

NORWICH
**Solidarity
Centre**

WE ARE OPEN:

First and third Tuesdays of the month 7pm - 9pm.
First and third Saturdays of the month 12noon - 4pm
Other times by arrangement. Closed all August.

Norwich Solidarity Centre, Room 13, Muspole Workshops,
Muspole Street (off Duke Street), Norwich.
Postal Address: PO Box 73, Norwich. NR3 1QD.
24 hour ansaphone: (01603) 611072.

**Book Review:
Anarcho Syndicalism
in Puerto Real**

When the Spanish government announced a programme of 'rationalisation' at the Puerto Real shipyards, the workforce came out on strike. But this was only the beginning. With personal accounts, photos and interviews, this pamphlet documents not just the workforce's great determination and ingenuity, but also that of the communities.

Despite state and police attacks, this is a 'success story' of workplace and community resistance and direct action, something a million miles away from the tried and failed methods of Norwich's Nestlé trade unions, and which they would be well advised to read about.

The work of the anarcho syndicalist union CNT in and around Puerto Real over many years established direct democracy as an inherent part of local political culture, rejecting control by unaccountable politicians, union officials or 'experts' and implanting workplace and locally-based control.

Mass meetings in the yards and surrounding localities involved workers, their families, neighbours and all supporters. Subsequently, struggles concerning health, taxation, environmental and other issues have been drawn into the activities of resistance.

Available for £1 from the centre. By post include an A5 SAE, cheques to 'Solidarity Centre'.

Video Showings:

Tue August 29th, 7.30pm.

Fighting Fascism in Football: St. Pauli fans.

The fans of the German St. Pauli team have a proud record of confronting fascism both on and off the terraces and their actions put to shame the liberal bleatings of the FA. on racism & fascism in football. This video shows how it's done.

Tue September 26th, 7.30pm.

Police Riot.

Actually made by the police themselves to show what a difficult and marvellous job they do in adverse conditions, apparently this is best watched with the commentary turned down. We'll be awarding points for seeing people you know fighting police oppression, and we'll get the beers in and throw the empties at each other afterwards to create an atmosphere of gritty urban unrest.

Tue Oct 24th, 7.30pm.

The making of Land and Freedom.

Recently shown on BBC2 this documentary goes behind the scenes of Ken Loach's latest film (see review in this issue) and includes the reaction of veterans of the revolution and also the reactions of the cast to the story that they were involved in recreating.

**Solidarity
Bulletin**

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Unions "no help to factory"-
A catalogue of missed
opportunities and failure:

**Nestlé
Closure**

Nestlé's decision last year to shut the Norwich factory, in hindsight came as little surprise considering the years of rumours, and particularly in view of Nestlé's profit crazed view of the world.

For years they have been universally condemned for the harm caused by their baby milk products in the third world. Back in the 1930's they did not hesitate to bankroll the launch of the Swiss Nazi party in order to guarantee increased profits and production by using Nazis to smash anything remotely approaching effective workers' organisation at their plants. Current yearly profits of £3 billion are not enough for Nestlé bosses, the destruction of people's livelihoods and communities in their pursuit of wealth counts for little or nothing.

Response of Norwich Nestlé Trade Unions

Of the numerous unions that claim to represent the workforce, the largest are USDAW and AEEU. contd on pg 3

**Taking Liberties:
ID Cards and
State Control**

The latest attack on our civil liberties looks set to be ID cards, with the possibility of some sort of system starting next year. There have been several attempts in recent years to get a foot in the door, which have been interesting not only because of the ultimate aim (compulsory ID cards for the whole population), but also because it's a good case study of how the government and media can set the agenda.

The classic scapegoating tactic has been used, for example the suggestion of ID cards solely for footy fans. Of course once they're accepted in one section of society, it's a much smaller step to suggest it would be a good idea for all. contd over

INSIDE:

- **Land and Freedom:** Ken Loach's new film previewed.
- **Staffing Solutions:** Equals workers problems?
- **Taking Liberties:** ID cards and state control.
- **Part time work:** Your rights explained.

Editorial

Welcome to issue 6 of the Solidarity Bulletin, the bulletin of Norwich Solidarity Centre. We've been very busy recently, for example with the Nestle closure and our campaign against Staffing Solutions (see articles in this issue). We've also gained some new members and a new hotline number since our last issue, if you need to contact us you can now phone our 24hr ansaphone on **(01603) 611072**, leave a message and we'll get back to you.

As last year we are taking August off, so the centre will **NOT** be open over August but back to 'normal' in September. That's all for now, hope you find this issue useful & informative, get in touch for more information about the Solidarity Centre or Solidarity Federation.

contd from pg 1

Similar thinking perhaps to the initial introduction of the poll tax in Scotland a year before England and Wales. Maybe Michael Howard should be brave enough to suggest ID cards for the Scottish first and see where that gets him (strung up we'd hope).

Now of course we're to have a new style driving licence (likely to be July 1996), we weren't aware of any problem with the old ones but still, this also fits in nicely with the public gradually getting used to the idea of carrying around a little card with your photo and details on. Then again, Tories have used the argument of "bringing us into line with Europe" (where cards have not been shown to prevent crime, if you believe that 's what they are for). Ironically this comes from a party who can't decide whether they want to be in Europe or not. The governments own Green paper itself states: "The effect of an identity card scheme on crime ... is difficult to quantify with any precision". But there must be some reason they're so bloody keen on it...

So much for conspiracy theories, what are the implications of a compulsory national ID card? When taken into consideration with The Criminal Justice Act, new police weaponry, politicians getting "tough on crime", it all amounts to a pretty fearsome package for the state to unleash as and when needed. The real implications of new legislation often only becomes apparant when social situations arise which lead to their use, this may be years later (it also can take a long time for poor old plod to get their head around the big legal words).

Interestingly the police sometimes appear to be reluctant to use their new powers to any great extent. Whether or not this is simply a smokescreen is largely irrelevant since they will do as they are told by their paymasters, come the crunch.

So the point is that whether you think the CJA, ID cards, or whatever else they come up with won't affect you, think again. The very broad, discretionary powers that we are now facing will not be used idly. You may not be interested in anti-roads protests, a traveller lifestyle, raves, or even basic civil liberties and our rights to live our lives without constant attempts to control us. Even so, who can predict the future?

Ann Oweres, director of the British Section of the International Commission of Jurists, says, "To be effective identity cards would have to be compulsory, regularly checked, and backed by national data bases, for example, of fingerprints, residence and immigration status. the card would be a gateway for future checks". There are enough implications for what sort of society we are heading for in that single quote than I'd care to think about - and I'm already a cynical old bastard.



'People without identities should have nothing to fear'

If only they could attack real social problems (e.g. homelessness, poverty, education, health care) with the same vigour then we might be making progress.

We need to send out the message now that ID cards will not be tolerated or cooperated with. A few years ago in Australia ID cards had overwhelming support. When the harsh realities came to light this support turned to mass opposition. In this country wartime ID cards were abolished in 1953 because they "tended to make people resentful of the action of the police". Well, we wouldn't want that, would we citizens?

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Their initial response to the announcement was decidedly directionless.

Following a push from the city council and trades' council, who organised a rally and march through the city, they embarked on a PR campaign involving councillors, MPs and the MEP spouting much rhetoric and pleas for a change of decision. Furthermore a firm of business consultants were hired, at the cost of thousands of pounds, to come up with a formula that would make the Norwich plant appear attractive to Nestlé bosses - something which Nestlé had no doubt been over already.

We hoped this display of hot-air was just an initial tactic while the unions geared up for serious resistance. As the weeks and months rolled by it became clear that for all the unions' talk of 'contingency plans' and 'nothing being ruled out', they had in fact put all their eggs in the PR/politicians' hot-air basket. It wasn't just a tactic, but their entire strategy!

After the closure of virtually every British coal mine two years ago, following a similar PR-orientated defence campaign that involved not dozens but hundreds of thousands of people had ended in complete failure, it should have been blatantly obvious to the unions at the factory that

A NORWICH workers group campaigning to save the doomed Nestle factory today claimed comrades across the world had joined a day of protest against the decision.

A total of 900 employees face the dole when the Swiss company closes the plant next year.

And the Norwich Solidarity Centre said demonstrations were planned today in 20 countries including France, Spain, Germany, Thailand, Pakistan, Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines.

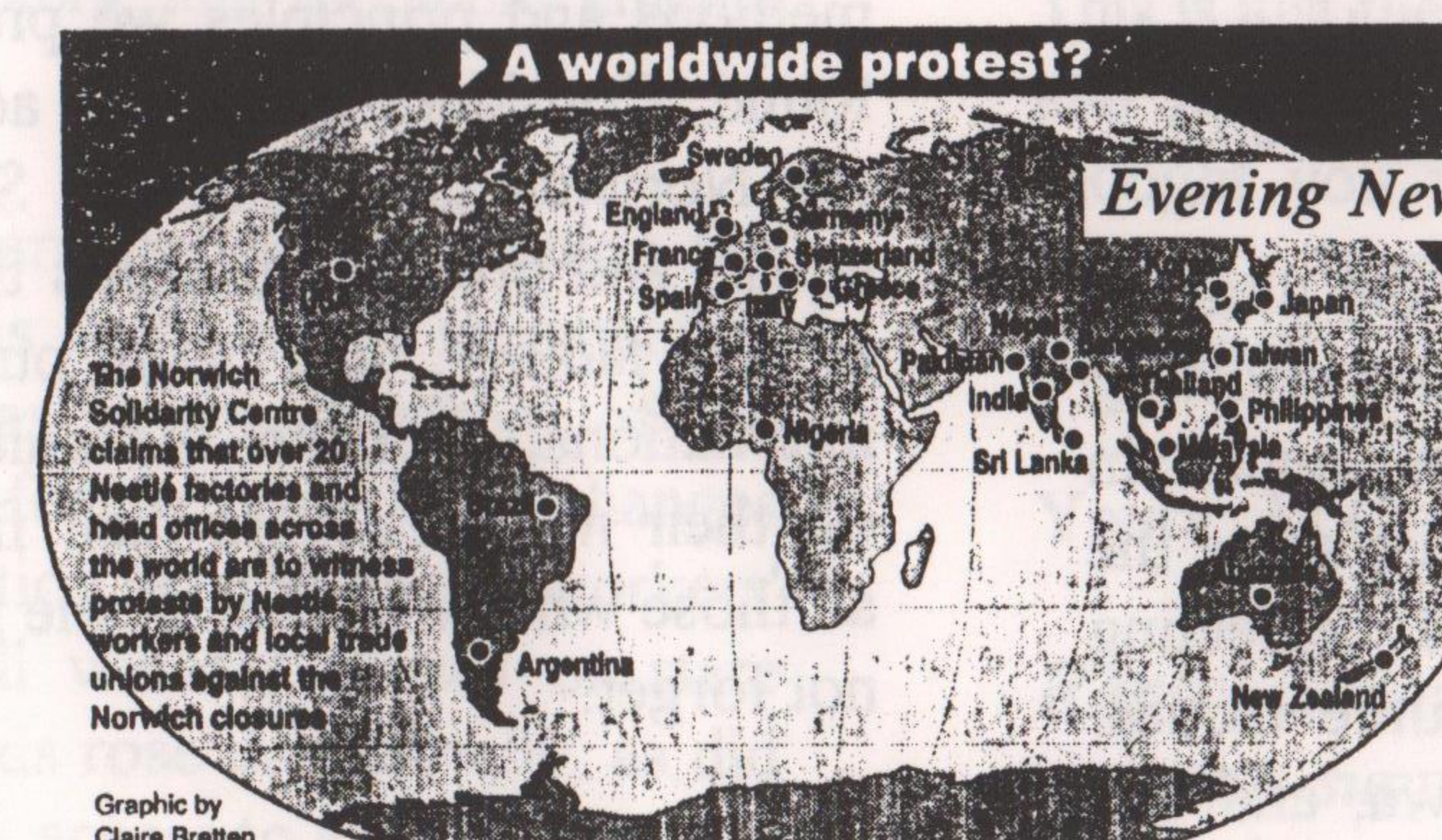
Support group spokesman Peter Jameson said although the protests across the globe were focusing on Norwich workers, the Nestle story was a familiar one worldwide.

"We condemn Nestle's immoral decision to put yet more profit before those who create the wealth — their workers — as do workers' organisations worldwide," he said.

But unions already fighting the planned closure condemned the group and its actions.

Couvenor Mick Banham said the joint co-ordinating committee had put out its own leaflet urging workers to ignore the group.

"As you are aware, we are try-



Graphic by Claire Bretten.

by Beth Rose and Steve Silk

ing to deal with the company in a reasonable and responsible way and feel strongly that the extreme actions advocated by this group would be of no help to our cause whatsoever and indeed could damage it."

Mr Jameson replied by saying: "We are constantly offering them help and we have met with indifference.

"We would very much like them to come along today and get involved."

The Norwich protest involved two 4ft square banners being displayed along Chapel Field Road, opposite the factory.

they were on hiding to nothing. Clearly a rethink and different approach were needed if this exercise wasn't going to result in a complete waste of time, money and the total demoralisation of the workers at the Norwich factory?

When it wasn't sad and pathetic, it was almost funny - the 22,000 name petition that would change Nestlé bosses' minds, the hoped-for hotline to Tony Blair...

Those of us who had previously worked at the factory, remembered without sentimentality just how the trade union USDAW operates. It must have been several decades (if ever) ago that USDAW lost its grasp of what made it have any relevance to workers - work place based organisation. For years the workforce has been left in total ignorance of how the union worked, when and where it met, how decisions were made, and what, if anything, it did. The union and its membership were as far apart as Mundesley and Moscow.

Even the notice boards at the factory never had notices that were less than two years out of date. At the lowest level, the branch, many if not most union officials see their rôle not as confronting management, but as involving themselves in union

One said: "Nestle Profits = Norwich dole".

The other proclaimed: "Nestle = Profit parasite".

The Evening News was not able to contact protesters in Asia, the USA or Africa today.

But in France, Valerie Franiatte, secretary of the Confederation Nationale du Travail, the French section of the International Workers Association, confirmed action was planned.

A CNT leaflet says the decision to close the Norwich factory would "throw 900 British families into misery".

"If we are not careful the menace at Norwich today could destroy us tomorrow, striking anywhere in the group," it said.



business. The further up the union structure you look, the more remote and better paid they are.

Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory

The most glaring and largest cock-up was USDAW, AEEU, MSF etc's total inaction with regards to the one avenue that stood a chance of stopping the closure dead in its tracks.

Early on came declarations by the York, Halifax and Newcastle plants' workforces that they did not wish to take away the work of the Norwich workforce as a result of the closure and relocation of the Norwich production lines. Here was something to be grasped with both hands and built upon. In this closure it is the other three UK chocolate producing plants that hold the key. With only half the time and energy spent on the PR/hot air campaign, the York, Halifax and Newcastle plant's reluctance to take work away from Norwich could be translated into resolutions to totally boycott the transfer, installations and renewed production of the Norwich lines - stopping Nestlé's decision from ever being put into action.

In not pursuing this line of action the unions opted to reject effective resistance and the fight was all but lost. All that remained was posturing and gestures which would only bring about the demoralisation of the Norwich Nestle workforce.

Whilst (of course) Nestle bosses hold the ultimate responsibility for shutting the factory and throwing 900 workers and their families into an uncertain and unpromising future, the unions must share the blame due to their inaction, years of neglecting workplace organisation and use of futile tactics. They have reaped what they have sown, and will not even be able to say that they tried but failed.

Norwich Solidarity Federation - where were we?

Following the announcement of the closure we wrote to all the unions at the plant with the offer of support in any and every way they required, particularly internationally as our sister union in France, the CNT, organises at two Nestle subsidiaries. We also have many other global contacts from our links with the International Workers Association (IWA).

We subsequently informed the factory unions of an IWA congress decision to respond to the closure with an international day of protest actions, and that in Norwich, the Solidarity Centre was to host the launch of a local support group. Each and every letter sent to the unions invited their comment, full involvement, dialogue and every opportunity for them to exercise powers of veto if they wished.

Indifference

To the disappointment of both ourselves and all those who participated in the support group, the Nestle unions showed nothing but indifference, never once making the effort to make any input to the international day of protest actions, the support group, or even just to say "thanks, but no thanks"!

Following the international day of action (an excellent opportunity to show Nestle bosses that workers worldwide were disgusted by their actions), the Norwich factory trade unions had the gall to tell Norwich trades council that they had not been informed. When we presented the trades council with copies of our correspondence the silence was deafening...

A clearer illustration of the bankruptcy of these trade unions and the need for the alternative methods and principles we promote could not be found. Considering that the active membership of the Norwich branch of the Solidarity Federation equals and probably exceeds that of all the unions at the factory, and with our strong UK and international contacts, the unions managed to cut off their noses to spite their faces. The losers are all those who work for Nestle in Norwich. We will not forget.



Ken Loach's new film: Land and Freedom.

Based on George Orwell's book of his experiences in the Spanish revolution (1936-39) *Homage to Catalonia*, this new film recreates much that is central to Orwell's book.

Ken Loach stands out as perhaps the only film director in the English-speaking world who consistently produces memorable films that whilst entertaining, also attack the consequences of the greedy profit system, and perhaps more significantly actually exist in the real world of working people's experiences (*Hidden Agenda*, *Riff Raff*, *Ladybird Ladybird*).

The film's central character is an out of work Liverpudlian who goes to Spain in order to join the workers' fight against General Franco's fascist coup. Joining a small Marxist party militia (the POUM), he witnesses the key events of the Spanish revolution: the social revolution in Barcelona and large tracts of rural Spain, fighting the fascists in Aragon, the swift rise to power of the Moscow/Stalin controlled Communist Party and its attacks on workers, and the achievements of the revolution.

In Spain it was the anarcho-syndicalist union the CNT (still active to this day), with a membership of 2 million which was at the forefront of the revolution, responsible for the remarkable changes - peasants collectivisation of the land, workers' control of industry, all without bosses or state control. Living standards rose dramatically, as did production, health care, access to education etc...

Land and Freedom also shows the turning point of the Spanish revolution, May 1937, when the Communist Party in Barcelona attacked both the CNT and the POUM in order to return industry to the bosses, the land to the fascist landlords, and to seize power for the party itself. It was this event which revealed the Communist Party for what it was - not a working class organisation, but interested only in power, whatever the price.

The Spanish people of 1936 were more politically developed and progressive than any today. Capitalism and wage slavery were seen for what

they are - robbery. People knew that an alternative could be built. Hope and collective action replaced greed, apathy and cynicism, fear of the boss had gone. This is exactly what we as anarcho-syndicalists still fight for.

See the film, and for those more interested, Norwich Solidarity Centre stocks a wide range of books on the Spanish revolution.

Letter: Boycott Nestlé.

Dear Solidarity Centre,

I was surprised to read (in the Evening News no less), that you are involved in campaigning to save the Nestle factory. After all, Nestle as a large, powerful multinational company, are guilty of promoting their baby milk products in developing countries.

This means that rather than using their own safe and free breast milk, mothers are encouraged to buy Nestle products, often making up the milk formula with poor quality water, with a subsequent effect on the health of the baby. UNICEF says that 4000 babies die daily from unsafe bottle feeding.

This is just the sort of excessively money-grabbing and immoral capitalist behaviour I would have thought you would be against at the Solidarity Centre. Nestle should be boycotted, not supported.

Yours, M.C.

Reply: Several people have made this mistake, equating support for the workforce at Nestle in Norwich with supporting the multinational company itself. But the fact is that their workers are being shat on, just as are mothers and infants in developing countries, by Nestle. Our support for the workforce is not the same as supporting the disgusting practices of the company.

We may not like who they work for, but if people think this means we should leave the workers high and dry without support then we say get real! If anyone out there can find a job without any dubious connections then good luck to them, but we think you'll be looking a long time. In case you haven't noticed we live in a capitalist system, with all the crap that that entails. As much as we could over

Your rights in part-time work

Six million people now work part time. The majority are women, but there are increasingly more men. Part time work is common across all industries, with terms and conditions often very poor.

You can claim:

- an itemised pay statement
- time off for antenatal care
- equal pay
- protection from sex or race discrimination
- time off for public duties
- time off for trade union duties
- protection from victimisation for trade union activity

This covers all part time and full time workers. And it doesn't matter how long you've worked for your employer.

After one month's service you can also claim:

- one week's notice of dismissal
- payment if you are suspended on medical grounds
- notice of any change in the statement of terms of your employment
- guaranteed pay if you are laid off

And after two month's service:

- a written statement of your terms of employment

After two year's service you can claim:

- the right to return after 40 week's maternity leave
- redundancy pay
- protection against unfair dismissal
- a written statement from your employer giving reasons for dismissal

This covers all part and full time workers. Sex discrimination and equal pay

More women than men work part time, so worse treatment of part time workers may amount to indirect sex discrimination which is unlawful.

Check that you get the same rights as full timers to:

- pay
- holidays
- sick pay
- occupational pensions
- anti-social hours payments

You may also be able to claim the right to work part time.

Your employer may refuse you these rights and be contravening the law.

Solidarity Centre membership is open to all workers who agree with our aims and principles - with you we can get these rights at work and much more besides.

If you have a problem with your boss, want advice and see the need for workplace organisation where you work - then get in touch.

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try not to live by their rules, it's just not always possible.

Are we only supposed to support people who have "politically correct" jobs? Bollocks! For people living in the real world there may be very little choice as to what job we have to take for ourselves and our family to get by. It may be a bitter pill for some idealists to swallow, but to have a chance of changing anything we may have to get our hands dirty and actually do something, instead of standing on the sidelines criticising.

Incidentally many Solidarity Centre members actively support the Nestle boycott. Baby Milk Action, who organise the boycott, can be contacted at Baby Milk Action, FREEPOST, Cambridge. CB2 3BR.

Sharks in the water

Norfolk 'employment agencies' illegal and savage exploitation of workforce

Following requests for help from a number of workers, Norfolk 'employment agencies', particularly Staffing Solutions and SRA, have come to light for their involvement in a number of rip-offs.

These agencies supply workforces to plants such as Danepak, Watton Produce, Howard Longs International and WH Knights. They take every opportunity to rip off workers - from charging for ear protectors, overalls and hats, to illegal wage deductions for 'administration'.

Under Health and Safety legislation no worker can be charged for protective equipment by an employer. These outfits try to cover themselves by claiming their workforces are self-employed - a claim that stands up to inspection like a bridegroom on a stag night.

Deductions for 'administration' are, as is common knowledge, how every employment agency stings the worker. Some of these agencies take not only the. for example, £5 an hour that the firms pay them (and then give the worker £3 an hour), but at the end of the week make a further deduction of several pounds. Two of the workers we contacted had challenged this and been told "Oh yes, we'll put that right, you won't have that deduction in future". Clearly these sharks were surprised that someone knew better, and weren't going to push their luck, hoping that news wouldn't spread!

On occasion these agencies really go the whole hog. A group of workers bussed in from one area had, instead of the normal daily charge of £1.50 for travel, a daily charge of £8 each - the equivalent of a £1 deduction for every hour they work.

Staffing Solutions have accurately summed up their scams as "being in direct competition with the benefits system".

The Solidarity Federation and particularly us in Norfolk at the Solidarity Centre, are targeting these employment agencies' to put an end to their robbery of working people, to expose them for the parasites they are, and above all to help workers at the sharp end of these con-artists with effective workplace organisation that will fight for them, rather than leave them to wait around for Father Christmas or Tony Blair, or the Never-Never Land of a Labour government.

The leaflet below is being distributed to many of the plants where these agencies operate. If you or someone you know works through these agencies, please get in touch and help this campaign.

SOLIDARITY FEDERATION International Workers Association

ILLEGAL CHARGES FOR EAR PROTECTORS & OVERALLS/HATS

If you have been charged for ear protectors and overalls/hat - you are being ripped-off!

The 'Noise at Work Regulations, 1989' state that no worker provided with ear protectors can be charged for them.

Overalls and hat are not required by law for the handling of raw vegetables, but for the handling and preparing of all other foods they are. If they are not necessary, you are not obliged to buy them - if they are, then you must be given them without charge.

Any employer who insists that you pay for these is committing theft, whether they be plant owners or some kind of 'employment agency' (such as Staffing Solutions)

CLAIM YOUR MONEY BACK - NOW

Let those who make profit from what we need for a safe and healthy working environment know that we won't be ripped-off.

DON'T ACT ON YOUR OWN - it might give your boss the chance to single you out and pick on you - if not now, later.

Talk with your workmates (ones you can trust), and demand your refunds together.

If they have any sense they will pay you, otherwise the Health & Safety Executive will only be the start of their problems...

ORGANISE!

Bosses, whether in 'respectable' suits or small-time sharks, will always try to 'pull a fast-one' on workers they think are unaware of their rights. Especially workers they think can easily be intimidated - workers not able to defend themselves with workplace organisation, a union.

With determination and the support of our workmates we can defend ourselves, organise and let the bosses know we won't be ripped-off, then we can start improving our working conditions and pay.

After all, whose work is it that creates their wealth?

It's ours! We won't let them rip us off!

If you would like further copies of this and future bulletins to distribute to friends, at work etc...Please fill in the form below and return it to : Norwich Solidarity Centre, PO Box 73, Norwich NR3 1QD.

Please send a further ___ copies, each issue

Name:.....

Address:.....

I would like further information about the Solidarity Centre & details on membership. ___ (Please Tick)

For readers outside Norfolk, especially overseas, please include stamps so we can afford to mail bulletins to you. We are skint.