



Politeia, 22 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0QP  
E mail: [info@politeia.co.uk](mailto:info@politeia.co.uk) Telephone: 0207 240 5070

**PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE**

Publication Date: Immediate

***University Challenge: Freedom, Fees and Future Funding***  
**Dr John Marenbon**

The debate about top up fees is not just about money. At stake is the vital matter of freedom without which the universities will not survive, says John Marenbon in Politeia's next pamphlet *University Challenge: Freedom, Fees and Future Funding*. The measure is rightly described (by its critics) as Thatcherite, for it will promote two principles of modern conservatism: that institutions should have the freedom to shape their own destiny and that individuals should take responsibility for the decisions which shape their lives. For this reason, the measure should, in principle, be supported by the Conservative party.

However, Dr Marenbon identifies the failings. First the plan for giving additional support -means tested - to those from less well-off families is unfair, for the loan is to the student not the family. It is the student who will be paying back at a rate to be determined by earnings and there is no reason to subsidise high earners more than lower earners, whatever the background, especially as it is intended that repayment is linked to earnings. Indeed by abolishing means testing and treating all students as equal, the money saved could be used to make for a less burdensome scheme all round

Second the proposals for the Access Regulator are not what they seem and Mr Clarke's intentions to control applications, rather than admissions will only accelerate the unwelcome trend of politicians pontificating, if not interfering in university admissions, especially as they have done lately, in Oxford and Cambridge. Fresh dangers too are posed especially to the elite universities.

Third, Mr Clarke's technocratic view of the purpose of universities as narrow training grounds for workers bodes ill for institutions whose purpose is the pursuit of knowledge, should have no place.

The author suggests how the principle, which is essentially sound, might be put into practice to accommodate these objections. In particular he shows how the scheme might be improved to make it less burdensome to all concerned and suggests that instead of the loan, which is unattractive to many, a LAIN (Liability Against INcome) might be substituted, to be paid back at a rate more congenial to graduate employees and over a longer period.

**\* The text will be available by e mail in advance to journalists on application by response to this message.** to Politeia on 0207 240 5070, or by e-mail to [info@politeia.co.uk](mailto:info@politeia.co.uk)

**The author:** Dr John Marenbon is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. His interests include political thought and the history of philosophy. His publications include *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* and for Politeia, *A Moral Maze: Government values in education*. Most recently he has also contributed to *Comparing Standards: Academic and Vocational 16- 19 year olds* and with Oliver Letwin MP *Conservative Debates: Liberty under the Law*.

*\*Systems for Success: Models for Healthcare Reform*, by Sheila Lawlor, Georg Baum, Director of Hospital Financing Division of the German Ministry of Health, Jean-Louis Beaud de Brive, *Avocat General* in the Office of the Deputy to the *Procureur General*, and Deepak Lal, Professor of Economics at UCLA is available at £7.00 from Politeia, 22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QP  
Tel No. 0207 240 5070, [info@politeia.co.uk](mailto:info@politeia.co.uk)  
Tel No. 020 72405070 to Sheila Lawlor at Politeia or 001 3108 254521 to Deepak Lal in Los Angeles.