

asked me if I was aware that the March was being opposed by the TUC. I could only reply that I thought Labour was trying to distance itself from the unions.....

With a little help from my friends, I eventually rejoined the March in Coventry, where I am proud to say, the first thing I was involved in was an occupation of the Project Aerospace factory, where 41 MSF members are presently locked out. The slogan on the factory gate said: "Quality Starts Here BS xxxx" - so we carried out a quality occupation - pending the arrival of the local constabulary and the local media, demonstrating practical support for the victimised men. That was a great part of the March as it wound its way towards London through Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Watford, Hillingdon and other places which previously I was only just aware were down south and somewhere off the MI - to show our active support for ongoing industrial disputes with pickets, especially outside Magnet kitchen showrooms. Indeed, sacked workers from the Magnet's kitchen factory in Darlington who were sacked nine months

ago during strike action after refusing to accept a pay deal had actually organised for the March in Darlington, and it was actually while the Jarrow March was being received in the Council House in Nottingham that news came through that the picket outside the factory had been physically attacked and the pickets' equipment and shelter destroyed only in the past 48 hours.

A bit of a sobering note to finish on for this first instalment of my Report on the Euromarch '97 - but then, things can only get better, as they say. I would just like to publicly thank Carol Kirk, MSF Regional Council President, Leo and Carole and Sandra for all helping to get me started, and my wife and kids, without whom the things we were marching for wouldn't mean so much. The next instalment will follow in good time, Jon, have no fear....

Ian Juniper

Euromarcher, '97. ★

'Breaking the link between poverty and disability'

DISABILITY RIGHTS HANDBOOK (22ND EDITION:1997-98)

Since 1977 the Disability Rights Handbook has successfully guided literally thousands of disabled people through the complex maze of social security benefits and regulations, as well as providing information on rights to other services such as community care, vaccine damage payments and housing grants.

Widely acclaimed for its accessibility, detail and accuracy the Handbook has attracted an extensive readership of disabled people and those who live or work with them.

The number of changes to benefits and services for disabled people will make the new 22nd edition of the Disability Rights Handbook, available from May 1997, an essential purchase.

The book includes:

- a complete section on the new Jobseekers Allowance
- the latest on Incapacity Benefit including all changes arising from case law

- how the new appeals procedures for disability and all other benefits will work
- details of the new arrangements for recovery of benefits following awards of compensation
- updates on Disability living Allowance including full details of the changes to the mobility component for people in hospital

All sections of the Handbook are fully up-dated to take account of legal changes and it is further backed up with an extensive directory - providing addresses and telephone numbers for national charities and self-help disability organisations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Handbook has been described as;

"..a golden treasury of information on social security benefits for disabled people.." C.M., Milton Keynes.

"..once again I would like to heap more praise upon the Disability Rights Handbook.." A.W., Cleveland.

"Extremely informative and well written" B.G., Enfield.

"..thanks to the wonderful Disability Rights Handbook" J.A., Cumbria.

The Disability Rights Handbook:22nd Edition, by Judith Paterson, will be published in May 1997, priced £10.50 postfree (£6.50 for those customers on benefit).

For further information please contact our Sales Department on 0171 247 8776.

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"Aiming to keep you safe"

At a meeting in Brussels on 22/23 February 1997, the sinister effects of the Maastricht Treaty were highlighted, and the Free-Market Convergence Criteria contained within the Treaty were rejected.

The delegates agreed to demonstrate throughout Europe, and organise marches endorsing the June 1996 Florence Appeal. It was decided that a realistic alternative to the current Maastricht Treaty, based on community-wide text should be launched which would be called "Our List of Demands".

This alternative would be debated along the routes of the marches and out of the debate would emerge a European Network Against Unemployment, Job Insecurity and Social Exclusion, run and organised by the Unemployed, The Excluded and those with insecure jobs.

A TULIP IN AMSTERDAM - A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE MARCHE EUROPEENE, MAY - JUNE, 1997

I guess I have to say that being a European Marcher was one of the proudest parts of my life - apart, obviously, from being a father. Reflecting on it, what it essentially was, was a manifestation of distilled solidarity - in a world in which there isn't enough love to go round, it's solidarity, not sympathy however, which is the people's only hope.

Initially, I joined the Jarrow to Amsterdam Euromarch in Mansfield Market Place on Wednesday 28th May, the European Day of Action Against Unemployment, where it had been feted by Mansfield Trades Council. At that stage, I only intended to march through Notts

as far as the Council House in Nottingham's city centre, where a civic welcome for the March was extended. Tribute should be paid to the role of City Council Leader Graham Chapman for this, and also for the intellectual stimulus he gave to the Trades Council to examine more closely the implications of a single currency - until our meeting with him, we were 'waiting and seeing'! The March was also given a civic farewell with breakfast at County Hall, with the Leader of the County Council and his Lady lending some civic dignity to the morning after the Social the night before, which was also much appreci-



ated. I was hanging over on the March towards Loughborough when someone asked me how far I was going.....

I actually took a detour through Blackpool and the annual Trades Councils Conference which, in the face of active opposition from the TUC General Council and the National Unemployed Centres' Combine, gave overwhelming

support (with perhaps three individuals voting against). The Conference had been opened by Rita Donaghy quoting John Monks to the effect that, in responding to the election of the new Labour Government, the TUC had a choice of being either part of the problem or part of the solution.

I made a contribution to the debate on European Monetary Union by stating that, in its decision to actually proscribe support for the Euromarches by itself and its affiliates, the TUC General Council had effectively made itself totally irrelevant to either, in the wider campaign against unemployment and social exclusion. In spite of its active opposition, the British Euromarches went ahead, albeit totally under-resourced, and in doing so, demonstrated the kind of embryonic internationalist solidarity of the oppressed, excluded and unemployed, which it will be vital to build upon to defeat the scale of the continental assault presently being pursued by international capital on their present standard of living - and indeed, their conditions of living as a whole.

Indeed, the success of the Marches in acutely raising the issues for public participation and debate, entirely refuted the assertion of the National Unemployed Centres' Combine in its promotion of a "Full Employment Roadshow 1997" (which never even hit the road), that "the days of the 'long marches' are gone in Britain, their effectiveness past". Not so. It's interesting to reflect now that in the course of the preparations to receive the Jarrow Marchers in the city of Nottingham, a prominent Labour councillor

(continued on page 8)



European 'marches against unemployment, job insecurity and social exclusion

Sec. European Marches, Christophe Aguiton, 5 Rue Henri Chevreau, 75020 Paris, France.
Tel/Fax: 00 33 1 43 49 50 37. e-mail: aguiton@sud.unions.eu.org

President, British Marches Committee, Alan Simpson MP, House of Commons, London.

"A CRY FROM THE HEART - YOU LIKE THE LINING, DON'T YOU?"

In a previous article in Notts TUN (8), the Editor alleged (allegedly) that I was "so laid back" in my role of Treasurer - I'm not going to take this lying down. He also expressed concern that I may not be able to sleep at nights because of the costs in producing a "free" 8-page newsletter - it's got nothing to do with that, but notwithstanding, it is an expensive job. So, I'm appealing to you to help keep me in cheque by:-

PLACING A BULK ORDER @ SO MUCH A COPY OF EACH ISSUE

like MSF Trent General Branch (my very own - now what are the chances of that happening?) which takes 50 @ 10p each for Branch distribution.

IT PAYS (US) TO ADVERTISE ON A REGULAR BASIS

like UNISON East Midlands; Freeth & Cartwright.

ON A ONE-OFF BASIS FOR PARTICULAR EVENTS, ANNIVERSARIES, etc, like Nottingham TUC, Mansfield TUC, Mansfield GMB, Mestcupia,

T&G Notts District, MSF Trent General (now what are the chances of that happening?)

Rates are:- £25 ¼-page; £50 ½-page; £100 Full page; or alternatively, bring your negotiating skills to bear to keep in practice between wage rounds.

MAKING A ONE-OFF DONATION

like Mel Read, MEP, APEX Partnership, FBU, Notts UNISON No 1, UNISON Bassetlaw, MSF Mansfield, MSG Trent General (now what are the chances of that happening?), MSF Notts Health, Newark TUC, Worksop TUC.....

SO SUBSCRIPTIONS/DONATION - You've got to have a system.

Also you can help to resurrect the Editor's social life by contributing articles, information on activities, ideas, etc; and offering to help edit, layout, and DTP (whatever that means) NOTTS TUN.

So when you have read, marked and inwardly digested the above, please ACT (Equity rules permitting). Now, off to the badger parade.....

Ian Juniper

Treasurer, Notts CATUC. ★

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first ever edition of Notts TU News which is not published under an Old Tory government. We did have dreams of carrying lengthy pieces on what the New Labour government would mean for us as Trade Unionists, but there were more important issues and campaigns to cover. To be honest, it feels a little too early to comment on the new government.

By the time we publish Issue 13 in early September, Tony Blair will have lived at 10 Downing Street for over 100 days. So let us judge them then, on the first 100 days of putting right over 18 years of Tory misrule. Any contributions on Trade Unions and New Labour will be welcomed. If the CWU would like to contribute an article on Critchley Labels, even better.

Contrary to popular myth, you do not have to be a member of the Writers Guild (TUC affiliated) before contributing to NTUN.

Many thanks to the contributors, advertisers, and those who have helped to put this edition together.

Deadline for Issue 13 is August 27th.

Jon O'Neill (Editor without a social life or portfolio).

NTUN c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY. - Tel. (01623) 424720. ★

THE ETIQUETTE OF DOWNSIZING

(from Michael Moore's book 'Downsize This!')

In the last issue we carried a review of a BBC 2 programme on Michael Moore's promotional tour of the USA for his latest book 'Downsize This. Random Threats from an unnamed American'. Below is an excerpt from that book.

Compiled from various internal memos of companies that are currently downsizing, including Chemical Bank and the Times-Mirror Company, among others.

TERMINATION Guidelines

1. The termination meeting should last no more than 5 to 10 minutes.
2. The termination meeting should be held in a neutral location with easy access for security.
3. Avoid any small talk. Get to the point. Don't debate. Don't discuss any issues of "fairness".
4. The downsized employee should clearly understand that he or she is being fired, and this will be his or her last day of work.
5. Have Kleenex available.
6. Be supportive and empathetic but not compromising. Use silence to give the employee an opportunity to react to the news.
7. Don't be defensive or argumentative. Don't be apologetic.
8. Don't provide extensive justification for the downsizing decision.
9. Do not try to make light of the situation by making jokes or trying to be funny.
10. Remain calm and try not to display any emotion.
11. If the employee becomes too emotional, suggest that he or she sees a counsellor. You may need to restate the message that he or she has been fired to ensure that the employee knows that the decision is final and has been made at the highest level for the good of the company.
12. The following are the four most common emotional responses employees have upon learning of their termination, and the best way for the manager to handle them:
 - * ANGER. The louder the downsized employee talks, the softer the manager should talk. The idea is to diffuse confrontation since the employee cannot have a one-sided argument.
 - * DENIAL. Just because a person has

been told "You're fired", does not mean that he or she really hears it or believes it. The manager's role is to let individuals know the importance of getting their lives back together as soon as possible.

*DEPRESSION. This type of emotion should send an immediate warning signal. The person should be referred to a human resources counsellor.

*HYSTERIA. Both men and women are capable of overreacting to news of their termination. For terminated people who begin to cry after hearing the news, have a glass of water handy.

13. The manager who conducts the termination wants to hear a fired employee say "Can I see you again?", or "How much am I getting in severance?". Such comments show that the downsized individual is getting over the news and thinking about the future.

14. Managers need to recognise the following symptoms during the meeting, that may indicate the terminated worker could turn violent. Expression of unusual or bizarre thoughts; a fixation on weapons; romantic obsession; depression and chemical dependence.

15. Request that the employee turn over his or her keys and other property of the company. Secure all access to the computers.

16. Contact security immediately if any assistance is required to escort the terminated employee from the property.

17. Offer the number of any services that may be of help to the terminated individual, such as temporary employment agencies, government assistance programmes, out-of-state job banks and a list of phone numbers for nearby moving services, such as U-Haul and Ryder Truck. ★

HISTORICAL RECORDS RETURNED

Historical documents relating to the history of Mansfield and District TUC have been recently returned to the Trades Union Council. The documents which had been preserved by Frank Barnes a former Vice-President of the Trades Union Council, were returned prior to the June delegates meeting.

Contained within the material are the Annual Reports of 1907, 1908 and

1947-65. The minutes of the Trades Union Council from 1919-80, Financial records 1915-69, and the Attendance register 1948-68.

The star find is the log book of the Mansfield Central Strike Committee during the 1926 General Strike, which is a detailed record of when the workers ran the Mansfield area.

The log book describes a meeting in Sutton attended by 10,000, the establishment of a police machine gun post at Warsop Main, through to the more mundane tasks of running a town.

One immediate story which gives flavour of the times, is that concerning Underwoods Bus Company of Pelham Street, Mansfield.

On the 7th of May 1926, reports were received at 10.20 a.m. of private buses running "under police protection". At 2.20 p.m. on 8th May, following active pressure from the strikers, the log records: "95% Bus proprietors have agreed to withdraw all buses, except those which the strike committee permits for safety reasons". Only Underwoods try to maintain a service.

That same evening the Strike Committee agreed to issue a special appeal to the Underwoods men, and adds "if this fails, sterner measures will have to be taken".

On May 11th an Underwoods bus is recorded running with 1 passenger and 8 police on board. By 12.45 that day 500 men had been dispatched to picket Underwoods. 10 minutes later there is a report that the Police and Underwoods men are preparing buses.

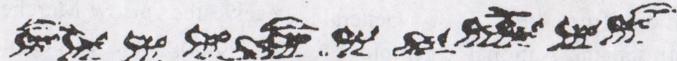
At 2.30 that same afternoon, as an Underwoods bus returned to the Pelham Street garage, it was attacked by a crowd of women with their faces painted black and white, who smashed every window in the bus. Several were arrested, and the rest of the women went to the police station to demonstrate for their release.

At 8.30 the women were released, with, as it states in the log the Police having accepted responsibility.

The Trades Union Council is now cataloguing the records prior to archiving. They are also planning to publish a booklet, later this year, on the General Strike in Mansfield based on the TUC and Strike Committee minutes. ★

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Nick Wright

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OI, TYNDALL, NO!

Building anti-fascism and anti-racism in Notts.

Despite the pitiful number of votes cast for neo-nazi candidates in Nottinghamshire at the General Election (a situation surely helped by the ludicrous sight of John Tyndall on national television), complacency on these issues is never an option. Many ordinary people may feel optimistic about Labour's return to power now (you can speculate all you like about how valid that is!), but the likes of the British National Party and the National Democrats (read "ex National Front") will be quick to exploit the resentment that will set in once the Blair administration fails to offer a real alternative to the policies of the previous 18 years. Add to that the problems created locally by pit closures and the decline of other traditional industries (e.g. textiles), and you get the picture.

The other factor is that in the two constituencies where the BNP stood (Sherwood and Ashfield) and in Nottingham South where the ND stood (by the way, does anyone know why the ND chose Nottingham South?) they actually managed to organise a leaflet drop via the

postal system, as is the entitlement under law for parties standing candidates in an election. Now although it's obvious that it hardly influenced voting patterns, the law of averages suggests that out of a few thousand leaflets you are likely to catch the eye of a handful of bozos out there. (This is what the BNP and ND call recruitment). However, the truth is that anti-fascists were caught on the hop. Some counter-material was distributed by supporters of Anti-Fascist Action, and the National Democrats found themselves subject to a police enquiry following the exposure by local anti-fascists of the fact that they had only managed to get the required number of signatures to stand a candidate by telling people in the constituency that their candidate was standing as a "local independent"! (The candidate, Sharon Edwards, lives in Staffordshire). However, the point is that we weren't as organised as we should have been, nor did the labour movement and left organisations seriously address the issue throughout the election campaign.

A more alarming fact is the number of racist attacks on the Black community in Nottinghamshire. Rumours suggest that

in parts of Mansfield the situation is worsening, and although the BNP are always on for a bit of mindless violence, most attacks tend to be carried out by vicious racists rather than card-carrying fascists. Official statistics fail to reveal the full extent of such activity, as many feel that reporting such an incident may provoke further attacks or that the police will be indifferent, or hostile, to the reporters of the crime. Again, grass-roots campaigning in this area, and others affecting ethnic minority communities, has largely been absent in recent months.

The fact is that some real successes have been achieved in the past with anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns in Notts. Solid campaigns which have their foundations in the communities they represent and are not used to promote sectarian interests have proven to be the most effective. Raising the profile of the struggle against racism and fascism in Nottinghamshire should be a political priority over the months to come - if you are interested then let us know by contacting:

NAFA, Box F, c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts. NG18 1EY.

Gail Squires. ★

The GCHQ Ban - taking it personally

Can you remember what you were doing at 3pm on Wednesday 25th January 1984? The workers at GCHQ certainly can.

That day, I was preparing for an afternoon shift and heard a brief news item on the World at One that a statement on GCHQ would be made at 3 o'clock. It was only months before that the Prime Minister had publicly acknowledged that GCHQ existed so this was interesting news.

However, at exactly 3 o'clock, as Geoffrey Howe, the then Foreign Secretary, was making his announcement. Management began distributing sealed brown envelopes to all staff. This was synchronised throughout all sites both at home and abroad. When the first impact had worn off, there was much discussion and very little work as everyone absorbed the content of the, now infamous GN100/84. This General Notice informed everyone that, unless they accepted the new conditions of service - giving up the right to belong to free and independent trade union and loss of access to industrial tribunals in exchange for £1,000 (less tax) - they could expect to be transferred or otherwise removed from GCHQ. You can imagine the disbelief, anger and dismay that was felt by a silent and stunned workforce. It was not long after this that I decided that no-one was going to dictate to me on the subject of human rights. The right of individuals to decide their own fate and which beliefs to hold is fundamental to democracy and I dared management to do their worst.

Two options were offered:- Option A - acceptance and total obedience, or Option B - retain your principles but lose your job and had to be taken before 1st March. Before this deadline, the combined civil service trade unions produced a further option C - "I wish to retain my trade union membership and



stay at GCHQ". As Branch Secretary, I made a great display of signing this form in front of a specially convened meeting only to embarrass my members who had either already signed option A or were soon to do so.

The rest of the year is a blur. We fought our case unsuccessfully at first followed by triumph at the Court of Appeal only to be overruled by the House of Lords. This was followed by an appeal to Europe that was ruled inadmissible due to the government's belated discovery that their defence was on the grounds of national security. During this time, I was living in a tied station house in North Cornwall and had three young children. Nevertheless, I found the strength to continue to defy the pressures being put upon me. I was refused pay rises that the rest of the workforce enjoyed, I was taken off the overseas transfer list, refused courses and generally marginalised whilst the carrot of signing option A was dangled as the cure to all these evils.

When all the dust had settled, after the court cases, we numbered about 150 "refusniks" (as we were termed). Some were B optants so their numbers decreased gradually as jobs were found for them and they transferred. Officially management claimed to be looking for other posts for all, but the skills that many possessed were not

transferable so other jobs were never liable to become available. The 1987 election also took its toll when many who could not face a further five years of conflict gave up the struggle. Four and a half years after making the threat to sack us for refusing to bow to the government's diktat and give up our rights, in November 1988, they began to sack the remaining 14 campaigners.

Three of my colleagues and I were there first to be sacked on 18th November 1988. The day was marked by my union officers, colleagues and many supporters from the trade union and Labour movement coming to meet me on my way out of work. They deliberately tried to counter the blackness of this day by generating a party atmosphere with a meal and a few pints in a local pub. The sackings continued over the new year and by 2nd March 1989, the last member of a national trade union left GCHQ.

I was proud to be the delegate on 15th May 1997 at PTC Annual Conference when the new Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said, "I want today to right a long-standing wrong - they (the staff at GCHQ) once again have the freedom they previously enjoyed to join any trade union they chose". It is a vindication of those 13 long years. To be proved right not only in conviction but also in the faith we placed in both our trade union and the Labour Party makes it all worth-while.

Would I do it again? Let's just say that after the success of this long and difficult campaign, we must ensure that never again should a vindictive Prime Minister be allowed to take advantage of archaic laws, such as the Royal Prerogative, to achieve dubious ideological gains.

I can certainly remember exactly what I was doing on Thursday 15th May 1997 10am when the campaign was won - but the rest of the day is a bit hazy.

Alan Rowland ★

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TU MP 95

Extracts from The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell (Number 62 in the Waterstone's 100 best books of the 20th Century)

PART V The causes of poverty - The Great Money Trick

Poverty, resumed Owen, consists in a shortage of the necessaries of life - or rather, of the benefits of civilisation. All these things are produced in the same way. They are made from the Raw materials by those who work - aided by machinery. When we inquire into the cause of the present shortage of these things, the first question we should ask is - Are there not sufficient raw materials in existence to enable us to produce enough to satisfy the needs of all?

The answer to this question is - There are undoubtedly more than sufficient of all the raw materials.

Insufficiency of raw materials is therefore not the cause. We must look in another direction.

The next question is - Are we short of labour? Is there not a sufficient number of people able and willing to work? [Capable of, available for and actively seeking? Ed]. Or is there not enough machinery?

The answer to these questions are - There are plenty of people able and willing to work, and there is plenty of machinery. These things being so, how comes this extraordinary result? How is it that the benefits of civilisation are not produced in sufficient quantity to satisfy the needs of all? How is it that the majority of the people always have to go without most of the refinements, comforts, and pleasures of life and very often without even the bare necessities of existence?

The present money system prevents us from doing the necessary work, and consequently causes the majority of the population to go short of the things that can be made by work. They suffer want in the midst of the means of producing abundance. They remain idle because they are bound and fettered with a chain of gold.

Let us now examine the details of this insane, idiotic, imbecile system. Owen now asked Philpot to pass him a piece of charred wood from under the grate, and having obtained what he wanted, he drew upon the wall a quadrangular figure about four feet in length and one foot deep.

To find out the cause of the shortage in this country of the things that can be made by work it is first necessary to find out how people spend their time. Now this square represents the whole of the adult population of this country. There are so many different classes of people, engaged in a great number of different occupations. Some of them are helping to produce the benefits of civilization, and some are not. All these people help to consume these things, but when we inquire into their occupations we shall find that although the majority are workers, only a comparatively small number are engaged in actually producing either the benefits of civilization or the necessities of life.

First we will separate those who not only do nothing, but do not even pretend to be of any use; people who would consider themselves disgraced if they by any chance did any useful work. This class includes tramps, beggars, the "Aristocracy", "Society" people, great landowners, and generally all those possessed of hereditary wealth. As he spoke, he drew a vertical line across one end of the oblong.

These people do absolutely nothing except devour or enjoy the things produced by the labour of others.

Our next division represents those who do work of a kind - "mental"

work if you like to call it so - work that benefits themselves and harms other people. Employers - or rather Exploiters of Labour; Thieves, Swindlers, Pickpockets; profit seeking share-holders; burglars; Bishops; Financiers; Capitalists, and those persons humorously called "Minister" of religion. If you remember that the word "minister" means "servant" you will see the joke.

None of these people produce anything themselves, but by means of cunning and scheming they contrive between them to obtain possession of a very large portion of the things produced by the labour of others.

Number three stand for those who work for wages or salaries, doing unnecessary work. That is, producing things or doing things which - though useful and necessary to the Imbecile System - cannot be described as the necessities of life or the benefits of civilization. This is the largest section of all. It comprises Commercial Travellers, Canvassers, Insurance agents, commission agents, the great number of Shop Assistants, the majority of clerks, workmen employed in the construction and adornment of business premises, people occupied with what they call "Business", which means being very busy without producing anything. Then there is the vast army of people engaged in designing, composing, painting or printing advertisements, things which are for the most part of no utility whatever, the object of most advertisements is merely to persuade people to buy from one firm rather than from another. If you want some butter it doesn't matter whether you buy it from Brown or Jones or Robinson.

1	2	3	4
Tramps, Beggars, Society People, the "Aristocracy", Great Landowners. All those possessed of hereditary wealth	Exploiters of Labour. Thieves, Swindlers, Pickpockets, Burglars, Bishops, Financiers, Capitalists, Shareholders, "Ministers" of Religion	All those engaged in necessary work	All those engaged in necessary work - the production of the benefits of civilization

It is over a year since Tough Times the book, the video and the show hit the streets. A year later we reprint a review which appeared recently in Mailout. Tough Times is as relevant today as the day it was published.

TOUGH TIMES - an anthology produced by and for the unemployed of Mansfield. Reviewed by Harry Henderson.

The photograph on the cover is of a shop front. In the window, in large, bold, black letters is a sign that says 'Closing'. Below the sign three fliers advertise a gig by the Apocalypse Babys. Filling the window someone has drawn the words THANK YOU MANSFIELD in the scrubbed white paint on the inside of the glass. And that's just the start. The Central Statistics Office, in late 1995, recorded the unemployment rate across the UK as 9.21%. In Mansfield in the Nottinghamshire coalfield area it was over 12%. Research by Sheffield University found the real figure to be almost twice that.

Hard facts tell you a lot. But they don't tell you what it's like to be one of the statistics. They don't give you a complete picture. You get that as you read on through the forty plus pages of poetry, prose, interviews and photographs. In his foreword, Jon O'Neill writes, "Tough Times reminds us that behind the bare statistics, there are real people with real stories, real feelings and an insight which puts politicians to shame". He sets this volume in the context of protest songs such as 'Solidarity Forever' and working class literature like Walter Greenwood's 'Love on the Dole'. And it reads like a cracking combination of 'The Little Red Song Book' and one of Banner Theatre's actuality based productions. Full of precise images - as in Kathy M Taylor's 'Invisible Prison', and 'Killing Time' by Max Banks, there are powerful expressions of how everyday.

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familiar experiences are changed by long-term unemployment. Anger and irony sit comfortably on the same page. In 'Excerpt', an anonymous letter writer outlines the chicken and egg syndrome of work experience (can't get it, without it) and describes government as "...the band of Charlatans and hypocrites that...keep blaming and labelling...instead of addressing why". Dave Hobbs' poem 'Go on a Course' spells out the contradictions inherent in retraining. "Learn or not we'll get you through Just turn a blind eye to the things we do Play the game and join the throng But don't ask questions - that's just wrong! There's work at the end if you get through Well, jobs for us, but none for you". There is also a video of talking head interviews - not the slickest production but it adds a rawness to the written material. The interviews, conducted in and around Mansfield market, were the starting point for the project and some of those featured contributed to the anthology. 'Tough Times' is not a comfortable read. In these heady days of New Labour, it's not particularly fashionable. It doesn't make you glad to be

alive, it reminds us that whenever we've been in the same situation, this is what we felt, this is how we reacted, and these are the words and images we wished we could have used.

Published: Mansfield Unemployed Workers' Centre
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MAGNET WORKERS TOUR

The first anniversary of the Magnet dispute falls on the 3rd of September. We are looking to arrange a speaking tour, commencing on 8th September for one week across Nottinghamshire.

If your branch has a meeting between 4th - 12th September, and you would like a Magnet worker to speak, get in touch with either myself (01623) 424720 or Ian Juniper (0115) 9582369. If you can arrange a factory or workplace meeting, let us know. Finally, if you would like to hand over a donation to the Magnet dispute, we can arrange it.

Jon O'Neill.

On September 3rd, it would be a good idea to leaflet Magnet stores in Notts. If you can help, let us know. ★