

# JACKDAW

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS

**BACK OUT ON  
THE STREETS!**

ISSUE N° 11 FREE

# THE PRICE OF WAR

“I can’t breathe” stands out from the Black Lives Matter movement after George Floyd’s death. It screams from the streets of Aleppo after two weeks of chlorine bombs. It resonates in the basements of Mariupol after a month of food and water sucking siege.



Germany, street art by Eme Freethinker

For our class in war, on and off the battlefield, that cost is counted in blood, bone and tears. In Ukraine, the most conservative estimates count the dead at around 20,000 – 50,000 in Mariupol alone according to the UN. Other casualties will be many times higher as more massacres like the one in Bucha are revealed.

For those in power these are just numbers. As Stalin put it “one death is a tragedy, a million deaths a statistic”. What the rich care about is the money, and that cost is also becoming mind boggling.

\$65 billion to date is the estimate of the reconstruction cost of Ukraine so far. This does not include the damage to the Donbass or the last 8 years of attritional con-

flict. Neither does it include the cost of munitions so far discharged by both sides. The Ukrainian anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles alone range from \$12,000-\$100,000 each, their respective targets around 500 times that. Add to this rocketing commodity prices and the NATO mobilisation and change from \$100 billion would be hard to find after the first month of this new conflict.

In context, that’s 25% of the UK’s COVID response over two years or the cost of fixing social care for a decade. It’s not going to finish anytime soon and the cost, alongside the human misery, is only set to rise.

For the rich this is a brinkmanship gamble with their eye on the prize.

Resource acquisition – the world’s bread basket; replacement arms deals, the political power of a new Cold War and lucrative reconstruction contracts with the influence that will buy. Snatch and grab hasn’t worked for Russia and China and the West are laying their tables for a feast.

As for the loss of ‘variable capital’, that’s us, the working class, there’s plenty more where we came from – they are also betting on numbers.

Despite the cost of dying being so much higher than the cost of living, the potential dividends and rewards mean that we will continue

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## **INSIDE**

- **Government and energy companies take us for fools**
- **Strike level at highest for five years!**



# The Government and Energy Companies Take Us For Fools



**“We call for the formation of community self-defence assemblies to protect and help vulnerable community members, for example, by setting up free pantries, and to coordinate community self-defence and to fight back against the energy companies.”**

On April 1st, most of us looked at dwindling incomes and soaring energy bills. Unless you're an elected politician, of course. For them it's the day members of the House of Commons each had their wages boosted by £2,212-a-year, with their salaries rising to £84,144 from £81,932. In the Scottish Parliament, MSP salaries rose to £64,470.

The Royal Family, too, were well insulated from the energy price hike. For them, the Sovereign Grant has increased by over 55% since 2012. And that is aside from the costs of Buckingham Palace renovations.

The energy companies are

laughing too, with British Gas profits doubling to £948m. The UK's Big Six energy companies between them raked in more than a billion pounds of profit ahead of April's record hike in bills. Despite this, many people will effectively be forced to give the energy companies interest-free loans, month-by-month building up credit with the bloated energy giants just to help their cash flow.

#### Poorest Hit Hardest

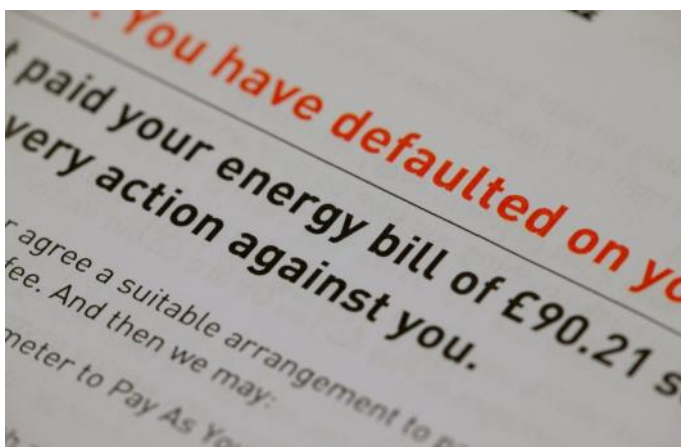
The poorest among us were hit the hardest. Those on lowest incomes are more likely to be on prepayment meters. For the 4.5 million people on prepayment meters, the price of energy has now risen by an average £708 – to £2,017 a year, the biggest average jump in prices.

This is on top of other bills climbing too, with food prices already up sharply and warnings to expect staple foods to increase even further in price in the months ahead. And that's not the end of it. We already know the energy

price cap will be up again in October, just in time for the colder months.

We can't expect politicians to help us. They're alright on their big salaries. The Labour Party isn't the answer. Sir Keir Starmer, talking about the energy bills, said "People don't want a revolution". Are you sure about that, Keir? Because it's not looking like anything else is going to help us. And people aren't just afraid. We're angry. Angry to have been taken for April Fools. The only people who will help us are ourselves. Only direct action will get the goods. We need to organise in our communities and stand together against the energy companies and the greedy, complacent politicians.

We call for the formation of community self-defence assemblies to protect and help vulnerable community members, for example by setting up free pantries, and to coordinate community self-defence and to fight back against the energy companies.





# IT'S OFFICIAL!

## Strike level highest for five years!

The Trades Union Council has counted more than 300 strikes and other labour disputes for this year alone. The main concerns of the striking workers have been over wage parity and sick pay, and over fire and rehire. The soaring cost of living, with huge fuel, energy, and food price rises will undoubtedly fuel this present strike wave.

As we regularly report on our website, major strikes are continuing at Chep in Trafford Park, GE Aviation, and Coventry with the bin workers, who have been on strike since the end of January. In addition, other bin workers, as we have reported, are taking or will take strike action – Adur and Worthing Council in East Sussex, Biffa in Manchester, North Somerset Environment Company, FCC Environment in Barrow and Cardiff Council.

Hackney Council workers are striking after rejecting a derisory 1.25% pay offer.

Parking wardens are balloting for strike action at Wiltshire Council after they suffered a 10% pay cut.

Workers at Valeo Confectionary in York, who make Fox's Glacier Mints are striking over fire and rehire which will lead to worse conditions. A number of two-hour strikes have already taken place.

Tugboat crews working for Svitzer Marine at Teesport are striking over another rotten pay offer.

Workers at NSK Bearings



Coventry bin workers

and AKS Precision Ball Factories in Durham, which supplies car manufacturers are striking every Wednesday and Saturday over a measly 1.6 pay offer.

Baggage handlers at Luton Airport are striking over employers failing to deliver on their agreement to improve sick pay.

JustEast couriers, organised in the IWGB base union, and employed by subcontracting agency Stuart, have been on strike for over 100 days over a huge pay cut. This affects Sheffield and other towns and cities.

Distribution workers at ASDA are balloting for strike action over a cut in sick pay.

Conductors on the Trans Pennine Express struck on April 10th and will continue to strike over pay.

Cleaners employed by Atalian Servest, who work on Avanti West trains, went on strike on April 9th and 10th demanding a wage just above the poverty line.

Postal workers voted by 97.3% for strike action after rejecting a 2% pay offer. It remains to be seen if the CWU union will sabotage any action. Meanwhile railworkers in

the RMT union are balloting for strike action over a pay freeze and job security. If strike action takes place it will affect 17 train operators.

In further education, workers are balloting at six colleges over a pay rise after ten years of pay freeze. Workers at 150 universities have also balloted over further strike action over attacks on their pensions. Locally, workers at Staffordshire University are striking over plans by the employers to employ new staff by an outsourced company. Dundee University workers have also been on strike over pensions. Strike action has also taken place at eight other universities, including at Edinburgh Napier. College lecturers in Scotland have voted to strike over pay.

Teachers at Pocklington School in East Yorkshire will strike on April 27th and 28th over plans by the employers to take them out of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. A similar strike over pensions took place in March at the Girls Day School Trust. Teachers on the Isle of Man have also voted to strike over pay.

**"The main concerns of the striking workers have been over wage parity and sick pay, and over fire and rehire. The soaring cost of living, with huge fuel, energy and food price rises will undoubtedly fuel this present strike wave."**





## Anarchist Communist Group

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### WHO WE ARE...

The Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) is a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation which is dedicated to seeking a complete transformation of society, and the creation of anarchist communism.

This will mean the working class overthrowing capitalism, abolishing the State, getting rid of exploitation, hierarchies and oppressions, and halting the destruction of the environment. To do this, we believe it is important to be organised.

We are committed to building an effective organisation that works towards the common goal of anarchist communism, in cooperation with other working class organisations and in grass roots campaigns.

We strive to base all our current actions on the principles that will be the basis of the future society: mutual aid, solidarity, collective responsibility, individual freedom and autonomy, free association and federalism.

If you want to join the ACG, then look first at our **Aims & Principles** on our website

[www.anarchistcommunism.org](http://www.anarchistcommunism.org)

You can also drop us a line at

[info@anarchistcommunism.org](mailto:info@anarchistcommunism.org)

## Zero For Conduct



Rebel Education Worker Soapbox

[educationworker.wordpress.com](http://educationworker.wordpress.com)

## Health Workers United

For working class independent action

[healthworkersunited.wordpress.com](http://healthworkersunited.wordpress.com)



## The Price of War (from front page)

to be kept poor and used as gaming chips in their brinkmanship.

For this privilege we will be asked to pay more in taxes and inflation. We too need to gamble on numbers. They are right! There are so many more where we come from and we have a power yet to be realised. We have glimpses of this power every day we struggle and we see it bubble and erupt in the fight against austerity, the resistance

to war, at the ports against P&O. It has been parallel to their power since capitalism began its exploitation of our labour. As the poet Shelley exhorted angrily in the Masque of Anarchy following the Peterloo massacre of Lancashire workers:

*"Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number  
Shake your chains to earth like Dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you –  
Ye are many – they are few."*

Red and Black Clydeside

**red and black**  
clydeside

**BOOKFAIR  
AND GATHERING**  
of community resistance  
and the libertarian left

**SAT 7 MAY 2022**  
3PM – 9PM STALLS, TALKS, MEETINGS

**THE CLUBROOM  
CCA - 350 SAUGHIEHALL STREET  
GLASGOW G2 3JD**  
FREE

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