

STRIKE WHILE THE IRON'S HOT

Inflation is higher than it has been in the last 40 years; Ofgem has announced that the annual energy price cap will rise to around £2800 a year in October; and wages are 10% lower than in 2008 in real-terms. Almost all of us see an impact on our quality of life. More people are driven into poverty, with serious impacts on physical and mental health.

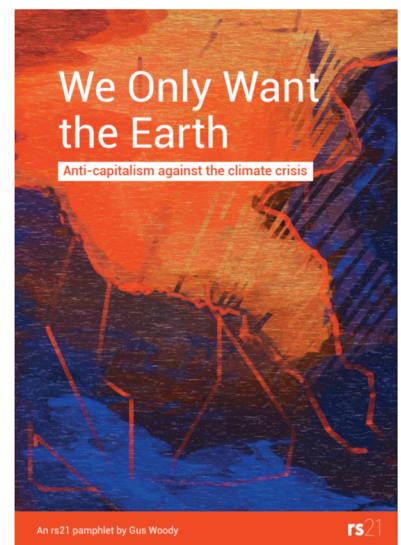
We are told we have to accept higher energy costs because of Russia's indefensible invasion of Ukraine, while energy companies report record profits. Inflation pre-dates the invasion, although both the war and Western sanctions (which do more to enrich bosses and drive up fuel prices than to help Ukraine) have made it worse.

The Tory government's 'solution' to spiralling energy costs, a grant which is lower than the planned price rise, is accompanied by plans to prolong Britain's reliance on fossil fuels by keeping coal power stations open. 'Tax relief' will double for British energy companies extracting yet more fossil fuels. The government has approved Jackdaw - a large new North Sea gasfield. In other words, Tory policies lock Britain and the world into a carbon bubble. The cost of these grants has not been put on fossil fuel companies, it has been put on the global working class of today and tomorrow, as we face escalating climate breakdown.

Tories want you to believe that rising wages will lead to a 'wage-price spiral', pushing prices up even further, but rising wages are not the cause of this crisis, and lowering them won't be the solution. Rising interest rates won't stop firms putting up prices, but it is tipping the economy towards recession. Whoever wins the Tory leadership race will continue to wage class war, making workers shoulder the burden of the cost-of-living crisis rather than letting profits take the hit.

As rail workers and other strikers have shown this summer, the best way to fight for better wages is to organise at work – unionise, negotiate higher pay, and take action if you meet resistance. But it's not just about wages. We also need to organise in working-class communities. The donthelp.uk campaign is pushing to get a million people to pledge to cancel their energy bill payments from 1 October. Thousands have already signed up as local organisers. The tactic is simple: a consumer strike that collectively refuses to pay. This will hit energy companies' pockets until the government or energy companies lower prices.

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STRIKES BRING HOPE

RMT rail workers' three strike days in June scared the Tory government. Reckless, wanton, selfish and irresponsible are good words to describe Boris Johnson - not workers fighting to defend their jobs and livelihoods. Across Britain, the pickets won huge support. Now more unions are moving to take action. CWU members in Royal Mail and BT voted by over 90% to strike. Ballots are being held across the public sector. Anti-union legislation slows this down, so it'll run through to autumn. The Tories have also rushed through new legislation to legalise employers using agency workers to cover for striking workers.

Workers take action in defiance of anti-union legislation all the time - such as May's wildcat strike by North Sea gas workers. If the courts come for any of us we must back each other, just as we must back those targeted by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act and other repressive legislation.

The more workers who win, the more it gives hope to the rest of us and the more strength and inspiration is given to community campaigns. We see this in the USA where successful unionisation at Amazon and Starbucks is inspiring more workers to have a go.

We can all help grow this wave of workplace resistance by organising where we work and by giving solidarity to everyone who fights back. Hold Tory MPs in your area to account, and take part in protest movements that oppose the Tories' divisive and violent actions. Whether it's organising at work, taking part in Don't Pay, climate campaigning, police abolitionism, anti-fascism, anti-racism, migrant solidarity or trans-inclusive feminism (just as examples!), we all have our part to play in making Britain harder for the Tories to rule, whoever their leader is.

WORKERS CAN WIN A GUIDE TO ORGANISING AT WORK IAN ALLINSON

Many workers can see the need to organise at work, but don't know how to do it effectively. This autumn Pluto Books is publishing *Workers Can Win: a Guide to Organising At Work*.

For more info or to pre-order a discounted copy, visit rs21.org.uk/workerscanwin or use the QR code below.



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