

Crisis? Austerity? We don't care! We need more pay!

Today we will hear what great a job we do and what the House Rules are. Thanks for that. But there is another problem – and we should not walk past it (Rule 3). After four years of pay freezes we have lost nearly 20 per cent of our real wages. And the government is offering 1 per cent this year, even though they can find money for all kinds of bail-outs and army budgets. This is bullshit. And everyone knows it. What we don't know is how to force them to pay us more so that our life is not just survival from day to day. It is a question of power and a question of how to organise ourselves. Full-stop.

Only half of the THH work-force is unionised. And we are organised in different unions. The bosses of these unions can't get it together to decide whether to do a joint action. We should not wait and depend on them to decide. Unison will ballot in mid-June on whether to reject the 1 per cent 'offer'. They will send out individual letters and we will be asked to vote alone from home, without any idea a) what the alternative union demand of a 'substantial wage raise' actually means in proper cash terms; b) what the union is prepared to do, e.g. if there will be a series of one-day strikes, which are generally useless; c) if the majority of e.g. care takers who are not in the union will be encouraged to join possible actions.

So if we try to convince our colleagues that some action for a wage hike is necessary, we first have to convince them to join the union, which costs roughly 150 quid a year. The union itself has not announced yet how much they will demand, how should we know if they are worth their money? The union decision of what will actually happen is made in some board-meeting far removed from our tea-rooms. This is not convincing anyone to move their fucking arse. But doing nothing is not an option (Rule 5)! We don't have an alternative plan. But we must discuss an alternative plan amongst ourselves if we actually want to stop these years of tightening belts till we throw up. What could the discussion look like? Discuss in your tea breaks (otherwise people only stare into their teas or iPhones anyway):

- *for what kind of wage increase are people happy to do some action for?*
- *what do people see as a risk if they, e.g. go on strike?*
- *how could the team or wider strike assembly support people who have particular risks?*
- *what forms of actions harm us the least (in terms of risk and wage loss) and puts most pressure on management and higher up government?*
- *can we expect support from the unions even if our struggle is not decided by their general secretaries?*
- *how can we react to possible repression and scabbing?*
- *how can we go around and ask residents for support, and encourage them to put forward their own demands?(no bedroom tax or evictions in Tower Hamlets etc.)*
- *how can we get in direct touch directly with other workers in the area, without having to wait for a one-day-demo in the unforeseeable future?
(Royal London Hospital, Collages, Transport, Veolia etc.)*
- *where can we meet with two or three hundred people in order to make some final decisions together*
- *how can we make sure that the meeting isn't dominated by two big shots talking, but that everyone can have their say?*
- *and how can we make sure that we have a good time during the action?*

A first step could be that two people from each team or office are delegated to meet up with delegates from other teams in a convenient pub of our choice and talk about what has been discussed. They can then propose an agenda for a wider THH assembly. This is neither rocket science, nor a proper plan, but something similar has to happen to get anything serious going. Otherwise all we can do is moan that nobody loves us and that the unions aren't doing anything about it.