



What Nestlé will not want you to know: the truth about the Panjang strike

Nestlé insists that the mass dismissal of union members was in response to criminal damage to the company's property. Yet a police investigation concluded that no criminal damages were incurred and there was no basis for criminal charges. When production was re-started on October 12 there was no need to repair or replace any machinery and no problems were encountered. So Nestlé focused instead on the damage done to raw materials - an issue they repeatedly raised with the local government and police. Again, no criminal damage was found by the police. On the occasions when raw material was damaged - a 450 kg bin of 3-in-1 coffee mix fell over on September 22, green coffee beans on the roaster and liquid coffee spoiled on September 28.

On September 22 union representatives repeatedly asked the management safety officer to stop putting raw materials on the lines because the strike had started - in accordance with the strike notice filed by the union – and machines would be turned off. Despite these warnings management and supervisors continued to place raw materials on the line. As a result there was damage to a bin of coffee mix.

On September 28 union members resumed the peaceful occupation of the plant after management reneged on its promise to meet the previous day. When SBNIP members came on duty members of the fake union created by management walked away from their machines. This included the coffee roaster where green coffee beans were being roasted. Union members informed supervisors and the first line manager in charge about the danger of leaving the roaster running unattended. The first line manager agreed to turn it off for safety reasons and union members were instructed to shut it down which they did according to procedure. But the early shutdown of the roaster left green coffee beans only partly roasted and this was among the damage to raw materials. On the same day there was damage to large quantities of liquid coffee.

The union informed management that it was necessary to again stop all raw materials because the boiler would be shut down (as it was on September 22 without consequence). However, the management in charge ignored the union's warning and continued to add raw materials. So this time when the boiler was shut down a large amount of liquid coffee was spoiled.