

30 days
of Labour chaos

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1 January

Labour MP Ian Lavery said Ed Miliband's inner circle haven't 'been anywhere or done anything'

He said 'we've got an elite in Westminster which quite frankly frightens me. They haven't been anywhere or done anything, and when you've got an accent like mine they think well that man doesn't really know too much' (*Telegraph, 1 January 2015*)

3 January

Ed Miliband was urged to stay out of Scotland by his own party's advisers

It was reported that Labour advisers were urging Ed Miliband to stay out of Scotland during the general election campaign. One senior figure said 'Jim [Murphy] has effectively told Ed to keep away' (*The Sun, 3 January 2015*).

5 January

First Labour were revealed to have a £21 billion black hole in their spending plans

On his campaign launch day, Ed Miliband came under pressure to clarify his spending plans after the Chancellor published a dossier that showed a £21 billion black hole in Labour promises (*London Evening Standard, 5 January 2015*).

Then they released a rebuttal document littered with errors

Their own rebuttal document tied them to paying for £891 million of unfunded spending commitments from unspecified cuts in departmental budgets.

- **16** official HM Treasury costings have been ignored and contradicted – as have the independent OBR and HMRC.
- **12** policies have been dropped altogether.
- **7** policies have hastily been changed.
- **3** have been delayed or brought forward to avoid spending and claim additional revenue.

And it was littered with errors – from not knowing who sits on their own frontbench team to confusing billions with millions.

6 January

A number of colleagues of Ed Miliband opened up about the Labour leader to the Financial Times

A shadow cabinet member said 'I'm not sure he spends a lot of time with people like me asking us what we think' (*FT, 6 January 2015*).

One senior Labour MP was baffled by the difficulty of securing an appointment with the leader: 'What does he do all day?' (*FT, 6 January 2015*).

7 January

Angela Merkel visits London but decides not to meet Ed Miliband

'The Foreign Office said that Mrs Merkel did not request to see Mr Miliband during her six hour visit to Britain' (*Telegraph, 7 January 2015*).

8 January

Labour Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson said Ed Miliband is out of touch

The Labour Mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, said Ed Miliband was trapped in the Westminster 'bubble'. He said 'Ed Miliband probably spends a lot of time preparing for Prime Minister's Question Time and I'd rather him [...] come out and talk to people...My advice to Ed Miliband is to get out of that bubble down there and get amongst the people – whether it's in middle England or in the working class areas of the north or down south, get out, talk to people' (*Guardian, 8 January 2015*).

9 January

A Shadow Cabinet member said Ed Miliband homes tax would cost them votes in London

The Sun reported that some London Labour MPs were concerned that Ed Miliband's homes tax would cost them votes. One shadow cabinet member said 'The mansion tax plays well in Scotland, but it's going to kill us in London. We've got some very difficult marginals where it's going to be a real problem' (*Sun, 9 January 2015*).

And Alan Johnson said that Ed Miliband isn't holding the government to account

Alan Johnson said Ed Miliband wasn't effectively challenging the Government's economic policy. He said 'If I feel frustrated about anything it is about not holding George Osborne to account...It needs a couple of big speeches from Ed - Ed Miliband not Ed Balls - in the run-up, just taking the whole thing apart' (*GQ, January 2015*).

11 January

Ed Miliband was under fire for telling BBC executives that he would 'weaponise' the NHS

In an interview on the Andrew Marr Show, Ed Miliband refused seven times to admit he said Labour must 'weaponise' the NHS (*The Andrew Marr Show, 11 January 2015*).

And for once writing an article that rejected tax cuts as a matter of principle

The Sunday Telegraph uncovered a little-seen article by Ed Miliband from 2007 in which he rejects tax cuts as a matter of principle. Miliband wrote 'today an explicit agenda around tax cuts...seems as out of the mainstream as nationalisation, penal tax rates and withdrawal from the EU did in 1997' (*Sunday Telegraph, 11 January 2015*).

13 January

Lord Prescott warned Labour would lose the election if Ed Miliband was pitched into a presidential contest with David Cameron

He said Labour 'could be in better shape and I think it's working to it. It's seen that they've got to get over to people and convince them'. He added 'don't run Ed as a president - you won't win' (*Daily Mail, 13 January 2015*).

A CLP chairman defected to the Conservatives

Former Ilford North CLP chairman Sanjib Bhattacharjee announced he would support the Conservatives in this year's election. He said 'the Labour Party is constantly failing to address main concerns of our people who really work hard and have worked to live in a peaceful neighbourhood'. He added David Cameron was the 'strongest and the best leader' to represent the country (*Ilford Recorder, 13 January 2015*).

The IFS said Labour's plans could add £170 billion to the national debt

The Institute for Fiscal Studies said the path set out by Ed Miliband risks adding £170 billion to the national debt by 2030, leaving little room for the government to offer emergency help if there is another crisis (*Times, 13 January 2015*).

Labour were mocked for saying that increased gun licence charges would help cut the deficit

'On the BBC's Daily Politics show, Andrew Neil asked Mr Leslie which of Labour's planned tax increases would be used to cut the deficit. After listing the Mansion Tax and restoring the 50p income tax rate, the Labour MP said: "We've talked about gun licence changes. We've talked about all sorts"' (*The Sun, 13 January 2015*).

14 January

Labour u-turned on their flagship energy price freeze policy

It was reported Labour were preparing to U-turn on their energy price freeze promise as household bills started to fall. A senior Labour source said 'the freeze was announced at a time when energy prices were rising. Obviously, if bills are coming down there will have to be a bit of rebranding to make it a price cap instead' (*The Sun, 14 January 2015*).

16 January

Ed Miliband was caught out saying one thing and doing another on registering non-voters

In a speech Ed Miliband promised to reverse falling electoral registration (*Mirror, 16 January 2015*).

But, the Daily Mail reported on a Labour electoral handbook advising its activists to avoid households where 'no-one has ever voted, no-one has a postal vote, no-one has turned 18 since 2010 and no-one has moved in since 2010' (*Daily Mail, 16 January 2015*).

Then the Fabian Society, of all people, said that Labour were too anti-business

The Fabian Society hit out at Labour, saying the party is not trusted by business. In a surprise attack from the left wing institution, a report said 'simply put, business doesn't trust Labour'. It said Labour should 'make it clear that it will take business to heart, not keep it at arms length'. Author Ed Wallis said businesses were 'worried by the rhetoric over markets...if Labour is going to make the changes it wants to as the next government, it needs a new partnership with business' (*Guardian, 16 January 2015*).

Andy Burnham disowned his own alcohol policy

The Times reported 'division and disorder' in Labour ranks as Andy Burnham disowned leaked proposals to ban alcohol brands from sponsoring high-profile sporting events. The newspaper said it was also 'understood that Mr Burnham and Labour's health team were pushing to introduce a levy on pubs, enforce a minimum price on alcohol and restrict the visibility of alcohol at supermarkets', but that those proposals had been blocked by other shadow cabinet members. Burnham said 'there are no plans to change existing arrangements or to introduce any form of ban' (*Times, 16 January 2015*).

17 January

Ed Miliband was forced to deny claims made by a veteran party member that activists had been instructed not to speak about the economy

Hampstead Labour member Cecil Jenkins said 'We have been told by London region not to talk too much about the economy because it is not one of our strengths. Can this conceivably be true?' (*Telegraph, 17 January 2015*).

18 January

Labour's War on Sugar backfired as it emerged fifty of their MPs had claimed for sweets and soft drinks on expenses

'But that hasn't stopped a total of 51 Labour MPs claiming for kilos of sugar and litres of sugary soft drinks on expenses. That includes sweet-toothed Chuka Umunna, Tristram Hunt and Stella Creasy. And who is chief among those charging the taxpayer for his sugar hit? Andy Burnham, who stuck a bag of sugar on his expenses tab' (*Sun on Sunday, 18 January 2015*).

Former mayor of Doncaster Martin Winter said Ed Miliband and Ed Balls wanted to hold an early general election in 2007 because they knew the economy was about to 'fall off a cliff'

Winter claimed Miliband told him 'Ed Balls was desperate for us to go now ... The simple fact is the economy is going to fall off a cliff and this was our best chance of winning. The economy is going to get a hell of a lot worse over the next two or three years and we'll get the blame for it; so it was either going now and risk losing or wait and know that we're going to lose' (*Mail on Sunday, 18 January 2015*).

19 January

Lord Mandelson said Labour's homes tax was 'crude' and 'short-termist'

He said 'we don't have an efficient system of taxing property in Britain. I don't happen to think that the 'mansion Tax' is the right policy response to that. I think it is crude, it is short-termist... [changing council tax banding] will be more effective and efficient in the longer-term than simply clobbering people with a rather crude short-term mansion tax' (*Newsnight, 19 January 2015*).

20 January

Diane Abbott said Labour's homes tax sums didn't add up

She said 'The revenues from mansion taxes won't begin to pay for all those nurses' (*BBC News, 20 January 2015, 11.43*).

And Ed Balls admitted that they wouldn't announce the full details until after the election

In response to Lord Mandelson's criticism of the policy, Ed Balls said the Homes Tax would be banded. Asked whether he would provide further details, Balls said 'Of course not, I will announce in our first budget the details...I've already set out far more detail than opposition parties normally do on a tax like this' (*The World at One, BBC Radio 4, 20 January 2015*).

21 January

Labour spelt the name of their website incorrectly in a Party Political Broadcast

Labour released a video emphasising importance of the NHS in this year's election. Unfortunately the video directed viewers to a non-existent website, leading some to accuse Labour of not even knowing their own web address (*Labourlist, 21 January 2015*).

22 January

Ed Miliband was mocked for making a campaign stop at a museum about the Titanic

(*The Sun, 23 January 2015*).

24 January

Labour forced to sideline Ed Balls

A senior Labour source told the Sun Ed Balls was being intentionally sidelined in the general election campaign. A Labour source called Balls a 'Marmite politician', adding 'Ed Balls and Ed Miliband don't get on at all. That hasn't improved in the last few months. Balls doesn't do any of the big set piece media appearances like Question Time anymore. Some people like him but others really don't. The Tories want to attack him and he has a fairly marginal seat to defend so it makes sense for us to keep him out of the spotlight' (*Sun, 24 January 2015*).

Labour peer Lord Winston compared Labour's homes tax to the policies of Soviet Russia

He said 'If I had the same identical house on the outskirts of Birmingham, it would be half that amount and I would never pay this kind of tax. That doesn't seem right to me. If you've lived in a house for 30 or 40 years I'm not sure government should be forcing you to move out. That then becomes something that last really happened in the Soviet Union after the revolution' (*Daily Mail, 24 January 2015*).

25 January

Labour accused of planning to cut the NHS

Andy Burnham was accused of 'rank hypocrisy' after the Sun uncovered comments he made in 2013 that hospital beds could be cut under Labour's plans. In an interview with the Fabian Review magazine in 2013, Burnham said 'Partly what I'd cut to pay for my policy are hospital beds...some social care could be met for free from a much more preventative, home-based system'. When pressed that the logical knock-effect would be fewer hospitals, he replied 'We're definitely saying that none of this is sacrosanct. We're not going to be on every picket line opposing every closure' (*Press Association, 25 January 2015*).

26 January

15 backbench MPs call on Labour to be more like Syriza

15 Labour MPs called for an anti-austerity uprising in Britain inspired by the victory of the left-wing Syriza Party in Greece (*Daily Mail, 26 January 2015*).

In a public statement that morning, 15 Labour MPs expressed concern about areas of Labour policy and urged the party to commit to billions of pounds worth of unfunded borrowing (*Labourlist, 26 January 2015*).

27 January

Ex-Labour Minister attacks Miliband's campaign

Alan Milburn accused Labour of running a 'pale imitation' of Neil Kinnock's campaign and criticised Labour's plans for the NHS as 'a fatal mistake' (*BBC World At One, 27 January 2015*).

28 January

Labour try and secure support from Sinn Fein

It was reported that Labour are secretly talking to Sinn Fein about a possible coalition after the next election (*The Sun, 28th January 2015*).

29 January

Ed Miliband refuses to rule out SNP coalition

'Ed Miliband declined to rule out a post-election deal with the SNP on a campaign visit to Scotland...when pressed on the issue again Mr Miliband said: "...we are not planning for that"' (*Scotsman, 29 January 2015*).
