

**socialist
students**



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CAMPUS!

NUS call a demo now!

**Day of action:
11 December**

- Fight for the right to protest
- NUS call and mobilise a mass national demonstration to defend democratic rights on campus
- Drop all charges against arrested protesters
- Re-instate the five suspended Sussex students
- For the right to demonstrate on and off campus. Stop university management's disciplining of students for protesting
- For a student and trade union led inquiry into police violence at the University of London
- Workers and students unite. For trade union organised stewarding and 'legal observers' to help defend demonstrators
- Build a mass, national campaign against cuts, fees and privatisation – we will not be cowed!

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Fight for the right to protest!

The shocking brutality meted out against peaceful protesters at the University of London (UoL) has sent shockwaves through the student movement and has been witnessed by millions via the internet. This was a deliberate and concerted attempt to crush protest through brute force. It is clear that police and university management worked together in order to first remove protesting students from their own campus, and then attack demonstrations taking place outside. Within the closed towers of a marketised, privatised, business-like higher education institution, dissent, debate and protest are dangerous and threatening. As far as UoL's management are concerned, student representation and democracy are easily disposed of luxuries. This is most clearly demonstrated by their attempt to close down the University of London Union (ULU) – one of the attacks that sparked the protests.

It's not just at UoL where a crackdown has been in process. At Sussex University, where students have been fighting the privatisation of campus services, five students have been suspended and excluded for their role in the campaign. This follows a series of occupations and a violent eviction by the police carried out last year. Elsewhere, at Birmingham, individual students have been targeted by the university's management with legal costs for them obtaining an injunction against an occupation. Across the country, university managers are uniting with a clear message: protest will not be tolerated.

But we will not be cowed. Students must respond to this repression with a mass campaign to defend democratic rights. As well as escalating protest at UoL, we need to organise solidarity demonstrations on campuses across the country. Socialist Students and others are calling for a second day of action to take place on Wednesday 11 December as part of building this momentum.

Socialist Students is also demanding that the so-called National Union of Students (NUS) live up to its name and immediately call a demonstration in defence of the right to protest on campus. Since the campaign to save ULU started, the right-wing leadership of NUS have given it zero worthwhile support. As cuts and privatisation have rained down on our campuses, NUS has remained inactive. It's time for those who lead this union to stand

up and fight or stand aside. A properly mobilised national demonstration, opposing this crack-down, should be a first step in building a mass campaign against fees, cuts and privatisation as well as for democratic rights on campus.

We also have to take measures to defend protesters against the police, and to support those who have been arrested and victimised for their role in campaigning. Our movement should be bold in its demand for the police to drop all charges against protesters. We must also fight for a student and trade union led inquiry into the brutality that has been witnessed. NUS has called on Boris Johnson(!) to organise an inquiry. This is the man who has said he would like to see even tougher anti-union laws brought in to effectively ban strike action for underground workers. No inquiry led by him and his cronies would have any legitimacy in the eyes of students and workers.

Instead of calling for support from Tory Mayors, our energies will be better spent uniting and linking up with trade unions and the workers' movement, both in defence of democratic rights and in the fight against austerity. The trade union and anti-cuts movement needs to take preparation and well-organised stewarding of demonstrations very seriously, including youth and student demonstrations. Stewards need to help protect participants from potential brutal or punitive actions by the police, guard against the role played by provocateurs and ensure the maximum degree of unity and collectivity, where our greatest strength lies.

This brutality, just like that which took place during the 2010 student movement, gives lie to the notion of the state as a neutral force within society. Under the blows of police violence ordinary people learn the true role of the police within a capitalist society: to protect the interests of rich and powerful. For those who want to see society run in the interests of the 99% it's necessary to understand the role of the state, as well as how it can be overcome. Democratic and civil liberties have been won by working people over generations of struggle and must be vigorously defended. But it will only be when capitalism is completely removed and a socialist society built, that our rights and freedoms can be fully protected and developed onto a higher level.

If you agree, join us today!



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