

have signed up to get this very attractive (for them) workers that don't have to be paid. It is obviously bad for the unemployed because they are being exploited and don't get any reward, but it is also bad for paid workers who might be replaced by free labour from the Job Centre.

We met at the left lion in Market Square and were sent off with an anti-workfare speech from a local anti-austerity campaigner who had a stall. Despite the somewhat pro-state slant of his words, it was good to receive some solidarity.

We were well equipped with a sound system in a pushchair pumping out revolutionary hip hop and our "Workfare ain't fair" banner as well as a stack of fliers. We walked and wheeled across the square to our first stop, Burtons. Burtons is part of notorious tax dodger Philip Green's Arcadia group, which has a policy of using workfare. The Burtons management immediately threw a massive tantrum, shutting up all but one of the doors to the shop and then standing in the remaining one snarling at us and chuntering on about how they had nothing to do with workfare and spent their whole days helping the sick and needy by giving them free suits, etc. All they managed to do was make their shop very unwelcom-

ing for the time that we were there.

Next stop was the Barnardo's charity shop a few doors up. Barnardo's is one of many high street charities which is supplementing their volunteers with forced labour from the Job Centre. The workers were, perhaps unsurprisingly, much more sympathetic to and interested in our protest and read our leaflets. Some PCSOs came along to ask whether we were a peaceful protest and what time we were leaving so they could "update the control centre". When they went in to let the staff know we weren't dangerous psychopaths, we slipped off to Primark.

Primark was a bit mental. There were just too many people rushing in and out of those doors. We didn't stay long.

Next stop was Greggs on Clumber Street. There was more space to stop and have decent interactions with people and people had time to read our leaflets in the queue. One man went in taking a leaflet and then emerged a few minutes later without having bought anything thanking us all for letting him know about Greggs' exploitative practices. Another man took a leaflet and said "I won't be buying anything in there then" and a group of kids in hoodies tut-

ted a bit and then were overheard saying they wouldn't be going in again.

For our last stop we moved over to Superdrug on the other side of the road and gave out the last of our leaflets. One man stopped to have a conversation with me about how he'd seen this coming with the New Deal and previous government attacks on the unemployed and how his son was involved in anti-workfare campaigning in Plymouth. "Why aren't there more of you?" he asked.

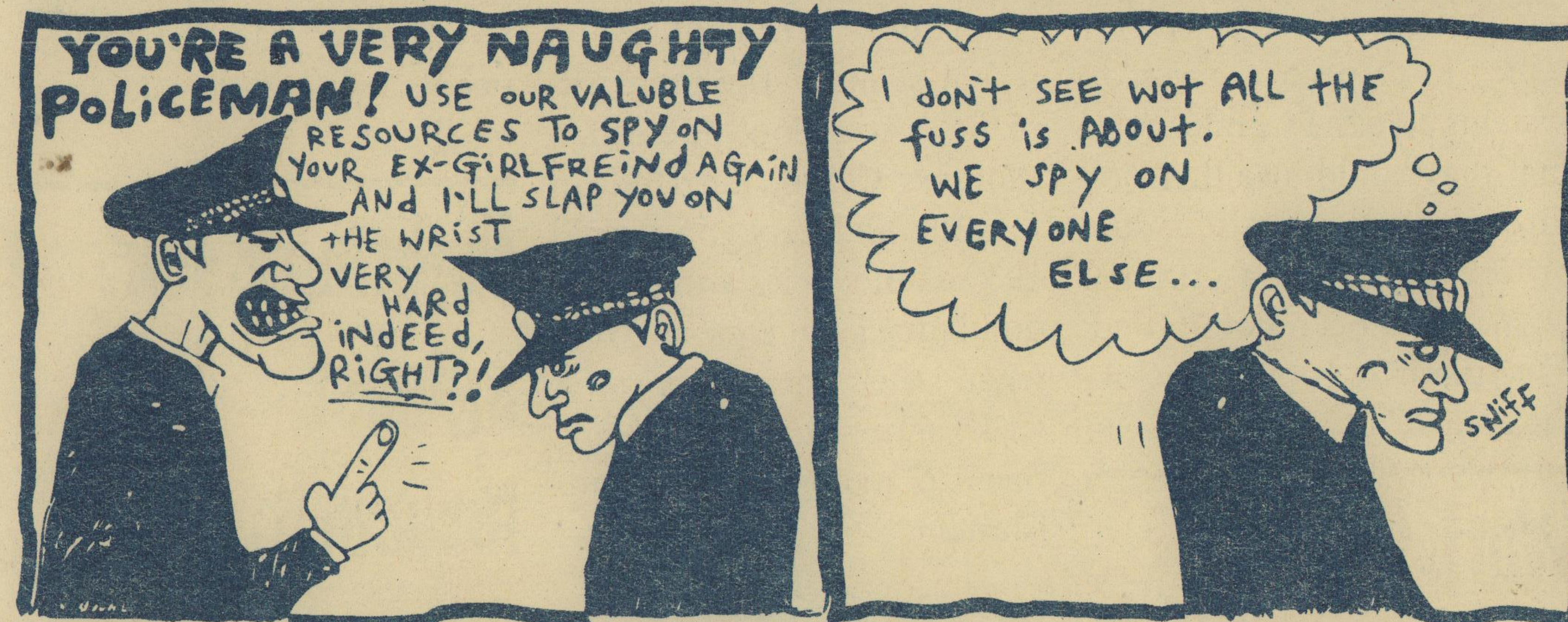
We will back and we hope that next time more people will join us. There are plenty of shops on our list that we didn't get to visit today, including Wilkinsons, Argos, Poundland, Miss Selfridge and Tesco's. We know that anti-workfare campaigning is working: earlier in the year Holland & Barrett pulled out of workfare after sustained, nationwide pickets of its stores. We just need to keep up the pressure.

Comments and submissions

Send 'em to
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~ The ~ FOREST FIELDS FIRE

- A FREE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS BY RESIDENTS / OCTOBER 2012 -



A Nottinghamshire Police Officer has admitted misusing the force's computer systems. Appearing at Derby Crown Court on Monday (1 October) for what would have been the start of his trial, PC Robert Kirk pleaded guilty to accessing records inappropriately.

Kirk, who had been based in the intelligence unit at Central Police Station, had been vetted to a high level because of the sensitivity of the information his role gave him access to. The force's policy on accessing information or intelligence held on the computer systems for anything other than a policing purpose identifies that criminal or disciplinary proceedings could result. Kirk, 47, of West

Bridgford, had been placed on restricted duties in November 2010 when the force's Professional Standards Department began its investigation. He had been suspended from the force since April 2011. Earlier this year, Kirk was charged with one count of misconduct in a public office.

The indictment stated that over a number of years, he had without reasonable justification, repeatedly accessed the Nottinghamshire Police computer systems for a non-policing purpose, namely to conduct searches and view data relating to family members, associates, and persons he was or had been in a relationship with. Kirk will reappear at Derby Crown Court on 22 October for sentencing.

He tendered his resignation from the force today (Tuesday 2 October), which was accepted by the Chief Constable, Chris Eyre. Had he not resigned he would have faced internal disciplinary proceedings and could have faced dismissal. Afterwards, the Head of the Professional Standards Department, Detective Superintendent Jackie Alexander, said: "The public places its trust in Nottinghamshire Police to protect information we hold and to use it only in strict accordance with our policy that there must be a genuine policing need for accessing it."

"Robert Kirk repeatedly exploited his position, which gave him access to confidential information not just

about the individuals he had become personally involved with, but potentially, many thousands of people. "This is a question of trust and confidence and is a serious abuse of position. Any officer or staff member who disregards force policy in respect of access to systems needs to understand that they could lose their job through gross misconduct proceedings or, if a criminal offence has been committed, have the case brought before the courts."

Work for free at the Pizza Factory!

Yet more evidence has emerged that workfare is replacing paid jobs. This week the 2 sisters food group announced the creation of 100 new jobs at their Nottingham Pizza Factory thanks to the 'introduction of new business'. This might seem like good news until you discover that the jobs aren't really jobs and the new business isn't really new business.

The jobs are actually 'pre-employment training' for the unemployed, organised with the Jobcentre "to give them an idea of what it's like to work in the food sector". In other words this is a workfare

scheme. And the new business? 2 sisters also own the R F Brookes factory in Leicester, where 350 workers have been made redundant with the production of pizza toppings being moved to Nottingham "as a result of several recent strikes". The president of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, Ian Hodson says that 2 sisters announced 193 redundancies and cut redundancy payments, and that when their members took strike action they made a further 157 redundant as a punishment.

The government insist that the millions of hours of unpaid work now being carried out across the UK by claimants on workfare does not displace paid work. But it seems fairly obvious that the work done by those on workfare is no longer being done by paid staff. It isn't as if those on workfare are unstacking the shelves or removing the toppings from the pizzas afterwards so that paid staff can do it. And it seems equally obvious that employers will help themselves to free staff if they can get them. What this story shows is how companies can use workfare not just to replace paid staff with unpaid staff, but also to degrade working conditions and to punish those who try to organise against this.

If you're being affected by

workfare or any other job centre related trouble, come along to our Unemployed workers club on thursdays at the Sumac Centre between 9am and 1pm, there's some breakfast, some tea and coffee, internet access and some people in a similar situation to chat to.

Fighting Back against insecurity

Often dubbed the 'insecurity' industry by its opponents, the military-industrial complex that arms the police and dictatorships, runs increasingly militarised detention centres and controls housing for migrants is a many-headed hydra. In the past few days, Nottingham has seen activists take on the beast in different ways. On the morning of the 26th, anti-militarists took to the streets of the Lenton Lane industrial estate to picket arms dealers, Hecker & Koch. In the previous night, militants sabotaged vehicles belonging to multinational 'security' company, G4S.

On Wednesday morning, anti-arms trade activists picketed the Lenton Lane premises of international arms dealers, Hecker & Koch. The picket

was timed to coincide with an event at the Trent Vineyard church, which is next door to the gun dealers. They were also responding to a recent documentary about the company's sale of arms to Bahrain, which may have been used to suppress the recent protests against the Bahraini regime. According to their report, almost every car entering the Easter Park industrial estate stopped to take a leaflet or two from them and "most expressed shock and surprise at not knowing what was going on there and were clearly disturbed to find out."

In the early hours of the same day, a group calling themselves "Petty Vandals" sabotaged two G4S vehicles in South Nottingham. They slashed their tyres, stripped paint and snapped off the exhaust pipes in protest at the way the company "profit[s] from this prison world". In their communique they cited the company's contract to run accommodation for asylum seekers in the East Midlands, as part of the "society of control" whose goals are "too have the working class monitored, categorised and punished at all times".

"G4S are not the reason for this, they are merely a vehicle for capitalists to make their profit from. But they are a mercenary bunch of thugs who should be chal-

lenged at every front by those of us whose lives they wish to seize."

Action against the English Defence League

Last month some people took action against G H Watts coach company at their depot on Foxholes Road, Braunstone, Leicester. Their gates were D locked shut in a number of places and their locks were glued. They left a message on the internet which said

"We did this because G H Watts have consistently supported the EDL over the past few years (1). The EDL are nothing more than class traitors. Their leadership have formed an alliance with investment bankers and property speculators who send their army of useful idiots to do their bidding (2). They try to blame all of society's ills on their favourite scapegoats, the Muslims, in the same way that the Nazis blamed Germany's problems on the Jews. These attempts to divide the working class along lines of race and religion divert anger away from our real class enemies: capitalists, politicians

and bosses. As antifascists we see it as our duty to combat the reactionaries of the EDL and all the tiny groups riding along on their coat tails. This includes taking action against companies that profit from their politics of hatred. For working class action against fascism! No pasaran! - they shall not pass. "

Workfare walk of shame in Not- tingham

On Saturday 29th a group of anti-workfare activists took to the streets of Nottingham to picket some of the corporate workfare profiteers and to highlight why workfare is such a dangerous idea. We visited Burton, Barnardo's, Primark, Greggs and Superdrug before we got through all of our leaflets and decided to call it a day. On the whole, the public responded positively to our message including several who agreed to boycott particular shops as a result of getting a flyer.

Workfare is the name given to various government programmes that force benefit claimants to work full-time jobs just to get their dole money. Various companies