

AFTER UNION BUILDINGS: WHERE NEXT FOR THE CAMPAIGN?

EPWP, CHW & ECD workers have put their campaign for permanent jobs and R12,500 on the map. Now we wait for a response from the different government departments, Treasury and the Presidency. We must use this time to strengthen our organisation and prepare for the next phase of the campaign. In this Bulletin, the Marxist Workers Party makes its proposals for the way forward. We encourage workers to begin discussing and debating this vital question immediately.

If the deadline for a response that workers gave to management passes without any serious progress, workers must be prepared to **TAKE TO THE STREETS** again! A programme of rolling mass action, targeting the different departments, must begin immediately.

If management agrees to meet to discuss workers' demands, workers should mobilise to **SUPPORT** their negotiating teams.

If the DID allows the contracts of EPWP workers to expire on 31 March as they have threatened, workers will need to be prepared to **OCCUPY** the department, or the Provincial Legislature, until their positions are guaranteed.

SELF-DEFENCE AGAINST ANY VICTIMISATION OR DEDUCTIONS

Some managers may try to punish workers by disciplinary action and/or deducting money for the two days workers were away from the workplace. **But if workers are united and act in an organised and disciplined way they have nothing to fear!**

In Bulletin No. 4 we reported that the Chief Director of the Department of Health had written to District Chiefs instructing them to extend CHW's contracts by another year. We warned that this was an attempt to split the CHWs away from the campaign. We were proved right! When this ANC-run Department realised that CHW's could not be bought-off so easily, it issued a new letter which revealed what it really thinks of the thousands of CHWs who provide essential health services across Gauteng.

The (acting) Deputy Director General of 'HR & Corporate' instructs managers (i) to institute disciplinary action for misconduct against CHWs who marched to Union Buildings, (ii) to withhold pay for the two days of the march, (iii) to refuse time-off or leave

arrangements, and (iv) to send lists naming every 'guilty' CHW to the central office. **Shame on you Mr Andile Gwabeni!** Workers will want to know if the ANC's Health MEC authorised this...?

Mr Gwabeni's justification for wanting to punish workers is that the march was not an authorised Section 77 action. Do you mean Section 77 of the **LABOUR RELATIONS ACT** Mr Gwabeni? Maybe no one informed you but the EPWPs, CHWs and ECDs do not have the pleasure of being covered by the LRA. If you refuse to recognise CHWs as workers covered by the LRA then you certainly cannot use it to punish them!

Other departments might try the same tricks. If this happens, workers should contact Nupsaw or a leader of the EPWP Workers Forum IMMEDIATELY. Give us the name of the workplace and the manager threatening workers and we will start our own list! If workers feel threatened, or if leading activists are singled-out for victimisation, we advise all workers to gather peacefully in the office of the offending manager and sit down, occupying the manager's office until help arrives.

BROADEN THE CAMPAIGN – BUILD OUR NUMBERS AND MAXIMISE THE PRESSURE

Broadening the campaign must be rolled-out on three levels:

(1) Involve **EVERY** worker in Gauteng who falls under the EPWP umbrella in the campaign. For example, we must reach out and involve the Working on Fire workers and ensure that every location and township, no matter how small or remote, is participating in the campaign. A new programme of general meetings in new areas should be organised.

(2) Spread the campaign **NATIONALLY**. Hopefully, the march to Union Buildings has raised the profile of the campaign and will inspire copy-cat movements. But if not, we must help to get things started. Through family, friends, and during visits home, talk

to EPWPs in other provinces. Pass on the contacts of anyone willing to play a co-ordinating role in new areas to the Forum leadership. We must also have another round of engagements with the trade unions to discuss what role they can play in initiating campaigns in the other provinces.

(3) Win the support of **PERMANENT PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS** and **COMMUNITIES**. Permanent workers want job-security, decent wages and good terms & conditions as they work providing public services; communities want accessible and high-quality public services. EPWP workers want to win permanent jobs as recognition of the essential role they **already** play providing public services. This is the foundation for a **UNITED CAMPAIGN** for well-resourced, fully-staffed, worker- and community-controlled public services. This could raise

the banner of an alternative to the diet of cuts and austerity that the ANC government is feeding to permanent workers and communities.

We could start this with the simple step of writing a **PETITION** that EPWPs ask the permanent workers alongside them in schools, clinics, hospitals and other workplaces to sign to show their support. Likewise in the communities, EPWPs could go door-to-door, or stand at taxi ranks and shopping centres, explaining the campaign and asking people to sign the petition. This could be the foundation for wider protest action that demands permanent jobs for EPWPs in the context of addressing the service delivery crisis in communities and defending the public sector against cuts, austerity and privatisation.