

Tesco Don't Want You To Read This

Last week, we visited the CFC to speak to Tesco workers about coronavirus in the warehouse and management failing to inform staff of recent positive cases. Not long after we started speaking with people, one of the managers came out and lost it, screaming, shouting and threatening us, even though what we were doing was perfectly legal. This manager accused us of 'ruining society' and asked if we worked for Asda or Morrisons!

Obviously it didn't occur to him that maybe some of our mates work in the warehouse. Guess we don't see enough examples of people in hard jobs supporting each other these days! The fact is, we were there because we know that there have been Covid19 cases in the warehouse and that management have failed to inform staff about this. We wanted to speak with workers to find out more about their experiences during the pandemic and to talk about other issues, like drivers having to carry heavy deliveries up multiple flights of stairs, health and safety problems with turnaround, problems with racism and discrimination, or worries about hitting the pick-rate.

This was far too much for management, who ended up calling the cops on us (who came, decided there was no problem with us, and left again). It begs the question, if everything is so rosy at Tesco, then why are the managers so scared of workers talking to each other and getting advice and support on improving their work conditions?

Maybe it's because if workers did talk more and if they had each other's back, then it would be hard for Tesco to get away with all the bullshit. Like flexi-shifts, the new 12-hour shifts for van drivers, the recent loss of the annual bonus and the poverty-level wages. If we had a united workforce, where people trusted each other and shared their problems, then we could force concessions from management. After all, it's the workers who make Tesco Online tick, from picking the items, to doing the turnaround, to loading the vans, to delivering to customers.

Every day, hundreds of people in the CFC have to communicate with each other to get the job done. At the moment, management has a tight grip, and the work all goes towards making Tesco a profit instead of serving the basic needs of its workforce. But we live in uncertain times where things could shift. The powerful protests against racist police violence are making people of all colours question issues around race and class, not just with police brutality, but in the workplace, and our neighbourhoods. The crisis from the pandemic is only just starting to hit, and already we've seen a mass wave of strikes around the world, including some in the UK. Workers have taken action to

ensure their own safety and livelihoods, as businesses and their management teams only care about profit. Who knows what will happen when Tesco cancel the 10% pandemic 'bonus', or if they come for the Sunday rate at the next sham USDAW contract negotiations?

Obviously, these are big things and it can be hard to know where to begin. In a huge warehouse like the CFC, the pace of work makes people stressed, tired and defensive. There are loads of different shift times, drivers are on the road alone, different departments don't mix much, there are barriers with languages and some people are way too cosy with management. But things start from small steps. Like people talking together about their common problems and common solutions. Sticking up for one another when management tries to have a go. Resisting the increase in work rate, etc.

Whatever management might say, we are a group of Tesco workers, and others from the area. We work in warehouses, logistics, as street cleaners and carers. We have links across various Tesco stores and warehouses. We exchange experiences about organising at work and learn from each other, including about rights at work and how to fight against management crap. No one is paying us to be here. We are doing this because the only way we can solve our work problems is by helping each other. If you are interested in finding out more, then get in touch with us safely, and privately.

Email: croydonsolidarity@gmail.com **Call/Text:** 07951421335 **Facebook:**
search 'Croydon-Solidarity-Network' **Twitter:** @NetworkCroydon