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WEEKS OF WEAKNESS



Ed Miliband's 52 weeks of weakness

Weakness is the key characteristic that has defined Ed Miliband's first 52 weeks as Labour leader. From his inability to stand up to his union paymasters to his failure to come up with a credible plan to deal with the mess Labour made, it's clear Ed Miliband can't provide the strong leadership Britain needs. His message to the British people is 'vote for us – we'd do it all over again'.

- **He was too weak to challenge his party's dependence on cash from his trade union paymasters.** Despite being ridiculed when it emerged that Alastair Campbell was his Party's biggest donor, Ed Miliband was too weak to cut Labour's dependence on the unions – they now provide 85 per cent of Labour's cash, more than even under Gordon Brown.
- **He was too weak to keep his promise to curb trade union power over Labour leadership contests.** Miliband's office briefed heavily that he was going to stop unions dictating who became leader of the Labour Party. But Miliband was too weak to beat the unions, leading influential Labour website LabourList to conclude: 'Ed "diluting" the union link? No, not really'.
- **He was too weak to keep his promise to curb trade union power over his party's conference.** Miliband's office also briefed that they would cut the size of the unions' vote at conference to 33 per cent from 50 per cent. But it emerged just this week that he had failed to do even that – new documents show that the unions will still have half the votes at conference.
- **He was too weak to enforce his choice of General Secretary – with the unions getting their man instead.** Ed Miliband wanted to appoint a safe pair of hands to be General Secretary of the Labour Party. But he was too weak to counter a trade union campaign to give the role to the GMB's political officer, leading to another embarrassing defeat for Miliband.
- **He was too weak to condemn the unions' proposed strike action in November.** After being heckled at the TUC last week, Ed Miliband caved in to the unions, and failed to condemn their proposed strikes on 30 November.
- **He was too weak to apologise for the mess Labour created with its spending, debt and failure to regulate the banks.** Despite leaving the country spending £120 million a day on debt interest, and having failed to regulate the banks, Ed Miliband has followed Ed Balls's example and has still not had the strength to apologise for what Labour did to Britain.
- **He was too weak to deliver a credible plan for dealing with this mess – his only suggestion was Labour's Plan B for bankruptcy, higher taxes and an economy in disarray.** When he was running for leader, Ed Miliband promised to undertake a shadow spending review, setting out what he would cut and where. But when he got elected, he was too weak to go through with this, and, along with Ed Balls, has set about opposing nearly every one of the Government's deficit reduction measures while proposing tens of billions of new spending.

Ed Miliband: a year of weakness

- 1. Ed Miliband was too weak to make his party less reliant on union funding – Labour is now even more reliant on the unions now than under Gordon Brown** In the three full quarters since Ed Miliband became Labour leader, Labour received a total of £8,650,330.10 in donations. £7,389,702.49, or 85 per cent of these, came from trade unions (Calculations from *Electoral Commission*). Even under Gordon Brown Labour were only reliant on the trade unions for 56 per cent of their donations. From Q3 2007 to Q2 2010 Labour received a total £60,319,074.77 in donations, of which £33,767,569.18, only 56 per cent, came from trade unions (ibid.). This is despite the fact that at one point this year their biggest private donor was former Labour spin doctor Alastair Campbell.
- 2. Ed Miliband was too weak to curb union power over Labour leadership contests.** Labour had briefed out that Ed Miliband planned to curb union power over Labour contests: ‘He wants to...reduce union influence in future leadership elections’ (*Evening Standard*, 3 August 2011). However, as key Labour grassroots website LabourList pointed out, the compromise reached to curb union power over the leadership election – allowing ‘supporters’ to vote in the union section of the Electoral College – would have no effect: ‘The number of “registered supporters” that Labour would need to sign up to have any significant impact on the affiliates section would be hundreds of thousands - as Jim Pickard at the FT has rightly noted. Pickard has also been hearing the same from inside the leadership as I have on potential numbers of “registered supporters” - that is that it will be tens, not hundreds of thousands, at least initially...Ed “diluting” the union link? No, not really’ (*LabourList*, 20 September 2011).
- 3. Ed Miliband was too weak to curb union influence at conference.** Ed Miliband’s office had briefed that he was going to reduce the trade union vote at conference to 33 per cent, instead of the current 50 per cent: ‘Britain’s most powerful union barons are to be stripped of their stranglehold over the Labour Party. In a move designed to shake off his ‘Red Ed’ tag, Ed Miliband will stop them dictating Labour policies – and the leadership...The main alteration would see unions lose their 50 per cent of voting rights at the Party’s annual conference. It could fall to as low as 33 per cent, with extra votes given to ordinary Labour supporters’ (*Daily Mail*, 24 July 2011). However, after a union campaign against the changes, *Refounding Labour* documents confirmed that they would retain 50 per cent of the votes at conference (*LabourList*, 20 September 2010).
- 4. Ed Miliband was too weak to enforce his choice of General Secretary.** According to Labour insiders, Ed Miliband wanted to appoint Chris Lennie, head of Labour’s fundraising, to the General Secretary post: ‘Ed’s team have moved heavily behind Chris,’ said the source. ‘The only serious opposition was McNicol, which is why he won’t be included on the shortlist’ (*New Statesman*, 27 June 2011). However, union man Iain McNicol, the GMB’s political officer, was included on the shortlist and was appointed by the NEC, after heavy lobbying by the unions (*Tribune*, 8 July 2011).
- 5. Ed Miliband too weak to condemn union strike day in November.** After he was heckled at the TUC last week, Ed Miliband caved into union pressure and failed to condemn the 30 November strikes planned by his paymasters: ‘I’ve got to make a judgement about whether industrial action is justified or whether it’s unjustified. [Is it justified to take action on 30 November?] We’re not at 30 November. I’ll make a judgement about that if we get to that’ (*New Statesman*, 21 September 2011).

6. **Ed Miliband was too weak to apologise for racking up a record deficit.** Ed Miliband has yet to accept that Labour spent too much, or apologise for his role in generating a record budget deficit.
7. **Ed Miliband was too weak to set out Labour's alternative to the spending review as he promised.** During the Labour leadership contest, Ed Miliband promised that he would set out an alternative to the spending review if elected leader: 'I think whoever is the Labour leader will, by the time of the spending review, have to show that they have an alternative plan... I would make sure that we did that as the leader' (Ed Miliband, *Left Foot Forward*, 8 July 2010). He did not publish any such alternative plan.
8. **Ed Miliband forced to appoint Ed Balls Shadow Chancellor, the second time around.** Ed Miliband did not initially choose Ed Balls as Shadow Chancellor, but after Alan Johnson's resignation in January 2011, he had no choice but to appoint Ed Balls to the post (*BBC News*, 20 January 2011).
9. **Ed Miliband too weak to say what areas Labour would cut.** Ed Miliband has only set out three cuts that he supports, which would only add up to savings of £3.87 billion. This contrasts to the need to set out £44 billion of spending cuts to meet the Darling plan (Ed Miliband, *TUC speech*, 13 September 2011; HMT, *June Budget 2010*, Table 1.1, p. 15, footnote 2).
10. **Ed Miliband forced to admit his party's current policy was a blank page.** Ed Miliband said: 'In terms of policy, but not in terms of values, we start with a blank page' (*The Guardian*, 22 November 2010).
11. **Ed Miliband let Ed Balls announce an unfunded £12 billion VAT cut.** On 16 June 2011, Ed Ball called for a cut in VAT to 17.5 per cent. This would cost £12.1 billion in 2011-12, rising to £13.5 billion in 2014-15 (HM Treasury, *Budget*, June 2010, p. 40).
12. **Ed Miliband was forced to put up with a Shadow Cabinet where only 8 of its elected members had supported him over his brother.** When Labour's Shadow Cabinet were elected by the PLP after Miliband became leader, it emerged that only eight of them had supported him over his elder brother (*Labour Leadership Results 2010; Shadow Cabinet Results 2010*).
13. **Ed Miliband was too weak to make his shadow cabinet stop making unfunded spending commitments.** Despite circulating strict controls to the Shadow Cabinet on spending commitments (The Waugh Room, *Politics Home*, 16 February 2011), they have continued to make significant commitments. For example, Ed Balls unfunded VAT cut, which would cost £12.1 billion this year (HM Treasury, *Budget*, June 2010, p. 40).
14. **Ed Miliband failed on tax avoidance, by allowing Labour MPs to vote against measures combating 'disguised remuneration.'** Fourteen Labour MPs, including shadow Treasury ministers David Hanson and Kerry McCarthy, have voted against clause 26 and schedule 2 of the Finance Bill, which contains measures to help stop disguised remuneration (*Hansard*, Public Bill Committee, 19 May 2011).

15. **Ed Miliband allowed Labour to vote against the Welfare Reform Bill.** Labour MPs, including Ed Miliband, voted against the Third Reading of the Welfare Reform Bill (*Hansard*, 15 June 2011, col. 888).
16. **Ed Miliband failed to support measures which pay for the cut in fuel duty.** Labour have opposed the changes to the supplementary charge on oil companies which is being used to pay for the cut in fuel duty (Ed Balls, *Sky News*, Murnaghan, 23 March 2011).
17. **Ed Miliband was revealed to be part of a circle of Labour advisers who plotted to replace Tony Blair with Gordon Brown because they feared their mentor would not win in an open leadership contest.** Leaked documents published by *The Telegraph* exposed the key role played by Ed Balls and Ed Miliband in a 'brutal plot' to destroy Tony Blair and get their mentor, Gordon Brown, into Number 10, without facing an open election. Codenamed Project Volvo, they began scheming within weeks of the 2005 general election, at the same time as London was under terrorist attack (*The Telegraph*, 10 June 2011). Both Ed Balls and Miliband had previously denied that they had ever been involved in attempts to undermine colleagues.
18. **Ed Miliband accused by Mandelson of being timid and cosying up to the trade unions.** 'We need to take a few risks; talk more directly to the country; be more innovative and courageous. At the moment to some in the country we appear almost too tactical, we appear too afraid that what we say might suddenly trigger some disagreement in our party. A leader has got to speak in national terms, he's got to speak in a way that reflects the national interest not sectional interests, not party interests, not simply trade union interests. We have to start to look like a party drawn from every region and every social background, and not just ex-political assistants, researchers and trade union apparatchiks' (*Daily Mail*, 21 June 2011).
19. **Ed Miliband warned by Tony Blair that Labour can only win from the centre.** 'I am happy to give him my full support. I always will do for the leader of the Labour party, and I think he should be given a chance to set out his agenda. But in my view Labour will win if it fights from the centre' (*The Sun*, 15 June 2011).
20. **Ed Miliband's Labour described by his Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary as a party which overspent without delivering value for money.** Ivan Lewis told the Blairite think tank: 'Today, they see Labour as the party of the North, standing up for the poor, benefit claimants, immigrants and minority groups. A party which overspent without delivering sufficient value for money. A party which talks a lot about rights but not enough about responsibility. It is important we understand the depth of people's feelings and frustrations if we are to have any chance of reconnecting so they start listening to us again' (*Speech to Progress*, 11 May 2011).
21. **Ed Miliband failed to convince the public that he could be Prime Minister.** According to a Populus poll for *The Times* almost two thirds of the public (63 per cent) say that they find it hard to imagine the Labour leader running the country. 49 per cent of Labour supporters saying that they find it difficult to see him in Downing Street; 22 per cent 'strongly' hold this view. This outweighs the 47 per cent of Labour supporters who believe that Mr Miliband will one day hold power (*The Times*, 14 September 2011).

- 22. Ed Miliband seen by voters as weak, out of his depth, and smug.** The top three words chosen to describe Ed Miliband in a Times/Populus poll were ‘weak’, ‘out of his depth’, and ‘smug’ (*UK Polling Report*, 10 May 2011).
- 23. Ed Miliband failed to get his party’s support for the AV referendum.** He said: ‘It’s a once in a generation chance for people to change our politics in this country’ (BBC R4, *Today*, 4 May 2011). However, more than half of Labour MPs and more than 80 per cent of declared Labour councillors supported No to AV. Ed Miliband failed to stamp his authority on his own party, let alone persuade the country as a whole.
- 24. Ed Miliband failed in the local elections.** Labour failed to take key councils he needed to win to win the next election, and he lost the popular vote – against all expectations. One former minister said of the results: ‘Crap, crap, crap, crap, crap, crap.’ Another said they were ‘****ing awful’ (*FT Westminster Blog*, 12 May 2011).
- 25. Ed Miliband failed to win back Scotland – which he thought would launch Labour’s fightback.** Ed Miliband’s speech to Scottish Conference last October boasted that: ‘Based on our values - an optimistic future for Scotland. Labour’s fight back has begun. We are ready for the fight. Let’s fight for the people we came into politics to serve. Let’s stand up for Scotland. Let’s fight to win’ (Ed Miliband, *Speech to Scottish Conference*, 29 October 2010). This was clearly spun to indicate that revival in Scotland was the start of the fightback, with the BBC running the headline: ‘Ed Miliband says Labour’s fightback starts in Scotland’ (*BBC News Online*, 29 October 2010). However, at the election, Labour crumbled, giving the SNP a landslide victory and the first ever majority in the Scottish Parliament.
- 26. Ed Miliband compared anti-cuts protests to civil rights movements and quoted Martin Luther King as protestors occupied shops.** Speaking at the TUC rally on March 26, he said: ‘We come in the tradition of movements that have marched in peaceful but powerful protest for justice, fairness and political change. The suffragettes, who fought for votes for women and won. The civil rights movement in America that fought against racism and won. The anti apartheid movement that fought the horror of that system and won. Fifty years ago, Martin Luther King said: “The arc of the moral universe is long and it bends towards justice.” But only if people bend it that way. Our cause may be different, but we come together today to realise our voice, and we stand on their shoulders’ (*Speech to TUC Rally*, 26 March 2011). As Ed Miliband spoke, protestors invaded Fortnum and Masons and caused vast damage to some of central London’s busiest areas.
- 27. Ed Miliband was too weak to support the Government’s council tax freeze.** Labour opposed a freeze in council tax. Hard-working families and pensioners living in an average Band D home in England are saving up to £72 a year over the next four years under the Government’s one-year freeze. Ed Miliband dismissed it, saying: ‘a small amount of money on the council tax is not actually going to make a huge amount of difference’ (Ed Miliband, *BBC Today Programme*, 31 March 2011). Chris Williamson, Labour’s Shadow Local Government Minister, attacked it as ‘nothing more than a gimmick’ (*Hansard*, 17 January 2011, col.531).

- 28. Ed Miliband was too weak to rule out council tax hikes under Labour:** Ed Miliband has also suggested there should be no controls on councils hiking council taxes - saying 'this is something we are looking at' (*Daily Telegraph*, 1 April 2011).
- 29. Ed Miliband forced to raid councillor allowances to subsidise his party.** Following a collapse in private donations under Ed Miliband, Labour are planning a massive raid on councillor allowances, according to the *Refounding Labour* proposals. Labour are calling for a national levy of 2 per cent paid to the national Labour Party, and then a 5 per cent levy to the local Labour group, as taxpayers face the prospect of their money being siphoned off to bankroll party activity. This is a desperate attempt by Miliband to shore up the Party finances at the expense of hard-working taxpayers who would ultimately be forced to foot the bill.
- 30. Ed Miliband failed to support increases in NHS funding, and would cut it instead.** Ed Miliband wrote Labour's 2010 Manifesto which committed to cutting the NHS. He has since confirmed that – unlike the Coalition – he would cut NHS budget (Ed Miliband, *Labour Party Press Conference reported on Politics.co.uk*, 13 April 2011). This is a continuation of the position Labour set out in their final budget which put forward a package that would cut capital spending by 50 per cent and only protect 95 per cent of the NHS budget (HMT, *PBR 2009*, p. 97).
- 31. Ed Miliband was too weak to support plans to modernise the NHS and scrap two layers of NHS bureaucracy.** These plans, voted against by Labour, would cut administration costs by £4.5 billion over four years, all of which would be reinvested into frontline patient care (*Hansard*, Column 497, 7 September 2011).
- 32. Ed Miliband was too weak to set out a vision for the NHS.** Not one of Labour's policy groups, including the one led by Miliband's Shadow Health Secretary John Healey, cover the future of our health system (*Guardian*, 22 June 2011). The recently published *Purple Book*, for which Ed Miliband wrote a preface, similarly neglected to mention the NHS in its 300 pages of policy recommendations (Philpot, *Purple Book: A progressive future for Labour*, September 2011).
- 33. Ed Miliband was too weak to back a referendum lock on the transfers of power to Brussels.** The Government's 'referendum lock' on the transfer of further powers to the EU received its second reading in the House of Commons on 7 December 2010. Yvette Cooper put forward and Labour voted on a motion stating 'this House declines to give a second reading to the European Union Bill' (*Hansard*, 7 December 2010, col. 206). Labour then went on to vote for a number of amendments designed to obviate the 'referendum lock' in both the House of Commons and Lords (*Hansard*, 8 March 2011 Col. 888).
- 34. Ed Miliband was too weak to say how he would deal with the £38 billion black hole in the defence budget.** Labour left the MoD with a £38 billion black hole in its budget (Based on *NAO Ministry of Defence Major Projects Report 2010*, 15 October 2010). Despite this financial mess and their Defence Spokesman Jim Murphy saying 'we'll now come up with a list of cuts that we support' (*Progress Online*, 27 January 2011) Labour has opposed nearly all changes designed to put the defence budget back on a sustainable footing.

- 35. Ed Miliband was too weak to support reforms to Feed-in Tariffs, which will save energy consumers £3.5 billion on their bills over the next decade.** Ed Miliband and the Shadow Energy Secretary Meg Hillier have sponsored a Commons motion proposing that the Government's changes to FITs 'be not approved' (House of Commons, *Early day motion 2016*). PQs show that energy consumers would have to contribute a total of £6.8 billion to Feed-in Tariffs between now and 2020 if the scheme was left unchanged. With the changes announced by the Coalition, consumers will only pay £3.3 billion – a difference of £3.5 billion (*Hansard*, 11 July 2011, Col. 153W).
- 36. Ed Miliband was too weak to produce 'detailed plans' for a graduate tax.** Ed Miliband said in June last year: 'A graduate tax would replace upfront tuition fees... I want to consult widely before publishing detailed plans later this year' (Ed Miliband, *Open Left Q&A*, 29 June 2010). But by the end of last year, he had failed to produce any detailed proposals for a graduate tax.
- 37. Ed Miliband was too weak to stick by his tuition fees policy.** By May this year, Miliband had backtracked on his support for a graduate tax, stating: 'At this stage, I can't make a promise on tuition fees' (*Labour Party Press Release*, 23 May 2011). At the time of writing, Ed Miliband still hasn't produced any detailed plans on university funding.
- 38. Ed Miliband was too weak to support the English Baccalaureate which is designed to reverse the catastrophic decline in numbers taking academic subjects when Labour were in power.** In 1997, 49.9 per cent of students sat GCSEs in the core academic subjects which now make up the English Baccalaureate: English, maths, two sciences, a humanity and a language. This figure more than halved by 2010, with only 22.0 per cent of pupils sitting these subjects. The number of pupils entering this academic core at GCSE fell by 152,000, from 293,000 in 1997 to 141,000 in 2010 (*Hansard*, 18 July 2011, Col. 550W). But Ed Miliband has allowed his Shadow Education Secretary to attack 'the backward-looking English Baccalaureate' as an 'engine for polarisation' (*The Times*, 10 June 2011).
- 39. Ed Miliband was too weak to support the Government's expansion of the Academies programme even though Tony Blair has backed it as an extension of his own policy.** Ed Miliband has attacked the Government for 'attempting to cut local government out of education' (Ed Miliband, *Speech to the Local Government Association*, 30 June 2011). But speaking to *The Times*, Tony Blair said: 'There are elements of the reform programme that we were doing in government that the present Conservative government are continuing, in other areas they're not. So it would be bizarre if I were to say, you know I don't agree with them doing the Academy programme — why would I want to say that?' (*The Times*, 9 June 2011).
- 40. Ed Miliband was too weak to support the Education Bill, which gives more power to teachers.** The Education Bill gives teachers significant new disciplinary powers, protects teachers from false allegations, scraps bureaucracy, and gives 130,000 2 year-olds 15 hours a week of free early years education and childcare (DfE, *Education Bill*). But Ed Miliband ordered his MPs to vote against the Education Bill at second reading (*Hansard*, 8 February 2011, Col. 263).
- 41. Ed Miliband's key adviser admitted Labour lied on immigration...** Lord Glasman, who was ennobled by Ed Miliband, and described as his 'de facto Chief of Staff',

admitted that Labour lied on immigration, saying: ‘Labour lied to people about the extent of immigration ... and there’s been a massive rupture of trust’ (*New Statesman*, 26 January 2011; *The Times*, 15 April 2011).

42. **...But Ed Miliband was too weak to accept Labour had let immigration run out of control.** When asked: ‘do you believe too many people were allowed to come into this country and therefore change the nature of British society?’ he replied: ‘I wouldn’t put it that way no’ (*BBC Radio 4 Today*, 4 May 2011).
43. **Ed Miliband called the big society a ‘blancmange’ but his brother said Labour should back it.** Ed Miliband: ‘One of the problems engaging with this ‘big society’ idea is that it is such a blancmange. It’s taken to mean anything and everything’ (*The Guardian*, 22 November 2010). David Miliband ‘We shouldn’t be afraid of the Big Society; we should claim it for our own and show how we can build it better’ (*The Times*, 8 March 2011).
44. **Ed Miliband complained about local cuts to spending on voluntary groups but then told a journalist he couldn’t protect spending on voluntary groups.** He said ‘nor can this Conservative-led government build a Big Society while simultaneously undermining its foundations with billions of pounds worth of cuts to the voluntary sector’ (Ed Miliband, *Independent on Sunday*, 13 February 2011). But then came clean to Laura Kuenssberg who said: ‘Miliband tells me scale of cuts is undermining big society but admits he wouldn’t make councils protect cash for voluntary groups either’ (Laura Kuenssberg, *BBCLauraK Twitter*, 14 February 2011).
45. **Ed Miliband was too weak to support Government reforms to cut the cost of politics and give everyone’s vote a more equal weight.** Ed Miliband: ‘we have serious concerns about the government’s decision to change the boundaries, which we believe was an act of gerrymandering by the Conservative party’ (Labour Press Release, 13 September 2011).
46. **Ed Miliband failed to improve Labour’s poll rating in the year since his election.** Before his election in September 2010 Labour were at 36 per cent in the polls (Ipsos Mori, 16 September 2010). A year later their poll rating had increased by just 1 per cent to 37 per cent (Ipsos Mori, 14 September 2011).
47. **Ed Miliband unknown to the man on the street.** On a recent public walkabout to reassure local shopkeepers affected by the London riots, Ed Miliband visited a cafe during his media tour. The rolling video cameras picked up the embarrassing moment when the shop owner who received the Labour leader had to ask his name, utterly unaware of who had entered the premises. The humiliating incident which highlights Miliband’s lack of impact took place 11 months into his leadership (*Sky News*, 15 August 2011).
48. **Ed Miliband still confused with his brother by the public – nine months in to his leadership.** ‘One in four people thinks Ed Miliband is his elder brother David. A similar proportion of voters believe that David is actually Ed. Nine months into his leadership of the Labour Party, the findings of the ComRes survey for *The Independent* do not paint a flattering picture for Ed Miliband, as he steps up his efforts to convince the people that he is a prime minister-in-waiting.’ (*The Independent*, 30 June 2011).

- 49. Ed Miliband embarrassed by biography which exposed his closeness to Gordon Brown.** A recent biography of the Labour leader revealed the closeness of the relationship he had with Gordon Brown and the extent of the rupture with his brother. It reports that he told David that standing against Gordon Brown would be like ‘killing our father.’ Furthermore, it was revealed that Ed helped author the killer line ‘I’m all in favour of apprenticeships but this is no time for a novice’ – designed to undermine his brother’s leadership bid – in Brown’s 2008 conference speech. On top of this, the book revealed that the Labour leader can be cripplingly indecisive, even over trivial subjects. A university friend was reported as saying: ‘I do remember him agonising over which chocolate bars to buy from the machine in the common room’ (M. Hasan and J. Macintyre, *Ed: The making of a Labour leader*, 2011).
- 50. Ed Miliband humiliated on Twitter.** ‘Ed Miliband suffered yet more embarrassment last night as his attempt at an internet question and answer session descended into abuse and mockery. The Labour leader was subjected to a string of cruel taunts and toe-curling jibes during a “webchat” on the Twitter social networking website. Tweeters goaded him about the betrayal of his elder brother David in Labour’s leadership contest, plots against Tony Blair and his Left-wing background. One even asked: “If you fell through a crack in the universe would anyone notice?”...Commenting on how the foray into cyberspace had backfired, another wrote: “Have you sacked the **** who had this idea yet?”’ (*The Express*, 16 July 2011).
- 51. Ed Miliband threatened with withdrawal of financial support by his union paymasters.** Len McClusky, the General Secretary of Unite, Labour’s biggest donor, has publicly announced that there will be no blank cheques for Ed Miliband: ‘I’ve got no intentions of bailing out the Labour party with money, until such times that they start to represent the views of ordinary working people and until such times they take on board the whole question of trade union rights and give us an even playing field’ (*BBC R5 Live*, 2 February 2011).
- 52. Ed Miliband is too weak to prevent his brother from becoming a distraction if he attended his leadership speech.** David Miliband will speak at a Movement For Change meeting at Labour Conference but will leave Liverpool before his brother addresses the party. Writing on his blog, David Miliband said: ‘I am not doing other events at conference. As I said after the last conference, and have repeated throughout the year, Ed is the leader and he needs an open field in which to lead the party as he sees fit. I don’t want to be a distraction, so I am not going to be a talking head on TV, or a media focus for soap opera. It’s Ed’s show’ (*Daily Mail*, 23 September 2011).