

Youth Fight for Jobs and Socialist Students day of action

The Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October announced cuts that will be detrimental to the future of young people across the country. Tuition fees will more than double at least, university and college funding will be slashed and Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will be scrapped. Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) and Socialist Students organised and took part in protests around the country to show that young people will fight back.

Goldsmiths University

GOLDSMITHS SOCIALIST STUDENTS held a protest outside the library at 4pm on 'day zero' of the spending review. Students wrote down how much debt they would be in by the time they finished their course and stuck it to our 'wall of debt'.

Most were between £25,000 and £36,000. Students from nearby Lewisham College who are planning to attend Goldsmiths next year predicted they would owe £100,000 by the time they graduated.

The wall was littered with responses like "I don't want to think about it!" and "the government stole my education". One student wrote "I'm planning to flee the country!" About 20 students at any given time were talking, adding to the wall or voting in the ballot over tuition fees (the result being 169 out of 170 voting against fees).

There was a lot of interest in Socialist Students with over 150 people leaving their details to find out more.

After the protest, Lewisham Anti-Cuts Alliance had its official launch meeting. Goldsmiths Socialist Students is now looking to link up Goldsmiths Anti Cuts with the Lewisham Anti-Cuts Alliance.

Mark Nicholson, Goldsmiths Socialist Students

Brighton University

AS THE Tory chancellor was spelling out disaster for students and the majority of people in the country, 25 students and staff gathered outside Brighton University's administration building to show their opposition.

We heard a few speakers, including people involved in the campaign last year that stopped the closure of one of the campus nurseries. We



Thousands of young people protested against the attacks.

photo Paul Mattsson

then used this small, but vocal demonstration to build and leaflet for the protest called at the end of the day by the University and College Lecturers' Union (UCU).

Around 100 students and staff gathered opposite one of the campuses in the centre of Brighton to protest against what had been announced.

I spoke from Socialist Students and raised a loud cheer when I said that these attacks on education were an attempt to make students pay for the crisis of the bankers and bosses.

We collected over 90 signatures and contact details of people wanting to get involved in the anti-cuts campaign at the university. The fight goes on!

Jack Poole, Brighton University Socialist Students

Huddersfield

OVER 20 students from Huddersfield university and Greenhead college marched for the day of action.

We set off from Greenhead college and made a striking impression on those we passed along the way, decked out with placards protesting against the Con-Dems' plans to destroy our future.

Our noisy and vibrant march was cheered as we joined the 200-strong anti-cuts rally organised by Kirklees Unison in town.

Myself and Ummah from Greenhead college spoke at the rally. She summed up the thoughts of many college students when she pointed out: "Cutting EMA means that young working class people can't have an education - we must fight back!"

Iain Dalton, Yorkshire Youth Fight for Jobs organiser

Newcastle

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY Stop Cuts and Fees (NSCF) was launched on 20 October and as its first action, enthusiastically joined the Public Service Alliance protest of 500 people in Newcastle.

The protest included all the major unions in the region including the PCS and Unison. PCS and Socialist Party member, Fran Heathcote, spoke from the platform calling for a united fightback against the cuts.

Before the rally, a group of school students with Socialist Party banners and a megaphone marched into the city centre to express their anger about the cuts and called on the working class of Newcastle to join the PSA rally. This is just a start of young people fighting back.

Paul Phillips, Newcastle Socialist Party

Nottingham

150 PEOPLE, including members of PCS as well as other unions, attended the protest in Nottingham.

There was a definite feeling of anger from young people, who felt under attack from the government's cuts.

The extremely successful rally was followed by a public meeting, where huge progress was made in organising YFJ in Nottingham. We will be having monthly meetings and lunchtime discussion groups in colleges and will work to get people along to the National Union of Students demonstration on 10 November.

Helen Pattison, Nottingham

Queen Mary University

QUEEN MARY (QMUL) is situated in one of the poorest boroughs of the country. 55% of young people in Tower Hamlets receive free school meals, of which only 6% do A-levels, let alone go to university. The Comprehensive Spending Review will hit students at QMUL and in the surrounding areas particularly hard.

As student places decrease and tuition fees rise, university will be harder to access for the poorest. Students are to expect less for more, yet George Osborne has the temerity to claim his actions are 'fair'.

QMUL Stop the Cuts, a broad campaign of staff, students and trade unionists, held a protest in Library Square. A referendum was held asking 'would you pay £12,000 to attend university?' The results

Organise the fightback

Youth Fight for Jobs conference - 4 December

Socialist Students conference - 5 December

Both start 10am at University College London, Christopher Ingold Auditorium, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT
Nearest Tube: Euston Square/ Warren Street

were an astounding 115-0 against planned tuition fee rises. There is clear anger at the further cuts and privatisation of higher education and a return to education solely for the privileged.

Quality of education should come before profit and an ability to pay. Free education can be funded through progressive taxation and is affordable in the sixth richest country on the planet. We are indeed, Mr Osborne, all in this together and we are united.

Vik Chechi, Queen Mary University Unison rep, personal capacity

Waltham Forest

ABOUT 30 students from three colleges took part in protests in Waltham Forest against rising tuition fees and the scrapping of EMA.

Outside Leyton Sixth Form, people rushed over to our banner reading 'Leyton Sixth Form students WILL NOT PAY £12,000 a year for university', especially when we told them about the announcement a couple of hours earlier that the government is getting rid of EMA.

Some then marched with us to the town square where we had a protest and got lots of college and school students walking past to sign the EMA petition.

All the students were really angry about the cuts and were keen to get their friends along to another protest soon. One summed it up when she said "it's not fair, it's just creating two different classes in education."

Sarah Wrack, Waltham Forest YFJ

Central London

1,000 STUDENTS from universities all over London, including many from Socialist Students and anti-cuts campaigns marched to Downing Street.

Students avidly snapped up the leaflets for the National Shop Stewards Network demo the following Saturday and for Socialism 2010, looking for a strategy to fight and a political alternative to the cuts.

Before hitting Downing Street the demo joined up with a march organised by Camden trades council. This had been promoted around London so about 1,000 people from Camden were joined by anti-cuts campaigners from several areas.

At Downing Street the protest swelled as the cuts were announced. Bob Crow of the RMT rail workers' union, Matt Wrack from the Fire Brigades Union and Steve Gillan from the Prison Officers Association all made fighting speeches that made it clear that working class people and trade unions need to be at the heart of the fight against the cuts.

Step forward for TUC youth unemployment demo

IN SEPTEMBER, the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) voted overwhelmingly in favour of a demonstration against youth unemployment before the end of the year. However, the TUC leadership appears to be dragging its heels.

Ben Robinson

Youth Fight for Jobs Chair

But the campaign to get the motion acted upon took a small step forwards at the last TUC general council meeting.

Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) organ-

ised a lobby, handing out our letter calling on council members to name a date.

The lobby at the meeting and before meant that the issue was discussed and debated despite reluctance on the part of the TUC leadership and some of the bigger trade unions. YFJ gained the support of a number of leading trade unionists before the meeting, including Bob Crow, RMT general secretary, and Janice Godrich, PCS president.

YFJ will not let up on the campaign and will continue building links with fighting trade unionists.



100 students joined a Trades Council organised demo in Leeds.