

Let's Kill The Bill!

Like most of us, you too are probably overworked and underpaid. We slave away for 8 (or more!) hours a day, only to head home and find that we don't have enough money to pay for the things we need to live an enjoyable life. Unfortunately, the Government is now proposing changes to employment law which will only make things worse! If the changes go through, we will all face a future with more unemployment, even less job security, less days off in both sick and annual leave, lower pay and all the stress and frustration that goes with all of that.

But it's not all doom and gloom - together, we have a huge amount of power as workers and, if we can work collectively and exercise that power, we can not only defeat these proposed law changes, but also improve significantly on the status quo!

All over the country, people have been out on the streets marching and rallying against these attacks on workers. But while mass protests on the streets are worthwhile, they will not be enough to roll back these proposed changes on their own. Mass action, like the hundreds of thousands that protested in the street against the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act in 1991, is ignored by those in power when it suits them. We need to take strike action and hit bosses where it really hurts -- their profits.

The Council of Trade Unions is organising protests and probably a nationwide stopwork in October, however we need to go well beyond that if we are to have any chance of stopping these law changes. We need real resistance run by the workers ourselves, not rhetoric and symbolic action. Likewise the Labour Party, which implemented a ban on solidarity strikes and political strikes when it introduced the original Employment Relations Act while it was last in power, is primarily concerned with managing capitalism rather than supporting workers. This means that when push comes to shove, the Labour Party will side with the bosses and make workers suffer - as was most clearly demonstrated during the 1980s when the Lange government introduced the most sweeping right wing reforms this country has ever seen.

What follows are some further ideas for collective resistance to these anti-worker laws.

We need to take industrial action against the bill where possible. This action can be legal or not. If you are not in negotiations, and thus cannot strike legally, push to open up negotiations for variations to your contracts to oppose the proposed laws. In that way, you open up space for legal strike action. Or push for unofficial strike action, like taking a mass sickie at your workplace on the day of the stopwork or protests against the bill. We need to build on these actions, and push for more national stopworks and strike action to defeat the bill.

If you can build a strong supportive culture with your workmates, you can create a

situation where action can be taken even when outside the legal restrictions. Support others' struggles too - we are all in this together, and that means that we need to support and encourage each other to the best of our ability. Ensure that all action is controlled by the workers taking it, not by union officials who are removed from the shop floor and don't have the same interests as us.

The new laws will make us work more for less pay. We want more pay for less work. We oppose any deals or laws linked to increases in productivity and work hours (such as reducing our leave or ability to take sickies). The bosses already steal countless hours of our lives and countless dollars from our pockets, they certainly don't deserve even more!

If, at the end of the day, these laws do pass, we need to plan to make them unworkable. Any boss considering firing someone under the 90 Day Bill should know that if they do, they will have pickets outside their business. Likewise for those employers who pressure workers into giving up their 4th week of annual leave. Bosses need to be taught that they cannot use these new laws without there being negative consequences for their profits.

One way to do this is to get involved in creating a network of militant workers in your area. This network could organise the above pickets. It could coordinate action and solidarity to support and encourage those taking industrial action and to resist any repercussions on those going beyond the law. If you are interested in being involved in a network like this, please contact us below.

We want to dump not only these new laws, but the whole sordid Employment Contracts/Relations Act era which has strangled workers' ability to strike, thus delivering massive profits to capitalists. In the end, there is no such thing as pushing for fairness at work. The capitalist system is at its heart exploitative, and all bosses are exploiters, even the 'nice' ones. Ultimately, we need to get rid of the whole exploitative system and bring in a classless, stateless society whereby we freely co-operate to meet our collective needs rather than be wage-slaves for the profit of a few.

This leaflet was produced by the Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement (AWSM), a national organisation working towards a classless, stateless society: anarchist-communism. As class-struggle anarchists our priority is active involvement in workplace struggles and industrial action as well as community based campaigns in our neighbourhoods. We encourage working class people to organise themselves against capital and the state. We do not seek to paternalistically organise people from the top down.



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