

LET'S MELT THE PAY FREEZE!

OK, you're here at the rally about the wage freeze for low-paid government workers. Yeah, the recession has hit us hard, with mass layoffs and pay freezes, and the prices of food and stuff keeps going up and up. At the same time CEOs get hefty pay rises and the banks get bailed out. And bosses and managers still treat us like shit.

So what are we gonna do about it? Passively listen to speeches from union bureaucrats in well-paid, cushy jobs? Clap a bit, yell a bit, and then go home?

It's time to start organising ourselves in our own workplaces. We don't need to rely on others to do stuff for us. We can do it ourselves together with our workmates. By looking out for, and supporting each other -- we call it solidarity -- together we can win. This grassroots action is the key to melting the wage freeze.



Ministry of Justice court workers at Manukau and Waitakere have shown the way recently. During the MOJ strikes, they have gone out of their own accord, in addition to the strikes organised by the Public Services' Association. Their wildcat strikes have shut down many courts. It is when us -- the rank and file -- get together and control the strikes our

selves that we are more likely to win (and be harder to break).

Action controlled from above, by union bureaucrats, leads to hollow strikes that are not well-supported. Sure, let's use them to negotiate more pay for less work (stuff their productivity deals!) for us, but in the process you get the feeling you are being kicked around like a football for their own ends.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

That will need to be worked out by us ourselves. But here are a few rough ideas, based on past successful struggles:

- First of all, vote for industrial action where possible and encourage others to do the same. Build a culture of supporting each other at your workplace.
- Make links between workers. Invite all staff at your workplace to your pay dispute meetings whether temps, permanent, members of your union or not.
- Often you don't need to strike. You can stay on-the-job and take action like go-slows and work-to-rules, which can be quite effective. Also it is a good idea to take regular common breaks.
- Take control of the strikes and actions. Make decisions in open workplace meetings with as many people involved as possible rather than leaving it to union full-timers. Call for mass assemblies of workers to control action. Make sure these meetings are run from the floor and not by union officials.
- Visit other workers' picket lines and discuss how you can help each other. Form support groups if you are not on strike.
- Form strike committees or informal groups at your workplace. Think creatively on how you can collectively stuff up your job, as you know your work better than your boss. Take local action against layoffs, bullying and overwork.
- Call for all union officials to be elected by and constantly accountable to the membership. Officials to be subject to immediate recall, and to be paid the average wage.
- Above all, don't trust bosses, union bureaucrats or politicians. Trust yourselves!

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