

NCAFC

national campaign against fees & cuts

RED ALERT: Coalition threatens unlimited fees NOW IS THE TIME TO FIGHT BACK!

The Browne Review of higher education funding, which is due to make its report on 12 October, is pretty much certain to recommend *abolishing the cap on tuition fees*.

Since 1998 we have gone from free tuition to fees of £1,000, to upwards of £3,000 – and now we face *unlimited* fees, regulated only by the market.

Browne was always going to recommend higher fees; his “independence” was just a way of drawing fire from the Government. The proposal is, in any case, an integral part of the Lib Dem-Tory coalition’s broader assault on public services and working-class living standards. It will lead to a vast increase in student poverty and debt, and to a free-market system on the model of the US, with an Ivy League of academic institutions for an elite and underfunded, low quality higher education for the majority.

Demonstrate on 10/11 – and prepare for direct action

Like the coalition’s other attacks, Browne’s proposals must be fought militantly.

That the National Union of Students has, under pressure from the growth of anti-cuts campaigns, called a demonstration on 10 November (www.demo2010.org) is good. Everyone who wants to fight Browne’s proposals should take part. But that will not be enough to stop the Government. We need direct action, including occupations, in every university and as many colleges and schools as possible across the country – modelled on the wave of occupations in solidarity with Gaza in 2009, and the anti-cuts occupations last year, but on a much bigger scale. Activists in anti-fees and cuts groups across the

**NCAFC
open meeting**
7.30pm, Wed 13
October,
University
College London
(room Pearson
G.07) **Come
and discuss
the fight back!**

country need to start discussing how we can do this. If you don’t have a group, set up one up! Even if all you can organise is a first meeting in your school or college, go for it! We can help you.

If we fight, we can win

The Tories are vulnerable on this. The Lib Dems pledged themselves to oppose higher fees; they are so nervous that Lib Dem MPs have been ordered not to speak to the press. They will – should! – come under increasing pressure after Browne’s recommendations are out.

Meanwhile, even many Tory voters will not be happy about being told their children must rack up £80,000 debt to go to university. An ICM survey for the *Sunday Telegraph* found that 62 percent of Tory voters support a graduate tax, compared with 29 percent for higher fees – almost exactly the same as the figures for the population as a whole. Free education was not an option in the survey!

If we pile on the pressure, the coalition will crack – helping push back their other attacks too. We owe it to ourselves and to everyone else fighting the cuts to be militant.

Demand free education

The Government says free education would mean the poor paying for the children of the rich to go to university. Anyone seriously concerned about this problem would advocate *taxing the rich and business* to fund an expansion of free, quality higher education for as many people as think they would benefit from or enjoy it. That way the rich can pay for everyone’s children to go to university.

This government of millionaires will tell us the money is not there. Yet last year, just the thousand richest individuals and families in Britain (the *Sunday Times* ‘Rich List’) increased their wealth by £77 billion. If the financial crisis demands drastic measures – and we agree that it does – that should mean taking hold of the wealth of the rich to preserve and extend the services the rest of us rely on. We should not accept that the majority have to pay for a crisis caused by a tiny minority, whether through job losses, cuts in services or higher fees.

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