

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PROTESTER

You are used to suppressing protests and know what the law says about it, but you might not know, from lack of experience, that as a protester you have some rights. Actually, not many anymore, but you should be aware of a few things:

-You can't be searched under the Police Powers to Stop and Search Persons and Vehicles. BUT, you can if you are in a designated area and in connection with terrorism, under the Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. (Suggestion: you must leave your gun and other arms at home today. If you did bring them with you, please hand them to the nearest Professional Protesters Stall immediately).

-ASBOs: Anti-social Behaviour Orders

This is a tricky one for you, guys. It says you can be arrested and then banned by a magistrate from specific activities or from entering particular areas if you "have caused or were likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress". So you must control your police instincts now. We know it is difficult breaking years of training and guard dog routines, but now you must act as an oppressed minority. If you don't know how to do that, we recommend that you remember those you arrest every day and you'll get the picture.

-Laws under Public Assembly

If you are the organiser of a public meeting on private premises, you must ensure that you comply with the terms and conditions for the use of the premises (including all fire and safety regulations), and that the meeting is conducted in an orderly manner. Stewards should be easily identifiable, but they should not wear a uniform to promote a political objective or signify membership of a political organisation. They must not try to take over the functions of the police or use force to promote a political objective (these acts would be illegal). They can assist in the admission and seating of members of the public and in the control of disorder or to remove members of the public who go too far in their heckling.

-It is an offence under the Public Meeting Act 1908 to try to break up a lawful public meeting by acting in a disorderly manner or to incite others to do so. The maximum penalty is six months' imprisonment and/or a fine up to £1000. If a police officer is present and reasonably suspects you of trying to disrupt the meeting, then, at the chairperson's request, he or she can ask you for your name and address. It is an offence if you fail to give these details or give a false name or address (maximum penalty is a fine at level 1 – currently £200).

-If such a meeting is attended by 20 or more people and held on land without the owner's permission it may be a trespassory assembly and could be subject to a banning order. (Note: organisers should be aware that plain-clothes anarchists might attend police meetings without authority for the purpose of collecting information).

KEEP THE STRUGGLE, and most important: HAVE FUN!

WHAT TO DO IF THE POLICE TURN UP

You have to be aware that as a protester you should expect confrontations with the police. Although you have the right and duty to express your voice (because you are not wearing a uniform today), the police are often instructed to suppress any dissent even by violent means.

Cases of police violence and brutality are rarely punished and often silenced. If you are assaulted by a police officer make sure to take their number (if you can't remember their name). This is of course if they have a number: the TSG (Riot Police) have often been seen in demonstrations with their numbers removed.

Although this is a peaceful demonstration, the police have been known to provoke confrontations in order to label the protesters as violent and devalue their message.

**If they try to use this tactic with you,
please attempt to remain calm in the face of their
aggression.**

Despite this pressure remember that your right to a political voice is something people have died for and is enshrined within the law.

**The future depends upon people like you,
standing up for your rights!**