

News

For the millions, not the millionaires!

Newsletter of Oxford SOCIALIST ALLIANCE
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www.oxfordsocialists.org.uk



Asylum: Labour courts racist vote

IN OPPOSITION, Labour opposed the Tories' racist anti-migrant legislation. But immediately after the 1997 election, Labour ministers stepped up deportations.

Home Office minister Barbara Roche recently boasted that Labour now deports more people than any British government in history.

Worse, Labour's Asylum and Immigration Act 1999 removed remaining welfare benefits from asylum applicants. And, despite the opposition of every agency concerned with the welfare of refugees, the government introduced the dispersal of asylum seekers and the hated vouchers – worth only 70% of British benefit levels – for all asylum seekers.

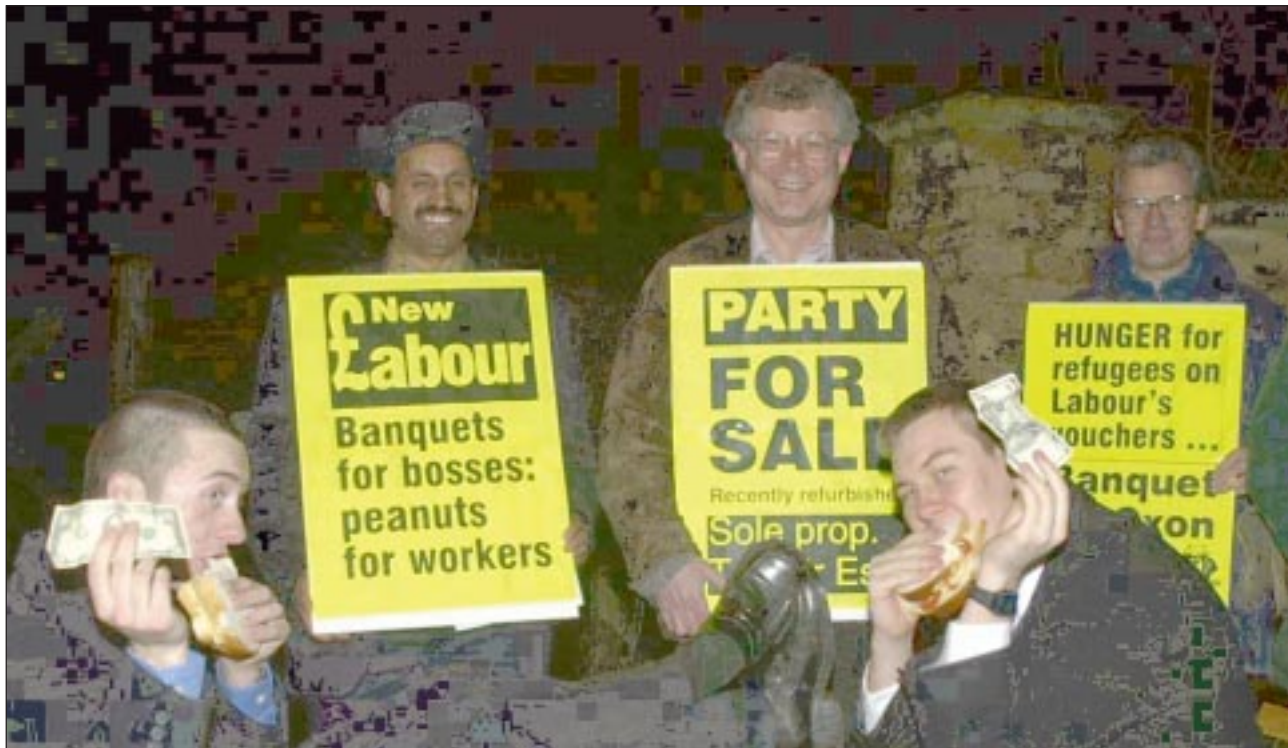
The result has cost more than benefits, and caused untold suffering to people who have often gone through traumatic events already, forced them into penury and begging, and incited racism in the population, causing physical attacks on asylum seekers. Even police chiefs now warn that the anti-refugee frenzy could trigger more violence.

Labour in government has joined rather than fighting the attack on asylum seekers orchestrated by the Tories and the tabloid press. It is still building detention camps for totally innocent people: the best-known is the notorious Campsfield detention camp, near Oxford.

John Lister, Socialist Alliance candidate for Oxford East, said: "It is disgusting that Labour is cynically attempting to attract racist votes by deporting and detaining ever more asylum seekers. Even the government's own figures show that refugees put much more into the economy and cultural life than they take out.

"New Labour supports the free movement of capital. The Socialist Alliance stands for the basic principle of the free movement of **human beings**.

"We say **open** the borders, **close** Campsfield, and **abolish** all immigration laws."



There was no such thing as a free lunch for Alliance activists outside the Labour beano: it was strictly a "cash for sandwiches" affair – alfresco!

Stop Labour's Tory policies!

The Socialist Alliance is a major new factor in British politics. For the first time in England we have a united campaign for a genuine socialist alternative.

The Alliance aims to unite and to mobilise the widest-ever range of working class and political opposition to the policies of a Labour government which has cruelly betrayed the hopes of so many who supported it in 1997.

Almost four years of Blair government have seen New Labour drawing even further away from the needs and concerns of its working class and trade union electoral base than any previous Labour government.

Instead Blair's team has shamelessly promoted the notion of "partnership" with big business, while continuing the Thatcherite policies of privatisation, deregulation and squeezing public services, which voters

thought they were bringing to an end in 1997.

The gap between rich and poor has widened; privatisation has continued; profits are soaring; pensioners have been ripped off, students robbed, asylum seekers victimised, and health workers, teachers and other public sector staff underpaid and exploited – all because New Labour is opposed to taxing big business and the rich, and prefers to hob-nob with billionaires than working people.

By standing candidates under the common Socialist Alliance banner in 92 English constituencies in the coming general election we are mounting the biggest left wing electoral challenge to Labour in modern times.

We are offering new hope to those working people who have been let down, ignored and attacked by Tony Blair's New Labour. Our campaign points to the need for a new

Socialists will contest Oxford East

JOHN LISTER, 51, a journalist who lives in Greater Leys will be the Socialist Alliance candidate for Oxford East at the coming election. John has worked 17 years as press officer for a campaign to defend the NHS, and has lived in Oxford for over 30 years.



type of government, one that acts in the interests of workers, not the bosses, and builds a partnership with labour, not capital.

We will be fighting to win the support and involvement of women, pensioners and older people, young people, people with disabilities, people from England's many

ethnic minorities, and people from the lesbian and gay communities.

People who want no change can vote Labour again.

But this time there is a choice: those who want something better can support our campaign, and vote for the Socialist Alliance!

Oxford East Labour Party's "cash for canapés" scandal exposed

SOCIALIST ALLIANCE members were not the only ones left off the guest list for a fund-raising bash organised by Oxford East Labour Party on March 8.

The invitations for the £65-a-plate dinner at the Four Pillars Hotel in Sandford were restricted to chief executives from Oxfordshire businesses.

In addition to their meat and two veg, the banquetting bosses were promised a chance to meet with Oxford East MP Andrew Smith Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and e-commerce minister Patricia Hewitt.

Undeterred, the Socialist Alliance decided to picket Labour's bosses' bash, sporting placards with slogans such as: "You get a fatter cat with New Labour plc", and "New Labour: a Party for Oxford bosses".

Alliance candidate John Lister said: "This attempt by the Labour Party to raise funds from Oxford businesses shows just how far the Party has broken from its traditional base in the working class and trade union movement.

"£65 for a meal may be peanuts for local employers seeking to ingratiate themselves with a minister or two, but it's the equivalent of half a week's pay for someone on Labour's minimum wage.

"How many of Andrew Smith's hard-working supporters on Blackbird Leys or Barton could afford to stump up that kind of cash to meet their local MP?"

Doubts over clinical services

Private hands off our NHS!

Hundreds of nurses, doctors and other NHS professionals in Oxford could see their jobs privatised if the Department of Health pursues its latest line of policy.

Health Secretary Alan Milburn recently announced that a new £25m cancer centre will be built at the Churchill using private funding under the controversial Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The government also proposes to fund the long-awaited £70m relocation of the Radcliffe Infirmary through PFI.

Until now, most PFI schemes have involved the transfer of hospital support staff (domestics, catering, laundry, portering and security) to new private contractors. But Labour ministers have always insisted that clinical staff – those providing front-line treatment and nursing care – would be excluded from PFI.

Directly employed

As recently as January Oxford East MP Andrew Smith wrote to anti-PFI campaigners insisting that “all the clinical staff – doctors, nurses, therapists and others – will continue to be employed directly by the trust”.

But is this assurance worth the paper it is written on? The *Health Service Journal*, the main magazine for NHS managers, has just been told by the Department of Health that there is “not necessarily any presumption against” the inclusion of clinical services in PFI contracts.

The implications for large

numbers of NHS staff could be serious, including the loss of valuable NHS pension rights, and other enhanced terms and conditions compared with the profit-seeking private sector.

Socialist Alliance candidate John Lister said:

“We are opposed to PFI and privatisation, both of which offer a rotten deal for patients and staff.”

“The problem is that we are facing a Labour government that makes no secret of its view that the private sector is somehow better than the public sector, and which has just signed a deal to hand over more NHS patients for treatment in private hospitals.”

“It’s bad enough that banks, developers, service providers and construction firms can make huge profits from building PFI hospitals, which they lease to the NHS.”

“But many would think it obscene that the skills of NHS nurses and professionals should be exploited for private profit. Oxford’s hospitals already find it hard enough to recruit and retain nursing and other clinical staff: privatisation would make that task even more difficult, creating even more pressures on staff and patients.”

“I have written to Andrew Smith to demand his explicit assurance that no such privatisation will occur.”



United against social service cuts 1999. Why do Oxford's council services get clobbered every year?

City Council goes for cuts and privatisation

Oxford Socialist Alliance has joined the fight against cuts by the City Council which will axe 30 jobs, mainly in leisure services, and remove facilities from the Council’s two union convenors.

Cuts totalling £3.7m agreed by the City Council’s ruling Liberal Democrat and Green councillors are simply the latest in a long succession of cuts in jobs and services by the County and City councils.

It now seems that the leisure services including the Ice Rink, will also face privatisation.

John Lister for the Alliance said: “Much of the blame must rest with the Labour government in Westminster, which is continuing the vicious squeeze on council spending that began under Thatcher, and has taken an annual toll of vital services at County and now City council

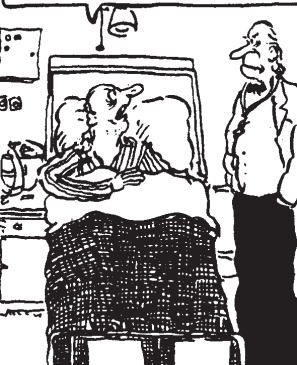
level ever since. They should tax business and the rich.”

Martin Gregory, secretary of Oxford City UNISON, and one of the convenors hit by the cuts, said:

“Oxford is one of the more prosperous areas of the fourth richest country in the world: it is outrageous that hard-working, low-paid council workers are seeing their jobs axed to balance the books of the City Council.”

Why trade union members should vote Socialist Alliance

HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING FOR SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES, DOCTOR?



Millions of trade union members will vote Labour in the next general election as a “lesser evil” to keep the Tories out – even though the Labour Party has shown no inclination to support them.

In government, despite its massive 180 majority in the Commons, New Labour has quite deliberately left intact most of the anti-union legislation brought in by the Thatcher government – laws which stack the odds heavily against trade unionists and in favour of bad

employers.

New Labour since 1997 has consistently denounced every strike, wherever and whenever it has been called. For example there was not a word in support of the Oxford postal workers from local Labour MP – and cabinet minister – Andrew Smith during their recent dispute.

This is not about to change in a second term: Tony Blair and his ministers openly boast that Britain still has the most repressive labour laws in the EU, and denounce France and other EU countries for not cracking down on their trade unions.

In contrast, the Socialist Alliance stands firmly on the side of ordinary working people and their right to organise and fight back when required against bully-boy employers, and for improved pay and conditions.

Our first press release gave full support to the striking postal workers, and this support will extend to any section of workers who take action to defend themselves, their living standards, and public services.

Alliance candidate John Lister said: “We understand those who want to keep the Tories out. We don’t want them back in, either. But the polls show they cannot win the next election – or Oxford East.”

“But Labour has continued with Tory policies. We oppose Tory policies wherever they come from, and fight for the repeal of all anti-union laws. We hope that trade union members will decide to support us – and vote for principles to be proud of at the next election.”

Bring back British Rail?

People have been queuing up at Socialist Alliance stalls in Oxford to sign our petition for the renationalisation of the railways.

Among the many other converts to renationalisation has been Simon Jenkins, editor of the *London Evening Standard*. But his article on March 8, rejecting the horrors and economic nonsense of privatisation, fell into the trap of nostalgia for the old system.

We should remember that British Rail was far from perfect.

The Socialist Alliance would like to see railways and the London Tube firmly in the hands of the public.

John Lister said: “If public transport was run by a democratically elected governing body which included passengers and workers – people like you and me – we’d get a system everyone wanted; safe, clean, comfortable, affordable and efficient.”

“We don’t want to see it back in the hands of state-appointed bureaucrats; we would like to see it run by the people who have the greatest stake in it being run well.”



Is the Post Office being softened up for a sell-off?

The hugely expensive and nonsensical change of name from the Post Office to “Consignia” is supposed to herald a new era of entrepreneurial spirit and commercial freedom.

But there are real grounds to fear that New Labour – more wedded to the privatised model than even the Thatcher government – would like to see that change extended to more systematic privatisation.

Perhaps the bully-boy tactics of Royal Mail management that have provoked strikes in Oxford and elsewhere are also designed to wear down trade union resistance and ease the path to a massive sell-off?

Privatisation threat to Oxon elderly care

SEVEN residential homes for the elderly in Oxfordshire face closure and a further dozen will be privatised as the County Council wrestles with government cash limits.

The massive changes will cut almost two thirds of the county’s residential places, and transfer 780 care staff from council contracts to the employment of a private “non-profit” Trust, with no long-term guarantee they will retain their current pay and conditions.

The seven homes that face closure are deemed too expensive to refurbish to meet new standards set out by the government – which the council claims could cost £20m.

Coincidentally many of them are on prime sites – such as Iffley House – and the pro-

ceeds from the land sales will be asset-stripped by the council to help finance their scheme, which they claim would switch the emphasis from residential to more intensive nursing home care.

All nursing homes are privately run, and New Labour has continued the Tory policy of progressively closing NHS provision for the elderly and forcing frail older people to seek care in the private sector, funded by Social Services and means-tested charges.

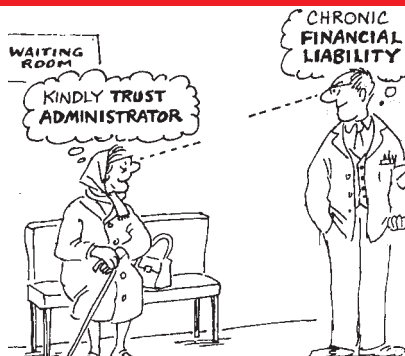
Since 1997 over 50 beds have closed in Oxfordshire’s Community Hospitals – a move which has in turn repeatedly led to crisis conditions as the John Radcliffe Hospital runs out of beds for emergencies.

The plans to axe residential

care and privatise another major service have been hotly contested by the Homes for Older People Action Group. Sylvia Barker, whose mother is a resident at Iffley House, one threatened with closure, said:

“People are shell-shocked and bewildered. When you are 94 like my mother you don’t want to be moved out of your home into the unknown. The feelings of residents, relatives and their carers must be respected as a priority.”

Anne Marie Sweeney says: “Reports show that the so-called ‘not for profit trusts’ aim to reduce running costs within three years – that means they will try to push down the terms and condi-



tions of their staff. Existing staff will become demoralised and leave – to be replaced by temporary staff, school-leavers and part-timers. That is no way to give quality care.”

The Socialist Alliance demands a halt to this privatisation, and for a new policy on care of the elderly with an injection of new cash for high quality NHS-run nursing homes to be established alongside a mix of residential and sheltered accommodation to be provided by Social Services.

● Homes for Older People Action Group 01491 628739

Our twelve point Action Plan

All Socialist Alliance candidates pledge that if elected they will take no more than a workers' wage, and to fight for a programme including the following policies:

- Stop privatisation in all its forms and bring the rail back into public ownership
- For the right to work – 35 hour week now!
- Ensure a fully funded NHS, and an end to privatisation and cuts
- Raise pensions and restore the link to earnings
- Oppose the sell off of council homes and end homelessness
- Defend comprehensive education
- Raise the minimum wage to the EU decency threshold of £7 an hour, and restore union rights for all
- Save the planet: tough action on pollution and food safety
- End discrimination on the basis of racism, sexism and homophobia and defend asylum seekers
- End student tuition fees and provide high quality education for all
- Tax the rich to rebuild the welfare state
- Stop the onslaught on civil rights
- Cancel Third World debt.



FAMOUS LAST WORDS? Angry air traffic controllers remind Oxford East MP Andrew Smith of his memorable attack on the privatisation of Air Traffic Control in 1996. As Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Smith has not only done a U-turn on this one key public service, but is now a key player in the New Labour privatisation programme, which also involves the London Tube.

Socialist Alliance: a new factor in British politics

The Socialist Alliance is:

- An **internationalist** organisation, which seeks to build links and solidarity with all those resisting inequality and injustice across the world.
- A **democratic** organisation, which is proud of its effort to unite socialists from many different traditions while allowing free debate and

discussion within its ranks.

The Alliance is controlled from the bottom upwards through its local groups and grassroots members, rather than from the top down like an elite hierarchy – or Tony Blair's Millbank-run Labour Party.

- A **progressive** organisation, which fights against

racism, bigotry, sectarianism and homophobia.

- A **campaigning** organisation, which fights for immediate reforms and improvements in the lives of ordinary people, even while arguing the need for more radical, socialist policies.

- A **socialist** organisation, which rejects the notion that

capitalism is permanent or invincible.

Our aim is not to humanise or improve capitalism, but to replace it with a new economic and social system.

We see the fight for socialism in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland as a step towards a socialist Europe and a socialist world, in which those who create the wealth in society collectively own and control that wealth to plan production to meet need instead of profit.

- An **environmentally conscious** party, which fights as part of its platform for an end to the destruction of our natural environment and the squandering of the earth's vital resources by global corporations in the interests of the wealthy elite.

Blair has already made it clear that New Labour will continue – and go further – with their current policies if they win the next election.

The Socialist Alliance opposes the pro-business policies and the neo-liberal consensus which now prevails across the major parties.

Blair means business!

THERE ARE SOME who believe that standing against Labour in this election is an over-reaction. The government elected in 1997 may have been a disappointment, some argue, but it is better than the Tories. It is still somehow "our" government.

Anyone still holding that point of view should take note of what Labour's own leaders say about themselves.

Gordon Brown has said openly that the only sections of the public sector that would not be subject to privatisation would be the NHS and the police. As we can see the NHS itself is far from safe.

And Tony Blair himself has spelled out an exceedingly right-wing agenda for New Labour's second term in an interview with a US business journal. Speaking to *Forbes* magazine early in March 2001, he said:

"Over the coming few years, corporation tax revenues as a percentage of national income will fall..."

"Our priorities for next term are to carry on stimulating enterprise, through reforms in the taxation system, amongst others in relation to capital gains tax and corporation tax."

"I have made it quite clear that we will retain a flexible labour market here.... My ambition is for Britain to be the best place for business in the world and in Europe in particular.

"I think for Europe and for Britain it is important we use this time to push forward measures of liberalisation within Europe, and we have played a part of reorienting the whole of the economic agenda around economic reform in Europe. ... At an international level we push ahead on the WTO..."

Schools

Among his goals: "Creating the right enterprise culture in Britain, which we still haven't driven all the way down in our country."

For the teachers, a warning: "I want to see far more emphasis on entrepreneurship



Blair: getting tough – on workers and the unemployed

in schools, far closer links between universities and business, I want to see us develop a far greater entrepreneurial culture. We have only just gone beneath the surface of this so far."

"When I came to office one in five non-pensioner households had no one working in them, right? We've reduced enormously the number of benefit claimants. We've introduced tough measures on welfare reform. You know, you lose your benefit if you're not taking the training and job opportunities.

"So there is a whole series of measures we're putting through, and it's vital we'll carry that on.

"There's performance-related pay for teachers. There's the whole reorganisation of our health system going on, there is a big agenda there for a second term."

Labour flogs off council housing

In the last year new Labour sold off 140,000 council homes – more than the Tories achieved in their last 10 years in office. Now Labour are implementing plans which would in effect end the provision of social housing.

With a massive £20 billion required to clear the backlog of repair work on existing council homes, the government is now bribing councils, with a budget of £12 billion to write off capital debts if they agree to transfer homes.

And it is promoting the establishment of "arm's-length" housing companies, under which estates would continue to be owned by local authorities but managed by housing associations.

Rents would inevitably rise but because councils would nominally continue to own the houses, tenants would not even get a vote on this type of sell-off.

The Socialist Alliance says the sell off of council properties must end, and there should be a massive injection of money into council estates to allow repairs to take place.

There should also be an end to all restrictions on councils spending money on either repairs or building new homes.

We want the restoration of housing benefit rights to every-

one and end to capping.

And there should be a proper regulation of the private sector – strengthen the Fair Rent Act and impose decent health and safety standards on private landlords.

Penalising the poorest

New Labour has presided over a massive setback to Britain's poorest families.

A massive 362,000 applications for help from the social fund were rejected in 1999/2000 – up from just 5,000 in 1997/98.

Most of those who were turned down were told it was because social security officers thought they would be too poor to pay back the loans – which average £390.

Some families have been refused loans to buy a cooker, and told that it is "not an essential item".

New Labour ministers clearly believe that poor people should feed their children on sandwiches instead – or maybe Millbank's Marie-Antoinettes think they should eat cake?

Third World needs serious relief

Pants to the World Bank: Drop the Debt!

WHILE TENS of thousands of young people and adults have laboured to support the fund-raising efforts of Comic Relief and Red Nose day to help relieve world poverty, New Labour has consistently sided with the organisations that have deepened inequality on a world scale – the World Bank, World Trade Organisation and International Monetary Fund.

These bodies have become by-words for austerity, welfare cuts, privatisation and plunging living standards imposed on third world countries through "structural adjustment programmes".

Globalisation has meant that the gap between rich and poor on a world scale is widening. The

global bodies, all dominated by the US and other free market ideologues, are part of the problem, not the solution: they must be swept away.

Wealthy countries like Britain owe much of their prosperity to the prolonged exploitation of the raw materials and cheap labour of the ex-colonial countries.

We now have an obligation to lift the burden of debt which hangs around them, and assist in a massive programme of investment to help build an infrastructure of education, health, welfare services, transport and public services to enable the culture and creative talents of the people in each country to develop.

The minimum wage will rise from £3.70 to £4.10, but even this 11% increase is not enough to lift people out of poverty, according to the Low Pay Unit.

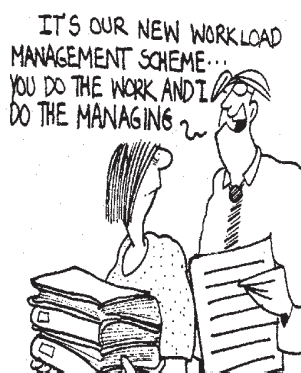
Blunkett witch-hunts protesting teachers

EDUCATION Secretary David Blunkett has claimed that teachers who support trade union policies of "no cover" for unfilled posts are "abandoning children" and putting their GCSE and A Levels at risk.

We don't agree. If no action is taken, the staff shortages that are already threatening educational standards will get even worse.

The working conditions for school teachers, faced by a mountain of admin and assessment tasks in addition to a heavy teaching load, are driving people out of and away from the profession.

The first few days of action by members of the NUT and NAS/UWT produced a new round of concessions from the government, including offers to subsidise child care



and other costs for teachers returning to the profession, and extra cash for schools to hire supply teachers.

The Socialist Alliance supports the call for a deal similar to that won by Scottish teachers, which defines working hours and specific "non-contact" time for marking and admin work.

Further Education: the neglected giant

Lecturers at Oxford College of Further Education have been balloting on industrial action over pay.

Their union, NATFHE, points out that they had no pay rise at all in Oxford College last year, and that FE teaching pay scales are up to £3,000 lower than for comparably qualified school teachers.

FE has remained the neglected giant of education system, teaching over 4 million students aged 16 to 60, and taking growing responsibility for the government's "Lifelong Learning" policies.

But while FE colleges are constantly under pressure to widen the recruitment, funding per student has been steadily falling, and many Colleges like Oxford have made cuts or imposed a pay freeze as they struggle to make ends meet.

John Lister says: "As a part-time FE teacher myself I know the pressure Oxford College staff are under. The Socialist Alliance demands proper funding and a big increase in pay to enable colleges like Oxford to recruit, retain and support the staff they need."

Socialist Alliance

Labour's new quango axes 11 Oxford schools

OXFORD's ten middle schools and an upper school face closure, and the education of thousands of children could be blighted for the next 3-5 years, as shambolic changes are forced through by an obscure quango - created by New Labour legislation.

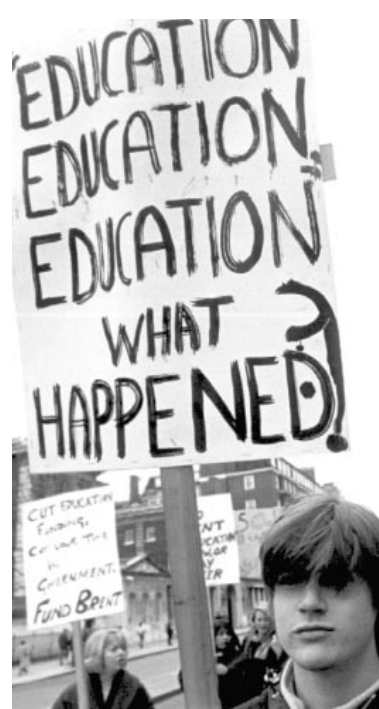
Campaigners from the Save Our Schools (SOS) campaign are pressing for a judicial review of the decision last September by the powerful Schools Organisation Committee to press ahead with its plans to switch Oxford's schools to a two-tier structure.

SOS argues that the planning and consultation process was a farce, in which the views of a massive 2,500 objectors were simply ignored and a decision rail-roaded through an unrepresentative committee.

The Schools Organisation Committee (SOC) was created as a result of New Labour's little-known but massive School Standards and Framework Act of 1998.

It now has powers to decide locally on issues such as closures, the building of new schools and reorganisation - which previously could be referred to the Department for Education and a Minister.

It is a large body, composed of up to six separate interest groups - the Oxford SOC includes 6 councillors, 7 representatives of governors, 3 each from the Church of England



and Catholic church, and a single rep from Further Education.

But campaigners point out that the SOC has opted NOT to include a sixth group - representing the local community.

This would have given the possibility of the representation of ethnic minority groups, who are currently excluded.

This, together with the arcane voting procedures established by the SOC have led to a muddled process in which half-baked decisions have been pushed through, while 2,500 letters of objection

have not been circulated to SOC members.

The process is currently log-jammed after a separate discussion on the fate of the City's Catholic schools failed to produce any agreement, and an independent adjudicator refused to act because the process was so flawed.

SOS campaigner Teresa Munby said "We want the current plan scrapped. We should have a proper, formal consultation in which the views of local parents will be taken into account. The present situation has blighted the future of eleven schools, and key teachers are already voting with their feet."

John Lister said: "The Socialist Alliance supports the SOS campaign.

"The reorganisation process is a fiasco, and with such valuable sites at stake as middle schools close, there is an unpleasant whiff of asset-stripping in the air.

"Education needs more resources and more democratic involvement of parents, not the creation of more arrogant quangos like the SOC."

Whose schools are bog standard?

TONY BLAIR and his pals have arrogantly dismissed the local schools that educate the children of millions of ordinary working families as "bog standard comprehensives".

Of course Blair sends his kids to selective schools, and Labour's latest green paper on education aims to expand the numbers of schools which can select - and therefore also reject - a proportion of the kids they take.

If Labour gets its way, by the time of the next election in 2006 the comprehensive system will have been largely wiped out.

Extra funds

In its place will be a 2-tier system in which almost half of all secondary schools will be "specialist" schools, receiving extra funding: those which do not achieve this status will be pushed even further to the bottom of the heap.

A school needs a cash pot of £50,000 even to apply to be a "specialist" school - so many of those already struggling in more deprived areas are automatically excluded.

All this comes after the explicit promises from David "read my lips: no selection" Blunkett that the government would intervene to eliminate selection on the basis of ability.

The Socialist Alliance is fighting to defend the principle of comprehensive education, and for the funding needed to bring all schools up to scratch.

Can you help us in the campaign for a Socialist alternative?

The Socialist Alliance is a new organisation, uniting the left, and standing 92 candidates across England in the next Election. Oxford Socialist Alliance welcomes support from anyone wanting to challenge the Tory politics of New Labour.

We already have backing from many union and community activists and campaigners. We are keen to meet and speak to local union branches, tenants groups and campaign meetings. Help us make a difference!

Membership is just £2, but we obviously need donations towards our campaign and helping hands on the ground to give out leaflets and canvass the constituency.

Just send in this form, or ring us on 07929 618579, or you can email us at:

feedback@oxfordsocialists.org.uk. Web site: www.oxfordsocialists.org.uk

I CAN HELP! (Tick as many as apply)

I ENCLOSE

- £2 to join the Socialist Alliance
 £..... donation towards the campaign.

I AM WILLING TO:

- Display a poster in my window
 Give out leaflets
 Canvass
 Come to campaign meetings
 Help raise funds
 Publicly endorse the campaign

Name

Address

..... Post code

Phone (day) (home)

e-mail

Position held (if any)

Send to Oxford Socialist Alliance
c/o PO Box 315 Oxford OX2 9LQ

Scrap student fees, restore the grant!

Oxford Socialist Alliance has been committed from the outset to make the fight for the abolition of tuition fees and restoration of the student grant a key element in its platform for the General Election.

Alliance candidate John Lister supported the recent sit-in protests against fees by Oxford University students, praising their courage in taking a stand, which had helped draw attention to the hypocrisy of government ministers. He said:

"Who would have thought it would be a Labour government that imposed fees?"

"Ministers talk of increasing numbers of university students from low-income families, while their own policy of imposing fees and axing grants has meant ever larger numbers have been dropping out of university because they can't afford to live.

"The policy is not only unfair: it is a nonsense. Many new universities which were told to expand to offer more places now face the problem that thousands are unfilled, and are contemplating cuts to avoid financial disaster.

"Meanwhile Oxford University, already swimming in cash, is now getting an extra cash hand-out for finally agreeing to take on more state school pupils.

"Ministers who, like me, benefited from a free university education funded by grants, have no right to deny this to the next generation of young people."

"We say the fees should be scrapped, grants reinstated, and education and other public services should be funded not by poverty-stricken students, but through progressive taxation on high earnings, the wealthy and big business."