

Protest Report

# ACLU Scores Mayday Police

By Lawrence Feinberg  
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The American Civil Liberties Union charged yesterday that widespread police misconduct and brutality marked the 1971 Mayday war protests here in which more than 13,000 persons were arrested. The civil liberties group,

which has led a major legal attack on the arrests, also criticized local courts and newspapers for being sympathetic to the police.

The charges are contained in an 81-page ACLU report on the protests, which included widespread efforts to block traffic on Monday, May 3,

1971, and rallies the next two days at the Justice Department and the Capitol.

Before the demonstrations, the principal participants, including Rennie Davis, said they would try to "shut down the war machine" of the U.S. government by preventing federal workers from getting to their jobs.

But at a press conference yesterday, James Heller, president of the local ACLU last year, said the protests were "a test of traffic control at best, not a test of democracy."

He described the police response as "one of the worst pieces of police misconduct and official lawlessness in modern times" and said it included a series of mini-police riots.

Asked to comment on the ACLU charges, D.C. Police Chief Wilson said the general allegations are a "gross overstatement."

Wilson said he would not comment on the report's charges that the police used "excessive force" in arresting protesters and that 1,000 letters from people protesting the report were "destroyed."

Wilson said he would "investigate" the report's charges that the police "deliberately" arrested protesters and that Judge Nicholas

## MAYDAY, From CL

strongly disputed its account of what happened in their courtrooms.

The report said that one of the judges, Alfred Burka, told defendants "that he was sending them to jail for a while so they would be unable to participate in (another) demonstration."

"That statement attributed to me is a bold-faced lie," Burka told a reporter. "I am really shocked and astounded by the extent of their inaccuracies."

The report also charged that the Superior Court's chief judge, Harold H. Green, improperly delayed the release from jail of many demonstrators and that Judge Nicholas

Nunzio "pressured" defendants into pleading guilty. Both judges denied the charges.

The ACLU report "was based largely on 1,000 affidavits the group collected from arrested persons and witnesses in response to a newspaper survey."

Of the arrested persons, the report said 53 indicated that police used "violent force," such as clubbing and striking those arrested with their fists.

Another 54 said police used "excessive force" in arresting them, such as "choking, dragging people by the hair, breaking glasses," but that this "did not result in bodily damage."

The report said 118 persons

said police used "some force — pulling, dragging" — but that 500 said they were not subjected to undue force during arrest.

One of the students recounted an incident in which police violated the U.S. Park Posters Act. He said they arrested a young FBI employee with a peace sign and then punched him and threatened to smash his legs against him into the ground.

He said the man's shirt was torn and his pants were soiled. He said the man was taken to a hospital.

At a news conference, Heller said the FBI did not arrest a group of police and college students in the area.

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