

RAINBOW NOTTINGHAMSHIRE JOBS NOT JSA

23 DEC 1996

0115 958 5666

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FORCED LABOUR SCHEMES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Forced Labour is now going to be reality for unemployed people. The Government has announced plans to extend its controversial Project Work Scheme - first piloted in Hull and Medway, to include a further 100,000 people from 1997.

People between 18 and 50 who have been unemployed for more than 2 years, will be given 13 weeks job search training followed by 13 weeks compulsory work experience. Anyone refusing will lose benefit.

People keep comparing these schemes to the American style 'Workfare', but in fact they are far worse. On the American scheme participants are paid the statutory minimum wage and only work the hours necessary to make up their benefit. Bad enough as this is, it is mild compared to what is being done here. We continue to have basic objections to 'Project Work'. For a start workers have already paid National Insurance contributions, in return expecting benefits when they are out of work. And remember your NI contributions have risen by 50% since 1979, while benefits were recently slashed by an average 20% with the introduction of JSA on October 7th.

Secondly, if there is work which wants doing, then pay the real rate for the job, not a derisory benefits + £10.

Finally, workfare style programmes are nothing new. They have been tried all over the world, and have two things in common. For a start, they all exploit the unemployed and secondly, they fail.

It is a myth that unemployed people don't want to work and need to be compelled. Our

experience teaches us that the vast majority of people don't want to exist on poverty benefits and would gladly take a job offering decent pay and conditions. What they don't want are the kind of poor quality, low paid jobs, often with terrible conditions, which are the only ones on offer. Project Work is the latest Government attempt to reduce the unemployment register and force people into just these kind of jobs.

We can stop Project Work in Notts. Councils, voluntary organisations and employers do not have to take part. In Hull and Medway, many potential "work" providers refused to co-operate. A similar stand needs to be made in Notts against the modern slave trades.

Contact:
Campaign against Workfare - Tel (0115) 9162231
Notts Campaign Against JSA - c/o PO Box 192, Nottingham NG1 1FJ
Nottingham and District TUC - c/o 118 Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3HL
or Notts Jobs not JSA c/o MUWC (01623) 424720

We also have an article on the campaign against Project Work in Hull written by a Trade Union activist. To receive a copy contact us at MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY. Tel (01623) 424720.

PROJECT WORK IS SLAVE LABOUR.

Dear All at Jobs not JSA,

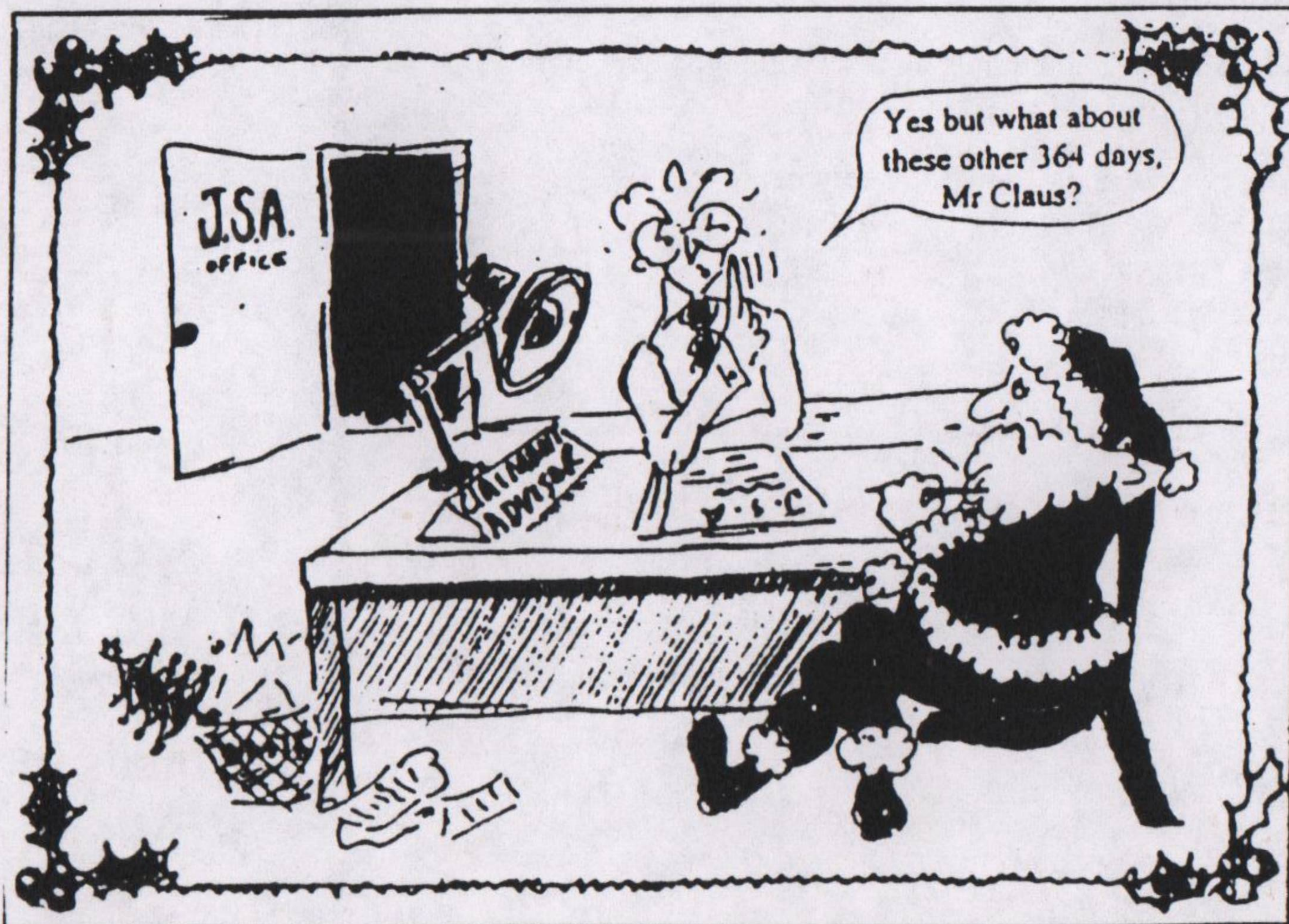
The following letter was sent anonymously to Notts Jobs not JSA. The contributor says that his little moan will be "of little use to anyone out there", we disagree. What he says is very interesting. Anybody else like to contribute?

Dear All at Jobs not JSA,
Just a note to tell you about my experiences at 'Instant Muscle', who're running the Restart scheme in the city.

Should you be unfortunate enough to be sent on this mandatory scheme, you will, no doubt find that the 'Restart Leader' is one Tina Dunbar. She has degrees in psychology/theology/philosophy, uses lots of flowery 'new-age' language, but is really very right wing. Be prepared to argue with her if you don't like being lectured on "creating your own destiny", etc ad nauseum. She indirectly suggested that those of us on the course were lazy, uninspired, unmotivated, as if we were pieces of shit! Expect her to ramble on about dismantling the welfare state and how we all will have to be responsible for ourselves. Expect to be told "you all have to expect less" because employers "can't afford decent wages"! Ask her how we can afford private health care/private welfare when we're all on £2.00 per hour. She will just skirt 'round the issue like a politician. - Look, I know this quick moan of mine will be of little use to anyone out there, but if you know what to expect, you can prepare yourself for some political debate/argument. Try and keep 'debating' with the daft woman and hold things up. Be careful not to get too mad in case you get chucked out and lose your dole. By the way, Instant Muscle have been tipped to get the contract for the Nottingham pilot of Workfare (dole in exchange for community work or working for private companies sweeping up, etc. It could be hard labour and not even the extra tenner!) This is coming in 2 - 3 months. Why not phone 'em up on 9586992 or 9418509 and let 'em know what you think? The address is Maid Marion House, Hounds Gate, Nottingham. (They're behind the pine shop) if you should want to pay 'em a visit.

That's all fer now. Take care!
From
The wee cycling man.

"Project Work is the wrong answer to the wrong problem. It is based on the view that the reason for unemployment is workshy scroungers rather than a shortage of jobs".
John Monks
TUC General Secretary.



DISMANTLING THE JSA

Some suggestions for change

The following suggestions for urgent changes were adopted at the TUC Unemployed Workers' Centre National Conference in London in October and are offered as a first step in the total repeal of this repressive legislation. Our experience is that the vast majority of unemployed people want a job. If there were quality jobs with decent pay there would be no need for compulsion.

Contributory Entitlement:

- * contributory benefit back to 12 months.
- * full rate of contributory benefit for 18 - 24 year olds.
- * Occupational/personal pension clawback eased.

Means-test and Earnings Rules:

- * radical reform of means-test for unemployed people
- * Capital limits raised at least in line with inflation.
- * Substantial increase of the earnings disregard.
- * Ability to roll-up disregard - at least on a quarterly basis - to allow claimants to undertake temporary work.
- * Simplify the rules of the Back to Work Bonus (BTWB) and replace the joint

BTWB for couples with separate BTWBs.

Availability, Actively Seeking Work & Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg):

- * complete reform of availability and actively seeking rules introduced under the Jobseekers Act and the 1989 Social Security Act.
- * New rules which take into account the lack of available jobs and which will not force claimants to carry out "cosmetic" jobseeking or to accept unsuitable, low paid work under threat of benefit sanction.
- * Granting same availability/actively seeking exemptions given to claimants on government schemes to people undertaking study/training in colleges or non-government programmes and to people engaged in voluntary work.
- * Ending the practice of suspending benefit under these rules before an Adjudication Officer has made a decision.
- * Immediate abolition of Employment Service performance targets.
- * Replacing Jobseekers Agreement with a voluntary agreement which is aimed at helping the claimant to maximise their potential and back into suitable

employment.

Benefit Sanctions & Hardship Payments

- * abolition of the Jobseekers Direction and the new 2/4 week sanction for not attending compulsory schemes - no benefit sanction attached to participation in government schemes.
- * No claimant should lose benefit until the Adjudication Officer has made a decision and all AOs should be independent and not based in Jobcentres.
- * Back to pre-1986 six week benefit penalty for "voluntary unemployment".
- * Complete reform of sanctions linked to availability/actively work.
- * Complete re-assessment of rules which define "voluntary unemployment" for claimants who leave jobs or are sacked for misconduct or who refuse offers of work from the Employment Service.
- * Abolition of new JSA rules and sanctions for claimants who do not attend interviews with the Employment Service.
- * JSA hardship payment replaced with one which awards payments automatically to all sanctioned claimants.

JSA NO WAY

DURESS CARDS

On November 4th TUC Unemployed Workers Centres launched the 'Duress Cards Campaign'.

These cards are designed to be handed

over to the claimant

adviser after signing the Jobseekers

Agreement, or after you have accepted a Direction.

Under JSA the unemployed are presumed guilty until you can prove your innocence.

The cards allied

with a model letter underline the fact that JSA is an infringement of civil liberties. The cards (illustrated) are to be passed on to Peter Lilley the Secretary of State for Social Security.

When the campaign was launched, Jobcentres on Merseyside refused to accept

the cards. Following meetings between MPs, CPSA, and ES/BA Management the cards are now accepted in Merseyside.

F.A.O. The Secretary of State for Social Security:

F.A.O. The Secretary of State for Social Security:

JOBSEEKERS DIRECTION

I am presenting this card to you as the representative of the Secretary of State for Social Security. I am capable, available and actively seeking work.

I have agreed to undertake the Jobseekers Direction issued to me because. I understand that refusal would result in my benefit being stopped. I do not feel that this direction is appropriate to me.

I believe this power to issue Jobseekers Direction is an infringement of my civil liberties and against the concept of natural justice.

Please pass this card to the Secretary of State. I will be contacting my M.P. to follow this up. I would like a reply by my next interview date.

Name of Signee

Benefit Office

ate for

at my

I

the

to

The cards and

explanatory leaflets are available from MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts. NG18 1EY, Tel (01623) 424720, or from Nottingham and District TUC, c/o 118 Workshop, 118 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. NG1 3HL. Tel (0115) 9582369.

If you wish to include any articles or campaigning activities around JSA in the region, please send them to :-

**JOBS NOT JSA %
MUWC 2 Beech Avenue
Mansfield Notts NG18
1EY (01623) 424720**

**JOBS
NOT
JSA
supporters**

**include:-
MUWC CPSA NUCPS
Notts CATUC Trades
Councils in Notts MSF
Advice Group**

8 NOV 1996

Britain. 1996. You thought it couldn't get worse. But you were wrong.....

Conservative Party Central Office is proud to present -

JSA

(or last of the mohicans)

With a unsupported cast of thousands this epic production will beggar belief
Watch with horror as the low wage economy eats people alive
Be aghast as Poverty makes a triumphant return to our streets
Scream with disbelief

"Perverse at it's very core," - Baroness Hollis of Heigham
"Remarkably close to forced Labour," - Earl Russell, Lib Dem Peer
"Helps create and feed an underclass," - Church Action on Poverty
"All they need is a good slap and a wash." - Tory Git

A Lilley-Portillo-Shepherd production
Filmed in Narrowvision™

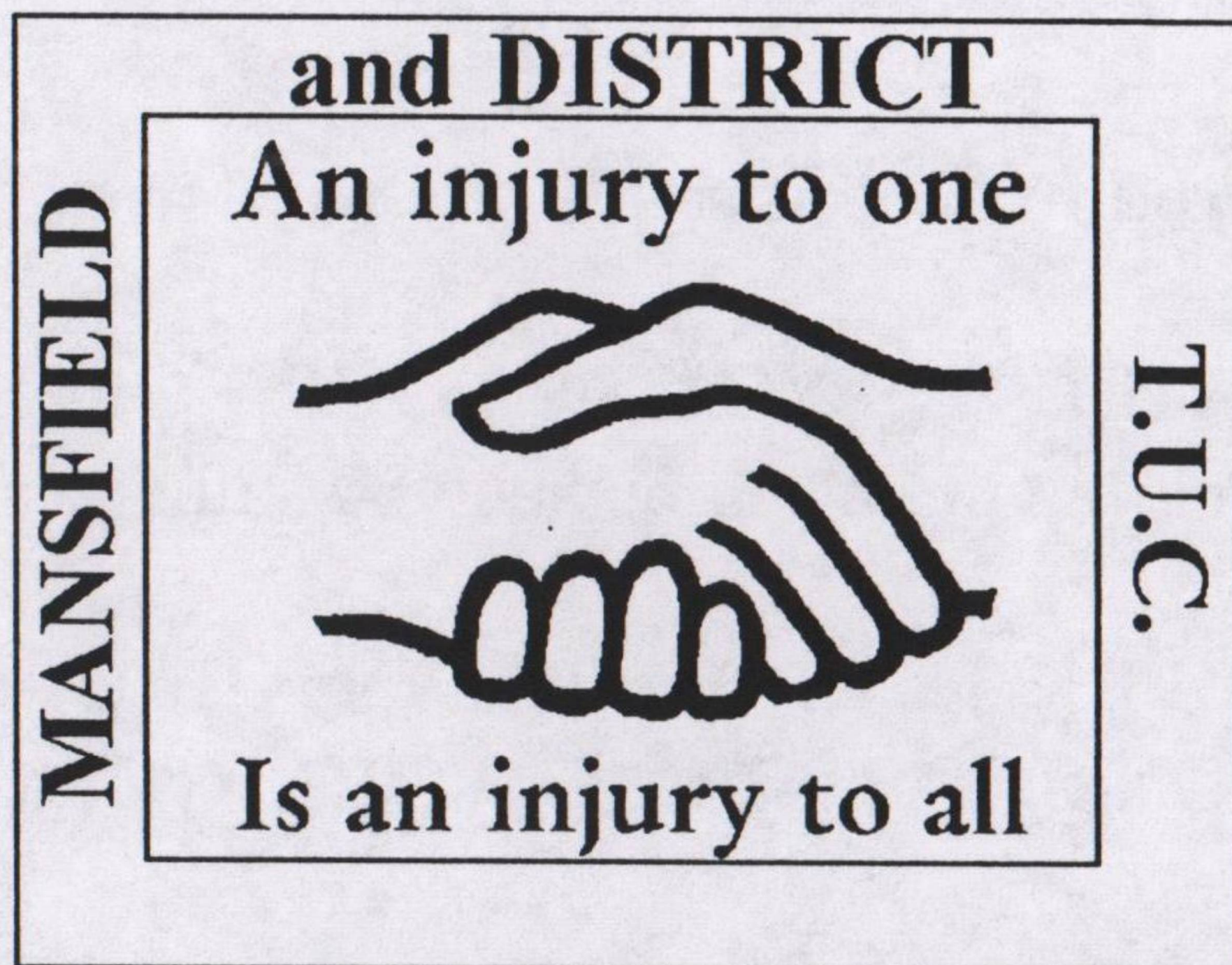
Directed by Market Forces and Vindictiveness
Starring Benefit Sanction and Harsh Regime
Special guest appearance by Clement Advisor
Special guest star Job Seeker
And introducing: Job Seeker's Direction

(Programme includes short film "They Came from Outer Space")
Soundtrack includes smash hit - Billy get yer hair cut - by Take That!

Coming to a Job Centre near you. Nationwide Release Monday October 7. There is no escape.

OR IS THERE?

Mansfield & District Trade Union Council



Are you in Work?
Well, Watch out!
for the
Jobseekers Allowance

Even though you're in employment this new benefit seriously affects you.

The Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) replaces Unemployment Benefit and Income Support.

JSA

- Threatens your job if your are temporarily laid-off or put on short-time working.
- Undermines your pay and conditions.
- Cheats you of benefit rights you pay for every week.

JSA WILL HIT YOU IN YOUR POCKET!

If you still think having a job makes you safe - read on...

COULD YOU BE TEMPORARILY LAID-OFF OR PUT ON SHORT-TIME WORKING?

Previously, if you were laid-off you could get benefit for the hours you didn't work.

Under JSA, after 13 weeks you have to be available to take any job, and prepared to give up the job you have now to do this. This means that skilled workers could be forced to leave their jobs for less skilled and even lower-paid jobs. It means that an employer may be forced to take on new workers to replace you. Rather than be forced into low paid, less skilled work, many workers will be forced to claim redundancy - you are entitled to do this if you are laid-off for more than 4 weeks

WILL YOUR REDUNDANCY PAYMENT PROTECT YOUR STANDARD OF LIVING WHILE YOU LOOK FOR ANOTHER JOB?

Under JSA you face a means-test after 6 months, instead of 12.

That means that if you've got more than £3,000 of your redundancy payment left, your benefit will be cut. If you've got £8,000 left, you won't get any JSA at all after 6 months. In any case, redundancy payments are a lot lower nowadays than they used to be - and remember, redundancy payments are soon spent!

WILL JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE AFFECT PEOPLE WITH GOOD JOBS?

People claiming JSA cannot refuse to apply for a job because of the pay or conditions. JSA will force unemployed people into taking badly-paid jobs, with poor terms and conditions. Unscrupulous employers will be helped in undercutting wages. JSA is a threat to the pay and conditions of workers with good jobs.

WILL PEOPLE WHO LOSE THEIR JOBS GET HELP WITH THEIR MORTGAGES?

Changes introduced in October 1995, mean that anyone with a mortgage taken out after then who then loses their job, has to wait 9 months before they get any help, even if they qualify for Income Support. People who took out their mortgage before then get no help for 2 months, and then only 50% of the interest for the next 19 weeks.

WILL NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS BE REDUCED TO MAKE UP FOR THESE CUTS?

Workers pay Contributions to cover them for unemployment, sickness and a pension. Since 1979, employees' Contributions have risen by 50%. Contributions are not being reduced, but the benefit they pay for has been halved to 6 months.

**Whether you're in a job or unemployed
Jobseekers Allowance is a threat to YOU.**

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:


- Pass this leaflet on to other workers;
- Raise it at your next union meeting;
- Find out your employer's views;
- Write to your local Councillor or MP.

The Government does not believe that enough people care what happens to the social security system.

**MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN!
SHOW THEM YOU CARE**

For more information
please contact:

Notts Jobs not JSA
MUWC 2 Beech Avenue,
Mansfield, Notts.
NG18 1EY

 (01623) 424720

