

# 77% of quangocrats are Labour party supporters

Critics attack 'disgraceful trend' and warn it could block Tory reforms

MORE Labour 'cronies' are being appointed to public bodies now than under the last government, official figures reveal.

Last year 77 per cent of those who had a known political allegiance were Labour, more than the 70 per cent under Gordon Brown's administration.

Critics said David Cameron had

By James Chapman  
Political Editor

failed to get a grip of public appointments and ensure those who served the Tories in opposition or are sympathetic to their reforms are in key positions.

In the last year in which John Major was in office, 57 per cent who were appointed to a public position and had a known political

allegiance were Conservatives, 32 per cent were Labour and 5 per cent were Liberal Democrats.

But Tony Blair reversed this in 1997. The percentage of Labour appointees soared to 75 per cent and the Tory percentage crashed to 13 per cent.

In 2009/10, the last full year of Labour's time in power, 70 per cent of those with a political allegiance winning public positions

were aligned to Labour, 16 per cent were Conservative and 11 per cent were Lib Dems.

Data released by the Commissioner for Public Appointments suggested Labour has since tightening its grip on key public sector jobs.

In 2011/12, 77 per cent of people who declare a political background are Labour supporters, while the Tory percentage has slipped further, to just 14 per cent. The Liberal Democrats are down to 4 per cent.

Mr Cameron himself has asked senior figures from the Left to advise the Government, including former Labour health secretary Alan Milburn, who is a social mobility 'czar', former welfare minister Frank Field

commendable in many ways that we are not doing what Labour did and stuffing every public body with political people. It is a disgraceful trend, what has happened with public appointments over the last decade.

There is nothing worse than that sort of political patronage. But the public should be very concerned about the current situation.

Tim Montgomerie, editor of the ConservativeHome website, said: 'Resistance to Tory ideas from within the civil service, the quangocracy and the heavily politicised charitable sector could easily be fatal for a large number of policy ideas.'

Geoff Mulgan, Tony Blair's former head of policy, who is now chief executive of the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, said the figures were 'quite striking'.

But he insisted: 'I don't think having witch hunts about people's party backgrounds serves the public purpose at all.'

'I think most of the appointment panels are probably independent. It's right that public appointments should try to discourage having too many people with a party background filling roles.'

'Maybe these Labour supporters haven't got anything better to do. The key thing, surely, is merit. The chairman of the BBC is a former chairman of the Conservative Party. He's seen as a man who was appointed for his merits and his integrity.'

Last year 13.3 per cent of those appointed to quangos, advisory bodies and NHS groups declared political activity, up from 8.4 per cent during 2009/10, but down from a peak of 20.7 per cent in 2001/2.

Comment - Page 16



## QUASH THE QUANGOS

- who prepared a report on child poverty - and former Observer editor Will Hutton, who conducted an inquiry into public sector pay.

Priti Patel, a Conservative MP on the public administration select committee, which has examined the issue of public appointments, said the figures were 'very alarming'.

She said ministers should examine measures - including a requirement that appointments should broadly reflect the political make-up of the House of Commons.

'The Government should consider all the options on this to ensure there is no political bias,' she said. 'It is

## Quash the quangos

IN 2010, in a move applauded by the Mail, David Cameron promised to dismantle much of Labour's social-engineering and grotesquely wasteful quango state.

Yet, two years on, almost 100 of the quangos slated for abolition still exist and will leech off taxpayers for years.

Worse, it emerges that the Prime Minister has failed to break the vice-like hold that Labour cronies have on these meddling bodies, which continue to wield terrifying influence inside and outside government.

Last year, an astonishing 77 per cent of people who were appointed to a public position and had a known political allegiance were Labour supporters.

Compare this with the Major government's last year, when almost six in ten appointees with political views were Conservatives.

One of Mr Cameron's failures (along with his inability to create a powerful, efficient Downing Street machine) has been to purge Labour fifth columnists from the system and replace them with Tories.

If he is to have any hope of ending Britain's insidious culture of welfarism and cut bloated state spending, he must move on this with urgency.