NO PASS LAWS HERE!

Stop the Asylum and Immigration Bill!
Tories steal NUS leaders clothes

*Paul McGowan*

Faced with a seven per cent cut in real terms by the government, PricewaterhouseCoopers have threatened to charge students a £300 fee to enter Higher Education.

Embarrassed by this move, Tories have again floated the idea of introducing a graduate tax to fund this sector of education. They don’t want any other robbers on their patch.

Rather than immediately threatening resistance to such attacks, the NUS leadership appears almost indifferent. Its surprise really considering they themselves support a graduate tax excluding their mentors in New Labour. The defeat of their motion to support such a scheme at the NUS Special Conference last year shows the mass of students oppose their capitulation to Blair and Major.

This opposition mobilised by the Free Education Campaign needs now to be demanding action from the NUS to force the Tories and the Vice Chiefs to abandon their plans.

The NUS Conference in March provides a good opportunity for us to plan a fighting campaign and rid ourselves of a leadership that supports the other olds. Their 'moderate' approach has led to students financial ruin. Last year a record £4,000 dropped out. Next year's thousands of working class youth won't even have the money to start their courses if VC's get their way.

In addition half a million graduates now face court because of their failure to repay their student loans. A striking contrast to what's happening here is France. Student strikes have just won a 2000% increase in capital spending for colleges. They have gained these concessions by uniting with workers in their disputes.

Here, all staff in colleges are under threat of the sack through the Tories current squeeze on education. There are conditions for united action. The lesson we all need to learn is to fight together.

The Tories claim the cupboard is bare - but the rich are sitting at the table with silver spoons in their mouths. The Government can afford to give £3 billion tax concession to North Sea oil companies.

We should demand its spent on financial support for students giving working class youth the same life at colleges that rich sprogs have enjoyed for generations.

Young Labour's Crumbling Foundations

*Bob Gooch*

After the experience of Militant's control of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) in the 1980's, Labour fears active youth in the party.

The Labour leaders only want young supporters as canvassing fodder at elections.

Thus the structures of Young Labour (YL) are designed to make it difficult to turn local groups into campaigning bodies and for youth to have much say in the party.

These problems were made worse in its early years because aged bureaucrats were given a watching brief on local groups and only had to cut ones way through miles of red tape to organise any activity.

Since there's been a slow recognition by the party that they are to get any young members they must give these bodies some degree of independence. In such a situation the Left are once again taking control of Labour's youth groups e.g. in Manchester, Southampton etc.

YL's tables have to resort to whining to officials to maintain their positions in YL.

However there is a need to fight for more democracy inside YL and the party. Currently YL's only real input into policy-making is electing with young trade-unionists and Labour students a representative on Labour's National Executive Committee.

In the days of the LPYS in the 1980's, youth in the Labour Party had additionally delegates on G6's and their own paper. They also had regional conferences and regional committees.

The grouping to gather of youth in one large city into one YL group severs the link between youth group's and constituencies. Also at YL Conference, youth representing such groups are not given any more say than a rep from a small town. Obviously this discriminates against urban youth. The lack of regional structures is there to isolate YL groups and makes it easier for the right to control them. Also the rule that only under 23 year olds can hold office prevents experienced youth playing a part.

Socialists inside YL and the party must fight to change these rules. In the meantime we shouldn't limit ourselves to working inside the current structures. We can begin to build up contacts through other means. We can start to organise regional and national meetings of the YL Left to defeat Blair's tables at the National Conference.

To grow we need to raise our voice outside the party as well. Campaigns like that against the immigration and Asylum Bill provide us an opportunity to turn outwards and attract more support. Invite speakers from CAIAB and demonstrate for the right to Asylum.

Get Active! Liberation regards views and reports from YL - write to us now!

New laws at Newbury

Anti-union laws have been used against road-protectors at Newbury.

Seven people were arrested under a Tory Act of 1992, for allegedly preventing people getting to work, by locking themselves to lorries carrying plant vehicles for the bypass.

They have called it again and regained control. Socialists in the YL were enthusiastic about the opportunities for it to grow and begin to address more issues affecting working class and oppressed youth, when they believed they had broken the right-wing stranglehold on it in January. Now the dead hand of the young Blairite bureaucrats has descended again. The left in Brum YL are calling on labour movement bodies to condemn these factional machinations and defend basic democracy.
Scargill digs himself a hole

Jonathan Joseph

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill has left the Labour Party to set up his own socialist Labour Party (SLP). To some this will seem a positive move. No one in their right mind could possibly argue that Blair's New Labour is socialist, and Scargill has made a point of supporting some of the single issue campaigns, like road protests, that young people are involved in.

However, we believe Scargill's project is wrong and will fail. Scargill's break from Labour is permanent. He argues that the Labour Party was defined by Clause Four of the constitution, Blair's ditching of this commitment to common ownership made up Scargill's mind. This shows how Scargill had real illusions in Labour. This is why he repeats many of the old mistakes, embracing narrow anti-establishment politics with illusions in parliament. Clause Four never defined the Labour Party. It has never been the socialist left party that Scargill claims. The Labour Party is important because of its links with the working class and the trade unions. Despite the defeats over Clause Four and internal democracy, Blair has not removed this link. He will try to - which means that it is all the more important to stay in the party and fight. A Labour government will come under pressure because of these links. The majority of the working class will vote for this government and will raise demands on it. This is the best way to defeat Blair's project. Scargill has cut himself off from these people. His SLP will not have anything like the same links with the working class, so his left rhetoric will be fruitless.

Yes, the Labour Party is very offputting. The left is weak and the politics are turgid. But it is also wrong to claim there are lots of radical things going on amongst single issue and youth campaigns.

Scargill wants to relate to these. Although they cannot be ignored, there are more decisive struggles to be waged by the Labour movement. These campaigns are often rather limited in scope, both in terms of ambition and effect. At least the Labour Party provides a perspective that links such issues.

And in Young Labour it is possible to engage in a more rounded political discussion. We must link up single issue campaigns to the fight against Blair inside the Labour Party. The real difference will be made by trade union struggles. These will make themselves felt inside the Labour Party. That is why socialists are there. Socialists inside Labour have to actively support such struggles and raise their own local demands. We should fight both Blair and the Tories simultaneously. This fight should cover common areas, like defence of public services, full employment, a minimum wage, the repeal of the anti-union laws and the Criminal Justice Act. Unfortunately, Scargill's SLP is not up to this task.

A direction to action

Mark Jasen

Anti-road protesters have generated wide media attention and have caused havoc to the government's road building programme.

The innovative tactics adopted, whilst they have not yet actually stopped a road being built once construction has started, have forced the government to back down on large sections of its road building plans.

Last year the No M11 campaign, the first of such campaigns in an urban area, brought to the fore a number of questions around pollution and how it impacted on the health of local residents, public transport policy, the shortage of housing as well as environmental issues.

Despite the success of such direct action tactics, there are limits to what they can achieve on their own. Whether we like it or not, it is ultimately the government who decide policy on roads, housing and the environment. The various campaigns across the country have shown that when the Tories are determined to force through policies, they are up against the full force of the police who the courts and the state.

To make a real change we not only have to get rid of this government, but we need to develop a broad alliance which includes the trade union movement and political parties, and which can develop its own policies for transport, the environment and so on. In short we need to be able to make decisions based upon the needs of society rather than the needs of profit.
The Immigration and Asylum Bill - What it is and how to fight it!

Simon Deville

The Tories are aiming at yet another round of racist legislation. The Immigration and Asylum Bill. The bill, along with changes in social security legislation could mean tens of thousands of asylum seekers thrown onto the streets with no source of income. Not only will asylum seekers have their benefits withdrawn, they will not be able to work as it will be an offence for bosses to employ them.

Already numerous refugees have been declared "bogus" asylum seekers by the Home Office, and then sent back to face persecution and death in their countries of origin. Similar attacks are occurring in France, Italy, Belgium and many other European states. European integration has been fought with divisions over patriotism, in the economy, with each nation attempting to defend its own interests against other nations. The creation of a "Fortress Europe" however, has found a much easier passage. This has been marked by the creation of much tighter and uniform immigration laws combined with a strengthend, paramilitary style of policing. The Tories have opposed a common immigration policy in terms of the free movement of people within the EC, but have been working much more closely in keeping refugees out of Europe.

In conjunction with the bill, Peter Lilley is aiming to stop benefits for the majority of asylum seekers. The benefits will be stopped for all those who don't make an application immediately on entering Britain. At present this amounts to around 70-80% of all applications. In order to enforce this legislation public sector workers will be expected to check the immigration status of people when they apply for benefits or when they attempt to gain access to public services.

This plays a role for the Tories of trying to boost their crumbling support from the electorate. It is also aimed at cutting welfare spending. Having lead the economy into crisis, the Tories are desperate to fund more welfare the "feel good factor" that they usually attempt before a general election.

The social security changes have already found numerous stumbling blocks. The Tories originally aimed at introducing their benefit cuts on 1 January, but were forced to postpone them until 5 February. Lilley were aimed to include existing claimants. During the estimated 13,000 people who would be thrown on the streets overnight forced a partial retreat to include only future claimants. On February the high court ruled that these changes should be postponed a second time.

The legacy of this imperialist past is that there is now a large settled black community in Britain, the vast majority of whom are British citizens.

The need by British for a labour force that could carry out a programme of reconstruction, that could only be carried out, however, was met with a strong response from the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean. Although many black people arrived in Britain to find themselves excluded from higher paid jobs, housing or many public places such as bars or restaurants, workers from British colonies were right to ablueprint of the asylum in Britain and in general had the same formal rights as other British citizens.

Economic recession from the mid-'80s went hand in hand with successive legislation from 1985 to 1979, under both Labour and Tory governments, to restrict immigration. People who are not granted the right to live in Britain will have the same right to welfare benefits and social provision as all other citizens.

Don't just get Angry

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Get Active!

• Build the National demonstration on February 24. Try raising funds to book coaches through trade councils, student unions, Labour Party branches etc.
• Organise stalls with leaflets publicising the demo.
• Affiliates to CAAB and raise a resolution in your trade union, Student Union, Labour Party etc.
• Students should try organising an event for the Student Week of Action 19-23 February - contact the Student Assembly against Racism, 90 Dean St, London W1 D0E, Tel 0171 247 9907.

The need by British for a labour force that could carry out a programme of reconstruction meant that immigration was positively encouraged from the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean. Although many black people arrived in Britain to find themselves excluded from higher paid jobs, housing or many public places such as bars or restaurants, workers from British colonies were right to ablueprint of the asylum in Britain and in general had the same formal rights as all other British citizens.

To date there is no category in British law of "immigrant" as exists in many other European states. The proposed law will create such a category. The Asylum and Immigration Bill will also create a "white list" of countries that are deemed safe and from which all asylum applications will be automatically refused. The original proposed list included Nigeria until 1986. Other countries on the "white list" are likely to include Sri Lanka and Algeria. The Home Secretary will be able to add more countries to this list at his discretion without recourse to parliament.

Despite the Tory government's rhetoric against European integration the bill will mean that anyone refused asylum in any other European country will automatically be refused asylum in Britain. This will be achieved through a list of "safe third countries": if an asylum seeker passes through one of these countries again, they can be deported back there.

The bill will create a criminal offence for anyone to employ a person with no legal right to work in Britain, which will not only make it impossible for many refugees to find any source of income, but will encourage employers not to employ any black people.

Measures to speed up appeals procedures will make it extremely difficult for asylum seekers to prepare documentation for their cases, particularly since the ultimate appeal will be withdrawn for many refugees.

To implement these laws there will be numerous forms of illegal immigration checks in which the police and other workers will be asked to prove their right to live in Britain. The Tories have tried to avoid the introduction of compulsory identity cards in Britain, but the bill will effectively introduce them for black people. Already sectors not covered by the bill have used it to start to implement apartheid style "pass laws". A number of hospitals, for example, have written to doctors in their area asking them to check the immigration status of patients before they are referred to hospital for treatment.

Although public apologies has turned against the IAB - it's not enough. A determined Government will force through its policies regardless of it.

We need to organise. The Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill (CAAB) has already brought together Trade unions, Labour Party activists, Church groups, antiracist bodies and refugee organisations. Local groups are emerging in many major towns and cities. If there isn't one where you live, why not try to set one up. Local groups should campaign for Labour Parties or local councils to resist the social security cuts and for public sector workers to refuse to carry out immigration checks on immigrants. This campaign backed up by trade union action can force the Government to scrap their plans.
Tear Down The Walls of Fortress Europe

Adam Hartman

The Fortress Europe Act (SEA) opens internal borders to the free movement of EU nationals, allowing them to live, work and get welfare anywhere in the EU.

The same time it restricts entry into the EU from outside and denies the right of free movement and settlement to non-citizens resident within. The SEA harmonises the immigration policies of member states, so that the most restrictive becomes the norm. Unaccountable institutions are being set up to direct EU immigration policy.

Fortress Europe is deeply racist. In 1994, a list of 127 countries was drawn up where nationals would need visas to enter the EU. The populations of these countries are predominantly black. In contrast, the three Commonwealth countries exempted from the list are "white". External border controls are aimed mainly at people in the Third World, whilst internal controls are targeted at black people.

However, Fortress Europe also targets East. Refugees fleeing war and ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe, notably ex-Yugoslavia, have already had problems entering and staying in the EU. Economic crisis is an underlying cause of Fortress Europe. During the 1980s and early 1990s an economic boom in Western Europe created a demand for immigrant workers from the Balkans, Asia and the Caribbean. But in the late 1980s/early 1970s, the economies slowed down and went into recession. Governments introduced laws to restrict immigrants and asylum seekers.

The central theme addressed at this camp is Anti-Racism. There will also be discussions on state and police repression, women's liberation, school and student struggles, internationalism, socialism, and much more.

Join the Liberation delegation from Britain now!

If you're skint, we have schemes to help you afford the trip.

The fortress is in solidarity with the Fourth International, a revolutionary organisation with supporters in over forty countries.

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End the Nightmare

Socialists against racism and fascism

Socialist Outlook Books
Students deal double whammy to Juppé and Maastricht

George Thompson

Students were on strike in more than 40 colleges at the height of the recent protests against the French government. Many were out more than four weeks. Although the government's Juppé plan attacked workers, the unemployed and students - it was the latter who first took action.

Students were incensed by the lavish spending by the government on a private university outside Paris when conditions of study for students in the public sector were so poor. They demanded more money for buildings and more teachers. Also they wanted the re-integration into the public sector of private universities. Furthermore they fought for equality between French and overseas students. Their militancy has won them huge concessions from the government e.g. a 2000 per cent increase in capital spending on colleges.

Their action together with other college staff encouraged other unions to come out on strike against the Juppé plan. Its provisions - to attack people's pension rights, break up the national railway network etc. - brought two million into the streets to protest. There were more people demonstrating in December than during May 1968. The public transport strike was so successful in Paris, students could no longer get to their colleges to organise action.

More people would have joined the strikes if trade unionism had been stronger in the private sector and some unions leaders had not opposed them. The French section of the Fourth International, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire was the only party of the left calling for a general strike. Supporters of Liberation attending a Paris demo' in December couldn't give out LCR's leaflets quick enough to strikers eager to spread the action.

The dispute sidetracked the far right Front National which backed the government and called on people to return to work. Many of the demands of the protesters have now been met, but Juppé still remains in office. Workers and students must now build a political alternative to the mainstream parties of the left which refused to call for Juppé's dismissal, even though he is now universally despised.

Juppe introduced his plan to help France meet the Maastricht criteria for European Monetary Union (EMU). Through forcing Juppe to shelve most of its provisions, French students and workers have blown off course EMU and the bosses plans to make Europe's poor pay for the restructuring of European capitalism. We owe them all a debt of gratitude!

Workers, Students, Solidarity!

Raoul Rouan

One of the most important things about the recent struggles in France against the government and the Juppé plan was the solidarity between students and workers.

Workers recognise that it is hardly possible to study in current conditions, and that more and more students are coming from a working-class background. At the same time, students are feeling more sympathy towards workers' struggles as they realise that their jobs, wages and social security are at stake in these struggles. And that a degree is no guarantee of a job and a good income. These attacks are part of the same political project. In refusing to take money from business and the rich, or from military expenditure or private education, the government refuses to finance public service and social protection. In refusing to upset the capitalists, they refuse to adopt the only measures which can reduce unemployment and misery.

All the victims of such policies must unite: from solidarity to a common struggle! For only a powerful movement of youth and workers can deliver a blow to stop the movement to the right and win our demands.

A government against us all, all of us against the government!

Translation from Revolution, Democracy, Egalité (the paper of Liberation's sister organisation in France).

At last! Ernest Mandel's booklets now back in print! The Lessons of May 1968


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Women in Evita sex in magazines

Argentine’s ‘Evita’ - Saint or Sinner?

Adela McGowan

Madonna is arousing passions in Argentina by daring to star as the leg-and-lips-giggling film version of the musical, The Phantom President Carlos Menem has denounced her as "an immoral representation of Evita’s life" and Madonna as "pornographic and unsuitable" to play the role.

Certainly Weber's musical is tongue in cheek, centering on a fictitious relationship between Evita and the revolutionary Che Guevara. Nevertheless, Madonna as Evita is better casting than David Essex as Che in the original version. She is a much more convincing resemblance to Evita and like her role-model has a range to her performance of background music and film, and is an assertive woman. However, Madonna's sexual assertiveness should not be welcomed by many Argentines for her portrayal of their heroine. Weber plays on the titillating theme Evita swept her way to the top. As Evita regarded by many as a Saint this is unthink-able. Her promiscuity may be true, but a film that dwells solely on it doesn't capture the essence of what made her a heroine of the masses - the political role she played. She married General Juan Peron in 1944, whilst he was still Minister of Labour. Although Evita described their relationship as the 'figure, I the shadow', she soon dev- eloped her own political pro- file.

The General's reform programme won him support in the trades unions and tightened the landed oligarchy. As a result the latter tried to prevent him taking Presidential office in 1945. Luckily Evita was on hand to call a huge demonstration to frustrate a coup. After the war, Argentina had a boom created by supplying the imperialist powers materials to put them back on their feet again. Industry grew, the Welfare State was devel- oped, there was a redistribution of wealth to the poor and the trade unions became stronger. This al- lowed people to remember Evita's time of influence as a golden era.

Peron introduced as Minister of Labour protective legislation for women and an Equal Pay Act in 1947. There was women's suffrage. Evita formed a Women's Party to push forward such reforms. Her view was that "just as only the work- er can wag his own struggle for liberation, so too can only women be the salvation of women".

Yet she was a contradicto- ry feminist, always stressing her total devotion and subordination to her patriarchal, populist husband.

Evita set up a Foundation to build schools and hospitals and personally distributed funds to de- serving causes. Her affin- ity with the "shirtless ones" and the early re- forms of Juan Peron made her despised by the bour- geoisie. Weber's depiction of Evita is largely based on the way they saw her at the time. Their view was too close to the communist, who was trans- lat-ed by him into her bed- ding Che Guevara. Many on the left did have illusions in Peron-

The first Peronist Government did introduce social reforms and meta- lically attacked US imperiali- 

Although the General was willing to do the bourgeoise's bidding to repair a faltering econ- omy in the 1950's, he never had much time to show it, before he was overthrown in 1955. It was still common to see portraits of Juan and Eva Peron held alongside por- traits of Guevara and Cen- tre on demos in Latin America in the early 1970's.

Juan Peron was always careful to keep tight con- trol of the workers move- ment, through his appointment as bureau- crats to police trade un- ions. He won support from the workers at a time of prosperity, but he still ar- gued "defence of the in- terests of businessmen, industrialists and trades- men is the very defence of the state".

Evita's death at 33 years old from cancer al- lowed her image to remain untarnished by Juan's later decline.

He alienated his radical left supporters by preach- ing conciliation between the military and the work- ers during his time of office, while the Peronists, which took up arms against successive junta and the Peronist youth idolised Evita instead. The military used her corpse and kept it in hiding until 1971, because they feared it providing a rally- ing point for the opposi- 

The legend of Evita was used to inspire workers to take on the military and bosses. Yet her husband was returned to power in the 70's with their sup- port to stabilise capitalist rule, at a time of massive social unrest. The "Dirty War" really began under Juan's su- pervision. The gangsters and gorillas surrounding Isabel, his second wife, helped form the death squad of the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance. These goons and the military would murder thousands of workers and students under the General, Isabel and the junta that fol- lowed. Peron accused the Fourth International as the main threat to his Gov- ernment. He said "You can't stop it in any way, because it is organised on a worldwide basis".

Before her death Evita never broke with the poli- tics of her husband. Many ordinary Argentines did later and paid for it with their lives. If Evita had been a Saint, she would have been on our side.

Sex! Read all about it!

Are you old enough to read this article? Recently, several Conservative and Labour MPs supporting the Protection of Children Bill proposed by Peter Luff, Tory MP for Worcester to protect girls and young women from all those dreadful articles about sex. Age limits on magazines, as the cinema and the music, were suggested.

So what's so frightening about young women's magazines that we need to be protected from their effect? Elkie Dee looked at a few.

Sugar. Horrible name for a girls' mag. An article on "Sex Myths You Should Never Believe" emphasises that girls don't have sex until they're ready, and stresses the value of trust, respect and love (yawn). Steamy packaging, disappointing con- tent.

Just 17 The problem pages carry a warning: "Re- member to be sensible is a must but sex under 16 is illegal" and shows the confusion of these magazines. The law that says a 15 year old woman is incapable of making her own decisions about sex is questioned here without question. Sex is the central issue but they can't really be too explicit.

Is there a discussion of whether Gemma (16) should sleep with her boyfriend, under pressure from him to say yes. The magazine speaks to Gemma, declaring: "It’s the best, best friend Katie and mum. Gemma doesn’t want to. Fine. But sometimes girls are the ones who want to try having sex. Why does this mag stick to the stereotype of passive woman, demanding man.

Girls Talk I found one really scary! Aimed at 8-10 year-olds, this is clearly meant to brainwash its readers into being nice little girls. Absolutely no sex, lots of cute little animals - Luff would love it! .19 Cover headlines contrast "Willies, widows and me girls in the sex industry" with "Why I gave up boys for God: a young nun's story". 19 is still obsessed with boys but at least they acknowl- edge the problems.

More is unsavourily tacky. Sex is the central issue, a key selling point, no doubt. Regular fea- tures are "Sex Talk", "Potion of the Fornight" and "Horny Horoscopes". Doesn't bother with too many of the niceties of the other magazines. Sex for fun is OK although heterosexual monogamy is still presented as an ideal. But at least the More! magazine isn't more explicit.

More and 19 are the best of these magazines, clearly aimed at older readers rather than the others. But isn't better a young woman, even a very young woman, having sex or thinking about it, reads these and gets useful information about us- ing contraception and having a good time, than that she worries about the right age or time to have sex?

A frequent criticism of women's magazines for younger and older readers is that they encourage women to think of themselves solely in relation to boys/man, and that they are filled with adver- tisements and pictures to sell clothes and other consumer goods.

All this is true. At least the coverage of sex, though does something to prepare women for real life and maybe to question it. Perhaps this is what politicians are afraid of.

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SPREAD THE WORD!
Boycotting workfare

Nigel Danby, CPSA North Humberside (personal capacity)

On April 9 the Tories plan to introduce US-style workfare into Britain. The Project Work scheme will be tested out first in Hull and Maldon.

Project Work replaces the compulsory Restart programme for those unemployed two years or more. Restart lasts two weeks. The new scheme takes six months: three months Job Club, three months work experience. Benefit is lost if you refuse to go on the scheme, drop out or are "disruptive".

Young people will be hardest hit, not just because they are more likely to be unemployed. After October 1996, young single people will have no right to DSS hardship payments if their benefit is stopped.

Thousands of young people are already living on £35 a week Income Support. The new system will leave many literally penniless.

Job Centre workers here are angry at being chosen to carry out the Tories' latest attack on the jobless. There is little pretence from management that Project Work will help the unemployed.

They live in the same fantasy world as the Tories - the jobless are to blame for their situation and deserve to be punished.

CPSA opposes Project Work as an attack on the unemployed and as part of the preparation for the Job Seeker's Allowance. CPSA policy is to boycott anything to do with JSA. On Project Work, the way forward is clear. With the Employment Service permanently understaffed, strike action would wreck Project Work.

The fight against workfare, though, cannot be won by Job Centre workers alone. Hull Trades Council is to launch a campaign against Project Work, involving other trades unions, Labour Party members and the unemployed.

Only by unity in action against Project Work can we tell the Tories - and Labour's Gordon Brown - where to stick their workfare schemes.

Get Active!

Contact Nigel Danby, TU side office, Crosskill House, Job Centre, Mill Lane, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 7NH. Please mark your envelope "in confidence".

North West marches against JSA

George Thompson

All unemployed youth between 18 and 24 will automatically face a cut in Unemployment Benefit of between 20 and 60 per cent if the Tories' new Job Seekers Allowance is introduced.

If you walk out of a job you won't receive any benefit for the first two weeks. Also Employment Service staff will have more power to force claimants to take up poorly paid jobs and go on slave labour schemes etc. It's Workfare in Britain.

The reaction of workers in benefit offices to the JSA has so far been excellent (see above). But also the unemployed, trades councils and welfare state campaigners are organizing a series of protests in opposition to it in coming months.

A North West march against the JSA is being organised by the Merseyside, Lancashire and Greater Manchester County Associations of Trades Union Councils to coincide with a National Conference to Defend the Welfare State on the March 23. The march will start at 10am in Cavendish Street, Manchester and there will be a rally at the Mechanics Institute at 11.30am where the Conference is being held. Speakers will include Audrey Wise MP and the General Secretary of the NUCPS.

Also Unemployed Workers Centres are building a lobby of Parliament on the 18th April, when the JSA is being introduced. There are many local meetings in the coming months.

War on Welfare

Claimants may soon have to prove their entitlement to benefits or lose them under a plan being considered by the Tories. In cuts of a quarter to the running costs of the DSS, they will undergo the same procedures faced by asylum seekers at present. Even the Tories are split on the cuts.

Peter Lilley in a leaked memo complained about their devastating impact. Kenneth Clarke has spoken publicly of his fears that deep cuts now would cause demonstrations like those seen in Paris.