

Funding the Future

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I'm not sure I like the term Neets - which stands for "not in employment, education and training". But it's highly relevant. There [are coming on for a million 16 to 24 year olds in this category now](#).

The Neets are important - those who are unemployed at this age are, evidence shows, likely to be harmed for life. Their earning capacity will always be impaired. Their chance of successive periods of unemployment is high. And with that many out of work its hard to imagine people do not knwo someone in this group in society - I certainly do.

We have seen mass opposition to the sale of forests. But now we need to see mass opposition to this waste of human talent. And some are protesting, and rightly so. This is in part what UK Uncut is about. As [Heather Stewart said in the Observer today](#):

A new generation is starting to join the dots between, for example, bumper bonuses at the banks, large-scale tax avoidance by some of Britain's biggest companies, and the age of austerity being so painfully imposed on the rest of us. It is, as they quite rightly say, not fair — and Osborne's doctrine that government must "get out of the way" and let the private sector flourish will cut no ice with those queueing outside the jobcentre. They may not be as organised as the "save our forests" campaign that forced the government into an embarrassing U-turn over its plans to flog off our woodland; but they have every right to be heard.

They're right to notice this link.

It's noted again in the [Observer's coverage of BP's claim](#) for a massive tax refund - a claim made in support of its right to the free movement of capital it says - a claim to be pursued ahead of course of the right of young people to work in this country. As is again noted:

The tax bills of major companies have been under scrutiny this month since it emerged Barclays paid just £113m in corporation tax in 2009 despite reporting £11.6bn of profits . Barclays is benefiting from rules allow all companies to use losses to offset against future profits. [Chancellor George Osborne has ruled out introducing rules](#) that could place a limit on how long such losses can be carried forward.

The bailed-out banks Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group are not paying any corporation tax at all and analysts believe it could be many years before they do so.

HSBC, which is expected to report £12bn of profits on 28 February, can also be expected to face questions about how much corporation tax it pays in the UK.

I'm delighted to have aid some part in raising these questions. This debate - on tax justice as justice for people as opposed to capital in this country - is key to the debate on the future we want.

The question it asks is what comes first - people or capital?

And it asks the question - why do some (corporations and their owners, all of them) seem able to avoid their responsibility - not just here but right around the world (see this article [about Australia if in doubt](#))?

This is why tackling the rolling back of the corporate tax regime - [whatever its apologists say](#) - is so clearly a choice by the ConDem government - and one that is so very obviously wrong.

Come April this government's contempt for Neets will become very obviously just a part of their contempt [for all middle and low income people in this country](#). And this is a choice - a point I made on Newsnight last week in the context of the choice to reduce the burden of corporation tax whilst at the same time imposing increasing burdens on the young, poorest and middle income people of this country.

It's right to protest against this choice.

It's a choice that Cameron, through gerrymandered electoral reform wants to make permanent by seeking to deny forever the chance (he hopes) of electing anything but a Conservative government.

It's a chance we need to deny him. Fianna Fail sought to destroy Ireland for the benefit of a few. Cameron is seeking to destroy whole swathes of hope in this country for much the same reason. And we need to treat him and his government and its partners with the same contempt that the Irish have now shown for Fianna Fail.

And yes, peaceful protest - peaceful mass protest if need be - is an essential part of that. Because people come before capital, and the rights of capital's owners to preserve their wealth at cost to all else.