Even after Brexit, family is still family. We will continue to work with you.

I wish you the best of luck for today’s conference and for the challenges ahead.