ANDREW MARR:
Good morning to you, Len McCluskey.

LEN McCLUSKEY:
Good morning, Andrew.

ANDREW MARR:
Can I ask, you’ve written a letter to the Prime Minister, this trade union bill is at the heart of a lot of your concerns, offering a kind of compromise deal with him. What does it say?

LEN McCLUSKEY:
Well, it’s a solution to one of the major problems that the Prime Minister has raised. He's indicated that he's concerned about the turnout in industrial action ballots and so are we, and so what I've said to the Prime Minister, why don’t you meet us in order to talk about new methods, modern methods, of balloting, digital online, but most importantly, secure secret workplace ballots. If he was prepared to do that, then Unite, for its part, wouldn’t have any difficulty agreeing thresholds and indeed time limits for ballots, so it’s a way of him extracting...
ANDREW MARR:
So to be clear...

LEN McCLUSKEY:
... a very contentious...

ANDREW MARR:
If he have you that aspect of modernisation, you would not oppose the 50% rule for, you have to hit 50% of all ballots before there's a strike?

LEN McCLUSKEY:
Yes, thresholds...

ANDREW MARR:
And thresholds of 40% on essential services, you'd go for that as well?

LEN McCLUSKEY:
Thresholds wouldn't be an issue if he'd allow us workplace balloting, secure workplace balloting, which we already have, so this divisive element that no other worker in the whole of Britain, of course in the whole of Europe, has to abide by would be removed, and there's also an issue I'd like the Prime Minister to consider, he ran part of his election on English votes for English laws, there's a likelihood here that it'll be English workers that are attacked by this trade union bill, the Scottish Parliament have said they're going to reject it, so have the Welsh Assembly, and so have Stormont, so it's English workers, not only the worst protected in Europe, but the worst protected in the British Isles, that cannot be correct, you're going to meet the Prime Minister later, please put it to him.

ANDREW MARR:
Have you ever spoken to him.?

LEN McCLUSKEY:
Strangely, no, I mean, I know it is...
ANDREW MARR:
It is odd. OK.

LEN McCluskey:
It is odd, because in the rest of Europe leaders would engage with trade union leaders all the time.

ANDREW MARR:
Now, this legislation also has other things that you disapprove of, arm bands have to be worn by official trade union officials during strikes and so forth, and there has to be a two-week notice period before people put stuff up on Facebook and other social media. Now, the truth of the matter is the Tories have won a majority, and this legislation is therefore likely to go through. in the past, you’ve said that you would go beyond the law in opposing that. What does that actually mean?

LEN McCluskey:
It actually means that there are occasions, and our history is littered with it, when bad laws are introduced, even by elected governments, then people have not only a right to oppose them, but a duty to stand up and defy them, that's why we've said repeatedly...

ANDREW MARR:
When you say "beyond the law, " what are you actually talking about?

LEN McCluskey:
It means that we will defend our members, this trade union bill, which is..

ANDREW MARR:
But how, I'm sorry, I'm...

LEN McCluskey:
This trade union bill, which is deeply, deeply divisive, and there's all kinds of individuals, Police Federation, the HR professionals, government's own regulatory body have said that it's not fit for purpose, there comes a time when you have to stand shoulder to shoulder with your membership, and if this law pushes our members outside of the law, what we in Unite will do
is we won't abandon our members, if that pushes us outside of the law, then it will the Prime Minister's responsibility for the outcomes of that.

**ANDREW MARR:**
OK. Now, there's going to be a huge demonstration today, you hope, it's going to be a bit shouty, I'm sure. Jeremy Corbyn has called for a kinder, gentler form of politics, are your members out there going to be respectful, are they going to be non-personal, or are they going to be aggressive and shouty?

**LEN McCluskey:**
Well, I think all of us are going to be on a new path, Jeremy's speech last week at the Labour Party conference was inspirational, John McDonnell's speech was historical, challenging neoliberalism and austerity for the first time, so all of us are on a learning path at the moment.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Does that mean you're going to tone down some of your own rhetoric about the Conservatives?

**LEN McCluskey:**
It may well do, I think the point that Jeremy's saying...

**ANDREW MARR:**
My god.

**LEN McCluskey:**
I think the point that Jeremy's saying, it's going to be difficult for me, the point that Jeremy's saying is let's engage properly in the debates that ordinary working are interested in - decent jobs, abolition of zero hours, decent housing, good education for their children - they're the things that people want to hear about.

**ANDREW MARR:**
I must ask you about one area where people want to hear about, where you disagree, I think, with your leader, which is Trident, because a lot of your members work around that industry
and so forth, and you are determined that the Labour Party should maintain a Trident nuclear deterrent.

LEN McCluskey:
Well, the truth of the matter is that this issue will be resolved next year anyway, I would appeal to my colleagues on the Labour front bench, stop slipping in to the trap presented by the media who are looking for division, next year there's going to be a main gate provision placed before Parliament by the Conservative Party. I mean, Jeremy may give Labour MPs the opportunity of a free vote, many of them will vote against Trident, many of them will vote for it, but it will go through, our position is to defend jobs and to defend communities above all else, and it's regrettable that consecutive governments have never seriously looked at credible alternatives.

Andrew Marr:
Nonetheless, if Trident goes through, and that must be the expectation, again because the numbers in the House of Commons, we now have a Labour leader who says that he will not under any circumstances press the button. Doesn’t it make an absolute nonsense of having a nuclear deterrent, costs all this money, huge amounts of money, but we're never ever going to use it if Labour get in again?

LEN McCluskey:
Well, there's...

Andrew Marr:
It's a bit weird, isn't it?

LEN McCluskey:
Well, the truth of the matter is, if we ever got into a situation, does anybody really believe that we're going to get into a world situation where pushing the button on nuclear, a nuclear holocaust is real? This is all hypothetical stuff. And I don't know how independent our nuclear deterrent is, it's the Americans who will tell us whether we push buttons or not, so I think it's an issue that is being created by the media, and I would urge my colleagues and the Labour front benches, don’t fall for it, stick to what people are interested in, which is their jobs and their security and the future for their kids.
ANDREW MARR:

Len McCluskey, I'm sure we'll talk about much more of these issues with the Prime Minister shortly, but for now thank you very much indeed.