



Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign <http://otjc.org.uk/>

Background to the Campaign for an Inquiry into Policing at Orgreave

The **Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign** (OTJC) was established in 2012 to campaign for a public inquiry into the conduct of the police at the mass picket of the Orgreave coking plant on 18 June 1984. The bloody confrontation between police and miners that unfolded is now infamously known as the 'Battle of Orgreave.' The coalminers' strike of 1984/5 was the longest national strike in British history. For a year over 100,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers, their families and supporters, in hundreds of communities, battled to prevent the decimation of the coal industry on which their livelihoods and communities depended. The attacks on the miners also involved the use of the courts and anti-trade union laws, restrictions on welfare benefits, the secret financing by industrialists of working miners and the involvement of the security services. The OTJC was partly inspired by the Hillsborough Justice Campaign which has successfully sought to get the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) to review the policing of the 1989 Hillsborough stadium disaster. The cover up and doctored evidence by the police at Hillsborough has strong parallels with what occurred at the Orgreave coking plant during the 1984-85 miners' strike.

Why a Public Inquiry?

There is evidence that the attack by the police and security forces was pre planned military style operation. There were 6,000 police mobilised with 8,000 miners assembled on the site to stop the transport of coke to the steel works. Most of the police were equipped with riot gear.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/01/orgreave-class-war-96-dead-hillsborough-amber-rudd-inquiry>

Many of the miners who suffered the most terrible police brutality faced serious charges such as riot. 95 Miners were arrested and released without charge amid allegations that the police fabricated evidence after the incident.

No investigation took place about the role of the police in producing false evidence against the Miners. Former Police officers have come forward in public offering to give evidence to confirm that they were "told what to write in their witness statements" by Senior Police. A former officer claimed that arresting officers had to sign pre-written testimonies

The media colluded with the Establishment to produce a false and distorted narrative of what happened at Orgreave. Media coverage 'showing' that it was the miners instigated the attack against the police where in fact the opposite actually happened.

In 1991 South Yorkshire police paid £425,000 compensation to 39 miners who had sued the force for assault, unlawful arrest and malicious prosecution. But still the police did not admit any fault, and not a single police officer was ever disciplined or prosecuted.

Documents reveal an attempt by the Thatcher Government to smear the miners, improperly intervene in police operational matters and fast-track prosecutions, despite concerns at the time over the weakness of evidence.

The OTJC submitted their evidence to the Conservative Government Home Secretary who decided against a public inquiry at the end of October 2016. The OTJC continues to campaign for an Independent Inquiry. Orgreave represents one of the most serious miscarriages of justice in this country's history, and it has never been adequately addressed.

The Campaign is pressing on with the call for a judicial review.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/01/orgreave-inquiry-campaigners-say-gloves-are-off-amber-rudd-miners>

There is growing support for the OTJC throughout the country among trade unions and wider public. Senior politicians in the Labour Party (such as the former Home Secretary Andy Burnham) have been extremely supportive to the campaign. Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour Party has committed the Party to an Inquiry.

Why the campaign is relevant to the Danish Labour Movement

The Danish trade union movement was extremely supportive with respect to solidarity action during the 1984-85 miners' strike. Similarly the key issues surrounding Orgreave have wide implications for trade unionists and activists everywhere. Under the current climate of right wing populism and neoliberalism there is a trend towards state attacks against labour and civil society organisations. We still see excessive policing, mass arrests, and collusion with the media by the police to promote their own narrative.

What can the Danish labour and civil rights movement do?

1. Write to the Home Secretary Amber Rudd calling for an Inquiry. (We will provide the model letter for you).
2. Publicise the campaign in Denmark
3. Make a financial donation to the OTJC
4. Send messages of support.

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