

☆ LESBIANS & GAY MEN SUPPORT THE MINERS ☆

LONDON

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National Demonstration in Support of the Miners, February 24th.

POLICE DISRUPT DEMONSTRATION. OVER ONE HUNDRED ARRESTED.

Hundreds of lesbians and gay men, marching side by side with South Wales' mining communities, with whom they are twinned, found themselves along with thousands of others stopped by police from entering Trafalgar Square on this warm, sunny day.

A festive spirit reigned throughout the demonstration until police arrested two miners and claimed Trafalgar Square was full.
A lie.

The police tactics created conditions in which they could practice military style manouvers already developed in Northern Ireland and on picket lines.

Police stopped the demonstration, creating a split. Pulled back their lines partially allowing the demonstration to move forward a little and then charged in with batons and horses. They began to pick on individual demonstrators and thereby created an atmosphere of anger and frustration. The police effectively isolated large sections of the demonstration and blocked off all exits from Whitehall. They attacked us from three sides, used Horseguards Parade as their marshalling place; they dragged the arrested there too.

Occasionally stewards gave us information on the arrested miners. We sat down in Whitehall in solidarity with those arrested. However under the circumstances the stewarding was inadequate. Demonstrators in Trafalgar Square stayed still unaware of our plight in Whitehall four hundreds yards away. On future demonstrations it would be wise if all stewards had walkie-talkies so all sections of the demonstration can know what's happening and plan accordingly.

Yet again our 'neutral' boys in blue try to break the massive solidarity shown for the miners. In so doing they attempt to weaken the strike itself. Why block off Trafalgar Square with tens of thousands trapped in Whitehall and then proclaim only 15,000 attended the demonstration? If we had all marched and sang and dashed our way into Trafalgar Square it would have been overflowing with miners and their supporters. Only the Tories and the police would hate that.

Later that evening the media stated, "scuffles broke out and a few drunken youths were arrested on a demonstration attended by 15,000". By Monday morning the news proclaimed "121 arrested on demonstration".

In future stewards must take a more effective role; we must prepare ourselves emotionally and psychologically for occurrences which for instance, communities in Northern Ireland and women at Greenham Common have been facing day in and day out for years.

24th. February 1985 won't just be remembered though for the police violence. For lesbians and gay men on the demonstration, gathering at Hyde Park, selling our badges, giving out our leaflets, proclaiming our solidarity openly with mining communities and being greeted so warmly by them was a great and joyful occasion. Lesbians and Gays Support the miners banner, unfurled in the middle of the demonstration with other lesbian and gay banners behind it were proudly held on high.
A day to remember.

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