

FREEDOM TO PROTEST CONFERENCE, 23/10/05

Briefing for Workshop 6

SETTING UP SUPPORT, DEFENCE, AND DEFIANCE CAMPAIGNS

The role of a Defendants Support Group

- To provide mutual support and solidarity to defendants.
- To raise the political issues in the arrests.
- To find and keep in contact with witnesses.
- To find good sympathetic lawyers.
- To keep the lawyers under control.
- To get everyone off (or at least minimise sentences).

How might a Defendants Support Group be organised?

- Defendants to have the central role.
- Non-Defendants to take on the tasks that defendants can't (e.g. due to bail conditions) or don't have time to do.
- Regular (weekly?) meetings.
- E-group.
- Website.

Practical tasks

- Attend all court hearings.
- Find, contact, and keep in touch with witnesses.
- Organise protests/pickets at court and elsewhere.
- Circulate information within the movement.
- Organise public meetings.
- Issue press statements.
- Media spokesperson.
- Attend with defendants in discussions with lawyers re defences and tactics.
- Share information between defendants and the lawyers.
- Raise money for defence, witness expenses, fines etc.
- Provide bail addresses, surety etc.
- Support anyone in prison.
- Demystifying the court process for defendants and their families.
- Support defendants' families.