

COST OF LIVING CRISIS- WORKERS NEED REAL PAY RISES!

Energy bills are through the roof – over 20% in the last year! Everyone notices the huge spike in the cost of food, fuel, entertainment and transport. Households are forking out thousands more for the basics. We are all feeling the pinch. This cannot go on. Meanwhile there are billions in profits are being made off the back of this crisis. Electric Ireland, to take just one example, recently reported profits of EUR 357 million!

The capitalist establishment parties in the Dáil are making much of Budget proposals for the cost of living crisis. We all know these will be woefully short of what we need. We all know these are pro-big bUsiness parties who do not care about the needs of working class people. A couple of hundred euros of energy credits for a month or two is not going to make any difference.

Fight for Real Pay Rises

While big business is making record profits, the working class is falling further behind. The Central Statistics Office reports price inflation of 8.7% over the twelve months to August. Yet the same institution admits that average weekly wages to June 2022 grew by only 2.4%! The difference between wages and prices was more than 6%. In cash terms, this means workers are hundreds of euro behind every month; thousands every year. That gap is only going to grow wider as this crisis continues. Wages are clearly

not matching price increases and this will drive hundreds of thousands into poverty.

Too many workers are already there. The minimum wage remains a poverty level wage and should be scrapped and replaced by a Living Wage. Yet, even the recommended Living Wage of EUR 12.90 per hour is well short of what workers need to live a decent life. The demand to increase the Living Wage to EUR 15 per hour is now not enough. A Living Wage of at least EUR 17 per hour is what the present crisis demands. We also need to demand that the minimum wage and Living Wage automatically increase with inflation. The cost of living crisis we are living through has dramatically worsened the long-standing crisis of low and stagnant wages.

Urgent Action Now! Build the Resistance – If We Fight We Can Win!

Militant Left argues that we need immediate measures to protect the living standards of working class people. We demand increases in wages, pension and social welfare that match inflation. To do this we must take energy supply out of private hands through public ownership and put it under democratic workers control. Some on the Left call for price controls. Militant Left argues we can't control what we don't own. Nationalisation of energy companies, and all elements of the energy supply infrastructure, would allow for massive price cuts. This is the

FIGHT FOR REAL PAY RISES

most effective way of dealing with spiralling costs. We need rent controls and reductions now.

Public ownership of the economy under workers' control and management will eliminate the profiteering and exploitation at the root of the present crisis.

Get Organised: For Fighting Trade Unions

In the absence of a mass political party of our class, the best defence workers have is membership of a trade union. Trade unions must ditch all notions of partnership with Right-wing governments and go on the offensive. If this means confrontation with an increasingly vicious State and engaging in so-called 'illegal' industrial action, then so be it.

The present crisis leaves no room for politeness or inappropriate notions of industrial peace. Only 20% of workers are members of a union and even fewer are covered by collective bargaining agreements. The labour movement must mobilise to secure the right to collective bargaining and trade union recognition. We need inflation busting pay increases across all sectors of the economy. If this doesn't happen, then hundreds of thousands of workers will sink even further into poverty and hardship.

The current public pay deal, for example, falls significantly short of what is workers in the public sector need to truly defend their living standards. It does however show that this government when confronted by determined trade unions will make concessions. Public servants should reject this deal and push for a campaign of strike action for more. The money is there: the Exchequer is in surplus of 6.4 billion euro. Enough to fund an immediate 10% pay increase for public servants and build 20,000 local authority houses.

There is no time to lose. Workers need action today to stop Workers need action today to stop the cost of living crisis. Some in the labour movement are making a huge mistake by advocating for the acceptance below inflation pay increases in an effort to appear 'reasonable'. This is not the way to protect workers' living standards. Workers in trade unions should join with those in unorganised workplaces, pensioners, young people and community activists to build a massive fightback against the huge cuts in living standards that will

result from this crisis.

For a Socialist Future

Capitalism is a system of permanent crisis for working class people. We are always the ones who have to pay. In 2008 we paid for the bank bailout; during the austerity years we had to pay through cuts to public services, mass unemployment and emigration; and, now, we are having to pay for the cost of the current economic crisis. This has to end. Only a transformation to a socialist system will end this permanent crisis and ensure a decent society for workers. Join us in the struggle to defend the working class and to fight for a socialist future.

MILITANT LEFT DEMANDS:

- EUR 15 per hour minimum wage with automatic increases to match inflation
- Bring the gas and electricity companies in to public ownership under workers' control. Seize their profits to cut our bills!
- Rent controls now
- Mass public house building programme
- Kick out all investment and vulture funds from the Irish housing system
- Mandatory trade union recognition and collective bargaining rights for all workers

Cost of Living Crisis. Fight for Real Pay Rises

Public Zoom meeting

Tuesday September 27th

7pm

Zoom ID: 854 4246 5159

ABOUT US

Militant Left is a socialist organisation and the Irish section of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI).

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