

Statement for Press

Arthur Andersen - in the light of the recent revelations about their role in regard to Enron and their links with the Labour party in Britain there has been a call for an enquiry into this company's operations in Britain. As a member of the National Union of Teachers Executive I have been drawing attention to this company's role in encouraging privatisation in education for some years.

My understanding is that they gave their services free to the Labour Party for the previous 2 General elections. Is this correct? - if it is how ethical is it that a company which gave material support in this way then appears to be contracted to work for Labour Ministers and Departments? They were then (1997) invited by Geoffrey Robinson to join the Treasury taskforce looking into the issue of public/private relations and in addition worked with the DfEE (as it then was) on the issue. An individual from Arthur Andersen was seconded to the DfEE.

Graham Walker was/is an education specialist for Arthur Andersen and had a seat on Newham's Education Action Zone. (He was interviewed for BBC File on Four 7/2/99) when he said, "If you look at the state education system, I think there's a general recognition that it's not providing what society wants, and that many people say that there is a crisis, and I think I would agree that there is a crisis, that we have to move to another level. and a lot of solutions that are relevant to the running of our schools and our education system generally are actually already in existence in the private sector, and the Education Action Zones are one way of really softening up and getting people ready in a more sophisticated manner than they can on their own as individual schools for this new way." (Punctuation from BBC transcript!)

Bernard Regan, National Executive Member for Inner London (me!) is calling for an investigation into the role of Arthur Andersen in the DfEE; - are they still operating in the DfES? What role do they play in the Department or elsewhere in education?

What role have they had in respect of PFI? Outsourcing?

I have written two pamphlets on the issue of the privatisation of Education - "Trojan Horses" (essentially highlighting the role EAZs would have in softening up Educaiton for privatisation) and "Not for Sale" (which took up opposition to education privatisation as a whole).

I have been on the NUT Executive for more than 20 years representing teachers in Inner London.

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