

# WORKERS WILD WEST

DARMOWA GAZETA - GREENFORD, PARK ROYAL, SOUTHALL, HEATHROW.  
NIKT NAS NIE ZBAWI, DLATEGO MUSIMY POLEGAĆ NA SOBIE! 5



## ODZYSKAĆ SIĘ

Nieprzyjemne miejsca pracy są do dupy! Podajemy kilka rad jak poprawić w nich atmosferę. Sześć zawsze wolą, gdy pomiędzy pracownikami panują podziały!

Więcej na s. 2

## NIEWYPŁACONA PENSJA ALBO INNE PROBLEMY W PRACY?

Raz w miesiącu organizujemy spotkania, na których rozwiązujemy nasze problemy związane z pracą lub problemy mieszkaniowe. Więcej informacji nt. dat, godzin i miejsc naszych spotkań...

[www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com](http://www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com)

# WORKERS WILD WEST

[angryworkersworld@gmail.com](mailto:angryworkersworld@gmail.com)

## KIM JESTEŚMY?

Jesteśmy grupą pracowniczą z zachodniego Londynu, wzajemnie się wspieramy w przypadku problemów z pracą, z job center i z landlordami. W naszej sieci nie ma przywódców, jesteśmy niezależni i aby do nas dołączyć, nie trzeba wnosić żadnych opłat. Jeżeli chcesz się z nami spotkać lub podzielić się doświadczeniami z pracy napisz do nas maila...

## FORUM

Napisz (anonimowo) o swoich doświadczeniach z pracy na:

<https://forum.netzwerkit.de/c/workerswildwest>

# WORKERS WILD WEST



ISSUE #5 FREE NEWSPAPER FOR GREENFORD, PARK ROYAL, SOUTHALL, HEATHROW  
NOBODY'S GONNA SAVE US, SO LET'S LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER!

## WHO ARE WE?

We are a coordination of workers in west London, supporting each other with problems at work, job centres and landlords. There are no leaders in this network - we are independent and there is no membership fee. Drop us an email if you want to meet up, or let us know what your workplace is like to work at...

[angryworkersworld@gmail.com](mailto:angryworkersworld@gmail.com)

## TAKE THE POWER BACK

Unfriendly workplaces suck! So here are some tips to try and make the atmosphere better. A divided workforce is always better for the boss!

Read more on page 2



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## UNPAID WAGES OR WORK PROBLEMS?

We meet in a few places around west London every month where you can drop by to discuss a work or housing problem. The idea is to build a local network where we support each other to sort out our problems. Check out posters around town plus our website for dates, times and places...

[www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com](http://www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com)

## FORUM

We have a forum where people can post (anonymously) about their work experiences:

<https://forum.netzwerkit.de/c/workerswildwest>



# TAKE THE POWER BACK - BREATHING SPACE, FRIENDLINESS AND SOLIDARITY AT WORK

It is a strange world. We spend more time at work than with our friends and family. Work eats up our life, but we see work as separate from life. We don't want to take work seriously, because we, as humans, are not taken seriously at work. In the current system, the creativity and life energy of billions is wasted in the way work is organised.

## Democracy? You must be kidding!

They tell us that we live in a democracy - but at the place where we spend most of our life, we have little to say. The way work is organised makes it very difficult to make friends or be friends at work: the machines are too loud, the line too fast to be able to talk (often we are told off for talking 'too much'), people come and go so we might think "why bother getting to know them?", some people think they get easier work if they show that they are better workers than the 'lazy' others - a feeling of competition is encouraged, despite all the 'team work' talk. Work is soulless and makes us feel half-human, so how can we connect to others?

## Small steps to take back control

True, we don't control what is happening in our company, what is produced and how, who is hired and fired and why. But we can start with creating a little breathing space for ourselves and others, some space against productivity targets and for friendliness.

\* Ease the work pressure and try not to compete with your co-workers. Don't work faster than the average, try to work a bit slower and give more time to your fellow humans. Encourage others to do the same.

\* Don't complain about fellow workers to supervisors and management. Try to speak to your colleagues directly. If the problem is more serious, talk to other colleagues you trust about it. Together you will find a solution.

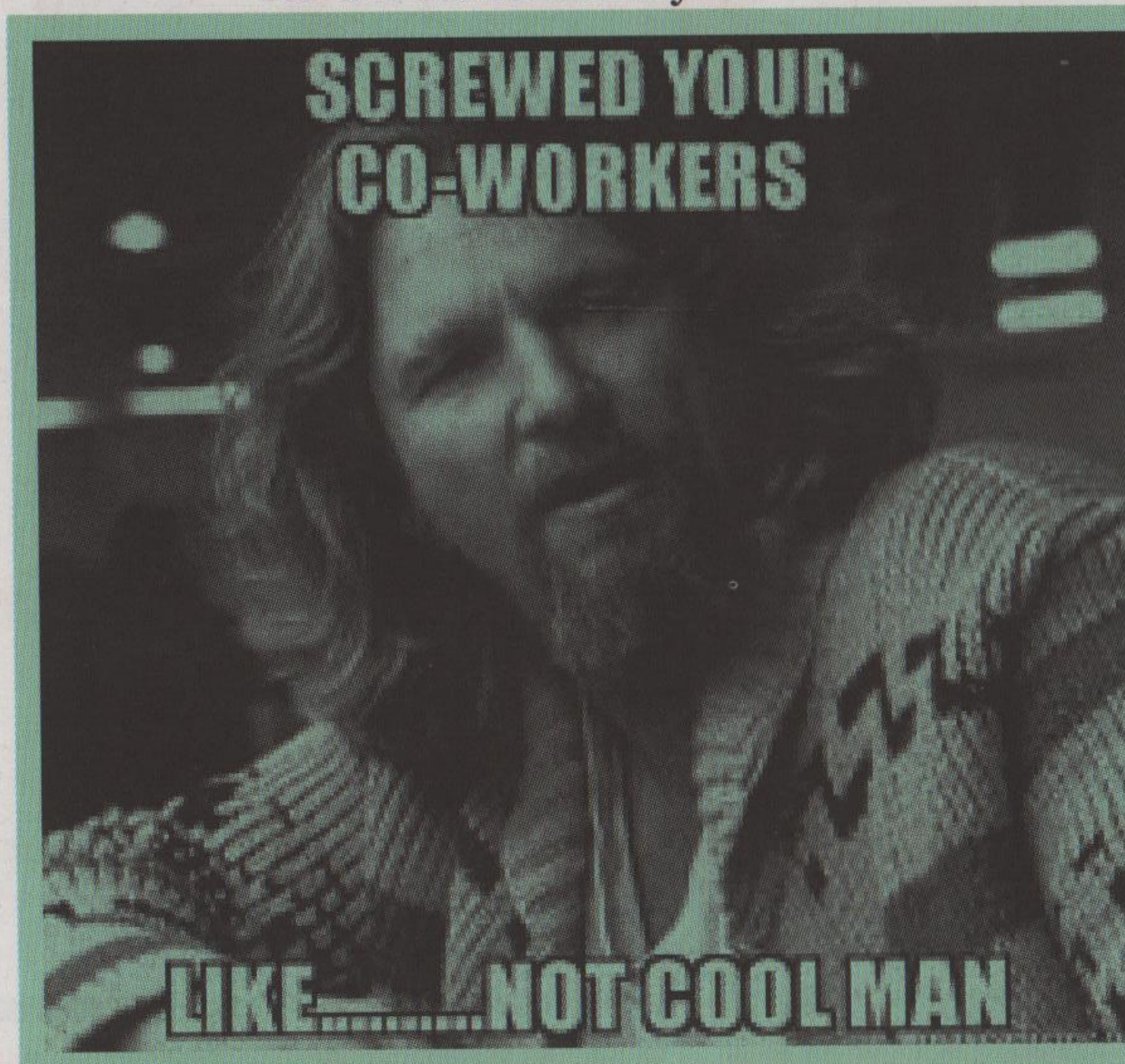
\* Be friendly to new starters, to agency workers - even if you think that they might not stay long. Explain

to them how things work and that they should not kill themselves for the minimum wage.

\* Show support when fellow workers are shouted at, disciplined or bullied by managers. Even if it just means going up to them and asking if they are okay. If you are a bigger group you can stand up to the manager and ask for an apology.

\* Let's try to talk to people during our break, instead of staring into our phones. Let's talk about the weather, about work, about life. Let's try to overcome language divisions - not everyone is confident in English, so be patient if people make the effort.

\* Try to work as little overtime as possible - although everyone needs the extra-money, this is more of a short-term carrot: in the long run they will make us work longer hours for the same money.



## We can ask for more!

These are just small steps, but they help to change the atmosphere at work. They can also help us to ask for more. This will not happen overnight, nor do we have to wait until everyone is on board. We can start with our immediate colleagues who we trust.

There are always small conflicts with management: about work speed, about overtime, about shifting us to worse jobs or shifts, about promised permanent contracts, about cuts in bonuses, about disciplinary procedures...

We often accept these changes, saying that we can't do anything or

that the other workers won't join us. In order to justify our fear of doing anything we often say: "the only option would be if everyone goes on strike, but they don't". But there are smaller steps we can take, which don't make us too vulnerable.

\* Find a small group of colleagues to start with, even four-five-six will do.

\* Talk about what small things you can do that would annoy management and will let them know that people are not happy with the changes.

\* This could be a hidden 'work-to-rule': colleagues at different jobs sticking to the official company procedures and health and safety regulations. Only do the jobs you are supposed to do according to your contract. This normally slows down work quite a lot.

\* Find ways to cause little breakdowns of computers or machinery, without putting you or others (health) at risk. Find other ways to slow down work-speed without management being able to single you or others out.

\* An unofficial overtime boycott can be another way to show that you are pissed off without sticking your neck out too far. The more people join in, the more effective it is.

\* Do your work, but stop communicating with management, don't say "hello" or "goodbye" to them. If a whole department sticks to this, they will feel the pain over time and might reconsider their plans.

\* Find ways to put forward your demands without having to send a spokesperson - management will either punish them or buy any 'leaders'. We need collective action, not heroes!

\* Find ways to speak to workers in other departments and encourage them to do similar things. This could be at meetings after work, through whatsapp or other ways.

\* Sometimes it bothers management if the media or clients of the company get to know that their employees are unhappy, that time targets or quality might be compromised. You can do or threaten to do this without having to show your face to management.

There are many creative ways to put pressure on the bosses. The more people join the better. But even a small group can annoy management. The challenge is to do this while also keeping your heads down and avoiding an open fight that we might lose.

## The workplace and beyond - Why join WorkersWildWest solidarity network?

Being poor ain't no fun - if you are alone. Similar to the situation at work. But if you join up with others and support each other, we can defend ourselves better. For this reason we have established a solidarity network in west-London.

Many of us change jobs frequently - but conditions are similar everywhere. Problems at work often continue after work - instead of company management we have to deal with nasty landlords, stress with the job centre or other state administrations. In the current climate, political leaders want to make us play dog-eat-dog: locals against migrants, Jesus fans against followers of Mohammed and so on. We are supposed to fight over the bones they throw at us. We should refuse their game and fight back. We don't need leaders for this. So what can we do and how can we do it?

We meet weekly in different places in Southall, Park Royal and Greenford. If you, or a group of you, have problems, either come along to one

of our meeting places or get in touch through email or phone. We are all working class people, no lawyers or experts. But we know our rights. We discuss the problem and think about how we can put pressure on the people who want to rip us off, evict us or whatever. Here are some examples...

\* The temp agency ASAP in Greenford didn't pay outstanding holiday pay to four workers. The workers called several times and sent letters, without result. We prepared some leaflets and a group of eight of us went to the office and told management that we won't leave until things are sorted and that we will let clients and possible new recruits know what's happening. Within half an hour we got our holiday pay.

\* The housing benefit department in Ealing refused to pay three months housing benefit to someone who is a 'EU-migrant' after she had worked in the UK for eight years. We sent various letter and finally went to the appeal court in Watford - it didn't cost any lawyer fees. In the end they got three months back pay.

\* A visa agent in Southall took £10,000 from a friend and warehouse worker. The agent promised IT training, a work-visa and a job guarantee. This did not materialise and when our friend asked for the money back, the agent refused. A few of us blockaded his office and threatened to stand in front of each of

his three training schools. Bit by bit he paid all the money back.

\* Temp agency 'Hays' did not pay three days of outstanding wages to a local road sweeper. We sent letters and distributed leaflets to fellow workers at the Amey recycling depot in Greenford. We also threatened to tell the media. In the end they paid.

\* Temp agency 'Templine' at the Sainsbury's warehouse continued to harass a friend for a couple of illness-related and doctor approved absences. We formulated an official grievance letter, which eased the pressure from management.

Again, the more we are, the more we can achieve. This is not just about claiming back what is ours. It is about working class confidence and creating a local force of solidarity, against the dog-eat-dog world that they are creating!

## WHAT IS THIS PAPER ABOUT?

We live and work in Greenford and Park Royal. We think that workers, wherever they come from, are screwed over and should fight back together. We have to figure out how we can run this world without bosses, bankers, politicians and mind-numbing, boring jobs in the future.

This newspaper is a means for us to exchange our experiences about conditions at work and develop a solidarity network. We have to learn from other people like us. No one else will do it for us. We are fed up hearing or saying: "Nothing can be done", because a lot IS being done, the question is: "What works, what doesn't?"

## SUPPORT EACH OTHER!

The newspaper is not (just) about words. We need a local network of workers and residents who support each other: if someone doesn't get their wages or has trouble with the job centre; if some of us are kicked out of our flats; if people need someone to leaflet their workplace or want creative ideas to undermine the management. For the struggle to survive and beyond. Do you need support? - Get in touch! And keep in touch - because others will need your support, too!

Other websites we find useful:

www.labourstart.org  
www.libcom.org  
www.labournet.tv

## WHERE DO WE GIVE THIS PAPER OUT?

We try to distribute this paper once a month at following places - if you have other suggestions where we could hand it out, let us know.

- Greenford Auriol Drive (Sainsbury's, Tesco warehouses, Wealmoor)

- Park Royal (Bakkavor, Greencore, Premier Park)

- Royal Mail DC (Greenford and Princess Royal)

- Greenford Retail Park

- Ealing & Southall Job Centre

- Greenford Bus and Street Cleansing Depot

## CONTACT US

- to share your workplace experiences (anonymously of course!)  
- to write about a conflict at work and what the workers did in response - if it made a difference, or not  
- if you need support for an action you want to do e.g. getting outstanding wages from the temp agency or distributing a leaflet outside your workplace  
- if you like the newspaper and want to get involved!

Email us at:  
[angryworkersworld@gmail.com](mailto:angryworkersworld@gmail.com)

Website:  
[www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com](http://www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com)

Forum:  
<https://forum.netzwerkit.de/c/workerswildwest>



# BURGER BULLSHIT! LET'S STOP IMMIGRATION RAIDS AGAINST OUR FELLOW WORKERS

Byron is a chain of posh hamburger restaurants. What they don't like to advertise is how, last July, they used a disgusting trick to stitch up some of their undocumented migrant employees.

Management told its workforce to turn up for what they said was a standard training day. But it was actually a Home Office trap. Anyone who turned up was forced to prove that they were in the UK legally and around 35 people from all over the world were arrested. What a load of bullshit!

Thankfully, around 200 protesters made the point loud and clear: tricking and scaring workers like this is unacceptable! Deliveroo workers (see article in this issue) started boycotting Byron Burgers; cockroaches were thrown into the restaurants to force them to close; other people picketed their restaurants - causing serious losses to the business.

But why do they do it? Immigration raids make it look like lots of people are being forced out of the country. A few years ago, the government put in place new checks for companies to make sure they weren't employing anyone without papers. After Brexit, they need to be seen to be acting tough on immigration so we think they are doing more workplace checks and raids. Employers can be fined £20,000 per illegal worker so it makes sense that companies are working with the Home Office to sell out their own workers to save their own skin.

But the government knows that it can't use this 'raid strategy' all the time, because at the end of the day, migrant labour (documented and undocumented) is just too valuable to lose. Best to just spread the fear. They use the worrying threat of a raid to scare people into keeping quiet. And this is important because workers who are scared that they might become the victim of a raid will be scared

of making a scene when fighting their bosses for things like better pay and working conditions. This situation is perfect for any company that pays its employees bargain basement wages.

Byron Burgers in central London made big news, but raids happen in our area, too. On construction sites, at food companies like Greencore and Bakkavor, in warehouses. We have to defend our fellow workers, regardless of their paper status. If you see a migration raid or the immigration come knocking at your place, here's a short guide of what to do:

பிரித்தானிய எல்லை முகவரர் குடியகல்வு (UKBA) அதிகாரிகளால் நீங்கள் தடுத்து நிறுத்தப்பட்டால் என்ன செய்யு?

பிரித்தானிய எல்லை முகவரர் (போர்டர் ஏஜன்சி) அல்லது போலீஸ் உங்களைத் தெருவில் தடுத்து நிறுத்தி உங்கள் குடியுரிமை பற்றி வினவினால்:

- நீங்கள் எந்தவொரு கேள்விக்கும் பதிலளிக்காது இருக்கலாம்
- உங்கள் பெயர் அல்லது முகவரி பற்றிய விபரங்களைச் சொல்லாமல் இருக்கலாம்.
- நீங்கள் அவர்களுடன் பேச விரும்பவில்லை என்று அவர்களுக்குச் சொல்லுங்கள்.
- கண்ணியமாக ஆனால் தன்னம்பிக்கையுடன் செயற்படுங்கள்
- நீங்கள் அவர்களை விலகி நடக்கலாம்.

உங்களை இன அடிப்படையில் தடுத்து நிறுத்த அவர்களுக்கு அனுமதி இல்லை.

அவர்களால் ஒரு நல்ல காரணம் இருந்தால் மட்டுமே உங்களைத் தடுத்து நிறுத்த முடியும். உங்களுக்குத் தென்றால் அல்லது பேசும் மொழி காரணமாகவே அவர்களைத் தடுத்து நிறுத்தப்பட்டிருந்தால் இவ்வாறு சொல்லலாம்:

"இது இனவாதமானது", "இது சட்டவிரோதமானது".  
"இது பற்றி முறையிடவேண்டும் (புகார் செய்வேன்)".

நீங்கள் தடுத்து அடைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தால் Bail for Immigration Detainees (குடியியல் கைதிகளுக்கு பிணை (ஐ.டி.டி.)) எனும் அமைப்பின் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும் : 020 7247 3590 (இங்கிலாந்து எங்கிலில் இருந்து கயாத்தானாது)

**Know the Law!**

SURE, ALL OF THIS ISN'T A GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL NOT ARREST YOU OR ABUSE OUR POWERS, BUT IF WE SEE THAT YOU KNOW THE LAW, WHO KNOWS, WE MAY EVEN ABIDE BY IT.

SO, WHEN SPEAKING TO IMMIGRATION OFFICERS, YOU CAN REMIND THEM OF "CHAPTER 31 UKBA OPERATIONAL ENFORCEMENT MANUAL", WHICH THEY MUST FOLLOW AND WHICH IS WHERE ALL THE UKBA GUIDANCE ON THIS CARD IS TAKEN FROM.

HALLO, AS YOU SURELY KNOW, OUR MATES FROM UKBA AND OURSELVES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING RAIDS ON MIGRANTS MORE OFTEN THESE DAYS.

ALTHOUGH WE ARE HERE TO SERVE AND PROTECT, (BLAH BLAH BLAH) IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT WE OFTEN GET A BIT OVEREXCITED AND NEGLECT TO FOLLOW PROCEDURES.

SO HERE ARE A FEW TIPS FOR YOU TO REMIND US OF WHAT OUR OWN GUIDELINES SAY

- 1) IMMIGRATION CHECKS CANNOT BE SPECULATIVE WE (UKBA AND POLICE) MUST HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE A PERSON MAY BE AN IMMIGRATION OFFENDER BEFORE STOPPING AND QUESTIONING THEM
- 2) WE CANNOT STOP AND QUESTION A PERSON ON THE BASIS OF RACE, (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EQUALITY ACT 2010)
- 3) IF WE STOP SOMEONE, THEY DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR SHOW IDENTIFICATION.
- 4) THEY CAN WALK AWAY

WHAT'S MORE, OUR MATES AT UKBA ARE WELL PISSED OFF BECAUSE IMMIGRATION OFFICERS MUST NOW FOLLOW A PROCEDURE BEFORE QUESTIONING:

- THEY MUST IDENTIFY THEMSELVES & SHOW A WARRANT CARD;
- THEY MUST EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THE QUESTIONING
- THEY MUST ADVISE THE PERSON THAT THEY ARE NOT OBLIGED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS
- THEY MUST ADVISE THE PERSON THAT THEY ARE NOT UNDER ARREST AND ARE FREE TO LEAVE AT ANY TIME (PARA 31.19.5 CHAPTER 31)

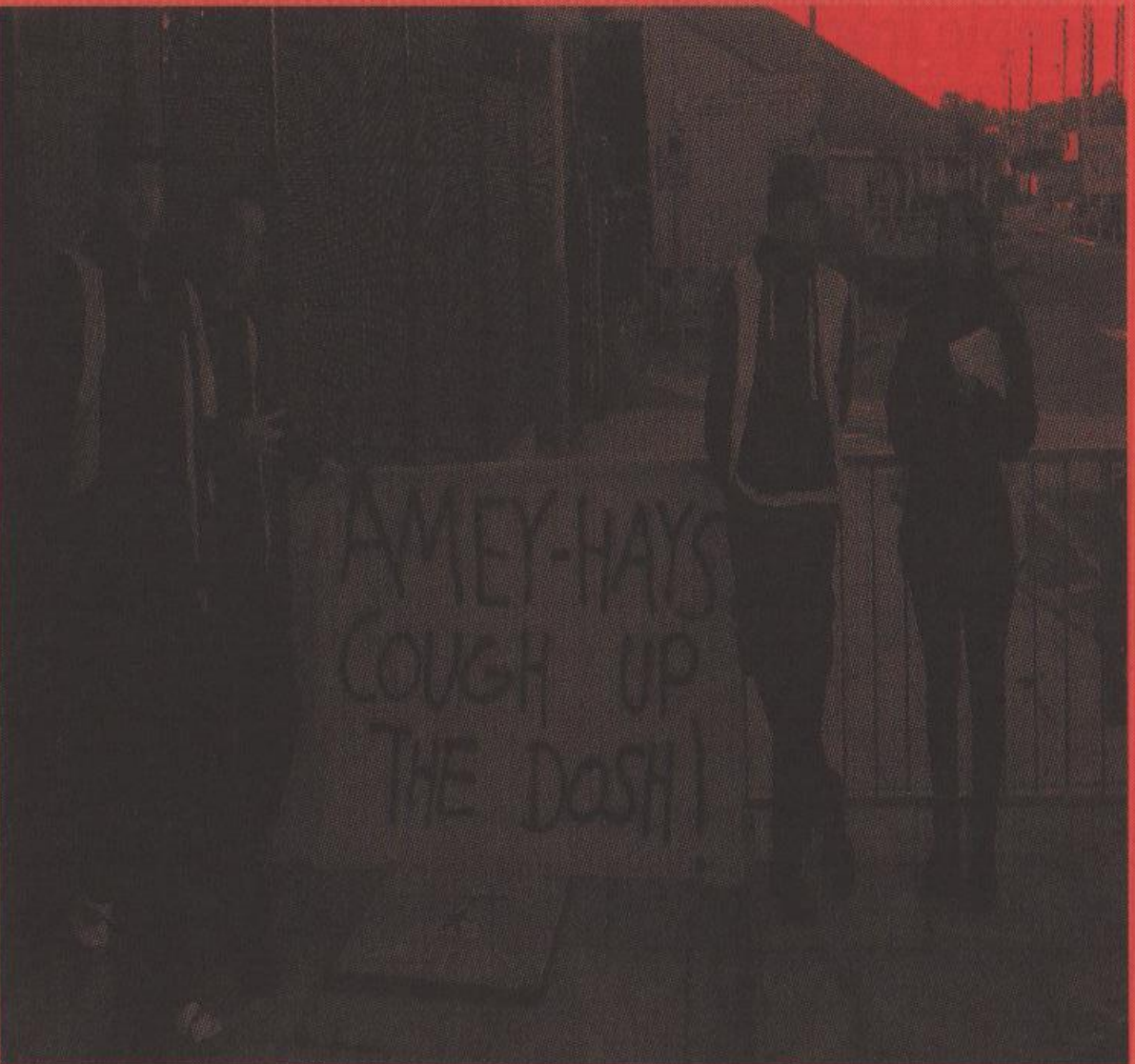
# "... AND HAYS/AMEY COUGHED UP THE DOSH!" SOLIDARITY NETWORK RE-CLAIMS OUTSTANDING WAGES AT GREENFORD DEPOT

One of our friends worked for Hays, the temp agency supplying workers for Amey - the company subcontracted to do street cleansing and refuse collection for Ealing council. He worked from September 2015 to March 2016 as a road sweeper. After he left, Hays refused to pay him for three days, saying that he wasn't in the supervisor's register...

Hays/Amey doesn't issue the temp workers with written proof of worked hours. So there was no way to 'prove' he had been there other than trying to remember what he was doing on those particular days when he'd been marked down as absent. But because you are sent from place to place and team to team, and you only find out you haven't been paid a week later when you get your payslip, it is pretty tough to remember where you'd been on any one day. But our friend did remember that on one of the alleged absent days, he had been to a union meeting - where one of the supervisors was present. But Hays/Amey would still not accept this as proof. For some of the days he tried to name the areas where he thought he had worked and the colleagues who he had worked with - but still no pay...

So he tried his luck writing to ACAS - a government institution that tries to solve issues before you can go to labour tribunal. They asked him: "What kind of proof do you have?" - He said: "They don't give no proof for temps, no clock-in card, no signed time-sheets." ACAS said: "No proof, bad luck". Going to the labour tribunal

costs over £300 - so the law ain't gonna help! So the friend got in touch with the WorkersWildWest solidarity network. We did an action at the depot, distributing leaflets about the situation to the workmates. We sent a picture of the action and the leaflet to Hays upper management, cc-ing in Amey upper management and Ealing council. The next day the Hays manager responsible for the Amey contract phoned and made promises: If Amey doesn't accept the hours Hays will pay. It needed some more threats of future actions and making things public, but finally Hays coughed up the dosh...



We don't need lawyers, we need direct action by a group of co-workers! If you have similar problems, get in touch!

Meanwhile, the conditions at the depot in Greenford got worse, over 100 people have left or have been made redundant after the introduction of wheelie bins in Ealing. For the remaining workers the workload has increased drastically. Perhaps the colleagues should check out what's going down in Sheffield: on 10th of October 2016, Amey workers of the 'Streets Ahead' road improvement project went on strike after Amey management announced 90 planned redundancies among its street lighting team with further job cuts to follow among employees who are resurfacing roads and footpaths. At the same time Amey is sub-contracting around 250 jobs to external contractors, mostly from out of town, to effectively do their work. A piss take that needs a solid response!

# GURNELL LEISURE CENTRE: UPDATE

Ealing Council plan to close Gurnell Leisure Centre for two years while they knock it down, sell off the public land it is on to private property developers who will then build fancy flats to finance a new leisure centre on the same site. Local residents are worried that: none of the new flats will be social housing; that there is no nearby alternative while it is closed; the land will be sold off; and little provision is being made for the extra traffic that will be created.

The Council's 'public consultations', were little more than a PR exercise. It quickly became clear that they

they didn't want any 'disruptive' questions to interfere with their ready-made plans...

So a group of us decided to go to the Town Hall on the evening when the planning permission was supposed to be submitted. We took some home-made placards to try and make them see that we weren't happy and they needed to reconsider their plans. The councillors were angry at having their meeting disrupted but we thought it was necessary to intervene in their cosy bubble.

The submission to the Planning

department was delayed. There are many outstanding issues that have not been resolved by the Council and so the original plan for Gurnell to close in April 2017 will also be delayed. Great news for us! Means we have more time to get organised and make sure this redevelopment really benefits us more than greedy shareholders.

We have done a few actions outside Gurnell to make people aware of what is happening and how to get involved. Check out the Facebook page for updated info! Facebook: @GurnellHousingCampaign



## RED CAP TERROR AND OTHER TALES FROM THE SAMOSA LINE - WORK REPORT FROM BAKKAVOR, PARK ROYAL

### Sites (in order of size):

Cumberland (houmous and some ready meals)  
Elveden (ready meals and snacks)  
Abbeydale (fried stuff)  
Harrow (pizzas)  
Premier Park (warehouse and storage)

### Pay

Pay for permanents: £7.20/hr  
£7.50 for Process Controllers  
Pay for agency staff: 7.20/hr  
£9 after midnight  
Overtime (over 40 hours) gets time and a half for permanent staff and time and a quarter for agency staff under 12 weeks.

We all heard about the scandal at the Sports Direct warehouse. The newspapers were outraged that people in the UK in 2016 were working in 'victorian workhouse' conditions. But the real scandal is that this is everywhere. Around here, in the warehouses and factories of west London, it is normal for managers to bully workers, steal our wages, cancel our shifts, pay us peanuts, treat us like dirt. But there aren't any reporters sniffing around these streets...

Everyone knows Sports Direct. Who can resist the bargain basement socks and tracksuit bottoms?! And the owner is famous for being a billionaire who everyone loves to hate. But who's ever heard of Bakkavor? Or Lydur and Agust Gudmundsson, its owners from Iceland? But we've all bought a supermarket ready-meal, pizza or a pot of houmous - and there's a good chance it was made by workers in this company. They have factories all over the UK, including 4 in west London (Park Royal & Harrow). They supply to all the major supermarkets: Tesco, Sainsbury's, Co-op, Waitrose, M&S and Aldi. They employ thousands of workers. They made over £60 million profit last year. And us workers are still getting minimum wage...

### Divided workforce

The permanent workers are mainly from Gujrat in the Cumberland and Elveden factories, with quite a few Sri Lankans too, and with more recently arrived people from Goa

mainly at Abbeydale. Like most of the bigger places around here, they use agency staff to put pressure on the permanents. The agency staff are mostly from Eastern Europe. Culture clash!! Communication is often difficult. And people get frustrated with each other: women on the line sometimes get annoyed when they have to teach the new agency people what to do; bad English skills means single words are shouted and people complain about bad manners; the people from India relate to each other in ways that exclude the non-Indians; some of the the assembly lines have doubled in speed over the last few years; there are more and more middle managers but also more and more disorganisation. No wonder people are stressed and take it out on each other.

But it's not all bad. It is actually pretty amazing that people from such different countries as Romania and Sri Lanka are working together. Despite the chaos and despite the fact that we may not be able to communicate so well, we still manage to work together to produce thousands and thousands of pizzas, samosas, ready-meals and houmous. And if you make a bit of extra effort to speak to people, you can have some interesting conversations. Everyone has a story in this place. We've all lived somewhere else. We've worked on ships. Many of us have sacrificed something to make a future for ourselves and our children. Some of us remember the Iron Curtain and, "the good old times when you never had to worry about being homeless or unemployed!" (But things must be pretty bad if an Eastern Block police state looks all cosy to us now!)

### Pay

Before the government raised the minimum wage to £7.20 last year, permanent workers were earning 9 pence more than the previous minimum wage (£6.79). Many people rely on overtime, where we get time-and-a-half, to make up for the small pay packet we otherwise get every week. If we have to rely on overtime to make ends meet, something must be wrong!

There is a large union membership inside the company (GMB) and people pay £13 a month. They might get some help with individual grievances and disciplinarys but in terms of health and safety, pay, and general atmosphere, we haven't really got our money's worth. When the new minimum wage was introduced, suddenly the company found the extra money. Many workers think the company is doing badly. They lost the Tesco mash contract early in 2016 and previous Christmas periods seemed to be busier. But this does not mean they are doing badly overall. They are hiring hundreds of workers in other parts of the country and their revenue is increasing every year.

In the first half of December 2016 a notice went up on the GMB noticeboards in the various factories, saying that the 2017 pay claim would be in line with the London Living Wage. After years of below inflation pay increases they wrote about how the increasing pressure on workers was no longer acceptable. This is fighting talk - and about time! But what we can be sure about is that Bakkavor won't do this voluntarily. It will take the whole workforce to come together and take action. The question is, how much will the union really put up a fight? They may be able to bring out



the permanent workers on strike but the agency workers, who are not in the union, will probably not be included. But this will be necessary if we don't just want agency workers to take the extra shifts and undermine a strike. And how much will us workers feel that we are part of the decision-making process and have some control over what action we take and the outcome? If we really want to change things around here, we need to try and take

some responsibility ourselves and not leave this all in the hands of the union reps and negotiators.

### Shift patterns

In the last year, some workers were told that they had to change their shift pattern. They wanted people working 4-days on, 3-days off. This is the cheapest way to have the factory running for 24 hours because it means you only need 2 shifts instead of 3. People working weekdays were told they had to work weekends instead and some people had to move over to night shift. Women with kids had problems with childcare and many went to HR to complain. But they were told that if they didn't like it, they could leave. Some workers did leave. But then, some agency workers came and got weekday shifts so it seems the company puts the permanent workers' needs last. It doesn't matter if you work here 1 year or 10 years - there is no such thing as 'job security'.

Then there is the issue of overtime. Working overtime after a regular ten-hour shift like we have to do at Cumberland and Abbeydale is HARD. But lots of us agree to work the overtime because we need the extra money. But the company wants to make our regular shifts longer so they don't have to pay as much in overtime. Once they make our shifts 10 hours long, and we do 2 hours extra overtime, what is to say that in a couple of years, they ask us to do 12-hour shifts as standard?

### Contract workers' pay problems

Lots of people who were given 3-month contracts with Bakkavor from August this year have been having ongoing wage payment problems. One guy who had been working there for 6 weeks was owed £1000! He left the job in disgust when he finally got his money, after hassling HR and contacting the GMB. But another young woman was just going to quit and was not going to fight for her money- probably because she didn't know how and her English was not so good. Lots of people were affected by this, and when we are being paid weekly, we cannot afford these f\*\*k ups! People have their individual disputes with HR but it would have been a good opportunity to go as a bigger group, or at least get together to discuss a plan of action.

### Red cap terror

How much red cap terror can we

take?! These lucky people, the ones chosen to wear red mob caps (worn over our hairnets) are plucked from the masses, and are offered the chance to always be stressed out, and get paid a few pennies more than us normal workers! A dream come true. The basic job description is to be an excellent shouter, ask us stupid questions: "Why line stop?!", and give us helpful advice such as: "Faster!", "No talking!", "Don't make mistakes!", "More cheese!", "Less cheese!", "Make properly!"

The higher up managers set the tone and the ones at Cumberland and Abbeydale in particular are notoriously mental. One made a woman cry on her last day of work. And he made an older agency woman cry on her first day for wearing the wrong colour mob cap - when she hadn't even started her shift yet! He obviously ate his weatabix that morning.

### Agency or slavery?!

The agency offer time-and-a-quarter for overtime (over 40 hours) if you have worked there for under 12 weeks. After 12 weeks, they get same as permanents (time and a half). But often, the agency try and get out of paying this overtime rate by sending you to a different site from where you usually work. They say this is a 'different workplace' so does not count for the overtime payment. But if you are doing the same type of work for the same company, just in a different location, legally, this means you should still get the overtime rate.

If you think you won't be at the agency for long, you put up with it because it is only a short-term thing and it is a hassle to make a fuss, for sure. But on the flip side, it probably only takes is three or four people to decide to act for others to feel confident to join... Challenging this type of thing would also be easier if permanent and agency staff could stick together more.

### Immigration worries

In December 2016, a notice went up that two Bakkavor employees at the Elveden factory were arrested and detained by the Home Office because they had fake passports. They had worked at the company for a long time. It is always difficult to find out exactly what happened in these kind of situations, but rumour has it that this was not a totally unexpected visit (in other words, Bakkavor knew that immigration were coming), and that the company had to pay a £40,000 fine.

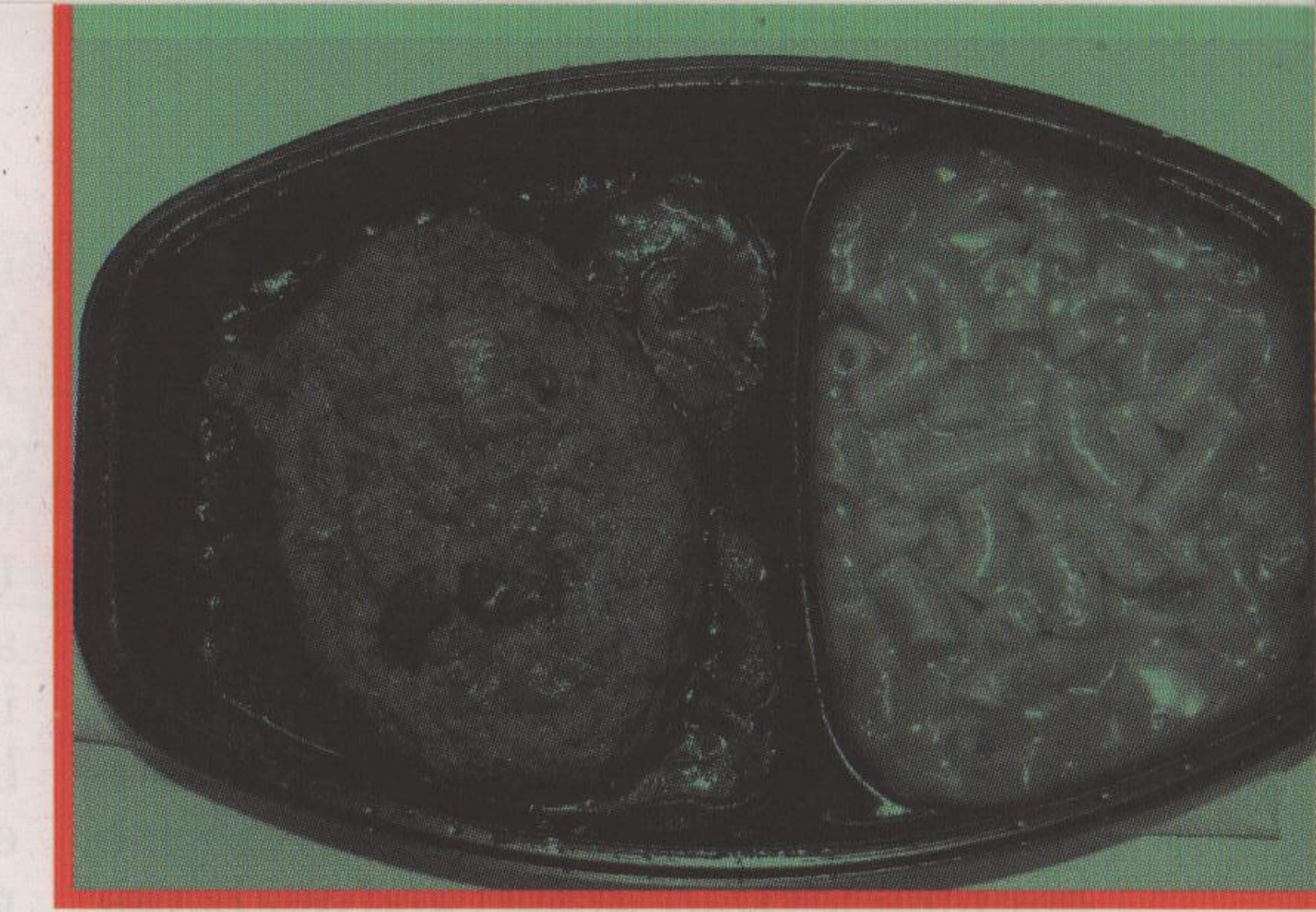
Sometimes, companies work with the immigration people to trap their own workers in order to avoid a fine. This is what happened in the case of Byron Burgers (p.4). Rumours were that Bakkavor were fined though - £20,000 per 'illegal' worker. The Home Office could have gone to these workers' homes but instead, they came to their workplace. This seems to indicate that Bakkavor were involved in the visit. Fear spreads amongst all workers, which is good for the management because it means their workforce are more likely to accept the current pay and conditions and not be too demanding.

This incident happened around the same time that the GMB announced that they would try to win a big pay rise for Bakkavor employees in 2017 - so that our pay is more in line with the London Living Wage which is almost £10 an hour. In this context, fears around immigration can work to the company's benefit to keep people quiet and less likely to risk going on strike for example.

### Chained to the line - differences between men and women

Ever noticed how it's mainly the men who are still in the canteen at 2 minutes before the start of shift? And it's mainly us men who are wandering around the factory? We might have to do more physical work but we also get to escape the red cap's attention for some parts of the day. Impossible if you are a woman. They are chained to the line, every toilet break is monitored, they can't slip back a bit late from break because the red caps will notice. They even get told off for talking to each other too much. Is this a prison or what?!

But why are certain jobs only done by men? Women can stack a pallet just as easy as a man. It might take two women to carry a pallet but they can do it. Women can also use a pallet truck - especially if it works properly or is a PPT. Women can lift the pastry trays and strong women can even do the lasagna trays. Men can go on the line and put sleeves on containers. Or glue on the pastry. But when





someone tries to do a 'man's job' or a 'woman's job', they are shouted at or undermined by the other workers. Fair enough, people don't want to do 'more jobs' but men shouldn't automatically be put to heavier jobs because what about if the man is old or has a bad back? Jobs should be done according to our abilities, not whether we are a man or a woman. After 2 hours of doing ANY job, our muscles start to hurt and our backs start to ache – regardless of whether we are a man or a woman. The point is we should all be rotating jobs so we all get some breaks and less chance of injuries.

## Atmosphere



The red caps' shouting plus the work pressure means it is difficult to stay happy in this place. But it is up to us to maintain some standards towards each other to keep the atmosphere nice. Sometimes permanents feel closer with their line leader than an agency worker. They complain to the line leader that the agency person is not working fast enough rather than trying to talk directly to the agency worker. If agency workers feel scared and bullied, it is also because the permanents are not able to create a friendly atmosphere where people know they are supported and looked after. Obviously some people do speak up – and make red cap enemies. And then they go to the union for a formal disciplinary or grievance procedure. But this is a way to make all our problems individual ones. The bigger picture is: We ALL face similar problems: pay, lack of respect, a disregard for health and safety of workers. But many of us are scared to try and change things. Lots of us are worried that if we try and do something, we could end up losing this job that we depend on. But that is why we have to stick together more, across the different sites, to build up our power against management victimisation.

## Other food factory struggles

In the last issue we wrote about a strike at the '2 Sisters' ready-meal food factories in Sheffield and Newport. They supply Bakkavor with some products. They are not too different from us: a mix of workers from different countries,

permanents and temps, people on different contracts, minimum wages. After going on strike, they voted to go on another 7-day strike. But this was then called off by the union (Bakers Union). Apparently the company agreed to a backdated lump sum pay increase because of the industrial action but the question of new contracts and elimination of premium pay is still under negotiation. Some workers felt sold out by the union who went against the decision of workers to continue their strike action.

## Ideas of what we can do

We need to think about what we can do to put pressure on the bosses to give us better pay and conditions, but that will not make us stand out individually. We can make an impact without doing anything that we could be individually victimised for.

Firstly, we have to stop being grateful for this job. We have to stop thinking that we are too old, that we don't deserve more because we don't speak good English. That we are 'unskilled'. Our collective strength is what is important, not whether we can speak English or have a degree. This work is hard. They send us crazy. It won't be better in the next job either. We have to make things better for ourselves now! And we should not be bribed by the fact that 'anyone could do this job.' We have seen how fast new agency staff come and go. Most of them quickly learn that the job is not worth it, and leave. If they tried to replace us, most of the replacements would quit after a few days or weeks. They need us more than they let on...

\*\*SEF's (Staff and Employee Forums) are managers talking shops. And we all know the union is close to management. But we need some way of linking up with other Bakkavor workers (in our own and other factories) and discussing our problems and possible actions. Perhaps a few of us can organise a meeting outside work and ask other workers in different factories to come?

\*\*This is also a good way for workers to share their experiences. For example at Abbeydale, lots of workers are newer to the UK and have only worked there for 2 or 3 years. So they could learn something from the old-timers in other factories who have more experiences and know what working in this company used to be like when it was owned by Katsouris. For example, when Abbeydale was burnt to the ground in a fire in 2009, they wanted us to use up our annual leave while the factory was closed. But we said no, the fire was not our fault, why should we sacrifice our holidays? So we were paid

even though we did not have to do any work. Stories like this should be shared across the factories so that more recent workers know that we did stuff in the past and things were better in some ways as a result.

\*\*Overtime is one thing we could sacrifice to put pressure on the company. And they would not be able to punish us for it because it is optional.

\*\*Health and safety and hygiene are also two areas we can use to our advantage, especially because we are working with food. They keep pestering us about health and safety, while also wanting us to work faster and faster. We all know how they slow everything down and tell us to do things "properly" when the auditors are snooping around, but when they are not there, they tell us to work so fast we have to ignore their own rules. Why not threaten to slow down and follow the rules all time? After all, we would only be doing our job safely, according to the bosses' own rules.

\*\*E.g. Some of the machines are very noisy. Over time, lots of us have gone a little deaf! But we do not have access to earplugs inside the factory if we want them in the middle of a shift. Sometimes they even run out of earplugs. There are notices up about the Noise Regulations Act so we should all insist on stopping work and demand earplugs for everyone if it gets too loud.

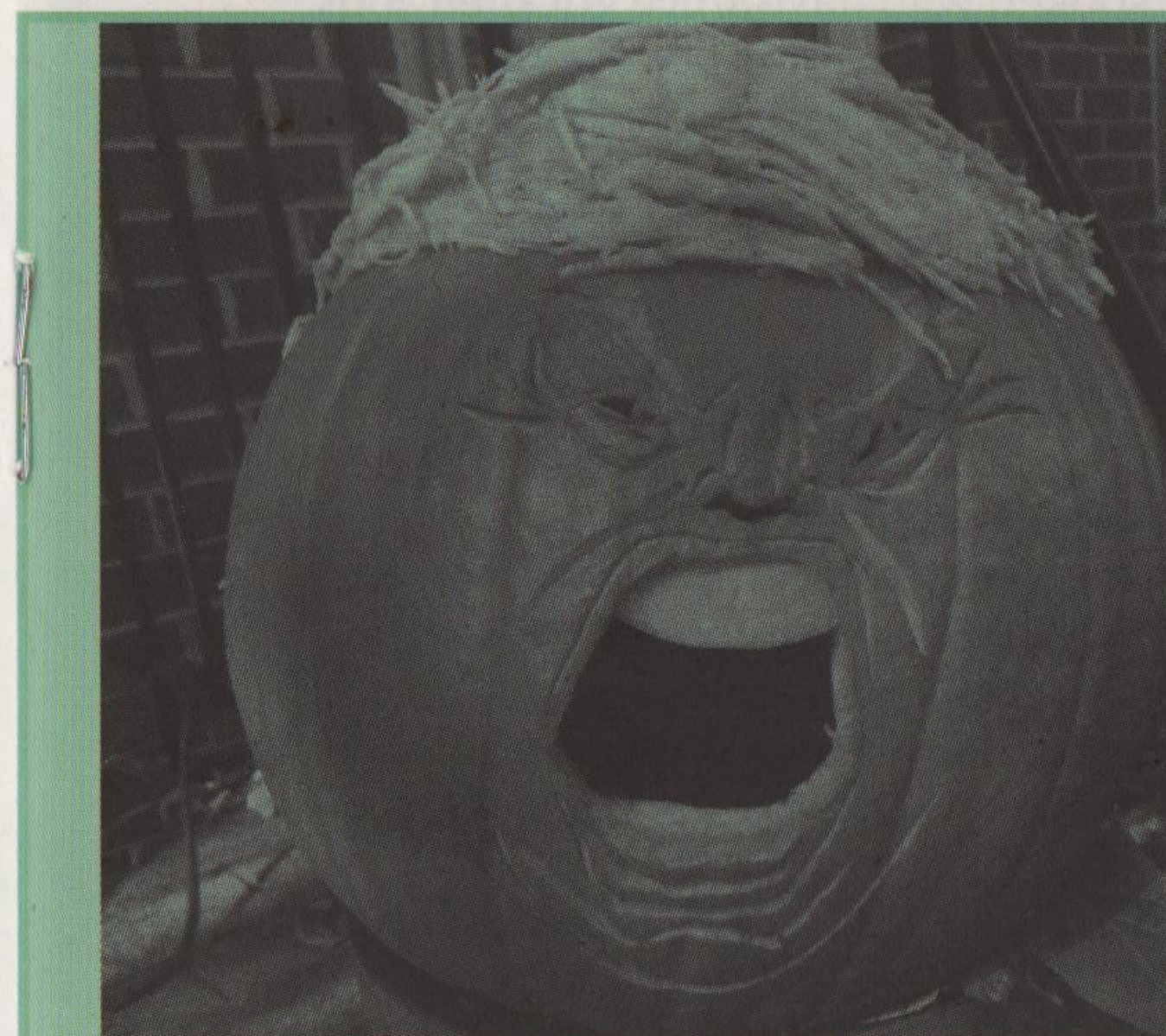
\*\*Assembly line work is repetitive and loads of people complain about muscle strain and aching legs and feet because we have to stand up for hours and hours and cannot sit down. The Workplace (Health and Safety) Regulations 1992 refer to standing. The law says that employers must supply suitable seats if workers are able to perform their duties, or a substantial part of them, sitting down. They can be served with improvement notices to supply chairs for the assembly line for example. This could be something we ask for, especially for the older people.

\*\*There needs to be an 11-hour gap between shifts. The pizza plant in Harrow breached this rule 647 times in a 3-month period in 2013. Many workers did not know this law. But even if they did, many of us want the overtime. But the point is, we shouldn't have to do any overtime in the first place! We should earn a good wage for working 40 hours per week so we don't have to workworkwork...



# Everyone's talking about Brexit and Trump

So, America has elected a discount day-glow con man as president. It is easy to laugh and say, "Americans are just dumb", but some of the same assumptions that led many Americans to vote for Trump were at play in the Brexit result and the rise of nationalism and right-wing politics across Europe.



The mainstream political system, both in Europe and the US, has failed the working class. Both the traditional left and right are so obviously in the pocket of business interests that they may as well be one big political party. They cannot offer any believable solutions to the mess we're in, nor offer a vision of a better future where life can be actually be easier rather than harder. Under these conditions, some people have voted for a poisonous nationalism, either in the hope of damaging the current corrupt system, or in a belief that it offers a genuine alternative.

We hate the current political elite. However, to think a self-serving strongman like Trump, who has based his campaign around the idea that he intends to do whatever he wants and to hell with everyone else, and who brags that he is a member of the same business class that our current political class serves, is going to care about us little people any more than mainstream politicians is hard to stomach.

Same with Brexit. Leaving the EU will not only require the government to renegotiate its trade agreements, but also undertake a review of all our domestic law. Parties like UKIP promise to free us from unelected bureaucrats in Brussels, only to reinforce the bureaucratic control of

Westminster. This is not liberation, it is simply passing power from one corrupt set of officials to another.

## The Nation Ain't Gonna Save Us

Besides the failure of voting nationalist as a protest, their promises are also unworkable and dangerous to the working class. A lot of noise has been made about immigration and tighter borders, but the market forces that are driving the demand for cheap labour and forcing wages down are global. We can try and stop cheap labour coming over here, but we can not stop business going elsewhere in search of cheap labour. The only way would be to make our own wages so cheap as to compete on the world market (and how much lower can they go?!) or slap massive import tariffs on goods coming in, which would make those goods too expensive for us to buy.

The nationalist politicians try to tackle the fallout from this in the most brutal way possible. They want to blame the unemployed for not having jobs, despite the fact that there are not enough jobs to go around. They want to slash welfare when people have no place else to turn for their survival. And when people then turn to crime, they want harsher laws against them. They have no credible plan to deal with low wages or unemployment, but they have a lot of ideas on how to make life as unpleasant for the working class as possible.

Workers need to work for wages to survive. But business owners make more profit the less they pay in wages, so they will always try and employ as few people as possible at the lowest possible cost. This not the fault of immigrants, or benefit claimants, or criminals. This is how

our society works, it's what our government exists to maintain, and this system transcends national borders. The nationalists offer no fundamental change to this, but their ideas do distract and divide us so that we can't mount any resistance.

## No One Looking Out For Us But Ourselves

If the political establishment is against the working class, and the nationalists just want to lead us down a dead end, what can we do? The working class can't face a united, global enemy when it is divided. We can't allow ourselves to be split into isolated groups, arguing over scraps. We must organise across nationality, race, sex, sexual preference, religion and anything else that is stopping us, the exploited, from coming together to confront our exploiters - our bosses, our landlords, the middlemen that stand between us and the ability to live, and the politicians that protect them.

We do not need politicians or nationalist strongmen, we need solidarity, we need to build our own communities of support. We are each individually struggling and losing against a dozen different opponents so much more powerful than us, but if we can turn our individual struggles into collective struggles, if we can fight together instead of being picked off one by one, we have the ability to improve our lives directly, in a way no political party ever could.

We have no great solutions for this - but try to build a solidarity network for workers of all backgrounds in this area. Read the article about it in this issue and get in touch...





## DELIVEROO ON STRIKE

Deliveroo, like Uber and others, are not much more than middlemen: they provide an app for food ordering and take a small cut from restaurants, couriers and customers for allowing them to use their software. Anyone on the street can see the essential activity - bringing food from restaurant to customer - is done by the cyclists and scooterists. In August 2016 Deliveroo management announced it would change the wage structure of their workers in central London: instead of £7 per hour plus £1 per delivery they announced that workers would get no fixed wage at all, but £3.75 per delivery. Did the workers accept managements' plan because, 'that's just the way things are?'

offices followed by boos and jeers... management tried to single people out, to intimidate or bribe individuals... workers refused to meet management individually, but forced them to speak to everyone... when management did not react workers started to block the main restaurants they usually fetched food from, causing significant losses to Deliveroo... they raised a new demand: £9.40 per hour, sick pay and accident cover for all...

- \* Within a few days they had collected £13,000 donations for their strike fund.
- \* Hundreds of people joined their pickets.
- \* A small union (IWGB) offered to help them with negotiations.

**Generally, Deliveroo workers would be seen as in a 'weak' position: most of them are migrants; they are 'self-employed' and don't have workers rights; they depend on the Deliveroo app; they work alone on their bikes and scooters. The fact that these workers engaged in a mass action surprised everyone, maybe even themselves.**

When they heard about the wage cut, Deliveroo workers sprung into action, discussions and conversations were had, strategies and tactics schemed, and soon, a small brigade of couriers had assembled outside the Deliveroo headquarters... scooterists riding slow through the streets creating traffic jams of power and solidarity... managers who came out to greet their workers were immediately driven back into their

- \* They got lots of media interest
- \* Some days later Uber Eats drivers engaged in similar actions, after facing similar wage cuts.
- \* Leaflets about the action were distributed to Deliveroo workers in other towns in the UK and even abroad.
- \* Weeks later, food delivery workers in Italy, employed by Foodora, also went on strike.
- \* In November 2016 around 100 Uber cab drivers staged a slow-down drive

through London, protesting against low wages.

Obviously Deliveroo management tried to regain control. They compromised without giving up the new wage structure: they said workers could keep their £7 per hour, if they were willing to work in other parts of London. They sacked one or two people who were too outspoken who have since got their jobs back. They tried to bribe others: offering them £150 per head to train new people. They cut the delivery fee for customers in other parts of town in order to increase orders...

All this shows that workers can win, but that there is no easy and lasting victory. Deliveroo workers are trying to re-group: they address newly hired workers and explain the situation to them... they try to get people signing up to the new union... they get in touch with workers of other companies...

Although we don't work in central London, our conditions are not so different. People also think that we - so-called unskilled workers, migrant workers, agency workers, zero-hour workers, workers controlled by pick-rates, scanner-devices and assembly lines - can't do nothing... let's surprise them and ourselves.

[iwgbclb.wordpress.com](http://iwgbclb.wordpress.com)

[www.bristoliiww.org.uk/rooriders](http://www.bristoliiww.org.uk/rooriders)

[www.weareplanc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/rebel-roo-front-back.pdf](http://www.weareplanc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/rebel-roo-front-back.pdf)

## AFTER US, THE DELUGE. SAINSBURY'S WAREHOUSE IN GREENFORD FLOODED

I work at the Sainsbury's warehouse in Greenford. In mid-September 2016 the entire warehouse was flooded after heavy rain. As usual, management reacted with divide-and-rule politics. The permanent Wincanton workers were allowed to go home after their shift. The Templine temp workers were supposed to stay until the pick was finished. On that day this meant: waiting around for two hours after your shift ended, then working with wet feet in inch-deep water. Forklifts driving around, too, increasing

the risk of accidents. We should have refused to work as long as the warehouse was not completely dry. We should not have to work 11-12 hour shifts. We should not have to do the back-breaking work in Produce (lifting heavy banana boxes), just because we are temp workers and don't get sick pay - while management keeps the permanents doing the easier jobs. All we can hope is that things don't go as wrong as in the Carlsberg brewery in Northampton on 8th of November 2016, when one guy died

and 20 were sent to hospital after an ammonia leak...



## REBEL CITY! NEWS AND VIEWS FROM LONDON TOWN

News about working class people struggling against bad conditions and government cuts often don't make it into the big media and even more rarely arrive here on the fringes of the city.

Below some news against the 'nothing can be done' attitude!

### 1 DAY WITHOUT US

Those in power always want to make us believe that they 'can do without us' - without workers in general and without migrant workers in particular. There have been massive Hispanic migrant workers strikes in the USA in recent years, bringing important industries to a standstill and forcing the government to make concessions. They can't do without us - who would clean, work in warehouses and construction, take care of the sick and elderly? In the UK the government tries to divide-and-rule and portray migrant workers as 'a problem for the economy'. They put more pressure on us through immigration raids, hassle to get social benefits or a school space for kids. Some groups and people therefore plan a day of action, a day of migrant workers' strike. We think that this is a good idea, but we don't think that such kind of day can be organised 'online' or through social media. We have to build such an action from the bottom up, through meetings after work or in the neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, maybe something comes out of it - check out their website and facebook page!

[www.1daywithoutus.org](http://www.1daywithoutus.org)



### KUEHNE+NAGEL

Retail companies and logistics companies, which organise distribution and transport for them, have split their workforce through different contracts, pay and conditions. We can see that here in Greenford and Park Royal: Pay and conditions at Kuehne and Nagel Drinks and Logistics warehouse in Greenford are better than at Kuehne and Nagel Sky Logistix in Park Royal/Premier Park. Conditions for permanent warehouse workers at Wincanton Sainsbury's are better than at Wincanton Waitrose across the road, where they basically do the same LLOP/picking job for 30% less pay.

In this situation pay and condition depends largely on our ability to put pressure on the bosses. To do this we need collective and coordinated steps on the shopfloor and beyond the company gates. This is why it is important to point out a recent small dispute at Kuehne

and Nagel Waitrose Regional Delivery Centre in Milton Keynes. The company arbitrarily reduced company 'Discretionary' Sick Pay from 100% to 75%. They claim that there has been a 'significant' increase in absence levels since the introduction of salary pay a year ago.

Such cuts are not uncommon: between 1999 and 2004 Tesco and the union, USDAW, agreed to cut Sunday/bank holiday and overtime bonuses from double pay to time-and-a-half and single pay respectively - and there was little resistance. However, in Milton Keynes, Kuehne and Nagel workers did get pissed off and the union balloted for strike action in late October 2016. The threat of a strike made the company go back to the original Sick Pay arrangements. If you want to let workers in Milton Keynes know what you think, drop us an email and we'll pass it onto them...



### BLACK FRIDAY

In November 2016, workers at the Solihull branch of 'Spectrum for Arcadia' (a logistics depot that's part of the DHL Logistics Supply Chain and supplies major brands such as Topshop and Burton's), went on strike over pay. They wanted £1.25 more per hour. It's one of the busiest days of the year for online shopping, and presumably orders placed on 'Black Friday' will still be working their way through the supply chain as well. Warehouse and other supply chain workers always have a fair amount of disruptive power, but that's magnified in the shopping rush in the run-up to Christmas. Workers at DS Smith, Saica and Smurfit Kappa also threatened with strike over pay in November. These workers make cardboard boxes for places like Amazon and Domino's Pizza.



# WESTSIDE STORY-

## A SHORT HISTORY OF WEST LONDON

Facing the pretty miserable working and living conditions today, a lot of people say that nothing ever changes or nothing can be changed. Looking back into history can show us that quite a lot of things change and that working class people, though barely mentioned, are making changes happen. This is why in this article we want to look at the history of our area, the history of workers in Southall, Greenford, Park Royal.

### After World War One - Industries and Workers move to West London

The first major boost in industrialisation of London's west took place in the 1920s. In 1914 Park Royal had been completely rural, by 1929 around 140 factories were located there, employing 14,000 workers. The Guinness Brewery, built in 1935, was the biggest single development. In Greenford J. Lyons & Co. Ltd. had established their factory by 1926, when it employed 3,000 workers.

The first migrant workers who came to do the dirty jobs, e.g. on the A40 roadworks, were migrants from Wales and later on Ireland, escaping local poverty, which was largely caused by the exploitative politics of the English state. These migrants, though 'white' and English-speaking, were treated hardly better than their Asian or Caribbean colleagues who arrived in the 1960s or workers from Eastern Europe after 2000. Other workers moved in from the slums in East London - between 1921 and 1931 the Middlesex population grew by 30%, which was the biggest growth of all England's counties.

Workers started to organise themselves early on, dozens of 'workers' self-education' clubs and union branches emerged. During the 1926 general strike around 50,000 people gathered on Ealing Common. The global crisis in 1929 quickly increased local unemployment. Unable to blame any 'foreign migrants' for the unemployment, the ruling class politicians started looking for other 'minorities' to burden the responsibility, e.g. in 1934 Acton Labour Councillors supported Acton Council's plan to dismiss married women public employees (if their husbands had a job) and employ men instead. Measures like these

were meant to distract workers from attacking the root of the crisis - the production for profit, instead of human needs. Bosses and politicians of all nations managed to lead workers into the massacre of the Second World War.

### After World War Two - Manufacturing expands and employs new workers from the former colonies (India, Caribbean)

In the 1950s West London had the biggest concentration of manufacturing industry in London and one of the biggest in Britain: double-decker buses were built at AEC chassis works in Southall and in Park Royal. In 1958 there were 20 airframe companies and six aero-engine firms based in and around Park Royal. Industries continued to grow during the 1960s, for example in Park Royal industrial employment increased from 14,000 in 1930 to around 45,000 in the late 1960s, working in 500 firms.

Many of these workers were new migrants from the Caribbean (e.g. Jamaica) and India. Many of their family members had fought as soldiers in the British Army or suffered from the colonial politics of the British Empire: from slave trade to the plantation regime to taxation politics, which ruined local peasants and artisans, e.g. in Punjab, India. After World War Two these workers were meant to solve the problem of labour shortages in the UK, as low-paid workers with insecure resident status, employed in factories, steel mills, as cleaners or bus drivers. Home Office estimates of net migration from the former colonies from January 1955 to June 1962 was about 472,000. By 1970 around 1.5 million migrant workers resided in the UK out of who the Irish remained the largest group.

In many industries workers were paid by result (piecework), a system which offered shop-floor workers the chance to bargain under the threat of stoppages. There was a ten-year national 'strike wave' in Britain from 1952 to 1962. Many strikes were unofficial, local, short-lived and usually triggered by dissatisfaction over pay

rates. Workers were able to gain wage increases throughout the 1960s - despite the 'new migrants' arriving from Jamaica or Punjab, or rather, because these workers refused to be treated like second-class workers and joined the struggle.

"I came to England (in 1966) for a better life and for a new experience. After Manchester, I moved to Luton and worked on the line at Vauxhall's, and then I went and worked as a press operator at John Dickenson's stationery firm in Watford. I came to London and started as a machine operator with Perivale Gutermann. It was a factory making silk thread, and the main workforce was Asian from India and Pakistan. Before 1969 there wasn't any trade union organisation at Perivale Gutermann and people say life then wasn't very good. They used to work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for, say £30 a week. We have been able to establish a branch of the T&G union and decent, basic rates of pay for our fellow workers..."

Akbar Khan

The new migrants did not only have to struggle against the exploitation of the bosses or the discrimination by the state, but also against racism amongst local workers. From the Notting Hill Riots in 1958 to the Southall Riots in 1979, Black and Asian proletarians had to organise self-defence against violent racism. In Southall, 3 years after the racist murder of Gurdeep Singh Chaggar, the racist National Front tried to hold a meeting there in 1979. Thousands came to stop the fascists, they were attacked by the police, the cops killed one demonstrator. When writing about the Southall Riots in 1979 people often forget to mention that on that day around 20,000 local workers went on unofficial strike to



support the protest. They knew that the battle has to be fought both on the streets and at work.

From the 1960s onwards a series of wildcat strikes led by mainly Afro-Caribbean and Asian workers shook factories in the UK, confronting not only management, but in most cases trade union leadership too. West London was a hotspot of migrant workers' discontent: Rockware Glass, Woolfs Rubber (Southall) in 1965, Gutterman (Perivale), Chibnalls Bakery, Fitters (Harlesden), Quaker Oats (Southall) and Chix (Slough) in 1979.

Unofficial walk-outs and/or strikes for equal conditions were not limited to migrant workers e.g. the Heath government's 1972 pay freeze provoked a sit-in at the Hoover factory (now Perivale Tesco). Women played a huge part in the West London factory workforce, accounting for more than half of the workforce in many factories (EMI in Hayes, Tetley Tea in Greenford etc.). In 1976, one of the most far-reaching equal pay strikes was successfully won at the Trico-Folberth factory in Brentford.

"The best paid jobs were in factories. So I went down the Job Centre and that's how I came to work at Trico, towards the end of 1975. I worked on the blades. Arms and blades, assembling arms and blades for the windscreen wipers. It was quite a big factory, I mean 1,600... There had been a night-shift but because of the downturn in the economy around 1975, the company announced that they were going to close the night-shift. The men, five at all, were offered alternative assembly work on the day shift alongside the women. At the end of our 40-hour week, if they achieved the same performance as one of the women they came away with £6 - £6.50 more than the women at the same speed. That was dynamite!"

Sally Groves

The women workers went on strike for 21 weeks, organised parties and picket lines around the factory and in the end, they won equal pay.

### And today?

During the 1970s workers all over the world - from Detroit car factories in 1973 to Polish shipyards in 1976 - demonstrated that they can act

independently. They also showed that the usual 'divide-and-rule' politics of the bosses, separating us into black/white, men/women or local/migrant can be overcome during and through struggle. The spirit was solidarity amongst workers, instead of 'dog-eat-dog'. This spirit had to be broken - and it was. Through the crisis, job cuts, industrial closures during the 1980s. West London lost 22,000 engineering jobs in 1979-81, representing a 17% reduction in just two years. Detroit turned from Motor-City into a scrapyard.

Today instead of metal manufacturing factories there are ready-meal factories and warehouses in Park Royal. Together with new Asian migrants, migrant workers mainly from Eastern Europe work in the local



low paid jobs. Like in the 1960s many of us share flats together, because the rents are too high for our wages. Like in the 1970s, migrant workers were violently attacked for speaking a foreign language. After Brexit, similar attacks happened to Polish people. Unlike in the 1960s and 1970s the new migrant workers haven't developed the same confidence to struggle yet. We still accept the low pay and bullying from the bosses and landlords. Again we are in a global crisis and the ruling class threatens us with all-out-war.

Returning to the beginning of this article: does this mean that nothing has changed and that nothing can be changed? We think that the struggles of the past have created some new potentials for us today:

\* In the 1970s the US state was still able to draft a lot of young poor people into the army and sent them off to kill and die in Vietnam. The anti-war protests, the rebellion by the poor at home and by soldiers themselves caused a crisis in the war machine. Today they will have difficulties mobilising the poor to war and rely on small 'professional armies' instead.

\* Thanks to the struggles in the 60s

and 70s we are more equal now as workers amongst workers: no law tells us that we are not allowed to sit on certain buses because of the colour of our skin; no one can pay us less because of our sex; all this makes it more difficult for those in power to divide us.

\* In the 70s and early 80s masses of workers in Poland organised themselves under police state conditions. They published dozens of small newspapers, organised wildcat strikes - but in the end they put a lot of trust into '(mis-)leaders' like Walensa. Workers nowadays are much more critical of so-called leaders. From Brazil, where former metal workers' leaders turned into corrupt presidents, to South Africa, where the ANC 'liberation party' now orders the police to shoot black workers. In recent movements, from Tahrir Square in Cairo to the recent 'Women's Strike' in Poland, we have learnt to organise ourselves without leaders.

\* In the 1980s the bosses could threaten workers by saying they would move production to Taiwan, South Korea and later on China. 'Workers work for peanuts there', they said. Nowadays, hardly any country has more intense wage strikes and struggles than China and the wage gap between China and Europe has diminished. It becomes more difficult for the bosses to blackmail us by saying that they give our job to 'peasants on the other side of the globe' - because these peasants are modern workers now.

\* Nowadays conditions become more similar around the globe, which also means that it becomes easier to learn from and coordinate struggles across borders. Amazon wanted to threaten workers in Germany by using the new warehouses in Poland, but some workers at Amazon in Poland (Poznan) organised themselves and refused to be used as cheap labour competition. UberEats and Deliveroo drivers' strikes in London got a lot of attention and sympathy from Deliveroo drivers in Berlin - helped by social media and the internet.

Today many of us still work 12 hour shifts like 150 years ago and earn less than our parents in the 1980s - despite all the technological progress. But the conditions for our struggles have changed and it has become easier to imagine and fight for a world where life and the production of what we need to live is organised and coordinated by everyone for everyone - not through share markets, war ministries and corporate headquarters. No war, but the class war...



# ODZYSKAĆ SIŁĘ – PRZESTRZEŃ ŻYCIOWA, PRZYJAŹŃ I SIEĆ WSPARCIA

Żyjemy w dziwnym świecie. Więcej czasu spędzamy w pracy niż z przyjaciółmi i rodziną. W pracy tracimy większość naszego życia, ale mówimy, że potrafimy oddzielić naszą pracę od prywatnego życia. Nie chcemy poważnie traktować pracy, ponieważ nikt w pracy nas poważnie nie traktuje. Potencjał twórczy i życiowa energia miliardów ludzi marnują się ze względu na panujący sposób organizacji pracy.

## Demokracja? Chyba żartujesz!

Mówią nam, że żyjemy w demokracji, lecz w miejscu gdzie spędzamy większość naszego życia, nie mamy nic do powiedzenia. Praca jest organizowana w taki sposób, aby utrudniać nawiązywanie przyjaźni albo ich rozwijanie. Maszyny są za głośnie, linia montażowa za szybka (często zwraca się nam uwagę, żeby „przestać rozmawiać”), ludzie przychodzą i odchodzą więc „po co się wzajemnie poznawać?”, niektórym się wydaje, że dostaną lepsze stanowisko, gdy pokażą, że są lepszymi pracownikami niż ci „leniwi”. Pomimo opowieści o „pracy zespołowej”, wciąż wzmacnia się konkurencję pomiędzy pracownikami. Praca jest monotonna i powoduje, że ledwo żyjemy, więc jak nawiązywać kontakty z innymi?

## Pewne kroki, aby odzyskać realną kontrolę!

To prawda, nie kontrolujemy tego, co dzieje się w naszej firmie, co i jak produkujemy, kto i dlaczego jest zatrudniany lub zwalniany. Możemy jednak zacząć od stworzenia warunków dogodnych dla siebie i innych, miejsca gdzie nie ma norm do wykonania, a za to są warunki umożliwiające kontakt z innymi.

\*Odetchnij od presji w pracy i staraj się nie konkurować z innymi. Nie pracuj szybciej od innych, staraj się pracować wolniej i daj więcej czasu współpracownikom. Przekonaj do tego innych.

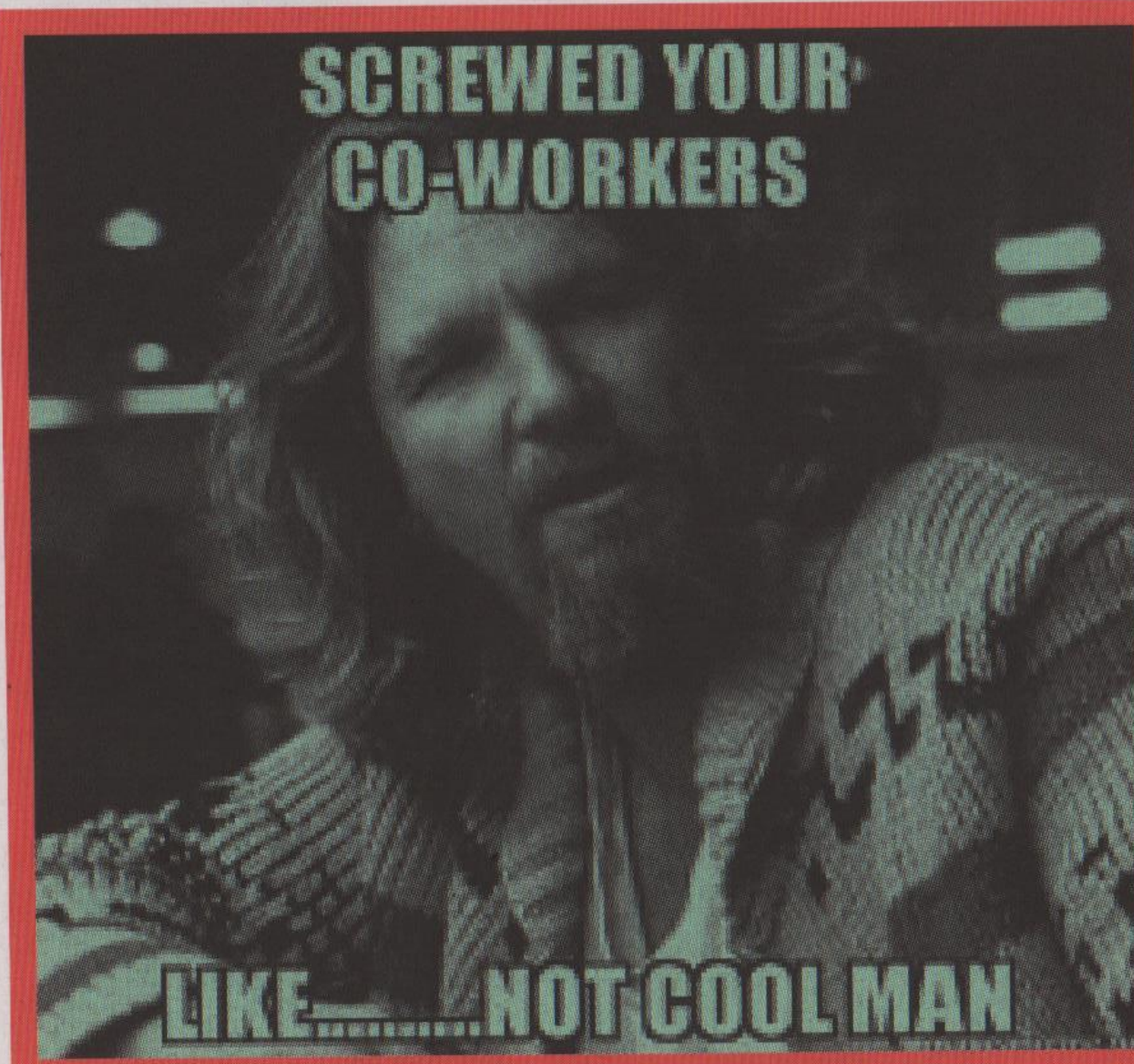
\*Nie donoś kierownictwu na innych. Jeżeli masz problem, to rozmawiaj bezpośrednio z kolegami, razem znajdziecie jego rozwiązanie.

\*Szczepnij nowo zatrudnionych i

zatrudnionych przez agencje, nawet jeżeli spodziewasz się, że nie zostaną na długo. Wy tłumacz, jakie panują stosunki w zakładzie i że nie ma sensu się wykańczać za psie pieniądze.

\*Pomóż innym, jeżeli kierownicy na nich krzyczą, dyscyplinują czy upokarzają. Jeżeli jest was więcej, możecie domagać się od kierownika przeprosin.

\*Na przerwie, zamiast wpatrywać się w telefon komórkowy, spróbuj porozmawiać z innymi o pogodzie, pracy, życiu. Spróbuj przełamać



bariery językowe, nie każdy jest doby w angielskim, więc jeżeli ktoś się stara, to bądź cierpliwy. \*Bierz jak najmniej nadgodzin. Pomimo że każdy potrzebuje pieniędzy, to się opłaca tylko na krótką metę. W dłuższej perspektywie zmuszą ludzi do dłuższej pracy za te same pieniądze.

## Możemy żądać więcej!

To małe kroki, lecz dzięki nim atmosfera w pracy się zmienia. Pomogą nam, gdy zażądamy więcej. To nie nastąpi z dnia na dzień. Możemy zacząć od najbliższych kolegów, którym ufamy.

Zawsze dochodzi do co najmniej małych konfliktów z kierownictwem o szybkość pracy, nadgodziny, kierowanie pracowników do gorszych prac lub na gorsze zmiany, o obiecywane stałe zatrudnienie, niewypłacanie dodatków, o procedury dyscyplinarne itd.

Zwykle przystajemy na te zmiany,

mówimy, że nic nie można zrobić lub że inni nie chcą się dołączyć. Swoją strach często usprawiedliwiamy, mówiąc, że „jedynym wyjściem jest strajk, ale nikt nie chce strajkować”. Istnieją jednak pewne rzeczy, które można zrobić i nie narażać się zbyt mocno na niebezpieczeństwo.

\*Skup grupę kolegów lub koleżanek, wystarczy kilka osób.

\*Rozmawiajcie o małych krokach, które można podjąć, aby pokazać kierownikom, że ludzie są niezadowoleni.

\*Można dokładnie przestrzegać zasad bhp, wykonywać tylko te zadania, które są zapisane w kontrakcie. Takie spowolnienie ma zwykle dużą siłę oddziaływania.

\*Znajdź sposoby spowodowania przestoju działania maszyn lub komputerów, tak aby nie narażać na ryzyko siebie i innych. Znajdź sposoby spowolnienia pracy, tak aby kierownicy, nie byli w stanie dowiedzieć się, kto jest temu winny.

\*Innym sposobem może być nieoficjalny bojkot nadgodzin, co pokaże, że macie dosyć, ale nie narażać na duże niebezpieczeństwo. Im więcej ludzi dołączy, tym więcej zyskacie.

\*Wykonuj pracę, ale nie rozmawiaj z szefostwem, nie mów im dzień dobry lub do widzenia. Jeżeli wszyscy będą się tego trzymać, kierownicy z czasem to poczują i mogą rozważyć zmiany na korzyść pracowników.

\*Znajdź sposób na przedstawienie waszych żądań bez wyznaczania przedstawiciela, kierownicy go wyrzucą albo przekupią. Nie potrzebujemy bohaterów lecz wspólnych działań!

\*Spróbuj porozmawiać z pracownikami z innych działów i przekonaj do podobnych działań np. podczas spotkania po pracy.

\*Czasem kierownictwo nie lubi, kiedy media lub klienci firmy dowiadują się, że jej pracownicy nie są niezadowoleni albo kiedy normy mogą nie zostać zrealizowane. Możecie do tego doprowadzić lub zagrozić, że to zrobicie, ale w taki sposób, żeby się nie ujawnić

kierownictwu.

Istnieje wiele sposobów wywierania presji na szefów. Im więcej ludzi dołączy tym lepiej, ale nawet mała grupa potrafi utrudnić im życie. Problem polega na tym, żeby się nie ujawniać i unikać otwartej walki, którą można przegrać.

## Praca i po pracy – po co dołączyć do sieci wsparcia Workers Wild West?

Bycie biednym nie jest zabawne, szczególnie kiedy jesteś sam. Jeżeli jednak dołączysz do innych i będziemy się wspierać, to możemy się lepiej chronić. Z tego powodu założyliśmy sieć wsparcia w zachodnim Londynie.

Wiele z nas często zmienia pracę, lecz jej warunki wszędzie są podobne. Problemy występują w pracy, ale często się do niej nie ograniczają. Po pracy, zamiast walczyć z kierownictwem firmy, walczymy z landloldem, urzędnikami z job center lub administracją państwową. Politycy nastawiają nas przeciwko sobie – pracownicy miejscowi przeciwko imigrantom, zwolennicy Jezusa przeciwko zwolennikom Mahometa. Chcą, żebyśmy walczyli o rzucane nam ochłapy. Musimy się temu przeciwstawić i bronić się. Nie potrzebujemy liderów. Co i jak możemy zrobić?

Spotykamy się co tydzień w różnych

miejscach w Southall, Acton, Park Royal i Greenford. Jeżeli ty lub twoi znajomi macie problem przyjdźcie do jednego miejsca spotkań, napiszcie maila lub zadzwońcie. Omówimy problem i zobaczymy jak wyrzucić presję na ludzi, którzy chcą was wyrzucić z pracy lub eksmitować itd. To kilka przykładów:

\*Agencja pracy ASAP z Greenford nie wypłacała pieniędzy za płatny urlop. Pracownicy dzwonili i wysyłali ponażenia, lecz to nie przyniosło żadnego skutku. Przygotowaliśmy ulotki, w osiem osób poszliśmy do biura, zagroziliśmy, że go nie opuścimy, dopóki nie dostaniemy wypłaty i że będziemy informować nowe osoby przychodzące do biura, o tym jak działa ta agencja. W ciągu pół godziny uzyskaliśmy zaległe pieniądze.

\*Wydział zajmujący się dodatkami mieszkaniowymi w Ealing odmówił wypłaty trzymiesięcznego dodatku jednemu z naszych przyjaciół, który jest imigrantem z UE i od ośmiu lat pracuje w UK. Wysłaliśmy kilka odwołań i ostatecznie pojawiliśmy się w sądzie odwoławczym w Watford, nie potrzebowaliśmy do tego prawnika. W końcu przyjaciel odzyskał zaległy dodatek.

\*Pośrednik wizowy w Southall pobrał 10 tys. £ od koleżanki pracującej w magazynie. W zamian za tę sumę obiecał szkolenie IT, wizę pracowniczą i zatrudnienie. Obietnicy

nie dotrzymał i odmówił zwrotu pieniędzy, kiedy koleżanka się tego domagała. Zablokowaliśmy jego biuro i zagroziliśmy, że zrobimy pikietę pod prowadzonymi przez niego trzema biurami szkoleniowymi. Stopniowo zwrócił całą sumę.

\*Agencja pracy tymczasowej „Hays” nie wypłacała ulicznemu sprzątaczkowi pensji za trzy dni pracy. Wysłał ponażenia, ale ostatecznie rozdał ulotki innym pracownikom centrali recyklingu Amey w Greenford. Zagroził również poinformowaniem o tym mediów. Ostatecznie zapłacili zaległą pensję.

\*Agencja pracy tymczasowej „Templine” w magazynie Sainsbury wciąż nękała przyjaciela z powodu kilku dni chorobowego potwierdzonego zwolnieniem lekarskim. Napisaliśmy skargę, dzięki czemu dali mu spokój.

Im jest nas więcej, tym więcej osiągniemy. Tu nie chodzi jedynie o odzyskanie tego, co do nas należy. Tu chodzi o świadomość pracowników i budowanie lokalnej solidarności przeciwko nędzy, w której żyjemy!

## O CZYM JEST TA GAZETA?

Żyjemy i pracujemy w Greenford i Park Royal w Londynie. Nie ważne skąd tu przybyliśmy, wszyscy jesteśmy wyzyskiwani i wyciska się z nas siódme poty, dlatego powinniśmy walczyć razem. Musimy znaleźć sposoby jak stworzyć świat bez szefów, bankierów, polityków i otepiałej pracy. Tak po prostu. Mamy dość słuchania, że „nic się nie da zrobić”. Pytanie polega na tym: „Co działa, a co nie działa? Co możemy zrobić dzisiaj z dwoma, trzema kolegami czy koleżankami w pracy, co możemy zrobić jutro?

## WSPIERAJMY SIĘ NAWZAJEM!

W tej gazecie nie chodzi tylko o słowa. Potrzebujemy lokalnej sieci pracowników, którzy będą się nawzajem wspierać. Jeśli ktoś nie dostał wypłaty lub ma problemy w job centre, jeśli ktoś z nas został wyrzucony z pracy, potrzebuje pomocy w ograniczeniu zapędów kierownictwa lub jeśli potrzebujemy kogoś kto rozdałby pod naszym miejscem pracy ulotki. To walka o przetrwanie. Potrzebujesz pomocy? Skontaktuj się z nami... inni też potrzebują Twojego wsparcia...

## GDZIE ROZDAJEMY TĘ GAZETĘ?

Staraliśmy się ją dystrybuować co miesiąc w poniższych miejscach. Jeżeli masz pomysł gdzie jeszcze warto ją rozdáwać, daj nam znać.

- Greenford Auriol Drive (magazyny Sainsbury's i Tesco)
- Park Royal (Bakkavor, Greencore, Premier Park)
- Royal Mail DC (Greenford i Princess Royal)
- Greenford Retail Park
- Ealing i Southall Job Centre
- Greenford Bus Depot

## SKONTAKTUJ SIĘ Z NAMI

- w celu przedstawienia swoich doświadczeń z pracy (oczywiście anonimowo!)

- w celu opisanego konfliktu w miejscu pracy i działań robotników
- jeżeli potrzebujesz wsparcia w planowanych przedsięwzięciach np. odzyskaniu zaległej płacy od agencji czy rozdań ulotek pod zakładem pracy
- jeżeli chcesz otrzymać gazetę bądź bardziej się zaangażować!

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Forum: <https://forum.netzwerkit.de/c/workerswildwest>

