

STRIKE FOR THE CLIMATE, 20 SEPTEMBER

Every day brings new climate calamities. Beyond these looms the risk of cascading 'tipping points' and runaway warming. Millions of people are suffering under the impact of extractive industries, pollution and climate change. We know the problem facing us is not technological, but political. A mass movement against climate change is emerging. How can we win?



The global school students' strikes have shifted the debate on climate. Now there is a call for workers to join the climate strikes on 20 September. This is a crucial opportunity for the movement. Strikes are potentially an extremely powerful form of direct action. Almost nothing happens without workers working – no goods are made nor services are produced. Strikes can create a crisis for businesses, industries and governments.

The UCU union, which organises university and college workers, and the BFAWU union, which organises bakers and food workers such as those as Greggs, McDonald's and Wetherspoons, have already backed the idea of striking on 20 September. Members of other unions are pushing to follow suit. If you or someone you know is in a union, they can use this template motion (tiny.cc/climatemotion). UCU has sent a motion to the TUC Congress, which brings together most of the unions, calling for a 30-minute stoppage on the day – not enough, but something to build on.

IT WON'T HAPPEN AUTOMATICALLY

Motions to conferences help, but they don't make strikes – workers do. And unions are much more ready to talk positively about strikes than to call them. This is partly because British law doesn't give a full right to strike, and if unions called strikes directly about climate change they would be open to injunctions and potentially unlimited fines.

However, workers can strike even without their union officially calling it. This used to be the norm, but is much less common these days because workers are scared of being sacked. So building up to a really mass strike over climate is going to take work. It will mean getting workers to take whatever action they feel they can now, however big or small. Any action helps push forward the discussion, draw more people in, and get us closer to the action we will need to prevent climate catastrophe.

rs21 has produced a video discussing the practicalities of striking for climate in the workplace: tiny.cc/strike4climatevideo.

If you're in work and not in a union, join one. This site helps you work out which one (www.tuc.org.uk/join-union) but only covers TUC-affiliated unions. There are also unaffiliated unions doing good work. If you are not in paid work, you can join Unite Community (unitetheunion.org/community).

Get involved with campaigns such as:

- UK Student Climate Network
- Extinction Rebellion
- One Million Climate Jobs
- Power Beyond Borders
- Scot.E3
- Local anti-fracking campaigns

There's lots more information about climate and the environment via tiny.cc/rs21climate.

THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE BREAKDOWN

A movement that wants to win can't avoid politics, because politics is about power: the power to win and the power of climate enemies. But what politics?

OPPOSE FOSSIL CAPITAL

Everyone can see that the government is not taking enough action to radically reduce emissions, but why? It is not simply corrupt or inept. States compete by encouraging capital accumulation, so protect the interests of polluting and exploitative corporations. Their pursuit of profit and economic growth at any price is no accident, it is the essence of capitalism.



The repression of anti-fracking protesters who disrupt fossil fuel extraction shows that the state puts capital before people. We need mass direct action against both fossil capital and its state backers.

JUST TRANSITION

A minority of wealthy individuals and corporations are responsible for the vast majority of atmospheric carbon, yet they are the ones with the greatest stake in the status quo. The rich are already planning to insulate themselves from the worst effects of climate chaos while failing to prevent it - and to repress the rest of us. The global majority will have to take them on to protect our environment. Diversifying our movement and mobilising that global majority means a just transition is vital. It must offer secure green housing, jobs and transport for everyone. This

will need programmes of publicly funded investment and the retraining of workers whose livelihoods currently rely on carbon intensive industries. There are already trade unionists making this case through campaigns like One Million Climate Jobs and Scot.E3.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Colonialism and imperialism have always gone hand in hand with extractive industries and environmental destruction. Fossil capital and the arms industry profit from imperialist conflict and competition. Imperialist states fight to control natural resources, build extractive infrastructures that destroy the conditions of life for indigenous peoples, and routinely violate the flimsy and inadequate international agreements on emissions. The climate movement must be anti-imperialist and stand in solidarity with indigenous people against incursions by extractive industries. Campaigns demanding that corporations and public institutions divest from fossil capital and the arms industry are gaining ground, from university campuses to workers' pensions.

MIGRANT SOLIDARITY & THE FAR RIGHT

As climate chaos and war displaces millions of people in the Global South, imperialist states are militarising their borders against the survivors of their own policies. Many on the far right are climate deniers, promoting carbon-intensive industries. Brazil's recently-elected far-right President Jair Bolsonaro poses an existential threat to the rainforest and to indigenous peoples. Others are using the climate crisis to justify genocidal racism, blaming people from poor countries, who have contributed little to this catastrophe but face the worst consequences. Climate change is an international crisis that demands an internationalist solution. We need to oppose the far right, build solidarity with migrants and opposition to border controls.