

Letter to Westminster Magistrates Court

Dear Clerk to the Courts,

As you will know, the Crown Prosecution Service had granted myself as well as other defendants leave to stay at home rather than travel into London on 29th December 2020. This was not confirmed by the court until 9.50am on 29th, by email providing a zoom link which I saw after 10 am. We were due to attend Westminster Magistrates Court to hear that the cases, throwing paint at political party buildings as part of a Burning Pink action, will be transferred to the Crown Court.

I deliberately did not use the zoom link, or phone, to attend the court remotely. When I saw the link the phrase 'deadly pantomime' sprang to mind, and I was having none of it.

In my opinion the court system is not acting with moral authority in matters related to nonviolent direct action. It is not promoting safety or security of citizens, but in fact is making judgements that put our young people and future generations in jeopardy. The Supreme Court decision to allow the third Heathrow airport runway plans to proceed, condemned as an act of treason by Tim Crosland the barrister acting for Plan B, is one of a series of actions that I firmly believe betray the UK and its people.

Other recent changes to the court system include not allowing activists their right to use the necessity and freedom of speech defences, and the instruction by judges to juries that the jury *must* find defendants guilty.

Citizens taking up nonviolent direct action do so to protect themselves, the young, and future generations. Denying us the right to defend our actions in court has reduced the legal system down to the level of a charade, a pantomime. This was my experience during my one court trial. I and the person being tried at the same time as me, a grandfather and retired specialist in employment health law, between us presented comprehensive and substantial evidence to the judge. The other defendant pleaded with the judge on behalf of his grandchildren. The judge admitted that we were morally right at the same time as finding us guilty.

I do hope that the legal case heard in the appeal court last month, to allow the Stansted 15 to argue that they acted out of necessity, will be successful. In the meantime a great deal of damage is being done. Plans now being made for recovery after Covid will result in the UK continuing fossil fuel extraction and use at a rate that will only add to increasing climate chaos. Government ignores the collective knowledge of scientists who cry out for change but listens to corporate lobbyists. Courts too are ignoring the overwhelming evidence and are swayed by the false arguments of expensive lawyers.

The courts are not protecting us. If courts upheld reasonable moral standards, our protests might succeed in making all our lives safer. Courts are effectively working to squash our voices when they should be serving citizens and upholding their rights to a fair and equitable hearing in law.

The stakes cannot be higher – life or death for many, if not for all.

Courts seem to be making a mockery of life and death. My conscience will not allow me to cooperate. If the alternative is prison, I am prepared for that as well as I can be.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Diana Warner