

## **The 91 signatories of the Alternative White Paper (85 of whom have rebelled)**

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In December, when the initial 57 signatories of the document were revealed, we noted that the organisers of the Alternative White Paper had gone out of their way to ensure that its initial signatories did not include the most rebellious Labour MPs – those who are usually described (and dismissed) as ‘the usual suspects’.<sup>†</sup> Of the 20 Labour MPs who rebelled most in the 2001 Parliament, and who are still in the Commons, not one was an initial signatory to the document. This was clearly not a coincidence; the organisers of the rebellion wanted to show that disquiet on the backbenches extended far beyond the usual suspects.

But we also argued that most of those who had signed the document were somewhat more rebellious than they were indicating. Nine out of ten had rebelled in the preceding parliament. Excluding those 2005 intake, the list of so-called ‘normally loyal backbenchers’ (a phrase often used to describe their ranks) included just two who had never voted against the Government before. And taken as a whole, the 48 rebellious signatories rebelled on an average of 11 occasions in the last Parliament.

Having excluded the most rebellious from the initial signatories, exactly half of the additional signatories since December come from exactly this group. Seventeen of the 20 most rebellious MPs left in the Commons from the 2001 Parliament have now added their signatures to the document’s supporters. The three who haven’t signed – but who can hardly be assumed to be supporters of the Government’s position – are Kate Hoey, Peter Kilfoyle, and Jim Cousins.

Together with a further 17 less rebellious MPs, they bring the total number of signatories to 91.

Six of the potential rebels are drawn from the 2005 intake: three - Dave Anderson, Nia Griffith and Alison Seabeck - have so far remained loyal to the Government, while the other three - Katy Clark, Linda Riordan and Sir Peter Soulsby have voted against the Government since the general election.

*Of the remaining 85, an astonishing 82 (or 96 per cent) have form from the last Parliament.*

Only three have never rebelled in this Parliament or in the previous one – Michael J Foster, Linda Gilroy and Mark Todd. A further three were totally loyal in the last Parliament, but have started to rebel in this one: Andy Love, Nick Raynsford and John Smith. Of these, only Foster is a new signatory to the document.

And just under half of the signatories (45 out of 91) have already voted against the Government this Parliament.

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\* University of Nottingham. This paper draws on research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Further details are available from [www.revolt.co.uk](http://www.revolt.co.uk).

<sup>†</sup> P. Cowley and M. Stuart, ‘It depends what you mean by ‘normally loyal’: The supporters of the Alternative Education White Paper’ (available from [www.revolt.co.uk](http://www.revolt.co.uk)).

This, of course, merely emphasises the problem for the Government. On this issue, they face backbench critics who will not find voting against the Government a novel experience.

Moreover, those dissatisfied with the education reforms extend beyond the 91 signatories. As well as Hoey, Kilfoyle and Cousins, there are six MPs who supported Ian Gibson's EDM 898, which expressed 'grave reservations about the new Education White Paper' who have so far not put their names to the alternative white paper: Michael Connarty, John Cummings, Jim Dobbin, Rob Marris, Marsha Singh and Graham Stringer.

And whilst, because of sensitivities over the West Lothian Question, only two Scottish Labour MP – Katy Clark and Sandra Osborne – have so far put their names to the alternative White Paper, there will be other Scottish MPs who rebel over the issue. Can the Government rely, for example, on David Hamilton, the most rebellious Scottish MP from the last Parliament?

Overall, therefore we're probably looking at least 100 potential rebels – nearly all with 'form' in the division lobbies.

Not all of these will necessarily rebel, of course. In 2003, there were almost 200 backbench critics of top-up fees. By January 2004, various concessions and changes to the bill had reduced the number prepared to defy their whip to fewer than 100 (72 voting against, with around 20 abstentions).

There will be a soft underbelly among the ranks of the potential rebels over the Education Bill, persuadable if concessions are forthcoming from Ruth Kelly. Indeed, for many of the signatories, that is the very point of the Alternative White Paper – to begin a consultation with the Government.

We would estimate that at least 40 of the signatories would be amenable to meaningful concessions – but that nearly 50 will be much harder to shift. These alone would be sufficient to prevent the Government getting the Bill without the support of the Opposition.

## The 91 signatories

Abbott, Diane	Flynn, Paul	Murphy, Denis
Allen, Graham	Gerrard, N	Naysmith, Doug
<b>Anderson, Dave*</b>	Gibson, I	O'Hara, Eddie
Austin, John	<b>Gilroy, Linda</b>	Owen, Albert
Berry, Roger	<b>Griffith, Nia*</b>	Osborne, Sandra
Betts, Clive	Grogan, John	Prentice, Gordon
Burden, Richard	Iddon, Brian	Prosser, Gwyn
Burgon, Colin	Illsley, Eric	Purchase, Ken
Campbell, Ronnie	Hamilton, Fabian	Raynsford, Nick
Caton, Martin	Havard, Dai	Riordan, Linda*
Challen, Colin	Heyes, David	Robinson, Geoffrey
Chaytor, David	Hopkins, Kelvin	Ruddock, Joan
Clark, Katy*	Humble, Joan	Salter, Martin
Clapham, Michael	Jackson, Glenda	<b>Seabeck, Alison*</b>
Clelland, David	Jones, Kevan	Short, Clare
Corbyn, Jeremy	Jones, Helen	Simpson, Alan
Cohen, Harry	Jones, Lynne	Skinner, Dennis
Cruddas, Jon	Jones, Martyn	Smith, John
Cryer, Ann	Keen, Alan	Soulsby, Peter*
Dean, Janet	Lepper, David	Taylor, David
Denham, John	Lloyd, Tony	<b>Todd, Mark</b>
Dobson, Frank	Love, Andy	Trickett, Jon
Drew, David	Mallaber, Judy	Turner, Des
Dunwoody, Gwyneth	Marshall-Andrews, Bob	Vis, Rudi
Eagle, Angela	McDonnell, John	Wareing, Bob
Efford, Clive	McCafferty, Chris	Walley, Joan
Ellman, Louise	Meacher, Michael	Wood, Mike
Etherington, Bill	Mitchell, Austin	Whitehead, Alan
Fisher, Mark	Morgan, Julie	Williams, Betty
<b>Foster, Michael J</b>	Mullin, Chris	Wyatt, Derek
Francis, Hywel		

*Note:* Bold indicates MPs who have yet to vote against their whip; \* indicates MPs from the 2005 intake