

NO DOLE SLAVERY! NO WAGE SLAVERY!

WHO BENEFITS?

Over the last few years people claiming benefits have had to face increased harassment, abuse, snooping, government campaigns labelling us scroungers and blaming us for every ill in society...

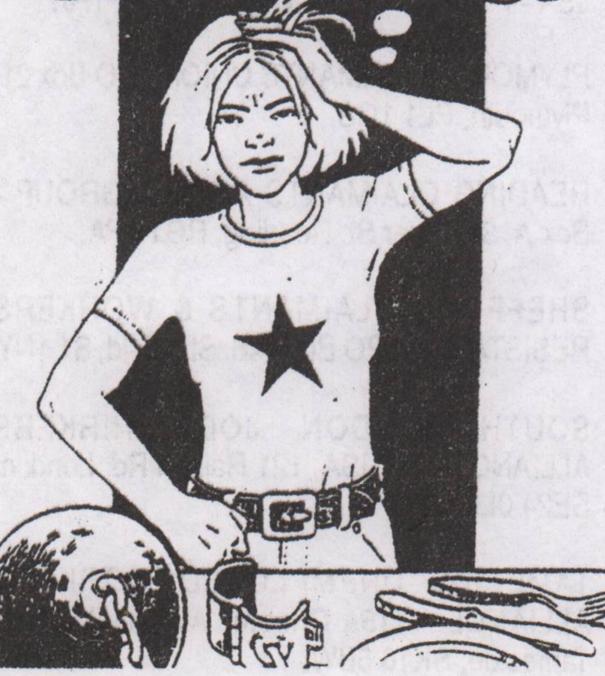
We've seen figures fiddled for political reasons, rule changes to make claiming harder, massive cuts in benefits. Refugees seeking asylum here have been denied benefits, child & one-parent benefits have been attacked...As if surviving on the pittance we receive -& putting up with DSS grief - isn't tough enough!
In the last 2 years measures have been brought in that tighten the screw even more.

JobSeekers Allowance

The Job Seekers Allowance was introduced in October '96, replacing income support and unemployment benefit. The JSA is designed not just to cut the unemployment figures, it's a direct attack on both employed and unemployed workers.

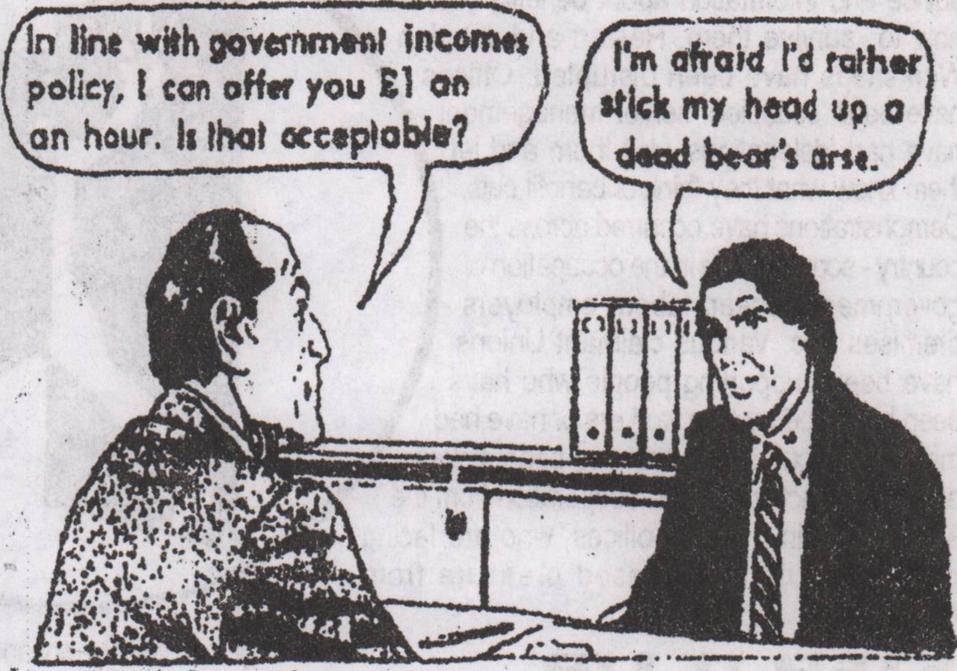
The changes under the JSA mean:
Cuts in Benefit: Contributory JSA (replacing Unemployment Benefit) will only be paid for 6 months.
Active Signing: every time you sign on you can be asked to provide proof of what you have done to find work in the last 2 weeks.

WAGE-SLAVERY OR STARVATION? —
THAT'S NOT A CHOICE, IT'S A THREAT!



Jobseekers Direction: you can be given orders to make yourself more employable - training courses, presentation (get your hair cut etc.)
Labour Market System: a computer system which 'matches' you to any going jobs. Much more pressure will be put on you to take low paid jobs with crap conditions.

Sanctions: if you refuse to go along with any of this it could mean **YOU LOSE ALL BENEFIT**, for anywhere from 2 to 26 weeks. You probably won't get hardship payments for the first two weeks at least - i.e. absolutely **NO MONEY**.
The JSA is meant to force us into taking any low-paid jobs the DSS offer us: some Job Centres advertise jobs paying as little as **£1 an hour!** This not only threatens claimants, it can only lead to employers being able to force down wages and conditions across the board. The only people to benefit will be the bosses!



AND THAT'S NOT ALL!

But the JSA is only a part of the package. Other changes include:

Incapacity Benefit

Incapacity Benefit for those unable to work has been replaced by Incapacity Benefit, much harder to claim due to the All Work Test, where you have to prove you are incapable of doing any job in order to receive benefits. This test is painful and humiliating, and loaded against you. Thousands of sick and disabled people are suffering benefit cuts and harassment.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit is also under attack. Under-25s receive a smaller proportion of their rent; and in many areas HB has been capped at a certain level, however high your rent. 1000s could be forced onto the streets.

Workfare

But the latest & worst change to benefit rules is **Project Work:** effectively **WORKFARE**. The idea came from the USA, where public sector workers in some areas (eg the New York Subway) have been sacked and replaced with welfare conscripts. People who have been on the dole for 2 years can be forced to take a placement on a 3 month compulsory work scheme, for £10 on top of their benefits. In Pilot schemes in Hull and Kent only a handful got a placement, never mind a job. 100s were forced to sign off, leave the area, take crap jobs...Most who completed placements signed back on, no better off. **Project Work has now been extended to 27 areas across the country.** Project Work is designed to go hand in hand with the JSA, to push claimants off the dole and force wages down. *It's nothing to do with training or opportunities, and everything to do with making working class people's lives harder while the rich get richer.*

Attacks on benefits are aimed at the whole of the working class. Those of us in work will be in a much weaker position with 1000s forced off benefits to work for lower wages. Bosses could force us to accept any crap pay & conditions, with 1000s of desperate people waiting to take the job for less. It's vital that those of us in work and those without don't let ourselves be divided into fighting each other for less & less of the pie. It's time to resist!

TIME TO FIGHT BACK

Claimants' groups around the country have been organising opposition to the Job Seekers Allowance. Claimants have been leafleted with advice and information about benefits cuts and how to survive them. Restart and Jobplan Workshops have been disrupted. Offices have been occupied, senior management have had 'delegations' visit them and let them know what they think of benefit cuts. Demonstrations have occurred across the country - some ending in the occupation of government / cheap labour employers premises, etc. Various claimant Unions have been supporting people who have been harassed by dole workers or have had their benefit cut. There has also been strikes and various actions of non-cooperation from the workers within the dole offices, who are facing mass job cuts & increased pressure from management.

STEP IT UP

It's vital that we keep up and increase this pressure. The Labour Party is being cagey about their plans, but if they win the election it seems they will keep up the JSA and other attacks on claimants. They have their own plans for a Project Work-type Scheme!

KNOW THE SCORE

Claimants groups have a selection of free leaflets which can help claimants know their rights and get round the rules:

- **Claimants Survival Guide:** a comprehensive guide to signing on under the JSA and how to get round the rules.
- **'Going to a restart or signing for the first time'**, useful info on Restart interviews.
- **'Stop the Harassment of Claimants'**: How to deal with fraud investigators and dole snoopers.
- **Advice leaflet on signing the Job Seekers Agreement.**
- **Leaflet on Incapacity Benefit and the 'all work' test.**
- **Students and Benefit Changes:** Signing on and studying.

Send an SAE to your local Groundswell contact, stating which leaflets you want. Better still, take a bundle and give 'em to your mates/hand them out at the Job Centre.



We need to defend individuals against harassment and benefit cuts, as well as standing together and putting pressure on the Employment Service. Whether we are working or 'unemployed', our interests lie in sticking together.

CHOOSE YOUR POISON

We're not defending the current welfare system. The Welfare State such as it is, was brought partly as a concession to working class people fighting for a better life, partly as an answer to the state's need at the time for healthier workers & soldiers. At the end of the day, the choice between poverty on the dole, and a lifetime of slogging our guts out under the beady eye of a greedy boss, is a FALSE CHOICE. We don't want to be dole slaves OR wage slaves. We believe in fighting day to day attacks on our living standards. But we know the attacks will continue as long as we live under a system where a rich minority control the wealth and we, the working class, are forced to sell our labour to survive. *We need a fundamental change, getting rid of this rotten society, to replace it by one run in our interests, not for profit.*

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **GET INVOLVED:** Join your local claimants group. If there isn't one, start one up.
- **DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION:** We have advice and info on benefit changes and how to beat them.. Write for a bundle & give them out at your local job centre/to your mates etc. **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.**
- **STICK TOGETHER:** If you are or your mates getting hassle from the DSS, get together, occupy the Job Centre, let them know you won't be intimidated.

GROUNDSWELL CONTACTS

Groundswell is a network of local claimants' groups fighting against the Job Seekers Allowance, Project Work and other benefit cuts. Some of these groups are listed below. For a contact nearer to you write to the National Contact, c/o the Oxford address.

BRIGHTON CLAIMANTS ACTION GROUP - c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury place, Brighton, BN2 2GY.

BRISTOL CLAIMANTS - Box 51, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston St, Bristol, BS1 5BB

COLIN ROACH CENTRE - 56 Clarence Rd, Hackney, London, E5 8HB.

EAST LONDON AGAINST THE JSA - c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London, E1.

EDINBURGH CLAIMANTS - c/o Peace & Justice Centre, St. Johns, Princes St, Edinburgh, EH2.

EXETER CLAIMANTS - c/o Flying Post, PO Box 185, Exeter, EX4 4EW.

HARINGEY SOLIDARITY GROUP - PO Box 2474, London, N8.

MANCHESTER ANTI-JSA GROUP - Dept 99, 1 Newton St, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1HW

NEWHAM & DISTRICT CLAIMANTS UNION - c/o Duming Hall, Earham Grove, Forest Gate, London, E7.

NORTH-EAST UNEMPLOYED ACTION GROUP - c/o North Shields People's Centre, 51 Bedford St, North Shields, NE29 0AB.

NORWICH UNEMPLOYMENT ACTION GROUP - PO Box 73, Norwich, NR3 1QD.

OXFORD CLAIMANTS - c/o OUWCU, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes St, Oxford, OX4 1HU.

NOTTINGHAM CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JSA - PO Box 192, Nottingham, NG1 1FJ.

PLYMOUTH CLAIMANTS UNION - PO Box 21, Plymouth, PL1 1QS.

READING CLAIMANTS ACTION GROUP - Box A, 30 Silver St, Reading, RG1 5PA.

SHEFFIELD CLAIMANTS & WORKERS RESISTANCE - PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY.

SOUTH LONDON JOB SHIRKERS ALLIANCE - Box JSA, 121 Railton Rd, London, SE24 0LR.

TAMESIDE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS ALLIANCE - 115a Chester Ave, Dukinfield, Tameside, SK16 5BW.

This leaflet was produced by:

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London, SE24.**

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