

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Take to the Streets: Join the Nationwide protests and any further local actions.

Talk to your workmates: Build a culture in your workplace where you all support each other when there's an issue, even if it only affects one or two people.

Collectivise problems: it's much harder for the boss to ignore a larger number of workers.

Take industrial action where possible: Work to rules, go slows, taking lunch breaks at the same time, strike activity and more. As workers we produce the wealth that lines our bosses pockets — by threatening that profit we can force bosses to give into our demands. When we do engage in industrial activity, make sure it is controlled by us, not by trade unions. While unions can sometimes be useful (for legal protection, resources etc), industrial activity is our weapon, not theirs, and should be controlled by us without interference.

Support other workers' struggles: We're all in this together, and one strong workplace won't be enough. If you hear of another workplace that's going out on strike, and you can make the picket line, go and stand with them. If you can't,

support them in other ways — there may be a strike fund you can donate to, or even just go in when they're not striking and let the workers know that you support them

Don't rely on the trade unions or the Labour Party: The response of the Council of Trade Unions (the umbrella body for NZ unions) to these latest attacks has been pitiful. They have announced they will distribute 20,000 copies of a 'Fairness at Work' leaflet — not even enough to reach 10% of their affiliate unions' membership, let alone the millions of ununionised workers. The Labour Party introduced the anti-worker ERA in its last term in power and has shown time and time again that it is no friend to the working class. In opposition it may encourage members to attend protests, but in Government it'll just be more of the same.

This is our fight: These attacks impact on all of us who are forced to work to survive. We, the working class, must stand together and fight in our workplaces to not only protect what little we have, but to create a better future for us all. Separate we will fall, but together we have a chance to win.

FOR MORE INFO CHECK OUT:

TEXT BY AWSM: WWW.AWSM.ORG.NZ



90 DAY FIRE AT WILL

THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT
LAW & WHAT WE CAN DO TO FIGHT THEM



The National Government recently announced a series of new attacks on workers across New Zealand. The raft of proposed changes to the anti-worker Employment Relations Act (ERA, brought in by the previous Labour Government in 2000) and the Holidays Act will serve to further cut job security, wages and conditions for hundreds of thousands of workers in both the public and private sectors.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES?

Perhaps the biggest change is the expansion of the 90 day fire at will scheme. Under this, any worker can be fired within the first 90 days of employment without any way to legally challenge this. When originally introduced following the 2008 election, this only applied to workers in workplaces with 19 or fewer employees (around 1/3 of the total workforce) however the proposed expansion would see it cover all workplaces. Since it was brought in, approximately 22% of workers hired under the scheme have been fired within 90 days, many given neither a reason nor a warning of what was about to occur, leaving them financially screwed.

A number of changes have also been proposed to the personal grievance process and the way the Employment Relations Authority works. All these changes make it harder for workers to challenge harassment, unjust firings and other problems and while making it easier for the bosses to get their way in a system that is already slanted in their favour.

We will also be pressured into working more often. The time honoured tradition of pulling a sickie is under attack. Meanwhile, the 4th week of annual leave will soon be able to be exchanged (for cash), as will public holidays (for other days). National is declaring that both of these exchanges must be initiated by the employee, but in reality many workers will no doubt be pressured by their bosses into making them, especially those workers in the first 90 days of their contracts who are in constant fear of being fired! This all adds up to more work for an already overworked population.

Workers who want to join a trade union may find it much harder if the proposed changes go through. Unions will require permission from the employer before they can set foot on the property, meaning it will be especially difficult for unions to get onto sites where they don't already

have members. Additionally, companies will be able to communicate directly with workers during collective bargaining meaning yellow unions (unions run by the company) may become more common, with the associated drop in wages and conditions.

Separate from this lot of law changes but also coming up soon is a private members bill from National MP Tau Henare, which would place further restrictions on strike activity. The bill, which would force unions to hold secret ballots for all strike activity, would give bosses another avenue with which to have strikes declared illegal, at a time when workers are already heavily restricted in their choice of industrial activity by the ERA.

