

LDMG UPDATE 26TH JUNE 2002

MAYDAY CASES

In our last Update (14th May 2002) we reported that a number of Mayday charges had been reduced. At the most recent court hearings a number were increased from s4 (threatening words and behaviour) to s3 (affray) and from s3 to s2 (violent disorder). One person pleaded guilty to s3 and another pleaded guilty to s2 both due to the video evidence. Pre-sentence reports were ordered and the judge warned that prison was 'not out of the question'. Another person, who pissed on a coppers leg whilst stuck in the cordon with no access to a toilet, pleaded guilty to s4 when the assault charges were dropped. He was fined a total of £240 despite being on the dole. About 20 cases are outstanding and no one is currently in prison.

WITNESSES URGENTLY NEEDED

This is the crucial time for people preparing their defences and we still urgently require witnesses to arrests, particularly in Old Compton Street, Wardour Street and Dean Street. If you witnessed an arrest please get in touch with us now.

EVENING STANDARD WANTED PHOTOS

The London Evening Standard did the cops dirty work and carried a series of wanted pictures on 6th June, which they claimed were from Mayday this year. All was not as it seemed however. A number of these photos were from Mayday 2001 and had appeared in the Standard, Daily Mail and on the cops own website previously! Indeed the cops website has no appeal for Mayday 2002. Curiously the Standards appeal now seems to have been removed from its web pages. The cops own photo gallery for 2001/2 is at:
www.met.police.uk/appeals/mayday/mayday.htm

JUBILEE ARRESTS

On 4th June the Movement Against the Monarchy organised an "Execute the Queen" demonstration, which was attended by about 75 people. Afterwards some people went home, others to the pub and some wandered off. The cops then arrested nearly 50 people supposedly "to prevent a breach of the peace" seemingly to prevent any further demonstrations. Many of those arrested were enjoying a quiet drink in a pub. Most were herded onto two double decker buses and driven around for an hour and a half before being taken to 8 different police stations. Anyone under 17 was then released and about 40 people were locked up in the cells until 7pm. During the time on the bus they had no access to solicitors.

Two days later five people were arrested "to prevent a breach of the peace" at the Queen's visit to Alexandra Palace. The cops shouted at them that they had to leave the area or be nicked. They went to the bus stop and were told that no buses were running. One person started to phone London travel info when a bus showed up. They travelled a couple of stops, with the cops trying to prevent them from leaving. Afterwards, whilst walking up the hill (accompanied by an ITN cameraman who also happened to be on the bus), a couple of vans of cops turned up and nicked everyone. They were driven around for about an hour and a half, before being released in Colindale!

This seems to be a new tactic by the cops. Both groups are now trying to sue the cops. If you were amongst the first group and have not contacted LDMG please do so.

"SNAPSHOT OF CRIME"

"The first ever snap shot of the criminal justice system on a single day" has just been published. For some strange reason the day chosen was May 1st! This reveals some interesting facts. 5,400 people were arrested in London, but only 54 at Mayday. Why then is there so much fuss about just 1%? Sir John Stevens, Met Cop Commissioner, was reported as saying that "the May Day demonstrations produced so few crimes and arrests – 54 arrests and seven reported crimes – that they were statistically insignificant." If there were only 7 reported crimes, what were the other 47 arrested for? As more than 7 people have now been convicted, why aren't the rest of the charges dropped?

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ABOUT US

The Legal Defence & Monitoring Group provides legal observers for protests/demonstrations – we cannot cover every event but are always willing to advise. We also provide unconditional support for anyone arrested on protests where we had legal observers. We can be contacted by post: LDMG, C/o BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX (please send a stamped self-addressed envelope); by e-mail: ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk and by 'phone: 020 8245 2930 (24hr answerphone).