

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE JOBS NOT JSA

ISSUE 8

JUNE 1997

WELFARE TO WORKFARE!!

**JOBS!
JOBS!
JOBS!**

Much was made in the general election by Tony Blair that the New Labour party would be 'Education, Education, Education'. In fact very little was said about unemployment by all the major parties.

We would like to suggest, no demand, that the priority of this and any other government should be Jobs, Jobs, Jobs.

Jobs that are full time and permanent, not temporary, agency, casual or contracted out.

Jobs that pay a real wage, not jobs which rely on a state subsidy, i.e. Family Credit.

Jobs with decent working conditions, that recognise trade unions, where employers recognise their responsibilities on health, safety and to the welfare of their employees.

**Jobs! Jobs!
Jobs! are our
priority.**

Remember the general election campaign? New Labour hopefuls waving small plastic cards at all and sundry and chanting the five promises as if they were a buddhist mantra.

One of the promises was "to get 250,000 under 25 year olds off benefits and into work by using money from a windfall levy on the privatised utilities". Sounds okay so far. The Welfare to Work programme, we are told, will be a cornerstone of Gordon Brown's first budget.

So what is "Welfare to Work"?

We will look at the other parts of the programme in the next issue, in this article we will concentrate on what is offered to young people.

The prospect of 250,000 young people moving from the dole queue and dead end training schemes into real jobs on real wages is something to get excited about. Don't bother.

In reality we are about to see our young people coerced into workfare type schemes. There is a choice, a voluntary element - and we use that term loosely, but only in relation to what part of the menu you choose. The scheme itself is compulsory.

Even within the menu, the scheme will

only be as voluntary as the targets set for Jobcentre staff allow.

So what is on the menu which our young workers will be offered?

First a chance of a "job" which in reality will be little more than workfare, and only guaranteed for 6 months. In the private sector your employer will be paid £1560 to take you on for six months.

The second part of the menu is six months work, similar to above, but working in the voluntary sector.

The third choice is to join an environmental task force.

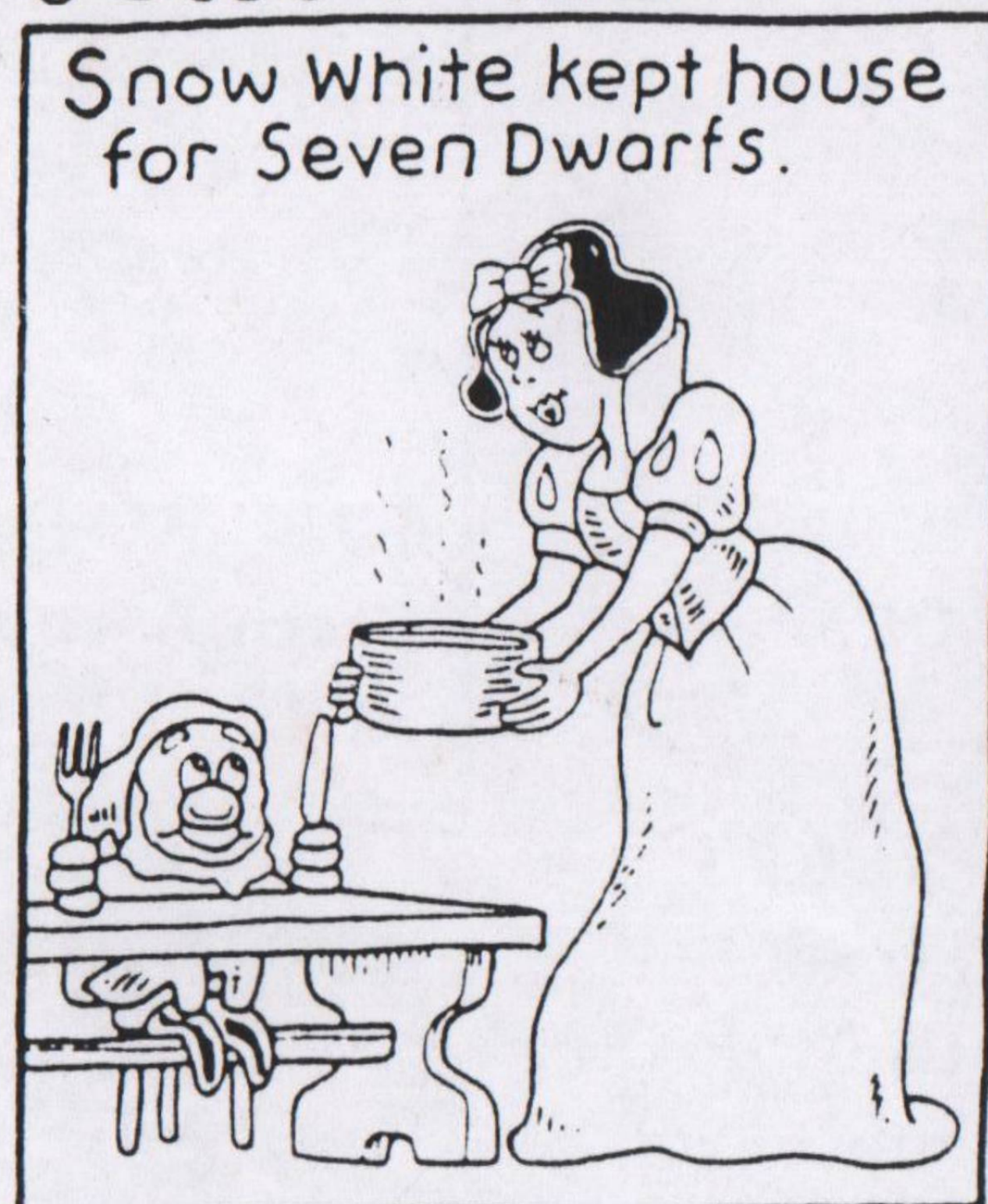
All of the above three choices will pay benefits plus £20, and remember if you refuse to take part, your benefit will be sanctioned by 40% for up to six months.

It is our opinion that Labours "New Deal for Youth" is only an extension of the Tories 'Project Work' scheme, targeted at young people, and paying an extra tenner.

What young people want are real jobs, paying real wages, not more coercive workfare style schemes.

The fourth option on the menu is a partial step in the right direction. The chance to study full time without losing your benefit, but only if the employment service approve of the course.

TORYTIME: Snow White and The Seven Trainee Chefs





EUROPE MUST WORK

As part of the European wide campaign for social justice, the National Unemployed Centres Combine (NUCC), were asked by colleagues in Europe to ask the TUC and European TUC for a day of action on unemployment for May 28th.

Across Europe, national and regional activities took place on the 28th May calling for job creation to be prioritised across the community, allied with minimum standards at work. The European TUC correctly stated that there was too strong a focus on monetary stability at the expense of employment.

In the Midlands Region, TUC Unemployed Workers Centres arranged an unemployment mountain in Coventry which received good media coverage. ★

NEW LEAFLETS AVAILABLE

MUWC have produced 4 new leaflets to assist claimants on JSA. They are:

- Have you lost your job and need to sign on?
- Are you unemployed and signing on?
- Studying and the Job Seekers Allowance
- JSA and the 16 Hour Rule

These are available from
MUWC
 2 Beech Avenue
 Mansfield
 Notts.
 NG18 1EY
 Telephone (01623) 424720

EDITORIAL

New Labour, New Government, same struggle. With Labour only offering to tinker with the JSA, we see no reason to suspend or halt our campaign. On the contrary we see every reason to step up the campaign.

The appointment of Harriet Harman and Frank Field to Social Security does not fill us with hope, in fact the opposite. Tony Blair has already made a keynote speech attacking welfare dependency and single mothers. With Welfare to Work threatening more coercion and workfare schemes, our campaign needs to intensify.

We are in danger of repeating ourselves, but we still look forward to the day when politicians attack and address the real problem which is unemployment, instead of scapegoating the unemployed.

In the meantime we will continue to campaign for social and economic justice for all, to rebuild the welfare state, and to remove the spectre of poverty from our communities. ★

EUROMARCH 97

From the 27th-29th May one of the British legs of the Euromarch was in Nottinghamshire. This leg had left Jarrow on May 19th and will arrive in Amsterdam along with 29 other marches originating from Mother countries on June 14th. New unemployed activists from MUWC are going over to Amsterdam for the 14th June for what will be one of the biggest demonstrations ever held in Europe. The reason Amsterdam was chosen for this date is to coincide with the Intergovernmental conference (Maastricht 2) which starts that weekend.

A rival conference bringing together unemployed and trade unionists from all over Europe will start on June 13th. Euromarch 97 is part of our response to a European Community in which 20 million people are unemployed, 50 million live below the poverty level, and 5 million are homeless. It is a response to the Maastricht convergence criteria which will lead to massive cuts in public spending totalling billions of pounds, and lead to the loss of millions of jobs.

The march in Notts received a fantastic response, with good regional TV, local radio and media coverage, and was a wonderful opportunity to get across our demand for 'a Peoples Europe not a bankers Europe'.

Several TU and unemployed activists joined the march as it passed through Notts, and Ian Juniper, Secretary of Nottingham and District TUC is still with the march.

While the march passed through Mansfield they held a fifteen minute picket outside Magnet kitchens in support of the 300 sacked Magnet workers in Darlington.

Our thanks to all who helped to organise and support the march as it passed through Notts. The final word to the march leader Andy Robertson, "When we arrive in Amsterdam it will not be the end of the march, it will be the beginning of the campaign". ★

JOBS NOT JSA

supporters
include:-

MUWC CPSA NUCPS
 Notts CATUC Trades
 Councils in Notts MSF
 Advice Group

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

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