

UK Uncut Fortnum & Mason protesters found not guilty

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I have just received and share this communication:

Eight anti-cuts protesters arrested in Fortnum and Mason last year were today found not guilty in the Westminster Magistrates' Court. The defendants were the third group facing identical charges, with the first two groups having been found guilty.

The protest had been organised by anti-tax avoidance group UK Uncut, and had been seeking to highlight an alleged tax dodge of £10 million by Fortnum and Mason's parent company, Whittington Investments. 145 people who took part were arrested outside the store. Most had charges dropped, but 19 have been found guilty, and 8 not guilty, despite each being tried for the same crime.

Stephen Reid, who was found not guilty today, said:

"The judge today recognised our legitimate right to protest. He listened carefully to the evidence, and we're delighted that he found us not guilty. It is absurd that other people who did exactly the same as us were found guilty while we weren't. As cuts begin to bite, we will continue our fight to ensure that the wealthiest pay their fair share of tax."

The first two groups of defendants are appealing their cases to the High Court and the Crown Court respectively.

I have not and never will condone violence. I'm pleased to note these protestors have been found not guilty of any charge of being involved with it and were instead found to have been legitimately protesting.