

UK students campaign against tuition raises, 2010

- [\(mainly or initiated by\) student participants](#) [1]

Timing

10 November

2010

to:

9 December

2010

Location and Goals

Country:

United Kingdom

Location City/State/Province:

Across the UK

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

Prevent tuition increases

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in

- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 4th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 5th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 6th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Notes on Methods:

All of these tactics, and likely more, were employed in multiple instances across the United Kingdom. Refer to the narrative and references for more specific instances of these tactics.

Segment Length:

5 days

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Group characterization:

- Students across the United Kingdom

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

National Union of Students (NUS), National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:
Groups in 2nd Segment:
Groups in 3rd Segment:
Groups in 4th Segment:
Groups in 5th Segment:
Groups in 6th Segment:
Segment Length:
5 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

United Kingdom Government Officials

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not Known

Campaigner violence:

Property destruction was frequent in this campaign along with some physical violence toward police. Although a small minority of the campaigners turned to these activities, the number of those who did made it significant in media coverage. The students' actions varied, including fights with police, breaking of windows and destruction of public property; the leadership urged a nonviolent discipline.

Repressive Violence:

Police force frequently fought with protesters.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Total points:

4 out of 10 points

Notes on outcomes:

The government ultimately voted in favor of the tuition raises, so this campaign gets 0/6 in terms of success.

The campaign was, however, very strong and widespread, so it does get full points for survival and growth.

In May of 2010, the United Kingdom held its general elections. The Conservative Party formed the new government by making an alliance with a smaller party, the Liberal Democrats.

The leader of the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg, had run on a promise to vote against any proposals to raise tuition fees for students. However, by October of the same year, Clegg changed his stance on the issue. The government proposed a change in the cap on tuition fees from £3,290 to £9,000. At the same time, the government announced substantial budget cuts, particularly for public services.

The news of these issues resulted in an outcry of protest from the student population across the United Kingdom.

On 10 November the National Union of Students (NUS) organized a protest against both the proposed tuition

increases and budget cuts. Approximately 52,000 people attended the protest outside of the Millbank Tower - the Conservative Party's headquarters.

The protest was for the most part nonviolent. However, the protest included property destruction and the threat of violence against police when, as NUS president Aaron Porter described it, a small minority of the protesters "hijacked" the event. Although the National Union of Students (NUS) intended the protest to be peaceful, some protesters broke glass windows, set off fire extinguishers, and performed other acts of property destruction. In addition, they threatened injury to police by throwing objects such as rocks, wooden banners, and shards of glass at police officers who attempted to control the scene.

The campaign against tuition raises spread rapidly across the United Kingdom. The National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts, which also helped to organize the protest at Millbank Tower, called for a national day of action on November 24th. Students from at least 25 universities began organizing sit-ins and occupations at their respective institutions.

As the campaign continued to spread the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts found itself unable to organize action on this scale while preventing all instances of violence. Episodes of property destruction continued, including destroying a London police riot van.

Both the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts and the National Union of Students attempted to maintain nonviolent discipline, and declared a second national day of action. The police force arrested 139 people for breach of the peace and other episodes of property destruction were reported.

The government announced a vote on tuition fees to be held on 9 December. Thousands of protesters made their way to Parliament, some fighting their way through 2,800 members of the police and/or breaking off into smaller groups to avoid being contained. 42 protesters were injured. The day's events included smashing windows of the Treasury building and an attack on Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall in their car as the pair drove to an unrelated event in London.

Overall, tens of thousands of students and others joined the protests, while a small fraction of those engaged in property destruction and/or violence. The mass media coverage of the campaign focused almost exclusively on the property destruction and violence when those were present in the larger actions.

Parliament voted in favor of the tuition rise.

Research Notes

Sources:

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Blake, Heidi. "Student Tuition Fee Protest Turns Violent as Tory Headquarters Evacuated - Telegraph." Telegraph.co.uk - Telegraph Online, Daily Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph - Telegraph. 10 Nov. 2010. Web. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/8123194/Student-tuition-fee-protest-turns-violent-as-Tory-headquarters-evacuated.html>>.

Coughlan, Sean. "Student Tuition Fee Protest Ends with 153 Arrests." BBC. 1 Dec. 2010. Web. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11877034>>.

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"The UK Student Movement." CrimethInc. Ex-Workers' Collective. 26 Jan. 2011. Web. <<http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2011/01/26/the-uk-student-movement/>>.

Waldram, Hannah. "Cardiff Students Protest as Assembly Pledges to Pay for Welsh Students | Cardiff | Guardian.co.uk." Guardian.co.uk. 30 Nov. 2010. Web. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/cardiff/2010/nov/30/cardiff-students-protests-university-fees-welsh-assembly-government-announcement>>.

"What Is the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts?" National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts. Web. <<http://anticuts.com/what-is-the-national-campaign-against-fees-and-cuts/>>.

Additional Notes:

Video footage of Millbank Tower protest:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMur4ohQA9s>

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Ashley Banks, 29/04/2011

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