

# Stop Education Cuts Teachers & Students Unite

The world seems about to end. The markets are convulsing, the banks are tumbling, the entire island is about to become some sort of black hole off the coast of Europe.

Never fear though, we've got a brilliant political establishment to shepherd us through the economic wilderness, and in the Budget on Tuesday 14th, October they revealed their master-plan, carefully crafted, as Mary Hanafin said, to 'protect the vulnerable'. Unfortunately, it seems like they've got a different understanding of who exactly 'the vulnerable' in Irish society are.

It's not the poorest workers, who'll get hit hardest with the one percent levy, it's not all of us who can't afford private health-care,

and it's not the chronically under-educated sectors of society, who are facing the loss of child benefit, class size increases, etc.

## Lower Class Sizes

No, 'the vulnerable' are those like the banks, whose deposits and stability have been guaranteed by our tax money, and the builders, who, thanks to former PD TD and now head of the Construction Industry Federation, Tom Parlon, don't need to worry about limits on their profits from fixed-price contracts. In fact, maybe 'the vulnerable' means the friends and cronies of the Fianna Failers, those who have access to the decision-

makers and can put a bit of pressure on to make sure things turn out alright.

It may have been the bankers and builders who gained most from the economic boom, but that sure doesn't mean they're willing to help pay for the bust. No, if cuts are to be made, they'll be made where it won't harm the government or their friends – increased taxes, attacks on an already under-functioning health service, and the further wealth-based segregation of education.

Education is a  
Right  
Not a Privilege







It's in this context that this latest round of education cuts comes. The government's slashing of teaching posts for children for whom English is not their first language, their decision to increase class sizes and their attacks on substitute cover will have a hugely negative impact on the quality of education that can be provided in our schools, and on the working conditions of teachers.

This must also be looked at in the context of the re-emergence of fees for third-level education, with the doubling of registration fees as just the start. If you add this to the halving, and eventual cut in child benefit for 18-year-olds, it's pretty clear that the people who'll be hurt by this are the ones who are already struggling to get their kids to college. As for students, they're going to be forced to take out big loans, work part-time jobs (if they can find them) to keep their heads above water and finally emerge out of college into an economic wasteland.

The reason that students, teachers and all the others getting shafted in the budget, are being told to

take the fall-out of the recession is that the government think they can safely push us around. The government retreat on the over-70s medical card shows that we don't have to choose to let them push us around. But what's needed is more than just a few demonstrations and speeches; we'll need to develop our own power, in massive self-organisation from the grassroots level and in our willingness to take the fight to the government.

## Free Education for Everyone

We need to build a national campaign that can fight the battle to prevent cuts at all levels of education, to demand more not less investment in our children's future, to stop the further limitation of access to third-level and, ultimately, to push to improve the entire education system from pre-school upwards. This will require a lot of work, and means

that links will need to be built between students, parents, teachers and other education staff at all levels.

Third-level students have begun the process of building an open campaign which will fight for equal access to education. The 'Free Education for Everyone' Campaign is organising across all colleges. If you want to join the fight for equal access to education, get in touch with Free Education for Everyone.

[stopfees@gmail.com](mailto:stopfees@gmail.com)

This leaflet is being distributed by anarchists who study or work across the education sector. We're working together to build a democratic and open campaign that can fight education cuts, challenge the imposition of fees and push to improve access to, and quality of, education. We want a society where access to wealth and power is equally distributed, and we start by pushing for improvements in our everyday lives. Contact us to find out more.

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