

Your job is being stolen away from you by the bosses

On April 17th Fisher & Paykel announced that it would be closing its plant here in Mosgiel, and shifting production to Mexico, Thailand and Italy, with the loss of 430 jobs. You, the guy who's been on the production line making the product, doing all the work and creating all of Fisher & Paykel's wealth, are going to have your job stolen away from you by the bosses.

Hard on the heels of this announcement came the news that Dunedin textile firm Tamahine Knitwear, which employs about 50 workers, will also be closing its doors.

And as if this wasn't enough, ANZ National Bank is also firing 500 clerical and IT jobs and shipping them off to India!

Politicians make sad noises, but no action

National, Labour and local body politicians wept crocodile tears over the news. Finance Minister Michael Cullen sobbed that "manufacturing jobs of this sort have been moving, sadly, to Third World countries around the world for any number of years", while Mayor Peter Chin said he was "shocked" and "hugely disappointed".

Chin nevertheless expressed the pious hope "that Government support is there in terms of the issues that will arise for employees" and then added that "I would trust that Fisher & Paykel will deal with their workers in a proper way". Exactly how taking your job away from you is "treating you in a proper way" remains unclear.

Apparently our Mayor expects you guys to take all of this on the chin.

Mayor Peter Chin leads a council which in recent years has provided millions of dollars in rates relief to the Fisher & Paykel bosses; however it is a fair bet that no such generosity is going to be shown to you, the worker.

Decision is no surprise

It's not as though political leaders have any reason to be surprised at the outcome in the case of Fisher & Paykel.

During last years mayoral election the Workers Party took up the issue of another crime against workers, committed by Wickliffe Press, which despite receiving lavish subsidies decided in

August 2007 to close its business and relocate elsewhere, again firing all of its workers.

We demanded the abolition of corporate welfare, and called instead "for all those large businesses that are threatened with closure because they are no longer deemed profitable by their owners to be taken over and run by the workers themselves."

Pathetic response typical of EPMU

What have the leaders of the union movement been saying about this latest wave of redundancies? What has the leader of your



union, the EPMU, been saying about the theft of your job? And most importantly, what has he been doing about it?

The short answer is – not a lot. He's done nothing, and what he's said has actually been largely supportive of Fisher & Paykel!

Predictably, instead of laying the blame where it belongs at the feet of the employers and the capitalist system, the best the EPMU's national secretary Andrew Little has to offer you guys is the statement that "most exporting manufacturers in NZ are struggling with a high US-NZ dollar but you can expect companies the size of Fisher & Paykel to work hard to keep jobs here." He also complained that the union had "not been properly consulted on this decision" and made the timid "threat" that the union might be "looking to the international trade unions movement for info and advice about conditions in Mexico and measuring conditions there against conditions here."

In other words, the leader of your union is making excuses for the bosses that just fired

you. He is not complaining about your jobs being wrenched away from you, instead he is complaining that your jobs weren't wrenched away from you in consultation with him! And the biggest threat that he's made is that he might do a Google search on Mexico and find out how much workers get paid there (minimum wage is between 48 and 51 pesos an hour depending on where you live, so between \$5.87 and \$6.23NZ. Vast numbers of workers are paid less than this). Fisher & Paykel must be shaking in their shoes.

Capitalism is to blame – time to fight back!

Ultimately the problem of job losses and redundancies has nothing to do with exchange rates, free trade agreements or cheap labour in Third World countries. At the end of the day, the

fight to keep local jobs is nothing more than a fight against the logic of capitalism itself.

Your bosses have stolen your job. Your union leaders have refused to fight for your job. The only person that can do anything now is you!

This pamphlet was produced by the Workers Party of New Zealand. We are a pro-worker, anti-capitalist organisation that is running in the election this year. If you want to find out more about us, our ideas and what we get up to, check out our websites.

www.workersparty.org.nz

www.thespark.org.nz

Workers Party message to redundant workers

Union leaders facing large factory or office layoffs have a clear choice. They can take the safe, well-trodden path of surrender – or stand up to lead their membership in a fight back.

Union leaders prepared to do their duty should call up all meetings of the affected workers and blame the company for the threatened layoffs.

They should encourage workers demands that the company change its policy.

They should advocate worker's occupation of the plant, and organise daily pickets.

Instead of crying about job losses affecting the community, union leaders should get out to the sections of the community who care, and get some action going.

They should demand nationwide union support in the form of plant visits, solidarity messages, money collection, public meetings, and pickets of company offices.

Union leaders should tell the

workers that the more defiance they show, the more chance they have of keeping their jobs, or, at the very least, getting a bigger payout to shut them up.

Union leaders should remind their members that they're fighting for their class and their strong stand today will change public attitudes to redundancy tomorrow and thus help future threatened workers.

That formula is not 'realistic' in some union office terms. It

will not help any union official up the ladder to a parliamentary career; it may even land someone in jail. But the truth is, outright defiance is actually the best shot the workers have to get a better deal in their circumstances.

Workers threatened with redundancy have nothing to lose. Their choice is tame acceptance of dead end legalities, or active fight back. Only one of these options has any possible chance of success.

And even if union leaders don't carry out the actions we've listed here, there's nothing stopping workers doing it themselves.

As Jock Barnes, leader of the militant Waterside Workers Union once said – "The workers fight is never lost. The only time they lose is when they bow their heads."

The Workers Party will actively support any efforts of unionists to defend their jobs.

