

!! NEWSFLASH !!

AUGUST 4th 1997

As we approach the first anniversary of our strike action time should be taken to reflect on the events leading up to our fight for justice and the action taken.

We realised early on in our dispute with Magnet that the only way to attempt to put pressure on the company was through the retail outlets across the country. We tried to get to as many as possible, although the fact that they were over 200 branches caused us some problems initially, with some Union officials vetoing the idea and refusing to fund trips to these places. Then the TUC came to our rescue and all trades councils were then mailed information and requested to help financially and physically with the leafleting campaign. The London Support group for the Liverpool dockers adopted us as well and their efforts have been a tremendous help to our campaign. The result of our campaign has had a noticeable effect on Magnets sales, reputation with many people cancelling orders because of the mistreatment of long serving and hard working staff.

The company have consistently refused to take part in any negotiations with us they have consistently called us militants, and tried to get us arrested on trumped up charges, knowingly allowed scabs who attacked our picket line to continue to work at Magnet refuse to face up to their responsibilities as a caring sharing employer.

On Saturday 2nd August a benefit night in aid of the **MAGNET STRIKERS** was put on as part of the Stockton Festival and raised £7,800 for our fund which was a tremendous boost to us all

We thank all those who took part which included Jeremy Hardy who organised the show, Anvil Springsteen who compered so well and the brilliant talents of Mark Steel, Rob Newman and our heroine Jo Brand who supported us then kicked us men where it hurt. More , more.

We send our very best wishes to you all



MAGNET OFFICIAL DISPUTE



1/ On September 3rd 1996, 350 skilled workers were sacked for taking legitimate strike action against Magnet Kitchens Darlington.

2/ A below inflation rate pay rise had been offered to only 60% of the workforce while the other 40% were offered a nil basic pay rise for the fourth consecutive year

3/ This offer was so unfair that the majority voted to reject the offer unless everyone was treated equally.

4/ The workers were sacked after being in dispute only 12 days, by a man who had only been with the company for 42 days. The majority of the workers had long-standing service with Magnet, some with up to 40 years service.

5/ The company has since refused to enter into any negotiations at all. even attempts from ACAS (an official Arbitration service) have been rebuffed.

6/ Approximate costs to the company to settle the dispute would be £30 to £40,000 per year. Unwarranted increased security measures have cost over £500, 000 in the first 6 months of the dispute.

7/ The company boasted that it had set aside £3,500,000 to cover the cost of the the dispute just think of how many men's wages that would have paid. That money was used up in the first 8 weeks of the strike and the cost is rising rapidly day by day. They are now bragging about having a "Greenfield Site", but a what cost to the men who had dedicated their lives to the company.

8/ There is scab labour in there now but with a high turnover in staff although the skilled work is being done outside of Darlington.

9/ An ultimatum letter was hand delivered to all strikers and those on the sick and holiday. The letter states "I hereby confirm that I do not symphathise, support or wish to take part in, nor do I intend at any time in the future to symphathise or take part in any of the industrial action currently being taken by the majority of the staff at Magnet Darlington" has more or less derecognised the union for all those who have signed and crossed the picket line.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Leaflet every Magnet showroom in the country.

To urge all possible customers to boycott all Magnet products

A return to work for all those sacked on September 3rd 1996

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