

RESISTANCE

No.1 Oct-Nov 96

AUTUMN OF DISCONTENT? - MAGNET Workers Lead The Way!

The recent sackings of over 300 skilled workers at the Magnet plant in Darlington has brought into focus once again the level of arrogance among bosses of recent years, and the contempt management has shown in their casual dismissal of an entire workforce.

Workers, many of whom with years of experience, came out on strike toward the end of August in a dispute over a pay deal. Despite not having received a wage rise in 3 years (effectively a pay cut), managers rejected the union's calls and instead gave the strikers an ultimatum: *return to work or face the sack.*

DEFIANCE

Notwithstanding such obvious pressure, all 300 ignored the threat, continuing the pickets in a fine display of defiance. Surprised and angered at the audacity of their workforce, Magnet sacked the lot on September 3rd and began making moves at recruiting scab labour. The unions - the T&G, UCATT, GMB and the AEEU - in typical fashion, clearly shocked by the move by Magnet, attempted to return to negotiations cap in hand, to beg for the reinstatement of the strikers, only to be shown the door by bosses. Yet while the unions continue to prostrate themselves at the feet of management, resistance continues among the strikers on the ground and is starting to build. Staff at the town's Job Centre declined to display adverts by Magnet for a replacement scab labour force while the regular pickets have continued. The resolve of the pickets has been matched by local people, angered by the blatant

casualness in which long serving workers were dismissed. The result for Magnet has been immense difficulty in trying to recruit replacements. Many of those who *have* taken on scab work have had their homes and cars attacked by outraged locals.

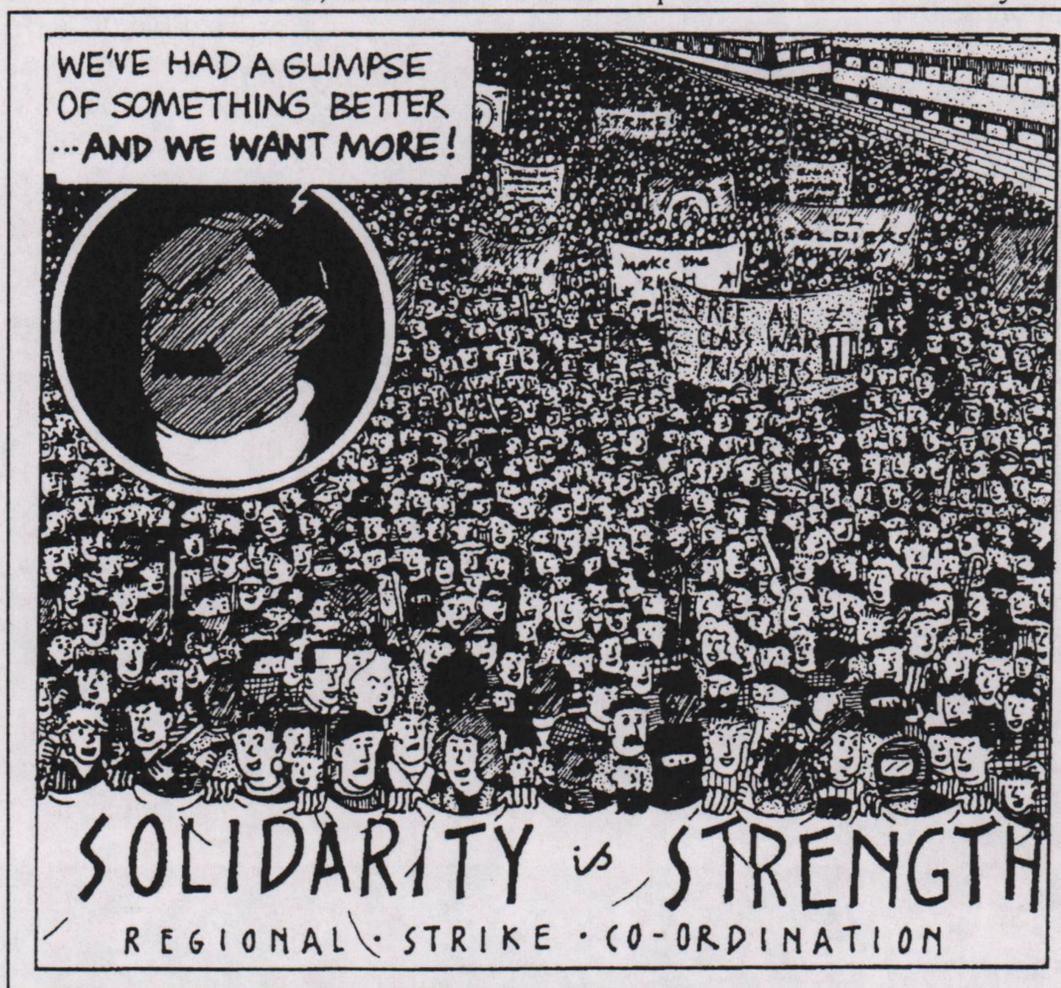
HEALTH WORKERS

Outside support has bolstered the confidence of the strikers. On September 23rd over 50 Magnet workers joined up to 500 health workers in a one day all out strike at Newcastle's General Hospital. The health workers walked out after being offered a rise of, wait for it, 0.75%. This offer, which adds around 40 pence a week

shows some promising signs for future action. It also shows that workplace struggles are far from over, as the 500 sacked Liverpool Dockers have shown as they enter their second year of struggle this month.

SOLIDARITY

Although it has been said many times before, apparently some of those who choose to cross picket lines need to be reminded - **SOLIDARITY IS STRENGTH, SCABS ARE SCUM.** It is Us, normal working people, who create the profits for the boss class, while they leisurely decide whether or not to deprive us of our livelihoods. And it is Us, UNITED, who can take away their profits by refusing to work for a pittance. As the unions have yet again shown, they are incapable of defending our interests. Solidarity and Support are vital if we are to succeed in our everyday battles against further impoverishment. Let's hope the example of the Magnet workers fight back will be repeated up and down the country. The Magnet workers are in desperate need of financial help if they are to continue their fight. Why not make a collection and send any donations to:



to a porter's wages, was insulting in the extreme, and is indicative again of the kind of abuses which bosses feel confident in imposing on their workforce.

The strike, which meant that senior bosses and executives were reduced to the roles of doing the laundry and being porters for the day, and which saw the linking up of disputes around the region,

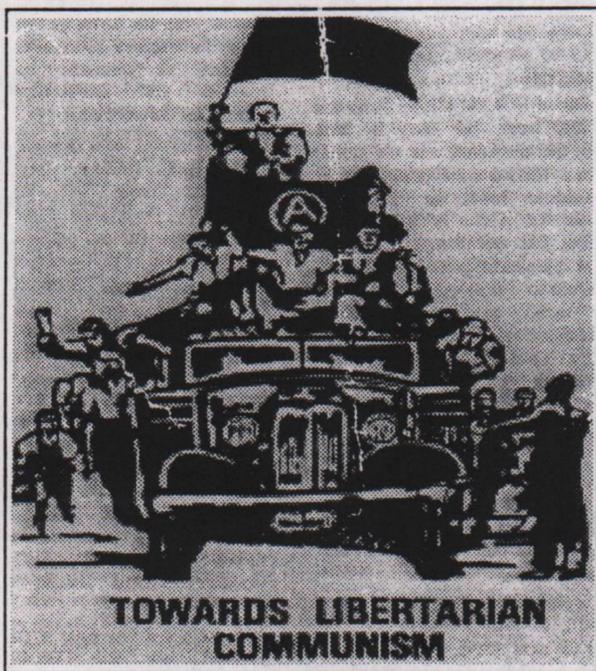
**Magnet Strike Committee,
c/o Ian Crammond,
109, Jedburgh Drive,
Darlington,
DL3 9UP.
Make cheques payable to the
"Magnet Family Hardship Fund".**

EVERYWHERE WE GO, PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW! . . .

Resistance is not produced by professional revolutionaries or a group of know it all lefties itching to lead something (anything!). Neither are we spaced out weirdoes confusing fight back and community/workplace struggles with our own ego trips. We're just a group of angry people who feel we've got something important to say about how to get us out of the current state we are in. We don't have great resources, or a monopoly on good ideas, and we certainly don't have all the answers.

What we do have however, is a dream of the kind of world we want to live in. That world is anarchist communism. Anarchist because we know that only ultimate freedom can release our full potential, and communist because we need a system of organisation to ensure we all get what we need. It goes without saying that we are opposed to government, capitalism and all the rest of this rotten system.

Of course we are realistic and don't expect to wake up one morning to see burning cop cars, raves in churches, free beer and a 3 hour working day. No, all this takes time, hard work and a lot of dedication. This is where our national organisation comes in. Rather than being isolated in Newcastle we are a part of a federation of other anarchist communists, (called funnily enough!) the Anarchist Communist Federation.



Working together we are more than the sum of our members. We have got a wealth of experience between us, not only of our day to day working lives, but of struggles, protests and revolutionary politics. In a word; RESISTANCE !

Our aim is to move beyond this resistance to the excesses of capitalism

and the state, and move towards the only event that can possibly sort this mess out. A revolution is our ultimate goal, and it's towards this that all our energies are channelled. We aim to take anarchism kicking and screaming into the next century. However, this can't be a real possibility without support from others in our class with the courage and pride to rebel.

prisoners and the class struggle

It is very easy to dismiss those of our class who are incarcerated in prisons as being unimportant or as being animals who don't deserve the basic dignity we should have as human beings. If we are to succeed in building a strong working class movement that will take back control of every part of our lives then this movement will need people in all areas of society, with all manner of experiences and backgrounds to achieve our aim. Prisoners and their families should play a vital role in building this movement and the resistance that would be a part of the class struggle. WHY?

"Prisoners see the unmasked face of the government, know the hypocrisy of the present system, witness the brutality and ruthlessness of this naked, unchecked force of destruction and for these reasons alone have the potential of being the army of the left".

This quote from American Anarchist prisoner Harold H Thompson explains why in simple but chilling terms. One network of worldwide groups that acknowledges this importance is the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC). The ABC recognises that prisons are an integral part of the class system and vital to the survival of capitalism and the preservation of the rich/ruling class. This is why we see working towards the abolition of the prison system as a vital part of the class struggle.

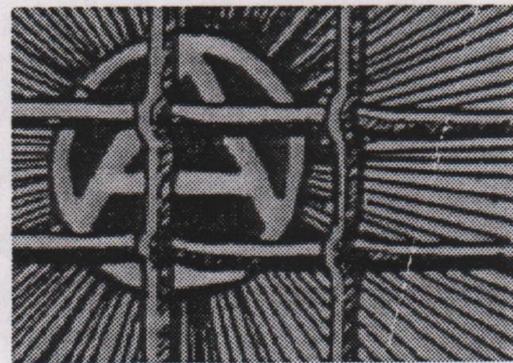
Their Battle inspires ours and ours theirs

Just as the class war goes on in our daily lives it also carries on inside the prisons. Many prisoners resist the prison system both individually and sometimes collectively, striking for better conditions, by taking to the roof and even tearing their prisons apart, as at Strangeways in 1990 - The day after thousands of working class people rioted in London over the much hated Poll Tax.

Six years on and there are rumours on the inside that it won't be long before there is another riot like that at Strangeways. Prison conditions are getting worse and if Michael Howard gets his way they will continue to do so: conditions that force one prisoner every five days to take their own life, leaving their families to face a wall of silence when they question the Prison Service over the conditions and treatment that made their loved ones so desperate that they killed themselves.

One law for the rich - One law for us!

As the old saying goes - when you kick a dog it is only a matter of time before it turns around and bites. When it does happen we have to be there for the prisoners, who are quite literally putting their lives on the line, just as we are there for our comrades in workplace and community struggles. We need to break down the lies about prisons and reject their definitions of crime - The solution lies with us.



If you would like to find out more about the prisoners we support and our recent campaigns, get in touch with us.

ORGANISE!

*The Quarterly magazine of the ACF.
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**Newcastle ACF,
PO Box 1TA,
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NE99 1TA.**

