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## Student fightback

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# Movement to defeat tuition fees and cuts

# This is just the start!



photo S.Beishon

**H**UNDREDS OF thousands of young people have taken to the streets against the Con-Dem destruction of education. Cutting Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), raising tuition fees to £9,000 and huge funding cuts have seen students from schools, colleges and universities up and down the country walk out, protest and demonstrate in defence of their right to a free, high-quality education.

Suzanne Beishon

This hated government is full of millionaire ministers, who themselves enjoyed the privilege of a free education and full grants.

They will be hoping that their vote to raise fees to £9,000 this week puts an end to the protests. However, this is only

the beginning of the fight. The poll tax was voted through in 1988 only to be thrown out in 1991 after a campaign of mass non-payment made it unworkable. This movement not only defeated the Poll Tax but ended Margaret Thatcher's reign.

The Con-Dem government is much weaker. A mass movement of students alongside workers, who have the power to bring the country to a standstill, would shake the coalition government to its core. Students have already started to win. As a result of this campaign the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament have said they will not cut EMA and the Welsh Assembly will subsidise the increase in fees.

After the vote on 9 December the movement must maintain momentum and offer a way forward for students and young people. Local anti-cuts campaigns need to be built in every school, college and university across the country to respond to events in the new year. January will see the end of new

EMA claims; March may see strike action by teachers and lecturers in the National Union of Teachers and University and College lecturers' Union. A national education shutdown in defence of education is needed to escalate the campaign in this period.

The current leadership of the National Union of Students have is guilty of a dereliction of duty by stepping back from leading a campaign against the biggest ever attacks on education in this country. That is why local campaigns need to come together on a national scale to organise the next stage of the movement.

The attacks on education are only one part of the government's wider attacks on all public services. It is vital these attacks are not fought in isolation but combined with the struggle in defence of every job and service.

See pages 2, 4 and 5 for more.



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