

GALOP

278 6215

Gay London Police Monitoring Group
38 Mount Pleasant WC1X 0AP

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE USE

15th August '84

GALOP REJECTS GAY TRAINING FOR THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

Last week saw press reports of the first ever interview given by a senior Metropolitan Police officer on the policing of London's gay community. Following extensive criticism of the Met's treatment of lesbians and gay men voiced by gay organisations, MP's, and civil liberties groups, Chief Superintendent Norman Brown, officer in charge of the clubs section at West End Central Police station wanted to "put right some of the myths" and called for representatives of the gay community to come and "enlighten" his officers about "gay lifestyles".

The Gay London Police Monitoring Group (GALOP), which has over two years experience of investigating the Met's treatment of lesbians and gay men, fully discussed the Chief Superintendent's offer at their General Meeting last Sunday. They concluded that this was "basically a public relations exercise." Certainly the last few weeks have seen heavy Police presence inside and outside gay clubs, a Police raid on the 'Zipper' bookshop in Camden, the use of the charge of 'insulting behaviour' against gay men showing affection in public, the arrest of a photographer and those who went to help her at this year's Lesbian Strength March, and mass arrests of men at public toilets, especially in 'J' District (Waltham Forrest).

"The recent NCCL survey of Police use of entrapment methods, plus calls to London Gay Switchboard and to ourselves leave little doubt that entrapment is still happening" said a spokesperson for GALOP. "It is interesting that Mr Brown's denial of the practice comes at a time when a major court case involving the use of plain clothes police officers inside a gay club

within Mr Brown's 'patch' has received a lot of media attention."

GALOP strongly advises anyone arrested or charged by the Police to get proper legal advice before deciding how to plead in court.

Does Mr Mr Brown's initiative herald the beginnings of 'community liason' exercises directed at London's lesbian and gay communities? No gay organisations have been approached directly. There is much suspicion of the motives behind Mr Brown's 'offer', and widespread belief among the gay community that discussions with the Met will simply be used by them to collect and record information on lesbians and gay men, our communities and organisations, and to improve police officers abilities in 'passing' as gay men for surveillance and entrapment purposes. There is little belief that any changes in policing strategy or Police attitudes and behaviour would result.

" Informal chats are no substitute for proper structures making the Police accountable to the communities they police" said a spokesperson for GALOP.

" We are not saying that gay men and lesbians and their organisations should never talk to the Police, but we do say that nothing will be gained from bland assurances while policing strategies and Police behaviour remain unaltered."

END.

- - - - -

ATTACHED: copy of the resolution passed at GALOP's General Meeting.

FOR further information, copies of GALOP's Annual Report, etc.

Please contact

Paul Thurlow or Margie Wood at 01 278 6215

GALOP
38 Mount Pleasant
London WCLX OAP
01 278 6215

"Training" for the Metropolitan Police

This General Meeting of GALOP notes the recent initiative taken by the Metropolitan Police in offering interviews to Capital Gay and the Guardian by Chief Superintendent Brown of 'C' District about the policing of central London gay clubs, and especially:

1. his desire to "put right some of the myths about how we police gay clubs "
2. his denial of the use of "pretty-boy policemen", entrapment, and any "campaign to persecute gays"
3. his admission of the use of plain clothes officers for surveillance
4. his apparent desire to "understand" and "respect" those "gay people" who do not break the law in any way
5. his request for representatives of the gay community to "enlighten" his officers about "gay lifestyles" and "sub-culture".

In the light of:

1. Metropolitan Police treatment of gay men and lesbians, as documented by GALOP and elsewhere, but especially:
 - (a) Police behaviour during the recent raids on the 'Pink Panther' when the names, addresses, date of birth and height of people present were recorded
 - (b) continued use by the Police of the charge of 'Insulting behaviour' to arrest and charge for showing affection in 'public'
 - (c) the arrests of lesbians and a gay man during the '84 Lesbian Strength march
 - (d) the Police raid on the 'Zipper' shop and premises and the conviction of the directors of MCM Ltd under the Obscene Publications Act
2. Commissioner Newman's increasing emphasis on police intelligence gathering and surveillance of 'target' communities in London as part of his 'New Policing Strategy'
3. the introduction of the Metropolitan Police computerised Crime Report Information System, for use alongside the Police National Computer and the Met. 'C' Department computer,

GALOP believes that

any discussions between gay organisations and the Police or training sessions/talks for Police officers will be used to collect more information on gay organisations and the gay community, so that surveillance of us, and the policing of us can be more effective in Police terms

this and similar efforts to defuse opposition to current policing methods and Police behaviour, to undermine demands for a ^{democratically} accountable Police force in London, and 'reassure' the lesbian and gay communities about Police intentions and activities must be rejected and exposed for what they are.

Passed at the General Meeting of GALOP:

12/8/84

GALOP (Gay London Police Monitoring Group)

38 Mount Pleasant
London WCLX 0AP

01 278 6215