

to sell off massive chunks of public assets. The Labour government's Treasury tasked Gerry Grimstone( privatisation guru for Margaret Thatcher !), with “finding ways to raise cash from public sector assets”.

The Tories agree. They want to move as many government services as possible into the hands of private profiteers. This would expose more and more national assets and vital government departments to the tender mercy of “market forces”. The bankers are licking their lips!

## SCHOOLS

It was Blair’s Labour government that introduced “Academies” in 2002. Labour continually increased the number of these, right up to the last election. Now the ConDem government is continuing that policy, pushing for more academies, seeking a big increase quickly.

Labour’s Academy scheme gave private sponsors as much as £35 million (of our money) to build and run a school which was then outside local democratic control. It could even teach creationism if its sponsors wished! The staff lost their nationally negotiated terms and conditions. Pupils could be expelled on a whim. Parents had no rights, not even to speak to the school management. And the final irony was that the sponsors often never come up with their contribution to funding!

The Tories are taking Labour’s process to its logical, privatizing conclusion. They want to break up the state education system into private fragments: academies, trust schools, free schools, etc. Of course, what most parents want is just a good, local state school. Or would you prefer your children to be educated by Tesco, the Royal Bank of Scotland, or perhaps the local Rotary Club?

The Campaign for State Education and the Anti-Academies Alliance, with the backing of education unions, parents’ organisations and the TUC, are working to defend publicly-provided and publicly-controlled. The Alliance GS supports this work and its representatives would oppose all privatization of education.

**Don’t be fooled by Labour politicians  
pretending to oppose Tory/Lib Dem cuts and privatizations.  
The ConDems are just continuing New Labour’s own policies.**

# Alliance for Green Socialism



## PRIVATISATION

**Who would you prefer to privatize your services?**

**New Labour or ConDem?**

**Is there any difference?**

**BOTH** main parties, in the run up to the general election, made clear their intention to use the recession as an excuse for huge cuts in public services. Both Labour and the ConDems also planned to use the situation to further enrich their friends in the City with a new and savage round of privatisations. The ConDem government are using the economic crisis to impose their “shock doctrine” on us - just as Labour would have done.

## NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Local campaigns erupted in the last few months of the Labour government as their restructuring of health services was implemented. That Labour plan included the downgrading of local general hospitals (closing departments like Accident & Emergency and maternity) and providing treatment like heart, stroke and major trauma only in a few specialist hospitals. This remains a major threat to local hospitals across the UK.

The Labour plan was to transfer much care out of hospitals, and into “community” health services. All Primary Care Trusts then had to divide community health services into “commissioner” and “provider” arms - half way to privatisation. Labour’s idea was a restructure to enable the private (and voluntary) sector to replace NHS bodies providing local health services .

Accident & Emergency departments were to be replaced by “Polyclinics”, many farmed out to big commercial healthcare companies. They threatened the survival of nearby traditional GP surgeries.

These Labour changes were the latest in a long series of NHS changes. It started under the Tories with the “purchaser/provider split”. This continued under New Labour. Now the Tories (and LibDems) once again pick up the process of further privatising our NHS.

This ConDem government proposes to abolish the publicly run Primary Care Trusts - and simply give the entire budget for buying health care to Polyclinics

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and groups of GPs. There will be no accountability, but plenty of opportunity for big health corporations (including foreign companies) to make a killing.

Already, where “HealthCos” have taken over GP services, we see them (as local commissioners) giving our money to themselves (as providers of secondary care) and buying drugs from themselves. The NHS name will be used as cover for passing our money, in large quantities, to private companies.

Meanwhile hospitals built under Labour’s “Private Finance Initiative” are already draining the NHS of cash. Such hospitals are mortgaged to the hilt for many years ahead. There are PFI-built hospitals today which the NHS cannot afford to run (and which may not be fit for future needs anyway!) which our children will have to fund for decades.

The source of these changes is thirty years of intensive and successful lobbying of politicians and the media by the big commercial healthcare companies. Each restructuring is designed to make it easier and more profitable for commercial healthcare companies to bid for selected (profitable) NHS services.

Politicians of each major party are in a “revolving door” with big global health firms. After a spell in office selling off our NHS to these firms, the ex-ministers join the board or score big fees as “consultants”.. Labour and Conservatives simply swap roles seamlessly when the government changes.

The British Medical Association has set up their “Look After our NHS” campaign, which is working with trade unionists and campaigners in “Keep Our NHS Public” to warn of these dangers and mobilise support to defend the NHS. The Alliance for Green Socialism actively supports this campaign. If elected, AGS representatives will fight hard for its aims.

## **SOCIAL CARE**

Frail elderly people can continue to live in their own homes and in the community if they can receive some care and help at home. Up till recently, councils directly employed carers who were properly-paid and worked under union-negotiated conditions. They mostly dealt with the same clients every day, getting to know their needs and likings.

This was first broken up in some boroughs when the job was put out to contract and casual workers brought in with little continuity of care or relationship with the clients. Next, all the clients will be assigned an “individual budget” and will become responsible for hiring their own carers and taking on all an employer’s responsibilities. For many older people this is just an added burden and a worry. Social care for the aged should be a right and the provision should be clear and straightforward. The carers must have full trade union rights if they are expected to perform a difficult job which requires skill, tact and sensitivity.

Elderly people have paid taxes and National Insurance contributions throughout their lives. They should not be taxed or charged again for this service. It would

cost an estimated £400 million a year to provide it. Small beer compared with the £12 billion spent on a failed NHS computer system which has now been largely abandoned.

## **COUNCIL SERVICES**

Amidst a lot of propaganda about “protecting front-line services”, Labour planned massive cuts in services provided by local councils – children’s services, schools, social work, libraries, parks, swimming pools, parks, playing fields, rubbish collection, street cleaning and support for voluntary bodies.

At the same time pilot schemes were testing out how to privatise council services along similar lines to the NHS. Labour wanted council departments just to manage the “commissioning” process through which contractors bid to run schools, social services, social care and all the other things councils do.

This reorganisation was a further step to ending the universal provision of a service (i.e. something the council-tax payer receives by right) and towards charging for services, which always hits people on low incomes the hardest. The ConDem government is carrying on these plans and is forcing huge cuts on local councils. Cameron’s “Big Society” is just a name for cutting services.

The Alliance for Green Socialism stands foursquare with council workers fighting redundancies and alongside communities campaigning to keep their vital services in the public sector. If you have the chance, vote AGS and take this fight to local councils and parliament.

## **ROYAL MAIL**

Postal workers know that, under Labour plans, up to half the mail centres would be closed over the next few years. Labour aimed to make the business a profitable and a tempting target for privatisation. The ConDem successors to Labour are continuing the privatization process and speeding it up. Mail is not to be a service for people but a cash cow for big business.

Potential buyers have already let slip that they will reduce the number of deliveries to two or three a week. They would like to end the “universal service” that delivers letters at the same price to any address in the country, and charge more for longer or more difficult deliveries, such as isolated rural addresses.

A privately-owned postal service could even stop doorstep deliveries altogether and hold items for collection by addressees at local centres. The most vulnerable people in society, the old, the infirm, and those with special needs, would suffer the most from all of this. This is the logic of capitalism.

## **GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Besides planning to sack large numbers of civil service workers – and to cheat them of their agreed redundancy settlements and pensions – Labour planned