

Paul Marsden

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Rt Hon Tony Blair MP

The House of Commons

London SW1

Sir

I enclose for your information and possible edification:

- 1 a copy of a letter to my Ward Labour Party Secretary resigning my membership of the Labour Party;
- 2 a copy of a letter to my bank, cancelling the direct-debit mandates for my Labour Party membership subscription and my £60-a-year sponsorship;
- 3 my 1994 and 1995 Labour Party membership cards (the latter, ironically, arrived in the post today).

As a long-standing supporter (30 years) and member (20 years) of the Party, and as a committed member of the state education service, I cannot begin to express how deeply I have been hurt and angered by the news that you have chosen a Grant-Maintained school for your son. Hearing Gillian Shepherd gloating over your decision made me feel physically sick. How can you fail to recognise that the GMS initiative is a cynical attempt to destroy democratically accountable public education and to undermine our whole structure of local democracy? Or that it has totally failed? Or that it is not producing, and will not produce, better schools?

You or one of your 'groupies' may recall that I wrote to you at length after voting for you in the leadership election, expressing my misgivings. Since then I have tried very hard to convince myself that I was right to vote for you. Tonight I have to accept that my misgivings were well-founded and my vote misplaced. It appears that, to use quaint Victorianisms, you are both a rascal and a fool.

You should be deeply ashamed of yourself, and you should humbly beg the collective pardon of the vast army of dedicated education professionals who have stood their ground against the political battering to which the Tories have subjected them and whom you have today publicly insulted and betrayed.

I cannot remain a member of a party led by you. I hope that when the opportunity comes I will be able at least to vote for it despite the fact that this may help to put you in 10 Downing Street.

Yours truly