

# LOW PAY, NO PAY

THE GROWTH OF THE LOW PAY ECONOMY OF PART-TIME, CASUAL AND TEMPORARY WORK SHOWS THE NEED FOR LINKS BETWEEN THE UNEMPLOYED, AND THE LOW-PAID.

People on the dole are coming under increasing pressure to take badly paid, unsuitable work, while those now doing such jobs are likely need to sign on again and again.

## NEW RULES

The "Available for Work" rules, the forthcoming "Actively Seeking Work" rules, have implications for claimants and low-waged alike.

Its the 'pool of cheap labour' theory taken a step further. Mass unemployment has been used to curb trade unions. Now that cheap labour is being put to work for £2.50 an hour or less in jobs which have no rights, no unions, where people are at the mercy of employers whims, and if you leave, you stand to lose benefit for up to 6 months.

## NO RESPONSE

Meanwhile, the Labour Party's policy review is notably silent about unemployment, the benefits system, and low pay. The TUC have collaborated with government and employers on the design and implementation of 'work for benefit' schemes like YIS and ET.

## THE SAME BOAT

So, the growth of the low pay economy will produce no response unless claimants and low paid workers, many of whom are at present unorganised, recognise their mutual interest and start to organise in defence of that interest at whatever level of activity is possible.

First things first though...

## IF YOU START WORK

\* **Join a Union.** Many people in temporary work don't even think of joining a union. But it always makes sense because, even the union offers little or no support, you can still get in touch with other workers in similar situations.

\* **Keep in Touch With Claimant Groups.** Just because you don't sign on doesn't make you any different. Pass on information about employers. Also, contact a claimants group BEFORE YOU LEAVE WORK FOR ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO AVOID THE 6 MONTHS BENEFIT DISQUALIFICATION.

\* **IN PLACES WITH NO USEFUL UNION,** whether through company hostility (e.g. MacDonalds), a transient workforce, or apathy, lots can still be done, whether by starting a workplace group, or just dispensing information. Many employers, and YIS and ET schemes take short cuts on, for instance, Health & Safety. A few people sticking together can encourage other workers to stand up for themselves.

## ET Rights

Rights guides to ET trainees are available free from the Unemployment Unit, 9 Poland St, London. They also produce a free YIS Rights guide and lots of useful statistics and information.

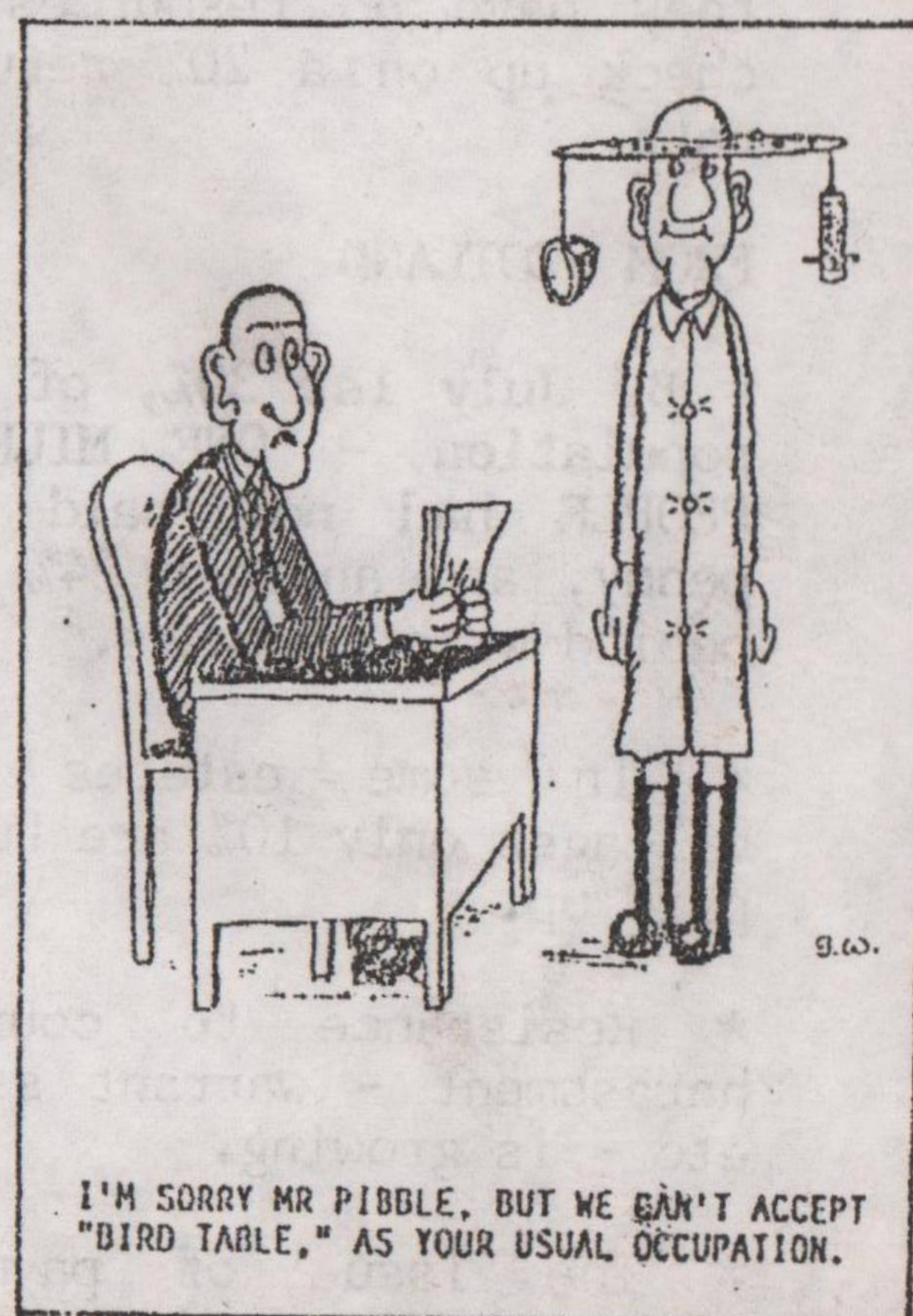
## boomstats

Over 5 million full-time workers earn less than £132 gross a week. There are also 4 million part-time workers. So 9 million people, 44% of the adult workforce are low paid. Two thirds of low paid workers are women.

In 1987, 150,044 people had either their gas or electricity supplies disconnected.

From 1984 to 1988 serious accidents on YIS rose from 63 to 156 per 100,000 trainees

Voter registration in Scotland has decreased by around 10% because of the Poll Tax.



# HASSLE

The Paper of the Alliance of Unwaged Organisations

ISSUE 2

SUMMER '89

FREE

# MILLIONS SAY WE WON'T PAY

IN AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF STRENGTH AND SOLIDARITY A COLUMN OF PEOPLE MORE THAN A MILE LONG MARCHED THROUGH MANCHESTER ON JULY 1ST.

This was the biggest demonstration yet seen in England and Wales against the Poll Tax. But it received little attention in the national media.

Britain's free press, while avidly reporting the great and tragic events in China, saw fit to ignore the people's opposition to the most unjust tax system this country has seen for centuries.

And, just as in China, where the media quickly fell into line behind the state's attempts to cover up and distort the bloodbath and ongoing repression, so the British press has been enlisted in defence of the Poll Tax and the decrepit regime which invented it.

## DIRTY TRICKS

It will be a feature of this campaign that the establishment press will ALWAYS lie about the level of opposition. The full range of dis-information tricks will be used to demoralise and discredit the anti-poll tax unions and community groups now organising against the Poll Tax.

BUT, DESPITE THE PRESS, AND TUC AND LABOUR PARTY EQUIVOCATION, THE MESSAGE FROM MANCHESTER AND FROM LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF ANTI-POLL TAX GROUPS IN SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND WALES IS CLEAR-

MARGARET THATCHER- WE WON'T PAY YOUR POLL TAX.

DOLEDRUMS

by

SN 4878  
SPENCER H



INSIDE -  
ALL THE LATEST  
ON THE POLL TAX  
\*  
NEW DOLE RULES





Hassle 2 has been produced by the Swindon Unemployed Movement, with contributions from Norwich Claimants Union.

Hassle will be produced in Swindon for the foreseeable future. This move is for both personal and practical reasons.

Hassle is a free newsheet containing practical advice and comment which can be handed out at ANY dole office.

We hope Hassle will serve to bring unemployed, claimants and low paid individuals and groups into closer communication as the basis of a national movement. But, we need your help - by ordering bundles of Hassle to distribute, AND by contributing news, comment, letters and donations.

Deadline for Hassle 3 is 21 August. Lets hear from you. Write to

Hassle,  
Swindon Unemployed Movement  
37 A Regent St, Swindon,  
Wilts.

To get in touch with your nearest unwaged group or claimants union write or phone your regional contact below.

Lothian Claimants Union,  
c/o EUWC, 103 Broughton St,  
Edinburgh.  
Tel 031 557 0718.  
(This is a new address)

Leeds Claimants Union,  
158 Hyde Park Rd, Leeds,  
LS6 1AG.  
Tel. 0532 753160

Coventry Unemployed Action  
Group, Room 5, Unit 15,  
Arches Industrial Estate,  
Spon End, Coventry.

# BENEFIT STOPS

NEW 'ACTIVELY SEEKING EMPLOYMENT' RULES, OUTLINED IN THE 1988 SOCIAL SECURITY BILL, WILL COME INTO EFFECT THIS AUTUMN.

Details on how they are likely to be enforced have been disclosed by Social Security Minister, Nicholas Scott, who claims that the new rules are meant to give unemployed people a 'shock to their system'.

This 'shock' means that not only will claimants be subject to more pressure and state harassment to accept badly paid jobs & training schemes, but also that they will be **FINED TWO WEEKS BENEFIT OR MORE** if Claimant Advisors and other Employment Agency Staff consider they have failed to produce enough evidence of actively seeking work.

The Social Security Bill has already had its third reading in the Commons and it is highly unlikely that any of the main features will be changed.

Tottenham Claimants Union  
72 West Green Rd  
London N15  
Tel. 01 802 9804

Norwich Claimants Union  
14 St Ann Lane  
Norwich  
Tel. 0603 661241

Plymouth Claimants Union  
Virginia House  
Palace St, Plymouth  
Tel. 0752 662778

\* Claimant Advisors will be able to recommend a 'two week benefit stop' (fine) on any claimant not meeting the new actively seeking employment criteria.

\* Full unemployment benefit can be stopped for two weeks and, because benefit is paid in arrears, claimants can actually be forced off for four weeks.

\* Income support claimants can be fined 40% of their allowance for the same periods as unemployment benefit.

Even income support claimants with 'special circumstances', such as an illness in the family, can receive a 20% reduction in their personal allowance.;

\* 'Benefit stop' fines may be re-imposed fortnightly if claimants are unable to prove active availability during their two week penalty period.

\* New claimants will be given a 'permitted period' to find work - ranging from 1 to 13 weeks, depending on their area, skills and job experience. Failure to take up a job during your 'permitted period' could lead to benefit disqualification.

\* Nationally, over 200 claimant advisors have been recruited to help enforce the new rules.

**PREPARE NOW:** Keep rejection letters, make lists of letters and phone calls you've made to employers. **BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, JOIN AND BECOME ACTIVE IN YOUR LOCAL CLAIMANTS UNION BECAUSE DODGING THE RULES DOESN'T CHANGE THEM.**

# POLL TAX \* BREAKING POINT

The Poll Tax is falling apart under pressure from the well-organised and ever expanding opposition. The cracks just keep appearing.

## WITHIN THE TORIES

Now the Tories themselves are worried - Tory councillors have been shouting at Ridley for under-funding the scheme, and the Government are considering a £1 billion sweetener - £30 a head - for the first bills.

## WITHIN LOCAL COUNCILS

\* Local authorities will be unable to use existing databases for Poll Tax registers - because of the Data Protection Act.

\* They're also admitting they have no resources to check up on a 20% refusal rate.

## FROM SCOTLAND

\* By July 1st 30% of the population - ONE MILLION PEOPLE had not paid one penny, and another 24% are behind with payments.

\* In some estates and villages only 10% are fully paid up.

\* Resistance to council harassment - warrant sales etc - is growing.

\* The issue of payment books is only half completed.



Marchers in Scotland ignoring media disinformation.

\* The rebate system is in chaos - many people haven't applied since they're not going to pay, and many more (20,000 in Lothian) have applied who aren't even on the register.

\* **THE MUCH VAUNTED 99% REGISTRATION FIGURE IS A MYTH.** In fact, 99% of people **ALREADY NAMED ON REGISTRATION FORMS WHEN COUNCILS SENT THEM OUT** are registered. So forms sent to 'The Occupier' don't count. Seen in this light, 99% is quite a flop.

\* John Lewis Stores withdraw a threat to sack staff whose wages have been arrested for poll tax non-payment - **UNDER THREAT OF A CHRISTMAS PICKET.**

## FROM LONDON

\* Anti-poll tax groups are working **ALL OVER LONDON** with public meetings, demos, community groups, and picketing of local companies involved in Poll Tax work. These include the **Alfred Marks Bureau**, who are recruiting canvassers.

\* In Lambeth 75% of the population have **NOT REGISTERED.**

## ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

There are thousands of anti-poll tax groups in England and Wales, some are already organised street by street into communities who **WON'T PAY.** With the great success of the Scottish campaign becoming increasingly obvious, it's clear that the momentum building up against the poll tax is huge.

So, get involved, if you're not already, and be one of the organisers of an historic defeat for this Government which has been in office forever.

If there isn't a campaign in your area contact one of the addresses below. They'll be able to put you in touch with your nearest group.

**Community Resistance to the Poll Tax, Box CR, 11 Forth St, Edinburgh.**

or

**London Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups, c/o Tottenham Against the Poll Tax, 72 West Green Rd, London N15.**  
Tel 01 802 9804