

INFORMATION & ADVICE

WHO'S WHO AT THE CENTRES?

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WHERE TO GET ADVICE

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| CHESTERFIELD 54, Saltergate Mon- Thurs. 9.00 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Fridays 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon | CLAY CROSS Room 8, Youth Suite Adult Education Centre Mondays 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. | HOLMEWOOD Community Centre Wednesdays 10.0 a.m. - 12.00 noon |
| KILLAMARSH Youth Centre Mondays 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m. | ALFRETON Alfreton House, High St. (01773) 832237 Mondays & Thursdays 9.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. | HEANOR 'Salcare' Fletcher St. Wednesdays 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. |
| BELPER Cottage Project 16, Chapel St Tuesdays 10.30 a.m. - 2.30 p.m. | SHIREBROOK 7, Main Street (01623) 748161 Mondays 9.00 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. 1.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. Tuesdays to Fridays 9.00 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. | PINXTON Community Centre Tuesdays 1.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. |
| BOLSOVER Elder Citizens Centre Wednesdays 1.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. | CALL IN DON'T LOSE OUT | CRESWELL Social Centre Thursdays 1.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. |

The **TRADE UNION/UNEMPLOYED LIAISON COMMITTEE** meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. in the Chesterfield Centre to plan and develop Campaigning activities. We would be pleased to see you there.
ALL ARE VERY WELCOME.

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SOLIDARITY

BULLETIN OF DERBYSHIRE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' CENTRES ONE FUND FOR ALL

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VOL.2. No.2

DEC. 1995/JAN 1996

STICK AND MORE

New Forced Labour Scheme for the Unemployed



"And what have you done to look for work this week?"

The Government is to pilot a new forced labour scheme called "Project Work". The £12 million pilot will cover 18-50 year olds unemployed for more than two years. The scheme will be tested on 6000 people in two areas from next April. Under the scheme unemployed workers who refuse to take part or who drop out will lose two weeks benefit the first time, a months money the second *and their entire right to benefit at a "third offence"*. Hardship cases will be able to keep 60% of benefit if they have dependent children.

Benefits Plus £10

Gillian Shephard, the Employment and Education Secretary, said that the scheme, a version of American "workfare", is aimed at the "recalcitrant few" who do not want to get back into work.

(Continued on next page....)

*We wish all our readers, supporters and OFFA
contributors a very Happy Christmas*

SOLIDARITY COMMENT

COMPELLING EVIDENCE

The last month has not been a good one for the unemployed. First we had Gordon Brown, seemingly attempting to outdo the Tories by compelling unemployed youngsters to take jobs or training under pain of losing benefit. Then we had the Budget which left most unemployed people worse off and finally we heard of Mrs Shephards' plans to introduce forced labour or workfare. We have come to expect this from the Government but unemployed people are rightly incensed when they hear it from the party to whom they look for help. It seems as if Gordon Brown has accepted the Governments' rhetoric that unemployment is the fault of the unemployed and that large numbers of them don't want work and therefore need to be compelled to work. This is quite wrong. As John Monks has said, "compulsion of unemployed people is unacceptable". We say it is also unnecessary. The vast majority of unemployed people don't want to live on meagre benefits. If quality training is made available, with the real prospect of a decent job at the end of it, then unemployed workers would be queuing up for it. Please, Mr Brown, don't swallow the Governments propaganda! Talk to unemployed people yourself and find out the truth.

Continued from Page 1.....

Participants in "Project Work" will do gardening, decorating and construction work for 6 months and be paid standard benefit plus £10.

CONDEMNED

"Project Work" has been condemned by both the Labour Party and the TUC. Michael Meacher, Shadow Employment spokesperson has condemned the scheme as a further move away from quality provision for the long term unemployed, which offers no provision for training or prospect of full time work. TUC General secretary, John Monks said that compulsion was unacceptable and pointed out, that since 1988 a number of sanctions against unemployed people, had led to massive loss of benefit. In the last year alone over 300,000 people had suffered benefit penalties. The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have also roundly condemned this latest forced labour scheme. Schemes like "Project Work" fail to address the real issues. What is needed is quality training, leading to decent jobs paid at Trade Union rates. This scheme provides neither and furthermore will give no safeguard against existing workers being replaced by those on the scheme. John Major recently tried to defend "Project Work" by saying it was a mixture of the carrot and the stick to help unemployed people to regain confidence and chivvy the reluctant into action. We say it's stick, stick and more stick designed to force long term unemployed workers off the register and into low paid work as yet another step towards creating a poverty wage, high profit economy.

AND MORE OF THE SAME Labours' Plan for Jobless under-25s

Nearly 300,000 young unemployed people would lose 40% of their benefit, if they refused jobs or full-time education under a £1billion job creation plan, put forward by Gordon Brown the Shadow chancellor. Under this "welfare to work" plan, youngsters under 25 who had been unemployed for more than 6 months would be offered 4 employment and training alternatives. Those refusing these offers will have their benefit cut by 40%.

"Simply remaining unemployed and permanently on benefits will no longer be an option" (Gordon Brown)

EMPLOYED & UNEMPLOYED - UNITED & FIGHTING CAMPAIGNS AND O.F.F.A.

TRAVEL AID SCHEME

DERBY CITY COUNCIL SHOW THE WAY

Derby City Council is to reinstate the travel Aid Scheme for the unemployed from January through to the end of the financial year. This is a big boost to the Campaign and a great Christmas present to the unemployed of Derby. Readers will remember that the Centres have been campaigning for the reinstatement of the Scheme, which gives half fare travel to unemployed workers, after it was axed by Derbyshire County Council back in March 1995. The reinstatement in Derby is a big encouragement to the Centres to continue their efforts to get the scheme reinstated across the County.

**Find out more about the
Campaign by phoning
(01246) 231441**



EAST MIDLANDS UNISON...

East Midlands UNISON has just completed a Report on the Unemployed Workers' Centres in the East Midlands. The idea is to see how UNISON can best help the Centres. The Report will be presented to the Executive in December. Among the many recommendations of the Report are a number aimed at helping the various OFFA Schemes. If adopted these recommendations will greatly assist our work, especially in the Local Authorities and the Health Service. East Midlands UNISON is to be congratulated on this initiative which, hopefully, will be a model for other Regions.

LEICESTER AMBULANCES..

Following a meeting with the Director of Human Resources of Leicester Ambulance services, arranged by E.Midlands UNISON, we have been given check-off facilities and access to the workforce. Many thanks to Tom Carroll of UNISON.

GMB OFFICES....

We have check-off facilities for GMB employees in the region and meetings with the staff of the Leicester and Hull Offices have been arranged for December. Thanks to all at the GMB.

EAST MIDLANDS OFFA....

The three OFFA Schemes in the East Midlands, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire are setting up another Fund called East Midlands OFFA. It will receive contributions not easily assignable to a local scheme and will be administered by representatives from the three schemes and the Regional TUC.

OFFA AGM 1996.....

This will be on **Thursday, 28th March at the Winding Wheel, Chesterfield at 7.15 p.m.** The guest speaker will be **John Monks, TUC General Secretary**. John will be with us all day and a programme is being arranged in conjunction with the Regional TUC. Please book this date now.

JOB SEEKERS' ALLOWANCE UPDATE..

Massive Losses for the Local Economy

According to calculations carried out by DUWC the local economies of North Derbyshire stand to lose massive amounts of income when the JSA comes in next year. The loss of 6 months benefit together with the loss of dependent partner supplement is estimated to add up to between £5 million and £9 million. If we add to this the effect of changes to Housing Benefit, Mortgages and Incapacity Benefit we must be looking at something well in excess of £15 million. This will vastly increase the levels of poverty in our area.

BUDGET BLUES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED & LONE PARENTS...

The Budget presented by Kenneth Clarke last month was another kick in the teeth for unemployed workers. The help given to those facing Inheritance and Capital Gains Tax will do nothing to put food on the tables of the people who use our Centres. Particularly hard hit will be Lone Parents as the Chancellor has frozen One Parent Benefit and the Lone Parent Premium. June Kent of the Single Parent Network said:

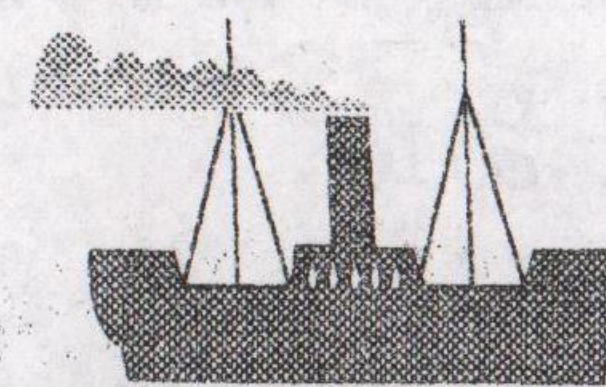
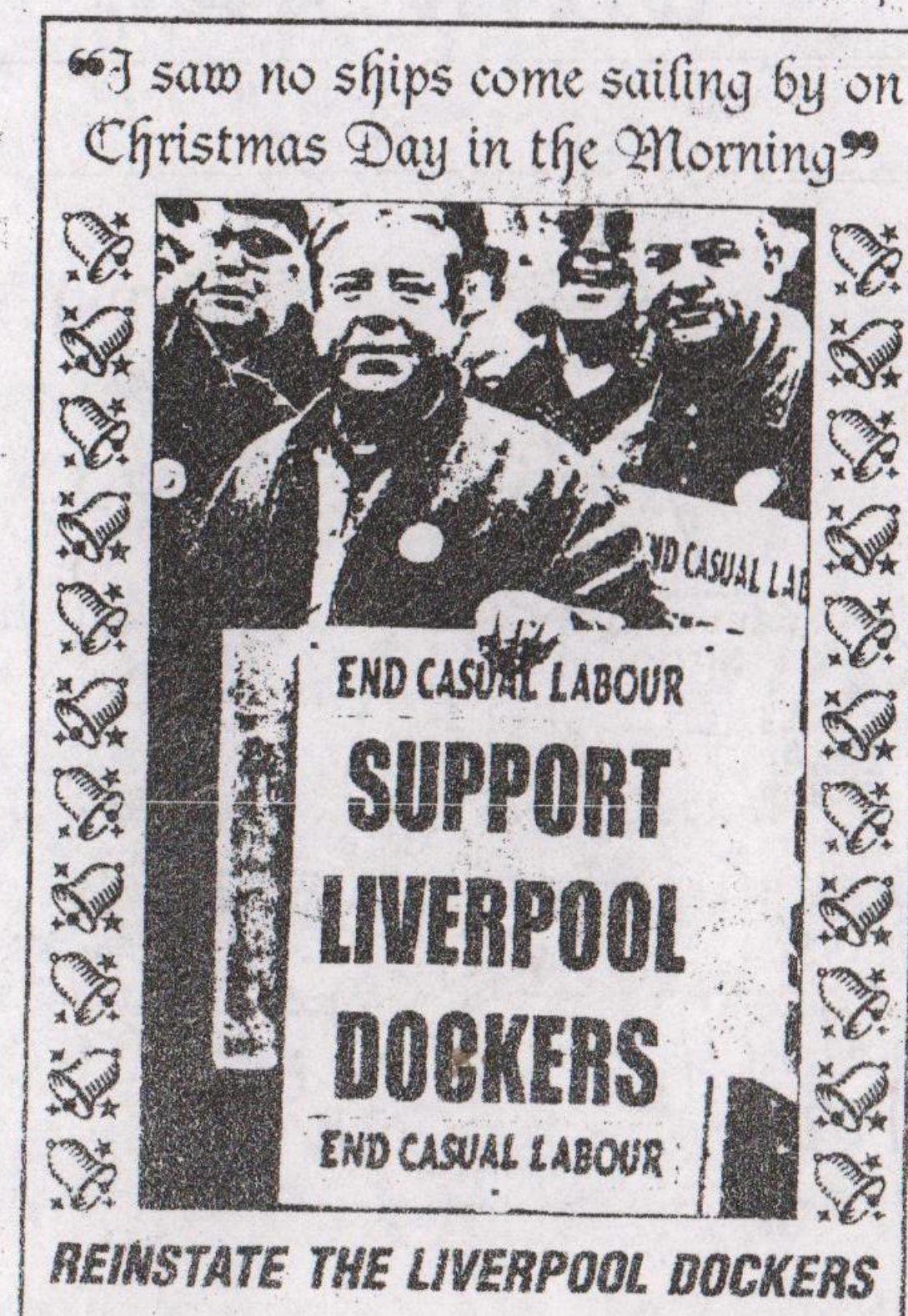
"Financial punishment does not stop relationships breaking up, it just punishes the children. There are no measures in the budget to help lone parents. It's typical of this Government's attitude in blaming single parents for everything."

TRAINERS SCANDAL

Not, for once in a while, anything to do with the TEC or local Training Agencies. This is about the Trainers you put on your feet. Did you know that some of the biggest names in sport have contracts with companies like Nike worth millions of pounds and the people making the shoes get as little as £40 a month? A recent report by Christian Aid has exposed this scandal of exploitation. According to the report Phil Knight, head of Nike, earned £929,113 in 1994 whilst those producing them were paid peanuts.

At current wage levels a worker in China producing Nike trainers would have to work nine hours a day, six days a week for 15 centuries to earn the same as the head of Nike earned in 1994.

This kind of mega-exploitation is the end result of the deregulation, union bashing and mass unemployment we are witnessing in this country. We should be warned and maybe should think twice before we buy those expensive trainers this Christmas.



500 LIVERPOOL DOCKERS SACKED

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ?..... 500 Liverpool Dockers have been sacked by their employer, the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company (MDHC), after the Company engineered the dismissal of 80 young dockers so that they could replace them with casual labour. The rest refused to cross the picket line mounted by the 80, many of them the sons of other dockers. Many of the men they have sacked have given more than 40 years service to the Docks. Liverpool Docks is one of the most profitable ports in the U.K. with profits in excess of £35 million and handling more cargo than in its heyday in the 1950s. Millions of pounds of taxpayers money has been poured into the docks company through grants and in this sense belongs to the people of Merseyside not the MDHC. These men are not the 'media militants', they are ordinary TGWU members carrying out traditional trade union activity but falling foul of the vicious anti trade union legislation. They have tremendous support from M.P.s, M.E.P.s, the Churches, the City Council and hundreds of thousands of people in Liverpool and beyond. But even more telling is the support they are receiving from dockers in America and Australia which is resulting in large container ships being unable to unload in Liverpool Docks despite the use of scab labour. This is causing the MDHC vast losses and is the main reason why the dockers will win.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Following a visit from the Dockers the Trades Council has set up a Support Group. It has made some suggestions for action.

* Send a postcard to MDHC Managing Director telling him what you think. Cards available from the Centre.

* Make a workplace collection or have a weekly levy or fill in a Bankers Order to support the dockers. Details from the Centres.

A DOCKERS LIFE 1995....

We have phone calls practically on a daily basis, altering his shift. 7am-3pm will be changed to 7am-7pm, 3pm-11pm can become 11am-11pm or nights. The day before a rota day off they can ring and change your shift to 12 hour nights, then your day off becomes a sleep day. We get calls on his day off, asking him to work or to change the next day's shift. Bank Holidays, you're expected to work 12 hours, but for your day in lieu you get 7 hours pay. We've had a call when he's been in bed less than four hours after a 12 hour night shift. We've been out one Sunday and arrived home early hours on Monday, expecting a lie-in because my husband was on twilight. Our son got out of bed and said the docks had rang - he was to go in at 7am. So, after less than 5 hours in bed he was back at work, driving a straddler. If you're out when they ring, they ask you where you were, as though you are accountable, had no right to be out and should be available 168 hours a week. (A Docker's Wife)

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

The Dockers and their families need our support this Christmas. We are collecting non-perishable Christmas Fayre which we will take over at Christmas. Can you help? Bring them to the Centre.



WELFARE RIGHTS NEWS & VIEWS- *ADVICE and REPRESENTATION for ALL.*

TALES FROM SALTERGATE

CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR PENSIONERS

An elderly couple from North East Derbyshire were referred to the Chesterfield Centre for a benefits check. We decided that they should both claim Attendance Allowance. We submitted these claims which were successful. One member of the couple now receives Attendance Allowance at £31.20, the other member was awarded £46.70. Because they are a couple living alone they now qualify for Income Support with a severe disability premium which increases their income by a further £48. Now that they qualify for Income Support they will get more help with Rent and Council Tax worth another £29 a week. The total increase in income for this couple now amounts to over £150 a week.



RESTART BEGINS TO BITE

As a run up to the introduction of the Job Seekers' Allowance next April there has been a great deal of Government media "hype" which has confused a lot of people. People going to sign on have been confronted by a much more aggressive approach, so much so that people think the Rules on Restart have changed. This is not so. The Rules are, at present, the same as they were last year. What has happened is that the Employment Agencies are beginning to interpret them in a far stricter way. To assist in this and the help gear up to the forthcoming JSA, the Chesterfield Office has even installed a new computer system. Whatever happens next April the first moves are being made now. We have had a spate of enquiries from Chesterfield and Clay Cross from people who have felt they were being pressurised into taking low paid and unskilled work. Under these circumstances it is vital that you know your rights. Above all remember you can be represented at Restarts by a Friend/Witness or representative.

**RESTART
BE REPRESENTED
REMEMBER -
ANYBODY CAN HAVE A
REPRESENTATIVE / FRIEND / WITNESS
TO SIT IN AT A RESTART INTERVIEW.**

THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS
SPEEDING UP THE NEW JSA RULES &
IN SOME ASPECTS IS TO USE THE
CHESTERFIELD OFFICE AS A PILOT
SCHEME

**IF YOU FEEL UNDER PRESSURE FROM
THESE CHANGES
CONTACT YOUR NEAREST CENTRE**

TRADE UNION NEWS CONGRATULATIONS...

To Rodney Bickerstaffe, who has been elected General Secretary of UNISON, to Ed Sweeney, just elected General secretary of the banking Union BIFU and to Davey Hall, recently elected President of the AEEU. They have all been keen supporters of the Unemployed Workers' Centres and OFFA. We wish them well in their new positions.

FAREWELL ...

The Unemployed Workers' Centres and OFFA will be sad to say good-bye to Ralph Don, when he retires at Christmas. Ralph has been the TUC Officer servicing the Centres, OFFA and the Trades Councils for a number of years and has always given us tremendous support. We shall not be losing touch with Ralph, as he will be helping out at the Kettering Centre. We wish him well in his retirement.

"SHOP A SCROOGE BOSS FOR CHRISTMAS"

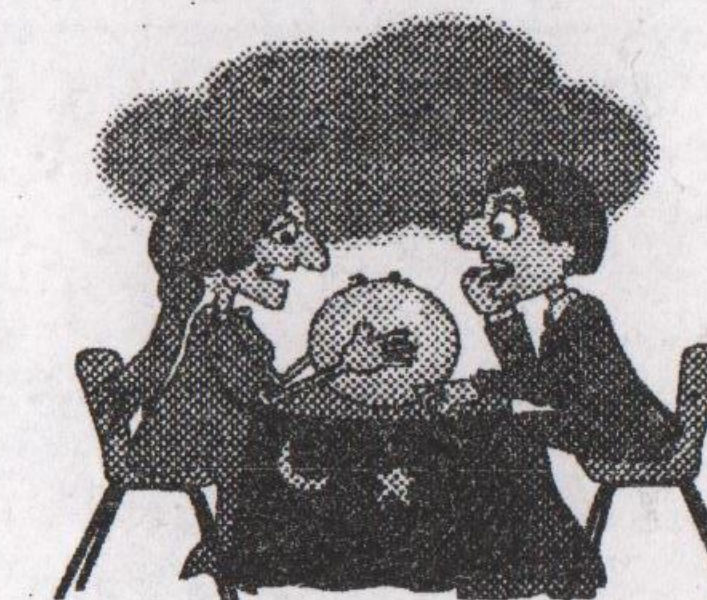
Scrooge bosses who bully, under-pay and over-work their employees risk exposure by a new TUC Campaign launched on December 4th. The TUC is expecting thousands of hard pressed workers to call a special TUC hotline which will run for 5 days. The North-West is being targeted as one of the worse regions and callers are being asked to shop bad employers. The hotline will be open from 9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. and will be staffed by employment rights experts.



**"The TUC is appealing to people to
expose exploitation, end the silence and
shop bad bosses. Companies which persist
in mistreating their employees should be
warned that the TUC are on their trail."**

(John Monks, TUC General Secretary)

WHAT'S ON ?



DECEMBER

- 11th Trades Council -
7.15 p.m. Labour Club.
- 19th. Unemployed Centres
Combine &
Demonstration
Liverpool.
- 21st Centre Christmas Party
7 p.m. Winding Wheel

January 1996

- 8th Trades Council -
7.15 p.m. Labour Club.
- 31st Trade Union/Liaison
Committee
5.00 p.m. Centre.

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers'
Centres & The Single Parent
Network

GRAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday 21st December
Winding Wheel

Chesterfield

7.00 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.

Admission by Ticket Only.

Ceilidh - Disco - Buffet

