

Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
House of Commons
London
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Dear Madam

Full public inquiry into the actions of the police at Orgreave coking plant on 18 June 1984

The Police Actions Lawyers Group (PALG) supports the call for a full public inquiry into the actions of the police at the Orgreave coking plant on 18 June 1984 during the miners' strike of 1984-85.

PALG is a national organisation comprised of solicitors, barristers and legal executives who represent complainants against the police throughout England and Wales. PALG members are concerned first and foremost with the principal objectives of the complainants we represent: to ensure that the police are held accountable for their conduct through all available avenues, including the police complaints system, judicial review and compensation claims. In many circumstances, litigation through the civil courts can be the only means by which complainants are able to enjoy any access to justice and thereby to defend their civil liberties in the face of malpractice on the part of officers of the state. PALG members hope that by upholding our clients' rights and highlighting poor practice, improvements will be made to police services and other state authorities against whom our clients bring claims. Further information is available on our website: www.palg.org.uk.

Along with ex-miners, their families, campaigners from the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, and the people of Sheffield, PALG has waited patiently for nearly 2 and half years for the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) to complete their "scoping" exercise, investigating whether to investigate the actions of the police on that day.

PALG was disappointed that the IPCC announced on Friday 12 June 2015 that despite there being findings that police officers did use excessive force against picketing miners, manipulated evidence and lied in court when giving evidence, they would not be conducting an investigation into what has become known as the 'Battle of Orgreave'.

The IPCC report concedes that "the unwillingness to disclose evidence of wrongdoing by officers does raise doubts about the ethical standards of officers in the highest ranks of the South Yorkshire Police at the time".

The IPCC cited the passage of time and the fact that there had been no miscarriages of justice in the form of wrongful convictions as reasons not to investigate.

PALG believes that the issue of Orgreave is of national importance and particular local importance to the mining communities and the people of Sheffield, many of whom were directly affected in 1984 and, in the absence of any kind of justice, continue to be affected. Further, in PALG's experience, the actions of the police at Orgreave are not confined to the past; they have been repeated time and time again since 1984 at a national level, and continue to this day. The passage of time should not deprive those who suffered brutality and injustice at the hands of the police the chance to get at the truth and hold those responsible to account, and should not prevent lessons being learned which are as current today as they ever were.

A full investigation into the military style policing used on that day is now long overdue and only a full public inquiry will suffice.

PALG therefore calls on the Home Secretary, Theresa May, to order a full public inquiry into the deployment and actions of the police on 18 June 1984.

Yours faithfully

Police Action Lawyers Group

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