

LDMG UPDATE 14TH MAY 2003

MAYDAY

Although Mayday was very peaceful, the cops still managed to arrest about 30 people. Not all have been charged and the picture is still slightly confused, but we know of 15 people who have been charged (including a journalist on the Evening Standard!). Of these, 1 pleaded guilty (see below). All the others are on bail. Trials will not take place for at least a few months.

Most people are facing s4 (threatening words & behavior) or assaulting a cop. One is charged with s3 (affray). The desperate nature of the charges is illustrated by the person charged with possession of an offensive weapon - they had a multi-tool in a pouch, in a pannier, attached to a bicycle!

WITNESSES NEEDED

We urgently need to make contact with potential witnesses. If you saw an arrest or have photos or video of an arrest, please get in touch (email is quickest).

Please let us know the time and location.

This information may keep someone out of prison.

28 DAYS FOR SPITTING AT A COP

Of the 30 or so people arrested at Mayday this year, about 20 have so far been charged. The first court appearances were at Bow Street on 2nd May. Only one person pleaded guilty and he was sentenced to 28 days prison for spitting at a cop by the Magistrate Roger Davies. He will serve a minimum of 14 days inside. LDMG has long warned against pleading guilty before all the evidence has been produced in protest cases as, where there is lots of media interest, sentences are handed down with an eye to how it will be reported.

WOMBLING FREE (AGAIN)

Just before Xmas, the WOMBLES held an event in Oxford Street to highlight consumerism and to celebrate the anniversary of the uprising in Argentina. They set up a free stall. The cops imposed conditions under s14 (see below). One participant, fed up with being followed by the police Forward Intelligence Team (FIT), left the protest and headed off down Oxford Street. The FIT (PC Paul Kemp & one other) followed and, when he went into a shop, they invited security to eject him. He then went into Benetton's and the same thing happened. On the way out, he made a remark about Benetton's dealings in Argentina and was arrested for breach of s14. After hearing all the evidence, Magistrate Rosamund Keating dismissed the charge.

SECTIONS 12 & 14

Sections 12 & 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 seem to be the cops favorite tactic to curtail protest at the moment. Section 12 allows the cops to impose conditions on public processions (e.g. marches) if the senior officer present believes it will result in public disorder or serious disruption or if the purpose of the procession is intimidation.

Section 14 is the equivalent power for assemblies. It allows the cops to impose conditions on public

assemblies (e.g. pickets, lobbies, rallies) if the senior officer present believes it will result in public disorder or serious disruption or if the purpose of the assembly is intimidation. However, whilst there are no minimum numbers for a processions, an assembly must have 20 or more people. Typical conditions are about the route, numbers allowed or curfews - for example on Mayday the police used s14 to demand that people disperse from Trafalgar Square at the arbitrary time of 7.05pm.

EXPENSIVE INJUNCTION THROWN OUT!

Expensive, a suitably named clothes shop in Oxford Street and Regents Street has been the target of animals rights activists for selling fur. They got an interim injunction to stop the protests at the shops, but recently we have been told that the injunction has been thrown out of court! Expensive didn't turn up to two of the hearings and their solicitor got a court order saying they would not represent them any more. They were ordered to pay the legal aid costs of three of the named defendants. They also have no fur in either of their stores now!

DELAY

Sorry about the long delay since the last issue of LDMG UPDATE - the next one will be out in a month or so.

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