

Leadership of the Labour Party, 2010

As a member of the Labour Party, I was faced with a decision as to who to vote for in the recent election for a new leader. (September 2010) Yes, I did vote and I am happy to tell you who I voted for and why.

I believe that the Leader of a major political party should be very articulate, have a good public image, and be willing to listen to voters and party members. Leadership is not about presenting and dominating policy issues, but lies in the desire to promote within the party and in the country a debate on issues which leads to policies which truly reflect the values of the members and ordinary members of the public. Involvement in politics is not just about voting every few years. It is about being part of the process which leads up to policies being formulated. Therefore, I was not simply ticking boxes about policies put forward by the candidates, but looking deeper in my own very personal way.

Diane Abbott



I didn't vote for her despite the fact that she is the candidate with the most left-wing credentials and nominations. My reasons are that whenever I have heard Diane Abbott speaking, she has been barely articulate, unable to string a few words together to make a sentence. I have also concerns about how much time she has spent on television cosying up to former Tory Party leadership candidate Michael Portillo. And, she asked Joanathan Aitken to be the godfather of her son whom she sends to a private school. How left wing is that? Mr Aitken was a Conservative Government Minister who was jailed for perjury in 1999. In my opinion, this does not show a great sense of judgement on the part of Diane Abbott. In addition, she only got onto the ballot because the real left-wing candidate, John McDonnell MP for Hayes and Harlington, stood down in her favour. Even then, she was short of the minimum number of MP nominations, and who came in to rescue her? David Miliband himself! No vote.

Ed Balls

His time as Secretary of State in charge of Education was a huge disappointment. The end product was a piece of industrial action on the behalf of Head Teachers and Teachers on the eve of the General Election of 6th May. He showed no ability to manage the situation better. He should have abolished SATs and Ofsted, and concentrated on listening to professionals, but went ahead like a bull-at-a-gate on initiative after initiative, heedless of the groans from schools throughout the country. Unfortunately, It was a case of Ed (what a load of old) Balls MP. No vote.



Andy Burnham



A candidate worthy of consideration. He is a man-of-the-people candidate, with a regional accent from Lancashire. He is a refreshingly newer face, although with experience in Government without being too tainted by the Blair excesses. Not ready yet for Prime Minister? Who ever is? Andy Burnham represents substantial change which is what the Labour Party needs.

I decided to give Andy Burnham my 2nd preference vote.

David Miliband



The Bookie's favourite, but has too much gloss from Tony Blair about his public image for my liking. He presents himself with a presidential stature, but we are not electing someone to be the President, just Prime Minister. He looks like a professional politician, not a person who has entered politics as a result of life experiences. He represents a continuity with Blair and New Labour, and I don't want to see that.

I liked a phrase in Andy Burnham's election address – "Not Old Labour. Not New Labour. Just true Labour."

I can only imagine David Miliband making policies up at the breakfast table and producing new policies without reference to the Cabinet, the Annual Party Conference or grass roots members. No vote.

Ed Miliband

The younger of the Miliband brothers, Ed seems to represent the best hope of moving the Labour Party onwards, away from New Labour and rebuilding a party with mass membership and real internal democracy and in touch with real people and real life, not just the "Westminster bubble". He is from a talented family who sent him to Haverstock Comprehensive school, and he went on to Oxford and the LSE. The Milibands were Polish Jewish immigrants, seeking refuge from Nazi death camps during the Second World War. It is a sign of the success and strength of our country that both David and Ed should now be in a position to campaign for the Labour leadership and eventually become Prime Minister, and I think they will both have more than a little sensitivity to the issues raised by immigration to our country. I liked these words from his statement: "we must rediscover our sense of moral purpose. The Labour party is most effective when we understand that we are a movement dedicated to transforming our country. We should be proud of our values of equality, opportunity and responsibility and we should fight for them." I gave Ed Miliband my first preference.



The election is on an "exhaustive ballot" procedure which means that if one candidate gains more than 50% of the first preference votes, they will be regarded as elected. If none have 50%+ after the first count, the last candidate will drop out and their other preference votes allocated to the other candidates and a recount taken, until at last one of them has the 50% required. That is why it is important not to use all your 5 preferences unless you are happy with all 5 candidates. I only voted Ed Miliband 1st and Andy Burnham 2nd.

