

WE WON'T BE A LOST GENERATION!

YOUNG PEOPLE face an uncertain future. The Con-Dem butchers have turned their axe to education in what is set to be the most savage attack on the public sector since the welfare state was established.

Claire Laker-Mansfield
Socialist Students national
organiser

Budget cuts, started by New Labour, are estimated by the University and Colleges Union (UCU) to be likely to cause 34,000 job losses in Further Education if allowed to go ahead. Under the new government this figure could be even higher.

These attacks all come at a time when almost one in five young people have been labelled NEETS (not in education, employment or training). A massive squeeze on Higher Education funding has meant over 180,000 young people scrambling to have access to the paltry number of university places available through clearing this year. The knock on effect of this has meant thousands are also being turned away from colleges.

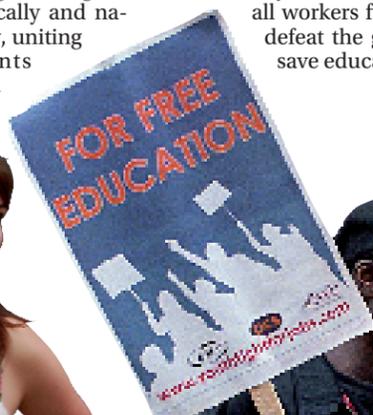
As the doors of college and university are slammed in the faces of young people, they may look to the world of work to save them from the dole queue. But there are no jobs! There are more than ten applicants for every job on

average and nearly 70 for graduate positions!

But these cuts are not inevitable! If the government can find billions of pounds to bail out bankers, fight wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and renew Trident nuclear missiles, why can they not guarantee a future for young people? With a mass campaign organised both locally and nationally, uniting students with

education unions and the wider working class, it is possible to defeat the government.

On 20 October, the government's Comprehensive Spending Review will announce even more education cuts. The Youth Fight for Jobs day of action on this date must mark the start of the fightback. Mass protests, demonstrations and student walk-outs, when combined with strike action by education unions and unity between students and all workers fighting cuts, can defeat the government and save education!



"I see students getting turned away, shifted from pillar to post as they desperately try to get on vocational courses, no matter what they are, because they are desperate to get not just a decent future through education, but a means to survive right now! All education staff are being worked to the bone. For me what is key is that the education unions and students link up to fight back. It's getting almost unbearable for us all."

University and Colleges Union (UCU) activist, Coleg Glan Hafren, Cardiff

"It seems to me that grades are now less important than who can buy private tuition, afford private schools and who can move easily into the catchment area for the best schools. In a nutshell, if your education is purely funded by the state, applying for university is becoming a bloodthirsty, cut-throat process."

Sam Lewis, Cardiff

"Many of my friends had fantastic grades at A-Level and still couldn't get into uni, even through clearing. We shouldn't be treated like this!"

Alex Richardson, Hastings

what we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work & Income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retire-

ment pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstatement of the link with average earnings now.

- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and Internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!