

# We don't have a cost of living crisis We have a cost o...

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As the Guardian has noted in an email this morning:

*A group of Conservative politicians and their allies are attempting to derail the government's green agenda, leading climate scientists claim. The Net Zero Scrutiny Group (NZSG) has gained widespread media coverage in the past month, [attempting to link the government's net zero agenda to the cost-of-living crisis](#) and calling for cuts to green taxes and an increase of fossil fuel production. Michael Mann, one of the world's leading authorities on the climate and author of The New Climate War, said the group appeared to be attempting to drag climate policies into a culture war, which he described as a "dangerous new tactic being used by those opposed to addressing the ecological emergency".*

The fact that right-wing populists have not, to date, made a big fight back about climate change has always been a little surprising. They were, for a long time, at the heart of climate change denial. They remain the major proponents of the claim that markets can address all issues arising from climate change without any involvement by governments.

Denial did, of course, eventually fail them. The evidence that climate change is happening is overwhelming. It is said that this group of MPs do not deny that.

The claim that markets will, by themselves, address the issues arising from climate change is very obviously false. The fact that most of the investment still made by major oil companies is in carbon-based energy production is the clearest evidence of that. The inability of any market to manage almost any issue relating to the future that is of consequence to human well-being is a further indication of this failure. The whole process upon which business decision-making is based literally discounts the future consequences of current action.

As a result, a new line of attack is emerging. The claim is that it would be nice to have a future, but that we cannot afford it at present, and so we will have to forgo it. The nihilism inherent within this is all too obvious, except I suspect to those who are

promoting it, who would appear to very largely be middle-aged men who are keeping their fingers crossed that they will make it through life before any of the consequences of their actions are really apparent.

The problem for them is that, as with their other claims, this one is very obviously false. We can, of course, afford a future. What we cannot afford is the future and the maintenance of existing property rights which are based upon the extraction of rents based upon the capture of the natural resources of the world in which we live to benefit the financial well-being of a few at cost to the vast majority.

So, for example, we literally cannot afford the existing returns to land that are forcing rents to the highest level in more than a decade, and increasing house prices, and all of the resulting fundamental threats to the cost of living and well-being of most families in the UK.

Nor can we afford the excess profits earned by energy companies, which also filter through into food pricing and so many other issues, all of which arise from resource exploitation.

The simple reality is there is as such no cost of living crisis in the UK, or around much of the world. There is instead a cost of resource exploitation crisis. It is the rents that people must pay to access the basics of living that are causing people to live in the financial stress that far too many suffer. And it is to the maintenance of this stress that this group of Tory MPs is dedicated.

We have a choice. We can have the future that we and our children want. Or we can maintain the current system of exploitation of the planets and the people who live upon it. What we cannot have is both.

The issues that we face is how to resolve this conundrum, but only one outcome is viable.