

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE JOBS NOT JSA

ISSUE 7

APRIL 1997

FORCED LABOUR - NEW DANGER

Although many employers and organisations refused to get involved in Project Work, as always there are those who put profit before principles. We have already heard of three organisations which will be running Project Work (slave labour) schemes in the Nottingham area.

Old perennials - the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BCTV) as always are at the head of the queue. BCTV were also involved in the Project Work pilots in Hull and Medway. BCTV seems very keen to preserve the environment - even at the expense of the unemployed.

A further contractor is Action for Employment - who describe themselves as one of the country's leading training and recruitment providers. Action for Employment, who are based at Bessemer Road in Sheffield, are looking to recruit 4 Managers, 20 Project Supervisors, 6 Jobsearch Tutors and 2 Administrators to run the Nottingham programme.

The final contractor which we are aware of at the moment is the locally based BESTCO. Several people are puzzled by their involvement, especially when Nottingham CVS refused to get involved with Project Work, and BESTCO must have been party to that decision.

There are only two winners with Project Work. The government, which can further massage the unemployment figures and, the providers, who can make a profit at the expense of the jobless.

Initial returns from the two pilot projects suggest that Project Work has been no more successful in finding jobs for the long term unemployed than any other scheme created by the government. A government which regards the unemployed as the problem,

and which has failed to tackle the real problem, which is unemployment.

All the unemployed ask for are real jobs at proper wages. We still have three major objections to Project Work, 1) Our National Insurance contributions have already paid for our benefits. We should not have to work for them.

2) If there is work which needs doing, then pay somebody the proper rate for doing it, not benefits plus £10.

3) Coercion - study after study has demonstrated the futility of forcing people onto such schemes. You will either go onto and complete Project Work or lose your benefit. If Project Work was voluntary, if it paid a proper wage, and if it actually helped the long term unemployed into proper jobs, we would have no problem with it. It fails on what counts, that is why we oppose it.

**PROJECT WORK
IS
SLAVE LABOUR**



90,000 JOBS NEEDED

The long discredited government unemployment figures for Nottinghamshire stood at 36,501 in February, 1997. The impact of JSA and a system which is struggling to cope, has led the Office of National Statistics to again admit that accurate figures for claimants will not be available until midsummer.

Three reports published so far in 1997 are able to paint a more accurate picture of how many people are out of work in Notts. All three reports used the last census returns, the Labour Force Survey and NOMIS to arrive at a more accurate figure of the number of people needing jobs. All three came to similar conclusions as to the real figure.

The Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland report (April/1997) suggested a real national figure of 4,500,000 out of work. A report published by Sheffield Hallam University (March/1997) quoted a figure of over 5,000,000, nationally. The report from the Unemployment Unit (January/1997) quoted a national figure of 5,400,000. All of the above reports have come out while the official government figure has stood at around 1,800,000.

What the above reports confirm is that 90,000 jobs are needed across the county if the need for work is to be met. In some wards such Radford and Lenton over 60% need jobs. In realistic terms, 2 out of 10 workers in Notts need jobs.

Local Authorities, through their Economic Development Departments, have clearly demonstrated that jobs can be both saved and created. This, remember, at a time when their

resources have faced severe cut backs. What we need now is for national politicians to learn from their local colleagues, how to create jobs.

In the meantime - 90,000 people wait.

Quote of the Month

You only have Power over people as long as you don't take everything away from them. But when you've robbed a man of everything he's no longer in your power - he's free again.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn - "The First Circle", 1968

CAMPAIGNING FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

Although there has been very little (okay, NO!!!) mention of full employment during the election campaign by the politicians, campaigners continue to push the item onto the agenda.

The following gives some idea of what is happening:

- European Convention for Full Employment. This is to be held in Brussels on 22nd/23rd May, 1997. The convention will be attended by over 1000 activists from across Europe. If you would like to know more, or are interested in attending, please contact (01623) 427622.

- European Day of Action for Full Employment. Wednesday 28th May, 1997. Called by the European TUC and supported by the TUC. A series of events locally, nationally and European wide to promote Full Employment. For further details contact (01623) 424720.

- Euromarch 97. Over 14 separate marches from all across Europe are converging on Amsterdam. One of the British marches will arrive in Mansfield on 27th May and Nottingham on 28th May. For more details telephone (0115) 9582369 or (01623) 424720.

- European Council of Ministers are meeting in Amsterdam on 16th/17th June to discuss the convergence criteria. The Euromarches will be there to draw attention to unacceptable levels of unemployment across Europe and to demand action to address the problem. It is planned to hold a European wide demonstration on Saturday 14th June, in Amsterdam. We will be arranging transport - more details in the next issue. Now - more than ever - we need to remind all politicians that full employment is possible, it just takes the political will.

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

WELCOME ON BOARD VICAR

A new report commissioned by the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, is to be published this week.

The report which is the result of an 18 month enquiry led by the Bishop of Liverpool, and whose main author is a former economic policy adviser to Kenneth Clarke, adds nothing new to what many of us already know.

The report identifies a real unemployment figure of 4.5 million in the UK, and goes on to call for tough measures to curb the pay of "fat cats". It points out that trade unions have been under sustained attack for nearly 20 years, leading to increased poverty and low pay.

The report underlines some grim facts about life in Britain. On increasing polarisation it says "wherever we went we saw increasing riches and poverty side by side".

The report is very damning on the running of the welfare state, as the following quotes demonstrate:

"What has sickened us most of all is the grudging way in which the system operates, so that claimants and their families can suffer repeated humiliation year after year".

"We do not believe that the level of benefits paid in Britain today is generally adequate to support a decent standard of life".

On JSA it attacks the practice of cutting benefit to claimants as "morally indefensible".

The report calls for a statutory minimum wage, a maximum 48 hour week, and the right of trade unions to negotiate in the workplace. It further calls for a reduction or abolition of National Insurance contributions

particularly in unskilled jobs, and a large scale expansion of employment supported by public spending in all sectors of the economy.

The report confirms the view held by Notts Jobs not JSA that unemployment and low wages were created by a system committed to ensuring that the lucky few who are rich, become richer at the expense of the rest of us.

It also clearly demonstrates that with the political will, unemployment could be eradicated from our society.

POLICING BENEFITS

TUC Unemployed Workers Centres across Britain have exposed a major invasion of civil liberties by DSS Benefit Fraud Investigation Teams.

These include random roadside checks in conjunction with the police, at which Benefits Officers have questioned motorists as to whether they are on benefits. Just think about it. If you are visiting a sick relative in Birmingham and are stopped, your entitlement to benefit could be challenged.

A report in the Worksop Guardian on the 10th April, detailed two claimants in the north of the county who were caught in such a roadside trap.

REMEMBER: People stopped in this way are under no obligation to answer any questions.

If you hear of this happening elsewhere, give us a ring on (01623) 424720.

The DSS have also admitted using public buildings near DSS offices to photograph claimants as they enter and leave. Again, if you are aware of this, give us a ring on (01623) 424720.

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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The Civil and Public Services Association