

# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE JOBS NOT JSA

ISSUE 4

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## THREE STRIKES ...

Originating within Groundswell (A National Anarchist dominated campaign against JSA), the three strikes policy has now arrived in Nottingham. The three strikes and your out policy is quite simple, if a complaint is received about a claimant adviser, then the local campaign will write a warning letter to that person. On a second complaint an even stronger letter is sent. A third complaint will result in the adviser's photograph appearing on posters and leaflets with a suggestion that you let them know how you feel.

Notts Jobs not JSA was established in early 1995 by advice workers, unemployed organisations, trade unionists and the local branches of CPSA and PTC. We have maintained this unity throughout the campaign, unemployed and employed united in opposition to the JSA.

Notts Jobs not JSA will never support the threat of violence against fellow trade unionists. Such a policy suits the

government because it divides us at a time when we are under attack.

We are aware that not all members of Nottingham Campaign against the JSA agree with the "three strikes" policy, in fact several have phoned me to say that it was discussed at a meeting, but never agreed. We can only ask that those who support the "three strikes" policy think again.

CPSA members in Jobcentres and Benefit Offices are very well aware of the frustrations of the unemployed - indeed, many of us have been in the same position, or have partners and friends who are signing on. Job Insecurity affects us all. As a union, CPSA is increasingly concerned at the continuing attacks on the unemployed and the Government's ever harsher benefit regime is clearly the worst attack yet.

CPSA members don't want JSA because of the implications for both staff and

claimants. Unions in the Employment Service and Benefits Agency have been actively campaigning against JSA, up to and including taking industrial action over it. We are therefore very concerned to learn that some members of the Nottingham Campaign against JSA have adopted a policy of blaming individual workers for the implementation of JSA (the "3 Strikes" policy). We believe that this policy is completely unjustified. Individual members cannot, and should not, be blamed for government policies. We also feel that the "3 Strikes" policy sets worker against worker and the employed against the unemployed.

Unemployed workers and Benefit/Jobcentre staff should work together to achieve the same aim - the abolition of JSA. We ask that claimants and workers stand alongside us - don't blame us!

Jon O'Neill (MUWC)  
Rachel Nicholls - CPSA Branch

## YORKSHIRE & EAST MIDLANDS AGAINST THE JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE



Saturday 5th October 1996 SHEFFIELD Assemble 11am  
Devonshire Green March off 11:30am Rally 12noon Barkers Pool  
Speakers Tony Benn MP Mark Serwotka CPSA National  
Unemployed Workers Combine Speaker

Because of the clash with the Goose Fair on October 5th, we are unable to organise a march and rally in Nottingham to mark the introduction of JSA on October 7th.

Since then, the TUC Unemployed Workers Centres in the East Midlands and Yorkshire have combined forces to arrange a demonstration in Sheffield on Saturday 5th October. Local transport will be arranged. For details contact MUWC on (01623) 424720.



## Benefit Offices To Strike

Members of the Civil and Public Services Association have voted for a series of national strikes across the Benefits Agency.

Union members are angry at plans to introduce the controversial Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) into job centres in October without the protection of Security screens.

Local Branch Secretary Steve Battlemuch said "JSA is a controversial means tested benefit which is replacing unemployment benefit. To ask staff to implement this without the protection of security screens is a disgrace. "He went on" Assaults on staff are on the increase, and members implementing Government policy should not have to work in fear of their lives".

Concern has been growing since the stabbing of two job centre staff in Bexleyheath in January and various incidents involving guns, including one in Nottingham.

CPSA are keen to stress that in an ideal world screens would not be necessary, and that the vast majority of the public never cause any problems when visiting benefit offices. However the fact remains that in 1995 there were over 2500 incidents in unscreened job centres. This will undoubtedly increase with the arrival of the controversial JSA.

After the stoppage on Friday August 30th, further stoppages are planned on 25th - 27th September and 7th - 8th October.

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

## OPERATION SPOTLIGHT

In Issue 3 we laid out why we opposed the above benefits fraud campaign. Due to limited resources, most of our work against Operation Spotlight was confined to the Mansfield and Ashfield areas.

We distributed leaflets, received good press coverage, and responded to the Benefits Agency on Radio Mansfield. During the phone in, only one person accused us of condoning criminal behaviour. Every other caller supported our line.

The results in Notts were 642 calls to the Freephone number, 35 of which were from the Mansfield and Ashfield area. BA Chiefs hailed it as a success, although one local newspaper in Mansfield ran the headline

"Neighbours refuse to shop benefit cheats".

Peter Lilley has since launched a national Freephone line with an advertising budget of £500,000. This at the same time as the free benefit helpline was axed, a service which 60,000 people a week used. In Mansfield this year the Customer Service Team was closed down along with the Tribunal Service office in Mansfield. At least we can see where this governments priorities lie.

Peter Lilley claims that £1.4 billion was saved last year through cracking down on

fraud. In fact the figures include fraud, and inadvertent mistakes by claimants and/or BA staff. Officials then multiply the weekly amount saved by 32 to arrive at the figure of £1.4 billion.

Of less concern to politicians, is the £3.2 billion in benefits which goes unclaimed every year. Over 2,000,000 people every year, fail to claim council tax benefit, 600,000 miss out on housing benefit. £1.2 billion is unclaimed by pensioners

every year in income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Every year a further 1,400,000 people do not claim the income support to which they are entitled, an average of £22.85 per week.

Paul Convery of the Unemployment Unit describes the system as being run "with the single minded purpose of preventing people from receiving benefits to which they should be entitled".

As we have said before in Notts Jobs not JSA, we look forward to the day when politicians receive standing ovations at conference by promising to ensure that everybody receives the correct benefit. More urgently, we look forward to the policies which attack unemployment as the real problem, and not the unemployed.



## Meadows Advice Group

**"Jobseekers Allowance - Know your rights"**

Find out how Jobseekers Allowance will affect you.

Wednesday 9th October 7:30 - 9:00pm

Queens Walk Community Centre Queens Walk

The Meadows Nottingham

Speaker Jon O'Neill

Mansfield Unemployed Workers' Centre

## JOBS

## NOT

## JSA

supporters

include:-

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